

SNORRI STURLUSON

HEIMSKRINGLA

VOLUME I

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SNORRI STURLUSON
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VOLUME I
THE BEGINNINGS TO ÓLÁFR
TRYGGVASON

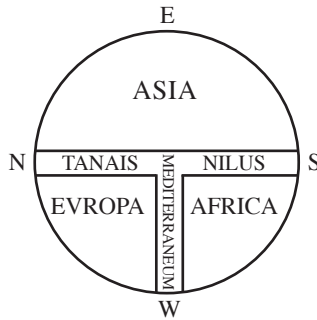
TRANSLATED BY
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AND
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The cover illustration is of the 'Isidorean' mappamundi (11th century), of unknown origin, diameter 26 cm, in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm 10058, f. 154v. It is printed here by permission of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. East is at the top, Asia fills the top half, Europe is in the bottom left hand quadrant, Africa in the bottom right hand quadrant. The earliest realisations of Isidore's description of the world have the following schematic form:



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Introduction

Authorship

The title *Heimskringla* derives from the phrase *kringla heimsins* ‘the disc of the world’ which opens this collection of sagas on the lives of the kings of Norway attributed to the Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson. The words belong to a geographical preamble, ‘The disc of the world which mankind inhabits is very indented with bays’, and have little to do with the main substance of the work; but they are fortuitously appropriate to its scope and ambition, which make it one of the greatest literary achievements of medieval Iceland. *Heimskringla* covers the history of Norway from its legendary beginnings up to the year 1177, and is structured as a sequence of sixteen sagas, mostly biographical in their focus on a single ruler (or two or three contemporary rulers). These sagas vary considerably in their length and degree of detail, presumably partly because of the varied nature of Snorri’s sources, but also because of differences of emphasis and technique in the way he interpreted them. The work is often described as a triptych, falling naturally into three sections, with the saga of Óláfr Haraldsson, translated and beatified as St Óláfr in 1031, only a year after his death at Stiklastaðir, as the centrepiece. This part of the text is closely based on Snorri’s own earlier *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*, and the incorporation of a work of this length and detail into *Heimskringla* marks it out from earlier historical surveys such as *Fagrskinna*, in which Óláfr’s reign is treated in no more detail than that of the rulers who preceded and succeeded him.

The authorship of *Heimskringla* is not referred to within the text or in any surviving manuscript—as is usually the case for a medieval work—and its attribution to Snorri has been questioned.¹ The first surviving works in which he is credited as author are the sixteenth-century translations of *Heimskringla* into Danish by the Norwegians Peder Claussøn Friis and Laurents Hanssøn (see *Hkr* I vii), who are generally believed to have used at least one now lost manuscript of *Heimskringla* that gave authority for their naming of Snorri. Ólafur Halldórsson argues from allusions to him in *Orkneyinga saga* and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar in mesta* that Snorri was widely known in medieval Iceland as a historian, and that the history in question is likely to have been *Heimskringla* (1979, 123–27 [1990, 385–89]).² *Íslendinga saga* ch. 79 records that in 1230 Snorri’s nephew Sturla Sighvatsson stayed with him for some

¹ Most recently by Cormack (1999) and Boulhosa (2005, ch. 1)

² Jørgensen (1995) has recently reviewed the evidence and found unconvincing the theory that Snorri was named as author in a lost manuscript, and suggested that the translators’ claims may have been based on the medieval references cited by Ólafur Halldórsson, and possibly on learned theories circulating in Bergen in Hanssøn’s time.

time and *lagði mikinn hug á að láta rita sögubækur eftir bókum þeim, er Snorri setti saman* ‘was very keen on having saga books copied from the books that Snorri had put together’; *sögubækur* can plausibly be interpreted as meaning ‘books of history’ (*Sturlunga saga* 1946, I 342).

The identification of Snorri as author of *Heimskringla* is all the more tempting, as he seems better equipped for it than any of his contemporaries by education, background and political experience. An argument based on his literary experience is a circular one, since there is little sure evidence either for Snorri’s authorship of *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* or even the work that carries his name, *Snorra Edda* (Wanner 2008, 26–29). There is a considerable convergence among the three, since *Snorra Edda* takes the form of a treatise explicating and preserving the complex skaldic poetry that is skilfully used as a source material in *Heimskringla* and *Egils saga*, and one of the three sections of *Snorra Edda*, *Háttatal*, itself takes the form of a long skaldic eulogy of two rulers of Norway. More significant perhaps is their shared literary skill, sharing ‘epic scope, an organising and rationalising intelligence, narrative verve, and resourceful use of skaldic verse’ (Whaley 1991, 15). *Egils saga* devotes far more detail than any other of the sagas of Icelanders to the history and politics of Norway and its rulers, and its account of events in the history of Norway overlaps with that of *Heimskringla*. Jónas Kristjánsson (1977 and 1990) accounts for its more hostile treatment of the Norwegian crown by suggesting it was written after *Heimskringla*, by a disillusioned Snorri on his return from Norway to Iceland in 1239; the more conventional view has been that *Egils saga* was the earlier work. An alternative explanation for this difference in perspective may be that *Heimskringla* addressed itself to a Norwegian and *Egils saga* to an Icelandic audience (Jónas Kristjánsson 1977, 471–72).³

Snorri was one of the foremost political figures of his day. He was an important member of the Sturlungar family, whose history is recorded in *Íslendinga saga*, written by his nephew Sturla Þórðarson, and in other parts of the *Sturlunga saga* compilation. The family was dominant at a particularly turbulent time in Iceland’s history, from the death of Snorri’s father Sturla in 1183 till the submission of Iceland to the Norwegian crown in 1262–64. Snorri, born in 1179, had connections with another powerful family, the Oddaverjar, as he was fostered at Oddi in south-west Iceland, an important centre of learning, by the powerful chieftain Jón Loptsson, himself descended

³ Ólafur Halldórsson (1965 [1990]) and Stefán Karlsson (1979 [2000]) have argued that many Icelandic manuscripts with content of interest to Norwegians were exported from Iceland to Norway soon after being written; it is also believed that texts such as *Fagrskinna* may have been written in Norway by Icelanders.

from a king of Norway. Snorri participated fully in the drive to acquire wealth and power that preoccupied Iceland's grand families at this time through marriage alliances, the collection of *goðorð* (chieftaincies) and legal manoeuvres. He twice held the chief administrative position of *lqgsqgumaðr* 'law speaker' (in 1215–18 and 1222–31) and became the wealthiest man in the country. After inheriting the estate of Borg in the west of Iceland, once the home of Egill Skalla-Grímsson, from his first father-in-law, he moved to Reykjaholt, where he lived for the rest of his life.

Snorri made two visits to Scandinavia, showing himself clearly ambitious to engage the favour of the Norwegian royal court; his choices of potential patrons, however, seem with hindsight either unlucky or ill-judged (Wanner 2008, 20–25). He sent early skaldic tributes to King Ingi Bárðarson and his half-brother Jarl Hákon galinn, both of whom had died by the time Snorri was able to visit Norway in 1218. He was well received, however, by Jarl Skúli, regent for the new king Hákon Hákonarson, and composed poetic tributes to both, including the surviving *Háttatal*. In the course of his two years in Norway, according to *Íslendinga saga*, Snorri was unusually honoured by being made a *lendr maðr* at the king's court, and helped to avert an invasion of Iceland by promising to persuade his compatriots to accept Norwegian rule peacefully—a promise he apparently made little attempt to fulfil. On his second visit to Norway, in 1237, in flight from the escalating tensions within his own family as well as among other Icelandic factions, Snorri cast in his lot with Jarl Skúli, now on the point of rebellion against the Norwegian king; unfortunately for Snorri, Skúli was defeated and killed in 1240, and Snorri himself, having returned to Iceland in defiance of the king's ban, was killed by a band of men led by his own son-in-law, Gizurr Þorvaldsson, now an agent of the king, in a cellar at Reykjaholt in 1241.

If the reference to *sögubækr* in *Íslendinga saga* rightly refers to *Heimskringla*, then Snorri must have been composing it during the years preceding 1230, when Sturla instigated the making of copies. It is usually assumed that Snorri's first visit to Norway furnished the stimulus for him to begin the work, and its composition is dated to the years 1220–30.

Sources

Despite the reader's impression of a critical intelligence shaping *Heimskringla*, it is also the product of a long tradition of historical writing in Iceland. Snorri's wealth, and his connections with centres of learning such as Oddi, would have enabled him to collect and compare the accounts already extant in written sources, and to some extent compile his history from them as well as from what he could glean from oral narratives (including poetry). In the words of Theodore Andersson, '*Heimskringla* is by no means a first

formulation, but a final fusion. It is a synthesis in a very narrow, almost editorial, sense' (1993, 12). The dependence of *Heimskringla* on its written sources varies considerably. The sagas of the later kings in *Hkr* III follow their source, *Morkinskinna*, almost verbatim (while stripping out much of the more colourful anecdotal material included in the form of *þættir* 'stories' about the encounters of Icelanders with kings),⁴ whereas the narrative of the legendary past, *Ynglinga saga*, seems to have been put together by Snorri himself from sparse, largely poetic, sources, though some quite significant information seems to derive from Ari's historical writing and *Skjöldunga saga*. Important as this literary context is for the study of *Heimskringla*, it is complicated by the fact that some of the sources probably used by Snorri are now lost wholly or in part, and those that survive do so in a form other than that known to Snorri himself; the corpus of Icelandic historical texts, though greatly influenced by Snorri, continued to evolve after his time.

Few prose sources are acknowledged explicitly by Snorri, despite the frustratingly vague account of his working practice given in his Prologue (and the similar one attached to his *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*). The *Heimskringla* Prologue refers first to oral reports ('old stories . . . as I have heard them told by learned men') and to genealogies, presumably written, 'in which kings and other men of high rank have traced their ancestry'. An example of this genealogical writing may be the *áttartala* 'genealogy' and *konunga ævi* 'lives of kings' said by Ari Þorgilsson to have been included in the first version, now lost, of his *Íslendingabók* (Grønlie 2006, 14 n. 3 and xi–xiii). The extent of Ari's lives of kings — whether extended narratives or, more likely, brief chronological records of significant events of their reigns — is a matter of speculation. Snorri's Prologue acknowledges him at greater length, it would seem, than is justified by the difference between Snorri's techniques and the rather dry scholarly style, with an emphasis on chronology, of Ari's surviving work. It is noticeable that Snorri puts weight on the role of Ari, who he says was the first Icelander to write history in the vernacular (1122–32), as the link to the events he was recording, through a chain of oral informants whose memory may well have reached back over three generations; the Prologue, therefore, may be attempting, by citing Ari as a source, to sanction the role of oral reports in Snorri's own history. Theodore Andersson has recently reopened the subject of the importance of oral narrative as a source for *Heimskringla*, and investigated narratives of events at which Icelanders were present and in a position to carry eyewitness accounts, in oral form, back to Iceland (Andersson 2008).

⁴ Recent scholarship suggests that the *þættir* were an integral part of *Morkinskinna* (Andersson and Gade 2000, 13 and Ármann Jakobsson 2005, 395), rather than having been interpolated at a later date, as earlier scholars argued.

The other kind of eyewitness account acknowledged in the Prologue is poetry, particularly ‘what is said in those poems that were recited before the rulers themselves or their sons. We regard as true everything that is found in those poems about their expeditions and battles.’ It is odd that the poems singled out for specific mention, *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal*, do not come into this category, since they are the main sources for *Ynglinga saga*, Snorri’s account of the legendary prehistory of the Scandinavian kings, and were composed retrospectively in the periods of rule of Haraldr hárfagri and Jarl Hákon inn ríki respectively. Nevertheless, the importance of poetry as a source is visible on almost every page of *Heimskringla*. Snorri did not invent the technique of relating an event, then substantiating his account by citing a skaldic verse by a contemporary skald as evidence, for the practice is found in essentially the same form in even his earliest sources (O’Donoghue 2005, 10–77), and in many cases Snorri takes over both anecdote and verse citation from an earlier written work. But he is more discriminating in his choice and more skilful in his interpretation of verses, as might be expected from the author of the poetical treatise, *Snorra Edda*. Snorri is also more systematic than his predecessors in citing both the name of the poet and, very often, the longer poem from which the stanza cited has been extracted.

The final sentence of the Prologue, though unfortunately rather enigmatic, seems to testify to Snorri’s confidence in the complex *dróttkvætt* verse form as a vehicle for oral history, since any corruption would be likely to disrupt either the form or the intelligibility of a verse. In the present translation, the complexity of the verses has been reproduced as far as possible by the preservation of alliteration, by the restriction of syllable count in each line as near as possible to the normal six syllables of the original and by the literal rendition of kennings—those poetical periphrases that transform, for instance, an eye into a ‘star of the forehead’ (in the first verse in *Heimskringla*, translated on p. 9 below) and mead into the ‘windless wave of the spears of the beast with curved horns’ (verse 4 below). While trying to the patience and comprehension of the English-speaking reader, this allows one to gauge the extent to which information presented in the prose narrative is derived from the verses.

Snorri mentions a number of other sources in the body of his work: the *Hryggjarstykki* ‘Backbone Pieces’ of Eiríkr Oddsson, now lost, which recorded events from 1130 to 1161 (*Haraldssona saga*, ch. 11); *Skjöldunga saga* (p. 32 below), a legendary history of the earliest kings of Denmark, now surviving only in fragments preserved in later books and a partial Latin version; an (unidentified) saga of Knútr inn gamli (*Magnúss saga ins góða*, ch. 22) and *Jarlasögurnar* ‘the sagas of the Jarls’ (*Óláfs saga ins helga*, ch. 103), which looks like a version of *Orkneyinga saga*.

Other works used but not acknowledged by Snorri fall into two main categories: historical surveys covering several reigns, and biographies, generally hagiographical, of individual rulers. The earliest surviving ‘synoptic histories’, dating from the late twelfth century, include vernacular and Latin works probably written in Norway, though in this category also should probably belong the often mentioned but now lost Latin history written by the Icelandic priest Sæmundr inn fróði (1056–1133). The only one of these that Snorri made extensive use of was the vernacular summary *Ágrip af Nóregs konunga sǫgum*, adopting almost verbatim its account of the episode of Haraldr hárfagri’s infatuation with the Lappish Snæfríðr. Later and fuller compilations used by Snorri are *Morkinskinna*, compiled c. 1220, which was Snorri’s main source for the period 1030–1177; and—probably—*Fagrskinna*, which covered the same historical span as *Heimskringla* (minus *Ynglinga saga*) but at about a quarter of the length. *Morkinskinna* now survives in an incomplete, and probably interpolated, manuscript from c. 1275, and *Fagrskinna* only in seventeenth-century transcripts. *Fagrskinna* shows a royalist bias that has suggested to many its composition in Norway, but its author’s familiarity with, and predilection for, skaldic verse has prompted the view that its author may have been an Icelander. Its probable date of composition is so close to that of *Heimskringla* that it has been argued that only the latter parts of *Heimskringla* draw upon it, but the dependence of both texts on *Morkinskinna* makes this difficult to establish.

The alternative tradition of royal biography took the form of hagiographical lives of the two proselytising kings, Óláfr Tryggvason (r. 995–1000) and Óláfr Haraldsson ‘the Saint’ (r. 1015–30). Soon after St Óláfr’s fall his cult began to develop, fostered by miracle stories and orally preserved verses; surviving from about 1200 are six fragments of the so-called *Oldest saga of St Óláfr* and from somewhat later, the closely related *Legendary saga of St Óláfr*. The *Oldest saga* was probably not a direct source for Snorri but seems to have had much material in common with Snorri’s own *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*, which he wrote before embarking on his *Heimskringla*, and then incorporated in the later work. About 1220 the priest Styrmir Kárason, prior of the Augustinian house on Viðey, wrote a *lífs saga* ‘biography’ of Óláfr, as it is called in Flateyjarbók, which preserves some fragmentary excerpts from it. Styrmir’s book, more expansive and rhetorical than the *Oldest saga*, was probably Snorri’s main source for his *Óláfs saga helga*.

Meanwhile, probably about 1190, a monk at the Icelandic monastery at Pingeyrar, Oddr Snorrason, wrote a life of Óláfr Tryggvason, who was credited with the conversion of Iceland along with the rest of the medieval North, in Latin and in hagiographical vein; this survives in different versions of a translation into Icelandic. Another Latin life of Óláfr Tryggvason by

another Þingeyrar monk, Gunnlaugr Leifsson, soon followed, but survives only in translated excerpts. Snorri clearly knew and used Oddr's life, in a version somewhat different from those that survive, and was probably less influenced by Gunnlaugr's more overtly hagiographical treatment.

The influence of Snorri's work in and after his own time is indicated by the fact that after *Heimskringla* the writing of new Kings' sagas virtually ceased. The trend in the fourteenth century and later was for more and more compendious versions of Snorri's sagas, interspersed and continued with other relevant material; as Diana Whaley observes, 'there seems to have been a sense that Snorri's work could be supplemented (sometimes in extreme ways) but not bettered' (1991, 46–47). The most expansive version is the late-fourteenth-century Flateyjarbók, in which Snorri's sagas are interspersed with interpolations including the texts of whole sagas such as *Orkneyinga saga*, *Færeyinga saga* and *Fóstbræðra saga*, as well as numerous *þættir* and other additions. Ironically enough, this practice of expansion sometimes had the effect of reintroducing some of the fantastical and hagiographical matter that Snorri had originally pruned from his sources.

Manuscripts

The earliest known manuscript of *Heimskringla*, known as Kringla, dates from around 1270. Only a single leaf survives, but the whole is preserved in transcripts made in the seventeenth century by the Icelander Ásgeir Jónsson. Most modern editions are based on this version (Jørgensen 2007). Other medieval manuscripts, all of which are incomplete, date from the fourteenth century; AM 39 fol. and Codex Frisianus (Fríssbók) are comparatively close to Kringla, while another branch of manuscripts comprises those associated with Jöfraskinna, another manuscript now lost and known only from paper copies. These manuscripts include some fanciful material apparently interpolated from *Morkinskinna*. Textual agreement among the versions is generally quite close, with some variation in the treatment of the saga of St Óláfr; in Fríssbók and Jöfraskinna this saga was omitted, perhaps because the owner already owned a text of the *Separate Saga* (an abbreviated version of which was inserted in Jöfraskinna at a later date). Many of these manuscripts had associations with Norway, and it has been suggested that they were produced in Iceland for export (Stefán Karlsson 1976, 6–8 [2000, 254–56]). Indeed, an allusion in the Prologue to the *Separate Saga* (*Hkr* II 422) suggests that Snorri himself may have been writing with an eye on the Norwegian readership:

I know that if this history goes abroad it will seem that I have said a great deal about Icelanders, but the reason for this is that the Icelanders who saw or heard these events brought these narratives here to this land, and afterwards people have learned them from them.

Further Reading

A much more detailed and comprehensive introduction to *Heimskringla* will be found in Whaley 1991, which also lists various works discussing aspects of Snorri's work on pp. 144–46. The following list supplements these with items published after her book appeared in addition to those referred to in the introduction above.

Andersson, Theodore M. 1994. 'The Politics of Snorri Sturluson'. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 93, 55–78.

Andersson, Theodore M. 1999. 'The King of Iceland'. *Speculum* 74, 923–34.

Ármann Jakobsson 1997. *Í leit að konungi. Konungsmynd íslenskra konungasagna*. Reykjavík.

Bagge, Sverre 1991. *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla*. Berkeley.

Bagge, Sverre 1992. 'From Sagas to Society. The case of *Heimskringla*'. In *From Sagas to Society. Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*. Ed. Gísli Pálsson, 61–75. Enfield Lock.

Bandle, Oskar 1993. 'Tradition und Fiktion in der *Heimskringla*'. In *Snorri Sturluson. Kolloquium anlässlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todesdages*. Ed. Alois Wolf, 27–47. Tübingen. ScriptOralia 51.

Cormack, Margaret 2001. '*Heimskringla*, *Egils saga*, and the Daughter of Eiríkr blóðøx'. *Alvissmál* 10, 69–78.

Danielsson, Tommy 2002. *Sagorna om Norges kungar från Magnús góði till Magnús Erlingsson*. Hedemora.

Lange, Guðrún 1989. *Die Anfänge der isländisch-norwegischen Geschichtsschreibung*. Reykjavík.

Louis-Jensen, Jonna 1997. 'Heimskringla: et værk af Snorri Sturluson?' *Nordica Bergensia* 14, 230–45.

Megaard, John 1994. 'Er Snorre skrevet av Snorre?' *Historisk tidsskrift* 73, 524–31.

Sverrir Tómasson 1992. 'Konungasögur'. In *Íslensk bókmenntasaga I*. Ed. Vésteinn Ólason, 358–401. Reykjavík.

Sverrir Tómasson 1994. 'The Hagiography of Snorri Sturluson, especially in the Great Saga of St Ólaf'. In *Saints and Sagas. A Symposium*. 49–72. Odense.

Sverrir Tómasson 1998. 'Snorri Sturluson als Hagiograph'. In *Snorri Sturluson. Beiträge zu Werk und Rezeption*. Ed. Hans Fix, 275–86. Berlin and New York.

This Translation

The introduction and a first draft of the prose of *Ynglinga saga* have been written by Alison Finlay, who is also responsible for most of the footnotes and the translation of all the verses. Anthony Faulkes translated the rest of the prose.

We are grateful to Chris Abram for reading a proof of the text and making many valuable suggestions and comments.

The translation is based on the edition of Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson in *Íslenzk fornrit* XXVI–XXVIII (*Hkr* I–III), the page numbers of which are included in the translated text in square brackets. The index to each volume is based on those in *Hkr* I–III, and the page references in the indexes are to the pages of that edition. To the right of each verse is noted the name of the poem and stanza number to which it is assigned in FJ, and a reference to any other major texts in which the verse appears.

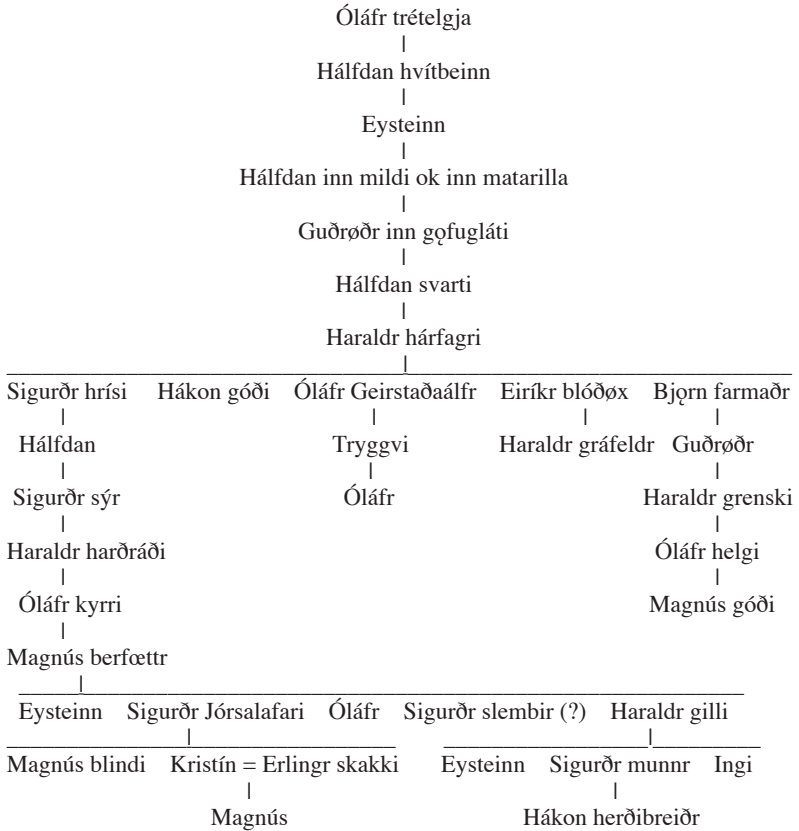
The prose has been translated as closely as possible, only departing from the sentence structure of the original where this is unavoidable. The use of the ‘historic’ present in Bjarni’s text is also reproduced in most cases, even when this involves switching of tenses back and forth in the same sentence, and correlatives such as ‘when . . . then’ are retained, although this seems rather clumsy in English, since it is believed that these features may characterise Snorri’s own idiosyncratic style of writing, and although it is acknowledged that sometimes the first may be the result of a scribe or editor arbitrarily interpreting abbreviated forms, which may well be the case especially with verbs like *segja*, *mæla* and *svara*. It is hoped that this manner of translating will give the English reader more of the flavour of the original narrative than the rather bland ‘normal’ English style of most other translations. On the policy used in translating the verses, see p. xi above.

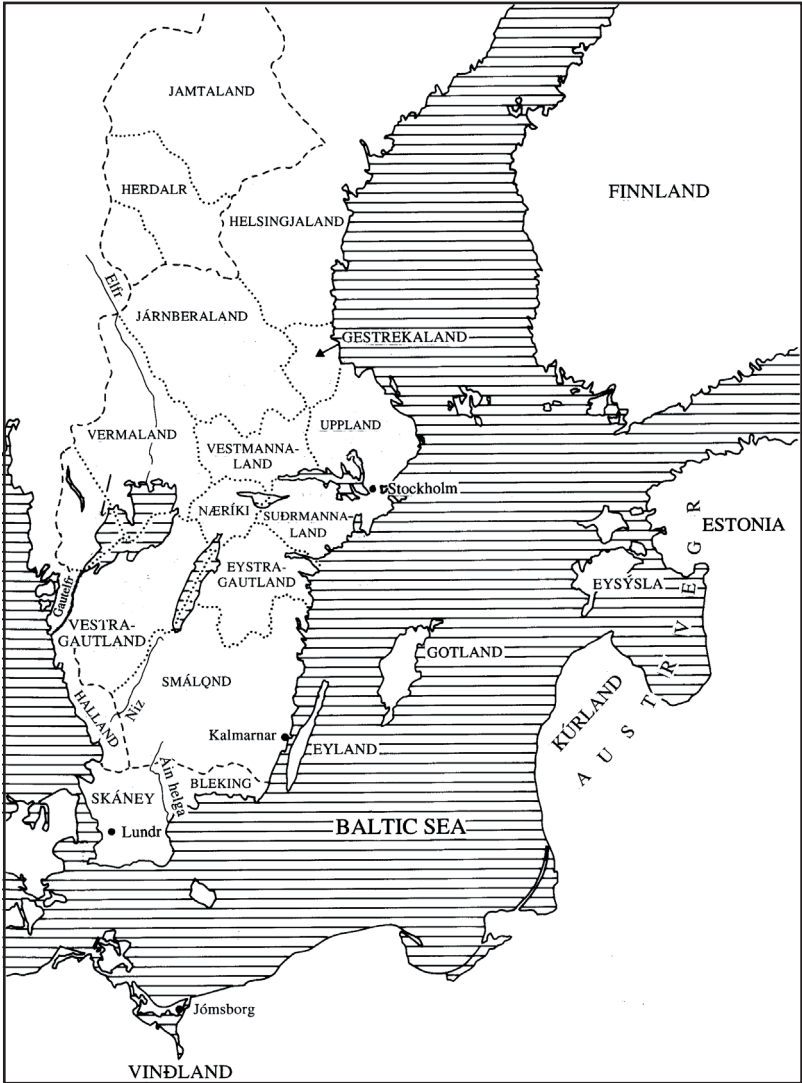
English equivalents of proper names are only used when the etymology and reference of the Old Icelandic name is exactly mirrored. Otherwise the Old Icelandic form is preserved, and the English equivalent will be found in the Index. Nicknames are only translated when their meaning is obvious and can be rendered in ordinary English words. Otherwise they are kept in their Old Icelandic form and translated (where possible) in brackets on their first appearance and in the Index. Old Icelandic words that have no exact equivalent in modern English are kept in Icelandic and explained in footnotes.

Chronology

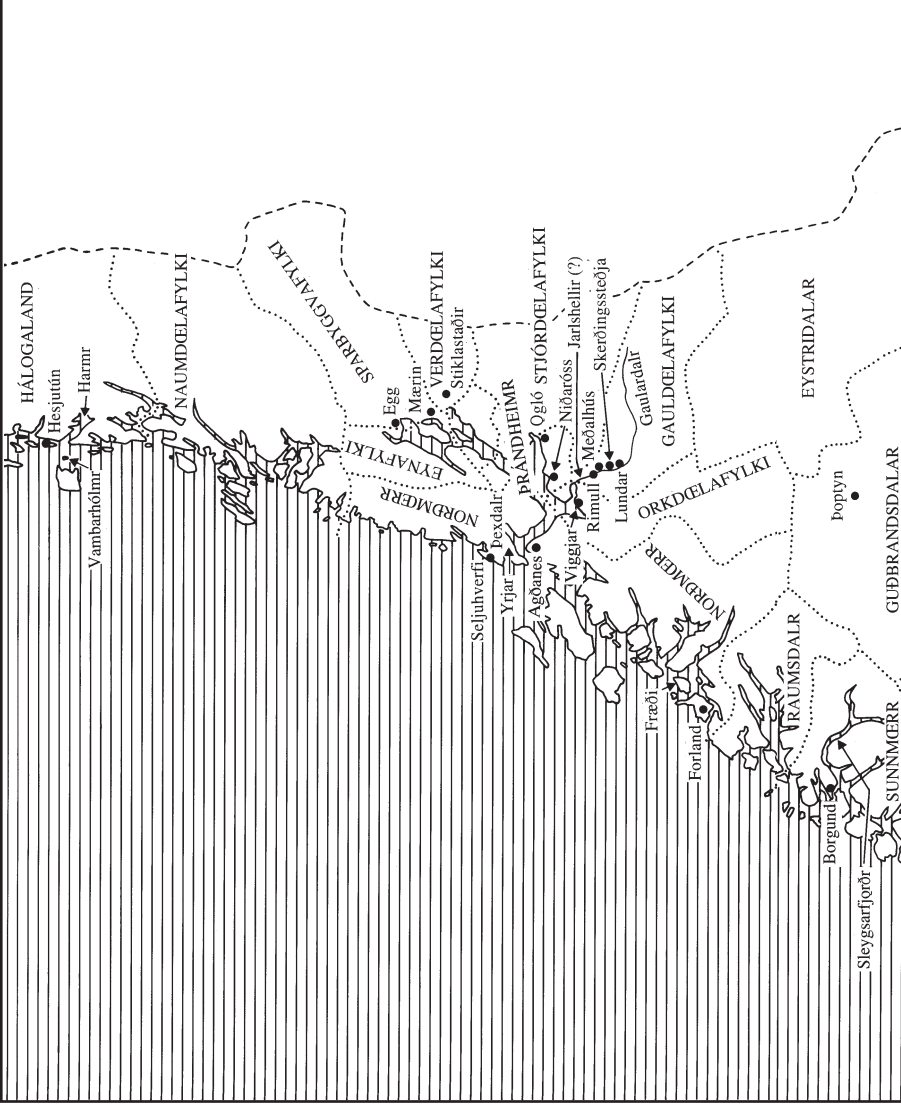
AD		Poets fl.
793	First viking raid on Northumbria	
c. 850	Beginning of viking settlement in England	[Bragi the Old
c. 870	Beginning of viking settlement in Iceland	
871	Alfred the Great becomes king of England	
c. 885	Haraldr hárfagri becomes king of all Norway	[Þjóðólfr of Hvinir [Porbjörn hornklofi
930	Foundation of <i>Alþingi</i> in Iceland	
933	Hákon góði (Aðalsteinsfóstri) becomes king	
960	Haraldr gráfeldr becomes king	
c. 965	Division of Iceland into quarters	[Eyvindr skáldaspillir
c. 985	Beginning of settlement of Greenland	[Egill, Kormakr
995	Óláfr Tryggvason becomes king of Norway	[Einarr skálaglamm
999/1000	Christianity accepted in Iceland	[Hallfreðr
c. 1000	Discovery of America by vikings	
c. 1014	Battle of Clontarf	[Sighvatr
1015	Nesjarbardagi. St Óláfr becomes king of Norway	
1030	Fall of St Óláfr at Stikla(r)staðir	[Arnórr jarlaskáld
1035	Magnús góði becomes king of Norway	
1036	Death of Sveinn Knútsson	
1045	Helganesbardagi	
1046	Haraldr harðráði returns to Norway	
1047	Death of Magnús góði	
1056	First bishop at Skálaholt. Sæmundr inn fróði born	[Þjóðólfr Arnórsson
1062	Battle at Niz	
1066	Fall of Haraldr harðráði in England. Battle of Hastings	
1067	Óláfr kyrri becomes king of Norway	
1067/8	Ari Þorgilsson born	
1076	Death of Sveinn Úlfsson	
1093	Death of Óláfr kyrri. Magnús berfœttr becomes king	
1095	Death of Óláfr Sveinsson	
1096	Tithe laws introduced in Iceland	
1103	Fall of Magnús berfœttr. His sons Sigurðr, Eysteinn and Óláfr become kings of Norway	

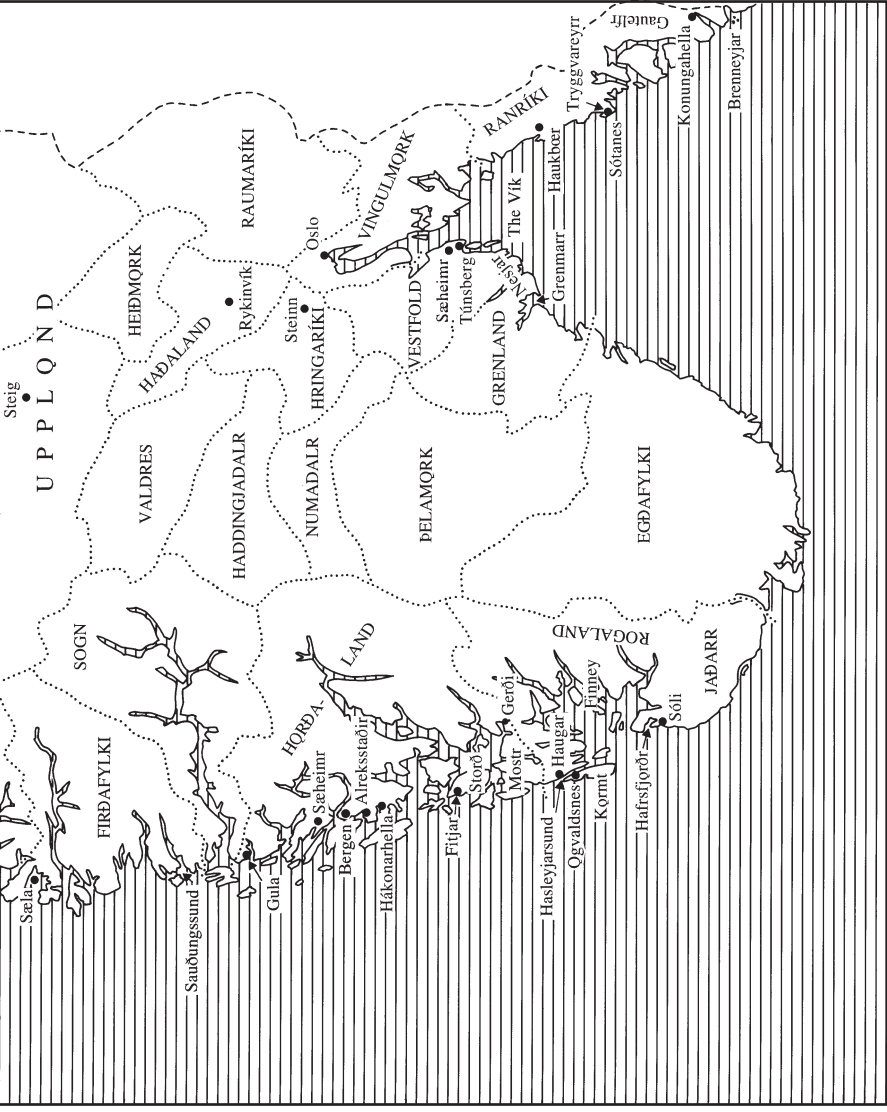
- 1106 First bishop at Hólar
- 1116 Death of Óláfr Magnússon
- c. 1125 *Íslendingabók* compiled
- 1122 Death of Eysteinn Magnússon
- 1130 Death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari. Magnús Sigurðarson and Haraldr gilli become kings of Norway
- 1135 King Magnús blinded
- 1136 Haraldr gilli killed. His sons Ingi and Sigurðr become kings of Norway
- 1139 Magnús blindi and Sigurðr slombir killed
- 1142 Eysteinn Haraldsson returns to Norway and becomes joint king with his brothers
- 1151 Røgnvaldr kali sets out for Jerusalem
- 1153 Archbishopric established at Niðaróss [Einarr Skúlason]
- 1155 Fall of Sigurðr Haraldson
- 1157 Fall of Eysteinn Haraldsson. Hákon herðibreiðr becomes king in Norway
- 1161 Fall of Ingi Haraldsson. Magnús Erlingsson becomes king in Norway
Eysteinn consecrated archbishop
- 1162 Fall of Hákon herðibreiðr
- 1164 Magnús Erlingsson becomes king
- 1177 Defeat of the Birkibeinar at Ré
- 1179 Snorri Sturluson born
- c. 1190–1210 *Sverris saga* written
- 1197 Jón Loptsson dies
- 1215–18 Snorri lawspeaker
- 1217 Hákon Hákonarson becomes king of Norway
- 1218–20 Snorri's first visit to Norway
- c. 1220 The Prose Edda
- 1222–31 Snorri lawspeaker again
- 1226 *Tristrams saga*
- 1237–9 Snorri's second visit to Norway
- 1240 Duke Skúli killed
- 1241 Snorri Sturluson killed 23rd September
- 1261 Magnús Hákonarson crowned king in Norway
- 1262–4 Icelanders acknowledge the king of Norway as their sovereign
- 1263 King Hákon dies





Sweden and the Baltic





Central and South Norway



Denmark

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SNORRI STURLUSON

HEIMSKRINGLA

I

[3] Prologue

In this book I have had written old stories about those rulers who have held power in the Northern lands and have spoken the Scandinavian language, as I have heard them told by learned men, and some of their genealogies according to what I have been taught, some of which is found in the records of paternal descent in which kings and other men of high rank have traced their ancestry, and [4] some is written according to old poems or narrative songs which people used to use for their entertainment. And although we do not know how true they are, we know of cases where learned men of old have taken such things to be true.

Þjóðólfr inn fróði (the Learned) from Hvinir was a poet of King Haraldr inn hárfagri (the Fine-Haired). He composed a poem in honour of King Røgnvaldr heiðumhæri (Nobly Grey), which is called *Ynglingatal*. Røgnvaldr was the son of Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr, brother of Hálfðan svarti (the Black). In that poem are named thirty of his paternal ancestors, and the death and burial place of each of them is related. The one called Fjölfnir was son of Yngvi-Freyr, whom the Svíar worshipped for a long time afterwards. The Ynglingar are named after him. Eyvindr skáldaspillir (Poet-Spoiler) also enumerated the paternal ancestors of Jarl Hákon inn ríki (the Great) in the poem that is called *Háleygjatal*, which was composed in honour of Hákon. In that poem Sæmingr is named as a son of Yngvi-Freyr. There also the death and burial place of each of them is related. The history of the Ynglingar is written first according to Þjóðólfr's account, and augmented according to the account of learned men.

The first age is called the Age of Burning. At that time all dead people had to be burned and memorial stones raised for them, but after Freyr had been interred in a mound at Uppsálar, many rulers built mounds as well as memorial stones in memory of their kinsmen. But [5] after Danr inn mikilláti (the Haughty), king of the Danes, had had a mound built for himself and commanded that he should be carried into it when he was dead with his royal robes and armour and his horse with all its saddle-gear and many other goods, and many people of his line had later done the same, then the Age of Mounds began there in Danmørk, though the Age of Burning continued long after among the Svíar and Norwegians.

And when Haraldr inn hárfagri was king in Norway, Iceland was settled. There were skalds (poets) with King Haraldr, and people still know their poems and poems about all the kings there have been in Norway since, and we have mostly used as evidence what is said in those poems that were recited before the rulers themselves or their sons. We regard as true everything that is found in those poems about their expeditions and battles. It is indeed the

habit of poets to praise most highly the one in whose presence they are at the time, but no one would dare to tell him to his face about deeds of his which all who listened, as well as the man himself, knew were falsehoods and fictions. That would be mockery and not praise.

The priest Ari inn fróði (the Learned), son of Þorgils, son of Gellir, was the first person in this country to write down history, both ancient and recent, in the Norse language.¹ He wrote in the beginning of his book mostly about the settlement of Iceland and the establishment of the laws, then about the law-speakers,² how long each had served, and he used that [6] reckoning of years first to the point when Christianity came to Iceland, and then all the way down to his own time. He also included much other material, both the lives of kings in Norway and Danmörk and also in England, and further the important events that had taken place in this country, and all his account seems to me most noteworthy. He was very wise, and so old that he was born in the year after the death of King Haraldr Sigurðarson.³ He wrote, as he himself says, lives of kings of Norway according to the account of Oddr son of Kolr, son of Hallr on Síða, and Oddr learned them from Þorgeirr afráðskollr (Payment-Chap), a wise man and so aged that he was living in Niðarnes when Jarl Hákon inn ríki was killed.⁴ In that same place Óláfr Tryggvason had a market town founded, where it still is now.⁵

At the age of seven, Ari the priest came to live with Hallr Þórarinnsson in Haukadalr, and stayed there for fourteen years. Hallr was a very intelligent man with a good memory. He remembered being baptised by the priest Þangbrandr at the age of three. That was a year before Christianity was adopted into the law in Iceland.⁶ Ari was twelve years old when Bishop Ísleifr died. Hallr travelled from country to country and had business dealings with King Óláfr [7] inn helgi (the Saint), from which he gained great advancement. So he was knowledgeable about his reign. But when Bishop Ísleifr died almost eighty years had passed since the death of King Óláfr Tryggvason.

¹ Ari's *Íslendingabók*, written in 1122–32, is the oldest surviving Icelandic vernacular text. In its prologue he refers to an older version (now lost) which included *ættatala ok konungaævi* ('genealogy and lives of kings') omitted from the surviving version; the latter are presumably the 'lives of kings in Norway and Denmark' referred to by Snorri. It is not known whether these were extended narratives or merely recorded the years of the kings' reigns.

² *Lögsögumenn* were presidents of the Icelandic parliament (Alþingi), one of whose duties was to recite the whole of the law during their three years of office.

³ King Haraldr Sigurðarson was killed at Stamford Bridge in 1066.

⁴ c. 995.

⁵ *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* ch. 70 (below) records the founding of the town of Niðaróss (now Trondheim).

⁶ Ari records the Conversion of Iceland to Christianity in AD 1000.

Hallr died nine years after Bishop Ísleifr. Hallr had then reached the age of ninety-four years. He had set up his farm in Haukadalsr when he was thirty, and lived there for sixty-four years. So wrote Ari.

Teitr, son of Bishop Ísleifr, was brought up by Hallr in Haukadalsr and lived there afterwards. He taught Ari the priest and gave him much information which Ari afterwards wrote down. Ari also learned much information from Þuríðr, daughter of Snorri goði (the Priest/Chieftain). She had a highly intelligent mind. She remembered her father Snorri, and he was nearly thirty-five when Christianity came to Iceland and died one year after the death of King Óláfr inn helgi.⁷ So it was not surprising that Ari was accurately informed about past events both here and abroad, since he had learned from old and wise people, and was himself eager to learn and retentive.

As to the poems, I consider them to be least corrupted if they are correctly composed and meaningfully interpreted.

⁷ King Óláfr inn helgi fell in battle at Stiklastaðir in 1030.

[9] *Ynglinga saga*

CHAPTER ONE

The disc of the world⁸ that mankind inhabits is very indented with bays. Large bodies of water run from the ocean into the land. It is known that a sea extends from Nǫrvasund (the Straits of Gibraltar) all the way to Jórsalaland (Palestine). From the sea a long gulf called Svartahaf (the Black Sea) extends to the north-east. It divides the world into thirds. To the east is the region called Asia, and the region to the west some call Europe, and some Enea. And from the north to Svartahaf extends Svíþjóð in mikla (Sweden the Great) or in kalda (the Cold). Some claim Svíþjóð in mikla [10] to be no smaller than Serkland it mikla (Saracen-land the Great, north Africa), others compare it to Bláland it mikla (Blacks-land the Great, Africa). The northern part of Svíþjóð remains uninhabited because of frost and cold, just as the southern part of Bláland is empty because of the heat of the sun. In Svíþjóð there are many large uninhabited areas. There are also nations of many kinds and many languages. There are giants there and dwarves, there are black people there, and many kinds of strange nations. There are also amazingly large wild animals and dragons. From the north, from the mountains that are beyond all habitations, flows a river through Svíþjóð that is properly called Tanais (Don). It was formerly called Tanakvísl (fork of the Don) or Vanakvísl (fork of the Vanir). It reaches the sea in Svartahaf. The land within Vanakvíslir (delta of the Don) was then called Vanaland (Land of Vanir) or Vanaheimr (World of Vanir). This river separates the thirds of the world. The region to the east is called Asia, that to the west, Europe.

[11] CHAPTER TWO

To the east of Tanakvísl in Asia it was called Ásaland (Land of the Æsir) or Ásaheimr (World of the Æsir), and the capital city that was in the land they called Ásgarðr.⁹ And in that town was the ruler who was called Óðinn. There was a great place of worship there. It was the custom there that twelve temple priests were of highest rank. They were in charge of the worship and judgements among people. They are known as *díar* or lords. They were to receive service and veneration from all people. Óðinn was a great warrior and very widely travelled and took power over many countries. He was so

⁸ The opening words, *kringla heimsins* ('the disc of the world') give Snorri's work its (modern) name, first used of it by the editor Peringsköld in 1697.

⁹ The euhemeristic identification of the Æsir (the chief family of pagan gods; sing. Áss) with Asia was widespread; see, for instance, *Gylf* 6.

blessed with victory that in every battle he was the winner, and it came about that his people believed that he was able to assign victory in every battle. It was his custom, if he was sending his men into battle or on other missions, that he first laid his hands on their heads and gave them *bjannak*.¹⁰ They believed that then things would turn out well. It was also the case with his men that whenever they were in trouble on sea or on land, they called on his name, and always seemed to get help from that. They believed that all their security depended on him. [12] He often went away so far that he spent many seasons on the journey.

CHAPTER THREE

Óðinn had two brothers. One was called Vé, the other Vílir. These brothers of his governed the realm while he was away. It happened once, when Óðinn had gone far away and had been away for a long time, that the Æsir lost hope of his return. Then his brothers began to divide up his estate between themselves, but his wife, Frigg, they made partner to them both.¹¹ But soon after Óðinn came back. Then he took back his wife.

CHAPTER FOUR

Óðinn went with an army against the Vanir, but they put up a good fight and defended their land, and victory went alternately to both sides. They each raided the other's land and did damage. But when both sides grew weary of this, they arranged a meeting of reconciliation between them and made peace and gave each other hostages. The Vanir put forward their noblest men, Njǫrðr the Wealthy and his son Freyr, and the Æsir in return the one called Hœnir, and they claimed that he was very suitable to be a ruler. He was a large and most handsome man. With him the Æsir sent the one called Mímir, a very clever man, and in return the Vanir put forward the wisest in their

¹⁰ The word (*bjannak* in K) occurs nowhere else. It is believed to derive from the Irish *beannact*, in turn derived from Latin *benedictio* 'blessing'.

¹¹ This seems to be based on Loki's accusation of the goddess Frigg in *Lokasenna* 26:

Pegi þú, Frigg! þú ert Fjörgyns mær
ok hefir æ vergjörn verit,
er þá Véa ok Vilja léztu þér, Viðris kvæn,
báða í baðm um tekit.

(Be silent, Frigg; you are Fjörgyn's daughter, and have always been mad for men, since both Vé and Vili, Viðrir's (Óðinn's) wife, you took into your arms.) Óðinn's second brother is called Vili in *Gylfaginning* too, and in ch. 13 (v. 6) below, but the form Vílir occurs again in ch 5 and in Egill Skalla-Grímsson's poem *Sonatorrek* 23, where Óðinn is referred to as 'bróðir Vílis'.

company. He was called Kvasir. [13] But when Hœnir came to Vanaheimr he was at once made a lord. Mímir always told him what to do. But when Hœnir was present at councils or meetings where Mímir was not nearby, and any problem came before him, he always answered the same way: ‘Let others decide.’ Then the Vanir suspected that the Æsir must have cheated them in the exchange of men. Then they took Mímir and beheaded him and sent his head to the Æsir. Óðinn took the head and smeared it with herbs that prevented it from decaying, and recited spells over it and imbued it with magic power so that it spoke to him and told him many secret things. Njǫrðr and Freyr Óðinn appointed as sacrificial priests, and they were gods¹² among the Æsir. Njǫrðr’s daughter was Freyja. She was a sacrificial priestess. She was the first to teach the Æsir black magic, which was customary among the Vanir. When Njǫrðr was among the Vanir he had been married to his sister, for that was the law there. Their children were Freyr and Freyja.¹³ But it was forbidden among the Æsir to cohabit with such close kin.

[14] CHAPTER FIVE

A great mountain range runs from the north-east to the south-west. It divides Svíþjóð in mikla from other realms. To the south of the mountains it is not far to Tyrkland (Land of Turks, Asia Minor). There Óðinn had large possessions. At that time the rulers of the Rómverjar (Romans) travelled widely around the world and conquered all nations, and many rulers fled their lands because of this aggression. And because Óðinn had prophetic and magical powers, he knew that his descendants would inhabit the northern region of the world. Then he appointed his brothers, Vé and Vílir, to rule Ásgarðr, while he, and all the gods with him and many other people, left. He went first west into Garðaríki (Russia) and then south to Saxland (Germany). He had many sons. He made himself king over large parts of Saxland and established his sons there to guard the land. Then he went north to the sea and took up residence on a certain island. That place is now called Óðinsey (‘Óðinn’s sanctuary’; Odense) on Fjón (Fyn). Then he sent Gefjun north over the sound in search of lands. She came to Gylfi, and he gave her one ‘plough-land’.¹⁴ Then [15] she went into Jǫtunheimar (world of giants) and had four sons with a certain giant. She changed them into the form of oxen and put them to the plough

¹² *Díar* (only used in plural) is a loanword from Old Irish *día*, related to Latin *deus* and Old Icelandic *tívar*. It normally means ‘gods’, but here may mean ‘high priests’.

¹³ In *Gylfaginning*, too, Njǫrðr is identified as the father of Freyr and Freyja, but their mother is not said there to be Njǫrðr’s own sister (*Gylf* 24).

¹⁴ An amount of land that one plough-team could plough in a day and a night; an acre or ‘hide’. See *Gylfaginning* ch. 1.

and hauled the land out into the sea and west next to Óðinsey, and that is called Selund (Sjælland). There she lived afterwards. Skjöldr, son of Óðinn, married her. They lived at Hleiðra (Lejre). A lake was left behind. It is called Løgrinn (Mälaren). The fiords in Løgrinn correspond to the headlands in Selund. So said Bragi inn gamli (the Old):¹⁵

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Gefjun dragged from Gylfi,
gladly, a sea-ring homeland, ¹⁶
Danmørk's addition, so that
the draught-beasts were steaming,
With eight orbs of the forehead ¹⁷
the oxen, in front of
the plundered isle, wide-pastured, ¹⁸
paced; and four heads also. | <i>Ragnarsdrápa</i> 13
<i>Gylf</i> 7 |
|----|---|---|

[16] But when Óðinn heard that good land was available from Gylfi to the east, he went there, and he and Gylfi came to terms, because Gylfi did not think he had the power to withstand the Æsir. Óðinn and Gylfi often competed in tricks and illusions, and the Æsir were always superior.¹⁹ Óðinn established his dwelling by Løgrinn at the place now called Old Sigtúnir, and built a large temple there and performed sacrifices according to the custom of the Æsir. He took possession of lands over the whole area that he gave the name Sigtúnir to. He gave dwelling places to the temple priests. Njǫrðr lived at Nóatún, Freyr at Uppsali, Heimdallr at Himinbjörg, Þórr at Þrúðvangr, Baldr at Breiðablik. He provided them all with good residences.

¹⁵ Bragi Boddason is thought to be the earliest named skald any of whose poetry has survived. He was composing probably in the late ninth century. His chief surviving poem is *Ragnarsdrápa*, which Snorri in *Skáldsk* says was composed in honour of the legendary viking Ragnarr loðbrók (*Skáldsk* 50). This poem is thought to have been a shield-*drápa*, in which various mythological scenes painted on a shield are described; this verse is conventionally taken to belong to the poem, although there is no authority for this in Snorri's works. This verse and the story of Gefjun's ploughing also appear in *Gylfaginning* (*Gylf* 7).

¹⁶ *djúpröðull ǫðla*: 'deep-circle of inherited lands', i.e. island homeland (Sjælland or Zealand).

¹⁷ *ennitungl*: 'forehead-stars', eyes.

¹⁸ *vineyjar valrauf*: 'plunder of meadow-isle'.

¹⁹ Gylfi (whose name must derive from Bragi's verse; elsewhere it is found as the name of a sea-king) is named in *Gylfaginning* as a king in Svíþjóð (Sweden) who attempts to find out the source of the success of the Æsir and is tricked by them in a contest of wisdom (*Gylfaginning* means 'tricking of Gylfi'). This is presumably what is alluded to here.

[17] CHAPTER SIX

When Óðinn of the Æsir came to the northern lands, and the gods with him, it is truthfully said that they originated and taught those skills that people went on practising long afterwards. Óðinn was superior to them all, and from him they learned all skills, because he knew them all first, and yet more. But there is this to be said about why he was so very exalted—there were these reasons for it: he was so fair and noble in countenance, when he was sitting among his friends, that it rejoiced the hearts of all. But when he went to battle he appeared ferocious to his enemies. And the reason was that he had the faculty of changing complexion and form in whatever manner he chose. Another was that he spoke so eloquently and smoothly that everyone who heard thought that only what he said was true. Everything he said was in rhyme,²⁰ like the way what is now called poetry is composed. He and his temple priests were called craftsmen of poems, for that art originated with them in the Northern lands. Óðinn could bring it about that in battle his opponents were struck with blindness or deafness or panic, and their weapons would cut no better than sticks, while his men went without mail and were as wild as dogs or wolves, biting their shields, being as strong as bears or bulls. They killed the people, but neither fire nor iron took effect on them. That is called berserk fury.²¹

[18] CHAPTER SEVEN

Óðinn changed shapes. Then his body lay as if it was asleep or dead, while he was a bird or an animal, a fish or a snake, and travelled in an instant to distant lands, on his own or other people's business. He also knew how to put out fire or calm the sea or turn the winds in any direction he wished with words alone, and he owned a ship called *Skíðblaðnir*, on which he sailed over high seas, but it could be folded together like a cloth.²² Óðinn kept Mímir's head by him, and it told him much news from other worlds, and sometimes he awakened the dead from the earth or sat himself under hanged men. Because of this he was called *draugadróttinn* ('lord of ghosts') or *hangadróttinn* ('lord of the hanged'). He had two ravens [19] which he

²⁰ *hending*, rhyme; although this word is also used to mean 'end-rhyme', it refers here to the internal rhyme regular in *dróttkvætt* (skaldic verse).

²¹ *berserkr* ('bear-shirt') or *ulfhæðinn* ('wolf-skin'): a man who fell into, or was able to work himself into, an animal-like state in which his strength was greatly enhanced and he seemed to be invulnerable to weapons. The berserks' apparently supernatural strength was often said to be bestowed on them by Óðinn.

²² According to *Gylfaginning* Freyr was the owner of this ship, made and given to him by dwarves (*Gylf* 36).

had trained to speak. They flew over distant countries and told him much news. From these things he became extremely wise. All these skills he taught along with runes and those songs that are called *galdrar* ('magic spells'). Because of this the Æsir are called *galdrasmiðir* ('magic makers'). Óðinn knew, and practised himself, the art which is accompanied by greatest power, called *seiðr* ('black magic'), and from it he could predict the fates of men and things that had not yet happened, and also cause men death or disaster or disease, and also take wit or strength from some and give it to others. But this magic, when it is practised, is accompanied by such great perversion that it was not considered without shame for a man to perform it, and the skill was taught to the goddesses. Óðinn knew about all the treasure of the earth, where it was hidden, and he knew songs which would make the earth and cliffs and rocks and grave-mounds open up before him, and with words alone he would bind those who were in them and go in and take from there whatever he wanted. He became very famous because of these powers. His enemies feared him, but his friends trusted him and believed in his power and in him. And he taught most of his skills to his sacrificial priests. They were next to him in all lore and magic. And yet many others learned much of it, and from there [20] heathendom spread widely and lasted for a long time. And people worshipped Óðinn and the twelve rulers and called them their gods and believed in them long afterwards. The name Auðunn comes from Óðinn, and people called their sons this, and from Þórr's name come the names Þórir and Þórarinn, or it is combined with other elements, as in Steinþórr or Hafþórr, or changed further in other ways.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Óðinn established in his land the laws that had previously been observed among the Æsir. He ordained that all dead people must be burned and that their possessions should be laid on a pyre with them. He said that everyone should come to Valhöll with such wealth as he had on his pyre, and that each would also have the benefit of whatever he himself had buried in the earth. But the ashes were to be taken out to sea or buried down in the earth, and mounds were to be built as memorials to great men,²³ and memorial stones were to be raised for all those who were of any account, and this custom lasted for a long time after that. Then one sacrifice was to be held towards winter for a good season, one in the middle of winter for the crops, and a third in summer; that was the sacrifice for victory.

²³ This conflicts with the statement in the Prologue that the raising of memorial mounds began only with the burial of Freyr.

[21] All over Svíþjóð tribute was paid to Óðinn, a penny for each nose, while he was to protect their land from hostility and make sacrifices for good seasons on their behalf. Njǫrðr married a woman called Skaði. She would not have relations with him and later married Óðinn. They had many sons.²⁴ One of them was called Sæmingr. About him Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed this:²⁵

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| <p>2. Honoured by shields,²⁶
 the Æsir's kin,²⁷
 on the troll-woman²⁸ sired
 a tribute-bringer,²⁹
 when the poets' friend³⁰
 and famous Skaði
 made their home
 in Manheimar.³¹</p> | <p><i>Háleygjatal</i> 3</p> |
|---|-----------------------------|

²⁴ *Gylfaginning* refers to the marriage (and separation) of Njǫrðr and Skaði, but not to a marriage of Skaði with Óðinn (*Gylf* ch. 23).

²⁵ On Eyvindr Finnsson skáldaspillir ('destroyer or despoiler of poets, plagiarist') and his poem *Háleygjatal* ('Enumeration of [the rulers of] the Háleygir') see the Prologue above. The poem is also named in the Prologue to *Gylfaginning* (ch. 11). It traces Jarl Hákon's ancestry back to mythical times, and is thought to be modelled on the *Ynglingatal* of Þjóðólfr of Hvinir. Like that poem it is in *kviðuháttur*, a metre similar to the eddic *fornyrðislag*, but normally with only three syllables in each odd line and four in each even line. 16 full- or half-stanzas of this poem survive. Eyvindr's nickname presumably refers to his imitation of other poets, since his memorial poem for Hákon inn góði, *Hákonarmál*, also follows another poet's model (see note 265 below). Eyvindr Finnsson appears in the saga of King Hákon inn góði (c. 946–61), not only as a poet but also as an adviser to the king. Although most poets at the Norwegian court from this period onwards were Icelanders, Eyvindr was of Norwegian birth, closely related to the king.

²⁶ *skjaldblætr*: 'shield-worshipped'; this has been taken to refer to a protective chant sung over shields to protect their users in battle, mentioned in *Hávamál* 156: *und randir gelk* ('I chant beneath the shields'), honouring Óðinn as god of battle (although if Óðinn is understood as the speaker in this part of *Hávamál*, he may be understood as the chanter). Codex Frisianus has *skáldblætr* 'honoured by poets'.

²⁷ *Ása niðr* 'kinsman of the Æsir', Óðinn.

²⁸ *jarnviðja*: 'inhabitant of Iron-wood', troll-woman (see *Gylf* 14 and *Völuspá* 40).

²⁹ *skattfærir*: 'tribute-bringer', a jarl, who pays tribute to a king (here Sæmingr, ancestor of Jarl Hákon).

³⁰ *skatna vinr*: 'friend of poets', Óðinn.

³¹ *Manheimar*: In the following prose Snorri apparently interprets this as *Mannheimar* ('world of men'; in contrast to the world of the gods), but *Manheimar* means 'world of love or desire'.

[22] 3. . . . of sea's bone³² *Háleygjatal* 4
 and sons in plenty
 the ski-goddess³³
 got with Óðinn.

Jarl Hákon inn ríki traced back his paternal ancestry to Sæmingr. They called this Svíþjóð Mannheimar, but Svíþjóð inn mikla (the Great) they called Goðheimar (World of the Gods). They told many stories about Goðheimar.

CHAPTER NINE

Óðinn died of sickness in Svíþjóð. And when he was on the point of death he had himself marked with the point of a spear and claimed as his own all men who were killed by weapons. He said he was going to go to Goðheimr and be reunited with his friends there. Now the Svíar believed that he had gone to the old Ásgarðr and would live there for ever. Then belief in Óðinn and invocation of him were renewed. The Svíar often thought he appeared to them before great battles were to take place. Then he gave victory to some of them, and others he summoned to himself. Both outcomes were considered good. Óðinn was burned when he was dead, and that burning was carried out most magnificently. Their belief was that the higher the smoke rose into the sky, the loftier in heaven would be the one who had been burned, and the better off the more wealth that was burned [23] with him. Njǫrðr of Nóatun then became the ruler over the Svíar and maintained the worship. The Svíar then called him their lord. He received tribute payments from them. In his day very good peace prevailed and all kinds of such good harvest that the Svíar believed that Njǫrðr had power over the harvest and the prosperity of men. In his day most of the gods died and were all burned, and afterwards worshipped. Njǫrðr died of sickness. He also had himself marked for Óðinn before he died. The Svíar burned him and wept bitterly over his grave.

CHAPTER TEN

Then Freyr took power after Njǫrðr. He was called lord over the Svíar and took tribute payments from them. He was popular and blessed with good seasons, like his father. Freyr built a great temple at Uppsalarir and made it his capital, directing [24] to it all his taxes in land and movable property. This was the origin of the Uppsalaauðr ('Uppsala wealth')³⁴ and it has continued

³² *sævar beinn*: 'bone of the sea', stone; apparently an incomplete kenning.

³³ *ǫndurdís*: 'ski-goddess', Skaði (*Gylf* 24).

³⁴ See *Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 77 (Volume II).

ever since. The peace of Fróði began in his time.³⁵ There was prosperity throughout all lands. The Svíar attributed that to Freyr. As a result of peace and good harvests, he was the more honoured than other gods the more prosperous the people of the land became in his time than before. His wife was called Gerðr Gymisdóttir.³⁶ Their son was called Fjólnir. Another name for Freyr was Yngvi. The name Yngvi was used in his family long after as an honorific title, and his descendants were called Ynglingar. Freyr caught an illness, and as the illness progressed people thought out what to do, and they let few people come to him, and built a great tomb and put a doorway and three windows in it. And when Freyr was dead they carried him secretly into the tomb and told the Svíar that he was still alive, and kept him there for three years. And they poured all the tribute into the mound, the gold through one window, the silver through the second, and copper coins through the third. Then prosperity and peace continued. Freyja kept up the sacrifices, for she was the only one of the gods left alive, and she [25] became the best known, so that all noble women came to be called by her name, just as now the name *frúvur* ('ladies') is used. Similarly everyone was called *freyja* ('mistress') of what she possessed, and *húsfreyja* ('mistress of a household') if she is in charge of a dwelling. Freyja was rather fickle. Her husband was called Óðr. Her daughters were called Hnoss and Gersimi.³⁷ They were very beautiful. The most precious treasures are called by their names. When all the Svíar knew that Freyr was dead, but prosperity and peace continued, they believed that that would last as long as Freyr remained in Svíþjóð, and they did not want to burn him, and they called him *veraldargoð* ('god of the world'), and sacrificed to him ever afterwards for prosperity and peace.

³⁵ In *Skáldskaparmál* (51–52) Snorri associates *Fróða friðr* 'Peace of Fróði' with the world peace (*Pax Romana*) established by the Emperor Augustus: 'but because Fróði was the most powerful king in the Northern lands then, the peace was attributed to him throughout the Norse-speaking regions, and Norsemen call it Fróði's peace'. Fróði Friðleifsson was a king of the Danes, said to be descended from Óðinn. Most of Snorri's information here was derived from the now lost *Skjöldunga saga*, as is shown by remains of that saga printed in *ÍF* XXXV 6 and 39–40. According to *Flateyjarbók* the Danes ascribed the golden age to Fróði, the Swedes to Freyr (*F1b* I 449).

³⁶ The marriage of Freyr and Gerðr is narrated in the eddic poem *Skírnismál*; see also *Gylf* 30–31.

³⁷ *Gylfaginning* gives the name of Freyja's husband Óðr and one of her daughters, Hnoss. Both appear in *Skáldsk* 115. Both *hnoss* and *gersimi* are common nouns meaning 'treasure'. Freyja's 'fickleness' is exaggerated in the eddic poem *Lokasenna* 30 where Loki accuses her of having slept with all the Æsir and elves present at the feast that is the setting for the poem.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Fjǫlnir, son of Yngvi-Freyr, then ruled over the Svíar and the Uppsala wealth. He was powerful, and blessed with prosperity and peace. Then Frið-Fróði (Peace-Fróði) was at Hleiðra. There was friendship and exchange of visits between them. When Fjǫlnir went to visit Fróði on Selund,³⁸ [26] a great feast was ready prepared, and people were invited from far and wide. Fróði had a large farmhouse. A big vat was built there, many ells high and supported with big timber props. It stood in a lower room with a loft with an open floor above it so that liquid was poured down there and the vat was mixed full of mead. The drink in it was amazingly strong. In the evening Fjǫlnir was taken to his room in the next loft, together with his retinue. During the night he went out onto the balcony to relieve himself. He was dazed with sleep and dead drunk. When he turned back to the room he went on along the balcony to the door of the next loft and went in, missed his footing and fell into the vat of mead and perished there. So says Þjóðólfr of Hvinir:³⁹

4. It befell *Ynglingatal* 1
 where Fróði lived,
 the destiny
 that dropped on Fjǫlnir,
 and the prince
 the pointed ox-spears'
 windless wave⁴⁰
 would destroy.

[27] CHAPTER TWELVE

Sveigðir took power after his father. He swore an oath to seek out Goðheimr and Óðinn inn gamli (the Old). He went with eleven other men far and wide over the world. He ended up in Tyrkland and in Svíþjóð in mikla and there met many of his relatives and spent five years on this expedition. Then he

³⁸ *Skáldskaparmál* (52) tells of a visit made by Fróði to Fjǫlnir.

