

ARI'S KONUNGA ÆVI AND THE EARLIEST ACCOUNTS OF HÁKON JARL'S DEATH

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## SUMMARY

The following paper compares the versions of Hákon jarl's last days and death in Theodricus' Historia de antiquitate regum norwagiensium, Oddr Snorrason's Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar, and Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla. On the basis of verbal correspondences between Theodricus and Oddr and independent correspondences between Theodricus and Snorri not shared with Oddr, it is argued that all three accounts made use of a common written source. This result runs counter to the prevailing consensus, according to which Theodricus used no written Icelandic sources, but Theodricus' reference to the absence of such sources is interpreted to mean not that they were unavailable to him, but that they were unavailable to the earliest Icelandic writers, whose chronology is therefore subject to some doubt. Such an interpretation is supported by a similar reference to the uncertainties of oral tradition in a fragment of Styrmir Kárason's Óláfs saga helga.

The common written source is identified as Ari Þorgilsson's lost konunga ævi. Three arguments are advanced to buttress this identification. 1) Ari's information on the circumstances of Hákon jarl's death would have been particularly full because it derived from Þorgeirr af ráðskollr, who lived in Norway at the time of the events. 2) A trading center at Niðarnes, referred to by both Theodricus and Oddr in the context of Olaf Tryggvason's arrival in Norway, is mentioned in Snorri's "Prologue" to Heimskringla in the midst of his account of Ari's writing; it therefore looks like a piece of information taken from Ari. 3) There is close agreement between the coverage of Theodricus' Historia and the presumed span of Ari's coverage (from Harald Fairhair until about 1130). In addition, there is a verbal correspondence between Theodricus' mention of Harald Fairhair's reign and a passage in Ari's Íslendingabók which has been identified as a fragment of the lost konunga ævi.

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The coming of Olaf Tryggvason to Norway and the death of Hákon jarl at the hands of his thrall Karkr are related in the greatest detail by Theodricus monachus, Oddr Snorrason, and Snorri Sturluson. The story of how Hákon lures Olaf to Norway in the hope of eliminating a rival, only to lose his grasp on the realm because of public indignation over his womanizing, how Hákon takes refuge in a pigsty at Rimull and is murdered in his sleep, how Karkr takes his head to Olaf with the expectation of reward and is hanged instead, all this is familiar enough not to require lengthy retelling. The high points in the three main sources are the following:

Theodricus

Oddr

Snorri

Hákon's moral  
degeneration

Olaf stays in Eng- land under the name Ole
--

Hocon learns of his  
location and plots  
against himHákon learns of  
Olaf's deeds and  
plots against him

Hákon learns of a man named Áli in the west and suspects it is Olaf
--

He intimidates Olaf's  
uncles with threats  
of death and sends  
them to England with  
Thorer klakka, who  
had once been with  
OlafHe dispatches Þórir  
klakka to Garðaríki  
together with  
Olaf's uncles, who  
are constrained by  
threats of deathHe dispatches Þórir  
klakka westward to  
identify Áli and be-  
tray him if possibleThe uncles stipulate  
that they may en-  
lighten Olaf when  
they reach Thialfa-  
hellirThey are not to re-  
veal the treachery  
until they set foot  
in NorwayThey are to announce  
Hocon's death and  
the eager reception  
that awaits OlafThey are to announce  
Hákon's death and  
the eager reception  
that awaits Olaf

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The message is conveyed

They sail to England, learn that Olaf is in Garðaríki, and bring the message to him there

Þórir wheedles Áli's real name from him and suggests that Norway would welcome a descendant of Harald Fairhair

Olaf sets sail with priests and Bishop Sigward and converts the Orkneys

They set sail in the spring and land at Þjálfahellir

Olaf sails first to the Hebrides, then converts the Orkneys

Olaf lands at Mostr

Olaf lands at Mostr

Þórir urges him to meet Hákon as soon as possible; at Agðanes they learn of an uprising against Hákon, much to Þórir's surprise

