The Representation of Kingship and Co-Rulership in the Norwegian Kings' Sagas, c.1030–c.1130.

Harriet Blithe Clark

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of English

March 2024

Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of how the respective authors of *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* depicted the ideal qualities for kingship in the cases of co-kings during the period c.1030–c.1130. Previous research into kingship ideology has largely focused on a normative model of singular monarchy, with co-kingship typically seen as either a sign of an unstable political system, or that the tensions which formed between co-kings ensured a stable society. Both of these views rest on the assumption that co-kings were inherent rivals, and that they are depicted as such in the Norwegian kings' sagas. The present study challenges this assumption, and demonstrates how the authors of *Ágrip*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* depicted co-kings as complementary and collaborative units of ideal kingship.

The thesis focuses on two cases of co-kingship: the shared rulership between the Magnússon brothers, Eysteinn Magnússon and Sigurðr Jórsalafari, and the rulership of Magnús inn góði and Haraldr Sigurðarson. The study begins with an analysis of the ideals which the *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* authors explicitly address and include in a *mannjafnaðr* performed between the Magnússon brothers. The ideals and qualities for kingship raised throughout the *mannjafnaðr* are considered against the depictions of the brothers, in these texts, as well as *Ágrip* and *Fagrskinna*, to see if and how each brother is shown to possess those same qualities, or aspects thereof.

The second part of the thesis considers how the ideal kingship qualities of wisdom, fortitude, and restraint are presented in the depictions of Haraldr Sigurðarson and Magnús inn góði respectively, throughout the narrative period c.1030–c.1047. The study turns firstly to Haraldr Sigurðarson and addresses how his depicted qualities and behaviours for his time as the leader of the Varangians qualify him for kingship once he returned to Norway in c.1045. The depictions of Haraldr Sigurðarson as a wise, brave, and self-restrained leader are then contrasted in the final analysis on the textual portrayals of Magnús inn góði, who is frequently depicted as naïve,

tyrannical, and lacking in restraint, though occasionally able to master himself. As is found in the case of the Magnússon brothers, Haraldr Sigurðarson and Magnús inn góði are shown to be complementary individuals who were able to meet all of the ideals for kingship as a collaborative co-ruling unit.

From these case studies, this thesis concludes that the *Ágrip*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* authors had a shared understanding of co-kingship as a complementary and collaborative form of rulership in which all of the ideals for kingship were met.

Acknowledgements

The first kernel of this thesis began when I was working on my MA dissertation, which focused on the journey that Sigurðr Jórsalafari took in c.1107–c.1111. While reading the accounts of his voyage, I was struck by the notion of how he shared the kingship of Norway with his brothers, and began to wonder what co-kingship meant. With the help of Professor Judith Jesch and Doctor Chris Callow, a research proposal was formed, and after one pandemic and two project changes of disruption, a finished thesis has now finally emerged. The road from start to finish has not been easy, and I owe Judith and Chris immense gratitude for sticking with me throughout this process – for all of the encouragement and critical feedback, thank you for making me question, defend my argument, and grow into the researcher I have now become.

A huge thank you to my Mum and Dad. Your support has been vital throughout this process; whether it was bringing me cups of tea, listening to my theories, or running me to the train station for research trips, you have helped smooth the way wherever you can. Thank you for everything you have done, and for your unwavering encouragement.

To my Nan and Taid, who saw the beginning of my PhD journey, but aren't here to see the end. I wish I could tell you how far I've come, but I know how proud you would be.

To all my friends who have cheered me on – thank you for all the walks, the tea-breaks, and the adventures that have kept me sane throughout this process.

This project would not have been possible without the support of Midlands4Cities. Thank you for funding my research and enabling me to go on the most amazing research and conference trips. The opportunities these trips gave me to discuss my work and visit relevant sites have immeasurably enhanced my understanding of the *konungasögur* texts and medieval Norway. The present thesis would be not what it

is without them. Thank you also to Google Maps for capturing my adventures at Ragnhildsholmen.

Finally, thank you to Haraldr Sigurðarson, Magnús inn góði, Eysteinn Magnússon, and Sigurðr Jórsalafari, and to the people who recorded the lives and stories of the Norwegian kings. It goes without saying that this thesis would not have been possible without the texts to work from, or the people who inspired the sagas we now have. These texts continue to fascinate me. Thank you for providing this material to work with, and for letting me do something I love.

Contents

Abbreviations

References to Old Norse texts are always to the Íslenzk Fornrit editions unless otherwise specified. In the case of *Heimskringla*, references are made to the relevant component saga, as found in the Íslenzk Fornrit volumes of the text.

Fsk – *Fagrskinna*

Msk – *Morkinskinna*

Hálfdsv – *Hálfdans saga svarta*

Hákgóð – *Hákonar saga góða*

Óhelg – *Óláfs saga helga*

Mgóð – *Magnúss saga ins góða*

HSig – *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*

Ókyrr – *Óláfs saga kyrra*

Mberf – *Magnúss saga berfœtts*

Msona – *Magnússona saga*

MblokHg – *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*

Hsona – *Haraldssona saga*

Hákherð – *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs*

MErl – *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*

ÓhelgSep – *Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku* (Separate Saga of Óláfr helgi)

Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Preliminary

Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, co-kingship was a common feature in the accession and governance of the kingdom of Norway. In 1046, King Magnús inn góði [the good] Óláfsson, who had ruled alone for the previous ten years, agreed to share rulership of the kingdom of Norway with his uncle, Haraldr harðráði [harsh-ruler] Sigurðarson. This arrangement lasted until the following year, when Magnús inn góði died of illness, and Haraldr continued to rule alone until his own death at the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. Haraldr's sons, Magnús and Óláfr kyrri [the peaceful], jointly succeeded their father and ruled together for about three years until Magnús died of illness. In 1093, after the death of Óláfr kyrri, Magnús berfœttr [bare-leg] Óláfsson was initially accepted in Vík as king over Norway, though the Upplendingar took his cousin, Hákon Þórisfostri Magnússon, as king. A tense but short co-rulership ensued; in 1095, Hákon fell ill and died. Magnús berfœttr continued to rule alone until he was killed in Ireland in 1103.

Following their father's fall, the half-brothers Eysteinn, Sigurðr Jórsalafari [Jerusalem-traveller], and Óláfr jointly acceded to kingship, and maintained a peaceful co-rule for twenty years. Óláfr Magnússon died of illness in 1115, and Eysteinn likewise succumbed to illness in 1123, after which Sigurðr Jórsalafari ruled as sole king. As well as being one of the longest periods of co-rulership, the shared kingship of the Magnússon brothers was also a time marked by peace and trust between the three brothers. Óláfr Magnússon was a small child at the time of his accession, and his older brothers, Eysteinn and Sigurðr, acted as his regents. In c.1107, Sigurðr led an expedition from Norway to Jerusalem, earning his sobriquet and entrusting his share of Norway to Eysteinn and Óláfr's governance.

Each of these cases of co-kingship lasted with relative peace between the rulers. Though tensions and disagreement occasionally arose, there is no record of open conflict between co-kings or their followers. This cooperative model of co-kingship

has been largely ignored, however, with the co-kings frequently, and inaccurately, deemed as rivals and competitors. Such views have largely stemmed from the deterioration of unified co-kingship which began with Magnús inn blindi and Haraldr gilli in the 1130s.

After Sigurðr Jórsalafari died in 1130, his son, Magnús, succeeded him as king of Norway, but was soon challenged by Haraldr gilli. Haraldr gilli had arrived in Norway some time before Sigurðr Jórsalafari's death, claiming to be another son of Magnús berfœttr. After an uneasy peace, open war finally broke out between Magnús and Haraldr, culminating in Magnús' capture at Bergen in 1135. To prevent Magnús from claiming kingship again, he was mutilated, and thereafter became known as Magnús inn blindi [the blind]. After Haraldr gilli's death in 1136, being murdered by his own followers, Magnús nevertheless returned to challenge Haraldr's young sons for kingship but was defeated and killed in the battle of Hólmr inn grá [Holmengrå] in 1139. In 1142, Eysteinn Haraldsson came to Norway and was accepted as co-king alongside his younger half-brothers Ingi and Sigurðr munnr [mouth]. Peace was maintained while regents acted in the stead of Ingi and Sigurðr respectively, but by the 1150s tensions rose again and conflict broke out between the brothers.

Sigurðr munnr was killed by Ingi's followers in 1155, and Eysteinn Haraldsson was killed two years later. Ingi Haraldsson then found himself opposed by his brothers' previous followers, who had rallied around Sigurðr munnr's son, Hákon herðibreiðr [the broad-shouldered]. Ingi Haraldsson was killed in battle near Oslo, and his supporters chose Magnús Erlingsson, a grandson of Sigurðr Jórsalafari, as their new contender for kingship. In 1162, a battle was fought at Sekkr [Sekken] in which Hákon herðibreiðr was killed.

The following decades saw a continuation of political and military conflict as rival claimants sought to become king of Norway. The peaceful, if occasionally tense, co-rulership that had lasted into the 1120s was no more, and political factionalism emerged in the form of the rival Bagler and Birkebeiner supporters. The political complexities of these conflicts, including how and why they broke out and were sustained, have been a staple for the study of Norwegian kingship and the centralisation of the kingdom. Much less attention has been paid to the peaceful

and cooperative co-rulership which preceded the conflicts. This study seeks to begin the process of redressing that imbalance.

It would be impossible to sufficiently analyse every aspect of co-kingship within a single thesis. This study will therefore focus on two cases of co-kingship: the shared rulership of the Magnússon brothers, and the rulership of Magnús inn góði and Haraldr Sigurðarson. These cases have been chosen due to the volume of available source material for them, as well as for the contrasting circumstances and lengths of their co-rule. The Magnússon brothers ruled together for twenty years, having succeeded their father, while Magnús inn góði ruled alone for ten years before agreeing to co-rule with Haraldr Sigurðarson, in an arrangement which lasted a single year before Magnús' death. A close textual analysis will be made of four Old Norse *konungasögur* [kings' sagas] texts which record and depict the lives of these chosen kings, to see how qualities and behaviours suited to kingship are portrayed across the texts for each figure. The *konungasögur* texts have largely been treated individually in previous scholarship, which has limited the scope for understanding how widespread ideas about kings and co-kingship were held by the respective Old Norse authors.[1] In bringing the texts together, it is intended that differences in political ideas between the texts are made clearer, and similarities are solidified.

The thesis begins with a study on the Magnússon brothers, concentrating on the themes raised by the Old Norse texts in a depicted *mannjafnaðr* held between Eysteinn Magnússon and Sigurðr Jórsalafari. Comparison is also made to the depictions and descriptions of other kings in relation to a given theme to consider how prevalent that theme is within the given text. Chapter Three focuses on the career of Haraldr Sigurðarson as a mercenary and leader of the Varangians. The recorded events are presented as having taken place before Haraldr became co-king

[1] Sverre Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed: Kingship in* Sverris saga *and* Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar (Odense University Press: Odense, 1996); Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's* Heimskringla (University of California Press: Oxford, 1991); Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal: The Representation of Royalty in *Morkinskinna*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 99: 1 (2000), 71–86; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject in *Morkinskinna*', *Skandinavistik*, 28 (1998), 101–117; Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93: 1 (1994), 55–78; Hans Jacob Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Medieval Norway, c.1030–1160', in Kim Esmark, et al. (eds.), *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 45–82.

with Magnús, and as such are an excellent opportunity to consider how qualities and behaviours deemed suitable and desirable for kingship were depicted as inherent characteristics. A similar approach is taken in Chapter Four, with an analysis of Magnús inn góði as sole king, before considering how Magnús and Haraldr are depicted as co-kings by the end of the chapter. It is intended that by studying Haraldr and Magnús separately and together, strengths and weaknesses of qualities will be made apparent in their comparison, and any changes in their depictions as individuals or co-kings will be identified.

In studying these two cases of co-kings, this thesis concludes that *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla*, and *Ágrip* consistently depict co-kings as a cooperative and complementary unit of kingship. This involves the depiction of specific qualities being shared between co-kings, where one king typically has a deficit of a given quality which is supplemented by an excess of the same quality in the other. The balance of excess and deficit was not always depicted as being static. Instead, the balance of a given quality is occasionally shown to fluctuate between co-kings. Despite these fluctuations, qualities for kingship are always depicted as present within the co-ruling unit, indicating that co-rulership was understood as a political model which ensured these ideals were continuously met.

1.2. Source Material

The *konungasögur* genre of Old Norse texts includes a wide variety of extant medieval works, mostly written in the vernacular Old Norse, but also some Latin texts. All of these texts focus on the lives and deeds of Danish and Norwegian kings respectively, covering a period from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, and it is this focus on kings and kingship which provides the most unifying factor for an otherwise diverse genre. The *konungasögur* vary in their level of narrative detail and depiction, and may cover a wide time span over a series of kings, or focus on just one central individual. Four Old Norse *konungasögur* texts will be analysed throughout the present study, namely *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*. These four texts concentrate on the

Norwegian kings, and while the time spans of their respective narrative chronologies vary, they all include the period from c.1030 to c.1160. The content of these texts is therefore relevant for studying how the practices of kingship and co-rulership in Norway in the eleventh to twelfth centuries were depicted. Each of the texts may be considered as edited compositions drawing on older source material, both written records and oral tradition, with borrowing also taking place between the works. Where the term "author" is used throughout the study, it is used with the understanding that they are the arranger and composer of the given narrative in its written form. As will be detailed below, much thought has previously been given to how these four texts are interrelated and how they have been transmitted and preserved over time. The four chosen texts have all been reproduced in the Íslenzk Fornrit series, and it is to these volumes which references will be made throughout the thesis, and from which page counts will be taken where relevant.

For the sake of clarity between editions and volumes, citations to each of the *konungasögur* texts will be given by chapter number. In the case of *Heimskringla*, where the narrative is typically divided into component sagas, citations will be given to the relevant saga and chapter number.

Together, *Ágrip*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* will form the foundation of the present study, with the aim of establishing how co-rulership was understood and represented by their respective authors. Where relevant, additional texts are drawn upon throughout the study for the purpose of establishing and analysing broader themes, such as mutilation and social standing, wandering folktales, and comparison or historical attestation outside of Old Norse texts.

1.2.1. *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*

Dated to c.1190, *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum* is among the oldest of the extant *konungasögur* texts. *Ágrip* contains an exceedingly short narrative, spanning just

fifty-one pages in the Íslenzk Fornrit edition.[2] The preserved narrative begins with the death of Hálfdan svarti [the black] and concludes with the first divisions between the Haraldsson brothers in the 1150s [*Ágrip*, Chs. 1 & 59]. The first page of the manuscript, AM 325 II 4to, was cut away at some point in time, leaving only the inner margin, and the original ending of the manuscript is likewise believed to be missing. As such, it is generally assumed that the original narrative was somewhat longer than what is now preserved, offering some detail on the life of Hálfdan svarti, and continuing down to 1177.[3] The author of the work remains anonymous, though through the narrative content it seems likely they were a cleric. This is apparent in the author's preoccupation with the tale of Sigurðr Jórsalafari's receiving of the Holy Cross relic in Jerusalem, with little detail given to his actual journey or deeds. Driscoll comes to the same conclusion in the apparent authorial siding with Ingi Haraldsson and Grégóríús Dagsson towards the end of the text.[4]

It has long been considered that *Ágrip* is of Norwegian origin. In 1873, Gustav Storm considered the orthography and morphology in the manuscript, as well as the absence of an Icelandic presence among the figures the text mentions and depicts, ultimately concluding the author to have been Norwegian.[5] Gustav Indrebø goes further in his assessment in 1922, claiming that the author was not only Norwegian, but from Niðaróss [Trondheim], and that the text was produced in that area.[6] An additional point to Norwegian authorship is presented by Turville-Petre, who considers the misinterpretation of a kenning, from one of the skaldic verses cited within the text, was a mistake that no 'educated Icelander of that day' would have made.[7] Nevertheless, in 1977 Bjarni Guðnason considered the possibility that the

---

[2] '*Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), 3–54.

[3] Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), v; M. J. Driscoll, 'Introduction', in M. J. Driscoll (ed. & trans.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasǫgum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series X (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2008), x–xi; Gustav Indrebø, 'Aagrip', *Edda: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Litteraturforskning*, 17 (1922), 19.

[4] Driscoll, 'Introduction', *Ágrip*, xii.

[5] Gustav Storm, *Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning, en Kristisk Undersögelse* (Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri: Kjöbenhavn, 1873), 25–28.

[6] Indrebø, 'Aagrip', 58.

[7] G. Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1953), 172–173.

author of *Ágrip* may have been Icelandic, and, in his 1985 work, Bjarni Einarsson makes a similar claim but with the addendum that the author worked *eftir norsku forriti* 'after a Norwegian programme'.[8] More recently, however, both Driscoll (1995, republished in 2008) and Ármann Jakobsson (2005) return to the notion of a Norwegian author with ties to Niðaróss [Trondheim].[9]

Two Latin works appear to have had close ties to *Ágrip*, namely the *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* by Theodoricus Monachus, written between 1177 and 1188, and the anonymous *Historia Norwegiæ*, which is of uncertain date. Together, these three works form the synoptic histories of Norway and appear to be interrelated. As Bjarni Einarsson acknowledges, while there is cross-over between the synoptics, *Ágrip* occasionally departs from the Latin works to include additional details.[10] Nevertheless, an intertextual relationship between the synoptic histories is apparent. The *Ágrip* author made clear use of the *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, and in places closely followed the Latin text.[11] *Ágrip* also shares sufficient similarities with the *Historia Norwegiæ* that 'one must stand in literary debt to the other or, more likely, both derive from a common written source', as Andersson states.[12] In 1950, Beyschlag posited the theory that the composition of the three texts drew independently from an oral tradition.[13] While this argument has not held sway, it is also impossible to entirely refute. An additional shared, now lost, written source, or several, remains a popular theory. The top candidates for this

[8] Bjarni Guðnason, 'Theodoricus og Íslenskir Sagnaritarar', in Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson (eds.), *Sjötíu ritgerðir: helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20 Júli 1977* (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar: Reykjavík, 1977), 119; Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, vi. Translation from Icelandic is my own.
[9] Driscoll, 'Introduction', *Ágrip*, xi–xii; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Royal Biography', in Rory McTurk (ed.), *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2005), 391.
[10] Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, xxvi–xlii.
[11] Tor Ulset, *Det genetiske forholdet mellom Ágrip, Historia Norwegiæ og Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium: en analyse med utgangspunkt i oversettelsesteknikk samt en diskusjon omkring begrepet "latinisme" i samband med norrøne tekster* (Novus: Oslo, 1983), 92–94; Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, x–xi; Driscoll, 'Introduction', *Ágrip*, xiii–xv; Carl Phelpstead, 'Introduction', in Carl Phelpstead (ed.), *A History of the Kings of Norway and the Passion of the Blessed Óláfr*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series XIII (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2001), xiv.
[12] Theodore Andersson, 'Kings' sagas (*Konungasögur*)', in Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (eds.), *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide* (Cornell University Press: London, 1985), 201.
[13] Siegfried Beyschlag, *Konungasögur: Untersuchungen zur Königssaga bis Snorri*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana VIII (Einar Munksgaard: Kopenhagen, 1950), 247–248.

influential role are the lost Latin history by Sæmundr Sigfússon, and the **Konunga ævi* by Ari Þorgilsson in an earlier version of *Íslendingabók*. Ellehøj's 1965 argument in favour of the **Konunga ævi* met fierce criticism from Andersson twenty years later, who demonstrates how Ellehøj's evidence is inconclusive and does not 'exclude other possibilities'.[14] These possibilities include the theory that Theodoricus drew on the works of both Sæmundr and Ari, which Bjarni Guðnason forwarded in 1977, as well as Tor Ulset's argument from 1983 that the *Ágrip* author drew on both Theodoricus' *Historia* and the *Historia Norwegiæ*, thereby removing the need for an additional source.[15] In 1989, Gudrun Lange built on Bjarni Guðnason's work, considering that all three extant synoptics could have used both Sæmundr and Ari, as well as additional sources, such as the *Oldest Saga of Óláfr helgi*, the Latin version of Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, and skaldic verse.[16]

For *Ágrip* at least, the presence of skaldic verse is undoubted, as the author includes seven verses within the narrative [*Ágrip*, Chs. 2, 8, 31, 34, 43, 47 & 55]. Additionally, Bjarni Einarsson identifies the possibility of a verse behind the mention of the Icelander Þórálfr inn sterki, due to his inclusion in the *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* narratives which supplement the tale with poetry [*Ágrip*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 13; *Hákgóð*, Chs. 30–31].[17] Thus, *Ágrip* is derived from a mix of traditions.

1.2.2. *Morkinskinna*

Whereas *Ágrip* offers the briefest narrative of the Norwegian kings, the narrative of *Morkinskinna* is the most detailed. *Morkinskinna* is characterised by its many *þættir*, and though the narrative now only covers the period c.1030 to c.1157, it spans 565 pages across two volumes of the Íslenzk Fornrit editions. The end of the text is missing, though it is believed that the narrative originally continued until c.1177, in

[14] Svend Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXVI (Munksgaard: København, 1965), 240–258; Andersson, 'Kings' sagas', 202–209.
[15] Bjarni Guðnason, 'Theodoricus of Íslenskir Sagnaritarar', 105–120; Tor Ulset, *Det genetiske forholdet*, 149–151.
[16] Gudrun Lange, *Die Anfänge der Isländisch-Norwegischen Geschichtsschreibung*, Studia Islandica 47 (Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs: Reykjavík, 1989), 163–178.
[17] Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, xxix.

keeping with the narratives of *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, which it is also believed to have informed. The extant text of *Morkinskinna* contains considerably more poetry than is found in *Ágrip*, with Gade placing it at 265 stanzas, while the total verses included in the Íslenzk Fornrit volumes comes to 328.[18]

Much of the analysis conducted on *Morkinskinna* has centred around its composition and manuscript transmission, while somewhat less attention has been paid to its narrative content. There is little doubt that *Morkinskinna* was an Icelandic work, likely written in the north or northwest of Iceland. Several suggestions for a more precise location have been made, based on references to people and locations within the text, though no consensus has been reached. Eivind Kválen suggested a school in Munkaþverá in Eyjafjǫrðr in 1925, and Borgarfjǫrðr was put forward by Sigurður Nordal in 1933.[19] Though Theodore Andersson has supported the case for Munkaþverá in more recent decades, uncertainty persists, and it is perhaps best to simply say that the text is of Icelandic origin.[20]

The *Morkinskinna* narrative is preserved across several manuscripts, none of which are entirely complete, but there is sufficient material between them to supplement the various lacunae, as had been done in the most recent edition of the text published by Íslenzk Fornrit in 2011 (which will be followed in this study), and in Andersson and Gade's English translation published in 2000 (republished 2012).[21]

---

[18] Kari Ellen Gade, '*Morkinskinna* (*Mork*)', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), lxviii; Cf. *Morkinskinna I*, Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011); *Morkinskinna II*, Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXIV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011).

[19] Eivind Kválen, *Den eldste norske kongesoga Morkinskinna og Hryggjarstykki* (Augustin: Oslo, 1925), 46–53; Sigurður Nordal, 'Formáli', in Sigurður Nordal (ed.), *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, Íslenzk Fornrit II (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1933), lxviii.

[20] Theodore M. Andersson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkaþverá', in Alois Wolf (ed.), *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages* (Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 1993), 15–20; Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Introduction', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), 67–71.

[21] Cf. Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 'Formáli', in Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), *Morkinskinna I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011), vi–xiv; Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Preface', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), ix–x; Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 5–11.

The oldest extant manuscript for *Morkinskinna*, Gamle kongelige samling 1009 fol., otherwise known as the *Morkinskinna* Manuscript (MskMS), dates to the latter part of the thirteenth century. MskMS is incomplete, however, suffering from several lacunae and missing the last of its seven quires. Three later manuscripts, *Flateyjarbók*, *Hulda*, and *Hrokkinskinna*, go some way to supplementing the lacunae, though as Louis-Jensen demonstrates, these manuscripts draw from a different redaction of *Morkinskinna* than that found in MskMS.[22] Both Indrebø (1917) and Louis-Jensen (1977) argue for the existence of a now lost "older *Morkinskinna*", with the understanding that it was this version which was used as a source for *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*. While such a theory may hold true for manuscript production, Ármann Jakobsson challenges the notion that the "older" *Morkinskinna* narrative was different to that which is now extant. Whereas certain narrative content, such as the many *þættir* have previously been viewed as subsequent interpolations of a "younger" *Morkinskinna*, Ármann Jakobsson reads them as part of an original, singular narrative, with the purpose of instructing a medieval Icelandic audience about conduct in the Norwegian court.[23]

In 1868, Jón Þorkelsson posited a possible date for *Morkinskinna* to have been written as between 1217 and 1237.[24] Gustav Storm revised this five years later, arguing that the text must have been written between 1217 and 1222 based on the genealogical details it includes.[25] Since then, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, and Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Guðjónsson have further supplemented and strengthened this narrative-based premise with additional examples of where details are absent due to the author not knowing them because the relevant events had not yet occurred.[26] Orthographical and morphological studies have likewise placed the

[22] Jonna Louis-Jensen, *Kongesagastudier: Kompilationen Hulda-Hrokkinskinna*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXXII (C. A. Reitzels Boghandel: København, 1977), 70–72.
[23] Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 104–112.
[24] Jón Þorkelsson, 'Morkinskinna', *Norðanfari*, 7 (1868), 66.
[25] Storm, *Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning*, 28–29.
[26] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Om de Norske Kongesagaer*, NVAOS 4 (Jacob Dybwad: Oslo, 1937), 136–137; Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 'Formáli', *Morkinskinna I*, xvii.

original text in the first half of the thirteenth century, and the date c.1220 remains widely accepted.[27]

There are numerous cases throughout the *Morkinskinna* narrative where material appears to have been borrowed from *Ágrip*. How this came about has been the subject of some debate. Gustav Storm claims that *Ágrip* was used as a direct source for *Morkinskinna*, while Finnur Jónsson proposes a shared common source alongside interpolations from *Ágrip*.[28] Gustav Indrebø also argues the case for later interpolations, demonstrating that where *Fagrskinna* is seemingly reliant on *Morkinskinna*, it omits the passages from *Ágrip*; Indrebø thereby concludes that the earlier version of *Morkinskinna* used by the *Fagrskinna* author did not include those passages derived from *Ágrip*.[29] In 1937, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson published an extensive review of the similarities between *Morkinskinna* and *Ágrip*, noting that these passages resulted in sometimes clumsy and contradictory text, and furthering the case for interpolation.[30] Most recently, in 2011, these views have been challenged by Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson. In their introduction to the Íslenzk Fornrit text, they argue that the evidence for interpolation is insufficient, that *Morkinskinna* contains longer passages than are found in its *Ágrip* counterparts, and they refute the case that apparent contradictions are evidence of interpolation and are instead part of the complexities of the original narrative.[31]

The most obvious narrative complexity of *Morkinskinna* is its prevalent *þættir*. Until recent decades, the *þættir* have likewise been viewed as later insertions to the supposed main narrative. Claiming that the depictions of the kings in the *þættir* offer a more negative view than is found elsewhere in the text, especially for Haraldr Sigurðarson, Indrebø finds them to be inconsistent with the positive depictions of the "main narrative", and views them as later additions made by a different

[27] For an overview of these arguments, see Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 'Formáli', *Morkinskinna I*, xvii.
[28] Storm, *Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning*, 28–31; Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie*, Volume 2, (S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri: København, 1894), 615–616.
[29] Indrebø, 'Aagrip', 25–40.
[30] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Om de Norske Kongesagaer*, 137–154.
[31] Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 'Formáli', *Morkinskinna I*, xxvi–xxxiv.

redactor.[32] In his 1994 article, Andersson challenges this view, reading the *þættir* as original inclusions of a single narrative, and furthermore finding a consistent negative reading of Haraldr Sigurðarson as evidence for single authorship.[33] More recently, Ármann Jakobsson has also argued for single authorship without insertions, but also finds the mixed depictions which Indrebø noted.[34] In his careful literary reading and assessment of both the "main narrative" and *þættir*, Ármann Jakobsson concludes that the author had 'an intricate mind and a keen interest in virtues and vices and the general weaknesses of human beings', capable of depicting 'the complexity of human character'.[35] As the present study will show, depictions of complex figures are not unique to *Morkinskinna*, though they are most prevalent in that text, and it is where they are perhaps best executed.

1.2.3. *Fagrskinna*

Written a little after *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* is the name commonly given to the text otherwise known as *Nóregs konunga tal*. Like *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna* is dated to c.1220. However, as Indrebø demonstrates, *Fagrskinna* must have been written after *Morkinskinna*, as the *Fagrskinna* author appears to have used *Morkinskinna* as a source for their own composition.[36]

The medieval manuscript named *Fagrskinna* [Fair vellum] by Þormóður Torfason, for its apparently beautiful condition, was destroyed in 1728 when the University Library of Copenhagen, where it was kept, caught fire. A similar manuscript, titled *Noregs konunga tal* [Catalogue of the Kings of Norway], was also lost except for a single leaf, known as NRA 51. Both had, however, been copied in the late seventeenth century. From the copies, the two manuscripts appear to represent two

---

[32] Gustav Indrebø, 'Harald hardraade i *Morkinskinna*', in Johannes Brøndum-Nielsen, et al. (eds.), *Sagastudier af festskrift til Finnur Jónsson den 29. Maj 1928* (Levin & Munksgaards: København, 1928), 173–180.
[33] Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 58–66. This article was republished eighteen years later as a chapter in his 2012 book, see Theodore M. Andersson, *The Partisan Muse in the Early Icelandic Sagas (1200–1250)*, Islandica LV (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2012), 121–129.
[34] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 72–86.
[35] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 77–79.
[36] Gustav Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, Avhandlinger fra Universitetets Historiske Seminar, 4 (Grøndahl & Søns Boktrykkeri: Kristiania [Oslo], 1917), 12–21.

narrative redactions, known as *Fagrskinna A* and *Fagrskinna B*. The *Fagrskinna A* redaction is now preserved in three copies, AM 52 fol., AM 301 4to, and AM 303 4to. In Alfred Jakobsen's orthographical and morphological analysis, he concludes that the *Fagrskinna A* redaction was written in the first half of the fourteenth century in south-eastern Norway.[37] The *Fagrskinna B* redaction is older, being dated to the mid-thirteenth century, and palaeographic evidence from NRA 51 suggests that it was written in or around Trondheim.[38] *Fagrskinna B* is now preserved in the copies UB 371 fol., AM 51 fol., and AM 302 4to. In Bjarni Einarsson's Íslenzk Fornrit edition of *Fagrskinna*, the *Fagrskinna B* text is primarily used from the UB371 fol. copy, and supplemented by the *Fagrskinna A* text where there are lacunae in *Fagrskinna B*.[39]

The narrative of *Fagrskinna* begins with Hálfdan svarti in the ninth century, and concludes with the death of Eysteinn Eysteinsson in 1177. The narrative is evenly balanced, as Finlay notes, with an even pace granted to each of the kings' lives and without excessive digression.[40] Though *Morkinskinna* was evidently used as a source by the *Fagrskinna* author, *Fagrskinna* contains none of the former's *þættir*.[41] Despite its relatively concise narrative, *Fagrskinna* nevertheless includes a considerable amount of poetry, amounting to 272 verses in Bjarni Einarsson's Íslenzk Fornrit edition, or amounting to 290 verses compiled by Diana Whaley for the *Skaldic Project*.[42]

---

[37] Alfred Jakobsen, 'Litt om forelegget til Fagrskinnas A-resensjon', in Hallvard Magerøy and Kjell Venås, *Mål og Namn. Studiar i Nordisk Mål og Namnegransking. Heidersskrift til Olav T. Beito* (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1971), 154–171.

[38] Alfred Jakobsen, 'Noen merknader om håndskriftene AM 51, fol. Og 302, 4to.' *Opuscula* IV, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXX (Munksgaard: København, 1970), 159; Bjarni Einarson, 'Formáli', lxii; Alison Finlay, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay, (ed.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 36.

[39] Bjarni Einarson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, lxii–lxiii. Where lacunae occur in both *Fagrskinna A* and *Fagrskinna B*, resulting in a broken narrative, instruction is typically given to follow the corresponding narratives in *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*. For a discussion on the possible content of the lacunae in the *Fagrskinna* narrative of the Magnússon brothers, see Chapter Two: The *Fagrskinna* Lacunae.

[40] Finlay, 'Introduction', *Fagrskinna*, 13.

[41] Cf. Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, 12–21; Finlay, 'Introduction', *Fagrskinna*, 11–12.

[42] '*Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), 57–364; Diana Whaley, '*Fagrskinna* (*Fsk*)', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part*

Fagrskinna has received considerably less attention than its *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* counterparts. This is in part due to the extensive treatise Indrebø produced on the text a little over a century ago, which addressed some of the most important questions about the work, and whose theories have held up remarkably well over time. Indrebø determines that *Fagrskinna* was written in Norway, likely in Trøndelag.[43] Opinions have varied as to whether the author was Icelandic or Norwegian. Since Jón Þorkelsson's work in 1856, it has been widely accepted that the author was Icelandic.[44] In his 1970 article, Alfred Jakobsen challenges this view, contrasting the earlier assumptions that only an Icelander could interpret the skaldic verses contained within *Fagrskinna* to archaeological evidence from Bergen which may suggest an equivalent Norwegian appreciation and understanding of the poetry.[45] The argument for Norwegian authorship did not initially gain much ground. In 1985, Bjarni Einarsson found Alfred Jakobsen's arguments to be inconclusive, with too much drawn from limited evidence.[46] However, Klaus Johan Myrvoll revived Jakobsen's arguments in a recent assessment published in 2023, in which he agrees that *Fagrskinna* was written by a Norwegian, most likely from Trøndelag, and adds a potential connection between the author and Skuli jarl.[47] These arguments do not yet fully discount the possibility of Icelandic authorship for *Fagrskinna*, but they have begun the process of strengthening the case for a Norwegian author. For the arguments either way, there is much work yet to be done.

The *Fagrskinna* author appears to have drawn on a number of sources, including an Icelandic version of Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and **Hryggjarstykki*, as well as *Morkinskinna* and *Ágrip*.[48] Compared to *Ágrip*, the *Fagrskinna* narrative is more detailed, containing additional information, more developed and sustained depictions of the Norwegian kings, and a far greater amount of skaldic verse.

1: From Mythical Times to c.1035, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), clx.

[43] Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, 12–19.

[44] Jón Þorkelsson, 'Um Fagrskinnu og Ólafs sögu helga', *Safn til Sögu Íslands og Íslenzkra Bokmenta að Fornu og Nýju* (S. L. Möller: Kaupmannahöfn, 1856), 152–172.

[45] Alfred Jakobsen, 'Om Fagrskinna-forfatteren', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 85 (1970), 96–124.

[46] Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, cxxix–cxxx.

[47] Klaus Johan Myrvoll, 'Skule jarl, Snorre og den historiske bakgrunnen åt *Fagrskinna*', *Maal og Minne*, 115: 1 (2023), 95–124.

[48] Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, 12–42; Finlay, 'Introduction', *Fagrskinna*, 3–13.

Compared to *Morkinskinna*, however, the *Fagrskinna* narrative is exceedingly succinct, keeping only to a strict and evenly paced chronology, and lacking the digressions and *þættir* which are found throughout *Morkinskinna*. As Andersson and Gade acknowledge, the straightforward biographical structure of *Fagrskinna*, and indeed of *Heimskringla*, indicate a greater tendency towards an author who acted as a 'critical historian' rather than the avid 'storyteller' behind *Morkinskinna*.[49] It is worth noting that this is not to *Morkinskinna*'s detriment, only that the aims and methods of the respective authors differed.[50] That the *Fagrskinna* author produced a more royalist text than other *konungasögur* works has been most recently reviewed by Andersson in his 2016 book.[51] In 1997, Ármann Jakobsson concluded *Fagrskinna* shared that same view of 'Icelandic ideas of monarchical power' as found in *Morkinskinna*, though he qualified this in 2005 to note that the *Morkinskinna* author was 'more interested in royal ideology than the author of *Fagrskinna*, and hence more critical'.[52] As will be seen in Chapter Four, where both *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* offer a more negative view of Magnús inn góði, the *Fagrskinna* author moderates Magnús' negative aspects in their depiction of him, resulting in a more positive outlook on Magnús and his kingship.

1.2.4. *Heimskringla*

The final *konungasögur* text which will form the basis of this study is *Heimskringla*. *Heimskringla* is the youngest of the four present *konungasögur*, dated to c.1230. A major characteristic of the work is its triptych form. The central saga, *Óláfs saga helga*, dominates the overall narrative, covering 413 pages in the Íslenzk Fornrit edition.[53] The preceding volume (*Heimskringla I*) covers 371 pages and includes a

[49] Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 57.
[50] On the comparative literary qualities of *Morkinskinna*, see Chapter Two.
[51] Theodore M. Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings (1130–1265): An Introduction*, Islandica LIX (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2016), 65–73.
[52] Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi: Konungsmynd Íslenskra Konungasagna* (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 1997), 309; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Royal Biography', 396.
[53] Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs saga helga*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1979), 3–415.

short prologue followed by six sagas.[54] The narrative begins in the legendary past (*Ynglinga saga*) and moves chronologically forward, including and ending with the rule of Óláfr Tryggvason and the battle of Svǫlðr [Svolder] in c.1000 (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*). The final third of the narrative includes nine sagas over 416 pages, picking up with Magnús inn góði after the death of Óláfr helgi [the holy; Saint Óláfr] (*Magnúss saga ins góða*), and concluding with the battle of Ré in 1177 in *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*.[55] In addition to the prose narrative, *Heimskringla* also includes a total of 581 skaldic verses, 233 of which are in *Heimskringla III*. As in the other *konungasögur*, the verses are often used to support or embellish the prose narration. The narration is sometimes informed by the verses cited, but it is also clear that the author used early prose works as sources for their composition as well. Among the works consulted are *Ágrip*, *Fagrskinna*, and, for the final third of *Heimskringla*, *Morkinskinna*.[56] On occasion, such as in Magnús inn góði's terms of co-rulership to Haraldr Sigurðarson, the text runs almost identically between *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*.[57] Elsewhere, details which are absent from *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, but are present in both *Heimskringla* and *Ágrip*, demonstrate that the author was likely familiar with the shorter synoptic history as well.[58] Though *Heimskringla* lacks the *þættir* of *Morkinskinna*, it nevertheless has a more descriptive and somewhat fuller narrative than *Fagrskinna*, and considerably more detail than *Ágrip*. Though *Heimskringla* drew on these works, the narrative and depictions of individuals is nevertheless tailored to the author's own purposes.

---

[54] All referenced sagas are to Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002): Snorri Sturluson, '*Prologus'*, 3–7; Snorri Sturluson, '*Ynglinga saga*', 9–83; Snorri Sturluson, '*Hálfdanar saga svarta*', 84–93; Snorri Sturluson, '*Haralds saga ins hárfagra*', 94–149; Snorri Sturluson, '*Hákonar saga góða*', 150–197; Snorri Sturluson, '*Haralds saga gráfeldr*', 198–224; Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*', 225–372.

[55] All the referenced sagas are to Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002): Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga ins góða*', 3–67; Snorri Sturluson, '*Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*', 68–202; Snorri Sturluson, '*Ólafs saga kyrra*', 203–209; Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga berfœtts*', 210–237; Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnússona saga*', 238–277; Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*', 278–302; Snorri Sturluson, '*Haraldssona saga*', 303–346; Snorri Sturluson, '*Hákonar saga herðibreiðs*', 347–372; Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*', 373–417.

[56] Diana Whaley provides a detailed overview of the sources of *Heimskringla* in her book. See, Diana Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series VIII (Viking Society for Northern Research: London, 1991), 63–82.

[57] Cf. Chapter Four: Two Kings. For the terms laid out, see *Fsk*, Ch. 52; *HSig*, Ch. 23; and *Msk*, Ch. 16.

[58] Cf. Chapter Two: The *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum* Lacuna.

As Bagge finds in his 1991 book, the overall narrative of *Heimskringla* is highly concerned with the 'political game' and how it was played out within society.[59] Though *Heimskringla* traces its narrative through kings, its narrative is not limited to them, as found in the recurrent presence of magnates, the other major political players, whose presence is greater in this text than in *Fagrskinna* or *Ágrip*.[60] *Heimskringla* is not as royalist in its presentation as *Fagrskinna*, as Bjarni Einarsson points out, but neither is *Heimskringla* 'anti-royalist', as Ármann Jakobsson acknowledges.[61] Andersson correctly identifies that parts of the *Heimskringla* narrative have undergone moderation and been toned down compared to the equivalent passages in the other *konungasögur*.[62] Such treatment and moderation is not always sustained, however, and there are equally places where kings receive more negative depictions.[63] In his 2013 article, Magnús Fjalldal concludes that *Heimskringla* displays an 'ambivalent love-hate attitude toward the Norwegian crown', which perhaps best sums up the mixed attitudes found throughout the narrative.[64] Nevertheless, there is also reason to be cautious in this assessment. The changes in attitude are not always to the crown, or the institution of kingship which it represents, nor are the praises or criticisms found in *Heimskringla* entirely directed at kings for being kings. Instead, the narrative treatment of kings, being met with condemnation or praise, comes down more to their depicted behaviours as individuals. It is not, then, a question of kingship as an institution, but of the proper conduct by which a king should abide.

There is a long tradition of Snorri Sturluson being considered the author of *Heimskringla*, though this attribution has been met with challenges, especially over the last few decades. It is therefore worth briefly covering the main arguments for both cases.

---

[59] Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 250.
[60] *Morkinskinna* also features magnates, though again to a slightly lesser extent than *Heimskringla*. However, *Morkinskinna* has a far greater presence of Icelanders, particularly in the *þættir*, and they may be considered the other main focus of that work.
[61] Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', *Ágrip : Fagrskinna*, cxxii; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Royal Biography', 397.
[62] Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 58.
[63] Cf. Chapter Four.
[64] Magnús Fjalldal, 'Beware the Norwegian Kings: *Heimskringla* as Propaganda', *Scandinavian Studies*, 84: 4 (2013), 468.

The earliest surviving attributions of Snorri Sturluson as the author of *Heimskringla* are by Peder Claussøn Friis and Laurents Hanssøn in the sixteenth century, who are thought to have concluded this using a now-lost manuscript which named Snorri as the author.[65] In 1995, Jørgensen questioned the premise of this lost manuscript being the source of authorial information, arguing instead that the notion that Snorri Sturluson was the author of *Heimskringla* could have been derived from references within *Orkneyinga saga* and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar in mesta*.[66] This does not exclude Snorri Sturluson as being the potential author of *Heimskringla*, but it does throw doubt on the original premise on which the claims for Snorri's authorship have been built. Patricia Boulhosa goes a step further in her 2005 book, rejecting the attribution of *Heimskringla* to Snorri Sturluson, due to there being no surviving manuscript ascribing the work to him, and furthermore questioning the reliability of medieval and early modern claims of authorial attribution and instead arguing that these could be created to grant gravitas to a given text.[67]

Nevertheless, what is known of Snorri Sturluson's life may place him in strong contention for authorship. In his 1991 analysis of *Heimskringla*, Bagge points to Snorri's political career and his engagement with the Norwegian court as the basis for how, as the author, he had 'good knowledge of Norwegian conditions' and the relevant understandings of politics to produce *Heimskringla*.[68] Diana Whaley similarly notes in her own 1991 survey of *Heimskringla* that 'Snorri's education and experience would have equipped him well, probably better than any of his contemporaries, for the task of producing such a work as *Heimskringla*'.[69] Such a view of somewhat circumstantial evidence has more recently been taken to its furthest extent by Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson. In his 2012 article, Sigurjón Ísaksson argues that Snorri Sturluson was the author of not just *Heimskringla*, but also of

---

[65] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.) *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), vi–viii; Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume I: The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2011), 8.

[66] Jon Gunnar Jørgensen, '"Snorre Sturlesøns Fortale Paa Sin Chrønicke" Om kildene til opplysningen om *Heimskringlas* forfatter', *Gripla*, 9 (1995), 47–60.

[67] Patricia Pires Boulhosa, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway: Mediaeval Sagas and Legal Texts*, The Northern World 17 (Brill: Leiden, 2005), 8–21.

[68] Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 12–14.

[69] Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 15.

Morkinskinna and *Fagrskinna*, balancing the timings of Snorri's journeys to Norway against the datings of the respective texts, and considering the narrative differences as evidence of a developing authorial career.[70] This view so far remains unconvincing due to the heavy demands presumed on Snorri's time, to be writing and rewriting whilst travelling, and the differences in style and perspective presented in each of the three works. Furthermore, the idea that only one person could know and develop an extensive knowledge of Norwegian kings is easily discredited when contextualised against the works attributed to other authors such as the earlier synoptic histories, *Sverris saga*, and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. Thus, while it is possible that Snorri Sturluson was the author behind *Heimskringla*, it is unlikely that he also wrote *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*.

A final and long-established mode of authorial attribution of *Heimskringla* to Snorri Sturluson is based on literary comparison. In the *Codex Upsaliensis*, an early fourteenth-century manuscript, Snorri Sturluson is named as the author (or compiler) of the *Younger Edda*.[71] For both Guðbrandur Vigfússon in 1878, and Diana Whaley over a century later, the epic scale and style of storytelling, clever organisation, and poetic knowledge found in both the *Younger Edda* and *Heimskringla* point to the same author, namely Snorri Sturluson.[72] Similarities of content and style between *Heimskringla* and *Egils saga* have likewise led to a long tradition of claims and counter-claims that Snorri also wrote *Egils saga*, which Nordal covers up to 1933.[73] In a more recent article from 2001, Cormack challenges the view that Snorri Sturluson wrote *Egils saga* due to the 'opposite attitudes toward the kings of Norway' presented in *Egils saga* and *Heimskringla*, and this

---

[70] Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson, 'Höfundur *Morkinskinnu* og *Fagrskinnu*', *Gripla*, 23 (2012), 237–277.
In 1999 Alan Berger made a similar claim for Snorri being the author of *Fagrskinna* on the grounds that some of the evidence towards his authorship of *Heimskringla* work equally well, if not better, for his authorship of *Fagrskinna*. If the evidence applies equally well to *Heimskringla* as it does to *Fagrskinna*, then the opposite must also be true and the argument turns circular, neither proving nor disproving Snorri's authorship of either work or both. See Alan J. Berger, 'Heimskringla and the Compilations', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 114 (1999), 12–13.

[71] Jesse L. Byock, 'Introduction', in Jesse L. Byock (ed. & trans.), *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology* (Penguin Classics: London, 2005), xii.

[72] Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 'Prolegomena', in Guðbrandur Vigfússon (ed.), *Sturlunga Saga I* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1878), lxxvii; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 14–15.

[73] Nordal, 'Formáli', *Egils saga*, lxx–xcv.

argument is echoed by Boulhosa.[74] On this same premise, Sigurjón Ísaksson's argument must also face scrutiny.[75] However, the discounting of *Egils saga* does not require the discounting of *Heimskringla* from the *Younger Edda*. Though the attribution of *Heimskringla* to Snorri Sturluson based on the claims made by Peder Claussøn Friis and Laurents Hanssøn may be rendered void, the arguments yet remain for Snorri's education and political involvement, as well as for comparison between the *Younger Edda* and *Heimskringla*. Until a stronger argument either in favour of attributing *Heimskringla* to Snorri Sturluson or not is presented, it is best to remain open to both possibilities, as Ghosh does.[76] Thus, in this study, where there is direct relevance in the narrative matter which may connect the text to Snorri Sturluson, the possibility of his authorship of *Heimskringla* will be considered, but this will not be assumed elsewhere.

The *Heimskringla* narrative is preserved in several manuscripts, which can be broadly placed into two main branches: the Kringla group (or x-class) and the Jöfraskinna group (or y-class). The Kringla manuscript, from which the group takes its name, was mostly destroyed in the 1728 fire in Copenhagen, and only one leaf now remains (Lbs frg 82). Fortunately, the manuscript had been copied beforehand. Kringla is the oldest of the *Heimskringla* manuscripts, dated to c.1258–1264, but is still a step away from the *Heimskringla* archetype, written around 1230.[77] The Kringla text is now preserved in three manuscripts which make up the K^x copy: AM 35 fol^x, which covers the content of *Heimskringla I*; AM 36 fol^x, which covers *Heimskringla II* (Óláfs saga helga); and AM 63 fol^x, which covers *Heimskringla III*. In his extensive assessment of Kringla, Jørgensen concludes that these three copies provide the most reliable version of *Heimskringla* from the Kringla group.[78] In the manuscript genealogy, the Kringla text is believed to have been a copy of an older

[74] Margaret Cormack, '*Egils saga, Heimskringla*, and the Daughter of Eiríkr blóðøx', *Alvíssmál*, 10 (2001), 61–62; Boulhosa, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway*, 6–8.
[75] Cf. Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson, 'Höfundur *Morkinskinnu* og *Fagrskinnu*', 235–279.
[76] Cf. Shami Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History: Problems and Perspectives*, The Northern World 54 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 16–17.
[77] Stefan Karlsson, 'Kringum Kringlu', *Landsbókasafn Íslands. Árbók 1976* (Reykjavík, 1977), 17–19; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 42.
[78] Jon Gunnar Jøregensen, *The Lost Vellum Kringla*, Siân Grønlie (trans.), Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XLV (C. A. Reitzels Forlag: Copenhagen, 2007), 318.

text, *x, which itself was derived from the original *Heimskringla* archetype (*Archetype).[79] Two further extant versions are derived from the *x redaction, though they go through an additional redaction, *x[1], and share features with the Jöfraskinna group.[80] The resulting manuscripts are AM 39 fol, and Fríssbók, otherwise known as the Codex Frisianus (AM 45 fol), both dated to the fourteenth century.

The Jöfraskinna group, or y-class, also includes a number of manuscripts, which, like Kringla, are one step removed from the *Archetype via a work referred to as *y.[81] Like AM 39 fol and Fríssbók, all the manuscripts of the Jöfraskinna group are dated to the fourteenth century. The Jöfraskinna manuscript was almost lost in 1728, and now survives in fragments (Holm perg 9 II fol, AM 325 VIII 3 d 4º, and NRA 55 A). Two copies of the manuscript had been made earlier, AM 37 fol[x] and AM 38 fol[x], however both copies follow a redaction of *Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku* rather than the *Heimskringla* redaction of *Óláfs saga helga* which follows the Kringla text.[82] In his 1999 article, Berger briefly argues that the Jöfraskinna text is closest to the original *Heimskringla* narrative, based in relation to stylistic evidence from the *Longest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*; this argument falls short, however, as it does not explain how much of the same work is preserved in Kringla, which is dated earlier.[83]

The Jöfraskinna group also contains the redactions known as Gullinskinna, again mostly destroyed in 1728 but copied into AM 325 VIII 5 c 4º, and Eirspennill (AM 47 fol). None of the redactions in the Jöfraskinna group contain a full version of *Heimskringla*, and the group features interpolations from the *Morkinskinna*

---

[79] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), xciv. The stemma is republished in Diana Whaley, '*Heimskringla* (Hkr)', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), clxvi.
[80] Ólafur Halldórsson, *Text by Snorri Sturluson in* Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en Mesta (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2001), xxxi.
[81] Cf. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', *Heimskringla III*, xciv.
[82] The relationship between *Óláfs saga helga* and *Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku* falls beyond the remit of the present study. For an overview on this matter, see Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 54–55. Cf. Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1979), 419–451.
[83] Berger, 'Heimskringla and the Compilations', 13.

narrative.[84] Nevertheless, the redactions of the Jöfraskinna group can be used to supplement the lacunae in Kringla where necessary, particularly for *Heimskringla III*. Of the Jöfraskinna group, only Jöfraskinna itself contains material of *Heimskringla I*, and none of the group contain *Óláfs saga helga* which comprises *Heimskringla II*. Because of these textual differences, Louis-Jensen called for a revision of the *Heimskringla* stemma in 1977, which was repeated by Diana Whaley in 1991.[85] A complete revision is yet to emerge, though Louis-Jensen does provide a clearer model for the Jöfraskinna stemma, under which the Hulda-Hrokkinskinna manuscripts are also included.[86]

1.2.5. Poetry and the Constraints of the *Konungasögur*?

As noted above, each of the four *konungasögur* texts which form the basis of the present study include skaldic verse throughout their narratives. The verses are typically presented as supporting evidence within the narratives and are often credited to the relevant skald. Additionally, the verses are generally thought to predate the prose narratives. They are therefore not considered the work of the same author as for the respective prose accounts in which they are found, and the citations to them will be provided separately. The citations will instead be given to the appropriate skald, and the quoted verses and translations will be to those published in the *Skaldic Project*. Nevertheless, because the verses are presented within the prose narratives of the *konungasögur*, they will be considered in the context of how the prose authors used the verses to present kings and kingship in their work.

The repeated challenge for understanding a supposed political ideology for the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and the ideological features of co-kingship, is the relative lack of contemporary textual material. Poetry dated to this period may be given a certain pedestal for its supposed contemporality and, as Poole

---

[84] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', *Heimskringla III*, xciv; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 45–46.
[85] Louis-Jensen, *Kongesagastudier*, 36; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 44.
[86] Louis-Jensen, *Kongesagastudier*, 40–43.

demonstrates, its uses as a corroborative historical record.[87] The reliability of poetry as a source is, however, under recurrent question. For Gade, the complexities of skaldic form are thought to preclude it from tampering throughout its transmission from composition to written record.[88] This view may be met with some scepticism, as the respective works of Poole and Abram demonstrate how the poetry is not immutable.[89] Whaley sums up the position, noting that poems 'may have been corrupted by scribes who did not fully understand how skaldic poetry works, or "improved" by scribes who did'.[90] When and where these variants arose throughout a process of oral transmission or scribal editing is perhaps less clear. As Ghosh assesses, 'if the poems are genuinely old and thus survived through oral transmission, the bearers of this tradition would most likely have been accomplished skalds themselves, and therefore fully capable of altering the verses to suit their needs according to the immediate performance context'.[91] While relevant, such a view should still be taken with caution. The very transmission of poetry as performance requires an audience, among which may be other skalds or people familiar with the recited verse(s) who may easily pick up on overt tampering or deviation which could affect the content of the poem rather than just its form. This does not equate to a strict policing of form or content, but may limit the scope in which the verse could be altered.

The problems of poetry further transmit to the prose *konungasögur*. The *konungasögur* frequently incorporate poetry into their respective narratives, either for use of citation and historicity in their presentation, or as sources from which their own prose descriptions are extrapolated. Again, Ghosh points out the

---

[87] Russell Poole, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016', *Speculum*, 62: 2 (1987), 267–298.
[88] Kari Ellen Gade, 'Poetry and its Changing Importance in Medieval Icelandic Culture', in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *Old Icelandic Literature and Society* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), 65.
[89] Russell Poole, 'Variants and Variability in the Text of Egill's Höfuðlausn', in Roberta Frank (ed.), *The Politics of Editing Medieval Texts* (AMS Press: New York, 1993), 65–105; Christopher Abram, 'Scribal Authority in Skaldic Verse: Þórbjǫrn hronklofi's *Glymdrápa*', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 116 (2001), 5–15.
[90] Diana Whaley, 'Editorial Methodology', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), xxxii.
[91] Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History*, 48.

problems of the interconnected prose and poetry. He argues that there is no way of knowing when the poetry became connected to a prose narrative, and that the preserved texts are only 'valuable as a window into compositional techniques' and are 'of little value as historical sources for the periods of which they purport to tell'.[92] Again, the view is too simplistic and does not consider the wider uses and value of the texts. If there was little historical value in the texts, there would be little history to study at all; this does not mean that the texts are accurate in a clear-cut, scientifically proven way, but that for want of alternative they must be trusted as evidence that something occurred. Historical attestation outside of Old Norse accounts is useful for determining the real existence of individuals, but it does not follow that the absence of an individual means they disappeared. For example, Haraldr Sigurðarson is attested in Greek accounts for his time as a Varangian before he returned to Norway. His time as a Varangian is well-narrated in the *konungasögur* (see Chapter Three), but these narratives contain fantastical elements. Thus, historical realism or truth does not follow the historical attestation of his presence among the Varangians. However, upon Haraldr's return to Norway, historical attestation becomes lost from the Greek sources, which no longer need to mention him, but the lack of this attestation does not mean that Haraldr ceased to exist once he departed for Norway. More likely, his life continued and events unfolded, and that is what the *konungasögur* describe. The details the *konungasögur* contain may not always be accurate, and should be regarded warily for that, but they recognise that people, events, and ideas preceded them, and the texts narrate these as best they can. Even when the narration is not perfect, or is obviously inaccurate, it retains historical value for noting that something happened.

[92] Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History*, 96.

1.3. Previous Research into Kingship

Little attention has been paid by scholars to the practices and depictions of co-kingship in medieval Norway. Where cases of co-kingship have arisen in studies, the co-kings have typically been seen and referred to as rivals, regardless as to whether there is any depiction of explicit rivalry or contention between them. These views have been perpetuated by studies concentrating instead on the period of civil wars in Norway, c.1130 to c.1240, and the questions of state development which have preoccupied researchers. The question of state development does not directly concern the present study, but it is worth noting that, if it is assumed that a functional administrative system could only occur in a narrowly defined "state", such as which emerged in the thirteenth century, then it overlooks the political functionality of the system which preceded it.

Several studies have attempted to analyse the development of the kingdom of Norway, typically with the view of determining when state formation occurred and by when it was supposedly completed. Such studies are not unique to Norway; Denmark and Sweden receive similar treatment from scholars, as do areas of eastern and central Europe.[93] A predominant theme in each case is the goal of identifying when the political infrastructure of each kingdom took on a standardised form that in some way resembles a more modern idea of monarchy, with the emphasis on a singular ruler or head of state. To borrow Weiler's term, this is the 'normative' model of kingship.[94] One of the factors for moving towards this normative model is the influence of Christianity, as scholars such as Bartlett, Bagge, Eriksen, and Winroth examine.[95] These studies position Norway within the context

[93] Cf. Knut Helle, 'The Norwegian Kingdom: Succession Disputes and Consolidation', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 369–385; Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Penguin: London, 1994), 7–18; Björn Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King Making in the West ca.1000–ca.1250', *Viator*, 41: 1 (2010), 60–65; Björn Weiler, 'Tales of First Kings and the Culture of Kingship in the West, ca.1050–ca.1200', *Viator*, 46: 2 (2015), 101–127.
[94] Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making', 57.
[95] Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 5–23; Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed*; Sverre Bagge, 'Christianization and State Formation in Medieval Norway', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 30: 2 (2005), 112–129; Sverre Bagge, 'The Norwegian Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century', in Anne J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 1993), 161–177; Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom: State Formation in Norway, c. 900–1350*

of Christendom or Europe. One of the major challenges of this approach is that the most significant contributions to Norway's conversion to Christianity in c.1024, what may be considered the first step towards normative kingship, took place some hundred-and-fifty years before surveys for state development start. In his book dedicated to the medieval formation of a Norwegian state, Bagge largely glosses over the political intricacies which predate the 1150s and instead turns much of his attention to the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[96] In part, this can be excused on the grounds of available, contemporary source material, which Bagge acknowledges, but it does not escape the matter that it was only after the 1150s that Norway's model of kingship began to significantly change into the normative model.[97] As Bartlett assesses in his seminal book, *The Making of Europe*, it did not matter that a country was Christian if the 'societies did not have the same social and legal characteristics' as those found in Frankish Europe, then it was considered 'uncivilised'.[98] When, in c.1163, the Law of Succession was introduced with the intention of restricting succession to legitimate agnatic primogeniture, the political model of Norway took a step closer to conforming with that found elsewhere in Latin Christendom.[99]

Despite the use of a normative monarchy as a foundation of state building, scholars such as Bagge and Steinsland argue that older ideas remained present in thirteenth-century ideology, and that they are adapted to work with and legitimise the new political order.[100] In his works on *Sverris saga*, Bagge similarly finds a longevity of an older rulership model.[101] This sparked a long-running debate, with challengers such

(Museum Tusculanum Press: Copenhagen, 2010), 148–170; Stefka G. Eriksen, 'Pedagogy and Attitudes towards Knowledge in *The King's Mirror*', *Viator*, 45: 3 (2014), 143–168; Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (Yale University Press: London, 2012), 145–160.

[96] Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*.

[97] Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 19.

[98] Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 18–23.

[99] On the increased importance of royal genealogy see Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Early Kings of Norway, the Issue of Agnatic Succession, and the Settlement of Iceland', *Viator*, 47: 3 (2016), 171–188.

[100] Gro Steinsland, 'Origin Myths and Rulership. From the Viking Age Ruler to the Ruler of Medieval Historiography: Continuity, Transformations and Innovations', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 62–63.

[101] Sverre Bagge, 'Ideology and Propaganda in *Sverris saga*', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 108 (1993), 15–16; Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed*, 86–88; Sverre Bagge, '"Gang leader" eller "The

as Lönnroth, Ljungqvist, and Þorleifur Hauksson arguing that the saga contains distinct Christian and *rex iustus* ideology.[102] Nevertheless, as Steinsland argues, the presence of mythological genealogies in works such as *Heimskringla*, which was written somewhere up to forty years after *Sverris saga*, indicates a persistence of older thought and ideology surrounding kingship.[103] More recently, Haki Antonsson and Costel Coroban have struck something of a middle ground on the matter. In his review of Christian themes in the *konungasögur*, Haki Antonsson notes that 'Icelandic authors were well able to formulate narratives of an essentially Christian function while locating them in a secular setting' and that they 'include Christian motifs that complement rather than dominate the narrative'.[104] Meanwhile, Coroban succinctly brings the arguments together by proposing that a 'mixed ideology' existed in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.[105] Such a stance may yet go some way to better recognising that a fully-fledged system was in place prior to the adoption of a normative model of monarchy, and that the organisation of the Norwegian kingdom was not a new occurrence in the later twelfth century.

The system of co-rulership has not been entirely neglected. In 1937, Holmsen argued that the lack of a singular, centralised political system bore the seeds of instability and inevitable conflict, culminating in the civil wars (these arguments were reprinted in 1977).[106] Bjørgo revised the cause of the civil wars in his 1970 article, considering co-rulership as being more stable than it had otherwise been credited, and arguing that the trigger point for conflict was a break in the traditional rules of succession in the late 1120s, when Sigurðr Jórsalafari attempted to secure singular kingship for his son, Magnús.[107] Bagge quickly challenged this view, pointing

---

Lord's anointed" i *Sverris saga*? Svar til Fredrik Ljungqvist og Lars Lönnroth', *Scripta Islandica*, 58 (2007), 101–118.

[102] Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, 'Kristen kungaideologi i *Sverris saga*', *Scripta Islandica*, 57 (2006), 79–93; Lars Lönnroth, 'Sverrir's Dreams', *Scripta Islandica*, 57 (2006), 97–109; Þorleifur Hauksson, 'Implicit Ideology and the King's Image in *Sverris saga*', *Scripta Islandica*, 63 (2012), 127–134.

[103] Steinsland, 'Origin Myths and Rulership', 58–59.

[104] Haki Antonsson, 'Christian Themes', in Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (Routledge: London, 2017), 283.

[105] Costel Coroban, *Ideology and Power in Norway and Iceland, 1150–1250* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2018), 107–109.

[106] Andreas Holmsen, *Norges historie fra de eldste tider til 1660* (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1977), 188–189 & 219–227.