³⁹ Þjóðólfr was a poet composing in southern Norway in the late ninth century, said to have composed both for Haraldr hárfagri and his cousin King Rognvaldr heiðumhæri of Vestfold, for whom he composed the poem *Ynglingatal*, tracing his genealogy back to the Ynglingar (see note 25 above). The Prologue to *Heimskringla* acknowledges this poem as a source, and its composition is mentioned again at the citation of the last stanza (v. 32 below). The other poem firmly attributed to Þjóðólfr is *Hauslǫng*, a shield-poem comparable to Bragi's *Ragnarsdrápa*.

⁴⁰ *svigðis geira vágr vindlaus*: 'windless wave of the spears (horns) of the beast with curved horns (ox)', mead or other drink (the 'sea' served in drinking horns).

came back to Svíþjóð. Then he stayed at home again for a while. He had married a woman called Vana out in Vanaheimr. Their son was Vanlandi.

Sveigðir went to look for Goðheimr again. And in the eastern part of Svíþjóð there was a large farm called Steinn ('at the Stone'). There is a stone there as big as a large house. In the evening after sunset, when Sveigðir left the drinking to go to his sleeping chamber, he looked towards the stone and saw a dwarf sitting under it. Sveigðir and his men were very drunk, and ran towards the stone. The dwarf stood in the doorway and called to Sveigðir, telling him to go in there if he wanted to meet Óðinn. Sveigðir ran in, and the stone immediately closed behind him, and Sveigðir never came out. So says Þjóðólfr of Hvinir:

[28] 5.	And the day-shy doorkeeper of Durnir's tribe ⁴¹ tricked Sveigðir, when into the stone the spirited kinsman of Dusli ⁴² ran after a dwarf, and the bright hall of Sökmímir's band, ⁴³ settled by giants, swallowed the king.	<i>Ynglingatal</i> 2
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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Vanlandi was the name of Sveigðir's son, who took power after him and ruled over the Uppsala wealth. He was a great warrior, and travelled far and wide. He accepted winter quarters in Lappland with Snjár inn gamli (the Old), and married his daughter Drífa there. But in the spring he left, and Drífa stayed behind, [29] and he promised to come back after an interval of three years, but after ten years he had not come. Then Drífa sent for a witch called Hulð, and sent Vísburr, her son with Vanlandi, to Svíþjóð.

⁴¹ *Durnis niðja salvörðuðr*: watchman of the hall (stone) of kinsmen of Durnir (dwarves)? Durnir is listed as a giant's name in a *pula* (*Skáldsk* 114) but seems to be taken by Snorri here to refer to a dwarf. But the kenning follows the same pattern as *salr þeira Sökmímis* in the second helming, where the stone is referred to as a hall built by giants.

⁴² *Dusla konr*: 'relation of Dusli', Sveigðir. Dusli looks like a personal name but is unknown elsewhere.

⁴³ *salr þeira Sökmímis*: 'hall of Sökmímir (a giant) and his crowd', stone.

Drífa paid Hulð to transport Vanlandi to Lappland by magic, or else to kill him. And when the spell was cast, Vanlandi was at Uppsali. Then he became eager to go to Lappland, but his friends and advisors forbade him and said that his enthusiasm must be caused by Lappish magic. Then he started to feel heavy with sleep, and lay down to sleep. And when he had been asleep for a short while he cried out and said that a mare was trampling him. His people rushed up and tried to help him. But as they held his head it trampled his legs so that they almost broke. When they held his feet it smothered his head so that he died. The Svíar took his body, and it was burned by the river called Skúta. His memorial stones were placed there. So says Þjóðólfr:

6. And to visit *Ynglingatal* 3
 Vili's brother⁴⁴
 a witch's spell
 sent Vinlandi,
 when troll-kind
 trampled—
 ale-night's Hildir—⁴⁵
 the enemy of men,⁴⁶
 and he burned
 on the bed of Skúta,
 the necklace-waster⁴⁷
 the nightmare smothered.

[30] CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Vísburr took over the inheritance after his father Vanlandi. He got the daughter of Auði inn auðgi (the Wealthy) in marriage, and gave her as bride-price three large estates and a gold necklace. They had two sons, Gísl and Qndurr. But Vísburr abandoned her and took another wife, while she went to her father with her sons. Vísburr had a son called Dómaldi. Dómaldi's stepmother brought misfortune on him with a spell. And when Vísburr's sons were twelve and thirteen years old, they went to see him and claimed their mother's bride-price, but he would not pay it. Then they said that the gold necklace should cause the death of the best man in his family; they left and went home. Then more black magic was brought

⁴⁴ *Vilja bróðir*: 'Vili's brother', Óðinn (see note 11 above).

⁴⁵ *líðs grímhildir*: 'Hildir (goddess) of strong drink (*líð*) = woman, of night (*gríma*)'. The meaning is uncertain; this interpretation was suggested by Lindquist 1929, 58.

⁴⁶ *ljóna bági*: 'enemy of men', warrior.

⁴⁷ *menglotuðr*: 'loser of neck-rings', generous man.

into play, and a spell cast that would enable them to kill their father. [31] Then the witch Hulð told them that she would bring this about by spells, and along with it that there would always be killing of kindred in the line of the Ynglingar after that. They agreed to this. After that they gathered a troop and took Vísburr by surprise at night and burned him in his house. So says Þjóðólfr:

7. And Vísburr's
 vault of wishes⁴⁸
 the sea's kinsman⁴⁹
 swallowed up,
 when the throne-defenders⁵⁰
 the thieving scourge
 of forests⁵¹ set
 on their father;
 and in his hearth-ship⁵²
 the hound of embers,⁵³
 growling, bit
 the governor.
- Ynglingatal* 4

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Dómaldi succeeded his father Vísburr, and ruled his lands. In his time there was famine and hunger in Svíþjóð. Then the Svíar held great sacrifices at Uppsalar. In the first autumn they sacrificed oxen, but even so there was no improvement in the season. The second autumn they held a human sacrifice, but the season was the same or worse. But the third autumn the Svíar came to Uppsalar in great numbers at the time when the sacrifices were to be held. Then the leaders held a council and came to an agreement among themselves that [32] their king, Dómaldi, must be the cause of the famine, and moreover, that they should sacrifice him for their prosperity, and attack him and kill him and redden the altars with his blood, and that is what they did. So says Þjóðólfr:

⁴⁸ *vilja byrgi*: 'shelter of wishes', breast.

⁴⁹ *sævar niðr*: 'the sea's kinsman', fire. Snorri says in *Skáldskaparmál* that fire can be called brother of the wind and of Ægir (*Skáldsk* 39/19); Ægir is a personification of the sea.

⁵⁰ *setrs verjandi*: 'defender of the palace or residence', prince.

⁵¹ *meiñþjófr markar*: 'harm-thief of the forest', fire.

⁵² *arinkjóll*: 'hearth-ship', house.

⁵³ *garmr glóða*: 'hound of embers', fire.

8. Once it was *Ynglingatal 5*
 that weapon-bearers
 with their ruler
 reddened the ground,
 and the land's people
 left Dómaldi
 without life,
 their weapons bloody,
 when the Svíar
 seeking good harvests
 offered up
 the enemy of Jótar.⁵⁴

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The son of Dómaldi, who ruled the kingdom next, was called Dómarr. He ruled the domains for a long time, and there were good seasons and peace in his day. Nothing is said of him other than that he died of sickness at Uppsalir and was taken to Fýrisvellir and burned on the river bank there, and his memorial stones are there. So says Þjóðólfr:

- [33] 9. And I had often *Ynglingatal 6*
 asked the wise
 about the end
 of the king,⁵⁵
 where Dómarr
 to the crackling
 bane of Hálf⁵⁶
 had been borne.
 Now I know
 that gnawed by pain
 by Fýri was burned
 Fjǫlnir's kin.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

His son, who ruled the lands next, was called Dyggvi, and nothing is said of him other than that he died of sickness. So says Þjóðólfr:

⁵⁴ *Jóta dólgr*: 'enemy of Jutes', Dómaldi.

⁵⁵ *yngrvi*: 'king', but perhaps specifically king of the Ynglingar, descended from Yngvi (see p. 14 above).

⁵⁶ *bani Hqólfs*: 'killer of Hálf', fire (see *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*, chs 7–8).

10. I call it no secret *Ynglingatal* 7
 the corpse of Dyggvi
 the horse's goddess⁵⁷
 has for pleasure,
 [34] for the Wolf's sister
 as well as Narfi's⁵⁸
 chose to keep
 the king for herself,
 and Loki's girl⁵⁹
 beguiled the lord
 of Yngvi's race
 into her power.

The mother of Dyggvi was Drótt, daughter of King Danpr, son of Rígr, who was the first to be called *konungr* ('king') in the Norse language. His descendants have used the name 'king' ever since for the title of the highest rank. Dyggvi was the first of his line to be called king, but before they had been called *dróttnar* ('lords'), and their wives *dróttningar* ('queens'), and the court the *drótt*. But all the men of that line were always called Yngvi or Ynguni, and [35] Ynglingar collectively. Queen Drótt was the sister of King Danr inn mikilláti, after whom Danmørk is named.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

King Dyggvi's son, who inherited the kingdom from him, was called Dagr. He was such a wise man that he could understand the speech of birds. He had a sparrow which told him many things. It flew to various lands. It happened on one occasion that the sparrow flew into Reiðgotaland to a farm called Vǫrvi. It flew into the farmer's field and got food there. The farmer came up and picked up a stone and struck the sparrow, killing it. King Dagr was greatly displeased when the sparrow did not return. Then he prepared a sacrifice of a boar to get news and got [36] the answer that his sparrow had been killed at Vǫrvi. Then he called out a large army and went to Gotland. And when he got to Vǫrvi, he went ashore with his army and raided. The people fled in all directions. King Dagr took his army back to the ships in the evening, and had killed many people and captured many others. But as they were crossing a river at a place

⁵⁷ *glitnis Gná*: 'Gná (goddess) of Glitnir'; Hel. Hel is the name of Loki's daughter and also of the abode of the dead. Glitnir is the name of a hall (*Grímnismál* 15), but one with no known connection with Hel; it is also a *heiti* for 'horse', and could refer to beliefs about the goddess of death riding on horseback.

⁵⁸ *jódis Úlfs ok Narfa*: 'sister of the wolf (Fenrir) and of Narfi (son of Loki)', Hel.

⁵⁹ *Loka mæð*: 'Loki's daughter', Hel.

called Skjótansvað or Vápnavað, a slave workman came running out of the woods onto the river bank and threw a pitchfork into their company, and the missile hit the king on the head. Then he at once fell off his horse and was killed. At that time a chieftain who went raiding was called *gramr* ('angry or fierce one'), and the warriors *gramir*. So says Þjóðólfr:

11. Dagr, I heard, *Ynglingatal* 8
 death's judgement
 —keen for fame—
 encountered,
 when to Vǫrvi came
 the advancer of the sword,⁶⁰
 sagacious one,
 a sparrow to avenge.
 And on eastern ways *Ynglingatal* 9
 this word
 the king's host
 from combat brought:
 a serving-fork
 of Sleipnir's food⁶¹
 it was that gave
 that *gramr* his death.

[37] CHAPTER NINETEEN

Agni was the name of Dagr's son, who was king after him, a powerful and excellent man, a great warrior and a very capable man in all respects. It happened one summer that King Agni went with his army to Lappland, went ashore and raided there. The Lapps gathered together a large force and advanced to battle. Their leader was called Frosti. A great battle took place there, and King Agni won victory. There Frosti fell and a large number with him. King Agni went harrying through Lappland and took control of it, and took a huge amount of plunder. He captured and took with him Skjálfr, Frosti's daughter, and her brother Logi. But when he came back from the west, he sailed to Stokksund. He put up his tents in the meadow to the south. There was a wood there then. King Agni then owned the gold neck-ring that had belonged to Vísurr. King Agni proceeded to marry Skjálfr. She asked the king to hold a funeral feast for her father. He then invited many powerful

⁶⁰ *spakframaðr valteins*: 'wise advancer of the slaughter-twig (sword)', warrior.

⁶¹ *slongupref sleipnis verðar*: 'slinging-grip of Sleipnir's (Óðinn's horse's) food (hay)', pitchfork.

people to visit him and prepared a great feast. He [38] had become very famous for this expedition. Then there was deep drinking there. And when King Agni got drunk, Skjálfr told him to watch out for the neck-ring he was wearing round his neck. He took hold of it and fastened it securely around his neck before he went to sleep. But the tent was standing near the wood with a high tree above it, which was intended to shield it from the heat of the sun. And when King Agni was asleep Skjálfr took a thick cord and fastened it under the neck-ring. Her men then took down the tent-poles and threw a loop of the cord up into the branches of the tree, then pulled on it, so that the king was hanging almost up against the branches, and that was the death of him. Skjálfr and her men leapt aboard a ship and rowed away. King Agni was burned there, and that place, to the east of Taurr and west of Stokkssund, has since been called Agnafir (Agni's Meadow). So says Þjóðólfr:

12. I think it a wonder *Ynglingatal* 10
 if Agni's men
 found Skjólfr's plots
 acceptable,
 when Logi's lady⁶²
 hauled aloft
 the great man
 with a gold ring,
 [39] he who by Taurr⁶³
 had to ride
 the chill stallion
 of Signý's man.⁶⁴

CHAPTER TWENTY

Agni's sons, who were kings after him, were called Alrekr and Eiríkr. They were powerful men, great warriors and very skilled. It was their practice to ride horses, and to train them for both walking and galloping. They were outstandingly good at this. They competed a great deal over who rode better or had the better horses. It happened on one occasion that these two brothers were riding apart from other people with their best horses, and they rode out onto some fields and never came back. Then a search was made for them and

⁶² *Loga dís*: 'goddess of Logi', interpreted by Snorri as 'Logi's sister'.

⁶³ *Taurr*: interpreted by Snorri as a place-name, but it has been suggested that it was a word for 'necklace'.

⁶⁴ *hestir Signýjar vers*: 'Horse of Signý's husband (Hagbarðr, who was hanged)', gallows.

they were both found [40] dead, both with their heads battered. They had no weapons but the horses' bridles, and it is thought they must have killed each other with those. So says Þjóðólfr:

13. Alrekr fell *Ynglingatal* 11
 where Eiríkr was
 brought down too
 by brother's weapon,
 and Dagr's kinsmen
 did each other to death
 they said, with bridles
 of saddle-horses.
 Never known before
 nags' reins used
 by Freyr's offspring
 to fight each other.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The sons of Alrekr, who took up kingship next in Svíþjóð, were Yngvi and Álfr. Yngvi was a great warrior and very successful in war, handsome and very skilful, strong and very fierce in battle, generous with money and very cheerful. Because of all this he grew famous and popular. His brother King Álfr stayed on his estates and did not take part in raiding. He [41] was known as Elfsi. He was a quiet man, imperious and unfriendly. His mother was called Dageiðr, daughter of King Dagr inn ríki (the Great), from whom the Døglingar are descended. Álfr had a wife called Bera, a very beautiful and impressive woman, a most cheerful person. Yngvi Alrekson had then one autumn come back to Uppsalir from raiding, and was now very celebrated. He often sat drinking late into the evenings. King Álfr often went to bed early. Queen Bera often sat up in the evenings and she and Yngvi chatted together. Álfr often spoke about this, told her to go to bed earlier, said that he did not want to wait up for her. She answered and said it was a lucky woman who would get Yngvi rather than Álfr. He got very angry at this, for she said it often. One evening Álfr went into the hall when Yngvi and Bera were sitting in the high-seat talking to each other. Yngvi had his sword on his knee. People were very drunk and took no notice when the king came in. King Álfr went to the high seat, drew a sword from under his cloak and thrust it through his brother Yngvi. Yngvi jumped up and drew his sword and struck Álfr his death-blow, and they both fell dead on the floor. Álfr and Yngvi were placed in a burial mound at Fýrisvellir. So says Þjóðólfr:

- [42] 14. Then must he too
whom Álfr slew,
guardian of altars,
on ground lie,
when Dagr's grandson
died his sword
enviously
in Yngvi's blood.
It could not be borne
that Bera should
whet to warfare
workers of slaughter,
when two brothers
brought each other down,
uselessly
out of jealousy.
- Ynglingatal* 12
- Ynglingatal* 13

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

It was the son of Álfr called Huggleikr who became king over the Svíar after the brothers, because Yngvi's sons were still children then. King Huggleikr was no warrior, and he stayed peaceably on his estates. He was very wealthy, and stingy with money. He had in his court a lot of all kinds of players, harpists and fiddlers. He also had with him [43] sorcerers and all kinds of practitioners of magic. There were brothers called Haki and Hagbarðr who were very fine men. They were sea-kings and had many followers, travelling sometimes together, sometimes separately. They both had many champions with them. King Haki went with his force to Svíþjóð against King Huggleikr, and King Huggleikr assembled a force to meet them. Then two brothers, Svipdagr and Geigadr, came to join his company, both outstanding men and great champions. King Haki had twelve champions with him. Starkadr gamli (the Old) was with him. King Haki was also a great champion. They met at Fýrisvellir. A great battle took place there. Huggleikr's company fell quickly. Then the champions Svipdagr and Geigadr advanced, but six of Haki's champions went against each of them, and they were taken captive. Then King Haki penetrated the shield wall against King Huggleikr and killed him and his two sons there. After that the Svíar fled, and King Haki took power over the lands and made himself king over the Svíar. He stayed in the lands for three years, and in this time of peace his champions left him and went raiding and so gained wealth for themselves.

[44] CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Jǫrundr and Eiríkr were the sons of Yngvi Alreksson. They stayed out on warships all this time and were great warriors. One summer they raided in Danmørk, and then they met Guðlaugr, king of the Háleygir, and fought a battle with him, and the end of it was that Guðlaugr's ship was cleared and he was taken captive. They took him ashore at Straumeyrarnes and hanged him there. His men raised a burial mound over him there. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir ('Poet-spoiler'):

15. But Guðlaugr *Háleygjatal 6*
 the grim steed
 —through overbearing
 of eastern⁶⁵ kings—
 of Sigarr⁶⁶ rode,
 when sons of Yngvi
 the ring-waster⁶⁷
 raised on a tree.

16. And, death-laden, *Háleygjatal 7*
 droops on the ness
 splitting the bays
 the swinging gallows;
 there, famous
 for fall of the king,
 marked with a stone,
 is Straumeyrarnes.

[45] The brothers Eiríkr and Jǫrundr became very famous because of this deed. They considered themselves much more important people than before. They heard that King Haki in Svíþjóð had sent away his champions. Then they headed for Svíþjóð and after that gathered an army to them. And when the Svíar learned that the Ynglingar had come there they flocked to them in countless numbers. Then they sailed up into Löggrinn (Lake Mälaren) and made for Uppsalar against King Haki, and he came against them at Fýrisvellir and had a much smaller force. Then a great battle took place. King Haki advanced so strongly that he killed all those who got nearest to him, and in the end he brought down King Eiríkr and cut down the brothers' standard. Then King Jǫrundr fled to the ships with all his troop. King Haki was so

⁶⁵ *austrkonungar*: 'eastern (i.e. Swedish) kings'.

⁶⁶ *Sigars jór*: 'horse of Sigarr (who hanged Hagbarðr)', gallows.

⁶⁷ *menglotuðr*: 'waster of necklaces', one who gives away treasure, generous lord.

badly wounded that he realised that his days were numbered. Then he had a *skeið* (warship) taken that he owned, and had it loaded with dead men and weapons, then had it taken out to sea and had the rudder put in place and the sail hoisted, and resinous fir-wood set fire to and a pyre made on the ship. The wind was blowing off the land. Haki was at the point of death or already dead when he was laid on the pyre. Then the ship sailed blazing out to sea, and that was very famous for a long time afterwards.

[46] CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Jǫrundr, son of King Yngvi, was king at Uppsaliir. He then ruled the lands and often went raiding in the summer. One summer he went with his army to Danmǫrk. He raided around Jutland and in autumn went into Limafjörðr and raided there. He lay with his troop in Oddasund. Then Gýlaugr, king of the Háleygir, son of Guðlaugr who was mentioned above, arrived there with a large army. He engaged in battle with Jǫrundr, and when the local inhabitants realised this they flocked there from all directions with ships both large and small. Then Jǫrundr was overpowered and his ship cleared. He jumped into the water, but was captured and taken ashore. Then King Gýlaugr had a gallows raised and led Jǫrundr to it and had him hanged. Thus ended his life. So says Þjóðólfr:

17. Jǫrundr was, *Ynglingatal* 14
 when he died long ago,
 deprived of life
 in Limafjörðr,
 when the high-towering
 hempen horse⁶⁸
 had to bear

[47] the bane of Guðlaugr,
 and Hagbarðr's
 goat-remains⁶⁹
 went round the neck
 of the ruler of chieftains.⁷⁰

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

The son of Jǫrundr, who was king over the Svíar after his father, was called Aun or Áni. He was a wise man and held many sacrifices. He was no warrior

⁶⁸ *hǫrva sleipnir*: 'horse of (noose made of) hemp', gallows.

⁶⁹ *Hagbarðs hǫðnu leif*: 'remains of (i.e. something made from) a goat for Hagbarðr (who was hanged)', noose made of leather or goat's hair.

⁷⁰ *hersa valdir*: 'ruler of *hersar* (lords)', king.

but stayed in his own territories. [48] At the time when those kings who have been told about above were at Uppsaliir, there was ruling Danmørk first Danr inn mikilláti—he lived to a great age; then his son, Fróði inn mikilláti (the Haughty) or inn friðsami (the Peaceful), then his sons, Hálfðan and Friðleifr. They were great warriors. Hálfðan was the elder and took the lead in everything. He went with his army to Svíþjóð against King Aun, and they had some battles, and Hálfðan always won, and in the end King Aun fled to Vestra-Gautland. He had then been king over Uppsaliir for twenty years. He stayed for a further twenty years in Gautland while King Hálfðan was at Uppsaliir. King Hálfðan died of sickness at Uppsaliir, and he is buried there. After that King Aun returned to Uppsaliir. He was then sixty years of age. Then he held a great sacrifice for length of life, and offered up his son to Óðinn, and he was sacrificed. Then King Aun received from Óðinn the answer that he would live for a further sixty years. Aun was king at Uppsaliir for another twenty years. Then Áli inn frækni (the Valiant), son of Friðleifr, came with his army to Svíþjóð against King Aun, and they fought battles, and Áli always won. Then King Aun fled [49] his kingdom a second time and went to Vestra-Gautland. Áli was king at Uppsaliir for twenty years until Starkaðr inn gamli killed him. After the fall of Áli, King Aun went back to Uppsaliir and then ruled the kingdom for another twenty years. Then he held a great sacrifice and offered up his second son. Then Óðinn told him that he would live forever as long as he sacrificed a son of his to Óðinn every ten years, and also that he must give a name to some district in his land based on the number of his sons he had sacrificed to Óðinn. And when he had sacrificed seven of his sons, he lived for ten years without being able to walk. Then he was carried on a chair. Then he sacrificed his eighth son, and lived for another ten years, lying bed-ridden. Then he sacrificed his ninth son and lived a further ten years. He had to drink from a horn like a baby. Then Aun had one son left, and he was going to sacrifice him, and was going to give Óðinn Uppsaliir and the districts belonging to it, and have it called Tíundaland (‘Tenth land’). The Svíar stopped him doing that, and no sacrifice was held. Then King Aun died, and he is buried at Uppsaliir. Since then it has been called *Ánasótt* ‘Áni’s sickness’ (properly ‘old-age sickness’) if a man dies painlessly of old age. So says Þjóðólfr:

[50] 18. Long ago
 it was old age
 Aun had to face
 at Uppsaliir,
 clinging to life,
 on baby food
 he had to subsist
 a second time.

Ynglingatal 15

And to himself
 he turned the thinner
 end of the
 ox's sword⁷¹
 when, lying, the killer
 of kindred drank
 from the tip of the yoke-
 reindeer's weapon.⁷²
 The herd-sword⁷³
 the hoary one,
 the eastern king,
 could not hold up.

Ynglingatal 16

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The son of Aun inn gamli, who was king after his father in Svíþjóð, was called Egill. He was no warrior, and stayed peacefully in his own territories. He had a slave called Tunni who had been [51] with Áni inn gamli (the Old) as his treasurer. And when Áni was dead, Tunni took a huge quantity of valuables and buried them in the ground. And when Egill became king he treated Tunni the same as his other slaves. He was very displeased at that and ran away, and many other slaves with him, and they dug up the valuables that he had hidden. He gave them to his men, and they made him their leader. Then a lot of ruffians attached themselves to him; they kept out in the forests, and sometimes overran the settlements, robbing and killing people. King Egill heard of this and went to search for them with his troops. And when he had found a lodging for himself one night, Tunni arrived there with his gang and attacked them unawares and killed a large body of the king's men. And when Egill became aware of the fighting, he moved to resist them and set up his standard, but much of his company fled. Tunni's band attacked boldly. Then Egill saw no other choice but to flee. Tunni's band pursued the rout all the way to the woods. Then they went back to the settlements, raided and robbed and met with no resistance. All the property that Tunni took in the area he gave to his followers. From this he gained popularity and a numerous following. King Egill mustered an army and went to battle against Tunni. They fought, and Tunni won, and

⁷¹ *inn mjóvari hlut sveiðurs mækis*: 'the thinner part of the ox's sword', point of the horn.

⁷² *okhreins lögðir*: 'sword of the driving-reindeer (ox)', horn.

⁷³ *hjarðar mækir*: 'sword of the herd', horn.

Egill fled and lost many men. King Egill and Tunni fought eight battles, and Tunni won them all. After that King Egill fled the land and went out to Selund in Danmørk, to Fróði inn frækni (the Valiant). He promised King Fróði tribute from the Svíar in exchange for help. Then Fróði gave him an army and his champions. Then King Egill went to Svíþjóð, and when Tunni [52] heard that, he advanced against him with his band. Then a great battle took place. Tunni fell in it, and King Egill took possession of his kingdom. The Danes went home. King Egill sent King Fróði fine and large gifts every season, but paid no tribute to the Danes, and yet his friendship with Fróði lasted. After Tunni fell, King Egill ruled the kingdom for three years. It happened in Svíþjóð that the bull that was intended for sacrifice was old and had been bred to be so fierce that it was vicious, and when people tried to catch it, it ran into the woods and turned frantic, and stayed in the forest for a long time, causing a lot of mischief for people. King Egill was a great huntsman. He often rode during the day into the forests to hunt animals. It happened one time that he had ridden out hunting with his men. The king had been pursuing one animal for a long time and chased it into the wood away from all the men. Then he noticed the bull and rode towards it and was going to kill it. The bull turned towards him, and the king got his spear into it, and the spear-head broke off. The bull plunged its horns into the horse's flank so that it immediately fell flat, and so did the king. Then the king jumped to his feet and tried to draw his sword. The bull gored him in the chest so that its horns pierced deeply. Then the king's men came up and killed the bull. The king lived for a short time, and he is buried at Uppsaliir. So says Þjóðólfr:

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------|
| 19. | And from the land
fled the lauded
kin of Týr ⁷⁴
Tunni's realm. | <i>Ynglingatal</i> 17 |
| [53] | And on Egill
the giant's draught-beast ⁷⁵
reddened the bill
of the bull's snout, ⁷⁶ | |

⁷⁴ *Týs óttungr*: 'descendant of Týr (i.e. of any god)', king.

⁷⁵ *jötuns eykr*: 'giant's draught-beast', ox, bull (the origin of this kenning is unknown; cf. *NN* § 75 and *Gylfaginning* ch. 1).

⁷⁶ *flæmingr farra trjónu*: 'sword of the bull's head', horn.

having worn
 in woods of Sweden
 its forehead-peak⁷⁷
 for a long time;
 the cattle-sword,⁷⁸
 scabbardless,
 of the Skilfing prince
 pierced the heart.

Ynglingatal 18

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The son of Egill, who succeeded to the rule and the kingdom after him, was called Óttarr.⁷⁹ He did not get on well with Fróði. Then Fróði sent men to King Óttarr to claim the tribute that Egill had promised him. Óttarr replied that the Svíar had never paid tribute to the Danes, and said that he [54] would act likewise. The messengers returned. Fróði was a great warrior. It happened one summer that Fróði went to Svíþjóð with his army, attacked there and raided, killing many people and taking some captive. He took a large amount of plunder. He also burned settlements far and wide and did a lot of damage. The next summer Fróði went raiding in the eastern Baltic. King Óttarr found out that Fróði was not in his country. Then he embarked in a warship and went out to Danmǫrk and raided there, and met no opposition. He found out that there was a great gathering on Selund. He then headed west into Eyrarsund (Öresund), then sailed south to Jutland and laid into Limafjörðr, then raided in Vendill, burned there and caused great devastation. Fróði's jarls were called Vǫttr and Fasti. Fróði had appointed them as guardians of Danmǫrk while he was out of the country. And when the jarls found out that the king of the Svíar was raiding in Danmǫrk, they gathered an army and leaped onto ships and sailed south to Limafjörðr, took King Óttarr completely by surprise there and at once engaged in battle. The Svíar put up a good resistance. Men fell on both sides, but as men fell on the Danish side, more came there from the surrounding settlements, and also all the ships that were in the vicinity joined in as well. The battle finished in such a way that King Óttarr fell there with the greater part of his troop. The Danes took his body and carried it to land and placed it up on a mound, leaving it there for animals and birds to tear

⁷⁷ *brúna hǫrg*: 'cliff, height of the brows', horn.

⁷⁸ *hæfis hjǫrr*: 'bull's sword', horn.

⁷⁹ Óttarr is identified with the Swedish king named in *Beowulf* as Ohthere, though the traditions are different in many respects (Ohthere's father is named there as Ongenþeow).

at the corpse. They made a wooden crow and sent it to Svíþjóð, saying that their King Óttarr was worth no more than that. After that they called him Óttarr vendilkráka (Vendill-Crow).⁸⁰ So says Þjóðólfr:

20.	Óttarr fell under eagle's claws the doughty one, from Danes' weapons;	<i>Ynglingatal</i> 19
[55]	him the carrion-bird, with corpse-stained feet, travelled from far, trampled on Vendill. It's said the Svíar the story tell of famous deeds of Fasti and Vǫttr, that the island- jarls of Fróði had brought down the battle-forwarder.	<i>Ynglingatal</i> 20

[56] CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The son of King Óttarr, who succeeded to the kingdom after him, was called Aðils. He was king for a long time, and was very wealthy. He also spent some summers raiding. King Aðils came with his army to Saxland. The king reigning there was called Geirþjófr, and his wife was called Álof in ríka (the Powerful). No children of theirs are mentioned. The king was not in the country. King Aðils and his men rushed ashore to the king's residence and plundered there. Some of them drove cattle down to the shore as plunder. Enslaved people, men and women, had tended the herd and they took them all along too. In that crowd there was a remarkably beautiful girl. She said her name was Yrsa. Then King Aðils went home with the plunder. Yrsa was not among the slave-girls. It was soon discovered that she was clever and well spoken and well informed in every way. People were very impressed by her, the king most of all. Then it came about that Aðils celebrated his

⁸⁰ A burial mound in Vendel near Uppsala in Sweden has traditionally been associated with Óttarr. If this were correct, Snorri's account would be based on a confusion of Vendel in Sweden with the place of the same name in Jutland, and his death on a raid in Denmark (and the dishonouring of Óttarr by placing his body on, rather than in the mound), an invention (Farrell 1972, 284–86).

marriage with her. Then Yrsa was queen in Svíþjóð, and was considered a very outstanding woman.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Then King Helgi Hálfðanarson ruled over Hleiðra. He came to Svíþjóð with such a great army that King Aðils could see no alternative but to flee. King Helgi then went ashore with his army and raided, taking a great deal of plunder. He seized Queen Yrsa and took her with him to Hleiðra and proceeded to marry her. Their son was Hrólfr kraki (Pole). But when Hrólfr was three years old, Queen Álof came to Danmörk. Then she told Yrsa that King Helgi, her husband, was her father, [57] and Álof was her mother. Then Yrsa went back to Svíþjóð to Aðils and was queen there for the rest of her life. King Helgi died on a raid. Hrólfr kraki was eight years old then, and he was accepted as king at Hleiðra. King Aðils had great quarrels with the king called Áli inn upplenzki (of Upplönd). He was from Norway. They fought a battle on the ice of Lake Vænir. There King Áli fell, and Aðils gained victory. There is a long account of this battle in *Skjöldunga saga*, and also of how Hrólfr kraki came to Aðils at Uppsálar.⁸¹ Then Hrólfr kraki sowed the gold on Fýrisvellir. King Aðils was very fond of fine horses. He owned the best horses at that time. He had a horse called Slöngvir, and another called Hrafn. He took that one from Áli when he was dead, and from it was bred another horse that was called Hrafn. He sent it to Hálogaland to King Goðgestr. King Goðgestr rode it but was not able to curb it until he fell off its back and was killed. That was on Qmð in Hálogaland. King Aðils [58] attended a sacrifice for the Dísir (goddesses or guardian spirits) and rode a horse through the hall of the Dís. The horse stumbled under him and fell, and the king was thrown forward, and his head struck a stone so that the skull was broken and his brains lay on the stone. That was the death of him. He died at Uppsálar and his burial mound is there. The Svíar considered him a great king. So says Þjóðólfr:

[59] 21.	I learned further that the life of Aðils a witch's work would destroy and, keen in deeds, the kinsman of Freyr had to fall from horse's shoulders.	<i>Ynglingatal</i> 21
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⁸¹ There was an account of these events in the lost *Skjöldunga saga* (see *ÍF* XXXV 29, 43–44), and there is also a version of them in *Hrólfs saga kraka*.

And with soil
 the skull's sea⁸²
 of the ruler's son⁸³
 was blended,
 and he had to die,
 with days blessed,⁸⁴
 Áli's foe
 at Uppsalir.

Ynglingatal 22

CHAPTER THIRTY

The son of Aðils, who next ruled the realm of the Svíar, was called Eysteinn. In his days Hrólfr kraki fell at Hleiðra. At that time kings, both Danes [60] and Norwegians, raided the realm of the Svíar a great deal. There were many sea-kings, who commanded large troops and had no lands. It was considered that a man could properly be called a sea-king only if he never slept under a sooty beam and never drank in the hearth corner.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

There was a sea-king called Sǫlvi, son of Hogni on Njarðey, who was raiding in the Baltic then. He held rule in Jutland. He went with his company to Svíþjóð. King Eysteinn was then at a feast in the district called Lófund. King Sǫlvi came there unexpectedly at night and seized the king's house and burned him inside it with all his following. Then Sǫlvi went to Sigtúnir and demanded the title of king and to be accepted as king, but the Svíar mustered an army and intended to defend their land, and a battle took place, so great that it was said that it did not stop for eleven days. There King Sǫlvi gained victory, and he was then king over Svíþjóð for a long time until the Svíar betrayed him, and he was killed there. So says Þjóðólfr:

22. I know the end
 of Eysteinn's life
 was doomed to lie
 at Lófund,
 [61] and among the Svíar,
 they say, the king
 by Jutish men
 was burned inside.

Ynglingatal 23

⁸² *ægir hjarna*: the manuscripts have *ægis hjarna*. *ægir hjarna*: 'sea of the skull', brain.

⁸³ *bragnings burr*: 'king's son', king.

⁸⁴ i.e. long-lived?

And the biting scourge
 of slope-seaweed⁸⁵
 in his flame-vessel⁸⁶
 found the king,
 when the stout-built
 ship of the home-site,⁸⁷
 full of crew, around
 the ruler burned.

Ynglingatal 24

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

The son of King Eysteinn, who was king over the realm of the Svíar then, was called Yngvarr. He was a great warrior and was often out on warships, because up to that time the land of the Svíar had been very much subject to raids, both from Danes and the eastern Baltic peoples. King Yngvarr made peace with the Danes, and then began to raid around the Baltic. One summer he took out an army and went to Eistland (Estonia) and raided during the summer, at the place called Steinn. Then Eistr (Estonians) came down with a large army, and they had a battle. The native army was so numerous that the Svíar could put up no resistance. Then King Yngvarr died and his army fled. This was in Aðalsýsla. The Svíar went home after this defeat. So says Þjóðólfr:

[62] 23. It was said
 that Yngvarr was
 by Sýsla people
 put to death,
 and off 'sea's heart'⁸⁸
 the host of Eistr
 slew the leader,
 the light-hued one,
 and the eastern sea
 sings the lay
 of Gymir⁸⁹ to cheer
 the fallen king.

Ynglingatal 25

⁸⁵ *bitsótt hlíðar þangs*: 'biting sickness of seaweed of the slope (woods)', fire.

⁸⁶ *brandnór*: 'fire-ship' (ship with a fire in it), house.

⁸⁷ *toptar nökkvi*: 'ship of the site where a house is built', house.

⁸⁸ *lagar hjarta*: 'heart of the sea', rock; referring to the place name Steinn (= stone).

⁸⁹ *Gymir*: personification of the sea.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The son of Yngvarr, who next became king in Svíþjóð, was called Qnundr. In his days there was good peace in Svíþjóð, and he was very wealthy in movable property. King Qnundr went with his army to Eistland to avenge his father, went ashore there with his army and raided widely through the land and took a large amount of plunder, and went back to Svíþjóð in the autumn. In his days there was great prosperity in Svíþjóð. Qnundr was the most popular of all kings. Svíþjóð is a very forested land, and there is so much uninhabited forest that it takes many days [63] to cross it. King Qnundr put a lot of effort and expense into clearing forests and then settling the clearings. He also had roads made through uninhabited forests, and then expanses of land without trees were discovered within the forests, and these became large settled districts. In this way land came to be inhabited, for there were plenty of people to inhabit it. King Qnundr had roads opened throughout Svíþjóð, through both forests and marshlands and mountain passes. Because of this he was called Braut-Qnundr (Road-). King Qnundr established residences for himself in each major district in Svíþjóð and went all over the country attending banquets.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Braut-Qnundr had a son who was called Ingjaldr. Yngvarr was at that time king in Fjaðryndaland. He had two sons by his wife. One was called Álfr and the other Agnarr. They were about the same age as Ingjaldr. At that time there were local kings in many parts of Svíþjóð. Braut-Qnundr ruled over Tíundaland. Uppsaliir is there, the assembly place for all the Svíar. There were great sacrifices held there then. Many kings came to them. That was at midwinter. And one winter, when people had come to Uppsaliir in great numbers, King Yngvarr was there with his sons. They were six years old. Álfr, King Yngvarr's son, and Ingjaldr, King Qnundr's son, started playing a boys' game, and each was in charge of a team. And as they played, Ingjaldr was less strong than Álfr, and he was so upset by this that he cried bitterly. And then his foster-brother Gautviðr came up and [64] led him away to Svípdagr blindi (the Blind), his foster-father, and told him that it had gone badly because he was less strong and more feeble in the game than Álfr, King Yngvarr's son. Then Svípdagr answered that it was a great shame. The following day Svípdagr had the heart cut out of a wolf and grilled on a stick and then gave it to the king's son Ingjaldr to eat, and from then on he became the fiercest and worst-tempered of all men.⁹⁰ And when Ingjaldr was

⁹⁰ See the eddic poem *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* 4, where Guttormr is given roasted wolf-meat to make him fierce enough to attack Sigurðr.

grown up, Qnundr asked on his behalf for marriage to Gauthildr, daughter of King Algauti. He was son of King Gautrekr inn mildi (the Generous), son of Gautr, after whom Gautland is named. King Algautr felt sure that his daughter would be well married if it were to the son of King Qnundr, if he had the temperament of his father, and the girl was sent to Svíþjóð, and Ingjaldr celebrated his marriage to her.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

King Qnundr was travelling between his residences with his following one autumn and went to a place called Himinheiðr. There are rather narrow mountain valleys, with high mountains on both sides. It was raining hard, but earlier there had been snow lying on the mountains. Then a great landslide came down with rocks and mud. Qnundr and his company were in its way. The king and many of his followers were killed. So says Þjóðólfr:

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 24. | Qnundr was | <i>Ynglingatal</i> 26 |
| | with evil of Jónakr's | |
| | sons ⁹¹ brought down | |
| | under Himinfjöll, | |
| [65] | and the bane of Eistrar | |
| | bowed before | |
| | the bitter hatred | |
| | of a bastard's wrath, | |
| | and by earth's bones ⁹² | |
| | was brought down | |
| | the hastener | |
| | of Høgni's fall. ⁹³ | |

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Ingjaldr, son of King Qnundr, was king at Uppsaliir. The kings of Uppsaliir were the highest of the kings in Svíþjóð when there were many local kings there. Ever since Óðinn was ruler in Svíþjóð, those who had their seats at Uppsaliir were supreme rulers over the whole of the domain of the Svíar until the death of Agni, and then the kingdom was divided between brothers for the first time, as has been written above, and after that the power and

⁹¹ *harmr Jónakrs bura*: 'destruction of Jónakr's sons', stones. The eddic poem *Hamðismál* relates how Hamðir and Sqrli, the sons of Jónakr, were stoned to death by Jormunrekkr.

⁹² *foldar beinir*: 'bones of earth', stones.

⁹³ This Høgni is unknown.

the kingdom were dispersed among family lines as they branched out, and some kings cleared large tracts of forest and settled them and thus augmented [66] their kingdoms. And when Ingjaldr succeeded to the power and the kingdom, there were many local kings, as was written above. King Ingjaldr had a great feast prepared at Uppsálir and intended to commemorate his father King Qunndr. He had a hall built, in no way smaller or less splendid than Uppsálr was, and called it the Hall of Seven Kings. In it seven high seats were prepared. King Ingjaldr sent men all over Svíþjóð and invited kings and jarls and other important people. To this commemorative feast came King Algautr, Ingjaldr's father-in-law, and King Yngvarr of Fjaðryndaland and his two sons, Agnarr and Álfr, King Sporsnjallr of Næríki and King Sigverkr of Áttundaland. King Granmarr of Suðrmannaland did not come. The six kings were assigned seats there in the new hall. There was thus one of the high seats that King Ingjaldr had had prepared left empty. All the company that had come was assigned places in the new hall. King Ingjaldr had placed his household and all his following in Uppsálr. It was customary at that time that when commemorative feasts were being held for kings or jarls, the one who was holding it and was about to come into his inheritance must sit on the step in front of the high seat right on until the toast that was called *bragarfull*⁹⁴ was carried in; he was then to stand up to receive the *bragarfull* and swear an oath, then drink off the toast, and then he was to be set in the high seat that his father had had. Then he had entered fully into the inheritance after him. On this occasion it was done in such a way that when the *bragarfull* came in, Ingjaldr stood up [67] and took a large animal's horn, then swore an oath that he would extend his kingdom to double the size in all four directions or die in the attempt, and then drank off the contents of the horn. And in the evening when people were drunk, Ingjaldr told Fólkvíðr and Hulvíðr, the sons of Svipdagr, to arm themselves and their men as had been planned that evening. They went out to the new hall and set fire to it, and soon the hall burst into flames, and six kings and all their followers were burned there, and those who tried to get out were quickly killed. After that King Ingjaldr took control of all the kingdoms that these kings had ruled, and took tribute from them.

⁹⁴ 'Chieftain's toast' (probably). See *Fagrskinna* ch. 20 for a fuller account of a commemorative feast; there the form is *bragafull* (*Fsk* 124–25). For the swearing of oaths at a commemorative feast, see *Jómsvíkinga saga* ch. 27 (*Jóms* (291), 160–64) and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* ch. 35 below.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

King Granmarr heard what had happened, and felt sure that the same fate was intended for him if he did not take precautions. That same summer King Hjørvarðr, who was known as Ylfingr, brought his troops to Svíþjóð and anchored in the fiord called Myrkvafjörðr. And when King Granmarr heard this he sent people to him and invited him to a banquet with all his following. He accepted that, because he had not raided in King Granmarr's kingdom. And when he came to the banquet there was a splendid entertainment there. And in the evening when toasts were to be drunk, it was the custom with kings who were in their own countries or at banquets that they had arranged that people should drink in pairs in the evenings, each man with a woman, [68] as far numbers allowed, and those left over drank singly. But it was the law of the vikings for all the company to drink together when they were at banquets.⁹⁵ King Hjørvarðr's high seat was set up opposite King Granmarr's high seat, and all his men sat on that dais. Then King Granmarr said to his daughter Hildiguðr that she should make herself ready and serve ale to the vikings. She was the most beautiful woman. Then she took up a silver goblet and filled it and went before King Hjørvarðr and said:

‘All hail Ylfingar, in the toast to Hrólfr kraki.’

And she drank half the contents and passed it to King Hjørvarðr. Now he took hold of the goblet and her hand along with it, and said that she should come and sit next to him. She said that it was not the custom of vikings to drink in pairs with women. Hjørvarðr said it was more likely that he would change all that by instead abandoning the viking law and drinking in a pair with her. Then Hildiguðr sat beside him and they drank together and talked a great deal during the evening. The next day, when the kings, Granmarr and Hjørvarðr, met, Hjørvarðr began his suit and proposed marriage to Hildiguðr. King Granmarr put the matter to his wife Hildir and other important people and said that they could expect great support from King Hjørvarðr. And now there was applause for this, and everyone thought it advisable, and it ended with Hildiguðr being betrothed to King Hjørvarðr, and he celebrated marriage with her. Then King Hjørvarðr had to stay with King Granmarr, because he had no son to guard the kingdom alongside himself.

[69] CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

That same autumn King Ingjaldr mustered an army for himself, planning to attack the father- and son-in-law. He got his host from all the kingdoms he

⁹⁵ See *Egils saga* 16 and 120–21 for examples of men and women drinking in pairs (*tvímenningr*), and 125 for all drinking together from a shared cup (*sveitardrykkja*).

had previously taken control of. And when the father- and son-in-law found out about this they mustered an army in their kingdom, and King Høgni and his son Hildir, who ruled over Eystra-Gautland, joined forces with them. Høgni was the father of Hildir, wife of King Granmarr. King Ingjaldr went ashore with all his army and had a much bigger force. Then battle was joined and it was a fierce one. And when the fighting had gone on for a short time, the leaders who ruled over Fjaðryndaland and the Vestr-Gautar, and those from Næríki and Áttundaland, and all the troops who had come from those countries, fled and went to their ships. After that King Ingjaldr found himself in trouble, and was wounded many times, and managed even so to flee to his ships, and his foster-father Svipdagr blindi, and both his sons, Gautviðr and Hulviðr. With that King Ingjaldr went back to Uppsaliir, and was ill-pleased with his expedition, and felt sure that the army that he raised from his realm that he had gained by force must be disloyal to him. After that there was great hostility between King Ingjaldr and King Granmarr. Now when a long time had passed like this, friends of both brought it about that they reached agreement, and the kings arranged a meeting between themselves and met and made peace between themselves, King Ingjaldr and King Granmarr and his son-in-law King Hjørvarðr. This peace between them was to hold as long as the three kings lived. It was [70] sealed with oaths and pledges. The following spring King Granmarr went to Uppsaliir for a sacrifice, as was the custom as summer approached, to ensure peace. Then the lots fell out that he would not live long.⁹⁶ Then he went back to his kingdom.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

The following autumn King Granmarr and his son-in-law King Hjørvarðr went to receive a banquet on the island that is called Sili, on their estates. And when they were at the banquet, King Ingjaldr arrived there with his army one night and seized the building they were in and burned them inside it with all their followers. After that he took power over all the kingdom

⁹⁶ The *spánn* or *blótspánn* (often translated as ‘divining chips’ or ‘rods’) were used in casting lots. Ch. 10 of Tacitus’s *Germania* refers to the practice among early Germanic tribes: ‘To the use of lots and auguries, they are addicted beyond all other nations. Their method of divining by lots is exceedingly simple. From a tree which bears fruit they cut a twig, and divide it into two small pieces. These they distinguish by so many several marks, and throw them at random and without order upon a white garment. Then the Priest of the community, if for the public the lots are consulted, or the father of a family about a private concern, after he has solemnly invoked the Gods, with eyes lifted up to heaven, takes up every piece thrice, and having done thus forms a judgment according to the marks before made.’

that the kings had held, and set rulers over it. King Hǫgni and his son Hildir often rode up into the lands of the Svíar and killed the men that King Ingjaldr had set over the realm that had been ruled by their son- and brother-in-law King Granmarr. For a long time great hostility continued there between King Ingjaldr and King Hǫgni. Nevertheless King Hǫgni succeeded in defending his kingdom from King Ingjaldr right until the day he died. King Ingjaldr and his wife had two children, the elder called Ása and the second Óláfr trételgja (Treefeller), and Gauthildr, wife of King Ingjaldr, sent the boy to her foster-father Bóvi in Vestra-Gautland. He was brought up there [71] with Bóvi's son Saxi, who was called flettir (Stripper or Plunderer). People say that King Ingjaldr killed twelve kings and betrayed them all under truce. He was called Ingjaldr inn illráði (the Evil). He was king over the greater part of Svíþjóð. He married his daughter Ása to Guðrøðr, king in Skáni. She was similar in temperament to her father. Ása brought it about that he [Guðrøðr] killed his brother Hálfðan. Hálfðan was the father of Ívarr inn víðfaðmi (the Far-Reaching). Ása was also behind the death of her husband Guðrøðr.

CHAPTER FORTY

Ívarr inn víðfaðmi came to Skáni after the death of his uncle Guðrøðr and at once assembled a great army, then went up into Svíþjóð. Ása in illráða (the Evil) had already gone to see her father. King Ingjaldr was present at a feast at Ræningr when he found out that King Ívarr's army had arrived nearby. Ingjaldr did not consider that he had the power to fight against Ívarr. He also felt it a clear possibility that if he took to flight his enemies would throng against him from every side. So he and Ása took this course, as has become famous, that they made all the people dead drunk and then set fire to the hall. The hall, and all the people who were inside, were burned along with King Ingjaldr. So says Þjóðólfr:

25. And Ingjaldr, *Ynglingatal* 27
 alive, was trampled
 by the smoke-raiser⁹⁷
 at Ræningr,
 [72] when the house-thief⁹⁸
 through those kin
 to the gods stepped
 with stockinged feet.

⁹⁷ *reyks rǫsuðr*: 'what makes smoke rush', fire.

⁹⁸ *húspjófr*: 'house-thief', fire.

And that death was
deemed by all
among the Svíar
the most fitting,
that he should
himself be first
to finish
his fierce life.

Ynglingatal 28

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

Ívarr inn víðfaðmi took power over all the realm of the Svíar. He also took possession of all the realm of the Danes and a large part of Saxland and all of Austrríki and a fifth part of England. From his line are descended the kings of the Danes and the Svíar who have held supreme power there. After Ingjaldr illráði [73] rule in Uppsalar passed away from the line of the Ynglingar, as far as their paternal ancestors can be reckoned.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

King Ingjaldr's son Óláfr, when he heard of his father's death, went away with those people who were willing to accompany him, because all the common people of the Svíar rose up with one accord to drive out the family of King Ingjaldr and all his friends. Óláfr first went up to Næríki, but when the Svíar found out where he was he could not stay there. Then he took a course west through forest paths to the river which flows into Vænir from the north, which is called the Elfr. There they stayed, and began to clear and burn the forest and then settle there. That soon became a large settlement. They called it Vermaland. The land there was productive. And when it was learned in Svíþjóð that Óláfr was clearing forests, they called him trételgja (Treefeller), and thought what he was doing was ridiculous. Óláfr married a woman called Sólveig or Sólva, daughter of Hálfðan gulltönn (Gold-tooth) of Sóleyjar in the west. Hálfðan was the son of Sólvi, son of Sólvarr, son of Sólvi inn gamli (the Old), who first cleared Sóleyjar. The mother of Óláfr trételgja was called Gauthildr, and her mother was Álof, daughter of Óláfr inn skyggni (the Sharp-sighted), a king from Næríki. Óláfr and Sólva had two sons, Ingjaldr and Hálfðan. Hálfðan was brought up [74] in Sóleyjar with Sólvi, his maternal uncle. He was called Hálfðan hvítbeinn (Whiteleg).

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

It was a great multitude who left Svíþjóð as outlaws because of King Ívarr. They found out that Óláfr trételgja had productive land in Vermaland, and flocked to it in such great numbers that the land could not sustain it. A great dearth and famine set in there. They blamed it on their king, according to the custom of the Svíar of holding the king responsible for both good and bad seasons. King Óláfr was not in the habit of sacrificing. The Svíar were dissatisfied with that and thought it was the cause of the famine. Then the Svíar mustered an army, made an expedition against King Óláfr, seized his house and burned him in it, dedicating him to Óðinn and sacrificing him for a good season. That was by Vænir. So says Þjóðólfr:

26. And by the water *Ynglingatal* 29
 the withy[-spoiler],⁹⁹
 alder-wolf,¹⁰⁰ swallowed
 Óláfr's corpse,
 from the Svíar lord
 the son of Fornjótr¹⁰¹
 the armour stripped.
 Uppsalir
 that offspring
 of the royal line¹⁰²
 left long before.

[75] Those who were wiser among the Svíar then realised that the cause of the dearth was that the population was too large for the land to sustain, and the king was not responsible. They now decided to go with the whole army west over Eiðaskógr and arrive in Sóleyjar quite without warning. They killed King Sǫlvi and captured Hálfðan hvítbeinn. They made him lord over them and gave him the title of king. Then he took possession of Sóleyjar. After that he went out with the army to Raumaríki and raided there and took that region by force.

⁹⁹ *viðjar* . . . : ‘? of the withy’, a kenning for fire. The line is one syllable short; a word meaning ‘destroyer’ must have been lost.

¹⁰⁰ *ǫlgylðir*: ‘wolf (destroyer) of alder’, fire.

¹⁰¹ *sonr Fornjóts*: ‘son of (the giant) Fornjótr’, fire. Snorri says that fire can also be called the brother of the wind, which is also referred to as son of Fornjótr (*Skáldsk* 39).

¹⁰² *áttkonr lofða kyns*: offspring of a royal family.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

Hálfdan hvítbeinn was a powerful king. He married Ása, daughter of Eysteinn inn harðráði (the Harsh Ruler), king of the Upplendingar. He ruled over Heiðmörk. She and Hálfdan had two sons, Eysteinn and Guðrøðr. Hálfdan gained possession of a large part of Heiðmörk and Þótn and Haðaland and much of Vestfold. He lived to be an old man. He died of sickness at [76] Þótn and was then taken out to Vestfold and placed in a mound at the place called Skæreið in Skíringssalr. So says Þjóðólfr:

27. All have heard *Ynglingatal* 30
 that Hálfdan was
 mourned by all
 mediators,
 and the goddess,
 guardian of stones
 thrown,¹⁰³ the king
 at Þótn took.
 And Skæreið
 in Skíringssalr
 broods over
 the bones of the warrior.¹⁰⁴

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

Ingjaldr, brother of Hálfdan, was king in Vermaland, but after his death King Hálfdan took Vermaland under his power and took tribute from it and appointed jarls to rule there while he was alive.

[77] CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Eysteinn, son of Hálfdan hvítbeinn, who was king after him in Raumaríki and Vestfold, married Hildir, daughter of Eiríkr Agnarsson, who was king in Vestfold. Agnarr, Eiríkr's father, was the son of King Sigtryggr of Vendill. King Eiríkr had no son. He died while King Hálfdan hvítbeinn was alive. Father and son, Hálfdan and Eysteinn, took all of Vestfold under their power. Eysteinn ruled Vestfold while he was alive. There was a king then in Varna who was called Skjöldr. He was very skilled in magic. King Eysteinn went across to Varna with a few warships and raided there, took whatever came

¹⁰³ *hallvarps hlífnauma*: 'the protecting Nauma (goddess) of stone-building? (burial mound)', Hel.

¹⁰⁴ *brynjálfr*: 'mailcoat-elf', warrior.

to hand, clothes and other valuables and farmers' goods, and made coastal raids, then went away. King Skǫldr came to the shore with his army. King Eysteinn had left by then and reached the other side of the fiord, and Skǫldr saw their sails. Then he took his cloak and waved it round and blew into it. When they were sailing round Jarlsey, King Eysteinn was sitting at the rudder. Another ship sailed close to them. There was rather a swell. The tacking boom on the other ship knocked the king overboard. That was the death of him. His men retrieved his body. It was taken into Borró and a mound raised for him out on the ridge by the sea near the Vaðla river. So says Þjóðólfr:

28. But a sailyard *Ynglingatal* 31
 sent Eysteinn
 to Býleistr's
 brother's girl,¹⁰⁵
 [78] under sea's bones¹⁰⁶
 the bidder of men¹⁰⁷
 rests now on
 the ridge's crest,
 where, snow-cold,
 by the Gautish king,
 to the sea flows
 the stream of Vaðla.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

The son of King Eysteinn, who succeeded to the kingdom after him, was called Hálfðan. He was called Hálfðan inn mildi ok inn matarilli (the Generous but Mean with Food). It is said that he paid his men as many gold coins as other kings gave silver, but he starved them of food. He was a great warrior and went raiding for long periods and gained property. He married Hlíf, daughter of King Dagr from Vestmarir. His main estate was Holtar in Vestfold. There [79] he died of sickness, and his burial mound is at Borró. So says Þjóðólfr:

29. And to a meeting *Ynglingatal* 32
 the maid of Hveðrungr¹⁰⁸
 a third king
 called from the world,

¹⁰⁵ *Býleists bróður mæ:* 'daughter of the brother of Býleistr (Loki)', Hel.

¹⁰⁶ *lagar bein:* 'bones of the sea', stones (making up the burial mound).

¹⁰⁷ *rekks lǫðuðr:* 'one who invites a man', king.

¹⁰⁸ *Hveðrungs mæ:* 'daughter of Hveðrungr (a giant, also a name for Loki)', Hel.

when Hálfdan—
 in Holtar he lived—
 reached the last of
 his allotted span.
 And at Borró
 they buried then,
 victorious ones,
 their warlike king.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

The son of Hálfdan, who succeeded to the kingdom after him, was called Guðrøðr. He was called Guðrøðr inn gøfugláti (the Munificent), but some called him veiðikonungr (Hunting-king). He married the woman called Álfhildr, daughter of King Alfarinn from Álfheimar, and with her got half of Vingulmörk. Their son was Óláfr, who was later known as Geirstaðaálfr. Álfheimar was the name given then to the area between the Raumelfr and Gautelfr rivers. But when Álfhildr was dead, King Guðrøðr sent his men west to Agðir to the king who ruled there—he was called Haraldr inn granrauði (the Red-Bearded)—to ask for his daughter Ása in marriage for the king, but Haraldr refused. The messengers came back and told [80] the king the result of their mission. And some time later King Guðrøðr launched ships and then went with a large troop out to Agðir, arrived there quite unexpectedly and invaded the coast, and came to Haraldr's dwelling at night. And when he realised that an army had come against him, he went out with the followers he had. Then a battle took place, between very unequal forces. There Haraldr and his son Gyrðr fell. King Guðrøðr seized a great deal of plunder. He took King Haraldr's daughter Ása home with him and celebrated marriage with her. They had a son who was called Hálfdan. And in the autumn when Hálfdan was a year old, Guðrøðr travelled round receiving banquets. He lay with his ship in Stíflusund. There was a great deal of drinking. The king was very drunk. And in the evening, when it was dark, the king stepped off the ship, but when he reached the end of the gangway a man ran up to him and thrust a spear through him. That was the death of him. The man was killed at once. And the next morning when it got light the man was recognised. It was the page of Queen Ása. She did not conceal the fact that this was her plan. So says Þjóðólfr:

30. It was long ago
 that Guðrøðr,
 the munificent, was trapped
 by treachery,

Ynglingatal 33

- and a plan
 when the prince was drunk
 the hate-driven queen
 hatched on the king,
 [81] and Ása's cunning *Ynglingatal* 34
 errand-boy
 gained a cheating win
 against the king,
 and the ruler
 right on the bank
 of Stíflusund
 was stabbed to death.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

Óláfr succeeded to the kingdom after his father. He was a powerful man and a great warrior. He was the most handsome and tallest of all men. He had Vestfold, because King Álfeirr had taken control of all of Vingulmörk. He put his son, King Gandálfr, in charge there. Then father and son went nearly all round Raumaríki and took possession of the greater part of that realm and district. The son of King Eysteinn inn ríki (the Great), king of the Upplendingar, was called Høgni. He took possession of all of Heiðmörk and Þótn and Haðaland. Then the sons of Guðrøðr also lost Vermaland, and then they changed into payers of tribute to the king of the Svíar. Óláfr was twenty years old when King Guðrøðr died. [82] And when his brother King Hálfðan came to rule alongside him, they divided Vestfold between them. Óláfr had the western part and Hálfðan the inner part. King Óláfr had a residence at Geirstaðir. He got a pain in his leg and died of it, and he was placed in a mound at Geirstaðir. So says Þjóðólfr:

31. And the kin-branch, *Ynglingatal* 35
 Óðinn's offspring,
 in Norway
 had flourished well.
 Long ago Óláfr
 governed the mighty
 wide extent
 of Vestmarir,
 until leg-pain *Ynglingatal* 36
 laid him low
 by Fold's shore,
 the fighting leader.

Now, bold in war,
 the battle-king
 lies at Geirstaðir
 laid in a mound.

[83] CHAPTER FIFTY

The son of Óláfr, who was king in Vestfold after his father, was called Røgnvaldr. He was known as *heiðumhæri* (Nobly Grey). In his honour Þjóðólfr of Hvinir composed *Ynglingatal*. In it he says this:

32. I know to be best *Ynglingatal* 37
 under blue skies
 the byname
 borne by the king,
 for Røgnvaldr,
 ruler of the host,
 ‘Nobly Grey’¹⁰⁹
 has as his name.

¹⁰⁹ *heiðumhór* ‘highly honoured’ may have been the original form.

[84] **Hálfðanar saga svarta**

CHAPTER ONE

Hálfðan was a year old when his father died. His mother Ása straightway took him west to Agðir and established herself there in the position of power that her father Haraldr had had. Hálfðan grew up there. He was soon big and strong and black-haired. He was known as Hálfðan svarti (the Black). He was eighteen when he took over the kingdom in Agðir. He then immediately went into Vestfold and divided that realm between himself and his brother Óláfr, as was said above. In the autumn of the same year he took an army to Vingulmörk against King Gandálfr, and they fought many battles, and now one, now the other gained victory, and in the end they made peace, and Hálfðan was to have half of Vingulmörk, just as his father Guðrøðr had had. After that King Hálfðan went up into Raumaríki and made it subject to himself. King Sigtryggr, son of King Eysteinn,¹¹⁰ heard about this. [85] At that time he had his residence in Heiðmörk and had previously subjected Raumaríki. Then King Sigtryggr went against King Hálfðan, and there was a great battle there, and Hálfðan had the victory. And when the flight broke out, King Sigtryggr was struck by an arrow under the left arm, and he fell there. Afterwards Hálfðan subjected the whole of Raumaríki to himself. Eysteinn was the name of the second son of King Eysteinn, brother to Sigtryggr. He was then king in Heiðmörk. And when King Hálfðan came out to Vestfold, King Eysteinn took his army out into Raumaríki and made many parts of it subject to himself.

CHAPTER TWO

Hálfðan svarti heard that there was warfare in Raumaríki. Then he mustered an army and went to Raumaríki against King Eysteinn, and they had a battle. Hálfðan had the victory, and Eysteinn fled up into Heiðmörk. King Hálfðan then took his army up into Heiðmörk in pursuit of him, and there they had another battle, and Hálfðan had the victory, and Eysteinn fled north into Dalar to see Hersir (Lord) Guðbrandr. From there he raised troops, afterwards in the winter going out to Heiðmörk. He met Hálfðan svarti on the great island that lies in Mjors, and there they had a battle, and many men fell on both sides, and King Hálfðan had the victory. Hersir Guðbrandr's son Guthormr, fell there, who was held to be the most promising man in Upplönd. Then King

¹¹⁰ Probably Eysteinn Hognason, mentioned in *Óláfs þátrr Geirstadaálfs* (ÓH 715, *Fib* II 75).

Eysteinn fled north into Dalar again. Then he sent his kinsman Hallvarðr skálkr (Servant) to see King Hálfðan [86] to seek a settlement, and for kinship's sake Hálfðan gave up to King Eysteinn half of Heiðmörk, just as it had been held by the kinsmen before. But Hálfðan subjected Þótn to himself, and the area known as Land, and Haðaland, for he made extensive raids. He was then also a very powerful king.

CHAPTER THREE

Hálfðan svarti married Ragnhildr, daughter of Haraldr gullskeggr (Golden-Beard). He was king in Sogn. They had a son, to whom King Haraldr gave his own name, and this boy was brought up in Sogn with his maternal grandfather, King Haraldr. And when King Haraldr was incapacitated by old age, he had no son, and gave his kingdom to his daughter's son Haraldr, and had him made king. Shortly afterwards Haraldr gullskeggr died. In the winter of the same year, his daughter Ragnhildr died. And the following spring the young King Haraldr died of sickness in Sogn. He was then ten years old. As soon as Hálfðan svarti heard of his death, he set out with a great troop and went north to Sogn. He was welcomed there. He claimed the kingdom and inheritance there after his son, and there was no opposition there. He subjected the kingdom to himself. Then Jarl Atli inn mjóvi (the Slender) from Gaular came to him. He was a friend of King Hálfðan. The king put him in charge of Sygnafylki to administer the laws of the land there and to collect taxes on behalf of the king. Then the king went to Upplönd to his own kingdom.

[87] CHAPTER FOUR

King Hálfðan went in the autumn out to Vingulmörk. It happened one night when King Haraldr was at a banquet, that at midnight a man came to him who had been keeping mounted guard, and told him that an army had approached the residence. The king immediately got up and told his men to arm. Then he goes out into the courtyard and drew up his men in battle order. Thereupon Hýsingr and Helsingr, sons of Gandálfr, arrived with a large troop. A great battle took place there, and because King Haraldr was far outnumbered, he fled to the forest and lost a large number of men. Qlvir inn spaki (the Wise), King Haraldr's foster-father, fell there. After this troops thronged to King Hálfðan. Then he went to search out Gandálfr's sons, and they met at Eið by Eyri and fight there. Hýsingr and Helsingr fell there, but their brother Haki escaped by flight. After this King Hálfðan subjected the whole of Vingulmörk to himself, and Haki fled to Álfheimar.

