

## EDITORS' NOTE

*Saga-Book* XV 3 (1960) was devoted to Mr W. E. D. Allen's monograph, *The Poet and the Spæ-wife*. Because this was also printed for issue as a separate publication, it was newly paged (viii + 102 pp.), and did not run on from *Saga-Book* XV 1-2 (pp. 1-148). Since this Part 3 is properly to be counted as pp. 149-258 in Vol. XV, the present Part 4 is paginated from p. 259 onward.



DR B. J. TIMMER

1904-1961

Benno Timmer, president-elect of the Society, died on 22nd June, 1961. He was born in Holland and studied at the University of Groningen, where he took his doctorate in 1934. He settled in this country after the last war and since 1954 had been Reader in English in the University of London at Queen Mary College.

His chief work lay in the Old English field, but his enthusiasm for Norse studies was kindled by Professor B. Sijmons and it never flagged. Benno made the invaluable index that accompanies the *Kommentar* volumes of the Gering-Sijmons edition of the Eddaic poems (1931) and won Sijmons's warm thanks for 'seine gewissenhafte und verständnisvolle arbeit'. Some evidence of his abiding interest in Norse studies and a notable tribute to the line of scholarly tradition from which he himself sprang may be found in his paper, 'Northern Research in the Netherlands', in *Saga-Book* XIV 211-25. It was with typical cheerful zest that he accepted the post of assistant secretary of the Society in 1956.

Benno will be remembered by many as a teacher and scholar. We who were privileged to be his friends will remember him for much more. We shall remember his love of music and his own great musical gifts. We shall remember his keen and kindly eye for the deserving younger student. We shall remember his discerning enjoyment of social occasions and how much he himself added to any good company he was in. We shall remember the enthusiasm with which he looked forward to his presidency, appreciative of the honour and eager to make it memorable. We shall above all remember him as a man modest and gentle and tolerant, who gave his friends more than they could ever give him.

P.G.F.





## THE ICELANDIC LIFE OF ST DUNSTAN

BY LENORE HARTY

**D**UNSTANUS SAGA is found on folios 1r to 5v of MS A.M. 180b fol., a vellum which is written in a coarse hand of the fifteenth century and "is black and in part difficult to read, but complete save one leaf out of which a strip cut, is (*sic*) dividing the page into two parts, which have been sewn together to keep them right after the bit was clipped out".<sup>1</sup> The manuscript may have suffered still more since this was written, for fol. 3 r and v. has a large patch across lines 21-29, making all but a few words impossible to read on a microfilm, while there are tears at the top and bottom of the left side and repairs on the right, affecting lines 1-6 and 41-48. At various other places, some letters which Vigfússon could read are not visible on the microfilm.

That one folio of the manuscript was damaged before the saga was copied is shown on fol. 4 r and v where the scribe has written on either side of a V-shaped tear.

The saga has been printed, "without any attempt at criticism", by Vigfússon in the appendix to volume II of the Rolls Series *Icelandic Sagas*, pp. 385-408. Apart from the omission of one or two words and an inconsistency of spelling which is not found in the manuscript, this edition reproduces the text accurately and, as mentioned above, contains readings that cannot be deciphered on a microfilm of the manuscript.

The work consists of eighteen chapters marked in the manuscript by the indentation of the first few lines of each. The first chapter tells us that Brother Árni Laurentii has been moved by the prayers of some men of goodwill to compile this account of St Dunstan's life and

<sup>1</sup> *Icelandic Sagas*, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon (Rolls Series 88; 1887), II xxiii-xxiv. The cut leaf is fol. 2.

miracles, even though he refused at first, knowing himself unnt for the task. He bids all to listen with humility, and excuse his strange and repulsive choice of words, remembering that Dunstan will pray more for them if they listen to these “adventures” of his, which have been written not only in honour of the saint but for the hearers’ joy and profit too.

In chapter 2, which we shall see has been taken directly from one of Áрни’s sources, the author urges his listeners to follow after St Dunstan, but as they are all weighed down by their sins, he will make a ladder of all those things found “in praises, hymns and other writings”, so that they can climb on it up to the heavenly heights.

Dunstan was born into a family even more renowned for their good habits and godly wisdom than for their dignities, honour and wealth; in fact his parents led such a holy life that their son was permitted to see them among the hosts of angels in heaven.

Chapter 3 gives a description of this vision, in which Dunstan saw his mother being married to the highest king. An angel, seeing him silent while all the others were rejoicing, offered to teach him the song they were singing at this wedding feast. This hymn Dunstan repeated so often that he knew it by heart when he awakened and had it written down and sung in Holy Church.

In chapter 4 we are told that while Dunstan’s mother was pregnant, she went to service on Candlemas Day and was holding a taper like the others. Suddenly all the candles went out, and then God re-lit her taper with heavenly fire. The people rejoiced at this strange sign and kindled their tapers from hers, and so God revealed by this that he had selected this child, while still in his mother’s womb, to light up those men’s hearts which grow cold towards godly love.

At this point (fol. 2r), 20 lines are missing from the manuscript and after this gap we find the story in the middle of an account of Dunstan’s adventures when he

was ill as a boy at Glastonbury. The description of this illness is missing, but we find Dunstan being attacked by devils in the shape of dogs, an event which occurred, according to other versions, when in his delirium he walked towards the monastery from the infirmary where he had been sleeping. Dunstan cut at these howling dogs with a twig he had in his hand and they fled down to hell. When he came to the monastery he found the church locked, but climbed up the builders' scaffolding and got into the church *öðru-megin þekjunnar* and from there to the dormitory where he was found sleeping safe and sound. When questioned, he could tell the brothers nothing of what happened after he had lain down to sleep in the housewife's lodging the night before. This housewife, however, bore witness to all these wondrous happenings so that all men might know them. And so Dunstan grew in favour with God and men.

Chapter 6 tells us that although Dunstan was wealthy and well-born, he did useful and secular work so that the fiend would not find him idle. After the gap of 20 lines (fol. 2v), the author is in the midst of a description of the six ages of man. When Dunstan had come to the third age of adolescence, he left Glastonbury and went to live with his foster-brother (*sic*), Adelmus, Archbishop of Rouen,<sup>2</sup> who seeing his promise, placed him in the service of King Athelstan.

When Athelstan died, his brother "Edward"<sup>3</sup> succeeded to the throne and on the advice of Dunstan and Ethelwald of Winchester watched over and improved the monasteries. At "Edward's" death, Dunstan and others chose his son Edward to succeed, as his father had wished, and, despite opposition, Dunstan consecrated him under

<sup>2</sup> The manuscript has *Rodobernensem* which must be a slip for *Doroberensis*, a name for Canterbury used by author B, Adelard and Osbern in their *Lives of St Dunstan*, cf. e.g. Osbern in *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. W. Stubbs (Rolls Series 63; 1874), 107.

<sup>3</sup> This "Edward" is a combination of Edmund, Athelstan's brother, who succeeded him in 940, and Edgar, Edmund's younger son, who succeeded his brother Edwy as king of all England in 959.

the holy banner of the Cross, for he had brought Edward up and loved him as a son.

In chapter 7, we are told of young Edward's martyrdom, for when he had ruled well for three years and eight months, his step-mother Elfrida plotted to kill him and put her son Ethelred on the throne. When the king came alone to visit his brother one day, Elfrida kissed him like Judas Iscariot and plunged the knife she was concealing under her mantle into his belly. Many miracles take place at his tomb in the nunnery of Uisturina (*sic*).<sup>4</sup>

In chapter 8, Árni declares that Dunstan was appointed Abbot of Glastonbury by Edward the Elder, and he then denounces the practice of kings' appointing bishops and abbots. By his martyrdom St Thomas Becket brought freedom from the evil custom.<sup>5</sup> Dunstan instructed his monks so well, that the effect of his work was spread throughout England.

Chapter 9 contains the story of Ethelred's being beaten with a taper by his mother when he wept for the death of his step-brother, Edward. After that, he hated tapers and would never look at them nor have them burnt before him. When Ethelred was born, Dunstan heard angels singing "Pax Anglorum". This was King Ethelwardus (*sic*).<sup>6</sup>

Chapter 10 tells of the death of Archbishop (*sic*) Elfegus of Winton, and how Dunstan, when offered the bishopric, refused until he had a vision of the saints Peter, Paul and Andrew, who each gave him the apostolic blessing and offered him the sword he was carrying. St Andrew said "Tollite jugum . . ." but St Peter struck Dunstan's hand with his palmatorium saying that this was his punishment

<sup>4</sup> The manuscript has *Uisturina*; *Icelandic Sagas*, II 393, has *Uistunina*. Perhaps a mistake for Wiltunie? Edward was buried first at Wareham and later at Salisbury.

<sup>5</sup> It is perhaps not surprising to find an Iclander digressing on this iniquitous habit and mentioning St Thomas Becket. See *Thómas Saga Erkibyskups*, ed. Eiríkr Magnússon (Rolls Series 65; 1883), II vi-xxxii.

<sup>6</sup> The assigning of this vision to the time of Ethelred's birth instead of Edgar's may be part of the author's attempt to whitewash Ethelred. See p. 271.

for refusing Winton and a sign not to refuse such honours again. When he awoke, Dunstan consented *án dvöl* and was *síðan vígðr á viðrkæmiligum tíma* and installed as bishop of Winton.

After some years, Dunstan resigned this see and Edgar made him father and overseer of bishops' sees and bishop of Worcester and London. When Oddr (Odo) died, Dunstan was made Archbishop. During his rule Ethelwald of Winton died, and in obedience to the command of St Andrew, Dunstan had Abbot Elfegus appointed in his place.<sup>7</sup>

In chapter 11 Árni declares that as Primate, Dunstan adorned his life with miracles, and showed a holy zeal in being before others in wisdom and virtuous behaviour. God's angels and saints often appeared to him, and three times the Holy Ghost came to him in the likeness of a dove. Only a small part of the tokens and signs which God made for the worth of St Dunstan is written in this book.

One of these signs is described in chapter 12. An earl committed incest, and Dunstan reprimanded him with fatherly kindness, until, seeing that no heed was taken of these warnings, he was forced to excommunicate the man. The earl appealed to the king, who took up his case, but Dunstan remained firm: "Langt sé burt frá mér at ek fyrir líta svó Guðs lögmál, at ek leysa nokkurn bannsettan mann fyrir bæn eðr kröf nokkurs veralligs höfðingja". Realizing that Dunstan would not be moved, the earl dressed in the garb of a penitent and went humbly to the Archbishop as he sat in his court. Dunstan was merciful to the repentant sinner and absolved him.

Another time, as chapter 13 tells, Dunstan refused to celebrate mass until three convicted forgers had had their hands and feet cut off in accordance with their sentence, even though it was Whitsunday and the punishment had

<sup>7</sup> The words *ábóta er hét Elfegus, sá sem fyrr var nefndr* seem to show that the author is confusing Elfegus of Winton in ch. 10, whom he calls archbishop, and this Elfegus now given Winton and later to become archbishop in 1006.

been delayed because of this. When the criminals had been beheaded (*sic*), Dunstan went gladly to mass, but shed tears and prayed piously for the forgers, thus showing that he had acted out of regard for the law, not from gladness at the penalty. And God bore witness to this, for as Dunstan was celebrating mass, a snow-white dove hovered over him with wings outspread. Afterwards the clerks were so busy talking over the portent that no one was there to receive Dunstan's cope when he took it off, but it hung in the air so as not to disturb Dunstan nor fall to the dusty ground until the serving men came to retrieve it.

Chapter 14 tells of the occasion when Dunstan had come to a village to consecrate a church which had been built by a nobleman, and there was not sufficient water for the service. Dunstan struck the floor with his staff and a clear fountain sprang up and is still there today. At another consecration, when the church did not point to the east as much as he thought it should, Dunstan moved it to the proper place by the pressure of his shoulders and body. It is said that because of wicked men and his zeal for holy truth and God's law, Dunstan was exiled, but God sent holy men to comfort him, as well as a vision of St Andrew.<sup>8</sup>

Chapter 15 gives the first of two accounts of the death of St Dunstan. This is attributed to Alvernus, who is apparently the Alfgar of Árni's sources. Alfgar's *vision* of Dunstan's calling is given as a report of the actual event in the Saga. While Dunstan was praying in Canterbury Cathedral before the feast of the Resurrection, a band of cherubim and seraphim rushed in to summon him to keep the festival with them, but Dunstan refused to go as it was his duty to feed all the congregation with the bread of Heaven. The angels replied that he must be ready the next Saturday to go to Rome with them and

<sup>8</sup> *sem fyrr var sagt*, says Árni, apparently referring to ch. 11. The chronology is very muddled here.

sing everlastingly Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. During mass the next morning, the Archbishop gave three sermons and preached as he had never preached before. He told the people of his approaching death, took communion and on his way out of the church showed his men where he wished to be buried. Then an illness seized him and on the Friday he took to his bed. On the Saturday he received the viaticum, and as he waited for death, three times his bed was lifted as high as the rafters and then lowered gently to the floor. Dunstan absolved and blessed the people, urging them to follow the way he had taught them, and then he died.

The second account of Dunstan's death is given in chapter 16, where it is said that after matins on the Friday, the saint called his people together and died while saying "Memoriam fecit . . . ." As he died the people heard angels singing the *Kyrie* which many call *Dunstanus-kyrie*. Then follows a panegyric on Dunstan, a brief résumé of his career, a careful dating of his death, and a prayer that God may bring us all to the same bliss.

Chapters 17 and 18 tell of two miracles that occurred after Dunstan's death. The first one tells of a brother in Lanfranc's day who was possessed by a devil, until a good and righteous brother placed Dunstan's cross over him, thus putting the devil to flight. The second tells how Lanfranc himself was strengthened in a law-suit against the bishop of Bayeux by a vision he had of Dunstan the night before the case. Next day he completely routed his opponents.

It must be obvious even from this brief description of the contents that Áрни is not interested in history as such, but wishes to use St Dunstan's life as an exemplum for the people, who if they listen carefully will gain spiritual profit. And so Áрни concentrates on the miraculous side of Dunstan's story, as in chapters 3-5, 9, 10, 14-18, and on his spiritual life and attitudes as in 12 and 13. Both these aspects are treated in some detail, whereas the main

historical events in his life are passed over as quickly as possible, so quickly and carelessly in fact, that the chronology becomes muddled and it is difficult to follow Dunstan's career without help from other sources.

As far as history is concerned, Áрни does tell us that Dunstan was brought up at Glastonbury, which he leaves to live with Adelm, is placed in Athelstan's court, helps "Edward" (Edgar) with the monastic reforms, consecrates Edward the Martyr (chapters 5-6), is made abbot of Glastonbury by "Edward the Elder" (chapter 8), becomes bishop of Winton but resigns this see under Edgar to become overseer of bishops and then bishop of Worcester, London and finally Archbishop of Canterbury (chapter 10), but the author's indifference to historical fact can be seen in the order of this list, which violates chronology, in the muddling of the kings' names, as well as in the inclusion of the miracles which are found even here.

With regard to the muddling of the kings' names: in chapter 6, Áрни says that when Athelstan died his brother "Edward" succeeded him and *var inn röskvasti riddari í bardögum, mjök vópn-djarfr*. This, of course, should be *Edmund* the magnificent. The next sentence: "En síðan hann var einvaldz-konungr yfir öllu [Englandi], lagði hann allan hug á at auka ok styrkja Guðs kristni, ok sæma hans þjónustu-menn", could apply to Edmund who made Dunstan abbot of Glastonbury and was generous to that monastery, but it is a better description of Edgar, his younger son, who became king of Mercia and Northumbria in 957, but king of all England when his brother Edwy died in 959. The rest of chapter 6 is certainly about Edgar, for it tells of his reform of the monasteries with the help of Dunstan and Ethelwald, and names his two sons Edward and Ethelred.

In chapter 8, Edmund the magnificent becomes Edward the Elder, King Alfred's brother, who died when Dunstan was a child.

Edgar's name occurs correctly in chapter 10 as the king



who appointed Dunstan overseer of bishops' sees<sup>9</sup> and then bishop of Worcester and London, and also in chapter 12 as the king who supported the earl against Dunstan.

No mention is made of Eadred (in chapter 10 Dunstan is chosen as bishop of Winchester *af öllum góðum mönnum*, not by the king), nor of Edwy and the story behind Dunstan's exile, though the exile itself is mentioned at the end of chapter 14.<sup>10</sup>

Árni's treatment of Ethelred is interesting, for in chapter 6, he says that of the two brothers, Edward was "þeirra ellri ok siðsamari, ok at öllu betr at sér gjörr, ok síns feðr meiri eptir-líkari í öllum góðum verkum", and one would expect this to lead on to the usual account of Ethelred as an unsatisfactory if not a wicked man, of whom Dunstan prophesied evil not only at his baptism but at his coronation.<sup>11</sup> Instead Árni begins to whitewash Ethelred by saying that he and Edward his brother "untuzt harðla mikit ok hjartanliga" (chapter 7), that he wept bitterly for his brother's death and "var með öllu hreinn ok hlutlauss af því vónða verki, er móðir hans h[afði gört]", and finally by transferring to his birth the vision Dunstan had had at Edgar's, when angels sang "Pax Anglorum ecclesie! exorti nunc pueri et Dunstani nostri tempore". Árni adds the further comment "Var þat þessi konungr Ethelwardus,<sup>12</sup> því at hann var friðsamr ok réttlátr, mjúkr ok miskunsamr við alla góða menn þar sem þat hæfði" (chapter 9). This is in great contrast to all other accounts of Ethelred.

Some parts of Dunstan's life are obscure and sometimes the authorities disagree on the order and details of events,

<sup>9</sup> Is this a version of author B's statement that Edgar made Dunstan bishop so that he could be at court? Unfortunately the text is so damaged at this point that it can no longer be read, and there are gaps in Vigfússon's text too.

<sup>10</sup> If this manuscript has a long history behind it, then the muddling of the kings' names may of course be due to bad copying by the different scribes. On the other hand, the confusion fits in well with the picture of an author who is careless about historical facts.

<sup>11</sup> cf. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum* (Rolls Series 90; 1887), II 10, as well as *Memorials*, 114-5, 215, 309.

<sup>12</sup> Even here, Árni cannot name the king correctly, though he calls him Ethelredus in ch. 6. Or is ch. 6 the work of a second author? cf. p. 292.

but even where they agree, Árne is prepared to cut and change their narrative with little regard for fact. For instance, in his version of the story of the bishopric of Winton, he does not say that Eadred asked his mother to persuade Dunstan to accept the post or that Dunstan asked the king to interpret his vision for him. Instead he has Dunstan interpreting the dream himself and *accepting the bishopric after it*, a version which is in none of the Lives of St Dunstan.<sup>13</sup>

Minor disagreements with his sources are found in chapter 6 where Árne describes Adelm as Dunstan's foster-brother, not his uncle, and we have seen already that he has muddled the two clerics who are both called Elfegus.<sup>14</sup> He does not give names to Dunstan's mother and father, nor to the Mayfield Church (chapter 14), though his sources have them.

And yet in chapter 7, Árne says King Edward ruled for three years and eight months<sup>15</sup> and in chapter 16, he dates Dunstan's death most precisely.<sup>16</sup>

But despite his disregard for historical accuracy, Árne carried out his purpose of compiling "í fylgjandi frásögn þau æventyr sem mjög hafa staðit sundr-dreift í imissum bókum af fyrr-nefndum Guðs vin ok vórum andligum feðr Dunstano". Sometimes it is difficult to say why Árne chose one "adventure" and not another, why, for instance, he leaves out all mention of Eadred and his mother in the story of the bishopric of Winton or why he does not give the reasons for Dunstan's exile, though

<sup>13</sup> It is not certain whether Eadred wished to give Dunstan Crediton or Winchester; see T. Symons, *Regularis Concordia* (Nelson's Medieval Classics, 1953), xvii note. Dunstan did not accept either see. See also E. Shipley Duckett, *Saint Dunstan of Canterbury* (1955), 55.

<sup>14</sup> See note 7 above.

<sup>15</sup> *Icelandic Sagas*, II 392, reads: "Nú sem Ethwardus hinn ungi konungr hafði stýrt sínu ríki vel ok guðréttliga um þrjú ár ok átta mánaði . . . ." Unfortunately this occurs under the patch on fol. 3r and cannot be read on a microfilm. If the word is *þrjú*, then the saga is inaccurate, for Edward ruled for *two* years and eight months (cf. F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1947), 366-8), although Osbern has "after three years" and *Gesta Regum* gives *three* and a half years. But the saga is not alone in this precise inaccuracy, for the *Annales regii* say: *Edvardus . . . . . iiiij. an. ok . . . . . xvi. vikvñ minnr* (G. Storm, *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578* (1888), 104).

<sup>16</sup> See p. 292 for a discussion of this.

that story should have appealed to him, or why he does not tell that Dunstan was attacked by the devil in the shape of a bear, and consecrated *archbishop* by Odo in the service of ordination to the bishopric of Worcester, and so on. All these except the second occur in Árne's main source, Adelard's *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, and they and others even more striking are found in Eadmer's two books, *Vita* and *Miracula Sancti Dunstani*, which he seems to have used as well.<sup>17</sup>

The Latin lives of St Dunstan were edited by Stubbs in 1874.<sup>18</sup> Five of them were written well before the fourteenth century — the *Life* by the so-called Author B, the series of lessons based on Dunstan's life by Adelard, two versions of the *Life*, each with a book of miracles, by Osbern and Eadmer, and a *Life* by William of Malmesbury.

According to Stubbs,<sup>19</sup> the first biography by B was written *c.* 1000, for it is dedicated to Elfric who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 996-1006, and by 1004 a revised version of it had been sent to France.<sup>20</sup> Árne does not seem to have known this version at all, unless his statement in chapter 10 that Edgar made Dunstan "faðir ok forstjóri yfir biskups stóla" is based on B's account of Dunstan being elected a bishop without a see.<sup>21</sup>

Adelard of Blandinium's series of lessons based on Dunstan's life (= A)<sup>22</sup> is undoubtedly Árne's main source. It was written before 1011, since it is addressed to Elfege who was archbishop from 1006-1012. The set of lessons contains some material from B, but has in addition many traditions about Dunstan then current.<sup>23</sup> It was copied many times and is the main source of the breviary lessons for St Dunstan's Day.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> cf. E. Mogk's statement, *Geschichte der norwegisch-isländischen Literatur* (1904), 893.

<sup>18</sup> See note 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Memorials*, x f.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, xxvii f.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 36 and xci.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 53-68.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, xxx-xxxi.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, 445 ff.

Between the time of B and A the legend of St Dunstan had grown luxuriantly, and A is the first to tell the stories, or give the details, that lie behind chapters 4, 5, 10, 14-16 in the Saga.<sup>25</sup>

The next life, by Osbern (= O), was written c. 1080, or before Anselm became archbishop, and it has a book of miracles attached to it.<sup>26</sup> Although this version seems to have been popular and was copied many times, it does not appear to have been used by Árne.<sup>27</sup>

Eadmer's two books on St Dunstan (= E) were written, so the author claimed, to correct Osbern's work,<sup>28</sup> though this is probably just an excuse for writing a new work.<sup>29</sup> The date of Eadmer's *Life* is c. 1109, and although it was apparently never very popular, it is certainly one of the sources for *Dunstanus Saga*. Some of his additions to and variations from Osbern are the stories Árne decides to tell in his Saga.<sup>30</sup> For example, Eadmer enlarges on A's story of the nobleman and the dispensation, which O omitted;<sup>31</sup> he gives the story of the forgers, which O would not tell, and gives in detail the story of the hanging chasuble which O slurred over;<sup>32</sup> he returns to B's version of the hymn in the vision of the marriage of Dunstan's mother;<sup>33</sup> and he gives an account of the orientation of Mayfield church.<sup>34</sup>

William of Malmesbury's *Life* (= WM) written after 1120, was also intended to supersede O, which William used together with B and A, but not E.<sup>35</sup> There is only one MS. of WM.<sup>36</sup> This version is much more soberly historical than the others and would probably not have

<sup>25</sup> For details see *ibid.*, lx f.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, xxxi-xxxii.

<sup>27</sup> But see below, pp. 287-8.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, xxxiii-xxxv.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, lxvii.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, lxviii.

<sup>31</sup> *Icelandic Sagas*, II 396 (ch. 12).

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, II 397 (ch. 13).

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, II 387 (ch. 3).

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, II 399 (ch. 14).

<sup>35</sup> *Memorials*, lxix-lxxi.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, lii.

appealed to Árne even if he had seen the book. The material for chapters 7 and 9 of the Saga (the martyrdom of Edward and the beating of Ethelred) is found in WM, but the same stories occur in his *Gesta Regum*, a more likely source, and indeed they may have come to Árne by more indirect means.<sup>37</sup>

With regard to the sources of his work, Árne makes several statements in the Saga itself. In chapter 1, he says “. . . því hefi ek saman lesit í fylgjandi frásögn þau æventyr sem mjög hafa staðit sundr-dreift í imissum bókum af . . . Dunstano”. (Later in the same chapter, Árne admits he is just a translator when he says “Í fyrstu mun ek fram bera með Norænligu móður-máli er til heyrir svó vóttandi sem hér fylgir”.) In chapter 2 it is stated “. . . munu vér saman bera þá hluti sem vér höfum fundit í lofsöngum ok ymnum ok öðrum heilögum ritningum af . . . Dunstano”, but as we shall see this is just an elaboration of a sentence taken direct from A, and sheds no light on Árne’s work.<sup>38</sup> Again in chapter 11 Árne says “. . . hyggjum vér þó at lítill partr sé skrifaðr í þessum bæklingi af þeim mörgum táknum ok jarteignum er Guð hefir gjört fyrir verðleika heilags Dunstani. En þó höfum vér saman lesit þat sem vér höfum fremst fundit af hönunum”.

Towards the end of the Saga there are references to sources by name. In chapter 15 there is the sentence: “Nokkurr klerkr, Alvernus at nafni, Kantara-byrgis kirkju fyrir-söngvari, er öllum mönnum í Englandi var fróðari í þann tíma at sönglist ok allra handa klerkdómi, hefir með þvílíkum orðum skrifat af anláti ok framför heilags Dunstani svó segjandi”. Chapter 16 is introduced by the statement “Svó segja sumir Enskir sagna-meistarar . . .”, while at the end of that chapter we have a reference to a book itself “. . . eptir því sem sá meistari segir, er diktat hefir Speculum Historiale”.

All these statements, except the third, give a true

<sup>37</sup> See p. 285.

<sup>38</sup> cf. *Icelandic Sagas*, II xxiv.

description of what Árne did to compile this saga: he translated from Latin into Icelandic the "adventures" he found in A and E; he seems to have used the *Regularis Concordia* (= RC) and perhaps the *Speculum Historiale* (= SH) by Richard of Cirencester, unless the material from the latter was added by a later hand.<sup>39</sup> Whether he used O or WM is very doubtful.

The pattern of his borrowing is seen in the following table:

Saga	2	A 1		
	3		I E 29 <sup>40</sup>	
	4	A 1		
	5	A 2		
	6	A 3		
				RC pp. 1-3
			I E 35	
	7			? SH 26 or WM 20
	8	A 3		
	9			? SH 27 or WM's Gesta Regum
		A 3		
10		A 4		
		A 7-8		
11		A 8		
12		(A 12)	I E 26	
13			I E 27	
14			I E 28	
		A 6		
15		? A 10	? I E 37 I E 38-41	
16		A 11		
		A 12		
				SH 27
17			II E 16	
18			II E 17	

<sup>39</sup> See p. 292.

<sup>40</sup> I E = Eadmer's *Vita*, II E = Eadmer's *Miracula*.

From this it is clear that Áрни's chief source was A, for he follows in the main the order A has for his lessons, using E to illustrate a statement of A, as in chapter 3 where he retells the story of the heavenly marriage of Dunstan's mother which A merely mentions in *Lectio* 1, and he uses the same technique in chapters 12-14 and 17-18. In fact E is used to embroider A with "mörgum táknum ok jarteignum er Guð hefir gjört fyrir verðleika heilags Dunstani", for *all* the material from E (including the first account of Dunstan's death in chapter 15) has to do with signs and miracles, whereas A is used for the more sober facts and legends of Dunstan's life.

It is not surprising that A should be Áрни's chief source, for as we have seen above (p. 273), A was one of the most popular versions of Dunstan's life, being written as lessons to be read in the nocturns of Dunstan's feast day.<sup>41</sup>

Then too, both authors have the same aim — not to write a biography of Dunstan, but to retell some of the events of his life for the edification of their hearers.<sup>42</sup> As Áрни says in chapter 1: "Því at hann biðr því framar fyrir yðr til Guðs, sem þér veitið honum meiri sæmd ok heiðr í atstöðu ok hlýðing þessarra fáu æventýra, sem sagna-meistarar hafa honum til sæmðar gört enn oss til gleði ok andarligrar nytsemdar í ímissligum bókum eptir látin".

Sometimes Áрни has merely taken his information from A, as in chapter 10 where he cuts out many details given in A but gives the necessary facts,<sup>43</sup> in chapter 11 which follows A *lectio* 8, except that Áрни uses his own words in praising Dunstan, and in the third part of chapter 14 which briefly describes Dunstan's exile in much the same way as in A *lectio* 6.

<sup>41</sup> See *Memorials*, 444 ff.

<sup>42</sup> cf. A's prologue, *Memorials*, 53.

<sup>43</sup> cf. ch. 10 and A *lectio* 4. See p. 272 above for omissions in the Winton bishopric story. Áрни also deletes the setting of the vision in Rome, the inscription on the swords, etc., and the last clause of St Andrew's quotation. In the second part of the chapter, he has to make Dunstan resign Winton, he states that Edgar made him overseer of bishops' sees, deletes the story of Odo and the consecration of Dunstan, and does not tie up his promotion with the vision of the three apostles.

Sometimes his debt to A is more complicated. For instance, in chapter 16, Árne follows A lectio 11 for the first part of his account, puts in the story of Dunstan's *Kyrie* at this point on his own authority,<sup>44</sup> and bases the rest of his chapter, where he compares Dunstan to the prophets, patriarchs, virgins and martyrs, on A lectio 12, but does not follow A in any detail, preferring to "write up" Dunstan in his own rather inflated way. (The rest of the chapter seems to come from SH, see below p. 286.)

Chapters 5 and 8 are quite clearly nearer to A lectio 2 and 3 than the other versions, though in chapter 5 Árne inflates A's account to get all the drama he can out of the story of Dunstan's adventures when delirious, and in chapter 8 he has confused the kings' names as well as adding the digression on St Thomas Becket. Nevertheless, despite all additions, there are phrases at various points in the narrative taken straight from A which show that Árne must have had A before him as he wrote.

The following transcript of chapter 2 and A lectio 1 shows just how Árne used A in most of his saga.

Meðr því at vér höldum með hátíðligum vökum ok tíðagjörðum heimferðar-dag sæls Dunstanni erchibiskups, á hverjum vér trúum hann hafa fram farit af þessu fallvalta lífi ok sorgarfullum útleigðardal til lifandi manna jarðar, ok himneskrar föður-leifðar, byrjar oss, hinir kærustu bræðr, at skríða til jarðar Lausnara vórs, gangandi fótspor þessa ens blezaða biskups með góðum verkum ok andligri gleði.

Quia solemnibus excubiis transitum beati Dunstani colimus, quo eum ad Christum migrasse credimus,

post eum fratres carissimi suspiremus, et ad Christum post eum læti quique tendamus.

<sup>44</sup> But Adelard had told his version of the *Kyrie* in lectio 9. Perhaps a tradition had grown up, later than the twelfth century, that this *Kyrie* was heard at Dunstan's death, although it seems unlikely that there was enough interest in Dunstan then to give rise to such a story.



En því at vér erum stórliga þyngdir (?) af vórum syndum, sem vér trúum, í dauðligum líkam, munu vér saman bera þá hluti sem vér höfum fundit í lofsöngum ok ymnum ok öðrum heilögum ritningum af þessum Guðs játara herra Dunstano, ok með áeggjangeligum hætti svó sem einn stiga saman setjandi, ok eptir þessum Guðs vin skundandi til himneskrar hæðar upp rísa. Er þat í fyrstu greinanda, at hann var getinn af mikils háttar mönnum ok kynferðugum at veraldar virðingu, sæmdum ok auðævum. En svó göfug sem hans feðgin vóru at heims mekt vóru þau miklu göfgari í góðum siðum ok guðligri spekt. Var faðir hans ok móðir svó háleitum lifnaði ok heilagligum prýdd hér á jarðríki, at eptir þeirra andlát öðlaðizt heilagr Dunstanus í andligum líkam skipaðr at sjá þau í millum engla-flokka í himinríki, sem eptir-faranda capitulum vóttar.

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 386).

Sed quoniam mortalitate gravati ad nos relabimur, quae de eo agnovimus inter hymnos divinos conferamus,

et sermone exhortatorio quasi scalam nobis post eum tendendi erigamus.

Ac primo dicendum, quod tam sanctis parentibus ortus claruit

[O. 3, *Memorials*, p. 71.<sup>45</sup> magnis quidem pro saeculi dignitate parentibus, sed ad religionem, quae Christianos decet, longe majoribus]

ut eos saeculo exemptos inter choros conspiciere mereretur angelicos.

(Adelard, *Memorials*, p. 54).

As can be seen from this, Árni is continually embroidering the plain cloth of A's tale: A's *solemnibus excubiis* becomes "með hátíðligum vökum ok tíðagjörðum", *post eum læti quique tendamus* becomes "gangandi fótspor þessa ens blezaða biskups með góðum verkum ok andligri gleði", and *quo eum ad Christum migrasse credimus* develops into the impressive "á hverjum vér trúum hann hafa fram farit af þessu fallvalta lífi ok sorgar-fullum útleðar-dal til lifandi manna jarðar, ok

<sup>45</sup> See p. 287 below.

himneskrar föður-leifðar". This is typical of Árni in his treatment of all his sources. He likes high-flown language, particularly when he is talking about death and eternal life, and sometimes his words seem so different from A or E that the reader begins to suspect he is using another source, until reassured by a direct quotation from the text, for Árni never strays far from A and E which must have been in front of him as he wrote. He keeps the idioms he finds there, he even uses the phrase *hinir kærustu bræðr*, and keeps and expands *inter hymnos divinos*, though it is not true of his own work that he used songs of praise and hymns. "Other holy writings" is vague enough to cover his own position.

Árni uses the same technique in chapter 4 which is an expansion of A lectio 1. He adds an explanation of the meaning of Candlemas, a statement that the people praised God when they saw the sign, and such clauses as "er Guð sendi af himni móður heilags Dunstani", "án vind nokkurum eðr mannligum áblæstri, svó at öngvan varði".<sup>46</sup> The last sentence again shows his method:

Meðr þessu æventýri megum vér merkja, hinir kærustu bræðr, at Guð hefir kosit ok valit sér þenna smá-svein þegar í móðurkviði, ok skipat hann þjónustumann eilífs ljóss, at með trúarinnar logbrandi skuli hann upp tendra þeirra manna hjörtu sem kólna eðr með öllu slokna í guðligum ástar . . . . [gap occurs here].

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 388).

Quid, fratres mei, Deum hoc in facto dicemus praefigurasse nisi filium ex ea nasciturum, in matris jam utero a Se electum, et aeterni luminis ministrum affuturum?

(Adelard, *Memorials*, p. 54).

Árni's use of E is on the whole freer than his use of A. As we have seen above (pp. 276-7), E is the only possible

<sup>46</sup> Both WM and E have this detail about the lack of wind, which is not in A. Árni may have read E's account and remembered this, but it would be such a natural thing to add anyway that it is probably Árni's independent addition.

source for chapters 3, 12, 13 and 14, the material for which is not found, or only referred to in passing, in A and O. The same is true of 6, 17 and 18, for although the material is found in O as well as E, it is clearly E that Árne follows. A transcript of chapter 3 shows how Árne used E:

Á nokkurri nótt sem heilagur Dunstanus nærði sik til guðligrar þjónustu með náttúrligum svefni, var hans skynsemdar-andi gripinn upp til himneskrar sýnar eptir guðligri forsjó.

Sýndizt hönun sem mikit hóf ok hátíðlig veizla færi fram í himinríkis höll. Undirstóð hann at þar var brúðkaups-veizla, ok þótti sem móðir hans væri brúðr hæsta konungs. Sýndizt hönun ok, sem at þessari veizlu væri margir mektögir höfðingjar ok ótölulikt fjölmenni í óumræðiligri gleði ok óendiligum fagnaði. Sá hann þar ok föður sinn gleðjast með öðrum konungs hirðmönnum. Þótti hönun öll sú höll listuliga þjóta með ymnum ok lofsöngum þessa konungs, ok organ, ok salterium ok cithara ok allzkonar hljóðberanligum strengfærum. Sem hann þessa hluti hugleiðandi gladdizt hann (*sic*) af fáheyrðum fagnaði, gékk at hönun einn ungr maðr í hinum bjartazta búnaði svó segjandi: “Fyrir hví öllum mönnum fagnöndum ok sætliga lof Guði syngjöndum, enn þú einn saman þegir í

Quadam etenim nocte cum membra quieti dedisset

per visum in superna raptus est.

Conspexit itaque et ecce, mater sua cuidam regi potentissimo in conjugium sub immensa confluentium magnatum laetitia exultatione copulabatur,

resonantibus undique hymnis ac laudibus in gloriam ejusdem regis, organis quoque ac diversis melodiis concrepantibus in his regalibus nuptiis.

Quibus dum ipse magnifice delectatus intenderet, atque ad ea totum sui cordis affectum arrigeret, accessit ad eum juvenis quidam candidissimo tectus amictu, dicens illi, “Cum videas et audias istos laetantium ac jubantium choros, cur te illis non

svó háleitu brúðkaupi móður þinnar er samtengir [hana] með óleysiligu sambandi himneskum brúðguma, hvers fegrð sól ok tungl mikilliga undrazt?" Dunstanus andsvaraði, segjandi sik ekki makliga kunna til lofs at syngja svó háleitum ok voldugum dýrðar konungi. Hinn ungi maðr sagði: "Viltú at ek kenna þér hvat þú skalt syngja?" Dunstanus sagðizt þat feginsamliga vilja. Engillinn [talaði] þá enn til hans: "Syng þessa symphoniam<sup>47</sup> eptir þeim orðum ok hljóðagreinum sem ek syng fyrir þér:

"O rex gentium, dominator omnium, propter sedem majestatis tuae da nobis indulgentiam, rex Christe, peccatorum, Alleluia.

[Translation of antiphon.]

Saung heilagr Dunstanus ok optliga endrtók þessa Antiphonu er Guðs engill hafði kennt hónum, gleðjandizt mikilliga of sætleik hljóðanna ok mikilleik sýnarinnar. Sem heilagr Dunstanus vaknaði,

mundi hann gjörla orð ok thon sagðrar antiphonu, látandi skrifa hana ok í heilagri kirkju syngja; ok görði Guði góðfúsar þakkir sem verðugt var, fyrir þessa anda-gipt ok gleði, er hann var hónum sýnandi sín feðgin millum engla-flokka sætliga Guði lof syngjandi. En af því er hér eigi skrifaðr thon sagðrar anthifonu, at hon er eigi sungin í kirkjum.

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 386).

<sup>47</sup> The manuscript has anpho. (= antiphon?).

copulas? Cur laudibus eorum non commisces laudes tuas? Et quidem si in desponsatione matris tuae a voce laudis et exultationis cuncti silerent, tu silere non deberes, nedum illis non tacentibus solus taceas". Ad haec verba, quid in laudem tanti regis cantaret ignorare se respondit.

Sciscitatur ergo an a se quod decenter canere posset instrui vellet. Quod cum sibi acceptissimum fore profiteretur, docuit eum antiphonam istam,

Quam pater per visum saepius repetens et in laudem praefati regis frequentius canens, mira jocunditate pascebatur.

Expergefactus autem a somno surrexit, gemens eo quod a tantis gaudiis tam subito se in hujus mundi aerumnis invenit. Antiphonam vero statim ne oblivioni daretur scribi praecepit, eamque a suis postmodum cantari saepius in sui praesentia fecit.

[Interpretation of vision.]

(Eadmer, *Vita*, in *Memorials*, pp. 205 f.)

At other times, Áрни cuts out a great deal of E's account, in contrast with his usual inflation of A. For instance, in chapter 12 he leaves out the incident of the papal letter,<sup>48</sup> the trial of the case and Dunstan's grief at the king's attitude and the reaction of those present at the earl's penitence. On the other hand, Áрни says the earl found Dunstan "mjúkan ok myskunsáman", where E has him sitting stern-faced and unmoved by the man's tears for an hour before forgiving him.

In chapter 15 which is based on I E 37-41, Áрни is continually expanding phrases, altering idioms, changing the words of speeches as well as cutting down much of E's inflated language and his account of the actual events. Yet these alterations do not conceal the fact that he is using E for his source. The same is true of chapter 18 (II E 17) which though abbreviated and very free is still clearly based on E, and not on the O version of the story.

Chapter 17, based on II E 16, which tells of the unhappy experiences of a brother possessed of a devil until Dunstan's staff laid over him cures him, differs from its source in several details. E's *teterrimos et horridos malignorum spirituum vultus* becomes "reiðiligar ásjónur helvískra blámanna"; the brother, who in E is the actor, is now dragged from his seat and dashed against the prior apparently by some unseen force; his blasphemies are now dictated by the devil; he is now treated not tortured in the infirmary; the moral of the confession story is pointed in some detail; the brother himself feels the devil like a puppy in his belly; there are some more vivid and unpleasing details about the devil's exit from the brother's belly and there is no account of the reformation that follows the miracle. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about Áрни's source for this chapter, and various phrases lifted straight from E seem to show he had the text in front of him. In particular:

<sup>48</sup> This is in A too, and seems to be the main point of the story. Even WM mentions the papal letter when describing Dunstan's severity against unlawful marriages, though he does not tell this tale.

Við þessa sýn at hann var (*sic*)  
mjög hræddr ok ótta-sleginn,  
at hann greip til erchi-  
biskupsins; en hann á Guðs  
líkama haldandi, kreistandi  
hann mjök sterkliga millum  
sinna armleggja,

ad quorum aspectum nimio  
pavore perterritus, antistitem  
inter manus sacra tenentem  
utrisque brachiis strictim  
amplectitur

með hárri röddu hræðiliga  
æpandi ok svó segjandi;  
“Christus regnat, Christus  
vincit, Christus imperat”.

horrido clamore vociferans  
ac dicens “Christus vincit,  
Christus regnat, Christus  
imperat”.

[The Latin is then translated.]

Allir þeir sem heyrðu, urðu  
mjök hræddir, en hann  
bróðirinn vitlauss var borinn  
eptir messuna af nokkurum  
riddarum í leyniligt studium  
erchibiskups.

Conterriti sunt omnes qui  
aderant, et arreptum juvenem  
milites de ecclesia in pontificis  
cameram rapiunt.

[*Icelandic Sagas*, II 404.]

(Eadmer, *Miracula*, in  
*Memorials*, p. 234.)

Whether Árne had the full version of E before him it is impossible to tell, but he took his material from both the *Vita* and the *Miracula*, and although it is possible that someone had made a selection from these works which Árne then used, it is more probable that Árne himself chose what he wanted from E, altering it when it pleased him to do so, quoting E verbatim when it seemed best.

The question of WM's influence on the Saga is an interesting one. Of all the authorities, WM is the only one who gives an account of Edward's martyrdom (chapter 7) and this occurs not only in his *Vita Sancti Dunstani*<sup>49</sup> but also, originally, in his *Gesta Regum* II, § 162.<sup>50</sup> The Saga version differs very much from WM: there is no mention of hunting, Edward's step-mother kills him with her own hand, and there are none of the

<sup>49</sup> *Memorials*, 308.

<sup>50</sup> *Gesta Regum*, I 183.

dramatic details of the horse running away with the dying boy, whose body is said to lie in “Uisturina”, not Wareham or Salisbury. Later chroniclers such as Roger of Wendover and Richard of Cirencester follow WM’s account closely. Árni’s version is the only one that makes the queen mother the murderess, and presumably this is on his own authority, perhaps based on a misreading of his source. The other differences may have come about quite simply by Árni’s cutting down the story and not being interested enough in the innocent young martyr to keep to the details. It is strange though that he did not mention the horse and the blood-track when he adds the following with such gusto: “þvíat þegar lagði hún í gegnum konungsins kvið með því saxi sem hún bölvað bar undir sínum mötli, svó at þegar lágu úti iðrin”.<sup>51</sup>

The material for chapter 9 (the story of Ethelred’s mother beating the young king with a taper) occurs in WM’s *Gesta Regum* II, § 164, but Árni whitewashes the character of Ethelred.<sup>52</sup>

Now it is possible that Árni had read *Gesta Regum*, even if he had not seen the *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, but both these stories are also found in chapters 26 and 27 of Richard of Cirencester’s *Speculum Historiale*,<sup>53</sup> where they are taken practically verbatim from *Gesta Regum*.

Ok einn tíma er pilltrinn  
grét beiskliga dauða b[róður]

... a móðir greip nokkur  
kerti ok barði piltinn mjök  
harðla, þvíat henni var þat  
næst hendi, heptandi með  
þessu hans grát ok kveinkan.

De isto praeterea rege Ethelredo legitur, quod, cum esset puer decennis, fratrem necatum conclamari audiret. Fletu suo furem genetricem adeo irritavit, ut, quia flagellum ad manum non habebat, arreptis candelis innocentem caederet, nec prius desisteret, quam pene exanimem relinqueret, et ipsa lacrimas infunderet.

<sup>51</sup> cf. too his delight in the story of the puppy in the brother’s belly in ch. 17.

<sup>52</sup> See p. 271.

<sup>53</sup> ed. J. E. B. Mayor (Rolls Series 30; 1869), 131 and 134.

Urðu hónum síðan svó leið kerti ok hatrsfull, at hann vildi aldri nær sjá þau eör fyrir sér láta brenna.

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 394.)

Quapropter tota vita sua ita candelas exhorruit in posterum, ut nunquam ante se pateretur inferri lumen earum.<sup>54</sup>

(SH, p. 134.)

In chapter 16, Árni quotes from SH 27:

Enn er liðit var frá hingatburð vórs Herra Jesu Christi tólf árum minnr enn þúshundrut ára, ok þá er hann hafði veit erchibiskup í Cancia xxx ára ok þrjú ár, *eptir því sem sá meistari segir er diktat hefir Speculum Historiale*. En þá vóru liðnir frá fæðing sæls Dunstani með öllu sjautigir ára, þá leið hans en blezaða önd . . . .

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 404.)

Anno Domini noningentesimo octogesimo octavo . . . anno patriarchatus sui tricesimo tertio,—

nativitatis suæ circiter septuagesimo . . . .

(SH, p. 136 f.)

None of the other authorities dates Dunstan's death so precisely.<sup>55</sup> So it is possible that Árni used SH not only for this dating but also for the material in chapters 7 and 9.<sup>56</sup>

The only other source used by Árni is the *Regularis Concordia*. In his account of "Edward's" (i.e. Edgar's) restoration of the monasteries in chapter 6, Árni seems to be summarizing the material in the Proem to this work<sup>57</sup> and ends with a quotation from it.

<sup>54</sup> From the words *quod cum* this is a quotation from *Gesta Regum*, II § 164, with the addition of *esset, relinqueret* and *sua* only.

<sup>55</sup> In his *Speculum Historiale*, Vincent of Beauvais certainly puts Dunstan's death under the year 988, but he calls this year "Anno Othonis tertii 5" (*Spec. Hist.*, lib. 24, cap. xcii-xcvii). My thanks are due to Dr E. M. Dalziel for checking this reference for me. Icelandic annals record his death s.a. 988, see G. Storm, *op. cit.*, 105, 178.

<sup>56</sup> For the problem this raises with regard to the date of the Saga, see p. 292.

<sup>57</sup> Edition cited in note 13.



En hans dróttning skyldi vitja systra-klaustra, ok með vakri áhyggju móðurligrar umhyggju . . . þá hluti sem þeim til heyrði, at karlmaðr karlmanni, en [kvinna] kvinnu mætti án nokkurri grunsemd vóndri viðrkvæmiliga við hjálpa.

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 391.)

coniugique suae Ælfthrithæ sanctimonialium mandras ut impauidi more custodis defenderet cautissime praecepit; ut uidelicet mas maribus, femina feminis, sine ullo suspicionis scrupulo subueniret.

(RC, p. 2.)

As a Benedictine, Árni might be expected to know this work, or others in which it was quoted.

Did Árni know Osbern's work? Occasionally in the Saga there is a statement that seems nearer to O than any other of the versions. We have already noticed the one in chapter 2,<sup>58</sup> but also in the account of the coronation of Edward the Martyr in chapter 6, which is based on E, occurs this sentence:

Ok þá er hann skyldi vígja konunginn greip hann heilagt kross-mark þat sem vant var at bera fyrir hónum ok erchibiskups tígn í Cancia til heyrði, setjandi þat fram á mitt gólf . . . .

