



## THE WORD AND THE WORLD: A RESONANT TEXTUAL FRAGMENT OF *ÍSLENDINGA SAGA*

ÚLFAR BRAGASON

Þórðr Sturluson tók sótt á föstunni, er á leið. Var þá sent eftir Böðvari, syni hans, ok þar váru þá við allir synir hans ok margir vinir. Ámundi Bergsson gekk næst honum ok talaði flest við hann.

En er sóttin herði at honum, bað Ámundi hann þá skipa til um eignir sínar. En Þórðr bað þá Hauk prest Auðunarson vita við Böðvar, hvern veg honum væri gefit um tilskipan hans, “því at hann er arfi minn.” En Böðvarr bað hann skipa öllum sem honum líkaði. Síðan lét Þórðr hafa hundrað hundraða hvárn þeira, Óláf ok Sturlu, en átta tigu hundraða hvárn, Þórð ok Guttorm. Valgerðr hafði ok hundrað hundraða, en hver dætra [hans] fjóra tigu hundraða. En Böðvarr hlaut þá enn fimm hundruð hundraða. Sturla hafði Eyri ok skyldi þá þegar taka við búi.

Eftir þat var hann óleaðr, er hann hafði til skipat. En hann andaðist föstudag fyrir pálmásunnudag at miðjum degi ok söng í andlátinu: Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum – eftir Hauki presti.

Lík Þórðar var þar jarðat á Eyri, sem hann hafði fyrir sagt, fyrir framan kirkjuna.

Hann hafði tvá vetr ins átta tigar, er hann andaðist.

(Þórðr Sturluson fell ill towards the end of Lent. His son Böðvarr was sent for, and so all his sons and many friends were with him. Ámundi Bergsson was very close to him and talked with him a good deal. When he grew more ill, Ámundi asked him to make arrangements about his property. Þórðr asked Haukr Auðunarson the priest to inquire if his disposition of the property would please Böðvarr, “for he is my heir.”

Böðvarr asked him to apportion to everybody as he wished. Then Þórðr gave Óláf and Sturla one hundred hundreds each, and Þórðr and Guttormr each eighty hundreds. Valgerðr also received one hundred hundreds, and each of his daughters forty hundreds. Böðvarr still had five hundred hundreds. Sturla received Eyrr and was to take over the farm at once. Then Þórðr was given extreme unction as he had instructed. He died on the Friday before Palm Sunday at midday, and as he passed away he sang “Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum” – with Haukr the priest. Þórðr was buried there at Eyrr as he had instructed, in front of the church. He was seventy-two years old when he died.)

Such is the description of the death of Þórðr Sturluson in ch. 120 of *Íslendinga saga* (The Saga of Icelanders).<sup>1</sup> Þórðr died of an illness in 1237.



*Íslendinga saga* is the core of the compilation known as *Sturlunga*, which was most likely compiled around 1300. The saga has been the principal source available to historians on events in Iceland in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is attributed to Sturla Þórðarson in the so-called *Sturlunga* Prologue, which says: “Flestar allar sögur, þær er hér hafa gerzt á Íslandi, áðr Brandr biskup Sæmundarson andaðist, váru ritaðar, en þær sögur, er síðan hafa gerzt, váru lítt ritaðar, áðr Sturla skáld Þórðarson sagði fyrir Íslendinga sögur [115].” (Almost all sagas concerning events which took place here in Iceland before Bishop Brandr Sæmundarson died were written; but those sagas which concern events which took place later were little written, before the skald Sturla Þórðarson dictated the sagas of the Icelanders). It has often been maintained that *Íslendinga saga* tells of people and events “svo blátt áfram, hispurslaust og óhlutdrægt” (so frankly, openly and impartially) that it is remarkable and admirable.<sup>2</sup> And historians have been of the opinion that *Sturlunga saga*, as far as it goes, gives a generally true picture of Icelandic society in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>3</sup> Their conclusion is based upon the fact that the authors are generally dealing with contemporary or recent events. This view is, however, partly attributable to the narrative method of the sagas, which is very “modern”. As in more recent historical texts, “personal production is suppressed in favor of seemingly neutral and distanced description; the use of impersonal linguistic conventions promotes a seeming transparency to the past.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, the rhetoric of compilation is taken to be a modern rhetoric of anti-rhetoric to be found in many historical writings.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, historians have pointed out instances of bias in the contemporary sagas, and Jón Jóhannesson argued that the objective storytelling of the sagas should not be interpreted to mean that the sagas were indeed impartial.<sup>6</sup> Jóhannesson made a clear distinction, as is natural for the duration of the analysis, between how the stories are told, and the views expressed in them, i.e. to employ another terminology, the presentation of events in discourse and the enunciation of narrative.<sup>7</sup> Helgi Þorláksson has even argued recently that in *Íslendinga saga* the accounts of events are altered in accordance with the interests of the audience and the narrator’s own needs.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Jóhannesson pointed out the way story events are selected in the contemporary sagas. He said that *Sturlunga saga* is “ekki þjóðarsaga, heldur persónusaga og saga um deilur og vígaferli ”<sup>9</sup> (not the story of a nation, but a story of individuals, and of disputes and armed conflict). The medieval historical writings were, in general, “about individuals; their valour or villainy, their memorable sayings, their good and bad luck.”<sup>10</sup> Gunnar Benediktsson and Robert J. Glendinning have also explored the interest in



