

STUDIA ISLANDICA

25

HEIMSPEKIDEILD HÁSKÓLA ÍSLANDS OG
BÓKAÚTGÁFA MENNINGARSJÓÐS

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ANTHONY FAULKES

RAUÐÚLFS ÞÁTTUR

A Study

STUDIA ISLANDICA 25

REYKJAVÍK 1966

*Gefið út með styrk úr
Sáttmálasjóði*

PRENTSMIDJAN LEIFTUR

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FORMÁLI

Ritsafnið *Íslenzk fræði* eða *Studia Islandica* stofnaði Sigurður Nordal 1937 og var útgefandi þess og ritstjóri allt til 1951. Síðan tók heim-spekideild Háskóla Íslands við útgáfunni, og frá 1962 hefur Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs einnig verið aðili að henni. Upphaflega birti það einkum erindi, sem flutt höfðu verið á rannsóknaræfingum íslenzkra fræða í háskólanum, og kom þá út eftir því, sem á stóð. Síðar hefur efni verið fengið víðar að, og nú á annan áratug hefur að jafnaði komið út eitt hefti árlega (sbr. ritaskrána hér í bókarlok). Í fyrra varð þó skarð í útgáfunna, m. a. vegna veikinda ritstjóra. En í ár koma í staðinn út tvö hefti.

Flestar hafa ritgerðirnar verið á íslenzku, en einnig á ensku, norsku og sænsku. Íslenzk fræði eru nú stunduð býsna víða um heim, til að mynda eru nú upp undir tíu útlendingar að semja meistaraþrófs- og doktorsritgerðir um efni úr íslenzkum bókmenntum 19. og 20. aldar, auk alls annars. *Studia Islandica* getur því miður ekki tekið að sér birtingu svo stórra ritverka. En ritinu er ánægja að því að greiða fyrir útgáfu á rannsóknum erlendra fræðimanna, eftir því sem föng eru á, þótt því miður séu því þar skorður settar. Þegar hafa birtz í þessu safni ritgerðir eftir Englendinga, Frakka, Hollending og Svía, auk Íslendinga vestan hafs og austan.

Að þessu sinni birtist ritgerð á sviði samanburðarbókmennta (littérature comparée) eftir ungan brezkan fræðimann. Anthony Faulkes stundaði nám hjá hinum merka íslenzkufræðingi prófessor Turville-Petre í Oxford, lauk þar B.A.-prófi í fornensku og íslenzku 1960. Hann var við Háskóla Íslands sem styrkþegi íslenzku ríkisstjórnarinnar 1960—61 og vann þá að ritgerð um elztu íslenzku orðabókina, *Specimen lexici runici* (Kh. 1650), sem hann birti í *Lingua Islandica* 1964. Hann lauk síðan B. Litt.-prófi við háskólann í Oxford 1965. Ritgerðin, sem hér birtist, er að verulegu leyti samin upp úr einni af þremur ritsmíðum, sem gerðar voru til þess prófs (hinar tvær voru um *Hreiðars þátt* og *Orms þátt Stórolfssonar*). Höfundur er nú kennari (lecturer) í fornenskum og ís-

lenzkum bókmenntum við Birkbeck College, University of London, en um þessar mundir vinnur hann að því að búa *Laufás-Eddu* til útgáfu á vegum Handritastofnunar Íslands.

Í *Studia Islandica* hafa oftast fylgt efniságrip ritgerða á ensku. En þar sem ritgerðin er hér á ensku, er efniságrip á íslenzku.

Næstu ritgerðir í þessu safni verða á íslenzku, samdar hér við háskólann.

Háskóla Íslands 2. júlí 1966.

Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson.

.1. THE STORY

The kernel of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*¹ is a conventional story of a type common in folk-tales. There have been thefts in a forest district of Norway, and the king's wicked steward, Björn, who is a relation and favourite of the queen, accuses Dagr and Sigurðr, the sons of Rauðúlfr, a wealthy landowner in that part of Norway. When the king arrives he hears the case and it seems to him that they are not guilty. He goes to stay for three nights with Rauðúlfr. He finds there a splendid homestead and is given a fine feast. While he is there Dagr convinces him that the person really responsible for the thefts is Björn the Steward. The king goes to Björn's farm and finds there the bones of the animals he has stolen, and Björn is thereupon banished: he escapes with his life only because he is the queen's favourite.²

This story has been put in a historical setting, with King Óláfr II of Norway (the Saint) as the central character. There are several references in the *þáttur* to the events of his reign (1015—1030). One is to the diplomatic mission of Björn the Marshal to Sweden in 1018. Three others are to

1 Edited diplomatically from St. perg. 4to nr. 4 with full variant apparatus in *ÓH* 655—682. References and quotations (which are normalised) in the following are to this edition. The text is translated into English with a useful introduction by J. E. Turville-Petre in *The Story of Rauð and his sons*, Viking Society for Northern Research, Payne memorial series II (1947). Different redactions are found in *Fornmanna sögur* V (Kaupmannahöfn 1830), pp. 330—348 (from *Tómasskinna*) and the editions of *Flateyjarbók*.

2 Stories of false accusation are common in the sagas, e.g. *Hallfreðar saga* (*IF* VIII 162—163), *Þórarins þáttur Nefjúlssonar* (*ÓH* 805—808); see also M. Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* (Princeton 1934), pp. 155—156.

the decline in the king's power and popularity towards the end of his reign, showing that the events of the *þáttir* are supposed to take place in about 1028.¹

This story of false accusation, however, is only related perfunctorily in the *þáttir* — it is told briefly in a paragraph at the beginning and a paragraph at the end — and it is clearly not the author's main interest. It is in fact only the frame for the central episode of the events that take place during the king's visit to Rauðúlfr's. During the feast the king asks his host and his two sons what their accomplishments are. Rauðúlfr's is the ability to interpret dreams. The entertainment continues and everyone present is called upon to name the accomplishment he considers himself best at. That night the king is lodged in Rauðúlfr's magnificent new sleeping chamber, which is so constructed that it revolves according to the position of the sun. The king dreams an elaborate symbolic dream, and tests Rauðúlfr's boast by asking him to interpret it, which he does in great detail.

While the "frame" story is related barely and without elaboration, this central episode is extensively elaborated with a wealth of detail unusual in early Icelandic narrative. It contains four main elements that derive ultimately from non-Scandinavian sources. One, the symbolic dream of King Óláfr and its interpretation, is based on the Old Testament story of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation by Daniel (Daniel ii 31—45). The other three (the description of the revolving building, the boasting, and the testing of the boasts) are derived from the Old French poem *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*² — significantly, perhaps, the first work in which the emperor and his legendary entourage of

1 See *ÓH* 667/1—2; 665/3—5, 672/10—11, 674/1—5.

2 The standard edition is *Karls des Grossen Reise nach Jerusalem und Constantinopel*, ed. E. Koschwitz, 7th ed. rev. G. Thureau (Leipzig 1923). A modern French rendering is included in *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, ed. Anna J. Cooper (Paris 1925). The English translation by M. Schlauch, *Medieval Narrative* (New York 1928), pp. 77—100, has not been available to me. A useful more modern edition of the text is

heroes are satirised: the poem, with its boisterous and somewhat crude humour, may have been inspired by the farcical failure of the second crusade. Its tone could perhaps be called anti-heroic. The author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, however, has only borrowed the story-elements from the French work, and has not imitated either its humour or its satirical view of heroic ideals. The poem tells how Charlemagne, having been told that King Hugue of Constantinople held a finer court than he himself, went there to see what truth there was in the report, and if possible prove it wrong. When he and his men arrived at King Hugue's court they were entertained in a splendid hall that revolved with the wind, so fast that the Frenchmen became giddy and lost their balance. They were given beds in another equally magnificent building where, unknown to them, King Hugue's spy listened to their conversations. Made indiscreet by wine, the emperor and his men indulge in extravagant boasts or "gabs" which are drily commented on by the spy in "asides" and later reported to King Hugue. The next morning the now sober and considerably abashed Frenchmen are called upon to carry out their boasts. Charlemagne prays to God for assistance, and with His help several of the impossible feats boasted of are performed, and Hugue is forced to acknowledge the superiority of his guests.

The description of the sleeping chamber in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* is similar in many ways to the descriptions of the buildings in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, and in both stories the revolving building is associated with an episode involving a series of boasts by the visiting king and his men (in the *þáttr* the host and his sons also participate), and in both stories some of the boasts (but not all) are put to the test the following day. Although, therefore, all these motives are found in many other places in medieval literature, the combination

Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople, ed. Paul Aebischer (Genève 1965). Quotations in the following are from the normalised text in this edition.

of them in these two stories, as well as the many correspondences of detail, make it virtually certain that the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* knew the French story in some form.

2. THE DREAM

In his account of King Óláfr's dream, the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* has combined popular and learned lore. Rauðúlfr advised the king to sleep in a new bed, in a new house, and in new clothes, if he wanted to dream a prophetic dream. His wife must sleep in another bed (evidently so that carnal desire should not interfere with the king's vision). This is a sort of symbolic purification, necessary before one can commune with the unknown. Similar accounts of dream rituals are found in other Norse stories. In *Jónsvíkinga saga* King Gormr is advised to sleep in a new house where no house has ever stood before for the first three nights of winter in order to have a dream. Like King Óláfr, he must sleep alone.¹ In *Sögubrot af fornkonungum* King Hrærekr's wife Auðr makes him up a new bed in the middle of the room (the same position as King Óláfr's bed has in *Rauðúlfs þáttur*), but she slept in another bed. As a result he dreamed a prophetic dream.²

A variation of this ritual is found in the story of Hálfðan the Black. He was concerned about the fact that he never dreamed, and consulted a wise man called Þorleifr Spaki (the Wise), who advised him to sleep in a pig-sty. He did so and dreamed successfully.³ The wording of Þorleifr's advice echoes the words of Rauðúlfr to King Óláfr.⁴ In a story in

1 *Fib* I 99 (the details of the ritual are not preserved so clearly in the other versions of the saga).

2 *Sögur Danakonunga*, ed. Carl af Petersens and Emil Olsen (København 1919—25), p. 6.

3 *Fagrskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1902—03), p. 4; *ÍF* XXVI 90—91.

4 "Hann sagði hvat hann gerði at þá er hann forvitnaði nokkurn hlut at vita, at hann fór í svínaból at sofa, ok brásk honum þá eigi

Morkinskinna a boy became ill as a result of being unable to dream (*draumstoli*). He was advised among other things to sleep in King Magnús the Good's bed. He did so, and as a result had a dream and was cured.¹ Such rituals are part of the popular dream-lore of the middle ages, and similar accounts are found in (modern) folk-tales.²

The dream itself in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* is closely based on the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel ii. Nebuchadnezzar had a bad dream but could not remember it when he awoke. He summoned all his advisers to see if any of them could tell him what his dream had been and what it signified. Only Daniel was able to do this. In his dream the king had seen "a great image . . . whose brightness was excellent". The head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet part of iron and part of clay. As the king gazed on the vision a rock struck the image, shattering it. Daniel interpreted the parts of the figure to represent successive "kingdoms" (*regna*), and the shattering of the figure their final destruction.

King Óláfr's dream keeps remarkably close to this original. King Óláfr is made to take the place of Nebuchadnezzar, Rauðúlfr that of Daniel. Like Daniel, Rauðúlfr is asked first to relate the dream and then interpret it, although this is not because the king has forgotten it: but the motive of Daniel's clairvoyance is perhaps reflected in Rauðúlfr's revelation of the king's thoughts before he went to sleep — a revelation that seems to have annoyed the king somewhat.³

draumr." Cf. *ÓH* 660: "En þat geri ek stundum, sagði Úlfr, þá er ek vil forvitnask í draumi sannindi stórra hluta, at ek tek ný klæði . . ."

1 *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), pp. 118—119. It is interesting that modern psychology also recognises the harmful effects of "dream starvation" or the lack of deep sleep.

2 See G. D. Kelchner, *Dreams in Old Norse Literature* (Cambridge 1935), pp. 75—76. Cf. *Sir Orfeo*, ed. A. J. Bliss (Oxford 1954), pp. xxxv ff., on the effect of going to sleep under an *ympe-tre*.

3 Compare Daniel ii 29: "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter" with *ÓH* 672/8 f.

The head of gold,¹ representing the dreamer, and the breast and arms (*faðmr*) of silver are copied straight from the biblical dream. The parts of the body *Rauðúlfr* interprets to represent the kings succeeding Óláfr on the throne of Norway: like Nebuchadnezzar, Óláfr is represented as superior to his successors. The following rulers, like the materials by which they are symbolised, will be inferior. The fourth kingdom after Nebuchadnezzar "shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise". Similarly the reign of Haraldr Harðráði: "iron is a hard metal and is used for causing harm to many: so I presume that this reign will seem hard and harmful to many from beginning to end and in between".² The feet symbolise the division of the kingdom in both dreams, although it is not the two feet, but the two metals out of which they are made (iron and clay) that symbolise the division in Daniel's interpretation.³ That kingdom, according to Daniel, would be "partly strong and partly broken", suggesting a time of unrest like that symbolised by the wooden feet in Óláfr's vision.

But the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* has not followed his model slavishly, and he has thoroughly adapted his material for its new context. The vision has been Christianised: the image has been made a crucifix. This is typical of the clerkly tone of the whole episode, which has a markedly religious orientation. The author has also divided his figure into a greater number of parts, and makes the neck copper, the belt iron, the belly gold alloy, from the navel to the genitals

1 *af rauðu gulli* "of pure gold": the Vulgate *ex auro optimo* may have suggested to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* the distinction between pure gold and gold alloy, which he calls *bleikt gull* or *næstagull*.

2 *ÓH* 677/3—5.

3 The use of the word *allt* in *var þat allt af tré gert*, *ÓH* 680/5, may perhaps be due to the author's remembering that in his model the feet were made of two materials combined.

the colour of impure silver, the thighs fleshy, the legs and feet of wood.¹ He has omitted the smashing of the figure since such a cataclysmic end would have no application to the history of Norway. The anatomy is somewhat confused (the belly and the part from the navel to the genitals are made distinct parts of the body) and the author has perhaps not fully visualised his image.

Whereas in Nebuchadnezzar's dream the materials are arranged in descending order of value, the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* has largely destroyed this order, putting copper before silver and iron before gold alloy and silver alloy. His reason for doing this was probably partly so that the value and symbolism of the materials should correspond to his estimate of the qualities of the various rulers they symbolise, and partly so that the names of the rulers can correspond to the names of the metals — the two kings with the name Óláfr are symbolised by the two kinds of gold, the two named Magnús by the two kinds of silver.

The interpretation of the dream in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* is far more detailed than in the Biblical dream. The author on the whole represents the qualities and relative popularity of the various rulers much as do the authors of the Sagas of the Kings. It is noteworthy that the actual names of the kings symbolised are not given in the *þáttr*.² The reader is expected to work them out for himself.

The copper neck represents the unpopular reign of the Dane Sveinn Álfifuson (Knútsson) who was put on the throne of Norway by his father Knútr inn Ríki (the Great), king of Denmark, after the death of St Óláfr in 1030. He fled the country in 1035 when St Óláfr's son Magnús the

1 The words "silfrs litr . . . þess er óskirt er" probably refer to silver alloyed with copper, usually called *bleikt silfr*, which is contrasted with the pure silver just as the gold alloy is contrasted with the pure gold. On the use of silver alloy for coinage in Norway in the middle ages see *IF* V 269, note 5.

2 Some manuscripts add them in the margin, see *ÖH* 1131.

Good, represented by the breast and arms of silver, came to Norway to claim the throne, and died soon afterwards, leaving no sons to succeed him (*engvar kvíslir*, *ÓH* 674/12).

Magnús's reign (1035—47), as implied by his nickname, was popular, a time of internal peace and prosperity. Although he also became king of Denmark, the statement that he was more widely-embracing (*viðfaðmari*) in extending his rule over other countries seems somewhat exaggerated, especially when one recalls that the epithet *inn viðfaðmi* was applied to the legendary Ívarr who was supposed to have ruled Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, Russia, and part of England. The author of the *páttr* was perhaps led into overstatement by the demands of the symbolism he had committed himself to.

The belt of iron represents St Óláfr's half-brother Haraldr Harðráði ("harsh of counsel"), who ruled jointly with Magnús the Good for a year until the latter's death in 1047, and then alone until he fell at the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066.

The belly of gold alloy symbolises the popular and peaceful reign of Óláfr Kyrri ("the Quiet") Haraldsson (1067—1093). In fact, Haraldr Harðráði was at first succeeded by his son Magnús, who was joined after one year by his brother Óláfr Kyrri. The two then ruled together until Magnús died in 1069. From then on Óláfr ruled alone.

The silver alloy represents Óláfr's son Magnús Berfoettr ("the Bare-legged"), 1093—1103. There does not seem to be any particular justification for the statement that he was less honoured abroad than at home; the author was probably thinking particularly of a comparison between him and his namesake Magnús the Good. The author's assessment of his popularity should be compared with Snorri Sturluson's in *Heimskringla* (*ÍF* XXVIII 237).

The flesh-coloured thighs represent the joint reign of Sigurðr Jórsalafari (1103—1130) and Eysteinn (1103—1123),

the sons of Magnús Berfœttr, who surprisingly enough managed to rule together with very little discord.¹ In fact they shared the throne at first with Magnús's third son Óláfr (1103—1116), but of course the symbolism of the human body does not allow of the representation of a tripartite division, and anyway Óláfr was very young and took no part in the government of Norway.

The lower legs and feet of wood symbolise in some detail the period of civil war after the death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari, which is divided into three stages (they hardly correspond to three reigns). At first the kingdom was divided ("tvískipt með frændum") between Sigurðr's son Magnús Blindi and Haraldr Gilli, who claimed to be the illegitimate son of Magnús Berfœttr. It was not long before they were at war together, and Haraldr captured Magnús and had him blinded and maimed in 1135 (hence his nickname); this is probably the bad end ("ill endimörk") referred to at *ÓH* 680/2—3. This is the first stage, represented by the calves of the figure ("fótleggir ofan frá kné"), *ÓH* 679/11—680/4.

Magnús retired to a monastery for a time. Now Sigurðr Slembidjárn, also claiming to be a son of Magnús Berfœttr, came to claim the throne. Having failed to win it peaceably, he murdered Haraldr Gilli in 1136 (cf. "þar munu bræðr berask banaspjót eptir"). This is the second stage, represented by the crossed feet or insteps ("ristrnar"), *ÓH* 680/5—9.

The third stage, represented by the toes, appears to be the following period of unrest which lasted until the accession of Sverrir (1177—1202), in which Sigurðr Slembidjárn and Magnús Blindi, who had joined forces, were defeated and killed by their cousins Ingi and Sigurðr, the sons of Haraldr Gilli (1139), who then reigned together, being joined in 1142 by their brother Eysteinn. These three soon quarrelled, and Ingi got rid of Sigurðr in 1155 and Eysteinn in 1157 (cf. "þeirra afkoemi mun lengi síðan hverr öðrum

1 See *IF* XXVIII 262, 277.

mýgja vilja ok til jarðar koma"). Ingi was defeated by Hákon Herðibreiðr, son of his brother Sigurðr, in 1161.

