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NOTE

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MANX MEMORIAL STONES OF THE VIKING PERIOD

By DAVID M. WILSON

There are more Runic inscriptions to be met with in this island, than perhaps in any other nation; most of them upon funeral monuments. They are, generally, on long flat rag-stone, with crosses on one or both sides, and little embellishments of men on horseback, or in arms; stags, dogs, birds, or other devices; probably, the achievements of some notable person. The inscriptions are generally on one edge, to be read from the bottom upwards; most of them, after so many ages, are very entire and writ in the old Norwegian language . . .

Bishop Thomas Wilson, 1722.

IT is difficult to estimate the impact of the Vikings on the Celtic settlers of the Isle of Man. There seems little reason to suspect that there was any aggressive relapse into paganism as a result of the invasions, although Professor Bersu once suggested — in my opinion unconvincingly — that the Christian cemetery at Balladoole was deliberately slighted by the Vikings.¹ Mr and Mrs Megaw,² on the other hand, have suggested — on fairly firm grounds — that the two peoples lived alongside each other reasonably peacefully and imply that the Manx Vikings more or less drifted into Christianity. By the middle of the tenth century there is definite evidence that the Scandinavian settlers of the Isle of Man had become, at least formally, Christian; for at this period the first memorial crosses and cross-slabs appear, decorated with both Christian and pagan Viking motifs in Anglo-Celtic tradition. The crosses themselves are usually carved on

¹ G. Bersu and D. M. Wilson, *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man* (Society for Medieval Archaeology: Monograph series I, 1966), 13.

² B. R. S. and E. M. Megaw 'The Norse Heritage in the Isle of Man', *The Early Cultures of North-west Europe* (ed. C. Fox and B. Dickins, 1950), 146-7 note.

slabs of the soft grey stone of the Manx slate series, quarried from various beds throughout the island. The ornament is cut, usually very sharply, on the flat surface of the stone and, apart from the points of interlace, there is no attempt to give a three-dimensional effect to the motif. The ornament (including the form of the cross itself) is usually reserved in the surface of a rectangular slab, the background being cut away. Occasionally the stone is shaped as a standing cross, but this is more common towards the end of the series. Generally the slabs give the impression of competent, careful craftsmanship: the sculptors obviously knew their material well — knew its limitations and its possibilities.

It is well over sixty years since P. M. C. Kermode published his masterly survey of the crosses of the Isle of Man and his interpretation, although still largely valid, needs modification in the light of the scholarship of the intervening period. This paper is intended to bring the material within the framework of modern theories — chronological theories in particular — concerning Viking art. It is intended as a preliminary to a completely new publication of the material which will take some years to prepare. I must emphasize that I shall deal only with the Viking slabs and not with the earlier Celtic crosses and memorials.

Any account of the Scandinavian sculpture of the Isle of Man must start with the cross at Kirk Michael 101 (74),³ illustrated in Fig. 1. It was raised by Gaut and bears a runic inscription which reads:

Melbrigði, sonr Aðakáns smiðs, reisti kross þenna fyrir sálu sína synd- . . . , en Gautr gerði þenna ok alla í Mön.

“Melbrigði, son of Athakán (the) smith, raised this cross

³ All the Manx crosses are numbered by means of small metal plaques affixed to the stone. This numeration I have used in this essay. Numbers in brackets are those given to the stones by P. M. C. Kermode in his corpus, *Manx Crosses* (1907).

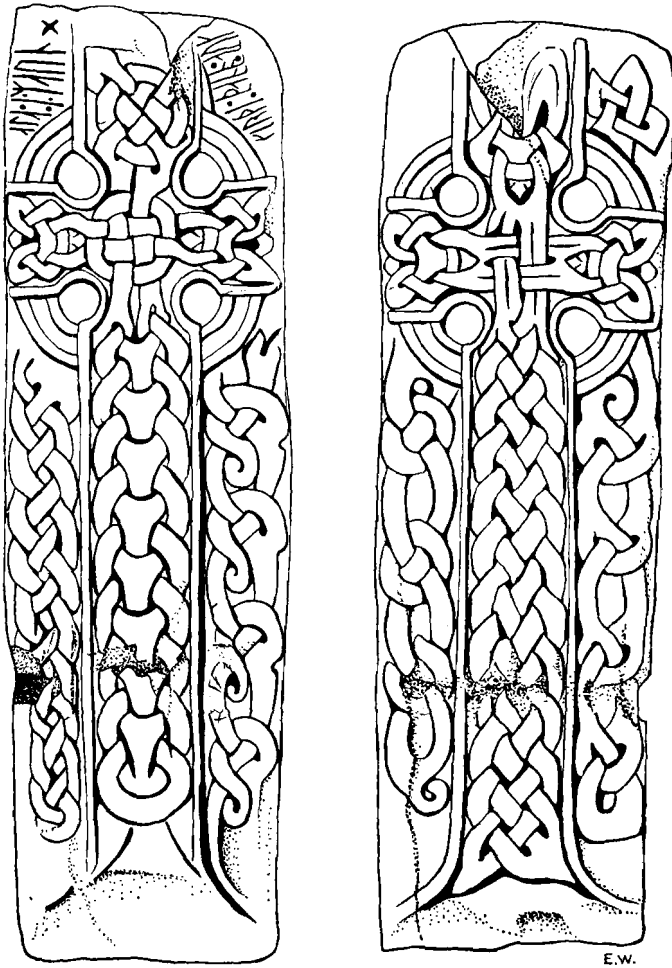


Fig. 1. Gaut's cross: Kirk Michael 10r (74).

for his sin- . . . soul, but Gaut made it and all in Man."⁴

The runes are Viking runes and the ornament is, to some extent, Viking ornament. The panel to the left of the stem of the cross on face A bears a typically Viking feature — the interlaced ring at the intersection of the interlaced bands. On face B is a tendril ornament (in the panel to the right of the stem of the cross) which has a semi-circular break in the contour at the thickest point of the tendril. This break — which might more correctly be called an indentation — is found on tenth-century objects decorated in the Jellinge and Mammen styles.⁵

The head of the cross is decorated with an interlace pattern of a type found on certain Borre-style antiquities made in Scandinavia in the late ninth and tenth centuries.⁶ The central stem of the cross on face B is decorated with a ring-chain pattern which is one of the chief motifs of the Borre style⁷ and is also found on stone carving in western England and Wales, as well as on certain Irish objects.⁸

It seems reasonable to suppose, because of the phrasing of the inscription, that Gaut may have been the earliest Viking craftsman to carve crosses in the Isle of Man, and we fortunately have another signed cross which tells us rather more about the man himself. At Andreas 99 (73), a few miles to the north of Kirk Michael, is a cross, signed by Gaut, whose inscription reads:

Þenna ept Ófeig, foður sinn, en Gautr gerði, sonr Bjarnar

⁴ The transliterations are based on those of M. Olsen, 'Runic Inscriptions in Great Britain, Ireland and the Isle of Man' in *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, vi (ed. H. Shetelig, 1954), 182-232; the translations into English have been improved.

⁵ It occurs in a dated context in Britain on a number of brooches in the Skail hoard (J. Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times: the Iron Age* (1883), figs. 71-7), the deposition of which is dated to c. 950.

⁶ Cf. N. Nicolaysen, *The Viking Ship discovered at Gokstad in Norway* (1882), pl. x, ii.

⁷ For example the strap-end from Sundvor, Rogaland, Norway, see H. Shetelig, 'The Norse Style of Ornamentation in the Viking Settlements', *Acta Archaeologica* xix (1948), fig. 9. (This paper is reprinted in *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, vi (1954), 115-50.)

⁸ I have cited these parallels in D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (1966), 108-9.

frá Kollí.

"... (erected) this (cross) after Ófeig his father, but Gaut son of Björn *frá Kollí* carved it."

We see that Gaut is the son of a man with a Norse name — Björn.⁹ This cross has all the Scandinavian features of the Kirk Michael cross, save for the ring-chain motif.

Unfortunately, not every Norse cross has an inscription — some were certainly carved without them, while others are now either too fragmentary or too worn to reveal any runes. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that a number of other crosses found in the Isle of Man were also carved by Gaut. On stylistic grounds it seems likely that the crosses at Ballaqueeney, Port St Mary (parish of Rushen) 100 (76), Kirk Michael 102 (75) and 110 (85), Keeil Pheric, West Nappin (parish of Jurby) 103 (78), Andreas 109 (83), and Thorstein's cross at Kirk Braddan 112 (86) were carved by Gaut. It is quite possible that he also carved the cross with the indecipherable bind-runes at Andreas 111 (84), but Professor Shetelig's contention¹⁰ that this is the work of a younger follower must be treated with respect. It has been said that certain other stones were carved by Gaut,¹¹ notably the Osruth Cross at St John's (parish of German) 107 (81) and, more interestingly, the Truian cross, Bride 118 (92). If the Truian cross was indeed carved by Gaut, it admits a new class of monument to Gaut's workshop — a class which perhaps includes the Sigurd crosses from Malew 120 (94) and Jurby 119 (93), which, like the Truian cross, also bear representations of mythological scenes as well as what is almost certainly a purely zoomorphic ornament. This introduction of decoration other than interlace

⁹ For a discussion of Gaut's home, *Koll(r)*, cf. H. R. Ellis Davidson and B. Megaw 'Gaut the Sculptor', *Journal of the Manx Museum* V (1941/1946), 135-9; C. J. Marstrand, 'Suderøyingen Gaut Bjørnson', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* X (1938), 375-83.

¹⁰ H. Shetelig, 'Manx crosses relating to Great Britain and Norway', *Saga-Book* IX (1925), 6.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 4.

patterns into Gaut's repertoire gives opportunities for much contention.

It is always difficult to estimate the growth of a man's style in a period or area without literature: it would be unusual if a craftsman's products exhibited no stylistic change in the course of a working lifetime and it is quite possible that a large number of the Scandinavian crosses of the Isle of Man were carved by Gaut himself. There are certainly enough common traits in the ornament of about half the surviving corpus to postulate that, if they were not all made by one man, they were at least the product of one workshop; and it is clear (as I shall show) that the Norse crosses did not span a great period of time.

Before examining any of the historiated or zoomorphically ornamented crosses, a more thorough examination must be made of the origins of the art of the series attributed to Gaut. Kermode, who was the first person to examine the crosses systematically, pointed out that Gaut's ring-chain pattern was also found in England, quoting the examples at Gosforth and Muncaster in Cumberland, an example from Burnsall in Yorkshire, and odd examples from Penmon, Anglesey and Cardynham near Bodmin, Cornwall.¹² He considered the motif to be indigenous to the Isle of Man — a view which was inevitable at the beginning of this century, when the art of other regions was less well understood. Kermode did point to two parallels in Sweden,¹³ now considered hardly relevant, but it was not until many years later that Shetelig was able to produce any really satisfactory parallels outside England and the Isle of Man.¹⁴ Shetelig showed that the ring-chain was an important element of the Borre style which flourished in Scandinavia from the middle of the ninth century until late in the

¹² Kermode, *op. cit.*, 40 n. and fig. 29.

¹³ *ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴ Shetelig, *op. cit.* (note 10 above), 4.

tenth century.¹⁵ It also seems likely that this motif was used in England earlier than in the Isle of Man. The late Professor Arbman, in an unpublished lecture, suggested that the Gosforth Cross and the crosses of Western England which bear the ring-chain motifs were carved before those raised by Gaut. Elsewhere he dated Gaut's crosses to *c.* 930-50,¹⁶ a date which is well borne out by the probable political situation of England at that time and by the probable origin of the art of the Gosforth cross series.¹⁷

A unique element in the Manx sculptures carved or influenced by Gaut is the tendril ornament on the right-hand panel of face A of the Kirk Michael cross, which has no convincing precursor in Scandinavian art.¹⁸ The only possible contemporary parallel is found on the bell-shrine of St Mura, which has an applied panel of exactly the same pattern as the motif so frequently found in the Isle of Man.¹⁹ Such a parallel is of no chronological use, because this portion of the shrine cannot be securely dated; but it does seem reasonable to suppose that the motif was introduced into Ireland from the Isle of Man — together with the ring-chain motif which is found on a number of objects in Ireland.²⁰ But one feature of the tendril motif is found in Scandinavia — the semi-circular nick in the broadest part of the stem. This is a well-known feature of the Mammen style of the latter half of the tenth century;²¹ it is also found in the ornament of the

¹⁵ I am using here dates developed in D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (1966). Even if the dates are not completely accepted the main tenor of the argument — which in this instance is basically Shetelig's — is still valid.

¹⁶ H. Arbman, *Vikingarna* (1962), 180.

¹⁷ See Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *op. cit.*, 106 ff.

¹⁸ Shetelig's Scandinavian parallel (Shetelig, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), 90) is unconvincing. The object (cf. J. Brøndsted, 'Danish inhumation graves of the Viking Age', *Acta Archaeologica* VIII (1936), fig. 49) is, in any case, much later in date.

¹⁹ This was pointed out by Shetelig, *loc. cit.*, and the shrine is illustrated by him in fig. 16.

²⁰ Cf. H. O'N. Hencken, 'A Gaming Board of the Viking Age', *Acta Archaeologica* IV (1933), fig. 85. An unpublished bone trial piece from Dublin also bears this pattern.

²¹ Cf. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *op. cit.*, pl. LIII.

Skaill brooches (where it must belong to the first half of the tenth century); and it was already present earlier in the Jellinge style in Scandinavia.²²

Another important motif is the strangely competent, yet almost muddled, interlace on the head of the crosses carved by Gaut, best displayed in Kirk Michael 101 (74). The interlace pattern of the arms is best paralleled on the series of bronze mounts from the Gokstad grave which are decorated in the Borre style.²³ The other motifs on Gaut's crosses are common ribbon interlace — of a type which has a long history — and a rather strange, interlaced, split band pattern which also, as Shetelig pointed out,²⁴ has Borre parallels.

The last motif, the interlace band pattern with a free ring, is a common enough Jellinge-style element, and the free ring, which is the important feature, is clearly seen in a demonstrably early tenth-century English context on a casket-plate of unknown provenance in the British Museum.²⁵

The origin of the ribbon interlace is less easily found, for the motif is so common.²⁶ The only major ornamental motif, other than the wheel-head of the cross, found in the pre-Viking sculpture in the Isle of Man is ribbon interlace,²⁷ which may or may not have been a significant influence on the art of the Viking crosses. It seems reasonably clear, however, that the style used on the earliest Viking crosses could have been based on Scandinavian models, for similar motifs are found in the Borre style and in the contemporary Jellinge style.

Returning to the possibility that certain other stones are also the work of Gaut, all that can be said is that some of the motifs he used are present on other stones and it is

²² *ibid.*, pl. XXXVIa, XXXVIIb.

²³ Nicolaysen, *op. cit.*, pl. X, 11.

²⁴ Shetelig, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), fig. 8.

²⁵ D. M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon ornamental metalwork, 700-1100, in the British Museum* (1964), no. 155, pp. 215-6.

²⁶ Kermode, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

²⁷ E.g. Maughold 42 (25), Calf of Man 61 (50).

possible that he also carved crosses like the Truian cross 118 (92). His style may well have developed in the course of his life-time and his repertoire may well have been larger than the motifs found on the few crosses which bear his name. Such a thesis, however, cannot be proved and one must treat the other crosses in groups or individually.

A cross which bears Gaut's ring-chain pattern but which, by the different techniques used and by the clumsiness of the design cannot be attributed to Gaut, is the cross at Bride 124 (97). This cross exhibits crude spiral patterns, various types of frets and interlaces, and a wealth of mythological scenes which may be drawn from Norse sources. One of the scenes, however — the hare-and-hound motif — is commonly found in Ireland and in north-western England²⁸ and has Christian significance. The same motif is found on the Sandulf cross at Andreas 131 (103), on the Mal Lumkun cross at Kirk Michael 130 (104) (which may indeed be by the same hand), on the cross at Maughold 97 (66), possibly on the Jurby stone 125 (98) — which I consider to be rather later — and possibly on the so-called Roolwer Stone²⁹ at Maughold 98 (72). The latest example of the scene occurs on the Joalfr slab at Kirk Michael 132 (105). Perhaps carved by the same hand as Bride 124 (97) is Maughold 114 (91), which has a double-contoured version of Gaut's ring-chain motif but no zoomorphic characteristics, apart from a rather doubtful snake's head at two places in the ring. All these stones were almost certainly not carved by Gaut but must be very close in date to some part of his career. Likewise it would seem reasonable to assume that four crosses, Ballaugh 106 (77), Jurby 125 (98), Kirk Michael 126 (100) and Jurby 134 (107), which bear many of Gaut's motifs — the ring-chain and the tendril pattern, for example — must

²⁸ F. Henry, *La sculpture irlandaise* (1933), pls. 36 and 46, Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *op. cit.*, pl. XXXIXc.

²⁹ Identified by Kermodé, *op. cit.*, 142, as the memorial stone of Bishop Roolwer. There is no evidence to support the theory.

also be very close in date to Gaut's series. But the presence of beading in the ribbons, together with certain more elaborate tricks of interlace, suggests that we are on the threshold of the Mammen style which in the Isle of Man reaches its heights on the two Kirk Braddan crosses, 135 (108) and 136 (109). It is interesting that one of these four crosses, Kirk Michael 126 (100), bears human and animal figures not dissimilar to those found on the Sandulf cross at Andreas 131 (103), mentioned above.

Such scenes, which are of fairly frequent occurrence, are difficult to interpret. Certain tales from Norse mythology and legend can almost certainly be identified. Thus scenes from the Sigurd cycle can be seen at Jurby 119 (93), Malew 120 (94), Andreas 121 (95) and on the slab from Ramsey, now Maughold 122 (96). Odin occurs on the fragmentary slab Andreas 128 (102) and possibly Jurby 125 (98), and it is conceivable that Heimdall occurs, blowing his horn to summon the gods before Ragnarök, on Jurby 127 (99). Certain definite Christian symbols (other than the cross itself) do, of course, appear: Christ, for example, is portrayed crucified on Kirk Michael 129 (101). But such identifiable scenes and representations are rare and the significance of many of the creatures and scenes portrayed is obscure. Sometimes we may guess at the meaning of a motif, but our guesses may be far away from the original sense. Thus it might be possible to identify the riders on Andreas 131 (103) and Kirk Michael 132 (105) as the men commemorated by the stones, but this is pure hypothesis. It is possible that Thor is represented on Bride 124 (97), as Kermode suggested, but this interpretation no longer convinces. Knowledge of Scandinavian symbolism in the Viking colonies in the tenth century is tenuous and we cannot say how many of the motifs, like the undoubtedly non-Scandinavian hart-and-hound, are indigenous. We cannot even be sure whether some of the scenes are Christian or pagan.

The mythological scenes are hardly susceptible of stylistic analysis, but overt hints of Scandinavian taste can be seen. The women, for example, on the slabs from Jurby 125 (98) and Kirk Michael 123 — especially the latter, with the long pigtail and the train to the dress — are clearly paralleled by figures executed in silver and other material found in tenth-century Scandinavian contexts.³⁰ The animals in the mythological scenes are quite distinct from the purely ornamental animals which abound on the crosses. This is clearly seen on the large stone, Kirk Michael 132 (105), erected in memory of a certain Frida. At the base of face A are a pair of purely ornamental animals executed in the true Mammen style — completely different from the more meaningful animals seen on either side of the shaft of the cross.

I have shown that certain cross-slabs bear a billeted interlace pattern which betrays traces of the Mammen style. Frida's cross, Kirk Michael 132 (105), for instance, bears both the billeted interlace patterns and true Mammen elements. It is remarkable that in the Isle of Man there are more monuments decorated in this style than are found in any other country in Europe. The meaning of this phenomenon is obscure: it is certainly not — as has been suggested — because the Mammen style originated in the Isle of Man.

The Mammen style — which is usually dated to the late tenth century — takes its name from an axe found in a village of that name near Viborg in Jutland. The axe is inlaid with wire in zoomorphic and foliate patterns,³¹ but the style is more usually found on objects carved in bone, ivory, wood and the like which are found as far away as the north of Norway³² and Russia.³³ The most splendid objects decorated in this style are undoubtedly the caskets from Bamberg in south Germany and Cammin

³⁰ Cf. e.g. Wilson and Klindt-Jensen, *op. cit.*, pl. XXIV c-e.

³¹ *ibid.*, pl. LII and LIII.

³² *ibid.*, pl. XLV b-e.

³³ *ibid.*, fig. 56.

in Pomerania, the one carved in ivory and the other in elk horn.³⁴ The main features of this style are the billeting of the body of the animals and the luxuriant and fleshy foliation of the motif — whether an animal or interlace pattern or merely an acanthus tendril. Details of the style are already evident in the preceding Jellinge style³⁵ and I have no doubt that it grew directly out of that style in the Vikings' homeland.

The two finest Manx stones decorated in this style — indeed two of the finest stones in the island — are Braddan 135 (108) and 136 (109). The first of these, illustrated in fig. 2, bears on one side the inscription in runes:

Þorleifr hnakki reisti kross þenna ept Fiak, son sinn, bróðurson Hafrs.

"Thorleif 'nape' erected this cross after Fiak, his son, brother's son of Hafr."

The cross is free-standing, 212 cm. high, and has a ring head. One edge of the shaft bears the runic inscription and the other edge bears an animal with its head at the bottom; it has a sinuous billeted body which is interlaced with the lappet of the animal and produces a series of semi-foliate offshoots. The two main faces are filled by a series of animals with double contours and billeted bodies, heavily involved in interlacing limbs and lappets.

The other stone is broken half way up the shaft, the top half is missing. This, like the previous stone, has an inscription on one side:

Oddr reisti kross þenna ept Frakka, fǫður sinn, en Þo(rbjǫrn sonr . . .)

"Odd erected this cross after Frakki, his father, but Tho(rbjǫrn son . . .)"³⁶

One of the main faces of the cross is decorated with animal ornament similar to that on the other Braddan

³⁴ *ibid.*, pl. LIV-LVI.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pl. XXXVII.

³⁶ The last letters were recorded in the nineteenth century, but are now missing. Olsen, *op. cit.*, 191, suggests that the inscription continued "... of N.N. made this cross".



Fig. 2. Ornament of Thorleif's cross: Braddan 135 (108).

cross; the other main face, however, was panelled and has an elaborate fleshy interlace motif, of typically Mammen taste, below a panel containing an overall interlace ornament. It seems reasonably probable that these two slabs were carved by the same man, and if Magnus Olsen was right, his name was Thorbjørn.

Apart from the ornament of Frida's cross, Kirk Michael 132 (105), and the Braddan crosses, all other Mammen elements in the Isle of Man are non-zoomorphic. They usually consist of beaded interlace patterns (like those already indicated) or feathered interlace combined with beading, like that on the fragment Kirk Braddan 138 (110) and on Kirk Michael 129 (101). The "Sigurd" slab, Ramsey 122 (96), however, seems also to have reminiscences of the Mammen style in the small interspaced dots which fill the free spaces on the side decorated with mythological scenes and on the side which bears zoomorphic decoration. This ornament, however, has elements of the Ringerike style — the tendril knot and the birds' feathers which can be seen on the historiated side — and must be considered as one of the latest in the decorated Manx cross series. In fact, the mythological scenes on this stone can be related to scenes found on contemporary carved stones in Sweden,³⁷ as well as on earlier tapestries in Norway.³⁸

Another slab with scenes from the Sigurd cycle is Malew 120 (94). This also bears a tenth-century Jellinge-style beast on the stem of the cross on face A. Similar animals occur on Kirk Andreas 121 (95) (which has Ringerike elements), Kirk Michael 117 (89) (which has Ringerike and Mammen elements), and Kirk Michael 116 (90).

All the crosses and slabs which have been discussed so far can be dated within a very narrow period — between, say, 940 and 1020 — but there are a number of crosses which for various reasons cannot be dated. Some of

³⁷ Cf. e.g. Kermodé, *op. cit.*, figs. 53 and 54.

³⁸ S. Kraftt, *Pictorial Weavings of the Viking Age* (1956).

them, like Marown 139 (111) or German 140 (112), cannot be dated because they bear only an undatable runic inscription (although Marown 139 (111) may bear the name of the Thorbjörn who perhaps carved the Braddan 136 (110) cross). Others, like Maughold 142³⁹ bear inscriptions and ornament which cannot be dated. While others, like Maughold 68 (38), bear no recognisable ornament but are presumably Norse.

Of these the most interesting is undoubtedly Maughold 142 which bears the inscription:

*Hedinn setti kross þenna eftir dóttur sína Hlíf (Hildi).
Árni risti rúnar þessar.*

“Hethin set up this cross after his daughter Hlíf (Hild).
Árni carved these runes.”

On one face of the shaft is a picture of a rather elaborate medieval ship. This, the only representation of a ship from the early medieval period found in the Isle of Man, is not unlike that on the Winchelsea seal of the thirteenth century⁴⁰ or on a thirteenth-century wooden stick from Bryggen in Bergen, Norway.⁴¹ It is useless, therefore, to try to date the drawing on form or style. One may only assume that it belongs to the early eleventh century.⁴² It is, however, interesting that a very similar ship can be seen on the earliest seals of the Norse kings of Man, which are dated towards the middle of the thirteenth century. Whether we can see in this stone the first glimpse of a Manx heraldic device is doubtful, but not impossible.⁴³

Inscribed but undecorated slabs occur here and there. Early examples of such are represented mainly by the one found in 1965, Maughold 127, erected by Kuim,⁴⁴ and by

³⁹ P. M. C. Kermodé, *Saga-Book IX* (1925), 333.

⁴⁰ S. Steen, 'Fartøier i Norden i Middelalderen', *Handel og Samsfærdsel* (Nordisk Kultur XVI, 1933), 283.

⁴¹ E. Herteig, *Bryggen i Bergen* (N.D.), 46.

⁴² M. Olsen, perhaps swayed a little by Kermodé's opinion dates the runes c. 1000 (*op. cit.*, 207-8). This may be perhaps a little too early.

⁴³ Cf. B. R. S. Megaw 'The Ship Seals of the Kings of Man', *The Journal of the Manx Museum VI* (1959-60), pl. 241, L, which is a seal of Harald dated between 1242 and 1249.

⁴⁴ A. M. Cubbon, 'Viking Runes', *The Journal of the Manx Museum VII* (1966), 23-8.

the two late inscriptions of twelfth-century date, Maughold 144 (144) and 145 (115) — carved by the same man, *Jóan Prestur*, "John the priest".

The inscriptions of the Manx corpus are themselves not without interest. They tell us something, if only a little, of the artists, of the indigenous population, and of the relations between the Celts and invading Vikings, as well as a little of the life and customs of the people.

In Scandinavia it became fairly common practice in the eleventh century to include the name of the sculptor and of the rune-master on stone monuments.⁴⁵ This practice is also found in the Isle of Man. I have discussed at some length the important monuments of Gaut and noted that the crosses at Braddan 135 (108) and 136 (109) and Marown 139 (111) may have been carved by Thorbjørn. It is possible, on orthographical grounds,⁴⁶ that Thorbjørn also carved the runes on Kirk Michael 132 (105); indeed, the Mammen-style animals at the base of the cross on face A would suggest that he also carved the ornament.

The man who carved the runes did not, however, always carve the ornament. This is patent in Scandinavia⁴⁷ and is fairly clear in the Isle of Man. On Maughold 142 we have encountered the phrase *Arni risti rúnar þessar*, "Arni carved these runes", and other stones, mostly later in date than the main series of decorated crosses, bear similar phrases — Onchan 141 (113), Maughold 145 (115), Maughold 144 (114), for example. Although there is a similarity of orthography between Thorbjørn's slabs, there is no such similarity between the slabs carved by Gaut.⁴⁸ It is possible, if we follow Shetelig, to identify one of Gaut's rune-writers — Osruth — at St John's, German 107 (81), but the association of this fragment with Gaut is by no means certain. It is clear, however, that Gaut, like certain Scandinavian sculptors, did not

⁴⁵ Cf. Sven B. F. Jansson, *The Runes of Sweden* (1962), 136 ff.

⁴⁶ Olsen, *op. cit.*, 221.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jansson, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁸ Olsen, *op. cit.*, 221-3.

carve his own runes.

The inscriptions tell us something of the lives of the inhabitants of the Isle of Man in the Viking period: they are rarely dramatic, as many Scandinavian inscriptions are, but one, Braddan 138 (110), tells of treachery: *(e)n Hrossketill vélti i tryggu eiðsvara sinn*, "but Hrossketil deceived under truce the man he was bound to by oath". Others give small details of family life and, like Kirk Michael 130 (104), of a family's pious banality: . . . *betra es leifa fóstra góðan en son illan*, "it is better to leave a good foster-son than a bad son". One of Gaut's inscriptions where we meet "Athakán the smith" tells of a man's occupation, while two twelfth-century inscriptions were, as we have seen, carved by a priest — Maughold 145 (115) and 144 (114). The inscriptions from Andreas 111 (84), with its uninterpretable bind- or twig-runes may indicate the magic or secret properties of the runes themselves.⁴⁹

The crosses also tell of the inter-relation of the two races — Celtic and Norse — present in the island. It is difficult to set the crosses in chronological order, but it is possible, as Olsen pointed out,⁵⁰ that the Celtic names tend to occur in the earliest period of the Scandinavian sculpture (the period of Gaut) and in the later period (the beginning of the eleventh century) and that in between these two periods the large majority of inscriptions bear Scandinavian names. Generally speaking this seems a tenable thesis and would indicate that the two elements in the population lived peacefully side by side, marrying each other and giving their children Celtic names — like Thorleif on Kirk Braddan 135 (108) who, although himself Norse by name, had a son with a Celtic name.

It is difficult to estimate the comparative chronology of the Manx crosses, for there are no fixed dates from which

⁴⁹ These properties of runes are difficult to define and interpret. For the most recent summary and discussion of them, cf. R. I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Runes and Magic', *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association* (1964), 14-31.

⁵⁰ Olsen, *op. cit.*, 228 ff.

to work. On the basis of the art styles, however, it seems reasonable to suggest that the main period of production of the surviving decorated crosses was comparatively short — spanning rather less than a century. Crosses carved by Gaut are separated from those carved with the first flickering traces of the Ringerike style by no more than the sixty years that span the period from 940 to 1000. The tradition of erecting tombstones in the Norse manner continued beyond this to Maughold 175 which is of twelfth-century date and reads

*Kuan sunr Mailb . . . ak . . . kirþi lik tinn aftir kuina
sína*

“Kuan son of Mailb . . . ak . . . made this to the memory of his wife”.⁵¹

But this is undecorated and, in the light of the two stones carved by John the Priest, 144 (1114) and 145 (1115) — who seems to have had antiquarian leanings — this may perhaps be one of the latest memorial stones erected with a runic inscription in the Isle of Man.

⁵¹ Cubbon, *loc. cit.*

LAND TENURE IN A FAROESE VILLAGE*

By J. F. WEST

THE tiny nation which inhabits the Faroe Islands is today completely dependent economically on its fine modern fishing fleet working for the export trade. In 1968, indeed, although it was not a boom year, exports amounted in value to just over 150 million Danish kroner, of which 95% consisted of fish or fish products.¹ This is equivalent to an export of over £210 (nearly \$500) for every man, woman and child in the 38,000 population. In consequence, urbanisation is proceeding rapidly, the growth of the capital, Tórshavn, and the second largest town, Klaksvík, being quite remarkable.²

The population of the more remote villages has tended to decline somewhat; and on islands where landing facilities are poor, and where road connections with the larger population centres are lacking, migration to the towns has become considerable. In general, however, Faroese village life is proving remarkably sturdy.³ The population of most villages is holding its own, the drift to the towns being balanced by a high birth rate.⁴ Village life in the Faroe Islands is both interesting and sociable, and even a fisherman who is at sea for eight months of the year may find more personal fulfilment in his ancestral village than in a small town — especially if the small town is within his reach when he wants it. For in the villages

* The author acknowledges with gratitude the help of Hr Róland W. Høgnesen and of Hr H. O. Danielsen, of the Land Registry Office, Tórshavn, for help in the preparation of this article.

¹ *Faroe in Figures*, No. 45 (March 1969).

² The population of Tórshavn in 1950 was 5,607; in 1960 it was 7,447; and by 1966 it had risen to 9,738. During the same period the population of Klaksvík rose from 3,040 to 4,086.

³ See the changes in population from 1960 to 1966 given with the description of each village in J. P. Trap, *Danmark XIII, Færøerne* (5. udg., 1968), 224-348.

⁴ The population of Faroe was only about 18,000 in 1911. In 1950 it was nearly 32,000, and in 1960 was 34,596. It is now over 38,000.

a good deal of the old subsistence peasant economy — sometimes with tools and techniques that have changed little in a thousand years — is carried on as an adjunct to the earnings from the trawlers or the fish-processing factories. The complex of rights and duties involved in the tenure of land is still of great importance to well over half the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands.

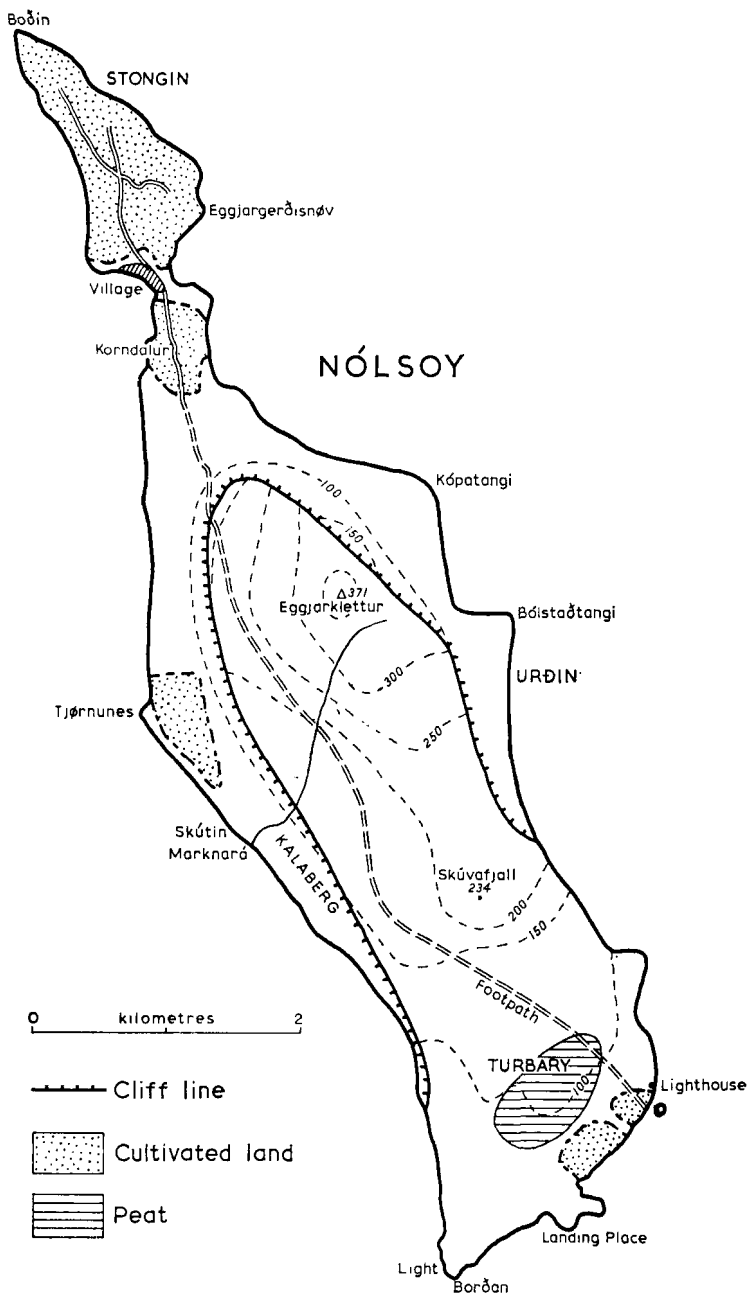
I spent the summers of 1956 and 1957 on the island of Nólsoy, studying the economy, the customs, and the village organisation of this typical Faroese community. In the spring of 1968 I returned for a couple of days, visiting old friends, and noting the changes that had taken place in eleven years. The present paper is based largely on my 1956 and 1957 note-books.⁵

The island of Nólsoy

Nólsoy lies like a long breakwater a couple of miles to the east of Tórshavn, the Faroese capital. Although it may be reached in half an hour by the post boat, and although many of its inhabitants now work in Tórshavn, Nólsoy has not become suburbanised and is still thoroughly rural in character. The population in 1957 was 330; since then it has been stable, with a slight tendency to increase.

The island is one of the smaller in Faroe, being a little over 5 miles long and only $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles across at its broadest point, from Tjørnunes to Bólstaðtangi (see Map A). The peninsula north of the village, called Stongin, is just over a mile in length, and joins the rest of the island in a low-lying isthmus over which the sea often blows in winter. On the southern portion of the island there are two hills, the higher, Eggjarklettur, being 371 m. above sea level, the other, more southerly hill, Skúvafjall, being 234 m. above the sea. A line of cliffs, like an inverted horseshoe,

⁵ For invaluable assistance in elucidating the village organisation of Nólsoy, I am indebted to all the inhabitants of that island, especially Poul Nolsøe í Mýrini and Niels á Botni, and my host, the late Jógvan Thomsen í Túni.



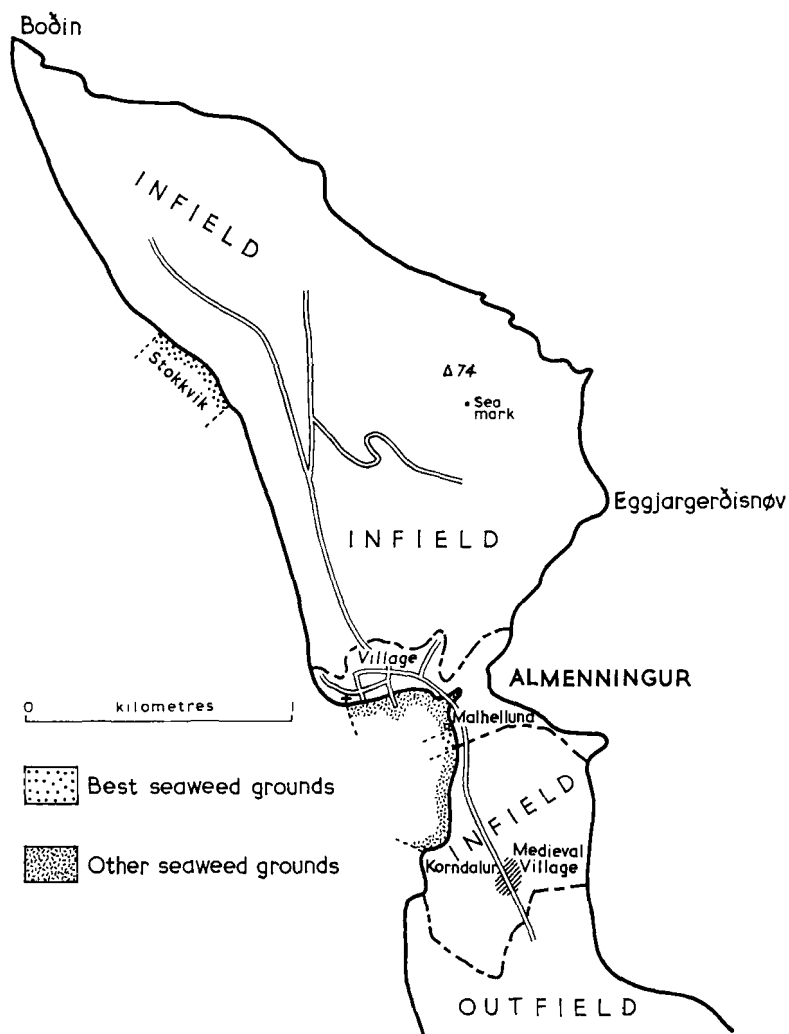
Map A
 (Contours are in metres)

runs from the south-west part of the island (Kálaberg) northwards, round Eggjarklettur, then southwards again along the eastern side of the island, above the scree-slope known as Urðin. This line of cliffs forms a natural barrier on the island, passable in only a few places.

The village lies just on the Stongin side of the isthmus, round a natural harbour which has now been improved with two concrete piers and a small wharf. Apart from this place there are only two or three points all round Nólsoy where even a rowing-boat can land, the cliffs being almost continuous, though low in some places. There is cultivated land north and south of the isthmus. Korndalur, the southern portion, a shallow valley, is more fertile on the whole than Stongin, which has some good southern-facing slopes, but in its northern parts is only technically under cultivation.

The first village to stand on Nólsoy was in Korndalur (see Map B). There, straddled across the main path, quite near to the wall of the outfield, lies a complex of ruined buildings inhabited by Nólsoyings of a previous age, which would well repay excavation. The largest of the ruined houses is known as *Prinsessatoftin*, after a local story that it was inhabited by a daughter of James II of Scotland, who fell in love with a courtier and, after being forbidden to marry him, eloped with him and fled to Faroe. The first houses on the present site of the village were said to have been built by the sons of the princess; and the name of a present-day Nólsoy dwelling, *Nýggjastova* (the new house), is said to date from this move. Korndalur is said to have become finally deserted early in the seventeenth century, the reason for the move probably being that the present village site is better sheltered from the winter storms and nearer to the beach where the boats would have to be drawn up.⁶

⁶ The tradition of the Scottish princess and her descendants is to be found in *Vardin* X (1930), 169-76. See also Daniel Bruun, *Fra de færøske bygder* (1929), 44; J. P. Trap, *op. cit.*, 202; Dansk-Færøsk Samfund, *Færøerne* I (1958), 140; N. Annandale, *The Faroes and Iceland* (1905), 6-8.



Map B
Village and seaweed grounds, Nólsoy

At the time when the Korndalur site was occupied, it is said that a chapel stood on the headland of Eggjargerð-isnøv. There is no visible trace of a church ruin today; but the site has been under continuous cultivation for several centuries. The present church stands near the harbour and was erected in 1863. Apart from Korndalur, the visible ruins on Nólsoy comprise an early medieval dwelling (possibly a *sæter*), some two and a half miles south of the village on the western slopes of the outfield (the villagers call the site *í Kassunum*); and a sea-mark near the summit of the rounded hill on Stongin, which was built in 1782 to carry a beacon for the guidance of smuggling vessels resorting to a depot maintained by the Danish merchant Niels Ryberg in Tórshavn from 1766 to 1788.⁷ Within the village itself there are old houses and abandoned sites of others, but since building styles changed only very slowly over the centuries, only investigation by an expert can distinguish what is of special antiquity.

Until the end of the eighteenth century the population of the Faroe Islands probably never exceeded 5,000. Since then it has risen steadily to the present 38,000. The population of Nólsoy⁸ has risen as follows:

1801	1850	1901	1925	1957	1960	1966
100	134	240	277	330	352	345

In 1957 there were 78 households. In 1966 this had risen to 87.

Infield and outfield on Nólsoy

Broadly speaking, the inhabitants recognise three types of land: *almenningur*, which comprises the actual village

⁷ J. P. Trap, *op. cit.*, 197-8, 262; Dansk-Færøsk Samfund, *op. cit.*, I 145-7.

⁸ The population figures for 1801 to 1925 from J. P. Trap, *Danmark IX* (4. udg., 1930), 686-7; the 1960 and 1966 figures from *ibid.*, XIII (5. udg., 1968), 262; the 1957 figure from my own count.

area; *bøur*, infield; and *hagi*, outfield. The infield is individually owned, subject to common winter grazing; the outfield is jointly owned by the infield owners. The position of the *almenningur* is more complex, prescriptive rights being an important feature.

At the present time, the outfield, which covers almost the whole of the island south of Korndalur, is divided into two *hagapartar*, commons, called *Norðarahelvt* or *Heimarahelvt* (i.e. the northern or homeward half), and *Sunnarahelvt* or *Ytrahelvt* (i.e. the southern or outermost half). This division is a fundamental one on Nólsoy, and although it primarily concerns sheep culture, it has an influence also on several other privileges.

The infield consists of the whole of the Stongin peninsula and the lowest-lying stretches of land immediately south of the isthmus, including Korndalur. An enclave half-way down the west coast, by the headland of Tjørnunes, also belongs to the infield, while near the lighthouse at the southern extreme of the island is a cultivated area which is the perquisite of the lighthouse keepers and is not, therefore, to be considered part of the Nólsoy village *bøur*.

Land units and land tenure

As in other parts of Faroe, the unit of land tenure is the *mørk* (mark), which is subdivided into 16 *gyllin* (gylden), each consisting of 20 *skinn* (skins). Faroese weights and measures are a complicated subject, and space does not permit a consideration of the origins of these units, which have been the subject of much research.⁹ Nólsoy as a whole is valued at 48 marks, 24 of which are in *Norðarahelvt* and 24 of which are in *Sunnarahelvt*. Ownership rights on infield and outfield are, however, inseparable; to own one mark of land implies absolute ownership of a

⁹ See for example Louis Zachariasen, *Føroyar sum rættarsamfelag 1535-1655* (1959-61), 392-6; Poul Petersen, *Ein føroysk bygd* (1968), 226-7. It ought to be mentioned that the Faroese mark is a highly variable unit: the mark of one village cannot be equated with that of another, and even within a single village commonwealth the marks may be of very different sizes.

certain area of infield (on Nólsoy very approximately 4 hectares) and rights in one of the two commons, as well as corresponding obligations.

Thirteen marks of Nólsoy belong technically to the Danish crown,¹⁰ being in fact leased at very low rents by so-called *kongsbøndur*, "king's farmers". Such leases are inherited by the eldest son of the deceased tenant; so that in practice, a crown tenancy hardly differs from outright ownership.¹¹ Indeed, as far as there is any difference, it is to the advantage of the crown tenant. The remaining 35 marks of Nólsoy are *ognarjørð*, the property of peasant proprietors. Until 1857, the allodial laws, such as are still in force in Norway, applied to Faroese land; and although in that year they were repealed for Faroe, it is common to hear the proprietors of *ognarjørð* referred to as *óðalsbøndur*. Privately owned land is divided on inheritance equally between the children of a deceased owner, with the modern provision that no quantity less than one complete *gylden* is legally recognised. Transfers of land should therefore always be made in a whole number of *gylden*, but this law is often evaded by informal arrangements between the villagers themselves. The long-term tendency, as may easily be foreseen, is for the *ognarjørð* to become subdivided into small and inconvenient fragments, especially as there is a long-standing Faroese prejudice against selling one's land. On Nólsoy in 1957 only the crown tenants could be considered as serious farmers.

It is impossible to consider infield apart from outfield, or outfield apart from infield. One mark, or one *gylden* of land, means so much infield plus so much share in the

¹⁰ By a law of 22 March 1938 administration of the crown lands of Faroe passed into the hands of an agricultural board, two of the three members of which are chosen by the Løgting. The position of a crown tenant in relation to his fellow-villagers has not changed, however, and he is still called *kongsbóndi*. Ownership rights in these lands are now vested in the Faroese home-rule government.

¹¹ Anton Degn, *Færøske kongsbønder 1584-1884* (1945), gives an account of the obligations of the Faroese crown tenant. The introduction is especially Valuable.

produce of the outfield. If, as has happened several times in the past, part of the outfield is brought into cultivation, it is shared by the *kongsbøndur* and *óðalsbøndur* in proportion to their land holdings.

As will be later seen, Nólsoy does have certain plots on the Stongin peninsula staked out as allotments (*tráðir*, sg. *trøð*), which carry with them no outfield rights. These are the outcome of a law passed in the nineteenth century in the interests of landless fishermen and will be considered later. First must be considered what is implied by ownership in the *markatal*, or mark scale, and the rights and duties it involves.¹²

Rights and duties in a mark of Nólsoy land

A mark of land leased or owned on Nólsoy carries with it absolute ownership of a portion of infield, as already mentioned, and participation in a joint outfield enterprise for the keeping of sheep and cattle, cutting peat, and catching sea-fowl. Also involved, though today of hardly more than historical importance, are rights of collecting seaweed and driftwood from the foreshore. An owner or tenant has a voice in the various administrative meetings and a vote proportional to his land holding; and his outfield duties, too, are in proportion to his holding in marks and *gylden*.

The chief perquisite of outfield participation is the wool and mutton of the common flocks. Nólsoy as a whole carries some 860 sheep, each producing about a kilo of wool yearly. At the annual round-up in October the animals not required as winter stock are slaughtered for conversion into the prized wind-dried mutton called *skerpikjøt*. The wool is taken at a round-up each spring.

With regard to fowling rights, there is one exceptionally

¹² The subject as it applies generally in the Faroe Islands is dealt with comprehensively in Poul Petersen, *op. cit.* Also valuable are J. A. Lunddahl, *Nogle bemærkninger om de færøske landboforhold* (1851); *Tillæg til Forslag og Betænkninger afgivne af den færøske Landbokommission . . .* (1911); M. V. Lützen, *Landbruget paa Færøerne* (1924); Dansk-Færøsk Samfund, *op. cit.*, II 184-96.

good place for puffin-catching on the east coast, the scree called Urðin. The privilege of fowling on Urðin is taken in alternate years by the owners of Norðarahelvt and Sunnarahelvt. The common which does not have the Urðin fowling has the sole right to catch sea-birds in other parts of the island.¹³ One-third of all puffins or guillemots caught "belong to the land", in other words, must be shared out by the catcher among his fellow-proprietors of the common. This demands an encyclo-pædic memory and a mind like a slide-rule, but the Nólsoyings seem to manage the calculations without much trouble.¹⁴

Peat-cutting rights are the privilege of all owners and tenants of both outfield parts. The turbarry is in Sunnarahelvt, near the southernmost point of Nólsoy, the headland of Borðan. All peat must be cut here, and special rules must be followed for the conservation of the turbarry and the surrounding pasture. It would seem that Norðarahelvt owners here have an advantage, but this is counterbalanced by joint use of that portion of the Norðarahelvt common below the cliff-line, except the two remotest pastures. This is *húshagi*, that is, summer grazing for the 66 cattle of the total outfield stock.

Until 1945 barley of the hardy local strain was grown on the Nólsoy infield, particularly, as its name implies, in Korndalur. Seaweed was much used in its cultivation, and near the isthmus on Nólsoy are some ancient middens that from time immemorial have been used for storing the seaweed while it was rotting. There was never enough of

¹³ Fulmars, being a new bird in Faroe, are however not subject to the fowling rules, and on Nólsoy may be taken by anyone without obligation. The rule is different in other villages.

¹⁴ One of my Nólsoy informants explained to me that he divided up the "land's share" of the puffins he caught by grouping together households in such a way as to create whole numbers of marks — thus making the arithmetic manageable. In view of the workings of the inheritance system, his method probably amounted to a genealogical mnemonic, though he did not describe it as such to me. Such mnemonics, based on condensed genealogies, are recorded from the village of Oyri on Borðoy, where they are used for calculating the division of the autumn sheep-slaughter among the joint owners of the common there. See Robert Joensen, *Býta seyð og fletta* (1968), 18-22.

it. In the old days the Faroemen used to reckon that a boatful of seaweed in spring was as valuable as a boatload of cod.¹⁵ Hence in all Faroese villages seaweed-gathering rights pertained to the *markatal*.¹⁶ On Nólsoy there are two places specially noted for seaweed gathering. One is Stokkvík on the west coast of Stongin and the other is round the harbour itself. That common which in a given year does not hold the Urðin fowling rights owns the seaweed in Stokkvík and in a particularly rich section of the harbour bay, by a little rock called Malhellan; the other common is permitted to gather seaweed in the other parts of the harbour bay.

In the treeless Faroe Islands driftwood was of considerable value, and its collection on the foreshore was affected by the land tenure system. In law driftwood might be of two kinds, *bóndaviður* (farmers' timber) and *kongsviður* (king's timber). A whole tree or part of a tree, provided it bore no marks of the hand of man, was reckoned as *bóndaviður* and belonged jointly to all the village landowners, Norðarahelvt and Sunnarahelvt alike. It was the Nólsoy practice to use *bóndaviður* for communal purposes, such as the erection of sheep shelters. Wreckage of unknown origin, or indeed, any timber worked by the hand of man, was crown property, and would be auctioned yearly by the *sýslumaður* (district sheriff). The law recognised certain refinements on this rough and ready rule, but these seemed to be unknown on Nólsoy in 1957. In each case the finder could claim one-third of the timber. The foreshore was reckoned to extend as far into the water as a horse could be ridden, or on the steep parts of the coast as far as a man could reach with his *fleygastong*, or fowling-net.¹⁷

¹⁵ See Heðin Brú's article, 'Det gamle bondesamfund', in Dansk-Færøsk Samfund, *op. cit.*, I (1958), 276.

¹⁶ Poul Petersen, *op. cit.*, 64-6.

¹⁷ Poul Petersen, *op. cit.*, 55-60; E. A. Bjørk, 'Strandarætturin í Føroyum', *Fróðskaparrit* 8 (1959), 66-102; Anton Degn, ed., *Kommissionsbetænkningen 1609-10* (1934), 81-2.

With regard to rights within the *almenningur* (village area), it was generally agreed in the village that, theoretically, these too pertained to the *markatal*, and that, if a man or his descendants became landless, he lost his right to the plot on which his house stood; but I heard of no case in which an islander had ever lost his house site, and in practice, prescriptive right is the rule. For houses, this did not matter, for there is plenty of building land for further houses, if not in the *almenningur*, then in the nearer stretches of the infield; but there is only a limited amount of foreshore for boat-houses and the whole of it is now occupied. Although many boat-houses are ruinous, their owners rely on the rights of occupancy, and such sites are not reverting to joint ownership as in theory they should.

Faroese law and custom divide the *almenningur* into four types of land: the building ground, *heimrustir*, is subdivided into actual sites, *grundir*, and inter-village pasture, *heimabeiti*, usually grazed by cows; *tún* are the rights of way within the village, and there may also be *geil*, fenced cattle-paths from the village to the *hagi*.¹⁸ These fine distinctions are not taken very seriously on Nólsoy, except that the *heimabeiti* are sold each year to the highest bidder, to finance the piped water supply which in 1907 was laid on for the village.

The *almenningur* on Nólsoy is much larger than is usual for Faroese villages, and it is still far from full. However, many modern houses are now being built on the Nólsoy *bœur*. The half mark known as Botnur is completely built up, and there is considerable building on Klártaryggur, Høgiryggur, and the southern extremity of Nýjagardamerkur. During my visits to Nólsoy I was not aware of the extent of this infield building, and I did not investigate the customary procedure followed by a villager wishing to build a new house. However, a

¹⁸ J. A. Lunddahl, *op. cit.*, 6-10; E. A. Bjørk, 'Heimrustir', *Fróðskaparrit* 9 (1960), 47-77.

Faroese correspondent informs me that the usual practice is for plots to be purchased. If they are *ognarjörð*, it is a matter for private treaty; if *kongsjörð*, the plots are sold by the Faroese agricultural board and the proceeds devoted to the advancement of Faroese agriculture. But in small villages, a man setting up house will often be given a suitable plot by some close relative, no payment being expected.

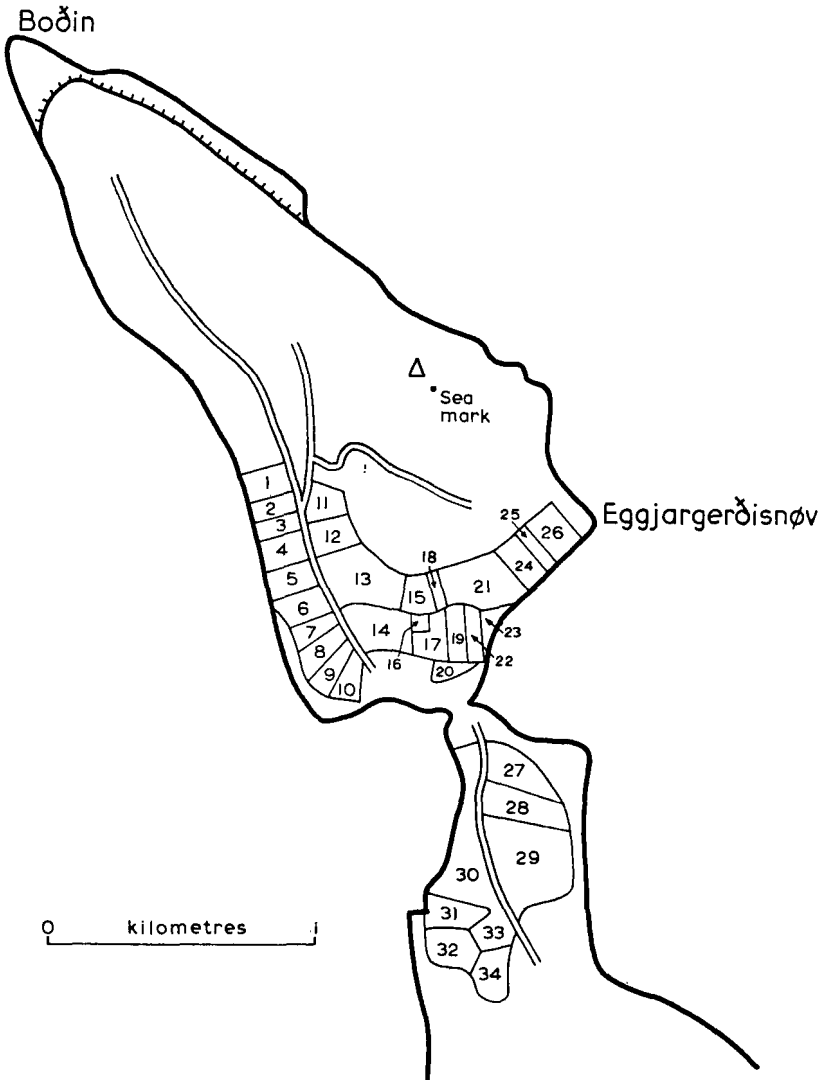
The history of Nólsoy land tenure

From the nomenclature of the oldest part of the Nólsoy

Table I. Old infield names on Nólsoy (see Map C).

	<i>Extent</i>
1. Norðbøsmørk (Norði á Bø)	1 mk.
2. Skarpheygur	8 gl.
3. Hálmørkin	8 gl.
4. Mikkjalsbøur	1 mk.
5. Britumørk (Breiðamørk)	1 mk.
6. Kirkjumørk	1 mk.
7. Abbaryggur	12 gl.
8. Høgirygur	12 gl.
9. Klártaryggur } (Ryggur)	12 gl.
10. Heimasti Ryggur }	12 gl.
11. Hjallamørk norðara	1 mk.
12. Hjallamørk heimara	1 mk.
13. Vaðið	3 mks.
14. Nýjagarðamerkur	3 mks.
15. Uppi á Hamri	2 mks.
16. Baggajørð	8 gl.
17. Uppi á Váli	2 mks.
18. Letan	8 gl.
19. Eystanfyri Vál	1 mk.
20. Botnur	8 gl.
21. Eystur á Bø	5 mks.
22. Miðmørk	1 mk.
23. Eggsmørk	1 mk.
24. Eggjargerðismørk heimasta	1 mk.
25. Eggjargerðismørk	8 gl.
26. Eggjargerðismørk eystara	1 mk.
27. Borgarmerkur	2 mks.
28. Krákumerkur (Krákan)	2 mks.
29. Eyðisbøur (Eyensbøur)	4 mks.
30. Lágibøur	4 mks.
31. Klokkumørk (Klokka)	1 mk.
32. Flatabøsmørk (Flatabøur)	1 mk.
33. Hússmørk (Uttan Fyri Hús)	1 mk.
34. Hornsmørk (Horn)	1 mk.
Total	48 mks.

The names are quoted in the form in which they are registered in the Land Registry Office, Tórshavn. The author collected nos. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 26, 27 and 30 on Nólsoy in the same form as here given, but variant forms for others, and these are quoted above in parenthesis.



Map C
Ancient infield, Nólsoy

outfield it is possible to learn the limits of the earliest cultivation. Every mark of the 48 has a distinctive name for the stretch of infield originally appertaining to it, and in 1957, by questioning a few older men, I was rapidly able to collect names accounting for over half of the 48, sufficient to delineate the original *bøur* of the island. The Faroese Land Registry Office has since supplied me with a full set of maps, which indicate a position as shown roughly in Map C.

As might be expected, the names refer either to the position or some other characteristic of the mark, or to some owner in times past (see Table I).¹⁹ Thus one finds *Uttan Fyri Hús*, beyond the houses (i.e. the Korndalur village); *Horn*, the corner; *Mikkjalsbøur*, Michael's infield; and *Kirkjumørk*, the church's mark. The area covered by these old names was probably already under cultivation by 1600.

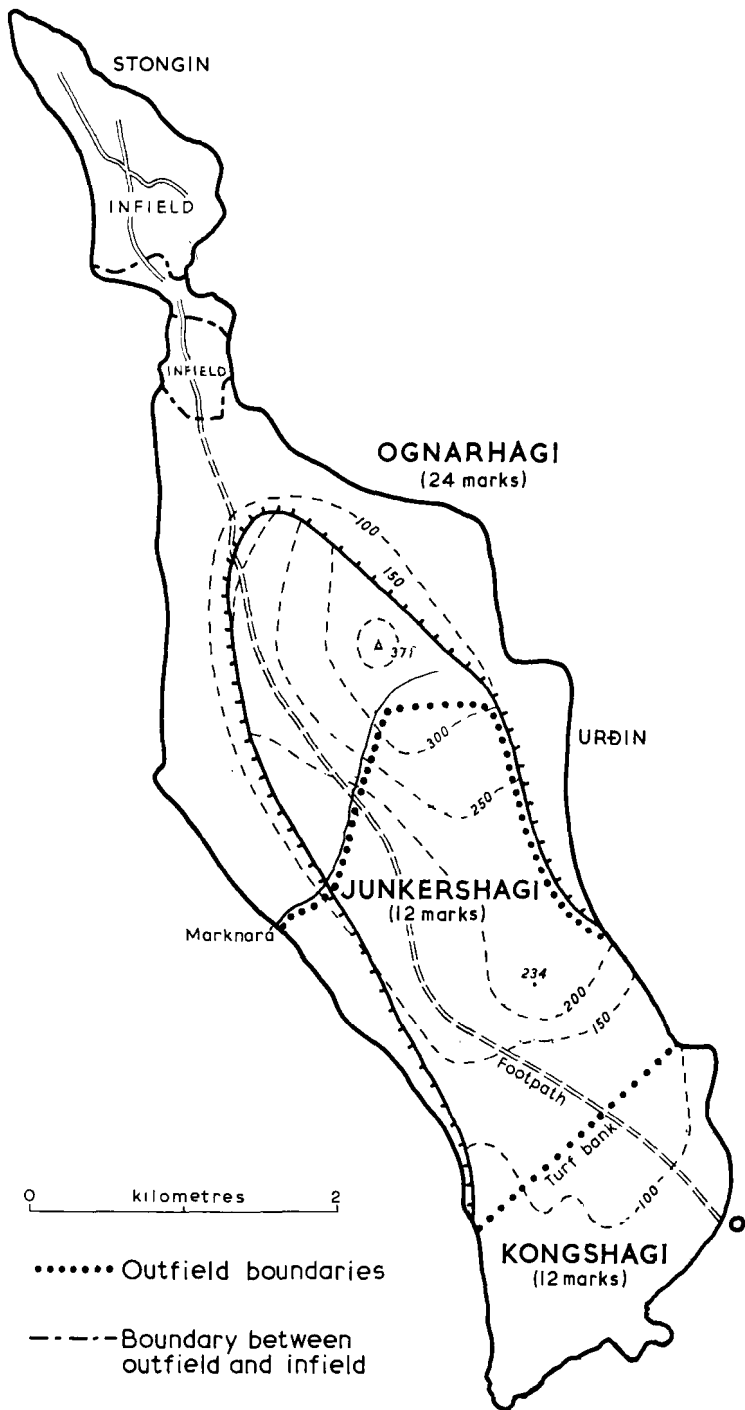
It is locally believed that the little hill to the east of Korndalur was enclosed during the eighteenth century; more land by Eggjargerðisnøv was brought under cultivation, and within the ancient infield, the lower, marshy parts of the Korndalur valley were drained by means of deep ditches, with the technical help of some Dutch sailors from a ship wrecked in the Faroe Islands in 1742.²⁰

The outfield gives more information about the early history of Nólsoy. In former times, the area now known as Norðarahelvt was called *Ognarhagi* (the farmers' outfield). The southern part of the island was divided into two parts, *Junkershagi* (the nobleman's outfield) and *Kongshagi* (the king's outfield). The first-named was rated at 24 marks, the other two being 12 each.

The Faroese clergyman, J. H. Schrøter (1771-1851), in

¹⁹ E. A. Bjørk has made a short study of Faroese infield names in his article 'Lidt om bønavne', *Fróðskaparrit* 13 (1964), 185-92. Names of all the infield marks in Faroe are to be found in *Forhandlingsprotokol for den i Henhold til Lov angaaende en ny Skyldsætning af Jorderne paa Færøerne af 29. Marts 1869 §2 nedsatte Taxationskommission* (1872-3).

²⁰ *Vardin* X (1930), 175-6.



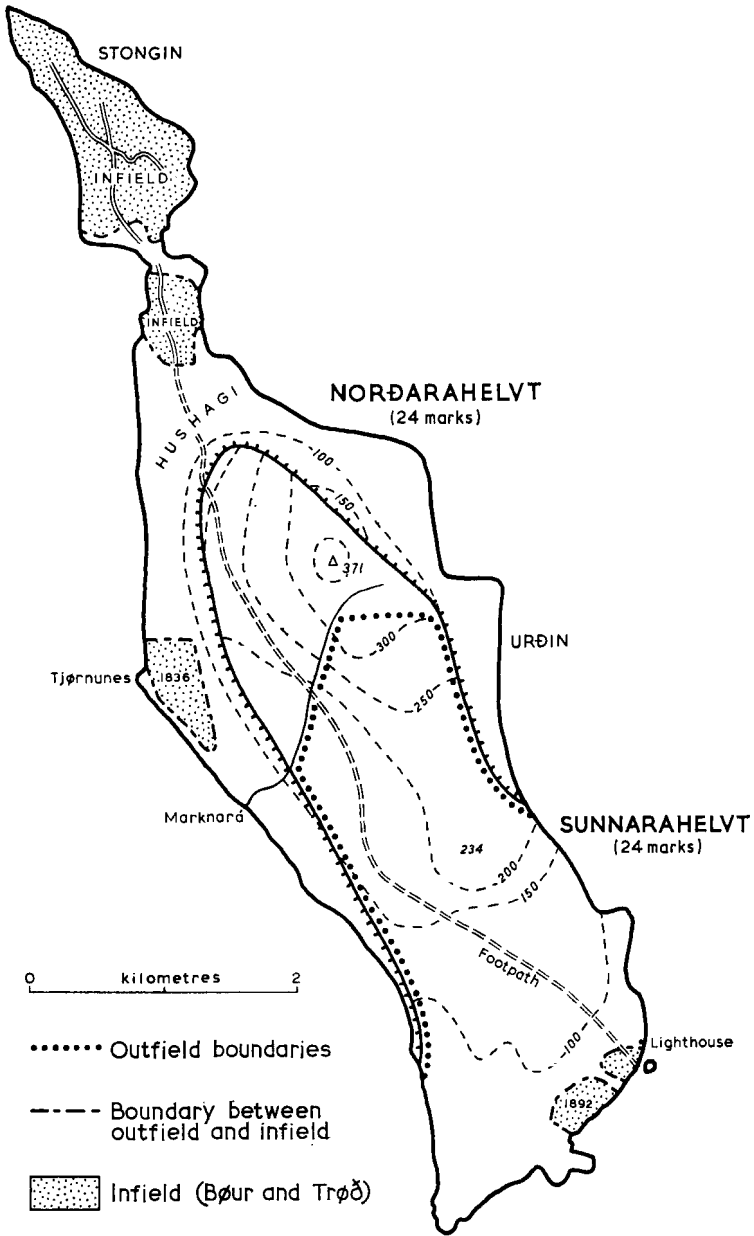
Map D
Ancient outfields, Nólsoy

a description of Nólsoy now available in print²¹ explains that some time before the Reformation the Church confiscated half of Nólsoy for some breach of ecclesiastical law. At the Reformation half of this land was taken as a crown estate, and half was sold to the families of Benkestok and Rosenkrands, the only families of the nobility ever to own estates in the Faroe Islands. One mark of the Ognarhagi, however, also belonged to the Church, so that at the present day, it happens that 13 marks of Nólsoy are crown land. Unfortunately Schrøter in reporting folk-lore was apt to swell out genuine evidence with his vivid imagination, and it is impossible to confirm the story. It is in one small detail at variance with deductions that can be made from the earliest crown rent books.

It might be expected that the different outfield parts would have their infield in localised sections of the ancient *bøur*, but this is not so. Subdivision of the *ognarjorð*, and the exchange of plots, legal or simply informal, have completely blurred any picture of what the ownership pattern might have been at the period of the Reformation. Only the name *Kirkjumørk* for a mark of infield just north of the village bears out one detail of Schrøter's story.

Until 1836 the portions of outfield that were enclosed and cultivated were rather small. However, early in the nineteenth century the potato was introduced and, according to Nólsoy tradition, rapidly became a popular crop. Occupiers of land were unwilling to use corn- or hay-land for potatoes. Hence arose the practice of staking out *viðbyrgir*. These are small portions of outfield, usually adjacent to the boundary wall that in every Faroese village lies between the infield and the outfield, and fenced in to prevent the sheep from eating what is being grown. In theory, every occupier of land should enclose *viðbyrgir* at the same time, and in

²¹ *Vardin* XI (1931), 168-75.

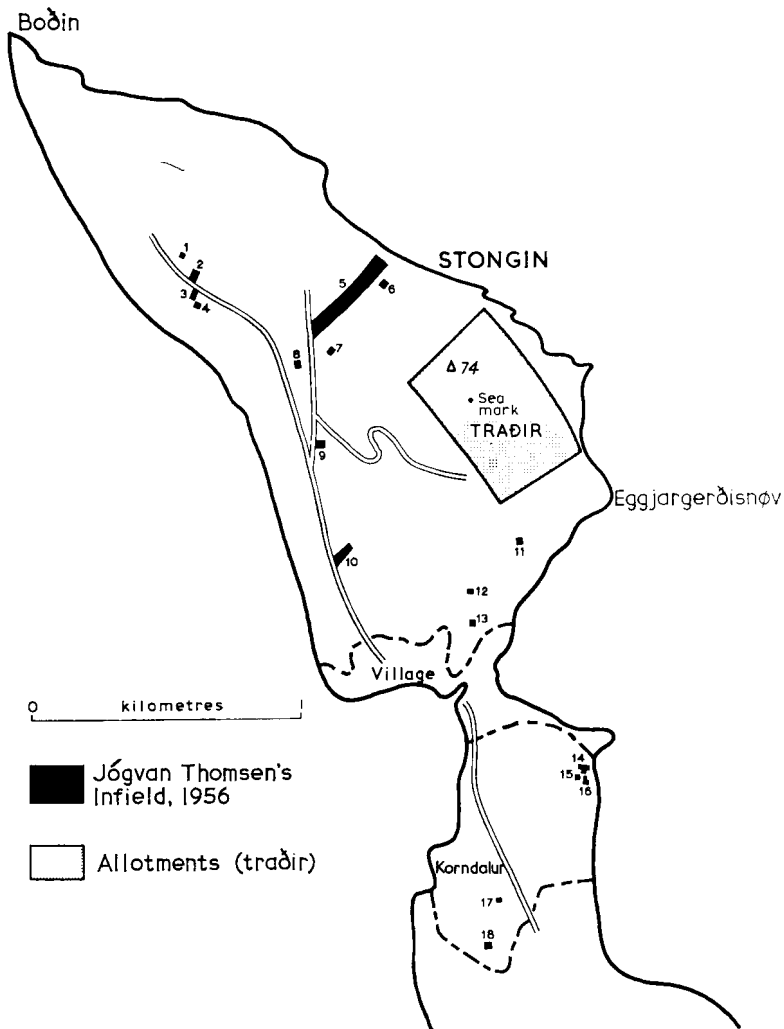


Map E
Modern outfields, Nólsoy

proportion to his holding on the *markatal*, but the amount of land involved was small, and no disputes seem to have arisen from their development. Some of these potato plots, incidentally, had grown potatoes every year for a century and a half, I was told. Heavy manuring counterbalanced the lack of rotation, at least in local opinion.

In 1816 a dispute arose between the Nólsoy farmers and the matter was referred to an arbitration commission. Before 1816, the *kongsbøndur* had their outfield in the southernmost part of the island, and the rest (all but one mark) was owned by *óðalsbøndur*, the Junkershagi long since having passed into private hands. The documents on the case do not give the exact nature of the dispute, but it must have been a pretty far-reaching one, since the interested parties finally agreed to a completely rationalised and new operation of the outfield. The old outfield divisions were abolished, and the present distinction into Norðarahelvt and Sunnarahelvt was introduced. The boundaries of the two halves of the island were, moreover, re-drawn to take the fullest advantage of the cliff-line. It was as a result of this agreement that summer cow grazing in Norðarahelvt was set off against the peat-cutting rights in Sunnarahelvt. There was a provision that 7 of the marks of crown land should henceforth have their outfield in the new Norðarahelvt, and 6 in the new Sunnarahelvt. The two halves were so equal that the commission for land taxation revision in 1868-71 assessed them at exactly the same value. (See Maps D and E.)

In 1835 and 1836 the largest crown tenant on Nólsoy and three owners of *ognarjørð* began to enclose and clear the low-lying area round Tjørnunes. Now, it had been informally agreed before this that all further outfield enclosures should take place in the Stongin peninsula, which was common to both Norðarahelvt and Sunnarahelvt. The resultant lawsuit was carried to Landsretten in Copenhagen, where the court upheld the enclosure at



Map F

Infield sub-division, Nólsoy

(There are six *traðir*, each capable of maintaining one cow over the winter.)

In 1956 Jógvan Thomsen's infield (5 gylden) existed in 18 plots, thus (areas in square metres): 1 : 85; 2 : 500; 3 : 850; 4 : 450; 5 : 5420; 6 : 360; 7 : 235; 8 : 250; 9 : 285; 10 : 585; 11 : 210; 12 : 175; 13 : 125; 14 : 145; 15 : 44; 16 : 220; 17 : 21; 18 : 770 — Total : 10,730. Potatoes were in 800 m², turnips in 40 m², rhubarb in 170 m², hay the rest, 9720 m². The last was used, with cattle cake, for one cow, kept in a byre in the cellar of the house. Plot 17 was laughable — 5 yards by 5 — but it was in the richest part of Korndalur and the family were unwilling to exchange it.

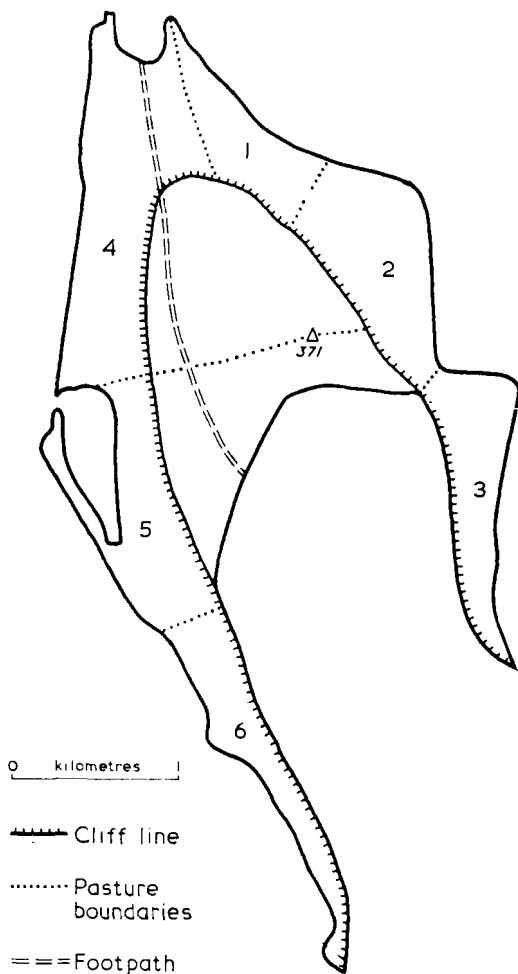
Tjørnunes, with the reservation that cows raised from its grass should not be entitled to summer pasture on the *húshagi*, since they were already getting their share of outfield. This condition was later extinguished in return for the right granted to the northern owners to enclose more of Stongin.²²

In 1892 the Nólsoy lighthouse was erected. An area of outfield equal to one mark was enclosed as an allotment so that the lighthouse keepers could each maintain a cow. A special act of the Danish Parliament was passed to expropriate the land²³ and the Sunnarahelvt owners were handsomely compensated. The Norðarahelvt owners suggested a re-adjustment of the boundary, so that the loss would fall equally on both outfields (and so that they would have a share of the compensation money), but the Sunnarahelvt owners would not agree. A lawsuit was heard in Tórshavn in 1904, and it was decided by the court that as the Sunnarahelvt owners had enclosed land and sold it, the Norðarahelvt owners should compensate themselves with the remainder of Stongin.

A certain portion of Stongin round the old sea-mark on the highest part of the peninsula is drawn up into six *tradir*, or allotments for landless men (map F). Each of these plots is supposed to be capable of maintaining one cow. They carry no outfield rights and are enclosed from crown land in accordance with an allotment act of 1894, which aimed at providing fishermen with small pieces of land to help to stabilise their domestic economy. These were staked out in 1914, and in the same year the Norðarahelvt private owners brought the rest of Stongin into some sort of cultivation in recognition of their right to enclose a corresponding portion of common.

²² For the details of the disputes of 1816 and 1835-6 I have drawn on the evidence of documents preserved on Nólsoy. Copies are doubtless also preserved in the official archives in Tórshavn.

²³ According to Nólsoy accounts. I have not seen the Act itself, but my friend Hr Róland W. Høgnesen has given me the references: *Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret* 1892, 392; *Folketingstidende*, cols. 4305, 4925, 5235-8; *Landstingstidende*, cols. 2017-18, 2068, 2087-8, Tillæg A, cols. 1815-18, Tillæg C, cols. 1061-6, 1203-4.



Map G
Norðarahelvt, Nólsoy

Key to pastures (*fylgir*):

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Skorin | 4. Oyggjarmúli |
| 2. Dalarnir | 5. Båtaseyðurin |
| 3. Urðin | 6. Kálalberg |

The summer cattle pasture (*húshagi*) consists of all the *fylgir* below the cliff-line with the exception of Kálalberg and Urðin. In winter the sheep in the parts of *fylgir* 4 and 5 which are above the cliff-line are brought into the *húshagi* and the infield.

In 1967 an attempt was made to rationalise infield holdings by a consolidation of the small pieces, a process known in the islands as *útskiifting*. It has obvious advantages, but some of the Nólsoyings are dissatisfied with the settlement that has been tentatively made. However, the urgency of the need for *útskiifting* is well illustrated from Map F, which shows the infield holding of an owner of 5 gylden of land in Norðarahelvt.

It is worth mentioning that, although the cutting of peat has fallen out of use since the war in most of the Faroese villages, it is still common in Nólsoy. This is because the Nólsoy turbary is near the cliffs at the southern end of the island, and the islanders run down the sacks of peat to their boats by a cable-way. On most islands the peat had to be brought in by the creel, a tiring and time-consuming task. Thus the peat-cutting right of northern owners in the southern common has not fallen into disuse.²⁴ If in the future it should, the question of the reciprocity of the summer cattle pasture in the north and the turbary rights in the south might become the subject of dispute.

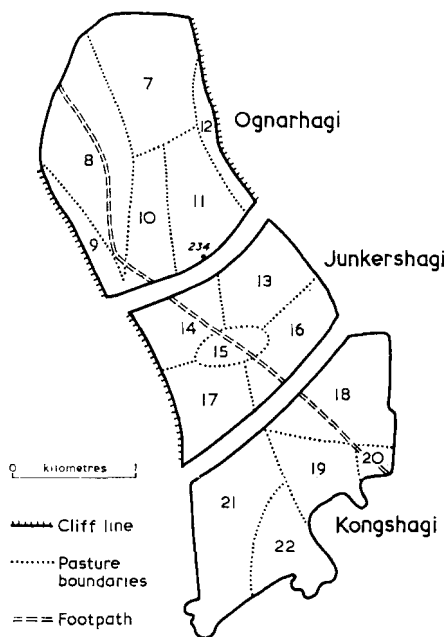
Sheep pasturage on Nólsoy

The pasturage of sheep on Nólsoy is administered separately by the owners of the northern and southern commons. The total number of sheep able to graze on Nólsoy is about 860. A law of 1698 forbade the individual ownership of sheep, and only since 1866 has it been again permitted on certain conditions.²⁵ A small measure of individual ownership has been attempted on Nólsoy only since 1952.

Norðarahelvt owners hold all their flocks in common. Their half of the outfield is divided into 6 pasture areas

²⁴ I have since learnt that on Nólsoy, too, peat-cutting has now been almost completely abandoned. See Nanna Hermansson, 'Dagligliv på Nólsoy', *Jordens Folk* 7 (1971), 42-8.

²⁵ The relevant acts are all printed in *Tillæg til Forslag og Betænkninger*, cited in note 12.



Map H
Sunnarahelvt, Nólsoy

Key to pastures (*fylgir*)

OGNARHAGI

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 7. Ovarafylgi | 10. Røkurnar |
| 8. Niðastiseyður | 11. Oynnabólsær |
| 9. Spakafylgi | 12. Hjallær |

Hjallær is a long grassy shelf between two cliffs overlooking Urðin. Access is possible at the southern end.

JUNKERSHAGI

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 13. Oynnabólsær | 16. Eystaraseyður |
| 14. Røkurnar | 17. Vestaraseyður |
| 15. Dalurin | |

The coincidence of pasture names between Nos. 11 and 13 and between 10 and 14 is a relic of the previous system of management of this outfield.

KONGSHAGI

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 18. Liðaseyður | 21. Mataseyður |
| 19. Kneppi Illa | 22. Um Húsabrekk |
| 20. Urðarær | |

There are no cattle grazing in Sunnarahelvt at any time of the year. Most of the Sunnarahelvt sheep remain out all winter. Ling, not found in Norðarahelvt, gives them sufficient warmth and pasture. The lambs only are taken into the infield.

Note that the threefold division of Sunnarahelvt has reference only to sheep. All other rights lie indifferently in the three sections.

(*fylgir*), each with its nominal stock of sheep (see Map G). In 1957 there were three shepherds (*seyðamenn*) for the three western *fylgir* and two for the eastern three. The *seyðamenn* are elected annually, in early September, at a meeting called the *hagastevna*, where the occupiers of land vote in accordance with their holdings. The *seyðamaður* is responsible for the care of the sheep, assisted by the occupiers of land in proportion to their holdings. The *seyðamenn* keep a roster to determine who is next to be called on for a day's work. The payment for a shepherd is the right to graze 6 sheep of his own on the pasturage he supervises.

Since 1952 Sunnarahelvt has been divided into three sections, now known as Ognarhagi, Junkershagi and Kongshagi, after the original division of the whole outfield (see Map H). Sunnarahelvt sheep are partly common (*felagsogn*) and partly individually owned (*kenning*). There are two *seyðamenn* for each of the three sections of the common. Ognarhagi has 6 *fylgir*, the other two sections five each. The *kenning* system was in 1957 in operation only in the western *fylgir* of Ognarhagi and Junkershagi.

At the autumn round-up (*fjallgonga*), each occupier of two marks of land must provide one man, lesser owners taking alternate years, or such lesser proportion as may be equitable. The spring roundup is a less arduous task, since the high pasture is at that time unoccupied.

The sheep occupying each individual *fylgi* have a distinct ear-mark. In the *kenning* areas, one ear carries a mark for the *fylgi*, the other a mark denoting the individual owner.

Buildings for the sheep are of two kinds: sheepfolds (*rættir*) and windbreaks (*ból*). The latter are semi-circular walls, usually about seven feet high, with the open side facing south. The folds are much larger constructions of dry-stone walling; the five on the island are sufficient to accommodate all the sheep on the outfields.

During the winter months, from 25 October to 14 May, the gates in the walls dividing infield from outfield are thrown open. The sheep graze over the *bøur* and the lower parts of the *hagi*, while the cattle are removed to be fed indoors.²⁶

Cattle raising

The official stock, or *skipan*, of 66 cows grazes on the lower parts of the outfield, below the cliff-line (i.e. the *húshagi*) during the summer, each landowner being allowed to place on the outfield a number of beasts in proportion to his holding. For this purpose a beast under the age of one year counts as a half. In addition to this stock many islanders have a cow or two all the year round in stall, fed on cattle-cake and hay, and sometimes also on slices of pilot-whale meat when this is plentiful. Cattle, as distinct from sheep, are invariably held individually, as is the practice all over Faroe.

The village bull is held in common. It is allowed to roam loose in the outfield, to serve whatever cow it encounters. In theory, the care of the bull should circulate in proportion to each man's land holding, but nowadays it is kept by a few of the villagers, who are paid a small sum yearly for taking on this responsibility. When the bull grows old, it is sold to a butcher and a new bull bought from one of the villagers at joint expense. The castration of young bulls is rarely practised. More usually they are sold when two years old.

In summer the women and girls go out to the *húshagi* every morning and evening to milk the cows. A little of the milk is sent to Tórshavn, but the bulk of it is consumed in the island.

Hay for the winter feeding is, of course, the responsibility of each individual owner and is grown on the *bøur*.

²⁶ Details of Faroese techniques of sheep culture are to be found in Daniel Bruun, *op. cit.*, 196-211, and the fine series of small books by Robert Joensen: *Royvið* (1958), *Greivabúin* (1960), and *Byta seyð og fletta* (1968), all published in Klaksvík, as well as in many of the other books previously cited.

Nowadays it is much supplemented by the use of cattle-cake. Turnips and green oats are also raised as fodder for cattle by some of the islanders.

Infield crops

The main crop of Nólsoy is hay, which accounts for something like 90% of the cultivated area. In the remaining acreage, potatoes are the principal crop, followed by turnips, carrots, rhubarb and green oats. Barley, once an important crop, was in 1957 grown only by one crown tenant, who was anxious to preserve the old strain.

The barley, which was last grown seriously in 1945, had to be dried out in a special kiln-house (*sornhús*), since it would not ripen on the stalk.²⁷ There were in 1957 several ruinous *sornhús* on Nólsoy, but none in working order. The six horizontal mills that were once used for grinding the barley are likewise long since fallen down, and only a few ruins and the stream name Myllá preserve their memory. Opinion in the islands sometimes speculates whether a crop of barley every seven years might not improve the hay crop, but few are willing to make the experiment.

Cultivation was, until 1967, much hindered by the phenomenal subdivision of the infield plots. Cf. Map F.

Drainage is an important part of Faroese infield cultivation, and on Nólsoy, as elsewhere in the islands, the narrow balks between the drainage ditches give the land its typical cut-up appearance. Many of the plots tilled are on very steep slopes, which would hardly be bothered with in any other country. In 1957 the infield was tilled entirely with the Faroese spade, the *haki*,²⁸ but in 1968 I found that

²⁷ The cultivation of barley in Faroe is well described in Kenneth Williamson, *The Atlantic Islands* (1948), 206-29. See also Daniel Bruun, *op. cit.*, 177-91, and for an eighteenth-century account J. C. Svabo, *Indberetninger fra en Reise i Færøe 1781 og 1782* (1959), 331-44.

²⁸ Kenneth Williamson, *op. cit.*, 54-61; J. C. Svabo, *op. cit.*, 331-57. Tillage on Nólsoy in 1956 and 1957 differed little from that described by Svabo.

several even of the smaller farmers had bought miniature tractors.

The tillage is carried out mainly by the older men, while the young men are at sea. Such is the smallness of the average Nólsoy holding that it provides an excellent occupation for an older man, who can thereby supply much of the family's basic food, while money is brought in by the sons at sea. On Nólsoy, and indeed in Faroe generally, only the crown tenants can today be considered full-time farmers; and they often supplement their farming income by inshore fishing.

Thus on the island of Nólsoy it is possible to observe a traditional Scandinavian peasant culture existing side by side with a modern fishing industry which takes away a large proportion of the male population for much of the year. The customs and practices of Nólsoy reveal many interesting traits, some of which may have ancient Norse origins, though of course one must be cautious in drawing parallels between Norway or Iceland in the tenth century and Faroe in the twentieth.

THE DEATH OF TURGESIUS*

By JAMES STEWART

IN his *Topographia Hiberniae*, which was first read publicly in or about 1188, Giraldus Cambrensis describes the assassination of the leader of the Scandinavians in Ireland in this way:

But in the reign of this Fedlimidius the Norwegians put in at the Irish shores with a great fleet. They both took the country in a strong grip and, maddened in their hatred, destroyed nearly all the churches. Their leader, who was called Turgesius, quickly subjected the whole island to himself in many varied conflicts and fierce wars . . . Turgesius ruled the kingdom of Ireland for some time in peace, until he died deceived by a trick about girls . . . Turgesius happened at the time to be very much enamoured of the daughter of Omachlachelinus (Maelseachlainn), the king of Meath. The king hid his hatred in his heart, and, granting the girl to Turgesius, promised to send her to him with fifteen beautiful maidens to a certain island in Meath, in the lake of Lochver. Turgesius was delighted and went to the *rendezvous* on the appointed day with fifteen nobles of his people. They encountered on the island, decked out in girls' clothes to practise their deceit, fifteen young men, shaven of their beards, full of courage, and especially picked for the job. They carried knives hidden on their persons, and with these they killed Turgesius and his companions in the midst of their embraces.¹

No comparable account is known to exist in any early Celtic or Scandinavian source. Where, then, did Gerald get it? Did he invent it, or draw on a source since lost,

* I am indebted to my colleague Dr A. A. Long for assistance with the passage from Aristotle discussed below. I also wish to thank Professor F. J. Byrne and Lektor L. Bødker who kindly read a draft.

¹ The translation is by John J. O'Meara, *The First Version of the Topography of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis* (1951), 102-3 and 104-5. The account of the stratagem reads as follows in the same scholar's edition of the original (*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, LII, Sect. C, no. 4 (1949), 174): Cum igitur ea tempestate filiam regis Medensis, scilicet Omachlachelini, Turgesius adamasset, rex ille, uirus sub pectore uersans, filiam suam ipsi concedens, ad insulam quandam Medie, in stagno scilicet de Lochuer, illam cum xv. puellis egregiis ei missurum se sponondit. Quibus et Turgesius gauisus, cum totidem nobilioribus gentis sue, statuto die et loco obuiam uenit. Et inueniens in insula, xv. adolescentes inberbes, animosos, et ad hoc electos, sub habitu puellari dolum palliantes, cultellis, quos occulte secum attulerant, statim inter ipsos amplexus Turgesius cum suis occubuit.

or did he borrow it — i.e. take a tradition about someone else and transfer it to Turgesius? The latter possibility will be considered here first.

Influence from Saxon tradition has been suggested. Todd, for instance, stated that the account "is evidently an imitation of the story of Hengist's treacherous banquet to Vortigern, as recorded by Nennius".² Nennius's account reads in translation:

It happened after the death of Guorthemir, the son of King Guorthigirn (=Vortigern), and after the return of Hengist and his hordes, that they urged forward a treacherous scheme to deceive Guorthigirn with his army. . . And they sent messengers to procure peace that there might be everlasting friendship between them. And Guorthigirn with his followers of higher birth took counsel and considered what they should do. At last it was one counsel with them all that they should make peace. And their messengers returned, and they afterwards contrived a meeting that from either side Britons and Saxons should assemble in one place without arms, so that there might be strong friendship.

And Hengist gave command to all his house-host, that each one should place his knife under his foot in his boot, "and when I shall cry out to you and say 'Eu Saxones enimitit saxas', draw out your knives from your boots and plunge them into them, and make a brave stand against them. And slay not their king but hold him for my daughter's sake, whom I have given to him to wife, because it is better for us that he should be ransomed from our hands." And they contrived a meeting and assembled in one place, and though the Saxons spoke friendly they were all the while wolves in their hearts, and they sat sociably, man by man. Hengist, as he had said, made a shout, and all the three hundred elders of King Guorthigirn were massacred. And he alone was taken and chained. And for the redemption of his life he gave them very many regions, to wit, Essex and Sussex.³

This story is also told by Geoffrey of Monmouth,⁴ from

² J. H. Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (1867), xlv, note 2.

³ Nennius, *History of the Britons* (transl. by A. W. Wade-Evans, 1938), 68-9. Cf. Griscom and Ellis Jones, *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth* (1929), 376-8. The incident is found in the Irish version of Nennius. Cf. Todd, *Leabhar Breathnach* (1848), 102 ff.; E. Hogan, *Royal Irish Academy, Todd Lecture Series VI* (1895), 12 ff., and van Hamel, *Lebor Bretnach* (1932), 64. Todd, *Leabhar Breathnach*, cxiii, suggests an act of treachery by Scoti against Picti, told by Giraldus in *De Instructione Principis*, is "borrowed from the story of Hengist". It lacks the element of disguise.

⁴ *The History of the Kings of Britain VI*, 15.

whom Giraldus Cambrensis got it, as he himself acknowledges.⁵ And, as Chadwick pointed out,⁶ practically the same story is told by Widukind of Corvey in his account of the early history of the Old Saxons.⁷ Here, then, we have several accounts which include the concealment of weapons with treacherous intent on an occasion of feigned friendship. As potential sources of Gerald's account of how Turgesius was assassinated, they all have a grave deficiency: they lack the element of disguise which is found in such distinctive form in the Turgesius story. In this respect, the Norse *Brymskviða* is a preferable parallel: there Thor, having lost his hammer, disguises himself as a bride and, accompanied by Loki disguised as the bride's handmaid, travels to Jötunheim, and, having recovered his hammer, slays Thrym and all the wedding party. In other respects⁸ however *Brymskviða* does not strike one as a very likely source of Gerald's account, even assuming he could have had access to it.⁹

More satisfactory analogues are to be found in classical literature. For instance, in an epitome of Aristotle's treatises on Greek constitutions we read of Promnesus's son, the tyrant of Cephalonias, that he claimed the *ius primae noctis* over all his newly-married subjects. One of them, Antenor, disguised as a woman and with a sword hidden under his cloak, gained entry to the tyrant's room and killed him.¹⁰

⁵ O'Meara's edition, 143; his translation, 53.

⁶ H. Munro Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (1907; 1924 reprint), 39. Cf. J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (1950), 386, note 24.

⁷ *Widukindi Res Gestae Saxonicae* I, 6 (ed. Waitz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptorum III (1939), 418-9).

⁸ On the conflicting views as to the date of *Brymskviða*, see Peter Hallberg's article in *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* LXIX (1954), 51 ff., and most recently R. Kvillerud, 'Några anmärkningar till *Brymskviða*', *Arkiv* LXXX (1965), 64 ff.

⁹ It is interesting to note that the similarity has been noticed by the Irish poet, Austin Clarke. His prose romance, *The Singing-Men at Cashel* (1936) includes (218-9) an effective combination of the account of the death of Turgesius (as found in Gerald or in Keating's *History*) with Thor's adventure as found in *Brymskviða*.

¹⁰ Aristotle, fr. 611, 64, in V. Rose's edition of the *Fragments*. Cf. Sophie Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (1958), 136-7.