CHAPTER FIVE

There was a king called Sigurðr hjörtr (Hart) in Hringaríki. He was larger and stronger than any other man. He was also the most handsome man to look at. His father was Helgi inn hvassi (the Sharp), and his mother was Áslaug, daughter of Sigurðr ormr-í-auga (Snake-in-the-Eye), [88] son of Ragnarr loðbrók (Shaggy Breeches). It is said that Sigurðr was twelve winters old when he killed the berserk Hildibrandr and eleven others with him, fighting on his own. He achieved many mighty deeds and there is a long saga about him.¹¹¹ Sigurðr had two children. His daughter was called Ragnhildr. She was the most splendid woman. She was aged twenty at this time. Her brother was called Guthormr. He was still a youth. And it is said of Sigurðr's activities, that he used to ride out alone into the wildernesses. He hunted huge and dangerous beasts. He always put great energy into this. It happened one day that Sigurðr was riding out alone into the forests, as his custom was. And when he had been riding a long while, he came out into a clearing in the neighbourhood of Haðaland. Then the berserk Haki came against him with thirty men. They fought there. Sigurðr hjörtr fell there, and twelve of Haki's men, and he himself lost an arm and had three other wounds. Afterwards Haki rode with his men to Sigurðr's home and took away his daughter Ragnhildr and her brother Guthormr, and a great deal of wealth and many valuables and took them with him back to Haðaland. There he had great residences. Then he had a banquet prepared and was going to celebrate his wedding to Ragnhildr, but this was delayed because his wounds got worse. Haki Haðaberserkr (Berserk of the Haðar) was confined to his bed with his wounds through the autumn and the first part of winter. But over Yule King Hálfðan was attending a banquet in Heiðmörk. He had heard about all these doings. It was early one morning, when the king was dressed, that he summoned Hárekr gandr (Wand or Wolf), told him that he was to go across to Haðaland, [89] 'and fetch me Sigurðr hjörtr's daughter Ragnhildr'.

Hárekr set out and took a hundred men, arranging his expedition so that they got across the lake to Haki's dwelling in the small hours, and put guards on all the doors of the hall that the household were sleeping in. Then they went to the sleeping chamber that Haki slept in and broke into it, carried off

¹¹¹ The legendary king, Ragnarr loðbrók, was claimed as an ancestor in the genealogies of many royal and noble families; he appeared in the Skjöldungar dynasty in *Skjöldunga saga* (ÍF XXXV 59). Highly fictionalised accounts of him and his sons survive in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* and *Ragnarssona þáttr* (ÍF XXXV 78–83), but there is no trace of the 'long saga' of Sigurðr hjörtr mentioned here.

Ragnhildr and her brother Guthormr and all the wealth that was there, and they burned the hall and all the men that were in it. They put a covering on a very splendid wagon and put Ragnhildr and her brother in it and went onto the ice. But Haki got up and followed them for a while, and when he got to the ice of the lake, he turned the hilt of his sword downwards and leaned on the point so that the sword pierced him through. There he met his death, and he is buried in a mound on the lakeshore.

King Hálfðan saw them crossing the ice of the lake, for he had very good eyesight. He saw the covered wagon and felt certain that Hárekr and his men's mission must have turned out as he wished. Then he had his table set and men sent round many parts of the district and invited many people to come and there was that day a great and splendidly prepared banquet, and at this banquet King Hálfðan married Ragnhildr, and she was afterwards a powerful queen. Ragnhildr's mother was Pyrrni, daughter of King Klakk-Haraldr of Jutland and sister of Pyri Danmarkarbót (Denmark's Betterment or Enhancement), who was married to Gormr inn gamli (the Old), king of the Danes, who was ruling the realm of the Danes at that time.

[90] CHAPTER SIX

Queen Ragnhildr dreamed great dreams, and she was highly intelligent. This was one dream that she dreamed, that she thought she was there in her herb garden and that she took a thorn from her shift. And as she held it, it grew so that it became a great shoot, so that one end reached the ground and was soon firmly rooted, and the other end reached high up into the air. And next the tree seemed so huge that she could hardly see up over it. It was also astonishingly thick. The lower part of the tree was red as blood, while the stem above was bright green and the branches white as snow. There were also many large twigs on the tree, some high up, some lower down. The branches of the tree were so huge that they seemed to her to spread across all Norway and much further still.¹¹²

CHAPTER SEVEN

King Hálfðan never dreamed. He thought this was strange and consulted a man called Porleifr spaki (the Wise) and asked for advice as to what could be done about it. Porleifr told him what he did if he wanted to find out about something, that he went to sleep in a pigsty, and then he never failed to have

¹¹² An interpretation of the dream is given below in ch. 42 of *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*.

a dream.¹¹³ And the king did this, and this dream appeared to him: It seemed to him that he had the finest hair of anyone, and his hair fell all in locks, some as long as down to the ground, some to halfway up his calves, some to his knee, some to his hip or halfway up his side, some to no lower than his neck, and some were no more than sprouting up [91] from his head like little horns, and his locks were of all kinds of colours, but one lock surpassed them all in beauty and brightness and size. He told Porleifr this dream, and Porleifr interpreted it thus, that great progeny would come from him, and they would rule lands with great, though not all with equally great, glory, but there would be one come of his line who would be greatest and highest of all, and it is accepted as true that this lock symbolised King Óláfr the Saint.

King Hálfðan was a man of great wisdom and truthfulness and justice, and established laws and observed them himself and forced everyone else to observe them, and so that arrogance might not overpower the law, he himself compiled a list of penalties and laid down the atonement for everyone according to their birth and status.

Queen Ragnhildr gave birth to a son, and the boy was sprinkled with water and named Haraldr. He was soon big and most handsome. He grew up there and already early on became a man of accomplishments and gifted with great intelligence. His mother loved him greatly, but his father not so much.

CHAPTER EIGHT

King Hálfðan was receiving a Yule-banquet in Haðaland. There then took place there a marvellous event on Yule-eve, when people had sat down at table, and there was a very large number of them, that [92] all the food disappeared from the tables and all the ale. The king remained sitting sadly, but everyone else set out for home. But in order that the king might ascertain what was behind this event, he had a Lapp brought who had knowledge of many kinds, and tried to compel him to tell the truth and tortured him and yet got nothing out of him. The Lapp turned insistently to Hálfðan's son Haraldr for help, and Haraldr begged for mercy for him and it was not granted, and yet Haraldr got him away in spite of the king's opposition and himself went with him. They came on their travels to where a nobleman was holding a great banquet and they were apparently given a good welcome there. And when they had stayed there until the spring, it happened one day that the nobleman said to Haraldr:

¹¹³ For other instances of sleeping in a particular location to achieve a prophetic dream see Faulkes 1966, 12–13; Joan Turville-Petre 1989. For the possible significance of sleeping in a pigsty, see Leland 1892, 252–53.

‘An amazingly damaging loss for himself your father made out of it when I took some food away from him last winter, but I will compensate you for it with joyful news. Your father is now dead, and you must go home. You will then get all the realm that he has ruled, and in addition you will gain all Norway.’

CHAPTER NINE

Hálfðan svartí was driving from the banquet in Haðaland, and his route happened to take him driving across the lake of Rõnd. It was in the spring. The ice was thawing quickly in the sun. And as they were driving across Rykinsvík, there had been there in the winter a watering hole for cattle, and where the dung had fallen on the ice, there it had eaten into it in the thawing sun, and when the king drove across it, the ice collapsed, and King Hálfðan perished there and a large part of his men with him. He was then forty years old. His [93] reign had been blessed with most prosperous seasons. People thought so much of him that when it became known that he was dead and his body was taken to Hringaríki and was going to be buried there, then the rulers came from Raumaríki and from Vestfold and Heiðmõrk and all asked to take the body with them and bury it in a mound in their own district, and it was considered a promise of prosperity for whoever got it. And they came to this agreement that the body was divided into four parts, and the head was laid in a mound at Steinn in Hringaríki, and they each took back with them their own share and buried it, and these are all known as Hálfðan’s mounds.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Other sources (*Ágrip*, *Nóregs konungatal*, *Fagrskinna B*) simply relate the king’s burial in Hringaríki or give a different account of the dismemberment (*Fagrskinna A*). François-Xavier Dillmann (2000, 154) argues that the story of the dismemberment contributes to a foundation myth echoing the myth of the foundation of the cosmos through the dismemberment of the giant Ymir.

[94] **Haralds saga ins hárfagra**

CHAPTER ONE

Haraldr succeeded to the kingdom after his father. He was then ten winters old. He was of all men the biggest and strongest and most handsome to look at, a wise and most outstanding man. Guthormr, his maternal uncle, was put in charge of his personal following and the whole government of the country. He was commander of the army. After the death of Hálfðan svarti many noblemen began to encroach upon the realm that he had bequeathed. The first person was King Gandálfr, and the brothers Høgni and Fróði, sons of King Eysteinn of Heiðmørk, and Høgni Káruson advanced over much of Hringaríki. Then Haki Gandálfsson sets out for Vestfold with three hundred men and travelled by the upland route across some valleys and intended to take King Haraldr by surprise, but King Gandálfr stayed in Lóndir with his army, and there he planned to transport himself across the fiord to Vestfold. And when Duke Guthormr hears about this, he musters an army and goes with King Haraldr and first turns up inland against Haki, and they meet in a certain valley. There was a battle there, and King Haraldr gained victory. There King Haki fell and a great part of his army. The place has since been known as [95] Hakadalr. After that they turn back, King Haraldr and Duke Guthormr, and by then King Gandálfr had reached Vestfold. And now each advances towards the other, and when they meet, a fierce battle takes place. King Gandálfr fled from it and lost the greatest part of his army and thus got back to his kingdom. And when the sons of King Gandálfr hear about these events in Heiðmørk, they thought an attack against them was imminent. They send word to Høgni Káruson and Hersir Guðbrandr and arrange to meet in Heiðmørk at Hringisakr.

CHAPTER TWO

After these battles King Haraldr and Duke Guthormr and all the troops they can muster set out, and turn towards Upplönd and travel largely through forest routes. They find out where the kings of the Upplanders have arranged to meet and get there about midnight. And the watchmen noticed nothing until the army had arrived before the chamber that Høgni Káruson was in, and also the one that Guðbrandr was sleeping in, and they set fire to both. But the sons of Eysteinn came out with their men and fought for a while, and both fell there, Høgni and Fróði. After the fall of these four leaders King Haraldr, by the strength and efficiency of his kinsman Guthormr, became master of Hringaríki and Heiðmørk, Guðbrandsdalir and Haðaland, Þótn and Raumaríki, Vingulmørk, the whole of the more northerly part. After this King

Haraldr and Duke Guthormr had warfare and battles with King Gandálfr, and it ended with King Gandálfr falling in the last battle, and King Haraldr becoming master of the realm all the way south to the Raumelfr.

[96] CHAPTER THREE

King Haraldr sent his men to fetch a girl whose name was Gyða, daughter of King Eiríkr of Hǫrðaland—she was being fostered in Valdres with a rich farmer—whom he wished to take as his mistress, since she was a very beautiful girl and rather proud. But when the messengers got there, they delivered their message to the girl. She replied in the following manner, that she is not willing to sacrifice her virginity in order to take as her husband a king who had no more of a realm than a few districts to administer.

‘But it seems strange to me,’ she says, ‘that there is no king who wants to take possession of Norway so as to be sole ruler over it, as King Gormr has in Danmørk or Eiríkr at Uppsalar.’¹¹⁵

The messengers thought she was replying astonishingly haughtily, and put the question to her, what good this reply can do, saying that Haraldr is such a powerful king, that he can do as he pleases in this. But although she is responding to their mission otherwise than they would wish, they see no alternative to carrying her off, unless she would agree to it, and they prepare to depart. And when they are ready, people came to see them off. Then Gyða spoke to the messengers, told them to take this message to King Haraldr, that she will only agree to being his wife if he will first do this for her sake, subject the whole of Norway to himself and rule that realm as independently as King Eiríkr rules the realm of the Svíar or [97] King Gormr Danmørk.

‘For then it seems to me,’ she says, ‘that he can be called a sovereign king.’

CHAPTER FOUR

The messengers now go back to King Haraldr and tell him these words of the girl’s, and say they think that she is remarkably bold and silly, and they think it fitting that the king should send a great army to fetch her in disgrace. Then King Haraldr replies that this girl had not said or done anything wrong, so as to merit punishment, saying she should be heartily thanked for what she had said.

‘She has drawn my attention to things,’ he says, ‘which it now seems to me strange that I have not considered before.’

And he went on:

¹¹⁵ Although this speech implies that Haraldr’s contemporaries Gormr and Eiríkr Emundarson had recently achieved sole kingship of Denmark and Sweden respectively, the account in *Ynglinga saga* suggests that this had been achieved long before in Denmark (ch. 36) and Sweden (ch. 41).

‘I make this vow and I call to witness the god who created me and governs all things, that my hair shall never be cut or combed until I have gained the whole of Norway with its taxes and dues and government or die in the attempt.’¹¹⁶

Duke Guthormr thanked him heartily for these words, and declared it was a kingly deed to keep his word.

CHAPTER FIVE

After this the kinsmen muster a great army and set out to Upplönd and on north across Dalir and from there north over Dofrafjall, and when he got down into the inhabited areas, he had everyone killed and the settlements burned. [98] And when the people found out about this, then everyone that could fled, some down to Orkadalr, some to Gaulardalr, some into the forests, some begged for quarter, and all those got it who came to see the king and became his men. They met no resistance until they came into Orkadalr. There they came up against a host. There they had the first battle against the king whose name was Grýtingr. King Haraldr gained victory, and Grýtingr was captured and a large part of his army killed, but he submitted to King Haraldr and swore him oaths of allegiance. After that the whole population of Orkdœlafylki submitted to King Haraldr and became his people.

CHAPTER SIX

King Haraldr made this law everywhere he established his dominion over, that he took possession of all inherited property and made all farmers pay him land dues, both rich and poor. He set a jarl in every district who was to administer the laws of the land and collect fines and land dues, and the jarl was to have one third of the taxes and dues for his maintenance and expenses. Each jarl was to have under him four or more lords and each of them was to have revenues of twenty marks. Each jarl was to provide the king with sixty fighting men for his army, and each lord twenty men. And so much had King Haraldr increased the taxation and land dues that his jarls had more power than kings had had in the past. And then, when this was learned in Prándheimr, many of the ruling class went to see King Haraldr and became his men.

[99] CHAPTER SEVEN

It is said that Jarl Hákon Grjótagarðsson came to King Haraldr from out in Yrjar bringing a great army in support of King Haraldr. After that King Haraldr went in to Gaulardalr and had a battle there and felled two kings and

¹¹⁶ There is a different account of the challenge from a woman (there called Ragna) to Haraldr to become king of all Norway in *Fagrskinna* A (*Fsk* 367).

afterwards took possession of their kingdoms, and that was Gauldœlafylki and Strindafylki. Then he gave Jarl Hákon supervision of Strindafylki. After that King Haraldr went in to Stjóradalr and there had the third battle and gained victory and won that district. After that the inland Prœndir gathered together, four kings assembling with their armies, the first, who ruled Veradalr, the second ruled over Skaun, the third Sparbyggvafylki, the fourth from Eyin iðri. He possessed Eynafylki. These four kings went with an army against King Haraldr, and he had a battle with them and gained victory, and having felled eight kings, gained possession of the whole of Prándheimr.

CHAPTER EIGHT

North in Naumudalr two brothers were kings, Herlaugr and Hrollaugr. They had spent three summers constructing a mound. This mound was built with stone and lime and timber. And when the mound was finished, then the brothers heard the news that King Haraldr was going against them with an army. Then King Herlaugr had a great deal of food and drink driven to the mound. After that King Herlaugr went into the mound with eleven men. Then he had the mound closed. Kind Hrollaugr went up onto [100] the mound that kings were accustomed to sit on,¹¹⁷ and had a royal throne set up there and sat in it. Then he had cushions placed on the platform where jarls were accustomed to sit. Then King Hrollaugr rolled himself out of the royal throne and into the jarl's seat and gave himself the title of jarl. After that he went to meet King Haraldr and gave him his whole kingdom and offered to become his man and told the king his whole procedure. Then King Haraldr took a sword and fastened it on his belt, fastened a shield round his neck and made him his jarl and placed him on a high seat. Then he gave him Naumdœlafylki to supervise and set him as jarl over it.

CHAPTER NINE

King Haraldr then went back to Prándheimr and stayed there for the winter. Always afterwards he called Prándheimr his home. There he built a very large establishment as his chief residence, which is called Hlaðir. That winter King Haraldr married Ása, daughter of Jarl Hákon Grjótgarðsson, and Hákon was then given the highest honour by the king. In the spring King Haraldr took to his ships. During the winter he had had a large dragon-head ship built and very finely fitted out. He manned it with his personal following and berserks. Those whose stations were at the prow were most carefully

¹¹⁷ For sitting on a mound as a ritual practice restricted to kings, see Olrik 1909, Ellis Davidson 1943, 105–11.

chosen, because they were in charge of the king's standard. Aft of the prow station as far as the bailing station it was called *rausn* ('forecastle'). There the berserks were stationed. Only those were admitted to the king's household who were outstanding men in strength and valour and all kinds of ability, only they were assigned to his ship, and he had [101] then plenty of choice of followers for himself from every district. King Haraldr had a large army and many great ships, and many noblemen followed him. The poet Hornklofi says this in *Glymdrápa*, that King Haraldr had fought at Uppdalsskógr against the Orkndælir before he took out this levy:¹¹⁸

33. On the heath the ruler— *Glymdrápa* 1
 raging ever against stirring-
 trees of banner-path chants¹¹⁹—
 waged battle-ski thunder,¹²⁰
 before the increaser
 of clamour of the high hall of Gripnir¹²¹
 sailed splendidly to the conflict
 skis of the riding-beast.¹²²

[102] 34. He caused, the battle-troop's *Glymdrápa* 2
 clash-Þrótt, ¹²³ who ushered
 Irish bandits hellwards,¹²⁴
 on the wolf-pack's path,¹²⁵ a crashing,

¹¹⁸ Hornklofi ('Horn-clawed'), named as Þorbjörn hornklofi below (ch. 15), is said to have composed, besides *Glymdrápa* ('Clash-poem'), the poem known as *Hrafnsmál* ('Speech of the Raven'), or *Haraldskvæði* ('Haraldr's Poem'). His nickname, a word for 'raven', is presumably an allusion to this poem, which is cast in the form of a dialogue between a valkyrie and a raven. Verses 33–36, 40, 41 and 48 are believed to belong to *Glymdrápa*; two further half-verses are preserved elsewhere.

¹¹⁹ *vébrautar galdra æskimeiddar*: 'stirring-trees of chants of standard-roads', warriors.

¹²⁰ *hjaldrskíðs þrima (þruma)*: 'battle-ski's (sword's) thunder', battle.

¹²¹ *Gripnis gnapsalar gnýstærandi*: 'clamour-increasing one of Gripnir's towering hall'; Gripnir is a giant name in the *pulur* but may here signify a sea-king; the sea-king's towering hall is a shield; its clamour is battle, the one who makes it swell is the warrior. The interpretation here is that of *NV* §§ 228–29; *FJ* (B I 20) takes together *Gripnis ríðviggs gnapsól* 'towering hall of Gripnir's riding-steed' as a kenning for 'shield'.

¹²² *ríðvigg lagar skíð*: 'ski of the riding-beast (horse) of the sea', ship.

¹²³ *Gný-Þróttur jorru dróttar*: 'Þróttur (Óðinn) of the din of troops of war (battle): warrior, king.

¹²⁴ *heltannandi hlenna Hlymreks*: *Hlymrek* refers in *Landnámabók* to a place in Ireland, presumably Limerick; 'one who assigns thieves of Limerick (i.e. Ireland in general) to Hel'.

¹²⁵ *glamma ferðar tröð*: 'path of the pack of wolves', wilderness.

before out to sea with splendour *Skáldsk* 93
 the foe of Nǫkkvi, murderous,
 drove the rushing serpent
 of the sacred road of sea-teeth.¹²⁶

[103] CHAPTER TEN

King Haraldr took his army out from Prándheimr and turned south to Mœrr. Húnþjófr is the name of the king who ruled over Mœrafylki. Sǫlvi klofi (Cleaver) was the name of his son. They were great warriors. And the king who ruled over Raumsdalr is named Nǫkkvi. He was Sǫlvi's maternal grandfather. These rulers drew an army together when they heard about King Haraldr, and go against him. They met by Sólskel. A great battle took place there, and King Haraldr gained victory. So says Hornklofi:

35. There storm drove the plank-steed¹²⁷ *Glymdrápa* 4
 south, so that in battle *Fsk* 69
 the shield-bearer¹²⁸ by the ship's side
 did battle with two rulers.
 And challenging chieftains
 exchanged speechless greetings
 with loud shots in battle; the shouting
 of red shields¹²⁹ continued.

[104] There both kings fell, but Sǫlvi escaped by flight. Then King Haraldr subjected these two districts to himself and stayed there for a long time during the summer and laid down the laws for the people and set up supervisors and made sure the people were reliable, and in the autumn he set out to go north to Prándheimr.

Rǫgnvaldr jarl of the Mœrir, son of Eysteinn glumra (Clash), had that summer become King Haraldr's man. The king made him ruler over these two districts, Norð-Mœrr and Raumsdalr, and gave him the support for it of both noblemen and farmers there, also a supply of ships to defend the land from attack. He was known as Rǫgnvaldr inn ríki (the Great) and inn ráðsvinni (the Wise of Counsel), and people maintain that both were appropriate names. King Haraldr spent the following winter in Prándheimr.

¹²⁶ *lagar tanna vébrautar ræsinaðr*: 'rushing snake of the sacred road (sea) of teeth of the sea (rocks)', dragon-ship.

¹²⁷ *borð-Hǫlkvir*: 'board-Hǫlkvir'. Hǫlkvir was the name of the hero Hǫgn Gjúkason's horse (*Skáldsk* 89); a horse of boards is a ship.

¹²⁸ *hlífar valdr*: 'wielder of protection, i.e. of a shield', warrior.

¹²⁹ *randa rǫdd*: 'voice of shields', the noise of battle.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The next spring King Haraldr set out from Þrándheimr with a great army and said that he would make for Sunn-Mœrr with this army. Sǫlvi klofi had during the winter stayed out on warships and had raided over Norð-Mœrr and killed many of King Haraldr's men, and plundered some and burned the buildings of others and caused very great damage, but sometimes in the winter he had been in Sunn-Mœrr with his kinsman Arnviðr. And when they learned that King Haraldr had come by ship and had a great army, they mustered troops and became very numerous, [105] for many felt they needed to pay King Haraldr back for his hostility. Sǫlvi klofi went south to Firðir to see King Auðbjörn, who ruled there, and requested help from him, that he should go with his army in support of him and King Arnviðr.

'It will then not be improbable that our expedition may turn out well, if we all rise against King Haraldr, for we will then have plenty of strength, and fate can determine the victory. The alternative, though it is no alternative for those men who are no less noble than King Haraldr, is to become his vassals. My father thought it the better course to fall in battle in his kingdom than to go of his own accord into King Haraldr's service or not to face up to weapons, as the kings of the Naumdælir did.'

Sǫlvi so managed his argument that Auðbjörn promised to go. He gathered together an army and went north to meet King Arnviðr. They then had a very large army. They then learned that King Haraldr was arrived from the north. They met each other on the landward side of Sólskel. It was usual, when men were fighting on ships, to tie the ships together and fight across the prows. This was done here. King Haraldr brought his ship against King Arnviðr's ship. The fighting was fierce, and many people fell on both sides. And in the end King Haraldr got so angry and furious that he went forward to the forecastle on his ship and then fought so boldly that all the men in the forward part of King Arnviðr's ship fell back to the mast, and some fell. Then King Haraldr went up onto King Arnviðr's ship. King Arnviðr's men then tried to flee, but he himself fell on his ship. King Auðbjörn also fell there, but Sǫlvi escaped by flight. So says Hornklofi:

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 36. | The king stirred against soldiers
a spear-storm, ¹³⁰ where red wounds
[106] spat blood; in din of Skǫgul ¹³¹
sounded mail-coat goslings, ¹³² | <i>Glymdrápa</i> 5
<i>Fsk</i> 70
<i>Skáldsk</i> 219 |
|-----|--|---|

¹³⁰ *geira hregg*: 'storm of spears', battle.

¹³¹ *Skǫglar dyn*: 'noise of Skǫgul (a valkyrie)', battle.

¹³² *bryngǫgl*: 'byrnie-goslings', (feathered) arrows.

when on the prow in the prince's
 presence, men fell lifeless;
 the sword on shields sang out;
 the stainer of blades¹³³ had victory.

From King Haraldr's army fell there his jarls Ásgautr and Ásbjörn, his brothers-in-law Grjótgarðr and Herlaugr, sons of Jarl Hákon. Sólvi was a great viking for a long time and frequently caused great damage in King Haraldr's realm.

CHAPTER TWELVE

After that King Haraldr subjected Sunn-Mœrr to himself. King Auðbjörn's brother Vémundr kept Firðafylki and became king over it. This was late in the autumn, and it was decided with King Haraldr that he should not travel south past Staðr in the autumn. Then King Haraldr set Jarl Røgnvaldr over both Mœrrs as well as Raumsdalr, and he kept a large number of men round him. King Haraldr then turned back north to Prándheimr. The same winter Jarl Røgnvaldr went along the landward side of the islands across Eið and [107] so south past Firðir. He got information about King Vémundr and reached the place called Naustdalr at night. King Vémundr was attending a banquet there. Jarl Røgnvaldr captured their house and burned the king in it with ninety men. After that Berðlu-Kári came to Jarl Røgnvaldr with a fully manned longship, and they both went north to Mœrr. Jarl Røgnvaldr took the ships that King Vémundr had had and all the valuables he could get. Berðlu-Kári went north to Prándheimr to see King Haraldr and became his man. He was a great berserk.

The next spring King Haraldr went south along the coast with a naval force and subjected Firðafylki. Then he sailed round the coast to the east and came out in Vík in the east. King Haraldr left Jarl Hákon Grjótgarðsson behind in Firðir and gave him Firðafylki to supervise. But then, when the king had gone to the east, Jarl Hákon sent word to Jarl Atli inn mjóvi that he should leave Sogn and be jarl in Gaular which he had had before. Atli said King Haraldr had given him Sygnafylki and said he would hold on to it until he met King Haraldr. The jarls disputed this with each other until they each mustered an army. They met in Stafanesvágr in Fjalir and [108] had a great battle. There Jarl Hákon fell, and Jarl Atli was mortally wounded. His men took him to Atley and there he died. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir:

¹³³ *eggliuðr*: 'blade-colourer', warrior.

37. Hǫkon, tree
of Hǫgni's daughter,¹³⁴
was weapons' target
when he did battle;
and as spear-points
sounded, life
the heir of Freyr
at Fjalir lost. *Háleygjatal* 9
Fsk 66
38. And where fell
the friends of Hǫkon,
Stone-garðr's¹³⁵ son,
at Stafanes
the bay with men's
blood was mingled,
in loud clash
of Lóðurr's friend.¹³⁶ *Háleygjatal* 10
Fsk 66

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

King Haraldr brought his army east to Vík and made in to Túnsberg. At that time there was a market town there. King Haraldr had then spent four winters in Þrándheimr and had not been in all that time in the Vík. He got the news that Eiríkr Eymundarson, king of the Svíar, had [109] subjected Vermaland to himself and was taking taxes from all the border forest districts and he claimed it was Vestra-Gautland all the way north to Svínasund and on the western side all the way along the sea; the king of the Svíar claimed it was all his realm and took taxes from it. He had set up a jarl there who was called Hrani inn gauzki (the Gautish). His realm was between Svínasund and the Gautelfr. He was a powerful jarl. The words of the king of the Svíar were reported to King Haraldr to the effect that he would not stop until he

¹³⁴ *Hǫgna meyjar viðr*: 'tree of Hǫgni's daughter, warrior'. Men are commonly referred to by tree-names of masculine gender in kennings. Hǫgni is the father of Hildir who presides over a legendary never-ending battle (*Skáldsk* 72); *hildir* is also a common noun for 'battle'.

¹³⁵ *maðgar Hallgarðs*: 'of Hallgarðr's son'. The first element of this name, *hallr*, means 'stone', a riddling substitution for the synonym *grjót* which occurs in the name of Hákon's father Grjótgarðr.

¹³⁶ *gný vinar Lóðurs*: 'clash of Lóðurr's friend (Óðinn), battle'. Lóðurr is named as a companion of Óðinn in *Vǫluspá* 18 (*Poetic Edda* 5).

had the same extent of rule in the Vík as Sigurðr hringr (Ring) or his son Ragnarr loðbrók had once had there, and that was Raumaríki and Vestfold, all the way out to Grenmarr, as well as Vingulmörk and everywhere south of there. There had by now turned to subservience to the king of the Svíar throughout all these districts many of the leading men and a large number of other folk. This greatly displeased King Haraldr, and he called a meeting with the farmers there in the Fold. He then brought charges against the farmers for what he claimed was treason against himself. Some of the farmers lodged denials on their own behalf, some paid fines, some received punishments. Thus he continued through this district during the summer. In the autumn he went up into Raumaríki, and there continued in the same manner, subjecting that district to himself. Then he learned in the early winter that King Eiríkr of the Svíar was riding across Vermaland to banquets with his following.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

King Haraldr set out east through Eiðaskógr and came out in Vermaland. There he had banquets prepared for himself. There was a man called Áki. He was the most powerful farmer in Vermaland, very wealthy and by now old in years. [110] He sent men to King Haraldr and invited him to a banquet. The king promised he would go on the given day. Áki also invited King Eiríkr to a banquet and appointed the same day for him. Áki had a great hall, an ancient one. Then he had another new banqueting hall built, no smaller, and all finely finished. He had this hall hung with all new hangings, but the ancient hall with ancient hangings. And when the kings came to the banquet, King Eiríkr was assigned to the ancient hall and his men, but King Haraldr to the new hall with his men. The tableware was all distributed in the same way, King Eiríkr and his men having all ancient vessels and also horns, though gilded and very finely decorated, but King Haraldr and his men had all new vessels and horns and all decorated with gold, they all had relief images on them and were polished like glass. The drink in both cases was of the best. The farmer Áki had previously been one of King Hálfðan's men. And when the day came when the banquet was over, the kings got ready to depart. Then riding horses were waiting. Then Áki went before King Haraldr and took with him his son, twelve years old, called Ubbi. Áki said:

'If you, king, think it worth your friendship in return for my goodwill, which I have shown you in my hospitality to you, then reward my son. I give him to you to enter your service.'

The king thanked him with many fine words for his entertainment and promised him in return his absolute friendship. Then he brought out great gifts which he gave to the king. Then Áki went to the king of the Svíar. Eiríkr

was then clothed and ready to be off, and he was not very cheerful. [111] Áki then took fine presents and gave them to him. The king makes little response and mounted his horse's back. Áki went along the road with him and spoke with him. There was a forest near them, and the way lay across it. And when Áki came to the forest, then the king asked him:

'Why did you make a difference between the hospitality for me and that for King Haraldr, so that he should have all the better share? And you realise that you are my man?'

'I thought,' says Áki, 'that you, king, and your men would find no entertainment lacking at this banquet. But as to there being ancient ornaments where you were drinking, the reason for that is that you are now old. But King Haraldr is now in the bloom of youth, so I gave him the new ornaments. But whereas you reminded me that I am your man, I know this for sure, that you are just as much my man.'

Then the king drew his sword and struck him his death-blow, then rode away. And when King Haraldr was ready to mount his horse, he ordered the farmer Áki to be summoned to him. And when people were looking for him, some ran in the direction that King Eiríkr had ridden. There they found Áki dead, then went back and told the king. And when he hears this, he calls on his men to avenge the farmer Áki. Then King Haraldr rides in the direction that King Eiríkr had previously ridden until each party becomes aware of the other. Then they each ride as hard as they can until King Eiríkr comes to the forest that separates Gautland and Vermaland. Then King Haraldr turns back to Vermaland, then subjects that land to himself and killed King Eiríkr's men wherever he went. King Haraldr went back to Raumaríki in the winter.

[112] CHAPTER FIFTEEN

King Haraldr went in the winter out to Túnsberg to his ships. He then gets the ships ready and sails east across the fiord, then subjects the whole of Vingulmørk to himself. He is out on warships all winter and raids on Ranríki. So says Þorbjörn hornklofi:¹³⁷

¹³⁷ For Þorbjörn hornklofi and his poem *Haraldskvæði* or *Hrafnsmál* see note 118 above. Verses 39 and 42–46, dealing with the Battle of Hafrsfjörðr, are believed to belong to this poem. *Fagrskinna* attributes verses 42–46 to Þjóðólfr of Hvinir, but cites a further fifteen attributed to Hornklofi, including the exchange between the valkyrie and the raven from which *Hrafnsmál* gets its name (*Fsk* 59–64). Three further verses are found elsewhere.

39. He will drink Yule at sea *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál) 6*
 if he decides the matter, *Fsk 61*
 the prince forward-looking,
 Freyr's game¹³⁸ he will play;
 bored from youth, by fireside
 basking, indoors sitting,
 with ladies' warm bower
 and wadded downy mittens.

The Gautar kept a host out against him all over the country.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

In the spring, when the ice broke up, the Gautar staked the Gautelfr so that King Haraldr should not be able to take his ships inland. King Haraldr sailed his ships up into the river and took them up to the stakes, then raided the land on both sides and burned the settlement. So says Hornklofi:

40. South of the sea, the feeder *Glymdrápa 6*
 of seagulls of war¹³⁹ subjected—
 [113] the prince had gods for patrons—
 people and land in battle,
 and the king, used to the helmet
 of the isle-trout,¹⁴⁰ high-couraged,
 had the savage stag of limewood¹⁴¹
 to a stake fastened by the land.

Then the Gautar rode with a great army and held a battle against King Haraldr and there was a great deal of loss of life, and King Haraldr gained victory. So says Hornklofi:

41. With a roar of raised axes *Glymdrápa 7*
 and ringing of spears, men were
 bitten by black-polished
 blades of the great king's forces,

¹³⁸ *Freys leikr*: 'game of Freyr', presumably battle, though the god Freyr is usually associated with fertility rather than war.

¹³⁹ *grennir gunnmós*: 'feeder of the battle-gull (raven)', warrior.

¹⁴⁰ *hjalmtamiðr hilmir holmreyðar*: 'king accustomed to the helmet of the island-trout (serpent, dragon)': a reference to the *ægishjálmr* or 'helmet of terror', associated in myth with the dragon Fáfnir; the king metaphorically wearing it rules firmly by inspiring terror.

¹⁴¹ *lindihqrtr*: 'hart, stag of limewood': ship.

when the enemy of Gautar
 got victory; loud over
 the necks of spirited soldiers
 sang spears flight-bidden.

[114] CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

King Haraldr travelled widely over Gautland raiding and had many battles there on both sides of the river, and he was generally victorious, but in one battle Hrani gauzki fell. Then King Haraldr subjected to himself the whole land on the northern side of the river and west of Vænir and the whole of Vermaland. And when he turned away from there, then he set behind there to guard the land Duke Guthormr and a large troop with him, but he turned then to Upplønd and stayed there a while, then went north over Dofrafjall to Þrándheimr and stayed there for further long periods. Then he began to have children. He and Ása had these sons: Guthormr was the eldest, Hálfðan svartí (the Black), Hálfðan hvítí (the White)—they were twins—the fourth Sigfrøðr. They were all brought up in Þrándheimr in great honour.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The news came from the south of the country that the Hǫrðar and Rygir, Egðir and Þilir had gathered together and were making an uprising with both ships and weapons and large numbers of men. The instigators were Eiríkr king of Hǫrðaland, Súlki king of Rogaland and his brother Jarl Sóti, Kjötví the Wealthy, king of Agðir, and his son Þórir haklangr (Long-Chin), from Pelamǫrk two brothers, Hróaldr hryggr (Sad) and Haddr inn harði (the Harsh). And then, when King Haraldr learned of these events, he mustered troops and launched ships [115] into the water, then set out with the army and went south along the coast and took many men from each district. And then, when he came south past Staðr, King Eiríkr heard of it. He had then also mustered those troops that he could expect. Then he went south to meet the troops that he knew would be coming from the east as support for him. Then the whole army met up to the north of Jaðarr and then made in to Hafrsfjörðr. King Haraldr was already lying there with his army. Then a great battle begins there immediately, it was both hard and long. But in the end it came about that King Haraldr gained the victory, and there fell King Eiríkr and King Súlki and his brother Jarl Sóti. Þórir haklangr had laid his ship against King Haraldr's ship. And Þórir was a great berserk. There was there a very fierce onslaught before Þórir haklangr fell. Then the whole of his ship was cleared of men. Then King Kjötví also

fled onto a certain little island, where there was a very good defensive position. Then all their troops fled, some on ships, but some leapt up ashore and so on the inland route south across Jaðarr. So says Hornklofi:¹⁴²

42. Hear now how there *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 7
 in Hafrsfjörðr grappled *Fsk* 67
 the king of high kin
 with Kjötvi the wealthy!
 [116] Warships sailed westward
 willing for battle,
 with dragon-heads gaping
 and graven prows.¹⁴³
43. They were laden with warriors *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 8
 and with white shields, *Fsk* 67
 spears brought from Britain,
 blades of Frankish forging.
 The berserks bellowed;
 battle was upon them.
 Howled wolfskin-wearers
 and weapons rattled.
44. The ambitious man they tested *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 9
 who taught them to flee, *Fsk* 68
 the lord of the Northmen
 who lives at Útsteinn.
 He steered steeds of Nǫkkvi¹⁴⁴
 seeing battle in prospect.
 Hard were shields hammered
 till Haklangr fell.
- [117] 45. The fat-necked king, flagging, *Haraldskvæði (Hrafnsmál)* 10
 defending the land against *Fsk* 68

¹⁴² Verses 42–46 are also in *Fagrskinna*, where they are attributed to Þjóðólfr of Hvinir.

¹⁴³ *með . . . grǫfnum tinglum*: The sense of *tingl* is obscure; it has been supposed to be ‘the triangular piece in the fore-stem where the two sides of the ship join’ (Jesch 2001, 148; Falk 1912, 43–44).

¹⁴⁴ *Nǫkkva stóð*: ‘stud of Nǫkkvi’, fleet of ships. Nǫkkvi, elsewhere a common noun meaning ‘boat’ (as in *Skáldsk* v. 491/8), is here the name of a sea-king (cf. *Skáldsk* v. 354/4).

Shock-head,¹⁴⁵ shielded
 his ships with an island;
 The wounded thrust themselves
 under thwarts, raising
 their arses heavenwards,
 heads stuck in the bilges.

46. On their backs they bore, gleaming — *Haraldskvæði*
 bombarded with stones — *(Hrafnsmál)* 11
 hall-tiles of Sváfnir,¹⁴⁶ *Fsk* 68–69
 the timorous soldiers.
 Home from Hafrsfjörðr
 hastened eastern bumpkins,
 their minds on mead-drinking,
 made tracks over Jaðarr.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

After this battle King Haraldr met no resistance in Norway. All the greatest of his enemies were now fallen, and some fled from the land, and that was a very large number of people, because then large uninhabited areas were settled. [118] Then Jamtaland and Helsingjaland were settled, and yet both had been to a certain extent settled previously by Norwegians. During the warfare by which King Haraldr gained territory in Norway, outlying countries, Faeroes and Iceland, were discovered and settled. Then there was a great deal of travelling to Shetland, and many of the ruling classes of Norway fled as outlaws before King Haraldr and went on raids to the British Isles, were in Orkney and the Hebrides in winter, but in summer they raided in Norway and did much damage to the land there. There were also many of the ruling classes who submitted to King Haraldr and became his men and occupied lands with him.

CHAPTER TWENTY

King Haraldr had now become sole ruler of all Norway. Then he called to mind what that proud girl had said to him. He then sent men for her

¹⁴⁵ *Lúfa*, ‘Shock-head’, Haraldr’s nickname, alluding to his oath not to cut or comb his hair before uniting Norway. After he succeeded in this, he achieved the nickname *hárfagri* ‘the Fine-Haired’. Cf. Ch. 23 below.

¹⁴⁶ *Sváfnis salnaefrar*: ‘Sváfnir’s (Óðinn’s) hall-tiles’, shields, with which the roof of Valhøll was tiled (*Gylf* 7).

and had her brought to him and made her his mistress. These were their children: Álof was eldest, then was Hrœerek, then Sigtryggr, Fróði and Þorgils.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

King Haraldr had many wives and many children. He married a woman who was called Ragnhildr, daughter of King Eiríkr of Jutland.¹⁴⁷ She was called Ragnhildr [119] in ríka (the Powerful). Their son was Eiríkr blóðøx (Blood-Axe).¹⁴⁸ He also married Svanhildr, daughter of Jarl Eysteinn. Their children were Óláfr Geirstaðálfr (Elf of Geirstaðir), Björn and Ragnarr rykkill (Snatcher). King Haraldr also married Áshildr, daughter of Hringr Dagsson from up in Hringaríki. Their children were Dagr and Hringr, Guðrøðr skyrja (Heifer), Ingigerðr. They say that when King Haraldr married Ragnhildr ríka he put away nine of his wives. Hornklofi alludes to this:

47. He would not have Hólmrygir¹⁴⁹ *Haraldskvæði* 14
 or Hǫrðar women,
 any from Heiðmörk
 or Hǫlgi's kindred,¹⁵⁰
 when the king of high birth
 chose a Danish bride.

[120] King Haraldr's children were all brought up in their maternal homes. Duke Guthormr had sprinkled King Haraldr's eldest son with water and given him his own name. He had placed the boy on his knees and fostered him and kept him with him in Vík in the east. He was brought up there with Duke Guthormr. Duke Guthormr had complete charge of the whole of the land around the Vík and across Upplönd when the king was not in the vicinity.

¹⁴⁷ Only Snorri names Ragnhildr's father as Eiríkr. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson speculates that this may be a deduction from the name of her son, Eiríkr blóðøx, who may have been named after his grandfather in accordance with tradition (*Hkr* I 118, note 2).

¹⁴⁸ Eiríkr's nickname is explained in several texts: in *Ágrip* he is said to be so named because he was *ofstopamaðr ok greypr* 'a cruel and ruthless man'; in Theodoricus he is said to have killed his brothers; and in *Fagrskinna* the nickname is attributed to his extensive raiding.

¹⁴⁹ *Hólmrygir*: inhabitants of Rogaland (Rygir), specifically those from its islands (*hólmar*), possibly with a play on *rygjar* (often found with a short vowel, *rygjar*) 'ladies'.

¹⁵⁰ *Hǫlga attar*: 'kindred of Hǫlgi', i.e. those from Hálogaland.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

King Haraldr heard that in many places in the central part of the country vikings were raiding, ones who spent the winters in the British Isles. He then took a levy out each summer and searched through the islands and outlying skerries, but wherever vikings became aware of his army, all fled, mostly out to the open sea. And then, when the king had got tired of this, it turned out one summer that King Haraldr sailed with his army to the British Isles. He came first to Shetland and there slew all the vikings who had not fled from there. Afterwards he sails south to Orkney and cleansed everywhere there of vikings. After that he goes right to the Hebrides and raids there. He slew there many vikings who had previously been leading bands. He had [121] many battles there and was nearly always victorious. Then he raided in Scotland and had battles there. And when he came to Man in the west, then they had already heard of what depredation he had caused in that country, so all the people fled in to Scotland, and it was entirely empty of people and all the animals that could be, had been carried away. And then, when King Haraldr and his men went ashore, they found nothing to plunder. So says Hornklofi:

48. The ring-wrecker¹⁵¹ bore many *Glymdrápa* 8
 rounds,¹⁵² shrewd, to the dwelling
 of the sand-ring;¹⁵³ on the sand the
 stream-wolves' tree¹⁵⁴ did battle;
 till the Irish¹⁵⁵ host, before the active
 lessener of the isthmus of the thruster,¹⁵⁶
 was all forced to flee from
 the fish-road country.¹⁵⁷

[122] It was at this time that Ívarr, son of Røgnvaldr Mørajarl (jarl of the Møerir), fell. And in compensation for this King Haraldr gave Jarl Røgnvaldr,

¹⁵¹ *menfergir*: 'destroyer of neck-rings', generous king.

¹⁵² *randir*: shields.

¹⁵³ *sandmens býr*: 'settlement of the sand-necklace (i.e. of the sea, which encircles an island)', identified by Snorri as Man.

¹⁵⁴ *Niðar varga lundr*: 'grove, tree of the wolves of the river Nið (ships)', sailor.

¹⁵⁵ *herr Skota*: 'the host of Scots'; *Skotar* could apply to the Irish, or the inhabitants of Man, at the time of the poem's composition.

¹⁵⁶ *lögðis eiðs þverrir*: 'diminisher of the neck of land of the thruster (sword)'; the land of the sword is the shield; the diminisher of shields is a warrior.

¹⁵⁷ *læbrautar lād*: 'land of the fish-road (sea)', land by the sea, or surrounded by sea (island).

when he sailed back from the British Isles, Orkney and Shetland, but Røgnvaldr immediately gave both countries to his brother Sigurðr, and he remained behind in the west when the king sailed back east. He first gave Sigurðr the jarldom. Then Þorsteinn rauðr (Red), son of Óláfr hvíti (the White) and Auðr in djúpúðga (the Deep-Minded), joined forces with him [Sigurðr]. They raided in Scotland and gained Katanes and Suðrland right as far as Ekkjálshakki. Jarl Sigurðr slew Melbrigði tǫnn (Tooth), a Scottish earl, and tied his head to his saddle-strap, and his calf-muscle struck against the tooth which was jutting out from the head. It became infected and he died as a result, and he is buried in a mound on Ekkjálshakki. Then his son Guthormr ruled the countries for one year and died childless. Then vikings, Danes and Norwegians, established themselves in these countries.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

King Haraldr was attending a banquet in Mœrr at Jarl Røgnvaldr's. He had now gained possession of the whole country. Then the king had a hot bath there, and then King Haraldr had his hair dressed, and then Jarl Røgnvaldr cut his hair, and before this it had been uncut and uncombed for ten years. During that time they called him Haraldr lúfa (Shock-Head), but afterwards Røgnvaldr gave him a surname and called him Haraldr inn hárfagri (the Fine-Haired) and everyone said that this was an absolutely apt name, because he had hair that was both abundant and beautiful.

[123] CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Røgnvaldr Mœrjarl was a most intimate friend of King Haraldr, and the king valued him highly. Røgnvaldr was married to Hildr, daughter of Hrólfr nefja (Conk). Their sons were Hrólfr and Þórir. Jarl Røgnvaldr also had sons by mistresses. One was called Hallaðr, the second Einarr, the third Hrollaugr. They were full-grown when their legitimate brothers were children. Hrólfr was a great viking. He was of such great size that no horse could carry him, and he walked wherever he went. He was known as Gøngu-Hrólfr (Walking-Hrólfr). He raided a great deal in the eastern Baltic. One summer, when he returned to the Vík from raiding in the east, he made a coastal raid there. King Haraldr was in the Vík. He became very angry when he heard about this, for he had laid an absolute ban on plundering within the country. The king announced it at an assembly, that he was making Hrólfr an outlaw from Norway. And when Hrólfr's mother Hildr heard about this, she went to see the king and begged for pardon for Hrólfr. The king was so angry that her begging did no good. Then Hildr uttered this:

49. Now you banish Nefja's
 namesake, from the land outlawed
 drive the wise brother of heroes.
 Why do you act so, ruler?
 [124] Unwise to be wolfish with such a
 wolf of Óðinn's slaughter-board,¹⁵⁸
 he'll treat the king's flocks fiercely
 if he takes to the forest.

Göngu-Hrólfr then went west across the sea to the Hebrides, and from there he went west to Valland and raided there and won a great jarldom and settled it extensively with Norwegians, and it has since been known as Normandy.¹⁵⁹ From Hrólf's line have [125] come jarls in Normandy. Göngu-Hrólfr's son was William, father of Ríkarðr, father of another Ríkarðr, father of Roðbert lǫngumspaði (Long Spade),¹⁶⁰ father of William Bastard, king of England. From him all the kings of England since are descended. Queen Ragnhildr ríka lived for three years after she came to Norway. And after her death Eiríkr, son of her and King Haraldr, went for fostering to Firðir to Hersir (Lord) Þórir Hróaldsson, and he was brought up there.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

King Haraldr went one winter to attend banquets through Upplönd and had a Yule-banquet prepared for himself in Poptar. On Yule-eve Svási came to the door while the king was sitting at [126] table, and sent the king a message that he was to come out to him. But the king flew into a temper at this message and the same person carried the king's anger out as had carried the message in to him. But none the less Svási bade the message be carried in a second time and said he was the same Lapp whom the king had permitted to set up his hut on the other side of the slope there. And the king

¹⁵⁸ *Yggs valbríkar ulfr*: 'wolf of the board (shield) of Óðinn's slaughter (battle)', warrior.

¹⁵⁹ Other sources (*Orkneyinga saga*, *Fagrskinna*) have versions of the story of the founding of Normandy by Göngu-Hrólfr. French and English sources (e.g. Dudo of St. Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normannie ducum*) record its founding by Rollo, an exile from Denmark who was granted lands at the mouth of the Seine in 911, but there is no evidence there for the evidently traditional identification of Rollo with Göngu-Hrólfr.

¹⁶⁰ This nickname (or *langaspjót* 'Long Spear') evidently derives from Old French *longue espede* (Long Sword; Medieval Latin *longa spatha*) which in French sources is applied to Göngu-Hrólfr's son William. *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* also transfer it to William the Conqueror's father Robert.

went out and agreed to go to his home with him, and walked over the slope with the encouragement of some of his men, though some were against it. There Svási's daughter Snæfríðr, a most beautiful woman, rose and served the king a goblet full of mead, and he took all into his grasp, including her hand, and it was immediately as if a fiery heat came into his flesh, and he wanted to have her straight away that night. But Svási said that it should not be except by force, unless the king betrothed himself to her and got her lawfully, and the king betrothed himself to Snæfríðr and married her and loved her so madly that his kingdom and all his duties he then neglected. They had four sons, one was Sigurðr hrísi (Brushwood), Hálfðan hálegggr (Long-Leg), Guðrøðr ljómi (Shiner), Rognvaldr réttilbeini (Straight-Grown). Then Snæfríðr died, but her colour changed not a bit, she was just as ruddy as when she was alive. The king sat over her continually and thought that she would return to life. So three years went by, that he mourned her dead while all the people of the land mourned him astray in his wits. But to put down this derangement Þorleifr spaki came to treat him who using his intelligence put down this derangement by first of all addressing him after this manner:

'It is not, king, surprising that you should commemorate a woman so beautiful and of such noble descent, and should honour her with down and velvet, as [127] she bade you, but your nobility is less than it ought to be, and so is hers, in that she lies too long on the same cloths, and it is much more proper that she should be moved and the cloths under her be changed.'

And as soon as she was moved from the bed, then decay and foul stench and all kinds of foul smells sprang out of the corpse. Then a pyre was hastily built and she was burned. Before that the whole body went black and there swarmed out of it worms and adders, frogs and toads, and all kinds of nasty maggots. Thus she descended to ashes, and the king ascended to wisdom and turned his mind from folly, afterwards ruled his kingdom and gained strength, rejoiced in his subjects and they in him, and the kingdom in both.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

After King Haraldr had found out the fraud of the Lappish woman, he got so angry that he drove away his and the Lappish woman's sons and refused to see them. But Guðrøðr ljómi went to see his foster-father Þjóðólfr of Hvinir and asked him to go with him to the king, since Þjóðólfr was an intimate friend of the king. But the king was then in Upplönd. Then they went, but when they came to the king late in the evening, they sat down among the lower seats and kept hidden. The king went down the centre of the room and looked at the benches, and he was holding some kind of banquet, and mead had been brewed. Then he uttered this in a low voice:

50. Much too mead-eager
are my old warriors,
come here all hoary.
Why are you so many?

[128] Then Þjóðólfr replied:

51. We have had our heads
hewn in play of weapons
with the wise gold-breaker.¹⁶¹
We weren't then too many.

Þjóðólfr took off his hood and then the king recognised him and welcomed him. Then Þjóðólfr begged the king that he should not despise his sons.

'For they would have willingly had a better maternal descent if you had let them have it.'

The king granted him this and bade him take Guðrøðr back with him where he had been before, but he bade Sigurðr and Hálfðan go to Hringaríki, and Røgnvaldr to Haðaland. They do as the king commanded. They all became valiant men and well endowed with skills. King Haraldr then remained peacefully in his own country and there was good peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Jarl Røgnvaldr in Mørr heard of his brother Sigurðr's fall, and also that vikings were occupying his lands. Then he sent his son Hallaðr to the west and he took the title of jarl and took a great troop to the west, and then, when he came to Orkney, he established himself in his lands. But both in the autumn and in the winter and in the spring vikings went round the islands, plundered the headlands and made coastal raids. Then Jarl Hallaðr got tired of staying in the Islands. He threw himself down from the jarldom and took up the status of *hqlðr* (free farmer with inherited property). Then he went east to Norway. But when Jarl Røgnvaldr heard about this, he was displeased with Hallaðr's behaviour, saying that his sons would turn out different from their forefathers. Then [129] Einarr replied:

'I have had little esteem from you. I have little affection to leave behind. I will go west to the Islands if you will give me some troops. I will promise you this, which will be a very great source of pleasure to you, that I shall not return to Norway.'

Røgnvaldr says it pleased him well that he would not return.

¹⁶¹ *vellbroti*: 'breaker (distributor) of gold', generous lord.

‘For I have little hope that you will be a credit to your family, for all your mother’s family is slave-born.’

Rögnvaldr gave Einarr one longship and provided it with a crew for him. Einarr sailed over the sea to the west. And when he came to Orkney, there lay there before him vikings on two ships, Þórir tréskegg (Tree-Beard) and Kálfr skurfa (Scab). Einarr immediately engaged in battle with them, and gained victory, and they both fell. Then this was recited:

52. Then to trolls he gave Tréskegg,
Turf-Einarr killed Skurfa.

He was called Turf-Einarr because he had turf cut and used it for firewood, for there was no forest in Orkney. Afterwards Einarr became jarl over the Islands, and he was a powerful person. He was an ugly person and one-eyed, and yet the most sharp-sighted of men.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Duke Guthormr usually stayed in Túnsberg and had supervision over the whole of the Vík when the king was not about, and was responsible for the defence of the land. It was very subject to raids by vikings there, and there was fighting up in Gautland as long as King Eiríkr Emundarson lived. He died [130] when King Haraldr inn hárfagri had been king in Norway for ten years.

After Eiríkr his son Björn was king in Svíþjóð for fifty years. He was father of Eiríkr inn sigrsæli (the Victorious) and of Styrbjörn’s father Óláfr. Duke Guthormr died of sickness in Túnsberg. Then King Haraldr gave supervision of all that realm to his son Guthormr, and placed him there as ruler over it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

By the time King Haraldr was aged forty, many of his sons were pretty well grown up. They had all matured early. It came about that they were ill pleased that the king gave them no political power, but set a jarl in every district, and they believed the jarls to be of lower birth than they themselves were. Then one spring Hálfðan hálegg and Guðrøðr ljómi approached with a large troop of men and came unexpectedly to Rögnvaldr Mœrajarl and surrounded his house and burned him in it with sixty men. Then Hálfðan hálegg took three longships and manned them and then sails west over the sea, but Guðrøðr established himself there on the lands which Jarl Rögnvaldr had previously held. And when King Haraldr heard about this he went with a great troop against Guðrøðr. Guðrøðr saw no alternative but to give himself up into King

Haraldr's power, and the king sent him east to Agðir. But King Haraldr then set over Mœrr Jarl Røgnvaldr's son Þórir, and gave him his daughter Álof, who was known as árbót (Improvement of Prosperity). Jarl Þórir þegjandi (Silent) then had the same rule as his father Jarl Røgnvaldr had had.

[131] CHAPTER THIRTY

Hálfðan hálegggr came west to Orkney, very unexpectedly, and Jarl Einarr immediately fled from the islands and came back straight away the same autumn and then took Hálfðan by surprise. They met and there was a short battle and Hálfðan fled, and that was right at nightfall. Einarr and his men lay without tents during the night, and in the morning when it began to get light, they sought the men fleeing all over the islands and each one was killed wherever he was caught. Then said Jarl Einarr:

'I am not sure,' he said, 'whether what I can see out on Rínansey is a man or a bird; sometimes it rises up, sometimes it lies down.'

Then they went over there and found there Hálfðan hálegggr and took him prisoner. Jarl Einarr had uttered this verse in the evening before he began the battle:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|
| 53. | I have not seen from Hrollaugr,
or the hand of Hrólfr, spears sent
at the crowd of foes ¹⁶² flying;
our father's vengeance befits us.
And this evening, while I
am creating tumult,
over the vat's stream ¹⁶³ silent
sits Jarl Þórir at Mœrr. | <i>Orkn</i> 12
<i>Fsk</i> 291–92 |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|

[132] Then Einarr went up to Hálfðan. He cut an eagle on his back after this fashion, that he thrust a sword deep into his back and cut all the ribs right down to his rump, drawing out his lungs through the wound.¹⁶⁴ This was the death of Hálfðan. Then spoke Einarr:

¹⁶² *dólga mengi*: 'crowd of enemies'. Some texts have *dæla mengi*: 'crowd of valley-dwellers'. It has been suggested that *dælir* 'valley-dwellers' is a derogatory term for land-dwellers with little experience of the sea (*Hkr* I 131 note).

¹⁶³ *kerstraumr*: 'stream of the vessel', drink.

¹⁶⁴ This was referred to as *rista blóðǫrn á baki einhverjum* 'to cut the blood-eagle on someone's back'; the ribs severed from the spine were likened to an eagle's wings (see Frank 1984).

54. I've carried out for Rognvaldr's killing *Orkn 15*
 my quarter-share of vengeance; *Fsk 292*
 now the folk's prop¹⁶⁵ is fallen;
 the fates rightly decided.
 Heap up, wise warriors,
 for we have won victory—
 hard tribute I've chosen
 for him—stones¹⁶⁶ on Long-Leg.¹⁶⁷

Afterwards Jarl Einarr settled himself in Orkney, holding it as before. And then, when these events were heard about in Norway, Hálfðan's brothers were very displeased with it and declared that it deserved vengeance, and many others agreed with this. And then, when Jarl Einarr hears that, he said this:

55. For my life are many *Orkn 15–16*
 men, not born lowly,
 [133] of various families, eager,
 and with ample reason.
 But they have no knowledge,
 not yet having killed me,
 of which under the sole-thorn
 of the eagle¹⁶⁸ will be lying.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

King Haraldr called out troops and mustered a large army and then went west to Orkney. And when Jarl Einarr learned that the king was come from the east, he went across to Nes. Then he uttered a verse:

56. Many a man fair-bearded *Orkn 13*
 is made outlaw for sheep-killing,
 but I for the fall in the Islands
 of the young son of a ruler.
 They promise me peril
 from that prince high-couraged;
 I sheared a shard from Haraldr's
 shield—but I'm not fearful.

¹⁶⁵ *folkstuðill*: 'prop of the people', king.

¹⁶⁶ *hlada grjóti at*: heap stones on, that is, bury.

¹⁶⁷ *Háfeta* 'Long-Leg', a variation on the nickname *hálegg*.

¹⁶⁸ *standa undir arnar ilþorn*: 'be under the eagle's sole-thorn (claw)', be food for the eagle, die in battle.

[134] Then men and messengers passed between the king and the jarl. So it came about that a meeting was arranged, and they meet in person, and the jarl submitted all to the king's judgment. King Haraldr adjudged against Jarl Einarr and all the people of Orkney a fine of sixty marks of gold. The farmers thought this fine too high. Then the jarl offered them that he would pay it on his own, and he should then own all the ancestral property in the islands. They agreed to this, mostly for the reason that the poor owned little land, while the rich thought they would be able to redeem their patrimony when they wished to. The jarl paid all the money to the king. The following autumn the king went back east. It was for a long time afterwards that the jarls owned all the ancestral property, right on until Sigurðr Hlōðvisson gave back the patrimonies.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

King Haraldr's son Guthormr was responsible for the defence of the land in the Vík, and he crossed with warships over the open sea. And when he was lying in the delta of the Elfr, Sólvi klofi came there and engaged in battle with him. There Guthormr fell. Hálfðan svartí and Hálfðan hvíti were out on viking raids and were raiding in the eastern Baltic. They had a great battle in Eistland. There Hálfðan hvíti fell. Eiríkr was being fostered by Hersir Þórir Hróaldsson in Firðir. King Haraldr loved him most out of all his sons and esteemed him most. When Eiríkr was twelve years old, King Haraldr gave him five longships, and he went raiding, first in the eastern Baltic, and then south round Danmørk and around Frísland and Saxland, and spent four years on this expedition. After that he went west across the sea and raided round Scotland and Bretland, Ireland and Valland, and there spent another four years. After that he [135] went north to Finnmørk and right on to Bjarmaland, and there he had a great battle and gained victory. When he came back to Finnmørk, his men found in a Lappish hut a woman whose equal in beauty they had never seen. She told them her name was Gunnhildr and said that her father lived in Hálogaland and was called Qzurr toti (Stub).

'I have been staying here,' she said, 'in order to learn witchcraft from two Lapps who are the wisest in these forests. Now they have gone hunting, but both of them want to marry me, and they are both so clever that they can follow tracks like gods both on thawed ground and on hard frozen snow, and they are so able on skis that nothing can escape them, neither men nor animals, and whatever they shoot at, they hit. Thus they have destroyed everyone that has approached here. And if they get angry, the earth turns upside down at their looks, and if anything living gets before their eyes, then it falls down dead. Now you can in no way get in their path unless I hide you here in my hut. We shall then try if we can kill them.'

They agreed to this, that she should hide them. She took a linen bag, and they thought it was ash in it. She put her hand in it and strewed it over the hut both outside and in. Soon after the Lapps come home. They ask what had come there, and she said that nothing had come there. The Lapps found this strange, when they had traced the tracks right to the hut, and then they find nothing. Then they make themselves a fire and cook their food. And then, when they were fed, Gunnhildr made her bed. But the way it had gone for the three previous nights was that Gunnhildr had slept, but each of them had watched over the other in turns out of jealousy. Then she said:

[136] ‘Now come here, one of you lie on each side of me.’

They were pleased at this and did so. She held one arm round each of their necks. They fall asleep straight away, but she wakes them up. And then they soon fall asleep again, and so deeply that she can hardly wake them. And again they fall asleep, and she can in no way wake them up, and then she sits them up, and still they sleep. Then she takes two great sealskin bags and throws them over their heads and ties them up tightly below their arms. Then she makes a sign to the king’s men. They then rush out and take their weapons to the Lapps, and manage to kill them and drag them out of the hut. The following night there were such great thunderings that they could not go anywhere, but in the morning they went to their ship and took Gunnhildr with them and brought her to Eiríkr. Eiríkr and his men then went south to Hálogaland. He then summoned Qzurr toti to come to him. Eiríkr says that he wants to marry his daughter. Qzurr agrees to this. Eiríkr then marries Gunnhildr and takes her with him to the south of the country.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

King Haraldr was fifty years of age by the time that many of his sons were grown up, but some of them were dead. Many of them then became very arrogant men within the country and quarrelled among themselves. They forced the king’s jarls off their estates, and slew some of them. King Haraldr then summoned a large assembly in the east of the country and called the people of Upplönd to it. Then he gave all his sons the title of king, and made it law that members of his family should each receive the kingdom from his father, but a jarldom any that [137] was descended from his line through females. He divided the country between them, let them have Vingulmörk, Raumaríki, Vestfold, Þelamörk—these he gave to Óláfr, Björn, Sigtryggr, Fróði, Þorgísl, while Heiðmörk and Guðbrandsdalir he gave to Dagr and Hringr and Ragnarr; to the sons of Snæfríðr he gave Hringaríki, Haðaland, Þótn and whatever belongs to them. To Guthormr he had given from the Elfr across Ranríki to Svínasund to supervise. Him had he set for the defence of

the land in the east by the border of the country, as is written above. King Haraldr himself was generally around the middle of the country. Hrœrekr and Guðrøðr were always within the household with the king and they had extensive revenues in Hǫrðaland and Sogn. Eiríkr was with his father, King Haraldr. He loved him most of any of his sons and esteemed him most. To him he gave Hálogaland and Norðmœrr and Raumsdalr. North in Þrándheimr he gave supervision to Hálfðan svartí and Hálfðan hvítí and Sigrøðr. He gave his sons in each of these districts half the revenues with himself and this also, that they should sit in a high seat a step higher than jarls and a step lower than himself. But that seat after his day each of his sons intended for himself, but he himself intended it for Eiríkr, and the Þrœndir intended it for Hálfðan svartí, but the Víkverjar and Upplendingar were happiest for those [138] to have power whom they had there under their control. From this there arose great disagreement all over again between the brothers. But since they felt they had little rule, they went on raids, and as has been said, Guthormr fell in the delta of the Elfr at the hands of Sǫlvi klofi. After that Óláfr took over the realm that he had had. Hálfðan hvítí fell in Eistland, Hálfðan háleggr fell in Orkney. To Þorgísl and Fróði King Haraldr gave warships, and they went raiding in the British Isles and raided round Scotland and Bretland and Ireland. They, first of the Norwegians, gained possession of Dublin. They say that Fróði was given a poison drink, and Þorgísl was for a long time king over Dublin and was betrayed by the Irish and fell there.¹⁶⁹

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

Eiríkr blóðøx planned to be supreme king over all his brothers, and King Haraldr also wished to have it so. Father and son were together for long periods. Rǫgnvaldr réttílbæini had Haðaland. He learned witchcraft and became a magician. King Haraldr thought magicians were evil. In Hǫrðaland there was a magician who was called Vitgeirr. The king sent him word and commanded him to cease casting spells. He replied and said:

57. It does little harm
if we do magic,
the children
of churls and crones,

¹⁶⁹ Irish annals record viking raids on Ireland from 795, with the establishment of harbour strongholds at places including Dublin in the 830s. A viking leader named Turges (corresponding to Norse Þorgísl or Þorgestr) is recorded, but there is no support for his being the son of Haraldr, or even for his Norwegian origin. He is said to have commanded a viking fleet for many years, and to have been seized by the Irish King of Meath and drowned in Lough Owel in 845 (Jones 1984, 205–07).

[139] if so does Røgnvaldr
 réttilbeini,
 great son of Haraldr,
 in Haðaland.

And then, when King Haraldr heard this said, on his instruction Eiríkr blóðøx went to Upplönd and reached Haðaland. He burned his brother Røgnvaldr in his house with eighty magicians, and this deed was greatly praised. Guðrøðr ljómi stayed during the winter with his foster-father Þjóðólfr in Hvinir, while visiting kinsmen, and had a fully manned cruiser, and he wanted to go north to Rogaland. Then great storms set in, but Guðrøðr was committed to his voyage and could not put up with the delay. Then spoke Þjóðólfr:

58. Don't set sail till the vessels'
 smooth plain¹⁷⁰ flattens, Guðrøðr;
 Geitir's highway¹⁷¹ is hurling —
 on the high seas — boulders.
 The gale's peak, far-reputed
 prince, await before leaving;
 stay till the weather settles.
 Surf breaks now on Jaðarr.