This period (1130—1177) is in several sources spoken of as a particularly bad time in the history of Norway.¹ The similar prophetic dream in *Hemings þáttr*, whose author probably knew *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, ends with a reference to the same events in which a comparable judgement is expressed.²

It cannot now be told whether the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* knew the Book of Daniel in Latin or the vernacular. There is no special influence of Latin style or syntax discernible in the *þáttr*, but the author's obviously close acquaintance with the learned literature of his time makes it seem likely that he would have been able to understand Latin if no translation were available, and the elegant periods and carefully balanced sentences in parts of *Rauðúlfr's* interpretation of the dream almost suggest a knowledge of Classical Latin prose. There is no evidence that the Book of Daniel was ever translated into Old Norse, although translations of other parts of the Old Testament survive. But the book was widely known. There are quotations from it (in Icelandic) in a twelfth century homily and in the early thirteenth century *Jakobs saga postula*,³ and Nebuchadnezzar's dream is referred to in a discussion of the reliability of dreams in the fourteenth century *Nikolaus saga*.⁴ All these references may have been taken over by the compilers of these works from their foreign sources, and they do not necessarily mean that the Book of Daniel was known at

1 See *IF* XXVIII lxi f.

2 *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar*, ed. G. F. Jensen (Copenhagen 1962), pp. 43—44. See p. 76 below.

3 *Leifar fornra kristinna fræða islenzkra*, ed. Þorvaldur Bjarnarson (Kaupmannahöfn 1878), p. 165 (Daniel vii 10); *Postola sögur*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania 1874), pp. 517, 533 (Daniel vii 14). See also the quotations from Daniel vii 10 and xiv 36 (apocrypha) included in the translations in *Leifar*, pp. 64 and 116.

4 *Heilagra manna sögur*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania 1877), II 87 (Daniel ii 29 and 31 are quoted). This version of *Nikolaus saga* is by Bergr Sökkason (d. 1345).

first hand, but Daniel enjoyed a high reputation as a source of dream-interpretations in the middle ages, and it is probable that the book was available in the vernacular.

A popular book of dream-lore that was in the middle ages ascribed to Daniel, and is now sometimes referred to as the *Pseudo-Daniel*, survives in many versions from several European countries.¹ It is now known that a version of this book also existed in medieval Iceland.² It may well have been known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, although there do not seem to be any very striking parallels. But he clearly drew on popular dream-lore of this kind to supplement his biblical source. The dream of Hálfðan the Black has already been mentioned: Hálfðan dreamed he had splendid thick hair that fell in locks of varying lengths and colours. One lock was the longest and most beautiful of all. The locks symbolised Hálfðan's descendants, who would vary in importance and greatness, and the longest symbolised one descendant who would be especially great, and it was believed that this lock represented St Óláfr.³ Similarly, the figure in the dream in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* had a long flowing lock (or locks⁴) of hair that symbolised St Óláfr's renown spreading throughout all the world.

Although in outline the dream and its interpretation is based on Nebuchadnezzar's, the symbolism in *Rauðúlfs þáttur*

1 See G. Turville-Petre, "Dreams in Icelandic Tradition," *Folklore* 69 (1958), pp. 93—111, esp. p. 107. Several versions of the *Pseudo-Daniel* are edited by Max Förster, "Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Volkskunde" II, IV, V, IX, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* CXX (1908), pp. 302 ff., CXXV (1910), pp. 39 ff., CXXVII (1911), pp. 31 ff., 48 ff., CXXXIV (1916), pp. 264 ff.

2 This is shown in an unpublished paper by G. Turville-Petre.

3 See p. 12, note 3 above.

4 *gulligr lokkr*, ÓH 674/14, *lokkr þeir inir gulligu*, ÓH 675/12—13. The inconsistency seems to be the author's. Only one manuscript (AM 75 c fol.) has the plural both times, and although this manuscript has a reliable text of *Óláfs saga* generally, the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* in it has been subject to extensive editorial changes. The author of the *þáttur* uses the symbol of the golden lock(s) in different ways on the two occasions they are mentioned.

is developed much more fully and in much greater detail than the symbolism in the biblical dream. Every aspect of the dream figure is analysed and some symbol extracted from it. This sort of symbolism is in many ways similar to that found in Icelandic religious writings of the twelfth century, and it is probable that the author of the *þáttr* was familiar with such writings and was influenced by them. The tone of the *þáttr* as a whole is clerkly: the author sees Óláfr more as a saint and martyr, as did the authors of the older sagas of the king, rather than as a viking king, as Snorri Sturluson tended to do.

Mariu saga was probably written in the early thirteenth century, although it has its roots in the religious writings of the twelfth century. The author of this saga (reputed to be Kygri-Björn, who died about 1237) was fond of elaborate symbolism. In one passage he develops the idea of the sun's influence on the world of nature being similar to the influence of heavenly love in the kingdom of heaven:

The sun warms and heats the whole world, and its heat symbolises the eternal warmth of love which good men have towards God and for each other in the other world. The sun also lights up the whole world, and its light symbolises that everyone can see other people's pleasure as clearly as his own in the eternal joy. The sun cheers and gladdens all those that inhabit the earth, for from it the heavenly bodies and the world, the sky and the earth, derive their light. As a result of its heat trees and grass sprout and grow with the moisture with which God is pleased to temper the heat of the sun so that it does not get too hot, for nature cannot be fruitful unless there is a combination of warmth and moisture. And thus the power of the sun gladdens and brings joy to the whole world. And this joy of the world symbolises the joy with which the spirit rejoices in the other world

in the kingdom of heaven, being gladdened just as much by the joy and happiness of another as by his own.¹

It may have been some such passage as this that was in the mind of the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* when he used similar symbolism in his account of the reign of Magnús the Good:

Just as the heavenly bodies illumine the earth and sky, and all men rejoice in the brightness of the sun, and it is beneficial to the world, giving light to the earth, and warms the ground so that it brings forth fruits: so will that reign be popular and prosperous and good and profitable to everyone in the country.

It is also interesting to compare the way in which the author of the *þáttr* uses the symbolism of the crucifix in the dream with the similar symbolism in the twelfth century homily *De Sancta Cruce*.² In King Óláfr's dream the crucifix portends strife. The head, round which the glory of heaven was depicted, symbolises the noble saint Óláfr, but the feet a time of civil war and unrest. Just as the legs hold up the whole body, so the kings they symbolise will uphold the customs of their predecessors. In the homily we are told that the cross was a symbol of death for evil men before Christ was tormented on it, but afterwards it became a symbol of life for good men. The head of Christ symbolises his divinity, but his feet his human nature, for the head pointed to heaven but the feet down to earth. Part of the cross stood buried in the ground, part pointed towards heaven: so Christ combined in himself the heavenly and the earthly. Christ's arms outstretched on the cross symbolise the embrace of his compassion (cf. *ÓH* 675/9 ff.). The part of the cross above his head symbolises our hopes of heaven, and the part buried in the ground, which was invisible and yet supported the whole cross, symbolises faith in spiritual power and mysticism, and just as the invisible part of the cross held up

1 *Mariu saga*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania 1871), p. 56.

2 *Homiliu-bók*, ed. Th. Wisén (Lund 1872), pp. 37 ff.

all the rest of it, so the invisible power of God controls all visible things. The author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* may not have known this particular homily, but he was clearly acquainted with the type of symbolism found in it.

It is characteristic of the complicated symbolism of this kind of homiletic writing that the same symbol is often given more than one significance. The symbolism in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, too, is characterised by the same sort of complexity, even tortuousness. Thus the flowing, golden lock(s) symbolise both Óláfr's renown spreading far and wide, and also his superiority over the king represented by the breast over which the locks fell. The aureole was an endless ring, and his fame would be endless; it was glorious, like his reign; it was pointed at top and bottom,¹ just as his life was harsh at its beginning and end. This exuberance of interpretation could be compared with the symbolism of another early Icelandic homily, the so-called "Dedication homily".² In this homily all the parts of the church are made to symbolise aspects of the Christian faith, and here also many of the symbols are given more than one significance:

The uprights of the church symbolise the apostles and the prophets, who are the supports of all faith . . . the uprights of this church symbolise faith, because on that foundation and support we must build all good works, that they may become the temple of God.

The entrance of the church symbolises true faith, which leads us in to catholic Christianity. The door in the entrance symbolises men of clear judgement who boldly stand up against heretics . . . the door in the doorway (in this case the doors inside the church: in the previous case it was the outer door) symbolises the control

1 J. E. Turville-Petre, op. cit. (p. 9, note 1 above), p. 8, sees a contradiction between this and the statement that the ring was endless. But there is no real contradiction, just the same symbol used in two different ways.

2 *Kirkjudagsmál*, in *Homiliu-bók*, pp. 98 ff.

of the tongue, as the psalmist said: set a watch on my mouth, lord, and a door to guard my lips. A door may also symbolise discernment, which can distinguish good from evil.

The bells symbolise the clergy who make a beautiful sound for God and men in their prayers and preaching (compare the symbolism of the reign of Sveinn Álfífuson, *ÓH* 674/6 ff.) . . . the bells symbolise the teachings which awake us to good works.

The four corner posts of the church symbolise the four gospels . . . the corner posts symbolise the four cardinal virtues.

Although it cannot be shown that the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* has borrowed directly from any particular one of these writings, it is clear that he was familiar with the sort of symbolism found in them, and that he was at home in the type of homiletic literature cultivated in Iceland in the twelfth century.

One kind of symbolism of which the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* is particularly fond is word-play symbolism. This kind of symbolism is uncommon in homiletic writings (except in the case of the traditional interpretations of biblical names¹), since these are mostly based on foreign sources, and such symbolism by its very nature can rarely survive translation. But it has always been popular in Icelandic dream interpretations, not only with dreams in literature but also with actual dreams, and there are numerous examples from both medieval and modern dream-stories.² The following are the cases where word-play is certainly intended by the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. In some cases the

1 E.g. Bethlehem, which means "the house of bread", and is Christ's birthplace, is said to symbolise that Christ is the spiritual food of holy souls and the angels (*Homiliu-bók*, p. 48).

2 See Wilhelm Henzen, *Über die Träume in der altnordischen Sagalitteratur* (Leipzig 1890), pp. 44—49; G. Turville-Petre, *op. cit.* (p. 19, note 1 above), pp. 96 ff.

symbolism depends on the metaphorical meaning of the word used to describe a concrete symbol, in other cases it depends on a true pun:

King Óláfr is a head man (*hofuðsmaðr*) and so is symbolised by the head (*hofuð*) of the dream-figure.

The aureole was sharp (*hvass*) at each end: so the king's life was harsh (*hvass*) at beginning and end.

Magnús Ólafsson was represented by the breast and arms (*faðmr*) of the figure: so he will be more widely-embracing (*viðfaðmari*) than other rulers in conquering other countries.

On the same part of the figure was depicted the sun making the earth fruitful: so Magnús's reign will be fruitful or prosperous (*ársamt*).¹

The belt of the figure was decorated with designs (*brögð*) executed with fine craftsmanship (*hagleikr*): this signifies that Haraldr Harðráði will perform noble deeds (*stórbrögð*) which will be considered decorous (*haglig*).

The head was of pure gold (*rautt gull*) and the belly of gold alloy (*bleikt gull*): so the two kings they represent will have the same name (Óláfr) but will be different in other ways. The two corresponding kinds of silver similarly represent the two kings named Magnús.

On the belly was depicted the glory (*prýði*) of the world: so this king will adorn (*prýða*) the kingdom. The belly was decorated with flowers (*blóm*): so the life of the king it represents will be accompanied by a great flowering or prosperity (*blómi*). As with the decorations on the belt, these designs were executed with great skill (*hagleikr*), which meant that this king would be beneficial (*hagligr*) to his country. In this case some

1 Cf. M. Olsen, "Om Balder-digtning og Balder-kultus," *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 40 (1924), pp. 148—175, esp. pp. 155 ff.

strain is put on the meaning of *hagligr*, which usually means "skilful" or "proper, convenient, fitting".

Magnús Berfoætr is symbolised by the part of the body where the genitals (*sköpin*) are: he will fulfil his destiny (*fylgja sköpum sínum* — *fylgja* means both "accompany" and "follow"). The silver on this part of the figure had images ("likenesses") on it (*var vel likat*: this could also mean "was finely polished"): so Magnús will please everyone (*öllum vel líka*). This part of the body accompanies (*fylgir*) the trunk: so Magnús will be the equal or peer (*maki*, which also means "companion") of his predecessors.

The sons of Magnús are symbolised by the human flesh of the thighs: they will treat each other humanely (*mannliga*) and their reign will be conducted with common humanity (*almennilígrí mennsku*). As the legs hold up the body, so they will uphold the customs of their predecessors.

The legs below the knees were of wood: so the reign they symbolise will go on wooden legs, a proverbial expression meaning that it will go badly.¹

The feet were placed crookedly (*mislögum*) on the cross: the rulers they represent will commit crooked acts (*mislögur*).

There are other cases where word-play symbolism may be intended, although it is often not possible to be absolutely sure whether the author intended it or not. The toes of the figure came forwards piled one on top of the other (*lögðusk hver fram yfir aðra*). This may simply imply that the offspring of the rulers represented by the feet were all trying to get on top of each other, i.e. to overcome each other, but there may also be a play intended on the two meanings of

1 See Halldór Halldórsson, *Íslensk orðtök* (Reykjavík 1954), p. 376. *Tréfotr* seems not to be found elsewhere in Old Icelandic in a metaphorical sense.

the verb *mýgja* "to destroy, overthrow", but literally "to mow down into heaps or piles" (cf. *múgr*, *múgi*, English *mow*). Similarly, there may be an impiled pun on *síðr* "custom" (*halda upp síðum ok dæmum*, ÓH 679/9) and *síða* "side of the body"; and on *skipan* "arrangement" (*eptir réttri skipan*, ÓH 679/10) and *skipta* "divide" (*tvískipt, í brœðra skipti*, ÓH 679/5—6).

There is possibly another pun intended in the explanation of the symbolism of the face of the figure. With the face, says Rauðúlfr, are associated the organs of speech and hearing (*heyrrn*). The glory of the face represents Óláfr's great reward for having converted many people (*margr lýðr*) to the true faith with his words and authority. Here there may be a play intended on the words *lýðr* and *hlýða* "to hear". The sounds of the words are sufficiently close without necessarily assuming the influence of Norwegian spelling or pronunciation (the loss of initial *h-* before *l*) of which there is no other evidence in the *þáttr*, although an Iclander in the early thirteenth century would certainly know about and have heard such pronunciations. It may be noted that in his discussion of *ofljóst* in his *Edda*,¹ Snorri Sturluson seems to imply that a play is possible on the sounds of such words as *lið*, *liðr*, *hlið*, and *hliðr*, although the meaning of the passage is not altogether clear. The undoubted cases of word-play elsewhere in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* are in some cases not less tortuous than this, and if it is not intended that the organs of speech and hearing represent the words of the saint's teaching and the people he converted, it is difficult to see the point of mentioning them at all. It must be admitted that there does not seem to be any point in the mention of sight (*sýn*).

The author often uses a characteristic sentence-pattern when he uses word-play symbolism, the occurrence of which can help confirm that word-play is intended in doubtful cases. The symbol is often explained by two words linked

* 1 *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1931), p. 193.

by *ok*, one of which is the word on which the pun is made, while the other is a near-synonym amplifying or clarifying its significance:

Svá ferr ok ævi þín, *hvöss* váru upphöfin . . . *Hörð* munu ok verða endimörk . . .

Hans ævi mun vera með *góðri stjórn* ok *blóma* miklum.

Hann mun ok fylgja *sköpum* sínum ok *forlögum*.

Þá munu þeir deila *mannliga* ok *jafnliga*.

Mun þeirra ríki fara eptir réttri *skipan* ok almenniligri *mennsku*.

. . . hverjar *mislögur* þeir mundu hafa ok *misgærðir*.

. . . hverr öðrum *mýgja* vilja ok *til jarðar koma*.

There is one other case of word-play in connection with the dream in the *þáttr*, although in this case it is not part of the interpretation of the dream. When the king asked Rauðúlfr whether it was true that either the sleeping chamber or the bed he slept in was revolving, Rauðúlfr replied that it had been constructed in that way so that the sleeper should always be facing in the direction of the sun (*horfa á sólina*), and so that his dream, his actions, and his questionings should turn out propitiously (*ganga at sólu*).

There are many other dreams in Old Icelandic literature where the interpretation depends on word-play symbolism. In *Jómsvíkinga saga* King Gormr's dreams, like King Óláfr's in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, are based on an Old Testament dream, although in this case too the author has considerably elaborated the symbolism and has added many motives to his biblical model. Gormr dreamed of cattle coming out of the sea, just as Pharoah dreamed of cattle coming out of the river (Genesis xli). The cattle had great horns (*váru hyrndir mjök*) which signified that many men would be losers (*hornungar*) of all their possessions.¹ In the same saga Jarl Haraldr had a vision of a tree bearing fruit and blossom (*blómgaðr*) in the middle of winter. This meant that a new

1 *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ed. N. F. Blake (London 1962), pp. 3—4.

faith would come (Christianity) which would flourish (*vera með blóma*). This is the same word-symbol as is used in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* of the reign of Óláfr Kyrri.¹ In *Viga-Glúms saga* the hero dreamed about a great crash (*brestr*). This foreboded a loss or calamity, for this is one of the meanings of *brestr*.² It is told in *Morkinskinna* that Haraldr Harðráði dreamed that he and Sveinn Úlfsson were pulling at a rope (*hǫnk*), and Sveinn pulled it out of Haraldr's hand. Some men interpreted this to mean that Sveinn would win what they were fighting about, but Hákon Ívarsson interpreted it to mean that Sveinn would get tied up (*á hankask*), i.e. meet misfortune.³ The first and more obvious interpretation of the same symbol is followed with a very similar dream in *Flóamanna saga*.⁴

Word-play is used a great deal in the interpretations of the dreams of Þórhaddr in *Þorsteins saga Síðu-Hallssonar*.⁵ In his first dream Þórhaddr was running over (*hlaupa yfir*) holes and paths: this meant that his conduct would overstep the right paths (*yfirhlaup mun verða í ræði þínu um réttar götur*). In his sixth dream he dreamed he had long arms: this meant that he would be miserable for a long time (*langarmr*). In the same dream he was standing on a rock (*bjarg*): this meant that he would trample his salvation underfoot (*alla yðra björg undir fótum troða*). In his ninth dream the place-name Gergpir signified that his circumstances would be favourable (*gerpiligr*). In the tenth there is a pun on *ró*, which means "peace" and is also a technical term for a piece of metal used in joinery. In the eleventh there is a play on the word *faðmr* similar to that in *Rauðúlfs*

1 *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ed. N. F. Blake (London 1962), pp. 4—5. Cf. also the dream of Signý in *Harðar saga* (ed. Sture Hast, København 1960), pp. 126—127.

2 See *Viga-Glúms saga*, ed. G. Turville-Petre, 2nd ed. (Oxford 1960), pp. 75—76.

3 *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), p. 207.

4 Ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), p. 45.

5 *IF* XI 309 ff.

þáttr in the part of the dream referring to Magnús the Good, although the symbol is not interpreted in quite the same way.

The dreams and their interpretations mentioned so far have all been "literary" ones, and are to be considered artistic devices, probably in most cases invented by the authors of the sagas. But similar dream interpretations are found in the so-called "Sagas of Contemporaries", where the dreams may often be genuine. This kind of interpretation may therefore have been more than a literary convention: it was probably actually believed in in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In *Sverris saga*, a large part of which must be based on Sverrir's own words, the king is said to have dreamed that his enemy Erlingr was roasting on a fire (*eldr*). This meant that Erlingr was growing old (*eldask*) and that Sverrir's enemies were nearly finished (*mjök elt* (v.l. *eldir*) *at ræð-um*). In this dream Sverrir ate the whole of the roasted body except the head: this meant that he would overcome all his opponents except the chief or head, King Magnús.¹ The symbolism of the head is used in the same way in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. In *Guðmundar saga byskups* Guðmundr interpreted a dream about an archbishop (*erkibyskup*) to pre-sage an "arch-wonder" (*erkibýsn*).² Sturla Sighvatsson once dreamed he held part of a sausage (*mørsbjúgahlutr*) in his hand, and straightened it out (*rétta*). This meant that he would redress his wrongs (*rétta hlut sinn*).³

These examples show that besides using symbolism similar to that found in learned religious writings and the bible, the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* used symbolism characteristic of the popular dream-interpretations of his own time. In a literature which abounds in dreams and dream-interpretations, *Rauðúlfs þáttr* contains one of the longest, most detailed, and most complicated dreams, in which symbolism of almost every conceivable kind has been called into service.