dreams, supernatural events and prophecies which is evinced in *Íslendinga saga*.<sup>11</sup> This is an indication of the way that no clear demarcation existed in the Middle Ages between what would today be generally perceived as true accounts on the one hand, and mythical ones on the other.

In the *Sturlunga* Foreword, the saga is called *Íslendinga sögur* (Sagas of Icelanders), in the plural. This is an accurate term, as the narrative “er ekki af neinum einum manni, ætt eða atburði, heldur sögur margra Íslendinga”<sup>12</sup> (is not about any one man, family or events, but the stories of many Icelanders). One of these is Þórðr Sturluson, the author’s own father. The account of his death marks the end of his biography within the saga. In the description we recognize some features which are typical of medieval deathbed scenes in a broad context.<sup>13</sup> Þórðr perceives that the end is near, and gives instructions about his possessions and burial. He receives extreme unction, and then dies with Christ’s last words on the Cross on his lips. Surrounded by family and friends, Þórðr expires in a manner befitting a magnate and father who has lived a long, and for the most part peaceful, life. Þórðr dies reconciled with the Church – a point which no medieval audience of the saga would have missed.

Whatever the facts behind Sturla’s narrative, the narrator clearly made the choice of what to include and how to describe it, in keeping with the literary traditions of medieval times.<sup>14</sup> Bearing this in mind, the description of Þórðr’s tranquil death contrasts sharply with the otherwise bloody account of the Sturlung Age. There was no real need to describe Þórðr’s death in the sequence of events, any more than e.g. the death of Þorvaldr Gizurarson the magnate, who is briefly mentioned in the same chapter. In view of the care with which the narrator delineates the characters of the three Sturluson brothers, Þórðr, Sighvatr and Snorri, in *Íslendinga saga*, and describes the relations and discord among them, all indications are that the description of Þórðr’s death is in fact intended to lead the audience to compare it with those of his brothers. The death scene was the final touch in a characterization, and had a rhetorical effect in the broader context of the saga.<sup>15</sup> Sighvatr Sturluson died on the battlefield at Örlygsstaðir in 1238, and Snorri was slain at his home at Reykjaholt in 1241. Their violent ends, and the way they are described, are in accord with the revenge scheme exemplified by *Íslendinga saga*, as by the Icelandic family sagas in general, and they do not conflict with the form, unlike the description of Þórðr’s death.<sup>16</sup> The saga recounts events which are supposed to have taken place here in Iceland in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and which were



perceived as historical (*söguligir*) because they conformed with a fixed traditional narrative form about factionalism and strife. The account of Þórðr's death belongs to another literary form.