He comes to Thialfahellir and the perfidy is revealed

At Þjálfahellir the perfidy is revealed

Consultation with a Lapp

Thorer is killed

Þórir is killed

The next day they go to the little trading village at Nidrosiensis

Olaf is acclaimed king

Hákon's moral degeneration

Hákon stays at Meðalhús and sends for Guðrún Lundasól

Her husband Ormr  
gathers forces and  
Guðrún refuses to go  
unless Þóra is sent  
for her

The heror is circulated  
by Halldorr á Skerðings-  
steðju

The abduction of  
Brynjólfur's wife  
and mobilization  
of forces

A short time before,  
Hákon had abducted  
Brynjólfur's wife

Balanced assess-  
ment of Hákon

Hákon flees to his  
ships and en-  
counters Olaf's  
fleet

Hákon flees to Jarls-  
dalr--the farmers think  
he has gone to his  
ships

Hákon lands in a  
small boat and  
heads for  
Gaulardalr

Hákon dismisses his men  
and sends word to  
Erlendr

Olaf kills Erlendr

The people make com-  
mon cause with Olaf  
against Hocon

The Þrændir wel-  
come Olaf and join  
the pursuit

Hákon flees, accom-  
panied only by the  
thrall Karkr

Hákon departs with  
Karkr

Hákon leaves his  
silken mantle in  
the river

Hákon leaves his mantle  
on the Gaul

At Jarlshellir Karkr  
dreams of "Ulli's"  
death and closed fjords

Abandoned by his followers, Hocon takes refuge with his mistress Thora at Rimull

Hákon takes refuge with "kona ein goð oc gafug" at Rimull

Hákon takes refuge with Þóra at Rimull<sup>1</sup>

Þóra tells of Olaf's arrival and Erlendr's death

Olaf finds Hákon's mantle; some say he is dead, but one old man suspects a trick

Olaf meets and kills Erlendr; the farmers join forces with him

They search Rimull and Olaf offers a reward

They search Rimull and Olaf offers a reward

Hákon sees the expression on Karkr's face and stays awake

Hákon notes that Karkr is alternately pale and flushed

Karkr dreams that he sits at a tiller and hears of "Urli's" death

Karkr dreams that Olaf gives him a gold necklace

Karkr dreams that all the fjords are closed and that Olaf gives him a big horse

Carcus cuts Olaf's throat while he sleeps

Hákon falls asleep and Karkr cuts his throat

Both hold watch, but Hákon dozes off convulsively and Karkr cuts his throat in fear

He takes the head to Olaf

He takes the head to Olaf at Hlaðir

He takes the head to Olaf at Hlaðir and recounts what has happened

Carcus is hanged  
for the crime against  
his lord

Karkr is hanged  
for the betrayal  
of his lord

Karkr is beheaded

The two heads are taken  
to Niðarhólmr and  
pelted

Hákon's trunk is  
fetched in Gaulardalr  
and burnt

The enmity of the  
Þrændir was such that  
they called Hákon the  
evil jarl

Balanced assessment  
and stanza of Þorleifr  
Rauðfeldarson

The Conversion as the  
main cause of Hákon's  
downfall

The similarities between the accounts of Oddr and Snorri are no mystery since Oddr was Snorri's immediate source. The connections between Theodricus and the two later writers are less certain, but it has been argued that Theodricus' book was known to Oddr. As far as I know, no such connection has been proposed between Theodricus and Snorri. Leaving these interrelationships aside for the moment, we may begin by abstracting the motifs shared by two or more of the versions:

1. Olaf stays in England (or "to the west" Sn) under the assumed name of Áli (Th and Sn).
2. Hákon learns of his location and plots against him (Th and Od).
3. He dispatches Þórir klakka and Olaf's two uncles Karlshöfuð and Jósteynn under duress to lure Olaf to Norway (Th and Od).
4. The uncles stipulate that they may enlighten Olaf when they reach Þjálfahellir (Th) or they are instructed not to reveal the treachery until they set foot in Norway (Od).
5. They are to announce Hákon's death and the eager reception that awaits Olaf in Norway (Th and Od).

