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THE LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE ACCOUNT OF ÓSPAKR'S  
REVENGE IN THE BANDAMANNA SAGA

At present it seems to be generally accepted that for the most part Bandamanna saga has no basis in oral tradition. But the end of the saga, with the stanza of Óspakr Glúmsson, stands apart, and is still regarded as a reminiscence of an older transmission, which people think was probably oral. While working on this saga many years ago I did not reach any definite opinion on this question. But in the present paper I shall, tentatively, try to adduce some evidence in favour of the view that this part of the saga too, with Óspakr's stanza, is an invention of the saga author.

In the last chapter of Bandamanna saga we are told how the chief villain of the saga, Óspakr Glúmsson, takes vengeance on three men whom he seems to have felt to be his main enemies. They are the farmer Bergþórr at Bøðvarshólar (who had formulated the charge against him when he was outlawed on account of the slaying of Váli, the saga's saint), Már Hildisson (who had married his wife, Svála, after Óspakr's condemnation), and Oddr Ófeigsson (who had brought the law-suit against him). To execute his revenge on Bergþórr and Oddr Ófeigsson, Óspakr kills cattle belonging to them. Már Hildisson

is attacked and killed by Óspakr one morning while still in bed. Having wounded Már, Óspakr recites a stanza, and after that he is mortally wounded by Már's brother, the silly but strong Bjálfi.

As is well known, Bandamanna saga is extant in two main versions, one the text of Möðruvallabók (the M-text), generally taken to be from the middle of the fourteenth century<sup>1</sup>, the other the text of Gl. kgl. saml. 2845, 4to (the Konungsbók or K-text), probably from "the first quarter of the fifteenth century"<sup>2</sup>.

Óspakr's stanza stands apart, being transmitted in both versions of the saga, whereas the M-text has five additional stanzas attributed to Ófeigr Skíðason. It is generally accepted that the stanza of Óspakr formed part of the original saga. But, as mentioned, there is still dispute as to the origin of the stanza itself. There are three possibilities:

(1) The stanza is authentic, i.e. it was composed by Óspakr and recited in the situation that the saga describes.

(2) The stanza is not authentic, but was included in the saga by the saga author, who got it through older, oral or literary transmission.

(3) The stanza was composed by the saga author himself.

Finnur Jónsson always maintained that the stanza was authentic<sup>3</sup>. Andreas Heusler, on the other hand, seems

to doubt whether a stanza recited under such circumstances would have any chance of being transmitted<sup>4</sup>. Björn Magnússon Ólsen believed this stanza, like the rest of the stanzas in the M-text of the saga, to be the invention of the saga author<sup>5</sup>, while Sigurður Nordal is inclined to believe that the stanza is older than the saga<sup>6</sup>.

I suppose that hardly anybody nowadays believes in the authenticity of the stanza. The reciting of a stanza in a situation of such disturbance and danger as that described in the saga is improbable per se. And as mentioned before, scholars in our time have ceased to regard Bandamanna saga in general as a trustworthy historical source. This opinion I shall try to back up still more in what follows. Our alternatives, then, are only the following: either the stanza is older than the saga but not authentic, or the stanza was invented by the saga author.

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The stanza of Óspakr in Bandamanna saga and the preceding prose contain some personal names, Svala, Már, Bergþórr, Bjálfi or Ólvir, Hildir or Hildir. We first have to give a brief commentary on the textual variants of the names.

In the M-text of the stanza Már is said to be arfa Hildis, in the K-text arfa Hildar. Norse people were most frequently designated by means of the names of their

fathers. The reading Hildis must also be regarded as lectio difficilior, Hildir being rarely used as a name by Icelanders in historical times, whereas Hildr is comparatively common<sup>7</sup>.

Of persons named Hildir Landnámabók has four, all of them living in the landnámsöld.

Except for our Hildir in the M-text of Bandamanna saga we find in the Sagas of Icelanders only one person bearing this name, Hildir Geirleifsson inn gamli in Njáls saga, who was converted by the missionary Pangbrandr.

Sturlunga saga knows only one Hildir, the father of Ólafr Hildisson. Ólafr was killed in the year 1119.

In addition to this the name Hildir is in Norse literature connected with some kings, heroes and giants in the fornaldarsögur.

Finnur Jónsson, who also gave preference to the variant Hildis, tried to explain Hildar in the K-text as a dittography, the syllable ar being an anticipation of ar in the following word fagrvaxinnar<sup>8</sup>.

Már in our saga has a brother, a half-wit, who in the M-text is named Bjálfi, in the K-text Qlvir. Both names are well known, but Qlvir is the more common. Here, too, one would presume that the rarer name, Bjálfi, is the original one. The variant Bjálfi is also supported by another argument, which I consider to be important.

Bjálfi is not only a proper name, but a common noun as well, meaning "skin rug". The word is also used in the sense "fool", "blockhead". The name Bjálfi, therefore, as already stated by Finnur Jónsson, corresponds to the character of the person in question.<sup>9</sup> Bjálfi is a name borne by six men in the Sagas of Icelanders. One of them is an óeirðarmaðr (Flóamanna saga), another a leysingi, the paternal grandfather of Björn hvíti in Njála, a third the obscure father of Kveld-Úlfr in Egla. Respectable persons are the ship-owner Bjálfi of Gísla saga and the Greenland farmer Bjálfi in Flóamanna saga.

Correspondence between name and character is a feature that is visible to some degree in several sagas<sup>10</sup>. In Bandamanna saga the correspondence between the names and the characters of some of the central persons is so manifest that I cannot help finding it very tempting to suppose that this is a conscious feature of the composition. On the one hand we have the main hero of the saga, the man who successfully opposes and conquers the forceful alliance of the chieftains. His name is Ófeigr, a name that may be interpreted as "he who will survive". On the other hand there is the villain of the saga, who spoils his good position at the farm of Oddr and causes his own outlawry. His name is Óspakr, "the unwise", and he is the son of Glúmr (Óspaksson). The word glúmr is a bjarnar heiti in the Skáldskaparmál of Snorra-Edda and seems to be related inter alia to the noun "glum" ("person with a gloomy, sinister face")

found in the dialect of Telemark in Norway, to the verbs "glum" ("look suspicious") of Shetland, "glum" ("have a gloomy look") of English dialects and the adjective "glum" ("terrible") of Jutlandish.