[107] Narve Bjørgo, 'Samkongedømme kontra enekongedømme', *Historisk Tidsskrift (Norsk)*, 49 (1970), 1–33.

out that a similar situation had arisen during the rule of Óláfr kyrri and the succession of Magnús berfœttr and Hákon Þórisfóstri, and that there was no consistent custom of succession before the 1150s.[108] Nevertheless, Bagge maintains Holmsen's position that co-rulership was a sign of disunity and a catalyst for conflict.[109] Orning has repeatedly challenged these views. In his 2013 essay, he demonstrates that co-kingship placed checks on the co-rulers' power which prevented either king from becoming a tyrant, resulting in a stable society – a view which he has recently re-emphasised in 2023.[110] Over recent years, Bagge and Orning have debated the political background to the tension and conflict surrounding Hákon Hákonarson and Skuli jarl Bárðarson, with Bagge arguing for the importance of changing and centralising legal procedures and authority, and Orning questioning what motivated people to adhere to these changes.[111] Part of Orning's argument is that the system of co-kingship persisted throughout the civil wars, citing Sverrir Sigurðarson's offer to rule as co-kings with Magnús Erlingsson, and that Skúli's rebellion against Hákon was a continuation of the balancing power checks which existed between co-rulers.[112]

A new theory was presented by Thomas Morcom in 2020, who approached the question of co-rulership through the lens of inclusive masculinity theory. Confining his study to the portrayals of Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Eysteinn Magnússon in *Morkinskinna*, Morcom finds that the two kings embodied different types of masculinity, ensuring that 'neither king is able to attain hegemonic masculine authority', which 'in turn, curtails the excesses either king might be susceptible

[108] Sverre Bagge, 'Samkongedømme og enekongedømme', *Historisk Tidsskrift (Norsk)*, 54 (1975), 239–272.
[109] Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 40–53.
[110] Hans Jacob Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 45–82; Hans Jacob Orning, 'Violence, Conflict and Order in Medieval Norway', *Global Intellectual History* (2023), 1–11.
[111] Sverre Bagge, 'Håkon og Skule 1217–1240', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 99: 3 (2020), 185–195; Sverre Bagge, 'Håkon og Skule – Svar til Hans Jacob Orning og Knut Arstad', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 101: 2 (2022), 157–165; Hans Jacob Orning, 'Håkon, Skule og de norske borgerkrigene', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 100: 3 (2021), 223–235.
[112] Orning, 'Håkon, Skule, og de norske borgerkrigene', 227–228. The argument rests on Orning's previous principle of power checks which he outlines in his 2013 chapter, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 45–82.

to'.[113] This gendered form of power checking is reminiscent of Orning's position on co-kingship, and it would be interesting to see if other cases of co-kingship presented in *Morkinskinna* and the other *konungasögur* offer similar findings. Such work is beyond the scope of the present thesis, though the work draws on elements of gender and comparative masculinities where it becomes most relevant.[114] The present thesis agrees most closely with the conclusions drawn by Orning and Morcom, that co-kings are depicted as political balances to one another in the *konungasögur*. However, where Orning and Morcom continue the tradition of viewing co-kings as 'rivals', this study takes the opposite view: that co-kings were understood by the *konungasögur* authors as two complementary halves of a whole.[115]

In her 1984 article, Marianne Kalinke likewise points to the positive collaboration shown between Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Eysteinn Magnússon in *Morkinskinna*, stating that the 'ideal monarchy' depicted in the text was 'one that achieves its greatness only through the combined talents of the brothers'.[116] Until now, this opinion has been largely sidelined in favour of theories of prevalent rivalries and a tendency to focus on the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the categories of kingship which Kalinke uses in her study reflect those which Clover identified four years earlier in a literary comparison of the compositional features of verbal duels.[117] Clover's literary assessment finds that the verbal combatants are frequently an adventurer, and someone who is more domestically inclined, as typified by the depictions of the *mannjafnaðr* between Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Eysteinn Magnússon.[118] Lönnroth makes a similar observation of the contrast between the brothers in the contest in his 1978 book, in which he reads the

---

[113] Thomas Morcom, 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna* and the Defusal of Kingly Aggression', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 137–138.
[114] See especially Chapter Two: The Mutilated (Un)Man.
[115] Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 49–62; Morcom, 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna*', 137.
[116] Marianne Kalinke, '"Sigurðar saga Jórsalafara": The Fictionalization of Fact in "Morkinskinna"', *Scandinavian Studies*, 56: 2 (1984), 164.
[117] Cf. Kalinke, 'The Fictionalisation of Fact', 163–164; Carol J. Clover, 'The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode', *Speculum* 55: 3 (1980), 454–456.
[118] Clover, 'The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode', 454–456.

differences as depictions of an older, warrior culture represented by Sigurðr, and a new, courtly style of kingship represented by Eysteinn.[119] Whether the distinction of two categories of kingship types is ideologically rooted or developed from more literary conventions which were adopted into the *konungasögur* has not been fully investigated. Bagge acknowledges an equivalent division of kingship types in *Heimskringla*, though Andersson argues that these depictions are most distinct in the passages which are based on *Morkinskinna*, and even then, the *Heimskringla* version attempts to soften the contrast.[120]

Over the course of a little more than twenty years, Andersson has repeatedly demonstrated the contrast between adventurer and domestic king types presented in *Morkinskinna*, arguing that the categories are deliberately comparative and that the author favoured a domestic style of kingship.[121] While there is a certain prevalence of such categoric depiction in *Morkinskinna*, both Ármann Jakobsson and the present author disagree with Andersson's conclusion that the adventurous and warlike kings are presented negatively in the text.[122] In addition to these categories of kingship, Ármann Jakobsson finds a number of other qualities, which he terms 'cardinal virtues', which are shown to have particular importance to kingship in the texts, namely 'wisdom, fortitude, temperance and justice'.[123] Though Ármann Jakobsson has used these qualities in conjunction with his work on *Morkinskinna*, they firstly feature in his more general survey of *konungasögur*, but are, importantly, directly traceable to *Sverris saga*.[124] This identification returns to the problem of ideological influences and sources, and the occurrence of Christian ideology in texts on kings and kingship. Bagge also identifies a number of qualities 'necessary to lead

---

[119] Lars Lönnroth, *Den dubbla scenen: Muntlig diktning från Eddan til ABBA* (Prisma: Stockholm, 1978), 68–69.
[120] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 139 & 156; Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings*, 73.
[121] Andersson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkþverá', 16–17; Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 57–71; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120–134; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280)* (Cornell University Press: London, 2006), 99–101; Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings*, 61–62.
[122] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 80–86.
[123] Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108; Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi*, 89–154.
[124] *Sverris saga*, in Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2007), Ch. 96; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108; Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi*, 89–154.

people and above all win conflicts – qualities such as intelligence, bravery or eloquence… generosity and a charismatic personality'.[125] In his 2010 book, Bagge also considers these qualities as component criteria for determining the king to be the 'best man'.[126] Though there is clear overlap between the qualities listed by Bagge and Ármann Jakobsson, and so a shared basis of Christian ideology on kingship, Bagge first established his theory on the king as the best man in his analysis of *Sverris saga* and his arguments that the saga represented an older, more secular idea of kingship.[127] Jón Viðar Sigurðsson similarly notes how personal qualities, such as charisma, are emphasised for the depictions of eleventh-century kings, as well as other rulers, but that this gave way to a new ideology in the thirteenth century.[128] Though confined to an article, Jón Sigurðsson's study takes a broader view than others in both its wide scope of rulers, including jarls and chieftains, as well as considering the depictions of rulership for the tenth and eleventh centuries. Such a study requires some caution, however, as the representations of the tenth and eleventh centuries still come mainly from thirteenth-century texts. Thus, it is worth returning to Coroban's idea of the texts having a mixed ideological basis.[129] The perennial problem of considering kingship ideology of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and its pertinence to co-rulership is the relative lack of contemporary textual material compared to studies concentrating on thirteenth-century ideology.

In opposition to Ghosh's view that the *konungasögur* can serve little more than as 'a window into compositional techniques', Jón Viðar Sigurðsson forwards the notion that 'the sagas about the distant past reflect the *main ideas* about the qualities a good ruler should possess'.[130] Coroban reiterated these sentiments in 2019, building

---

[125] Sverre Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 467–468.
[126] Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 162.
[127] Cf. Bagge, 'Ideology and Propaganda in *Sverris saga*', 15–16; Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed*, 86–88; Bagge, '"Gang leader" eller "The Lord's anointed" i *Sverris saga*?', 101–118.
[128] Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains. Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland c.900–1300', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 70–103.
[129] Costel Coroban, *Ideology and Power*, 107–109.
[130] Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History*, 96; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains', 96–97.

on his own stance of mixed ideology, to argue that 'the foundations of the political ideology of Early Medieval Norway were consolidated in the 12th and 13th centuries and that authors and sources from this period constructed models of kingship based on their 12th or 13th century recently Christianized culture'.[131] As outlined above, how recent the process of Christianisation was, is in relative terms; Christian influences may be more apparent for depictions of kingship in the early tenth century compared to depictions of the late eleventh century, by which time Christianity may have already permeated aspects of kingship ideology. However, in these statements, both Jón Sigurðsson and Coroban recognise that part of the value of the sagas, including the *konungasögur*, is their preservation of the ideas held by their respective authors. This includes both the ideology prevalent at the time the texts were written, in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as the ideas the respective authors held about what the ideology was in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

Ármann Jakobsson follows a similar concept in that 'historical figures are public figures and when they no longer exist, interpretations about them are based not on living beings but rather on written documents, or on other kinds of evidence. The medieval Icelandic sagas likewise originate in life and its affairs but are themselves mostly a linguistic expression of the past, shaped first by experience, then memory and eventually tradition'.[132] This understanding of the historical figure, as something which is neither a fully fictitious character nor an accurate depiction of the real person, is akin to Jón Sigurðsson's and Coroban's arguments that the sagas preserve ideas rather than actualities.[133] The historical figure turns into something of an actor, by which the respective 'handlers' or authors could convey a particular message or impart their particular understanding of events or ideologies.[134] Thus, the behaviours and qualities depicted of a king are not solely a depiction of

[131] Costel Coroban, 'Intercultural Political Models in *Egils Saga* and Other Literary Sources. A Philological Study', *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, 11: 2 (2019), 42; Coroban, *Ideology and Power*, 107–109.
[132] Ármann Jakobsson, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent: The "Historical Figure" in the Medieval Sagas, a Case Study', *Viator*, 45: 3 (2014), 103
[133] Jón Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains', 96–97; Coroban, 'Intercultural Political Models', 42.
[134] Ármann Jakobsson, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 123.

personality, but of a set of ideals which the author places in association with kingship.

For the purpose of the present study, the depictions of co-kingship in the *konungasögur* are not read as accurate depictions of how co-kingship was understood in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries or how it functioned over that time period; instead, the depictions of co-kings represent how the *konungasögur* authors understood co-kingship to function. Thus, the present study is less concerned with older or newer ideologies of kingship, and concentrates instead on how ideological aspects of kingship were used for the depictions of co-kingship to determine how co-kingship was understood by the *konungasögur* authors.

The previous research into kingship, and to a lesser extent co-rulership, can be summarised thus: that co-kingship was either a sign of an unstable political system, or that the tensions between co-kings allowed society to be stable; most attention has been spent on the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with little thought given to how co-kingship is presented in the texts for an earlier period; where attention has been given to cases of co-kingship prior to 1130, these studies have focused mostly on *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*. The present study moves beyond these remits. Firstly, it focuses on the lesser studied period c.1030 to c.1130. Secondly, by bringing four *konungasögur* texts together, this thesis demonstrates how notions of co-kingship were shared between authors as a representative whole of political thought, rather than the opinions of one author. Finally, the study reveals how co-kingship was presented as a stable system of complementary and collaborative qualities shared between co-rulers.

Chapter Two: The Contents of a *Mannjafnaðr*

For studying the ideology of kingship and co-rulership, it is firstly worth considering which qualities and attributes the *konungasögur* authors emphasised within their respective narratives. The given descriptions of kings occasionally include comments on the qualities which a figure possessed, but these are often presented as traits of the individual rather than as a commentary on kingship. While several qualities for kingship have been identified in previous scholarship, these are often found in the subliminal depictions of kings and are not always directly named or emphasised in the texts as explicit qualities for kingship.[1] Both *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* offer an exception to this, however. During the respective narratives of the co-ruling Magnússon brothers, Eysteinn and Sigurðr Jórsalafari are shown to perform a *mannjafnaðr* [comparison (literally, evening) of men] while at a feast.[2] Throughout the conversation, the brothers compare several qualities, attributes, and deeds which are presented as being desirable for kingship. As an indicator of perceptions of kingship, the competition between the brothers provides insights into which qualities were deemed acceptable in a king, and which were potentially most desired for kingship. Three main themes arise throughout the brothers' discussion: appearance and physicality, the ability to administer justice, and the esteem in which a king is held. These three themes and the subtopics which the brothers raise within them can be measured against the depictions of the brothers themselves elsewhere in the texts, as well as in the wider corpus of kings the texts include. The

[1] Cf. Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi: Konungsmynd Íslenskra Konungasagna*, (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 1997), 89–154; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject in *Morkinskinna*', *Skandinavistik*, 28 (1998), 108; Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal: The Representation of Royalty in *Morkinskinna*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 99: 1 (2000), 74; Sverre Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 467–468. See also, Chapter One: Previous Research into Kingship.

[2] The Magnússon brothers jointly succeeded their father, Magnús berfœttr, in c.1103. The co-rulership was initially shared between Eysteinn, Sigurðr Jórsalafari, and Óláfr. Óláfr was about four years old at the time he became king, and Eysteinn and Sigurðr acted as regents on his behalf. Óláfr died in c.1115, and due to his short life, he receives little attention in the texts. Eysteinn and Sigurðr continued to share rule until Eysteinn's death in c.1123, after which Sigurðr ruled alone until his own death in c.1130.

authors' attitudes and perceptions towards kingship and the ideal qualities of a king can thereby be seen where themes may or may not be recurrent, and in their treatment of specific aspects or issues of a king's conduct in the narrative.

2.1. The Texts

The *mannjafnaðr* is only contained in the accounts of *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona saga* (in *Heimskringla*) [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. Neither the extant *Fagrskinna* nor *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum* texts contain a version of the *mannjafnaðr*. Both *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip* suffer from lacunae during their respective narrative passages concerning the Magnússon brothers. It is highly doubtful these lost pages ever contained a *mannjafnaðr*, however, due to their more succinct narratives and the necessity of including other more pertinent information for their narratives which has since been lost (see Chapter Two: Lacunae, in this chapter below). The distinction of inclusion or omission of the *mannjafnaðr* between the former and latter pairs of texts raises questions of a potential Norwegian-Icelandic approach to how kingship was portrayed, or was expected to be portrayed by a particular audience.[3]

Much of the content covered in the two accounts of the *mannjafnaðr* is the same and follows a similar structure. The exchange will be examined in further detail below, but a preliminary summary is as follows:

> The conversation is initially driven by Eysteinn, and Sigurðr reluctantly joins in. Their equivalent titles and parentage are remarked upon by Eysteinn in both accounts before the brothers engage in a discussion comparing their differences, beginning with matters of physicality. Both brothers agree that Sigurðr is the physically stronger king, and Eysteinn the more agile, but the two were of equal ability in marksmanship. Appearance, or perhaps more accurately for its purpose, recognisability, is next remarked upon by the kings. They then move on to discuss their relative degrees of legal

[3] On the authorship of the texts and their places of writing, see Chapter One: Source Material.

> knowledge and skills, and the role of their personal honour in administering and maintaining justice. As personality or moral character is called into question in a flurry of thinly veiled insults, it is here where the texts' scripted conversations begin their subtle deviation. In *Magnússona*, the distinction between Eysteinn's theoretically-based action – knowledge of the law, and the administrative development of the kingdom – is presented in recurrent contrast to Sigurðr's physical action – command and leadership of a fleet, and success in battle. Each of the brothers' deeds are addressed in turn, saving each action for its own argument for contrast and developing the tension growing between them.

In total, the *Magnússona* account provides sixteen argumentative or contrasting points throughout its portrayal of the discussion. Though the same arguments are presented in *Morkinskinna*, Sigurðr's deeds are lost against Eysteinn's development of the kingdom in a bombastic concluding speech by the latter. Here, the building works Eysteinn commissioned are listed in quick succession and render Sigurðr without response. The argument lasts all of eight points in *Morkinskinna*'s structure – half the scale of the *Magnússona* version. In both accounts, Eysteinn is granted the last word – a structural point which may have unfairly contributed to him being considered as the 'winner' of the *mannjafnaðr* and thus 'the better king' in modern scholarship.[4] Eysteinn having the last word would be as much in keeping with his depictions elsewhere – his wit and knowledge of *lǫgprettu* 'legal tricks', as Sigurðr is shown to term them – as it would be of Sigurðr remaining the more taciturn brother [*Msona*, Ch. 21].

[4] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 85; Marianne E. Kalinke, '"Sigurðr Saga Jórsalafara": The Fictionalization of Fact in "Morkinskinna"', *Scandinavian Studies*, 56: 2 (1984), 164; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), lvi; Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93: 1 (1994), 70; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Partisan Muse in the Early Icelandic Sagas (1200–1250)*, Islandica LV (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2012), 133–134.

2.2. Verbal Duels: Defining a *Mannjafnaðr*

Verbal duels are found across Germanic-language literature and are frequently and variously referred to as flytings, *sennur* [quarrels], and *mannjafnaðir*. The distinctions between the terms are relatively flexible due to certain similarities and overlaps, and are used somewhat interchangeably within modern scholarship. The inconsistent application of terms, the challenges of not having any 'unambiguous example' of any form, and the problems between supposed practical distinction and textual transmission have previously led Clover to propose only one 'distinct category' of verbal duel, 'labelled a flyting'.[5] While this certainly provides for the wide parameters and forms of verbal duelling, it neglects the subtle differences of form and content which have given cause for the alternative, often more specific terms to have been applied. Used as a catch-all term to denote 'specific "speech-events"', according to Bax and Padmos, *flyting* largely sums up the key component of a somewhat formalised exchange of insults or boasts (or sometimes a mix of both) between two contestants (or sometimes more).[6] There is little to distinguish any strict structure or content to these events – the contestants do not need to know each other, no consistent exchange pattern is required, and the purpose may be either to boast about oneself or insult one's opponent.

To determine whether the exchanges between the Magnússon brothers can be considered in the category of either *sennur* or *mannjafnaðir*, certain requirements can be observed. As Bax and Padmos have explored, a *senna* can occur between contestants who do not know each other, whereas a *mannjafnaðr* required a certain extent of familiarity for the initial 'equality' of the *mannjafnaðr* (as befitting a literal evening of men) to be effective.[7] The exchange between the Magnússon brothers fits and indeed greatly surpasses the remit of suitable acquaintance required for a *mannjafnaðr* of the contestants at minimum knowing one another's names, or

[5] Carol J. Clover, 'The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode', *Speculum*, 55: 3 (1980), 445.
[6] Marcel M. H. Bax and Tineke Padmos, 'Senna-Mannjafnaðr', in Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (eds.), *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge: Abingdon, 1993), 572.
[7] Bax and Padmos, 'Senna-Mannjafnaðr', 572; Marcel Bax and Tineke Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Dueling in Old Icelandic: The Interactional Structure of the "Senna" and the "Mannjafnaðr" in *Hárbarðsljóð*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 55: 2 (1983), 156–158.

providing an acceptable name, as exemplified in *Hárbarðsljóð* and *Qrvar-Odds saga*.[8] Throughout the *konungasögur* narratives, Sigurðr and Eysteinn are repeatedly shown as being largely amicable, familiar with one another's nuances, and sharing a great level of trust and mutual respect in their governance of Norway. Each of these points of familiarity are visible in both versions of the brothers' *mannjafnaðr*. In both accounts, Eysteinn instigates the conversation (though this is at the behest of the unnamed host of the feast in *Morkinskinna*) and Sigurðr slowly joins in, succumbing to Eysteinn's pestering [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. These depictions of Eysteinn being the more talkative brother to Sigurðr's more taciturn conduct follow the pattern of their presentation elsewhere in the narratives, as well as the descriptions of their personalities [*Msona*, Chs. 16–17; *Msk*, Chs. 71 & 73]. Similarly, the discussion of their respective abilities and achievements, including specific details of those achievements and their legacies in Norway, demonstrates an awareness of both the kingdom of which they share governance, and the minutiae of one another's activities [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. The extensive familiarity between the brothers thereby makes the *mannjafnaðr* form an apt option for their verbal duel, as well as providing meaningful content to be used over a highly varied range of topics.

The topics, content, and form of the turns of speech is the next and most substantial indicator as to what category the verbal duel may fit. The argumentative content of a *senna* typically relies on direct insults hurled at one's opponent; by contrast, the content of a *mannjafnaðr* is comprised of boasts of one's own achievements. The boasts of the *mannjafnaðr* can indirectly serve as insults to the opponent – drawing attention to the lesser or lack of achievements the opponent has done – but the primary focus is on one's own deeds with the insulting element construed in subtext. The form of boasting in a *mannjafnaðr* can easily be confused with *senna*-style insults as the purpose is ultimately the same: to establish a hierarchy between the contestants by proving one contender the superior.

[8] Bax and Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Dueling', 156; Bax and Padmos, 'Senna-Mannjafnaðr', 572; '*Hárbarðsljóð*', in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), sts. 9–10; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, R. C. Boer (ed.), (Halle A. S. Max Niemeyer: 1892), 78.

Distinguishing the form of the Magnússon brothers' contest is complicated by the first portion of their exchange where the statements rely most heavily on a shared childhood and the competitive element of sports and physical skills [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Each claim either brother makes relies on a shared memory or event causing a succinct entanglement of boast and insult in the statement, a device best exploited in the *Magnússona* version [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. By boasting about their own triumphs over the other, the "loser" in the former competition is confronted with an insult. The Magnússon brothers' insults never stray far from their boasts, however, and are never isolated, rarely explicitly delivered, and do not linger in the remit of the insult as contestants do in other verbal duels.[9] Additionally, the covertly insulting elements of the Magnússon brothers' exchange never fall into the *senna*-style insults relating to the categories of 'cowardice, unfree social status, and especially sexual perversions' termed by Harris.[10] In these ways, the Magnússon brothers' exchange aligns itself with *mannjafnaðir*.

Whereas the purpose of a *senna* is to belittle one's opponent by directly naming their supposed deficiencies, as is excellently illustrated throughout *Lokasenna* and in the initial exchange between Þórr and Hárbarðr [Óðinn] in *Hárbarðsljóð*, the indirect insults in a *mannjafnaðr* and in the Magnússon brothers' contest rely instead on the subtext from boasts about one's own achievements [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21].[11] In both accounts, the exchange develops from a jovial teasing tone to becoming tenser and more stand-offish, as befitting the verbal duelling style.[12]

Though insulting comparisons and rebukes become more prominent from the middle of the brothers' exchange, with the focus of the statements' shifting from oneself to one's opponent in both accounts, the insults are tempered by the primary focus of the overall claim remaining on the respective speaker's boast [*Msona*, Ch.

[9] '*Hárbarðsljóð*', sts. 16–53; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, sts. 31–50.
[10] Joseph Harris, 'The Senna: From Description to Literary Theory', *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 5: 1 (1979), 66.
[11] Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 445; '*Hárbarðsljóð*', sts. 1–60; '*Lokasenna*', in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), sts. 6–65.
[12] See Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 447.

21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. For example, in the *Magnússona* version, Sigurðr delivers the first barb against Eysteinn's claim of his own superior legal knowledge and fluency.

Msona, Ch. 21:

> *Sigurðr konungr svarar: "Vera kann, at þú hafir numit fleiri lǫgprettu, því at ek átta þá annat at starfa. En engi frýr þér sléttmælis, en hitt mæla margir, at þú sér eigi allfastorðr ok lítit mark sé, hverju þú heitr, mælir eptir þeim, er þá eru hjá, ok er þat ekki konungligt."*
>
> 'King Sigurðr replies: "It is known to be that you have learnt more legal tricks, because at that time I had other works. And no one denies you speak smoothly, but many others say that you are not very true to your word and your promise is of little importance to what you say after when they are near, and that is not kinglike"'.[13]

In Sigurðr's statement he is shown to agree with Eysteinn's claim that he is better learned in law, accompanied by a soft boast of him having spent his time on other important matters (his journey to Jerusalem, as is subsequently raised in the exchange). Sigurðr also agrees to his brother's superior fluency, but then the tone shifts as he delivers the first true insult towards Eysteinn's general conduct. It does not matter if Eysteinn is better learned or a skilled speaker if he does not stand by what he has said. Despite the rebuke of Eysteinn's conduct, the insult is modified to remain on the theme Eysteinn raised and is softened by Sigurðr's agreements to his brother's boastful claims. The insult almost becomes a point of feedback for Eysteinn to improve on rather than a jab to tear him down.

The *Morkinskinna* version offers a similarly subtle change in tactics. In this case the new phase is begun by Eysteinn who claims that "*nǫkkuru sé þá um mik þjokkskipaðra þá er menn sœkja ørendlaust á þinn fund til nauðsynligra órskuða*" '"anybody may see that the crowd is denser around me then, when people seek your finding without effect to necessarily decide"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. Eysteinn's statement takes the initial form of a boast, focusing on his apparent popularity, but

[13] All translations of Old Norse prose are my own throughout this thesis.

by structuring his boast as a comparison he wields it as a subtle insult, pointing instead to Sigurðr's comparative unpopularity. Sigurðr is shown to reply with a more overt insult: "*þú heitir stundum því er þú endir ekki af ok virðir eigi mikils orð þín"* '"you promise at the time, but you resolve nothing and do not greatly value your word"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. While this follows much the same premise as in the *Magnússona* version, the attack is more personal. In the *Morkinskinna* version, Sigurðr criticises Eysteinn's conduct as a general failing, whereas in *Magnússona* the conduct is criticised for being unkinglike [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Though the scene is a comparison of two men, it is also designed to be a comparison of two kings – as Eysteinn himself is shown to outline at the beginning of the discussion in *Magnússona* [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Sigurðr's remark in *Magnússona* is not strictly a generic criticism of Eysteinn as a man, but rather a criticism of what is expected and should be adhered to by a man who is king. By implication provided by Sigurðr, and subsequently by Eysteinn's mention, it is shown that Sigurðr is known to stay true to his word [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Thus, despite Sigurðr's remarks functioning as insults towards Eysteinn, they double as boastful comments about himself. The same is apparent in Eysteinn's initial statement in *Morkinskinna* and in his responses in both accounts [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Boastful overtones remain present in both brothers' statements, but the delivery has shifted to being more attacking.

In both accounts, the more overt insults Sigurðr and Eysteinn deliver pertain almost exclusively to one another's conduct as kings and peacekeepers, the expectations of kingly behaviour, and their efficiencies in governing and benefitting Norway. The insults only edge towards Harris' more typical remit and become fully overt when Sigurðr likens Eysteinn to their *"dóttir fǫður"* '"father's daughter"' in *Magnússona* for having never left Norway, and in Eysteinn's answer in both accounts that *"ek gerða þik heiman sem systur mina"* '"I prepared you from home as I would my sister"' in funding Sigurðr's famous journey, a point which he also says in *Morkinskinna* [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78].[14] These attempts at emasculating one another prove to be largely ineffectual – in comparison to the provocations in *Hárdarðsljóð* and *Qrvar-Odds saga* – as the conversation swiftly returns to the

[14] Harris, 'The Senna: From Description to Literary Theory', 572.

brothers boasting about their respective successes as kings.[15] While Sørensen expects the challenge of an emasculating accusation to be successfully refuted, Eysteinn does not directly defend himself against Sigurðr's assertion of him being like their *dóttir fǫður* 'father's daughter' [*Msona*, Ch. 21].[16] Eysteinn's reputation does not appear damaged, however, and it may be that Sigurðr's charge was intended to be read as a 'ludic remark' rather than a truthful statement.[17] Rather than an assertion of his own masculinity, however, Eysteinn's defence may be his subtle deftness at turning the same emasculatory accusation on his brother [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. Again, the remark can be seen as ludic within the confines of the verbal duel. Notably, the accusations are not repeated in different forms, nor do they escalate, as is otherwise observed in the verbal duel in *Qrvar-Odds saga*.[18] Nevertheless, in the *Magnússona* structure of the conversation, Sigurðr promptly defends himself against the accusation of being effeminate by swift mention of the *"orrostur mjǫk margar"* '"very many battles"' he had fought abroad and the victories he gained [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Thus, Sigurðr is shown to negate Eysteinn's challenge and preserve his masculinity.[19]

The *Morkinskinna* author, meanwhile, denies Sigurðr the opportunity of such a response as the insult is Eysteinn's final line and the concluding remark to the whole *mannjafnaðr* in this account [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. The bias of the *mannjafnaðr* in favour of Eysteinn is thereby clearest in the *Morkinskinna* version through the unsubtle use of the script's structure. However, the hollow ring of Eysteinn's insult and attempt to effeminise his brother is nonetheless apparent. At the beginning of the narrative of the Magnússon brothers' rule and the commencement of Sigurðr's journey, it is explained in each of the accounts that the journey was agreed upon and the expenses supported jointly between the brothers [*Msk*, Ch. 64; *Msona*, Ch. 1; *Fsk*, Ch. 86]. Any audience of the *konungasögur*, and in this context the audience of

---

[15] '*Hárbarðsljóð*', sts. 16–53; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, sts. 37–43.
[16] Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of sexual defamation in early Northern society*, Joan Turville-Petre (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1983), 77–78 & 84.
[17] Ward Parks, 'Flyting, Sounding, Debate: Three Verbal Contest Genres', *Poetics Today* 7: 3 (1986), 446.
[18] *Qrvar-Odds saga*, sts. 37–43.
[19] See also, Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, Joan Turville-Petre (trans.), 77–78 & 84.

Morkinskinna in particular, as well as any presumed audience of an actual *mannjafnaðr* would therefore have been aware of the expedition's funding, either through the explicit narrative telling or from having provided for the levies. Thus, Eysteinn's insult is diminished on the grounds of his own agreement to the course, and is made obsolete in the *Magnússona* presentation of events as Sigurðr is stated to have borne at least some of the cost himself.

Rather than belittling one another, the Magnússon brothers' passing insults serve to raise the tension in the exchange and add to the overall drama of the piece. Despite *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* depicting alternative brothers initiating the overt insults, they both remain consistent to their depictions of the brothers – Eysteinn manipulating his boast into a more explicit insult, and Sigurðr firmly rooted in righteous honour (whether delivering the first insult in *Magnússona*, or responding to it in *Morkinskinna*) [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. How the brothers respond is as much a part of the contest and comparison as the spoken content. In the nineteen turns of speech in *Magnússona*, only two turns include explicit insults, three turns are for the initial establishment of the contest, and fourteen are boasts [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Likewise, *Morkinskinna* covers thirteen turns of speech, with only one turn including an explicit insult (at the end of Eysteinn's final speech) [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. While the insulting elements of Sigurðr's and Eysteinn's statements can be easily detected, the primary content and delivery of the claims is consistently focused on their own achievements – the claims only function as insults due to the shared background of the events and deeds of which they speak. Thus, the content of the exchange is of a boastful nature and easily demarcates the brothers' contest as a *mannjafnaðr*.

The differences in the structure of the two versions of the *mannjafnaðr* has given rise to considerations on the purposes and effects of the scene. Hallvard Lie observes a literary superiority in the *Magnússona* version due to a dramatic shift in tone from friendly banter to anger between the brothers.[20] Although the dialogue structure certainly runs more evenly throughout the *Magnússona* version, subtly shifting the tone of the scene, it lacks the emphatic conclusion of the *Morkinskinna*

[20] Hallvard Lie, *Studier i Heimkringlas Stil: Dialogene og Talene* (Jacob Dybwad: Oslo, 1937), 66–68.

version which drops into a stunned silence [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. Ármann Jakobsson likewise finds drama in the *Morkinskinna* version, created by the *hraða og taktfasta* 'speed and rhythm' in the bombardment of Eysteinn's concluding speech, and the reiterations of the brothers' jibes.[21] Literary superiority is therefore perhaps better concerned towards intended effect. The *Magnússona* version offers a steady transition and decay of the brothers' relationship in the scene, whereas the *Morkinskinna* version has a more impactful conclusion. Thus, each form meets its own purpose, but would perhaps struggle to meet the purpose of the other. Kalinke believes the *Morkinskinna* version takes a more deliberately contrasting approach than *Magnússona*, reflecting 'the antithetical and dissimilar personalities of the speakers'.[22] While it holds that the goals of the respective authors differed towards either sharply contrasting the speakers (*Morkinskinna*) or creating a fluid literary exchange (*Magnússona*), each element is still present in each form. Sigurðr remains as grudging to engage in conversation in the *Magnússona* account as in *Morkinskinna*, while Eysteinn remains blithe [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. Direct elements of the structure and signalling in the dialogue in *Magnússona* also find equivalents in *Morkinskinna*. The order of claims and counterclaims are largely the same in both accounts, and while the phrasing may differ the content remains consistent. For example, when Sigurðr challenges Eysteinn for being unfaithful in his promises – "*en hitt mæla margir, at þú sér eigi allfastorðr"* '"but many others say that you are not very true to your word"' in *Magnússona* or *"þú… virðir eigi mikils orð þín"* '"you… do not greatly value your word"' in *Morkinskinna* – Eysteinn defends himself with a lengthy explanation for mediating the circumstances of the cases brought to him [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78].

At the most crucial tipping point in the exchange, following Sigurðr's mention of his deeds abroad, both accounts lead with Eysteinn exclaiming *"Nú greiptu á kýlinu"* '"Now you touch upon a sore spot"' in *Magnussona* and *"Nú greiptu á því kýlinu"* '"Now in that case you touch upon a sore spot"' in *Morkinskinna* [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. In this small statement, Eysteinn's envy is made apparent, and having

[21] Ármann Jakobsson, *Staður í Nýjum Heimi: Konungasagan Morkinskinna* (Háskólaútgátan: Reykjavík, 2002), 183–185. Translation from Icelandic is my own.
[22] Kalinke, 'The Fictionalization of Fact', 165.

been metaphorically wounded his tactics turn more vicious to defame Sigurðr in light of his own achievements. In this again, the focus of content remains pertinent to the speaker and scarcely strays into overt insults about their opponent. For the matter of structure versus personality and the purpose of the authors' respective approaches, Eysteinn's exclamation demonstrates that the *Morkinskinna* author had as much awareness of the structural importance and signalling as did the *Heimskringla* author. Additionally, the near identical phrasing at the same point in the exchange suggests potential and direct borrowing from the *Morkinskinna* version into the *Magnússona* account.[23] The only major difference between the two versions appears to be what effect the structure – considered as the balance between number of turns speaking and the volume of words – was intended to have. In *Magnússona*, the structure is evenly balanced, providing a smooth conversation even as the verbal conflict is supposed (and indicated) to escalate. By contrast, in *Morkinskinna* the heavy tip towards the volume of words – Eysteinn's monumental concluding speech – emphasises the emotionality of the scene and demonstrates Eysteinn's outrage [*Msk*, Ch. 78].[24] Whereas the *Magnússona* account seeks to provide a smoothly spoken *mannjafnaðr per excellence*, the *Morkinskinna mannjafnaðr* brings a visceral portrayal of human emotion to what is, essentially, Eysteinn's only major "battle".[25] The purposes of the two versions of the brothers' *mannjafnaðr* are thereby different and cannot be considered in terms of superiority in one regard or another.

The final portion of the Magnússon brothers' *mannjafnaðr* is given to the perceived crowning achievements of both – Sigurðr's journey to and time in Jerusalem, and the developments Eysteinn made to the kingdom, with particular focus on his

---

[23] On reliance and borrowing in *Heimskringla* from *Morkinskinna*, see Diana Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series VIII (Viking Society for Northern Research: London, 1991), 64 & 92.

[24] Andersson also considers the contrasting structures, concluding the *Morkinskinna* version to lend weight to Eysteinn's victory whereas the *Heimskringla* version remains 'inconclusive'. See Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 70–71; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 133–134.

[25] Eysteinn receives significantly less attention in the texts than Sigurðr – in *Magnússona*, the *mannjafnaðr* is the only space truly given to a depiction of him. Although Eysteinn receives more attention in *Morkinskinna*, such as in *Ívarrs þáttr Ingmundarsonar* [*Msk*, Ch. 72] and *Þinga þáttr* [*Msk*, Ch. 77], the *mannjafnaðr* is perhaps his most significant scene due to it being the only one featuring him shared between *konungasögur*.

construction works [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. It is here where the discussion becomes the most heated. Each brother is shown to consider his own achievements the superior, and it is where the differences between them become most apparent. Sigurðr's achievements are grounded in the legacy of his voyage, which, though impressive, is rooted in the past with little continuing impact. Meanwhile, Eysteinn's developments to the kingdom, including the construction of harbours and monasteries, would have been perceived as having a continuing effect on people's lives and on Norway's infrastructure. Eysteinn's legacy is therefore more tangible than Sigurðr's, and is presented as such in both versions of the *mannjafnaðr*, leading to him being declared the winner. According to Clover, Eysteinn's victory as the domestic contender (against the well-travelled, adventuring opponent) was a 'deliberate reversal' which 'upended the traditional terms'.[26] Though the exchange highlights the divide between the domestic-king and the adventure-king types which Eysteinn and Sigurðr epitomise, a contrast between past and present-to-future is also observable. Sigurðr's deeds and greatness rely on the past; Eysteinn's are present and lasting. The distinction of victory for Eysteinn may not simply be an upending of domestic/adventurer types, but an acknowledgement that past greatness does not necessarily have direct benefit to the present or future, and it is the deeds that have sustained impact which should be focused upon.

The question of a violent end or subsequent, external challenge to a *flyting* divides opinion, with Parks, and Bax and Padmos expecting it and Clover claiming it to be unnecessary.[27] However, given Clover's broad encompassment of all forms of verbal duels as flytings, it is perhaps better or necessary to narrow down the considered categories in some ways.[28] As the situation between the Magnússon brothers does not result in a subsequent, external challenge, the verbal duel is not a flyting.[29] *Morkinskinna* gives no indication as to how the brothers parted after their exchange, though an angry impression of Eysteinn is left, while *Magnússona* states that sibling rivalry remained as *vildi hvárr vera ǫðrum meiri, en helzk þó friðr milli*

[26] Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 456.
[27] Parks, 'Flyting, Sounding, Debate', 448; Bax and Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Duel', 153; Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 459.
[28] Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 445.
[29] Bax and Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Duel', 153; Parks, 'Flyting, Sounding, Debate', 448.

þeira ‘each wanted to be greater than the other, and yet peace was held between them’ [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. The potential of a subsequent challenge is issued, however, in both texts, when Sigurðr calls on Eysteinn to travel to the River Jordan and untie the knot left for him there [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. Eysteinn refuses the challenge, and tells Sigurðr that he could have provided him with a far more insurmountable challenge if he had been inclined to take over all of Norway for himself while Sigurðr was abroad [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Sigurðr is thus reminded that he is still king (and potentially still alive) only because of his brother’s grace. Based on personal claims, the exchange thereby resolves itself. Sigurðr is shown to be indebted to Eysteinn, and Eysteinn emerges the victor.

At the same time, the verbal exchange is resolved. In both accounts, Eysteinn’s words mirror Sigurðr’s original statement. In *Magnússona*: *Eysteinn konungr segir: “Eigi mun ek leysa þann knút, er þú reitt mér, en ríða mátta ek þér þann knút, er miklu síðr fengir þú leyst…”* ‘King Eysteinn says: “I will not untie this knot that you tied me, but I might have tied you this knot, that you would have been much less able to untie…”’ [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Likewise, *Morkinskinna* invokes the continued metaphorical use of knots when Eysteinn says: *“En þat er þú reitt knútinn þá sýnisk mér at mátt hefði svá verða at ek ríða þér þann knút er þú værir aldregi síðan konungr at Nóregi”* ‘“But as for the knot you tied, then it seems to me that I might have made it such that I could have tied this knot for you, that you would afterwards have never been king in Norway”’ [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. In both versions, Eysteinn is shown to take Sigurðr’s original remark of a knot and twist it in such a way as to verbally ensnare his brother. Sigurðr is rendered undone by the content of Eysteinn’s statement, but the delivery of the statement also proves Eysteinn to be the superior speaker, able to manipulate what others give him and turn it back on his opponent. The exchange is thereby resolved internally with regard to both its content and its form as a comparative verbal contest. As such, there is no need for a subsequent challenge, the category of flyting can be discounted, and the exchange can be termed a *mannjafnaðr*.

2.3. Lacunae

2.3.1. The *Fagrskinna* Lacunae

The *Fagrskinna* account suffers an absence of text in both manuscript forms. The gap in *Fagrskinna B* begins following the statement of Sigurðr's fourth battle during his Mediterranean journey, which took place at Alkasse, and this version of the text resumes with the listing of Eysteinn's accomplishments in Norway [*Fsk*, Chs. 86–92]. *Fagrskinna A* contains details further into Sigurðr's journey, breaking off during the *Paðreim leikr* 'Padreim Games' he attended while in Miklagarðr [Istanbul] and lasting for four leaves [*Fsk*, Ch. 91]. Whereas *Fagrskinna A* supplements the early portion of the lacuna, *Fagrskinna B* resumes the narrative. By cross consulting these two manuscripts, the overall narrative of *Fagrskinna* has the shortest textual gap and thus the most coherent reading. To fill the remaining void, modern editorial advice has been to follow the narrative details found in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona saga*.[30] Succinctly, *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* follow the rest of Sigurðr's journey outlining his route home to Norway [*Msk*, Chs. 69–70; *Msona*, Ch. 13]. *Morkinskinna* also contains an additional scenario, not included in *Magnússona*, in which he prepares a feast for *Kirjalax keisari* 'Emperor Kirjalax [Alexios I Komnenos]' cooked using walnuts to fuel the fires [*Msk*, Ch. 69].[31] It is unclear whether this scenario was included or otherwise referenced in the now-lost pages of the *Fagrskinna* narrative. While filling in the overall narrative with the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* accounts enables us to follow the general sequence of events and their outcomes, the question remains as to what specific details were most likely included in the now-lost pages. Though the *konungasögur* share much of their narrative content, the respective extent of their details varies greatly.

---

[30] Bjarni Einarsson, '*Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), Ch. 91, fn. 2; Bjarni Einarsson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), lxiii–lxiv; Alison Finlay (ed. & trans.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), fn. 757.

[31] The scenario of using walnuts as a fuel source appears to be a wandering folktale and is also applied to Haraldr Sigurðarson in *Morkinskinna*. See Chapter Three: The Faux Funeral – Folklore and Purpose. On the tale's effective application to Sigurðr Jórsalafari see Kalinke, 'The Fictionalization of Fact', 158–159.

The discrepancies between narratives must be considered for what content may have been included in the *Fagrskinna* lacunae – both for the compiled and presented narrative in later editions, as well as in the manuscript versions. Though the overall structure of the *Fagrskinna* account of the Magnússons is similar to those of *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona*, it is difficult to ascertain which details from these other accounts were shared in *Fagrskinna* and which omitted from the pages now lost. Any supposition is further complicated by *Fagrskinna* being in general a shorter and less detailed history than *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna*. In determining *Fagrskinna*'s possible content, it is necessary to consider which details of the Magnússons' lives are also otherwise missing from the account beyond the base-level narrative structure.

The *Fagrskinna* lacunae may have contained passages describing the Magnússon brothers and the genealogies of their marriages – details which are present in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* but missing from *Fagrskinna* [*Msona*, Chs. 16 & 19–20; *Msk*, Chs. 71 & 73]. *Fagrskinna* provides equivalent descriptions and genealogies for other kings (and their wives), Norwegian or otherwise, throughout the text, and an equivalent inclusion for the Magnússons can be reasonably assumed.[32] Both *Magnússona* and *Morkinskinna* include such descriptions at around the same narrative point as where the *Fagrskinna* lacuna occurs, marking these details as a close contender for inclusion. The only notable difference may be the swapped order of these details and Eysteinn's deeds, though such a discrepancy would not otherwise alter the narrative and may have provided a logical break and transition in the account from following Sigurðr's deeds to those of Eysteinn.

A description of the lineage of Magnús Sigurðarson (later *inn blindi* 'the blind') must also be considered for the likely inclusion in the *Fagrskinna* lacunae. As with the genealogies of Eysteinn's and Sigurðr's respective wives, a description of Magnús' mother and Sigurðr's liaison with her is close to the narrative point of the lacuna when compared with the structure of *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona*. *Fagrskinna*

[32] Examples in *Fagrskinna* include Eiríkr bloðøx's marriage to Gunnhildr and their children, Óláfr digrleggr's family, and the extensive connections listed from Gyða Haraldsdóttir [*Fsk*, Chs. 5, 23, & 77].

contains no description of Magnús' mother or her family elsewhere – something of an anomaly in the text. Points of genealogy are typically well-documented in each of the *konungasögur*, often straying into the wider remit of local and international political ties and associations, including for non-Scandinavian kings.

According to *Magnússona* and *Morkinskinna*, Magnús' mother was Borghildr, the daughter of Óláfr of Dalr [*Msona*, Ch. 19; *Msk*, Ch. 73]. The *Ágrip* account renders Borghildr simply as Sigurðr's *friðla* 'concubine' but does not name her, while *Morkinskinna* provides the same term but includes her name and father in the record [*Ágrip*, Ch. 56; *Msk*, Ch. 73]. *Magnússona* provides a lengthier account in which Borghildr's friendship with Eysteinn is first related, followed by Sigurðr's arrival in Dalr and his relationship with her [*Msona*, Ch. 19]. The *Magnússona* account also takes the opportunity in this tale to establish Sigurðr in Konungahella before he travelled to Dalr, and describes his improvements to the town [*Msona*, Ch. 19]. Though the other accounts also include details of Sigurðr's work in Konungahella, only *Magnússona* includes them here to frame the story with Borghildr.

An equivalent version to *Magnússona* may have originally been included in *Fagrskinna*, though this is less likely than the general inclusion of Magnús' parentage as the genealogical context is the central purpose of the tale. Without the description of Borghildr, or at least the context of Magnús' mother (if she was left unnamed in the text), the only information pertaining to Magnús' genealogy in *Fagrskinna* is:

Fsk, Ch. 93:

> *Magnús, sonr Sigurðar konungs, fekk Kristínar, dóttur Knúts lávarðar ok Ingibjargar, dóttur Haralds konungs, systur Málfríðar dróttningar, er Sigurðr konungr, faðir hans, átti.*
>
> 'Magnús, King Sigurðr's son, married Kristín, daughter of Knútr lávarðr (lord) and of Ingibjǫrg, daughter of King Haraldr, and sister of Queen Málfríðr, who was married to his [Magnús'] father, King Sigurðr'.

Without reference to Borghildr, or without reference to the other texts, it appears in *Fagrskinna* that Magnús was the son of Sigurðr and his wife, Queen Málfríðr (*Málmfríðr* in *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna*), and married his cousin. Such a marriage would have fallen within the fourth degree of consanguineous kinship and would have been illegal.[33] The resulting interpretation of Magnús' parents and kin relations from the remaining *Fagrskinna* account alone therefore greatly differs from the report found in the other three *konungasögur*, with vastly different legal and moral implications, and must be considered inaccurate. Though details occasionally differ between the *konungasögur* these are usually over smaller or more trivial matters – a shortened version of a long campaign, or a different choice of supporting poetry. In short, the differences and omissions pertain most to narrative flourishes than to the narratives and people they portray. The genealogical change presented of Magnús inn blindi must therefore not be a deliberate authorial choice but the result of the lacunae. The mention of Borghildr, or at least of Sigurðr's liaison with her (if not a named inclusion) and the birth of Magnús must have originally been included in *Fagrskinna*.

Once the final events of Sigurðr's continued journey, the full listing of Eysteinn's developments in Norway, Magnús inn blindi's parentage, and the king's genealogies are accounted for, there is little room remaining in either *Fagrskinna* lacunae for the account to have entertained a full version of Eysteinn and Sigurðr's *mannjafnaðr*. Due to the lack of remaining space, it is also doubtful any shortened version could have been included, as is any nominal reference to the *mannjafnaðr*. As a performative scene, a referenced version would have been largely irrelevant to include, providing little in both detail and entertainment value. For the *mannjafnaðr* to have served its purpose within the narrative, it would have required the full version to have been included.

[33] On the laws surrounding marriage in Norway, see Jan Ragnar Hagland, 'Norwegians and Europe: The Theme of Marriage and Consanguinity in Early Norwegian Law'', in Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (eds.), *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2004), 209–218. For canon background and law, see Niels Lund, 'Sven Estridssen's Incest and Divorce', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 13 (2017), 120–125.

2.3.2. The *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum* Lacuna

Like the *Fagrskinna* lacuna, the lacuna in the *Ágrip* account of the Magnússons (the span of one leaf in the manuscript) is preceded by Sigurðr's return to Norway and the text resumes with his Kalmarnar expedition [*Ágrip*, Chs. 54–55]. Modern editorial suggestion directs the reader to supplement the gap using *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* – the latter in particular for its inclusion of the Kalmarnar expedition to frame where *Ágrip* resumes.[34] Only *Ágrip* and *Magnússona* contain references to the Kalmarnar expedition, and of these only *Magnússona* contains a full account of the plan and campaign [*Msona*, Ch. 24]. *Morkinskinna* makes no mention of the expedition, and though not impossible, it is highly unlikely *Fagrskinna* contained any reference to it either. As established, there would have been very limited space remaining in the *Fagrskinna* lacuna where reference to the Kalmarnar expedition could otherwise be made. Additionally, reference to the expedition in the *Fagrskinna* lacuna would have displaced the chronology of the event, if in line with the chronological structure of *Magnússona*. For *Magnússona*, it is probable the *Heimskringla* author made use of *Ágrip* or a now unknown alternative source (or both) when constructing this section of the work.

The *Ágrip* account resumes thus:

Ágrip, Ch. 55:

> *…ok lǫgðu vistagjald á Smálǫnd, .xv.c. nauta, ok tóku við kristni. Ok vendir síðan Sigurðr konungr heim með mǫrgum stórum gørsimum ok fjárhlutum er hann hafði aflat í þeiri, ok var sjá leiðangr kallaðr Kalmarna leiðangr.*
>
> '…and levied a food tax of fifteen-hundred cattle on Smálǫnd [Småland], and the people accepted Christianity. And then King Sigurðr returned home with

[34] M. J. Driscoll, 'Notes to the Translation', in M. J. Driscoll (ed. & trans.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasǫgum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series X (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2008), fn. 151; Bjarni Einarsson, '*Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), Ch. 54, fn. 3 & Ch. 55, fn. 1.

> many great treasures and valuables he had procured there, and this expedition was called the Kalmarnar expedition'.

These lines serve to close the account of the Kalmarnar expedition, as indicated by King Sigurðr's return home to Norway. The now missing lines preceding the closure of the expedition and Sigurðr's return to Norway must have included details and contextual framing to the beginning of the Kalmarnar expedition. In particular, the reason for the expedition, of Christianising the people of Smálǫnd [Småland], must have been included as the supposed successful outcome is preserved in the remaining *Ágrip* account [*Ágrip*, Ch. 55]. The arrangement and failed alliance between Sigurðr Jórsalafari and King Níkolás Sveinsson of the Danes may also have been explained by *Ágrip*, as it is in the *Magnússona* account, though this is less likely as it is not strictly integral to the expedition having taken place [*Msona*, Ch. 24].

There is no mention of the Kalmarnar expedition in *Knýtlinga saga*, nor of any dealings between Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Níkolás Sveinsson. The only (somewhat tenuous) connection explicitly presented in *Knýtlinga* between Sigurðr and Níkolás is through a genealogical explanation which outlines the affinal kinship ties between them.[35] If the *Magnússona* account is to be believed, it would be reasonable to assume the Kalmarnar expedition would merit at least a passing mention in *Knýtlinga* due to the supposed Danish contingent promised by Níkolás. As this is not the case, an alternative solution must be considered: there was no collaboration between Sigurðr and Níkolás. *Ágrip* would therefore have had no need to include mention of Níkolás or an equivalent scenario as outlined in *Magnússona* [*Msona*, Ch. 24]. Sigurðr may have undertaken an expedition to Kalmarnar, as both *Magnússona* and *Ágrip* agree, but this was likely a singular affair [*Msona*, Ch. 24; *Ágrip*, Ch. 55]. Where *Ágrip* resumes, the text focuses on Sigurðr; provided there was adequate reason for Sigurðr to have undertaken the expedition – to Christianise Smálǫnd – any wider narrative context may not have been necessary to the narrative.

[35] '*Knýtlinga saga*', in Bjarni Guðnason (ed.), *Danakonunga sǫgur*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1982), Ch. 88.

The former portion of the *Ágrip* lacuna must similarly have been given to the conclusion of the *gørsimum, er þá flutti Si…* 'treasures [King] Si[gurðr] brought…' back from Jerusalem and Miklagarðr [*Ágrip*, Ch. 54]. The account may have concluded this section of the narrative here or may have continued to list the places adorned with Sigurðr's treasures. The account previously describes the placement of the True Cross fragment with which Sigurðr returned and *reisti kirkju við landsenda* 'built a church on the frontier' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 53]. Though a similar description can be imagined for any other items with which Sigurðr returned, only the True Cross fragment is mentioned in the other *konungasögur* accounts, of which only *Magnússona* also includes the placement of the fragment at Konungahella [*Msk*, Ch. 66; *Msona*, Chs. 19 & 32; *Fsk*, Ch. 88]. If *Ágrip* was used as a source for any of these other compilations – perhaps most notably for *Magnússona* due to the above reasons of the Kalmarnar expedition and the True Cross placement – then it may also be assumed for these other accounts to have mentioned any other treasures Sigurðr brought back to Norway. In the absence of any descriptions of other treasures, either the *Ágrip* account was considered potentially unreliable on this matter by the other authors, if the other authors knew of or used *Ágrip* as a source at all, or *Ágrip* never contained a description of them. The latter scenario is the more likely of the two as it would keep the narrative of Sigurðr's deeds in line with *Ágrip*'s general structure of 'detailed narratives and quick overviews'.[36] The detailed narrative had been provided in the description of the True Cross relic, and the statement of other treasures would have made for a quick overview, while simultaneously underlining generic points about Sigurðr's grandeur and reputation as a returning king. It is therefore unlikely this section of narrative continued any further.

By necessity, the remainder of the lacuna must have recounted the death of King Eysteinn Magnússon. Eysteinn's death did not occur until after Sigurðr had returned from his Mediterranean voyage, but was before the Kalmarnar expedition took place, if it used the *Magnússona* chronological narrative structure [*Msona*, Chs. 13

[36] Ármann Jakobsson, 'Inventing a Saga Form: The Development of the Kings' Sagas', *Filologia Germanica*, 4 (2012), 11.

& 23–24]. Additionally, *Ágrip* contains no mention of Eysteinn's death in the resumed narrative, requiring this information to have been included in the lacuna. Mention of Eysteinn's death would likely have been short to tell, and the remaining space in the lacuna could have been given to Eysteinn's accomplishments in Norway. A description of Eysteinn's work is provided in each of the other *konungasögur* immediately following Sigurðr's return and there is no reason for this to have been different in *Ágrip* [*Msona*, Chs. 14–15; *Msk*, Ch. 71; *Fsk*, Ch. 92]. The vast majority of the *Ágrip* narrative on the Magnússons is given to Sigurðr's deeds, though Eysteinn's were no less impressive or important – as the *mannjafnaðr* in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* seeks to demonstrate. Even without the inclusion of the *mannjafnaðr*, the *Ágrip* author would have been remiss to omit Eysteinn's endeavours – the construction of various churches, halls, harbours, and ships, and the sequestration of Jamtaland [Jämtland] [*Msona*, Chs. 14–15; *Msk*, Chs. 71 & 78]. Not all these actions and achievements may have been included, or included in equal detail, though it can be readily accepted that attention was paid to a portion of them in the text.

Between the framing around the *Ágrip* lacuna and the other content necessary to have been included in the narrative gap, there is no feasible space for a description of the *mannjafnaðr* between Eysteinn and Sigurðr to have been included in the text. As in the case of *Fagrskinna*, an abbreviated reference to a *mannjafnaðr* would not have sufficed for the purpose otherwise intended by the scene. The *mannjafnaðr* examples must therefore pertain only to the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* accounts of the Magnússons.

2.4. The Body Politic

2.4.1. Appearance and Physicality

Various qualities relating to the physicality of both kings, and the physical ideals a king should meet, are mentioned by both Eysteinn and Sigurðr during the first half of the *mannjafnaðr*. In both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* accounts the

discussion predominantly centres around physical abilities, and *Magnússona* concludes this section of the brothers' comparison with a note on personal beauty. It is towards this point where the purpose of the discussion becomes more apparent.

Msona, Ch. 21:

> *Sigurðr konungr segir: "Þess þykkir mikill munr, at þat er hǫfðingligra, at sá, er yfirmaðr skal vera annarra manna, sé mikill í flokki, sterkr ok vápnfœrr betr en aðrir menn ok auðsær ok auð kenndr, þá flestir eru saman."*
>
> *Eysteinn konungr segir: "Eigi er þat síðr einkanna hlutr, at maðr sé fríðr, ok er sá ok auðkenndr í mannfjǫlða. Þykki mér þat ok hǫfðingligt, því at fríðleikinum sómir inn bezti búnaðr…"*
>
> 'King Sigurðr says: "In this there seems a great difference, that it is more princely that one who is overlord to other people should be impressive in a group, strong and a better fighter than other people, and easily seen and easily recognised when there are most men together."
>
> King Eysteinn says: "It is no less distinguishing that a man should be handsome and is also the one easily recognised in a crowd. And to me that seems princely, because personal beauty becomes the best outfit…"'

Stripped of the confrontational framing, it is clear the brothers are shown to agree on the key point: a king should be recognisable, and he should be recognisable because he possesses a physical quality deemed best. Though the line of personal beauty does not feature in the *Morkinskinna* account, both Sigurðr and Eysteinn follow a similar discourse and ultimately agree on the qualities of physical strength and skill [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. As such, the emphasis on physical capabilities is the recurrent theme in both accounts and must have been considered a necessary quality for kingship by the Old Norse authors.

Only the author of *Heimskringla* goes further with the specific addition of personal beauty. Though beauty or handsomeness is commented on in the descriptions of kings in *Morkinskinna*, the criteria are not as consistent as in the *Heimskringla*

account. Among the descriptions of the kings in *Magnússona*, Eysteinn is described as *fríðasti* 'most handsome' and having *bleikhárr* 'pale hair', whereas Sigurðr is described as *ekki fagr* 'not beautiful' and being *jarpr á hár* 'brown haired' [*Msona*, Chs. 16–17].

Throughout *Heimskringla*, kings who are described as being *bleikhárr* 'pale haired' or having *gult hár* 'golden hair', or have a similar description are also said to have been exceedingly handsome or are presented in positive regard of their appearance (see Table A) [*HSig*, Chs. 30 & 99; *Ókyrr*, Chs. 1 & 5; *Mberf*, Ch. 14; *Msona*, Ch. 16; *Hsona*, Ch. 22].[37] Additionally, the description of Magnús berfœttr closely mirrors the qualities of physical appearance presented in the *mannjafnaðr*, him being *auðkenndr, manna mestr* 'easily recognised, the tallest of men' [*Mberf*, Ch. 14]. By contrast, those kings described without comment on their beauty, or are explicitly stated as not being handsome, typically possess darker hair [*Hálfdsv*, Ch. 1; *Msona*, Chs. 17 & 27; *Hsona*, Chs. 21–22].

The only king said to be *ljósjarpr á hár* 'light brown haired' and receive positive comment regarding his appearance is Óláfr helgi (See Table A and Table B) [*Óhelg*, Ch. 3].[38] Óláfr helgi may be the exception to the general rule due to his status as a saint. Where otherwise the *Heimskringla* author appears to associate brown hair with non-beauty (or at best, averageness), Óláfr helgi is said to have been *allþrekligr, sterkr at afli* 'very robustly built, powerful in strength' and *eygðr forkunnar vel, fagreygr ok snareygr* 'in possession of exceedingly good eyes, beautiful and sharp eyes' [*Óhelg*, Ch. 3]. As the only Norwegian king who became a saint there may have been an authorial need, or anticipation by any given audience, for Óláfr to have the criterion of physical beauty expected of kings. The only outlier to this remit by the *Heimskringla* author's typical standard is Óláfr's possession of

[37] For an assessment of colour terms, including their applications to describing human hair, see Kirsten Wolf, 'Some Comments on Old Norse-Icelandic Colour Terms', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 121 (2006), 177–187, and Kirsten Wolf, 'Non-Basic Colour Terms in Old Norse-Icelandic', in Jeffrey Turco (ed.), *New Norse Studies: Essays on the Literature and Culture of Medieval Scandinavia* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2015), 392–405.

[38] On the description of brown hair, and the use of *jarpr* as a hair colour term, see Kirsten Wolf, 'The Colour Brown in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature', *North-Western European Language Evolution*, 70: 1 (2017), 33–34, and Wolf, 'Non-Basic Colour Terms', 392–393 & 398.

brown hair. Most likely, Óláfr possessing brown hair was already an established part in stories about him in the oral tradition or other narratives from which the *Heimskringla* author derived their work. The *Heimskringla* author was therefore unable to change this detail to match their usual expectations.

King	Light Hair	Explicitly Handsome	Praise on appearance	Dark Hair	Explicitly Not Handsome	No praise on appearance
Hálfdan svarti				✓		✓
Óláfr inn helgi			✓	✓		
Magnús inn góði	✓		✓			
Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson	✓	✓				
Óláfr kyrri	✓	✓				
Magnús berfœttr	✓	✓				
Eysteinn Magnússon	✓	✓				
Sigurðr Jórsalafari				✓	✓	
Haraldr gilli				✓		✓
Ingi Haraldsson	✓	✓				
Sigurðr munnr Haraldsson				✓	✓	
Eysteinn Haraldsson				✓		✓

Table A: The twelve kings who receive full descriptions of their appearance in *Heimskringla*, including comments on their respective degrees of beauty and corresponding hair colour.

A further consideration for reasoning the anomaly of Óláfr helgi's description is that he was rebelled against and killed by the people of Norway. A taint to his reputation as a king (rather than as a saint), due to having suffered such action, may have consciously or unconsciously prohibited total praise or the presentation of an epitome of ideal physical qualities in kings. The rebellion against Óláfr can be easily considered as a mark against his capabilities or suitability to rule; if Óláfr had been a better king, there would not have been a rebellion against him.[39] Despite this, Óláfr is the only king whose brown hair is described as being a lighter shade, as though the *Heimskringla* author sought to make Óláfr's brown hair more acceptable to beauty expectations [*Óhelg*, Ch. 3].

The rebellion against Óláfr helgi must be considered under a separate light than the opposing factions and resurgences of the twelfth-century civil wars due to their differing political context. Whereas the disputes between the Haraldssons and their subsequent factional replacements (the Birkebeiners and Baglers) emerged from a previously established co-rulership arrangement, with the co-rulers turning against one another and seeking to extend their own authority, Óláfr was contested by his subjects who invited a Danish usurpation [*Msk*, Chs. 2 & 105–109; *Fsk*, Chs. 31–34 & 99–129; *Ágrip*, Chs. 26 & 59; *Óhelg*, Chs. 130, 170; *Hsona*, Chs. 21–32; *Hákherð*, Chs. 1–21; *MErl*, Chs. 1–44]. By nature of the rebellion, Óláfr had lost popular support. Thus, the perceived failures of his governance and kingship prevent Óláfr helgi from being described as the epitomised embodiment of kingly ideals.

In total, twelve kings receive physical descriptions in *Heimskringla*. Of these twelve, half are blond, and five are explicitly said to have been handsome (see Table B). All five kings who are described as handsome are also blond. Of the six kings described as having darker hair, two are explicitly said to have been *ekki fagr* 'not beautiful' or possessing an ugly feature [*Msona*, Ch. 17; *Hsona*, Ch. 21]. As stated above, Óláfr helgi is the only king to have had brown hair and receive positive comments on his appearance. Notably, the reverse is not apparent at any point in the text. No king described as blond receives any comment of ugliness or goes without praise on their

[39] See also, Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's* Heimskringla (University of California Press: Oxford, 1991), 158–159.

appearance. A pattern thereby emerges wherein there is a general correlation between blondness and beauty in *Heimskringla*, while dark hair is associated with not being beautiful, backed by explicit indications of non-beauty.

Combination of Description	**Frequency**
Light haired and explicitly handsome	5
Light haired and positive comments on appearance	1
Dark haired and explicitly not handsome	2
Dark haired and no praise on appearance	3
Dark haired and positive comments on appearance	1

Table B: The frequencies of comments on appearance alongside hair colour in the descriptions of kings in *Heimskringla*.

The association of blondness with royalty in *Heimskringla* possibly stemmed from the tale of a dream had by Hálfdan svarti. The tale is found in *Hálfdanar saga svarta* in *Heimskringla*, as well as in *Fagrskinna* [*Hálfdsv*, Ch. 7; *Fsk*, Ch. 1]. In the dream, Hálfdan is said to have had hair of different lengths and colours, with *einn lokkr sigraði alla aðra með fegrð ok með frídleik ok ljósleik* 'one lock which conquered all others with fairness, beauty, and brightness' [*Fsk*, Ch. 1; *Hálfdsv*, Ch. 7]. Within the tale, the locks are interpreted to represent the descendants of King Hálfdan, and the most beautiful lock to be those descendants who would continue and establish the Norwegian royal dynasty [*Fsk*, Ch. 1; *Hálfdsv*, Ch. 7]. From the outset of *Heimskringla* there is therefore a clear association between beautiful hair, and especially fair hair, and kingship. Despite *Fagrskinna* containing the same tale there are no particularly strong associations between hair, beauty, or royalty within that text. Only one king receives a detailed description of his appearance in *Fagrskinna*: Óláfr kyrri, of whom it says *at engi maðr hafi sét fríðara mann eða tígurligra*

sjónum. *Gult hafði hann hár ok bjartan líkam, eygðr manna bazt ok limaðr…* 'that no one had seen a more beautiful man or more princely appearance. He had golden hair, a bright body, the best eyes and limbs…' [*Fsk*, Ch. 73]. The only other ruler of Norway to receive a detailed physical description in *Fagrskinna* is Jarl Hákon, also a descendant of Hálfdan svarti but never king [*Fsk*, Ch. 15].

King	Light Hair	Handsome	Praise on appearance	Dark Hair	Unspecified hair colour	No praise on appearance
Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson			✓		✓	
Óláfr kyrri	✓	✓				
Magnús berfœttr		✓			✓	
Eysteinn Magnússon	✓	✓				
Sigurðr Jórsalafari		✓		✓		
Haraldr gilli		✓			✓	
Magnús inn blindi		✓			✓	
Ingi Haraldsson					✓	✓

Table C: The eight kings described in *Morkinskinna* including their hair colour (if specified) and comments on their beauty.

Morkinskinna contains fewer physical descriptions of kings, only seven in total, but of those provided there is no direct correlation between blondness and beauty (see Table C). As in *Heimskringla*, both Óláfr kyrri and Eysteinn Magnússon are said to have been blond-haired and beautiful [*Msk*, Chs. 57 & 71]. Neither Haraldr Sigurðarson nor Ingi Haraldsson receive any description of their respective hair colour, nor is there any comment in *Morkinskinna* on their degrees of beauty [*Msk*,

Chs. 35 & 105]. Ingi receives a description of his disability alongside a comment on his popularity, but no further details of his appearance are recorded [*Msk*, Ch. 105]. Like Magnús inn góði in *Heimskringla*, Haraldr receives a positive appraisal of his appearance in *Morkinskinna*, though he is not explicitly said to have been handsome [*Msk*, Ch. 35]. The description nonetheless reflects the superior physical attributes and recognisability mentioned as being desirable in kings in the Magnússon brothers' *mannjafnaðr* [*Msk*, Chs. 35 & 78]. Finally, Sigurðr Jórsalafari is described as *fríðr sjónum* 'beautiful in appearance' and *svartr á hár* 'dark haired' [*Msk*, Ch. 73]. Though both *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* agree in their descriptions of Sigurðr having dark or brown hair, they vehemently disagree on whether he was beautiful or decidedly not [*Msk*, Ch. 73; *Msona*, Ch. 17]. Where the *Heimskringla* author appears to correlate beauty and blondness, there is no such overt pattern in *Morkinskinna*'s descriptions. Most notably the description accorded to Sigurðr in *Morkinskinna* subverts the images in *Heimskringla*. Hair colour has no bearing on handsomeness for the *Morkinskinna* author.