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6. The message is delivered in England (Th) or in Garðaríki (Od).
7. Olaf sets sail and converts the Orkneys on the way (Th and Sn).
8. He lands at Mostr (Th and Sn).
9. The treachery is revealed at Þjálfahellir (Th and Od).
10. Þórir is killed (Th and Od).
11. The people make common cause with Olaf (Th and Od).
12. Hákon takes refuge with his mistress (Od AM 310,4°: "kona ein goð oc gafug") Þóra at Rimull and is hidden together with his thrall Karkr in a pigsty (Th, Od, Sn).
13. Karkr cuts Hákon's throat when he falls asleep (Th, Od, Sn).
14. Karkr takes his head to Olaf (Th, Od, Sn).
15. Karkr is hanged for his betrayal of his lord (Th and Od).

In determining whether the shared features are attributable to a common written or oral tradition, it is necessary first of all to examine the verbal correspondences. The significant agreements between Theodricus and Oddr are the following:

Theodricus

Oddr

(MHN, p. 14, lines 6-9)

(AM 310,4°, ed. F. Jónsson, p. 63)

Hocon ergo ut cognovit eum pro certo ibidem morari, modis omnibus intendit animum ut eum vita privaret, eo quod pæne solum timeret sibi suisque hæredibus. Et quia totus erat fraudulentus, multum diuque secum deli-berans, . . .

Þa hugsar hann a marga uega at setia rað við at eigi ræni hann hann rikinu eða sonu hans með engum skiotum eða uaeiflegum brogðum. ihugar hann amargar lundir huernueg hann skal rað imoti setia at eigi leti hann sitt riki. helldr ætlar hann at setia firirhann nocquot uelræði at hann metti ræna hann ættiorðum sinum eða lifinu.

(MHN, p. 14, lines 22-24)

Jussit ergo eis nunciare Olavo obitum suum, totam terram ejus præstolari adventum, prope-rare eum debere, ne quid novi interveniret.

(AM 310,4°, p. 63)

hann callar hann til sin aþinginu oc segir at hann uill senda hann i Garða austr með þeim örendum at hann scal segia andlat jarlsins oc þat með at landit liggi nu hofþingialaust oc nu se þat allra vili at ðnna Olafi T. s. konungdoms.

(MHN, p. 14, lines 10-13)

. . ., postremo vocavit ad se avunculos scilicet Olavi, fratres videlicet matris ejus Astrithar, Iostein et Karls-hofoth, interminatusque est eis mortem, nisi jussis obedirent.

(AM 310,4°, pp. 64-65)

jarlinn s. at þeir munu velia ser uerra cost oc uigirnilegra lut ef þeir neita þessum þui at þit scolut sæta skiotum dauða ef þit gerit eigi sem ec vil.

(MHN, p. 18, lines 6-8)

. . .; quem tamen postea servum caput domini sui afferentem pro præmio et scelere in dominum perpetrato rex laqueo necari jussit.

(AM 310,4°, p. 83)

Oc er Olafr kendi þetta vera hafuð Hakonar j. þa reiddiz hann þærlinum oc bað hann up festa oc sagbi hann hafa scylldu maclig laun firir sin drottins suik.

There is a sufficient degree of verbal similarity, involving in two cases special phrasing (modis omnibus intendit animum = hugsar hann a marga uega and ihugar hann amargar lundir; pro præmio et scelere in dominum perpetrato = maclig laun firir sin drottins suik), to assure that the relationship between Theodricus and Oddr is scribal rather than oral. The easiest assumption is that Oddr had access to Theodricus' book and this is the view argued by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson.<sup>2</sup> However, the situation is considerably complicated by the fact that there are independent correspondences between Theodricus and Snorri not shared with Oddr. These correspondences are boxed in my summary and include items 1, 7, and 8 in the fifteen-point abstract above:

1. Olaf stays in England (Sn: "to the west") under the assumed name Ole or Áli.<sup>3</sup>
2. Olaf converts the Orkneys on his way to Norway.
3. He lands at Mostr.