I am well aware of the fact that these two names, like the name of Oddr Ófeigsson, were inherited through older transmission. But I suppose that the author of the saga found that these two names (Ófeigr and Óspakr Glúmsson) fitted excellently into his saga plan. Consequently he made use of them, giving the two persons Ófeigr and Óspakr Glúmsson characters corresponding to their names<sup>11</sup>.

Accordingly I also think Bjálfi of Möðruvallabók, not Ólvir of Konungsbók, to be the original name of this man in the saga.

Moving on from the subject of the textual variants, we will consider next the name Svala. Svala is the only woman who takes part in the action of the saga. I shall try to show that her name, too, was chosen with a view to her role in the saga.

Svala was the owner of the farm Svølustaðir. We are not told how she came into possession of this farm. The saga only states that Svala was væn kona ok ung. She has no husband and does not seem to have been married before. Most likely therefore we have to infer that she has inherited her farm Svølustaðir.

There is an obvious correspondence between the girl's name Svala and the farm's name Svölustaðir that cannot be accidental. The saga gives no information about this correspondence. We are not told that the farm got its name from the girl Svala herself. Moreover such an origin of the farm's name would be improbable from a historical point of view.

Icelandic farm names ending in -staðir most frequently seem to have a personal name as the first part of the compounds.<sup>12</sup> Such a personal name is generally believed to be the name of the first settler of the farm, or the name of a prominent owner from later times.<sup>13</sup> But it would be as improbable to think the young girl Svala was the first settler on the farm as to think she was reason for the farm-name as an owner in a later period. Hence the coincidence of the owner's name Svala and the farm-name Svölustaðir does not seem to have its origin in historical facts, but must be by design.

Our doubt as to the historical reliability of the account of Svala will be still more increased if we consider the general nature of oral tradition. It is well known that oral tradition is mainly concerned with outstanding persons or events; for instance, in Norwegian folklore Saint Olaf or the great pestilence of the years 1349-1350 named "Svartedauen", in Icelandic folklore *Samundr inn fróði* or *Guðmundr inn góði*. Minor persons are apt to be forgotten. In Bandamanna saga Svala is a

secondary person, a wheel necessary for the action but of little interest herself.<sup>14</sup> It therefore seems improbable that her name would have been preserved in oral tradition for hundreds of years. The person Svala, and also the woman's name, Svala, are both totally unknown in saga literature outside Bandamanna saga.<sup>15</sup> For these reasons it does not seem too audacious to infer that Svala is invented.

Whereas the girl Svala is most probably a conception of the author's, the farm Svǫlustaðir really existed. It is the only farm known in Iceland with this name. It is mentioned in medieval documents and in the land-register of Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín. Ruins of the farm still remain.<sup>16</sup>

From this I am inclined to conclude that the saga author, whether he knew this name for a woman beforehand or not, derived the name Svala from the farm-name Svǫlustaðir.<sup>17</sup>

It is well known that names of people in the sagas frequently originate in place-names.<sup>18</sup> I suppose the saga author brought the farm-name Svǫlustaðir into the saga because he thought that it contained a woman's name that would be useful to him for the composition of his saga.

The personal name Svala is probably the same word as the common noun svala "swallow" - a bird known in Iceland. Whether the farm-name is built up from the personal name Svala or from the bird name I shall not discuss.<sup>19</sup> But it is important here that Svala can also be interpreted as a weak declension form of the adj. svalr "cool"; compare the woman's name Ljótt and adj. ljótr, Helga and heilagr. To be sure



the etymology of the bird-name svala is, according to modern theories, different from that of the adj. svalr. But the saga author certainly had no idea of their etymologies. He most likely interpreted the name Svala as a form of the adjective. This adj., svalr, was also used as a man's name in medieval Iceland. Svala would then correspond to Svalr just as Ljót corresponds to Ljótr and Helga to Helgi.<sup>20</sup>

If the author of Bandamanna saga interpreted the woman's name Svala as "the cool" or "the cold", there is complete correspondence in the saga between the name and the character of this woman. In Old Norse, as in modern usage, the word "cold" could indicate a special type of mind or temperament. Compare the proverb: Köld eru kvenna ráð. Like kaldr the adj. svalr could have the connotation of disagreeable coolness (cf. Fritzner and Lexicon poeticum), and also the figurative meaning "cold-hearted", cf. the compound svalbrjóstaðr, which also means "cold-hearted" (Fritzner).

Svala in Bandamanna saga is indeed a cold-hearted and cynical person. As often in the sagas, this is not stated openly but revealed by behaviour. In chapter four of the saga she forms a liaison with Óspakr in an impudent manner. She betroths herself to him against the betrothal rules and without her family's consent. In the absence of Oddr Ófeigsson and without his permission, she moves from Svǫlustaðir to Melr,

the farm of Oddr, and settles there with Óspakr. After Óspakr's subsequent murder of the innocent mediator Váli, she helps Óspakr to conceal the murder by lying to Oddr. When Óspakr has become an outlaw, she abandons him and marries Már Hildisson. (Cf. the contrary behaviour of Auðr Vésteinsdóttir in Gísla saga.)

In the case of Svala the correspondence between name and character is no less manifest than in the cases of Ófeigr and Óspakr Glúmsson.

As already stated, Svala is very probably a person invented by the saga author. But Svala is also the central figure of the sixth stanza of the saga. This leads to the conclusion that the stanza too is an invention of the saga author.

Although Svala cannot be a person who really lived, this does not make it impossible for the other person who is mentioned in the sixth stanza of the saga, Már Hildisson, to have been an historical person, or for at least some sort of older tradition of him seems to have existed. But, as we shall soon see, certain circumstances suggest that he is not an historical person either.

To make the villain Óspakr's failure total, the author of the saga not only lets him become an outlaw, but also lets him be deceived by his wife. For this reason the author needs a new husband for Svala. This husband is Már Hildisson, the brother of Bjálfi. Both brothers are

unknown from other sources. The half-wit Bjálfi is not mentioned in the stanza, only in the saga prose. He is trivial, introduced just to take Óspakr's life. His name suits his character. He is most probably an invention of the saga author.