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 392.)

In cujus electione dum quidam principes palatini adquiescere nollent Dunstanus arrepto crucis vexillo, quod prae se ex more ferebatur,

in medio constitit . . . .<sup>59</sup>

(Osbern, *Memorials*, p. 114.)

Several phrases in the vision of the apostles in chapter 10 seem to come from O rather than A.

. . . heyrði hann sælan Andreas postula mæla með blíðu andliti þessi guðspjallz-orð til sín talandi: . . . .

Interea Andream exhilarato vultu aspicit conniventem, et evangelicis verbis audit praecinientem:<sup>60</sup> . . . .

Sem nokkur skóla-meistari bauð hann Dunstano fram rétta höndina. Ok sem hann fram rétti sinn lófa sem

Tunc a beato Petro jussus laevam extendere

<sup>58</sup> See p. 279.

<sup>59</sup> cf. I E 35, *Memorials*, 214.

hlýðinn lærisveinn, gefr hann  
hónum plágu svó at *skall við*;  
svó segjandi: “Þetta (MS:  
þessi) skal vera þín pína  
fyrir þat er þú hefir neitað at  
vera Winthonar biskup . . . .

modicum *crepitantis* ferulae  
ictum excepit hoc ab illo  
audiens, “Hoc tibi sit poena  
abjecti, et signum ulterius  
non abjiciendi pontificatus”.<sup>61</sup>

(*Icelandic Sagas*, II 395.)

(Osbern, *Memorials*, p. 97.)

Similarly chapter 17 has one detail that seems to come from O rather than E. In O the young brother sees the evil spirits *juxta altare*<sup>62</sup> (cf. *Saga þar nær altarinu*) but E has *coram se*.<sup>63</sup>

But these are minor points and occur when Árne is not keeping as close to his main source as usual. They are all probably chance similarities in phrasing which must happen when writers are dealing with the same subject matter. When such phrases from E occur in parts borrowed mainly from A, they may be reminiscences of that work which Árne had undoubtedly read.<sup>64</sup> But on the whole such phrases are commonplace.

Occasionally Árne strikes phrases that are reminiscent of WM: e.g. chapter 5, which is based mainly on A, has: “hlaupa þeir allir at hónum í senn með gapanda gini ok greypiligri gnauð”, while WM has (*Memorials*, p. 256): . . . *magnum latrantium agmen rapidis in properantem inhians rictibus obviam veniebat*; again “niðr drekkjast gegnum jörðina til helvítis hylja ok brennesteinsliga pytti . . .” is nearer to WM’s *furvis inferni unde emerberat se indidit umbris* than the other versions. Still, it is more probable that Árne added these details himself.

The only parts of the *Saga* unaccounted for are the beginning of chapter 6 and the end of chapter 8. Chapter

<sup>60</sup> cf. A lectio 4, *Memorials*, 57: “Tunc sanctus Andreas blande ex evangelio modulando cecinit”. Cf. also I E 13, *Memorials*, 186.

<sup>61</sup> cf. *ibid.*: “Sanctus autem Petrus arguendo virgam levavit et in palmam levem ictum vibrando dixit, ‘Hoc habeas commonitorium, de non recusando ulterius jugo Domini’”; and also I E 13, *Memorials*, 186.

<sup>62</sup> *Memorials*, 145.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, 234.

<sup>64</sup> In ch. 4 the detail of the lack of wind may have come from I E 1, *Memorials*, 165, in this way. See p. 280 above and cf. the end of ch. 11 (*Icelandic Sagas*, II 396) and I E, *Memorials*, 217.

6 begins with the statement that although he was the son of a wealthy family, Dunstan did worldly work so that the devil would not find him idle. At this point 20 lines are missing and we cannot tell just how Áрни continued with this theme. Perhaps there was an account of his building and metalwork which otherwise receive no mention in the Saga, unless the likening of Dunstan to a goldsmith at the end of chapter 8 was stimulated by the tradition of Dunstan as a metalworker.

After the gap in the manuscript, Áрни is in the middle of an account of the six ages of man. The ages of man is a common idea from Greek and Roman times onward and was used as a subject for art from the twelfth to the sixteenth century.<sup>65</sup> The number of the ages varies from five to twelve, ten and especially seven being the most popular. Isidore of Seville talks about the *six* ages of man,<sup>66</sup> but divides *Senectus* into two, the second being *Senium* or senility. The *Promptorium Parvulorum* of c. 1440 follows him in this, but Áрни does not and his description of these ages differs from that of Isidore.

From *Laurentius Saga* we know a little about the bishop's bastard son, Áрни, born of Þuríðr, a Norwegian woman, but living as a Benedictine monk at Þingeyrar.<sup>67</sup> Both his father and his father's friend Bergr Sokkason, also of Þingeyrar, were notable clerks and teachers, so it is perhaps not surprising that Áрни followed in their footsteps. In chapter 33 it is stated "Á Árna lagði hann [Laurentius] alla ástundan at kenna honum látinu ok letr. Varð hann inn framasti klerkr ok skrifari harðla sæmiligr ok *versificator*. Sannliga mátti þat segja, at fagrligt var þat klaustr, sem svo var skipat af slíkum munkum sem þá var at Þingeyrum."<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> The various forms of the idea are discussed, with massive bibliographical apparatus, by A. Hofmeister, 'Puer, iuvenis, senex: zum Verständnis der mittelalterlichen Altersbezeichnungen' in *Papsttum und Kaisertum: Forschungen . . . Paul Kehr . . . dargebracht*, hsgegeb. von A. Brachmann (1926), 287-316.

<sup>66</sup> *Etymologiarum* lib. XI ii, De ætatibus hominum.

<sup>67</sup> *Byskupa Sögur* (ed. Guðni Jónsson, 1948), III 55.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, III 75-6.

Árni accompanied his father when he went to be consecrated bishop,<sup>69</sup> but supported his cloister against his father before Archbishop Eilífr of Nidaros, and was commended by the Archbishop for this.<sup>70</sup> In chapter 44 we are told that Árni was made a teacher at Hólar, where there were always fifteen pupils or more.<sup>71</sup> Árni was ordained priest by Bishop Jón of Skálaholt as Laurentius did not think it right for a father to ordain his own son.<sup>72</sup> The author then goes on: “Stóð ok bróðir Árni aldrihi hjá föður sínum, nema þá hann fermdi börn. Var bróðir Árni inn bezti klerkr ok *versificator* ok kenndi mörgum klerkum. Fór hann hvern tíma í *visitacionem* með herra Laurentio, föður sínum, ok svaf í einu herbergi ok hann. Hafði hann ok innsigli byskupsins ok bréfagerðir ok Einarr djákni”.

The next comment on Árni is not so promising. In chapter 64 is an account of his illness and of how his father lectured him on his drunken and wicked ways.<sup>73</sup> “‘Ef þú vilt því heita guði ok mér, at þú skalt fara þegar eftir í klaustrit þitt at Þingeyrum, sem þú missir mín við, þá mun ek þora at óverðugu biðja fyrir þér til guðs, at þér batni sóttar þessarar, því at í klaustrinu á Þingeyrum máttu gera mikinn þrifnað, kenna ok skrifa. Berstu þat fyrir at brjóta þetta vort boð ok fara til Nóregis, er þú missir vor við, þá óþrífst þitt ráð, því at vér vitum, at þú leggst í ofdrykkju ok annan ófögnuð, ok nýtr þá heilög kirkja ekki þinnar menntar.’

Létti byskup eigi fyrr við en hann komst við ok táraðist beiskliga, játandi því, at hann skyldi til Þingeyra aftur fara ok staðfestast, þegar hann missti byskupsins við, hver hans fyrirheit urðu miðr en hæfði. Fór svo um hans ævi sem faðir hans sagði fyrir.”

His father died on April 16, 1331,<sup>74</sup> but we are not sure

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, III 93.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, III 97 f.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, III 100.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, III 107.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, III 146.

<sup>74</sup> See *Icelandic Sagas*, II xxiv-v.

what happened to Árne, for though Vigfússon says “an ominous silence covers his career from the death of the Bishop, 1330 (*sic*)”,<sup>75</sup> it is possible that the ‘fratrem Arnerum Laurentij sacerdotem’ referred to in a Norwegian letter of 1337<sup>76</sup> is the author of this saga. It appears that this Arnerus is working for the Dominicans of Trondheim and this fact may perhaps explain the disapproving tone of the later references to him in *Laurentius Saga* — though of course it is impossible to prove that the same Árne is referred to in each case. The last mention of Árne occurs in chapter 65: “Bróður Árna, syni sínum, skipaði hann aftr í klaustr sitt at Þingeyrum, skrifandi með honum til Guðmundar ábóta, hvat hann skipaði klaustrinu af því gózi, sem hann hafði. Var þat nærri fimmtán hundruð ok umfram klæði hans ok bækr”.<sup>77</sup>

Vigfússon gives the date of Árne’s birth as c. 1296<sup>78</sup> but the evidence of *Laurentius Saga* seems to show that it was about seven years later, for in chapter 16 between mention of the consecration of Pope Benedict XI (October 1303) and of his death (July 1304) is the statement: “Þuríður Árnadóttir af Borgundi kenndi síra Laurentio pilt, er Árni hét”.<sup>79</sup> Presumably Þuríður would have done this soon after the child’s birth. Again, Vigfússon says that Árne compiled the *Dunstanus Saga* at the beginning of the fourteenth century,<sup>80</sup> but if he used the *Speculum Historiale* as a source, the compilation of the Saga must be dated after the middle of the century when Richard of Cirencester wrote the work. (Richard was a monk of Westminster from 1355 till his death in 1400 or 1401,<sup>81</sup> and presumably wrote his history during that period.)

This would make Árne a man of over fifty when he read

<sup>75</sup> *Sturlunga Saga* (1878), I cxxxvi.

<sup>76</sup> *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, II 715 ff. (no. 455).

<sup>77</sup> *Byskupa Sögur*, III 151.

<sup>78</sup> *Sturlunga Saga*, I cxxxvi.

<sup>79</sup> *Byskupa Sögur*, III 32.

<sup>80</sup> *Icelandic Sagas*, II 385.

<sup>81</sup> J. E. B. Mayor, edition cited note 53, pp. viii ff.

the work, and it is difficult to say where he could find the *Speculum* without travelling to England.<sup>82</sup> Of course it is possible that Árni did not return to his monastery when his father died, but went back to Norway<sup>83</sup> and perhaps even to England before his own death, and during this time wrote the Saga. Or another clerk may have brought to Iceland an account of the *Speculum* and some information taken from it. But really we have no evidence at all as to when Árni wrote the work. Was it while he was teaching at Hólar, while he was at Þingeyrar,<sup>84</sup> or thirty years after his father's death when he might by some means have seen the *Speculum* or been given some extracts from it?

Perhaps the reference to the *Speculum*, together with the careful dating of Dunstan's death, is an addition by a later author or reviser, between the time of the compilation of the Saga and the fifteenth-century manuscript in which it is found. Certainly it is rather strange that a writer who was so careless of history as Árni seems to have been in his treatment of kings' names and his vagueness about chronology, should suddenly become interested in dating Dunstan's death so precisely, especially as this date is not found in his main source A, nor his secondary source E.

If this supposition is true, then perhaps this reviser has added the length of Edward's reign in chapter 7 — the only other sign of precision in the Saga — or perhaps the whole of chapter 7 *and* chapter 9, the martyrdom of Edward and the beating of Ethelred, which are both found in SH, are his additions too. It does, however, seem unlikely that he would transfer the story of Dunstan's vision at Edgar's birth to Ethelred — a move which is quite in keeping with Árni's practice.

If this Saga has come down to us as Árni wrote it, then

<sup>82</sup> There seems to be only one extant manuscript of the work, cf. *ibid.*, clxv.

<sup>83</sup> The evidence of the Norwegian document referred to above would support this.

<sup>84</sup> The references to "my dearest brothers" need not refer to Árni's fellow monks, or even his fellow men, for they are taken direct from Adelard.

he must have compiled it when he was an old man in the second half of the fourteenth century, using A and E as his main sources, and quoting from SH and RC. On the other hand, if he wrote it, as Vigfússon said, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, then he must have used material from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* for chapters 7 and 9, or else, they, as well as the dating of Dunstan's death and the reference to SH in chapter 10, are the additions of a later copyist.

There is little doubt about the "holy writings" which lie behind *Dunstanus Saga*, but just when Árni compiled his work from them remains uncertain, and must do so until the problem of the quotation from the *Speculum Historiale* is solved.

## ST ERIC OF SWEDEN\*

By J. E. CROSS

SWEDISH scholars have always enjoyed "the rigour of the game" and no problem in mediæval Swedish history has been debated with more vigour, nor perhaps with more diligence, than that of Eric, patron of Sweden. The reason is that Eric, his life, and the early growth of his cult, form a focal point for many of the questions about a poorly-documented period. Speculation and debate are necessary when documents are few and the time is important. Eric died in 1160,<sup>1</sup> within a century from the destruction of the pagan temple at Old Uppsala,<sup>2</sup> and at a time when Christianity had opportunity to hold the Swedish people. His descendants were kings and throne-claimants in fierce struggles with a powerful rival family<sup>3</sup> well into the thirteenth century. Eric's name is

\*Abbreviations used in the notes:-

- S.R.S. = *Scriptores rerum Svecicarum* (3 vols.) Vol. I ed. E. M. Fant (Uppsala, 1827); Vol. II ed. E. G. Geijer and J. H. Schröder (Uppsala, 1828); Vol. III ed. C. Annerstedt (Uppsala, 1871-76).  
D.S. = *Diplomatarium Suecanum*, (later *Svensk Diplomatarium*), ed. J. G. Liljegren *et al.* (Stockholm, 1829 —). I have followed Swedish scholarly tradition in citing by vol. and page or number of document for the first two volumes, but inserting vol. number for the later volumes.  
S.T. = *Sveriges Traktater*, ed. O. S. Rydberg and others (Stockholm, 1877 —).  
H.T. = *Historisk Tidskrift* (Stockholm).  
E. = *Erik den Helige, Historia, Kult, Reliker*, general editor B. Thordeman (Stockholm, 1954).

*Svenskt Biografiskt Lexicon* provides a bibliography of papers on St Eric up to 1951, and refers to *Erik den Helige*, ed. Thordeman, which was then available in page-proof.

I wish to thank the Librarian of University College, London, and the Director of the Swedish Institute, London, for obtaining periodicals and books, and allowing me to hold them on extended loan. Without their help this survey could not have been written.

<sup>1</sup> According to the *Vita*, S.R.S. II i, p. 276; but there is no reliable confirmation of the date. Differing scholarly opinions about the legend's accuracy derive from conflicting traditions about the succession from Sverker the Elder to Knut, Eric's son, and will be discussed with the problem of the length of Eric's reign.

<sup>2</sup> I. Anderson, *A History of Sweden*, trans. C. Hannay (1956), p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> The descendants of Sverker the Elder.



connected with the dominant part of Sweden in these centuries. He ruled from the province of Uppland; he was certainly buried at Old Uppsala,<sup>4</sup> which kept its sacred quality, and, in 1164, became the seat of the first Archbishop of Sweden.<sup>5</sup> Eric's remains were translated to the new and present cathedral of Uppsala (then Östra Aros) in the thirteenth century,<sup>6</sup> and he became one of the

<sup>4</sup> *Sverris saga*, ch. 100: "Eiríkr konungr hvílir í skríni í Svíþjóðu at Uppsölum"; and the chronicle of kings in the Law of the Västgötar, (Codex Holmiensis, B 59): "Tolfte war Erekaer konongaer . . . oc ben hans hwilaes i wpsalum". Quotations of the complete passages are given in E. Carlsson, 'Translacio Archiepiscoporum', *Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift*, 1944, pp. 87 and 83 resp. The statement in *Sverris saga* derives, at latest, from the first half of the thirteenth century, that in the Law from the mid-century. The place of burial is confirmed by information on the translation of relics and references to the cult. See below note 6.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Alexander III appointed Stephen, a monk from Alvastra, to the archbishopric and stated: "Et ne de cetero prouincie swecie metropolitani possit cura deesse, commissam gubernacioni tue vpsaliam, vrbem eiusdem prouincie, perpetuam metropolim ordinauimus" (D.S. 49, August 5th 1164). A second bull was sent on the same date informing the Swedish bishops of the appointment (D.S. 50).

<sup>6</sup> The events leading up to a translation of relics and move of the archbishop's seat from Old Uppsala to Uppsala are clear enough, but the actual date of the move has been hotly debated because of conflicting evidence in mediæval records. A move had been suggested by Pope Innocent III in 1215 or 1216, though then the new venue was to have been Sigtuna. From time to time letters tell of damage by fire to the old church (1245, D.S. 326, and 1257, D.S. 444), and exhortations to carry out a move came from the curia (1258, D.S. 451, for Bishop Karl of Västerås to take charge; 1259, D.S. 458 and D.S. 462, explaining this to the other bishops; and the same year, D.S. 460, D.S. 461, informing Birger Jarl and King Valdemar). But Eric's remains were still in Old Uppsala in the 1260s on the reliable evidence of Israel Erlandsson, author of *Miracula S. Eriki*. He narrates that, in his boyhood, "corpus Beati Eriki . . . tunc in antiqua requiescebat Upsalia" (Miracle XXV, S.R.S. II i 294). In the autumn of 1270 however, King Valdemar called a meeting of prelates and noblemen at Söderköping to decide again on a move (D.S. 546). When the Swedish bishops met at Östra Aros in 1271, the move appeared imminent, for they sent out a letter offering indulgence to those who gave help for the foundation of a new cathedral (D.S. 554). Many scholars believe that it took place in 1273, on the evidence of three documents. On July 28th, 1273 (D.S. 570), King Valdemar wrote from Stockholm confirming gifts to Uppsala "in translacione reliquiarum beati erici regis et martiris gloriosi". A note in the calendar of Uppsala cathedral (dated 1344), against July 4th, also refers to 1273: "translacio archiepiscoporum de antiqua vpsalia ad vpsaliam, Anno D:ni M°CC°LXX°tertio" (D.S. II ii, p. xvii). Finally, according to the chronicle of archbishops in *Registrum Ecclesie Upsalensis*, the relics of bishops and archbishops except Olov Basatömir were moved under the direction of Archbishop Folke Ängel, while he was still archdeacon (S.R.S. III ii, p. 99). Folke had been appointed archdeacon in 1253, and became archbishop on August 17th, 1274 (D.S. 414, 579).

S. Söderlind, H.T. (1950), p. 132 seq., however, recalls a conflicting record, the paschal tables of the *Registrum Eccles. Upsal.*, which date the year in relation to events. It records: "anno translacionis reliquiarum Vpsalensis ecclesie lxvii" together with other events, one of which dates the entry as before May 19th 1344. This statement thus suggests that a translation was carried out either in the latter part of 1276 or in the early months of 1277. Using

cathedral's patrons. In the *Miracula S. Erics* compiled at the request of the cathedral chapter towards the end of the century<sup>7</sup> we find the names of later kings, and of noblemen and noblewomen of Uppland, men who ruled the state as members of council and men who ruled the church.

Clearly every statement and speculation about St Eric had to be considered. So it was not surprising that the spate of papers began to flow when the fullest account of his life and person, the *Vita S. Erics*,<sup>8</sup> was rejected by

this as a basis, Söderlind states that the event took place under the direction of Archbishop Folke Ängel (died March 1st 1277), on July 4th 1276.

S. Lindqvist, "Eriksmiraklerna", *Svenska Landsmål* (1953-54), pp. 143-144, takes evidence from Miracle XXV (see above) to suggest that the relics of St Eric had been moved from Old Uppsala by 1277. His argument is based on a discussion of the archetype and a grouping of the miracles into times of writing. Thus, in the words quoted above, Israel is noting a different resting-place for the relics from that in his boyhood. The evidence is not conclusive since the miracle is not actually dated, but the argument is sound and agrees with the evidence of the majority of records.

Miracle II (S.R.S. II i, p. 291) has been adduced as evidence that the cathedral church was still in Old Uppsala in 1293 when it recounts Magnus Johansson Ängel's pilgrimage of that year. Lindqvist, *op. cit.* pp. 144-147 adequately disposes of this suggestion.

A conservative conclusion is that the move of the seat and relics took place between 1271 and 1277, probably in 1273.

<sup>7</sup> See note 70.

<sup>8</sup> The texts of *Vita S. Erics* and early printings of these are described most fully in *Vita et Miracula Sancti Erics Regis Sueciæ*, (facsimile of Cod. Vat. Reg. Lat. 525), ed. Axel Nelson (Copenhagen, 1944), pp. xxi seq. Extant texts in Latin and Old Swedish are:-

- i. *Registrum Ecclesie Upsalensis*, fol. 151v - fol. 161v, a Latin text of the Life and Miracles. The text is dated 1344, and is now in the Swedish Public Record Office, A 8, (S. Lindqvist, *op. cit.* p. 114).
- ii. *Codex Vaticanus Reg. Lat. 525*, a Latin and Old Swedish text of the Life and Miracles. The text was once in the library of Queen Christina of Sweden and catalogued by her librarian, Isaac Vossius, about 1651. Nelson, p. xxi, dates the MS. to the beginning of the fifteenth century from the handwriting and style of illustration. Two accounts of miracles occurring in 1403 and 1411, which are added in the margin of the *Reg. Eccles. Upsal.* text, appear in the text of the Vatican MS. Lindqvist, p. 115, states however that these notes were written in after the main description.
- iii. *Codex C 15 Uppsala University Library*, fol. 191r - 208v, a Latin text of the Life and Miracles. The codex belonged to Vadstena monastery in the Middle Ages. Nelson, p. xxvii, regards this as a copy of the same type of redaction as that in the *Reg. Eccles. Upsal.* text, but Lindqvist, p. 117, notes that C 15 reveals independence by readings which sometimes support *Vat. Reg. 525* against *Reg. Eccles. Upsal.* and sometimes vice-versa.
- iv. *Codex Bildstenianus, Uppsala University Library Codex C 528*, fol. 157v - fol. 158v, an Old Swedish text of the Life. It is dated to 1420-1450 by R. Geete, *Fornsvensk Bibliografi*, p. 69. The text is printed by E. V. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Norse*, revised Taylor (1957).
- v. The written and printed breviaries and other liturgical books of the Middle Ages which contain the office of St Eric, and, thus, references to

Knut Stjerna<sup>9</sup> in 1898 as hagiographical idealisation.

The historic value of the legend is the central problem and, despite a great deal of subtle argument and amassing of irrelevant information, no external evidence has been presented to prove early composition, and internal evidence points to a date approximately a century after Eric's death at the earliest. In order even to place the legend's composition in the mid-thirteenth century, one statement has either to be regarded as a later addition or to be "explained". This is the phrase which identifies the site of Holy Trinity Church, Östra Aros — "ubi nunc metropolitana fundata est ecclesia". The writer is referring to the present cathedral of Uppsala, whose French builder, Estienne de Bonneuil, was not invited to Sweden before 1287.<sup>10</sup> Even if the words describe a symbolic<sup>11</sup> founding of the cathedral when the relics of the archbishops were translated from Old Uppsala, this probably did not happen before 1273.<sup>12</sup>

A reading of the legend, in both its "standard" and "shortened" versions,<sup>13</sup> shows that the hagiographer has

parts of the *Vita* and *Miracula*. They have been collected and discussed by T. Haapanen, 'Olika Skikt i S:t Eriks metriskä officium', *Nordisk Tidskrift för Bok- och Biblioteksväsen*, XIV (1927), pp. 53-83, and discussed by T. Schmid, 'Erik den Helige i Liturgien', E., pp. 155-171. The oldest breviary text was published by E. Jørgensen, *N.T.B.B.*, XX (1933), pp. 190-191, from B.M. Additional MS. 40146. The three lections in this office are now regarded as "the shortened legend" in the scholarly discussion. Dr. Schmid presents evidence to show that this breviary was intended for use in the diocese of Linköping during the last decades of the thirteenth century, and thinks it possible, (E. p. 167), that the lections were an abbreviation of an Uppsala legend which was not the *Vita* now extant. This possibility has been taken up by E. Lönnroth, 'Kring Erikslegenden', *Septentrionalia et Orientalia* (1959), pp. 270-281, and his conclusions will be discussed below (notes 21 and 87).

The oldest Latin versions of the *Vita* in the MSS of the Uppsala *Registrum* and of *Vat. Reg.* 525 vary insignificantly (see the printing with variant readings in E. pp. xi-xiii), and are the texts used in the historical discussion. The Old Swedish texts are clearly derivative and any extensions or omissions in these may be ignored for this purpose.

<sup>9</sup> Knut Stjerna, *Erik den Helige, en sagohistoriske studie* (Lund, 1898).

<sup>10</sup> D.S. II, p. 32, dated 1287, is an attestation from Renaut le Cras that Estienne de Bonnueill, (tailleur de pierre, maistre de faire l'église de Vpsale en Suece), was formally commissioned as builder, in order to take craftsmen and apprentices with him, and that he had been paid 40 Parisian pounds for this purpose.

<sup>11</sup> Y. Brilioth, *Svenska Kyrkans historia* (Stockholm, 1941), II, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> See note 6.

<sup>13</sup> See note 8, and appendix.

had a free hand, uncontrolled by an audience who knew the historical events. In both versions Eric is presented as an ideal Christian king, and is described with features and in phraseology found in other legends of royal saints. He behaves in the manner prescribed by St Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, especially Book V, chapter xxiv, and repeated in such "mirrors for princes" as the *Via Regia*<sup>14</sup> of Smaragdus (ninth century), in moral *florilegia* such as Isidore's *Liber Sententiarum*,<sup>15</sup> in the widely read seventh-century Irish tract *De Duodecim Abusivis Sæculi*,<sup>16</sup> and, finally, in those applications of principles to persons, the legends of our own royal saints, Oswald and Edmund, and the Scandinavians, Knut of Denmark and Olav of Norway.

Eric is chosen king for his "natural gentleness and goodness of life". He divides his time in three ways. First, he supports the church. Gregory the Great had emphasised that the king must rule according to the counsel of the church and that the priesthood was above the kingdom.<sup>17</sup> And the colonising Cistercians propagated this view, which was formally expressed in the *Gratiani Decretum* (c. 1150), the basis for Canon Law.<sup>18</sup> Eric therefore builds churches as St Oswald does,<sup>19</sup> "in imitation of Old Testament Kings" such as David and Solomon.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, he acts as a just ruler and judge. Even the phraseology here is traditional, when it says that he dispenses justice on the *via regia*,<sup>21</sup> "declining neither to

<sup>14</sup> Migne, P.L. 102, col. 931 seq.

<sup>15</sup> P.L. 83, col. 537 seq.

<sup>16</sup> P.L. 4, as Pseudo-Cyprian; P.L. 40, as pseudo-Augustine. According to M. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe 500 to 900* (revised edition, 1957), pp. 145-146, the "ninth abuse", the section on the unjust king, was popular with Carolingian writers concerned with theory of government and the relation of the spiritual to the temporal power, and was quoted in the records of Church councils and synods held during the ninth century. See also K. B. Westman in E., p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> K. B. Westman, E., p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (1948), p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III iii. St Olav and St Knut did the same (Westman, E., p. 51).

<sup>20</sup> Wisdom IX, 8.

<sup>21</sup> For the information on *via regia* see L. Weibull, 'Erik den Helige', *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (1917), pp. 115-116, and K. B.

the right for favour or gift, nor turning aside to the left for fear or hate'. The *via regia* is used concretely as "the king's highway" in Numbers xxi.22, but when Smaragdus took this Biblical text for his title, *Via Regia*, he used the phrase metaphorically and with ethical application. The *De Duodecim Abusivis* follows this tradition when condemning the people without law in these words: "many go the ways of perdition, they neglect the only *via regia*, which declines not to the right or the left, the law of God. Christ says about this: 'I am the way'." Eric does not waver, nor does St Edmund decline — in his case from the true doctrine. And Eric seems also to avoid the four pitfalls of a judge enumerated by Isidore — timor, cupiditas, odium, amor — copied and defined in the fourteenth-century English *florilegium*, *Speculum Christiani*.<sup>22</sup> Thirdly, Eric undertakes an Augustinian *justum bellum* like Oswald, but against the enemies of

Westman, E., p. 55. Swedish scholarly opinion takes it that this *via regia* refers on a realistic level to an *Eriksgata*, (probably "all-ruler's way" though a seventeenth-century opinion has it as "Eric's way"), the progress which a king made after election by the Svear in Uppland in order to be accepted by the other provincial assemblies in turn before returning to Uppland to be acclaimed king. If the legendary statement has realistic application however, it seems no more than a royal progress for the dispensation of law and justice. The *via regia* is not linked with Eric's election in the words of the *Vita* — even in the "shortened legend" the election is mentioned in *Lectio* I and the *via regia* in *Lectio* II. And judicial decisions on an *Eriksgata* appear to be limited to the normal courtesies of welcome for a new king, as in the Law of the Västgötar, *Rättslösabalken* I, that the king shall grant reprieve to three criminals, and the Law of the Östgötar, *Dråpsbalken* V § 1, that the king is to receive a "greeting tax".

E. Lönnroth, *op cit.* p. 275 finds further connotations in his comment on *Lectio* II of the "shortened legend": "*via regia* incedens nec ad dexteram favore vel pretio, nec ad sinistram timore vel odio, sed tramite recto, qui ducit ad patriam, inflexibiliter gradiebatur'. He notes that, in mediæval statutes, *patria* stood for "native land", representing the people's rights in opposition to the royal power, and regards the phrase as having three-fold meaning. *Patria* is Uppland, the end of an *Eriksgata*; heaven, the reward for a righteous life; and the people's rights against those of the king's power. Lönnroth regards the "shortened legend" as an embryo of the "standard legend", but we should note that the only statement which allows concrete application of the words appears only in the "standard legend", where, before *via regia*, appears the phrase: "*deinde regnum suum circuiens ac populum visitans universum*". In view of the phraseology in the "mirrors for princes" and other moral tracts and legends, the phrase in the "shortened legend" can only be a metaphorical expression for behaving justly and righteously.

<sup>22</sup> ed. G. Holmstedt (1930), p. 236, in the section, "Of justices". The Isidorean passage, *Liber Sententiarum*, lib. III, cap. liv, 7, is not identified in this mediæval English text.

the faith in Finland.<sup>23</sup> Here, says the legend, commenting on Eric's sorrow after the battle, his grief was like that of the good friend of God, Moses, who wept over the idolators (Exod. xxxii, 25-32). Moses is the example of just severity and compassion, comments Gregory the Great in his *Moralia* xx c. 5.<sup>24</sup>

Many more holy acts and virtues are enumerated for St Eric. As a man of influence and power he defended the weak against the strong and was merciful to those in adversity, like the king of the Old Testament who is to protect widows and orphans (Deut. x, 18, and Exod. xxii, 22), and like the *rex justus* of the *De Duodecim Abusivis* who indeed had to defend strangers, minors, widows, to nourish the poor with alms, and, at certain times, to devote himself to prayer and fasting. Eric's virtue of liberality is high-lighted by his refusal of the fines offered to him by a grateful people. Other men with power were similarly liberal. We recall Oswald's silver dish,<sup>25</sup> but more relevantly, Adam of Bremen records the refusal of a gift by Bishop Eginio of Lund, and the legend of St Knut narrates how the Danish king, Eric Ejegod, also declined the gift of a generous people.<sup>26</sup> Eric's minor Christian virtues, his attentiveness to prayer and generosity in almsgiving, are noted in such mediæval catalogues as the seven works of mercy and the seven works of spiritual mercy,<sup>27</sup> and those virtues distinguish St Oswald also.

As if the Swedish king were not ideal enough, he appears also as an ascetic. He obeys the command of St Paul,

<sup>23</sup> Note Oswald's prayer in Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, III ii, before the battle of *Heofonfeld*: "He knows that we fight in a just cause to save our nation"; and his wars to extend his kingdom; and Ælfric's insertion in *The Maccabees* (Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, ed. W. W. Skeat, E.E.T.S. O.S. 76 (1881-90), Vol. II, p. 115): "*Justum bellum* is just war against the cruel seamen, or against other peoples that wish to destroy our land".

<sup>24</sup> P.L. 76, col. 144. The word *Mosen* is later added above the line in Cod. Vat. Reg. 525.

<sup>25</sup> Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, III vi.

<sup>26</sup> L. Weibull, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>27</sup> Recorded in *Speculum Christiani*, ed. cit., pp. 40-46.

(I Cor. ix, 27),<sup>28</sup> and constrains the desires of the flesh like Augustine's Christian ruler. At his death he was found to be wearing a hair shirt like Thomas Becket who had become a popular saint in Scandinavia;<sup>29</sup> and during times of fast or festival he often abstained from his consort's bed, cooling the animal heat of his flesh with cold baths, even in winter. His slight difference from the practice of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon ascetics,<sup>30</sup> who preferred a lake or the sea, may be explained by the thickness of Scandinavian ice.

This selective account suggests that, apart from certain proper names in the text, the *Vita* could have described any other ideal Christian king. We expect such identification in this literary genre which has connections with the modern obituary notice in its search for virtue. Both obituary and saint's legend can however select from life, and, despite the stereotyped features of Eric's character, historians have had to test the possible historicity of individual statements in the *Vita*.

In some legends the intimate and distinctive detail of certain events marks them as factual, but Eric's legend does not compare with the stories of other royal Scandinavian saints in this respect. The *Vita S. Erics* contains only a few names of people — Henry, Magnus, and Pope Alexander III; only a few places are named — Uppsala, Östra Aros, Finland. Who were Eric's secular supporters? Who was his queen? Who was the Swedish ally of Magnus? Exactly where did Eric land in Finland? The legend gives no answer. There is an air

<sup>28</sup> Gordon and Taylor, *Introduction to Old Norse*, p. 255, are inaccurate in saying that "this sentence, (jac pinar . . . thiænist), does not correspond exactly with any passage in the scriptures etc". The Latin version is an exact copy of the Vulgate text, and indication is given in the Old Swedish text of Cod. Vat. Reg. 525: "som apostolus paulus sigher om sigh sielffuan".

<sup>29</sup> T. Schmid, E. p. 168, notes that the foremost models in the period after their deaths were Thomas of Canterbury and Peter of Verona. "In Scandinavia there is manifold evidence that they were known, valued, and venerated, and that one and another motif and quotation was taken over from their legends for Scandinavia's own martyrs." See also a report by Professor A. Lindblom in *The Manchester Guardian*, June 5th 1950, of an account of the cult of St Thomas in Sweden.

<sup>30</sup> See B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert* (1940), p. 319.

of distance about the account, as Sven Tunberg said.<sup>31</sup> And it contains demonstrable mistakes of fact. According to the legend, Magnus marched against Eric on Ascension Day and was killed on the same day, later identified as May 18th, 1160. But Ascension Day fell on May 5th in that year.<sup>32</sup> We are also told that Eric died in the tenth year of his reign. Yet his predecessor, Sverker the Elder, was certainly King of Sweden when a papal letter was addressed to him with that title in 1153 or 1154,<sup>33</sup> and independent sources state that he was murdered about the mid-decade.<sup>34</sup> There is probably a third error, for Magnus is called "the son of the king of the Danes". If he is Magnus, son of Henry the Halt, as almost everyone agrees, he is not a king's son. Henry was son of Sven, a bastard son of the Danish King, Sven Estridsson.<sup>35</sup>

Yet one piece of information in the legend is undoubtedly true, and, interestingly, this is the only information which needs to be true for Eric to be called saint at this time. When I discussed the stereotyped features of the legend a notable omission was the death

<sup>31</sup> S. Tunberg, 'Erik den Helige, Sveriges Helgonkonung', *Fornvännen* (1950), p. 136.

<sup>32</sup> Gordon and Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 255, are incorrect in identifying "hælga thorsdag" of their O. Swed. text as "Maundy Thursday, which in that year fell on May 18th". Holy Thursday is a name for Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday, in O. Swed. texts, but the *Reg. Eccles. Upsal. Vita* has: "instabat die illo festum Ascensionis", i.e. Ascension Day. Maundy Thursday can never be as late as May 18th. On the dating of Ascension Day 1160 as May 5th, see K. B. Westman, *Den Svenska Kyrkans Utveckling från S:t Bernhards Tidevarv till Innocentius III:s* (Stockholm, 1915), p. 97.

<sup>33</sup> D.S. 38, addressed to "S. regi et vniuersis proceribus Swechie".

<sup>34</sup> There are different traditions about the way in which Sverker was murdered, and about the names of the murderers. A papal letter of Nov. 13th, 1208 (S. T. I n. 59), says: "prædecessores Erici (Eric, St Eric's grandson) . . . illustris recordationis S. Sueciæ Regis morte per quendam ipsius camerarium (probably "servant", here) procurata". Saxo, whose *Gesta Danorum* is knowledgeable on Swedish affairs, but biased in favour of the Sverker family, says that Sverker was murdered, while he slept, by his servant at the instigation of Magnus, son of Henry the Halt, and dates this about 1156 by reference to a contemporary Danish event of this time. The chronicle of kings in the Law of the Västgötar adds that Sverker was killed on his way to church for Christmas matins. For a convenient summary see K. B. Westman, *op. cit.* p. 66.

Gordon and Taylor's note p. 254 on "*regno vacante*, referring to the period 1134-50, when there was no king in Sweden", is inaccurate.

<sup>35</sup> Westman, E. p. 38, and others. Gordon and Taylor's note on Henry the Halt as "King of Denmark", p. 255, is inaccurate.



scene. In this too there is an obvious attempt to copy the ideal model, the Passion of Christ. Apart from Biblical reference — the image of the crushed seed (John xii, 24) — and verbal echoes of phraseology found in the legends of other royal saints,<sup>36</sup> events and motives appear to be adapted. When the slayer Magnus is said to be incited by the Devil, and his associates are said to be enticed by gifts and promises, the treachery of Judas is recalled. Such identification may have caused the inconsistency about the day of Eric's death, since Ascension Day may have been added so that Eric can "happily ascend after our Lord through the palm of martyrdom".<sup>37</sup> Perhaps also the place of Eric's devotions was not historically Holy Trinity Church, Östra Aros, which is conveniently called "mons Domini", and would turn the listeners thoughts to Calvary. For, on this point, the "shortened" legend differs from the "standard" legend, and says that Eric "was martyred at Uppsala", where he was enthroned, i.e. Old Uppsala. Maybe this was the fact later altered to fit new conditions when Östra Aros, or present-day Uppsala, replaced Old Uppsala as the seat of the archbishop. The site of the new cathedral, which was on that of the old Holy Trinity Church,<sup>38</sup> would be even more venerated for its connection with St Eric.

But a hagiographer's most difficult task is to make the

<sup>36</sup> See L. Weibull, *op. cit.*, pp. 116, 118, 120-121, 124, for verbal similarities between *Vita S. Erici* and texts of the legends of St Olav and St Knut.

<sup>37</sup> N. Ahnlund, H. T. (1948), p. 316, regards it as "undeniably striking that Eric's Mass, May 18th, 1273, was also Ascension Day"; and, in E. p. 115, adds that "probably this can really be ascribed to the conditions in 1273", when the move of the archbishops' seat was carried out. This however would imply that Ascension Day was joined with May 18th as the day of Eric's death in or after 1273, and that the statement would be an interpolation. My speculation leads to no further complications and is based simply on acknowledged common practice of hagiographers.

<sup>38</sup> S.R.S. II i 276: "in Ecclesia Sanctæ Trinitatis in monte . . . ubi nunc metropolitana fundata est ecclesia". This Holy Trinity Church is not the one bearing the name in present day Uppsala. Mediæval tradition has it that Eric died at the foot of the hill where the Cathedral stands, thus very near the place of his last devotions. Canon Arnerus (canon 1330-39) is said to be the first to build a chapel of stone, further down (*inferius*) on the place where Eric died (D.S. V 3835). This chapel was situated, (Ahnlund, E. p. 116), close to the present *St Eriks Källa* (spring) whose name recalls the miracle of the spring rushing forth where Eric fell.

historic death of a king exactly the same as the Passion of Christ, because a violent death and a change of ruler are remembered long after deeds of piety in life, and because the Lord is the example of non-resistance. Admittedly, St Edmund, who had no other alternative when surprised by an overwhelming Danish force,<sup>39</sup> can happily follow Christ's example, and his biographer relishes the situation. St Eric, at best for the writer of his legend, can only delay resistance. He must fight and he dies violently: "Wounds were doubled on wounds for the Lord's anointed as he lay on the ground. His enemies raged still more fiercely against him as he lay half-dead, and mocking him, they irreverently cut off his revered head." This untimely death is confirmed by independent sources within living memory of the event. About 1191 A.D. the Pope wrote to King Knut of Sweden and referred to his father, Eric, "revered in memory, killed by his enemies".<sup>40</sup> Sweden's oldest book of laws, the Law of the Västgötar, laments that Eric "was taken from life all too soon",<sup>41</sup> in its comments on the kings. Such information, in the right hands, fulfils the only requirement for royal sainthood in the early mediæval period, for supporters were eager to assume that a Christian king, violently killed, gained a martyr's crown; and many kings, who were often unknown in Rome, became local saints revered only in their own diocese merely by dying in battle or by assassination.<sup>42</sup> The Norwegian king Sverre commented ironically after the bloody battle of Bergen in 1179: "There was a good

<sup>39</sup> According to Abbo of Fleury in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed. T. Arnold (Rolls Series, 1890), I pp. 15-16.

<sup>40</sup> D.S. 825, from Pope Celestinus III (1191-2) referring to Knut Eriksson: "postmodum vero claræ memoriæ N [al. O and En(ricus)] patre suo, ab inimicis occiso".

<sup>41</sup> A translation of the phrase in Codex Holmiensis B 59: "han war vsini swa brat of ðaghum takin". The other MS, Codex Holmiensis D4, has: "han war slaghin i en striidh widh opsala oc ther ligger han". The complete passages are printed in E. Carlsson, *op. cit.* pp. 83 and 85 resp.

<sup>42</sup> Ahnlund, H. T. (1948), p. 306: "It was very common during the older middle ages, almost the rule in Scandinavia, that a new native saint was acclaimed because of his violent death, without real scruples of a theological nature." A number of examples are given in L. Daae, *Norges Helgener* (1879), p. 190 seq.

supply of sainted men in the town after this battle.”<sup>43</sup> There was no question of official canonization for most of these kings, and indeed, often no request, for twelfth-century popes did not claim the sole right to canonize. Interestingly, the first occasion when a pope spoke of the “*reservatio papalis*” was in a letter,<sup>44</sup> written some time in the 1170s to a certain King K of Sweden, (probably Knut Eriksson), where he forbade the worship in Sweden of a man killed in a drunken carousal. But the “*reservatio papalis*” did not become formal canon law until 1234 in the decretals of Gregory IX. The older formality for recognition of sainthood was by elevation of the bones

<sup>43</sup> *Sverris saga*, ch. 34, noted by Ahnlund, E. p. 120.

<sup>44</sup> P.L. 200, col. 1259 or D.S. 41. The letter is dated *Tusculani ii Non Julii* and was written by Pope Alexander III to “*karissimo in Christo filio K illustri Sweorum et Gothorum regi*”, and to the Jarl, bishops, clergy and people of Götaland, forbidding the veneration as saint of a man “*in potacione et ebrietate occisum*”. It was written in one of the years 1171, 1172, 1180 when the Pope was in Tusculanum on July 6th. Some Swedish scholars have regarded the dead man as St Eric, and the letter as early evidence of a cult, but the evidence is uncertain. The argument assumes that the letter was written at the earliest possible date and that the addressee was a certain Kol, brother of Karl Sverkersson, who was a throne-claimant after Karl’s death. Obviously, if the addressee were Knut Eriksson, the pope would be unlikely to speak of St Eric in the letter’s terms. The theory also assumes that St Eric was killed in a drinking-bout since there is no evidence for this. Others have speculated that Knut Eriksson was the addressee, the most likely King K in the 1170s, and therefore that the dead man was of the opposing faction, the family of Sverker, or even Sverker the Elder himself, though no record suggests that Sverker died while drunk. Another candidate was the Norwegian King Harald Gille, who was killed in his mistress’s bed after a drunken evening, but more than a quarter of a century earlier, in 1136.

For a summary of these opinions and his own theory see E. Carlsson, ‘Erikskultens Uppkomst’, *Saga och Sed* (1938), pp. 1-48. The most satisfactory speculation is that of N. Ahnlund, H.T. (1948), pp. 305-11. Ahnlund agrees that the dead man was among the group of powerful Scandinavian leaders who became saints, and suggests the Danish king, Knut Magnusson, who was killed at the feast of Roskilde 1157, a story fully treated by Saxo and in the *Knýtlinga saga*. He was regarded as a saint both in Denmark and in Sweden, probably in Östergötland especially, since he was related to the Sverker family whose estates were there. Thus the derogatory reference to him could be sent to Knut Eriksson, and be directed also to the leaders and people of Götaland.

E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (1948), pp. 99 seq., discusses the importance of the letter in connection with the history of the *reservatio papalis*. Apparently the paragraph forbidding the worship of the man became detached and appears in collections of decrees and eventually in law-books. Kemp states that although popes of the second half of the twelfth century were “quite sure of their position and authority” (p. 101) in regard to declaration of sainthood, there was still doubt among the glossators and interpreters. But the paragraph from the letter of Alexander III was the text eventually accepted as authority in the Decretals of Gregory IX in 1234 (p. 107).

from the grave to a shrine placed in a prominent position — often on or above the altar — where they could be more easily venerated.<sup>45</sup> Eric was never canonized, but his remains were laid in a shrine. The *Sverris saga*, whose hero married Eric's daughter, notes that: "King Eric rests in a shrine at Uppsala".<sup>46</sup> The home of the relics can be identified from that time though the present shrine in Uppsala cathedral is not the original one.<sup>47</sup> From time to time, the shrine was opened, the first time in 1303<sup>48</sup> when Archbishop Nils Allesson was in charge and some bones were abstracted for favoured devotees of the saint, the most recent in 1946 when Professor Bengt Thordeman, the State Antiquary, co-ordinated the work of archaeologists and physiologists, and found macabre confirmation of the legendary statement.<sup>49</sup>

They found that the bones in the shrine, apart from one, belonged to one man, about 40 years old. These include, among others, two thigh-bones and two shin-bones which were clearly hacked by a sharp-edged weapon, and the cuts are quite different from ones made after death. The neck-bone is also cut through, not from the back, as in formal execution, but probably when the body lay on its side or back. And apparently the remains were raised from the grave before the flesh had decomposed from the bones. Their colouring suggests that the flesh was removed artificially by softening in water or even boiling which was a fairly common method of preparation before it was forbidden by papal bull in 1299.<sup>50</sup> Long fine scratches on the bones also indicate artificial preparation

<sup>45</sup> Kemp, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> See note 4.

<sup>47</sup> See A. Bygden, 'Sankt Eriks skrin genom tiderna', in E. pp. 321-383.

<sup>48</sup> D.S. 1395, and J. Peringskiöld, *Monumenta Ullerakerensia* (Stockholm, 1710-19), II p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> See B. E. Ingelmark, 'Skelettdelarna i Erik den Heliges Relikskrin', in E. pp. 233-261.

<sup>50</sup> *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, ed. G. Digard (1890-94), II no. 3409, cited by Ingelmark, E. p. 260, together with examples of preparation of relics in Scandinavia and elsewhere. He refers to the relics of Magnus Erlendsson, jarl in the Orkneys (after 1115), of the Danish local saint Theodgarus (about 1065) and St Birgitta, whose bones were certainly prepared shortly after her death in 1373 for a journey back to Sweden from Rome.

and were probably made by some instrument for scraping. As the report maintains, if the relics were faked the man who did it was a remarkably knowledgeable anatomist.<sup>51</sup>

So it seems that Eric met a violent death in battle and that his body was prepared for a shrine rather soon after his death. The most probable time for the elevation was during the comparatively long reign of Knut Eriksson, c. 1167-95. The conditions then were favourable and the reason was obvious. For Knut had defeated his rival Karl, son of Sverker, at the Battle of Visingsö, and it was the turn of the family of Eric to rule. It would be an advantage for Knut to derive from "holy stock".<sup>52</sup> Eric's position as founder of a dynasty was of paramount importance for his elevation, and his violent death was an acceptable excuse. By 1198 he is recognised as a saint in a church document, the Vallentuna calendar, where his name, *erici regis*, is entered against May 18th in dark ink in contrast with the red ink denoting the great festivals.<sup>53</sup> Thus by that date he has become a minor local saint in the place where the calendar originated, probably in the Mälar-districts, and possibly from Sigtuna church.<sup>54</sup>

The sources have been painstakingly sifted for other independent confirmation of the legendary statements but with small success. Certain general statements are probably true, such as the description of the way in which Eric was elected, because this was the normal procedure at this time.<sup>55</sup> But statements about Eric's distinctive actions have no decisive support. His activity as defender

<sup>51</sup> Ingelmark, E. p. 258.