Among the accounts with which Sophie Trenkner has compared this passage in Aristotle is the following in Herodotus:

Howbeit, while the Paeones that had been conquered were being led into Asia, Megabazus, who had conquered them, sent the seven Persians who were of most reputation in the camp after himself unto Amyntas of Macedonia, to demand earth and water for king Darius . . . So when these Persians that were sent to Amyntas arrived, they came into the presence of Amyntas and demanded earth and water for king Darius. And he gave them what they asked and also bade them to dinner. And he prepared a magnificent feast and entertained the Persians hospitably. But when the dinner was over, as they went on drinking, the Persians said thus: Macedonian, it is our custom in Persia, when we have a great feast, to bring our concubines and wives in, to sit beside us. Now therefore, seeing thou hast received us kindly, and feasted us magnificently, and givest king Darius earth and water, do thou follow our custom. Then said Amyntas: O Persians, we indeed have not this custom, but rather that the men be separated from the women; yet seeing ye our masters desire these things, ye shall have them also. So saying, Amyntas sent for the women. And when they came at his bidding, they sat down in a row opposite to the Persians. Then the Persians, finding the women comely, spake unto Amyntas and said that this which he had done was nothing wise; for it were better that the women had not come at all, than that they should come and sit opposite to them, to be a torment to their eyes. Then Amyntas was constrained to bid them sit by the side of the Persians; and when the women obeyed, the Persians, who were exceedingly drunk, straightway laid their hands on the breasts of the women, and some also tried to kiss them. Now Amyntas, when he saw this, held his peace, albeit he was displeased, because he greatly feared the Persians; but Amyntas' son, Alexander, who was present and saw these things, being young and having no experience of trouble, was not able to restrain himself any longer, but was wrathful and said to Amyntas: Father, do thou have respect unto thy years; go, take thy rest and tarry no longer at the drinking; but I will remain here and provide our guests with all things fit. Then Amyntas, perceiving that Alexander purposed some mischief, said: Almost, my son, I understand thy meaning, that thou wouldest send me away and then do some mischief; therefore I beg of thee to do no manner of mischief to these men, lest thou destroy us utterly, but to look on patiently. Howbeit, concerning my going I will obey thee. And when Amyntas, having made this request, was gone, Alexander said to the Persians: Friends, these women are gladly at your service, to lie with all of them, if ye will, or with as many of

them as ye please. This ye yourselves shall decide. But now, seeing the time for bed is at hand, and I perceive ye are well served with drink, suffer these women, if it is your pleasure, to go and bathe; and when they have bathed, ye may have them back. When he had so spoken, and the Persians consented, Alexander sent the women away to their own apartments when they came out. Then he dressed in the apparel of the women an equal number of men that had no beards, and gave them daggers, and led them within. And as he led them in, he said to the Persians: This is indeed, O Persians, a full and perfect banquet wherewith ye have been entertained; for all that we had and all that it was possible to seek out and procure, ye have received; and moreover, what is the greatest thing of all, we do freely bestow upon you our own mothers and sisters, that ye may be sure ye are honoured of us as ye deserve, and may bear word to the king that sent you that a Greek who governeth Macedonia for him received you well with board and bed. When Alexander had said this, he put one Macedonian by each Persian, as though they were women. But when the Persians tried to touch them, they slew them.¹¹

While more detailed and better motivated than Gerald's account, this classical story comes considerably closer to his than the "Saxon" analogues mentioned, because it includes the motif of disguising men as women to do away with prospective lovers.¹²

¹¹ Herodotus (translated by J. Enoch Powell, 1949), Book V, 17-22.

¹² Recognition of the parallel is not new: it was pointed out well over a century ago by Rev. James O'Lavery in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 7 (October 1859), 338. As Dr Maurice Craig has pointed out to me, O'Lavery was himself anticipated by Stuart in his *Historical Memoirs of the City of Armagh* (1819), 111, where the Turgesius tale as found in Gerald, in Higden's *Polychronicon* and Keating's *History of Ireland* (c. 1634) is compared with Herodotus, V 17 ff., and Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas*. Both O'Lavery's and Stuart's remarks seem to have gone unnoticed. Todd, for instance, mentions neither (*op. cit.*), although he was writing within a decade of the appearance of O'Lavery's article. Neither are they mentioned in Charles Haliday's *Scandinavian Kingdom of Dublin*, as edited by Prendergast (1882). An awareness of analogues to the Turgesius tale is however shown in this work, a classical derivation being in fact suggested — from Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas*, or Herodotus (the exact passage is not indicated, but V 17 ff. is presumably intended). Stuart would not derive the "Irish" story from the Greek; his purpose in citing the analogues was to support the plausibility of the Turgesius tale. O'Lavery would attribute the similarity to derivation from a common source in the remote, perhaps Indo-European, past. Unlike Stuart, neither O'Lavery nor Haliday alludes to Gerald's account, using Keating (= Irish Texts Society edition, III 176 ff.) as the basis for comparison. But, while differing in the ending (Turgesius being spared on the occasion of the stratagem) and in lesser points, Keating's account is essentially the same as Gerald's, so that parallels drawn with the one will hold good for the other. (W. E. D. Allen, *Saga-Book* 15 (1957-61), 60 ff., exaggerates the differences.) In certain respects Keating's account is reminiscent of Herodotus and Nennius, and he is known to have been acquainted with their works: cf. *Éigse* IV, 277, 279. Some of the touches in question are however such as could occur to a good storyteller anywhere.

Comparable stories occur in other Greek sources, for instance in accounts of how a band of Theban exiles overthrew the polemarchs. Xenophon's account reads as follows in translation:

There was a certain Phillidas, who acted as secretary to Archias and his fellow polemarchs and in other ways served them, as it seemed, most excellently. Now this man went to Athens on a matter of business, and there met Melon, one of the Thebans in exile at Athens and a man who had been an acquaintance of his even before this time. Melon, after learning of the doings of the polemarch Archias and the tyrannous rule of Philippos, and finding out that Phillidas hated the conditions that existed at home even more than he himself did, exchanged pledges with him and came to an agreement as to how everything should be managed. After this Melon took with him six of the fittest men among the exiles, armed with daggers and no other weapon, and in the first place proceeded by night into the territory of Thebes; then after spending the day in a deserted spot they came to the city gates, as if on their way back from the country, at just the time when the last returning labourers came in. When they had entered the city, they spent that night at the house of a certain Charon, and likewise spent the following day there. As for Phillidas, since the polemarchs always celebrate a festival of Aphrodite upon the expiration of their term of office, he was making all the arrangements for them, and in particular, having long ago promised to bring them women, and the most stately and beautiful women there were in Thebes, he said he would do so at that time. And they — for they were that sort of men — expected to spend the night very pleasantly. Now when they had dined and with his zealous help had quickly become drunk, after they had long urged him to bring in their mistresses he went out and brought in Melon and his followers, having dressed up three of them as matrons and the others as their attendants. He conducted them all to the anteroom adjoining the treasury of the polemarchs' building, and then came in himself and told Archias and his colleagues that the women said they would not enter if any of the servants were in the room. At that the polemarchs speedily ordered them all to withdraw, while Phillidas gave them wine and sent them off to the house of one of their number. Then he led in the supposed courtesans and seated them one beside each man. And the agreement was, that when they were seated, they should unveil themselves and strike at once. It was in this way, then, as some tell the story, that the polemarchs

were killed, while others say that Melon and his followers came in as though they were revellers and killed them.¹³

Xenophon does not mention the name of Pelopidas in his account of this conspiracy.¹⁴ In Plutarch's version, Pelopidas plays a prominent role. As Plutarch's account is rather circumstantial I restrict quotation to the relevant part of the climax:

Now that the fitting time for their undertaking seemed to have come, they sallied forth in two bands; one, under the lead of Pelopidas and Damocleidas, against Leontidas and Hypates, who lived near together; the other against Archias and Philip, under Charon and Melon, who had put on women's apparel over their breastplates, and wore thick garlands of pine and fir which shaded their faces. For this reason, when they stood at the door of the banquet-room, at first the company shouted and clapped their hands, supposing that the women whom they had been long expecting were come.

But then, after surveying the banquet and carefully marking each of the reclining guests, the visitors drew their swords and rushing through the midst of the tables at Archias and Philip, revealed who they were. A few of the guests were persuaded by Phillidas to remain quiet, but the rest, who with the polemarchs offered resistance and tried to defend themselves, were dispatched without any trouble, since they were drunk.¹⁵

A similar episode occurs in Plutarch's Life of Solon. Here is his description of how Solon enabled the Athenians to capture Salamis from the Megarians:

The popular account of his campaign is as follows. Having sailed to Cape Colias with Peisistratus, he found all the women of the city there, performing the customary sacrifice to Demeter. He therefore sent a trusty man to Salamis, who pretended to be a deserter, and bade the Megarians, if they wished to capture the principal women of Athens, to sail to Colias with him as fast as they could. The Megarians were persuaded by him, and sent off some men in his ship. But when Solon saw the vessel sailing back from the island, he ordered the women to withdraw, and directed those of the younger men who were still beardless, arraying themselves in the garments, head-bands, and sandals which the women had worn, and carrying concealed daggers, to

¹³ Xenophon, *Hellenica* V, iv, 4-6 (translated by Carleton L. Brownson, 1918).

¹⁴ Cf. George Grote, *History of Greece*, VIII (new ed. 1888), 78, and R. W. Macan, *Herodotus, The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books* (1895), 162-3.

¹⁵ *Plutarch's Lives* (with an English translation by Bernadotte Perrin, 1917), *Pelopidas*, XI. As described in Plutarch's essay 'On the Genius of Socrates', the conspiracy lacks the element of disguise.

sport and dance on the sea shore until the enemy had disembarked and the vessel was in their power. This being done as he directed, the Megarians were lured on by what they saw, beached their vessel, and leapt out to attack women, as they supposed, vying with one another in speed. The result was that not a man of them escaped, but all were slain, and the Athenians at once set sail and took possession of the island.¹⁶

Not surprisingly, this story found its way into Polyænus's *Stratagems of War*.¹⁷ As his telling is much the same as Plutarch's it is unnecessary to quote it here. Instead I quote his account of a similar ruse from the same work.¹⁸

Phaebiades, prefect of the tower, conceived a passion for the wife of Epaminondas, who informed her husband of the advances he had made to her. Epaminondas directed her to dissemble with her lover, and to invite him to supper, desiring him at the same time to bring some friends with him, to whom she promised to introduce ladies as easy and complying as herself. According to engagement Phaebiades and his company came and found everything agreeable to their wishes. Having supped and drunk freely, the ladies desired leave to retire, in order to attend an evening sacrifice, and promised to return. The request was complied with, and the porters were ordered again to introduce them. These accordingly left the company, and gave their dress to some beardless youths; whom, one of the women attending back to the porters, they, after conversation with her, introduced to the company. The young men, according to their instructions, immediately dispatched both Phaebiades and his companions.¹⁹

Latin literature appears to afford less satisfactory analogues to the Turgesius tale than Greek literature.

¹⁶ Plutarch's *Life of Solon*, VIII, as translated by Perrin, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ I, 20.

¹⁸ II, 3. Quotations from Polyænus are from the translation by R. Shepherd (1793), a more recent version not being available to me.

¹⁹ I have altered certain archaisms of phrase and punctuation in the translation quoted. (Cf. Polyænus, VIII, 64, for a similar ruse ascribed to the Carians.) Pausanias, *Description of Greece* IV, 4, 3, tells of a stratagem involving beardless youths dressed as girls that failed. Cf. *Gesta Romanorum*, CLVI. The interesting question of how the Greek stories quoted are related is beyond the scope of the present article. Although such ideas can arise independently, it would seem reasonable to allow for some degree of interaction in this instance. Cf. Macan, *Herodotus, the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books*, 162 ff. Disguising men as women to enter an enemy stronghold is known in Celtic and Scandinavian tradition: see Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, K 2357.8, with reference to Tom Peete Cross's *Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature*; and Inger M. Boberg's *Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature*. The latter alludes to several instances in Saxo Grammaticus. Motifs K.1321 ff. involve disguise as women for purposes of seduction.

Cornelius Nepos's book on the great generals of foreign nations contains a brief *Life of Pelopidas*. The assassination of the polemarchs is mentioned (ch. 2 and ch. 10), but there is no allusion to disguise as women.²⁰

An imperfect parallel occurs in several classical descriptions of the battle of Cannae. Livy's account of the "Punic ruse" on this occasion reads as follows in translation:

About five hundred Numidians, who, in addition to their customary arms and missiles, carried swords concealed under their corslets, pretended to desert. Riding over from their own side, with their bucklers at their backs, they suddenly dismounted and threw down their bucklers and javelins at the feet of their enemies. Being received into the midst of their ranks they were conducted to the rear and ordered to fall in behind. And while the battle was getting under way at every point, they kept quite still; but no sooner were the minds and eyes of all absorbed in the struggle, than they snatched up the shields which lay strewn about everywhere amongst the heaps of slain, and assailing the Romans from behind and striking at their backs and hamstrings, effected a great slaughter and a terror and confusion that were even greater.²⁰

Frontinus's account of this incident is essentially the same, except that he states that 600 Numidians were involved, as against Livy's 500.²¹

As the element of disguise, in any form, is here lacking, the account resembles the Vortigern story rather than the Turgesius tale, though the occasion is here one of feigned defection rather than feigned friendship.

Concealment of weapons by soldiers disguised as women is found elsewhere in Frontinus:

When the Voccaei were hard pressed by Sempronius Gracchus in a pitched battle, they surrounded their entire force with a ring of carts, which they had filled with their bravest warriors dressed in women's clothes. Sempronius rose up with greater daring to assault the enemy, because he imagined himself proceeding against women, whereupon those in the carts attacked him and put him to flight.²²

²⁰ Livy, XXII, xlviii (translation by B. O. Foster, 1929).

²¹ Frontinus, *Stratagems* II, v, 27. Cf. Valerius Maximus, VII, iv, ext. 2, and Appian, *The Hannibalic War* VII, iv, 20-1, who describes the ruse as being executed by Celtiberians. The ruse is not found in Polybius's description of the battle, III, 107-18.

²² *op. cit.*, IV, vii, 33.

The circumstances in which the ruse is here employed differ so markedly however from those of the Turgesius story (an occasion of feigned friendship made possible by the amorous aspirations of the intended victim) that the classical account can hardly be said to provide a satisfactory parallel or a likely source.²³

To date, therefore, no satisfactory parallel to Gerald's account of how Turgesius died has been found in classical Latin literature.

If we put *Drymskviða* aside as being of indeterminate relevance, there remain the "Saxon" (or Vortigern) parallels and the Greek. As regards geographical and chronological proximity, the former group has the advantage as a prospective source. On formal grounds, however, it is rather deficient. For, though there is the concealment of weapons with treacherous intent on an occasion of feigned friendship,²⁴ the idea of disguising men as women is lacking.²⁵ Some of the Greek accounts, by contrast, present a virtually perfect parallel to the Turgesius tale, with men being disguised as women to slay would-be lovers with weapons which they have concealed on their persons.²⁶

Two considerations make it difficult however to derive

²³ In III, ii, 8 Frontinus tells how Epaminondas got troops into an enemy town by disguising them as women. Cf. Polyænus, II, iii, 1. With these classical instances of motif K.2357.8 compare those alluded to in note 19 above.

²⁴ Neither, of course, is an uncommon idea. Cf. for instance Thompson's motifs K.818 ff. For feigned friendship with treacherous intent, cf. Thompson, Cross and Boberg, K.811 ff. Also motifs K.2357 ff.

²⁵ Another difference is that in the "Saxon" story the enemy is spared, while in Gerald's he is not. Moreover if Gerald was using the Vortigern tradition it might be thought unlikely that he would draw attention to the fact by alluding to that tradition as he does in the self-same *Topographia Hiberniæ* (see note 5 above). While it might be thought a simple matter for Gerald to alter or conflate such sources, the balance of probability is against his having done so, as will be indicated below.

²⁶ Herodian of Antioch, *History of the Roman Empire* IV, x-xi, has an account of marriage promised with treacherous intent. In as much as it culminates in an actual wedding ceremony and feast, it resembles *Drymskviða*, but there is no use of disguise. In *Caithréim Ceallacháin Caisil* (ed. A. Bugge, 1905), par. 27-9, the Vikings plan to capture Cellachán by promising to give him one of their women to marry. They are foiled however by the woman who, disguised as a bondmaid, informs Cellachán of the plan. G. F. Dalton, *Folklore* 81 (1970), 15, regards the death of Turgesius as a ritual killing.

Gerald's account with confidence from the Greek. The first is the problem of transmission. The other is what might be called his probity.

On the face of it, it would seem unlikely that anyone, even a learned man like Giraldus Cambrensis, living in western Europe in the late twelfth century, could have had direct access to such Greek sources.²⁷ And even if classical analogues of the type indicated could be shown to have been available to Gerald, it would be rash to conclude that he borrowed from them. A study of the many instances where his use of sources can be controlled has convinced me that, though a propagandist, he tried to transmit tradition conscientiously. This being so, he is entitled to the benefit of the doubt in cases like the present where his source is not known. It would seem fair to assume that in this instance too, he neither invented the story nor tampered with the tradition he received.

Professor Brian Ó Cuív has suggested that "the accounts of the Viking Turgeis and the stratagem by which his death was encompassed, which are found in Giraldus Cambrensis and in Keating, probably derive from one of the historical tracts which came to supplement the Irish annals of the 9th and 10th centuries".²⁸ The fact that Keating, who is usually so ready to challenge Gerald's statements, does not do so in this instance, could lend support to this view. Keating however disagrees with Gerald in stating that Turgesius was drowned, and in this he is supported by the Annals²⁹ and the *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*.³⁰ And the silence of the *Cogadh* about any stratagem is puzzling.³¹

²⁷ I am indebted to Professors E. W. Handley and W. B. Stanford for answering my questions on these points.

²⁸ *Proceedings of the British Academy* XLIX (1963), 246.

²⁹ *Annals of Ulster*, 844 (for 845).

³⁰ Ed. Todd, 14, 227.

³¹ Part of the problem might be solved by assuming that, while right about the nature of the stratagem, Gerald was wrong about its immediate outcome: that in fact the Viking leader was captured alive, though his companions were killed, and that he was executed later, by drowning.

Assuming Gerald's account is an accurate reflection of an historical event, the question then is: where did the Irish king get the idea? Ruling out the likelihood of his having known any of the analogues alluded to, or of inheritance from a common source in the remote past, one is left with the possibility that the Greeks and the Irish got the idea independently of each other. The distinctiveness of the Turgesius tale has been urged above.³² And this view perhaps gains some statistical support from the fact that such satisfactory parallels as have been noticed to date are comparatively few and all from one cultural sphere, while, in its own immediate area, the Turgesius tale appears to be unique. But, while distinctive, the narrative does not constitute a pattern of such complexity as to make it necessary to assume a link between every occurrence of it, even where conditions make diffusion feasible. Not least in dealing with stratagems, one must be prepared to entertain the possibility of polygenesis.³³

³² Sophie Trenkner, *op. cit.*, 136-7, regards Herodotus, V, 18 ff., Aristotle, fr. 611, 64, Polyaeus, VIII, 64, and *Þrymskviða*, as manifestations of the theme of "the substitution of one person for another, the object of passion", as found in e.g. *Genesis* XXXIX, 16-25, and in many fabliaux and fabliau-like tales (motifs K.1223 etc. rather than K.1911). Most of these and others such as the Turgesius tale and the other Greek instances cited, where the substitute is a man in disguise, intent not only on protecting "the object of passion" but on slaying her prospective lover, seem to me sufficiently different and rare to warrant consideration as a group apart.

³³ W. Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Nouvelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (1921), 143, allows for the possibility of certain modern instances of the disguise-as-women stratagem being independent of classical accounts.

A FRAGMENT OF VIKING HISTORY

By JÓN STEFFENSEN

OVER twenty years ago I investigated all the available bones that had been found with Viking Age objects in Scandinavia, the British Isles and Iceland. I concluded from my study that there were two distinct Viking strains: a western one, covering the Icelandic and most of the British finds, and an eastern one, covering the Scandinavian finds. This conclusion was an unexpected one and led to my enquiring more closely into the history of the Vikings in Norse authorities.¹ The present paper is a re-examination of the material in the light of subsequent research.

Many Irish and British authorities divide the Vikings into two distinct groups, who were often at odds with each other and appear to have had conflicting interests. Unfortunately the distinction is not always as clear as one might wish. They are variously distinguished by the names *Lochlanns* for Norwegians and *Danars* for Danes, or as *Dubhgaill*, "Black gentiles" — Danes — and *Finnngail*, "White gentiles" — Norwegians. It would be natural to assume that these names referred to their hair-colouring, fair and dark; but this does not accord very well with the situation today. The Icelanders are darker than either Danes or Norwegians, and there is hardly such difference in hair-colouring between the Danes and the Norwegians as to justify such differentiating names. It is, therefore, more than likely that they refer to some other characteristic of the Vikings.

As regards the struggle for power between "light" and "dark" foreigners in Ireland, the following may be considered established facts. Turgeis, who came to Ireland with "a great and vast royal fleet" and made him-

¹ I published two lectures on the subject in *Samtíð og Saga* V (1951), 28-50, 112-22.

self king over the foreigners in that country, was a Norwegian and king of the "light" foreigners. He lived in Ireland from 839 until 845, when he was drowned by the Irish.² In the year 851 "Black gentiles came to Dublin, and they made great slaughter of the White-foreigners," and it is clear that they had the upper hand among the Vikings in Ireland until the year 853, when "Olaf, son of the king of the White-Scandinavians, came to Ireland, and the Scandinavians of Ireland submitted to him, and tribute was given him by the Gaels. Sigtrygg and Ivar his two full brothers came with him on that expedition." Ólafr seems to have conquered quite an extensive domain in the West, where he lived until 871. In that year, according to the *Three Fragments*, "Olaf went from Ireland to Scandinavia, to fight with the Scandinavians and to assist his father, Godfrey, for the Scandinavians were warring against Godfrey; and Godfrey his father had sent to him." After this, Ólafr is not mentioned in Irish sources, but Ívar his brother took over the kingdom in the West and held it to the day of his death in 873, when Earl Bárðr assumed power in the name of Ívar's two young sons. In 877 Bárðr slew Hálfðan Ragnarsson, the leader of the "dark" foreigners, but was himself slain in Dublin in 880. After the death of Hálfðan, according to the *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, there was a forty-year period of peace, which must mean that no fresh Viking forces came to the country. In the year 901 the Irish drove the Norsemen from Dublin, to which city they did not return until 916, when Sigtryggr Ívarsson retook it. During the years of exile from Dublin, the Norwegian Vikings seem to have stayed on the west coast of England and Scotland, and in Northumberland, of which Sigtryggr was king when in 925 he made a treaty with King Athelstan and married his sister. Sigtryggr died in 926 and was succeeded in Dublin by his son Guðrøðr, who failed, however, in an attempt to regain

² Cf. James Stewart's paper in the present volume.

control of Northumberland in 927.

I shall not pursue this history from Irish and English sources any further, but propose to examine now what Norse records have to offer on these events. In *Ynglinga Saga* the following is said of Hálfðan *inn mildi ok matarilli*: "He was a great warrior and was long on Viking expeditions and won himself wealth. He wedded Hlíf, daughter of King Dagr of Vestmarir. His principal seat was Holtar in Vestfold. He died of sickness there and is buried at Borró."³ Snorri Sturluson got the information about the dwelling-place, death and grave of Hálfðan from the *Ynglingatal* of Þjóðólfr from Hvin, but there is no knowing how he found out about his marriage or his Viking activities. The name and paternity of his wife may well have been Snorri's own invention, and her native district, Vestmarir, borrowed from the verse in *Ynglingatal* about Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr Guðrøðarson, Hálfðan's grandson. But it is very unlikely that Hálfðan's Viking expeditions are also Snorri's invention, since he does not generally reckon with Viking activities before the days of Haraldr Fairhair. If pure invention by Snorri is involved, it seems strange that "Vestmarir" and "Viking" should occur in conjunction, since they are also found together in the verse about Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, though Snorri there has no explanation of them, as will be mentioned later. If the Ólafr who made himself leader of the Vikings in Ireland was the same man as Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, it would be chronologically possible for Hálfðan, his grandfather, to have engaged in Viking expeditions — Hálfðan could have been about the same age when Viking voyages to the British Isles began, shortly before 800, as Ólafr was in 853. Taking everything into consideration, it seems more likely that Snorri is following some authority for this than that it is purely the product of his own imagination.

³ Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, *Heimskringla* (Íslenzk fornrit XXVI-XXVIII, 1941-51), I 78-9; abbreviated *Hkr.* hereafter.

After *Hálfðan inn mildi ok matarilli* no mention of Vikings occurs in the prose narrative of *Heimskringla* before *Haralds Saga Hárfagra*; nor for that matter is there any reference to any mustering of their forces that might correspond to the battle between the "light" and "dark" foreigners of the Irish annals. But the verses tell another story, which I shall now try to trace.

There seems no doubt that the Turgeis of the Irish authorities is referred to in the account in *Haralds Saga Hárfagra* of the two sons of Haraldr, Þorgísl and Fróði, of whom it is said: "They won Dublin first of the Northmen. So it is said that Fróði was given a deadly drink, but Þorgísl was long king over Dublin, and was betrayed by the Irish and fell there."⁴ In *Haralds Þáttr in Flateyjarbók*⁵ we are told that these brothers went on a Viking expedition to the West and harried far and wide. Þorgísl is not counted among the sons of Haraldr either in *Agrip* or in *Fagrskinna*, and is not mentioned in any poem. In all these four works, the sons of Haraldr are numbered as twenty, but the only contemporary poem to give their number, *Hákonarmál*, puts it at nine, which is doubtless correct. There is no means of knowing where Snorri got his information about Þorgísl. As far as his paternity and chronology are concerned, the information is wrong, but otherwise it contains a notable grain of truth, indicating that some obscure traditions about this Viking king were in circulation among the Icelandic settlers and in Norway. In fact, it can be assumed that Þorgísl would have been more or less a contemporary of Ketill Flatnose, Eyvindr the Easterner and Ólvir *barnakarl*, and what is said in the *Annals* of Prudentius of Troyes for the year 847 would apply well to their activities in the West: "The [Irish] Scots, after being attacked by the Northmen

⁴ *Hkr.* I 138.

⁵ Guðbrandur Vigfusson and C. R. Unger, *Flateyjarbók* (1860-68), I 576; abbreviated *Flat.* hereafter.

for very many years, were rendered tributary; and [the Northmen] took possession, without resistance, of the islands that lie all round, and dwelt there."

As mentioned above, the next king of the Norse Vikings in Ireland after Þorgísl was Ólafr Guðrøðarson, or Amhlaeibh mac Godfraidh. In *Ynglingatal*, as we saw, there is a king of Vestfold of this name: Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, of whom Snorri says in *Ynglinga Saga* that he took over the kingdom at the age of twenty after his father Guðrøðr, and was a great warrior. Later his domains gradually shrank, until only Vestfold was left, and when his half-brother Hálfðan the Black was of age, he divided it with him in a brotherly fashion, while Hálfðan reclaimed the former kingdom of their father by battle. Finally, Snorri quotes a verse about Ólafr from *Ynglingatal*:

Ok niðkvísl
 í Nóregi
 þróttar Þrós
 of þróazk hafði.
 Réð Ólafr
 ofsa forðum
 víðri grund
 of Vestmari,
 unz fótverkr
 við Foldar þrom
 vígmiðlung
 of viðá skyldi.
 Nú liggir gunndjarfr
 á Geirstöðum
 herkonungr
 haugi ausinn.

The gist of this is: "And the descendants of Óðinn had flourished in Norway. In former times Ólafr governed a very large area of *Vestmari* until a leg-disease took the life of the warrior on the coast of Vestfold. Now the

warlike warrior-king lies at Geirstaðir, buried in a grave-mound."⁶

Here we are told that Ólafr was a great warrior, and also what there was to show for it — that he formerly “governed a very large area of *Vestmari*”. Snorri Sturluson obviously assumed that *Vestmarr* was another name for Vestfold, incredible though it may appear, for such an interpretation makes the verse into what amounts to a nonsense-verse. A district of Norway can under no circumstances be described as *ofsa við grund* — a very large area — nor is it a *gunndjarfr herkonungr* — a bold warrior-king — who loses a sizeable part of his patrimony. In 1948 I concluded that *Vestmarr* probably meant “the lands to the west of the ocean” in general, i.e. the British Isles. This would make reasonable sense of the verse.⁷ I was then unaware of the fact that a similar conclusion had previously been reached by two scholars: E. Wadstein in 1896 and Jan de Vries in 1924. Since then, Jón Jóhannesson dealt admirably with the problem in 1956 and came to the conclusion that *Vestmarr* was the Western Ocean — what is now generally known as the North Sea — and the verse then tells us that “in former times Ólafr governed a very large area to the west of the North Sea”. It may therefore be considered very likely that the Ólafr Guðrøðarson of *Ynglingatal* is identical with his namesake, the king of Dublin. The view that Ólafr the White of *Landnámabók* and Ólafr Guðrøðarson of the Irish annals were identical has also been advanced.⁸

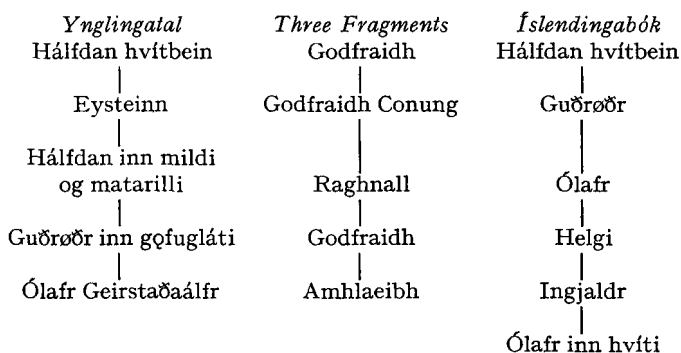
The chief obstacle to the acceptance of these as all one and the same Ólafr is the discrepancy between the genealogies given in the various sources. The genealogies take three main forms:

⁶ Jón Jóhannesson, in *Driðji Víkingafundur* (Árbók hins íslenska Fornleifafélags: Fylgirit, 1958), 124.

⁷ *Samtíð og Saga V* (1951), 42.

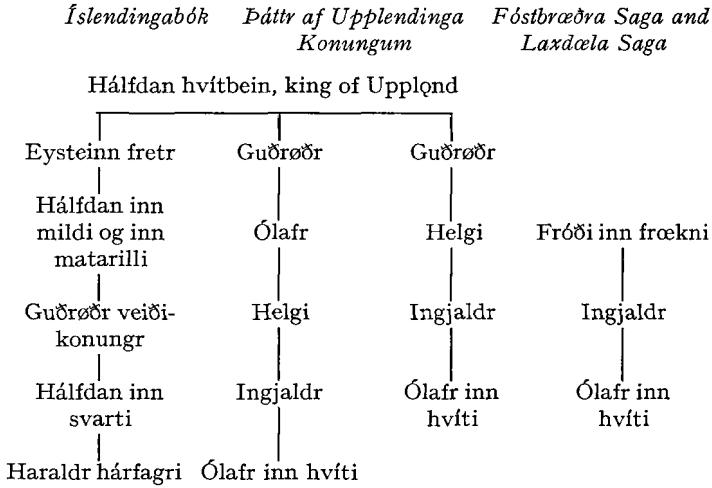
⁸ E.g. by J. H. Todd in 1867 and H. Shetelig in 1940.

TABLE I
Family tree of Ólafr, according to:



Of these, the most trustworthy is probably found in the *Ynglingatal* of Þjóðólfr of Hvin, since it is contemporary with the son of Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, Røgnvaldr, and composed in his honour. The only authority other than the Norse that gives the descent of Ólafr, king of Dublin, or rather of his brother Ívar, is the *Three Fragments*, but there is some doubt how much reliance should be placed on this. According to the investigations of de Vries, these annals were compiled from various sources of varying degrees of reliability, and the section containing the genealogy is in fact derived from one of the less satisfactory sources. In *Íslendingabók* and *Sturlubók* Ólafr the White is fifth in descent from Hálfðan hvítbein, which links him with *Ynglingatal* and is presumably his most trustworthy genealogy, if correctly ascribed to Ari the Learned. *Íslendingabók* also includes the family of Haraldr Fairhair, but both of these genealogies are a later supplement and an interpolation into the book, though they were probably in the older version. A comparison of these two genealogies from *Íslendingabók* will show that Ólafr the White and Haraldr Fairhair are both fifth in descent from Hálfðan hvítbein. This is chronologically

TABLE 2
Family tree of Ólafr the White, according to:



impossible. Haraldr died in 931 or 932, while Þorsteinn the Red, son of Ólafr, had already been dead some time when his mother, Auðr *djúpuðga*, moved to Iceland about the year 890 along with children of his, some of whom were already married. It has also been pointed out that in the genealogy Ingjaldr, the father of Ólafr, is called grandson of Sigurðr Worm-in-the-Eye, the son of Ragnar Hairy-Brecks. But Ívar, son of Ragnar, put St Edmund, king of the East Angles, to death in the year 870, and this is also chronologically incompatible. There is such an obvious chronological discrepancy here that one finds it hard to believe that Ari could have accepted these genealogies.

Ynglingatal was composed in honour of Rognvaldr *heiðumhæri*, and it can be safely assumed that he would have known his five immediate forebears — to judge from the ancient laws, such knowledge was generally an essential requirement. One may therefore accept the

accuracy of the pedigree from Hálfðan *hvítbein*, provided the poem has come down to us uncorrupted in this part.

In the *Þáttr af Upplendinga Konungum*⁹ Ingjaldr, the father of Ólafr the White, is said to be the son of Helgi, son of Guðrøðr, son of Hálfðan *hvítbein* — that is, it has one generation less than Ari, making Þorsteinn the Red and Haraldr Fairhair fifth in descent from Hálfðan *hvítbein*, which is chronologically possible. Finally, *Laxdæla Saga* and *Fóstbræðra Saga* both describe Ingjaldr as the son of Fróði “the Valiant, whom the Svertlingar slew”.

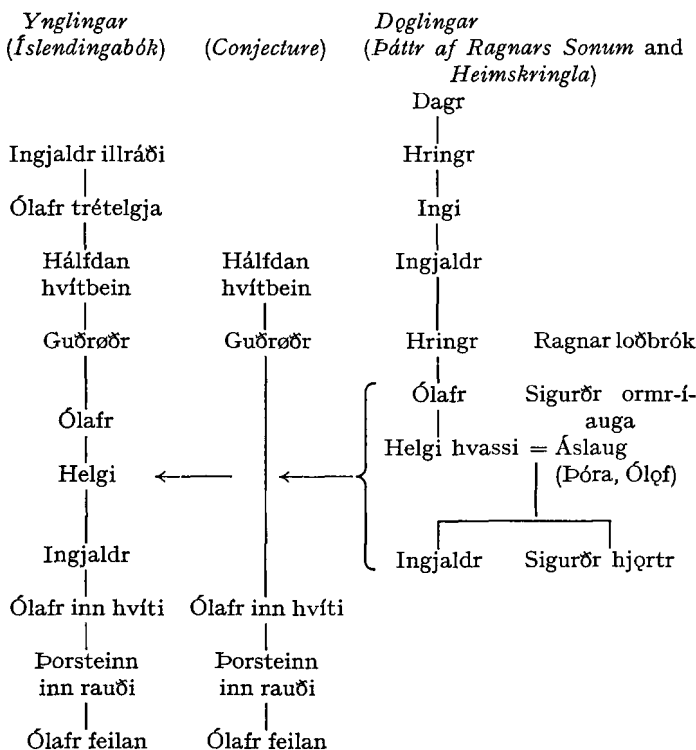
It is obvious that the genealogy of Ólafr the White was far from consistent from an early date, and it is therefore likely that some error found its way into it at an early stage. The genealogy of *Íslendingabók* is the most reliable, for Ari the Learned traces his own family in it; but in view of the chronological discrepancy already mentioned, it is unlikely that he was the inventor of the link between his family and the Ynglingar. In this section he most probably followed old genealogies of his forebears, the men of Breiðfjörður, though whence these were derived and how reliable they were is something that can never be known. However, we are free to make guesses, and I now propose to give my guess. It is based on the premises that the three Ólafs are one and the same man; that *Ynglingatal* is correct from Hálfðan *hvítbein* onwards; and that the law of repetition of personal names and events applies in the completion of genealogies, irrespective of chronology, as is apparent in many ancient family trees.

I imagine that the children of the settler Ólafr *feilan* would have known their ancestry back through five generations, and would have traced it thus: Ólafr *feilan*, Þorsteinn the Red, Ólafr the White, Guðrøðr, Hálfðan *hvítbein*.

⁹ Finnur Jónsson and Eiríkur Jónsson, *Hauksbók* (1892-6), 456-7.

TABLE 3

Conjecture regarding the origin of the family tree of Ólafr the White in *Íslendingabók*



This agrees with *Ynglingatal*, apart from the transformation of Hálfðan's nickname, which should properly be *inn mildi og inn matarilli* (see Table 1). Then, when the descendants of Ólafr *feilan* wanted to connect their family tree with the *Ynglingatal* of Þjóðólfr, they failed to realise that a corrupt form of the nickname was involved and assumed that elements had dropped out in the descent from Hálfðan *hvítbein*. In their search for these, their attention was turned to Guðrøðr Hálfðanarson,

about whom nothing is said except that he "was king in Heiðmörk after his father".¹⁰ A story about his namesake Guðrøðr *inn gofuglári* has survived. This tells how his queen, Ása Haraldsdóttir, plotted his death, and a similar story is told of King Guðrøðr *á Skáni* and his dealings with his queen, Ása, daughter of Ingjaldr *illráði*. She was the sister of Ólafr *trételgja*, father of Hálfdan *hvítbein*, and this, I believe, is where Ólafr the White's patronymic was found, for his name is identical with that of Ólafr *trételgja*. In *Langfeðgatal* Ingjaldr is called grandson of Sigurðr, son of Ragnar Hairy-Breeks; but in the *Þáttr af Ragnars Sonum*¹¹ and in *Heimskringla* the same is said of Sigurðr Hart, father-in-law of Hálfdan the Black and son of Guðrøðr *inn gofuglári*. I shall make no attempt to guess whence this information about Ingjaldr got into Ari's *Langfeðgatal*, but by it Ingjaldr becomes one of the family of the Döglingar, or descendants of King Dagr, as a son of Helgi Ólafsson *hvassi* (see Table 3). These three generations are inserted into the *Langfeðgatal* between Guðrøðr and Ólafr the White, while in the *Þáttr af Upplendinga Konungum* only two of them are used: Ingjaldr and Helgi. The patronymic of Ingjaldr in *Fóstbræðra Saga* and *Laxdæla Saga* — viz. Fróðason — was possibly inspired by the statement in *Þáttr af Ragnars Sonum* that Sigurðr Hart inherited Hringaríki from his uncle Fróði.

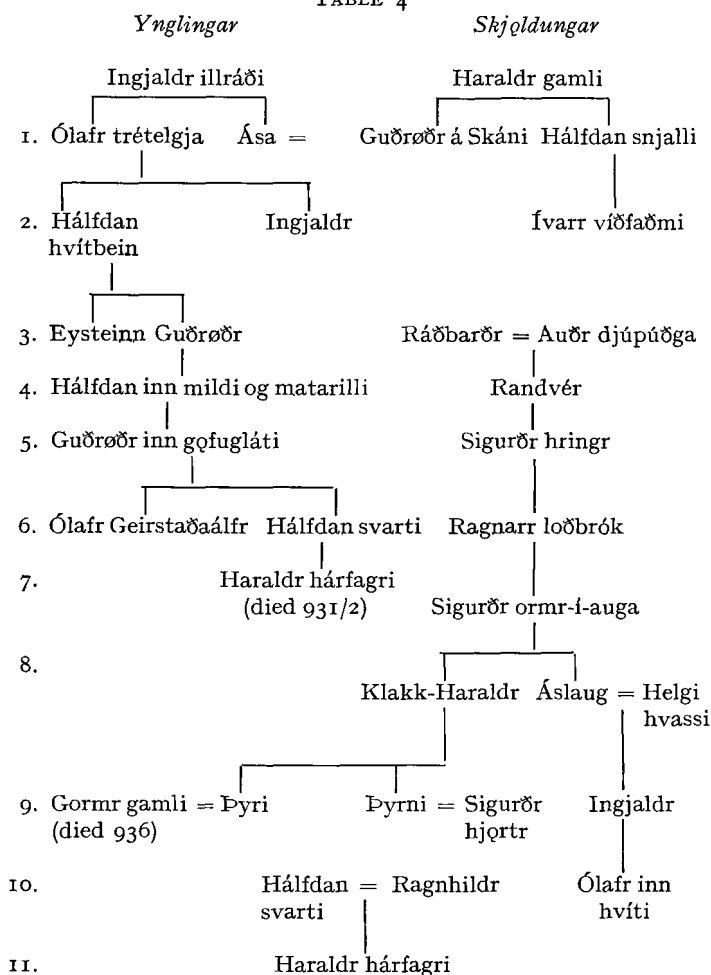
But this will be enough of such speculations — in the spirit of those who long ago compiled genealogies of the ancient kings out of scanty material! To demonstrate more clearly how little importance those authors attached to chronology, I have provided a section of the genealogies of the Skjöldungar and Ynglingar families.

I have spent a good deal of time discussing these genealogies, which may seem of little value, because they focus our attention on the way in which Haraldr Fairhair

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 456.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 466.

TABLE 4



and Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr are linked, and on the way the latter, together with his son Rognvaldr *heiðumhævi*, vanish completely from the Sagas of Kings. When they were lost to view, an ancient Viking kingdom went with them.

If the three Ólafs are one and the same man — and there is every indication that they were — then there is considerable difficulty in reconciling this with the claim that this Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr was half-brother of Hálfðan the Black. In the *Three Fragments* the father of Ólafr is said to be alive in 871, but in *Heimskringla* we are told that Hálfðan was one year old and Ólafr nineteen when their father died, and that Haraldr Fairhair was ten when his father was drowned. All this is chronologically irreconcilable, even assuming that Haraldr was born about 865.

Something has gone badly adrift, and as a large discrepancy has already emerged between the narratives of *Ynglingatal* and *Ynglinga Saga* about Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, it is only right to see what contemporary poems have to say about Hálfðan the Black and his son Haraldr. The first point to be noted is that no old poem mentions the father of Hálfðan the Black — not even the poem *Nóregskonungatal*, although it begins with Hálfðan. This poem was composed in honour of Jón Loftsson of Oddi some time between the years 1184 and 1197, and is prefixed to the *Konungatal* of Sæmundr the Learned. It is worth noting that in the poem the descendants of Haraldr Fairhair are called *Skjöldungs kyn*.¹² If the supplement to *Íslendingabók* containing the family of Haraldr Fairhair was in the earlier version, it would be our oldest authority for the paternity of Hálfðan the Black.

Hrafnsmál, or *Haraldskvæði*, which is believed to have been composed by Þorbjörn *hornklofi*, Haraldr Fairhair's poet, shortly after the battle of Hafrsfjord, is preserved in *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla*, and *Haralds Þáttr*. In it the raven says to the valkyrie: *Haraldi vér fylgðum, syni Hálfðanar, ungum ynglingi*¹³ — “we followed Haraldr, son of Hálfðan, the young *ynglingr*”. Thus we have here

¹² *Flat.* II 521 (v. 8).

¹³ Finnur Jónsson, *Fagrskinna* (1902-3), 7-8 (v. 4); abbreviated *Fsk.* hereafter.

a reliable authority for Harald's father, but it is by no means certain that the words *ungr ynglingr* mean more than "young king" in this context. However, from the *Hákonarmál* of Eyvindr *skáldaspillir* it may be deduced that Haraldr was of the family of the Ynglingar, for there Hákon the Good is called *Yngva ættar* — "of the race of Yngvi".¹⁴

In *Heimskringla* Ása, the queen of Guðrøðr *veiðikonungr*, is said to have gone after her husband's death with Hálfðan the Black, their one-year-old son, "west to Agðir, where she settled in the domain there that Haraldr her father had possessed". When Hálfðan was eighteen, he became king there, and "then at once went into Vestfold and divided the kingdom with Ólafr his brother".¹⁵ In the *Hálfðanar Þáttr Svarta* in *Flateyjarbók*¹⁶ this is described in the following way: "Hálfðan the Black succeeded to the kingdom at the age of eighteen after his father, Guðrøðr *veiðikonungr* the Strong, in Upplönd;" and later, "but he gave Vestfold to Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr, his brother." These sources make the elder brother's lot an incredibly humiliating one and very much at odds with what may be deduced from the last two verses of *Ynglingatal*. It is far more likely that Hálfðan never was king of Vestfold, and this is strongly supported by references in contemporary poems to the domains of Haraldr Fairhair. He is called *Upplanda gramr* — "king of Upplönd" — in a verse attributed to Þjóðólfr of Hvin in the *Haralds Þáttr Hárfagra*,¹⁷ and *ræsir Sygna* — "king of men of Sogn" — in the poem *Nóreghkonungatal*. In *Hrafnsmál* we are told that the lord of the Norwegians dwells at Kvinnar¹⁸, which was in Hordaland, while in another verse of the same poem¹⁹ the ruler of the Easterners lives at Útsteinn, which was on an island on the

¹⁴ *Hkr.* I 193.

¹⁵ *Hkr.* I 84.

¹⁶ *Flat.* I 561-6.

¹⁷ *Flat.* I 567.

¹⁸ *Fsk.* 8 (v. 5).

¹⁹ *Hkr.* I 116 (v. 44).

coast of Rogaland. Thus we have four dwelling-places of Haraldr Fairhair specified in ancient poems, and neither Agðir nor Vestfold is among them. To this may be added the fact that in *Hrafnsmál* Harald's opponents in the battle of Hafrsfjord come from the east²⁰, and they flee of *Jaðar heim ór Hafrsfirði*²¹. This can scarcely have any meaning other than that they flee home to the districts of Norway south of the mountains — Agðir and Vestfold. Had these been among the hereditary lands of Haraldr Fairhair, it is very unlikely that they would have afforded a refuge to his last opponents in Norway.

The account in the Sagas of Kings of two Haralds, both sons of Hálfðan the Black, is suspect. According to *Heimskringla* Hálfðan first married Ragnhildr, daughter of Haraldr Goldbeard, king of Sogn, and by her had a son who was fostered by his grandfather, also receiving from him his name and the succession to his kingdom. A little later Haraldr Goldbeard died; then Ragnhildr, his daughter, died, and finally Haraldr Hálfðanarson, by now ten years of age, also died. The Sogn kingdom then passed to his father Hálfðan, who put Earl Atli the Lean in charge of it. In *Landnámabók* this daughter of Haraldr Goldbeard is named Þóra and described as a niece of Earl Atli — that would explain why Hálfðan the Black set him over Sygnafylki. The second wife of Hálfðan was also named Ragnhildr, daughter of Sigurðr Hart, king of Hringaríki, and by her he had Haraldr Fairhair, who took over the kingdom at the age of ten on the death of his father. In *Fagrskinna* the mother of Haraldr is said to be Helga, daughter of Dagr the Learned, a rich *hersir*. In these accounts of the two Haralds there seems to appear an attempt to reconcile the contradictions of sources, such as the poem of Þjóðólfr — where Haraldr is called “king of Upplönd” — and *Nóreghskonungatal* — where he is called “king of men of Sogn”. It furthermore appears

²⁰ *Hkr.* I 116 (v. 42).

²¹ *Hkr.* I 117 (v. 46).

from the latter poem that Sæmundr the Learned believed Haraldr was born about A.D. 842 — that is, Haraldr of Sogn — while Ari believed he was born ten years later — that is, Haraldr of Upplønd. Then again, one might mention the *Hauksbók* "Supplement", in which it is said: "When Haraldr was twenty years old, he then first took possession of Sygnafylki." Here we have the combined age of the two Haralds, with the assumption of power of the second.

To my mind it seems likely that there was only one Haraldr Hálfðanarson, and that Hálfðan the Black was a king of Upplønd who gained control of Sogn by marriage, though after his death it was lost for a while until Haraldr began his struggle for power by reclaiming it. About the same time he probably invaded Vestfold and this was the occasion when Ólafr Geirstaðaálfr came to the aid of his father, Guðrøðr. Haraldr failed to secure Vestfold on this occasion, and it was the last district of Norway to come under his control.

In *Heimskringla* the progress of Haraldr Fairhair's fight for supremacy is described in greatest detail. He does battle with each local king in turn and subdues their dominions one after another until he has possession of all Norway. Snorri Sturluson never mentions a clash between Haraldr and Vikings in the course of these battles. It was not until he had become sole king that "he heard that far and wide about the middle of the country Vikings harried, who in winter were across the sea to the west". He then reacted vigorously, attacking the Vikings twice in their western bases and causing great confusion among them there; he reached as far as the Isle of Man. In confirmation of his account of many of these battles, Snorri quotes verses from *Hrafnsmál* and *Glymdrápa*, but often these confirm nothing, and generally speaking he has overlooked a number of very important points in the poems and positively misinterpreted others.

In *Glymdrápa* Haraldr is called *helkannandi Hlymreks hlenna*²² "destroyer of Limerick (i.e. Irish) thieves" — but Snorri applies this verse to a battle in Uppdalsskógr against the people of Orkadalr and does not mention Vikings. No less doubtful is his interpretation of another verse from the same poem²³ which he takes as confirming the following account: "Then he (that is, Haraldr) harried in Scotland and fought battles there. But when he came west to Man, they had already had news there of what he had done in that country, and all the people fled into Scotland, so that the land was emptied of men, and also all goods that could be were carried away. And when King Haraldr landed, they got no booty."²⁴ Snorri then quotes this verse (*Svá segir Hornklofi*):

Menfergir bar margar
 margspakr Niðar varga
 lundr vann sókn á sandi,
 sandmens í bý randir,
 áðr fyr eljunprúðum
 allr herr Skota þverri
 lögðis eiðs af láði
 læbrautar varð flœja.

Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, to a great extent following Konráð Gíslason,²⁵ reads the verse in question as follows: "Margspakr menfergir bar margar randir í sandmens bý — Niðar varga lundr vann sókn á sandi — áðr allr herr Skota varð flœja af læbrautar láði fyr eljunprúðum lögðis eiðs þverri." And he expounds it thus: "The very-wise, generous king had many shields borne into the sea-settlement (or sea-village) — the seafarer did battle on the sand — before all the Scots fled from the coast (from the island?) in face of the mighty warrior."²⁶

²² *Hkr.* I 102 (v. 34).

²³ *Hkr.* I 121 (v. 48).

²⁴ *Hkr.* I 121.

²⁵ *Njála* (1875-89), II 380-8.

²⁶ *Hkr.* I 121-2, note.

When this paraphrase of the verse is put beside Snorri's narrative, it is difficult to see that the same events are being described, although Konráð Gíslason took it for granted that Snorri understood the verse correctly and knew that it dealt with two events: one in Scotland and the other on the Isle of Man. Only in this way can *læbrautar láð* refer to an island, and *allr herra Skota varð flæja* mean "all the Scots fled". *Varð flæja* would scarcely be used except where some special pressure was being exerted, and would not be applied to the islanders, who hear of the raids at a distance sufficient to allow them to sail with all their valuables over to Scotland. The expression can hardly apply to anything but flight from battle, in which case *herra Skota* must be an army. I fail to see how any acceptable interpretation of the verse is to be found by supposing it to refer to two events, as Snorri does. But if a single event is involved, the description of the verse is quite explicit. Possibly the agent in it is one and the same throughout, i.e. Haraldr Fairhair, so that the kennings *menfergir*, *Niðar varga lundr*, and *lögðis eiðs þverrir* all refer to him. In this case the verse would tell us that Haraldr had many shields borne to the sea-settlement and (then) did battle on the sand, before the army of the Scots was forced to flee before him. But the account would be more natural if there were two agents involved: Haraldr Fairhair, referred to by the two kennings associated with the dignified epithets *margspakr* and *eljunþriðr*, and the sefarer — *Niðar varga lundr* — who is without any associated term of praise. The sentence in parenthesis would then be an explanation of why the king had many shields borne to the sea-settlement, and in it the agent would be the sefarer, or Viking. My exposition of the verse would be as follows: "The very-wise, generous king had many shields borne to the sea-settlement — (for) Vikings launched an assault on the sand (i.e. attacked the coast) — before the whole Viking army was forced to flee from the shore in face of the mighty

warrior." I believe that *herr Skota*, i.e. the Irish, refers like *Hlymræks hlennar* — Limerick thieves — to the western Vikings in general, and the verse is therefore concerned not with Harald's campaign in the West, but with the attacks of a Norse Viking leader from the British Isles on Norway, and with his defeat at the hands of Haraldr.

Many more verses from *Hrafnsmál* have been preserved than from *Glymdrápa*, twenty in *Fagrskinna* and seven in *Heimskringla*, though six of these are the same in both. It may be open to question whether Snorri Sturluson also knew the verses of the poem not included in *Heimskringla*, but it seems likely that he knew them all, for the five describing the battle of Hafrsfjord are ascribed in *Fagrskinna* to Þjóðólfr of Hvin, while Snorri attributes them to Hornklofi, without doubt correctly. But he could hardly have reached this conclusion without knowing the beginning of the poem, which is found in *Fagrskinna* ascribed to Þorbjörn hornklofi.

Hrafnsmál has high praise for Harald's generosity to his men, and says, for example, that they are endowed with "Hunnish metal" and "eastern slaves",²⁷ both of them commodities acquired by Viking raids or trade in the Baltic. His ships are described thus: *djúpum ræðr hann kjöllum roðnum røndum, rauðum skjöldum*²⁸ — that is, they are equipped with red shields. *Glymdrápa* also describes them in this way: *rødd rauðra randa endisk*.²⁹ But the equipment of Harald's opponents at Hafrsfjord is described thus in *Hrafnsmál*: *hlaðnir vøru þeir hølða ok hvitra skjalda, vigra vestrænna og valskra sverða*³⁰ — white shields, western spears and Frankish swords. This is the equipment of Vikings who harried across the North Sea, whereas Haraldr, as I said, had valuables and slaves from the Baltic. It is also established that his supporters

²⁷ *Fsk.* 9 (v. 8).

²⁸ *Fsk.* 8 (v. 5).

²⁹ *Hkr.* I 103 (v. 35).

³⁰ *Hkr.* I 116 (v. 43).

have red shields, while his opponents have white ones. Could this not be the characteristic which gave the authors of the Irish annals occasion to distinguish between "light" and "dark" foreigners? The ships on the horizon were what caught the attention of the inhabitants first of all, filling them with foreboding of terrors to come, and it was precisely the shields that gave the Viking ships their unmistakable character.

If so, then Haraldr Fairhair must have used the same kind of shields as the "dark" foreigners, the Danes — and there is an undeniable likelihood that he had their support in his struggle for supremacy. In *Hrafnsmál*³¹ we are told that he rejected Norwegian women and wedded a Danish wife, by whom he had Eiríkr Bloodaxe. Eiríkr, in his turn, married Gunnhildr, daughter of Gormr the Old, king of Denmark, as we are told in *Historia Norvegiæ*. Harald's struggle for supremacy has a very similar flavour to the struggle for power in the British Isles between the "dark" foreigners and the "light", and at all events neither *Hrafnsmál* nor *Glymdrápa* makes an unequivocal reference to any opponents of his other than Vikings and Gauts.

Hrafnsmál names the leaders of Harald's enemies at the Battle of Hafrsfjord as Kjǫtvi and Haklangr. These are clearly only nicknames, but it is my guess that they refer to Rǫgnvaldr *heidumhæri* and some close relative of his, members of the family of the Norse kings of Dublin. This might provide an explanation of the forty years of peace in Ireland which, according to the Irish annals, began after the year 877 — for this is exactly when the struggle for power of Haraldr Fairhair in Norway can be reckoned to have started in real earnest.

³¹ *Hkr.* I 119 (v. 47).

THREE ESSAYS ON *VÖLUSPÁ*

BY SIGURÐUR NORDAL

TRANSLATED BY B. S. BENEDIKZ AND J. S. MCKINNELL

TRANSLATORS' NOTE. The following essays are the weightiest material in Professor Nordal's edition of *Völuspá* (1923, rev. 1952) which marked a turning-point in the study and criticism of the poem. They are printed here to make them available in English to students of Old Norse poetry. All references in them to "my text" or "my commentary" are to this edition. The translators, though kindly permitted (and even encouraged) by Professor Nordal to revise the text liberally, have not felt it right to intervene between the author and his reader more than is unavoidable, and so have restricted themselves to the sparsest of additional footnotes.

I HISTORY

Völuspá is the most famous poem of the Norse world, and beyond it, and there are many reasons for this. The subject is exalted and of universal application: the destiny of the world, of gods and men, and the battle of opposing powers described in such a way that every man recognises his own story. The poet was at once a man of profound vision and a great artist, and must have lived in an age which forced him to exert all his powers in this creative effort. From the beginning the poem was laconic in expression and hard to understand, and now it is in fragments, and in parts corrupt. It mocks its editor in the words of the sibyl, "Vituð ér enn — eða hvat?" But the harder it is to understand, the more powerfully it

attracts one. People do not try to plumb the depths of works which let all their treasures float on the surface.

Of the comments of men of later times let one suffice as an example. These are the words of Julius Hoffory, one of the most understanding of its expositors:¹

Dass gerade an einem solchen welthistorischen Wendepunkt ein Dichter von höchstem Range Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft zu einem Alles überragenden Bilde zusammenfasste, ist für die Nordländer ein Glück, wie es keinem anderen Volke jemals wiederfuhr. Die *Völuspá* ist nicht nur, wie Müllenhoff sagte, das grösste Gedicht des Nordens bis auf den heutigen Tag, sondern ein Werk, das in seiner Art niemals erreicht, noch weniger übertroffen worden ist.

One could amass many similar views. Even those editors who have pulled the poem about like a raw hide or dissected it with insensitive ingenuity have paid it tribute by the care with which they did their work.

It would be interesting to know something of how the poet's contemporaries reacted to the poem and valued it. But there one can only guess. *Völuspá* has never been on everyman's lips as, for instance, *Lilja* was at a later date. Otherwise the language of poetry would have been more strongly marked by it. Nor did the poet follow either the old tradition or the new, but went his own way, and this never makes for popular esteem. Yet the poem may have had its influence, opening the minds of the heathen to Christian ideas and helping Christians to be forbearing towards the old faith. For often the most influential works are not those which are known by most people, but those which reach the leaders and affect the course of their action. But even though *Völuspá* was kept in the memories of the wisest and most learned men of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it was not saved from damage. The poet stood too high above his age for it to be safe for him to commit this mysterious poem to its keeping. Snorri Sturluson's example shows us how

¹ J. Hoffory, *Eddastudien* I (1889), 141.

difficult it was to catch sight of the poem's continuity and philosophy of life. This was why unrelated verses were interpolated into it, while other verses which could be ill spared were forgotten.

About the year 1065 Arnórr Jarlaskáld imitated the description of Ragnarök in his *Þorfinnsdrápa*.² In the twelfth century the shorter *Völuspá* was composed³ and there is no doubt about the model. About 1200 an echo of *Völuspá* is heard in *Merlinusspá*.⁴ Snorri refers to *Völuspá* as ancient lore (*forn vísendi*) and makes it the basis of his account of the old gods. In the *Codex Regius* [R] it occupies pride of place. But from the time of the compilation of *Hauksbók* [H] until the revival of the old learning in the seventeenth century there is no sign of its history. I should mention, however, as it has not been previously noted, that in a sacred poem of the fifteenth century there are obvious marks of the influence of *Darraðarljóð*, *Völuspá* and other Eddaic poems. This is the *Carmen votivum de Cruce* (Árni Magnússon's title), a poem about the Cross of Christ and the Day of Judgment, and among other stanzas there is the following:

Hamrar sprungu,
en hrotu steinar,
gerði svartá
sól í heiði,
heimar skulfu
en himinn pipraðist
þá er drottinn vor
dó viljandi.⁵

This poem is, to the best of my knowledge, the only Catholic sacred poem written in *fornyrðislag*. Further research may bring others of a similar kind to light. But

² Cf. my commentary on st. 57.

³ Cf. my commentary on st. 65.

⁴ The monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson's translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophecies of Merlin*.

⁵ Jón Helgason, *Íslensk miðaldakvæði* (1951), I 242; cf. also Jón Þorkelsson, *Om Digtingen på Island i det 15. og 16. Arhundrede* (1888), 77.

though small, this example shows that the Eddaic poems were not an entirely hidden treasure to the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Völuspá was first printed (together with *Hávamál*) in Copenhagen in 1665, with a Latin translation by Stefán Ólafsson. Its second edition appeared in 1673, with a translation by Guðmundur Andrésón. Since then it has been printed nearly forty times [1923] in the collected Eddaic editions and on its own and translated into most European languages, while the books and articles which deal with it or mention it in some way cannot be numbered.⁶ It would be material for a great deal of research, and in many ways instructive, to describe these editions and translations, and to demonstrate how the understanding of the poem has altered and improved, and what influence it has had on the literature of later centuries. But there is no room for this here, and in any case, this would be more a chapter in the cultural history of the last four centuries than an investigation of *Völuspá*. My conclusion, after examining older writings, is that if one only wants to understand the poem itself one may safely ignore all editions and critical work older than Bugge's edition of 1867. Anything of permanent value in these older works has been repeated many times since then. But an immense amount has become outdated in the light of new researches, and no notice need be taken of it.⁷

Sophus Bugge's edition of the *Sæmundar Edda*⁸ is still the best edition of these poems. Special attention is paid there to *Völuspá*, which is printed in diplomatic transcript from both *Codex Regius* and *Hauksbók*, and also

⁶ For full bibliographical details see Halldór Hermansson, *Bibliography of the Eddas* (Islandica XIII, 1920); Jóhann S. Hannesson, *Bibliography of the Eddas: supplement* (Islandica XXXVII, 1955); H. Bekker-Nielsen, *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic studies I-* (1963-).

⁷ By this I am by no means making light of the work which such men as Rask, Finnur Magnússon, Hallgrímur Scheving, Sveinbjörn Egilsson, Munch, Svend Grundtvig and others have done towards the elucidation of *Völuspá* and other Eddaic poems.

⁸ *Norræn fornkvæði* (1867).

in an emended conflated text. Now commentators had a solid foundation on which to build. Yet it was not until 1879 that a real start was made in the examination of the poem. In that year A. C. Bang published his essay, *Völuspáa og de Sibyllinske Orakler*.⁹ In this he maintained that the model for *Völuspá* was the so-called Sibylline Oracles, a set of false prophecies compiled by Jews before the birth of Christ and later by Christians in order to increase respect and support for their faith among the gentiles. Bang pointed to various things which *Völuspá* has in common with these ancient writings, but he made no attempt to explain how the author of *Völuspá* (which he, like Guðbrandur Vigfússon, thought was composed in the British Isles) had come into contact with Greek literature, and did not even consider the possibility that the form and content of the poem could be of Norse origin. Yet that is the obvious line of elucidation to follow as far as it will go, for *Völuspá* is not the only prophecy in the *Sæmundar Edda*. Bang's essay attracted great attention, and many good scholars agreed with him. Some have since followed his footsteps and have traced the material of Norse mythology back to southern European and Christian writings of the Roman Empire and later years.¹⁰

The most prominent of these was Bugge, especially in the first volume of his *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*.¹¹ Bugge's views have been considered extreme by many (though he did not lack followers, especially in the earlier days) and the time of their greatest influence is now over. But yet there is always much to be learnt from his works, even for those

⁹ In *Christiania Videnskabselskabs Forhandlinger* (1879), no. 9; cf. also Bang's 'Bidrag til de sibyllinske Oraklers og den sibyllinske Orakeldigtningens Historie i Middelalderen', *ibid.* (1882), no. 8.

¹⁰ It is in fact no discovery of nineteenth-century scholars that the matter of Norse mythology is partly of Christian origin. Bishop Finnur Jónsson (or he and his son Hannes) maintained this in *Historia ecclesiastica Islandiæ* (1772), I 23-4, and some of his comments are still valid.

¹¹ Række 1, 1881-9.

who differ from him on basic principles. And Bugge is moderate in comparison with the German mythologist E. H. Meyer, who edited *Völuspá* with a commentary in 1889 and traced all its matter to mediaeval Christian writings. For in this large book (300 pages) I have not found one single observation which I have thought worth mentioning in my commentary. It is from beginning to end a scholarly fable by a man whose learning had made him mad.¹²

Many came forward to oppose this line of research. Victor Rydberg attacked Bang, while Bugge defended him, and this resulted in Rydberg's producing his great work *Undersökningar i germanisk mythologi*.¹³ This is written with great learning and eloquence, but its chief fault is that the author makes it clear neither to himself nor to his reader where the learning stops and the eloquence begins. Another of Bang's opponents was one of the leaders of the German antiquarians, Karl Müllenhoff. He edited *Völuspá* with a translation and a detailed commentary¹⁴ and maintained that the poem was totally heathen in spirit and matter, that it was composed in Norway but that its essence was common to all Germanic poetry (at one point he speaks of "die deutsche *Völuspá*"). But there is no point in writing at length about this essay, for it is, in spite of all differences of opinion, the basis of my commentary, as of most others by his successors. For instance, Finnur Jónsson followed Müllenhoff for the most part in his editions of and dissertations on the poem — but then Finnur is the man who has stood most firmly against Bugge's theories and has advanced the most powerful arguments against them.

Two other scholars who have contributed much towards the elucidation of the poem should be mentioned. Björn

¹² I shall not waste space describing the views of Meyer and Bugge, for they are dealt with, as are many of these disputes, in articles by Valtýr Guðmundsson and Benedikt Gröndal in *Tímarit* (1892-3).

¹³ 2 vols., 1888-9. Published in English as *Teutonic mythology* (1889).

¹⁴ *Deutsche Altertumskunde* V (1883), 1-165.

M. Ólsen¹⁵ advanced the strongest arguments for the poem's composition in Iceland, distinguished with moderation between heathen and Christian elements, and described plausibly how the poem is likely to have been composed. Axel Olrik made an exhaustive search for the origins of the content of *Völuspá* in his most important work, *Om Ragnarok*.¹⁶ There he examined the origins of the ideas of the end of the world, and traced their spread from the Caucasus westward into Europe. From his work one can see, for instance, that the legends of Prometheus bound and Loki bound may be related, though the Norse legend does not have to be a copy of the Greek. This opens up a much more fruitful field for research than Bugge's theory.¹⁷

Müllenhoff was the first to place *Völuspá* on the operating-table of the so-called "higher textual criticism" in an attempt to distinguish between the original poem and later additions. He considered that 16 of the 66 stanzas had been interpolated. Finnur Jónsson went a step farther (Müllenhoff considered st. 65, for instance, an original part of the poem) but otherwise agreed. Björn M. Ólsen¹⁸ objected to this method of examination of the poem, and in his edition of *Völuspá*¹⁹ F. Detter argued that little was to be gained by departing from the manuscripts, whether over occasional words or whole stanzas. The same policy is apparent in the edition of Detter and Heinzel.²⁰ But other investigators have gone much farther in dismembering the poem than Müllenhoff and Finnur Jónsson. E. Wilken cuts 27 stanzas from the

¹⁵ 'Hvar eru Eddukvæðin til orðin', *Tímarit* (1894), 1-133 (cf. also Finnur Jónsson's criticism of this article, *ibid.* (1895), 1-41, and Ólsen's rejoinder, 42-87, and *Um kristnitökuna* (1900).

¹⁶ 2 vols., 1902-14. Cf. also the revised German version, tr. W. Ranisch (1922).

¹⁷ Among works which take a similar line I may mention F. von der Leyen, *Das Märchen in den Göttersagen der Edda* (1899) and G. Neckel, *Die Überlieferungen vom Gotte Balder* (1920). Axel Olrik has also made the special position of *Völuspá* clearer than any other commentator.

¹⁸ *Tímarit* (1894), 102 ff.

¹⁹ F. Detter, *Die Völuspá* (1899).

²⁰ F. Detter and R. Heinzel, *Sæmundar Edda* (1903), 2 vols.

beginning of the poem with one flash of his knife.²¹ Boer²² distinguishes between two principal authors — 21 stanzas are by the earlier and 20 by the later. All the rest, he thinks, is *opus diaboli* (i.e. still later accretions).

In my own edition I unhesitatingly follow the rule not to depart from the best available manuscript reading until every expedient has been tried, whether in individual words or whole stanzas. I have not done this because of any undue faith in the manuscripts. I do not doubt, for instance, that the Catalogue of Dwarves is an interpolation, for all older explanations which attempted to connect it to the previous stanzas are unacceptable.²³ But the reasons are rarely so obvious. On the other hand it is amazingly daring to reject stanzas solely because a Mr X thinks that the author of *Völuspá* would never have expressed himself in this way, that he would never have bothered with such a digression, and so on. Heusler pointed out the consequences of too blind a faith in the manuscripts. One would then have had to follow the text of *Hauksbók* throughout, if *Codex Regius* had been lost.²⁴ Very well! Let us carry this thought a step further: would any editor of today trust himself to emend the poem into a similar form to the R text if he had to follow the H text alone? *That* is the principal point. The answer to this question must be No. We do not stop because the manuscripts are reliable, but because the methods of editing do not allow us to go any further without going astray. Comparison between studies of the poem urges us to be careful. Some of the things that Müllenhoff and Finnur Jónsson call additions are considered by Boer to be among the oldest parts of the poem.²⁵ Wilken

²¹ 'Zur Ordnung der Völuspá', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* XXX (1898), 448-86, and 'Zur Erklärung der Völuspá', *ibid.* XXXIII (1901), 289-330.

²² 'Kritik der Völuspá', *ZfdP* XXXVI (1904), 289-370. Cf. also Boer, *Die Edda* (1922), II 1-32.

²³ E.g. Hallgrímur Scheving, 'Kritisk Undersögelse om et Par Stropher i den saakaldte Völuspá', *Skandinaviske Litteratur Selskabs Skrifter* (1810), 175-220; and F. Hammerich, *Nordens ældste digt* (1876).

²⁴ Boer, *Kritik*, 289.

²⁵ Cf. my commentary to st. 37, 55 and 65.

appears to have no supporters for his view, nor has Boer, except on a very few points, for his — nor is this because his case is feebly argued.

As might be expected, criticism of *Völuspá*, both old and new, is very varied in quality. It is not only an endurance test, but also sometimes a test of temper to plough through it all. For editorial comment is in some respects a sad game. It is concerned principally with difficult matters, though the difficult is often not worth the most consideration. Critics write long screeds on *iviði* and *loptvaegi ljóðpundara*. But when it comes to those verses of *Völuspá* and *Sonatorrek* which are richest in beauty and spiritual content, these are not considered "in need of comment". It is therefore understandable that Norse studies have attracted too few outstanding men, and this again has made these studies less esteemed than they should be. It was in particular a great pity that in the mid-nineteenth century there were not men capable of breathing more of the vital spirit of the romantic school into the new scientific methods — such men as Renan and Gaston Paris, over whose youth the dying glow of romanticism shone and whose years of maturity were spent in the clear daylight of the exact sciences. The men who possessed both these gifts have perhaps been the greatest commentators, because this art requires not only talent and learning but also a love and respect for the subject. Otherwise there is a danger that the ancient writings will become only chewing-bones and shooting-targets for the sharp wits or ingenious folly of the commentators. Nonetheless, these commentaries cannot be ignored, and I doubt whether it would have been better if even the very worst had been left unmade. Even if they only wander into the blackest of blind alleys they serve as warnings to others. And it does no harm to *Völuspá* if its commentators take their carvers to it, gnaw all the flesh off its bones and wax fat thereon. It rises up whole in the morning like *Sæhrímnir* of the *Einherjar*

and Þór's goats. Commentaries are superseded. The manuscripts stand.

What is worse is that these commentaries fall so far short of the truth because their aim is too low. While the tendency of romantic antiquarianism was to build high towers on pure sand, that of the materialistic sciences has been to lay all the emphasis on digging down and strengthening a foundation on which nothing has been built. Why is all this energy put into explaining *Völuspá*? Not because of those few words which occur only there. Not to restore it to its original form, for this is an impossible task, and in any case would only be a stage on the road. Not to find out where and when it was composed, for these are also only steps towards understanding. Most commentators will reply that the poem's value is historical, that it demonstrates an interesting stage in literature, culture and view of life. This is undoubtedly a great point, but some of these people would lose all interest in the poem if they thought it was of Christian origin. They would not care for the experience which might still be hidden in it, nor for the gospel which it preached. Yet men may be Christians, even though they know and acknowledge that Christianity developed under many influences, and be the followers of Kant even though they know he learned from Hume. Exposition is only an empty name unless it considers works of literature both as links in the chain of events and as entities of independent value, and follows the authors along the paths which they themselves have travelled. Admittedly, this makes research more difficult, but it should also spare one many an unnecessarily roundabout way, which is travelled because every cairn by the roadside is treated as the highest peak.

Tagore said of the researches of Europeans into Indian literature:

For Western scholars the great religious scriptures of India seem to possess merely a retrospective and archaeological

interest; but to us they are of living importance, and we cannot help thinking that they lose their significance when exhibited in labelled cases — mummified specimens of human thought and aspiration, preserved for all time in the wrappings of erudition.²⁶

The course of events caused *Völuspá* not to become a sacred book. But it was intended to be a gospel, and it cannot be understood fully unless one attempts to read it in the spirit in which the poet composed it. He was neither a philologist nor an antiquarian, and his spiritual life was not commonplace. *Sólarljóð* is the most nearly related poem of these earlier times; it presupposes a similar experience, but its horizon is much narrower. Let us suppose that our descendants began to struggle with Matthías's poem *Guð, minn guð, eg hrópa*²⁷ after 900 years, Christianity had vanished long ago and the poet's name and the events of his life were forgotten. Would not its commentators have to dive deep in order to get to the core of its meaning and reach an understanding of its form and content?

"Let others do that," say the commentators and antiquarians of our day. "Let others search for the 'spirit'. We are neither philosophers nor preachers."

This view is both shortsighted and cowardly. In so far as men begin to deal with things of the spirit, they must not stop until they have reached the spirit. Although it may be a great defect in a scholar to impose his own spiritual wealth on the writings of others, it is no less a responsibility to attribute one's own spiritual poverty to the works of great men of long ago and to try to force them into a dwarf-sized shirt. The results of such an obstinately perverse habit of thought will be as disastrous for the scholars themselves as for the general public. No one is capable of examining a specific field of inquiry and producing perfect results, with nothing spoiled, unless he can see his subject in relation to life and culture

²⁶ R. Tagore, *Saddhana* (1913), viii.

²⁷ Matthías Jochumsson, *Ljóðmáli* (1936), 216.

in their entirety. Nor is anyone really able to give a popular explanation of anything which he does not understand completely. But it happens far too often that the educated public fights shy of the works of scholars, feeling it finds stones there instead of bread. There is a danger in this, that the subjects may fall into the hands of charlatans who will spice them with irresponsible eloquence, and that readers will fall prey to these dabblers. Let me give two examples of my meaning, examples which had a considerable effect on me while my edition was in the making.

A few years ago I heard a liberal Icelandic theologian read a paper which he called "Branches of one tree". In this he traced the principal features of various pagan religions, and pointed out those which were common to all of them and were likely to have a general currency. But he did not mention the religion of the Æsir, the faith of our own forefathers. Why? Neither from narrow-mindedness nor from lack of piety towards them. Nor because this faith (at least as it appears in *Völuspá*) has not its value for life. I can well imagine a man of our times living and dying in such a faith, and I am not sure that the Germanic peoples will not take considerable notice of their old faith when they shape for themselves a philosophy of life for the future. No, the reason was simply that our ancient faith is never discussed except as an antique. It is always presented in a shroud, never as a living experience which may still be worthy of consideration, even though it is old. The public feels it as nonsensical to seek for values of life in it as to think of living one's whole life on horsemeat and mares' milk.

Contrariwise two Norwegians have set out to demonstrate the cosmic philosophy of *Völuspá*.²⁸ But they do not allow the poem to speak with its own voice. The intention of their monograph is solely to prove that

²⁸ H. A. Alme and L. G. B. Flock, *Grundtræk af Asalæren og Völuspaa med fortolkning* (1917).

Völuspá is in complete agreement with some of the teachings of the theosophists. In these men's exposition prejudice and ignorance hold hands. But I cannot blame the credulous public, which sees it said there for the first time that the most famous of the ancient poems of the Northlands has some living message to bring, if it gapes to swallow this bait. Another commentary written according to the tenets of the Swedenborgians appeared in London in 1897.²⁹ And more such expositions may unquestionably be expected, especially if the rift between scholarly research and general education is allowed to widen.³⁰

II FRAMEWORK AND STRUCTURE

1. The name *Völuspá* is neither in R nor in H, but the poem is so named not less than ten times in *Gylfaginning*, where stanzas from it are quoted. Furthermore the name *Völuspá hin skamma*, "The short *Völuspá*", (which in fact also occurs only in *Gylfaginning*) points clearly to the name of its prototype. The authorities for the name are therefore sufficiently weighty, and it fits the poem admirably. The whole poem is put into the mouth of a *völva*, "sibyl", and though it is not entirely a prophecy, yet the prophecy is its principal content. Because of it the sibyl tells of her upbringing and wisdom and provides a survey of the events of the past — for the future is always hidden in the past, as few men have realised more clearly than the author of *Völuspá*, and no one can make others trust in his untested prophetic gift unless he demonstrates his knowledge of the secrets of former times. This is still

²⁹ J. J. G. Wilkinson, *The book of Edda called Völuspá* (1897).

³⁰ [A prize example of how far lunacy can go in such esoteric interpretation appeared in L. A. Waddell, *The British Edda* (1930), where Þórr became King Arthur, and recovered the Holy Grail in the year 3310 B.C. The power of such works to mislead can be seen in the uncritical admiration accorded to Dr Waddell's book by Hugh MacDiarmid in *A golden treasury of Scottish poetry* (1948), viii. Two recent Icelandic editions (by Helgi Hálfdánarson, 1965, and Ólafur M. Ólafsson, 1965-66) also show signs of twisting the text to suit preconceived theories — Translators' note.]

the method of today's fortune-tellers, whether they read palms, cards or other things. For how else do the spirits of the past provide proper credentials as to their identity? Nor may one be scandalised because the sibyl speaks at first only of *forn spjöll*. The poet has his mind fixed on what comes next, and is there in a flash.

The word *völva* is formed from *völr*, "staff" (e.g. *vánarvölr*, "beggar's staff"). The movement of a raised hand impresses most people, the more so if a wand is held in it than if it is empty. That is why kings have carried their sceptres and conductors their batons. It was therefore natural that a wand should be among the implements which were called *vitt* or *taufr*, which warlocks and witches used in order to gain control over hidden forces. Þorbjörg littlewitch, who is minutely described in *Þorfinns saga karlsefnis* "had a wand in her hand, on which there was a knob. It was wound about with brass, and stones set about the knob" — clearly a precious possession. The wand which belonged to Þórdís the prophetess of Spákonufell in *Vatnsdæla saga* is named *Högnuðr* ("staff of good fortune", cf. *hagna* and the sword-name *höguðr*), which indicates that it was a notable object. Beneath the witch's grave described in *Laxdæla saga* was found "a great magic wand". Another name for the conjuring wand was *gandr* — "Ostacia went out and waved her *gandr*; we would say that she went to cast spells [*at hon færi at seiða*], as do . . . those women whom we call *völur*."³¹ These wands were imbued with power (through special magic formulae, cf. *vitti hon ganda*, *Völuspá*, st. 22). It was popularly believed that they could be a means of transport for the witches (cf. *gandreið, að renna göndum*³²). Þórdís the prophetess makes Högnuðr touch Guðmundr the Mighty's cheek, so that he loses his memory for a while. And today there are

³¹ H. Bertelsen, *Þiðreks saga* (1905-11), II 271.

³² Bugge has suggested an alternative explanation of the word *gandr* (i.e. *ga-andar*, "a being entered by an evil spirit"). See *Aarbøger* (1895), 130 ff.

the dowsing-rods with which water and metals are sought in the earth, and which are used to make things happen which are difficult to explain in a natural manner.

Völr is from the root *val* (*ávalr*, *velta*, cf. Lat. *volvare*), "a cylindrical wand". *Vala*, "huckle-bone", is from the same root. This word was identical to *völva* in every case except the nom. sg. and gen. pl., because *v* was anciently lost before *u*. As a result the words were confused. The *völva* was often called *vala*, and the *vala* became *völva*; people began to use the bone as an oracle, for it is so made that the two sides are unlike, and the one could mean *yes* and the other *no* (*vala* was used as a dice in former times, cf. the two meanings of the Latin *talus*). Icelandic children still derive amusement from these prophecies without realising their origins.³³

2. The poet has a *framework* round his poem. He puts the prophecy into the mouth of another. And really this was unavoidable. No mortal man could deliver such a prophecy, nor yet the tale of the ancient secrets of the gods, on his own account. There are conspicuous examples to demonstrate it. In *Vafþrúðnismál* Óðinn and Vafþrúðnir deliver all the wisdom, in *Grimnismál* it is Óðinn, in *Fáfnismál* the dying Fáfnir, etc. The philosophy of life of *Hávamál* becomes more impressive because Óðinn pronounces it. It is true that Boer cuts away the framework from the poem and says, "It (the poem) is so far from being a sibyl's prophecy that it is no prophecy at all."³⁴ But this does not only go flatly against manuscripts and sources, but even against Bugge's own text. He takes, for instance, into his *Urtext* the stanza *sé ek upp koma* (st. 59). This is an indisputable prophecy, and can there be any example of such things being spoken of in the first person unless a framework

³³ Cf. Ólafur Davíðsson, *Íslenzkar skemmtanir* (1888-92), 183-4.

³⁴ *Kritik*, 354. Cf. also Boer's edition *ad loc.*

accompanies the speech? The poet of *Völuspá* chose to put his prophecy into the mouth of a sibyl rather than of gods or giants, who are involved in the events related. She is no ordinary prophetess, as we shall soon see, though it is not impossible that the poet knew well some sibyl or sibyls and how they prophesied.

The poem opens without preamble with the sibyl's words. So does *Vafþrúðnismál* with Óðinn's words to Frigg, but there a narrative stanza follows soon after (st. 5). *Hávamál* is from start to finish Óðinn's monologue, without introduction. The names of such poems were sufficient indication of who spoke, and some explanations would normally be given when they were declaimed for those who did not know them already. The preliminary prose to *Grímnismál* is one example of this kind of preamble.

The sibyl addresses gods and men in the style of the skaldic poems, calls for silence and declares her subject. As a comparison the beginning of Þorbjörn hornklofi's *Haraldskvæði* may be cited:

Hlýði hringberendr
meðan frá Haraldi
segik odda ípróttir . . .

and the beginning of Eyvindr skáldaspillir's *Háleygjatal*:

Viljak hljóð
at Háars líði . .
meðan hans ætt . .
til goða teljum.

Compare also Egill's *Höfuðlausn*, st. 2, and his *Berudrápa*, Arnórr's *Hrynhenda* and other poems. No Eddaic poems other than *Völuspá* begin like this, nor is this its only resemblance to skaldic poetry.

Besides calling her hearers to silence, the sibyl turns specifically to Óðinn. It is because of his will that she sings. In the same way she speaks both to Óðinn and to her hearers (*Vituoð ér enn . . . ?*) in st. 28. This has been

thought unnatural,³⁵ but each stanza supports the next there, and all becomes comprehensible if the framework is correctly explained.

In st. 2 the sibyl gives some account of herself. She has already said that she chants at Óðinn's demand — now she describes her knowledge, whence it comes to her, and how wide it is. This she considers enough to establish confidence in her for the time being. She now begins her narrative and continues without a break to st. 16 (*Þórr einn þar vá* in my reconstructed text). She then takes three stanzas to describe the ash, the norns, etc., after which come two stanzas which are part of the framework, though they stand in the middle of the poem (st. 28-9). In them the sibyl describes how she once "sat outside"³⁶ and Óðinn came to her. They exchanged words, and she was able to tell him such secrets as caused him to trust her prophetic power. He gave her good gifts and from this arose a sort of alliance between them. But she did not deliver her prophecy then, but later.

Why does the sibyl describe her dealings with Óðinn there and not at the beginning? Precisely because the framework of *Völuspá* is a living part of the poem. The arrangement of the material is like that of many imaginative works of later ages, both stories and plays. At first the character is brought on stage without warning, made to show himself, and rouse the reader's curiosity and interest. Then comes a narrative of the events which have taken place previously. It explains what has gone before, and that in turn gives the poem life and character. But here there is more at issue. If the dialogue between Óðinn and the sibyl had been described at the beginning of the poem it would have been unclear and unprepared. Now we have a survey of the

³⁵ Finnur Jónsson, 'Leiðrjettingar á ýmsum stöðum í Sæmundar-Eddu', *Arkiv IV* (1888), 30.

³⁶ [*sitja úti*, "to sit outside", *úti seta*, "sitting outside", are terms used of a divinatory and necromantic practice, see e.g. D. Strömbäck, *Sejd* (1935), 127-9 — Translators' note.]

history of the world and the gods up to the time when Óðinn met the sibyl. Óðinn has reached the stage where he seeks more learning and wisdom, wherever it may be found and whatever the cost. The whole poem up to this point is from a certain viewpoint only a preamble to the description of this meeting.

In these stanzas the sibyl is both narrator and subject. She speaks of herself in the third person, as is often done in ancient poems, even where there is less reason to do so.³⁷ I will not deny that this may have caused some muddle, so that in some places in the manuscripts *hon* may be written where *ek* should be. But it is a complete mistake to alter *hon* everywhere to *ek*, or else to leave it out as Gering does. Boer's comments on this subject³⁸ are based on far too weak a case.

Now the sibyl continues, describing the events which have happened from the time of the dialogue with Óðinn up to the poem's composition. At the same time she also gives some description of the state of the world. But the moment of the poem's composition is marked by the refrain:

Geyr nú Garmr mjök . . .

After the first appearance of this (st. 44, where *nú* is admittedly not in the manuscripts) everything is in a clear future tense (*Bræðr munu berjask*, etc.). The poet imagines that when the state of the world has reached that point, the sibyl will come forward and deliver her prophecy. The refrain declares that Ragnarök is near.³⁹ The author believed this himself. He repeats the stanza to make it grip the minds of the hearers. It must not be linked to any specific moment when it occurs later in the poem (as after st. 57, when all is over) but only to its first appearance. At that point the poem is uttered.⁴⁰

³⁷ Various examples are given in Detter and Heinzel, *ed. cit.*; I draw attention especially to *Lokasenna* st. 52, *Atlamál* st. 33 and *Hyndluljóð* st. 4.

³⁸ *Kritik*, 322 ff., 354 ff.

³⁹ Björn M. Ólsen, 'Um Völuspá', *Skírnir* (1912), 372-5.

⁴⁰ Bugge, *ed. cit.*, 8-9 n.

With st. 65 the prophecy is over. The stanza about *hinn riki* describes the furthest and the highest that the sibyl can see. Thereafter it is as if her eyes are blinded by too much brightness, and she has to calm herself before she completes her speech. Her far-sight stretches over space as well as time (cf. st. 2 and 29) and now she searches with her eyes for something which will describe the present state of the world, in order to focus her sight on it. She sees *Níðhöggr* and draws an unforgettable picture of it. Thereafter she says "Now she (I) will sink", i.e. "I have spoken". So Bugge explained it in his edition⁴¹ and so later did Finnur Jónsson,⁴² except that he accepted Müllenhoff's emendation *hann* (i.e. *Níðhöggr*) for *hon* in the last line. But it is imprudent to depart from both manuscripts here, and anyway not necessary. Even though the sibyl is living (i.e. not awakened from the dead to deliver her poem), there is nothing to preclude her disappearing from the scene in this manner.

What can we deduce about the sibyl from the poem? (1) She is very ancient and fostered by giants; (2) she "sits outside" and thus speaks to Óðinn, who seeks knowledge from her; (3) she knows the secrets and fates of all gods and men. From this it is obvious that we are dealing with no ordinary travelling spae-wife, nor can she be measured by their measure. The poet has made her gigantic in knowledge and inspiration; has given her the wisdom of the giants and set her foresight no bounds. This must be understood if one wants to avoid misunderstanding various points in the text. Such a sibyl could well speak contemptuously of a travelling spae-wife like *Heiðr* (st. 22). She could permit herself the solemn form of address to gods and men which some scholars have found shocking; they have felt that they had to

⁴¹ *ed. cit.*, 392.

⁴² Finnur Jónsson, *Völuspá* (1911), 33-4.

trace it back to foreign models.⁴³ In general, this sibyl has no bounds set her other than those of the poet's own inspiration.

But did the poet envisage her living, or waked from the dead (like the sibyl of *Baldrs draumar*⁴⁴)? Opinions have been sharply divided on this point, nor can it be definitely decided with certainty. The sibyl is undoubtedly alive when she meets Óðinn (st. 28). The words make this clear: *sat hon úti*. This was not the habit of the dead. They did not have to seek knowledge from the other world in this way. And since there is no mention of her being waked by Óðinn, and she appears to come forward of her own volition to fulfil her promise rather than under compulsion and driven by wand-magic like the sibyl of *Baldrs draumar*, I am inclined to think that she is still alive. When she sinks it is only through her witchery. It would hardly be proper for her to leave in any other manner. In the *Helreið* Brynhildr commands the witch to sink at the end, and the sibyl's own words in st. 2, *nú man ek heima*, suggest that she was not confined to the earth's surface.

The explanation of the poem's framework which has been given here is in its principal points very close to Müllenhoff's explanation, though I differ from him in many individual details. There seems no need to go into that further. I have also learnt a good deal from Detter.⁴⁵ But otherwise I have first and foremost gone my own way, and then selected from the opinions of others.

⁴³ Cf. W. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* (1895), 653.

⁴⁴ Opinions differ as to the connection between *Völuspá* and *Baldrs draumar*. Some consider *Baldrs draumar* the older poem and the prototype of *Völuspá*, and the sibyl the same in both poems (e.g. A. LeRoy Andrews, *MLN* XXIX (1914), 50). Others regard *Völuspá* as the older and the model in all respects (Neckel, *Die Überlieferung*, 43 n., and *Beiträge zur Eddaforschung* (1908), 59 ff.) But yet others consider an older *Vegtamskviða* the source of *Völuspá* and the subject-matter of *Baldrs draumar* (F. Niedner, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* XLI (1897), 38 and 309 ff.) I think that the most reasonable explanation is that *Baldrs draumar*, at least in a form similar to the state in which it is preserved, is older than *Völuspá* (cf. my commentary to st. 32) but that it is very doubtful whether the one influenced the other at all.

⁴⁵ *ed. cit.*

There is no room here to describe all the explanations which I can *not* accept (one such is by Guðbrandur Vigfússon, who thought the poem delivered by three sibyls). I think it right, however, to make some mention of two of them.

Bugge thought that Heiðr (st. 22) was the sibyl who delivered the prophecy. He wanted to alter the order of the stanzas so that a narrative framework was created round the poem (on an epic, not dramatic, model), as round *Vegtamskviða*. He put st. 22 first, then the first part of st. 28 and st. 29. After this introduction he lets the prophecy itself begin with st. 1, etc. This is at first sight a more easily understood order. But it would lessen the artistic value of the poem enormously, besides which it would be unnatural to put the difficult in place of the easy. In one respect I agree with Bugge.⁴⁶ He grasped the fact that st. 19-20 belong near st. 27. But he went flatly against the whole spirit of the poem by moving st. 27 and the first part of st. 28 ahead of st. 21, instead of moving st. 19-20 to follow st. 26. This shows most clearly how far the understanding of the poem has advanced since Bugge produced his edition.

Mogk⁴⁷ thinks that the sibyl is waked from the dead, that twenty-nine stanzas are the poet's narrative, and that the prophecy proper begins at st. 30. The two latter points differ widely from my own understanding of the poem and the poet, but because Mogk only mentions them and does not give his reasons, I do not think it necessary to quarrel further with his views here.

3. It still remains to make some comment on the structure of the poem, which is in danger of being overlooked in the exposition of individual stanzas.

⁴⁶ Cf. my commentary on st. 19.

⁴⁷ E. Mogk, 'Anmälen av F. Jónsson: *Den oldnordiske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*', *Arkiv* XII (1896), 280 ff., and in H. Paul, *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*, 2nd ed. (1896-1909), II 579 ff.

There is no doubt that the first part of *Völuspá* describes the *past*. These stanzas are 3-18 (less the Catalogue of Dwarves, st. 9-16) and 21-26; cf. my reconstructed text.^{48a} In this part the sibyl uses *man hon* once about her knowledge, as she does in the introduction (st. 1-2). Detter has understood this to mean that concerning these events she relies on the tales of others, i.e. the giants, her foster-fathers. This is doubtless partly right. Yet st. 2 points to the sibyl being amazingly old.

To some extent st. 19, 20 and 27 begin a new episode of the poem. Now the sibyl says *veit ek (hon)* when she describes things that are still unchanged at the time of the poem's composition, but most often *sér hon, sá hon*. This episode extends to st. 43. Some commentators have called it the description of the *present*, but this cannot be right. The poet undoubtedly thinks of the killing of Baldr and the punishment of Loki as past events. *The description of the present* (i.e. of time that is passing) is *only the refrain* (st. 44). Yet the tale of the meeting of Óðinn and the sibyl makes a division of acts in the poem. After it her powers are more mature (*sjá* instead of *muna* and *vita*), all her attention is turned to the preliminaries to Ragnarök. But this division of the past was bound to cause a muddling of tenses in the poem. Where what has been and is still is being described (st. 19-20, 27, 35-39) the present may well be used. The manuscripts do not agree, and the divergence is obvious: "*fellu eitrdropar . . . sá er undinn salr*" (st. 38), "*gól um Ásum . . . en annarr gelv*" (st. 43). I have attempted to correct this in my reconstructed text, and anyone can take what seems to him the most likely reading. I read st. 41 as a historic present, cf. the text of Hauksbók.

From st. 45 all becomes consistent again: it is a pure description of the future. Now the sibyl says "Bræðr

^{48a} [Nordal's reconstructed text is in this order: 1-6, 17-18, 7-8, 21-6, 19-20, 27-31, 32¹⁻⁴, 33⁵⁻⁸, 35-66; these numbers are those of Bugge's text, *ed. cit.*, 1-11 — Translators' note.]

munu berjask', etc., and where the present is used the future meaning is obvious. The *prophecy* itself is only st. 45-65.

One of the means of differentiating between the three parts of *Völuspá* are the so-called refrains. *Völuspá* is alone among the Eddaic poems in having refrains, except for its imitation, the "short *Völuspá*". What has sometimes been called the sibyl's refrain in *Baldrs draumar* is of an entirely different nature. But though the refrains of *Völuspá* point to its relationship to the skaldic poems, the differences must not be forgotten. No *drápa* has three refrains of different kinds, as *Völuspá* has, and none of these three refrains is of exactly the same kind as the skaldic refrains. The first (*þá gengu regin öll . . .* st. 6, 9, 23, 25) is the beginning of a stanza, the third (st. 44) is a complete stanza, and the second (*vituð ér enn — eða hvað?*) is only a last-line refrain. The poet has followed his own taste and desire, but no rules. He uses the refrain to control the mood of the poem: in the first part it emphasises the power and might of the young gods; in the second the uncertainty, fear and the jeering question of the sibyl — "Shall I stop — or dare you listen longer?"; in the third the danger itself and the fate of the gods.

Yet it cannot be denied that the third refrain may have been repeated at precise intervals, although the poem is not well enough preserved for it to be possible to reconstruct it according to this view. What Brate and Åkerblom have written about *Völuspá* from that viewpoint⁴⁸ throws no light on it. Nor will I deny that the return of the second refrain at st. 62-63 is suspicious. But if the poet liked it like that, then there is no more to be done about it.

Boer⁴⁹ has said about *Völuspá* that "now the poem goes

⁴⁸ E. Brate, 'Voluspa', *Arkiv XXX* (1914), 43 ff.; A. Åkerblom, 'Om Völuspás komposition och syfte', *ibid.*, XXXVI (1920), 58 ff.

⁴⁹ *Kritik*, 291.

on at length about apparent side-issues, or flies over the subject-matter in huge leaps". He relies to a great extent on this varying treatment of the subject-matter when dividing the poem up between two poets, the older being epic and swift-moving in method, the younger lyrical and descriptive. Of course Boer knows that the subject itself causes the treatment in part: "Das ist eben dichterische Kunst, dass der Stil sich dem Gegenstande fügt."⁵⁰ But he has looked for a difference and found too big a one. No poet is described in one or two words.

The subject of *Völuspá* is so extensive that it precludes a detailed narrative, or else the poem would have been endless. But on the other hand the poet was too great an artist to compose nothing more than a skeleton. He provides individual portraits instead of general descriptions: such are Eggþér and the cockerels (st. 42-43) and the eagle over the mountain (st. 59). The quivering of the ash in st. 47 becomes all the more impressive because it is previously described as green and still, covered with dew of fertility. Other influences appear. It cannot be denied that some parts of the poem may be provided simply as information (perhaps they were fragments taken out of older poems), as Sijmons pointed out with great understanding.⁵¹ Orlík⁵² has drawn attention to the fact that the detail of the poet's account varies according to whether he is referring to well-known legends of the gods which he cannot avoid mentioning or is telling of those matters which he has himself created or understood in a new way. This will be considered later. But the reader should ponder on all these things if he feels the poem to be uneven, or that the poet was clumsy.