Már, on the other hand, is mentioned in the stanza with Svala. Now it is suspicious that both these persons Svala and Már, bear names that are at the same time bird-names. This looks as if it must be by design: the "mew" marries the "swallow".

Furthermore both Már's brother, Bjálfi, and Már's wife, Svala, as we have seen, have names that correspond to their characters, and although it does not seem possible to interpret the name Már in the same way, the stanza also mentions the name of Már's father, Hildir, and this name may, possibly, have a connection with Már's character. The meaning of the root syllable of the name Hildir, hild- ("fight") was well known to all Icelanders. So the name of Már's father alluded to conflict and fight. In medieval times the idea of inheritance of character was commonly accepted. Cf. Old Norse words like ættarbragð and ættarsviðr.<sup>21</sup> This idea is verbally expressed in the Möðruvallabók text of our saga, in the second chapter, where Óspakr asks Oddr for employment on his farm. Oddr says: "Ekki ertú mjök lofaðr af mönnum, ok ekki ertú vinsæll. Þykkir þú hafa brögð undir brúnum, svá sem þú ert ættborinn til." Later on Oddr says: "Miklir

eruð þér, frændr, ok torsóttir, ef yðr býðr við at horfa."<sup>22</sup>

Eyrbyggja saga gives a picture of Óspakr's grandfather, Óspakr á Eyri, and the similarity to the character of our Óspakr is obvious. The correspondence cannot be fortuitous. And, as shown above, the meaning of the name of Óspakr's father, Glúmr, fits very well into this pattern.

Accordingly it seems possible that the name Hildir in Bandamanna saga is not primarily intended to describe Már's father, Hildir, but Hildir's son, Már. The name of Már's father may give a hint that the new husband Svala chose after betraying Óspakr was an aggressive type, perhaps an ójafnaðarmaðr (like another Már, of whom we shall soon learn more). This picture of Már fits in well with the saga's picture of his brother, the strong and silly Bjálfi.

I shall now try an admittedly somewhat hazardous reconstruction of the saga author's chain of reasoning.

To start the conflict in the saga the reckless villain Óspakr is given a perhaps still more reckless wife with the characteristic name Svala. To increase Óspakr's failure the author lets this wife deceive him. To this end a new husband is provided, Már, who gets a bird's name like Svala herself. He too is a reckless character, demonstrated by his father's name, Hildir. The new husband has to be a victim of Óspakr's revenge. Óspakr, being an outlaw, can approach people's homes only at night-time. Már consequently must be killed when lying in his bed. To fulfill the

villain Óspakr's deserved fate the author lets Már be revenged. For that purpose Már's brother, Bjálfi, is invented.

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I hope that this attempt at reconstruction has hit at least some of the main points. But at any rate this cannot be a complete solution. One can still ask: if Svala's new husband had to have a bird's name, why did he then get the name Már? Why not for instance a name like Hrafn, Haukr or Qrn, one that would indicate an aggressive character still more clearly?

And second: why has the first victim of Óspakr's revenge got the name Bergþórr? (To be sure, this name is now found only in Möðruvallabók. But the corresponding text of Konungsbók is obviously corrupt in other respects, and I hope to corroborate the belief in the reliability of the name in what follows.)<sup>23</sup>

To my two questions concerning the names Már and Bergþórr I cannot find any answer based on internal logic. But another explanation is still left, viz. influence from literary patterns.

The author of Bandamanna saga, like many other saga authors, was inevitably familiar with older Icelandic literature. The authors of the Sagas of Icelanders never hesitated to make use of older literature as materials for

their own creations. The characters and the details of events of these sagas must to a great extent have been the products of their own imaginations. But it seems to have been a sort of principle that they preferred to seek the names of their main heroes in historical sources and older literature. This manner of composition is one of the qualities that give these sagas that seductive flavour of real history.

We also know examples of the transfer of details of subject-matter originally connected with one person to another person with the same name.<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, where two analogous patterns of subject-matter already existed, we must take into account the possibility that a name might be transferred from one of the patterns to the other one.<sup>25</sup>

Like other authors of his time the author of Bandamanna saga seems to have made use of literary models, e.g. Olkofra þáttir and Laxdæla saga.<sup>26</sup> When setting out to frame the account of Óspakr's revenge and death, he appears to have had mainly two literary sources in his mind, Porgils saga ok Hafliða and Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu.

Porgils saga ok Hafliða, the first part of the Sturlunga collection, is generally considered to have been written in the later part of the twelfth century or the first half of the thirteenth.<sup>27</sup> The main substance of this

saga is the account of a conflict between the chieftains Þorgils Oddason and Haflíði Másson in the years 1118 to 1121. But this conflict originated in contests between men who were followers of these chieftains. One of these was a nephew of Haflíði Másson, Már Bergþórsson, another a casual labourer named Ólafr Hildisson.

Már Bergþórsson had a boat and carried on fishing in the district of Strandir, the district where Oddr Ófeigsson in Bandamanna saga earned his living by sea-transport in his youth. Ólafr Hildisson was one of Már's crew. Már, being brutal and rough, got into a quarrel with Ólafr, deprived him of all his property and drove him away. Ólafr resorted to Þorgils Oddason at Staðarhóll, who furnished him with clothes and an axe. With this axe Ólafr returned to Ávík on Strandir, where Már Bergþórsson was then staying in the home of the farmer Hneitir:

Már lá útar í bekk ok hafði lagt höfuð sitt í kné Rannveigar, dóttur Hneitis bónda. Hann settiz þá upp, er hann heyrði til Óláfs, ok hafði annan fótinn niðr fyrir bekknum; hann var í loðkápu. Óláfr srýr at pallinum útar fyrir Má ok spýrr: "hversu máttu Már? eða hvé líkar þér?" Hann sagði: "hvat mun þik undir vera? fyrir þat mun þér ganga, sem ek mega illa ok mér líki ok illa." Síðan mælti Óláfr linliga til, ef hann mundi vilja bæta honum fyrir fjárupptökuna, ok mælti til vel. Már svarar illa ok sagði ekki mundu tjá

um orð né tilloggur Þorgils Oddasonar. Síðan hæggr Óláfr til Más, ok verðr þat svǫðusár ok eigi beinhogg. Síðan gengr Óláfr út, en Már vill hlaupa eptir honum. Þorsteinn hleypr upp ok heldr Mávi, ok þægir honum í bekkinn. 28

After this assault Ólafr Hildisson became the centre of a long-lasting and complicated legal procedure which touched the summits of Icelandic society and no doubt was well known in Iceland in the thirteenth century.