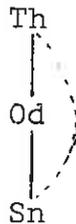
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Since Snorri could not have taken these items from Oddr, he must have taken them from Theodricus or from a common written or oral source. To assume, in a section clearly derived from Oddr, that Snorri altered this model on the basis of an oral tradition which happened to correspond perfectly to Theodricus is unreasonable. On the other hand, no one has, to my knowledge, assumed that Snorri made direct use of Theodricus. Yet, if Theodricus was available to Oddr at Þingeyrar, there is no reason to believe that he would not have been equally available to Snorri thirty or forty years later.

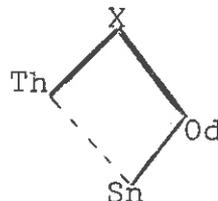
The other possibility is that all three accounts of Hákon's death drew on a common written text somewhat selectively so that the special correspondences between Snorri and Theodricus are due to a shared source, which was abridged or ignored in three respects by Oddr. The content of the common source would be reflected by the fifteen points listed above.

Thus several models suggest themselves to explain the relationships. It is possible that Theodricus was the immediate source for Oddr and a secondary source for Snorri:



The weakness of such an explanation is that Theodricus was apparently referred to only in this one episode and not used elsewhere by Oddr or Snorri.

Another possibility is that Theodricus and Oddr worked from a common source X and that Snorri based himself on Oddr while consulting Theodricus at the same time:



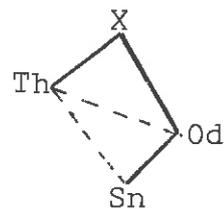
The weakness is again the anomaly that Snorri was familiar with Theodricus' book, but consulted it only this one time.

A third possibility is that Theodricus and Oddr derived their accounts from a common source, that Snorri derived his account

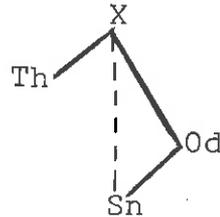
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from Oddr, and that both Oddr and Snorri consulted Theodricus in addition:



This solution does nothing to remedy the weaknesses of the two previous explanations. The persistent difficulty is that there are no indications to suggest that either Oddr or Snorri referred to Theodricus except in this one brief passage. An explanation which dispenses with the use of Theodricus by Oddr and Snorri would therefore have a distinct advantage. We might, for example, assume that Theodricus and Oddr derived their versions from a common source, from which Oddr omitted the impersonation, the conversion of the Orkneys, and the landing at Mostr, while Snorri restored these omissions by referring again to the common source:



This model explains the verbal correspondences between Oddr and Theodricus and accounts at the same time for the extremely thin evidence that Theodricus' book was actually known in Iceland.

Whether we believe in a common source or in Oddr's direct reliance on Theodricus, we must of course also explain why Oddr omitted from this sequence the pseudonym Áli, the conversion of the Orkneys, and the landing at Mostr. It is clear that Oddr was aware of these items because he records them elsewhere. The name Áli occurs in chaps. 14-15, the conversion of the Orkneys in chap. 26, and the landing at Mostr in chap. 27. The impersonation of Áli was removed from the passage under discussion because Oddr decided to shift Olaf's location at this juncture of the story from England to Russia, where the impersonation had no function (aside from the fact that the motif had already been used up in the earlier mention of Olaf's stay in England). The omission of the Orkneys was prompted by a decision to account for all of Olaf's conversion activity only after he had become king. Finally, the elimination of the landing at Mostr had become impossible because Oddr had altered the stipulation from a form which allowed for a revelation at Þjálfahellir to

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a form which allowed for a revelation as soon as Olaf set foot on Norwegian soil. The retention of Mostr would therefore have required that the treachery be revealed there, in contradiction to Theodricus, and presumably the common source, which dictated a revelation at Þjálfahellir.

We can go one step further in the demonstration that Oddr knew an account of the Orkney conversion akin to what we find in Theodricus. The following correspondences are significant:

Theodricus

Oddr

(MHN, p. 16, lines 23-26)

(AM 310,4°, p. 92)

Olavus vero discedens ex Anglia recto cursu tetendit ad Orcadas insulas, et quia ipsa subjecta sunt regi Norwagiensi, convenit Sigwardum comitem ut christianus fieret, qui tunc eisdem insulis præerat.