Yet the year of Þórðr's death is a milestone in the chronological structure of the story. In that same year, both of Iceland's bishops died, leading to a complete change in church government. In ch. 119 of *Íslendinga saga*, we have the deathbed scene of Bishop Guðmundr Arason. Here we see some of the same features as in the death scene of Þórðr Sturluson. The placing of the two descriptions consecutively in the saga, the authorial comment in favour of Guðmundr in ch. 119 and the bishop's prediction of his own death and that of Þórðr (399) suggest that the narrator intended to emphasize Þórðr's grandeur by employing symmetry between the scenes.<sup>17</sup> Bishop Guðmundr knows that his hour has come. He gives instructions about where he is to be buried, and distributes his books among several priests. He then receives extreme unction, and waits calmly for death in company with the learned men of Hólar. The bishop expires in as much tranquillity as Þórðr. This is not, however, in accordance with his unruly life, but reflects his saintliness. Descriptions of the hour of death are a fixed topic in the stories of holy bishops and features such as Guðmundr wishing to expire lying on the bare earth, like St. Francis of Assisi, indicate his piety and holiness.<sup>18</sup> The deathbed scenes show that the author of *Íslendinga saga* was familiar with clerical chronicles; the scenes are at odds with the rest of the saga, and with the clear intent to write an aristocratic saga where descriptions of people (*mannfræði*) and events (*atburðir*) are paramount, and a worldly interpretation (*jarðlig skilning*) of the events is predominantly expressed, instead of a clear-cut spiritual message (*andlig skilning*). The saga is mainly concerned with the workings of human society and the laws that govern it, although Christian principles sometimes appear, along with contemporary expectations of life after death.

*Íslendinga saga* also emphasises the turning-point in secular rule which took place with the passing of Þórðr, Þorvaldr Gizurarson having died two winters before. The account of their deaths is thus related to the manner in which genealogy is blended with epic time in the composition of the contemporary sagas, as witness for instance the genealogical section of *Sturlunga saga*.<sup>19</sup> At the death of Þórðr and Þorvaldur, a new generation is taking over in Iceland's principal families. In ch. 121 Gizur Þorvaldsson and Sturla Sighvatsson are compared and contrasted. The tranquil death of Þórðr is as different as it is possible to imagine



from the description of his nephew Sturla, who was fighting his way to power in Iceland and within his own clan: “Í þenna tíma var svá mikill ofsi Sturlu Sighvatssonar, at nær engir menn hér á landi heldu sér réttum fyrir honum. Ok svá hafa sumir menn hermt orð hans síðan, at hann þóttist allt land hafa undir sig lagt, ef hann gæti Gizur yfir komit” (In those days, Sturla Sighvatsson was so overbearing that almost no man here in this country could hold his own against him. Some men have since reported his saying that he thought he could have controlled the whole country if he had managed to overcome Gizurr). These words are, most likely, an interpolation in the *Sturlunga* compilation, but are nonetheless based upon the *Íslendinga saga* account.<sup>20</sup>

No conflict of the Sturlung Age is described in as much detail in *Íslendinga saga* as the battle of Örlygsstaðir and its background.<sup>21</sup> Sturla Sighvatsson, cousin of Sturla the saga author, may thus justly be called the hero of the saga. Guðný Böðvarsdóttir, his grandmother, dreams of his birth, and he is given the name Vígstærkr (Strong in Battle) (pp. 236-37). Later in the saga, when Sturla has reached adulthood, and his disputes with other members of the Sturlung family have begun, the narrator cannot conceal his admiration of his splendour, although the author of the saga was at that time one of his opponents: “[...] riðu þeir Sturla ok Ormr ór hrauninu. Reið Sturla á lötum hesti, er Álfarleggr var kallaðr, allra hesta mestr ok fríðastr. Hann var í rauðri ólpu, ok hygg ek, at fáir muni sét hafa röskliga mann [334].” ([...] Sturla and Ormr rode out from the lava field; Sturla was riding a gentle horse, called Álfarleggr, a very large and handsome mount. Sturla wore a red cloak, and I think that few can have seen so valiant a man.) Sturla Sighvatsson increasingly displaces other characters in the saga, to become its hero when he returns to Iceland after making a pilgrimage to Rome, meeting with King Hákon of Norway, and promising to win Iceland over to the king. Sturla Sighvatsson is the focus of the narrative before and during the battle of Örlygsstaðir. But this is not because the author of the saga was on Sturla’s side; the narrator also had information on what was happening on the other side. The narrative emphasis and viewpoint are chosen because Sturla represents the hero facing his destiny. At this moment, he must have the sympathy of the audience, as he fights to the bitter end, though outnumbered, and is finally slain as he lies helpless.

But as Sturla displaces other characters in the saga, the narrator’s admiration gradually gives way to doubts about his leadership abilities, his character and his actions. And the narrator has



Þórðr Sturluson predicting evil consequences of the aggression of his brother Sighvatr and his sons (392). Even Sighvatr, who stands by his son, Sturla, through thick and thin, has doubts about how long his extreme behaviour (hubris) can last, expressed in conversation with a certain Már, an old friend of the Sturlung clan:

Þá tók Sighvatr til orða: “Hvé lengi mun haldast ofsi sjá inn mikli, er Sturla hefir umfram alla frændr vára?”