We shall now compare this scene in Þorgils saga ok Hafliða and the account of Óspakr's revenge in Bandamanna saga.

The similarities are of two types. On the one hand there are some similarities that are non-exclusive, that is to say parallels to them are to be found elsewhere in Norse literature:

- (1) A man is assaulted when lying in his bed.
- (2) The assault is an attempt at revenge.
- (3) If we take into account the *Konungsbók* text of Bandamanna saga, the man is assaulted when in the company of his woman.
- (4) The assault is performed in the same part of Iceland, in the neighbourhood of Húnaflói.

As to exclusive similarities we have two:

- (1) The assaulted man is named Már.
- (2) Connected with the story of the revenge are the two



names Hildir and Bergþórr.

These exclusive similarities are never found together elsewhere in saga literature. I also want to emphasise that the name Hildir, as previously shown, is very rarely connected with persons living after the landnámsöld.

This combination of similarities between the two accounts I find too striking to be fortuitous. I am therefore inclined to believe that Bandamanna saga was here influenced by Porgils saga ok Hafliða, or if not, then by oral accounts of the same events that are told in that saga. The author of Bandamanna saga has, so to speak, created the name Már Hildisson by combining the names of the antagonists Már Bergþórsson and Ólafr Hildisson in Porgils saga ok Hafliða. He has also made use of the name Bergþórr by giving it to the first enemy on whom Óspakr takes his revenge.<sup>29</sup>

This theory of influence will explain why the author of the saga, when he wanted to give Svala a husband with a bird's name, chose the name Már, and also why the names Már, Hildir and Bergþórr are so closely connected in Bandamanna saga.

But at the same time this theory gives fresh support to the view that the sixth stanza of Bandamanna saga is a creation of the saga author, and that the account of Óspakr's revenge has no base in tradition older than the saga.

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Again some words about the disagreement between the texts. As mentioned, the similarity that the assaulted man has his woman by him is to be found in only one of the two main texts of Bandamanna saga, the Konungsbók version. One might easily believe this to be a secondary addition, since this motif is very well known and widespread for instance in eddaic poetry and in sagas. On the other hand only a slight correction of the other main text of Bandamanna saga, the Möðruvallabók text, is necessary to bring it in harmony with the Konungsbók version.

In the Konungsbók Óspakr's entrance into the house in order to kill Már is described by the words einn morginn, er þau Már ok Svala lágu í rekkju sinni, kom þar inn maðr -. Möðruvallabók has: þerr svá til, at maðr gengr inn á Svölustöðum ok í hús þat, er Már hvílir í -<sup>30</sup> In several places in the Möðruvallabók text one single word, or a short sequence of words, that must have stood in the original text of the saga, has been dropped.<sup>31</sup> This may be the case here too. If the original of the Möðruvallabók had: - maðr gengr inn á Svölustöðum ok í hús þat er (þau) Már hvíl(a) í -, the harmony between the main texts as to this point would be complete. The view that this motif - the husband wounded while lying beside his wife in his bed - belongs to the original text of Bandamanna saga is also supported by the fact that the same motif is found in Gunnlaugs saga.

It is well known that there exists some sort of connection between Gunnlaugs saga and Bandamanna saga. Particularly obvious is the similarity between our sixth stanza of Bandamanna saga and a famous speech in the twelfth chapter of Gunnlaugs saga.

We here read that the scald Gunnlaugr Ormstunga, during their last fight, brought his enemy Hrafn Qnundarson drinking-water in his helmet and so approached Hrafn bare-headed. Hrafn made use of this opportunity to give Gunnlaugr a mortal wound in the head. The saga continues as follows:

Pá mælti Gunnlaugr: "Illa sveiktu mik nú, ok ódrengiliga fór þér, þar sem ek trúða þér."

Hrafn svarar: "Satt er þat," segir hann, "en þat gekk mér til þess, at ek ann þér eigi faðmlagsins Helgu innar fǫgru." <sup>32</sup>

The sixth stanza of Bandamanna saga has:

Unnak eigi  
arfa Hildis  
fagrvoxinnar  
faðmlags Svǫlu.<sup>33</sup>

Between Hrafn's speech in Gunnlaugs saga and the stanza of Bandamanna saga there is correspondence not only in subject-matter but also in the choice of words (unna eigi faðmlags; fagr). A literary relationship is here evident.<sup>34</sup>

Between these two sagas there are similarities in other respects too. Common to both is the brother of

Gunnlaugr, Hermundr Illugason, although the picture of him in Gunnlaugs saga - in accordance with the different plans of the two sagas - is more sympathetic than that in Bandamanna saga. But in both sagas he is a distinguished person. Cf. Gunnlaugs saga, ch. 4 (on the two brothers): Hermundr var þeirra vinsælli ok hafði höfðingjabragð á sér,<sup>35</sup> and Bandamanna saga, M-text ch. 10: "Þar sitr þú, Hermundr, mikill höfðingi", and K-text: "Þá sitr þú, Hermundr, höfðingi mikill".<sup>36</sup>

Egill Skúlason, a particularly prominent bandamaðr in Bandamanna saga, but known only from this saga, is the son of Skúli Þorsteinsson, who in Gunnlaugs saga is a hirðmaðr at the court of Earl Eiríkr in Niðarós, where he willingly gives Gunnlaugr assistance and saves him in a very dangerous situation. Skúli's sister is Helga in fagra.

In Gunnlaugs saga ch. 4 we read that Gunnlaugr at the age of 12 asks his father for equipment for a journey to foreign countries. The father rejects this:

Ok einnhvern morgin var þat, alllitlu síðar,  
at Illugi bóndi gekk út snimma ok sá, at útibúr  
hans var opit, ok váru lagðir út vgrusekkar  
nökkurir á hlaðit sex ok þar lénur með; hann  
undraðisk þetta mjök. Þar gekk þá at maðr ok  
leiddi fjögur hross, ok var þar Gunnlaugr, sonr  
hans, ok mælti: "Ek hefi sekkana út lagit,"  
segir hann. Illugi spurði, hví hann gerði svá.