Oc er Olafr konungr var buin sigldu þeir til Orkneyia. En þar reð firir Sigurþr j. Loðues s.

(MHN, p. 17, lines 1-5)

. . . ; cumque diu reluctaretur, fertur quod Olavus rapuerit filium ejus de loco, ubi nuntiebatur, puerulum annorum trium, Thorfin nomine, constans se eum immolaturum in conspectu patris, insuper et juges intentans inimicitias, nisi assensum præbeat.

Ok er Olafr sa at hann uilldi sua þraliga hallda sín atrunað. Þa tok Olafr s. hans ungan er Huelþr het er þar var up fõddr með virctum. Olafr konungr lagði hann asaxit langskipinu oc bra suerði oc bað þa j. kiosa huart hann uill helldr sia son sín hogguin firir augum ser ef hann neitar trúnni.

In addition to showing a textual affinity to Oddr, Theodricus' version (and presumably the common source) suggests why Oddr chose to delay the conversion episode until a later time in his account. According to Theodricus, Sigurðr jarl treats Olaf as if he were already king (pp. 16-17): "At ille promisit se quidem ei fore subjectum ut regi, si eum ad christianismum non cogeret; . . ." This reaction might appear to make better sense after Hákon jarl's death and Olaf's official accession to the throne. Oddr altered the sequence to accommodate such a view.

That the common source X was a written account and not oral tradition is assured by the verbal congruities between Oddr and Theodricus. But the assumption of a written source for Theodricus (beyond the Catalogus Regum Norwagiensium) is contrary to the now universally held view that Theodricus used only oral traditions and had

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no written Icelandic sources.<sup>4</sup> This opinion is based chiefly on Theodricus' own disclaimer in Chapter 1 (MHN, p. 6):

Anno ab incarnatione Domini octingentesimo quinquagesimo octavo regnavit Haraldus pulchre-comatus, filius Halfdan nigri. Hic primum expulit omnes regulos et solus obtinuit regnum totius Norwagiæ annis septuaginta et defunctus est. Hunc numerum annorum Domini, investigatum prout diligentissime potuimus ab illis, quos nos vulgato nomine Islendinga vocamus, in hoc loco posuimus: quos constat sine ulla dubitatione præ omnibus aquilonaribus populis in hujusmodi semper et peritiores et curiosiores extitisse. Sed quia valde difficile est in hujusce [hisce] ad liquidum veritatem comprehendere, maxime ubi nulla opitulatur scriptorum auctoritas, istum numerum nullo modo volumus præjudicare certiori, . . .

I believe the passage is to be translated approximately as follows:

From the year of our Lord 858 Harald Fairhair, the son of Halfdan the Black, reigned. He was the first to drive out all the petty kings and he ruled all of Norway alone for seventy years and then died. I have here settled on this date, which I ascertained as diligently as I could from those whom we call "Islendinga" in the vernacular; it is held that without any doubt they, more than all northern peoples, have always been more skilled and probing in these matters. But because it is extremely difficult to arrive at any clear conception of the truth in this regard, especially when no written authority lends assistance, I do not wish to insist on this date with any sense of certitude, . . .

The statement that no written authority lends assistance has been taken to mean that no such written authority was available to Theodricus and that he therefore depended on the oral communications of Icelanders, based in turn on the Icelandic poems inherited from the earlier period and referred to by Theodricus in his "Prologue." It seems to me that this interpretation is not self-evident. In the first place, a learned and fairly detailed work like Theodricus' does not look like an oral compendium, but rather like a link in the written transmission. In the second place, the very notion of chronological debate seems foreign to the oral tradition and appropriate only to written history. It is therefore more reasonable to assume that the chronological reflections derive from written Icelandic sources. Nor is this view difficult to square with the text. When Theodricus protects himself against a possible charge of inaccuracy, he does not mean that he has no written sources, only that there are no contemporary written sources for the period in question, that is for the period around

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858. He informs his Norwegian audience that he depends on the Icelanders because they are the best authorities. This is of course true—the Icelanders began to record Norwegian history and chronology half a century before the Norwegians. Even so, two hundred years elapsed between the death of Harald Fairhair and the onset of Icelandic historiography and during those centuries the Icelanders had no written authority to rely on; they had only their antiqua carmina, which are, of course, not chronological documents. This is the factor of uncertainty to which Theodricus alludes: he takes the best source he can find, but he cannot absolutely vouch for the accuracy of that source because it is ultimately not based on written authority.