⁵⁰ *Kritik*, 345.

⁵¹ B. Sijmons, *Die Lieder der Edda* (1906), cccxlvii.

⁵² *Om Ragnarok*, I 270.

III THE POET

1. We do not know the name of the poet who composed *Völuspá*, nor will it ever become known with any certainty. Yet it cannot be said that the man is entirely unknown to us. Emerson said of Shakespeare: "So far from Shakespeare's being the least known, he is the one person, in all modern history, known to us."⁵³ One cannot speak so boldly of the author of *Völuspá*. But do we not get closer to the man if we hear his philosophy of life in his own words than if we had various dubious pieces of evidence about his family and his career? Inasmuch as our understanding of the poem is correct in the main points we shall know the author *better* (if not more *about* him) than any other Norseman from before 1100 with the single exception of Egill. But in order to get closer to the author we must examine the most important facts which can be pointed out concerning the poem's place in literature and culture, and when and where it was composed.

Völuspá and the Eddaic poems

No one should be misled by the fact that *Völuspá* is preserved in a collection with other poems, and has a common name with them in the history of literature. The better one gets to know the poem the plainer its unique position among the Eddaic poems becomes. There is no clearer way of demonstrating this quickly than to compare *Völuspá* with *Vafþrúðnismál*, a neighbouring poem on a similar subject. There is no room here for a detailed comparison, and in any case, to guide those who want to make a closer examination themselves, it is enough to touch on the main points.

The *framework* of *Vafþrúðnismál* is an independent tale and in no way fused with the matter of the poem. Whatever speakers there might be could exchange parts, and

⁵³ R. W. Emerson, *Shakespeare, or The poet* (1850), repr. in *English critical essays, 19th century*, ed. E. D. Jones (1916), 550.

there is no difference between Óðinn's manner of speech and Vafþrúðnir's. On the other hand the subject-matter and framework of *Völuspá* can hardly be separated, as has already been shown. This demonstrates at once that *Völuspá* was hammered out in a hotter forge.

The *organisation of content* and the cohesion of *Vafþrúðnismál* show this even better. Óðinn's first question (st. 20) is, it is true, about the origin of heaven and earth, and his next to last (st. 52) about his fall in Ragnarök, but in st. 17 there is talk of the battlefield of Surtr and the gods, in st. 48, right in the middle of other material, of the norns, and so on. The poem is a jumble of odd fragments of erudition without any proper organisation, and no attempt is made to trace the causal connection of events. In *Völuspá* it is quite different. There the tale of the life of the gods is followed in strict chronological order and each event is tied up with the next, even though the pace is quick. The poem is sustained by a strong framework of art and philosophy.

In *Vafþrúðnismál* the *treatment* of the subject is cool and dry. The poem is clear and easily understood, full of names and facts. On the other hand there is the swell of poetic excitement in *Völuspá*. It is true that the principal events of the mythology had to be mentioned, but the poet merely uses these as stepping-stones. In *Vafþrúðnismál* they are like stones threaded on a string, in *Völuspá* like gravel rolled onward by a rushing current. This is why the poem is so obscure that hardly a single stanza can be completely explained, and the way to understanding is rather by living at the speed of the current than by staring at individual pebbles.

The *understanding* of individual events is different. In *Vafþrúðnismál* a crude imagination and an unpolished taste, which swallows every camel of popular credulity, produce such curious things as:

Undir hendi vaxa
kváðu hrímpursi

mey ok mög saman;
 fótr við foeti
 gat ens fróða jötuns
 sexhöfðaðan son.⁵⁴

The descriptions in *Völuspá* are drawn from a very different world.⁵⁵ The earth is not made from Ymir, but has risen out of the sea; dew is not the drops from the muzzle of Hrímfaxi but the spray from the holy river which cascades down over the ash of Yggdrasill; the sun is not caught by the wolf, it is darkened; Fenrir does not swallow Óðinn, who is killed without further description; Víðarr does not tear Fenrir's jaws apart, but stabs him to the heart.⁵⁶ Where the rebirth of the world is described there emerges a twofold philosophy of life, as will be shown later. *Vafþrúðnismál* speaks both of the terrible winter and of the flame of Surtr without integrating them (*Hoddmímis holt*, st. 45, could guard against the winter but not the burning of the world). In *Völuspá* the various ideas about the end of the world are welded into a consistent whole.

A comparison of *Völuspá* with the other Eddaic mythological poems, in so far as it could be carried out, would produce a similar result. They have little of its majesty and inspiration. Their appearance is quite different. It is enough to mention the catalogues of names in *Grimnismál*, the word-count of *Alvíssmál*, the threats of *Skírnismál*, the humour of *Brymskviða*, the mockery of *Hárbarðsljóð* and the scabrousness of *Lokasenna*. In *Brymskviða* the giant sits on the mound, cuts the manes of his horses and makes collars for his dogs. In *Völuspá* he sits on the mound and — plays the harp! The giants of *Völuspá*, Hrymr with his linden shield, Surtr with the bright sword, are polished personages in comparison with the giants of popular mythology.

⁵⁴ *Vafþrúðnismál* st. 33.

⁵⁵ See Olrik, *Om Ragnarok*, I 269.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Vafþrúðnismál* st. 14, 21, 47 and 53.

There is a far closer relationship between *Völuspá* and the heroic poems of the Edda. In the best of these there appears the same poetic sweep in which one image creates the next.

Svá bar Helgi
af hildingum
sem ftrskapaðr
askr af þyrni
eða sá dýrkalfr
döggu slunginn,
er öfri ferr
öllum dýrum
ok horn glóa
við himin sjalfan.⁵⁷

In the heroic poems, which are partly European in subject-matter, another civilisation, more polished (harp-music and the like) than that of most of the mythological poems, is reflected. Their philosophy of life is closely related to that of *Völuspá*: the power and evil effect of gold; the evil consequences of magic, of the breaking of the bonds of kinship and of oaths; to die innocent, like Sigurðr, is the way to man's greatest glory. All this will be spoken of again later.

If the Eddaic poems are divided into two classes according to the culture and taste which are reflected in them, *Völuspá* undoubtedly belongs to the younger class.⁵⁸ In support of this can be cited the fact that various investigators think they have found in it influences from older poems: Bugge from *Hávamál*,⁵⁹ Neckel from *Sigurðarkviða hin meiri*.⁶⁰ The connection with *Rígsþula* should also be remembered.⁶¹ All this indicates that *Völuspá* is not much older than the turn of the century about 1000.

⁵⁷ *Helga kviða Hundingsbana* II st. 38.

⁵⁸ The most notable attempt at such a division is in B. S. Phillpotts, *The Elder Edda and ancient Scandinavian drama* (1920).

⁵⁹ *Studier*, I 389.

⁶⁰ *Beiträge*, 347-8.

⁶¹ Cf. my commentary on st. 1.

Völuspá and the skaldic poems

The Eddaic and skaldic poems diverge in some respects. Yet this divergence varies with the individual poems. Of the Eddaic poems *Völuspá* is one of the closest to the skaldic in taste and culture. There appear also to be direct influences from them. *Tefðu í túni* reminds one of *Haraldskvæði* st. 16: *þeirs í Haralds túni hinum verpa*.⁶² *Hefisk lind fyrir*, cf. *höfðusk hlífar fyrir* (*Hákonarmál* st. 11). *Lætr . . . standa hjör til hjarta*, cf. *Ynglingatal* st. 18: *hjör til hjarta stöð*.⁶³ See also my commentary on st. 4, on the poet's notion of the creation of the earth, and the agreement of this with the kennings of skaldic poets. *Völuspá* is the only Eddaic poem which begins with an invocation similar to that of many skaldic poems, the only Eddaic poem which has refrains. These two points are weighty ones. But one cannot deduce directly from them that the author of *Völuspá* was a court poet. None of the court poets whom we now know is likely to have composed it. For the author practised the making of verse as an athlete practises his game, he knew the poems of the best court poets and was touched by their spirit. This points to the poem's origin in Iceland, for the composition of skaldic verse had become restricted almost entirely to Iceland by the end of the tenth century.

Völuspá and the pagan faith

No one can fail to realise that the whole of the basis and the bulk of the matter of *Völuspá* are heathen. The religion of the Æsir must have been the author's childhood faith, whatever may have influenced him later. Much of the poem's subject-matter is recognisable from other

⁶² This does not conflict in any way with my commentary on st. 8. The model of the description in st. 8 is Norwegian (and of all men Icelanders knew Norwegian poetry best) but the meaning of the word *tún* in st. 61 can none the less be Icelandic.

⁶³ For other places reminiscent of *Ynglingatal*, see my commentary on st. 31, 45 and 47.

sources of heathen lore, as the commentary to the text in my edition will have made clear. Yet some of these ancient tales of the gods are understood differently in *Völuspá* than in their popular interpretation, and some events the poet seems to have altered to suit his own convenience or even invented himself. Of these we may mention the story of the creation of earth and mankind, the life of the Æsir on Iðavellir, the tale of Gullveig and the builder of the citadel, the return of the Æsir after Ragnarök. But these incidents are peculiarly prominent in the poem because the poet could not avoid speaking of them in some detail. Where he followed well-known tales of the gods it was enough just to mention them.

As was already said, however, it is not the content of *Völuspá* which sets it apart from the other sources of Norse mythology, nor the things in it which the poet may have created himself, nor yet those which may be of Christian origin. The Æsir faith had no restricted and well-defined system of dogma. The tales of gods grew like wild flowers. Every poet was permitted to alter them or add to them, and the way was open to influences from other religions. The author of *Völuspá* is unique precisely because he tries to create a system, a theology. He takes the diverse and childish ideas of the end of the world which had sprung from a healthy people's longing for life, selects from them, casts them into a single whole and interprets everything with a new and spiritual understanding so that it becomes a purification, not a destruction — the curse turns into a blessing. If we compare the depth of vision and understanding in *Völuspá* and *Vafþrúðnismál*, the question automatically arises whether this reflects the inner growth of paganism, or the result of external influences. For even if there were not one single event in *Völuspá* which could not be found in some pagan source, yet the stature of the poem, its spirit, and the system drawn up in it would tell clearly enough that the poet had read the ancient runes

by a new light. This new light gave him courage to select and to raise a single temple from the scattered ruins of ancient hallows.

Völuspá and Christianity

The disagreements of scholars on this subject have been dealt with earlier.⁶⁴ Both extremes, total paganism and total Christianity, and most positions in between have been looked for and found in it. Yet even those who stand foremost on the side of paganism, such as Finnur Jónsson, acknowledge that the poet knew something of Christianity, since they consider that he composed the poem to demonstrate the superiority of the old faith over the new. But the knowledge of such a new thing as Christianity must have had some effect on so sensitive and thoughtful a spirit as that of the author of *Völuspá*. It is more difficult to decide just what this effect was.

Axel Olrik has said: "No pagan of the tenth century, at least none of the more intelligent, was entirely untouched by Christian ideas." He points out that heathens adopted some burial customs and the custom of pouring water on children (at their naming) from Christianity long before they adopted the faith itself. And he reminds us of Gísli Súrsson, who dreamt, about the middle of the tenth century, of some of the commandments of the new faith — do not be the first to kill, help the blind and the lame, and so on.⁶⁵ Spiritual influences are often diffused in the atmosphere in a peculiar way. But we may note a few factors which could have made Christianity passably familiar to the pagan: such were the journeyings of Norwegians and Icelanders to the British Isles, the Christian settlers in Iceland, the Christian mission of King Hákon the Good. And there is one other influence⁶⁶ which ought certainly

⁶⁴ See pp. 83-5.

⁶⁵ A. Olrik, *Nordisk Aandsliv* (1907), 64. [The historicity of these dreams is counted dubious — see e.g. G. Turville-Petre, 'Gísli Súrsson and his poetry', *MLR* XXXIX (1944), 574-91 — Translators' note.]

⁶⁶ Cf. Mogk, 'Anmälan . . .', *Arkiv* XII (1896), 274.

to receive more attention than hitherto: the influence of the captive Irish in Iceland. We are told by *Laxdæla saga* that Melkorka taught her son Ólafr the Irish language, and spoke for a long time to no other person. It is likely that she would not least have told him about her childhood faith and of Christian customs. And is Gestr Oddleifsson not likely to have known something of Christianity, for instance through his dealings with Ólafr the Peacock, before Þangbrandr came on the scene? The influences of Christianity on *Völuspá* are partly such as make it probable that the poet had had a long, if unclear, acquaintance with it. These influences stimulated his thoughts on the divine powers and on the nature of existence. They prepared the way for the strong and sudden effect of the Christian mission proper.

Axel Olrik has tried to separate heathen and Christian elements in the description of Ragnarök. I append his division in the note below, not because I agree with it, but as a specimen of the better kind of criticism.⁶⁷ In my opinion the individual elements are more or less dubious. What matters most is, as already observed, the character of the poem and the consistency of its cosmic view. But both of these will be best comprehended by attaining as clear an understanding as possible of the poem's origin.

⁶⁷ Olrik considers the following elements of *Völuspá* to be of Christian origin: (i) The decay of mankind. (ii) The sounding of Gjallarhorn to announce Ragnarök. (iii) The darkening of the sun and the disappearance of the stars. (iv) The burning of the world. (v) Gimlé. (vi) The Great One (st. 65). I agree about the last two. Olrik would have looked differently at the third and fourth if he had assumed that the poem was made in Iceland. The first and second I consider very dubious. Gjallarhorn may be a fully Norse concept, even though a similar element occurs in the Bible, and the degeneration of gods and men as a cause of decay and doom is a mainstay of the poem, part of the poet's own flesh and bone. The principal biblical passages which have been regarded as prototypes of *Völuspá* are: Matt. xxiv, 7-10, Mark xiii, 12, Luke xxi, 24 (the degeneration of the last and worst days), Matt. xxiv, 29 ("The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven", cf. Rev. vi, 12-13: "And the sun became black as sackcloth and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell onto the earth"), and II Peter iii, 10 ("The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"). The new heaven and new earth are referred to in II Peter iii, 13 and Rev. xxi. For the description of Gimlé cf. the new Jerusalem in Rev. xxi. For Níðhöggr cf. the dragon of Rev. xii.

When was Völuspá composed?

Earlier on I put forward the view that the poem's place in literature suggests that it was composed around the year 1000. If one examines its place in the religious movement of the tenth century one comes to the same conclusion. It is scarcely thinkable that it was made after the final victory of Christianity, nor yet before the Christian mission had begun to raise a great groundswell of disturbance. Finnur Jónsson considered its inspiration to have been the Christian mission of King Hákon the Good, but the spiritual effects of this mission appear to have been too slight to cause such a poem to grow out of them. King Ólafr Tryggvason's mission is another matter. Besides, Hákon's mission never reached Iceland, so that if the poem is considered Icelandic on other grounds, this points forward to the end of the tenth century. It is otherwise difficult to put forward convincing arguments, since the difference is only a few decades. But the view which is supported by most and opposed by fewest probabilities, and which *best helps one to understand and explain the poem*, is the most convincing. It will be shown later that the assumption that *Völuspá* was composed just before the year 1000 opens up a new explanation for the poem's creation.

Where was Völuspá composed?

This question often occurs in the notes to the text in my edition. Briefly, it may be said that *Völuspá* is the Eddaic poem for which the most convincing arguments for an Icelandic genesis can be given. This is not to say that these arguments are unassailable. The dispute between Finnur Jónsson and Björn M. Ólsen over the home of the Eddaic poems⁶⁸ showed clearly that it is easier to knock down arguments in such matters than to find better ones in their place. But if all probabilities, however light they

⁶⁸ See note 15.

may be singly, fall into the same pan of the scale, then there is no doubt about which way the beam tips.⁶⁹

(i) *Icelandic specialist knowledge.* In my notes on st. 35, 41, 47 and 52 I have endeavoured to demonstrate that the poet knew hot springs, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. Even if some of this knowledge came rather from the narratives of others than from the poet's own experience (*hveru-lundr* might make this probable) it still points to Iceland. The tale of Borgarhraun shows that the first eruptions which the settlers saw excited their imaginations, and the capacity to create mythical tales was not completely dead:

It was when Þórir was old and blind that he came out late one evening and saw a huge evil-looking man who rowed an iron boat into Kaldárós from the sea, walked up to the farm named Hrip and dug in the gateway of the milking-shed there. And fire came up in the night out of the earth there and the Borgarhraun flowed. The farm was where the lava-cone is.⁷⁰

Þorvaldur Thoroddsen considers⁷¹ that Eldborgarhraun is as a whole older. All the same, there is probably a true core in the story in *Landnáma*, and some eruption occurred here in the tenth century. The next one recorded was in Ölfus in the year 1000.

(ii) *Icelandic local conditions.* Olrik has pointed out that the idea that the earth will sink into the sea is most common among nations with a long defenceless coastline next to them, such as the Jutes, Irish and Icelanders, but much less so where a strong wall of outer skerries protects it. He provides many examples in support of this point.⁷² The idea was very clear to the author of *Völuspá*, for out of it he shapes the story of the earth's creation. And when he describes the void he says "vara *sandr* né *sær*".

⁶⁹ It may be mentioned that all the chief Eddaic scholars outside Scandinavia whose work I know, such as Boer, Mogk, Neckel, Sijmons and Phillpotts, consider *Völuspá* to be Icelandic.

⁷⁰ *Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Íslenzk fornrit I, 1968), 97-9 (*Sturlubók*, ch. 68, *Hauksbók*, ch. 56).

⁷¹ Þorvaldur Thoroddsen, *Ferðabók* (1913-15), III 87.

⁷² Olrik, *Om Ragnarok*, I 175-89.

This would hardly have occurred to a Norwegian.⁷³ But it would be natural to someone who knew the long sandy south shore of, for instance, the lowlands or Mýrar. The weight of *tún* and *á landi* as evidence in this context is dealt with in my notes to st. 8 and 17.

(iii) *Icelandic insularity*. The author of *Völuspá* appears not to have known the mistletoe, since he calls it a tree. But what is much more notable is that he refers to the ash as *þollr*, "fir" (st. 20). This would no more have occurred to a Norwegian than it would to an Icelander to call the buttercup *stör*, "sedge"! But Icelanders, even those who have spent a long time abroad, have both before and since muddled all kinds of trees together. One could in all probability write a whole monograph on "Botany in Icelandic poetry".⁷⁴

Doomsday

The present-time description in *Völuspá*, the description which is so powerfully alive in the poet's mind that he repeats it over and over again, is this half-stanza:

Geyr nú Garmr mjök
fyr Gniphelli,
festr mun slitna,
en freki renna.

Völuspá is a poem on the end of the world, and that seen not as a distant vision but as an overhanging actuality. But the poet was too serious-minded to say this without believing it. He must have been certain that the end of the world was at hand, and to have had especial reason

⁷³ I had pointed this out in my university lectures in the spring of 1922. But in the following summer Professor Fredrik Paasche brought it to my attention of his own accord, after he had travelled around Iceland, and I thought this a notable thing, for "the guest's eye is keen".

⁷⁴ *Eplið fellur sjaldan langt frá eikinni*, "the apple seldom falls far from the oak-tree" (cf. Ólsen in *Tímarit*, 1894, 39). In *Völsunga saga*, ch. 2-3, *eik* and *apaldr* are used of the same tree. Even the naturalist Benedikt Gröndal writes in "Hret" (*Ritsafn* I, 1948, 172):

hnipinn er skógur og hniðið er *bar*,
hám sem að áður á *björkunum* var.

And Jónas Guðlaugsson muddles *eik* and *björk* in a poem written in Denmark (*Dagsbrún*, 1909, 62), and so on.

for this certainty. Now it was a common belief, or at least fear, among Christians that the last and worst times would begin in the year 1000. It is easy to trace the way this fear could reach Iceland. Other reasons have made it probable that *Völuspá* was actually composed just before 1000. It is therefore very likely that the ideas and mental state of Christians had affected the author. Moreover, even if other reasons did not point to the poem's composition about this time, a great deal might be determined from this as to when and how the poem came into being, for nothing that can be adduced to explain *Völuspá* casts as much light upon it as this does.⁷⁵ Revelation xx, 1-3 has the following prophecy:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And later it says (Rev. xx, 7-8):

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth . . .

After this comes the description of Doomsday and of the heavenly Jerusalem.

As may be expected, these scriptural passages provided much food for thought for men of the Middle Ages. In those days earthly life was only a fleeting dream. Death, Doomsday and the after-life were the real truth, which was deeply pondered, and by which all other things were

⁷⁵ It may have occurred to many that the author of *Völuspá* could have been influenced by the fear Christians had of Doomsday. I have felt this to be the key to the understanding of the poem and the poet. Guðbrandur Vigfússon says, for instance, in *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* I (1883), lxvii, "The apprehension of the near crack of doom points to a date near 1000 A.D." Björn M. Ólsen mentions the same in *Um Völuspá*, 372, without referring to Guðbrandur. Nor has either of them attempted to explain this any further, or to produce reasons for it.

measured. It was more natural to work out when Doomsday would be than to calculate an eclipse of the sun. Was it not most probable that these thousand years referred to the Christian calendar? A heavy shadow lies over the Christian nations in the tenth century. The great pilgrimages around the year 1000 and on through the eleventh century, which were the main causes of the crusades, demonstrate the fear of men for their salvation. Donative letters to churches in the tenth century often begin with the words *Mundi termino adpropinquante*. Abbo of Fleury tells how he heard a sermon in his youth in Paris to the effect that Antichrist would come soon after the year 1000, and that not much later Doomsday would occur.⁷⁶ Ecclesiastical historians have of late tried to discount this fear, admitting that it did manifest itself, but no more than at many other times. But it is extremely difficult to judge this in retrospect. Everyone knows how Doomsday prophecies can become epidemic even in this present age of "universal education". An astronomer in Minnesota rashly writes an article in a paper — and people in Grindavík take to their beds in fright. Yet the power and spread of the hysteria varies greatly according to the basis of the prophecy. Many people will still recall the terror that resulted from the appearance of the comet in May 1910. But afterwards this is soon forgotten. No one wants to remember it, least of all those who were most frightened. When the end of the world did not come in the year 1000, the expectation was transferred to a thousand years after Christ's death, i.e. to A.D. 1033. At that time a great flood of pilgrims poured into the Holy Land, including some from Norway, for instance.⁷⁷ This fear doubtless played a great part in the conversion of the Norwegians after the battle of Stiklestad, and in King Ólafr's canonisation.

⁷⁶ Cf. R. S. Storrs, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (1892), 59.

⁷⁷ F. Paasche, *Kristendom og kvad* (1914), 14.

I consider it certain that the fear of Doomsday about the year 1000 had a great effect on Ólafr Tryggvason and his mission. Certainly there is no other example of this effect which is so obvious.

Ólafr Tryggvason came to Norway in 995. He was no home-bred himself — he had been for many years in the lands west of the North Sea, had become a Christian and had married a Christian wife, while in his train were both British and Continental clergy. The belief in the impending Doomsday could not, therefore, pass him by. And it acted like oil on the new-kindled fire of this Viking's faith.

Ólafr's actions are so astonishing that they need especial explanation. He converts five countries to Christianity in five years — the five years immediately before A.D. 1000. He is in such a hurry that he does not even take the trouble to secure his throne, like Hákon the Good, before he begins his mission. He forces people to Christianity by methods which he and his clergy undoubtedly felt were not entirely desirable. The mission to Norway is clearly different from the missions elsewhere in the North. But if Ólafr believed that this was the last chance to save his people from heathendom and Hell, it is no small excuse and makes the man more understandable and acceptable.⁷⁸

Admittedly, we are not directly told that Ólafr and his clergy used this prophecy in their mission. Neither those who had preached it nor those who had believed it were willing to parade this fact later. But besides the main factor that Ólafr must have known this prophecy, and therefore have used it, various other pointers can be mentioned. After his fall the people relapsed almost entirely into heathendom. This could suggest that the force had gone out of Christianity, as from an over-bent bow, when the prophecy was not fulfilled. There are, too, traces which indicate that Ólafr and his clerics did not

⁷⁸ [But cf. a review by Árni Pálsson, *Skírnir* (1924), 215 — Translators' note.]

preach an entirely joyous gospel. Hallfreðr dies with the fear of Doomsday and Hell on his lips. In *Kristni saga* we are told that the words of Gissurr and Hjaltili at the Alþingi of 1000 inspired such awe that none of their enemies dared speak against them. These words become understandable if they could state categorically that the end of the world was at hand. It was much more necessary to emphasise this point in the mission to Iceland. The king's power touched men only very lightly there, so that spiritual bullying was the only way. Moreover, Þangbrandr was the man to preach on that text to no mean effect.

It is remarkable how prominent the Archangel Michael is in Ólafr Tryggvason's mission. Michael was noted for his battle with the dragon (Rev. xii, 7), and his part in the Last Judgment. A fragment by Arnórr jarlaskáld demonstrates early eleventh-century ideas about him well:

Mikáll vegr, þats misgört þykkir,
manvitsfróðr, ok allt et góða;
tyggi skiptir síðan seggjum
sólar hjalms á dæmistóli.

This corresponds completely with portraits in various mediaeval churches, where Christ is shown at the top on the judge's throne, below him Michael with the scales, and on either side of him the two companies — the saved whom an angel is leading to heaven, and the condemned whom a devil is taking in fetters to the worse abode. King Ólafr keeps Michaelmas Day with great solemnity, and this solemn mass has such an impact on the Icelanders in Norway that they embrace Christianity.⁷⁹ The same sequence occurs with Þangbrandr in Iceland. He sings mass on Michaelmas Day "and made a great solemnity, for it was a great feast". He tells Hallr of Síða that "Michael shall assess all the good that you do, and he is so merciful that he assesses higher everything that he

⁷⁹ *Kristni saga*, ch. 10; *Heimskringla, Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 82.

approves of.⁸⁰ These arguments please Hallr so well that he is baptised and chooses Michael as his guardian angel. It is probable that King Ólafr was the first to have St Michael's toast drunk in Norway.⁸¹

I have now given an account, as best I can, of *where* and *when* the poem was composed, of the environment and the conditions of the poet. The next step is to listen for the characteristics of the man in the poem, and to try to make it a little clearer *how* it came to be composed.

2. The author of *Völuspá* was one of the wisest men of his age, and had received such education as a tenth-century Icelander had available to him. It is rather difficult for the children of the twentieth century to visualise such a man — possessed of less knowledge than any child of confirmation age today, but at the same time having a clearer reason and wiser thought than most educated men of our time, whom specialisation has made narrow of vision, and whom the multifariousness and whirligig of present-day life have made unsteady and butterfly-like in their thought. But if we think of the earliest sages of Greece — or of the wisest countryfolk of Iceland — this can somewhat shorten the distance between us and him. A serious pondering of the deepest reasons of being, perpetually allied to a battle for life, conversations with other wise men searching for the same thing, travel and communication with many people, alternating with great seclusion and solitude — all this goes far to counter-balance school and books in acquiring true education. For this reason one may safely reckon that the author of *Völuspá* often went to the Alþingi or to visit his friends, even in other parts of the country. It is also probable that he went abroad one or

⁸⁰ *Njáls saga*, ch. 100.

⁸¹ On the cult of St Michael cf. for instance F. Paasche, 'St. Michael og hans engle', *Edda* I (1914), 33-74.

more times. The poem demonstrates that he knew how to look at nature, and he undoubtedly used the company of other wise men to talk to them of serious matters. Nor can one doubt that his experience of life was great and hard. The man who makes the destruction and fiery baptism of Ragnarök into a gospel of joy has at some time been in such troubles as to make him feel that all existence is worthless. No one can guess with any certainty what these troubles were. But it cannot be a very out-of-the-way guess that, like Egill, he had lost a son and had to fight a similar battle to come to terms with life. There is nowhere such tenderness in *Völuspá* as when it speaks of Baldr, Óðinn's *child*, and his mother's grief at his death.⁸² It might also have been a personal experience which caused oathbreaking (in breach of a promise of safety) to overshadow all other crimes in the poem's outlook on life.⁸³ Tenderness goes hand in hand with severity and a manly temper. Oathbreakers and murderers receive their due reward, Baldr and Óðinn are avenged, and the gods fight overwhelming opposition to the uttermost, even though they have no hope of victory.⁸⁴

The poet had been brought up to believe in the Æsir. The mythology of *Völuspá* is neither a game nor a pretence. It is the truth which forms the basis of the life of the soul, and which is moved by all new influences. In the difficulties of life the poet first sought the way which this faith provided. I cannot therefore avoid giving some

⁸² Cf. Finnur Jónsson, *Völuspá* (1911), 47. Ólsen points out 'Til Eddakvadene', *Arkiv* XXX (1914), 135, that in three places in *Völuspá* (st. 33, 35, 53) "the poet gives expression to his sympathy by delineating the grief of a woman taking part in the action . . . Either the poet was in fact a woman, or else, with delicate understanding, he lets the sibyl herself speak thus in her female character." I quote this to show that other commentators have taken special note of st. 33, but I consider it indubitable that the poet was a man. He could none the less share the feelings of a woman. But it is in fact the artist's tenderness which weeps there in the person of Frigg (Óðinn could not weep). This matches the general experience that the artist is at once the tenderest and toughest of men.

⁸³ [Professor Nordal has developed this argument further in his essay 'Völu-Steinn', *Íðunn* (1924), 161-78 — Translators' note.]

⁸⁴ See also my commentary on st. 26.

indication of the state of the pagan religion just before the acceptance of Christianity.

The cult of the Æsir would not have given way with so little opposition before Christianity as it did in Norway, and especially in Iceland, if it had ruled undivided over the minds of men. These people were too loth to give way, when they knew what they wanted, for this to happen. But the heathen faith had become too developed, and at the same time too enfeebled, partly because of the widening horizon and spiritual development of the Northern peoples, and partly because of a trickle of influence from their Christian neighbours. Óðinn had become the All-father, was drawing near to becoming omnipotent. People worshipped "him who made the sun", and felt less sure of their own might and main with regard to him than they did with regard to the ancient gods. The character of Baldr was influenced by Christian ideas and became almost milder and gentler than the White Christ of whom the missionaries told, who enlarged his domain after the manner of warrior kings. But Christianity had not yet come so close as to open up a vista of eternal joy and peace. Over the minds of men still hung the old pessimism, the fear of an evil, hidden fate, the conviction that all would perish. All the principal heroic legends told of suffering and fall: Sigurðr Fáfnisbani, the Gjúkungar, Atli, Hrólfr kraki, Hagbarðr and the others, all went the same way. The gods themselves must suffer the same fate. He who sees the shortest distance ahead is happiest. But the powers of endurance were not the same as of old. The spiritual life of the most developed men, the exceptional men in the van of spiritual progress, had become too complex to enable them to be happy at the bidding of the will.⁸⁵ For those who measured the world by an ethical yardstick there was little consolation in the prospect that it would be made new after Ragnarök

⁸⁵ I have written at greater length of the ancient pessimism in an essay on the belief of Egill Skallagrímsson, *Skírnir* (1924), 145-65.

— as corrupt as before. They did not receive the new world in inheritance through the virtues of Líf and Lífþrasir, of Móði and Magni (*Vafþrúðnismál*), but from the blind fates. Was the same game then to be played over and over again? The author of *Völuspá* could have echoed Mynster's hymn "My soul is weary — where shall it find rest?" His philosophy was rich and many-sided, but it lacked cohesion and a goal. It could ease the anguish by splitting the personality, but it could not cure it.

Then the Christian mission (probably Þangbrand's preaching) came into the picture. It probably delivered a simple message: deny the gods who are only dust and ashes, and believe in Christ, the angels and the saints. This was in itself not particularly new, as most people had heard of Christianity. But then came the great news — Doomsday was at hand. This was the last chance to be converted. Now people would be judged by their works, the evil would go to Hell, and the good would dwell in eternal bliss with Christ himself. This end of the world was no meaningless game, where everything was begun again in the same way. This was the end of the battle and the beginning of the true and perfect life. This doctrine could give the poet peace. This was what the old faith had lacked.

Völuspá will never be understood rightly, least of all in its attitude to Christianity, while there is talk of the poet's composing it for a *purpose*, whether to defend heathendom against Christianity (Finnur Jónsson) or to make a way for Christianity by showing that heathendom "bears within itself its own death sentence" (Björn M. Ólsen). If this was the poet's purpose before he began to compose the poem, and while he was engaged in its composition, then his moderation would be inexplicable, whichever side he inclined to. It would be especially difficult to understand the poem's exposition, the poet's inspiration, the dark and lightning-swift narrative, which shows most clearly that the poem is composed as the poet

achieves a new outlook on life, composed because the poet cannot help it, composed in exaltation and without conscious control.

Although much has been said about inspiration, there is normally very little understanding of what it is and how it may be psychologically explained. Every poetaster is apt to talk about "the spirit coming over" him, even though the truth may be that he has spent his whole life searching frantically for spirit, or even for words. All human works may be divided into two classes, according to whether they are done from the desire to achieve an end or from a need that drives from within.⁸⁶ When an external goal is the desired end the steps are many — the ideal towards which the striving aims, the longing and the will to fulfil it, the struggle towards the goal. When an inner need breaks out we cannot distinguish between goal, desire and work. Those who have the strongest will do not know that they possess it, for in them there is no gap between desire and strife. Those who are inspired do not know that they are thinking because their thought is too undivided to examine itself. That is why they think (and they may be right in this) that they have not discovered these thoughts. They have not had to search. The thoughts have come — from the spirit.⁸⁷ Nietzsche has described this most clearly from his viewpoint:

Hat Jemand, Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, einen deutlichen Begriff davon, was Dichter starker Zeitalter

⁸⁶ [For modern discussions of inspiration see C. M. Bowra, *Inspiration in poetry* (1951), and A. E. Housman, *The name and nature of poetry* (1933) — Translators' note.]

⁸⁷ J. P. Jacobsen describes this difference among men in the sphere of the will in *Niels Lyhne*: "Those people . . . appeared to him like centaurs, man and horse in one being, thought and action the same single unit, while he was divided into horse and rider, thought one thing, action another." Bertrand Russell gives a good differentiation between *impulse* and *desire* in his *Principles of social reconstruction* (1916). G. Simmel differentiates in *Goethe* (1913) between "Gezogenwerden vom Ziel" and "Wachsen von der Wurzel her". For Bergson, intuition lies in the fact that thought about the highest things becomes as automatic and accurate as instinct. But most information on inspiration is to be found, directly or indirectly, in the prophets and mystics of the various religions.

Inspiration nannten? Im andren Falle will ich's beschreiben. — Mit dem geringsten Rest von Aberglauben in sich würde man in der That die Vorstellung, bloss Incarnation, bloss Mundstück, bloss Medium übermächtiger Gewalten zu sein, abzuweisenwissen. Der Begriff Offenbarung, in dem Sinn, dass plötzlich, mit unsögicher Sicherheit und Feinheit, Etwas sichtbar, hörbar wird, Etwas, das Einen im Tiefsten erschüttert und umwirft, beschreibt einfach den Thatbestand. Man hört, man sucht nicht; man nimmt, man fragt nicht, wer da giebt; wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf, mit Notwendigkeit, in der Form ohne Zögern — ich habe nie eine Wahl gehabt . . . Alles geschieht im höchsten Grade unfreiwillig, aber wie in einem Sturme von Freiheits-Gefühl, von Unbedingtsein, von Macht, von Göttlichkeit . . . Die Unfreiwilligkeit des Bildes, des Gleichnisses ist das Merkwürdigste; man hat keinen Begriff mehr; was Bild, was Gleichniss ist, Alles bietet sich als der nächste, der richtigste, der einfachste Ausdruck.⁸⁸

At such a temporal crossroads as occurred in Iceland in A.D. 1000 it was as if the nation held its breath, and no one can wonder that people were keener of perception than normally, so that they could notice these wave-motions which are normally drowned in the noise of daily life. *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar hin mesta* tells the following story:

One day at Þvottá, Þórhallr the prophet was staying with Hallr. Hallr lay in his bed, and Þórhallr in another. And one morning, when both were awake, Þórhallr smiled. "Why do you smile?" said Hallr. "I smile," answered Þórhallr, "because many a hillock is opening, and every living being in it,

⁸⁸ F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* in *Werke* (1911), XV 90-1. The authorised English translation by A. M. Ludovici (in vol. 17 of the collected translation, ed. Oscar Levy, 1909-11, repr. 1964, 101-2) renders this thus: "Has any one at the end of the nineteenth century any distinct notion of what poets of a stronger age understood by the word inspiration? If not, I will describe it. If one had the smallest vestige of superstition left in one, it would hardly be possible completely to set aside the idea that one is the mere incarnation, mouthpiece, or medium of an almighty power. The idea of revelation — in the sense that something which profoundly convulses and upsets one becomes suddenly visible and audible with indescribable certainty and accuracy — describes the simple fact. One hears — one does not seek; one takes — one does not ask who gives: a thought suddenly flashes up like lightning, it comes with necessity, without faltering — I have never had any choice in the matter . . . Everything happens quite involuntarily, as if in a tempestuous outburst of freedom, of absoluteness, of power and divinity. The involuntary nature of the figures and similes is the most remarkable thing; one loses all perception of what is imagery and metaphor; everything seems to present itself as the readiest, the truest, and simplest means of expression."

small and great, is packing his bags and flitting." And shortly afterwards those things happened which we will now describe [i.e. Þangbrand's coming to Iceland and his stay at Þvottá].⁸⁹

There is little doubt that the author of *Völuspá* has more than once "seen two worlds", been enraptured, so that he felt that things were being whispered to him which he could not find by racking his brains for them. He has known that the highest bliss and the highest understanding cannot be found by searching for them, only by making the soul sufficiently sensitive and then waiting with tuned strings like the Aeolian harp for the wind. Now his vision opened out so that these scattered and precious moments became connected, raised to the eternal plane, so that the Mighty One would make his dwelling there. This new vision enthralled him. He neither thought nor understood; he saw, he was shown. He did not cast off his paganism. Perhaps its best parts had never been so precious to him as after this uncomprehending spiritual assault on him by the Christian missionary. But with the tolerance which was one of the things which paganism had in greater measure than Christianity (and which was one of the things which caused its fall) he took from the new message what he needed to perfect his philosophy of life. All this happened swiftly, as is common in cases of conversion. It was in fact a triumph of faith: a divided soul which found the truth which could make it whole — but this victory appeared at the same time in poetic inspiration. The fate of the world showed itself to him in one image after another. But these images and similes which made existence clear to the poet make his poem dark for us of the present age — this poem which still fascinates the minds of men and is yet as imperfect a picture of the poet's spiritual ordeal as the inshore eddies are of the surf-surge of the open ocean.

⁸⁹ *Flateyjarbók*, ed. G. Vigfússon and C. R. Unger (1860-68), I 421; ed. F. Guðmundsson and V. Bjarnar (1944-45), I 468. Cf. also Ólsen, *Um kristnitökuna*, 58-9. He points out how similar Þorhall's description is to st. 48 of *Völuspá*.

3. *Introite, nam et hic dii sunt*

*Völuspá*⁹⁰ does not state in one word how the world and its first dwellers, giants and gods, came into being. In the beginning there was only Ginnungagap, the great void. Then we are told that the sons of Burr raised the earth out of the sea and made it habitable, created Miðgarðr, marked out the paths of the planets and ordered the passing of time.

This great leap in the poem's narrative might be explained, it is true, by the loss of one or more stanzas. But this assumption is unnecessary and improbable. The poet has bypassed the popular ideas on the origin of giants, gods and world, which are well-known from *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Gylfaginning*, because he could not believe implicitly in them — and he had to stop somewhere. The beginning itself had to be a mystery, for the simple reason that the mind of man cannot stop at the last course or the deepest foundation. One can go back over a number of steps, say that the earth rests on an elephant's back and the elephant stands on a turtle, as an Indian myth has it. But what is the turtle standing on?

On one point, which is not explicitly stated, one can doubtless assume that the poet was in agreement with the popular concept. He considered the giants the oldest of living beings (*ár of borna*). If the believers in the Æsir of the ninth century could have foreseen that Darwin would become famous a thousand years later for the strange new doctrine that men were descended from apes, they might well have thought this ridiculous, for

⁹⁰ In this part 3 I shall attempt to expound *Völuspá's* philosophy of life in such a way that every present-day person can comprehend it. Far be it from me to "take my text" from *Völuspá*. I do not want to say anything other than what the poet had in mind, and preferably to say it in words similar to those that he would have used if he had set out to tell the same truths in modern speech. Nevertheless I cannot avoid its being like a translation into a foreign language, and thereby a falsification — "traduttore traditore". We use concepts where our forefathers preferred to use images. All our thinking is soaked in Greek and Hebrew culture, even where the words are the same as of old, e.g. what is *guð* now and what was *god* in the tenth century? We cannot avoid using the word *sin*, which is a totally Christian concept, and so on. The poem's sequence is naturally taken from the "emended" version.

according to the ancient mythology the gods themselves (and therefore also men, created by the Æsir and offspring of Heimdallr) were descended from *apes*, for this word, *api*, is one of the old names for giants. As the thralls of *Rígsþula* are descended from Ái and Edda, great-grandfather and great-grandmother, yeomen from Afi and Amma, grandfather and grandmother, and earls from Faðir and Móðir, so men of old understood that the giants, the least developed and least perfect of beings, must also be older than gods and men. Evil beings were not fallen angels of light, but earthbound creatures in a low state of development, inhabitants of caves and mountains. It is true that there is a fall in *Völuspá*, but it is understood in a different—and more natural—way than the Fall of the Bible.

Óðinn and his brothers are called "sons of Burr" in *Völuspá* as in other sources. But Burr is a giant and his wife of giant kin. No source attempts to explain how this one branch of the giant-family rose so high over its forefathers. The myths are as wise as the scientists there. No one knows how or why one tribe of apes became the forefathers of mankind.

What raises the plant out of the earth? Is it not as if the sun draws it towards itself? What makes man rise out of an animal struggle for life and the necessities of life? Is there not some spiritual sun which draws him upwards? All doubt is caused by what man observes in himself — he feels like a string tugged by opposing forces: matter and spirit, evil and good, inertia and life. These forces are in him, his spiritual life has caught fire between them, like a spark between two electrodes. But they are also outside him, are greater than he: the whole world has come about through their conflict and cooperation.

The gods are descended from giants. The giants' nature is their heritage before they fall. But at the same time they are more than giants. What has raised them up, where are they going? It cannot be said that the author of *Völuspá* had an answer to this question when

he composed the first part of the poem. But he answered it before he had done, and the poem has turned out in such a way that it is probable that he viewed the end at the beginning, saw everything in a single overall vision. The main points of his philosophy of life are these: there are two opposing worlds, the one of uncreated matter, to which the giants stand nearest and of which they are the representatives, and the other the kingdom of the almighty god. Gods and men have reached various intermediate stages between these worlds. From this viewpoint all discord and conflict become understandable. The aim of this conflict is to be rid of the influences which draw one downwards and to gain a lasting contact with the highest god.

But this road is long. It cannot be travelled without accident, nor without losing many by the wayside. The giants do not let their rights of possession go until the last moment. Hel demands her portion.

Yet *Völuspá* first describes the golden age of the gods, the life on *Iðavellir*, the carefree life of youth and rest after the most exhausting labours of creation. This part of the mythology is best marked by the words of deep insight: *var þeim vettergis vant ór gulli*. They had enough, i.e. were contented with what they had. But this golden age only bears witness to their first joy at having grown up beyond the giants and having ordered the world. There is no question of perfection. For now comes the acid test which decides who shall rise even higher and who fall back again. The giants look for a chance to tempt the gods. The gods allow themselves to be led astray and corrupted, not at once, but step by step. I shall try to trace these steps here, to make clearer the wise thought set forth in the poem's dark images.

The first step is least clear. But it is undoubtedly nearest to the poem's spirit to consider that it is the *þrjár þursa meyjar* who put an end to the golden age and the joy of the *Æsir*, fair and crafty giant-maids, sent to

induce covetousness and injustice among the gods and to prepare the stage for Gullveig. This is the point in the tale of the gods where Óðinn blends blood with Loki, Freyr weds Gerðr, the gods receive from the giants. But the most dangerous of dealings with enemies is to accept their gifts.

Though the next step is clearer, it is still hard to follow. The poet knew the ancient story of the war of the Æsir and the Vanir. The Vanir ruled over wealth and fair harvests, and it is probable that the Æsir fought for gain. But this was a sign that their joy and innocence were over. Instead of stating outright that the gods stole the gold of the Vanir, the poet sees the events in images. The gold comes in the shape of a sibyl, a fair and attractive witch-wife. The Æsir slay this Gullveig, burn her three times, but she escapes unharmed from them, and continues her activity. Then the Æsir demand compensation from the Vanir. The war begins at Óðinn's bidding, and battle enters the world. The Vanir do well in the war, it appears, because of their knowledge of magic. Here there is a gap in the poem, where the peace made and the hostages exchanged between the Æsir and the Vanir were described, as was the contract between the citadel-builder and the Æsir.

The gods themselves have slain one another, and the *borðveggr borgar Ása* is in ruins. Even though the giants may have been behind this trouble, they have still not shown any open enmity towards the gods. And now there comes a builder from Jötunheimar who offers to repair the damage so as to make it better than before, to build a new and stronger fortress. It is true that the price is fearful, if it ever comes to paying the builder his fee: Freyja, the sun and the moon. But the gods are still like children in knowledge and experience, and Loki, the enemy in their camp, can easily make them believe that they are in no danger. The greed for wealth has now set its mark on the Æsir. They who formerly *hátimbruðu hörg ok hof* now

want to have others work for them, and try to trick them out of their rewards. Loki makes use of their own giant-inherited quality of inertia.

The builder completes his task and demands his fee. Then the gods wake as from sleep and ask who has caused this terrible dilemma. For now there are only two choices open to them — either to give Freyja, the sun and the moon back to the giants (make the world again into dead uncreation) or break their oaths to the builder. The latter choice must be made. The oaths, *mál öll meginlig*, are broken. Now the world of gods and men is totally corrupt. Now the giants need only await the harvest of their sowing.

It is an especially noteworthy idea to make oathbreaking the cause of the "fall" of the gods. What are breaches of oath or promise in their nature? Nothing but inconsistency and disharmony. One part, one strand of man's temperament, promises that which the whole cannot perform. The keeping of one's word is the vital nerve of all ethics: to be punctilious in carrying out promises to others and in carrying out one's own intentions. He who is constantly in accord with the *best* in himself, who is always whole and sincere, cannot be a bad man. He who is constantly in accord with the *worst* in himself can never be dangerous, because no one could be mistaken in him. "But because thou art lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. iii, 16).

The dual nature of the gods causes their oathbreaking. They want to use the giants, and think the end justifies the means. They do not understand that the strongest fortress round Ásgarðr was their own innocence. They fall into a trap from which crime is the only way out.

The author of *Völuspá* could not have drawn this understanding of the fall from Christianity. The biblical fall is not nearly so well explained. Adam and Eve are created sinless, in the image of God. Whence came the serpent's rights in them? From whom did he receive his

power? Besides, Adam and Eve did not have the same responsibility for the commandments which they were bidden to obey as the Æsir for the oaths which they themselves had sworn. *Völuspá* harmonises much better with the outlook on life of the present age. Man is not a fallen angel but a beast, a giant, an ape on the way to becoming like the gods. God's likeness is not a cradle gift but the final goal of a long advance. Sin has not come into the world because of any whim of the fates, but is a natural need of that advance. As we do not know life without death except on the lowest plane, so we do not know growth without sin. But life alters its aspect not a little according to whether we are constantly approaching or receding from the divine image.

God is faithful. He keeps his promises to the last iota. But Christianity calls the devil traitor, liar and father of lies. It is noticeable that popular opinion has corrected this view of the devil. Nick is a most reliable old thing. His every word is literally true. The giants are the same — their faithfulness and the reliability of their promises are a byword. This is thought out quite correctly. Nick and the giants are, like God, of one world, whole and undivided. That is why they are totally self-consistent.

Thus the undecided mind must look on the matter. The two opposites are in perfect balance. Discord — sin — is found only in that part of existence which is on the way between them.

After the breaking of the oaths the poem grows darker. The refrain is no longer about the counsels of the holy gods, but the jeering question *Vituð ér enn — eða hva?* Yet there is still much life-force in the world. The ash still stands, green all over and bedewed. And the path of the gods does not lead directly downwards. Óðinn tries to save the situation. The gods have been short of wisdom. Cannot more wisdom repair what has happened — or at least block its effects?

The Æsir's counsel of salvation is to give Heimdall's hearing and Óðinn's sight in pawn to Mímir in return for a drink from the well of wisdom. In this the poet's insight is seen. For hitherto the gods have possessed the child's acute senses and undeveloped thought. Now they sell their sensitivity for knowledge. Much pondering usually blunts observation.

It is doubtful how the poet understood this pawning. Is it because Óðinn is one-eyed that the gods overlook the mistletoe? Or is it because Heimdall's hearing is impaired that he does not blow his horn until everything is in uproar? Only one thing is clear — this is a new step in the corruption of the gods. The wisdom which Óðinn receives from Mímir and the foster-child of the giants, the sibyl who tells the story, proves only a hindrance to him. An alliance with the giants must always be a retrogressive step. Wisdom gives Óðinn fear. Now he has become the *Yggjungur*, "fearful", of the Æsir. But fear does not turn the fates back. It can see but not overcome. This pessimistic view of the perceptive man is also apparent in *Hávamál*:

Snotrs manns hjarta
verður sjaldan glatt . . .
örlög sín
viti engi fyrir,
þeim er sorgalausastr sefi.⁹¹

These are virtually the words of Ecclesiastes: "For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."⁹²

Óðinn foresees Ragnarök. He begins to gather his forces and sends the Valkyries out to choose men. But at the same time he increases the corruption of the world, sets kings against one another, implants hatred among kinsmen and is at length considered to cause "all evil".

⁹¹ *Hávamál* st. 55-6.

⁹² Eccl. i, 18.

And when it comes to the test the Einherjar can do nothing against the overwhelming odds. The gods bind the wolf, Þórr beats the trolls, the Æsir try to save Baldr, to defend him from death and to call him back from Hel, Höðr is slain, Loki is punished. But this is all either bungled or at best stopgap work. The world is corrupt. It can be purified only through fire.

The description of the torments of the wicked and of the age of beasts preceding Ragnarök appears in *Völuspá* as if it were the result of what went before. The governors of the world have been guilty of infamy, therefore the world is out of joint. But the poet's philosophy of life is in fact founded on induction, not deduction. He did not reason: "Because the gods are corrupt the earth must be the valley of the shadow of death;" but "A world like this must be governed by imperfect powers." He knew humanity. It did not come up to his ethical standards. He did not know the gods. But he did not think that there was so great a gulf between gods and men that one doom would not overtake both in the end. In this respect he is totally heathen. He took the scattered myths of the people: of the strife of gods and giants, of Baldr's death, the end of the world and the fall of the gods, tied them together, gave sight to the blind fates, and made ethics into the fatal thread of being.

This was the path of thought which the poet was treading when he encountered Christianity itself, the Christian gospel which contained both the most terrible threat and the most wonderful promise. Otherwise the points which he took from the new religion would have been only new patches on an old garment, and would have clashed with all the poem's basic tenets. But he was man enough to be able to use the new light, not to reject the heathen riddle of life, but to solve it by its brightness. He did not break down the religion of the Æsir, he perfected it. That is why *Völuspá* is a living whole viewed both as art and as a philosophy of life.

Baldr and Höðr can largely thank Christ that they become the lords of the reborn world. Yet it was not an unknown thought to those who had been brought up on the tale of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani that one way to the highest honour was to suffer death for innocence. In this way a ray of the light of a better day could be seen in the middle of the worst corruption. Loki's counsels failed no less than Óðinn's. He intended to deal the gods a mortal blow by Baldr's death, but in fact he lifted Baldr onto a new plane of perfection. Nothing can destroy the man who is free from sin. Therefore *men* who are good and true to their oaths will also survive Ragnarök and enjoy perpetual bliss.

Now Ragnarök begins — the event which imprints its stamp on all Norse mythology and which Grundtvig considered was enough by itself to make the Norse more magnificent than the Greek. The poet has cast this story out of the broken silver of popular mythology, and shaped it with the power of his imagination, so that it will bear his mark as long as Norse mythology is known and studied.

Who wins, gods or giants? In fact neither. As Þórr leaves the Miðgarðsormr dead, but dies himself from its poison, so all who fight in this carnage perish in it. What happens is this: the area of quarrel between matter and spirit is divided. The corrupt returns for ever to the earth, while the best is completely saved.

The nature of evil is to frustrate and deny: cold and darkness, lethargy and death. That is why death (and not torment) is the only thing which by logical reasoning falls to evil's share when the estate of existence is divided. In this respect the author of *Völuspá* is totally opposed to Christianity. This contemporary of Hallfreðr is not afraid of Hell, does not even acknowledge it. The torments which are mentioned in the poem are of Norse, heathen origin: water and cold. And they are not eternal. According to *Völuspá* immortality is not

intended for every man. It must be earned. This is the same idea as Ibsen brings forward in *Peer Gynt*, and which many outstanding men have held both before and since.

Evil is not conquered. It is eternal, like good. It has demanded its own again: all that had not yet developed beyond discord and oathbreaking. But the intercourse of good and evil is over. And thereby all conflict is ended.

But good lives on. Baldr and Höðr, the brothers who, each in his own way, were slain for their innocence, become the chief of the gods. Now *hinn riki* comes to his realm, the kingdom which has been prepared for him. He has taken no direct part in any of these events, but his existence could be inferred from the conflict itself, like the existence of an invisible planet from its effect on the path of another, visible one. All those who strove forward have made their way towards him — and among them the ancient gods. As soon as the world has reached a certain stage of perfection through development and suffering, he comes of his own accord. Then the goal of existence has been reached. This is quite simply a conception of the world's destiny, formed from the individual's highest religious experience, and can be understood only by those who know something of this experience. *Hinn riki* is neither Christ nor Óðinn, but the poet's own highest divine ideal.

In this way *Völuspá* ends the world's story. Popular belief, as it appears in *Vafþrúðnismál*, sees the end no more than the beginning: there the avengers and the young gods — and even the giants, for Mjólnir is mentioned — live on after Surt's fire. Rebirth there is only a renewed beginning of the old tale. One can admittedly imagine, in accordance with the philosophy of life of *Völuspá*, that a new wave rises out of death and tries to raise itself up to life, and so one after another. But those who have once made contact with the highest have no need to take part in this struggle. And the poet did not think so. He had

found rest for his weary soul, and received it gladly. That was only human. The human spirit never digs the foundation out of a deep valley but from time to time it demands a roof over its head. Though space is infinite, the weakness of our sight makes it into a vault. Vision sets limits at the distance where it fails.

SOME ASPECTS OF
ARONS SAGA HJÖRLEIFSSONAR

BY JOHN PORTER

I

ARON HJÖRLEIFSSON was born in 1199, the year in which Snorri Sturluson turned twenty-one and improved his shaky financial position by marrying Herdís Bersadóttir.¹ The wedding took place at Hvammr and was attended by, among others, the priest Guðmundr Arason,² who became bishop of Hólar four years later. In the same year Snorri's brother Sighvatr became a father for the second time. On the night of this birth the child's grandmother had a dream in which a man appeared from Hjarðarholt, where the confinement was taking place, and announced that the baby had been delivered, was a boy, and had been named Vígsterkr. This turned out to be more prophetic than the reality, for the messenger from Hjarðarholt on the following morning brought the news that the boy had been named after his grandfather and was to be called Sturla.³

No such omen surrounds the birth of Aron, whose life was destined to be so powerfully affected by both Guðmundr Arason and Sturla Sighvatsson, but he too was given a family name and called after his great-grandfather Aron, the son of Bárðr the Black,⁴ both of whom are known to us from *Dorgils saga ok Hafliða*. On his father's side Aron appears to have been connected with Brandr inn örvi, though the exact nature of this relationship remains rather obscure.⁵ At all events both sides of the family

¹ *Sturl.* I 237. Quotations from both *Íslendinga saga* and *Arons saga* are from *Sturlunga saga* (*Sturl.*), ed. Jón Jóhannesson et.al. (1946).

² *Sturl.* I 142.

³ *Sturl.* I 236-7.

⁴ *Sturl.* II 238.

⁵ See Hermann Pálsson, 'Athugasemd um Arons sögu', *Saga* (1961), 299-303.

contained men of admirable qualities, though not ones blessed, or cursed, with the over-riding ambition for wealth and power which marked many of the descendants of Hvamm-Sturla.

Another of the Sturlungs has an important connection with Aron for apart from the biography of his life which is known as *Arons saga* the other main source of information about him is the *Íslendinga saga* of Snorri's nephew, Sturla Þórðarson. These two sources corroborate, contradict, and supplement each other in a highly interesting fashion, especially in the rather contrasting pictures they provide of Aron's character, as I shall show later.

Arons saga tells us that Hjörleifr, his wife Sigríðr, and their family lived at Miklaholt on the Snæfellsnes peninsula. Hjörleifr himself is said to have been a well-to-do, generous and popular man, who was renowned for his accomplishments, one of which was his curious ability to behead any ox one-handed or two oxen if he swung his axe in both hands. It appears that some time before 1210 he and his wife separated. Sigríðr moved out of Miklaholt with Aron and her third son, Bárðr, and went to stay at Hítardalr with a distant relative, Þorlákr Ketilsson. Þorlákr was a close friend of Sighvatr Sturluson and he was acting as foster-father to the young Sturla, so it was here that the two future enemies first met as children. Initially they got along well enough together, but the author notes that their games were subjects of fierce contest, and that their friendly relationship began to worsen. At this point Aron left Hítardalr in the company of his uncle Helgi, who eventually took him to Flatey in Breiðafjörðr, where he stayed with Eyjólfur Kársson. Eyjólfur had married Herdís, one of the daughters of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, who was of the Seldælir family to which Aron's mother also belonged. This family tie was later to prove of great benefit to Aron in his outlawry. Eyjólfur was,

furthermore, a great friend of Guðmundr Arason, by now bishop of Hólar, whose quarrels with the secular powers were at this time reaching a new pitch of intensity. So it was a perfectly natural outcome of family loyalty that led Aron into the company of the bishop's men when the dispute became acute. At Christmas in 1221 Hólar was evacuated under threat of attack by Sighvatr's eldest son, Tumi, who then occupied the cathedral establishment while Guðmundr and some seventy of his followers, including Eyjólfur and Aron, set up camp on the island of Málmei in Skagafjörður. Here they had great difficulty in keeping themselves alive, especially as Tumi's coastguards prevented foraging parties from landing on the mainland.

In February of 1222 it was decided to send a raiding party to Hólar under the leadership of Eyjólfur, Aron, and a third man, Einarr skemmingr. Here Aron had his first taste of combat. The outcome of the raid was the death of Tumi. Although Aron apparently inflicted a great wound on Tumi, his part in the murder is not made explicit, but it is clear that Sturla held him largely responsible because he later had him outlawed for the deed. An earlier reprisal on a larger scale was the huge armed expedition which Sighvatr and Sturla mounted two months later against the bishop's new hideout on the island of Grímsey. In this, the notorious Grímseyjarför of April 1222, the defenders were hopelessly outnumbered. Aron, using Tumi Sighvatsson's weapons, was fiercely attacked by Sturla in person, and left for dead on the foreshore, but with the assistance of Eyjólfur he managed to escape to the mainland and out of Sturla's vengeful reach for the time. Eyjólfur himself was not so fortunate. Wounded and crippled by Sturla's men, his last heroic stand ended beneath their spears on the skerry to which he had swum.

Now the story turns to an account of Aron's wanderings around Iceland, a tale of continual concealment, pursuit by Sturla's *flugumenn*, hardship, privation,

and the ever-present danger of sudden death, which is only narrowly averted on several occasions. Aron did not seem to be able to bear the strain of outlawry as well as some of his more famous predecessors in the profession. After four unsettled years on the run he managed in 1226 to obtain a passage to Norway, with the help of Haraldr Sæmundarson and his brothers (the grandsons of Jón Loptsson of Oddi), but before he went he dealt one further blow against his enemies by killing Sigmundr snagi, who had been in Sturla's force on Grímsey.

On arrival in Þrándheimr he again met up with Bishop Guðmundr and spent the first winter in the retinue of Earl Skúli, whom he deserted in order to make his famous pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Jordan. On his return he joined the household of King Hákon in Bergen. Even here Sturla sought him out, but owing to Aron's powerful protection, had to be content with piercing his former companion only with a glare. Now, in contrast to his earlier experiences, Aron enjoyed many favours and lived in great comfort and honour until his death about 1255.

II

Although we have a fairly cohesive and coherent account of Aron's life, it is only by a series of historical accidents that we are able to piece it together at all. The saga no longer exists as a whole in its original form. We find the last half of it in a vellum fragment from the first half of the fifteenth century (AM 551 d B 4to). This once belonged to Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson of Skálholt, in whose time it was apparently much more complete than it is now, since his scribe, Jón Erlendsson, made a copy of it some time before the year 1665 (AM 212 fol.). Originally this copy contained only two lacunæ, representing gaps in the exemplar, but since then two other sections of it have been lost. Fortunately most of

the lost material is in fact covered by what remains of the vellum, and the remaining gap can be supplied by another seventeenth-century manuscript (AM 426 fol.) which is a copy of the one made by Jón.

Jón's copy was once part of a larger codex containing some thirteen sagas. It survived a loan to one of the bailiffs at Skálholt,⁶ and eventually passed into the hands of Bishop Björn Þorleifsson of Hólar, to whom Árne Magnússon, in 1699, writes about it in urgent tones:

Visse eg bok i heimi sem Monfrere villdi hafa firir þessa ad utvega, þá mundi eg færast i alla auka til ad fá þá sömu, því eg villdi giarnan þessa eiga . . .⁷

The other copy, made between 1659 and 1667, is likewise part of a large compilation, distinguished chiefly by three original paintings which preface it; one of Egill Skalla-Grímsson, another of Grettir, and the third of Guðmundr Eyjólfsson. The book was assembled at the instigation and expense of the well-known Magnús Jónsson of Vigur on Ísafjarðardjúp. On his death his library passed to his son-in-law, Páll Vídalín, whose close association with Árne Magnússon was no doubt responsible for the safe arrival of the manuscript in Copenhagen.

We are still faced with the problem of the two sections which disappeared from the vellum between the time of its writing and the time of Jón Erlendsson's copy. No text of the separate *Arons saga* now exists from which these gaps might be filled.

In the mid-fourteenth century, however, the author, or compiler, of *Guðmundar saga byskups*, had recourse to *Arons saga* in putting his own work together, and it seems very likely that he used the original *Arons saga* for his purpose. His reason for referring to it at all was almost certainly that it gave fuller information about the Grímsey expedition of 1222 and about Aron's outlawry than did his other main source, Sturla's *Íslendinga saga*, and

⁶ Jón Helgason, *Úr Bréfabókum Brynjólfs Biskups Sveinssonar* (1942), 194.

⁷ *Arne Magnussons Private Brevveksling* (1920), 566.

also because its general tone provokes more sympathy for Bishop Guðmundr. It thus provides us with invaluable material for reconstituting the text of *Arons saga*.

This manuscript, the oldest existing of *Guðmundar saga byskups*, is often referred to as *Codex Resenianus*, or *Resensbók* (AM 399 4to), after its former owner, Peder Resen, the seventeenth-century Danish jurist and historian. He donated his whole collection of books and manuscripts to the University Library in Copenhagen. Árni borrowed this particular volume from the library in 1706. Had he not been such an eminent person in his field the book would perhaps have been recalled. As it turned out, it was still in his possession twenty-two years later. This hardly unparalleled misdemeanour was of course extremely fortunate, since the manuscript was thereby saved from the great fire of 1728, which destroyed most of the library's manuscripts.

Resensbók is now defective, but a late sixteenth-century vellum copy of it (AM 394 4to) contains all the relevant material from *Arons saga*, and thus the two gaps can be fairly satisfactorily filled.

The fact that *Resensbók*, written about 1350, uses material from *Arons saga* provides a lower limit for the date of the saga's composition. The author's own reference to Sturla Þórðarson's *Hákonar saga*,⁸ which was probably finished in 1265, gives the upper limit. Between these two termini scholarly opinion has varied quite widely. Guðbrandur Vigfússon⁹ and Finnur Jónsson¹⁰ dated the saga to before 1270 and before 1280 respectively, views which seem to me to disregard much of the evidence, and to have their base in hazy speculation.

Guðbrandur produces more evidence for his belief, albeit tenuous. In the author's conviction that Aron's

⁸ *Sturl.* II 271.

⁹ Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa Sögur* (1858-78), I lxxvii.

¹⁰ Finnur Jónsson, *Den Oldnorske og Oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* (1923), 762-3.

soul *hafi gott heimili fengit*¹¹ he sees an indication that the narrative was composed not long after Aron's death, a conclusion for which there seems small warrant. The idea that the observed differences between the saga and *Íslendinga saga* point to an almost simultaneous date of composition is more interesting, but bears little weight in the face of other evidence, as I show below. His most solid claim is that the events at Grímsey and Valshamarr are derived from eye-witness accounts, and that this can be seen in the description of Sturla which is "verified" by the words *sem allir hafa eitt um talat, þeir er hann hafa sét*,¹² and also by the phrase *hafa þeir menn þat sagt, er þar váru*, which occurs at the point where Aron evades his captors at Valshamarr.¹³ In the absence of any comprehensive study of the problems raised by such apparent references to oral sources it is unwise to build dating theories upon them.¹⁴ In these instances, moreover, the author does not claim to have spoken directly with eye-witnesses of events, and they therefore provide no tangible clue as to how long afterwards the narrative was composed.

Most of the evidence points to a somewhat later date of composition. The style of the work is certainly not that generally associated with the thirteenth century, as Finnur Jónsson himself acknowledged; nor does the author display the knowledge that one expects of a thirteenth-century Icelander. His use of the word *valdsmadr*¹⁵ is a case in point. This makes its first appearance in the language after the fall of the Republic, with the introduction of the new law codes *Járnsíða* (1271) and *Jónsbók* (1280). It is true that elsewhere in the saga *höfðingi* is used of secular chieftains, but the single and easy employment of *valdsmadr* is sufficient evidence that the

¹¹ *Sturl.* II 278.

¹² *Sturl.* II 244.

¹³ *Sturl.* II 267.

¹⁴ See Walter Baetke, *Über die Entstehung der Isländersagas* (1956), ch. 3; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Dating the Icelandic Sagas* (1958), 95, n. 1.

¹⁵ *Sturl.* II 237.

term had gained current acceptance at the time of writing.

Likewise, his acquaintance with the laws of the republican period is suspect. He writes that Aron received a heavier sentence of outlawry than the other members of the bishop's party — *at hann var gerr skógarmaðr ok óheilagr ok óferjandi ok óráðandi öllum bjargráðum*.¹⁶ Björn M. Ólsen points out that in fact all Tumi's attackers were liable by law to a sentence of full outlawry for their part in the raid, and that Sturla and his father would have had no inclination to leniency for those who had killed their kinsman.¹⁷

The clearest indication of a late date, however, is given by the existence of extracts from two poems by Þormóðr prestr Óláfsson.¹⁸ A man of this name is mentioned in an annal for the year 1338, where he is described as both *prestr* and *skáld*.¹⁹ Despite Guðbrandur Vigfússon's arbitrary rejection of the apparent link,²⁰ there can be little doubt that this man is the author of these verses, as well as of one in praise of Gunnarr of Hlíðarendi which is found in the *Kálfalækjarbók* text of *Njáls saga* from c. 1350.²¹ It has been suggested that the verses may be interpolations in an earlier text,²² but apart from the misplacing of two of them, which could well be a copyist's error, there is no concrete evidence to support the idea. *Íslendinga saga* is altogether ignorant of them but on the other hand they were in the manuscript which the writer of *Resensbók* used.

It seems fairly clear then that some part of the

¹⁶ *Sturl.* II 258.

¹⁷ B. M. Ólsen, 'Um afstöðu Íslendinga sögu og Aróns sögu', *Safn til Sögu Íslands* III 267. The phrase *óráðandi öllum bjargráðum*, as opposed to the *óráðandi öll bjargráð* of *Grágás* has also been held by Ólsen to indicate the author's ignorance of the older law. In fact, the *-umm* abbreviation above the end of each word in AM 426 fol. (the other chief manuscripts are all defective at this point) has been added in a later hand.

¹⁸ *Sturl.* II 247-8, 252, 256.

¹⁹ G. Storm, *Íslandske Annaler indtil 1578* (1888), 350.

²⁰ *loc. cit.*

²¹ See Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Brennu-Njáls saga* (1954), 190 n., 477.

²² Finnur Jónsson, *loc. cit.*

fourteenth century must have elapsed before *Arons saga* was composed. Since it is likely that the author's intentions were in some way linked with the contemporary pressure for Bishop Guðmundr's canonisation,²³ we may perhaps be forgiven the otherwise rather subjective conclusion that it was composed in the second rather than the first quarter of the century. At all events the compiler of *Resensbók* was quick enough to seize on the material offered by the saga and to use it for his own particular ends. Although no definite conclusions can be drawn about the way in which he obtained *Arons saga*, their apparent closeness in time leads one to think that the original version may well have been the one used in *Guðmundar saga byskups*.

III

As mentioned above, much information about Aron and his activities is contained in Sturla's *Íslendinga saga*. A comparison between these two narratives is interesting not only for the discrepant accounts of Aron's character, or the different attitudes behind the separate authors' treatment of him, but also for the light it might shed on their literary relationship, and on the biographer's sources of information.

Björn M. Ólsen has already written a study of this and related questions (quoted above), and the following discussion is indebted to the stimulus of his scholarship. He first poses four hypotheses: Either the author of *Íslendinga saga* had *Arons saga* before him, or the author of *Arons saga* had *Íslendinga saga* before him, or the authors of both sagas had a common original, or both sagas are independent.²⁴

If the dating of *Arons saga* is accepted as correct then the first notion becomes impossible. Moreover, such a

²³ See Bishop Jón Helgason, *Íslands Kirke indtil Reformationen* (1925), 145-7; *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder*, V 538-42.

²⁴ *op. cit.*, 254.

statement over-simplifies the problem, for "dependence" may be manifested in ways more devious than an exact correspondence of phraseology, and to prove that an author did not have a certain book *fyrir sjer* does not say the last word about relationships between two works. Thus, although Ólsen provides a satisfactory answer in one sense, by demonstrating that neither saga actually copies the other, his immediate conclusion that they are therefore independent strikes one as a little hasty, or at least vaguely phrased. For this reason, rather than because of massive disagreement with his general argument and answer, a re-examination of the question seems in order.

Arons saga usually has higher figures for the number of men involved in a particular action. Thus it says that there were eighteen men in Aron's group of defenders on Grímsey, where *Íslendinga saga* gives the number as eleven.²⁵ Five or six men are said to be in the boat in which Aron makes his escape, against four in the older work;²⁶ and twenty men are said to have been sent to spy on Aron when he was staying in Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr, whereas *Íslendinga saga* mentions four only.²⁷ In the first vital passage from *Resensbók* the number of men taking part in the attack on Hólar is given as thirty-five, against thirty in *Íslendinga saga*.²⁸ On the other hand the latter says that fifteen men came to Valshamarr with Sturla, whereas the biography gives eleven.²⁹ Little or no significance can, in my view, be attached to these variations in number, since none of them has any particular point or effect. They certainly tend to indicate that the author of *Arons saga* was not copying from Sturla's written account, but they cannot really be used to argue that proportions have been increased

²⁵ *Sturl.* I 291; II 245.

²⁶ *Sturl.* I 292; II 250.

²⁷ *Sturl.* I 305; II 259.

²⁸ *Sturl.* I 287; II 247.

²⁹ *Sturl.* I 307; II 266.

during a longer circulation of the story in oral tradition, as Björn M. Ólsen suggests. It would reflect more to the credit of Aron and the bishop's men if their numbers on Grímsey, or in the Hólar raid, had been *less*, whereas in the one case where we should expect to find an increase, in the Valshamarr episode, the figure is actually smaller.

Two other instances, however, do appear to bear out Björn's contention that the inflation has some point. *Íslendinga saga* says that two priests, Snorri and Knútr, were captured in the churchyard on Grímsey, while *Arons saga* names them as only two among some men (*nökkura menn*) who were selected for torture.³⁰ The figure of compensation paid to Sturla for the illegal protection of Aron by Einarr and Sveinbjörn Hrafnsson is raised from ten hundreds in Sturla to sixty hundreds in *Arons saga*.³¹ Both these cases reflect the general trend of the latter to blacken the deeds of Aron's enemies. Since Sturla says that it was his brother Böðvarr who paid over this money at the assembly his account is more likely to be the accurate one.

In many of their particulars the two stories disagree about what actually happened at certain times and places, and if we bear in mind that *Íslendinga saga* is in all probability older, and certainly more sober in tone, then some of these divergences appear rather important.

Sturla tells that Einarr skemmingr died in Málmei at Easter, and that the bishop and his men did not move to Grímsey until after the festival, but in *Arons saga* we are told that the move took place before Easter and that Einarr died on Grímsey.³² Consequently Sturla has nothing about the brutal desecration of Einarr's grave and corpse, an episode in *Arons saga* which is clearly intended to discredit the Sturlungs.³³ It is just as

³⁰ *Sturl.* I 292; II 249.

³¹ *Sturl.* I 305; II 259.

³² *Sturl.* I 288; II 244.

³³ *Sturl.* II 249.

possible, of course, that Sturla himself is guilty of suppression here, since he was not above the odd judicious omission when he thought fit. Of a similar nature is the discrepancy the two accounts show in the matter of the priests Snorri and Knútr, who, according to *Íslendinga saga* were seized *in the churchyard*, while the author of *Arons saga* has them dragged *out of the church* before being tortured and castrated.

Corresponding to this are certain strong differences which, in the younger narrative, show Aron himself in a decidedly more heroic light. *Íslendinga saga* says that after the defence of Grímsey had crumbled and the attackers had gone inland in search of the bishop, Aron lay helpless in the seaweed on the foreshore until Eyjólfur came and carried him away to the boat in which he made his escape. In *Arons saga* the hero was sitting upright with his weapons, surrounded by the dead and wounded, bloody but unbowed, and was well able to walk unaided along the shore with Eyjólfur.³⁴ At Valshamarr, Hafþórir's lone journey from the lamb-shed to the farm is represented as a disobedience, for Aron had told him to wait *svá at þeir gengi báðir saman heim*, but according to Sturla *þeir Aron gerðu þat ráð* that Hafþórir should proceed alone to the farm buildings to see what was happening.³⁵ The strongest difference of all is in the whole story of the killing of Sigmundur snagi. In *Íslendinga saga* this episode shows Aron in the worst possible light. Accompanied by Starkaðr Bjarnarson he goes to Eyðihús and sees Sigmundur and another man working in a stackyard. *Vildi Aron eigi á hann leita*, writes Sturla. They wait until it is pitch dark. Starkaðr enters the house and asks for refreshment, while Aron conceals himself outside near the door. There is no water inside. Starkaðr asks Sigmundur to go with him to fetch some, and arranges it so that Sigmundur steps out first,

³⁴ *Sturl.* I 292; II 250.

³⁵ *Sturl.* I 307; II 266.

speaking loudly to alert Aron, who kills him, defenceless and unsuspecting as soon as he sets foot over the threshold. Then they make free with the farm for the night.³⁶ It seems significant that *Arons saga* provides no convincing alternative to this tale, merely saying that Aron went there alone, and that the outcome was that Sigmundr was killed without much ado *því at Sigmundr var úti staddr*.³⁷ This is, moreover, the only passage in which Sturla is more detailed than the biography. The uncertain certainty of this relatively weak account in *Arons saga* is suspect in the extreme, and gives the impression that the author was not ignorant of the story the way Sturla told it but was deliberately white-washing his hero. It is as though he were able to cope with the minor cases in which Aron appeared less favourably than was desired, but his imagination failed to invent a plausible rejection of what amounted to cowardice.

One of the best episodes in the saga is the fight which took place at Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr, a remote farm in the north-west where Aron was taking refuge. One day he is down at the boathouse mending the farmer's boat when two men suddenly appear. Their names are Sigurðr and Egill. *Íslendinga saga* says that they had both been with the bishop on Grímsey and that Egill was expressly in search of Aron, whereas the biography has them both just travelling by on an errand for Þorvaldr of Vatnsfjörðr, from whom Aron had no cause to expect goodwill.³⁸ There can be no doubt that this helps to make the latter version more exciting and tense, for Aron does not know whether they are friends or foes, a dramatic possibility which the author exploits excellently. Here it seems likely that a known account is being distorted for a purely literary purpose.

³⁶ *Sturl.* I 308.

³⁷ *Sturl.* II 268-9.

³⁸ *Sturl.* I 305-6; II 260-3.

Other evidence of this sort does not suggest any precise knowledge of Sturla's history on the part of the biographer, but there are instances which could be interpreted as showing that the earlier account had for example been read once, but badly remembered. The attack on Valshamarr takes place at night according to Sturla, and by day in *Arons saga*, though the latter does not stress that it is daylight.³⁹ The events of the episode are indeed more convincing if darkness is assumed. Aron and Hafþórir are able to make their way back to the lamb-shed unseen; Eiríkr birch-leg does not recognise whom he has killed, though the difference between the younger and older man (Aron and his uncle) would have been apparent by daylight; Aron's whole escape is more readily credible. In a similar way the *Íslendinga saga* version of Eyjólfur's last defence reads more logically, though we have to rely on *Resensbók* for the equivalent passage of *Arons saga*, and the manuscript shows some sign of corruption at this point.⁴⁰

Eyjólfur is given no motive for remaining on the island in the younger story, but *Íslendinga saga* provides the convincing reason that he wanted to damage the ferry boat in order to forestall pursuit. He is heard at his work and attacked. This is far more satisfactory. In both these cases the prevalent illogicality of *Arons saga* points to a certain lack of confidence in the author, which could be explained by a partial digestion of source material.

Other differences of circumstance seem to show entirely different sources of information. *Arons saga* says that Sturla Sighvatsson arranged a special meeting with the Hrafnssons at which he charged them with harbouring Aron and settled the forfeit due, whereas *Íslendinga saga* records that they were formally summoned at the Assembly, and that Böðvarr Þórðarson stood as guarantor

³⁹ *Sturl.* I 307; II 265-7.

⁴⁰ *Sturl.* I 292; II 251.

for the brothers.⁴¹ Since Böðvarr was Sturla's brother we can assume the greater accuracy of *Íslendinga saga* at this point (cf. p. 146 above). Directly after the incident at Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr it is said in *Íslendinga saga* that Aron went south to Barðaströnd and hid in a cave in Arnarbælisdalr, but in *Arons saga* that he crossed over Arnarfjörðr and stayed at Lokinhamrar with Helgi Sveinsson.⁴² Some confirmation of the former tale is supplied by the existence in this locality of a cave which is called Aronshellir (also Ármannshellir), though this could be a case of the name being supplied after the story.⁴³ On the whole there seems no reason to doubt the veracity of either fact, despite the confusion over time. It is possible that the author of *Arons saga* was closer to members of Aron's family than was Sturla, and that therefore the details of Aron's movements and hideouts which the biography provides are fairly reliable. It says that after his escape from Valshamarr Aron went first to Höfði, where his mother came to dress his wounds, and then on to Rauðamelr, while *Íslendinga saga* records only that he went direct to his mother's home.⁴⁴ Both accounts agree that he went south to Rosmhvalanes after killing Sigmundr snagi (although Sturla allows him a stay at Rauðamelr with Starkaðr first), but they differ in that *Arons saga* tells that he stayed with Einarr Snorrason at an unspecified farm, Sturla that he went to Þorsteinn at Hvalsnes.⁴⁵

Both narratives contain details of which the other is entirely unaware. *Arons saga* describes its events in much greater detail, which is quite natural in the light of the authors' varying purposes, and it seems unnecessary to list all the matter which appears there but not in Sturla's history. On the other hand, a glance at what is

⁴¹ *Sturl.* I 305; II 259.

⁴² *Sturl.* I 306; II 264.

⁴³ See *Sturl.* I 563, note 4 to ch. 55.

⁴⁴ *Sturl.* I 307; II 268.

⁴⁵ *Sturl.* I 308; II 269.

contained in *Íslendinga saga* but not in *Arons saga* will provide further evidence for speculation about their relationship. It has been claimed that, if the biographer had known some of the things recorded in the history, then he would have used them himself.⁴⁶

Íslendinga saga states that Bishop Guðmundr left the mainland for Málmey at *jólafostu* and names Ketill Ingjaldsson among his followers, while *Arons saga* does not specify the time and misses Ketill's name.⁴⁷ Sturla says that before the fight on Grímsey some men went to confession with the bishop.⁴⁸ He also records that Aron left Tumi's helmet and mail coat at Svínafell but took the *sax*, and that Ormr gave him some other weapons.⁴⁹ In both accounts he has a mail coat in Geirþjófsfjörðr, but in *Íslendinga saga* his weapon is an axe rather than the *sax* of the biography, which also equips him with a helmet and shield without claiming directly that these are Tumi's arms.⁵⁰

Arons saga does not mention that Ingimundr Jónsson was sent to Arnarfjörðr to look for Aron, nor does it know that Egill's nickname is *digri*.⁵¹ The incident of Aron taking a boat from Vaðill, rowing across Breiðafjörðr and then pushing the boat out to sea again⁵² is unknown to the author of the biography, and this is another instance in which we must be inclined to trust Sturla for accuracy, since the boat is said to have drifted up at Eyrr, his father's home, and may well be a personal memory, since the historian was ten years old at the time. Sturla also tells that his cousin, Sturla Sighvatsson, rode out on Snæfellsnes to Helgafell one day in the autumn of 1224, with two other men, and passed by the woods at Valshamarr, where Aron, Hafþórr and another man were

⁴⁶ *Biskupa Sögur* (1858-78), I lxvii.

⁴⁷ *Sturl.* I 287; II 239-40.

⁴⁸ *Sturl.* I 290.

⁴⁹ *Sturl.* I 293.

⁵⁰ *Sturl.* I 305; II 261.

⁵¹ *Sturl.* I 305.

⁵² *Sturl.* I 306.

in hiding. Aron wanted to attack them *er þeir vǫru hvárir*, but his uncle held him, and the others rode on unaware of their presence.⁵³ It will be recalled that the author was indeed aware that Aron had stayed at Valshamarr *enn fyrr í sektinni*,⁵⁴ and it is possible that the episode just mentioned is in some way connected with the tale in *Arons saga* where Aron and Hafþórir walk out of Valshamarr and hear voices in the woods. As has already been remarked, the small uncertainties which stamp this section of the narrative seem to indicate a shaky handling of source material. *Arons saga* is also ignorant of the fact that Sturla Sighvatsson received *sjálfðæmi* from Vigfúss for harbouring Aron, and awarded himself twenty hundreds payable in land.⁵⁵ To meet this fine the Valshamarr islands were made over to him. Again we can trust Sturla, for later on these islands were paid over to the historian's father.⁵⁶ *Íslendinga saga* says that after leaving Rauðameið when he had recovered from the Valshamarr ordeal Aron went to stay with Halldórr Árnason at Berserkseyrr. Hjörleifr's mistress was there, and father and son met there often.⁵⁷

Amongst these examples it is hard to find very much which the author of *Arons saga* would have used had he known of it. Aron's trick with the empty boat endows him with some cunning, and is a detail which might well have been taken up, but there are no other major incidents concerning the hero which do not also appear in his biography. Minor details such as names and figures could easily be forgotten or distorted, and so far the claim that *Íslendinga saga* was entirely unknown to the biographer seems far from proved.

Any facts contained in *Arons saga* which do not appear in Sturla's account will suggest the existence of other

⁵³ *Sturl.* I 306-7. *Íslendinga saga* gives Aron's uncle's name consistently as Hafþórr, *Arons saga* as Hafþórir.

⁵⁴ *Sturl.* II 265.

⁵⁵ *Sturl.* I 307.

⁵⁶ *Sturl.* I 318.

⁵⁷ *Sturl.* I 307-8.

sources. (For the events concerning Aron's life in Norway there is very little comparable material elsewhere. The subject is not discussed here, for reasons of length. On the whole we can probably rule out the possibility that the author used existing written material for this.) The author does seem to be in possession of several details of Aron's earlier life which were not known to Sturla, or at any rate not used by him. Thus, the fact that Aron went to stay with his uncle Helgi after leaving Hítardalur is not mentioned in *Íslendinga saga*, which says that Aron went straight to Eyjólfur in Flatey, and with his mother, a detail which *Arons saga* itself does not mention. But if, as implied in Sturla's work, Aron left Hítardalur at the same time as Sturla Sighvatsson, then he could not have gone straight to Flatey, for according to an earlier episode in *Íslendinga saga* Eyjólfur did not buy the island until 1218, but the departure from Hítardalur occurred in 1214, that is when Sturla was fifteen years old.⁵⁸ This is one instance in which the younger source seems demonstrably more accurate, and the reason for this is no doubt that the author gained his knowledge directly or indirectly from some member of the family. There could be no reason for the invention of such mundane details. Aron's night's lodging at Valþjófsstaðir, his sojourn in the cave near Rauðamelr, his removal from there to Barðaströnd where he stays with his kinsmen Eyvindr and Tómas, none of which is recorded in the older narrative, are similar cases.⁵⁹ With the existence of these probably accurate reports we are more inclined to trust the truthfulness of the biography over details which might otherwise be thought inventions. For example, *Arons saga* is more precise about the hero's wounds. On Grímsey it says that Aron received three wounds; one in the mouth, another in the thigh, and a third in the instep, while *Íslendinga saga* only tells that

⁵⁸ *Sturl.* I 266-7; II 238-9.

⁵⁹ *Sturl.* II 253, 257-8.

the first was inflicted by Sturla, and that Aron was *sárr ok kumlaðr mjök* when he reached the mainland.⁶⁰ Likewise, Sturla's account has Aron *mjök þrekaðr* after his escape from Valshamarr, but the biography states that he had been wounded in the calf by a spear.⁶¹ Although these details might have been invented in order to increase the hero's standing by dwelling on his sufferings, it seems from the other evidence that they are more likely to be true. We can imagine, too, that the scars would have been well remembered in Aron's family.

Having discussed the ways in which the two accounts differ from each other, it is worth while to make a general survey of their similarities. Certain overall agreement will naturally appear when the same events are being reported, but it is as well not to assume without careful investigation that this is the sole cause of any such correspondence.

On a number of occasions the two narratives show such close verbal agreement as to make one think that copying might have taken place. We have already seen that this is not likely to have been true. Björn M. Ólsen touches on some of these points in his discussion, but dismisses them rather summarily as coincidence or as the result of the same fact being described. Some indeed are susceptible of the latter explanation, but in other places there is more room for doubt. In the tale of Aron's fostering at Hítardalr, we find the following:

Arons saga

Því váru þeir svá sem fóstbræðr . . . En þá er meir tók at greinast með þeim kumpánum . . .⁶²

Íslendinga saga

Váru þeir Sturla Sighvatsson fóstbræðr, þar til er Sturla fór á brott ór Hítardal . . . Urðu þá í greinir nökkurar áðr þeir skildu.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Sturl.* I 291; 293; II 248.

⁶¹ *Sturl.* I 307; II 267.

⁶² *Sturl.* II 238.

⁶³ *Sturl.* I 267.

Stronger examples are:

Arons saga

Settist þá Tumi á staðinn at Hólum ok lagði undir sik heilagra manna eign, svá sem hann væri erfingi orðinn.⁶⁴

Arons saga

... er Guðmundr hét ok var Ólafsson. Sá var síðan at brennuni Þorvalds Vatnsfirðings...⁶⁶

Íslendinga saga

Tumi sezt nú á staðinn at Hólum með sveit sína svá sem þat væri hans föðurleifð.⁶⁵

Íslendinga saga

Guðmundr Ólafsson var með honum þá, er síðan var at brennu Þorvalds Snorra-sonar.⁶⁷

Then there is the whole pre-battle sequence on Grímsey, in which the most striking similarity of all occurs:

Arons saga

“Ok vil ek nú, sonr minn, at þú gangir til skriftar við mik.”

“Ekki er nú tóm til þess, herra,” segir Aron...

“Vel er slíkt mælt,” segir biskup, “en þó skyldir þú sem trúmestr vera, sonr minn, ok vertu sem bezt við fátæka menn.”

“... en þó væntir mik, at vit sjáumst enn síðar.”⁶⁸

Íslendinga saga

... biskup... spurði, ef hann vildi skriftast. Aron kvað eigi tóm at því.

“Ver góðr við fátæka menn,” segir biskup, “en sjást munum vit enn.”⁶⁹

It is hard to dismiss these first three instances as pure coincidence, or to agree with Björn M. Ólsen that the last is fully explained by the fact that the original authority for the material was Aron himself,⁷⁰ for this would mean, according to his conclusions about the origins of the saga,

⁶⁴ *Sturl.* II 240.

⁶⁵ *Sturl.* I 287.

⁶⁶ *Sturl.* II 256.

⁶⁷ *Sturl.* I 294.

⁶⁸ *Sturl.* II 246.

⁶⁹ *Sturl.* I 291. On the dream in this episode, see Robert J. Glendinning, ‘Arons saga and *Íslendinga saga*: A Problem in Parallel Transmission’, *Scandinavian Studies* 41 (1969), 41-51.

⁷⁰ Ólsen, *op. cit.*, 259.

that the words remained almost completely intact in oral tradition for over a hundred years, while at the same time other details and incidents became distorted.

If the author had at one time read Sturla's narrative, the notion that he remembered some things and forgot others, that certain phrases remained in his mind, is not too hard to accept. Or again, it is possible that in part at least they both had a certain amount of common source material. Either of these suppositions might be thought to provide a more satisfactory explanation of these verbal similarities than does the theory that they are traceable to a strictly preserved oral tradition, for this is the supposed source that Björn M. Ólsen claims is responsible for the exaggerations and distortions in *Arons saga*.

Examination of the more literal aspects of the two texts is a good and profitable yardstick for comparison, but not one which should be wielded to the neglect of broader, less tangible considerations. It has supplied sufficient material for a clear proof that neither account was directly copied from the other, and enough to raise some doubts about an entire lack of relationship between them beyond the traditional idea of oral expansion.⁷¹ A closer look at the Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr episode, from both the literal and literary point of view, serves to increase this doubt. In both sources this is the most detailed incident, and the one in *Íslendinga saga* which comes closest in length to *Arons saga*. Both accounts are substantially the same, remarkably so in their more minute details. Thus Aron is busy mending the boat; his mail coat is lying on the prow (*sax* in *Arons saga*, *stafn* in *Íslendinga saga*); greetings and exchange of names take place; Sigurðr puts on the mail coat. The same individuals fight with each other — Egill against Rögnvaldr, Sigurðr against Bergr, Aron against Þorvaldr. After quickly wounding his opponent, Aron goes to Egill's aid.

⁷¹ In addition to Ólsen, see Knut Liestøl, *The Origin of the Icelandic Family Sagas* (1930), 58, 74, 80-3, 89, 192-3, 219-20, 251.

Arons saga

Fekk Aron þat fangaráð, at hann slær saxinu flötu aftan undir stálhúfuna. Rögnvaldr svimraði við, því at höggit var mikit, ok steypist stálhúfan fram yfir augun, ok berar hálsinn. Heggr Aron þá tveim höndum með öllu afli á hálsinn, svá at af fýkr höfuðit.⁷²

Íslendinga saga

Þá bar Aron at ok laust hann með öxarhamri aftan undir stálhúfuna, ok steypist húfan fyrir andlitit. Bar hálsbjörgina upp af brynjunni, ok beraði hálsinn á milli. Sneri Aron þá öxinni í hendi sér ok hjó á hálsinn, svá at af tók höfuðit.⁷³

Then there is the detail of Bergr lying across the saddle while Þorvaldr spurs on the horse under him, and the almost identical words of Þorvaldr:

Arons saga

“Upp, þér Sturla, hér hleypr fjandinn Aron eftir okkr.”

Íslendinga saga

“Upp þér, Sturla, hér rennr Aron eftir okkr.”

Finally may be mentioned the agreement on Rögnvaldr's burial, with Aron first stripping the body, then sinking it in the sea. *Arons saga* makes more of many of these details. Thus we are given a glimpse of Bergr's fear before flight, of Rögnvaldr stumbling and unsighted by Aron's blow, and of Aron's difficulties with the body.

The literary or dramatic elements of the incident are likewise similar in each text. The biography, however, seems to use them more successfully. It has already been remarked that whereas *Íslendinga saga* tells that both Sigurðr and Egill had been with the bishop, and that Egill was especially in search of Aron, the biography makes no such comforting disclosure by way of explaining their presence in the remote fjord, and the resultant gain in tension is immense. Aron's predicament is spun out. The question about why he was acting so unwarily, since danger was to be expected on all sides, takes on a sinister edge. Again, the dream is used positively by the biographer; in *Íslendinga saga* it is merely alluded to.

⁷² *Sturl.* II 262.

⁷³ *Sturl.* I 306.

Aron tells it in order to play for time, to try and keep the strangers there and to guess at their loyalties. Their rather negative comment, that the dream probably has some significance, in no way answers his fears, and underscores the tension by its ambiguity. In *Íslendinga saga* Sigurðr puts on the mail coat almost as soon as he arrives on the scene, but in *Arons saga* the act is placed later, and occurs after Sigurðr's ominous silence to Egill's enquiry: "*Muntu allöruggri í vera at veita Aroni, ef hann þarf nökkurs við?*" In addition, the characters of the two strangers are developed further. Their hesitations, questionings, and mutual reliance make them partially comic. And the immediate tension, given through this sense of dubious constricted space, is brilliantly augmented by the spinning out of time through the period before the fight. Three references to time — Egill's *því at líðr dagrinn*, Sigurðr's *tóm til at fara*, and the narrator's *Ok leið á daginn* — provide a tight temporal perspective for the scene. Time is passing, nothing is happening; the lull is full of danger.

All this has a highly personal touch, and suggests skilful artistic shaping on the author's part, as though he is recognising what might be done with some extra elements in the source and manipulating them for dramatic effect. The close agreement in detail must mean either that the two authors are relying on closely-related sources of information, or that the younger account has profited from a knowledge of the older. We know that Sturla Þórðarson used his own experience and a variety of oral and written sources in composing his history. In view of the likely difference of age between *Íslendinga saga* and *Arons saga* it can hardly be thought that the two authors had a single oral informant for this episode, and it is my contention that a circulating oral tradition would not have preserved the story of this incident, and the other details already noted, with such exactness. The differences between the two here are not of fact, but of

emphasis, and the conclusion to be drawn is that their relationship is closer than has hitherto been supposed.

It is almost incredible to think that an educated man and would-be author living in western Iceland in the first half of the fourteenth century should be unaware of Sturla's writings. The author himself gives a plain indication that he knew of and had read the historian's *Hákonar saga*⁷⁴ and from this alone it is not unreasonable to assume that he was in some way acquainted with the same man's history of his own times. Again, a man setting out to write a biography of Aron Hjörleifsson would in all probability know that some of his exploits were recorded in *Íslendinga saga*, and it is hardly over-fanciful to think that such knowledge may even have been a partial motivation for him. Given this hypothesis the question again presents itself as to why the two accounts differ in the ways shown.

If Aron's biographer had read *Íslendinga saga*, how far would he have felt restrained by the version it gives? If his set purpose was to write a laudatory work, historicity then became a secondary consideration for him, the more so perhaps as he was further removed in time from the events he was going to narrate. The author of *Arons saga* is patently concerned to show his hero in the best possible light, perhaps even to vindicate him, or to straighten the account of him, and to attract sympathy for the men and causes to which he was allied.

Like Sturla, he obviously had different sources of information for the events he was writing about, some oral, some written. Like Sturla too, he would use these selectively, adding his own ingredients of art and bias, making judgements, preferences, and mistakes.

Björn M. Ólsen's claim that the biography is independent of *Íslendinga saga* has been proved open to doubt. His conclusion that it represents a later stage of oral tradition

⁷⁴ In the phrase *sem ritat finnst*, *Sturl.* II 271.

about Aron, which has been endorsed by Liestøl⁷⁵ and Guðni Jónsson,⁷⁶ is likewise suspect. Jón Jóhannesson⁷⁷ states that, apart from the reference to *Hákonar saga* and of course the poems, nothing shows a reliance on written sources, but he adds a word of caution by saying that some of the material could well be drawn from *Íslendinga saga*, though the author may not have had it by him when he wrote, and had perhaps not even read it. This slightly cryptic statement hints in the direction of what seems to be the only other solution to the problem.