The absence of beauty as a point of dispute in the *Morkinskinna* account of the *mannjafnaðr* indicates a subtler entanglement of ideas in the text – where beauty persists in the descriptions of kings but not in the named qualities for Sigurðr's and Eysteinn's discussion. The correlation between beauty and kingship is so interwoven that it is not necessary for either Eysteinn or Sigurðr to mention it. As they are described as handsome elsewhere in *Morkinskinna*, it would be an irrelevant point of discussion in the *mannjafnaðr* as the two are already on equal ground, unlike in the *Heimskringla* account. Equally, the *mannjafnaðr* in *Morkinskinna* has a much shorter structure than its *Magnússona* counterpart, of which the absence of this discursive point may be the result. The *Heimskringla* author clearly valued personal beauty as a royal trait, albeit under a particular aesthetic lens, and structure their version of the *mannjafnaðr* accordingly. Sigurðr is dark haired and therefore not handsome; he does not argue for personal beauty [*Msona*, Chs. 17 & 21]. Eysteinn, blond and beautiful, does [*Msona*, Chs. 16 & 21]. The *Heimskringla* author thereby presents their own understanding of kingly ideals through the portrayals of Sigurðr's

and Eysteinn's respective arguments while simultaneously supporting those arguments by aligning them with the previously given descriptions of the two kings.

As a combined unit of kingship, the brothers' physical attributes and corresponding statements in the *mannjafnaðr* complement each other exceedingly well. Bagge's survey of the descriptions of kings throughout *Heimskringla* reveals an inverted correlation between descriptions of physical attributes – where one area of physicality is lacking another is emphasised.[40] Sigurðr and Eysteinn provide a prime example of this finding. Eysteinn's recurrent attribute is that he is *fríðasti* 'most beautiful', while Sigurðr is *ekki fagr* 'not beautiful' but strong [*Msona*, Chs. 16–17]. Though each king is lacking in one regard of physicality, he is said to have made up for it in another. The importance of physicality to kingship is thereby emphasised as an overall deficit cannot be tolerated. As Jón Viðar Sigurðsson explores, there is more leeway in ideals for the descriptions of jarls and chieftains whereby their physicality may be found lacking, but 'the king's appearance and physical attributes were an important part of the royal virtues'.[41] Kingship had its own league of qualities, and those qualities must meet the required high standard or else find them 'compensated for by other qualities', typically within the same remit.[42] Though both Sigurðr and Eysteinn have their own respective qualities and means of compensation, they meet all the necessary attributes together as a kingly unit. Sigurðr's deficit in beauty, though compensated for by his individual strength, is made up by Eysteinn's extreme beauty. Equally, as Eysteinn's beauty compensates for his lack of strength, Sigurðr's strength also supplements Eysteinn's deficit in that area. More time is spent on Sigurðr's strength than on Eysteinn's beauty in the *Magnússona mannjafnaðr* – three statements and examples of strength in different forms to Eysteinn's one comment on beauty – which may allude to Sigurðr's time as sole ruler. Without Eysteinn to supply the quality of beauty, Sigurðr's strength

[40] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 147.
[41] Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains: Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland, c. 900–1300', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 79; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth*, Jean Lundskær-Nielsen (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1999), 94.
[42] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 147.

needed to be excessively emphasised in the narrative for when he was sole king rather than a member of a co-ruling unit. Thus, in this case the superior quality in one regard directly correlates to the degree of deficit in another.

At the outset of the *mannjafnaðr* in *Morkinskinna*, Eysteinn asks Sigurðr *"Erum vit eigi synir Magnúss konungs jafnbornir? Finn ek þetta ok heyri ek, ok sé ek yfirsýn þína…"* '"Are we not equal-born sons of King Magnús? I perceive this when I hear [you] and I see your appearance…"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. While the narrative purpose of Eysteinn's statement is to establish the *mannjafnaðr* by explaining the suitability of the comparison between himself and Sigurðr, it clearly conveys an awareness of a shared family resemblance.[43] Both Eysteinn and Magnús berfœttr are described as handsome in *Morkinskinna*, thus it is logical to expect similar praise of Sigurðr's appearance [*Msk*, Chs. 57 & 71]. By both describing Sigurðr, Eysteinn, and Magnús berfœttr as handsome and indicating a familial resemblance, the *Morkinskinna* author thereby demonstrates an awareness of their own work in the consistent portrayals of the figures in subtle and nuanced ways. Such consistencies in individual descriptions and the carrying of traits through the royal lineage align with Bagge's notion of the man best suited to kingship being a product of the royal line.[44] The handsome description provided of Óláfr kyrri in *Morkinskinna* further attests to this as three generations of kings are accorded a shared trait and govern over a largely stable political period in Norway.

2.4.2. The Mutilated (Un)Man

The success of Óláfr kyrri's handsome lineage fails to fully reach a fourth generation due to the outbreak of conflict between Magnús inn blindi and Haraldr gilli. Though

[43] On criteria for contestants and their relative terms, see Chapter Two: Verbal Duels – Defining a *Mannjafnaðr*. Also, Bax and Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Dueling', 157 and Bax and Padmos, 'Senna-Mannjafnaðr', 572.
[44] Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom: State Formation in Norway, c. 900–1350* (Museum Tusculanum Press: Copenhagen, 2010), 61–62. See also, Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 126–127.

Magnús inn blindi is described in the same handsome terms as his forefathers (before his mutilations), he is unable to maintain the political stability of the king.

The mutilations which Magnús suffered following his defeat and capture by Haraldr gilli – of being blinded, having one foot cut off, and being castrated – are all obvious indicators that after his defeat, Magnús no longer met the physical kingly ideal [*MblokHg*, Ch. 8; *Msk*, Ch. 90].[45] According to Adams, 'certain forced mutilations, such as blinding, would suggest a significant failing or failure of the individual, and these could then cause a loss of prestige'.[46] Magnús' failure to achieve victory, and more importantly his failure to escape, resulting instead in his capture, meant that he had failed in the capacities of being a warrior and military leader, and had ideologically lost his authority. Haraldr gilli had outmanoeuvred Magnús and proven himself to be the superior contender. As a result, Magnús' fate was to be mutilated in such a way as to serve as both a physical punishment for his political opposition, and to symbolically divest him of power.

There is no description provided in any of the accounts as to how any of the mutilations were enacted upon Magnús, though the description of the blinding of a priest, Ríkarðr included in *Haraldssona saga*, as well as the description of the blinding of Órækja in *Sturlunga saga* may provide some clues to this component of Magnús' fate [*Hsona*, Ch. 25].[47] The descriptions are brutal and visceral, and give an impression of scarring beyond the loss of one's eyes. In the example of the priest's blinding in *Haraldssona*, even after he is miraculously healed of his wounds, the text relates that *at auga hans hǫfðu verit út stungin, þá grøri ørr hvítt á hvarmi hvárum tveggja* 'where his eyes had been stabbed out then white scars grew on each eyelid' as a reminder of the injury inflicted upon him [*Hsona*, Ch. 25]. Even healed, the lingering physical effects of the mutilation are apparent. Thus, it can be assumed that Magnús' blinding left apparent scarring. As such, he may be declassified from

[45] A similar mutilation of Magnús is described in *Fagrskinna*, although in that account he keeps his foot [*Fsk*, Ch. 95].
[46] Anthony Adams, ''He took a stone away': Castration and Cruelty in the *Sturlunga saga*', in Larissa Tracy (ed.), *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2013), 201.
[47] '*Sturlunga saga*', in Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir (ed.), *Sturlunga Saga eða Íslendinga Sagan Miklan II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2021), Ch. 257.

the handsome kings. His blinding thus robbed him of one of the physical virtues expected of kings.[48]

The amputation of Magnús' foot has similar connotations. The loss of his foot may have rendered Magnús less agile, limiting his athletic ability by at least hampering his agility.[49] Once again, the mutilation dispossesses Magnús of a kingly attribute and symbolically positions him further from the ideal. Additionally, the loss of both his sight and foot has led Bagge and Sørensen to consider these mutilations as ways in which to prevent Magnús from being a recurrent military threat.[50] The effectiveness of this appears to be somewhat limited, however, as Magnús is said to have later posed a threat to the kingship of Haraldr gilli's sons and to have led a troop to battle the young Ingi Haraldsson [*Hsona*, Chs. 2–10]. While there is little to indicate how involved Magnús was with the fighting, he is nonetheless depicted as being capable of persuading a troop to follow him and of leading them [*Hsona*, Ch. 2].[51]

A comparison may be drawn to the figure of Qnundr tréfótr [Tree-Foot] in *Grettis saga*. In this tale, despite having lost his leg below the knee in battle, Qnundr remained an active fighter and is described as being *svá frækinn maðr, at fáir stóðusk honum, þótt heilir væri* 'so valiant that few people could stand against him, although they were whole'.[52] Instead of diminishing him, as Qnundr fears the loss of his leg would do, his injury is seen to invite praise in Sextan's assessment of the narrative, as the author of the saga stresses that Qnundr was recognised as being *rǫskvara en marga þá, er heilfœttir væri* 'quicker than many, when they had both

[48] On the physical virtues of kings see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 147–149.
[49] During the *mannjafnaðr* between the Magnússon brothers, Eysteinn argues in favour of his agility over Sigurðr's strength. Of the two components, the loss of a foot is here considered to have greater detriment to agility than strength. On the importance of athletic ability in kings, see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 148.
[50] Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, Joan Turville-Petre (trans.), 81; Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 112.
[51] It is worth noting that at this point in the *konungasögur* narratives, Ingi Haraldsson, a small child at the time, is presented as Magnús' main opponent. Although Ingi is protected by several grown figures and advisors, it is nonetheless an important distinction that the dishonoured and mutilated Magnús only regains a following when his opponent is an infant.
[52] '*Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*', in Guðni Jónsson (ed.), *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar : Bandamanna saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit VII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1936), Chs. 2–10.

legs' by those around him.[53] Although *Grettis saga* was written down later than the *konungasögur*, it reflects the real possibilities of injuries any warrior risked, and hints at how one could come to view themselves afterwards, as well as how they were viewed by others.[54] Although some figures are initially sceptical of Qnundr's capabilities, such as Ófeigr grettir and Vígbjóðr, Qnundr is repeatedly shown to have the support of his friend Þrándr, and to disprove other's assumptions.[55] The author was clearly aware that a person could remain capable following a disabling injury, and this awareness appears to be shared in the descriptions of Magnús blindi's subsequent activities.[56] Thus, the shared presence of such resilience and understanding of capability despite disability suggests that the injuries which Magnús was subjected to were not considered by the *konungasögur* authors to have been as incapacitating as Bagge and Sørensen suppose them to have been.[57] In both the cases of Magnús and Qnundr, their respective loss of limb does not prevent them from engaging in subsequent military activity, and in Magnús' case neither does his accompanying blindness.

Continued capability does not take away the political symbolic significance of Magnús' mutilations. As Magnús' injuries were the result of deliberate mutilation and were not wounds sustained in direct combat (as was the case for Qnundr), it must be presumed that it is the circumstances of the injury which caused the loss of authority and kingly ideal rather than the injury itself. The deliberate mutilations were designed to shame and humiliate Magnús, and so cause him to lose his following. Blinding especially is identified by Sørensen as being one of the 'particular mutilations' by which 'the mutilated man was deprived of his manhood'.[58] The social

---

[53] John P. Sextan, 'Difference and Disability: On the Logic of Naming in the Icelandic Sagas', in Joshua R. Eyler (ed.), *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations* (Routledge: London, 2010), 156–157; '*Grettis saga'*, Ch. 3.

[54] On the dating of the saga, see Guðni Jónsson, 'Formáli', in Guðni Jónsson (ed.), *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar : Bandamanna saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit VII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1936), viii–ix; and Jesse Byock, 'Introduction', in Jesse Byock (ed. & trans.), *Grettir's Saga* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009), xi–xii.
On injury and disability, see Sextan, 'Difference and Disability', 154.

[55] '*Grettis saga'*, Chs. 3–4.

[56] A further example of understanding capability despite disability can be found in '*Hávamál'*, in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), st. 71.

[57] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 112; Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, Turville-Petre (trans.), 81.

[58] Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, 68.

significance of blinding, as opposed to the loss of a limb, may thereby be the more important factor in the descriptions of Magnús' mutilations and why both blinding and castration are listed in the *Fagrskinna* account of the matter, with the loss of Magnús' foot being present only in *Magnúss saga blinda* and *Morkinskinna* [*Fsk*, Ch. 95; *MblokHg*, Ch. 8; *Msk*, Ch. 90]. The loss of Magnús' foot may not have had the same gravitas as a signal of a loss of masculinity and honour, while lost masculinity and honour may have been heavily implied through deliberate blinding.[59]

Due to the apparent lack of an equivalent connotation to social and political degradation, the removal of Magnús' foot may have been a literary addition to the descriptions of the mutilations inflicted upon him in the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga blinda* accounts [*Msk*, Ch. 90; *MblokHg*, Ch. 8]. It is generally agreed that the final portion of *Heimskringla* is heavily dependent on *Morkinskinna* in the latter portion of the work, including the narrative span on Magnús inn blindi and Haraldr gilli.[60] It is feasible that the *Heimskringla* author took their description of Magnús' mutilations from *Morkinskinna*, thus the addition of Magnús' lost foot may be attributed to the *Morkinskinna* author first. Whether the *Morkinskinna* author added the description of the lost foot themselves or knew it from an oral source cannot be determined, though it was clearly a conscious choice for them to include this detail. Similarly, the reliance of the latter part of *Fagrskinna* on *Morkinskinna* suggests that the *Fagrskinna* author was aware of the tale of Magnús losing his foot, but chose not to include it [*Fsk*, Ch. 95].[61] For the *Fagrskinna* author, the blinding and castration of Magnús was clearly enough to convey his loss of status. Presumably, this would also have been enough for the *Morkinskinna* and

[59] Adams, 'Castration and Cruelty', 201. For a comparative study on the connections between castration, blinding, masculinity, and honour, see also, Klaus van Eickels, 'Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England', *Gender and History*, 16: 3 (2004), 588–602, and especially pp. 591–594 for connections with Scandinavia.
[60] Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 64; Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume I: The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2011), xii; Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume III: Magnús Óláfsson to Magnús Erlingsson* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2015), xi–xii.
[61] On the textual relationship between *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* see Alison Finlay, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay (ed.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 11–12.

Heimskringla authors to convey the same. A conscious decision to include the description of Magnús' lost foot was therefore made by both authors.

If the lost foot was not necessary to demonstrate a loss of status in the narrative, it must have served an additional purpose. If blinding and castration were enough to convey the loss of Magnús' status, then the loss of his foot on top of these mutilations was intended to demonstrate the unnecessary actions, and in this case excessive cruelties, which Haraldr gilli took against his opponent. Although the imagery of the amputation is described of Magnús inn blindi, as an action and depiction of person it pertains to Haraldr gilli.

The depiction of Haraldr gilli as cruel has particular relevance in *Morkinskinna*. In an earlier scene where Magnús acts immaturely and insists on a competition of racing Haraldr with a horse, Sigurðr Jórsalafari is shown to contrast Magnús with Haraldr, saying: *"Illa eru þér at staddir, Nóregsmenn, at hafa æran konung yfir yðr. En svá segir mér hugr um at þér mynduð rauðu gulli kaupa af stundu at ek væra heldr konungr en þeir Haraldr ok Magnús; annarr er grimmr en annarr óvitr"* '"You Norwegian people are badly placed with having a mad king over you. But so says my mind that you may soon give red gold that I might still be king rather than Haraldr and Magnús; one is cruel and the other is witless"' [*Msk*, Ch. 86]. The statement is clearly fictionalised for the purpose of foreshadowing the conflict between Haraldr and Magnús as kings after Sigurðr Jórsalafari's death. Shortly beforehand, Haraldr is said to have sworn oaths of loyalty to Sigurðr and Magnús to not supplant Magnús as king, so it makes little sense for Sigurðr to consider Haraldr as king after him. The statement must therefore be read as the *Morkinskinna* author's assessment of Haraldr and Magnús as kings and their respective behaviours. It is therefore apparent that the *Morkinskinna* author believed Haraldr gilli to have been a cruel man, having called him as such, and included the infliction of cruelty in their depiction of him. Although the racing scene is also included in *Magnússona saga*, the *Heimskringla* author omits any mention of Haraldr as cruel (though they do also reprimand Magnús' foolishness) [*Msona*, Ch. 27]. The removal of Magnús' foot as an unnecessary punishment was therefore a continuation of the *Morkinskinna* author's

sentiment, borrowed to a lesser extent into *Heimskringla*, and was intended to depict Haraldr's cruelty.

The humiliating loss of masculinity is most apparent in the castration inflicted upon Magnús [*Msk*, Ch. 90; *MblokHg*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 95]. While castration had the pragmatic result in preventing the victim from producing heirs to avenge him (on the assumption that there were no (living) heirs by the time of castration), it also served to politically dominate the victim by robbing him of the physical trace of his masculine identity.[62] As Gade demonstrates, the forced loss of masculinity had the effect of dispersing the following the victim had, 'because they had no interest in supporting an emasculated leader'.[63] The ideas of castration and emasculation are so interwoven in Old Norse political understandings that in *Orkneyinga saga* it appears that only the implication of being castrated is enough to divest Jarl Páll Hákonarson of his authority.[64] Knowing that there is no way back for him, Jarl Páll is said to have instructed Sveinn Ásleifarson to make it known that *"ek sé blindaðr ok þó at fleira meiddr"* '"I am blinded and, moreover, seriously maimed"'.[65] Here, blinding again seems to act as a special punishment of humiliation and shame, with connotation to emasculation.[66] The unspecified but serious maiming may easily be taken to mean castration, in both its comparative placement to blinding and the loss of power (as found in the descriptions for Magnús) and because of its equivalent, if more explicit function to humiliate and emasculate [*MblokHg*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 95; *Msk*, Ch. 90]. It is the act of castration then which definitively divests Magnús of his authority *at hann mætti eigi kallask konungr þaðan í frá* 'in such a way that he may not call himself king from then on' [*MblokHg*, Ch. 8; *Msk*, Ch. 90]. Having been castrated, Magnús had been emasculated and could no longer be considered in the

---

[62] Alison Finlay, ''*Þat þótti illr fundr*': Phallic Aggression in *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa*', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 175; Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, Turville-Petre (trans.), 83. See also, Adams, 'Castration and Cruelty', 202.

[63] Kari Ellen Gade, '1236: Órækja meiddr ok heill gerr', in Sverrir Tómasson (ed.), *Samtíðarsögur / The Contemporary Sagas I–II* (Stofnun, Árna Magnússonar: Reykjavík, 1994), 199. See also, Finlay, 'Phallic Aggression in *Bjarnar saga*', 175 on the purpose of castration as 'political domination'.

[64] '*Orkneyinga saga*', in Finnbogi Guðmundsson (ed.), *Orkneyinga saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXIV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1965), Ch. 75. Gade makes the same observation in 'Órækja meiddlr ok heill gerr', 199–200.

[65] '*Orkneyinga*', Ch. 75.

[66] See Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, 68.

same social terms as a contender for being the 'best man' or king.[67] Masculinity, and complete physical masculinity, was therefore deemed essential to kingship.

2.4.3. Outer Appearance as Inner Reflections?

It is only after Magnús is mutilated that he is implied to no longer meet the kingly ideal. Before Haraldr gilli captured him, Magnús is said to have been *allra manna fríðast* 'the handsomest of all people' and that he *bráðgǫrr á vǫxt ok afl* 'quickly grew in size and strength' [*Msona*, Ch. 19]. In basic regards to physicality, following such broad terms as are typically provided, Magnús thereby follows the typical praise pattern. Though he is not described again following his mutilation, it is fairly apparent that he would no longer have met the prescribed ideals to their full extent. That the injuries were inflicted, however, is of key consequence. If appearance and physicality are expected to reflect the innate qualities of kings, that Magnús began with a praiseworthy description, it would follow that he was anticipated to become a praiseworthy king embodying the ideals of kingship. His failure to reflect those principles, in both his physicality and his governance, is not a matter of innateness. Rather, his lack of physical capability – the loss of his foot, sight, and ability to further the royal line – were all imposed by an external aggressor, Haraldr gilli. Thus, his failure to embody kingly ideals or act with good governance (e.g. his loss of support), were not an inherent problem. Instead, they were a matter of circumstance likewise imposed upon him.

Haraldr gilli receives only scant descriptions in the *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* texts. The *Morkinskinna* account states that *Haraldr konungr gilli var maðr vaskligr ok liðmannligr, heldr hár vǫxtum ok inn vakrligsti sýnum* 'King Haraldr gilli was a brave and adroit man, rather tall in size and of lively appearance' [*Msk*, Ch. 89]. Meanwhile, the *Heimskringla* author makes no remark on Haraldr's degree of beauty (or lack thereof) but does note his dark hair (see Table A) [*Msona*, Ch. 27]. Haraldr gilli is depicted most clearly in the *Heimskringla* narrative as being the

[67] On the effects of castration to emasculation see Adams, 'Castration and Cruelty', 202. On the best man as king see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 130; Bagge, *Viking Stronghold*, 61–62.

instigator of the conflict between himself and Magnús inn blindi, due to the overt attention paid to the breaking of the oaths Haraldr had previously sworn to Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Magnús, that Magnús would succeed his father as sole king [*Msona*, Ch. 26; *MblokHg*, Ch. 1]. The *Morkinskinna* account also includes a scene of Haraldr swearing these same oaths of loyalty and deference to Sigurðr and Magnús, but the account is missing a page immediately following the death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari and the text resumes amid the conflict between Magnús and Haraldr [*Msk*, Chs. 85 & 89–90]. Though the absent text means there is no longer an outright statement, the *Morkinskinna* author presumably took the same view as the *Heimskringla* author, laying the blame for the conflict directly with Haraldr gilli for breaking his oaths [*Msona*, Ch. 26; *MblokHg*, Ch. 1; *Msk*, Ch. 85]. Additionally, as addressed above, the *Morkinskinna* author considered Haraldr gilli to be cruel and excessive in his actions, and blaming him for the conflict would continue with this depiction [*Msk*, Ch. 86]. By contrast, *Fagrskinna* takes a more neutral stance by portioning blame for the conflict equally between Magnús inn blindi and Haraldr gilli [*Fsk*, Ch. 94]. *Fagrskinna*'s apparent neutrality may be the result of the account not containing a description of the oaths to begin with, thus there is no opportunity for Haraldr gilli to have broken them [*Fsk*, Chs. 93–94]. The inclusion of oaths in the *Morkinskinna* narrative, however, suggests a closer alignment to the *Heimskringla* narrative, and may signal an equivalent indication of blame pertaining to Haraldr gilli was included on the now-lost page.

In his dishonourable conduct of oath-breaking, Haraldr gilli is the clear disruptor of the political order in the *Heimskringla* narrative, and presumably in the *Morkinskinna* narrative, and is, as Bagge notes, an unsuccessful and 'weak' king.[68] As such, Haraldr gilli does not receive any praise in the physical description accorded to him in *Heimskringla*, nor does he meet any of the physical expectations of ideal kings.[69] Despite losing his kingship, Magnús inn blindi is still granted praise on his appearance, perhaps as a literary "what might have been". According to *Magnúss*

[68] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, p. 157.

[69] According to *Heimskringla*, *Haraldr gilli var maðr hár ok grannvaxinn, hálslangr, heldr langleitr, svarteygr, døkkhár, skjótligr ok fráligr, hafði mjǫk búnað írskan, stutt klæði ok létt klæddr* 'Haraldr gilli was a tall man and slender, long-necked, rather long-faced, black-eyed, dark haired, alert and quick, he had very Irish attire, short clothing and lightly clothed' [*Msona*, Ch. 27].

saga blinda, *[á]tti hann þá þegar stefnur við vini sína, ok réðu þeir þat af at eiga Haugaþing þar í býnum. Á því þingi var Haraldr til konungs tekinn yfir hálft land* 'he [Haraldr gilli] then immediately had meetings with his friends, and they agreed to hold a Haugaþing there in town. At that assembly Haraldr was taken as king over half the land' [*MblokHg*, Ch. 1]. The immediacy of this action causes the conflict between Haraldr gilli and Magnús inn blindi, and thus denies Magnús inn blindi the chance of continuing the stable governance of Norway as established by his predecessors. Furthermore, the *Heimskringla* author indicates that Haraldr gilli and his followers altered the narrative that had previously been ascribed to him: *[v]áru þá kallaðir þat nauðungareiðar, er hann hafði svarit fǫðurleifð sína af hendi sér* 'it was then claimed that oaths had been taken under compulsion, when he had sworn his patrimony out from his hands' [*MblokHg*, Ch. 1]. There is no indication in the narrative when the oaths were sworn that Haraldr gilli had been pressured or manipulated into swearing such promises, thus the sudden change of attitude described of Haraldr serves to portray Haraldr's own manipulation of events as it suited him [*Msona*, Ch. 26; *MblokHg*, Ch. 1]. Haraldr's devious and dishonourable conduct is thereby demonstrated in the *Heimskringla* account, and Magnús inn blindi is exempted from blame for the conflicts between them.

Haraldr gilli's dishonourable conduct, his destabilisation of Norway, and his unsuccessful kingship all distance him from the successes of his preceding kings and the kingly ideals they had come to embody, and whose appearances are accordingly praised. As such, Haraldr gilli receives no praise on his appearance in the *Heimskringla* account, and is instead associated with non-beauty by having dark hair [*Msona*, Ch. 27]. Though Magnús inn blindi never proved himself to be a well-suited or ideal king, his claim to kingship was the expected and agreed upon course following the death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari, as attested by the requirement of the oaths [*Msona*, Chs. 26; *Msk*, Ch. 85]. In this regard, Magnús would have been the more peaceful and natural successor to Sigurðr, and the physical descriptions of him in *Heimskringla* follow accordingly.

Whether handsomeness as a desired quality or indicator of an ideal king was a purely ideological notion reflected in the texts, or whether it was borne from a

familiarity of kings, both current to the time the texts were written and the descriptions of past kings, is difficult to determine. Bagge argues that the descriptions of kings 'must primarily be understood against an ideological background, as expressions of an ideal of masculine beauty which ought to be found in a king'.[70] While there is an apparent correlation between handsomeness and kingship across the texts, with *Heimskringla* taking this to its furthest extent by acting as a subliminal commentary of the kings themselves, this ideology must have had a founding point.

The three generations of relatively stable kingship beginning with Óláfr kyrri could potentially have influenced the ways in which notions about kingship and ideal qualities developed. These notions could have been influenced at any time, but would presumably require a long enough time frame for a pattern to have become established. The time span between Óláfr kyrri first becoming king in 1066 to the death of his grandson Eysteinn Magnússon in c.1123 covered fifty-seven years, while the same span from Óláfr kyrri to the death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari in c.1130 covered sixty-four years. As is clear between Table A and Table C, these kings, as well as Magnús berfœttr between them, are largely described as handsome and govern through a predominantly peaceful and politically stable time. By contrast, the successive kings following 1130 and the subsequent civil wars are largely described in non-handsome terms throughout a decidedly politically unstable time. Either or both of these factors may have influenced the traits described of the "peaceful" or "ideal" kings before 1130 as becoming notions towards ideal kingly attributes, with the descriptions of the competing kings of the twelfth century becoming the opposites of the ideal. If the warring kings were indeed predominantly dark haired or not handsome then these traits may easily have become associated with non-ideal kingship and non-ideal qualities. If the peaceful kings were largely light haired and considered handsome, or the descriptions of them were already established as such in an oral tradition, these traits would have become a rose-tinted ideal for kingship. The descriptions of kings and any perceived notions of idealism apparent in the texts may therefore not be purely an indication of the expected ideals of kings

[70] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 147.

held by the Old Norse authors and reflected in the texts. Instead, a coincidence of genuine appearances and contrasting fortunate and unfortunate events could have provided the basis from which the ideological ideals formed.

2.4.4. The Body Politic – Conclusion

Superior physical attributes including beauty played a role in both the *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* authors' respective understandings of idealised qualities for kingship, though the remit of those attributes or beauty standards differ. For the *Heimskringla* author, beauty and blondness often go hand in hand and being blond is typically beautiful.[71] In *Morkinskinna*, the notion of beauty or the physical superiority of kings is largely presented in a broader and more varied sense. Though both texts work on the same premise – kings should stand out physically because they are kings – only the *Heimskringla* author appears excessively concerned as to the reason and to describe why the kings are aesthetically superior.

2.5. Justice

Following Sigurðr and Eysteinn's discussion of physical attributes both the *Magnússona* and *Morkinskinna* versions of the *mannjafnaðr* move on to the matter of legal knowledge. The importance of a king establishing laws and upholding them well is a recurrent theme throughout the *konungasögur*, and to be efficient in these tasks the king is presumed to know the existing laws. Both *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* agree that Sigurðr Jórsalafari *helt vel lǫgin* 'upheld the laws well', though *Morkinskinna* adds that he *var ekki mikill lagamaðr* 'was not a great man of law' [*Msk*, Ch. 73; *Msona*, Ch. 17]. Though the role of the king in administering law and justice is infrequently depicted, instead given only brief statements of praise as in Sigurðr's case, the importance of legal knowledge to kingship is made evident by the brothers including the theme as a topic in their discussion.

[71] Table B; see also, Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 148.

The role of the king as legislator and upholder of justice has strong associations to the *rex iustus* ideology which grew in prominence in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Norway. Among the duties of the *rex iustus* were the responsibilities of maintaining law, order, and justice in accordance with Christian doctrine.[72] Traces of this ideology have been found most clearly in the depictions of Óláfr helgi in *Heimskringla*, though it can also be found in the descriptions of other kings, going so far back as Hálfdan svarti, and the text's mention of their respective engagements with the law and judicial administration.[73] With the possible exception of Óláfr helgi, however, the text rarely portrays any king as an epitomised *rex iustus*. As Jón Viðar Sigurðsson argues of the *konungasögur*, the 'sagas are first and foremost interested in describing the rulers and their deeds', not in depicting ideological expectations for the office of kingship.[74] Depictions of kings administering justice, upholding, or updating laws do not have to signal *rex iustus* purpose though the king may be shown to act justly. Throughout the respective narratives contained in the texts, the laws are said to have been updated by successive kings, and it can be clearly recognised that the laws and traditions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had grown out of something before them. For example, the laws established by Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri are said to have still been in use at the time of Óláfr helgi, who amended them, and Magnús inn góði is credited with the compilation of the *Grágás* laws in the mid-eleventh century [*Óhelg*, Ch. 58; *Mgóð*, Ch. 16; *Fsk*, Ch. 9; *Ágrip*, Ch. 35]. A sense of continuum and origin of standardisation may therefore be the greater purpose of these depictions than pure ideology. Legal administration of the kingdom would have been required to settle disputes and maintain peace, unity,

[72] Gro Steinsland, 'Introduction – Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney, and the Faeroes', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 9–10; Jan Erik Rekdal, 'From Wine in a Goblet to Milk in Cowdung. The Transformation of Early Christian Kings in Three Post-Viking Tales from Ireland', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 215.

[73] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 131–132; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 162; Gro Steinsland, 'Origin Myths and Rulership. From the Viking Age Ruler to the Ruler of Medieval Historiography: Continuity, Transformations and Innovations', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 42.

[74] Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains', 102.

and stability in any age, and its necessity for such easily recognised by the *konungasögur* authors. The question of *rex iustus* influence on the texts is therefore of secondary relevance here.[75] For the practicalities of maintaining justice, it was understood that kings needed to know and understand the existing laws and legal processes they were to administer, or in which they may otherwise find themselves to be involved. Justice and legal knowledge, as well as hopefully and usefully possessing a legal eloquence, would thereby have been a long-standing quality desired in kings, and so reflected in the depictions of them.

2.5.1. Legal Knowledge

In both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* accounts of the *mannjafnaðr*, Eysteinn clearly declares himself to be the brother with the greater degree of legal knowledge and the more popular king to consult in the case of disputes [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. As with the matter of the brothers' appearances, the descriptions provided for Eysteinn in both texts also attest to his reputation as having been a knowledgeable individual of the laws in Norway [*Msona*, Ch. 16; *Msk*, Ch. 71]. According to *Morkinskinna*, *Eysteinn konungr bœtti ok í margar staði rétt landsmanna ok var mikill upphaldsmaðr lǫgunum ok gørði sér mjǫk kunnig ǫll lǫg í Nóregi* 'King Eysteinn also improved the rights of inhabitants of the country in many places and was a great upholder of laws and made himself knowledgeable of all the laws in Norway' [*Msk*, Ch. 71]. Despite this overarching mention, however, the *Morkinskinna* author does not include any specific examples of legal improvements made by Eysteinn. The only legal matter recounted in *Morkinskinna* is found in the aptly named *Þinga þáttr*, in which Eysteinn and Sigurðr find themselves at odds in a legal dispute [*Msk*, Ch. 77]. Though *Þinga þáttr* serves to demonstrate Eysteinn's prowess in legal knowledge and ability, it does little to show how Eysteinn improved any laws himself.

[75] For considerations on *rex iustus* influences on Nordic texts, see Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 162–164; Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 131–132 & 144–145; Hans Jacob Orning, *Unpredictability and Presence: Norwegian Kingship in the High Middle Ages*, The Northern World 38 (Brill: Leiden, 2008), 42–44.

Magnússona includes a similar description of Eysteinn, praising him for being *at ǫllu fróðr, lǫgum ok dœmum ok mannfrœði* 'learned in all things, laws and customs and genealogies' [*Msona*, Ch. 16]. Although *Magnússona* does not attribute any improvements specifically to Eysteinn, the text does attribute the repeal of unpopular taxes to the brothers: *þá er þeir brœðr váru konungar í Nóregi, tóku þeir af margar álǫgur, þær er Danir hǫfðu lagt á lýðinn, þá er Sveinn Álfifuson réð landi* 'when these brothers were kings in Norway, they removed many taxes that the Danes had imposed on the people when Sveinn Álfifuson ruled the land' [Msona, Ch. 16].[76] *Magnússona* thereby provides a definitive example of legal change made to the previously existing laws. These changes are not mentioned elsewhere in the *konungasögur*, but it is possible they were included in the now-missing pages of the *Fagrskinna* lacuna. It is unclear whether the change was the work of one brother, two, or three (Óláfr being alive at this point in the *Magnússona* narrative chronology), only that the changes were made during the time the Magnússons were kings. For the phrasing in relation to the brothers' rule, it is unlikely to have been a change made by Sigurðr alone as sole ruler; any actions attributed to him are typically explained as such with great clarity in each of the *konungasögur*. Eysteinn at least, if not also Óláfr, must therefore have been alive during the time these changes were made. Although Sigurðr is described in both *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* as having *helt vel lǫgin* 'upheld the laws well', there is no praise on his legal ability, unlike for Eysteinn, and *Morkinskinna* goes so far as to state that Sigurðr *var ekki mikill lagamaðr* 'was not a great man of law' [*Msona*, Chs. 16–17; *Msk*, Chs. 71–73]. As the reputedly legally minded brother and co-king, Eysteinn can therefore be assumed to have played an important role in these tax repeals and was likely supported in this by Sigurðr, and possibly Óláfr.

It is amid the topic of legal knowledge and administration where the *mannjafnaðr* in both *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* starts to turn more noticeably into an argument. The *Magnússona* account has Sigurðr take the first shot, replying to Eysteinn's boast *at þú hafir numit fleiri lǫgprettu, því at ek átta þá annat at starfa* '"that you have learnt more legal tricks, because at that time I had other works"'

[76] That the Magnússon brothers repealed the imposed taxes is also recorded in *Ágrip*, Ch. 51.

[*Msona*, Ch. 21]. The first portion of Sigurðr's statement is a clear allusion to Eysteinn's other reputation as a stay-at-home or domestic king.[77] The other activities which Sigurðr found to occupy himself with were presumably his adventures around the Mediterranean. His expedition lasted around four years, early in the brothers' rule, resulting in Eysteinn governing the kingdom by himself.[78] Though no individuals are named as advisors to the Magnússon brothers in any of the texts, advisors can be imagined as having been present among the kings' retainers. Consultations between kings and their company are briefly mentioned and alluded to throughout the *konungasögur*, including references in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona*. In *Morkinskinna*, Sigurðr is said to have consulted the *spekimǫnnum* 'wise-people; advisors' while they were in Spain, and in *Magnússona* when Haraldr gilli first arrived in Norway and presented his business there (that he was a son of Magnús berfœttr), then *Sigurðr konungr rœddi þetta má fyrir hǫfðingjum, at hverr legði til eptir síu skaplyndi* 'King Sigurðr discussed what must be done before the leading men, so that each laid forth his own thoughts' [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 26]. Similarly, throughout the narratives concerning him, Magnús inn góði is depicted as having taken advice from Einarr þambarskelfir and the skald Sigvatr, as well as unspecified others who *váru í ráðagørð með honum* 'were involved in rule-making with him'; and a list of named and successive advisors is provided in relation to the Haraldsson brothers, for example with Queen Ingiríðr and Grégóríús Dagsson shown to directly advise (and argue with) King Ingi Haraldsson in both *Haraldssona saga* and *Morkinskinna* [*Msk*, Chs. 4 & 108; *Mgóð*, Chs. 13–16; *HSig*, Ch. 21; *Hsona*, Chs. 21 & 27]. Advisors are thereby shown to be a perennial feature among a kings' retinue, both before and after the time of the Magnússons' rule. Eysteinn also presumably had advisors around him, most likely powerful and learned individuals in line with the depictions of advisors elsewhere in the texts, and from them Eysteinn would have been able to learn the nuances of Norwegian laws and customs.

---

[77] See Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 57–58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120. On the types of contenders in verbal duels see Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 456.

[78] Though Óláfr Magnússon would have presumably remained in Norway with Eysteinn, Óláfr would still have been in his minority with Eysteinn acting as regent. Therefore, it can be presumed that Eysteinn effectively governed Norway alone for the period of Sigurðr's journey.

As before with the theme of appearance and physicality, in the descriptions of Sigurðr and Eysteinn's respective degrees of legal knowledge and capability, where one brother is less knowledgeable and capable in legal matters than the other, the other is accorded an apparent excess of legal skill and knowledge. Although Sigurðr is said to have *helt vel lǫgum* 'upheld the laws well', there is no indication of him being especially knowledgeable of the laws or eloquent in applying them [*Msona*, Ch. 17; *Msk*, Ch. 73]. This is presented most plainly in *Morkinskinna* by the claim that Sigurðr *var ekki mikill lagamaðr* 'was not a great man of law' [*Msk*, Ch. 73]. By contrast, the description in *Morkinskinna* of Eysteinn having *gørði sér mjǫk kunnig ǫll lǫg í Nóregi* 'greatly improved all of the laws in Norway himself' alludes to his knowledge of the laws, his ability to use them effectively, and the insight to understand where they needed changing and how to change them [*Msk*, Ch. 71]. Sigurðr is therefore depicted as being less legally capable than his brother, a point which is reflected in the *mannjafnaðr* [*Msona*, Ch. 21; *Msk*, Ch. 78]. Eysteinn's apparent expertise and excess of capability, however, makes up for Sigurðr's deficit.

2.5.2. Integrity

The second component of maintaining and implementing justice is the integrity with which the judgement is passed and upheld. The integrity of any given claimants would have played an important role in validating the trustworthiness of their accusations, the ensuing discourse, and any resulting settlement. In the case of settlement, whether this be as a balanced redressing or explicit punishment for wrongdoing, the integrity of those judging the case and pronouncing the verdict would have been necessary to impose and maintain the sentence, as well as instill continuing trust in the legal system and the judge's authority. As the king was required to maintain and uphold law and order within the kingdom, he had the highest judicial authority and so the most need to act with integrity.

During the *Magnússona* version of the *mannjafnaðr*, Sigurðr is shown to goad Eysteinn, saying *"engi frýr þér sléttmælis, en hit mæla margir, at þú sér eigi allfastorðr ok lítit mark sé, hverju þú heitr, mælir eptir þeim, er þá eru hjá, ok er þat*

ekki konungligt" '"no one denies you speak smoothly, but many others say that you are not very true to your word and your promise is of little importance to what you say after when they are near, and that is not kinglike"' [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Similarly, in *Morkinskinna*, Sigurðr remarks that "*þú heitir stundum því er þú endir ekki af ok virðir eigi mikils orð þín"* '"you promise at the time, but you resolve nothing and do not greatly value your word"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. These statements clearly address aspects of kingship and justice bound up in regards of trust and integrity. However eloquently the king may speak, or how learned he is of the laws, his words and knowledge mean nothing if he does not uphold and abide by them himself. Eysteinn's apparent failing in this regard as a king is made most apparent in the *Magnússona* version with the additional comment of his conduct being *"ekki konungligt"* '"not kinglike"' [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Although the implication of unkinglike behaviour is observable in the *Morkinskinna* version, it is presented foremostly as a general failure of Eysteinn as a person rather than specifically as a king [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. In *Morkinskinna*, these actions are only a failure of a king because the person they concern, Eysteinn, happens to be a king. Abiding by one's word is therefore presented as a necessary component of integrity for any person. Thus, Eysteinn's failure in this regard as a king stems from his lack of integrity as a person. By contrast, the *Magnússona* version offers no insights as to the degrees of integrity expected of any person, though it is clear that it was highly valued in kings.

Eysteinn's rebuke to the charge of his lack of integrity is two-fold. Firstly, Eysteinn explains how issues are often brought before him by one party and then later settlement is demanded by the other party involved, thus requiring Eysteinn to adjust his recourse to compromise between the two [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. The *Heimskringla* author thereby demonstrates through Eysteinn that in legal situations, listening, learning, and responding accordingly with the full and appropriate information are important processes to adhere to when implementing legal settlements. In depicting Eysteinn as delivering this response himself, the author depicts him as a wise king for both knowing the importance of these processes, and in having the self-awareness to implement them in legal situations. Eysteinn's shortcoming, by the presentation of Sigurðr's opposing view, is that he is too quick

to pass judgement without having heard the opposing side of the case set before him. Despite insightfully listing the necessary components for good judicial practice, and so demonstrating his wisdom in that regard, Eysteinn is simultaneously depicted as being unwise and lacking restraint in his actions by failing to follow his own advice.[79] In the hypothetical situation the author alludes to, if Eysteinn was less hasty to please the people before him at the time and instead waited to hear all sides, he would have less need to return to the case and modify the outcome. If the situation is imagined and interpreted to its furthest extent, then Eysteinn is depicted as being too trusting of the single account given by whichever claimant presents themself to him first. Thus, Eysteinn is presented as a somewhat gullible king, too keen to please those who come to him, and who compromises his own integrity through an excessive, misguided trust in the supposed integrity of others.

The second aspect of Eysteinn's response to Sigurðr's accusation is to criticise his brother's approach *"at heita ǫllum illu, en engi heyri ek efndanna frýja"* '"to promise everyone ill, and I hear no one complaining about their fulfilment"' [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. According to Eysteinn, Sigurðr upholds his word so rigorously that he runs the risk of becoming tyrannical. The depictions of Sigurðr across the *konungasögur* never run so far as to make him despotic. The closest Sigurðr comes to tyranny is in the depictions of the bouts of madness he faced in his later life, but these are kindly resolved and forgiven due to a sympathetic understanding of his illness making him act other than himself [*Msona*, Chs. 25 & 28–29; *Msk*, Chs. 81–82 & 84]. Whenever Sigurðr is shown to recover from a bout of madness, he thanks and praises the person who intervened to keep him on the correct course. Sigurðr's conduct thereby becomes reliant on the loyalty of his retainers and their actions to help maintain their king's integrity.[80] Furthermore, Sigurðr's apparent gratitude to them indicates the importance of personal integrity to how he is depicted in the texts as an individual, and by extent the importance of integrity to his kingship. Sigurðr's integrity was therefore a foundational part of his depiction and reputation.

[79] On wisdom and restraint, see Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74–75.
[80] On another person acting on a king's behalf, see also, Orning, *Unpredictability and Presence*, 340.

While Sigurðr is never shown to have turned true tyrant, he is nevertheless described as being *stjórnsamr ok refsingasamr* ‘a powerful ruler and given to imposing punishment’ according to both *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* [*Msona*, Ch. 17; *Msk*, Ch. 73]. Additionally, *Magnússona* describes him as *fastúðigr… ok veglátr* ‘steadfast in mind… and nobleminded’, while *Morkinskinna* adds that he was *heitfastr ok langúðir* ‘true to his promises and long in memory’ [*Msona*, Ch. 17; *Msk*, Ch. 73]. In the descriptions accorded to him within the main prose and presented in Eysteinn’s statement, Sigurðr is depicted as being almost the opposite of Eysteinn – he gives little consideration as to whether his answers please others, and is so strict in keeping his word that he becomes stubborn and inflexible. While this has the advantage of ensuring everyone knew their fate with certainty by him, such an approach left no room for moderation. On balance between the two kings, the most desirable approach was therefore considered to have been one in which the claimants could be confident the terms would be adhered to, but which left room to moderation in fairness and not punishment.

2.5.3. Justice – Conclusion

Though the exchange in the *mannjafnaðr* is brief, the themes of legal knowledge and integrity are demonstrated to have been of great importance to the understandings of kingship. In both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* accounts, legal knowledge is presented as being of little consequence without the necessary integrity to uphold the laws and outcomes, while integrity alone runs the risk of tyranny. In Eysteinn’s and Sigurðr’s remarks, the brothers are each presented as having an excess of one respective attribute. While Eysteinn’s remark on crowd density suggests the brothers did not always face the same cases, as a co-ruling unit they are nevertheless presented as having the balance of both integrity and legal knowledge desired for kingship. In this regard, the brothers are again presented as balancing one another and functioning as a complementary unit within the textual depictions.

2.6. Esteem: The Legacy of Two (Types of) Kings

The final theme presented in both versions of the *mannjafnaðr* is the matter of esteem. As a concept, esteem or honour was the fundamental principle of determining an individual's value within society and the regard in which they were held.[81] Various deeds could gain esteem, and the final portion of the *mannjafnaðr* is given to a comparison of which deeds each brother had enacted had gained the most esteem. In both accounts, Sigurðr begins the theme with a boast about the journey he undertook to Jerusalem, while Eysteinn then responds with a list of the developments he has made to the kingdom. Though vastly contrasting, the deeds of both kings are shown to be worthy of esteem due to their purposeful offsetting and the depicted pride of each brother in his boasts.

2.6.1. Balancing the Scales

Through the comparison of Sigurðr's and Eysteinn's respective deeds, the texts also compare the merits of different types of kingship. The ideas of the domestic and adventurer king types are well established, particularly in the works of Theodore Andersson, and serve the additional useful function in the respective narratives of conforming to the norms of contestants in verbal duels.[82] Andersson supposes the *Morkinskinna* author had an overarching preference for domestic kingship, and notes Eysteinn's apparent victory in the *mannjafnaðr* as an indicator of this.[83] Certainly, the *Morkinskinna* author shows a greater appreciation of Eysteinn's achievements during their depiction of his deeds in the *mannjafnaðr* than their *Magnússona* counterpart, but the *mannjafnaðr* itself cannot be taken as an ultimate reflection of either author's attitudes towards either brother. Though the scene is

[81] See Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 150 & 165–166.
[82] Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 57–58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280)* (Cornell University Press: London, 2006), 100; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings (1130–1265): An Introduction*, Islandica LIX (Cornell University Library: Ithaca, 2016), 99–100; Theodore M. Anderson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkaþverá', in Alois Wolf (ed.), *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages* (Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 1993), 16–17.
[83] Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 69–71; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 132–134.

constructed as a depiction of the brothers and their contrasting characterisations, it is also a scene of verbal duelling which in itself has structural requirements and expectations of a winner and loser. As Clover notes, the Magnússon brothers' *mannjafnaðr* upends the expected outcome of the adventurer winning.[84] Given that much of the content of the brothers' discussion is tame compared to the insults traded in *Harbarðsljóð* and *Qrvar-Odds saga*, the upending of these norms supplements the entertainment value of the scene in creating a plot twist.[85] Thus, the apparent favouritism of Eysteinn winning as the domestic king may not be wholly representative of the authors' attitudes towards him as his victory serves as a literary device.

As Ármann Jakobsson argues for *Morkinskinna*, it is better to read the text as a nuanced account of complex figures 'who may behave at different times in a manner either tough or clement, rash or prudent, restrained or out of control' as fully realised representations of people with all their rationality and irrationality included.[86] Although the *mannjafnaðr* in *Morkinskinna* openly shows an authorial appreciation of the benefits a domestic king can bring, apparent in the lengthy list of achievements and explanations of the continuing positive impact Eysteinn's deeds had for the people of Norway, praising acknowledgement does not equate to overt preference for Eysteinn rather than Sigurðr. Instead, the *mannjafnaðr* is an opportunity for the authors to balance the deeds and legacies of the brothers by contextualising them alongside one another, rather than bluntly contrasting them as is typically supposed.[87]

It is firstly worth looking at the overall balance of narrative content provided on the brothers' time as rulers. Compared to Sigurðr, Eysteinn receives little narrative attention or depiction across the *konungasögur*, resulting in a somewhat underwhelming biography. In total, the Magnússon brothers' respective narratives

[84] Clover, 'The Germanic Context of Unferþ', 456.
[85] '*Hárbarðsljóð*', sts. 16–53; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, sts. 37–43.
[86] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 80–81.
[87] On the contrast of Eysteinn and Sigurðr see Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 70–71; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 133–134; Kalinke, 'The Fictionalization of Fact', 165; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything: The *Morkinskinna* Account of King Sigurðr of Norway's Journey to the Holy Land', *Parergon*, 30: 1 (2013), 140.

span eighty-two pages in *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnússona saga* comprises thirty-nine pages in *Heimskringla*. A substantial portion of both narrative accounts is given to Sigurðr's journey, lasting thirty pages in *Morkinskinna* and seventeen pages in *Magnússona* [*Msk*, Chs. 65–70; *Msona*, Chs. 3–13]. Additionally, as Sigurðr outlived Eysteinn, the latter portion of the narratives focuses on the period of his sole rule, covering fifteen pages each in both *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* [*Msk*, Chs. 81–88; *Msona*, Chs. 24–33]. In total, a little over half of the *Morkinskinna* narrative focuses primarily on Sigurðr, while Sigurðr is the main focus for four-fifths of the *Magnússona* narrative. Furthermore, Sigurðr often features alongside Eysteinn in the remaining content in both narratives, including in the *mannjafnaðr* example.[88] To balance the attention which Sigurðr and his deeds thereby receive, it is necessary for Eysteinn's deeds to be emphasised and made a spectacle of during the *mannjafnaðr*.

Although the *Magnússona* author successfully presents Eysteinn's achievements and their importance as unequivocal equals to Sigurðr's boasts, little detail is provided of individual deeds and the overall effect is underwhelming. Eysteinn states that he *"reista fimm kirkjur af grundvelli,* '"raised five churches from their foundations"', with no further details or specifics provided during the *mannjafnaðr* [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. These details are included earlier in the text, however, indicating that the author had more information to hand when they were constructing the *mannjafnaðr* boast [*Msona*, Ch. 14]. The individual specifics of the churches which Eysteinn built are likewise included in the *Morkinskinna* description of Eysteinn's deeds, but the *Morkinskinna* author also includes these details in the *mannjafnaðr* (see Table D) [*Msk*, Chs. 71 & 78]. The apparent omission of details, though repetitive, in the *Magnússona* account indicates the author was reliant on the memory of their audience (having given them the information beforehand) and was less concerned with adding supporting evidence or flourishes to Eysteinn's final boast than the *Morkinskinna* author. Instead, the only grandeur granted to Eysteinn's deeds in *Magnússona* comes from the direct rebuttal they form against

[88] In *Magnússona*, the *mannjafnaðr* is the only scene with a functional depiction of Eysteinn rather than a plain description.

Sigurðr's boast of his own *"hǫfðinglig"* '"princely"' deeds [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Thus, the importance of Eysteinn's deeds and their associated esteem is determined solely in relation to the esteem granted to Sigurðr's achievements. The *Magnússona* author thereby does little to redress the narrative balance between Sigurðr and Eysteinn, and Eysteinn's achievements are presented in meek and minimal terms.

The conclusion in *Morkinskinna*, by contrast, is an overt display of the importance of Eysteinn's works and a deliberate shift of attention to him and his achievements. In a reversal of narrative scale, Eysteinn's speech covers 36 lines of the *mannjafnaðr*, while the entire conversation from him first engaging Sigurðr in discussion covers a total of 76 lines [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. Almost half of the *mannjafnaðr* in *Morkinskinna* thereby focuses on Eysteinn's achievements and legacy. Through this speech, Eysteinn's deeds are granted the equivalent attention they had otherwise been missing in the narrative. Moreover, it is worth noting the narrative merits of both Eysteinn's and Sigurðr's respective deeds. While Sigurðr's achievements centre around his voyage in a chronological and geographic structure with space to emphasise successes in battle, diplomacy, and general grandeur, Eysteinn's achievements have a significant lack of narrative flare; a comparison apparent across the *konungasögur*. Unfortunately for Eysteinn, the building of churches and harbours simply do not have the same opportunities for dramatic storytelling as travels to distant lands, as evidenced by the brief, summarising lists describing his achievements outside of the *mannjafnaðr* [*Msona*, Ch. 14; *Msk*, Ch. 71; *Fsk*, Ch. 92].[89] The *mannjafnaðr* is therefore the only opportunity for Eysteinn's deeds to receive the attention and credit they deserve within the texts, and the *Morkinskinna* author takes full advantage of the opportunity the scene creates. Thus, Eysteinn's concluding speech in *Morkinskinna* is an authorial effort to balance the scales of achievement and reputation between the brothers across the overall narrative concerning them. As the *mannjafnaðr* is the stage on which Eysteinn's achievements can be best contextualised alongside Sigurðr's and given the credit they deserve,

[89] On the requirement of the sagas to be entertaining, see Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, 7.

there is only to conclude that the *Morkinskinna* author therefore does not show a strict preference for Eysteinn during the *mannjafnaðr*.

Deeds by Eysteinn	***Magnússona saga***	***Morkinskinna***	***Fagrskinna***
Church, Agðanes	Ch. 14 (Ch. 21)	Ch. 78	
Fortress, Agðanes	Ch. 14	Ch. 71	Ch. 92
Harbour, Agðanes	Ch. 14; Ch. 21	Ch. 78	
Hall, Bjǫrgyn	Ch. 14; Ch. 21	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	
Postolakirkja, Bjǫrgyn	Ch. 14 (Ch. 21)	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	
Monastery, Norðnes (Bjǫrgyn)	Ch. 14	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	
Mikjálskirkja, Norðnes (Bjǫrgyn)	Ch. 14 (Ch. 21)	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	
Refuges on Dofra trail to Þrándheimr		Ch. 78	
Improved relations with the Jamtar	Ch. 15	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	Ch. 92
Improvements to law		Ch. 71; Ch. 78	
Níkoláskirkja, Niðaróss	Ch. 14 (Ch. 21)	Ch. 71	
Warship after Ormr inn Langi, built in Niðaróss	Ch. 23	Ch. 71	Ch. 92
Boat sheds, Niðaróss	Ch. 23		
Tower, Sinhólmssund	Ch. 21		
Church, Þrándarnes		Ch. 78	
Church, Vágar	Ch. 14 (Ch. 21)	Ch. 71; Ch. 78	Ch. 92
Harbour, Vágar		Ch. 71	
Fishers' shelter, Vágar		Ch. 78	
Poor fund, Vágar		Ch. 78	

Table D: Table listing the individual deeds which Eysteinn Magnússon is credited with in *Magnússona saga*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna*, and the chapters where these details are found. A total of nineteen deeds are listed.

In the *Magnússona mannjafnaðr*, Eysteinn mentions the construction of five churches but does not name them; these references are given in bracketed chapter form alongside the corresponding details where they are mentioned elsewhere in the text.

2.6.2. Diplomacy

The deeds which Eysteinn and Sigurðr list in both versions of their *mannjafnaðr* carry with them an interrelated theme of diplomacy. Both brothers' efforts of building positive relationships with people and rulers outside of Norway feature across the *konungasögur*. Eysteinn is credited with bringing Jamtaland into the kingdom of Norway by means of diplomacy in *Morkinskinna*, *Magnússona* and *Fagrskinna*, while Sigurðr's most notable diplomatic work was his voyage to Jerusalem, as recounted in all four *konungasögur* texts [*Msona*, Chs. 3–13 & 15; *Msk*, Chs. 65–71 & 78; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–92; *Ágrip*, Chs. 52–54]**.** Additionally, *Magnússona* includes Sigurðr forming an alliance with Níkolás Sveinsson ahead of a proposed joint attack on Kalmarnar, though this takes place in the narrative chronology after the *mannjafnaðr* [*Msona*, Ch. 24].

2.6.2.1. The Destination or the Journey?

In both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* versions of the *mannjafnaðr*, the final topic which Sigurðr is shown to raise is that of his famous journey to Jerusalem [*Msk*, Ch. 78; *Msona*, Ch. 21]. Although the topic and argument structure are nominally shared between the two accounts, each version subtly holds different aspects of Sigurðr's expedition in esteem.[90] In the *Magnússona mannjafnaðr*, the author emphasises the journey itself as the deed which earned Sigurðr his esteem. Thus, Sigurðr firstly claims that *"[þ]at hefir verit mál manna, at ferð sú, er ek fór ór landi, væri heldr hǫfðinglig"* '"it has been said by people that the journey on which I went abroad was rather princely"' [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Although the journey may encompass the destinations, it is the undertaking of the voyage and how it was done (in splendid, princely form) which comprises the boast. The distinction of emphasis is made clear when contrasted next to the *Morkinskinna* presentation of the same claim. In *Morkinskinna*, Sigurðr states that *"[f]ór ek til Jórdánar, ok kom ek*

[90] On how the tales of Sigurðr's journey bestowed prestige to his reputation, see Joyce Hill, 'Pilgrimage and Prestige in the Icelandic Sagas', *Saga-Book*, XXIII (1990–1993), 436–444; and Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 121–139.

ek við Púl" '"I travelled to the River Jordan, and I came by way of Apulia"' before continuing his speech-turn with a brief summary of having fought *"átta orrostur"* '"eight battles"', including his victory at *"borgina Sídon með Jórsalakonungi"* '"the city of Sidon with the king of Jerusalem"', and his visit *"til grafar Dróttins"* '"to the Lord's Sepulchre"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. Unlike in the *Magnússona* version, the *Morkinskinna* account repeatedly mentions locations and connections as part of Sigurðr's boast throughout his singular turn of speech. The *Magnússona* version does not mention any locations until the third turn of Sigurðr's speech on the topic, in which Sigurðr boasts that *"[f]ór ek í ferð þeiri lengst út til Jórðanar"* '"the farthest I travelled on that journey was out to the River Jórðan"' [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. The *Magnússona* account thereby places less emphasis on individual locations and destinations than the *Morkinskinna* version as the key component of Sigurðr's claim. Two components of adventurous deeds are thereby apparent: the travel itself, with its ensuing battles, and the destinations to which the figure has journeyed.

Fagrskinna, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnússona* all share the same details of the route which Sigurðr is said to have taken on his voyage. Sigurðr is said to have travelled firstly to England, where he wintered as a guest of King Heinrekr [Henry I] [*Fsk*, Ch. 86; *Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 3]. From there, he is said to have sailed south until he came to Galizuland [Galicia] where he was briefly entertained by a local nobleman until relations turned sour [*Msona*, Ch. 4; *Msk*, Ch. 65; *Fsk*, Ch. 86].[91] A series of battles is narrated after as Sigurðr sailed around the Iberian coast and through the Nǫrvasund [Straits of Gibraltar] into the Mediterranean Sea until the company finally reached Sicily [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–87; *Msona*, Chs. 4–8]. There, Sigurðr is said to have been greeted by the Sicilian ruler, Roðgeirr [Roger], whom Sigurðr is said in the Old Norse texts to have elevated from the status of duke to king of Sicily [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Fsk*, Ch. 87; *Msona*, Ch. 8].[92] Sigurðr then travelled to the Holy Land, where he firstly landed in Acre before coming to Jerusalem [*Msk*, Ch. 66; *Msona*, Chs. 10–11; *Fsk*, Ch. 88]. King Baldvini [Baldwin I] of Jerusalem is said to have

[91] *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* refer to Galicia by the name *Jákobsland*, whereas *Heimskringla* uses *Galizuland*.
[92] The tale of Sigurðr making Roger a king is anachronistic; Roger became king of Sicily in 1130, the same year in which Sigurðr died in Norway.

greeted Sigurðr, and an alliance was formed between the two kings to capture the city of Sætt [Sidon] [*Msk*, Chs. 66–67; *Fsk*, Chs. 88–89; *Msona*, Chs. 10–11]. Sigurðr's company then departed for Miklagarðr where Sigurðr was entertained by the emperor, Kirjalax [Alexios I Komnenos] [*Msk*, Chs. 68–70; *Msona*, Ch. 12; *Fsk*, Chs. 90–91]. Finally, Sigurðr returned overland to Norway, travelling through Hungary and then the Holy Roman Empire where he was escorted by *Lotharium keisara* 'Emperor Lothair' [Lothair III] until he came to Denmark where King Níkolás Sveinsson provided a ship for the final passage north [*Msk*, Ch. 70; *Msona*, Ch. 13].[93]

Throughout the route described, Sigurðr is depicted as having encountered a total of seven high-status individuals, who are each presented in association with the area they ruled over [*Msk*, Chs. 64–70; *Msona*, Chs. 3–13; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–91]. Thus, the *Morkinskinna* emphasis on location in the *mannjafnaðr* is a means of repeating and reminding the audience of the diplomatic associations Sigurðr was said to have made during his voyage.

Of the seven diplomatic encounters depicted within the texts, two serve as prestige motifs. Firstly, the unnamed nobleman who hosted Sigurðr and his company in Galicia, and then the tale of how Sigurðr made Roðgeirr of Sicily king [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Chs. 4 & 8; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–87]. Of the two, the Galician nobleman is perhaps the more obvious prestige tale – the very fact that they are the only unnamed person of high-status whom Sigurðr is said to have encountered casts doubt on the authenticity of the tale. Having come to Galicia, Sigurðr is said to have made a deal with the local ruler, the nobleman, to the effect of them providing the Norwegian company with a market over winter until they could depart in the spring [*Msona*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 86; *Msk*, Ch. 65]. Before Christmas, the market ran dry and Sigurðr spurred the Norwegians to attack the nobleman's stronghold and take what they needed, on the understanding that by inadequately supplying the market the nobleman had broken their agreement [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Fsk*, Ch. 86; *Msona*, Ch. 4].

[93] Lothair did not become Holy Roman Emperor until 1133; at the time of Sigurðr's voyage he was the duke of Saxony and Henry V was emperor.

There is nothing particularly extraordinary about the events, and the scene may be easily overlooked. However, two significant themes are present throughout the tale.

In his assessment of the Galician nobleman example, Morcom persuasively concludes that the events are a demonstration of Sigurðr's warlike masculinity, which he uses to gain 'material goods and a famous legacy'.[94] Andersson also views Sigurðr's journey as a display of his 'military aspirations', equating them to the trademark behaviours of the adventurous king type, but there is ultimately very little detail recorded in any of the texts about Sigurðr's capabilities as a warrior.[95] In contrast to the highly descriptive sieges Haraldr Sigurðarson is said to have fought in (see Chapter Three: The Sieges) or Magnús inn góði's battles (see Chapter Four: A Warrior King), Sigurðr's narrative is exceedingly bland. Sigurðr's most prestigious battle, the siege of Sætt [Sidon], receives scant attention other than the basic outline of a siege: *Þeir settusk um borgina ok hǫfðu litla hríð um setit áðr heiðnir menn gáfusk upp* 'they settled themselves around the city and held out against attack for a little while before the heathen people gave themselves up' [*Msk*, Ch. 67]. *Magnússona* includes a similarly phrased and scant description, while *Fagrskinna* skips the siege entirely and merely states that *unnu þeir borginna* 'they won the city' [*Msona*, Ch. 11; *Fsk*, Ch. 89]. Meanwhile the Latin and Arabic accounts of the siege have significantly lengthier entries, providing far more military detail of how the siege took place by land and sea.[96] Naturally, some details may have been lost over time before the *konungasögur* were penned, but the overall effect is underwhelming. The authors overtly borrowed motifs elsewhere in their narratives (see Chapter Three: The Sieges), and it is reasonable to assume they could have done the same here if they had wanted to emphasise Sigurðr's militarism. A famous

---

[94] Thomas Morcom, 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna* and the Defusal of Kingly Aggression', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 131–132.

[95] Anderson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings*, 99.

[96] Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*, Frances Rita Ryan (trans.), (University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, 1969), 199–200; Albert of Aachen, *History of the Journey to Jerusalem – Volume 2: Books 7–12. The Early History of the Latin States, 1099–1119*, Susan B. Edgington (trans.), (Ashgate: Surrey, 2013), 169–171; William of Tyre, *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Volume One*, Emily Atwater Babcock & A. C. Krey (trans.), (Columbia University Press: New York, 1943), 486–488; Ibn al-Qalānisī, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades: Extracted and Translated from the Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalānisī*, H. A. R. Gibb (trans.), (Luzac & Co.: London, 1932), 106–108.

legacy is certainly described in the texts, though it is hardly won by a war-driven monarch.

The scene with the Galician nobleman, though small, therefore bears the burden of exemplifying Sigurðr's capabilities at warfare and as a military leader. These traits are emphasised in the *Morkinskinna* account, lending a little weight to Morcom's assessment of the scene, where Sigurðr is depicted actively leading and encouraging his company to attack the Galician nobleman's stronghold [*Msk*, Ch. 65]. There is no overarching emphasis of these qualities, however, in *Morkinskinna* or in any of the other texts. Instead, Sigurðr's overall portrayal is exceedingly that of an ambitious politician or diplomat rather than as a grasping military brute.

Considering this, the second theme present in the tale of the Galician nobleman comes to the fore: the overarching tone of the voyage, being a display of Sigurðr's ability as a diplomatic leader. Connections with foreign rulers are emphasised throughout the *konungasögur* narratives of Sigurðr's voyage, often as depictions of prestige and respectful recognition of Sigurðr's status as king. Each narrated connection was a further opportunity for Sigurðr to be shown gaining further prestige from foreign rulers, and confer further esteem on him and his reputation from the text's audience.[97] The identity of the unnamed nobleman is less important in the textual depiction of Sigurðr's encounter with him than is the depicted encounter itself. The nobleman features as an additional figure who could lend further esteem to Sigurðr by demonstrating and increasing the number of textual examples of diplomatic connections which Sigurðr is shown to have made.