Már svarar: “Þat þykkir líkligt, at lengi haldist fyrir þínar sakir ok annarra frænda yðvarra göfugra. En þó muntu slíku næst geta, bóndi, ok vilda ek heyra, hvers þú gætir til eða hversu þér segði hugr um þetta.”

Sighvatr svarar: “Ekki kann ek til slíks at sjá, en fá eru óhóf alllangæ. En þó má vera, at þetta sé langætt, ef hann drepr eigi brátt fæti, en ef hann drepr, þá mun hann drepa eigi sem minnst [411].”

(Then Sighvatr said, “How long will it last this great pride which Sturla shows more than all our kinsmen?”)

Már answered: “It seems likely it will last a long time because of the admiration and respect everywhere for you and all your kinsmen. But still, you should more nearly understand such things, my friend. I would like to hear what you prophesy, or what you think about this.”

Sighvatr replied: “I cannot prophesy about such things, but excesses are rarely long-lasting. Still, it may last a long time, if he doesn't trip up. But if he does stumble, his fall will be spectacular.”)

Sighvatr's words here are significant, since the narrator's attitude to him is usually amicable, even though Sighvatr finds himself in trouble through his son, Sturla. His words become yet more striking because Sighvatr uses a proverbial saying: “Fá eru óhóf alllangæ” (pride goes before a fall).<sup>22</sup> Thus the prophecy of Þórðr, Sturla's uncle, is reflected in the story. The high expectations attached to Sturla are turned upside down, and his degradation, shown by the saga to be the result of wilful presumption, is complete.

As *Íslendinga saga* is generally favourable towards Þórðr Sturluson, the inference is that the account of his behaviour, words and actions is intended to set a good example. Þórðr's wisdom, justice, strength and moderation brought him a happier life than that of his brothers. In the church's view, such a man was graced with the four cardinal virtues: *prudentia*, *justitia*, *fortitudo* and *temperantia*. He was a *vir magnus*, a great man.<sup>23</sup> He is a man who has fortune on his side. *Íslendinga saga*'s accounts of conflict, on the other hand, exemplify the inevitability of evil fortune.



The narrator of *Íslendinga saga* makes no secret of the fact that he believes the Sturlung clan is entitled to rule. On the other hand, his account of the deaths of the Sturluson brothers, and the actions of Sturla Sighvatsson, can only be interpreted as entailing that they did not know how to handle the power they had acquired, with the exception of Þórðr Sturluson.<sup>24</sup> Had they followed the example of Þórðr, events would have developed differently. The death of Þórðr Sturluson is thus a crucial point in the story of the Sturlungs, and indeed in the saga as a whole. The personification of the four cardinal virtues expires, and his sons do not succeed in continuing his tradition in opposition to the aggressors. Even Sturla Þórðarson the magnate finds himself caught up in their conflicts. In this we see the narrator's evaluation of events. British literary scholar W.P. Ker focussed precisely on the tragic undertone of *Sturlunga saga*/*Íslendinga saga*: “[...] the Icelandic tragedy had no reconciliation at the end, and there was no national strength underneath the disorder, fit to be called out by a peacemaker or a “saviour of society”.”<sup>25</sup> *Sturlunga saga* recounts how “the age of heroes” came to an end, because the advice of such men as Þórðr was not heeded. Icelandic historian Gunnar Karlsson is of the view that *Íslendinga saga* expresses tension between “the *tough* values of heroism, pride, revenge, and the *soft* values of modesty, humility, peacefulness.”<sup>26</sup> Sturla Sighvatsson represents the former set of values, his uncle Þórðr the latter. The saga unambiguously takes Þórðr's side, and is critical of destructive elements in society – those who are depicted as causing conflict and hostilities.