Guðrøðr went anyway, whatever Þjóðólfr said. And when they were passing Jaðarr, the ship capsized under them, and all perished there.

[140] CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

King Haraldr's son Bjørn was at that time ruling over Vestfold and was generally in residence in Túnsberg, but did not go raiding much. Trading ships came frequently to Túnsberg both from there round the Vík and from the north of the country and from the south, from Danmørk and from Saxland. King Bjørn also had trading ships on voyages to other countries and so acquired for himself valuable objects and other supplies which he felt he had the need for. His brothers called him seafarer or merchant. Bjørn was an intelligent person and very moderate and it was thought that he would make a good ruler. He had married well and suitably. He got a son who was called Guðrøðr. King Eiríkr returned from the eastern Baltic with warships and a large force. He demanded from his brother Bjørn that he should receive the taxes and revenues that were due to King Haraldr in Vestfold, but previously the custom had been for Bjørn to take the tax to

¹⁷⁰ *fleyja flatvollr*: 'flat plain of ships', sea.

¹⁷¹ *Geitis vegr*: 'road of Geitir (a sea-king)', sea.

the king himself or to send men with it. He wanted to go on doing this and refused to hand it over. But Eiríkr felt he needed food supplies and tapestry and drink. The brothers disputed this obstinately, and Eiríkr still did not get his way and went away from the residence. Björn also went away from the residence in the evening and up to Sæheimr. Eiríkr turned back, went up during the night to Sæheimr after Björn, got there while they were sitting over their drink. Eiríkr surrounded the building they were in, but Björn and his men went out and fought. Björn fell there and many men with him. Eiríkr took a great deal of plunder there and went to the north of the country. This greatly displeased Víkverjar, and Eiríkr was very unpopular there. The word went around that King Óláfr would avenge Björn if he got an opportunity to do so. King Björn lies in Farmannshaugr in Sæheimr.

[141] CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

King Eiríkr went the next winter back north to Mœrr and was receiving a banquet in Sólvi in from Agðanes. And when Hálfðan svartí learned this he went there with troops and surrounded the house they were in. Eiríkr was sleeping in an apartment outside the main building and managed to get out into the forest with four men, but Hálfðan and his men burned down the residence and all the troops that were in it. Eiríkr came to see King Haraldr with news of these events. The king became enormously angry at this and mustered an army and went against the people of Prándheimr. And when Hálfðan svartí heard about this, he called out troops and ships and got together a very large number of men and sailed out to Staðr further in than Þorsbjörg. King Haraldr was then lying with his troops out off Reinsléttá. Then men went between them. There was a certain noble person called Guthormr sindri (Flint). He was now in Hálfðan svartí's troop, but he had previously been with King Haraldr and was a close friend of both of them. Guthormr was a great poet. He had composed poems about each of the two, father and son.¹⁷² They had offered him a reward, but he refused, and asked that they should grant him one request, and they had promised this. He then went to see King Haraldr and mediated for reconciliation between them and asked each of them to fulfil their promise and that they should be reconciled, and the kings held him in such great esteem that at his request they were reconciled. Many other noble persons supported this plea with him. It was brought about on these terms, that Hálfðan was to keep all the realm that he had previously [142] held, he was also not to subject his brother Eiríkr to

¹⁷² Guthormr sindri's poems for Haraldr and Hálfðan have not survived, but his *Hákonardrápa* for Haraldr's youngest son Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri is quoted in the latter's saga (see note 187 below).

any attacks. About these events Jórunn skáldmær (Poetess) composed some verses in *Sendibítur*:¹⁷³

59. I learned, Hálfðan, that Haraldr
heard of harsh actions,
the blade-tester finds this poem
black-looking¹⁷⁴ — the Fine-Haired.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Hákon Grjótgarðsson jarl of Hlaðir had entire supervision of Þrándheimr whenever King Haraldr was elsewhere in the country and Hákon had the highest esteem from the king of anyone in Þrándalög. After Hákon's fall his son Sigurðr took over the rule and became jarl in Þrándheimr. He had residence in Hlaðir. With him King Haraldr's sons Hálfðan svarti and Sigrøðr were brought up, though previously they had been under the guardianship of his father Hákon. They were much the same age, Haraldr's sons and Sigurðr. Jarl Sigurðr married Bergljótr, daughter of Jarl Þórir þegjandi (Silent). Her mother was Álof árbót, daughter of Haraldr hárfagri. Jarl Sigurðr was the wisest of all men. And then, when King Haraldr began to grow old, he frequently spent his time in large residences that he owned in Hǫrðaland at Alreksstaðir or Sæheimr or [143] Fitjar and in Rogaland at Útsteinn and at Ögvaldsnes on Kǫrmt. When King Haraldr was nearly seventy, he got a son by a woman called Þóra Morstrstǫng (Pole of Morstr). Her family was from Morstr. She came of good kin, she was related to Hǫrða-Kári. She was the finest of women and most beautiful. She was said to be the king's handmaid. At that time there were many in the king's service who were of good family, both men and women. It was the custom with noblemen's children to be very particular about who should sprinkle them with water or give them names. And then, when it came to the time when Þóra expected that she would give birth to a child, she wished to go to be with King Haraldr. He was then north in Sæheimr, but she was on Morstr. She then travelled north on Jarl Sigurðr's ship. They lay during the night by the shore. There Þóra gave birth to a child on the slab of rock by the end of the jetty. It was a boy. Jarl Sigurðr sprinkled the child with water and called it Hákon after his father, Hákon Hlaðajarl. This boy was at an early age handsome and well built and much like his father. King Haraldr had the boy be with his mother, and they were at the king's residences while the boy was young.

¹⁷³ Three *helmingar* and three full *vísur* survive of Jórunn's poem *Sendibítur* (Biting Message). On Jórunn and other women skalds, see Straubhaar 2002.

¹⁷⁴ *svartleitr* is normally used of people. Of a poem, it presumably indicates that the hearer found it unpleasant or threatening in some way.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Aðalsteinn was at that time the name of the king in England who had then just taken over the kingdom.¹⁷⁵ He was called the Victorious and the Firm in Faith. He sent men to Norway [144] to see King Haraldr with this kind of message, that the messenger, going before the king, gives the king a sword ornamented with gold on hilt and handle, and the whole scabbard was decorated with gold and silver and set with precious stones. The messenger held it with the hilt towards the king and said:

‘Here is a sword, which King Aðalsteinn said you were to receive.’

The king took hold of the handle, and immediately the messenger said:

‘Now you have accepted it as our king wished, and now you shall be his subject, since you have received his sword.’

King Haraldr now realised that this was done in mockery, but he was not willing to become any man’s subject, and yet he remembered what his custom was, every time sudden fury or anger came over him, that he first calmed himself and thus let the anger pass off him and looked at the matter without anger. Now he again does the same, and put this before his friends, and they all agree together on what is best to do in this case, first of all to let the messengers go back unharmed.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

The following summer King Haraldr sent a ship west to England and put on it as captain Haukr hábrók (Long-Leg).¹⁷⁶ He was a great warrior and very dear to the king. He gave into his charge his son Hákon. Haukr then went west to England to see King Aðalsteinn and met him in London. There was a reception taking place there and a splendid banquet. Haukr tells his men, when they came to the hall, how they are to organise their entrance, says that the one is to come out last who goes in first, and all are to stand in front of the table at the same distance from it and each have his sword [145] on his left side and arrange their outer clothes in such a way that the sword cannot be seen. Then they go into the hall. There were thirty or them. Haukr went before the king and greeted him. The king bids him welcome. Then Haukr took the boy Hákon and put him on King Aðalsteinn’s knee. The king looks at the boy and asks Haukr why he does that. Haukr replies:

‘King Haraldr bade you foster a handmaid’s child for him.’

¹⁷⁵ Athelstan became king of England in 925.

¹⁷⁶ There is a *þáttur* about Haukr hábrók in *Flatteyjarbók*, but its content is purely fictional.

The king became very angry and grasped at a sword that was by him and drew it as if he was going to kill the boy.

‘You have now taken him on your knee,’ says Haukr. ‘Now you can murder him if you like, but you will not by doing that destroy all King Haraldr’s sons.’

After that Haukr went out and all his men and they go their way to their ship and sail out to sea as soon as they were ready to do so, and got back to Norway to see King Haraldr, and he was now pleased, because it is a common saying that a person who fosters a child for someone is of lower rank. In such exchanges between the kings it was evident that each of them wanted to be greater than the other, and even so no disparity between their status came about as a result. Each was supreme king in his realm until his dying day.

CHAPTER FORTY

King Aðalsteinn had Hákon baptised and taught the true faith and good morality and all kinds of courtly behaviour. King Aðalsteinn loved him so much, more than he did all his kin, [146] and after that everyone loved him who knew him. He was afterwards known as Aðalsteinn’s foster-son. He was the greatest man for sports, bigger and stronger and more handsome than any other man. He was intelligent and eloquent and a good Christian. King Aðalsteinn gave Hákon a sword whose hilt was of gold and the handle, though the blade was even better; Hákon clove a millstone to the eye with it. It was afterwards referred to as Kvernbítr (Millstone-biter). That was the best sword that has ever come to Norway. Hákon had it until his dying day.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

King Haraldr was now eighty years of age; he now became infirm so that he felt he could not travel by land or manage the royal affairs. Then he took his son Eiríkr to his high seat and gave him rule over the whole country. But when King Haraldr’s other sons heard about this, then Hálfðan svarti sat himself on a king’s high seat. He then took the whole of Prándheimr to rule over. All the Prændir backed him in this course of action. After the fall of Björn kaupmaðr (Merchant) his brother Óláfr took rule over Vestfold and adopted Björn’s son Guðrøðr. Óláfr’s son was called Tryggvi. He and Guðrøðr were foster-brothers and nearly the same age and both most promising and very able men. Tryggvi was bigger and stronger than anyone. And when the Víkverjar heard that the Hǫrðar had taken Eiríkr as supreme king, then they took Óláfr as supreme king in the Vík, and he kept that kingdom. Eiríkr was very displeased at this. Two years later Hálfðan svarti died suddenly inland

in Prándheimr at [147] some banquet, and it was rumoured that Gunnhildr konungamóðir (Mother of Kings) had bribed a woman skilled in magic to make him a poisoned drink. After that the Prændir took Sigrøðr as king.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

King Haraldr lived three years after he had given Eiríkr sole rule of the kingdom; then he stayed in Rogaland or in Hǫrðaland in large residences that he owned. Eiríkr and Gunnhildr had a son whom King Haraldr sprinkled with water and gave his name to, saying that he should be king after his father Eiríkr. King Haraldr gave most of his daughters within the country to his jarls as wives, and from them are descended great family lines. King Haraldr died of sickness in Rogaland. He is buried in a mound at Haugar by Karmtsund. In Haugasund there stands a church, and by the very churchyard wall to the north-west is Haraldr hárfagri's mound. To the west of the church lies King Haraldr's tombstone, which lay over his tomb in the mound, and the stone is thirteen and a half feet long and nearly two ells broad. King Haraldr's tomb was in the middle of the mound. One stone was put there at the head, and another at the foot, and the slab was laid on top, and it was heaped with stones round both sides underneath. The stones, which were then in the mound and have just been described, now stand there in the churchyard. [148] Learned men say that Haraldr inn hárfagri has been the most handsome in appearance of all men, and strongest and biggest, the most liberal with money and very popular with his men. He was a great warrior in the early part of his life. And people now interpret it, those who have known about that great tree which appeared to his mother in a dream before his birth, where the lowest part of the tree was red as blood, while the trunk above it was fair and green, that this represented the blossoming of his reign. But in the upper part the tree was white: there it showed that he would become old and hoary. The twigs and branches of the tree signify his offspring which were spread over all the land, and kings in Norway have ever since been of his family line.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

King Eiríkr took all the revenues which the king had had over the central part of the country the next winter after King Haraldr's death, but Óláfr those in the east around the Vík, and their brother Sigrøðr had everything round Þrændalǫg. Eiríkr was very displeased at this, and the word went round that he would by force seek from his brothers whether he might get sole rule over the whole country, as his father had given him. But when Óláfr and Sigrøðr hear this, then messengers go between them. Next they make an appointment

for them to meet, and Sigrøðr goes in the spring east to Vík, and Óláfr and his brother meet in Túnsberg and stayed there for a while. The [149] same spring Eiríkr calls out a great army and ships and turns east to Vík. King Eiríkr got such a strong favourable wind that he sailed day and night and no intelligence went before him. And when he got to Túnsberg, then Óláfr and Sigrøðr took their troops eastwards out of the town onto the slope and formed up there. Eiríkr had a much larger force, and he gained victory, but Óláfr and Sigrøðr both fell there, and the mounds of each of the two of them are there on the slope, where they lay fallen. Eiríkr then went round the Vík and subjected it to himself and stayed there much of the summer. Tryggvi and Guðrøðr then fled to Upplönd. Eiríkr was a big man and handsome, strong and a very valiant man, a great warrior and blessed with victory, an impetuous man in temper, fierce, unsociable and reserved. His wife Gunnhildr was the fairest of women, intelligent and of wide knowledge, cheerful in speech and a very deceitful person and the fiercest. These were the children of Eiríkr and Gunnhildr: Gamli was the eldest, Guthormr, Haraldr, Ragnfrøðr, Ragnhildr, Erlingr, Guðrøðr, Sigurðr slefa (Lisp). All Eiríkr's children were handsome and promising.

[150] Hákonar saga góða

CHAPTER ONE

Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri was in England at the time when he heard of the death of his father King Haraldr. He immediately got ready to set out. King Aðalsteinn provided him with a troop of men and a good fleet of ships and fitted him out for the voyage very splendidly, and in the autumn he arrived in Norway. Then he learned of the fall of his brothers and also that King Eiríkr was now in the Vík. Then Hákon sailed north to Þrándheimr and went to see Sigurðr Hlaðajarl, who was the most sensible of men in Norway, and was given a good reception there, and they entered into fellowship with each other. Hákon promised him great power if he became king. Then they had a large assembly called, and at the assembly Jarl Sigurðr spoke on behalf of Hákon and proposed him to the farmers as king. After that Hákon himself stood up and spoke. Then they said to each other, each to his neighbour, that now Haraldr inn hárfagri was come there and had become young a second time. Hákon made this the beginning of his speech that he asked the farmers to give him the title of king and also to give him backing and support to hold on to the kingship, and in return he offered to make all farmers entitled to their patrimony and to give them their inherited land that they were dwelling in. There was such great applause for this that the whole crowd shouted and called out that they wanted to accept him as king. And thus it was done, that the Þrændir took Hákon as king over the whole country. He was then fifteen years old. Then he got himself a following and travelled round [151] the country. This news reached Upplönd, that the Þrændir had taken a king for themselves similar in every way to what Haraldr inn hárfagri had been, except for the fact that Haraldr had enslaved and oppressed all people in the land, while this Hákon wished everyone well and offered to return the farmers their patrimonies which King Haraldr had taken from them. At this news everyone became glad and everyone passed it on. It flew like wildfire all the way east to the land's end. Many farmers travelled from Upplönd to see King Hákon, some sent him men, some sent messages and tokens, all to the effect that they wanted to become his men. The king received this gratefully.

CHAPTER TWO

King Hákon went to Upplönd at the beginning of winter, summoned assemblies there, and everyone that was able thronged to see him. He was

then accepted as king at every assembly. Then he went east to Vík. His nephews Tryggvi and Guðrøðr came there to him, and many others, reckoning up the troubles that they had been subject to at the hands of his brother Eiríkr. Eiríkr's unpopularity grew ever the more as everyone became fonder of King Hákon and became more confident in speaking their minds. King Hákon gave Tryggvi and Guðrøðr the title of king and the same rule as King Haraldr had given their fathers. To Tryggvi he gave Ranríki and Vingulmörk, and to Guðrøðr Vestfold. But because they were young and still children, he set noble and wise men to rule the land with them. He gave them land on the same conditions that had applied previously, that they should share half the dues and taxes [152] with him. King Hákon went north to Prándheimr when spring came, by the higher route through Upplönd.

CHAPTER THREE

King Hákon mustered a great army in Prándheimr when spring came and took to his ships. The Víkverjar also had a great army out and planned to go against Hákon. Eiríkr also called out troops in the centre of the country, and he found it difficult to get troops, since many of the ruling class forsook him and went over to Hákon. And when he saw he had no means of withstanding Hákon's army, he sailed west across the sea with those troops who were willing to go with him. He went first to Orkney and got from there a large force. Then he sailed south to England and made raids around Scotland wherever he came close to land. He also raided everywhere round the north of England. King Aðalsteinn of the English sent word to Eiríkr and invited him to accept rule from him in England, saying this, that his father King Haraldr had been a great friend of King Aðalsteinn, and so he wanted to pay regard to that in dealings with his son. Then men went between the kings, and it was agreed on special terms that Eiríkr should take Norðimbraland to hold from King Aðalsteinn and defend the land there from Danes and other vikings. Eiríkr was to have himself and his wife and their children and all his men who had come there with him baptised. Eiríkr accepted this offer. He was then baptised and received the true faith. Norðimbraland is [153] reckoned to be a fifth part of England. He had his residence in Jórvík, where it is said that earlier the sons of Loðbrók had resided. Norðimbraland had been mostly inhabited by Norwegians after the sons of Loðbrók conquered the land. Danes and Norwegians had often made raids on it after rule of the land had passed from them. Many place-names there are derived from the Norse tongue, Grímsbær and Hauksfljót and many others.

CHAPTER FOUR

King Eiríkr had large numbers of men around him, kept there a lot of Norwegians who had come with him from the east, and many more still of his friends came later from Norway. He held a small amount of land. Then he always went on raids in summer, raided Scotland and the Hebrides, Ireland and Bretland and so increased his wealth. King Aðalsteinn died of sickness. He had been king for fourteen years and eight weeks and three days. Afterwards his brother Játmundr was king in England. He was not keen on Norwegians. King Eiríkr was also not on friendly terms with him, and the word went round about King Játmundr that he [154] was going to appoint another king over Norðimbraland. And when King Eiríkr heard this, he went raiding in the British Isles and took with him from Orkney Torf-Einarr's sons Arnkell and Erlendr. Then he went to the Hebrides, and there were many vikings and war leaders there and they joined forces with Eiríkr. He then first of all took the whole army to Ireland and got from there whatever troops he could. Then he went to Bretland and raided there. After that he sailed south round the coast of England and raided there just as in other places, and all the people fled wherever he went. And because Eiríkr was a very courageous man and had a large army, he trusted his forces so well that he went a long way up inland and raided and sought followers. The name of the king that King Játmundr had set there to guard the land was Óláfr. He mustered an invincible army and went against King Eiríkr, and there was a great battle there. A lot of Englishmen fell, and wherever one fell, three came down from inland in his place. And in the latter part of the day, the casualties turned against the Norwegians, and many people fell there, and at the end of that day King Eiríkr fell and five kings with him. These are named:¹⁷⁷ Guthormr and his two sons, Ívarr and Hárekr; Sigurðr and Rognvaldr also fell there. Torf-Einarr's sons Arnkell and Erlendr also fell there. A very great number of men fell from among the Norwegians, and those who got away went to Norðimbraland and told Gunnhildr and her sons what had happened.

[155] CHAPTER FIVE

And when Gunnhildr and her sons found out about this, that King Eiríkr was fallen, having previously made raids on the land of the king of the English, then they felt sure that it did not bode peace for them. They then got ready immediately to leave Norðimbraland, taking with them all the ships that King Eiríkr had had, and also took all the men who were willing to go with them,

¹⁷⁷ Probably in *Eiríksmál*, though the surviving fragments of this anonymous poem in *Fagrskinna* and *Snorra Edda* do not include any of these names.

and a huge amount of wealth that had piled up there in taxes in England, though some had been got in raids. They take their troop north to Orkney and established themselves there for a while. At that time Torf-Einarr's son Þorfiðr hausakljúfr (Skull-Splitter) was jarl there. Then Eiríkr's sons subjected Orkney and Shetland to themselves and took taxes from them and stayed there the winter, and went on raids in the British Isles in summer, raiding round Scotland and Ireland. Glúmr Geirason mentions this:¹⁷⁸

60. The youth skilled in sailing
to Skáney a fine voyage
astride the stallion
of sandbanks¹⁷⁹ had made from there.
With rage-flames¹⁸⁰ the ruler
ravaged, shield-Ullr,¹⁸¹ Scotland,
sent an army of men's sons
sword-stricken to Óðinn.

[156] 61. The friend of men¹⁸² fostered
fire of strife,¹⁸³ to the pleasure
of the valkyrie's eagle;¹⁸⁴
in flight went a host of Irish.
The land-Freyr¹⁸⁵ felled warriors,
in favour¹⁸⁶ of victory
in the south, and stained red
sword-blades in men's blood.

Gráfeldardrápa 2

¹⁷⁸ Glúmr Geirason was an Icelandic poet who plays a part in *Reykðæla saga* and is mentioned in *Landnámabók*; his son Þórðr was the second husband of Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir, as related in *Laxdæla saga*. Several stanzas believed to belong to his *Gráfeldardrápa*, for Eiríkr's son Haraldr gráfeldr, are cited in *Heimskringla* (see v. 61 below), and Snorri evidently took verse 60 too to refer to Eiríkr's sons. But the reference to a voyage to Skáney does not fit the prose account of raids in the British Isles. It has been suggested that instead it belongs to a poem by Glúmr on Eiríkr blóðøðx, mentioned in *Fsk* (79), which says that the poem refers to Eiríkr's raids on Skáney.

¹⁷⁹ *blakkríðandi bakka*: 'rider of the steed of sand-banks (ship)', sailor.

¹⁸⁰ *rógeisa*: 'strife-fire'.

¹⁸¹ *rand-Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of the shield', warrior.

¹⁸² *gumna vinr*: 'friend of men', lord.

¹⁸³ *dolgeisa*: 'fire of hostility', battle.

¹⁸⁴ *dísar gjóðr*: 'eagle of the goddess (valkyrie)', carrion bird.

¹⁸⁵ *foldar Freyr*: 'Freyr (god or lord) of ground', ruler.

¹⁸⁶ *hlynninn*: MSS *hlinninn*, *hlunninn*. The word does not occur elsewhere, but is taken to derive from *hlynnna* 'to help, support'.

[157] CHAPTER SIX

King Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri subjected the whole of Norway to himself when his brother Eiríkr had fled away. King Hákon made his way the first winter to the west of the country, after that north to Þrándheimr and stayed there. But because the prospect did not seem peaceful, if King Eiríkr should make his way from the west over the sea with his army, he for this reason stayed with his troops in the centre of the country in Firðafylki and Sogn, in Hǫrðaland and Rogaland. Hákon put Sigurðr Hlaðajarl over all Þróendalög, just as he and his father Hákon had held it from King Haraldr inn hárfagri. But when King Hákon heard of the fall of his brother King Eiríkr, and also that King Eiríkr's sons had no support in England, then he felt there was little for him to fear from them; then he went one summer with his troops east to Vík. At that time Danes were raiding a great deal in the Vík and often caused great damage there. But when they heard that King Hákon was come there with a large army, they all fled away, some south to Halland, while those who were closer to where King Hákon was made out into the open sea and so south to Jutland. And when King Hákon found out about this, he sailed after them with all his army. And when he got to Jutland and people realised this, then they collected an army together and planned to defend their territory and engage in battle with King Hákon. Then a great battle took place. King Hákon fought so boldly that he was in advance of his standard and wore neither helmet nor coat of mail. King Hákon gained victory and pursued the flight of the enemy a long way up inland. So said Guthormr sindri in *Hákonardrápa*:¹⁸⁷

62. The king stepped with stream-oxen,¹⁸⁸ *Hákonardrápa* 1
on streets of blue,¹⁸⁹ rowing.

[158] The splendid lord slew Jótar
in storm of the battle-woman.¹⁹⁰
The raven-wine pools' swan's sater¹⁹¹
with the scourge of the seducer
of Óðinn's roof,¹⁹² afterwards,
at his will, pursued the fleeing.

¹⁸⁷ For Guthormr sindri, see *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* ch. 36 (above). Six whole or half stanzas of his *Hákonardrápa* are cited in *Heimskringla*, and two more elsewhere.

¹⁸⁸ *bekkar bjfraukn*: 'moving draught beast of the stream', ship.

¹⁸⁹ *blárǫst*: 'blue *ǫst* (measure of distance)', sea.

¹⁹⁰ *mistar vífs drífa*: 'storm of the woman of battle (valkyrie)', battle.

¹⁹¹ *svangæðir hrafnsvíns hylja*: 'feeder of the swan (raven) of pools of raven's wine (blood)', warrior.

¹⁹² *sótt hrótgiljaðar Jalfaðar*: 'sickness of the seducer of Jalfaðr's (Óðinn's) roof (shield)', weapon. The shield is Óðinn's roof, or tile, as the roof of Valhöll was tiled with shields (*Gylf* 7); its seducer is a sword, whose sickness is another sword (or other weapon).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Afterwards King Hákon took his troop north to Selund and sought for vikings. He rowed with two warships on into Eyrarsund. There he found eleven viking warships and immediately engaged in battle with them, and the outcome was that he gained victory and cleared all the viking ships of men. So says Guthormr sindri:

63. The bush of the bow-woman's *Hákonardrápa 2*
 blaze-storm,¹⁹³ with no more than
 two prow-steeds,¹⁹⁴ to Sel-wound's
 snout¹⁹⁵ of green, went northwards,
 when the mover of the mast-steed,¹⁹⁶
 mad with rage, disabled¹⁹⁷
 the Danes' ships, all eleven—
 it won him fame widely.

[159] CHAPTER EIGHT

After this King Hákon made raids in many places round Selund and plundered the people, killing some of them, but took some captive, meeting no resistance. So says Guthormr sindri:

64. Selund then the strife-tree¹⁹⁸ *Hákonardrápa 3*
 succeeded in claiming
 as widely as ranged falcon
 and winds¹⁹⁹ on Skáneyjarsíða.

[160] Then King Hákon went east along Skáneyjarsíða and laid all waste, took tribute and taxes from the countryside. and slew all vikings wherever

¹⁹³ *élrunnr almdrósar eisu*: 'bush (man) of the storm (battle) of the fire (sword) of the woman of the bow (valkyrie)', warrior.

¹⁹⁴ *tingls marr*: 'horse of the *tingl*', ship. See v. 42 above.

¹⁹⁵ *selmeina trjóna*: 'snout (promontory) of Sjáland', with a pun on Selund, taken to mean 'seal-wound', but actually an older spelling of Sjáland; *und* and *mein* both mean 'wound'.

¹⁹⁶ *valsendir vandar*: 'sender of the horse of the mast (ship)', ship's captain.

¹⁹⁷ *hrauð*: all MSS have *rauð*.

¹⁹⁸ *sóknhegr*: 'battle-tree', warrior.

¹⁹⁹ *frelsi vals ok vinda*: 'free space of hawk and winds'. The reference to Wendish (*Vindr*) vikings in the following prose shows that Snorri read *vinda* 'Wends' for *vinda* 'winds'. FJ (B I 55) follows this interpretation, translating *de vidstrakte tilflugtsteder for Vendernes udvalgte mandskab* 'the extensive strongholds of the chosen men (*val*) of the Wends'.

he met them, both Danes and Vinðr. He went all the way east past Gautland and made raids there and got from the countryside there huge payments. So says Guthormr sindri:

65. The sail-bear's steerer²⁰⁰ made *Hákonardrápa* 4
 subject to tribute the Gautar.
 Greatest destroyer of gold,²⁰¹ he
 gave battle²⁰² on that journey.

King Hákon returned in the autumn with his troops and had gained an immense amount of wealth. He stayed the winter in the Vík in case of attacks, should Danes and Gautar make them there.

CHAPTER NINE

That autumn King Tryggvi Ólafsson returned from raiding in the British Isles. Before this he had been raiding round Ireland and Scotland. In the spring King Hákon went to the north of the country and put [161] his nephew King Tryggvi over the Vík to defend it from attacks and to take possession of those territories in Danmørk that King Hákon had laid under tribute the previous summer. So says Guthormr sindri:

66. And over this Ónarr's daughter,²⁰³ *Hákonardrápa* 5
 oak-grown, the reddener
 of strife-hood's ice²⁰⁴ the mind-soother²⁰⁵
 set, in the east, the bold one;
 him who had come from Ireland,
 careful in deeds, the splitter
 of Sveigðir's hall,²⁰⁶ on skis of
 the swan's plain,²⁰⁷ with his army.

²⁰⁰ *skyldir skautjalfaðar*: 'commander of the bear of the sheet (lower corner of the sail; ship)', ship's captain.

²⁰¹ *gjǫflastr gullskýfir*: 'most liberal waster or destroyer of gold', generous lord.

²⁰² *geirveðr*: spear-storm, battle.

²⁰³ *Ónars fljóð*: 'woman, (here) daughter of Ónarr', (the goddess) Jǫrð, i.e. earth or any land; here the eastern district of Norway, the Vík.

²⁰⁴ *sóknhattar sveltrjóðr*: 'reddener of the ice (sword) of the battle-hat (helmet)', warrior.

²⁰⁵ *geðbætir*: 'mender of the mind', possibly a reference to the meaning of the name Tryggvi, 'faithful, trusty'.

²⁰⁶ *Sveigðis salbrigðandi*: 'breaker of Óðinn's hall (the shield; Óðinn's hall was roofed with shields)', warrior.

²⁰⁷ *svanvangs skíð*: 'ski of the swan's plain (sea)', ship.

CHAPTER TEN

King Haraldr Gormsson was then ruling Danmørk. He was very displeased that King Hákon had made raids on his country, and it was rumoured that [162] the king of the Danes would be planning vengeance, but this did not happen so soon. But when Gunnhildr and her sons heard this, that there was fighting between Danmørk and Norway, then they set out on an expedition from the British Isles. They gave Eiríkr's daughter Ragnhildr in marriage to Þorfiðr hausakljúfr's son Arnfinnr. Then Jarl Þorfiðr established himself in Orkney again, and Eiríkr's sons went away. Gamli Eiríksson was then just about the eldest and yet was not a full-grown man.²⁰⁸ And when Gunnhildr got to Danmørk with her sons, she went to see King Haraldr and was received well there. King Haraldr granted them such great revenues in his realm that they were easily able to support themselves and their men. And he accepted as foster-son Haraldr Eiríksson and placed him on his knee. He was brought up there in the household of the king of the Danes. Some of Eiríkr's sons went raiding as soon as they were old enough, and gained wealth for themselves, making raids in the eastern Baltic. They were handsome at an early age, and mature in strength and ability sooner than in years. Glúmr Geirason mentions this in *Gráfeldardrápa*:

67. The prince, who gave many poets *Gráfeldardrápa* 3
 piercers of war-temples²⁰⁹ —
 in strife he was successful —
 subdued eastern countries.
 The sword-play god²¹⁰ set singing
 scabbard-tongues.²¹¹ The ruler
 brought armies, gold-adorned,
 active, to the ground.

[163] Eiríkr's sons then also turned about with their army northwards to the Vík and made raids there, but King Tryggvi had an army out and sailed to meet them, and they had many battles and the victory went now one way, now the other. Eiríkr's sons were sometimes making raids in the Vík, and Tryggvi sometimes round Halland and Sjáland.

²⁰⁸ This contradicts ch. 5, which says that the sons of Eiríkr had already subjected Orkney and conducted raids from there.

²⁰⁹ *gunnhorga slag*: 'striker (literally 'blow') of the war-temple (shield, which gives protection in battle)', weapon. Weapons were among gifts traditionally given to poets as rewards for their poems (see *NN* § 256).

²¹⁰ *sverðleiks reginn*: 'god of sword-play', warrior.

²¹¹ *slóðrtunga*: 'tongue of the scabbard', sword.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

While Hákon was king in Norway, the farmers and the merchants were on good peaceful terms with each other, so that neither harmed the other or the other's property. Those were prosperous times both by sea and by land. King Hákon was the most cheerful of all men and the most eloquent and most condescending. He was a man of great wisdom and devoted great energy to lawmaking. He set up Gulapingslög with the advice of Þorleifr spaki and he set up Frostapingslög with the advice of Jarl Sigurðr and others of the Þrændir who were the most sensible.²¹² But Heiðsævislög had been set up by Hálfðan svartí, as is written above.²¹³ King Hákon attended a Yule-banquet in Þrándheimr. Jarl Sigurðr had prepared it for him at Hlaðir. In the night of the first day of Yule the jarl's wife Bergljót gave birth to a boy child. Then next day King Hákon sprinkled the [164] boy with water and gave him his own name, and this boy grew up and later became a powerful and noble person. Jarl Sigurðr was a very close friend of King Hákon.

CHAPTER TWELVE

King Eysteinn of the Upplendingar, whom some call the Great, and some the Evil, he made raids in Þrándheimr and subjected Eynafylki and Sparbyggðafylki to himself and put over it his son whose name was . . .²¹⁴ But the Þrændir slew him. King Eysteinn made a second military expedition into Þrándheimr and made raids in many places there and subjected it to himself. Then he gave the Þrændir the choice, whether they wanted to have as their king his slave, known as Þórir faxi (the Maned), or a dog who was called Saurr, and they chose the dog because they thought that then they would be more independent. They had a spell cast on the dog giving him the intelligence of three men, and it barked for two words and spoke the third. A collar was made for it and a lead of silver and gold. And when it was muddy, courtiers carried it on their shoulders. A throne was made for it, and it sat on a mound as kings do, and dwelt on Eyin iðri and had a residence in the place called Saurshaugr. It is said that its death came about when wolves attacked its flock and courtiers urged it to defend its property; it left

²¹² Gulapingslög was the law of the western districts Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn and Firdir, and Frostapingslög of Þrándheimr (Trøndelag), Nord-Mørr, Naumudalr and Raumsdalr. *Fagrskinna* (ch. 9) and *Ágrip* (ch. 4) also credit Hákon with establishing the laws, but it is likely that at least the Gulapingslög predated Hákon's reign.

²¹³ See *Hálfðanar saga svarta* ch. 7 above.

²¹⁴ In *Hversu Nóregr byggðist*, a short narrative preserved in *Flatexjarbók*, Eysteinn's son is called Qnundr (*Fib* I 25).

the mound and went to where the wolves were, and they immediately tore it to pieces. There were many other surprising things that King Eysteinn did to [165] the *Prœndir*. Because of this raiding and warfare many of the ruling class fled, and many people fled from their ancestral property. Ketill *janti* (the Persistent), son of Jarl *Qnundr* of *Sparabú*, went east over *Kjǫlr* and a large number of men with him and took his household goods with him. They cleared forests and settled large districts there. It was afterwards called *Jamtaland*. Ketill's grandson was *Þórir helsingr* (Barnacle-Goose). He moved away from *Jamtaland* because of some killings, east over the forests that are situated there, and settled there, and a large number of people made their way there with him. And that is known as *Helsingjaland*. It extends all the way to the sea. *Svíár* inhabited *Helsingjaland* all along the eastern side by the sea. And when King *Haraldr inn hárfagri* was fighting his way to power, then again numerous people fled before him out of the country, *Prœndir* and *Naumdœlir*, and then further settlement took place east across *Jamtaland*, in some case extending all the way to *Helsingjaland*. The *Helsingjar* made trading expeditions into *Svíþjóð*, and their loyalties were entirely in that direction, but the *Jamtr* found themselves very much right in the middle, and no one took any notice of this until *Hákon* established peace and trade with *Jamtaland* and became friends with the ruling classes there. They afterwards travelled from the east to see him and consented to submission to him and payment of taxes and became his subjects, because they had had good reports of him. They preferred to be under his dominion rather than under the king of *Svíþjóð*, for they had come from Norwegian ancestry, and he established laws and privileges for them. All the *Helsingjar* did the same, those who originated from north of *Kjǫl*.

[166] CHAPTER THIRTEEN

King *Hákon* was a good Christian when he came to Norway. But because that country was all heathen and there was a great deal of pagan worship and many powerful people, and he felt he was lacking support and popularity among the ordinary people, he decided to practise his Christianity in secret, observing Sundays and Friday fasts. He made it law that observance of Yule should begin at the same time as Christian people observed Christmas, and then everyone was to have a measure of ale, or else pay a fine, and keep holiday as long as the ale lasted.²¹⁵ But previously observance of Yule began on midwinter night

²¹⁵ That is, the ale made from a measure (*mællir*) of grain. This amount of ale has been estimated at about 16.2 litres, on the basis of a thirteenth-century legal text, but the measure probably varied in different times and places.

(12th January), and continued for three nights. What he was intending was that when he was established in the country and had subjected the whole country to himself without opposition, he would then put forward Christianity. What he did first, was attract the people who were closest to him to Christianity. Thus by means of his popularity it came about that many had themselves baptised, and some gave up pagan practices. He [167] stayed for long periods in Prándheimr, because most of the power in the country resided there. And when King Hákon felt that he had gained the support of some of the ruling class in upholding Christianity, then he sent to England for a bishop and some other clerics. And when they came to Norway, then King Hákon revealed publicly that he intended to preach Christianity throughout the country. But the Mœrir and the Raumdœlir referred their decision to the Þrœndir. King Hákon then had some churches consecrated and put priests in them. But when he came to Þrándheimr, he called an assembly with the farmers and preached Christianity to them. Their answer was that they would refer this matter to Frostþing, and desired that people should come there from all the districts that were in Þrœndalög, saying that then they would respond to this difficult business.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Sigurðr Hlaðajarl was very keen on heathen worship, and so was his father Hákon. Jarl Sigurðr maintained all the ritual banquets on behalf of the king there in Þrœndalög. It was an ancient custom, when a ritual feast was to take place, that all the farmers should attend where the temple was and bring there their own supplies for them to use while the banquet lasted. At this banquet everyone had to take part in the ale-drinking. All kinds of domestic animals were slaughtered [168] there, including horses, and all the blood that came from them was then called *hlaut* ('lot'), and what the blood was contained in, *hlaut*-bowls, and *hlaut*-twigs, these were fashioned like holy water sprinklers; with these the altars were to be reddened all over, and also the walls of the temple outside and inside and the people also were sprinkled, while the meat was to be cooked for a feast. There would be fires down the middle of the floor in the temple with cauldrons over them. The toasts were handed across the fire, and the one who was holding the banquet and who was the chief person there, he had then to dedicate the toast and all the ritual food; first would be Óðinn's toast—that was drunk to victory and to the power of the king—and then Njörðr's toast and Freyr's toast for prosperity and peace. Then after that it was common for many people to drink the *bragafull* ('chieftain's toast'). People also drank toasts to their kinsmen, those who had been buried in mounds, and these were called *minni* ('memorial toasts'). Jarl Sigurðr was the most liberal of men. He did something that was very

celebrated: he held a great ritual feast at Hlaðir and stood all the expenses. Kormakr Qgmundarson mentions this in *Sigurðardrápa*:²¹⁶

68. No man need take platter *Sigurðardrápa* 6
 nor ash-wood cup's offspring²¹⁷
 to give the goods-damager²¹⁸
 there. The gods fooled Þjazi.²¹⁹
 Each avoids the enmity
 of the temple's keeper,
 for he hails the fire-Røgnir
 of the fen.²²⁰ Gramr fought for treasure.²²¹

[169] CHAPTER FIFTEEN

King Hákon came to the Frostþing, and a very large number of farmers was attending there. And when the assembly had been inaugurated, then King Hákon spoke, beginning first of all with this, that it was his proposal and entreaty to the farmers and husbandmen, rich and poor, together with all ordinary people, young and old, wealthy and not well off, women as well as men, that everyone should have themselves baptised and believe in one God, Christ son of Mary, and abandon all heathen worship and pagan gods, keeping holy every seventh day, abstaining from all work, also fasting every seventh day. But when the king had put this to all the people, there was immediately a great murmuring. The farmers grumbled that the king wanted to deprive them of labour, and also that the land could not be cultivated like that. And the labourers and slaves declared

²¹⁶ Kormakr Qgmundarson is the hero of *Kormaks saga*, one of the earliest Sagas of Icelanders, which includes a large number of verses relating to his love for Steingerðr and associated quarrels, but makes no mention of his praise poetry, although he travels and fights in the service of King Haraldr gráfeldr. Besides this stanza, six half-stanzas are cited in *Skáldskaparmál* and are believed to belong to the same poem for Jarl Sigurðr. They are distinctive for their form, called *hjástaelt* in Snorri's *Háttatal* (v. 13), in which each half-stanza ends with a mythological allusion in counterpoint to the rest of its content.

²¹⁷ *eskis fats afspring*: 'offspring of the vessel (cup) of ash-wood', ale.

²¹⁸ *fésærandi*: 'wounder of money or goods', generous man.

²¹⁹ An allusion to the myth told in the *Haustlög* of Þjóðólfr of Hvinir, and retold by Snorri in *Skáldskaparmál*, in which Loki rescues the goddess Iðunn, who preserves the youth of the gods, from the giant Þjazi (*Skáldsk* 1–2 and vv. 92–104).

²²⁰ *fens fúr-Røgnir*: 'Røgnir (Óðinn) of the fire of the fen or pool (gold)', wealthy man.

²²¹ Gramr may be the sword of Sigurðr, who won a treasure by killing the dragon Fáfnir. Little is known about Gramr Hálfðanarson, who is mentioned in *Skáldskaparmál* and *Flateyjarbók*.

that they could not work if they were not to get food, and also said that it was a defect in the character of King Hákon and his father and their whole family that they were mean with food, even though they were generous with gold.

Ásbjörn of Meðalhús in Gaulardalr stood up and replied to the king's proposal and said:

‘What we farmers thought, King Hákon, when you [170] held the first assembly here in Prándheimr and we had accepted you as king and received from you our ancestral rights, was that we then had heaven in our grasp, but now we are not sure which is more the case, that we will have received freedom or that you will have had us enslaved anew in an amazing way, that we should abandon the beliefs that our fathers held before us, and all our forefathers, first about the age of burning, and now about the age of mound-burial, and they have been far more noble than we, and yet these beliefs have served us well. We have become so fond of you that we have let you decide all our laws and privileges. Now this is what we desire and the farmers have agreed on, that we keep the laws which you established for us here at the Frostaping and we consented to with you. We will all follow you and keep you as king, as long as any of the farmers who are now present at this assembly is alive, if you, king, will exercise some moderation in asking of us only what we can grant you and what is not impossible for us. But if you try to pursue this business with such great rigour as to treat us with physical force and tyranny, then we farmers have made our decision, all of us to part company with you and find ourselves another ruler who will carry on towards us so that we can hold to that belief which we wish in freedom. Now you, king, must choose from these alternatives before the assembly is broken up.’

The farmers gave loud applause to this speech and say that that is how they want it to be.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

And when a hearing could be got, Jarl Sigurðr replied:

‘It is King Hákon's desire to reach an agreement with you and never to bring about the loss of your friendship.’

The farmers say that they want the king to sacrifice for their prosperity and peace as his father had done. Then the grumbling stopped, and they break up [171] the assembly. Then Jarl Sigurðr spoke to the king, that he should not absolutely refuse to do what the farmers wanted, saying that nothing else would do.

‘This, king, as you yourself can hear, is the desire and determination of the leaders and of all the people too. We shall, king, find some satisfactory way out.’

And this was agreed between the king and the jarl.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

In the autumn towards winter there was a sacrificial feast at Hlaðir, and the king attended. Previously, he had always been accustomed, if he was present where sacrifices were being offered, to take his food in a small building with a few of his men. But the farmers objected to him not sitting on his throne when the principal entertainment was taking place. The jarl said that he should not do that then. So it was, that the king sat on his throne. And when the first toast was served, Jarl Sigurðr announced it and dedicated it to Óðinn and drank from the horn to the king. The king took it and made the sign of the Cross over it. Then Kárr of Grýtingr spoke:

‘Why does the king do that now? Does he not want to worship?’

Jarl Sigurðr replied: ‘The king is doing what all those do who trust in their might and main and dedicate their toast to Þórr. He made the sign of the hammer over it before he drank.’

It then stayed peaceful for that evening. The next day, when people went to table, the farmers rushed up to the king, saying that he must now eat horse-flesh. The king wanted on no account to do that. Then they bade him drink some of the gravy. He would not do that. Then they bade him eat some of the fat. He would not do that either, and he was on the point of being attacked. Jarl Sigurðr says that he will settle the matter between them, and told them to stop the disturbance, and told [172] the king to lean with his mouth open over the handle of the pot where the steam from the cooking of the horse-flesh had risen up, and the handle was covered with fat. Then the king went up and wrapped a linen cloth round the handle and opened his mouth over it and then went to his throne, and neither side was well pleased.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The following winter, preparations were made for the king to celebrate Yule inland at Mærin. And when Yule approached, eight of the rulers who had most to do with the sacrificial feasts all over Þrændalög arranged to meet together. Four of them were from the coastal side of Þrándheimr: Kárr of Grýtingr and Ásbjörn of Meðalhús, Þorbergr of Varnes, Ormr of Ljoxa, and from the inland Þrændir: Blótólfr of Qlvishaugr, Narfi of Stafr in Veradalr, Þrándr haka (Hook) of Egg, Þórir skegg (Beard) of Húsabær in Eyin iðri. These eight men bound themselves as follows, that the four of the coastal Þrændir should root out Christianity, and the four of the inland Þrændir should force the king to offer sacrifice. The coastal Þrændir sailed four ships south to Mœrr and there slew three priests and burned three churches, afterwards returning home. And when King Hákon and Jarl Sigurðr came inland to Mærin with their army, farmers had arrived there in great numbers. The first day at the

feast the farmers attacked him and told him to offer sacrifice, promising him trouble if he didn't. Jarl Sigurðr mediated between them. The outcome was that King Hákon ate a few pieces of horse-liver. He then drank all the toasts that the farmers poured for him without the sign of the Cross. And when this feast was finished, the king and the jarl immediately went out to Hlaðir. The king was not at all cheerful and immediately got ready to go away from Prándheimr with all his troops, [173] saying this, that next time he would come to Prándheimr with more men and then repay the Prændir for the hostility that they had shown towards him. Jarl Sigurðr told the king not to make an issue out of this with the Prændir, saying that it would not do for the king to make threats or raids on the people of his own country, least of all in the area where the greatest strength of the country lay, which was in Prándheimr. The king was so angry it was impossible to get him to listen. He went away from Prándheimr and south to Mœrr, stayed there during the winter and during the spring. And when summer came, he gathered troops together, and word got about that he would be going with this army against the Prændir.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

King Hákon had now taken to his ships and had a large force. Then news reached him from the south of the country that King Eiríkr's sons were come from the south from Danmørk into the Vík, and in addition that they had driven King Tryggvi Ólafsson from his ships east of Sótanes. They had then raided widely in the Vík and many people had submitted to them. And when the king heard about these events, then he felt he was in need of forces. Then he sent word to Jarl Sigurðr to come to him, and to other leaders as well from whom he could expect support. Jarl Sigurðr came to King Hákon and had a very large force. This included all the Prændir who in the winter had most pressed the king to force him to offer sacrifice. Then they were all granted reconciliation as a result of Jarl Sigurðr's persuasion. King Hákon then went south along the coast. And when he came south round Staðr, he learned that Eiríkr's sons had then reached Norðr-Agðir. Then each side advanced against the other. Their meeting was at Kǫrmt. Then each side left their ships and fought [174] on Qgvaldsnes. Both sides had very large numbers. There was a great battle there. King Hákon pushed forward hard, and came up against King Guthormr Eiríksson with his troop, and they had an exchange of blows. King Guthormr fell there and his standard was cut down. A large number then fell with him. After this the army of the sons of Eiríkr took to flight, and they fled to their ships and rowed away, having lost a large number of troops. Guthormr sindri mentions this:

69. The giver of the arm's girdle²²² *Hákonardrápa 6*
 got battle-pins²²³ clashing
 over heads of slain heroes
 of the howl of slaughter-Þögn.²²⁴
 There the Njörðr of the noise of
 the nail's full moons²²⁵ left, weapon-
 wounded, the Njörðr of the water
 of wide lands' slaughter-fire.²²⁶

King Hákon went to his ships and sailed east in pursuit of Gunnhildr's sons. Both parties went as fast as they [175] could until they came to Austr-Agðir. Then Eiríkr's sons sailed out into the open sea and south to Jutland. Guthormr sindri mentions this:

70. Oftentimes—I recall it— *Hákonardrápa 7*
 the elm-band's terrifier's²²⁷
 brother's sons had to learn
 the wound-fish Baldr's²²⁸ power.
 The seeker of strife of
 sea-planks²²⁹ drove *snekkjur*²³⁰
 to sea, and sent fleeing
 all the sons of Eirekr, his brother.

After this King Hákon went north back to Norway, and Eiríkr's sons then stayed in Danmörk for a long time.

²²² *gildir handar vafs*: 'yielder of the wrapping of the arm (arm-ring)', generous man, king.

²²³ *vígnest*: 'battle-pin', sword, spear (or 'battle-brooch', shield).

²²⁴ *valþagnar hlýmmildingr*: 'lord of the noise (battle) of the Þögn (a valkyrie) of slaughter', warrior.

²²⁵ *Njörðr nadds hámana raddar*: 'Njörðr (god) of the voice (clash, battle) of the spike (spear) of high moons (shields)', warrior.

²²⁶ *Njörðr valbrands víðra landa sunda*: 'Njörðr (god) of the straits (blood) of wide lands (shields) of slaughter-fire (sword)', warrior. See *NN* § 1079.

²²⁷ *almdrógar ægir*: 'frightener of (i.e. one who makes quiver) the narrow band (string) of the elm (bow)', archer, warrior.

²²⁸ *bensíks Baldr*: 'Baldr (god) of the hook (type of fish) of the wound (sword)', warrior.

²²⁹ *þöðsækir flæðu bríkar*: 'pursuer of battle of the sea's plank (ship)', fighter of sea-battles. This interpretation assumes a feminine noun **flæða*, or emendation of *flæðu* to *flæða* (see FJ (B I 56); *NN* § 1933).

²³⁰ *snekkja* (plural *snekkjur*) was a kind of large warship.

CHAPTER TWENTY

After this battle King Hákon made it law over the whole country along the coast and as far up inland as the furthest salmon go, that he organised every inhabited area and [176] divided it into ship-levy sections and divided the ship-levy sections into districts.²³¹ It was determined how many ships there should be and how large they should be fitted out from each district when the whole population was called out, and the population should be obliged to fit them out as soon as a foreign army came to be in the country. This also had to be done when such a levy took place, that a beacon should be lit on high mountains so that each one was visible from the next. It is said that in seven nights the war-summons passed from the southernmost beacon to the most northerly assembly district in Hálogaland.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Eiríkr's sons did a lot of raiding in the eastern Baltic, and sometimes they made raids in Norway, as has been written above. But King Hákon was ruling Norway and was very popular. At that time there were also good harvests in the land and good peace.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

When King Hákon had been king in Norway for twenty years, Eiríkr's sons came from the south from Danmørk and had a very large force. It was a large force that had followed them on their raids, and yet the army of Danes that Haraldr Gormsson had put at their disposal was much larger. They got a very favourable wind and sailed out from Vendill and approached the coast at Agðir, then set their course north along the coast and then sailed day and night. But beacons were not lit up because it was the practice for beacons to go across the country from the east, but there in the east they had not become aware of their expedition. Another reason was that the king had imposed a big penalty if beacons were wrongly set up on the people who were known to have done it and found guilty of doing it, because warships and vikings had gone [177] round the outlying islands making raids and the local people thought it must be the sons of Eiríkr doing it; then beacons were lit and there was a rush to arms all over the country, but Eiríkr's sons went back to Danmørk and had not brought any Danish army except their own troops, and sometimes it was some other type of vikings. King Hákon got very angry at this, when labour and

²³¹ For a more detailed account of the *leidangr* 'levy' system supposedly put in place by Hákon, see *Fagrskinna* ch. 12.

expense resulted from it, and no benefit. The farmers for their part also complained about it when this happened. And this was the reason why no reports came in advance of Eiríkr's sons' expedition until they got north to Úlfasund. They lay there seven nights. Then a report travelled by the higher route across the isthmus north across Mœrr, but King Hákon was then in Sunnmœrr on the island called Fræði, in a place called Birkiströnd, at his residence, and he had no force except his personal following and the farmers who had been invited there.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Informants came to King Hákon and told him their news, that Eiríkr's sons were south of Staðr with a great army. Then he had called to him the wisest men that were there and asked advice from them, whether he should fight with Eiríkr's sons, in spite of the great difference in numbers, or whether he should go away to the north and get himself more troops. Egill ullserkr (Wool-Shirt) is the name of one farmer who was there then, very aged, and had been bigger and stronger than anyone and a very great fighter. He had for a long time carried Haraldr inn hárfagri's banner. Egill replied to the king's speech:

'I was in some battles with your father, King Haraldr. He fought sometimes against larger forces, sometimes against smaller. He was always victorious. I never heard him seek such counsel that his [178] friends should advise him to flee. We also shall never give that advice, king, because we believe we have a trusty leader. You shall also have reliable support from us.'

Many others then also backed this speech. The king also said that he would rather fight with what was available. This was then decided upon. The king then had the war summons published and sent round in all directions from where he was and had a force mustered, whatever he could get. Then said Egill ullserkr:

'I was afraid for a while, while this great peace lasted, that I would die of old age inside on my straw bed on the floor, but I would rather fall in battle and follow my ruler. Now it may turn out that it can be so.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Eiríkr's sons sailed north round Staðr as soon as they got a favourable wind. And when they came north round Staðr they found out where King Hákon was, and sailed to meet him. King Hákon had nine ships. He sailed north under Fræðarberg in Féeyarsund, and Eiríkr's sons came to land on the south side of the cliff. They had more than twenty ships. King Hákon sent them a message, telling them to go ashore, saying that he had marked

out a battlefield for them at Rastarkálfr. There are level and extensive fields there, and behind them a long and rather deep slope runs down. Eiríkr's sons went from their ships there and north over the ridge on the landward side of Fræðarberg and so on to Rastarkálfr. Egill then spoke to King Hákon, asking him to give him ten men and ten [179] banners. The king did so. Then Egill went with his men up to the foot of the slope. And King Hákon went up onto the battlefield with his force, set up his standard and drew up his troops and said this:

‘We shall have a long battle line, so that they cannot surround us, even if they have more troops.’

They did so. A great battle took place there and a fierce one. Then Egill made them raise the ten banners that he had, and organised the men carrying them so that they should walk as close as possible to the slope, and leave quite a distance between each of them. They did so and walked on along the slope as close as they could, as if they were planning to get behind Eiríkr's sons. They saw, those who were standing highest up in Eiríkr's sons' battle line, that many banners were going at a furious pace and towering above the slope, and imagined that with them there must be a great force intending to get behind them, between them and the ships. Then there rose a great shouting. They all told each other what was happening. Next their troops took to flight, and when the kings saw this, they fled. King Hákon then pressed forward hard and pursued the rout and cut down a large number of men.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Eiríkr's son Gamli, when he got up onto the ridge above the cliff, then turned back and then saw that no troops were coming after them other than those they had previously fought against, and that it was just a trick. Then King Gamli had a blast of war-trumpets blown and raised a banner and drew up his battle line. All the Norwegians gathered around this, but the Danes fled to the ships. And when King Hákon and his force came up to them, then a most fierce battle took place there a second time. King Hákon now had more troops. It ended with Eiríkr's sons fleeing. They made their way south from the ridge, but some of their troops [180] retreated south to the cliff, and King Hákon pursued them. There is a level field east of the ridge and westwards to the cliff and then steep precipices down to the west. Then Gamli's men retreated away up to the cliff, and King Hákon attacked them so boldly that he killed some, and some leapt west over the cliff, and both lots were killed, and the king only parted from them when every mother's son was dead.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Eiríkr's son Gamli also fled from the ridge and down to the level ground south of the cliff. Then King Gamli again turned towards them and continued the battle. Then troops again gathered to him. Then all his brothers came up with great forces. Egill ullserkr was then leading Hákon's men and delivered a hard attack, and he and King Gamli exchanged blows. King Gamli received great wounds, but Egill fell and many men with him. Then King Hákon came up with the troops who had been following him. Then a fresh battle took place again. King Hákon then again pushed forward hard and struck men on both sides of him and felled one after the other. Thus says Guthormr sindri:

71. The swords' voice²³² host fled, fearful, *Hákonardrápa* 8
 from the waster of weapons.²³³
 The raiser of strife-fire,²³⁴ stout-hearted,
 strode before the standards.
 [181] The king, in the spat of spear-wives,²³⁵
 seeks himself no shelter,
 prince well-endowed with the wind of
 the wife of the moon's downfall.²³⁶

Eiríkr's sons saw their men falling all round them. Then they turned in flight to their ships, but those who had fled to the ships earlier had then pushed out the ships, but some of the ships had now run aground. Then all Eiríkr's sons leapt into the water, with the troops who were following them. There fell Eiríkr's son Gamli, but the other brothers reached the ships and afterwards sailed away with the troops that were left, and then sailed south to Danmørk.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

King Hákon took the ships that had run aground there, which Eiríkr's sons had owned, and had them dragged up onto the shore. Then King Hákon had Egill ullserkr laid in a ship and with him all the men of their forces who had

²³² *hjørva rødd*: 'the voice of swords', (din of) battle.

²³³ *pverrir malma*: 'the diminisher of weapons', generous man, king.

²³⁴ *ræsir rógeisu*: 'ruler, controller of the battle-fire (sword)', warrior.

²³⁵ *snerra geirvífa*: 'sharp attack of spear-wives (valkyries)', battle.

²³⁶ *byrr kvánar óls mána*: 'wind of the wife of the moon's destruction (giantess)', mind, courage. According to mythology the moon was to be swallowed by a wolf (*Gylf* 49), which could be seen as equivalent to a giant; elsewhere kennings of the type 'wind of the giantess' refer to 'thought' (*Skáldsk* 14/21–23, 108/28–30), though the underlying story is lost.

fallen, having earth and stones brought up. King Hákon also had more ships brought ashore and the fallen put onto them, and these mounds can still be seen to the south of Fræðarberg. Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed this verse when Glúmr Geirason boasted about King Hákon's fall in his verse:

72. Wary of flight, once the ruler Fsk 96
 washed in blood of Gamli ÓTMI 47–48
 [182] Fenrir's lip-stretcher;²³⁷ fury
 enflamed trees of weapon-storm,²³⁸
 when into the sea, steadily,
 all the sons of Eiríkr he drove;
 now spears' guarding-Gautar²³⁹
 grieve for the prince's downfall.

Tall memorial stones stand near Egill ullserkr's grave-mound.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

When King Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri had been king in Norway for twenty-six years after his brother Eiríkr left the country, then it came about that King Hákon was there in Hǫrðaland and was receiving a banquet on Stord at Fitjar. He had there his personal following and many [183] farmers at his invitation. And while the king was sitting at table over his morning meal, then the watchmen who were outside saw many ships sailing from the south, and they were not far from the island. Then they all told each other that the king should be told that they thought that there must be an army coming against them. But no one was very keen to bring the king news of war, for he had set heavy penalties on anyone who did that, but it seemed nevertheless impossible to leave the king in ignorance of this. And then one of them goes into the room and asked Eyvindr Finnsson to go out with him quickly, saying that it was something of the highest importance. Eyvindr went straight away, when he came out, to where the ships could be seen from. Then he saw immediately that there was a great army coming there, went back into the room and before the king and said:

‘It takes a little time to sail, but a long time to eat a meal.’

The king looked at him and said:

‘What is going on?’

Eyvindr said:

²³⁷ *Fennis varra sparra*: ‘stretcher of Fenrir's lips’, sword. *Gylfaginning* relates how the gods bind the wolf Fenrir and wedge his jaws apart with a sword (*Gylf* 29).

²³⁸ *malmhríðar meiðr*: ‘tree (man) of the storm of weapons (battle)’, warrior.

²³⁹ *geira gæti-Gautr*: ‘guarding-Óðinn of spears’, warrior.

73. Bold Blood-Axe's avengers *Fsk* 84–85
 bid us to mailcoat-meeting *ÓTM* I 40
 of the strap's pin;²⁴⁰ for sitting
 scarcely we have leisure.
 It's hard—but I hoped to
 uphold, king, your honour—
 let us at once wield ancient
 weapons—to tell a lord war-news.

[184] The king says: 'You are such an honest fellow, Eyvindr, that you will not tell us news of war unless it is true.'

Then the king had the table cleared away. Then he went out and looked at the ships, saw that they were warships, and spoke then to his men about what course should be taken, whether they should fight with the force they had or go to the ships and sail away north.

'It is obvious to us,' says the king, 'that we shall now be fighting against much greater odds than we have had to face before, and yet we have often thought our forces greatly outnumbered when we have fought a battle against Gunnhildr's sons.'

People offered no quick opinion about this. Then Eyvindr says:

74. It suits not the brave soldier, *Fsk* 85
 spear-rain Njǫrðr,²⁴¹ further northwards *ÓTM* I 41
 to lead the board land's stallion;²⁴² *Landn* 66
 we allow no hesitation.
 Now on the roaring roadway
 of Rakni,²⁴³ a great navy—
 with hard grip we hold war-boards²⁴⁴—
 Haraldr from the south is driving.

[185] The king replies: 'Boldly is that spoken, and close to my disposition, and yet I would like to hear more people's opinion on this matter.'

But when the men realised how the king wanted to have it, then many responded, saying that they would rather fall valiantly than flee before Danes without trying, and said that they had often been victorious when they had been fighting with a smaller force. The king thanked them warmly for their words and told them to arm, and men do so. The king throws on his coat of

²⁴⁰ *brynþings fetilstinga*: 'mail-coat meeting (battle) of the strap's pin (i.e. weapon carried on a belt or baldric, perhaps sword)', battle.

²⁴¹ *Njǫrðr naddregns*: 'Njǫrðr (god) of point-rain (battle)', warrior.

²⁴² *borðmærar skær*: 'horse of the land of boards (sea)', ship.

²⁴³ *Rakna rymleið*: 'Rakni's (sea-king's) noisy path', sea.

²⁴⁴ *gunnborð*: 'battle-board', shield.

mail and girds on his sword *Kvernbítr* (Millstone-biter), puts on his head a gilded helmet, takes a halberd in his hand and a shield at his side. Then he arranges his following in battle order and the farmers as well, and raised his banner.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Haraldr Eiríksson was then leader of the brothers after the fall of Gamli. The brothers had brought there a great army from Danmørk in the south. They had then joined forces with their maternal uncles Eyvindr skreyja (Braggart) and Álfr askmaðr (Shipman). They were strong and valiant men and great slaughterers of men. Eiríkr's sons sailed their ships to the island and went ashore and formed up. And what they say is, that the odds were no less than must have been six men to one, by which Eiríkr's sons must have been more numerous.

[186] CHAPTER THIRTY

King Hákon had now formed up his troops, and so it is said, that the king threw off his coat of mail before the battle began. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir in *Hákonarmál*:

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 75. | They found that Bjørn's brother, ²⁴⁵
battle-shirt donning,
the mighty monarch
had marched with his standard;
strife-poles ²⁴⁶ stooped
and spear quivered;
then strife was started. | <i>Hákonarmál</i> 2
<i>Fsk</i> 86–87 |
| 76. | He called on Háleygir
as on Hólmrygir,
the jarls' sole slayer
advanced to battle.
Freehanded, he had a fine
following of Norwegians,
the scourge of island-Danes;
he stood in brass helmet. | <i>Hákonarmál</i> 3
<i>Fsk</i> 87 |

²⁴⁵ i.e. Hákon. For Haraldr hárfagri's son Bjørn kaupmaðr or farmaðr see *Haralds saga hárfagra* ch. 35 above. On Eyvindr's *Hákonarmál*, see notes 25 and 265.

²⁴⁶ *dolgrá*: 'pole of enmity (battle)', spear.

77. He threw off his armour; *Hákonarmál* 4
 the army's chief²⁴⁷ his mail-coat *Fsk* 88
 [187] flung on the field
 before the battle.
 With men he made merry;
 he must defend his country;
 the king with glad spirit
 stood in golden helmet.

King Hákon selected men carefully for his personal following, for strength and valour, just as his father King Haraldr had done. Þórálfr inn sterki (the Strong), son of Skólmr, was there and was positioned on one side of the king.²⁴⁸ He had helmet and shield, halberd and a sword that was called Fetbreiðr. It was claimed that he and King Hákon were equal in strength. Þórðr Sjáreksson mentions this in the *drápa* that he composed about Þórálfr:²⁴⁹

78. There, where strove war-hardened *Þórólfs drápa*
 wood of land-binder's horses,²⁵⁰ *Skólmssonar* 1
 the host came to swords' clashing *Fsk* 91
 keenly, on Storð at Fitjar,
 and he dared go forth flourishing
 fire of the storm of the ogress
 of the ship's sheltering moons²⁵¹ by the
 shoulder of the king of Northmen.

[188] And when the battle lines closed together, there was a furious and bloody battle. And when men had thrown their spears, they drew their swords.

²⁴⁷ *verðungar vísi*: 'leader of the troop of paid men', king.

²⁴⁸ Þórálfr Skólmsson was an Icelander from Myrká. He is mentioned in the twelfth-century *Íslendingadrápa* (v. 13, FJ B I 542), *Landnámabók* (*Landn* 257) and *Grettis saga* (197), which refers to Þórálfr's trials of strength against the hero of *Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar*, to whom he is said to be related (*ÍF* XIII 403–04), though the two can hardly have been contemporaries, since Ormr is said to have been still performing feats of strength after the year 1000.

²⁴⁹ Þórðr Sjáreksson was an Icelandic poet whose works include *Róðadrápa*, a memorial poem for King Óláfr Haraldsson (the Saint; died 1030). His poem on Þórálfr must have been composed long after the events referred to in it, since Þórálfr was killed c. 961.

²⁵⁰ *jódraugr bands landa*: 'tree-trunk (man) of horses (ships) of the binding of lands (sea)', seafarer.

²⁵¹ *gimslongvir drifu gifrs hlémána nausta blakks*: 'swinger of fire (sword) of the storm (battle) of the ogress (axe) of the protecting moons (shields) of the horse of the boat-sheds (ship)', warrior. This exceptionally long extended kenning (8 elements, the longest known in any Germanic alliterative verse) is not fully rendered in this translation.

Then King Hákon and Þórálfr with him advanced before the standard and struck on both sides. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir:

79. So the sword pierced *Hákonarmál 5*
 from the sovereign's hand *Fsk 88–89*
 Váfuðr's weeds,²⁵² as if
 through water moving;
 spears were clashing,
 shields were smashed.
 Swords resounded
 on skulls of warriors.
80. Trampled were targes *Hákonarmál 6*
 by the Týr of neck-rings²⁵³ *Fsk 89*
 with hard limbs of hilts,²⁵⁴
 as were heads of Norwegians.
 Clamour came to the island;
 the kings reddened
 bright banks of shields
 with blood of warriors.