The second example of diplomacy and prestige is the apparent elevation of Roðgeirr to be king of Sicily [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 87]. The royal dignity with which Sigurðr is depicted as having comported himself with is, as Ármann Jakobsson agrees, part of the depicted act of convincing other rulers of the importance and grandeur of Norway and its rulers.[98] Sigurðr's act is successful against Roðgeirr, who

[97] See Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 131; Harriet Clark, 'Bestowing Status: The Journeys of Rǫgnvaldr Kali Kolsson and Sigurðr Jórsalafari', *Apardjón Journal for Scandinavian Studies*, (forthcoming).
[98] Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 133–134.

is said to have hosted and served Sigurðr, and similar displays of grandeur, in wealth and status, and received respect are depicted for his arrivals to Miklagarðr in all the texts, as well as in the honours which Baldvini is said to have greeted him with upon his arrival to Jerusalem in the *Morkinskinna* account [*Msk*, Ch. 65–68; *Fsk*, Ch. 87 & 90; *Msona*, Chs. 8 & 11–12].

Reiterations and emphasis of prestige are displayed to their greatest extent in the texts when Sigurðr is said to have elevated Roðgeirr to the status of king [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 87]. This portion of the tale is certainly fictionalised – Roðgeirr became king in 1130, the same year in which Sigurðr died in Norway, and the tale of Sigurðr elevating his rank does not appear to be known outside of the Old Norse texts.[99] While it is plausible that Sigurðr met Roðgeirr, he certainly did not make Roðgeirr king. As a prestige motif, however, the elevation of Roðgeirr to kingship in turn demonstrated the power and status which Sigurðr held in order to make Roðgeirr king.[100] As an act of diplomacy, the exchange also depicts the impact which a meeting could have: changing the status and fate of a ruler, and gaining the recognition and support of foreign friends. The subsequent descriptions in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* of Roðgeirr's accolades and the politically advantageous marriages which his children made further emphasise the impact which Sigurðr's friendship with Roðgeirr had [*Msona*, Ch. 9; *Msk*, Ch. 65].[101] In the textual presentation of Roðgeirr becoming king before he achieved his own greatness, the opportunities which he found himself able to take advantage of are implied to have been, at least in part, down to Sigurðr providing him with the authority to act upon them. Similarly, the deeds which Roðgeirr is credited with, including victories in Apulia and in Greece, as well as earning the moniker *Roðgeirr ríki* 'Roger the Great', reflected back to Sigurðr for enabling his greatness to be achieved [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 9]. Thus, the diplomatic impact and its lasting

[99] See Björn Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making in the West ca.1000–ca.1250', *Viator*, 41: 1 (2010), 79; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', fn. 38.
[100] See Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 134; Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making', 79.
[101] The details of the marriages which Roðgeirr's children made appear to have become confused by the time the texts were written and cannot be taken as reliable details of alliances, see Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds. & trans.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), Ch. 61, fn. 15. Nonetheless, the deviation of topic serves a purpose within the texts.

effects are demonstrated throughout Sigurðr's voyage, and the texts emphasise the connections he made.

2.6.2.2. Persuasive Gifts

The importance of generosity and gift-giving in securing one's kingship is a recurrent theme across the *konungasögur*. Although it does not have an overt presence during the Magnússon brothers' *mannjafnaðr* as a topic, it nonetheless receives a reference in the *Morkinskinna* version. In that account, Eysteinn boasts "*[þ]eim Jamtum hǫfum vér ok snúit undir þetta ríki"* '"I also brought the Jamtr to us and persuaded them to be under our kingdom"' [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. The boast is little more than a footnote in Eysteinn's overwhelming list of deeds, but its presence nonetheless signifies its importance to Eysteinn's reputation and depiction within the text. More importantly, the author stresses how Eysteinn managed to bring Jamtaland into the kingdom of Norway with *"blíðyrðum ok viti"* '"persuasion and wisdom"' rather than aggression [*Msk*, Ch. 78]. Persuasion is the crucial aspect within Eysteinn's boast, as it alludes not only to his supposed eloquence, but also to the gifts which he is said to have given to the Jamtr earlier in the text [*Msk*, Ch. 71]. Gifts frequently equate to buying support, particularly the support of those of lower social status than the giver in the form of a vertical bond as the receiver could only reciprocate in the form of service.[102] In this case, Eysteinn is not described as having received any gifts from the Jamtr, thus a vertical (rather than horizontal) bond is established and the Jamtr are presented as being indebted to Eysteinn [*Msk*, Ch. 71].[103] In *Morkinskinna*, this debt is downplayed in favour of emphasising Eysteinn's eloquence and rhetoric by informing the Jamtr of how they would find their situation improved if they joined Norway until *þeir skilðu at konungrinn mælti þeira þurfit* 'they understood that the king spoke in their interest' [*Msk*, Ch. 71]. These

[102] See Lars Hermanson and Hans Jacob Orning, 'Friends and Allies: Networks and Horizontal Bonds', in Kim Esmark, et al. (eds.), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c.1050–1250, Volume II* (Routledge: London, 2020), 57; Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 139 & 156.
[103] On different bond structures, see Hermanson and Orning, 'Friends and Allies', 57.

discussions follow the description of gift-giving; thus, the gift signals an innately understood component to the negotiation and the hierarchical bonds it triggered.

The repeated mention of Eysteinn successfully securing Jamtaland for Norway indicates the importance with which the *Morkinskinna* author regarded the deed. Although Andersson detects 'a deep-seated apprehension about Norwegian foreign policy' in *Morkinskinna*, the attitude seems to disappear in the descriptions and praise afforded to Eysteinn's diplomatic efforts.[104] Either the author was reassured enough by the other aspects of Eysteinn's reputation, seeing to the domestic welfare of Norway, to not consider his diplomacy something to be condemned, or they tolerated Norwegian expansionism when it was conducted through peaceful discussion and was ultimately the will of the new vassals to join Norway.[105] Through the repeated description in the narrated prose and Eysteinn's speech, the *Morkinskinna* author stresses that Jamtaland was secured through persuasion rather than violent means [*Msk*, Chs. 71 & 78]. Clearly, if the people of the sought-after land are agreeable to become vassals of the Norwegian king, the author has no issue. In *Morkinskinna*, peaceful diplomacy is thereby an important feature in Eysteinn's kingship and an admirable act.

A similar description of Eysteinn's diplomatic efforts toward the Jamtr is included in the narration of *Magnússona* [*Msona*, Ch. 15]. The securing of Jamtaland for Norway is not referred to again, however, and Eysteinn does not raise it during the *Magnússona mannjafnaðr* [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. The lack of repetition may be a simple pruning from the *Morkinskinna* version, resulting in a more succinct and balanced exchange of dialogue between the brothers in *Magnússona*.[106] However, as with the other deeds which Eysteinn only briefly mentions during the *mannjafnaðr*, the omission of Eysteinn securing Jamtaland downplays the deed's significance. As the exchange is a boast of successes, the authorial decision to omit Jamtaland from the

[104] Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 57–58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120. See also, Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, 51–53 & 95–96; and Anderson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkaþverá', 17.
[105] See Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120–121.
[106] On the literary qualities of the two versions of the *mannjafnaðr*, see Chapter Two: Verbal Duels – Defining a *Mannjafnaðr*. See also, Lie, *Studier i Heimkringlas Stil*, 66–68; Ármann Jakobsson, *Staður í Nýjum Heimi*, 183–185; Kalinke, 'The Fictionalization of Fact', 165.

claims suggests the *Magnússona* author did not hold the deed in great esteem and did not consider it a worthwhile contrast to Sigurðr's preceding boast [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. This goes beyond an authorial balancing of the score, as Andersson considers it, compared to the *Morkinskinna mannjafnaðr*.[107] If the *Heimskringla* author wanted to tone down the total of Eysteinn's achievements for the purposes of closing the distance between the brothers, then they could have omitted other achievements or details.[108] For example, Eysteinn boasts that "*Ek reista fimm kirkjur af grundvelli,* '"I raised five churches from their foundations"' though the total can be counted in an earlier description of the same; there was no overt need to repeat how many churches Eysteinn had constructed [*Msona*, Ch. 21]. Alternatively, the harbour at Agðanes [Agdenes] and the hall at Bjǫrgyn [Bergen] could have been omitted, having also been described earlier, as they provide little further detail to Eysteinn's skills and successes other than showcasing a lengthy building programme. The amalgamation of Jamtaland into the kingdom of Norway, by contrast, demonstrates the variation of Eysteinn's skills and successes by showing him to be a diplomat. Thus, in the *Magnússona mannjafnaðr*, greater emphasis is placed on Eysteinn's building achievements than on his diplomatic skills or success in that area.

2.6.2.3. Making a Deal

Like Eysteinn, Sigurðr is also said to have engaged in diplomatic meetings and participated in gift-giving. The grandest gift which Sigurðr is credited with bestowing is the title of king on Roðgeirr of Sicily, though this is only as a prestige motif as addressed above.[109] During his respective stays in Jerusalem and Miklagarðr, Sigurðr is given an array of gifts according to the *konungasögur*, which he reciprocates by either performing a service (the siege of Sætt) in a vertical bond, or by offering a gift in exchange (the ships he left at Miklagarðr) to signify a horizontal bond [*Msk*, Chs. 66–70; *Msona*, Chs. 11–13; *Fsk*, Chs. 88–91]. Little detail is given in any of the *konungasögur* as for whom the meetings and arrangements of alliances were made,

[107] Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 70–71; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 133–134.
[108] For a list of Eysteinn's deeds, see Table D.
[109] See also, Clark, 'Bestowing Status'.

other than the implication that some discussion must have occurred. Only the agreement with the Galician nobleman receives any acknowledgement, shared between *Magnússona* and *Morkinskinna*, though this is again in minimal terms.[110]

The agreement which Sigurðr and the Galician nobleman are said to have made is the only explicit textual means of emphasising Sigurðr's leadership and diplomacy. The *Morkinskinna* account tones down Sigurðr's abilities slightly by claiming that *sendi Sigurðr konungr hertoga sína með sættarmálum til hertoga þess* 'King Sigurðr sent the commander of his company to parley with this lord' on his behalf [*Msk*, Ch. 65]. Thus, Sigurðr is not credited with any implied skills of persuasion in speaking with the nobleman, although the emphasis on his ability to lead through reading a situation and delegating remains. By contrast, *Magnússona* states *at jarl sá, er þar réð fyrir landi, gerði sætt við Sigurð konung* 'that jarl, who ruled over the land there, made an agreement with King Sigurðr' [*Msona*, Ch. 4]. In *Magnússona* it is unclear whether this agreement was made through intermediaries or direct communication between the nobleman and Sigurðr himself. Through the omitted mention of intermediaries, however, the attention remains solely on Sigurðr, and he is thereby implied to have made the agreement directly. As such, the *Magnússona* author credits Sigurðr with the success of reaching the agreement.

The subtlety of these depictions directly contrasts the description accorded to Eysteinn's process of negotiating with the Jamtr, and persuading them to join the kingdom of Norway later in the respective narratives [*Msk*, Ch. 71; *Msona*, Ch. 15]. In *Morkinskinna*, Eysteinn is said to have dealt with and *gørði orð vitrum mǫnnum af Jamtalandi* 'communicated with the wise people of Jamtaland' [*Msk*, Ch. 71]. *Morkinskinna* makes no mention of intermediaries in Eysteinn's case, so it must be assumed the discussions were held directly between Eysteinn and the Jamtr. Meanwhile *Magnússona* describes that Eysteinn *bauð þeim til sín, en fagnaði ǫllum, er kómu, með blíðu mikilli* 'invited them to visit him, and he welcomed all who came with much kindness' [*Msona*, Ch. 15]. The depictions of Sigurðr's and Eysteinn's respective diplomatic interactions and negotiations thereby favour Eysteinn as the

[110] *Fagrskinna* only says that Sigurðr was in *ósáttr við jarl nǫkkurn* 'disagreement with some jarl' but offers no detail on whether they had had an agreement beforehand [*Fsk*, Ch. 86].

more diplomatic brother. In *Morkinskinna*, this is through the specification of intermediaries in Sigurðr's case and not Eysteinn's, and in *Magnússona*, through the more explicit description of Eysteinn meeting with the Jamtr [*Msk*, Chs. 65 & 71; *Msona*, Chs. 4 & 15].

2.6.2.4. Prestigious Gifts

According to *Fagrskinna* and *Magnússona*, after arriving in Miklagarðr, Sigurðr is said to have received a choice from Kirjalax of *sex skippund af gulli* 'six ship-pounds of gold' or to have games performed in the Hippodrome [*Fsk*, Ch. 91; *Msona*, Ch. 12]. The choice reflects the same offer said to have been presented to the Danish King Eiríkr when he visited Miklagarðr in c.1103, but on that occasion Eiríkr chose the gold.[111] The same offer to Sigurðr is included in *Morkinskinna*, where it functions as a second example of the emperor's diplomatic overtures, but as a fourth example of the total gifts given by him to Sigurðr [*Msk*, Ch. 69]. The importance of gift giving, and by extent peaceful diplomacy is thereby again emphasised by the *Morkinskinna* author.[112] Having received these gifts, *Morkinskinna* then describes Sigurðr preparing a feast for the emperor, for which he was required to use walnuts for cooking fuel – a motif shared by the *Morkinskinna* narrative of Haraldr Sigurðarson's time in Miklagarðr (see Chapter Three: The Faux Funeral – Folklore and Purpose) [*Msk*, Ch. 15]. In the repeated depictions of Sigurðr receiving gifts from foreign rulers, the texts demonstrate the political power and influence which Sigurðr, as a king of Norway, could offer others. As the text containing the most depictions of gift-giving, *Morkinskinna* goes to the furthest extent to emphasise Sigurðr's status in this manner.

Each of the texts repeatedly take care to demonstrate Sigurðr's reciprocity of the gifts he is said to have received, ensuring that most bonds depicted are of a horizontal nature.[113] In return for the gifts given to him by Kirjalax, Sigurðr is said to

---

[111] '*Knýtlinga*', Ch. 81.
[112] On fear of aggressive foreign policy in *Morkinskinna*, see Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120–121.
[113] See Hermanson and Orning, 'Friends and Allies', 57.

have given the emperor *ǫll skip sín, ok hǫfuð gullbúin váru á því skipi, er konungr hafði stýrt* 'all of his ships, and the figureheads, which were decorated with gold, were on the ship the king had steered' [*Msona*, Ch. 13; *Msk*, Ch. 70]. *Morkinskinna* further adds that *váru þáu skip lengi síðan hǫfð til sýnis í Miklagarði* 'those ships were afterwards put on display in Miklagarðr for a long time', thereby emphasising the grandeur of the gesture Sigurðr had made [*Msk*, Ch. 70]. As both Ármann Jakobsson and I have previously explored, the respective narratives of Sigurðr's journey spend a considerable amount of time emphasising his displays of status compared to the other rulers whom he meets, and his dealings with Kirjalax are presented as his ultimate test.[114] Whether Sigurðr is able to meet the demands placed upon him by Kirjalax' gifts is left in doubt in both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnússona* presentations of the narrative, until at the last moment when Sigurðr is due to leave the city, he is said to have returned the gifts in kind by way of his ships [*Msona*, Chs. 12–13; *Msk*, Chs. 69–70]. A certain pragmatism of this gift must be considered, however, as in David Abulafia's findings, Sigurðr's route of sailing through the Mediterranean necessitated an overland return due to the inherent problems of sailing out of the Mediterranean Sea and into the Atlantic Ocean.[115] It is unclear in the texts whether these challenges would have been known by the Norwegian company at the time of the voyage, and whether they were prepared to leave their ships behind. If this was not the case, and the realisation came too late, then the texts place a remarkable spin on the story. In purposefully gifting the ships to Kirjalax, Sigurðr is depicted as a generous king, rather than one caught out by circumstance. Thus, Sigurðr is shown to meet the test placed upon him, and by so doing establish his friendship with the emperor as one of equals, in accordance with Hermanson and Orning's framework.[116]

Vertical bonds are also apparent in the respective narratives of Sigurðr's voyage, firstly in his dealings with Roðgeirr in Sicily, and secondly from the gifts presented to

[114] Clark, 'Bestowing Status'; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 131–139.
[115] David Abulafia, 'The Black Sea and the Viking Road to Byzantium', Keynote Lecture, *A "Viking" in the Sun: Harald Hardrada, the Mediterranean, and the Nordic World between the late Viking Age and the Eve of the Crusades* (2023); David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011), 72.
[116] Hermanson and Orning, 'Friends and Allies', 57.

Sigurðr by King Baldvini [*Msona*, Chs. 8 & 11; *Msk*, Chs. 65–66; *Fsk*, Chs. 87–88]. The first case is straightforward. In making Roðgeirr the king of Sicily, the *konungasögur* depict Sigurðr gifting him with enhanced power and status [*Msk*, Ch. 65; *Msona*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 87]. The gift cannot be reciprocated because Sigurðr is already a king; Roðgeirr has nothing equivalent which he could offer to him. Sigurðr is thereby depicted in the texts as establishing a vertical bond between himself and Roðgeirr, in which he is the superior. Because the gift is fictional, it came with none of the inherent risks which Hermanson and Orning identify, but it sustains the idea of Sigurðr's grand performance and emphasises his benevolence and own status.[117]

The second vertical bond which Sigurðr is part of directly contrasts the first. When King Baldvini, with the apparent approval of the patriarch of Jerusalem, gives Sigurðr a piece of the True Cross as a gift, Sigurðr becomes the lesser party in the newly formed bond, being unable to reciprocate with something of equal value [*Msona*, Ch. 11; *Fsk*, Ch. 88; *Msk*, Ch. 66; *Ágrip*, Ch. 53]. The gift, and the bond it created, is a fictional addition to the narrative to deliberately enhance the presentation of Sigurðr's piety, and to provide a counterbalance to the assistance which Sigurðr provided at the siege of Sætt.

In *Ágrip*, the relic is given to Sigurðr upon his request, thereby presenting Sigurðr as directly humbling himself and placing himself in the service of the king of Jerusalem, whom the author does not name [*Ágrip*, Ch. 53]. The account spends a significant amount of time on what subsequently became of this relic, how Sigurðr placed it at Norway's border and how it was later lost, but makes no mention of the siege of Sætt, or any other events which took place during Sigurðr's voyage [*Ágrip*, Chs. 52–54]. There is a short statement that Sigurðr received gifts from the Byzantine emperor when he came to Miklagarðr, and that he left his ships in that city, but there is no depicted interaction between the two [*Ágrip*, Ch. 54]. Nevertheless, the author offers a distinction between the vertical bond created by Sigurðr receiving a piece of the True Cross, and the horizontal bond of gifts in Miklagarðr. The overwhelming emphasis, however, remains on the spiritual aspects of Sigurðr

[117] Hermanson and Orning, 'Friends and Allies', 57. On Sigurðr's journey as performance, see Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', 132–139.

receiving the True Cross, suggesting that the *Ágrip* author was most concerned with the crowning motif of piety built into Sigurðr's reputation by the time they compiled their work, and that depictions of diplomacy were an afterthought.

In *Magnússona*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna*, Sigurðr is said to have received the fragment of the True Cross shortly before the siege took place [*Msona*, Ch. 11; *Fsk*, Chs. 88–89; *Msk*, Ch. 66]. In this presentation, Sigurðr is thereby indebted to Baldvini and, being unable to offer a gift in return, is required to perform a service in exchange, thus following the pattern which Bagge, and Hermanson and Orning respectively find.[118] The military support which Sigurðr subsequently provides thereby fulfils this requirement, and helps to redress the presentation of the two kings as equals. Though Hill considers the depiction of the capture and gifting of the city of Sætt as a way of showing 'that Sigurðr was on equal terms with Baldwin', the scales of status are not entirely balanced, as Sigurðr is shown to act in the service of Baldvini.[119] Nevertheless, the act of service itself serves as an additional emphasis of Sigurðr's piety, displaying a humility of service to the benefit of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Nonetheless, the scales are somewhat balanced if the scene is taken as a counterpart to Sigurðr's promotion of Roðgeirr and the vertical bond invoked there [*Msona*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 88; *Msk*, Ch. 65]. In the case of Roðgeirr, Sigurðr emerges the superior party, whereas with Baldvini, Sigurðr is inferior. Thus, two contrasting vertical bonds are presented which thereby offer an overall balance within the respective narratives.

The two events do not entirely cancel each other out, of course, as they instead form a kind of hierarchy between the three monarchs. Nevertheless, both Roðgeirr's elevation to kingship and the gifting of the True Cross fragment are both fictional embellishments to the story of Sigurðr's voyage, and should be viewed as such, as creations with deliberate purpose. As noted above, Roðgeirr was a youth at the time of Sigurðr's voyage and did not become king until 1130.[120] The matter of the True Cross is a little more elusive. The significance of such a gift would likely have drawn

[118] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 156; Hermanson and Orning, 'Friends and Allies', 57.
[119] Hill, 'Pilgrimage and Prestige', 440.
[120] See also, Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making', 79; Ármann Jakobsson, 'Image is Everything', fn. 38.

attention from clerical authors outside of Scandinavia. While authors such as Albert of Aachen, Fulcher of Chartres, and William of Tyre all included a description of Sigurðr's time in Jerusalem and how he helped at the siege of Sætt, none of them included any record of him receiving a piece of the True Cross.[121] Of these authors, Fulcher of Chartres was writing closest to the time of the voyage, while Albert of Aachen's work was undertaken about a decade later. They are therefore the closest contemporary prose accounts of Sigurðr's journey which could be expected to mention the gifting of a holy relic.[122] The contemporary *Damascus Chronicle* by Ibn al-Qalānisī also includes a passage on the support which Sigurðr lent to Baldvini in their campaign against Sætt, but no detail beyond a description of the battle is provided.[123] A singule example of the tale of the True Cross is found outside of the Old Norse histories in Theodoricus' work, *De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, though due to the apparent connections of the author to Norway it cannot be counted as an independent, corroborative account.[124] Thus, the tale of the True Cross piece being gifted to Sigurðr was a fictional addition to the reputation which surrounded him, likely as a prestige motif to demonstrate the supposed piety of his voyage. The motif also serves a secondary purpose, however, in deliberately presenting a vertical bond between Baldvini and Sigurðr.

---

[121] Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*, Frances Rita Ryan (trans.), 199–200; Albert of Aachen, *History of the Journey to Jerusalem* (trans.), 166–171; William of Tyre, *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Emily Atwater Babcock & A. C. Krey (trans.), 486–488.

[122] The praise poetry in *Útfarardrápa* and *Sigurðardrápa I* may also be considered in similar contemporary terms, though neither poem mentions the True Cross – see Clark, 'Bestowing Status'. See Einarr Skúlason, '*Sigurðardrápa I*', Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the King's Sagas 2, Part 2: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 538–542; Halldórr skvaldri, '*Útfarardrápa*', Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 2: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 483–492.

[123] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, H. A. R. Gibb (trans.), 106–108.

[124] Theodoricus, '*De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*', in Egil Kraggerud (ed. & trans.), *Theodoricus: De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium – On the Old Norwegian Kings* (Novus Forlag: Oslo, 2018), 124–125; Egil Kraggerud, 'Introduction', *Theodoricus: De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium – On the Old Norwegian Kings* (Novus: Oslo, 2018), xxix–xxxv; Peter Foote, 'Introduction', in David McDougall and Ian McDougall (eds.), *Historia De Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium: An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2006), ix–xi.

2.6.2.5. Diplomacy – Conclusion

In the depictions of Eysteinn and Sigurðr giving and receiving gifts as acts of diplomacy, Eysteinn's reputation and conduct is far more stable than the varied encounters which Sigurðr is shown to have had. This is not detrimental to either brother, however, as the authors use the depictions to demonstrate how gifts could be used as a means of persuasion, such as Eysteinn persuading the Jamtr to join Norway or Sigurðr joining the siege of Sætt, as well as a means of showing esteem and securing equal bonds of friendship, such as in the reciprocity between Sigurðr and Kirjalax. Thus, diplomacy was understood and presented as working in multiple ways depending on the ultimate goal of the figures presented. In the depictions of the brothers' diplomatic efforts, the texts demonstrate how the two components of being giver or receiver were necessary for sustained diplomacy with multiple rulers under differing circumstances. Whereas Eysteinn's diplomatic efforts concentrated on Norway's neighbours, Sigurðr's focused on the wider connections and political positioning of Norway outside of Scandinavia. As in the other themes raised in the *mannjafnaðr*, where one brother is shown to fulfil one aspect of a dual criterion, the other brother supplements the apparent gap.

2.6.3. Two Types of Kings?

The respective reputations of Sigurðr and Eysteinn may be simply summed up by the adventurer and domestic kingship types, epitomising the eloquently contrasting categories of the domestic king and the adventurer.[125] These categories stand perfectly well on their own, and Sigurðr and Eysteinn certainly fit them. The categories should be used with caution, however, as although the texts, particularly *Morkinskinna*, appear to enjoy contrasting these archetypes, the figures representative of both categories are also frequently shown to be capable of crossing those superficially imposed borders, as Ármann Jakobsson also reads.[126] As

[125] See, Andersson, 'Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 57–58; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 120; Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, 100; Anderson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkaþverá', 16.
[126] See Ármann Jakobson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 80–81.

apparent in the theme of diplomacy, Eysteinn and Sigurðr are depicted to act on the same theme though in different ways which pertain to their respective category of domestic king or adventurer. Eysteinn's diplomatic endeavours concentrate on deals directly affecting the Norwegian border, while Sigurðr's seek to establish good relations abroad. Thus, their depictions are not simply conforming to archetypes as a contrast of adventurer or domestic king, but to the methods best suited to each archetype as a practical division of labour. Each king is thereby shown to work to their own strengths, concurrent with their depictions and reputations, to meet the overall requirements of kingship on a domestic and international level.

2.7. Conclusion

Through analysing the respective versions of Sigurðr Jórsalafari's and Eysteinn Magnússon's *mannjafnaðr*, three key themes relating to kingship can be identified. In chief importance to the *konungasögur* authors were matters of appearance and physicality, justice through legal knowledge and integrity, and the balance of domestic kingship with militaristic and outward looking kingship, culminating in how a king is remembered and esteemed. Each of these themes are reflected elsewhere in the *konungasögur*, though the respective authors interpret and emphasise each theme uniquely. Nevertheless, a consistent pattern emerges in the depiction of the Magnússon brothers as a co-ruling unit. Where one brother falls short of the kingly ideal, the other is depicted as having an excess of that quality with which they can make up the deficit as a co-ruling unit.

Chapter Three: Haraldr Sigurðarson in the Mediterranean

The exploits with which Haraldr Sigurðarson is credited during his time leading the Varangians serve a secondary purpose of demonstrating his suitability to be king.[1] *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* (in *Heimskringla*), *Fagrskinna*, and *Morkinskinna* all contain versions of Haraldr's military campaigns in the Mediterranean, with particular focus on the sieges associated with his time in Sicily. The initial purpose of these narratives is to fill in the chronological span of Haraldr's life between his exile from Norway after being wounded at the battle of Stiklarstaðir in 1030, until his return to Norway around fifteen years later, wealthy and with a loyal and seasoned military company. The tales of Haraldr's adventures show him to be a successful military commander and warrior, and explain how he accrued the wealth with which he returned to Norway. Within the wider narrative setting, these factors explain the potential threat which Haraldr posed to Magnús inn góði, who was ruling as sole king at the time of Haraldr's return, and contextualise how the two kinsmen came to an agreement of co-rulership. In addition to providing this surface-level narrative context, however, the respective narratives also demonstrate how Haraldr was innately suited to kingship. Throughout the narratives of the sieges in which Haraldr is said to have engaged, the qualities of wisdom, fortitude, and self-restraint are apparent in his depicted behaviour. Haraldr is thereby shown to pose an ideological threat to Magnús inn góði, as well as a physical one. The respective narrative depictions of Haraldr before his return to Norway are therefore an excellent place to explore how the *konungasögur* authors sought to demonstrate the importance of personal qualities as qualifiers for kingship, rather than simply in the depictions of figures who only appear already as kings in the narratives.

[1] Haraldr Sigurðarson was king of Norway from 1046–1066. Between 1046–1047, he shared the rule of Norway with his nephew, Magnús inn góði, and after Magnús' death in 1047, Haraldr ruled Norway as sole king.

3.1. Reality and Fiction

Before any detailed analysis of Haraldr's depictions for this period of his life can begin, it must first be noted that the narrative sieges depicted in the texts may have been fictionalised to add to the drama and sense of adventure of Haraldr's military endeavours.[2] It is plausible that much of the wider scope of Haraldr's military endeavours with the Varangians was grounded in a historical reality, from which the examples recounted in the Old Norse texts were drawn. There is an identifiable correlation between the Old Norse and Greek histories which places the loosely referenced exploits of Haraldr in the *konungasögur* within the context of the contemporary Byzantine affairs. The Greek historian Kekaumenos includes several details of one 'Araltes [Haraldr]' that concur with the details provided in the *konungasögur*, including that he was the brother of 'Iouvalos [Óláfr]', and that he fought in Sicily and Bulgaria.[3] As a result, Kekaumenos' work has been a staple for historicising Haraldr as a Varangian, especially by Sverrir Jakobsson and Blöndal and Benedikz.[4] Unfortunately, Kekaumenos does not include any description of the events in which Haraldr is said to have participated, and these details are largely down to the imaginations of the Old Norse authors. Another correlation survives, however, in the work of John Skylitzes, a second Greek historian.[5] Skylitzes recounts the Sicilian campaign led by the Greek Georgios Maniakes, a figure who equates to the Greek commander "Gyrgir" in the *konungasögur* [*Msk*, Chs. 12–14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51;

[2] Fictionalisation is here taken to mean tangible embellishments and supplements made to the respective narratives. These additions do not diminish the value of the texts as historical records as they still convey the sense of events having taken place, their purpose within the chronology, and how the depicted figures were impacted by or reacted to these events. Cf. Ralph O'Connor, 'History and Fiction', in Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (Routledge: London, 2017), 88–103.

[3] Kekaumenos, 'Λόγος νουθετητικος, 'A Word of Wisdom'', in R. I. Page (ed. & trans.), *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (The British Museum Press: London, 2014), 104.

[4] See Gwyn Jones, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford University Press: London, 1969), 405; R. I. Page, *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (The British Museum Press: London, 2014), 104; Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2020), 75–76; Sigfus Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1978), 56–58.

[5] Sverrir Jakobsson also consults the work of Skylitzes for Byzantine events surrounding the time when Haraldr was there in his book, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 77–85.

HSig, Chs. 3–5].[6] Again, relatively little detail of the sieges in which Haraldr is said to have partaken is included, and Haraldr himself is not mentioned. Despite certain discrepancies between the Greek and Old Norse works, including an exaggeration of events and Haraldr's ranking among the Varangians in the *konungasögur* narratives, as Blöndal and Benedikz explore, there is fair ground to assume that Haraldr was indeed involved with Byzantine affairs and participated in their Mediterranean campaigns.[7] Beyond the basic premise of Haraldr's presence and involvement with events in Sicily, however, there is considerably less to go on. The details of the sieges are only narrated in the Old Norse accounts, and they are riddled with their own problems of exaggeration and fictionalisation. The *konungasögur* narratives lack the specific locational details that may otherwise be expected of foreign adventures, and either closely follow folkloric themes for heroic sieges, or follow such standard siege strategies (such as undermining a city's walls) that they have relatively equal chances of having been made-up for the narrative or were actually used. Nevertheless, the narratives bear relevance as a stage for the respective Old Norse authors to demonstrate Haraldr's conduct as a leader, and his burgeoning qualities for kingship.

The qualities apparent in the depictions of Haraldr in the respective texts are not wholly unfamiliar from previous scholarship. In his study of *Morkinskinna*, Ármann Jakobsson named four key qualities of kingship: wisdom, fortitude, temperance (which will here be referred to as self-restraint), and justice.[8] Meanwhile, Sverre Bagge has highlighted the importance of 'intelligence, bravery, and eloquence' to leadership through his works on *Heimskringla*, *Sverris saga*, and the *Konungs skuggsjá* [The King's Mirror].[9] For the most part, these qualities have been derived from studies in which the Old Norse texts have been dealt with separately. While an

---

[6] John Skylitzes, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, John Wortley (trans.), (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010), 376–383; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 60–69.
[7] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 58–100.
[8] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal: The Representation of Royalty in *Morkinskinna*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 99: 1 (2000), 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject in *Morkinskinna*', *Skandinavistik*, 28 (1998), 108; Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi: Konungsmynd Íslenskra Konungasagna* (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 1997), 89–154.
[9] Sverre Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 467.

individual approach has allowed for an initial identification of kingly qualities depicted in the texts, it does not address the comparative factors of how the qualities are depicted between texts, including the similarities or differences in their depictions, and the extents to which qualities are emphasised. In bringing the texts together, it is possible to develop a more comprehensive picture of the understandings of kingship at the time the texts were written, and the interplay between the texts themselves.

Two further qualities emerge in the *konungasögur* depictions of Haraldr during their narration of his time in the Mediterranean. In each account, Haraldr is shown to be an occasionally deceitful figure who manipulates circumstances to his own favour, and to the favour of his followers. In these cases, trickery becomes the means to success. As Bagge finds in *Heimskringla*, success was key to gaining esteem and honour from one's fellows, with little regard paid to how the apparent victory was achieved.[10] Though trickery may be a facet of strategic wisdom, it is a somewhat more morally questionable quality, akin to playing unfairly.[11] As qualities, trickery and deceit have been overlooked in previous studies, presumably because they appear to be the antithesis of justice.[12] Nevertheless, as deceit and trickery work out successfully for Haraldr, the protagonist in these narratives, these qualities are presented in positive terms and must therefore be considered as an acceptable attribute for a leader to possess and use when necessary. Such reconciliation of this first additional quality lends itself towards the second: working for the benefit of one's followers. While it is unsurprising to consider that a king or leader must care for his company, upon whom he relies for support and success, the requirement of such caring conduct has been overlooked. In each example of Haraldr's deceptions or manipulations, he is ultimately shown to have acted in the interest of his followers, ultimately gaining the victory for them either in battle, or by securing for them the best camping conditions [*Msk*, Chs. 12 & 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Chs. 4 &

[10] Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's* Heimskringla (University of California Press: Oxford, 1991), 165–166.
[11] On unfair conduct, see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 162.
[12] In his works, Ármann Jakobsson stresses the importance of justice as the supreme quality a king could possess. See Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 75; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108.

10]. These successes range from the large-scale, such as warfare, to the smaller, potentially more trivial matters of personal comfort. Both, however, are presented with equal importance in the texts, and both may contribute to the loyalty of one's company and extend to continuing success. As will be addressed below in a review of his depicted actions, where Haraldr is shown to have sacrificed just behaviour it is to improve an outcome for his followers. Trickery is therefore a necessary quality when it best serves one's company.

3.2. The Texts

Of the four Old Norse texts considered in this study, only three provide any details of Haraldr's exploits in the Mediterranean – those being *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*. There is no description of Haraldr's exploits found in the *Ágrip* account. Though *Ágrip* recognises that Haraldr had travelled to Miklagarðr and returned *á kaupskipi, vel búin at fé ok at gørsimum* 'on a merchant ship equipped with wealth and treasures', there are no details offered on how exactly Haraldr came by his wealth [*Ágrip*, Ch. 38]. *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Haralds saga*, meanwhile, provide an explanation for Haraldr's accrued wealth by detailing his deeds with the Varangians and his service to the Byzantine emperor while in the Mediterranean, and the payment for his actions. It is possible that the authors of *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Haralds saga* had access to additional source material at the time of their writing, of which the *Ágrip* author may have otherwise been unaware.[13]

Of the three accounts detailing Haraldr's time in the Mediterranean, the *Morkinskinna* narrative is the longest, spanning twenty-seven pages from Haraldr's first arrival in Miklagarðr until the commencement of his return journey north. Of these pages, sixteen are given to Haraldr's time under the Byzantine emperor's employment and his military service alongside the Greek commander Gyrgir, including nine pages focusing specifically on their campaigns in Sicily. *Haralds saga*

[13] See discussion in Chapter One: Source Material, 4–24.

is next in length, lasting nineteen pages in total from Haraldr's arrival in Miklagarðr until his northward departure; ten pages cover his time as a Varangian, including six pages on the Sicilian campaigns. Finally, *Fagrskinna* offers the shortest account, covering a total ten pages on Haraldr's time in the Mediterranean, with six pages detailing his time as a Varangian, with the Sicilian campaigns covered over three pages.

3.2.1. The Included Sieges

Across the three Old Norse accounts which detail Haraldr's time in the Mediterranean, a maximum of four siege examples are recounted. These examples include:

- A siege where birds were used to set fire to the city [*HSig*, Ch. 6; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]
- A siege where the Varangians undermined the city walls [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]
- A siege where the Icelander, Halldórr Snorrason, was injured storming the city gates [*HSig*, Chs. 8–9; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]
- A siege where a faux funeral was used to gain access to the city [*HSig*, Ch. 10; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]

In places, these four examples overlap across the accounts, as illustrated in Table E.

Fagrskinna contains two full examples which are also found in *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga*. *Morkinskinna* contains three full examples, and *Haralds saga* includes an additional fourth excursion. However, what constitute the third and fourth respective siege examples in the structure of *Haralds saga* (storming the gates and the faux funeral) are placed together in the *Morkinskinna* account where they are instead recounted as one single example. Similarly, the *Fagrskinna* account includes a passing mention of how the Icelander Halldórr Snorrason was wounded at the city gates in the fight which ensued following the faux funeral, covered below [*Fsk*, Ch. 51]. The faux funeral siege is structured in all three of the accounts as the final siege

recounted. The narrative order of the preceding siege examples otherwise varies between the three texts. *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* begin their respective narratives with the example of the bird siege, whilst *Morkinskinna* starts with the case of undermining [*HSig*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. *Morkinskinna* then continues on to the bird siege, and finally the faux funeral where an exchange with the figure of Halldórr Snorrason is included [*Msk*, Ch. 14]. Meanwhile, *Haralds saga* places the undermining example second in its narrative, and the Halldórr Snorrason exchange as a separate third case, before concluding with the faux funeral [*HSig*, Chs. 7–10].

Account	**Number of Sieges** (counted by full details and structure)	**Bird Siege**	**Undermining Siege**	**Storming the Gates** (Halldórr Snorrason)	**Faux Funeral**
Fagrskinna	2	✓		*	✓
Morkinskinna	3	✓	✓	*	✓
Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar	4	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table E: Number of sieges described in full in the Old Norse accounts. Ticks show which sieges are included in each account. Stars show where an example is described as part of a different siege.

3.2.2. Lack of order

The lack of a shared ordering found between the three accounts indicates two key points. Firstly, that the authors did not know what precisely occurred (and possibly where). Secondly, the siege examples were deemed important enough to the narrative and to the representation(s) of Haraldr to be included despite the possible uncertainties around them. Unlike Sigurðr Jórsalafari's time in the Mediterranean, Haraldr's exploits are rendered without a specific geographic route or associated

chronology (see Chapter Two: The Destination or the Journey?) [*Msk*, Chs. 65–70; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–91; *Msona*, Chs. 3–13]. *Haralds saga* openly acknowledges this lack of grounding, stating that *Haraldr var marga vetr í hernaði þessum* 'Haraldr was many winters on this raiding expedition', thus suggesting that the events narrated may not accurately reflect the lived experience of the campaigns [*HSig*, Ch. 11]. It is for the audience to presume, then, that the sieges recounted are to function as select examples of battles which Haraldr is said to have conducted throughout his time in the Mediterranean, and possibly throughout its geographic range. Furthermore, the notion that examples are selected is suggested in all three accounts by the inclusion of skaldic verses and additional prose statements which claim Haraldr captured *átta tigu borgar* 'eighty cities' [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Ch. 5; *Msk*, Ch. 12].[14] Whilst it may have been possible for Haraldr to have engaged in eighty battles generally during the near decade he spent with the Varangians, this claim may equally be an exaggeration of the number of battles in which he was involved. Additionally, the claim that Haraldr won eighty cities – without mention of any battles he may have lost – would serve to bolster a reputation of his military prowess. It is unlikely that of so many claimed victories, every one of them would have been recounted. Only those which seemed the most remarkable, and perhaps demonstrated Haraldr's qualities the best, may reasonably be considered to have been the examples most easily remembered and retold. Because the narrated sieges are actively acknowledged as select examples in these ways, the order in which they are recounted becomes of secondary importance to the narrative. As such, keeping to a strict order of events is not necessary to the narrative structure. The narrative structure itself may instead have been considered more important. Each account concludes the siege examples with the faux funeral story at a city which is said to have been the most difficult to capture [*HSig*, Ch. 10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 14]. Whilst the build up to this event serves best to demonstrate Haraldr's qualities, it could also make for the most engaging and entertaining story for a given audience.

[14] On the verse claiming eighty cities were taken by Haraldr, see Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), verse 2, 113–114.

3.2.3. Presentation

Morkinskinna presents the tales of Haraldr's adventures as being told by Haraldr himself and the people who had travelled with him. In the narrative context, Haraldr is said to have returned to Norway and is being hosted by his nephew, Magnús inn góði, when recounting his adventures. The first stage of the tale, that of Haraldr's escape after the Battle of Stiklarstaðir and the assistance he was given by an unnamed farmer's son, was a story which, according to the *Morkinskinna* author, *vissi Magnús konungr ok aðrir menn í Nóregi* 'King Magnús and other people in Norway knew' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. *Morkinskinna* then notes that *heðan frá er sú frásǫgn um farar Haralds er hann, Haraldr, sagði sjálfr, ok þeir menn er honum fylgðu* 'from here is the story of Haraldr's travels as he, Haraldr, told himself, and the people who accompanied him' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. The narrative style does not change to reflect Haraldr's speech in recounting events, instead remaining in the same authorial voice as used throughout *Morkinskinna*. It is instead the source of information which is indicated to have changed. Whereas the preceding information on Magnús is presented as being generally known by his retainers and subjects, the implied audience listening to Haraldr within the text, the information source on Haraldr's adventures is presented as being Haraldr himself and his company. The effect of this is two-fold. Firstly, the news and stories Haraldr and his company brought with them are presented as fresh and exciting tales to the listening Norwegians (Magnús' company). Secondly, Haraldr is shown to be a somewhat Odyssean figure, travelling firstly in disguise and recounting battles which border on the wonderous and fantastical. In telling his own story, Haraldr is placed in a position to emphasise the traits he wishes to embellish, and grow his prestige by moulding the telling of his own reputation.

Nevertheless, this presentation is ultimately the work of the *Morkinskinna* author and their structuring of the narrative. The entirety of Haraldr's adventures form a particularly large *þáttr* within the text, positioning it within the sequence of events concerning Magnús inn góði.[15] There is a certain logic to this structuring, as the

[15] Cf. Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Amplified Saga: Structural Disunity in "Morkinskinna"', *Medium Ævum*, 70: 1 (2001), 38.

events as recounted for both Magnús and Haraldr are supposed to have taken place at approximately the same time. Given the practical issues of being able to narrate only one narrative at once, the respective authors would have had no choice but to split the two. The *Heimskringla* author does this by presenting Magnús first throughout *Magnúss saga ins góða* and breaking for *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in which the two strands are subsequently joined. *Fagrskinna* initially follows a similar structure to *Morkinskinna*, dealing firstly with Magnús and then Haraldr, and integrating the return of Haraldr to Norway as an event within Magnús' rule [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 10]. Like in *Heimskringla*, however, *Fagrskinna* then pauses its telling of Magnús to reset its narrative chronology to after the battle of Stiklarstaðir and on the second go follow the events of Haraldr's life instead [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Ch. 1].

The possible purposes of the *Morkinskinna* structure and indication of Haraldr as telling the tale are again multifaceted. Undoubtedly, the tales of battles in which Haraldr is said to have fought predated the compilation of *Morkinskinna*. As discussed below, the tales of the bird siege and the faux funeral are drawn from wandering folktales, as others have previously noted, and border the fantastical.[16] The *Morkinskinna* author may not have believed the truth of such tales, a scepticism potentially shared by their own sources of information and contemporary audience, and thus included the statement of Haraldr being the ultimate source of the story as a means of both validating and protecting the historicity of their work. The work in itself was correct in relation to the available information; if the available information was at fault, that was beyond the author's scope or accountability.

Elements of deception play throughout the narrative of Haraldr's time in the Mediterranean in all three accounts. *Morkinskinna*, however, takes Haraldr's deceptions to their furthest extent. As Ármann Jakobsson notes, '*Morkinskinna* is structured according to the principles of amplification', and the narrative of

[16] See Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 71–73; Alexander Haggerty Krappe, 'The Sparrows of Cirencester', *Modern Philology*, 23: 1 (1925), 7–16; Paul A. White, 'The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings' Sagas', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 98: 2 (1999), 160–161; Jan de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut in den isländischen Königssagas', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 47 (1931), 66–68.

Haraldr's adventures is no exception.[17] Upon arriving in Miklagarðr, Haraldr is said to have adopted the alias "Norðbrikt" *því at þat er at viðrsýn gǫrt ef útlendir menn eru konunga synir* 'because they are afraid if foreign men are the sons of kings' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. Neither *Fagrskinna* nor *Haralds saga* mention any need for any alias and refer to Haraldr as such throughout. As Andersson and Gade note, 'kings in disguise are not uncommon in *Morkinskinna*', as Magnús inn góði and Sveinn Úlfsson are also shown to hide their true identities upon occasion.[18] For the most part, these are short-lived instances for the purposes of either gathering information or escaping an enemy. Haraldr's time as Norðbrikt, by contrast, is presented as lasting for several years and he is referred to as Norðbrikt throughout the tales of his Mediterranean adventures [*Msk*, Chs. 11–15].

Despite their different treatment in disguising Haraldr/Norðbrikt, all three accounts include deception in Haraldr's conduct during the faux funeral siege, and in his dealings with the Greek commander, Gyrgir [*HSig*, Chs. 4 & 10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Chs. 12 & 14]. Haraldr's alias is simply another level of deception added to the *Morkinskinna* narrative – whether by Haraldr's own supposed telling of the tale, or by the *Morkinskinna* author. Either way, Haraldr is shown to have hidden his identity and more importantly that *bað hann alla sína því leyna* 'he asked all his company to conceal it [the truth of who he was]' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. Such conduct alone demonstrates Haraldr's stubbornness in the decision, as well as his ability to ensure the deception is not broken by those around him. In outlining his need for disguise, Haraldr is first depicted to command the obedience of his company and followers.

In the narrative of Haraldr's time abroad, the order for this initial disguise is also the first depiction and overt acknowledgment of him acting deceptively. Coupled with the manner of Haraldr's return to Norway and his disguise of being his own messenger, sent to entreat with Magnús inn góði on the behalf of Haraldr, the theme of deception is a constant feature of Haraldr's portrayal [*Msk*, Ch. 10]. Twice

[17] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Amplified Saga', 36.
[18] Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds. & trans.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), fn. 8.3; see also, Joseph Harris, 'The King in Disguise: an International Popular Tale in Two Old Icelandic Adaptations', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 94 (1979), 64–65.

over Haraldr is presented as being unreliable in his own identity. As such, it can be expected of him to be unreliable in the tales he tells of himself. Thus, the statement of Haraldr as being the source of the tales simultaneously protects the *Morkinskinna* author from rebuke whilst also conforming to the overall depiction of Haraldr as a deceiver. Haraldr is repeatedly shown to fit himself to the role as required – whether that be as a common-born mercenary or a messenger – and so these tales of adventure are designed to fit with the image of the clever and victorious military commander he wishes to present.

Haraldr's apparent ability to morph into whatever role was required of him is also relevant, and perhaps crucial, to the moment of him supposedly telling his own story. Having arrived before Magnús inn góði and the king's company of advisors, Haraldr would have needed to present himself as someone potentially equal to the king, or at least as someone capable of challenging the king. While this can be taken as an aggressive stance, it is nonetheless a protective one. Regardless of Haraldr's actual ambitions, others may have seen him as a threat to Magnús. The four accounts differ slightly in their descriptions of Haraldr's return from Garðaríki [the lands of the Kievan Rus'], though all agree he returned by ship, and by implication the company to crew it [*Ágrip*, Ch. 38; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Chs. 17–19; *Msk*, Ch. 10]. According to *Haralds saga*, having come north, Haraldr first met and allied himself with Sveinn Úlfsson before acquiring additional ships with which to travel to Denmark [*HSig*, Chs. 17–19]. Meanwhile, *Morkinskinna* describes a singular but richly decorated ship as the means of Haraldr's arrival ahead of his meeting with Magnús [*Msk*, Ch. 10]. Though the ship in *Morkinskinna* is alone, its apparent wealth carried connotations not only of individual importance, but also of a company strong and capable enough to defend their riches. Furthermore, under Bagge's identification of 'generosity' as a method to attract supporters, the obvious wealth showed the obvious means by which the company's leader (Haraldr) could gain new friends and allies, should he so choose.[19] Thus, the manner of Haraldr's arrival could be seen as a challenge and threat from Magnús' perspective. Conversely, Haraldr's

[19] Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', 467–468.

display of status, wealth, and might projects an image of someone not to be trifled with, and so serves as a preventative, defensive display.

Until the first meeting between them was concluded, Haraldr cannot have been thought of or presented as having known the manner of reception he would be greeted with upon his return. Haraldr had departed Norway after the battle of Stiklarstaðir in which he was wounded and escaped with the help of Rǫgnvaldr Brusason [*Msk*, Ch. 11; *HSig*, Ch. 2; *Fsk*, Chs. 34 & 51; *Ágrip*, Ch. 32].[20] Haraldr is said to have learned that Magnús had regained the kingdom of Norway, and that this knowledge spurred him to return as well. The knowledge of Magnús having become the Norwegian king carries with it the implication that the main threat which had pushed both Magnús and Haraldr into exile had been removed. Thus, Haraldr's return to Norway may be considered an optimistic homecoming. However, there is no indication in any of the accounts as to how Haraldr learned of Magnús' kingship, nor is Haraldr shown to have been aware of how Magnús became king. As such, both *Ágrip* and *Morkinskinna* depict Haraldr as having acted cautiously by first pretending to be a messenger sent on behalf of himself to inquire about the type of reception Magnús would grant him [*Ágrip*, Ch. 38; *Msk*, Ch. 10]. Though one old threat had been vanquished, Haraldr may yet have found a new opponent in Magnús. Due to the apparent lack of information available to him beforehand, Haraldr must have been, and is presented as having been prepared for anything. While an initial inquiry may have been enough to warrant the arrangement of a peaceful meeting of kinsmen, it would not have been enough to determine or establish a true rapport.

The subsequent hostilities between Haraldr and Magnús are presented as being largely the fault of Magnús' advisors who are shown to stubbornly insist on Magnús alone as their king [*Msk*, Ch. 16; *Fsk*, Ch. 52]. Thus, it was not only Magnús whom Haraldr needed to assess and persuade, but those around Magnús as well.

[20] Haraldr's escape and recovery is also recorded in *Orkneyinga saga*. See '*Orkneyinga saga*', in Finnbogi Guðmundsson (ed.), *Orkneyinga saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXIV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1965), Ch. 21.

Haraldr's need to persuade Magnús' retainers is not immediately apparent in any of the accounts, though that does not render the retainers absent or unimportant from the meeting. In this instance, the balance of information and lack thereof adds to the suspenseful intrigue of the narrative. Though the retainers' role is not immediately apparent, it becomes apparent later. As O'Donoghue puts it, the 'saga authors may go a step further and conspicuously withhold information, so that we experience even more vividly the uncertainty of living through real time'.[21] The audience is subjected to the same uncertainties as Haraldr himself is shown to have encountered upon his return in the *Ágrip* and *Morkinskinna* accounts, most especially in the latter [*Ágrip*, Ch. 38; *Msk*, Ch. 10]. As Haraldr is ultimately shown to plan for and navigate the different scenarios he may or may not encounter in the *Morkinskinna* account, his anticipation lends itself to showcase his insights and wisdom in the later fallout. The purposeful withholding of information thereby emphasises the depiction of Haraldr as a canny figure, and increases the audience's appreciation of the traits he is shown to have possessed.

The presentation of the meeting between Haraldr and Magnús in the *Morkinskinna* account is perhaps the most effective in depicting both the situation in which Haraldr appears to find himself, as well as his response to it. As Haraldr is depicted as telling Magnús and Magnús' retainers of his adventures and battles in the Mediterranean himself, the *Morkinskinna* author essentially grants the figure of Haraldr a platform by which the tales of his achievements can be brazenly embellished. A type of play-within-a-play is thus established.

Throughout the entire telling of Haraldr's exploits in *Morkinskinna*, an invocation of Lönnroth's 'double scene' can be imagined.[22] The supposed audience of *Morkinskinna* learning of Haraldr's adventures through the textual narrative is akin to the implied audience within *Morkinskinna*, Magnús' retainers, listening to the tales from Haraldr himself. The effect of such a double scene may be greatest if

---

[21] Heather O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga: Meanings of Time in Old Norse Literature* (Bloomsbury: London, 2021), 5.
[22] Lars Lönnroth, *Den dubbla scenen: Muntlig Diktning från Eddan till ABBA* (Prisma: Stockholm, 1978), 79–80; Lars Lönnroth, 'The double scene of Arrow-Odd's drinking contest', *Medieval Narrative: A Symposium* (Odense University Press: Odense, 1979), 95.

Morkinskinna was read aloud, with the audience listening to the text essentially being transported and transformed into the implied audience within *Morkinskinna*. As Thorvaldsen applies to *Vǫluspá*, the 'deictic effects seem to be oriented towards spoken communication' rather than a singular or silent reading, and the same can be applied to Haraldr in *Morkinskinna*.[23] Setting may also be of some importance to the general effect, as Chennells explores, but other than a general meeting with Magnús and his company taking place ashore, the *Morkinskinna* author provides scant details of Haraldr's stage [*Msk*, Ch. 10].[24]

The lack of detail does not necessarily diminish the transformative and transportive effects of the scene. Instead, it leaves the scene open to be performed in any given space while maintaining these effects in whatever setting. If the audience is listening to *Morkinskinna* in a hall, the meeting between Haraldr and Magnús can be imagined as having taken place in a hall; equally, an open-air performance of the text could invoke a similar response. A specific setting is therefore unimportant to the *Morkinskinna* author and the delivery of their narrative.[25]

Equally, the lack of detail for a setting can be taken as a further indicator of the *Morkinskinna* author's uncertainty of the narrative or its accuracy. If the purpose of a specific setting, especially the hall, is taken as a tool of memory to help order 'units of knowledge', as Hermann describes, then it correlates that a lack of setting indicates a lack of certainty.[26] While this may not always hold true, in the case of Haraldr, it seems likely. At the outset of the tale of Haraldr's Mediterranean adventures, the *Morkinskinna* author states that what follows is what *Haraldr, sagði sjálfr, ok þeir menn er honum fylgðu* 'Haraldr said himself, and those who accompanied him' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. In citing and presenting Haraldr as the initial teller of the subsequent tales, the *Morkinskinna* author overtly distances themself from

[23] Bernt Øyvind Thorvaldsen, 'The Double Scene in Performance: Deictic Blending in *Vǫluspá*?', in John McKinnell, et al. (eds), *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature Sagas and the British Isles I–II* (Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Durham, 2006), 950.
[24] Ben Chennells, 'Dual Identities and Double Scenes. Transformations of Physical and Mental State in Performances of Eddic Poetry', *Saga-Book*, XLVI (2022), 35.
[25] See Chennells, 'Dual Identities and Double Scenes', 40–41.
[26] Pernille Hermann, 'The Mind's Eye: The Triad of Memory, Space and the Senses in Old Norse Literature', *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies*, 47: 1 (2017), 210.

any rebuke for inaccuracies in their narrative of these events. The most plausible motive for this would be their own doubts in the tales' veracity. Thus, the lack of specific setting functions as an additional and subtle hint to an astute audience that the tales of Haraldr's adventures are not entirely to be trusted.

The levels of scene and delivery do not stop there, however. Though the *Morkinskinna* author cites and positions Haraldr as the teller of his tales, they are still the ultimate sculptor of Haraldr's depiction in the text. The amplification present in *Morkinskinna* thereby surpasses the bounds of a general structure being enhanced with additional scenes, as Ármann Jakobsson considers.[27] Rather, the figure of Haraldr is presented as informing the narrative directly. Haraldr thereby becomes the narrative voice and authority for this section of *Morkinskinna*, though it is of course the *Morkinskinna* author who is behind it. The *Morkinskinna* author uses Haraldr as a mouthpiece to emphasise his qualities as they see fit. Thus, in the tales of his adventures, "Norðbrikt" is the central figure whose tale is being told by Haraldr, while Haraldr is the figure whom the *Morkinskinna* author depicts (and is thereby depicting "Norðbrikt" as well). Haraldr thereby becomes the authorial voice of "Norðbrikt" to the audience, while the real author (the *Morkinskinna* author) is covertly diminished to the background. Any erroneous embellishments found in the tales of "Norðbrikt's" adventures may be dismissed and considered the fault of Haraldr as an unreliable narrator; meanwhile, the traits which Haraldr is shown to emphasise in his telling are the ones which the *Morkinskinna* author wanted to impart.

Almost counter-intuitively, a second element is also at work. As the *Morkinskinna* author is in ultimate control of how Haraldr is depicted, anything which Haraldr is shown to say plays into how the author is depicting him. Where Haraldr is shown to speak of his triumphs over foreign adversaries, he is simultaneously being depicted as promoting himself and emphasising his prowess to the implied audience within the narrative, namely Magnús and Magnús' retainers. Thus, Haraldr's recounting of his past adventures serves as an additional form of glorious arrival and preventative

[27] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Amplified Saga', 36.

defence within the “present” of the *Morkinskinna* narrative. In effect, Haraldr is shown to both talk up his military achievements, with the potential to increase the respect and status accorded to him by Magnús and his company, as well as deliver a warning to anyone in Magnús’ retinue who might think of crossing him. Through this multifaceted delivery unique to *Morkinskinna*, Haraldr is depicted as both amicable and cautious, willing to engage and foster friendship but wary of the reception he may receive. As is fitting with the tales of the strategies used in the Sicilian sieges, which he is said to have taken part in, Haraldr is shown to introduce himself to Magnús and Magnús’ company with a strategy in place.

3.3. Reverse Psychology

As will be seen, much of the strategic basis and context of the sieges associated with Haraldr’s time in the Mediterranean are either generic or folkloristic, leaving little to be considered as any resemblance of actuality. These embellishments do not detract from the purpose of the narrative; rather, they showcase the intentions of the respective *konungasögur* authors to depict and demonstrate to their audience that Haraldr was a capable leader, and potentially a formidable opponent, by the time of his return to Norway. In depicting and emphasising Haraldr’s qualities and leadership while he acted as a mercenary, the accounts also demonstrate his suitability for the kingship he subsequently gains. Though the siege examples take place before Haraldr is king in the narrative chronology, they nonetheless illustrate his inherent kingliness.

The importance of demonstrating Haraldr’s suitability for kingship and possession of leadership qualities by the time of his return to Norway is underpinned by the portrayal of the regard he was held in before the battle of Stiklarstaðir. The *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* (in *Óláfs saga helga*) accounts contain the most illustrative depictions of the younger Haraldr, and occur during the narrative period of Óláfr helgi. As the *Morkinskinna* account commences with the return of Magnús inn góði to Norway it does not include an equivalent depiction of Haraldr before the

battle of Stiklarstaðir, though a similar understanding of Haraldr in this earlier narrative point may be anticipated.[28]

In *Fagrskinna* and *Óláfs saga helga*, Haraldr is shown to have been considered too young and inept to engage in the battle of Stiklarstaðir. In *Óláfs saga helga*, Óláfr helgi is presented saying *"at Haraldr, bróðir minn, sé eigi í orrostu, því at hann er barn at aldri"* '"that Haraldr, my brother, should not be in the battle, because he is a child in age"' [*Óhelg*, Ch. 209]. *Fagrskinna* includes a similar sentiment stating that King Óláfr told Haraldr *eigi vera í orrostunni, því at hónum þótti sem hann væri eigi vápnfœrr* 'not to be in the battle, because to him [Óláfr] it seemed that he [Haraldr] was not able to bear arms' [*Fsk*, Ch. 34]. In attempting to prevent Haraldr from fighting, Óláfr helgi is shown to consider Haraldr as incapable of fighting, or of fighting effectively. Haraldr is thereby implied to have been lacking the abilities of a warrior, and thereby also of a warrior-leader.

An initial baseline for Haraldr is thereby set in both accounts. Though earlier in *Óláfs saga helga* Haraldr is said to have shown ambition from a very young age, at the time of the battle of Stiklarstaðir he is yet lacking the abilities to see it through [*Óhelg*, Ch. 77]. Compared to this baseline, the subsequent tales of Haraldr's battles and victories abroad demonstrate his increased experience and skill over time, until he finally becomes the warrior-leader he needs to be. The Haraldr who returned to Norway is not the same as the one who left.

It is firstly worth noting that Haraldr would have been around fifteen years old at the time of the battle of Stiklarstaðir, as attested in the prose *Óláfs saga helga*, and in *Fagrskinna* and *Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku* which both include an additional verse from *Sexstefja* attesting the same [*Fsk*, Ch. 34; *Óhelg*, Ch. 196; *ÓhelgSep*, Ch. 232].[29] While the presentation of Óláfr's concern and Haraldr's stubbornness offer an added degree of realism to the figures' depiction – Haraldr behaving as a headstrong teenager, keen to show he is no longer a child, and Óláfr considering him

[28] While *Ágrip* mentions that Haraldr fought in and escaped the battle of Stiklarstaðir, it contains no illustrative depiction of him until later in the narrative, upon his return to Norway. See *Ágrip*, Chs. 30–32.
[29] See also, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', verse 1, 112–113.

to not yet be ready – compared to other military leaders and rulers of the time, such as Óláfr himself and Knútr inn ríki [the Great], Haraldr's first military engagement comes late. Haraldr's contemporaries, including Magnús inn góði, are all said to have first displayed their military promise around the age of twelve. As Jesch notes, the 'literary convention of the twelve-year-old hero' acting in a military capacity is well-established of kings, or those who are set to become king.[30] This convention falls short of being applied to Haraldr however, whose first apparent taste of military engagement comes three years late.

The lack of literary convention implies three possibilities. Firstly, that the authors (and poet Þjóðólfr Arnórsson) did not want to present Haraldr as an equivalent to Óláfr during a narrative time when Óláfr was still king, or as an immediate rival to Magnús inn góði after Óláfr's death. Þjóðólfr's verse is not included in *Óláfs saga helga*; thus, it could have been omitted if its information conflicted with the impressions the prose authors wanted to portray. Secondly, that the authors wanted to diminish the reputation of Haraldr's abilities as a youth, with the possibility of adding emphasis to his subsequent militaristic improvements. Thirdly, that the age of fifteen (the age of majority) was more representative or accurate for the age at which a warrior-to-be first engaged in military activity.[31] Any or all of these factors may have played a part, to a greater or lesser extent, in how the respective authors intended to portray Haraldr, and their adherence to historicity or literary convention.

Haraldr's age also plays into the effect of Óláfr helgi's apparent caution or admonishment that Haraldr was not yet capable of joining the coming battle. If Haraldr was to prove himself as a great warrior, he needed to do so sooner rather than later. In light of these factors, the statements made by Óláfr helgi within the texts must be read as a shared literary device designed to spur Haraldr into action – namely, to prove his military capabilities – rather than as a rebuke. In both

[30] Judith Jesch, ''Youth on the Prow': Three Young Kings in the Late Viking Age', in P. J. P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages* (York Medieval Press: Woodbridge, 2004), 125.
[31] See also, Jesch, ''Youth on the Prow'', 124; J. U. Jørgensen, 'Myndighedsalder', in Georg Rona and Allan Karker (eds.), *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder*, 12 (Rosenkilde og Bagger: København, 1967), 35–37 on the age of majority.

Fagrskinna and *Óláfs saga helga*, Óláfr is not cautioning him but goading Haraldr into joining the battle. In *Óláfs saga helga*, it is Óláfr himself who is shown to recognise the ambition and lack of fear the three-year-old Haraldr possessed [*Óhelg*, Ch. 77]. By the battle of Stiklarstaðir, Haraldr would have been around fifteen years old, and Óláfr is depicted as finally prodding Haraldr into using those traits he saw once before [*Óhelg*, Chs. 77 & 209]. In accordance with Mundal's assessment, Óláfr is thereby shown to direct his provocation 'at the most promising of men in question', in this case his brother Haraldr, who, true to literary form, fights in the battle of Stiklarstaðir 'to prove himself to be the opposite of what is accused'.[32]

Óláfr's comments are shown to have the desired effect, as in both accounts Haraldr is said to have then composed a verse expressing his determination to fight [*Óhelg*, Ch. 209; *Fsk*, Ch. 34].

Lausavísur 1:

> *Þora munk þann arm verja,*
> *– þats ekkju munr nekkvat –*
> *– rjóðum vér af reiði*
> *rǫnd – es í hlýtk standa.*
> *Gengra greppr inn ungi*
> *gunnblíðr, þars slǫg ríða,*
> *– herða menn at morði*
> *mót – á hæl fyr spjótum*.
>
> 'I shall dare to defend that rank in which I am placed; that seems to be the wish of the widow; let us redden the shield-rim with rage. The young poet shall not take to his heels, battle-cheered, before spears where weapons swing; men will intensify hostile encounters in the battle'.[33]

[32] Else Mundal, 'The Orkney Earl and Scald Torf-Einarr and his Poetry', in Colleen E. Batey, et al. (eds.), *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the North Atlantic* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1993), 250.
[33] Standardised verse from Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson, '*Lausavísur*', Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), verse 1, 42–43. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade, taken from the same reference as the verse.