1 *Sverris saga*, ed. Gustav Indrebø (Kristiania 1920), p. 46.

2 *Biskupa sögur* (Kaupmannahöfn 1858—78), I 423.

3 *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Jón Jóhannesson et al. (Reykjavík 1946), I 350.

3. THE REVOLVING BUILDING

Descriptions of revolving buildings are widespread in medieval European literature, and are found in Greek, French, English, Welsh, and Irish literature. They belong to a very ancient tradition going back to classical times, probably derived partly from actual descriptions of Byzantine palaces.¹ Ovid's description of the palace of the sun (*Metamorphoses* book II, 1 ff.) is clearly part of this tradition, and other examples are found in late Greek romances that are also probably derived from classical models. The distinctive characteristics of this tradition, apart from the general splendour of the building, are:

1. The mathematical symmetry of the building.
2. Decorations representing the whole of creation, from the sky with birds to the earth with all living creatures on it and the sea with sea creatures.
3. Pronounced astrological connections (signs of the zodiac, planets, &c.).

At some time during its development the tradition acquired a further motive:

4. The building is cunningly constructed so that it revolves.

In some stories containing a description of such a building it is associated with another narrative element:

5. The visitors to the building indulge in elaborate boasts or vows.

The first three of these motives are present already in Ovid's description of the palace of the sun. This palace has tall pillars and is richly adorned with gold and jewels. There are decorations depicting the sky, the earth, and the sea,

¹ See Margaret Schlauch, "The Palace of Hugon de Constantinople," *Speculum* VII (1932), pp. 500—514.

with many sea creatures and some mythological beings. The signs of the zodiac are depicted on the gates. Phoebus himself sits on his throne surrounded by the hours, days, months, years, and ages, and the four seasons. Ovid was well known and widely read in the middle ages, and many of the later descriptions of similar buildings could well have been influenced directly by this passage.

The fourth motive, of the turning of the building, would seem to be a development of the astrological motives: the heavens were depicted on the roof, so the roof must be made to turn according to the positions of the heavenly bodies in the sky. Staring at the ceiling of a large vaulted building can sometimes cause giddiness, and give the impression that the building is revolving. It may be that the motive originated in garbled travellers' tales of the wonderful buildings to be seen in the East.¹ Whatever its origin, it is clear that this motive transfers the building to the realm of romance. It is not present in Ovid, but it is at least implied in some of the later Greek descriptions.² If the turning was at first associated with the movement of the heavenly bodies, this connection was soon forgotten, for in many of the medieval descriptions belonging to this tradition the building not only revolves but whirls round. The whirling building soon became a commonplace in the landscape of the Romances and appears also in Irish literature. It is natural to assume, although it is not altogether certain, that this tradition found its way into French literature from its ultimate classical origins via Celtic. In most cases the main point of the whirling of the building is that it makes the building difficult to enter (as in the house of Rumour in Chaucer's *House of*

1 Cf. E. Faral, *Recherches sur les sources Latines des contes et romans courtois du moyen âge* (Paris 1913), pp. 323—324, note; Jules Horrent, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne. Essai d'explication littéraire*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, Fasc. CLVIII (Paris 1961), p. 56.

2 See Margaret Schlauch, "The Palace of Hugon de Constantinople," p. 511.

Fame, and the revolving castle in *La Mule sanz Frain*), and the hero is often enabled to get in by the help of a friendly animal.¹ The astrological motives have been lost in these stories, but are well preserved even in such a late example as the description of the palace in the castle of the Porte Noire in *Arthur of Little Britain*.² In this story the whirling building is combined with the motive of the "perilous bed", common in the Arthurian cycle, and acquires some of the characteristics of an "otherworld" castle.³

The fifth motive (the boasting) is associated with the revolving building in both Irish and French stories. The Irish *Fled Bricrend* and the French *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* both contain descriptions of revolving buildings and boasting episodes, although in neither case does the boasting actually take place in the revolving building. There are many points of resemblance between these two works. Bricriu's hall⁴ is very like the sleeping chamber assigned to Charlemagne in King Hugue's palace⁵: in it Conchobar's royal couch is surrounded by twelve other couches for the twelve heroes of Ulster, just as the magnificent bed prepared for Charle-

1 *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston 1957), p. 300; *La Mule sanz Frain*, ed. Raymond Thompson Hill (Baltimore 1911), lines 440 ff. Many examples of revolving buildings in romance and other literature are quoted by Wilbur Owen Sypherd, *Studies in Chaucer's House of Fame* (London 1907), pp. 144 ff.

2 *The history of the valiant knight Arthur of Little Britain*, trans. J. Bourchier, Lord Berners, [ed. E. V. Uttersson] (London 1814), pp. 139—144. The French original, which has not yet been published, was written in the fourteenth century and could not have been known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*. See R. S. Loomis, "The visit to the Perilous Castle," *PMLA* XLVIII (1933), pp. 1000—1035, esp. pp. 1015 ff.

3 Cf. also the Prose Percival, *Perceval le Gallois*, ed. Ch. Potvin (Mons 1866—71), I 195 f.; the Welsh *Seint Greal*, in *Selections from the Hengwrt Manuscripts*, ed. and tr. Robert Williams and G. H. Jones (London 1876—92), I 325 and 649. See also Einar Ól. Sveinsson, "Celtic Elements in Icelandic Tradition," *Béaloideas, Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society* (1959 for 1957), pp. 11—12.

4 *Fled Bricrend. The feast of Bricriu*, ed. and trans. George Henderson, Irish Texts society II (London 1899), pp. 2—5.

5 *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* (see p. 10, note 2 above) lines 421 ff.

magne stood in the middle of the chamber surrounded by the splendid beds of his twelve peers. The hall of Bricriu was so mighty that "it took a wagon team to carry each beam", while in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* the beds were so huge that it took twenty oxen and four wagons to carry them. In both descriptions there is mention made of shining carbuncles. Just as Hugue had his spy watching his guests from a concealed point of vantage, so Bricriu's hall was fitted with a balcony outside from which he could see what was going on inside through a window. At the feast Bricriu causes disputes among his guests for the "Champion's portion", and the resulting boasting of the contenders (or rather of their wives, who do most of the boasting on their husbands' behalf) has a certain resemblance, if only superficial, to the "gabs" of Charlemagne and his men at Constantinople. In particular Cuchulainn's "leaping feat"¹ is reminiscent of the "gab" of Naimes that he would jump fully armed higher than Hugue's castle. The revolving building, in which Hugue had previously disconcerted the Frenchmen by making them giddy, is paralleled later in *Fled Bricrend* in the description of Fort Curoi, which "revolved as swiftly as a mill-stone" every night, just as Hugue's palace revolved "like the axle of a mill". As in *La Mule sanz Frain*, the point of the whirling of Fort Curoi is that it is made difficult to enter ("the entrance was never to be found after sunset"), while in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* it is rather that it is difficult to get out of: the terrified Frenchmen complain that "the doors are open, but we cannot get out".

Clearly there is a close relationship between these two stories, and although the exact interpretation of it belongs to the domain of Celtic and Romance studies, it may be noted that while the descriptions of the buildings in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* seem to preserve more of the origi-

¹ Boasted of by his wife Emer, *Fled Bricrend*, p. 29; cf. also pp. 111—113, where Cuchulainn jumps over Fort Curoi, and his list of feats, p. 37.

nal motives of the classical tradition (e.g. the astrological motives, pictures representing the whole of creation), this poem is certainly not as old as *Fled Bricrend*, which is preserved in *The Book of the Dun Cow*, made about 1100, and was probably composed some considerable time before this.

The story containing the motive of the revolving building with which *Rauðúlfs þáttr* has the closest affinity is *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, and it is almost certainly some version of this story from which the author took it. The French text of this poem is now known only from an Anglo-Norman version of the thirteenth century (the only known manuscript, British Museum MS Royal 16 E, has been lost since June 1879). Although the poem was for a long time thought to have been written in the eleventh century, most scholars now agree that it was first composed about the middle of the twelfth century.¹ The use of Alexandrines, and the anti-heroic satire of the story, make it certain that it is not among the oldest of the Chansons de Geste, and it is considered likely that it owes its cynical tone to the disillusionment caused by the failure of the second crusade (1146—49). There are several later French versions made in the fifteenth century, mostly in prose, which contain a very much modified form of the story in which most of the descriptive details have been omitted.² Of more importance

1 See Jules Coulet, *Études sur l'ancien Poème français du voyage de Charlemagne en Orient* (Montpellier 1907), pp. 69—70; P. Aebischer, *Les versions norroises du "Voyage de Charlemagne en Orient" leurs sources* (Paris 1956), pp. 172—176; F. Schürr, *Das altfranzösische Epos* (München 1926), pp. 160—169; Theodor Heinermann, "Zeit und Sinn der Karlsreise," *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* LVI (1936), pp. 497—562. It is perhaps worth noting that one of the most recent French writers on the poem (P. Aebischer, in the introduction to his edition, see page 10, note 2 above) is not only very sceptical of any attempt at a definite dating of the poem, but also denies that there is any compelling evidence that the original work was anything other than Anglo-Norman.

2 See *Sechs Bearbeitungen des altfranzösischen Gedichts von Karls des Grossen Reise nach Jerusalem und Konstantinopel*, ed. E. Koschwitz (Heilbronn 1879), pp. 40—133; and his ed. of the poem (see p. 10, note 2 above) pp. iii—iv.

than these for reconstructing the original form of the story are the versions in Welsh and the Scandinavian languages. The Welsh translation survives in three very similar texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,¹ although the original translation from which they derive may have been made much earlier. An Old Norse version (entitled *Af Jór-salaferð*) is found as part VII of the great collection of Norse adaptations of stories from the Charlemagne cycle known as *Karlamagnus saga*.² The same translation (or an earlier version of it) was the source of versions in Danish and Swedish prose,³ the Icelandic rímur *Geiplur*,⁴ and a Faroese ballad (*Geipa Táttur*).⁵ Except for that in *Karlamagnus saga*, the Scandinavian versions, like the later French ones, preserve the story only in a very abridged form.

There are three buildings described in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*. Before they go to Constantinople, Charlemagne and his men go to Jerusalem. There they enter a church. This was a vaulted building with painted ceilings and coloured decorations representing martyrs and saints (or angels), the movements of the moon, the festivals of the church year, and the fish in the sea.

When they reach Constantinople they find Hugue's magnificent palace is also a vaulted building, and this one is circular and revolves, impelled by the wind. The furnishings were of gold and inside the painted roof was supported

1 *Sechs Bearbeitungen*, pp. 1—18, tr. J. Rhys, pp. 19—39 (from the Red Book of Hergest); *Selections from the Hengwrt MSS.*, ed. and tr. Robert Williams and G. H. Jones (London 1876—92), II 1—19, tr. 437—449; the third text is fragmentary and has not been published.

2 *Karlamagnus saga ok kappa hans*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania 1860), pp. 466—483.

3 *Karl Magnus' Krønike*, ed. Poul Lindegård Hjorth (København 1960), pp. 264 ff.; *Karl Magnus enligt Codex Verelanus och Fru Elins bok*, ed. David Kornhall (Lund 1957), pp. 1—42.

4 Ed. Finnur Jónsson in *Rimnasafn* II (København 1913—1922), pp. 357—391.

5 *Færøsk Anthologi* I, ed. V. U. Hammershaimb (København 1891), pp. 139—152. On these Scandinavian versions and their relationships see P. Aebischer, *Les versions norroises* (see p. 34, note 1 above).

by a hundred columns. This building had decorations depicting all creation: flying birds, animals, and serpents are mentioned.

The third building is the one assigned by Hugue to Charlemagne and his men to sleep in. This was also vaulted and decorated with painted flowers and precious stones. It was illuminated by a carbuncle. There were twelve splendid beds with beautiful coverings, and a thirteenth in the centre: this one was circular, and had gold ornaments.

Many of the details of the description of the sleeping chamber in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* correspond to those in one or other of these descriptions. This building, like Hugue's palace, was circular, and revolved (according to the sun, not with the wind). It was vaulted, and the roof was supported by twenty pillars standing in a circle. Like Charlemagne's sleeping chamber it had splendid beds for the king's men, with beautiful coverings, and King Óláfr's bed, like Charlemagne's, was the finest and stood in the middle, and had gold ornamentations. The circular dais mentioned in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* recalls the fact that Charlemagne's bed was circular.

The decorations on the walls and roof of the building in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* are described in much greater detail than those in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, although the suggestion for most of them is to be found in the French poem. Rauðúlfr's chamber had pictures representing all creation, including angels, the sky and heavenly bodies (cf. the church in Jerusalem), birds of the air and beasts of the field (like Hugue's revolving palace), fishes in the sea (like the church at Jerusalem), and plants (like Charlemagne's sleeping chamber). The stories of ancient times (*fornsögur*) may have been suggested by the pictures of martyrs in the church at Jerusalem. It may be noted also that King Óláfr at first takes the sleeping chamber at Rauðúlfr's homestead for a church.

Karlamagnus saga survives in two main versions. One is

supposed to have been made about the middle of the thirteenth century, the other in the first half of the fourteenth century. The oldest manuscript fragments of the compilation are from the late thirteenth century, and the oldest fragment containing part of the section *Af Jórsalaferð* is from the early fourteenth century. The translations used in the compilation were not necessarily all made at the same time, although it is likely that most of them were made during the reign of Hákon Hákonarson (1217—63). The first translation of a French romance into Norse is supposed to be that in *Tristrams saga* from the poem of Thomas of Brittany, made by one brother Robert in 1226. But it is by no means impossible that the translation of such works began earlier. It has recently been shown that some of the material used in *Karlamagnus saga* was translated into Icelandic (from Latin) as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century,¹ and it is quite possible that the translation of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* was made about this time too, and this translation could then have been known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*. But there are no striking verbal similarities between the *þáttur* and the translation of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* in *Karlamagnus saga*, and *Rauðúlfs þáttur* contains many details which must be derived from the poem which the translation in *Karlamagnus saga*, although it follows the French text fairly closely, has omitted. In the description of the church in the Norse translation the martyrdoms of saints, the sun and the moon, the heaven and the earth are mentioned as the subjects of the illustrations on the roof, but the fish are not mentioned. The description of Hugon's palace in *Karlamagnus saga* is also very brief: the illustrations on the roof are simply described as representing various stories, and no details are given. Also, in the account of the boasting episode or "gabs", *Karlamagnus saga* omits the speeches which appear in *Le Voyage de Charle-*

1 See Peter G. Foote, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle in Iceland*, London Mediaeval Studies 4 (London 1959), pp. 35 ff.

magne in which the king invites each of the participants in the entertainment in turn to make their boasts, just as King Óláfr does in *Rauðúlfs þátttr*.¹ These details could have been lost during the scribal transmission of *Karlamagnus saga*, but the two surviving versions do not differ in respect of them, and there is no other evidence that the text of the saga has been subject to any such drastic shortening. It is more likely that these details were omitted by the translator.

It appears therefore that the version of the Charlemagne story known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þátttr* was fuller than that preserved in *Karlamagnus saga*, and must have been in some respects closer to the original. There is in fact only one detail the *Karlamagnus saga* translation has in common with the *þátttr* that is not also in the surviving French text of the poem; the Norse translation mentions "stories" (*ýmsar sǫgur*: one of the Swedish versions also mentions *alskona sagur*) depicted on the roof of the revolving building, and in Rauðúlfr's chamber there were ancient stories and tales of noble kings on the lower part of the roof (*forn-sǫgur ok frásagnir frá ágætum konungum . . . á neðra ræfrinu*). This motive, however, is very common both in descriptions of halls in Norse sources (e.g. the hall at Hjarðarholt in *Laxdœla saga*² and in other literatures also (e.g. Ovid's palace of the sun, the castle of the Porte Noire in *Arthur of Little Britain*, although in neither case is the ceiling mentioned in this connection). The similarity could therefore be accidental (or the author of *Rauðúlfs þátttr* perhaps took the suggestion from the decorations in the church at Jerusalem), although it is possible that in this detail *Rauðúlfs þátttr* and the Norse translation of *Le Voyage de Charle-*

1 And King Sveinn in *Jómsvíkinga saga* (ed. N. F. Blake, London 1962), pp. 28—29. In all these stories it is the king who initiates the entertainment, although it is only in *Jómsvíkinga saga* that he does it with an ulterior and sinister purpose in mind (cf. also *Fled Bricrend*).

2 *ÍF* V 79.

magne both preserve a motive from the original text of the poem which is omitted in the surviving French version.

The indications are, therefore, that the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* knew the story of Charlemagne's travels in the east in a version independent of the translation preserved in *Karlamagnus saga*. It is possible that his source was oral, but the detailed correspondences between the descriptions of the buildings in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* and that in the *þáttur* make it seem more likely that he knew the story in a written version. It is not likely that the story was translated into Old Norse more than once, and it is quite possible that he had it in French (or, conceivably, Latin).

There are three loan-words from French in *Rauðúlfs þáttur*. One is *kurteisi* (OF *cortésie*), which is perhaps too common in Old Norse to provide evidence that the author of the *þáttur* knew French, although it cannot appear very often in Icelandic texts written in the early thirteenth century (the adjective *cortéis* occurs several times in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*). Another is *purtréat* (ÓH 668/4, cf. v.l.). If this was the original reading, it is probably the first occurrence of this word in Old Norse (it was sufficiently strange to cause the copyists of the *þáttur* some difficulty: the manuscripts have *purcreat*, *putreat*, *puterat*, *pentat*) and could be taken to imply that the author knew French. It is from OF *pourtraire* (later *portraire*), found in literature from the twelfth to eighteenth centuries, but never common: certainly not a colloquial word in either language, and not one likely to have found its way into Old Norse except as a literary loan. *Pourtraire* does not occur in the surviving text of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, nor does *purtréa* occur in *Karlamagnus saga*. The third loan-word is *flúr* (in all manuscripts of the *þáttur*, ÓH 677/7). This is probably the first appearance of this word also in Old Norse (in the meaning "flower"¹). Like *purtréa*, it is found mainly in trans-

1 *Flúr* ("flower") also appears in the thirteenth century *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga* (ed. R. Keyser and C. R. Unger, Kristiania 1851),

lated works and never became fully naturalised in Icelandic (it occurs in part IV of *Karlamagnus saga*, *Af Agulando konungi*,¹ but not in part VII, *Af Jórsalaferð*). The corresponding French word *flor* (modern *fleur*) occurs three times in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, once in the description of the sleeping chamber. The vowels in *purtréa* and *flúr* show that these words were borrowed into Old Norse from French or Anglo-Norman rather than from Latin *protrahere*, *flor-*, although all three words could have gone via English.

The occurrence of these three comparatively rare loan-words in such an early text strongly suggests that its author was able to read French and that he knew *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* in the original. There would be nothing really extraordinary in this: Sæmundr the Wise is only one of several Icelanders who are known to have visited France in the early middle ages, and merely by their contact with the Norwegian court Icelanders would have had opportunity both to read and hear French. There is even known to have been a Frenchman in Iceland in the twelfth century: a French priest named Ríkini is said to have taught singing and verse-making at Hólar in the time of bishop Jón Ögmundarson (died 1121), although of course this was too early for the text of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* to have reached Iceland by his agency, and the name Ríkini suggests a German or perhaps Alsatian origin (possibly he was of mixed parentage).² It can be no more than chance that all the known translators of French romances into Old Norse are Norwegians. The Icelander Brandr Jónsson (died 1264) is said to have translated *Alexanders saga*, but from Latin. It is of course possible that *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* found

p. 116 (twice); and *flúr* ("flour") in *Sverris saga* (ed. Gustav Indrebø, Kristiania 1920), p. 110.