The author of *Sturlunga saga* turns to Sturla the saga writer in his search for the truth about past events, commenting: “Ok treystum vér honum bæði vel til vits og einurðar að segja frá, því at hann vissa ek alvitrastan ok hófsamastan [115]”(And we may trust well both his understanding and his selection of what to tell, for I know him to be a very wise and a most temperate man). And he saw the saga as an *historia*, i.e. the epic story as historical account.<sup>27</sup> The Icelandic school of saga research has, on the contrary, looked to Sturla for “the reality” of the Sturlung Age. Those who subscribed to this school of thought were of the view that the authors of the contemporary sagas had only been conscious of one way of recounting events, i.e. in chronological order. Jónas Kristjánsson says: “Uppbygging eða efnisröðun samtíðarsagna mótast af því að raunverulegum atburðum er lýst í tímaröð samkvæmt frásögn sjónarvotta eða annarra heimildarmanna”<sup>28</sup> (The composition or ordering of the contemporary sagas is a function of real events being recounted in chronological order, according to the accounts of eye-witnesses or other informants). He uses this as an argument that no common





structure may be found in the sagas. Jónas Kristjánsson, in other words, sees the contemporary sagas as chronicles or imperfect sagas.<sup>29</sup> Icelandic historians also appear to believe that the narratives of the *Sturlunga* compilation reveal life itself – that the accounts are formed by objective reality. In other words, they make no distinction between that signified by the signifier and their reference to reality outside the text. My studies of *Sturlunga saga* have revealed, however, that the sagas follow certain narrative schemes; some things were worth recounting because they conformed with these schemes, others not. Their composition was based upon certain ideas about family and generations, and the interpretation of chronology blended with genealogy, and they express a certain set of values. The contemporary sagas are thus not based upon the “true reality” of the Sturlung Age, nor are they a direct copy of it, but are accounts about “reality” and views of it. The events are not “real” because they happened, but because they were remembered and included in a saga.<sup>30</sup>

The contemporary sagas are based upon oral accounts, the experience of the saga authors, and even written sources, as indicated by the Prologue to *Sturlunga*. Narrative sources have both a narrative structure and a certain content and significance. The individual’s understanding of his experience, and the way he presents it, are also believed to be functions of the cultural customs of his environment.<sup>31</sup> A small event may become the subject of a narrative, which is then included in another narrative, and so on. Because the sagas are based upon narrative sources, one cannot attribute the views expressed there to the saga’s author alone. A narrative may be polyvocal, not least if the sources have not been adapted to the principal view of the saga. In the words of semiologist Yuri M. Lotman, “[t]he text is not only the generator of new meanings, but also condenser of cultural memory.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, it is quite unacceptable in the context of narrative theory not to distinguish between the so-called “implied author” and the author himself. Indeed, there is no reason to expect all the works attributed to the saga author Sturla Þórðarson to express the same views.<sup>33</sup>

Medievalist R. Howard Bloch has become a spokesman for so-called “literary anthropology”. In his view, medieval writing particularly “both reflects its cultural moment, thus enabling anthropological description, and is a prime vehicle for the change of that which it reflects”; medieval text is a “generator of public consciousness,” which can be said to exist through it just as society can be said to exist through language.”<sup>34</sup> Taking into consideration the narrative rules of the contemporary sagas, their delimitation of material, disposition and structure,





narrative method and style, the limitations of *Sturlunga saga* as a historical source are clear. But bearing Bloch's ideas in mind, the compilation can, nevertheless, serve as "náma af upplýsingum frá fyrstu hendi um menningu og hugsunarhátt þessarar aldar"<sup>35</sup> (a mine of first-hand information on the culture of that time, and its ways of thinking).

The context of *Íslendinga saga* "is illuminated in its detailed operations by the moves made" in the text. It "gives us insight into the type of meaning production available in the culture" of Sturla Þórðarson's time and place.<sup>36</sup> It is precisely when the text is about itself, or it changes code, that it best reveals how the subject-matter is encoded, and the ideas behind the narrative. The deathbed scene of Þórðr Sturluson is an example of such a case. It draws the audience's attention to the saga's narrative schemes and its composition and values, not least because it contrasts so starkly with the saga as a whole.

Trans. Anna H. Yates

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Íslendinga saga* is quoted according to *Sturlunga saga*, eds. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, and Kristján Eldjárn, vol. 1, Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946. For the quoted translation into English, see *Sturlunga Saga*, trans. Julia H. McGrew, vol. 1 (The Library of Scandinavian Literature 9-10) New York: Twayne, 1970-74. Some emendments have, however, been made in the passages quoted from the translation and form of proper names changed in accordance with the main text.

<sup>2</sup> Magnús Helgason, "Sturlungaöldin." in Magnús Helgason and Kjartan Helgason. *Bræðramál*, Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1949: 113.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Gunnar Karlsson. "Goðar og bændur," *Saga* 10 (1972): 7-8; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth*, trans. Jean Lundskær-Nielsen, (The Viking Collection 12) Odense: Odense U.P., 1999: 18.