The *formáli* to *Íslendinga saga* mentions written records (*bréf*)⁷⁸ which were available for Sturla to consult when he was writing. The existence of such material is also attested by the words of the author of the *Míðsaga* version of *Guðmundar saga*, who in his preface tells of a collection of *bréf* which were to be used in expanding the biography of the bishop, but which were burnt in 1258 in the church where they had been gathered (at Laufás in Eyjafjörðr) before he had the opportunity of consulting them.⁷⁹

The supposition must be that the same sort of material was available to Aron's biographer, and it seems possible at least that some of it was the same as that used by Sturla. It does not seem necessary to postulate, as did Pétur Sigurðsson,⁸⁰ that a lost saga of Bishop Guðmundr was the common source for the noted correspondences. If Sturla's written sources were something more substantial and more of a common property than a private collection of rough notes then they would no doubt have survived for use by other writers. Moreover, a church establishment would in all probability be the home of such stuff, as was the case with

⁷⁵ *op. cit.*

⁷⁶ *Sturlunga saga* (1948), III xii.

⁷⁷ *Sturl.* II xlix-l.

⁷⁸ *Sturl.* I 115.

⁷⁹ *Biskupa Sögur* (1858-78), I 555-6.

⁸⁰ Pétur Sigurðsson, 'Um Íslendinga Sögu Sturla Þórðarsonar', *Safn til Sögu Íslands* VI 175-7.

the Eyjafjörðr bréf, and all the evidence suggests that the author of *Arons saga* was a cleric.

IV

Arons saga follows the life of a single hero from childhood to death. It may in this respect be classed with other, earlier biographies of Icelandic heroes, especially with *Gisla saga* and *Grettis saga*, for like them the protagonist is an outlaw for part of his life. In style, theme and scope it does not approach the quality of the best of these earlier works, yet it is probably the nearest thing to a saga of the classical school that the fourteenth century produced, and makes intermittent demands to be judged alongside these predecessors. Side by side with this element it reveals a spirit which sets it well apart from the stringency of the classical school, and makes the comparison seem too bold.

A natural form of construction is provided by the biographical framework of the story, and this subdivides, again naturally, into two parts, the first dealing with Aron's adventures in Iceland, the second with his life in Norway. In the first half the straightforward chronological development contains within itself a certain dramatic progress towards breaking-point. Aron's position steadily worsens as men become more and more weary of harbouring him. The boredom and frustration, as well as the danger, of the outlaw's life increase in intensity to the point where desperation gives him recourse to prayer. But his answer lies in the positive action of killing Sigmundr snagi, and having thus figuratively doubled the price on his head his escape to Norway is a suitable end to the tale of his exploits in Iceland.

The material contained in the second part of the work is by no means as ample and cohesive. The narrative becomes fragmentary and anecdotal. There is little connection between events, beyond the natural effect of

the chronological sequence, and little internal development. This accounts for the pervading sense of anticlimax in the latter section. The story of Aron's relations with Sturla is neatly rounded off, however, and it cannot be denied that the Norwegian episodes are partially related to former events by a theme of contrast between ease and privation.

This, coupled with rather slight treatment of Aron's gradual conversion to more active Christian behaviour, is about the nearest substitute for a dominant and purposeful theme in the saga of Aron's life. His years in Iceland had been stamped by adversity, suffering, and alienation from a common life among family and friends, but in Norway he finds security, honour and reward. Likewise, his character undergoes a more gradual change, from that of a self-willed and impetuous youth to that of a determined pilgrim and unswerving loyalist. The brusqueness slowly disappears from his nature, to be replaced by something akin to the Christian ideal of forgiveness which is seen in his treatment of Þórðr kakali in Norway.

This theme of conversion seems to constitute the author's main interest in Aron's character as such. For the rest he pays only rather unconvincing lip-service to his heroic stature. None the less, the old ideal of *drengskapr* is very much to the fore, though surprisingly it is better seen in the actions of lesser characters than in the central figure. Eyjólf's final defence in the boathouse on Grímsey is firmly in the classic heroic tradition of unwavering defiance in the face of overwhelming odds, and in essence matches up to the sense of aesthetic conduct fully as well as the last stands of Gunnarr and Gísli, though of course there is no particular feeling that his death is the outcome of an inevitable chain of preceding events.

None of Aron's actions can be compared with the behaviour of Eyjólf, or of Þórarinn Jónsson who protects

Aron so bravely at Svínafell. The author tries to insist that his hero has the same personal force, but he fails to depict it fully in action. Nowhere is Aron drawn into a sufficiently tragic dilemma. In the episode at Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr, although Aron emerges the physical victor and master of the situation, the moral show is stolen by Sigurðr and Egill, who elect to join a conflict in which they have no apparent personal interest, simply because they are unwilling to face the self-reproach which flight would entail. In all these instances the reader's sympathies are more solidly engaged for the individuals concerned than they are at any time for the nominal hero of the piece. The author lived at a time when the heroic age was certainly over, yet he shows in his handling of these scenes that his aesthetic sensibility was fully alive. It is significant that it inspires him to his best writing.

It is difficult to speak with absolute confidence about the artistic merits of a work preserved in the composite form of this saga, as also of one which is at least semi-historical in its nature, for one cannot finally separate what is due to the author's own powers from what is due to his sources.

The author's ability to use his data to good literary and dramatic effect has already been illustrated. His style is that of a fairly plain pragmatic narrator who wastes few words on unessentials, though this statement must be modified by reference to the personal intrusions of the author himself.

There is no dialogue, and very little reported speech, until the time when Aron and Eyjólfur break the silence with their conversation on the foreshore at Grímsey. It is at this point that the actors seem to burst into life upon the scene, as though the author himself is reacting to the drama of the moment. His description of the landing-place, with its deep waters, seaweed-lined shore and steep cliffs, is brief but sufficient, and seems to narrow the

odds against the defenders. The whole account of the expedition is given in a succession of "shots" which move from far to near-focus, from general impression to minutiae. First we see the ships approaching the island in the sunrise, and experience the sense of urgency among the defenders as they spread the warning from one to another, hurriedly arming themselves in preparation. Then there is a lull — "the ships still had a long way to go to land" — while Aron fetches Tumi's weapons. "Now the fleet draws towards land", and the time-gap here is filled with the description of the spot, and the encouragement given by the leaders to their men. Now we have a view of Sturla Sighvatsson, huge and easily recognisable as he stands in the prow of his ship. The viewpoint changes to that of the attackers for a moment. They are closer now, and Sturla is scanning the shore, spotting Aron, and making his decision to attack there. While the distance is narrowing there is a glimpse of Aron brandishing his sword and shouting words of defiance, until at last the boats touch sand and the attackers stumble clumsily over the slippery seaweed to the clash. The whole scene is handled with fine visual imagination and a sure sense of timing to impart the slowly mounting tension.

In general it is the saga's individual scenes which impress most: the Grímsey expedition, Eyjólf's last defence, the cautious early-morning arrival of Aron at Rauðamelr, with sentiment, humour and danger in close and productive harmony, the incidents at Valshamarr and Geirþjófsfjarðareyrr with their close eye for detail and imaginative creation of atmosphere. Particularly memorable are the moving but speechless lips and outstretched fingers of the dying Hafþórir at Valshamarr as he motions his nephew away from the danger in the farm buildings. In these scenes, all contained in the more exciting first section of the saga, the writer's skills are most clearly in evidence, and it is here that the saga

demands to be judged with the best products of thirteenth-century writing. W. P. Ker wrote:

There is no reason for depressing these histories below the level of any but the strongest work in the heroic sagas. The history of Bishop Gudmund and the separate lives of his two friends, Hrafn and Aron, are not less vivid than the stories of the men of Eyrr or the men of Vatzdal . . . It is not easy to specify any element in the one that is not in the other, while the handling of the more authentic stories is not weak or faltering in comparison with the others.⁸¹

Yet between *Arons saga* and the best of the *Íslendinga sögur*, however much the former may vie with the latter in respect of individual scenes, there are certain more or less definable differences. The most salient of these are the author's habit of intruding personal statements, and his manifest bias towards the clerical, the royalist, and the orthodox. He plainly has a case to plead, a trait not normally associated with the family sagas, where the author maintains that appearance of impartiality which is generally accounted a hallmark of the classical style. Thus, after the heat of the Grímsey battle is over we are told that Aron showed great bravery, and expected to believe it, without the concrete proof of a direct narrative account of his deeds. The concentration is rather on the hero's wounds and sufferings, and we fall between the thrones of saint and hero. Even when valorous action has been shown, the author is not averse to spoiling the effect somewhat by interjecting a shallow little boost for his man, as after the escape at Valshamarr, when we are told what a bold fellow Aron was to have got away from such fierce foes. Again after Aron's tough verbal exchange with Gautr which follows the horse-fight in Bergen, the author insensitively explains what the incident purported in terms of Aron's character. Such a trait does not suggest the writer's overwhelming confidence in the intelligence of his audience. It is

⁸¹ W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (1897), 256-7.

patronising, and reminiscent rather of the naïvety and demand for large-scale suspension of disbelief that one associates more with a type of medieval writing foreign to the classical Icelandic mode. It is notable that this attitude seems to occur especially when Aron's personal attributes are under review, or when he is mentioned in connection with Bishop Guðmundr. By no means does it mar the splendour of the best and most dramatic scenes.

One might say in conclusion that the author has failed to assimilate completely the secular and religious motifs with which he is dealing, has failed to find a single standard of persuasion. This gives rise to an observed lack of unification in the whole work, for while it contains passages of fine and stimulating prose it does not impress one as being dominated by the broad and whole conception of human life which is found in the best of its predecessors.

MAGNÚS ÓLAFSSON'S *FRÍSSDRÁPA*

By ANTHONY FAULKES

RIDDARA Christians Frys Dräpa was composed by Magnús Ólafsson (born c. 1573, died 22/7 1636), priest at Laufás in northern Iceland from 1622, in the last year of his life, in honour of Christian Friis of Kragerup (1581-1639), chancellor of Denmark from 1616.¹ After Magnús's death the poem was copied out fair by his foster-son and successor at Laufás, Jón Magnússon, and sent by the poet's son Benedikt in September 1636 to Ole Worm, professor at Copenhagen University, for him to forward to Friis, as his father had requested.² Both Magnús's draft and this fair copy now seem to be lost, but the poem survives in what is probably a direct copy of the latter in a manuscript from the library of the Danish Royal Historiographer S. J. Stephanius (1599-1650), now in the De La Gardie collection in the University Library, Uppsala (DG 19).³ This manuscript is in the hand of the Icelander Sveinn Jónsson, who did some literary work for Ole Worm while attending the University in Copenhagen in 1635-7 (see Jakob Benediktsson, *op. cit.*,

¹ See *Ole Worm's Correspondence with Icelanders*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Bibliotheca Arnarnagana VII, 1948), 402 f., 453 f. et passim; Páll E. Ólason, *Menn og Menntir Síðskiptaaldrarinnar á Íslandi* IV (1926), 664 ff.; Stefán Ólafsson, *Kvæði* (1885-6), II 397. The editor of the latter work misinterprets v. 12 of *Fríssdrápa* (judging by the Latin interpretation in the MS) and here, as elsewhere, the poem is said to consist of 47 verses, but in the manuscript there are 45 if the refrain is only counted as one, and 48 if it is counted each time it recurs.

² In the covering letter Benedikt wrote: "Ego cantilenam (cuj nomen indidit pater Riddara Christians Frijs Dräpa) ad te transmitto, qvam more veterum poetarum in honorem Magnifici Domini Cancellarij anno præterito edidit; tibiqve ei offerendam mittere jussit" (Jakob Benediktsson, *op. cit.*, 97).

³ The text below is based on a photographic copy of this manuscript supplied by Uppsala University Library and kindly obtained for me by the Librarian of Birkbeck College, London. There are nineteenth-century copies of DG 19 in JS 540, 4to and Lbs. 2031, 4to (National Library, Reykjavík). These copies do not include all the explanations.

472), and must have been made for Stephanus during this period at Worm's request, before the poem was sent to the chancellor.

Friis was a patron of letters and deeply interested in the new antiquarian studies developing in Scandinavia in his time. He encouraged Magnús in his literary work, and in 1629 Magnús made a Latin version of his redaction of the Prose Edda (the so-called *Laufás-Edda*) for him. Magnús had also, for several years before his death, been having negotiations with the chancellor, mainly with Ole Worm as intermediary, aimed at first at obtaining an ecclesiastical, later a secular, office in Iceland for his son Benedikt, whose wild oats sown at the University in Copenhagen in 1626-9 had offended the authorities both in Denmark and Iceland. Both his Latin Edda and other similar antiquarian work, as well as the *drápa* in honour of the chancellor, were evidently undertaken by Magnús at least partly in the hope that Friis would show his gratitude by helping Benedikt. Worm and Friis were not unsympathetic, but for various reasons Magnús had not yet secured any positive result at the time of his death, and still nothing had been achieved for Benedikt when Friis died in 1639. Benedikt never received any official position.

Worm and Friis were mainly interested in early Scandinavian history; but Magnús was also interested in medieval poetry and verse forms. He wrote a short treatise on skaldic poetry (printed by Worm in his *Runir seu Danica literatura antiquissima*, 1636, 191-6), and like other Icelanders of his time made several experiments in composing poetry in the skaldic style, both in Latin and Icelandic (some of these were also printed by Worm in the same work). One of his most ambitious attempts at this is *Friissdrápa*, a full-blown *drápa* in *dróttkvætt* with refrain.⁴

⁴ It is possible that Magnús had intended the poem to be longer than it is, for the refrain is not positioned symmetrically and the last verse as it stands bears no obvious sign of being a conclusion.

Ingenious and laborious as the experiment is, the poet has not succeeded in reproducing the form and style of skaldic verse exactly, and both in metre and diction there are frequent alarming departures from medieval usage, as might be expected. In particular, many of the kennings are rather violent variants of those current in earlier times, and often reveal Magnús's inadequate understanding of his models. But the poem is interesting as an example of seventeenth-century enthusiastic antiquarian endeavour and as a measure of the period's understanding of medieval poetry. The Latin explanations (which are presumably Magnús's own:⁵ he must have known there was no point in sending Friis a poem in Icelandic without a translation, and no one besides the author would have been able to interpret the more elaborate kennings) are also of great interest, since they apparently tell us how Magnús understood⁶ the kennings he uses, and may also be helpful towards understanding the diction of other seventeenth-century poems, especially *rímur*.

The text is here printed exactly as it stands in the MS (DG 19) with the following exceptions:

Abbreviations of Latin words (which are frequent) are generally expanded silently ("jd:" and "i:" are expanded to "i.e."). In Icelandic words the "nasal stroke" is replaced by a following nasal consonant. In *herrum* v. 32⁷, the *r* is written single with an accent above. A dot is frequently found above *r* and is apparently without significance, and so is not here reproduced, but in *Fyris* v. 10⁴, *hara* v. 41¹², and *þeira* v. 42⁴ it may indicate *-rr-*. The abbreviation for *-ur* used in Latin words (like a *z* below the line) is difficult to distinguish from an ordinary *-r*, and may be intended also (anomalously) in the Icelandic words *okunnr* v. 11¹⁶ and *hlauðr* v. 17^{10,18}. No

⁵ They are similar in arrangement to the explanations of medieval Icelandic verses in Magnús's own hand in AM 762, 4to and R 702.

⁶ and occasionally misunderstood: see, for example, his explanations of *Valur Haptatys* (v. 19), *fiðtur Fenringar* (v. 16), and *höttur Hengetys* (v. 24).

other abbreviations are found in Icelandic words (except *constr.*, etc., at the beginnings of the explanatory notes, which is expanded to *construe*).

The letters *u*, *v*, and *y* are almost universally (both in the Icelandic and Latin) written with two dots or accents (less often a single dot) above, in place of the more normal curl. Since these signs are without significance (except to distinguish the letters from *n*, etc.) they are here omitted. But over other vowels, where they are "length" marks they are retained (and printed as dots).

Corresponding to modern Icelandic *ö* Sveinn often writes *o* with accent or dot above it and hook or short slanting stroke below it: all these forms have been printed as *ø* (as was usual in printed books in the seventeenth century). There is often a hook written underneath *æ*, but this is not reproduced. "Grave" accents are often written over the final letters of Latin words, especially adverbs, and are not reproduced. Otherwise single accents, dots and hooks are printed where they occur in the MS.

The capitalisation (in so far as it is distinguishable) and punctuation of the manuscript have been followed, but *ʒ* as a variant form of *ʒ* (i.e. not a capital) is not indicated. Commas, however, are often written a long way below the line and are sometimes indistinct. Some redundant full stops in the explanations have been omitted.

Words and parts of words occasionally repeated after a line or page division are omitted, and slips of the pen corrected by the scribe are not recorded. Accidental omissions by the scribe are supplied between angle brackets. All other departures from the manuscript are indicated in the textual notes.

Riddara Christians Frys Drápa

- 1 Heyre hilldar skura
 hefiendur mál stefia.
 Gust ber golnis ystu,
 Gialfur ur nordur älfu.
 Grydar girmist vedur
 Gøfugs vinar jøfra
 Lofe ad hreifa, sem life
 Lønd medan briddast sòndum

(Construe) (Hilldarskura hefiendur) i.e. viri militares (heyre) audiant (stefia mál) cantilenam quæ constat intercalaribus. (golnis gialfur) i.e. poësis (ber gust) movet mentem (ur ystu nordur alfu) i.e. ex remotissima aquilonis plaga seu Islandia. (grydar vedur) i.e. animus (girmist) i.e. cupit. (ad hreyfa) celebrare (lofe) laudem. (gøfugs vinar jofra) i.e. inclytissimi regis amici (sem life) quæ vivat sc: laus (medan lond) qvamdîu regiones (briddast) i.e. circumcinguntur (sondum) arenis. (Nota). (hilldarskur) bellum. Hilldur vocabatur illa fæminá, ob cujus raptum, primus cepit conflictus (ut ait Edda) hinc hilldarskur¹) eddice. hilldæ pluvia. pro bello (malstefia). stef. est intercalaris versus (grydar vedur) (gryd) est nomen monstrosæ fæminæ (vedur) ventus. ventus autem fæminarum monstrosarum est animus Eddice

- 2 Þor efla mier ærit
 Allsæmeleg dæme
 Skállda ädur j ölldum
 Ord kunnande at skorda
 Hara redu med hersum
 Hiarlaudga sem jarla
 Danska, Austmenn oc Enska
 Islandz hrodre prysa

(Construe) (Allsæmeleg dæme) i.e. honesta exempla (skallda) scaldorum. (ädur j ölldu(m)) i.e. priscorum. (ord kunnande ad scorda) i.e. qui noverunt ligare oratonem. (efla mier) augent mihi. (ærit þor) i.e. magnum ausum (redu ad prysa.) potuerunt laudare. (Islandz hrodre) i.e. Islandica poësi (Hara med Hersum) i.e. reges cum principibus (Hiarlaudga) equites auratos (sem jarla) i.e. et barones (Danska) i.e. Danos. (Austmenn) i.e. viros orientales (oc Enska) et Anglos

¹ sic.

- 3 Höfgar fra eg friofgat
 Finna ordsaker vinnur
 Sinne, suptungs brunnum,
 Sid vorn jdka en forna.
 Stord ber visu verda
 Valldhöfende skiallda
 Glitrada, elvar ytrum
 Ellde, Danaveildis

(Construe) (Friofgat sinne) i.e. animus prægnans (suptungs brunnum.) poësi. (vinnur ad² finna) i.e. potest invenire (Höfgar) i.e. principales (ordsaker) causas (idka) i.e. exercere. (sidvorn) consuetudinem nostram (en forna) antiqvam. (stordverda visu) i.e. Heroica cantilena (ber) i.e. dignus est. (valldhofende skiallda) i.e. armipotens (valldhofende glitrada) i.e. potens serici (valldhofendi elfar ellde) potens auri, (ytrum) preciosi (Danaveildis) i.e. in regno Daniæ (Nota) (Suttungur) erat unus ex gigantibus, qui cum iratus esset, placabatur musto. hinc (Suttungs miödur seu brunnur, pro poësi accipitur Eddice (Gli þradur³) filum byssinum. pro serico. (Elvar elldur) (Elvi) Albis. fluvius. fluviorum autem ignis est aurum Eddice.

- 4 Kongsæler öfundum öngvann
 Vnder skya grundu
 Allvel styrer stiller
 Sterkur ryke Danmerkur
 Þiod sæmer sidpride
 Sueitkiær fir oc nærre
 Løgum illveniu aga
 Alstietta leidrietter

(Construe) (Kongsæler.) nos rege gaudentes (öfundum öngvann) invidemus nemini (vnder skya grundu) ex ijs qui sub cælo sunt (stiller sterkur) rex fortis (styrer) gubernat (allvel) laudabiliter (Danmerkur ryke) i.e. regnum Daniæ. (sæmer) ornat rex scil: (Þiod) populum (sidpride) civilitate morum (sueitkiær) gratus populo (fir oc nærre) tam eminus qvam comminus (leidrietter) corrigit. (aga illveniu) anomiam (løgum) legibus (alstietta) i.e. in omnibus ordinibus

² not in text above; evidently to be supplied (cf. v. 12).

³ written *Gli | þradur* over line division. A hyphen was written after *Gli* and then erased or perhaps altered to *-l*.

- 5 Jarder ver siöle suerdum
 Sinar und nordur linu
 Gudrækne framar fryða
 Frekt hindrar ospeckter
 Heidsær hafþaks ládit
 Herjendum tyr oc veria
 Einginn a suardar sængu
 Setur hialm jöfur betre

(Construe) (siöle heidsær) i.e. rex serenus. (ver) i.e. propugnat. (jarder synar) i.e. suas regiones. (und nordur linu) i.e. quæ sitæ sunt in aquilonari plaga (frammar) multo magis scil: tuetur. (gudrækne) pietatem. (fryða) speciosam. (hindrar) impedit (frekt) diligenter (ospeckter) i.e. morositatem et tumultum (ver) i.e. defendit (hafþaks ládit) i.e. mare (herjendum) militibus (tyr) i.e. princeps magnanimus (oc veria) i.e. propugnaculum. scil. existens. (Einginn jöfur) nullus rex (a suardarsængu) i.e. in terris. (setur hialm) induit armaturam (betre) eo excellentior (Nota) hafþaks lād) mare⁴ Eddice (suardarsæng.) terra. Eddice

- 6 Yngve velur vangra
 Vidis oc hafskida
 Hird af bestu burdum
 Beima j nordur heime.
 Höll skipar hugfullur
 Hare fögurum mannskara
 Volldugann vopnaballdur
 Versa ek eirn af þessum,

(Construe) (Yngve.) rex (velur) seligit (vangravidis oc hafskida hird) i.e. populum maritimum et nauticum (af bestu burdum) ex optimo genere. (beima) hominum (j nordurheime) in aquilonari mundi plaga. (Hugfullur hare) rex magnanimus (skipar höll) i.e. congregat in aulam suam (fögurum skare) jllustrem turbam (Eg versa) ego celebri carmine (eirn af þessum) unum ex hisce scil. aulicis nobilibus. (Nota) (vangravidis hird.) populus maritimus. vangur) campus. (vidir) mare. hinc (vidis vangra hird) populus accolens marina loca. (Hafskida) haf. est æquor (skid) asser. hinc. (hafskid) navis eddice. et (hafskida hird) i.e. populus nauticus.

⁴ erased.

7	Christian fostfrone
intercalaris	Frijs vinnur prijs stinnann
	Hara geingur skyr skanga
	Skialldglæstum valldnæstur
	Fifu-þunda, lof, lendra
	Leysir Ran-eystu frana
	Fridradum gud giædir
	Gofugann jofurs huga

(Construe) (Christian Frijs) i.e. Christianus Frisius (vinnur prys stinnann) i.e. magnam laudem promeretur. (Fostfrone) i.e. suæ patriæ. (skyr) illustris. scil heros. (geingur valldnæstur) i.e. proximus est (Hara) i.e. regi (scanga) Daniæ (Scangur) i.e. Scanus, et pars pro toto accipitur (lóf) scil: Christianus Frysus est laus (Fifuþunda lendra) i.e. Danorum (leysir) solvit (fræna) peregrinos captivos (Raneystu) auro. (gud) deus: (giæder) beat. (gøfugann) jofurs huga) i.e. heroicum Cancellarij animum. (fridradum) consilijs ad pacem spectantibus. (Nota) (Fostfron) fron terra (fostfron) patria. (fostfron) dicitur qvasi terra nutrix. nam (ad fostra) est nutrire. (Hare) est rex eddice. (Skialldglæstur) id est. armis conspicuus. (Fifuþunda) (fifa) lana pratensis (þundur) homo eddice. lana autem pratensis, est cortex seu vellus pratorum. (scan) item est cortex in superficie cuiusque liquoris concretum. sicut ergo lana pratensis est cortex seu vellus pratorum; ita Scania est cortex seu vellus maris, quæ est pars Daniæ. Hinc (fifuþunda lendr) Danus. pro Dano.

8	Ættstærd ofnis gætta
	Ullur manndyrdarfulle
	Sameign, traustum tæmer
	Tiørgu hefur med mørgum:
	Adle þui under rødle
	Einginn Donskum geingur
	Fremre, ad firnd ok soma
	Funa straums oc uppruna.

(Construe) (ofnis gætta ullur) i.e. eques auratus (manndyrdarfulle) i.e. illustris (hefur ættstærd) i.e. habet generositatem (sameign) i.e. communem (med mørgum) cum multis (traustum) strennuis⁵ (tiørgu tæmer) i.e. principibus (þui vnder rødle) nam sub sole (geingur einginn fremre) est nemo prior, aut præstantior nobilitas (Donskum adle) qvam est Danica nobilitas. (ad firnd oc soma) tum antiquitate et excellentia funastraums oc uppruna) tum amplitudine et generositate.

⁵ sic (cf. v. 18).

- 9 Kynslod, þo yfer þridiu
 Þiodprys, hefur upp Frysa
 ofvelldis ættsællder
 Oskialfur, heims alfu
 Siþrátt sialandz drottnum
 Sigrunnar giørst unnu
 Vid sygn oc ad røstu Røgnis
 Rædspektar, þess slectis

(Construe) (oskialfur) i.e. intrepidus scil: heros (hefr) upp) excitat (þiodprys Frysa) laudem et gloriam Frisiorum⁶ (yfer þridiu kynslod) supra tertiam generationem (of velldis ættsællder) i.e. per magni nominis genealogias. (Heims alfu) i.e. in plaga mundi, aquilonari. scil: (sigrunnar) i.e. victoriosi heroes (þess slectis) istius stemmatis (unnu) i.e. officium præstiterunt cum dilectione (sialandz drottnum) regibus Selandiæ seu Daniæ (siþratt) sæpissime (vid sygn) i.e. iuxta prudentiam, (oc ad røstu røgnis rædspectar) et secundum plane divina dona dandi consilia. (Nota). (ad Raugnis røstu) alludit ad fabulam Eddicam de Heimdallo, qui fuit unus ex numero Asarum qui dij vocantur Eddice, eorundemque custos fuit vigilantissimus et prudentissimus. tantâ namque fuit vigilantia et providentia, ut ave minus dormiret, tamque linceis oculis, ut ultra centum milliara procul videret (Raugn) i.e. Numen (pro heimdallo) sino (Raugnis rost) seu Heimdalli rost.) pro prudentia divinitus data (cujusmodi prudentiæ comparat Frisiorum prudentiam vigilantiam et dona dandi consilia (Radspekt) Donum dandi consilia

- 10 IOHans Frijs medan fleykuæm
 Frodavøng bygger þiodinn
 Flygur tyr um fолld fløgre
 Fyris⁷ marklanda dyrre
 CHristian, trutraustann
 Tamur hofsmønnum gramur
 Leifdur hinn þridie hafde
 Herra þann kiærstann manna

(Construe) (IOHans Fry) Johannis Frysii (tyr dyre) i.e. laus splendida (flygur vm fолld) pervolitat terram, (medan fl(e)ykuæm þiod) i.e. qvamdiu populus nauticus (bygger) incolit (Frodavøng) pelagus. i.e. laus eius erit perpetua. (fyrris)

⁶ altered from *Friscæ*; before and after this word is written and erased *gentis*.

⁷ or *Fyrris*, see p. 169 above.

i.e. eius laus transit (marklanda) terminos regionum (fløgre) rumore (Christian hinn þridie gramur) Christianus rex, tertius. (leifdur) vita defunctus (tamur hofsmønnum) i.e. assuetus aulicis. (hafde þann Herra trútraustann.) habuit illum heroem fidum. (kiærstann manna) sibi charissimum omnium. Nota. (fl(e)ykuæm) fley est navis (fleykuæmur) nauticus (Frodavange) Froda erat rex marinus (vangur) campus. eius autem campus est mare.

11 Enn er j ossa minne
 Ørsender dædkendur
 Nafn sa er hafde afhefnir
 heimspiodar allgodum.
 Herrann styrde bybaru
 Bothradur frys adals
 Huor mun onars sprundspora
 Spiotrunna hans okunnur

(Construe) enn er j ossa minne) adhuc unus est⁸ in regno Daniae (orsendir Dædkendur) i.e. Heros illustris (sa er hafde nafn) qui nomen sortitus est. (af godum hefnir) a bono vindice (heims piodar.) gentis humanæ. scil: a Christo. (Herrann böthradur) ille beneficus heros (styrde) rexit (baru by) navim⁹ i.e. natus est, seu oriundus ex nobili stemmate. (frys adals) i.e. libera nobilitatis (huor spiotrunna) i.e. quisnam bellatorum (mun okunnr) erit ignarus (onars) alias (hans spora sprund) eius præliorum, seu bellicarum virtutum! (Nota) baruby. est navis eddice. compositum vocabulum a (bara) quod est unda. et by i.e. apis. (spora sprund) hic intelligit pugnam seu victoriam in bello. Nam pugna Eddice etiam appellatur mulieris appellatione addita descriptione ab aliquo instrumento bellico (spore) calcar. nam calcaria etiam ad bellum pertinent et jdeo vocatur (sporasprund.) pugna

12 Mejdur milldinge tiedist
 Marbryma, radþarfur
 Hørsueigir var huorium,
 Hygnre stæstu¹⁰ tygnar.
 Virða gedliufur giorde
 Gunnriodur fyre haf sunnann
 Mig sa mals er føgur
 Minning hans tuisvar sinnum.

⁸ altered from (or to?) *fuit*.

⁹ In margin: *forsa (n) alitud (?) n(omen) D. Borreby* (readings uncertain).

¹⁰ replaced by *hæstu* in interpretation below.

(Construe) (marbryma meidur) ille heros. eddica est appellatio heroïs (radþarfur) i.e. fidus consilijs (tiedist) addixit se (milldinge) regi (hørsuæger) i.e. ille heros (var huørjum hygure) erat quovis sapientior (hæstu tygnar) in eminentissimo gradu (sa gedliufur gunriodur) i.e. affabilis ille princeps (giørde ad virða mig) dignatus est me. (mals) i.e. suo alloquio (firer haf sunnann) cum ego essem in Dania (minning hans) eius mentio (er føgur) est honesta (tuisvar sinnum.) iterato seu semper (Nota) marbryma-mejdur) mar) mare (brimi ignis) (meidur) læsor, seu fractor. maris autem ignis est aurum. qui vero aurum frangit est vir. atque ita (marbrima mejdur) est viri synonymum, quo synonymo Heroëm nominat.

- 13 Ættgeing miog storstietta
 Stófnud vølld framan ur øldum
 Vells hafa verid þollum
 Velburdugum än þurða
 Rådhera vier vide
 Vigþinga, bragningum
 Heidgiæfa huern af ødrum
 Hapsbot fragum Iöta

Construe (Ættgeng vølld) hæreditaria potestas (stor stietta) eminentium ordinum (stofnud) inchoata (framan ur øldum) a priscis seculis (hafa verit) fuerant. (velburdugum vells þollum) i.e. generosis illis heroibus. Frisiorum.¹¹ (vier vide) novimus (an þurða) exacte scil: eos fuisse (rådhera) prætores (vigþinga) bellorum scil. antesignanos. seu duces in prælijs. (heidgiæfa bragningum) i.e. coronam seu gloriam militum. (fragum) rescivimus, seu novimus (huern af ødrum) unumquemque eorum fuisse (hapsbot) i.e. augmentum fortunatum (jota) Danorum. Nota) Jota: ita vocat Danos. seu Cymbros. nam (Iotland) est Cymbria et (Iote) Cymbri.¹²

- 14 Bert er ad vitru oc virtum
 Vafinn Frysa kynstafur
 Heill efler enn høllu
 Hadur stiorNSEme lada
 farsæl þriggund þesse
 Þreid Cancellers heidar
 Næst var niflungum bestu
 Nade borgar forsorgun.

¹¹ altered from *Frisicæ scil: gentis* (cf. v. 9).

¹² written *Cyber*.

Construe (Bert er) manifestum est. (ad kynstafur frysa) quod Friscicæ gentis nobiljs (vafinn) circumamictus, ornatus (vitru oc virtum) prudentia et heroica dignitate (efler enn hœllu) adhuc auget aulam (heill) incolumis, sospes. (hadur stiorseme) præditus imperio (lada) regionum (farsæl þesse) fælix hæc (þriggund) terra trifida. i.e. Dania, cum ea dividatur in tres partes (þreid) desideravit. (Cancellers heidur) i.e. honorem Cancellarij, seu honorum Cancellarium. (Næst var) proximus erat, scil: hic Frisius (Niflungum bestu.) regibus optimis (nam borgar forsorgun.) suscepit curam civitatis.

- 15 Riddarinn giptu giæddur
 Gnottum, snemma sotte
 Braut til um bratta reitu
 Bygdar skiaerustu dygda
 Edla manndada midla
 Matte dyrst þeingill hyrstur
 Er heima oc j heifær sæma
 Halldendur mega vallda

(Construe) Riddarinn). eques auratus (giæddur) præditus (giptu gnottum) virtuosus monumentis (sotte) quæsit (snemma) mature. (braut) viam (til bigdar) ad domicilia (skiaerustu digda) i.e. splendidissimarum virtutum (vm bratta reitu) per ardua loca (þeingill) i.e. heros (hyrstur) hilarissimus (matte) magnificus (midla) media (edla manndäda) nobilium virtutum (er) quæ, scil. media virtutum (vallda halldendur) imperia tenentes (mega) possunt (sæma) æstimare laudare.

- 16 Hugtiginn baur bauga
 Bokspeke red þreka
 Alldur nams nytstum mildra
 Nä rentum liet menta
 Lundur vida of londin
 Linz sloda. þui froda
 Færdur yfer fiótur heyrdi
 Fenringar, spekinga.

Construe (Baur bauga) i.e. eques auratus (hugtiginn) Generosi animi. (red þreka) addidit (bokspeke) artes liberales (let) sivit (nåms alldur) ætatem discendi aptam. (nä) assequi (nyrstum) utilissimum (rentum) proventum (menta) liberalium artium (vida) passim (um lœndin) per regiones (þui) quoniam (lundur linz sloda) eques auratus (heyrdi) audivit (froda) peritos. (spekinga)

sophos (færdur yfer fiøtur Fenringar) i.e. liber. et nullis vinculis implicatus. (Nota) Fenringar. Alludit ad fabulam Eddicam de Fenris ulf; qui cum ab Asis victus esset, nequo poterat amplius vadere. Contrarium autem hic asserit de equite aurato, quod nimirum philosophos audiêrit, nullis impeditus remoris, aut vinculis secus quam lupus ille. (Baur bauga) (Baur) est nomen viri (baugur) annulus qui vero annulum gestat est vir, quo etiam nomine describit equitem auratum. (Lundur linzsloda) (lundur) ita vocatur homo eddice (linne) serpens (slod) via. hinc (linz sloda lundur) eques auratus.

- 17 Landaskia logbrøndum
Leit ec vid birtu ad veita
Hylle eda hunagulle
Haudurs ad auka raudu
Þo ek liodhlar j hlaudur
Hleranda vogie bera
Höfðinglegasta lofða
Lof ur þagnar rofe

(Construe) (Þo eg) quamvis ego (liodhlar) cantandi imperitus. (vögíe) audeam (bera) inferre (j hlaudur) auribus, (lofða) principis (höfðinglegasta) celsissimi (hleranda) auscultantis. (lof) laudem (ur þagnar rofe) rupto silentio: (leit ec vid) est quasi attentem (birtu ad veita) lucem addere (landa skia) soli (lögbrøndum) facibus (eda) sive (ad auka) i.e. augere (raudum) rutilis. (haudurs hunagulli) radijs solaribus. (hylle) illuminationem seu gratiam. Nota: (landaskiar) (land.) regio terra (skiar) fēnēstra (landaskiar) Eddice est sol: qui est tanquam regionum fēnēstra (Ad hlera) auscultare. (Hlaudur) horreum est proprie. hic pro auribus accipitur metaphorice: (Hunagull haudurs) (hun.) rotula (haudur) terra. aurum vero rotarum terræ. sunt solares seu astrorum radij, est enim sol et luna aspicientibus instar rota, quo ad formam. hic autem intelliguntur radij solares qui auro assimilantur. (Hylle) gratia, favor, nam radij solares, gratiam præ se ferunt permagnam

Intercalaris CHRISTIAN Fostfrone etc:

- 18 Ungur olldu sløngve
Oquidit vann rida
Fak, til framande rikia
Forstr(e)y mis liet sueyma
Þorde a áta jordu
Udur lemjandi suder

Huatur huednløgs biter
Huitfalldada at lita

(Construe) (huednlogs biter) i.e. ille heros. ita enim eum describit Eddice ab (huednlog) quod est aurum, et (biter) i.e. dator (huatur) strennuus (vann ryda) usus est pro equo. (ølldu slongue) navigio. (oquidit) intrepide (ungur) cum adhuc esset juvenis. (let) fecit. (forstreymis fak) equum marinum. seu navim (sueyma) natate (til framande rykja) ad peregrinas terras. (Þorde) ausus est (ad lyta) aspicere (udur) fluctus. (huitfalldada) albicantes (lemjande suder) percellentes asseres. (a Atajordu) in pelago. (Nota) (allda) est synonymum maris. (slanga) funda: (hinc (ølldu slongve) pro navi. (Atajord) Ate erat unus ex regibus marinis, cujus terra idcirco dicitur mare eddice

19 Rettfræadne gulls gæde
Geigvår um higgju teiga
Brunn ok blomrot sanna
Balldur mannfarsældar.
Valur er hende hollre
Haptatys þar kraptur
Allur j alioss føllum
Ofælinn sig bæler

Construe (Gulls balldur) eques auratus (geigvar) fugiens mali (gæde um higgju teiga) conservavit in animo suo, (rettfræadne) doctrinam sanam (brunn fontem (ok blomrot sanna) et florem radicum verum. (mannfarsældar) virtutum (valur haptatys) animus (er hollre) utilior (hende) manu (þar) ubi scil. in pectore (kraptur) vigor (allur) totus (ofælinn) intrepidus (bæler sig) habet sedem (j alioss føllum) in pericardio. (Nota) Geigvar. Geigur) vel Gygur. erat fæmina monstrosa, quæ etiam alio nomine vocabatur (Angurboda) i.e. nuncia mali. hinc (Geigvar) est is qui cavet vel fugit malum seu infortunium. (Valur haptatys) (valur) est accipiter (Hapt) ligamentum. animum autem vocat (haptatys val) i.e. avem ligamentorum. ligamentum vero hic notat vel thoracem pectoris, vel viscera quæ tanquam ligamento continuo nexa cohæreant. avis pro animo accipitur Eddica licentia

20 Let j løndum uti
Lundged sitt um stunder
Lagt til frægstu lista
lysa skorungur Frysa

Sale hann haskola
 hæst rækiande glæste
 Allvangs heyrde ødlingr
 Ungur ment ølldunga

(Construe) (skörungur Frysa) i.e. ille princeps Frisicæ gentis. (let lundged sitt) sivit ingenium suum (lagt til frægstu lista) ad optimas artes capescendas aptissimum (lysa) elucescere (um stunder) aliquandiu (j løndum ute) in exteris regionibus (hann rækjande) ille frequentans (haskola sale) academias (glæste) ornavit eas sua scil: præsentia (ødlingur) ille princeps (heyrdi) audivit (ungur) juvenis (ment ølldunga) doctrinam seu peritiam seniorum, (allvangs) ubique

21 Dyrra driugum herra
 Dæme marger ræma
 Lædra suo leikur a ordit
 Listum þar ed hann giste
 Prudann sa Pompejum
 Prydelega hlyda
 Roma rykis frama
 Ruda j heime sudur

(Construe) (marger ræma) multi comendant (driugum) multoties (dæme) exempla (dyrra herra) illustrium principum (listum lædra) liberalium artium gnarorum (suo leikur a ordit) adeo, ut fama non sileat. (Þar ed hann giste) Ubi divertit (prudann sa Pompejum) i.e. vidit res egregie¹³ gestas Pompeji (prydelega hlyda) pu(l)chre quadrare seu correspondere (Romarykis frama) amplificationi imperij Romani (Ruda) scil. vidit res gestas à Pompejo Romæ, qui scil: Pompejus erat (Ruda) rombus seu fænestra (j heime sudur) in meridionali mundi plagå

22 Feck ött gegnum Gryckia
 Gerhugull oc Romveria
 Bilbugslaust bokmäla
 Benþuaratyr farit
 Huorra mind of mære
 Mengistiornar fráða leinge
 Speigil visse vel fagrann
 Vapnspenner stormennis

¹³ or *egregia* ?

(Construe) (Benþuaratyr) i.e. ille Heros. ita enim eum describit a gladio (Gerhugull) magnaminus (feck farit gegnum) perlegit (ött) cito (bokmäla) libros (Gryckiä oc Romveria) Græcorum et latinorum (bilbugslaust) intrepide (huorra mengis stiornar mind) quorum, reipublicæ administrationis exempla (leinge fräda) diu inaudita (of mære) per poësin seu historias poëticas (vapnspennir) i.e. heros (visse) novit esse (speigil velfagran) speculum pellucidum (stormennis) magnatum. (Nota) Benþuaratyr) ben) vulnus. þuara terebrum) tyr nomen viri (hinc (benþuaratyr) pro viro bellatore eddice (vapnspenner) vopn. gladius (ad spenna) comprehendere manu (hinc vapnspennir) stringens gladium, pro viro bellatore, quo synonymo equitem auratum appellat et describit. (Gerhugull) ferox, magnanimus. (Ger) ita vocabatur lupus Odini. (hugull) audax. hinc (Gerhugull) pro animoso et feroci in bello. (of) est per. (mærd) cantilena poësis. (ad mæra) cantilenis celebrare).

23

Skeidrum mannords giædgiædum
 Gistur rann suo ed firsta.
 Tignast ok tyrs af regne
 Tiallda fiølnis apalldarar¹⁴
 Katt þa er kirsæte
 Kyrkendur lyta, myrkvar
 Lyser laufaþras huad
 Listugur sä menhrister

(Construe) scil: heros (gistur) dotatus (giædgiædum) humanitate (rann so) ita cucurrit. (firsta skeidrum) primum stadium. (mannordz) boni nominis. (Tignast) commendatur, (ok) etiam (tyrs af regne) a rebus bellicis. incipit eum laudare a rebus in bello gestis. (Apalldrar) abstinentes (fiølnis tjallda) bellorum (kyrkendur) domi manentes, seu incarcerati (þa er lyta) quando vident (katt¹⁵ kirsæte) lætam quietem. sensus est, quando viri militares non exercent bellum, (myrkvar) tunc quasi obscurantur. (Laufaþras) bella vero (Lyser) claritatem afferunt¹⁶ scil: bellatoribus (huad.) quæ scil: bella (listugur menhrister) vir bellicosus (sa) vidit (Nota) (Apalldrar¹⁷) compositum est ab. (Af) et hallda) abstinentes. (tiallda Fiølnis.) (tialld) tentorium (Fiølnir) nomen viri proprium bellicosi. eius vero tentoria sunt castra eddice (kyrkendr) ad kyrkia) est constringere. dicit autem eos qui a bello abstinent esse domi quasi constrictos.

¹⁴ In margin in different hand: *Af hallðar.*

¹⁵ written *kät* / *katt* over page division.

¹⁶ altered from *affert.*

¹⁷ In margin in different hand: *Afhalldar.*

- 24 Hitt fra ec ok und hette
 Hengetys ad geinge
 Darra fione fiærre
 Freyr ad regne geyra
 Fullhuginn fus til snille
 Far ei ugde sära
 Arædis einginn pryde
 Almver Dönskum herra

(Hitt fra ek) aliud ego rescivi, quam scil: quod ille heros sese domi contineret, seu quietem caperet (ad Darrafreyr) quod ille vir bellicosus (fione fiærre) procul a quiete (geinge) accederet (ad geyra regne) ad bellum (und hengetys hette) indutus galeam, seu armatus. (fullhugin) vir magnanimus (fus til snille) pronus ad concinnitatem (Ugde ei) nil metuit (far) p(er)iculum (sara) vulnificum (Einginn arædis pryde) nulla animositas (ver) prohibet (Dönskum herra) Danicum illum heroem (alm) arcu. i.e. nemo quantumvis animosus, audebit illum Danicum heroem a bello retardare. seu, nemo est qui ei resistere in bello præsumat. Nota: (hengety) gladius a pendendo dictus; nam (ad hanga) est pendere (hentetys¹⁸ vero höttur) est Galea. sic pro armatura accipitur (Geyraregn) bellum eddice (Darrafreyr) (Darre) gladius: Nomen autem viri est (Freyr) et vir ab armis describitur, eddice

- 25 Gladur j giukavodum
 Geck. þar ed hilldarbecke
 Þröng eflande a þinge
 Þioder geystar odu
 Meid var meniu säda
 Möt alhuassra spiota
 Modum¹⁹ jafnt sem miadar
 Mey skiær gullkier bære

Construe) (Gladur) lætus scil. heros (j Giukavodum) in castris (geck) incedebat (þar ed) ubi (þioder geystar) milites concitati (odu) vadaverunt (hilldar becke) sangvinem in bello fluentem. (a þröngvo) þinge) in angusto foro, seu in acie angustá. (meniu säda meid) heroï (var) erat (mot allhuassra spiota) ferocium bellorum seu bellatorum, concursus, (jafnt) tanquam (mey skiær) virgo florida (bære) adportaret (mödum) defesso (miadar gullker) mustum in poculo aureo i.e. tam lætus ille inibat bellum, quam lætus esse potest is, qui defessus potum haurit ex aureo poculo

¹⁸ sic.

¹⁹ catchword *mödum*.

- 26 Briot var þad laxlatra
Lings sem harpa syngre
Sömd eda eyrum ymde
Organs hlíod j borgum
Liftions er vid lod dripter
Lopt ryfande, huopte
Munnkringlott at mæn(n)um
Malmfres elldum bliesu

(Construe) (þad var) illud erat briot lax latra lyngs) equiti aurato, ita enim describit eddice ab auro (sem) tanquam (harpa) cithara (syngre sonaret (eda organshlíod) sive vox organica (sömd) moderata (j borgum) in civitatibus (ymde eyrum) sonaret in auribus (er) quando. (liftions malmfres) lethiferæ bombardæ (munnkringlott) ore rotundæ. (blesu elldum) evomuerunt ignem (huopte) ex ore (ad mænnum) in homines. (vid loddripter) ad explosionem jaculorum (lopt ryfande) lacerantium aëra. (Nota) lax) salmo (latur) receptaculum piscium, seu locus in mari vel fluvij. in quem sese pisces recipientes, capi solent. (lyng) sunt virgulta tenuissima et humillima. hic vero notat arenam, arena autem fluviorum est aurum eddice. hinc (laxlatra ling) aurum (briotur) fractor. qui autem frangit aurum, est vir., itaque laxlatralyngs briotr est vir eddice, quo nomine heroëm describit²⁰

- 27 Apollins sem pelle
Prudskryddastann bruda
Malfærann²¹ ment skolar
Mensfrey lofudu þenna
Härs ei sydur med hersum
Herbuda vafinn skruda
Þotti vid hermans hättu
Handør skyfer randa

(Construe) (mentskolar) Academiæ (lofudu þennann mens frey) laudaverunt hunc heroëm (malfærann) disertum (sem) tanquam (prudskryddastann (pelle)) splendidissimum amictu (Apollins bruda) musarum. (skyfer randa) ille vir bellator (vafinn) circumamictus (härs herbuda skruda) vestibus castrensibus, seu armatura (þotte) videbatur (handør) assuetus (vid hermans hättu) ad bellum. (med hersum) una cum viris militaribus, magni nominis. i.e. non erat minus peritus belligerandi quam honestarum artium gnarus

²⁰ The passage (*Nota*) — *describit* is marked *NB* in margin.

²¹ altered from *Malfærinn*.

Intercalaris CHRistian Fostfrone etc:

- 28 Náde gersema gödra
 Gilldra borinn til snillda
 Hare a jngis árum
 Alliomande bloma
 stundan ædstu stendur
 Stordar smidz j ordu
 Tignar ödrum eignum
 Ad þar giorde hlada

(Construe) (Hare) heros (borinn) natus (til snillda) ad honores (gilldra) amplissimos (náde) acquisivit (bloma) florem, (alliomande) splendidissimum (godra gersema) bonarum artium (a jngis árum) in juventute (stundan) studium (stordar smidz) illius viri bellicosi (stendur) consistit (j ædstu ordu) in supremo gradu (tignar) dignitatis (giorde þar ad hlada) curavit ijs scil. artibus adjici, (ödrum eignum) alias dotes. (Nota) stordar smidz: (stord) est bellum. (smidur) faber. faber autem belli. est bellator eddice (Gersemar) ita vocantur res pretiosissimæ. hic bonas artes denotat

- 29 Lærdoms liosar dyrder
 Lof slungid nam tungna
 Sagna vitru sidhygne
 Sanna raun hlutanna
 Romsælast riettdæme
 Raddhapp oc krans dæda
 Tyr lastvar jnnlæste
 Lioss Rynar hugsk(r)yne

(Construe) (Tyr lastvar) integer, inculpatus heros (innlæste) inclusit. (hugs kryne) pectori (liosar rynar) aureo. seu generoso (lærdoms dyrder) doctrinales honores (liosar) splendidos, (lofslunged) laudem eximiam. (näm tungna) cognitionem lingvarum (sagna vitru) scientiam historiarum (sidhigne) civilitatem morum (sanna raun) veram experientiam. hlutanna (rættæme) justiciam in judicando (romsælast) celeberrimam (rædhapp) prudentiam. (oc dædakrans) coronamque virtutum omnium

- 30 Frama vithugar fime
 Flutnings til storhluta
 Hoskur hrepte med visku
 Hernadar ræser ærne.

Ferd yfer fyrnar jarðer
 Froð sidkinning þjóða
 Huatfrumud huervetna
 Huitlyndis var jnde.

(Construe) (Ræser) erne) heros illustris (hrepte) acquisivit (vithugar fine) intelligentiam (frama) celebrem (til storhluta-flutnings) ad res magnas gerendas. (med visku hernadar) cum peritia militandi (ferð) iter (yfer fyrnar jarðer) per peregrinas regiones (froð sidkinning) docta cognitio morum (þjóða) externarum nationum (huatfrumud) cito acquisita (var jnde) erant jucunditas (huytlindis) candidi animi seu principis sereni (huervetna) ubique

31 Letu a Ranar reita
 Renna fir stormenne
 Gylva grafande volvur
 Grär hofvarpner ära
 Skyfðu med Romu refde
 Rönd j ymsum löndum
 Gull ad oc mundar mialla
 Mod-drekjur finde godar

(Construe) (Stormenni) atletæ (letu) curaverunt (ära hofvarpner) naves actas remigibus (grafande) secantes. (Gylvavolvur) fluctus (grar) cæruleos (renna a ränarreita) navigare per pelagus (fyr) quondam. (skyfðu rönd) scil. illi atletæ exercuerunt prælia (med Romu refde) gladio, j ymsum löndum, in varijs regionibus (ad finde) ut invenirent (gull) aurum. (oc mundarmialla moddrekiur) argentum. (Nota) Ran) mare. (reitur) spacium (ranarreitur) spacium marinum. seu mare. (Gylvavolvur) Gylve) rex marinus (volvur) sunt furie (Gylvavolvur) ergo, sunt fluctus maris, seu mare fremens (är) remus (ara hofvarpner) navis quæ remos habet. (Romu refde) Roma) est bellum Eddice. (Rifð) liciatorium, quo licia circumvolvuntur, quo etiam nomine appellatur gladius Eddice addito vocabulo bellum., ut hic (Romarefð) pro gladio. (skyfðu rönd) (ad skyfa) scindere (rönd) est linea quædam in clypeo, cui antiqui solebant literas inscribere. hinc (ad skyfa rönd) est bellum gerere eddice. (Mundar-mialla moddrekiur) (mundur) dos. (miöll) nix (möddrekiur) feces maris. nam (möða) mare est. (dregg) fex. fex autem maris est aurum eddicé, ubi vero (mundarmialla) additur, intelligitur argentum pro auro: quod, quia magis album est quam aurum, nivi assimilatur.²²

²² (*Mundar-mialla moddrekiur*) — *assimilatur* underlined; in margin: *NB vide Eddam* (in a different hand).

- 32 Þesse hefur þægre hnosser.
 Þundur stála vel fundit.
 Rubin riett sem j þröum
 Rastar blossa fastur
 Skyna höfðings a hönnum
 Heilskygðar manndygðer
 Þær sem þegne oc herrum
 Þyngrykum fulltingia

(Construe) (Þesse stalapundur) hicce vir bellator. (hefur fundit) acquisiverat (þægre hnosser) dotes acceptiores (höfðings manndygðer) heroicæ virtutes (heilskygðar) claræ (þær sem fulltingia) quæ sufficiunt (þegne oc herrum) tam subditis quam principibus (þyngrykum) virtuosis. (skyna a hönnum) micant in eo (rett sem) æque ac, (Rubin) gemma, (fastur) infixia (j þröum) sulcis (rastar blossa) auri.

- 33 Mälprudur meiginn stolpe
 Mundangs stöll föstur grundar
 Skiölddur fridar skraut alldar
 Skerðer nu er þui suerða
 Ördugre ungur huad heyrde
 Eldre leit ok raun selðe
 Alldradur seims ut sælðar
 Sender, Dønsku vyðlende

(Construe) (skerðer suerða) hic jdem heros, ita enim ab armis describitur eddice (mälprudur) celebris. (meiginn stölpe) præcipua columna (mundangsstöll) examen æquibre) (skiölddur fridar) clypeus pacis (skraut alldar) ornamentum seculi (fosturgrundar) patriæ suæ (er nu þui) est iam propterea (ördugre) sublimior, quia scil: (huad) quod (seims sendir) ille eques auratus (heyrde) audivit (ungur) juvenis (leit) vidit (eldre) ætate provecior; (alldradur) jam senior (utsælðar) communicat (Donsku vidlende) universo regno Daniæ²³ (Nota) (mundan(g)s stoll) (mundang) est æquilibrium (Mundan(g)s stöll) autem, est examen seu stylus in statera, qui quo pondus se vergit, exit. æquitatem igitur, herois, comparat æquilibrio.

- 34 Fullur heylinda oc hylle
 Hygginn räd gefur tyggia
 HUSai helltur liose
 Havegs synum er DAVID.

²³ *raun selðe* is not glossed (= experienced ?).

Blikspør hans spiallspeke
 Sperra upp under herrum
 Leidsøgu steirn, sem stöðu
 starsyn er nordhiara.

(Construe) scil. heros (fullur) auctus (heilinda oc hylle) fidelitate et pietate (gefur) dat (tyggia) regi. (hyggiu räd) sapiens consilium (er) scil. ille est (synum David) suo Davidi (Husai) alter Husai. (helltr) perfusus (havegs liose) lumine sapientia. (Hans spiallspeke) ejus scil. herois, eloquendi donum, (blik spør) non habens intermissionem. scil: est (sperra) tignus. (underherrum) principibus in inferiori gradu constitutis. (leidsögusteirn) scil: ille est lapis index, seu est instar lapidis indicis, principibus reliquis (sem) ceu (leidsögusteirn) lapis index (er) est starsyn) intentus. (Nordhiara) in plagam septemtrionalem, seu polum arcticum. Nota: Comparat Cancellarium Husai, in dandis consilijs integris. sicut enim Husai Davidi profuit integris consilijs; ita magnificum hunc Cancellarium, Serenissimo regi, a consilijs esse, innuit Deinde principes inferioris ordinis, eius sapientia lumen attendere, haud secus ac lapis index in polum arcticum, perpetuo est intentus. (Blikspør) (Blik) brevissimum temporis spatium. ut (augnablik) oculi momentum. (spar) parvus hinc (Blikspør) qui non tamdiu desinit, quamdiu, viget momentum oculi.

35

Saman fara sinne
 Siklings oc hans miklu
 Höll skipar hinn oc skola
 Herser samtignar þesse
 Sæmer frabær ad frama
 Fromleik oc vysdome
 Vegur hans, vytt sem flygur
 Valur, Danska Jørsale

(Construe) (sinne) animus. (siklings oc hans) regis et illius, scil Cancellarij. (ad miklu) magna ex parte. (fara saman) concordant (Hinn) ille scil. rex (skipar) fundat. (holl oc skola) aulam et Academiam (þesse) hic scil: Cancellarius (samtignar herser) ejusdem dignitatis in regimine (fra bær) insignis. (ad frama) industriã (fromleik) probitate. (oc vysdome) et sapientia. (sæmer) coronat, ornat scil: aulam et Academiam. (hans vegur) ejus nomen seu fama (flygur um Danska) Jørsale) volat per universam Daniam (vytt) tam late (sem) quam (valur) aves scil: volant

- 36 Gjør visse storm styriar
 Standa mest til klandra
 Reindur Romuvandar
 Riödur landz hia þiöðum
 Af Danastrydz stífla
 Stöðvunargiarn þui böðvar
 Finna sig fridz a reynum
 Fremstann liet firer skemstu

(Construe) (Romuvandarríodur) vir bellator, intelligit Cancelarium. (reindur) expertus (visse) novit. (gjør) exacte (storm styriar) tempestatem bellicam, seu bellum (standa mest til klandra) maximi mali, causam esse futuram (hia landz þiöðum) inter nationes et gentes (afstífla) scil. ille heros existens validissimum impedimentum (Danastryds²⁴) belli Danici (þui) ideoque (let sig finna) curavit se inveniri stöðvunargiarnann (böðvar) pacificum caduceatorem (fremstan) primum (frids a reinum in seriebus pacis (firer skemstu) nuperrime. (Nota) (styriar stormur) (styria.) irrequies (stormur) tempestas. hinc (styriar stormur) est bellum eddice. (Romuvandarríodur) (Roma) bellum (vöndur) virga (ríodur) qui rubefacit. (Romu vondr) est ergo gladius, qui vero gladium rubefacit est vir bellator eddice

- 37 Leit Lybek ad mote
 Lands heillar midlanda
 Roms keysara runna
 Rög jels efnun loga
 Fyrergöngu folkstiorum
 Föðurlands nockrum öðrum
 Fäður tignum Frys tiede
 Frid best ad stadfesta

(Construe) Lybek. Lubeca (Leit ad mote) vidit a longe, seu prævidit (runna) milites (Roms keysara.) cæsaris Romani. (loga) perdere (lands heillar midlanda) (pacem (rögjels efnun) occasione belli. (Frys) Christianus Frisius. (fäður tignum) auctus dignitate, seu auctoritate præditus. (tiede) præstitit. (firergöngu) intercessionem (folkstiorum) præsidibus (föðurlands) patriæ (nockrum öðrum) alijsque nonnullis. (ad stadfesta frid) ad pacem constabiliendum (best) integerrime (Nota) (Landsheillar midlanda) (lands heill) salus regionis (ad midla) impertiri (midlande)

²⁴ Catchword -strydz.

impertiens²⁵ seu impertitor. Pacem autem vocat, impertientem salutis regionum cum pax sit optima rerum, eaque res parvæ crescant etc. (Rogjels efnun) (rogur) calumnia. (jel) nimbus (efne) materia. quasi materia calumniæ nimbi, pro materia belli, seu bello. eddice

Intercalaris, CHRISTIAN Fostfrone etc:

38 Eign ma þrymu þagna
 Þierklausra Danmerkur
 Reikna j Raun þo vikne
 Rond j ødrum løndum.
 Flagd ef fridar brigdum
 Fellda gauts þar velldur
 Sampikker sefa Romu
 Syngur, ræds høfðingiar

Construe (þierklausra þrymu) pacem (mä reikna) possumus referre (þagna) acceptam (Eign) possessionem (Danmerkur) Daniæ. (j Raun) re vera (þo) si (rønd) bellum (j ødrum løndum) in alijs regionibus (vikne) sedetur. (ef) si (felldagauts flagd) bellum. (velldur) causa est. (fridar brigdum) amissæ pacis. (þar) ibi mox scil: in Daniâ (sampilcker) concordēs (höfðingiar) principes (sefa) sedant. (Romu syngur) murmur bellicum, seu bellum. Nota: (þiarklausra) (þiark) tumultus (þiarklaus, qui est sine tumultu. (þruma) est bellum, eddice. hinc (þrymu þiarklaus) pacificus. et pacificus pro pace per metonymiam. hic ponitur. (Felldagautr) castra sunt (Flagd) est nomen monstrosæ fæminæ; et eadem etiam appellatione securis appellatur, atque ita (felldagautz flagd) quasi securis castrensis, hic pro bello est accipienda, eddice.

39 Fridur frons er pryde
 Fro riett allra stietta
 Audmilldingur eyðer
 Oeyrum þui geyra
 Fridur boklista fræðum
 Forkunar þreks orkar.
 Hyggin er hellst a leggur
 Hug, reiner streingflugar

Construe) (Fridur) pax. (er pryde) est ornamentum regionis (frons) regionis (rett fro) recta tranquillitas (allra stietta) omnium

²⁵ Above line in different hand : *mediator*.

ordinum. (þui) jdeoque (audmillingur) ita vocat heroem Eddice ab (audur) opes, et, milldingur) largus (eyder) annihilat (geyra oeyrum) discordiam, bellum, seu rixas bellicas (fridur) pax (orkar) acquirit (boklistafræðum) liberalibus artibus, (forkunar þreks) maximum profectum (er) quibus scil: artibus (hygginn) sapiens (reiner streingflugar). i.e. heros ita enim eum ab arcu describit (leggur hellst a hug) maxime studet. Nota: (öeyrur) morositates (Geyr) gladius (geyra öeyrur) pro bello eddice. (Reiner streing flugar) (streingur.) funis (fluga) musca. (reiner) qui intendit. funis hic pro arcu, musca, pro telis, accipitur eddice; qui vero arcum intendit est vir bellator, pro quo Cancellarium vult intelligi.

40 Traust er FRys oc föstre
 Fädra visku nädum
 Hæle oc vordur hascola
 Hradur athuarfa fader.
 Syner Sælands Athenu
 Sennior fra ec þenna
 Flutnings mann fuser vitna
 Fram til aller saman

(Construe). (Frys er) Frisius est (traust hæle) tutum refugium (oc fostre) et nutritor (fädra visku nädum) eorum qui scientiam sunt assecuti (vordur) conservator (haskola) Academiae. (hradur athuarfafader) promptus patronus. (Syner Sælands Athenu) alumni Athenarum Selandicarum, seu cives Academiae Hafniensis (fuser) ultro (vitna) contestantur (aller saman) omnes pariter (þennan (hunc (sennior) principem scil: esse (flutningsmann) promotorem (til frama) ad honores Nota: (sennior) est synonymum principis eddicum

41 Margann myer hörga
 Metords lagann uppsetur
 Ufan harra hinna
 Hærre flytur til æru
 Adra ur lyfs suo leider
 Lægd enn sier nafnfrægder
 Skielfer yrs semur sialfum
 Sidvandur odehyande

(Construe) (Skielfer yrs) ita vocat heroem eddice. (Sidvandur) civilitate morum ornatus (uppsetur) exaltat (margan myer horga) multos viros (metordz lägan) conditionis humilioris. (Ufan

hara²⁶) in eminentiores principes, seu constituit eos principes. (Hina) alios (flytur) evehit (til hærre æru) ad gradus eminentiores, seu honores. (adra) alios (so leider) eodem modo educit seu suscitāt (ur lyfs lægd) ex obscuritate vitæ. (enn) sier) sibi vero ipsi (semur) acquirit. (nafnfrægðer) nomen (odeyande) immortale

- 42 Lundur, j lioma stendur
 Listbær, niu sistra
 Sol medan su elur
 Seirlaus alldin þeirra²⁷
 Klingia lof klerk ølldungar.
 Klar fagnadar äre
 Lyster landstiornu ästum
 Lios færande hrosa

(Construe) (Lundur) saltus seu lucus (nio sistra) novem sororum (listbær) ferax artium. intelligit academiam et scholas. (stendur j lioma) floret. (medan su sol) dum ille sol scil: Cancellarius, (seirlaus) serenus (elur) rigat, pascit, nutrit, (þeirra alldin) earum scil: scholarum, gemmas, seu ramulos. i.e. alumnos Academicos. (Klerkolldungar) seniores ordinis literarij (klingia lof klar) laudes sonant sinceras (fagnadar äre) anno jubilæo. (lister ästum) cordicitus lubitum est, (hrosa) celebrare (landstiornu) stellam regionis. (lios færande) lucentem.

- 43 Burster happskreittar hæstu
 Halla litast sem gialle
 Ryta rads ad vidsetu
 Renner, vitande þenna
 Lög semur lykndriugar.
 Lungur adals niungar
 Riettskickad lofns locka
 Lester fyrrum rotfester

(Construe) (Hæstu buster) suprema fastigia (halla) aulæ (happskreittar) conspicua auro, (litast) pinguntur (sem) tanquam (gialle) scintillatione, i.e. radiant auro, haud secus ac ferrum candens scintillas emittit. (vitande) scientes (þenna) hunc (ryta renner) equitem auratum (ad vidsetu) assidere (räds) una cum senioribus in comitio. seu, quod Cancellarius considerat in comitio, magnam gloriam conciliat aulæ regiæ. (Lungur adals)

²⁶ or *harra*, see p. 169.

²⁷ or *þeirra*, see p. 169.

flos nobilitatis scil: Cancellarius (semur lög) dicit legem (riettskickad) justo ordine. (Lofns locka lester) i.e. Cancellarius, ita enim eum ab auro describit Eddice (rotfester) stabilit. (nyungar) nova statuta (firrum) antiquitate, seu legibus antiquis.

- 44 Ænd fra ec engla grundu
 Jnnum lærdoma sinne
 (Hrausthuga folldu fosturs
 Far geds dygda skara
 Speke, radskorum rykia,
 Rangkiljudum godvilia
 Ryckte odæens²⁸ eycktum)
 Elgfæder sa helgar

(Construe) (sa Elgfæder) ille eques auratus, ita eddice descriptus. (nam) (Jlgia) fera est carnivora, (fæder) pastor. qui vero pascit feras et aves carnivoras, est vir bellicosus. (helgar) sacrat (ænd) animam (Einglagrundu) regioni angelorum seu regno cælorum glorioso. (jnnum lærdoma sinne) in studendo theologiæ seu doctrinæ theöpneustæ (odaens eycktum) in æternum, seu seculis infinitis (far geds) fata. (rykte) sustulerunt e medio (Rangkiljudum godvilia) invisâ benevolentîâ (dygda skara) viros virtuosos (hrausthuga) animosos (folldu fosturs) patriæ terræ (radskorum) consiliarios (spekeryka) sapientes. (Nota) (Rangkiljudum godvilia) invisâ benevolentîâ. hic mortem intelligit, quæ licet pijs non cedat in malum, tamen, quia est naturæ humanæ contraria, dicitur et est invisâ.

- 45 Oldd þreyr utlensk tærer
 Ordaflegs þar ed var forðum.
 Øll hlaudnum grund hledru
 Hliom lofs framm ber soma
 Unna þeim er syst sinner
 Samborgar menn drambe
 Enge first slepper slöngu
 Slykur oddvite rykis

(Construe) (Øll oldd) omnes nationes (utlensk) exterranæ (þar ed var forðum) ubi erat qvondam, seu, inter quas olim fuit Cancellarius. (þreyr) trahuntur desiderio (ordaflegs tærer) Cancellarij (frammber) depromunt, scil: exterranei, (hlaudnum hledru grund) equiti aurato (hliomlofs soma) splendidam laudem.

²⁸ written *odæens* in MS.

(Samborgar menn) concives seu, conterranei (unna þeim) diligunt eum scil: Cancellarium (er syst sinner) quippe qui minime assentitur (drambe) superbiæ. (first) siquidem (Einge oddvite) nemo Cancellarius (slykur) talis (slepper slongu rykis) jaculatur fundam regni, seu, nemo illi compar, tenet imperium regni. sensus in summa sic habet. tam exterranei, inter quos olim conversatus est, quam conterranei eum diligunt atque suspiciunt, cum non sit ei compar inter eos qui imperia tenent. (Nota) (ordaflegs tærer) (ordafleg) quasi aplustre verborum. (tærer) depromptor. intelligit autem Cancellarium, cujus fida verba et consilia tanto sunt ornamento, quanto Aplustre esse solet navibus.

NOTES

I. ON BELSHEIM'S *AF BIBELEN* . . .

BY I. J. KIRBY

IN THE YEAR 1884 the prominent Norwegian theologian Johannes Belsheim published in book form a collection of quotations from the Bible¹ extracted from the Norwegian-Icelandic pre-Reformation literature then in print. It had first appeared in *Theologisk Tidsskrift for den evangelisk-lutherske Kirke i Norge* (in vols. VIII-X, Ny Række, 1882-1884), but soon came out as a separate volume.

The circumstances surrounding its publication make sad reading; but they help us to understand both the strength and weakness of the work. Gissur Belsheim, son to Johannes, collected the material, but was drowned in Oslo Fjord before he could publish it (*op. cit.*, 191); and it was his father who thus saw it into print. At the time, it received little critical attention: contemporary reviews² hailed it as a long-needed contribution to Nordic studies, but made no attempt at serious appraisal. Closer examination shows, however, that while those quotations which are given are presented with a high degree of accuracy, Gissur's knowledge of the Bible was by no means adequate to his task, and he passed over a large number of the less obvious quotations in the works he read. More seriously, he clearly did not examine all the material he says he did: in the case of the Thomas Becket sagas³ he erroneously assumed that the second account (at pp. 295-504) was sufficiently like the first to make reading unnecessary, and in consequence missed some 60 quotations and references, only a few of which also appear in the first account.

¹ J. Belsheim, *Af Bibelen paa norsk-islandsk (norröna) i Middelalderen* (1884).

² In *The Academy* (1886), I 81, a sympathetic review, but including the comment that *Biskupa Sögur* should have been included among the works excerpted; and in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* (1885) 17,222, a brief but appreciative review by Möbius, whose desire for such a work had encouraged the Belsheims (*op. cit.*, 12-13). *Af Bibelen* . . . is also listed in *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* (1886), III 352.

³ C. R. Unger, *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups* (1869).

He made a similar mistake with *Stjórn*⁴, wrongly assuming that only the Prologue and Introduction would contain quotations⁵; in fact, there are over 70 quotations and references scattered through the work from parts of the Bible not included in the basic translation. His statement in his introduction (*op. cit.*, 12) that in spite of all his care a few quotations may have been missed⁶ is thus seen to be hopelessly over-optimistic. Certain of his editorial decisions, too, are regrettable. From the point of view of the serious student, the failure to give even a reference to all parallel passages (*op. cit.*, 6) is more than a nuisance, and the decision to omit all quotations from the Apocrypha⁷, an integral part of the Latin Bible (*op. cit.*, 5), indefensible. The result of all this is that almost three times as many quotations and references as are listed in *Af Bibelen . . .* are to be found in the material now in print, which in volume is not so very much greater than in Belsheim's day⁸.

A complete re-examination of the whole subject thus seems called for; and the present writer hopes to publish the results of his own investigations in the near future. In the meantime, since the Belsheims' work will continue to be used by scholars, a note of the comparatively small number of errors in attribution etc., as distinct from omissions, is appended. Corrected verse (and chapter) references are to the Authorised Version of the Bible (AV) of 1611, with whose numbering system modern Bibles in the major world languages generally correspond; the Vulgate reference (marked LV) is given in parenthesis where it differs.⁹

⁴ C. R. Unger, *Stjórn, Gammelnorsk Bibelhistorie* (1862).

⁵ Belsheim states (*op. cit.*, 5) that he has not included anything from the text of *Stjórn* on account of its size. In fact, he includes a quotation from the Prologue (Psalm 24.1) on p. 19, and one from the Introduction (John 1.3) on p. 86.

⁶ "Trods al Flid af Samleren kan mulligens dog enkelte Bibelsteder ikke være fundne" (*op. cit.*, 12).

⁷ Belsheim states (*op. cit.*, 5) that these are not very numerous. In fact, there are about a hundred.

⁸ I refer here, of course, to the religious literature, from which virtually all the quotations are taken. Unger's massive compilations and the homily books, from which about three-quarters of the total come, were all among the works available to Gissur Belsheim.

⁹ Chapter and verse references are not corrected when the sole reason for alteration would be that they do not correspond to the Vulgate (or AV) numbering. A few corrections may appear arbitrary, particularly those where a quotation appears both in the Old and New Testament, or where there are parallel verses in the Synoptic Gospels. Such corrections are usually made because the Latin work from which the Norse version is translated follows the Vulgate in the passage I have substituted.

Belsheim

- Page 14 Gen.2.17. *Recte* 2.9.
- 15 Ex.12.17. Read 17.12.
- 16 Lev.24.19. *Recte* Wisdom 11.16 (LV: verse 17).
 Num.35.33. Read H.II.269.
 Deut.18.15. *Recte* Acts 3.22 (cp. Belsheim p. 125).
- 17 II Sam.7.12. *Recte* Ps.132.11 (LV: 131.11).
 I Kings 14.8. A loose recollection, closest to Acts 13.22.
- 18 Job 1.1. Read H.I.257.
 Job 40.20. Read 40.20-21 (= LV: AV = 41.1-2).
- 21 Ps.44.24-27. Read Th.539.
 Ps.49.16. *Recte* Ps.86.13. (LV: 85.13).
 Ps.50.14-21. Read Ps.50.14-22. Belsheim omits verse 22.
- 22 Ps.57.2. Read Ps. 57.1f (= AV: LV = 56.2f).
 Belsheim quotes only the former verse.
 Ps.68.19. *Recte* Eph.4.8, a New Testament version of the original Psalms quotation.
- 23 Ps.79.13. *Recte* Ps.100.3. (LV: 99.3).
- 24 Ps.104.4. El.58: *recte* Heb.1.7.
- 25 Ps.116.16-17. Read W.55.
 Ps.119.48. After *boḇorḇa*, add *ḡinna*.
- 26 Ps.134.3. *Recte* Ps.128.5 (LV: 127.5).
- 27, note 1. Read H.I.519.
- 28 Prov.20.15. *Recte* Prov.21.20.
 Eccles.3.18-19. Read 3.18-20. Belsheim has not given the entire quotation.
- 30 Is.10.1-2. Read 10.1-4. The second part of this quotation is unaccountably omitted.
- 32 Is.49.8. *Recte* II Cor.6.2.
- 33 Jer.4.4. *Recte* Deut.10.16.
 Jer.10.12. *Recte* Ps.136.5. (LV: 135.5).
 Jer.31.15. *Recte* Mt.2.18.
- 33-4 Ezek.33.11. The BJ.173 quotation continues in looser form to verse 16.
- 35 Zech.2.7-8. Read 2.3-4.
- 36 Mt.2.1-22. Read 2.1-12.

- 39 Mt.3.2. *Recte* Mt.4.17.
- 40 Mt.4.4. H.II.428 (Notes 1, 2), *recte* Lk.4.4.
- 42 Mt.7.7. *Recte* Jn.16.24.
- 43 Mt.7.21. The next phrase in W.208, *viz. sa mun inn ganga i rike himna*, is also part of this quotation.
- 44 Mt.11.4-10. *Recte* Lk.7.22-27.
- 50 Mt.19.5. *Recte* Eph.5.31.
- 50, note 2 Read H.II.569.
- 51 Mt.21.12-13. This is a repetition of a passage from Luke 19 on B.69 (quoted at Belsheim p. 85), not a separate quotation from Mt.
- 53 Mt.23.12. U.15 appears both here and at Lk.14.11 (Belsheim page 77)! There is nothing to choose between the two references.
- Mt.24.42. *Recte* Mk.13.35.
- 53, note 1 The Kong. quotation comes rather from Deut.6.5.
- 54 Mt.25.41. Read H.I.544.
- 54, note 2 Read El.69.
- note 7 Read W.49.
- 58 Mk.9.29. The first part of this quotation comes from Mt.17.21.
- Mk.11.25. Read 11.25-26. Belsheim has omitted the latter verse.
- Mk.14.27-31. *Recte* Mt.26.31, 33-35. P.161 corresponds almost exactly to P.285, quoted at Belsheim p. 55.
- 59, note 1 The source of this footnote is P.162.
- 63, note 1 The second passage is from M.18.
- 71 Lk.5.52. Read Lk.5.32.
- Lk.6.32. *Recte* Mt.5.46f, as the continuation in W.114 shows.
- Lk.6.43-44. *Eigi má . . . goða dvöxtu*, *recte* Mt.7.18.
- 77 Lk.14.11. See note to Mt.23.12.
- 78 Lk.14.27. *Recte* Mt.10.38. (U.141 and W.38 are parallel passages).
- 79, note 2 Read W.72.

- 86 Lk.23.46. The second sentence of M.XVII and the corresponding passage in M.1009 come from Jn.19.30.
- 87 Jn.1.18. Read BJ.78.
- 91, note 1 Instead of P.10, read H.II.343.
- 97 Jn.13.34. *Recte* Jn.15.12.
Jn.14.15. *Recte* verse 23.
- 99 Jn.18.25. This is verse 17; but verse 25 is also found on P.14.
- 102 Jn.21.30. Read Jn.20.30.
- 149 Acts 12.1-23. P.72-74. Read P.72-75.
- 150 Acts 13-14. Read Acts 13-14.17.
- 175 Rom.5.3-4. Basically James 1.3-4, though influenced by the Romans passage.
- 176 I.Cor.2.9. The opening words of B.149 come from verse 10.
- 178 I. Cor.10.33. *Recte* I Cor.9.22.
- 181 Gal.3.28. Part of this is from Col.3.11.
- 182 Eph.4.32. *Recte* Col.3.13.
Eph.5.2. *Recte* II Cor.2.15.
- 183 I Thess.5.15. *Recte* Rom.12.17 (where Belsheim also has it, see page 176).
- 187 II Pet.2.7. Read 2.7-8. Belsheim omits the second verse.
I Jn.2.1. Read 2.1-2. Belsheim omits the second verse.
- 189 Rev.18.4. Read El.132.

BOOK REVIEWS

A HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS. By GWYN JONES. *Oxford University Press*, 1968. xvi + 504 pp. £3.

In this volume Professor Gwyn Jones has attempted a difficult task, a composite history of the Scandinavian peoples from the earliest times down to A.D. 1070, a date he regards as significant of the virtual end of the Viking period. On the whole his synthesis is remarkably successful.

The continental Viking realms, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, are rightly dealt with separately in so far as that is possible, for in their own day it was mainly from a foreign, non-Scandinavian, point of view that they were regarded as identical. Indeed one cannot help but feel, after the spate of books which have recently been published on "Viking" matters, that it might now be worth while, in the immediate future, for scholars to concentrate on separate histories of the constituent countries. Too often conclusions seem to have been drawn from the events and phenomena of one country and applied to all, with the result that real differences are hidden.

The book is divided into four main sections. First a survey account, based on mainly legendary material, is given of the Northern peoples down to A.D. 700, and this is followed by a description of the Viking kingdoms to the close of the tenth century with perhaps an inevitable concentration on Denmark and Norway. In the third section, the Viking Movement Overseas, Sweden and Gotland begin to play a greater role, particularly in the review of the part played by the Scandinavians in the Baltic, Russia and Byzantium. The fourth, the Viking Age Ends, deals with the reigns of Svein and Knut, St Olaf and Harald *harðráði*. Each of these four sections is given a general introduction in which Professor Jones, avoiding a straightforward historical account, attempts a picture of the culture and achievement of each country at the time. It must, indeed, be admitted that the book rarely reads as a history, except perhaps in the section on the final phase of the Viking age, and such an exception is natural enough, for it is only at this late stage that the sources, particularly from outside Scandinavia, permit any detailed presentation of events in the various countries.

For the earlier period the author is dependent mainly on two sources, the doubtful quicksand of legend and semi-fictional saga writing, and the firmer, though not yet fully settled, ground of

archaeological investigation. Professor Jones clearly delights in an old love, the Icelandic Sagas, and obviously finds their better anecdotes irresistible. He is, of course, fully aware of the danger of using them as sources and constantly reminds his reader of the untrustworthiness of their historicity; they remain, however, the very warp and weft of much of his narrative with the result that we are often left with pleasant reading-matter rather than solid history. The dilemma seems unavoidable. I do not, however, wish to suggest that Professor Jones's account is not accurate, but rather that his own pleasure in the less reliable sources adds to his outline of historical facts a delightful, but sometimes less than scholarly, aura.

The great virtue of the work is that it is a palatable digest of a great deal of the scholarly work done on Viking history during the last decades, and such a synthesis is both welcome and worth while. The composite picture given can be filled out by reference to the excellent selective bibliography, which acts as a guide through a maze of scholarly papers in many languages. There is, however, one book I should like to see listed there, the late Sigfús Blöndal's *Væringja saga* (Reykjavík 1954), which makes available the results of much Russian research on Arabic and Greek sources. Another fine tool provided is the full summarising index, which extends over more than fifty pages. In so long a work misprints are refreshingly few; only half a dozen or so have been noticed and none of them is likely to mislead more than momentarily.

In sum, therefore, one is bound to say that this is a good and useful book. One would have liked more on the Vikings in Scotland and the Isles and a little more on the Norman offshoot, both in France and the Mediterranean, but many aspects of Viking life are well and adequately dealt with. Professor Jones is to be congratulated on his industry and achievement.

A. R. TAYLOR

THE PLACE-NAMES OF CHESHIRE. Parts One and Two. By J. McN. DODGSON. *English Place-Name Society Volumes XLIV-XLV*. Cambridge University Press, 1970. xlvii + 338 pp.; x + 329 pp. £4.50 each.

These are the first parts of a five-volume edition of the place-names of Cheshire. Part One contains the bibliography, the forest-, territorial, river- and road-names for the whole county,

and the place-names and field-names of the easternmost division, Macclesfield Hundred. Regrettably, there is no map of the county nor one showing the township boundaries within the hundred. From the point of view of a study of the interaction of different languages in local nomenclature, Cheshire is one of the most interesting of the English counties. The problems presented by the name-forms are often complicated and occasionally, it seems, insoluble. Several British names survive from the time of the Cornovii, not only those of large regions such as The Lyme (discussed pp. 2-6), and of rivers such as the Dee (pp. 21-22), but also settlement-names such as Werneth (p. 302), which is identical in origin with *Vernetum* in Gaul, and Cheadle (p. 246), whose present form is a tautological combination of PrimWelsh **cēd* and OE *lēah*, both meaning "wood". Chester became the fortress of the Roman Twentieth Legion and some of the localities in the county received Latin or latinised names. The British river-name Dee, for example, was employed by the Romans, in the form *Deva*, for Chester, the city on its banks. After the arrival of the Angles in Britain, Cheshire became part of the kingdom of Mercia and the majority of its townships bear Anglian names, e.g. Northenden (p. 234), "*nordign* (enclosure) in the north", and Saxfield (p. 236), which seems to indicate the presence of some Saxons among the Angles. After the Angles came the Danes and the Norwegians. The former must have crossed the Pennines from Yorkshire and Derbyshire, the latter came across the sea from Viking settlements in Ireland. The Vikings were followed by the Normans, who created the County palatine of Cheshire and left their linguistic mark on some of its p.ns., e.g. Delamere (pp. 8-9). In the Middle Ages Cheshire was the scene of a confrontation between the Welsh and the English and the fact that Cheshire marches with Wales is reflected not only in the p.ns. containing Welsh elements, such as Fluellens Brooke (p. 25), in which the Welsh personal name *Llewellyn* has replaced OE *Lēofwine*, but also in the double forms of some p.ns., such as English Wirrall beside Welsh *Cilgwri* (pp. 7-8). The most recent invasion of Cheshire has issued from Manchester. Wythenshawe (p. 234), the "willow copse" in Northenden, has been developed by the city into an overspill satellite town for about 90,000 people. Wealthier Mancunians have penetrated even further into the Cheshire countryside, causing the natives of Bollington to coin a new name for Prestbury, namely *Mansionville* (p. 212).

The history of the settlements in Cheshire has been an eventful one but for the readers of this journal it is probably the evidence which the place-names provide for the Scandinavian

settlements that will prove of greatest interest. There are not very many Scandinavian names recorded in Part One. The river Croco (p. 19) may well be identical with the Norwegian *Króká* but its forms are possibly corrupt. Somerford Booths (p. 63) shows the addition of the Scandinavian loan-word *bōth* "temporary hut on summer pasture". Birtles Hall (p. 100) was originally called *Hulme* "water-meadow". The name Kettleshulme contains the Scandinavian personal name *Ketill*, which is not typically Danish as implied by Mr Dodgson, and *hulm*. Cheadle Hulme (p. 247) is the *hulm* of Cheadle. There is also a handful of minor names. A number of these are hybrids and probably simply represent the employment of Scandinavian loan-words or personal names by the English. *Ormr* is found in three names (pp. 53, 171, 271) but as the surname Orme, derived from the personal name, is still current in east Cheshire, the p.n.s. may rather contain the surname. Other Scandinavian personal names to be found in the minor names are *Gamall* (p. 253), *Grimr* (p. 317) and *Arnkell* (p. 133). *Stenvis(h)iche* (p. 253) contains two Scandinavian elements, *steinn* "stone" and *hris* "shrubland", and one OE one, *sic* "watercourse". All the other minor names with Scandinavian elements contain either *bōth* or *holmr/hulm*. They are (i) *Carlisboth* 1287 (p. 53), *Bothefeld* c1300 (p. 66), *Tydenacbothes* 1356 (p. 68), *le Herlesbothe* c1270 (p. 181), *Bothes* c1220 (p. 213) and *le Bothegrene* 1403 (p. 215), and (ii) *Hulmesbrok'* 1349 (p. 34), *Haselholm* 1285 (p. 53), *Hengilholm* early 14th century (p. 53), *Hulmes* 1503 (p. 53), *the holmes* c1494, *the hulmes* 1611 (p. 133), *le Holmelegh* 1347 (p. 171), *The Hulme* 1611 (p. 179), *Asssheinholmes* 1453 (p. 192) and *Bolyn Holme* 1437 (p. 225). It will be noticed that *bōth* must represent Old Danish *bōth*, for the West Scandinavian form is *búð* and the element always appears with *o* spellings in Macclesfield hundred. This may only be because the comparatively young names we are concerned with here all contain the word in the form in which it was adopted into ME but it may indicate that the Scandinavian settlers in east Cheshire were predominantly Danish. It will be interesting to see whether forms with *u* occur in west Cheshire.

The variation between *holm* and *hulm* is a more difficult problem. It is to be hoped that we shall not have to wait too long for a full treatment of it in Mr Dodgson's Introduction. He will be able to discuss it in the light not only of forms from the whole of Cheshire but also of all the forms from the other counties for which the EPNS has collections of material. Here I shall do no more than give a brief summary of the state of our knowledge at the present time. Two questions must be answered. What is the

reason for the existence in England of the two forms? How is the distribution of the two forms in place-names to be accounted for? There was a poetic OE word *holm* "billow, ocean" but in the senses "island" and "water-meadow" in which the element is found in p.n.s. the word must be a loan from Scandinavian. Both the English and the Scandinavian words are related to Latin *culmen*. In West Germanic and West Scandinavian the original *u* had become *o* at an early date. In Danish, however, particularly East Danish, a number of forms with *u* survive into and beyond the Viking period. In English sources the element *holm* is latinised as both *holmus* and *hulmus*. It is possible that the twin forms reflect the Scandinavian dialect difference but *hulmus* could perhaps be a conventional latinised form of *holm*. Cf. the gloss in Promptorium Parvulorum from c1440, "holm, place besydene a water *hulmus*; of a sonde yn the see *bitalassum* vel *hulmus*". A spelling *hulm* in a place-name can thus be (i) an otherwise unrecorded West Scandinavian side-form of *holm*, (ii) an East Danish form, as generally assumed (e.g. PNEI i 268), although recorded forms of place-names in old Denmark apart from Skåne and Bornholm only have spellings in *-holm*, (iii) a conventional English scribal form, perhaps particularly common in Latin documents. The distribution pattern of *holm* and *hulm* in English place-names is interesting but not clearly defined. There is only one place-name in Domesday Book (DB) with a *u* spelling, namely Holme, Halikeld wapentake, Yorks North, *Hulme* DB, 1128-35, *Hulmo* 1252 but *Holm(e)* 1088 et pass. The early *o* spellings may indicate that the forms with *u* are merely scribal variants but it should not be forgotten that the distinction between *holm* and *hulm* was obscured in England partly by the Anglo-Norman spelling of both *u* and *o* as *o*, and partly by later dialectal development of both *ul* and *ol* to [ɔu] (PNEI i 259). If the *hulm* spellings really represented Danish forms, however, DB spellings with *u* from Lincs and Yorks East would have been expected. But in Lincs the 4 DB p.n.s. containing the element all have *o* spellings and these spellings are supported by the Lindsey Survey of 1115, a source which has been shown to be a reliable recorder of genuine Scandinavian forms. Similarly, the 5 DB p.n.s. containing *holm* in Yorks East all have *o* spellings, although 2 of them do have *u* spellings in Latin sources from the late twelfth century onwards. In Norfolk a DB *Holm* spelling is confirmed by sources dating from 902 and 961. DB spellings in *Holm* are recorded in the following counties: Beds, Derby, Lincs, Lancs, Norfolk, Notts, Westmorland and the three Ridings of Yorks. *u* spellings are found for place-names recorded in sources

younger than DB in Cambridge, Hunts, Lancs, Westmorland and Yorks West, but even in Lancs, where there are 6 instances, and Yorks West, where there are 5, they are greatly outnumbered by the place-names with *o* spellings. Even accounting for ME levelling under *o*, it is strange that more spellings in *u* are not found in Lincs and Yorks East and North. The fact that *u* spellings are most common in Lancs and Yorks West and, to judge from the figures from Macclesfield hundred, eastern Cheshire, suggests that the *hulm* spelling might be a Norwegian side-form. There are two objections to this theory, however. No forms with *u* are recorded in West Scandinavian sources and it would be difficult to attribute the spellings in *u* which occur throughout England, often for place-names with DB spellings in *o*, to a Norwegian influence that can hardly have been strong to the south and east of the Pennines. On the whole it would seem most satisfactory to attribute the variation of spelling in English place-names to scribal conventions. This would not, however, solve the problem as to why *holme* became the standard spelling in ME and the form adopted in young field-names in practically every county in England, including Lancs, while *hulme* is the regular form in young place-names in east Cheshire and the form under which place-names such as Kettleshulme, with early spellings in both *o* and *u*, have been levelled. Perhaps the material from the whole of the county will enable this problem to be solved.

Part Two contains the place-names of the Hundreds of Bucklow and Northwich, the northern and central districts of east Cheshire. There are rather more place-names containing Scandinavian elements than in Macclesfield Hundred and the elements themselves are more varied. The two elements found most frequently in Macclesfield Hundred, *bōth* and *holmr/hulm* reappear here. *bōth* is again only found with *o* spellings (pp. 14, 37, 50, 71, 75, 76), while *holmr/hulm* shows variation between *o* and *u*. *u* forms, however, are earlier, predominant and more persistent in both township names (pp. 236, 278, 302) and minor names (pp. 41, 49, 53, 63, 72, 217, 275, 314), although a few minor names are only recorded with *o* spellings (pp. 12, 14, 55, 164, 221), and note Holmes Chapel, a village in the township of Church Hulme (p. 279). Mr Dodgson records the association of Strettle (p. 52) with the Hulme family and shows that there was variation between *o* and *u* in the family name, too. Quite an interesting selection of Scandinavian personal names is found in the place-names, namely *Hásteinn* (p. 49), *Rauðr* (p. 56), *Steinulfr* (p. 65), *Knútr* (p. 73), *Þóraldr* (p. 101), *Kolsveinn* (p. 111),

Kolsteinn (p. 127), *Fráni* or *Frændi* (p. 133), *Keikr* (p. 151), *Sveinn* (p. 156), *Hávarðr* (pp. 157, 323), *Gunnhildr* (p. 166), *Múli* (p. 207), *Hemmingr* (p. 221), *Ormr* (p. 222), *Saxi* (p. 226), *Hákon* (p. 232), *Arnketill* (p. 265), *Hallvarðr* (p. 315), *Liulfr* (p. 320). The problematical township names Anderton (p. 95) and Antrobus (p. 127) may possibly contain the personal name *Eindriði*. Other township names which do contain Scandinavian elements are Knutsford (p. 73), Toft (p. 81, *Tofte* 12th "the curtilage"), Rostherne (p. 56), Croxton (p. 236), Arclid (p. 264), and perhaps Moulton Hall (p. 207, *Moletune* DB, "Múli's tún" or "mule farm"). For the suffix Dennis in Lach Dennis (p. 186, *Lece* DB, *Lache Deneys* 1260), Mr Dodgson makes the attractive suggestion that it represents the Old English adjective *denisc* "Danish" and perhaps refers to the TRE tenant *Colben*. Scandinavian appellatives found in field-names include *slakki* (p. 80), *eng* (p. 89), *vra* (p. 109), *kvi stia* (p. 150), *steinn* (p. 151), *þreit* (p. 154), *garðr* (p. 155), *skáli* (p. 165), *bóndi* (p. 171), *bál* (p. 314).

All students of Scandinavian settlement in England, their appetites whetted by these excellent volumes, will await the publication of Mr Dodgson's remaining three volumes with impatience and pleasurable anticipation.

GILLIAN FELLOWS JENSEN

STEN BRONS JÄRN. By MÅRTEN STENBERGER. *Aldusserien* 264. Stockholm, 1969. 377 pp.

Professor Stenberger followed his excellent introduction to the prehistory of his country, *Sweden* (1962), with a major survey, *Det Forntida Sverige* (1964), which will for long remain a standard work. With these books Professor Stenberger has set his own very high standards against which his latest general work, *Sten Brons Järn*, must be judged. This is in fact an abbreviated version of *Det Forntida Sverige* published in paperback with new illustrations. It aims to provide a survey of developments in Sweden from 12,000 B.C. to the end of the Viking period, with occasional brief excursions into more general fields such as Greenland and Vinland during the Viking period. It does not, however, set out to place Sweden in a wider prehistoric context — Sutton Hoo, for instance, achieves only a passing reference in an account of gold sword mounts.

Apart from small plans of Valhagar, Valsgårde and Birka, the text is unsupported by maps or plans. Whilst distribution-maps

present many difficulties for detailed interpretation they can provide excellent summaries of various types of archaeological evidence and their absence is to be regretted. Indeed the text has to stand very much on its own since the illustrations conspicuously fail to provide any idea of the nature or range of the artefacts which form the basic framework of any such survey. The plates are more attractive than instructive, as is also the case with the text figures by Svenolov Ehrén. His repudiation of tonal gradation in favour of solid black achieves considerable impact but conveys nothing of the individual characteristics of the different objects. A further difficulty is the absence of any indications of his widely varying scales. Plates and text illustrations thus fail to form an integral part of the book and serve merely as decorative adjuncts to the text which cannot itself be expected to provide an adequate introduction to Swedish prehistory.

In this respect *Sten Brons Järn* falls far behind the high standards set in the author's *Ancient Peoples and Places* volume, *Sweden*. This has regrettably been unavailable for some time and a revised edition would be most welcome. Meanwhile *Det Forntida Sverige* will be found to supply what is lacking in its offspring.

JAMES A. GRAHAM-CAMPBELL

THE ELDER EDDA — A SELECTION. Translated by PAUL B. TAYLOR and W. H. AUDEN. Introduction by PETER H. SALUS and PAUL B. TAYLOR. London, 1969. £2.