<sup>52</sup> *beata stirps*.

<sup>53</sup> A facsimile reproduction of the relevant folio is given in E., plate IX, facing page 112. From this it may be seen that an 'h' of *herici* has been partially erased, and commentators state that the cross and *festum*, which are added after *regis*, were written in during the thirteenth century.

<sup>54</sup> Ahnlund, E. p. 114, and note 15, referring to *Liber ecclesiæ Vallentunensis*. ed. Toni Schmid (1945).

<sup>55</sup> As indicated in the Laws of the Swedish Provinces. There has been discussion whether the Swedish crown was inherited or gained by election, but H. Schück has discussed apparently discordant statements in early Scandinavian sources, (in H.T. (1913), pp. 258 seq.), and concludes that "the kingdom, like the family estates, was regarded as belonging to the family and nothing seems to hinder the observation that the people of Sweden, as elsewhere, had the right of choice within the family".

and propagator of the faith abroad has particularly fascinated investigators, partly because it suggests an early development of the Swedish influence in Finland which still continues. Only the other day a new document was added to the collection surrounding but not applying directly to St Eric. This is a papal letter of 1193<sup>56</sup> describing Knut, Eric's son, as a "lover of the Christian religion" who "is always fighting against the pagans for the extension of the holy church". This reference to the twelfth century may be collated with another papal letter of 1171 or 1172,<sup>57</sup> where Archbishop Stephen of Uppsala and other Swedes are warned about the treacherous behaviour of the Finns to the Christian faith. Apparently they are Christian while a Swedish army remains but revert to paganism when the Swedes retire. The pope tells the Swedes to take safeguards against past mistakes and, of course, implies knowledge of some early crusading activity, which the letter of 1193 also attests for later decades. It is also quite certain that Christianity could easily have gone on the Eastern Way before the time of St Eric, for Russian sources speak of *ledung* fleets, one of them with a king and a bishop aboard, sailing on the way to Novgorod, both in 1142 and 1164.<sup>58</sup> Yet Eric's name does not appear in any independent source in connection with Finland, and his companion, the Englishman, Bishop Henry,<sup>59</sup> is a suspiciously obscure figure until his

<sup>56</sup> From Pope Celestinus III (1191-98) to Knut Eriksson, quoted in Swedish translation by Gerhard Hafström in 'Den Historiske Erik den Helige', *Svensk Dagbladet*, June 12th, 1960. The letter was discovered in a Spanish manuscript volume.

<sup>57</sup> S.T., I no. 46, from Pope Alexander III.

<sup>58</sup> Hafström, *loc. cit.*, and Schmid, E. p. 166.

<sup>59</sup> The earliest information about St Henry of Finland, apart from *Vita S. Erici*, is a short legend in the *Breviarium Upsalense*, (printed in S.R.S. II i, 332-335), probably originating in the 1290s, (Westman, E. p. 64). There it says that Henry was an Englishman, (oriundus in Anglia), who ruled the church at Uppsala when Eric was king. When Eric returned from Finland, Henry remained, but finally met his death at the hands of a wrongdoer whom he censured. A later Finnish tradition, (S.R.S. II i, 336-7), adds details of the saint's death. His murderer was a *bonde* named Lalli, who killed Henry near Nousis. Henry was buried at Nousis church, which was dedicated to him, but his relics were translated to Åbo church in 1300. Henry is regarded as the fourth of five bishops before 1164 in the Uppsala list of bishops (written at the earliest in the fourteenth century), (S.R.S. III ii 97); and the Swedish

cult as patron saint of Finland is well established.

To hear again of Eric's specific church building at Old Uppsala we have to rely on such traditions as the notes of Bishop Karl of Västerås,<sup>60</sup> and his dating appears too convenient to be true. He records that the old pagan temple had been destroyed by early Swedish Christian kings and that one had built a small Christian church there. This was improved and extended by Sverker the Elder and completed by Eric in 1150. The date, however, conveniently agrees with the first year of Eric's reign according only to the legend, and confirms the priority of his pious activities.

As a law-giver Eric is honoured in the Law of Uppland, written in 1296. Here he is mentioned twice: once generally, in the oath which required a king on accession to follow the law of his forefathers, including Eric;<sup>61</sup> once specifically, in connection with the law on women's rights in marriage.<sup>62</sup> It is most likely however that he did no more than christianise traditional marriage vows since the phraseology of the law is in an alliterating and rhythmical pattern so familiar in laws transmitted orally.

chronicler, Johannes Magnus, says that Henry was appointed by his fellow Englishman, the papal legate Nicholas Breakspear on his visit to Scandinavia in 1152. One scholar, K. Grotenfelt, 'Erik den Helige och hans korståg till Finland', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* (1920), pp. 111-125, has drawn on these and other late traditions in his argument for the historicity of Eric's crusade.

<sup>60</sup> *Annotationes ex scriptis episcopi Karoli Arosiensis*. These however were burned in a fire of 1702 and only a copy remains, now in Uppsala University Library, S. 142. Their unreliable nature was demonstrated in the seventeenth-century debate between two Swedish scholars, Verelius and Schefferus, according to C. M. Kjellberg, 'Några blad ur Upsala domkyrkas äldre byggnadshistoria', *Upplands Fornminnes Föreningens Tidskrift*, XVII (1895), p. 142 seq. Peringskiöld, *op. cit.*, I, 161, appears to draw on these notes for his statement that the Old Uppsala church was begun by Sverker, completed by Eric, and consecrated by Bishop Henry in 1150.

<sup>61</sup> "ok wiliu wir fylghia i laghum þæmmæ warum forfæprum Erikinum hælghæ, Byghiri iarli ok Magnusi kunungi"; quoted by Westman, E. p. 99, note 270.

<sup>62</sup> The Law of Uppland, *Ärvdabalk* III: "han a kono manni giptæ til heþær ok til husfru ok til siæng halfræ, til lasæ ok nyklæ ok til laghæ þripiunx, ok til alz þæs han a j lösörum ok han aflæ fa, utæn gull ok hemæ hion, ok til allæn þæn ræt ær uplænz k lagh æru ok hin hælghi Erikær kunungær gaff, j namn fapurs ok sons ok þæs hælghæ andæ"; quoted by Westman, E. p. 99, note 271.

See especially, K. Stjerna, *op. cit.*, section G on the qualities of Eric; and S. Ambrosiani, 'Uplandslagens Ärfda B. III — ett bidrag till Erik den heliges historia', *Nordiska Studier till A. Noreen* (1904).

Apart from the legend there is little information about Eric, but one account proves beyond doubt that he held the Swedish throne towards the end of the 1150s. The extremely reliable record of the foundation of the Cistercian monastery at Vidtskøl in Jutland<sup>63</sup> in 1158 names Eric and his queen Christina in a story clearly deriving from life. Apparently Sverker the Elder and his queen had invited two convents of monks from Clairvaux to Sweden, one of which, after difficulties, was eventually offered a house at Varnhem by a noblewoman, Sigrid. After a while however an unnamed "powerful" man persuaded Sigrid to expel the monks, but they were hastily recalled when the punishment of God in the form of leprosy and blindness fell on her. Her kinswoman, Queen Christina, who inherited the estate after Sigrid's death, renewed the persecution by inciting the local people against them, on one occasion even breaking up a Palm Sunday procession of monks by the intrusion of "lightly-clad dancing girls". Finally the abbot Henry began a journey to Rome to complain to the Cistercian general chapter there. But in Denmark King Valdemar was sympathetic, and, at the synod of Roskilde, he offered support to found a new monastery at Vidtskøl. Henry sent for his convent to join him but some decided to stay, and later, when Eric and his queen became more favourably disposed to the monks, Gerard of Alvastra, their head in Sweden, persuaded some to return from Denmark and made up the complement from his own convent under a new abbot.

It appears that this detailed account falsifies the legendary picture of an Eric burning with zeal for the faith, yet one need not deduce from it as Knut Stjerna did, that Eric was a "luke-warm Christian". Most probably<sup>64</sup> the king regarded the affair as a purely secular

<sup>63</sup> "Narratiuncula de fundatione monasterii Vitæ scholæ in Cimbria", printed in *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum*, ed. J. Langebek, (Copenhagen, 1772-1878), IV 458 seq.

<sup>64</sup> Westman's analysis in E. p. 54.



matter of the legal right to an inherited estate, and the church did not always encourage the view that hard business was beneath it. It is likely that Sigrid's gift was made without reference to her heirs, and while the church hoped that such gifts would be accepted as binding, Swedish civil law still denied that they should. Within the law Christina could claim Varnhem, though some of her methods to eject the monks were more hard-headed than reverent. Now, probably, Gerard of Alvastra, a church diplomat honoured by all as a true man of God,<sup>65</sup> negotiated with king and queen and persuaded them to give up their inheritance. So successful were his methods that Varnhem was favoured by Eric's descendants and became the family burial-place.

There is little more to add about the historic Eric. He is the son of a certain Jædhuard (Icelandic, *Játvarðr*),<sup>66</sup> a Swedish pronunciation of the English name of Edward, but the kind of connection with England which gave the name remains as speculation. A late tradition<sup>67</sup> says that Eric's mother was Cecilia, daughter of King Sven, possibly the heathen king, Blót-Sven. Eric however certainly married into a royal line by taking Christina, a descendant of King Inge the Elder. There are two different traditions about her descent,<sup>68</sup> but the more reliable in *Knýtlinga saga* makes her Inge's grand-daughter. It therefore seems that Eric would really need the strong support of nobles and commons, since his claim by inheritance is somewhat insecure.

Here the search for the historic Eric must end despite much ado about a "lost legend" by some scholars.<sup>69</sup> They

<sup>65</sup> Westman, *loc. cit.*, referring to Cistercian record.

<sup>66</sup> See C. M. Kjellberg, 'Erik den heliges ättlingar och kronpretendenter bland dem', H.T. (1923), p. 351 seq.

<sup>67</sup> A chronology in *Liber Memorialis ecclesiæ Uppsälensis*, printed in S.R.S. I i p. 83, dated 1307: "Mater ejus fuit Cecilia filia Swenonis Regis".

<sup>68</sup> *Knýtlinga saga*, the older tradition, states that Christina was the daughter of a Danish prince Björn and Katarina, daughter of Inge the Elder. The Swedish "list of kings up to 1333" (S.R.S. I i p. 4) names her: "Christina filia Ingonis iunioris".

<sup>69</sup> Notably E. Carlsson, 'Translacio Archiepiscoporum', see note 4.

refer to the statement in "the standard legend" that: "reliqua vite eius et translacio sancti corporis ac miracula que dominus operatus est per sanctum suum et vsque in presens non desiuit misericorditer operari que hic ommissa sunt breuitatis causa alibi scripta sunt". There is an extant miracle-collection<sup>70</sup> written by Israel Erlandsson before 1311 and now attached to "the standard legend" in the oldest text. No *account* of a translation is extant however, though there is a reference to a commonplace miracle which happened at a translation. Apparently Israel's uncle, Folke Ängel (who became Archbishop at Uppsala in 1274), had given his nephew some notes on miracles of St Eric and Israel recorded them as headings. One of these was: "De lumine quod apparuit in translatione Sancti Erici".<sup>71</sup> So presumably the statement in the *Vita* refers to a fuller account of St Eric which is now lost. But the information leads nowhere unless it can be proved that existing texts drew on an older "lost legend", and this cannot be done. Nor can it be assumed, as one writer did,<sup>72</sup> that because Eric was venerated by the church in 1198, distinctive texts about him would be

<sup>70</sup> Latin texts of *Miracula S. Erici* are extant in *Reg. Eccles. Upsal.*, *Cod. Vat. Reg. Lat.* 525, and *Cod. C.* 15, *Uppsala Univ. Lib.*, referred to above in note 8. S. Lindqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-158 discusses the texts and suggests an archetypal arrangement of the miracle-accounts. It appears that there are no major differences in the text.

The author, as he himself says, (S.R.S. II i 314), is Israel Erlandsson, prior of the Dominicans at Sigtuna, and this statement dates the completion of the *Miracula* as before June 30th, 1311, when Israel is called *episcopus* (Bishop of Västerås). S. Lindqvist (p. 155) rejects the ending of Miracle 48, describing an event of 1311, as a marginal addition, and considers that the collection was completed by the end of 1310 (for which there are 2 dated miracles, nos. 48 and 50), or the beginning of 1311. Israel had been requested to undertake his task by "certain canons of the church of Uppsala" *sede vacante*, but opinion differs on the identification of this vacancy in the archbishopric. There were two lengthy periods without leadership, one of seven years before Archbishop Folke Ängel was appointed in 1274, and another from 1291-5. (See Lindqvist, p. 148).

Biographical information about Israel is presented by G. Ekström, *Västerås stifts herdaminne* (Falun, 1939), I i pp. 40-58, abstracted in English by J. Cross, 'The Authorship of *Vita S. Erici*', *Vetenskaps-Societetens i Lund Årsbok* (1952), pp. 23-25.

<sup>71</sup> Miracle no. 44, S.R.S. II i 306. A further possibility is that the phrase "in translatione" means on some anniversary of the translation. Thus the miracle need not necessarily have been drawn from an account of the original translation of St Eric's relics. The reference might also be to the translation to the new cathedral of Uppsala c. 1273.

<sup>72</sup> E. Carlsson, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

written for divine service. For, in such a case, material for an office could be taken from the *commune sanctorum*<sup>73</sup> — the general masses and offices for the different categories of saints.

We need to look to a later period before the name of Eric becomes prominent in Swedish and foreign records, and then, in the mid-thirteenth century, comes a notable activity. He is first called *beatus* in a papal bull of 1256 (Oct. 23rd),<sup>74</sup> when Pope Alexander IV grants forty days indulgence to those who visit St Eric's grave at Old Uppsala. As the pope says: "A crowd of people flocks there". Again in 1266 (Oct. 21st),<sup>75</sup> Pope Clement IV promises the same respite for the same purpose and refers to "*corpus beati Eri*c*i*" and the festival "*ipsius sancti*". Since the terms *beatus* and *sanctus* are interchangeable at this period,<sup>76</sup> Eric has obviously been accepted by Rome as a saint "*per viam cultus*", i.e. in view of an established cult. The Law of the Västgötar had already spoken of miracles happening at his grave.<sup>77</sup>

Probably the first liturgical texts for an office of St Eric were composed after the mid-thirteenth century, as a story in the *Miracula* indicates.<sup>78</sup> In this Israel Erlandsson narrates his own cure from a quartan fever by the aid of St Eric. He had been advised by his uncle Folke Ängel to speed his cure by reciting "an antiphon with a versicle and a collect" about the glorious martyr, and this means that a *memoria* or *commemoratio*<sup>79</sup> was in existence at the

<sup>73</sup> T. Haapanen, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

<sup>74</sup> D.S. 435 "... sicut asseritis ad sepulchrum beati Henrici Regis cuius corpus in uestra requiescit ecclesia deuote concurrat populi multitudo" etc.

<sup>75</sup> D.S. 523: "Cupientes igitur, ut ecclesia uestra in qua corpus beati Eri*c*i martiris, ut asseritis, requiescit, et in qua festiuitate ipsius sancti ob eiusdem reuerentiam populi conuenit multitudo congruis honoribus frequentetur" etc.

<sup>76</sup> Kemp, *op. cit.* p. 116.

<sup>77</sup> "Nu ær hans sial i ro mæð guðhi oc hans hænglum oc ben hans hwilæs i wpsalum, oc hawir þær teeth oc oppenbaræt margh faghær iærtingni mæð gudz naðhum." ("Now is his soul at peace with God and his angels, and his bones rest at Uppsala, and have revealed and made manifest many wondrous miracles there by the grace of God.") Quoted in E. Carlsson, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>78</sup> Miracle XXV, S.R.S. II i 296: "tradidit (Folke Ängel) etiam ei Antiphonam cum versiculo et collecta, quæ de glorioso Martire frequenter recitare deberet".

<sup>79</sup> Defined as the smallest possible kind of office by Haapanen, *op. cit.*, p. 79 note 2, and often used for the festivals of less important saints.

time the miracle occurred. At this time Israel was a schoolboy at Linköping which indicates that this *memoria* was in existence in the 1260s; and this approximate date is confirmed by an analysis of the extant liturgical texts. The most complete office for St Eric reveals strata of composition, the earliest layer being two antiphons, possibly on English models, one of which could have been included in the *memoria* described by Israel.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> T. Haapanen, *ibid.*, has scrutinized all the liturgical material available to him, (30 texts from thirteenth to sixteenth centuries), and the progress of his argument may be of general interest:

- i. The material divides into 2 groups, for a *festum novem lectionum*, (3 nocturns, 9 lections), and for a *festum trium lectionum*, (1 nocturn, 3 lections).
- ii. The *festum trium lectionum* is the earlier since it was composed for the day of Eric's death, May 18th, which, with few exceptions, fell within the period of Easter, when the Church limited individual festivals even for saints of high rank. Alternatively, a *festum t.l.* could be composed for a saint of low rank (a black letter day saint, as Eric was in the original composition of the Vallentuna Calendar).
- iii. The original nocturn in this *festum t.l.* was the one printed as number III in S.R.S. II i, 325, 326, from the *Breviarium Upsalense*. It begins *Rex*. *Rex* differs from the other two beginning *Opem* and *Pugil*, both metrically and in the kind of melody to which it was sung, whereas *Opem* and *Pugil* are the same; and these two show similarities to, and were influenced by, the office for St Eskil, composed certainly after 1278, and probably much later. Also *Opem* and *Pugil* repeat the content of *Rex*.
- iv. *Opem* and *Pugil* were probably added to the Office for St Eric either when May 18th fell outside the period of Easter, (this occurred in 1283 for the thirteenth century), or for the feast of the translation of Eric on January 24th. The Uppsala official calendar does not mention this feast in 1344, and its first specific naming is in 1420 (D.S. III p. 539): "sancti Eriks afton, som wm wintrin kombir", while a reference from 1419 (*ibid.* p. 448) implies such a feast with the expression: "sancte Erix dagh, som wm somaren kombyr". Probably the two nocturns were composed at the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth century.
- v. Speculations are made about phases of composition for the *festum t.l.* The hymns, which are in iambic metre, need not have been composed at a different period from the antiphons and responses, which are in hexameters, since iambic was the most common metre for hymns, the hymns appear in the oldest texts, and both iambic and hexameter parts show influence from the office for St Dominic (melody, metrical structure, and even lines of text). Haapanen notes that there were cliché-lines in liturgical texts but the points of contact are numerous, including the first lines of the hymns "Adest dies lætitiae", and "hymnum nouæ lætitiae", and 2 lines of the sequence "A defunctis revocatum/matri vivum reddit natum". He suggests that the songs for the mass and the songs for the office were composed by a Dominican, most probably from the monastery at Sigtuna.
- vi. There may be an even older phase — the *memoria* mentioned in Miracle XXV, being an antiphon, a verse and a collect. The antiphon in a *memoria* is always a *Magnificat* or *Benedictus* antiphon, so that if a *memoria* were to be selected out of the complete office, one of three *Magnificat* or *Benedictus* antiphons would be chosen. Such a *memoria* is actually extant at the end of the *Breviarium Upsalense* and the antiphon is *ad Magnificat*, for the first vesper in the office: "Ave martir pretiose/miles Christi gloriose". Haapanen's suggestion that this antiphon and another beginning "Miles Christi gloriose" are influenced by English models is not

There appear to be various though inter-connecting reasons for an interest in St Eric at this time which cause a number of scholars to maintain that the extant versions of the legend originated after the mid-thirteenth century. For both political and ecclesiastical conditions, aligned with hints in the legend, suggest that the *Vita* had a secondary purpose as a political pamphlet directed against Birger Jarl and the son he placed on the throne in 1251, King Valdemar. Their most troublesome opponents in the thirteenth century were the Folkung party, a group of landed noblemen, connected by kin or estates to the province of Uppland, who were identified, on some occasions at least, with the Uppland commons.<sup>81</sup> In the main their activities supported the claims of St Eric's descendants — when their policies coincided. They had put one of them on the throne in 1231, and had revolted on two other occasions with members of St Eric's family in 1247 and 1251, the last action being against Birger Jarl.<sup>82</sup>

Birger Jarl stood for the power of the pope over the international church and for the strength of the king against the ancient rights of the people as represented by the independence of their provincial assemblies. The opposing Folkung programme is stated in the Older Law of the Västgötar, part of which emanated from the Lawman Eskil, who had connections with their party. There it says that the people of Uppland, the Svear, "have the right to choose and depose<sup>83</sup> the king". The elected king is then to present himself to the other provincial assemblies in turn, by undertaking an *Eriks-gata*, finally to return to Uppland to be enthroned. The bishop

convincing, although the possibility is not excluded when we note that the models are the offices for 2 royal saints, Edmund and Oswald.

Haapanen's results are not invalidated by the discovery of the oldest text of the office, by Jørgensen in 1933, (see note 8, v), for this is a *festum trium lectionum*.

<sup>81</sup> See E. Lönnroth, 'De äkta folkungarnas program', *Från Svensk Medeltid* (Stockholm, 1959), pp. 15-16, for the statements in this paragraph.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>83</sup> According to G. Holmgren, 'Taga och vräka konung', *Förnvannen* (1937), p. 19 seq.

also was to be elected and receive his ring and staff from the king. So too was the lawman, and it is added that he can take the king's place when the ruler cannot exercise his office. Thus the rights of the people are confirmed to control the three most important offices in the kingdom, and for the provincial legislature to function at times independently of the king.<sup>84</sup>

These words of the law had real meaning in the 1220s and might easily stand as verbal principles for a revolutionary party at a later date. But in 1248 Birger Jarl met the papal legate and Swedish bishops at Skänninge<sup>85</sup> to agree on economic independence and immunity in law for churchmen. No longer could king or jarl lay hands on priests without fear of excommunication. No longer could parish tithes go to laymen. Canon law was clearly accepted in that the election of bishops should be in the hands of the church. By making these concessions Birger Jarl gained the support of the international church, and he himself strengthened the power of his son Valdemar in other ways. He built royal castles to hold permanent garrisons. He raised the level of taxation — the Law of the Ostgötar (Dråpsbalk XIV) states that he trebled the fines to the king for manslaughter during the king's peace, and for killing a king's man — and Valdemar introduced permanent taxation. More incitingly Birger had ordered the estates of the rebellious Folkung leaders to be confiscated.<sup>86</sup>

If we now read the legend against this background of events, we may detect a bias which has more relevance to the historic situation after the mid-thirteenth century than that of any other period.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Lönnroth, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24, and E. Lönnroth, 'Kring Erikslegenden', *Septentrionalia et Orientalia, studia Berghardo Karlgren dedicata* (Stockholm, 1959), p. 274.

<sup>87</sup> Lönnroth has directed attention to the hints in the legend in his stimulating paper, 'Kring Erikslegenden', and I accept some of his conclusions, but his method of argument is, to my mind, unsound, and inconsistent in its application. He begins with the working hypothesis that the "shortened legend" represents an earlier tradition than the standard legend, (for arguments *pro* and *con* see Schmid, E. p. 159-160), and assumes that extensions in the

The most jagged edge in this formal saint's legend is the sudden outburst of feeling expressed as comment on Eric's refusal of the fines which should have gone to him by law: "O just prince", exults the hagiographer, "so rarely found in high places, who was content with his own and did not greedily seek to gain the possessions of those under him." It seems as if some real grievance has goaded the writer to break the smooth recital of regal virtues, and this could have been the increased taxation and appropriation of estates.

Less positive but prompting a question is the reference to Magnus's Swedish ally as a "certain prince of the land". Why is this man not named? If he was, as a late traditiör says,<sup>88</sup> Karl, son of Sverker the Elder, who was Knut Eriksson's strongest rival for the throne, clearly the omission of the name was not made at an early date. Eric's family in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries would be only too eager to blacken the reputation of their foremost rivals. The lack of name however may allow a later listener to choose a head to fit the cap.

Interestingly, and perhaps relevantly, there is an exact parallel between the claim of Magnus and that of Valdemar to the Swedish throne. Magnus claimed "by inheritance through his mother". Such a claim was upheld for

*Vita* indicate a political purpose and suggest a date of composition about the mid-thirteenth century. But a working hypothesis should also be a conclusion, and if *all* the extensions and changes do not point towards that conclusion then the hypothesis is at fault. Apart from the extensions discussed by Lönnroth we note in the "shortened legend": that Eric is not *beatus*; that, on his *via regia*, he does not go on a progress around his kingdom since "*deinde regnum suum circuiens ac populum visitans universum*" appears only in the *Vita*; that he is not credited with the completion of Old Uppsala church; and that Magnus's claim is not specified as false (Lat. *perperam* in the *Vita*).

To be consistent Lönnroth should not have suggested that Eric undertook an *Eriksgata* (p. 274), and should have held that Eric was not regarded as a saint before the mid-thirteenth century, a fact which the existence of a *festum trium lectionum* attests. It is clear that the "shortened legend" need not have been brought into the discussion of the *Vita* as a political pamphlet. As a general point, sources and models are useful in aiding the understanding of a work of literature but they are not necessary.

<sup>88</sup> The Prose Chronicle (composed about 1450) which says (in translation) about Karl: "He was chosen as king by the Götar before Eric was chosen in Uppland, and he was a conspirator for the death of St Eric. For this Knut, son of Eric, killed him at Visingsö" (S.R.S. I i p. 246).

Valdemar<sup>89</sup> in 1250 against his rival Philip Knutsson of the Folkung party and a direct descendant of St Eric. It has been suggested that the *Vita* here and in the comment on Eric's election stresses the rights of the provincial assemblies to choose the king and, of course, this generally would be the Folkung party programme against Birger Jarl and Valdemar.

Obviously too there is some anti-Danish feeling in the legend directed against Magnus, and, in the extension in the "standard legend", by the comment on the prohibition of foreigners from ruling. Anti-foreign feeling was strong in the 1270s when another Folkung group revolted against King Magnus Ladulås and directed their opposition towards foreign favourites of the king. By 1319 the prohibition was made legal and arose from antagonism towards King Birger Magnusson's foreign counsellors and prince Magnus Birgersson's Danish invading army.<sup>90</sup> But if the legendary statement has point it can scarcely be against these later kings who both took an interest in the cult of St Eric and are mentioned favourably in the late thirteenth-century *Miracula S. Erici*.<sup>91</sup> It could however be a cut at the Danish sympathies of Birger Jarl and Valdemar. In 1259 Valdemar married Sophia, daughter of the Danish king Eric Ploughpenny who had died in 1250, whose remains were translated in 1258, and who came to be regarded as a saint both in Denmark and Sweden. Birger Jarl certainly favoured the cult of the Danish Eric and visited his grave at Ringsted once in the 1260s.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Lönnroth, 'King Erikslegenden', p. 273, who makes the following suggestion.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 272. We should note however that, according to Saxo, the Swedes rejected the Danish Magnus Nilsson and chose Sverker the Elder in the twelfth century because they did not wish to have a foreigner as king. See Westman, E. p. 28.

<sup>91</sup> Magnus Ladulås and his queen witnessed the revelation of two miracles in 1277 (Miracle XXIV); Birger Magnusson was healed of pleurisy in his youth at the intercession of St Eric (Miracle XXVI).

<sup>92</sup> See Ahnlund, H.T. (1948), pp. 311-316, who argues convincingly that rivalry between the cults of the Erics was also a factor in the growth of the cult of the Swedish Eric.



This information, the historic fact of the papal letters, tentative deductions about the bias of the legend, and results of research on the composition and date of the liturgical texts, shows that the cult of Eric flourished in the mid-thirteenth century and suggests that it was directed by the Folkung supporters, though also by the church who would gain from the revival of interest.

This interest is still limited mainly to the area of Uppland and its immediate neighbourhood in the thirteenth century, for when the miracles are recorded only a few are placed outside the area of Lake Mälär.<sup>93</sup> But the seeds of a greater influence are already sown because Eric is linked with foundations which are centres of power in mediæval Sweden. In or about 1273 his relics were translated to the site of the new cathedral of Uppsala and he is the only native patron saint of this church. The *Miracula* was certainly completed before 1311 and many of the important names in national and church history witness or attest miracles performed by invocation of the saint.<sup>94</sup> By now he is favoured by the Uppsala cathedral chapter who had commissioned the *Miracula*, and, in 1275, his figure appears for the first time on a seal, the counter-seal of the chapter.<sup>95</sup> St Eric also begins a connection with Stockholm, for when the patrons of Stockholm church are mentioned for the first time in 1419,

<sup>93</sup> Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 31, and Ahnlund, *op. cit.*, p. 311. Ahnlund considers, p. 312 note 1, that Miracle XV (about the calming of a storm on Lake Vättern for the Dominican Prior of Dacia, Petrus de Rusquillis) can very well refer to the Danish Eric. There is no need to assume this, however, since the Dominicans, among them Israel Erlandsson who wrote the *Miracula*, were zealous for the cult of the Swedish Eric. The event is best dated 1305, when the provincial capital at Skänninge, mentioned in the account, took place, (D.S. 1476), not 1303 as in the *Reg. Eccles. Upsal.* text. This is a period of great activity for the cult of St Eric of Sweden, but the Danish Eric seems to have fallen into the background by this time.

<sup>94</sup> Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29. Church dignitaries include two archbishops of Uppsala, Folke Ängel and Nils Allesson (Miracles XXIII, XXV, XLV, XLVIII), and men of high rank in the Franciscan order (II, IX, XVIII); while the nobility, including members of the king's council, are named in III, V, XVII, XX, XXVI, XXVIII, XLII, L.

<sup>95</sup> Imprinted on a document of that year, and described by B. Thordeman, E. p. 179. The saint appears as a young, beardless king holding orb and sceptre and the inscription runs: "Sanctus Ericus Rex et Martir".

Eric is one of a group of four.<sup>96</sup> But as a future symbol of nationalism he has the advantage over all his early rivals, since of all the patrons of Stockholm and Uppsala cathedral he is the only native royal saint. The cult of St Olav of Norway, a co-patron of Uppsala, faded because he was foreign, the national popularity of the others because they were not kings. Thus Eric later became the *patronus regni*,<sup>97</sup> the *rex perpetuus* at times of difficulty and interregnum, and there is a possible indication of this as far back as the crucial period for the cult, the mid-thirteenth century. In 1951 a coin was found in Jämtland stamped on only one side with a cross and the inscription *Rex Upsalie*. Nils Rasmusson,<sup>98</sup> who has considered its origin most closely, states that it was probably coined between 1235 and 1250, and, by analogy with older and twelfth-century usage, regards the phrase *Rex Upsalie* as synonymous with *Rex Sweorum*, King of the Swedes. The lack of a king's name suggests that it was coined during a real or supposed interregnum. Rasmusson will not speculate further, but Professor Bengt Thordeman<sup>99</sup> states that "the unnamed king (of Uppsala) can scarcely be other than St Eric, put forward as opposing king to Valdemar . . . who was illegitimate in the eyes of the revolutionaries". I do not presume to stand between the archæologists, although recognising the inter-related speculations on which Professor Thordeman's statement is founded. Yet St Eric has certainly become *patronus regni* at a later period, notably in the fifteenth century,

<sup>96</sup> The patrons of Stockholm church are named as St Nicholas, St Olav, St Erik, and St Catherine in a letter from the citizens to the curia in this year, (Ahlund, E. p. 145). The patrons of Uppsala were St Lawrence (who had been patron of Old Uppsala cathedral), St Olav, and St Eric.

<sup>97</sup> The figure of St Eric which appeared to Olav of Måby in his severe illness (Miracle I) is a foreshadowing of the *patronus regni* concept. There he appears in regal clothes wearing a crown and holding a sceptre in his hand.

<sup>98</sup> 'Rex Upsalie', in *Arkeologiska forskningar och fynd, Studier utgivna med anledning av H.M. Konung Gustav VI Adolfs Sjuttioårsdag* (Stockholm, 1952), pp. 283-294.

<sup>99</sup> In a lecture to *Finska Vetenskaps Societeten*, Sept. 21st 1959, available to me in typescript kindly sent by Professor Thordeman. This paper has been of the greatest value in directing me to the most recent discussion about St Eric.

the period of uneasy union with Denmark. Then Engelbrekt revolted in the name of St Eric with the common people against the crown because of excessive taxation and because of Danish "bailiff-dominion".<sup>100</sup> By 1439 the Swedish national seal bore St Eric's picture during time of interregnum,<sup>101</sup> and, in the fifteenth century, coins known as "patron's coins"<sup>102</sup> were struck, bearing Eric's head in place of a king's. The rallying-cry became "With God and St Eric",<sup>103</sup> and when Sten Sture the Elder defeated Christian I of Denmark in 1472, a rhyming-chronicle speaks of a flaming sword in the heavens which rallied the Swedes. "Surely" says the chronicler, "St Eric, the king, who is protector of Sweden, caused his sword to be waved then."<sup>104</sup>

The religious cult obviously extended too. From 1273, when Valdemar made a donation to Uppsala cathedral at the end of his reign,<sup>105</sup> a succession of kings and regents had often favoured Uppsala for the person of St Eric. By the fifteenth century the cult of Eric had spread to Norway, Denmark, and even Germany.<sup>106</sup> But the Lutheran reformation of the sixteenth century ended all this. Like other European kings of this period, Gustav Vasa broke the power of the Catholic Church within his kingdom, and the reformation swept away the proces-

<sup>100</sup> Engelbrekt's revolt in 1434 is described in a letter written home on August 1st by a Danzig merchant then in Stockholm. I quote from the translation by Carolyn Hannay of Ingvar Anderson, *A History of Sweden* (1956), p. 79: "They (the men of Dalarna) therefore wish Sweden to return to her state under King Eric, whom the country now worships as a saint. In his time no customs duties or taxes existed and no burdens were laid upon the peasants, and they will therefore have back the same rights as in former days".

A German chronicler says, *ibid* p. 86, of Engelbrekt that he "rose against King Eric (Eric of Pomerania 1412-1439), for he would not suffer the overweening indignity to which knights, citizens, peasants, and the whole Swedish nation were subjected by King Eric's bailiffs and captains".

<sup>101</sup> First mentioned in 1439 as: "War rikis insigle", (Ahnlund, E. p. 139), and made for the National Council who were then opposing the king, Eric of Pomerania. The seal is described by Thordeman, E. p. 181.

<sup>102</sup> Ahnlund, *loc. cit.*

<sup>103</sup> Ahnlund, E. p. 138.

<sup>104</sup> Andersson, *op. cit.*, p. 97; and A. Schück, 'Sankt Eriks Minne', *Svenska Turist-Föreningens Årsskrift* (1942), p. 214.

<sup>105</sup> The letter discussed above in note 6.

<sup>106</sup> Ahnlund, E. p. 148 seq. The *Vita et Miracula* is extant in a German translation, printed at Lübeck, 1507 (S.R.S. II i, 319-321, for the German "Life").

sions<sup>107</sup> and pilgrimages. St Eric's figure, which had graced a door of Uppsala cathedral, was removed because of the superstition which "old and common people" continued by "rubbing the clothes of the sick on the image in a papish manner".<sup>108</sup> Protestant historians, such as Olaus Petri,<sup>109</sup> could speak of him as an ideal king, but the veneration for his saintly powers was erased.

Today there are still reminiscences of his veneration and influence — the naming of Stockholm as "St Eric's town", the title of the annual industrial fair, *Eriksmässa*, place-names within Uppsala, *St Eriks gränd*, *St Eriks källa*, the shrine and tapestries in Uppsala cathedral, the wooden statue in the country church of Roslagsbro, a copy of which stands in the Town Hall of Stockholm — but to most of my Swedish friends he is now no more than a figure of history whose deeds are artifiically recalled when reports of scholarly investigation are popularised in Swedish newspapers.

<sup>107</sup> Miracle II refers to a procession with St Eric's shrine from Old Uppsala to Uppsala on the Rogation Days, "sicut moris est"; and Peringskiöld, *op. cit.*, II p. 51, states that it was borne between the two cathedrals on May 18th and on "Festum Translationis S. Eriki". Processions with the shrine also took place at other high festivals and at times of need. One interesting episode took place as late as 1521 when two of Gustav Vasa's officers marched against Uppsala, and the cathedral chapter, the burgomaster and the council, requested the officers not to hinder them from bearing the shrine and relics of St Eric, "during the feast of St Eric, with due ceremony and procession to Old Uppsala, as the custom was", (translated from *Peder Swart, Konung Gustaf I:s Krönika*, ed. N. Eden (1912), p. 29).

<sup>108</sup> According to A. Schück, *op. cit.* p. 215.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted by S. Tunberg, 'Erik den Helige, Sveriges Helgonkonung', *Fornvännen* (1941), pp. 257-8.

## APPENDIX

## THE LIFE OF ST ERIC

I "*The standard legend*" from the oldest text, *Registrum Upsalense*, 1344, now Codex A17 Swedish Public Record Office, Stockholm. Translation from the Latin printed by T. Schmid in *Erik den Helige*, ed. B. Thordeman (Stockholm, 1954), pp. XII-XIII.

This brief account for men of our own time touches on the origin, life, and happy consummation of the blessed Eric, the glorious martyr of Christ, and at one time, the most illustrious king of the Swedes. He was of royal lineage and of a line of noble Swedish lords. When the throne was vacant he was chosen by the lords of that country and by all the people because he was loved for his natural gentleness and the conspicuous goodness of his life, and was unanimously elected king, and was raised with due ceremony to the royal throne at Uppsala. When this worshipper of the Holy Trinity was established on the height of royal power, he divided his time — more to undertake responsibility than to increase his power — in three ways, adorning and occupying his days up to the consummation of his life by his illustrious martyrdom. For, in imitation of the examples of the holy kings of the Old Testament, he set his hand to great deeds, giving himself wholly, first to the building of churches and the restoration and spread of divine worship, next to the ruling of the people and the proclaiming of the justice of laws, and finally to the expulsion of enemies of the faith and of the kingdom. For, with great care and laborious effort, he was zealous to complete the church of Uppsala which had been founded and partially built by his ancestors, the ancient kings; he undertook this before all else and set ministers of divine worship therein. Next he went around his kingdom and visited all his people, treading the king's way (*via regia*), walking firmly along the right path which leads to our home (*patria*), declining neither to the right for favour or gain, nor to the left for fear or hatred. So he made peace between enemies, freed those who were oppressed by the more powerful, guided those who walked righteously in the ways of God, expelled the wicked from the land, and distributed and apportioned his law to every man with even balance on the scale of justice. And when he had become beloved by all his people because of these and similar deeds, all desired with one accord to give him the third part of the fines paid by criminals which, according to the custom of the land, legally belonged to the state treasury. He is said to have given this reply to those who made the offer:

"What is mine is enough for me; you keep what is yours. For perhaps your descendants may need it in future times".

'O just prince, so rarely found in high places, who was content with his own and did not greedily seek to gain the possessions of those under him!'

But, since it is right that he who judges and rules others by virtue of his office should first judge himself by subjecting the flesh to the spirit and by guiding the spirit towards the Lord, according to the verse: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection" (I Cor. ix, 27), so our holy king, assiduous in prayers, frequent in vigils, constant in fasts, suffering with those afflicted by misfortune and generous in giving alms to the poor, exhausted his body by the discipline of a hair-shirt, with which, as it were with a breastplate of justice, he was likewise clothed at the time of his passion, and which even today is preserved in the church of Uppsala, stained (as it is) with his precious blood. Indeed, how he bore himself towards our familiar foe who sleeps in the bosom of man is clearly seen from this, because when he often abstained from the queen's bed during times of fast or at other holy seasons he often bathed secretly in a vessel of cold water, even in winter, in order to repress the rising lusts of the flesh, and cured his heat with the cold. With a firm mind he himself checked the desire of his flesh. Finally, as we said above, when the church was built and the kingdom set in order, he turned his hand against the enemies of the faith and of his people. He gathered an army together and, taking with him the blessed bishop Henry from the church of Uppsala, he led an expedition against the Finns. The faith of Christ was first revealed to them and peace offered to them, but they refused it and rebelled, so he attacked them with a strong force to avenge the blood of Christians and conquered them in war. When he had won such a great victory he prostrated himself in prayer, and, since he was always devoutly pious, he was weeping as he prayed to the Lord. He was asked by one of his company why he was weeping, when he ought rather to be rejoicing at the victory over the enemies of Christ. He is said to have replied:

"Indeed I do rejoice and glorify the Lord for the victory which is given to us, but I grieve deeply that so many of their souls have perished today that would have been preserved for everlasting salvation if they had accepted the sacraments of the faith".

In this he was imitating that friend of God and mildest of men who, fired with zeal, laid low the idolaters and avenged the injuries done to God, and then, moved by compassion, prayed to God for the sin of that same people. So he gathered together those who were left of that people, granted them peace and caused the Christian faith to be preached; and when most of them had been baptised and churches had been founded, he set over them the blessed bishop Henry whom we mentioned above and who was afterwards crowned with martyrdom there. And when priests had been organized there and the other things that pertain to Christian worship had been arranged, he returned to Sweden in glorious victory.

Now in the course of the tenth year of the reign of our illustrious king, in order that tribulation might test the just man and the

crushed seed might bear fruit more richly, the ancient foe incited as his adversary a certain man, named Magnus, the son of the king of the Danes, who falsely claimed the right to rule by inheritance through his mother, contrary to the custom of the land which prohibits foreigners from ruling. Wherefore he allied himself with a certain prince of the realm and other wicked accomplices who, corrupted by gifts and enticed by promises, unanimously conspired for the murder of the illustrious king. They assembled an army secretly and attacked the king, who knew nothing about this and suspected nothing hostile, at Östra Aros with a strong force. On that day the feast of our Lord's Ascension was at hand, when he was to ascend joyfully after our Lord through the palm of martyrdom. When on that day he was present at the ceremonies of mass in the church of the Holy Trinity on the hill which is called the mount of Our Lord, where now the cathedral is founded, he was told by one of his men that the enemy were approaching the city and that they ought to meet them at once with armed force. He is said to have replied:

"Let me hear in peace the mysteries of such a great ceremony to the end for I hope in God that what remains of his service we shall hear with solemnity elsewhere".

With these words he commended himself to God and, first signing himself with the sign of the cross, he left the church and armed himself and his men. Though they were few he went bravely to meet his enemies with them. The enemies engaged them in battle and directed their attack against the king himself above all others. Wounds were doubled on wounds for the Lord's anointed as he lay on the ground. His enemies raged still more fiercely against him as he lay half-dead, and mocking him, they irreverently cut off his revered head. Thus as a victor he crossed over from war to peace, joyfully exchanging his earthly kingdom for a heavenly kingdom.

(Two miracles are now recounted of a fountain which gushed forth where Eric fell, and of a blind woman who regained her sight when she touched her eyes with the martyr's blood).

The rest of his life, the translation of his holy body and the miracles which the Lord has performed through his saint and mercifully has not ceased to perform up to the present day, which are omitted here for the sake of brevity, are written elsewhere. The blessed Eric died in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1160 on the eighteenth of May when Pope Alexander III ruled the Church of Rome under the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is all honour and glory, world without end. AMEN.

II "*The shortened legend*", being 3 lections from an office for St Eric in the oldest extant Scandinavian breviary, now Additional MS 40146, British Museum, dated late thirteenth century. Translation from the Latin printed by E. Jørgensen in *Nordisk Tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen*, XX (1933), p. 191.

- I When the throne of Sweden was vacant, the glorious martyr of God Eric was unanimously elected king by the lords of that country and all the people, because of his natural gentleness and the goodness of his life; and was raised with due ceremony to the royal throne at Uppsala.
- II When he was established on the height of royal power, he set his hand to great deeds, giving himself wholly, first to the building of churches and the restoration of divine worship, then to the ruling of his people and the proclaiming of the justice of laws, and finally to the expulsion of enemies of the faith and of the kingdom, treading the king's way (*via regia*) walking firmly along the right path which leads to our home (*patria*), declining neither to the right for favour or gain, nor to the left for fear or hatred.
- III Now in the course of the tenth year of his reign his head was cut off and he was martyred at Uppsala on the feast of Our Lord's Ascension, by certain accomplices who had been corrupted by gifts and promises by Magnus, the son of the king of the Danes, who claimed the right to rule by inheritance through his mother, contrary to the custom of the land.



ADVOCACY AND ART IN  
*GUÐMUNDAR SAGA DÝRA*

By JACQUELINE SIMPSON

IT is well known that a deep preoccupation with honour and good name was a fundamental characteristic of the Icelandic mentality, and indeed of the whole Germanic code of ethics. Whatever else Amlóðr the Dane would have disowned in Hamlet, this at least he would have recognised:

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied . . . .  
O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!

From this care for honour springs the desire that the tale should be told, and rightly told; more, that it should be so told as to win over "the unsatisfied". The teller must be well informed, and must also be an able advocate.

When in the early thirteenth century we see the rise of a new branch of saga-writing, the secular Sagas of Contemporaries, we find this same motive at work; as Einar Ól. Sveinsson has said:

The passion for fame is also the underlying motive when sagas begin to be written about notable Icelanders of this time . . . sometimes these works are evident vindications of the heroes or direct attacks on their enemies.<sup>1</sup>

The artistic effects resulting from this motive can be clearly observed in one of the earliest Contemporary Sagas, *Guðmundar saga dýra*, which, though no longer existing independently, has been preserved in the *Sturlunga saga* compilation.<sup>2</sup> It is not a biographical saga, despite its

<sup>1</sup> Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *The Age of the Sturlungs*, tr. Jóhann S. Hannesson, (*Islandica* XXXVI; 1953), 90.

<sup>2</sup> The chief editions of *Sturlunga saga* are those of Guðbrandur Vigfússon (Oxford 1878); Kr. Kaalund (Copenhagen 1906-11); and Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason and Kristján Eldjárn (Reykjavík 1946). All references here are to the last-named edition, unless otherwise stated.

title; it is the story of a feud culminating in deeds of unusual cruelty — the burning-in of Qnundr Þorkelsson and the slaying of his son and several supporters by Guðmundr dýri in May 1197, and then, some months later, the cold-blooded killing of four of Guðmundr's nephews by Qnundr's surviving kinsmen.

The author of the saga<sup>3</sup> is concerned to trace the early causes of the feud, to explain its growth, and to describe its climax and consequences; but he goes deeper than this, for he seeks to interpret the motives of the main actors, and, above all, to defend Guðmundr by showing him to have been unendurably provoked. It is the author's wish to understand, to interpret, and to convince others of the validity of his interpretation; this is not only the primary reason for the writing of the saga, but also the source of whatever literary merit it can claim. The falling-off in quality of the last sections of the saga is one sign of this; after the deaths of Guðmundr's nephews the narrative is no more than a factual chronicle — always clear, sometimes touched by a vivid detail, but uninspired; the last chapters are mere scattered anecdotes. By contrast, the first two-thirds of the saga presents selected material shaped into a pattern, a pattern determined by the psychological interpretation on which the author bases his defence of Guðmundr.

His main aim, paradoxical as it may seem, is to present Guðmundr as a peace-loving chieftain whose power is based on a reputation for justice combined with moderation, whose position is slowly undermined by the

<sup>3</sup> It has been argued by Magnús Jónsson in *Guðmundar saga dýra. Nokkrar athuganir um uppruna hennar og samsetning* (*Íslensk Fræði* 8; 1940), that this text should not be regarded as a single saga with a single author, but as a mere collection of materials towards a saga, gathered and partially worked over by several hands. This view, in my opinion, conflicts with evidence to be obtained from a study of the text; my arguments for rejecting it have appeared in detail in an article in *Skírnir* CCCX (1960), 152-76. For the purposes of the present article I shall throughout speak of the author as a single person and assume that his work was intended to be read in substantially the same form as we now have it. It bears every mark of being based on abundant first-hand information and eye-witness accounts, and can be dated c. 1215.

sneers of those who mistake moderation for cowardice, and whose appalling vengeance on his rival Qnundr is the necessary act of a man goaded beyond endurance. After the burning he makes every effort to pay the heavy fines laid on him; some months later he is again forced to fight when Qnundr's kinsmen break the truce, and at length he crushes them.

The first eleven chapters deal with events which, although they are not immediate causes of the feud, have been selected to form two interwoven patterns: the rise and fall of Guðmundr's prestige, and the contrast between his character and Qnundr's. Guðmundr is shown as wise and resourceful, well able to protect his followers and outwit his rivals, but always respecting the laws; Qnundr and his friend Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson, by contrast, are shown as contemptuous of law, overbearing, stubborn, willing to use armed bands or hired killers, and by no means scrupulous over the justice of the causes they take up. This contrast is established from the moment that Guðmundr appears (in ch. 3), and all the material presented in the first part of the saga is intended to emphasize it.

If this intention is not always plain at first glance, the explanation lies in a characteristic feature of the narrative technique. The author wishes to trace the remote causes of the event with which he deals, yet at the same time he keeps rigidly to a chronological scheme. Thus each episode must begin with persons and events remote from the main characters, and only gradually draw near enough to affect their lives. Nor does the author explain the point of an episode before embarking on an account of it; facts must be given first, and only later will their link with the main theme appear. Constantly, therefore, the narrative begins at the periphery, works inwards to the centre, and then returns to the periphery to start a fresh episode.