Hann sagði, at þat skyldi vera fararefni hans.  
 Illugi mælti: "Engi ráð skalt þú taka af mér  
 ok fara hvergi, fyrr en ek vil," ok kippði inn  
 apr vgrusekkunum. Gunnlaugr reið þá í brott  
 þaðan -. <sup>37</sup>

In the beginning of Bandamanna saga Oddr Ófeigsson, at  
 the age of 12, asks his father for equipment to leave home.  
 This is contemptuously refused. The M-text continues:

Annan dag eptir tekr Oddr vað af þili ok ǵll  
 veiðarferi ok tólf álnar vaðmáls. Han gengr nú  
 í brott ok kveðr engan mann.

K-text: Annan dag eptir ferr Oddr ok tekr vað  
 af þili ok ǵll veiðarferi ok tólf álnar vaðmáls  
 ok gengr í brott ok kveðr engan mann -. <sup>38</sup>

It may also be mentioned that only in these two sagas  
 do we find the mountain name Valfell in Borgarfjörður, a  
 name that is now forgotten. <sup>39</sup>

A similarity of particular interest to us is found in  
 the twelfth stanza of Gunnlaugs saga. <sup>40</sup> After describing  
 how Helga in fagra is married to Hrafn against her will  
 the saga continues:

Hrafn fór heim til Mosfells með Helgu, konu  
 sína. Ok er þau hfðu þar skamma stund verit, þá  
 var þat einn morgin, áðr þau risu upp, at Helga  
 vakir, en Hrafn svaf, ok lét hann illa í svefni.  
 Ok er hann vaknaði, spyrr Helga, hvat hann hefði

dreymt. Hrafn kvað vísu:

Hugðumk orms á armi  
 ý döggar þér hoggvinn,  
 væri, brúðr, í blóði  
 beðr þinn roðinn mínu;  
 knættit endr of undir  
 ǫlstafns Njörun Hrafni,  
 líka getr þat lauka  
 lind, hoggþyrnis binda.

Helga mælti: "Þat mun ek aldri gráta," segir hon,  
 "ok hafi þér illa svikit mik, ok mun Gunnlaugr út  
 kominn."<sup>41</sup>

Here we see the idea of the husband wounded and blood-stained while lying in bed beside his wife quite clearly expressed. In this respect the similarity is greater between Bandamanna saga and Gunnlaugs saga than between Bandamanna saga and Porgils saga ok Hafliða. In the latter saga the woman is not the wounded man's wife and not lying in bed beside him, nor is the wounded man killed.

A literary relationship between Gunnlaugs saga and our stanza of the Bandamanna saga is undoubted. But what was the direction of the influence? Which of them was the prior one, Gunnlaugs saga or the account of Óspakr's revenge in Bandamanna saga?<sup>42</sup>

As stated before, I am inclined to regard the sixth stanza of Bandamanna saga as having been an invention of

the saga author himself. If this conclusion is correct, I think it will help to some extent to determine the relationship between these two sagas.

Most scholars assign the composition of both sagas to the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>43</sup> But as yet the question of their age relative to each other has been left unsolved.

The question of the age of Gunnlaugs saga is complicated. The rivalry between Gunnlaugr and Hrafn about Helga in fagra is mentioned in Egils saga. A vísuhelmingr ascribed to Gunnlaugr is quoted in Snorra-Edda. Both Gunnlaugr and Hrafn are named in Skáldatal<sup>44</sup> and Gunnlaugr in the Sturlubók of Landnáma.<sup>45</sup> But as Sturla Þórðarson does not seem to have made use of Gunnlaugs saga in his Sturlubók, Sigurður Nordal supposed the saga to be of comparatively late origin, viz. the 1270s.<sup>46</sup> Bjarni Einarsson points out the possibility that there existed an older Gunnlaugs saga, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and that the preserved Gunnlaugs saga may be a remodelled version of that older saga.<sup>47</sup> At any rate, the dispute between Gunnlaugr and Hrafn was evidently well known in Iceland throughout the thirteenth century. If the sixth stanza of Bandamanna saga was composed by the author of that saga in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the conflict between Gunnlaugr and Hrafn must have been well known to the author of this stanza too. And nothing seems to prevent the

assumption that the author of the stanza may also have known the prose of our existing Gunnlaugs saga.

On the other hand, if Óspakr's stanza is as young as the saga itself, it will for chronological reasons be rather difficult to regard it as a source of Gunnlaugs saga. In addition, this stanza, and the obscure persons named there, are totally unknown in Old Icelandic literature outside Bandamanna saga. I am therefore inclined to believe that this stanza, like the whole account of Óspakr's revenge, is built up by means of material from three sources: Bandamanna saga itself, Porgils saga ok Hafliða and Gunnlaugs saga.



## NOTES

1. Stefán Karlsson's recent investigations into the hand of the Möðruvallabók-writer supports this conclusion. Cf. Stefán Karlsson, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile*, Vol. VII: *Sagas of Icelandic Bishops* (Copenhagen 1967), p. 28.
2. Jón Helgason, *Manuscripta Islandica II* (København 1955), p. XII.
3. Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie I (København 1920), pp. 514-5; cf. idem: *Bandamannasaga med Oddspátttr ... udgivne for Samfund til Udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur* (København 1933), p. IX.
4. Zwei Isländer-Geschichten, die Hønsna-Póres und die Bandamanna saga (Berlin 1913), p. XIV.
5. Um Íslendingasögur, p. 272, in *Safn til sögu Íslands VI* (Reykjavík 1929-1939).
6. *Nordisk kultur VIII:B Litteraturhistorie* (Uppsala 1953), p. 257.
7. Cf. E.H. Lind: *Norsk-isländska dopnamn och fingerade namn från medeltiden* (Uppsala 1905-1915), Supplementband Oslo 1931; Hallvard Magerøy: *Studiar i Bandamanna saga*, *Bibliotheca Arnemagneana XVIII* (København 1957), p. 106.
8. Edition 1933 (cf. note 3), p. VII. - As to anticipatory dittographies cf. also Dagfinn Åsen in *Mål og Namn. Heidersskrift til Olav T. Beito* (Oslo 1971), p. 349.
9. Edition 1933, p. VII.