The participation of a major poet in this new translation makes for more memorable verse than in previous renderings, and facilitates the reader's comprehension of the behaviour and beliefs of an obscure time. The task of understanding is still a formidable one, and it is too much to expect that any translation of these poems could *bouleverser* the reader like *Omar Khayyam*. They are bitty and allusive, the language — in any language — necessarily complex, the gnomic and philosophical content strange to us, quirky, forgettable, quite often inconsistent. This edition contains 20 pages of notes and glossary and a 36-page introduction: they are confined to brief exegetic apparatus, and do not mention the thornier problems of origins and provenance. The volume may be looked on as a primer of Northern mythology as it is transmitted through the poems.

The best of the translations are perhaps *The Lay of Thrym*,

Skirnir's Ride and *The Lay of Harbard*. The poems are translated in the original metres, and the task of alliteration has sometimes slightly distorted meaning. For example, exception may be taken to

The glory of the great dead
as the English for
dómr of dauðan hvern.

Also there are occasional excursions into William Morris diction. But these are minor blemishes, which will not impede a reader's enjoyment of a veracious and stirring rendering.

And who is this reader? Chiefly no doubt it will be an introduction welcomed by students. But should it fall into the hands of a general reader, it may well kindle his enthusiasm for an attitude to life which deserves to be remembered:

Finish, friends, the foaming ale,
The stout pillars are starting to crack.
Men shall remember while men live
The march of our host to the maker of war.

A. P. PEARSON

THE PLACE-NAMES OF BIRSAY. By HUGH MARWICK. Edited and introduced by W. F. H. NICOLAISEN. *Aberdeen University Press*, 1970. xii + 135 pp. £1.20.

Mr William Sabiston of Scrutabreck collected the place-names considered in this volume, and he is the author of a learned appendix in it, an analysis of the 1595 rental of Birsay, on pp. 99-115. He deserves congratulations; and why not a place on the title-page?

Over 600 nature names, farm and house names and miscellaneous names collected from a single Orkney parish are here published with Dr Marwick's suggestions as to their origin, lightly edited, too lightly perhaps, by Dr Nicolaisen. The work was submitted to the editor in 1961 and finally given entirely into his care because of Dr Marwick's failing health (it will be remembered that he died in May 1965). To the scholar or the merely curious the book will be valuable as a source of information, but it would have been of much greater general use if the introduction had attempted to show what light the names throw on matters such as settlement and occupation, work and play, English and Norse. (I may insert a word of warning on Dr Marwick's old-fashioned

and narrowly correct use of the term 'Norse' — to him it translates *noršk*, Norwegian, and then especially *landsmál*.) Some of the commentary is of marked historical or cultural interest, e.g. on Vinbreck (pp. 58-9), where ON *vin* 'pasture', may be the first element; on Wattle (p. 59), whose derivation from ON *veizla* perhaps indicates that the farm supplied provisions for the earls in Norse times; on Airy (p. 80), from Gaelic *airigh*, Celtic *airge* 'shieling', which Dr Marwick thinks is "almost certainly to be regarded as a pre-Norse Celtic survival in Orkney" (though one imagines that neither he nor Dr Nicolaisen would venture the same explanation of the word's occurrence in Faroese); on the Stane of Quoymbune (p. 41), where the element *-bune* may ultimately be derived from *bóndi*; on Kirbuster (p. 69), where a most welcome note describes quite irrelevantly a primitive kind of roof-vent in the present-day farmhouse, with a guard that can be moved to suit the direction of the wind.

In a source-book of this kind errors are particularly regrettable. The normalised spelling of Norse words is not reliable (e.g. *hrifa* for *hrífa*, *þytt(n)-* for *þytt(r)-*, p. 5, *garðinam* for *garðinum*, p. 6, *glýfur* for *gljúfr*, p. 8, *hviði-* for *hvíti-*, p. 70, *-bólstað-* for *-bólstaðar-*, p. 83; is *grof* on p. 76 supposed to be *grof* or *gróf*?). In the interesting note on p. 92 on Iron, Ayre, Ower, there is failure to distinguish between *aurr* m. and *eyrr* f. (hence an erroneous OI form *eyrrinn* for *eyrrin*); the latter is not "the Icelandic or West Norwegian umlaut of O.N. *aurr*" but a derivative from the same root, doubtless common to all the Scandinavian languages though with a form necessarily obscured in EN.

Dr Marwick's etymologies will obviously be the starting-point for all future discussion of these Orkney names; he was fully aware of the tentative nature of a number of them. A small oversight seems to be the failure to mention that some names seem best referred to an inflected form of an original Norse word. Thus pl. (*h*)*rífur* and *þúfur* appear to explain Rivers (p. 5; the *-s* is English) and Ernie Tooer (p. 38) better than sg. (*h*)*rífa* and *þúfa*. In Queenabreckan and Queenaday (p. 95) it is not clear what case is represented by the first element (*hvi* with def. art.), and a statement of the possibilities and reference to related names would have been welcome.

PETER FOOTE

NUMERALIER. 1962. pp. [vi] + 302. VOL. V PRONOMINER (under medvirkning af mag.art. Karl Martin Nielsen og cand. mag. Marie Stoklund). 1965. pp. [vi] + 554. *Københavns Universitets Fond til Tilvejebringelse af Læremidler*.

It is now clear that Professor Brøndum-Nielsen will complete his *Gammeldansk grammatik*; indeed, by the time this review appears, the remaining volumes (the next of which deals with the verb) will be out, or at least at press. The first volume — the vowel phonology — came out in 1928, the second — the consonant phonology — in 1932, and the third — the noun — in 1935. The work takes its place as the greatest of all historical grammars of Germanic, a worthy rival to the greatest historical grammars of Indoeuropean, such as Brugmann's *Griechische grammatik* and the *Altindische grammatik* of Wackernagel and Debrunner. Professor Brøndum-Nielsen, in his old age, is indeed to be congratulated upon the completion of a truly magnificent task.

English philologists in particular will feel envious, for there is no work on Middle English which is remotely comparable. Admittedly Luick's *Historische grammatik der englischen sprache* is comparable in respect of the vowel-phonology of the whole of English and E. J. Dobson's *English pronunciation 1500-1700* in respect of the whole phonology of a small period of English. But there is as yet no serious morphology of Middle English. This striking difference between the states of Old Danish and Middle English studies lies perhaps in the nature of the case: there is after all very much more Middle English than there is Old Danish. Still, there is a very large amount of this latter, as a glance at the copious bibliographies of *Gammeldansk grammatik* will show. There is a further difference between Middle English and Old Danish — one to the advantage of the former. Old Danish has no "great" dictionary, for Kalkar's *Ordbog til det ældre danske sprog* cannot possibly be considered of the same calibre as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Middle English Dictionary*. Later Danish has however a dictionary of this calibre, the *Ordbog over det danske sprog* (started by Dahlerup). It has, for two generations now, been the practice of scholars to use the indexes of the volumes of the *Gammeldansk grammatik* (which are, I understand, to be cumulated in a final volume) as an Old Danish dictionary, as far as actual forms are concerned.

In the morphology, Professor Brøndum-Nielsen treats each case-form in a standard manner. First the Indoeuropean form is presented, with one or more non-Germanic descendants; then the Primitive Germanic form, with one or more non-Scandinavian

descendants. Next comes the Primitive Norse form, supported by non-Danish forms. Then follow the Runic Danish forms and, finally, the forms of the Old Danish manuscripts. Each of the Danish forms is documented with references to inscriptions and texts, each is explained, and there are exhaustive references to the discussion of the forms.

The *Gammeldansk grammatik* thus incidentally constitutes a method whereby students can approach Germanic and Indoeuropean philology via Old Danish. In this respect, then, it is comparable to O. Mausser's *Mittelhochdeutsche grammatik*, which sets out to afford the student an approach to these philologies via Middle and Old High German. This book is however gravely handicapped by a condensedness due to lack of space. But, as a guide to students, as in all other respects, the *Gammeldansk grammatik* is an unqualified success.

There is little for a reviewer to say of the specific volumes under review here — except, of course, praise — for their contents are clearly indicated by their sub-titles. Volume IV deals with the strong and weak declensions of adjectives and with their comparison. As is correct in a Germanic morphology, the only adverbial matter treated of is Comparison. The Cardinal and Ordinal numerals are discussed, and some other numerals, such as the interesting *tysvar* 'twice', are dealt with almost incidentally, in footnotes. In Volume V the pronouns are treated at great length. They are classified as: genderless personal pronouns (of the first and second persons — also *sik*); gendered personal pronouns (of the third person); possessives; demonstratives (including several words not normally comprised under this heading, such as *slikær*); relatives; interrogatives; and "Indefinita" — these last of various types, including, for instance, *nōkov*, *bāthi*, *ængi*.

ALAN S. C. ROSS

NEW LIGHT ON THE WESTERN SETTLEMENTS

WESTWARD TO VINLAND. The Discovery of Pre-Columbian Norse House-sites in North America. By HELGE INGSTAD. Translated from the Norwegian by ERIK J. FRIIS. London, Jonathan Cape, 1969. 250 pp. 55s. (£2.75).

THE HISTORY OF GREENLAND. Volume I. Earliest Times to 1700. By FINN GAD. Translated from the Danish by ERNST DUPONT. London, C. Hurst, 1970. xiv + 350 pp. 126s. (£6.30).

The appearance of a major narrative of Greenland history is an important event. Finn Gad's book is planned on a generous scale, well-produced and illustrated and reads very well in its translated form. To a reviewer who lacks the basic knowledge of the languages from which it derives, the work appears to be one of real as well as apparent authority. There is in it, and in its sources, some indication that Scandinavian historians and archaeologists do not always read material in their field published in England or America, just as there is a similar lack of study of Scandinavian publications by English-speaking writers (there are obvious exceptions to this). But as the sources and the bulk of the secondary work on Greenland has been done in Scandinavia, especially in Denmark, omission of papers in English is perhaps not a serious handicap. What Finn Gad shows is not only a mastery of the historic materials (which one might expect), but also a really effective knowledge of the archaeology of the Greenland settlements and of the ethnographic material on the Eskimo. The way in which these materials are woven together into a single narrative is impressive. The scene is well set, the Icelandic pioneers are installed efficiently in the Greenland settlements, their prime is chronicled, their society delineated, and their decline is studied, and, after their disappearance, the recovery of Greenland by Europeans is discussed against its Eskimo background. For complete understanding of what has been done it is necessary to go back to the Danish edition which has more extensive references to the literature, though notes at the end give references to sources cited.

The Danish edition (*Grønlands Historie I: indtill 1700*) was published in Copenhagen in 1967 and did not take into account the finding of a Norse site in Newfoundland some years before this. It is, therefore, interesting to see what Gad says about the Vinland voyages (pp. 46-52). He expressly declines suggesting where Leif's camp may have been; at the same time he indicates that it was in the vicinity of northern Newfoundland, and that "In Norse *vin* may mean 'wine', it is true, but may also be an altogether different word which means 'grassy plain'." This explanation is, he says, much more suitable since northern Newfoundland contains grassland. The self-sown wheat and vines "must then be seen as the dream-like ravings of minds entranced by this land of promise" (p. 47). He thus aligns himself on one side in what is now a very old controversy. Vinland proved, he considers, less suitable for the Norse way of life than Greenland, and so was not exploited, except for its timber, in later times.

The discovery in 1960 of the Norse site at l'Anse aux Meadows and the completion of nine seasons of exploration and excavation in 1968, brings to an end one significant phase in Helge Ingstad's achievement, signalled by the award to him of an honorary degree of Memorial University in May 1970 for his services to Newfoundland history. A good deal is now known about what went on during these years, but it will not be fully understood until the definitive excavation reports appear and are digested by the experts in this difficult field. Though I have not been to the site, I have been fortunate enough to have been in touch with what was going on through Ian Whitaker and Henry Collins who have, and also E. R. Seary, Agnes O'Dea, and the late R. A. Skelton, who passed on materials and answered queries. More recently I have had a chance to talk to Tom Lee at Laval University about the still very mysterious structures, with at least some Norse affinities, which he has excavated in the Ungava Peninsula. A very tentative discussion of some of the problems associated with these discoveries and excavations may be worth while.

Helge Ingstad's *Land under the Pole Star*, published in England in 1966, seven years after its appearance in Norway, dealt with the prelude to his Newfoundland discovery with a note only on the location of the site and of the first five seasons' work on it. The present book, *Westward to Vinland*, has suffered a similar time-lag, having been published in Norway (as *Vesterveg til Vinland*) in 1965. This does cover the discoveries of 1960-64 in some detail, though without technical information on excavation, and refers incidentally to some discoveries of the seasons 1965-68 of which there has not yet been any systematic treatment. Ingstad is an experienced traveller and travel-writer. His earlier book gave a very thorough, though highly personal, view of the Norse Greenland colony and its broader setting; his second book takes some time to focus on the northern tip of Newfoundland where he finally settled on L'Anse aux Meadows as the probable site of a Norse settlement and appears to have been well vindicated in the result. He was, in 1960, hot on the heels of the eminent Danish archaeologist, Jørgen Meldgaard, who had been over the same ground a short time before him. Ingstad is not a professional archaeologist, though his wife, Anne Stine Ingstad, has had an archaeological training and has usually been in charge of digging. He is a great specialist on life in the Arctic and a considerable, though somewhat amateur, historian. It is necessary to mention these points because Ingstad has been criticized on a number of grounds, notably that he pushed ahead with excava-

tions in 1962 when his wife was not able to work, that he insisted on the site being (or probably being) Leif's camp-site, instead of concentrating on the fact that the evidence did not necessarily support the association of the site with any particular enterprise, and that he has held the control of information on the site too much in his own hands, largely through the financing of the expedition by the National Geographic Society from 1963 onwards, which has restricted the flow of scientific information from the site. It is probable that there are adequate answers to most or all of these criticisms, but the fact that they have been made involves the discussion of the finds in some ambiguity. It is not true, however, that there have been no informed publications on the sites, though Anne Stine Ingstad's papers delivered at Buenos Aires to the *XXXVII Congreso Internacional de Americanistas* in 1966 were not published until 1968 and are probably insufficiently known. The time-lag in the appearance of the English editions of his books has also proved an impediment to understanding. But given that it is travel-writing, not definitive history and still less authoritative archaeology, *Westward to Vinland* gives a vivid and effective conspectus of the discovery of the site and the early definition and uncovering of the house-remains at L'Anse aux Meadows.

The first full account by an independent authority was given by Ian Whitaker, then Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Memorial University, to the Newfoundland Historical Society on 25 October 1962. He had recently returned from taking part briefly in the excavations. This was picked up by the *Daily News* (St John's, 26 October) and became the basis of other more or less garbled reports. He described the discovery of "a large house with several rooms which is very similar to the Norse houses found in Greenland as well as a smithy where iron was worked. The smithy is most important since we know that the natives of North America did not have the art of smelting, while the Vikings did." Ingstad's own press conference at Ottawa a few days before (reported at length, *New York Herald Tribune*, 18 October) had been guarded but confident. He placed on his academic visitors the authority for the view that the remains were "very impressive" and "almost certainly Viking", though reserving an opinion as to whether the site was really Leif's. Nor in the interviews he gave in London in February 1963 (*The Times*, 20 February, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 February) did he make any excessive claims in regard to interpretation. The financing of the excavations by the National Geographic Society in the 1963 season produced a certain shut-down on reports by outsiders,

though two eminent American Arctic specialists, Junius Bird and Henry B. Collins, were brought to see the site and gave their considered opinion that it was of Norse origin. This produced an enthusiastic response by Americans to a discovery which they regarded as one relative to their own history (e.g. report in *New York Times*, 6 November 1963; leader in *Washington Post*, 8 November). From this time on, Ingstad had, in the view of educated Americans, "discovered" the site of Vinland, even if many still hankered after the vines of New England.

The article 'Vinland ruins prove Vikings found the New World' in *National Geographic Magazine* (November 1964), 708-34, was re-written for Ingstad in the tear-jerking style for which this magazine is famous, ending in characteristic fashion: "Thus it was that young sailors stood once under a square sail gazing wonderingly across the water where a strange coastline rose from the sea — the New World." Yet it contained some useful information and valuable illustrations; it was all that was to be available in English for several years.

Meantime, Newfoundlanders broke out into strong expressions of opinion of their own. Harold Horwood, a well-known local journalist, made a hostile attack on Ingstad in the *Evening Telegram* (St John's) on 5 February 1964. He challenged the validity of the specimens of iron slag and of timber sent for analysis to Norway. He concluded that this was an old Eskimo site, "afterwards used by Europeans — possibly, but by no means certainly, by the Norse — and also for whaling". The main building was a whale-oil station built by Basques, used down into the seventeenth century. Ingstad replied on 10 March, denying, with evidence, a number of Horwood's points, and maintaining that no artifacts indicating later European occupation had been found, which supported exclusive Norse occupation: he made the interestingly modest admission that "whether Leiv Eiriksson lived there or not, we don't know for certain". A similar distinctively Newfoundland view was taken by Farley Mowat in *West Viking* in 1965. Mowat is even more famous as a travel-writer than Ingstad and knows Newfoundland intimately. His book conceded that the site was Norse but insisted that, superimposed on it, was a Basque whaling station and try-works. Though he gave indications that such had existed, he had no detailed evidence that the large building at L'Anse aux Meadows was one. Moreover, he maintained there was no evidence that this was Leif Eiriksson's site, but suggested it could have been some other "temporary Norse settlement". These views have survived and cannot be entirely dissipated until full reports are

in print. Eventually J. R. Smallwood (Newfoundland's Premier) got Ingstad to write a useful factual article, 'The Norse discovery of Newfoundland' for *The Book of Newfoundland III* (St John's 1967), 218-24, which appears to have driven some, at least, of the Newfoundland critics underground.

The Ingstads, husband and wife, broke off their 1966 excavations to attend the Americanists' conference in Buenos Aires. There Helge Ingstad gave two general papers on the history of the Norse Vinland ventures, in which he leaned strongly to the view that L'Anse aux Meadows was Leif's site (*Actas y Memorias IV*, 1968, 89-106). Anne Stine Ingstad's two papers (*ibid.*, 107-25) gave something more specific. Her paper on Site F, the large building or "hall", went into reasonably full detail on the course of excavation and the finds, and made very tentative and sensible conclusions. Analogies with halls in Greenland and Iceland were brought forward without dogmatism, Carbon 14 datings cited (with details of the samples taken), while she frankly admitted that without more artifacts than the soapstone spindle-whorl found at the end of the 1964 season precise reference to voyages was very difficult. The discussion of seven other house-sites followed similar lines more briefly. The impression left by these papers was that in general the excavations had been responsibly conducted and that all the indications were that the site was Norse, though far-reaching conclusions beyond this were not possible. They gave a clearer view of the problems than did Helge Ingstad's parallel chapters in *Westward to Vinland*. Little has been published so far on the last two seasons' work, but in *Westward to Vinland* Ingstad included an illustration of an important Norse artifact, a bronze pin, found only in 1968, and also a provisional sketch of the lay-out of all the sites so far identified or excavated.

The questions whether this was Leif's Vinland and his focal camp simply cannot be answered, only argued peripherally on what has come to light,¹ but that the site is Norse appears so highly probable that it can be accepted as such, and thus the first North American (though Canadian, not United States) site of pre-Columbian activity has been located. The institution of Leif Erickson Day by the United States on 9 October 1964 owes something to the Ingstads.

Meantime there have been other sites which have some claim to

¹ Matti E. Kaups, 'Shifting Vinland — traditions and myth', *Terrae Incognitae* II (1970), 29-60, pours scorn on all attempts to locate Vinland or identify Leif's site. Her challenge to Ingstad that his site is not Norse is not based on all the evidence so far available.

be considered of Norse origin, though judgement for the present must be wholly suspended. In 1948 Canada's leading ethnobotanist, the late Jacques Rousseau, first explored the Payne Lake area of the Ungava Peninsula, and noted certain rectangular house plans and other settlement indications. After he moved to the Centre d'Etudes Nordiques at Laval University he was able to set on foot professional investigations of these sites. Preliminary excavations in 1957 and 1964 by Thomas E. Lee of the Centre's staff revealed a variety of occupation sites, of Eskimo, Indian and, apparently, other origin (T. E. Lee, *Payne Lake, Ungava Peninsula, Archaeology*, 1964, Centre d'Etudes Nordiques, Travaux divers No. 12, 1966). In 1965, with Rousseau, Lee made a serious attempt to define the character of the four rectangular foundations at the Cartier site. Examination of the largest ("East Hall"), a "church-like" structure, brought to light foundations consisting of very large stones, defining a three-roomed building 46' x 16' overall, the largest room having an interior size of 27' x 12'. The north chamber had been reached by a doorway from this larger room, had a curved wall and a fireplace with "the post moulds of a suspension device in front of the fireplace", though no chimney. No clear indication of how this structure could have been roofed was found (all timber is absent from the area and other devices do not seem to fit the basic conditions). A larger expedition was mounted in 1966 which explored other sites in the Ungava Peninsula and examined some remarkable beacons on the shores, another "great hall" on Pamick Island, and sunken stone boxes very like the ember pits associated with Norse sites in Greenland and elsewhere (one was found by Ingstad at L'Anse aux Meadows). A further attempt brought more details of habitation sites but no conclusive indication of what these habitations were (T. E. Lee, *Fort Chimo and Payne Lake, Ungava, Archaeology*, 1965, Centre d'Etudes Nordiques, Travaux divers No. 16, 1967; *Archaeological Discoveries, Payne Bay Region, Ungava*, 1966 . . . No. 20, 1968; *Archaeological Findings, Gyrfalcon to Eider Islands* . . . No. 27, 1969). Mr Lee is strongly of the opinion that, in spite of the absence of European artifacts, these are Norse structures, built near the migration line of caribou herds. But it is hard to fit them in with anything that is certainly known of the Greenland settlers. The theory that the Greenland colony in part survived by dispersion into the farther wilds of the Canadian North has no documentary basis, but might just possibly get an archaeological one if the Ungava sites could be confidently identified as Norse. At present they are an enigma only.

The end of the Norse colony in Greenland is even more hazy than Leif's American travels. Finn Gad devotes a chapter (pp. 153-82) to the wisps of conjecture which are all we have on the colony after 1410. The cautious thing to say is that we know nothing definitely, and then adduce such indications that may point otherwise in the most tentative manner possible. Gad is not as dogmatic as some, but he is optimistic in his judgement of the evidential value of what there is. The sheet-anchor of the view that the colony survived at least to mid-century and was in contact with Europe is nothing more tangible than the "Burgundian cap" (pl. 28) excavated nearly fifty years ago, before modern dating methods were available, at Herjolfsnes. This is said to be a mid-fifteenth-century European style, and so firm evidence of continuing contact. Nowadays, on other matter of this sort, diffusionists are more cautious than they were in the 1920s, and perhaps caution should be enjoined in this case. Are all costume historians of the period, even, agreed that this is what it is alleged to be? Though it may be that "English ships sailed the North Atlantic throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries", there is no evidence whatever that they reached Greenland. They went to Iceland and may have discovered Newfoundland before Columbus sailed, but all suggestions of English trade with or piratical raids on Greenland are so far worthless as being unbacked by evidence. Only vague papal pronouncements on Greenland, where bishops appointed to its see did not attempt to land, fill out an exiguous picture. Finn Gad would be wise in future editions to qualify most of his firm phrases in this chapter. His account of the revival of Greenland on the maps of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is better informed, and so too are his accounts of the rediscovery of Greenland and its Eskimo by English, Danish and Dutch expeditions, with the rebirth of the extensive summer whaling camps which made it in the seventeenth century again valuable to Europe. By 1700 Greenland is on the threshold of re-occupation by Europeans. One rather surprising thing is that Finn Gad is so poorly informed on early representations of Eskimo. There are extant drawings, or engravings after drawings, by at least three artists of the sixteenth century, all of them better than the engraving, "drawn from imagination" (p. 257), which is on the cover and which appeared only in 1656. What is described as "Probably the earliest Danish drawing of a kayaker catching birds" (p. 241) is, in fact, a version of the tail-piece to Dionyse Settle, *La navigation du Capitaine Martin Forbisher* (Paris, 1578), and derives from a lost drawing by John White made on Baffin Island in 1577,

and adapted for Hans Poulson Resen's map of 1605. At the same time, between them, Gad and the Ingstads, and possibly Thomas Lee as well, have added to our knowledge (and to the puzzles) concerning the westward-moving Norse adventurers and settlers.

DAVID B. QUINN



Plate 1. *Frontispiece.*
Gold collar from Möne.

BEOWULF
SWEDES AND GEATS

BY
R. T. FARRELL

VIKING SOCIETY FOR NORTHERN RESEARCH
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BEOWULF
SWEDES AND GEATS

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Introduction: the poem Beowulf

FOR many years a critical climate has existed in which *Beowulf* has been seen as a tragedy of the fall of the Geats; Beowulf's people are destroyed by the Swedes, their neighbours to the north, shortly after Beowulf is killed by the dragon. The purpose of this study is to re-examine the background of the poem, in the light of what is known about Scandinavia before the Viking Age from history, archaeology and legend. Two presumptions are basic. The first is that the *Geatas* are the *Gautar*, the inhabitants of south central Sweden, the area below the lakes Vänern and Vättern.¹ The second is that *Beowulf* is a work of heroic history, i.e. a poem in which facts and chronology are subservient to the poet's interest in heroic deeds and their value in representing the ethics of an heroic civilization. A poet writing in this mode does not disregard absolute historical fact, history, that is, as we know it. He rather sees it as less important than other considerations, if he uses it at all.² He will be reasonably consistent — but within his own limits, and with his own priorities. His account will sometimes mesh reasonably well with history, as in the episode of Hygelac's raid on the Frisian shore. But more often, his work will be a freely-woven structure in which the characters and actions of the past will be part of an ethically satisfying narrative.³ In this paper, then, the aim is not to examine

¹ In this paper, unless specific indications to the contrary are given, the term 'Swedes' means the ancient inhabitants of central Sweden, with their centre at Old Uppsala in Uppland. On the difficulty of precise location, see below, pp. 258-62.

² The question may well be raised whether the poet had the means to know history in a more modern sense.

³ As Jan de Vries pointed out, the Germanic epic gives the fullest evidence regarding the transmutation of historic fact into heroic history. After surveying a number of traditions, he concluded: '[In heroic poetry] it is to be expected that in the course of the oral tradition the historical facts change out of all recognition.' *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend* (1963), 194-209, quotation 203.

or evaluate the 'historicity' of the poem, but rather to study its internal consistency in terms of the art of writing heroic history. What is primarily important is the structure which the *Beowulf* poet created from the facts, myths and high ideals which he knew in connection with certain north Germanic tribes, the noble ancestors (physical or spiritual) of his own race. Much can be learned about the background and context of the poem through other literary sources, through historical writings, and through archaeology; but such evidence will be used here to fill the outlines as they are laid down by the poet's account of an heroic life. I propose first to discuss the passages in the poem which appear to me to be 'pro-Swedish', for want of a better term. A discussion of Beowulf's connections with the various royal houses of Scandinavia follows. The historical background of Scandinavia in the period before the Viking Age is then treated. Finally, the relationship of *Beowulf* to Sutton Hoo is discussed. With these perspectives in mind, we can begin with an examination of the passage dealing with Beowulf's coming to kingship, supposedly a clear indication of the hostile nature of the contacts between Swede and Geat.

I *Beowulf's coming to kingship*

Beowulf's accession to the throne is described in lines 2367-2400 of the poem. The passage is particularly important, since it serves to introduce the last act of a heroic life. Though there are many difficulties in the account, the major problem centres on the relations between Swede and Geat, as outlined above. Particularly upsetting to commentators is the account the poet gives us of Onela, king of the Swedes. R. W. Chambers interprets the passage as follows:⁴

Onela [is] king of Sweden and is spoken of in terms of highest praise. Yet to judge from the account given in *Beowulf*, the Geatas had little reason to love him. He had followed up the defeat of Hygelac by dealing their nation a second deadly blow. For Onela's nephews, Eanmund and Eadgils (the sons of Ohthere), had rebelled against him, and had taken refuge at the court of the Geatas, where Heardred, son of Hygelac, was now reigning, supported by Beowulf. Thither Onela pursued them, and slew the young king Heardred. Eanmund was also slain, then or later, but Eadgils escaped. It is not clear from the poem what part Beowulf is supposed to have taken in this struggle, or why he failed to ward off disaster from his lord and country. It is not even made clear whether or not he had to make formal submission to the hated Swede. But we are told that when Onela withdrew, he succeeded to the vacant throne. In later days he took his revenge upon Onela.

In Chambers's view, then, the villain of the piece is clearly Onela, the 'hated Swede', though we are left with the discomfiting fact that the poet speaks of Onela, as Chambers himself puts it, 'in terms of highest praise'.

Later critics extended the anti-Swedish interpretation further still; the interpretation of Adrien Bonjour is representative:⁵

Beowulf's refusal having led to Heardred's accession, the poet could not but mention the early death of the young king which finally put Beowulf himself on the Geatish throne Now the circumstances of Heardred's death allow the poet to

⁴ *Beowulf: An Introduction* (3rd ed. with a Supplement by C. L. Wrenn, 1963), 5; this book is abbreviated Chambers-Wrenn hereafter.

⁵ *The Digressions in Beowulf* (1965), 31-2.

introduce for the first time the Swedish wars in the poem, wars of which we are to hear with an alarming recurrence Hygd's fears of 'ælfylcum' are here dramatically confirmed, as the Swedish raids find their outcome precisely in her son's death. At the same time her trust in Beowulf is also justified by Onela's retreat, who does not seem particularly eager to fight against Beowulf, now that the hero has ascended the Geatish throne (*let þone bregostol Beowulf healdan*). Thus by showing so conspicuously how Hygd's confidence in him was well placed, the second part also serves the cause of Beowulf. The purpose of the poet is to convey the certitude that Beowulf's power was enough to prevent any attempt at an invasion, even on the part of an hereditary foe — the Swedes, of course It should be remarked, finally, that the story of Onela and his brother's sons Eanmund and Eadgils provides another (and this time much closer) foil to Beowulf's attitude towards Heardred: the rightful heirs to Ohthere are indeed deprived of the throne by their uncle Onela — a further instance of usurpation sharply contrasting with Beowulf's loyalty and delicacy.

Chambers's awareness of contradictory elements in the account is missing. Onela, in Bonjour's criticism, is a villain who disrupts civil order and who ravages Geatland in his single-minded desire to usurp the throne. A critical structure is built in which the evil Onela is a representative emblem of the struggle to the death between Geats and Swedes, which is to end with the complete destruction of the Geats, shortly after Beowulf's death.⁶

A closer examination of the lines in question is necessary. For purposes of clarity, the text is presented complete and a translation is provided, which will serve as a basis for interpretation.

Oferswam ða sioleða bigong sunu Ecgðeowes,
 earm anhaga eft to leodum;
 þær him Hygd gebead hord ond rice,
 beagas ond bregostol; bearne ne truwode,
 þæt he wið ælfylcum eþelstolas

⁶ The perspective of a kind of Scandinavian total war is most eloquently set by A. Brodeur in *The Art of Beowulf* (1960), 135: 'The historical traditions have to do with the downfall of the Danish and Geatish kingdoms, both of which Beowulf was concerned to uphold; their matter is the tragedies of nations with which he was emotionally as well as politically involved . . . Both these national catastrophes are the ultimate consequence of the defeat and death of Hygelac in Frisia.'

healdan cuðe, ða wæs Hygelac dead.
 No ðy ær feascæfte findan meahton
 æt ðam æðelinge ænige ðinga,
 þæt he Heardrede hlaford wære,
 oððe þone cynedom ciosan wolde;
 hwæðre he hine on folce freondlarum heold,
 estum mid are, oð ðæt he yldra wearð,
 Weder-Geatum weold.

Hyne wræcmægças

ofer sæ sohtan, suna Ohteres;
 hæfdon hy forhealden helm Scylfinga,
 þone selestan sæcyninga
 þara ðe in Swiorice sinc brytnade,
 mærne þeoden. Him þæt to mearce wearð;
 he þær[f]or feorme feorhwunde hleat,
 sweordes swengum, sunu Hygelaces;
 ond him eft gewat Ongenðioes bearn
 hames niosan, syððan Heardred læg,
 let ðone bregostol Biowulf healdan,
 Geatum wealdan; þæt wæs god cyning.

Se ðæs leodhryres lean gemunde
 uferan dogrum, Eadgilse wearð
 feascæftum freond; folce gestepte
 ofer sæ side sunu Ohteres,
 wigum ond wæpnum; he gewræc syððan
 cealdum cearsiðum, cyning ealdre bineat.

Swa he niða gehwane genesen hæfde,
 sliðra geslyhta, sunu Ecgðioewes,
 ellenweorca, oð ðone anne dæg,
 þe he wið þam wyrme gewegan sceolde.⁷ (2367-2400)

When Ecgðeow's son, the afflicted solitary one, swam across the sea, back to his people, Hygd then pressed upon him the treasury and the kingdom, the (giving of) rings and the throne; she did not trust her son, did not believe that he would know how to (or be able to) protect the country against foreigners, when Hygelac was dead. Despite this, the unfortunate people could not in any way prevail upon the prince (Beowulf) to become Heardred's lord, or take over the kingdom; yet he (Beowulf) supported him among the people with friendly counsel, kindly, with honour, until he grew older and ruled the Geats.

Exiles (*wræcmægças*) sought him from across the water,

⁷ This and all subsequent citations from *Beowulf* are from Klaeber's third edition (1950), unless specific note to the contrary is given; the edition is abbreviated Klaeber hereafter.

Ohthere's sons; they had rebelled against the protector of the Scylfings, the illustrious lord, that best of sea-kings who ever gave out treasure in Sweden.⁸ That was his finish; Hygelac's son suffered a deadly swordblow on account of that hospitality, and Ongendæow's son then went home after Heardred had fallen, let Beowulf keep the throne, rule the Geats: he was a good king!

He (Beowulf) remembered a requital for his lord's fall at a later time (*uferan dogrum*). He became a friend to the destitute Eadgils, the son of Ohthere, established him among his people across the broad water, by means of battle and weapons; he (Beowulf) gained revenge afterwards in a bitter journey, fraught with woe, he deprived the king of his life. So Ecgðeow's son had experienced every sort of hostility, fierce affliction — deeds of glory, until that notable day, on which he was fated to fight against the dragon.

II *The account of Onela's fall*

The points which I find most striking are the following.⁹

(1) Hygd, Hygelac's queen, did not trust her own son as a ruler, and pressed Beowulf to accept the kingship. She had a specific reason for doing so, since she thought her son incapable of protecting the country from foreigners (*wið ælfylcum*).

(2) Her fears are justified, for the young and unwise Heardred harbours a pair of rebels, Eanmund and Eadgils. The poet's choice of words here is significant. They are *wræcmæcgas*. *Wræcmæcg* is used elsewhere to refer to the devil,¹⁰ and to the Jews in *Elene* who despise Christ's teachings.¹¹ Too much weight cannot be attached to these uses,¹² but the surrounding context of *wræcmæcg*

⁸ See note 14 below.

⁹ Chambers found Beowulf's failure to defend Heardred in the battle against Onela significant, in that it lent an aura of improbability to the narrative. I fail to see how this is at all relevant. Beowulf was present at the battle in which Hygelac fell; though he slew the Frankish champion (2501 ff.), and swam home carrying 30 suits of armour, he did not save his lord. It is equally valid, or invalid, to question the whereabouts of Beowulf in both battles.

¹⁰ *Guthlac* 231, 558, *Christ* 363 (in apposition with *hetelan helscæðan*), *Juliana* 260 as an *n*-stem form, *wræcmæga*, referring to the devil who disguised himself as an angel in an attempt to deceive Juliana.

¹¹ *Elene* 387.

¹² First of all because the number of recorded uses is small, second because any firm statements on Old English semantics must await the publication of the new Anglo-Saxon Dictionary.

in the *Beowulf* passage reinforces the negative impression. These two young men did not show proper respect to Onela (i.e. they rebelled against him): *hæfdon hy forhealden*¹³ *helm Scylfinga . . .*

(3) Onela is 'the protector of the Scylfings, the illustrious lord, that best of sea-kings who ever gave out treasure in Sweden'.¹⁴

(4) Heardred's hospitality to these unsavoury guests cost him his life.

(5) Beowulf did not assume the kingship, *but was permitted it by Onela*. The poet states this clearly: *let done bregostol Biowulf healdan, Geatum wealdan; þæt wæs god cyning!* 'Onela let Beowulf keep the throne, rule the Geats; he was a good king!' Since Onela is the subject in 2387-90a, it is at least possible that *þæt wæs god cyning* refers to Onela, *not* to Beowulf. The implications of *let . . . healdan* cannot be established. Onela let Beowulf rule either because he feared him or because he favoured him.

(6) Beowulf does avenge his lord, Heardred, by helping Eadgils regain the throne. Without Beowulf, Eadgils would have been unable to regain power; he was *feasceaft*, destitute. Significantly, Beowulf does not act at once but after a period of time, *uferan dogrum*.

(7) The revenge for Heardred is accomplished by depriving the king (Onela) of his life. The deed is not pleasant, it is done *cealdum cearsidum*. Klaeber glosses *cearsid* as 'expedition that brings sorrow', *ceald* as 'painful', 'pernicious', 'evil'. C. L. Wrenn takes *cearsid* as 'journey

¹³ The gloss I use here is that suggested by T. Northcote Toller, *Supplement to an Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1921), IV (1). The meanings listed for *forhealdan* range from 'keep back, hold improperly' to 'abuse' or 'not keep morally pure'. I read *for-* as an intensive negative prefix; compare *bærnan* 'burn up', *forbærnan* 'burn up utterly', *brecan*, 'break', *forbrecan*, 'violate', etc. Klaeber's translation is 'rebel against' in the present context.

¹⁴ *brytnade* can be taken as a subjunctive plural in *-e*; in such constructions, i.e. a limiting adjective clause with a genitive depending on a superlative as its antecedent, the subjunctive seems to indicate a totality — in this case, all the possible examples of sea-kings. Parallels are found in *Beowulf* 2129 ff., *Genesis* 6264, and *Daniel* 691 ff. See Bruce Mitchell, *A Guide to Old English* (2nd ed., 1968), 165.4.

that brings grief, disastrous expedition'.¹⁵ Since the revenge for Heardred is fulfilled, the only reason for viewing the expedition as disastrous is that it brings grief to Beowulf. Klaeber sees Eadgils as the subject of *gewrac*, but this interpretation is rejected for the following reasons:

(i) He had no power to fight for himself, because he was *feasceaft*; Beowulf put him on the throne (*folce gestepte*, 2393).

(ii) Beowulf is the subject, centre of interest, and active force in 2391-2400; while it is possible that there could be a subject-shift in 2395, such a shift is by no means necessary and is unlikely, considering Beowulf's active role throughout the passage.

(iii) We are told that Beowulf *lean gemunde leod hryres*; it seems natural to suppose that he felt it necessary to take appropriate action in revenging his lord.

(iv) It is hard to see how the journey in which Eadgils regains the kingship could be a *ceald cearsið* for him, whereas it could much more easily be such for Beowulf. However, the possibility does exist that *cealdum cearsiðum* refers to Onela.

Certainly, *this passage alone* cannot be seen as an attack on the character or actions of Onela, the Swedish king. His reason for coming to Heardred's court is to seek out and crush rebellion. In the course of doing so, both he and Heardred are caught up in the bonds of heroic conduct. Eanmund and Eadgils are in Heardred's protection, and Heardred must fight with and for them; Onela must do battle with Heardred. Heardred's fault is lack of wisdom; he took the wrong side in a civil conflict. And the conduct of Beowulf, when he is permitted the kingship, is governed by convention as well; he must continue his lord's obligations, and must avenge Heardred, and thus is forced into killing the rightful king of the Swedes, in an undertaking that is painful to him.

¹⁵ *Beowulf*, second edition (1958).

III *The role of Wiglaf in Beowulf's last battle*

Questions are raised here which can only be answered by extending the enquiry further; in fact, the defence of those warriors with Swedish attachments is found elsewhere, in the account of Beowulf's last battle. After a long reign the valiant warrior is engaged with the dragon. His sword fails, the end of his life is at hand. His retainers see him struck by the dragon, but none moves to help his lord — save one:

Hiora in anum weoll

sefa wið sorgum; sibb'æfre ne mæg
 wiht onwendan þam ðe wel þenceð.
 Wiglaf wæs haten, Weoxstanes sunu,
 leoflic lindwiga, leod Scylfinga,
 mæg Ælfheres; geseah his mondryhten
 under heregriman hat þrowian.
 Gemunde ða ða are, þe he him ær forgeaf,
 wicstede weligne Wægmundinga,
 folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte;
 ne mihte ða forhabban, hond rond gefeng,
 geolwe linde, gomet swyrd geteah;
 þæt wæs mid eldum Eanmundes laf,
 suna Ohtere[s]; þam æt sæcce wearð,
 wræcca(n) wineleasum Weohstan bana
 meces ecgum, ond his magum ætbær
 brunfagne helm, hringde byrnan,
 ealdsweord etonisc; þæt him Onela forgeaf,
 his gædelinges guðgewædu,
 fyrdsearo fuslic, — no ymbe ða fæhðe spræc,
 þeah ða he his broðor bearn abredwade.
 He [ða] frætwe geheold fela missera,
 bill ond byrnan, oð ðæt his byre mihte
 eorlscipe efnan swa his ærfæder;
 geaf him ða mid Geatum guðgewæda,
 æghwæs unrim, þa he of ealdre gewat
 frod on forðweg. — Ða wæs forma sið
 geongan ceman, þæt he guðe ræs
 mid his freodryhtne fremman sceolde. (2599b-2627)

The mind of a certain one surged with grief: for those who are right thinking, the claims of kinship cannot ever be set aside.

His name was Wiglaf, Weohstan's son, the kinsman of Ælfhere,¹⁶ a Swedish prince; he saw his helmeted lord enduring the heat. He called to mind the honours Beowulf had given him, the rich Wægmunding estate — every one of those land-rights his father had had before him. He could not hold back then; he grasped his yellow linden shield, drew his ancestral sword that was (*mid eldum?*) a legacy of Eanmund, Ohthere's son; Weohstan had become his slayer in battle by means of a sword, and had borne the glistening brown helmet, the ringed mail shirt and the wondrous ancient sword to his kinsmen. Onela granted his kinsman's war-equipment, his battle-equipment to him — and made no mention at all of hostility, though he (Weohstan) had cut down his (Onela's) brother's son. He kept that treasure for many years, the sword and mailcoat, until his child could accomplish deeds of valour, as his father had done; he gave him the war-equipment, all of it,¹⁷ when, full of years, he departed from life on the road hence. That was the first time the young man was fated to experience the onrush of battle with his excellent lord.

The points which I find significant in the passage are these:

- (1). Wiglaf is called *leod Scylfinga*, a Swedish man, or prince.¹⁸
- (2) The only thing we know about Weohstan is that he slew Eanmund, almost certainly in the course of the battle between Onela and his rebellious nephews. It appears that he was in Onela's service at the time, since Onela

¹⁶ H. B. Woolf suggested ('The name of Beowulf', *Englische Studien* 72, 1937-38, 7-9) that Ælfhere was actually Beowulf's name. His argument was that the vocalic alliteration would fit with his father's name, and he saw a patterning in the sequence *wæg* plus the genitive of a personal name: 'There is another reason . . . for considering Ælfhere Beowulf's true name: the alliteration in line 2604 does not call for a name initially vocalic, and the name of some other kinsman of Wiglaf might just as well have been used — save that Beowulf was, in the opinion of the poet, his greatest relative. The phrase *mæg* plus the genitive of a personal name occurs six times in the poem: in lines 737, 758, 813, 914, 1530, and 2604. In the first five of these, Beowulf is referred to as *Mæg Hygelaces*, and in no one of them is the name of Hygelac necessary for alliteration. Indeed, it seems likely that when the name of a kinsman of Beowulf was used in this way by the poet he naturally thought of Hygelac, who played an important role in the poem; similarly, when the name of a relative of Wiglaf was needed, what more logical to use that of his most famous kinsman, *Beowulf*, known also as Ælfhere?'

¹⁷ All of it = *aghwæc unrim*.

¹⁸ *leod* is used 13 times elsewhere in the singular in *Beowulf*, 10 times as part of a title for Beowulf, once each in the same way for Heorogar, Hroðgar, and once to refer to Wulfgar, as *Wendla leod*. Wulfgar is a high officer at Hroðgar's court, his *ar ond ombiht*. It seems possible to take *leod* as 'prince' in all 13 instances, with the present example as the fourteenth.

gave him gifts of armour, returning what he had won from Eanmund.

(3) The armour which Wiglaf wears, the sword he carries, are his father's trophies from this battle,¹⁹ in which Heardred died, defending his guests, Eanmund and Eadgils.

(4) Despite the fact that Wigstan took and slew Eanmund, who was under Heardred's protection, he was apparently favoured by Beowulf, and must have been accepted among the Geats, since he passed on Eanmund's armour to his son, in Geatland (cf. 2623), and may have held land there.

The translation of lines 2612b-2619 is ambiguous: there is no doubt that Weohstan did kill Eanmund with his own hands, but what *magum* (2614) refers to is not clear, and the meaning of *ætberan* is also hard to establish. Working from analogy, it appears that *ætberan* can mean 'bear away from', or 'bear away to'.²⁰ Since *magum* is plural, it seems unlikely that the reference is to Eanmund, with *ætberan* as 'bear away from', i.e. 'Weohstan took away [the armour] from his kinsman, Eanmund'.²¹

A more likely translation takes *magum* as a simple plural, *ætberan* as 'carry off to': Weohstan carried off the armour to his kinsmen — and here the question arises, to whose kinsmen? Eanmund's or Weohstan's? There is no way to come to a decision on the basis of the phrase itself; either translation is possible, and only the context can help. Since Onela had the armour to give it to Weohstan, it came into his possession some time before. In the *Beowulf* poet's view, accepted practice for warriors

¹⁹ If Swedes and Geats were such implacable enemies, this alone would have caused a cool reception for Wiglaf among the Geats, and among the supporters of Onela in the land of the Swedes. A parallel is to be found in the *Headobard* feud, where the mere sight of *Headobard* treasures on Danish lords is enough to stir up deadly conflict. Cf. 2016-69.

²⁰ Bosworth-Toller gloss only 'from' meanings for *ætberan*, but other verbs with the *æt-* prefix have the alternative force, as *ætferian*, 'take away', *æt-don* 'deprive', *æt-fleon*, 'flee away', etc.

²¹ It is still perhaps possible that *magum* is a classword, with singular for plural; cf. *broðrum* and *bearnum*, 1074, where the reference is singular, as *Hildeburh* has lost one from among the class sons, one from brothers.

seems to have been for them to pass on to their lords what they had won in battle.²² Since Onela is Weohstan's lord, it would be plausible to assume that Onela is referred to in *his magum* — either as one of Weohstan's kinsmen, or one of Eanmund's. More convincing evidence is Wiglaf's title of *leod Scylfinga*, 'prince of Swedes', which he must have gained by descent since the dragon fight was his first battle. It is thus, on the basis of this passage, probable that Beowulf was tied to the Swedes through his connection to the Wægmunding line of Weohstan and Wiglaf. His connection with the Wægmundings cannot be disputed, for he himself stresses it in his very last words, as he speaks to Wiglaf:

Pu eart ende-laf usses cynnes,
 Wægmundinga; ealle wyrd forsweop
 mine magas to metodsceafte,
 eorlas on elne; ic him æfter sceal. (2813-16)

You are the last survivor of our race, the Wægmundings; fate has taken off all my kinsmen, the illustrious lords, to their appointed lot; I must follow them.

Thus, the picture built up from the account of Beowulf's succession and of the circumstances of his last battle does not easily accord with an interpretation of the poem which has Geat and Swede as implacable foes, while Beowulf is alive.

Scholars have been troubled about the Wægmunding line, and Beowulf's relation to it. Klaeber held that the Wægmundings were a family with Geatish and Swedish relations,²³ and Wrenn identified them as 'the family related (perhaps by marriage) to the Geatish royal house — to which Wiglaf, Wihstan and Beowulf belong'.²⁴ Hoops held that they were Swedes,²⁵ and E. Wardale, on the basis of the Wægmunding relation, suggested long

²² A parallel here is Beowulf's passing on the splendid treasures he had been given by Hroðgar, and gaining lands in return, cf. 2144-51, 2190-99. See also *Widsið* 93-6, discussed below, p. 242.

²³ Klaeber, xlv.

²⁴ Wrenn, *Beowulf*, 316.

²⁵ Hoops, *Kommentar zur Beowulf* (1932), 276-7.

ago that Ecgðeow, Beowulf's father, was a Swede.²⁶ A summary article on the question was written by W. F. Bryan in 1936, 'The Wægmundings: Swedes or Geats?'.²⁷ As far as I can discover, his reasons for concluding in favour of a Geatish origin have never been fully refuted in print, so it seems necessary to do so here. Bryan first restates the 'pro-Swedish' arguments, and finds them a satisfactory explanation of three circumstances:

The first is that Wiglaf's father Weohstan was a follower of Onela, the king of the Swedes, in the war between Onela and Heardred, the king of the Geats, and in this war Weohstan killed Eanmund, Onela's rebellious nephew, who was being supported by Heardred, and Heardred was slain by the Swedes. The second is that Wiglaf himself is called *leod Scylfinga*, that is, a man [or 'prince'] of the Swedes. The third is that Beowulf and Wiglaf (and of course Wiglaf's father Weohstan) were members of the same family, the Wægmundings.

Bryan's major argument against a Swedish attachment is as follows:

There is not the slightest hint in the epic that the Wægmundings as a family had any roots or possessions in Sweden; but there is a clear statement concerning the estate of this family in the land of the Geats. Wiglaf is kindled to his valiant support of Beowulf in the desperate contest with the fire-drake by his recollection of the obligations to Beowulf under which he lay:

Gemunde ða ða are þe he him ær forgeaf,
wicstede weligne Wægmundinga,
folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte. (2606-8)

He remembered the favours he had had in times past, the splendid Wægmunding estate, every one of the folk-rights (see below) his father had had.

The phrase *wicstede weligne Wægmundinga* seems clearly to refer to the ancestral holding or fief of the family, and the additional *folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte* strongly confirms this interpretation: Wiglaf had succeeded his father in the family seat. As this succession had been granted by Beowulf, the king of the Geats, it is obvious that the ancestral home of the

²⁶ 'Beowulf — the Nationality of Ecgðeow', *Modern Language Review* 24 (1929), 322.

²⁷ *Modern Philology* 34 (1936), 113-8.

Wægmundings was in the land of the Geats. Since Beowulf, the king of the Geats, is a Wægmunding, as are Wiglaf and his father Weohstan, since there is a perfectly clear implication that the ancestral seat of the Wægmundings lay in the land of the Geats, and since there is nowhere in the poem any association of the family as a family with the land or race of the Swedes, the conclusion seems inescapable that the Wægmundings were not Swedes, but Geats.²⁸

This conclusion is far from inescapable. First of all, Onela may well have been *kinsman*-lord of Weohstan, for the reasons adduced above. Secondly, Bryan's idea of an ancestral estate is not in keeping with methods of land-tenure in Anglo-Saxon England. While any question involving Anglo-Saxon land-tenure is necessarily complex, a few certainties can be made out.²⁹ References to land-tenure elsewhere in the poetry seem particularly appropriate here. In *Widsið*, the wandering *scop* gives up the splendid and extremely valuable gold bracelet he had from Eormenric to his lord Eadgils, in return for the *re-granting* of lands that had been his father's:

þone [hring] ic Eadgilse on æht sealde,
 minum hleodrihtne, þa ic to ham bicwom
 leofum to leane, þæs þe he me lond forgeaf,
 mines fæder eþel, frea Myrginga. (93-6)³⁰

The ring which I gave to Eadgils, my beloved lord, ruler of the Myrgings, when I came home, as a repayment for the land he had granted me, my father's estate.

Chambers cited *Beowulf* '2607, etc.' as a confirmation of the above. The case of Deor is even more striking. As soon as he lost favour with his lord, his rival Heorrenda succeeded to his lands:

Ahte ic fela wintra folgað tilne,
 holdne hlaford, oþþæt Heorrenda nu,
 leoðcræftig man londriht gepah,
 þæt me eorla hleo ær gesealde. (38-41)³¹

²⁸ *ibid.*, 114.

²⁹ See E. John, *Land Tenure in Early England* (1960), and 'Folcland Reconsidered', *Orbis Britanniae* (1966), 64-129.

³⁰ *Widsið* (ed. R. W. Chambers, 1912), 217.

³¹ Krapp and Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* III (1936), 179.

For many years I had a dependable lord, until now, when Heorrenda, a man skilled in song, came into the lands which the lord had formerly given to me.

The practice of land-holding for longer periods than a single lifetime (or the duration of the king's pleasure) was a later development, and almost certainly originated in the necessity to provide support for the church.³² In brief, then, on the basis of current understanding of Anglo-Saxon land-holding, it would appear extremely likely that lands granted by Beowulf to Wiglaf are those which had been granted earlier to Weohstan, for his lifetime only. The phrase *folcrihta gehwylc, swa his fæder ahte* need imply no more than a life-estate, as Dr Golden has indicated.³³ The fact that Weohstan held such lands does not make him a Geat by descent; it only means that he was rewarded while in the service of a king of the Geats, Beowulf, as his father had been rewarded in his lifetime.

We can now turn to Bryan's other points. He explained Weohstan's presence in Sweden by recourse to Chadwick, who held that Weohstan the *Geat* had taken service with a foreign lord, and was thus forced to fight against his own nation.³⁴ As Chadwick points out, a characteristic of the retinues of Germanic kings is that

³² The granting of such lands to lay persons was a very late practice; John discusses early (seventh-century) charters from Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and elsewhere, in his chapters on the origin of book-right (*Land Tenure*, 1-23). He holds that 'it seems reasonable to claim that these charters, for all their variety of formula, share a common legal background, that they intend to confer an essentially similar kind of right on newly-established or recently founded churches. This common legal background is called, in the vernacular, book-right, and land held under its terms, bookland. All the sources take it for granted that both terms have a precise and currently understood meaning' (p. 10). In John's view, this book-right bears 'at least a family resemblance' to the Roman imperial *jus perpetuum* formula of the granting of lands (p. 11).

³³ See John Golden, *Societal Bonds in Old English Heroic Poetry: A Legal and Typological Study* (Cornell University Ph.D. thesis, 1970). Dr Golden cites a range of contexts in Anglo-Saxon law codes in which *folcland* is equated with *folcriht*, and concludes: '... the evidence of laws, wills, charters, and letters seems to suggest that the owner of *folcland* did not have the freedom to dispose of it to his heirs without the king's consent, which might be withheld; and that *folcland* was traditionally given to the king's retainers in reward for their services' (p. 126). I am indebted to Dr Golden for aid on the legal aspects of land tenure in Anglo-Saxon England, and for help in preparing a lecture from an earlier version of this study.

³⁴ H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (1912), 329-30, 350.

'they were not always composed of born subjects of the king. Bede (*HE* III, 14) says that Oswine, popular king of Deira, attracted noblemen to his service from all sides; and in the Heroic Age such cases appear to have been frequent . . . It is probably due to the same custom that we find so many Teutonic chieftains serving the Romans during the Heroic Age.'³⁵ Examples of such foreign service are easily found in *Beowulf*. The hero himself was, for a time, Hroðgar's 'man'; his father, Ecgðeow, took allegiance to Hroðgar at one point in his career, though he had married into the Geatish royal line.³⁶ Hroðgar had Wulfgar, a lord of the Wendels, as his *ar and ombiht*.³⁷ Beowulf himself found it noteworthy that Hygelac did *not* have to take foreign men into his service, but the passage clearly implies that such a possibility was at least an alternative, in case of need. Particularly noteworthy is Beowulf's acceptance of 'hateful' Sweden as a possible source of warriors for a king of the Geats — in a passage which comes *fifteen lines* after his mention of the battle of *Hreosnabeorh*, in which Hæðcynn fell.³⁸ The principle is well established, but the argument, surely, is two-sided. If a Geat could take service with the Swedes, the reverse is equally possible. Since it appears that it was a commonplace of Germanic heroic custom for warriors to serve princes who were admirable, whether or not they were members of the same tribe, a review of how Beowulf himself extended his allegiance is called for. In fact, a discussion of Beowulf's dealings with all the three major tribes dealt with in the poem, Geats, Swedes and Danes, will clarify the complex and interrelated series of social bonds in which he was involved.

³⁵ *ibid.*, 350.

³⁶ See 372-5, 456-7.

³⁷ See 331b-5. Wrenn's note here is interesting; he identifies the *Wendlas* as the Vandals, and states, 'It seems extremely probable that the Vandals left pockets of settlement in Vendel (Swedish Uppland) and Vendill (modern Vendsyssel) which is the northernmost region of Jutland. Wulfgar, *Wendla leod* (348), prince of the Vandals, may have come from either place, but more likely from Vendel in Sweden, since the point of the passage is that he was a foreign prince who served Hroðgar, not — like so many voyagers abroad — because he had been exiled, but out of motives of high adventure.'

³⁸ See 2490-2509 cited below, pp. 252-4.

passage quoted above, we do know that Ecgðeow was widely travelled, or at least widely known. He had to flee to Denmark at one point in his life, because of a feud among the Wylfings, in which he slew Heaðolaf. Hroðgar became his lord.⁴⁰ It is also apparent that Ecgðeow's name alliterates with the Swedish house, Ongenðeow, Ohthere, Onela, etc. But no great structure can be built on this slight evidence alone. Kemp Malone has presented a case for Ecgðeow as a Wylfing, with two stages in his argument.⁴¹ His first is based on a new emendation in the passage in which Ecgðeow's feud among the Wylfings is discussed. The lines are as follows:

- 459 Gesloh þin fæder fæhðe mæste;
 wearð he Heaðolafe to handbonan
 mid Wilfingum; ða hine *gara cyn* (MS reading)
 for herebrogan habban ne mihte.
 Þanon he gesohte Suðdena folc
 ofer yða gewewalc, Arscyldinga.
- 465 ða ic furðum weold folce Deniga . . .
- 470 Siððan þa fæhðe feo þingode:
 sende ic Wylfingum ofer wæteres hrycg
 ealde madmas. He me aðas swor.

The now generally accepted emendation of the non-alliterative *gara cyn* in 461 is to *Wedera cyn*, i.e. the Geats. Malone says of this:

Wedera makes great difficulties of interpretation. We are asked to believe that King Hreðel of the Geats refused asylum to his own son-in-law, for fear of the avengers of Heaðolaf! Such conduct on the part of Hreðel would have been proper enough, it is true, if the deed had taken place in his own kingdom. In a case of homicide, the banishment of the slayer for a period of years was a punishment (or a precautionary measure) not infrequently resorted to among the ancient Germans, and this irrespective of the merits of the case . . . The slaying of Heaðolaf took place among the Wylfings, not among the Geats; his slayer was therefore presumably banished from the land of the Wylfings and *gara cyn* is nothing more than an alternative form of the Wylfing name, a form here used for stylistic reasons. (Namely, to avoid repetition.) Now, the

⁴⁰ Cf. 459-72.

⁴¹ 'Ecgðeow', in *Studies in Heroic Legend and Current Speech* (1959), 108-15.

only extant alternative name for the Wylfings is *Vulgares*, the name which Paulus Diaconus uses for the tribe. I therefore emend *gara cyn* to *Wulgara cyn*. The emendation presupposes that the scribe, in copying the text before him, skipped the alliterative syllable and wrote *gara* instead of *Wulgara*. One may compare the same scribe's *elan* for *Onelan* in l.62.⁴²

Malone makes a further supposition on the basis of this new reading, namely, that Ecgðeow was a Wylfing in origin. He states:

If so, we can understand why after his banishment from his proper tribe, he went to the Danish court. Hroðgar's wife, Queen Wealhðeow, was herself a Wylfing, as appears from *Beowulf* 620, where she is called *ides Helminga* [Helm is called a ruler of the Wylfings in *Widsith* 29 RTF] and Ecgðeow presumably hoped that she would prove a friend in time of need. Certainly Ecgðeow won favor with King Hroðgar, who, as we have seen, gave him asylum and even settled his feud with the avengers of Heaðolaf by a money payment. He was able to act as peace-maker in virtue of his friendly relations with the Wylfings, a relationship strengthened by a royal marriage. It seems less likely that Ecgðeow was by birth a man of the Geatas, since in that case he would hardly have escaped from the land of the Wylfings with a mere sentence of banishment; a stranger in a strange land, he could have saved his life only by flight; and there is no indication of such a flight in our text, where on the contrary (as the commentators have recognized), everything points to a judicial sentence of banishment for a term, followed by an open and dignified departure. One may contrast the situation in *Beowulf* 2061 f., where the bane *is* a stranger in a strange land, and saves his life by flight.⁴³

Such a view is admittedly based on slender evidence, but it has a logical basis, once Malone's emendation is accepted. A motivation for Ecgðeow's departure for Denmark is provided — and further possible links with the Swedish line are provided through the *ides Helminga*, *Wealhðeow*, Hroðgar's queen. E. V. Gordon studied her name and related Old English and Scandinavian name-forms some years ago, and his arguments, briefly summarized, are as follows:⁴⁴ *Wealhðeow* is generally

⁴² *ibid.*, 110-11.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁴ 'Wealhðeow and Related Names', *Medium Ævum* 4 (1936), 169-75.

taken as a descriptive, with a meaning 'British servant' or 'foreign servant'. Gordon held that the *wealh* 'foreigner' element was reserved for non-Germanic peoples, and that since *Wealhðeow* is *ides Helminga*, she could not be *wealh* in this sense. Gordon held that name-elements in *-ðeow* are 'not Anglo-Saxon in type, and are presumably Scandinavian in origin or formed under Scandinavian influence'.⁴⁵ OE *Ecgðeow* and *Ongendæow* have ON equivalents in *Eggþér* and *Angantýr*,⁴⁶ and though no direct equivalent for *Wealhðeow* can be found, a corresponding masculine form exists, *Valþjófr*. Gordon provides evidence, in numerous parallels in ON and other Germanic languages, for taking the respective elements of *Wealhðeow* as from Gmc **wala*, 'chosen', 'beloved', and OE *ðeow*, as a word of restricted, semi-religious meaning, 'servant', 'devotee'. Accordingly, we may interpret *Valþjófr* and its cognate forms OHG *Waladeo* and OE *Wealhþeow*, which means literally 'chosen servant', as denoting a person devoted to some god or power which was expected to show special favour OE *Ongendæow* (ON *Angantýr*, OHG *Angandeo*), seems to be a name of the same kind, the first element being identical with ON *angan* 'love', 'special favour'.⁴⁷

It has already been pointed out that *Ecgðeow*'s name alliterates with the Swedish line; it is also interesting to note that the *second* element of the name works into series with *Ongendæow*, and *Wealhðeow*, by front variation, a practice which was frequently employed.⁴⁸ Of course,

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 169. On the incidence of the rare names in *-þeow* in the North see e.g. Kr. Hald, *Personnavne i Danmark*. I. *Oldtiden* (1971), 29-30.

⁴⁶ With *-týr* explicable as a substitution for *-þér*, because of false etymology.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 171-2.

⁴⁸ H. B. Woolf, *The Principles of Germanic Name-Giving* (1939), points out in his Conclusion (p. 253): 'In both England and on the Continent front- and end-variation were practised in equal proportions. The number of names linked by common initial themes and those joined by identical final themes is approximately the same for such important groups as the Mercians, the Bernicians, the Deirans, the West Saxons, and the Langobards. Yet there are some deviations in one direction or the other. The East Anglians, the Merovingians, and the Gothic Amalings, for example, made greater use of front variation, and the Kentishmen preferred end-variations.' An East Anglian association of course tempts one to summon up the splendours of Sutton Hoo, but the temptation is best resisted; see below.

we have no way of knowing Wealhðeow's nationality; but since her name is of a Scandinavian type, and finds its closest parallel in Ongenðeow, a king of the Swedish line, it might be conjectured that she may have had her origin among the Swedes. We know that there was a royal marriage between a Swedish king and a Danish princess, from lines 59-63 of the poem; an unnamed daughter of Healfdene was [On]ela's queen.

The very tentative suggestion to be made on the basis of the above is that there may be some relationship between Ecgðeow, Wealhðeow, and Ongenðeow, between the Wylfings and the Swedes. Any further information on the Wylfings is hard to trace. The context in which the *Wulfings* are mentioned in *Widsið* associates them with northern tribes, both Danish and Swedish, so we are no closer to localization on the basis of this source.⁴⁹ Dr J. N. L. O'Loughlin surveyed the available material for the localization of the Wulfings (MHG *Wulfinge* and ON *Ylfingar*).⁵⁰ He cited three pieces of evidence which point to Östergötland as their place of origin: (1) *Beowulf* 459-72; (2) the inscription on the Rök stone — itself in Östergötland — which in his view 'refers to Theodric, lord of the Mærings, the equivalent of MHG Dietrich, whose faithful followers were the Wulfings'⁵¹; and finally (3) *Sögubrot af fornkonungum*, ch. 4, which tells that Hjormundr, son of Hjorvarðr Ylfingr, was made king of Östergötland. The passage in *Beowulf* dealing with Ecgðeow does indeed imply, as Dr O'Loughlin states, 'that the Wylfings were neighbours of the Geats, and that they were separated from the Danes by the sea'.⁵² But this vague location could just as well locate the Wylfings in

⁴⁹ *Widsið*, 28-31:

Sigehere lengest	Sæ-Denum weold,
Hnæf Hocingum,	Helm Wulfingum,
Wald Woingum,	Wod Þyringum,
Sæferð Sycgum,	Sweom Ongendþeow . . .

⁵⁰ 'Sutton Hoo — the evidence of the documents', *Medieval Archaeology* 8 (1964), 1-19.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 3.

⁵² *ibid.*, 3.

north-central Sweden. The Rök inscription may speak of *Biodrikr* . . . *skati Mæringa*, but a lord who ruled the Mærings (?) is not *ipso facto* a lord of the Geats, even though the inscription is carved on a stone in Östergötland. Finally, the evidence of *Sögubrot* is not to the point here.⁵³ We are not really any further on with the localization of the Wulfings.

The conclusions to be reached on the basis of a study of Beowulf's father are these. It would appear, at the very least, that he is not *directly* in the Geatish royal line. What little we know of his career encourages the belief that he was a wandering warrior of considerable reputation, who served among the Geats and Danes, and who had an unfortunate feud among the Wylfings. If Malone's arguments and hypotheses are accepted, he is a Wylfing.⁵⁴ There is a closeness between his name-type and that of Wealhðeow and Ongenðeow. Beowulf's relation with the Wægmundings' line may be through his father — and, as has been pointed out above, the Wægmundings may have very strong connections in Sweden.

V *Beowulf and the Danes*

The relationship between Hroðgar and Beowulf is complex; on the first mention of Beowulf's name in Hroðgar's presence, the succession of challenges through which Beowulf and his men have passed is ended with Hroðgar's immediate recognition of the hero:

Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende;
 wæs his eald-fæder Ecgþeo haten . . .
is his eafora nu
 heard her cumen, sohte holdne wine. (372-6)

⁵³ See below, p. 269. It may be noted that the best source of the text of *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* has the name Hervarðr, not Hjörvarðr, Ylfingr; cf. C. af Petersens and E. Olson, *Sögur Danakonunga* (1919-25), 13/22.

⁵⁴ So Malone supposes in *Studies*, 109 (cf. note 41 above).

I knew him as a boy; his revered father was called Ecgðeow . . . his valiant son has now come here, seeking a faithful lord.

This probably means that Beowulf accompanied his father when he fled to the Danish court after his feud with the Wylfings. It is plausible to suppose that Beowulf was very young during this visit, since Hreðel took over his fostering when he was seven (cf. 2428-33). After the cleansing of Heorot, Wealhðeow refers obliquely to a closer relationship between Hroðgar and Beowulf in a speech addressed to her lord:

beo wið Geatas glæd, geofena gemyndig,
nean ond feorran þu nu hafast.
Me man sægde, þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde
hererinc habban . . . (1173-6)

The impression of adoption which this passage gives is further confirmed by the fact that Beowulf is seated among the *geoguð*, the untried warriors, next to Hreðric and Hroðmund (1188-91). Since Beowulf is obviously entitled to sit among the *duguð* by his many exploits, it might be concluded that he has been placed among the *geoguð* to show his closeness to the young Danish princes.

The further exchanges between Hroðgar and Beowulf show the closeness of their relationship, though they are not as explicit as the statement by Wealhðeow, and the place of Beowulf in the hall by Hreðric and Hroðmund.

Thus, it is clear that Beowulf had close associations with the three major tribes in the poem. His mother was a Geat, and his upbringing, for the most part, was provided by Hreðel, king of the Geats. He spent time at the Danish court as a child, and later went back to form a very strong personal bond between himself and Hroðgar, which resulted in a firm basis for friendly associations between Danes and Geats. Finally, through the Wæg-mundings, and perhaps directly through his father, he may be connected with the Swedish royal line. One further cross-connection is interesting, between Denmark and Sweden. We are told in the opening of the poem that

Healfdene's daughter married [On]ela.⁵⁵ Thus, Hroðgar's sister was Onela's queen — a further reason for Beowulf to wish to avoid killing Onela. The close relations between all the major houses is best indicated in a genealogical chart, most of which is based on explicit statement in the poem. See Figure 1.

VI *The accounts of Geatish-Swedish conflicts in Beowulf*

Aside from a mention of Onela as husband to a Danish princess,⁵⁶ and a descriptive epithet for Hygelac, *bonan Ongenðeowes* in 1968, the Swedes play no part in the poem until the attack on Heardred by Onela in 2379-2400, as has been discussed above. They are again mentioned in Beowulf's speech of reminiscence before his fight with the dragon (2472-89). He tells us that there were raids on the Geats after Hreðel's death; they attacked in a terrible way, not wishing peace, and did a good deal of damage to the Geats in the battle of *Hreosnabeorh*. Though Hæðcyn fell, Hygelac gained revenge in the slaying of Ongenðeow. This account of the battle is very brief, some 18 lines only. It is immediately followed by Beowulf's assertion of his own usefulness to Hygelac, set in terms which are surprising to those who believe in the implacability of the Swedish-Geatish conflict:

Ic him þa maðmas, þe he me sealde,
 geald æt guðe, swa me gifeðe wæs,
 leohtan sweorde; he me lond forgeaf,
 eard eðelwynn. Næs him ænig þearf,
 þæt he to Gifðum oððe to Gar-Denum
 oððe in Swiorice secan þurfe
 wyrsan wigfreca weorðe gecypan . . . (2490-96)

As it was granted me, I repaid in battle the treasures which he [Hygelac] had given me, by means of my gleaming sword. He

⁵⁵ 59-63. See further Malone, 'The Daughter of Healfdene', *Studies*, 124-41 (cf. note 41).

⁵⁶ 62-3; cf. pp. 249, 251-2 above.

BEOWULF AND HIS 'DESCENTS' — (*ÆDELU*)

Swedish tree

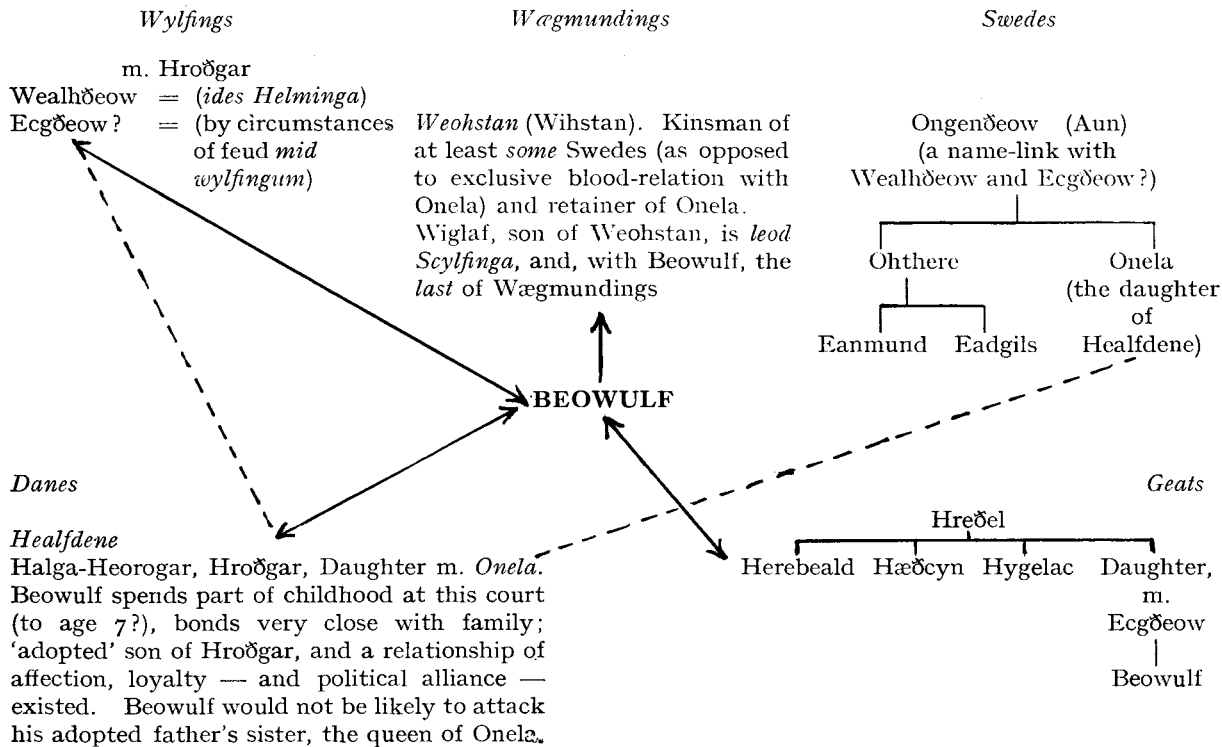


Fig. 1.

gave me land, a place to dwell, noble bliss. He had no need to seek out a less good warrior from among the Gepidae, the spear-Danes, or from among the kingdom of the Swedes, buying him with treasure

It seems clear that despite the conflicts with the Swedes, normal contacts could be made, and a member of that tribe could have been accepted into the Geats without difficulty. The next topic in the reminiscence is the Frisian battle in which Hygelac fell (2490-2509). There is a parallel in the two brief accounts. The keynote appears to be revenge. Hygelac avenged Hæðcyn by slaying Ongenðeow; Beowulf avenged Hygelac, repaid him for past favours, by killing Dæghrefn, the Frankish champion. Beowulf says nothing further about Swedish-Geatish conflicts before he dies; what is more important, his last speech is decidedly not full of dreadful omens; he has died protecting his people, who will (he thinks) gain from the treasure. He leaves his personal treasure to Wiglaf, who is the strongest figure in the kingdom after himself (2794-2818).

It is in the speech of the Messenger (2900 ff.) that we hear of further conflicts between the two tribes. He expects times of difficulty for the Geats, attacks from the Franks and Frisians, now that Beowulf is dead (2900-2921). Peace and good faith from the Swedes were also not to be expected. The whole past history of the conflict is reviewed. Beowulf has mentioned the attacks of the Swedes on the death of Hreðel (2472-83); the Messenger gives an account of the subsequent attack of the Geats on the Swedes (2922-98). The Geats had taken off Ongenðeow's queen, and a great deal of treasure; Ongenðeow attacks the party, kills Hæðcyn, and the rest of his band, lordless, escape to Hrefnesholt, where they are taunted with threats of execution during the night that follows. Hygelac, with another party, attacks at dawn, and drives off Ongenðeow and his men; Ongenðeow is killed by Wulf and Eofor, retainers of Hygelac. The account of Ongen-

ðeow's final battle is very lengthy, and is full of details which bear witness to his great valour (2964b-88).

This account of constant attack and counter-attack must be seen in its proper perspective. Are these full-scale battles, or plundering raids? The distinction I make is a real one. Is it probable that the entire nation was committed in any given battle, or is it more likely that affairs of war took place on a smaller scale? There is much evidence to show that the latter is far more probable. First, since the gaining of booty through battle was in a sense the business of a Germanic king, it seems hardly likely that each and every battle would have been fought with the resources of the country totally committed. As Girvan stated long ago, 'In early times, and especially in northern Europe, the body [of warriors] cannot have been really large.'⁵⁷ Beowulf set out to rid a nation of monsters with a retinue of fourteen. *Beowulf* is full of accounts of sudden outbreaks of hostility and skirmishes. Scyld is a good king, not only because he established a great kingdom, but because the tribute he exacted from surrounding tribes enabled him to keep a court of great splendour;⁵⁸ Hygelac dies while plundering the Frisians; the Danes and Frisians cannot keep peace, even when the reasons for a Danish visit appear to be friendly;⁵⁹ the Heoðobards are bound to strike against the Danes, even though Hroðgar had attempted to mend the feud by giving his daughter to Ingeld, their ruler.⁶⁰ More to the immediate point is the seldom-stressed mention by Hroðgar of discord between Geat and Dane, which had not been settled so very long since when Beowulf arrived to slay the monster:

⁵⁷ R. Girvan, *Beowulf and the Seventh Century* (1935), 45-6. As Peter Hunter Blair recently reminded us (*The World of Bede*, 1970, 32), Ine's laws define a group of up to seven men as thieves, one of seven to thirty-five as a band, and over thirty-five as an army (*here*).

⁵⁸ 8-10.

⁵⁹ See 1063-1159.

⁶⁰ 2020-70.

Me þin modsefa

licað leng swa wel, leofa Beowulf.
 Hafast þu gefered, þæt þam folcum sceal,
 Geata leodum ond Gar-Denum
 sib gemæne, ond sacu restan,
 inwitniþas, þe hie ær drugon,
 wesan, þenden ic wealde widan rices
 maþmas gemæne, manig oþerne
 godum gegrettan ofer ganotes bæð;
 sceal hringnaca ofer heafu bringan
 lac ond luftacen. (1853-63)

Dear Beowulf, your spirit pleases me more and more as time goes on. You have brought about a peace between two nations, Spear-Danes and Geats; wars will end, the terrible enmities which they have endured in the past; while I rule this great kingdom, there will be an interchange of gifts, and many a man will greet another with good things across the expanse of the sea, the gannet's bathing-place; the ringed ship will bring gifts and tokens of regard over the seas.

It is Beowulf's act that establishes the peace for as long as Hroðgar lives, and thus ends trouble with his country's neighbours to the south. It is thus in a context of almost continual raid and counter-raid between all sorts of people that the Geatish-Swedish conflicts must be seen: they are nothing unusual. New alliances could be established, or peace or treaty broken, very quickly.

VII *The calamity of Beowulf's death*

There is much about the speeches at the end of the poem to suggest that they are mood-pieces rather than reasoned accounts of what is to come. The loss of Beowulf is a calamity — this is the central message. The mention of Franks and Frisians in the Messenger's speech (2910-13) hearkens back to ancient times; Beowulf had ruled for a long time, and Heardred was on the throne before him. From a purely realistic point of view, if the Franks and Frisians had wanted revenge, they could have

had it on several earlier occasions — after they had killed Hygelac, or while Heardred, that weak ruler, was on the throne. The conflicts with the Swedes of which the Messenger speaks were only a second stage; in the third, Beowulf became involved when he supported Eadgils against Onela. The mood *may* be right, for if Onela's proper line had reasserted itself, Beowulf's act in killing Onela, the rightful king of Sweden, would be seen as another attack of the Geats on the Swedes and a treacherous interference with the properly established succession, as the *Beowulf* poet viewed it. The important point here is that Beowulf himself, though he reviewed his life and actions before he died, and regretted his lack of children to succeed him, saw no terrible calamity in store for his people. It is only in the speech of the Messenger (2999-3007) that such fears are mentioned. The Geatish woman's lament, briefly reported (3150-55), is almost certainly ritual lamentation,⁶¹ though it has its basis in the hard facts of primitive tribal warfare, and the fall of a king did often bring attack from outside.

VIII *The end of the Geats as reported in 'historical' sources*

But though fears of further hostility may well have been justified in the dramatic context of a great hero's death, it is in vain that we search for conclusive evidence in any 'historical' source for the end of the *Gautar* about A.D. 550. Many modern Scandinavian historians who have written on the Geatish-Swedish question have held that the extension of Swedish domination over Götaland took place at a much later date, and that the *Gautar* had

⁶¹ Professor Tauno Mustanoja develops a case for ritual lamentation at the funerals of Germanic heroes in his 'Beowulf and the Tradition of Ritual Lamentation', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 68 (1967), 1-27. He concludes of this lament: 'It was simply a woman's ritual song of lament, and as such it was an essential traditional feature in the funeral ceremony and had to be included in the description' (p. 27).

a semi-independent existence until a considerably later time. Dr Sisam has recently drawn attention to a number of considerations which indicate that the Geats survived for a very long time after 550.⁶² He cited the title of the present Swedish king as *Sveriges, Götas, och Vendes Konung*, and an Icelandic tradition in which the Geats are treated as a distinct people.⁶³ Harald Fairhair (c. 900) is said to have fought many battles against them, and to have won part of their territory. Finally, Dr Sisam tells us that Ailnoth, a Canterbury monk, in his life of St Knud of Denmark (d. 1086) spoke of five peoples in Scandinavia — Danes, Swedes, Geats, Norwegians and Icelanders.

Since some British scholars have recently maintained that the fall of the Geats could well have taken place c. 550, it seems necessary to review the evidence for their continued survival. Professor Gwyn Jones considers Tacitus's testimony shows that about A.D. 100 the Swedes were 'more powerful and better organised in their Uppland province than any of the tribes that surrounded them'.⁶⁴ He holds further that the date at which they gained supremacy over their southern neighbours, the Geats, is 'bewilderingly uncertain', and may have taken place as early as *post* 550 or as late as c. 1000.⁶⁵ Dr O'Loughlin has recently stated as a strong probability that 'barbarian Swedes' overthrew the Geatish kingdom 'a decade or two before the middle of the sixth century'.⁶⁶ The first point to make in a revaluation of the evidence is that Tacitus's account of the states (*civitates*) of the *Sweones* is not clear evidence for the supremacy of the *Svear* over their southern neighbours, Geats, or anyone

⁶² K. Sisam, *The Structure of Beowulf* (1965), esp. 51-9. I wish here to acknowledge my debt to Dr Sisam; the implications raised by this chapter of his are the basis of the present article.

⁶³ See Lee M. Hollander 'The Gautland Cycle of Sagas', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 11 (1912), 61-81, 209-17.

⁶⁴ *A History of the Vikings* (1968), 34.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ See note 50 above. Dr O'Loughlin's arguments will be discussed below.

else. Tacitus speaks of the tribe as good sailors with powerful fleets, a respect for wealth, and a universally accepted king.⁶⁷ But other classical informants, Ptolemy and Procopius, writing closer to our time, do not attribute such importance to the *Svear*. Ptolemy, composing a world map some half a century after Tacitus, lists seven tribes as inhabiting the island *Skandia*, one of which is the *Goutai*, another the *Souionai*, Geats and Swedes, certainly. His placement of the tribe accords with later accounts, see Figure 2.⁶⁸ Procopius's account is of particular

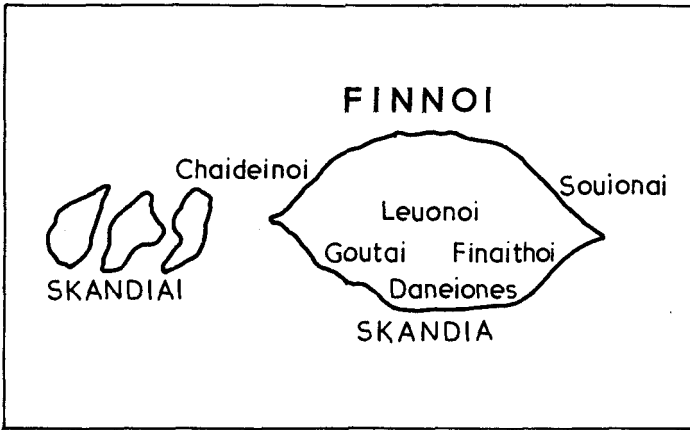


Fig. 2. Ptolemy's map of Scandinavia.

importance, since his informants were reputed to be natives of the island.⁶⁹ Writing *c.* 550, he tells us in his

⁶⁷ Tacitus, *Germania* (trans. by Maurice Hutton, 1914), 326-7. Much has been made of Tacitus's term, *civitates Suionium*, with *civitates* equated with the other *peoples* of Sweden. A more likely interpretation has been given by Professor Musset: '...les *civitates* citées par Tacite chez les *Suiones* correspondent sans doute aux cantons autonomes (*hundari*...) qui se fédérèrent au nombre de 4, 10, et 8 (Fjädrundaland, à l'ouest; Tiundaland, au centre; Attundaland, à l'est, sur la côte) en trois régions dont l'union, au moyen âge, formera l'Uppland' (*Les Peuples Scandinaves au Moyen Age*, 1961, 23). This interpretation is supported by Jerker Rosén in his entry 'Rikssamling — Sverige', in *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder XIV* (1969), 268-71.

⁶⁸ See G. Schütte, 'A Ptolemaic Riddle Solved', *Classica et Medievalia* 13 (1952), 236-84. After a study of name-forms, Schütte concluded that the *Goutai* are the ON *Gautar*.

⁶⁹ *History of the Wars* (ed. and trans. by H. B. Dewing, 1914-40), Vol. 6, *The Gothic war continued*, 415-21.

history of the Gothic wars that the island of *Thule* (which can only be equated with Scandinavia) had thirteen very numerous nations, one of which was the *Gautoi*, who were especially powerful. When the Eruli were defeated by the Lombards, they went off and settled close to this tribe, who can readily be identified with the *Gautar*. Finally, Jordanes, in his *History of the Goths*, tells us of a large number of tribes, including *Svehans* and *Svertidi* (= *Svear*), *Gauthi-gothae* and *Ostrogothae*, probably the inhabitants of Väster- and Östergötland.⁷⁰

On the basis of the above survey, it is my interpretation that the account given by Tacitus of the *Sweones* has been over-valued, since the *Gautar*, or *Gautoi*, seem to be at least equally prominent in such early sources as we have available to us.⁷¹

It is significant that the mid-Swedish lowland, with its great lakes Vänern, Vättern, Hjälmarén and Mälaren, is about equally divided between the Geats and Swedes. Professor Stenberger describes this area as the 'heartland of Sweden', for it offered both fertile clay plains and comparative ease of communication by water⁷² (see Figure 3). In the early Iron Age (c. 400 B.C. - A.D. 50) impressive cemeteries are known from Öster- and Västergötland, Öland and Gotland, and also from Uppland and Värmland. For some reason, there is little evidence of settlement in south central Sweden. Gotland and Öland have a distinctive and somewhat favoured

⁷⁰ See J. Svennung, *Jordanes und Scandia: kritisch-exegetische Studien* (Skrifter utgivna av K. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala, 44: 2A, 1967).

⁷¹ Sir Thomas Kendrick concluded his survey of the early sources for Scandinavian history on an even more pro-Geatish note: 'It can be inferred that by the time of the sixth century the kingdoms of Götaland, particularly that of the Västgötar, had risen to such strength and power that they seriously challenged, if indeed they had not overthrown, the supremacy of the Swedes' (*History of the Vikings*, 1930, 76).

⁷² M. Stenberger, *Sweden* (1962), 17. It is most probable that sixth-century settlements would have been largely confined to these 'heartland' plains, with numerous lakes for transport. It is also probable that conflict would have arisen there, between the Geats on the west and the Swedes to the east. The dense woodlands south of this area inhibited settlement and development until a much later period.

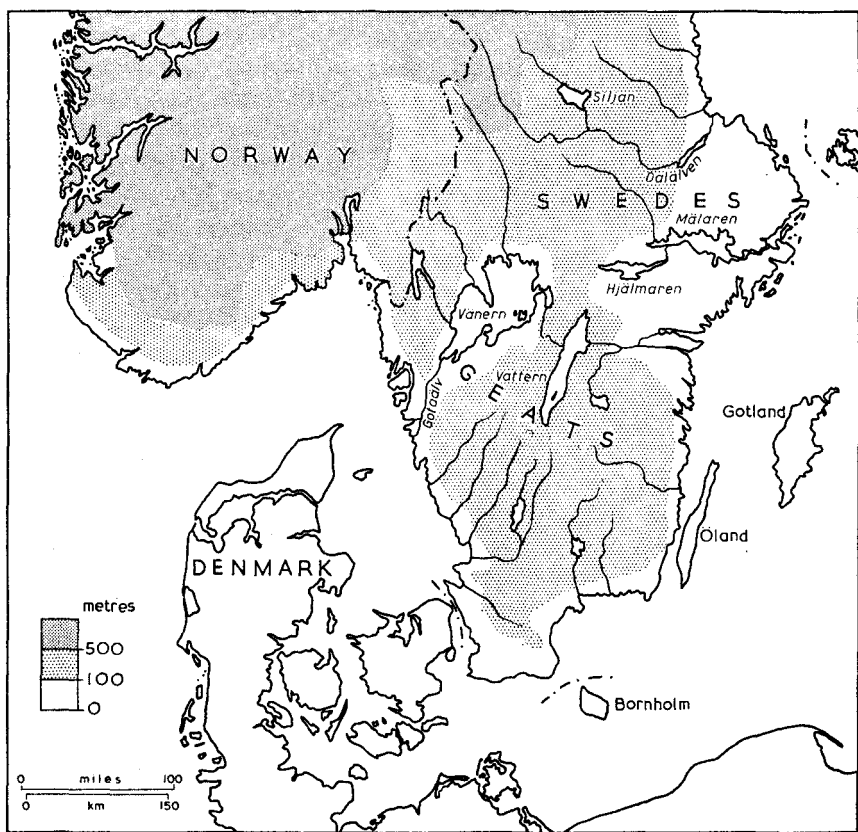


Fig. 3. South Scandinavia.

place in Swedish archaeology, because of their placement on major trade routes, and also their agricultural richness. One must concentrate on the heartland region of Sweden in order to trace the development of the Geats and Swedes.

If one accepts modern Västergötland, Östergötland, Dalsland (and perhaps Bohuslän) as roughly equivalent to the former kingdom of the *Gautar*, and Uppland, Södermanland, Västmanland and Närke as the primal territory of the Swedes, an impression of equal prosperity in the period from about 50 B.C. to about A.D. 550 cannot be avoided.⁷³ (See Figure 4.) In the Roman Iron Age (c. 50 B.C. - A.D. 400) Roman imports are found in approximately equal numbers in Geatish and Swedish territory (cf. Figure 5). Most of these imports date from the third and fourth centuries, and trade apparently grew more important later in the period.

This picture does not change significantly in the later Iron Age (c. A.D. 400-550), the time of the great migrations and the immediate pre-history of the events spoken about in *Beowulf*. This period has been called the Golden Age of Scandinavia, because of the plentiful supply of gold which was available from southern sources. The greatest hoard of gold laid down in this period was found near Tureholm in Södermanland in the territory of the Swedes. But the second largest, some seven kilos of gold bullion, came from Timboholm near Skövde in Västergötland, as did some of the most splendid gold collars in the Scandinavian heritage, those from Älleberg and Möne (see Frontispiece).

⁷³ The extension of Geatish control before the Viking Age is very hard to establish. The territory I list as theirs is a conservative estimate. Gwyn Jones (*op. cit.*, 43) describes the *locale* of the Geats as follows: 'Gautish origins are to be sought in Västergötland, but they were a strong people and spread steadily into Östergötland, Dalsland, Närke, Värmland and part of Småland.' Unfortunately, he does not cite reasons for this delimitation of Geatish territory. S. Tunberg, in *Götarnas Rike* (Västergötland A:4, Bidrag till landskapets kulturhistoria och naturbeskrivning, 1940), gave a much wider extension of Geatish territory. He held that in its time of greatest prosperity, this Geatish kingdom included all of Småland and Öland, Bohuslän, Dalsland and Värmland, in addition to the original Väster- and Östergötland. Steuberger says of the early Iron Age: 'Impressive cemeteries are known from many areas, particularly the central Swedish provinces of Öster- and Västergötland, Öland and Gotland, but also Uppland and Värmland' (*Sweden*, 1962, 119).

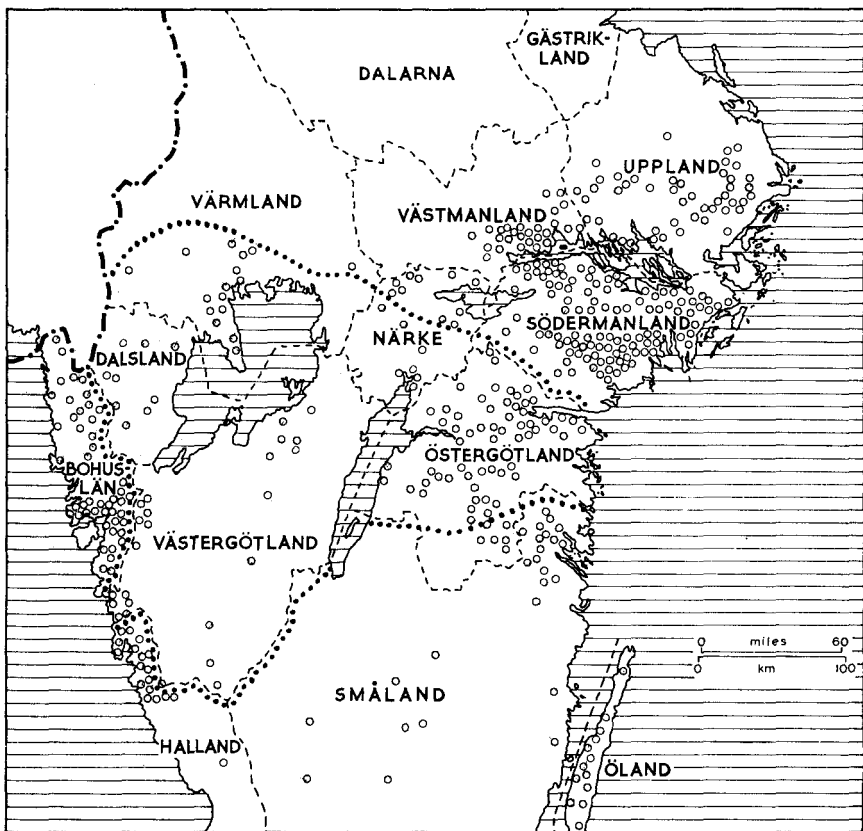


Fig. 4. Iron Age hill forts c. A.D. 450-550.
 (Probable Geatish territory enclosed by)

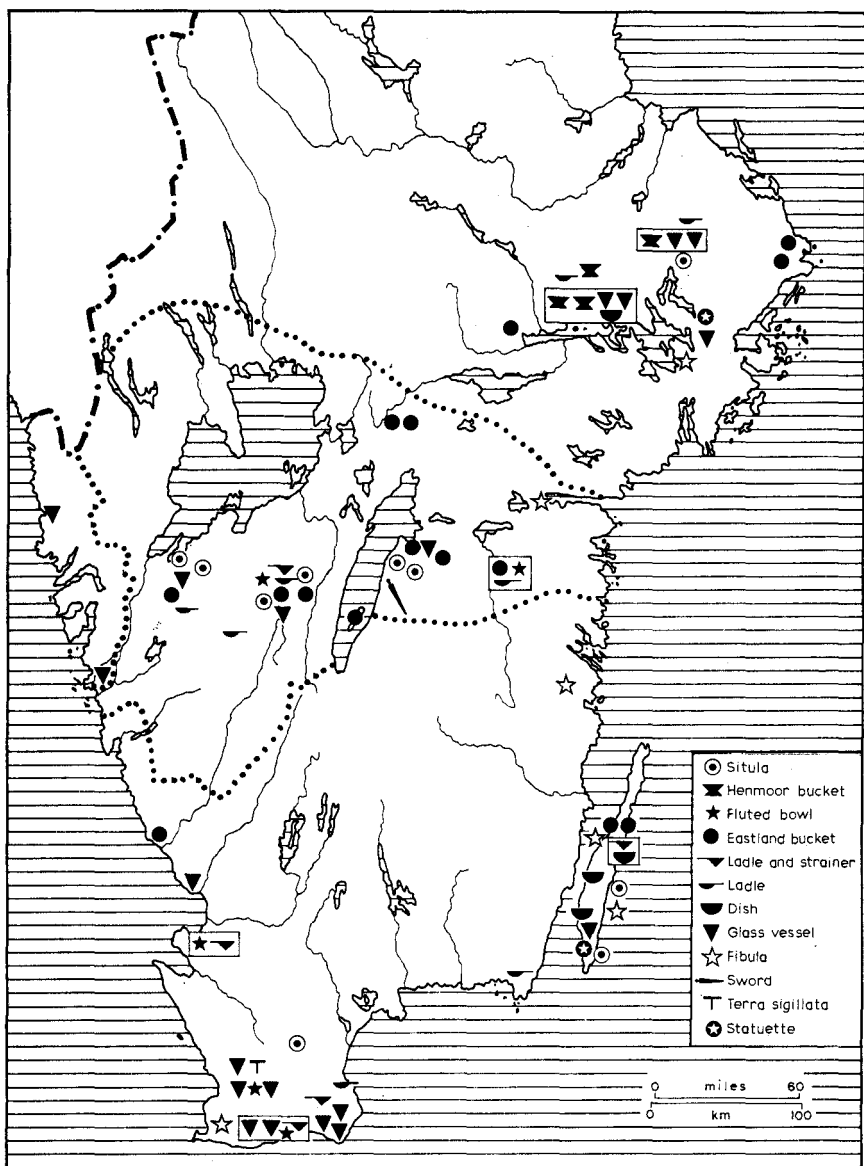


Fig. 5. Roman imports.
 (Probable Geatish territory enclosed by)

About the year 500, the region around Mälaren, centred on Uppland, gains a special prominence, for it is there that we find a series of massive burial mounds, at Old Uppsala, at Husby near Vendel, and elsewhere.⁷⁴ But does this Uppland prosperity mean that we have no evidence of a continuing culture in the Geatish areas? The answer most surely must be no. Once again, finds of treasure in the period from c. 400-550 show an east-west distribution across central Sweden, with southern, coastal outliers (Figure 6).

