THINGS GREEK AND THE *RIDDARASÖGUR* *

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It will be my rather ungrateful task in this paper to try to dispel or at least deglamourize one of the glittering phantoms of saga research - the spectre of the supposed Byzantine sources of the *riddarasögur*. The Greek provenance of the *fornaldarsögur* in late antique and early medieval times was explored by Edith Marold in a challenging paper at the last saga conference (1979). I want to carry the investigation further and re-examine the relations of the *riddarasögur* to the Byzantine verse romances in the twelfth and the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Margaret Schlauch's view of their relations in *Romance in Iceland* is long overdue for revision. The questions I am going to pose will be more narrowly addressed to the various means of transmission of fictional and fairy-tale motifs, character-types, and settings between Byzantium and the northern lands from the twelfth century onwards, and my conclusions about the *literary* contacts of the two cultural areas in the later Middle Ages will be quite negative, though I hope not any the less salutary on that account. The tortuous translation process from Greek to Old Norse is the most problematic factor in the transmission of any narrative materials from the eastern Mediterranean to the north of Europe. It will not do to say therefore with Margaret Schlauch, "how slight is the barrier offered by foreign languages when people wish to pass on a good tale", and then simply point to the "Greek source" of a saga, as she does to an analogue of *Friðþjófs saga* in The *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena[1] ; one must also take into consideration the linguistic intermediaries through which the tale may have passed, especially so in the case of the *riddarasögur*, which owed their inception to translations from Latin and French.

When the Varangian guard had been organized in Constantinople, and one of its most distinguished officers, Haraldr harðráði, came to power in Norway, Byzantine influence over the political and ecclesiastical institutions of medieval Scandinavia was probably maximum. Haraldr had married a Kievan princess baptized in the Orthodox Greek Church, and gave himself the airs of a Greek emperor in his theocratic opposition to Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen and the Church of Rome. God, as Arnorr jarlaskáld conceived Him at the Norwegian court, was "the Protector of Greece and the Rus"[2] . Greek-speaking and Slavonic prelates of the Eastern Church must have been in attendance on Haraldr and his queen, for it will be recalled that three Slavonic church dignitaries - the so-called

"Armenian" bishops - made their way out to Iceland from Norway in the mideleventh century[3]. Haraldr and those Norwegians and Icelanders who had soldiered in the imperial guard would have spoken demotic Greek with more or less facility ; patristic or literary Greek was beyond their competence to read.[4]

In effect, firsthand experience of the Graeco-Russian world among the Scandinavians at an early period did not qualify them *ipso facto* as initiates of Byzantine high culture. The majority of them were in Greek as in Latin illiterate, whereas the Byzantine romance was the product of a puristic revival of a late antique genre of Greek literature. Not that a popular literature of the kind was incommunicable to them orally- they may already have "heard tell", from Greek ballads sung throughout Asia Minor, of the valor of the Arabic-Greek folk-hero, Digenes Akrites, and his love for the Maid[5] - but that the first true Byzantine imitations of the Greek novel, as composed in the twelfth century, in a purified poetic language, were in all respects unreadable to them. Even if these sophisticated works were recited at court in Constantinople, would the Varangians in the audience have been willing or able, with their demotic Greek and their skaldic poetics, to listen appreciatively, as Schlauch suggests[6]? I doubt it. The narrative involutions of the plots, the lyric emoting of the protagonists, the static descriptions of palatial buildings and grounds, the allegorical personifications of love, the virtues, or the months, the preciosity of the "pure" style of writing, together with the pedantry of the constant allusions to ancient Greek classics[7], were as yet utterly foreign to northern sensibilities, and a taste for such literary artifices was only just being cultivated by the French in the courtly romances, from which subsquently the authors of the *riddarasögur* acquired it.

While the Scandinavian presence persisted in Byzantium and the Kievan state, and the Norsemen had some knowledge of the spoken language in Greek, the bulk of the eastern fiction that was relayed to Norway and Iceland consisted of court gossip about Haraldr and high-born Byzantine ladies, regimental recollections of the Varangians', travellers' tales of the marvels of Constantinople, and oriental folktales of magical wonders[8]. These, however, were very perishable narrative materials which were imperfectly retained in the later vernacular literature of Old Norse. For the translation of Greek literary texts and their European dissemination, on the other hand, something more specialized and academic was demanded of the translator than a tour of guard duty in Constantinople and a smattering of demotic Greek- namely, the clerical ability to read literary Greek. That ability, be it said, was always rare in the medieval Latin West, and the habit of translating into Latin whatever one might have read of Greek literature was still rarer. Out of the accumulated stores of late antique and medieval Greek novels and novelistic biographies and histories in the archives of Byzantium but two or three specimen works

had been translated into Latin up to the twelfth century- e.g., the Pseudo-Callisthenes fictionalized history of the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Apollonius of Tyre novel, and the Graecized Buddhist legend of Barlaam and Joasaph. None of the Byzantine verse romances was ever translated into Latin thereafter ; instead, the Latin version of the Apollonius novel was translated through Italian back into Greek, and Greek translations of *Floire et Blancheflor* and *Pierre de Provence et la belle Maguelonne (= Imberios and Margarona)* were added to the Byzantine romantic corpus [9].