1 Ed. cit. (p. 35, note 2 above), p. 200.

2 *Biskupa sögur* (Kaupmannahöfn 1858—79), I 239—40; cf. *Al-fræði íslenszk* II, ed. N. Beckman and Kr. Kálund (København 1914—16), pp. xx—xxi.

its way to Iceland in a Latin version. But the appearance of French texts and translations in Iceland around 1200 need occasion no surprise: Iceland was by no means isolated from European cultural influences in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.¹

There are indications that the version of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, whatever language it was in, was in some respects more similar to the text which was the basis of the Welsh translation than to either the surviving Anglo-Norman text or the Norse translation in *Karlamagnus saga*. In the Welsh version the church and the sleeping chamber are described very briefly, but the revolving palace in more detail than in either the Anglo-Norman or Old Norse versions. While the astrological motives in the two latter versions are very much in the background, and are associated with the church, as are the decorations representing the sky, the sea, and the sea creatures, in the Welsh version these are all part of the decorations of the revolving hall, as in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, and the astrological motives are much more explicit:

Singular and wonderful the king of France thought the nature of the hall: sculptured in the floor appeared the likeness of all the animals, both wild and tame. In the entrance at its lower end, that is below the entrance, there was sculptured the likeness of the sea and every kind of piscine creature bred in the sea. In the sides of the hall was the likeness of the sky and every bird that flew in it just as though it were the air. The top of the hall had the form and aspect of the firmament with the sun, the moon and the stars and the constellations arranged in the firmament so that they shone in the top

1 See Alexander Jóhannesson, "Menningarsamband Frakka og Íslendinga," *Studia Islandica* 9 [1944]; Sigurður Nordal, *Litteraturhistorie: Norge og Island*, Nordisk Kultur VIII: B (Uppsala 1953), pp. 206—208.

of the hall, according to various seasons. There was a circle in the hall with a column of huge size fashioned like a pillar in the centre . . . Around it there were a hundred pillars of becoming and fair marble, as far in measurement from the central pillar as the large circle of the sides bore from the circle of the hundred pillars.¹

This building, like the sleeping chamber in *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, is much more obviously a microcosm of the world than any of the buildings described in the French and Norse texts of the poem. The mathematical symmetry that is such an outstanding feature of Rauðúlfr's chamber is more explicit in the Welsh version (" . . . as far in measurement from the central pillar as the large circle of the sides bore from the circle of the hundred pillars"). The chief difference between the building in the *þáttur* and the revolving palace in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* is that the former revolves almost imperceptibly according to the sun, while Hugue's palace whirls round with the wind so fast that those inside become giddy. In this detail the description in the *þáttur* would seem to be reverting to a more primitive form of the tradition, where the building is more definitely associated with astrological motives, although the change is a natural one, given the different purpose of the description in the *þáttur*. But the suggestion for the change could well have come from some such phrase as that in the Welsh version: " . . . the moon and the stars and the constellations arranged in the firmament so that they shone in the top of the hall, *according to various seasons*."

Not every detail that is derived from the Charlemagne story in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* is preserved in the Welsh version. The latter does not mention, for instance, that the revolving building was vaulted. The suggestion for the inclusion of the heavenly hosts in the scheme of decoration in the *þáttur* presumably came from the description of the church in

1 Trans. J. Rhys (see p. 35, note 1 above), pp. 26—27.

Jerusalem with its pictures of martyrs and saints or angels (*granz maiestez*), but these are not mentioned in the Welsh version. Plants are mentioned in the decoration of the sleeping chamber in the French text but not in the Welsh. The explanation of the correspondences between the *þáttr* and the Welsh version of the story is therefore probably that the Welsh version preserves in some respects details of the original poem that have been lost or obscured in the French and Norse texts. It is likely that many of the details of the description of the church in the Anglo-Norman text have been transferred from the description of the revolving hall, and that in this respect the Welsh version preserves the original arrangement.¹ Even so it is clear that the description in the *þáttr* is not just an imitation of a single description in the original poem, but has used motives taken from all three buildings described. The author of the *þáttr* has also departed from his source in transferring the scene of the boasting from the sleeping chamber to the main hall, in making the host take part in the boasting, which is made the main entertainment at the feast, and in omitting the spy; and in making the sleeping chamber the one that revolves.

There are other stories in Icelandic literature that have descriptions of buildings derived from *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*.² Most of them are derived from the version in *Karlamagnus saga*, but some seem to show the influence of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, e.g. *Rémundar saga*, which has a description of a hall that turns with the sun, like Rauðúlfr's, and which also has a balcony (*svalir*) round it.³

1 The opposite is assumed by E. Koschwitz, *Karls des Grossen Reise*, pp. 60—61; same, *Ueberlieferung und Sprache der Chanson du voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople* (Heilbronn 1876), p. 9.

2 See M. Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* (Princeton 1934), p. 163.

3 *Riddarasögur*, ed. Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík 1949—54), V 170—171; cf. *ÓH* 667/12; cf. Margaret Schlauch, "The 'Rémundar Saga Keisarasonar' as an analogue of 'Arthur of Little Britain'," *Scandinavian Studies and Notes* X (1928—29), pp. 189—202.

There is no direct evidence that the author of *Rauðúlfr þáttr* knew any other French romance, or that he knew Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, although it is possible that he knew both, and King Óláfr's question about the movement of the bed (*ÓH* 672/4), which, it may be noted, Rauðúlfr does not answer directly, suggests that the author was acquainted with the "perilous bed" tradition found in Arthurian literature,¹ although it seems fairly clear that he intends to lead the reader to understand that it is the whole building that is involved. But the influence of the style of southern romance is evident in other things in the *þáttr* besides the description of the sleeping chamber. Not only this building, but all the buildings in Rauðúlfr's homestead are described in some detail, and so is even the surrounding palisade and gateway. This love of physical description, and the fantasy of the rich ornamentations in these passages is somewhat foreign to the style of most of the older Icelandic writings but is typical of southern romances and the sagas based on them. Indeed the whole landscape of the *þáttr* is more suggestive of the traditional world of romance than of the bleaker northern scenery of the sagas. The account of the feast and the service at it with its elaborate *courtoisie*, and the detailed description of the seating arrangements, which is purely decorative and serves no dramatic purpose, may have been suggested by such descriptions in the romance. The similarly detailed account of the arrangement of the beds in the sleeping chamber is evidence of the same taste, and here the *þáttr* is even more detailed than the Charlemagne

1 On this motive see R. S. Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance* (New York 1927), pp. 159—176; idem, "The visit to the Perilous Castle," *PMLA* XLVIII (1933), pp. 1000—1035.

2 In the Charlemagne story, the Welsh and Old Norse versions are more detailed in this respect than the Anglo-Norman text, see *Seibearbeitungen*, p. 28; *Karlsmagnus saga*, p. 472; *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, lines 400—401. A detailed account of the positions of those present at a feast where vows were indulged in is also found in *Hættþóris saga* (*IF* III 33—34).

story. The presence and part played by King Óláfr's household bishop (not named, but presumably Grímkell), rarely mentioned in other parts of *Óláfs saga*, may have been suggested by the role of archbishop Turpin in the French poem, and even that of the six sons of Árne, who are not elsewhere made the constant companions of the king, or given such prominent positions, may have been suggested by the twelve peers of France. Common to all these characters, as well as to Rauðúlfr and his sons, is excessive modesty and deference towards the king. Note, for instance, Rauðúlfr's words to him: "I cannot give you any good counsel, for you know it all already",¹ and Dagr's: "It is my opinion that there is little fault to be found in your character"² — reminiscent of the words of Skaði about the most beautiful of the gods.³ Most of the characters are reluctant to profess any accomplishment, and several at first decline to make any boast, and their elaborate and obviously insincere courtesy is reminiscent of the pointless and repetitious courtesy-formulas that mar the style of the romances and most of the sagas influenced by them. The modesty displayed by these characters is however in strong and obviously deliberate contrast to the brashness and overweening self-confidence of Charlemagne and his twelve peers when they make their ridiculously exaggerated claims. As elsewhere, the author of the *þáttr* reveals the extent of his indebtedness to his models most clearly when he departs from them.

1 *ÓH* 660/13. The reply seems to have been conventional, cf. Þjóðólfr's reply to King Haraldr in *Sneglu-Halla þáttr*: "Ekki kann ek þér ráða ráðin, herra" (*IF* IX 276).

2 *ÓH* 671/6. Cf. Hreiðarr's words to King Magnús, *IF* X 251—252.

3 "Fátt mun ljótt á Baldri", *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1931), p. 81.

4. THE BOASTS

The custom of indulging in elaborate formal vows or boasts at feasts is attested in the heroic literature of many parts of Europe. It is referred to in the Old English *Battle of Maldon*,¹ and described in *Beowulf*, where Beowulf and Unferð quarrel about their respective achievements and stature as heroes in Hroðgar's hall; and afterwards Beowulf, as he receives a goblet from Wealþeo, boasts of what he will do the following night: "I shall perform noble deeds of valour, or else face my death in this mead-hall."²

The same practice, in the form of the boasting for the "Champion's portion", appears in the Irish story of Mac Dathó's Pig,³ and in the story of Bricriu's Feast (although in this story the boasting is mostly carried out by the heroes' wives).⁴ It is also found in Arthurian stories, in *The Avowynge of king Arther*,⁵ where, as in Bricriu's Feast, the testing of the boasts is an episode of considerable importance, and in the Prose Lancelot.⁶ Parallels are also to be found in

1 Ed. E. V. Gordon (London 1937), lines 212 ff.

2 *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Fr. Klaeber, 3rd ed. with first and second supplements (Boston 1950), lines 636 ff. This speech is referred to in the poem as *gilpcwide* (line 640). Cf. also lines 675 ff., 2510 ff., 2633 ff.

3 *Scél Mucci Mic Dathó*, ed. and tr. N. Kershaw Chadwick in *An Early Irish Reader* (Cambridge 1927).

4 Ed. cit. (p. 32, note 4 above), pp. 9 ff.

5 *The Avowynge of king Arther, Sir Gawan, Sir Kaye, and Sir Bawdewyn of Bretan*, stanzas VIII—IX, ed. John Robson, *Three early English Metrical Romances*, Camden Society Publications 18 (London 1842), p. 61.

6 *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac*, ed. H. O. Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* IV (Washington 1911), pp. 266—267. Cf. J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance* (Göttingen 1923), I 409. The work was compiled between 1214 and 1227. Other examples in Celtic and Romance literature are quoted by John R. Reinhard, "Some Illustrations of the Mediaeval *gab*," *Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature*, University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature VIII (1932), pp. 27—57. See also Stefán Einarsson, "Old English *beot* and Old Icelandic *heitstrenging*," *PMLA*

Homer's *Iliad*.¹ The boasting episode in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* presumably represents Frankish (i.e. Germanic) tradition, although Celtic influence may also have contributed.² The verb *gaber* or *gabber* ("to gab or boast") used in the poem appears to be a loan-word from a Germanic language, cognate with Old Norse *gabba*.

The custom appears frequently in the Icelandic sagas, where it becomes a standard literary motive. There are three kinds of entertainment which are similar in many ways. One was called *heitstrenging*: this was the making of a solemn vow to do some particular deed or to follow some particular course of action. Often there is a ritual attached to this practice, and originally it may have had (heathen) religious significance. It is sometimes connected with the *bragafull* or *bragarfull* (chieftain's toast), which may originally have been a libation. It could therefore be compared with the Christian habit of swearing by the mass. The ritual is described in some detail in *Ynglinga saga*.³ Another example is in the story of Ragnarr Loðbrók, where the father of Þóra vowed at the *bragarfull* that he would only give his daughter's hand to the man who slew the serpent that guarded her bower.⁴ The *braga(r)full* is also mentioned in the version of the vows of the Jomsvikings in *Fagrskinna*, while in the *Heimskringla* version this originally heathen practice has been Christianised, and the term *braga(r)full* is replaced by the more Christian word *minni*.⁵

XLIX (1934), pp. 975—993; Kr. Nyrop, "En middelalderlig skik," *Nordisk Tidskrift for Vetenskap, Konst och Industri*, N. F. II (1889), pp. 312—332.

1 See Levin L. Schücking, *Heldenstolz und Würde im Angelsächsischen*, Abh. der Phil.-Hist. Klasse der Sächsischen Akad. der Wissenschaften XLII no. V (Leipzig 1933), p. 5.

2 Cf. Laura Hibbard Loomis and Tom Peete Cross, "Observations on the *Pèlerinage Charlemagne*," *Modern Philology* 25 (1927—28), pp. 331—354.

3 *ÍF* XXVI 66.

4 *Pátr af Ragnars sonum*, *Fas* I 345—346.

5 *Fagrskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1902—03), p. 85; *ÍF*

In some stories oath-making is accompanied by other kinds of ritual. In some cases the oath is sworn with one hand laid on a sacred boar (boars were sacred to the god Freyr),¹ or with one foot on one of the beams or planks of the hall (*stokkr*),² and in one account with one foot on a stone.³ Oath-making seems to have been traditionally associated with yule-feasts,⁴ wedding feasts,⁵ and memorial feasts.⁶ In time the heathen associations of the ceremony were forgotten and *heitstrenging* took on more of the character of Christian vows, although it continued to be thought of as a Christmas pastime.⁷ Its modern counterpart is perhaps the custom of making new-year resolutions.

It is inherent in such practices, carried out in such circumstances (i.e. when drinking was taking place), that men might become too excited and boast unwarily: when the effects of the drink had worn off they might regret having taken part in the ritual and wish they had not committed themselves to a course of action that might prove embarrassing or worse. In *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* this aspect of the ritual is used as a source of comedy, to make Charle-

XXVI 274. The toast is not mentioned in the version of the story in *Jónsvíkinga saga* itself. See Rudolf Meissner, "Minnetrinken in Island und in der Auvergne," *Deutsche Islandforschung* 1930 I (Breslau 1930), pp. 232—245.

1 *Helgakviða Hjquarðssonar*, prose before verse 31; *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, ed. G. Turville-Petre and Christopher Tolkien (London 1956), p. 36.

2 *Harðar saga*, ed. Sture Hast (København 1960), p. 142; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, ed. R. C. Boer (Leiden 1888), p. 186; *Hrólfs saga kraka*, ed. Desmond Slay (Copenhagen 1960), p. 99.

3 *Hœnsa-Þóris saga*, *ÍF* III 34.

4 *Harðar saga*, loc. cit.; *Eiríks saga víðfjrla*, *Fas* III 661; *Sturlaugs saga*, *Fas* III 633; *Ketils saga hœngs*, *Fas* II 125; *Þáttur Sveins ok Finns*, *Fib* I 388.

5 *Svarfdœla saga*, *ÍF* IX 165—166; *Hœnsa-Þóris saga*, *ÍF* III 34.

6 *Ynglinga saga* (see p. 47, note 3 above); *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ed. N. F. Blake (London 1962), p. 28.

7 *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Jón Jóhannesson et. al. (Reykjavík 1946), II 40. Further references in M. Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* (Princeton 1934), pp. 102—103.

magne and his men look ridiculous when they are called upon to put their boasts into practice. But in a heroic context it could be a serious matter: a man was bound by his code to carry out his oath or fulfil his boast whether or not it was made under the influence of drink. Thus Heðinn in *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* made an oath that he afterwards regretted so much that he wandered off without knowing where he was going.¹ The oaths unwisely sworn by the Jomsvikings lead to tragedy and bring about their deaths: it is in vain that Sigvaldi quotes the well-known proverb "ale is a different man" (*Öl er annarr maðr*). He cannot escape the consequences of his unwary words.² Hrafnkell, priest of Freyr, fears that he may bring down the wrath of heaven on himself if he fails to fulfil his vow to the god, though he regrets having to do so.³ The author of the Old English poem *The Wanderer* warns against being too eager in boasting, and advises caution.⁴

In *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, however, the consequences of the boasts are not so serious: the testing is much reduced in importance. Only the accomplishments of Rauðúlfr and his sons are put to the test, and their boasts are successfully vindicated. Those of the king and his followers are accessory to the main threads of the story and are not an essential part of it. But the testing of the boasts of Rauðúlfr and his sons is functional in the construction of the story, for it provides the connecting links between the various episodes. Rauðúlfr's boast and the king's desire to put it to the test lead on to the description of the sleeping chamber, the king's prophetic dream, and its interpretation. Dagr's boast and its testing provide the link between the events at Rauðúlfr's home and the "frame" story of the unmasking of Björn the

1 Prose before verse 31.

2 *Jómsvikinga saga*, ed. N. F. Blake (London 1962), p. 29.

3 *IF* XI 105.

4 *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, rev. C. T. Onions, 13th ed. (Oxford 1954), p. 150, lines 69—72.

Steward. The boasts of Björn the Marshal and Þorbergr Árnason provide the opportunity for the insertion of remarks by the king which connect the *þáttr* more closely with *Óláfs saga helga* (the references to Björn's mission to Uppsala and to the decline in the king's power at the end of his reign). The author shows considerable skill in using the traditional boasting ritual to knit together the various elements of his story.

Another pastime that is often mentioned in Icelandic literature is *mannjafnaðr* or *mannjöfnuðr* ("comparison of men"). This is different from *heitstrenging* in that instead of boasting of what they will do in the future, the participants in this game boast of what they have done or are capable of doing. It is an assertion of one's qualities rather than an oath or a vow. Like *heitstrenging*, this was a form of entertainment that was often indulged in at feasts, and when the ale was flowing freely could have just as disastrous consequences, arousing rivalries and jealousies that could only be settled by bloodshed. This too became a standard literary motive in the sagas as the spark to ignite a blood-feud.

One form of *mannjafnaðr* was for each man to choose someone he thought comparable to himself in accomplishments: he would then compare his own qualities with those of his *jafnaðarmaðr*. The classic example of this is the story of the two kings Eysteinn and Sigurðr, the sons of Magnús Berfœttr, where they catalogue their accomplishments, each one topping the other's boast with another he thought better. Before they had finished they both became angry, and came near to an open quarrel.¹ Obviously it was easy for such a game to pass from boasting of one's own accomplishments

1 *Heimskringla*, IF XXVIII 259 ff. Cf. *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), pp. 382 f. Snorri's version is a much modified and polished retelling of the episode in which literary art is much more apparent.

to the disparagement of other people's.¹ In *Qrvar-Odds saga mannfafnaðr* is combined with a drinking match: as each man declares his accomplishment (in verse) he offers his opponent a horn of mead. The latter then has to drink this as well as capping the boast.² In *Svarfðœla saga mannfafnaðr* and *heitstrenging* are both performed together as parts of the same ritual.³ The original function of this form of boasting is perhaps preserved in *Hálfs saga*, where it is a prelude to battle, and a part of the traditional challenge and defiance.⁴

In another form of *mannfafnaðr* those taking part do not boast of their own achievements but discuss those of others: very often those chosen for discussion would be well-known figures, the chief men of the district. It is obvious that this also was liable to have disastrous consequences, and could lead to bloodshed in a society where personal honour and reputation had such importance. This game is used in many sagas as the motivation for quarrels and fighting.⁵ Another name for it seems to have been *kjósa sér fulltrúi* ("to choose a patron for oneself").⁶

A third kind of entertainment is a traditional custom mentioned especially in Heroic Sagas and other legendary stories. A hero arriving at the court of a foreign king in such stories was often asked what his accomplishments (*iþróttir*) were, and sometimes was required to demonstrate them, in some cases in competition with one of the king's champions or even with the king himself.⁷ This was a sort of initiation

1 Cf. *Bandamanna saga*, *ÍF* VII 354.

2 *Qrvar-Odds saga*, ed. R. C. Boer (Leiden 1888), pp 159 ff.

3 *ÍF* IX 165—166.