<sup>4</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer jr., *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1995: 160.

<sup>5</sup> See Dominick LaCapra, *History and Criticism*, Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1985: 42.



<sup>6</sup> Jón Jóhannesson, “Um Sturlunga sögu,” *Sturlunga saga*, eds. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, and Kristján Eldjárn, vol. 2, Reykjavík: Sturlunguúgáfan, 1946: xiii.

<sup>7</sup> See Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*, London: Routledge, 1981: 170.

<sup>8</sup> Helgi Þorláksson, “Sturla Þórðarson, minni og vald,” *2. íslenska söguþingið, 30. maí – 1. júní 2002: Ráðstefnurit*, vol. 2, Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun, 340-41; cf. Auður Magnúsdóttir, *Frillor och fruar: Politik och samlevnad på Island 1120-1400*, Gothenburgh, s.n., 2001: 39.

<sup>9</sup> Jón Jóhannesson, “Um Sturlunga sögu,” p. xii.

<sup>10</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1964: 182.

<sup>11</sup> Gunnar Benediktsson, *Sagnameistarinn Sturla*, Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1961: 177-78; Robert James Glendinning, *Träume und Vorbedeutung in der Islendinga Saga Sturla Thordarsons: Eine Form- und Stiluntersuchung*, (Kanadische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur 8) Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Jón Jóhannesson, “Um Sturlunga sögu,” xxxiv.

<sup>13</sup> See Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981, esp. 5-28, 188-201; see also Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum, Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1975: 1-25.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Tue Gad, *Legenden i dansk middelalder*, Copenhagen: Dansk videnskabs forlag, 1961: 57.

<sup>15</sup> Úlfar Bragason, “The Art of Dying: Three Death Scenes in *Íslendinga saga*,” *Scandinavian Studies* 63 (1991): 453-63.

<sup>16</sup> Úlfar Bragason, “Sturlunga saga: Atburðir og frásögn,” *Skáldskaparmál* 1 (1990): 73-88.

<sup>17</sup> See Theodore M. Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading*, (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 28) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1967: 43.

<sup>18</sup> Tue Gad, *Legenden i dansk middelalder*, Copenhagen: Dansk videnskabs forlag, 1961: 54-57; Fredrik Paasche, *Snorre Sturlason og Sturlungerne*, Oslo: Aschehoug, 1922: 251.



<sup>19</sup> Úlfar Bragason, “Um ættartölur í *Sturlungu*,” *Tímarit Máls og menningar* 54:1 (1993): 27-35; See also Margaret Clunies Ross, “The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organisation in Early Iceland,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 92 (1993): 372-85.

<sup>20</sup> Pétur Sigurðsson, *Um Íslendinga sögu Sturlu Þórðarsonar*, (Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenzkra bókmennta 6) Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1933-35: 42-43; cf. Glendinning, *Träume und Vorbedeutung in der Islendinga Saga Sturla Thordarsons*, 223-26.

<sup>21</sup> See Úlfar Bragason, “Hetjudauði Sturlu Sighvatssonar,” *Skírnir* 160 (1986): 64-78; cf. Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, “Historiefortælleren Sturla Þórðarson,” *Sturlustefna*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir og Jónas Kristjánsson, (Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32) Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988: 112-26; Hermann Pálsson, “Á Örlygsstöðum: Grafist fyrir um eðli Íslendinga sögu,” *Saga* 29 (2001): 169-206.

<sup>22</sup> See Peter Foote, “Skömm er óhófs ævi: On Glaucia, Hrafnkell and Others,” *Idee. Gestalt. Geschichte. Festschrift Klaus von See: Studien zur europäischen Kulturtradition*, ed. Gerd Wolfgang Weber, Odense: Odense U.P., 1988.

<sup>23</sup> See Marlene Ciklamini, “Biographical Reflections in *Íslendinga saga*: A. Mirror of Personal Values,” *Scandinavian Studies* 55 (1983): 205-21; Sverrir Tómasson, “Perfecta fortitudo,” *Sjöttú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*, eds. Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson, (Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 12) vol. 2, Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977: 733-40.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Theodore M. Andersson, “Etics and Politics in Hrafnkels saga,” *Scandinavian Studies* 60 (1988): 293-309.

<sup>25</sup> W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature*, rev. ed. 1908, rp. New York: Dover, 1957: 257.