In his recent book on Egils saga, Bjarni Einarsson quotes a similar disclaimer from the fragments of Styrmir Kárason's Óláfs saga helga in Flateyjarbók (III.248).<sup>5</sup> Styrmir also refers to the problem of inaccurate oral traditions: "Hafið nú þat af samsettri sögu Óláfs konungs allri saman sem yðr lízk sannligt vera, því at í fornum sögum verðr mörqu saman blandat; er þat ok eigi ólíkligt þar er menn hafa sögusögn eina til." Styrmir does not of course mean that he has only oral tradition (sögusögn) and no written sources. He means that there are uncertainties when the authority is ultimately oral and I believe Theodricus can be interpreted in the same way. I should like therefore to proceed on the assumption that Theodricus did have Icelandic written material. His reliance on this material explains the repeated insistence on Icelandic sources and the preoccupation with chronological problems.

I now return to my earlier conclusion that Theodricus, Oddr, and Snorri base their accounts of Hákon jarl's last days on a common source. Is it possible to identify this source?

Among the various alternatives, we have ruled out the idea that the source could be oral because of the close similarities in wording between Theodricus and Oddr. A second possibility, suggested by the central position of Hákon jarl, is that the source is the lost Hlaðajarla saga, but since Hlaðajarla saga is chiefly an instrument for understanding Fagrskinna and since Fagrskinna contains almost none of the narrative we have ascertained for the common source, this possibility must also be ruled out. A third possibility is that Samundr's lost book on the Norwegian kings is the missing source. I see no reason either to urge or reject this alternative. A fourth possibility is that Ari Þorgilsson's konunga ævi is the source in question and certain circumstances favor this suggestion, not least of all the fact that Oddr refers to Ari in the passage under study.<sup>6</sup>

It has often been assumed that Ari's konunga ævi was very brief and the account I am about to ascribe to the book may appear to strain its capacity. However, Svend Ellehøj has argued plausibly for a

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larger scale and the obvious importance of Ari's work to later historians would seem to support the idea that it was more than a skeletal outline. That a larger compass is credible especially for the story of Hákon jarl's death is suggested by a sentence in Snorri's "Prologue." After listing Ari's works, Snorri goes on to say: "Hann ritaði, sem hann sjálf segir, ævi Nóregskonunga eptir sögu Odds Kolssonar, Hallssonar af Síðu, en Oddr nam at Þorgeiri afráðskoll, þeim manni, er vitr var ok svá gamall, at hann bjó þá í Niðarnesi, er Hákon jarl inn ríki var drepinn." In other words, Ari had his information on the death of Hákon jarl from a man whose informant, Þorgeirr afráðskollr, was actually on the spot at the time of the event and in a position to give a first-hand report. It would therefore not be surprising if Ari's account were particularly full in this section.