10. The name Svartr is borne by 15 persons in the Sagas of Icelanders and Landnámabók. Except for Svartr, the son of Úlfr aurgoði in Landnámabók, they are as a rule characterised by low rank or by a brutal nature (outlaws, vikings, berserks and so on). The adjective svartr can be a sign of evil character also when used outside names. Cf. Gunnlaugs saga, stanza 2: illr ok svartr (Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 69; P. G. Foote: Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu, London 1957, p. 13). In Eiríks saga rauða Þórhallr veiðimaðr is svartr ok þursligr, hljóðlyndr ok illorðr ... illa kristinn (Ísl. fornrr. IV, p. 222).- Of 15 persons in the Sagas of Icelanders bearing the name Kolr 6 are thralls or servants, 1 is a viking. Of the others 1 (Kolr Egilsson in Njála) is a typical ójafnaðarmaðr, and some of the rest rather hard and aggressive. - In these sagas there are 3 persons named Sóti. Two of them are vikings, the third a man who unjustly tried to deprive Hrútr Herjólfsson in Njála of his inheritance. In other saga types persons bearing the name Sóti are frequently of evil character. Cf. Ísl. fornrr. XII, p. 12, note 1. - Ljótr is the name of 12 men in the Sagas of Icelanders. Some of these are most respectable persons. But in the cases of the berserk Ljótr inn bleiki in Egils saga and the viking Ljótr inn bleiki in Svarfdæla saga the correspondence of name and character is evident. The choice of name is also certainly deliberate in the cases of Ljótr, the companion of Hrollaugr inn mikli in Vatnsdæla saga, Ljótr inn svartí, the relative of Hallgerðr in Njáls saga, and Ljótr, the nephew of Þorgrímr trolli in Fóstbræðra saga. A hofgoði named Ljótr in Rcykdæla saga advises in a bad year at gefa til hofs, en bera út börn ok drepa gamalmenni. An outstanding man is Ljótr inn spaki of Landnáma. But in Laxdæla saga and Hávarðar saga

Ísfrðings he is named Hólmgöngu-Ljótr, inn mesti hólmgongumaðr (Ísl. fornrr. VI, p. 336). - Sámr ("the dark one") is in the Sagas of Icelanders the name of 6 persons, one a troll, one a viking. Sámr Bjarnason, found only in Hrafnkels saga, scarcely got his name by chance. - The same is to be said of Hildigunnr Starkaðardóttir in Njála. - In the case of Gunnhildr, the famous queen of King Eiríkr Blóðøx in the Kings' Sagas and the Sagas of Icelanders, the name is probably historical, but it seems possible that her character in the sagas has been influenced by her name.

11. Cf. Magerøy, Studiar i Bandamanna saga, pp. 234-5. Cf. n.10 on Gunnhildr; and what of Víga-Glúmr?
12. Finnur Jónsson, Bæ, unöfn á Íslandi, p. 428, in Safn til sögu Íslands IV (København and Reykjavík 1907-1915); Nordisk kultur V Stedsnavn (Stockholm 1939), pp. 65-6 (Ólafur Lárusson); Hans Kuhn, Upphaf íslenskra örnefna og bæjarnafna, in Samtíð og saga V (Reykjavík 1951), p. 188.
13. Cf. Oluf Rygh, Norske Gaardnavne. Forord og Indledning (Kristiania 1898), pp. 17-18; Nordisk kultur V, pp.24-6 (Magnus Olsen); Hans Kuhn, op.cit., p. 191. Kuhn does not regard the Icelandic farm-names ending in -staðir as the original names of farms bearing such names now (op. cit., pp. 188 ff.). But this view cannot affect our problem: the name Svplustaðir was at any rate taken to be as old as Svala herself by the author of Bandamanna saga (cf. Magerøy: Studiar i Bandamanna saga, p. 117, note 26). The same is true of the recent theories of Þórhallur Vilmundarson, who explains a great many Icelandic farm-names ending in -staðir, that have hitherto been considered to contain personal names, as derived from natural features or

human activities.

14. Cf. Andreas Heusler, *Zwei Isländer-Geschichten* (1913), p. XLVI.
15. E.H. Lind supposed the woman's name Svala to be preserved in the Norwegian farm-names Solerud and Sulerød (cf. note 7). The former of these farm-names O. Rygh derived from the personal name Sóli (*Gamle Personnavne i norske Stedsnavne, Kristiania 1901*).
16. The earliest example in *Diplomatarium Islandicum* is from the year 1385 (*Dipl. Isl. III, No. 326*). Cf. Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín, *Jarðabók VIII* (København 1926), p. 231; Kr. Kålund, *Bidrag til en historisk-topografisk Beskrivelse af Island II* (Kjøbenhavn 1879-1882), p. 24; *Isl. fornrr. VII*, p. 305, note 2.
17. Cf. Magerøy, *Studiar i Bandamanna saga*, p. 117.
18. Cf. Paul Rubow, *Smaa kritiske breve* (København 1936), pp. 9-10; Sigurður Nordal, *Hrafnkatla*, *Studia Islandica* 7 (Reykjavík 1940), pp. 21 ff.; Bjarni Einarsson, *Brákarsund*, in *Árbók hins íslenska fornleifafélags* 1969, pp. 57-60; idem, *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga* (Oslo 1971), pp. 44-5. This view is also supported by Þórhallur Vilmundarson (cf. note 13).
19. On my inquiry Þórhallur Vilmundarson has informed me of his opinion in the case of *Svölustaðir*. He is inclined to believe in the possibility of still other explanations.
20. Cf. *Nordisk kultur VII Personnamn* (Oslo 1948), pp. 33-4.
21. Cf. A. Bley, *Eigla-studien* (Gand 1909), pp. 93-4; Hallvard Lie, *Jorvikferden*, in *Edda XLVI* (Oslo 1947), pp. 188 f.