<sup>26</sup> Gunnar Karlsson, “The Ethics of the Icelandic Saga Authors and Their Contemporaries,” *The Sixth International Saga Conference 28.7 – 2.8. 1985. Workshop Papers*, vol. 1. [Copenhagen]: Det arnamagnæanske Institut, 1986: 384; see also Gunnar Karlsson, “Siðamat Íslendingasögu,” *Sturlustefna*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson, (Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32) Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988: 204-21;



Jacqueline Simpson, "Advocacy and Art in *Guðmundar saga dýra*," *Saga Book of the Viking Society* 15 (1961): 328-29; R. George Thomas, Introd., *Sturlunga saga*, trans. Julia H. McGrew, vol. 1. (The Library of Scandinavian Literature 9) New York, 1970: 45; cf. Ármann Jakobsson, "Sannyrði sverða: Vígaferli í Íslendinga sögu og hugmyndafræði sögunnar," *Skáldskaparmál* 3 (1994): 42-78; Guðrún Nordal, "'Eitt sinn skal hverr deyja': Dráp og dauðalýsingar í Íslendinga sögu," *Skírnir* 163 (1989): 72-94.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, "Historiefortælleren Sturla Þórðarson," 125.

<sup>28</sup> Jónas Kristjánsson, "Íslendingasögur og Sturlunga: Samanburður nokkurra einkenna og efnisatriða," *Sturlustefna*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson, (Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32) Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988: 107.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987: 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, p. 20; cf. Jürg Glauser, "Sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendinga sögur*) and *þættir* as the literary representation of a new social space." *Old Norse Literature and Society*, ed Margaret Clunies Ross, (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 42) Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2000: 209-15.

<sup>31</sup> Georgy Gizelis, "Historical Event into Song: The Use of Cultural Perceptual Style," *Folklore* (London) 83 (1972): 319-20.

<sup>32</sup> Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. Ann Shukman, paperback, Blomington: Indiana U.P., 2000: 18.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Hermann Pálsson, "Á Örlygsstöðum," 201.

<sup>34</sup> R. Howard. Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages*, Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1983, paperback ed. 1986: 15-16.

<sup>35</sup> Sigurður Nordal, *Um íslenzkar fornsögur*, trans. Árni Björnsson, Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1968: 99.

<sup>36</sup> See White, *The Content of the Form*, 212-213.



## WORKS CITED

- Andersson, Theodore M. *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading*. (= Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 28). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1967.
- . "Ethics and Politics in Hrafnkels saga." *Scandinavian Studies* 60 (1988): 293-309.
- Ariès, Philippe. *The Hour of Our Death*. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.
- . *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. Trans. Patricia M. Ranum. Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1974. Paperback ed. 1975.
- Auður Magnúsdóttir. *Frillor och fruar: Politik och samlevnad på Island 1120-1400*. Gothenburgh, s.n., 2001.
- Ármann Jakobsson. "Sannyrði sverða: Vígaferli í Íslendinga sögu og hugmyndafræði sögunnar." *Skáldskaparmál* 3 (1994): 42-78.
- Berkhofer, Robert F., jr. *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1995.
- Bloch, R. Howard. *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages*. Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1983. Paperback ed. 1986.
- Ciklamini, Marlene. "Biographical Reflections in *Íslendinga saga*: A. Mirror of Personal Values." *Scandinavian Studies* 55 (1983): 205-21.
- Clunies Ross, Margaret. "The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organisation in Early Iceland." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 92 (1993): 372-85.
- Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. London: Routledge, 1981.
- Foote, Peter. "Skömm er óhófs ævi: On Glaucia, Hrafnkell and Others." *Idee. Gestalt. Geschichte. Festschrift Klaus von See: Studien zur europäischen Kulturtradition*. Ed. Gerd Wolfgang Weber. Odense: Odense U.P., 1988.
- Gad, Tue. *Legenden i dansk middelalder*. Copenhagen: Dansk videnskabs forlag, 1961.