[189] King Hákon was easily recognised, bigger than other men. Light also gleamed from his helmet when the sun shone on it. There were many weapons aimed at him. Then Eyvindr Finnsson took a hood and placed it over the king's helmet.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Eyvindr skreyja then shouted out:

'Is the king of the Norwegians hiding now? Or has he fled? And where is the golden helmet now?'

Then Eyvindr advanced, and his brother Álfir with him, and they struck on both sides and went on as if they were mad or possessed. King Hákon shouted to Eyvindr:

'Keep on in the same direction if you want to meet the king of the Norwegians.'

So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir:

²⁵² *váðir Váfaðar*: 'garments of Váfuðr (Óðinn)', armour.

²⁵³ *bauga Týr*: 'Týr (god) of rings', generous man.

²⁵⁴ *hjalta harðfótr*: 'hard leg of hilts', sword-blade.

81. The stirrer of the storm of
slaughter-gate-Gefn,²⁵⁵ loyal
to troops, not treasure, did not
tell Skreyja to turn aside,
'if, intent on winning, you wish
the wise wealth-waster²⁵⁶ to encounter,
press onwards, ocean-rider,²⁵⁷
to the able king of Northmen.'

Fsk 90

There was also not long to wait before Eyvindr came up, swung [190] up his sword and struck at the king. Þórálfr pushed his shield against him and it made Eyvindr stagger, while the king took his sword Kvernþír in both hands and struck at Eyvindr down on his helmet, splitting the helmet and his head right down to his shoulders. Then Þórálfr slew Álfr askmaðr. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir:

82. I know that the sharp wound-wand,²⁵⁸
wielded by the king two-handed,
cut the dubiously doughty
dweller on the ski of cargo;²⁵⁹
the branch of boar-of-Áli's
bad weather,²⁶⁰ Danes' harmer,
through hair-barrows²⁶¹ drove down,
dauntless, his sword gold-hilted.

Fsk 90–91

After the fall of the brothers King Hákon advanced so strongly that the whole host gave way before him. Panic and flight spread through Eiríkr's sons' troops, and King Hákon was in the van of his battle line and pursued the rout relentlessly and struck often and hard. Then an arrow flew, of the kind known as *fleinn* ('long shaft'), and planted itself in King Hákon's arm high up in the muscle just below the shoulder. And it was reported by many

²⁵⁵ *valgrinda Gefnar veðrheyjandi*: 'raiser of the storm of Gefn (valkyrie) of the slaughter-gates (shields)', raiser of battle, warrior.

²⁵⁶ *søkspennir*: 'one who squanders treasure', generous man.

²⁵⁷ *njótr hranna*: 'user of the waves', seafarer.

²⁵⁸ *benvöndr*: 'wound-wand', sword.

²⁵⁹ *byggvingr búlka skíð*: 'one who lives on the ski of cargo (ship)', seafarer.

²⁶⁰ *Ála galtar éldraugr*: 'tree-trunk (man) of storm (battle) of Áli's boar (helmet)', warrior. Áli was a legendary king who owned a helmet called Hildisvín or Hildigöltr 'battle-boar' (*Skáldsk* 58); in *Ynglinga saga* Snorri refers to the now largely lost *Skjöldunga saga* as his source for the story in which Áli appears (*Hkr* I 57).

²⁶¹ *skarar haugr*: 'mound or barrow of hair', head.

people that one of [191] Gunnhildr's servants called Kisingr, ran forward in the turmoil and shouted:

'Make room for the king's slayer' — and shot the long shaft at King Hákon. But some say that no one knows who shot it. And that may well be, for arrows and spears and all kinds of missiles were flying as thick as snow. A multitude of Eiríkr's sons' men fell both on the battlefield and on the way to the ships and also on the beach, and a multitude leapt into the water. A lot got onto the ships, all Eiríkr's sons, and immediately rowed away, with King Hákon's men after them. So says Þórðr Sjáreksson:

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 83. | The criminals' killer ²⁶² —
so calm should be broken —
far in his front line
fought; long rule men wished him.
The struggle started when the
son of Gunnhildr came northwards,
gold's flight not fearing, ²⁶³
but fallen was the ruler. | <i>Þórólfs drápa</i>
<i>Skólmssonar</i> 3
<i>Fsk</i> 92 |
| [192] | Weariness was clear, where
wounded farmers sat at
their rigid rowing-shafts;
rendered up life many.
Brave it was, when the bold
battle-Njǫrðr ²⁶⁴ in such tumult
fought by the king, he who furnished
refreshment for the raven. | <i>Þórólfs drápa</i>
<i>Skólmssonar</i> 4
<i>Fsk</i> 92

<i>Þórólfs drápa</i>
<i>Skólmssonar</i> 2
<i>Fsk</i> 93 |

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

King Hákon went out onto his warship, then had his wound bandaged, but it bled so much that it could not be stopped. And as the day passed, the king grew weak. Then he said that he wants to go north to Alreksstaðir to his residence. But when they got north to Konungahella, they came to land. The king was then nearly dead. Then he called his friends and told them the arrangements he wished to make for the kingdom. The only child he had was

²⁶² *varga myrðir*: 'killer of outlaws', just king.

²⁶³ *vanr ótta á flóttu gulls*: 'lacking fear of the flight of gold', generous; the description may be intended to apply to *gramr* 'king' (l. 7) rather than to *Gunnhildar arfi* 'Gunnhildr's son', Haraldr. The fallen king may be Haraldr's brother Gamli.

²⁶⁴ *göndlar Njǫrðr*: 'Njǫrðr (god) of battle', warrior.

a daughter, who was called Þóra, and no son. He bade them send word to Eiríkr's sons that they should be kings over the country, but he asked them to treat his friends and kinsmen kindly.

'And even if it be granted me to live,' he says, 'I will still go from this country to be among Christian people and atone for what I have done to offend God, but if I die here in a heathen place, then give me whatever burial you think best.'

And soon after King Hákon died there on the slab of rock where he had been born. King Hákon was lamented so much that [193] both friends and enemies wept for his death and declared that never again would such a king come to Norway. His friends moved his body north to Sæheimr in Norðr-Hǫrðaland and raised a great mound there and laid the king in it with all his arms and his best attire, but no other goods. They spoke over his burial as the custom of heathen people was, directed him to Valhǫll. Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed a poem about the fall of King Hákon, telling also about his reception there. This is called *Hákonarmál*, and this is how it begins:²⁶⁵

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Gǫndul and Skǫgul
Gautatýr ²⁶⁶ sent
to choose among kings,
which of Yngvi's race
was to go with Óðinn
and dwell in Valhǫll. | <i>Hákonarmál</i> 1
<i>Fsk</i> 86 |
| 2. | They found that Björn's brother,
battle-shirt donning,
the mighty monarch
had marched with his standard;
strife-poles stooped
and the sword quivered;
then the strife was started. | <i>Hákonarmál</i> 2
<i>Fsk</i> 86–87 |

²⁶⁵ Despite this introductory phrase, often used when only a sample verse is quoted, and despite the fact that several stanzas from the poem (2–6) have already been cited, Snorri repeats *Hákonarmál* in what seems to be its entirety to form a conclusion to *Hákonar saga*. The poem, which has parallels with the anonymous *Eiríksmál* in memory of Eiríkr Blood-Axe (and was probably inspired by it if *Eiríksmál* is accepted as genuine), dramatises the conducting of the (somewhat reluctant) king to Valhǫll by two valkyries.

²⁶⁶ *Gǫndul* and *Skǫgul* are listed among names of 'Óðinn's maids' (valkyries) in *Skáldskaparmál* (*Skáldsk* 115). *Gautatýr*: Týr (god) of the Gautar, Óðinn.

3. He called on Háleygir
as on Holmrygir,
the jarls' sole slayer,
and advanced to battle.
Freehanded, he had a fine
following of Norwegians,
the scourge of island-Danes;
he stood in brass helmet. *Hákonarmál 3*
4. He threw off his armour;
the army's chief his mail-coat
flung on the field
before the battle.
With men he made merry;
he must defend his country;
the king with glad spirit
stood in golden helmet. *Hákonarmál 4*
5. So the sword pierced
from the sovereign's hand
Váfuðr's weeds,²⁶⁷ as if
through water moving;
spears were clashing,
shields were smashed.
Swords resounded
on skulls of warriors. *Hákonarmál 5*
6. Trampled were targes
by the Týr of neck-rings²⁶⁸
with hard limbs of hilts,²⁶⁹
as were heads of Norwegians.
Clamour came to the islands;
the kings reddened
bright banks of shields
with blood of warriors. *Hákonarmál 6*
- [194] 7. Wound-blazes²⁷⁰ burned
in bloody gashes,
langobards²⁷¹ lowered
over lives of men, *Hákonarmál 7*
Fsk 89

²⁶⁷ *váðir Váfaðar*: 'garments of Váfuðr (Óðinn)', armour.

²⁶⁸ *bauga Týr*: 'Týr (god) of rings', generous man.

²⁶⁹ *hjalta harðfótr*: 'hard leg of hilts', sword-blade.

²⁷⁰ *beneldr*: 'wound-fire', sword.

²⁷¹ *langbarðar*: 'long-beards', swords from Lombardy in Italy.

- the wound-sea²⁷² resounded
 on the swords' headland,²⁷³
 the arrows' flow²⁷⁴ falling
 on the foreshore of Storð.
8. Rednesses blended under
 the rim's heaven.²⁷⁵
 Skoꝓul's storm²⁷⁶ battered
 clouds of the shield-rims.²⁷⁷
 Spear-waves²⁷⁸ thundered
 in storm of Óðinn.²⁷⁹
 Many men sank in
 the sword's current.²⁸⁰
9. Then with swords unsheathed
 sat the princes,
 with shields broken
 and battered armour,
 That host was not
 in good heart, going
 the way to Valhøll.
- [195] 10. Gøndul said this,
 on spear-shaft leaning:
 'The gods have gained forces
 now that Høkon,
 his great host with him,
 home they have bidden.'
11. The war-leader heard
 the words of the valkyries,
 mighty, horse-mounted.
 They showed their wisdom,
 wearing helmets, sitting,
 and held their shields before them.
- Hákonarmál* 8
- Hákonarmál* 9
- Hákonarmál* 10
- Hákonarmál* 11

²⁷² *sárgymir*: 'wound-sea', blood.

²⁷³ *sverða nes*: 'headland of swords', shield.

²⁷⁴ *flóð fleina*: 'flood of spears or arrows', blood.

²⁷⁵ *himinn randar*: 'sky of the shield-rim', shield.

²⁷⁶ *Skoꝓlar veðr*: 'Skoꝓul's (valkyrie's) storm', battle.

²⁷⁷ *bauga ský*: 'clouds of the shield-rims', shields (MS *skýs* emended to *ský* as in FJ).

²⁷⁸ *oddlá*: 'spear-wave', blood.

²⁷⁹ *Óðins veðr*: 'Óðinn's storm', battle.

²⁸⁰ *mækis straumr*: 'the stream of the sword', blood.

12. 'Why did you settle,' said Hǫkon, *Hákonarmál* 12
 the war thus, Spear-Skǫgul?
 We were worthy of gain from the gods.'
 'We were the cause,' said Skǫgul,
 'that you won the field,
 and your foemen fled.'
13. 'We must ride now,' *Hákonarmál* 13
 said the mighty Skǫgul,
 'the green lands of the gods,
 to say to Óðinn
 that a king is coming
 to see him in person.'
14. 'Hermóðr and Bragi,' *Hákonarmál* 14
 Hroptatýr²⁸¹ called,
 'go to greet the ruler!
 For a king is coming,
 who is called a hero,
 here to our hall.'
- [196] 15. The king spoke then, *Hákonarmál* 15
 come from the battle,
 he stood all soaked in blood:
 'Great ill-will
 Óðinn seems to show us.
 We fear his hatred.'
16. 'The truce of all the *einherjar*²⁸² *Hákonarmál* 16
 you shall enjoy;
 accept ale from the Æsir!
 Jarls' enemy, *Fsk* 95
 you have in here
 eight brothers,' said Bragi.
17. 'Our fighting gear,' *Hákonarmál* 17
 the good king said,
 'we will hold on to ourselves.
 Helmet and corselet
 will be kept fast.
 It is right to have all at the ready.'

²⁸¹ *Hroptatýr*: a name for Óðinn (*Gylf* 22).

²⁸² *einherjar*: 'those who fight alone(?)' or 'unique warriors(?)', or 'united warriors(?)', Óðinn's chosen warriors who live in Valhöll (*Gylf* 21)

18. Then it was made clear *Hákonarmál* 18
 how this king had
 well honoured holy places,
 when Hókon was
 hailed in welcome
 by all the gods and powers.
19. On a blessed day *Hákonarmál* 19
 will be born that king *Fsk* 94
 who has such a heart.
 his age
 will always be
 given out as good.
- [197] 20. Ravaged will be *Hákonarmál* 20
 The realms of men *Fsk* 94
 by Fenrisúlfr unfettered,²⁸³
 before his equal
 on the empty path
 so fine a king will come.
21. Cattle die, *Hákonarmál* 21
 kinsmen die, *Fsk* 95
 land and fief lie ruined;
 since Hókon went
 among heathen gods,
 enslaved are many peoples.

²⁸³ *Fenrisúlfr*: The monstrous wolf Fenrir, fettered by the gods, whose breaking loose signals the coming of Ragnarök (the doom of the gods) (*Gylf* 50).

[198] **Haralds saga gráfeldar**

CHAPTER ONE

Eiríkr's sons then assumed the kingship over Norway after the fall of King Hákon. Haraldr was the most highly regarded of them, and he was the eldest of those who were still living. Their mother Gunnhildr shared a large part of the government of the country with them. She was now called Mother of Kings. In the country at this time, Tryggvi Ólafsson was ruler in the east of the country and Guðrøðr Bjarnarson in Vestfold, Sigurðr Hlaðajarl in Prándheimr, and Gunnhildr's sons had the centre of the country, the first winter. Then messages and ambassadors went between Gunnhildr's sons and Tryggvi and Guðrøðr, and straight away proposals were made for settlement, that they should have the same share of rule from Gunnhildr's sons as they had previously had from King Hákon.

There is a man named Glúmr Geirason. He was King Haraldr's poet and a very valiant man. He composed this verse after Hákon's fall:

85. Haraldr has got good vengeance Fsk 96
 for Gamli; sword-wound-logs²⁸⁴ ÓTMI 47
 forfeit life; king fierce in battle,
 fine deeds you accomplish
 [199] as the war-deity's dark falcons²⁸⁵
 drink Hákon's blood; I heard that²⁸⁶
 the reed of ruddy gashes²⁸⁷
 was reddened beyond the water.

This verse was very popular, and when Eyvindr Finnsson heard it, he composed a verse, which was written above:²⁸⁸

86. Wary of flight, once the ruler Fsk 96
 washed in blood of Gamli ÓTMI 47–48
 Fenrir's lip-stretcher;²⁸⁹ fury
 enflamed trees of weapon-storm,²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴ *hjors bendraugr*: 'tree-trunk (man) of wounds of the sword', warrior. *Bendraugr* is the reading of *Fagrskinna* B and some MSS of *Hkr*; *Fagrskinna* A and other MSS of *Hkr* have the more correct warrior kenning *hjors berdraugar* 'tree-trunks bearing swords'.

²⁸⁵ *dolgbands dökkvalr*: 'dark falcon of the strife-god (Óðinn, battle-god)', raven.

²⁸⁶ *frák* 'I have heard'. The reading of *Fagrskinna*, *sá ek* 'I saw' would support the assertion of *Íslendingadrápa* 11 that Glúmr Geirason fought at Fitjar (FJ B I 541).

²⁸⁷ *rauðra benja reyrr*: 'the reed of red wounds', sword.

²⁸⁸ *Hákonar saga góða*, ch. 27; p. 108 above.

²⁸⁹ *Fenris varra sparra*: 'stretcher of Fenrir's lips', sword. *Gylfaginning* relates how the gods bind the wolf Fenrir and wedge his jaws apart with a sword (*Gylf* 29).

²⁹⁰ *malmhríðar meiðr*: 'tree (man) of the storm of weapons (battle)', warrior.

when into the sea, steadily,
 the sons of Eiríkr he drove;
 now spears' guarding-Gautar²⁹¹
 grieve for the prince's downfall.

This verse too was recited far and wide. And when King Haraldr heard this, then he declared Eyvindr had committed a capital offence, right on until their friends reconciled them on these terms, that Eyvindr should become his poet, just as he had previously been King Hákon's. There was close kinship between them, for Eyvindr's mother was Jarl Hálfðan's daughter Gunnhildr, and her mother was King Haraldr inn hárfagri's daughter Ingibjörg. Then Eyvindr composed a verse about King Haraldr:

[200] 87.	Little you let your spirit, land-guardian of Hǫrðalanders, ²⁹² weaken, they said, when wound-hail ²⁹³ washed on armour; bows were bent; when unsheathed, sharp-bladed, shrieked from your hand, Haraldr, ice of the sword-straps, ²⁹⁴ so that sated was the she-wolf.	<i>Fsk</i> 97 <i>ÓTM</i> I 48 <i>Skáldsk</i> 71 (first half)
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Gunnhildr's sons stayed mainly in the centre of the country, both because they did not think it safe to be within reach of the Þrændir or Víkverjar, who had been closest friends of King Hákon, and also there were many powerful people in both places. Then people went to take offers of settlement between Gunnhildr's sons and Jarl Sigurðr, because they had previously received no taxes from Þrándheimr, and the outcome was that they reached a settlement, the kings and the jarl, and confirmed it with oaths. Jarl Sigurðr was to hold the same rule from them in Þrándheimr as he had previously held from King Hákon. They were then said to be reconciled.

All Gunnhildr's sons were said to be miserly, and it was said that they hid money in the ground. About that Eyvindr skáldaspillir composed this:

²⁹¹ *geira gati-Gautr*: 'guarding-Óðinn of spears', warrior.

²⁹² *landvǫrðr Hǫrða*: 'guardian of the land of the people of Hǫrðaland', and by extension, of the Norwegians; king of Norway.

²⁹³ *benja hagl*: 'hail of wounds', arrows.

²⁹⁴ *fetla svell*: 'ice of the sword-baldrics', sword (here plural).

- [201] 88. We, Ullr of the war-leek,²⁹⁵ *Fsk* 99
 wore seed of Fýrisvellir²⁹⁶ *ÓTMI* 49
 on hawks' hills²⁹⁷ through all of *Skáldsk* 59
 Hǫkon's lifetime; (first half)
 now the people's foe²⁹⁸ the flour
 of Fróði's sad slave-girls²⁹⁹
 has hid in flesh of the mother
 of the harmer of the giantess.³⁰⁰
89. The fading sun of the field *Fsk* 99–100
 of Fyllr's brows³⁰¹ shone on *ÓTMI* 49
 hills of the hull of Ullr³⁰² *Skáldsk* 43
 in Hǫkon's time, for poets; (first half)
 now is the stream's elf-circle³⁰³ *Skáldsk* 35
 concealed—great the counsels (second half)
 of mighty men—in the body
 of the mother of the foe of giants.³⁰⁴

[202] When King Haraldr heard the truth about these verses, he sent word to Eyvindr that he should come to see him. And when Eyvindr came, the king made charges against him and declared he was an enemy to him.

²⁹⁵ *ímunlauks Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of the battle-leek (sword)', warrior.

²⁹⁶ *Fýrisvallafræ*: 'seed of Fýrisvellir', gold. The legendary king Hrólfkraki is said to have scattered gold on the field of Fýrisvellir to delay the pursuing Swedes (*Skáldsk* 59).

²⁹⁷ *hauka fjöll*: 'hawks' mountains', arms (on which trained hawks perch).

²⁹⁸ *folkstríðir*: 'tormentor of people'.

²⁹⁹ *Fróða fáglyjadrá þýja melldr*: 'flour of the joyless bondwomen of Fróði', gold. *Grottasǫngr* relates how Fróði, a legendary king of the Danes, made his giantess slaves grind gold from the magic mill Grotti (*Skáldsk* 52–57).

³⁰⁰ *móður mellu dolgs hold*: 'flesh of the mother of the enemy of the giantess', flesh of Þórr's mother, the goddess Jǫrð; i.e. the earth. This kind of verbal transference is ironically called *ofljóst* 'excessively clear' (*Skáldsk* 109).

³⁰¹ *Fyllar bráa vallar fallsól*: 'setting sun of the field of Fyllr's eyebrows', sun of the forehead, (gold) headband. *Fyllr* is presumably a form of *Fulla* (the form *Fullar* appears in one manuscript, *Fyllar* in others), a goddess whose headband is said to have been of gold (*Skáldsk* 43).

³⁰² *Ullar kjóls fjall*: 'mountain of Ullr's (a god's) ship (shield)': the arm, on which the shield rests. Cf. *Skáldsk* 67/21 and note. Ullr is said to have a ship called Skjöldr (Shield) in *Edda Magnúsar Ólafssonar* 206; maybe there was a legend about him arriving on a floating shield, analogous to that of Scyld Sceþing at the beginning of *Beowulf*.

³⁰³ *elfar alfrøðull*: 'elf-wheel (sun) of the river', gold (the famous Niflungar treasure was hidden in the Rhine river, so gold is often called fire or sun of the sea or river).

³⁰⁴ *jǫtna dolgs móður lík*: 'body of the mother of the giants' enemy (Þórr)', the body of the goddess Jǫrð, i.e. the earth.

‘And it ill befits you,’ he says, ‘to behave disloyally to me, for you have previously become my follower.’

Then Eyvindr uttered a verse:

- | | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|
| 90. | Before you I have followed,
fine prince, one master —
old age, king, comes upon me —
I crave not a third one.
I was true to the dear ruler,
two shields I never juggled;
I fall in, lord, with your following;
falls old age upon me. | Fsk 98
ÓTMI 49–50 |
|-----|--|----------------------|

King Haraldr had judgment on this matter assigned to himself. Eyvindr owned a large gold ring which was known as Moldi (Earthy). It had been taken long before out of the ground. This ring, the king says, he shall have, and there was no alternative. Then spoke Eyvindr:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| 91. | Steerer of skerry’s country’s
ski, ³⁰⁵ after this I ought to
find favour in your
fair wind of the giant’s lady, ³⁰⁶
for I am forced, chooser
of the field of slaughter, ³⁰⁷
to give you the ling-chain’s lair ³⁰⁸
long owned by my father. | Fsk 100
ÓTMI 50 |
|-----|---|--------------------|
- [203]

Eyvindr then went home, and it is not reported that he met King Haraldr ever again.

CHAPTER TWO

Gunnhildr’s sons had accepted Christianity in England, as was related above. But when they came to power in Norway, they made no progress

³⁰⁵ *skerja foldar skíðrennandi*: ‘one who causes to move the ski or long piece of wood of the ground (sea) of the skerry’, mover of the ship, seafarer.

³⁰⁶ *pursa tæs byrr*: ‘fair wind of the help (i.e. wife(?)) of giants’, mind. The MSS have *tæs, tøs, tós* or *týs* (*Fagrskinna* A has *kaus*, *Fagrskinna* B has *tóls*). The reading here assumes a noun *tæ* (cf. the verb *tæja* ‘to help’; *NN* § 1041). Kennings of the type ‘wind of the giantess’, meaning ‘mind, thought’, are common, although their basis in mythology is not understood. Cf. note 236 above.

³⁰⁷ *valjarðar veljandi*: ‘one choosing the ground of slaughter’, warrior.

³⁰⁸ *lyngva mens látr*: ‘lair of the necklace of heather’, bed of the serpent, gold (on which dragons were said to lie).

in converting people in the country to Christianity, but everywhere they could, they demolished temples and destroyed rituals and because of this became very unpopular. It was in their time that prosperity declined in the country, because there were many kings and each of them had their own following. They made great demands for expenses and [204] they were most avaricious, and they did not uphold the laws very much which King Hákon had established except as they thought fit. They were all very handsome men, strong and big, and had a variety of skills. So says Glúmr Geirason in the *drápa* that he composed about Haraldr Gunnhildarson:

92. Twelve skills the terror-stave *Gráfeldardrápa* 13
of teeth of Hallinskiði³⁰⁹
had; often he advanced
ahead of other rulers.

The brothers were frequently all together, but sometimes each on his own. They were fierce men and valiant, great warriors and usually victorious.

CHAPTER THREE

Gunnhildr Mother of Kings and her sons often held conversations and conferences and managed the government of the country. And on one occasion, Gunnhildr asked her sons:

‘What do you intend to do about the rule in Þrándheimr? You bear the names of kings just as your forefathers have done, but you have small armies and lands and there are many of you to divide it between. The Vík in the east is in the possession of Tryggvi and Guðrøðr, and they have some claim because of their descent, but Jarl Sigurðr rules the whole of Þrændalög, and I do not know what obligation made you let one jarl rule such a great part of your realm. I find it strange that you go raiding every [205] summer in other countries, but let a jarl within the country take from you your patrimony. Your grandfather Haraldr, whom you are named after, would have thought it a small matter to deprive one jarl of rule and life, when he had subjected the whole of Norway to himself and then ruled it until his old age.’

Haraldr says: ‘It is not the same,’ he says, ‘depriving Jarl Sigurðr of life, as slaughtering a kid or calf. Jarl Sigurðr is of distinguished family and has numerous kinsmen, popular and wise. I believe, if he finds out for certain that he can expect hostility from us, that all the Þrændir will be behind him. Then we shall have no business there but what is ill-fated. It seems

³⁰⁹ *tanna Hallinskiða ógnarstafr*: ‘terror-staff (i.e. man who terrifies) of the teeth of Hallinskiði (the god Heimdallr, whose teeth were of gold (*Gylf* 25))’, man who gives away gold, generous man.

to me that none of us brothers will find it safe to stay within reach of the Þróendir.’

Then Gunnhildr says: ‘Then we shall undertake a quite different plan, try a smaller enterprise. Haraldr and Erlingr are to stay this autumn in Norð-Mœrr. I will go with you too. We shall then all together try what can be done.’

Now they follow this course.

CHAPTER FOUR

Jarl Sigurðr’s brother was called Grjótgarðr. He was by far the younger of the two, and less highly regarded. He also had no title of high rank, yet he maintained a following and spent the summers raiding and increased his wealth. King Haraldr sent men inland to Þrándheimr to meet Jarl Sigurðr with friendly gifts and friendly words, saying that King Haraldr wishes to develop with him the same sort of friendship as Jarl Sigurðr had previously had with King Hákon. Accompanying these words came a message, that the jarl should come to meet King Haraldr, when they would confirm their friendship fully. Jarl Sigurðr welcomed the messengers and the king’s friendship, saying this, that he could not go to meet the king because of his many commitments, but he sent the king [206] friendly gifts and kind and amiable words in return for his friendship. The messengers went away. They went to see Grjótgarðr and brought him the same message, King Haraldr’s friendship and an invitation to visit him and with it fine gifts. And when the messengers went back, Grjótgarðr promised that he would be coming. And on the appointed day Grjótgarðr comes to see King Haraldr and Gunnhildr. He was received very warmly. He was treated there with the greatest kindness, so that Grjótgarðr was admitted to private business and many secret matters. Eventually it came about, that the conversation turned to discussion of Jarl Sigurðr, as had been previously agreed between the king and queen. They argued to Grjótgarðr that the jarl had treated him as of no account, but if he wanted to be in on this plan with them, then, said the king, Grjótgarðr should be his jarl and have all the rule that Jarl Sigurðr had had previously. So it came about, that they settled it with a secret agreement that Grjótgarðr should keep watch for when it might be best to make an attack on Jarl Sigurðr and then send word to King Haraldr. Grjótgarðr then went home with matters thus and received fine gifts from the king.

CHAPTER FIVE

Jarl Sigurðr went in the autumn inland to Stjóradalr and attended banquets there. From there he went out to Qgló and was to receive banquets there. The Jarl always had a large following with him when he was mistrustful of kings. Because words of friendship had now passed between him and King

Haraldr, he did not at present have a large troop of men. Grjótgarðr then sent intelligence to King Haraldr that there would never be a more favourable time to attack the jarl. And immediately the same night the kings Haraldr and Erlingr went in through Þrándheimr, taking four ships and a large force, sailing at night [207] by starlight. Then Grjótgarðr came to meet them; they came in the latter part of the night to Qǫgló, where Jarl Sigurðr was at a banquet, set fire to the building and burned the farm and the jarl inside it with all his following, going away early the next morning out along the fiord and so south to Mœrr, and stayed there for a long time.

CHAPTER SIX

Jarl Sigurðr's son Hákon was at this time inland in Þrándheimr and heard what had happened. There was immediately a great rush to arms all over Þrándheimr. Every ship there that was fit for warfare was dragged into the water. And when this army was gathered together, they took as jarl and leader of the force Jarl Sigurðr's son Hákon. They sailed this force out through Þrándheimr. And when Gunnhildr's sons heard about this, they went south into Raumsdalr and on into Sunn-Mœrr. Each side had watch kept on the other. Jarl Sigurðr was killed two winters after the fall of King Hákon. So says Eyvindr skáldaspillir in *Háleygjatal*:

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| 93. | And Sigurðr,
who to the swan of
the god of cargoes ³¹⁰
gave the beer of
the birds of slain
Haddingjar, ³¹¹ land-rulers
of life deprived
at Qǫgló. | <i>Háleygjatal</i> 11
<i>Fsk</i> 101
<i>ÓTM</i> I 54n.
<i>Skáldsk</i> 7
<i>Skáldsk</i> 78
(second half |
| [208] 94. | And, fearless,
the forearm snake's
master ³¹² was
in land-mackerel ³¹³ | <i>Háleygjatal</i> 12
<i>Fsk</i> 101
<i>ÓTM</i> I 54n. |

³¹⁰ *svanr Farmatýs*: 'the swan of Farmatýr (the cargo-god, Óðinn)', the raven.

³¹¹ *Haddingja vals hróka bjór*: 'beer of the shag (bird) of the slain of the Haddingjar (legendary heroes)', beer of the raven, blood. This interpretation assumes that *vals* derives from *valr* m. 'the slain', but it could also be (from *val* n.) 'the flower, pick' of the Haddingjar.

³¹² *alnar orms qðlingr*: 'ruler (lit. nobleman) of the snake of the forearm (ring), wealthy, generous man.

³¹³ *jarðar qlun*: 'mackerel of land', snake. A word for snake is *linnr*, which also means fire; by *offjóst* (a pun), *í jarðar qlun* here means 'in (or by) fire'.

of life deprived,
 when land-rulers
 betrayed the trust
 of Týr's kinsman.³¹⁴

Jarl Hákon held Þrándheimr with the support of his kinsmen for three years, without Gunnhildr's sons receiving any revenues in Þrándheimr. He had some battles with Gunnhildr's sons, and many men were killed as a result. Einarr skálaglamm (Scales-Tinkle) speaks of this in *Vellekla*, which he composed about Jarl Hákon:³¹⁵

95. And the user of spear-points,³¹⁶ *Vellekla* 7
 oath-careful, took out a mighty
 fleet; in the gales of Gǫndul³¹⁷
 glad, the king brooked no faltering.
 [209] And he raised, the ravager
 of red moons of Heðinn's shoulders,³¹⁸
 the war-sail,³¹⁹ keenly quenching
 kings' eagerness for battle.
96. None had to spur the sater *Vellekla* 8
 of the swan of gushing sword-fiord³²⁰
 to the spear-wife's snowfall³²¹
 or strong wind of arrows.³²²

³¹⁴ *Týs óttungr*: 'relative of Týr (a god)', member of (divinely descended) Yngling family or of that of the Jarls of Hlaðir.

³¹⁵ Einarr Helgason skálaglamm was an Icelander, mentioned in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, where he is said to discuss poetry with the hero. According to *Egils saga* Einarr was given a shield by Jarl Hákon in payment for the poem *Vellekla*. The poem's name means 'Gold-Dearth', presumably referring to the poet's hope of reward for its composition. The meaning of Einarr's nickname is obscure, and was evidently so in medieval times, since *Jómsvíkinga saga* gives a story apparently designed to explain it: Jarl Hákon gave Einarr a set of scales that tinkled and foretold the future (*Jóms* (291), 179).

³¹⁶ *oddneytir*: 'user of the (spear)point', warrior.

³¹⁷ *Gǫndlar veðr*: 'storm of Gǫndul (valkyrie)', battle.

³¹⁸ *rauðmána Heðins bóga reynir*: 'tester (by using or attacking) of the red moon of Heðinn's (legendary warrior-king) shoulders (the shield)', warrior.

³¹⁹ *rógsegl*: 'strife-sail', shield.

³²⁰ *sverða sverrifjarðar svanglýjaðr*: 'the gladdener of the swan of the roaring fiord of swords (blood; the swan of blood is the raven)', warrior.

³²¹ *odda vífs drífa*: 'snowfall of the woman of spear-points (valkyrie)', battle.

³²² *orva ofbyrr*: 'strong wind of arrows', battle.

- Bows' hail³²³ from Hlökk's sails³²⁴ *Skáldsk* 71
 he scattered, the Røgnir (second half)
 of sword-crash;³²⁵ outlaws not sparing,
 he saved his own life bravely.
- [210] 97. Long lasted Áli's storm,³²⁶ till *Vellekla* 9
 lands east,³²⁷ to the gods' pleasure,
 the shield-leek's tending tree³²⁸
 took over by force.

Einarr also speaks of how Jarl Hákon avenged his father:

98. Resounding praise I offer — *Vellekla* 10
 unsheathed it made the glinter —³²⁹
 for vengeance that the wave-Hrafn's
 warden³³⁰ took for his father.
99. The spear-shower of the strengthener *Vellekla* 11
 of sword-storm³³¹ rained widely
 on lords' lives; the tree of uproar³³²
 added much to Þundr's³³³ following.
- [211] The steering-Viðurr of stallions
 of the sea³³⁴ set swelling
 with Óðinn's shower³³⁵ the icy
 sword-wind³³⁶ against men's lives.

³²³ *bogna hagl*: 'hail of bows', arrows.

³²⁴ *Hlakkar segl*: 'sail of Hlökk (valkyrie)', shield.

³²⁵ *hjörs brak-Røgnir*: 'Óðinn of the crash of the sword', warrior.

³²⁶ *Ála él*: 'snow-storm of Áli (a sea-king)', battle.

³²⁷ i.e. Norway (from the poet's Icelandic point of view).

³²⁸ *randar lauks rækilundr*: 'cultivating grove or tree of the leek of the shield-rim (sword)', man who cultivates, i.e. wields, the sword in war.

³²⁹ *skjómi*: 'flicker, glint'; listed as a *heiti* for 'sword' in a *þula* (*Skáldsk* 118).

³³⁰ *hranna Hrafn's vörðr*: 'guardian of the horse of the waves (ship)', seafarer. Hrafn was the name of a horse belonging to King Áli (see *Ynglinga saga* ch. 29, above) and appears elsewhere in kennings for 'ship'.

³³¹ *hjörs hrðremmir*: 'strengthener of the sword-storm (battle)', warrior.

³³² *þrimlundr*: 'tree of battle', warrior.

³³³ *Þundr*: Óðinn, whose following is increased by the death of warriors in battle.

³³⁴ *haffaxa hald-Viðurr*: 'steering-Óðinn of sea-horses (ships)', seafarer.

³³⁵ *Hóars drífa*: 'Óðinn's snow-shower', battle.

³³⁶ *laufa veðr*: 'wind of the sword', battle. Laufi was the name of Bøðvarr bjarki's sword.

After this friends of both became intermediaries and carried proposals of settlement between them, for the farmers were weary of warfare and hostility within the country. And so it came about by the counsel of men of the ruling class that settlement was made between them, to the effect that Jarl Hákon should have the same rule in Prándheimr as his father Jarl Sigurðr had had, but kings should have the same power as King Hákon had had over them, and this was then ratified with firm pledges. Then there developed great intimacy between Jarl Hákon and Gunnhildr, though sometimes they schemed deceitfully against each other. So another three years passed. Now Hákon stayed peacefully within his realm.

CHAPTER SEVEN

King Haraldr stayed most often in Hǫrðaland and Rogaland and so did others of the brothers. They frequently stayed in Harðangr. It happened one summer that an ocean-going ship [212] came from Iceland, owned by Icelanders. It was loaded with sheepskin wares, and they sailed the ship to Harðangr because they had heard that there the largest numbers of people were to be found. But when people came to do business with them, no one wanted to buy the sheepskin wares. Then the skipper goes to see King Haraldr, because he already knew him to speak to, and tells him of this problem. The king says that he will come to see them, and he does so. King Haraldr was an unpretentious person and a great one for fun. He had come there with a fully manned boat. He looked at their wares and said to the skipper:

‘Will you give me a grey cloak?’

‘Willingly,’ says the skipper, ‘or more, if you like.’

Then the king took a cloak and put it over his shoulders. Then he went down to his boat. And before they rowed away, every one of his men had bought a cloak. A few days later so many people came there, each of whom wanted to buy a cloak, that only half of those who wanted to have one got it. After this he was known as Haraldr gráfeldr (Grey-Cloak).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Jarl Hákon went one winter to Upplönd and to a certain lodging and slept with a certain woman, and she was of low birth. And when some time had passed, this woman was with child. And when the child was born, it was a boy and was sprinkled with water and called Eiríkr. His mother took the child to Jarl Hákon and says that he was the father. The jarl had the child brought up with a man called Þorleifr inn spaki (the Wise). He lived up in Meðaldalr. He [213] was a powerful man and wealthy and a great friend of the jarl. Eiríkr soon became a promising person, very handsome in appearance,

very soon big and strong. The jarl took little notice of him. Jarl Hákon was also the most handsome of men in appearance, not a tall man, pretty strong and with a variety of skills, of great intelligence and a very great fighter.

CHAPTER NINE

It happened one autumn that Jarl Hákon went to Upplönd. And when he came out in Heiðmörk, then there came there to meet him King Tryggvi Ólafsson and King Guðrøðr Bjarnarson. Dala-Guðbrandr also came there. They held a conference together and sat in private talk for a long time, and the outcome was that each of them was to be the friend of each of the others, and after this they separated. Each went back to his realm. Gunnhildr and her sons hear about this, and they have a suspicion that they must have made a treasonable plot against the kings. They often talk about this among themselves. And when spring came, then King Haraldr and his brother King Guðrøðr³³⁷ make it known that they will be going raiding in the summer over the sea to the west or to the eastern Baltic, as they were accustomed to do. Then they gather forces to themselves and launch their ships into the water and make preparations. And when they were holding their farewell banquet, there was a lot of drinking and much was said over the drinks. Then it came about that comparisons of people were made, and then there was discussion of the kings themselves. Someone said that King Haraldr was the foremost of the brothers in every way. Then Guðrøðr became very angry, saying this, that he shall yield in nothing to Haraldr, saying also that he is ready to put it to the test. Then both of them soon got so angry that they challenged each other to a fight and rushed for their weapons. But those who were sensible and less drunk stopped them and leapt between them. [214] Each side then went to their ships, for there was now no hope that they could all go together. Then Guðrøðr sailed east round the coast, but Haraldr made out towards the open sea, saying that he would sail across the sea to the west, but when he got out past the islands he laid his course eastwards over the open sea parallel with the coast. King Guðrøðr sailed the normal route east to Vík and so eastwards across Foldin. Then he sent word to King Tryggvi that he was to come to meet with him and they should both go raiding in the eastern Baltic in the summer. King Tryggvi was sympathetic and favourable to this idea. He learned that Guðrøðr had only a small force. Then King Tryggvi went to meet him with a single boat. They met west of Sótanes off Veggirnir.

³³⁷ Not to be confused with his cousin Guðrøðr Bjarnarson, whose father Björn was killed by Eiríkr blóðøx. He was the foster-brother of Tryggvi Ólafsson (see *Haralds saga hárfagra*, chs 35, 41 above).

And when they went into conference, then Guðrøðr's men rushed up and killed King Tryggvi and twelve men with him, and he lies in the place that is now called Tryggvahreyrr.

CHAPTER TEN

King Haraldr sailed the outer route most of the way. He laid his course in to the Vík and came during the night to Túnsberg. Then he learned that King Guðrøðr [Bjarnarson] was at a banquet there a short way up inland. King Haraldr and his men went ashore there, arriving during the night and capture the building they are in. Guðrøðr and his men go out. They made a short stand there until King Guðrøðr fell and many men with him. Then King Haraldr went back to meet with his brother King Guðrøðr. They then subjected the whole of the Vík to themselves.

[215] CHAPTER ELEVEN

King Guðrøðr Bjarnarson had got himself a good marriage and a suitable one. They had a son who was called Haraldr. He was sent for fostering up into Grenland to Hrói inn hvíti (the White), a landed man.³³⁸ Hrani inn víðförlí (the Far-Travelled) was Hrói's son. He and Haraldr were pretty much the same age and were foster-brothers. After the fall of his father Guðrøðr, Haraldr, who was known as inn grenski (the Grenlander), fled, first of all to Upplönd, and with him his foster-brother Hrani, and few men with them. He stayed there a while with his kinsmen. Eiríkr's sons were searching hard for men who had committed offences against them, and especially for those from whom they were likely to have trouble. His kinsmen and friends advised Haraldr to leave the country. Haraldr grenski then went east to Svíþjóð and looked for a place for himself on a ship and for an opportunity to join a band of men who were engaged in raiding, and to get himself some wealth. Haraldr was the most accomplished person. There was a man in Svíþjóð called Tósti who was one of the richest and most distinguished people in that country, of those who did not have a title of nobility. He was the greatest warrior and was for long periods on raids. He was known as Skoðglar-Tósti. Haraldr grenski got himself into this band and spent the summer on viking raids with Tósti, and Haraldr was regarded highly by everyone. Haraldr stayed with Tósti the following winter. Tósti's daughter was called Sigríðr, young and fair and a very haughty woman. She was later given in marriage to Eiríkr inn sigrsæli (the Victorious), king of the Svíar, and their son was

³³⁸ A *lendr maðr* 'landed man' was one who held land in fief from the king. He was next in rank to a jarl in Norway.

Óláfr sænski (the Swedish), who was later king in Svíþjóð. Eiríkr died of sickness at Uppsálar ten years after Styrbjörn fell.³³⁹

[216] CHAPTER TWELVE

Gunnhildr's sons called out a large force from the Vík, then went north along the coast and get men and ships from every district, making it plain that they will take this army north to Þrándheimr against Jarl Hákon. The jarl hears about this and gathers an army together and takes to his ships. And when he finds out about the army of Gunnhildr's sons, how large a one they have, then he takes his force south to Mœrr and raids everywhere he went, and slew large numbers of people, and then sent back the army of Prœndir, the farmers' force, while he went harrying through both parts of Mœrr and Raumsdalr and had watch kept for Gunnhildr's sons right down south of Staðr. And when he found that they were come to Firðir and were waiting for a wind to sail north round Staðr, then Jarl Hákon sailed from the north past Staðr and beyond the islands, so that his sails could not be seen from the shore, making his way across the open sea eastwards along the coast and came out in Danmørk, sailing then into the Baltic, and raided there during the summer. Gunnhildr's sons took their force north to Þrándheimr and stayed there a very long time, collecting there all the taxes and dues. And when summer drew to a close, then Sigurðr slefa and Guðrøðr stopped behind there while Haraldr and the other brothers went to the east of the country together with the levied army that had been out in the summer.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Jarl Hákon went in the autumn to Helsingjaland and beached his ships there, travelling after that by land over Helsingjaland and Jamtaland and so from the east across Kjölr, coming down [217] in Þrándheimr. Forces immediately thronged to him, and he took to the ships. And when Gunnhildr's sons learn this, then they board their ships and sail out along the fiord. But Jarl Hákon goes out to Hlaðir and stayed there during the winter, while Gunnhildr's sons stayed in Mœrr, and each side made attacks on the other and slew each other's men. Jarl Hákon kept his rule in Þrándheimr and was generally there in the winters, but in the summers sometimes went east to Helsingjaland and picked up his ships there and went to the eastern Baltic and raided there in the summers, but sometimes he stayed in Þrándheimr and had a force out, and then Gunnhildr's sons did not venture north of Staðr.

³³⁹ Styrbjörn is mentioned in *Haralds saga hárfagra* ch. 28 above, where he is identified as the nephew of Eiríkr sigrsæli. According to *Knýtlinga saga* he died in battle against Eiríkr at Fyrisvellir (*ÍF* XXXV 95).

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Haraldr gráfeldr went one summer with his army north to Bjarmaland³⁴⁰ and raided there and had great battles with Bjarmar on Vínubakki. There King Haraldr gained victory and slew many people, raiding many places all over the country and getting a huge amount of plunder. Glúmr Geirason speaks of this:

100. In the east the overthrower *Gráfeldardrápa* 5
of earls,³⁴¹ north of the township,
bold of speech, reddened the burnished
blade, where I saw Bjarmar fleeing.
This campaign brought the peacemaker³⁴²
repute; while young the ruler,
by the river Vína,
raised a spear-tempest.³⁴³

[218] King Sigurðr slefa came to the dwelling of Hersir (Lord) Klyppr. He was son of Þórðr Hǫrða-Kárason. He was a powerful man and of great family. Klyppr was not at home at this time, but his wife Álof welcomed the king, and there was a fine banquet there and a lot of drinking. Hersir Klyppr's wife Álof was daughter of Ásbjǫrn and sister of Járn-Skeggi (Iron-Skeggi) from Yrjar in the north. Hreiðarr was Ásbjǫrn's brother, father of Styrkár, father of Eindriði, father of Einarr þambarskelfir ('Bowstring-Shaker'). The king went during the night to Álof's bed and lay with her against her will. Then the king went away. The following autumn King Haraldr and his brother Sigurðr went up into Vǫrs and called an assembly there with the farmers. And at the assembly the farmers made an attack on them and were going to kill them, but they got away and afterwards went off. King Haraldr went into Harðangr, but King [219] Sigurðr went to Álreksstaðir. And when Hersir Klyppr learned this, then he and his kinsmen joined together and made an attack on the king. The leader of the expedition was Vémundr vǫlubrjótr

³⁴⁰ An area somewhere round the White Sea in northern Russia, probably near modern Archangelsk; *Vínubakki* is the bank of the Dvina river, mentioned in the verse (*á Vínu borði*), but the town or settlement also referred to there is unidentified. *Egils saga* (93–94) tells of an expedition to Bjarmaland in which Eiríkr blóðøx won a battle *við Vínu* 'by the Dvina' and claims this is referred to *í kvæðum hans* 'in poems about him'. It has been suggested that the author of *Egils saga* was referring to this verse by Glúmr, which he understood to be about Eiríkr (for whom Glúmr is said in *Skáldatal* to have composed).

³⁴¹ *jǫfra þrýstir*: 'oppressor of kings or earls', king.

³⁴² *gumna sættir*: 'reconciler of men', king (ironical here?).

³⁴³ *geirveðr*: 'spear-storm', battle.

(Knuckle-Breaker). And when they come to the house, they go for the king. Klyppr ran the king through with a sword, and that was his death, but immediately Erlingr gamli (the Old) killed Klyppr.³⁴⁴

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

King Haraldr gráfeldr and his brother King Guðrøðr gather a great army together from the east of the country and took this force north to Þrándheimr. And when Jarl Hákon learned of this, then he mustered a troop and sailed south to Mœrr and made raids. His uncle Grjótgarðr was there at that time, and was supposed to have been put in charge of the defence of the land by Gunnhildr's sons. He called out an army, as the kings had sent word for him to do. Jarl Hákon sailed to meet with him and to battle. Grjótgarðr fell there and two jarls with him and many other men. Einarr skálaglamm speaks of this:

101. The hardy king with a hailstorm Vellekla 12
of helmets³⁴⁵ his foes defeated;
with this waxed the waterway
of the wine-home of Loptr's comrade,³⁴⁶
and three fell, outstanding
sons of jarls, in shower
of Þrótt's fire,³⁴⁷ affording
fame to the people's leader.³⁴⁸

[220] Then Jarl Hákon sailed out to sea and so south along the coast by the route outside the islands. He came out south in Danmørk, then went to see Haraldr Gormsson, king of the Danes, receiving there a good welcome. He stayed with him for the winter. Also staying with the king of the Danes at that time was a man called Haraldr. He was son of Knútr Gormsson and King Haraldr's nephew. He had come back from raiding, having been on raids for a long time and amassed a great amount of wealth. He was known as Gull-Haraldr (Gold-Haraldr). He was thought to have a good title to the kingship in Danmørk.

³⁴⁴ This story is also told in *Sigurðar þáttur slefu* (*F1b* I 19–22) and in *Þórðar saga hreðu* (*ÍF* XIV 164–67).

³⁴⁵ *hjálmgráp*: 'hailstorm of the helmet', shower of spears.

³⁴⁶ *Lopt's vinar vínheims Vínu*: 'river (Vína, see v. 100) of the wine-home (vessel) of Loptr's (Loki's) friend (Óðinn)', poetry.

³⁴⁷ *Þróttar fúrs skúr*: 'shower of Þrótt's (Óðinn's) fire (spears)', battle.

³⁴⁸ *þjóðar snytrir*: 'educator of the people', ruler.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

King Haraldr and his brothers took their army north to Prándheimr and met there no resistance, receiving taxes and dues and all the king's revenues there, and made the farmers make huge payments, because for a long time then the kings had had little money from Prándheimr, since Jarl Hákon had settled himself there with a large following and been at war with the kings. In the autumn King Haraldr went to the south of the country with most of the troops whose homes were there, while King Erlingr remained behind there with his men. He then still made great demands on the farmers and made life hard for them, and the farmers complained bitterly and did not put up with their losses well. And [221] in the winter the farmers met together and assembled a large force, making then for King Erlingr where he was attending a banquet, and had a battle with him. King Erlingr fell there and a large company of men with him.

While Gunnhildr's sons were ruling Norway there were very poor seasons, and this got worse the longer they had been over the land, and the farmers blamed it on the kings, and also on the kings being avaricious and life for farmers getting hard. So it came about in the end that the people all over the country found themselves almost without corn and fish. In Hálogaland there was so much famine and starvation that hardly any corn grew there, but snow lay then over the whole land in midsummer and the animals were all kept inside. So spoke Eyvindr skáldaspillir—he came out, and snow was drifting hard:³⁴⁹

102. Snow falls at midsummer *Fsk* 98
 on Svǫlnir's mistress;³⁵⁰
 we have bound the bud's gnawing
 beast³⁵¹ indoors, as Lapps do.

Eyvindr composed a *drápa* about all the Icelanders, and they rewarded him in this way, that each farmer gave him a minted coin. This [222] corresponded to three silver pennies by weight and had to be white when notched. And when the silver was brought out at the Alþingi, then people decided to get silver-smiths to purify the silver. Afterwards a cloak-pin was made of it, and some of it was used to pay the silver-smith his fee. Then the pin weighed fifty marks. They sent it to Eyvindr, and Eyvindr had the pin cut in pieces

³⁴⁹ For interpretations of this verse, see E. O. G. Turville-Petre 1976, 44 and *NN* § 3049.

³⁵⁰ *Svǫlnis vǫr*: 'wife of Svǫlnir (Óðinn)', the goddess Jǫrð, i.e. the earth.

³⁵¹ *brums birkihind*: 'bark-stripping hind of the bud', (domestic) animal which eats buds off plants, sheep or goat.

and bought stock with it. Then too in the spring a rather [223] small shoal of herring came to a fishing ground far out to sea there. Eyvindr manned a rowing boat with his servants and tenants and rowed to where the herring had been hauled in. He said:

103. We'll send the water-stallion³⁵²
 on sea-feet³⁵³ southwards treading
 to the terns portending
 tail-winged,³⁵⁴ of spreading nets,
 to see if the grass, gracious
 ale-Gerðr,³⁵⁵ of the field of icebergs,³⁵⁶
 that the ripple-swine³⁵⁷ uproot,
 rates my friends' selling.

And so completely had all his ready money been used up with his having bought stock for his farm that he had to buy the herring in exchange for the arrows for his bow. He spoke:

104. A year ago I was given—
 and gave in exchange for cattle—
 a cloak-stabber³⁵⁸ sent to me
 by sky-of-eel-landers.³⁵⁹
 [224] Last, for sea-arrows slender³⁶⁰
 I sold my leaping herrings
 of Egill's palms;³⁶¹ each time
 it was caused by famine.

³⁵² *lōgsóti*: 'Sóti (name of a horse) of the sea', ship.

³⁵³ *verfótr*: 'leg or foot of the sea', oar.

³⁵⁴ *sporðfjaðraðar spáþernur langra nóta*: 'tail-feathered (i.e. with fish-tail instead of wings or feathers) terns of long nets', fish, herrings. The element *spá-* is not understood but *LP* speculates that a kind of tern was called *spáþerna* 'prophetic tern'.

³⁵⁵ *öl-Gerðr*: 'Gerðr (goddess) of ale', woman (the person addressed in the poem).

³⁵⁶ *akra jökla mura*: 'grass (silverweed, goosegrass or wild tansy) of the ploughed field of icebergs (sea)', herrings.

³⁵⁷ *unnsvín*: 'wave-pigs', ships.

³⁵⁸ *feldarstingi*: cloak-pin.

³⁵⁹ *álhimins lendingar*: 'eel's sky- (ice, because eels swim beneath it) landers', Icelanders.

³⁶⁰ *mæqr sævar*: 'slender arrow of the sea', herring.

³⁶¹ *Egils gaupna hlaupsild*: 'leaping herring of Egill's palms', arrow. Egill, brother of Vǫlundr, was a famous archer (as related in *Piðreks saga*).

[225] Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar

CHAPTER ONE

The woman whom Tryggvi Ólafsson had married was called Ástriðr. She was the daughter of Eiríkr Bjóðaskalli (Bald-Head of Bjóðar), who lived at Oprostaðir, a rich man.³⁶² But after the fall of Tryggvi Ástriðr fled away and travelled in secret with the movable property that she was able to take with her. She was accompanied by her foster-father who was called Þórólfr lúsarskegg (Lousy-Beard). He never parted from her, but her other confidential friends went on the look-out for what could be learned about her enemies and where they had gone. Ástriðr was carrying King Tryggvi's child. She had herself transported out onto a lake and hid there on some small islands and a few people with her. There she gave birth to a child. It was a boy. And when he was sprinkled with water, he was named Óláfr after his grandfather.³⁶³ There she hid herself during the summer, [226] but when night became darker and day began to get shorter, and the weather to get cooler, then Ástriðr set out and Þórólfr with her, and few people, only travelling through settled districts when they could keep hidden at night, and met no one. They came out one day at evening to Ástriðr's father Eiríkr's home at Oprostaðir. They travelled secretly. Ástriðr sent men to the house to tell Eiríkr, and he had them taken into a small building and a table set for them with the best provisions. And when Ástriðr and her friends had been there for a short while, her companions left, and she stayed behind and two servingwomen with her and her son Óláfr, Þórólfr lúsarskegg and his six-year-old son Þorgísl. They stayed there for the winter.

CHAPTER TWO

Haraldr gráfeldr and his brother Guðrøðr went after King Tryggvi's death to the residences he had owned, but by then Ástriðr had gone, and they could find out nothing about her. A rumour reached them that she might be with child by King Tryggvi. In the autumn they went to the north of the country, as was written above. And when they met their mother Gunnhildr they told her everything that had happened regarding the events that had taken place

³⁶² The nickname *Bjóðaskalli* may refer to a farm called Bjóðar, and this place name is recorded in Hordaland (Lind 1920–21). Oprostaðir is known as the name of a farm in Jaðar, but from Ástriðr's movements Snorri seems to have believed it to be in the east of Norway (allowing her to escape to Sweden).

³⁶³ The fact that Óláfr was not named after his father, as posthumous sons usually were, supports the statement of *Ágrip* (ch. XVII) that he was three years old when his father died.

in their expedition. She asked particularly about Ástríðr. They told her such reports as they had heard about her. But because that same autumn Gunnhildr's sons were in conflict with Jarl Hákon, and likewise during the winter that followed, as was written above, there was no search made for Ástríðr and her son that winter.

[227] CHAPTER THREE

The following spring Gunnhildr sent observers to Upplönd and all the way to the Vík to see what they could find out about what could have become of Ástríðr. And when the messengers came back the most they could tell Gunnhildr was that Ástríðr must be with her father Eiríkr, and said that the most likely thing was that she would be bringing up her and Tryggvi's son there. Then Gunnhildr immediately sent out messengers, fitting them out well with weapons and horses, and they were thirty men in all, and the leader was an influential man, a friend of Gunnhildr, whose name was Hákon.³⁶⁴ She told them to go to Oprostaðir to Eiríkr and take away King Tryggvi's son and bring him to her. Then the messengers travel the whole way there. And when they had nearly reached Oprostaðir, Eiríkr's friends become aware of their movements and brought him report of the messengers' travelling in the evening. And straight away that night Eiríkr arranged for Ástríðr's departure, provided her with good guides and sent her east to Svþjóð to see his friend Hákon inn gamli (the Old), a wealthy man. They went away when plenty of the night remained. They came in the evening to a district that is called Skaun, and saw there a large dwelling and went up to it and asked for a night's lodging. They disguised themselves and wore poor clothing. This farmer's name was Björn eitkveisa (Poison Snake), a wealthy man and a nasty person. He drove them away. They went during the evening to another village a short way from there, called Vizkar. The farmer who lodged them and gave them good hospitality for the night was called Þorsteinn. They slept in great comfort.

[228] CHAPTER FOUR

Hákon and the messengers of Gunnhildr came to Oprostaðir early that morning and ask about Ástríðr and her son. Eiríkr says that she is not there. Hákon and his men searched the farm and stayed for a large part of the day and got no information about Ástríðr's movements, then ride on the same way and come late in the evening to Björn eitkveisa's in Skaun, getting lodging there. Then Hákon ask Björn if he can tell him anything about

³⁶⁴ According to Oddr Snorrason, it is Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson whom Gunnhildr sends (Oddr 132).

Ástriðr. He says that people had come there during the day and asked for lodging.

‘But I drove them away, and they must be lodged somewhere here in the village.’

A workman of Þorsteinn’s went during the evening out of the forest and came to Björn’s, since it was on his way. He realised that there were guests there and also what their business was. He told farmer Þorsteinn. And when a third of the night was still to go, Þorsteinn woke his guests up and told them to go away, speaking harshly. And when they were come on their way off the premises, then Þorsteinn told them that Gunnhildr’s messengers were at Björn’s and were going looking for them. They asked him for some kind of help. He provided them with a guide and some food. This man went with them on into the forest where there was a kind of lake with a small island in it, covered with reeds. They were able to wade out to the island. There they hid themselves in the reeds. Early in the morning Hákon rode away from Björn’s into the settlement, and wherever he came, he asked after Ástriðr. And when he got to Þorsteinn’s he asks if they had come there. He says that there had been some people there and they went off towards daybreak eastwards into the forest. Hákon told Þorsteinn to go with them, since the way and the hiding-places were known to him. Þorsteinn went with them, and when he came into the forest, he directed them in completely the opposite direction from where [229] Ástriðr was. They went on all that day searching and did not find them, then go back and tell Gunnhildr what they have found out. Ástriðr and her companions went on their way and came out in Svíþjóð to Hákon gamli’s. Ástriðr stayed there and her son Óláfr for a long time enjoying good entertainment.

CHAPTER FIVE

Gunnhildr Mother of Kings found out that Ástriðr and her son Óláfr were in Sweden. Then she sent Hákon again and a good party of companions with him east to King Eiríkr of the Svíar with good gifts and words of friendship. The messengers were welcomed there. They stayed there and were well treated. Later Hákon brought up his business before the king, saying that Gunnhildr had sent word to this effect, that the king should provide him with assistance so that he could take Óláfr Tryggvason with him to Norway.

‘Gunnhildr wants to bring him up.’

The king provides him with men, and they ride to see Hákon gamli. Hákon invites Óláfr to go with him with many friendly words. Hákon gamli gave a positive reply, saying that his mother should decide where he should go, but Ástriðr will by no means agree that the boy should go. The messengers

go away and tell King Eiríkr how things are. Then the messengers get ready to go home, asking the king again to give them some assistance to get the boy away, whether Hákon gamli is willing or not. The king again provides them with a troop of men. The messengers come to Hákon gamli and demand then that the boy should go with them. And when this was not granted, then they start to use strong words and threaten harsh treatment and act angrily. Then a slave, whose name is said to be Bursti, dashes forward and is about to strike Hákon, and they only just manage to get away without being beaten up by the slave. After that they go back to Norway and tell Gunnhildr how they have got on, and also that they have seen Óláfr Tryggvason.

[230] CHAPTER SIX

Ástríðr's brother was called Sigurðr, son of Eiríkr Bjóðaskalli. He had now been a long time away from the country and been east in Garðaríki with King Valdamarr. Sigurðr was held in high honour there. Ástríðr became keen to go there to her brother Sigurðr. Hákon gamli provided her with a good retinue and all necessary supplies. She travelled with some merchants. She had now been two years with Hákon gamli. Óláfr was now three years old. But as they sailed east by sea, vikings came against them. They were Eistr (Estonians). They captured both people and goods, and killed some, but some they divided among themselves as slaves.³⁶⁵ There Óláfr was separated from his mother, and he was taken by an Estonian, Klerkón, together with Þórólfr and Þorgísl. Þórólfr seemed too old to Klerkón to be a slave, and he thought he would not get much work out of him and killed him, but took the boys with him and sold them to a man called Klerkr, getting in exchange a rather good goat. A third man bought Óláfr and gave a good cloak or mantle for him. He was called Réás, and his wife was called Rékón, and their son Rékóni. Óláfr was there for a long time and treated well, and the householder was very fond of him. Óláfr was in this exile in Eistland for six years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sigurðr Eiríksson came to Eistland on a mission from Hólmgarðr for King Valdamarr, and he was to collect the king's taxes in that country. Sigurðr travelled in fine style [231] with many men and a great deal of wealth. He saw a boy in a market-place, very handsome, and realised that he must be a

³⁶⁵ For the fate of Ástríðr, not mentioned here, see ch. 52 below. On the Estonians, particularly the personal names recorded here, see Keraliunas 1994.

foreigner there, and asked him his name and descent. He said his name was Óláfr, and that of his father Tryggvi Ólafsson, and that of his mother Ástríðr, daughter of Eiríkr Bjóðaskalli. Then Sigurðr realised that the boy was his nephew. Then Sigurðr asked the boy why he was come there. Óláfr told him all the circumstances of his position. Sigurðr asked him to take him to his master Réás. And when he got there, then he bought both the boys, Óláfr and Þorgísl, and took them with him to Hólmgarðr and did not let Óláfr's descent get known about, but treated him well.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Óláfr Tryggvason was there one day in the marketplace. It was very crowded. He recognised there Klerkón, who had killed his foster-father, Þórólfr lúsarskegg. Óláfr had a small axe in his hand and he planted it in Klerkón's head, so that it stuck down in his brain, immediately taking to his heels back to his lodging and telling his kinsman Sigurðr, and Sigurðr immediately took Óláfr to the queen's quarters and told her what had happened. She was called Allógiá. Sigurðr asked her to help the boy. She replied, looking at the boy, and says that such a handsome boy must not be killed, ordered men to be summoned to her fully armed. Hólmgarðr was a place of such great sanctuary that it was the law that anyone who killed a man who had not been judged should be killed. In accordance with their custom and law, the whole population stormed out and searched for the boy to find where he had got to. Then someone said that he was on the queen's premises and there was an army of men there fully armed. [232] Then the king was told. He then went there with his troop and was unwilling for them to fight. He brought about a truce and after that a settlement. The king adjudged compensation, and the queen dealt with the payment. Afterwards Óláfr stayed with the queen, and she was very fond of him. It was the law in Garðaríki that no men of royal blood should be there except with the king's consent. Then Sigurðr told the queen of what descent Óláfr was and the reason why he was come there, that he could not stay at home in his own country because of hostility, asking her to discuss this with the king. She did so, asking the king to help this king's son, who had been treated so harshly, and her arguments were so persuasive that the king agreed to this with her, then took Óláfr under his wing and treated him nobly, as it befitted a king's son to be treated. Óláfr was now nine years old, when he came to Garðaríki, and stayed there with King Valdamarr another nine years. Óláfr was the handsomest of all men and the biggest, the strongest and in sports beyond all men of whom the Norwegians tell.

CHAPTER NINE

Jarl Hákon Sigurðarson stayed with Haraldr Gormsson King of the Danes the following winter after he had fled from Norway before Gunnhildr's sons. Hákon was so filled with anxiety during the winter that he took to his bed and suffered from sleeplessness, eating and drinking only as much as would preserve his strength. Then he sent his men [233] secretly north to Þrándheimr to his friends and put a plan to them, that they should kill King Erlingr, if they could manage to, saying that he would return to his realm when summer came. That winter the Þrændir killed Erlingr, as is written above. There was close friendship between Hákon and Gull-Haraldr. Haraldr revealed his plans to Hákon. Haraldr said that he wanted now to settle ashore and no longer live on warships. He asked Hákon what he thought, whether King Haraldr would be willing to share his kingdom with him if he demanded it.

'I think,' says Hákon, 'that the king of the Danes will not refuse your just demands, but even so, you will know the situation more precisely if you discuss it with the king. I do not expect that you will get the kingdom without asking for it.'

Soon after this conversation, Gull-Haraldr spoke with King Haraldr, when there were many of the ruling class, friends of both, present. Then Gull-Haraldr demanded of King Haraldr that he share the kingdom half and half with him, as his birth and descent there in Danmørk entitled him. At this claim King Haraldr got very angry, saying that no one had demanded this of his father King Gormr, that he should become half-king over Danmørk, nor from his father Hǫrða-Knútr or Sigurðr ormr-í-auga or Ragnarr loðbrók, making himself so angry and furious that one could not speak with him.

CHAPTER TEN

Gull-Haraldr was now much less happy than previously. He now had no rule any more than before, but instead the king's anger. He then came to his friend Hákon, and told him his troubles and asked him for some good advice, if there was any available, such that would enable him to gain rule, saying that he could [234] only think of trying for rule with force and weapons. Hákon told him not to say that in the presence of anyone so that it could get known.

'Your life is at stake. Think about it to yourself, what you are capable of. For such great undertakings, a man must be bold and resolute, stick at neither good things nor bad, so that what is embarked upon may succeed. But the contrary would be a disaster, to embark on a great undertaking and then abandon it in disgrace.'

Gull-Haraldr replies: 'I shall press this claim without withholding my hands from killing the king himself, if I get an opportunity, since he is going to refuse me the rule that I ought rightly to have.'

Then they end their conversation. King Haraldr then went to see Hákon, and they begin to talk. The king tells the jarl what claim Gull-Haraldr has made to him for rule, and the answer he had given, saying that he is in no way willing to diminish his own rule.

'But if Gull-Haraldr is going to press on at all with this claim, then it will be no problem for me to have him killed, because I shall be unable to trust him if he refuses to give it up.'