Whatever one makes of Snorri's *Ynglinga saga* and the lines it incorporates from *Ynglingatal*, the tradition reflected there shows clearly that the Geats were very much a power until many generations after the middle of the sixth century, when their line was supposed to have been stamped out.⁷⁵ The saga meshes with *Beowulf* in some of the kings it names: in the Old English poem the succession is *Ongentheow, Onela, Ohthere, Eadgils*. *Ynglinga saga* (and apparently *Ynglingatal*) list Aun, Egill, Óttarr and Aðils in the corresponding places; the relations between these lines are discussed in the Appendix. But what is to the point here is the insecurity of the kings of the *Svear*, their relations with the *Gautar*, and the survival of a 'Gautic' kingdom.

When Aun, that peaceful king, was threatened by Hálfðan of Denmark, he ran for sanctuary to West Gautland. When Áli drove him out of his kingdom a second time, he sought refuge in the same place. He was no fighter. His son Egill also had a reputation for peace, and was kept from his kingdom for a good while by his thrall Tunni. Óttarr, according to Snorri's account, was

⁷⁴ On the problematical relation of these mounds to *Beowulf*, see the Appendix.

⁷⁵ Snorri himself was very much aware that what he wrote was tradition, not history; see the Appendix. The account I give in the following paragraphs is from chapters 25-39 of *Ynglinga saga*. The translation quoted is from *Heimskringla*, ed. by Erling Monsen and transl. with the assistance of A. H. Smith (1932), 25.

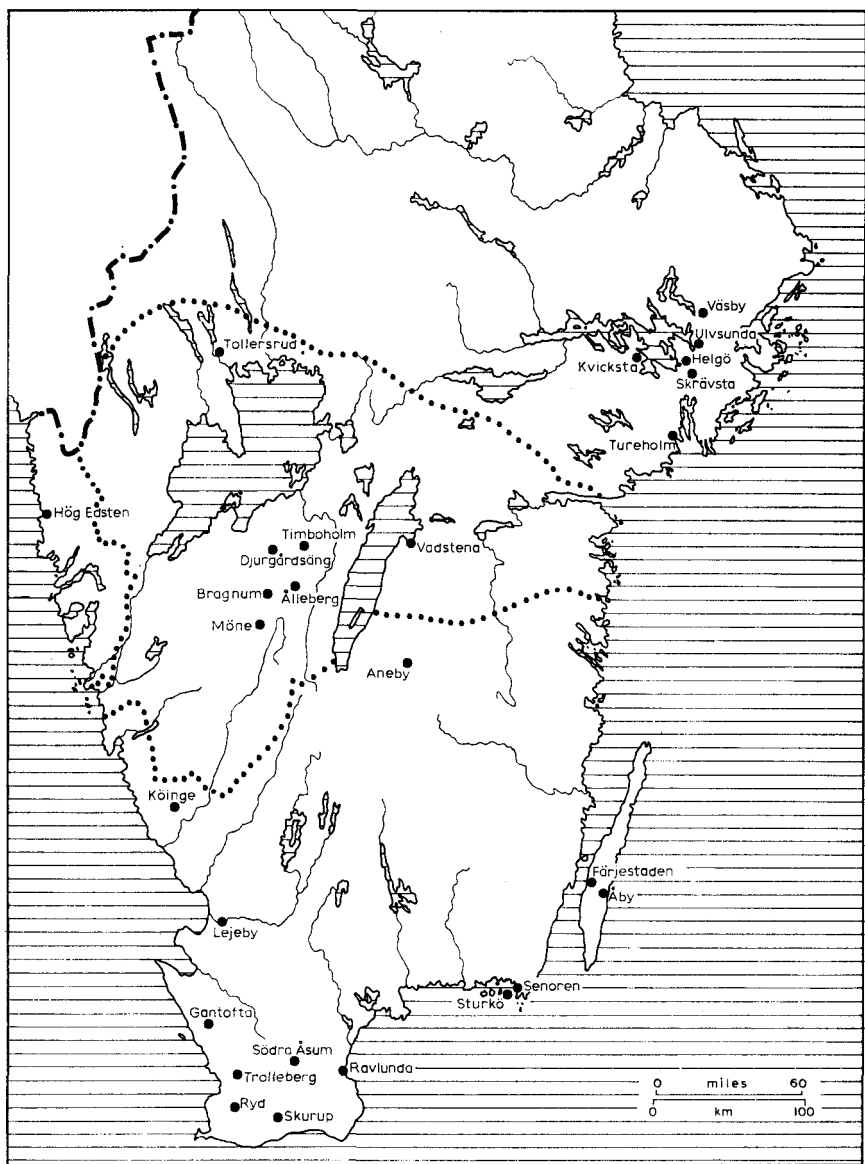


Fig. 6. Treasure burials c. A.D. 400-550.
 (Probable Geatish territory enclosed by)

also not good in battle, for he was defeated by the Danes and made sport of after he fell; Aðils, Egill's son, fled from Helgi, king of Denmark. In the reign of Eysteinn, the next in the line, Danish, Norse and 'sea kings' made many raids on the kingdom of the *Svear*; Eysteinn's fate was to be burned alive by such a raider, Sölvi. The reigns of the next two kings were more successful, for Yngvarr and Qnundr both built up the kingdom, and made peace with the Danes. Ingjaldr, Qnundr's son, married a Gautish princess. The relations between the kingdom of the *Svear* (eastern Sweden) and the Gautish kingdom is made clear by implication in this account from *Ynglinga saga* in the Monsen-Smith translation:

When [Ingjaldr] was grown up, Anund wooed for him Gauthild, the daughter of King Algaut, the son of Gautrek the Generous, the son of Gaut, from whom Gautland took its name. King Algaut seemed to think that his daughter would wed well if she wed the son of King Anund and if he were like his father. The maid was sent to Sweden (East Sweden) and Ingjaldr held a bridal feast with her.

Ingjaldr's most splendid deed was to burn up six kings in the celebration of his coming to kingship, including King Algautr of West Gautland; he took their dominions under his control, and took tribute from them. This legend perhaps reflects the growing power of the *Svear*; but Ingjaldr was fifth in line after Aðils, and Aðils is the last of the kings of the *Svear* who can be paralleled in *Beowulf* in the figure of Eadgils. Furthermore, though kingdoms were *subject* to him, they were not destroyed. Among Ingjaldr's other difficulties, Hogni and Hildir would often ride up into the Swedish kingdom from their dominions in East Gautland, and slay his men. Thus, the general drift of the traditions preserved in the *Ynglinga saga* will not support an early suppression, much less a destruction, of the kingdom of the *Gautar*.

The evidence presented by Curt Weibull on the question

of Geatish survival is formidable.⁷⁶ Briefly summarized, his major points are as follows. The earliest record of Sweden as a political unit comes in the middle of the eleventh century, in a document which records the oldest drawing up of a boundary between Sweden and Denmark.⁷⁷ Documents of the late ninth century often quoted to support the concept of a unified Sweden, Rimbert's *Vita Sancti Anskarii* and Wulfstan's northern voyages as reported by Alfred, deal only with the eastern and coastal regions, and tell us nothing about what is going on in the west of Sweden.⁷⁸ Such documents as do deal with the west, the accounts of the wars of Norwegian rulers from the time of Harald Fairhair onwards, have their heroes engaged in combat with the *Gautar*, Weibull stresses, right up to the end of the tenth century.⁷⁹ Weibull's further assumptions are, first that the *Gautar* did not have the same seafaring traditions as the Swedes, and thus were not as prominent, and second, that the major impetus of the Swedish expansion *c.* 800-1000 was to the east, and it was only after the year 1000 that they

⁷⁶ 'Om det svenska och det danska rikets uppkomst', *Historisk Tidskrift för Skåneland* 7 (1917-21), 301-60. Weibull believed that the *Geatas* of *Beowulf* were the Jutes, and cites *Ynglingatal* to indicate that there were many military contacts between Denmark and Sweden in the early period (319-20). One of the major reasons he cites for this belief is Adam of Bremen's accounts of the time it took to travel from Västergötland to Uppland and from Västergötland to Jylland (Denmark) respectively. Towards the end of the eleventh century Västergötland-Uppland would take over three weeks by land, but a sea journey from Jutland to Uppland would take no more than a week (316). But is this argument really significant when *Ynglingatal* and *Ynglinga saga* tell us of conflicts between *Gautar* and *Stear* as well, and secondly, when one considers the ease of travel on the large inland lakes in central Sweden? Thirdly, it seems natural to assume that conflicts would most naturally occur in border-country, and any statistics on travel-time are not to the point. Thus, I re-affirm the identity *Gautar-Geatas* stated earlier in this paper.

⁷⁷ As quoted by Weibull, *op. cit.*, 348. See also his 'Den äldsta gränsläggningen mellan Sverige och Danmark', *Historisk Tidskrift för Skåneland* 7 (1917-21), 1-18. It is well known that the laws of Västergötland were distinctive; the main manuscript of the older laws is dated to the 1280s, that of the younger Västgötalag to *c.* 1350. See Åke Holmbäck and Elias Wessén, *Svenska landskapslagar V* (1936), xi-xxxvii.

⁷⁸ Weibull, *op. cit.*, 349-50.

⁷⁹ To quote from Weibull, *op. cit.*, 351: 'During the time up to the end of the tenth century all battles fought by Norwegian kings against Sweden which are recorded in the Norwegian-Icelandic scaldic poetry deal exclusively with Geats. Thorbjørn Hornklofi calls Harald Fairhair enemy of the Geats... Guthormr sindri says of Hákon the Good that he "made the Geats liable to taxation". According to Glúmr Geirason Haraldr gráfeldr reddened his sword in the blood of the Geats. Einarr Skálaglamm reports that Hákon Jarl wished to destroy the lines of the Geats.'

began to turn their attention primarily to the west, towards Norway and England.⁸⁰

IX Evidence for the end of the Geats c. A.D. 550

What evidence is cited by those who hold for an earlier date for the collapse of the Geats? Dr O'Loughlin cites *Sögubrot af nokkurum fornkonungum* which relates that Hjormundr, son of Hervarðr Ylfingr, was king of Östergötland.⁸¹ But this text probably represents a corrupt tradition,⁸² and is contradicted by a wide range of Norse sources cited above, which give overwhelming support to the continued existence of the Geats. Dr O'Loughlin's other reasons are no more convincing; he holds that the silence of *Beowulf* about events in Scandinavia after A.D. 530, and the end of the import of Scandinavian wares in England about that time set a limiting date of c. 550.⁸³ If we accept a chronology for the poem based on the date of Hygelac's raid on the Frisian coast as reported by

⁸⁰ Weibull cites the speech by Thorgrý the Lawman to Óláfr Skötkonung at the Uppsala Thing; the point of it is that the people were not in favour of attacking Norway, while they would happily follow in an attempt to regain eastern (Baltic) lands (cf. *Heimskringla*, ed. and transl. cited, 286). He also cites King Óláfr's aid to Eiríkr Jarl of Norway, and subsequent Swedish-Norwegian alliances (*loc. cit.*, 354-6). This view is further supported by Sven B. F. Jansson in his study *Swedish Vikings in England — The Evidence of the Rune Stones* (Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture, 1965). Scanning the several hundred stones which deal with Viking expeditions and foreign trade, he concludes: 'Not only during the ninth but also during the tenth century Sweden's external interests were directed eastward... all the runic inscriptions that mention Swedish voyages to England belong to the last phase of the Viking age, that is to say, principally to the period between 1000 and 1050. No such inscriptions have yet been found prior to the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. In this connection it is interesting that the great majority of the Anglo-Saxon silver coins that have been dug out of Swedish soil belong to the same time; most of them were struck between 990 and 1050' (4-5).

⁸¹ 'Sutton Hoo — the Evidence of the Documents', *Medieval Archaeology* 8 (1964), 3. Cf. note 53 above.

⁸² See Bjarni Guðnason, *Um Skjöldungasögu* (1963), 313 (English summary): 'Sögubrot is without doubt a contaminated text, having in all probability undergone expansion of subject-matter and stylistic dilution and bears clear signs of interference.'

⁸³ *op. cit.*, 16.

Gregory of Tours,⁸⁴ the hero of the poem dies after the middle of the sixth century, and we can hardly expect the poet to write further on Scandinavian history. Secondly, the life of legend is not to be equated with the import of goods; people wrote about Eormanic or Theodoric without themselves having contact with the Gothic kingdom, and the Scandinavian traditions reflected in *Beowulf* may well have had currency long after a first period of active contact had ceased.

Professor Gwyn Jones, with considerable caution, cites the Sparlösa stone and Alfred's account of Wulfstan's voyages as evidence to support a claim that the Geatish fall took place *c.* 800.⁸⁵ The limitations of the Wulfstan account have been noted above,⁸⁶ and the most recent interpretation of the Sparlösa stone differs from the one which reads in it a statement that Alrikr, son of King Eirikr of Uppsala, ruled over Västergötland about the year 800.⁸⁷ Thus the claims for the fall of the Geats about 550 do not have solid support. A realistic view, based on such scant evidence as we have, is that the *Gautar* were gradually dominated by the *Svear*, and that they were gradually subsumed into the larger kingdom of Sweden, while maintaining their cultural identity in many respects. This process was not completed until well after A.D. 1000. There is no evidence for a destruction of the *Gautar* as a people at any time. This account does not contradict what is said in *Beowulf* about the relations between the

⁸⁴ For the text of Gregory's account and other historical sources, see Chambers-Wrenn, 2-4.

⁸⁵ *A History of the Vikings* (1968), 79.

⁸⁶ p. 268.

⁸⁷ Sven B. F. Jansson (*The Runes of Sweden*, 1962, 15) holds that the inscription is 'only understood in part'. Niels Åge Nielsen, in the latest published account of this difficult inscription, 'Freyr, Ullr and the Sparlösa Stone', *Medieval Scandinavia* 2 (1969), 102-28, gives no reading of any word which resembles Västergötland. Erik and Alrik are mentioned in one part of the inscription; Öjuls appears to be Erik's son, and Alrik comes in as well. Uppsala is mentioned. But connecting these names into a consecutive account in which we can be sure of relations seems quite impossible. Elizabeth Svärdström considers that the widely variant current interpretations of this sadly defaced monument make a definitive interpretation impossible. See her *Västergötlands runinskrifter* (Sveriges runinskrifter 5, 1958), 195-229.

two powers. They engage in a series of battles, with victories on either side. Quite naturally, once they have lost a strong ruler, the Geats fear incursions from without — but there is no mention of tribal destruction in *Beowulf*, and none in history.

X *Beowulf and Sutton Hoo*

In interpreting the many problems of Geatish and Swedish relations in *Beowulf*, one might expect aid from the splendid treasure-trove at Sutton Hoo. Indeed, in his supplementary chapter to Ritchie Girvan's *Beowulf and the Seventh Century*, Dr Bruce-Mitford speaks of 'the clue that the ship-burial as a whole may provide to the poem's place of composition and to the transmission of its Scandinavian themes to the Anglo-Saxon *milieu* — two of the major problems to do with the poem still unsolved'.⁸⁸

Both in this publication⁸⁹ and in the British Museum *Handbook* of 1968, Dr Bruce-Mitford states that there is a direct connection between Swedish Uppland and Sutton Hoo. His statement in the *Handbook* is intended for a general audience, but the major points are presented:

The most plausible explanation of the hard fact of the Swedish connection seen at Sutton Hoo is that it is dynastic. The evident antiquity of some of the Swedish pieces at Sutton Hoo, especially the shield, suggests that the connection goes back into a period earlier than the burial. The most likely explanation seems to be that the dynasty of the Wulfingas was Swedish in its origin, and that probably Wehha, said to be the first of the family to rule over the Angles in Britain, was a Swede.

However, the names in the genealogy of the *Wulfingas* do not seem to have had any parallels or analogues amongst those of the royal house of the *Svear*, the people whose territory lay

⁸⁸ Rupert Bruce-Mitford, 'Sutton Hoo', added to *Beowulf and the Seventh Century* (1971), 96.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, *passim*. (Since Dr Bruce-Mitford distinguishes between Geats and Swedes on the last page of this chapter, I assume that 'Swedish' earlier in the piece = *Svear*.)

to the north of the Mälars lake, and some of whose kings are buried at Old Uppsala. The names of the East Anglian royal genealogy, on the contrary, seem to find their affinities amongst those of the royal house of the Geats, the traditional enemies of the Swedes, who occupied the areas of central Sweden, south of lakes Vännen and Vätten [*sic*], in the territories now known as Västergötland and Östergötland. Beowulf, we may recall, was a Geat. The picture at the Scandinavian end is thus not wholly clear, and may at any time be modified by fresh archaeological discoveries. The specific, direct, east-Scandinavian link with the Vendel culture of Sweden, however, transcending the parallels and similarities common to many parts of western Europe, from north Italy to Kent and Sweden, seems to be quite clearly established . . .⁹⁰

We are faced with a paradox of several strands; Beowulf is a Geat, the Old English poem is written from a Geatish perspective — yet Sutton Hoo links most closely with the *Svear*, the traditional enemies of the Geats, as they are called. Name-affinities for the East Anglian royal genealogy are found not among the *Swedes*, but among the Geats — contrary to what we might expect. There have been various attempts to resolve the paradoxes presented here. Dr O'Loughlin in a study cited above argues that the East Anglian dynasty (i.e. the Wylfings) was Geatish in origin, and that the Swedish treasures at Sutton Hoo are 'trophies of earlier battles against Swedish kings'. He supposes that the Wylfings had settled in East Anglia towards the end of the fifth century, and that there was a second influx of Geat exiles 'after the final overthrow of the Geat kingdom a decade or two before the middle of the sixth century by the barbarian Swedes'.⁹¹

A directly contrary solution was suggested by Professor Sune Lindqvist, who held that the Wylfings were 'in origin Swedes, a branch of the Royal House of Uppsala and the descendants of Wiglaf', who is called a *leod Scyldinga*, a Swedish prince, in the poem.⁹²

⁹⁰ *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial — A Handbook* (1968), 69-71.

⁹¹ O'Loughlin, *op. cit.*, 15-16.

⁹² 'Sutton Hoo and *Beowulf*', *Antiquity* 22 (1948), 131-40, quotation 140.

Both of these completely opposed solutions assume a very great deal. Professor Lindqvist bases his claim on a single epithet, the title of Wiglaf. Dr O'Loughlin accepts the validity of the regnal list presented in MS Cotton Vespasian B VI, which Ker dates to the first part of the ninth century.⁹³ The lateness of the document would not be particularly disturbing, if Anglo-Saxon genealogies were remarkable for their consistency and truthfulness. But as Dr Sisam has clearly demonstrated, the typical Anglo-Saxon royal genealogy is far from trustworthy. He states explicitly that 'as historical records, all the genealogies in their early parts fail because fact, fiction, and error cannot be distinguished'.⁹⁴ In addition, any connection of the *Wuffingas* of East Anglia either to the *Svear* or *Gautar* is based on very slender evidence indeed.⁹⁵

XI *The larger context of the Sutton Hoo finds*

It seems necessary to examine the ground afresh. In the light of the discussion of Geatish-Swedish relations presented above, the first question that comes to mind is

⁹³ N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957), 268. It is perhaps significant that the MS is in a Continental hand, which distances it still further from English sources.

⁹⁴ Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 39 (1953), 287-346, quotation 329.

⁹⁵ In 1950 Dr Bruce-Mitford said of the *Wuffingas*: 'Nothing is known of the origins of this ruling family, and there is no reason why they should not have come from Sweden' — R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial — recent theories and some comments on general interpretation', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History* 25 (1950), 75. (This paper is referred to as 'Recent theories' hereafter.) Stenton saw the more recent parts of the East Anglian genealogy as 'a credible pedigree of the early East Anglian kings' in its later stages, and supported Bruce-Mitford's concept of a Swedish origin by suggesting that in the seventh century Æðelhere's adventures 'may have taken him into the Scandinavian north, for intercourse in and before his time between England and Sweden is attested by many objects in the varied deposits at Sutton Hoo' ('The East Anglian kings of the seventh century' in *The Anglo-Saxons* . . . ed. Peter Clemons, 1959, 42-52, quotations 48 and 51). Dr O'Loughlin, *op. cit.*, 2, note 5, disagreed with this view and promised further study of the problem. We must await further research, and perhaps new discoveries, before the relations of the *Wuffingas* of East Anglia either to Geatland or Sweden are fully established.

this: Is it possible that some of the objects Bruce-Mitford cites as Swedish may have had their origins in Geatish territory?

The distribution map in Figure 7 locates the objects which are cited as Swedish parallels for the Sutton Hoo material. It shows that while there is an Uppland concentration, a significant proportion of the 'Swedish' material comes from other parts of the country. The helmet and shield are apparently most closely paralleled in Vendel material, but parallels from Gotland exist for the shield (Plates 2-5); the highly distinctive beaded-elbow cloison in the jewellery seems Uppland-oriented,⁹⁶ and the loose 'sword-ring' is probably Swedish,⁹⁷ but of the four known Swedish sword-pommels which are closely similar to the Sutton Hoo piece (Plate 6), one is from Uppland, one from Södermanland close by,⁹⁸ but the other two come from far distant areas, Hög Edsten, Kville parish, Bohuslän (Plate 7) and Stora Sandviken, Sturkö parish, Blekinge. The closest parallel Dr Bruce-Mitford cites for the difficult Sutton Hoo purse-decoration showing a man and two beasts is a plate for impressing helmet-decorations from Torslunda, Öland⁹⁹ (Plates 8-9). The whetstone (Plate 10) at Sutton Hoo is highly distinctive and has been seen as Swedish, but whetstones are frequently found in burials from Gotland as well as from Vendel and Old Uppsala graves¹⁰⁰ and they are also known from burials in Celtic areas. It must be admitted that Boat Grave 12 at Vendel has faces in the details of decoration of a shield-boss and a rectangular mount which

⁹⁶ Found on the Faversham brooch, the Sutton Hoo pieces, and on a fragment (possibly a pyramid for decorating a sword) from the western mound (Odenshög) at Old Uppsala. See 'Recent theories', 50-53 and Pl. XIV, d.

⁹⁷ See Vera I. Evison, 'The Dover Ring-Sword and other Sword-Rings and Beads', *Archaeologia* 101 (1967), 63-118. Miss Evison sees Swedish connections for the sword at Coombe, Kent, and the Sutton Hoo ring, but views these as 'isolated examples of foreign influence, rather than the re-introduction of the sword-ring custom to England' (81). The sword-ring, in her view, had flourished here only until the middle or end of the sixth century.

⁹⁸ Väsby, Hammarby parish, and Skrävsta, Botkyrka parish, respectively.

⁹⁹ Bruce-Mitford, 'Recent theories', 69 and Pl. VIII.

¹⁰⁰ *Handbook*, 21.

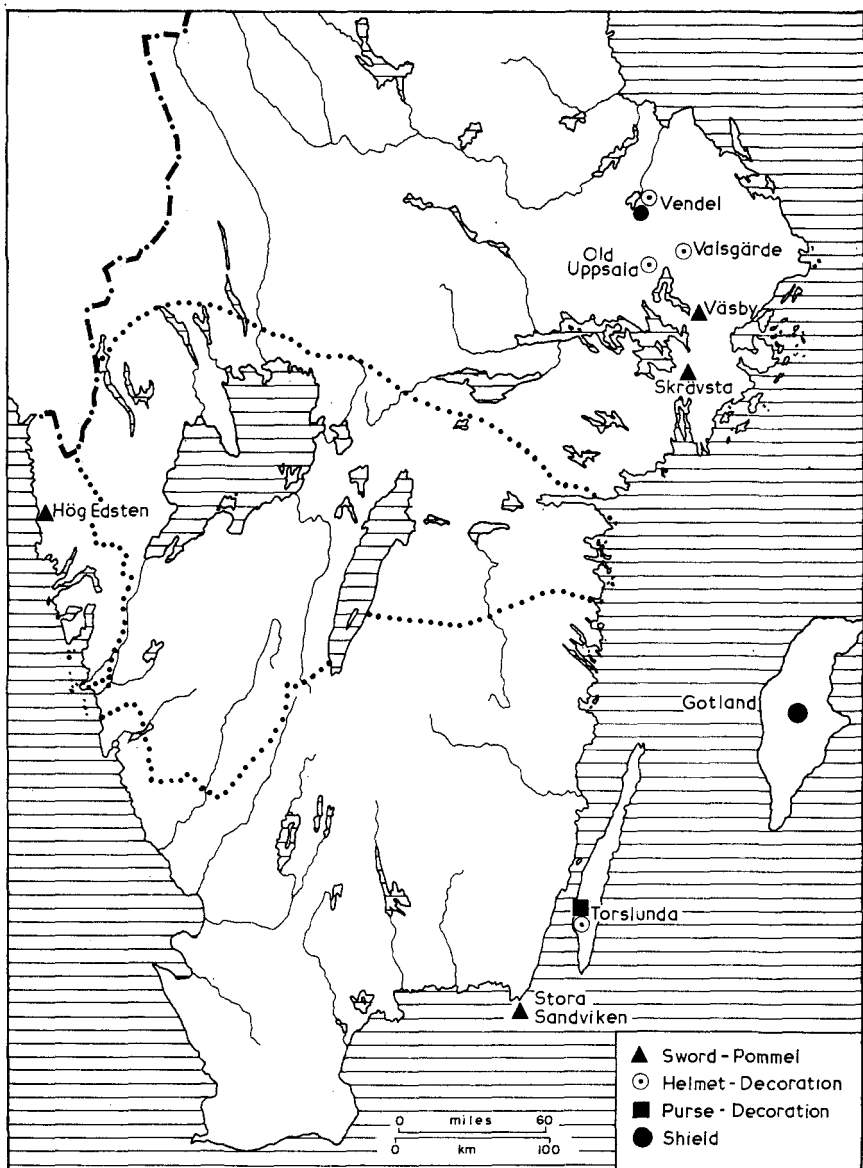


Fig. 7. Parallels for Sutton Hoo material.
 (Probable Geatish territory enclosed by)

closely resemble the faces on the whetstone; but Dr Bruce-Mitford's discussion of the piece in the 1968 *Handbook* does not lead us to a Swedish origin for it:

Nothing really comparable to it is known, but several less monumental and less finely shaped stones of fine grain or of schist, which might be regarded as whetstones, and which terminate in carved heads at least at one end, and are probably of this period, are known. Three are from the Celtic north and west, one from an Anglo-Saxon grave at Hough-on-the-Hill, Lincolnshire. One of these, from Lochar Moss in Dumfriesshire, is of substantial proportions, and that from Hough-on-the-Hill is also of large size, but relatively crude in aspect. Nothing is known to approach in sophistication, size, complexity of finish, the fantastic piece from Sutton Hoo.

This is a change from the view he expressed in 1950, when he regarded the whetstone as associated more closely with Swedish materials.

There is a second figural scene on the Sutton Hoo helmet, in addition to the man flanked by beasts cited above. I refer to the plate which shows twin warriors with horned hats and spears (Plate 11). When Dr Bruce-Mitford wrote in 1950, he cited two Uppland parallels for this plaque, a helmet from Boat Grave 7 at Valsgårde, and a very small fragment from the east mound at Old Uppsala. A similar scene on one of four bronze dies from Torslunda, Öland, was also cited.¹⁰¹ Recent discoveries have been made in Kent and Lincolnshire of pieces which have on them figures which are claimed as parallels for the Sutton Hoo plaque. I refer to the so-called 'Finglesham Man', published by Sonia Chadwick Hawkes and others (Plate 12),¹⁰² and the 'Loveden Man', published by Kenneth R. Fennell (Figure 8).¹⁰³ The first of these is found as decoration on a buckle, and the second is the central figure (in a repeated motif) on one of the bands of bronze sheet-metal which decorated a bucket

¹⁰¹ 'Recent theories', 49-50.

¹⁰² Sonia Chadwick Hawkes, H. R. Ellis-Davidson and Christopher Hawkes, 'The Finglesham Man', *Antiquity* 39 (1965), 17-32.

¹⁰³ *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), 211-15.

found at the cemetery at Hough-on-the-Hill, Lincolnshire. Both are seen as early in date.

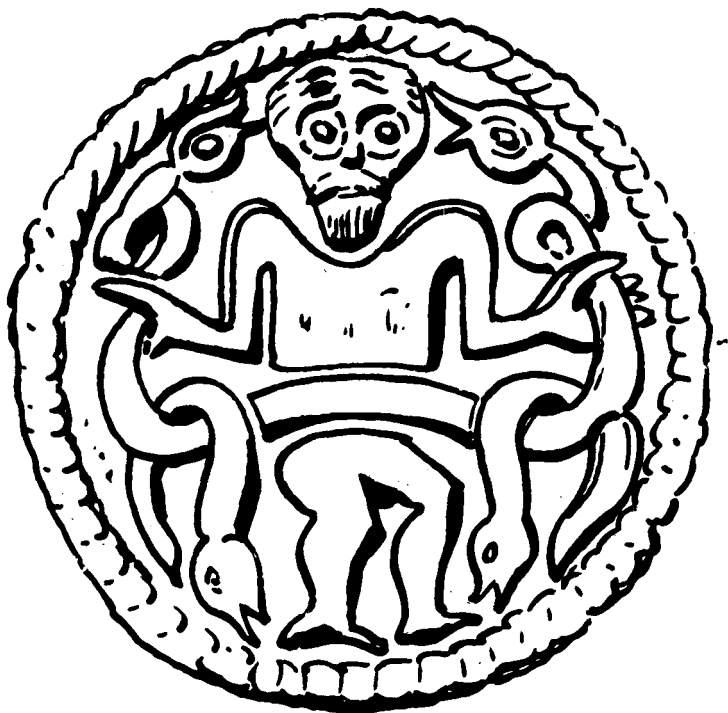


Fig. 8. Loveden Man.

While too much is not to be made of such comparatively slight evidence, the implications are interesting. If all these objects can be associated, then the sphere of this motif is not limited either to Uppland or to Sweden. Even before the publication of the Finglesham and Loveden figures, Holmqvist concluded his discussion of the figured metal work found at Sutton Hoo, Vendel, Torslunda (Öland) and elsewhere by saying:

This picture as a whole strikes one as genuinely Germanic, and there is much to suggest that it was more widely spread among

the Germanic tribes than the material preserved to us would at present suggest. The intense concentration of such work in Sweden (helmets and gold-embossed work) does not necessarily prove that it was an exclusively Scandinavian phenomenon. The embossed panels from Sutton Hoo show it to have been practised in England too — assuming, of course, that the Sutton Hoo helmet is not itself Scandinavian — and the Pliezhausen brooch and several other continental specimens indicate that the art was popular on the continent also.¹⁰⁴

Thus, my conclusion on the basis of the above survey is that the objects of the Sutton Hoo treasure which are claimed as Swedish are not all of Uppland origin, and that recent research has tended to lessen, rather than to re-enforce, this relationship.¹⁰⁵

But what of the fact of ship-burial itself? Dr Bruce-Mitford refers to the Sutton Hoo ship burial in his most recent published work as a 'royal ship-burial of an east-Scandinavian type'.¹⁰⁶ While it is true that rich ship-burial is only known in East Anglia and in Uppland as early as the first half of the seventh century,¹⁰⁷ the burial customs typical of Uppland sites are not found at Sutton Hoo.¹⁰⁸ Dr Bruce-Mitford has pointed out that

¹⁰⁴ W. Holmqvist, *Germanic Art during the First Millennium B.C.* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar 9, 1955), 51-2.

¹⁰⁵ Mr George Speake of the Institute for Archaeology, Oxford, has written on 'A Seventh Century Coin-pendant from Bacton, Norfolk, and its Ornament', *Medieval Archaeology* 14 (1970), 1-16. His suggestions regarding the piece are yet another indication of the wider sphere of the relations between south-eastern England and Sweden. He holds that the pendant is 'an apprentice product of the Sutton Hoo workshop' with its closest analogues in south Swedish C-bracelets of the fifth and early sixth centuries. I am indebted to Mr Speake for much useful discussion of the Swedish material, and for his generous loan of a proof-copy of his paper.

¹⁰⁶ *Beowulf and the Seventh Century* (1971), 90.

¹⁰⁷ A ship burial which pre-dates the Uppland burials is known from Augurum parish, Blekinge. It was excavated in 1895 by Oscar Montelius, and was discussed more recently by Birgit Arrhenius, 'Båtgraven från Augerum', *Tor* 6 (1960), 167-85. Dr Arrhenius's conclusions (183) on the relations of this boat-burial are interesting: 'The Uppland boat grave cemeteries seem often to be situated at or near trading centres. The Augerum grave shows that the Lyckeby river was of some importance as a trade route, and it is interesting in this connection to note that two gold hoards have been found on the islands of Sturkö and Tjurkö at the approaches to this river. The Sturkö hoard comprised 4 gold bracelets and 2 Roman solidi; that from Tjurkö yielded a sword pommel with garnet inlay [*sic*]. The closest parallels to the pommel are to be found in the Vendel culture in Uppland and the Sutton Hoo ship burial in England, the latter thus bearing witness to the same connections as the finds from the Augerum ship-burial.'

¹⁰⁸ 'Recent theories', 64.

there are no animal or human sacrifices in the English instance, and the Sutton Hoo boat was not covered by a low, flat-topped circular mound typical of the Swedish boat-graves. In fact, as he remarked in an earlier publication, 'The only thing that appears distinctively Swedish about the funeral arrangements is the use of a boat.'¹⁰⁹ A recent review of boat-grave burials, written because of the many finds in the past fifteen years, calls for a reconsideration of the custom, because of the 'high degree of local variation in the construction and treatment of the boats'.¹¹⁰ I am not qualified to say how this affects the East Anglia-Uppland relationship; but it seems that the distinctive similarity between boat-burials in these two areas lies merely in their early date.

If we begin our relation of the Sutton Hoo material to the poem *Beowulf* with the ship as our starting-point, the way is indeed rough. Dr Bruce-Mitford tells us:

The Sutton Hoo burial shows . . . that ship inhumation, with provision of grave-goods similar to that of Scyld, was being practised in an Anglo-Saxon setting, in a royal context and on a scale comparable with Scyld's funeral, as late as the second quarter of the seventh century . . .¹¹¹

While this is true, the uncomfortable fact remains that there is no ship-burial in *Beowulf*. Scyld is laid in a vessel, and his treasures are piled about him. The ship is then let loose, to sail where it will, in God's keeping. The most convincing parallel yet cited for this practice comes from an unexpected quarter, the life of St Gildas, written by a monk of Ruys in Brittany. Mr Cameron has recently commented on the relations between the burials of Scyld and St Gildas, and cites the following parallels:

- (1) Both 'sea burials', if such they may be called, were undertaken at the express wish of those so honoured.
- (2) Both had treasure laid on their bodies, Scyld his golden

¹⁰⁹ 'Recent theories', 64.

¹¹⁰ See Jenny-Rita Næss, 'Grav i båt eller båt i grav', *Stavanger Museum Årbok* (1969), 57-76, quotation 76.

¹¹¹ *Beowulf and the Seventh Century* (1971), 88.

pile of weapons and treasures, Gildas his pillow-stone (presumably, the only 'treasure' a Celtic monk would have).

- (3) Both were sent into the Lord's keeping; *On frean wære* as *Beowulf* has it, and *quo Deus voluit* in the *Gildas Vita*.¹¹²

XII *The relation of Sutton Hoo to Beowulf re-examined*

In many ways, particular treasures from Sutton Hoo shed light on *Beowulf*. The helmet, with its thick iron crest, almost certainly provides an example of the troublesome *wala, wirum bewunden* of 1031, and the lyre, or harp, is one example of the kind of instrument used by the *scop* in *Beowulf* and among the Anglo-Saxons. But in the present state of knowledge, it is dangerous to attempt to regard *Beowulf* as a product of the same *milieu* as produced the Sutton Hoo treasures, and still more dangerous to take *Beowulf* as a record of the historical Scandinavian background of the East Anglian court. The poem is *not* history, but heroic legend, in the sense in which the term was defined earlier in this essay. Its general treatment of the period nicely parallels the broader outlines of what is known of early Scandinavian history, though in particular respects it is clear that *Beowulf* and *Ynglinga saga* represent different traditions. The relation of the background of *Beowulf* to Sutton Hoo has tended to be caught up in a paradox which is created by the juxtaposition of Sutton Hoo, with supposed exclusively Uppland connections, with the Geatish perspective in *Beowulf*. This inconsistency is lessened when a slight modification is made on both sides. From

¹¹² Angus Cameron, 'St. Gildas and Scyld Scefing', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 70 (1969), 240-6. Cameron also makes the important point that as long ago as the beginning of the present century Axel Olrik held that there was no evidence for a belief in a sea-journey to the afterworld in Scandinavia, but that such beliefs were common in Celtic literature.

the point of view of the archaeological evidence, it seems probable that what have been called Swedish elements are not paralleled only in the Uppland area. Secondly, the pro-Swedish passages in the poem should not be dismissed, in an attempt to create a drama of Geatish annihilation.

What is more important still, *Beowulf* has no necessary direct connection with Sutton Hoo. The poem may be the product of a seventh-century East Anglian court-poet; it may have been written in an Anglo-Scandinavian community in the ninth century; it may be a product of Mercia in the eighth century; or it may have originated in Bede's Northumbria.¹¹³ All that we know for certain is that it was written down about the year 1000. The place of origin most generally acceptable is Northumbria, for there is impressive evidence there of both material culture and a fertile intellectual *milieu* admirably suited to the production of such a poem.¹¹⁴ As a literary critic, it is my belief that the intellectual background is far more important than material culture for the production of poetry. We know almost nothing about the state of East Anglian culture in the seventh century, and though new discoveries may of course be made, the burden of proof is very much on those who wish to make *Beowulf* a product of this culture.

Conclusions

And it is here that I am moved to state what might well be seen as a kind of heresy. *Beowulf* is more

¹¹³ For an eighth-century Mercian localisation, see D. Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (1951); for a ninth-century date, see L. Schücking's 'Wann entstand der Beowulf?', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 42 (1917), 347-410. The Northumbrian argument is so generally known as not to require documentation.

¹¹⁴ This is not the place to re-open the question about the Christianity of the poem. I use the view that the poem is the earliest product of what Professor Charles Donahue defines as 'Insular' Christianity — that is, a kind of ethical stance which was capable of the productive assimilation of an heroic past. His arguments are set forth in 'Beowulf — a reconsideration from a Celtic stance', *Traditio* 22 (1965), 55-116.

Scandinavian, more 'Swedish', if one must be pressed, than Sutton Hoo. For while some of the Sutton Hoo treasures are Swedish in orientation, they constitute a small part of the whole. Sword-pommel, helmet and shield are major items, but there are Frankish coins, fragments of imported silks, a Coptic bowl from Alexandria, and Celtic hanging bowls. *Beowulf*, on the other hand, deals almost exclusively with Scandinavian affairs, the relations of Geat, Dane, and Swede, in the troubled times of the late migration period. Sutton Hoo is a very significant, though limited, find, firmly fixed in reality — in place and (in a somewhat less precise sense) in time. *Beowulf* is a work of fiction, which celebrates with honour and solemnity the heroic Northern past.

In the current state of knowledge about the period before the Viking Age in Scandinavia, it is tempting to draw together whatever information we have to make a satisfying whole, and *Beowulf* is easily overtaxed as evidence, as it pre-dates most, if not all, of the accounts extant from Scandinavia. This paper, written from the point of view of someone whose interests are focussed on Anglo-Saxon literature, has been an attempt to set some slightly different perspectives on the poem's form, and the picture it presents of early Scandinavian history. *Beowulf*, Sutton Hoo, and early Scandinavian archaeology and legend all somehow enrich one another, but the relation between all or even any two members of the series is not easy to define. It is sincerely hoped that further research and new discoveries, particularly in the field of archaeology, will soon supersede the tentative suggestions made here.

Appendix

The relations between the Old Uppsala burial mounds and the accounts of Swedish kings in *Beowulf* and in Scandinavian sources are very complex. Briefly stated, the problems are as follows. *Ynglinga saga*, Snorri tells us, is based on oral tradition, both 'historical' and mythical, and on Þjóðólfr of Hvin's *Ynglingatal*. Snorri's own words establish the limits of the credibility of his work better than any commentary can do: 'In this book I have had written the old narratives about the chiefs who have had realms in the Northlands and who spoke the Danish tongue, even as I have heard wise men, learned in history, tell, besides some of their family descents even as I have been taught them; some of this is found in the family successions in which kings and other men of great kin have traced their kinship; some is written according to old songs or lays, which men have had for their amusement. And although we know not the truth of these, we know, however, of occasions when wise old men have reckoned such things as true' (*Heimskringla*, transl. cited in note 75 above, xxxv). When *Ynglinga saga*, with the citations from *Ynglingatal* it includes, is set against *Beowulf*, it is clear that the two represent traditions which are different in many respects. The line of the Swedish kings in *Beowulf* is Ongenðeow-Ohthere-Onela-Eadgils; Onela is Ohthere's brother, Eadgils is Ohthere's son. In *Ynglinga saga*, the descent is Aun, Egill, Óttarr, Aðils. The *Saga* further mentions *Áli*, a Dane who attacks Aun, and drives him from his kingdom, and *Áli*, from Uppland in Norway, who attacked Aðils. They fought on the ice of lake Vänern, and Aðils won. This battle is also documented in Arngrímur Jónsson's paraphrase of *Skjoldunga saga*: 'Post-haec ortis inter Adillum illum Sveciae regem et Alonem, Opplandorum regem in Norvegia, inimicitiiis,

praelium utrinque indicitur: loco pugnae statuto in stagno Waener, glacie jam obducto' (*Arngrimi Jonae Opera* . . . I, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, Bibliotheca Arnarnagnæana IX, 1950, 346). The traditional interpretation is that of Chambers: 'We are told how Athils (=Eadgils) king of Sweden, son of Ottar (=Ohthere), made war upon Ali (= Onela). By the time the *Ynglingatal* was written it had been forgotten that Ali was Athils' uncle, and that the war was a civil war' (Chambers-Wrenn, 6). But Chambers's account strains the translation somewhat. As I read it, *Aðils konungr átti deilur miklar við konung þann, er Áli hét inn upplenzki* means essentially that the two were in conflict, not that Aðils made war on Áli.

But how readily can we relate the Old English and Norse accounts? There is no person named *Angantýr* in *Ynglinga saga* or *Ynglingatal*, which is the name we would expect to correspond to OE *Ongendeow*. (Malone's suggestion that *Ongendeow* is a 'surname' for Egill is interesting, but too speculative for general acceptance; see his *Widsið*, 1962, 158-90.)

Does archaeology help here? In his Preface to *Heimskringla* Snorri tells us that in Scandinavia there was first an Age of Burning, and that this was succeeded by a Mound Age, first in Denmark, later in Sweden and Norway. In *Ynglinga saga* we are told that Hálfðan, the Dane who drove Aun from his kingdom, was buried in a mound at Uppsala, and that Aun and Egill were so honoured (ch. 25-6). Óttarr, according to Snorri, was laid *on* a mound, in Vendel, Denmark (i.e. Vendsyssel, North Jutland), as a mark of disrespect: *Danir . . . létu þar rífa dýr ok fugla hræin* (ch. 27). Aðils died at Uppsala; he too was laid in a mound.

Archaeologists are in agreement that the mound at Husby, in the parish of Vendel, some 27 km north of Uppsala, is quite possibly Óttarr's mound, and that Snorri's account is based on a confusion of names, Vendel-Uppland = Vendel-Jutland, just as in the account of Áli

he has confused Uppland in Norway and Uppland in Sweden. In the year 1677, a search for relics of antiquity was made throughout Sweden, and the people of the Husby district were then calling the mound Ottarshögen (S. Lindqvist *Uppsala högar och Ottarshögen*, 1936, English summary, 329-31; conclusion, 352). Lindqvist holds that on the archaeological evidence and the traditional name-evidence: 'Ottar and some of the generations immediately following him can — thanks to their being mentioned in *Beowulf* — be looked upon as historical personages with far greater right than most of the others mentioned in the Y[nglinga] T[al].' But M. Stenberger is far less sure about the relation between Óttarr, the mound at Vendel, and history: 'It is possible that the huge grave-mound in Vendel really was built over the remains of the ancient king mentioned in *Ynglingatal* and *Beowulf*, but it is impossible to prove it' (*Det forntida Sverige*, 1964, 537).

The problems associated with the Uppsala mounds are much more vexing. There are three major mounds, known as the east mound, the west mound, and the centre mound. Lindqvist (*op. cit.*, 334-5) gives the traditional names for the tumuli; the eastern is known as Odin's, the centre as Frey's, and the western as Thor's. The eastern mound was excavated in 1846-7, and the western in 1874; the centre mound has not yet been fully investigated. The artifacts recovered in excavation are very few, and any firm decision on them hard to establish, for as Lindqvist tells us, 'With regard to certain objects, particularly those of iron and bone, it appears that the finds in the eastern and western mounds have been mixed up' (*op. cit.*, 341). From the archaeological side, without entering into a full discussion of the finds, one can only say that relations between *Beowulf*, the Swedish kings mentioned in that poem, and the Uppsala and Vendel tumuli are indeed tenuous. The only externally verifiable date is that of Hygelac's raid on the Frisian coast, as

reported by Gregory of Tours, which is dated 'after 515, probably after 520, but before 530' (Chambers-Wrenn, 3).

On archaeological grounds, Lindqvist (*op. cit.*, 344-5) dates the mounds as follows: eastern mound, *c.* 500; western, 'hardly before the middle of the sixth century'; centre mound (on the basis of position and structure, since it is yet to be excavated), 'most probably in its original form from the fifth century', with an added part, from 600 at the earliest. But this dating is disputed by Nils Åberg, who from an investigation of decorative motifs on the finds would date these mounds considerably later, to the middle of the seventh century (see his 'Uppsala högars datering', *Fornvännen* 42, 1947, 257-89, English summary 288-9). It is best to follow the caution of Professor Stenberger here. He concludes that the Old Uppsala mounds are possibly to be attributed to Aun, Egill, and Aðils, but that it is even more difficult to do this than to associate the Vendel mound with Óttarr, and no sure conclusion is possible (*Det forntida Sverige*, 537).

In conclusion, then, we are left in doubt as to the relations between *Ynglinga saga* (and *Ynglingatal*), the Uppsala mounds and the *Beowulf* account. Chronology cannot be finally established which relate any *two* of the series. *Ynglinga saga* has *four* kings in mounds at Uppsala (Hálfðan, Aun, Egill, Aðils), and one mocked by the Danes in Vendel, Jutland, while we have three Uppsala mounds which might be associated with the written account. *Ynglinga saga* and *Ynglingatal* do not completely correspond with *Beowulf* on the names of the kings. What is still more important is that the quality of the Swedish kings in the account in *Beowulf* is far superior to that in the Norse account; the former appear courageous and successful in war, the latter are a miserable lot, who consistently lose battles, and are often driven from their lands. Thus, all three sources of evidence vary in important respects.

PLATES



Plate 2. Helmet
from Vendel,
Uppland,
grave 14.



Plate 3. Helmet
from Sutton Hoo.

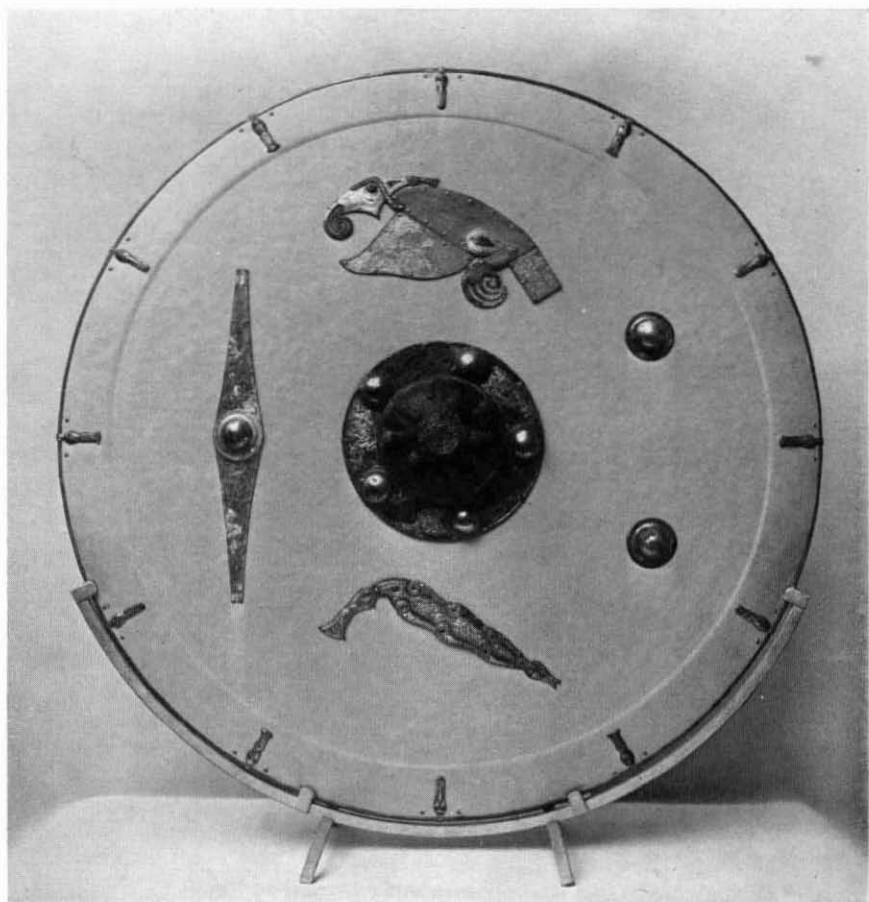


Plate 4. Shield from
Sutton Hoo.

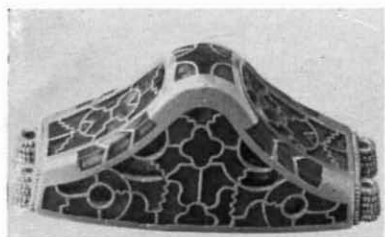
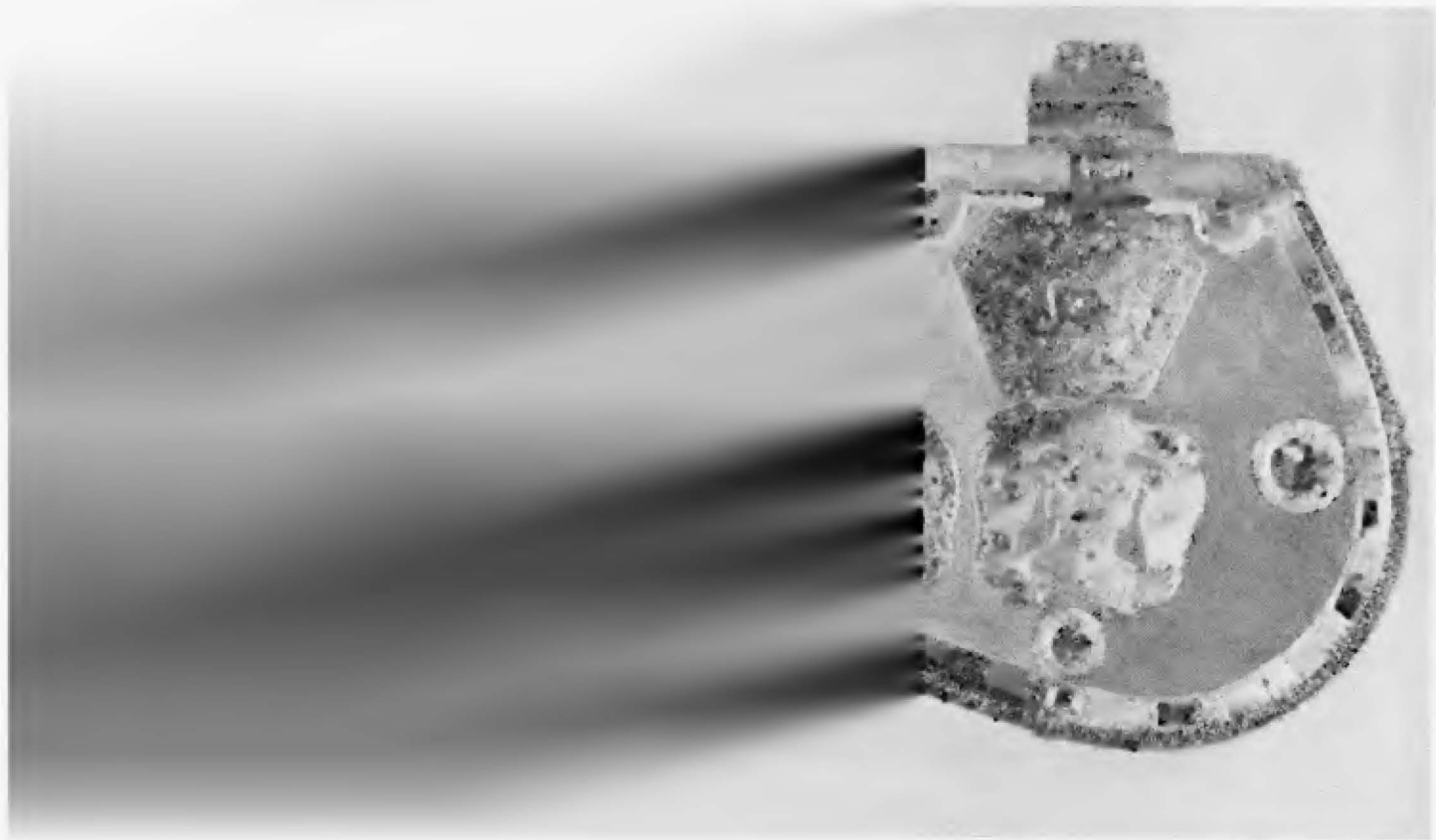


Plate 6. Sword-pommel from
Hög Edsten, Kville, Bohuslän.



Plate 7. Sword-pommel from Sutton Hoo.





ELIZABETH STEFANYJA ROSS

In Stefanyja Ross (née Olszewska) the Viking Society has lost one of its most distinguished and devoted members. She was President of the Society from 1937 to 1938, and a Vice-President in Council from then until her death.

Stefanyja was born in Warsaw in 1906, daughter of a Polish father and an English mother. She took her first degree, an outstanding First in English, in the University of Leeds in 1926. She subsequently moved to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she studied for a research degree. She was lecturer in English in the University of Reading from 1930 to 1933 under Professor Edith Morley. In 1932 Stefanyja married the eminent philologist Alan S. C. Ross and helped him with his varied and ambitious work. During the war and for a long time after it she tutored many undergraduates in Oxford with great success.

After their marriage, Stefanyja returned to Leeds, where Alan held an appointment under Bruce Dickins as lecturer in English. After the war they moved to Birmingham, where Alan was first Professor of English Language and later Professor of Linguistics.

Stefanyja had two favourite fields of work, both lexicographical. Her first job was on the First Supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, on which she worked under the direction of Dr C. T. Onions. Later in life she returned to the *Dictionary* and did a great deal of work for the *Second Supplement*. She sent in a very large number of slips and also helped greatly with the revision of the proof of the first volume. Her second field was Middle English alliterative phrases of Scandinavian origin. Stefanyja published a good deal on this subject and members of the Society will know her papers which were published in the *Saga-Book*: Types of Norse borrowing in

Middle English (XI, 2), Legal Borrowings from Norse in Old and Middle English (XI, 3), Some English and Norse Alliterative Phrases (XII, 4). Stefanyja collaborated in *The Life of Gudmund the Good, Bishop of Holar*, a translation published by the Society in 1942. Without her help this work would never have been finished.

Stefanyja has left a great deal of unpublished work, and it is to be hoped that this will one day be edited and published.

G.T.P.

THE LANGUAGES OF *ALVISSMÁL*

BY LENNART MOBERG

A *LVÍSSMÁL* is not one of the outstanding poems of the *Edda*. Erik Noreen passes the somewhat harsh judgement that the poem in purely poetic terms is "a pretty unhappy product".¹ Whether or not this is true, *Alvissmál* does possess qualities which lend the poem a unique interest, not least from the linguistic point of view.

The content of the poem is roughly as follows. *Alviss*, "All-knowing", a pale-nosed dwarf who lives under the earth, lays claim to a woman, who, it would seem, is the daughter of the god Thor, and claims that she has been promised to him in marriage. Thor, who strangely enough was not present when this promise was made, wishes to prevent such a bad match. He succeeds most cunningly. Thor promises that the marriage will take place if *Alviss* is able to answer a series of questions. *Alviss* agrees to the proposal and answers all thirteen questions correctly — but in the meantime the night passes. At the end of the examination the dwarf is taken by surprise by the rising sun, which brings about his undoing. The implication here is that the dwarf is turned to stone when he sees the sun, a motif well known from popular belief.

Such is the narrative framework. It plays a subsidiary part in the poem and is really only an excuse for communicating learning of a mythological-lexicographical nature — evidently the real object of the poem. In this *Alvissmál* is reminiscent of *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Grimnismál*.

The thirteen questions comprise twenty-six stanzas in *ljóðaháttur*; in alternate stanzas Thor puts his questions and

¹ *Den norsk-isländska poesien* (1926), 62.

Alvíss makes his reply. The questions are all concerned with words, with linguistic expressions used by different beings. In stanza 9, for example, Thor asks what the *earth* is called in different places, and Alvíss replies: it is called *iǫrð* by men, but *fold* by the Æsir; the Vanir call it *vega* (acc. pl.), the giants *igræn*, the elves *gróandi*, and *uppregin* call it *aur*. In the same way Thor asks the different names for *sky, moon, sun, clouds, wind, calm, sea, fire, forest, night, seed, and ale*. There seems to be a certain plan in the ordering of the questions, in as much as they seem to go in pairs: earth and sky, moon and sun, clouds and wind, calm and sea, fire and forest, corn and ale. But *night* stands isolated (stanza 30); its natural partner *day* is missing. It is possible that the night-stanza, as Finnur Jónsson has suggested, was originally the last, i.e. immediately preceding the concluding stanza, 35, which relates the fateful effect of daylight on the dwarf: *uppi ertu, dvergr, um dagadr*.²

The beings whose languages we are thus told about are men, gods (or Æsir) and giants — these three occur regularly, i.e. thirteen times and always in the same place in the stanza: men first, gods second and giants fourth. Alongside these three, the elves appear eleven times (ten times in fifth position), the Vanir nine times (eight times in third position), dwarves seven times (four times in sixth position). The basic scheme is therefore: men — Æsir — Vanir — giants — elves — dwarves, but this order is, as in stanza 9 above, quite often disturbed, generally through the introduction of new names for gods and supernatural powers, whose relationship to the poem's five most usual names for gods and other powers is extremely unclear, e.g. *ginnregin* (20, 30), *uppregin* (10), *halir* (28), and *i heliu*, which occurs no less than six times.

² Jan de Vries, *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 50 (1934), 9, divides the subject-matter into a primary group of *cosmic* terms: earth, sky, moon, sun, clouds, wind, calm, sea, fire; and then a group of other things such as forest, night (which, as noted, ought to belong to the primary group), crops and ale. Roughly speaking this implies a division into natural forces, the elements, and the means of maintaining life (cf. *Maal og minne*, 1918, 17).

One can also ask what is meant by *ása synir* (16) and *Suttungs synir* (34). The former appear in stanza 16 together with *goð*, which in all probability is synonymous with *æsir*, and the occurrence of *Suttungs synir* (34), which one would expect to refer to the giants, does not prevent them from appearing in their usual place in the same stanza.

However, such small incongruities can be ignored for the moment. The poem's most important and interesting aspect remains obvious enough, i.e. that the poem hinges on the notion of separate languages for gods and other supernatural beings (giants, dwarves, etc.). Parallels — principally the notion of a divine language, divorced from that of men — have been found elsewhere: in Greek (Homer), Old Indian and Celtic.³

Do the different languages in *Alvissmál* have any special characteristics? Without doubt there is a clear distinction between the language of men on the one hand, and the languages said to be those of the gods, giants, etc., on the other. The words of men are throughout the common prosaic names that are still used today: *iþrð*, *himinn*, *máni*, *sól*, *ský*, *vindr*, *logn*, calm, *sær* (a phonetic variant of *sjór*), *eldr*, fire, *viðr*, timber (here meaning 'forest'), *nótt*, *bygg*, barley, (still thus in Modern Icelandic and Norwegian, Swedish *bjugg*), *pl*.

The words said to belong to the language of the gods, giants and others, are not normally found in the colloquial language, at least not with the same function as they have in the poem — and we ought perhaps to remind ourselves with due caution that our knowledge of the early colloquial language comes from a limited number of texts. The words of the gods and supernatural powers for the most part belong higher up the stylistic scale. They are of different types. Some of them are true

³ H. Güntert, *Von der Sprache der Götter und Geister* (1921); C. Watkins, *Language of Gods and Language of Men: Remarks on some Indo-European Metalinguistic Traditions* (ed. J. Puhvel, 1970).

synonyms, archaic words or "poetic" on other grounds. In this category we find *fold*, earth (10), *funi*, fire (26), *barr*, seed, corn (32, cf. English 'barley'),⁴ *veig biórr*, ale (34), all unknown or rare outside the poetic language. The first four (*fold*, *funi*, *barr* and *veig*) are archaisms. *Biórr* is thought to be a loan from West Germanic (cf. Eng. 'beer'), borrowed in connection with the introduction of hops in brewing. If so, the loan may be an old one, for one often finds *biórr* in the *Edda*, in *Völundarkviða* and *Atlakviða*, for example, both of which are thought to be among the oldest poems in the *Edda*. One can therefore hardly describe *biórr* as "ein junges Lehnwort", as Hermann Güntert does in connection with its occurrence in *Alvissmál*.⁵ The native word, *öl*, was doubtless the most common. It is possible that *biórr* signified a better quality ale, prepared with hops, and that this — as Güntert suggests — is the reason why the word is put into the mouth of the gods. However, the word's relative rarity may by itself have caused its inclusion in the language of the gods.

Another of the simple synonyms, *sunna*, the gods' word for 'sun' (16), is of special interest. Those who have investigated the language of *Alvissmál*, like Güntert, Finnur Jónsson and Jan de Vries, include *sunna* in the group of very old Nordic-Germanic words, which were on their way to becoming archaic at the time of the

⁴ H. Wagner, in 'Irisches in der Edda', *Ériu* XX (1966), 178-82, suggests that *barr*, 'corn', and *niól*, 'night', in the gods' language (strophe 32, 30), came into Icelandic from Irish. There seems something to be said for this in the case of *niól*, but hardly in the case of *barr*. The theory that *barr* is a loan-word rests on two assumptions: Scand. *barr* means only 'needles' (of conifers), and the meaning 'corn' is only attested in *Alvissmál*. It is true that *barr* in the Scandinavian languages usually only means 'needles' (of conifers). But Aasen and Ross give a Norwegian dialect word *barlog*, 'malt-water, the water grain is softened in for malt', apparently compounded with a *bar(r)* whose meaning corresponds closely to that of *barr* in *Alvissmál*. C. Vidsteen, *Ordbog over Bygdemaalene i Sandhordland* (1900), has *bar n.*, 'all the grains in an ear, especially of oats'. We find, moreover, from *Lexicon poeticum* (1931), s.v. *barr* (2), that the meaning 'grain, food' is not unique in *Alvissmál* (references there to *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* I, Arnórr Þórðarson, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson). How to account for the origin of the two meanings of *barr* in West Norse is a problem that I must leave for the present.

⁵ H. Güntert, *op. cit.*, 153; cf. N. von Hofsten, *Eddadiktarnas djur och växter* (1957), 55.

composition of *Alvíssmál* (and it would therefore be of the type *funi, fold, barr, veig*). Is this a correct evaluation of the word? The Icelandic *sunna* could be a loan-word, and a relatively young loan-word at that.

Alvíssmál is the only poem of the *Edda* in which *sunna* occurs. Apart from this isolated case the *Edda* only has *sól*, which is found approximately thirty times. In the poetry of the skalds, *sól* — a very common word in kennings — reigns supreme up to about A.D. 1000. The oldest examples of *sunna* are found in Þórarinn Þórólfsson's *Máhlíðingavísur* from the 980s and in a *lausavísa* by Þjórn Hítðelakappi (who died in 1024). Of the few remaining examples one is found in a *þula* in Snorri's *Edda* and the rest in religious poetry.⁶ As far as is known, the only prose work where *sunna* occurs is *Rimbegla* (c. 1187), and it is worth noting the context: *sunna heitir sól ok er við hana kendr dróttinsdagr* (the sun is called *sunna*, and the Lords' day [Sunday] is named after it).

In continental Scandinavia the word *sunna* is, as far as I am aware, completely unknown. That the word is missing from written sources does not, of course, say very much. More important is the fact that the word is not certainly attested in a single Norwegian, Swedish or Danish place-name,⁷ an absence all the more striking because *sól* is extremely common in place-names, e.g. Swedish Solberg, Solberga, and older Norwegian Sólberg(ar), Sólheim(ar). Admittedly in his etymological dictionary Hellquist makes use of a suggestion by Erik Modin that *Sånfjället*, "Härjedalen's most popular peak", preserves an Old Norse *sunna*, 'sun'. But the mountain's name is pronounced in the local dialect in such a way that derivation from a form in *Sunnu-* is out of the question.⁸

⁶ Some examples included in *Lexicon poeticum* are uncertain, cf. E. A. Kock, *Notationes norræne* (1923-44), §§ 622, 1235, 1966.

⁷ None of the place-names in *Sunn-* in *Norske Gaardnavne* is interpreted with reference to subst. *sunna*.

⁸ Cf. J. Reitan, *Vemdalsmålet* (1930), 49.

As far as I can see, only one conclusion can be drawn. We have no evidence of a native Norse *sunna*. It is possible that Old Norse, like Gothic, once had both *sól* and *sunna*, but then in such a remote period that it is impossible to find any definite indication that it actually did.

The Icelandic *sunna* ought therefore to be a West Germanic loan, something which is already suggested by the chronology of its occurrences. In my opinion the word's appearance can be connected with the borrowing of the name of the weekday, *sunnudagr*, 'Sunday'. The West Germanic *sunna* may have come with *sunnudagr*. But it is also possible that the Icelanders, with their literary and linguistic interests, abstracted the simplex *sunna* from *sunnudagr* — the above quotation from *Rímbeǵla* is in its way enlightening. The Icelandic word, *sunna*, was probably a literary word from the beginning. If *sunna* is a loan-word, then its appearance in *Alvíssmál* says much about the poem's age. But this is a question to which we shall return later.

Most of the words credited to the gods and other powers are *poetic circumlocutions* of various types.

Very similar to the group of words discussed above are those words whose meanings have been modified by restriction or extension. For example, *vegar* (10) which really means 'ways, roads' is the word of the Vanir for 'earth'; *aurr* (10), really 'gravel', is the word for 'earth' used by the *uppregin* (whoever they were); *mylinn* (14), according to Hjalmar Falk really meaning 'ball',⁹ is the gods' word for 'moon'; *skin* (14) 'shining', is the dwarves' word for 'moon'; *ofhlý* (22), really 'the sultry', is the giants' name for calm; *vágr* (24), 'wave, bay', is used by the Vanir for 'sea'; *vöndr* (28), really 'wand' (often used for 'mast' in scaldic poetry), is used by them for 'forest'; *gríma* (30), really 'a kind of hood covering the face', is the word for 'night' among the *ginnregin*; *vöxtr* (32), really

⁹ *Altnordische Waffenkunde* (1914), 86 note.

'growth, vegetation', is used by the Vanir for 'seed, corn'; *míðr* (34), really 'mead', is the word for 'ale' í *helii*; *sumbl* (34), usually meaning 'carousal, feast', is the word for 'ale' among "Suttung's sons".

A further group are epithets and similar expressions, e.g. *igræn* (10), 'greenish', the giants' word for 'earth', *gróandi* (10), 'growing, verdant', the elves' word for 'earth', *alskír* (16), 'all-glowing', the word for 'sun' among *ása synir*, *eygló* (16), presumably a substantivized feminine adjective with the meaning 'the ever bright one', the giants' name for the sun (cf. *fljóðs ens fagrglóa* in stanza 5), *hlýrnir* (12), 'that provided with sun and moon', the gods' word for 'sky', *skyndir* (14), 'the swift one', the giants' word for 'moon', *æpir* (20), 'the shouter', the giants' word for 'wind', *forbrennir* (26), 'the one who destroys by fire', the dwarves' word for 'fire', *ártali* (14), 'the year teller', the elves' word for 'moon', *dynfari* (20), 'the noisy traveller', the elves' word for 'wind', *frekr* or *freki* (26), 'the greedy one', the giants' word for 'fire'.

In this context I would like to mention a group of *nomina agentis* ending in *-uðr*, that are quite characteristic of the poem. They are four in number. Three are words for wind (20): *váfuðr* from the verb *váfa*, 'to hover', here perhaps with a meaning 'to sway, wander about', *gneggjuðr* from *gneggja*, 'to neigh', a verb of onomatopoeic origin, and *hviðuðr*, related to the noun *hviða*, 'gust of wind' (*hviðuðr* should mean 'the gusty one', 'one who moves in gusts', not "fuld af, med, vindstød", the gloss for it found in *Lexicon Poeticum*). The fourth example is *hrøðuðr*, the word used by the inhabitants of Hel for 'fire' (26), formed from the verb *hraða*, 'to hasten, hurry on'. Such *nomina agentis* as these belong exclusively to the poetic language, and it is perhaps not so remarkable that *hviðuðr* is *hapax legomenon* and *gneggjuðr* and *hrøðuðr* only appear elsewhere in a *þula* in Snorri's *Edda*. In addition *váfuðr* is only otherwise known as a name for Odin (as in *Grimnismál*, Bragi, etc.). This secondary

name for Odin alludes to his function as the god of storm. It is a successful ploy on the part of the poet of *Alvíssmál* to give *váfuðr* as the gods' word for 'wind' (20).

As a final group I would like to mention compounds and combinations which in part resemble kennings: *fagraraefr*, 'fair-roof', *driúpan sal* (12), 'the dripping hall', the elves' and dwarves' words for 'sky' respectively, *fagrahvél* (16), 'fair wheel', the elves' word for 'sun'. The dwarves call the sun *Dvalins leika* (16). *Dvalinn* is a common dwarf-name in the *Edda*. If Wimmer is correct in his assumption that *leika* originally was a neuter noun with not only the meaning 'plaything' but also the meaning 'play-fellow', one could surmise that the expression *Dvalins leika* means 'Dvalinn's play-fellow', a term with ironic undertones — the sun plays with the dwarf, i.e. outwits him and turns him to stone (cf. the narrative framework of *Alvíssmál*). The name *Dvalinn* has also been thought to mean 'the delayed one' and so an allusion to the well-known myth.¹⁰ E. A. Kock has surmised that here *leika* instead means 'a trap'. (Kock bases his assumption on the double meaning of the verb *leika*: on the one hand 'to play' and on the other 'to play a trick on, entrap'.) But however this may be, the significance of the kenning is quite clear.

Also connected with mythological notions, or perhaps rather with popular belief, is the word used by the inhabitants of Hel for 'clouds', *hialmr huliðs* (18). The expression can be translated as 'a hiding helm'. Other words for 'cloud' are *vindflot*, 'that which floats with or on the wind', 'air sailer', used by the Vanir, *skúrván* and *úrván*, 'hope of rain' (attributed to the gods and the giants respectively). The sea is called *álheimr* by the giants, 'eel-home'. The forest is called *vallar fax* (28) by the gods, 'the field's mane', *fagrlimi* by the elves, 'the fair-limbed', and *hlíðþang* by the *halir*, 'seaweed of the hills'. *Svefnngaman*, 'sleep's joy', is the elves' word and

¹⁰ Cf. most recently S. Gutenbrunner, *Arkiv* 70 (1955), 61.

draumniörun, 'dream-goddess', the dwarves' word for 'night' (30).

The compounds quoted above which can be described as kennings are both simple and transparent.

Thus in *Alvissmál* a clear distinction can be seen between the language of men on the one hand and that of the gods and supernatural powers on the other. The difference is principally stylistic: prosaic everyday language *versus* the language of poetry.

Is it then possible to differentiate this non-human poetic language in *Alvissmál*? The task is a difficult one, because, as we have already observed, the distribution of the verbal material between the different worlds and beings is not systematic. However, this need not decisively hinder an investigation. The arrangement of the poem is sufficiently consistent for us to form a relatively complete picture of the languages of those beings who appear most often.

The language of the Æsir is characterized to a significant extent by solemn, poetic words, archaic, already old-fashioned at the time of the poem's composition — words like *fold*, *funi* and *barr*, or common poetic words with a foreign sound like *sunna* and *biórr*.

The words of the giants seem to me also to exhibit common characteristics, both in content and style. One subscribes willingly to Finnur Jónsson's description of the words of the giants: "de er prægede af noget groft, af en materiel opfattelse og udtaler en ærgrelse over det skønne og gode i naturen." The sun is *eygló*, 'the ever-glowing' (16), calm is felt to be *ofhlý*, 'the sultry' (22), fire is *frekr*, i.e. 'the greedy one' (26), the forest is *eldi*, 'firewood' (28), seed, corn is *æti*, 'food' (32). Another word, which is indubitably translated wrong in all the commentaries on the *Edda* that I have consulted, points in the same direction. The word is *igræn* (10), the giants' name for 'earth'. Gering translated it as 'die herrlich grünende', Neckel 'die immergrüne', *Lexicon poeticum* 'den stærkt

grønne' with the qualification "i nedsættende mening". This qualification perplexed Gering, who writes in his *Kommentar*: "Warum dies eine 'verächtliche bezeichnung' sein soll, ist nicht einzusehen." Finnur Jónsson made himself clearer in his edition, *De gamle Eddadigte* (1932), where he writes: "*ígræn*: stærkt grøn, jætterne føler ubehag ved den smukke grønne farve." The adjective is *hapax legomenon* in Old West Norse. But the word is well known from both Modern Icelandic and the dialects of Modern Norwegian and means 'greenish'. The same applies to other colour adjectives formed with the same prefix: *iblaa*, *igraa*, *irauð*, *isvart*, i.e. 'bluish', etc. Fritznér's dictionary omits *ígrænn* but has *íblár* and *írauðr*, which are correctly translated as 'blaaelig, blaaagtig' and 'rødlig, lidt rødagtig'. The German *ingrün*, which corresponds to *ígrænn*, means admittedly 'very green, extremely green' and has done so since the Middle High German period, but it is equally undeniable that Scandinavian colour adjectives with the *i*-prefix do not have any intensive connotation.¹¹ Thus the giants in *Alvissmál* call the earth by a word which means 'greenish, a little green'. The word is an understatement. The giants admit, as if against their will, that the earth is green; it is *ígræn*, 'a bit green'. The vocabulary of the giants does not, however, have negative connotations throughout. Ale (34), for example, is able to dispel their peevishness: its name is *hreini löggr*, 'the bright liquid'.

The vocabulary of the elves testifies to a totally different frame of mind from that of the giants. The earth is verdant and fertile (*gróandi*), the sky a beautiful roof (*fagraraefr*), the sun a beautiful wheel (*fagrahvél*), the forest is fair-limbed (*fagrlimi*), the night is sleep's joy (*svefngaman*). It is to be noted that in no case do words beginning with the prefix *fagr*- make part of the metrical structure and they are therefore not bound by alliteration.

¹¹ I refer to Ture Johannisson's discussion of these questions in his essay 'Idrott' in *Meijerbergs Arkiv för svensk ordforskning* 5 (1943).

It is clearly the light-elves who have been allowed to show off their language in *Alvíssmál*.

The elves called the sun 'the fair wheel' (*fagrahvél*). Another Old Icelandic word for 'wheel' is *roðull* (related to German *Rad*, Latin *rota*). Both as a simplex and in compounds *roðull* appears as a *heiti* for 'sun'. The compound *álfrøðull* is especially interesting in this context, well known from poetry, e.g. in *Skirnismál* 4:

álfrøðull lýsir um alla daga,
ok þeygi at mínum munum.

It is tempting to postulate a connection between the name for the sun, *álfrøðull*, meaning 'the elf-wheel', and the information in *Alvíssmál* that the elves call the sun 'the fair wheel'. But the precise significance of such a connection would be difficult to establish.

The Vanir are portrayed in Norse mythology as typical fertility gods, but one notices little of this in the words attributed to them in *Alvíssmál*. One could possibly cite their word for 'seed, corn', which is *vøxtr*, 'vegetation'. Gutenbrunner has pointed out that the same usage is found in an OE *Flursegen*, a blessing of the crop, where *wæstma* stands for 'seed'. More striking are the three compounds with 'wind' — *vindófnir* for 'sky', *vindflot* for 'cloud', and *vindslot* for 'calm', all three found only once in Norse poetry. If one adds to this the fact that the earth is called *vegar* 'ways', and the forest *vøndr* (the word is often used by the skalds with the meaning 'mast'), then one could possibly say, as Einar Ól. Sveinsson and others have done, that the words of the Vanir in *Alvíssmál* allude to journeys by land and sea. In western Norway the Vanir god Njörðr was principally a god of merchants and seafarers.

The vocabulary of the dwarves does not seem to me to exhibit any special characteristics, and the same applies to those creatures who are said to live *í heliu*, i.e. in the underworld or the kingdom of the dead. One case might, however, be worth mentioning. This is in stanza 32

where we read that *i heliu* seed or corn is called *hnípinn*. The word means 'drooping' and is generally used of the head, hanging down with sorrow. The meaning here must be "with drooping ears" or something similar, but the double meaning is at any rate poetically effective.¹²

It is perhaps time now to ask ourselves how a poem like *Alvissmál* is to be read. It is obvious that the poet knew of or perhaps actually shared an old heathen belief that gods and other supernatural beings speak special languages. But how seriously can we take the poem's mythological lexicography? What were the poet's sources? How much of the linguistic information that is transmitted is of genuine popular origin, and how much is to be ascribed to the poet's own imagination and invention? And what was the purpose of the poem? These questions, which also inevitably involve the problem of the poem's age, are the centre of much controversy, and, as far as I know, no commonly accepted view exists. Mogk, Sijmons, Heusler, Güntert and most recently de Vries¹³ date the poem at the earliest to the middle of the twelfth century or about 1200 and almost totally deny it any popular basis — Gering's criticism that the poem is "ein versifiziertes Kapitel aus der skaldischen Poetik" is quoted with approbation; but scholars like Olrik, Magnus Olsen and Finnur Jónsson have emphasized the poem's heathen and popular character and its practical purpose. For example, Magnus Olsen writes: "Det har været *Alvissmál's* digter magtpaaliggende at lære sin samtid de ord, som bruktes i de overnaturlige væseners verdener og som menneskene maatte kunne,

¹² According to Sijmons-Gering *hnípinn* is "als Bezeichnung des Getreides sonst nicht nachgewiesen". This needs qualification. In the so-called *Eddu-brot* printed in *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* II (1852), 494, we find the word in a sense admittedly not wholly identical with what *Alvissmál* has but very close to it. Under the heading *her ær hilylum haliar* (sic) the names of things and people belonging to this region are given, and *hnípinn* is the name of the *akr* there. — The word *hnípinn* also gives a clue as to what kind of grain was cultivated in Iceland at the time the poem was composed. The term suits admirably four rowed barley with a bending ear. Cf. N. von Hofsten, *op. cit.*, 65.

¹³ See his *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte* II (1967), 112.

naar de færdedes utenfor hjemmet.”¹⁴ Finnur Jónsson dates *Alvíssmál* to the tenth century, as does Boer in his *Edda* commentary, and even suggests that the poet may have been Norwegian.

Another problem concerns the poem's narrative framework. It has generally been thought remarkable that “Thor, who is not otherwise portrayed as a particularly intelligent or inquisitive person, here wins a test of knowledge through his cunning” (Noreen), and most people have seen this as something secondary and late. However, in his book on Thor, published in 1947, Helge Ljungberg maintains that the idea of Thor as a gullible god is secondary, and that the picture we have of him in *Alvíssmál* is more original. At the same time Ljungberg also assumes that the poem is a late work.

I do not propose to go into all these problems. We must content ourselves with a number of points which are raised by the language of the poem.

It is striking, and has indeed often been pointed out, that the words attributed to the Vanir all begin with *v*; they are nine in number: *vegar*, ‘earth’ (10), *vindófnir*, ‘sky’ (12), *vindflot*, ‘cloud’ (18), *vindslot*, ‘calm’ (22), *vágr*, ‘sea’ (24), *vág(r)*, which should perhaps be *væginn*, ‘fire’ (26), *vøndr*, ‘forest’ (28), *vøxtr*, ‘seed, corn’ (32), *veig*, ‘ale’ (34). If one extends this examination to the other beings, one finds the following. The dwarves' words begin with *d* in five cases out of seven, namely *driúpan sal*, ‘sky’ (12), *Dvalins leika*, ‘sun’ (16), *dags vero*, ‘calm’ (22), *diúpan mar*, ‘sea’ (24), *draumniþrun*, ‘night’ (30). The two dwarf-words which do not begin with *d* are *skin*, ‘moon’ (14), and *forbrennir*, ‘fire’ (26). The giants' terms begin with a vowel and therefore alliterate with their name, *iþtnar*, in ten cases out of thirteen: the exceptions are *skyndir* (14), *freki* (26), *hreinalög* (34). The words of the Æsir, however, never alliterate with their name and those of the elves (like those of men) do so

¹⁴ *Maal og minne* (1909), 91.

only sporadically, almost unintentionally. As Güntert has shown, the explanation is simple when we realize that we are dealing with a poem in *ljóðaháttr* and that as far as possible the poet has used a definite sequence for the different beings. Of the six lines of the *ljóðaháttr* stanza the two half-lines alliterate in pairs, while the third and sixth lines, the so-called full lines, alliterate internally. The fact that the Vanir words all begin with *v* and that the dwarves' words begin in five cases with *d* depends entirely on the fact that the Vanir always and the dwarves five times are mentioned in the third and sixth lines respectively. In the full lines word and name alliterate *without exception*, no matter what the latter may be, thus not only *Vanir* and *dwarves*, but also the more occasional *ginnregin*, *uppregin*, *halir*, *i heliu*, etc. So we find *kalla gneggjuð ginnregin* (20:3), *kalla grímu ginnregin* (30:3), *kalla aur uppregin* (10:6), *kalla hliðþang halir* (28:3), *alskrí ása synir* (16:6), *kalla sumbl Suttungs synir* (34:6), *kalla hverfanda hvél heliu í* (14:3)¹⁵, *kalla í heliu hiálm huliðs* (18:6), *kalla í heliu hviðuð* (20:6), etc. Of the eleven words attributed to the elves only one begins with a vowel, *ártali* (14); as we might expect, it is in the sixth line — the elves otherwise always appear in the fifth.

Outside the two full lines the different terms do *not* alliterate with the names of the beings who use them, (those of the giants do, but this is only a superficial impression, see below). This is entirely due to the fact that the short lines in *ljóðaháttr* do not as a rule have more than one alliterating word. The result is therefore that name and word that appear in one line do not alliterate with each other but rather with name or word in the other line of the pair, word with word as here:

Himinn heitir með mönnum
en hlýrnir með goðum (12);

¹⁵ This line with its abnormal four lifts should doubtless be emended on the lines suggested by E. Noreen in *Studier i nordisk filologi* 4:5 (1913), to *kalla í heliu hverfanda hvél*.

or word with name as here:

uppheim iǫtnar,
álfar fagaræfr (12).

As we see, the giants' word *uppheimr* also alliterates with their name, *iǫtnar*. It was noted above that ten of the thirteen giant-words begin with a vowel. It can however be claimed that this is, if I may say so, entirely accidental. In all cases the name *elves* (*álfar*) comes in the following line. The giants' word is thus determined by the mythological name in the following line, not by the word *iǫtunn*. Stanzas 14, 26 and 34 show that this is the case, for here the elves of line 5 are replaced by *dwarves* (14, 26) and *i heliu* (34). The giants' words in these cases are *skyndir*, *freki* and *hreinalög*, which do not begin with vowels.

One can see that the constrictions imposed by alliteration and other technical requirements caused the poet much difficulty. The line pairs were relatively easy to compose, but the need to find alliterating words in the full lines through all of thirteen stanzas proved difficult. Men, the Æsir and the giants recur regularly, stanza after stanza, in their special positions, in the first, second and fourth lines respectively, for here the poet could allow himself a certain freedom in his choice of alliterating syllable, and for the same reason the fifth line was for the most part reserved for the elves. But in the third and sixth lines the poet's system breaks down beyond repair. It was surely the difficulty of finding alliterating words which called for the introduction of the following names, whose significance otherwise remains unclear: *ginnregin* (twice), *uppregin* (once), *halir* (once), *Suttungs synir* (once), *ása synir* (once) and *i heliu* (six times). Such an assumption is supported by the fact that the above names — with only one exception — appear in lines 3 and 6, the full lines. The terminological confusion and the lack of consistency have their roots in technical difficulties.

In his literary history Finnur Jónsson has tried hard to sort out the poem's nomenclature. He thinks *ginnregin*, 'the great gods' or 'the strong powers', are the *Vanir*, since this term appears in the third line which is normally reserved for the *Vanir* (stanzas 20:3 and 30:3). One can perhaps agree. But that *uppregin* (10:6) should refer to the elves, which Finnur Jónsson also tentatively suggests, seems highly unlikely in view of the fact that the elves are mentioned earlier in the same stanza (in line 5!). It is equally impossible to identify the people located *i heliu*, mentioned six times, as the dwarves, for in two stanzas (14:3, 26:6) they appear in addition to the dwarves. *Halir* in stanza 28:3 is also curious. Old Icelandic *halr* (an *i*-stem) is not known to have any other meaning than 'man, human being'. But men and their words are mentioned first in every stanza throughout the poem (likewise in stanza 28). Vilhelm Kiil¹⁶ has attempted to show that the form *halr* is the result of the falling together of two entirely different words, namely the well-known Germanic **haliþ*, **haluþ* (cf. the OI variant *hōldr*, 'a free man') on the one hand, and on the other an old masculine *i*-stem **hali-*, formed from the same root as OI *hel*, 'the kingdom of the dead'. This latter *halr* would therefore mean 'inhabitant of hel', i.e. 'a dead man', and, says Kiil, it is this word we find in *Alvissmál* 28. But Kiil's only support for the reconstructed **halr*, 'dead man', is *Alvissmál* 28 — which lends most fragile support. It is to be admitted that *halir* in *Alvissmál* 28 is perplexing, but it is hardly less perplexing to find *Æsir*, *Vanir* and *uppregin* in stanza 10, both gods and *ása synir* in stanza 16, and both giants and *Suttungs synir* in stanza 34.

In the short lines, too, the poet's freedom of choice was greatly restricted by the metrical conventions. No less than ten of the thirteen words attributed to the gods alliterate with the words of men: *himinn*: *hlýrnir*; *máni*

¹⁶ *Arkiv* 68 (1953), 90.

mýlinn; *sól*: *sunna*, etc. In all these cases the human words begin with a consonant and the poet did not have at his disposal a synonym for *Æsir* which could alliterate with the human word. Three of the human words, however, do begin with vowels and in these cases the poet was free to choose the name *æsir* (instead of *goð*) and place it in an alliterating position. The choice of words for the gods could then be made without reference to the demands of alliteration (*fold* 10, *funi* 26, *biórr* 34). The poet had significantly greater freedom of movement in line 5, the elves' line. As pointed out above, the giants' words (in line 4) begin ten times with a vowel and rhyme with the name of the elves found in the following line. Thus the elves' words fell outside the alliterating scheme and could be chosen freely. This freedom of choice played an important role, for it allowed a unified character to be imposed on the content of the elves' words, to give an impression of brightness and beauty, which has already been mentioned (*gróandi*, *fagraræfr*, *fagrahvél*, *fagrlími*, *svefngaman*).

It seems indisputable therefore that the demands of alliteration have influenced to a significant extent the distribution of words from the languages of the gods and the supernatural powers. For why should the words of the Vanir and the dwarves alliterate with their own names but not those of the *Æsir* and the elves? It seems as if it was not always the *word* which was considered the most important thing and allowed to determine its surroundings. The opposite seems sometimes true — especially in the case of the words of the Vanir and the dwarves. Older scholars, represented for example by Friedrich Kauffmann, were inclined to interpret alliteration between the names of certain beings and their vocabulary as a reflexion of ancient notions of a magical connection between a being and its language. However, a detailed examination of the composition of the poem lends no support to such a view.

Given our findings so far, we are perhaps prepared to be somewhat sceptical of claims that lend the poem much value as a source of information about heathen mythology and popular belief. But we must not jump to conclusions.

In an essay entitled 'Det norrøne Sprog på Shetland og den nordiske Kultur', published in *Nordisk Tidsskrift* in 1897, the Danish philologist Axel Olrik was able to announce a number of remarkable discoveries. His essay is a review of Jakob Jakobsen's book *Det norrøne Sprog på Shetland*, and Olrik devotes much attention to the striking, so-called 'noa-words' which Jakobsen recorded as in use among the fishing population of Shetland. It is a well-attested popular belief that in certain circumstances some words are dangerous or unsuited for use — they are 'taboo'. In such circumstances cryptic circumlocutions are used instead — these are 'noa-words'. Such notions of taboo seem to have been especially common amongst fishermen; at sea, especially when actually fishing, it was not permissible to use the common names of things, but special 'sea-words' were used instead, in order not to wake the displeasure of the powers of the sea. Jakobsen cites a long list of such 'sea-words' used by the Shetland fishermen, and Olrik points out in his review that some of these Shetland noa-words show a remarkable similarity to certain expressions in *Alvíssmál*. In the language of the fishermen the sea is called *djub*, *mār*, *lög* or *hōlást*, this last seemingly descended from a form *álvøzt*, 'a fishing bank'. In *Alvíssmál* 24 we learn that the dwarves call the sea *diúpan mar*, the elves call it *lagastaf*, which Olrik and several with him translate as 'material for *lōgr*', i.e. what is fluid, water, sea; and the giants called it *álheimr* 'eel-home'. Thus we have the parallels — Shet. *djub* and *mār*: *diúpan mar*; Shet. *lög*: *lagastaf*; Shet. *hōlást* < *álvøzt*: *álheimr*. Likewise with 'fire': in the Shetlands it is called *fona*: the Æsir in *Alvíssmál* call it *funi* (26); Shet. *brener*,

bräner: cf. the dwarves' word in *Alvissmál*, *forbrennir*. Or *sun*: in the Shetland fishermen's language *foger*: in the language of the elves *fagrahvél* (16) 'the fair wheel'. In addition Olrik points out certain similarities in word-formation. Shetland *brener* 'the burner' and *sjiner* 'the shiner', the latter used of the sun, correspond to words in *Alvissmál* of the type *forbrennir* (of fire), *skyndir* 'one who speeds' (of the moon) and *æpir* 'the shouter' (of the wind) etc., *ia*-stems.

Olrik is opposed to the idea that *Alvissmál* merely contains a collection of purely *poetic* expressions and paraphrases, which the poet has transferred to the spheres of the gods, giants and dwarves. When the poet of *Alvissmál* ascribes to supernatural beings a language which he wishes to teach to his fellow men, then this — according to Olrik — must be connected with the existence of a language which human beings must learn and use in order to curry favour with supernatural beings. Having reminded his readers of the similarities between *Alvissmál* and the noa-words of the Shetland fishermen, Olrik sums up his view of the poem as follows: "*Alvissmál* har ikke skjaldesproget, men det overtroiske huldresprog, 'søordene', og desl., til sin væsentlige forudsætning."

After Olrik's analysis it is difficult not to believe that at least some of the words that are said to belong to the languages of gods and other powers in *Alvissmál* are of popular origin, and belong to the language of magic. One or two of Olrik's examples are perhaps questionable. When Olrik translates Shetland *hólást* by 'the eel-bank', i.e. 'the place at sea where eel is fished', and places it alongside *álheimr*, 'eel-home', in *Alvissmál*, he has not studied what Jakobsen says carefully enough. Jakobsen identifies the prefix in Shetland *hólást* with OWN *áll*, 'deep cleft in the sea-bed'. Fish are often caught near such clefts. If *álheimr* in *Alvissmál* is to be translated as 'eel-home', 'eel-world', then the similarity with Shetland *hólást* is purely accidental.

Olrik's unsatisfactory translation of Shetland *hōlāst* has left traces in Norwegian place-name research. A quite large island off the north Norwegian coast is called *Alsten*. The medieval forms of the name are compatible with the idea that the island was earlier called *Álvøzt*, i.e. that the name is identical with the Shetland sea-word *hōlāst* and OI **álvøzt*, 'fishing-place at sea'. The juxtaposition has been made by Magnus Olsen. Like Olrik, Magnus Olsen believes that the fish name *ál* (eel) is the first element. It is, however, presumably true, as Olsen points out, that eel-fishing never played so significant a role in northern Norway that the island, *Alsten*, was named after it. Olsen is therefore inclined to recognize the name as the Shetland sea-word, i.e. as a noa-name. The island, he says, originally had another name. He continues: "Fiskerne har, naar de var paa fangst utenfor øen, ikke vovet at betegne den ved dens egentlige navn, fordi dette paa en eller anden maate har været egnet til at vække havvættens opmærksomhet, og saa har de dannet et fuldstændig ligegyldig ønavn, som var ufarlig derved, at det kun indeholdt navnet paa den i forhold til de vigtige fiskearter (torsk, sild osv.) ganske værdiløse aal."¹⁷ — However, neither OI **álvøzt* nor the corresponding Shetland 'sea-word' *hōlāst* contains the word 'eel', but instead the word *áll*, 'deep cleft in the sea-bed'. The Norwegian name is not a noa-name, but must be interpreted literally. The name can mean 'the fishing place near the deep cleft', an interpretation which finds support in the local geography. — Nor can one place too much weight on the Shetland word *hōlāst* as a noa-word. Cf. OI *áll*, 'cleft', and *vøzt*, 'fishing place', with the meaning 'sea' in the poetic language, where taboo notions do not enter the picture at all.

Such objections to details need not undermine Olrik's and Magnus Olsen's main conclusion — that a magical,

¹⁷ *Maal og minne* (1909), 93.

popular noa- or taboo-language comprises at least one of the elements in the lexicography of *Alvíssmál*.