- Gizelis, Georgy. "Historical Event into Song: The Use of Cultural Perceptual Style." *Folklore* (London) 83 (1972):302-20.
- Glendinning, Robert James. *Träume und Vorbedeutung in der Islendinga Saga Sturla Thordarsons: Eine Form- und Stiluntersuchung*. (= Kanadische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur 8). Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974.
- Glauser, Jürg. "Sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendinga sögur*) and *þættir* as the literary representation of a new social space." *Old Norse Literature and Society*. Ed Margaret Clunies Ross. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 42) Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2000. Pp. 203-20.
- Gunnar Benediktsson. *Sagnameistarinn Sturla*. Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1961.
- Gunnar Karlsson. "Goðar og bændur." *Saga* 10 (1972): 5-57.
- . "The Ethics of the Icelandic Saga Authors and Their Contemporaries." *The Sixth International Saga Conference 28.7 – 2.8. 1985. Workshop Papers*. Vol. 1. Copenhagen: Det arnamagnæanske Institut, 1986. 381-99.
- . "Siðamat Íslendingasögu." *Sturlustefna*. Eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson. (= Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32) Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988. 204-21.
- Helgi Þorláksson. "Sturla Þórðarson, milli og vald." *2. íslenska söguþingið, 30. maí – 1. júní, 2002: Ráðstefnurit*. Vol. 2. Ed. Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir. Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun, 2002.
- Hermann Pálsson. "Á Örlygsstöðum: Grafist fyrir um eðli Íslendinga sögu." *Saga* 29 (2001): 169-206.
- Jón Jóhannesson. "Um Sturlunga sögu." *Sturlunga saga*. Eds. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, and Kristján Eldjárn. Vol. 2. Reykjavík: Sturlunguúgáfan, 1946. vii-lvi.
- Jón Viðar Sigurðsson. *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonweath*. Trans. Jean Lundskær-Nielsen. (= The Viking Collection 12). Odense: Odense U.P., 1999.



- Jónas Kristjánsson. "Íslendingasögur og Sturlunga: Samanburður nokkurra einkenna og efnisatriða." *Sturlustefna*. Eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson. (= Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32). Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988. Pp. 94-111.
- Ker, W. P. *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature*. Rev. ed. 1908. Rp. New York: Dover, 1957.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1985.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1964.
- Lotman, Yuri M. *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Trans Ann Shukman. Paperback. Blomington: Indiana U.P., 2000.
- Magnús Helgason. "Sturlungaöldin." *Kvöldræður í Kennaraskólanum 1909-1929* (1931). Rpt. Magnús Helgason and Kjartan Helgason. *Bræðramál*. Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1949. 111-34.
- Meulengracht Sørensen, Preben. "Historiefortælleren Sturla Þórðarson." *Sturlustefna*. Eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir og Jónas Kristjánsson. (= Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 32). Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988. 112-26.
- Nordal, Guðrún. "'Eitt sinn skal hverr deyja': Dráp og dauðalýsingar í Íslendinga sögu." *Skírnir* 163 (1989): 72-94.
- Pétur Sigurðsson. *Um Íslendinga sögu Sturlu Þórðarsonar*. (= Safn til sögu Íslands og íslenzkra bókmennta 6). Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1933-35.
- Paasche, Fredrik. *Snorre Sturlason og Sturlungerne*. Oslo: Aschehoug, 1922.
- Sigurður Nordal. *Um íslenzkar fornsögur*. Trans. Árni Björnsson. Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1968.
- Simpson, Jacqueline. "Advocacy and Art in *Guðmundar saga dýra*." *Saga Book of the Viking Society* 15 (1961): 327-45.
- Sturlunga saga*. Eds. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason, and Kristján Eldjárn. 2 vols. Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946. Vol. 1.





*Sturlunga Saga*. Trans. Julia H. McGrew. 2 vols. (= The Library of Scandinavian Literature 9-10) New York: Twayne, 1970-74. Vol. 1.

Sverrir Tómasson. "Perfecta fortitudo." *Sjöttíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*. Eds. Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson. (= Rit Stofnunar Árna Magnússonar 12) Vol. 2. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1977. 733-40.

Thomas, R. George. Introd. *Sturlunga Saga*. Trans. Julia H. McGrew. Vol. 1. (= The Library of Scandinavian Literature 9) New York, 1970. Pp. 11-49.

Úlfar Bragason. "Hetjudauði Sturlu Sighvatssonar." *Skírnir* 160 (1986): 64-78.

---. "The Art of Dying: Three Death Scenes in *Íslendinga saga*." *Scandinavian Studies* 63 (1991): 453-63.

---. "Sturlunga saga: Atburðir og frásögn." *Skáldskaparmál* 1 (1990): 73-88.

---. "Um ættartölur í *Sturlungu*." *Tímarit Máls og menningar* 54:1 (1993): 27-35.

White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987.