Óláfs saga helga also includes an additional depiction of Haraldr telling Óláfr that he *"…skal vera at vísu í orrostu, en ef ek em svá ósterkr, at ek má eigi valda sverðinu, þá kann ek þar gott ráð til, at binda skal hǫndina við meðalkaflann"* '"ought to be in the battle, but if I am so feeble that I may not wield a sword, then I know a good way of resolving that, which is that my hand should be tied to the haft"' [*Óhelg*, Ch. 209]. In both the poetry and the prose of *Óláfs saga helga*, Haraldr is demonstrated to possess the necessary determination and courage to fight, as well as the awareness of how to improve himself: by fighting. As a lesson in arms, a battle is perhaps not the best starting point, and Haraldr is subsequently said to have been wounded and helped to escape [*Fsk*, Ch. 34; *HSig*, Ch. 1; *Msk*, Ch. 11; *Ágrip*, Ch. 32]. The battle of Stiklarstaðir is therefore not the greatest display of Haraldr's abilities, nor of the promise he is supposed to have shown. Instead, Haraldr's services abroad, firstly in the army of Jarizleifr [Yaroslav the Wise] in Garðaríki where he is said to have risen in rank, and then in Byzantium with the Varangians are the real responses to Óláfr's provocation. Where Óláfr is said to have called Haraldr unready for battle, Haraldr is subsequently shown to have thrown himself into battles repeatedly. The narratives of Haraldr's time in the Mediterranean, and the detailed examples of the sieges and battles he fought in are thereby designed to demonstrate his developed military capabilities. The Haraldr who returned to Norway is therefore not the same Haraldr who left.

3.4. The Sieges

3.4.1. The Bird Siege

3.4.1.1. A Wandering Tale

In the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts, the first siege recounted for Haraldr is that which will be referred to here as the bird siege [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Ch. 6]. The same siege is also found in *Morkinskinna*, where it is narrated as the second siege example [*Msk*, Ch. 14]. For this siege, Haraldr is said to have had birds captured which flew daily to and from the city, and affixed small fires to their backs. Returning

to the city, the birds then set the roofs alight, and the spread of fire caused the city to be surrendered.

The premise of this strategy – using birds to capture the city – has been clearly identified as a motif of folkloristic tradition and borrowing.[34] Similar methods are attributed to the respective kings Hadding and Frithlef in the *Gesta Danorum*, and to Princess Olga of Kiev (later Saint) in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, among others.[35] While these texts are not interrelated with the *konungasögur*, there are cultural contacts between their places of origin including political and marital ties, as well as routes for trade and travel. A folktale heard in Denmark or Garðaríki could have easily passed into a Norwegian remit, and had its central figures changed to suit its new surroundings. On this basis, the tale of Princess Olga and her use of birds in siege warfare may have travelled along the overland routes between Scandinavia and the Byzantine Empire. Due to Haraldr's reported service to Jarizleifr, King of Garðaríki, and his continued connections with the kingdom, it is possible the tale was carried back to Norway with him. However, there is no way to determine how and when exactly the tale made it into the collection of stories pertaining to Haraldr, and the idea of the bird siege may have been a later or earlier (and subsequently transferred) addition to the oral literature.

3.4.1.2. Purpose

Influence or shared origins cannot stand alone, however. The depiction of Haraldr ordering the birds' capture may have been a conscious decision at some point in the development of the king's tale. By giving the order, he is shown to be a leader; moreover, also because his army follows his instruction – even if the tactic may originally have appeared farfetched.

---

[34] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 71–72; Krappe, 'The Sparrows of Cirencester', 7–16; White, 'The Latin Men', 160–161; de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut', 66–67.

[35] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes, Volume 1*, Karsten Friis-Jensen (ed.), Peter Fisher (trans.), (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2015), 51 & 249; *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (eds. & trans.), The Mediaeval Academy of America Publication No. 60 (The Mediaeval Academy of America: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953), 81; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 71–72.

Regardless of the tale's origins, the use of incendiary birds serves to demonstrate Haraldr's leadership qualities in the three *konungasögur* narratives. Firstly, the weaponising of birds would have required knowledge of the birds' flight patterns. Though a time frame for the siege is not mentioned in any of the accounts, it can be presumed that the siege must have lasted long enough for the birds' flight patterns to have been observed. Patience in siege warfare can already be considered a test of fortitude – both against the opposing contingent, as well as from potential dissent from one's own followers for the lack of action. In this sense, fortitude is apparent in each of the siege examples. Secondly, wisdom and strategic intelligence must have been required to both consider the use of the birds as a viable means of offence, as well as how to enact such a plan. These qualities for Haraldr are not only demonstrated by the inclusion of the bird siege example in all three accounts, but are emphasised by the respective authors as well. In *Haralds saga* it is crucial that *leitaði Haraldr þess ráðs* 'Haraldr tried this plan' and in *Fagrskinna* that he *vann þar borg eina með þeima hætti* 'won one city in this way' [*HSig*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. In these two accounts, the respective authors further underline the point that the strategic plan was Haraldr's doing. Thus, the wisdom and intelligence of his plans and actions are his alone. Similarly, the *Morkinskinna* account actively indicates the plan was of Haraldr's making, but narrates a longer version of the siege, using the structure to demonstrate each step of Haraldr's plan and gives voice to his directives. Rather than providing only a notion of the strategy used, the *Morkinskinna*-Haraldr is shown to be a wise and strategic thinker for each stage – simultaneously explaining the plausibility for far-fetched strategies, and again promoting Haraldr's superior wisdom to devise them. Additionally, having outlined his plan to his army, *Morkinskinna* states that *fara þeir svá með sem Norðbrikt mælir* 'they go thus following what Norðbrikt says' [*Msk*, Ch. 14]. For the army to be actively following his directives, Haraldr is presented as being actively in command of the army, and not merely named as such. His experience and associated abilities as a leader are thereby reinforced. The *Morkinskinna*-Haraldr knows how to command, is wise, and crucially, is successful – the true testimony to the abilities of a leader and a king.

3.4.2. The Undermining Siege

The second siege in the *Haralds saga* narrative structure is the case where the Varangians undermined the walls of the besieged city [*HSig*, Ch. 7]. Found only in *Haralds saga* and *Morkinskinna*, this tale is the least documented siege across all the narrative accounts, with no references found to it elsewhere [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. The narrated course of the siege is relatively straightforward. The city was too *fjǫlmenn ok sterk* 'populous and strong' for them to be able to storm it [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. Instead, Haraldr ordered a tunnel to be dug beneath the city walls, bypassing the defences [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. *En er Haraldr skilði þat, at jarðhús þat var svá langt, at þá myndi vera komit inn um borgarvegginn* 'And when Haraldr decided that the tunnel was so long that it measured to be past the city wall' the Varangians used it to enter the city undetected and ultimately captured the town [*Msk*, Ch. 13; *HSig*, Ch. 7]. As a form of medieval siege warfare, these narrated tactics are reasonably practicable. As such, Haraldr can be considered to have enacted these tactics in actuality and not just depiction – as de Vries, and Blöndal and Benedikz have also acknowledged – though this cannot be claimed as a certainty.[36] The narrative premise for undermining may easily have been drawn from its practice in siege warfare more generally.[37]

3.4.2.1. Purpose

The undermining tale also includes more fanciful aspects. The details shared between accounts of the invading Varangians breaching the floor of the city hall and startling the feasting guests is most likely an addition meant for entertainment more

[36] de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut', 66; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 73.
[37] For the continued practice and effectiveness of undermining in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see Richard L. C. Jones, 'Fortifications and Sieges in Western Europe, c. 800–1450', in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), 171. Undermining also took place at the respective sieges of Exeter in 1068, Edessa in 1144, Lisbon in 1147, Château-Gaillard in 1203–1204, and Rochester Castle in 1215, among other examples – see entries in Jim Bradbury, *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Warfare* (Routledge: London, 2005), 150, 187, 199, 217, & 224.

than supposed historical accuracy [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13].[38] In a supposed reality, the guests would surely have heard the digging beneath them and arranged a defensive force to challenge the Varangians in the hall instead. This fanciful addition is not without purpose, however. The depiction that *margir af borgarmǫnnum, snæddu þar ok drukku* 'many of the citizens ate there and drank' firstly reinforces the difficulty the city otherwise posed to capture [*HSig*, Ch. 7]. Though neither narrative specifies a time frame, the siege must have lasted long enough for the tunnel to have been successfully dug out. Supplies of food and drink, however, are not suggested to be particularly depleted due to the impression of many citizens gathered to feast. Secondly, the surprise the citizens are said to have shown further implies an air of complacency within the city [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. The citizens believed in the strength of their defences, and were expecting to outlast their besiegers. By contrast, the success of the chosen course of action to undermine the city walls demonstrates Haraldr's superiority in military wisdom and his fortitude in the face of such adversity.

3.4.2.2. Organisation

Finally, the depicted organisation required for the successful outcome of undermining the city also showcases Haraldr's qualities as a leader. As in the case of the bird siege, it is again keenly highlighted by the respective authors that the enacted strategy was of Haraldr's planning [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. In *Haralds saga*, Haraldr is said to have ordered that the tunnel to undermine the city was started *frá þar sem fell bekkr einn, ok var þar djúpt gil, svá at ekki mátti þannig sjá ór borginn* 'from where a stream flowed, and there was a deep gully, so that they would not be able to see from the city' [*HSig*, Ch. 7]. Similarly, in *Morkinskinna*, Haraldr is depicted as enacting his plan and leading his company through it: *[á] fell eptir gili einu hjá borginni sjálfri. Þangat gekk Norðbrikt með sex tigu manna, ok fal sýn í milli <ok> borgarinnar.* 'A gully ran nearby behind the city itself. Norðbrikt went with sixty men, and hid from sight in between it [the gully] and the city' [*Msk*, Ch.

[38] On the requirement of entertainment in the tales, see Theodore M. Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280)* (Cornell University Press: London, 2006), 7.

13]. Haraldr is thus shown to have full command over his army and their trust in his orders.

The army's need to hide their actions is also made apparent in both accounts, and Haraldr is again depicted as the mastermind providing the solution, in this case where to dig at the gully. If the Varangians had been witnessed working to undermine the city, it is probable that a sortie would have been sent by the defenders to prevent the work from continuing, for them to have commenced countermining, or for them to have prevented the work of undermining through other means. The required secrecy of the operation is further highlighted by the specific alignment with the flowing stream which was said to have carried the excavated earth away [*HSig*, Ch. 7; *Msk*, Ch. 13]. The growing presence of a large pile of earth otherwise would also have served as a giveaway to the defenders. Haraldr's reported specification for the location of the tunnel entrance thereby depicts a deeper level of wisdom and awareness of his surroundings on which the success of his strategy depended.

Haraldr's awareness of his surroundings is a recurrent theme in his portrayals in the *konungasögur*. Through the repeated depiction of Haraldr's ability to read and analyse the geography of his settings to his advantage, the degree of his wisdom is amplified. Whereas a singular victory may be attributed to luck, the repeated demonstration of Haraldr having manipulated the scenario to his advantage and success attests to his own qualities and abilities as being the deciding factors. Furthermore, the narration in *Haralds saga* of charges still being led against the city – despite the previous authorial acknowledgement that the city could not be breached in this manner – must be assumed to have been engaged in as a distraction tactic to divert the defenders' attention away from the site of undermining [*HSig*, Ch. 7]. In addition to the Varangians working to excavate the tunnel in shifts *bæði dag ok nótt* 'both day and night', it is repeatedly demonstrated that the army was working harmoniously in units under Haraldr's leadership and directive [*HSig*, Ch. 7].

3.4.3. The Faux Funeral Siege

The final siege tale shared between the three *konungasögur* is the one here referred to as the faux funeral. In each of the accounts, the tale of the faux funeral is used to conclude the passages on the sieges in the narrative structure. It is possible that this tale is narrated last because it best displays Haraldr's varied qualities and is the most elaborate of his strategic schemes, thereby making it the most suited to act as the grand finale. The reported premise of the siege is shared across the three accounts as follows:

Having come to yet another impenetrable city, the Varangians established their besiegement and *hǫfðu litla hríð dvalzk* 'had stayed a little time' when *fekk Haraldr sjúkleik* 'Haraldr got a sickness' [*HSig*, Ch. 10]. Both the Varangians and the besieged citizens became aware of this, and following Haraldr's apparent death, the Varangians asked if they might bury their leader within the city to which the citizens agreed [*HSig*, Ch. 10; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Once the funeral procession had entered past the city gates, the Varangians launched their attack and successfully captured the city [*HSig*, Ch. 10; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51].

3.4.3.1. Presentation

The *Haralds saga* account does not include any indication of Haraldr's illness as being a decided part of the Varangians' strategy, nor does it explicitly state that Haraldr is in fact alive and well at the time of the attack [*HSig*, Ch. 10]. These details are instead included in the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts, with *Morkinskinna* being the most explicit in detailing Haraldr's strategising efforts [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 14]. In *Haralds saga*'s preceding siege examples, the author had already demonstrated and explicitly acknowledged Haraldr's wisdom and military intelligence. In this final tale, the *Heimskringla* author appears to have redeveloped their narrative approach to actively engage with Haraldr's own supposed tactics.

By not acknowledging Haraldr's illness as part of his strategy, the audience is misled to suppose that Haraldr was in fact ill and died whilst besieging the city. Through this omission, the *Haralds saga* author enacts Haraldr's own supposed tactics upon

the audience. As such, Haraldr's wisdom and ability to manipulate a situation are actively demonstrated by the continued effectiveness of the deception upon the present audience. The portrayal of the faux funeral siege and Haraldr's tactics in this performative way, however, is unique to *Haralds saga*. Both the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* authors continued to use the same formulaic structure as in their previously recounted sieges, openly acknowledging the strategy which Haraldr had devised [*Msk*, Chs. 13–14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. *Haralds saga* also follows this formulaic structure in the previous sieges recounted in the text – for the bird siege and undermining [*HSig*, Chs. 6–7]. Having followed the accepted structure for the previous siege examples, the deviation from this structure in *Haralds saga* subverts expectations, thereby making the employed deception more convincing to the audience.

The choice to deviate from the established structure must have been a deliberate authorial decision. While the narration creates a depiction of Haraldr, the depiction of Haraldr and his tactics also informs the narration. Haraldr is shown to retain his secrets, so the author chose to retain Haraldr's secrets; the author chose to retain information, so Haraldr is shown to retain information in the author's narrative. The narration simultaneously draws upon its own portrayal of Haraldr whilst informing that portrayal.

3.4.3.2. Haraldr Sigurðarson in Memory

The redevelopment of the narrative structure and delivery in *Haralds saga* raises questions as to how Haraldr was remembered and how tales of his life were informed. Though Haraldr is portrayed in each of the accounts as wise enough to identify and develop another strategy for taking the final city, his ability as a deceiver must also have been apparent. Within the broad literary repertoire of depicted behaviours suitable for a king, deception has not been considered an acceptable quality by most scholarship – presumably for the matter of it appearing

counterintuitive to the highly praised attribute of justice.[39] Whilst the *konungasögur* offer a tone of disapproval about those who frequently practiced deceptions and injustices against the kingdom's populace, they rarely decry the episodic depictions of infamies. Instead, positive qualities and practices are cheered in the kings' depictions, and it is by omission that negative traits receive disapproval. On rare occasions, however, where deception is practiced for the benefit of the populace or king's followers, there is no suggestion of qualms with the action. Haraldr's faux funeral is one such example. The lack of criticism here may demonstrate a component of the 'key duties of kingship', namely to be 'a protector of his people', in line with a wider European model of kingship and its development observed by Weiler.[40] Though Haraldr's strategy led his followers into battle, and so to danger, his course likely sped the siege and forced a battle under conditions which were of greater advantage to them – thus protecting them from an overly lengthy siege or a battle of unfavourable odds. Such attributes, however, may not accurately reflect the time in which Haraldr himself acted or the expectations for Norwegian or Scandinavian kingship in the eleventh century. Instead, these attributes may have been retrospectively tailored by the *konungasögur* authors. An alternative explanation for the lack of criticism of Haraldr's deception may equally be because the respective authors recognised the folkloristic or fictitious elements of the tale and therefore deemed such criticism irrelevant. The association of the tale with Haraldr may have been enough for the example to have been included in the *konungasögur* regardless, and it otherwise further supports the positive kingly qualities depicted of him.

While none of the accounts offer overt criticism of Haraldr's trickery in the siege, the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts retain a clear line of how deception ought to be practised when compared to the *Haralds saga* account. In *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, the Varangians are shown to be aware that Haraldr was neither sick nor dead as *Haraldr hafði borit sjálfr kistuna* 'Haraldr himself had carried the coffin' [*Fsk*,

[39] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74–75; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108; Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom: State Formation in Norway, c. 900–1350* (Museum Tusculanum Press: Copenhagen, 2010), 158; Björn Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making in the West ca.1000–ca.1250', *Viator*, 41: 1 (2010), 61 & 80.
[40] Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making', 61.

Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 14]. Thus, Haraldr is described as being in view of the Varangians, and as such could be recognised by them, alive and well. Haraldr's deception is therefore limited in these accounts to having been played upon the Varangian's enemies only, and not upon Haraldr's followers. The *Haralds saga* account differs from this approach by having it appear that Haraldr really was ill, and that the Varangians believed he had died. Moreover, Haraldr is not described among the funeral procession [*HSig*, Ch. 10]. In *Haralds saga*, Haraldr's deception is therefore shown to have been enacted upon both the besieged citizens and his own followers. There is therefore a clear distinction between the accounts as to upon whom it was acceptable to practise deception when working for the benefit of one's followers. In the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts, deception is presented as acceptable if practised only against the enemy; in *Haralds saga*, the deception could extend to one's followers as well, when it is being done for their benefit. The motive for the deception, benefiting one's followers, is thereby shown to outweigh the deception itself in the *Haralds saga* presentation.

Deception could be employed by figures who were socially positioned as royal lords, such as kings, however, as Weiler identifies.[41] Though at the time of Haraldr's exploits with the Varangians and in the narrative chronology, Haraldr was not a king, his prominent placement within the *konungasögur* speaks for why and how he was remembered – as a king of Norway. The thirteenth-century depictions of Haraldr would not have required him to have been shown in the light of a purely favourable moral framework otherwise designed to demonstrate the suitability of his candidacy to kingship – he had already secured the position long ago. Even whilst leading the Varangians, Haraldr may have been considered to hold a position as a royal lord due to his close familial connections to Óláfr helgi and Magnús inn góði. Haraldr's trickery could thereby have been potentially overlooked. Equally, it is possible the depiction of Haraldr as a trickster to some degree added to the notion of a distinct past, where kingship and the rules of its conduct were different to those of the time in which the *konungasögur* were penned. Haraldr's deception in this case, however, also contains direct links to positively perceived qualities. Wisdom and strategic

[41] Weiler, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making', 83.

intelligence would have been required for the ruse to have worked. The presence of these qualities repurposed for the use of deception could have thereby made an alternative presentation of acceptable kingship.

3.4.3.3. The Faux Funeral – Folklore and Purpose

Like the bird siege, the story of the faux funeral has been identified as a wandering folkloristic tale.[42] The use of folklore narratives throws significant doubt on the historical validity of the accounts, being further removed from the illusion of a historical truth. Nonetheless, the narratives remain useful for demonstrating and identifying the qualities and ideals supposedly held for leadership and kingship as applied to the representative figure. The key distinction between the bird siege and faux funeral narratives within the *konungasögur* is where they have so far been identified elsewhere. As well as the parallel examples of bird siege narratives, equivalent tales have been found in antiquity (such as a case regarding Alexander the Great), up to the thirteenth-century exploits of Genghis Khan.[43] A superficial geographic reach can also be seen across the bird siege examples, being applied to cases from Ireland to Mongolia. The extent of this geographic range must be taken with caution, however, as the various records relating the tales may have been produced in locations distant from the supposed place of action, with different cultural implications placed upon potentially both the location of the action, and how the action and narrated event were intended and interpreted. By contrast, there appears to have been an excess of faux funeral narratives concentrated in and around the twelfth century, with several being set across the Mediterranean.[44] A simple explanation for the commonality of a Mediterranean setting proving popular at this time may be an effect of the Crusades, their associated routes, and related campaigns. Alternative settings of faux funeral narratives can be found in the *Gesta*

[42] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 72–73.
[43] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 71–72.
[44] William of Apulia, 'The Deeds of Robert Guiscard by William of Apulia', G. A. Loud (trans.), *Medieval History Texts in Translation* (University of Leeds), 24–25; Dudo of Saint-Quentin, 'Gesta Normannorum by Dudo of Saint-Quentin', Felice Lifshitz (ed. & trans.), *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Fordham University, republished online 2019), Ch. 2; see also, further examples given in Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 72.

Danorum, including Paltisca and London, though Saxo Grammaticus again falls into the sphere of potential influence in the twelfth century.[45] It is difficult to determine which version of the tale – if any – held the most influence as a source for the inclusion of the motif in the Old Norse literature. Saxo Grammaticus may offer the closest contact by potential geographic and cultural proximity, though Matthew of Paris may also be considered a fair contender for distance. Jan de Vries argues for the tale to have begun with Robert Guiscard – though *resprouted* may be a better understanding due to Dudo's work predating Guiscard, and the identification by Blöndal and Benedikz of a similar classical tale by Polyaenus.[46] Nevertheless, the tale concerning Robert Guiscard, found in the *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* by William of Apulia, may be the most relevant example to compare with that of Haraldr due to other similarities in the records of their respective careers.[47] Both Haraldr and Guiscard were renowned military commanders and operated in the eleventh century. For both figures, their campaigns took them around the Mediterranean, and Sicily features prominently in the records of their respective successes. Additionally, the connections and cultural exchange between Normandy and Scandinavia, which the respective works of Elisabeth van Houts and Paul White convincingly examine, may have acted as a fair avenue for the deeds of Robert Guiscard – a notable Norman – to have traversed and attached themselves instead to Haraldr.[48]

As will be discussed in more detail below, the setting of Haraldr's sieges in Sicily is rendered ambiguously in the *konungasögur* record. Haraldr has previously been recognised as having aided the Byzantine campaigns in Sicily of Georgios Maniakes, but while passing mention of Haraldr's assistance can be found in Greek and Latin texts, there are no detailed accounts to corroborate the narratives of the

---

[45] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, 85 & 105; Karsten Friis-Jensen, 'Introduction', in Karsten Friis-Jensen (ed.), Peter Fisher (trans.), *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes, Volume 1* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2015), xxxiii–xxxv.
[46] de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut', 68 & 72–73; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 72; Felice Lifshitz, 'Gesta Normannorum by Dudo of Saint-Quentin', Felice Lifshitz (ed. & trans.), *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Fordham University, republished online 2019), Introduction.
[47] William of Apulia, 'The Deeds of Robert Guiscard', Loud (trans.), 24–25.
[48] White, 'The Latin Men', 157–158; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Scandinavian Influence on Norman Literature', in R. Allen Brown (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies*, VI, (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1990), 120. See also, de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut', 68.

konungasögur.[49] Although it is likely Haraldr ventured to and fought in Sicily, the details of his specific battles and wider travels were forgotten and otherwise merged with other tales of similar association by the time the textual accounts of the *konungasögur* were created.

In addition to the bird siege and the faux funeral, a third instance of a borrowed tale is present in the *Morkinskinna* narrative of Haraldr. During his stay in Miklagarðr, Haraldr is said to have been required to prepare a feast, but there was an imperial restriction placed on the availability of firewood and he instead ingeniously used walnuts for fuel [*Msk*, Ch. 13]. The same tale is told again in *Morkinskinna* of Sigurðr Jórsalafari while he was in Miklagarðr [*Msk*, Ch. 70].[50] Again, similar tales are found outside of Old Norse works, including a version pertaining to the Norman Duke Robert the Magnificent.[51] In the case of Duke Robert there is no pretext of a feast, only the necessity of 'fuel so that food for himself and his men could be prepared'.[52] The tale of Duke Robert also includes a description of his steed being shod with golden horseshoes, and his refusal to accept gifts from the Byzantine emperor – both of which are motifs shared with *Morkinskinna*'s account of Sigurðr Jórsalafari's time in Miklagarðr [*Msk*, Ch. 68].[53] Both van Houts and White consider these shared attributes as part of a common 'Norman-Scandinavian literary stock', a view shared albeit to a lesser extent by Scheel.[54] While the sharing of these tales indicate a connection between Norman and Scandinavian motifs, it is clear the Old Norse tales

---

[49] Dirk Booms and Peter Higgs, *Sicily: Culture and Conquest* (The British Museum Press: London, 2016), 169; Kekaumenos, 'Λόγος νουθετητικος, 'A Word of Wisdom'', Page (trans.), 104; Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 76.

[50] On the comparative uses of the tale for Haraldr Sigurðarson and Sigurðr Jórsalafari see Kalinke, '"Sigurðr saga Jórsalafara": The Fictionalization of Fact in "Morkinskinna"', *Scandinavian Studies*, 56: 2 (1984), 158–159; and Joyce Hill, 'Burning Walnuts: An International Motif in the Kings' Sagas', in Daniel Anlezark (ed.), *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature* (University of Toronto Press: London, 2011), 194–195.

[51] William of Jumièges, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni. Volume II*, Elisabeth van Houts (ed. & trans.), (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1995), 83–85. On the different versions of the walnut motif see Hill, 'Burning Walnuts', 195–202.

[52] William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, *Vol. 2*, van Houts (trans.), 85.

[53] William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, *Vol. 2*, van Houts (trans.), 83.

[54] van Houts, 'Scandinavian Influence on Norman Literature', 120–121; White, 'The Latin Men', 158; Roland Scheel, 'Byzantium – Rome – Denmark – Iceland: Dealing with Imperial Concepts in the North', in Christian Scholl, et al. (eds.), *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages* (Peter Lang: New York, 2017), 284. Both White and van Houts consider a shared cultural background between the Norman and Scandinavian authors as a reason to classify these tales as being of a shared stock rather than as wandering folktales.

also drew on motifs, such as the bird siege, which have other examples from farther afield. The literary borrowing and influences on Haraldr's narrative is therefore wider and more varied than simply drawing from a Norman-Scandinavian pool.

Notably, though Robert Guiscard is included in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* there is no equivalent mention of him partaking in a faux funeral strategy.[55] Despite the plain attachment of a tale to a particular leader by one author, its credibility may have been questioned by the authors of other works about the same individual, resulting in its exclusion – a scepticism apparent in both Norman and Norse works. The "walnut tale" is not included in *Heimskringla*, *Fagrskinna*, or *Ágrip*, for either Haraldr nor Sigurðr. A careful selection of which tales were included and ascribed to which figures is therefore apparent in both Norse and Norman works. Whether these selections were the result of prior knowledge of the tale having attachment elsewhere, or not, is more difficult to determine. While the crossover of tales has been correctly identified, it was not always consistently applied by the medieval authors.

Though the "walnut tale" is not included in *Heimskringla* or *Fagrskinna*, the respective authors clearly had no aversion to using other stock motifs in their narratives, as evidenced by the faux funeral and bird siege examples [*HSig*, Chs. 6 & 10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. How aware each of the *konungasögur* authors were of their use of stock motifs cannot be determined, only hypothesised as a reason for their selective inclusions. Overt borrowing of tales could have potentially damaged the sense of historicity in the narratives if historicity was the chief goal of the text. Despite this risk, the included tales serve to illustrate and shape the themes and figures which the authors chose to portray. Thus, though the perceived accuracy regarding real events may be skewed, the reputation surrounding Haraldr at the time the texts were written is revealed. In each of the narratives depicting Haraldr, the motifs are used to demonstrate his courage, ingenuity, and leadership. The more fantastical elements to the stories may have added a sense of awe of his deeds, but certainly emphasise those depicted qualities. The tales therefore illuminate the regard with

[55] William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, *Vol. 2*, van Houts (trans.), 154–159.

which Haraldr was remembered, and demonstrate the qualities considered important for a leader or king to possess.

3.4.4. Halldórr Snorrason

A fourth siege example is narrated in the *Haralds saga* account, wherein the Varangians boldly storm the city gates [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. The defining feature of this tale is the prominent presence of the Icelandic figure, Halldórr Snorrason. During the battle, Halldórr is said to have been called upon to carry the Varangians' standard, to have criticised Haraldr's leadership, and to have been wounded across the face in the fighting [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. The *Morkinskinna* account contains an equivalent exchange between Halldórr and Haraldr, as well as details of Halldórr's injury, though in this version these events are staged within the battle following the initial tactics of the faux funeral tale [*Msk*, Ch. 14]. Halldórr's injury is also granted a passing mention in the *Fagrskinna* account of the faux funeral, though the account contains no further details [*Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Counterintuitively, the distinctiveness of the event, including the specification of the Icelander, Halldórr Snorrason, may indicate the example found in *Haralds saga* holds the most historical truth. Unlike the undermining tale, the battle is a distinct enough narrative of combat to not fall into the category of generic siege tactics. Additionally, unlike the bird siege and faux funeral tales, there are no folkloristic themes in the Halldórr example.

The theme of the banner or standard-bearer is found elsewhere in saga literature, however. These include descriptions of standards being captured or falling in battle, with several examples included in the *konungasögur*, though these may stand as a regular course of strategy to demoralise the enemy force and spur one's own victory.[56] Magic or lucky banners are also a feature in other sagas, such as the raven banner in the battle of Clontarf, included in *Orkneyinga saga* and *Brennu-Njáls saga*.[57] In *Haralds saga*, Haraldr makes a similar claim for his banner, *Landeyða*

[56] Cf. the placement of Magnús berfœttr's standard, or the anticipated advance of Erlingr skakki's forces and standard [*Fsk*, Chs. 85 & 104; *Mberf*, Ch. 25; *MErl*, Ch. 13; *Msk*, Ch. 63].
[57] '*Orkneyinga saga*', Chs. 11–12; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (ed.), Íslenzk Fornrit XII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1954), Ch. 157.

'Land-waster', being capable of ensuring his victory in a boast to Sveinn Úlfsson, though this is not the case in the battle of Stamford Bridge where the banner is used [*HSig*, Chs. 22 & 88–93; *Fsk*, Chs. 67–71; *Msk*, Ch. 54]. Finally, there are scenes during battles in which a brief exchange takes place near the banner, where it features as a positional marker, and where a participant is then spurred on to demonstrate greater ferocity and courage in fighting. *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, in *Hákonar saga góða*, share an example of this type of scene taking place between Eyvindr skreyja [braggart] and Hákon inn góði, where Hákon is spurred to kill Eyvindr, while the exchange between Halldórr Snorrason and Haraldr Sigurðarson is an example between allies [*Fsk*, Chs. 13 & 51; *Hákgóð*, Chs. 30–31; *HSig*, Ch. 9; *Msk*, Ch. 14].[58] The description or importance of a standard in a battle-scene is therefore not uncommon, and the premise for the scene between Halldórr and Haraldr may draw from this stock to contextualise their exchange in the *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts [*Msk*, Ch. 14; *HSig*, Ch. 9]. Though *Fagrskinna* includes Halldórr Snorrason and his injury in battle, the account does not mention the standard, nor does it describe any exchange having taken place between Halldórr and Haraldr [*Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Thus, the exchange around the standard in *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga* may be loosely classified as a form of "banner motif", while the presence of Halldórr provides the tale with greater historical validity.

Rather than the generically described setting, it is the dialogue which requires greater analysis for how Haraldr is portrayed. Both *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga* include Halldórr insulting Haraldr, accusing him of cowardice:

Msk, Ch. 14:

> *þá er hann mælti at Halldórr skyldi bera merkit fyrir í borgina, at hann svaraði í fyrstu: "Beri herr merki fyrir þér rǫgum!"*
> *"Mjǫk er mælt, Halldórr," segir Norðbrikt, "enda er vel gengit."*
> *Norðbrikt spurði nú ef jarlinn vildi lífit þiggja.*

[58] *Brennu-Njáls saga* contains a similar discussion around the banner during the battle of Clontarf, and may also be considered as overlapping with this category. However, the focus in *Brennu-Njáls saga* is on the banner being cursed, with the bearer consistently being killed, rather than on spurring someone to action. See, *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Ch. 157.

Hann svaraði: "Hver ertu?" segir hann; "víst ertu konungborinn maðr."
Hann segir jarlinum til it sanna í hljóði, ok þá jarlinn af honum líf ok ríkit.

'then he [Haraldr] said that Halldórr should carry the standard forth into the city; he [Halldórr] immediately answered: "Carry the standard forth yourself, coward!"
"That is grand speech, Halldórr," says Norðbrikt, "as it is going to end well."
Norðbrikt now asked the jarl [Halldórr] if he wished to accept a living.
He replied: "Who are you?" he says; "you are certainly a man of royal birth."
He [Norðbrikt] quietly tells the truth to the jarl, and then the jarl had a living and influence from him'.

Hsig, Ch. 9:

En er Haraldr kom at borgarhliðinu, þá fell merkismaðr hans.
Þá mælti hann: "Halldórr, tak upp merkit!"
Halldórr svaraði ok tók upp stǫngina ok mælti óvitrliga: "Hverr mun merki bera fyrir þér, ef þú fylgir svá blauðliga sem nú er um hríð?"
Var þat meirr reiðimál en sannyrði, því at Haraldr var inn vápndjarfasti maðr.

'But when Haraldr came to the city gates, then his standard-bearer fell.
Then he spoke: "Halldórr, take up the standard!"
Halldórr replied and took up the pole and spoke unwisely: "Who will carry a standard before you, if, as for a while now, you follow it in such a cowardly way?"
That was more wrathful speech than true words, because Haraldr was the most fearless person in battle'.

The insult which Halldórr is shown to deliver attacks Haraldr in several ways, all stemming from the accusation of cowardice. As well as being an expected quality possessed by kings, courage was innately tied to masculinity, as demonstrated in

various studies across saga literature.[59] If the king was expected to be the 'best man', as Bagge claims, then he would need to be the paragon of masculinity.[60] This idealised form did not have to be static or singular, however, but both presiding and alternative forms of masculinity typically included displays of courage and martial capability, as Morcom addresses.[61] As the 'antithesis of a hegemonic ideal of masculinity', as Finlay describes, cowardice was the most potent attack to inflict upon Haraldr to injure both his own social grounding as a masculine man and his hierarchical standing as a military leader.[62] The terms used – *ragr* 'coward' in *Morkinskinna* and *blauðliga* 'cowardly' in *Haralds saga* – may have been particularly provocative descriptions as understood by a contemporary audience due to their additional connotations to sexual or gender perversions, and the penalty weight such accusations could carry.[63] By Sørensen's standard, such accusations could threaten the social structure as well as challenge Haraldr's own social status; if Haraldr wanted to maintain his position as the Varangian's leader he would have had no choice but to demonstrate that he was the opposite of what Halldórr accused, or else 'live on in shame'.[64] In response, Haraldr could reasonably be expected to attack or kill Halldórr. As neither *Morkinskinna* nor *Haralds saga*

[59] Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', 467; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 162 & 280; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108; Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74; Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Men and Masculinities in the Sagas of Icelanders* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2019), 70; Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, 'With mirthful merriment': Masquerade and Masculinity in *Mágus saga jarls*', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 77–78; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, 'Masculinity, Christianity, and (Non)Violence', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 119–125; Thomas Morcom 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna* and the Defusal of Kingly Aggression', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 127; see also, Jacqueline Murray, 'Introduction', in Jacqueline Murray (ed.), *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (Garland Publishing, Inc.: London, 1999), xviii–xix.

[60] Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 162.

[61] Morcom, 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna*', 127, 132–133.

[62] Alison Finlay, ''*Þat þótti illr fundr*': Phallic Aggression in *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa*', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell and Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 171.

[63] Finlay, 'Phallic Aggression in *Bjarnar saga*', 171. See the entry for *ragr* in the following: Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1874); Geir T. Zoega, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (Dover Publications: Mineola, 2004). See the entry for *blauðr* in the following: Cleasby and Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*; Zoega, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*.

[64] Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of sexual defamation in early Northern society* (Odense University Press: Odense, 1983), 77–78.

describes such an attack, Haraldr is instead shown to possess self-restraint, which has been deemed another quality for kingship.[65]

Haraldr's restraint does not diminish his masculinity, nor his social status in the accounts, and both texts present Halldórr's insult as unfounded. Throughout the narratives of the sieges and battles Haraldr participated in, Haraldr is demonstrated to have been actively engaged in the strategies and positioned in the thick of the fighting. Although the strategic planning exemplified by the bird siege does not necessitate a scene of direct fighting (Haraldr is portrayed as the mastermind while no one is commended for outstanding skill at arms), he is shown to participate in the battle from the faux funeral strategy in both *Haralds saga* and *Morkinskinna*, and in the separate siege featuring Halldórr in *Haralds saga* [*Msk*, Chs. 13–14; *HSig*, Chs. 6 & 9–10]. In the first examples where he is the mastermind, Haraldr might be considered as leading from the back, but this is clearly not the case when he is challenged by Halldórr, as the two are presented as being closely engaged in the battle. Haraldr's courage is thereby evident as he is shown to be among the fighting.

The apparent fact of Haraldr's courage, as demonstrated in previous battle descriptions, is bluntly stated in the *Haralds saga* version, with the author describing Haraldr as *inn vápndjarfasti maðr* 'the most fearless person in battle' [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. While this simple statement protects the reputation the previous stages of the narrative had built around Haraldr, it merely concludes what the descriptions accorded to Halldórr had begun. Halldórr is said to have spoken *óvitrliga* 'unwisely', uttering *reiðimál* 'wrathful speech' rather than *sannyrði* 'true words' [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. Through the repeated use of modifiers, the author makes it clear that Halldórr's comment is not to be taken seriously. The overt intervention of the narrator 'to correct a false interpretation voiced by one of the characters' is a rare occurrence in *Heimskringla*, as Whaley assesses, but was likely one of necessity here.[66] Firstly, the interruption ensures that the presentation of Haraldr and his reputation as a courageous warrior are never in question. Secondly, the clarifying

[65] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108.
[66] Diana Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series VIII (Viking Society for Northern Research: London, 1991), 92–93.

modifiers explain to the audience why Haraldr did not seek retribution against Halldórr. The audience is given to understand the scenario as the imagined Haraldr would have seen it: Halldórr speaking rashly in anger amid battle, not with real accusation or malice. Thus, a glimpse of Haraldr's more empathic side is granted, and perhaps shared by the texts' audience. Haraldr's respect for the warriors fighting under his direction and facing difficult circumstances is made clear, and demonstrations of such behaviour could aid in ensuring their loyalty. Haraldr's reputation is therefore never in doubt, and his suitability to leadership, particularly military leadership, is made apparent.

The presentation of Halldórr's attitude in the moment, being unwise and angry, contrasts sharply against the carefully sculpted image of Haraldr as being wise and restrained. As both Haraldr and Halldórr are described as being in the thick of battle at the city gates, they are placed in the same situation under the pressure of fighting and defending themselves. Though Halldórr is said to have received a facial wound during the battle, this does not necessarily diminish his ability as a warrior compared to Haraldr.[67] The only difference presented between the two is Halldórr's reaction to the situation, voiced in his comment to Haraldr. Whereas Haraldr is shown to remain level-headed enough to issue orders, Halldórr's anger betrays his apparent loss of composure. Thus, Haraldr is demonstrated to be the more restrained and capable of the two in a fraught situation. Haraldr's skills for being both a warrior and leader are thereby shown, and are emphasised in contrast to the otherwise capable figure of Halldórr. The contrast of their respective capabilities and behaviours highlights Haraldr's superiority and presents him as being the better man.

In the *Morkinskinna* account, Haraldr is shown to immediately refute Halldórr's insult by instead claiming that the battle will end well, and they will be victorious [*Msk*, Ch. 14]. The confidence of Haraldr's statement demonstrates his courage – the very thing Halldórr claims him to be lacking – by reacting almost cheerfully to the situation of being heavily pressed by the enemy. A parallel may be found in

[67] Receiving a wound may be as much a matter of individual circumstance of the fight as skill against one's opponent.

Bagge's assessment of Sverrir Sigurðarson who was so 'sufficiently brilliant and successful as a military commander to be able to joke about his lack of personal courage'.[68] While Haraldr is clearly not lacking in personal courage, being in the middle of a battle, he is certainly shown to make light of the situation – quite possibly *because* he is in the middle of a battle. In both cases, the actions demonstrated in the texts speak louder than the words themselves. By implication, Haraldr's cheery disposition to the scenario turns the insult back on Halldórr, who must have been doubting the odds of their success to make such a comment. As in the *Haralds saga* version, the contrast in the demeanours of the two is clear, with Haraldr emerging the superior in courage and morale.

Haraldr's superiority in courage and restraint is further emphasised in the *Morkinskinna* version when Halldórr is shown to question who "Norðbrikt" really is and suspects him of being of royal descent. As outlined above, Haraldr is said to have taken on the alias when he had entered the Byzantine emperor's service *ok var þat eigi í vitorði alþýðu at hann væri konungborinn* 'and it was not known by people that he was of royal birth' [*Msk*, Ch. 11]. Despite how Haraldr attempted to hide his identity and royal connections, his conduct before Halldórr – his courage, restraint, and leadership – are nonetheless deemed by Halldórr to be of royal quality and give Haraldr away. Haraldr's kingly qualities, and by extension his suitability to kingship, are innate.

The scene presents a clear distinction for the idea of royal blood leading to the expected royal qualities and conduct. The notion of the genealogical 'best man' is thereby explicitly apparent in *Morkinskinna*, in addition to the texts where Bagge identifies it.[69] Thus, the presentation of kingship ideology and the understanding of innate suitability to kingship is found in both *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*. The anonymity of the *Morkinskinna* author makes it difficult to determine how prevalent these ideas were compared to other royal authors and biographers of the thirteenth

[68] Sverre Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed: Kingship in* Sverris saga *and* Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar (Odense University Press: Odense, 1996), 28.
[69] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 129; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 61–62; Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed*, 59.

century.[70] It may nevertheless be supposed that the ideas present in *Morkinskinna* reflected the ideas held by the wider Icelandic and Norwegian societies, from whom it is presumed the author collected 'a large variety of oral sources' with which they formulated the existing text.[71] Ideology around kingship, royal descent, and the inheritance of innate qualities may therefore not pertain solely to a closed courtly sphere, but be part of wider political understandings developed and held in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, around the time these texts were penned.

After learning the truth of who "Norðbrikt" is, Halldórr appears to pledge himself to Haraldr in the *Morkinskinna* account, despite his previous condescension. Halldórr's demonstrative action further subscribes to the notion of the king needing 'to attract "friends" through his personality and behaviour', as Bagge states, when Haraldr takes him into his confidence and reveals his identity [*Msk*, Ch. 14].[72] Haraldr's confidence in victory, in the fighting abilities of himself and his followers, as well as his generosity and restraint in taking Halldórr into his confidence instead of turning on him as retribution for the insult all appear to change Halldórr's opinion of him and gain him Halldórr's friendship. Haraldr is thereby demonstrated to innately possess the qualities expected for kingship, as well as the ability to secure his position through developing friendship with his followers. This latter ability is further emphasised due to Halldórr's initial opposition. Haraldr is so royally charismatic, he can persuade even those who are firstly opposed to him to his side.

---

[70] Snorri Sturluson, the presumed author of *Heimskringla*, had direct connection with the Norwegian court, as did the authors of *Sverris saga* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. Whether the *Morkinskinna* author had similar connections is unknown. See also, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 'Formáli', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), xxiv–xxv; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 32–33; Þorleifur Hauksson, 'Formáli', in Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), *Sverris saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2007), xxii–xxiv; *Sverris saga*, Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2007), Prologus; Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed*, 15–17 & 91–92.

[71] Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Introduction', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), 82–83.

[72] Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', 467; see also, Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 99.

3.4.4.1. Origins of the Halldórr Siege Tale

The shared references to Halldórr Snorrason across the three accounts suggest the story had a shared origin, and may have once sat within another tale. The reason for Halldórr's memorability may be twofold. Firstly, if the details – and particularly the detailed injuries – from the recounted battle are presumed to be accurate, then Halldórr would likely have been a visually memorable figure, the *Haralds saga* version detailing thus: *Halldórr varð sárr mjǫk, hafði sár mikit í andliti, ok var þat lýti alla ævi, meðan er hann lifði* 'Halldórr was badly wounded, he had a great injury to his face, and had that disfigurement all his life, as long as he lived' [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. It is possible Halldórr was asked about the injury, or he otherwise shared the details, providing a connection of the tale with a potentially visible reminder throughout his life – at least long enough to preserve the event and his part in it within oral tradition. Both *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga* indicate that Halldórr was an original source for the tale of the siege in which he was wounded, and likely of more besides [*HSig*, Ch. 9; *Msk*, Ch. 44].[73]

Secondly, as several scholars outline, Halldórr had strong familial connections to figures present in other sagas, and to Snorri Sturluson, the assumed author of *Heimskringla*.[74] As an ancestor of Snorri Sturluson, it is perhaps unsurprising the *Haralds saga* account in *Heimskringla* is the only text to contain the tale as a distinct siege example. The familial connection provides a traceable line between origin and compilation, and a reason as to why the tale was written. While this does not strictly account to an equivalent extent for Halldórr's inclusion in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, it may be a reason for the singular treatment with which the tale is granted in *Haralds saga*. Rather than being a component in a general tale and

[73] According to *Haralds saga*, Halldórr *hafði þessa frásǫgn hingat til lands* 'brought this story here to this country', but makes no clear distinction as to whether this in reference to the singular tale of the siege in which he was wounded or if he told a larger story, of which this siege was only one component [*HSig*, Ch. 9]. The latter case may be more likely. During a *þáttr* in *Morkinskinna* in which an Icelander came to Haraldr's court and entertained them over Christmas with stories of Haraldr's adventures, he is shown to credit Halldórr Snorrason as the source from which he learned the stories [*Msk*, Ch. 44].

[74] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 72 & 212–214; Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 124–125; Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *Saga and Society: An Introduction to Old Norse Literature*, John Tucker (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1993), 104; Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 153; Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, 38.

setting, there may have been a conscious decision to isolate the siege in which Halldórr was injured as a means of emphasising his own presence and deeds within the narrative. Thus, the presentation of the siege in *Haralds saga* functioned as a platform for familial pride, spotlighting the deeds and courage of the author's ancestor. Where a familial connection may be absent in the cases of the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* authors, there would have been no clear cause to isolate the incident from other siege examples, particularly if the stories had otherwise already merged before these works were written down.

3.4.5. Number of sieges

As has been established, the number of siege campaigns recounted of Haraldr differ between the three accounts which record them. At the core of the matter lie the two siege examples which are present in all three accounts: the bird siege and the faux funeral. Though both examples have folkloristic parallels – and are likely drawn from folkloristic traditions – they must be considered tales closely associated with Haraldr. When the respective authors were compiling their works, there must have already been a strong enough association between the tales and Haraldr for them to have been included in the narratives. Moreover, a pre-existing association would suggest the tales to have been relatively well-known. Though the *Fagrskinna* author could have learned the tales from their record in *Morkinskinna*, the *Fagrskinna* author could have equally discounted them from their narrative if they had deemed the tales too unfamiliar and unimportant, in keeping with their otherwise streamlined narrative. The *Heimskringla* author could equally have learned the tales from *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, but this is of secondary relevance here. As *Morkinskinna* is the oldest record of the use of these stories for Haraldr, it can be presumed that the tales were known in Iceland, where the text was composed. The case for *Fagrskinna* is a little trickier, depending on whether the author was Icelandic or Norwegian.[75] If it is assumed the *Fagrskinna* author was Norwegian, and that their reason for including the tales was that they were already familiar with

[75] See Chapter One: *Fagrskinna*.

them and did not simply include them from *Morkinskinna*, then this constitutes evidence of the same tales being known in Norway as in Iceland. Furthermore, it is likely that the same tales were known in both Norway and Iceland due to the recurrent contact between the two. If the *Fagrskinna* author was Icelandic but working in Norway, then they could have learned the tales in Iceland and brought them to Norway as easily as someone who learned the tales in Norway could have taken them to Iceland. The importance of conveying Haraldr's military and leadership qualities, regardless of their supposed reality, must thereby have predated the time of the *konungasögur*'s compilations to be present in all three works.

3.5. Locations

Unlike other battles mentioned in the *konungasögur*, scant details are provided for the locations of the example battles and sieges in which Haraldr is said to have fought. Of the *átta tigu borga* 'eighty strongholds' that Haraldr supposedly captured, only two examples are included in *Fagrskinna*, three in *Morkinskinna*, and four in *Haralds saga* [*Msk*, Chs. 12–14; *HSig*, Chs. 5–10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51].[76] In each account, the first siege is clearly stated to have taken place in *Sikiley* 'Sicily' [*HSig*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. As comparative tales of battles during foreign adventures, the initial specificity of Sicily in Haraldr's case matches the structure the accounts use in narrating the battles in which Sigurðr Jórsalafari is said to have partaken in during his own travels. For each of Sigurðr's battles, a named location is typically included at the outset, or else a detailed description of a city's population and surroundings [*Msona*, Chs. 3–10; *Msk*, Chs. 65–70; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–91]. In Sigurðr's case, these details add to the sense of adventure and geographical placement for the journey narrative, with many of the locations being easily identifiable and in the order of a practicable route.[77] By contrast, following the initial mention of Sicily ahead of the

[76] The capture of eighty strongholds is mentioned in a poem by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson. See, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', verse 2, 113–114. The same verse is included in all three prose accounts. See, *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12; *HSig*, Ch. 5.

[77] Cf. Harriet Clark, 'Bestowing Status: The Journeys of Rǫgnvaldr Kali Kolsson and Sigurðr Jórsalafari', *Apardjón Journal for Scandinavian Studies*, (forthcoming).

siege and battle examples narrated for Haraldr, no further geographic details are provided. Only *Morkinskinna* concludes the examples recounted for Haraldr with a parting comment that *[þ]á gerði Norðbrikt ferð sína af Sikileyju með ǫllum herinum út í Jórsalaheim* 'then Norðbrikt, with the whole army, undertook a journey from Sicily out to Jerusalem' [*Msk*, Ch. 15]. Due to the bookending reiteration of Sicily, the *Morkinskinna* account plainly implies that all the besieged cities the text recounts were Sicilian. For the *Morkinskinna* account then, the apparent absence of locational details between the opening and concluding lines for the sieges is redressed by this statement.

By contrast, both the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts are left open-ended. Though the first siege example in both accounts is stated to have taken place in Sicily, no further locations are mentioned for the subsequent sieges [*HSig*, Chs. 5–6; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. It is clear in both accounts that Haraldr must have travelled between cities, but it is left for open interpretation as to whether these other cities were also Sicilian. Whereas the *Morkinskinna* account tidily concludes the siege examples with Haraldr departing Sicily, *Fagrskinna* merely states that *[m]arga staði vann hann í þessu landi undir vald Girkjakonungs áðr en hann kœmi aptr til Miklagarðs* 'he [Haraldr] won many places in this land under the authority of the Greek king before he afterwards came to Miklagarðr' [*Msk*, Ch. 15; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. *[Þ]essu landi* 'this land' is presumably still Sicily as no other location is mentioned in between, though Haraldr is said to have captured *[a]ðra borg* 'another stronghold', suggesting some element of travel had been involved [*Fsk*, Ch. 51].

Haralds saga has a similar problem to *Fagrskinna*. Though Haraldr clearly travelled between four cities to account for the number of sieges narrated in *Haralds saga*, three of them are not given precise locations by the author [*HSig*, Chs. 7–10]. Following the sieges, *Haralds saga* simply states that *Haraldr var marga vetr í hernaði þessum, er nú var frá sagt, bæði í Serklandi ok Sikileyju* 'Haraldr was many winters on this raiding expedition, as now was said, in both Serkland and Sicily' [*HSig*, Ch. 11]. While Sicily is mentioned, it is unclear whether all of the siege examples were thought to have taken place there, or whether they were set in Serkland as well.

All three accounts describe Haraldr as well-travelled, with references to Sicily, Serkland, and Africa, as well as Miklagarðr and the Balkans. Little attention is paid to Haraldr's Balkan exploits in the prose, though *Haralds saga* includes a full poetic reference to his time there [*HSig*, Ch. 1].[78] In each account, Haraldr is said to have gone to *Affríka* 'Africa' where he won the claimed 'eighty strongholds', with all three accounts accompanying this statement with the same supporting verse by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson [*HSig*, Ch. 5; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12].

Sexstefja 2:

> *Tøgu má tekna segja,*
> *(tandrauðs) á Serklandi*
> *(ungr hætti sér) átta,*
> *(ormtorgs hǫtuðr) borga,*
> *áðr herskorðuðr harðan*
> *Hildar leik und skildi,*
> *Serkjum hættr í sléttri*
> *Sikileyju gekk heyja*.
>
> 'One can say that eighty strongholds were captured in the land of the Saracens (Serkland) – the young hater of the flame-red dragon-square [gold > ruler] put himself in danger –, before the troop-supporter [warrior], dangerous to the Saracens (Serkir), advanced to wage the harsh sport of Hildr <valkyrie> [battle] behind his shield in level Sicily'.[79]

A slight discrepancy is apparent between Þjóðólfr's verse and all of the prose accounts in that the eighty captured strongholds were in either Serkland, according here to Þjóðólfr, or Africa, according to the prose authors [*Msk*, Ch. 12; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Ch. 5].

[78] Partial references to the same verse are found in *Fsk*, Ch. 34 and *ÓhelgSep*, Ch. 232. See also, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', verse 1, 112–113.
[79] Standardised verse from Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', verse 2, 113–114. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

It is possible there was some level of conflation between the two locations. As 'the land of the Saracens', "Serkland" has been taken as referring to both North Africa and the Near East, though anywhere in the Arabic-speaking world could also have been meant.[80] A denotation of an eastern area is generally favoured, roughly encompassing the land between the Levantine coast and the Caspian Sea, though these assertions come largely from the association with Yngvarr's eastern expedition.[81] Jesch, and Blöndal and Benedikz consider Þjóðólfr's use of "Serkland" to refer to the Byzantino-Arabic conflicts in Asia Minor which were contemporary to Haraldr's time as a Varangian.[82] This is perfectly plausible for Þjóðólfr's use, particularly as the 'stanza tells of two discrete campaigns', as Jesch asserts.[83]

The prose, however, is somewhat more complex. *Haralds saga* makes a direct connection between Serkland and Africa, stating that *[l]agðisk hann [Haraldr] þá með her sinn vestr í Affríka, er Væringjar kalla Serkland* 'then he [Haraldr] set off with his army west to Africa, which the Varangians call Serkland' [*HSig*, Ch. 5]. Even if Serkland and Africa are taken as near-synonymous terms as the *Haralds saga* author claims, the distinction of westward travel remains. Similarly, though there is no comment on a possible connection between Serkland and Africa, *Morkinskinna* states that Haraldr travelled *með herinn vestr í Affríka* 'with the army west to Africa' [*Msk*, Ch. 12]. It is possible that the *Affríka* 'Africa' referred to was actually 'Ifriqiyah', a region 'understood in the twelfth century to designate the former Roman province of Africa, stretching from what is now eastern Algeria to Tripoli' in Libya.[84] As both *Haralds saga* and *Morkinskinna* place Haraldr in Miklagarðr before heading out on this particular expedition, the destination of Ifriqiyah would be in

[80] Jonathan Shepard, 'Yngvarr's Expedition to the East and a Russian Inscribed Stone Cross', *Saga-Book*, XXI (1982–1985), 232–237; Judith Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2001), 104; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 61–62; Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), *Morkinskinna I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011), 93–94, fn. verse 52 A. See also, the entry for *Serkir* in Cleasby and Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*; and the entry for *Serk-land* in Zoega, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*.

[81] Shepard, 'Yngvarr's Expedition to the East', 236; Jesch, *Ships and Men*, 102–104; Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 91; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 61–62.

[82] Jesch, *Ships and Men*, 106; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 62–63.

[83] Jesch, *Ships and Men*, 106.

[84] David Abulafia, 'The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean', in R. Allen Brown, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, VII (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1984), 26, fn. *.

keeping with the sense of westward travel [*HSig*, Ch. 5; *Msk*, Ch. 12]. On this occasion, the use of Serkland in *Haralds saga* must mean an area west of the Levantine coast. This does not strictly exclude its meaning of the Near East, in this text or any other, only that the word was understood to refer to a larger area and could be used with greater or lesser specificity depending on the narrative context.

The matter is further complicated by an additional verse by Þjóðólfr which is only included in the *Fagrskinna* account [*Fsk*, Ch. 51].

Sexstefja 3:

> *Dolgljóss, hefir dási*
> *darrlatr staðit fjarri*
> *endr, þás elju Rindar*
> *ómynda tók skyndir.*
> *Vasat Affríka jǫfri*
> *Ánars mey fyr hônum*
> *haglfaldinni at halda*
> *hlýðisamt né lýðum*.
>
> 'The spear-lazy sluggard stood far away at that time, when the speeder of battle-light [sword > warrior] seized the rival of Rindr <giantess> lacking bride-payment [=Jǫrð (*jǫrð* 'earth')]. It was not possible for the prince of Africans or his people to hold the hail-coifed maiden of Ánarr <dwarf> [=Jǫrð (*jǫrð* 'earth')] against him'.[85]

A third campaign may be assumed from the verse. Despite containing this allusion to a battle, the prose text of *Fagrskinna* does not include an accompanying battle description. Instead, the author merely states that Haraldr *barðisk við sjálfan konunginn í Affríka ok sigraðisk* 'fought against the king himself in Africa and was victorious' [*Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Though *Morkinskinna* and *Haralds saga* both mention Africa as part of Haraldr's campaigns, neither text describes any events which took place there, nor do they contain an equivalent poetic reference. For all three texts,

[85] Standardised verse from Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', verse 3, 114–116. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

however, it has been suggested that the inclusion of Africa stemmed from each of the authors having some knowledge of this verse.[86] It seems likely this was the case, or at least that the stories the respective authors themselves used were informed by the verse.

Blöndal and Benedikz dismiss the mention of Africa on the circumstantial grounds of there being no other evidence for a major Byzantine military expedition in Africa during the years of Haraldr's involvement with the Varangians.[87] The lack of a major expedition does not rule out minor skirmishes, however, nor does the verse specify that any battle took place in Africa, only that Haraldr's opponents were African. According to Greek historical works, the commander Georgios Maniakes (mentioned alongside Haraldr in the *konungasögur* as *Gyrgir*) fought against 'African and Sicilian Saracens' for the period during which Haraldr would have been present among the Varangians.[88] Additionally, at this time, 'Oumer, ruler of Africa' gave his support to Sicily during the conflicts there.[89] 'Oumer', or Abdallah bin al-Mu'izz as he is otherwise known, was the son of Al-Mu'izz ibn Bādīs who ruled Ifriqiyah at the time, and was likely the *Affríka jǫfri* 'prince of Africans' whom Þjóðólfr mentions.[90] It is perfectly feasible, therefore, for Haraldr to have fought against African defenders without needing to step foot in Africa. It is possible the third campaign, to which Þjóðólfr was referring, instead took place in Sicily.

The apparent lack of precision for locations and events in each of the accounts suggests the exact details of Haraldr's exploits were forgotten by the time the texts

---

[86] Diana Whaley, 'Þjóðólfr Arnórsson', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry in the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035–c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 115–116; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 75, fn. to verse 81; Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, *Morkinskinna I*, 94, fn. 2.

[87] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 61.

[88] Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History*, Wortley (trans.), 376–383; John Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum, Libri XIII–XVIII* (Impensis ed. Weberi: Greece, 1897), 590–591; see also, Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 60.

[89] Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History*, Wortley (trans.), 378; see also, Stavros G. Georgiou, 'A Contribution to the study of Byzantine Prosopography: the Byzantine Family of Opoi', *Byzantion*, 78 (2008), 229; Kenneth Cline, 'Byzantium's Star-Crossed General', *Medieval Warfare*, 4: 2 (2014), 46.

[90] Þjóðólfr, '*Sexstefja*', verse 3, 114–115; Whaley, 'Þjóðólfr Arnórsson', 115; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla III*, 75, fn. to verse 81; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 66; John Wortley (ed. & trans.), *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010), 378, fn. 44.

were written. However, it is clear in the narratives of Sigurðr Jórsalafari's travels that the authors were otherwise well-informed about the Mediterranean geography [*Msona*, Chs. 3–13; *Msk*, Chs. 65–70; *Fsk*, Chs. 86–91]. The naming of additional locations, even in a knowingly fictitious manner, is unlikely to have affected the narrative or received heavy critique – if where Haraldr had travelled had become forgotten, so too could the information of where he had not been become increasingly unknown. Whether specifically known or not, the naming of precise locations could have lent weight to the plausibility and sense of historicity to the siege examples by grounding them in an existing reality. Without this foundation, a possible lack of certainty in the tales of Haraldr's adventures is made apparent. Combined with the use of wandering folktales and stock motifs, it is clear the tales of Haraldr's adventures served a more illustrative purpose to the sense of himself and his reputation than they did as a precise historical record. Whether the authors themselves, their predecessors in oral tradition, or the respective audiences of both, thought the tales were an accurate record of Haraldr's life, to a greater or lesser degree, cannot be succinctly determined.

Clearly certain aspects of Haraldr's Mediterranean adventures were borrowed and embellished, but when these adaptations took place cannot be known. If the locations of Haraldr's exploits could be forgotten, so too could the details of those exploits be lost to memory. It seems that by the time the accounts were written down, Haraldr was remembered to have done *something*, and possibly done it with a particular flair, rather than the specifics of what he had done. The qualities Haraldr is demonstrated as having possessed throughout the Mediterranean section of his narrative can thereby be read as the qualities the respective authors deemed most important to how Haraldr was remembered as being, and how he ought to be portrayed in their works. The function of the siege examples then, is not to be an accurate history of Haraldr's life, but to be an illustrative tool for how Haraldr was remembered, the qualities he was thought to possess, and how those qualities were enacted and perceived.

3.5.1. Opposition

The relative interplay between how Haraldr was remembered, and what Haraldr was thought to have done, also comes through in the lack of detail or description in each of the accounts accorded to his opponents in the sieges. The absence of detail suggests the opponents themselves were not deemed relevant to the thematic portrayal of Haraldr; instead, their abstract presence as Haraldr's opponents were what was important to the narrative and Haraldr's depiction.

In each of the texts, each of the cities at which Haraldr is said to have fought receives minimal description. As established above, none of the cities are named, and their locations are left to vague assumption or interpretation. Furthermore, little detail is given to the population of the cities. Each city is described in succession as being *mikillar ok fjǫlmennrar* 'large and populous', *fjǫlmenn ok sterk* 'populous and strong', and *þessum ǫllum sterkust ok ríkust* 'the strongest and richest of all' [*HSig*, Chs. 6–10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Chs. 13–14]. With each encounter, the city is said to have been a greater challenge and more difficult to defeat, with the final city being the most impenetrable Haraldr and his army had by then encountered. As Haraldr defeats each city in the respective narratives, his skills as a cunning strategist and warrior are made apparent. Moreover, his own courage and fortitude is made apparent in his acceptance of the challenge each city poses, and his leadership abilities are also emphasised in ensuring his army does not lose morale at the sight of an impenetrable city.

Despite the emphasis on the seemingly daunting scales of the cities, no attention is paid to the defenders themselves, or who Haraldr was fighting in any of the accounts. By comparison, in the narratives of his own adventures, Sigurðr Jórsalafari is said to have fought at Lisbon where the population was *hálf kristin, en half heiðin* 'half Christian, and half heathen', at a castle at Sintra *sat í heiðit folk ok herjaði á kristna menn* 'held by heathen people who harried against Christian people', and at Sætt, where *[s]ú borg var heiðin* 'this city was heathen' [*Msona*, Chs. 4–5 & 11; *Msk*, Chs. 65 & 67; *Fsk*, Chs. 86 & 89]. Though the descriptions of Sigurðr's opponents are relatively minimal, they nonetheless serve the purpose of illustrating who Sigurðr

fought, and supports the religious theme of his expedition as a crusade or armed pilgrimage. Similarly, in the battles Magnús inn góði is said to have fought against Sveinn Úlfsson and the Wends, the identification of his opponents reiterates the depiction of Magnús as a defender of his kingdom [*Msk*, Chs. 6–8; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–33].

The contrasting lack of identification of Haraldr's opponents thereby suggests their identities were not deemed important to the narrative of Haraldr's campaigns. Haraldr is not depicted as being moved by piety in his Mediterranean endeavours, nor is he acting defensively. Though the campaigns he was involved in may have had political bearing for the Byzantine Empire he was working for, this bearing did not directly affect Haraldr other than his work as a mercenary, nor did they effect the course of events in Scandinavia. Haraldr's opponents are therefore not integral to his story, nor to the larger narrative of political history with which the *konungasögur* concern themselves. Instead, the key description afforded to Haraldr's opponents is the steady increase in scale of the challenge the cities presented. With every increase in the cities' scale, their subsequent defeat equates to an increase in Haraldr's own abilities. Haraldr is thereby shown to meet every challenge posed to him and respond accordingly. Additionally, with each added challenge and level of difficulty, Haraldr's own abilities are shown to rise accordingly. Though his abilities and qualities as a warrior and leader are often depicted as innate, as exemplified by his success in the first siege, the repetition of multiple victories demonstrates a honing of his abilities, effectively showing him to level-up commensurately. This effect is apparent in all three accounts, but is taken to its furthest extent in the *Haralds saga* narrative which recounts the most siege examples (see Table E).

3.6. A Comparison of Command

In the years c.1038–1041, Georgios Maniakes conducted the Byzantine Conquest of Sicily. Haraldr's involvement in the Sicilian campaign has been previously recognised by both modern scholarship – including scholars from Old Norse and Byzantine fields – and in *Strategikon*, an eleventh-century Byzantine work attributed to one

Kekaumenos.[91] Additionally, the *Morkinskinna* account places Haraldr alongside Gyrgir throughout the narrative for the sieges [*Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. However, in the narrative structure of the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts, Haraldr is said to have parted company from Gyrgir before leading the Varangian contingent to Sicily [*HSig*, Chs. 5–6; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. It is possible, as Blöndal and Benedikz suggest, that Haraldr separated with the Varangians under directions from Georgios Maniakes as part of Maniakes' campaign strategy.[92] Any precise details regarding this matter are lost, however. Whether Haraldr was sent with the Varangians independently on the specific siege campaigns found in the Old Norse examples (as well as potential other campaigns) is unknown, though this theory may fit with the narratives of the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts [*HSig*, Chs. 5–10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. It is equally possible that Haraldr and the Varangians were joined by the larger Greek army, led by Gyrgir, as following the *Morkinskinna* account [*Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. Whether Haraldr had any significant position of command among the army has been met with doubt, but supposed actuality is of little purpose here.[93] Haraldr may or may not have had command of a greater or lesser force, though in consultation with Greek sources, it has been deemed likely that he indeed had some commanding role.[94] However, it is probable that the experiences he gained as a Varangian, serving or commanding, would have affected both him and the reputation which subsequently grew around him. Embellishments are well-established in the narratives of Haraldr's adventures, of which a position of command is probably the most innocuous. While this makes command one of the more plausible aspects of the narratives concerning Haraldr, it must nonetheless be met with a degree of scepticism and treated in the same regard as the more fantastical details of his tales. The narrative position of command in each of the texts purposefully demonstrates

---

[91] Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 75–76; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 65–67; Booms and Higgs, *Culture and Conquest*, 169; Wortley, *The Synopsis of Histories*, fn. 28; Kekaumenos, 'Λόγος νουθετητικος, 'A Word of Wisdom'', Page (trans.), 104.
[92] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 62.
[93] Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 62 & 67; Alison Finlay, 'History and Fiction in the Kings' Sagas', *Saga-Book*, XXXIX (2015), 78; Gísli Sigurðsson, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition: A Discourse on Method* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004), 255.
[94] Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire*, 76; Blöndal and Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 62; H. R. Ellis Davidsson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.: London, 1976), 183.