22. Ísl. forn. VII, pp. 299-300; Hallvard Magerøy, *Bandamanna saga* utgjeven for Samfund til Udgivelse af gammel nordisk Litteratur (København 1956), pp. 7<sup>11-13</sup>, 8<sup>1-2</sup>.
23. Cf. Magerøy, *Studiar i Bandamanna saga*, p. 106.
24. See for instance H. Magerøy, *Guðmundr góði og Guðmundr ríki*, in *Maal og Minne* 1959; Lars Lönnroth, *Studier i Olav Tryggvasons saga*, in *Sammlaren LXXXIV* (Uppsala 1963).
25. Bjarni Einarsson takes this to be the origin of Oddný (eykyndill) in Bjarnar saga Hitðelakappa, Porkell (i Tungu) in Kormáks saga, Ketill (gufa) in Egils saga. See his *Skáldasögur* (Reykjavík 1961), pp. 50-51, 63-4; *Litteraire forudsætninger for Egils saga*, pp. 61-2.
26. Ísl. forn. VII, pp. LXXXIV-LXXXVII; Magerøy, *Studiar i Bandamanna saga*, pp. 241 ff.; Walter Baetke, *Bandamanna saga und Ólkofra þátr* (Halle a. Saale 1960), pp. 26-34.
27. Ursula Brown, *Porgils saga ok Hafliða* (London 1952), p. XXIX; Einar Ól. Sveinsson in *Skírnir* 1952, pp. 251-2; Sigurður Nordal, *Nordisk kultur VIII:B*, pp. 215-6; Jan de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte II* (Berlin 1967), p. 310. Peter Foote's investigation into the frequency of of/umb in this saga points to "the opening years of the thirteenth century". See *Studia Islandica* 14 (Reykjavík 1955), pp. 67-8.
28. Kr. Kálund, *Sturlunga saga I* (København 1906-1911), p. 12<sup>15-26</sup>; Ursula Brown, *Porgils saga ok Hafliða*, pp. 6<sup>17</sup> - 7<sup>2</sup>.
29. The theory of influence from Porgils saga ok Hafliða on Bandamanna saga seems to be corroborated by still other similarities or connections between them. In Bandamanna saga Oddr Ófeigsson's two most exasperated

enemies among the bandamenn are Styrmir Þorgeirsson from Ásgeirsá and Hermundr Illugason of Gilsbakki. Both of them are relatives of important persons in Þorgils saga ok Hafliða. In Þorgils saga we read: Kolfinna hét kona Þorgils, dóttir Halls Styrmissonar, Þorgeirssonar, frá Ásgeirsá (Kálund, Sturlunga saga I, p. 8<sup>28-29</sup>). Hallr Styrmisson is also mentioned in the M-text of Bandamanna saga. Hermundr Illugason is not mentioned in Þorgils saga. But his son Hreinn was the father of Styrmir Hreinsson of Gilsbakki, who is one of Þorgils Oddason's supporters, and who also plays a prominent part in the reconciliation of Þorgils and Hafliði. Styrmir Þorgeirsson from Ásgeirsá was also a brother of Styrmir Hreinsson's mother.

In Þorgils saga Hildir, the father of Ólafr Hildisson, varð sekr skógarmaðr (Kálund, Sturl. I, p. 9<sup>30</sup>) - another probable correspondence between name and character, though obviously fortuitous if he really existed.

As mentioned before, the events of our two sagas to a great extent take place in the same part of Iceland, and the sagas therefore have several place-names from these districts in common, e.g. Hrútafjörðr, Strandir, Bitra, Skriðinsenni, Ásgeirsá.

In Bandamanna saga Ófeigr Skíðason is described in this way in the M-text: Ófeigr var spekingr mikill ok hinn mesti ráðagørðamaðr. Hann var í gllu mikilmenni, en eigi var honum fjárhagrinn hoegr, átti lendur miklar en minna lausafé. Hann sparði við engan mann mat - ; In the K-text: Ófeigr var spekingr mikill ok ráðagørðamaðr. Ekki var honum fjárhagr sinn hoegr, átti lendur miklar en minna lausafé. Hann sparði við engan mann mat (Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 293-4; Magerøy: Edition 1956, pp. 1<sup>8</sup> - 2<sup>1</sup>, 1<sup>17</sup> - 2<sup>17</sup>). In Þorgils saga the priest Ingimundr Einarsson is described in similar

terms: Hann var vinsæll maðr ok þó nokkut févani ok var þó bæði orr af peningum ok it mesta stórmenni í skapi (Kålund, Sturl. I, p. 9<sup>8-9</sup>).

Ólafr Hildisson having come to Þorgils, the Þorgils saga continues: Hann (i.e. Þorgils) svarar; kvað þat vænst at hann færi norðr á Strandir ok aflaði þar fjár, sagði þat margra manna siðvenju. Síðan fór hann (i.e. Ólafr) norðr á Strandir með gagn sitt - (Kålund, Sturl. I, p. 10<sup>7-9</sup>). Cf. Oddr Ófeigsson's growing wealth from sea-transport in this district in chapter 1 of Bandamanna saga.

Between the two sagas there are also similarities in the use of some characteristic words and expressions.

Þorgils saga ok Haflíða

(Kålund: Sturl. I)

Már ... sækir mjök eptir, ok þar kemr, at Þorsteinn neitar eigi skipvist með Mávi (10<sup>14-16</sup>)

þá leitar Ólafr eptir (12<sup>7</sup>)

honum hæfði at leita eptir (12<sup>8</sup>)

at þú leitir eptir (12<sup>10</sup>)

Hon sækir eptir mjök (15<sup>9</sup>)

þá skorar hann til mjök (10<sup>16-17</sup>)

skorar á hann til viðtöku (25<sup>19</sup>)

at Þorsteinn réðisk frá skipi hans ok í sveit með Mávi (10<sup>17-18</sup>)

Bandamanna saga

(Isl. forn.VII; Magerøy:Ed.)