Another hint of Ari's involvement is provided by the mention of a trading center at Niðarnes. Theodricus refers to it in the following terms (MHN, p. 17, lines 25-30): "Mox ergo divinitus adjutus [scil. Olaf Tryggvason] in crastinum profectus est in locum, qui dicitur Nidrosiensis, ubi tunc quidem paucula domus diversorum negotiatorum habebantur, nunc vero caput est totius regni, non solum metropolitana sede, verum etiam reliquiis beatissimi Olavi martyris honorabiliter sublimata civitas." Oddr mentions the same trading center, with variations in the Arnamagnaean and Stockholm MSS. The Arnamagnaean version reads as follows: "oc helldu þeir inn um Agða nes oc til Niðar oss. þar var nocquot þorp sett oc kaupstaðr" (ed. F. Jónsson, p. 122). The Stockholm version is fuller: "logöf inn vm Agðanes ok upp i ana. þa var sett nockot þorp ibónom ok let þat gera fyrst O. konungr" (ibid.). Fagrskinna contains essentially the same information as this latter version: "Olafr konungr let æfla kaupstað i Niðarose, sem aðr var æin bæle" (ed. F. Jónsson, p. 113, lines 7-8). Indrebø surmised that Fagrskinna took over the item from Oddr and Snorri elaborated one or the other or both: "Óláfr konungr fór liði sínu út til Niðaróss. Þá lét hann reisa þar hús á Niðarbakki ok skipaði svá, at þar skyldi vera kaupstaðr, gaf monnum þar toptir til at gera konungsgarð upp frá Skipakrók."<sup>7</sup>

How do these passages fit together? Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson has argued in detail that the Arnamagnaean MS of Oddr is more reliable than the abbreviated version in the Stockholm MS.<sup>8</sup> All things being equal, we should therefore accept the reading of the former: "oc helldu þeir inn um Agða nes oc til Niðar oss. þar var nocquot þorp sett oc kaupstaðr." This reading corresponds exactly to what we find in Theodricus and contains no mention of the fact that Olaf founded the trading center. Olaf's auspices must therefore be an addition, which was included in Fagrskinna and transmitted in this way to Snorri.

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The wording of Theodricus and Oddr (AM 310,4°) is again similar enough to suggest the phrasing of the underlying source. Can it be argued that this underlying source was Ari? If we look back at the passage quoted above from Snorri's "Prologue," we observe that among Ari's ultimate sourcemen was Þorgeirr afráðskollr, who was "so old that he lived on Niðarnes when Hákon jarl was killed." In the following sentence we read: "Í þeim stað lét Óláfr Tryggvason efna til kaupangs, þar sem nú er." The passage then continues with an account of Ari: "Ari prestur kom sjau vetra gamall í Haukadal..." The little note about the trading center on Niðarnes in the midst of a lengthy characterization of Ari can hardly be explained in any other way than as a citation from Ari's writings. At the same time, it has been elaborated in the sense suggested by Oddr's reviser and Fagrskinna, to the effect that Olaf was the founder. I conclude that Ari mentioned a trading center on Niðarnes and that this note was incorporated by both Theodricus and Oddr, then expanded by Oddr's reviser and passed on in the expanded form to Fagrskinna and Snorri.

There is one last general consideration pointing to a connection between Theodricus and Ari. It is the observation that their chronological coverages coincide. Theodricus begins with Harald Fairhair and it is generally assumed that Ari did the same.<sup>9</sup> Theodricus concludes with the death of Sigurðr jórsalafari in 1130, the precise moment at which Ari's information runs out in his extant Íslendingabók.<sup>10</sup> The kinship is reinforced by a verbal correspondence between Theodricus' introduction of Harald Fairhair and two notes at the beginning of Ari's Íslendingabók which have been ascribed to the lost konunga ævi.<sup>11</sup> Theodricus writes: "Hic [Haraldus pulchre-comatus] primum expulit omnes regulos et solus obtinuit regnum totius Norwagiæ annis septuaginta et defunctus est." Ari's words could well have been the source: "[Háraldr inn hárfagri] es fyrstr varþ þes kyns einn conungr at ollom Norvegi . . . En sva er sagt at Haralldr veri LXX. vetra conungr oc yrþi atrøþr."