Haraldr as a military leader and warrior, and allows the respective authors to illustrate the expected qualities and behaviours of both.

The three accounts deviate into two different narrative structures concerning Haraldr's dealings with the Greek commander Gyrgir. According to *Morkinskinna*, Haraldr and Gyrgir were both present at each of the siege examples recounted, and the two are often put into direct contrast [*Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. Meanwhile, *Haralds saga* and *Fagrskinna* both present Haraldr as having sole command of the army throughout the siege examples, though Gyrgir briefly features as a figure whom Haraldr acts against before the Sicilian campaign is recounted [*HSig*, Chs. 3–10; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. The different versions of the narratives' structures in the *konungasögur* nevertheless serve the same purpose of highlighting Haraldr's leadership capabilities. In separating Haraldr and the Varangians from Gyrgir's command, the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts attribute the authority and strategic decisions to Haraldr alone [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Chs. 5–10]. As such, each victory recounted serves to demonstrate Haraldr's military prowess and success. In comparison, the *Morkinskinna* account uses the siege examples to provide a direct contrast between the figures of Haraldr and Gyrgir. Throughout the *Morkinskinna* narrative, as each siege begins, Haraldr and Gyrgir are placed in discussion, with Gyrgir always claiming that it is hopeless to continue their attack [*Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. On each occasion, Haraldr replies that their forces will prevail and then provides the necessary strategy to achieve victory [*Msk*, Chs. 12–13]. With each of Haraldr's replies, he is shown to have the steadfast courage and fortitude required to see through the siege, as well as the strategic knowledge and wisdom to propose a solution to the situation in which the commanders otherwise find themselves. Due to the comparison that the *Morkinskinna* structure provides, these qualities are brought into sharp relief against the more passive and incapable depiction of Gyrgir.

Though it is clear the depictions of Gyrgir as an incompetent commander in each of the *konungasögur* are for the effect of enhancing Haraldr's heroics, the depictions may not be limited to this textual remit or purpose. According to Berto, the image of an inept and cruel Georgios Maniakes and the failings of the Greek army is also

present in several Norman histories, including in the work of William of Apulia.[95] As noted above, William of Apulia's work contains other shared themes to the tales of Haraldr's adventures, most notably a description of Robert Guiscard capturing a city through the deceit of a faux funeral.[96] Berto concludes that 'an extremely negative image of the Greeks' was held by Western European writers, and it is possible that this view was shared or transmitted along the same lines as the stock motifs that van Houts and White respectively identify.[97] The depiction of Gyrgir may therefore be as much a stock motif in Haraldr's narrative as the faux funeral or bird siege examples. As with the siege examples, this does not render Gyrgir's presence or depiction irrelevant in any of the texts. Instead, he is yet another tool employed by the writers by which to demonstrate, and on this occasion, contrast with Haraldr's abilities.

3.6.1. Best Man Qualities

While the qualities drawn out by the *Morkinskinna* comparison of the two commanders demonstrates the expectations of abilities and conducts for competent military leadership, they also demonstrate how excelling in these qualities marks out competency for kingship. The comparison marks out, quite literally, that the king is the best man. Much of this comparison is made in the undercurrent of the depictions of Haraldr and Gyrgir, with Haraldr repeatedly emerging the superior in terms of skill, conduct, fortitude, and wisdom. However, though these attributes initially appear to be the matter of a depiction of personality and outlook, each of the accounts makes clear their innate genealogical bearing. Haraldr is not only

[95] Luigi Andrea Berto, 'The Image of the Byzantines in Early Medieval South Italy: The Viewpoint of the Chroniclers of the Lombards (9th–10th centuries) and Normans (11th century)', *Mediterranean Studies*, 22: 1 (2014), 15 & 20–23; William of Apulia, 'The Deeds of Robert Guiscard by William of Apulia', Loud (trans.), 13–14.
[96] William of Apulia, 'The Deeds of Robert Guiscard', Loud (trans.), 24–25.
[97] Berto, 'The Image of the Byzantines in Early Medieval South Italy', 25; van Houts, 'Scandinavian Influence on Norman Literature', 120–121; White, 'The Latin Men', 158.

superior because he has the better skills and outlook; the superior skills and outlook which make him superior are the result of his inherited "best man" qualities.[98]

Upon the introduction of Gyrgir to each of the Old Norse narratives, it is said that *var hǫfðingi Grikkjahers Gyrgir, frændi dróttningarinnar Zóe* 'the leader of the Greek army was Gyrgir, a kinsman of the queen, Zóe' [*Msk*, Ch. 12; *HSig*, Ch. 3; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Based on these credentials, Haraldr and Gyrgir are on initially equal footing at this point in the narrative. Both Haraldr and Gyrgir are said to be experienced commanders, and both are kin to monarchs. In Haraldr's case, the most recent royal connection to the time of the Sicilian campaigns would be to his nephew, Magnús inn góði, whom each of the *konungasögur* had previously established as king of Norway [*Mgóð*, Ch. 5; *Msk*, Ch. 2; *Fsk*, Ch. 46]. According to *Haralds saga*, Haraldr is said to have only learned of this development in Norway following his return to Miklagarðr, while the extent of his apparent knowledge is left undetermined in the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* descriptions [*HSig*, Ch. 13; *Msk*, Ch. 15; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. It may therefore be imagined that, to Haraldr's mind, the most recent connection was his half-brother, Óláfr helgi, though Haraldr's father, Sigurðr sýr, had earlier been a petty king of Ringerike. Despite these connections, the agnatic genealogical tracing of Haraldr Sigurðarson as a descendent of Haraldr hárfagri, as presented and reiterated in the texts, suggests it was this connection which was used to strengthen and legitimise his claim to kingship, at least by the time the texts were written [*HSig*, Ch. 1; *ÓhelgSep*, Ch. 18 *Msk*, Ch. 11; *Fsk*, Ch. 50].[99] In any event, the royal genealogical connections between Haraldr and any one of his royal predecessors is clearly outlined and explained in the texts. Meanwhile, there are no equivalent descriptions accorded to Gyrgir's genealogy or connection to the imperial family (though these may not be expected to be found in the *konungasögur*). Gyrgir's

[98] On the notion of the "best man", see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 130; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 61–62.

[99] See also, Finlay, 'History and Fiction in the Kings' Sagas', 80–84; Judith Jesch, 'Norse Historical Traditions and the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*: Magnús berfœttr and Haraldr hárfagri', in K. L. Maund (ed.), *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1996), 142; Shami Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History: Problems and Perspectives*, The Northern World 54 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 30.

proximity to the imperial royal line is therefore left unknown and unaddressed in the Old Norse texts, whereas Haraldr has three distinct and reiterated connections.

Genealogical proximity to kingship appears to gain importance throughout the contrast of the two commanders, as Haraldr quickly surpasses Gyrgir in wisdom, courage, and leadership. The genealogical notion of the best man thereby begins to become apparent. As an unspecified kin-relation to Empress Zóe, Gyrgir may not have been considered as part of the imperial royal line, thus he would have been thought of as without any royal blood to recommend him. The three connections presented for Haraldr's royal family, however, ensured that he was understood to have the necessary proximity to current kingship (Magnús inn góði and Óláfr helgi), but also his own distinct royal blood (from Haraldr hárfagri). Gyrgir may therefore be considered as the model of an average man, lacking royal blood, whereas the portrayal of Haraldr in contrast to him is of someone superior due to his royal pedigree.

3.6.2. Lots of Deception

In all three accounts, Haraldr is said to have confronted Gyrgir over where the respective Varangian and Greek units of the army were to set up camp, with each commander wanting the better situation for their followers [*HSig*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12]. The scene of their confrontation is the only depiction of the two together and in contrast in the *Haralds saga* and *Fagrskinna* accounts. In *Morkinskinna*, the scene preludes the subsequent comparisons shown between the two during the siege examples. According to all three accounts, the disagreement is said to have nearly come to violence until *kómu þá til inir vitrustu menn ok skilðu þá* 'the wisest men came in and parted them' and offered a solution of drawing lots for the best camping ground [*HSig*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12].

It is firstly worth noting the use of intermediaries in the dispute. In all his other Mediterranean endeavours, Haraldr is shown to provide the solution to the problem, with no mention of him having taken any counsel. From the *Morkinskinna* account, Finlay rightly takes these solutions as examples of Haraldr's

'resourcefulness offset by the claimed defeatism of the Byzantine general Gyrgir'.[100] Haraldr's superiority in these situations is thereby demonstrated in contrast to the apparent ineptitudes of the Greek commander. The changes to the depictions of Haraldr's disposition may have been part of a planned narrative process in which Haraldr is shown to develop and hone his praiseworthy attributes, including his ability to problem solve. In addition to not having the solution, both Haraldr and Gyrgir are shown to have been equally hot-headed and obstinate throughout the campground confrontation. The lack of self-mastery and restraint depicted of Haraldr at this point in the narrative chronology contrasts sharply with his self-control later in the narratives, particularly in his confrontation with Halldórr Snorrason [*HSig*, Ch. 9; *Msk*, Ch. 14]. As the campground confrontation is the forerunner to the siege examples, the anomalous lapse in Haraldr's judgement is a deliberate depiction on the respective authors' behalf. In providing this initial starting point of his military and leadership career, the authors can demonstrate how Haraldr's skills and abilities grew over time with his experiences. Moreover, in continuing the contrast between Haraldr and Gyrgir throughout the Mediterranean narrative, the *Morkinskinna* account highlights Haraldr's growth against Gyrgir's stagnation. Furthermore, despite beginning on apparently equal and obstinate footing, Haraldr is shown to be wise enough to recognise the flaws in his conduct and respond to improve himself accordingly. As Gyrgir does not appear to have the ability to do the same, it is made clear that the supposed equality between the two was only ever an illusion, and that Haraldr was the superior leader all along.

Despite failing to have a solution to his conflict with Gyrgir, once the suggestion of drawing lots is provided, Haraldr's intelligence and cunning comes to the fore. As in the case of the subsequent faux funeral siege, Haraldr turns to trickery and deception to ensure the outcome works in his favour. According to *Haralds saga*: *'[s]íðan váru hlutir gǫrvir ok markaðir. Þá mælti Haraldr við Gyrgi: "Ek vil sjá, hvernug þú markar þinn hlut, at eigi markim vit á eina lund báðir"* 'Then the lots were made and marked. Then Haraldr spoke with Gyrgir: "I want to see how you mark your lot, so that we don't mark both in the same manner"' [*HSig*, Ch. 4]. A

[100] Finlay, 'History and Fiction in the Kings' Sagas', 86.

similar statement is included in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* respectively [*Msk*, Ch. 12; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Presumably, from Gyrgir's perspective and that of the audience, Haraldr's request is demonstrative of honour and fair play – wanting to be certain of a decisive outcome and bringing the dispute to a swift end. However, once the winning lot was drawn, Haraldr *tók hlutinn ok kastaði út á sjá* 'took the lot and cast it out into the sea', claiming that lot to be his [*HSig*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12]. Gyrgir challenges Haraldr on this, clearly suspecting foul play, and Haraldr directs him to the remaining lot [*Msk*, Ch. 12; *HSig*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. *Síðan var at hugat um þann hlutinn, ok kenndu allir þar mark Gyrgis* 'Then the lot was examined, and everyone recognised Gyrgir's mark there', showing that Haraldr and the Varangians were the victors [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12; *HSig*, Ch. 4].

Throughout this case, Haraldr is shown to outwit Gyrgir with a duplicitous strategy. To the audience, it becomes obvious that Haraldr requested to see Gyrgir's mark on his lot so he may copy it onto his own. By removing the true winning lot, Haraldr removed the evidence of the copy and thereby ensured that whichever lot was drawn, it would appear as though Gyrgir's was second. Without the evidence of a copied lot, Gyrgir would have been unable to challenge the result without reinciting the dispute, and potentially causing a greater conflict between his Greek forces and the Varangians.

It is clear Haraldr's depicted actions are unjust throughout the episode, and by extent may be deemed unkinglike. Whereas justice and just behaviour have been identified as kingly attributes by Ármann Jakobsson, acting with disregard to these principles must, at face value, be considered unacceptable.[101] Though Haraldr's depicted actions demonstrate his 'superior intellect', in Andersson's words, he is 'hardly the model of scrupulous conduct'.[102] Duplicity, however, does not appear to be held against him in any of the accounts.

---

[101] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108. Similarly, Bagge outlines the importance of "fair play" in conflicts. See, Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 162.

[102] Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93: 1 (1994), 60; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Partisan Muse in the Early Icelandic Sagas (1200–1250)*, Islandica LV (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2012), 122.

As described above, trickery and deceit are tactics Haraldr is said to have used during the faux funeral siege to great effect, ensuring victory against the city. As in the faux funeral example, Haraldr may be forgiven his deceitful conduct due to his narrative positioning and presentation as a royal lord or "prince" at this point in the narrative chronology, and as a past king from the authors' time of writing. As Weiler analyses, kings could be exempt from certain constraining rules, and on occasion could be expected to break them.[103] In Haraldr's narratives, the permitted scenarios for rule bending appear to be those in which bending the rules would act to the benefit of his followers. By faking his death, Haraldr was able to gain admittance to the final impenetrable city and gain victory for his side [*HSig*, Ch. 10; *Msk*, Ch. 14; *Fsk*, Ch. 51]. Having won the case of lots, Haraldr ensured the Varangians *skyldi kørna kosti hafa um allt þat, er þeir þreyttu um* 'should have their preferred choices in all that they disputed'– riding ahead, making harbour first, and camping on the best sites [*HSig*, Ch. 4]. Deception, therefore, was not considered an unjust behaviour provided it was done for the benefit of one's followers. Instead, deception could be classified as an alternative manifestation of wisdom and intellect, and fall into the category of praiseworthy qualities expected of a leader and king.

3.7. Conclusion

Throughout the narratives relating Haraldr's deeds in the Mediterranean, he is repeatedly shown to possess and hone his abilities as a warrior and leader. Though a significant portion of this content appears to be derived from fabrication, embellishment, or other borrowing, it nonetheless demonstrates how Haraldr was remembered and the qualities he was believed to have possessed. In various ways, the respective authors of *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Haralds saga* treat their own narratives with suspicion, but they never shy away from using the stories to illustrate their points. Much of Haraldr's greatness as a leader and military commander came from his intellect – his ability to solve the unsolvable and ensure

[103] See, Weiler, 'Crown-giving and king-making', 83.

the outcome benefited his followers. He is repeatedly shown to be a restrained and competent commander, with his army following his instructions, however far-fetched his plans may seem, and even when questioned, his courage in battle does not wane. Though he is not yet king during this chronological point of his narrative, he is nonetheless shown to be innately suited to rulership based on his qualities displayed in the texts.

Chapter Four: Magnús inn góði

4.1. Introduction

Of all the kings depicted across the four *konungasögur*, Magnús inn góði may be considered the most well-rounded.[1] In his battles in Denmark against the Wends and Sveinn Úlfsson, Magnús is frequently depicted as a strong and inspiring leader, and a brave and capable warrior. The apparent improvement of his behaviour following the admonishments of the skald Sigvatr Þórðarson in the form of *Bersǫglisvísur* is said to have earned Magnús the name *inn góði* 'the good'.[2] Additionally, the improvements Magnús made to the laws of Norway have positioned him in the scholarly category of domestic kingship, as determined by Andersson.[3] However, despite the many positives in the depictions of Magnús' life, the texts also show him to have been rash, naïve, and vindictive. Magnús is shown to have been easily swayed by those around him, and is said to have wreaked terrible destruction upon Jómsborg [Wolin] and across Denmark. Through the depictions of these more negative traits and behaviours, Magnús is frequently presented as an unrestrained tyrant. Magnús' lack of control and vindictive nature dominate the respective narrative depictions of him as sole king, and it is only once he becomes co-king with Haraldr Sigurðarson that his depicted behaviours begin to drastically change and improve. Magnús' lack of restraint and naïveté sharply

[1] Magnús inn góði ruled as sole king from c.1035, when he returned to Norway from exile in Garðaríki, until 1046 when he agreed to share the kingship of Norway with his uncle, Haraldr Sigurðarson. The co-rulership arrangement lasted one year, as Magnús died in 1047, after which Haraldr ruled as sole king until 1066.

[2] In the Íslenzk Fornrit editions, the *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* texts each name the poet Sigvatr Þórðarson, though *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip* use the spelling Sighvatr. For consistency, the form "Sigvatr" will be used here.

[3] Cf. Theodore M. Andersson, 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkþverá', in Alois Wolf (ed.), *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages* (Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 1993), 16–17; Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93: 1 (1994), 57–66; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Partisan Muse in the Early Icelandic Sagas (1200–1250)*, Islandica LV (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2012), 120–128; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280)* (Cornell University Press: London, 2006), 100; Theodore M. Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings (1130–1265): An Introduction*, Islandica LIX (Cornell University Library: Ithaca, 2016), 99–100.

contrast with the depictions of Haraldr as being a largely restrained and wise leader of the Varangians. These depictions change after the agreement to co-rulership is made as the two kings are shown to balance and moderate one another.

As in the case of Haraldr Sigurðarson, it is firstly worth noting that the narrative depictions of Magnús were subject to fictionalisation for the purposes of illustrating his legacy and supposed character.[4] Certain events and conflicts may have been grounded in a historical reality, but some details must be read with scepticism. Óláfr helgi's divine intervention at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr [Lyrskov Heath] is certainly a fictitious embellishment to the battle, and the numbers of the opposing force may have been exaggerated to impress upon the audience the direness of the situation in which Magnús allegedly found himself. Nevertheless, the battle can be assumed to have taken place. Thus, as with the studies in the previous chapters, the narratives surrounding Magnús must be read with a view to understanding what the respective authors wanted to impress upon their audience, and not as a strict and accurate retelling of past events.

Many of the same qualities included in the depictions of Haraldr Sigurðarson and mentioned by Sigurðr Jórsalafari and Eysteinn Magnússon during their *mannjafnaðr* are presented in the respective depictions of Magnús inn góði. The qualities of courage and fortitude remain at the forefront of the depictions of Magnús in battle, as well as being scenes designed to illustrate his abilities as a warrior.[5] However, in each of the narratives on Magnús, there is an overall glossing of righteousness and appeals to the divine which are largely absent in the comparative material. In effect, there are two versions of Magnús depicted in the texts: one of a king driven by ambition, and one of a king driven by a supposed sense of divine justice. This latter

[4] Cf. Chapter Three: Reality and Fiction, esp. fn. 1. Ralph O'Connor, 'History and Fiction', in Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (Routledge: London, 2017), 88–103.

[5] On the qualities a king should possess, see Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal: The Representation of Royalty in *Morkinskinna*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 99: 1 (2000), 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject in *Morkinskinna*', *Skandinavistik*, 28 (1998), 108; Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi: Konungsmynd Íslenskra Konungasagna* (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 1997), 89–154; and Sverre Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 467.

presentation is often made with overt references to Óláfr helgi, partly as a political tool to legitimise Magnús' return from exile and rule, as DuBois notes, and, as Phelpstead considers, partly as a way of maintaining Óláfr helgi's presence in the texts to show his role as *rex perpetuus Norvegiæ*.[6] Additionally, in the context of ideologies in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the presentation of Magnús inn góði as a king who arrived in Norway and who has divine legitimation corresponds with similar connections and divine justifications included in *Sverris saga* which are used to legitimise Sverrir Sigurðarson and his descendants as the rightful rulers of Norway.[7] The semi-divine depiction of Magnús, who lived around 150 years earlier, could thereby provide a direct parallel of rightful rulership, as well as a sense of continuity and historical precedent.

The four *konungasögur* share many of the same narrative details of Magnús' life. The *Ágrip* account is shortest, spanning a mere six pages from Magnús' return from Garðaríki and the beginning of his rule until his death [*Ágrip*, Chs. 33–39]. The *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Heimskringla* accounts are a little more complicated in their counting. Each of these three accounts begins their narrative focusing solely on Magnús inn góði, narrating around ten years of his life from the beginning of his rule, but then turn their attention to the life of Haraldr Sigurðarson for the same time span. In *Heimskringla*, this results in Magnús' narration beginning in *Magnúss saga ins góða* and concluding in *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* [*Mgóð*, Ch. 1; *HSig*, Ch. 28]. In *Fagrskinna*, the total span is over forty-three pages, of which thirty pages include the narration of Magnús' life (the other thirteen pages detail Haraldr Sigurðarson's travels) [*Fsk*, Chs. 44–54]. In *Morkinskinna*, the total span is over 170 pages, which includes thirty-eight pages given to Haraldr's travels, and 138 pages in which Magnús' life is detailed. Finally, *Heimskringla* covers a total of 103 pages from the beginning of Magnús' rule until his death, with sixty-five pages concentrating on

[6] Thomas A. DuBois, 'Sts. Sunniva and Henrik: Scandinavian Martyr Saints in their Hagiographic and National Contexts', in Thomas A. DuBois (ed.), *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia* (University of Toronto Press: London, 2008), 84; Carl Phelpstead, *Holy Vikings: Saints' Lives in the Old Icelandic Kings' Sagas*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Volume 340 (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, 2007), 137–138.
[7] Sverre Bagge, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed: Kingship in* Sverris saga *and* Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar (Odense University Press: Odense, 1996), 53–57.

Magnús himself (thirty-eight pages are on Haraldr's travels) [*Mgóð*, Chs. 1–37; *HSig*, Chs. 1–28].

As a comparative study to that of Haraldr Sigurðarson, the main focus here will be on the narratives of Magnús' life up until Haraldr's return to Norway, followed by an analysis of their agreement to co-rule. Notwithstanding the slight discrepancies of chronological narrative order and detail found in *Ágrip* compared to *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*, the same key events of Magnús' rule are otherwise shared between all four texts. In each account, Magnús is said to have returned to Norway from Garðaríki, where he had spent his childhood in exile after the death of his father, Óláfr helgi, in the battle of Stiklarstaðir [*Fsk*, Ch. 34; *Óhelg*, Ch. 228; *Ágrip*, Ch. 30]. The backstory of Óláfr helgi's fall is largely alluded to in *Morkinskinna*, where the text simply begins with Magnús under the care of King Jarizleifr and Queen Ingigerðr in Garðaríki [*Msk*, Ch. 1]. Following his return to Norway, each of the accounts outline how Magnús was obstinate and vindictive in his rule to begin with, but was corrected from this course by the poet Sigvatr. An agreement with the Danish king, Hǫrða-Knútr, is also included in each of the texts to varying amounts of detail, but is used in all of the accounts to showcase both Magnús' ambitions and burgeoning diplomatic skill. Finally, Magnús is said to have fought in several battles against the Wends and Sveinn Úlfsson before Haraldr Sigurðarson's return to Norway. The number of battles varies between the accounts (see Table F) but the battle of Helganes [Helgenæs] and the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr are shared in all four texts and will be focused on here.

4.2. A Vindictive King

In all four *konungasögur*, Magnús is shown to have been vindictive in the early years of his rule. The harsh treatment which Magnús is said to have inflicted upon his subjects ultimately leads to disgruntlement among the Norwegians and the looming threat of rebellion against him until the skald Sigvatr intercedes and Magnús mends his ways [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Chs. 13–16; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. Magnús' tyranny is not held against him in any of the texts, and his legacy is instead of a king most

beloved by his people. In Bagge's assessment of *Heimskringla*, these changes in behaviour are not inconsistencies within the textual presentation but demonstrations of how a person's demeanour can grow and change over time, and is evidenced by their actions.[8] This principle is applicable to each of the respective textual depictions of Magnús. Despite this apparent change in Magnús' attitude, little attention has been paid to the depictions of the former, vindictive Magnús in the texts. Magnús' reputation as a good king has overshadowed the need for an analytical reading of his actions as a tyrant. Although the *Morkinskinna* depiction of Magnús is of a 'benevolent and popular king' as Ármann Jakobsson finds, wrath and tyranny are nonetheless apparent in the text.[9] Andersson likewise finds a positive depiction of Magnús in *Morkinskinna*, bordering on a portrayal of 'a Norwegian *rex justus*'.[10] Similarly positive traits for Magnús are found in *Heimskringla*, though in that text Andersson finds Magnús' depictions to be of the 'political man' rather than the 'moral man' of *Morkinskinna*.[11] Both Whaley and Bagge find the portrayal of Magnús in *Heimskringla* as coming close to meeting an authorial 'ideal' – a king who is popular and maintains the peace, but is also a capable warrior.[12] Each of these understandings has been made on the basis of either a reading of Magnús compared to Haraldr Sigurðarson in the texts, in which Magnús frequently comes out as the peaceful, domestic king and Haraldr the aggressive adventurer, or concluded by the respective portrayals of Magnús at the end of his life. There has been no thorough treatment of Magnús' early rule and his depictions as a young, vengeful, and unchecked king. Only Bagge acknowledges the 'tyrannical and vindictive' aspects of Magnús' early kingship, though this is contextualised as a dutiful need for revenge.[13] Although revenge is the motivating factor, Magnús'

---

[8] Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's* Heimskringla (University of California Press: Oxford, 1991), 187–188.
[9] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 79.
[10] Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, 100; Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 66; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 128.
[11] Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 64–65; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 127. See also, Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Introduction', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), 2–3.
[12] Diana Whaley, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series VIII (Viking Society for Northern Research: London, 1991), 101; Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 156.
[13] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 114 & 188.

depicted actions go beyond exacting retribution from his father's slayers to inflicting hardship on anyone who had opposed Óláfr helgi, and by so doing had brought about the battle which had led to his death. These scenes in the texts show Magnús to have begun his career as an unmoderated king who courted tyranny for want of good advice.

4.2.1. Magnús the Tyrant

The majority of Magnús' vindictive actions are said to have been directed at the Þrœndir and those who had opposed his father at the battle of Stiklarstaðir. Each of the accounts only give minimal details on the actions which Magnús undertook against these subjects, and the situation is presented in relatively broad terms. The only overt depiction of Magnús' wrath is a scene in which he confronts Kálfr Árnason, as included in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Ch. 14]. The *Magnúss saga* account follows the same premise as the *Morkinskinna* version, including the same means of depicting Magnús' anger and Kálfr's escape, suggesting the tale was written first in *Morkinskinna* and later copied by the *Heimskringla* author [*Mgóð*, Ch. 14; *Msk*, Ch. 4].[14] In these accounts, Magnús is said to have visited Stiklarstaðir with Kálfr Árnason for the purpose of learning what had transpired there. Upon learning that Kálfr had been within striking distance of Óláfr helgi, Magnús is implied to have realised that Kálfr had been one of Óláfr helgi's killers [*Mgóð*, Ch. 14; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* share their depiction of Magnús' anger and the fear it instilled in Kálfr. In *Morkinskinna*, having realised that Kálfr had killed his father, *veik konungr frá í því ok gørði dreyrrauðan yfirlits. En Kálfr snýr þá til hests síns ok skilsk nú þar við konunginn* 'because of this the king turned away and his appearance went blood-red. And then Kálfr turns to his horse and now parted from the king' [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. *Magnúss saga* also uses the imagery of Magnús turning red with anger, *konungr mælti ok var þá rauðr sem*

[14] On the relationship between the texts see Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 12–14; Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume III: Magnús Óláfsson to Magnús Erlingsson* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2015), xi–xiv.

dreyri 'the king spoke and was then red as blood', followed by Kálfr fleeing on horseback [*Mgóð*, Ch. 14].

In addition to Magnús' evidently wrathful reaction, both *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* depict and emphasise Magnús' reputation as being prone to wrath in their respective descriptions of Kálfr Árnason's actions. In both accounts, Kálfr is shown to have anticipated Magnús' wrath and guessed its effects by preparing to escape the country before making the trip to Stiklarstaðir with the king. *Morkinskinna* presents these preparations in clear, pre-emptive terms, stating *er Kálfr sér at fǫrin mun takask þá segir hann sveini sínum hljótt ok mælti: "Far þú út á Eggju sem hvatast ok seg mǫnnum mínum at þeir sem tíðast langskipp mitt með mǫnnum ok vápnum ok láti hvern hlut er þarf á skipi vera í kveld ok alla gripi mina* 'when Kálfr sees they are determined to take the journey then he softly speaks to his boy: "You go out to Egg as fast as possible and say to my men that they should ready my longship with men and weapons, and every necessary thing is to be placed in the ship by evening, and all my valuables"' [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. This small scene has two effects in the *Morkinskinna* account. Firstly, it establishes Kálfr's guilt for the part he played in killing Óláfr helgi. The battle of Stiklarstaðir is not included in *Morkinskinna*, and the narrative instead begins with Magnús inn góði's kingship. Kálfr's orders thereby serve as an authorial signal to the presumed audience what Kálfr's role had been, and that Kálfr now anticipated the consequences of his actions. Secondly, Kálfr's preparations demonstrate his familiarity with the king and his understanding of Magnús' moods. Kálfr is shown to anticipate a vengeful turn from the king, and an awareness that if he does not prepare to flee and go into exile from Norway, he could potentially expect to lose either his life or all his property to the king. The depiction of Kálfr's anticipatory fear thereby demonstrates the wrathful reputation which, at that point in the narrative chronology, was coming to surround Magnús. Similarly, the *Magnúss saga* version suggests that Kálfr had prepared to flee before going to Stiklarstaðir with Magnús. Having departed from the king, Kálfr is said to have reached Egg by evening, where *[v]ar skip hans búit fyrir landi ok á komit lausafé allt ok skipat af húskǫrlum hans* 'his ship was ready on the shore and all his moveable property brought [on board] and it was manned with his men' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 14]. The *Magnúss*

saga text thereby presents the same understanding of Magnús' frightful wrath and Kálfr's awareness of the vengeance he risked bringing about on himself as displayed in *Morkinskinna*. Thus, both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* accounts demonstrate and emphasise Magnús' wrath and his capacity for vindictive behaviour.

Although there is no depiction of Magnús' wrath towards Kálfr in the *Fagrskinna* account, the author acknowledges that *[f]ór þá Kálfr ór landi fyrir konungs reiði ok nǫkkurir aðrir gǫfgir menn* 'then Kálfr and some other distinguished people left the country because of the king's wrath' [*Fsk*, Ch. 48]. While the text does not give a literal red face to Magnús' wrath, it nonetheless presents Magnús as an unrestrained, vengeful king. Moreover, in each of these three accounts, before this event, Kálfr Árnason is established in the texts as one of Magnús' advisors and foster-fathers [*Fsk*, Ch. 45; *Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Chs. 13–14]. This relationship between Magnús and Kálfr elevates the betrayal which Magnús is shown to have faced and explained his anger. Additionally, the relationship between the two emphasises the vindictiveness of Magnús' wrath, being willing to turn so wholly and suddenly against someone once close to him.

Magnús' wrath is shown to be yet unsated by Kálfr Árnason's flight, and all four accounts outline the harsh treatment he imposed on the people of Norway. *Ágrip* gives the briefest description, stating that there *marks angri væri fyrst, því at hann hóf ríki sitt með harðræði fyr æsku sinnar sakar ok ágirndar ráðuneytis* 'was considerable resentment at first, because he began his rule with harshness because of his youth and the ambitions of his counsellors' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. Unlike in *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga*, the author of *Ágrip* does not specify whether Magnús directed his tyranny at any group. In the other accounts, Magnús' harsh conduct is said to have been targeted at those who had opposed Óláfr helgi, while the *Ágrip* account suggests Magnús' mistreatment was widespread and felt generally throughout the kingdom.[15]

[15] See also, M. J. Driscoll, 'Notes to the Translation', in M. J. Driscoll (ed. & trans.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasǫgum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series X (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2008), fn. 101.

Unsurprisingly, as they contain generally more detailed narratives, the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts respectively offer a little more detail than is provided in *Ágrip*, including a short description of events under Magnús' tyranny. *Fagrskinna* states that *harðnaði konungr við Þrœndi… Sumir guldu mikit fé, en sumir létu allar eignir sínar*, 'the king hardened against the Þrœndir… Some paid great fines, and some lost all their possessions' [*Fsk*, Ch. 48]. Likewise, *Morkinskinna* says that *nú eptir harðnaði konungr mjǫk við Þrœndr, svá at sumir létu alla eign sína, ok enn fleiri stukku ór landi, svá sem Kálfr, en sumir guldu fé* 'now afterwards the king became greatly hardened against the Þrœndir, so that some lost all their possessions, and yet more were driven from the land, as Kálfr was, and some paid fines' [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. In *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna*, the Þrœndir are specified as the objects of Magnús' wrath. Though a small detail, this specificity nonetheless demonstrates the vindictive and vengeful aspects of Magnús' portrayal in the texts.[16] Whereas the *Ágrip* author presented Magnús as a generically harsh ruler, doling out hardship across the kingdom, the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts show how his actions were targeted and unfair. As a king of all Norway and all the Norwegians, Magnús was thereby expected to have treated all his subjects equally – an obligation he is shown to have failed to meet in *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga*. By comparison, the vindictiveness of Magnús' conduct is somewhat toned down in the *Ágrip* presentation. Because in *Ágrip* his actions are not said to have targeted any group, his cruel behaviour was at least evenly spread across all his subjects.

The *Magnúss saga* account provides the most detail of Magnús' vindictive actions.

Mgóð, Ch. 15:

> *Magnús konungr kastaði eigu sinni á Viggju, er Hrútr hafði átt, ok Kviststaði, er Þorgeirr hafði átt, svá ok á Eggju ok allt þat fé, er Kálfr átti eptir, ok margar aðrar stórar eignir lét hann þá falla í konungsgarð, þær er þeir hǫfðu átt, er fallit hǫfðu á Stiklarstǫðum í bónda liði. Hann gerði ok við marga þá*

[16] On the problem of unchecked sole kings acting at will, see Hans Jacob Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway, c. 1030–1160', in Kim Esmark, et al. (eds.), *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 62–66.

> *menn stórar refsingar, er í þeiri orrostu hǫfðu verit í mót Óláfi konungi. Suma rak hann af landi, ok af sumum tók hann stórfé, fyrir sumum lét hann bú hǫggva.*
>
> 'King Magnús took possession of Vigg, which Hrútr had owned, and Kviststaðir, which Þorgeirr had owned, and of Egg and all the property that Kálfr had left behind, and many other sizeable possessions, that had been owned by those who had fallen at Stiklarstaðir on the farmers' side, he let them be moved into the royal treasury. He also exacted very heavy punishments on people, those who had been on the side against King Óláfr in that battle. Some he drove from the country, and from others he took heavy fines, for some he had their livestock killed'.

The broad actions listed in *Magnúss saga* follow the same descriptions given in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*: the exacting of *mikit fé* 'great fines', the appropriation of property, and of people leaving Norway [*Mgóð*, Ch. 15; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. Similarly, the victims of Magnús' wrath are targeted as the people who had opposed Óláfr helgi. In all three accounts, Magnús is thereby depicted as a vengeful king, seeking recompense for his father's murder, though his actions clearly go beyond fair justice. The additional specificity of the lands which Magnús appropriated and to whom it had previously belonged further emphasises his unchecked actions. While serving to, quite literally, ground the narrative, the specific lands and people mentioned also invoke a sense of empathy, humanising and putting a face to Magnús' victims within the text. The author thereby provides two figures directly opposite Magnús within the narrative who are shown to be powerless against him. While the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts attempt to offer the same depiction by collectively naming the Þrœndir as Magnús' victims, it lacks the personal details found in *Magnúss saga* which demonstrate and emphasise the impact which Magnús' actions had on individuals, to whom an audience may be better able to relate. As a group, the Þrœndir can be considered as a collective power, capable of withstanding Magnús, or challenging him as they had Óláfr helgi. Instead, by naming Hrútr and Þorgeirr, the *Heimskringla* author singles out individual contrasting figures who are unable to oppose Magnús in any way. Thus,

the depiction is not a battle of equals, but a scathing portrayal by the author of a king with unchecked power imposing devastation upon his powerless subjects. By humanising and creating empathy with Magnús' victims, the *Heimskringla* author emphasises the vindictive actions taken by the young king. Magnús' actions are those portrayed as the unjust conduct of a tyrant.

4.2.2. Tyranny and Mitigation

Each of the accounts contextualise Magnús' vengeful actions as stemming from the competing opinions and advice offered by those surrounding him. All four texts agree that Magnús was swayed by these other, unnamed voices by either providing a loose description of circumstances, as in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga*, or by forthrightly explaining that he acted on the advice he was given, as in *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip*. Through this contextualisation of others' talk, each author initially attempts to somewhat mitigate Magnús' initial culpability. The *Ágrip* and *Fagrskinna* accounts take this to the furthest extent, absolving Magnús of blame and providing comparatively little detail of his actions. Meanwhile, the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* authors both contextualise the cause of Magnús' actions, but continue to emphasise his apparent vindictiveness.

The *Morkinskinna* account offers a comparatively lengthy description of the circumstances which are shown to have led to Magnús' tyrannical behaviour.

Msk, Ch. 4:

> *En svá mikit varð at at fortǫlum þeira manna er fylgt hǫfðu Óláfi konungi fǫður hans við Þrœndi ok aðra menn, þá er sviku land undan honum, ok nefndir váru margir gǫfgir menn í Þrœndalǫgum til þess at fjándskap hefði haft í móti Óláfi konungi, ok var því virt Magnúsi konungi til lítilmennsku er hann hafði þá menn jafnan við borð sitt ok suma við trúnaðarrœður ok gørði sér at ráðgjǫfum, sem var Kálfr Árnason. Ok hlýddi konungr nǫkkut svá á slíkar rœður ok harðnar heldr til Þrœnda af slíkum fortǫlum.*

> ‘There was much persuasive talk by the people who had supported King Óláfr, his father, against the Þrœndir and other people who had cheated the land from under him, and many distinguished people in Þrœndalǫg [Trøndelag] were named to have sided against King Óláfr in this hostility. And King Magnús was deemed to be paltry because he always kept these people at his table, and some in confidential talks and made them counsellors, such as Kálfr Árnason. And the king heard some of this talk and hardened more against the Þrœndir because of these sayings’.

Through this description, the *Morkinskinna* author presents competing factions surrounding Magnús. No specific details are given for the people who spoke against the Þrœndir and Kálfr Árnason. The author instead leaves this to their audience’s imagination as to whether the speakers were among Magnús’ direct companions, or whether the author meant to encompass the Norwegian people and popular opinion as a more general whole. Regardless of their supposed identities, the mutterings and voiced opinions are said to have reached Magnús, who was swayed by what they were saying. Thus, the author presents Magnús’ hostilities towards Kálfr Árnason and the Þrœndir to be the result of other people’s views, rather than being strictly set in his own mind. Magnús’ actions are thereby mitigated in the initial contextualisation.

The *Fagrskinna* account offers a similar contextualising description to that found in *Morkinskinna*.

Fsk, Ch. 48:

> *Þeir menn, er vinir hǫfðu verit Óláfs ens helga, tǫlðu mjǫk á hendr Þrœndum, þeim er verit hǫfðu í móti Óláfi konungi, ok váru til þess margir nefndir gǫfgir menn. Var ok sagt Magnúsi konungi, at þat var lítit ráð at hafa þá at borði sínu, en sumar við trúnaðarrœður, ok gørði þá ina ráðgjafa, sem var Kálfr Árnason.*
>
> ‘The people who had been friends with Óláfr inn helgi spoke a lot against the Þrœndir, those who had sided against King Óláfr, and many distinguished people were named in this. And it was said to King Magnús that it was hardly

> advisable to have them at his table, and some in confidential talks, and some made counsellors, such as Kálfr Árnason'.

As in *Morkinskinna*, two factions are made loosely apparent, those who had sided with Óláfr helgi, and those who had opposed him [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48]. Both accounts share the portrayal of disgruntlement among those who had been friends with Óláfr helgi, while neither offer a set side for the Þrœndir. Thus, the talk which is said to have swayed Magnús is shown in both accounts to have stemmed from a grudge which Óláfr's former supporters still harboured.

The *Fagrskinna* account goes further in creating a greater sense of political divide than is found in *Morkinskinna* by explicitly stating that the opinions against the Þrœndir were directly shared and told to Magnús. Coupled with the description of Magnús keeping the Þrœndir among his counsel, the *Fagrskinna* author suggests Magnús to have been a wise king for keeping a broad spectrum of advisers. While the *Morkinskinna* account tentatively implies that Magnús listened to varied opinions, he is described as having kept Kálfr Árnason and members of the Þrœndir, or others who had opposed Óláfr helgi, in his immediate circle [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. Thus, there is no indication that he had kept a varied counsel, including people outside of this remit. Additionally, the *Morkinskinna* account suggests that Magnús only learned of the alternative opinions of those who had been Óláfr helgi's supporters through general gossip or hearsay, whereas the *Fagrskinna* account states that these thoughts were told to Magnús directly [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48]. The *Fagrskinna* account thereby emphasises a depiction of Magnús as a wise king, who deliberately sought to listen to a broad range of advice without favouritism. By contrast, the *Morkinskinna* author drastically downplays any depiction of Magnús' early wisdom, and instead emphasises his naïveté and gullibility in listening to the gossip whispered by others.

Magnús' naïveté is nonetheless apparent in the *Fagrskinna* depiction of him, where he is said to have heeded what was *sagt Magnúsi konungi* 'said to King Magnús' causing him to become *harðnaði… við Þrœndir* 'hardened… against the Þrœndir' [*Fsk*, Ch. 48]. Although the *Fagrskinna* account explains that Magnús was swayed by the opinions of others, as in the *Morkinskinna* account, rather than acting on

malicious gossip, Magnús is instead shown to have listened to explicit advice given to him by his advisers [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. Thus, although Magnús became wrathful and vengeful, these turns of temper are shown to have been the result of others' advice and manipulations. Similar to the presentation in *Fagrskinna*, the *Ágrip* author mitigates the blame accorded to Magnús, claiming that *hann hóf ríki sitt með harðræði fyr æsku sinnar sakar ok ágirndar ráðuneytis* 'he began his rule with harshness because of his youth and the ambitions of his counsellors' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. In both accounts, rather than succumbing to hearsay, Magnús' naïveté is depicted by his eagerness to trust the advisers he keeps. Because of the different sources of the opinions, advisers rather than gossips, *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip* nevertheless retain the depiction of Magnús as a wise king in keeping a varied counsel. As Andersson finds, *Fagrskinna* 'systematically reduces the king's culpability' of the tyrannical events which subsequently transpire.[17] The same can also be said of *Ágrip*, where the mitigation goes even further as the text states that Magnús was misled due to his youth [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. While the *Fagrskinna* account implies Magnús' youthfulness through inexperienced naïveté, a feature shared to a lesser extent in *Morkinskinna*, the *Ágrip* account makes his young age a clear factor in the situation [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. Thus, in *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip*, Magnús is not shown to act on whim and gossip, but on reason and trusted advice. In these depictions, Magnús is not a tyrant, but a blameless victim who fell prey to the manipulations of others.

While none of the accounts specify Magnús' age at the time of his tyranny, or how long his tyranny lasted for, they all suggest he was inexperienced. Magnús came to be king of Norway at around the age of ten or eleven, having returned from Garðaríki *fjórum vetrum eptir fall fǫður síns, Óláfs konungs* 'four years after the fall of his father, King Óláfr' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. None of the accounts specify how much time had passed between his return to Norway and the onset of his tyranny, other than implying that it occurred in the former portion of his rule [*Msk*, Chs. 3–4; *Mgóð*, Chs. 13–16; *Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Fsk*, Chs. 46–48]. In *Magnúss saga*, the next datable event mentioned is the death of Harold Harefoot in 1040, a detail which is

[17] Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings*, 69.

provided after Magnús is said to have been reprimanded and changed his ways [*Mgóð*, Chs. 16–17]. *Fagrskinna* also includes the death of Harold Harefoot but places this before the description of Magnús' tyranny [*Fsk*, Chs. 47–48]. Meanwhile, the poem, *Bersǫglisvísur*, which was composed by Sigvatr with which to admonish Magnús and is included to various extents in each of the accounts, has been dated to 1038.[18] On this basis, Magnús can be assumed to have been aged between ten and thirteen or ten and fifteen in the depictions of his tyranny. Each of the authors demonstrate an awareness of youthful impetuousness in their depictions of Magnús', retaining the characteristics of rashness and naïveté which could stem from immaturity. In *Fagrskinna*, this is demonstrated in Magnús' overeagerness to trust his advisers; in *Morkinskinna*, by his gullibility; and in *Magnúss saga* by his unruly moods [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Mgóð*, Chs. 13–15]. However, of the prose descriptions, only the *Ágrip* author explicitly states Magnús' youth as a defining factor contributing to his vengeful and vindictive conduct, and one which allowed him to be misled.[19] Thus, the *Ágrip* author mitigates Magnús' culpability in the most forthright terms and to the greatest extent.

Finally, the *Magnúss saga* author takes a mixed approach in detailing the context and outcome of Magnús' tyranny. *Magnúss saga* briefly states that *gerðusk menn til áminningar við konungr, hvar Kálfr hafði verit á Stiklarstǫðum* 'then people reminded the king about where Kálfr had been at Stiklarstaðir' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. Like *Fagrskinna* and *Ágrip*, *Magnúss saga* describes Magnús as having been manipulated by the people around him by the means of direct comments [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. *Magnúss saga* does not specify these people as advisers as *Ágrip* does, however, nor are they presented in explicit terms as those who had previously been supporters of Óláfr helgi, as *Fagrskinna* describes them [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. Excessively few details are thereby given in *Magnúss saga*. Furthermore, the *Magnúss saga* account only specifies a dislike or disapproval of

[18] See Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 11–30.

[19] Descriptions of youthfulness are included within *Bersǫglisvísur*, which is cited in each of the accounts. However, as the poem is attributed to Sigvatr Þórðarson, these descriptions must be taken as his work and presentation, and not as a construction by the prose authors.

Kálfr Árnason in the opinions directed towards Magnús [*Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. The speakers may therefore be supposed as figures who were opponents of Kálfr Árnason, with or without previous allegiance to Óláfr helgi. The resulting ambiguities lend the *Magnúss saga* presentation an air akin to that in *Morkinskinna*, of Magnús listening to malicious, targeted gossip rather than trusted counsel [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. The *Magnúss saga* account thereby depicts Magnús as having been manipulated by others, and mitigates his subsequent interaction with, and banishment of Kálfr Árnarson.

Despite the mitigating depictions of youthful naïveté and manipulation conducted in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga*, the authors nevertheless depict Magnús as a vindictive, unrestrained tyrant in his subsequent actions against the Þrœndir. Whereas in his actions against Kálfr Árnason, Magnús is depicted as avenging his father, in broadly persecuting the Þrœndir, Magnús is shown to have overstepped [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Chs. 14–15]. According to Bagge, certain acts of revenge are to be expected within the presentation of society in *Heimskringla*, in which they are necessary for establishing one's value within society based on 'his ability in conducting such conflicts'.[20] The depiction of Magnús' vengeance against Kálfr Árnason is in keeping with this assessment due to the comments made specifically about *hvar Kálfr hafði verit* 'where Kálfr had been' during the battle of Stiklarstaðir [*Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. In *Óláfs saga helga*, Kálfr is depicted as one of the men who dealt Óláfr helgi his death wounds [*Óhelg*, Ch. 228]. Magnús is therefore shown to have been specifically urged to take revenge on Kálfr Árnason for the role he played in Óláfr's downfall and death, thus the act of revenge is met with approval. Although the backstory of the battle of Stiklarstaðir is absent from *Morkinskinna*, the text instead beginning with Magnús inn góði's rule, the same depiction of revenge is included [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. The *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* authors therefore have little need to mitigate blame for tyranny in their depictions of Magnús inn góði regarding Kálfr Árnason, as the depictions of revenge are instead the texts' priority.

[20] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 144.

Magnús' vendetta against the Þrœndir, however, is not met with the same approval. Rather than taking just revenge, he is instead depicted as an unrestrained, vengeful tyrant in both *Magnúss saga* and *Morkinskinna*. The *Morkinskinna* author partially mitigates Magnús' vindictive and incessant need for revenge by including the Þrœndir in their initial description of targets, who people had persuaded Magnús' against, by claiming that *nefndir váru margir gǫfgir menn í Þrœndalǫgum til þess at fjándskap hefði haft í móti Óláfi konungi* 'many distinguished people in Þrœndalǫg were named to have sided against King Óláfr' [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. As such, the Þrœndir are presented in similar terms as Kálfr Árnason, and Magnús is implied to have a right to revenge against them [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. Nevertheless, *Morkinskinna* states that *harðnaði konungr mjǫk við Þrœndr* 'the king became greatly hardened against the Þrœndir', to the extent that they *hvárt mun konungr sjá ekki hóf á kunna við þá* 'wondered whether the king would not show moderation' [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. Magnús' actions are thereby presented as having surpassed what was acceptable, and instead run into vindictive tyranny. Magnús is thus depicted as an unrestrained king at this point of the narrative chronology, and consequently incapable of maintaining or delivering justice.[21] Similarly, the depiction of Magnús' sustained vengeance against the Þrœndir in *Magnúss saga*, including his actions against Hrútr and Þorgeirr, portray him to have overstepped and become cruel and tyrannical [*Mgóð*, Ch. 15]. As Bagge assesses in *Heimskringla*, revenge could at times be anticipated and deemed necessary, but it was equally 'necessary for a king to show moderation in carrying out revenge'.[22] Such opinion was clearly shared by the *Morkinskinna* author, who, like the *Heimskringla* author, accepted Magnús' revenge against Kálfr Árnason but not against the Þrœndir. Consequently, the *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* authors alter Magnús' depiction throughout the scenario, from him being a king justly taking the revenge that was his due, to becoming an unrestrained tyrant.

The *Magnúss saga* account further emphasises the unjust tyranny of Magnús' actions against the Þrœndir by not including them alongside Kálfr in the initial manipulations or advice spoken to Magnús [*Mgóð*, Ch. 13]. Whereas Magnús is

[21] Cf. Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108.
[22] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 114.

shown to have been goaded into turning against Kálfr, there is no equivalent mitigation or approval granted to the actions he took against the Þrœndir. Instead, Magnús' actions against the Þrœndir are presented as being of entirely his own choosing in the *Magnúss saga* account [*Mgóð*, Chs. 13–15]. Compared to the other texts, the *Heimskringla* author thereby deliberately depicts Magnús as an unrestrained and vengeful king who went to excessive lengths in his wrath.

4.2.3. The Use of *Bersǫglisvísur*

As Magnús' tyranny is shown to have increased in the texts, without sign of abating, people are understandably said to have become dissatisfied with the king and to have spoken of possible rebellion against him. The growing threat led to the need for Magnús to be made aware of his actions and change his style of rule; for this task, the skald Sigvatr Þórðarson was eventually chosen. Extracts of various lengths from Sigvatr's poem, *Bersǫgslisvísur*, which he composed to admonish the king, are included in each of the *konungasögur*. The poem contains eighteen verses in total in its reconstructed form.[23] Of these, *Ágrip* contains the shortest extract, comprised of a single verse, while *Morkinskinna* contains the most at sixteen verses [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. Meanwhile, *Fagrskinna* includes five verses and *Magnúss saga* has nine [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Mgóð*, Ch. 16]. There is some obvious cause for cross-over between these records, though the extracts do not consistently share the same order of presentation between the *konungasögur* texts. As a result, attention has been paid to respective interpolations of the verses to the prose accounts and the possibility of a single, original poem.[24] The respective works of O'Donoghue and Evans have looked to varying extents at the framing of the poem within the prose accounts, with O'Donoghue considering the dialogic nature of the verse in *Ágrip*,

[23] See Kari Ellen Gade, 'Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Bersǫglisvísur*', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry in the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035–c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 11–30.

[24] See Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 28–29; Russell Poole, *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Narrative* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1991), 8–10; Jonna Louis-Jensen, *Kongesagastudier: Kompilationen Hulda-Hrokkinskinna*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXXII (C. A. Reitzels Boghandel: København, 1977), 83–84; Gade, 'Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Bersǫglisvísur*', 11–30.

and Evans measuring the emphasis of Sigvatr as a diplomat in the context of the prose descriptions.[25]

There is a clear distinction between the prose contexts and the included verses as to how the verses were deliberately used and presented by the prose authors. In *Ágrip*, the use and presentation of the verse is relatively simple. The verse in question, *Bersǫglisvísur* 12 in the reconstruction, is used alongside the prose to emphasise the mood of the presented scene. In the prose description, Magnús is said to have *átti þing í Niðarósi ok reisti með freku sakargipt við Þrœndi alla, ok stungu allir nefi í skinn feld ok veittu allir þǫgn, en engi andsvǫr* 'held an assembly in Niðaróss and began with harsh charges against all the Þrœndir, and they all stuck their noses in their fur-cloaks, and all offered silence and did not answer' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34].

The verse follows this statement, and reiterates the actions and silence of those gathered.

Bersǫglisvísur 12:

> *Hætts, þats allir ætla*
> *– áðr skal við því ráða –*
> *hárir menn, es heyrik,*
> *hót, skjdungi at móti.*
> *Greypts, þats hǫfðum hneppta,*
> *heldr, ok niðr í feldi*
> *– slegit hefr þǫgn á þegna –*
> *þingmenn nǫsum stinga.*
>
> 'The threat is dangerous when all grey-haired men, as I hear, intend [to revolt] against the ruler; that must be prevented in advance. It's rather grim when assembly members hang their heads and stick their noses into their cloaks; silence has descended on your followers'.[26]

[25] Heather O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), 39–42; Gareth Lloyd Evans, 'The Construction of Diplomacy in the Various Accounts of Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Bersǫglisvísur*', *Saga-Book*, XXXVIII (2014), 50–58.
[26] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verse 12, 23–24. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse.

While the verse certainly has comical merits as a 'punchline', in O'Donoghue's assessment, it also contains crucial information which is otherwise missing from the prose.[27] The *Ágrip* author shares the mood of the assembly in their prose narration, but fails to establish the degree of anger felt by those assembled, nor the threat of rebellion. Instead, the prose author relies on the quoted verse for this [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. Thus, Magnús' tyrannical actions are reduced to accusations without any physical substance. The descriptions of land seizures, fines, and banishments as found in the other prose accounts, as well as elsewhere in *Bersǫglisvísur*, are entirely absent from the *Ágrip* text [*Mgóð*, Chs. 14–15; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4].[28] The question of whether the *Ágrip* author was familiar with the other verses from the poem is naturally difficult to resolve. Nevertheless, the scene which is presented in *Ágrip* demonstrates an astute authorial combination of creativity and editorial principles of a prose narration formed in relation to a specific verse.[29] The creative inspiration for the scene and the editorial precision with which it is executed within the text suggest that the author was likely aware of other verses from *Bersǫglisvísur*, but chose to concentrate their efforts on this one in their abridgement. Thus, the author chose to exclude other verses from the poem, among them those which contained details of the more tyrannical aspects of Magnús' early rule. Through careful omission, the *Ágrip* author thereby mitigated the vengeful and vindictive aspects of Magnús' reputation.

The verse *Bersǫglisvísur* 12 is also included in the *Fagrskinna* account, as well as in *Magnúss saga* and *Morkinskinna* [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Mgóð*, Ch. 16; *Msk*, Ch. 4]. *Fagrskinna* contains an additional four verses, though two, *Bersǫglisvísur* 9 and *Bersǫglisvísur* 10, are given as half stanzas [*Fsk*, Ch. 48].[30]

The second half of *Bersǫglisvísur* 9:

> *Hafa kveðask lǫg, nema ljúgi*
> *landherr, búendr verri*

[27] O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, 40.
[28] See also, Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verses 11–14, 22–26.
[29] On editorial abridgement and creative impulse, see Poole, *Viking Poems on War and Peace*, 8–23. On these attributes in *Ágrip* see O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, 41.
[30] For the full verses see Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verses 9–10, 20–22.

endr í Ulfasundum
ǫnnur, an þú hézt mǫnnum.

'The farmers claim they have other, inferior laws, unless the countrymen lie, than you promised the people earlier in Ulvesundet'.[31]

The first half of *Bersǫglisvísur* 10:

Gjalt varhuga, veltir,
viðr, þeims nú ferr heðra,
þjófs (skal hǫnd í hófi)
hǫlða kvitt (of stytta).

'Toppler of the thief [just ruler], pay heed to the chatter of men which now is spreading here; the hand must be held back by moderation'.[32]

The verses *Bersǫglisvísur* 11 and *Bersǫglisvísur* 13 are also included in *Fagrskinna* in their entirety.

Bersǫglisvísur 11:

Hverr eggjar þik hǫggva,
hjaldrgegnir, bú þegna?
Ofrausn es þat jǫfri
innanlands at vinna.
Engr hafði svá ungum
áðr bragningi ráðit;
rán hykk rekkum þínum
– reiðrs herr, konungr – leiðask.

[31] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verse 9, 20–21. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse. On the importance of promises, see Chapter Two: Integrity.
[32] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verse 10, 21–22. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse.

> ‘Who urges you, battle-promoter [warrior], to slay the livestock of your subjects? It is insolence for a prince to do that in his own land. No one had earlier advised a young ruler in such a way; I think your troops are tired of plunder; people are angry, king’.[33]

Bersǫglisvísur 13:

> *Hverr eggjar þik, harri*
> *heiptarstrangr, at ganga*
> *(opt reynir þú) þínum*
> *(þunn stôl) á bak môlum?*
> *Fastorðr skyli fyrða*
> *fengsæll vesa þengill;*
> *hœfir heit at rjúfa,*
> *hjaldrmǫgnuðr, þér aldri.*
>
> ‘Who urges you, vengeful lord, to go back on your promises? Frequently you test slender swords. A prosperous prince of the people must be true to his word; it is never proper for you to break your pledges, battle-increaser [warrior]’.[34]

Each of these four verses are also included in the *Magnúss saga* and *Morkinskinna* accounts in their entirety [*Mgóð*, Ch. 16; *Msk*, Ch. 4].

Diplomatic mitigation can be seen across these verses, as Evans reads them, in the careful asking of who had influenced Magnús to enact these deeds upon his people.[35] Mitigation of Magnús’ culpability is thereby apparent in the poetic as well as prose presentation of events. The lingering effects of this presentation in the poem are retained by the prose narration in each of the *konungasögur*, where Magnús’ initial actions appear to have stemmed from the influence of others, either

[33] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, ‘*Bersǫglisvísur*’, verse 11, 22–23. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse.
[34] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, ‘*Bersǫglisvísur*’, verse 13, 24–25. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse.
[35] Evans, ‘The Construction of Diplomacy’, 55.

through gossip or advice [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Mgóð*, Ch. 13].[36] The scenarios which the prose authors present and by which they attempt to mitigate Magnús' behaviour can therefore be seen to have their origins in *Bersǫglisvísur*.

Each of the verses further accuse Magnús of acting in an unrestrained manner. The verses' inclusion in each of the texts thereby reiterates and emphasises the lack of restraint which Magnús is said to have shown in the prose. The *Morkinskinna* prose especially mirrors the call for Magnús to learn restraint and moderation as found in the verse *Bersǫglisvísur* 10 [*Msk*, Ch. 4]. Although the verse and call for moderation are included in the *Magnúss saga* and *Fagrskinna* accounts, the problems of unrestrained behaviour, and the unrest such unmoderated actions could cause, are thus most pronounced in the *Morkinskinna* account where the call is repeated. Whereas Ármann Jakobsson finds the depiction of Haraldr Sigurðarson in *Morkinskinna* to be of an unrestrained aggressor who only occasionally masters himself, Magnús is likewise hindered by the same problem.[37] At times, Magnús is shown to be capable of changing his behaviour and imposing self-restraint, such as after he is reprimanded by Sigvatr, or during the agreement to co-rulership with Haraldr, but Magnús is otherwise frequently depicted as an unrestrained tyrant.

In the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts, the verses supply additional information to the tyranny which Magnús' vindictive actions are said to have wrought. While the prose authors offer brief overviews of fines and the seizure of property, they do not include a description of slain livestock or broken promises [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48]. These details are only present in the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts due to their inclusion in the quoted verses. Thus, like in the *Ágrip* account, the respective prose authors of *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* are seen to have selectively omitted details within their narrative depictions of Magnús, mitigating his tyrannical actions [*Ágrip*, Ch. 34; *Msk*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 48]. The *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* authors do not go so far as the *Ágrip* author, however, as they retain the acknowledgement of Magnús' poor conduct through the inclusion

[36] See also, Poole, *Viking Poems on War and Peace*, 10; O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, 41.
[37] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 79–81.

of the verses. As such, they can be seen to take a more moderate stance in lessening Magnús' tyrannical reputation. While the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* authors do not entirely hide his vindictive actions, neither do they emphasise them.

By contrast, the *Magnúss saga* author has no qualms with detailing Magnús' tyranny. As well as the poetic depictions, the prose narrative includes a blunt statement of slaughtered livestock alongside the litany of other misconducts as are included in the other prose accounts [*Mgóð*, Chs. 15–16]. The author presumably took their information on these matters from the poem and decided to incorporate them into their own narrative. Thus, editorial selection from the poetry into the prose narration and overall presentation is once again apparent.

A similar application can be viewed in *Morkinskinna*, as well as *Magnúss saga*, on the matter of Magnús' seizing property. Both accounts contain the verse *Bersǫglisvísur* 14, which reads:

> *Eitt es mál, þats mæla:*
> *'minn dróttinn leggr sína*
> *eign á óðǫl þegna';*
> *ǫfgask búendr gǫfgir.*
> *Rán mun seggr, hinns sína*
> *selr út, í því telja,*
> *flaums at fellidómi*
> *fǫðurleifð konungs greifum.*
>
> 'They all say the same thing: "my lord appropriates his subjects' ancestral properties"; proud farmers revolt. That man, who parcels out his patrimony to the king's counts according to precipitate rulings, will call that robbery'.[38]

Both the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* authors presumably used this verse to inform their generic descriptions of the land and property seizures which Magnús is said to have enacted [*Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Ch. 15]. The *Fagrskinna* author also appears to have had access to this information, but only included the land seizures

[38] Standardised verse from Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verse 14, 25–26. Translation by Kari Ellen Gade taken from the same reference as the verse.

in their narrative description [*Fsk*, Ch. 48]. Evidently, if the *Fagrskinna* author knew of this verse, they chose to omit it from their work. As a result, the *Fagrskinna* author can again be seen attempting to redeem Magnús by lessening the descriptions of his tyranny, albeit while acknowledging that there was a less than perfect period in his rule. By comparison, the *Morkinskinna* author treads closer to the *Magnúss saga* presentation in its use of repetition of tyrannical and vindictive actions included in both the poetic and prose descriptions.

The use of the same verses detailing Magnús' tyranny across the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts clearly indicates that the respective prose authors had access to the same poetic information. The different descriptions of Magnús' actions within the prose narratives, placed in repetition (or not) with these verses, thereby reveals the different editorial principles and narrative intents of the prose authors. The *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* authors had the same opportunity as the *Magnúss saga* author to include an additional prose description of slaughtered livestock, but chose not to [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Ch. 15]. A description of land and property seizures is included in the *Fagrskinna* prose, but only *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* also include its poetic description [*Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4; *Mgóð*, Chs. 15–16]. A scale of mitigation thereby becomes apparent, with *Ágrip* offering the softest depiction of Magnús, followed by *Fagrskinna*, while *Magnúss saga* offers the most critical view of Magnús, reiterating and emphasising his tyrannical actions.

4.2.4. Þrándr

In their respective readings of *Morkinskinna*, both Indrebø and Andersson find a negative portrayal of Haraldr Sigurðarson in the *þættir* in contrast to the "main narrative", with Indrebø going so far as to consider these conflicting depictions as evidence that the *þættir* were additional insertions to the narrative.[39] Ármann

[39] Gustav Indrebø, 'Harald Hardraade i *Morkinskinna*', in Johannes Brødum-Nielsen, et al. (eds.), *Sagastudier af festskrift til Finnur Jónsson 29. Maj 1928* (Levin & Munksgaards: København, 1928), 173–180; Andersson, 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', 58–66; Andersson, *The Partisan Muse*, 121–128; Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 13.

Jakobsson has since rightly argued for the complexity of Haraldr Sigurðarson's depictions throughout *Morkinskinna*, describing his portrayal in the text as being of 'a three-dimensional human being with good sides and bad and always a bit unpredictable'.[40] Similar descriptions can be accorded to other kings in *Morkinskinna*, including Magnús inn góði. Although Andersson finds the *Morkinskinna* portrayal of Magnús so positive as to be akin to a 'Norwegian *rex justus*', Magnús is also frequently depicted as an unrestrained and vindictive tyrant.[41] Magnús' tyranny does not erase the positive depictions of him; instead, the two strands of his depiction, like Haraldr's, show him to be a complex and human figure. The *þættir* then, while distinct examples and scenarios peppered along the main chronological structure of the text, offer an opportunity for demonstrating a figure's complexities and are as much a part of the main narrative as the big events which move the chronology along. Additionally, the *þættir* are artfully integrated alongside the supposed main narrative, supplementing themes, and paralleling events. In creating their narrative, the *Morkinskinna* author worked from a '*totum simul* perspective', dropping hints along the way and reflecting back on past narration, between both the "main narrative" and the *þættir*.[42] This careful weaving and cross-referencing within a single narrative is apparent in events around Magnús' and Haraldr's agreement to co-rule, while parallels are drawn between Magnús' treatment of Kálfr Árnason and the Þrœndir and Haraldr's treatment of the Upplander, Þrándr.