The jarl replies: 'It is my opinion that Haraldr has gone so far in making this public, that he will be most reluctant to abandon it. I expect, if he starts hostilities here in this country, that he will not be short of support, principally because of his father's popularity, and it would be highly disastrous for you to slay your kinsman, for everyone will declare him innocent as things are. I do not want, either, to declare it my counsel that you make yourself a lesser king than your father Gormr was. He also enlarged his rule greatly, and in no way diminished it.'

Then said the king: 'What is your counsel, then, Hákon? Must I neither share rule nor rid myself of this threat?'

'We must meet in a few days' time,' says Jarl Hákon. 'I shall first consider this problem, [235] and then give you a solution.'

Then the king went away, and all his men.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Now Jarl Hákon was once again taken up with extreme anxiety and weighing up of plans and let only a few people stay in the house with him. A few days later King Haraldr came to the jarl, and they begin to talk. The king asks if the jarl has considered the conversation they had together the other day.

'I have,' says the jarl, 'lain awake about it day and night ever since, and it seems to me the best course for you to keep and rule all the kingdom that your father had and you inherited from him, and hand over to your kinsman Haraldr some other kingdom which will make him a distinguished man.'

'What kingdom is that,' says the king, 'that I can rightfully give Haraldr, if I keep the Danish realm undiminished?'

The jarl says: 'It is Norway. The kings that are there are hateful to all the people of the country. Everyone of any account wishes them ill.'

The king says: 'Norway is a large country and the people are hardy and it is not easy to attack with a foreign army. That's how it was for us while Hákon was defending the country, we lost many troops and never won a victory. Haraldr Eiríksson is my foster-son and has been adopted by me.'

Then says the jarl: 'I have long known that you had often given support to Gunnhildr's sons, and yet they have rewarded you with nothing but evil. We shall get hold of Norway much more easily than by fighting for it with the whole Danish army. Send a message to your foster-son Haraldr, offer to let him take from you the land and fief that they previously held here in Danmørk. Summon him to a meeting with you. Then Gull-Haraldr will in a short time be able to gain rule in Norway from King Haraldr gráfeldr.'

The king says that this will be said to be an evil deed, [236] to betray his foster-son.

'The Danes will reckon,' says the jarl, 'that it is a better trick to kill a Norwegian viking than one's Danish nephew.'

They now discuss this for a long time, until this is agreed on between them.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Gull-Haraldr came again to talk to Hákon. The jarl tells him that he has now pursued his business to the stage where it is very likely that now a kingdom will lie vacant for him in Norway.

'Then we shall,' he says, 'keep up our friendship. I shall then be able to give you much support in Norway. You get hold of that kingdom to begin with. King Haraldr is now very old, and he has only the one son, whom he is little fond of and is illegitimate.'³⁶⁶

The jarl goes on about this to Gull-Haraldr until he is satisfied about it. Then they all talk together frequently, the king and the jarl and Gull-Haraldr. Then the king of the Danes sent his men north into Norway to see Haraldr gráfeldr. This expedition was fitted out very splendidly. They had a good reception there and met King Haraldr. They announce the news that Jarl Hákon is in Danmørk and lies close to death and nearly unconscious, and this other news, that King Haraldr of the Danes has invited his foster-son Haraldr gráfeldr to come to him and receive there from him revenues such as he and his brothers had formerly held there in Danmørk, and bade Haraldr come to him and meet him in Jutland. Haraldr gráfeldr referred this business to Gunnhildr and other friends of his. People expressed very different opinions about this. Some found this trip unsafe, considering how the people there were. The others were more numerous who urged that he should go, because there was such [237] great famine in Norway then that kings could hardly feed their men. At this time the fiord where the kings resided most often got its name, being

³⁶⁶ That is, Sveinn tjúguskegg (see ch. 34 below). *Jómsvíkinga saga* (*Jóms* (291), 109) relates Sveinn's illegitimate birth, but according to Saxo Grammaticus he was legitimate.

called *Harðangr* (Harsh Land).³⁶⁷ In *Danmørk* the seasons were going tolerably well. People thought provisions could be obtained there if King *Haraldr* got revenues and rights to visit there. It was decided, before the messenger went away, that King *Haraldr* should come to *Danmørk* in the summer to see the king of the Danes and accept from him the offer that King *Haraldr* had made.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Haraldr gráfeldr went to *Danmørk* in the summer taking three longships. *Hersir* (Lord) *Arinbjørn* from *Firðir* skippered one of them.³⁶⁸ King *Haraldr* sailed out from the *Vík* and to *Limaþjórd* and came to land at *Háls*. He was told that the king of the Danes would be coming there soon. And when *Gull-Haraldr* heard this, then he sailed there with nine ships. He had previously fitted out this force to go raiding. *Jarl Hákon* had by then also got his force ready and also planned to go raiding. He had twelve ships, and they were all big ones. But when *Gull-Haraldr* had left, then *Jarl Hákon* says to the king:

‘Now I’m not sure whether we aren’t rowing in a levy and also paying the fine for not doing so.³⁶⁹ *Gull-Haraldr* will kill *Haraldr gráfeldr*. After that he will take over the kingdom in Norway. Do you expect him then to be loyal to you if you give him so much power? But he told me last winter [238] that he would kill you if he got the opportunity. Now I will subject Norway to you and kill *Gull-Haraldr* if you will promise me that I shall easily be able to settle with you for that. I will then become your *jarl* and confirm it with oaths and subject Norway to you with your support, then after that hold the country under your rule and pay you tribute, and you will then be a greater king than your father, if you rule two great nations.’

This was agreed between the king and the *jarl*. *Hákon* then went with his troop to find *Gull-Haraldr*.

³⁶⁷ *Snorri*’s etymology derives the name from *harðr* ‘harsh’ + *angr* ‘fiord, bay’; but another word *angr* means ‘distress’. *Harðangr*, derived from **harðgangr* ‘difficult path’ also occurs as a word meaning ‘hardship’. In fact the place name most likely means ‘fiord of the *Hørdar*’ (de Vries 1977; Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989).

³⁶⁸ *Arinbjørn* is best known as the friend of *Egill Skalla-Grímsson*, in whose saga he intercedes for him with King *Eiríkr blóðøx* in York. He is commemorated in *Egill*’s *Arinbjarnarkviða*.

³⁶⁹ An allusion to a provision in the *Gulapingslög* (ch. 301; *NGL* I 99): ‘If a man travels on a ship other than that on which he is supposed to travel, then he must both row in the levy and pay the fine.’ Here it implies ‘having the worst of both worlds’.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Gull-Haraldr came to Háls in Limafjörðr. He immediately challenged Haraldr gráfeldr to battle. And even though Haraldr had a smaller force, he immediately went ashore and prepared for battle, drawing up his battle-line. But before the lines joined in battle, Haraldr gráfeldr urged his troops strongly and told them to draw their swords, leaping forward immediately in the van of his line and striking out on both sides. So says Glúmr Geirason in *Gráfeldardrápa*:

105. Valiant words spoke the Óðinn *Gráfeldardrápa* 7
 of valuable hilts' metal,³⁷⁰ *Fsk* 108
 who had courage to colour *ÓTMI* 95
 crimson the plain for hosts;
 Haraldr warned, wide-landed,
 warriors their swords to ready
 for war; to seafarers, splendid
 seemed the king's command.

[239] There fell King Haraldr gráfeldr. So says Glúmr Geirason:

106. Good with horses,³⁷¹ the guardian *Gráfeldardrápa* 9
 of Glammi's steed's courtyard³⁷²
 had to fall on the wide fringes
 of the fiord of Eylimi.³⁷³
 On the sand the sender *Fsk* 109 (second half)
 of sea's fire³⁷⁴ fell at Háls; *ÓTMI* 95 (second half)
 the speech-blessed confidant
 of kings³⁷⁵ caused that killing.

Most of King Haraldr's force fell there with him. Hersir Arinbjörn fell there. Then were fifteen years passed from the fall of Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri, and from the fall of Sigurðr Hlaðajarl, thirteen years. The priest Ari Þorgilsson says this, that Jarl Hákon was thirteen years ruling his patrimony in

³⁷⁰ *mætra hjalta malm-Óðinn*: 'Óðinn (god) of metal of precious hilts', god of the sword-blade, warrior.

³⁷¹ *viggjum hollr*: 'kind to, fond of horses'; horsemanship may have been one of the skills for which Glúmr praises Haraldr (v. 92 above).

³⁷² *Glammi sóta garðs gætir*: 'guardian of the courtyard or enclosure (shield) of Glammi's (a sea-king's) horse (ship)', warrior.

³⁷³ *Eylimafjörðr*: Limafjörðr, suggesting the name derives from the name of a legendary king, Eylimi.

³⁷⁴ *sevar báls sendir*: 'sender of sea's fire (gold)', generous lord.

³⁷⁵ *jofra spjalli*: 'confidant of kings', here Hákon; *konungs spjalli* is specified by Snorri as an epithet for a jarl (*Skáldsk* 81/26).

Prándheimr before Haraldr gráfeldr fell, and for the last six years that Haraldr gráfeldr lived, Ari says that Gunnhildr's sons and Hákon fought and fled from the country in turns.³⁷⁶

[240] CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Jarl Hákon and Gull-Haraldr met a little while after Haraldr gráfeldr fell. Then Jarl Hákon joined battle with Gull-Haraldr. Hákon gained victory there, and Haraldr was captured and Hákon had him hanged. Then Jarl Hákon went to see the king of the Danes and settled with him easily for the killing of his kinsman Gull-Haraldr. After that King Haraldr took out to sea an army from all over his kingdom and went with six hundred ships. There with him then were Jarl Hákon and King Guðrøðr's son Haraldr grenski and many others of the ruling class who had fled their patrimonies in Norway because of Gunnhildr's sons. The king of the Danes sailed his fleet from the south into the Vík, and all the people of the country submitted to him. And when he came to Túnsberg, large numbers thronged to him. And King Haraldr handed over all the forces that had come to him in Norway to Jarl Hákon and gave him to administer Rogaland and Hǫrðaland, Sogn, Firðafylki, Sunn-Mœrr and Raumsdalr and Norð-Mœrr—these seven districts King Haraldr gave to Jarl Hákon to administer on the same terms as Haraldr inn hárfagri had given them to his sons, with this difference, that Hákon was also to possess there and also in Prándheimr all the royal residences and land dues. He was also to use the royal treasury whenever he needed it if there was an invading army in the country. King Haraldr gave Haraldr grenski Vingulmørk, Vestfold and Agðir as far as Líðandisnes, and the title of king, and let him have rule there in every way the same as in times past his kinsmen had had and Haraldr inn hárfagri had given his sons. Haraldr grenski was then eighteen years old and afterwards became a renowned man. Then King Haraldr of the Danes goes home with the whole army of Danes.

[241] CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Jarl Hákon took his troops along the coast to the north. And when Gunnhildr and her sons heard this news, then they gather together an army, and it was hard for them to get troops. They took up the same procedure as before, sailing west over the sea with those men who were willing to go with them, going first to Orkney and staying there for a while. Previously the jarls there had been the sons of Þorfiðr hausakljúfr, Hlǫðvir and Arnviðr, Ljótr and Skúli.

³⁷⁶ This information is not included in the surviving version of Ari's *Íslendingabók*, but may have formed part of the *áttatala ok konunga ævi* 'genealogy and lives of kings' that Ari says were in the now lost earlier version (*ÍF* I 3).

Jarl Hákon now subjected the whole country to himself and stayed that winter in Prándheimr. Einarr skálaglamm speaks of this in *Vellekla*:

107. Seven districts were subdued by *Vellekla* 14
 the scrupulous wearer of the
 brow's ground's silk band,³⁷⁷ bringing
 betterment to the country.

Jarl Hákon, when he travelled from the south along the coast in the summer and the people of the country submitted to him, then he ordered over his whole realm that people should maintain temples and rituals, and this was done. Thus it says in *Vellekla*:

108. At once, wise, he enabled *Vellekla* 15
 honour of all Einriði's³⁷⁸ *Fsk* 120
 famed temple grounds, ravaged, *ÓTM* I 98
 and the gods' sacred places,
 [242] before over all the ocean
 and on the giants' road,³⁷⁹ the Hlórriði
 of the spears' yard³⁸⁰—gods guide him—
 goes³⁸¹ with the wolf of slaughter.³⁸²

109. And, useful to men, the Æsir's *Vellekla* 16
 offspring³⁸³ return to rituals; *Fsk* 111–12
 the mighty master of Hlökk's
 meeting's red board³⁸⁴ wins glory.
 Now the earth is growing
 again; the wealth-destroyer³⁸⁵
 lets happy spear-bridge envoys³⁸⁶
 inhabit the gods' temples.

³⁷⁷ *brúnar grundar silkis síma geymir*: 'keeper, owner of the silken band of the brow's ground (forehead, head)', man, ruler.

³⁷⁸ *Einriði*: Þórr.

³⁷⁹ *jötna vegr*: 'road of giants', mountains.

³⁸⁰ *geira garðs Hlórriði*: 'Þórr of the enclosure of spears (shield)', warrior.

³⁸¹ *farði*: past tense of *ferja* 'to bring'; literally 'brought'.

³⁸² *valfalls vitnir*: 'wolf of battle-death', sword.

³⁸³ *Ásmegir*: sons of the Æsir, i.e. the gods.

³⁸⁴ *Hlakkar mótis rauðbrikar rækir*: 'tender of the red board of Hlökk's (valkyrie's) meeting (battle)', tender of the shield, warrior.

³⁸⁵ *auðrýrir*: 'destroyer of wealth', generous lord.

³⁸⁶ *geirbrúar órr*: 'messenger, servant of the spear-bridge (shield)', warrior.

110. Now all land from Vík northwards *Vellekla* 17
 acknowledges the jarl's rule; *Fsk* 120
 widely the bringer of battle- *ÓTM* I 98–99
 board storm,³⁸⁷ Hókon, grows mighty.

[243] The first winter that Hákon ruled over the country, herring came in all over the country, and the previous autumn corn had grown wherever it had been sown. And in the spring people got seedcorn, so that most farmers could sow their land, and there was soon prospect of a good harvest.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Gunnhildr's son King Ragnfrøðr, and another of Gunnhildr's sons, Guðrøðr, these two were now still alive of the sons of Eiríkr and Gunnhildr. So says Glúmr Geirason in *Gráfeldardrápa*:

111. My hopes of wealth were halved when *Gráfeldardrápa* 11
 Haraldr's life by sword-storm³⁸⁸
 was broken; the king's death in battle
 has brought me no riches.
 But I know both his brothers *3GT* 43
 bright promises have made me;
 Plenty of men will now depend
 on prosperity from that quarter.

Ragnfrøðr set out in the spring when he had been one winter in Orkney. He then sailed from the west to Norway and had a fine force and large ships. And when he came to Norway, then he learned that Jarl Hákon was in Þrándheimr. Ragnfrøðr then sailed north round Staðr and raided along Sunn-Møerr, and some people submitted to him, as [244] often happens when hostile bands pass over the land, that those who are faced by them seek for help, each one from wherever seems most promising. Jarl Hákon heard about what was happening, that there were hostilities south round Møerr. The jarl then took to his ships and sent round a summons to arms, got ready as quickly as he could and sailed out along the fiord. He found it easy to get troops. The meeting of Ragnfrøðr and Jarl Hákon took place in the northern part of Sunn-Møerr. Hákon immediately joined battle. He had a larger force and smaller ships. There was a fierce battle, and Hákon got on worse. They fought across the prows, as was the custom there. There was a current in the sound and all the ships drifted together in to the shore. The

³⁸⁷ *ímunborðs veðrgæðir*: 'provider of storm of the battle-board (shield)', causer of battle, warrior.

³⁸⁸ *hjørðrifa*: 'sword-snowstorm', battle.

jarl also had his men row astern to the shore where it seemed to him best to land. And when the ships touched bottom, then the jarl and all his men left the ships and beached them, so that their enemies should not be able to drag them out into the water. After that the jarl formed up on level ground and urged Ragnfrøðr to come ashore.³⁸⁹ Ragnfrøðr and his men brought their ships to land and they shot at each other for a long time. Ragnfrøðr would not go ashore, and they parted without more ado. Ragnfrøðr sailed his force south round Staðr because he was afraid of a land army if there was a rush of men to Hákon. But the jarl would not join in battle again because he thought the difference in the height of their vessels was too great. Then he went in the autumn north to Prándheimr and stayed there during the winter, and Ragnfrøðr then controlled everywhere south of Staðr: Firðafylki, Sogn, Hørdaland, Rogaland. He kept a large number of men with him during the winter. And when spring came, he called a levy out and got a large force. He then went round all these districts to get himself troops and ships and other supplies that he needed.

[245] CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Jarl Hákon called a levy out, when spring came, from all over the north of the country. He got a great force from Hálogaland and Naumudalr, also everywhere from Byrða to Staðr he got forces from all the coastal areas, an army gathering to him from all over Þrendalög, also from round Raumsdalr. It is thus claimed that he had an army from each of four counties. Seven jarls joined him and altogether they had a countless number of men. So it says in *Vellekla*:

<p>112. Further, the defender of the folk of Mœrr, eager for war, sent men southwards to Sogn travelling; from four counties the Freyr of the fair wind of Heðinn³⁹⁰ brought out all people; the Ullr of swords³⁹¹ was resolute.</p>	<p><i>Vellekla</i> 22 <i>Fsk</i> 114 <i>ÓTMI</i> 101–02</p>
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³⁸⁹ Hákon's ending the battle by choosing to fight on land seems to follow a verse preserved only in *Fagrskinna* (*Fsk* 113, *Vellekla* 20).

³⁹⁰ *Freyr Heðins byrjar*: 'Freyr (god) of the fair wind of Heðinn (legendary warrior)', god of battle, warrior.

³⁹¹ *sverða Ullr*: 'Ullr (god) of swords', warrior.

113. And seven land-steerers³⁹² *Vellekla* 23
 on smooth hurdles of Meiti³⁹³ *Fsk* 115 (first half)
 [246] swept with the bird-of-Sqrvi's *ÓTM* I 102
 soother³⁹⁴ to the shield-meeting.³⁹⁵
 All of Norway echoed as
 Ullrs of the wall of Heðinn³⁹⁶ —
 by headlands floated crowds of corpses —
 came together in sword-conclave.

Jarl Hákon took all this force south round Staðr. Then he heard that King Ragnfrøðr with his army was gone inland into Sogn; he then directed his troop that way and a meeting between him and Ragnfrøðr took place there. The jarl sailed his ships to the shore and marked out a battlefield for King Ragnfrøðr and took his position for the battle. So it says in *Vellekla*:

114. Slaughter, wide-famed, was wielded *Vellekla* 24
 by the Vinðr's foe in the second
 affray, but again the ruler
 readied himself for battle.
 The shield-giantess's noise-Narfi³⁹⁷
 manoeuvred the ski of Jálkr³⁹⁸
 to shore, and steered his vessel
 to the shire's outermost region.

[247] There was a very great battle there. Jarl Hákon had a much larger force and gained the victory. This was at Þinganes, where Sogn and Hordaland

³⁹² *landreki* 'land-director', ruler. Snorri derives it from *reka* 'to drive': *Dví heitir hann svá at hann rekr her um land annara konunga eða rekr her ór sínu landi* 'He is called this because he drives armies through the lands of other kings or drives armies out of his own land' (*Skáldsk* 101), but it is more probably related to *rekja* 'to straighten'.

³⁹³ *mjúkhurð Meita*: 'supple hurdle of Meiti (sea-king)', ship.

³⁹⁴ *svørgælir Sqrva*: 'comforter of Sqrvi's (sea-king's, warrior's) bird', feeder of the raven, warrior.

³⁹⁵ *randa mót*: 'meeting of shields', battle.

³⁹⁶ *Heðins veggjar Ullar*: 'Ullar (pl.) (gods) of the wall (shield) of Heðinn (legendary warrior)', warriors; *veggr* 'wall' is used in kennings for shield because shields are used to form the 'shield-wall' in battle.

³⁹⁷ *hlífar flagðs hlym-Narfi*: 'Noise-Narfi (son of Loki, here a god) of the shield's giantess (axe)'; noise of the axe is battle; the god of battle is a warrior.

³⁹⁸ *Jálks øndurr*: 'ski of Jálkr (usually a name for Óðinn, here possibly a sea-king)', ship. The verse includes the meaningless word *førf*, which may belong to this kenning; see *NN* §§ 404, 2244 for conjecture.

meet. King Ragnfróðr fled to his ships, and there fell there of his troop three hundred men. So it says in *Vellekla*:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 115. | Fierce was the fight until the
enforcing-pole of war-trees ³⁹⁹
crammed under the corpse-vulture's ⁴⁰⁰
claws three hundred enemies;
to the sea on soldiers'
skulls—so great his gain—
the war-waging leader
could walk, laden with booty. | <i>Vellekla</i> 25
<i>Fsk</i> 115
<i>ÓTMI</i> 103 |
|------|---|---|

After this battle King Ragnfróðr fled from Norway, and Jarl Hákon brought peace to the country and let [248] the great army that had followed him that summer go back north, but he stayed there for the autumn and for the winter.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Jarl Hákon proceeded to marry a woman called Þóra, the daughter of Skagi Skoptason, a rich man. Þóra was the most handsome of women. Their sons were Sveinn and Hemingr. Bergljót was the name of their daughter, whom Einarr þambarskelfir later married. Jarl Hákon was a great womaniser and had many children. Ragnhildr was the name of a daughter of his. He gave her in marriage to Þóra's brother Skopti Skagason. The jarl loved Þóra so much that he became much closer friends with her kinsmen than other men, though his brother-in-law Skopti was the most highly esteemed of all her kinsmen. The jarl gave him large revenues in Mœrr. And every time they were out on a naval expedition, then Skopti had to position his ship closest to the jarl's ship, and no one was permitted to sail a ship between their ships.

CHAPTER TWENTY

It happened one summer when Jarl Hákon was on an expedition, that Þorleifr spaki was skippering one of his ships. Eiríkr was also in it with him. He was then ten or eleven years old. And when they sailed into harbour in the evenings, then Eiríkr would have nothing else but that they should sail to a berth next to the jarl's ship. But when they came south to Mœrr, then the jarl's brother-in-law Skopti arrived there with a well manned longship.

³⁹⁹ *gunnar lunda þrøngvimeidr*: 'oppressing-tree of trees of battle', victorious war-leader.

⁴⁰⁰ *gammr nás*: 'vulture of carrion', raven.

And when they were rowing up to the fleet, then Skopti shouted that Porleifr should make room in the harbour for him and get out of the berth. Eiríkr replied quickly, telling Skopti to put into another berth. Jarl Hákon heard this, that his son Eiríkr thought himself now so great that he will not give way to Skopti; the jarl immediately shouts, [249] telling them to move out of the berth, saying that otherwise it would be the worse for them, saying that they would be beaten. And when Porleifr heard this, he gave orders to his men, telling them to loose the ship from the hawsers, and this was done. Then Skopti put into the berth that he was accustomed to have next to the jarl's ship. Skopti had to tell the jarl all his news when they were both together, and the jarl would tell Skopti any news if he had heard of it first. He was called Tíðenda-Skopti (News-Skopti). The following winter Eiríkr stayed with his foster-father Porleifr, but early in the spring Eiríkr got himself a troop of men. Porleifr gave him a small ship with fifteen rowing-benches complete with rigging, awnings and provisions. Eiríkr then sailed out along the fiord and then south to Mærr. Tíðenda-Skopti was travelling with a manned fifteen-benched ship between his residences, and Eiríkr sailed against him and into battle. There fell Skopti, but Eiríkr gave quarter to the men who were then still standing. So says Eyjólfur dáðaskáld (Poet of Deeds) in *Bandadrápa*:⁴⁰¹

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>116. Late in the day to Meiti's meeting⁴⁰²
 he moved, when young, the distant
 fishing-ground's ski⁴⁰³ with followers
 no fewer than the bold chieftain's,
 when the wrathful raiser
 of red fire of the shield-rim's meadow⁴⁰⁴
 made fall—often the wolf-feeder⁴⁰⁵
 fed blood-falcons⁴⁰⁶—Skopti.</p> | <p><i>Bandadrápa</i> 1
 <i>Fsk</i> 138
 <i>Skáldsk</i> 76
 (first half)</p> |
|---|---|

⁴⁰¹ Nothing is known of the origin or life of this poet. Eight stanzas (vv. 116–18 and 149–53 below) and a refrain survive of his only known poem *Bandadrápa* (Poem of the Gods), so called because of the words *at mun banda* 'according to the will of the gods' in the refrain (see v. 117). The phrase also occurs in *Vellekla*, composed in honour of Jarl Eiríkr's father Hákon (see v. 97 above). The lines that constitute the refrains are italicised in the text.

⁴⁰² *Meita mót*: 'meeting of Meiti (a sea-king)', battle.

⁴⁰³ *útvers skíð*: 'ski of the remote fishing-field', ship.

⁴⁰⁴ *randvallar riðloga reiðir*: 'brandisher of the swinging fire of the field of the shield-boss (or rim)', brandisher of the fire of the shield, i.e. of the sword, warrior.

⁴⁰⁵ *ulfteitir*: 'wolf-gladdener', warrior.

⁴⁰⁶ *blóðvalr*: 'blood-falcon', raven.

- [250] 117. The gold-mover,⁴⁰⁷ most mighty,
 made fall the ruler's landsman⁴⁰⁸
 when he fought; life you finished
 for the hand's fire bestower.⁴⁰⁹
 The steel-terrifier⁴¹⁰ trod from
 the controller of the din of
 prow-ravens' bench-plank,⁴¹¹ lifeless;
 to the pleasure of the gods, takes land . . .⁴¹²

After that Eiríkr sailed south along the coast and came out in Danmörk, then went to see King Haraldr Gormsson and stayed with him for the winter. And the following spring the king of the Danes sent Eiríkr north to Norway and gave him a jarldom and with it Vingulmörk and Raumaríki to supervise on the same terms as in the past tributary kings had held them. So says Eyjólfur dáðaskáld:

⁴⁰⁷ *hoddsveigir*: 'bender, mover of treasure', generous man.

⁴⁰⁸ *Kiars landmaðr*: 'Kíarr's (the ruler's) landsman (perhaps referring to a *lendr maðr*, lord or owner of an estate)', the ruler's supporter (i.e. Skopti). The name Kíarr, perhaps derived from 'Caesar', is used here of a ruler (i.e. Jarl Hákon).

⁴⁰⁹ *handa logreifir*: 'gladdener with fire of hands (gold, jewellery)', generous man (the sense is probably that he gladdens those to whom he gives the jewellery).

⁴¹⁰ *státægir*: 'frightener of steel or weapons', warrior.

⁴¹¹ *stafns hrafna fletbalkar dynbeidir*: 'demander of the noise of the bench-plank (shield) of ravens of the prow (ships)', commander of battle, war-leader. FJ (B I 191) emends *fletbalkar* to *flatbalkar*, 'flat plank'.

⁴¹² The last line belongs to the *stef* 'refrain' of the poem, which is of a kind called *klofastef* 'split refrain' or *rekstef* 'extended refrain', of which individual lines are incorporated as the fourth or last line of some stanzas. Three lines of the *stef* are cited in *Skáldsk* (I 84) and together with two further lines, read:

Dregr land at mun banda	(line 8 of v. 117)
Eiríkr und sik geira	(line 4 of vv. 149, 152)
veðmildr ok semr hildi	(line 8 of v. 149, 152)
gunnblíðr, ok ræðr síðan	(line 4 of vv. 150, 153)
jarl goðvörðu hjarli.	(line 8 of vv. 150, 153)

'Eiríkr, spear-storm-generous, draws land into his power to the pleasure of the gods and, delighting in battle, wages war, and then the jarl rules the god-defended land.'

118. Young was the army leader— *Bandadrápa* 3
 [251] I find ale of the vessel
 of the snake of the mountain saddle⁴¹³ —
 south, on the ocean's adder,⁴¹⁴
 until gold-bestowers⁴¹⁵ decided
 to set over Yggr's consort⁴¹⁶
 the helmet-bearing holder
 of Hildir's snow-shower.⁴¹⁷

Jarl Eiríkr was afterwards a great ruler.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Óláfr Tryggvason was all this time in Garðaríki and had the best treatment from King Valdimarr there and affection from the queen. King Valdimarr appointed him leader over the troops that he sent out to defend his country. Óláfr had some battles there and his command of the troops turned out well. He himself maintained a great company of soldiers with the pay the king gave him. Óláfr was a generous person to his men. As a result he became popular. But it turned out, as it often can when foreigners rise to power or to such great [252] fame that they surpass native men, that many were envious of how dear he was to the king and no less to the queen. Men said this in the presence of the king, that he should beware of making Óláfr too great,

'For such a man will be most dangerous to you if he decides to lend himself to doing harm to you or your kingdom, when he is so gifted with ability and popularity. We also do not know what he and the queen are always talking about.'

⁴¹³ *setbergs linna knarrar ol*: 'ale of the trading-ship of the snakes of the flat-topped mountain'; poetry. 'Mountain-snakes' are dwarfs (described in *Gylf* (15) as maggots in the flesh of the primeval giant Ymir); in the myth of the origin of poetry, two dwarfs who possessed the poetic mead were marooned on a skerry but saved themselves by giving it to the giant Suttungr; thus, as Snorri says, 'we call poetry . . . dwarfs' transportation, because this mead brought them deliverance from the skerry' (*Skáldsk* 4). The sense of lines 2–3 boils down to 'I compose poetry'.

⁴¹⁴ *sævar naðr*: 'adder of the sea', (dragon-headed) ship.

⁴¹⁵ *hoddmildingr*: 'man generous with treasure'.

⁴¹⁶ *Yggjar brúðr*: 'wife of Yggr (Óðinn)', the goddess Jörð, who also personifies 'earth', thus, land.

⁴¹⁷ *Hildar élhvetjandi*: 'the one who encourages Hildir's (valkyrie's) snowstorm (battle)', war-leader.

It was a great custom of powerful kings that the queen should have half the royal following and maintain it at her own cost and use taxes and dues for it as she needed. It was also the case with King Valdimarr, that the queen had no smaller a following than the king, and they contended with each other for the outstanding men. Each of them wanted to have them for themselves. Now it turned out that the king gave credence to such speeches that were spoken before him, and he became rather reserved and hostile towards Óláfr. And when Óláfr noticed this, then he told the queen, and also that he was getting anxious to go to the Northern lands, and says that his kinsmen had in the past had rule there and he thought it most likely that his future might be most prosperous there. The queen bade him farewell, saying that he would be thought noble wherever he was. Afterwards Óláfr set out and went on board ship and sailed out to sea in the Baltic. And when he sailed out of the east, then he came to Borgundarhólmr and launched a raid there and plundered, but the people of the country advanced down against him and held a battle with him, and Óláfr gained the victory and much plunder.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Óláfr lay off Borgundarhólmr and they got there a rough wind and a stormy sea, and they could not tie up there and they sail south from there off Vinðland and find there a good harbour, went on peacefully there and stayed there for a [253] while. The king in Vinðland was called Búrizláfr. His daughters were Geira, Gunnhildr and Ástríðr. The king's daughter Geira held power and rule there where Óláfr and his men came to land. The man is called Dixin who had most control of government with Queen Geira. And when they had been informed that there had come to land there unknown men who were acting in lordly fashion, and that they were going on peaceably there, then Dixin went to see them with a message from the queen, Geira, that she wants to invite the men who had come there to stay the winter, because the summer was now far gone, and the state of the weather rough and great storms. And when Dixin came there, then he soon realised that a man was in charge there distinguished both in descent and appearance. Dixin told them that the queen had invited them to her with an offer of friendship. Óláfr accepted that offer and went for the winter to Queen Geira's, and each was very well pleased with the other, so that Óláfr embarked on a proposal and asked for Queen Geira in marriage, and it was resolved that Óláfr should marry Queen Geira that winter. He then became ruler of the kingdom with her. Hallfrøðr

vandræðaskáld (Problem Poet) speaks of this in the *drápa* that he composed about King Óláfr:⁴¹⁸

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 119. | Ruthless flesh-ravagers ⁴¹⁹
the ruler with blood reddened—
why should one conceal it?—
on the isle, and east in Garðar. | <i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 2

<i>Fsk</i> 143
<i>ÓTMI</i> 111 (first half) |
|------|---|---|

[254] CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Jarl Hákon ruled over Norway, and paid no tribute because the king of the Danes had granted him all the taxes that the king was entitled to in Norway for his labour and costs that the jarl expended in defending the country from Gunnhildr's sons.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Emperor Ótta⁴²⁰ was at this time in Saxland. He sent a message to King Haraldr of the Danes, that he must accept baptism and the true faith, and the people of the land he ruled, or otherwise, the emperor said, he would go with an army against him. Then the king of the Danes had land defences set up, had the *Danavirki*⁴²¹ maintained and his warships fitted out. Then the king sent a message to Jarl Hákon in Norway that he should come to him quickly in the spring with all the troops he could get. Jarl Hákon called out an army in the spring from his whole realm and he got very large numbers of men and took that force to Danmørk and went to see the king of the Danes. The king received him very honourably. Many other rulers were then with the king of the Danes who gave him support. He had then a very great force.

⁴¹⁸ Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld was an Icelandic poet who is most celebrated for his verses in honour of King Óláfr Tryggvason, but he also, paradoxically, composed for Óláfr's enemies, the jarls Hákon and Eiríkr. *Hallfrøðar saga* records his conversion to Christianity under the patronage of Óláfr, and his probably fictitious love affairs. His nickname, 'Problem Poet' or 'Troublesome Poet' is said in Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and other kings' sagas to have been given to him by the king because of his reluctance to accept baptism (Oddr 244).

⁴¹⁹ *hræskóð*: 'carrion-harmers', weapons.

⁴²⁰ Emperor Otto II of Germany (967–983), who in 972–73 broke through the Danish defences and advanced some distance into Jutland.

⁴²¹ *Danavirki* 'Danes' wall'. The *Danevirke* was a fortification of banks and ditches across the base of the Jutland peninsula to secure the Danish boundary against the Saxons. Its construction was begun before 700 and it was refortified in later periods.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Óláfr Tryggvason had been during the winter in Vinðland, as has been written above. He went during the winter to the districts there in Vinðland which had been subject to Queen Geira and had then turned away from all allegiance and tribute to her. Óláfr raids these places and slew many men, burned some people's homes, took much plunder and subjected [255] these realms to himself, going back afterwards to his fortification. Early in the spring Óláfr fitted out his ships and then sailed out to sea. He sailed close to Skáni, made an attack on the coast, but the people of the country gathered together and held a battle, and Óláfr gained the victory and took much plunder. After that he sailed east to Gotland. There he captured a merchant ship that belonged to Jamtr. They put up a great defence, and it ended with Óláfr clearing the ship and killing many men, and he took all their goods. He had a third battle on Gotland. Óláfr gained the victory there and got much plunder. So says Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld:

120. Mighty, to shrines merciless, *Óláfsdrápa* 4
 he made Vinðr fall in battle *Fsk* 142 (second half)
 and Jamtaland's offspring; *ÓTMI* 138 (second half)
 early he achieved it.
 The dignitaries' lord,⁴²² sword-daring, *Fsk* 142 (first half)
 endangered lives of Gotlanders; *ÓTMI* 138 (first half)
 I learned that the gold-lessener⁴²³
 unleashed spear-storm⁴²⁴ on Skáney.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Emperor Ótta gathered together a great army. He had troops from Saxland and Frakkland, Fríslanð, and King Búrizláfr accompanied him from Vinðland with a great army, and in the troop with him was his son-in-law Óláfr Tryggvason. [256] The emperor had a great army of cavalry and a much larger army of foot soldiers. He also had a great army from Holtsetaland. King Haraldr of the Danes sent Jarl Hákon with the army of Norwegians which accompanied him south to the Danavirki to defend the country there. So it says in *Vellekla*:

⁴²² *hersa dróttinn*: 'lord of *hersar* (men of high rank)', king.

⁴²³ *gollskerðir*: 'diminisher of gold', generous lord.

⁴²⁴ *geirþeyr*: 'spear-wind', battle.

121. So it happened that southwards *Vellekla* 26
 sand-plank draught-beasts⁴²⁵ under
 the valiant bush of victory⁴²⁶
 to visit Danmørk went running,
 and the Hǫrðar lord, Dofrar's leader,⁴²⁷
 looked then for a meeting,
 hooded in the isle-shackle helmet,⁴²⁸
 with Danish rulers.

122. And in winter he wanted, *Vellekla* 27
 the wealth-kind king of Hlóðyn
 of Myrkviðr,⁴²⁹ to make trial
 of the murder-elf⁴³⁰ who came southwards,
 [257] when the king bade the keeper,
 keen, of mailcoat-tempest⁴³¹
 defend the fortification
 from din-Njǫrðrs of Hagbarðr's door.⁴³²

Emperor Ótta came with his army from the south to the Danavirki, and Jarl Hákon defended the fortification wall with his troop. The Danavirki is constructed in this way, that there are two fiords going into the land, one on each side of the land, and between the heads of the fiords the Danes had built a great fortified wall of stone and turf and timber and dug a broad and deep ditch outside it, and fortifications in front of the gates in the wall. Then there was a great battle. It speaks of this in *Vellekla*:

⁴²⁵ *aurborðs eykr*: 'draught-beast of the gravel-board ('plank that rests on the ground when the ship is beached', Jesch 2001, 141)', ship.

⁴²⁶ *sigrrunnr*: 'bush of victory', successful warrior.

⁴²⁷ *Hǫrða valdr . . . Dofra dróttinn*: 'ruler of Hǫrðalanders, lord of Dofrar (people of a district of Norway)', i.e. king of Norway.

⁴²⁸ *holmfjöturs hjalmr*: 'helm of the island-fetter (the Miðgarðsormr, which encircled the land within the sea; thus the dragon Fáfnir)', *ægishjalmr* 'helm of terror', see note 140 above.

⁴²⁹ *fémildir konungr Hlóðynjar myrkmarkar*: 'generous king of the dark forest (= Myrkviðr, a forest in Jutland) of Hlóðyn (= Jǫrð, i.e. earth, land)', king of Jutland, i.e. king of Denmark.

⁴³⁰ *mordalfr*: 'elf of slaughter, battle', warrior.

⁴³¹ *valsekjar veðrhirdir*: 'keeper of the storm (battle) of the slaughter-shirt (coat of mail)', warrior.

⁴³² *Hagbarðar hurðar hlym-Njǫrðr*: 'Njǫrðr (god) of the din (battle) of Hagbarðr's (sea-king's) door (shield)', warrior.

123. There was no way of over- *Vellekla* 28
 whelming, though the Rognir
 of the wall of the spear-rush⁴³³ gave
 strong battle, their forces,
 [258] when, with a force of Frísians,
 Frakkar, Vinðr, northwards
 went the war-Viðurr;⁴³⁴ to warfare
 the wave-steed's rider⁴³⁵ summoned.

Jarl Hákon lined up troops above all the wall-gates, though that was a larger part of his force that he made go all along the fortification walls and defend the places that were most prone to attack. Much of the emperor's force fell there, but they did not manage to get anywhere with taking the fortification. Then the emperor turned away and did not attempt anything further there. So it says in *Vellekla*:

124. Din of Þriði's fire⁴³⁶ thundered *Vellekla* 29
 there as spear-play Miðjungar⁴³⁷ *Fsk* 116–17
 engaged shields together; *ÓTMI* 137
 to grips came the eagle-feeder;⁴³⁸
 the sea-steed's striking-Þrótr⁴³⁹
 sent Saxons fleeing; that was
 where the king with warriors
 the wall⁴⁴⁰ for men defended.

After this battle Jarl Hákon went back to his ships and was going then to sail north back to Norway, but he did not get a favourable wind. He was then lying out in Limafjörðr.

⁴³³ *geirrásar garð-Rognir*: 'enclosure-Rognir of spear-rush (battle)', Rognir (Óðinn) of the enclosure or wall of battle (shield), warrior.

⁴³⁴ *gunn-Viðurr*: 'war-Viðurr (Óðinn)', warrior (here, the emperor Otto).

⁴³⁵ *vágs blakkriði*: 'rider of the horse of the wave (ship)', seafarer (here, Hákon).

⁴³⁶ *þrymr Þriðja logs*: 'din of Þriði's (Óðinn's) fire', din of the sword, battle.

⁴³⁷ *leikmiðjungur odda*: 'Miðjungur (giant) of the play of spears', giant of battle, warrior. Miðjungur is listed as a giant name in one of the *pulur* attached to *Snorra Edda* (*Skáldsk* 111), but it is not known how it comes to be used as a base word in kennings for 'man'. Cf. *Skáldsk* 40/15, *Kent er ok við jötna heiti, ok er þat flest háð eða lastmæli*, 'Names of giants are also used [to refer to a man in kennings] and this is mostly as satire or criticism'.

⁴³⁸ *arnreddir*: 'eagle-feeder', warrior.

⁴³⁹ *sæki-Þrótr sundfaxa*: 'attacking-Þrótr (Óðinn) of the sea-horse', viking, sea-fighter.

⁴⁴⁰ *garðr*: 'enclosure, wall, stronghold', here the Danavirki.

[259] CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Emperor Ótta then turned his army towards the Slé. He there gathered to himself a naval force, transporting the troops across the fiord there to Jutland. And when King Haraldr of the Danes heard about this, he went against him with his army. And a great battle took place there, and finally the emperor won the victory, and the king of the Danes fled away to Limafjörðr and went out to Mårsey. Then men passed between the king and the emperor, and a truce and appointment for a meeting were arranged. Emperor Ótta and the king of the Danes met on Mårsey. And then the holy bishop Poppó preached the Faith to King Haraldr, and he bore red-hot iron in his hand and showed King Haraldr his hand unburned. Then King Haraldr had himself baptised with the whole Danish army. King Haraldr had earlier sent word to [260] Jarl Hákon, while the king was stationed on Mårsey, that the jarl should come to his assistance. The jarl had then arrived at the island after the king had had himself baptised. Then the king sends word that the jarl should come to meet with him. And when they met each other, then the king forced the jarl to have himself baptised. Then Jarl Hákon was baptised and all the men who were with him. Then the king provided him with priests and other clerics and says that the jarl must have all the people in Norway baptised. Then they parted. Jarl Hákon goes out to sea and there waits for a favourable wind. And when the wind comes that he thought would carry him out to sea, then he shoved all the clerics up ashore, and then he himself sailed out to sea, and the wind was blowing to the south west and west. The jarl then sails east through Eyrarsund. He makes raids then on both shores. After that he sails east past Skáneyjarsund and raided there too, wherever he came to land. And when he came east off Gautasker, then he sailed to land. Then he performed a great pagan sacrifice. Then two ravens came flying there, screeching loudly. Then the jarl felt sure that Óðinn had accepted the sacrifice and now it would be a propitious time for the jarl to fight. Then the jarl burned all his ships and went up inland with his troops and ravaged everywhere. Then Jarl Óttarr came against him. He was ruling over Gautland. They had a great battle with each other. [261] Jarl Hákon wins the victory there, but Jarl Óttarr fell and a large part of his force with him. Jarl Hákon goes across both parts of Gautland and ravages everywhere, until he comes to Norway, going after that by land all the way north to Þrándheimr. It tells about this in *Vellekla*:

125. On the field the felling-Njorðr of flight⁴⁴¹ consulted oracles;
 Heðinn's attire's tree-trunk⁴⁴²
 took the war-Sága's⁴⁴³ lucky day.
 And strong vultures of slaughter⁴⁴⁴
 he saw, the battle-offerer.⁴⁴⁵
 The blood-bowl Týr⁴⁴⁶ then wanted
 to break off lives of Gautar. *Vellekla* 30
Fsk 118
ÓTM I 146
 3GT (ll. 1–2)
126. The jarl, where no man earlier
 under Sqrli's dwelling⁴⁴⁷
 had harried, held the meeting
 of hollow-of-swords' burning;⁴⁴⁸
 None brought rounds wrapped in
 resting-place of the heather-
 whale⁴⁴⁹ further from the water; the ruler
 went over all Gautland. *Vellekla* 31
Fsk 119
ÓTM I 146–47
 3GT (ll. 1–2)
- [262] 127. The god of Fróði's storm⁴⁵⁰ stacked
 slaughter on the battlefield;
 the gods' kinsman⁴⁵¹ could glory
 in gain; the slain went to Óðinn.
 Who doubts the disrupter of royal
 race⁴⁵² by gods is guided?
 I say the splendid deities
 strengthen Hǫkon's power. *Vellekla* 32
Fsk 119 (first half)
Skáldsk 85 (ll. 7–8)

⁴⁴¹ *flóttu felli-Njorðr*: 'felling Njorðr (god) of fleeing men', warrior.

⁴⁴² *Heðins váða draugr*: 'tree-trunk (man) of Heðinn's (legendary hero's) garments (mailcoat)', warrior.

⁴⁴³ *dolga Sága*: 'Sága (goddess) of battle', valkyrie.

⁴⁴⁴ *hrægammr*: 'corpse-vulture', raven.

⁴⁴⁵ *hildar haldboði*: 'one who offers to hold a battle', warrior.

⁴⁴⁶ *teinlautar Týr*: 'Týr (god) of the sacrificial bowl', man who performs sacrifice. The word *teinlaut* does not occur elsewhere.

⁴⁴⁷ *Sqrli rann*: 'hall of Sqrli (legendary warrior)', shield (under which a warrior shelters).

⁴⁴⁸ *hjǫrlautar hyrjar þing*: 'meeting of fire of the hollow place of the sword', meeting of fire of the shield, sword-meeting, battle.

⁴⁴⁹ *loptvarðaðr lyngs barða rǫnd*: 'shield (lit. rim) covered in the loft (sleeping-chamber) of the whale of the heather (snake)', shield covered in gold (on which dragons are conventionally said to lie).

⁴⁵⁰ *Fróða hríðar óss*: 'god of Fróði's storm', god of battle, warrior.

⁴⁵¹ *ragna konr*: 'descendant of gods', member of the Ynglingr family.

⁴⁵² *jöfra ættrýrir*: 'diminisher of the family line of princes', warlike king.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Emperor Ótta went back to Saxland to his kingdom. He and the king of the Danes parted in friendship. They say that Emperor Ótta became godfather to King Haraldr's son Sveinn and gave him his own name, and he was so baptised that he was called Ótta Sveinn. King Haraldr of the Danes observed Christianity well until the day of his death. King Búrizláfr then went to Vinðland and with him his son-in-law Óláfr. Hallfrøðr vendræðaskáld speaks of this battle in *Óláfsdrápa*:

- [263] 128. The rod who sets running *Óláfsdrápa* 5
 roller-steeds⁴⁵³ in Danmørk *Fsk* 142 (second half)
 stripped bark from the birches *ÓTM* I 145 (second
 of battle-shirts⁴⁵⁴ south of Heiðabýr. half)

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Óláfr Tryggvason stayed in Vinðland for three years, until his wife Geira caught a sickness that led to her death. Óláfr found this such a great loss that he could not feel happy in Vinðland afterwards. He took himself then to warships and went again on raids, raiding first round Frísland and after that round Saxland and all over Flæmingjaland. So says Hallfrøðr vendræðaskáld:

129. The king had cut down often *Óláfsdrápa* 6
 corpses of Saxons by the finish, *Fsk* 142–43
 Tryggvi's son, for the ill-tempered *ÓTM* I 148
 twisted steed of Leikn,⁴⁵⁵
 plentifully the popular
 prince gave the horsewoman-
 of-dusk's dark stud⁴⁵⁶ a drink
 of dark red blood of Frisians.
- [264] 130. The great settler of men's strife⁴⁵⁷ *Ólafsdarápa* 7
 destroyed bodies of Valkerar.⁴⁵⁸ *Fsk* 143
 The war-leader⁴⁵⁹ had flesh of Flemings *ÓTM* I 148 (second
 fed to the ravens. half)

⁴⁵³ *hlunnviggja hleypimeidr*: 'tree that causes steeds of the slipway to gallop', man who makes ships sail, seafarer.

⁴⁵⁴ *bøðserkjar birki*: 'birch-trees of the battle-shirt', warriors. *Hjó barklaust*: 'hewed bark-less', i.e. cut off their mail-coats.

⁴⁵⁵ *ljótvoxinn Leiknar hestr*: 'deformed horse of Leikn (giantess)': wolf.

⁴⁵⁶ *kveldriðu stóð*: 'stud (group of horses) of the (female) rider in the evening', horses of the trollwife, wolves.

⁴⁵⁷ *rógs rekka lægir*: 'calmer of strife of men', ruler.

⁴⁵⁸ *Valkerar*: people of Walcheren (Holland).

⁴⁵⁹ *herstefnir*: 'war-guider', ruler.

CHAPTER THIRTY

After that Óláfr Tryggvason sailed to England and raided widely round the country. He sailed all the way north to Norðimbraland and raided there. From there he sailed north to Scotland and raided widely there. From there he sailed to the Hebrides and had some battles there. After that he sailed south to Man and fought there. He raided widely round Ireland too. Then he sailed to Bretland and raided widely in that land and also in the place called Kumraland. From there he sailed west to Valland and raided there.⁴⁶⁰ Then he sailed from the west and planned to go to England. Then he came to the islands called Syllingar, in the sea west of England. So says Hallfrøðr vendræðaskáld:

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 131. | Young, the king most mighty
made foes of the English;
that nail-shower nourisher ⁴⁶¹ made
Northumbrians perish. | <i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 8
<i>Fsk</i> 143 (first half)
<i>ÓTM</i> I 160 |
| [265] | War-glad, the wolf-feeder ⁴⁶²
wasted Scotland widely,
with the sword; on Man the diminisher
of metal wire ⁴⁶³ made sword-play. | <i>Fsk</i> 144 |
| 132. | He sent, the bowstring's scarer, ⁴⁶⁴
soldiers of the isles ⁴⁶⁵ falling —
the Týr of fine swords ⁴⁶⁶
longed for fame — and Irish.
Of British lands he harried
inhabitants, the king hewing —
glutted was the greed of the eagle
of the gale of spears ⁴⁶⁷ — Cumbrians. | <i>Óláfsdrápa</i> 9
<i>ÓTM</i> I 161
<i>Fsk</i> 144 |

⁴⁶⁰ west to Valland . . . from the west . . . to England: Snorri is not mistaken in his geography. His directions are normally made from the viewpoint of (southern) Norway or the European mainland. Thus he thinks of both France and the British Isles as 'western countries'. His meaning could perhaps be indicated by translating the present phrases 'to Valland in the west . . . from the west (of Europe) . . . to England'. See Tatjana Jackson, 'On the Old Norse System of Spatial Orientation', *Saga-Book XXV* (1998), 78–79.

⁴⁶¹ *naddskúrar nærir*: 'nourisher of the shower of spikes (spears)', warrior.

⁴⁶² *ulfa greddir*: 'feeder of wolves', warrior.

⁴⁶³ *seims skerðir*: 'damager of gold wire', distributor of treasure, generous lord.

⁴⁶⁴ *ýdrógar ægir*: 'terrifier of the bow-string', warrior (who makes the bow-string quiver as if frightened); *ýdrógar* is the reading of *Hkr* where *Fsk* has *ýdrauga* 'tree-trunks of the bow'.

⁴⁶⁵ *eyverskr herr*: 'Island-dwelling host', here inhabitants of the Hebrides (Suðreyjar)?

⁴⁶⁶ *dýrra tjörva Týr*: 'Týr (god) of valuable swords', warrior.

⁴⁶⁷ *geira hríðar gjóðr*: 'sea-eagle of the storm of spears', bird of battle, raven.

Óláfr Tryggvason spent four years raiding after he left Vinðland, until he came to Syllingar.

[266] CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Óláfr Tryggvason, while he was lying in Syllingar, he heard that there on the island was a certain prophet who spoke in advance of things not yet happened, and it seemed to many that these were generally fulfilled. Óláfr became curious to test this man's prophecy. He sent the one of his men who was handsomest and biggest, and fitted him out as splendidly as possible and bade him say that he was the king, for Óláfr was now become renowned throughout all countries for this, that he was handsomer and nobler and bigger than all other men. But since he had left Garðaríki, he had used no more of his name than to call himself Óli, saying he was Russian. But when the messenger came to the prophet and said he was the king, he got this reply:

'You are not the king, but this is my advice, that you be true to your king.'

He did not say anything further to this man. The messenger went back and told Óláfr, and Óláfr became all the more eager to meet this man, when he heard such a reply from him, and now all doubt left him about his not being a prophet. Then Óláfr went to see him and had a conversation with him and enquired what the prophet could foretell to Óláfr about how he would come to power and the rest of his fortune. The hermit replied with a holy prophecy:

'You will become a celebrated king and achieve celebrated deeds. You will bring many men to faith and baptism, you will benefit yourself in this and many others. And so that you may have no doubts about these answers of mine, you can take this as a sign: at your ships you will meet treachery and uprising, and it will lead to a battle, and you will [267] lose some of your troops and yourself receive a wound and because of this wound you will be at the point of death and be carried to your ship on a shield, but you will recover from this wound within seven nights and soon receive baptism.'

Then Óláfr went down to his ships and then he met there hostile men who wanted to kill him and his troop, and their exchange went as the hermit had told him, that Óláfr was carried out to his ship wounded, and also that he recovered in seven nights. Then Óláfr felt sure that this man must have told him true things and that he was a true prophet, wherever it was that he had his prophecy from. Then Óláfr went a second time to see this man, discussing then many things with him, then asking in detail where he had got this wisdom from, to be able to foretell things that had not yet happened. The hermit says that the God of Christian people Himself let him know everything that he wanted to know, and then tells Óláfr many of God's great wonders, and as a result of these representations Óláfr agreed to receive baptism, and so it

was that Óláfr was baptised there and all his following. He stayed there a very long time and learned the true faith and took away from there priests and other clerics.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Óláfr sailed from Syllingar in the autumn to England, lying there in a harbour, then proceeding peacefully, for England was Christian and he was Christian too. But then an announcement of a certain assembly went round the country, and all the people had to come to the assembly. And when the assembly was set up, then a certain princess came to it whose name is Gyða, sister of Óláfr kváran who was king in Ireland in Dublin. She had been given in marriage in England [268] to a rich jarl. He was now dead, and she remained holding his dominions. But there was this man in her dominions whose name is Alvini, a great champion and fighter of duels. He had asked for her in marriage, but she replied that she wished to make her choice of whom she wished to have of the men in her realm, and it was for this reason that the assembly was called, so that Gyða should choose herself a husband. Alvini was come there, and fitted out with the finest clothes, and many others were there, well dressed. Óláfr was come there and had on his bad-weather clothes and on top a shaggy cloak. He was standing with his troop away from other people. Gyða went and looked at each man that she thought had anything of a manly appearance. And when she came to where Óláfr was standing and looked up into his face, she asked what man he was. He said his name was Óli.

‘I am a foreigner here,’ he said.

Gyða said: ‘If you will marry me, I will choose you.’

‘I will not refuse,’ he says. He asked what the name of this woman was, her descent and origin.

‘I am,’ she says, ‘a king’s daughter from Ireland. I was given in marriage in this country to the jarl who ruled this realm. Now since his death I have controlled the realm. Men have asked for me in marriage, but none whom I wished to marry. But I am called Gyða.’

She was a young and handsome woman. After this they discussed this affair and reach agreement between themselves. Óláfr betroths himself to Gyða. Alvini is now highly displeased. But it was the custom in England, if two men quarrelled about anything, that a duel should be held about it. Alvini challenges Óláfr Tryggvason to a duel about this business. They arrange with each other an appointment for the fight, [269] and there were to be twelve on each side. And when they meet, Óláfr instructs his men that they should do exactly the same as he does. He was carrying a great axe. And when Alvini was about to strike at him with his sword, he struck the sword out of his

hands and with the second blow the man himself, so that Alvini fell. After that Óláfr tied him up securely. All Alvini's men went the same way, that they were battered and bound and taken back like that to Óláfr's lodging. Afterwards he told Alvini to leave the country and not return, and Óláfr took all his possessions. Óláfr then married Gyða and stayed in England, or sometimes in Ireland.

While Óláfr was in Ireland, he was engaged on some warlike expedition, and they were travelling by ship. And when they needed to make a coastal raid, men go ashore and drive down to the beach a large number of cows. Then there came following them a farmer and bade Óláfr give him those cows that he owned. Óláfr told him to take his cows if he could recognise them.

'And don't delay our journey.'

The farmer had there a great sheepdog. He directed the dog to the herds of cattle, and many hundred head were herded there. The dog ran through all the herds of cattle and drove away the same number of animals as the farmer said that he owned, and they were all marked in the same way. They then realised that the dog must have recognised them correctly. They thought the dog was amazingly intelligent. Then Óláfr asked if the farmer would give him the dog.

'Willingly,' says the farmer. Óláfr gave him a gold ring on the spot and promised him his friendship. This dog was called Vígi and was the best of all dogs. Óláfr had him for a long time afterwards.

[270] CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

King Haraldr Gormsson of the Danes heard that Jarl Hákon had rejected Christianity and raided the land of the king of the Danes in many places. Then King Haraldr of the Danes called an army out and then went to Norway. And when he came into that realm which Jarl Hákon had supervision over, he made raids there and devastated the whole land and brought his force to the islands that are called Sólundir. Only five farms stood unburned in Sogn in Læradalr, and all the people fled to the mountains and forests, taking everything they could manage. Then the king of the Danes was going to sail the force to Iceland and avenge the insult with which all the Icelanders had insulted him. It was made law in Iceland that an insulting verse should be composed about the king of the Danes for every nose that was in the country, and the reason for this was that a ship that Icelandic men owned was wrecked in Danmørk, and the Danes appropriated all the goods and claimed it was flotsam, and it was the king's steward called Birgir who was responsible for this. The insult was composed about them both. This is in the insult:

133. When Haraldr, hailed as killer, *Jóms* (291) 99
 in horse-form stood bracing
 for the push—the Vinðr’s punisher—
 into penis-land,⁴⁶⁸ like wax he melted;
 while wretched Birgir, rightly
 run out of the land by spirits,⁴⁶⁹
 filled the role of filly
 in front, as all could see.

[271] King Haraldr told a man skilled in magic to go in changed shape to Iceland and find out what he could tell the king. He went in the form of a whale. And when he came to the land, he went westwards round the north of the country. He saw that all the mountains and hills were full of land-spirits, some large and some small. And when he came opposite Vápnafjörðr, then he went into the fiord and was going to go ashore. Then there went down along the valley a great dragon, and with it many snakes, toads and vipers, and spat poison on him. And he swam away and westwards along the coast, right up to Eyjafjörðr. He went in along that fiord. There a bird went against him, so large that its wings reached out to the mountains on both sides, and a multitude of other birds both large and small. He went away from there and westwards round the coast and so south to Breiðifjörðr and made to go into that fiord. There a huge bull went against him and waded out into the sea and began to bellow horribly. A multitude of land-spirits came with it. He went away from there and southwards round Reykjanes and tried to go up onto Víkarsskeið. There a mountain giant came against him with an iron staff in his hand, and his head rose higher than the mountains, and many other giants with him. From there he went eastwards along the whole length of the coast.

‘Then there was nothing but sands and harbourless coasts and a great deal of surf out to sea, and ocean from one country to another so great,’ he says, ‘that it is not navigable for large ships.’

At this time Brodd-Helgi was in Vápnafjörðr, Eyjólfir Valgerðarson in Eyjafjörðr, Þórðr gellir in Breiðifjörðr, Þóroddr goði in Qlfus. After this the king of the Danes turned his force [272] south along the coast, going afterwards to Danmörk, but Jarl Hákon had all the land resettled, and paid no tribute to the king of the Danes again.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

King Haraldr’s son Sveinn, who was later called tjúguskegg (Forkbeard), demanded rule from his father King Haraldr, but it was now again as before,

⁴⁶⁸ *mörnis mór*: ‘land of the (horse’s) penis’, mare’s rump?

⁴⁶⁹ *bergsalar band*: ‘god of the mountain-hall’, land-spirit?

that King Haraldr did not want to divide the realm of Danes into two, and refuses to give him rule. Then Sveinn gets together warships for himself and says that he wants to go raiding. And when his force was all assembled and Pálna-Tóki from the Jómsvikings had joined his force,⁴⁷⁰ then Sveinn made for Sjaland and in to Ísafjörðr. Then he found there before him his father King Haraldr with his ships, preparing to go on an expedition. Sveinn joined battle with him. A great battle took place there. Then troops rushed to support King Haraldr, so that Sveinn was overpowered, and he fled. King Haraldr received wounds there that led to his death. Afterwards Sveinn was taken as king in Danmørk. Then Sigvaldi was jarl over Jómsborg in Vinðland. He was son of King Strút-Haraldr who had ruled over Skáney. Sigvaldi's brothers were Hemingr and Porkell inn hávi (the Tall). Then Búi digri (the Fat) of Borgundarhólmr was also leader of the Jómsvikings, together with [273] his brother Sigurðr. There also was Búi's nephew Vagn, son of Áki and Þorgunna. Jarl Sigvaldi had captured King Sveinn and carried him to Vinðland into Jómsborg and forced him to come to terms with King Búrizláfr of the Vinðr, and to let Jarl Sigvaldi settle the terms between them—Jarl Sigvaldi was now married to King Búrizláfr's daughter Ástríðr—and otherwise, says the jarl, he would hand King Sveinn over to the Vinðr, and the king felt sure that they would torture him to death. Therefore he agreed to the jarl's arbitration. The jarl adjudged that King Sveinn should marry King Búrizláfr's daughter Gunnhildr, while King Búrizláfr should marry King Sveinn's sister Þyri Haraldsdóttir, and both of them should keep their kingdoms and there should be peace between their countries. Then King Sveinn went back to Danmørk with his wife Gunnhildr. Their sons were Haraldr and Knútr inn ríki (the Great). At that time Danes were making great threats to go with an army to Norway against Jarl Hákon.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

King Sveinn held a magnificent banquet and called to him all of the ruling class that were in his kingdom. He was going to commemorate his father Haraldr.⁴⁷¹ Then there had also died [274] shortly before this Strút-Haraldr on Skáney and Véseti in Borgundarhólmr, father of Búi digri and Sigurðr. The king then sent word to the Jómsvikings that Jarl Sigvaldi and Búi and their brothers should come there and commemorate their fathers at the banquet that the king was holding. The Jómsvikings went to the banquet with all the most

⁴⁷⁰ According to *Jómsvíkingsa saga*, Pálna-Tóki was Sveinn's foster-father and founder of the fortress of Jómsborg.

⁴⁷¹ In *Fagrskinna* the main ritual at the memorial feast is called *bragafull* 'toast of a great man'. The custom is also described in *Ynglinga saga* ch. 36 (there called *bragarfull*). Cf. note 94 above.

valiant of their men. They had forty ships from Vinðland and twenty ships from Skáney. There assembled there a very large number of men. The first day at the banquet, before King Sveinn was to go up into his father's high-seat, he drank his toast and made a vow that before three winters had passed he would have come with his army to England and have killed King Aðalráðr or driven him from the country. Everyone who was at the memorial banquet had to drink that toast. Then the leaders of the Jómsvikings were served the largest horns with the strongest drink that was there. And when that toast had been drunk, then everyone had to drink Christ's toast, and the Jómsvikings were always given the fullest and strongest drinks. The third one was Mikjáll's toast,⁴⁷² and everyone drank that. And after that Jarl Sigvaldi drank his father's toast and afterwards made a vow that before three winters were passed, he would have come to Norway and killed Jarl Hákon or driven him from the country. Then his brother Þorkell hávi made a vow that he would go with Sigvaldi to Norway and not flee from battle if Sigvaldi was still fighting there. Then Búi digri made a vow that he would go to Norway with them and not flee before Jarl Hákon. Then his brother Sigurðr made a vow that he would go to Norway and not flee while a majority of the Jómsvikings were fighting. Then Vagn Ákason made a vow that he would go with them to Norway and [275] not come back before he had killed Þorkell leira (Mudflat) and gone to bed with his daughter Ingibjörg. Many other leaders made vows to do various things. People drank the memorials that day but the following morning, when the Jómsvikings were sober, they felt they had said plenty and hold their discussions and make deliberations as to how they are to arrange the expedition, deciding at length to get ready then as quickly as possible, fitting out their ships and troops. This was very widely talked of round many countries.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson heard what had happened. He was then in Raumaríki. He immediately gathered troops to himself and goes to Upplönd and so northwards over the mountains to Þrándheimr to see his father Jarl Hákon. Þórðr Kolbeinsson speaks of this in *Eiríksdrápa*.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² A toast to the Archangel Michael.

⁴⁷³ Þórðr Kolbeinsson was a well-known skald from Hítarnes in western Iceland; he figures as villain in the semi-fictional poet's saga *Bjarnar saga Hítðelakappa*, which attributes a number of occasional verses, many of them libellous, to him. In the kings' sagas fifteen verses and two half-verses in honour of Eiríkr are attributed to him. These are said in various manuscripts to belong to two named poems, the *Belgskakadrápa* ('Bag-Shaking Lay'?), composed according to *Bjarnar saga* in about 1007, and an *Eiríksdrápa*, generally assumed to be a memorial poem composed after Eiríkr's death in 1014. Fidjestøl has argued that all these verses belong to a single poem, for which two names were current (1982, 115–16).

134. And truly, from the south travelled *Eiríksdrápa* 1
 great war-tidings of trees of
 weapons;⁴⁷⁴ worthy farmers
 widely feared trouble.
 Sveiði's plain's horseman⁴⁷⁵
 heard of long-planked Danish
 warships, shoved in the water
 from worn slipways, in the south.

[276] CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Jarl Hákon and Jarl Eiríkr have a war-summons sent round all Þrændalög, sending an order to both Mœrrs and to Raumsdalr, also north to Naumudalr and to Hálogaland, summoning all the population out to provide men and ships. So it says in *Eiríksdrápa*:

135. Ships of all shapes in plenty *Eiríksdrápa* 2
 the shield-tree⁴⁷⁶ sent out *Fsk* 129
 to sea, resounding — my *Jóms* (510) 69
 skald's work grows, praise-generous — *Skáldsk* 84 (first half)
 when the war-strengtheners⁴⁷⁷ *ÓTM* 181–82
 went at no small pace, with shields to
 fence the land of his father;
 before it, many ships gathered.

Jarl Hákon immediately sailed south to Mœrr to see what information he could get and to muster troops, while Jarl Eiríkr gathered the army together and brought it from the north.

[277] CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

The Jómsvikings took their force to Limafjörðr and from there sailed out into the open sea and had sixty ships and come to Agðir, taking their force straight north to Rogaland, beginning to make raids as soon as they come into Jarl Hákon's realm, and so go north along the coast laying waste everywhere.

There is a man named Geirmundr who went with a light ship and a few men with him. He came up north to Mœrr and there met Jarl Hákon, went in in front of his table and told the jarl the news that there was an army in

⁴⁷⁴ *stála meiðr*: 'tree of weapons', warrior.

⁴⁷⁵ *Sveiða vangs viggmeiðr*: 'tree of the horse (ship) of Sveiði's (a sea-king's) plain (the sea)', seafarer.