It is a worn commonplace of medieval literary history that the crusades affected Old French literature, inspiring an epic cycle of *chansons de croisade* [10], but the ultimate impact of the French courtly romances on the second wave of Byzantine romances as well as the *riddarasögur* may surprise us, so prone are we to believe that the much older East culturally dominated the younger West at every turn in the Middle Ages. We forget that Byzantium's cultural domination of Europe and indeed its own political autonomy were very severely curtailed at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the Fourth Crusade. After the shameful sack of Constantinople by the Venetians (1204), in the course of the thirteenth century - i.e., in the period when the *riddarasögur* were to be translated from the French romances - Byzantine civilization came in turn under heavy literary and linguistic influences from France and Italy which reversed the normal flow of high culture westward. French and Italian loan words engrossed the literary language of the Byzantine writers, which now approximated more closely the "impure" spoken language[11]. The heroes of the popular-style romances written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by them were represented as Latins, with a Western penchant for falconry and Frankish "bowl haircuts", and one Egyptian villain goes incongruously by a German name (Berderichos = Frederick)[12]. The heroines figure as heiresses to Latin principalities in the Near East which had been founded by the crusaders, and a princess who has been editorially misrepresented as an Indian will cast off in angry scenes the passive character and languid manner of the typical oriental heroine of the first Byzantine romances and behave more like a Western woman[13]. Further, vignettes and motifs from the French romances have insinuated themselves into the settings and narratives of these popular-style Byzantine romances - e.g., the personification of January in *Lybistros and Rhodamné* (Escorial MS, 1092-7) as a falconer out hunting with his hawk, or the lady-in-waiting's substitution of herself for her mistress in the love affair of Belthandros and Chrysantza[14]. The total effect of the impact of the French romances on the Byzantine in the later Middle Ages has been summed up thus by J.A. Lambert :

> ... l'élément franc était adopté par les Grecs, mais l'individualité grecque restait fidèle à ses principes : le caractère essentiel restait byzantin. Après que les Grecs se fussent familiarisés avec les romans occidentaux (Imbérios et Margarona, Florios et Platziaflora), ils

> avaient commencé à écrire des romans de chevalerie analogues ; ces ouvrages, dûs à la fusion du monde grec avec celui des Francs, montrent comment les Grecs ont maintenu leur caractère propre.[15]

These words, which lay stress on the native residuum beneath the many external accretions, would be equally apropos of the fusion of Old French *roman* and Old Norse saga in the *riddarasaga*.

The French penetration of Byzantium imposed a cultural situation which was peacefully reproduced in Norway during the thirteenth century in the process of the country's becoming a European, semifeudal state[16]. In the emergent Norwegian state as in the new Latin principalities of Byzantium, translations of French romances furnished official literature to fit the cultural situation or complement the political ideology of the translators' patrons. The parallel literary developments in Norway and Byzantium thenceforth will make it self-evident why there should be superficial resemblances between the *riddarasögur* and the Byzantine popular-style romances wherever they both happened to draw upon common French or other sources. This parallelism does not exclude the possibility that genuine Byzantine influences - e.g., the fanciful architectural designs which Schlauch has studied in minute detail[17] - had previously been absorbed in the twelfth century into the French sources of the *riddarasögur*, but it firmly establishes the leading role of France as the central clearing house for romantic and exotic stuff in the later Middle Ages. Since a Latin presence had replaced the Scandinavian in Byzantium after the Fourth Crusade, and the knowledge of spoken Greek had lapsed among the Norsemen in the thirteenth century[18], the Norse translators had not even the opportunity anymore to apprehend the popular-style romances of their Byzantine brethren, untranslated as they were. The scanty eastern source-materials of the authors of the *riddarasögur* had to be transmitted north from France (via England or Germany) either in the content of the French romances, or in the form of ancillary works on Greek and oriental subjects - the above-cited Latin translations of Greek novelistic biographies and histories - which were disseminated throughout Europe at the High Middle Age in Latin, French, and English. As the father in the *Konungs skuggsja* observed[19], Latin and French had the widest circulation in the West.