The tense situation between Haraldr and Þrándr presented in *Morkinskinna* provides a clear contrast to the situation which arose between Magnús and Kálfr Árnason and offers a comparison between the two kings. Just as Magnús was angry and vindictive towards Kálfr, so too his Haraldr shown to be wrathful against Þrándr. The scenario takes place during the shared kingship of Magnús and Haraldr, when a man named Þrándr is said to have found himself in the difficult position of being the friend of King Magnús but the enemy of King Haraldr [*Msk*, Ch. 20]. The situation

[40] Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 109.
[41] Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, 100.
[42] Heather O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga: Meanings of Time in Old Norse Literature* (Bloomsbury: London, 2021), 5.

appears to be temporarily resolved when Þrándr arranges to leave Norway, but his escape is blocked by Haraldr who is waiting offshore. Magnús is still present and moves to help Þrándr, and Haraldr finally withdraws when he sees he is facing battle with his kinsman and co-ruler [*Msk*, 20]. The enmity between Haraldr and Þrándr is initially presented as stemming from Þrándr favouring Magnús, causing Haraldr to be affronted. Orning subscribes to this surface-telling in the *þáttr* and considers it an example of the petty disputes and tensions which come with the checks of power in co-rulership.[43] Such a reading is perfectly applicable and apparent in the scenario, though it misses the wider scope of the narrative context and effect.

Firstly, the *þáttr* opens with a reminder that Magnús was *í mót brutusk, þeim var hann grimr* 'brutal in dealing with those to whom he was opposed' [*Msk*, 20]. Though a general statement, the description immediately references the unrestrained, vindictive actions which Magnús took against the Þrœndir, as well as the Danes whom he considered to have betrayed or resisted him (see Chapter Four: A Danish Betrayal). The *Morkinskinna* author thereby reminds their audience of past events and draws attention to the relevance of them in the coming scene. From the outset, the *þáttr* establishes a deliberate contrast between Magnús' past actions and, as it will be revealed with the telling, Haraldr's present conduct.

Secondly, the *þáttr* is chronologically positioned within the narrative as the first example of Haraldr and Magnús as co-kings. As such, the scenario is presented as having occurred early in Haraldr's rule, not long after his return to Norway. In the context of Haraldr's life, the last time he had otherwise substantially been in Norway was when he had fought in the battle of Stiklarstaðir, where he was wounded and his brother, Óláfr helgi, was killed [*Msk*, Ch. 11; *Fsk*, Ch. 34; *Óhelg*, Ch. 209; *Ágrip*, Chs. 30–32]. Just as Magnús' ill-treatment of the Þrœndir occurred early in his rule, so too is Haraldr shown to be vindictive at the beginning of his own kingship. The reminder of these past events in the opening statement, combined with the chronological position of the present *þáttr*, thereby begins to draw a connection

[43] Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 59.

between the events and a comparison of the two kings' conduct within an equivalent set time span, as relevant to each.

Finally, Þrándr is introduced in the narrative as a *frændi Kálfs Árnason* 'kinsman of Kálfr Árnason' [*Msk*, Ch. 20]. Aside from Kálfr, several of his kinsmen are also said to have been in the battle against Óláfr helgi, and whom Haraldr himself may have fought, though other family members had sided with Óláfr [*Óhelg*, Chs. 214–231]. Þrándr is presented as having had no part in the battle, and his first depiction in *Morkinskinna* is an appeal to Magnús, in which he acknowledges the role his kinsmen played, but explains that he *en vér hǫfum ekki við verit þau in miklu tíðendi* 'then had not been with them in those great events' [*Msk*, Ch. 20]. Through this, Magnús and Þrándr are reconciled, but when Haraldr is said to have later learned of it, he considered the peace to have been hastily made [*Msk*, Ch. 20]. No explanation is provided for why Haraldr believed the resolution to be hastily made, or why he otherwise did not trust Þrándr's claim. This itself may be a whispered contrast of individuals. Magnús, who is shown to rarely use deceit, is presented as willingly trusting Þrándr, whereas Haraldr, who is frequently depicted as being deceitful to gain the upper hand, does not. Thus, the kings' reactions to Þrándr can be read with how each of them is shown to conduct himself.

Meanwhile, the premise of Haraldr's annoyance is clearly not a matter of ego and honour, but of apology. For the uprising against Óláfr, the battle, and his own wounding and exile, Haraldr is shown to still hold a grudge, made worse by the lack of apology offered to him. Haraldr's actions against Þrándr are thereby reminiscent of the actions which Magnús took against Kálfr Árnason and the Þrœndir, setting disorder to Þrándr's property and driving him from the land [*Msk*, Chs. 4 & 20]. Thus, Haraldr and Magnús are depicted as having acted on the same vindictive and unrestrained anger towards those whom they believed to have been connected with Óláfr helgi's downfall. These traits are clearly undesirable for a king to possess, and the author treats both occasions with condemnation. Both kings are shown to have required and received a reprimand from another; as Magnús was admonished by Sigvatr, so Haraldr finds himself confronted by Magnús, and only then does he back

down [*Msk*, Chs. 4 & 20].[44] In this final scene, the contrast between Haraldr and Magnús emerges. Magnús is said to have made peace with the Þrœndir some years prior to Haraldr's return to Norway, whereas Haraldr's anger was still fresh and easily kindled.

Throughout this *þáttr*, the *Morkinskinna* author presents a comparison of how Magnús and Haraldr reacted similarly in anger, but that at this point in the narrative chronology, Magnús had in effect moved on and ceased his vendetta, whereas Haraldr still carried his emotional baggage. The *Morkinskinna* author was therefore an astute observer of human behaviour and interaction, and capable of relaying these details into comments of their effects on kingship. Moreover, the author made this poignant comparison using a mix of overt, but separate events alongside subtler references and parallels between scenarios, and used both the "main narrative" and the *þáttr* to this effect.

4.3. A Warrior King

Following the tyrannical period of Magnús' early rule, the *konungasögur* narratives turn to the battles which he is said to have fought outside of Norway. The accounts differ in the number of battles they each recount (see Table F), as well as in their chronological presentation of the battles. For example, the *Ágrip* account presents the battle of Helganes as having occurred before the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, while the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts narrate the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr before the battle of Helganes [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Chs. 6–7; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–28 & 33]. Unlike the contextual presentation of the siege examples provided in the respective narratives of Haraldr Sigurðarson, none of the accounts frame the scenes of Magnús' battles as select examples (see Chapter Three: Lack of Order). Each account instead narrates the battles which Magnús is said to have fought as though those specific battles are the complete compendium of his military experiences [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Chs. 5–8; *Mgóð*,

[44] On checks of power and action between kings, see Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 59–62.

Chs. 26–33]. Accordingly, the *Ágrip* narrative does not read as though it is lacking military examples for Magnús, and the author instead uses the two included battles to great effect in emphasising Magnús' courage, leadership, and abilities as a warrior. In the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts, several raids are described alongside the more determinate battles, such as at Jómsborg and Fjón [Fyn] [*Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Mgóð*, Chs. 24 & 31; *Msk*, Ch. 8].[45] In each battle, Magnús' abilities as a warrior and inspiring leader are emphasised. Although these traits are also included in the descriptions of the respective raids, the raids are contextualised within the narratives as being punishments upon the people for having shown disloyalty to Magnús. Thus, the raids also serve as reminders of Magnús' more vindictive behaviours.

Account	Number of Battles	Battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr	Battle at Ré, off Vestland	Battle of Áróss	Battle of Helganes
Ágrip	2	✓			✓
Fagrskinna	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Morkinskinna	4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Magnúss saga ins góða	4	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table F: Number of battles included in each of the Old Norse accounts. Ticks show which battles are included in each account.

In the *Ágrip* presentation of the battles at Helganes and Hlýrskógsheiðr respectively, Magnús is said to have fought against Sveinn Úlfsson as his primary opponent. In the narrative context shared by all four accounts, Sveinn Úlfsson challenged Magnús for the kingship of Denmark after Magnús had (initially) asserted his authority over the

[45] There appears to be some confusion in the *Morkinskinna* account where the author creates additional battles out of the poetic record of raids against Fjón. An additional battle at Skáni is also mentioned, though this should instead be part of the battle of Helganes. See Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds. & trans.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), fn. 7.1.

country [*Mgóð*, Chs. 20–25; *Fsk*, Chs. 48–49; *Msk*, Ch. 5; *Ágrip*, Chs. 35–36].[46] In the *Magnúss saga*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Morkinskinna* accounts, Sveinn Úlfsson is firstly presented as an ally of Magnús, whom Sveinn later betrays once he has the support of the Danish people [*Mgóð*, Chs. 22–25; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 5]. These circumstances are not included in *Ágrip*; instead, Sveinn Úlfsson is presented as an immediate opponent to Magnús [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. Additionally, whereas *Ágrip* presents Sveinn Úlfsson as being the main instigator of the battle of Helganes and the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, the other three texts present Sveinn as being present at the battle of Helganes but not at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–33; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Ch. 6–7]. According to *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga*, the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr was fought against the Wends, who are depicted as acting independently [*Mgóð*, Chs. 26–28; *Fsk*, Chs. 49 – 50; *Msk*, Ch. 6]. A Wendish host is still present in the *Ágrip* version of the battle, though in this text, the Wends are said to have been under Sveinn's command [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. Through the repetition of battles against the same opponent, the *Ágrip* account creates an immediate comparison between Magnús inn góði and Sveinn Úlfsson as military leaders. The *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts also compare the two throughout their battles, but they do not use the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr in this comparison. Instead, the battle of Áróss [Århus] is used in all three accounts as a reiterative example alongside the battle of Helganes, while the *Magnúss saga* account also uses the battle at Ré [*Mgóð*, Chs. 29–33; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Chs. 7–8]. The battle at Ré is also mentioned in the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts, though it is briefly stated as a victory for Magnús against a band of pirates and offers little commentary on Magnús' skills as a warrior or leader [*Msk*, Ch. 5; *Fsk*, Ch. 49]. The battle will therefore not receive any special consideration here, as the victory alone can be taken as emphasising Magnús' military success.

[46] Magnús is said to have acceded Hǫrða-Knútr as king of Denmark following the latter's death in 1042. In a treaty made between the two kings some time before, it was decided that if either king died without a male heir, the other would inherit their kingdom [*Msk*, Ch. 3; *Fsk*, Ch. 47; *Mgóð*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 35].

4.3.1. The Battle of Helganes

The battle of Helganes took place in c.1043 between Magnús inn góði and Sveinn Úlfsson, off the Danish coast. The *Ágrip* version of the battle of Helganes is exceedingly short.

Ágrip, Ch. 36:

> *En þá er Sveinn, sonr Úlfs ok Ástríðar systur Knútr ríkja, spurði þetta í England, þá afladi hann alla vega hers, er hann mátti. En Magnús [fór] at móti ok funnusk á skipum við nes þat, er kallat er Helganes, ok heldu bardaga, ok flýði Sveinn til Vinðlands...*
>
> 'But when Sveinn, the son of Úlfr and Ástríðr, the sister of Knútr inn ríki, heard of this [Hǫrða-Knútr's death] in England, then he gathered a mighty army together to fight for him. And Magnus went against him and they met with their ships off that headland which is called Helganes, and held a battle, and Sveinn fled to Wendland...'.

The account offers little detail of Magnús as a warrior, and largely downplays his personal abilities. Nevertheless, the text offers a glimpse of Magnús as a military leader. Magnús is depicted as having made the decision to engage Sveinn in battle and is therefore shown to have had active command of his ships. Rather than focus on Magnús, however, the author constructs a contrast between him and Sveinn Úlfsson. Sveinn is said to have initiated the circumstances of the battle, but to have subsequently fled. Thus, by contrast, Magnús is shown to have been more peaceful than Sveinn, acting defensively rather than aggressively, as well as being militarily superior due to his victory.

Although the *Ágrip* account provides little detail of the battle of Helganes, a substantial amount is implied through its context. The battle is presented as a sudden, almost chance meeting between Sveinn and Magnús, and there is no indication as to whether Magnús had been aware of Sveinn's opposition or movements beforehand. The battle is therefore presented as an unexpected attack. As such, Magnús is implied to have been both ready and capable of defeating

Sveinn, despite not knowing there was an enemy moving against him. The *Ágrip* account thereby demonstrates Magnús' capabilities as a leader through his quick thinking and fortitude against unexpected circumstances. Moreover, whereas in the *Magnúss saga*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna* accounts of the battle, Magnús is depicted with an accompanying Norwegian force, the *Ágrip* account contains no equivalent provision of Norwegian support. Although Norwegian support is implied through the battle itself, there is no indication as to its scale or composition in *Ágrip*; in the other *konungasögur*, Magnús is repeatedly shown to travel with a seasoned company [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36; *Msk*, Chs. 5–8; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–33]. In *Ágrip*, Magnús is thereby implied to have been largely unprepared for any attack (known or not), thus his victory over Sveinn is presented as a greater triumph. As such, Magnús' intrinsic abilities as a warrior are emphasised, as is his fortitude in the face of unexpected adversity. If Magnús had been less capable or courageous, he presumably would not have been able to overcome Sveinn's surprise attack. Thus, Magnús' victory over Sveinn in the *Ágrip* account demonstrates his superior military and leadership skills.

Magnús' military superiority over Sveinn Úlfsson is likewise depicted in the *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts [*Msk*, Ch. 7; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. Again, little strategic information is provided, though it is made clear in all three accounts that Magnús was aware of Sveinn's movements and *ferr Magnús konungr þegar í móti honum* 'King Magnús immediately went to him' in battle [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 7; *Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. In this version of the narration, Sveinn is thereby presented as acting in more chivalrous terms and the texts close the moral gap between him and Magnús. Nevertheless, Magnús is depicted as a courageous and authoritative leader in choosing to go into battle against Sveinn and ensuring his forces followed him into it.

Although the battle is implied to have been lengthy, lasting all through the night, the descriptions accorded to it are incredibly brief [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33; *Msk*, Ch. 7; *Fsk*, Ch. 50]. *Magnúss saga* even makes a point to this effect, stating, *skjótast at segja af orroustu þessi, at Magnús konungr hafði sigr, en Sveinn flýði* 'to say quickly of this battle, King Magnús had the victory, and Sveinn fled' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. The

Morkinskinna and *Fagrskinna* accounts similarly conclude the battle, and all three accounts use Sveinn's flight to set-up the next stage of the narrative. In *Morkinskinna*, this leads into the battle of Áróss, while in *Fagrskinna* and *Magnúss saga*, it is used to explain Sveinn's presence in Sweden where he subsequently met with Haraldr Sigurðarson [*Fsk*, Chs. 50–51; *Mgóð*, Ch. 33; *HSig*, Ch. 18; *Msk*, Chs. 7–8]. As in the *Ágrip* version, Magnús' apparent victory depicts him as militarily superior to Sveinn, though the prose descriptions otherwise offer little insight as to Magnús as a warrior.

With the exception of *Ágrip*, each text cites a selection of skaldic verses which praise Magnús' abilities as a warrior. In *Fagrskinna*, one and a half verses are included for the battle of Helganes, both from *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr jarlaskáld [*Fsk*, Ch. 50].

Magnússdrápa 12:

> *Vítt hefk heyrt at heiti*
> *Helganes, þars elgi*
> *vágs inn víða frægi*
> *vargteitir hrauð marga.*
> *Røkr ǫndurt bað randir*
> *reggbúss saman leggja;*
> *rógskýja helt rýgjar*
> *regni haustnótt gegnum.*
>
> 'I have heard that it is called broad Helgenæs, where the widely famed wolf-cheerer [warrior] stripped many elks of the wave [ships]. At the beginning of twilight the ship-tree [seafarer] called for shields to be set together; the rain of the troll-woman of strife-clouds [shields > axe > battle] persisted through the autumn night'.[47]

[47] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), verse 12, 221–222. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

Magnússdrápa 14:

> *Skeiðr tók Bjarnar bróður*
> *ballr Skônungum allar*
> *– þjóð røri þeirar tíðar*
> *þingat – gramr með hringum.*
>
> 'The monarch, baleful to the Skánungar, seized all the warships of Bjǫrn's brother [Sveinn], every one; men rowed up at the right moment'.[48]

In these two verses, Magnús is praised for seizing Sveinn's ships and clearing them of Sveinn's followers. Magnús is thereby depicted as a capable warrior for overcoming his opponents, and being able to repeat this process over multiple vessels. The same verses are also included in the *Magnúss saga* account where they have a similar effect [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. In the *Magnúss saga* presentation, the verses carry further weight and emphasis on Magnús' abilities as a warrior, however, as the prose includes a description of the two forces ahead of the battle's commencement. According to *Magnúss saga*, *Magnús konungr lið minna ok skip stœrri ok skipuð betr* 'King Magnús had a smaller force and greater and better manned ships' than Sveinn Úlfsson [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. Through the combination of this description, the verses, and Magnús' ultimate victory, he is shown to overcome a numerically superior force (which is also the case in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr). As such, Magnús' abilities as a warrior are emphasised. Moreover, because the battle of Helganes is implied to have been long and drawn out, taking place over the course of a night, Magnús' resilience and fortitude are also made apparent, as is his ability to inspire his followers to continue fighting [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33]. These latter features are also implied in the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts, though the apparent fortitude is less in these as they do not offer a description of either force, so omit the scale of the challenge which Magnús was able to overcome [*Msk*, Ch. 7; *Fsk*, Ch. 50].

Magnúss saga also contains two verses by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson for the battle of Helganes [*Mgóð*, Ch. 33].

---

[48] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', verse 14, 223–224. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

Magnússflokkr 17:

Hizig laut, es heitir
Helganes, fyr kesjum
(sukku sárir rekkar)
Sveins ferð (bana verðir).
Mætr helt, orgu sjóti
Mœra gramr í snœri;
odd rauð aski studdan
ǫrr landreki dǫrrum.

'Sveinn's troop stooped before halberds there, where it is called Helganæs; wounded champions sank down, deserving death. The excellent lord of the Mœrir [Norwegian king = Magnús] held many spear in its thong; the valiant land-ruler reddened with spears the point hafted [*lit*. supported] with ash'.[49]

Magnússflokkr 18:

Flýði jarl af auðu
ótvínn skipi sínu
morð, þars Magnús gerði
meinfœrt þaðan Sveini.
Réð herkonungr hrjóða
hneitis egg í sveita;
sprændi blóð á brýndan
brand; vá gramr til landa.

'The unwavering jarl fled the killing, from his empty ship, where Magnús made it perilous for Sveinn to go from there. The army-king painted [*lit.* did

[49] Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Magnússflokkr*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), verse 17, 84–85. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

paint] the sword's edge in gore; blood spurted onto the sharpened sword; the prince fought for lands'.[50]

In both of Þjóðólfr Arnórsson's verses, Magnús is depicted as being in the midst of the battle, reddening spear and sword, and is effectively shown as leading from the front. His abilities as a warrior are thereby displayed, as he is depicted as an efficient fighter, able to defend himself and overcome any opponents. As well as a display of his skills as a fighter, the imagery also demonstrates Magnús' apparent fortitude and leadership in being fully involved with the battle and in the thick of the fighting. Additionally, alongside the description of Magnús' forces being fewer but more skilled than Sveinn's, the verses serve to demonstrate and emphasise the military skill and prowess of their leader, Magnús. Though Sveinn's force was numerically superior, the skill with which Magnús fought, as depicted in the verses, could overcome them. Magnús' military prowess is thereby emphasised in the *Magnúss saga* presentation of prose and poetry.

The *Morkinskinna* account also includes the verse *Magnússflokkr* 17 by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, though the author attributes it to Arnórr jarlaskáld [*Msk*, Ch. 7]. Nevertheless, the verse carries the same purpose within the *Morkinskinna* presentation. The *Morkinskinna* account also includes a full stanza from *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr jarlaskáld and one half stanza from his poem, *Hrynhenda* [*Msk*, Ch. 7].

Magnússdrápa 13:

Dǫrr lét drengja harri
drjúgspakr af þrek fljúga
– glœddi eldr af oddum –
almi skept á hjalma.
Létat hilmir hneiti
Hǫgna veðr í gǫgnum

[50] Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Magnússflokkr*', verse 18, 85–86. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

– jôrn flugu þykkt sem þyrnir –
þél harðara sparðan.

'The ever-wise lord of warriors made spears, hafted with elm, fly powerfully at helmets; flame sparked from spear-points. The ruler did not allow his sword, harder than a file, to be spared throughout the wind-storm of Hǫgni <legendary hero> [battle]; iron missiles flew thick as thorns'.[51]

Hrynhenda 15:

Keppinn vannt, þats æ mun uppi,
Yggjar veðr, meðan heimrinn byggvisk;
valgammr skók í vápna rimmu
viðr Helganes blóðugt fiðri.
Yngvi, fekktu ǫll með hringum,
– jarl vissi sik folder missa –
þjóðum kunnr, en þú tókt síðan,
þeira flaust, við sigri Meira.

'You fought, vigorous, a wind-storm of Yggr <=Óðinn> [battle], which will always be extolled while the world is peopled; the corpse-vulture [raven/eagle] ruffled his bloody plumage in the roar of weapons [battle] at Helganæs. Sovereign renowned to men, you seized all their vessels, every one; the jarl [Sveinn Úlfsson] knew he had lost land, and you gained then a greater victory'.[52]

Again, the verses emphasise Magnús' leadership and success in battle. Notably, in *Hrynhenda* 15, Sveinn Úlfsson is said to have lost land to Magnús. Though this clearly references Sveinn's retreat from the battlefield, it also projects an image of

[51] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', verse 13, 223. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.
[52] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Hrynhenda, Magnússdrápa*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), verse 15, 201–202. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

Magnús taking greater control of Denmark, literally taking control of the land. As a comparison of the two leaders, Sveinn is thus shown to give way to Magnús, ceding his own control of Denmark, while Magnús reclaims it. Magnús is thereby shown to be the superior of the two, being able to defeat Sveinn and take the prize of Denmark which they are fighting over.

4.3.2. The Battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr

Following the battle of Helganes, the *Ágrip* account says that *flýði Sveinn til Vinðlands ok efldi þaðan her annat sinni, hvaðan ok er hann mátti fá* 'Sveinn fled to Wendland and there gathered another mighty army for himself from wherever he could' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. The army which Sveinn is said to have gathered is ultimately the same Wendish force which meets Magnús at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr in the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts [*Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–28]. Out of all the texts, only *Ágrip* places Sveinn in command of the Wendish force [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. In *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga*, the Wends are presented as having organised themselves against Magnús, independent of Sveinn Úlfsson [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Mgóð*, Ch. 26]. The *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* authors thereby all present Magnús as having faced two separate and distinct opposing forces, emphasising his military capabilities for being able to withstand multiple opponents. By comparison, the combined opposition of Sveinn Úlfsson and the Wends, presented in the *Ágrip* account, suggests the author was deliberately more succinct in their telling (regardless as to whether Sveinn's involvement with the Wends was a fictitious addition or not), but nonetheless sought to emphasise Magnús' capabilities. By combining the opposition which Magnús faced, the opposing force itself is presented as a larger, overwhelming force, and thus Magnús' subsequent victory is presented as a greater triumph.

The *Ágrip* author retains the element of surprise in their depiction of the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, though this time in more explicit terms. Ahead of the battle, Sveinn Úlfsson is said to have deliberately brought his *her til Danmarkar, svát Magnús hafði*

skǫmmu áðr vitorð af ok fyrir því lítinn viðbúnað ok óttask af liðleysi 'army to Denmark in such a manner that Magnús had little knowledge of them beforehand, and because of this had made little preparation and was afraid of having too few forces' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. The idea of a combined force of Wends and Sveinn's other followers is thereby used by the *Ágrip* author to explain the overwhelming size of the army opposing Magnús, and to contextualise Magnús' fear. Additionally, Magnús' fear is also used to emphasise the insurmountable odds with which he is presented as having faced. The acknowledgement of fear further demonstrates Magnús' depicted fortitude in holding his ground and subsequently going into battle. The author further establishes Magnús' fear by claiming it was the reason for Óláfr helgi's appearance to Magnús in a dream the night before the battle [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Compared to the depictions of other kings elsewhere in *Ágrip*, as well as in the other *konungasögur* texts, the description of a king being afraid, especially before battle, is highly unusual. Courage and fortitude before battle are highly established qualities for kings to display in the *konungasögur*, as Ármann Jakobsson and Bagge respectively note, and can also be seen in the depictions of Haraldr Sigurðarson in Sicily (see Chapter Three).[53] Fear can be reasonably expected from anyone facing battle and in conflict, and while it is not outrightly stated in the depictions of other kings, it can nonetheless be understood by the displays of fortitude needed to overcome it. By comparison, the explicit attention the *Ágrip* author pays to Magnús' fear emphasises the magnitude of the opposition he faced before the battle, and the immense fortitude required for him to overcome that fear. Thus, the description in the *Ágrip* account of Magnús' fear directly emphasises the extent of his personal fortitude, and the significance of his subsequent victory.

4.3.2.1. Fight or Flight

Through the repeated inclusion of Sveinn Úlfsson as Magnús' primary opponent in the battles of Helganes and Hlýrskógsheiðr, the *Ágrip* author creates a deliberate

[53] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 74; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 108; Bagge, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', 467.

contrast between the two men. Through the course of their depicted actions, Sveinn is repeatedly shown as the moral and military loser, while Magnús is presented as the 'best man' for the kingship of Denmark.[54] The same comparison is also presented in the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts, though the respective authors of these texts do not use the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr for this purpose.

At the respective conclusions of the battles of Helganes and Hlýrskógsheiðr in the *Ágrip* account, Sveinn Úlfsson is said to have fled the battlefield [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. On the first occasion, after the battle of Helganes, this description contextualises his subsequent gathering of a Wendish host and leads into the beginning of the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. However, the conduct of Sveinn Úlfsson is repeatedly depicted as being diametrically opposed to that of Magnús throughout their military engagements. In Bagge's assessment of acceptable and expected conduct presented in *Heimskringla*, he finds that 'one should be able to control fear' and that 'it was considered disgraceful to flee'.[55] These same values are present throughout the *Ágrip* account of Magnús' battles, where Sveinn is shown to be the dishonourable and military loser. Despite being faced with overwhelming odds in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, Magnús is shown to stand his ground, mastering his fear, and refusing to flee [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Meanwhile, at the same battle, Sveinn has the numerically superior force and the accompanying expectation of victory, but is depicted in disgraceful flight from the battlefield [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. The same contrast is apparent in the battle of Helganes, where Sveinn also flees [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. Magnús is therefore depicted as having superior fortitude and is shown to clearly adhere to the standards of admirable conduct.

Similarly, Bagge finds that 'during conflicts, there were fairly strict rules of "fair play", for example, against treason or ambush'.[56] Again, Sveinn is shown to flout the rules of conduct, and thus is presented as the moral loser compared to Magnús. The subterfuge which Sveinn is explicitly described as using ahead of the battle of

[54] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 130; Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom: State Formation in Norway, c. 900–1350* (Museum Tusculanum Press: Copenhagen, 2010), 61–62 & 162.
[55] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 162.
[56] Ibid.

Hlýrskógsheiðr emphasises the underhand methods to which he was willing to go [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Combined with the description of his greater army, Sveinn is therefore presented as the combatant expected to win, though at the expense of moral loss. As Magnús is able to overcome Sveinn's underhand methods and defeat the superior force, the grandeur of Magnús' victory is emphasised. In addition to the displays of his fortitude, Magnús is shown to be wise enough to outmanoeuvre Sveinn, even when he is placed at a deliberate disadvantage. Moreover, due to the implied secrecy of Sveinn's manoeuvres ahead of the battle of Helganes, Magnús' wisdom and fortitude are further emphasised through repetition, having defeated Sveinn in similar circumstances twice. Magnús is thereby presented as superior to Sveinn Úlfsson and emerges from the conflicts in *Ágrip* as the best man.

In contrast to the *Ágrip* narration, in the *Morkinskinna*, *Magnúss saga*, and *Fagrskinna* accounts the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr is presented as having taken place before the battle of Helganes [*Msk*, Chs. 6–7; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–33; *Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. The provided context for each battle is therefore subtly different in the *Morkinskinna*, *Magnúss saga*, and *Fagrskinna* texts than found in *Ágrip*, with the most marked contrast being the background to the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Mgóð* Chs. 26–28; *Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. In these three accounts, the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr is prefaced by an attack by Magnús on the city of Jómsborg and does not feature Sveinn Úlfsson [*Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Chs. 5–6; *Mgóð*, Chs. 24–28]. All four texts nevertheless share the same purpose of contrasting Magnús and Sveinn, as the *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts all include further examples of battles between the two [*Msk*, Chs. 7–8; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Mgóð*, Chs. 29–33]. Meanwhile, just as Magnús is praised for his courage and military leadership in the depictions of the battles, he is also shown to unleash his destructive and tyrannical traits upon those whom he perceives as his enemies, notably in raids across Denmark and at Jómsborg.

In the *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts, at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, Magnús is said to have met an overwhelming army of Wends who were set upon ravaging Denmark. The premise of the battle in these three accounts follows much the same course as the version found in *Ágrip*, with the exception that

they do not include Sveinn Úlfsson among Magnús' opponents (whereas he is the opposing leader in *Ágrip*), and that Magnús is said to have received reinforcements from his brother-in-law, Duke Ótta of Saxony [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37; *Msk*, Ch 6; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Mgóð*, Chs. 26–28]. The only other significant difference from the *Ágrip* account is the contextual motivation of the battle. In *Ágrip*, the Wends are said to have allied themselves with Sveinn Úlfsson as part of his bid to overthrow Magnús as the king of Denmark [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. As Sveinn is not included in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr in the other accounts, the Wends are given a different cause for the fight against Magnús. The *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts instead explain that the Wends had a long tradition of raiding in Denmark, and that the army which Magnús faced acted on expected behaviour by continuing this tradition [*Msk*, Ch. 5; *Fsk*, Ch. 49]. Such context is not provided in *Magnúss saga*; instead, the Wends are first described in Jómsborg, which Magnús then attacked [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. Shortly afterwards, the Wends are mentioned a second time for the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr [*Mgóð*, Ch. 26]. A correlation between the two events is thus implied in the narrative structure of *Magnúss saga*, with the Wends' motivation being revenge against Magnús for his raid on their city. The *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* narratives share this structure, and present this as the same motivating factor in addition to the contextual backstory of historic raids and rivalries [*Fsk*, Chs. 49–50; *Msk*, Chs. 5–6].

4.3.2.2. An Enemy Approaches

At the outset of the respective narratives of the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, all four texts emphasise the size of the army which Magnús and his forces were opposed by. In *Ágrip*, the author does this by uniting the supporters of Sveinn Úlfsson with the Wendish army, as discussed above [*Ágrip*, Ch. 36]. In the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* accounts, the difference between the armies is described as *sex tigir um einn* 'sixty to one', while in *Magnúss saga*, Magnús is said to have dismissed half of his army back to Norway before he received word of the advancing Wends, and

had no opportunity to recall them [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Mgóð*, Ch. 24].[57] Although in *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga*, Magnús is said to have called a levy and received troops from across Jótland [Jutland], the difference remained [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 26]. Magnús is also said to have received additional support from Duke Ótta of Saxony in these accounts, as well as in the *Fagrskinna* account [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 26; *Fsk*, Ch. 49].[58] Despite these reinforcements, the Wends are still depicted as having had an invincible army due to their overwhelming numbers [*Mgóð*, Ch. 26; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 6]. Thus, like the *Ágrip* account, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* all present the looming battle as one of insurmountable odds.

Each of the authors use their construction of impossible odds as a means of displaying and emphasising Magnús' courageous leadership and military ability. Like the description accorded to him in the *Ágrip* account, the *Magnúss saga* and *Morkinskinna* authors describe Magnús as being anxious about the numerical discrepancy between the two armies [*Mgóð*, Ch. 26; *Msk*, Ch. 6]. Magnús' worry thereby reinforces the idea of the overwhelming odds he is said to have faced, and highlights the necessary fortitude to overcome such fear. Moreover, the *Magnúss saga* and *Morkinskinna* accounts directly address Magnús' fortitude. In *Magnúss saga*, the text explains that, though it would have been more sensible to flee, *Magnús konungr vildi þá berjask* 'King Magnús, though, wished to fight', and that *[þ]ótti honum illt, ef hann skyldi flýja verða, því at hann hafði þat aldri reynt* 'he thought it bad if he should have to flee, because he had never experienced that' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 26]. Similarly, *Morkinskinna* states that the *konungr vill þó fyrir øngvan mun flýja* 'king nevertheless wished [to fight] as he had not taken to flight before' [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. Throughout these comments, Magnús is presented as a courageous king in both accounts, and one who conforms to the expected, honourable conduct

[57] Although the *Magnúss saga* account offers no direct comment on the numerical difference between Magnús' army and that of the Wends, the same description of *sex tigir um einn* 'sixty to one' is included in the description of a battle between the Varangians and an unspecified force at the end of *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs* [*Hákherð*, Ch. 21].

[58] The *Magnúss saga* account refers to the duke of Saxony as Ótta, while in *Fagrskinna* he is referred to as Ótti. *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* both describe him as having come from Saxony, whereas *Magnúss saga* opts for the more specific Brunswick. He is otherwise known as Ordulf [*Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 26].

of fighting instead of fleeing from a superior force.[59] Compared to his previous depictions as a tyrant against his people, uncaring of his expected conduct, Magnús is shown instead to adhere to the expectations placed upon him and excel in them.

The *Morkinskinna* account includes an additional passage in which Magnús' fortitude is further emphasised in a display of resilience and initiative, as well as providing a demonstration of both his youth and wisdom. The night before the battle, Magnús is said to have disguised himself and gone with Einarr þambarskelfir, his foster-father and closest adviser, throughout their encampment where he could hear what his company was saying and assess their mood [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. Magnús learns that his troops are afraid and lament having to follow a king who is set on leading them into disaster [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. Moreover, he overhears one of his followers saying, *"Hér vilda ek þá vera við skóginn. Þá bersk sá er berjask vill, en hinn felr sik er felmta vill"* '"I would like to be here by the woods. Then those who want to fight can fight, and those of us who want to be hidden can hide ourselves"' [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. Throughout this passage, Magnús' is shown to learn the 'home truths' of people's opinions of him as befitting the motif of kings in disguise.[60] Following a consultation of what they had learned with Einarr þambarskelfir, Magnús is then able to act on what he has learned, and takes care to arrange his army away from the trees, making it more difficult for anyone to flee [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. While this may not depict him as a king keen on gaining popularity, the chosen formation shows him to have been attentive to his followers and wise in taking counsel and acting on it. Thus, Magnús is depicted as a pragmatic leader. Additionally, the rampant fear throughout the camp further emphasises the fortitude which Magnús possessed to overcome his own fear and maintain his following. The *Morkinskinna* author therefore uses this additional scene to emphasise several qualities in their depiction of Magnús, demonstrating him to have been an attentive, wise, and courageous leader.

[59] See Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 162.
[60] Joseph Harris, 'The King in Disguise: An International Popular Tale in Two Old Icelandic Adaptations', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 94 (1979), 64–66.

4.3.2.3. Divine Intervention

All four *konungasögur* texts include the appearance of Óláfr helgi in a dream had by Magnús the night before the battle, and it is with his supposed guidance that the battle is won [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Mgóð*, Ch. 27; *Msk*, Ch. 6]. The *Morkinskinna* account further emphasises the significance of Óláfr helgi's appearance and the miraculous nature of events by including an additional, brief passage in which a farmer describes the same dream to the king, indicating that what each had dreamt had been the same [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. By all accounts, in the dream, Óláfr helgi is said to have reassured Magnús, given him instruction on how to handle the battle, and promised him victory [*Mgóð*, Ch. 27; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37].

The apparent influence of Óláfr helgi varies between the accounts, though *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* follow a very similar presentation. The inclusion of Óláfr helgi's miraculous aid, while purposeful in emphasising his divinity, subtracts some of the glory accorded to Magnús for his victory against the Wends. In the *Fagrskinna* and *Magnúss saga* accounts, Óláfr helgi is said to have instructed Magnús to *bardaga við Vinðr, er þér heyrið lúðr minn* 'attack against the Wends when you hear my trumpet' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 27; *Fsk*, Ch. 50]. This subsequently turns out to be the sound of the bell Glǫð being rung, though they were far from its home in Kaupangr [Trondheim] [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Mgóð*, Ch. 27].[61] The *Morkinskinna* account likewise includes Glǫð sounding, but this detail is included in the plan spoken by Óláfr helgi to his son in the dream [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. The miraculous ringing of the bell is therefore presented in each of the accounts as the first aspect of Óláfr's divine intervention to the proceedings. Although Magnús is said to have led his army into the battle at the sound to the bell, within the narrative contexts, he was only acting on the orders and signals given to him by Óláfr helgi.

The *Ágrip* account similarly diminishes any portrayal of Magnús as a military leader, and instead credits the winning strategy to Óláfr helgi [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. According to

[61] Óláfr helgi is said to have given Glǫð to Clemenskirkja [Church of St. Clement] in Trondheim [*Mgóð*, Ch. 27].

this text, *Magnús svá liði sínu í fylkignar sem inn helgi Óláfr hafði áðr í draumi kennt hónum, ok á þeiri tíð gekk hann at berjask, er hann hafði áðr sagt hónum of nóttina* 'Magnús led his troops as the blessed Óláfr had instructed him to before in the dream, and he went into battle with them at the time which he had been told about before in the night' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. As well as the timing of the battle's engagement, the *Ágrip* account also describes the tactical arrangements of Magnús' forces as having been by Óláfr's design, not Magnús'. Thus, Magnús' own military skills are diminished. Rather than a commanding strategist, Magnús is portrayed as a foot soldier following divine orders. This presentation of Magnús contrasts sharply with those of Haraldr Sigurðarson, who is portrayed as a competent and cunning strategist throughout the narratives of his time leading the Varangians (see Chapter Three: The Sieges). As such, in the build-up to Magnús' and Haraldr's co-rulership, the two are shown to be complementary opposites.

4.3.2.4. The Fearless Fighter

Although the victory at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr is ultimately presented as a strategic success on behalf of Óláfr helgi, the texts nonetheless depict Magnús as a strong and fearsome warrior during the fighting. In the *Ágrip* depiction of the battle, the author comments that *ef allir berðisk svá sems á enn fríði maðr enn ungi í silkiskyrtunni, þá hefði ekki barn undan komizk, en þat var konungrinn sjálfr* 'if all [of Magnús' forces] had fought in such a way as the handsome young man in the silken tunic, then no child would have escaped, and that [man] was the king himself' [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Having already outlined the overwhelming size of the army, the imagery of outright slaughter if all had fought as Magnús had emphasises both Magnús' efficiency and potential brutality as a warrior. Despite the praising portrayal of capability, a note of reproof is nevertheless apparent within the text. Magnús is said to have fought so fiercely he did not possess the merciful restraint to spare a child [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. *Morkinskinna* contains a similar description to that in *Ágrip*, where the Wends are said to have thought *ef allir bǫrðusk svá sems á inn fríði er í silkiskyrtunni var þá hefði ekki mannsbarn undan komizk* 'if all [of Magnús' forces]

had fought in such a way as the handsome [man] in the silken tunic had, then no person would have escaped' [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. As in the depictions of his harsh rule in *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga*, Magnús is again presented as a rash and unrestrained figure when caught in strong feeling and action [*Msk*, Chs 4 & 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Mgóð*, Chs. 14–15]. While a warrior could be praised for their ferocity, a king ought also to know restraint and show mercy towards an already defeated enemy.

No such statements are found in either the *Magnúss saga* or *Fagrskinna* accounts. It is possible the respective authors of *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* wished to portray a more positive account of Magnús in the battle and chose to omit these sentiments. The *Morkinskinna* account, however, appears to have drawn the description from *Ágrip*, and may be counted as one of the 'interpolations' identified throughout the text.[62] The *Morkinskinna* version of the battle shares one further detail with *Ágrip*, Magnús' pursuit of his enemy, but the two texts are otherwise vastly different in their overall content and level of detail. Nevertheless, the commentary on Magnús' unrestrained fighting lends a critical slant to his depiction as a warrior. Though the sentiments may have been drawn from *Ágrip*, they are nonetheless used by the *Morkinskinna* author. Thus, the *Morkinskinna* account offers the same criticism of Magnús.

As noted above, lack of restraint is a negative trait which has been considered a problem of Haraldr Sigurðarson, particularly in his depiction in *Morkinskinna*.[63] In the context of battle, however, Haraldr is repeatedly implied to have had a better handle on restraint than that which is depicted of Magnús [*Msk*, Chs. 13–14]. In the *Morkinskinna* passages relating Haraldr's sieges in Sicily, the *Morkinskinna* author states that *[s]umir gáfusk upp* 'some gave themselves up' following the undermining attack, and in the bird siege that the defenders *linleik ok lítillætti at biðja sér miskunnar* 'gently and humbly bade him to show them mercy' [*Msk*, Chs. 13–14]. Although these statements do not directly answer whether Haraldr offered mercy, either directly from his own actions or by issuing such a command through his army,

[62] Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 12–13.
[63] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 77–81.

the author acknowledges mercy as a viable option to him in these scenarios. By contrast, the description accorded to Magnús, that he was an unstoppable and ruthless fighter, to the extent that none could withstand him, leaves no room for such merciful considerations to be present. Thus, Magnús is presented as being far less restrained than Haraldr.

The main quality attributed to Magnús across each of the *konungasögur* for the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr is his unfailing courage. All four accounts present Magnús as fighting without armour, instead opting to go into battle in a silk shirt [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 28; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. The *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts further emphasise Magnús' lack of protection by depicting him as actively shedding his armour: *[þ]á fór Magnús konungr ór brynju sinni* 'then King Magnús threw his coat of mail off himself' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 28; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 50]. The same detail of Magnús going into battle without armour is also included in a verse from *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr jarlaskáld, which is cited in those three prose accounts [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 28].

Magnússdrápa 10:

> *Óð með øxi breiða*
> *ódæsinn framm ræsir*
> *– varð of hilmi Hǫrða*
> *hjǫrdynr – ok varp brynju,*
> *þás of skapt, en skipti*
> *skapvǫrðr himins jǫrðu,*
> *– Hel klauf hausa fǫlva –*
> *hendr tvær jǫfurr spendi.*
>
> 'The unsluggish ruler stormed forth with broad axe, and cast off his byrnie; a sword-clash [battle] arose around the ruler of the Hǫrðar [Norwegian king = Magnús], as the prince clenched both hands around the shaft, and the shaping guardian of heaven [= God] allotted earth, Hel clove pallid skulls'.[64]

[64] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', verse 10, 219–220. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

It appears that this verse served as the initial inspiration for Magnús to be described as fighting without armour in the prose accounts. As the oldest prose narrative, *Ágrip* may be considered the first Old Norse account to include this description of Magnús, and it is plausible that the description was later borrowed and copied by the respective authors of *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*.[65] The *Magnúss saga* account further describes that the tunic Magnús wore was red, though this detail is absent from the other accounts [*Mgóð*, Ch. 28]. A red silken tunic worn into battle also appears in the descriptions afforded to Magnús berfœttr in his final battle, and is described in detail in *Magnúss saga berfœtts*, as well as *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* [*Mberf*, Ch. 24; *Msk*, Ch. 63; *Fsk*, Ch. 85]. In the description of Magnús inn góði, the *Heimskringla* author presumably took the imagery of Magnús berfœttr as found in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, either by design or an accidental confusion of names, and applied it to both kings. In all three accounts of Magnús inn góði, the shedding of armour takes place shortly after the first sign of divine intervention, to which the action is clearly connected as a representation of Magnús now being under Óláfr helgi's protection, as Andersson and Gade note.[66] While this is a motif suited to the divine, it also demonstrates Magnús' faith, courage, and skills as a warrior.

The apparent lack of armour serves to promote Magnús' ability to protect himself during the battle, not needing to rely on anything other than his own skill and military prowess. Combined with the subsequent statement that he *hjó þegar tveim hǫndum hvern mann at ǫðrum* 'immediately hewed with two hands every man one after another', the *Magnúss saga ins góða* account depicted Magnús as both ruthless in his treatment of enemies, and effective in ensuring they cannot reach him to deal injury [*Mgóð*, Ch. 28]. While both the *Morkinskinna* and *Ágrip* accounts relate his army's fears that their king had fallen, a plausible concern given his lack of armour, Magnús is never shown to have been in any insurmountable danger [*Msk*,

[65] Arnórr jarlaskáld is thought to have composed *Magnússdrápa* in memory of the king, and is mentioned as having been present in Norway during the shared rule between Magnús and Haraldr. Thus, the poem would predate the prose accounts by some 160 years. See Diana Whaley, 'Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middles Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 177.
[66] Andersson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, fn. 5.9.

Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Furthermore, according to *Magnúss saga*, *[e]ptir orrustu lét Magnús konungr binda sár sinna manna* 'after the battle, Magnús had his followers' wounds bandaged', though no treatment or mention of injury is provided for himself [*Mgóð*, Ch. 28]. Minor injuries might have been expected and considered to not be worth mentioning by the *konungasögur* authors, as such wounds are rarely mentioned from any battle in texts unless they are death blows or have a significant long-term effect.[67] The depiction of Magnús without armour thereby implies that he is at a significantly greater risk of sustaining a serious or fatal injury. As such, the absence of any injuries described of Magnús emphasises his abilities as a warrior.

Finally, all four *konungasögur* further emphasise Magnús inn góði's courage and abilities as a warrior by describing him as fighting ahead of his army [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Mgóð*, Ch. 28; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. The *Ágrip* and *Morkinskinna* accounts take this depiction further, however, by describing a solitary pursuit undertaken by Magnús as he chases down his enemy [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. In *Ágrip*, this attack is taken against Sveinn Úlfsson, while in *Morkinskinna* it is simply against the Wends. Such a description is not included in the *Magnúss saga* and *Fagrskinna* accounts, and the *Morkinskinna* author may have taken inspiration from *Ágrip* or a similar source in adapting their depiction. In *Morkinskinna*, Magnús is described as having acted alone: *rak hann svá mjǫk lengi einn samt flóttan at engi maðr fylgði honum* 'he drove so far forward, quite alone, to pursue the fleeing host that no person escaped him' [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. A similar impression of the king fighting alone ahead of his forces is described in *Ágrip* [*Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. The risk of such action is made explicit in both accounts as they relate how the Norwegian army feared Magnús had been killed when he had not been seen among their number [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Magnús is thereby depicted as an exceptional warrior, able to single-handedly defend himself against a numerically superior force. Furthermore, to have distanced himself from his army in his pursuit, Magnús is presented as having effectively crossed behind enemy lines as the remains of the opposing army can be imagined as having been between the two. Magnús is thereby implied to

[67] Examples of long-term effects from injuries mentioned in the *konungasögur* include Halldórr Snorrason's facial scar obtained during a battle in Sicily, and Erlingr skakki's neck injury, gained while fighting in the Mediterranean with Jarl Rǫgnvaldr Kali Kolsson.

have successfully crossed the battlefield while dealing with additional opponents in pursuit of their leader.

The fugue into which Magnús is depicted as having entered while fighting is brought to full emphasis in the *Morkinskinna* version of his pursuit of the Wends. Magnús is initially said to have *gáði eigi at hann væri svá langt kominn frá liðinu… þá finnr hann hversu óvarliga farit er, snýr síðan aptr til liðs ins, ok urðu allir honum fegnir, en áðr hǫfðu þeir mjǫk óttazk um fall hans* 'not heeded that he had come so far from his army... then he realised how carelessly he had gone, then he turned back to his army, and everyone was delighted for him as up until then they had greatly feared that he had fallen' [*Msk*, Ch. 6]. The description of Magnús acting and fighting in a fugue state further emphasises his expertise as a warrior, as he is shown to have been acting without conscious control or thought. All of his actions are thereby presented as occurring by instinctual talent. In this capacity, having outstripped and outfought his company, Magnús is presented as being the best man on the battlefield.[68] Secondly, the depiction of Magnús' fugue state also displays and underlines his complete lack of restraint. Whereas in other instances, Magnús is said to have been unrestrained and unmerciful towards his opponents, on this occasion he is shown to have been unrestrained in putting himself in potential danger. This matter is further emphasised by the descriptions in both accounts of his army's concern for him and their relief to find him alive [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. Although Magnús' outstripping the battlefield is a display of courage, it is courage which goes unnecessarily far. In each depiction, the enemy is already described as having been routed; Magnús therefore has no need to excessively pursue them beyond the sight of his own army [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. As in the examples of his harsh justice, Magnús is again depicted and contextualised as going beyond what is necessary while caught in an intense scenario or feeling (in this case, fear ahead of the battle and then a battle-haze), which led to his loss of restraint.

[68] On the king as the "best man", see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 130; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 61–62 & 162.

4.3.3. Battle of Áróss

The final battle in which Magnús is said to have partaken which will be considered here is the battle of Áróss. The battle of Áróss is not included in the *Ágrip* account, and while *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* mention it, they provide very little detail [*Msk*, Ch. 8; *Fsk*, Ch. 50]. In *Fagrskinna*, the author simply states that Magnús and Sveinn Úlfsson *fundusk fyrir sunnan Árós á Jótlandi, en þar var litlu fyrir jól. Var sú skǫmm orrosta, því at Sveinn hafði minna lið. Fekk Magnús konungr sigr, en Sveinn flýði ok var mesti hlutr liðs hans drepinn* 'met south of Áróss in Jótland, and that was a little before Christmas. That was a short battle, because Sveinn had a small force. King Magnús gained the victory, and Sveinn fled and most of his army was killed' [*Fsk*, Ch. 50]. *Morkinskinna* relates a similar summary, including the description of Sveinn having the smaller force, but omits when the battle took place [*Msk*, Ch. 8].[69] Neither text includes any description of Magnús' leadership or abilities as a warrior, and his reputation as a successful military commander is largely concluded by his victory over Sveinn.

Meanwhile, the *Magnúss saga* account includes a lengthy passage on the battle of Áróss, consisting of a described scene in the prose narration and ten verses attributed to Þjóðólfr Arnórsson [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30].[70] In this account, Magnús is depicted as an active and inspiring commander, and a courageous and ferocious fighter against a numerically superior force. According to *Magnúss saga*, Magnús *talaði við lið sitt, sagði svá: "Nú hǫfum vér spurt, at jarl með lið sitt mun hér nú liggja fyrir oss. Er mér svá sagt, at þeir hafi lið mikit. Ok vil ek gera yðr kunnigt um ætlan mína. Vil ek leggja til fundar við jarl ok berjask við hann, þótt vér hafim lið nǫkkuru færa* 'spoke with his troops, and said this: "Now we have heard, that jarl with his army will now be lying at the mouth of the river. I am so told that they had a

[69] The *Morkinskinna* author appears to have confused some of the skaldic terminology surrounding the battles of Áróss and Helganes, resulting in an uncertain chronology. See also, Andersson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, fn. 7.1.

[70] The verses comprise of seven full stanzas and three half stanzas, with two and a half stanzas from *Danaveldi* and seven and half from *Magnússflokkr*. See also, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, 'Stanzas about Magnús Óláfsson in *Danaveldi*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 88–103; Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Magnússflokkr*', 61–87.

great army. And I wish to make you aware of my plan. I wish to attack in a meeting with the jarl and fight with him, although we have somewhat fewer forces"' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30]. Magnús is thereby portrayed to be actively leading his followers, and through the description of the subsequent battle they are shown to be adhering to his plan. Thus, the *Magnúss saga* author clearly depicts Magnús as the leader of the company.

As well as being shown to have authority, the *Magnúss saga* author also demonstrates and emphasises the courage which Magnús possessed, and which he was able to inspire among his company by having them follow him into a battle against a numerically superior force. The description of Sveinn's force being larger than Magnús' is reiterated twice in Magnús' apparent speech, and is also included in the preceding prose description: *Sveinn var þá í Árósi ok hafði mikit lið* 'Sveinn was then in Áróss and had a large force' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30]. This directly contradicts the descriptions of both Sveinn and Magnús' armies as found in the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts [*Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 8]. In *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, Magnús' victory is seemingly downplayed because he is expected to win due to having the numerically superior force. Thus, the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* authors offer very little detail on the battle itself as the determined outcome does little to demonstrate or emphasise Magnús as a warrior. The different description provided by the *Magnúss saga* author, of Sveinn having the numerically larger army, therefore clearly demonstrates the authorial use of description to emphasise the qualities of the protagonist. As Magnús is described to once again be facing overwhelming odds after the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, his subsequent victory serves as testimony to his superior skills as a military leader and warrior.

During the description of the proceedings of the battle, the *Magnúss saga* author also depicts Magnús as a courageous and fierce warrior, and an inspiring leader. As in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, Magnús is depicted spurring his forces forward and entering the thick of the fray ahead of his company: *Magnús konungr var fyrst ǫndverða orrostu í skjaldborg, en er honum þótti seint á orkask, þá hljóp hann fram ór skjaldborginni ok svá eptir skipinu ok kallaði hátt ok eggjaði sína menn ok gekk allt fram í stafninn í hǫggorrostu. En er þat sá hans menn, þá eggjaði hver annan*

‘King Magnús was firstly in the shield-wall at the beginning of the battle, but when he thought progress was slow, then he leapt forward from the shield-wall and so along the ship and called loudly and urged his followers on, and went all the way forward into the close fighting in the stern. And when his followers saw this, then they urged one another on’ [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30]. Through the repetition of Magnús being described as fighting alone, ahead of his forces, in the battles of Áróss and Hlýrskógsheiðr, his abilities as a skilled warrior are emphasised. However, the repetition of this tactic also emphasises the recklessness of his actions, as he is repeatedly shown to be in an area of greater danger. Though this emphasises Magnús’ apparent courage, it is at the cost of reducing his tactical wisdom. Moreover, in the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, Magnús is said to have removed his armour before going ahead in all four accounts, and in the battle of Áróss in *Magnúss saga*, he is said to have abandoned his place behind the shield wall [*Msk*, Ch. 6; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37; *Mgóð*, Chs. 28–30]. The *Magnúss saga* author therefore emphasises Magnús’ unrestrained and reckless behaviour.

Despite the unwise decisions of going into battle without armour and leaving a defensive shield wall, Magnús is nevertheless portrayed as an inspiring leader during battle. As well as being shown to be an efficient and skilled warrior himself during the battle, the victory at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr must also have been down to his followers’ actions having been inspired by the courage which Magnús demonstrated [*Mgóð*, Ch. 28; *Fsk*, Ch. 50; *Msk*, Ch. 6; *Ágrip*, Ch. 37]. The same effect is described in greater detail for the battle of Áróss in the *Magnúss saga* account. Once Magnús changed his tactics, charging forward onto the enemy’s ship, his men are said to have become re-energised and motivated to press forward themselves, ultimately resulting in their victory [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30]. The apparent effect which Magnús’ actions had on his followers, and thereby on the outcome, demonstrates his awareness of the situation and the need to change a contributing factor to break the stalemate. Thus, the *Magnúss saga* author depicts Magnús’ strategic wisdom through his insightful decision to change his current actions, even when his new actions are reckless. This trait is not emphasised, however, and it is a rare depiction of such a quality for Magnús. Overall, in each of the accounts, Magnús is depicted as

a courageous and unrestrained fighter and an inspiring leader, though not a strategic genius.

Finally, the battle of Áróss serves the same purpose in the *Magnúss saga*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna* accounts as the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr provides in *Ágrip*, namely as a means of demonstrating Magnús' superiority compared to Sveinn Úlfsson. The repeated mention and depiction of battles between Magnús and Sveinn in each of the accounts builds a deliberate contrast between the two, with the purpose of identifying and emphasising Magnús as the 'best man'.[71] This comparison is most obvious in the *Ágrip* account, where the two figures are shown to be opposed in both of the battles recounted in that text [*Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. The effect is somewhat less in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* where the battle of Áróss receives little attention. The contrast between Magnús and Sveinn is not sharply drawn, and the litany of Magnús' battles against Sveinn, the Wends, and unspecified pirates blurs into a generalisation of Magnús' military abilities against any opponent [*Msk*, Chs. 5–8; *Fsk*, Chs. 49–50]. Although Magnús' skill (and potential luck) at winning the victory is emphasised through repetition, the lack of details of his opponents diminishes the effect as there is no equivalent repetition or "levelling up" of the scales of the challenges he faced in these accounts. In *Magnúss saga*, the scales of the challenges are repeatedly described for the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr and the battle of Áróss, and Magnús is said to have encountered Sveinn Úlfsson in battle on multiple occasions in the battles of Helganes, Áróss, and Ré [*Mgóð*, Chs. 26–33]. Again, Magnús' consistent victories in *Magnúss saga* demonstrate him to be a competent military leader and warrior. Additionally, his repeated victories over Sveinn Úlfsson also depict Magnús as the better man in both *Ágrip* and *Magnúss saga* [*Mgóð*, Chs. 29–33; *Ágrip*, Chs. 36–37]. While this is presented and emphasised in *Ágrip* in two separate battle examples, the *Magnúss saga* author provides three victories for Magnús against Sveinn and thereby emphasises the comparison between the two men, and Magnús' superiority, to the greatest extent.

[71] See Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 130; Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold*, 61–62 & 162.

4.4. A Vengeful King

4.4.1. Jómsborg

Before the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, in the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* accounts, Magnús is said to have taken his army to Jómsborg and raided the city [*Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 5; *Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. The *Fagrskinna* account mentions the attack very briefly, giving only the context of Magnús' motivation and no details of the raid itself: *hann sigldi sínu liði suðr til Vinðlands at vinna aptr jarlsríki þat, er Danakonungr hafði átt at Jómi. Í þeiri ferð vann hann Jómsborg* 'he [Magnús] sailed with his forces south to Wendland to win back that jarldom which the king of the Danes had had at Jómi. On this trip he won Jómsborg' [*Fsk*, Ch. 49]. In the *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* versions, the accounts include both more description in the prose, as well as skaldic verses relevant to the raid [*Msk*, Ch. 5; *Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. Such details and additions are absent from the *Fagrskinna* account, suggesting the author was either unaware of the poetry and the actions of the attack, or that the muted description is an authorial attempt to soften the depiction of Magnús by omitting any acknowledgements of his savagery.[72] The *Morkinskinna* and *Magnúss saga* accounts do not shy away from describing the raid on Jómsborg, resulting in a depiction much closer to the tyrannical Magnús portrayed earlier in the narratives.

Shortly before the attack on Jómsborg in the *Morkinskinna* account, Magnús is said to have become the king of the Danes, following his earlier agreement with Hǫrða-Knútr, and that his territory then spanned over Jótland, *er megn er alls Danaveldis. Þat er first Nóregsríki en næst Vinðum ok Sǫxum er mikinn ófrið verittu Dǫnum jafnan* 'where the power of all the Danish realm lies. That is farthest from the Norwegian realm and nearest to the Wends and Saxons, who have always been aggressive towards the Danes' [*Msk*, Chs. 3 & 5]. This small passage serves two key purposes. Firstly, the *Morkinskinna* author praises Magnús for extending his power and authority across Denmark by securing the integral region of Jótland, and

[72] On the depiction of Magnús in *Fagrskinna*, see also, Andersson, *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings*, 69–71.

secures and legitimises his rule over Denmark by explaining that Magnús had control of the seat of Danish power. Magnús is thereby shown to have been a successful expansionist king. Secondly, the Wends and Saxons are established as a recurring threat against the Danes and the land Magnús now controlled [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. The author thereby makes clear the potential conflict with the Wends, the Saxons, or both before the notion of a battle, and specifically the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr, arises. The implied. blame attached to Magnús for provoking the Wends with his own attack is thereby mitigated. The threat and potential conflict are instead made present in the text regardless as to what action Magnús took. That the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr occurred after Magnús' attack on Jómsborg in the *Morkinskinna* narrative chronology is thereby presented as coincidence rather than solely the result of Magnús' own actions.

Whereas the *Magnúss saga* narrative presents the attack on Jómsborg shortly following Magnús' subjugation of Denmark, the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts imply the passing of time between events [*Mgóð*, Chs. 21–24; *Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 5]. All three texts agree in their chronological presentation that Magnús had made Sveinn Úlfsson his steward over Denmark before the attack on Jómsborg took place [*Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Mgóð*, Chs. 22–23; *Msk*, Ch. 5]. Immediately following this appointment in the *Magnúss saga* narrative, Magnús is said to have travelled with his forces to Jómsborg with the intent of subjecting the city to himself as it had previously been under Danish rule [*Mgóð*, Chs. 23–24]. Meanwhile, the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts firstly describe Sveinn's betrayal of Magnús in claiming the Danish kingship for himself, how Magnús returned to Denmark from Norway to fight Sveinn and punish the Danes for their part in the betrayal, and only afterwards does Magnús go to Jómsborg [*Msk*, Ch. 5; *Fsk*, Ch. 49]. The *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts thereby present Magnús' attack on Jómsborg as a continuation of the raids he had carried out in Denmark, and a logical next step towards ensuring the entirety of the Danish territories was under his rulership. By contrast, Magnús' attack on Jómsborg in the *Magnúss saga* account is unprovoked and without equivalent motivational context [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. Whereas the *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* accounts depict Magnús as methodically securing

what was rightfully his within their contextual presentation, the *Magnúss saga* author depicts Magnús as an ambitious and aggressive king, set on expanding his kingdom and proving himself as a military leader.

Alongside their prose description of the devastation Magnús wrought upon Jómsborg, the *Morkinskinna* author includes a verse from *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr jarlaskáld [*Msk*, Ch. 5].

Magnússdrápa 8:

> *Vann, þás Venðr of minnir,*
> *vápnhríð konungr síðan;*
> *sveið of ôm at Jómi*
> *illvirkja hræ stillir.*
> *Búk dró bráðla steikðan*
> *blóðugr vargr af glóðum;*
> *rann á óskírð enni*
> *allfrekr bani hallar.*
>
> 'The king worked then a weapon-blizzard [battle], which Wends remember; the ruler singed around dark corpses of evil-doers at Wollin. The bloody wolf dragged a body, swiftly-roasted, from the embers; the most ravenous slayer of the hall [fire] darted over unbaptised brows'.[73]

In the prose description, Magnús *kom með herinn út at Jómni. Gengu þeir á land upp ok herjuðu ok brenndu þar bæði byggðir ok menn, ok gørir þar mikinn hernað ok vinnr þar stórvirki mikil* 'came with the army out to Jómsborg. They went up on the land and harried and burned there both settlements and people, and wrought great havoc and worked great achievements there [*Msk*, Ch. 5].

The prose author clearly drew their description of the destruction that Magnús and his army wrought upon the city from the verse. Both descriptions include imagery of fire, and the burning of people and buildings, informing a visceral and savage scene.

[73] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', verse 8, 217. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

It is unclear in the prose how much of the action was led by Magnús; although he is said to have brought his force to the city, he is not depicted as taking an active part in the sacking of Jómsborg [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. His depiction as a warrior is therefore somewhat muted. Meanwhile, in the verse, Magnús is depicted as taking a very active role in the battle and appears to lead the destruction [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. In this, he is presented as a strong and fearsome military leader and a heroic king fighting a heathen enemy.[74] By including the verse in their narrative, the *Morkinskinna* author draws on Arnórr jarlaskáld's depiction of Magnús to create a positive and praising impression of the king, though they do little to emphasise these traits themselves.

Two more of Arnórr jarlaskáld's verses, from the *Hrynhenda* poem, are included alongside the attack on Jómsborg in the *Magnúss saga* narrative [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24].

Hrynhenda 11:

> *Heyra skalt, hvé herskjǫld bôruð,*
> *hilmis kundr, til Venða grundar,*
> *– heppinn drótt af hlunni sléttum*
> *hélug bǫrð – í stefjaméli.*
> *Aldri frák, en, vísi, valdið*
> *Venða sorg, at dǫglingr spenði*
> *– flaustum varð þá flóð of ristit –*
> *fleiri skip til óðals þeira.*
>
> 'Ruler's kinsman, you shall hear in a refrain-section how you carried the war-shield to the land of the Wends; you dragged, fortunate, rime-spread prows from the smooth launcher. Never have I heard that a sovereign steered more ships against their patrimony, and, prince, you cause grief for the Wends; then the flood was carved by ships'.[75]

[74] On the growing depictions of Magnús as an active leader in the poetry, see Judith Jesch, ''Youth on the Prow': Three Young Kings in the Late Viking Age', in P. J. P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages* (York Medieval Press: Woodbridge, 2004), 131–139.
[75] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Hrynhenda*', verse 11, 196–197. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.

Hrynhenda 12:

> *Skjǫldungr, fort of óþjóð eldi;*
> *auðit vas þá flotnum dauða;*
> *hæstan kynduð, hlenna þrýstir,*
> *hyrjar ljóma sunnr at Jómi.*
> *Hvergi þorði hallir varða*
> *heiðit folk í virki breiðu;*
> *buðlungr, unnuð borgarmǫnnum*
> *bjǫrtum eldi stalldræp hjǫrtu.*
>
> 'King, you went with flame through the evil tribe; then death was fated to men; crusher of thieves [just ruler], you kindled a towering blaze of fire south in Wollin. The heathen host dared not at all to defend halls in the broad stronghold; royal one, you caused terror-struck hearts in the townsmen, by means of bright flame'.[76]

Neither of these verses are included in *Morkinskinna*, and the verse in *Morkinskinna*, *Magnússdrápa* 8, is not included in *Magnúss saga*. Nevertheless, the verses and their use within the two prose accounts are used to the same effect.[77] Consistently throughout these verses, Magnús is shown to have been in active command of his troops, and to have taken an active role in the attack on Jómsborg. Like the *Morkinskinna* author, the prose author of *Magnúss saga* appears to have drawn upon the poetic descriptions of Magnús' actions, but also goes further than their *Morkinskinna* counterpart by mimicking the poetry by depicting Magnús as an active military leader [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24; *Msk*, Ch. 5]. In the *Magnúss saga* prose, *bauð hann út af Danmǫrk skipaher miklum ok helt um sumarit til Vinðlands með allan herinn… þá lagði hann til Jómsborgar ok vann þegar borgina, drap þar mikit folk, en brenndi borgina ok landit* 'he [Magnús] ordered out of Denmark a great navy and held a course with all the army to Wendland in the summer… then he lay at

[76] Standardised verse from Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Hrynhenda*', verse 12, 197–198. Translation by Diana Whaley, taken from the same reference as the verse.
[77] The poem *Hrynhenda* is thought to have been composed a few years before *Magnússdrápa* and was recited to the king. Meanwhile, *Magnússdrápa* was composed later, after Magnús' death. See Diana Whaley, 'Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson', 181–182 & 206.