But not everything in the poem's vocabulary has its roots in the language of popular magic. In disposition *Alvíssmál* is strongly reminiscent of *Vafþrúðnismál* and Boer is in my opinion right when he asserts that *Alvíssmál* imitates that poem. Thor introduces all his questions, *mutatis mutandis*, with these words:

Segðu mér þat, Alvíss,
— öll of røk fira
vorumk, dvergr, at vitir —
hvé sú iðrð heitir —

This seems like an amalgam of the two variants in *Vafþrúðnismál*

Segðu mér, Gagnráðr, allz þú á gólfí vill þíns um freista frama, hvé sá hestr heitir . . .	Segðu þat it eina, ef þitt æði dugir ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir . . .
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In the final stanza of *Vafþrúðnismál* the giant admits that Odin is the victor in their test of wisdom.

Feigom munni mæltá ek mína forna stafi
ok um ragna røk.

With fated mouth the fall of gods
And mine olden tales have I told.

In the final stanza of *Alvíssmál* the dwarf admits:

Í eino briósti ek sák aldregi
fleiri forna stafi.

In a single breast I have never seen
More wealth of wisdom old.

The expression *fornir stafir* ('olden tales', 'old wisdom') fits better in *Vafþrúðnismál* than in *Alvíssmál* and was presumably borrowed from it by the poet of *Alvíssmál*.

In the language of the inhabitants of Hel the moon is called *hverfanda hvél*, which for an Icelander probably meant 'whirling wheel'. Such a meaning is undoubtedly the one we meet in the well-known passage in *Hávamál*

(stanza 84): A man shall not trust the oath of a maid nor the word a woman speaks:

— þvíat á hverfanda hvéli
vóro þeim hiǫrto sköpuð —

for their hearts were fashioned on a whirling wheel. It is doubtless the potter's wheel which is here called *hverfanda hvél*.

Boer is of the opinion that influence from *Hávamál* is behind the moon's name, *hverfanda hvél*, in *Alvíssmál*.

It is possible that *Hávamál* was in the thoughts of the poet of *Alvíssmál*, despite the fact that the verb *hverfa* can hardly have the same meaning in both poems. I believe, however, that *Vafþrúðnismál* may also have played a part here. Odin asks (stanza 22):

hvaðan máni um kom,
svá at ferr menn yfir,
eða sól it sama.

and *Vafþrúðnir* replies:

Mundilfœri heitir;
hann er Mána faðir
ok svá Sólar it sama;
himin hverfa
þau skulo hverian dag
öldom at ártali.

Here we have *hverfa* with a meaning 'to move across the sky in an arc', a meaning which admirably fits *hverfanda hvél* in *Alvíssmál*. In addition we can note that the moon (and the sun) according to *Vafþrúðnismál* are *at ártali* for men, i.e. are of help when measuring time. As we remember, *ártali*, 'the year teller', is the elves' word for 'moon' in *Alvíssmál*. The word is *hapax legomenon* (it occurs also in a *þula* but is doubtless a borrowing from *Alvíssmál*), and *ártal* ('reckoning by years') in *Vafþrúðnismál* is also *hapax legomenon*.

It is thus possible to demonstrate literary influence on *Alvíssmál*, especially from *Vafþrúðnismál*. When the poet makes the *halir* in stanza 28 call the forest (*viðr*)

hlidþang, 'seaweed of the hills', then he presumably had stanza 24 of *Ynglingatal* in his thoughts, where *hlidar þang* occurs with such a meaning. But my main impression is that the poet is quite independent. Surprisingly enough, many of the words attributed to divine and other powers are *hapax legomena* or are only found in *þulur* from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, whose source could quite easily have been *Alvissmál*. I include here such cases where the meaning or function of an otherwise known word is unique. To mention a few: *vindófnir* (for sky), *skyndir* (of the moon), *ártali* (moon), *vindflot*, *veðrmegin* (clouds), *hiálmr huliðs* (also clouds), *dagsefi* and *dags vera* (calm), *fagrlimi* (forest), *svefngaman* and *draumniðrun* (night). For the most part words from *Alvissmál* are only found very rarely in the poetic language, this despite their poetic character. Gering's often quoted judgement on the poem — "a versified chapter from scaldic poetics" — is therefore somewhat wide of the mark, as Erik Noreen has pointed out. Much indicates that the poet himself created many of the poetic words and expressions which he attributes to different beings. Finnur Jónsson however has maintained in various places that all the words of the gods and other powers are older than the poem and that the poet did not create a single one of them. It is an opinion that I find difficult to share.

The most divergent views have been held concerning the poem's age. Finnur Jónsson counts *Alvissmál* among the older poems about the gods in the *Edda* and dates it to the tenth century. The poem's terminological confusion and its lack of system are taken by him to be evidence of its great age. "Var dígтет forfattet i 12 årh., væntede man snarest fuld systematik gennem det hele." He seems to mean that the deficiencies of the poem have arisen as a result of the poem's preservation. I, on the other hand, have attempted to demonstrate that the inconsistencies are due to technical difficulties and that they have therefore always been present in the text.

Heusler and most recently Jan de Vries have advanced the view that a work like *Alvíssmál* is only possible in a post-classical era (at the earliest around the middle of the twelfth century). Erik Noreen objects to Heusler's view and writes that a literary culture developed at a very early stage in western Scandinavia, and that consequently *Alvíssmál* could quite easily have been composed during the heathen period. Einar Ól. Sveinsson, who has most recently discussed the question of the poem's age, thinks it doubtful whether *Alvíssmál* should be placed either among the older or the younger poems of gods. He points out that the so-called expletive particle *of* occurs several times in the poem and is of the opinion that this is indicative of "nokkrum aldri".

As far as one can see, there are not many fixed points of reference to help with the dating of *Alvíssmál*. The poem appears certainly younger than *Vafþrúðnismál*, which probably dates from the first half of the tenth century. A word like *sunna* seems to me to point to the end of the tenth century as the first possible date for composition. Two of the stanzas (20 and 30) are quoted in Snorri's *Edda* from c. 1220. This gives a *terminus ante quem*. The period we must stick to is thus the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A more precise dating seems to me to be impossible at the present time.

The poem shows that the poet was a man with a pronounced interest in and sense for words. He *collected* words, and *speculated* on them. He drew on many sources. He seems to have borrowed least from his colleagues, the skalds. The language of popular magic and his own creative linguistic fantasy were his most important assets. Behind the poem there lies the notion of a special language spoken by the gods and other powers, and its character — as the poet understood it — is shown clearly enough. But the way the words are distributed among the different supernatural groups must not be taken too seriously. We are dealing primarily with a freely creative

poet, a man for whom the discovery of old and rare words and the creation of new ones were a source of pleasure and satisfaction. One does not have the impression that he had any particularly serious intention in composing his verses. Despite the poem's similarity to *þulur*, he scarcely intended to create a handbook for skalds. It seems even less likely that the poet wished to help his fellow men in communicating with the gods and with dangerous powers by teaching them words used by these supernatural beings. (One notes with a certain amount of surprise that Thor himself uses the words of men in his questions. Whether this is due to an oversight on the part of the poet or whether he found this arrangement a practical necessity is difficult to say. In any case it helps to strengthen the impression that the poet did not himself take the fiction of the languages of different worlds all that seriously.)

Alviðsmál is first and foremost a virtuoso performance. The poet shows off his rich vocabulary and his powers of expression. And the fictitious connection with other worlds is secondary. Like the poem's narrative frame, the *heim*-fiction is a stylistic trick — and not an unsuccessful one. As I have pointed out several times, the poet knew and perhaps himself shared the old popular belief that gods and supernatural powers spoke a special language. But the differentiation of this non-human speech into languages of gods, giants, dwarves, the inhabitants of Hel and the others is certainly to a large extent the poet's own invention.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE LANGUAGE OF
DUNSTANUS SAGA

WITH AN APPENDIX ON
THE BIBLE COMPILATION *STJÓRN*

By PETER HALLBERG

I

THE SUBJECT of this paper is the Icelandic translation *Dunstanus saga*, dealing with St Dunstan (c. 909-988; Archbishop of Canterbury 959) and almost completely derived from Latin sources.¹ My point of departure is my earlier work on a cluster of religious Icelandic texts, all probably written in the first part of the fourteenth century. They turned out to have a lot of striking linguistic and stylistic features in common, both syntax and vocabulary.² These texts are anonymous, with the exception of a later version of *Nikolaus saga erkibiskups* and a *Mikaels saga*, which are both attributed in the manuscripts themselves to a "brother" Bergr Sökkason and "brother" Sökkason respectively. This man is obviously identical with Bergr Sökkason, who became a monk at Þingeyrar in 1317, prior of Munka-Þverá in 1322 and abbot of the same monastery in 1325. For some unknown reason he gave up his office in 1334 but resumed it in 1345; the year of his death is not known.³

In view of the close and to some extent very special relations within that cluster of texts — also in their sources

¹ I quote from the edition by Christine Elizabeth Fell: *Dunstanus Saga* (Editiones Arnarnagnæanæ, Series B, 5, 1963). See her Introduction (pp. ix-xci) for the sources of the translation, its author, manuscripts, etc.

² I refer to my *Stilsignalement och författarskap i norrön sagalitteratur* (Nordistica Gothoburgensia 3, 1968), and two papers: 'Jóns saga helga', *Afmælisrit Jóns Helgasonar* (1969), 59-69, and 'Om Magnúss saga helga', *Einarsbók. Afmælisræðja til Einars Ól. Sveinssonar* (1969), 59-70.

³ For Bergr Sökkason cf. Peter Foote, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle in Iceland: A Contribution to the Study of the Karlamagnus Saga* (London Mediaeval Studies, Monograph No. 4, 1959), 24-5.

and the general treatment of their topics — it was tempting to ascribe them all to Bergr Sökkason. Such a conclusion would also explain why Bergr is said by contemporaries to have been in high esteem for *many* books on holy men: *margar sögubækur heilagra manna* or *margar heilagra manna sögur*.⁴ The two compositions *Nikolaus saga erkbiskups* and *Mikaels saga* hardly meet that description on their own.

Later I have come to notice that *Dunstanus saga* also offers a considerable number of the linguistic and stylistic features which I had regarded as characteristic of Bergr Sökkason. However, in the introduction to *Dunstanus saga* the translator and compiler introduces himself as *broder Arne Laurencii* (p. 1). This of course implies a problem for my earlier attributions to Bergr Sökkason, or at least for one or two of them. There is also the question of Bergr's personal influence on his younger compatriot Árni. Their relations as monks in the same monastery, Þingeyrar, appear to have been very close. We have some information on them from the biography of Árni's father, *Laurentius saga biskups*.

II

It seems convenient to begin by applying my linguistic "Bergr-tests" also to *Dunstanus saga*, which is a rather short text, *c.* 6700 words in all.⁵

The proportion of *reverse word order* in usual main clauses — *Fór hann* instead of *Hann fór* — has turned out to vary greatly from one writer to another, and thus to be an indicator in questions of attribution.⁶ For instance, in the big compilation *Sturlunga saga*, which is rather

⁴ The quotations are from *Laurentius saga Hólabiskups* in *Biskupa sögur* I (1858), 832 and 850 respectively.

⁵ For special problems and details concerning the construction and application of the tests I refer to my book *Stilsignalement* (see note 2 above).

⁶ Cf. my paper 'Om språkliga författarkriterier i isländska sagatexter', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* LXXX (1965), 157-86.

homogeneous in its genre and subjects, the ratios of reverse word order range from 1.3 per cent (*Sturlu þátttr*) to 59 per cent (*Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*). An average in saga literature seems to be about 30 per cent. Figures on that level, let us say between 20 and 40 per cent, make a "normal" impression. On the other hand, such extremes as figures below 10 per cent or above 50 per cent undoubtedly reveal special habits or preferences of the authors. It should be added that this "word order ratio" usually remains fairly constant (within wide limits, of course) throughout one and the same text. Such a constancy indicates that we have to do with an individual writing habit. But certainly other factors, such as the genre (Icelanders' sagas, Kings' sagas, Bishops' sagas, etc.), also play their part and complicate the picture. The language of a text within a certain genre has to be considered in relation to the general linguistic pattern of that genre.

As for Bergr Sökkason, his authentic *Nikolaus saga* (*Nik*) has a very high share of reverse word order, 60 per cent; also *Mikaels saga* (*Mik*) comes close to that proportion: 57 per cent.⁷ Among the works which I have supposed to be "Bergr-texts" are two voluminous Bishops' sagas: late versions of *Tómas saga erkbiskups* (*Tómas*) and *Guðmundar saga Arasonar* (*Guðm*), with 36 per cent and 51 per cent respectively.⁸

Dunstanus saga (*Dunst*) fits well into this pattern with its very high proportion of reverse word order: 70 per cent (35 cases against 15 of normal word order). Just a single example may be cited: *Gegg at honum einn ungur madr. j hinum biartazta bunade* (p. 3).

⁷ *Michaels saga* and *Nikolaus saga erkbiskups* II are printed in C. R. Unger, *Heilagra manna sögur* (1877), I 676-713, and II 49-158, respectively. *Mik* has c. 15,600 words, *Nik* c. 45,000. For the application of my tests to these sagas, cf. *Stilsignalement*, 129-37.

⁸ I have used C. R. Unger, *Thomas saga erkbiskups* (1869), and *Guðmundar biskups saga* in *Biskupa sögur* II (1878). In both cases I have applied my tests to the first 60,000 words, which is about 80 per cent of *Tómas* and 90 per cent of *Guðm*. Other "Bergr-texts" have been left aside here, except a version of *Jóns saga helga* which is of importance for my discussion in this paper.

In order to facilitate the comparison I list the figures just presented. Corresponding lists will be given with the same texts in the same order in the subsequent tests.

<i>Dunst</i>	70 per cent (35/15)
<i>Nik</i>	60 per cent (62/41)
<i>Mik</i>	57 per cent (56/42)
<i>Tómas</i>	36 per cent (196/354)
<i>Guðm</i>	51 per cent (553/528) ⁹

My next linguistic criterion is the *present/preterite ratio* in the author's narrative.¹⁰ On the whole the sagas are known for a comparatively high frequency of the present tense. But just as with word order, texts within one and the same saga genre may reveal great differences. Thus, Icelanders' sagas range from 3.2 per cent in *Eyrbyggja saga* to 37 per cent in *Laxdœla saga* and to 78 per cent in one version of *Bandamanna saga* (*M*; the other version, *K*, has 72 per cent). The present/preterite ratio is comparable to the reverse word order proportion as a feature of individual style. For instance, the figures just presented seem to exclude the possibility that *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Bandamanna saga* could have the same author.

In this case *Dunst* differs rather drastically from the authentic "Bergr-profile", as the following list shows:

<i>Dunst</i>	19.5 per cent (26/106)
<i>Nik</i>	83 per cent (192/38)
<i>Mik</i>	79 per cent (172/45)
<i>Tómas</i>	85 per cent (1105/200)
<i>Guðm</i>	56 per cent (167/133)

Another distinctive feature is the distribution of the three most common *verbs* introducing *direct speech*: *mæla*, *segja*, *svara*.¹¹ The "Bergr-texts" distinguish

⁹ For the application of this and other tests cf. *Stilsignalement*; each of the relevant chapters there has the same arrangement.

¹⁰ Cf. the chapter on 'Berättartempus' (61-79) in *Stilsignalement*.

¹¹ Cf. *Stilsignalement*, 111-13, and the following chapters on various "Bergr-texts".

themselves by a comparatively low frequency of *mæla* and a correspondingly high one of *segja* and *svara*. It should be remarked that the diverging proportions in *Mik* have a special cause: 9 out of 14 instances of *mæla* appear in a section copied more or less verbatim from a version of *Duggals leizla*, another piece found in *Heilagra manna sögur (HMS)*.¹² *Dunst* corresponds excellently to the specific distribution in the "Bergr-texts":

	<i>mæla</i>	<i>segja</i>	<i>svara</i>
<i>Dunst</i>	0 (0)	79 (11)	21 (3)
<i>Nik</i>	13·5 (19)	64 (92)	22 (32)
<i>Mik</i>	38 (14)	38 (14)	24 (9)
<i>Tómas</i>	4·2 (8)	57 (110)	38 (74)
<i>Guðm</i>	0·8 (2)	47 (121)	51 (132)

Still more significant, though, is the occurrence of the introductory verb *tala*, on the whole very rare in saga literature. We meet it 3 times in *Dunst*:

[heyrdi] hann sælan Anndreazt postola mæla með blidu anndlite. þessi *gudspiallzt ord. til sin talannde. Tollite iugum meum super uos (p. 14)

Þaa taladi fyr nefnt eingla fylki cherubin ok sera(phin) uid sælan Dun(stanum). at uisu skaltu buinn uera (p. 21)

(Dunstanus) suo talandi uid um standandi menn. Nu siae þier ener kærustu brædr ok syner huert ek em kalladr (p. 23).

These 3 cases make 17·5 per cent of the whole group *mæla/segja/svara/tala*. A similar frequency of *tala* is a striking characteristic of the "Bergr-texts", as the following figures indicate:

<i>Dunst</i>	17·5 per cent (3 out of 17)
<i>Nik</i>	15·5 per cent (15 out of 96)
<i>Mik</i>	16 per cent (7 out of 44)
<i>Tómas</i>	23 per cent (58 out of 250)
<i>Guðm</i>	21 per cent (69 out of 324)

¹² Cf. my paper 'Broder Robert, Tristrams saga och Duggals leizla', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* LXXXVIII (1973), 55-71, esp. 66.

As a matter of fact, *tala* as an introductory verb seems to be extremely infrequent outside the "Bergr-texts". The only exception I had noticed before *Dunst* was *Laurentius saga biskups* (see p. 325 above) with its 22 per cent (28 cases out of 127).¹³ Another one is a large section of the Old Testament text, *Stjórn*; that text will be dealt with summarily in an Appendix to this paper.

Of the linguistic-stylistic tests applied up to now, the high frequency of *reverse word order* and the *distribution of the verbs* introducing *direct speech* (including the very uncommon *tala*) come close to the typical "Bergr-profile". On the other hand, the low rate of the *present tense* in Árni Laurentiusson's narrative rather disagrees with that profile.

III

Two different *vocabulary tests* were constructed to make a filter for tracing "Bergr-texts". One comprised the following 12 words or phrases: *dásama* 'admire, praise', *dragsa* 'drag, trail', *eptir megni* 'to the best of one's ability', *eptir svá talat* 'having spoken thus', *forsjá/forsjó* 'care, management', *frábærr* 'excellent, unparalleled', *geysi* 'highly, extremely', *greindr* 'above-mentioned', *mekt* 'force, power', *þunktr* 'point, place', *stórliga* 'greatly, extremely', *umbergis* 'around'. The other list had 9 items: *einkanliga* 'especially, particularly', *fljótr* 'fast, rapid, swift' (instead of the far more frequent *skjótr*), *fullting* 'assistance, help', *hæverska* 'courtesy', *kumpánn* 'companion, fellow', *lypta sinni ferð* 'start one's journey', *öftluga* 'often', *prófa* 'get to know, learn; prove', *senniliga* 'in truth, truly'.¹⁴

These 21 words or phrases turned out to be characteristic of my "Bergr-texts", compared to a voluminous control material from other texts of the same kind. But of

¹³ Cf. *Stilsignalement*, 155.

¹⁴ For the construction of these vocabulary tests, cf. *Stilsignalement*, 114-8.

course they vary greatly in frequency, both within the "Bergr-texts" themselves and in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelandic literature as a whole. Such words as *dásama*, *frábærr*, *umbergis* are extremely rare outside the "Bergr-texts",¹⁵ while *einkanliga*, *fullting*, *optliga*, for instance, are rather common, especially in religious texts.

Now, of the first series (*dásama* etc.) *Dunst* has 7 cases: *forsjá/forsjó* 2 (epter gudligri forsio 3⁶; guds forsia 6¹⁸); *greindr* 2 (senndande [...] fyrir [g]reinnda postola 15¹; bidiandi med saunnu godfysi fyrer adr greindum *myntarum 18²³); *mekt* 1 (Enn suo göfug sem hans fedginn uorv at heims mekt. uorv þau miklu gofgare igodum sidum. ok gudligri spekt 2²⁸); *punktr* 1 (þar uar einginn hia honum j þan punkt er hann steyppte aptur af sier hoklinum 19⁶); *stórliga* 1 (Enn þuiat uer erum storliga *þyngder af uorvm synndum 2¹⁷).

These 7 instances make a rate of 10.5 per 10,000 words (the measure I have chosen for comparison). A list including the same works as in the tests above gives the following figures:

<i>Dunst</i>	10.5/10000 (7 cases)
<i>Nik</i>	24/10000 (75 cases)
<i>Mik</i>	21/10000 (20 cases)
<i>Tómas</i>	6.5/10000 (39 cases)
<i>Guðm</i>	9.2/10000 (55 cases)

The figures for *Tómas* and *Guðm* probably strike the reader as low, compared to those for the two authentic Bergr-texts. But they are in fact high in comparison with the corresponding frequencies in my control material.¹⁶

Of the second series *Dunst* provides 9 cases: *einkanliga* 1 (ok einkanliga/birtizt honum gud fyrer enn sæla Anndream postola 20¹⁹); *kumpánn* 3 (mikinn flokk heluisk[ra] anda

¹⁵ Cf. *Stilsignalement*, the summing-up on 163-4.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. the figures for *Heilagra manna sögur*, *Mariu saga* and the various Bishops' sagas in *Stilsignalement*, 132-3, 139-40 and 156.

ok kumphana 5¹⁶; [Dunstanus] stod stadfasliga med sinum kumpanum ok heilt med Ethuardo 10⁶; eda med huerium hætti þeir hefði suo skiotliga / . . / samtei⟨n⟩gðan kumpana skapp upp sagt. ok j sundr slitit 27²⁵); *optliga* 4 (savng h(eilagr) Dun(stanus) ok optliga enndurtok þessa ann(tiphonam) er guds eingill hafde kennt honum 4⁵; þuiat honum birtiz optliga guds einglar. ok heilager menn 16⁵; gud uilldi eigi lata þat klædi aa jord koma. eda aa duptugt golf nidr falla er suo heilagur madr hafdi borit ok helgat juors herra likam. helldr op⟨t⟩liga 19¹⁷; þuiat optliga sendi gud honum sina helga menn til styrktar 20¹⁸); *þrófa* 1 (myntur meistarar er falsat hofdu peninga slag. ok sannprofader at þeirre odygd uar þeim dæmd su pina. sem til er sett j ennsko logmale 17²⁸).

The comparison list for this second series looks like this:

<i>Dunst</i>	13·5/10000	(9 cases)
<i>Nik</i>	23/10000	(72 cases)
<i>Mik</i>	22/10000	(21 cases)
<i>Tómas</i>	20/10000	(121 cases)
<i>Guðm</i>	16·5/10000	(98 cases)

Thus, in the two vocabulary tests taken together *Dunst* falls only slightly below my supposed "Bergr-texts" *Tómas* and *Guðm*. On the other hand, in *Dunst* only 9 of the 21 items are represented, whereas *Guðm* and *Tómas* have 18 and 16 items respectively; they both lack *dragsa*, *geysi* and *senniliga*, *Tómas* also *dásama* and *mekt*. But the difference may of course be due, partly or totally, to the fact that *Dunst* is much shorter than *Tómas* and *Guðm*, and consequently does not offer the same opportunities of displaying the author's "possible" range of vocabulary.

The two vocabulary lists do not include a few other words, which have turned out to be particularly characteristic of my "Bergr-texts". One of them is the phrase *án dvöl* 'without delay'; it is completely lacking in

a total control material of 368,000 words.¹⁷ Now we find 3 instances of this phrase in *Dunst*: ok samþyc[k]iz hann an [du]ol sogdum kosningi 15⁴; letu þeir aan duol afyr sogdum hatidar degi roincharana hals hogua þa epter lagana dome 18¹⁵; þessum hans ordum trudu marger menn ok skriptoduzt þegar ann duol 27¹⁸. Such a striking detail seems to be one more indication of a strong affinity between *Dunst* and my "Bergr-texts".

IV

In her edition of *Dunstanus saga* Miss Fell has pointed to its specific linguistic connections with a version of *Jóns saga helga*, a biography of Jón Ögmundarson (b. 1052, d. 23/4 1121), first bishop of Hólar (1106-1121). Miss Fell refers to that text as "translated towards the end of the thirteenth or at the beginning of the fourteenth century from a Latin *Life* written by Gunnlaugr between 1203 and 1208" (p. XLIII; Gunnlaugr is the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson of Þingeyrar, d. 1218/19). It should be added that there exist two different translations of Gunnlaugr's Latin work, which has itself been lost. Though the author of the later Icelandic version — I call it *Jón B* — has obviously made use of the older translation (*Jón A*),¹⁸ it is exclusively between *Jón B* and *Dunst* that we find the striking verbal similarities which Miss Fell has noticed.

Her findings are of special interest for the present discussion. In my paper 'Jóns saga helga' (cf. note 2, p. 324 above) I have tried to demonstrate that *Jón B* too is probably to be regarded as one of the "Bergr-texts". I will put *Dunst* and *Jón B* side by side in the various tests given above.

¹⁷ Cf. *Stilsignalement*, 163-4.

¹⁸ Cf. my paper 'Jóns saga helga' (note 2 above), 59-63. The two versions of this saga are printed in *Biskupa sögur* I (1858), 149-202 (*A*) and 213-60 (*B*).

	Reverse word order	Present tense
<i>Dunst</i>	70 per cent	18.5 per cent
<i>Jón B</i>	44 per cent	24 per cent

	Distribution of			
	<i>mæla</i>	<i>segja</i>	<i>svara</i>	<i>tala</i>
<i>Dunst</i>	0	11	3	3
<i>Jón B</i>	40	17	16	7

In the considerable frequency of the verb *mæla*, *Jón B* differs strikingly from the average "Bergr-profile", while *Dunst* comes rather close to it. But *tala*, extremely unusual as an introductory verb outside the "Bergr-texts", is fairly well represented in *Jón B* too.

In the vocabulary tests *Dunst* also reveals a somewhat closer resemblance to the typical "Bergr-profile" than *Jón B*:

	<i>dásama</i> etc.	<i>einkanliga</i> etc.
<i>Dunst</i>	10.5/10000	13.5/10000
<i>Jón B</i>	2.4/10000	13.5/10000

Jón B shows 3 instances of the unusual phrase *án dvöl* (218, 221, 260), just as *Dunst* does.

Now, if *Jón B* is to be regarded, by my standards, as a "Bergr-text", *Dunst* obviously ought to be so too. But as the latter is explicitly said to be the work of Árni Laurentiusson (and we have no special reason to doubt that statement), the hypothesis will not hold good for *Dunst*. But if so, it might not be true of *Jón B* either. That is the problem we have to deal with here.

It should be emphasised, however, that *Jón B* — unlike *Dunst* — is a revision by some other author of an earlier Icelandic version. A revision may be more or less thorough, depending on various circumstances. One cannot suppose that a reviser's work will reveal his individual linguistic preferences to the same extent as an "original" translation he has made. Personal characteristics may show up in a very uneven way, more on some points than on others. Thus, as has already been mentioned, *Jón B* has a rather high frequency of the verb

mæla — its only remarkable deviation from the genuine “Bergr-profile”. On that point — the distribution of *mæla/segja/svara* — its ratios are practically identical with those of *Jón A*. But in other cases the trend from *A* to *B* towards the “Bergr-profile” is quite clear. Thus, the low frequency of reverse word order in *A*, 11 per cent, has been raised to 44 per cent in *B*. And the rate of present tense in *A*, 11.5 per cent, has become 24 per cent in *B* — still on an average “Saga level”, it is true, but a high frequency within the whole genre of Bishops’ sagas, and after all a definite step in the direction of the “Bergr-texts”. As for the vocabulary lists (*dásama* etc. and *einkanliga* etc.), *A* has a total frequency of merely 2.8/10000, distributed over only 3 different words, and these probably the least distinctive ones: *forsjá* (1), *fullting* (3), *optliga* (1). The corresponding figures for *B* are 16/10000 and 9 respectively.¹⁹

V

In my paper ‘*Jóns saga helga*’ I constructed a special vocabulary test, built on *Jón B*. From that text I picked out a sample of words which seemed to me remarkable in some way and which were all completely absent in *A*. As the writer of *B* had introduced them, they ought to be more or less characteristic of his manner of expressing himself. The different words, 45 in all, were distributed — alternately according to alphabetical order — in two lists with 23 and 22 words respectively, with a view to providing a means of checking the homogeneity and reliability of the test. It is important that this test was constructed for the two versions of *Jóns saga helga* only, with no regard whatsoever to my former “Bergr-texts”, and still less to *Dunst*, which was then not in my mind at all.

I list here the words of my first “*Jón-B-series*”, with their meanings summarily indicated: *andar-* ‘spiritual’ (in compounds, as *andarhjálþ*), *dikt* ‘form, writing’, *flekka*

¹⁹ Cf. ‘*Jóns saga helga*’ (note 2 above), 64-7.

'contaminate, stain', *forverari* 'predecessor', *framning* 'action, execution', *fyrirdjarfa* 'disregard, reject', *harðlifi* 'ascetic life', *herraliga* 'as a powerful man, a lord', *iblástr* 'inspiration', *játari* 'confessor', *liðugr* 'free, unoccupied', *mektugr* 'considerable, powerful', *miskunnar-* 'compassionate, pitying' (in compounds, as *miskunnarfaðmr*), *partera* 'divide, share', *röksamligr* 'reliable, substantiated', *sampning* 'compassion', *sjónhverfiligr* 'illusory', *styrkliga* 'strongly', *tendra* 'kindle, incite', *umfang* 'agitation, commotion', *vanhyggja* 'imprudence, thoughtlessness', *versa* 'put into verse, make verse', *öskranligr* 'terrible'.

In the following table the frequencies of *Jón B* are listed with those of *Dunst* and the same "Bergr-texts" as before.

	<i>Dunst</i>	<i>Jón B</i>	<i>Nik</i>	<i>Mik</i>	<i>Tómas Guðm</i>	
<i>andar-</i>	—	1	—	1	—	—
<i>dikt</i>	—	1	—	—	—	1
<i>flekka</i>	—	1	—	—	3	1
<i>forverari</i>	—	1	—	—	2	3
<i>framning</i>	—	1	4	1	—	1
<i>fyrirdjarfa</i>	—	1	4	—	—	—
<i>harðlifi</i>	1	1	1	—	3	3
<i>herraliga</i>	—	2	—	1	1	—
<i>iblástr</i>	—	1	3	2	—	1
<i>játari</i>	2	2	23	—	—	—
<i>liðugr</i>	—	3	5	1	5	10
<i>mektugr</i>	1	2	1	—	—	1
<i>miskunnar-</i>	—	1	10	3	2	1
<i>partera</i>	—	2	2	—	—	—
<i>röksamligr</i>	—	1	1	—	4	2
<i>sampning</i>	—	1	1	1	3	2
<i>sjónhverfiligr</i>	1	2	—	—	—	—
<i>styrkliga</i>	—	3	5	—	—	—
<i>tendra</i>	2	2	4	—	1	1
<i>umfang</i>	—	1	—	2	—	1
<i>vanhyggja</i>	—	1	—	—	—	—
<i>versa</i>	—	1	—	—	—	—
<i>öskranligr</i>	—	1	—	—	—	1
Total	7	33	64	12	24	29
Per 10000 words	10·5	19·5	14	7·5	4	4·8

In this list *Dunst* comes rather close to *Jón B*, not quite as close as *Nik*, but closer than the other authentic Bergr-text, *Mik*. Before any comments are made on the ratios here or on individual items, however, I give the complementary list of my vocabulary test: *blóm/beranligr*, *-bæriligr* 'flourishing', *dýrðar-* 'glorious' (in compounds, as *dýrðarmaðr*), *flærð/samr*, *-samligr* 'deceitful, false', *framhleypti* 'precipitancy', *fund(n)ing* 'finding', *fyrirláta* 'abandon, leave', *heimligr* 'mundane, of the world', *hreinferðugr* 'pure, uncontaminated', *illkyndugr* 'wily', *leirbúð* 'earth(en) hut', *lystuligr* 'desirable, excellent', *mikilliga* 'highly', *næmi* 'acquisition of knowledge', *purpurligr* 'purple-coloured', *sampínask* 'feel compassion', *siðferðugr* 'moral, virtuous', *skilríkr* 'honest, trustworthy', *tempra* 'moderate, temper', *traktera* 'discuss; entertain (generously)', *undirstanda* 'learn; understand; endure', *váveifi* 'surprise', *við(r)verandi* 'present'.

	<i>Dunst</i>	<i>Jón B</i>	<i>Nik</i>	<i>Mik</i>	<i>Tómas Guðm</i>	
<i>blóm/beranligr</i> ,						
<i>-bæriligr</i>	—	2	2	—	—	—
<i>dýrðar-</i>	I	I	4	—	II	6
<i>flærð/samr</i> ,						
<i>-samligr</i>	—	I	5	—	—	—
<i>framhleypti</i>	—	I	—	—	I	—
<i>fund(n)ing</i>	—	I	—	I	—	—
<i>fyrirláta</i>	I	I	9	I	8	9
<i>heimligr</i>	—	I	4	I	3	5
<i>hreinferðugr</i>	—	I	—	—	—	I
<i>illkyndugr</i>	—	2	—	—	—	—
<i>leirbúð</i>	—	I	—	—	I	I
<i>lystuligr</i>	—	I	2	—	I	—
<i>mikilliga</i>	3	5	—	—	I	—
<i>næmi</i>	—	I	—	—	—	—
<i>purpurligr</i>	—	I	—	—	—	—
<i>sampínask</i>	—	2	5	I	I	—
<i>siðferðugr</i>	I	3	—	—	—	—
<i>skilríkr</i>	—	I	4	—	6	12
<i>tempra</i>	I	I	6	I	6	2
<i>traktera</i>	—	2	I	—	4	I
<i>undirstanda</i>	6	6	14	—	2	I
<i>váveifi</i>	—	I	—	—	—	—
<i>við(r)verandi</i>	—	2	—	—	—	—
Total	13	38	56	5	45	38
Per 10000 words	19.5	22	12.5	3.1	7.5	6.3

In this list, then, *Dunst* has a frequency quite near to that of *Jón B* and much higher than any other "Bergr-text", including the authentic *Nik* — and *Mik* (!). If we regard the two lists, with their 45 items, as one single vocabulary test, the rates per 10000 words turn out to be as follows, in decreasing range: *Jón B* 42, *Dunst* 30, *Nik* 27, *Tómas* 11.5, *Guðm* 11, *Mik* 10.5. The test seems to substantially confirm the strong affinity between *Jón B* and *Dunst*, which Miss Fell has noticed. One of the most striking words — I have not found it in my texts outside *Jón B* and *Dunst* and Fritzner's only example is from *Jón B* — is specially mentioned by her: *sjónhverfiligr*.

I now present a complete list of the occurrence of the test words in *Dunst*:

dýrðar:- ecki makliga kunna til lofs at syngia suo haleitum ok voll dugum dyrðar konungi 3²⁷

fyrirláta:- Enn saa gud er all dri fyrer lætur sig elskannda mann 20¹⁵

harðlifi:- med dagligu ok uiliugu pislaruætti munkligs hardlifizt 24²³

játari:- af þessum guds iatara herra Dunnstano 2²¹; ok <j> jatara flokk. hefur hann ordit makligur at uera guds samarfui 24²⁵

mektugr:- marger mektöger hofdingiar 3¹¹

mikilliga:- himneskum brudguma huers fegurð sol ok tungl mikilliga undrazt 3²⁵; glediandizt mikillega af sætleik hliodanna. ok mikilleik synarinnar 4⁷; Nu sem aller stodu mikillega unndrandi þessa faa heyrdu stormerkis nyung 4²⁹

siðferðugr:- skipandi yfer sum klaustrin sidferduga menn til abota 9³

sjónhverfiligr:- diofla flokk er sig hafde hulid ok skraytt med siðn huerfuiligum* hunda yfer braugdum 5²⁴

tempra:- te[mprandi] sina d[o]ma med mildi ok myskunn 10²⁴

tendra:- at med truarinnar logbrandi skuli hann vpp tendra þeirra manna hiortu sem kolna eda med aullu

slokna j gudligum astar . . . 5¹³; myskun guds tenndradi hann upp til* sannrar jdranar 17¹²
undirstanda: þaa hefer ek understadit 1¹¹; Unnderstod hann at þar uar brudkaups veizla 3⁸; *þottuz aller uitrer menn unnders(t)annda af guds alfu ok heilags annda gipt at hann mundi *mikils hattar madr uerda 7⁶; þuiat hann understod af hans krapta verkum at hann mundi miog kær guds uin 8¹⁶; þui at hann understod af þessi uitra(n). at þat mundi uera guds uili. at hann yrði Uinthon(ensis) byskup 15²; Nu sem erchibyskupins iustisar / . . ./ understodu erchibyskupins uilia 18¹⁴.

VI

A few supplementary details may be added to the points of contact between *Jón B* and *Dunst*, as they appear in Miss Fell's observations and my own vocabulary tests.

dauðavegr 'path of death': Enn sem konungurenn Ethelstanus for fram um almenniligan dauda ueg 8¹⁹. — Miss Fell refers in a note (p. 33) to the phrase "almenniligan veg um dauða dyrr", which occurs twice in *Guðm*, and to *Nik*, where we read: "erkibyskup gengr fram þann sama veg um dauda dyrr, sem almenniligr er hveriu holldi" (75³⁶). There are, however, two close parallels (in one case an even closer one) to the *Dunst* expression in *Jón B*: bróðir okkarr, Þorkell prestr trandill, er nú fram stiginn um almenniligar dauðadyr 246⁷; gekk hann fram um almenniligan dauðans veg, ok andaðist í góðri elli 250⁴. It should be observed that in both these passages the forerunner *Jón A* prefers another phrasing: Þorkell prestr, bróðir okkarr, er nú liðinn af þessu lífi 173⁸; andaðist hann í góðri elli 176¹³, respectively. In the latter case *Jón B* has thus, in typical manner, expanded a simpler expression. — One more instance of the phrase at issue is to be found in another "Bergr-text", *Tómas*, which Miss Fell regards

as a possible source (p. XLVI) for *Dunst*: margs mannz lif dro til utlegdar, / . . . / allt fram i dauda dyrr 296²⁴.

As far as I can see, there is no example of *daudadyrr* or *daudavegr* — except the one just cited from *Nik* — in the huge collection of texts in *Heilagra manna sögur* I-II.²⁰

hjarta/ligr, -liga; þuiat þeir unntuzt *hardla mikit. ok hiartanliga 11⁶; steypandi ut morgum hiartaligum tarum 18²¹. — In *Jón B* we have: með miklum fagnaði ok hjartaligri góðfýsi 259¹¹

One might be inclined to regard this adjective *hjartaligr* 'heartfelt, from the heart' with its adverb *hjartaliga*, as a rather common word in texts of this kind. But it is not. Thus, in *HMS* it is — outside the authentic Bergr-texts *Nik* and *Mik* — represented by only one case: hiartaligan hardleik I 530¹ (*Marthe saga ok Marie Magdalene*). On the other hand, from *Nik* alone I have excerpted 25 examples: 58¹⁰, 59³³, 67⁶, 69², 70⁴, 75¹⁷, 76¹⁴, 86²², 96³⁵, 98³⁶, 102³¹, 104¹⁶, 106²⁷, 112³, 115³⁰, 119⁵, 123¹⁰, 125³¹, 126³⁶, 132¹⁰, 140¹², 140²², 150⁹, 150¹³, 156³⁸. In a few instances we meet the same phrase as in *Jón B*: medr þinni hiartaligri godfysi 58¹⁰, 150⁹. *Mik* also provides one case: meðr himnasongh hiartaligrar cantilene 710⁸. My "Bergr-text" *Guðm* has had its share too: 25²¹, 156²⁹, 159⁵, 169³³, 170¹⁷, 171²⁵, 172²⁰ (með hjartaligri góðfýsi), as well as *Tómas*: 321³¹, 333², 415³⁰. A section of *Mariu saga*, which I have also ascribed to Bergr (cf. *Stilsignalement* etc., pp. 138-73), offers a considerable frequency of *hjartaligr*: 159², 165⁵, 171¹⁹, 175³, 177³, 180², 181²⁹, 196¹⁴, 198¹¹, 198¹⁷.

On the other hand, there is no instance of *hjartaligr* in my control material from another, older version of *Mariu saga*, some 24,000 words.

²⁰ From *HMS* I have left out some 20 pp., viz. *Ólafs saga hins helga* (II, 159-82); as a northern King's saga it differs considerably from the other texts on holy men and women. With this small reduction *HMS* has a size of c. 498,000 words.

Once again it is significant that the example from *Jón B* is lacking in the corresponding passage of *Jón A*.

kinnroði 'blush (because of shame)': uiliandi helldr þola kinnroda. með Marie Magdalene 17²⁰. — In a note (p. 34) Miss Fell refers to a passage in *Marthe saga ok Marie Magdalene* (*HMS I*, 518²²; the same word is repeated twice on the same page: 518¹⁶, 518¹⁸).

However, the noun *kinnroði* is also used in *Jón B*: prestrinn fær hær af nokkvarn svá kinnroða ok fyrirlitning 220¹², without any counterpart in *A*. This is certainly no frequent word, if we are to judge from *HMS*. With the exception of the 3 cases just referred to in *Marthe saga ok Marie Magdalene* it occurs twice in *Antonius saga* (I 81²³, 89³²) and — characteristically — twice in *Nik*, in one of the latter instances with a rather close resemblance to *Jón B*: kinnroda skriptandi 101²²; i brigdzli ok kinnroda fyrirlitningar 133³⁷.

On the whole *kinnroði* seems to appear more often in my "Bergr-texts" than in other religious writings. Thus we meet it several times in *Tómas* (404³³, 414³⁸) and *Guðm* (77²⁵, 93¹⁹, 97³², 149²³).

meistaradómur 'a teacher's position or vocation': *fra barndome hafdi heilagur Dun(stanus) halldit þessum pillte under sinum meistara dome 10¹⁷. — *Jón B*: var hann fenginn af feðr sínum í meistaradóm sæls Ísleifs biskups 219²; lacking in *A*, where we read instead: fèkk faðir hans hann til læringar Ísleifi biskupi 153²³.

This word is certainly especially well represented in the "Bergr-texts", as I have pointed out in another connection.²¹ Thus we find it in *Nik* (106¹², 107⁴, 130¹⁸), and also in *Tómas* (300², 307³¹, 479⁵, 496³²) and *Guðm* (7²⁸).

thesaur 'treasure; treasury': af konungligum thesaurum 9¹. — The word turns up once in *Jón B* (but not in *A*), there used as an image for the Bishop's remains:

²¹ Cf. my paper 'Om Magnúss saga helga' (note 2 above), 68-9.

Tóku lærðir menn þá or jörðu þenna dýrðliga *thesaur* ok purpurligan gimstein, líkam hins sæla Jóhannis 259⁵.

This Latin word (*thesaurus*), which was not included in Fritzner's dictionary I-III, is represented in both the authentic works by Bergr. *Mik* speaks of þann haleita *thesaur*, er i var kominn þeira landskap 710⁶, i.e. the mortal remains of St Michael. Out of 6 instances (70²⁴, 83¹⁰, 83²⁶, 85²³, 107¹, 132¹⁶) in *Nik* one may be quoted: en sidan upplukandi sinn *thesaur* offrar hann yfir alltari guds vinar þat sama gull ok gimsteina, sem fyrr greindum vær 132¹⁶. Outside *Mik* and *Nik* not a single example is to be found in the whole *HMS*. On the other hand some appear in the "Bergr-texts" *Tómas* (429³⁹, 494⁵) and *Guðm* (56²⁵). In Fritzner IV (Rettelser og tillegg ved Finn Hødnebo, 1972) the entry *tesaur* has been added; 6 examples are referred to, all of them from my "Bergr-texts".

tilvísan 'guidance, instruction': med guds bennding ok til vísan 4²⁷. — Of this word *Jón B* offers 2 examples, neither appearing in *A*: af guðs tilvísan 233²⁶; með guðs tilvísan 250¹¹.

In *HMS I* there are 3 instances (46⁴, 309¹⁹, 526²³) besides the one in *Mik* (684¹⁸); in *HMS II*, *Nik* has the only example (96²⁵) there is. This very uncommon word also appears in other "Bergr-texts", e.g. in *Tómas*: 325¹⁸, 463³⁹ (med guds tilvísan).

VII

Thus, the verbal correspondences between *Dunst* and *Jón B* provide at the same time as many correspondences between *Dunst* and the "Bergr-texts" as a whole, including the authentic ones. I will below list a number of words from *Dunst*, which — though not represented in *Jón B* — indicate striking verbal affinity with the "Bergr-texts".

banablóð 'blood from a mortal wound': keypti fagurliga

med s[inu] bana blodi þat *frelsi sem kirkian atte at hafa med rettu 12¹².

As I have pointed out in my paper 'Jóns saga helga' (p. 75), this word seems to appear especially in "Bergr-texts". In *HMS*, crowded with martyrs, I have found it only in *Mik*: siallfr gręðarinn leysti þat meðr sinu banabloði 679¹. *Guðm* offers another instance: eða dirfast með öllu út at hella þeirra banablóði 159¹⁹, and *Tómas* two (316²⁷, 504²⁰).

burgeis 'burgher, Burgess': burgeisinn rugladiz ok stygdizt aa sinna þionvstu menn 19²⁶.

This loan-word appears to be fairly characteristic of Bergr, since in *HMS* we meet no instances except in *Mik* (693³⁷, 707³) and *Nik* (129³⁸, 131¹⁷, 132²⁰). In these passages *burgeis* is equivalent to '(very) rich man'. — We also meet it in the "Bergr-text" *Tómas* (431²⁹).

einvalaker 'chosen vessel' (figurative, of a person): Medur þuilikre takna giord sem nu hafui þier heyr. pryddi gud drottinn æsko alldr sinns einvalakers. heiglags Dun(stani) 6²⁷.

As I have shown elsewhere,²² this very rare phrase appears in some of my "Bergr-texts", among them *Guðm* where we read: sjálfv várr herra fór til meðr sínun miskunnar sprota at semja ok alskíra sitt einvala ker með líkams meinlætun 148³⁷. With an almost identical wording the Bishop is once named einvalit ker almáttigs guðs 70¹⁹.

fallvaltr 'perishable: mortal': af þessu falluallta lifui 2¹². Fritzner gives 5 references, 3 of which are to my "Bergr-texts".

The word is well represented in *Nik* (74³¹, 83¹⁰, 102³⁰); elsewhere I have recorded only 1 case from *HMS* (II, 364¹²) and 2 of *fallvalltigr* (I, 64²³; II, 403³). It also appears in *Tómas* and *Guðm*. Curiously enough, in both the latter instances, as also in one of the examples from *Nik*, we have to do with the same rather

²² Cf. *ibid.*, 68.

strange-looking phrase, *fallvölt blíða* (*heimsins*) 'the transient pleasure (of the world)': *fallvalltri heimsins blidu* (*Nik* 74³¹); *med skammsyni fallualltrar blidu* (*Tómas* 355³⁰); *enga elsku hafði hann í fallvaltri blíðu eðr fjárlutum heims þessa* (*Guðm* 127²).

frábæriligr 'excellent, rare': *suo sem hann uar frabæriligur audrum j sinum formanzzskap* 16².

This is another word extremely typical of the "Bergr-texts"; 5 out of 7 cases in Fritzner are taken from them. It is thus represented in *Nik* (63⁵, 68¹⁵, 85³⁷, 95³³, 96¹, 101³⁷, 107⁶, 116⁵) and in *Mik* (677²⁰) — but not in any other of the many *HMS* texts.

kynferðugr 'of a certain origin, of good descent': *hann uar getinn. af mikils hattar monnum ok *kynferdvgum at ueralldar virðingu sæmdum. ok avdæwm* 2²⁶.

Fritzner records instances only from "Bergr-texts", 2 of them from *Nik*: 85²⁹, 129³⁸ (*einn burgeis omatans ríkr ok kynferðugr*). I have noticed no other examples in *HMS*.

mustarðskorn 'mustard seed': *ef þier hef⟨d⟩id tru sem *mustards *korn* 20⁷.

Fritzner gives one example only, from *Nik*: *Ef þer hafit tru sva sem mustardzkorn* 109³. One more can be added from *Vitæ Patrum* in *HMS* II: *ef þer hefdit sva megna tru sem mustardz korn* 416¹⁷. In all three passages the author of course refers to the well-known passage in Matth. 17, 19.

resignera 'give up, renounce': *Enn epter nockur ar resigneradi hann byskups ⟨stol⟩ sinn* 15⁷.

The 5 cases in Fritzner are all from "Bergr-texts"; cf. my paper 'Jóns saga helga' (p. 78). As far as I can see, the word is not to be found anywhere in *HMS*, including Bergr's authentic *Mik* and *Nik*, but we have it both in *Tómas* (316³⁷, 376¹⁹) and in *Guðm*: *hvat hann vildi: resignera eðr halda biskupsdóminn* 125²³.

samvitugr 'conscious (of)': *þuiat gud giordi hann makligan. hier j ueralligu lifui. at uera forsparr ok samuitugur vm*

marga hluti owordinna j himeriki 24¹³.

The only example in Fritzner is taken from *Nik* (100³⁴), with a reference also to another of my "Bergr-texts".

sýtiligr 'deplorable, sad': burt farandi ur þessa heimms utlegd ok sytiligum sorgar dal til himneskrar faudur leifdar 25¹⁶.

Fritzner gives 2 instances, both from my "Bergr-texts", one of them *Guðm*: en sumar gleyma hennar sýtiligum harmi 76²².

The list of items in this section, which could certainly be considerably enlarged by further research, seems to confirm the close verbal resemblance between *Dunst* and the characteristic "Bergr-profile".

VIII

The documentation and argument above have probably offered a rather complicated and confusing picture of the main problem under discussion: the relation of *Dunst* to Bergr Sökkason and the "Bergr-texts". But one must fear that the picture will necessarily remain so, at least as long as we have to rely on the facts and methods at present at our disposal. As far as I can see, there is no possibility of giving a reasonably precise — not to speak of a statistical — measure of the linguistic affinity between *Dunst* and the Bergr-texts, authentic and supposed. It is certainly safe to maintain, however, that this affinity is very remarkable — in the first hand, perhaps, with *Jón B*, but to a high degree also with the authentic works of Bergr Sökkason, *Mik* and *Nik*. The present paper has provided further evidence in that direction.

But how are we to interpret the facts, the rather intricate and puzzling pattern of facts? Are we to draw the conclusion that one or other of my earlier attributions to Bergr Sökkason should be doubted, or rejected? Or

are we, on the contrary, to doubt the explicit attribution, in the text itself, of *Dunst* to *broder Arne Laurencii* — and transfer this work to *Begr* too? As I have hinted at before, we have no reason whatsoever to consider the latter solution. But, after all, neither alternative seems to be necessary. The facts could be accounted for otherwise, by reference to the Icelandic situation of the authors in question, *Begr Sökkason* and *Árni Laurentiusson*, and the relations between them.

It appears from *Laurentius saga biskups*, here our main source, that *Begr* was a close friend of *Laurentius*, *Árni's* father. All three of them became monks and entered the monastery of *Þingeyrar* together in Lent 1317. As was mentioned above, *Begr* became prior of *Munka-Þverá* in 1322. In the same year *Laurentius* was elected bishop of *Hólar*, the northern diocese in which both *Þingeyrar* and *Munka-Þverá* were situated. Miss *Fell* has given a summary of what we know about *Árni's* biography. In *Laurentius saga*, written by the Bishop's assistant and friend *Einar Hafliðason* (d. 1393), *Árni* is mentioned in connection with the school his father established at *Hólar*, and is said to have been *hinn beztí klerkr ok versificator, ok kenndi mörgum klerkum*.²³ But later we hear from the same source that *Árni's* way of life was very much *í móti klaustrligum lífnæði* and caused his father distress. I cite Miss *Fell*: "During a severe illness of *Árni's* his father found opportunity to lecture him severely on his conduct, pointing out that if he returned to Norway [where he was born and where as a grown man he had accompanied his father on travels] he would indulge in heavy drinking and other dissipation, and his talents would be lost to the church" (p. LXII). *Árni* is said to have repented and promised to obey the paternal exhortation. But the author ends his passage on this episode by stating sadly that *Árni's* life went on in the

²³ *Biskupa sögur* I (1858), 850.

direction his father had feared.²⁴ Apart from this very general comment we have no certain knowledge of Áрни's further career.

According to *Laurentius saga* the year of Áрни's birth was 1304. Bergr Sökkason, who became prior in 1322, must have been considerably older. As for Áрни's literary activity and his dependence on Bergr in that connection, Miss Fell summarizes the situation thus: "But during his early years at Þingeyrar Áрни was living in an atmosphere conducive to this kind of work, and his adoption of Bergr Sökkason's literary mannerisms indicates that his interest may have been stimulated by the writings of his father's friend. The enthusiasm and carelessness of the writing, the eagerness to display irrelevant knowledge, and the uncertain hovering between precise translation and rhetorical flourish, suggest that the *Dunstanus Saga* was an early work, and may even have been an experimental one" (p. LXIV). I think this is a plausible description of the relations between the two colleagues. It also seems to account fully for the striking affinity in vocabulary and style between *Dunst* and the "Bergr-texts", as well as for the apparent "uncertainty" and "unevenness" of Áрни's work. Under such circumstances there is no reason why that affinity should affect, or invalidate, any of my attributions to Bergr. Áрни was capable of imitating Bergr's language and style to such a degree that we have still no instruments sharp enough to distinguish safely between teacher and pupil.

APPENDIX

In her book *Lýsingar á Stjórnarhandriti* (Reykjavík 1971) Selma Jónsdóttir — as the title indicates — is first and foremost concerned with illuminations. But she

²⁴ *ibid.*, 873.

also makes some interesting observations on the text of the manuscript at issue, AM 227 fol. The youngest section of the huge Bible compilation *Stjórn*, dated in C. R. Unger's edition, *Stjórn. Gammelnorsk Bibelhistorie* (Christiania 1862), to the beginning of the fourteenth century (p. iv), reveals in various passages remarkable parallels in substance and wording with Bergur Sökkason's *Nik*. From her observations Selma Jónsdóttir draws the conclusion that this part of *Stjórn* must have been directly influenced by Bergur's work (pp. 62, 64). In that connection she queries "hvort Bergur Sökkason muni ekki á einhvern hátt vera viðriðinn *Stjórn*" (p. 64). Referring to my earlier discussion of "Bergur-texts", she hints at the possibility (pp. 65-6) that Bergur himself had something to do with the composition of the youngest part of *Stjórn*. If that section could be shown to exhibit the characteristic linguistic features of the "Bergur-texts", such a suggestion would of course be strongly supported. To test the hypothesis, I will apply the tests above to the relevant text, pp. 1-299 (c. 126,000 words) in Unger's edition.

For *reverse word order* we get a total of 37 per cent (643 cases out of 1746). This is somewhat below the typical "Bergur-rate", but all the same a high one, on the same level as *Tómas*.

The test of *present/preterite* rate in the author's narrative can hardly be applied because the section is not in the first place plain narrative but interspersed to a very large extent with theological argument, translated from various medieval authorities.

The distribution of *verbs* introducing *direct speech* is very interesting:

<i>mæla</i>	(1)	0.2 per cent
<i>segja</i>	(327)	52 per cent
<i>svara</i>	(108)	17.5 per cent
<i>tala</i>	(188)	30 per cent

We have here the typical "Bergur-profile", though still more extreme than with Bergur himself. One notices the

low rate of *mæla*. But far more striking is the exceedingly high proportion of *tala*, very rare outside my "Bergr-texts". One can compare this table with the corresponding figures for another part of *Stjórn*, pp. 349-654, an older section of the compilation, according to Unger (p. vii) dating back to the first half of the thirteenth century. Counting 1000 cases (pp. 349-634) we get the following figures, with a distribution completely different from the one above:

<i>mæla</i>	(423)	42 per cent
<i>segja</i>	(307)	31 per cent
<i>svara</i>	(241)	24 per cent
<i>tala</i>	(29)	2.9 per cent

The rest of *Stjórn*, the section pp. 300-349, reveals at this point a profile still more remote from that of Bergr: *mæla* 153, *segja* 3, *svara* 29, *tala* 0, i.e. 83, 1.6, 15.5 and 0 per cent respectively.

Of the original word series, the first one has the following frequencies: *dásama* 0, *dragsa* 0, *eptir megni* 0, *eptir svá talat* 0, *forsjá/forsjó* 12, *frábærr* 0, *geysi* 0, *greindr* 2, *mekt* 8, *punktr* 8, *stórliga* 35, *umbergis* 0 = 65, i.e. 5.2 per 10000 words. This might seem to be a rather meagre harvest, especially when 7 out of 12 items are completely lacking in such a voluminous text.

The second word series rises to a considerably higher frequency, showing 8 of the 9 items: *einkanliga* 78, *fljótr* 2, *fullting* 9, *hæverska* 1, *kumpánn* 10, *lypta sinni ferð* 0, *óptliga* 4, *prófa* 24, *senniliga* 7 = 135, i.e. 10.5 per 10000 words.

The frequency of these words — on the same level as in *Jón B* (p. 333 above) — cannot be said to be within the typical "Bergr-range". But it certainly points in that direction, when we compare our text with the rest of *Stjórn* or with my control material outside the "Bergr-texts".

If we examine the variant readings in the footnotes of Unger's edition, we find there some more cases: *mekt* 221, *umbergis* 87, 89, 115; *einkanliga* 219, 237, 279 (bis),

senniliga 195, 252, 266. They all originate from the manuscript which Unger labels *B* (= AM 227 fol); his main text is taken from AM 226 fol. One should especially notice *umbergis*, which is — outside the “Bergr-texts” — an extremely rare form of the “normal” *umhverfis*.²⁵

As for the special “*Jón-B* lists” we get the following figures for the first one: *andar-* 0, *díkt* 0, *flekka* 1, *forverari* 0, *framning* 0, *fyrirðjarfa* 1, *harðlífi* 0, *herraliga* 0, *íblástr* 0, *játari* 0, *liðugr* 35, *mektugr* 2, *miskunnar-* 3, *partera* 2, *röksamligr* 2, *sampíning* 1, *sjónhverfiligr* 0, *styrkliga* 0, *tendra* 4, *umfang* 0, *vanhyggja* 0, *versa* 0, *öskranligr* 0 = 51, i.e. 4 per 10000 words.

The second list is rather better represented: *blóm/beranligr*, *-bæriligr* 0, *dýrðar-* 4, *flærð/samr*, *-samligr* 0, *franhleypti* 0, *fund(n)ing* 0, *fyrirláta* 4, *heimligr* 0, *hreinferðugr* 0, *illkyndugr* 0, *leirbiud* 0, *lystuligr* 8, *mikilliga* 33, *næmi* 0, *purpurligr* 0, *sampínask* 0, *siðferðugr* 2, *skilríkr* 4, *tempra* 10, *traktera* 0, *undirstanda* 16, *váveifi* 0, *við(r)verandi* 0 = 81, i.e. 6·4 per 10000 words.

Of the 45 items in these lists 17 appear in *Stjórn*, a figure which can be compared with the one for *Tómas* and *Guðm*, in both cases 21. As for the total frequency, *Stjórn* has 10·5 per 10000 words — very much on the same level as *Tómas* (11·5) and *Guðm* (11·0), and exactly the same as the authentic Bergr-text *Mik* (10·5).

I will end by listing a few other words from *Stjórn* that reveal a close affinity with the “Bergr-texts”. Some of the items in this very limited sample are certainly more striking than any in my “standard” tests above.

Of words already mentioned in my discussion of *Dunst* and *Jón B* we find as many as 11 cases of *hjartaligr* (55⁷, 61², 141³², 145²⁹, 150³³, 152²⁶, 154²⁸, 156¹⁴, 157⁴, 186²⁷, 219⁵) and 3 of *tilvisan* (6¹¹, 46³⁷, 156²). One should also notice such phrases as: for sua þann sama ueg um

²⁵ Cf. *Stilsignalement*, 163-4.

daudans dyrr (237¹²), at nðkurr af mannkyninu uerdr *ualidr* [B: valit] *ker* guds (45¹); cf. pp. 338 and 342 above.

Other conspicuous items are:

formera 'fashion, form, shape': Nu sem guð drottinn hafdi skapat ok formerat oll iardnesk kuikendi 33¹⁵; other examples 14⁹, 20³². — As has been remarked in my paper 'Jóns saga helga' (p. 76), the references for this word in Fritzner are predominantly to "Bergr-texts", including *Mik*, *Nik* and *Guðm*. The dictionary also records two of the instances above from *Stjórn*; moreover, it is only this section which contains the noun *formeran*, in two instances.

fullfengiligr 'excellent, fine': Honum syndiz sem .vii. aux fògr ok fullfengilig yxi upp aa einn haalm 201³⁰. — Fritzner has this example only, and I have not met the word elsewhere in my texts. On the other hand, the noun *fullfengi* 'enough supply' is to be found in *Nik* (110³⁰) and *Guðm* (134³⁹, 142³⁰). *Nik* also offers one case of the noun *fullfengr* (93²⁸; Fritzner incorrectly: 93⁸), meaning the same as *fullfengi*; it is the only instance given in the dictionary.

geymari 'guardian, protector': Ek man þinn hirdir ok geymari uera hueria leid sem þu uill farit hafa 170⁶; another case 8³⁷. — As appears from Fritzner, *geymari* is typical of "Bergr-texts"; cf. my article 'Jóns saga helga', p. 77. The dictionary also refers to one of the above examples from *Stjórn*.

kjöttligr 'carnal' in contrast to 'spiritual', in a biblical or theological sense: kiöttligr kíerleiki ok gudligr elskhugi 131⁴; another case 55³³. — Except these two instances from *Stjórn*, Fritzner only records one more, from my "Bergr-text" *Guðm*: en nákvæmir hana síðast með kjöttligu verki 78¹⁹.

mótstaðligr 'contrary, hostile': Enn ef þu ert mer enn motstaðligr ok uill hann eigi upp gefa 275⁷; other instances 23¹⁰, 80¹¹. — This seems to be a word especially characteristic of the "Bergr-texts". We meet it in the

- authentic *Mik* (685²⁸: motstaðligt hans heilsu), in *Nik* (62³⁶), and in *Guðm* (164²⁹).
- spasera* 'walk': huersu kuendit gekk ut ok spaceradi ser 234³²; another case 138²¹. — Fritzner's entry for this word is dominated by my "Bergr-texts", e.g. *Mik* (682⁴) and *Guðm* (57⁶, 144²¹).
- steinblindr* 'completely blind': enn eigi uurdu þeir meðr ollu steinblindir 121³⁶. — In Fritzner this adjective is represented only by the example from *Stjórn* and two others from *Guðm* (81³⁰, 169³¹: varð hún með öllu steinblind).
- svá framt at (sem)* 'to such an extent that; as soon as': Skulu allar uarar hiardir meðr oss fara. sua framt at eigi nockur klauf skal eptir uera 276³¹; kom hann til fundar uid Moysen i eydimorkina / . . . / sua framt sem hann fretti þat uissuliga. at hann uar þar komin 297⁷; other instances 98¹⁰, 219²³, 227²³, 227³², 254¹¹, 264¹⁹, 265²⁴, 266¹⁹, 272⁴, 274⁷, 276³⁷, 287²⁹. — The documentation in Fritzner is completely dominated by our section of *Stjórn* and to some extent by a "Bergr-text" (*Guðm*). One can add a couple of cases from *Guðm* (22¹⁹, 143³⁸) and, especially, from *Nik* (66³⁷, 92³², 112²⁰, 122⁶, 145³³, 146¹⁰) and *Mik* (699³⁹).
- ténaðarmaðr* 'helper, supporter': at þer faait nockura þa fataka menn ydr procurerat. sem ydr megi á siðarsta doms degi fyrir ydrum glæpum ok afgerðum fyrir sealfum guði tulkar ok tēnaðarmenn uera 157⁶. — Of this noun I have only found one more example, in *Jón B*: Ísleifr Hallsson, hvern Jón biskup æskti at verða skyldi biskup næst eptir hann ok tēnaðarmann síns biskupsdóms, ef hann mæddi elli, en hann andaðist fyrr en herra biskup 240³¹ (so also Fritzner, s.v. *tēnaðarmaðr*).
- tilheyrligr* 'belonging to, suitable': þiat eptir þi sem harðla tilheyrligt ok uidrkuæmiligt uar frealsadi hann oss 145³⁰; other examples 141³⁵, 144³², 147²⁹, 158¹², 167¹, 240³, 251¹³, 255³⁶. — In the dictionary the adjective is

especially represented by *Nik* (84¹⁴, 140¹²); from this text one could add 52⁹, 74²⁹, 78³⁰, 84³⁸, 85²⁵; *Mik* has one instance (706⁵). The "Bergr-text" *Guðm* offers some more examples: 99⁶, 110²⁷, 144¹. — The negative form *ótilheyrligr* is documented by Fritzner only from *Stjórn* (34²⁴); one more instance from the same text (283¹⁴) is recorded in the dictionary under *tilheyrligr*.

tilteyging 'attraction; instigation': syndarinnar tilteygung og lystugleiki 146¹¹; another instance 146². — As well as the latter example Fritzner has two references to my "Bergr-texts", including the authentic *Nik*: ovinarins tilteygung 87⁹. *Tómas* offers at least one more instance (406³).

yfirvættis 'extremely': Yfirvættis storar aar falla um Indialand 69¹⁵; other examples 14¹, 17²⁰, 58¹⁰, 58³⁰, 63³⁴, 85²¹, 87²⁷, 99³², 142²², 155³⁷, 156⁴, 203⁴, 211²⁶, 220¹², 224²⁸, 251¹⁶, 253², 254²⁴, 258²³. — Fritzner records 6 cases, one of them from *Nik* (149³⁶), the rest from our section of *Stjórn*. But in fact *Nik* has so many examples that their frequency, in relation to the size of the text, exceeds that of *Stjórn*; besides the one quoted in the dictionary I have found 10 more: 62³⁷, 63⁶, 68¹³, 100¹⁵, 105²⁵, 112³⁴, 119²², 121²⁷, 124²⁶, 155²⁵. Elsewhere the word is completely lacking in *HMS* — with the exception of one instance in *Mik* (702³⁸)! It is also represented in *Guðm*, though not as abundantly as in *Nik*: 5⁸, 175¹², 183¹². The adverb *yfirvættis* is thus safely documented as a "Bergr-word".²⁶ Its high frequency in our section of *Stjórn* is perhaps to be ranked as the most striking similarity with Bergr Sökkason's vocabulary.

þrekkur 'dirt, mud': bera þrekk ok leir i laupum i brott fra aullum bæium ok strætum 247²². — Fritzner records only two additional examples of this extremely

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 189.

uncommon noun, both of them from *Mariu saga* — a large section of which is one of my "Bergr-texts".

The list above, from *hjartaligr* etc., records 77 instances in all, distributed among 17 entries. On the other hand, the remainder of *Stjórn*, more than half the work, pp. 300-49 and pp. 350-654 (according to Unger from the middle of the thirteenth century, p. v, and the earlier part of the thirteenth century, p. vii, respectively) shows no single instance of those words!

As has already been said, the above word list includes only a very limited sample of possible items. But I hope it has been enough to prove a quite remarkable resemblance between the vocabulary in the youngest section of *Stjórn* and the "Bergr-texts". The tests applied here seem to have substantially strengthened the hypothesis that Bergr Sökkason was "in some way connected with *Stjórn*". This work not only reveals unquestionable influence from *Nik* in certain passages. It also bears throughout the distinctive stamp of Bergr Sökkason's linguistic and stylistic habits. Further research work would certainly profit by taking him into consideration.

NOTES

I. ON WOLFGANG KRAUSE'S *DIE SPRACHE DER URNORDISCHEN RUNENINSCHRIFTEN* (1971)

BY MICHAEL BARNES

WOLFGANG KRAUSE was a sound philologist but not an expert in modern linguistics. Seen in terms of Alexander Jóhannesson's *Frumnorræn málfræði* and Noreen's *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik* his work is a meticulous and authoritative study of the language of the Primitive Norse inscriptions (i.e. inscriptions found in Scandinavia or of probable Scandinavian origin c. A.D. 200-775). The linguist, however, will regret the lack of any attempt to see "Urnordisch" as a system or systems rather than as a collection of more or less isolated sounds, syllables, roots and endings. This lack is all the more perceptible in a grammar dealing with a language or languages about which we have such limited sources of information: we may be able to make some sense of the whole, but the individual elements, frequently interpreted in different ways by scholars, are in themselves often very uncertain.

An important question which strikes the reader from the outset is whether it is helpful to class together all runic inscriptions found in Scandinavia or of probable Scandinavian origin from the period c. A.D. 200-775. Gustav Indrebø considered that: "Det er eit større stig frå målet på Tune-stenen (ikr. 450) til målet på Eggja-stenen (ikr. 650) enn frå gamalnorsk til det nynorske normalmålet",¹ and in his introduction (p. 15) Krause acknowledges a marked distinction between the language of early and late proto-Scandinavian inscriptions. He talks of "Früh-" and "Späturndisch", the former c. A.D. 200-600, the latter c. A.D. 600-775. Another question about which there has recently been discussion is whether the language of the earliest Scandinavian runic inscriptions (before c. 500) should properly be classed as proto-Scandinavian or common Northwest Germanic.² Krause devotes a whole section of his book (Part I, B) to "Das Urnordische zwischen Urgermanisch und Altnordisch", but no real

¹ Gustav Indrebø, *Norsk målsoga* (1951), 46.

² Cf. Elmer H. Antonsen, "Proto-Scandinavian" and Common Nordic', *Scandinavian Studies* 39 (1967), 16-21.

attempt is made to demonstrate that either "Frühurnordisch" or "Späturnordisch" is specifically "Nordisch" In the case of the latter this is perhaps unnecessary, but since the title of this section suggests that with "Urnordisch" we have left behind any kind of common Germanic, a list of the criteria by which we can distinguish North from West Germanic before *c.* A.D. 500 ought to have been provided.³ If the purpose of Part I, B of the book is not to demonstrate that we have from the time of the earliest Norse inscriptions a language recognisable as specifically Norse, there seems little point in making it separate from Part I, C ("Die Sprachformen der urnordischen Inschriften"), and indeed in numerous cases information contained in the one section is merely repeated in the other. The confusion which arises from the lack of any clear definition of "Urnordisch" is well illustrated by the "Ausgewählte Paradigmata zur urnordischen Flexion" which appear on pp. 123-8. One might reasonably expect these paradigms to consist of a series of tables containing such inflexions as are attested in the inscriptions the book deals with. But this is far from the case. The paradigms are almost entirely reconstructions of a "Frühurnordisch" which would probably have been incomprehensible to the writer of the Eggjum stone, yet this stone is included as an "urnordische Inschrift" A number of inflexions cannot be reconstructed on the basis of the medieval Scandinavian languages (of which "Urnordisch" is presented as the common parent), but only by reference to other Germanic languages. This is the case, for example, with **gastimR*, dat. pl. of *gastir*, medieval Scand. *gestum*, *gæstum*, Stentoften (Krause, *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*, 1966, hereafter abbreviated Kr., No. 96) *gestumR*, Goth. *gastim*, OHG *gestim*. A prototype which is reconstructed by reference to several languages, however, is by definition the prototype of all these languages and not of just the one. Because of the uncertainty as to whether we are dealing with Northwest or North Germanic in the earliest inscriptions, and since most of the following discussion is concerned with actual rather than reconstructed forms, I propose to discard proto-Norse in favour of the more general term Primitive Norse.

Let us now turn to the inscriptions themselves and Krause's treatment of their language.

One should from the start be aware of the fact that *Die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften* is a grammar of Krause's interpretation or understanding of the inscriptions. It could of course hardly be otherwise, given the degree of uncertainty that

³ The few remarks in Section A, p. 19 about the nom. masc. sing. -z ending and the 2nd pers. sing. past indic. of strong verbs do not in any way establish firm criteria.

exists about many of them, and the author sometimes acknowledges this fact. But as often he does not. On p. 133 Carl J. S. Marstrander's interpretation of **unnam** on the Reistad stone (Kr. 74): "ich habe gelernt", "ich verstehe mich auf"⁴ is noted as a possible alternative to the usual translation "undertook". Elsewhere "habe gelernt", "verstehe mich auf" can appear without qualification (e.g., pp. 121, 122). Yet if **unnam** is indeed "das uralte Perfekt" of **und-neman*,⁵ this is an important example since it adds a new verb to the small list of preterite-presents in Germanic.

Marstrander's views do not fare as well in the case of the Opedal stone (Kr. 76). Only two passing references are made to his interpretation of **wage** as the 3rd pers. sing. pres. subj. of **wāgian*, Old Icel. *vægja* (pp. 98, 116), although this gives as good or better sense than other interpretations of the Opedal inscription.⁶ Elsewhere **wage** is declared without reservation to be dative of a personal name (p. 102 a word "mit unsicherer Deutung"), and on p. 131 it features as one of the five examples of "Dativ des Interesses"

The form **witada** on the Tune stone (Kr. 72) is only valid as the one example of the early shortening and change $\bar{e} > a$ before *-nd* (p. 29) if we are reasonably sure we are dealing with the present participle of the elusive verb **witēn*.⁷ Sophus Bugge saw the first element of **witadahalaiban** as related to Gothic *witōþ* ("law") and translated the complete word "'Kammerat', oldn. *lagsmaðr*, og vel nærmest 'Krigskammerat'".⁸ Marstrander also recognises that **witada** may be transliterated *vitaða*, though in that case he would prefer to take this element of the compound as the past participle of **witēn*⁹ (finally he adopted von Friesen's interpretation¹⁰). It is only fair to stress that Krause's interpretations are

⁴ Carl J. S. Marstrander, 'Ein neues Perfektpräsen', *Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap* (hereafter abbreviated *Nts*) 4 (1930), 245-50. Marstrander's actual translation of *unnam* is "ich erlernte", "ich kenne, kann"

⁵ Marstrander (1930), 248.

⁶ Cf. Carl J. S. Marstrander, 'Opedalstenen', *Nts* 3 (1929), 170-2, 184-5.

⁷ Cf. Otto von Friesen, 'Till tolkingen af Tune-stenen', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 16 (1900), 191-200.

⁸ Sophus Bugge, *Norges Indskrifter med de ældre Runer* I (1891-1903), 17. For the full discussion of *witada* cf. 16-18.

⁹ Cf. Carl J. S. Marstrander, 'Tunestenen', *Nts* 4 (1930), 327-33.

¹⁰ Cf. Marstrander (1930), 333-4. If Krause is correct in taking *witada* as **witanda* < **witēnda*, it is by no means certain that this was a change which was restricted to position before [nd] as his words imply, cf. the parallel development in Goth. where both inf. and pres. part. are affected: *haban*, *habands*. In fact it is far from clear that the original stem vowel in class III of the Germanic weak verbs was \bar{e} . E. Prokosch (*A Comparative Germanic Grammar*, 1938), after giving examples of this class of verb from all the Germanic languages of which only OHG has \bar{e} for certain, concludes (203): "It is hardly possible to state with any confidence which of these formations is the original one."

based on a careful appraisal of the results of the most recent studies of each inscription or word. His fault lies, in my view, in narrowing too greatly the number of possibilities.

Krause's approach to his corpus seems open to criticism on a number of points. A grammar of the Primitive Norse runic inscriptions will clearly have to concern itself a great deal with phonology. Lack of examples will make it impossible to give any systematic treatment to morphology. Syntax will fare even worse. One might therefore expect such a grammar to begin, or perhaps end, with a full discussion of the older runic alphabet and its relationship to the sounds of the languages it was used to write, in so far as these can be deduced. Krause's work contains no such discussion. On pp. 135-6 he gives the reader what are apparently his reasons for this omission, and it is worth quoting what is said there in full: "Es zeigt sich also immer wieder, daß wir nicht in der Lage sind, ein auch nur einigermaßen genaues phonologisches System für die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften zu entwerfen, besonders wenn man bedenkt, daß die Sprache im Laufe der urnordischen Periode selbst gewiß nicht konstant blieb, wengleich die uns erhaltenen Inschriften ein solches Trugbild vorgaukeln könnten.

Dazu kommt schließlich der Umstand, daß die Runenschrift selbst nicht in der Lage ist, uns über den Lautstand genauer Auskunft zu geben; denn die Runenschrift war ja weithin abhängig von ihrem südeuropäischen, wahrscheinlich nordetruskisch-lateinischen Vorbild, wenn auch der Schöpfer der Runenschrift hie und da, besonders wohl bei den Runen *j* und *η*, eigene Zeichen einfügte, um die Schrift den Erfordernissen seiner germanischen Sprache besser anzupassen."

It is true that Primitive Norse underwent changes, but it nevertheless seems permissible to treat the language of the pre-syncope inscriptions as a system in the same way as we do Old Icelandic or Old Swedish. Of course we know considerably less about this early language and the developments it was undergoing, but the evidence available to us, historical, comparative and runic, gives us a fairly clear picture of its phonemic structure.¹¹ Krause maintains that we are unable to establish a "genaues phonologisches System" for the language of the early Norse inscriptions. He seems to envisage a system in which it would be possible to determine, for example, the precise value of the 'a'-rune in any given word ([e:], [æ:], [a:], [ã:] or [a], see below), or where

¹¹ Cf. Antonsen (1967), 21-39; the same, 'Toward a New Runic Grammar', *The Nordic Languages and Modern Linguistics*, ed. Hreinn Benediktsson (1970), 313-21; M. I. Steblin-Kamenskij, 'Noen fonologiske betraktninger over de eldre runer', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 77 (1962), 1-6.

the 'b'- 'd'- and 'g'-runes represent spirants and where stops (cf. p. 135). But the fact that we cannot determine precise shades of sound is no reason for abandoning any attempt to establish the relative position of sounds in the phonological structure of the language and their relationship with the runic symbols. In the case of [β], [ð] and [ɣ] it would clearly be of interest if we could show when the stop variants developed, but linguistically it is not of great importance since until well after the syncope period the stops were merely allophonic variants of the spirants.

Krause's view that the runic alphabet cannot give us very precise information about the sounds of Northwest Germanic or Scandinavian because it is (in all probability) based on North Italic alphabets is hard to understand. He seems to assume that the concept of the *littera*, which was clearly a linguistic reality to the First Grammarian,¹² also meant something to the creator(s) of the runic alphabet. But we know nothing about the circumstances in which this alphabet was developed. If the model really was "Nordetruskisch-lateinisch", the creator, if one man was responsible, must have been familiar with at least two foreign languages and the symbols used to express them in writing. The fact that he apparently did not adopt a complete alphabet suggests that he cannot have been entirely dependent on the sound-symbol relationship of one language, but must have picked and chosen symbols until he had a sufficient number for the distinctive speech sounds of his language which (a) were easily distinguished from each other and (b) easy to carve in wood, metal or stone. There is no evidence, at least Krause does not produce any, to suggest that the runic alphabet was not suited to the sound systems of proto-Germanic and later, Northwest Germanic. On the contrary, it can be argued that there was an almost perfect phonemic fit.¹³ Oddly enough it is the 'j'- and 'ŋ'-runes, considered by Krause to be among the few new creations of the author of the runic alphabet, which, together with the 'w'- and possibly the 'è'-rune, would appear to be phonemically superfluous.

The failure to see the language of the Primitive Norse inscriptions as a system and against the background of a general linguistic theory has resulted in a number of misunderstandings or questionable interpretations. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this.

¹² Cf. Hreinn Benediktsson, *The First Grammatical Treatise* (1972), 41-68.

¹³ Cf. note 11 and Fritz Askeberg, *Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid* (1944), 77-85.

1. On p. 43 it is suggested that IE *k* already had the pronunciation [h] in common Germanic times. As evidence, three ways in which the Germanic peoples ("Die Germanen selbst") represented the reflex of IE *k* are given: (1) the spelling on the Negau helmet, (2) the 'h'-rune, (3) the 'h'-symbol in the Gothic alphabet. Krause considers that since the initial sounds of the first and second elements of the compound *hari-χasti* on the Negau helmet are spelt with the North Etruscan symbols for *h* and *χ*, the former must have lain closer to the aspirate [h] than the voiceless spirant [x]. To draw exact phonetic parallels, however, we would need to know a lot more about the native language of the person who carved the inscription and his *system* of writing. If he represented what was almost certainly [y] by the North Etruscan symbol for *χ*, there being no symbol for [y] in that alphabet, and wished to distinguish [y] from [x], North Etruscan *h* must have seemed a reasonable choice. As regards the 'h'-rune, it is true that in shape it resembles both the Latin and North Italic symbols for *h*, but this does not necessarily indicate that it represents the pronunciation [h] in Germanic, any more than the 'b'-rune represented [b] to begin with. We may ask why a symbol like that in *-χasti* on the Negau helmet was not adopted if the Germanic reflex of IE *k* was indeed [x], as I suppose, but we know far too little about the origins of the runic alphabet to answer such questions. If, for example, the writer of the Negau inscription had decided to create an alphabet for Germanic, he clearly could not have used the 'χ'-symbol for [x] since he was already using it for [y]. It is conceivable, though undemonstrable and far from certain, that in some positions in common Germanic the reflex of IE *k* developed to [h] while in others it remained as [x]. This might be a reason for the adoption of the 'h'-symbol which would have served for both sounds since they would not have contrasted phonemically. All the runic inscriptions can tell us, however, is that the 'h'-rune stood for the reflex of IE *k*. From the evidence of these inscriptions and comparative linguistics we can see that this must have been a distinctive speech sound, contrasting, for example, with both [k] and [y]. The exact shade of sound or sounds represented by the 'h'-rune at any given time can never be determined and is linguistically less relevant. Similarly, Gothic 'h' seems to represent one phoneme, although exactly how this was realised in speech in each case is difficult to determine. The fact that it appears to be modelled on Latin uncial 'H' tells us little. The Gothic 'þ' bears a strong resemblance to Greek 'ψ', and a connection between these two symbols should perhaps not be dismissed out of hand considering the degree of correspondence between the two alphabets otherwise.

The evidence of later Germanic languages strongly suggests that the common Germanic reflex of IE *k* was pronounced [x] (and [ç]?) and not [h], cf. German *Nacht*, *acht* (and the pronunciation of such words in Old English and modern English dialects), Icel. *hver*, *hjarta* [xwæ:r], [çjarta].

2. Krause asserts on a number of occasions that the 'a'-rune could represent not only [a] and [a:], but also [æ:] (pp. 24, 51-2, 89). He finds that the ending of the nom. sing. of the masc. *-an* stems, although written with the 'a'-rune, must have been [æ:]. This must also have been the value of the final vowel of **swestar** (Opedal, Kr. 76). Krause further thinks it likely that the reflex of proto-Germanic stressed \bar{e}^1 , although consistently represented by the 'a'-rune, was pronounced [æ:] at the time of the earliest Scandinavian inscriptions. The reason for such assumptions is that the sound for which the 'a'-rune stands in these cases is supposed to be the reflex of an earlier \bar{e} , which in the nom. sing. of the masc. *-an* stems and in **swestar** is unstressed and apparently develops to [ɪ] in medieval Scandinavian (proto-Germanic stressed \bar{e}^1 develops regularly to [a:] at an early stage in North-west Germanic). The ending of the nom. sing. of the masc. *-an* stems must come either from IE $*\bar{e}n$ or $*\bar{o}n$, of which only $*\bar{e}n$ could give [a:] at the time of the Primitive Norse inscriptions. There is no reason to think that either would give [æ:], and this sound would doubtless never have been mentioned if it had not been necessary to explain why the reflex of \bar{e} is represented by the 'a'-rune in the early period and 'i' in the Viking Age and later. It is, after all, normally assumed that the ending of the 3rd pers. sing. past indicative of weak verbs developed from [e:] to [ɪ] without an intervening [æ:] period (for which there is no evidence at all). In fact, the explanation of both the *-a* and *-i* endings in the nom. sing. of the masc. *-an* stems seems to be analogical, as suggested by Nils Lid, Harry Anderson and Antonsen;¹⁴ the reason for assuming an intermediate [æ:] stage therefore disappears. The 'a'-rune in **swestar** is apparently considered by Krause to represent [æ:] < \bar{e} chiefly because it seems to develop later to [ɪ], like the vowel in the nom. sing. of the masc. *-an* stems, cf. Old Icel./Norw. *systir*, but also because the generally accepted proto-form $*swes\bar{o}r$ would not give [a:] or [a] in the ending at

¹⁴ Cf. Nils Lid, 'Den nordiske nominativ singularis av maskuline *an*-stammer', *Nts* 16 (1952), 237-40; Harry Andersen, 'Opedalstenen', *Nts* 19 (1960), 409-10; Antonsen (1970), 314-15. Nils Lid found evidence in Norse or Germanic loan-words in Lappish of the reflex of an *o* in the nom. sing. ending of masc. *-an* stems, and it seems likely that $*\bar{o}n$ rather than $*\bar{e}n$ was the original ending. This sound would have appeared as 'o' at the time of the Prim. Norse inscriptions, as for example the use of the 'o'-rune in the common 1st pers. sing. past indic. weak verb endings (< $*\bar{o}m$) shows.

such an early stage. Acceptance of this hypothesis must depend entirely on whether other evidence of the 'a'-rune's double function is forthcoming. But such evidence is nowhere to be found. We know that Scandinavian [a:] is often a reflex of proto-Germanic \bar{a}^1 , but we have no way of knowing when the change took place, let alone whether it was a gradual development of $\bar{a}^1 > [\bar{a}:] > [a:]$. It seems more likely, as suggested by M. I. Steblin-Kamenskij,¹⁵ that in the long vowel system of common Germanic (/i:/, /e:/, /o:/, /u:/) /e:/ contained an allophone [a:], i.e. that it could vary between [e:] and [a:]. Not only is there no evidence that the 'a'-rune could represent /æ:/, an examination of the orthographic system of Northwest Germanic and/or Prim. Norse reveals internal evidence against such a supposition. It is generally agreed that there were five distinctive vowel qualities in Northwest Germanic which could be either long or short (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/).¹⁶ These vowels were represented in writing by five runes, length not being marked in either vowels or consonants in the runic alphabet. Whether or not one believes with Antonsen that the sixth vowel symbol, the 'é'-rune, represented /æ:/ in proto-Germanic, spellings in early Scandinavian runic inscriptions provide evidence that it was phonemically irrelevant at a later stage. As regards the vowels at least, there is thus no reason to suppose other than that there was a perfect phonemic fit between sound and symbol in Northwest Germanic. It is unnecessary, uneconomic and against the evidence of the runic alphabet as an orthographic system to posit more than five qualitative distinctions among the vowels. The early Scandinavian runic inscriptions are so far removed in time and of so uncertain interpretation that when faced with a problematical word or form it may be tempting to assume that runes had values other than those generally accepted and attested in virtually all inscriptions. But even if such an assumption is phonetically attractive (and [e:] > [æ:] > [ɪ] is hardly that), one must ask oneself whether it is phonemically likely or possible. Sounds and symbols should never be treated, as they tend to be in Krause's book, in isolation from the phonemic and orthographic system of which they form a part.

3. On p. 43 Krause states without reservation that the reflex of IE p developed "early" from an unvoiced bi-labial spirant [Φ] to the labio-dental equivalent [f], except in the combination pt in Old Icel. The only evidence adduced for this rather startling

¹⁵ Steblin-Kamenskij (1962).

¹⁶ Cf. Antonsen (1967), 27, (1970), 316-20; Steblin-Kamenskij (1962), 3; Hreinn Benediktsson, 'The Proto-Germanic Vowel System', *To Honor Roman Jakobson* 1 (1967), 179-80.

statement is the occurrence of 'pt' (rather than 'ft') spellings in Old Icel. Such spellings are attested in all the medieval Scandinavian languages, however, not only in Icel., and they occur side by side with the 'ft' notation. In one and the same manuscript we may find *eftir* or *eptir*, *craftv* or *craptv* etc. As Hreinn Benediktsson has pointed out, the distinction between stop and spirant must have been neutralised before [t] in Germanic, a reflex of the IE devoicing of [b] in this position.¹⁷ We have no way of knowing for sure what the exact pronunciation of 'ft' or 'pt' was in any medieval Scandinavian dialect, but the fluctuation in spelling cannot be unconnected with the neutralisation of the stop/spirant distinction. Thus the appearance of 'pt' in Old Icel. for etymological *ft* is no indication that the pronunciation of this consonant combination was [Φt] in that language. Given this, the inconsistent distinction in Old Icelandic spelling: 'p'+ 't' : 'f' ± other consonants or vowels cannot help us to decide whether the change [Φ] > [f] occurred before or after the time of the earliest Icelandic manuscripts, let alone whether it happened "early", i.e. long before the manuscript age. As for the early Scandinavian inscriptions themselves, they contain no indication of the exact sound represented by the 'f'-rune. However, the fact that inscriptions in the younger *fuþark* occasionally represent the reflex of IE *p* by the 'b'-rune¹⁸ (in spite of Krause's assertion to the contrary, p. 43: "In den Runeninschriften wurde aber in allen Stellungen von Anfang an nur die *f*-rune verwendet") suggests that in the Viking Age and later the pronunciation was still [Φ].

4. On p. 39, where in connection with the 'b', 'd' and 'g'-runes there is talk of phonemes and allophones and reference to Steblin-Kamenskij's 1962 article, the reader is encouraged to think that a more systematic approach is being adopted. But he is soon disappointed. Steblin-Kamenskij's basic point that in Old Icel. [p] and [ð] are not two phonemes, but allophones of one and the same phoneme, is noted and the comment appended that "Diese Feststellung hätte aber in verschiedenen Richtungen erweitert werden müssen und kann nicht für die entsprechenden urnordischen Verhältnisse gelten." Steblin-Kamenskij, however, nowhere suggests that [p] and [ð] were allophones in Prim. Norse. He does say, as is also implied by Krause elsewhere (pp. 38-9), that, e.g., [d] and [ð] were allophones of one and the same phoneme at this period, and he is clearly right. It is, oddly enough, Krause

¹⁷ Hreinn Benediktsson, *Early Icelandic Script* (1965), 76-7.

¹⁸ Cf. Lis Jacobsen and Erik Moltke, *Danmarks runeindskrifter* (1941-2), cols. 947-8.

himself who states on p. 39 that [p] and [ð] were allophones in Prim. Norse. He asserts that "In der klass.-altnordischen Periode . . . fallen die stimmlosen und die stimmhaften Allophone [i.e., [β], [ð] and [Φ], [p]!] im In- und Auslaut nach Vokal und nach gewissen Konsonanten durchweg in den entsprechenden stimmhaften Reibelauten zusammen" — a statement which shows an imperfect understanding of the term allophone.

5. On p. 77 the forms **haeramalaur** and **haeruwulafir** on the Björketorp and Istaby inscriptions (Kr. 97-8) are taken as early evidence of breaking ("—ae- soll offenbar zumindest den Ansatz einer Brechungserscheinung andeuten"). It would, however, be remarkable if the onset of a process of phonetic change were marked in writing. It is normally not until the change is complete and well-established that it begins to appear in the written language. But even if we assume that the carvers of the Blekinge stones were men with an unusually keen ear for gradations of sound, what stage in the process of breaking does **Æ** represent? According to both the principal theories of breaking, the first element of the diphthong or incipient diphthong was the more palatal. We should be particularly careful of taking **Æ** to represent diphthongal pronunciation in view of the spelling **haidera** on the Björketorp stone where, according to Krause, **AI** stands for [e], the word being the same as Old Icel. *heðra*. We should also consider the fact that falling diphthongs on the neighbouring and closely related Stentofen inscription are all represented by a single symbol. Clearly there was some uncertainty in seventh-century Blekinge about how diphthongs should be portrayed, but without greater knowledge of the writing system or systems which lie behind the Björketorp, Istaby and Stentofen inscriptions we can do little more than stress the dangers of treating words in isolation.

6. It is odd to find under the heading "Ältester *i-* und *a-Umlaut*" on p. 76 the change IE *ei* > Germanic *ī* and IE/Germanic *eu* > Prim. Norse *iu*. Leaving aside the more general question of whether "the oldest *i-* and *a-*mutation" are best described as mutations (the process involves far more than the influence of [i] or [a] on a preceding vowel¹⁹), to class the particular development of *ei* > *ī* and *eu* > *iu* as such seems an unfortunate and unnecessary extension of the term. Indeed, is monophthongisation necessarily due to the influence of one vowel on another? The change 'eu' > 'iu' in writing is more likely to indicate a shift of stress within the diphthong, with resulting uncertainty about the phonemic identification of the consonantal element (as witness the

¹⁹ Cf. Prokosch (1938), 100-1.

discussion in the First Grammatical Treatise about whether one should write *iarn* or *earn*²⁰). In Scandinavian languages the development of *eu* does not seem to be affected by the quality of a following vowel. The distinction *jó* : *jú* in West Norse is due to the quality of the following consonant. In East Norse we find only *iū*.

One could produce a great many more examples of lack of system and general theoretical considerations in Krause's book, but let these suffice. There is a similar absence of clear and systematic terminology. Dotted throughout the book are terms such as: "hellem Vokal" (p. 31), "dunklen Vokalen" (p. 37) and phrases of the type: "eine besondere Affinität des *l* zu *d*" (p. 34), "die Aussprache ungefähr eines flüchtigen *ø*" (p. 83). These seem to me to convey no linguistic information at all. They are of the same order as the statement (p. 48): "Die Vielzahl der Komposita in den urnordischen Inschriften erklärt sich wesentlich aus dem magischen und heroischen Gehalt vieler dieser Inschriften", which seems at the very least to need amplification, and the argument (p. 81) that the *e* of the patronymic suffix *-er* in **Hrorer** on the By stone (Kr. 71) was "weakened" to *i* in **hæruwulafir** on the Istaby stone. It may be possible to define weakening in a linguistic sense in different ways (Krause gives no definition), but one would hardly expect the term to cover the change [e] > [i] or [ɪ].

Questions of systematisation and theory are not the only matters in Krause's book which require comment. The author occasionally shows a lack of familiarity with the development of the Scandinavian languages after the early runic period. On p. 16 we are told that the Eggjum stone (Kr. 101) shows certain traces of Old Swedish influence. Evidence of "East Norse" influence on the inscription is given on p. 143, and consists of (1) vowel harmony (**e** after **A** or **a**, **i** after **i** and **u**), (2) the form **huwar**, (3) the form **kam**, (4) the word **hi**, (5) the form **fokl**. Outside Norwegian it is in the medieval dialects of Västergötland and Skåne that vowel harmony is generally considered to have existed. But in the written form of these dialects 'a' (in Västergötland when representing [a] and [a:], in Skåne [a]) in a stressed syllable is usually followed by 'i', not 'e'.²¹ It is in most Norwegian varieties of vowel harmony we find 'e' after 'a'.²² It is not certain that the Eggjum stone has vowel harmony at all. We find **solu** and **skorin** in the well-known first sentence, both of

²⁰ Cf. Hreinn Benediktsson (1972), 155-62.

²¹ Cf. Elias Wessén, *Svensk språkhistoria* I (1965), 61; Johs. Brøndum-Nielsen, *Gammeldansk Grammatik* I (1950), 402.

²² Cf. Didrik Arup Seip, *Norsk Språkhistorie* (1955), 128.

which contradict the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian rules. However, the spellings **sakse**, **made** and **galande** are difficult to explain in any other way, unless they are inverted spellings at a time when the 'e'-rune was gradually being superseded by the 'i'-rune. The form **huwar** may well represent *hwæR* or *hwer* just as **manr** represents *mænR* or *menR*. As Seip has shown,²³ there is every reason to believe that this pronoun (=Goth. *hwas*) existed in Norwegian and became confused with *hverr* (=Goth. *hwarjis*) after *i*- and *R*-mutation and syncope, cf. *hverr* sense 2 in Fritznér's *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog*, which corresponds exactly with the function of Goth. *hwas*. The form **kam** and the word **hi** may be East Norse in origin, but **hi** is not the same word as Old Swed./Dan. *hit* and we should perhaps be wary of suggesting East Norse influence on the basis of two isolated forms alone, given the state of our knowledge of the Scandinavian languages at this time. The form **fokl** is if anything hyper-West Norse, and should be compared with *goll*, *goþ* etc. in early Norwegian and Icelandic manuscripts and in scaldic poetry. The Old Norwegian Homily Book has many examples of the word *fogl* spelt with an 'o'. Forms such as *foghil*, *foglar* etc. do occur in (mostly late) Old Swed., but may well be due to the general change which manifests itself as 'u' > 'o' in younger Old Swedish texts.²⁴

The Roes stone (Kr. 102), according to Krause, is "sprachlich typisch altgutnisch" (p. 16). It runs: **iu pin ; udr rak**. The only feature I can see that is typically Old Gotlandic is the loss of initial *w* in the verb *reka*, a feature which Old Gotl. shares with West Norse, not one which distinguishes them as suggested by Krause (p. 159: "*rak* agutn. für awn. und aschwed. *vrak*"). In Old Gotl. as we know it **iu** and **pin** would appear as *iau* (presumably) and *pan(n)* cf. pp. 371-2 below. The spelling **udr** tells us little, since at this time the 'o'-rune was being superseded by the 'u'-rune.