A demonstration such as the one presented here depends on a series of interlocking premises. If one link is faulty, the whole proof unravels. I will therefore conclude by reviewing the assumptions which have gone into the argument and which are required to support it. It is necessary to believe first of all that the accounts of Hákon jarl's death in Theodricus, Oddr, and Snorri go back to a common source. If it is considered more likely that Oddr used Theodricus directly and that Snorri either used Theodricus to supplement Oddr or that his special affinities to Theodricus are coincidental, then the proof fails. It is furthermore necessary to believe that Theodricus made use of written Icelandic sources and that his disclaimer applies to the sources available to the first Icelandic historians, not to the source material known to him. If Theodricus is judged to have had no Icelandic written

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sources, the argument fails. Finally, it must be accepted that the common written source was Ari's konunga ævi because 1) the tradition mediated from Þorgeirr afraðskollr would have been particularly full on the details of Hákon jarl's death, 2) there is reason to believe that the note on the trading center on Niðarnes goes back to Ari, and 3) there are verbal and chronological correspondences between Theodricus and some traces of Ari's konunga ævi preserved in Íslendingabók. If these reasons are faulty or inconclusive, the argument fails. But if all the necessary premises are granted, the synopsis of Hákon jarl's last days and death on pp. 6-7 above is tantamount to a summary of one section in Ari's lost history of the Norwegian kings.

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## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The name Þóra is not mentioned in Oddr's saga as we have it in AM 310,4°, but it does occur in the redaction represented by Sth. 18,4° (Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar, ed. Finnur Jónsson [København: Gad, 1932], p. 79). Snorri could have found the name in this latter redaction or in some other source such as Ágrip, ASB 18, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Halle: Niemeyer, 1929), p. 16.
- <sup>2</sup> Om de norske kongers sagaer, Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo, II, Hist.-Filos. Klasse, 1936, No. 4 (Oslo, 1937), pp. 69-75.
- <sup>3</sup> Snorri does not mention England specifically, but this is probably what he had in mind. The author of Fagrskinna cites a stanza of Þórðr Kolbeinsson (chap. 67) in which Olaf is said to have come vestan and the prose interprets this as "vestan af Englandi" (chap. 69). Snorri would have been familiar with this passage.
- <sup>4</sup> See, for example, Rudolf Meissner, Die Strengleikar (Halle: Niemeyer, 1902), pp. 31-38; Sigurður Nordal, Om Olaf den helliges saga (København: Gad, 1914), pp. 9-18; Toralf Berntsen, Fra sagn til saga (Kristiania: Gyldendal, 1923), pp. 26-27; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Om de norske kongers sagaer, pp. 5-6, 49-54; Siegfried Beyschlag, Konungasögur: Untersuchungen zur Königssaga bis Snorri (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1950), pp. 122-128; Svend Ellehøj, Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning (København: Munksgaard, 1965), pp. 177-178. The case for Icelandic written sources was argued in particular by A. Gjessing, Under-søgelse af kongesagaens fremvæxt (Christiania: Brøgger, 1873), II, 51-56 and Finnur Jónsson, "Ágrip," Aarbøger (1928), pp. 263-66.
- <sup>5</sup> Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga (Reykjavík: Stofnun Anna Magnússonar, 1975), p. 224.
- <sup>6</sup> Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar, ed. F. Jónsson, p. 88.
- <sup>7</sup> Gustav Indrebø, Fagrskinna (Kristiania: Grøndahl og Søn's Boktrykkeri, 1917), p. 167. On this trading center see also Heimskringla, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, I, 318 and II, 53, 70.
- <sup>8</sup> Om de norske kongers sagaer, pp. 61-68, 76-78.

<sup>9</sup> Theodricus' prologue (Monumenta historica Norvegiæ, ed. Gustav Storm [Kristiania, 1880], p. 4) states that he had no written sources before Harald Fairhair: "Liquet itaque, virorum optime, ex his fuisse etiam ante tempora Haraldī in hac terra in bellicis rebus potentes viros, sed ut diximus illorum memoriam scriptorum inopia delevit."

<sup>10</sup> S. Nordal, Om Olaf den helliges saga, p. 24 and S. Ellehøj, Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning, p. 53 give 1120 as the cutoff date for Ari's konunga ævi, but this is not based on specific evidence and appears to represent the nearest round date before 1130.

<sup>11</sup> See Eva Hagnell, Are frode och hans författarskap (Lund, 1938), pp. 17-19, 135 and Svend Ellehøj, Over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning, p. 48.