The danger of this method is that it may create

confusion or overload the story with details about persons on the outer edge of the tale. The author of *Guðmundar saga dýra* is not indeed always firm enough in controlling his material, although his very failures are of interest for the light they throw on the process of composition. But whatever its risks, the method has one great advantage in the hands of an advocate: the step-by-step unfolding of events gives the impression not merely of accuracy but of impartiality, while at the same time it affords opportunity for those brief comments, revealing remarks, and striking juxtapositions by which an author can predispose his audience to make those judgements which he wishes them to make. Thus, when the end of an episode reveals its real point, the reader readily assents to the author's interpretation of it.

The first three chapters illustrate this well. They tell of a lawsuit over an inheritance, the *Helgastaðamál*, a case in which there was room for sharp difference of opinion, and which became a source of danger when powerful and obstinate chieftains tried to profit from it. The first chapter tells in detail why, when a certain rich young man died, it was hard to see who was his legal heir. The second tells how one chieftain bought up the right of inheritance from one claimant, while Qnundr and Þorvarðr bought up that of the other claimant; then these chieftains met, but "could come to no agreement, because each party claimed to be owner of all that they were disputing over; no compromise was possible between them, for neither would yield any part of his claim."<sup>4</sup> The third chapter introduces Guðmundr, who "sided with nobody in these disputes",<sup>5</sup> and it immediately establishes his character by showing how he prevented fighting at the *þing*: "Qnundr and Þorvarðr prepared to defend themselves by battle, not by a legal defence, but Guðmundr interposed himself with his men, so that

<sup>4</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 163.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, I 163.

neither battle nor lawsuit took place."<sup>6</sup> The same point is made again and again by various touches, all designed to show Qnundr's ruthlessness and the growing risk of serious fighting, which Guðmundr's disinterested intervention twice averts. At length, a shrewd and wise chieftain from another district comes to consult with Guðmundr, and together they arrange a settlement. The author then makes his explicit comment on the whole episode: "Thereupon they went away; and neither of those parties that had disputed this case won honour from it, and the honour then went to Guðmundr."<sup>7</sup>

With this judgement the reader concurs, largely because the detailed treatment of every stage in the dispute has enabled him to form his own opinion, while the selection and presentation of details has ensured that that opinion will match the author's.

Another striking instance of this technique is to be found in ch. 11. Here we read a detailed account of a fight between three farmers (one a follower of Guðmundr, the others two of Qnundr's men); the right is made to seem so clearly on the side of Guðmundr's follower that the reader, were he a thirteenth-century Icclander, would already be mentally assessing the compensation. Then Þorfinnr (a son of Qnundr, married to Guðmundr's daughter) offers to arbitrate; he awards terms so grossly unjust to Guðmundr's man that the reader finds himself in full agreement with the comment: "that settlement was unpopular".<sup>8</sup>

Some critics, notably Magnús Jónsson,<sup>9</sup> have severely criticized this saga for the allegedly disproportionate space given to minor episodes. Yet I believe that the method of peripheral approach is not only valuable as a means of persuasion, but is potentially of artistic merit. It enables the author to present the growth of the feud

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, I 163-4.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, I 166.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, I 183.

<sup>9</sup> *op. cit.*, especially pp. 8-10, 14, 16, 50.

up to the burning as an advancing, wave-like series of threats, each of which apparently retires but leaves the central situation one step nearer the inevitable clash. This is an inherently dramatic method, and one which more skilled saga-writers were able to put to impressive use.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, it is instructive to see the treatment which this author gives to "irrelevant" characters. One such is a certain Guðrún Þórðardóttir, of whom he gives a full and venomous sketch in chapters 5 and 6. She is an artful, hypocritical, hysterical, and unscrupulously selfish woman, who, after two unsuccessful marriages, inveigles Guðmundr's nephew Hákon into killing her husband for her — so providing an occasion for Guðmundr's rivals to try to damage his position, though in fact he outwits them and saves Hákon from the consequences of his deed. Guðrún's earlier life is described with a wealth of detail which, however interesting as an acute psychological sketch, is disproportionate to the slight part she plays in the saga as a whole. From one point of view, one would prefer to be told less about Guðrún and more about Guðmundr's increasing power, of which a brief and enigmatic remark at the opening of ch. 6 provides a glimpse. Yet need this extended treatment of Guðrún be considered a total artistic error? An interest in character for its own sake is a valuable feature in saga-writing, and the great sagas obtain striking and vivid effects from the extended treatment of "minor" personages and "digressive" episodes.

Moreover, on at least one occasion the author shows considerable skill in such matters — in the brief episode of Gálmr, the innocent man who chose to die in the burning farm in the hope that his sacrifice would force

<sup>10</sup> A fine example can be seen in *Þorgils saga ok Haflíða*, where in the earlier part of the saga (up to ch. 15) the causes of enmity between the two chieftains are steadily built up; in the second part the pattern is reversed, and a series of apparently inevitable clashes are each narrowly averted, till permanent reconciliation is achieved. See Ursula Brown, *Þorgils saga ok Haflíða* (1952), xvi-xx.

Guðmundr and Kolbeinn to abandon their onslaught:

In there there was a man called Gálmr; he was the son of Grímr. He was a well-to-do farmer, and lived at a place called Dynhagi. He was a friend of them all, and of none more than of Kolbeinn Tumason. He went to the door to talk to them, and the harm done by the fire was not yet so great that one could not have saved everything. He asked Guðmundr and Kolbeinn to turn back for that time and offered them all his wealth if they would, and he was a rich man and had a very fine farm. Kolbeinn answered and said that he would himself give Gálmr as much money as he wished if only he would come out. Gálmr answered: "You have long laughed over the fact that I enjoyed baths and often drank a great deal. Now here is the chance of a bath; but I find it hard to see how I will manage about the mead-drinking." And he did not go out.<sup>11</sup>

An episode such as this is a fine example of economy, vividness and dramatic force, limited to its right proportion in the general scheme of the saga. Furthermore, the very fact of recording information about people who were only marginally involved in the feud prevents the saga from becoming over-systematized or over-simplified, and preserves in it some of the complexity of truth.

It seems to me that the author of *Guðmundar saga dýra* is groping towards, and has here attained, that mastery in the treatment of episodes which Professor Maxwell has analysed in his discussion of "the principle of the integrity of episodes". A good saga will not relegate any episode to the background but will give it a place of its own, an account "short, but rounded and whole". The episode may only touch the main action at one point, but it "must seem to exist and to be interesting in its own right, not simply as a term in some larger argument"; thus the saga itself as a whole will be freed "from the oppression of a purpose that saps each moment's independent reality".<sup>12</sup>

It is another notable quality in this author that, though obviously guided by partizan motives, he never

<sup>11</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 190.

<sup>12</sup> I. R. Maxwell, 'Pattern in *Njáls saga*', *Saga-Book* XV 1-2 (1956-9), 25-6.

exaggerates his case by presenting Guðmundr and his kinsmen as irreproachable, nor by totally blackening the characters of Qnundr and his supporters. The courage of Qnundr and his son Þorfinnr, the touches of magnanimity in his son-in-law Þorgrímr, the horror of Þorfinnr's death — all these things are plainly shown. Similarly the author does not hide the marked streak of cruelty in Guðmundr (most visible in ch. 19, where he is prepared to let his followers rape and maim in the pursuit of vengeance). The whole character of Guðmundr is indeed somewhat enigmatic; the deeper motive for his patience under insults remains unclear — perhaps it was piety, but perhaps also he would not fight till he was sure of victory. "The odds are not those that I would choose", said Guðmundr once, when with thirteen men he came face to face with Qnundr, who had fourteen.<sup>13</sup> It would be rash to claim that the author never suppressed facts in the zeal of his advocacy, for in one episode there are signs that he did,<sup>14</sup> but on the whole the picture he draws is convincing in its refusal to oversimplify the enigmas and complexities of human nature.

One cause of this must be the fact that the author was writing so soon after the events and addressing himself to men whose knowledge of the facts might be almost equal to his own, even if their interpretation differed from his. Falsification would have been easily detected and would have defeated its own aim, by rousing public indignation. So the writer, though making plain where his sympathies lie, keeps his advocacy within bounds and produces a credible and balanced interpretation.

<sup>13</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 186.

<sup>14</sup> This is in ch. 10, an account of a quarrel between Guðmundr's nephews (sons of Þórðr of Laufás), and Qgmundr Þorvarðsson sneis. It is well told, but seems irrelevant here, for it barely touches Guðmundr's life. It so happens that the same incident is mentioned in ch. 25 of the *Resensbók* version of *Prestssaga Guðmundar góða* (see *Biskupa sögur* (1858-78), I 446-8). There it is made plain that Guðmundr dýri and Qnundr were both drawn into the quarrel, though the part they played was ineffectual. Therefore it seems likely that the author of *Guðmundar saga dýra* has here suppressed something which he thought discreditable to his hero, while at the same time feeling bound to include some reference to the episode — the point of which consequently remains obscure.



His narrative is closely based on eye-witness accounts — so closely that one can often see who his informant for a given passage must have been. His respect for fact is such that on one occasion he directly informs the reader, speaking in the first person, that he is ignorant of a crucial conversation; yet it is worth noting too how he turns his very ignorance to advantage by suggestive touches which amply reveal what, in his opinion, must have taken place. The episode in question is in ch. 9, which tells how Qnundr's son, Þorfinnr, fell in love with Guðmundr's daughter Ingibjörg, and how Guðmundr, who had strongly opposed the match, at last consented to it:

That week Qnundr and Þorfinnr left home, and they were fifteen in all, and they rode up to Bakki. Guðmundr was at home, with not many men, and the farmhands were at their work and were working far from the house. I do not know what they said to one another, but there is something to be said about the outcome of their errand, for then Ingibjörg was betrothed to Þorfinnr before they went away; and arrangements were agreed on for the wedding feast and also for the money which he was to receive with her.<sup>15</sup>

The author here merely states certain facts, but by juxtaposing the mention of Qnundr's band of men with that of Guðmundr's isolation, he strongly implies that it was by threat of violence that the latter's opposition was broken down. This is his usual technique, and it is an important factor in the art of the saga that impressions should be so unobtrusively yet firmly produced.

Other means too are used towards the same end. One is the straightforward comment on a character, not in the form of a set description at his first appearance, as is common in sagas, but in the form of casual remarks:

Qnundr . . . valued men according to his opinion of their loyalty to himself, and not so much according to their popularity with other people.<sup>16</sup>

It was a fault in Guðmundr's character that he loved other women besides the one he had as wife.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 178.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, I 167.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, I 175-6.

The author also makes occasional use of that appeal to public opinion which is so characteristic a feature of sagas, as when he says of a settlement that it was unpopular, but this is by no means a regular part of his technique. He prefers to quote the opinion of some particular man to reinforce the impression he is seeking to make, especially if that man is one whose words are likely to command respect. Thus in ch. 4 he quotes Bishop Brandr's advice to certain chieftains to seek Guðmundr's help because "in the cases of greatest importance the previous summer" (i.e. the *Helgastaðamál*) "it had been Guðmundr who had produced all the best solutions".<sup>18</sup>

The most striking example of this method is in ch. 18. After Qnundr's death his kinsmen accepted a large compensation awarded by Jón Loptsson, but eighteen months later, egged on by Qnundr's daughter Guðrún and led by her husband Þorgrímr, they broke the truce, killed four of Guðmundr's nephews, and wounded two other men. Then they fled south to Oddi, where Jón's son Sæmundr took them in and half promised them further help. Jón by then was dead. But Ormr, another son of Jón's, rebuked Sæmundr in the name of the respect due to their father's memory:

"I think that our honour is involved," he said. "We had a father who was held in such high honour in this land that there was no man who did not think his case in good hands if he was to arbitrate in it. Now I do not know," said he, "which was the more unprecedented: the nature of those cases which were laid before him, or the terms of the settlement, which were the last he laid down. Now," said Ormr, "they<sup>19</sup> have paid up the great sums which were imposed, and which everyone expected would never be paid, so that that would break the settlement. But the others, who accepted the payment, have now broken and made void every declaration he made in this affair; and it goes against the grain for me to help Þorgrímr, and dishonour our father's words, and himself, and all of us, his sons."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, I 168.

<sup>19</sup> i.e. Guðmundr and his followers.

<sup>20</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 200.

By ascribing this long and impassioned declaration to Ormr, the most respected of Jón's sons, the author has done more than explain why Sæmundr then ceased to help Qnundr's avengers; he has evoked the immense prestige of Jón Loptsson and has used it to make their action appear not a heroic vengeance, but a dishonourable truce-breaking. Without passing open judgement himself, he has, at a crucial moment, most effectively directed the judgement of his readers.

Much of the literary interest of this saga lies in the co-existence within it of strongly effective passages and of others where the pressure of the author's purpose relaxes, and which are in consequence flatly written or downright clumsy. For there are grave blemishes on this saga, both as a work of art and even as a factual record. There is the tendency, already mentioned, to cram the narrative with details; the ending peters out in petty anecdotes; and, most serious, the connections between certain episodes and the main theme remain so obscure that a modern reader can only guess at them. Some such points would presumably have been no puzzle to a contemporary reader, but other obscurities are certainly due to inadequate technique. The author himself comes near to admitting his difficulty in arranging his material; at the beginning of ch. 9, which contains three interwoven episodes (two of which remain apparently unrelated to the main story), he remarks: "Now more than one thing happened at once, and yet they can only be spoken of one at a time."<sup>21</sup> The formula serves well to sum up the problem of an inexperienced writer struggling to interpret a complex series of events within the rigid limits of chronological narration.

And yet, for all his faults, the author has three qualities which can at times raise his work to a high level. Two have already been discussed: the sense of purpose that gives shape and persuasiveness to the narrative, and the

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, I 175.

realistic insight into characters, which are never oversimplified for the sake of cheap effectiveness or a ready-made pattern. His third quality is a sense of drama, which can be seen both in his love of vivid revealing remarks and details, and in his firm, sure handling of the first climax of the saga: the burning-in of Qnundr.

The immediate cause of the burning is a series of insults to Guðmundr.<sup>22</sup> A certain Rúnólfr had been banished by Guðmundr and Kolbeinn, had returned to the district in defiance of their decree, and then, after giving them presents to obtain their pardon, had changed his mind, taken back his gifts, and placed himself under Qnundr's protection:

Guðmundr behaved as if he knew nothing of this, and Guðmundr's honour diminished greatly and was thought to be sadly shrunk through what had happened. And Qnundr's men said that he (i.e. Guðmundr) was sitting on a sanctuary chair up in Øxnadalr, and they said they would build a wall across the valley at both the upper end and the lower, and then turf it over and bury Guðmundr's honour there.<sup>23</sup>

The author says little of Guðmundr's reaction to this; instead, he tells vividly how one of Kolbeinn's men caught Rúnólfr unawares and cut off his hand; how Rúnólfr's brothers and Þorfinnr Qnundarson retaliated

<sup>22</sup> Guðmundr may have had more than the average sensitiveness to all that touched his good name. It is said that on one occasion Hvamm-Sturla, having a grudge against Guðmundr, pointedly ignored him, while greeting his brother Jón. "Someone asked why he greeted the latter, but not Guðmundr. He answered and said that at that time Jón was the more widely known for outrageous deeds" (*viðfrægstan at endemum*) (*Sturlunga saga*, I 109). This seems to imply that both Jón and Guðmundr were eager for fame, and furthermore that Sturla did not think either of them worthy of much respect. Guðmundr's nickname (which could be rendered as "the Excellent", "the Noble", "the Honourable", perhaps even "the Glorious") also points in the same direction.

<sup>23</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 185. For a discussion of the nature and privileges of a "sanctuary chair" (*friðstóll*), see J. Simpson, 'A Note on the word *Friðstóll*', *Saga-Book* XIV (1953-7), 200-10. The reference to building a wall round the area containing Guðmundr's farm is puzzling. It is true that the limits of certain sanctuary areas, e.g. churchyards, could be marked by walls, but the limits of an area made holy by a *friðstóll* seem to have been marked by crosses, not walls. Perhaps the wall should rather be associated with the idea of burial, since there is some evidence that heathen Icelanders sometimes cut off access to a burial mound by a wall, apparently as a precaution against "after-walking". (See *Eyrbyggja saga* ch. 33, *Íslensk Fornrit*, IV 95). Guðmundr's honour is to be so efficiently buried that it will never rise from its grave.

by wounding a close kinsman of Guðmundr; and how Guðmundr and Qnundr came unexpectedly face to face as each rode with a band of men to visit his wounded follower. It was on this occasion that Guðmundr refused his nephew Hákon's wish to stand and fight the matter out, declaring that the odds against him (of one man!) were "not those he would choose".

Hákon said: "Such are the odds that I should like best, for now everything in our encounter can go as fate will have it."

Guðmundr answered: "I will not allow jeers or assaults from my band to provoke them; but receive them as vigorously as possible, if they make any move against us."

But it was easy to see from Hákon's air that he did not shrink from giving provocation. Qnundr and his men halted on a little rise. But Guðmundr and his men passed by, and neither side attacked the other.<sup>24</sup>

This is the last sight we have of Guðmundr before he and Kolbeinn stand at Qnundr's door with ninety men behind them and refuse all terms of peace. Whether it was mere prudence that had held him back; or whether genuine moderation still had a hold on his mind; at what moment he decided to avenge his honour in blood — all this the author does not say, perhaps even did not know. But the outward and visible facts he does give, and these he shapes into a pattern which foreshadows that which the authors of the Family Sagas were to use in similar circumstances.

The most striking, indeed startling, feature of his treatment is the focussing of attention at this point on Qnundr and his household. It is impossible to believe that the author did not know what Guðmundr was doing in those last few weeks before launching his attack; had he so wished, he could have described directly the sending of messages, the plans and preparations, the secret mustering of Guðmundr's allies. Instead, he chooses to speak of Qnundr and his men, and merely to hint at Guðmundr's doings through the unheeded warning brought to Qnundr by Erlendr the Unlucky. This

<sup>24</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 186-7.

change of focus is most effective in heightening the tension; it is a first step in building up that sense, so necessary at the climax of a saga, that events are now advancing by their own impetus and that nothing can change their fated course.

Erlendr comes to Qnundr with news that men are gathering at Guðmundr's farm in unusual numbers, but two of Qnundr's men brush aside the warning with a sneer — a sneer which echoes the earlier taunt at Guðmundr's dead honour:

"A little while ago we both went through all Øxnadalr and searched all the upland pasture and found no sheep, except one hornless ewe whose fleece had all fallen out, and she will not go far this spring. And we think that Guðmundr is sitting firmly on his sanctuary chair."

Qnundr answered: "It is possible that he is sitting for a while. But if he does stand up, then it is not certain how small his stride will be."<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note here a type of sarcasm based on homely symbolism which is frequent in Family Sagas.<sup>26</sup> The taste for such things was certainly widespread in all periods in Iceland, and the invention of such a sneer against Guðmundr is not in itself remarkable. The literary merit of the passage lies in the author's realization that by inserting this conversation at this point of his narrative he can reveal so much. The implications of the jest itself are far-reaching: Guðmundr is a womanly coward ("hornless ewe"), he is afraid to leave his own valley, his followers and prestige are dwindling ("her fleece had all fallen out"), and he is helpless in face of trouble. The jest is framed between Erlendr's warning that Guðmundr may be planning to attack, and Qnundr's half tribute ("if he does stand up, it is not

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, I 187.

<sup>26</sup> cf. the animal imagery of certain mocking offers of compensation to apparently helpless persons: in ch. 8 of the reconstructed part of *Heiðarvíga saga* Víga-Styrr offers young Gestr "a male lamb, grey in colour, with torn fleece, which would not thrive" (*Íslensk Fornrit*, III 231); in *Hávarðar saga Ísfrðings*, ch. 5, Þorbjörn offers old Hávarðr a broken-down horse "grey in colour, very old, and his back covered with sores, who has been lying flat on his back till now" (*Íslensk Fornrit*, VI 308-9).

certain how small his stride will be"). The contemporary reader, knowing the outcome, could appreciate the validity of the warning, the blind stupidity of the sneer, and the greater insight shown by Qnundr. By including this conversation the author gives proof of the true saga-writer's talent for revealing much by the most economical means.

The next stage of his narrative is equally significant in its anticipation of a typical device of fictional and semi-fictional sagas, for it is the recording of two portents:

It happened in the spring that servants came indoors at Langahlið in broad daylight, wanting to find Qnundr because of something they needed. They did not see him. And three times it happened thus, and yet he was sitting in his own place.

At that time Arnþrúðr Fornadóttir and her sons<sup>27</sup> were living at Sakka in Svarfaðardalr. There was something that happened one morning as men were asleep in the sleeping-room: two axes whistled loudly on the axe-beam. Then they were taken down, and they were those of the brothers Snorri and Þorsteinn, sons of Arnþrúðr. They still whistled, even when they were held. Then Guðmundr Arason the priest was sent for, and then they fell silent when he sprinkled them with holy water.<sup>28</sup>

It is clear that to the author these events had a plain significance: Qnundr was invisible because he was soon to die,<sup>29</sup> and the axes whistled for the blood they would soon be shedding. Yet the author gives no explicit interpretation, but relies on the placing of the incidents to convey their meaning. Here once again we see the recording of fact (or what the author accepted as fact) merging into art, for incidents are selected and the narrative shaped according to a sense of drama which foreshadows the use the Family Sagas make of portents as vital elements in their accounts of great disasters. Contemporary superstition, like the contemporary taste for symbolic taunts, has been used with artistic effectiveness.

<sup>27</sup> Arnþrúðr was Guðmundr's neice.

<sup>28</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 187-8.

<sup>29</sup> This interpretation seems certain to me, but I have not been able to find an exact parallel among the various death omens recorded in the sagas.

After this passage, the author takes up the tale again from the point of view of Qnundr's friends. Even the march of Guðmundr's men on Langahlíð is not described directly, but at one remove, through the eyes of Qnundr's loyal friend, Erlendr the Unlucky. Erlendr, convinced that an attack is imminent, tries to reach Qnundr to warn him again; on the way he is stopped by a group of Guðmundr's kinsmen, one of whom parleys with him:

Sqxólftr said: "Turn back, Erlendr, and go no further. I know that you think that you have noticed that men are gathering against Qnundr and that there is some threat to him, and it is brave of you to wish all the same to warn him of it. Yet now nothing can come of this, and it may be that you are exposing yourself to danger. It cannot now be kept secret that a meeting between us is to take place now. You can see now that at the mouth of Øxnadalr, by Grænabrá, a band of men is advancing; and where the sun shines down onto the scarps you can see shields flashing, and the men there have come from out along the fjord, from Svarfaðardalr. And all that host will meet, and visit Qnundr tonight."<sup>30</sup>

This placing of information and description through dialogue shows considerable skill. It makes possible such vivid touches as the mention of the sun flashing on the distant shields, which would be out of place in the particularly bare style of direct narration usually used by this author. Moreover, Erlendr's forebodings and the tribute Sqxólftr pays to his courage both serve to bring out the tense drama of the situation, in a way which a blunt factual account of Guðmundr's march on Langahlíð could not have done.

The author now speaks alternately of Guðmundr's men and Qnundr's; of the mustering of the attackers on the river bank; of Qnundr's fatal decision, against advice, to defend his house from within. The passage reads almost like a summary of the dialogue between Njáll and his sons in the same situation:

There were some earthworks there round the buildings, and they said that the defence could be kept up for a long time outside. Qnundr said that he had often known of cases of an

<sup>30</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 188.



attack proving difficult when men were attacked indoors in a house. They answered and said that they thought that then fire would be brought against them. Qnundr would not let himself be convinced by that and insisted on having his own way, and the men all went indoors.<sup>31</sup>

Guðmundr's men surround the farm, and when Qnundr, standing in the only open doorway, asks who is their leader, Guðmundr answers in symbolic language which echoes and develops that of the taunts:

"The leadership is poor. Here now that hornless ewe has come, having gone down out of the valley, even though a great deal of her fleece is gone; and the bell-wether is in no better shape than that. And yet she is now resolved that one of two things must happen: either she must now lose all her fleece, or else go home with the fleece whole."<sup>32</sup>

The account of the actual burning is given in the detailed, clear, and factual manner typical of this author, which here takes on an added grimness from the nature of the subject. It is too long to quote here, but it is interesting to note how many details scattered through it anticipate episodes in the burning of Njáll. Some may of course be due to a natural similarity of events at any burning, but several are very marked: the fatal decision to fight from indoors; the kindling of fire in the roof when attempts to start a blaze in the doorway have failed; the killing of a man who tries to smuggle weapons out when quarter is given to women and servants; the voluntary death of some whom the attackers wished to spare (Gálmr in *Guðmundar saga dýra*, Njáll, Bergþóra and young Þórðr in *Njála*). Of course there are clear differences too. In *Njála* the story is told for the most part through dialogue, has a markedly heroic tone, and is told from the point of view of those within the house; *Guðmundar saga dýra* sees through the eyes of the attackers, is terse and factual, and says nothing of conditions within the house. One gruesome episode,

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, I 189.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, I 189.

however, may have provided the author of *Njála* with a hint for his account of Kári's escape:

No-one could then come near the fire, and when the buildings began to blaze, fragments were thrown up out of the buildings so high that they came down very far off. They then saw something being thrown out through a gap where the walls were broken down, but they did not recognise it until it moved, and they asked what it was. He answered and said that it was Þorfinnr . . . . Everything about him was on fire, both his hair and his clothes.<sup>33</sup>

Such parallels make it very probable that the author of *Njála*, writing three-quarters of a century after the burning of Qnundr, drew upon it for hints for his description of the most famous of all Icelandic burnings. As Einar Ól. Sveinsson has remarked: "It is evident that the various burnings which took place in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were much in the mind" of the author of *Njála*, and among these the burning of Qnundr shows most points of similarity with that of Njáll.<sup>34</sup>

But the literary interest of *Guðmundar saga dýra* does not rest only on the use a later and greater writer may have made of it, but on merits of its own. The author's struggle to marshal his carefully-gathered facts into order has produced many passages of good narrative, and his sense of drama does justice to the great moments of the story, even if the selectiveness needed to achieve good structure is not evident in his work as a whole. Moreover, he possesses the fundamental quality of a saga-writer: interest in human nature, the wish not merely to record events but to probe into their causes and lay bare the motives of those who play a part in them. And the driving force behind his whole undertaking is the desire that the reader should accept his interpretation of these

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, I 191.

<sup>34</sup> Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Brennu-Njáls saga* (*Íslenzk Fornrit* XII; 1954), pp. cxiv-cxv. There is also reason to think that the author of *Njála* drew on chs. 7 and 8 of *Guðmundar saga dýra* for some details of his Víga-Hrapp episode (see Barði Guðmundsson, *Andvari* LXXIV (1949), 23-39). Signs of influence of *Guðmundar saga dýra* on the account of an attempted burning in *Ljósvefninga saga* have been mentioned by Björn Sigfússon in his edition of that saga, *Íslenzk Fornrit* X, p. xxxviii, and by Barði Guðmundsson, *Andvari* LXXV (1950), 105.

motives, should concur in his judgement on these events. Basically he is not a chronicler, despite his respect for fact; he is an advocate, pleading Guðmundr's cause by the use of every technique at his disposal. It is significant that at the climax of the saga he has recourse to one of the oldest Icelandic methods of persuasion, the quoting of laudatory verses. He tells us that as Guðmundr's troops rode home in the morning after the burning, Kolbeinn Tumason composed a verse on it; this verse he quotes, and it is the epitome of the whole interpretation which the saga is designed to present:

Fighters full of wiliness,  
fierce amid the sword-storm,  
blamed the moderate mood of  
manly-hearted Guðmundr.  
The lordly man has lit this fire!  
They've learnt now, those shield-wielders,  
that he who stirred this storm of blades  
in strife is no meek weakling.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Sturlunga saga*, I 191-2.

## WHEN WAS MAGNUS ERLINGSSON CROWNED?

By G. M. GATHORNE-HARDY

PROFESSOR Halvdan Koht, the distinguished *doyen* of Norwegian historians, has, in his eighty-seventh year, given welcome proof of his continued intellectual vitality by making a fresh contribution to the still unresolved controversy on the date of Magnus Erlingsson's coronation.<sup>1</sup> His views on this subject were previously expressed, twenty-seven years earlier, in a celebrated lecture to the Norwegian Vitenskaps Akademi, in which, however, this chronological point was only incidentally treated.<sup>2</sup> Since his arguments on this point are repeated and elaborated in his recent contribution, it is to this that I propose to devote my principal attention here.

It may seem surprising that the precise dating of this historical event should have been deemed of such importance, since it only involves a choice between two consecutive years — 1163 and 1164. Yet I most certainly agree with Professor Koht when he says — “Many historians — including myself at one time — have been content to say that the coronation took place in 1163 or 1164. *But we cannot stop there.* For the context of events will be different, according as one or the other year is chosen.” Among early Norwegian sources, our method of reckoning time by the *anno Domini* was an unfamiliar practice which is almost exclusively confined to the Icelandic Annals, the earliest of which was not compiled before the late thirteenth century, so that the dates ascribed to earlier events were derived from other authorities. Previous writers were accustomed to measure the lapse of time between one event and another by the passage of winters, beginning in the October of one calendar year and ending in the April of the next, and

<sup>1</sup> *Historisk Tidsskrift (Norsk)*, 40 (1960-61), 232.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 30 (1934-6), 81; see pp. 98 ff.

while seasons and church festivals gave a clue to the time of year they gave no direct guidance to the date. In these circumstances, the fixing of an indisputable date to serve as a point of departure is an achievement of great value. What the historical records of those days can tell us with reasonable accuracy is the sequence of events and the interval between them, and if the nearest point of departure is wrongly calculated, the whole surrounding history may be thrown into confusion and create serious difficulties. The soundest method for us is to start from a point as to which no uncertainty exists, and to use this in our calculation.

The earlier Norwegian historians of the nineteenth century followed Snorri Sturluson (and the Icelandic Annals) in placing the date for Magnus Erlingsson's coronation in 1164. At a later stage, both Alexander Bugge and Absalon Taranger are said to have asserted that the correctness of this choice could be proved.<sup>3</sup> In 1904, however, Ebbe Hertzberg presented the case for 1163 supported by impressive arguments,<sup>4</sup> and his view was backed up — as already stated — by Professor Koht, some thirty years later. In spite of these arguments, however, the question has remained unresolved, and the attitude of later historians has been generally hesitant and non-committal. In these circumstances I have the temerity to put forward my objections to the conclusions of the advocates of 1163, and to support the case for 1164 with my own arguments.

To supplement the evidence which they deduce from the direct historical sources, which are Snorri's Saga of Magnus Erlingsson, *Fagrskinna*, and — particularly stressed by Professor Koht in his recent article — the more nearly contemporaneous testimony of Saxo Grammaticus, the advocates of 1163 introduce—

(1) A reference to the coronation by an English writer

<sup>3</sup> *HT(N)*, 30 (1934-6), 99, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> *HT(N)*, 4 Række, 3 Bind (1905), 30-55.

in the *Gesta Henrici Secundi* (referred to as the *Gesta* hereafter).

(2) An argument based on the presence at the ceremony of the Icelandic bishop, Brand Sæmundsson.

(3) Statements as to Magnus's age at the time of his coronation, found in *Fagrskinna* and in *Sverris saga*.

(1) In the History of King Henry II of England, completed before the end of the twelfth century, and therefore practically a contemporary record, there is interpolated under the year 1180 a fairly accurate summary of events in Norway, from the arrival of Harald Gilli in the reign of Sigurd the Crusader to the flight of Archbishop Eystein to England in 1180, after Sverre's defeat of Magnus in the battle of Iluvellir. The *Gesta's* information is therefore plausibly conjectured to have been derived from the archbishop himself or someone in his immediate *entourage*, though this assumption has been challenged by Ludvig Daae.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence of the *Gesta* on the subject of Magnus's coronation is as follows:—

. . . Insurrexit ergo in eum Siwardus frater Haconis, (i.e. Sigurd Markúsfóstri) et habito inter eos proelio Siwardus frater Haconis interfectus est, et Magnus coronatus est et inunctus in regem, secundo anno regni sui et quinto anno aetatis suae . . . anno scilicet quarto papatus Alexandri papae tertii, magistro Stephano de Urbe Veteri misso illuc legato.

The relevance of the opening words, which precede the mention of the coronation, will be shown later, but, as will be seen, here are three chronological statements. The first is of disputable accuracy, since Magnus was chosen king in 1161, but it is defended as possible by reckoning the beginning of the reign from the death of his rival, Hakon the Broad-shouldered, in 1162. The second statement — “the fifth year of his age” — is plainly erroneous, but here it is argued that the *Gesta* has confused a statement as to Magnus's age when accepted as king (1161) with his age when crowned. So far, however, there

<sup>5</sup> *HT(N)*, 4 Række, 3 Bind (1905), 20.

is little to encourage confidence in the report's accuracy. As to the third statement, the papacy of Alexander III began in September 1159; his fourth year consequently ended in September 1163. But it should be observed that the *Gesta*'s evidence at this point is linked with the arrival in Norway of the Legate, Stephen of Orvieto, who was certainly present at the coronation, though he is generally believed to have come on quite a different mission. The writer may easily have regarded his arrival as the start of the coronation proceedings, but the Icelandic Annals, though dating the coronation in 1164, agree that the Legate reached Norway in the previous year, and this, as we shall see, is confirmed by *Fagrskinna* (cap. 268). But what the writer of the *Gesta* was told may easily have been in some such form as this:— In the fourth year of his papacy, Alexander sent the Legate Stephen to Norway, and the coronation took place in his presence. The language of the passage quoted would then seem a perfectly legitimate paraphrase. Of these three statements, therefore, one proves wholly inaccurate and another questionable, while the third is capable of an interpretation supporting either date. This evidence, then, proves quite indecisive.

(2) Bishop Brand Sæmundsson undoubtedly arrived in Norway in 1163, but his journey, too, had nothing to do with the coronation, though he in fact attended it. Having been designated bishop in Iceland, he came to receive his episcopal ordination at the hands of Archbishop Eystein. The date of his consecration is given in the episcopal history known as *Hungrvaka* as 8th September 1163. If, therefore, the coronation took place — as alleged — in the summer of 1163, Brand was not yet a bishop, and since he was given a prominent and honoured place in the ceremony, together with his four Norwegian *confrères*, and was entertained by Erling at a great banquet, one would have expected his ordination to have taken place in time. *Hungrvaka* tells us that Brand left

Iceland in the summer of 1163, that he and Jón Loptsson — Snorri's fosterfather and doubtless his source of information on this event — both stayed in Bergen for the winter, and that Brand did not return to his see in Iceland till the summer of the following year. If he left by the first possible boat — about May — he could not have been present at a coronation held later in the summer of 1164. Hertzberg's argument really depends on the assumption that he must have made this early departure.

But personally, I cannot imagine any man, still less a bishop, so completely apathetic and unenterprising as to miss so unique an opportunity for the sake of catching an early boat! Here — on the assumption that this great unprecedented event has not yet taken place — here he is in Bergen in 1164, in the thick of all the elaborate preparations for it, as described by Snorri. He is presented with the chance of participating in the assembly of the greatest in the land, with his archbishop and a papal legate, and sharing with his four Norwegian colleagues the honour and pleasure of tasting Erling's regal hospitality in a splendid banquet, and perhaps of being presented with a really valuable souvenir of the occasion. And he will be the *only* colonial bishop so privileged, if only he stays for a month or two longer! I feel sure that any newly-appointed colonial bishop must have jumped at the chance — and stayed. And if so, the whole argument for 1163, so far as he is concerned, disappears.

(3) *Statements of Magnus's age.* In *Fagrskinna*, cap. 269, appears the statement that Magnus was "seven winters old" at the time of his coronation. If true, this statement would support the belief that the date of the ceremony was in 1163. Snorri, however, and the Icelandic Annals, say that he was eight winters old. The primitive Norwegian method of reckoning age by the passage of winters lasting from mid-October to mid-April must, one would think, have made the calculation of the age of a young child rather difficult and uncertain, though in most



cases a mistake or difference of a year would not be important. If, as asserted by Hertzberg,<sup>6</sup> “when a new-born child had survived the whole *or part* of the winter half-year, this was his first winter”, a strict application of the system might have the Gilbertian effect of separating by a whole year of official age infants born but a few days apart, on either side of the dividing line in April! But, even if we ignore the possibilities of mistake or misapplication of the system, there is more to be said as to this statement of *Fagrskinna*. The chapter in which it occurs has the appearance of an afterthought or footnote, based on information derived from some (unknown) source distinct from the main authority followed. It contains no more than 32 words, most of which are employed to convey this statement of the young King’s age. Moreover, the information conveyed by it directly contradicts that given in the immediately preceding chapter (268), which clearly agrees with Snorri in dating the coronation in 1164. For it opens by recording the arrival of the papal legate “one winter after the fall of King Hakon (the Broad-shouldered)” in other words, in 1163. This gives us an indisputable point of departure. We are next told how, “in the following spring” — i.e. the spring of 1164 — Erling came north from Viken, and held an important discussion with the archbishop, which is also mentioned by Snorri, when it was finally agreed that the coronation should take place during the same summer, in Bergen. In this account there is no discrepancy between the two sources, except that Snorri places the interview with the archbishop in Bergen, while *Fagrskinna* says it was Trondheim; this, however does not affect the chronology.

It is clear that the compiler of *Fagrskinna* cannot possibly have realized the implications of his brief interpolation, from an unknown source, relating to Magnus’s age. He could not otherwise have set two

<sup>6</sup> *HT(N)*, 4 Række, 3 Bind (1905), 36.

completely contradictory statements in immediate juxtaposition, and the fact that he did so can only raise a doubt as to the reliability of so careless and unintelligent a historian. *Fagrskinna*, in fact, can be cited in support of either or both of the alternative dates, and its evidence cancels out.

A similar statement as to his age is also put into the mouth of Magnus himself by the writer of *Sverris saga* (cap. 89). This of course does not imply the authority of Magnus himself, all it means is that the saga-writer, having found somewhere — very likely in the same unknown source from which *Fagrskinna* derived it — this statement whose authority we have no means of testing, has made use of it to embellish his narrative. It has been cynically remarked that “history may not repeat itself, but historians repeat one another”, and thus falsehood as well as fact gets perpetuated. Two repetitions do not make a statement more trustworthy, and we have no means of ascertaining the degree of authority which either of them carries. This evidence, then, cannot outweigh that of any facts pointing to a different conclusion.

So far, the argument has merely been directed to establishing that the evidence adduced in favour of 1163 is inconclusive, a point which seems pretty generally agreed. To reach a positive conclusion, we must critically examine and compare the existing source material, and try to judge what parts of it to accept. To do so, let us start with a date so well authenticated as to command general agreement, and see the chronological results of following the course of subsequent events in all the available sources. A good starting-point for this purpose is the death of Sigurd Jarl of Reyr, in the battle of Ré, near Tønsberg, as to which there is an exact consensus of evidence. The date of this event was 20th February 1163.

For the history of the period under consideration, we depend on Snorri and *Fagrskinna*, both obviously based

on and frequently rendering in almost identical language an earlier common source, now no longer in existence, but generally conjectured to have been the missing portion of *Morkinskinna*, the original of which is ascribed to c. 1210. The late thirteenth-century copy which now exists and to which the name properly belongs is incomplete, carrying the history no later than c. 1157. Where our two sources are in agreement, therefore, their narrative may be taken to carry a high authority.

In connection with the question here under consideration, much play has been made of the divergencies between Snorri and *Fagrskinna*, but for the most part they disclose a very considerable measure of agreement, and some of the points on which they confirm one another, in matter which seems clearly to be drawn from their common source, provide, perhaps, some of the strongest evidence on the question which we are considering.

I hope later to develop my reasons for thinking that the only serious difference between the two narratives in the chronology of events following February 1163 may be explained as the result of a single quite intelligible slip made by *Fagrskinna* when it reaches the spring of that year. But for the moment I would first stress the tremendous importance of the fact that both sources are in complete agreement in presenting Erling with a formidable alibi for the whole of the year 1163, in which Hertzberg and Professor Koht contend that the coronation took place. For it certainly took place in Bergen, and both Snorri and *Fagrskinna* are agreed in testifying that Erling and his son were far away, in Viken, for the whole of the year 1163 and beyond it.

In his recent article, Professor Koht repeatedly accuses Snorri of "*konstruksjon*", which he defines as "reasoning his way towards the chronology into which he finds it right to fit the events".<sup>7</sup> This practice, honestly applied,

<sup>7</sup> *HT(N)*, 40 (1960-61), 239: "Han resonnerer seg fram til den tidsfylgja han finn det rett å setta hendingane inn i".

is surely the proper function of any historian, who, like a judge or juryman, has to sift the available evidence and decide on the relative credibility of its different parts. Indeed, Professor Koht himself supplies a remarkable instance of this procedure. In concluding that the coronation took place in 1163, he assumes the presence of Erling and Magnus in Bergen in the teeth of *all* the historical evidence. In both our sources, Erling remains in Viken, first for clear strategic reasons and then because of adverse winds, until after the death of the pretender, Sigurd Markúsfóstri, and the subsequent mopping-up operations in the south, which continue, according to Snorri, until the spring of 1164, and in *Fagrskinna* considerably later. According to Snorri, the sequence of events is as follows:— in spring (? April) Sigurd the pretender and his foster-father arrive in Viken, having acquired some ships, and base themselves off the island of Hising, near Konungahella. Immediately on hearing of this, Erling crosses the fjord from Tønsberg to Konungahella and captures the enemy ships, soon after which Markus and the pretender retire overland to Trondheim, where Sigurd is accepted by the Øreting. Erling, being held in the south by adverse winds, sends Nikolas Skjaldvörsson and others to guard Bergen and the western coast. Throughout the summer, the adverse winds continue to an extent which grew proverbial; Markus and his foster-son had all the luck of the weather, and sailed about the western coast, collecting all the royal dues. In the late summer, having sailed as far south as Lister, they turn back, but are intercepted, captured and executed, by Nikolas Skjaldvörsson, the local commander, at Michaelmas, 1163.

The correct fixing of this date is of crucial importance. For in the spring of 1163 *Fagrskinna* makes what seems to me its one serious slip, apparently without seeing the chronological results of it. Its compiler omits Erling's *spring* offensive at Hising, being perhaps confused by the

fact that another operation took place in the same locality in the autumn. The writer of *Fagrskinna* continues to follow his main source with painstaking fidelity, and in fact only changes a word or two. Snorri says — “Markus and his foster son Sigurd came down into Viken when spring began (*er váraði*) and acquired some ships. But when Erling heard of it he crossed to the east after them.” *Fagrskinna* innocently but fatally alters the meaning by the addition of the words “in the autumn” to “when Erling heard of it”.<sup>8</sup>

This amended statement sounds completely absurd. It is hard enough to believe that Erling would have left his opponents undisturbed from early spring till autumn, but it is surely impossible to swallow the assertion that Markus and Sigurd remained totally inactive and immobile at Hising for the greater part of a year, or that Erling’s intelligence service would not have informed him of their presence across the fjord for the same period! *Fagrskinna* must be mistaken, but the results of the slip were catastrophic. For a form of chronicle which very rarely mentions dates, but depends on the mere sequence of events, the change from spring to autumn necessarily advanced most of the events of this year to the next. I do not think the compiler of *Fagrskinna* realized this; he went on faithfully recording these events in due order, but the ultimate effect was that the execution of Sigurd was no longer at Michaelmas 1163, but in the late summer — possibly on the same day — of 1164.

Professor Koht accepts this later date with equanimity, but apparently, like the text he follows, without considering the effects upon his argument. All those events connected with the appeal of the defeated Markusmen to Valdemar of Denmark, as recorded by Saxo, can no longer be placed in 1163, where Professor Koht is

<sup>8</sup> cf. Snorri: “er Erlingr spurði þat, þá fór hann austr eptir þeim”, with *Fagrskinna*: “um haustit eptir, er Erlingr spurði, fór hann austr eptir”. (*Magnús saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 15, in Finnur Jónsson, *Heimskringla* (1893-1901), III 454; idem, *Fagrskinna* (1902-3), 362 [ch. 91]).

determined to place them. For Saxo makes it quite clear that even the prior appeal of the Markus-men to the King of *Sweden* did not take place till after the death of their leader. They were, he says, “*victoria pariter ac rege privati*”. But, leaving Saxo for the moment, the statement that Sigurd was liquidated in 1164 is quite incompatible with a general consensus of testimony that this event *preceded* the coronation, as, indeed, we should naturally imagine. It seems scarcely possible that an assembly so elaborate and important could be arranged in Bergen while the rival claimant to the throne was still alive and active, and even in a position to sail up and down the west coast of Norway collecting the royal revenues! *Fagrskinna* clearly implies that the coronation came later, its author having probably failed to grasp the logical consequences of his initial error, just as he does not seem to have realized the implications of Magnus’s age. For he deals with Sigurd’s death in cap. 266, two chapters *before* introducing the subject of the coronation, winding up the incident with the words — “Magnus was now the sole King of Norway”. Snorri, of course, tells us plainly that the coronation was subsequent to Sigurd’s death, and, more surprisingly, the author of the *Gesta* confirms the same point in the words quoted earlier — “*Siwardus interfectus est, et Magnus coronatus est*”. It is perhaps significant that *Fagrskinna* in cap. 268, having found a new point of departure for its chronology in the date of the arrival of the papal legate, falls back into line with Snorri, and now clearly tells us that the coronation was in 1164.

I hope I have now established a convincing case for preferring Snorri’s precise date — Michaelmas 1163 — to that implied in *Fagrskinna*. But if this point is established, it follows that Erling’s absence from Bergen in the summer of 1163 is additionally confirmed, since, according to *both* sources, the retreat of Markus and Sigurd from Lista was occasioned by the news of Erling’s

continued presence in Viken, with an irresistible force.<sup>9</sup>

Erling's alibi is much more unassailable than may at first sight appear. A coronation is not an event like a murder in a detective story, which can be carried through in a matter of minutes. To stage such a ceremony, and still more the important legislative assembly associated with it, would need elaborate and lengthy preparation; to attend both functions would involve considerable time. The arguments of A. O. Johnsen as to the time needed to convene such a *riksting* as this on an earlier occasion<sup>10</sup> seem altogether to preclude the possibility that this was a last-moment improvisation. And of course it all involved the presence of the young King and his father.

The final operations, resulting in the dispersal of the Markus-men to Sweden and Denmark, are ascribed by Snorri to spring 1164, and this event introduces the evidence of Saxo, to which Professor Koht attaches particular importance, but which he interprets in a way which I find it impossible to follow. It is at first sight difficult to see the bearing of Saxo's evidence on the question of the coronation, which, according to either theory, was over by the end of summer 1164. But since Professor Koht insists that Saxo says that King Valdemar invaded Norway in 1163, and contends that Erling's absence from Viken at the date of the Danish invasion confirms his presence in Bergen at this time, and therefore breaks or weakens the alibi, we must consider his interpretation of Saxo a little farther. The passage on which he relies is cap. 29 of Saxo's fourteenth book. This consists of a *résumé* of Norwegian history from the days of Harald Gilli and Sigurd Slembidiákn to the point where the Markus-men appeal to King Valdemar, to which event a passing reference is made in the opening words of the chapter, but to which the author returns, with a more

<sup>9</sup> *Magnús saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 18 (*Heimskringla*, III 457); *Fagrskinna*, 363 (ch. 93).

<sup>10</sup> A. O. Johnsen, *Studier vedrørende Nikolaus Brekespears Legasjon til Norden* (1945), 93-5.

definite clue to the date, later in his summary. The opening words are, however, "*per idem forte tempus*", and the Professor argues that this refers to the birth of Valdemar's son, Knut, in 1163 an event with which, he says, the previous chapter concludes. This relation of the two events is, however, a slender and precarious foundation for his argument, since it is widely held among learned textual authorities that cap. 29 has been placed in an inappropriate context. In Holder's edition of Saxo, the two passages in question have been separated by about eight pages of intervening matter (p. 541, line 12 to p. 549, line 17), and although the Danish edition published in Copenhagen in 1931 is arranged in conformity with Professor Koht's statement, its editors make it clear that cap. 29 is, in their opinion, "*minus apte a Saxone hic insertum*", and does not fit appropriately into the chronology, and that the view that this chapter is wrongly placed is shared by other authorities.<sup>11</sup>

In any case, it is doubtful whether the opening words of this chapter are meant to have any precise chronological significance. The sentence of which "*per idem forte tempus*" forms part is simply a justification of the digression into Norwegian history which it introduces, and means no more than "at this point" or "now". The whole introductory passage may fairly be rendered as follows:—

It now happened that some emissaries of the Norwegians visited the King (Valdemar), entreating him to attempt an attack on the rulers of Norway, which was wasted by incessant civil war and fearfully oppressed by tyrants, till it was now bled white and nearly destroyed. And since external affairs are at this point bound up with our own, take it not amiss if I give a brief summary of the Norwegian situation.