4 *Fas* II 47 ff. Cf. *The Fight at Finnsburg* (see p. 46, note 2 above), lines 24—27. *Mannfafnaðr* in a mythical setting is the subject of *Hárbarðsljóð*, and merges with flyting in *Lokasenna*.

5 E.g. *Eyrbyggja saga*, *ÍF* IV 98—99; *Fib* I 66, II 271 ff.; *Flóamanna saga*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), p. 53.

6 *Víga-Glúms saga*, ed. G. Turville-Petre, 2nd ed. (Oxford 1960), p. 23 (see the note, *ibid.*, p. 69).

7 E.g. Þórr and Loki at the court of Útgardaloki, *Edda Snorra Sturlu-*

the newcomer had to undergo before being accepted as a guest: he had to show his worth before being allowed to sit down with heroes. The author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* may have been thinking partly of this custom when he wrote his account of the boasts, for he uses such phrases as *taka til íþróttar*(r) *sér* and *segja sínar íþróttar* ("choose as one's accomplishment(s), name one's accomplishments") of the entertainment. It is also worth noting that in the translation of *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* in *Karlamagnus saga* the French word *gaber* is rendered *segja sína íþrótt*.

Although the idea of including the boasting episode in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* was probably suggested by the episode in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, it is clear that the author was also influenced by these native traditions, both in the actual form of the boasting and in the choice of accomplishments for his characters. While the "gabs" in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* are most similar to the *heitstrenging* of Norse tradition, in that they refer to the deeds of valour that Charlemagne and his men intend to perform the following day, the episode in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* has more in common with the traditional naming of one's accomplishments, in that most of the boasts are not really vows, but concern what the boasters think they are able to do. That the author was also thinking of the game of *mannjafnaðr* is shown by the fact that after the boasts of the king and his chief followers the other guests pair off to compare their accomplishments, much in the same way as the kings Eysteinn and Sigurðr did. The element of comparison also appears in the king's speech to the bishop after he has heard Rauðúlfr's sons declare their accomplishments (*ÓH* 663/2 ff.).

The accomplishments mentioned in the entertainment in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* are very varied and exemplify the wide con-

sonar, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1931), p. 54; *Qrvar-Odds saga*, ed. R. C. Boer (Leiden 1888), p. 143; *Hemings þáttur*, ed. G. F. Jensen (Copenhagen 1962), p. 13; *ÍF* V 117. Cf. also Axel Olrik, *The Heroic Legends of Denmark*, tr. Lee M. Hollander (New York 1919), pp. 315 f.

notations of the word *íþrótt*. Unlike Charlemagne and his men, the guests at Rauðúlfr's feast were not drunk. Their boasts are more restrained and rational than those of the Frenchmen, whose "gabs" are concerned with superhuman feats of strength, ridiculous because of their impossibility. Many of the accomplishments boasted of in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* are traditional in Icelandic literature. The author has suited the boasts to the characters and positions of the boasters. Those of the six sons of Árni are in accordance with viking ideals and practices. Finnur and Þorbergr's are vows of loyalty to their liege lord, recalling the famous vows of the Joms-vikings Þorkell Hávi, Búi inn Digri, Sigurðr Kápa, Vagn Ákason, and Björn inn Brezki, who all swore to follow Sigvaldi on his expedition to Norway and not to let him down as long as he was alive and wanted to go on with it.¹ Both Finnur and Þorbergr remained faithful to King Óláfr to the last (they had earlier sworn oaths of loyalty to the king²) and fought with him in his last battle at Stiklarstaðir where they were both wounded.

Kálfr, whose unusual boast strikes a somewhat menacing note in this otherwise innocent entertainment, alone of the sons of Árni turned against the king in the last years of his reign and fought against him at Stiklarstaðir; according to *Heimskringla* he gave the king one of the three wounds from which he died. His chief reasons for turning against the king seem to have been, according to Snorri Sturluson, his resentment for the death on the king's orders of his stepson Þórir Ölvisson and for the death of Áslákr Fitjaskalli.³ His boast thus foreshadows his later conduct.

Kolbjörn's three accomplishments were accurate shooting, skiing, and swimming. These three skills are often

1 *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ed. N. F. Blake (London 1962), pp. 28—29. This kind of boast is also traditional in Old English literature, e.g. *Beowulf*, lines 2633 ff., *The Battle of Maldon* passim.

2 *ÓH* 386.

3 Cf. *ÓH* 465, 490, 505—506.

mentioned together in Old Norse sources: Hemingr displays all three before King Haraldr Harðráði in *Hemings þáttur*, and they are also among the eight accomplishments of King Haraldr himself, which he catalogued in a verse, and among the skills boasted of by the two kings Sigurðr and Eysteinn in Snorri Sturluson's version of their game of *mannjafnaðr*.¹ Bow-shooting and skiing are among Rognvaldr Kali's nine accomplishments² as well as being the particular activities associated with the divine figures Ullr and Skaði. Swimming and archery are among Qrvar-Oddr's accomplishments and Eindriði and King Óláfr Tryggvason also compete at these two sports.³

Árni's accomplishment was the ability to control a sailing ship in the dangerous waters near the coast in the strongest wind without reefing sail. This *íþrótt* was practised by the legendary Hálfrekkr.⁴ Árni and Kolbjörn both fought and died for the king at Stiklarstaðir.

Arnbjörn's accomplishment, the ability to bend the strongest bow, was not admired and possessed by the vikings alone. It figures in the *Odyssey* (book 21). It is also mentioned in the *mannjafnaðr* of the kings Eysteinn and Sigurðr, and in *Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar*.⁵ Arnbjörn was killed by Grjótgarðr Qlvisson in mistake for the king shortly after the events of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* (ÓH 467).

The accomplishments of Rauðúlfr and his sons, and those of the king, the bishop, and Björn the Marshal are of a different kind. They refer not to physical strength or ability, but to more intellectual achievements. Rauðúlfr and his sons have the accomplishments of scholars — the interpreta-

1 *Hemings þáttur*, ed. G. F. Jensen (Copenhagen 1962), pp. 13—25; *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), p. 86; *ÍF* XXVIII 259 f.

2 *ÍF* XXXIV 130.

3 *Qrvar-Odds saga*, ed. cit. pp. 145—157; *Flb* I 461—463.

4 *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*, ed. Sophus Bugge, *Norrøne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold I* (Christiania 1864), p. 16.

5 *Flb* I 532.

tion of dreams (considered a serious art in the middle ages as in biblical literature), astronomy (note that it is astronomy, and not astrology), and physiognomy. Rauðúlfr is probably modelled chiefly on Daniel, although he perhaps has spiritual fellows in such dream interpreters as Þorleifr spaki, Gestr Oddleifsson, and even Drauma-Jón.¹ Sigurðr's *íþrótt*, astronomy, does not figure much in the sagas, but one might compare the *stjörnu-íþrótt* of the magician in *Jóns saga helga*, who knew everyone's star as soon as he saw them.² Astronomy was much studied in Iceland and a high standard was reached in the science in the twelfth century, as such works as *Rímbeğla* show.³

The king's *íþrótt*, the ability to remember faces, is a somewhat surprising one. It is not mentioned elsewhere in Old Norse, but, as the bishop remarks, its choice shows great wisdom and discernment. The bishop's accomplishment, suitable to his station, is similar to that of the French priest Ríkini in *Jóns saga helga* who, it is said, besides having musical and poetic talents, knew all the chants for all the offices of the day with their proper tunes for the whole year by heart.⁴

Björn the Marshal's accomplishment is also in accordance with his station. The duties of a marshal (*stallari*: the word was formed as an equivalent of the medieval Latin *stabularius*) are defined in *Hirðskrá*⁵ as to announce all the king's

1 See *ÍF* XXVI 90—91; *Laxdæla saga*; *Drauma-Jóns saga*, ed. R. I. Page, *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* I (1957), pp. 22—56.

2 *Biskupa sögur* (Kaupmannahöfn 1858—78) I 228. Compare the words used to describe the king's and Dagr's accomplishments (*ÓH* 662/10—13, 664/2—4) with those used of the magician: "hann kennir hvers manns stjörnu þess er hann sér ok hyggir at um sinn."

3 See *Alfræði islenzk* II, ed. N. Beckman and Kr. Kålund (København 1914—16); *Áldsta delen af Cod. 1812 4to*, ed. Ludvig Larsson (København 1883).

4 *Biskupa sögur* (Kaupmannahöfn 1858—78) I 239. On Ríkini see p. 40 above.

5 Chapter 22, *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387*, ed. R. Keyser and P. A. Munch et al. (Christiania 1846—95), II 410 f. *Hirðskrá* was compiled in

business at public assemblies and meetings of the royal household. The rank was a high one.¹ According to Snorri Sturluson Björn was "a famous man, known to many by sight and voice, and to everyone who had seen King Óláfr, because Björn stood up at every assembly and announced at every assembly the king's business".² Björn is frequently mentioned in the sagas of St Óláfr and was certainly a historical person, although his father's name is not recorded. He is sometimes called Björn Digri ("the fat") and he is represented as one of the king's most faithful followers, although at one point his loyalty wavered.³ He fell at Stiklarstaðir.

All the boasts in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, varied though they are, are in great contrast to the extravagant boasts of Charlemagne and his men, and epitomise the different outlooks of the Icelandic sagas and the French romances. The author of the *þáttr* has omitted all trace of the satire and exuberant farce of his model and has made the whole story more serious and down to earth. He has omitted the embarrassment of the boasters when they are called upon to carry out their boasts: those that are tested (those of Rauðúlfr and his sons) are successfully vindicated. He has also omitted the spy who reports the boasts to the host in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*: indeed in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* the host takes part in the boasting. But the ironical "asides" of King Hugue's spy, in which he drily comments on each of the boasts, may be reflected in the comments of King Óláfr on the boasts in the *þáttr*. But there is no vestige of the irony of the spy's remarks in the solemnly commendatory and encouraging speeches of King Óláfr, which are in fact much more like the comments of King Sveinn on the oaths of the Jomsvik-

the reign of Magnús Hákonarson (1263—1280), but much of it was probably based on older practice.

1 "Nest lendum monnum oc kanceler i hirð konongs ero stallarar at ollum sœmdum" (*Hirðskrá*, loc. cit.).

2 *ÓH* 129.

3 *ÓH* 509 ff.

ings, although there too the comments are made tongue in cheek. In particular the comments of King Sveinn on the oaths of Þorkell Hávi and Sigurðr Kápa are very like the comments of King Óláfr on the *íþróttir* of Finnur and Þorbergr Árnason.¹ There could well be a literary relationship between the two stories. In the form in which it survives *Jómsvíkinga saga* was probably composed about 1230, and so is likely to be later than *Rauðúlfs þátr*. But there is believed to have been an earlier version of the story on which the accounts of the Jomsvikings in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* were based, and this earlier version could have been known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þátr*. It is uncertain how full the account of the vows would have been in this earlier version, but it can be seen from *Fagrskinna* that some at least of King Sveinn's comments were present in it.² Some similarities between the dream in *Rauðúlfs þátr* and the dreams and visions in *Jómsvíkinga saga* have been noted above.

5. SNORRI STURLUSON'S VERSION OF THE STORY

In chapter 156 of his separate saga of King Óláfr the Saint ("The Greatest saga of St Óláfr"), Snorri Sturluson put a shortened version of *Rauðúlfs þátr*,³ including only the "frame" story and the boasts of Rauðúlfr's sons, which were necessary for the discovery of Björn the Steward's guilt. The rest of the boasting episode, the description of the sleeping chamber, and the king's dream were all omitted by Snorri. This original chapter 156 survives in only two of the inde-

1 *Fib* I 180—181, *ÓH* 664/13, 665/2—3. The different versions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* vary considerably in the form and length of these comments and in some they are almost completely omitted.

2 *Fagrskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1902—03), p. 86, where the king's comment on Sigvaldi's boast is included. None of the comments are included in the *Heimskringla* version of the story.

3 *ÓH* 460—462.

pendent manuscripts of his *Óláfs saga helga* (St. 2, 4to and AM 61, fol.), and in the corresponding part of *Heimskringla*.¹ In the other manuscripts later redactors have replaced this chapter with the text of the *þáttr* on which it was based.

Although in chapter 156 Snorri omitted most of the decorative and elaborative episodes of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, the parts of it he did include correspond with the text of the *þáttr* almost word for word. His version of the story consists of five passages which correspond to the following parts of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*:

1. (ÓH 460/14—461/12) The beginning of the *þáttr*, ÓH 655/1, to ÓH 656/8 with 658/11: this is the introduction, telling of Björn's accusation of Rauðúlfr's sons, the arrival of the king, his absolving them of blame, and their invitation to him to stay with their father, as far as the beginning of the feast.

2. (ÓH 461/12—17) The passage from ÓH 681/3—8, where Rauðúlfr tells the king his lineage and history.

3. (ÓH 461/17—18 and 19—22) The passage from ÓH 661/10 to 663/2, where the king asks the sons of Rauðúlfr to name their accomplishments.

4. (ÓH 461/19 and 22—23) From ÓH 670/13 to 671/10: the testing of these boasts.

5. (ÓH 461/23—462/7) From ÓH 681/8 to the end of the *þáttr*, in which Dagr reveals that Björn the Steward is the thief and he is punished.

Passages 3 and 4 Snorri has very much abbreviated, but passages 1, 2, and 5 he seems to have copied direct from a manuscript of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. There is therefore no reason to suppose that the version of the story known to Snorri dif-

1 IF XXVII 298—299. The version of *Óláfs saga helga* in *Heimskringla* is taken to be Snorri's own revision of his separate *Óláfs saga*.

ferred substantially from that which survives. It is in accordance with what we know of Snorri's methods that he should omit everything in the story that had no bearing on his immediate purpose: it would have been surprising if he had kept such episodes as King Óláfr's dream and the boasting episode in such a work as his *Óláfs saga*. On the other hand it is difficult to imagine that *Rauðúlfs þáttur* can ever have lacked these episodes, for there is little point in the story without them. The conventional "frame" story is obviously only the excuse for the much more interesting episodes of the boasting and the dream, which were clearly the author's main interest. These are not merely decorative motives that that could have been added afterwards, for they are the centre of the story. It is therefore unlikely that the version of the story known to Snorri lacked any of the episodes in the extant version.¹

Snorri has added nothing to the details he found in *Rauðúlfs þáttur*. But he has made some changes. He has altered the order of events, making Rauðúlfr tell the king about his family history immediately after the king's arrival at his home; and putting Rauðúlfr's sons' statement of their accomplishments immediately after this. The compression of the story has also resulted in the testing of these boasts apparently taking place at the same time, instead of the next day as in the *þáttur*. Another change Snorri has made is the transference of Rauðúlfr's accomplishment (the ability to interpret dreams) to his son Sigurðr, who is therefore given two accomplishments.² All specific references to Rauðúlfr's accomplishments Snorri has omitted. His third change is the most significant. In *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, when the king asks Dagr (in order to test his boast) what defect he can see in his

1 Cf. Sigurður Nordal, *Om Olaf den helliges Saga* (København 1914), pp. 86—88. A contrary opinion was expressed by Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* (København 1894—1902), II 645, III 90.

2 See p. 71 below. Many of Snorri's changes have influenced later redactors of the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, see below pp. 71—75.

character, Dagr replies, after being pressed, that it was the love of women (*kvennanna ást*). But in Snorri's retelling this becomes merely "Dagr mentioned something which the king considered correct". This hesitancy would seem to imply that Snorri did not agree with the opinion of the author of the *þáttr* on this point.¹ There are many other aspects of King Óláfr's character in which Snorri has departed from his sources, re-interpreting it according to his own personal (and very convincing) idea of what the saint was like, and this is a good example of his method, which was to completely remould his source, while appearing to stick very close to it: the mere omission of the whole episode would not have had the same effect of deliberate correction.

Chapter 155 of Snorri's *Óláfs saga* (*Frá Birni ármanni*) is in effect an introduction to the story of Rauðúlfr and relates only to it. It introduces Björn the Steward and the thefts which are the background of the story. Neither are mentioned elsewhere in *Óláfs saga* than in these two chapters. Chapter 155 is therefore meaningless except as part of the story of Rauðúlfr, and is essential to that story. There are several references in the first paragraphs of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* to things mentioned in chapter 155 (*þar . . . í Eystridǫlum*, ÓH 655/1—2; *á þingi því, sleit svá því þingi*, ÓH 655/3—4 and 8; *sǫkum þessum, mál þetta*, ÓH 655/5, 656/2). From this it is clear that the matter at least of chapter 155 must have been included in the original *þáttr* before it was interpolated into *Óláfs saga*. Since in the parts of the *þáttr* he uses Snorri seems to have reproduced the wording of the original text almost exactly, it is likely that his chapter 155 also followed the original introduction to the story fairly closely. Chapter 155 should therefore be considered part of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* and should be included in any edition of the story, although it is possible that it has been subject to more alteration than the rest of the text.

1 Cf. Sigurður Nordal, *Snorri Sturluson* (Reykjavík 1920), p. 240.

In the three chapters of his *Óláfs saga* following the story of Rauðúlfr (chapters 157—159, *ÓH* 462—465) Snorri tells how Rauðúlfr's son Dagr (who, as we are told in the *þáttr*, had entered the king's service) helped to unmask a traitor, Þórir Ólvisson, by means of his accomplishment, the ability to see a man's true character. The evidence of Þórir's guilt was a hidden gold arm-ring, a bribe from King Knútr of Denmark. This is reminiscent of *Þórarins þáttr Neffjúlfs-sonar*,¹ where Þórarinn is similarly found to have a gold arm-ring given him by Knútr concealed on his arm, although, unlike Þórir, he is found to be not guilty of treason. There is probably a literary relationship between these two stories, although it is difficult to say which is the borrower.

The episode of Þórir's discovery cannot originally have been part of the story of Rauðúlfr. It is closely connected with other events in *Óláfs saga* and the tone and style is different from that of the *þáttr*, which clearly ends with the discovery of Björn the Steward's guilt: the addition of an extra episode would upset the balance of the story. Since Rauðúlfr and his sons are not mentioned elsewhere in *Óláfs saga*, it is probable that they are fictional characters invented by the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. Dagr cannot therefore have originally been concerned with the discovery of Þórir's treachery: his part in the story was probably invented by Snorri.

The episode of Þórir's death appears to have been related very briefly in the versions of *Óláfs saga* older than Snorri's. The substance of the Middle saga is probably reproduced fairly accurately in the Legendary saga, which has simply: "He (Óláfr) had four of their men slain. One was the nephew of Þórir Hundr (i.e. Þórir Ólvisson: his name is not even given). Another was Grjótgarðr, whose wife Kálfr Árnason subsequently married."² The episode does not survive in Styrmir's version, nor in the Oldest saga, but

1 *ÓH* 805—808.

2 *Óláfs Saga hins helga*, ed. O. A. Johnsen (Kristiania 1922), p. 63.

neither are likely to have been any fuller, although Styrmir evidently had Þórir's name.¹ It is probable that Snorri, finding the episode rather bare in his sources, wished to provide details of the discovery of Þórir's guilt. Knowing the story of Rauðúlfr, he evidently decided to make Dagr the agent of the discovery, and based the episode on the discovery of Björn the Steward's guilt. In order to introduce Dagr and his special gift convincingly, he would then have needed to include the story of Rauðúlfr in his saga, or at least a summary of it. This would explain why he included only the "frame" story, and omitted the central episodes of the boasting and the dream: he needed the story only to introduce Dagr, whom he needed for the following episode, and so the rest of the story was, for his purposes, superfluous. Snorri was not necessarily blind to the qualities of the *þáttr* as literature, but he had no room for it in his saga.