While dialectal differences in the later inscriptions are strongly stressed by Krause, little account is taken of their possible appearance in the early period. We obviously know far too little to be able to say with any assurance that this or that is a dialect feature, but when Krause describes the possible dat. masc. sing. ending of **hahai** on the Möjbro stone (Kr. 99) as "nur archaisch beibehaltene" (p. 49) and the dative case following **after** on the Tune stone as "vielleicht altertümlich" (p. 131), one feels that the possibility of dialectal differences ought not to be ignored.

²³ Didrik Arup Seip, 'Pronomenet hvem i gammelnorsk', *Festskrift tilegnet førstebibliotekar A. Kjær* . . . (1924), 70-2.

²⁴ Cf. Wessén (1965), 78-9.

Presumably the Northwest Germanic language spoken in Scandinavia did not develop in the same way at the same time everywhere.

In any book about Primitive Norse runic inscriptions there will clearly be very little that is certain and therefore much room for disagreement. I feel a different interpretation from Krause's is to be preferred in many cases, but here I shall only mention a few important matters about which he must, I think, be wrong.

1. The preposition **after** on the Tune stone can hardly develop to *æftir* (Old Icel. *eptir*) at the time of *i*-mutation.²⁵ Any unstressed [e] (or [ə]?) in this position would be regularly lost during the syncope period and would not develop to [i], let alone cause the changes [a] > [æ] (or [ɛ]) and [r] > ʀ.²⁶ We are faced with two possibilities: (1) The spelling on the Tune stone for some reason represents [i] by the 'e'-rune in this word (though not in others). If we are dealing with the preposition which in later Scandinavian appears as *eptir*, *æftir* etc., this is perhaps the only explanation, for whether one believes that unaccented IE *ē* regularly developed to *ī* in Germanic, or that this development could be hindered by a following mid or low vowel, the etymology suggested for Old Icel. *eptir* (< **opteri*) indicates an early Germanic form **aftir(i)*, not *after*.²⁷ (2) The spelling on the Tune stone is consistent, and **after**, although doubtless etymologically identical with **aftir(i)*, is at this stage a different word, probably the one that develops to *aft*, "after, in memory of", which occurs on many Viking Age inscriptions. It may be that **Afatr** on the Istaby stone is a transitional form, although -ʀ for -r is hard to explain. In my view the second possibility is the more likely. That is to say, on the Tune stone we already have the distinction of early (Danish and Swedish) Viking Age inscriptions and of scaldic verse between *aft* (and analogical(?) *æft*, *ept*), prep., and *eptir*, *æftir*, adv.²⁸ Whether **after** is a very early example of weakening in unstressed position ([i] > [ə]) or whether we are dealing with two different Germanic forms,

²⁵ Krause, 30. The form *æftir* does not, as far as I know, occur before or during the syncope period, yet here it is printed without an asterisk (cf. below).

²⁶ Thus Krause, 30.

²⁷ Cf. H. S. Falk and Alf Torp, *Norwegisches-Dänisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1910-11), 181; Prokosch (1938), 234; R. C. Boer, *Oergermaansch handboek* (1924), 61. Krause himself seems to hold the view that unaccented *ē* > *ī* irrespective of the following vowel, for in his Primitive Norse paradigms he gives the 2nd pers. pl. pres. indic. ending as -*iþ* in all cases (< IE *-ete, cf. Prokosch (1938), 212, Boer (1924), 61). It is worth noting that according to Krause's indices (1966 and 1971) no clear examples of unstressed *ē* occur in Norse runic inscriptions before the seventh century (on the Blekinge stones, Kr. 95-8), and some might not even call these clear.

²⁸ Cf. Jacobsen and Moltke, col. 742; Ingrid Sanness Johnsen, *Stuttruner* (1968), 54.

**afñir*(i) and **aftera* < IE **opterom*, Krause's etymology, is impossible to say.

2. On p. 45 Krause suggests that the change [z] > *r* (the latter "mit stark palatale Aussprache?") occurred before the fifth century at the latest. The evidence for this is (1) the tribal name *Fervir* in Jordanes, (2) the spelling **mer** on the Opedal stone. The final '-r' in *Fervir* proves quite clearly, according to Krause, that "dieser Laut um die Mitte des 6. Jh.s nach römischem Empfinden bereits dem Phonem *r* näherstand als dem Phonem *z*." While it is obvious that in *-ir* we have a Germanic rather than a Latin ending, one would like to know something about the phonemic system of the language spoken by the person who was Jordanes's source for this word before drawing more detailed conclusions. It would be important to know whether this system contained [z], as a phoneme or as an allophone of [s] or some other consonant, and what variety of *r* was used. Unfortunately we know nothing about the source of the relevant passage in *Getica*.²⁹ The form **mer** is evidence of an *r*-pronunciation because: "Die Öffnung des -i- zu -e- (im Klass.-Altnordischen zu -ē-) wird . . . in höherem Grad wahrscheinlich sein, wenn man dem schließenden Konsonanten bereits den Wert eines *r*-artigen Lautes gibt, als wenn man in dieser Stellung noch einen stimmhaften Zischlaut *z* annehmen wollte." This, however, can only be true if we assume that the *r*-sound was not palatal. If it was palatal, as Krause and others suggest and as the *r*-mutation in West Norse testifies, a change of [i] > [e] after the development of [z] > *r* seems out of the question. Not only is a palatal *r* unlikely to have made [i] less palatal than it already was, it is phonetically highly improbable that any speech sound would be able to affect another in diametrically opposite ways. The sound which caused [a] > [ε] (**glara* > *gler*), [u:] > [y:] (**kūr* > *kýr*) etc. can hardly have been responsible for a development **mīr* > *meR*. This does not mean that the sound changes mentioned by Krause on pp. 62 and 60 (IE *i* > Prim. Norse *ē* before *r*, IE *ū* > Prim. Norse *ō* before *r*) did not take place,³⁰ only that the sound which he writes 'R' in this connection cannot have been the palatal *r* which caused *r*-mutation during the syncope period. We can only guess at what value the forerunner of palatal *r* may have had at any given time and at what time [i] > [e] and [u] > [o], but if we take the end of the common

²⁹ Cf. J. Svernung, *Jordanes und Scandia* (1967), 4, 32.

³⁰ There is considerable evidence for these changes, which were often followed by lengthening, cf. Germanic **miz* > Icel. *mér*, Germanic **wiz* > Prim. Norse **wiz* > Icel. *vér*, Germanic **uz* > Icel. *ór*, Germanic **kuzun* > Prim. Norse **kozun* > Icel. *køru* etc.

Germanic era as being around the time of the birth of Christ, we have some five hundred years for the development of [z] to palatal *r* and something less than four hundred for the change [i] > [e] (the Opedal stone is dated to the beginning of the fifth century by which time the change must have been well established). It seems reasonable to suppose that [i] > [e] before the pronunciation of *z* became at all palatal, that is, assuming a steady progression from [z] to palatal *r* — and we have no reason to assume anything else — very soon after the end of the common Germanic era. It is thus not surprising to find **mer** on the Opedal stone, but this form provides no guide to the pronunciation of *r* at that time.

3. On p. 135 we are told that it is impossible to be sure whether the first **a** of the form **hahai** on the Mjöbro stone, which is interpreted as the dat. sing. of a masc. **hāhar* (< **hanhaz*), “horse”, had the pronunciation [an], [ã:] or [a:]. While **a** might perhaps stand for [an] as well as [ã:] (although one would think that only after a change [an] > [ã:] would such spellings as **hahai** occur), it cannot represent [a:]. Nasality, particularly in *a*, is a feature which can be followed down to the time of the First Grammarian. He could still distinguish between *hár*, “hair” (non-nasal, < **hāra*) and *hár*, “shark” (nasal, < **hanhar*),³¹ and there is no reason to believe that if **hahai** is indeed the dat. sing. of **hāhar* and the word had existed in twelfth-century Icel., it would have had a pronunciation in any way different from *hár*, “shark”. In Swedish it is only in the middle of the eleventh century that the old **ansur*-rune begins to appear in non-nasal contexts and clearly represents [o:], [o] rather than [ã:], [ã].

4. On p. 135 we are also told that it is impossible to say at what period the spirants [β], [ð] and [ɣ] developed to stops in initial position and immediately after nasals: all we can see for sure is the result of these developments in the consonant system of “Klass.-Altnordischen”. It is, however, possible to be a little more specific. The Eggjum stone, which Krause dates to A.D. 700, has the form **lat**. This can only represent a pronunciation [lãnd] since although the ‘t’-rune was sometimes used for [d] in the final period of the older runic alphabet and always in the early stages of the younger runic alphabet, it was not used for [p] or [ð]. Assuming that what is true of the dental consonants also holds good for the labials and velars, and there seems no reason to suppose there was a chronological difference between the orders in the question of the development from spirant to stop, we can say that nasal + spirant > nasal + stop before A.D. 700. The same doubtless applies to the change from spirant to stop in initial

³¹ Cf. Hreinn Benediktsson (1972), 132.

position, but here it is not until we come to inscriptions in the younger runic alphabet that we have positive evidence. However, the Rök stone, probably from the early ninth century, provides us with **tu** (= *dō*) or **tumir** (= *dōmir*) and **traki** (= *drængi*). It is impossible that Krause can mean to include the Eggjum stone in his definition of "Klass.-Altnordisch" Apart from the fact that "Klass." suggests Old Icel. and thereby the other Scandinavian languages of the manuscript age (Iceland and Norway post 1150, Denmark and Sweden some hundred years later), the Eggjum stone provides much material for his grammar and must therefore be "Ürnordisch"

5. On p. 29 it is stated that in the dat. pl. of all stems the *i* of the original ending, ***-mis**, was lost very early, and the name of a goddess from late common Germanic times, *Aflims*, is instanced (but without reference for the less well-informed as to where this word may be found³²). The only dat. pl. form preserved in Prim. Norse, according to Krause, is **-gestumr** on the Stentofsten stone (although in fact this inscription also contains the word **-borumr**). In classical Old Norse, we are told, the final *-r* is always lost except in old spellings of the numerals *tveim(r)* and *þrim(r)*. The implication of this statement is that it is only in early West Norse manuscript texts that the dative of the two numerals preserves the final *-r*. There are two errors here. First, it has been shown that in Germanic the word for "two" had dual endings and that the dative *-r* in West Norse is analogical;³³ it was probably introduced as late as the Viking Age. Certainly final *-r* is much less common in *tveim(r)* than in *þrim(r)* where *-s > -z* formed part of the dative ending from the start.³⁴ Second, it is not only in early texts that the datives of *tveir* and *þrir* appear with *-r*. There seems to be a tendency to prefer forms without *-r* between c. 1200 and 1400 in Icel. (although examples with *-r* can be found, and even occur in fourteenth-century Norwegian³⁵), but after this *tveimr* or *tveimur* and *þremr* or *þremur* (*þrimr*, *þrimur*) become widely used and are common today.³⁶

6. On p. 50 we are told that the early Primitive Norse form of Stentofsten's **-gestumr** "wäre entweder als ***gastumr** oder — noch altertümlicher — als ***gastimr** . . . anzusetzen". This pre-

³² The reference is *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. Th. Mommsen et al. (1863-1955), XIII, No. 8157.

³³ Cf. R. Loewe, 'Der germanische Pluraldativ', *Kuhns Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* XLVIII (1918), 91-2.

³⁴ Cf. Adolf Noreen, *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik* (1923), 202 with references.

³⁵ Cf. Marius Hægstad, *Vestnorske maalføre I* (1907), 26.

³⁶ Cf. Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Um íslenskar orðmyndir á 14. og 15. öld* (1925), 39; Stefán Einarsson, *Icelandic* (1945), 66.

supposes a line of development for which we have no evidence. The form **gastumR* need never have existed. A change **gastimR* > **gæstimR* is equally, perhaps more, likely, with the introduction of analogical *u* after *i*-mutation.

In a book as detailed as Krause's it would not be surprising to find a number of straightforward slips. In fact the work is remarkably free of such and the proof-reading seems to have been meticulous. It is nevertheless perhaps worth recording the following: (1) The By stone is dated on p. 46 to "um 475" and on p. 81 to "um 575". The latter is the correct date. (2) *mér* **meyna* on p. 118 should read *mæv* **meyna*. (3) The reference on p. 119 to inscription 87 after *Niuwila* should be to 86. (4) *rwilu* on p. 133 is a mistake for *r wrilu*. (5) In the index there should be a further reference under *mæR* to § 111, 1a and under *orte* § 38, 4 (which does not exist) should presumably read § 39, 1b or 39, 2b (or both). In addition to these there are two points which Krause can hardly have made intentionally: (1) *huwar* on the Eggjum stone cannot be an example of the failure of runic writing to indicate *i*-mutation (p. 76); if, as suggested earlier in this article, and indirectly by Krause himself, *huwar* = *hwæR*, it is due to the influence of the following *R* that the change [a] > [æ] has taken place. (2) The word *arjoster* (or *sijoster*) on the Tune stone, as Krause points out (p. 53), is our first example of the characteristic *-R* (> *-r*) ending in the nom. masc. pl. of adjectives in Scandinavian. This *-R* must have been added on analogy with noun plurals and/or the nom./acc. fem. pl. of adjectives. The statement on p. 117: "Adjektiva mit pronominaler Endung sind: . *arjöstēR* . . urgerm. **arjöstai-R*" is thus at best clumsily expressed and oversimplified: *arjoster* has both a pronominal *-ē* (< *-ai*) and a nominal *-R* ending and it comes from Germanic **arjöstai* + analogical *R*.

Krause's book is open to criticism on a more practical level. Among his omissions is a discussion of why, at a time when the Scandinavian languages were undergoing radical changes and the number of runic symbols in use was decreasing, a distinctive symbol was adopted for [ã:] and [ã]. Was it just because a symbol became available? Why then did the 'e'- and 'o'-runes fall into disuse? Part I, B, II is concerned with word-formation, but restricts itself entirely to nouns, and Section B, as we have seen, does not deal with the language of the Prim. Norse runic inscriptions where one might argue that the greatest number of words are nouns, but is a general description of "Das Urnordische zwischen Urgermanisch und Altnordisch". On p. 130 we are told: "Der Genitiv tritt in den urnordischen Inschriften als Possessivus, Objektivus und Partitivus auf. Hier sollen nur

einige Fälle des Genitivus possessivus besprochen werden." Examples of the "Objektivus" and "Partitivus" would have been interesting and helpful. The use of the asterisk which normally indicates a reconstructed form is difficult to follow in Krause's book. On p. 63, for example, we have Germanic *bergan*, Prim. Norse **gibir*, **gibiþ*, IE *esti* and Prim. Germanic **wilþia*-. Such inconsistency can also be found elsewhere in the work. In Section C, "Die Sprachformen der urnordischen Inschriften", it is never made entirely clear which paragraphs contain a complete list of examples of the relevant feature or class of word, and which merely include an arbitrary number for illustration. A note at the beginning of § 28: "Zur Bildung der einzelnen Kasus (die gesammelten Beispiele s. §§ 88-98)" makes it clear that those paragraphs which deal with noun inflexions are intended to be complete, but then in § 32, 3 a list of forms is preceded by the statement: "Außerdem seien hier folgende Einzelbeispiele herausgestellt", and in § 104 ("Schwache Verba"), which otherwise appears to be complete, the important form **dalidun** from the Tune stone is missing as well as the probable 1st pers. sing. pres. indic. **wija** from the Vimose buckle (Kr. 24). Some perceptible order, numerical, alphabetical or other would also have been helpful in these lists of examples in Section C.

There are a number of points made by Krause which are less than clear to me, but this may be due to the uncertain nature of the material.

1. It is difficult to see why Krause concludes that the one-time dental ending of the 3rd pers. sing. indic. pres. in Scandinavian must have been *-þ* (and not *-ð*) "von Haus aus" (p. 42), when the only certain example of this ending is from the very period in which it is believed that unvoicing of spirants in final position took place and from the same stone (Stentofthen) that has **gaf** (<**gab* [gaβ]).

2. It is not clear to me why we need to posit a third IE pronominal stem, **ti*- (p. 53), because of the spelling **pin** on the Gotlandic Roes stone and the uncertain **pit . . uilald** (Over Hornbæk II, Kr. 129). The reading of Over Hornbæk II is too uncertain a basis for such a theory and the Roes stone is from c. A.D. 750, a time when the 'e'-rune was being or had been superseded by the 'i'-rune. This may also be the explanation of the three occurrences of **pina** on the Viking Age Sjonhem stones from Gotland³⁷ which Krause sees as further evidence of the pronominal stem **ti*-: **pina** may=a runic Gotl. **þenna* (we find

³⁷ *Gotlands runinskrifter*, ed. Sven B. F. Jansson and Elias Wessén (1962-), Nos. 134-6.

both *eftir* and *iftir* on these stones); alternatively, of course, **pina** may = Old Gotl. *pinna*, but this is more likely to be an example of Gotlandic palatalisation than an IE pronominal stem **ti-*. In Old Gotlandic manuscripts the simple form of the pronoun is *þan(n)*, never *þen(n)*, but these post-date the Roes stone by about six hundred years and are of no relevance in trying to decide whether **pin** stands for [þen:] or [pin:].

3. There is much in Krause's discussion of the Lindholm amulet (Kr. 29) which I find puzzling (pp. 132, 134). He translates **ek erilar sa wilagar ha(i)teka** as "Ich, der Runenmeister hier, heiße Listig"; **sa** could not have had "die Bedeutung eines bestimmten Artikels" because one would then have expected **wilagar** to have had "die Bestimmtheitsform des Adjektivs". Even so, Krause considers it odd that a "Beiname" (is **wilagar** then an adjective or a noun?) should appear in the "indefinite" form. However, there is some evidence to show "wie leicht in der Auffassung des Sprechenden unbestimmte und bestimmte Flexion des Adjektivs miteinander wechseln können". It seems to me unfortunate to confuse strong and weak inflexion with indefinite and definite function as Krause's terminology does. In modern Icel. definite function is not synonymous with weak inflexion (cf. *blátt hafíð* v. *bláa hafíð*), and if we confuse our terms how are we to describe phrases such as *var virðulæghr herra* which are not uncommon in medieval Norwegian diplomas?³⁸ We know nothing about the way in which weak and strong adjectives were used at the time of the Lindholm amulet (A.D. 500-550), or whether *sa* could function as a definite article, but if it could we should not dismiss the possibility that it might have been followed by a strong adjective. However, **sa** can also be taken with **erilar** and we can translate (according to the dual function, "this" and "that", which *sa* seems to have had at this time): "I, this rune master" (if "rune master" is indeed what *erilar* means). This seems preferable to taking **sa** as an adverb, a usage which as far as I know is unparalleled. Finally, it is odd that Krause describes the verb on the Lindholm amulet as being in third place (p. 134). This is surely only possible if **ek erilar** and **sa wilagar**, or, as suggested here, the first three words of the inscription are taken together.

4. Krause's remarks about the autonomy of the word on p. 137 are not easy to grasp. It is necessary here to quote in extenso: "In einem entscheidenden Punkte ist noch der Sprachcharakter des theoretisch erschlossenen Urindogermanischen in den urnordischen Runenschriften gut bewahrt, nämlich in dem,

³⁸ Cf., for example, *Diplomatarium Norvegicum* II, 35 and 39, IV, 48.

was man als die Autonomie des Wortes bezeichnen kann, womit denn zugleich auch die grammatische Kategorie "Wort" beibehalten ist, ein Begriff, der ja für viele Sprachen der Erde keineswegs gilt: weder etwa das Chinesische noch das Eskimoische kennen diese Kategorie "Wort", und auch in späteren indogermanischen Sprachen, wie besonders im Inselkeltischen und im modernen Französischen tritt der Begriff des "Wortes" stark zurück; man nehme etwa einen französischen Satz wie *je ne m'en vais pas*, bei dem man vom Standpunkt der lebenden Sprache unmöglich sagen kann, aus wie vielen Worten er besteht." What Krause appears to be discussing is the coalescing of words. The fact that two or more words coalesce and become one in a language does not mean, however, that there is necessarily a period in which it is impossible to say whether we are dealing with several words or one. In the French example quoted it can be demonstrated synchronically that there are six words by a process of substitution: *je ne m'en vais pas, tu ne t'en vas pas* etc., and, if this is not sufficient: *je ne me lave pas, tu ne te laves pas* etc. More difficult to understand is Krause's contention that sandhi and the coalescing of words were unknown phenomena in Prim. Norse. This may have been true of early Prim. Norse, although it is odd to find that Krause's transliteration of the Lindholm amulet is: **ek erilar sa wilagar ha(i)teka** (five words or six?), but in late Prim. Norse many words must have started to coalesce. We have **sar** (= *sa er, sa es*?) on the Björketorp stone, and Krause himself transliterates the beginning of the Eggjum inscription: **ni's solu sot** (p. 143), although in fact the 'i'-rune could be taken both with **n** and **s** (but cf. the double **ss**). The most important evidence, however, is provided by the many new forms and words which appear to have been fully developed by the beginning of the eleventh century: the *-sk* form of the verb,³⁹ the suffixed definite article,⁴⁰ the pronouns *engi* and *nokkurr*,⁴¹ just to name the most important.⁴² These must have started to develop during the late Primitive Norse period, if not before. Scandinavian in the seventh-tenth centuries cannot have been so very different from modern French in the matter of word-boundaries.

³⁹ One of the earliest examples is found in the Danish runic inscription Aarhus 4, Jacobsen and Moltke (1941-2), No. 66, probably from the first half of the eleventh century.

⁴⁰ One of the earliest examples is found in the Swedish runic inscription Ekilla Bro, *Upplands runinskrifter*, ed. Sven B. F. Jansson and Elias Wessén (1940-58), No. 644, probably from about 1050.

⁴¹ Many examples are to be found in edaic and scaldic poetry, cf. Finnur Jónsson, *Lexicon Poeticum* (1931).

⁴² Examples of the coalescing of various pronouns with other words can be found in Noreen (1923), 310-11, 319.

It is in the nature of a lengthy review to emphasise the negative aspects of the book considered; there would otherwise be little basis for discussion and the reviewer would run the risk of writing a panegyric. I would like therefore in conclusion to stress that Krause's *Die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften* is an extremely accurate and careful work, and together with his *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark* provides the most comprehensive guide we have to the runic inscriptions in the older *futhark* and the earliest known language of Scandinavia. Both books will doubtless remain standard works for many years to come.

BOOK REVIEWS

FRÓÐSKAPARRIT. ANNALES SOCIETATIS SCIENTIARUM FÆROENSIS. 18. BÓK. Ritstjórar: HANS DEBES JOENSEN, JÓANNES RASMUSSEN, JÓHANNES AV SKARÐI. *Mentunargrunnur Føroya Løgtings*. Tórshavn, 1970. 391 pp.

This volume of *Fróðskaparrit* constitutes a *Festschrift* to Professor Christian Matras on his seventieth birthday. Professor Matras has devoted a life-time to Faroese studies. In the late 'twenties he published with M. A. Jacobsen the first modern dictionary of the Faroese language. His doctoral thesis of 1933 dealt with the place-names of his native Norðuroyar. And his many publications since then have included a history of Faroese literature (*Føroysk bókmenntasøga*, 1933), the first volumes of a full critical edition of the Faroese ballads (*Føroya kvæði*, 1944-), an edition of Svabo's *Dictionarium Færoense* (1966, 1970) and many contributions to the periodicals *Útiseti* and *Varðin*. Christian Matras is also famous as a poet and translator. In 1952 he became Professor of Faroese in Copenhagen and in 1965 returned to the Faroes to become professor at the newly established Fróðskaparsetur. His *Festschrift* contains thirty articles by scholars from eight countries. Three contributions, those of Magne Oftedal, Hans Bekker-Nielsen and Helgi Guðmundsson, relate to a greater or lesser extent to Professor Matras's own theories on 'Atlantssiðir-Atlantsorð' (see *Fróðskaparrit*, 1958, 73-101). Three Icelanders write on specifically Icelandic subjects: Jón Helgason edits and elucidates three 'grammatical' stanzas from the Codex Wormianus; Ólafur Halldórsson does the same with a riddle-poem from AM 687b, 4to; and Svavar Sigmundsson argues an earlier date for the Icelandic *hljóðdvöl* than that normally accepted. Ornithologists are well catered for by four papers, including one by W. Lockwood on 'Faroese Bird Names' and one by H. D. Joensen about the ornithological artist Dýðrik á Skarvanesi. (Four of Dýðrik's charming paintings are reproduced as colour plates.) And another four articles are rightly devoted to various aspects of Faroese ballad studies. There are three contributions on the Faroese language, by Otmar Werner on the preterite-present, by Björn Hagström on supradentals, and by Ulf Zachariassen on athematic stems in Faroese. And other contributions include a paper by Peter Foote on legal terms in *Færeyinga saga*, one by Åsa Nyman on 'Etniska särdrag i den färöiska folksagotraditionen' and one by Harry Andersen on

William Heinesen's lyric poetry. Pages 386-91 are taken up with a bibliography of Matras's learned work. In this volume, then, we find a wide range of Faroese topics discussed — language, literature, folklore, ethnography. The whole book bears witness to the diversity, vitality and freshness of Faroese studies. It is a fitting tribute to a man who has done so much to promote the study of the culture of the Faroe Islands.

RICHARD PERKINS

MEDIAEVAL SCANDINAVIA 3. Managing Editor HANS BEKKER-NIELSEN. *Odense University Press, 1970.*

This volume contains a great variety of articles, covering various disciplines. Three articles are concerned with literature. R. Frank in 'Onomastic play in Kormakr's verse: the name Steingerðr' shows how an understanding of his kennings on this name deepens one's appreciation of the poet. In 'A note on the Atlakviða, Strophe 16, lines 9-10' Margaret Clunies Ross explains the meaning of Guðrún's insult to the Hunnish maidens — servile work is being suggested for these aristocratic ladies. Niels Åge Nielsen's 'Notes on early Runic poetry' is an attempt to interpret some runic inscriptions from a knowledge of the metres of *ljóðaháttir* and *fornyrðislag*, in which he suggests that they are written.

Four articles are of special interest to historians. Of these easily the most enjoyable is Claiborne W. Thompson's on 'A Swedish runographer and a headless bishop', for few things are more delightful than to witness a long-established theory crumble into dust, together with the reputation of those associated with it. In this case the identification of Asmundr Karasun, one of the most famous of the Swedish rune-masters, with an irregular ('acephalus') English bishop called Osmundus, is demolished. One may feel that the victory is rather easily won, but the history of the theory is instructive. It began with the statement by an eighteenth-century Swedish antiquary that Asmundr must have been more than ordinarily papistical, because of references in his inscriptions to the Virgin Mary. The ground was thus prepared for identification, by two nineteenth-century scholars, with Osmundus. The identification was defended by Otto von Friesen. In 1907 he wrote that it was "not impossible". In 1913 it was "more than possible" In 1920 it was "highly probable" and "hardly to be doubted" This kind of development is only too familiar, but in von Friesen's defence it should be stated that the whole process took him some thirteen years. In the present

jet-propelled age one most frequently finds it within the covers of a single book.

Such appears to be the case in a book by Vegard Skånland, discussed by A. O. Johnsen in 'The earliest provincial statute of the Norwegian Church'. Skånland claims that the collection hitherto known to scholars as the canons of Nicholas Breakspear should really be regarded as the canons of an "unknown" provincial council held by Archbishop Eystein in 1170-80. A. O. Johnsen's article is actually the text of his opposition to Skånland's thesis, and E. Ladewig Petersen's 'Preaching in Mediaeval Denmark' is similarly an opposition *ex officio* to Anne Riising's *Danmarks middelalderlige prædiken*. Learned and important though both these contributions are within their own context, one may question the wisdom of including them in a journal like *Mediaeval Scandinavia*. They imply a detailed knowledge of the book under discussion, without which the argument appears remote and disjointed. It is greatly to be hoped that the editors of *Mediaeval Scandinavia* will think twice before including such material again. It is quite a different *genre* of writing from the book review, which assumes that the reader has not yet seen the book, and the success of which may be measured by the number of persons who have been dissuaded from reading it.

Finally within this group comes a detailed article by Nanna Damsholt on 'Kingship in the arengas of Danish royal diplomas, 1140-1233'. Not surprisingly, since it is shown that they were mostly borrowed from foreign models, the conclusion has to be that they reveal little of the actual ideology, still less of the policies, of the rulers in whose names they were written. Perhaps an exception to this is Knud VI's 'Manslaughter Ordinance for Scania' which contains a clumsy and somewhat embarrassed apologia for the king's right to legislate. The passage, which is not actually part of an arenga, is briefly mentioned in the article. It is in any case a rarity among the formal sections of Danish royal documents. It might be more profitable to trace the chanceries from which the different formulae came, whether papal, imperial, English or French. It is suggested, at the end of the article, that such an investigation is perfectly possible. It should certainly reveal much about the cultural influences on Denmark during this period.

Two contributions stand out on their own. The first is Kenneth Cameron's 'Scandinavian settlement in the territory of the Five Boroughs: the place-name evidence, part ii, place-names in thorp'. Cameron discusses the nature and distribution of these place-names and draws some tentative conclusions. The

word 'thorp' is used, he maintains, exactly as in Denmark, to denote a place of secondary settlement. He is able to identify with considerable success and the aid of maps the main settlements on which the 'thorp' depended. The fact that a Danish name was exclusively used for such secondary settlements seems to him "to support the general hypothesis I have proposed that Danish settlement in the northeast Midlands was on a considerable scale, and was not simply the result of the settlement of a *part* of an army, itself to be counted only in hundreds"

Finally, this issue of *Mediaeval Scandinavia* sees the publication of the first part of the Norse-Celtic bibliography. The bibliography has been planned in two parts, the first to cover the ground geographically, the second by special topics. There is also a section called 'Miscellanea' which includes items not easily fitted into the planned categories. The first part of the bibliography published here consists of the Miscellanea section and the Faroese section. The purpose of the bibliography is "to furnish specialists in one branch of study with a point of departure for investigation into another, and in that way to promote interdisciplinary research on the Norse-Celtic question" Nevertheless, the bibliography on the Faroe islands is particularly full, and covers most aspects of their history and culture. Within the eleven subsections (miscellaneous, medieval and early modern sources, historical studies, etc.) books are arranged chronologically. There is a generous provision for cross references from one subsection to another. Altogether this is a most interesting and well-set-out bibliography. Whoever undertakes research into a new subject and faces all the uncertainties and difficulties of the pioneer will envy Norse-Celtic scholars the efficient instrument which has been provided for them.

Among the reviews in this issue, R. I. Page's discussion of Niels Åge Nielsen's *Runestudier* stands out for its sensible and witty discussion of problems of Runology in general. Altogether this volume is packed with interest and admirably upholds the high standards one has come to associate with *Mediaeval Scandinavia*.

PETER KING

THE NORDIC LANGUAGES AND MODERN LINGUISTICS. Edited by HREINN BENEDIKTSSON. *Vísindafélag Íslendinga*. Reykjavík, 1970. 616 pp.

This volume is the record of a conference held in Reykjavík in

1969; it contains versions of some thirty papers, as well as some record of their discussion. Roughly ten papers are primarily concerned with problems of general linguistics, although several of them draw their material from Scandinavian languages. The others are concerned with specific topics related to individual Nordic languages. Hreinn Benediktsson has contributed an important paper summarising and continuing his work on the diachronic development of Icelandic in terms of general linguistics (mostly taxonomic); the interest of the paper, and its faults, lie mostly in its methodology. For instance, he plausibly suggests that lowering of accented *i* and *u* enabled the unaccented vowels previously written *e* and *o* to be identified with these instead, while not undergoing any phonetic change. He then continues by deducing that the archiphonemes (in phonetic contexts where vowel-length was non-distinctive), although previously identified with the short accented vowels, did not participate in this lowering, and so became qualitatively more similar to the long vowels, were identified with them, and later underwent the same phonetic developments as they did. This is intended to replace the conventional explanation that all short vowels were lengthened in certain phonetic contexts, thereby neutralising vowel-contrast in those positions, and so producing archiphonemes. But an archiphoneme cannot be identified with a specific phonetic realisation; it is the functional unit formed when certain features normally distinguishing one phoneme of a group from the others cease to be distinctive in certain phonetic contexts. Similarly, an archiphoneme cannot remain unchanged when the phonetic realisation of a constituent phoneme changes. But even ignoring this basic error, the evidence that the archiphoneme was "identified with" the short accented vowel before lowering is, as Einar Haugen points out, dubious: mostly that in the Stockholm Homily Book vowel-length is not marked where it is not distinctive. The imperative *se* (used in the First Grammatical Treatise to exemplify short *e*) may merely show that lengthening, and hence the development of the archiphoneme, had not yet taken place, or it may be a special case, in that pronoun-suffixation (*se-þú*) may have caused the temporary retention of a form with a short vowel. It would seem better, after all, to consider the lengthening as purely phonetic, and the development of the archiphoneme as secondary to it.

Paul Kiparsky contributes a paper on generative semantics, proposing "semantic extension rules" whereby words may be allowed to have more than one meaning. Generative semantics is an important field, and important work on it has been published since this paper was given. Part of the matter is

admirably expressed by Chafe (*Language* 47, no. 1), that any purely transformational grammar requires initial structures to transform. Generative semantics proposes roughly that the semantic component produces these basic structures. But much else is involved: for instance, the lexicon contains semantic, syntactic and phonological information, and must therefore be organised and must operate at all of these levels. A theory of the lexicon must thus form an essential part of any theory of generative semantics. Secondly, meaning remains relevant to the form of speech at syntactic and phonological levels: e.g. certain formal changes of surface structure can modify meaning, as Chomsky has pointed out. And even the passive transformation can effect a semantic shift of emphasis. Again, purely phonological elements such as intonation may be meaningful in their own right. It is essential, therefore, that any theory of generative semantics recognises that semantic processes are not only anterior but also parallel to formal syntax and phonology in sentence-production. Kiparsky's paper may be considered as part of a description of the semantic organisation of the lexicon.

Alvar Ellegaard gives a clear classification of clause-types within a generative framework. Halldór Halldórsson discusses some loan-words into Icelandic and the principles of loan-analysis that can be deduced from these. Els Oksaar gives some examples of connotation-profiles, a statistical method of describing the implications of a word beyond basic meaning, by reference to a number of other terms. Aleksander Szulc describes and gives some classification of interference between languages in bilinguals. Ulf Teleman discusses the generation of noun-phrases. William Moulton and Karl-Hampus Dahlstedt contribute papers on dialectology: Moulton pleads for the retention of the phoneme, on dubious grounds, while Dahlstedt discusses, inter alia, the position in a generative theory of the social function of dialect. Of the papers concerned with Nordic linguistics, Einar Haugen contributes an elegant plea for a panoptic view of Nordic linguistics, while Hans Anton Koefoed discusses semantic variations between the Nordic languages, and Baldur Jónsson gives a paper on the reconstruction of unaccented verbal prefixes in Primitive Norse on syntactic and semantic grounds. Elmer Antonsen gives a somewhat speculative paper on runes and the Germanic vowel-system. A number of papers deal specifically with Swedish: Bengt Loman reports on research in progress into social variation in syntax, and Sture Allén on a programme of large-scale vocabulary processing. Bengt Nordberg outlines a research programme into the urban dialect of Eskilstuna. Kim Nilsson discusses the generation of causative clauses in Swedish,

showing that semantic considerations must be taken into account in the formal generation of such clauses. Bengt Sigurd analyses the position of η , ζ and \int in a generative phonology of Swedish, while Sture Ureland describes the breakdown of Swedish among Texas-Swedes. Jørgen Rischel describes the relationship between stops and fricatives in Danish in terms of generative phonology, and John Weinstock sketches a generative phonology of Norwegian. Björn Hagström, Trygve Skomedal and Otmar Werner give papers on Faroese: Hagström discusses t/d variation in initial position in pronouns; Skomedal discusses parallel but unrelated developments in Faroese and other West Norse languages or dialects, while Werner describes the vocalisation of v . There are two papers specifically on Icelandic, other than those already mentioned: Helgi Guðmundsson describes the development of the $já/jú$ contrast in modern Icelandic, while Sigríður Valfellis gives a not entirely convincing analysis of the function of the Icelandic middle voice as marking the absence or deletion of an underlying noun phrase. The volume is thus an eclectic but stimulating selection of work in progress, and contains several papers of importance in their respective fields.

PAUL BIBIRE

THE VIKING LEGACY. THE SCANDINAVIAN INFLUENCE ON THE ENGLISH [AND GAELIC] LANGUAGE[S]. By JOHN GEIPEL. *David and Charles*. London, 1971. 225 pp. £4.25.

Since Björkman's *Scandinavian Loan-Words in Middle English* (1900) there has been no general survey of the influence of the Scandinavian languages on English. This, as one of the sub-titles tells us, is the principal subject of Geipel's book. The main title, for which I imagine the publishers are to blame, is to say the least misleading and should be deleted in any subsequent edition.

The book has five chapters: The common roots of English and Norse, The Northmen in Britain, The Norse invasion of the languages of Britain, Scandinavian place-names in Britain, and Scandinavian personal names in Britain. In addition the book contains lists of Scandinavian loan-words in modern English and of British surnames of probable or partial Scandinavian origin. There is also a glossary of technical terms, a pronunciation guide and a bibliography.

Mr Geipel's book is not a scholarly work, nor is it a linguistic investigation in the scientific sense. It seems to be addressed to

the general reader, but whether there are general readers with sufficient interest in the development of the English and Scandinavian languages, and to a lesser extent Gaelic, to read and digest such a book is open to question. Let us hope there are, for the author has provided a detailed and generally accurate account from which those with little knowledge of the subject can learn a great deal. For the specialist there is nothing new, although it is useful to have so much diverse material collected in one volume. The section on the Orkney and Shetland Norn, with its particularly lavish exemplification, is most noteworthy in this respect. An irritating feature is the lack of proper references. A reader whose appetite is whetted by the opening stanza of *Hildinakvaðet* will search in vain for some indication of where he can find the rest. The bibliography is a poor thing which must reflect Mr Geipel's expectations of his readership rather than his own learning. In a list of eleven books and articles about individual Scandinavian languages we find a specialised study such as Kenneth Chapman's *Norwegian-Icelandic Linguistic Relationships* side by side with Lundeby and Torvik's school-book *Språket vårt gjennom tidene*, while Seip's *Norsk språkhistorie* is excluded. For Faroese we have Lockwood's text-book *An Introduction to Modern Faroese* (though excellent in itself, hardly of immediate relevance to *The Viking Legacy*) and Jón Helgason's article "Færøiske studier" in *Maal og minne* (1924), while Marius Hægstad's historical studies in *Vestnorske maalføre* and Otmar Werner's excellent bibliographical work 'Die Erforschung der färingischen Sprache' in *Orbis* (1964) are omitted. Swedish is represented by Wessén's *Svensk språkhistoria* (1945, presumably not a reference to the complete work which is 1941-56), although Gösta Bergman's *Kortfattad svensk språkhistoria* would be a better companion to *Språket vårt gjennom tidene* and Vemund Skard's *Norsk språkhistorie*. Scandinavian dialectology includes Sigurd Kolsrud's *Nynorsken i sine målføre*, but omits such basic and comprehensive works as Hans Ross's *Norske bygdemaal* and Hallfrid Christiansen's *Norske dialekter* I-III. It is not clear whether "WADSTEIN, E. *Norden och kontinenten i gammal tid*, Uppsala, 1944" is a reference to Fritz Askeberg's book of that title and year of publication or to Wadstein's *Norden och Västeuropa i gammal tid* (1925). The Viking Society and the Viking Congress have only the word 'Viking' in common, as those who try to follow up another reference, "THORSON, P. 'The Third Norn Dialect . . .', in *Saga Book* . . . 1954" will discover. There are mistakes elsewhere in the book, too. Let the following serve as an example (p. 25): "The Scandinavians also seem to have shared with English-speakers a certain bewilderment concerning

the correct accusative and dative forms of the personal pronoun 'who' ('The man who (whom?) I met') — although the Danes, Swedes and Norwegians long ago gave up the unequal struggle and opted in favour of the inflected form 'whom' (*hvem, vem, hvem, kem*, etc) in every context." The use of *hvem* etc. as a relative (not personal) pronoun in a sentence of the type "The man who(m) I met" is archaic in all the modern Scandinavian languages and has probably never been part of unaffected speech. In *nynorsk*, which *hvem* and *kem* presumably are meant to represent (both are in fact dialect forms as distinct from *nynorsk hvem*), the sentence **mannen kven eg møtte* is unthinkable. Mr Geipel's pronunciation guide is only approximate, but when it is stated: "Æ (ON, Dan, Norw, Faer [i.e., at least two different vowels and a diphthong]) Approximately as English ai in *air*", one wonders where to draw the dividing line between approximation and error. But then, as already stated, this is not a book for the specialist.

MICHAEL BARNES

GERMANISCHE HELDENSGE. STOFFE, PROBLEME, METHODEN. EINE EINFÜHRUNG. By KLAUS VON SEE. *Athenäum Verlag*. Frankfurt, 1971. 178 pp.

Professor von See's book can perhaps best be thought of as a *vade-mecum* of the most important theories on the origins and nature of Germanic heroic legend and of the forms it takes, or may have taken, plus a critical commentary, at times "pithy", on the various scholarly attitudes discussed.

The author distinguishes between "Germanic heroic legend" proper, and simple "legend". The content of the former inheres essentially in the Age of Migrations and has largely to do with a situation of conflicting obligations, while the content of the latter inheres in historical events of a later period, often has to do with fabulous adventures in unproblematic situations and is frequently linked to a specific locality. There is a helpful discussion of the concept of an heroic age with its blurring of historically distinct generations leading to a grouping together in heroic legend of characters originally unconnected. The problem of a possible parallel between Greek heroic legend, with its more or less clear relationship to cult and myth, and Germanic heroic legend is raised. This ushers in a definition of myth and of fairy-tale, and a discussion of theories of scholars who pronounce in favour of an origin of Germanic heroic legend in one of these two and thus oppose Heusler's belief in its ultimately historical basis.

Friedrich Panzer is the most doughty protagonist of the fairytale theory, and he is mentioned together with such names as Kaarle Krohn and Aatti on the one hand, and Axel Olrik on the other, not forgetting the important work of Max Lüthi, all of whom mark milestones in the investigation of the fairytale. A chapter is devoted to links between heroic legend and fairytale, and any genetic connection is rightly discounted. A clear distinction is made between the fairytale hero and the hero of heroic legend, and between the difference in time-perspectives of the two genres, and between the types of audience for whom each was intended. At the same time, contamination of heroic legend by the fairytale is shown in examples extending from the world of Hellas down to that of the *Nibelungenlied* and of the *Poetic Edda*, while an example of influence in the opposite direction is demonstrated by the Russian fairytale on the theme of the amazon-like bride won unfairly for her husband by his friend on both of whom she is later revenged: this is derived from the heroic Brunhild-Siegfried-Gunther constellation as found in the *Nibelungenlied* (not the other way round, as Panzer contended).

F. R. Schröder is certainly the greatest name connected with the idea of a provenance in myth. A lengthy chapter is devoted to links between heroic legend and myth, and, in addition to a consideration of F. R. Schröder's ideas, due attention is also paid to those of Jan de Vries, Otto Höfler and Karl Hauck. The reader learns of the theory that a religious rite might be secularised, lose its timeless significance and be reduced to the level of a single historical heroic event, with psychologically motivated characters, or else that an historical event might be felt to reflect in its essence an archetypal myth and be made in the telling to conform more closely to the pattern of that myth. Neither Otto Höfler's application of this latter possibility to Siegfried's slaying of the dragon and to certain aspects of the legends centering on Theoderich, nor Karl Hauck's different but in the last analysis not dissimilar attitude towards the Theoderich material are found acceptable. The first of the two possibilities is found to be equally at fault, and attempts to account for e.g. the Eddaic Helgi lays, the *Hildebrandslied* and Siegfried's death in this way are dismissed as vain. The author does however believe that the story told in *Beowulf* about Hæðcyn and Herebeald is in fact dependent on the myth of the Baldr-Höðr story, although he refuses (perhaps too readily) to draw any general conclusions from this undoubted fact.

The upshot of these various considerations is that heroic legend gradually became infused with mythical elements in Scandinavia and with fairytale elements on the Continent. Stripped of these

later accretions we are left, as it were, where we started, viz. with an historical basis which became heroic legend, and the author discusses how this came about. He very firmly rejects the hypothesis put forward by George Baesecke, Friedrich van der Leyen and others that heroic lays develop from heroic eulogies, and comes finally to the conclusion that historical events of an unusual, doubtful, terrifying nature posed questions, gave rise to rumours and produced explanations which at the end of the Migration Age assumed the form of lays celebrating the deeds of a bygone day, yet without presenting these as criteria of behaviour for their own day.

But were there no lays composed much nearer in time to the actual events, the reader may wonder, since elsewhere in the book this may seem to be indicated, e.g. on p. 62 where we are told that an heroic lay, quite close to the historical events, may have been the source of Jordanes's account of the death of Ermanarich? Further, there is here the very real, if implicit, problem of a possible distinction between heroic lay and a non-poetic heroic tradition, postulated by Hans Kuhn, and discussed by the author whose attitude might seem to be — perhaps naturally enough — rather less than sharply defined. He grants the existence of "unshaped legend" (p. 110) which plays only an incidental role and is inaccessible to us as a literary genre, yet we also read "the oldest form of the Germanic heroic legend of the Age of Migrations is the lay" (p. 130) — it is admittedly an awkward topic.

Also implicit in the above-mentioned conclusion is the question of the intended effect or purpose of heroic lays. If, as the author believes, they did not contain ethical criteria (until later used to that end by the Church), were they meant as dynastic or national propaganda? The author thinks not. He declares that their centre of interest is essentially the man who unhesitatingly and uninhibitedly follows his impulses without regard for himself or for others, who does what is exceptional and exorbitant, and not inevitably what is necessary or consonant with duty; heroic lays, we read, do not celebrate the virtue of loyalty, on the contrary, they have more to say of treachery; nor should concepts such as "honour" or "fate" be brought to bear on them — though it also seems implicit in a statement on p. 133 that heroic legend originally had more than a mere entertainment value. The last sentence of the book tells us that it had to a high degree "monumental" character (*Denkmalscharakter*) — but surely not at its inception, especially if chronologically close to its historical basis. And to what extent is a "monument" in this sense more than "entertainment"?

The real problem here is, perhaps, an underlying feeling that to talk of fate and honour — let alone of kinship and blood — is inextricably bound up with National Socialist attitudes, and that they are therefore topics to be eschewed. The ancient Germanic peoples were not Nazis, but the importance of the blood link (blood thought of not in terms of race but of kin) along with the associated idea of honour upheld by vengeance must surely have played a vital role in the "aristocratic" life and poetry of the times, to judge by much that has come down to us. And the "ethic of the blood" is essentially negative and (self-)destructive — the author himself speaks of the hero faced with decisions who, in an intoxication of self-assertion, gives himself over to death (p. 22). The fact that much of the early poetry must have been composed by and for (nominal) Christians does not necessarily affect the issue — the impact of the new faith on an ancient ethos hardly resulted in massive conversions akin to that of Saul.

Professor von See devotes a chapter to Christian elements in heroic legend and argues forcibly against the idea of a deliberate suppression of heroic legend by the Church and incidentally also against the commonly held view that the lost collection of lays made, according to Einhard, by Charlemagne had anything to do with ancient Germanic days: they would have dealt, the author thinks, with Charlemagne's own ancestors and predecessors in office. He also rejects the theory that the Waltharius story, despite its Christian elements, is simply a creation of the monastic mind and was unknown to genuine Germanic tradition. He sees *Beowulf* as conveying an essentially Christian message, and points to certain Christian traits in the *Poetic Edda*. In the various pictorial representations of heroic themes (to which a whole chapter, with illustrations, is devoted) he sees, on the whole, more of Christianity than of paganism, and so necessarily rejects the theories of Karl Hauck.

Here and there we also find passing references to classical influence on heroic legend, e.g. the clear parallel between the Weland story and Daedalus, though possible classical parallels to the grisly banquet served up to Atli by Guðrún are not mentioned (e.g. Ovid's tale of Tereus and Procne). Julius Schwietering's conjecture that the Goths might have learnt something of Greek heroic lays through contact with Greek traders in the Black Sea area is not thrown completely out of court.

Professor von See considers that the *Nibelungenlied* and other later German heroic poems do not come within the scope of his book because they are not strictly speaking Germanic in that the material is no longer seen "with Germanic eyes" Some, depending on the precise definition of "Germanic", could take

issue here. Nevertheless, much space is in fact given to the genesis of the *Nibelungenlied* (and of other heroic matter) and the theories of Lachmann, Heusler, Kurt Wais, Wolfgang Mohr and others (including in the background Milman Parry and A. B. Lord) are critically evaluated. The conclusion reached by D. von Kralik that there must have existed parallel lays is mentioned, though without explicit reference to the work of that scholar.

Apart from the lack of a formally listed select bibliography, any shortcomings in Professor von See's book lie in certain quite intractable problems in the nature of some of the material combined with the fact that not all can be said on an extremely complex and widely ramified subject in the space of 178 pages. The author is to be congratulated on having produced a well-written compendium which is well worth the reading — and not only by the educated layman.

R. G. FINCH

DIE GESTALT DER HÁVAMÁL. By KLAUS VON SEE. *Athenäum Verlag*. Frankfurt/Main, 1972.

The *Hávamál* contains material of very various kinds and consequently critics have seen in it some six poems, or relics of six or more. Especially the first section (vv. 1-79) has been the field for emendation, radical re-arrangement of strophes and expurgation, as scholars have sought to distinguish an *ur-Hávamál*.

K. von See approaches the problem in a rather different way. In the Codex Regius the poem opens with the title *Hávamál* (Words of the High One, Óðinn). This title is repeated in the final strophe (164) and echoed in v. 111:

Háva hǫllu at,
Háva hǫllu í,
heyrða ek segia svá . . .

Consequently we can say that the redactor of the extant text regarded the whole as the "words of Óðinn" in spite of great differences in form, sentiment and subject. Von See (p. 11) uses the term "redactor" (*Redaktor*) for want of a better, recognizing that "final poet" (*der letzte Dichter*) might be more appropriate.

The first section (1-79) is the one which scholars have regarded as least appropriate to Óðinn. Óðinn appears clearly as the speaker only in vv. 13-14, but there are several reasons for considering the rest of this section as words of Óðinn. He is,

as elsewhere, the guest, the wanderer, who has travelled far (*hefir fiqlð um farit*, v. 18). Von See shows that there is some logical progression in the first section, and that nothing can be gained by shuffling the strophes, as several scholars have done. The guest arrives, but he must be wary. He needs warmth, food, water and a friendly welcome. He also needs wits and caution; he must not make a fool of himself, as Óðinn once did, by drinking too much.

Although in this first section Óðinn can plainly be heard as the speaker only in the strophes mentioned, these lines (on drunkenness) place the same value on moderation as many others. In this same section emphasis is laid on the transitoriness of everything, culminating in the famous lines:

Deyr fé,
deyja frændr,
deyr siálfr it sama . . .

Von See regards this sentiment as Christian as much as pagan and he believes this strophe to be derived from the *Hákonarmál* of Eyvindr Skáldaspillir:

Deyr fé,
deyja frændr.
Eyðisk land ok láð . . .

Eyvindr's lines, in their turn, are associated with the Old English *Wanderer*:

Her bið feoh læne,	her bið freond læne,
her bið mon læne,	her bið mæg læne.

The use of *feoh* . . . *freond*, *fé* . . . *frændr* in the two poems is striking, even though the meanings of *freond* and *frændr* are different, and both the Old English and the Old Norse lines seem to echo *Ecclesiastes* 3, 19: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity."

In conclusion it should be said that von See's work is concentrated and informative. Many details are explained in a new light, but it is difficult to see that the general theme is so revolutionary as might be supposed. The chief question which remains unanswered is who was the redactor? Did he put the *Hávamál* together in oral form, inserting strophes of his own where he thought desirable, or was he the first man to put the extant *Hávamál* on parchment, perhaps in the early thirteenth century, filling it out with new strophes to link the various sections together? Von See has shown that the *Hávamál* has

a certain unity which has been achieved by the redactor or last poet, but the structure remains very loose. We still have to think of six or more poems rather than one.

G. TURVILLE-PETRE

CORPUS CODICUM NORVEGICORUM MEDII AEVI. Quarto Series Vol. IV. With an introduction by MATTIAS TVEITANE. *Selskapet til utgivelse av gamle norske håndskrifter*. Oslo, 1972. 34+98 pp. of facsimile.

Following the Old Norwegian Homily Book, the Legendary Saga of St Ólafr and *Gammelnorske membranfragment i riksarkivet*, the Society for Publication of Old Norwegian Manuscripts has now issued a facsimile of De la Gardie 4-7 fol. and AM 666b 4to. DG 4-7 is in fact the remnant of two originally different MSS, the first of which is now represented only by two leaves containing the end of *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* by Oddr Snorrason. The main part of the codex comprises (1) *Pamphilus*, (2) A dialogue between courage and fear, (3) *Elis saga* and (4) *Strengleikar* (a translation of twenty-one (?) French *lais*), all of which are now more or less defective. AM 666b 4to consists of the remnants of some leaves lost from the final gathering of DG 4-7 (discovered by Árni Magnússon in Iceland) and contains fragments of *Strengleikar*.

This facsimile edition which includes a brief introduction by Mattias Tveitane on the history, palaeography and language of the manuscript and the general literary background, will clearly be well received not only by Scandinavian specialists, but by all with an interest in medieval literature. The sources of *Pamphilus*, the dialogue between courage and fear and *Elis saga* are well known, but for four of the *Strengleikar*, *Guruns ljóð*, *Strandar ljóð*, *Ricar hinn gamli* (defective), and the lay of "the two lovers" (defective), no French originals have been found. Moreover, although a translation, *Strengleikar* is one of the three largest collections of *lais* in existence and appears to be based on a single source which was probably older than any of the extant manuscripts of *lais*. DG 4-7 itself is dated to c. 1270, but *Strengleikar* was translated sometime during the reign of Hákon Hákonarson the Old (1217-63).

Of the various items in DG 4-7 only *Pamphilus* has been edited at all recently. *Strengleikar* has long been out of print and virtually unobtainable. A facsimile of the manuscript is therefore all the more welcome.

MICHAEL BARNES

KINGS BEASTS AND HEROES. By GWYN JONES. *Oxford University Press*, 1972. xxv+176 pp. £3.

Kings Beasts and Heroes is concerned with three works, dissimilar but with points of likeness: the Old English *Beowulf*, the Welsh *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and the Icelandic *Hrólfs saga kraka*. Professor Jones is concerned less with local provenance, though he does not ignore it, than with what these works commonly draw on and uniquely transform. Each displays, in very different proportions, elements of myth, folktale, heroic legend, legendary history, historical tradition, and history. The author is concerned chiefly with the second and third of these vague categories, and especially with folktale or wondertale. Indeed his book is, in his own words, "an inquiry into the presence of folktale and folktale-motif in three highly developed and interestingly diversified medieval literary kinds: epic, romance, and saga"

Such an approach offers varying rewards. It necessitates a deal of retelling and quotation (in translation), which is no bad thing, since most of us will be general readers in one or two of the fields in which Professor Jones moves so assuredly. Aarne and Thompson's classifications are employed as a starting-point; in specific application, these can seem central (*Culhwch ac Olwen*) or at the least helpful (*Hrólfs saga*); but *Beowulf*, with its high sophistication, makes for less tractable material. Certainly the folktale-type of "The Three Stolen Princesses" is buried somewhere, but the author has to dig hard to exhume parts of it; and the ladies themselves have long decomposed.

About each work Professor Jones asks four questions: "What is it?" "What is it about?" "How is it done?" and "How well is it done?" His answers to the first two questions are splendid ones; he knows his texts well, having in fact translated two of them in the past, and the competence with which he retells the stories is matched by a way with English which makes their various qualities instantly accessible. Additionally, his exposition of the elements which compound each work is plain and helpful: muddle is unuddled without oversimplification. Professor Jones scants a little on the remaining questions, partly because his strengths are those of the descriptive rather than the practical critic. His particular responses are often unsatisfactory (the "true simplicity" of the close of *Hrólfs saga* is surely less a calculated effect than a conventional tidying-up) or, indeed, unparticular. For example, he sets down a lengthy extract from *Culhwch ac Olwen* which describes the hunting of the boar, *Twrch Trwyth*, and remarks, "This is fine narrative, gallant, comic, beautiful, deadly, zestful, hard, heady, and precise" — a statement which, however true,

employs the puffy epithets of the blurb-writer in place of the language of criticism. On a number of things, however, Professor Jones writes illuminatingly (the comedy of *Hrólfs saga* is a notable instance), and always with honesty: he makes no claims for these works as "literary structures" — though he notices that some twentieth-century commentators have sought to invent structures for them — and in so doing he does their authors a genuine service.

Unless one re-reads the Introduction, which is both a statement of intent and a list of necessary qualifications, one feels the lack of a postscript; *Kings Beasts and Heroes* is crammed with so much, in fact and by implication, that it demands some form of summation, even if this were, as it might well have to be, an admission that our information is too various and partial to allow firm generalisation. In one chapter Professor Jones does deal with broader aspects of his material: *Culhwch ac Olwen* provides the warrant for an eclectic excursus on the Great Hunt, a chase which encompasses Faulkner as well as Ovid. The illustrations in *Kings Beasts and Heroes* represent not the times when the individual works received their final impress but the heroic and marvellous worlds which they partially recall; but they are handsome and generous, like most things in this book.

BILL MANHIRE

NJÁLS SAGA: A LITERARY MASTERPIECE. By EINAR ÓL. SVEINSSON. Edited and translated by PAUL SCHACH with an Introduction by E. O. G. TURVILLE-PETRE. *University of Nebraska Press*, 1971. xvii+210 pp.

FIRE AND IRON: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO NJÁLS SAGA. By RICHARD F. ALLEN. *University of Pittsburgh Press*, 1971. xvi+254 pp.

Although these two books on *Njáls saga* both appeared in 1971, they represent very different periods of and fashions in literary criticism. Einar Ól. Sveinsson's *A Njálsbúð* was first published in 1943. It has received some modifications before being launched with a new title in Dr Schach's translation, but its approach remains representative of an earlier decade in as much as it is mainly centred on character analysis. Out of eight chapters one deals with "character portrayal" and three are devoted to individuals. Professor Einar does not entirely avoid the dangers of such an approach. The characters, lifted from their place in

the saga, are subjected to a modern mind's understanding of their psychology. Professor Einar offers reasons for behaviour beyond those suggested or even implied by the saga-writer. "Perhaps they (the sons of Njáll) are handicapped by lack of experience in human affairs, since Njáll has always led them by the hand and has made their decisions for them" (p. 149). This implies criticism of Njáll for not encouraging greater independence in his sons, and criticism of his sons for not asserting it, but we have no evidence that the saga-writer is thinking in these terms. Similarly the view of Hallgerðr as a woman of "sick and disturbed mind" represents the imposition of a twentieth-century psychological judgement onto the saga-writer's moral one.

But the danger of interpreting beyond the evidence is inherent in any character approach to a work, and has rightly been pointed out in other contexts than this in the years since *Á Njálssbúð* was written. Professor Einar's work demonstrates more of the advantages than the weaknesses of the approach. He is himself so close to the saga that much of what he says is necessarily illuminating to a reader who has lived with it neither so long nor so intimately as he has. I cannot, however, feel that he has been well served by his translator. Most people who read this book will be familiar with the names either in their Old Icelandic or their anglicized form, e.g. Hallgerðr or Hallgerd. To use the modern Icelandic form Hallgerður is simply perverse. Much of Dr Einar's text is written in a vein of sentimental reminiscence which is not without charm, but the translator overplays the sentimentality. To render "þannig hafa þessi fjöll verið í árdaga" as "thus have these mountains stood since the dawn of time" is to introduce both archaism and jargon into a comparatively simple sentence.

Yet Dr Schach is to be congratulated on giving us an English version of this work, which may be considered not only a minor classic of Icelandic literary criticism, but also a work of scholarship, readable and lucid. Dr Allen's book "Fire and Iron" lacks this clarity. What he hopes to achieve can be seen from the subtitle "Critical Approaches to *Njáls saga*" and is defined more specifically in his Introduction: "I have tried to avoid imposing a single theory of interpretation on *Njáls saga*, indicating instead what might be appropriate in a number of theories." He uses his impressive knowledge of modern critical theory in a series of chapters attempting to illuminate *Njáls saga* from different angles, but the result is an uneven work, moving backwards and forwards between detailed analysis of the saga and wide-ranging generalisations on such subjects as "foreground-style", "background-style" and "archetypes". Dr Allen is by no means imperceptive, and

when he is dealing directly with the saga much of what he says is to the point. He can offer the reader detailed, well-thought-out, precise analysis, but too often such analysis is marred by the imprecisions of emotive language. The chapter on form and theme contains some excellent discussion of the tensions inherent in the saga's attitude to law, but the same chapter lapses into lyricism in "certainly the sagas do glow with that light." (p. 134).

Certain quirks of style, at first no more than irritating, suggest increasingly that Dr Allen is listening to the fine ring of his sentences, rather than considering their content. If we look at his use of the word "very" in the pages of the Introduction alone we find: "the role the Christian vision had in shaping the very syntax"; "the rhetoric available to the narrator extends to the very order"; "There is . . . a need for a sustained close look at the very style"; "At the same time this man used . . . those very conventions" Still the writing is not without highlights of a more amusing kind. On p. 60 "men bite the dust cleanly, often with an appropriate quip" — a sight not to be missed.

To sum up, I think I would say that though much of "Fire and Iron" is both sound and illuminating, as a whole it is weakened partly by too many words (or too much rhetoric) per idea, and partly by too many random ideas arbitrarily introduced and insufficiently thought through. Greater economy of statement and more rigorous argument would have resulted in a shorter, more lucid, and more useful book.

CHRISTINE FELL

KAOS OG KÆRLIGHED: EN STUDIE I ISLÆNDINGESAGAENS LIVSBILLEDE. By THOMAS BREDSDORFF. *Gyldendals Uglebøger*. Copenhagen, 1971.

Regarded as a collection of literary essays, Thomas Bredsdorff's book should be of great value both to scholars and to lay readers of the sagas. It is brilliantly written, imaginative, stimulating to read, easy to quarrel with, full of somewhat impressionistic but good observations on specific texts.

As a work of scholarship, however, the book is a bit too subjective and superficial. Its basic thesis is presented with such seductive ambiguity that it almost defies my attempts to analyze it. What Bredsdorff appears to be saying can perhaps be paraphrased as follows: Apart from the well-known theme of honor and revenge, the classical family sagas (or at least some of

the best) contain another and previously neglected "second pattern", namely that of destructive sexual passion. The conflicts dominating the structure of these sagas may be traced back to some individual's transgression of the rules for sexual conduct set up by society. Forbidden love ("kærlighed") thus leads to a chaotic and bitter feud ("kaos") which must run its course before the saga can come to an end.

Bredsdorff finds this "second pattern" in *Laxdæla saga*, *Egils saga*, *Gísla saga* and *Njáls saga* and concludes that it is characteristic of the "classical" stage in saga development. For he cannot find the same structure in early, "pre-classical" sagas such as *Eyrbyggja*, nor in late, "post-classical" sagas such as *Grettis saga*. What is then the explanation for the dominance of "Kaos og kærlighed" in the classical sagas? Bredsdorff tries to answer the question by discussing the changes in Icelandic society during the Sturlung Age.

Each stage of this argument is fraught with problems which Bredsdorff rarely gives himself time to scrutinize. Is it, first of all, possible to isolate a specific "love theme" and set it apart from the theme of "honor and revenge"? To my mind it is not. If we look closer at the "love theme" conjured up by Bredsdorff's persuasive rhetoric, it turns out to be a somewhat arbitrary conglomeration of disparate motifs which saga-writers may sometimes use when building up a traditional revenge conflict, e.g. the motif of the lover who comes back from his travels abroad to find his woman married to another man, the motif of the berserk lusting for the farmer's daughter, the motif of the casual affair leading to an illegitimate son who makes claims on his father's inheritance, etc. If we want to, we may of course label these various motifs "love motifs", but such labelling may prevent us from seeing that their main function is merely to get a good feud going. There are many other motifs which are just as often used as such "openers", even though they have little to do with "love", e.g. the motif of the quarrel at a horse-fight, the motif of the stranded whale whose meat must be divided fairly among property owners along the shore, and so on. Unlike Thomas Bredsdorff, I can see no essential difference between feuds that start with a "love motif" and feuds that do not. And in most cases the "love motif" appears to be a rather subordinate element in the whole structure, which is mainly centered on feuds between two families or two parties.

Only in *Laxdæla saga* and a few other sagas (e.g. the story of Hallgerd and Gunnar in *Njála*) is "love" clearly of major importance, and the feuds seem to contain a strong element of battle between the sexes. In *these* cases we may properly speak of

a "love theme", or perhaps rather of a "sex theme", running through the entire saga composition, or at least an important part of it. Bredsdorff has many good things to say about these particular texts, but he is unconvincing when he tries to interpret a work like *Egils saga* as also somehow essentially dominated by destructive sexual forces. I fail to see, for example, that the feud between Egil and Queen Gunnhild is sexually motivated. And I cannot possibly regard the story of Egil's uncle Thorolf as very sexy just because the illegitimate affair of one very subordinate character in that story may be counted among the many factors that give rise to the conflict (which has otherwise very little to do with sex)! The arguments which Bredsdorff uses to prove his point are sometimes of a kind that would make almost *any* story qualify as a drama of sexual passion.

Is it not obvious, after all, that sagas concern themselves less with sex and love than almost any other medieval genre? Like many other readers of the sagas, I tend to interpret this fact as a sign that the Icelanders had a comparatively liberal and realistic attitude to sex, so that "forbidden love" was actually less of a problem to them than to many other people in the Middle Ages. Even Njál has an illegitimate child, but the saga mentions it only in passing and without a hint of disapproval. The narrator even appears to regard it as quite natural that Njál's wife is on excellent terms with his former mistress. Should not such apparent indifference to sexual problems warn us against reading too much sexual passion into the saga conflicts even when they do (inevitably!) contain a sexual element? Is it not possible that even the conflict between Kjartan and Gudrun in *Laxdæla saga* — surely the best example of a sexual conflict we can find in any saga — should be seen more in terms of honor and revenge than in terms of "chaos and love"? One would at least have expected Bredsdorff to discuss such questions to some extent in the presentation of his thesis.

Since I feel doubt about Bredsdorff's basic premiss that the "second pattern" is characteristic of classical sagas, I also hesitate to accept his theories about the development of saga-writing. His arguments about literary history are about as impressionistic as his structural analysis, but he is always full of good ideas which may be very useful in building up a somewhat more stable theory about the evolution of saga structure. Perhaps even his central idea of "chaos and love" may *somehow* be fitted into such a theory.

Under all circumstances, however, Bredsdorff deserves gratitude for his willingness to tackle large and important problems which Old Norse philologists rarely dare to touch and for the disarming openness with which he demonstrates his own subjecti-

vity and disregard for conventional scholarly presentation. My criticism should not prevent the reader from recognizing such virtues or from appreciating his very genuine talents as a literary essayist. And we need more books of this kind as an antidote to all the many more trustworthy but infinitely more boring saga studies we have to read.

LARS LÖNNROTH

ARROW-ODD: A MEDIEVAL NOVEL. Translated by PAUL EDWARDS and HERMANN PÁLSSON. *University of London Press Ltd.* 1970. 136+xxii pp. \$5.95.

HROLF GAUTREKSSON: A VIKING ROMANCE. Translated by HERMANN PÁLSSON and PAUL EDWARDS. *The New Saga Library. Southside*, 1972. 150 pp. 95p.

Each of these translations of *Fornaldarsögur* includes a short introduction, chiefly on the literary aspects of the sagas; *Arrow-Odd* has an appendix on Sources and Parallels, and an index; *Hrolf Gautreksson* has a "list of characters"

The translations are in fluent, modern English, though at times I found them rather too racy and colloquial. Thus the prophetic in *Örvar-Odds saga*, about to deliver her prophecy, says: "It's good to see you here, Ingjald" (*Þat er vel, Ingjaldr . . . at þú ert hér kominn*), and in ch. 3 Oddr addresses himself to Ásmundr in the following terms: "Our voyage is going to be a bit of a bore if we're to row all the way north to Hrafnista" (*Erfíðlig er för okkar, ef vit skulum róa alla leið norðr til Hrafnistu*). In the matter of accuracy the translators do both well and less well. I found few straightforward errors, although "They said their farewells to Ingjald and he wished them luck" in ch. 3 of *Arrow-Odd* seems an odd rendering of . . . *ganga á fund Ingjalds ok biðja hann vel lifa*. Perhaps the translation at this point is not from Guðni Jónsson's *Fornaldar sögur norðurlanda*. (The English version, we are told, is "based on" this text, but "made from" might have been less ambiguous if this is what is meant.) Faithfulness to the wording of the original is a harder test of accuracy. Clearly one does not want an entirely literal rendering of the Icelandic, but "writing up" the sagas is a practice to be deprecated. Some typical examples from these translations are: (*Arrow-Odd*, ch. 2) "take turns to hear from you" (*hafa af þér fréttir*); (ch. 4) "making the Lapp women squeal" (*at græta Finnurnar*); (ch. 5) "There's a crowd of people swarming down from the forest" (*Ek sé mannfjölda mikinn koma fram ór mörkinni*); (*Hrolf Gautreksson*,

ch. 2) "he scythed his way time and again right through Olaf's army" (*hann gekk oftliga í gegnum fylking Óláfs*). In contrast, a specific Icelandic phrase is occasionally given a vague or watered-down English rendering: (*Arrow-Odd*, ch. 3) "I think it's fair to say" (*Þat ætla ek, at þat láta ek um mælt*); (*Hrolf Gautreksson*, ch. 4) "anyone so bold as to call her a maiden or woman was in serious trouble" (*skyldi ok engi maðr svá djarfr, at hana kallaði mey eða konu, en hverr, er þat gerði, skyldi þola harða refsing*). Before translating *Spá þú allra kerlinga örmust um mitt ráð* as "Damn you for making this prophecy about me" (*Arrow-Odd*, ch. 2), reference should have been made to Hreinn Benediktsson's article 'Um "boðhátt liðins tíma"' in *Íslensk tunga* 2 (1960). Although the translators use an 'æ' where it is needed, 'ö' appears as 'o'. Oddities such as Nordmore do not perhaps really matter greatly, but *Gotaland* as a modernisation (?) of *Gauland* could be misleading.

A Medieval Novel and *A Viking Romance* are the sub-titles given to the two translations. The blurb which accompanies *Hrolf Gautreksson* states: "This series [*The New Saga Library*, of which *Arrow-Odd* is not a part] will provide all educated general readers with good modern translations of the best Icelandic sagas and romances." I was left wondering whether the translators would describe *Arrow-Odd* as a saga or a romance, and what the criteria were for distinguishing the two. If the works we are promised are all to be *Fornaldarsögur* I would have thought "mediocre" or "the worst" a more fitting description than "the best". In the introduction to *Hrolf Gautreksson* the translators point out that it is "essentially escapist literature", and in truth the work seldom rises above the level of a thriller or serial in a women's magazine. An admission of this fact in the way I have indicated might have increased sales.

MICHAEL BARNES

THE VIKING SHIPS, THEIR ANCESTRY AND EVOLUTION. By A. W. BRØGGER and HAAKON SHETELIG. Translated from the Norwegian by KATHARINE JOHN. *C. Hurst and Co.* London, 1971. 192 pp. £7.50.

The original edition of this important book, published in Norwegian in 1950 and in English in 1951, was basically an essay by two distinguished Scandinavian archaeologists on a subject concerning which at the time they had unsurpassed knowledge and enthusiasm. There was, in the original edition, a profusion of

pictures and no critical apparatus in the form of footnotes or book-list. In this edition the pictures have been improved and coloured photographs have been lavishly introduced, but the text remains unaltered and the critical apparatus is still lacking. For those who have no copy, and who feel they can afford it, this reprint will be useful. I fail to see, however, any real justification for the new edition in view of the vast amount of work on the subject produced in recent years — Professor Marstrander's work on the Norwegian rock carvings, Professor Olsen's and Mr Crumlin-Pedersen's excavation and publication of the Skuldelev ships, Mr Åkerlund's theoretical consideration of many practical aspects of sailing, and reports on Baltic ships from Hedeby and elsewhere.

The enormously important pioneering work of Brøgger and Shetelig encouraged a re-appraisal of the subject and their book — stimulating at the time — is now only useful as a reminder of how far we have progressed in the last twenty years. Their names will always be honoured in Scandinavia and in the Viking Society: this re-issue hardly does justice to their originality for they would have been the first to insist that it was out-dated.

DAVID M. WILSON

STAVKIRKENE I BYGNINGSHISTORISK SAMMENHENG. By HÅKON CHRISTIE. *The Ása G. Wright Memorial Lectures I. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands*. Reykjavík, 1970. 27 pp.

The Ása G. Wright Memorial Lectures are to be given annually under the auspices of Þjóðminjasafn Íslands who will also publish them. The first lecture delivered by Mr Håkon Christie of Oslo on 16 March 1970 was on stave churches and their place in general architectural history. He argues that stave churches have often been wrongly regarded as something of a curiosity in the context of the general development of European architecture. However, the earliest stave churches, or, more correctly, the precursors of the stave church, belong to a period when wood was the commonest building material in Europe, and basic architectural features common to stave churches are suggestive of the long-house which may have been used as a model for the nave of early wooden churches in Norway and elsewhere. In fact, the principal difference between the stave church and earlier wooden churches is

that the latter had their posts buried in the ground and thus had no need of the clasping plates and saltire-bracing which give the stave church proper much of its stability. Christie ends his lecture with an appeal for proper research into the history of wood architecture, a sadly neglected field. Without such research he maintains it will be impossible to gain a picture of anything but the immediate forerunners of the stave churches we know today.

MICHAEL BARNES

FAROE, THE EMERGENCE OF A NATION. By JOHN F. WEST. C. Hurst and Co. London, 1972. x+312 pp. £3.25.

"A people without a language of its own is only half a nation." Thus the nineteenth-century Irish patriot, Thomas Davis. If we contrast the fates of Orkney and Shetland and the Faroes, the importance of having a national language becomes immediately apparent. Orkney and Shetland are declining communities with an aging population; the Faroes is a thriving industrial society whose population has increased rapidly from approximately 15,000 at the turn of the century to nearly 40,000 to-day. Of course the Danish authorities have invested far greater sums in the Faroes than their British counterparts have in Orkney and Shetland, but it is unlikely that these investments would have achieved such dramatic results without the energetic concern of the Faroese for the fate of their country. Had Danish superseded Faroese and become the only language of the islands, I am sure there would have been considerably less concern for their future, principally in the Faroes, but also in Denmark.

In view of this it is surprising that a book entitled *Faroe: the emergence of a nation*, shows so little understanding of what the Faroese language means and has meant to the islanders. The common cultural heritage, the sum of shared experience over nearly twelve centuries which the language embodies, is fundamental to the existence of the nation. Yet in West's book language is almost totally neglected. The occasional mention it receives tends to drown in a sea of statistics about fish fillets and train oil. For West nationhood is largely synonymous with political independence and industrial activity; the emergence of the Faroese as a nation depends on acts of parliament and the export of fish. But in the sense in which I understand

nationhood, the Faroes emerges from the time its language and culture can be recognised as separate from any others.

It is possible that it is a preoccupation with economic and administrative matters that has sometimes led West to take a less than sympathetic attitude to Faroese aspirations when these conflict with the Danish or Faroese *Samband* (Unionist) point of view. There can be no doubt that economically the Danes have a good record in the Faroes. But cultural imperialism can be just as devastating as the economic variety, even if it is not deliberate policy but only an attitude of mind, and there is ample evidence that Faroese was held in contempt not only by the Danes, but ultimately by some of the Faroese themselves, in the same way as many Irishmen came to regard their own language as inferior to English. What are we to make of the following statement by West (166): "they [the *Samband* Party] were determined not to allow the *Sjálvstýri* [Independence Party] to introduce Faroese everywhere merely on dogmatic grounds"? If the wish to make one's native language the medium of education, government, etc. is dogmatic, what adjective can we use to describe repeated attempts to thwart this aim? Louis Zachariassen, the teacher who in 1912 resigned rather than adhere to the regulation that Danish should be the medium of instruction in Faroese schools, which even West admits was "nonsensical", was "a useful martyr", and his action "made good propaganda for the *Sjálvstýri*" However, "this was far from being the only occasion when he [the Danish Governor] had to use strict measures with recalcitrant teachers" (125). While the *Samband* and *Javnaðarflokkurinn* (Social Democrats) are almost always presented as reasonable and sensible people acting from the best of motives, *Tjóðveldisflokkurinn* (the Republican Party — left-wing separatists) is not above a bit of political agitation for its own sake: "the Republicans, in opposing (on national grounds) the stationing of Danish forces in the islands, were able to divert some latent resentment into their own political channels" (202).

West's account of the Klakksvík affair in the early 1950s also tends to be somewhat one-sided. The sending in by the Danish Commissioner and the Faroese *Samband* and People's Party government of a hundred Danish riot police against the people of Klakksvík, who were protesting about the replacement of a temporary hospital doctor, was at best a gross misjudgement of the situation. Yet, according to West, it was necessary because "they [the authorities] found themselves unable to enforce their will against the violent resistance of the Klakksvík people" (247). The real violence only began when the Danish police arrived. This, as well as the previous troubles, could have been

avoided if some attempt had been made to accede to not unreasonable local wishes from the start.

In spite of what has been said, West's history has a great deal to recommend it. It achieves a high degree of accuracy and is written in a clear, straightforward English, free of jargon. It gathers together in a single volume much information about the economic and political development of the Faroes that previously lay scattered in a variety of publications inaccessible to those with no knowledge of Faroese or Danish. The book has no illustrations, apart from a rather unclear map and the inevitable *grindadráp* on the dust-jacket, but the text is backed up by a wealth of statistical tables. The two chapters devoted to cultural developments are less good, principally because they are too brief to say anything of value. This is especially true of "The National Culture" which in the space of twenty-one pages attempts to describe Education, Cultural Institutions, Faroese Writers and Artists (mainly of the twentieth century) and Religious and Philanthropic Movements. Less care than usual seems to have been taken over this chapter, too. From Jens Pauli Heinesen's considerable output we are given the title of one novel, the trilogy *Tú upphavsins heimur*, and told that it is "a fast-moving and subtle social satire" (240). I would hardly have thought "fast-moving" appropriate: the first book is concerned largely with introducing the characters and resembles more a collection of short stories than a novel; and surely the work is more allegory than social satire? Christian Matras will doubtless be honoured to be known as "the philological professor" (238) and William Heinesen surprised to learn that he has written "at least nine important novels" (241). The reluctance to give an exact figure suggests inadequate research, and indeed enquiry shows that to date Heinesen has written no more than six novels. This same uncertainty occurs elsewhere in the chapter: "In at least two villages, Miðvágur and Saksun, are folk museums in old houses" (230). It is surprising that although mention is made of dramatic art in the Faroes, Valdemar Poulsen's plays are ignored. Finally, the date of birth of the Nólsoy artist, Stefan Danielsen, should be 1922, not 1928.

Because his book is aimed at the general reader as well as the scholar West does not provide detailed references. I find it hard to understand why such references, indispensable for the scholar, should so seriously incommode the general reader as to warrant their total omission. But this is clearly the view of many writers and publishers. In some cases lack of references is merely irritating, as when we are told (108) that the first time a Faroese text was printed was in 1814, in a Swedish collection of folk

poetry, but not told where. Occasionally, however, confusion or at the very least vagueness can result. On 21-2 where whaling is discussed we learn that: "In former times the bulk of the catch was divided equally between the owners of the land where the whales had been stranded and the hunters." Now this is not in accordance with the law as it is stated in *Seyðabrævið*. It is true that this law seems to deal with the division of dead whales which float ashore or single whales killed by man, but were other rules in force for *grindaðráp*, and if so, what were they?

In place of references West includes two bibliographies. The first gives some of the main printed sources he uses; the second is an English language bibliography which aims at completeness in the fields of Faroese history, sociology and culture. The first bibliography is too brief to be of much value to the scholar and is bedevilled, as are other Faroese and Danish names and titles in the book, by incorrect spelling. We find among other things *Færoerne-Danmark* as the title of Asger Møller's book (wrongly dated 1968 instead of 1958), and "Jakobsen, Jakob, *Poul Nolsøe, lívssøga og irkningar*". In the main part of the book we have *Royndin Friða, Sjurðarkvæði, Føringatíðindi* and *Antiquariske Tidsskrift*, and in the glossary *tróð* pl. *tráðir*. This, coupled with the translation of Danish *folkeviser* as "folk songs" (43), as distinct from Faroese ballads (*kvæði*), suggests perhaps less than complete familiarity with the languages concerned. The second bibliography is by no means complete, even if one excludes as having nothing to do with "culture" the many articles in English on the Faroese language that are not listed. Let it suffice to mention Jakob Jakobsen's district secretary's report in the *Saga-Book* IV 1 (1905), 38-54 and various articles in English in *Fróðskaparrit* 13 and 18 (1964 and 1970).

Perhaps I may end by commenting briefly on one or two further details.

In his statement at the beginning of the General Bibliography: "To make an adequate study of the Faroe Islands, it is essential to read Danish, and highly desirable to read Faroese as well" the author must surely have got the names of the two languages in the wrong order.

As one who has been teaching Faroese in a modest way for a number of years, I am puzzled that West *looks forward* to the day "when Faroese studies . . . will take a tiny, but respected place in the academic life of our country" (vi).

To anyone who has been in the Faroes on 29 July, that *Færoernes Realkreditinstitut* started work on that day (211) must seem improbable.

MICHAEL BARNES

THE AGE OF THE VIKINGS. By P. H. SAWYER. Second Edition. *Edward Arnold*. London, 1971. 275 pp. 21 figs., xiv pls. £3.50.

The second edition of P. H. Sawyer's book *The Age of the Vikings* is not quite so audacious and controversial as the first edition of 1962 (reviewed in *Saga-Book XVI* 1, 1962).

The purpose of the book was to examine various aspects of the Viking Age in the light of "the main types of evidence for the period" — archaeology, history, philology (with particular reference to place-names) and coinage — and finally to explain the reasons for the Viking raids and the changing patterns of Scandinavian activity during the period. The result was a provocative clash with long-accepted points of view, particularly regarding the expeditions to the British Isles and the settlement there, especially in England. Their extent and importance were considerably reduced. Study of coins in particular led to an explanation on straightforward economic lines of the various activities of the Vikings. The pieces of this complex puzzle were arranged in a beautiful pattern.

The book was reviewed many times and often strongly criticised. Many people could accept that the Vikings' importance in Western Europe had often been exaggerated, but they found that Sawyer had gone to the other extreme with a gross under-evaluation. Mistakes and misunderstandings were pointed out, and serious objections were made to his general attitude to "the auxiliary studies" — archaeology, numismatics and philology — and to the debate in these fields in particular. Yet there was general recognition of his boldness in daring to attempt a consistent and thorough synthesis, based on so many disciplines, and gratitude that the book was so plainly controversial and provocative that it was bound to stimulate fresh discussion and research.

In the many articles and books which have dealt with the Viking period since 1962 one finds time and again committed attitudes to Sawyer's ideas: and in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 2 (1969) there was a discussion — in places quite heated — between Sawyer and other scholars about his views on the Viking period in the British Isles. In Denmark the book in its first and now in its second edition has been widely used as a basis for discussion among historians in university teaching.

The trend of the new edition is very much the same as that of the old, but various points have been corrected and revised. Many misunderstandings and factual errors have been corrected or removed, but not all. For instance, it is surprising that Sawyer should still suppose that King Harald was buried in one of the

Jelling mounds (54-5), not least when this mistake was pointed out in a review.¹ It has also long since been agreed that the so-called saw-marks on the Swedish Galtabäck boat are, in fact, not due to saws at all.² There is no evidence of the use of sawn planks in Scandinavia in the eleventh century (80).

However, the most important differences between first and second editions are due to the results of research since 1962 and fresh consideration of previously neglected sources. Thus it may be mentioned that the five ships from Skuldelev in Denmark, excavated in 1962, are now included in discussion of Viking Age ships.³ It is now accepted by Sawyer that the military camps of the Trelleborg type in Denmark were used as barracks in the period before the expeditions to England of Svend and Knud.⁴ New studies of personal and place-names in the Danish-inhabited regions of England, chiefly by K. Cameron and Gillian Fellows Jensen, are brought into the picture, and the stone crosses of northern England, decorated in the Viking style,⁵ are now accepted as important factors in an assessment of the Scandinavian settlement.

The altered points of view affect these things in particular:

(1) The Danish settlement in England in the second half of the ninth century: Sawyer still considers this to have been on a small scale and without any later influx of population from Denmark. But the incoming population is now referred to as "a dominant minority" (173), whereas in the first edition they were given a humbler status and in the main were said to have settled peacefully in uninhabited regions (1st ed., 164-5).

(2) The Viking armies which attacked England around the year 1000 are now said to have come in great numbers in large ships, unlike the armies of the ninth century (131 ff.). In the first edition all the Danish armies were said to have been small and to have sailed in small ships (1st ed., 82, 128 ff.).

(3) The Danish and Norwegian Vikings are now characterised in different ways. The Norwegians are said to have been chiefly on the look-out for new land; the Danes were mainly pirates who extended the range of their activity into western Europe (206 ff.). In the first edition "the search for land" was the main driving force for both parties (1st ed., 165, 202-3).

The alterations are in chapters 4-7, on ships, treasure, raids and Danish settlements (previously on settlements unqualified), and

¹ In *Saga-Book* XVI (1962-5), 107.

² O. Olsen and O. Crumlin-Pedersen, 'The Skuldelev Ships', *Acta Archaeologica* XXXVIII (1967), 161-2, n. 8.

³ *ibid.*; idem, *Fem Vikingskib fra Roskilde Fjord* (1969).

⁴ O. Olsen, 'Trelleborgproblemer' in *Scandia* XXVIII (1962).

⁵ Newly treated in D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (1966).

in the final chapter "Causes and consequences: a survey of the Viking Period", which has been completely rewritten. The remaining chapters are virtually unaltered. Finally, some new figures and plates have been added and new literature included in the notes.

It is refreshing to see that Sawyer, as in the first edition, gives a very clear introduction to the complicated problems he presents. His descriptive sections are also very clear, and the bibliography is comprehensive.

But when one has finished the book, one is still left with a feeling of great scepticism about Sawyer's arguments and conclusions. This is partly due to his apparent lack of thoroughness and sufficient insight into the many ancillary subjects. One would have liked to see this made good in the new and revised edition. It is also partly due to doubt about the general treatment of the sources: the aim is a new evaluation of the Viking Age, and for this Sawyer uses — somewhat ponderously — a selection of the available sources. He does not do justice to alternative possibilities of interpretation, and he draws conclusions from the absence of material without any serious attempt to consider other possible explanations for this lack. It is also alarming that his conclusions, which lie completely within the realm of "the auxiliary studies", can differ radically from those of specialists in these various fields. This is especially true in the field of philology.

Some examples.

It is Sawyer's basic view that the Vikings who left Norway and Denmark only had very loose ties with their homelands.

In the chapter on Towns and Trade we find the following statement and assessment (197): "A large number of objects from the British Isles has been discovered in Norway, and although some of these may have been loot, trading contacts cannot be excluded." Information on most of the finds referred to here is conveniently available, published by Jan Petersen in 1940.⁶ His general comment on the largest of these groups (122 articles from 110 graves, most of which can be dated to the ninth century) is: "The Irish ornaments consist mainly of mountings of various kinds pertaining to saints' shrines or to holy books . . .".⁷ It is unreasonable to assume that such objects should have come to Norway in that number as the result of trading contacts. This very relevant group of finds does not belong in the chapter on Towns and Trade but should come in the chapter on Raids.

⁶ H. Shetelig, *British Antiquities of the Viking Period found in Norway* (Viking Antiquities V, 1940).

⁷ *ibid.*, 7.

The purchase of land abroad for cash is still thought to explain why so few west European coins have been found in ninth-century contexts in Denmark and Norway. The people who left did not return (99-100). Another argument for this is the Anglo-Saxon *feohleas*, which is here translated as "moneyless" (100, 150). But this word can also be translated "without stock" or possibly "without property", and in either case the argument loses its validity.⁸

Other explanations for the rareness of west European coins in these finds could very well be that in that period money was seldom used for trade in Scandinavia, and also that it was hardly worth while to bring west European coins to Scandinavia on any large scale, because there they only had the value of the silver, whereas in their places of issue they might have a higher nominal value.⁹ Brita Malmer points out, moreover, that during this period there was general reluctance and decline in the issue of coin in western Europe.¹⁰

Nor can one attach special importance to the fact that there are not all that many imported goods from western Europe in Danish finds from the Viking period until late in the tenth century, because Danish graves — in contrast to Norwegian graves — are quite simply furnished through most of the Viking Age. In addition, all the Viking Age material found in Denmark has never been thoroughly investigated to discover the quantity of imported goods.

Sawyer attaches no decisive importance to the fact that there is a parallel development in art in Scandinavia and in the Norse-occupied parts of England, illustrated by many examples from the late ninth and tenth century,¹¹ and this is in spite of the fact that English material absent in the first edition is now included.

There are very few Cufic coins in ninth-century hoards from Denmark and Norway. Sawyer assumes from this that silver from the East remained for the time being in eastern Scandinavia (99-100); one had to go west to quench one's thirst for silver (208 ff.). It is, however, wrong to conclude this from the evidence used, which, in the case of Denmark (110), is the thirteen hoards

⁸ The alternative translations are given in a note on p. 100. The rendering "without stock" can be found e.g. in G. N. Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (1953), 89, and is adopted by P. G. Foote and D. M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement* (1970), 13. Sawyer's argument on the basis of the rendering "moneyless" is opposed by Niels Lund, *De danske vikinger i England* (1967), 40 ff.

⁹ See e.g. S. Bolin, 'Mohammed, Charlemagne and Ruric' in *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* I (1953).

¹⁰ B. Malmer, *Nordiska mynt före år 1000* (1966), 212 ff.

¹¹ See the chapters on Borre style, Jellinge style and Mammen style in D. M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (1966). Cf. O. Klindt-Jensen in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 2 (1969), 194-5, and Arne Thorsteinsson, *ibid.*, 203.

listed by Skovmand. Because of the types of the rings these hoards can be dated to *c.* 800-900. Only one of these hoards contains any coins: and they are Cufic coins.

But Sawyer completely overlooks the fact that several of these rings are so-called Permian rings from Central Russia. This identification is repeated by M. Stenberger, who also extends it to other spiral rings, regarded by Skovmand as copies of Permian ones. The rings are dated to the second half of the ninth century or early tenth century,¹² and it is thus possible that most of the thirteen hoards were first deposited around 900, when the expeditions to western Europe were becoming less frequent. There are (a) practically no coins in Danish and Norwegian hoards from the ninth century, however many of these there may be elsewhere; (b) there may be several reasons why there are few west European coins in the finds; (c) in the thirteen Danish hoards which Sawyer deals with there is silver as such — that is, imported — and there is Russian silver. Indeed, the study of coins is extremely important for an understanding of the far-flung communications of the Viking Age but when Sawyer uses negative evidence as his starting point, as he does here, and does not consider the remaining archaeological material, then his results become distorted.

The many Scandinavian personal and place-names and the large Scandinavian influence on language have always been important sources for the evaluation of the extent of the Danish settlement in England. The amount of place-name material is now explained by Sawyer as the result of a general internal expansion of the settlement area, after the Danes had settled as "a dominant minority". He attaches very little importance to the linguistic element and the personal names as such, which are often transmitted in late sources (154 ff.). Here he differs from philologists such as K. Cameron, G. Fellows Jensen and Kristian Hald, who regard the size of this material as inexplicable without postulation of a large Scandinavian influx.¹³

As mentioned above, Sawyer maintains that the ships which the Vikings used in western Europe in the ninth century cannot have been bigger than the Gokstad ship, *c.* 23 metres long and designed for approximately 32 men (81). On this and other things

¹² R. Skovmand, 'De danske Skattefund', *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (1942), 41 ff.; M. Stenberger, *Die Schatzfunde Gotlands der Wikingerzeit I* (1958), 124 ff., types SA1 and SA2.

¹³ See K. Cameron in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 2 (1969), 176 ff.; Kr. Hald, *ibid.*, 185 ff.; G. Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (1968), xxii ff.; *idem*, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire* (1972), 120-1, 124-5, 250-1, et passim (this work is referred to by P. Sawyer as "G.F.J., Unpublished").

Sawyer bases his argument that the armies of the time were small, as was also the number of Danes who settled in England.

The argument concerning the size of the ships hangs on his old belief that the keel of a sea-going ship must of necessity be made from one piece of wood in order to be stable, and straight-boled oak trees of more than 20 metres were doubtless a rarity (80-1).

This argument is even less convincing in the new edition because Sawyer — influenced by descriptions of the size of fleets and ships in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and his new opinions about the Viking Age camps in Denmark — now accepts that Ethelred's England was conquered by fair-sized armies transported in large ships, possibly with crews of more than 60 men (132).

The ship-builders of Svend and Knud are therefore implicitly credited with the skill to make a composite keel which was stable, and there is reliable information in later written sources to show it was technically feasible (cf. 82).

On the basis of present knowledge it is, however, unreasonable to limit this ability to the tenth century and later. The wide range of ship-building skills in general throughout the Viking period is well documented, and this evidence includes the ships that have been found. All things considered, there can scarcely be any doubt that the Vikings used very large ships when it was expedient.¹⁴ Incidentally it may be noted that one does not need to make a proper ocean voyage to go from Denmark to western Europe and from there to England.

Against this background the calculations of how many Vikings came to England, e.g. in the army which arrived from Boulogne in 892, become of less importance.

Concerning the connection between the armies of the tenth century and the Viking Age camps in Denmark (132 ff.), it ought to be pointed out that in the last couple of years doubt has been cast on the generally accepted interpretation of them as "barracks". It is also uncertain whether one of the forts, Nonnebakken, belongs to this group at all. In any case the forts could not have held 5000 men.¹⁵ But Sawyer in 1971 cannot be blamed for ignorance of these facts.

¹⁴ It is however quite probable that a ship with a maximum length about that of the Gokstad ship was best suited for sea voyages. This is not because a scarfed keel could not be made stable, but because a ship of that size could ride the waves much better than a bigger one. This point of view is put forward by O. Olsen, 'Die Kaufschiffe der Wikingerzeit . . .', *Die Zeit der Stadtgründung im Ostseeraum* (ed. M. Stenberger; Acta Visbyensia 1, 1965), 32-3.

¹⁵ T. E. Christiansen, 'Træningslejr eller Tvangsborg' in *Kuml* (1970); O. Klindt-Jensen, 'La possibilité d'utiliser des sources archéologiques dans les domaines historiques' in *VIIIe Congrès international des sciences pré-historiques et protohistoriques*, 9-15 sept. 1971, Belgrade (at press); Else Roesdahl, 'The Viking fortress of Fyrkat . . .', *Chateau Gaillard VI* (1972), 195-202.

Sawyer prefaces his book with these proud words: "The main argument of this book is that the Scandinavian activity of the Viking period is not so much inexplicable as misunderstood." Neither in the first nor in the second edition does he seem to me to have succeeded in telling us "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist"

Nevertheless, I should like to stress that, read with a proper critical eye, the book gives a well-formulated and instructive introduction both to the problems dealt with and to many of the varied kinds of sources which form the foundation of our understanding of the Viking Age. The two editions, along with the debate in *Mediaeval Scandinavia* in 1969, set out excellently the problems of method the period presents.

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