With this prelude, the summary starts, eventually reaching its original starting point, when the date referred to is made clearer. For it goes on to say that the fugitives *after the defeat and death of Sigurd Markúsfóstri* (Victoria

<sup>11</sup> J. Olrik and H. Raeder, *Saxonis Gesta Danorum* (1931), I 444, note to lib. xiv, cap. xxix.



*pariter ac rege privati*), first applied to King Karl Sverkerson of Sweden, to be their new candidate for the throne. He, however, put them off *for a long time* (*diu*) with ready promises, till they concluded that he was really more concerned to keep his own kingdom than to gain another. Not till then did they turn to Valdemar with the same proposition, whereupon he, "thinking it foolish to engage in so serious a war on the bare representations of these envoys", decided first to investigate public opinion in Norway by means of a secret mission (*tacitis legationibus*). On hearing the report given by these secret agents on their return, he started his invasion "without delay" (*absque cunctatione*). He did not, however, encounter Erling, who had removed to "*abstrusas Norvagiae partes*".

All of this, right down to Valdemar's invasion of Norway, Professor Koht asks us to believe is assigned by Saxo to the year 1163! Koht even puts Valdemar's invasion in the *spring* of that year.<sup>12</sup> But in fact Saxo does not, at any point, mention any date whatever, and it is clear that the interval between the first appeal to Karl Sverkerson and the final dispatch of Valdemar's secret investigators, who are obviously identical with the pseudo-pilgrims mentioned in the Norwegian sources, must have been considerable, even if we date the *Swedish* negotiations immediately after the execution of Sigurd and Markus, i.e. about October 1163. Professor Koht is not really entitled to do this, since he accepts the statement in *Fagrskinna* which leaves the pretender alive till the late summer of 1164! Actually, it seems more probable that even the appeal to Sweden did not begin till after the final dispersal to Denmark and Sweden following Erling's final operations in the spring of 1164, and Valdemar may not have been approached until considerably later. Snorri's chronology from this point corresponds most remarkably

<sup>12</sup> *HT(N)*, 40 (1960-61), 241. See also the time-table at the end of his article.

with Saxo's narrative, particularly considering that the Norwegian sources differ radically from the Danish on the subject of Valdemar's motives, and are thus shown to be completely independent. We are safe in concluding that the approach to Valdemar was not before May 1164, and very likely later. His secret mission, travelling overland as pilgrims, did not reach Trondheim till late in the year; *Fagrskinna* says it was "autumn or even the beginning of winter" (cap. 270); Snorri's account seems to make it slightly later. They left to return to Denmark "late in Lent" 1165, which would be, in that year, towards the end of March. Valdemar, on the receipt of their report, did indeed act — as Saxo says — "*sine cunctatione*" and must have been in Norway in May 1165, while Erling was in Trondheim (*abstrusas partes Norvagiae*) dealing with the local "Quislings".

In fact, from beginning to end of this enquiry, we find no difficulty in following Snorri's chronology, while the advocates of 1163 are in constant trouble, as indeed Professor Koht in his earlier article frankly admitted.<sup>13</sup> Is it not the explanation that their whole theory is mistaken?

<sup>13</sup> *HT(N)*, 30 (1934-6), 100: "Men når vi så skal føre dei dagtala vi såleis har funne fram til . . . inn i dei andre meldingane vi har om norsk historie i denne tida, så råkar vi ut i nye vanskar."

# NOTES ON PRE-CONQUEST CHURCHES IN THE DANELAW<sup>1</sup>

By Dr H. M. TAYLOR

IN these notes the term "Saxon" is used to denote churches showing any distinctive Saxon feature and those showing mixed Saxo-Norman features, typical of the period just before and after the Conquest. The total number of these churches of which distinguishable features survive in England is close on 400, but the statistical notes in the following paragraph are based on an analysis of 336.

## *Distribution of characteristic features.*

No less than 103 of the 185 Saxon churches in the Danelaw have towers, while only 21 of the 151 churches elsewhere have towers. The incidence of churches with towers is roughly the same in East Anglia (55%), Northumbria (50%), and Mercia (44%). In other features, however, these regions show well-marked differences. Thus, for example, long-and-short quoins are found in 28% of Mercian churches and 22% of the East Anglian, but only in 5% of the Northumbrian. Double-splayed windows are in 22% of Mercian churches, in 42% of East Anglian churches, while in Northumbria only a single example is known. This one example at Jarrow is in a type of dressed stone found otherwise only in west and south-west England and must be associated with the re-building by the Gloucestershire monk Aldwine in 1073.

## *Northumbrian towers.*

A unique feature of six Northumbrian towers<sup>2</sup> is the

<sup>1</sup> These notes form an abstract of an illustrated talk given to the Society at its meeting in University College London on 4th December 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Monkwearmouth, Billingham (Co. Durham); Bywell, Ovingham (Northumberland); Wharram-le-Street, York, St Mary Bishophill Junior (Yorkshire). Strip-work round some Norfolk belfry openings is rather differently treated.

presence of strip-work hood-moulding round the double belfry windows, and this may be safely regarded as a sign of pre-Conquest origin.

At least five Northumbrian churches<sup>3</sup> have post-Danish towers built above pre-Danish porches. The intention appears to have been not only to provide suitable hanging sites for bells but also to give access to upper chambers in the church and to provide further rooms; architectural evidence can be adduced for the occupation of these tower-rooms. These facts suggest that we have to do with an indigenous development in tower-construction and one not solely the result of Italian influence from the ninth century onwards, as is generally maintained.

#### *Lincolnshire towers.*

Of 42 surviving Saxon churches in Lincolnshire, 33 have towers, and 17 of these are of the type called "Lincolnshire towers", found only here and in the adjacent counties. Good examples are St Mary-le-Wigford and St Peter-at-Gowts in Lincoln itself. They may be safely assigned to a pre-Conquest period. A notable feature of the "Lincolnshire towers" is that none of them has long-and-short quoins, although several of them have been added later to naves with quoins of this type. Thus, in Lincolnshire at least, long-and-short quoining had gone out of fashion before the latest period of pre-Conquest building.

#### *Round towers of Norfolk.*

Round towers exist in 201 churches in the country, of dates ranging from Saxon to modern times; of these 139 are in Norfolk, 46 in Suffolk and only 16 elsewhere. A prime reason, but not the only one, for this local peculiarity is the lack of good stone for making the angles of a square tower. 24 of the Norfolk towers may be counted pre-Conquest or Saxo-Norman. Examples are at Colney (double-splayed round-headed windows and a

<sup>3</sup> Monkwearmouth, Jarrow, Corbridge, Bardsey, Ledsham.

broad pilaster-strip running up the tower at its junction with the nave), at Forncett St Peter (double belfry openings in conjunction with double-splayed circular windows, all in undressed stone, and typical Saxon tower arch), and at Bessingham (double belfry windows outlined by strip-work).

*Stair turrets.*

There are three complete stone staircases of pre-Conquest date in churches in the Danelaw, at Brixworth (Northants.), Hough-on-the-Hill and Broughton (Lincs.). At Brixworth the stone steps are laid on a spiral barrel-vault of rubble, and at the other two the steps are separate from the newel. Thus, all three can be distinguished from the Norman staircase, where the newel is formed by the inner ends of the overlapping step-slabs themselves.

*Transeptal churches with central towers.*

Two of these of Saxon origin exist in the Danelaw, at Norton near Billingham in Co. Durham, and at Stow near Lincoln. The latter is the greatest of the surviving transeptal churches in England of pre-Conquest origin. Three building periods may be distinguished at Stow. The earliest, possibly ninth-century work, had its upper structure destroyed by fire (perhaps in the Danish incursions c. 870); the second entailed the re-building of the walls; and the last saw the creation of the great arches at the crossing. This latest building must be connected with the monastic establishment and endowment at Stow, within the outside limits of 1004 and 1055.

*Further references.*

More detailed accounts of a number of the features described here may be found in the following:  
H. M. Taylor, 'Some little-known aspects of English pre-Conquest churches,' in *The Anglo-Saxons. Studies . . . presented to Bruce Dickins* (1959), 137-58.

H. M. Taylor, *English Architecture in the Time of Bede* (The Jarrow Lecture, 1961).

Joan and Harold Taylor, 'The dating of Anglo-Saxon churches', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies* I (1961), 58-76.

## WILLIAM MORRIS AS AN INTERPRETER OF OLD NORSE

By J. N. SWANNELL

A mild interest in Old Norse themes is not unusual among the poets and essayists of the nineteenth century: Carlyle, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Robert Buchanan, and others, all found a certain amount of inspiration in the Eddas or the sagas. But to them Old Norse was always an exotic, a convenient source of subjects for an occasional poem, a useful set of symbols for political or theological controversy; the Norse element is incidental, rather than significant. For William Morris, however, Old Norse literature was an overwhelming influence; it dominated him — obsessed him, one might say — for nearly thirty years. His most impressive original poems, *The Lovers of Gudrun* and *Sigurd the Volsung*, are taken direct from Norse originals; he devoted many hours of a busy life to translating a surprisingly large amount of Old Norse prose and verse; and his late prose romances, perhaps his most considerable achievement, grow naturally and inevitably out of his devotion to the sagas.

The influence of his Norse studies on his political development is less easy to estimate, but it is certain that in the “ethic of the north” he found a philosophy of life, a “religion of courage”<sup>1</sup> as he called it, which gave him faith and inspiration when he needed them most.

Not that he was a Norse scholar in the modern sense of the word, though he learned to read the language easily and could speak a certain amount of modern Icelandic. He was certainly no philologist. He was, after all, a poet, a painter, a tapestry-maker, a designer, a dyer, a printer, a factory-owner, a shopkeeper, and a political agitator,

<sup>1</sup> May Morris, *William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist* (1936), I 450.

as well as a student of Old Norse, and at no time in his life did languages come to him easily. What he had above all, though, was a natural affinity with Old Norse literature, a unique sense of kinship with the Saga Age. Morris always had an instinctive knowledge of how things were made and used in the Middle Ages ("How Morris seems to know things, doesn't he?" said his friend Faulkner during their Oxford days),<sup>2</sup> and in the same way he seems to *know* about the domestic details of the Viking Age — how the houses and booths were constructed, how the land was cultivated on an Icelandic farmstead, how the Viking ships were manoeuvred. He himself had something of the Viking chieftain's ability to turn his hand to anything.

William Morris — and this can be said of very few of us, even in this Society — would feel quite at home with Njál and his sons in Bergthor's Knoll. In fact, in 1884 we find him complaining, in a lecture to the Secular Society of Leicester,<sup>3</sup> of the "foolish rabbit warrens" of "our well to do homes", and longing for the Germanic hall, the "rational ancient way which was used from the time of Homer to past the time of Chaucer, a big hall, to wit, with a few chambers tacked on to it for sleeping or sulking in".

But this remarkable innate sympathy with Norse literature did not find full expression until 1868, when he began to study the Icelandic language. Before this date his medieval sympathies were more diffused. From early childhood the Middle Ages were as real to him as the present. He was absorbed by the history, the literature, and the art of medieval England, a period symbolised in his mind by the glories of Gothic architecture; but his medieval world is the world of Chaucer, Malory, and Froissart — what he was later to call the "maundering side of medievalism"<sup>4</sup> — and it was in these authors,

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris* (World's Classics, 1950), I 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, ed. May Morris (1910-15), XXIII 199.

<sup>4</sup> *The Letters of William Morris to his Family and Friends*, ed. Philip Henderson (1950), 186.



especially Malory and Froissart, that he found his inspiration for his first book of poems, *The Defence of Guenevere*, in 1858.

His first awareness of Old Norse literature, which later captivated him entirely, came in 1852, when Burne-Jones introduced him to Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*. This stimulated his interest and encouraged him to look for other works on the same subject, and by 1868, the year of his meeting with Magnússon, he had acquired a very creditable knowledge of Norse matters. He had read Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* in the 1847 edition containing Scott's abstract of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*; he knew Laing's *Heimskringla*, and Dasent's translations of the *Prose Edda*, *Njal's Saga*, and *Gisli's Saga*; he had some idea of the *Poetic Edda* through the versions of Cottle, Herbert, and Thorpe; and he had also read some of the many travel books about Iceland which were being published in the fifties and sixties.<sup>5</sup> All he lacked was first-hand knowledge of the Norse language.

By 1868, too, his contemporary reputation as a poet had been well established by *The Life and Death of Jason* and the first volume of the *Earthly Paradise*. It must be admitted, however, that in spite of Morris's intensive reading of books about Old Norse, and his knowledge of the literature in translation, there is very little that is intrinsically Norse about any of his early poems. There is clear evidence of his reading, here and there, but the Norse references are no more than ornament or local colour. The general effect is always medieval and romantic, rather than heroic. The only poems of this period which seem to promise us more are *The Wooing of Swanhild*, published after Morris's death, and *The Fostering of Aslaug*, published in Part IV of the *Earthly Paradise* in December, 1870, though written before the autumn of

<sup>5</sup> See Stefán Einarsson, 'Eiríkr Magnússon and his Saga Translations', *Scandinavian Studies and Notes*, XIII (1934); and Karl Litzenberg, *The Victorians and the Vikings* (University of Michigan Contributions in Modern Philology, no. 3; April 1947).

1868. The substance of both poems Morris took from Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*.

*Swanhild*, which runs to well over a thousand lines, was never finished; the story is taken as far as Randver's meeting with Swanhild, and no further. Morris turns it into a leisurely, ornate story, heavy with impending doom, but entirely romantic in tone, and he probably abandoned it once he had acquired some knowledge of the original Norse texts. *Aslaug*, on the other hand, is a complete poem, the last attempt of William Morris to recreate a Norse atmosphere from secondary sources. Morris's version is successful enough as a poem, but its qualities are those of the earlier tales of the *Earthly Paradise*, not those of the sagas — though it is true that the Aslaug episode of *Ragnar's Saga* is, even in the original, unusually romantic in tone. *The Fostering of Aslaug*, in short, is much the sort of poem Morris's readers would expect. There are not many Norse stories which could slip, almost unnoticed, into the *Earthly Paradise*, as this one does.

And so Morris might have continued. But in 1868 came his meeting with "a real Iclander", Eiríkr Magnússon, and from this time onwards Morris was to find his inspiration not in abstracts and translations but in the original Norse texts.<sup>6</sup>

Magnússon had been in England since 1862, and now, after five or six years of frustrating and unsatisfactory collaboration with George Powell<sup>7</sup> — a curious foreshadowing of the later partnership with Morris — he found an enthusiasm for Icelandic literature which equalled his own. Certainly, no teacher could have hoped for a more eager pupil; to Morris, as his daughter tells us, it was a wonderful moment: "a poet's entering into possession of a new world, only partly his till now".<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Eiríkr Magnússon's accounts of his meeting with Morris and their subsequent collaboration are to be found in the preface to *Works*, VII, and the preface to *The Saga Library*, VI (1905).

<sup>7</sup> Stefán Einarsson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> *Works*, VII xv.

Magnússon, for his part was struck by Morris's remarkable appreciation of the spirit of Norse literature: "he entered into the spirit of it", he says, "not with the pre-occupied mind of the foreigner, but with the intuition of an uncommonly wide-awake native".<sup>9</sup>

In this atmosphere of mutual understanding and sympathy they agreed to meet three times a week to read Icelandic together, and these lessons were well established by October, 1868. Morris, though, was not the man to submit to the discipline of grammar and syntax, and Magnússon, obviously pained by this disregard of the academic proprieties, yet swept away, as always, by Morris's overwhelming personality, gives a vivid description of their first lesson:<sup>10</sup>

"I suggested we had better start with some grammar. 'No, I can't be bothered with grammar; have no time for it. You be my grammar as we translate. I want the literature, I must have the story. I mean to amuse myself' . . . ."

Almost immediately he is insisting on trying for himself:

"'But, look here, I see through it all, let me try and translate'. Off he started, translated, blundered, laughed; but still, he saw through it all with an intuition that fairly took me aback . . . in this way the best of the sagas were run through, at daily sittings, generally covering three hours, already before I left London for Cambridge in 1871".

The method they adopted at this early stage seems to have suited them both, and they kept to it during the many years they worked together: after they had gone through the day's task, Magnússon would write out a literal translation at home and give it to Morris the next time they met, leaving Morris to prepare a final version for publication. And this method gave quick results. Their translation of *Gunnlaug's Saga* was finished in two weeks and published in the *Fortnightly Review* in January 1869, by which time *Grettir's Saga* was ready for the press. During the early part of this year they also worked at the

<sup>9</sup> Preface to *The Saga Library*, VI.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

*Laxdale Saga*, and though their version was never published, Morris's verse re-telling of part of the saga was completed by July and published, as *The Lovers of Gudrun*, in the third part of the *Earthly Paradise* (December 1869).

Imperfect though it may be, judged as a reconstruction of the Saga Age, *The Lovers of Gudrun* is a tremendous advance on *Aslaug*. Those modern readers who turn to *Gudrun* after the saga itself may be distracted by the limpid verses, the occasional lushness of description, the Pre-Raphaelite wanness of the heroine; but to an audience conditioned, as we say nowadays, to these characteristics, the change of atmosphere was significant and startling. In spite of its faults *Gudrun* has an intensity and a firmness of outline which are new to the *Earthly Paradise*, as though the poet has at last emerged from a world of dreams; his characters are sharply etched; there is something, certainly something, of the starkness of saga narrative.

When *Gudrun* appeared, Morris and Magnússon were hard at work translating the *Völsunga Saga*, "which quite throws all the other stories into the shade", as Morris writes to Swinburne in December 1869.<sup>11</sup> Morris had not been particularly impressed with the saga when Magnússon first drew his attention to it — it was "rather of the monstrous order",<sup>12</sup> he told his wife — but he soon began to write of it in superlatives, and when the translation was published, in 1870, the saga of the Volsungs is described, in Morris's introductory verses, as "the best tale pity ever wrought", and, in the Translators' Preface, "the Great Story of the North, which should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to Greeks".

An original poem which may belong to this period is entitled, rather pretentiously, *Of the Wooing of Hallbiorn the Strong, A story from the Landsettling Book of Iceland*

<sup>11</sup> *Letters*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Works*, V xvi.

*Chapter XXX*, and it is indeed based, very freely, on the grim little incident in *Landnámabók* in which Hallbjörn kills his wife Hallgerd and is himself slain by Snæbjörn. May Morris implies that this is a poem of the seventies (it was not published until *Poems by the Way* in 1891),<sup>13</sup> but the treatment of the story is quite unlike Norse narrative; it is a kind of medieval ballad, quite pleasing, but very “literary” and romantic. I see nothing in it to suggest that it is later than the meeting with Magnússon. The title is impressive, but it so happens that the story is told in one of Blackwell’s supplementary chapters in the 1847 edition of Mallet, with a footnote giving a reference to *Landnámabók*, ii, 30. Morris can hardly have missed it, especially as the moral which Blackwell draws from it (that ladies who are allowed too much liberty are apt “to let their passions get the upper hand, and lead them into scrapes which they sometimes have occasion to repent of”) would have annoyed him very much.

Whatever date we may assign to *Hallbiorn*, there can be no doubt that Morris had by 1870 surrendered himself whole-heartedly, with the passionate intensity which characterised all his enthusiasms, to the spell of Old Norse literature. And then, in 1871, came the supreme experience: the first of his two visits to Iceland, with Magnússon and two other friends. His *Journals*<sup>14</sup> convey something of the deep emotion with which he found himself, at last, in the land of Njál and Grettir. The expeditions had their lighter moments, but to Morris they were essentially pilgrimages to a holy land. This was his spiritual home: “the touch of Iceland”, as Mackail puts it,<sup>15</sup> “was something that stirred him with an almost sacramental solemnity”; or, as Morris himself wrote after the second visit in 1873, “it was no idle whim that drew me there, but a true instinct for what I needed”.<sup>16</sup> For

<sup>13</sup> *Works*, IX.

<sup>14</sup> *Works*, VIII.

<sup>15</sup> Mackail, *op. cit.*, I 304.

<sup>16</sup> *Letters*, 59.

the rest of his life this "terrible and tragic, but beautiful land"<sup>17</sup> was never far from his thoughts. The memory occurs and reoccurs in his letters and in his conversation, in his lectures and articles on politics and art, and in the long prose romances which were the solace of his last years.

The study of Old Norse literature continued after the visits to Iceland. In 1875 came the publication of *Three Northern Love Stories*, containing *Gunnlaug*, *Frithiof*, *Viglund*, and a number of short tales. Other translations made in the seventies were not published until twenty years later, but Morris had been occupied for some time with an original poem which was to re-tell, for his own age, the great story of the Volsungs. He had been tempted by the idea as early as December 1869, when he had written to Professor Charles Eliot Norton: "I had it in my head to write an epic of it, but though I still hanker after it, I see clearly it would be foolish, for no verse could render the best parts of it, and it would only be a flatter and tamer version of a thing already existing".<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, some five years later he set to work, encouraged by Magnússon, and *Sigurd the Volsung* was published towards the end of 1876. Morris omits the Jormunrek-Swanhild episode, but, this apart, attempts a comprehensive treatment of the whole Nibelung legend, drawing on the *Edda* poems as well as the *Volsunga Saga* (though he abandons his Old Norse authorities at the end of his poem in favour of the *Nibelungenlied* version of the death of Sigurd's murderers).

To Morris these legends were in a very real sense a part of English tradition; he was much influenced by writers like Laing and the Howitts, who (as some contemporary reviewers complained) stressed the importance of our Scandinavian heritage by belittling our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Morris felt it his duty, therefore, to restore this lost heritage to his English readers. Yet the atmosphere which he evokes in *Sigurd* is not that of the

<sup>17</sup> *Letters*, 58.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters*, 32.

sagas, or even of Norse epic verse; it reminds one rather of Old English epic, of *Beowulf*. There is the same leisured dignity of narrative; the poet is always ready to pause for long descriptions or to dwell on the moral implications of his theme; it is the long paragraph which predominates, not the pregnant, strophic arrangement of Old Norse verse. As in *Beowulf*, the emphasis is on the stately splendour of the Germanic court; the lofty halls adorned with gold, the precious swords and ancient coats of mail which gleam on the warriors as they unlock their store of words in formal discourse. The Morris translation of *Beowulf* is almost unreadable, but it is perhaps to be regretted that Morris did not attempt a version of *Beowulf* on the lines of *Sigurd the Volsung*. Be that as it may, this vast poem is something unique in nineteenth-century literature; Morris has perhaps attempted the impossible, but it is difficult to name any other poet of his day who could have equalled his achievement.

After 1876 Morris became increasingly involved in political controversy, and though he continued to read and translate Old Norse nothing was published for the next fifteen years. Then in 1890 came the collaboration with the publisher Bernard Quaritch which resulted in the *Saga Library*. In July of that year Morris writes: "I have undertaken to get out some of the sagas I have lying about. Quaritch is exceedingly anxious to get hold of me, and received with enthusiasm a proposal to publish a *Saga Library*".<sup>19</sup>

Fifteen volumes were originally planned, but only six appeared: Volume I (*Howard the Halt, The Banded Men, Hen-Thorir*) in 1891, Volume II (*Eredwellers*) in 1892, Volume III (*Heimskringla* Part I) in 1893, Volume IV (*Heimskringla* Part II) in 1894, and Volume V (*Heimskringla* Part III) in 1895. Volume VI (notes, indexes, genealogical tables, etc.) was the work of Magnússon, and did not appear until 1905.

<sup>19</sup> Mackail, *op. cit.*, II 260.

The *Saga Library* represents the work of Morris and Magnússon over several years. The *Eredwellers* must have been finished before April 1871, since Mackail tells us that Morris had made an illuminated copy of it by that date.<sup>20</sup> *Howard the Halt*, *The Banded Men*, and *Hen-Thorir* belong to the early seventies, for Morris made a copy of them in 1874, when he was working at calligraphy and illumination.<sup>21</sup> As for *Heimskringla*, we know from Morris's letters that he was working on it in 1873,<sup>22</sup> and his daughter May tells us that "a painted book of the first fifty-five chapters" was one of his holiday tasks for that year.<sup>23</sup> (*Ynglinga Saga*, in the *Saga Library* translation, actually contains fifty-five chapters.) The translation clearly continued for several years, for May Morris, elsewhere, quotes short passages from *St Olaf's Saga* (*Saga Library* Vol. IV) and from the *Saga of Harald Harðráði* (*Saga Library* Vol. V), and says they are translations of the "late eighties".<sup>24</sup> So it would seem that the actual translations were more or less complete when *The Saga Library* was planned, and only needed to be carefully revised and prepared for the press.

These six handsome volumes are a pleasure to read and to handle. They are admirably printed, as one would expect, and the critical apparatus and explanatory notes, nearly all the work of Magnússon, are almost frighteningly elaborate and detailed. There could be no more fitting memorial to the twenty years of close collaboration between the two men; every volume expresses their sense of wonder and delight in the great stories of the north; to Morris and Magnússon the sagas are not "texts" but human documents, as real and as immediate as to-day's newspaper. The serenity is broken only by the bitterness of Magnússon's references to Vigfusson and Powell: Magnússon could never forgive those remarks in

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, I 286.

<sup>21</sup> Preface to *Works*, IX.

<sup>22</sup> *Letters*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> May Morris, *op. cit.*, I 454.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, I 455-6.



the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* about “the affectation of archaism”, “pseudo-Middle English”, and “specious nullity of false phrasing”.<sup>25</sup>

Many other critics have commented unfavourably on Morris’s style;<sup>26</sup> it has been dismissed, often unread, as “Wardour Street English”; fashions in translation have changed, and Morris has suffered accordingly. Yet the archaisms of Morris’s early poems are not particularly remarkable; they are to be found in all romantic poets. Those who condemn Morris as one who writ no English are judging him, whether they realise it or not, by the later prose romances, where we do find a special language, a vocabulary and syntax peculiar to Morris. This highly individual style may not be to everyone’s taste, but it is something far removed from the “tushery” of second-rate historical fiction; it is a deliberate creation; it is in all essentials the style evolved by Morris and Magnússon in their translations from Old Norse. We find it, fully grown, in the first translation, *Gunnlaug*, and in all the sagas which follow. It is not really true to say, as C. S. Lewis does, that “Morris invented for his poems and perfected in his prose romances a language which has never at any period been spoken in England”; it is not found in *The Defence of Guenevere* or in the *Earthly Paradise*, or even in *Sigurd the Volsung*. In these poems we have only what may be called the usual, conventional archaisms: betide, brand, dight, eld, erewhile, whiles, wot, and the like. The language perfected in the prose romances, with its strange words and phrases — almost all of them disguised Norse words and idioms — is taken over bodily from the saga translations; it is a blend of Old Norse and the romantic archaisms taken from Chaucer, Malory, and Spenser, the common property of all poets. It is clear that Morris’s joy in Norse literature extended to the very words and idioms of his originals, and he felt it his

<sup>25</sup> G. Vigfusson and F. York Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* (1883), I cxv.

<sup>26</sup> See Karl Litzenberg, ‘The Diction of William Morris’, in *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 53 (1937).

duty to give something of this pleasure to his readers. This may be enthusiasm taken to excess, but the results are often vigorous and stimulating, particularly in the rendering of gnomic utterances and proverbs. Of course he goes too far; he became so skilful at this transmuting process that he sometimes forgets his readers and becomes unintelligible.

But why did he adopt this new and peculiar style? I suspect that it grew out of those first attempts at verbal translation which Magnússon describes in his preface to the sixth volume of the *Saga Library*. Morris was impatient to get at the story:

“Off he started, translated, blundered, laughed; but still, he saw through it all with an intuition that fairly took me aback. Henceforth no time must be wasted on reading out the original. He must have the story as quickly as possible. The dialect of our translation was not the Queen’s English, but it was helpful towards penetrating into the thought of the old language. Thus, to give an example, *leiðtogi*, a guide, became load-tugger (load = way, in load-star, load-stone; *togi* from *toga* to tug (on), one who leads on with a rope); *kvænask* (*kvæna sik* from *kván* = queen, woman) to bequeen one’s self = to take a wife, etc. That such a method of acquiring the language should be a constant source of merriment, goes without saying . . . .”

Now Morris was passionately fond of old words, and particularly resented the Romance elements which had driven out so many of our native, Germanic words, (he deplored the fact that we had not preserved our language “as the Germans have theirs”),<sup>27</sup> and it may well be that he saw in this rough, literal method of translating the solution to the difficult problem of rendering the saga into modern English. Magnússon’s comment is interesting in this connection:<sup>28</sup>

“From the beginning Morris was strongly impressed by the simple dignity of style of the Icelandic sagas. There must be living many of his friends who heard him frequently denounce it as something intolerable to have read an Icelandic saga rendered into the dominant literary dialect of the day — the English newspaper language . . . this dignity of style cannot be reached by the Romance element in English. If it is to be

<sup>27</sup> *Works*, XVIII xviii.

<sup>28</sup> *Works*, VII xvii.

reached at all — and then only approximately — it must be by means of the Teutonic element in our speech — the nearest akin to the Icelandic . . . Morris's saga style is his own, the result of an endeavour by a scholar and a man of genius to bring about such harmony between the Teutonic element in English and the language of the Icelandic saga as the not very abundant means at his command would allow".

It is curiously ironic. This style was Morris's most treasured offering at the shrine of Old Norse literature, yet his translations are now more likely to repel the modern reader who tries to use them as a substitute for the originals. Yet they can give much pleasure to those who do read Old Norse, and they are much more readable than brief quotations would indicate. It is only fair to him to remember the kind of English he was reacting against: late-Victorian Latinized prose — "the English of our drawing rooms and leading articles . . . a wretched mongrel jargon that can scarcely be called English, or indeed language . . . the language of critics and 'superior persons' . . . ." <sup>29</sup>

It is worth noting, at this point, that Morris was very insistent that Magnússon should not be robbed of his share of the credit for these translations. In a letter to the *Athenaeum* in 1879 he writes: <sup>30</sup>

"I have noticed that Mr Vigfusson, in his recently published Prolegomena to the Sturlunga Saga, speaks of me as the sole translator of the English version of the Grettis Saga and the Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu, omitting to mention the name of Mr Eiríkr Magnússon, my *collaborateur*. As a matter of fact, when we set about these joint works I had just begun the study of Icelandic under Mr Magnússon's mastership, and my share in the translation was necessarily confined to helping in the search for the fittest English equivalents to the Icelandic words and phrases, to turning the translations of the 'vísur' into some sort of English verse, and to general revision in what might be called matters of taste: the rest of the work, including notes, and all critical remarks, was entirely due to Mr Magnússon's learning and industry . . . Mr Magnússon's responsibility and labour was, therefore, much greater than mine in these works, which if his pleasure in the labour was half as much as mine, it was great indeed".

<sup>29</sup> *Works*, XXIII 241.

<sup>30</sup> *Letters*, 127.

This would be a fair statement of the situation throughout their long collaboration, though, of course, Morris's knowledge of the language increased steadily. This fact is confirmed when we examine the manuscript of their translation of *St Olaf's Saga*.<sup>31</sup> In this manuscript we can see how Magnússon's learning and industry serve as the raw material for Morris's finished product.

The left-hand pages of the manuscript book are usually left blank, and the right-hand pages contain the translation in Magnússon's neat, flowing hand-writing; Morris's corrections and emendations are written, between the lines or wherever there is room for them, in a bolder, more flamboyant script, usually perfectly readable. At times, though rarely, Magnússon's rendering is erased with such vigour that it is quite undecipherable. Sometimes whole sentences are rewritten, sometimes an individual word is altered, so that Morris's emendations form a continuous commentary on Magnússon's version, turning Magnússon's "unconsidered journalese" (May Morris's unsympathetic phrase) into "a language more worthy of the subject". And it is a remarkably thorough process; it is rare to find two continuous lines without some alteration.

It is clear that Morris is emending with the Old Norse by his side, for when Magnússon accidentally omits three and a half lines Morris, on the opposite blank page, inserts a translation of the missing words. On another blank left page Morris writes "what is aukvísi literally?" He notices, too, that Magnússon has used the wrong English word in one of the verses: "Thou didst champion the most valiant king" (*brauzt bág við*); Morris writes: "to champion a man means, I think, to fight *for* him, not *against* him", and translates accordingly: "thou daredst the king most valiant".

<sup>31</sup> Through the kindness of the Librarian of the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, I was provided with a microfilm of this manuscript. I am also very grateful to Professor G. N. Garmonsway, who directed my attention to it.

A few, a very few, of Morris's emendations are corrections of Magnússon's spelling or grammar. I have noticed only about half a dozen misspelt words, so far, but "ye" and "you" seem to worry Magnússon a little, and he sometimes drops the second person singular in mid-sentence; Morris carefully corrects all these minor lapses.

It is Morris, too, who decides the paragraphing. But the bulk of the emendations are definitely stylistic, designed to bring everything into conformity with the highly individual style Morris thought appropriate.

Some are very slight adjustments, like these, and are of no real importance:

<i>Magnússon</i> King Olaf then sailed west	<i>Morris</i> Then sailed King Olaf west
<i>Magnússon</i> She was a most high-mettled woman	<i>Morris</i> She was a woman most high-mettled
<i>Magnússon</i> in the following spring	<i>Morris</i> next spring
<i>Magnússon</i> swiftly	<i>Morris</i> speedily.

Then there are many words which Morris obviously considers essential to his style; they are favourite archaisms, many of them found in his earliest works. Magnússon sometimes remembers to use them, but often forgets, and Morris emends. Morris's word is the second of each pair in the following examples:

aware: ware; anything: ought; nothing: nought; much: mickle; when: whenas; whenever: whenso; later: sithence; happened: betid; went: fared; custom: wont; between: betwixt; counsels: redes; fields: acres; wealth: fee; get ready: dight (me); got: gat; (they) thought: were minded; vowed (*or* accepted): yeasaid.

Morris is very fond of "let" with the infinitive, and is always altering Magnússon's less archaic constructions, e.g.:

<i>Magnússon</i> King Olaf had a cut made	<i>Morris</i> King Olaf let dig a dyke
<i>Magnússon</i> There King Olaf had a wall built	<i>Morris</i> There let King Olaf do a wall.

Sometimes the emendations replace individual words by English words and expressions more closely akin to Old Norse. Morris's word is again the second of each pair:

quarters: harbour (*herbergi*); message: wordsending (*orðsending*); war: unpeace (*ófriðr*); men and women: carles and queans (*karlar ok konur*); council-chamber: Thing House (*þinghús*); door keepers: doorwards (*durverðir*); funeral: corpse-fare (*líkferð*).

The results of this process are not always fortunate, and there can be no doubt that Magnússon's version is usually the more comprehensible. Morris's close watch on the Norse text has its disadvantages:

*Magnússon* he kept out spies  
on his journeys

*Morris* he let bear spying on  
his ways (*bera njósn til fara hans*)

*Magnússon* There also he  
had marked out building  
ground

*Morris* There also he let mark  
tofts (*toptir*)

*Magnússon* plead this case

*Morris* to flit this case (*mál flytja*)

*Magnússon* The Earl giveth  
King Olaf his oath

*Morris* The earl winneth oath  
to King Olaf (*vinna eiða*)

*Magnússon* Ragnhild . . .  
about to give birth to a  
child

*Morris* . . . should be lighter of  
a child (*skyldi léttari verða*)

*Magnússon* what loss of life we  
have suffered

*Morris* what man-scathe we  
have gotten

and then, by analogy, as it were:

*Magnússon* baneful to Christ-  
ian faith

*Morris* wherein was Christ-  
scathe (*kristnisþell*).

A particularly unsuccessful example of Morris sacrificing all to preserve a Norse idiom occurs when Magnússon writes: "Stein nowise kept himself tonguetied . . . both in prose and poetry". Morris cannot resist the Norse *sundrlausum orðum ok samföstum*, and alters the manuscript to: "in speech both loose and knitted up". By the time the text appears in print he has gone even further, and we read: "both in speech loose and in speech upknitted".

Magnússon, of course, is perfectly in sympathy with Morris's principles of translation. His own style is fairly straightforward and not unattractive; it is slightly archaic,

and though he is concerned only with producing an intelligible and accurate translation, he often tries to meet Morris halfway, and regularly uses words like “few-spoken” (*fámálugr*), and “a-many”. But it is amusing to find that Morris is not always ready to accept Magnússon’s attempts at morrisisms; Magnússon’s ear was obviously not *quite* attuned. For example, Magnússon writes: “it is a wont of long standing that . . .” which seems to have the genuine ring, but Morris alters it to: “it has long been that . . . .” On another occasion Magnússon produces: “the greater scathe in men” (*mannskaði*), but Morris goes one better with: “the greatest man-scathe”.

We may suspect that Magnússon is tiring at one place — or is it a gesture of protest at a surfeit of archaism? “But the Swedes gainsay this”, he writes, “and call it all gammon (*telja hégóma*) that any men were lost there”. Morris primly emends to: “and reckon it vain that any men were lost there”. Such colloquialisms are very unusual. Magnússon does not often “use a word too homely . . . which brings it down a little” (this is Morris’s comment on Dasent’s *Njáls Saga*),<sup>32</sup> and I have noticed only two other examples, both duly amended by Morris: “Earl Hakon, who has now bolted out of the land” (emended to “fled”), and: “she takes this with exceeding fuss” (emended to “mickle eagerness”).

And so the process continues, page after page, until Magnússon’s unambitious but very creditable prose is transformed — and in some places contorted — into the characteristic, highly criticised dialect of William Morris.

The verses of the Saga need special mention. Morris, like most of us, found them extremely difficult. “As to the Vísur”, he writes to Magnússon, “I will do my best, only I must say I look forward to the job with little short of anguish, for truly sometimes they are really *un*-translateable . . . I agree we ought to make the vísur

<sup>32</sup> *Letters*, 84.

literal, if we *can*, but sometimes I can't keep it verse at the same time. However, with your help I may manage''.<sup>33</sup>

The solution meant more work for Magnússon. Whenever he comes to a verse he writes out the Norse text, in prose order, and, underneath, a literal word-by-word translation, with, very occasionally, an explanatory note. When Morris reaches the verse he writes out his own metrical translation on one of the blank pages of the manuscript, with surprisingly little correction or emendation, and erases Magnússon's version. All Morris's verses are numbered as he translates them, perhaps two or three together on the same page, so he writes "Insert A", "Insert B", etc. at the appropriate place in Magnússon's translation, and passes on.

So there is nothing casual about this process. This manuscript is ample proof, if proof were needed, of the devotion of these two remarkable men to the language and literature of Iceland. Morris has been dismissed as a mere dilettante. He was much more than this. He did so many things well that his considerable achievement in this one narrow sphere can easily be overlooked. Without Magnússon, as he freely and publicly admitted, this achievement would have been impossible, but it can hardly be doubted that Morris was the driving force in their collaboration. Between them they introduced to English readers a vast amount of Old Norse prose and verse; Morris, with his reputation as a poet and craftsman, could reach a far wider audience than Magnússon, and in his lectures, and in his private conversations, he strove unceasingly to impart to his contemporaries something of his own feeling for Norse literature — not only because of its intrinsic qualities as pure literature, passionately though he admired those qualities, but because he found in it an attitude to life, a noble courage and steadfastness, which might serve as an example to his own time, and which gave him hope for the future.

<sup>33</sup> May Morris, *op. cit.*, I 459.



## ON TRANSLATION — I

A REVIEW BY IAN R. MAXWELL

EVERY age looks for translations adapted to its own habits of speech; that is, to its own habits of thought. Thus the moderns are well served, and Proust loses little at the hands of Scott Moncrieff; but Homer must be content to know that the *Odyssey* holds its own with other novels in the Penguin series. (What Proust would lose if adapted to the minds of Achilles and Anticleia in a Hades Penguin there is fortunately no need to enquire.)

As for the Icelandic sagas, it is now generally held that they should be turned, as far as possible, into up-to-date English, partly on the (sandy) ground that they were modern to thirteenth-century Icelanders, and partly perhaps because our speech is thought to suit them better than our grandfathers'. So Bayerschmidt implies in the preface to his version of *Njáls saga*:

A new translation seems called for, since Dasent's, though outstanding for its time, bears many earmarks of Victorian style (and prudery) less appropriate for rendering the realistic manner of Icelandic sagas.

There is of course no royal road for translators. They must consider their audience, their purpose, the nature of their original and their medium, not least their own tastes and talents; and each version may shed its own light. Let Lang, Leaf and Myers do their best with the English of Wardour Street, and Samuel Butler retort in the English of Tottenham Court Road. We may profit from both. Yet each method has its own merits and drawbacks; and these are worth weighing, especially in an age when it seems to be pretty generally agreed that only one method is right, or at least that one is definitely wrong.

Professor Schach's readable and handsome version of

*Eyrbyggja saga*<sup>1</sup> may be examined from this point of view. It seems fair to say that on the whole he accepts the principle of translation into modern English; and his work would appear to illustrate some of the difficulties and dangers of the attempt.

Any translator from the sagas may be forgiven some trouble with his English. Even the best leg-roped sentence is apt to gore its neighbours, and to observe strict keeping from first to last is perhaps a dream and folly of expectation. Still, one may fairly be alarmed to read "he did not want to stand for it that they should defile the field" (p. 11), where the brawny rouseabout Stand-for-it and the silver-haired Mr Defile are locked in a construction that owes nothing to nature and everything to dire necessity; or "Thórólf's answer wasn't a whit more conciliatory" (p. 62), where the matey "wasn't", the aged "whit", and the prim "conciliatory" are neatly juxtaposed in a symmetry of discord. When a farmer protests, "In that case we will flatly refuse permission for this search if you mean to initiate and conduct it in illegal fashion" (p. 27), he has clearly missed his vocation — he should have been articulated to an attorney. It is, I repeat, extremely difficult to avoid lapses of this type, but they could well be fewer and smaller. How is it that so many of them are now finding their way into print?

Schach and Hollander reject the Morris-Magnússon tradition, for reasons good as far as they go. It seems to have been Morris's task to give the text its finished form, and (unfortunately) to pepper it with archaisms from his private pot. Would that he had wotted naught of "thenas" and had less of a mind to "withal", and that he had seen something a little ludicrous in saying that Vermund the Slender was "marvellous wholesome of redes" (*Eyrbyggja*, ch. 18). The archaisms are too many, too obtrusive, often too unconvincing; they tend to clog

<sup>1</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga*. Translated from the Old Icelandic by Paul Schach, Introduction and Verse Translations by Lee M. Hollander. The University of Nebraska Press and The American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1959.

the vigour of the original, and I confess I can seldom read half a dozen lines without being troubled by them. Still, it would be a pity not to see past these striking defects. Morris worked on a close translation (at times, I admit, too close to the words to give the sense) that had been made or checked by an eminent Icelandic scholar; and he tried to make his English imitate the Icelandic. “Then Snorri set forth that the thralls were indeed out of the law on the field of deed” (*þá færði Snorri þat fram, at þrælarnir váru óhelgir á þeim vættvangi; ib. ch. 31*) may suggest to the puzzled reader that he is dealing with a foreign system of law, but a glance at Index III will solve his problem and refer him to the Icelandic word. For Morris and Magnússon did at least plan their work in a generous and scholarly way. They gave copious information, often, as it were, naturalizing an Icelandic term and inviting their readers to learn its meaning by seeing how it was used. For readers of a scholarly bent who do not know Icelandic, this is perhaps the best plan. In its execution we find serious defects; yet the translation is sometimes brilliant (e.g., the interview with Earl Eric in “The Story of Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue”, ch. 7) and often unobtrusively close and vigorous; and it is at any rate the work of a *writer*, who felt the life of words and knew the demands of keeping. We should not ignore the problems Morris faced simply because we cannot altogether accept his solution. Morris is a man to learn from.

Are we not tending now to ditch him and hope for the best? Of course we must put up with a few archaisms — when old gods and warrior kings and fate and fetches come into a story, it would be strange if an occasional “naught”, “thereby”, “behold”, or even “dwelled” did not sneak past our pickets — but we have only to call up our young battalions (“his permanent residence”, “its present site”, “the loss he had sustained”, “revenants”, “as much involved as I”, “whatever the circumstances in which we

kinsmen are placed", "to experience the hostility of", "a reconciliation of the contending parties was brought about immediately") to make the reader feel that he is comfortably back in his own age, with his morning newspaper, his secretary's report, and the pronouncements of his fellow committee-members. The trouble is that all this seems so unlike the Icelandic. You and I may feel quite at home with a phrase like "most of the wood of which it had been constructed" (p. 4), but if the original says "most of the timbers that had been in it" (*flesta viður, þá er þar höfðu í verit*) should we not resign ourselves to the ruder phrase? Why prefer "the place where the fighting had occurred" (p. 28) to "where they had fought" (*þar sem þeir höfðu barizk*)? Some readers may even think the simple Icelandic the better English: all should wish to gather from the version some notion of the style of the original.

It is of course not impossible, though it grows increasingly difficult, to write modern English without slipping into modern jargon; but, quite apart from this, the dangers of trying to translate sagas into a selection of the language we naturally use about our own affairs are manifold. There are of course good reasons for avoiding, in a thirteenth-century story, anything that bears an obvious twentieth-century stamp; and the common sense of *The King's English* on archaism, negative and positive, still stands. But something more than decorum is at stake here. The standard phrasing that has been made to fit the standard sentiments of our day is almost certain to distort the sentiments of thirteenth-century Icelanders; and a translator — however determined he may be to avoid the "antiquarian language flavoured with English dialecticisms" that Professor Hollander deplores in his Introduction — must begin by breaking down the barrier that his own linguistic habits interpose between him and his text. If he is committed to the current idiom, he will be hard put to it to avoid misrepresentation.

The point may be simply illustrated. Thorstein Thorskabít was “very precocious” (p. 9), a phrase that does in some sense translate *allbráðgörr* but that should be dismissed by reason, if not by taste. We seldom use “precocious” without a hint of ridicule or at least apprehension, and we use it primarily of a premature heightening of the brow (little Johnny in goggles gravelling the dominie) or flowering of the temperament (young master making advances to the housemaid), and not of being beyond one’s years in strength, sense, and character. (Morris’s “very quick of growth” is awkward but nearer the mark.) Again, to say that Ásdís was “vain and showy” (p. 53: *ofláti mikill*) or Thuríd “much given to vain display” (p. 105: *skartskona mikil*) is to dismiss her foibles with summary contempt; but I see no such contempt in the Icelandic words (cf. *Laxdæla*, ch. 20: “þat var gøfugt kvánfang; var Gjaflaug væn kona ok ofláti mikill”) and the Elizabethan “brave” seems more apt to express the old attitude to personal display. That Snorri goði was “unforgiving and revengeful” (p. 21) is no doubt true, and might stand for *langrækr ok heiptúðigr* in a list of the man’s sins. But this is rather a list of his qualities as a chieftain (cf. the cool machiavellian appraisal of Hákon the Mighty in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 50, or the king’s curt judgment on Jón Kuflung in *Sverris saga*, ch. 105); and an antiquarian phrase like “constant in vengeance and mindful of his wrath” would be truer in this respect to the spirit of the words, though in others more fitting for Jehovah than the master of Holyfell. To make *inn mesti ójafnaðarmaðr* “an extremely unjust and overbearing man” (p. 10) is to do no injustice to Thórólf Lamefoot, yet it imports an attitude of shocked reproof that seems absent from the saga phrase. The word “extremely” is the obviously damaging one, and perhaps the more natural a word seems to us the more likely it is to suggest our own attitudes in our own policed society; hence, “a man most unjust and over-

bearing" would be better *because* it has no modern tone. In all these examples, a leaning to the ready modern "equivalent" results in some distortion; and there are other more obvious examples. When Thórólf rates Snorri for following up his case "with so little energy" (p. 64), *our* thought and *our* phrase are simply substituted for the characteristic thought and phrase of the Icелander, *svá lítilmannliga*. The ideas of the original, which should be of interest to any reader and especially to students, are similarly obscured when *kølluðu alla þá hafa fallit óhelga* is rendered "declared that there should be no indemnity for those" (p. 13), or *at þiggja inar sæmiligstu gjafar af höfðingjum* "of receiving such valuable gifts" (p. 66). There is really no reason why the notion of falling "unhallowed" (which recurs in the saga and may be linked with our own common law definition of murder) should be thought untranslatable or uninteresting in a saga like *Eyrbyggja*; and the reduction of *sæmd* to its cash value is a brutal oversimplification, even for a commercial age. But to use by preference expressions that lie on the tip of the twentieth-century tongue is to risk keeping one's readers in twentieth-century blinkers.