This, therefore, must be why Snorri thought it worth while to include the story of Rauðúlfr in his *Óláfs saga* at all in such a mutilated form: Rauðúlfr and Björn the Steward are not important in the story of St Óláfr, but Þórir Ólvisson (or at least his death) was. To make Þórir's death convincing, Snorri needed Dagr, and so he needed a summary of *Rauðúlfs þáttr*.

There are some verbal borrowings from *Rauðúlfs þáttr* in Snorri's account of Þórir's discovery which confirm both that the Þórir episode is secondary to the *þáttr*, and that it can never have been part of it. The account of King Óláfr's testing of Dagr's wisdom in the Þórir episode (ÓH 463/1-5) is clearly adapted from the account of his testing of Rauðúlfr's wisdom in the *þáttr* (ÓH 659/2-7). Similarly the words Dagr uses to reveal Þórir's treachery (ÓH 463/16-464/2) echo his words in the *þáttr* of the king's one failing (ÓH 671/8-9). The two passages in the *þáttr* are of course among those that are omitted in Snorri's shortened version of it.

1 It occurs in an extract from Styrmir's saga in *Flateyjarbók* (articulus 16), see ÓH 692.

In chapter 43 of *Óláfs saga helga* (ÓH 103—104, cf. *ÍF* XXVII 72—73, XXVIII 204) Snorri describes the customs and seating arrangements in the king's court at Niðaróss. His account is clearly based on an older one also preserved in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*,¹ which was also probably used by the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* in his account of Rauðúlfr's feast. There are two details in which both Snorri and *Rauðúlfs þáttr* depart from the *Morkinskinna* account: both assign the seat next to the king to the household bishop, and the seat opposite the king (the second high-seat) to the king's marshal. In *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* this seat is assigned to the chief counsellor (*ráðgjafi*), while the places of the bishop and marshal are not mentioned. These two details Snorri probably borrowed from *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. As mentioned above, the high position given the bishop in the *þáttr* (and so perhaps in Snorri's *Óláfs saga*) may have been suggested by the role of archbishop Turpin in Charlemagne legend.

In the form in which it survives, even if chapter 155 of Snorri's *Óláfs saga* is taken to be part of it, *Rauðúlfs þáttr* can never have been an independent story. The reader is expected to know the historical background of the story, and to have considerable knowledge of the events of Óláfr's reign. There are many laconic references to the events of his reign which would need explanation unless the *þáttr* is read as a part of *Óláfs saga*.² The characters in the *þáttr* who do not appear elsewhere in *Óláfs saga* are introduced in the usual saga style (Björn the Steward, Rauðúlfr and his family), but those already known from *Óláfs saga* are brought into the story casually without any introduction

1 *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1932), p. 289; *Fagrskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1902—03), p. 306. These accounts refer to the changes in these customs introduced by Óláfr kyrri (1067—93).

2 See p. 10, note 1 above. The point of some of the boasts of the sons of Árne would also be lost if the reader did not know about their subsequent behaviour, see p. 53 above.

(King Óláfr, the bishop, Björn the Marshal, the sons of Árni).

It is possible that the *þáttr* was at some time adapted to fit it into the context of *Óláfs saga*. But the textual history of the *þáttr* shows that it was interpolated into Snorri's *Óláfs saga* not just once by one redactor, but on several different occasions independently.¹ It can be seen from the textual variants that the various redactors who interpolated the *þáttr* into the saga made some changes, chiefly attempts to combine Snorri's shortened version with the text of the *þáttr*. But they did not alter the way in which the characters were introduced, nor the references to other parts of *Óláfs saga*. Any changes of this kind must therefore have been made before the *þáttr* was interpolated into Snorri's saga. This means that it was probably originally intended to be part of one of the earlier versions of *Óláfs saga*. There is no trace of the story of Rauðúlfr in the *Legendary saga*, and so it is unlikely that it ever formed part of either the *Oldest saga* or the *Middle saga*. It is probable that it was originally intended to be part of *Styrmir's saga*.

There is a reference in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* to Björn the Marshal's diplomatic mission to Sweden in 1018. Commenting on Björn's boast, the king remarked that he could well believe that Björn would always be fearless in announcing his master's business, since at the Uppsala-þing he had made the king of Sweden angry, a thing most people would have feared to do (*ÓH* 667/1). The story is told in Snorri's *Óláfs saga*, chapter 64 (*ÓH* 165–166): Björn had been sent with an offer of a peace settlement to the king of Sweden, who had refused all dealings with Norway or to recognise Óláfr as king, not even allowing his name to be mentioned in his presence, referring to him only as "the fat man" (*inn digri maðr*). At an assembly called by the Swedish king at Uppsala, Björn suddenly spoke up and delivered his message in

1 See pp. 70 and 76 below.

a loud, clear voice. The king was furious, but his subjects, tiring of the continual hostility with their neighbours, are said to have forced him to accept a settlement. Although the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* must have known this story in some form, he cannot have known it from Snorri's saga, which was written after the *þáttur*. There is no reason to think that the reference to Björn's mission was added after the *þáttur* was written.

The episode does not survive among the fragments of the Oldest saga, but in the Legendary saga, which can be presumed to reproduce the Oldest saga and Middle saga fairly closely at this point, the story of these negotiations is very different. In this version Björn did indeed undertake the mission to Sweden, but it was the Icелander Hjalti Skeggjason who took the main part in the negotiations and brought about the settlement, and the striking scene at the Uppsala-þing is entirely lacking.¹ Obviously it cannot have been this version of the episode that was known to the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*. The only other possibility is that the version of *Óláfs saga* he knew was Styrmir's, which must have had the episode in a form closer to that in which it appears in Snorri's saga than to the version in the Legendary saga (this part of Styrmir's saga unfortunately does not survive).

It has been assumed that the alteration of this episode in *Óláfs saga* was Snorri's work: that he must have thought it unlikely that such an important mission would have been entrusted to (and carried out by) Hjalti, a foreigner, and so increased the role of Björn and reduced that of Hjalti.² But the reference in *Rauðúlfs þáttur* shows that the scene at the Uppsala-þing is older than Snorri's saga, and must have been in Styrmir's saga: the alteration of the episode must be at least in part Styrmir's work.

¹ *Óláfs Saga hins helga*, ed. O. A. Johnsen (Kristiania 1922), pp. 36—39.

² Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *ÍF* XXVII xxxvii.

In *Rauðúlfs þáttur* Dagr finds as king Óláfr's chief vice the love of women (*kvennanna ást*), and the king admits that this is correct. This seems to be the invention of the author of the *þáttur*, and need have no specific source. But among the fragments surviving from Styrmir's *Óláfs saga*¹ there are some stories told about the king's temptations in this direction, and Styrmir includes some verses supposed to have been composed by the king in which he confesses to desire for various women.² Styrmir says that Óláfr "fought daily against the ancient fiend", and conquered his desire for one of his mistresses because "he counted the will of God in heaven more important than his own personal desire". Some of these stories Styrmir may have taken from the older versions of *Óláfs saga*, but some he probably collected and wrote down for the first time himself:³ evidently he was interested in this sort of story, and his saga seems to have included more of them than any of the other sagas of the saint. Here again, therefore, there are indications of a particularly close affinity between *Rauðúlfs þáttur* and Styrmir's version of *Óláfs saga*. Snorri, besides omitting the reference to the king's vice in the story of Rauðúlfr, also did not include any of Styrmir's stories about the king's amorous adventures, either because he did not agree with Styrmir's interpretation of the king's character or because he found the stories uninteresting or irrelevant. At any rate, if his intention was to suppress them, he failed, for later redactors of his work have added them to the saga again, making sure that they were not forgotten. The picture of the king given in the *þáttur* is much more like that of the older sagas, which

1 *Fib* III 237—248; *ÓH* 683—687, 771, 820. Cf. *ÓH* 1127 ff.; Sigurður Nordal, *Om Olaf den helliges saga* (København 1914), pp. 69 ff.

2 *ÓH* 683, 686, 687, 771, 820; *Skj* A I 220—222.

3 The verse about Ingibjörg Finnsdóttir, *ÓH* 687, is also in the *Legendary saga* (p. 57), and so must have been also in the *Middle saga*, from which both the *Legendary saga* and *Styrmir's saga* were derived.

portray him as a saint and martyr, than like Snorri's, where other sides of his character are more strongly stressed.

It is therefore probable that *Rauðúlfs þátr* was intended to be a chapter in, or perhaps an appendix to, Styrmir's saga of St Óláfr, and may even have been written by Styrmir, or at least the surviving version may have been made by him. Styrmir's saga was one of Snorri's chief sources for his *Óláfs saga*, and it would then have been in this saga that he found the story of Rauðúlfr. Later redactors of Snorri's saga interpolated into it a great deal of the material from Styrmir's saga that he had omitted, and it was probably from the same place that the complete version of *Rauðúlfs þátr* was taken to replace Snorri's shortened version in some redactions. Several versions of Styrmir's saga seem to have existed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries,¹ and it could have been in the copying of these that the variants in the different texts of *Rauðúlfs þátr* grew up. The fact that *Rauðúlfs þátr* is found in some manuscripts of *Óláfs saga* that otherwise have no interpolations from Styrmir's saga does not necessarily speak against this conclusion: there is no reason why an interpolator should not select one *þátr* from a saga, and *Rauðúlfs þátr* may also have circulated independently of Styrmir's saga.²

The history of several of the other works used by Snorri as sources for his historical writings is very similar. He selected material from many sagas such as *Orkneyinga saga*, *Færeyinga saga*, and *Jómsvíkinga saga* for his *Óláfs saga helga* and *Heimskringla*. Later redactors of Snorri's works interpolated into them the parts of his sources that he had omitted, making composite or conflated texts, which incidentally spoiled the artistic unity and construction both of Snorri's works and his sources, but by this means saving many a work which might otherwise have been completely

1 See OH 1128—29.

2 Sigurður Nordal, *Om Olav den helliges saga*, pp. 86—87, thought it unlikely that *Rauðúlfs þátr* was ever part of Styrmir's saga.

lost, for Snorri's works superseded many of the sagas written before his time. A version of *Þormóðar þáttur* survives fragmentarily as part of the Oldest saga of St Óláfr, and a similar version, but somewhat shortened, is preserved entire as part of the Legendary saga. Styrmir probably included the story in his version of *Óláfs saga*, but Snorri omitted it in his. It was almost certainly from Styrmir's saga that the *þáttur* was later interpolated into the text of Snorri's saga in *Flateyjarbók*, where it has been given an extended introduction and conclusion.¹ *Þiðranda þáttur ok Þórhalls* is believed to have been written by Gunnlaugr Leifsson as part of his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, which was one of Snorri's sources for *Heimskringla*. Snorri did not include *Þiðranda þáttur* in his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, but a later redactor interpolated it into the saga, although the surviving version may have been subject to considerable editorial alteration.²

6. PRESERVATION

Rauðúlfs þáttur is preserved as an interpolation in several fourteenth century manuscripts of Snorri Sturluson's separate *Óláfs saga helga*, where it replaces Snorri's original chapter 156. The oldest manuscript in which it is found was written about 1300. There are several manuscripts of this saga that contain a large amount of material interpolated by later redactors. Much of this material was derived from the lost version of *Óláfs saga* compiled by Styrmir Kárasen.

1 *Flb* II 199—203; cf. *ÍF* VI lxxx. A third version, drastically shortened and lacking the extended introduction and conclusion of the *Flateyjarbók* version, was interpolated into the text of Snorri's saga in *Tómasskinna* (*ÓH* 803—804). This was probably also derived from Styrmir's saga.

2 *Flb* I 419 ff.; *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, ed. Ólafur Hall-dórsson (København 1958—61), II 145 ff. See Dag Strömbäck, *Tidrande och Diserna* (Lund 1949), pp. 13—18; *ÍF* V xlii f.; Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, *Om de norske kongers sagaer* (Oslo 1937), pp. 94 and 107.

Rauðúlfs þáttur is found not only in some of these "interpolated" manuscripts, but also in some manuscripts that otherwise preserve a relatively pure text of Snorri's saga. It is therefore the most frequently found interpolation, and evidently enjoyed great popularity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹

Of the manuscripts of Snorri's separate *Óláfs saga* that have independent value for the purpose of textual criticism, only eleven still contain the relevant part of the saga (the rest are defective). These are divided by the editors into three groups according to the relationships between the texts of *Óláfs saga* they preserve.² Some manuscripts belong to different classes in different parts of the saga, but in the part where the story of Rauðúlfr is found they are classified as follows:

Class A: St. 2 (St. perg. 4to nr. 2).³
 Boejarbók (AM 73 b, fol.).⁴
 75 a (AM 75 a, fol.).⁵

Class B: 68 (AM 68, fol.).

1 As well as in later times, see *ÓH* 1130—31. The story of Rauðúlfr was made into a set of *rimur*, probably in the early 16th century (*Rímnasafn*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, København 1905—22, I 215—221); see Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Rimur fyrir 1600*, *Safn Fræðafjelagsins IX* (Kaupmannahöfn 1934), pp. 464—465. Only a fragment of the beginning of these *rimur* survives, and it is difficult to see what they were like, but the use of both the names Rauðr and Rauðúlfr implies that the poem was based on one of the longer versions of the story, not Snorri's where only the name Rauðr is used.

2 *ÓH* 1091—1114. Full descriptions of all these manuscripts are given in *ÓH* 879 ff.

3 Facsimile in *Corpus Codicum Islandicorum Medii Aevi XV* (Copenhagen 1942).

4 This manuscript is fragmentary, but its text can be reconstructed from paper manuscripts derived from it when it was in a more complete state than it is in now, see *ÓH* 978 ff.

5 This manuscript is fragmentary, but the text of the lacunae can be supplied from the seventeenth century copy in 321 (AM 321, 4to), see *ÓH* 898 ff.

Class C: 61 (AM 61, fol.).

St. 4 (St. perg. 4to nr. 4).

Flateyjarbók (GkS 1005, fol.).¹

Bergsbók (St. perg. fol. nr. 1).²

Tómasskinna (GkS 1008, fol.).³

75 c (AM 75 c, fol.).

325 (AM 325 V, 4to).

Two of these, St. 2 and 61, still contain Snorri's original chapter 156.⁴ The other nine have *Rauðúlfs þáttur* instead. *Rauðúlfs þáttur* cannot therefore have been interpolated into just one manuscript of the saga from which all nine that contain it are derived: it must have been interpolated by independent redactors into separate manuscripts belonging to each of the three classes.

Although the *þáttur* must once have existed in manuscripts independent of Snorri's *Óláfs saga*, none of these now survive. In those manuscripts in which it is found as a separate story, the oldest of which is GkS 2845, 4to, written in the fifteenth century,⁵ the text is still derived from versions in which it was part of Snorri's saga. In the case of GkS 2845, 4to, this is shown by the fact that the following chapters of the saga (157–161, *ÓH* 462–467) have been copied out as part of the *þáttur* although they cannot originally have belonged to it. The scribe who did this evidently did so because these chapters tell of events in which Rauðúlfr's son Dagr took part.

1 Facsimile in *Corpus Codicum Islandicorum Medii Aevi* I (Copenhagen 1930).

2 Facsimile in *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in facsimile* 5 (Copenhagen 1963).

3 Facsimile in *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in facsimile* 6 (Copenhagen 1964).

4 One other class C manuscript, AM 325 VII, 4to, which has a lacuna in this part of the saga, can be seen, from the length of the lacuna, to have once had Snorri's version of the story, and not the full text of the *þáttur*, see *ÓH* 935, 1129.

5 Facsimile in *Manuscripta Islandica* 2 (Copenhagen 1955). See *ÓH* 1130.

The manuscripts containing *Rauðúlfs þáttr* preserve the text in several distinct redactions which are characterised by the attempts of various redactors to combine it with the text of Snorri's shortened version of it, or to tell the events in the same order as Snorri does. In some redactions this has resulted in some episodes being duplicated, and most of these alterations are extraordinarily clumsy and upset the balance and construction of the original story. The only manuscript that appears not to have been subject to such contamination with Snorri's version is St. 4, which is therefore taken to preserve the best text of the *þáttr* although it is not the oldest manuscript.¹

One redaction of the *þáttr* (a) is found in *Flateyjarbók* and *Bergsbók*. These two manuscripts share a large number of variants in the text of the *þáttr* against the other seven, see e.g. *ÓH* 655/8, 656/1, 3, 4–5, 658/14, 661/9, 671/7, 672/6, 10, 673/10, 676/11, 677/8 (variant readings). In a few cases St. 4 agrees with these two manuscripts against the other six, see *ÓH* 661/10, 664/1, 670/6–8 (*AM* 75 c defective), 675/7 (325 V omits the sentence), 677/5–6 (variant readings).

Flateyjarbók and *Bergsbók* insert Dagr and Sigurðr's statement of their accomplishments and the king's testing of them at the end of the *þáttr* (after Rauðúlfr's speech about his family history, *ÓH* 681/7–8, variant reading) according to Snorri's version, although this has already been related earlier in the story (*ÓH* 661/10–662/13 and 670/13–671/9). In *Bergsbók* this interpolation corresponds closely to Snorri's version (*ÓH* 461/17–23), and thus includes the ability to interpret dreams as one of Sigurðr's accomplishments (Snorri's alteration, see p. 59 above). *Flateyjarbók*

1 There are however a few short sentences and phrases in St. 4 that are not in any of the other manuscripts, which might be considered additions to the original text, e.g. *ÓH* 656/8: "Björn latti ferðarinnar en konungr fór eigi at síðr", which may be Snorri's addition (cf. *ÓH* 461/11; 656/7 v.l.).

has a similar interpolation in the same place, but very much shorter, and also inserts a few lines earlier, before Rauðúlfr tells the king about his family, an even briefer summary of the testing of Dagr and Sigurðr's boasts (ÓH 681/3, v.l.). This text therefore mentions this testing three times in all (Flb II 297/33–298/4, 301/4–5, 11–13).

The text of *Rauðúlfs þáttir* in GkS 2845 is almost identical to that in *Flateyjarbók*, and is usually assumed to derive from it.¹ Some readings however suggest that it is independent, and is derived from a closely related sister manuscript, e.g. at ÓH 655/5 all manuscripts have *drambsmenn* (GkS 2845: *dramsmenn*) except *Flateyjarbók*, which has *bramlsmenn*; at ÓH 665/6 most manuscripts have *taka* (so GkS 2845) but *Flateyjarbók* has *fá*.

Another redaction of *Rauðúlfs þáttir* (b₁) is found in 68, 75 a (321), and *Bœjarbók*. These three manuscripts share a large number of variants in the text of the *þáttir* against the other six, see ÓH 656/12, 674/10, 679/2, 6, 680/1, 682/4, variant readings. 75 a (321) and *Bœjarbók* have particularly closely-related texts both of *Óláfs saga helga* and *Rauðúlfs þáttir* (see ÓH 655/4, 656/4, 660/10, 11, 13, 661/12, 672/1, variant readings) and are obviously both derived from a manuscript of the saga which already contained the *þáttir*.²

68, 75 a (321) and *Bœjarbók* have four interpolations in the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttir*. The first is near the beginning of the story (ÓH 656/6–7, v.l.), and appears to be an expansion of statements about Rauðúlfr and his homestead found elsewhere in the *þáttir* (e.g. ÓH 657/4–5, *þar . . . bæ*, which these manuscripts omit). The second and third interpolations in this redaction are passages borrowed from Snorri's version of the story. Rauðúlfr's speech about his family history is put at the beginning of the feast as soon as the king arrives at Rauðúlfr's house (ÓH 658/15, v.l.) and Dagr's

1 ÓH 1130; but see Jón Helgason's introduction to the facsimile edition of GkS 2845 (p. 70, note 5 above), pp. x–xi.