⁴⁷⁶ *skjaldhlynr*: 'shield-maple', warrior.

⁴⁷⁷ *élherðir*: 'storm (battle)-promoter', warrior.

the south of the country, come from Danmørk. The jarl asked if he had proof of this. Geirmundr lifted up one arm, and the hand was chopped off, saying that there was the proof that an army was in the country. After that the jarl asks in detail about this army. Geirmundr says that there were Jómsvikings in it and they had slain many men and plundered widely.

‘But they are travelling,’ he says, ‘fast and hotly. I expect it will not be long before they will turn up here.’

Then the jarl rowed through all the fiords, in along one bank, and out along the other, travelling day and night and having watch kept inland across Eið, also south in Firðir, also to the north where Eiríkr was coming with the army. This is spoken of in *Eiríksdrápa*:

136.	The war-ried jarl, who urged out to sea stud-horses of planks, ⁴⁷⁸ pointed towering prows against Sigvaldi;	<i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 3 <i>Fsk</i> 130 <i>Jóms</i> (510) 70 <i>ÓTMI</i> 184
[278]	many oar-shafts were shaking; shrank from death never the comforters of carrion birds ⁴⁷⁹ cutting the sea with oar-blades.	

Jarl Eiríkr travelled from the north as swiftly as he could.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

Jarl Sigvaldi sailed his force north round Staðr, making first for Hereyjar. The local people, even when vikings found them, never told the truth about what the jarls were doing. The vikings raided wherever they went. They sailed in to Høð, ran ashore and raided, bringing to their ships both prisoners and farm stock, but killed the males who could bear arms. And when they went down to their ships, then there came to them an old farmer, and he went close to Búi's troop. The farmer said:

‘You are behaving unlike true warriors, driving to the shore cows and calves. It would be a better catch for you to go after the bear that is now come close to the bear-trap.’

‘What does the old fellow say?’ they say. ‘Can you tell us anything about Jarl Hákon?’

The farmer says: ‘He rowed yesterday in to Hørundarfjörðr. The jarl had one or two ships, they were not more than three, and he had not heard anything of you.’

⁴⁷⁸ *hrefnis stóð*: ‘stud of the plank’, fleet of ships.

⁴⁷⁹ *sárgamms huggandi*: ‘comforter of the wound-vulture (raven)’, warrior.

Búi and his men immediately set off at a run to their ships and abandon all the plunder. Búi said:

‘Let us take advantage of the fact that we have got information, and let us be in the forefront [279] of the victory.’

And when they reach the ships, they immediately row out. Jarl Sigvaldi called to them and asked what was going on. They say that Jarl Hákon was there inside the fiord. After this the jarl lets the fleet cast off and they row north of the island Høð and so inside round the island.

CHAPTER FORTY

Jarl Hákon and his son Jarl Eiríkr were lying in Hallkelsvík. Their whole army was assembled there. They had a hundred and fifty ships and had now heard that the Jómsvikings had sailed in at Høð. Then the jarls rowed from the south to find them, and when they come to the place called Hjørungavágr, then they meet. Then they each line up their forces for attack. In the middle of the line was Jarl Sigvaldi’s standard. There Jarl Hákon positioned himself for the attack. Jarl Sigvaldi had twenty ships, and Hákon sixty. In Jarl Hákon’s force the leaders were Þórir hjörtr (Hart) of Hálogaland, then Styrkárr of Gimsar. In one wing of the formation were Búi digri and his brother Sigurðr with twenty ships. Against them Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson lined up sixty ships and with him these leaders, Guðbrandr hvíti (the White) from Upplönd and Þorkell leira, a man from the Vík. In the other wing Vagn Ákason came forward with twenty ships, and against them Sveinn Hákonarson and with him Skeggi of Yrjar from Upphaugr and Røgnvaldr of Ærvík from Staðr with sixty ships. So it says in *Eiríksdrápa*:

- | | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 137. | Against them to war glided
on gleaming sea ⁴⁸⁰ —far along
the coast sailed the sea-force—
slender Danish warships,
most of which the jarl emptied
of envoys gold-rich ⁴⁸¹ at Møerr;
with a cargo of warm carrion
the gunwale-steed ⁴⁸² drifted. | <i>Eiríksdrápa</i> 4
<i>Fsk</i> 130 (first half)
<i>ÓTM</i> I 187 |
| [280] | | |

Eyvindr skáldaspillir also says this in *Háleygjatal*:

⁴⁸⁰ *glæheimr*: ‘gleaming world’, sea.

⁴⁸¹ *ǫrr ærins gulls*: ‘man (lit. messenger) of plentiful gold’, rich man.

⁴⁸² *barns viggr*: ‘horse of the gunwale’, ship.

138. There for workers
of woe for Freyr⁴⁸³
was in the morning
a meeting
far from happy,
when with a fleet
the land-rulers
rushed on the wreckers,⁴⁸⁴
when the sword-elf⁴⁸⁵
from the south drove
an ocean-stud⁴⁸⁶
against their force.

Háleygjatal 13

[281] Then they brought the fleets together and the fiercest battle begins there and many fell from both sides and many more from Hákon's force, for the Jómsvikings fought both valiantly and boldly and sharply and shot right through the shields, and there was such a raining down of weapons on Jarl Hákon that his coat of mail was torn and become useless, so that he threw it off. Tindr Hallkelsson speaks of this:⁴⁸⁷

139. It was hardly as if the handsome
hearth-fire Gerðr,⁴⁸⁸ with shoulder-limbs⁴⁸⁹ —
the clash of Fjölfnir's flames⁴⁹⁰ increased —
a couch for the jarl made ready,
when he must cast off the clattering
coat of Hangi, short of rings;⁴⁹¹
swaying horses of Róði's space⁴⁹²
were stripped by trees of mailcoats.⁴⁹³

*Drápa on Jarl
Hákon* 1

Skáldsk 68

⁴⁸³ *meinvinnendr Yngvifreys*: 'those doing harm to Freyr (god responsible for peace and good harvests?)', warriors.

⁴⁸⁴ *eyðendr*: 'destroying ones', seems to be an incomplete warrior kenning.

⁴⁸⁵ *sverðálfr*: 'elf, god of the sword', warrior.

⁴⁸⁶ *lagar stóð*: 'stud (of horses) of the sea', fleet.

⁴⁸⁷ Tindr Hallkelsson was uncle of the Icelandic poet Gunnlaugr orms tunga, and appears in *Landnámabók* and *Heiðarvíga saga*. *Fagrskinna* refers to a *drápa* he composed for Jarl Hákon, including an account of the battle against the Jómsvikings, to which the verses cited here presumably belong. 7½ further verses are preserved in *Jómsvikinga saga*.

⁴⁸⁸ *gims Gerðr*: 'Gerðr (goddess) of the fire', woman.

⁴⁸⁹ *herða bjúglimar*: 'bent boughs of shoulders', arms.

⁴⁹⁰ *Fjölfnis fúra gnýr*: 'clash of fires of Fjölfnir (Óðinn) (swords)', battle.

⁴⁹¹ *hringfár Hangi hrynserkr*: 'Hangi's (Óðinn's) resounding shirt', coat of mail; *hringfár* could mean 'with few rings', i.e. damaged, as the prose text suggests, or 'with shining rings'.

⁴⁹² *Róða rastar riðmarr*: 'rocking, swaying horse of the land of Róði (sea-king)', ship.

⁴⁹³ *brynju víðr*: 'tree of the mailcoat', warrior.

- [282] 140. Where on the shore the ring-shaped shirt of Sǫrli⁴⁹⁴ that the jarl wore was blasted apart; men's benchmate⁴⁹⁵ bore witness to it. *Jóms* (510) 82
Drápa on Jarl Hákon 3

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

The Jómsvikings had larger ships and ones that stood higher out of the water, but both sides fought very bravely. Vagn Ákason pushed so hard forward against Sveinn Hákonarson's ship that Sveinn [283] had them row astern and was on the point of fleeing. Then Jarl Eiríkr moved in their direction and forward into the line against Vagn. Then Vagn gave way astern, and the ships were now as they had lain to begin with. Then Eiríkr decided to go back to his force, and his men had now rowed astern, and Búi had severed the cables and was about to pursue the rout. Then Jarl Eiríkr came broadside on to Búi's ship,⁴⁹⁶ and then there took place the sharpest hand-to-hand fighting, now two or three of Eiríkr's ships came against Búi's one ship. Then bad weather started, and such a great storm that one hailstone weighed an *eyrir*.⁴⁹⁷ Then Sigvaldi cut the cables and turned his ship away and was going to flee. Vagn Ákason shouted to him telling him not to flee. Jarl Sigvaldi paid no attention to what he said. Then Vagn threw a spear at him and struck the man who was sitting at the helm. Jarl Sigvaldi rowed away with thirty-five ships, but twenty-five remained behind. Then Jarl Hákon laid his ship on one side of Búi. Then the blows rained down without ceasing on Búi's men. Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson took up a sharp-pointed anvil that was lying on the planks with which someone had previously been clinching the hilt on his sword. Vigfúss was a very strong man. He threw the anvil with both hands and brought it down on Áslákr hólmkalli's (Island-Crown's) head, so that its point stuck down into his brain. No other weapons had up to now penetrated Áslákr, but he had been striking [284] out on both sides. He was Búi's foster-son and one of his forecabin men. And another one was Hávarðr höggvandi (the Feller). He was the strongest of men and very brave.

⁴⁹⁴ *hringofinn Sǫrli serkr*: 'ring-woven shirt of Sǫrli (legendary warrior)', coat of mail.

⁴⁹⁵ *seggja sessi*: 'seat-mate of men', the jarl.

⁴⁹⁶ *síbyrt*: 'broadside on'. Cf. *Haralds saga hárfagra* ch. 11 (above), 'It was usual, when men were fighting on ships, to tie the ships together and fight across the prows', suggesting that the ships on each side were normally fastened together side by side, so that the opposing lines met prow to prow (see Foote and Wilson 1970, 282; Jesch 2001, 210). Here, Búi has broken away from his own line so that Jarl Eiríkr is able to go alongside him.

⁴⁹⁷ An *eyrir* was an ounce, i.e. about 27 g.

In this attack Eiríkr's men went up onto Búi's ship and aft to the poop to where Búi was. Then Þorsteinn miðlangr (Long-waist) struck at Búi across his forehead cutting through his visor. That made a very great wound. Búi struck at Þorsteinn into his side so that it cut the man in two in the middle. Then Búi picked up two chests full of gold and shouted out loudly:

'Overboard all Búi's men.'

Then Búi threw himself overboard with the chests, and many of his men then leapt overboard, though some fell on the ship, for it was no good suing for quarter. Then the whole of Búi's ship was cleared from stem to stern, and after that one ship after another. After that Jarl Eiríkr moved along to Vagn's ship, and there was very tough resistance there, but in the end their ship was cleared and Vagn taken captive and his thirty men and taken ashore bound. Then Þorkell leira went up and said this:

'You made this vow, Vagn, to kill me, but now it seems to me more likely that it is I who will kill you.'

Vagn and his men sat on a log all together. Þorkell had a great axe. He executed the one that was sitting at the end of the log. Vagn and his men were so bound that one rope was tied round the feet of all of them, but their hands were free. Then one of them said:

'I have a cloak-pin in my hand, and I shall stick it in the ground if I am at all conscious when my head is off.'

His head was cut off and the pin fell from his hand. Next there sat a handsome man with fine hair. He swept his hair forwards over his head and stretched his neck forwards and said:

'Don't get blood in my hair.'

A man took hold of the hair in his hands and held it tight. Þorkell swung the axe down. The viking jerked his head back hard. The one who was holding the hair was pulled forwards. The axe came down on both his arms and severed them, so that the axe ended up in the ground. Then Jarl Eiríkr came up [285] and asked:

'Who is this handsome man?'

'They call me Sigurðr,' he says, 'and I am the reputed son of Búi. Not all the Jómsvikings are dead yet.'

Eiríkr says: 'You must truly be the true son of Búi. Do you wish to have quarter?'

'It depends who is offering it,' says Sigurðr.

'He is offering it,' says the jarl, 'who has the power to grant it, Jarl Eiríkr.'

'Then I accept,' he says.

Then he was taken out of the rope. Then spoke Þorkell leira:

'Even if you want, jarl, to let all these men have quarter, I shall never let Vagn Ákason go alive.'

He then ran forward swinging his axe, but the viking Skarði propelled himself forwards onto his face from the rope and fell in front of Þorkell's feet. Þorkell fell flat over him. Then Vagn seized the axe. He swung it up and struck Þorkell a death-blow. Then said the jarl:

‘Vagn, will you accept quarter?’

‘I will,’ he says, ‘if we can all have it.’

‘Free them from the rope,’ says the jarl, and this was done. Eighteen had been killed, and twelve received quarter.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

Jarl Hákon and many men with him were sitting on a felled tree. Then a bowstring twanged on Búi's ship, and the arrow struck a landed man, Gizurr of Valdres. He was sitting next to the jarl and was dressed splendidly. Then men went out to the ship, and they found Hávarðr höggvandi standing on his knees out by the ship's side, because his feet were cut off. He had a bow in his hand. And when they came out to the ship, then Hávarðr asked:

‘Who was it fell off the log?’

They said that he was called Gizurr.

‘Then my luck was worse than I wanted.’

‘The luck was bad enough,’ they say, ‘and you shall not have any more tries.’

And they kill him. Then the dead were [286] searched and the goods taken for sharing out. Twenty-five of the Jómsvikings' ships had been cleared. So says Tindr:

141. The furnisher of food to Huginn's
flock⁴⁹⁸ left sword's edge traces⁴⁹⁹—
limbs the dog of the strap's sun⁵⁰⁰
savaged—on the host of Vinðr,
until the sword-damager⁵⁰¹ succeeded
in stripping five and twenty
long warships, laying
the levy⁵⁰² open to danger.

*Drápa on Hákon
jarl 4*

⁴⁹⁸ *Hugins ferðar verðbjóðr*: ‘offerer of food to Huginn's (one of Óðinn's ravens) company’, feeder of ravens, warrior.

⁴⁹⁹ *sverðs eggja spor*: ‘tracks of sword's blades’, wounds.

⁵⁰⁰ *seilar sólgagarr*: ‘dog of the sun of the (shield-)strap’, sword (which harms shields).

⁵⁰¹ *hjørmeiðir*: ‘one who does damage to swords (or with a sword)’, warrior.

⁵⁰² *leiðar lið*: men of the the *leiðangr*, a levy called out to serve in warfare. See *Hákonar saga góða* ch. 20 (above).

After that the army disperses. Jarl Hákon goes to Þrándheimr and was very displeased that Eiríkr had given Vagn Ákason quarter. It was rumoured that in this battle Jarl Hákon had made a sacrifice of his son Erlingr for victory, and after that the storm blew up, and then the casualties turned against the Jómsvikings. Jarl Eiríkr then went to Upplönd and so to his area of rule in the east, and Vagn Ákason went with him. Then Eiríkr gave Þorkell leira's daughter Ingibjörg to Vagn in marriage, and gave him a fine longship with all its tackle and provided him with a crew for it. They parted the best of friends. Then Vagn went back south to Danmörk and afterwards became a renowned person, and many great men are descended from him.

[287] CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

Haraldr grenski was king in Vestfold, as was written above. He married Guðbrandr kúla's (Bump's) daughter Ásta. One summer, when Haraldr grenski was going to the eastern Baltic raiding to get himself wealth, then he came in to Svíþjóð. At this time Óláfr sænski was king there. He was son of King Eiríkr in sigrsæli and Skoðglar-Tósti's daughter Sigríðr. Sigríðr was then a widow and owned many residences and large ones in Svíþjóð. And when she heard that her foster-brother Haraldr grenski had come in to land a short way away, she sent men to him and invited him to a banquet. He did not neglect going there and took a large troop of men. There was very good entertainment there. The king and the queen sat on a high-seat and both drank together in the evening, and all his men were supplied liberally. When the king retired in the evening, then there was a bed there hung with splendid hangings and spread with costly coverings. There were few people in that room. And when the king was undressed and lying down, then the queen came to him there and served him herself and enticed him hard to drink and was most agreeable. The king was pretty well drunk, indeed they both were. Then he fell asleep, and the queen then also went away to bed. Sigríðr was the wisest of women and prophetic about many things. The following morning there was the most plentiful banquet. And it happened at it, as is generally the case where men get rather heavily drunk, that the next day most men go easy with the drink. But the queen was merry, and they spoke together. She said that she valued no less the possessions [288] and rule she held in Svíþjóð than his kingdom and possessions in Norway. At this speech the king became unhappy and took it all rather coldly and got ready to leave and was very depressed, but the queen was most cheerful and sent him off with great gifts. Then in the autumn Haraldr went back to Norway, stayed at home during the winter and was not very cheerful. The following summer he went to the (eastern)

Baltic with his troops and then made for Svíþjóð and sent word to Queen Sigríðr saying that he wished to see her. She rode down to meet him and they talk together. He soon raises the matter of whether Sigríðr wanted to marry him. She says that he was talking nonsense and he was already so well married that he was by no means ill-matched. Haraldr says that Ásta is a good woman and noble.

‘But she is not as high-born as I am.’

Sigríðr says: ‘It may be that you are of greater descent than she. But I would have thought that with her you would now both be very happy.’

They exchanged few further words before the queen rode away. King Haraldr was then rather depressed. He prepared to ride up inland and see Queen Sigríðr again. Many of his men tried to dissuade him from doing so, but nevertheless he went with a large troop of men and came to the residence that the queen was mistress of. The same evening another king arrived there. He was called Vissavaldr from Garðaríki in the east. He went to ask for her in marriage. The kings were assigned with all their men to a large and ancient apartment. All the furniture of the apartment was in keeping. And there was plenty of drinking during the evening, so strong that everyone was completely drunk and the bodyguards and the watchmen outside fell asleep. Then Queen Sigríðr had an attack made on them during the night with [289] both fire and weapons. The apartment there burned and the people that were inside, but those who got out were killed. Sigríðr said that thus would she make petty kings stop going from other countries to ask to marry her. Afterwards she was known as Sigríðr in stórráða (of the Great Undertakings). The previous winter the Battle of the Jómsvikings had taken place.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

Hrani had stayed behind at the ships when Haraldr had gone up inland, with the troops that were left behind, to be in charge. And when they learned that Haraldr’s life had been taken, they went away as quickly as possible and back to Norway and told about these events. Hrani went to see Ásta and told her what had happened on their expedition and also what business Haraldr had gone to Queen Sigríðr on. Ásta immediately went to Upplönd to her father, when she had heard about all this, and he welcomed her, but they were both very angry about the plans that had been hatched in Svíþjóð, and also about the fact that Haraldr had planned to desert her. Ásta Guðbrandsdóttir gave birth to a boy child that summer. This boy was named Óláfr when he was sprinkled with water. It was Hrani who sprinkled him with water. This boy was brought up there to begin with, with Guðbrandr and his mother Ásta.

[290] CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

Jarl Hákon ruled Norway, all the western part along the coast, and had control of sixteen districts. But after Haraldr inn hárfagri had ordained that there should be a jarl in each district, it continued so for a long time afterwards. Jarl Hákon had sixteen jarls under him. So it says in *Vellekla*:

142. Where so do men know subject *Vellekla* 37
 sixteen jarls' dominions
 to one?⁵⁰³ This the earth-ruler's
 army⁵⁰⁴ must consider.
 The host-play of Heðinn's
 hair-parting fire⁵⁰⁵ of this
 shield's blaze speeder⁵⁰⁶ is celebrated
 to the sky's four corners.

While Jarl Hákon ruled over Norway, there were good harvests in the country and good peace within the country among the farmers. The jarl was popular with the farmers for the greater part of his life. But as time went on, it increasingly came about that he was unprincipled in his relations with women. This got so bad that the jarl had [291] rich men's daughters taken and brought back to him and he lay with them for one or two weeks, afterwards sending them home, and as a result he became very disliked by the women's kinsfolk and the farmers began to complain bitterly, as the *Prœndir* are accustomed to do about everything that displeases them.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

Jarl Hákon got to hear some rumour about a man being over the sea to the west who called himself Áli and that they had taken him as their king there, and the jarl suspected from the accounts of some men that it must be someone of the Norwegian royal family. He was told that Áli claimed to be Russian by origin, but the jarl had heard that Tryggvi Ólafsson had had a son who

⁵⁰³ The inference from this in the prose, that Hákon had sixteen jarls subject to him, seems over-literal; the verse may mean only that he ruled over enough land for sixteen (or any other large number) jarls.

⁵⁰⁴ *jarðbyggvis herr*: 'army (or men) of the land-settler, ruler'.

⁵⁰⁵ *Heðins reikar fúrs fólkleikr*: 'the play of the army of the fire of Heðinn's (legendary warrior's) parting', play of the sword, battle. *Heðins reikr* usually means 'head' in a kenning completed by a word meaning 'hat', with the sense 'helmet'; this element seems to be missing here. Finnur Jónsson emends *fólkleikr* to *faldleikr* to give the sense 'headdress of Heðinn's parting', helmet.

⁵⁰⁶ *lindar logskundaðr*: 'hastener of the fire of the shield (sword)', warrior.

had gone east to Garðaríki and been brought up there with King Valdimarr, and that he was called Óláfr. The jarl had also made many enquiries about this man and suspected that it must be the same person who had now come there to Vestrlönd. There is a man named Þórir klakka (Danger?), a great friend of Jarl Hákon, who had been a long time out raiding, but sometimes on merchant voyages, and was widely renowned for it. Jarl Hákon sent this man over the sea to the west, telling him to go on a trading voyage to Dublin, which now many people were doing, and enquire into who this man Áli was, but if he discovers for certain that it was Óláfr Tryggvason or some other of the Norwegian royal family, then Þórir was to bring about some treachery against him if he could.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

After that Þórir went west to Ireland to Dublin and enquired there about Áli. He was there with his brother-in-law King Óláfr kváran. After this Þórir got into conversation with [292] Áli. Þórir was a clever talker. And when they had been talking for a very long time, then Áli began to ask about Norway, first of all about the kings of the Upplanders and which of them were then alive and what rule they had. He also asked about Jarl Hákon, what his popularity was like in the country. Þórir says:

‘The jarl is such a powerful man that no one dares to say anything else but what he wishes, and the reason for that is that there is nowhere else to go. But to tell you the truth, I know the minds of many noble people and also of the commoners, that they would much prefer it and welcome it if some king came to power there of the line of Haraldr inn hárfagri, but we can see no one available, and that is mostly because it has now been shown that it does not pay to fight against Jarl Hákon.’

And when they had spoken of this often, then Óláfr reveals to Þórir his name and descent and asks him for some advice as to what he thinks, if Óláfr goes to Norway, whether he supposes the farmers would be willing to receive him as king. Þórir urged him fervently to this undertaking, and praised him and his abilities greatly. Óláfr now became very eager to visit his patrimony. Óláfr then sails from the west with five ships, first of all to the Hebrides. Þórir went along with him there. After that he sailed to Orkney. Jarl Sigurðr Hlǫðvisson was then lying in Rognvaldsey in Ásmundarvágr with one longship and was about to go across to Katanes. Then Óláfr sailed his force from the west to the islands and sailed into harbour there, because it was not possible to cross Pétlandsfjörðr. And when the king realised that the jarl was lying right there, he had the jarl called to talk with him. And when the jarl came to talk with the king, then they had said very little before

the king says that the jarl must have himself baptised and all the people of his country, or otherwise he should die there on the spot, and the king said he would go with fire and burning over the islands and devastate the country unless the people became Christian. And [293] in the position the jarl now found himself in, he chose to accept baptism. He was then baptised and all the people that were with him there. After that the jarl swore oaths to the king and became his man, giving him as hostage his son who was called Hvelpr or Hundi, and Óláfr took him with him to Norway. Óláfr then sails eastwards across the sea and came in to land at Morstr, making his first landing in Norway there and having a mass sung there in his land-tent. And afterwards in that same place a church was built. Þórir klakka tells the king that the only thing for him to do was not to make it known who he was, and to let no information precede him and to go as fast as he could to find the jarl, and take him by surprise. King Óláfr does so, going north, travelling night and day whenever there was a fair wind, and keeping the people of the country ignorant of his journey, as to who it was going there. And when he came north to Agðanes, then he learned that Jarl Hákon is inside the fiord and also that he was in disagreement with the farmers. And when Þórir heard this said, then things were very different from what he expected, for after the Battle of the Jómsvikings everyone in Norway had been wholehearted supporters of Jarl Hákon because of the victory that he had won and his freeing the whole country of warfare. But now it had turned out badly, in that a great leader is come into the country, and the farmers were at odds with the jarl.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

Jarl Hákon was at a banquet in Gaulardalr at Meðalhús, and his ship was lying out off Vigg. There is a man called Ormr lyrgja (Loafer), a rich farmer. He lived at Býnes. He had a wife whose name is Guðrún, daughter of Bergþórr of [294] Lundar. She was known as Lundasól (Sun of Lundar). She was a most handsome woman. The jarl sent his slaves to Ormr with his orders to bring Ormr's wife Guðrún to the jarl. The slaves delivered their message. Ormr told them first to come and have supper. But before the slaves had finished eating, there had come to Ormr's many men from the district, to whom he had sent word. Now Ormr said there was no chance that Guðrún would go with the slaves. Guðrún spoke, telling the slaves to tell the jarl that she would not come to him unless he sent Þóra of Rimull for her. She was a rich lady and one of the jarl's mistresses. The slaves say that the next time they came the farmer and his lady would soon regret this, and made many threats and after that went away. But Ormr sent out a war-summons in all

directions round the district and with the summons sent to say that everyone was to go armed against Jarl Hákon and slay him, and sent to Halldórr at Skerðingssteðja, and Halldórr immediately sent out a war-summons. Shortly before the jarl had taken the wife of a man called Brynjólfr, and that action was very much disliked, and then it had come close to an armed uprising. After the war-summons a mob of people rose up and made for Meðalhús. But the jarl received information and went from the farm with his troop and into a deep valley which now since then has come to be called Jarlsdalr (Jarl's Valley), and they hid there. The next day the jarl got information about the army of farmers from all over. The farmers [295] went along all the paths and thought it likeliest that the jarl would have gone to his ships, and his son Erlendr, a most promising man, was then in charge of the ships. And when night came, the jarl dispersed his troops and told them to make their way by forest tracks out to Orkadalr.

'No one will do you any harm if I am nowhere near. Give word to Erlendr that he is to go out along the fiord, and we shall meet in Mœrr. I shall easily be able to conceal myself from the farmers.'

Then the jarl went, taking one of his slaves with him, who was called Karkr. There was ice on the Gaul, and the jarl shoved his horse into it, and he left his mantle behind there, but they went into a cave which has since been known as Jarlshellir (Jarl's Cave). Then they fell asleep, but when Karkr awoke, then he told his dream, that a dark and evil-looking man went past the cave, and he was afraid that he might come in, but the man told him that Ulli was dead. The jarl says that Erlendr must have been killed. Þormóðr karkr (Thick-Skin?) fell asleep again a second time, and was restless in his sleep. And when he wakes up, he tells his dream, that he saw that same man go back down and told him to tell the jarl that now all escape routes were closed. Karkr told the jarl his dream. He suspected that this must presage the shortness of his life. After that he got up and they went to the farm of Rimull. Then the jarl sent Karkr to see Þóra, asking her to come to him secretly. She did so and welcomed the jarl. The jarl asked her to hide him for a matter of a few nights, until the farmers broke up their gathering.

'You will be searched for here,' she says, 'around my farm, both outside and inside, for many people know that I will be eager to help you as far as I can. There is but one place on my farm where I would never think of looking for a man like you. That is in a sort of pigsty.'

They went to it. The jarl said:

'Here we shall fix ourselves up. The main thing now is preservation of life.'

[296] Then the slave dug a great pit there and took the earth away. After that he put pieces of wood over it. Þóra told the jarl the news that Óláfr Tryggvason had come into the fiord and he had killed his son Erlendr. After

that the jarl went into the pit, and Karkr as well, and Þóra covered it over with wood and scraped earth over it and dung and drove the pigs over it. This pigsty was just below a great stone.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

Óláfr Tryggvason had sailed into the fiord with five longships, and Jarl Hákon's son Erlendr rowed out against them there with three ships. And when the ships drew close, then Erlendr and his men became suspicious that it might be a hostile force, and they turn towards the shore. And when Óláfr saw the longships sailing down the fiord and rowing towards him, then he thought that it might be Jarl Hákon there, and told them to row after them as hard as they could. And when Erlendr and his men were nearly come to the shore, they rowed into shallows and immediately leapt overboard and made for the shore. Then Óláfr's ship glided up. Óláfr saw where an exceedingly handsome man was swimming. Óláfr grasped the tiller and threw it at the man, and the blow struck the jarl's son Erlendr on the head, so that the skull was shattered to the brain. There Erlendr lost his life. Óláfr and his men killed many men there, but some got away by flight, some they captured and gave quarter to and got news from them. Óláfr was then told that the farmers had driven Jarl Hákon away and he was a fugitive from them and all his troops had dispersed. Then farmers come to see Óláfr, and each side is happy to see the other and they immediately unite together. [297] The farmers take him as king over themselves, and they all adopt the same plan, to search for Jarl Hákon and go up into Gaulardalr, and they assume it is most likely that the jarl would be at Rimull if he was anywhere among the farms, since Þóra was his closest friend there in that valley. They go there and search for the jarl outside and inside and do not find him. And then Óláfr held a council with his men out in the farmyard. He stood up on the great stone that stood there by the pigsty. Then Óláfr spoke, and part of what he said was that he would enrich with both wealth and honour the man who became the death of Jarl Hákon. The jarl and Karkr heard this speech. They had a light with them. The jarl spoke:

‘Why are you so pale, and sometimes dark as earth? Is it not that you are going to betray me?’

‘No,’ says Karkr.

‘We were born on the same night,’ says the jarl. ‘There will also be a short time between our deaths.’

Then King Óláfr went away, when evening came. And when night came, then the jarl kept watch over his own safety, but Karkr fell asleep and was restless. Then the jarl woke him and asked what he had dreamed. He says:

‘I was just now at Hlaðir, and Óláfr Tryggvason placed a golden necklace on my neck.’

The jarl replies: ‘That is, Óláfr will put a blood-red ring around your neck, if you meet him. So beware. But by me you will be well treated, as you have been in the past, so don’t betray me.’

After that they both stayed awake, as if each were watching over the other. But towards dawn the jarl fell asleep, and he got restless, and this became so severe that the jarl pushed down with his heels and the back of his head, as if he were wanting to get up, and he made loud and horrible noises. But Karkr was afraid and panic-stricken and snatched a great knife from his belt and stabbed it through the jarl’s windpipe and severed it. That was the death of Jarl Hákon. After that Karkr cut off the jarl’s head and ran away and arrived later in the day in at Hlaðir and brought the jarl’s head to King Óláfr. [298] He also then described the events of the travels of Jarl Hákon and himself, as has just been written above. Then King Óláfr had him taken away and his head cut off.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Then King Óláfr and a large number of farmers with him went out to Niðarhólmr, taking with him the heads of Jarl Hákon and Karkr. This little island was at that time used for executing thieves and criminals on, and a gallows stood there, and he had the heads of Jarl Hákon and Karkr taken there. Then the whole army went there and shouted out and threw stones at it, saying that there should a villain go with other villains. Afterwards they got people to go up into Gaulardalr and get the body and dragged it away and burned it. There was here such strength in the antipathy that the Þrendir felt towards Jarl Hákon, that no one could refer to him by any other name than ‘jarl inn illi’ (‘the evil jarl’). This appellation was used long afterwards. But it is true to say about Jarl Hákon, that he had many of the qualities requisite for a ruler, first of all a fine pedigree, and along with that wisdom and cleverness in managing his rule, boldness in battle and in addition the good fortune to be able to win victory and kill his enemies. So says Þorleifr Rauðfeldarson:⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁷ Þorleifr jarlsskáld, son of Ásgeirr rauðfeldr (Red-Cloak), was an Icelandic poet of the tenth century mentioned in *Svarfdæla saga* and the hero of *Þorleifs þátr jarlsskálds* in *Flateyjarbók*, in which he composes a *níð* ‘slander’ poem against Jarl Hákon. In the *þátr* he is also said to have composed a *drápa* for King Sveinn tjúguskegg of Denmark. The verse quoted here, and another half-stanza found in the Third and Fourth Grammatical Treatises, seem to be from a poem in honour of the jarl.

143. We know no greater jarl *Hákonardrápa* 1
 beneath the moon's pathway,⁵⁰⁸
 Hókon, than you; bush of army-goddess,⁵⁰⁹
 you prospered through battle.
 [299] You have ushered to Óðinn—
 the offered corpses ravens feed on—
 nine royal men; this, ruler,
 rendered your lands extensive.

Jarl Hákon was the most generous of men, but this kind of ruler experienced the greatest misfortune until his dying day. And the chief cause of it happening like this was, that then the time had come for heathen worship and heathen worshippers to be condemned, and be replaced by the holy Faith and proper morals.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

Óláfr Tryggvason was taken as king over the whole land, as widely as Haraldr inn hárfagri had ruled, at a general assembly in Prándheimr. Then the mob and multitude rose up and would hear of nothing else but that Óláfr Tryggvason should be king. Óláfr then travelled throughout the whole country and subjected it. Everyone in Norway turned to obedience to him, even the rulers in Upplönd and in the Vík, who had previously held land from the king of the Danes, they became King Óláfr's men and held land from him. Thus he travelled over the country the first winter and the following summer. Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson and his brother Sveinn and their other kinsmen and friends fled the country and made eastwards to Sweden to King Óláfr inn sönski and were welcomed there. So says Þórðr Kolbeinsson:

- [300] 144. Fate causes much, increaser *Belgskakadrápa* 2
 of criminals' suffering;⁵¹⁰ *Fsk* 140
 men's treachery, a little *ÓTM* I 244
 later, brought death to Hókon.
 And to the land the bold lance's
 land-prop⁵¹¹ had vanquished,
 eastwards with the army
 advanced the son of Tryggvi.

⁵⁰⁸ *mána ferill*: 'path of the moon', sky.

⁵⁰⁹ *folk-Ránar runnr*: 'bush, tree of the Rán (goddess) of the army or battle (valkyrie)', warrior.

⁵¹⁰ *varga meinremmir*: 'strengthened of harm of outlaws', just ruler.

⁵¹¹ *lindar láðstafr*: 'prop of the ground of the (limewood) spear (shield)', warrior.

145. More in his mind than he *Belgskakadrápa 3*
 made known had Eiríkr, *Fsk 140–41*
 schemes for the wealth-spoiler;⁵¹² *ÓTM I 254*
 such was of him expected.
 Angry, the jarl of Trondheim— *3GT 28, 108*
 no one opposing it—
 sought the Swedish king's counsel;
 stubborn were the Þrændir.

[301] CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

There is a man called Loðinn, from Vík, wealthy and of good family. He frequently went on trading voyages, but sometimes went raiding. It was one summer that Loðinn went on a trading voyage to the eastern Baltic. He had one ship which also carried a good deal of goods for trading. He made for Eistland and spent the summer there at a market. And while the market went on, many kinds of merchandise were brought there. Many slave-women were brought there for sale. Loðinn saw there a certain woman who had been sold as a slave. And when he looked at the woman, he recognised that it was Ástríðr Eiríksdóttir, who had been married to King Tryggvi, and yet she looked different from the last time he had seen her. She was now pale and thin-faced and poorly dressed. He went up to her and asked what her situation was. She says:

‘It is painful to speak of it. I have been sold as a slave, and brought here for sale.’

Then they recognised each other, and Ástríðr knew who he was. After that she asked if he would buy her and take her back with him to her kinsfolk.

‘I will offer you terms for that,’ he says. ‘I will take you to Norway if you will marry me.’

And since Ástríðr was now in a desperate situation, and since she also knew that he was of noble ancestry, valiant and wealthy, so she promises him this for her redemption. After this Loðinn bought Ástríðr and took her back with him to Norway and married her there with the consent of kinsmen. Their children were Þorkell nefja and Ingiríðr, Ingigerðr. The daughters of Ástríðr and King Tryggvi were Ingibjörg and [302] Ástríðr. The sons of Eiríkr Bjóðaskalli were Sigurðr, Karlshöfuð, Jósteinn and Þorkell dyrðill (Hanger-On) and they were all distinguished men and wealthy and resided in the east of the country. Two brothers lived east in Vík, one was called Þorgeirr and the other Hyrningr. They married the daughters of Loðinn and Ástríðr.

⁵¹² *auðs særir*: ‘harmer of wealth’, generous lord.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

King Haraldr Gormsson of the Danes, when he had received Christianity, then he sent an order throughout all his kingdom that all people should have themselves baptised and turn to the true faith. He accompanied the order himself and used force and punishment where nothing else would work. He sent two jarls to Norway with a great force, who were called . . .⁵¹³ They were to preach Christianity in Norway. This was successful in the Vík, where King Haraldr's rule prevailed, and then many of the people of the country were baptised. But after Haraldr's death, then his son Sveinn tjúguskegg soon went raiding, both in Saxland and Fríslanð and eventually to England. And the people in Norway who had received Christianity, they then turned back to the heathen rituals they had practised before, the same as those practised by people in the north of the country. But when Óláfr Tryggvason had become king in Norway, then he stayed for a large part of the summer in the Vík. Many of his kinsmen came to him there, and some of his relations by marriage, and there were many who had been good friends with his father, and he was [303] welcomed there with very great warmth. Then Óláfr called to speak with him his mother's brothers, his stepfather Loðinn, his brothers-in-law Þorgeirr and Hyrningr, then put before them with the greatest earnestness the proposal that they themselves should back him and then support him with all their might in his desire to establish the preaching of Christianity all over his kingdom, saying that he shall achieve the Christianisation of everywhere in Norway or die in the attempt.

'I shall make you all great and powerful men, for I trust you best on account of our kinship or other ties.'

They all agreed to this, to do as he asked and to support him in everything he wanted to do, together with everyone who was willing to follow their lead. King Óláfr immediately announced to the public that he intends to preach Christianity to everyone in his kingdom. The first to agree to accept this proposal were those who had already assented. These were also the most powerful of the people who were then present, and all others followed their example. Then everyone round the Vík to the east was baptised. Then the king went north in the Vík and instructed everyone to receive Christianity, and to those who objected he dealt out heavy punishments, killing some, having some maimed, some he drove from the country. So it came about that all over the kingdom that his father King Tryggvi had earlier ruled, and also that which his kinsman Haraldr grenski had had, all the people accepted

⁵¹³ In the main manuscript a space is left for the names. In *Jómsvíkinga saga* the two jarls are said to be sent by the emperor Otto, and are given the names Urguþrjótr and Brimiskjarr (*Jóms* (291), 85); Snorri may have doubted the correctness of these forms.

Christianity as Óláfr preached it, and that summer and the following winter everywhere round the Vík became fully Christian.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

Early in the spring King Óláfr went out into the Vík and took a great force, going then north to Agðir. And everywhere that he held assemblies with the farmers, he commanded everyone to be baptised, and people accepted Christianity, for [304] no rebellion by the farmers against the king had any success, and the people were baptised wherever he went. The people in Hǫrðaland who were descended from the line of Hǫrða-Kári were numerous and of high rank. He had had four sons. One was Þorleifr spaki, the second Qgmundr, father of Þórólfr skjálgr (Squint-Eyed), father of Erlingr of Sóli, the third was Þórðr, father of Hersir Klyppr, who killed Sigurðr slefa Gunnhildarson, the fourth Qlmóðr, father of Áskell, father of Áslákr Fitjaskalli (Bald-Head of Fitjar). This family was at that time the greatest and noblest in Hǫrðaland. But when these kinsmen heard about this problem, that the king was travelling round the coast from the east and had a large force and was breaking the people's ancient laws, while all those who objected had to face punishments and harsh terms, these kinsmen arranged a meeting between themselves and are going to make plans for themselves, for they know that the king will soon come to see them, and they agree together that they shall all come with large followings to Gulaping and fix a meeting with King Óláfr Tryggvason.

[305] CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

King Óláfr summoned a meeting when he got to Rogaland. But when the summons came to the farmers, they gather together in large numbers fully armed. And when they meet, they have discussions and make plans and appoint three men, those who were the best speakers in their company, to reply to King Óláfr at the assembly and speak in opposition to him, and to add that they will not subject themselves to wrongful laws even if they are introduced by the king. But when the farmers come to the assembly and the assembly was in session, then King Óláfr stood up and at first spoke kindly to the farmers. Yet it was apparent from what he said that he is determined that they shall accept Christianity, inviting them to do so with fair words, but finally adding for the benefit of those who objected and would not accede to his request, that they would have to face anger and punishments and harsh terms from him wherever he was able to bring it about. And when he ended his speech, then stood up that one of the farmers who was an especially good speaker and had been appointed the first who was to

answer King Óláfr. But when he tried to begin his speech, he was attacked by such great coughing and difficulty in breathing that he could not get a word out, and he sits down. Then another farmer stands up, and this one is determined not to let the answers fail to be presented, though the previous man had not altogether succeeded. But when this one begins to speak, he had such a stammer that he could not get a word out. Then everyone who was listening began to laugh. Then the farmer sat down. Then a third stood up and tries to speak in opposition to King Óláfr. And when this one began to speak, he was so husky and hoarse that no one could hear what he said, and he sat down. Then there was none of the farmers ready to speak against the king. But when the farmers could get no one to answer the king, then their uprising in opposition to the king came to nothing. So it came about that everyone [306] agreed to what the king proposed. Then all the people present at the assembly were baptised before the king was finished there.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

King Óláfr took his force to Gulapíng, because the farmers have sent him word that they wish to reply to his proposal. And when both sides are come to the assembly, then the king wishes first to have his discussion with the leading men of the land. And when they have all met together, then the king puts forward his proposal and invites them to receive baptism in accordance with his demand. Then says Qlmóðr inn gamli (the Old):

‘We kinsmen have discussed this matter between ourselves, and we shall all adopt the same counsel. If it be the case, king, that you are planning to compel us kinsmen to do this, to break our laws and force us to submit to you with some kind of compulsion, we shall stand against you with all our might, and let them gain victory to whom it is granted by fate. But if you, king, would like to make some advantageous offer to us kinsmen, then you could make it so attractive that we would all submit to you with complete obedience.’

The king says: ‘What do you want to request of me, so that the best possible agreement may be between us?’

Then Qlmóðr says: ‘First of all this, if you will give your sister Ástríðr in marriage to our kinsman Erlingr Skjálgsson, whom we consider to be the most promising of all the young men in Norway.’

King Óláfr says that he thinks it likely that this match would turn out well, saying that Erlingr is of good family and to all appearances the most promising person, and yet he says it is for Ástríðr to respond to this proposal. After that the king discussed this with his sister.

‘I am benefitting little,’ she says, ‘from being daughter of a king and sister of a king if I must be given to a man of low birth. I will rather wait a few years for another match.’

And they end their discussion for the time being.

[307] CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

King Óláfr had a hawk taken that belonged to Ástríðr, and had all its feathers plucked off, and afterwards sent it to her. Then Ástríðr said:

‘Now my brother is angry.’

Then she got up and went to the king. He welcomed her. Then Ástríðr spoke, saying that she wishes the king to arrange whatever match he wishes for her.

‘I would have thought,’ says the king, ‘that I would be getting the power to make anyone I want in this country noble.’

Then the king had Qlmóðr and Erlingr and all the kinsmen called to him for a discussion. Then this proposal was discussed. The end of it was that Ástríðr was betrothed to Erlingr. After that the king had the assembly instituted and proposed Christianity to the farmers. Now Qlmóðr and Erlingr were the principals in supporting this proposal of the king’s, together with all their kinsmen. No one had the confidence to oppose it. Then all the people were baptised and made Christian.

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

Erlingr Skjálǫsson held his wedding in the summer, and a very large number of people was present. King Óláfr was there. Then the king offered to give Erlingr a jarldom. Erlingr spoke thus:

‘My kinsmen have been *hersar*. I do not wish to have a higher title than they. What I will accept, king, from you, is that you make me the greatest with that title in this country.’

The king agreed to that with him. And at their parting King Óláfr gave his brother-in-law Erlingr from Sognsær in the north and east to Líðandisnes on the same terms as Haraldr inn hárfagri had given it to his sons and are written above.⁵¹⁴

[308] CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

That same autumn King Óláfr called an assembly of four districts north on Staðr at Dragseið. To it were to come Sygnir and Firðir, Sunnmærir and

⁵¹⁴ *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* ch. 33.

Raumdælir. King Óláfr went there with a very large number of men whom he had brought from the east of the country and also the troops that had then joined him in Rogaland and Hǫrðaland. And when King Óláfr came to the assembly there, then he preached Christianity there as in other places. And because the king had there a great force of numerous men, they were afraid of it. And at the conclusion of this business the king offered them two alternatives, either that they should accept Christianity and have themselves baptised, or otherwise that they should join in battle with him. But as the farmers realised that they had not the resources to fight with the king, the other course was adopted, that all the people became Christian. So then King Óláfr goes with his force to Norð-Mœrr and he makes that district Christian. After that he sails in to Hlaðir and has the temple knocked down and all the wealth taken away, and all the finery from the temple and off the idol of the god. He took off the temple door a great gold ring that Jarl Hákon had had made. After that King Óláfr had the temple burned. But when the farmers find out about this, then they have a war summons sent round all districts and summon an army out, intending to go against the king. King Óláfr then took his force out along the fiord and then makes his way north along the coast and is intending to go north to Hálogaland and bring Christianity there. But when he came north to Bjarnaurar, then he heard from Hálogaland that they have an army out there and are planning to defend the country [309] against the king. The leaders of the force there are Hárekr from Þjótta and Þórir hjótrr from Vágar, Eyvindr kinnrifa (Torn Cheek). And when King Óláfr hears this, then he alters his course and sails south along the coast. And when he came south round Staðr, then he travelled much more leisurely, and yet at the beginning of winter had come all the way east to the Vík.

CHAPTER SIXTY

Queen Sigríðr in Svíþjóð, who was known as in stórráða, was staying at her residences. That winter men passed between King Óláfr and Queen Sigríðr, and by them King Óláfr made his proposal to Queen Sigríðr, and she received it favourably, and this arrangement was confirmed by special agreement. Then King Óláfr sent Queen Sigríðr the great gold ring that he had taken from the temple door at Hlaðir, and it was considered an unparalleled treasure. A meeting was to be arranged for this business the following spring at the River Elfr on the border. And while this ring that King Óláfr had sent Queen Sigríðr was being so much praised by everyone, there were staying with the queen her goldsmiths, two brothers. And when they picked up the ring and weighed it in their hands and spoke privately together, then the queen

had them called to her and asks what joke they were making about the ring. They pretended they weren't. She says that they must whatever the case let her know what fault they have found in it. They say that the ring was false. After that she has the ring broken open, and there was found brass inside. Then the queen got angry and says that Óláfr must be deceiving her in other things besides just this.

[310] That same winter King Óláfr went up into Hringaríki and brought Christianity there. Ásta Guðbrandsdóttir, soon after the fall of Haraldr grenski, had given herself in marriage to a man called Sigurðr sýr (Pig). He was king in Hringaríki. Sigurðr was son of Hálfðan, while he was son of Sigurðr hrísi, son of Haraldr inn hárfagri. At this time her and Haraldr grenski's son Óláfr was living there with Ásta. He was brought up in his youth with his stepfather Sigurðr sýr. And when King Óláfr Tryggvason came to Hringaríki to preach Christianity, then Sigurðr sýr and his wife Ásta and her son Óláfr had themselves baptised, and Óláfr Tryggvason acted as godfather to Óláfr Haraldsson. He was then three years old. Then King Óláfr went again out into the Vík and stayed there during the winter. This was his third winter as king over Norway.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

Early in the spring King Óláfr went east to Konungahella for a meeting with Queen Sigríðr. And when they met, then they discussed the business that had been spoken of in the winter, that they should be married, and this business all seemed to be going well. Then King Óláfr said that Sigríðr should receive baptism and the true faith. She spoke as follows:

'I shall not abandon the faith that I have previously held, as have my kinsmen before me. I shall also make no objection to your believing in whatever god you like.'

Then King Óláfr got very angry and spoke hastily:

'Why would I want to marry you, heathen as a dog as you are?'

And he struck her in the face with his glove which he had in his hand. Then he got up, and she also. Then spoke Sigríðr:

'That could well cost you your life.'

After that they parted. The king went north into the Vík, and the queen east into Sweden.

[311] CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

Then King Óláfr went to Túnsberg and then held a further assembly there and spoke at the assembly, saying that everyone who was known for practising spells and witchcraft, or who was a sorcerer, and was found guilty of it, must

all leave the country. After that the king had searches made for these people in the districts nearby there, and summoned them all to him. And when they came there, there was one man among them whose name is Eyvindr kelda (Bog). He was grandson of Rǫgnvaldr réttillbeini, son of Haraldr hárfagri. Eyvindr was a sorcerer and very much skilled in witchcraft. King Óláfr had all these people put into an apartment and had it well furnished, had a banquet provided for them and strong drink given them. And when they had got drunk, Óláfr had the building set fire to, and the apartment was burned and all the people who were in it, except that Eyvindr kelda got out through an opening in the roof and so got away. And when he had got a long way off, he met some people in his path who were intending to go to the king, and bade them tell the king that Eyvindr kelda had got away from the fire and that he would never again come into King Óláfr's power, but he would carry on in the same way as he had done before as regards all his magical skills. And when these people came and met King Óláfr, they report about Eyvindr as he had instructed them. The king was displeased that Eyvindr was not dead.

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

Then King Óláfr went, when spring came, out along the coast of the Vík and received banquets at his large estates and sent a summons all round the Vík that he wants to take a force out in the summer and go [312] to the north of the country. After that he went north to Agðir. And towards the end of Lent he made his way north to Rogaland and arrived on Easter-eve on Qgvaldsnes in Kǫrmt. There an Easter banquet had been prepared for him. He had nearly three hundred men. That same night Eyvindr kelda came there to the island. He had a fully-manned longship. They were all sorcerers and other people skilled in magic. Eyvindr went ashore from the ship and his troop and they started working their spells. Eyvindr made them a covering of invisibility and foggy darkness so great that the king and his troop would not be able to see them. And when they came almost up to the residence on Qgvaldsnes, then it became bright daylight. Then it turned out very differently from what Eyvindr had planned. The dense fog that he had caused by magic now affected him and his company so that they could not see with their eyes any more than through the backs of their heads, and they just kept going round and round. But the king's watchmen saw them, where they were going, and did not know what troop it was. Then the king was told. Then he got up with all his troop and got dressed. And when the king saw where Eyvindr and his men were walking, he told his men to arm themselves and go up and find out what people they were. And when the king's men recognised Eyvindr

there, they took him and all the rest prisoner and led them to the king. Then Eyvindr tells everything that has happened on his expedition. After that the king had them all taken and conveyed to a reef covered at high water and tied up there. So Eyvindr lost his life, together with all the others. That has since been called Sorcerers' Skerry.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

It is said that when King Óláfr was at the banquet on Qgvaldsnes, an old man, a clever talker with a hood hanging down over his face, came there one evening. He was one-eyed. This man could tell about all lands. He got [313] into conversation with the king. The king found his conversation very entertaining and asked him many things, and the guest was able to answer all his questions, and the king sat up late into the evening. Then the king asked whether he knew who the Qgvaldr had been that the ness and the farm were named after. The guest says that Qgvaldr had been a king and a great warrior, and used to worship mostly a cow, taking it with him wherever he went, and he always used to think it wholesome to drink its milk.

'King Qgvaldr fought against a king called Varinn. In the battle King Qgvaldr fell. He was buried in a mound a little way from the farm and memorial stones were set up that are still standing here. And in another place not far from here the cow was buried in a mound.'

He also told similar things and many others about kings or other events of long ago. And when they had been sitting long into the night, then the bishop reminded the king that it was time to go to sleep. The king then did so. And when he was undressed and was lying in bed, then the guest sat on the footboard and went on talking with the king for a long time further. The king still wanted to hear more, whatever was said. Then the bishop spoke to the king, saying that it was time to go to sleep. Then the king did so, and the guest went out. A little later the king awoke and asked about the guest and asked for him to be called to him, but the guest could not then be found anywhere. The next morning the king had the cook called to him, and the man that looked after the drink, and asked whether any stranger had been to see them. They say that when they were about to prepare the food, some man had come there and said that they were cooking surprisingly poor meat [314] for the king's table. Afterwards he had given them two thick and fat sides of beef, and they had cooked them with the other meat. Then the king says that all that food must be thrown away, saying that it could not have been any man and it must have been Óðinn, whom heathen people had long believed in, and said that Óðinn must not now be allowed to do anything to deceive them.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

In the summer King Óláfr assembled a great force from the east of the country and took this force north to Prándheimr and made first of all for Niðaróss. After that he had a summons to an assembly sent all round the fiord and announced an eight-district assembly at Frosta, but the farmers changed the assembly summons into a call to arms and called out both free men and bondmen all over Prándheimr. And when the king came to the assembly, then the mob of farmers was come there fully armed. And when the assembly was set up, then the king spoke to the people and asked them to accept Christianity. But when he had been talking a little while, then the farmers shouted out and told him to shut up, saying that otherwise they would make an attack on him and drive him away.

‘We did this,’ they said, ‘to Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri when he made the same request of us, and we pay no more regard to you than to him.’

‘And when King Óláfr saw the frenzy of the farmers, and also that they had such a great army that it could not be withstood, then he changed his tack and turned to agreement with the farmers, saying this:

‘I want us to agree together, as we have previously settled things between us. I want to go to where you hold your greatest worship and see your practices there. Then we shall hold discussions about the practices, which ones we want to have, and then all come to an agreement about it.’

[315] And when the king spoke mildly to the farmers, then their attitude softened, and afterwards the whole talk went pleasantly and in a conciliatory fashion, and it was decided in the end that there should be a midsummer festival in at Mærin, and all the leaders and rich farmers would attend, as the custom was. King Óláfr would also be there.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

Skeggi was the name of a rich farmer. He was known as Járn-Skeggi (Iron-Skeggi). He lived at Upphaugr in Yrjar. Skeggi had spoken first at the assembly against King Óláfr and was the foremost of the farmers in opposing Christianity. They broke up the assembly on these terms. Then the farmers went home and the king to Hlaðir.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

King Óláfr was lying with his ships in the Nið, and had thirty ships and a fine and large force, but the king himself was frequently at Hlaðir with his personal following. And when it was coming very close to the time for holding the festival in at Mærin, then King Óláfr prepared a great banquet at Hlaðir,

sending summonses in to Strind and up into Gaulardalr and out to Orkadalr and inviting to him leading men and other important farmers. And when the banquet was ready and the guests had arrived, then the first evening there was a splendid feast there, and served very liberally. People got very drunk. But the following night everyone slept peacefully there. The next morning, when the king was dressed, he had the divine service sung for himself, and when the Mass was finished, the king had a trumpet-call sounded for a household council. Then all his men left their ships and went to the meeting. And when the meeting [316] was in session, the king stood up and spoke, saying this:

‘We had an assembly in at Frosta. I then proposed to the farmers that they should have themselves baptised, but they in turn proposed to me that I should turn to heathen sacrifice with them, as King Hákon Aðalsteinsfóstri had done. Agreement was reached between us that we should meet in at Mærin and there hold a great festival. But if I must turn to heathen sacrifices with you, then I will have the greatest sacrifice that is known made, and offer men in sacrifice. I do not want to choose for this slaves or evil-doers. For this I shall choose to offer the gods the most distinguished people. I am naming for this Ormr lygra (Bright) of Meðalhús, Styrkár of Gimsar, Kárr of Grýtingr, Ásbjörn, Þorbergr of Ornes, Ormr of Lyxa, Halldórr of Skerðingsteðja.’

And in addition he named another five of those who were most distinguished, saying that he wanted to offer these as a sacrifice for prosperity and peace, and immediately launched an attack on them. But when the farmers saw that they did not have sufficient forces to withstand the king, they beg for quarter and put all their future at the king’s disposal. It was then agreed between them that all the farmers who had come there should have themselves baptised and swear oaths to the king to keep to the true faith, and give up all heathen ritual. The king then kept all these men as his guests right on until they had handed over their sons or brothers or other close kinsmen as hostages to the king.

[317] CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT

King Óláfr went with his whole force in to Þrándheimr. And when he came in to Mærin, all the leaders of the Þrændir who were most opposed to Christianity had arrived there, and had there with them all the important farmers who in the past had maintained heathen worship in that place. There was then a large number there, similar to what had before been at the Frostuþing. Then the king had an assembly proposed, and both sides went to this assembly fully armed. And when the assembly was set up, then the king spoke, preaching Christianity to the people. Járnскеggi replied to the king’s proposal on behalf of the farmers. He says that the farmers wanted the same as before, that the king should not break their laws.

‘We desire, king,’ he says, ‘that you should offer sacrifices, as other kings have done here before you.’

At his speech the farmers applauded loudly, saying that they wanted to have everything as Skeggi said. Then the king says that he wants to go into the temple and see their rituals when they offer sacrifice. The farmers were pleased at this; both parties go to the temple.

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE

King Óláfr now goes into the temple and a small number of men with him and some of the farmers. And when the king came to where the gods were, there sat Þórr, and was most dignified of all the gods, adorned with gold and silver. King Óláfr raised up a gold-adorned ceremonial halberd that he had in his hand and struck Þórr, so that he fell off his pedestal. Then the king’s men leapt forward and shoved down all the gods from their pedestals. And while the king was inside in the temple, then [318] Járnkeggi was killed outside before the temple entrance, and it was the king’s men who did this. And when the king came back to the people, he offered the farmers two alternatives, the one that they should all now receive Christianity, or as an alternative engage in battle with him. But after Skeggi’s death there was no leader there among the host of farmers ready to raise a banner against King Óláfr. The other alternative was taken up, to go to the king and yield to what he commanded. Then King Óláfr had all the people that were there baptised and took hostages from the farmers to ensure that they should keep up their Christianity. After that King Óláfr made his men travel round all the districts in Þrándheimr. No one now opposed Christianity. Then all the people in Þrændalög were baptised.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

King Óláfr took his force out to Niðaróss. Then he had buildings put up on Niðarbakki and planned it so that there should be a market town there, giving people sites to build themselves houses there, and he had his palace built up above Skipakrókr. He had all the supplies that were needed for winter residence there transported there in the autumn, and he kept a very large number of people there.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE

King Óláfr made an appointment for a meeting with Járnkeggi’s kinsmen and offered them compensation, and there were a lot of distinguished people involved. Járnkeggi had a daughter who is named Guðrún. In the end, a part

of their settlement was that King Óláfr should marry Guðrún. And when the date for this wedding came, then they started to sleep in the same bed, King Óláfr and Guðrún. But the first night that they were lying both together, as soon as the king was fallen asleep, she drew a knife and was going to stab him. [319] And when the king realised this, he took the knife off her and got up from the bed and went to his men and tells them what had happened. Guðrún then also got her clothes and all the people who had come there with her. They went off on their way, and Guðrún never again came into the same bed as King Óláfr.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-TWO

That same autumn King Óláfr had a great longship built on the sandbanks by the Nið. It was a cruiser (*snekkja*). He employed many shipbuilders on it. And by the beginning of that winter the ship was completely finished. The number of rowing benches was thirty, it was high at stem and stern and not of large capacity. The king named this ship Traninn (the Crane).

After the slaying of Járnseggi his body was transported out to Yrjar, and he lies in Skeggjahaugr on Austrátt.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE

When King Óláfr Tryggvason had been king in Norway for two years, there was with him a Saxon priest who is named Þangbrandr. He was a very violent man and a fighter, but a good cleric and a valiant man. But because of his unruly behaviour the king did not want to have him with him and sent him on a mission, that he was to go to Iceland and Christianise the country. He was provided with a merchant ship, and there is this to be told about his voyage, that he reached Iceland in the Eastern Fiords in the southerly Álptafjörðr, [320] and the following winter he stayed with Hallr on Síða. Þangbrandr preached Christianity in Iceland, and because of what he said, Hallr had himself baptised and all his household and many other leading men, but the others who objected were more numerous. Þorvaldr veili (Weak in Health) and the poet Vetrliði composed insulting verses about Þangbrandr, and he slew them both. Þangbrandr stayed two years in Iceland and became the slayer of three men before he went away.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FOUR

There was a man called Sigurðr, and another called Haukr. They were from Hálogaland and spent much time on trading voyages. They had gone one summer west to England. And when they came back to Norway, they sailed

north along the coast and in Norð-Mœrr they came face to face with King Óláfr's force. And when the king was told that some men from Hálogaland were come and that they were heathen, then the king had the skippers called to him. He asked them if they were willing to have themselves baptised, and their answer was no. After that the king used many arguments with them, and that did no good. Then he threatened them with death or maiming. This did not change their minds. He had them put in irons and kept them with him for some time, and they were kept in fetters. The king argued with them frequently, and that was of no avail. And one night they disappeared, so that no one could discover what had become of them or knew by what means they had got away. But in the autumn they turned up in the north with Hárekr in Þjótta. He welcomed them, and they stayed there with him during the winter with good entertainment.

[321] CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE

It was one fine day in the spring that Hárekr was at home and there were few men in the dwelling. He found it dull. Sigurðr spoke to him, asking whether he would like them to row somewhere and amuse themselves. Hárekr was pleased with that idea. After that they go to the shore and launch a six-oared boat. Sigurðr got the sail and tackle that belonged with the boat from the boathouse, as they often used to go, using a sail when they went to amuse themselves. Hárekr went on board and fitted the rudder. Sigurðr and his brother went fully armed, as they were always accustomed to do at home among the farmers. They were both the strongest of men. But before they went out onto the boat, they threw aboard some butter chests and a bread-box and carried between them a great beer-tub out onto the boat. After that they rowed from the shore, and when they had come a short way from the island, then the brothers hoisted the sail, while Hárekr steered. They were soon carried away from the island. Then the brothers went aft to where Hárekr was sitting. Sigurðr said to farmer Hárekr:

‘Now you shall choose here between some alternatives. The first is to let us brothers determine our voyage and our course. The second is to let us tie you up. The third is that we shall kill you.’

Hárekr now saw what his situation was. He was a match for no more than one of the brothers if they were equally equipped. So his choice was the one that seemed to him rather the best, to let them determine their voyage. He confirmed this to them by oaths and plighted his troth to this. After that Sigurðr went to the rudder and set a course southwards along the coast. The brothers took care that they should nowhere meet people, and they had winds as good as could be. They did not cease their journey until [322] they got

south into Prándheimr and in to Niðaróss and find King Óláfr there. Then King Óláfr had Hárekr called to talk with him and asked him to be baptised. Hárekr objected. The king and Hárekr discuss this for many days, sometimes in the presence of many people, sometimes in private, and no agreement is reached. But in the end the king says to Hárekr:

‘Now you shall go home, and I shall not harm you for the moment. The reason is that we are closely related, and also that you will claim that I have got hold of you by deceit. But be sure of this, that I am intending to come there to the north and visit you men of Hálogaland. You will then find out whether I know how to punish those who refuse Christianity.’

Hárekr felt happy that he would be able to get away as soon as he could. King Óláfr gave Hárekr a good small ship with ten or twelve men on board to row, had this ship fitted out as well as could be with all necessaries. The king gave Hárekr thirty men, valiant fellows and well fitted out.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX

Hárekr of Þjótta immediately went away from the town as soon as he could, but Haukr and Sigurðr stayed with the king and both had themselves baptised. Hárekr went on his way until he got home to Þjótta. He sent word to his friend Eyvindr kinnrifa, and bade tell him that Hárekr of Þjótta had met King Óláfr and had not let himself be cowed into receiving Christianity. This also he bade tell him, that King Óláfr is intending in the summer [323] to go with an army against them. Hárekr says that they will need to take precautions about this, told Eyvindr to come to see him as soon as possible. And when this information was brought to Eyvindr, then he realises that there will be very great need to take some steps to prevent their being at the mercy of the king. Eyvindr goes as quickly as he can with a light ship and a small number of men on it. And when he got to Þjótta, Hárekr welcomes him and without delay they quickly start their discussions, Hárekr and Eyvindr, to one side of the farmhouse. But when they have been talking for only a short time, King Óláfr’s men, those who had accompanied Hárekr to the north, come up, then take hold of Eyvindr and take him to the ship with them, afterwards going off with Eyvindr. They do not leave off their travelling until they come to Prándheimr and meet King Óláfr in Niðaróss. Eyvindr was then conducted to an interview with King Óláfr. The king tells him to receive baptism like other people. Eyvindr said no to this. The king asked him with kindly words to accept Christianity, giving him many reasons, as did the bishop. Eyvindr did not change his mind for that. Then the king offered him gifts and great revenues, but Eyvindr refused all this. Then the king threatened him with maiming or death. Even at this Eyvindr

did not change his mind. After that the king had a washbowl full of red-hot embers brought in and placed on Eyvindr's belly, and his belly soon burst apart. Then Eyvindr said:

'Take the bowl off me. I want to speak a few words before I die.'

And this was done. Then the king asked:

'Will you now, Eyvindr, believe in Christ?'

'No,' says he, 'I cannot receive any baptism. I am a spirit, quickened in a human body by the sorcery of Lapps, for my father and mother were not able to have a child before that.'

Then Eyvindr died and had been a man most skilled in magic.

[324] CHAPTER SEVENTY-SEVEN

So the following spring King Óláfr had his ships and troops fitted out. Now he himself took charge of Traninn. The king now had a large force and a fine one. And when he was ready he sailed out along the fiord and then north past Byrða and on north to Hálogaland. And wherever he came to land, then he held an assembly. There he told all the people to receive baptism and the true faith. No one dared to object, and the whole country was made Christian, wherever he went. King Óláfr received a banquet on Þjótta at Hárekr's. Then he was baptised and all his men. Hárekr gave the king good gifts at parting and became his man and received revenues from the king and a landed man's privileges.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-EIGHT

There was a farmer named Rauðr inn rammi (the Powerful), who lived in the fiord that is called Sálpti on Goðey. Rauðr was an extremely wealthy man and had many men in his household. He was a rich man. A large number of Lapps attended him when he needed them. Rauðr was a great pagan and very skilled in magic. He was a great friend of the man who was mentioned earlier, Þórir hjörtr. They were both great leaders. And when they heard that King Óláfr was travelling with an army of men from the south through Hálogaland, then they gather together to themselves an army and call out ships and get a great force. Rauðr had a great dragon-head ship with a gilded figurehead on it. This ship's rowing-benches were thirty in number and it was of according size. Þórir hjörtr also had a large ship. They sail this force south against King Óláfr. And when they met, then they went into battle against King Óláfr. There was a great battle there, and soon there were casualties, and there came to be more of these in the force of the Háleygir, and their ships were cleared of men, and [325] next they were struck by fear and panic. Rauðr rowed with his dragon-ship out to sea, and next he hoisted

sail. Rauðr always had a favourable wind wherever he wanted to sail, and this was a result of his magic. To tell most briefly about Rauðr's voyage, he sailed home to Goðey. Þórir hjörtr fled in to land and there they leapt from their ships, but King Óláfr followed them. They also leapt from their ships and pursued and killed them. The king was then again foremost as usual when this required exertion. He saw where Þórir hjörtr was running. He was swiftest of all men. The king ran after him, accompanied by his dog Vígi. Then the king said:

‘Catch the hart, Vígi.’