To confuse translation with explanation is a pitfall in the path of a scholar committed to his own age and professionally occupied in making things clear to novices. The addition of explanatory words — "the Dales *District*", "*the farm* Hrísar", "came out *to Iceland*" — is deliberate and may sometimes be required; but, each time, the feeling of being in the story and among Icelanders is slightly weakened. One could scarcely justify "because of the hostilities *which ensued*" (p. 1: *fyrir þeim ófriði*) or "on the point of the ness *projecting into the sea*" (p. 6: *átanganum nessins*); and when we are told that men were "busy sorting out sheep" on a tongue between rivers and that some of Snorri's men "went there *to help gather and sort the sheep*" (p. 43), a reader who does not know that the words I have italicized correspond to nothing in the

Icelandic may still wonder what they are doing in English. When *um stefnudaga* becomes “at the time legally set for summoning” (p. 23), *seta fjölmenn* “a large body of armed men” (p. 12), *trogsgöðull* a “trough-shaped saddle” (pp. 17-8), *stakkgarðr* a “fenced-off haystack” (p. 28), *með oxarhamri* “with the blunt part of his axe” (p. 122), one sees the excellence of the translator’s intention; but things begin to dissolve in definitions — as though one took a small knife with folding blades to sharpen one’s inkless writing instrument — and one begins to long (as perhaps the lovers of “English dialecticisms” did) for words that men might be supposed to have used about the things they saw and handled. Nicknames must be a thorn in any translator’s flesh, and which of us would lightly cast the first stone? Yet how could any two sisters have been actually *called* Aud the Profound and Jörunn the Sagacious, unless perhaps in one of Gilbert’s operas? Bolverk the Rash has a footnote (p. 10) to explain that his nickname was Gadfly-snout and that this may (or possibly may not) denote rashness; but surely the text is the place for the name and the footnote for the dubious explanation? (We should not translate the Iron Duke as “Wellington the Unyielding”, or Triphammer Jack as “John L. of the Ponderous Punch”!) The same curious confusion appears when we are told in the text that Eyjólf was given “the right to determine the indemnity himself” (p. 18) and in the note that injured persons were sometimes given “self-doom”. To name a thing and to expound its nature are, in art, two very different things. Habitual explanation reminds the reader at every turn of his own remoteness from the action and of the proximity of a kindly guide. This is just what one does not feel in the sagas themselves; it weakens the illusion and can sometimes seriously blunt the narrative. Thus, when Thórólf Lamefoot died, “all thought there was something uncanny about his death” (p. 68: *öllum þótti óþokki á andláti hans*); and, before his hauntings are related, we

read, "it seemed to many that there was something uncanny out of doors as soon as the sun got low" (p. 69: *þótti mörgum mönnum verra úti, þegar er sólin lægði*). This last is well said; but for any good writer there is a difference between what he elects to say and what he expects us to gather. The saga does not say, on either occasion, that things seemed uncanny — the voice that here breaks in is that of the teacher making things clear to his class. A translator should tell us what his text says, even if he himself sees no advantage in allowing a sense of something "worse" at sundown to usher in the actual revelations.

In general I should plead for a more literal rendering, as close an adherence as possible both to the words and order of the original. The less a translator interferes the better. He may fairly claim to have given the substance of the original when he says that old Thorbjörn, looking out at night, "discovered his son Gunnlaug lying unconscious before the door" (p. 23); but it would be as easy to give the form too, and say that he "found his son Gunnlaug before the door; he was lying there senseless" (*fann hann Gunnlaug, son sinn, fyrir durum; lá hann þar ok var vitlauss*). To me, the saga's way of putting this seems right — try it on an audience — and the translator's an enfeebling summary in which the sense of action is lost; and, even if this tiny example seems trifling, it is of the essence of the saga technique to follow the game, not simply to give the closing scores. But there is no need to argue this. The point is that the reader should know how the saga puts it and judge for himself. Similarly, if the text says *segir* there is no need to make it "retorted" (p. 122), even if this word aptly characterizes the speech; for better or worse, saga-writers generally prefer to avoid this sort of comment — and so distinguish themselves from the authors of novelettes. Thórd's advice to Björn, *þat mun þó vera yðvart ráð, at eigask fátt við ok snúa frá hug sínum, þar sem Þuríðr er*, is translated: "And yet it



would be best for you two not to see each other any more. Try to forget Thuríd, Bjorn" (p. 83). The pathetic finality of "not to see each other any more" seems to me to strike a false note, but I shall not press a matter of opinion. It is surely not matter of opinion that to break up the sentence and introduce a direct personal plea is to misrepresent the tone of Thórd's advice. "Still, it will be best for you to keep away from each other, and to get your mind off Thuríd" might offend purists and is too blunt, but it seems to me to be nearer the original in spirit as in form.

We may glance at a short speech in chapter 37 that Morris and Schach translate with some instructive differences. Arnkel's enemies are approaching, and his thralls urge him to run for it.

Arnkell svarar: "Hér kann ek gott ráð til, því at hér skulu gera hvárir, þat er betra þykkir; þit skuluð hlaupa heim ok vekja upp fylgðarmenn mína, ok munu þeir koma skjótt til móts við mik, en hér er vígi gott í stakkgarðinum, ok mun ek heðan verjask, ef þetta eru ófriðarmenn, því at mér þykkir þat betra en renna; mun ek eigi skjótt verða sótt; munu mínir menn koma skjótt til móts við mik, ef þit rekið drengiliga ørendit".

(Fornrit ed. pp. 100-1).

Arnkel answered:

"Good rede can I give thereto, and now shall each of us do what each best liketh. Ye shall run home and wake up my following, and they will come quickly to meet me, but here in the rickyard is a good place to make a stand, and from hence will I defend myself if they come in warlike wise, for that meseems is better than running; nor shall I soon be overcome, and speedily will my men come to me, if ye do your errands in manly wise".

(Morris).

Arnkel replied: "I have a good plan: let each do what he considers best. You two run home and wake my men, and they will come at once to join me. There is a good vantage ground for defense here in the enclosure, and I can stand them off from here if these men mean to attack me. I consider that better than running away. They won't get the better of me so quickly, and my men will soon be here if you do well what I told you".

(Schach).

Poor Morris has much to answer for. "Good rede", "thereto", "liketh", "in . . . wise", "meseems" — even when one has got used to this sort of thing it is a load for one short speech. The verbal faithfulness of "my following" does not justify it as against Schach's brisk and natural "my men"; and indeed Schach's version is often the livelier, with the notable exception of "a good vantage ground for defense here in the enclosure", where

*vígi* expands into a definition with nothing like the life of Morris's phrase, and *stakkgarðr* fades into a category. But there is another and a deeper difference. On the whole Morris follows the original closely, and with his help one might hope to understand it. Arnkel is handling a ticklish situation with composure. The thralls are good for nothing; one is to perish in a waterfall through sheer panic, the other will forget to summon help; and, since we have just been told that Arnkel worked his thralls day and night, we may suspect mulish resentment behind the forgetfulness. Arnkel knows that he must calm and encourage the pair. His speech is level, easy, persuasively reasonable — the point of *því at* (because) is slightly blunted in Morris's "and now" — but marked by an unobtrusive irony. It is an irony implicit in the situation and realized (with a touch of amused exasperation?) by Arnkel, but it becomes explicit (for us, not for the thralls) in "for that seems to me better than running away" and "if you do your [coward's] business *manfully*". One would have a much better chance of checking this interpretation from Morris's version than from Schach's. Once the speech is broken up and gingered up, it changes its character: the opening phrases become bright suggestions, losing their persuasive roundness and hint of ironic reserve; "I consider that better than running away" becomes smug, uncalled for, a little ridiculous; the point of *drengiliga* is simply missed. This sort of thing will happen naturally — not, of course, inevitably — when a scholar attempts to bring an old story to his contemporaries. It is less likely to happen when an artist attempts to sink himself in the old story and copy it as faithfully as he can, so that his contemporaries may be led back to it. The more humble and literal approach will at least have the merit of keeping his eye fixed on the words of his text, and he may sometimes tell his readers things he had not noticed himself.

A different approach to the problem would of course

raise its own difficulties and expose one to attack from another quarter. Yet the defects I have noted are worth examining, because they are growing common and almost taken for granted; because they are natural hazards in an age when translation into modern English seems to have become an article of faith, without, so far as I can see, very much enquiry into the kind of English that would best suit the sagas; because I find them distracting, and suspect that in half a century's time they may seem as strange as the "antiquarian language flavoured with English dialecticisms" of an earlier generation.

## ON TRANSLATION — II

A COMMENT BY GEORGE JOHNSTON

A translation may be close or not very close, and its vocabulary may be either up-to-date or rather archaic in tone. These seem to be the chief distinctions in kind between translations from the older languages. Ian Maxwell has argued for close translation and a vocabulary with a slightly archaic flavour, in his review, and he has used William Morris's practice as a point of reference. He has shown that Morris kept close to the Icelandic and succeeded, in some passages, in giving the flavour and texture and the sense too of the original in English where the more modern translation had failed. He regrets the heavy mannerisms of Morris's archaic style, but feels that some archaisms are nevertheless a good thing, and that certainly an archaic style in general is likely to be better than an up-to-date style.

These are really separate problems. A translation may be both free and archaic as well as close and archaic, and indeed I was surprised to learn that Morris's translation was so close. But a translation may be also close and modern, and this is the sort I would prefer to make. Of course, Ian Maxwell does not ask for an archaic vocabulary but merely a vocabulary with an archaic flavour. I agree that an up-to-date flavour is not right for the sagas, but I think it is possible to choose words from ordinary English of our time which will not be incongruous, and I would prefer these to words with any touch of quaintness. The events and sentiments of the sagas must be given an appropriate setting, and it is true that this is not one we are likely to be at home with. A word that reminds us of our own city kind of life breaks the setting and takes us out of the story. But on the other hand, their feeling of actuality is perhaps the most important quality of the

sagas, and any hint of quaintness, any suggestion that their events belong in a never-never land helps to weaken this feeling of actuality. This is the most serious complaint that is made about Morris's translations; their world is marvellously consistent, but it is never quite real.

They are very good translations just the same, and their strength lies mainly in the closeness of their rendering of the Icelandic. This is a point on which I agree with Ian Maxwell altogether, and perhaps I would emphasize it even more strongly than he does. Most critics assume that literalness is not a desirable quality in a translation because they think it is dry and unimaginative. Even those who expect a translator to be scholarly hardly ask him to be literal, and most writers prefer to "re-create" their original, and capture its spirit rather than its letter. There are strong arguments to be made on both sides, but I am convinced that close translation — from the Old Icelandic at any rate — will produce a better English text than a free rendering. Literal rendering and free rendering must be understood as relative terms; it is neither desirable nor possible to be absolutely literal, and the translator must always be governed by respect for the English language. Nevertheless, it is surprising how close to the Icelandic English can come without strain, and indeed contemporary English often seems to be given new life by the effort.

I will show what I mean by reference to a translation of the *Gísla saga* which Peter Foote and I have made in collaboration. Ian Maxwell looked over our first complete version, which we had made as a free rendering, and his comments made me realize that a close translation, which I had deliberately avoided, would be better than what we had done. The new and much more literal version that we then made turned out to be livelier, richer in texture, and better English than the free rendering, besides being closer to the Icelandic, both in letter and in spirit.

Close translation, however, is an ideal; it should provide

a working principle and not an unbreakable rule. Few manuscripts of older works are perfect, and where two or three are available it would be absurd not to eke out the best with borrowings from the others if this helps the telling of the story. In this kind of work a difficulty sometimes arises in deciding between the scholar's and the story-teller's conscience. My tendency would be to rely on the scholar's conscience because its criteria are likely to be less personal and whimsical. At the same time one must remember that if the translation is not readable, it might better have been left in the Icelandic. A few passages in our manuscript of the *Gísla saga* seemed rather flat-footed in tone, but these we kept conscientiously because they were integral. This was a case in which the story-teller's preference was likely to be misleading, even from the standpoint of readability.

Some qualities of Old Icelandic prose seem to resist direct translation into current English. The most obvious of these, in the *Gísla saga* especially, is the handling of the tenses, which shift back and forth between the simple present and the simple past apparently on the whim of the writer or scribe, and according to no consistent principle. When they are turned straight into narrative English these tenses at first seem awkward, but an unprejudiced reader will soon recognize their effectiveness. In fact they are familiar in colloquial English, and good yarn spinners and anecdote tellers shift their tenses with exactly this kind of freedom and liveliness. In my opinion the tenses of the Icelandic should be followed as closely as possible; their effect is startling and vivid, the events come before the eye of the reader as they seem to do in life, unpredictably and unceremoniously.

Other Icelandic peculiarities can be turned into English with the same directness. Many translators seem to be embarrassed by the abruptness with which the characters are introduced into the sagas. "There was a man named Thorgeir who was called heathcock; he lived at

Heathcock's steading" sounds unsophisticated in English, and one is tempted to smooth it out. "A man by the name of Thorgeir, who was called heathcock, lived at Heathcock's steading". The sense is hardly changed from one passage to the other, but the bite has been lost. English prose makes use of many participles, relatives and adverbial subordinations, and almost seems to apologize for its independent clauses. But narrative prose is made of independent clauses, and the principle of subordination belongs to a different kind of writing in which novels, for instance, are written. When a novelist like Ernest Hemingway writes what is really a fine narrative prose, made up of strings of independent clauses, he can hardly help sounding affected. But the cadences of Old Icelandic prose will translate into a true English narrative which sounds abrupt perhaps, but hardly affected. It seems absurd to me that a translator should attempt to smooth out this abruptness, which is part of the character of the prose, not only in Icelandic but also in English. These are cadences that English might profitably rediscover.

Two versions of the same passage from our translation of the *Gísla saga* will serve as general illustrations. The first is a free rendering, the second follows the Icelandic much more closely. Ian Maxwell first drew our attention to the inadequacy of the free rendering.

1. Gisli stayed with Ingjald over the winter and built a boat for him, and several other things. It was easy to recognize whatever he made because he was much skilfuller than most men at this work. People began to wonder why so many of Ingjald's things were well made when he wasn't good with his hands. Gisli returned every summer to Geirrhjofsfiord.

It was three years since he had dreamt, and the protection that Ingjald gave him was the fullest he had enjoyed. But people were beginning to suspect that he was still alive and not, as had been reported, drowned. They saw that Ingjald now had three well-made boats, and after a while Eyjolf the grey heard rumours that Gisli was staying at Hergilsey, so he sent Helgi out to investigate.

2. Gisli is there over the winter, and he builds a boat for Ingjald, and many other things. And whatever he made was

easy to recognize because he was handier than most men are. Men began to wonder why so many things were well made that Ingjald has; for he was not skilful with his hands. Gisli is always at Geirthjofsfjord over the summer; it goes on so for three years from the time he had dreamt, and this is the best shelter he has had, which Ingjald gives him.

It seems to men, now, that all these things taken together are suspicious, and they begin to think that Gisli must be alive, and have been with Ingjald, and not drowned, as had been said. Men begin to talk about the fact that Ingjald now has three boats, and all well made. These rumours come to the ears of Eyjolf the grey, and it falls to Helgi's lot to set out again, and he comes to Hergilsey.

Nothing will be proved by these two passages, and tastes will differ over the second, but to me the contrast is clear between the ordinariness of the first and the restless vitality of the second, in which the narrative seems to be hunting for its course, and dropping the scent and picking it up again. I think the wandering of the tenses contributes to this effect.

Problems of vocabulary are more likely to arise in close translation than in a free rendering, but they are a separate kind of problem, in my opinion. Ian Maxwell has said that he prefers a slightly archaic vocabulary, and my preference, like his, is for a tone that is not noticeably up-to-date. The events and sentiments of the saga world are not, as I have said, ours, and they sound out of place in our idiom. This is especially true in the dialogue. Here the translator is under strong temptation to use familiar colloquial expressions to represent the lively familiarity of the original; but such liveliness is dearly bought, at the cost of incongruity. Nevertheless, I think a twentieth-century translator is unlikely to use an even slightly archaic vocabulary with success. The words will not sound as though he has really said them. An exception must be made of technical words which have no modern equivalent.

It may be that I have underestimated vocabulary problems, but I am not inclined to be a hunter for the *mot juste*. Some words do fit certain special contexts better



than others, and a writer must hunt for them, but a word that has taken much finding is likely to be self-conscious. In prose — and in poetry too, I think — a word should know its place. I would rather see a commonplace word, in all but a very few contexts, than a self-conscious one.

The most satisfactory answer lies again, I think, in close translation. The vocabulary of the sagas is not extensive, and most of its words can be represented by English words in current use. In the *Gísla saga* we relied on the Icelandic word order, which we followed as closely as we thought English would allow, to give a special environment to the story — a somewhat outlandish and yet not archaic or romantic environment — in which the events would not seem incongruous, and we drew our vocabulary from our conversational word stock. Much trial and rewriting led us to this principle and it is, I think, a simple and good one.

The “accent” of the translation is another aspect of its vocabulary that has to be considered in modern English. Ian Maxwell was conscious of it, though he did not mention it specifically. The differences between English, American and Australian usage, to name the three most obvious, are not many, nor even very significant, but readers are touchy about them. No writer should inhibit himself on account of his readers’ touchiness, but he can avoid many obvious expressions without feeling much hampered. Some words, however, are stubborn. *Viðr* is an example: this would be called lumber in America, and the English word timber would not do instead, because it would mean standing trees. But lumber would be either comical or misleading to an English reader. Our solution, “dressed timber” has the shamefaced look of a compromise. Perhaps a translation should decide on one usage — English *or* American *or* Australian — and stay with it.

Latin words raise a similar difficulty. They are so much a part of our everyday talk that they can hardly be left

out of a piece of writing without making their absence felt. Yet they do not belong in the saga world; they are at two removes from what they stand for, whereas the saga words sound like life itself. And they are lighter in weight than English words or old borrowings, and their accent is not reliable. Schach and Hollander's *Eyrbyggja saga* and Magnússon and Pálsson's new translation of the *Njáls saga* both use Latin words freely, but I would rather avoid them, or at any rate keep their numbers down, in order to make the translation as close as possible. However, it would be absurd to pretend that Latin words do not belong in literary English; they have their place even in translation of the Icelandic verses, but they need not be allowed to presume on it.

The verses present problems of their own. Ian Maxwell has said nothing about them, and every translation I have seen has followed its own principle in dealing with them. The *dróttkvætt* stanza is such a demanding and artificial one that most writers can see little justification for following it in English, except loosely. However, even a literal prose translation has to straighten out the syntax of the original and provide footnotes for the kennings, and once one has decided to make the translation in verse the temptation arises to explore the difficulties as far as possible. In the *Gísla saga* I had the writing of the verses, and I decided to keep to the Icelandic conventions — the alliteration, the pattern of three staves per line with an unstressed syllable at the end, the *skothendings* and the *aðalhendings* and as many of the kennings as we could fit into the sense. I was anxious to make the literal meaning clear, so I had to straighten out the syntax, and because of the importance of the small grammatical words in English I was more often than not unable to keep the number of syllables down to six. My verses are only fairly near to the Icelandic, but they are a good deal nearer than I expected when I started out, and I think they could be brought, with practice, nearer yet. And I

think they are worth the considerable effort. The closer they come to the strict Icelandic form, and the more fully they manage to include the kennings, the better English poetry they turn out to be. And the kennings are more intelligible in this strict form than in the freer forms, or in the literal prose translations.

These verses are frankly contrived, and their artificiality in contrast with the apparent artlessness of the prose, gives an effect which I have not seen elsewhere than in the sagas. The poems are centres of emotion in the stream of events, made intense by the very strictness of the formal limitations. This justifies, I think, the concentration of effort that they require.<sup>1</sup>

The one quality that no translation or any other piece of writing can do without is life, obviously, because without this it will not be read. Where is its life to come from? Some is bound to come through from the Icelandic, which is full of energy, but care and conscientiousness may stifle it as surely as bright, up-to-date language may falsify it. Ian Maxwell has given the answer to this too: he asks for an artist who will attempt to sink himself in the old story and copy it as faithfully as he can. "Sink" is the important word: my ideal translator is humble before scholarship and hopes that he may be an artist. The liveliness of his writing comes from the energy he has put into it, and the pleasure he has taken in doing it. Close translation requires patience and much hard work, both of which are likely to generate life. It also imposes

<sup>1</sup> It may be interesting to see two of my versions of the same verse, as an illustration of my views on their translation.

Earlier version.

My shield to the screaming  
Swords stood and warded,  
The poet's protector  
Played with the blade points;  
Courage came to me:  
There sang the loud clangour  
Of battle before I was  
Dumbed by their numbers.

Later version.

My shield fenced my skald's life,  
The sounding blades found my  
Wooden bastion wide-hard  
Toward them, loud sword points;  
Metal dinned on meeting;  
Much their power touched me,  
Quelled me, though my called-for  
Courage faced their murder.

(The verse is no. 33 in *Gísla saga* in *Vestfirðinga sögur* (Íslenzk Fornrit VI, 1943), 105-6.)

anonymity, which is an especially valuable quality. In Morris's translation, the faithfulness to the original is what holds the reader; the idiosyncrasies are what put him off and take away his attention. Morris's sort of individuality, which calls for eccentricities of style, belonged to the nineteenth century. Most of the saga writers were anonymous, and the translator will want to render as closely as possible the common, manly qualities of their style. I am convinced that the vocabulary for this can be found in twentieth-century English, and as an example, I will give the *New English Bible*, which is deliberately modern, and shows the life and anonymity that I have been talking about.



nockvat þollnon þell a biarta yngan þra  
kōf z erchibps þa ganga þa miok þram  
ok taka þa yndur sik at draga þe heilag  
kirkiō z sakur a leida mey. En þyrtur þe  
gra ok þora ei ym at vanda Mikla þyrtur  
ge tōg a at samþyckia þy yd sik bedrind

From NRA 67a

From NRA 67c



# ON THE FRAGMENTARY TEXT CONCERNING ST THOMAS BECKET IN STOCK. PERG. FOL. NR. 2

By P. G. FOOTE\*

## I *Introduction*

The chief extant Norwegian and Icelandic sources concerning St Thomas Becket are these:

(1) A Norwegian translation of the *Quadrilogus prior*. The Latin work was produced by a conflation of material from the lives by John of Salisbury, Alan of Tewkesbury, Herbert of Bosham and William of Canterbury and from the *Passio* by Benedict of Peterborough. It was finished just before 1200; the Norwegian translation probably belongs to the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

(2) An Icelandic recension of the *Vita* and *Gesta* post martyrrium preserved in the codex called *Tómasskinna*, written c. 1400. Some fragments are extant from other

\* I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs J. Turville-Petre, Oxford, Dr E. F. Halvorsen, Oslo, and Dr V. P. Underwood and Mr A. G. Watson, both of University College London. They have readily given the advice and information I sought from them.

<sup>1</sup> The Norwegian and Latin texts of the *Quadrilogus* are printed by C. R. Unger, *Thomas saga erkibyskups* (1869), 1-292. The Latin text is in J. C. Robertson, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket* (Rolls Series, 1875-85), IV 266-430. (This collection is henceforth referred to as *Materials*.) Unger dates the *Quadrilogus* translation to the latter half of the thirteenth century, probably near its close (*op. cit.* III). Others have suggested that it belongs with the literary work done at the instigation of King Hákon Magnússon (reigned 1299-1319), see e.g. Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* (1920-24), II 969, F. Paasche, *Norges og Islands Litteratur* (ny utg. ved Anne Holtsmark, 1957), 488; Paul Lehmann, *Skandinaviens Anteil an der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* II (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akad. der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Abt. 1937, Heft 7), 81, says the translation was done "unter der Leitung Arnis von Bergen" (bishop 1305-14), but this is to read altogether too much out of the fact that a *Tómas saga* was in Bishop Árni's library. That Unger's vaguer and somewhat earlier dating is preferable is shown by the fact that the *Quadrilogus* translation was used in the recension of *Tómas saga* followed in a collection of Mary-miracles made in all probability before 1300 (see note 16), and that the manuscript in which it is extant is dated c. 1300 and is certainly not the original, see V. Gödel, *Katalog öfver Kongl. Bibliotekets fornisländska och fornnorska Handskrifter* (1897-1900), 58, Kr. Kålund, *Palæografisk Atlas* (1905), no. 43. Professor Seip appears to regard c. 1300 as the *terminus ante quem* for its production, see *Palæografi* (Nordisk Kultur XXVIII:B, 1954), 66.

manuscripts that contained the same recension. The recension is referred to as T.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Two sets of fragments containing parts of an Icelandic recension, or recensions, different from T.<sup>3</sup> The first set (= D) are from a text of the Vita, remnants of four leaves from a codex written at the beginning of the fourteenth century now preserved as no. 67 a-d in the Riksarkiv, Oslo.<sup>4</sup> The second set (= E) are from a text of the Gesta post martyrium. They are found in AM 234

<sup>2</sup> T is edited by Unger, *op. cit.* 295-504, with the fragments, 519-27; and largely from this edition by Eiríkr Magnússon, *Thómas saga erkibyskups* (Rolls Series, 1875-83), I (the Vita), II 2-240 (the Gesta post martyrium), 245-61 (fragments). References here are only to the latter edition, distinguished as EM I-II. The most recent description of the codex *Tómasskína* (Gl. kgl. sml. 1008 fol.), correcting in several points the information given by Eiríkr Magnússon, is in O. A. Johnsen and Jón Helgason, *Den store Saga om Olav den hellige* (1941), 1034-42.

<sup>3</sup> Printed Unger, *op. cit.* 527-44, as fragments F and G, EM II 261-84, as fragments D and E. The date given for D is from Unger, *op. cit.* 527, followed by D. A. Seip, *Palæografi*, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Eiríkr Magnússon, EM II 1-111, distinguished between no. 67a and 67b-d, because he believed that the texts they offer belong to different recensions. The first he considered to be a kind of abstract, the second a proper history where "the narrative assumes its natural breadth". It is hard to agree with this hypothesis. The fragments are in the same hand (cf. plate), and since they have the same provenance in Norway it is reasonable to assume that they come from the same codex. (Fragments 67a-c were used in the binding of accounts from Sunnhordland in 1628, 67d for the same purpose and from the same place in 1629.) There is some difference in presentation between the text on 67a and that on 67b-d, but this is not surprising when we consider that the matter on 67a is descriptive and most of that on 67b-d consists of quotation of speech and letters. 67a is like the other fragments in indubitably containing some material derived from Robert of Cricklade, cf. p. 421, and both in its text and in that on 67b are references to what appear to be otherwise unknown life-time miracles of St Thomas, see EM II 262<sup>9-10</sup>, 264<sup>2-9</sup>. It may be noted here that some other fragments written in the same hand as these from a text of *Tómas saga* are also found in the Riksarkiv as no. 67e. They consist of five snippets from a single leaf containing part of the text of *Jóns saga postola* (printed C. R. Unger, *Postola Sögur* (1874), 443-5, cf. *ibid.* XXII), and three others, again from a single leaf, containing matter from *Stephanus saga* (corresponding to the text Hms. II 303<sup>14-17</sup>, 303<sup>26-32</sup>, 304<sup>2-9</sup>, 304<sup>23-29</sup>, 305<sup>7-10</sup>, 305<sup>16-23</sup>). Two of the fragments in 67e were with material from Sunnhordland, dated 1628 and 1637, and three were with material from Sogn, dated 1628, 1629 and 1633. Although it is believed that the binding of such accounts took place in the districts themselves and not at some centre (see Anne Holtsmark, *Studier i norrøn diktning* (1956), 9, with reference), it seems less likely that this was so in the case of the present fragments. Cf. also on this E. F. Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland* (Bibliotheca Arnemagnæana XIX, 1959), 36 and note 17. The feast-days of the saints whose lives were written by this one scribe are 26 December (Stephen), 27 December (John) and 29 December (Thomas). It seems most likely that these texts were closely associated in a single codex that contained a vernacular legendary, or part of one, arranged as is most usual according to the calendar. There is no hope at arriving at any firm estimate of the length of the D-E recension, but the fact that it existed as part of a legendary at any rate suggests that it was nothing like the size of the T recension.

fol., fols. 79-81. This is a codex from Skálholt, usually dated to c. 1325.<sup>5</sup> On other texts representing originals similar to D and E, see pp. 407-8 and the Appendix.

(4) A fragmentary text in the codex Stock. perg. fol. nr. 2, fols. 1-2ra 29. The codex was written in Iceland c. 1425-45.<sup>6</sup> The two leaves on which the text is preserved represent the second and seventh leaves in the first gathering in the codex. Eiríkr Magnússon characterised this work as a 'homiletic abstract',<sup>7</sup> and it must have been a comparatively short work, since it filled only just over six folios in Stock. 2. He noted that the text was related in some way to that of D,<sup>8</sup> but otherwise little attention has been paid to it.

Of these texts T is undoubtedly the youngest in origin. Its author made use of the *Quadrilogus* translation and an older Icelandic text, or texts, generally equated with the version or versions represented by the fragments D and E; he also knew Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*.<sup>9</sup> On several occasions he refers to a certain Prior Robert 'af Cretel' as his source.<sup>10</sup> This man was identified by Eiríkr Magnússon as Robert of Cricklade (Crichlade), a twelfth-century prior of the Austin house of St Frideswide's, Oxford. He was known as the author of other works and to him was now attributed an otherwise unknown life of Thomas Becket<sup>11</sup>. Both the identification and the attribution have been generally accepted.

More light was thrown on Robert of Cricklade and his

<sup>5</sup> Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Biskupa sögur* (1858-78), I xxxv (not much before 1350); C. R. Unger, *Mariu saga* (1871), xi (c. 1325); Kr. Kálund, *Katalog over den Arnemagnæanske Håndskriftsamling* (1888-94), I 194 (first part of the fourteenth century); D. A. Seip, *Palæografi*, 128 (beginning of the fourteenth century).

<sup>6</sup> Printed C. R. Unger, *Heilagra manna sögur* (1877), II 315-20 (abbreviated Hms. hereafter). On the codex, see P. G. Foote, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile* IV (1962), 7-18.

<sup>7</sup> EM II xlix, lvii-lviii.

<sup>8</sup> EM II 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Unger, *Thomas saga*, III; EM II xlviii-lviii; Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie* (1920-24), II 876-7.

<sup>10</sup> EM I 32, 36, 38, 50, II 92-108, 110, 114, cf. 284.

<sup>11</sup> EM II xcii-xciv, followed, with some further information, in *DNB* XLVIII 368-9.



work by E. Walberg,<sup>12</sup> and the fullest details of his life and literary work have recently been collected by A. B. Emden.<sup>13</sup> Walberg was able to show that the Icelandic texts were not the only available source of our knowledge about Robert's life of St Thomas, for this work had also provided the material for an Anglo-Norman poem on the saint, composed by Beneit, a monk of St Albans.<sup>14</sup> He was able to date Robert's work and the poem with some accuracy. The former was probably written in 1173, at any rate soon after 1172 and certainly before 1180. The latter was written between 1183 and 1189, probably in 1184.<sup>15</sup>

Walberg arrived at his conclusions on the source of Beneit's poem (= B) by a comparison between it and the Icelandic texts, D and T. Both he and the later editor of the poem, B. Schlyter, neglected the text in Stock. 2. It is the aim of the present essay to bring this text into the discussion in order to gain a better understanding of its nature as an 'abstract' and to demonstrate its importance for the study of the textual history of the Icelandic work derived from Robert of Cricklade's Latin life.

Before this can be done, it is necessary to clarify the position of the fragments D and E in relation to T and to the Latin texts that are their ultimate source.

<sup>12</sup> E. Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique de saint Thomas Becket avant la fin du XIIe siècle* (1929), 9-33 (also in *Romania* XLIV (1915-17), 407-26).

<sup>13</sup> *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500* (1957-9), I 513-4. Emden thinks that Robert is probably the Robert 'magister de Criklade' who witnessed a charter c. 1125. He was a canon of Cirencester before 1141, when he became prior of St Frideswide's, an office he gave up c. 1174.

<sup>14</sup> Edited by B. Schlyter, *La Vie de Thomas Becket par Beneit* (Etudes romanes de Lund IV, 1941); see pp. 10-12 for a table of correspondences between the poem and the saga.

<sup>15</sup> Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 14, 25, 32-33. The year 1180 given by him as the limit for the composition of the Latin work was the date he knew as the termination of Robert's office as prior. This, he thought, probably meant Robert's death in or about that year. Emden has emended the date for the vacation of office to c. 1174, and if this is thought to coincide approximately with Robert's death, then the composition of his life of Thomas can only be assigned to 1173-4. Cf. note 102.

## II *The relationship between D, E and T*

(i) Are the fragments D and E from the same recension?

The fragments D and E come from different manuscripts and from different kinds of text, the former from a *Vita*, the latter from an account of the *Gesta post martyrium*. Regarded in isolation, there is no way of telling whether they belonged to the same recension or not. Unger noticed, however, that in a version of a Mary miracle (= M) there are passages which parallel material now extant both in the D fragments and in the E fragments, and this furnishes a strong argument in favour of the supposition that they belonged to a single recension.<sup>16</sup> M tells the story of how St Thomas received from the Virgin the gift of pontificalia and thereby silenced his fellow-students, who had taunted him for having no present to show from his sweetheart. This story is followed by a description of St Thomas and an account of his martyrdom and merits. The miracle-story itself is paralleled in T,<sup>17</sup> and the matter that follows the story in M is certainly borrowed from some form of the *Tómas saga* (cf. pp. 426-8 below).

In his discussion of the question, Eiríkr Magnússon decided that the whole of the passage in M, miracle and what follows, was borrowed from a text similar to T.<sup>18</sup> He refers only to T and E, and does not mention D. But that Unger was right in referring to the text of D and E, rather than to the text of T, is proved by the presence in M of this sentence:

Guðs móður Mariam elskaði hann umfram alla [helga] menn ok fal henni á hendi alla sína framferð næst almátkum guði.

This sentence is in D, in the same position as in M, but it

<sup>16</sup> Unger, *Thomas saga*, V. M is printed in C. R. Unger, *Mariu saga* (1871), 198-203, from the miracle-collections denoted *MarS* and *MarE*<sup>1</sup> (see Ole Widding, 'Om de norrøne Marialegender', in *Opuscula* II, 1 (Bibliotheca Arnemagnæana XXV, 1, 1961), 1-9). These related sources are from an original which probably came into being towards the end of the thirteenth century. The text of M is reprinted EM II 284-9.

<sup>17</sup> EM I 20<sup>12-24</sup><sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> EM II clvii-clx.

is not in T.<sup>19</sup> If Unger was thus correct, we must recognise the existence of an Icelandic Vita and Gesta post martyrium in what may be called the D-E recension. On the sources of this recension, cf. pp. 422 ff. below.

Eiríkr Magnússon assumed that the miracle-story in M was itself borrowed from a text of the *Tómas saga*. If his assumption is correct, then the D-E recension must have contained the story, just as T does. He bases his argument on the fact that near the beginning of the text in M comes:

Þegar í æskublómi, *sem fyrr var greint*, setti signaðr Thómas guðs móður Mariam sinn vakran verndarmann ok göfugligan geymara —.

He maintains that the italicised words are unjustified in M, and points to an earlier passage in T, where St Thomas's devotion to the Virgin is spoken of. In T this passage is followed by some remarks introducing the miracle-story that comes in the next chapter.<sup>20</sup> If the miracle-story were also in the D-E recension, it ought also to have contained something corresponding to these earlier words in T, to which Eiríkr Magnússon thought reference was made in the phrase *sem fyrr var greint*.

There are a number of reasons for thinking that Eiríkr Magnússon's view is mistaken. The text in M does not begin like an extract from the saga:

Svá er senniliga skrifat, at einn klerkr [enskr] Thómas at nafni var á ungum aldri til náms í Paris —

and the story could and did exist separately.<sup>21</sup> In D's defective state we cannot tell for certain whether it contained any passage corresponding to the earlier one in T on Thomas's devotion to Mary. It seems unlikely that it did. That passage in T is from John of Salisbury,

<sup>19</sup> M 202<sup>20-22</sup> = D, EM II 262<sup>17-19</sup> (*Guðs móður Mariam dýrkaði hann ok virði umfram alla aðra helga menn ok fal henni á hendi allt sitt ráð næst guði*), cf. T, EM I 28<sup>16</sup>. (Where necessary I have normalised quotations from Icelandic texts.)

<sup>20</sup> See EM I 18<sup>8-24</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> In Icelandic as well as Latin: see the two other texts in Unger, *Mariu saga*, 1160-2, containing only the miracle-story, not the material from the saga.

derived through the *Quadrilogus* translation.<sup>22</sup> Now, the sentence beginning *Guðs móður Mariam* —, quoted above from D, seems also to depend ultimately on the influence of this same text from John of Salisbury (see p. 423). Its position in D follows the description of the saint's appearance, which in this recension comes late, after his consecration as archbishop (cf. p. 422), and consequently there is small reason to think that the same passage would have been used earlier as well, or, having been used, would be repeated. There is no indication that the miracle-story itself is very ancient,<sup>23</sup> or that it was in the chief sources of the text in D (cf. pp. 422-30). Indeed, there is a marked difference in style between the miracle-story in M and the material that follows it derived from a text like D-E. Finally, if the author of T made use of a recension like D-E, as he certainly did, then he should have obtained his account of the Mary-miracle from it as well, and the similarity of his account to the separate version of the miracle in M should be obvious. But this is not so, for although the two correspond in the details of the

<sup>22</sup> EM I 18<sup>8-15</sup>, cf. the *Quadrilogus* translation, Unger, *Thomas saga*, 2<sup>6-9</sup>; *Materials* IV 269-70. That T may also depend in part on a text like D is suggested by the phrase they both have: *umfram alla aðra helga menn* (EM II 262<sup>18</sup>, cf. EM I 18<sup>11</sup>), which is not in the *Quadrilogus* translation or the original Latin.

<sup>23</sup> The legendary story, which may have had its origin about the end of the twelfth century, is not thought to have been attached at first to any named person. It appears in this anonymous form in the first version of the Middle High German poem known as *Thomas von Kandelberg*, where the identification of the central character as Thomas of Canterbury is only made as a scribal addition. This poem dates from the latter part of the thirteenth century. One would assume that the connection of the story with Thomas Becket was first made in England. See H.-Fr. Rosenfeld in K. Langosch, *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon* IV (1953), 453-5. In Latin sources the story appears connected with Thomas in the interpolated Book III of the fragmentary *Libri VIII miraculorum* of Caesarius of Heisterbach, see A. Hilka, *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach* (Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde XLIII, 1933-7), III 173. The *Libri VIII* were written 1225-7, but the manuscripts of the interpolated text are from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Hilka, 13, 6-8). The date of the interpolated text is thus uncertain, but it must have been after the composition of Jacob de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (1255-66), because legends from this work appear in it (Hilka, 10-11). The middle or third quarter of the thirteenth century seems the likeliest time for the origin of the story in its Thomas Becket form. It could then appear in the Icelandic collection of Mary-miracles towards 1300 and in some German manuscripts of about 1300 (cf. Rosenfeld, *loc. cit.*). Cf. also the study by R. Scholl, *Thomas von Kandelberg* (Form und Geist 7, 1928), 70-78, 81-6.

narrative, they are verbally very different. I should be unwilling to deny that it was beyond the powers of the author of T to re-write his source so thoroughly, but one would think that a text like M would have well suited his stylistic preferences, with at any rate no more than minor alterations.

If the miracle-story was not in the D-E recension, the phrase *sem fyrr var greint* in M remains to be explained. It seems possible to regard it as meaning no more than *sem nú var greint*. The opening lines after the first pair quoted above, *Svá er senniliga skrifat* etc., appear to be an editorial ebullition on the virtue, chastity and love for Mary of St Thomas. The opening lines have the phrase *á ungum aldri* and these following lines refer to *hinn ungi Thómas*. Then the story proper begins with the above-quoted: *Þegar í æskublómi, sem fyrr var greint* —. The reference back throws emphasis on St Thomas's youth, something which the preceding text has twice mentioned. The word *fyrr* can answer simply to *supra*, and it is a feature of the latinate style to make frequent use of the diplomatic formula 'aforesaid' and so forth.<sup>24</sup> Bearing this in mind, we need not go outside the passage as it stands to find what has occasioned this clause of reference in M.

The story of the miracle was thus not in the D-E recension. This story existed separately in Latin and it was translated and extended by material from the D-E recension to give it the form it has in the miracle-collections in which it is now extant. The author of T obtained it in a different translation from that used in M, or perhaps translated it himself.

(ii) D, T and Robert of Cricklade's Vita.

Walberg has shown that B, the poem by Beneit, and

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog* (1883-96; 1954), s.v., especially the references to Hms. II; B. Berulfsen, *En stilistisk og språklig undersøkelse av brevene fra Håkon Erlingsson* (Bidrag til nordisk filologi IX, 1933), 54-6. There are two examples in the Latin text of the miracle (Hilka, *op. cit.* 173<sup>20</sup>, <sup>21</sup>), the one parted from its antecedent by eight, the other by three lines.

the fragment D have two passages in common, and since these passages do not appear in the same form elsewhere, they must be derived from the same source, Robert of Cricklade's life of St Thomas.<sup>25</sup> The first of these, which is also found in T, is an account of St Thomas's experience when Christ Himself promised him the crown of martyrdom. Walberg thought that the differences between D and T, although slight, were enough to permit the conclusion that the two are different translations of the same original. The passages from D and T and the corresponding stanzas from B are as follows:<sup>26</sup>

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D  | [heyrði er]kibyskup rödd, svá mælandi: "Heyrðu Thómas, <i>mín kirkja man dýrkaz í þínu blóði.</i> " Hann                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3  | svaraði, " <i>Hverr ertu dróttinn?</i> " Röddin mælti, " <i>Ek em Jesus Kristus, guðs sonr ok faðir þinn.</i> " Thómas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6  | svaraði, " <i>Verði svá vel dróttinn at þú dýrkiz í mínu blóði.</i> " Röddin svaraði, " <i>At sönnu man mín kirkja</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 9  | <i>dýrkaz í þínu blóði, ok þá er hon tignaz af þér, þá skaltu tignaz af mér.</i> " Nú eptir þessa ena dásamliga vitran                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 12 | ok [er] af leið mannligr ótti, þá girntiz hann á þetta eitt, er fyrr var sagt. Ok þá gengr ábótinn fram ok segir svá, " <i>Þetta má þér óumbræðiligr fagnaðr vera,</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15 | <i>herra, því at þú hefir við mælt sjálfan guð í dag.</i> " Thómas svaraði, " <i>Hversu máttu þat vita?</i> " Ábótinn svaraði, " <i>Vittu þat at ek heyrða á.</i> " Thómas bað þá ok bauð at hann skyldi engum manni segja meðan líf hans væri, ok hann gjörði svá.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| T  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 3  | kemr yfir hann rödd svá hljóðandi: "Thóma, Thóma, <i>kirkja mín mun dýrkast í blóði þínu.</i> " Erkibyskupinn svarar: " <i>Hverr ertu, Drottinn?</i> " Röddin talar: " <i>Ek er Jesús Kristr, bróðir þinn.</i> " Sæll Thómas segir: " <i>Verði svá vel, Drottinn minn, at kirkja þín dýrkist í blóði mínu!</i> " Guðs Son mælir þá enn: " <i>Sannliga man kirkja mín dýrkast í blóði þínu. Enn þá er hon dýrkast af þér, skaltu tignast af mér.</i> " Af þessi vitran fyldist hinn sæli Thómas með svá háleitum fagnaði, sem eingi má orðum skýra, ok svá mikill |

<sup>25</sup> *La tradition hagiographique*, 29-32.

<sup>26</sup> EM II 264<sup>10-28</sup>, I 316<sup>18</sup>-318<sup>18</sup>. There must be some doubt as to which of the readings, *faðir* D 4 and *bróðir* T 4, is better, because for *pere* B 977, other manuscripts of the poem have *frere*, see Schlyter, *La Vie de Thomas Becket*, 114, note *ad loc.*

- hiti guðligrar ástar gekk þegar at hans hugskoti, at  
 12 hann *girntist þetta fyrirheit* umframm alla luti, at  
 gefa sitt líf fyrir Guðs nafni. Þessu samtíða, sem  
 sæll Thómas þiggr birtingina, var ábótinn staðarins  
 15 innan kirkju svá leyniliga, at erkibyskup vissi eigi.  
 Ábóti sá prófast svá valdr maðr, at hann heyrði alla  
 þá orðræðu, sem fyrr var skrifat, millum Græðara  
 18 vors ok erkibyskups, því *geingr hann framm* af leyni  
 ok víkr at erkibyskupi svá mælandi: “*Þetta má*  
*yðr, herra, óumræðiligr fagnaðr vera, at þér hafit talað*  
 21 *vit sjálfan Guð.*” Signaðr Thómas svarar: “Hversu  
 kom þat í þína skilning ok kynning?” Ábótinn  
 segir: “Svo sanna vissu hefir ek þar af, at ek heyrði  
 24 öll ykkur orð.” Erkibyskup talar: “Ef svá er, sem  
 þú talar ok sannar, *þá biðjum vér yðr ok bjóðum*, at  
 þenna lut segir þú eingum manni, meðan vér lifum í  
 27 líkam.” Ok þat trúist ábótinn vel fyllt hafa.

B 961 L’abbes l’atendi el mustier,  
 Pres de li suz un piler,  
 Priveement.  
 Une voiz oï od li parler  
 Mes rien ne vit sei aprismer  
 Corporeument.

967 La voiz dist: “Jeo ai escutee  
 Ta oresun ke mult m’agree  
 E atalente.  
 Kar en tun sanc ert glorifíee  
 Tute seynte Iglise e honuree  
 Sanz lunge atente.”

973 Des paroles mult s’esjoist  
 Seint Thomas e tost enquist  
 Ki il esteit.  
 La voiz respundi, si li dist;  
 “Jeo sui tun pere, Jhesu Crist,  
 Ke trestut veit.”

979 Seint Thomas graces l’en rent  
 E puis li dist mult humblement,  
 Cum a seignur:  
 “Ma volenté serreit e mun talent  
 De souffrir la mort benignement  
 Pur vostre amour.”

- 985 Dunc dist Jhesu: "Thomas, Thomas,  
Verreiemment pur moy morras  
En seinte Eglise.  
E quant glorifié en sanc l'avras,  
E tu glorifié de moy serras  
Pur tun servise."
- 991 L'arcevesque out joie grant,  
Unkes en sa vie jur devant  
N'out greynur.  
Des dunc alad le mund perdant  
E sa premesse mult desirant  
Pur Deu amur.
- 997 Idunc s'est l'abbes demustré  
E l'arcevesque ad araisuné,  
Si li dist:  
"Mult poés estre joius e lié,  
Kant buche a buche avez parlé  
Od Jhesu Crist."
- 1003 Dist l'arcevesque: "Vus ke savez?"  
Respund li abbes: "Bien le sacez  
Ke jeo l'oÿ."  
Fait l'arcevesque: "Des ore gardez,  
Tant cum viveray le celez  
Cum ami."
- 1009 E li abbes issi le fist —

The italicised parts of D and T above are enough to show that one text lies behind both. D appears to be superior to T in its arrangement, since it must have agreed with B in introducing the abbot at the outset, not, as in T, in the middle (T 13-17). D also agrees with B against T in D 13-14 (*Tómas svaraði — heyrða á*), and 16 (*ok hann gerði svá*), cf. B 1003-5, 1009, perhaps also in D 4, cf. note 26. T, on the other hand, is certainly more original than D in the inclusion of T 8-10, cf. B 991-3, and in T 12, *girntist þetta fyrirheit*, corresponding to B 995, *E sa premesse mult desirant*, where D 9, *girntiz hann á þetta eitt*, is clearly the result of scribal error. The use of direct



speech T 24-27 also parallels B 1006-8, where D 14-16 has indirect speech, and it may be that the repeated vocative in T 1 is more original, cf. B 985.

From this comparison it may be concluded that the author of T had a text like D (part of the D-E recension), but this immediate source of his was fuller than D and thus nearer the ultimate original. In spite of D's deficiencies, it must still be counted in arrangement and language a faithful representative of the early Icelandic translation of Robert of Cricklade's work. (On parts of D attributable to a source other than Robert, see p. 423.) We learn also that this early translation was in general a plain and literal version of the Latin source, just as Beneit's poem must itself often have been a pretty literal versification of those parts he selected for treatment, and we learn that the author of T was capable of revising both the arrangement and style of the older work he was using.

The closeness of the original Icelandic translation to Robert of Cricklade's Latin is confirmed by the second passage which D and the poem have in common, the end of a speech made by the Earl of Arundel before the Pope.<sup>27</sup> There may be some abridgment in the Icelandic and various modifications in the poem, but there is, for example, a particularly striking parallel between the following:

D            Nú er hvárgi keisarinn yðr at fulltingi, en hinn  
              hvártveggi er vel viljaðr. Ok ef þér týnið vináttu  
              annars hvárs konungsins, þá hugsið ér hvern skaði  
              af má göraz yðr ok heilagri kirkju. Páfanum  
              þokkaðiz enskis þeirra ræða jafnvel sem jarlsins, ok  
              svarar fá ok vel —

B    895    "Des empereurs, bien le sachez,  
              A vostre pru nul nen avez,  
              Ceo peise mei.  
              E si wus des rois nul perdez,

<sup>27</sup> EM II 263<sup>24</sup>-264<sup>2</sup>, B 847-912.