2 See ÓH 1129–30; cf. also the stemma, ÓH 1103.

revelation of Björn the Steward's guilt is put immediately after the testing of Dagr's boast (*ÓH* 671/10, v.l.) just as in Snorri's chapter 156 (*ÓH* 461/12–16, 461/23–462/3). These two interpolations therefore anticipate the passage at the end of the *þáttr* (*ÓH* 681/3–14) which is clearly the proper place for these speeches to be. Instead of repeating them, this redaction replaces them at the end of the story with a short sentence stating simply that the king stayed at Rauðúlfr's for three nights and was very impressed with his wisdom (*ÓH* 681/3–14, v.l.).

A third redaction of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* (b_2) is found in 325 and 75 c: these two manuscripts also share many variants against the other seven, see *ÓH* 660/13–14, 15, 661/2–3, 5–7, 662/3–4, 663/4, 8, 664/10, 12–13, 14, 665/2–3, 666/4, 672/14, 673/1, 3, 674/3, 7, 675/11–12, variant readings. The text of the *þáttr* in 325 has been subject to similar changes to that of redaction b_1 . It opens with a passage similar to the first interpolation of redaction b_1 , although it is in a different place, which contains further expansion of the details about Rauðúlfr, his family, and his homestead, without, however, adding much information of consequence (*ÓH* 655/1–3, variant reading). Like redaction b_1 , 325 omits the sentence at *ÓH* 657/4–5, which would have partly repeated the content of the first interpolation. The second and third interpolations of redaction b_1 (Rauðúlfr's family history and the revelation of Björn the Steward's guilt, taken from Snorri's version) are also found in the same places and with similar wording in 325. A sentence similar to the fourth interpolation of redaction b_1 is also found in 325 in place of the *þáttr*'s original account of these speeches, but it is much shorter (*ÓH* 681/3–14, variant reading).

75 c is a defective manuscript and only two passages of the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* survive in it. It is therefore not possible to see whether it also had the first, second, and fourth interpolations found in 325, but since in the parts that survive these two manuscripts share so many variants

in the text of the *þátttr*, it is likely that 75 c had the beginning and end of the story in a similar form to 325. But it has been subject to further contamination with Snorri's version of the story. Like redaction a, 75 c has the testing of Dagr and Sigurðr's boasts according to Snorri's version, but interpolated earlier in the story, immediately after they make their boasts (ÓH 662/6, 663/2, v.l., cf. ÓH 461/19, 22–23). It then inserts the revelation of Björn the Steward's guilt immediately after the testing of Dagr's boast (cf. ÓH 461/23–462/3), which corresponds to the third interpolation in 325 and redaction b₁, but interpolated earlier in the story. If the redactor responsible for these further changes was to avoid considerable duplication of this material later on in the story, he would have needed to make other fairly extensive alterations to the text, but because the manuscript is fragmentary it cannot now be seen what these may have been. The text of the *þátttr* in this manuscript has been subject to more extensive changes and more frequent attempts to combine it with the text of Snorri's version than any of the others, although it is one of the older manuscripts. But since it is so closely related to 325, the two manuscripts can be regarded as containing essentially the same redaction of the *þátttr*. (See also the note on *Húsafellsbók*, p. 88 below.)

Tómasskinna appears to have an eclectic text of *Rauðúlfs þátttr* (the text of *Óláfs saga helga* in this manuscript changes more than once from one manuscript class to another: the redactor of this version evidently had several manuscripts to copy from, see ÓH 1095–97).¹ It includes the first of the four interpolations found in redaction b₁, in the same place and with similar wording to that redaction, but does not have the other three. It shares some variants with redaction b₁ against the other five manuscripts, particularly in the part of the *þátttr* containing the interpretation of the dream, see

1 On such eclectic texts in Old Norse manuscripts see ÓH 1093 ff., and E. Ó. Sveinsson, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Njálssaga*, *Studia Islandica* 13 (Reykjavik 1953), pp. 27–29.

ÓH 676/11–12, 677/6, 10, variant readings. In a few instances, particularly near the beginning of *Rauðúlfs þátr*, *Tómasskinna* agrees with St. 4 against the other manuscripts, see ÓH 656/7 (possibly a borrowing from Snorri's version, see ÓH 461/10–11), 657/2, 658/9–10, 10, 669–11, variant readings. But generally the text of the *þátr* in *Tómasskinna* is most similar to redaction b_2 (except that it does not have all the interpolations found in that redaction), see ÓH 657/14, 658/1, 659/2, 661/11, 662/6–7, 8, 10, 11, 12–13, 664/9–10, 666/2, 676/1, 681/2, variant readings. *Tómasskinna* is taken as the basis of the text of *Rauðúlfs þátr* in *Fornmanna sögur* V.

If the manuscripts of Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga* that contain the story of Rauðúlfr are grouped according to the relationships between them in the text of the *þátr*, it can be seen that the grouping is very different from that of the same manuscripts according to the relationships between them in the text of the saga (see pp. 69–70 above):

Group I (Snorri's version of the story): St. 2
61

Group II (The text of the *þátr* with no contamination
from Snorri's version): St. 4
(*Tómasskinna*)

Group III (The text of the *þátr* combined with Snorri's
version):

Redaction a: Flateyjarbók
Bergsbók

Redaction b_1 : 68
75 a
Bœjarbók
(*Tómasskinna*)

Redaction b_2 : 325
75 c
(*Tómasskinna*)

The textual history of the *þáttr* has evidently been largely separate from that of the saga in which it is found as an interpolation, and was obviously interpolated into it on several separate occasions. Some at least of the alterations to the text of the *þáttr* in redactions b_1 and b_2 must have been made before the *þáttr* was interpolated into Snorri's saga, since the same interpolations from Snorri's version of the story are found in manuscripts of all three classes of the text of the saga.

7. DATE

Opinions about the date of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* have differed widely. P. E. Müller assumed that the part containing the dream must have been composed before the time of King Sverrir or at any rate Hákon Hákonarson as otherwise the prophecy in it would have extended to cover these reigns.¹ This is not necessarily so, however. The year 1177 seems to have been considered an end of an era, and many histories ended at this point; and the rather similar prophetic dream in the fourteenth century *Hemings þáttr* ended at the same point. Gustav Storm, at the other extreme, declared there was no evidence that *Rauðúlfs þáttr* was written earlier than the fourteenth century,² but this is contradicted by the existence of a manuscript, by no means close to the original, written about 1300 (AM 75 a, fol.). Finnur Jónsson, judging by the inclusion of the motives taken from Old French literature, which he assumed reached the author via *Karlamagnus saga*, dated the *þáttr* to the last quarter of the thirteenth century.³ It is virtually certain, however, that *Le*

1 *Sagabibliothek* (Kjøbenhavn 1817—20), III 299.

2 *Otte Brudstykker af den ældste Saga om Olav den Hellige* (Christiania 1893), p. 20.

3 *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*, 2nd ed. (Kjøbenhavn 1920—24), III 85. In his first edition (1894—1902), III 90, Finnur Jónsson had accepted Gustav Storm's dating, but he revised this opinion in the light of S. Nordal's remarks (see p. 77, note 1 below).

Voyage de Carlemagne was known to the author of the *pátrr* in a version independent of that in *Karlamagnus saga*, and the inclusion of motives from foreign literature does not necessarily imply a late date. Sigurður Nordal seems to have been the first to realise that the *pátrr* must have been known to Snorri Sturluson in a version which was probably not much different from the surviving one. He therefore supposed it to be roughly contemporary with Styrmir's *Óláfs saga* (usually dated about 1220, but possibly somewhat earlier).¹ J. E. Turville-Petre thought it possible that it was composed as early as "round about 1200".²

Since the author of *Rauðúlfs pátrr* apparently knew Styrmir's *Óláfs saga*, and the *pátrr* was used by Snorri Sturluson in his *Óláfs saga*, the possible date of composition is virtually limited to the second and third decades of the thirteenth century.

8. STYLE AND ARTISTRY

Rauðúlfs pátrr was clearly written within the tradition of the writing of the Sagas of the Kings, and is closely connected in subject and outlook with the early sagas of St Óláfr. The main purpose of the story appears to be the glorification of the king, and his is the only character that is presented in any detail. He is represented much as in the older versions of *Óláfs saga helga*, as the wise and perfect ruler. This is reflected in the excessive deference shown him by all the other characters in the story and by the part of the dream that refers to him, in which he is shown as the greatest of the early Norwegian kings, the apostle of Norway, and his saintliness and future martyrdom are strongly hinted at. He is portrayed at a point when he feels that his worldly power is declining, and is shown as more sorrowful than

1 *Om Olaf den helliges Saga* (København 1914), p. 87; cf. also idem, *Litteraturhistorie* (see p. 41, note 1 above), pp. 207—208.

2 *Op. cit.* (p. 9, note 1 above), p. 11.

angry that many of his former followers are deserting him.¹ The most interesting aspects of the portrayal of the king in the *þáttr* are the accomplishment he professes and the defect Dagr sees in his character, the love of women. The conversation between Dagr and King Óláfr is remarkably similar to that between Hreiðarr and King Magnús in *Hreiðars þáttr*.² Both Hreiðarr and Dagr are asked to point out defects in their king, and both unexpectedly give the right answer after protestations that none exist (in *Hreiðars þáttr* it is a question of a physical defect rather than a moral one), and both kings take the criticism with good grace. The inclusion of this detail in *Rauðúlfs þáttr*, apparently invented by the author, but suggested by a tradition about St Óláfr which Snorri Sturluson seems to have tried unsuccessfully to suppress,³ is welcome human touch to this portrait of the saint.

The story of Rauðúlfr has been given a historical setting, and there are frequent links with the events of St Óláfr's reign. Among the king's retinue are several undoubtedly historical persons: Björn the Marshal, six of the sons of Árni Arnmóðsson, the king's household bishop (not named, but presumably intended to be Grímkell, well known from the sagas of St Óláfr). But none of these characters take any part in the main action of the story: those that do, Rauðúlfr and his family and Björn the Steward, are not known from any other independent source, and are certainly fictional. It was a standard literary convention in the sagas that the

1 Cf. *ÓH* 665/3-5; and the king's complaint at *ÓH* 492/2-4. In the last few years of his reign King Óláfr's authority in Norway was beginning to slip from his grasp. In 1028 Knútr the Great invaded Norway and most of Óláfr's followers deserted him, and he fled to Russia. Among those of his subjects who turned against him shortly before the events of the *þáttr* were Erlingr Skjálgsson (see *ÓH* 422), Þórir Hundr (*ÓH* 393), Einarr Þambarskelfir (*ÓH* 421), Hárekr ór Þjóttu (*ÓH* 452-453), and Hákon Eiríksson (*ÓH* 458).

2 *ÍF* X 251-252. Cf. p. 45, note 2 above.

3 See p. 66 above.

king's steward (*ármaðr*) should be unpopular.¹ The relationship of Rauðúlfr's wife Ragnhildr with king Óláfr's former enemy Hringr Dagsson (cf. *ÓH* 147–155), a descendant of Haraldr Hárfagri, which the king does not seem to hold against her, seems to be the fabrication of the author of the *þátr*, since no other source confirms that Hringr had a sister. The author does not tell us any more of Rauðúlfr except that he came from Sweden, and although the tantalisingly sparse details he gives of his and Ragnhildr's elopement suggest the existence of a story he does not care to tell us, it is likely that the whole family, indeed the whole story of Rauðúlfr, is the creation of the author of the *þátr*.²

The names Rauðúlfr, Rauðr, and Úlfr are used interchangeably in most manuscripts of *Rauðúlfs þátr*, although some are more consistent than others. All manuscripts agree that he was called by more than one name.³ It is clear that these variations in the name go back to the original and that the attempts at consistency are those of the copyists. Such variations in names are not uncommon in the sagas: Ketill hoengr, for instance, was known both as Ketill and Hoengr.⁴ It is therefore not necessary to assume that the variations in Rauðúlfr's name imply the fusion or confusion of more than one character. *Rauðúlfs þátr* bears in other respects

1 E.g. Hildiríðarsynir in *Egils saga* (*ÍF* II 41 ff.); Áki in *Auðunar þátr* (*ÍF* VI 363). The wicked counsellor figures in many Icelandic folktales, where he is traditionally named Rauður and is often, like Björn, a favourite or relative of the queen, see Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* (Leipzig 1862–64), II 355–360, 391–397.

2 Ólafur Halldórsson, cand. mag., has pointed out to me the similarity both in names and other details with the story of the elopement of Úlfr (Þorkell) and Ragnhildr in *Færeyinga saga* (ed. Finnur Jónsson, København 1927), pp. 20 ff.

3 Only in Snorri's version is there complete consistency (always *Rauður*). It may be noted that most printed editions are somewhat misleading since the manuscripts often use the abbreviation *R.* which could stand for either *Rauður* or *Rauðúlfr*.

4 See Jón Jóhannesson, *Gerðir Landnámabókar* (Reykjavík 1941), pp. 49 and 111. Cf. also *ÍF* XII 299: "Heðinn heiti ek, en sumir kalla mik Skarpheðinn qllu nafni."

such clear marks of deliberate literary artistry that it is obvious that the author was sufficiently master of his craft to have been able to avoid such clumsy signs of undigested source-material in his work if he had wished. It is possible that in composing his story he was remembering some of the traditional stories of how St Óláfr kept finding pockets of heathenism in Norway that required stamping out (note, for instance, the king's repeated question whether there was a church at Rauðúlfr's homestead¹), but it is expressly stated that Rauðúlfr was a good Christian and not a sorcerer, and his character owes more to the biblical tradition of the wise interpreter of dreams than to Norse traditions of heathen sorcerers like Rauðr inn Rammi.²

The inspiration for *Rauðúlfs þáttur* was mostly literary. A lot of the material for the story was derived from foreign literature, especially the poem *Le Voyage de Charlemagne*, and the influence of the style of southern romance is evident in the richness of descriptive detail throughout the *þáttur*. The dream and the symbolism of its interpretation show the influence of the bible and homiletic writings. The dream-prophecy implies a close knowledge of the history of Norway, and the *þáttur* is particularly connected with Styrmir's *Óláfs saga*. The author's development of the metal-symbolism of the dream, the mention of the *sólarsteinn* with its peculiar properties,³ the repeated introduction of astronomical motives (in the description of the sleeping chamber and of the breast of the dream-figure, in Sigurðr's accomplishment, and in Rauðúlfr's means of seeing into the future,

1 The motive of the mistaking of a sleeping chamber for a church or chapel recurs in the fourteenth century *Drauma-Jóns saga*, ed. R. I. Page, *Nottingham mediaeval studies* I (1957), p. 41.

2 A connection with Rauðr inn Rammi (*IF* XXVI 324 f.) is suggested by M. Schlauch, *op. cit.* (p. 9, note 2 above), p. 159; cf. also J. E. Turville-Petre, *op. cit.* (p. 9, note 1 above), p. 5, note 8.

3 On this see Peter G. Foote, "Icelandic *sólarsteinn* and the Medieval Background," *Arv, Tidskrift för Nordisk Folkminnesforskning* 12 (1956), pp. 26—40.

ÓH 660/8), and the author's interest in physiognomy (the boasts of Dagr and King Óláfr) and the "science" of dream interpretation imply a considerable acquaintance with the scientific and encyclopaedic literature of the middle ages, much of which was known and translated in Iceland in the twelfth century.¹ This list includes nearly all the types of literature both native and foreign that were known in Iceland about the year 1200. The author must have had access to a well-stocked library; he will almost certainly have been in religious orders; and he probably worked within the tradition of historical writing cultivated at the largest cultural centre of the time in Iceland, Þingeyrar.

But although the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* was widely read, and had a high respect for learning, as is shown by his attitude to Rauðúlfr and his family, who he seems to have envisaged as leading an ideal existence in their secluded intellectual retreat, he also reveals an interest in things far removed from the world of books. Besides using the symbolism typical of learned religious writings, the interpretation of the dream uses the word-play symbolism characteristic of popular dream-lore; and one symbol is based on a proverbial saying (ÓH 679/12). Rauðúlfr's advice on how to dream a prophetic dream reflects a popular dream-ritual.

1 Treatises on astronomy and chronology survive in Icelandic manuscripts of the twelfth century (e.g. GkS 1812, 4to, written about 1187, cf. p. 55, note 3 above). Other texts on subjects relevant to *Rauðúlfs þáttr* survive in later manuscripts (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), but may have been current in Iceland much earlier, e.g. "Um náttúru himintunga," "Merkingar tunglsins," "Um mannsins náttúru," "Merking steina," *Alfræði islenzk*, ed. Kr. Kálund and N. Beckman (København 1908-18), III 27-35, 68-70, 105-108, 91-105; I 40-43. Cf. also p. 19 above (on the Pseudo-Daniel). On this type of literature in Iceland in general see Nat. Beckman, "Vetenskapligt Liv på Island under 1100- och 1200-Talen," *Maal og Minne* (1915), pp. 193-212; idem, "Island under Medeltidens Upplysningstidearv," *Nordisk Tidskrift för Vetenskap, Konst och Industri*, N. S. 11 (1935), pp. 46-55; Halldór Hermannsson (ed.), *The Icelandic Physiologus*, *Islandica XXVII* (1938), pp. 1-4; G. Turville-Petre, "Notes on the intellectual history of the Icelanders," *History*, N. S. XXVII (June-September 1942), pp. 111-123.

The author illustrates the appearance of the toes of the crucifix with a startlingly vivid reference to a children's game ("to make rams with the fingers") which is among those collected by Icelandic folklorists in the nineteenth century from popular tradition.¹ Throughout the story the author shows that he has a strong visual imagination, and he seems to have been especially interested in the visual arts and to have taken particular delight in pictures: he mentions decorations depicting angels, the sun, moon, stars, plants, and animals twice each, once in the scheme of decoration on the roof of the sleeping chamber, and once as part of the decorations on the different parts of the dream-figure. He mentions depictions of ancient stories (*fornar sögur*, *fornsögur*: the equivalent modern term is *fornaldar sögur*) twice too, once on the lower roof of the sleeping chamber, and again on the belt of the dream-figure (the stories of Sigurðr the dragon-slayer, Haraldr Wartooth, and Haraldr Fine-hair²).

One detail in the description of the dream-figure shows that the author of the *þáttr* was acquainted with and observant of the religious art style of his time. Around the head of the figure was a ring coloured like a rainbow and shaped like God's aureole ("vaxinn sem veldishringr guðs"). A similar phrase is used in one of the miracle stories attached to the Virgin Mary of a halo completely surrounding a figure of the Virgin and the infant Jesus on a *tabula* given

1 See Jón Árnason and Ólafur Davíðsson, *Íslenzkar gátur, skemmtanir, víkivakar og þulur* (Kaupmannahöfn 1887-1903), II 163.

2 Note the use of the word *saga* for a story in pictures. A tapestry representing Sigurðr slaying the dragon is mentioned in the Oldest saga of St Óláfr (*Otte Brudstykke af den ældste Saga om Olav den Hellige*, ed. Gustav Storm (Christiania 1893), first fragment, p. 2); and carvings of scenes from legends about him survive from Norway from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (London 1964), plates 32-34; Haakon Shetelig, "Billedfremstillinger i Jernalderens Kunst," *Kunst, Nordisk Kultur XXVII* (Stockholm 1931), pp. 214 ff. The association of Haraldr Harðráði and Sigurðr the dragon-slayer is also made in a poem by Illugi Bryndóelaskáld, *Skj A I* 384.

to a man in a dream ("svá vaxinn hringr sem veldishringr várs herra er víða markaðr", a ring shaped in the same way as our Lord's aureole is often represented).¹ The author of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* goes on to describe the ring as sharp at top and bottom ("hvass upp ok niðr"): this is a remarkably accurate description of what is technically termed *vesica piscis*, a pointed oval aureole which often completely surrounds divine figures in medieval paintings, as opposed to the ordinary halo given to saints and other lesser figures, which is usually circular and surrounds only the head. The *vesica* is particularly common in representations of the transfiguration, where the figure of Christ is often distinguished by one, while the watching apostles have only ordinary haloes. The phrases used in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* and the miracle story to indicate the special shape of the "divine halo" show that the authors of these stories were acquainted with this convention of reserving the *vesica* for divine figures.² That the *vesica* in *Rauðúlfs þáttr* is made to surround only the head of the figure is evidently because the symbol was to apply only to St Óláfr, who was represented by the head.