Vígi leapt forward after Þórir and straightway up at him. Þórir stopped at this. Then the king threw a halberd at Þórir. Þórir thrust his sword at the dog and gave him a great wound, but at the same moment the king's halberd flew under Þórir's arm so that it stuck out through his other side. There Þórir lost his life, but Vígi was carried wounded to the ships. King Óláfr gave quarter to all those men who asked and were willing to receive Christianity.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

King Óláfr sailed his force northwards along the coast and made all the people Christian wherever he went. And when he got north to Sálpti, he was going to sail into the fiord to visit Rauðr, but a storm of wind and a squall was blowing from in along the fiord, and the king lay there waiting for a week, and the same stormy weather continued to blow from in along the fiord, but outside it there was a fair wind blowing for sailing north along the coast. Then the king sailed all the way north to Qmð, and all the people there submitted to Christianity. Afterwards the king changed his course back to the south. But when he got down from the north to Sálpti, then there was a storm out along the fiord and flying spray. [326] The king lay there a few nights, and the wind was the same. Then the king spoke to Bishop Sigurðr and enquired whether he could offer any advice about it. The bishop says that he will try, if God will add his assistance to overcome this devilish power.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

Bishop Sigurðr got out all his Mass vestments and went forward to the prow on the king's ship, had candles lit and took incense, set a crucifix up on the prow, read from the Gospel there and many other prayers, sprinkled holy water all over the ship. Then he bade them take down the awnings and row into the fiord. The king then had someone shout to the other ships that everyone was to row behind him. And when the oars were plied on

Tranan,⁵¹⁵ then she went into the fiord, and those who were rowing on that ship felt no wind on themselves, and the position of the wake behind them indicated that it was calm there, but there was such widespread spray out on each side of them that because of it the mountains could nowhere be seen. Then one ship after another rowed there in the calm. They travelled thus the whole day and the following night, coming a little before dawn to Goðeyjar. And when they arrived before Rauðr's farm, then there off the shore that great dragon-ship of his was floating. King Óláfr immediately went up to the farm with his men, made an attack on the upper room there that Rauðr slept in, and broke in. Men ran in there. Then Rauðr was taken captive and bound, and the other men who were in there were killed, and some taken captive. Then the king's men went to the hall that Rauðr's household slept in. Some there were killed and [327] some tied up, some beaten. Then the king had Rauðr brought before him, ordering him to have himself baptised.

'I will then,' says the king, 'not take from you your property, rather be your friend, if you go carefully.'

Rauðr shouted in protest, saying that he would never believe in Christ, and blaspheming greatly. Then the king became angry and said that Rauðr should die the worst death. Then the king had him taken and bound face upwards on a beam, had a piece of wood put between his teeth so as to open up his mouth. Then the king had a heather-snake taken and brought to his mouth, but the snake would not go in his mouth and wriggled away, because Rauðr blew against it. Then the king had an angelica stalk pipe taken and put in Rauðr's mouth—though some people say that the king had his trumpet put in his mouth—and put the snake in it, having a red-hot iron bar pushed against it from the outside. Then the snake wriggled into Rauðr's mouth and after that into his throat and tore out through his side. There Rauðr lost his life. King Óláfr took there a huge amount of wealth in gold and silver and other goods, in weapons and many sorts of valuable items. But all the people who had been with Rauðr the king had baptised, and those who refused he had killed or tortured. Then King Óláfr took the dragon-ship that Rauðr had owned and skippered it himself, since that ship was much larger and finer than Traninn. There was a dragon-head on the prow, and on the stern a curved piece bending forwards at the end like a serpent's tail and both the neck and the whole of the stem was plated with gold. The king called this ship Ormrinn (the Dragon), because when the

⁵¹⁵ The form of the name here is the feminine *Tranan*, also used in verse 164, but elsewhere it is the masculine (*Traninn*). Both words can mean 'crane' (the bird), but their use as a ship name may refer rather to the alternative sense 'snout' (cf. the ship name *Barðinn*, from *barð* 'prow, beak').

sail was up it was supposed to be like the wings of a dragon. This ship was the handsomest in all Norway. The islands [328] where Rauðr lived are called Gylling and Hæring, but as a group they are called Goðeyjar, and it is Goðeyjarstraumur to the north, between them and the mainland. King Óláfr made the whole fiord Christian, afterwards going on his way south along the coast, and on that voyage many things happened that have been put into stories, when trolls and evil spirits played tricks on his men and sometimes on him himself. But we want rather to write about the events of King Óláfr Christianising Norway or the other countries that he introduced Christianity to. King Óláfr brought his force that same autumn into Prándheimr and sailed to Niðaróss and fixed it up for himself there as his winter residence.

Now I want to have narratives written about Icelanders next.⁵¹⁶

CHAPTER EIGHTY-ONE

That same autumn there came to Niðaróss from out in Iceland Kjartan, son of Óláfr Hǫskullsson and grandson of Egill Skalla-Grímsson, who has been said to be about the most promising man of those who have been born in Iceland. There also at that time were Halldórr, son of Guðmundr at Mǫðruvellir, and Kolbeinn, son of Þórðr Freysgoði (Priest of Freyr) and brother of Brennu-Flosi (Burning-Flosi), fourthly Rúnólfr goði's (Priest's) son Svertingr—these were all heathen, like many others, some rich, and others poor. Then there also came from Iceland distinguished people who had received Christianity from Þangbrandr: Teitr Ketilbjarnarson's son Gizurr hvíti (the White)—his mother was Álof, daughter of Víkinga-Kárason's son Hersir (Lord) Þoðvarr. Þoðvarr's brother was Sigurðr, father of Eiríkr Bjóðaskalli, father of King Óláfr's mother Ástríðr. Hjalti was the name of an Icelander, son of Skeggi. He [329] was married to Gizurr hvíti's daughter Vilborg. Hjalti was also Christian, and King Óláfr welcomed the father-in-law and son-in-law, Gizurr and Hjalti, gladly, and they stayed with him. But the Icelanders who had charge of ships and were heathen, they sought to sail away now the king was in the town, since they had been told that the king forced everyone into Christianity, but the wind turned against them and drove them back beneath Niðarhólmr. There were these there in charge of ships: Þórarinn Nefjólffson, the poet Hallfrøðr Óttarsson, Brandr inn ǫrvi (the Open-Handed), Þorleikr Brandsson. This was told to King Óláfr, that Icelanders were there with some ships, and all heathens, and were trying to escape meeting the king. Then the king sent men to them

⁵¹⁶ This seems a clear indication that Snorri is using a scribe in composing this work, perhaps sometimes dictating to him, sometimes getting him to copy existing narratives.

and forbade them to sail away, telling them to sail in to the town, and they did so, but did not unload their ships.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-TWO

Then came Michaelmas. The king had it observed solemnly, having Mass sung in high style. The Icelanders went to it and listened to the beautiful singing and the sound of the bells. And when they got [330] to their ships, each of them told how they had liked the proceedings of the Christians. Kjartan said he liked it, but most others condemned it. But it is as they say, that many are the ears of a king. The king was told about this. Then he immediately sent during the day a man for Kjartan and bade him come to see him. Kjartan went to the king with some men. The king welcomed him. Kjartan was of all men the biggest and handsomest, and well-spoken. And when he and the king had exchanged just a few words, then the king invited Kjartan to receive Christianity. Kjartan says that he will not refuse this, if he may have the king's friendship. The king promises him his perfect friendship, and they agree on this covenant between them. The next day following Kjartan was baptised, and his kinsman Bolli Þorláksson and all their company. Kjartan and Bolli stayed as guests of the king while they were in the white clothes,⁵¹⁷ and the king was very affectionate towards them.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-THREE

King Óláfr was walking out in the street one day, and some men walked towards them, and the one that was walking in front greeted the king. The king asked this man his name. He said his name was Hallfrøðr. Then said the king:

‘Are you the poet?’

He says: ‘I can compose.’

Then said the king: ‘You will be wanting to receive Christianity and afterwards become my follower.’

He says: ‘There is a condition to this, my being baptised: if you, king, will yourself be my godfather. I will have no one else.’

The king says: ‘I will do that.’

Then Hallfrøðr was baptised, and the king was [331] his sponsor. Afterwards the king asked Hallfrøðr:

‘Will you now become my follower?’

Hallfrøðr says: ‘I was formerly in Jarl Hákon's following. So I will not enter your service nor that of any other rulers unless you promise me that I

⁵¹⁷ White baptismal gowns were worn for a week after baptism.

shall never find myself guilty of things that will cause you to drive me away from you.'

'From all I have heard,' says the king, 'about you, Hallfrøðr, you are not so sensible or wise that I can be confident that you will not do things that I can in no way put up with.'

'Kill me then,' says Hallfrøðr.

The king says: 'You are a problem poet,⁵¹⁸ but you shall now be my follower.'

Hallfrøðr answers: 'What will you give me, king, as a naming gift, if I am to be called Problem-Poet?'

The king gave him a sword, and it had no scabbard. The king said:

'Now compose a verse about the sword and let there be "sword" in every line.'

Hallfrøðr spoke:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>146. This one sword of swords
 sword-rich has made me.
 For swords' swiping-Njǫrðrs⁵¹⁹
 swordful it's now becoming.
 There would be no sword-worry —
 I'm worthy of three swords —
 if, with bone of earth,⁵²⁰ a scabbard
 were added to the sword.</p> | <p><i>Hallfrøðar saga</i> 161–62
 3GT (ll. 1–2)</p> |
|--|---|

[332] Then the king gave him a scabbard. From Hallfrøðr's poems we shall take information and confirmation of what is told about King Óláfr Tryggvason.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FOUR

That same autumn the priest Þangbrandr came from Iceland to King Óláfr and says things have not gone smoothly, saying that Icelanders had made insulting verses about him, and some had wanted to kill him, and declared he thought there was no hope that the country would become Christian. King Óláfr got so furious and angry that he had all Icelandic men who were there in the town summoned by trumpet, and after that said that they should all be

⁵¹⁸ This is a reference to Hallfrøðr's nickname, *vandræðaskáld*, used in his saga and elsewhere. Cf. note 418 above.

⁵¹⁹ *sverða svip-Njǫrðr*: 'swiping-Njǫrðr (god) of swords', warrior.

⁵²⁰ *jarða leggs umbgerðr*: 'scabbard, sheath of the bone of the earth', stone. This is a play on the similar words *steinn* 'stone' and *steina* 'to stain, colour'; the sense is 'painted scabbard'.

killed. But Kjartan and Gizurr and Hjalti and the others who had received Christianity went to the king and said:

‘You will not, king, want to go back on your words, for you have said this, that no one shall have done so much to make you angry, that you will not pardon those who are willing to be baptised and abandon heathendom. Now all these Icelanders who are here now want to have themselves baptised, and we will find some way to bring it about that Christianity will be accepted in Iceland. There are here many powerful men’s sons from Iceland, and their fathers will lend great support to this business. [333] But Pangbrandr went on there, as he did here with you, with violence and homicide, and people would not put up with that from him there.’

Then the king began to listen to these speeches. Then all Icelandic people that were there were baptised.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FIVE

King Óláfr was at sports of every kind the most accomplished man in Norway about whom we have information. He was stronger and more agile than anyone, and there are many accounts written about that. One is about when he went to Smalsarhorn and fastened his shield on the top of the precipice, and again when he helped one of his men that had earlier climbed up the precipice and found that he could get neither up nor down, but the king went to him and carried him under his arm down onto the level. King Óláfr used to walk along the oars over the side while his men were rowing on Ormrinn, and he used to juggle with three daggers so that there was always one in the air, and every time caught the handle. He fought equally well with either hand and threw two spears at once. King Óláfr was the most cheerful of men and liked games, kindly and condescending, an impetuous person about everything, magnificently generous, a man very distinguished in appearance, surpassing all men in valour in battles, the fiercest of all men when he was angry, torturing his enemies horribly, burning some in fires, having some torn to pieces by savage dogs, maiming some or having them thrown over high cliffs. As a result his friends were very fond of him, while his enemies were afraid of him. So his success was great, because some did his will with love and friendliness, while some did it out of fear.

[334] CHAPTER EIGHTY-SIX

Leifr, son of Eiríkr rauði (the Red), who was the first to settle Greenland, was come that summer from Greenland to Norway. He went to see King Óláfr and received Christianity and stayed the winter with King Óláfr.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SEVEN

Guðrøðr, son of Eiríkr blóðøx and Gunnhildr, had been on raids in Vestrlönd after he had fled the land before Jarl Hákon. But this summer, about which we have just been telling, when King Óláfr had been ruling Norway four years, Guðrøðr came to Norway bringing many warships. He had just sailed away from England, and when he had almost reached sight of land, he made southwards along the coast to where he thought there was less chance of meeting King Óláfr. Guðrøðr sails south to the Vík. And when he came to land, he began to raid and force the people of the country into submission, demanding that they accept him. And when the men of the land saw that a great army had come against them, then men seek for quarter and reconciliation and propose to the king (Guðrøðr) that a summons to an assembly should be sent over the country, offering to accept him rather than suffer his army, and a delay was agreed while the assembly summons went round. The king then demanded maintenance while this wait should last. But the farmers choose rather the alternative of offering the king banquets all the time that he needed for this, and the king accepted that alternative, of travelling round the country to banquets with some of his troops, while some guarded his ships. But when King Óláfr's brothers-in-law, the brothers Hyrningr and Þorgeirr, hear this, then they gather themselves troops and take to their ships, afterwards going north in the Vík, and come one night with their troops to where King Guðrøðr was at a [335] banquet, making an attack there with fire and weapons. There King Guðrøðr fell and nearly all of his troops, but those who had been at the ships were some of them killed, while some got away and fled in all directions. Now all Eiríkr and Gunnhildr's sons were dead.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-EIGHT

The following winter, when King Óláfr had come back from Hálogaland, he had built a great ship in under Hlaðhamrar which was much bigger than the other ships that were then in the country, and the stocks are still there so that one can see. Þorbergr skafhogg (Shave-Stroke) is the name of the man who was the stem-builder at the ship, but there were many others engaged on it, some fitting planks, some shaping them, some forging nails, some transporting timber. All the parts were very carefully constructed. The ship was both long and broad and with high sides and large-timbered. And when they were making the sides of the ship, then Þorbergr had to go home to his dwelling on some important business and was delayed there a very long time. And when he got back, the ship was fully planked. The king went straightway that evening, and Þorbergr with him, and they look over the ship, how it

has turned out, and everyone said that they had never seen such a large or such a fine ship. Then the king went back to the town. But soon after, in the morning, the king went again to the ship, both he and Porbergr. The builders had by then already arrived. They were all standing and doing nothing. The king asked why they were carrying on so. They say that the ship was spoilt and someone must have gone from stem to stern [336] making one diagonal cut after another down into the ship's side. Then the king went up and saw that it was true, immediately speaking and swearing that the man should die if the king found out who out of malice had spoilt the ship.

'But he who can tell me this shall get great reward from me.'

Then Porbergr spoke: 'I will be able to tell you, king, who will have done this deed.'

'I would have expected from no other man more than from you,' says the king 'that he would be so fortunate as to get to know this and be able to tell me.'

'I will tell you, king,' he says, 'who has done it. I have done it.'

Then answered the king: 'Then you must restore it so that it is as good as it was before. Your life will depend on it.'

Then Porbergr went up and planed the side so that all the diagonal cuts went away. Then the king said, and everyone else, that the ship was much finer on the side that Porbergr had made cuts. The king bade him do the same on both sides and told him he was very grateful to him for it. Then Porbergr was chief builder for the ship until it was finished. It was a dragon-ship and modelled on the Ormr which the king had got from Hálógaland, but this ship was much larger and in every way more elaborate. He called it Ormr inn langi (The Long Serpent), but the other one Ormr inn skammi (The Short Serpent). On Ormr inn langi there were thirty-four rowing benches. There was gilding all over the figure-heads and the curve on the tail. The sides were as high as those on ocean-going vessels. This was the best ship made in Norway and at the greatest expense.

[337] CHAPTER EIGHTY-NINE

Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson and his brothers and many other noble friends of theirs left the country after Jarl Hákon's fall. Jarl Eiríkr went east to Svíþjóð to see King Óláfr of the Svíar, and they were welcomed there. King Óláfr granted the jarl asylum and large revenues, so that he could well maintain himself and his following in that country. Þórðr Kolbeinsson speaks of this:⁵²¹

⁵²¹ Verses 147 and 148 repeat verses 144 and 145. The Jöfraskinna redaction of *Heimskringla* adds here *í Belgskakadrápa*.

147. Fate causes much, increaser
of criminals' suffering;⁵²²
mens's treachery, a little
later, brought death to Hókon.
And to the land the bold lance's
land-prop⁵²³ had vanquished,
eastwards with the army
advanced the son of Tryggvi. *Belgskakadrápa* 2
Fsk 140
ÓTM I 244
148. More in his mind than he
made known had Eiríkr,
schemes for the wealth-spoiler;⁵²⁴
such was of him expected.
Angry, the jarl of Trondheim — *3GT* 28, 108
no one opposing it—
sought the Swedish king's counsel;
stubborn were the Prændir.

Large numbers left Norway to seek out Jarl Eiríkr who had fled from the country before King Óláfr Tryggvason. Jarl Eiríkr adopted this course, that he took to his ships and went raiding to get wealth for himself and his men. He made first for Gotland and lay off there for a long period during the summer and waylaid trading ships that were sailing to that country or else vikings. Sometimes he went up ashore and raided many places along the coast there. So it says in *Bandadrápa*:

149. The famous ruler fought many
further battles later,
others; I still hear of that—
Eiríkr into his power, spear-
when widely went the Váli
of wand of Virfill's fencing,⁵²⁵
sacking the strands of Gotland—
-storm-generous, and wages war. *Bandadrápa* 4

[338] After that Jarl Eiríkr sailed south to Vinöland and off Staurrinn he met some vikings' ships and closed in battle with them. Then Jarl Eiríkr won victory and slew the vikings. So it says in *Bandadrápa*:

⁵²² *varga meinremmir*: 'strengtheners of harm of outlaws', just ruler.

⁵²³ *lindar láðstafr*: 'prop of the ground of the (limewood) spear (shield)', warrior.

⁵²⁴ *auðs særir*: 'harmer of wealth', generous lord.

⁵²⁵ *Virfils garðvala Váli*: 'Váli (god) of the wand (sword) of Virfill's (a sea-king's) fencing (shield)', warrior. This involves emendation of the MSS *vala* to *Váli*.

150. At Staur the men's strengthener⁵²⁶ *Bandadrápa* 5
 settled the head of the prow-horse,⁵²⁷
 thus the ruler arranged it,
and ruled thereafter, glad in battle,
 viking scalps at the severe
 sword-meeting⁵²⁸ the gull of
 injuries⁵²⁹ tore, off the sand-bank.
the jarl, the god-guarded country.

CHAPTER NINETY

Jarl Eiríkr sailed in the autumn back to Svíþjóð and stayed there a second winter. And in the spring the jarl fitted out his army and after that sailed to the eastern Baltic. And when he came into the realm of King Valdimarr, he began to make raids and kill the people and burn everything wherever he went, and laid waste the land. He got to Aldeigjuborg and besieged it until he took the place, killing many people there, and destroyed and [339] burned all the fortifications, and after that he travelled widely making raids over Garðaríki. So it says in *Bandadrápa*:

151. With flame of the point-storm⁵³⁰ *Bandadrápa* 6
 the polisher of harbour-fire⁵³¹
 ravaged the realm of Valdimarr;
 unrest grew after that.
 Aldeigja you demolished, menacer
 of men; news we had of it.
 That fight grew, between forces,
 fierce. You came east into Garðar.

Jarl Eiríkr spent altogether five summers on this raiding expedition. And when he left Garðaríki he went making raids over all Aðalsýsla and Eysýsla, and there he took four viking warships from Danes and slew everyone on them. So it says in *Bandadrápa*:

⁵²⁶ *gumna stærir*: 'one who makes men greater or stronger', leader. On the italics used in the text of this poem see note 401 above.

⁵²⁷ *stafnving*: 'prow-horse', ship.

⁵²⁸ *sverða mót*: 'meeting of swords', battle.

⁵²⁹ *unda mǫr*: 'seagull of wounds', raven.

⁵³⁰ *oddhríðar brandr*: 'fire of the storm of (weapon-)points (battle)', sword (see *NV* § 482 for the interpretation of this and the following kenning, which disagrees with that of *FJ* (B I 191)).

⁵³¹ *lægis logfágandi*: 'polisher of the fire of the harbour (gold)', rich man (who looks after treasure).

152. I heard tell how the temperer *Bandadrápa* 7
of torches of the sea of arrows⁵³²
in the isles' sound once did battle;
Eiríkr into his power, spear-
[340] The war-tree,⁵³³ generous with wave-fire,⁵³⁴
— we have heard news about it—
stripped some four Danish vessels;
-storm-generous, and wages battles.
153. You made war against Gautar, *Bandadrápa* 8
guardian-Njörðr of the plank-steed,⁵³⁵
where men ran off to residences;
and ruled thereafter, glad in battle,
The war-deity⁵³⁶ brought devastation,
reducing peace for people,
over every district;⁵³⁷
the jarl, the god-guarded country.

Jarl Eiríkr went to Danmørk when he had been one winter in Sweden. He went to see King Sveinn tjúguskegg of the Danes and asked for his daughter Gyða in marriage, and this match was concluded. Then Jarl Eiríkr married Gyða. [341] A year later they had a son who was called Hákon. Jarl Eiríkr spent the winters in Danmørk, or sometimes in Sweden, but the summers in raiding.

CHAPTER NINETY-ONE

King Sveinn tjúguskegg of the Danes was married to Gunnhildr, daughter of King Búrizláfr of the Vinðr. But at the time that was just being described, it came to pass that Queen Gunnhildr got ill and died, and a little later King Sveinn married Sigríðr in stórráða, daughter of Skoqlar-Tósti and mother of Óláfr inn sænski, king of the Svíar. Then with the affinity between the kings, intimacy developed there between Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson and all of them.

⁵³² *fleina sævar fúrherðir*: 'the hardener of fire (sword) of the sea of arrows (blood)', warrior, who hardens swords by dipping them in blood.

⁵³³ *folkmeiðr*: 'tree of battle', warrior.

⁵³⁴ *vága fúrr*: 'fire of waves', gold.

⁵³⁵ *hlunnviggs gæti-Njörðr*: 'Njörðr (god) who looks after the horse of the slipway (ship)', seafarer.

⁵³⁶ *hildar Óss*: 'god of war', warrior.

⁵³⁷ The word *sýslur* (pl. of *sýsla*) could well mean 'districts' in general, but is taken in the prose to refer to two specific place names, Aðalsýsla and Eysýsla, locating these incidents in the Baltic.

CHAPTER NINETY-TWO

King Búrizláfr of the Vinðr complained of this matter to his son-in-law Jarl Sigvaldi, that the terms of settlement that Jarl Sigvaldi had negotiated between King Sveinn and King Búrizláfr had been breached. King Búrizláfr was to have King Sveinn's sister Pyri Haraldsdóttir in marriage, but that match had not been implemented, for Pyri had declared a flat 'no' to the idea that she should want to be given in marriage to a heathen king, and an old one at that. Now King Búrizláfr tells the jarl that he wants to insist on the fulfilment of that agreement, and told the jarl to go to Danmørk and fetch Queen Pyri [342] to him. Jarl Sigvaldi did not neglect this journey and goes to see King Sveinn and puts this matter to him, and the jarl argues his case so that King Sveinn hands over his sister Pyri to him, and she was accompanied by some women and her foster-father, a rich man whose name is Qzurr Agason, and some other people. It was part of the agreement between the king and the jarl that the properties in Vinðland that Queen Gunnhildr had had should now become the property of Pyri, in addition to other substantial possessions, as her bride-price.⁵³⁸ Pyri wept bitterly and went very much under compulsion. And when she and the jarl got to Vinðland, then King Búrizláfr held his wedding and married Queen Pyri. But while she was among heathen people, she would take neither food nor drink from them, and it went on thus for seven nights. But then it happened one night that Queen Pyri and Qzurr ran away under cover of night and into a forest. To put the story of their travels most briefly, they ended up in Danmørk, and Pyri dares in no way to stay there because she knows that if her brother King Sveinn finds out about her being there, he will quickly send her back to Vinðland. They went completely incognito until they reach Norway. Pyri did not cease her travels until they came to see King Óláfr. He welcomed them, and they stayed there with fine hospitality. Pyri tells the king all about her problems and asks him for some helpful advice, asking for asylum for herself in his kingdom. Pyri was an eloquent woman and the king was favourably impressed by what she said. He saw that she was a beautiful woman, and it occurs to him that she would be a good match, and turns the discussion on to that, asking if she would take him in marriage. But such were the circumstances in which she found herself, she felt that this was a difficult problem to deal with, but on the other hand she saw what an advantageous match this was, to marry such a distinguished [343] king, and told him to decide for himself and what was best for him. And in accordance with what had been said about it, King Óláfr married Queen Pyri. This marriage was held in the autumn, after the king

⁵³⁸ *tilgjǫf* = *mundr*, a sum payable by the bridegroom for the bride that after the marriage became the bride's own property.

had come from Hálogaland in the north. King Óláfr and Queen Þyri stayed in Niðaróss during the winter. But the following spring Queen Þyri complained often to King Óláfr and wept bitterly about the fact that her possessions were so extensive in Vinðland, while she had no property in this country such as was suitable for a queen. Sometimes she begged the king with fair words that he should get her property, saying that King Búrizláfr was such a great friend of King Óláfr that as soon as they met, the king would grant King Óláfr everything he asked. But when King Óláfr's friends became aware of these speeches, then they all tried to dissuade the king from going. It is said that it happened one day early in the spring, that the king was walking along the street, and by the marketplace a man came walking towards him carrying many stalks of angelica, and amazingly large for the time of year. The king took a large angelica-stalk in his hand and went back to Queen Þyri's apartments. Þyri was sitting within in her private room weeping when the king came in. The king said:

‘See here a large angelica-stalk, that I am giving you.’

She struck it with her hand and said: ‘Haraldr Gormsson gave more generously, and he was less afraid to go abroad and seek his property that you are being now, as was proved when he came here to Norway and laid waste the greater part of this country, and gained possession of everything in the way of dues and taxes, but you do not dare to go through Danmørk because of my brother King Sveinn.’

King Óláfr jumped up at this, when she said that, and spoke loudly, and swore to it:

‘I shall never go in fear of your brother King Sveinn, and if ever we come to meet, then he shall yield.’

[344] CHAPTER NINETY-THREE

King Óláfr called an assembly in the town soon after. He made it known to all the people that he was going to take a levy abroad in the summer and he wanted to have a contribution of ships and men from every district, then states how many ships he wants to have from there in the fiord. Then he sends messages both north and south along the coastal areas and inland and has troops called out. King Óláfr then has Ormr inn langi launched, and all his other ships both large and small. He himself skippered Ormr inn langi. And when men were picked for the crews, the men were so carefully selected and chosen that no man was to be on Ormr inn langi older than sixty or younger than twenty, and they were to be chosen mainly for strength and valour. First of all to be marked down for it were King Óláfr's own men, since for that troop had been selected from men both within the country and from abroad all those who were strongest and bravest.

CHAPTER NINETY-FOUR

Úlfr rauði (the Red) was the name of a man who bore King Óláfr's standard and was at the prow on Ormrinn, a second was Kolbjörn stallari (the Marshall), Þorsteinn oxafótr (Ox-Leg), [345] Arnljótr gellini's (from Gellin?) brother Víkarr of Tíundaland. These were in the *rausn* ('forecastle') in the *søx* (forepart of the *rausn*): Vagr elfski (from Álfheimar) Raumason, Bersi inn sterki (the Strong), Án skyti (Shooter) of Jamtaland, Þrándr rammi (Powerful) of Þelamörk and his brother Óþyrmir; the Háleygir Þrándr skjálgi (Squint-Eyed), Ögmundur sandi (from Sandr?), Hlōðvir langi (the Long) from Saltvík, Hárekr hvassi (the Sharp); the inland Þrændir Ketill hávi (the Tall), Þorfinnr eisli (Dasher), Hávarðr and his brothers from Orkadahlr. These were in the *fyrirrum* (station before the *lypting*?): Björn of Stuðla, Þorgrímr from Hvinir Þjóðólfsson, Ásbjörn and Ormr, Þórðr from Njarðarlög, Þorsteinn hvíti (the White) of Oprostaðir, Arnórr mærski (from Mæri), Hallsteinn and Haukr from Firðir, Eyvindr snákr (Snake), Bergþórr bestill (Bast-Roped), Hallkell of Fjalir, [346] Óláfr drengr (King's Attendant), Arnfinnr sygnski (from Sogn), Sigurðr bíldr (Speckle-Face), Einarr hǫrzki (from Hǫrðaland) and Finn, Ketill rygski (from Rogaland), Grjótgarðr roskvi (the Doughty). These were in the *krapparúm* ('narrow space', the position aft of the *fyrirrum*): Einarr þambarskelfir—he was considered not fit to be there, for he was eighteen—Hallsteinn Hlífarson, Þórólfr, Ívarr smetta (Gob?), Ormr skógarnef ('Forest-Nose'). And many other men, very distinguished ones, were on Ormrinn, though we cannot name them. There were eight men per divided position in Ormrinn, and they were chosen individually. There were thirty men in the *fyrirrum* (position in front of the *lypting*). People used to say that the men chosen for Ormrinn excelled other men in handsomeness and strength and bravery no less than Ormrinn did other ships. The king's brother Þorkell nefja skippered Ormr inn skammi. The king's uncles, Þorkell dyrðill and Jósteinn, were in charge of Traninn. And both of these ships were very well manned. King Óláfr had eleven large ships from Þrándheimr besides ships with twenty rowing-benches and smaller ships.

[347] CHAPTER NINETY-FIVE

And when King Óláfr had pretty well got his force ready from Niðaróss, then he appointed men all over Þrændalög to stewardships and bailiwicks. Then he sent Gizurr hvíti and Hjalti Skeggjason to Iceland to preach Christianity in Iceland and provided with them the priest whose name was Þormóðr and other men in orders, but kept behind with him in hostage four Icelandic men whom he thought most distinguished: Kjartan Ólafsson, Halldórr Guðmundarson, Kolbeinn Þórðarson, Svertigr Rúnólfsson. And it is told about Gizurr and

Hjalti's journey that they came to Iceland before the Alþingi and went to the Assembly, and at that assembly Christianity was adopted into the law in Iceland, and that summer all people were baptised.

CHAPTER NINETY-SIX

The same spring King Óláfr also sent Leifr Eiríksson to Greenland to preach Christianity there, and he went to Greenland that summer. Out in the ocean he took up a ship's crew of men who had got exhausted and were lying on a wreck, and then he discovered Vínland it góða (the Good) and came in the summer to Greenland and took there with him a priest and clerics and went to stay at his father Eiríkr's in Brattahlíð. Afterwards people called him Leifr the Lucky. But his father Eiríkr said that they cancelled each other out, that [348] Leifr had saved a crew of men, and that he had conveyed the hypocrite to Greenland. This was the priest.

CHAPTER NINETY-SEVEN

King Óláfr took his force south along the coast. Then there came to meet him many of his friends, men of the ruling class who were ready to go on the expedition with the king. The first man of these was his brother-in-law Erlingr Skjálgsson with the great warship. Thirty was the number of its rowing-benches, and that ship was very well manned. Then there also came to the king his brothers-in-law Hyrningr and Þorgeirr, and each of them was skippering a large ship. Many others of the ruling class went with him. He had sixty longships when he left the country and sailed south past Danmørk through Eyrarsund. And on this journey King Óláfr came to Vinðland and arranged a conference with King Búrizláfr, and the kings met. They spoke then about the possessions that King Óláfr was claiming, and all the discussions between the kings were going promisingly, and the business of the claims that King Óláfr felt he had dealt with satisfactorily. King Óláfr stayed there for a long time in the summer, visiting there many of his friends.

[349] CHAPTER NINETY-EIGHT

King Sveinn tjúguskegg was at that time married to Sigríðr in stórráða, as is written above. Sigríðr was the greatest enemy of King Óláfr Tryggvason and gave as the reason for this that King Óláfr had broken agreements with her and struck her in the face, as was written above. She strongly urged King Sveinn to hold a battle with King Óláfr Tryggvason, saying that there was sufficient cause against King Óláfr in that he had lain with his (Sveinn's) sister Pyri—

‘Without your leave, and in the past your kinsmen would not have put up with that.’

Queen Sigríðr frequently had such arguments in her mouth, and she brought it about by her arguments that King Sveinn was fully persuaded to carry out her proposal. And early in the spring King Sveinn sent men east into Svíþjóð to see his stepson King Óláfr of the Svíar and Jarl Eiríkr and had them told that King Óláfr of Norway had a fleet out and was planning to go in the summer to Vinðland. It accompanied this message that the king of the Svíar and the jarl should take a force out and go to meet with King Sveinn, they should then all together close in battle with King Óláfr. And the king of the Svíar and Jarl Eiríkr were quite ready for this expedition and gathered a great naval force together from Sweden, took this force south to Danmørk and got there when King Óláfr Tryggvason had already sailed to the east. Halldórr ókristni (the Unchristian) speaks of this when he composed about Jarl Eiríkr:⁵³⁹

[350] 154. Wild in the storm of the war-gleam, *Eiríksflokkur* 1
 the wonder of kings a great army
 summoned from Svíþjóð;
 south the prince sailed to battle.
 Every man then was eager,
 each fattener of corpse-wasps⁵⁴⁰ —
 gulls of wounds⁵⁴¹ at sea deeply
 drank—to follow Eiríkr.

The king of the Svíar and Jarl Eiríkr sailed to meet the king of the Danes and altogether they then had an immense army.

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE

King Sveinn, when he had sent for his army, then sent Jarl Sigvaldi to Vinðland to get information about the movements of King Óláfr Tryggvason and make a trap so that a meeting might take place between King Sveinn and King Óláfr. Then Jarl Sigvaldi went his way and turned up in Vinðland, went to Jómsborg and after that to meet with King Óláfr Tryggvason. There was then much friendly talk between them. The jarl got himself on very close

⁵³⁹ Nothing is known of the poet Halldórr ókristni, other than the verses cited in kings' sagas; some or all of these belong to the poem in honour of Jarl Eiríkr to which Snorri refers; Oddr calls it a *flokkur* (a series of stanzas without a refrain; Oddr 347).

⁵⁴⁰ *hrægeitungafeitir*: 'fattener of wasps (metaphorically, birds) of carrion', warrior.

⁵⁴¹ *sára mǫr*: 'seagull of wounds', raven.

terms with the king. The jarl's wife Ástríðr, daughter of King Búrizláfr, was a great friend of King Óláfr's, and this was largely because of their former connection when King Óláfr had been married to her sister Geira. Jarl Sigvaldi was an intelligent and [351] shrewd man. And when he got into discussions with King Óláfr about his plans, then he greatly delayed his journey for sailing back from the east, finding lots of different reasons for this, but King Óláfr's troops were extremely displeased, and the men were very eager to get home, as they were lying completely ready, and the weather promised a fair wind. Jarl Sigvaldi secretly got information from Danmørk that now the army of the king of the Danes was come from the east, and Jarl Eiríkr also now had his army ready and the rulers were about to come east off Vinðland, and they had decided that they would await King Óláfr by the island called Svøð, and also that the jarl was to so arrange it that they might meet King Óláfr there.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED

Then there came a sort of rumour to Vinðland that King Sveinn of the Danes had an army out, and soon there was talk that King Sveinn of the Danes must be wanting to meet King Óláfr. But Jarl Sigvaldi says to the king:

'It is not King Sveinn's plan to start a battle with you with just an army of Danes, in view of how great a force you have. But if you are in any way suspicious about this, that there is hostility in the offing, then I shall accompany you with my force, and it was always considered a help wherever Jómsvikings accompanied rulers. I will provide you with eleven well-manned ships.'

The king agreed to this. There was then little wind, and it was favourable. Then the king had the fleet cast off and the trumpet-signal given for departure. Men then hoisted their sails and all the small ships sailed faster, and they sailed away out into the open sea. But the jarl sailed close to the king's ship and called to them, telling the king to come behind him.

'I am best acquainted,' he says, 'with where it is deepest round the island sounds, [352] and you will need that with those large ships.'

Then the jarl sailed ahead with his ships. He had eleven ships, and the king sailed behind him with his large ships. He also had there eleven ships, but the whole of the rest of his force sailed out to the open sea. But when Jarl Sigvaldi sailed in to Svøð, then a small ship rowed out to meet them. They tell the jarl that the army of the king of the Danes was lying there in the harbour in front of them. Then the jarl had his sail furled and they row in beneath the island. Halldórr ókristni says this:

155. From the south one and seventy
ships steered the king of Eynir;⁵⁴²
the splendid staff of sea-horses⁵⁴³
his sword in battle reddened,
when the jarl⁵⁴⁴ had summoned
sail-top-liquid's reindeer⁵⁴⁵
to battle—peace among people
fell apart—from Skǫnungar.⁵⁴⁶
- Eiríksflokkur 2*
Fsk 148
Oddr 313

[353] Here it says that King Óláfr and Jarl Sigvaldi had seventy ships and one more, when they sailed from the south.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

King Sveinn of the Danes and King Óláfr of the Svíar and Jarl Eiríkr were now there with all their army. It was then fine weather and bright sunshine. They now went onto the island, all the rulers and their followers with them, and saw how the ships sailed out to sea very many together, and now they see where one great and splendid ship is sailing. Then both the kings said:

‘That is a big ship and extremely beautiful. That must be Ormr inn langi.’

Jarl Eiríkr replied, saying that this is not Ormr inn langi. And it was so, what he said. That ship was Eindriði of Gimsar’s. A little later they saw where another ship was sailing, much bigger than the previous one. Then King Sveinn said:

‘Now Óláfr Tryggvason is afraid. He does not dare sail with the figureheads on his ship.’

Then Jarl Eiríkr says: ‘That is not the king’s ship. I know that ship and its sail, because the sail is striped. That is Erlingr Skjálgsson. Let them sail on. Better for us would be a gap and absence in King Óláfr’s fleet than this ship there fitted out like that.’

And somewhat later they looked and [354] recognised Jarl Sigvaldi’s ships, and they turned there towards the island. Then they saw where three ships were sailing, and one of them was a big ship. The King Sveinn spoke, telling

⁵⁴² *Eyna* (MSS *Óna Hkr* and *Fsk A*, *Æna*, *Æina Fsk B*) *konungr*: ‘king of the Eynafylki people’, i.e. of Norway, which could be represented in kennings by any one of its districts.

⁵⁴³ *unnviggs meiðr*: ‘tree (i.e. man) of the sea-horse (i.e. ship)’, sailor.

⁵⁴⁴ The jarl may be Eiríkr, who is referred to by Halldórr in other poems as ‘jarl’ without further specification; but Snorri assumes it to be Jarl Sigvaldi, perhaps taking the words *jarl Skǫnunga* together.

⁵⁴⁵ *húnlagar hreinn*: ‘reindeer of water of the mast-top (the sea)’, ship.

⁵⁴⁶ *Skǫnungar*: ‘people of Skáni’, Danes.

them to go to their ships, saying that now it was Ormr inn langi going past. Jarl Eiríkr says:

‘They have many large and splendid ships other than Ormr inn langi. Let us wait still.’

Then very many men said: ‘Jarl Eiríkr is unwilling to fight now and avenge his father. This is very shameful, so that it will be heard about through all countries if we lie here with such a large force, while King Óláfr sails out to sea here past our very selves.’

And when they had discussed this for a while, then they saw where four ships sailed, and one of them was a very large dragon-ship and heavily gilded. Then King Sveinn stood up and said:

‘High will the Ormr carry me this evening. That is the one I shall command.’

Then many said that the Ormr was an amazingly large and handsome ship, it was a very glorious thing to have had such a ship built. Then spoke Jarl Eiríkr so that some men heard:

‘Even if King Óláfr had no larger ship than that, King Sveinn would never get it from him with just an army of Danes.’

Then men rushed to the ships and tore off the awnings. But while the rulers were discussing this between themselves, as has just been told, then they saw where three very large ships were sailing and a fourth in the rear, and that was Ormr inn langi. But the great ships that had sailed by previously and that they thought had been the Ormr, the first was Traninn and the second Ormr inn skammi. But when they saw Ormr inn langi, they all knew it; now no one disputed that there it must be Óláfr Tryggvason sailing. They left for the ships then, and drew them up for the attack. It was the agreement between the rulers, King Sveinn, King Óláfr and Jarl Eiríkr, that each of them should get his third of Norway, if they brought King Óláfr Tryggvason down, and whichever one of the leaders first boarded the Ormr [355] should have all the booty that was taken on it, and each of them should have the ships that he himself disabled. Jarl Eiríkr had a beaked ship, extremely large, that he was accustomed to take on raids. There was a beak on the upper part of each *barð* (middle part of the stem or stern) and underneath it a thick iron plate, and it was as broad as the beak and reached right down into the sea.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWO

When Jarl Sigvaldi and his men rowed in by the island, it was seen by Þorkell dyrðill from Traninn and other skippers who were sailing with him that the jarl turned his ships by the island. Then they also lowered their sails and

rowed after him and called to them asking why they were sailing thus. The jarl says that he wants to wait for King Óláfr.

‘And it is more than likely that there is hostility ahead of us.’

Then they let their ships drift until Þorkell nefja came with Ormr inn skammi and the three ships that were sailing with him, and they were given the same information. Then they also lowered their sails and lay drifting and waited for King Óláfr. And when the king sailed out towards the island, then the whole enemy force rowed out into the sound ahead of them. And when they saw this, then they begged the king to sail on his way and not engage in battle against such a large force. The king replied in a loud voice and stood up on the raised deck:

‘Let down the sail. My men must not think of flight. I have never fled in battle. Let God rule my life, but I will never take to flight.’

It was done as the king ordered. So says Hallfrøðr:

- [356] 156. The speech shall be told that, say men, *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)*²
 strong in deeds, the fir-tree *Fsk* 152–03
 of enmity’s mail-coat⁵⁴⁷ made to Oddr 322
 men in the weapons’ quarrel.⁵⁴⁸ *ÓTM* II 259–60
 The ender of enemies’ courage⁵⁴⁹
 urged not his men to think—
 the country’s comrade’s⁵⁵⁰ words of
 courage live on—of fleeing.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THREE

King Óláfr had the trumpet signal blown for all his ships to assemble together in formation. The king’s ship was in the middle of the force, and on one side of it Ormr inn skammi, and on the other side Traninn. And when they began to tie the stems together, they fastened together the prows of Ormr inn langi and Ormr inn skammi. But when the king saw this, he called out in a loud voice, telling them to bring the great ship further forward and not let it be the hindmost of all the ships in the force. Then Úlfr inn rauði replied:

‘If Ormrinn is to be brought forward as much further as it is longer than other ships, then it will be hard work around the bows.’

The king says: ‘I didn’t know I had a man at the prow who is both red and recreant.’

⁵⁴⁷ *dolga fangs bǫrr*: ‘the fir-tree (i.e. man) of the tunic of hostility (i.e. mailcoat)’, warrior.

⁵⁴⁸ *vápna senna*: ‘quarrel of weapons’, battle.

⁵⁴⁹ *hertryggðar hnekkir*: ‘thwarter of army’s confidence’, successful military leader.

⁵⁵⁰ *sessi þjóðar*: ‘seat-mate (i.e. friend) of the people’, king.

Úlfr says: ‘Don’t you turn your back in defending the raised deck in the stern any more than I do in defending the prow.’

The king was holding a [357] bow and placed an arrow on the string and aimed at Úlfr. Úlfr answered:

‘Shoot the other way, king, to where there is greater need. It is for you that I do what I do.’

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR

King Óláfr stood on the raised deck at the stern of Ormrinn. It lifted him up very high. He had a golden shield and a gilded helmet. He was easily distinguished from other men. He wore a short red tunic over his coat of mail. And when King Óláfr saw that the opposing forces were scattered and that banners were set up before the leaders, then he asked:

‘Who is the leader of the force that is opposite us?’

He was told that it was King Sveinn tjúguskegg there with a Danish force. The king replied:

‘I am not afraid of those cowards. There is no courage in Danes. But which leader belongs to the standards which are out there on their right-hand side?’

He was told that it was King Óláfr with an army of Svíar there. King Óláfr says:

‘It would be better for the Svíar to be at home licking their sacrificial bowls than to board Ormrinn beneath your weapons.⁵⁵¹ But whose are those great ships that are lying out on the port side of the Danes?’

‘There,’ they say, ‘is Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson.’

Then King Óláfr replies: ‘He will think it only right that he should be facing us like this, and we can expect a fierce battle from this force. They are Norwegians, like us.’

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE

Then the kings make their attack. King Sveinn sailed his ship towards Ormrinn langi, and King Óláfr inn sænski went right out to the side and thrust his stems at the outermost of King Óláfr Tryggvason’s ships, and on the other side Jarl Eiríkr. [358] Then a fierce battle began there. Jarl Sigvaldi had his

⁵⁵¹These are conventional gibes at the stereotypically pagan Swedes. A verse in *Hallfreðar saga* includes a similar taunt (*Hallfreðar saga* 188):

The boastful carrion-maker’s Baldr
less bother would find it,
so I guess, to lick the inside
of his sacrifice vessel.

ships hover and did not close in battle. Skúli Þorsteinsson says this — he was at this time with Jarl Eiríkr:

157. I followed the Frisians' *Fsk* 154
 foe⁵⁵² — young, where spears sounded, *Oddr* 325
 I won renown; men notice *ÓTM* II 264
 now I grow old — and Sigvaldi,
 where to meet the member
 of metal-thing⁵⁵³ in helmets'
 clash,⁵⁵⁴ south off Svǫlðr's mouth⁵⁵⁵
 we carried the reddened wound-leek.⁵⁵⁶

And in addition Hallfrøðr speaks here of these events:

158. There, I think, too much missed — *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 3
 many men went fleeing — *Fsk* 152
 the prince, battle's promoter, *Oddr* 320–21
 support of men of Þrándheimr. *ÓTM* II 260–61
- [359] The brave king battled with
 bold kings, two, alone —
 splendid it is to speak of
 such deeds — and a jarl, thirdly.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SIX

This battle was of the fiercest and there were very many casualties. Those stationed in the bows of Ormr inn langi and Ormr inn skammi and Traninn thrust anchors and grappling hooks into King Sveinn's ships, and had to bring their weapons down on those beneath their feet. They cleared all the ships that they could hold on to, but the king, Sveinn, and the troops that could get away, fled onto other ships, and next they stood off out of range of missiles, and this force acted as King Óláfr Tryggvason had said they would. Then King Óláfr of the Svíar moved up there in their place, and as soon as they got close to the large ships, then the same happened to them as to the others, that they lost many troops and some of their ships and stood off without more ado. But Jarl Eiríkr laid Barðinn alongside the outermost of King Óláfr's ships and stripped that and immediately cut it from its cables,

⁵⁵² *Frísa dolgr* 'enemy of Frisians' is presumably Eiríkr, as Snorri asserts (*Hkr* I 358).

⁵⁵³ *mætir malmþings*: 'one who attends the metal (i.e. weapons) parliament (i.e. battle)' warrior; Óláfr Tryggvason.

⁵⁵⁴ *dynr hjalma*: 'noise of helmets', battle.

⁵⁵⁵ *Svǫlðrar mynni* 'mouth' suggests that Svǫlð(r) may actually have been a river, rather than an island as the prose account states.

⁵⁵⁶ *sárlaukr*: 'wound-leek', sword.

and then attacked the one that had been next to it, and fought until that was stripped. Then the troop began to jump off the smaller ships and up onto the large ships, and the jarl cut each one from its cables as it was cleared. But the Danes and Svíar moved then into range and from all sides towards King Óláfr's ships. But Jarl Eiríkr lay always [360] alongside the ships and fought hand-to-hand, and as men fell on his ships, then others went up in their place, Danes and Svíar. So says Halldórr:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 159. | Sharp swords were set moving; ⁵⁵⁷
men cut up peace for long,
when gilded spears gave tongue,
against the Long Serpent.
Swedish men, they said, and
strife-bushes ⁵⁵⁸ of Danmørk
to the keen leg-cutter's
quarrel ⁵⁵⁹ followed him ⁵⁶⁰ southwards. | <i>Eiríksflokkur</i> 4
<i>Fsk</i> 156
Oddr 338
<i>ÓTM</i> II 272 |
|------|--|---|

Then there was the fiercest battle, and men fell in large numbers, and it came about in the end that all King Óláfr's ships had been cleared except Ormr inn langi. Now all his men that were still able to fight had come onto it. Then Jarl Eiríkr laid Barðinn alongside Ormrinn, and there was hand-to-hand fighting there. So says Halldórr:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 160. | A year since, the Long Serpent
suffered a harsh trial.
Blood-reeds ⁵⁶¹ beat each other;
battered were moons of prow-brands, ⁵⁶²
when the god of the armour-
ogre ⁵⁶³ laid high-sided
Barði—the jarl did battle ⁵⁶⁴
by the isle—at side of Fáfñir. ⁵⁶⁵ | <i>Eiríksflokkur</i> 3
<i>Fsk</i> 155
Oddr 337
<i>ÓTM</i> II 273 |
|------|---|---|
- [361]

⁵⁵⁷ *sнарpra sverða gangr*: 'activity of sharp swords', battle.

⁵⁵⁸ *dolgs runnr*: 'bush of strife', warrior.

⁵⁵⁹ *leggbita senna*: 'quarrel of the leg-biter (i.e. sword)', battle.

⁵⁶⁰ i.e. Jarl Eiríkr.

⁵⁶¹ *reyr dreyra*: 'reed of blood', sword.

⁵⁶² *tungl tingla tangar*: 'moons of tongs of the prow-piece (i.e. of the prow)'; *tong* 'tongs' must mean the *brandar* 'brands', a pair of carved ornamental strips of wood along the sides of a ship's prow; their moons are shields, which were fastened along the sides of ships. But *brandr* can also mean a sword, so this may be another case of *ofljóst* (wordplay)—the moons of the sword are also shields.

⁵⁶³ *brynflagðs reginn*: 'god of the troll-wife of the coat of mail (i.e. axe)', warrior.

⁵⁶⁴ *hjalms hríð*: 'storm of the helmet', battle.

⁵⁶⁵ *Fáfñir*, the legendary dragon killed by Sigurðr, referring here to Ormr inn langi.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN

Jarl Eiríkr was in the *fyrirrum* (position in front of the *lypting*) on his ship and there a shield-wall had been formed. There was then both hand-to-hand fighting and thrusting of spears and throwing of everything available as a weapon, while some were shooting from bows or by hand. Then there was so much wielding of weapons on Ormrinn that they could hardly get their shields in front of themselves when spears and arrows were flying so thick, for warships were attacking Ormrinn from all sides. But King Óláfr's men were in such a rage that they leapt up on the sides in order to be able to reach the people with sword-blows to kill them, though many did not come so close under Ormrinn that they would be involved in hand-to-hand fighting. But most of Óláfr's men went overboard and took no more notice than if they had been fighting on level ground and sank under with their weapons. So says Hallfrøðr:

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| 2161. | Sank down from the Serpent
those in spear-hatred ⁵⁶⁶ wounded;
strivers of the strong ring-shirt, ⁵⁶⁷
they spared not each other. | <i>Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)</i> 13
<i>Fsk</i> 157
Oddr 339–40
<i>ÓTM</i> II 274 |
| [362] | Long will the Long Serpent
lack such great warriors,
though a great king guides it
gliding with the army. | |

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT

Einarr þambarskelfir was on Ormrinn aft in the *krapparúm* ('narrow space', the position aft of the *fyrirrum*). He was shooting from a bow and he was the strongest shooter of all men. Einarr shot at Jarl Eiríkr and struck the neck of the tiller above the jarl's head, and the arrow sank in right up to the arrow-head fastening. The jarl looked at it and asked if they knew who was shooting there, but immediately another arrow came, so close to the jarl that it flew between his side and his arm and then into the head-board behind so that the point went through a long way. Then the jarl spoke to the man that some call Finnrr, though some say that he was Finnish (Lappish)—he was the finest bowman:

'Shoot that big man in the *krapparúm*.'

⁵⁶⁶ *naddfárs bõð*: 'warfare of spike-hatred', spear-battle.

⁵⁶⁷ *verkandi meginserkjar baugs*: 'workers of the strength-shirt of ring-(mail) (i.e. coat of mail)', warrior.

Finnr shot, and the arrow struck the middle of Einarr's bow at the moment that Einarr was drawing his bow for the third time. Then the bow broke in two pieces. Then said King Óláfr:

'What was it snapped there so [363] loud?'

Einarr replied: 'Norway from your grasp, king.'

'It was not as big a snap as that,' says the king; 'take my bow and shoot with it.'

And he threw the bow to him. Einarr took the bow and immediately drew it past the point of the arrow and said:

'Too weak, too weak the supreme ruler's bow,' and threw the bow back, then took his shield and sword and fought.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINE

King Óláfr Tryggvason stood on the raised deck in the stern of Ormrinn and during the day mostly shot, sometimes bowshots, sometimes javelins and always two at a time. He looked to the forepart of the ship and saw his men swinging their swords and striking fast and saw that they were not cutting well, then spoke in a loud voice:

'Are you swinging your swords so weakly, as I see that they do not cut for you?'

A man replied: 'Our swords are blunt and very damaged.'

Then the king went down into the *fyrirrum* (position in front of the *lypting*) and opened up the chest under the high-seat, took from it many sharp swords and handed them to the men. But when he stretched down his right arm then men saw that blood was running down from under the sleeve of his coat of mail. No one knows where he was wounded.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TEN

The defence was strongest on Ormrinn and most bloody among the men in the *fyrirrum* and those at the prow. That was where the body of men was most select and the sides of the ship highest. But when the men first began to fall round the middle of the ship and when there were few of the men still standing around the mast area, then Eiríkr decided to try boarding [364] and got up onto Ormrinn with fourteen other men. Then King Óláfr's brother-in-law Hyrningr came against him with a party of men, and there was the hardest of battles there, and it ended with the jarl and the men who had boarded with him drawing back down onto Barðinn, some falling and some being wounded. Þórðr Kolbeinsson speaks of this:⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁸ Two lines are missing from the verse, although no space is left in the manuscripts.

162. There was, of the host in helmets *Eiríksdrápa* 5
 against Hroprtr's bloody hillocks⁵⁶⁹
 . . .
 He who spilled the sword's sea⁵⁷⁰
 with steel-blue blade got glory,
 Hyrningr; the high mountains'
 hall⁵⁷¹ must fall before that lapses.

Then there was again the fiercest of fights, and then many men on Ormrinn fell. And as the crew for defence on Ormrinn thinned out, then Jarl Eiríkr decided to try boarding Ormrinn a second time. Then there was again tough resistance. And when the men in the bows on Ormrinn saw this, then they went aft on the ship and set about a defence against the jarl and present tough resistance. But because there had now fallen so many men on [365] Ormrinn that in many places the gunwales were unoccupied, then the jarl's men began to board in many places. And all the men who were still standing up in defence on Ormrinn made their way aft on the ship to where the king was. Halldórr ókristni says this, that Jarl Eiríkr then urged his men on:

163. The mind-glad lord commanded *Eiríksflokk* 6
 his men useful in warfare; *Fsk* 158
 back over the benches Oddr 344
 the band sprang with Óleifr; *ÓTM* II 283–84
 when they had hemmed in
 the hardy king with warships
 of the sea-fire's spoiler;⁵⁷²
 the slayer of Vinðr⁵⁷³ knew battle.⁵⁷⁴

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN

Kolbjörn stallari went up onto the raised deck to the king. They had very similar clothing and weapons. Kolbjörn was of all men the biggest and most handsome. There was now still in the *fyrirrum* the fiercest of battles. But

⁵⁶⁹ *Hropts toptr*: 'mound, piece of land of Hroprtr (Óðinn, god of war)', shield.

⁵⁷⁰ *Grams vörr*: 'ship's wake (i.e. sea) of Gramr (name of a sword)', blood.

⁵⁷¹ *hóra fjalla höll*: 'hall of high mountains', the sky.

⁵⁷² *hafvita hallandi*: 'destroyer (by giving away) of sea-beacon (i.e. gold)', generous ruler (here, Jarl Eiríkr). Snorri explains that gold is called 'fire of the sea' because it was used to light the hall of the sea-god Ægir (*Skáldsk* 40–41); *hallandi*, lit. he who causes something to lean to one side, i.e. damages; 'they' in this clause are Eiríkr's men.

⁵⁷³ *Vinða myrðir*: killer of Vinðr, Óláfr.

⁵⁷⁴ *váþneiðr*: 'oath-making (i.e. fierce talk) of weapons', (noise of) battle.

because there had now as many people boarded Ormrinn of the jarl's party as the ship could hold, and his ships were attacking from all sides round Ormrinn, and there were only small numbers for [366] defence against such a large force, now although those men were both strong and valiant, most of them now fell in a short period of time. But King Óláfr himself and Kolbjörn with him both then leapt overboard, and each on opposite sides. But the jarl's men had placed small boats all round near it and were killing those who leapt into the water, and when the king himself had leapt into the water, they tried to capture him and take him to Jarl Eiríkr. But King Óláfr brought his shield over his head and plunged into the water, but Kolbjörn stallari pushed his shield under him and thus protected himself from the spears that were thrust up from the boats lying below him, and he fell into the water so that the shield got under him, and therefore he did not get under the water as quickly, and he was captured and pulled up onto this boat, and they thought that it was the king. He was then led before the jarl, but when the jarl realised that it was Kolbjörn, and not the king, then Kolbjörn was given quarter. And at this moment all those of King Óláfr's men that were still alive leapt overboard from Ormrinn, and Hallfrøðr says this, that the king's brother, Þorkell nefja, was the last of all the men to leap overboard:

164. The lessener of limb-metal⁵⁷⁵ *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 16
 looked on the Crane floating, *Fsk* 159
 and both Serpents, deserted— *Oddr* 329–30
 spear in war, glad, he reddened— *ÓTM* II 288
 until Þórketill,⁵⁷⁶ fight-bold,
 fierce-hearted in strong battle,
 wise,⁵⁷⁷ from the wolf of the cable⁵⁷⁸
 went away swimming.

[367] CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE

It was written above that Jarl Sigvaldi had joined company with King Óláfr in Vinðland. And the jarl had ten ships, plus an eleventh on which

⁵⁷⁵ *armgrjóts ógræðir*: 'diminisher of arm-stones (i.e. arm-rings of silver and gold)', generous man.

⁵⁷⁶ *Þórketill*: archaic form of Þorkell, its trisyllabic form necessary to preserve the number of syllables in the line. The use of such archaic forms tends to confirm the authentic age of the verse, though they are common enough to be imitated by later poets.

⁵⁷⁷ *snotr sunds*: skilled in swimming?

⁵⁷⁸ *snæris vitnir*: 'wolf of the rope', ship.

were the men of Ástríðr, king (Búrizláfr)'s daughter and Jarl Sigvaldi's wife. And when King Óláfr had leapt overboard, then the whole army shouted a shout of victory, and then they struck their oars into the sea, the jarl and his men, and rowed towards the battle. Halldórr ókristni speaks of this:

165. Voyaged far the vessels *Eiríksflokkur* 7
of Vinðr to the fight; thin-bladed
ogres of land of Óðinn⁵⁷⁹
yawned iron-jawed over people.
Swords' uproar was heard on the ocean.
The eagle tore bait of Geri.⁵⁸⁰
He struck, the men's great commander.
Many men went fleeing.

But the cruiser of Vinðr that Ástríðr's men were on rowed away and back off Vinðland, and there was already a report [368] by many people that King Óláfr must have thrown off his coat of mail in the water and dived away from under the longships, afterwards swimming to the Vinðr's cruiser, and that Ástríðr's men had taken him ashore. And there have been many stories made since about these travels of King Óláfr's by some people, though Hallfróðr speaks of it in this way:

166. Whether the sater of seagulls *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 20
of the sound of the glow of Heiti's *Fsk* 160
beast⁵⁸¹ to laud living *Oddr* 348 (first half)
or lifeless, I know not, *ÓTM* II 290
since both tales men are telling
as truth—the king is wounded
in either case—news of him
is always unreliable.

But however it may have been, King Óláfr never after came to power in Norway, and yet Hallfróðr vandræðaskáld speaks in this way:

⁵⁷⁹ *Priðja hauðrs gálkn*: 'monster (destroyer) of Priði's (Óðinn's) land (shield)', axe.

⁵⁸⁰ *Gera beita*: 'bait, food of Geri (one of Óðinn's wolves)', carrion.

⁵⁸¹ *dynsæðinga dýrbliks Heita hungredeyfir*: 'sater of the hunger of the seagulls (i.e. ravens) of the din (i.e. battle) of brightness (i. e. shining shields) of Heiti's beast (i.e. ship)', warrior, who feeds ravens by killing on the battlefield. This kenning has seven elements (of which only six appear in the translation).

167. The wielder of the weapon-clash⁵⁸² *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 22
 was honourable, who of the destiny *Fsk* 161
 of the trusty son of Tryggvi *ÓTM* II 292–93
 told that the king⁵⁸³ was living.
 [369] They say Óleifr came safely
 from the storm of weapons,⁵⁸⁴
 telling far from truthful
 tales—much worse the case is.

And also this:

168. It would not, as warriors *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 23
 the warlike king assaulted, *Fsk* 161
 have been destined—I deal in *ÓTM* II 293
 drink of land-shoulder people⁵⁸⁵—
 for the excellent arm-icicle’s
 owner⁵⁸⁶ to come safely—
 people seem to suppose that
 probable—from such a battle.
 169. Some to the wealth-assayer⁵⁸⁷ *Óláfsdrápa (erfidrápa)* 24
 speak of the king being wounded, *Fsk* 162
 or in the clashing weapons *ÓTM* II 293
 east away escaping.
 [370] Now comes a true account of
 the king’s death, north from
 the great warfare; wavering
 words of men I heed little.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN

Jarl Eiríkr Hákonarson gained possession of Ormr inn langi with this victory, and a great deal of booty, and the jarl steered Ormrinn from the engagement. Halldórr says this:

⁵⁸² *oddbraks órr*: ‘messenger, deliverer of the clash of points, weapons (battle)’, warrior, man.

⁵⁸³ *lofða gramr*: ‘lord of men’, king.

⁵⁸⁴ *stála él*: ‘storm of (steel) weapons’, battle.

⁵⁸⁵ *landherðar lýða líð*: ‘strong drink of land-shoulder (i.e. mountain) people (i.e. giants)’, poetry. An allusion to the myth in which the mead of poetry, brewed by dwarves and stored by giants, was stolen by the god Óðinn and bestowed on earthly poets (*Skáldsk* 3–5).

⁵⁸⁶ *mundjökuls stýrir*: ‘controller of ice of the hand (shining metal, i.e. rings)’, wealthy, generous lord.

⁵⁸⁷ *auðar kennir*: ‘one who experiences wealth’, man; here, the poet, Hallfrøðr.

170. The king helmet-covered
 was carried by Ormr inn langi
 to the mighty sword's meeting;⁵⁸⁸
 men adorned the warship.
 In the south the glad jarl seized
 the Serpent in Gunnr's tumult;⁵⁸⁹
 Hemingr's high-born brother⁵⁹⁰
 had to redden blades for that.

Eiríksflokkur 8*Fsk* 164*ÓTM* II 297–98

Jarl Hákon's son Sveinn had before this betrothed himself to King Óláfr of the Svíar's daughter Hólmlfríðr. And when they divided Nóregsveldi between themselves, King Sveinn of the Danes and King Óláfr of the Svíar and Jarl Eiríkr, then King Óláfr had four districts in Prándheimr and both Mœrrs and Raumsdalr and in the east Ranríki from the Gautelfr to Svínasund. This area of rule [371] King Óláfr handed over to Jarl Sveinn on similar conditions to those on which tributary kings or jarls had held it from supreme kings in the past. And Jarl Eiríkr had four districts in Prándheimr, Hálógaland and Naumudalr, Firðir and Fjalir, Sogn and Hǫrðaland and Rogaland and Agðir from the north right down to Líðandisnes. So says Þórðr Kolbeinsson:

171. I know that, other than Erlingr,
 early on most hersar⁵⁹¹—the Týr
 of the light of the ship's land⁵⁹²
 I laud—to jarls were friendly.
 But the land bowed after
 the battle, from Veiga—
 I summon words for strife—
 south to Agðir, and further.
172. By the ruler people profited;
 pleasure comes in this way.
 He held he was bound to hold his
 hand over men of Norway.
 But in the south King Sveinn is
 said to be dead; empty—
 few are spared the ill fates
 of fellow men—his dwellings.

Eiríksdrápa 6*Fsk* 166*ÓTM* II 300*Fsk* 163 (first half)*Skáldsk* 86*Eiríksdrápa* 7*ÓTM* II 30*Fsk* 163 (second half)

⁵⁸⁸ *hrings þing*: 'meeting of the sword', battle. *Hringr* 'ring' referred to a ring in the hilt of particularly valuable swords, and by metonymy, was used of the sword itself.

⁵⁸⁹ *Gunnar gný*: 'din of Gunnr (valkyrie)', battle.

⁵⁹⁰ *Hemings bróðir*: Eiríkr. Hemingr was named in chapter 19 as a son of Jarl Hákon.

⁵⁹¹ *hersir* (plural *hersar*) is more or less the equivalent of English 'lord'.

⁵⁹² *farlands fasta Týr*: 'Týr (god) of the fire of the ship's land (sea)', Týr of gold, generous man.

[372] King Sveinn of the Danes now still had the Vík, as he had had before, but he gave Jarl Eiríkr Raumaríki and Heiðmörk. Sveinn Hákonarson received a jarldom from Óláfr inn sænski. Jarl Sveinn was the most handsome of all men that people have seen. Jarl Eiríkr and Jarl Sveinn both had themselves baptised and received the true faith, but while they ruled over Norway they let each one do as he wished about observance of Christianity, but they kept well to the ancient law and all the customs of the land and were popular and good rulers. Jarl Eiríkr was pretty much the principal of the brothers in all matters of government.

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Qrnes (unidentified farm in Þrándheimr) 316.

Qzurr toti (Stub) 135–36.

Qzurr Agason, foster-father of Þyri Haraldsdóttir 342.