Grant damage en averez,  
Si cum jeo crey."

901 L'apostoile bien l'escuta,  
De ses paroles s'esmerveila,  
C'est la sume.  
Beau respundi mes poi parlad —

907 De tuz ceus ke vindrent od li,  
Un sul n'i out si bien oÿ,  
Cum il esteit —

In T the Earl makes a different speech. What has happened is that the author of T has rejected his source like D in favour of the *Quadrilogus* text,<sup>28</sup> perhaps because the suggestion of papal *Realpolitik*, apparent in the speech in Robert of Cricklade's work, was not to his taste.

None of the remaining matter in the other D fragments is paralleled in Beneit's poem, but this is doubtless to be explained by the fact that from events of 1165-66 (ending line 1134) Beneit passes rapidly to events of 1169 (line 1153). In two of the intervening stanzas, however, he refers to missives from St Thomas to the king and bishops and others from the Pope, and it is precisely correspondence of this order that takes up most of the other fragments of D. In the Icelandic presentation all these letters are referred to 1165-66,<sup>29</sup> within the period Beneit passes over so rapidly. Some of this matter in D has been used by the author of T, apparently with some rearrangement of the order.

<sup>28</sup> EM I 282 ff.; the Latin text is in Unger, *Thomas saga*, 129-30 (the Norwegian translation of the *Quadrilogus* has lost two quires at this point, cf. Unger, 120, note 2), and *Materials* IV 338-9.

<sup>29</sup> The first letter, not elsewhere extant, is apparently referred to 1165, cf. EM I 322 ff. and II cxx-cxxii. The second letter is from 1165 and the third from either 1165 or later, but both are fitted into events towards the end of 1166, cf. EM I 376, note 15, II cxxix-cxxx, *Materials* V 175, 202 and note b. The fourth letter is from 1169, but both in D and T it appears in an earlier context (1166, 1165), although not in the same place, cf. EM I 332 ff., II cxxv, *Materials* VI 565. It may be noted that the exchange of letters between Thomas and the bishops given EM I 394-410 is something that T has in common with B 1015-98, and there can be no doubt but that this is derived in both from Robert of Cricklade; cf. Schlyter, *La Vie de Thomas Becket*, 11. The same is probably true of these letters also preserved in the D fragments and T. Cf. also the letters referred to in the Appendix.

III *Stock. 2 in relation to the other texts*

As was mentioned above, Eiríkr Magnússon observed that the text in Stock. 2 was related to that of D, in that these two alone say that St Thomas went himself to fetch the pallium, using closely similar words. Being related to D, Stock. 2 must also be related to Robert of Cricklade's work. The nature of that relationship can only be established by a collation of its text with that of Beneit's poem and with T, D and E.

(i)(a) Sources of Hms. II 315-318<sup>35</sup>.

The fragmentary text in Stock. 2 begins with the end of the story of St Thomas's escape from drowning as a young man, Hms. II 315<sup>4-7</sup>. This is not in B, but it is found in T, EM I 30-34, where at 32<sup>20</sup> there is a reference to Robert, "who wrote in Latin the life of St Thomas". Robert is presumably the source for the Stock. 2 text as well, an assumption supported by a verbal similarity between it and T in a passage where the author of the latter expressly says that he is using Robert's words (cf. Hms. II 315<sup>6</sup> with EM I 34<sup>5</sup>). There has certainly been some abridgment in Stock. 2, but it is difficult to assess because of the defective opening and T's stylistic revision.

The following text, Hms. II 315<sup>7</sup>-318<sup>35</sup>, tells of Thomas's service with Archbishop Theobald, the king's notice of him, his invitation to court, and his authority and influence as chancellor. His justice, generosity and piety are described, as well as his personal appearance, speech and character: though given to pride and pomp, his piety outweighed all. King Henry was in Normandy when the death of Archbishop Theobald occurred, but he ordered a meeting of prelates and made it known that he wished Thomas to be elected archbishop. This is done after some discussion, Thomas is told and he finally consents; he goes to Canterbury by way of Merton, where he professes as a canon; he is ordained priest and takes charge of the archdiocese. His character changes with

his ordination. Nearly all of this is closely paralleled in Beneit's poem, thus: Hms. II 315<sup>8-14</sup>: B 85-93; 315<sup>15-16</sup>: B 109-112; 315<sup>23-26</sup>: B 121-6; 315<sup>26</sup>-316<sup>1</sup>: B 133, 139-42; 316<sup>1-3</sup>: B 143-4; 316<sup>4-8</sup>: B 136-8, 145-7; 316<sup>8-9</sup>: B 163-5; 316<sup>11-18</sup>: B 175-86; 316<sup>18-20</sup>: B 211-6; 316<sup>30-31</sup>: B 199-200, 203-4; 316<sup>32</sup>: B 205; 317<sup>6</sup>-318<sup>25</sup>: B 223-348; 318<sup>25-27</sup>: B 355-7; 318<sup>27-34</sup>: B 361-90. Naturally, not all the details correspond, but in essentials the two works, each in its own way, must be faithful renderings of Robert's Latin. Sometimes, as was seen with D above, the Icelandic and the Anglo-Norman are surprisingly close. A couple of passages will suffice as illustration (Hms. II 315<sup>23-26</sup>, B 121-6; Hms. II 318<sup>22-24</sup>, B 343-8):

— at hann lét hann vera féhirði sinn ok ræðismann ok sér  
nágönglan at öllum ráðum um sitt ríki, ok engi maðr var sá í  
hirð konungsins, er honum væri kærri en Thómas nema kona  
hans ok börn.

Pus fist de luy sun chancelier,  
De tut le regne cunseiler  
E du tresur.  
Suz ciel n'out home ke plus eust chier  
Fors ses enfanz e sa mulier  
Alienor.

Gjörðu sem Páll postoli, er fyrst herjaði á helga kristni ok  
hennar vini, en síðan þoldi hann dauða fyrir ástar sakir við  
guð [honum] til vegs ok dýrðar —

“Fetes si cum seint Pol fist,  
K'a seinte Yglise guerre prist  
En la primur,  
E puis a mort pur li se mist,  
En l'onur de Jhesu Crist,  
Sun seignur. —”

Much of this matter in Stock. 2 reappears in T, although not always in the same order.<sup>30</sup> The discussion of the prelates at the meeting to elect the new archbishop corresponds closely in the two texts, but one need only

<sup>30</sup> cf. e.g. Hms. II 316<sup>35-37</sup>, 14-23, EM I 54<sup>18-56</sup>; Hms. II 317<sup>21-23</sup>, 15-18, 23-26, EM I 74<sup>5-9</sup>, 12-14, 16-21.

compare the text of T answering to the last passage quoted above from Stock. 2 and B to see what great stylistic revision the original may undergo in the new editor's hands. In T it reads (EM I 80<sup>26</sup>-82<sup>3</sup>):

Leið þér til minnis, hversu hann gerði Paulus, hann var fyrri mótstöðumaðr Guðs kristni, enn síðan mestr uppheldismaðr í orði ok eftirdæmi, ok dýrkaði hana at lyktum með sínu banablóði.

(i)(b) Passages not paralleled in B.

So far in Stock. 2 there are three passages of some significance that are not paralleled in B: Hms. II 315<sup>17-22</sup>, 316<sup>20-29</sup>, 316<sup>35</sup>-317<sup>6</sup>. The first of these tells of the king's recognition of Thomas's abilities and his request to the archbishop to allow Thomas to come into his service. This is not in T, so doubt must remain about its provenance, although in all probability it is from Robert of Cricklade, perhaps in abridged form (Hms. II 315<sup>17-18</sup> and B 130-2 may both echo the same original text). The first part of the second passage, Hms. II 316<sup>20-23</sup>, is not paralleled exactly in B, but may be said to be in general agreement with the matter found in B 173-4, 196-8, 208-10, and such a text as that in Stock. 2 was used in T, see EM I 56<sup>5-6</sup>. The second part of this passage is only partially legible in the manuscript, but it concerns Thomas's devotion to God while chancellor and the king's appreciation of his piety. The passage contains the phrase, *vakti mjök á bænum*, something which is repeated in the third passage noted above: *Hverja nótt vakti hann lengi á bænum, stundum í rekkju sinni, en stundum í kirkju úti*. Now, in T (EM I 50-54<sup>15</sup>) there is a general effusion on St Thomas's devotion and chastity, followed by two stories to illustrate them: the second story is taken from the *Quadrilogus* translation,<sup>31</sup> but the first tells of how the saint was found by night lying in prayer outside a church and it is specifically referred to Robert's authority. The editor of the Stock. 2 text has

<sup>31</sup> Unger, *Thomas saga*, 8-9; *Materials* IV 273.

here evidently abridged the original text by omitting the anecdote. How far his words may represent Robert's introductory matter and how far they are his own cobbling-stitches cannot be told.

The third passage mentioned here and not paralleled in B concerns St Thomas's character and follows immediately after the description of his person which will be discussed below. The last lines of this passage, *Hverja nótt vakti hann lengi* etc., were quoted above; they are followed by an expanded quotation from a psalm, Hms. II 317<sup>3-6</sup>. This is not found in T. The earlier part of the passage reads thus:

Sæll Thómas var röskr í sóknum, sem sagt er frá hinum helga Sebastiano, trúr í heitum, forsjáll í ráðum, ágætligr í öllu, siðprúðr í búningi, þá er hann fylgdi konungi, þó bar hugprýði hans meir af öllum mönnum í hverju góðu ráði, ok þótt nökkurt bil (?) sýndiz hann drambsmaðr í sinni prýði líkamligri, þá var hann öllum framar í dýrligum hugrenningum ok lítillátr í guðs augliti.

Such a passage as this has been adapted in T. The parallel with St Sebastian is found EM I 54<sup>18-27</sup>, but it would be difficult to recognise the literal kinship of T and Stock. 2 if the former did not contain the words, *trúlyndr í fyrirheiti, forsjáll í ráði* (cf. line 2 in the passage from Stock. 2). The phrase *röskr í sóknum* (line 1 above) may be responsible for the line in T, *hversu röskr maðr hann hefir verit til stríðs*, which occurs in a different passage in combination with other material, based on the *Quadrilogus* translation (EM 56<sup>30-582</sup>).<sup>32</sup> It also seems likely that the last sentence in the passage quoted above (*ok þótt — augliti*) is echoed in the following earlier passage in T, EM I 48<sup>25-29</sup>:

<sup>32</sup> Unger, *Thomas saga*, 10<sup>14</sup>-11<sup>5</sup>; *Materials* IV 274, from Herbert of Bosham. This correspondence with the *Quadrilogus* is ignored by Eiríkr Magnússon, EM I 56, note 10, cf. II ciii, though correctly seen by Unger, *Thomas saga*, IV. Given this passage in the *Quadrilogus*, there is no justification for Eiríkr Magnússon's speculation that the 'book' referred to here in the Icelandic might be Robert of Cricklade's work. There are other signs that he underestimated the influence of the *Quadrilogus* translation on T, as well as the ability of the author of T to rewrite his sources. Cf. note 62.

Ok þótt hann væri líkr metnaðarmönnum í veraldar eftirlæti, var hann þeim harðla ólíkr, er elska þetta líf, því at hann virði aldri at minna góðan mann, þó at fátækr væri, ok aldri vondan at framar, þótt férikr væri.

The last part here (*því at hann virði — férikr væri*) corresponds to a different sentence in Stock. 2, Hms. II 316<sup>13-14</sup>:

ok svá gerði hann góðan mann [eigi] at minna, at fátækr væri, né illan at meira, at auðigr væri.

That this is in its rightful place in Stock. 2 and has been shifted in T is shown by the parallel passage in B 175-80.

After the passage comparing St Thomas and St Sebastian, T has some lines on the archbishop's charity and authority, EM I 54<sup>27</sup>-56<sup>10</sup>. These undoubtedly depend on a text like that in Stock. 2, Hms. II 316<sup>14-23</sup>, where again comparison with B 180-6, 211-6, shows that Stock. 2 must have the original order and doubtless, in the main, the original language.<sup>33</sup>

Here, then, T is seen to have matter which, dispersed and rephrased though it often is, must depend on an older text like that in Stock. 2.<sup>33a</sup> Beneit's poem shows that some of this matter is certainly from Robert of Cricklade and that Stock. 2 is more original than T in its arrangement. We may reasonably conclude that the matter which T and Stock. 2 have in common, but which is not in B (or any other source), is also from Robert. In this, as in the long passage preceding, Stock. 2 must be counted, despite its omissions, our only close

<sup>33</sup> The last part of this passage in T, EM I 56<sup>6-10</sup>, contains a reference to a fief given to Thomas, *er nýir menn kalla barúniam*, which, according to EM II cii-ciii, must be drawn from an unknown source. In B 592 the Earl of Leicester speaks to Thomas and says: *De la barunie ke vus tenez* —. It may thus be that this matter in T is also from Robert of Cricklade.

<sup>33a</sup> A possibility that must be borne in mind is that the Latin text of Robert of Cricklade's work was still extant in Iceland in the fourteenth century and that the author of T had recourse to it, as well as to the older translation derived from it. That translation may have been abridged from the start. This editing and amplifying of an older vernacular text by reference to the Latin original has been postulated, for example, in the case of the *Jóns saga ens helga* (Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Dating the Icelandic Sagas* (1958), 109, note 1), of the *Stephanus saga* version in Stock. 2 (Ole Widding, *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* XXI (1952), 154-5), and of versions of the *Martinus saga* (P. G. Foote, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile* IV (1962), 20).

representative of the original Icelandic translation of Robert's work.

(i)(c) The description of St Thomas: sources of Stock. 2, and D-T.

The description of St Thomas's person, speech and mental powers offers the only opportunity to put the texts of B, Stock. 2, T and D side by side. As will be seen, this comparison is important for an assessment of the nature of the text represented by the fragment D.<sup>34</sup>

B 199 Hum esteit de bele estature,  
Nent trop grant mes a mesure,  
Cum dis einceis.  
Semblant out de bone nature,  
De vileynie n'out unkes cure,  
Tant fu curteis.

205 Facunde out bone de parler  
Pur grant affere en curt mustrer  
Reinablement.

Cf. 217-9 Ceo est la fin, tant fu vaillant,  
Curteis e pruz e bien parlant  
E de tel sens —

Stock. 2 Thómas var heldr hár meðalmaðr at vexti . . .  
kurteiss, svartr á hárslit, heldr lang[nefjaðr],  
3 skýrmæltr ok hvellmæltr ok blíðr í máli, ok nökkut  
stamr stundum, ok mælti hann brosandí nökkut.  
Hvárki fylgdi hans [máli] hlátr né stemi svá at til  
6 lastar þótti, heldr þótti [þat] vera með blíðleik ok  
þokkamóti.

D Erkibyskup Thómas var hárr maðr á vöxt, grann-  
vaxinn ok ljóslitaðr, svarthárr, neflangr, réttleitr,  
3 blíðligr í yfirbragði, hvass í hugviti, inndæll ok  
ástsamligr í allri viðræðu, skorinorðr í formælum ok  
líttat stamr. Hann var svá hvass ok gleggrr í

<sup>34</sup> B 199-207, 217-9; Hms. II 316<sup>30-35</sup> (emended by reference to the codex); EM II 262<sup>10-21</sup> (= D, completed by quotation in brackets of text from Unger, *Mariu saga*, 202<sup>16-18</sup>; similar text also in Add. 11, 242, see Appendix); EM I 28<sup>9-16</sup>.



- 6 skiln[ingi at hann greiddi vitrliga vandar spurningar.  
Svá var hann ok minnigr at þat sem hann] heyrði í  
ritningum eða lagadæmum, þat var honum allt  
9 tiltækt þá er hann vildi þat frammi hafa. Guðs  
móður Mariam dýrkaði hann ok virði umfram  
alla aðra helga menn ok fal henni á hendi allt sitt  
12 ráð næst guði. Forsjáll var hann [í] meðferð sinni ok  
ráðagjörð, vandykr í sak . . .

T grannvaxinn maðr ok ljóslitaðr, svartr á hár, neflangr  
ok réttleitr, blíðr í yfirbragði, hvass í hugviti, inndæll  
3 ok ástúðigr í allri viðræðu, skorinorðr í formæli, ok  
stamr nokkut lítt; svá snarpr í grein ok skilning, at  
hann greiddi jafnan vitrliga vandar spurningar; svá  
6 var hann ok furðuliga minnigr, at hvat er hann  
heyrði af ritningum ok lagadómum var honum  
tiltækt á hverri tíð, er hann vildi frammi hafa.

Of the physical description itself there is little to be said. It looks as though Stock. 2 may well be nearer the original in its *heldr hár meðalmaðr at vexti* (cf. B 199-200), and T is evidently based on a text like D. What must be observed, however, is the position of this passage, which differs in the three Icelandic texts. In T it occurs after St Thomas has finished his schooling in France, before he takes service with Archbishop Theobald. In D it occurs at some point much later in the narrative, after he has become archbishop. But in Stock. 2 it appears in essentially the same position as in Beneit's poem. Here Stock. 2 must be nearer the original, while D represents a revision.

The matter in D 5-9, T 4-8, above is not paralleled in Stock. 2 or in B. Mere absence in these two last texts does not of course mean that matter in D could not have been in Robert of Cricklade's work. But here it is evident that the lines in question are related to a passage in John of Salisbury, which forms part of the sentence in which he describes St Thomas's appearance:

tantoque rationis vigebat acumine ut prudenter inauditas **et**  
difficiles solveret quæstiones; adeoque felici gaudebat memoria

ut quæ semel in sententiis aut verbis didicerat, fere quotiens volebat, posset sine difficultate proferre.<sup>35</sup>

One would conclude that the editor of D has not only altered the order of the original text but also conflated that text with material from John of Salisbury.

Such a conclusion is supported by an examination of the remaining lines in D 10-13 in the passage quoted above, and of other parts of the first fragmentary leaf of D. Compare the following with lines 10-13:

- (a) . . . didicit . . . beatam virginem . . . dulcius invocare, et in illam post Christum totam jactare fiduciam.
- (b) Erat quoque providus in consiliis, et in ventilatione causarum diligens —.<sup>36</sup>

And further, e.g.:

- (c) Allar stundir þær sem á milli urðu svefns ok tíða ok líkams nauðsynja, þá sat hann yfir málum manna eða ritningum eða merkiligu hjali —  
Post epulas autem et somnum ubi necessitas poscebat exactum, denuo præter pensum horarum aut negotiis aut scripturis aut honestis colloquiis insistebat —.<sup>37</sup>
- (d) Þrætumenn forðaðiz hann ok aldri vildi hann samneyta bannsettum mönnum, ok hvern dæmði hann þann sinn óvin er á móti sneriz heilli kenningu.  
Hæreticos et schismaticos infatigabiliter expugnabat, et nunquam induci potuit, ut excommunicatis communicaret; et quisquis sanæ doctrinæ adversabatur, eum sibi hostem futurum in Christo non dubitabat.<sup>38</sup>
- (e) Mikla stund leggr konungr á at samþykkja Thómas við sik bæði með [. . . ei]gi við hótin né blotnar við blíðmælin. Conatus est ergo rex archiepiscopum promissis et blanditiis ad suum inclinare consensum. Sed vir Dei . . . nec blanditiis emolliri potuit, nec minis terreri —.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Materials* II 302.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* 302-3; 307. In connection with the first passage, it is proper to note that B 401-2 has:

Kar il ama Deu parfitement  
E sainte Marie.

But the lines in themselves are trite and they occur in a different context from that under discussion in D.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* 308.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* 309.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.* 309.

- (f) — refsing rangynda til grimðar ok ágangs, fjárheimtur kirkna til ágirni, húskarla fjölða til metnaðar, ok þat er hann tók suma hluti framar en hinir fyrri byskupar, þá mátu þeir til djarftæki. Ok svá mátti at kveða at ecki gjörði hann þess né mælti er eigi þýddi hans óvinir afleiðis ok á vinstra veg —

Zelum justitiæ crudelitatem mentiebantur; quod ecclesiæ procurabat utilitates, avaritiæ attribuebant . . . curialis magnificentia fingeatur elatio . . . quod antecessorum metas in tuendo jure sæpe videbatur excedere, temeritatis arbitrabantur indicium. Nihil jam ab eo vel dici vel fieri poterat, quod non malitia infelicium hominum depravaret —<sup>40</sup>

The correspondences between D and John of Salisbury, not exhausted by the passages quoted here,<sup>41</sup> are too many and too close to permit any conclusion other than that there is a literary connection between them. If this material in D is from John of Salisbury, it must have been drawn from a separate text of his work, not from the *Quadrilogus*, since, although the *Quadrilogus* has most of this material from John, it does not have it all.<sup>42</sup>

It might still be argued that this matter was in Robert of Cricklade's work if a case could be made for believing that Robert had borrowed from John or, alternatively, that John had borrowed from Robert. The latter suggestion can hardly be right. Walberg has shown that John himself adapted material from William of Canterbury and the author of the Anonymous Lambeth life, and some of the material he borrowed from the latter author reappears in the Icelandic.<sup>43</sup> Here it is sometimes evidently in a form closer to John than to the Lambeth

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* 310.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. EM II 262<sup>32</sup>-263<sup>1</sup>, on Thomas's generosity to the poor, followed by the beginning of a comparison with Archbishop Theobald, with *Materials* II 307; EM 263<sup>3-7</sup> with *Materials* II 309.

<sup>42</sup> Passage (c) and the second passage mentioned in note 41 are not in the *Quadrilogus*. The translation of the passages here that are in the *Quadrilogus* is clearly independent of the Norwegian translation of the whole work.

<sup>43</sup> *La tradition hagiographique*, 173-85. Passages (b) (c) (f) and the two passages mentioned in note 41 are based on matter in the Lambeth text.

text,<sup>44</sup> and if we wished to believe John obtained it from Robert, we should have to assume that Robert first took it from the Lambeth life and then transmitted it to John — a theory which appears to have no other evidence in its support. Chronologically it might have been possible, for the Lambeth life is dated to the end of 1172 or the beginning of 1173, Robert's work to 1173 (probably), and John of Salisbury's to 1173-6. William of Canterbury also wrote in 1173 or the beginning of 1174.<sup>45</sup>

A possible argument in favour of the alternative theory, that Robert himself borrowed from John, might be that the Icelandic in the passages quoted above appears to treat the original so freely that it must indicate that the Latin had already been reworked. I do not see how such an argument can be proved or disproved on its own, but there is certainly plenty of evidence to show that Icelandic and Norwegian authors were capable of free translation, especially in the early period, not to mention stylistic revision in the stages of editing. Against the theory may be adduced the chronology of the texts, as noted above, although the dates are not precise enough to refute it entirely by themselves. There is also the complete absence of this matter comparable with John of Salisbury's text in Beneit's poem and Stock. 2 — despite the unsatisfactory nature of these sources, this must be allowed some weight. Finally, we must recall that D is a fragment of the D-E recension, a text in which there has certainly been a conflation of sources and some rearrangement of the narrative (cf. p. 422), so that there are no *a priori* grounds for expecting D to present a pure text of the Robert of Cricklade translation.

At this point it is desirable to consider the sources of

<sup>44</sup> Cf. e.g. the following with the opening of passage (b), Latin and Icelandic: . . . *in propriorum ordinatione providus, in causarum decisione promptus et justus* (Materials IV 88). But in one instance the Icelandic has an expression corresponding to the Lambeth text rather than to John, although the whole passage in which it occurs is nearer his text. Cf. the following with the last sentence in (f): *Denique vix aliquid boni visus est agere, quod non in sinistram partem retorserint* (Materials IV 92).

<sup>45</sup> Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 133-4.

the text preserved in E, fragments representing the Gesta post martyrium as it appeared in the D-E recension. Leaves 2-4 of E present no problem: they contain matter translated and abridged from Benedict's *Miracula*,<sup>46</sup> followed by two miracles derived from Robert of Cricklade's work.<sup>47</sup> Most of this matter re-appears in T.

The sources of the text on the first leaf of E are not so easy to define.<sup>48</sup> The limited range of the material here can be extended by reference to the text of the Mary-miracle concerning St Thomas (M; and cf. Appendix). As was seen above, p. 410, the man who wrote that text made use of a text of the D-E recension, and it is natural to assume that he obtained all his comparatively brief material (other than the miracle story itself) from that one recension. A combination of M and E gives us the following matter: (1) Reflections on the character, qualities and death of St Thomas: M 200<sup>7</sup>-201<sup>7</sup>. This corresponds to the opening of the Gesta post martyrium in T, EM II 2-4<sup>14</sup>. Presumably both T and M drew it from the D-E recension.<sup>49</sup> (2) A brief description of

<sup>46</sup> EM II 274<sup>23</sup>-283<sup>28</sup>, *Materials* II 23-31, 56-62.

<sup>47</sup> EM II 283<sup>29</sup>-284<sup>14</sup>, cf. pp. 435-6.

<sup>48</sup> An insoluble problem at present is that of the source of the letters found in E and T. E has two, one from King Louis and one from Count Theobald of Blois, both addressed to the Pope, EM II 272<sup>20</sup>-274<sup>21</sup>, *Materials* VII 428-9, 433-5. They reappear in T (EM II 14, 20), with a letter from Archbishop William of Sens inserted in its proper chronological order between them (EM II 16, *Materials* VII 429-33). Later in T there is a letter from the Pope to Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter (EM II 50, *Materials* VII 534-6), and another from him to the people of England on St Thomas's canonisation (EM II 190, *Materials* VII 547-8). The first three were widely known, and doubtless the fifth also, but the fourth is apparently rare. It would have been chronologically possible for Robert of Cricklade to have included them in his work (the latest of the letters, that on the canonisation, is dated 12 March 1273), but whether he did so must remain pure speculation. It is altogether more likely that the letters extant in D were from Robert, see note 29. It is perhaps impossible to trace a source for the letters. Cf. Canon Robertson's words: "It would seem that small collections of the letters relating to the history of Thomas of Canterbury were very early made; and such collections, varying in extent and in matter according to the opportunities which each scribe enjoyed, are in many cases annexed to the MSS. of the different Lives" (*Materials* V xv).

<sup>49</sup> The reference in M 200<sup>7-8</sup> to Thomas son Gilliberts ok Moaldar [sic] appears to depend on the reference at the beginning of the passage in T, EM II 2<sup>6-8</sup>, to the fulfilment of a prophetic vision seen by his mother at the time of his birth. This reference firmly links the Gesta post martyrium, here beginning, with the Vita itself, since this vision is described at the outset of the latter, EM I 14<sup>12-15</sup>. It is moreover said to be peculiar to the Icelandic

Thomas's death and last words, M 201<sup>7-20</sup>. (3) A description of the saint's dead body,<sup>50</sup> M 201<sup>20-202</sup><sup>10</sup>. (After this comes the personal description, discussed above, pp. 421 ff.) (4) Exhortation to consider the outstanding things in his martyrdom, the cause, the victim's status, the time and the place, M 202<sup>24-203</sup><sup>7</sup> = E, EM II 270<sup>7-14</sup>; lacuna in T. (5) Pious remarks surrounding a precise statement of the year, day and hour of the martyrdom, M 203<sup>8-22</sup> = E, EM II 270<sup>14-27</sup>; lacuna in T. (6) Description of the rifling of the palace by the murderers (the king had the loot returned later); the burial of the archbishop was forbidden, but the monks and clerks made hasty preparations, finding his hairshirt on his body as they made it ready, and laid him in a grave in the church, E, EM 270<sup>28-271</sup><sup>28</sup>. Not in M; lacuna in T, but the author of T knew this text, cf. below. (7) The fear and horror of all the population described, with two anecdotes to illustrate the power of the secular over the church after the martyrdom, E, EM II 271<sup>29-272</sup><sup>18</sup> and T, EM II 6<sup>11-8</sup><sup>18</sup>.

Passages 2 and 3 here are derived from the *Quadrilogus* translation. The former is a brief summary of its text, but shows unmistakable verbal similarities; the latter is a straightforward quotation from it.<sup>51</sup> Passage 1 is almost certainly from the same source, but the Norwegian text is defective at this point, and one can only go by the fact that the passage in M and T appears to be a shortened and simplified version of the chapter *Altior consideratio*

text (EM II xcvi), and the possibility thus exists that it is derived from Robert of Cricklade, who we know from B 25-61 included at least one such vision in his work. There thus need be no difficulty in believing that the reference and the earlier passage referred to were both in the D-E recension.

<sup>50</sup> Something corresponding to passages 2 and 3 might have stood in the lacuna in T (following EM II 6<sup>11</sup>), but the description of the martyrdom at the end of the life proper in T, EM I 542-58, is largely based on the *Quadrilogus* translation, just as these passages in M are.

<sup>51</sup> For passage 2 cf. M 201<sup>9, 10-11, 12-14, 14-15</sup> with Unger, *Thomas saga*, 259<sup>2</sup>, 260<sup>2</sup>, 4-5, 261<sup>19-20</sup>, 262<sup>2-3</sup> (M seems on occasion to have a better text than the *Quadrilogus* manuscript). For passage 3 cf. M 201<sup>20-202</sup><sup>10</sup> with Unger, *Thomas saga*, 272<sup>5-273</sup><sup>2</sup> (*Materials* IV 404-5). The passage in M here is obviously drawn from a longer text because the last four words, M 202<sup>10</sup>, are included in error — they properly belong to the following sentence in the *Quadrilogus* translation.

*martyrii et argumentum*, taken into the *Quadrilogus* from John of Salisbury.<sup>52</sup> Passage 4 appears to some extent as a repetition of passage 1 insofar as it reflects ideas from this same text in John of Salisbury's work; it is much shorter than passage 1 and verbally independent of it.<sup>53</sup>

The source for the opening and close of passage 5 is uncertain. The middle part, on the time of the martyrdom, is in M a closely literal translation of a passage in the *Quadrilogus*, derived there from Benedict's *Passio*.<sup>54</sup> The Norwegian translation is again defective at this point. The corresponding passage in E differs considerably, yet must, it seems, be more original than M. For the date it gives appears to be based on the Gerlandus chronology, a system which gives a figure for the years of our era seven years lower than the normal.<sup>55</sup> This manner of dating is paralleled only in Icelandic texts composed towards the end of the twelfth century and in the earliest decades of the thirteenth.<sup>56</sup> It thus seems likely that in E this passage goes back to the early translation of Robert of Cricklade's work. We must then presume that in the form of the recension used in M that early dating has been replaced by the much less ambiguous text of the *Quadrilogus* translation.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. the Latin text, Unger, *Thomas saga*, 265<sup>20</sup>-266<sup>7</sup>, *Materials* IV 400. The following text in T, EM II 4<sup>14</sup>-6<sup>11</sup> (after which comes the lacuna), is said by Eiríkr Magnússon to come from Herbert of Bosham's *Liber melorum* or some similar record, see EM II cxlviii-ix, 6 note 8. But the last four lines are joined with matter from the *Quadrilogus*, or perhaps direct from John of Salisbury, cf. EM II 6<sup>7-11</sup> with Unger, *Thomas saga*, 266<sup>10-12</sup>, *Materials* IV 400 = II 317. The possibility that the preceding passage, EM II 4<sup>14</sup> onwards, was in Robert of Cricklade cannot be discounted.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. *Materials* II 316<sup>30-32</sup>, 317<sup>4-16</sup>, 317<sup>24-29</sup>, 318<sup>14-28</sup>, IV 400-1.

<sup>54</sup> *Materials* IV 407-8, II 19. In *Thomas saga*, 278, Unger prints the text from M (justifiably correcting the text of *MarS* by reference to *MarE*, see M 203 note 6).

<sup>55</sup> EM II 270<sup>20-22</sup>: á fjórða ári [hins .vii. tigar] hins .xii. hundraðs fra hollium guðs getnaði. Eptir Dionisium m°. c°. .lxx.

<sup>56</sup> On Gerland's system see G. Turville-Petre, in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies . . . presented to Bruce Dickins* (1959), 105, and Jón Jóhannesson, 'Um tímatal Gerlands', *Skírnir* CXXVI (1952), 76-93, whose conclusions, 87 note 2, I follow in the reading given in note 55. In Beneit's poem, 1813-18, there is support for the hypothesis that the year given in E's first statement is counted as beginning 25 December. He dates the martyrdom 1171 years after *la seinte incarnaciun de Jhesu*. The reference both in B and E may also be to a year beginning 25 March (the Annunciation). Cf. also Edward Grim, *Materials* II 439.

Material corresponding to passage 6 is of course to be found in all the lives of the saint, and Beneit's poem shows that Robert of Cricklade's work certainly contained something of the same kind as well.<sup>57</sup> There is however one point in the Icelandic here which suggests that his work is the ultimate source for this passage. Alone amongst the sources, it says that when the murderers came to the king, he was ill pleased *ok lét flest aftr fara þat er þeir höfðu tekit* (EM II 271<sup>2-3</sup>). T has a reference to this in a different position (after passage 7, EM II 82<sup>1-26</sup>):

— þær bækr, er framast fylgja Heinreki gamla, setja þat í fyrstu eftir andlát erkibyskups, at ránfengi þat er honum fluttist af Kantúaría léti hann flest aftr færa. Enn þat segir eingi bók, at hann fénýtti sér eigi nokkuð af.

There are things in Beneit's poem and in the Stock. 2 text which show that Robert's book might well be counted, perhaps with William Fitzstephen's, amongst those *er framast fylgja Heinreki gamla*.<sup>58</sup>

A problem which must be considered is that there are parts of this passage which are very close to John of Salisbury's description of the murder.<sup>59</sup> But here there can be no question of a conflation at any stage in the Icelandic transmission, simply because it is inconceivable that these same details were not already in the account we presume to have come from Robert: it would have been a very curious description without them and there was no question of Robert's having better information than John. Robert must have used John's description, but we are still no nearer a certain solution of the problem

<sup>57</sup> B 1777-1812.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hms. II 319<sup>8</sup>, 23-24: *Heinrikr konungr var bæði vitr maðr ok ríkr; — konungrinn var vitr maðr, ok hugr hans var lengi staðfastur á ást við Thomas*. And B 91-108 (praise of Henry's beneficent power), 1201-6 (the king not to be blamed for wishing his son to be crowned — he did it *mult sagement* to keep the kingdom in peace), 2065-2082 (exhortation to pray for the king). We may note too that Robert dedicated his abridgment of Pliny's *Natural History* to Henry, cf. Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 25. On William Fitzstephen's case, see *Materials* III xiv-xv; differently EM II lxxviii-lxxx; and a synthesis of views in D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway, *English Historical Documents* 1042-1189 (1953), 699.

<sup>59</sup> cf. EM II 270<sup>28</sup>-271<sup>1</sup>, 271<sup>5-8</sup>, 16-21, 22-26 and *Materials* II 320<sup>28</sup>-321<sup>8</sup>, 322<sup>5-10</sup>, 321<sup>23-29</sup>, 322<sup>12-16</sup>.



of the source of the passages in D discussed above, because Robert need not have used the *Vita* by John, but simply the letter he wrote in 1171(-2) describing the murder.<sup>60</sup> This letter was used in the Anonymous Lambeth text, by Edward Grim and Benedict of Peterborough, possibly by William of Canterbury, and it is repeated by John himself in his *Vita*.<sup>61</sup> It would have been natural for Robert to use it as well, and there are no chronological difficulties to face, as there are if borrowing from John's *Vita* is assumed. Passage 4 above could then depend on the same use.

Little can be said about passage 7 above. No source is known for it. It too may be from Robert of Cricklade.

In the text of the D-E fragments themselves, then, we find a combination of material from Robert of Cricklade and John of Salisbury, with the inclusion of letters and with the *Gesta post martyrium* completed by material from Benedict's *Miracula*. We have seen that it is likely that Robert made use of John's description of the murder and following events, and the simplest explanation of the passages in D that are related to John's work would be that they too were already in Robert's work. But the simplest explanation is not always the best and there are difficulties in the way of this one. The more complicated explanation would be that Robert wrote a life of Thomas Becket in which he used John's letter describing the death of the saint. This was translated early into Icelandic. Later, this work was extended by material from John's *Vita* and from Benedict's *Miracula* to give us the D-E recension.<sup>61a</sup> Taking M into account, we see that its source was a form of the D-E recension which had been extended still further, at any rate in the parts dealing with the martyrdom and its immediate sequel, by

<sup>60</sup> The letter is printed *Materials* VII 462 ff. On the date cf. Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 176.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 124-32.

<sup>61a</sup> It may be noted that John of Salisbury's *Vita* could appear as an introduction to Benedict's *Miracula*, cf. *Materials* II xxi.

reference to the *Quadrilogus* translation. (As mentioned earlier, it seems less likely that the author of M would have consulted two recensions in putting his short text together, and it is easier to assume that he made use of a recension which had already borrowed from the *Quadrilogus* translation.) This conclusion explains the repetition that appears in passages 1 and 4 and the discrepancy between E and M in passage 5: in each case E has the original text, while in M (and T) that text has been expanded or revised by reference to the *Quadrilogus* translation.

(ii) Sources of Hms. II 318<sup>35</sup>-319<sup>32</sup>.

After Hms. II 318<sup>35</sup> close comparison between Stock. 2 and Beneit's poem is impossible. The lines Hms. II 318<sup>35</sup>-319<sup>5</sup> tell very briefly of his life of devotion while at Canterbury, his consecration and his going to the pope to receive the pallium (cf. D, EM II 262<sup>1-7</sup>). Only his charity and devotion are spoken of after his consecration in B 397-400:

De sa vie esteit comencement  
De vivre tut dis honestement,  
Sanz vilainie,  
De vestir e pestre povre gent —

There is a long detailed account in T, EM I 94-110, of the archbishop's customs. Although the chief source for this appears to be the *Quadrilogus* translation, it may be that matter from Robert of Cricklade is amongst it and could be disentangled from the rest.<sup>62</sup>

In the following text in Stock. 2, Hms. II 319<sup>5-32</sup>, St Thomas is said to take control of all churches and incumbencies, matters in which the king had earlier had

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Unger, *Thomas saga*, 24-44. Eiríkr Magnússon does not recognise the use of the *Quadrilogus* translation, EM II cv-cvi. His claim that the mention of Pope Urban III as one of Thomas's companions, EM I 106<sup>12-13</sup>, is found only in T is an oversight, for it too is from the *Quadrilogus* translation, Unger, *Thomas saga*, 39<sup>13</sup>, although not in the *Quadrilogus* itself, cf. *Materials* IV 289. The ultimate source for the insertion is presumably Herbert of Bosham's *Catalogus Eruditorum*, see Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 190, col. 1289, cf. H. K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes* X (1914), 288.

much say. He refuses to crown Prince Henry, on the grounds that two kings cannot be in the same kingdom at one time. The archbishop of York and another bishop, enemies of St Thomas, slander him before the king, although it is difficult and takes a long time to arouse the king against him. They then crown the prince. On hearing this, Thomas writes to the pope, who excommunicates the bishops and the young king.<sup>63</sup> "And when they knew this their dishonour, they asked the king when he would . . . ." Here the text breaks off and there is a lacuna of four leaves.

The writer of the Stock. 2 text, having spent some time on Thomas's youth, his election and consecration, was evidently intent on then getting as quickly as possible to the heart of the matter, the events that formed the immediate background to the martyrdom.<sup>64</sup> The earlier part of this passage and the narrative order in which it occurs are in agreement with Beneit's poem, where immediately after the description of St Thomas's life as archbishop, ending B 402, come three stanzas, B 403-420, which tell of his protection of clerks and Holy Church, and of the enmity of Satan and the slanders and misunderstandings he caused to come between archbishop and king. The poem later contains reference to the crowning of the prince (1177-83), to the letters to the pope (1225-30), and to the excommunication of the archbishop of York and other bishops (1297-1302). Such matter is common to the lives of St Thomas, of course, but, given that the preceding matter in Stock. 2 is from Robert of Cricklade, it may at any rate be said that no positive objection can be maintained against a view that regards this passage also as a very rapid and not wholly accurate summary of

<sup>63</sup> There could hardly have been warrant in Robert's work for the inclusion of the young king here, cf. B 1298-1302.

<sup>64</sup> The incitement of the bishops, led by the archbishop of York, was commonly regarded as the immediate cause of the king's anger, cf. D. Knowles, *The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket* (1951), 115, 137-9.

material found in the Icelandic translation of Robert's work.<sup>65</sup>

(iii) Source of miracle, Hms. II 319<sup>34</sup>-320<sup>6</sup>.

After the lacuna we find ourselves in the middle of an account of a miracle, in which a boy, lifeless for three nights, is restored by the water of the saint; see the text Hms. II 319<sup>34</sup>-320<sup>6</sup>. This must be the miracle in which the son of a knight, Jordan, is cured, given by Benedict of Peterborough and by William of Canterbury and also found in T.<sup>66</sup> The details in T correspond very closely to Benedict's account, but only an extract is given — the restoration to life of the boy, as in Stock. 2 — and not the whole story, which tells further of Jordan's failure to fulfil his vow and the punishment he suffered. No verbal connection is evident between the Icelandic texts in Stock. 2 and T, but in the exchange of words between priest and father it is clear that Stock. 2 is much nearer a Latin text like or the same as Benedict's than T is. Compare the passages:<sup>67</sup>

Benedict . . . sacerdos . . . ait illi, "Utquid, domine, sepultura differtur defuncti? ecce jam secunda dies defluxit, postquam puer decessit." Et contra ille, "Nequaquam sepelietur filius meus; revera namque testificatur mihi cor meum, quod per martyrem Thomam mihi reddendus sit: afferte aquam domini mei."

Stock. 2 Þá mælti prestr enn, at eigi þyrfti at dvelja at jarða hann, "nú hafa liðit .iii. nætr," sagði hann, "þaðan frá er hann andaðiz." Bóndinn svaraði, "Öllungis eigi mun sonr minn enn vera grafinn, fyrir því

<sup>65</sup> Cf. note 63. Two bishops are named, *Jokell* of York, and another, *Gillibjarkr*. These presumably stand for Jocelin of Salisbury and Gilbert Foliot of London, both of whom, with other bishops, assisted Roger of York at the coronation of Prince Henry. And it was they who, with Roger, went to the king in Normandy and stirred him up against the returning archbishop. See D. Knowles, *op. cit.* 136-7.

<sup>66</sup> *Materials* II 229 ff., I 160 ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Materials* II 229-30, Hms. II 319<sup>34-39</sup>, EM II 160<sup>1-10</sup>. In a text of this kind no significance can be attached to the discrepancy in the length of the time given for the boy's death. It has simply undergone a stereotyped magnification in the younger text.

at svá býðr mér í skap sem sæll Thómas muni eigi vilja at ek missi enn sonar míns: færi mér," kvað hann, "vatn dróttins míns —"

T Riddarinn . . . seger þat sitt hugboð, at heilagr Thómas leiði aftr son hans í veraldligt líf . . . Prestrinn . . . seger, at þetta er vitleysi at varðveita svo lengi dauðan mann. Jordan seger, at betr skal prófa þat mál, áðr enn piltrinn er grafinn: "Því at mér víkst aldri hugr um þat," sagði hann, "at Thómas erkibyskup muni til sín um taka —"

From this it seems permissible to conclude that there originally existed in Icelandic a full translation of this part of Benedict's text, or of one very like it. In Stock. 2 it has been abridged but the original language is retained as far as it goes; in T it has been re-written and re-arranged. This conclusion agrees with our earlier findings on the relations between the Icelandic texts. The question that remains is whether the original translation was in fact from Benedict or from Robert of Cricklade. As happens so often, the answer to this question must be couched in terms of possibility and probability rather than in terms of certainty.

We know that Robert's work included the report of miracles. In T his authority for accounts of miracles is expressly referred to on three occasions. In each case there is a great wealth of circumstance in the description and in all three Robert is to some extent personally involved. That these three did not exhaust his miracle-collection is suggested by Beneit's poem, where there is reference in general terms to the miracles of St Thomas and one example — one of the stories referred in T expressly to Robert's authority — is given in some detail.<sup>68</sup> See also pp. 437 ff. below.

<sup>68</sup> B 1921-80. The passage begins:

Des miracles voil tucher  
E aukes briefment demustrer,  
Par un trespas —.

It is not improbable that the references to life-time miracles in D (see note 4) are also derived from Robert. Very few miraculous events are ascribed to Thomas in his life-time, but some are reported from Pontigny in Guernes de

The first of the three miracles certainly from Robert in T is Robert's account of his own cure, described by him in a letter to Benedict of Peterborough. The Latin text appears in Book II of Benedict's *Miracula*, following the account of a cure for a different ailment also experienced by Robert through the saint's intercession.<sup>69</sup> Since Benedict's *Miracula* were also known in Iceland, it might be thought that Robert's letter was drawn from this source. Benedict introduces the letter with: *quod . . . ipse nobis postea, salutatione præmissa, rescripsit sic*, and having referred to the 'salutation' in this way, does not quote it. In T the salutation and exordium are found in full at the beginning of the letter: *Priórr Robert, minnsti þræll Guðs þjóna, sendir bróður Benedictó þá kveðju . . .* (EM II 94<sup>9-15</sup>). Similarly, the Valete remains at the end in T (EM II 100<sup>20-21</sup>), but is absent in Benedict. Eiríkr Magnússon also pointed out that some differences exist between the Icelandic text of the letter proper and the Latin text in Benedict's *Miracula*.<sup>70</sup> Some of these differences may well be due to the stylistic revision of the author of T, but hardly all of them.<sup>71</sup> The beginning of this miracle is also found in the fragment E (EM II 284<sup>7-14</sup>), where it is not given in the form of a letter and is thus told in the third person, not the first. It has evidently been abridged to some extent, but even so, it answers better to the opening of Benedict's text than the letter in T does. It is technically possible for the account in E to be from Benedict and that in T to be from Robert.

Pont-Sainte-Maxence's poem (composed 1172-4), see E. Walberg, *La Vie de Saint Thomas . . . par Guernes* (1922), 3651-75, cf. *ibid.* lxxxiii-iv. There is some discussion of such miracles, with further references, in P. A. Brown, *The Development of the Legend of Thomas Becket* (1930), 86-91.

<sup>69</sup> EM II 92<sup>10-100</sup>, *Materials* II 97 ff.

<sup>70</sup> EM II lxxiv-lxxv, 100 note 26. Eiríkr Magnússon ingeniously connects Robert's visit to Italy with the confirmation of the privileges of St Frideswide's by Pope Hadrian IV (1154-9).

<sup>71</sup> Especially the sentence in the first person, EM II 94<sup>17-20</sup>, not in Benedict, although it is not impossible to regard even a sentence such as this as the result of 'stylistic' revision. Matthew Paris, for example, did not mind adding tendentious bits of his own composition to letters he quotes from Emperor and Patriarch, see R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (1958), 132-3.

Since, however, the author of T knew a version like D-E in a fuller form than the extant fragments, it seems most likely that T and E are from the same source, the original translation of Robert of Cricklade's work, in which he must have included a copy of his letter to Benedict. This has been cut down in E and embellished in T.

The second miracle attributed to Robert's authority comes immediately after the account of his own cure. While in Canterbury he hears tell of a man who, after being blinded and gelded, was miraculously restored through the merits of St Thomas. He meets the man himself, who attests the miracle, and it is fully confirmed by a clerk of Bishop Hugh of Durham, who had given the man a physical inspection, and by the bishop himself.<sup>72</sup> The man's crime, punishment and restoration are told comparatively briefly in William of Canterbury's Book II and at length in Book IV of Benedict's *Miracula*.<sup>73</sup> There are no grounds for thinking that there is any connection between Benedict's account and Robert's. The miracle is also told in outline in Beneit's poem, 1933-50, the only miracle he gives at any length. It also appears in much abridged form in E (EM II 283<sup>29</sup>-284<sup>6</sup>), where there are, however, verbal connections with the account given in T. They must thus both be dependent on the original translation from Robert of Cricklade.

This story is then followed by the third miracle introduced on Robert's authority. In this case, he hears of a man in Perigord miraculously saved after being hanged.<sup>74</sup> The same miracle is told by William of Canterbury,<sup>75</sup> but there is certainly no literary connection between Robert and William at this point. The miracle must obviously have taken place before William completed his Books I-V, in 1174-5, a time confirmed by

<sup>72</sup> EM II 102-106<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> *Materials* I 155-8, II 173-82.

<sup>74</sup> EM II 106<sup>26</sup>-118<sup>10</sup>. The part from 114<sup>15</sup> is an example drawn from Robert's own experience of a man whose life was saved even after being hanged.

<sup>75</sup> *Materials* I 369-73.

the letter to Odo, prior of Canterbury, included in his account. (Odo became abbot of Battle in 1175.)<sup>76</sup> Benedict does not have this miracle at all.