M: Oddr leitar eptir, en Óspakr ferr undan ok er þó óðfúsi til; ok þar kemr, at hann biðr Odd ráða (p. 302; 10<sup>1-3</sup>)

K: Oddr sækir nú eptir, en Óspakr ferr undan, ok þar kemr, at hann víkr til ráða Odds (p. 302; 10<sup>18-19</sup>)

M: er þú skorar á mik til viðtöku (p. 300; 8<sup>2-3</sup>)

K: Nú er þú skorar þetta svá hart (p. 300; 8/19)

M: réðsk þar í sveit með vermönnum (p. 295; 3<sup>8</sup>)

K: ræzk í sveit með þeim mönnum, er váru í veri

(p.295; 3<sup>24</sup> -25)

Már Bergþórsson vegr til við  
Þorstein (10<sup>10-11</sup>)

M: Oddr vegr til við Óspak  
(p. 307; 14<sup>10</sup>)

Ólafr Hildisson vegr til við  
Hneiti (10<sup>20-21</sup>),  
at þú vektir til (10<sup>24</sup>)

vegr síðan til við Má (10<sup>25</sup>)

Þá vegr Ólafr til (11<sup>13</sup>)

Heyr þar á endimi (11<sup>17</sup>)

M: Heyr á endemi (p. 333;  
44<sup>4</sup>)

Már sagði, at þeir væri  
sáttir (14<sup>17</sup>) [in this case  
a lie]

M: segi hon, at vit sém  
sáttir (p. 315; 26<sup>6</sup>)

K: segi hon honum, at vit  
sém menn sáttir (p. 315;  
26<sup>21-22</sup>)

M: segir þá sátta (p. 315;  
26<sup>10</sup>)

K: sagði hon honum þa Vála  
ok Óspak menn sátta  
(p. 315; 26<sup>25-26</sup>) [a lie  
here too]

It can be seen that the most notable verbal correspondences with Bandamanna saga in Porgils saga ok Haflíða are mainly concentrated in the short section dealing with Már Bergþórsson and his dealings with Ólafr Hildisson. The explanation of this may partly be parallelism of subject-matter. But it is also probable that this section of Porgils saga, being of special interest to the author of Bandamanna saga, had some influence on his choice of words.



30. Ísl. fornrr. VII, pp. 361-2; Magerøy, Edition 1956,  
p. 72<sup>18-20</sup>, 28-29.
31. Magerøy, Studiar i Bandamanna saga, p. 119; cf. Kr.  
Kålund, Laxdæla saga (København 1889-1891), pp. XXXVII-  
XXXVIII.
32. Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 102; Foote, Edition 1957, p. 36.
33. Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 362; Magerøy, Edition 1956,  
p. 73<sup>5-8</sup>, 20-23.
34. As to this similarity see Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 362;  
Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 102, note 4; Helga Reuschel, Gunn-  
laugs saga Ormstungu (Halle a. Saale 1957), pp. 7-8;  
Baetke, Edition of Bandamanna saga 1960, pp. 32-33;  
H. Magerøy in Arkiv för nordisk filologi 1966, p. 99.
35. Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 59; Foote, Edition 1957, p. 6.
36. Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 348; Magerøy, Edition 1956,  
p. 59<sup>10</sup>, 24-25.
37. Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 59; Foote, Edition 1957, pp. 6-7.
38. Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 295; Magerøy, Edition 1956,  
p. 3<sup>5-7</sup>, 21-24; idem in Arkiv för nordisk filologi  
1966, pp. 99-100. The word faðmlag in this sense is  
extremely rare in the Íslendingasögur; cf. Wolfgang  
Krause, Die Frau in der Sprache der altisländischen  
Familiengeschichten (Göttingen 1926), pp. 140-1.
39. Kr. Kålund, Bidrag til en historisk-topografisk  
Beskrivelse af Island I (Kjøbenhavn 1877), pp. 369-370,  
382; Ísl. fornrr. VII, p. 360, note 3; Ísl. fornrr. III,  
p. 53, note 2.
40. Sigurður Nordal takes this stanza to be older than  
Gunnlaugs saga and one of the saga's sources (Ísl.  
fornrr. III, pp. XLVII-XLVIII). Peter Foote agrees  
with this (Edition 1957, p. XIV). Helga Reuschel

on the other hand is inclined to believe that the author of the stanza is the same person as the author of the saga. She points inter alia to the similarity between the beginning of this stanza and of the beginning of the last stanza of the saga: Hugðumk orms á armi / Lagðak orms at armi (Edition 1957, p. 17). This may be right or not. At any rate the twelfth stanza of Gunnlaugs saga is of particular interest to us when it is part of the existing Gunnlaugs saga.

41. Ísl. fornrr. III, p. 88; Foote, Edition 1957, p. 27.
42. Helga Reuschel seems to consider that Gunnlaugs saga was influenced by Bandamanna saga (Edition 1957, pp. 7-8). Walter Baetke supposes that Bandamanna saga was influenced by Gunnlaugs saga, but his argument is very vague (Edition of Bandamanna saga 1960, p. 33).
43. Ísl. fornrr. VII, pp. XCI-XCII; Ísl. fornrr. III, p. LX; Nordisk kultur VII:B, p. 261; Foote, Gunnlaugs saga 1957, p. XXII; Helga Reuschel, Gunnlaugs saga 1957, p. 28; Magerøy, Studiar i Bandamanna saga, pp. 292-3; Jan de Vries, Altnordische Literaturgeschichte, II, pp. 359, 405. - Peter Hallberg nowadays stands apart in considering Bandamanna saga to be one of the older Sagas of Icelanders (Arkiv för nordisk filologi 1965, p. 179). Cf. also B.M. Ólsen, Um Íslendingasögur, p. 264.
44. Edda Snorra Sturlusonar III (Copenhagen 1880-1887), pp. 252-284.
45. Finnur Jónsson, Landnámabók (København 1900), p. 181; Ísl. fornrr. I, p. 214.
46. Ísl. fornrr. III, p. LX; Nordisk kultur VIII:B, p. 261. B. M. Ólsen considered Gunnlaugs saga to be dependent

on Hœnsa-Póris saga (Om Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu, København 1911, pp. 26, 36). This view, although not taken as proved by Sigurður Nordal (Ísl. fornrr. III, p. XLIX), is supported by Helga Reuschel (Edition 1957, p.19). Björn Sigfússon has tried to show that Hœnsa-Póris saga was composed in the years 1275-1280 (Saga 1962). These opinions, too, if right, would point to a comparably late date for Gunnlaugs saga.

47. Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder V (1960), art. Gunnlaugs saga; Skáldasögur, pp. 269-270, 299.