Although *Rauðúlfs þáttr* shows such a wide range of miscellaneous sources and influences, the author has not borrowed ideas from his sources uncritically, but has thoroughly digested them and adapted them to his own purposes, and has combined native and foreign material, popular and

1 *Mariu saga*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania 1871), p. 170.

2 A Norwegian painting of the thirteenth century containing a *vesica* is reproduced in *Kunst*, Nordisk Kultur XXVII (Stockholm 1931), p. 295. The *vesica* is particularly common in Byzantine art, see O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford 1911), pp. 655 and 682–683. The influence of Byzantine style on medieval Icelandic carvings has been demonstrated by Selma Jónsdóttir, *An 11th Century Byzantine Last Judgement in Iceland* (Reykjavik 1959). The *vesica* appears in the comparative material illustrated in this book on plates 2, 6, and 8, but it does not seem to be used in the surviving Icelandic carvings. There are many routes by which Byzantine style could have become known in Iceland, cf. Magnús Már Lárusson, "On the so-called 'Armenian' bishops," *Studia Islandica* 18 (1960), pp. 23–38, esp. pp. 32–33.

learned ideas, without any unevenness of texture. *Rauðúlfr's* sleeping chamber, based as it is on the palace of the emperor of Constantinople, is still a Norwegian building, its roof shingled and tarred, its ceilings decorated with Norse stories, its walls panelled in Scandinavian style. King Óláfr dreams a dream similar to Nebuchadnezzar's, but the vision is a Christian vision, and the kings he dreams are Norse, not Babylonian kings: they have Norse virtues and vices. The boasts of King Óláfr and his men may have been suggested by the "gabs" of Charlemagne and his twelve peers, but they boast not of ridiculous and impossible feats of strength like French and Celtic heroes, but of their loyalty and courage, their skill in viking sports and activities. The atmosphere of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* has something of the glitter of Romance with its rich descriptions and strong visual imagination, and the roughness of viking manners on this Norwegian farm is softened by more than a hint of the gentleness of *kurteisi*, but the characters are still vikings rather than knights, and the story as a whole fits better into the context of the Sagas of the Kings than into that of the Romance Sagas.

In its context in the history of Icelandic prose *Rauðúlfs þáttr* illustrates one fact that is still not always recognised. The appearance in a medieval Icelandic text of ideas and story material from foreign literature such as the Romances is not in itself a criterion of age and cannot be taken as evidence that the text is late or "post-classical" — only that it is later than its source. Iceland was by no means isolated from the cultural activities of the rest of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and Icelandic writers were not slow to assimilate the influence of foreign works. There are many texts written in Iceland in the early thirteenth century that show the influence of foreign literature, although none perhaps so clearly or to such an extent as *Rauðúlfs þáttr*. The stories, for instance, told of Haraldr Harðráði's adventures in the east in *Morkinskinna* (probably first

compiled about 1220) include motives also found in Romance literature.¹ This has nothing to do with any supposed degeneration of taste in Iceland: it merely illustrates that Icelandic writers had at all times access to the same common stock of European story material as writers in other countries. The extent of the influence of foreign literature on early Icelandic prose ought not to be underestimated.

It is true that literary taste in Iceland did change in the thirteenth century. But this change is not reflected in an increased use of foreign material so much as in a change in the way it was used. Earlier writers, like the author of *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, assimilated their sources and adapted them to enrich their narratives without making the borrowed material seem out of place. Later writers were often blinded by the glitter of Romance, and tended merely to reproduce the worst excesses of the style of the Romances without critical adaptation and selection of the material. Stories such as *Rauðúlfs þáttur* are proof of the Icelandic power of assimilating foreign influence without sacrificing native individuality, and of the non-exclusive nature of early Icelandic literature, so ready to welcome foreign ideas without necessarily accepting them uncritically.

The same can be said of the learned and scientific literature of Iceland in the middle ages. The works on chronology and astronomy compiled in Iceland in the twelfth century, although they are heavily indebted to their foreign models, show more originality and treat their sources and authorities more critically than the later ones of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.² It is the same with grammatical works: although the author of the twelfth century First Grammatical Treatise knew the standard foreign grammars, his originality and accuracy of observation in his approach

1 See Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Dating the Icelandic Sagas* (London 1958), pp. 112 ff.; Sigurður Nordal, *Litteraturhistorie* (see p. 41, note 1 above), p. 208.

2 See the articles of Nat. Beckman cited above (p. 81, note 1 above).

to Icelandic grammar still surprise modern grammarians, while the later treatises on similar subjects are most uncritical in their acceptance of foreign authority and tend now to be valued exclusively for the quotations from old poems which they include as illustrations of the grammatical and rhetorical rules originally propounded for other languages and other literatures.

The contents of *Rauðúlfs þáttr* tell us more about its author than a mere knowledge of his name could do; but the story is not just a catalogue of the author's wide interests. He has set the story during the last years of King Óláfr's reign, and by means of several hints at various places in the *þáttr* evokes an atmosphere of gathering gloom that overshadows the apparently carefree entertainment at Rauðúlfr's feast. Three times we are reminded that the king's friends and followers are beginning to desert him, and that the bitter end of his reign is near. Kálfr Árnason's boast is the first note of menace, and those of his brothers Finnur and Þorbergr, in effect protestations of loyalty, serve only as reminders of the many who were disloyal. Many things in the story foreshadow the king's approaching martyrdom — the cross in the dream, we are told, forebodes strife — and the attitude of the king appears to be sad but resigned, an impression that is only strengthened by his evident pleasure in the trivialities of the feast and the entertainment there, in a place so secluded, so far from the political turmoil of his normal life.

The interpretation of the dream represents Óláfr's reign as a golden age, soon to end, after which things would go from bad to worse as ruler succeeded inferior ruler, until the time represented by the feet of wood came, a time so near the author's own that one cannot help thinking that he himself felt he was living in the worst age of all, and that he looked back to the early eleventh century as the ideal age, when an ideal existence such as that of Rauðúlfr and his family was possible. This attitude to King Óláfr's reign

gives the impression of being the author's own, and not just an expression of the traditional propagandist outlook connected with the cult of the saint. His own tastes and sympathies are revealed by his obvious idealisation of the life of Rauðúlfr and his sons, and his pessimism by his conclusion of the story, where even Rauðúlfr's sons were not left in peace: they had to leave their intellectual haven, being pressed into the king's service "because he felt he could not do without them".

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NOTE

While this study was being printed, my attention was drawn to the existence of another manuscript that contains *Rauðúlfs þáttur*, *Húsafellsbók* (St. papp. fol. nr. 22). *Húsafellsbók* was not used by the editors of *ÓH*, but in spite of the misleading description in Gödel's catalogue, it includes a text of Snorri Sturluson's separate *Óláfs saga helga*, which, although it was not written until the seventeenth century, is derived from a much older manuscript closely related to the now defective 75 c. *Húsafellsbók* can therefore be used to reconstruct the lacunae in 75 c (cf. pp. 73–74 above). In *Húsafellsbók* the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* opens with a passage very similar to the first interpolation in 325, except that it lacks the mention of Rauðúlfr's alternative names: the name *Rauðr* or the abbreviation *R.* is used throughout this text (in the passages surviving in 75 c the abbreviation *R.* is always used; cf. p. 79 above). Like 325 (and redaction b₁) *Húsafellsbók* omits the sentence *þar . . . bæ*, *ÓH* 657/4–5. The second interpolation in 325 and redaction b₁ is also present in *Húsafellsbók*, but two sentences later (after *stofuna*, *ÓH* 659/2); and after it another sentence has been inserted, also from Snorri's version of the story (*fannsk þat at þeir feðgar vǫru menn vitrir*, cf. *ÓH* 461/16–17). Although *Húsafellsbók*, like 75 c, has the testing of Rauðúlfr's sons' boasts interpolated according to Snorri's version immediately after the boasts are made, it repeats the episode according to the fuller text of the *þáttur* (with a few omissions) in its proper place later on in the story (*ÓH* 670/12–671/9). The third interpolation (found at *ÓH* 671/10 in 325 and redaction b₁) is found in *Húsafellsbók*, as in 75 c, at *ÓH* 663/2, and is not repeated. *Húsafellsbók* does not have the fourth interpolation of 325 and redaction b₁, but, as in 325, the conclusion of the story after the interpretation of the dream (i.e. from *ÓH* 680/12) is related very briefly, and the passage 681/3–14 is omitted. Among other alterations to the text of *Rauðúlfs þáttur* in *Húsafellsbók*, which may or may not have also been found in 75 c, may be mentioned the considerable elaboration of the account of the first meeting between King Óláfr and the sons of Rauðúlfr (*ÓH* 656/1–8).

EFNISÁGRIP

1. Uppistaða Rauðúlfs þáttar er frásögn, svipuð þjóðsögu að efni, um ósanna þjófnaðarákæru; aðalpersónan er Ólafur konungur helgi. Inn í frásögnina er svo aukið fjórum minnum, sem runnin eru frá erlendum heimildum: draumi Ólafs konungs ásamt ráðningu Rauðúlfs; lýsingu á glæsilegu húsi, sem snerist með sólu; mannjöfnuði eða heitstrengingum Ólafs konungs og manna hans; prófun konungs á íþróttum Rauðúlfs og sona hans. Auðséð er, að þessi minni eru ekki aukaatriði. Þvert á móti eru þau aðalefni frásagnarinnar, en allt hitt er að eins umgerð um þau.

2. Draumur Ólafs konungs er stældur eftir draumi Nebúkadnesars í Daníelsbók og fylgir honum allnákvæmlega, þó að höfundur þáttarins hafi aukið í mörgum atriðum. Á sama hátt og draumur Nebúkadnesars er vitrun um ókomin ríki í Babýlon, boðar draumur Ólafs eftirkomendur hans í Noregsríki, þar til skömmu fyrir valdatöku Sverris konungs, og er gerð allrækileg grein fyrir flestum þeirra. Ekki verður úr því skorið, hvort höfundur þáttarins hafi notað latneskan texta Daníelsbókar eða þýðingu. Orðfæri hans og meðferð táknmyndanna í ráðningu draumsins minna mjög á klerkleg rit (hómilíur o. s. frv.), sem tíðkuðust á Íslandi um aldamótin 1200, og augljóst er, að höfundur hefur verið þaulkunnur þess konar fræðum. En einkennileg er tilhneiging hans til orðaleiks í táknmyndum, t. d. tákna sköp (þ: kynfæri) líkneskisins í draumnum sköp (þ: forlög) þess konungs, sem þau eiga við. Oft verður vart orðaleiks í draumaráðningum í fornritum, þó hvergi eins oft og í Rauðúlfs þætti. Einnig er slíkt altitt í draumaráðningum síðari alda.

3. Hús, sem snúast, koma víða fyrir í fornþéttmenntum Evrópuþjóða, allt frá Grikklandi til Írlands. Slík hús eru að nokkru leyti tengd sólkonungsgörðum fornra goðsagna, en að nokkru annarsheimsborgum keltneskrar hjátrúar; þau eru mjög tíð í riddarasögum (íslenskum og erlendum). En þetta minni hefur höfundur Rauðúlfs þáttar fengið frá

fornfrönsku (anglonormannsku) kvæði: *Le Voyage de Charlemagne* (Jórsalaferð Karlamagnúsar), hetjukvæði frá 12. öld, eins konar ádeilukvæði með nokkrum kímniþrag. Höfundur Rauðúlfs þáttar hefur notað allmörg atriði úr þessu kvæði, þótt hann hafi látið myndni þess lönd og leið. Augljóst er, að hann hefur haft texta kvæðisins í höndum. Þýðing þess er í *Karlamagnús sögu*, en frásögn þáttarins er óháð henni, enda er líklegt, að sú þýðing sé yngri en þátturinn. Þrjú tókuorð úr fornfrönsku eða ensku koma fyrir í þættinum, tvö þeirra mjög sjaldgæf í íslenzku. Að þessu athuguðu virðist sennilegast, að höfundur þáttarins hafi notað kvæðistextann á frummálinu, enda er engan veginn loku fyrir það skotið, því að Ísland hefur aldrei verið einangrað gagnvart menntum Evrópuþjóða. Athyglisvert er, að í sumum atriðum er frásögn þáttarins skyldari kymriskri þýðingu kvæðisins, sem gerð var á miðöldum, en þeirri einu gerð, sem nú er til á frummálinu. Ekki er ósennilegt, að handrit kvæðisins hafi borizt til Íslands frá Bretlands-eyjum.

4. Heitstrenginga er víða getið í hetjusögum Evrópuþjóða, sérstaklega með Germönum og Keltum. En þar sem þær koma einnig fyrir í kvæði því um Jórsalaferð Karlamagnúsar, sem höfundur Rauðúlfs þáttar hefur þegið frá önnur atriði, hlýtur þessi kvæðiskafli að hafa verið aðalfyrirmynd leiksins í þættinum. En hvorttveggja er, að höfundur hefur vislega þekkt margar slíkar sögur annars staðar að — til dæmis eru auðséð tengsl við hina alkunnu frásögn af heitstrengingum Jónsvíkinga — og hann hefur ekki heldur fylgt kvæðinu nákvæmlega í þessu efni. Aðaleinkenni þessa kafla í kvæðinu er myndin, en í þættinum er allt í fullri alvöru. Leikurinn í þættinum er að nokkru leyti venjuleg heitstrenging, en að nokkru leyti mannjöfnuður; hvorttveggja er algengt í íslenskum fornritum. Ennfremur minnir þetta á, að í fornaldarsögum og víðar eiga hetjur, sem nýkomnar eru í konungsgarð, að nefna íþróttir sínar. Íþróttirnar, sem nefndar eru í þættinum, eru einkennilegar; sumar eru venjulegar víkingaíþróttir, en aðrar eru tengdar andlegum og menningarlegum hæfileikum. Eins og í kvæðinu um Jórsalaferð Karlamagnúsar, á að reyna sumar þessara íþrótta daginn eftir að um þær var rætt, og það er einmitt þetta atriði, sem höfundur þáttarins notar til þess að tengja saman sundurleita hluta frásagnarinnar.

5. Snorri Sturluson þekkti Rauðúlfs þátt. Í 156. kafla Ólafs sögu helga hefur hann sett ágríp af efni þáttarins, og er það aðeins umgerð frásagnarinnar; þar vantar drauminn, húsið sem snýst — og að mestu

leyti mannfögnuðinn. Snorri virðist hafa farið beint eftir einhverju handriti þáttarins, þó að hann hafi gert nokkrar breytingar. 155. kafli í sögu hans er inngangur frásagnarinnar, og efni þessa kafla hlýtur upphaflega að hafa verið hluti Rauðúlfs þáttar, þó að hann sé nú ekki til í frumgerð. Ástæðan til þess, að Snorri tók þáttarefnið upp í sögu sína — sem það virðist í fljótu bragði ekki koma við í neinu, sem máli skiptir — má ætla að verið hafi þessi: Rétt á eftir ágripinu í sögunni kemur frásögn um aftöku Þóris Ölvissonar, sem Dagur Rauðúlfs sonur er við riðinn. Hlutdeild Dags í þessu hefur Snorri búið til; í heimildum hans var ekki skýrt, hvernig svik Þóris komu í ljós. Til þess notar Snorri sérkennilegar gáfur Dags, en til að gera nægilega grein fyrir honum, þurfti hann að taka upp inntak Rauðúlfs þáttar. Í kaflanum um Þóri og víðar hefur Snorri notað atriði úr þættinum, sem hann hafði sleppt í ágripinu.

Auðséð er, að höfundur Rauðúlfs þáttar hefur notað einhverja sögu Ólafs helga, og sennilegt er, að frásögnin hafi í fyrstunni verið samín sem þáttur í sögunni. Óræk vitni benda til þess, að sú sögugerð, sem höfundur fór eftir, hafi hvorki verið Elzta Sagan né Miðsagan. Þar sem hún hefur ekki heldur getað verið saga Snorra, hlýtur hún að hafa verið Styrmis saga. Mynd Ólafs konungs í þættinum kemur vel heim við mynd hans í þeim brotum af sögu Styrmis, sem enn eru til. Í báðum ritunum er konungurinn sagður vera nokkuð kvenhollur. Vel gæti verið, að Styrmir sjálfur væri höfundur þáttarins, eða hann hafi að minnsta kosti um hann fjallað.

6. Rauðúlfs þáttur er varðveittur sem innskot í allmörgum handritum af Ólafs sögu helga hinni sérstöku eftir Snorra Sturluson, þar sem skrifarar hafa sett hann í stað ágrips Snorra. Þátturinn hefur því verið mjög vinsæll. Þar sem tengsl texta þáttarins koma ekki heim við tengsl aðaltexta Ólafs sögu í sömu handritum, er ljóst, að þættinum hefur all oft verið skotið inn í söguna af einstökum skrifurum. Flest handrit bera þess merki, að skrifarar hafi reynt að flétta saman frásögn þáttarins og ágrip Snorra, og þau skiptast í flokka eftir innskotum í texta þáttarins, runnum frá ágripinu. Sumir slíkir íaukar hafa verið gerðir, áður en texti þáttarins var felldur inn í sögu Snorra.

7. Þar sem Rauðúlfs þáttur er eldri en Ólafs saga Snorra, en yngri en saga Styrmis eða samtíða henni, hlýtur að vera nærri sanni, að hann hafi verið saminn í núverandi mynd á öðrum eða þriðja tug þrettándu aldar.

8. Efni Rauðúlfs þáttar er nátengt eldri konungasögum; hann er að miklu leyti lofgerð um Ólaf helga. Þó máætla, að frásögnin sé algerlega ósannsöguleg. Engar líkur eru á, að Rauðúlfur hafi nokkurn tíma verið til. Hann virðist að mestu leyti vera eftirlíking Daníels.

Efni sitt hefur höfundur einkum sótt í ritaðar heimildir: biblíuna, sögur, kvæði, hómilíur og vísindaleg rit alls konar. Hann hefur verið vel lærður maður, sennilega prestur eða munkur. Frásögn hans um Rauðúlf og syni hans ber því vitni, að hann hefur haft dálæti á vísindaíðkunum. Þó sjást víða merki þess, að hann hafi einnig verið hneigður fyrir þjóðleg fræði, og mörg atriði bera með sér, að hann hafi verið mjög hrifinn af teikningum og útskurði og athugull um þess háttar. En þó að í þættinum gæti áhrifa frá ýmsum óskyldum heimildum, hefur höfundur tekið vel að flétta saman öll atriði frásagnar sinnar, án þess að þar sjáist neinar þær misfellur, sem máli skipta. Þátturinn sýnir greinilega, að minni úr erlendum bókmenntum, jafnvel úr riddarasögum og því um líku, geta komið fyrir í elztu íslenskum ritum, og slík atriði eru ekki aldurseinkenni þess rits, sem hefur þau að geyma. Rauðúlfs þáttur er snilldarverk; hann er til vitnis um þau sannindi, að beztu íslenzku höfundum á öllum öldum hefur oft tekið að samræma útlent efni innlendri hefð, án þess að glata íslenskum menningareinkennum.

ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

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- Flb Flateyjarbók, ed. Guðbrandr Vigfússon and C. R. Unger, I—III (Christiania 1860—68)
- ÍF Íslenzk fornrit I ff. (Reykjavík 1933—)
- ÓH Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga, ed. Oscar Albert Johnsen and Jón Helgason (Oslo 1941)
- Skj Den norsk-islandske Skjaldedigtning, ed. Finnur Jónsson, A I—II, B I—II (København og Kristiania 1912—15)

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