These three miracles that are certainly derived from Robert of Cricklade belong to an early period after the martyrdom and are paralleled either in William of Canterbury's work or in Benedict of Peterborough's. In E they appear in abridged form, in T at any rate with some revision and expansion. The Jordan miracle in Stock. 2 fulfils the same conditions. It is found in William and Benedict; in Stock. 2 it has been abridged, in T revised. It shows verbal similarities to Benedict's text, but Benedict's account of miraculous cures experienced by Robert and his quotation of Robert's letter show that literary contact existed between them (cf. p. 435). The possibility has thus been established that the Jordan miracle was to be found in Robert's work.

Some further discussion of the *Gesta post martyrium* found in E and T may add a degree of probability to a theory that the Jordan miracle was in Robert's work and derived from there in Stock. 2.

Eiríkr Magnússon divided the stories of visions and miracles found in T and E into two groups, based on the occurrence of the three miracles from Robert spoken of above.<sup>77</sup> All but one of the visions and miracles before them are found in Benedict's *Miracula* and are derived from that source (nos. 1-17 in his list). All the miracles after them are from Robert (nos. 21-35),<sup>78</sup> including the

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Materials* II xix; Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 73.

<sup>77</sup> EM II clv-clvii.

<sup>78</sup> So the list EM II clvi-clvii, but no. 23 has been inadvertently omitted and the numbers should read 21-34 (this correction has not been made in the references here). Eiríkr Magnússon includes nos. 32-35, as if they too were from Robert of Cricklade, but this is out of the question, as he himself recognises elsewhere, see EM II xlix, liii, cxlviii. In these places he does not come to a firm conclusion as to what should be regarded as the end of the original work: p. 172 (after no. 32), 168 (after no. 31) or 184 (after no. 33). The miracles do not offer any internal evidence as to their date of origin, and only no. 21 has a certain analogue in William of Canterbury, although no. 32 may have (cf. references EM II clvi). No. 31 seems the likeliest limit, but doubts may be raised about nos. 28 and 30, neither of which sounds like a near contemporary account, cf. the phrases EM II 156<sup>15-18</sup>, 164<sup>17-18</sup>. No early



story of Jordan's son (no. 29). This is a reasonable inference from the introductory words in T, before the three miracles expressly attributed to Robert are given:<sup>79</sup>

... priór Robert, er marga hluti hefir skrifat í latínu sælum Thómasi til virðingar, ok þar af skal í fyrstu setja þat, er hann boðar af sjálfum sér —

Here the italicised words naturally suggest that after the stories in which Robert himself figured, others were to come which he had recorded but in which he was not personally concerned. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be quite as straightforward as that. The last miracle-stories in T certainly cannot be from Robert (cf. note 78 above). It still remains necessary to account for the close similarity between the details of the Jordan story in T and the same story in Benedict. And Eiríkr Magnússon does not include in his list a reference to two cures which appear in T between his nos. 24 and 25, where a woman with a hurt knee and a crippled woman are helped at the saint's tomb.<sup>80</sup> These miracles are from Benedict and they occur in fuller form and in their proper place in E,<sup>81</sup> whence Eiríkr Magnússon included them rightly in his list as nos. 16 and 17. It is again technically possible that E has them from Benedict and T from Robert, but it seems at least as likely that the editor of T has moved them and altered them, so that they now appear amongst miracles that would otherwise be attributed to Robert's authorship. But if he has done this with these stories, he may also have done the same thing with the Jordan story, which is also paralleled in Benedict's *Miracula*.

If we consider what appears in T and E from Benedict's *Miracula*, it becomes however less likely that this was also the source for the Jordan story. The visions and

origin can be suggested for no. 33, for it departs even further from the facts than does the independent version of the story found in H. Gering, *Isländzk Æventyri* (1882-83), I 67-9, cf. II 58-9.

<sup>79</sup> EM II 92<sup>18-21</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> EM II 138<sup>11-24</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> EM II 283<sup>7-28</sup>; *Materials* II 61-2.

miracles in the Icelandic are from well-defined sections of Benedict's work. First come visions that betoken Thomas's sanctity and they are from the opening of Book I of the *Miracula*. They take us up to Easter 1171. Then come miracles performed just before and at Eastertide 1171, and they come from the end of Book I and the beginning of Book II.<sup>82</sup> In the middle part of Book I, Benedict, having got as far as Easter with his visions, then goes back in time to speak of other earlier marvels,<sup>83</sup> and this part must have been omitted by the Icelandic writer not only because he wished to abridge but also because he wished to avoid the chronological inconsistency. He has thus restricted himself to material from the beginning and end of Book I and the beginning of Book II, and it would be odd if after this he then selected one, and only one, other miracle from Benedict's scores, the Jordan story, which is moreover found in Book IV of the *Miracula*, far removed from the other material adopted in the Icelandic.<sup>84</sup> Under the circumstances, it appears probable that the Jordan story is not from Benedict but from Robert. It may be noted in passing that some lines from Beneit's poem also make it reasonably certain that Robert's work included some account of miracles which restored the dead to life, B 1927-30:

Ainz ke dous anz fussent passez,  
Apres k'il fu martirisez  
El Deu servise,

Out Deus cinc morz resuscitez —<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> See the list EM II clv-clvi. Nos. 1-7 are from *Materials* II 27-34 (ending with a prophetic vision fulfilled when access was given to the tomb in Easter Week 1171); nos. 8-14, 16-17 are from *Materials* II 55-62 (beginning Maundy Thursday 1171). It can be seen from no. 1 that the correct sequence of E has been altered in T. Miracle no. 15 is not apparently to be found in any other source, another fact which must call Eiríkr Magnússon's neat division in question.

<sup>83</sup> *Materials* II 35<sup>15</sup>, first a prophecy from ten years earlier, then miracles (p. 37) from 31 December 1170 onward.

<sup>84</sup> *Materials* II 229 ff.

<sup>85</sup> If the story of the hanged man of Perigord were counted a 'resuscitation' (no. 20, certainly from Robert) and if nos. 28 and 30 were dismissed from those miracles tentatively ascribed to Robert (cf. note 78), we should have five people raised from the dead in the Icelandic (in miracles nos. 20, 29 and 31). But obviously this result is far too dearly bought to be taken seriously.

If the Jordan story in the Icelandic is from Robert, then the text in Stock. 2 shows that we must assume that there was close verbal similarity between Robert's Latin and Benedict's. This may be explained either by presuming that Benedict culled his account from Robert — the two were certainly in touch and Benedict's Book IV was written at the earliest in 1179,<sup>86</sup> which makes such a loan chronologically easy — or by presuming that both used the same source, perhaps a record at Canterbury made when Jordan's vows were fulfilled.

(iv) Source of conclusion, Hms. II 320<sup>7-25</sup>.

All the material so far in Stock. 2 may be referred with certainty or with varying degrees of probability to Robert of Cricklade's work. When we turn now to the concluding paragraph of the text, Hms. II 320<sup>7-25</sup>, we are again left pondering possibilities and probabilities. The first ten lines of this part are general remarks on the signs at St Thomas's shrine and his innumerable miracles; the remainder is an invocation to the saint. A specific literary source can be found for the opening:

Þat er sagt, at .v. sinnum hafi brugðit vatn hins helga Thómas bæði öðli sínu ok lit: fjórum sinnum hefir þat sýnz sem blóð, en eitt sinn sem mjólk. Fjórum sinnum hefir ljós komit af himni hátíðardag Thómas í Kantarabyrgi, ok hafa kerti kve[yk]z í kirkjunni yfir hans helgum dómi honum til dýrðar ok lofs —

This must translate the third and fourth antiphons sung at lauds from the rimed office for St Thomas:<sup>87</sup>

Aqua Thomae quinquies  
varians colorem  
In lac semel transiit,  
quater in cruorem.

Ad Thomae memoriam  
quater lux descendit  
Et in sancti gloriam  
cereos accendit.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. p. 406; Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 57.

<sup>87</sup> G. M. Dreve, *Analecta hymnica* XIII (1892), 238-41.

The interesting thing about this rimed office is that it is the work of Benedict of Peterborough and must, it seems, have been composed by him before he issued Books I-III of his *Miracula*, i.e. before 1173.<sup>88</sup> Chronologically it would therefore have been possible for Robert of Cricklade, probably also writing in 1173, to use the words in his own epilogue. These lines in the Icelandic are followed by the remark that nothing is impossible to St Thomas,

þar sem hann hefir reista menn af dauða, rekit djöfla frá óðum  
mönnum, gefit sjón blindum, heyrn daufum, höltum göngu,  
hreinsaða líkþrá, ok nú fær engi manns tunga talt né hugr  
ætlat hans jartegnir, svá margar ágætligar sem eru.

That something corresponding to these lines in the Icelandic was in Robert's work near the end is suggested by Beneit's poem, 1967-74:

Les surdz oïr, les muz parler  
E ciuz veanz.

Nul ne savereit acunter  
Ne les miracles anumbrier  
Ke Deus ad fait  
En Engleterre e utre mer  
Pur seint Thomas, sun ami cher,  
Ke seit beneit.

It may also be noted that there is a near parallel to such a combination of lines closely related to verses from the office and a catalogue of wonders in the prologue to Benedict's *Miracula*.<sup>89</sup> There can of course be no certainty that either Benedict or Robert served the other as model, but at least the parallel passage in Benedict shows that there is nothing inherently improbable in

<sup>88</sup> See R. W. Hunt in *Liber floridus . . . Paul Lehmann . . . gewidmet* (1950), 359-60. The early date for the composition of the office is probably also indicated by the fact that one verse is given in a dream to a monk of Canterbury before Easter 1171, see *Materials* II 33-4, cf. EM II 64.

<sup>89</sup> *Materials* II 26<sup>8-21</sup>. After the catalogue comes: *Quater etiam invisibiliter advenit ignis, et exstincta vel super vel circa tumbam ejus luminaria reaccendit*. Cf. the Icelandic and the verse from the office quoted above.

ascribing the Icelandic text to a translation from Robert's work. Such catalogues are however commonplace (Benedict's itself is based directly on the Gospels, Matthew 10, 8, Luke 7, 22) and too much cannot be made of such correspondences. Similar catalogues are found in the verses of the rimed office itself.<sup>90</sup> This was doubtless known in Iceland,<sup>91</sup> and it might be counted the inspiration for the whole passage here in Stock. 2. It is possible however to point to two words in the invocation at the end, *nöckvi* and *auðræði*, both of which indicate a date early in the thirteenth century for its composition.<sup>92</sup> They are in harmony with the assumptions we may reasonably make about the date of the original translation of Robert of Cricklade's work.

#### IV *Author and date of the translation of Robert of Cricklade's work*

In the collections of tales edited by Gering there is one that sets out to explain how the royal power in England came to have so much authority over the Church before St Thomas's time.<sup>93</sup> The matter is almost all from Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale*, and the oldest of the manuscripts containing it are from the fourteenth

<sup>90</sup> Cf. e.g. the responsoria for the third nocturn, *Analecta hymnica* XIII 240, and the antiphons for the third nocturn in a different rimed office, *ibid.* 243. Such catalogues are found in other prose texts as well, see *Materials* II 288, 322 (used in the *Quadrilogus*, *Materials* IV 407).

<sup>91</sup> The *Thomas saungur* and *Thomas historia*, clearly titles for the same work, found at Ás (Norður-Pingeyjarsýsla) in 1318 and 1394 (*Diplomatarium Islandicum* II 429, III 586), must have contained a text of a rimed office. It is reasonable to identify this as Benedict's work, of which G. M. Dreve says: "Das Officium gehört wie zu den vollendetsten Reimofficien, die es giebt, so zu den verbreitetsten" (*Analecta hymnica* XIII 241).

<sup>92</sup> The great majority of the occurrences of these words are in archaic texts. Not much weight could be placed on the occurrence of either one alone, but the two of them together offer evidence that can hardly be ignored. On *nökkvi*, cf. e.g. Cleasby-Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, s.v. *nekkverr*, A. Noreen, *Altisländische Grammatik* (1923), § 475, Anm. 1. I hope to publish a note on the word *auðræði* in the near future but it may be noted here that the word occurs twice elsewhere in texts of *Tómas saga*, once in D, EM II 269<sup>7</sup>, and once in T, EM I 82<sup>17</sup>. Both these passages are best regarded, on other grounds, as derived from the translation of Robert's work.

<sup>93</sup> H. Gering, *Islendzk Æventyri* (1882-3), I 51-60, cf. II 42-44.

century. In one old and two young manuscripts, the text begins:<sup>94</sup>

Merkiligr tveir kennimenn, Bergr Gunnsteinsson ok Jón hestr, hafa skrifat lífssögu virðuligs herra Thomæ Cantuariensis erkibiskups, hvárr með sínum hætti —.

It remains uncertain who Jón hestr was,<sup>95</sup> but the identity of Bergr Gunnsteinsson is generally regarded as established. He was the son of Gunnsteinn Þórisson of Einarsstaðir in Reykjadalr (Þingeyjarsýsla). Þórir, his grandfather, was killed in 1136. Gunnsteinn married Hallbera, daughter of Þorgils Oddason of Staðarhóll (in Saurbær in Dalasýsla), and he was in that district in 1160. He seems to have settled in the west and Bergr, his son, was probably brought up there. Gunnsteinn's sister, Guðrún, was married to Tumi Kolbeinsson of the Ásbirningar of Skagafjörður. It can be seen from these marriage alliances that Gunnsteinn's family was counted a distinguished one.<sup>96</sup> We hear of Bergr on only two occasions. He is said to have been with Guðmundr Arason on his voyage to be consecrated bishop of Hólar,

<sup>94</sup> AM 586 4to (fifteenth century), AM 664 4to (early eighteenth century), cf. Gering, *op. cit.* I xxvii, xxxi, and Kr. Kålund, *Katalog over den Arnemagnæanske Håndskriftsamling* (1888-94), I 747, II 76. It is also found in AM 727 4to, written 1644 by Jón Guðmundsson, cf. EM II lviii-lix, Kålund, *Katalog* II 154-5.

<sup>95</sup> For suggestions see Gering, *op. cit.* II 44, EM II lix, Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*, II 876-7. If, as these writers assume, Jón hestr were the priest Jón holt who in 1284 is said to have been nearly 40 years in Hítardalr (*Biskupa sögur* (1858-78), I 734) and who died in 1302, it would be easiest chronologically to connect him with the D-E recension (cf. note 102), rather than with the *Quadrilogus* translation (so Eiríkr Magnússon) or with T (so Finnur Jónsson). Eiríkr Magnússon argues that the lines: *Merkiligr tveir kennimenn . . . hafa skrifat lífssögu . . . Thomæ . . . hvárr með sínum hætti, hversu hann þreytti fyrir guðs kristni í Englandi allt til þíningar* mean that "both men wrote a saga of Thomas up to his passion" (his italics), and thus "the second, composite saga of T., which is the saga of the miracles, is not contemplated". This is obviously wrong. *allt til þíningar* goes with *þreytti*, not with *hafa skrifat lífssögu*, cf. e.g. *Materials* II 291 (from Caesarius of Heisterbach): *Beatus Thomas . . . qui nostris temporibus pro ecclesiæ libertate usque ad mortem dimicavit* —.

<sup>96</sup> On the family, see Eggert Ó. Brím, *Athuganir við fornættir nokkrar . . . í Sturlunga sögu* (Safn til sögu Íslands III, 1902), 524-8; Björn Sigfússon, *Ljósvetninga saga* (Íslenzk Fornrit X, 1940), 263-4 (genealogical tables); idem, *Saga Þingeyinga* (1946), 79, 90-91; Jón Jóhannesson, *Sturlunga saga* (1946), II, 22 ættskrá; Steinn Dofri, 'Rannsóknir eldri ætta V', *Blanda* VIII (1944-8), 377-88.

1202-3.<sup>97</sup> He is called priest, and he must have been a man of some years and standing.<sup>98</sup> He is mentioned again as leaving Iceland in 1212 with Arnórr Tumason.<sup>99</sup> Bergr is thus well at home in an influential circle in which we know interest in Thomas Becket flourished — from all points of view.<sup>100</sup> A link between Bergr and Canterbury is easily forged too through Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, who had been on pilgrimage to St Thomas's shrine before 1200 and who also accompanied Guðmundr Arason on his voyage for consecration.<sup>101</sup> If Bergr composed a life of St Thomas, a date about 1200 is by far the most likely for it, and, as far as we can tell, his chief or only source must have been the work of Robert of Cricklade. Insofar as the texts of Stock. 2 and parts of D represent the original translation by Bergr, it may be said that their style answers to what we have come to expect of early Icelandic works derived from Latin sources. It is simple and unadorned and although it may be influenced by the Latin, it does not affect any larger imitation of it.

This essay has led to the conclusion that much of the text concerning St Thomas Becket in Stock. 2 is certainly,

<sup>97</sup> *Biskupa sögur* (1858-78), I 481 and note 7. He is not named in the parallel passage in *Sturlunga saga*, cf. *ed. cit.* I 158.

<sup>98</sup> The canonical age for priest's orders was the twenty-fifth year, but this requirement was not infrequently waived. We can only guess at Bergr Gunnsteinsson's age, using the analogies offered by the careers of other members of his family. His brother, the priest Þorgils, was adult in 1185; Þorgils's son was Lambkárr ábóti, whom Bishop Guðmundr Arason took to foster in 1200 (Lambkárr is thought to be the author of the *Prestssaga Guðmundar*) — a fact which strengthens the link between Bergr and the bishop's circle. One of Bergr's brothers, Hallr, died in 1228. Probably the outside limits for Bergr's life-time are c. 1160-1230. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Sturlunga Saga* (1878), I cxxxv, mistakenly gives the year 1211 as the date of his death, and this error is repeated by Finnur Jónsson, *op. cit.* II 876, and Páll E. Ólason, *Íslenzkar Æviskrár* (1948-52), I 147.

<sup>99</sup> G. Storm, *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578* (1888), 124, cf. 183, 325, and *Flateyjarbók* (1860-68), III 523. Presumably Bergr sailed in the same ship as Arnórr. Of the six chieftains who were summoned with Bishop Guðmundr Arason to appear before the archbishop of Nidaros, Arnórr was the only one who undertook the voyage. He may well have been glad of the company of a learned cleric on this occasion, one with whom he had some connection. (His father Tumi had been married to Bergr's aunt, as is mentioned above, but Arnórr was the son of a different wife.)

<sup>100</sup> See e.g. EM II xii-xiv, xviii-xxii, G. Turville-Petre and E. S. Olszewska, *The Life of Gudmund the Good* (1942), xxv-xxvi.

<sup>101</sup> *Biskupa sögur* (1858-78), I 641-2, 481.

and all is possibly, drawn from the translation of Robert of Cricklade's work, probably made by Bergr Gunnsteins-son about 1200. The discussion has however led far afield, and the following tentative conclusions have also emerged: (1) The early translation by Bergr Gunnsteinsson was at some time joined with material perhaps from John of Salisbury's *Vita* and certainly from Benedict of Peterborough's *Miracula* to make the D-E recension.<sup>102</sup> (2) This D-E recension was later expanded, at any rate in part, by reference to the Norwegian *Quadrilogus* translation, and this second edition of the D-E recension was used by the author of the Mary-miracle, M.<sup>103</sup> (3) The author of the T recension used this second edition of the D-E recension, which he appears to have known in a fuller and better text than that represented by the extant fragments, but rejected much of its narrative in favour of material drawn largely from the *Quadrilogus* translation, and he used other sources as well. One of his motives seems to have been to rid the text of anything that might be held to disparage saint or church or give credit to Thomas's enemies. In his work there are many signs of extensive revision of style and arrangement.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> It is difficult to date this recension with any certainty. It existed in a second edition by the end of the thirteenth century. Some elements in the style of parts of the E fragment, particularly the alliteration and substantive doublets in the letters and some of the translation of Benedict's *Miracula* (EM II 272 ff.), suggest a date in the later part of the thirteenth century rather than in the earlier part. (The possibility that the letters were in Robert of Cricklade's work is only a remote one, cf. note 48, and there is a notable difference between the style of the letters in D probably in the early translation of his work, see note 29, and the letters in E.) The conjectural association with Jón holt (see note 95) would make any date after c. 1245 possible, and it might have been a text of this recension that was read to Þorgils skarði on the night of his murder in 1258 (*Sturlunga saga* (1946), II 218). If it is decided that the material in the D fragments related to John of Salisbury's work is there because Robert borrowed from John, it is necessary to emend the dates for the production of their respective lives of St Thomas — John's could possibly be from early in 1173, Robert's from late 1173, or possibly from 1174. Cf. pp. 406, 425 and note 15.

<sup>103</sup> The original collection of miracles in which M is found came into being towards 1300. The second edition of the D-E recension might thus be dated c. 1275. If this is so, then the translation of the *Quadrilogus* was made before that date. Cf. notes 1, 16.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. pp. 415, 429 and note 58. T in its present shape must have been made after 1299, cf. EM II xxxvi. The oldest fragment of this recension is AM 662a 4to II, dated to the latter half of the fourteenth century, see Kålund,



These tentative conclusions need further detailed investigation, and it is to be hoped that someone will undertake a new full collation of T and the other sources, Icelandic and foreign. Eiríkr Magnússon's pioneer study was naturally chiefly concerned with what the Icelandic texts might offer of significance for English history.<sup>105</sup> In the literary history of these texts much remains to be uncovered, both in the investigation of sources and in the comparative study of style and language from part to part of the extant recensions. And indeed, until the literary history of these sources has been exhaustively studied their historical value will not be fully revealed. It seems likely that in the end their historical value will be a good deal less than Eiríkr Magnússon believed and will essentially depend on what in their texts may be reasonably used to reconstruct Robert of Cricklade's *Vita*.

As an instance of this reconstruction and one which may help to compensate for the "much cry and little wool" of this essay, I may mention the vindication it helps to bring of the report of St Thomas's stammer, found only in the Icelandic sources.<sup>106</sup> Appearing in Stock. 2 as it does, there can be little doubt but that it is derived from Robert of Cricklade, a contemporary English witness, and it is not merely a codification of some rumour that reached remote Iceland in the course of the century following the martyrdom. It is a detail prized by historians, and it may make them happier to know that we can say — with only the standard reservations — that it must be true.

*Katalog*, II 74. In its style, in its conflation of numerous sources and its large-scale reorganisation of the material, it belongs with works such as the B-version of the *Karlamagnús saga* and Bergr Sokkason's *Nikolaus saga*, both of which are probably from c. 1320-50.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. EM II clxxi.

<sup>106</sup> M. D. Knowles, *Archbishop Thomas Becket: A Character Study* (The Raleigh Lecture on History, British Academy, 1949), 6 and 24 note 7, speaks of it as a "widespread tradition", having gathered from EM II xcvi that it is mentioned in all the Icelandic accounts. But, of course, all the Icelandic accounts are derived from one and the same source and do not each bear independent witness.

## APPENDIX

Since writing the above, Professor Jón Helgason has drawn my attention to some excerpts concerning St Thomas in manuscript British Museum Add. 11,242. This is the well-known miscellany manuscript written by the priest Gottskálk Jónsson in Glaumbær (c. 1524-1590).<sup>107</sup>

The source of all the excerpts except the last must have been a manuscript of the D-E recension, apparently in a form similar to that known to the author of M (cf. pp. 407 ff., 426 ff. above).

(1) Fol. 8r. Thirteen lines of text beginning: *Thómas erkibyskup var maðr einkar sæmiligr ok kennimannligr í sínu lífi* —.<sup>108</sup> This text parallels M 202<sup>11-22</sup> and the fragmentary D, EM II 262<sup>10-21</sup>. The latter goes a little beyond M and ends: *vandykrkr í sak[a]* . . . (see the text printed p. 422 above). The text in Add. 11,242 continues:

giptum ok sa[. .] gi[. . .] sóknum, smásmugall í spurningum ok eigi vandbúinn við andsvörum, eigi vinhallr í dómum eða í mannvirðingu, virði meira málaefni en manna [ . . .] eigi drógu hann fégjafir né fagrmæli [ . .] riettd . .

(2) Fol. 16v. Twelve lines of text, with the heading *Úr decretum sanctorum patrum. Decreta sancti Thome erkibyskup[s]*. The passage begins:

Ef klerkar verða staddir at manndrápi eða ljótum hórdómi, stuld eða ráni eðr þvilíkum hlutum, þá skulu þeir fyrst missa embættis ok því næst kirkjugöngu, síðan excommunicari, ad ultimum degradari, ok síðan skulu þeir undir leikmanna lögum búa.

Then comes a comparison between the power of the Church and the power of the King. It ends:

Hversu megi þér þá mik dæma, þar sem ek á at réttri setningu

<sup>107</sup> See Jón Þorkelsson, *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* VIII (1892), 217 ff. On pp. 221-2 he points out the similarity between passage 3 below and the text of D, printing the two side by side. On Gottskálk's miscellany see also Jón Helgason, *Ritgerðakorn og ræðustúfar* (1959), 115-7.

<sup>108</sup> I have normalised the spelling but not the forms, beyond writing *eigi* for *ei*. The number of points given in square brackets roughly indicates the number of lost letters (often of course abbreviated forms).

[. . .] yðr at dæma, ok eigi at eins hér á jarðríki heldr ok jafnvel á himni ok jörðu.

This text, including the title, is paralleled in abridged form in T, EM I 152<sup>4-18</sup>, in a description of the proceedings at a council held in London in 1163. Eiríkr Magnússon says that the chapter here “contains much which is not found in the extant lives”, but Schlyter has demonstrated the presence of comparable matter in Beneit’s poem, B 421-510.<sup>109</sup> The source for the Icelandic, as for the Anglo-Norman, must thus be Robert of Cricklade.

(3) Fol. 17r. Nine lines of text, beginning *Svá segir heilagr Gregorius páfi* —, ending *fyrirdæmiz þeir eigi á efsta dómi*. Then two lines of text: *Sjálfir guð virðir þat til sín gjört er til hans er gjört, at sjálf[um] honum svá mælandi, Qui vos recipit me recipit, qui vos spernit me spernit*.

The first passage offers a parallel text to part of D, EM II 269<sup>16-30</sup>, a translation of a letter from Pope Alexander to King Henry (Add. 11,242 has a title to this effect). The second is from the same letter, but D does not extend so far. Cf. *Materials* VI 565-6, 567<sup>11-15</sup>. The translation of the letter, much abridged and rewritten, was used in T, EM I 332.

(4) Fol. 17r. Nine lines of text, with a note at the top: *í öðru bréfi Alexandri*. It begins:

Svá er ritið ok boðit hverjum yfirboðara, Clama et ne cessa,<sup>110</sup>

And ends:

Er nú ok þar komit at vér munum eigi lengr byrgja munn á er[. .] Tómas, svá at eigi greiði hann fram skuld síns embættis ok hefni sinna mei[na] ok sinnar kristni vanréttis með sverði guðligrar stríðu.

This translates part of a letter from Alexander to King Henry, of 22 May 1166, *Materials* VI 437-8. The text was known to the author of T, who seems to have made use of it both with the text of the letter from which the

<sup>109</sup> EM II cix, Schlyter, *op. cit.* 10-11.

<sup>110</sup> The manuscript has *nesse*, as one word. Isaiah 58, 1 has *Clama, ne cesses*, —.

excerpts noted under no. 3 above were taken (cf. EM I 334<sup>24-25</sup> *ok upp segjum vér lengr at byrgja hans munn —*), and also separately, EM I 422-4. On these letters cf. EM II cxxiv-vi, cxxxiii.

(5) Fol. 17r. Twelve lines of text, beginning

Heilagr Thómas erkibyskup dvaldiz í grámunka klaustri einu þá er hann var í útlegð frá stól[. .] Þar þokkaðiz hann hverjum manni vel ok ástsamliga [. . . .] var engi sá [. . . .] munklífi at sér meinlætti meir eða fleiri vega en hann.

The passage then describes his harsh life, especially his dress and the flagellations he submitted himself to in secret. It ends:

Þess háttar var h[. . . . .] vetr svá at þessa [. . . . .] vissu öngvir nema klerkr ok skósvei[nn]

This is not paralleled in any other Icelandic text, but it is certainly related to B 931-948, cf. 931-33, 937-9:

A Punteny ad sujern pris,  
Un' abeie de moines gris,  
De bone gent.—

N'i out moine en l'abeie  
Ke plus demenast seinte vie  
Ke il feseit.—

It may be noted that what precedes and what follows this section in B, B 869-900 and B 949-1014, are precisely the two passages which, as Walberg pointed out, are closely paralleled by parts of the D fragments (see pp. 411-15). All of this must be indubitably derived from Robert of Cricklade's work.<sup>111</sup>

(6) Fol. 20r. Seventeen lines of text, with the heading: *epistola Tome arc[h]iepiscopi til Heinriks konungs*. It begins:

Heinriki Englands konungi sendir kveðju Thómas erkibyskup með guðs myskunn lágr þjónn Cantar[a]byrgis kristni. Því

<sup>111</sup> St Thomas's austerities, including the flagellation, are also described by Edward Grim when he tells of the sojourn at Sens; the description is followed immediately by a brief account of the vision, as in B, see *Materials* II 417-9. It may be that Robert of Cricklade was following Edward Grim at this point; the latter's life is thought to have been written in 1172, cf. Walberg, *La tradition hagiographique*, 105-7.

svá segir postolinn, Allir þeir, segir hann, er í guði vilja lifa, þá  
þoli afgerð ok ofsókn manna —

and ends:

sem Davíð ok Ezechias ok öðrum mörgum.

This corresponds, after the greeting, to part of a letter from 1166, see *Materials* V 279<sup>7</sup>-280<sup>14</sup>. The same letter was used in T with the language much revised and with large omissions, see EM I 342-4, cf. EM II cxxvii. On this and the other letters, cf. p. 415 above.

(7) Fol. 51r. A passage of five lines describing St Thomas taken from the *Quadrilogus* translation, see Unger, *Thomas Saga*, 37<sup>5-11</sup>. It seems likely that Gottskálk got this from a separate text, unconnected with the source of excerpts 1-5. The passage is so closely repetitive of what is already in Stock. 2, D-E and T, that it is hard to believe that it would have been included in the conflation of the D-E recension and the *Quadrilogus* translation which is postulated as the immediate source of M (cf. pp. 426-31).

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE ANGLO-SAXONS. Studies in some aspects of their history and culture presented to BRUCE DICKINS. *Bowes and Bowes*, 1959. 322 pp.

We have good reason to welcome this book. The recipient is a great scholar who has been for many years one of our Honorary Members, and of the eighteen contributors to the volume no less than thirteen are members of the Society. Even though the present notice is a belated one, we may perhaps feel that our congratulations to Professor Dickins have already been presented. Four of the papers in the book concern Northern Research more particularly. Professor Dorothy Whitelock gives an authoritative survey of the dealings of the kings of England with Northumbria in the tenth and eleventh centuries. She traces what policy is discernible, especially in lay and ecclesiastical appointments, in the delicate matter of preserving a strong Northumbria as a bulwark against the Scots and preventing that same strong Northumbria from exerting its independence of the south. She points out that after Eric Blood-axe's expulsion in 954 "contemporaries naturally could not know that Eric was to be the last Scandinavian king to establish himself at York", and that, right down to 1066, English uneasiness as to how the Northumbrians would act when it came to conflict between English and Scandinavian was not without cause. Professor Turville-Petre writes interestingly of legends of England in Icelandic manuscripts. He deals with references to Bede in Icelandic sources and an Icelandic version of the story explaining his title of *venerabilis*, and gives a study of the story by Hermann monachus concerning the canons of Laon and their tour through southern England in 1113 which appears in an Icelandic collection of Mary-miracles. Miss M. Ashdown writes on an Icelandic account of the survival of Harold Godwinson, i.e. the story found in the *Hemings þáttir Áslákssonar*, with some useful comparative material on "survival" legends from other lands and times. Mrs N. K. Chadwick, in a long paper "The Monsters and Beowulf", argues "that the motifs of Beowulf's encounters with the monsters are not the *disjecta membra* of folk-tales, but are found in traditions of courtly literature in the Old Scandinavian world, and are associated more especially with the ruling families of Scandinavia". In her discussion of some early Norse monster stories one would have welcomed a stricter analysis of the literary connections between the various tales.

There is much else in the book to read and ponder. All concerned with the production of this volume, not least Dr Clemoes, the editor, deserve great praise.

PETER FOOTE

KELTEN UND GERMANEN. By JAN DE VRIES. (Bibliotheca Germanica IX). *Bern und München: Francke Verlag*, 1960. 139 pp.

Jan de Vries has added to the long series of works, for which Germanic scholars owe him so great a debt, a book which will serve as an admirable introduction to early Celtic studies for those whose interests lie mainly in the Germanic field. This will hold good, even if the author's main thesis is not in the long run upheld. This is that certain similarities of Germans and Celts in religion, social life, and poetical practice, are due to contact between the two races, occurring in an early post-Indo-European period of mutual intelligence, which was followed by long years, during which they drew apart in language as in other matters, so that they came to the notice of classical antiquity sharply contrasted.<sup>1</sup>

Before further consideration of this conjecture, a word may be said in appreciation of the manner in which de Vries presents in footnotes his source for every important statement, and for the admirable examples of source criticism which he offers. For example, the growth of the hoary legend that the Celts drank out of the skulls of their enemies is traced (pp. 11-15), rhetorical commonplaces concerning "savages" are pointed out (pp. 97, 104), and the liability of ancient authors to repeat the remarks of their predecessors, even when they might be most expected to report their own observations, is stressed (pp. 81-2, etc.). On the other hand, the sources are often well defended, as for example when the word *Germanis* of the Marcellus inscription is rescued (pp. 57-9).

The material upon which de Vries bases his main conclusion may now be rapidly reviewed. At the outset, it may be said that the last thing he can be called is a man with an axe to grind. He often shows the weakness of an argument as clearly as could any defender of an opposite point of view. Thus the chapter on religion and cult opens with a consideration of the existence of a Germanic equivalent (other than as a late loan-word) of Celtic *nemeton*, "sacred grove", which reduces it to an outside possibility.

<sup>1</sup> See particularly pp. 63, 78-9; the re-union of Celts and Germans is referred to the La Tène period (p. 133 and *passim*).

De Vries proceeds in a similarly open-minded spirit to show that the Germanic priest was not so totally different from the Druid as might be thought, and that the Germans were sacrificers (despite Caesar, *De bello Gallico* vi, 21), and temple-worshippers (despite Tacitus, *Germania* ix), in both respects resembling the Celts. He rightly brushes aside Caesar's allegation that the Germans worship only what they can see (Sun, Moon, Fire). He might have added that it is a rhetorical commonplace to declare that man is most prone to worship what he can see. As a loyal supporter of Dumézil, de Vries naturally finds reflections of Indo-European mythology among both the Celts and the Germans, and it is not clear that the chapter claims to offer support for the theory of a Germanic-Celtic post-Indo-European common culture. Rather, it implies that the two races had sufficient common ground of ancient origin to develop such a culture readily in favourable circumstances (p. 100). In the chapter on social life, tribal land-ownership and the *comitatus* are the main subjects, and some similarities of Celts and Germans are pointed out. Lastly, in the chapter on poets and heroes, there is first an interesting discussion of early Celtic and Germanic poetry, which cannot be said to contribute much to the theory of a common culture,<sup>2</sup> and secondly a consideration of motives of heroic story common to Germanic and Celtic, illustrated mainly from the story of Sigurd and the Irish sagas. This last has been more fully discussed by de Vries elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and is the solidest support for his theory.<sup>4</sup>

Most of de Vries's material could be explained as the result of the ultimate common ancestry of the Celts and the Germans. That the results of this common ancestry are traceable outside the linguistic field de Vries is a firm believer. Often he adds to

<sup>2</sup> This discussion fails to distinguish the heroic panegyric, which was certainly Celtic and presumably Germanic, from the epic lay, which was certainly Germanic, but for which there is no evidence in Celtic. (De Vries quotes *Three Fragments* [under 722] as evidence for the existence of poems describing the wars of the men of Leinster. But the text is of uncertain date, romantic in character, and is preserved only in an early modern manuscript by an antiquary fully equal to improving his exemplar.)

<sup>3</sup> *P.B.B.* lxxv, 225-47.

<sup>4</sup> Here de Vries might have pointed out the frequent parallels to his material outside Germanic-Celtic. The hero vulnerable in one spot only is well known, and Brunhild's flame-guarded castle has a readier parallel in the keep of Tartarus (*quae rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis*) than in Maelduin's island. Sigurd's mastery of bird language is given by contact with a serpent, and so belongs to a dispersed folk-tale group, the salmon of the Irish version is an isolated divergence. The only peculiarly Germanic-Celtic motives produced by de Vries are, (1) the combination of the hero vulnerable in one spot only with the wife who betrays her husband's secret, and (2) the testing of steel by cutting something soft or fine. (Scott has an elaborate version of the second of these, *Talisman* xxvii, but he probably knew the story of Sigurd.)



his Germanic-Celtic correspondences a third witness (usually Greek or Indian). One wonders if the evidence for special Germanic-Celtic correspondences can ever appear great, unless the theory of descent from Indo-European for matter other than linguistic be abandoned. However, de Vries's book can be recommended as the work of an honest scholar, perhaps a little desirous to have the best of two worlds, but anxious to establish the present position of knowledge, although well aware that the time for the final word is yet to come.

A. CAMPBELL

THE VIKINGS. BY JOHANNES BRØNDSTED. *Penguin Books*, 1960. 320 pp.

THE VIKINGS. BY HOLGER ARBMAN. *Thames and Hudson*, 1961. 212 pp.

*Scandinavian Archæology* by Shetelig, Falk and Gordon appeared in 1937 and in its latter chapters has been a useful companion to Norse studies for the British student. Archeological research has been so intensively pursued in the intervening years, however, that most people would agree that it stands in urgent need of revision. It is true that such collaboration between archeologist and philologist is more difficult today, partly because people find it easier to dismiss Icelandic sources altogether than to undertake the arduous task of sifting them, and partly because the archeologist tends to set increasingly stern limits on his interpretation of the material he excavates. The resulting approach is sometimes unnecessarily narrow, for however proper it may be to reject late and uncertain literary sources, it is certainly wrong to ignore the illumination that language, here essentially the names for things within the field of material culture, can shed upon archeological material. To take a small example from Professor Arbman's book, he notes that in tombs in Kiev and in other Scandinavian graves in Russia the axe found is of the light, short-hafted Slavonic type, while the other weapons are Scandinavian. This adoption by the Swedes in Russia of the Slavonic axe gives a firm background against which to assess one of the very few Slavonic loanwords in Norse, the first element in *taparøx*.<sup>1</sup> Since from Norse the word came into Old English, attested in a couple of sources from the eleventh century,<sup>2</sup> it is not a bad example either of the links that bound the whole world of Viking expansion.

<sup>1</sup> The latest list, in Jan de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1957-61), xxxiii, gives sixteen words counted certain loans, including this one.

<sup>2</sup> Hj. Falk, *Altnordische Waffenkunde* (1914), 110; Bosworth-Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. *tapor-æx*, and *Supplement*, p. 720.

Of the two books to be noticed here, it is Professor Brøndsted's that comes nearest to being a new and expanded version of the relevant part of *Scandinavian Archæology*. He devotes a third of his volume to the history of the Viking Age, describing it synchronically, century by century; another third to weapons, tools, dress, transport, towns, coins, weights and measures, runic inscriptions and art; and the last third to the Viking way of life, religion and burial customs, and to "Poetry and the Viking Spirit". It will be evident that he is not afraid of drawing on late literary sources, and he does it sensibly. He carries his learning lightly, writes pleasantly and is able to explain complex things in simple terms. It would be an admirable book for the student-beginner if the author had not been so execrably served by his translator and proof-reader. The translator evidently has excellent command of Danish and English, but knows nothing about Vikings or the languages of the sources on which our knowledge of them depends. One would think an intelligent publisher would understand that a technical work needs a specialist translator — if he is in doubt in such a field as this, he could do worse than come to the Viking Society for advice. As it is, it is only safe to recommend this book to an inexperienced student in its Danish edition, which unfortunately costs six times as much as the Pelican.

Professor Arbman's book appears in a series called *Ancient Peoples and Places*, and from such a title one might expect the same kind of work as Professor Brøndsted's. In fact it covers a much narrower field, partly doubtless because each of the Scandinavian countries is to have its own volume. What we have is a chapter on the general Scandinavian background, chapters on the history of the Viking movements in a geographical arrangement, with a concluding chapter on Viking art. The historical sketch is well done, although necessarily impressionistic in so brief a compass. The brevity leads to a common defect, in that the author, especially in the first and last chapters, seems to expect too much expert knowledge on the part of the reader. Mr A. L. Binns, who has translated and edited the book, has apparently felt that the book was rather too narrow in scope, for he contributes an introduction on the Viking as "technologist", writing with learning and love on ship-building and sword-forging and, with much less learning, on poetry as well. His literary history is a little hazy — he manages to get Chaucer's dates, or the dates of the classical *Íslendinga sögur*, wrong by a century — and he makes some generalisations whose rashness he would doubtless admit himself, but all in all his essay is not an entirely misplaced

effort to lay emphasis, lacking in the book itself, on certain important features of Viking outlook and accomplishment.

The book is handsomely produced and very well illustrated, although some of the line drawings are too small to be helpful. Its bibliography compares unfavourably with that in Professor Brøndsted's volume. One thing that it has entirely in common with the Pelican volume is the inadequate preparation it has received for press. Two or three sentences are unintelligible as they stand, misprints abound (*loggumaðr* and *Pjórsárdalr* on one page, for example!). Professor Arbman or Mr Binns, or both, also have an irritating tendency to use parentheses where it is normal English, and I think Swedish, practice to use commas, but that may not upset everyone as much as me.

PETER FOOTE

EGIL'S SAGA. Translated by GWYN JONES. *Syracuse University Press for the American-Scandinavian Foundation*, 1960. 257 pp.

Although Professor Jones's translation of the *Egils saga* is sometimes unnecessarily far from the Icelandic and occasionally inaccurate, it may be commended for its general vigour and clarity. Temptations to which the author sometimes succumbs are, on the one hand, to write a sort of committee-English, and, on the other, to liven up the Icelandic by the use of a more colourful or forceful expression than the original warrants. An example of the first may be found on p. 31: "Associated with him was the man known as Berdla-Kári —" (*Með honum var í félagskap sá maðr, er kallaðr var Berðlu-Kári* —); and of the second on p. 153, in the description of the disposal of Skalla-Grím's corpse: "Next they whipt him off down to Naustanes —" (*Báru þeir hann þá í hriðinni ofan í Naustanes* —). In the latter instance it is a word of sustained movement rather than of sudden movement that is required, but I also harbour the suspicion that the choice of the English verb here shows a certain lack of respect for what is a serious and urgent description in the Icelandic. We should always beware of lending saga-authors, even Snorri Sturluson, too much of our modern superiority. The verse-translations seem to me good, and the translator catches particularly well the movement of the *kviðuháttir*. In his versions of the *dróttkvætt* stanzas he shows himself so adept in finding chiming sounds in English that one wonders why he did not attempt a much closer imitation of this complex metre. As it is, we have an unsystematic profusion of alliteration and *hendingar* without the shapeliness that helps to set so fine an intellectual

edge on the best scaldic verse, much of which is here in the *Egils saga*. The translation is prefaced by an introduction where the main sections are on the saga and tradition and on the date and authorship. In the former a clear account is given of the Vínheiðr-Brunanburh problem and special attention is paid to the setting and authenticity of the *Höfuðlausn*. In the latter Professor Jones states his firm belief in the attribution to Snorri and would put its composition in the years 1220-25. He has throughout accepted and assimilated the views of Professor Nordal and he re-presents them freshly and readably but without adding any novel evidence or arguments. Under these circumstances it is especially to be regretted that Professor Jones has not translated for himself the one long passage he quotes from Nordal's work but has given it in the somewhat garbled version of another writer. The text is followed by seventeen pages of illustrative notes, sometimes rather uncritical (see e.g. the reference to the burning of Blund-Ketill on p. 245). Occasionally it seems as if a prose version of a verse has not been translated from the literal prose ordering found in the notes of the *Fornrit* edition, which would have been helpful, but from the modern Icelandic paraphrase found in the same place, which is not. I wish the author had had second thoughts about the inclusion of the last sentence of note 1. There is some carelessness about diacritical marks and there is no index in what is otherwise a well-produced book.

PETER FOOTE

FØROYSK-DONSK ORÐABÓK. By M. A. JACOBSEN and CHR. MATRAS. *Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, Tórshavn*, 1961. (Agent for the Faroes: Helgi Justinussen, Tórshavn; Foreign Agent: Munksgaard, Copenhagen.) xxxvi + 521 pp.

A notable landmark in Faroese studies was the publication in 1928 of this Faroese-Danish dictionary by M. A. Jacobsen and Chr. Matras. Now, as a second edition, Professor Matras gives us what is virtually a new dictionary, published at the expense of the Landsstýri and under the auspices of Føroya Fróðskaparfelag, the learned society which in the few years of its existence has done so much to put Faroese intellectual life on the map. (Every member of the Viking Society who has influence on the purchases of a library with any interest in Northern Research, ancient or modern, should see to it that a subscription is taken out for *Fróðskaparrit*, the journal of this Faroese academy.) The new dictionary is substantially larger than the older one, containing

many hitherto unrecorded words, and many more compounds and many more verbal phrases than the first edition. One need only compare the articles on common verbs like *ganga* or *kasta* to see what an enormous expansion has been made and how useful this work will be to the would-be speaker or reader of Faroese. It would also be hard to better the glosses themselves in economy and precision. An important departure has been made in the treatment of pronunciation. In the earlier work the pronunciation was indicated with each word, but now this is only done when the pronunciation of a word departs from the normal rules. The pronunciation is indicated by a "coarse" phonetic script, making use of no special symbols. The "normal rules", those, that is, that apply in the speech of a central area comprising chiefly southern Streymoy with Tórshavn, are described in an introductory and not too elaborate survey by Mr Jørgen Rischel, where the "coarse" phonetic script is defined in relation to the conventional spelling of Faroese and to what might be called a "professional" phonetic notation. "A coarse phonetic script of this kind does not reproduce the pronunciation of words in detail; but, unlike the spelling, it stands in an unambiguous relationship to the pronunciation —". For the untrained student such a system will be useful, and it is to be hoped that it will be generally adopted, for, despite its limitations, it is far better to have a single "coarse" system of this kind than for each writer to construct his own.

Every student of comparative Germanic philology, every student of Icelandic and the Scandinavian languages, ancient or modern, should buy this book. It will mean the acquisition of a first-class tool of scholarship and, since any income from the sale of the book is to go to a special dictionary fund, the purchase will in itself be an aid and encouragement to further work in Faroese lexicography.

PETER FOOTE

HRÓLFS SAGA KRAKA. Edited by D. SLAY. *Editioes Arnamagnæanæ, Series B, vol. 1. Copenhagen, 1960. xix + 132 pp.*

THE MANUSCRIPTS OF HRÓLFS SAGA KRAKA. By D. SLAY. *Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, Vol. XXIV. Copenhagen, 1960. x + 168 pp.*

Dr. Slay's edition of *Hrólfs Saga* is based on a thorough examination of the thirty-eight known manuscripts, all from the seventeenth century or later. He publishes separately a detailed description of the manuscripts, with discussion of their

provenance and an interesting account of early references to the saga and of the composition of some of the codices. The conclusions that emerge from this exhaustive study are (i) that all the manuscripts ultimately derive from one lost original (or does Dr Slay mean archetype?), probably of the sixteenth century (it would have been helpful if more prominence had been given to this conclusion in *Bibl. Arnam.* XXIV either by a stemma or in the General Survey, p. 4); (ii) that twelve manuscripts are primary and are (presumably) derived either directly from the lost original or from good copies of it, in the same way as AM 9 fol. is derived from AM 12b fol. which survives only as a fragment (Dr Slay nowhere states categorically what he considers the relation between the primary manuscripts and the lost original to be); (iii) that, of the primary manuscripts, five show themselves by their close correspondence to be reliable versions of a common original, while the remaining twenty-six can be traced to one or other of the primary manuscripts (these relationships are often complex: Dr Slay's handling of them seems admirable). In his edition he gives the text of one of the five reliable manuscripts, with variants from the other four and from one unreliable primary manuscript (the readings of AM 12b fol. should surely have been included here in full rather than in a 'fairly full' list of the differences between it and AM 9 fol. in *Bibl. Arnam.* XXIV). Ample quotation is given in *Bibl. Arnam.* XXIV of variants from the six 'rejected' primary manuscripts to show the character of each and to record phrases of interest that would otherwise not see the light of day. Dr Slay's full and meticulous work provides a very thorough record of an important text. As to the printing of the text, however, one must regret the decision (not Dr Slay's) to use the diæresis sign for the double accent which in the manuscripts indicates a long vowel: each page is dotted with the confusing symbols ä and ö for á and ó (cf. the outlandish fááräd, p. 73). This seems inexcusable especially in a text which is not diplomatic; a single accent would have been preferable if distinctive type was not available (cf. the edition, p. xvii).

URSULA DRONKE