Jómsborg and immediately won the city, killing many people there and burning the city and land' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. In addition to portraying Magnús as an active and capable leader, the *Magnúss saga* prose emphasises his authority by describing his army as Danish [*Mgóð*, Ch. 24]. In this small detail, Magnús' newly appointed authority as the king of the Danes is reiterated. Although the Danish contingent was new to him, Magnús is portrayed as being capable of inspiring them to follow him as well as ensuring that they followed his orders. Thus, the *Magnúss saga* account emphasises Magnús' abilities as a leader.

4.4.2. A Danish Betrayal

Similar descriptions of destruction to those apparent in the attack on Jómsborg are also presented in the descriptions of Magnús' raids across Denmark, which occurred following the Danes' betrayal of Magnús in favour of taking Sveinn Úlfsson as their king. While Magnús is again depicted as a fearsome and capable warrior and an able leader, his tyrannical traits again come to the fore. According to *Morkinskinna*, having landed in Fjón, Magnús *þar hernað ok drap mart folk fyrir svikræði, því at hann vildi nú leiða Dǫnum svikin* 'harried and killed many people for their treachery, because he now wanted to discourage the Danes from treachery' [*Msk*, Ch. 8]. Magnús' single intent is made clear in the description, with the depiction of him once again shaped by themes of vengeance and forced obedience. The scene has strong echoes of the actions he had previously wrought upon the Þrœndir, only now Magnús' unrestrained, vindictive behaviour is said to have extended to killing those whom he deemed as having betrayed him [*Msk*, Chs. 4–8]. Fjón is not the first target of Magnús' wrath, though similar descriptions of the destruction Magnús wrought across the land are found in *Magnúss saga* and *Fagrskinna* [*Mgóð*, Chs. 32–34; *Fsk*, Ch. 50]. In *Magnúss saga*, Magnús is likewise said to have *herskildi yfir Sjáland ok brenndi víða fyrir þeim mǫnnum, er um haustit hǫfðu slegizk í flokk með Sveini* 'harried the land over Sjáland and burning widely because of those people who in the autumn had joined with Sveinn's army' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 31]. As at the attack on Jómsborg, fire is invoked as one of the destructive tools which Magnús employed

against his perceived enemy [*Mgóð*, Ch. 14]. Through these details of destruction, Magnús is depicted as conducting war against the Danes as a form of punishment for their betrayal.

The theme of betrayal is strong throughout Magnús' respective narratives, and many of his actions and most destructive moments are presented in direct connection with it. In his mistreatment of the Þrœndir, Magnús' actions are contextualised as stemming from the betrayal they had acted against Óláfr helgi. The descriptions of much of the vindictive treatment which the Þrœndir received from Magnús find parallels in the later *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Magnúss saga* descriptions of Magnús' treatment of the Danes. In addition to the destructions of burning, plundering, and the killing of people, Magnús is said to have sent a detachment of his followers ashore in Sjáland, where *kómu þeir ofan með strandhǫgg mikil* 'they came back with a great amount of cattle and supplies' [*Mgóð*, Ch. 30]. Although there is a pragmatism to the action, Magnús and his company needed food while they were raiding, the taking and slaughtering of the Danes' cattle parallels the descriptions of the livestock Magnús had slaughtered in Norway during his tyrannical early years of rule [*Mgóð*, Chs. 15–16 & 30].[78] In the narrative chronology, the Danes had once been Magnús' people, and Magnús hoped to regain his kingship over them and so have them as his people again. Thus, the actions which he is described as having taken against the Danes are akin to the tyranny that he wrought against the Þrœndir; Magnús is, in effect, pillaging his own people.

A more explicit connection between Magnús' actions against the Þrœndir and against the Danes respectively is included in the *Fagrskinna* account [*Fsk*, Ch. 49]. Having received word that the Danes had taken Sveinn Úlfsson as their king, thus betraying Magnús, the *Fagrskinna* author recounts that *Magnús konungr fór með liði sínu suðr til Jótlands ok gekk allt folk undir hann. Lét hann drepa marga menn. Sumir flýðu óðul sín, en sumir leystu sik með fé, þeir er áðr hǫfðu undir Svein gengit* 'King Magnús went south with his army to Jótland and made all the people submit

[78] See also, Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Bersǫglisvísur*', verse 11, 22–23.

to him. He had many people killed. Of those who had previously submitted to Sveinn, some fled their ancestral property, and some absolved themselves with fines' [*Fsk*, Ch. 49]. Firstly, as with the Þrœndir, the narrative quickly establishes that the people submitted themselves to Magnús' rule before he took any action against them. Thus, these people are presented as being under Magnús' protection and should not anticipate any attack on themselves from their king. Magnús' subsequent actions against them are therefore presented as being malicious and vindictive, without just cause. Secondly, the actions which Magnús is said to have conducted against the Danes closely follows the same conduct as he is said to have taken against the Þrœndir. In both cases, people are said to have paid fines, while the description of Danes fleeing their property is a hybrid version of the earlier descriptions of people leaving Norway and losing their possessions [*Fsk*, Chs. 48–49]. As such, Magnús is shown to use the same tyrannical tools against the Danes as punishment as he used vindictively against the Þrœndir.

Finally, the *Morkinskinna* account also includes a specific connection between Magnús' actions against the Danes and against the Þrœndir. As in *Fagrskinna*, Magnús is said to have *tekr fé af mǫrgum* 'taken fines from many' for taking another king, while *sumri flýðu ór landi frá eignum sínum. Suma lét hann drepa* 'some fled from the land and left behind their property. Some he had killed' [*Msk*, Ch. 5; *Fsk*, Ch. 49]. Although the descriptions are similar, the *Morkinskinna* author is more explicit in detailing that people left both their property and the country than is told in the *Fagrskinna* account [*Fsk*, Ch. 49; *Msk*, Ch. 5]. Whereas the *Fagrskinna* version creates a bland impression of people hiding either a little distance away or in another region of Denmark, the *Morkinskinna* account depicts them actively fleeing as far from Magnús as they possibly can. Through this subtle detail, the *Morkinskinna* author emphasises the level of fear which Magnús was capable of instilling, and furthers their depiction of Magnús acting in a vindictive, unrestrained, and tyrannical manner.

4.5. Magnús as Sole King – A Summary

Throughout the narrative accounts of Magnús inn góði, the authors simultaneously depict him as being both a capable and ferocious warrior and military leader, but also as an unrestrained and vindictive tyrant to those whom he perceives as his enemies. The actions which Magnús is said to have taken against the Danes who betrayed him are similar to the actions which he took against both the Þrœndir, such as fines and the taking or destruction of property, and against Jómsborg, such as the killing of people and burning of properties and land. The tyrannical actions which Magnús enacted upon his subjects in both Norway and Denmark is therefore akin to the tactics he used when waging war elsewhere. As is evident in the prose descriptions and in *Bersǫglisvísur*, Magnús' actions were deemed unacceptable and in need of reproof. However, the equivalent actions of destruction are praised in the descriptions of his warfare against Jómsborg. Magnús is therefore repeatedly shown to be an aggressive king. In contrast to the depictions of Haraldr for the same time span, Magnús is consistently shown to have been lacking restraint, while Haraldr excelled in restraint and was able to instil it into his followers as well. The two kings thus balance one another out, much as Eysteinn Magnússon and Sigurðr Jórsalafari are shown to do, and together make a complete set of ideal kingship values.

4.6. Two Kings

4.6.1. Agreement to Co-Rule

Whereas the co-rulership of the Magnússon brothers was a product of shared inheritance, with the brothers' sharing kingship after their father died, the co-rule of Magnús inn góði and Haraldr Sigurðarson was established by meetings and an agreement made between them. The terms of Magnús' and Haraldr's agreement for co-rulership are set out in near-identical format in the *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Haralds saga* accounts.[79] The scene neatly parallels and references specific

[79] *Ágrip* does not include the terms of the agreement made between Haraldr and Magnús, though it does state that a meeting took place between the two and that thereafter Haraldr shared half the rule of Norway [*Ágrip*, Ch. 38].

events which are presented earlier in Magnús' and Haraldr's respective narratives, as well as setting up the terms for a future confrontation between Haraldr and Magnús.

In each of these three texts, Haraldr and Magnús are said to have been at a feast when Magnús began handing out gifts to members of Haraldr's retinue, increasing in value proportionate to their rank [*Fsk*, Ch. 52; *HSig*, Ch. 23; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. Finally, Magnús is depicted approaching Haraldr.

Msk, Ch. 16:

> *ok hafði í hendi sér tvá reyrteina fagra ok mælti: "Haraldr frændi, hvárn reyrtein vilið ér [þiggja at] oss at gjǫf?"*
> *Haraldr segir: "Þann, herra, er áðr er nærri oss."*
>
> 'and [Magnús] had in his hands two beautiful canes and he said, "Kinsman Haraldr, which cane would you receive from us as your gift?"
> Haraldr says: "That one, lord, which is closer to us"'.[80]

None of the accounts makes any distinction of Haraldr's choice, and in each text the canes function symbolically as the two halves of Magnús' kingdom. As Magnús was at this point in the narrative chronology the king of both Norway and Denmark, it can be easily imagined that each cane respectively represented the Norwegian and Danish halves of his domain. Neither of the canes receive any labelling or individual description in the narratives. The respective authors therefore do not provide any private, inside knowledge to their audience before Haraldr is shown to make his choice. Thus, Magnús could have been as easily depicted offering Haraldr half of Denmark instead of Norway. Accordingly, the power over which kingdom Haraldr would receive co-rulership of is shown in each account to always rest with Magnús, and that Haraldr's choice was an illusion. Once Haraldr had chosen a cane, Magnús was free to say whatever he wanted; Haraldr's choice therefore meant nothing within the narrative presentation.

[80] *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* both contain near-identical passages of this exchange to that found in *Morkinskinna*. See, *Fsk*, Ch. 52; *HSig*, Ch. 23.

In the illusion of choice and fate, the scene neatly parallels the scenario of Haraldr tricking the Greek commander Gyrgir over the casting of lots for the best camping grounds [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *HSig*, Ch. 4; *Msk*, Ch. 12]. An offer of seemingly equal odds is made, but the outcome is ultimately of no consequence as it is revealed in the narrative presentation to have been predetermined. In the matter of lots, Haraldr is shown to have outmanoeuvred and outsmarted Gyrgir to meet his own objective (see Chapter Three: Lots of Deception) [*HSig*, Ch. 4; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 12]. Unlike Haraldr's obvious scheming in the case of lots, there is no overt presentation of Magnús manipulating the scenario for his own favour. Through these subtleties, Magnús is depicted as being more chivalrous than Haraldr, adhering to clear, fair play in his conduct, rather than cheap tricks, as well as worthy of esteem for his apparent success in appeasing Haraldr with co-rulership of Norway.[81] Nevertheless, the power of the decision is shown to ultimately rest with Magnús, similarly to how it was explained to have rested with Haraldr in his confrontation with Gyrgir. An initial impression of hierarchy is thereby formed. Haraldr had power over the outcome with Gyrgir; Magnús has power over the outcome with Haraldr.

The more distinct hierarchy between Haraldr and Magnús is established in Magnús' statement setting out the terms of their co-rulership.

HSig, Ch. 23:

> *"Með þessum reyrsprota gef ek yðr hálft Nóregsveldi með ǫllum skyldum ok skǫttum ok allri eign, er þar liggr til, með þeim formála, at þú skalt jafnréttr konungr í ǫllum stǫðum í Nóregi sem ek. En þá er vér erum allir saman, skal ek vera fyrirmaðr í heilsan ok þjónan ok at sæti. Ef þrír eru tignir menn, skal ek milli sitja. Ek skal hafa konungslægi ok konungsbryggju. Þér skuluð ok styðja ok styrkja várt ríki í þann stað, er vér gerðum yðr at þeim manni í Nóregi, er vér hugðum, at engi skyldi verða, meðan várr haus væri uppi fyrir ofan mold."*
>
> '"With this cane I give you half of the kingdom of Norway with all taxes and tributes and all possessions which lie there, with these stipulations, that you

[81] On chivalry and esteem, see Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 162–166.

> shall have authority equal to mine in all places in Norway. But when we are all together, I shall be the first person in greetings and service and seating. If there are three people of high rank, I shall sit in the middle. I shall have the king's berth and the king's bridge. You shall also support and strengthen our power in this position, as we made you into this person in Norway, which we thought should never happen so long as our head was above the ground"'.[82]

The specificity of Magnús' proprietary claim of *konungslægi ok konungsbryggju* 'the king's berth and the king's bridge' has a dual effect in the respective narrative contexts of both asserting himself over Haraldr in the present moment, due to Haraldr's return to the north by ship through the Baltic Sea, and in laying the foundation for future dispute in the narrative over mooring positions and privileges. The statement thus places a check on Haraldr's ambitions and actions as demonstrated in both the preceding and subsequent scenarios.

In all three accounts, Haraldr is first associated with raiding and aggression in Denmark and Norway, behaviours largely enabled by his ship and crew, and fuelled by his unchecked ambition. According to *Haralds saga*, Haraldr sailed to Sigtúnir [Sigtuna] where he first met Sveinn Úlfsson [*HSig*, Chs. 17–18]. *Fagrskinna* accords a similar description to Haraldr's return to the north, where he is described as arriving with three ships, while *Morkinskinna* details his arrival on a ship *allt gulli búit fyrir ofan sjó ok váru á drekahǫfuð fǫgr* 'all fitted out in gold above the sea-line and had on fine dragon-heads' and that had a costly double sail of fine fabric [*Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 10]. In the *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* narration, Magnús is said to have first refused to share the kingdom with Haraldr in accordance with the advice and wishes of his retainers [*Fsk*, Ch. 52; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. Displeased with this answer, Haraldr then allied himself with Sveinn Úlfsson and set to raiding in Denmark before claiming his hereditary estates in Upplǫnd and demanding to be called king in Guðbrandalr [*Fsk*, Ch. 52; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. The *Haralds saga* account follows a similar course, but differs slightly in showing Haraldr and Sveinn Úlfsson allying themselves before Haraldr ever met Magnús [*HSig*, Chs. 18–20]. Haraldr's main impression upon

[82] The same speech is included in both *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna.* See, *Msk*, Ch. 16; *Fsk*, Ch. 52.

Magnús in the texts is therefore of someone ambitious, with the potential to be highly aggressive and who will use the support of his ship and crew to meet his ends. In claiming a reservation in the king's berth and quay as a condition of their agreement, Magnús is shown to immediately take control of the situation and limit the risk that Haraldr posed by asserting his own authority and restricting Haraldr's actions.

One of the functions of co-rulership, as Orning sees it, is in the checks and balances multiple kings could have on one another, toning down their aggression and ensuring they each act within the confines of conduct deemed acceptable to both, and by extension to their subjects.[83] This premise is shared across the *konungasögur* depictions of Magnús and Haraldr together. The frequent lack of restraint depicted of Magnús throughout his sole rule quickly disappears in each of the texts in favour of a king in control once Haraldr arrives [*Fsk*, Ch. 52; *HSig*, Chs. 20–23; *Msk*, Chs. 10 & 16]. Although Haraldr is not immediately king alongside Magnús, he is immediately recognised as having the capacity to be king within the narrative presentation. Magnús is thus provoked into changing his conduct. By contrast, however, Haraldr is shown to loosen his self-restraint in favour of testing his new boundaries. On the one hand, this has the effect of devaluing Haraldr compared to Magnús, as Ármann Jakobsson finds.[84] However, rather than being a purposefully deprecating change of depiction, Haraldr's uncaring conduct provides the need for Magnús' new restrained attitude.

Despite this, Haraldr's unrestrained ambition and Magnús' newfound restraint should not be taken as a simple motif of power checks between co-rulers within the texts. In Bagge's assessment of the depiction of 'individual characteristics' within *Heimskringla*, he concludes that 'when a man is basically the sum of his acts, each new act may in principle change it'.[85] For Haraldr Sigurðarson, the same theory is applicable to each of the *konungasögur* which depict him, with the most notable change being at the time of his return to Norway. Whereas Haraldr was repeatedly

[83] Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway', 45–46.
[84] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Individual and the Ideal', 75–83; Ármann Jakobsson, 'King and Subject', 110–111.
[85] Bagge, *Society and Politics*, 187–188.

shown to have been calculating but restrained in his actions, exerting the same control over his followers throughout each of the sieges he attended, the depictions of him shortly after his arrival in Norway are of someone recklessly grasping and challenging the status quo [*HSig*, Chs. 5–23; *Fsk*, Chs. 51–52; *Msk*, Chs. 10 & 16]. The change in action is not only a change in character, but a change in circumstance. While Haraldr was a Varangian, he was apparently unaware of the events which had occurred in Norway, only travelling north once he learned that Magnús had since established himself as king, and his service in the Mediterranean was part of a career which he had been forging for himself since his own exile [*HSig*, Chs. 3–13; *Fsk*, Ch. 51; *Msk*, Ch. 11–15]. Upon returning to Norway, Haraldr no longer needed to conduct himself as he had before, and he could instead create a new role for himself. Thus, his depicted actions change to match his changed circumstances. Likewise, Magnús inn góði's initial tyranny and unrestrained conduct against the Þrœndir is shown to change in each of the *konungasögur* only after he is reprimanded by Sigvatr and made aware of the threat of rebellion against him [*Mgóð*, Chs. 14–16; *Fsk*, Ch. 48; *Msk*, Ch. 4**;** *Ágrip*, Ch. 34]. Upon the arrival of Haraldr to the north, the political circumstances are shown to have changed again, and so does Magnús' conduct [*Fsk*, Ch. 52; *HSig*, Chs. 20–23; *Msk*, Chs. 10 & 16]. The depictions of Magnús and Haraldr in each of the texts are therefore not of static figures, but figures who are shown to behave differently under different circumstances.

Finally, the changes in the depictions of Magnús and Haraldr respectively enables the authors to better present the two as a burgeoning kingly unit. Whereas in Haraldr's previous depictions he was the picture of restraint, and in Magnús' previous depictions he was the image of a tyrant, now the authors blend their stark contrasts. Haraldr is shown to become less restrained, while Magnús begins to harness some self-control. The two are therefore respectively presented as possessing some measure of restraint, though still to different degrees. Thus, both Haraldr and Magnús are portrayed as having the necessary qualities for kingship, but neither has the full remit of those qualities, and one king cannot fully surpass the other. Haraldr and Magnús are thereby shown to require one another's

cooperation and agreement to co-rule to meet the standards of a whole ideal within the textual depiction.

4.6.2. Quick Wits

In answer to Haraldr's aggression, Magnús' response in establishing a meeting and successful treaty with him, and placing restrictions on his actions, demonstrate Magnús to have possessed the wisdom necessary to recognise that diplomacy and carefully laid conditions were a better option than outright warfare. Outside of the initial conflicts with Haraldr, the texts provide few examples of Magnús' wisdom. By contrast, Haraldr receives multiple examples testifying his own wisdom throughout the sieges in which he is said to have partaken (see Chapter Three: The Sieges).

Magnús' wisdom in his dealing with the threat Haraldr posed is displayed to its greatest extent in the *Haralds saga* narrative. In the reports Magnús is said to have received concerning Haraldr's raids, Haraldr is described as being *meiri en aðrir menn ok sterkari ok svá vitr, at honum var ekki ófœrt ok hann hafði ávallt sigr, er hann barðisk* 'bigger and stronger than other men and so wise that nothing was impossible for him, and he was always victorious when he fought' [*HSig*, Ch. 20]. Haraldr is thus presented as an opponent whom Magnús would struggle to defeat in combat. As such a contest is thereby out of the question for Magnús, he is shown to instead turn to diplomacy and a battle of wits. During the meeting between the two, Magnús is depicted in each of the accounts as taking the initiative in showing his generosity through gifts, and he sets the terms of the agreement with Haraldr, all while giving Haraldr an illusion of his own choice and control [*HSig*, Ch. 23; *Fsk*, Ch. 52; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. Magnús' own wisdom and quick strategising in dealing with his opponent is thereby displayed. Moreover, as Haraldr's strategic wisdom is well established by this point in the respective narrative chronologies, Magnús' besting of him emphasises his own abilities [*HSig*, Chs. 4–23; *Fsk*, Chs. 51–52; *Msk*, Chs. 13–16].

4.6.3. Two Meetings

The terms of Magnús' speech to Haraldr must be taken as an authorial construction and not as the words of the king himself. Certainly, an auspicious moment or witty remark may live long in memory, but the lengthier passage which Magnús is shown to speak is unlikely to have been remembered from the supposed time of the meeting to its written form with such precision (a difference of some 175 years). For whatever supposed agreement was made, however, there were likely stipulations that went with it. The earliest extant version of the terms is found in *Morkinskinna* [*Msk*, Ch. 16]. Due to the near identical structure and phrasing of the same passage found in the *Fagrskinna* and *Haralds saga* accounts, it is likely the authors of both texts followed the *Morkinskinna* version.[86] Although all three texts detail a subsequent confrontation between Haraldr and Magnús over the proper mooring places for their respective ships, this again is likely taken from the *Morkinskinna* narrative. In addition to the subsequent scene where Haraldr and Magnús are said to have nearly run into conflict over appropriate mooring positions, the *Morkinskinna* narrative contains a scene earlier in its chronology that also has direct relevance to the terms of the agreement laid out by Magnús. The overall narratorial context of the *Morkinskinna* version of the co-rulership agreement demonstrates a superior example of a '*totum simul* perspective' through the structuring of past, present, and future events within the chronological narrative and the direct relevance these events have on shaping the understanding of each.[87] As the *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* narratives do not contain the earlier scene, their connection points are limited to the present moment of the agreement and the future confrontation at the harbour only. The integration of strands throughout the narratives of those two accounts is therefore less than that found in *Morkinskinna*.

When Magnús stipulates that he should be the *fyrimaðr okkarr í heilsun ok þjónkun ok sæti* 'first person in our greetings and services and seating', a direct line is drawn

[86] On the influence of *Morkinskinna*, see Alison Finlay, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay (ed.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 11–12; Andersson and Gade, 'Introduction', *Morkinskinna*, 13; Gustav Indrebø, *Fagrskinna*, Avhandlinger fra Universitetets Historiske Seminar, 4 (Grøndahl & Søns Boktrykkeri: Kristiania [Oslo]), 20–30.
[87] O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, 5.

between the scene of his meeting with Haraldr and one earlier, in which he met with Hǫrða-Knútr [*Msk*, Chs. 5 & 16]. According to *Morkinskinna*, Magnús and Hǫrða-Knútr met on two occasions, firstly at the Elfr [Göta Älv], and secondly at Limafjǫrðr [Limfjord] [*Msk*, Ch. 3 & 5]. The first meeting is briefly noted by the *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* authors as the setting at which the treaty between Magnús and Hǫrða-Knútr was made, but neither author mentions the second [*Fsk*, Ch. 47; *Mgóð*, Ch. 6].

In the description of the meeting of the kings at Limafjǫrðr (the second meeting), Hǫrða-Knútr is said to have invited Magnús to enter the hall first and be *fyrri alla þjónostu ok tígn* 'first in all services and honour' [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. As the meeting is set in Denmark, the initial impression is that Hǫrða-Knútr was attempting to honour Magnús by offering him precedence. However, Magnús anticipates the tension which accepting these honours might cause among their followers if Hǫrða-Knútr's retinue saw their lord diminish himself in his home country to Magnús [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. Instead of simply accepting, Magnús replies, *"Þá ek em í Nóregi, ok sœkir þú mik heim, þá skal ek fyrri ganga ok fyrri skal mér veita alla þjónostu, en nú skulu þér fyrri ganga, er ek em hér kominn ok sitja fyrri ok drekka fyrri ok taka fyrri alla þjónostu ok tígn"* '"when I am in Norway, and you visit my home, then I shall be first to go and shall be first in all services, but as I am come here, now you should be first to go and first to sit and first to drink and first to take all services and honour"' [*Msk*, Ch. 5]. In the repeated iterations of order and precedence in service and seating, in Magnús' meetings with Hǫrða-Knútr and Haraldr respectively, the *Morkinskinna* author establishes a definitive relationship between an individual's status and their accorded respect. Furthermore, the two scenes explain how these elements are to be read as markers of status and respect between individuals, particularly those who are of similar rank. In establishing himself as the king who would take precedence before Haraldr, Magnús asserts his own authority and higher rank, and provides the instructions of how this is to be performed between them.

The scene with Hǫrða-Knútr lays the foundations of the meeting Magnús has with Haraldr within the *Morkinskinna* text. Combined with the subsequent scene of the mooring dispute, the meeting as it is presented and contextualised within

Morkinskinna is better integrated with the narrative, with ties throughout the text, than its equivalent presentations in *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna*. Why the meeting with Hǫrða-Knútr was not included in *Fagrskinna* or *Heimskringla* (presumably, in *Magnúss saga*) is unclear, though one reason may be that the respective authors did not see or understand the ties between the scenes. In the *Morkinskinna* presentation, the direct parallels between the two meetings suggest that the stipulations outlined in Magnús' agreement with Haraldr were firstly embedded into and designed to reflect previous events within the narrative the author was constructing.

4.6.4. The Mooring Dispute

Shortly after their agreement to share rulership over Norway, Magnús and Haraldr are said to have run into conflict over their appropriate mooring places, as per the terms laid out by Magnús [*HSig*, Chs. 23–27; *Fsk*, Chs. 52–53; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. Due to the narrative proximity of the two scenes, the connection between the terms of the agreement and the actions in the confrontation are apparent in each of the texts. The scenes form an easy continuum to illustrate the new power Haraldr has acquired, and its extent in relation to the power Magnús retained. Additionally, when these scenes are taken together, the depicted behaviour of both kings can be seen to change throughout them, with each king shown to modulate his conduct in relation to specific kingly qualities in response to the other.

The circumstances of the confrontation run as follows:

Both Haraldr and Magnús had moored their ships in the same harbour, and the following day Haraldr set sail before Magnús was ready to depart. When he reached a new harbour, *þá leggr Haraldr í konungslægit. Magnús konungr sigldi síðarr um daginn, ok koma svá til hafnar at* 'then Haraldr lay [his ship] in the king's berth. King Magnús sailed later in the day, and so came to that harbour' [*Msk*, Ch. 16; *Fsk*, Ch. 53; *HSig*. Ch. 27]. Magnús is shown to immediately call his company to arms to challenge Haraldr, as Haraldr had supposedly breached their agreement by mooring in the king's berth when they were in the same harbour [*Fsk*, Chs. 52–53; *HSig*, Chs.

23–27; *Msk*, Ch. 16]. The narration cuts back and forth between Magnús and Haraldr, detailing their reactions, and the confrontation is ultimately resolved without bloodshed as Haraldr gives way. Haraldr is not shown to have been cowed, however, or to have suffered any loss of face, as he is granted the moral high ground in saying *"Þat er fornt mál at inn vitrari skyli vægja"* '"It is an ancient saying that the one who is wiser should give way"' [*Fsk*, Ch. 53; *HSig*, Ch. 27; *Msk*, Ch. 16].

In the respective reactions of Magnús and Haraldr, the displayed qualities each possess are again reversed. Magnús' immediate reaction to challenge Haraldr demonstrates a lack of wisdom and restraint. His actions are hasty, being shown to order his company to arms having only then seen where Haraldr's ship lay and without time to fully assess the scenario, indicating both a quick temper and a lack of insight. Additionally, the description in *Haralds saga* that *Haraldr konungr sér, at Magnús konungr ætlaði at leggja til orrostu við þá* 'King Haraldr sees that King Magnús intended to lay into battle with them' further emphasises the rash immediacy of Magnús' actions [*HSig*, Ch. 27]. Magnús is not simply posturing a warning or coming into a heated discussion with Haraldr to tell him to move, he is charging with full aggression before there is any opportunity for discussion. Once again, Magnús is shown to act too extremely and too quickly, demonstrating his lack of restraint.

4.7. Conclusion

Although the picture of Magnús at the mooring dispute, as an unrestrained and somewhat naïve king, is in keeping with the previous depictions of him as sole king, it is also in sharp contrast to the calm and well-reasoned depiction of him during his meeting with Haraldr where he presented the agreement to be co-rulers. Similarly, whereas Haraldr is portrayed as an unrestrained aggressor when he returned to the north, his depiction during the mooring dispute returns to that of the wise and restrained leader, as he had been during his time in the Mediterranean (see Chapter Three). Both kings are thereby shown to possess two of the qualities for kingship, but their mastery of each fluctuates. The fluctuation is not random, however, but a

deliberate and carefully crafted portrayal within the texts to balance the kings as a unit, while simultaneously acknowledging that both had the capacity for kingship. Throughout Haraldr's time as a Varangian leader, he is consistently depicted with the qualities that Magnús is shown to lack during the equivalent time span. While this qualifies Haraldr for kingship before his return, Magnús is the one with the title and authority. As soon as Magnús is presented with a challenge for rulership, the qualities between the two begin to see-saw, first with Haraldr's new unrestrained aggression against Magnús' suddenly calm wisdom, and then with Magnús' unchecked temper and Haraldr's mild response. The rulership is therefore not only said to be shared in the texts, but also depicted as being shared as one or the other is suddenly depicted as having either a deficit or surplus of a quality respectively.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The present thesis demonstrates that co-kings for the period c.1030 to c.1130 are consistently depicted as co-ruling units in the *konungasögur* texts *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*, *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Heimskringla*, with the ideological qualities and conduct for kingship shared between the individual figures. In the textual depictions of Eysteinn Magnússon and Sigurðr Jórsalafari, the two kings are consistently portrayed as a co-ruling unit, with the ideal qualities for kingship shared between them. In *Heimskringla*, Eysteinn is repeatedly described as being beautiful but not physically strong, had great knowledge of the law but lacked integrity, and concentrated his diplomatic efforts to domestic improvement. Meanwhile, Sigurðr is presented as the opposite. Sigurðr is strong but not beautiful, unskilled at law but steadfast in his word, and concentrated his diplomatic efforts to Norway's reputation in the wider world. *Morkinskinna* shares many of these same descriptions of the Magnússon brothers, including Sigurðr's strength, integrity, and focus on building a good international reputation compared to Eysteinn's lack of integrity and domestic focus. Thus, for the three qualities for kingship raised in the brothers' *mannjafnaðr*, Sigurðr and Eysteinn are consistently shown to be opposite and complementary in their respective possession of those qualities, and that together as a co-ruling unit they successfully meet all of these ideals. Small discrepancies arise between *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*, such as in how each author determines whether a king is beautiful or not, but these differences have no overall effect on how the kings are portrayed as a co-ruling unit. Where one king lacks a particular quality, the other king is inevitably shown to possess the same quality to excess, thus making up and balancing the deficit between them.

Similarly, Haraldr Sigurðarson is consistently shown in *Heimskringla*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna* as a strong candidate for kingship throughout the respective depictions of him as leader of the Varangians, ahead of his return to Norway. As a military commander, Haraldr is shown to be wise, resourceful, courageous, and authoritative while inspiring the loyalty of his company. His qualities and abilities as

a leader are shown to surpass those of other men, such as Halldórr Snorrason and the Greek commander Gyrgir. Magnús inn góði similarly receives favourable treatment in *Heimskringla*, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Ágrip* compared to Sveinn Úlfsson, as Magnús is repeatedly shown to be the better military commander and a courageous warrior. However, Magnús is also shown to be prone to unrestrained and reckless behaviour, is excessively vengeful, and occasionally naïve. As in the case of Eysteinn Magnússon and Sigurðr Jórsalafari, the texts present paired and distinct differences between Haraldr and Magnús. Where Haraldr is repeatedly demonstrated to be a restrained warrior, Magnús plunges into battle without thought (most notably at the battle of Hlýrskógsheiðr). The division of qualities is not static, however, as when Magnús is shown to be restrained and wise in his first dealings with Haraldr after the latter's return to Norway, Haraldr is shown to be rash and unrestrained. Both Haraldr and Magnús are shown to possess the ideal qualities for kingship, but neither possess all of the qualities at a given time. However, as a co-rulership unit, Haraldr and Magnús are able to consistently meet all of the ideals together.

Though the four texts used in this study collectively share many aspects of their depictions of each of the kings, differences are also apparent. *Ágrip* offers the least commentary on co-kingship, as the text largely focuses on kings individually with little overlap. Though *Ágrip* acknowledges cases of co-rulership, such as Haraldr Sigurðarson and Magnús inn góði agreeing to be co-kings, and the Magnússon brothers jointly succeeding their father, the main narrative depictions concentrate on Magnús and Haraldr as individual, sole kings, and on Sigurðr Jórsalafari's journey and later sole rule. Nevertheless, many of the qualities for kingship which are present in the other texts are also present in *Ágrip*.

Fagrskinna, *Morkinskinna*, and *Heimskringla* all provide more depictions of co-kingship than *Ágrip*, and though their own narrative lengths and the lengths of these depictions differ, all three present co-kingship in similar terms. Although *Fagrskinna* has shorter depictions of co-kingship, and a shorter depiction of Haraldr Sigurðarson's time as a Varangian (including only two distinct sieges compared to *Heimskringla*'s four), the *Fagrskinna* author nonetheless demonstrates all of the

same qualities for Haraldr within that shorter depiction. *Fagrskinna* also presents the same aspects of the balancing of qualities between Haraldr and Magnús as co-kings as are found in *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*. The differences between Magnús inn góði and Haraldr Sigurðarson are more muted in *Fagrskinna*, compared to *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*, as the *Fagrskinna* author does much to mitigate the negative aspects of Magnús' unrestrained and tyrannical behaviour. However, differences are still apparent between the two kings, and *Fagrskinna* agrees with *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* in its depictions of co-kings as collaborative and complementary units of ideal kingship.

By combining and comparing the four texts used in this study, it is possible to see that ideological notions of co-kingship were shared between the respective authors, which may indicate a common understanding of co-kingship in medieval Norway and Iceland. More research will need to be done in this area before broader conclusions of co-kingship ideology can be drawn, notably on whether the same complementary and collaborative depictions are apparent in cases of co-kingship outside of the period c.1030 to c.1130, and whether these ideas are also present outside of the four texts studied here. Additionally, for the purposes of understanding the wider remit of co-rulership practices and their depictions, it would also be worthwhile establishing whether similar ideas are shared in the presentation of co-rulers who are not kings, such as in the cases of co-jarls in Orkney. For now, it can be confirmed that the ideological qualities for kingship were shared between the *Ágrip*, *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Heimskringla* authors, and that the *Fagrskinna*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Heimskringla* authors had a shared ideological understanding of co-kingship.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Albert of Aachen, *History of the Journey to Jerusalem – Volume 2: Books 7–12. The Early History of the Latin States, 1099–1119*, Susan B. Edgington (trans.), (Ashgate: Surrey, 2013).

Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Hrynhenda, Magnússdrápa*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 181–206.

Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson, '*Magnússdrápa*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 206–229.

'*Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*', in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), 3–54.

Brennu-Njáls saga, Einar Ólafur Sveinsson (ed.), Íslenzk Fornrit XII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1954).

Dudo of Saint-Quentin, 'Gesta Normannorum by Dudo of Saint-Quentin', Felice Lifshitz (ed. & trans.), *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Fordham University, republished online 2019).

Einarr Skúlason, '*Sigurðardrápa I*', Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the King's Sagas 2, Part 2: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 538–542.

‘*Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*’, in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), 57–364.

Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*, Frances Rita Ryan (trans.), (University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, 1969).

‘*Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*’, in Guðni Jónsson (ed.), *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar : Bandamanna saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit VII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1936), 3–290.

Halldórr skvaldri, ‘*Útfarardrápa*’, Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 2, Part 2: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 483–492.

Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson, ‘*Lausavísur*’, Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 42–46.

‘*Hárbarðsljóð’*, in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), 389–398.

‘*Hávamál’*, in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), 322–355.

Ibn al-Qalānisī, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades: Extracted and Translated from the Chronicle of Ibn al-Qalānisī*, H. A. R. Gibb (trans.), (Luzac & Co.: London, 1932).

Kekaumenos, ‘Λόγος νουθετητικος, ‘A Word of Wisdom’’, in R. I. Page (ed. & trans.), *Chronicles of the Vikings*, *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (The British Museum Press: London, 2014), 104.

‘*Knýtlinga saga*’, in Bjarni Guðnason (ed.), *Danakonunga sǫgur*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1982), 93–321.

‘*Lokasenna’*, in Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason (eds.), *Eddukvæði Vol. I* (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2014), 408–421.

Morkinskinna I, Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011).

Morkinskinna II, Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXIV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011).

‘*Orkneyinga saga*’, in Finnbogi Guðmundsson (ed.), *Orkneyinga saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXXIV (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1965), 3–300.

The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text, Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (eds. & trans.), The Mediaeval Academy of America Publication No. 60 (The Mediaeval Academy of America: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953).

Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes, Volume 1*, Karsten Friis-Jensen (ed.), Peter Fisher (trans.), (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2015).

Sigvatr Þórðarson, ‘*Bersǫglisvísur*’, Kari Ellen Gade (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 11–30.

Skylitzes, John, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, John Wortley (trans.), (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010).

Snorri Sturluson, ‘*Haralds saga gráfeldr*’, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 198–224.

Snorri Sturluson, ‘*Haralds saga ins hárfagra*’, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 94–149.

Snorri Sturluson, ‘*Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*’, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 68–202.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Haraldssona saga*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 303–346.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Hákonar saga góða*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 150–197.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Hákonar saga herðibreiðs*' in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 347–372.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Hálfdanar saga svarta*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 84–93.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga berfœtts*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 210–237.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 278–302.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 373–417.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnúss saga ins góða*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 3–67.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Magnússona saga*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 238–277.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs saga helga*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1979), 3–415.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Ólafs saga kyrra*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 203–209.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*' in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 225–372.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Óláfs sǫgu ins helga inni sérstǫku*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1979), 419–451.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Prologus'*, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 3–7.

Snorri Sturluson, '*Ynglinga saga*', in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), 9–83.

'*Sturlunga saga*', in Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir (ed.), *Sturlunga Saga eða Íslendinga Sagan Miklan II*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2021), 3–562.

Sverris saga, Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), Íslenzk Fornrit XXX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2007).

Theodoricus, '*De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*', in Egil Kraggerud (ed. & trans.), *Theodoricus: De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium – On the Old Norwegian Kings* (Novus Forlag: Oslo, 2018), 4–129.

William of Apulia, 'The Deeds of Robert Guiscard by William of Apulia', G. A. Loud (trans.), *Medieval History Texts in Translation* (University of Leeds), 3–67.

William of Jumièges, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni. Volume II*, Elisabeth van Houts (ed. & trans.), (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1995).

William of Tyre, *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Volume One*, Emily Atwater Babcock & A. C. Krey (trans.), (Columbia University Press: New York, 1943).

Zonaras, John, *Epitomae Historiarum, Libri XIII–XVIII* (Impensis ed. Weberi: Greece, 1897).

Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Magnússflokkr*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 61–87.

Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, '*Sexstefja*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 108–147.

Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, 'Stanzas about Magnús Óláfsson in *Danaveldi*', Diana Whaley (skald ed. & trans.), in Kari Ellen Gade (general ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 88–103.

Qrvar-Odds saga, R. C. Boer (ed.), (Halle A. S. Max Niemeyer: 1892).

Secondary Sources

Abram, Christopher, 'Scribal Authority in Skaldic Verse: Þórbjǫrn hronklofi's *Glymdrápa*', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 116 (2001), 5–19.

Abulafia, David, 'The Black Sea and the Viking Road to Byzantium', Keynote Lecture, *A "Viking" in the Sun: Harald Hardrada, the Mediterranean, and the Nordic World between the late Viking Age and the Eve of the Crusades* (2023).

Abulafia, David, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011).

Abulafia, David, 'The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean', in R. Allen Brown, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, VII (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1984), 26–49.

Adams, Anthony, ''He took a stone away': Castration and Cruelty in the *Sturlunga saga*', in Larissa Tracy (ed.), *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2013), 188–209.

Andersson, Theodore M., *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280)* (Cornell University Press: London, 2006).

Andersson, Theodore M., 'Kings' sagas (*Konungasögur*)', in Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (eds.), *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide* (Cornell University Press: London, 1985), 197–238.

Andersson, Theodore M., *The Partisan Muse in the Early Icelandic Sagas (1200–1250)*, Islandica LV (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2012).

Andersson, Theodore M., 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93: 1 (1994), 55–78.

Andersson, Theodore M., *The Sagas of Norwegian Kings (1130–1265): An Introduction,* Islandica LIX (Cornell University Library: Ithaca, 2016).

Anderson, Theodore M., 'Snorri Sturluson and the Saga School at Munkaþverá', in Alois Wolf (ed.), *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages* (Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 1993), 9–25.

Andersson, Theodore M., and Kari Ellen Gade (eds. & trans.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012).

Andersson, Theodore M., and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Introduction', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), 1–83.

Andersson, Theodore M., and Kari Ellen Gade, 'Preface', in Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (eds.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030–1157)*, Islandica LI (Cornell University Press: London, 2012), ix–x.

Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Amplified Saga: Structural Disunity in "Morkinskinna"', *Medium Ævum*, 70: 1 (2001), 29–46.

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘Image is Everything: The *Morkinskinna* Account of King Sigurðr of Norway’s Journey to the Holy Land’, *Parergon*, 30: 1 (2013), 121–140.

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘The Individual and the Ideal: The Representation of Royalty in *Morkinskinna*’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 99: 1 (2000), 71–86.

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘Inventing a Saga Form: The Development of the Kings’ Sagas’, *Filologia Germanica*, 4 (2012), 1–22.

Ármann Jakobsson, *Í Leit að Konungi: Konungsmynd Íslenskra Konungasagna* (Háskólaútgáfan: Reykjavík, 1997).

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘King and Subject in *Morkinskinna*’, *Skandinavistik*, 28 (1998), 101–117.

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘Royal Biography’, in Rory McTurk (ed.), *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2005), 388–402.

Ármann Jakobsson, *Staður í Nýjum Heimi: Konungasagan Morkinskinna* (Háskólaútgátan: Reykjavík, 2002).

Ármann Jakobsson, ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent: The “Historical Figure” in the Medieval Sagas, a Case Study’, *Viator*, 45: 3 (2014), 101–124.

Ármann Jakobsson, and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), *Morkinskinna I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011).

Ármann Jakobsson, and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, ‘Formáli’, in Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.), *Morkinskinna I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2011), v–lxviii.

Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ‘Masculinity, Christianity, and (Non)Violence’, in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 113–126.

Bagge, Sverre, ‘Christianization and State Formation in Medieval Norway’, *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 30: 2 (2005), 107–134.

Bagge, Sverre, *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed: Kingship in* Sverris saga *and* Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar (Odense University Press: Odense, 1996).

Bagge, Sverre, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom: State Formation in Norway, c. 900–1350* (Museum Tusculanum Press: Copenhagen, 2010).

Bagge, Sverre, '"Gang leader" eller "The Lord's anointed" i *Sverris saga*? Svar til Fredrik Ljunqvist og Lars Lönnroth', *Scripta Islandica*, 58 (2007), 101–119.

Bagge, Sverre, 'Håkon og Skule – Svar til Hans Jacob Orning og Knut Arstad', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 101: 2 (2022), 157–165.

Bagge, Sverre, 'Håkon og Skule 1217–1240', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 99: 3 (2020), 184–196.

Bagge, Sverre, 'Ideologies and Mentalities', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 463–486.

Bagge, Sverre, 'Ideology and Propaganda in *Sverris saga*', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 108 (1993), 1–18.

Bagge, Sverre, 'The Norwegian Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century', in Anne J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 1993), 159–177.

Bagge, Sverre, 'Samkongedømme og enekongedømme', *Historisk Tidsskrift (Norsk)*, 54 (1975), 239–274.

Bagge, Sverre, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's* Heimskringla (University of California Press: Oxford, 1991).

Bartlett, Robert, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Penguin: London, 1994).

Bax, Marcel, and Tineke Padmos, 'Two Types of Verbal Dueling in Old Icelandic: The Interactional Structure of the "Senna" and the "Mannjafnaðr" in *Hárbarðsljóð*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 55: 2 (1983), 149–174.

Bax, Marcel, M. H., and Tineke Padmos, ‘Senna-Mannjafnaðr’, in Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (eds.), *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge: Abingdon, 1993), 571–573.

Berger, Alan J., ‘Heimskringla and the Compilations’, *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 114 (1999), 5–15.

Berto, Luigi Andrea, ‘The Image of the Byzantines in Early Medieval South Italy: The Viewpoint of the Chroniclers of the Lombards (9th–10th centuries) and Normans (11th century)’, *Mediterranean Studies*, 22: 1 (2014), 1–37.

Beyschlag, Siegfried, *Konungasögur: Untersuchungen zur Königssaga bis Snorri*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana VIII (Einar Munksgaard: Kopenhagen, 1950).

Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ‘Formáli’, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla I*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVI (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), v–cxl.

Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ‘Formáli’, in Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002), v–cxv.

Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla III*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXVIII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2002).

Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Om de Norske Kongesagaer*, NVAOS 4 (Jacob Dybwad: Oslo, 1937).

Bjarni Einarsson, ‘*Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum*’, in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Rekjavík, 1985), 3–54.

Bjarni Einarsson, ‘*Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*’, in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), 57–364.

Bjarni Einarsson, ‘Formáli’, in Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonunga sǫgum : Fagrskinna – Nóregs Konunga Tal*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXIX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1985), v–cxxxi.

Bjarni Guðnason, ‘Theodoricus og Íslenskir Sagnaritarar’, in Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson (eds.), *Sjötíu ritgerðir: helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20 Júli 1977* (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar: Reykjavík, 1977), 107–120.

Bjørgo, Narve, ‘Samkongedømme kontra enekongedømme’, *Historisk Tidsskrift (Norsk)*, 49 (1970), 1–33.

Blöndal, Sigfus, and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1978).

Booms, Dirk, and Peter Higgs, *Sicily: Culture and Conquest* (The British Museum Press: London, 2016).

Boulhosa, Patricia Pires, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway: Mediaeval Sagas and Legal Texts*, The Northern World 17 (Brill: Leiden, 2005).

Bradbury, Jim, *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Warfare* (Routledge: London, 2005).

Byock, Jesse, ‘Introduction’, in Jesse Byock (ed. & trans.), *Grettir’s Saga* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009), vii–xxviii.

Byock, Jesse L., ‘Introduction’, in Jesse L. Byock (ed. & trans.), *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology* (Penguin Classics: London, 2005), ix–xxx.

Chennells, Ben, ‘Dual Identities and Double Scenes. Transformations of Physical and Mental State in Performances of Eddic Poetry’, *Saga-Book*, XLVI (2022), 31–64.

Clark, Harriet, ‘Bestowing Status: The Journeys of Rǫgnvaldr Kali Kolsson and Sigurðr Jórsalafari’, *Apardjón Journal for Scandinavian Studies*, (forthcoming).

Cleasby, Richard, and Gudbrand Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1874).

Cline, Kenneth, ‘Byzantium’s Star-Crossed General’, *Medieval Warfare*, 4: 2 (2014), 44–48.

Clover, Carol J., ‘The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode’, *Speculum*, 55: 3 (1980), 444–468.

Cormack, Margaret, '*Egils saga, Heimskringla*, and the Daughter of Eiríkr blóðøx', *Alvíssmál*, 10 (2001), 61–68.

Coroban, Costel, *Ideology and Power in Norway and Iceland, 1150–1250* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2018).

Coroban, Costel, 'Intercultural Political Models in *Egils Saga* and Other Literary Sources. A Philological Study', *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, 11: 2 (2019), 35–48.

Davidson, H. R. Ellis, *The Viking Road to Byzantium* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.: London, 1976).

Driscoll, M. J., 'Introduction', in M. J. Driscoll (ed. & trans.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasǫgum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series X (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2008), ix–xxv.

Driscoll, M. J., 'Notes to the Translation', in M. J. Driscoll (ed. & trans.), *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasǫgum: A Twelfth-Century Synoptic History of the Kings of Norway*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series X (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2008), 82–108.

DuBois, Thomas A., 'Sts. Sunniva and Henrik: Scandinavian Martyr Saints in their Hagiographic and National Contexts', in Thomas A. DuBois (ed.), *Sanctity in the North: Saints, Lives, and Cults in Medieval Scandinavia* (University of Toronto Press: London, 2008).

Eickels, Klaus van, 'Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England', *Gender and History*, 16: 3 (2004), 588–602.

Ellehøj, Svend, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXVI (Munksgaard: København, 1965).

Eriksen, Stefka G., 'Pedagogy and Attitudes towards Knowledge in *The King's Mirror*', *Viator*, 45: 3 (2014), 143–168.

Evans, Gareth Lloyd, 'The Construction of Diplomacy in the Various Accounts of Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Bersǫglisvísur*', *Saga-Book*, XXXVIII (2014), 49–60.

Evans, Gareth Lloyd, *Men and Masculinities in the Sagas of Icelanders* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2019).

Finlay, Alison (ed. & trans.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003).

Finlay, Alison, 'History and Fiction in the Kings' Sagas', *Saga-Book*, XXXIX (2015), 77–102.

Finlay, Alison, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay (ed.), *Fagrskinna: A Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), 1–39.

Finlay, Alison, ''*Þat þótti illr fundr*': Phallic Aggression in *Bjarnar saga Hítdœlakappa*', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 167–182.

Finlay, Alison, and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume I: The Beginnings to Óláfr Tryggvason* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2011), vii–xv.

Finlay, Alison, and Anthony Faulkes, 'Introduction', in Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (eds. & trans.), *Heimskringla Volume III: Magnús Óláfsson to Magnús Erlingsson* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2015), vii–xv.

Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie*, Volume 2, (S. L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri: København, 1894).

Fjalldal, Magnús, 'Beware the Norwegian Kings: *Heimskringla* as Propaganda', *Scandinavian Studies*, 84: 4 (2013), 455–468.

Foote, Peter, 'Introduction', in David McDougall and Ian McDougall (eds.), *Historia De Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium: An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings* (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2006), vii–xxxi.

Friis-Jensen, Karsten, 'Introduction', in Karsten Friis-Jensen (ed.), Peter Fisher (trans.), *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes, Volume 1* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2015), xxix–lxxx.

Gade, Kari Ellen, '*Morkinskinna* (*Mork*)', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), lxvi–lxix.

Gade, Kari Ellen, '1236: Órækja meiddr ok heill gerr', in Sverrir Tómasson (ed.), *Samtíðarsögur / The Contemporary Sagas I–II* (Stofnun, Árna Magnússonar: Reykjavík, 1994), 194–207.

Gade, Kari Ellen, 'Poetry and its Changing Importance in Medieval Icelandic Culture', in Margaret Clunies Ross (ed.), *Old Icelandic Literature and Society* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), 61–95.

Gade, Kari Ellen, 'Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Bersǫglisvísur*', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry in the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035–c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 11–30.

Georgiou, Stavros G., 'A Contribution to the study of Byzantine Prosopography: the Byzantine Family of Opoi', *Byzantion*, 78 (2008), 224–238.

Ghosh, Shami, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History: Problems and Perspectives*, The Northern World 54 (Brill: Leiden, 2011).

Gísli Sigurðsson, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition: A Discourse on Method* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2004).

Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 'Prolegomena', in Guðbrandur Vigfússon (ed.), *Sturlunga Saga I* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1878), xvii–ccxicx.

Guðni Jónsson, 'Formáli', in Guðni Jónsson (ed.), *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar : Bandamanna saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit VII (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1936), v–civ.

Hagland, Jan Ragnar, 'Norwegians and Europe: The Theme of Marriage and Consanguinity in Early Norwegian Law'', in Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman

(eds.), *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2004), 209–218.

Haki Antonsson, 'Christian Themes', in Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (Routledge: London, 2017), 279–291.

Harris, Joseph, 'The King in Disguise: an International Popular Tale in Two Old Icelandic Adaptations', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 94 (1979), 57–81.

Harris, Joseph, 'The Senna: From Description to Literary Theory', *Michigan Germanic Studies*, 5: 1 (1979), 65–74.

Helle, Knut, 'The Norwegian Kingdom: Succession Disputes and Consolidation', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia – Volume 1: Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003), 369–391.

Hermann, Pernille, 'The Mind's Eye: The Triad of Memory, Space and the Senses in Old Norse Literature', *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies*, 47: 1 (2017), 203–217.

Hermanson, Lars, and Hans Jacob Orning, 'Friends and Allies: Networks and Horizontal Bonds', in Kim Esmark, et al. (eds.), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c.1050–1250, Volume II* (Routledge: London, 2020), 54–75.

Hill, Joyce, 'Burning Walnuts: An International Motif in the Kings' Sagas', in Daniel Anlezark (ed.), *Myths, Legends, and Heroes: Essays on Old Norse and Old English Literature* (University of Toronto Press: London, 2011), 188–205.

Hill, Joyce, 'Pilgrimage and Prestige in the Icelandic Sagas', *Saga-Book*, XXIII (1990–1993), 433–453.

Holmsen, Andreas, *Norges historie fra de eldste tider til 1660* (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1977).

Houts, Elisabeth van, 'Scandinavian Influence on Norman Literature', in R. Allen Brown (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies*, VI (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1990), 107–121.

Indrebø, Gustav, 'Aagrip', *Edda: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Litteraturforskning*, 17 (1922), 18–65.

Indrebø, Gustav, *Fagrskinna*, Avhandlinger fra Universitetets Historiske Seminar, 4 (Grøndahl & Søns Boktrykkeri: Kristiania [Oslo], 1917).

Indrebø, Gustav, 'Harald hardraade i *Morkinskinna*', in Johannes Brødum-Nielsen, et al. (eds.), *Sagastudier af festskrift til Finnur Jónsson den 29. Maj 1928* (Levin & Munksgaards: København, 1928), 173–180.

Jakobsen, Alfred, 'Litt om forelegget til Fagrskinnas A-resensjon', in Hallvard Magerøy and Kjell Venås, *Mål og Namn. Studiar i Nordisk Mål og Namnegransking. Heidersskrift til Olav T. Beito* (Universitetsforlaget: Oslo, 1971), 154–171.

Jakobsen, Alfred, 'Noen merknader om håndskriftene AM 51, fol. Og 302, 4to.' *Opuscula* IV, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXX (Munksgaard: København, 1970), 159–168.

Jakobsen, Alfred, 'Om Fagrskinna-forfatteren', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 85 (1970), 88–124.

Jesch, Judith, 'Norse Historical Traditions and the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*: Magnús berfœttr and Haraldr hárfagri', in K. L. Maund (ed.), *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 1996), 117–147.

Jesch, Judith, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age* (Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2001).

Jesch, Judith, ''Youth on the Prow': Three Young Kings in the Late Viking Age', in P. J. P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages* (York Medieval Press: Woodbridge, 2004), 123–139.

Jones, Gwyn, *A History of the Vikings* (Oxford University Press: London, 1969).

Jones, Richard L. C., 'Fortifications and Sieges in Western Europe, c. 800–1450', in Maurice Keen (ed.), *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), 163–185.

Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, ‘With mirthful merriment’: Masquerade and Masculinity in *Mágus saga jarls*’, in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 77–93.

Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth*, Jean Lundskær-Nielsen (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1999).

Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, ‘Kings, Earls and Chieftains: Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland, c. 900–1300’, in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 69–108.

Jón Þorkelsson, ‘Morkinskinna’, *Norðanfari*, 7 (1868), 66–67.

Jón Þorkelsson, ‘Um Fagrskinnu og Ólafs sögu helga’, *Safn til Sögu Íslands og Íslenzkra Bokmenta að Fornu og Nýju* (S. L. Möller: Kaupmannahöfn, 1856), 137–184.

Jørgensen, Jon Gunnar, *The Lost Vellum Kringla*, Siân Grønlie (trans.), Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XLV (C. A. Reitzels Forlag: Copenhagen, 2007).

Jørgensen, Jon Gunnar, ‘“Snorre Sturlesøns Fortale Paa Sin Chrønicke” Om kildene til opplysningen om *Heimskringlas* forfatter’, *Gripla*, 9 (1995), 45–61.

Jørgensen, J. U., ‘Myndighedsalder’, in Georg Rona and Allan Karker (eds.), *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder*, 12 (Rosenkilde og Bagger: København, 1967), 35–37.

Kalinke, Marianne E., ‘“Sigurðr Saga Jórsalafara”: The Fictionalization of Fact in “Morkinskinna”’, *Scandinavian Studies*, 56: 2 (1984), 152–167.

Kraggerud, Egil, ‘Introduction’, *Theodoricus: De antiquitate regum Norwagiensium – On the Old Norwegian Kings* (Novus: Oslo, 2018), xv–xcviii.

Krappe, Alexander Haggerty, ‘The Sparrows of Cirencester’, *Modern Philology*, 23: 1 (1925), 7–16.

Kvålen, Eivind, *Den eldste norske kongesoga Morkinskinna og Hryggjarstykki* (Augustin: Oslo, 1925).

Lange, Gudrun, *Die Anfänge der Isländisch-Norwegischen Geschichtsschreibung*, Studia Islandica 47 (Bókaútgáfa Meningarsjóðs: Reykjavík, 1989).

Lie, Hallvard, *Studier i Heimkringlas Stil: Dialogene og Talene* (Jacob Dybwad: Oslo, 1937).

Lifshitz, Felice, 'Gesta Normannorum by Dudo of Saint-Quentin', Felice Lifshitz (ed. & trans.), *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* (Fordham University, republished online 2019), Introduction.

Ljungqvist, Fredrik Charpentier, 'Kristen kungaideologi i *Sverris saga*', *Scripta Islandica*, 57 (2006), 79–95.

Louis-Jensen, Jonna, *Kongesagastudier: Kompilationen Hulda-Hrokkinskinna*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXXII (C. A. Reitzels Boghandel: København, 1977).

Lund, Niels, 'Sven Estridssen's Incest and Divorce', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 13 (2017), 115–143.

Lönnroth, Lars, *Den dubbla scenen: Muntlig Diktning från Eddan till ABBA* (Prisma: Stockholm, 1978).

Lönnroth, Lars, 'The double scene of Arrow-Odd's drinking contest', *Medieval Narrative: A Symposium* (Odense University Press: Odense, 1979), 94–109.

Lönnroth, Lars, 'Sverrir's Dreams', *Scripta Islandica*, 57 (2006), 97–110.

Morcom, Thomas, 'Inclusive Masculinity in *Morkinskinna* and the Defusal of Kingly Aggression', in Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (eds.), *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (Boydell & Brewer: Cambridge, 2020), 127–146.

Mundal, Else, 'The Orkney Earl and Scald Torf-Einarr and his Poetry', in Colleen E. Batey, et al. (eds.), *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the North Atlantic* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 1993), 248–259.

Murray, Jacqueline, 'Introduction', in Jacqueline Murray (ed.), *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (Garland Publishing, Inc.: London, 1999), ix–xx.

Myrvoll, Klaus Johan, 'Skule jarl, Snorre og den historiske bakgrunnen åt *Fagrskinna*', *Maal og Minne*, 115: 1 (2023), 79–131.

Nordal, Sigurður, 'Formáli', in Sigurður Nordal (ed.), *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, Íslenzk Fornrit II (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 1933), v–cv.

O'Connor, Ralph, 'History and Fiction', in Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (Routledge: London, 2017), 88–110.

O'Donoghue, Heather, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga: Meanings of Time in Old Norse Literature* (Bloomsbury: London, 2021).

O'Donoghue, Heather, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005).

Orning, Hans Jacob, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway, c.1030–1160', in Kim Esmark, et al. (eds.), *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Brill: Leiden, 2013), 45–82.

Orning, Hans Jacob, 'Håkon, Skule og de norske borgerkrigene', *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 100: 3 (2021), 222–237.

Orning, Hans Jacob, *Unpredictability and Presence: Norwegian Kingship in the High Middle Ages*, The Northern World 38 (Brill: Leiden, 2008).

Orning, Hans Jacob, 'Violence, Conflict and Order in Medieval Norway', *Global Intellectual History* (2023), 1–15.

Ólafur Halldórsson, *Text by Snorri Sturluson in* Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en Mesta (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2001).

Page, R. I., *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (The British Museum Press: London, 2014).

Parks, Ward, 'Flyting, Sounding, Debate: Three Verbal Contest Genres', *Poetics Today* 7: 3 (1986), 438–458.

Phelpstead, Carl, *Holy Vikings: Saints' Lives in the Old Icelandic Kings' Sagas*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Volume 340 (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, 2007).

Phelpstead, Carl, 'Introduction', in Carl Phelpstead (ed.), *A History of the Kings of Norway and the Passion of the Blessed Óláfr*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series XIII (Short Run Press: Exeter, 2001), ix–xlv.

Poole, Russell, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016', *Speculum*, 62: 2 (1987), 265–298.

Poole, Russell, 'Variants and Variability in the Text of Egill's Höfuðlausn', in Roberta Frank (ed.), *The Politics of Editing Medieval Texts* (AMS Press: New York, 1993), 65–105.

Poole, Russell, *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Narrative* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1991).

Rekdal, Jan Erik, 'From Wine in a Goblet to Milk in Cowdung. The Transformation of Early Christian Kings in Three Post-Viking Tales from Ireland', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 211–268.

Scheel, Roland, 'Byzantium – Rome – Denmark – Iceland: Dealing with Imperial Concepts in the North', in Christian Scholl, et al. (eds.), *Transcultural Approaches to the Concept of Imperial Rule in the Middle Ages* (Peter Lang: New York, 2017), 245–294.

Sextan, John P., 'Difference and Disability: On the Logic of Naming in the Icelandic Sagas', in Joshua R. Eyler (ed.), *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations* (Routledge: London, 2010), 149–163.

Shepard, Jonathan, 'Yngvarr's Expedition to the East and a Russian Inscribed Stone Cross', *Saga-Book*, XXI (1982–1985), 222–292.

Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson, 'Höfundur *Morkinskinnu* og *Fagrskinnu*', *Gripla*, 23 (2012), 235–285.

Stefan Karlsson, 'Kringum Kringlu', *Landsbókasafn Íslands. Árbók 1976* (Reykjavík, 1977), 5–25.

Steinsland, Gro, 'Introduction – Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney, and the Faeroes', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 1–14.

Steinsland, Gro, 'Origin Myths and Rulership. From the Viking Age Ruler to the Ruler of Medieval Historiography: Continuity, Transformations and Innovations', in Gro Steinsland, et al. (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, The Northern World 52 (Brill: Leiden, 2011), 15–68.

Storm, Gustav, *Snorre Sturlassöns Historieskrivning, en Kristisk Undersögelse* (Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri: Kjöbenhavn, 1873).

Sverrir Jakobsson, 'The Early Kings of Norway, the Issue of Agnatic Succession, and the Settlement of Iceland', *Viator*, 47: 3 (2016), 171–188.

Sverrir Jakobsson, *The Varangians: In God's Holy Fire* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2020).

Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht, *Saga and Society: An Introduction to Old Norse Literature*, John Tucker (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1993).

Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of sexual defamation in early Northern society*, Joan Turville-Petre (trans.), (Odense University Press: Odense, 1983).

Thorvaldsen, Bernt Øyvind, 'The Double Scene in Performance: Deictic Blending in *Vǫluspá*?', in John McKinnell, et al. (eds), *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature Sagas and the British Isles I–II* (Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Durham, 2006), 944–950.

Turville-Petre, G., *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1953).

Ulset, Tor, *Det genetiske forholdet mellom Ágrip, Historia Norwegiæ og Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensium: en analyse med utgangspunkt i oversettelsesteknikk samt en diskusjon omkring begrepet "latinisme" i samband med norrøne tekster* (Novus: Oslo, 1983).

Vries, Jan de, 'Normannisches Lehngut in den isländischen Königssagas', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 47 (1931), 51–79.

Weiler, Björn, 'Crown-Giving and King-Making in the West ca.1000–ca.1250', *Viator*, 41: 1 (2010), 57–87.

Weiler, Björn, 'Tales of First Kings and the Culture of Kingship in the West, ca.1050–ca.1200', *Viator*, 46: 2 (2015), 101–128.

Whaley, Diana, 'Arnórr jarlaskáld Þórðarson', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035 to c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middles Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 177–281.

Whaley, Diana, 'Editorial Methodology', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), xxx–xxxv.

Whaley, Diana, '*Fagrskinna* (*Fsk*)', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), clix–clxi.

Whaley, Diana, *Heimskringla: An Introduction*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series VIII (Viking Society for Northern Research: London, 1991).

Whaley, Diana, '*Heimskringla* (Hkr)', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1, Part 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2012), clxvi–clxxi.

Whaley, Diana, 'Þjóðólfr Arnórsson', in Kari Ellen Gade (ed.), *Poetry in the Kings' Sagas 2, Part 1: From c.1035–c.1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2 (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), 57–176.

White, Paul A., ‘The Latin Men: The Norman Sources of the Scandinavian Kings’ Sagas’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 98: 2 (1999), 157–169.

Winroth, Anders, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (Yale University Press: London, 2012).

Wolf, Kirsten, ‘The Colour Brown in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature’, *North-Western European Language Evolution*, 70: 1 (2017), 22–38.

Wolf, Kirsten, ‘Non-basic Colour Terms in Old Norse-Icelandic’, in Jeffrey Turco (ed.), *New Norse Studies: Essays on the Literature and Culture of Medieval Scandinavia* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2015), 389–433.

Wolf, Kirsten, ‘Some Comments on Old Norse-Icelandic Colour Terms’, *Arkiv för nordisk fililogi*, 121 (2006), 173–192.

Wortley, John, (ed. & trans.), *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2010).

Zoega, Geir T., *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (Dover Publications: Mineola, 2004).

Þorleifur Hauksson, ‘Formáli’, in Þorleifur Hauksson (ed.), *Sverris saga*, Íslenzk Fornrit XXX (Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag: Reykjavík, 2007), v–xc.

Þorleifur Hauksson, ‘Implicit Ideology and the King’s Image in *Sverris saga*’, *Scripta Islandica*, 63 (2012), 127–135.