At this juncture we may sample a group of *riddarasögur* with Byzantine and/or Indian settings[20] and sort out from the broader features of the *riddarasaga* which correlate it with the medieval Greek novel the restricted features of the Old Norse genre of romance which derive from intermediate Latin and French sources, or are *sui generis*.

A) Authorial comment on the sources or the *utilitas* of the *riddarasögur*. In the first sentence of *Viktors saga ok Blávus* the author blandly asserts that under King Hákon Magnússon's learned patronage "many *riddarasögur*" were translated from French and Greek, a noble

custom of the king's which ought to be adopted by all good men ; more plausibly, *Clari saga* (Rs V, p. 3) is prefatorily stated to be a Norse translation of a Latin *rhythmus* which the Norwegian Bishop Jon Halldórsson had read somewhere in France, i.e., when he was a young student at the University of Paris. Since Latin was a legitimate medium for the transmission of narrative materials to Scandinavia in the later Middle Ages, whereas Greek was not, Einar Ól. Sveinsson has reasoned that the sagaman "laid it on rather thick" in the opening of *Viktors saga*, but that the source of *Clari saga* may well have been a French poem in Latin which the bishop had transcribed in his youth along with the Latin *exempla* or *daemisögur* "er hann hafði tekit í útlöndum, baeði með letrum ok eiginni raun", as reported in his biography[21]. Nevertheless, although *Clari saga* itself does occasionally betray Latinate turns of phrase -"Og hvað meira ?", "Hvað þarf hér langt um ?", etc.-, its source reference is really no more reliable than the bland assertion that King Hakon V had Greek works, namely romances translated into *riddarasögur*, or indeed the airy declaration in the last sentence of *Konráðs saga* (Rs III, p. 344) that a clerk picked up for the author a copy of that saga in a street of Constantinople[22]. Whether plausible or improbable, the sagamen's comments in the *riddarasögur* were uniformly intended to authenticate a fictional mode of writing which was felt to be uncomfortably close to lying, a deceptiveness from which the sensitive author of *Mágus saga* jarls II (Rs II, pp. 427, 429) was quick to dissociate the *riddarasaga*. If such comments have a Latin antecedent, it must be back in the *Schwindelliteratur* of late Antiquity, in the artful translator's forewords to the *Ephemeris Belli Trojani* of Dictys the Cretan and the *Historia de Excidio Trojae* of Dares the Phrygian, which were given out to be posthumous discoveries in Greece of eye-witness accounts of the Trojan War, "translated" from Greek into Latin. Hence Dares and Dictys were trusted, inter alios, by the compilers of the *Trójumanna saga*. [23]

B) "Marriage will increase princely honor". This maxim of the foster-brothers and kinsmen of unmarried kings, which in *Viktors saga ok Blavus* (p. 34), *Mágus saga jarls* II (Rs II, p. 140), and *Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns* (Rs VI, p. 178) prompts them to go in quest of a suitable bride in eastern parts for the throne, differentiates categorically the narrative themes of the *riddarasaga* and the medieval Greek novel ; for the one mainly concerns an unsentimental Germanic *Brautwerbung*, and the other, romantic love, aimed secondarily at marriage.

C) The dream vision of a faraway (eastern) princess. One saga in the group, *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* (Rs V, ch. 5), anticipates the hero's marriage to the Indian princess, Élina, with a dream vision of the ceremony. The sagaman reworked the dream scene from a poetic version of the French prose romance of *Arthur of Little Britain*, but Schlauch would also link up the saga by this scene with the Byzantine popular-style romance of *Lybistros and Rhodamné* because Lybistros too envisions in a dream an "Indian" princess whom he is to marry[24] . The Princess Rhodamné,

however, is not an Indian- rather, a Westernized woman - and dream visions of a *princesse lointaine* are not to seek so far afield when they abound in Provençal and French literature.

D) The *meykóngr*. In *Partalópa saga* (Rs II, p. 81), a midthirteenth century Norwegian translation, revised by an Icelander, of the end-of-twelfth century romance, *Partonopeus de Blois*, the Norwegian translator or the Icelandic reviser designated a Byzantine princess who reigns in solitary splendor as a "meykongr" [24]. Her French counter part may have projected from the romance an image of the Byzantine female autocrat [25]; but otherwise her "maiden-king" prototype is the "cruel princess" of West Germanic legend, Mōdþrȳðo ("The violent of temperament", as in *Beowulf*, 1931-60, on which lines see the note, p. 195, to Klaeber's edition). Erik Wahlgren in his doctoral dissertation chose Þorbjörg, the cruel princess of *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar* (ch. 6), as a Norse model of the type, but as this saga dates no earlier than the beginning of the fourteenth century, she is at most a notable instance, not a model, of the type [26]. Another candidate for the original "maiden king" might be the Amazonian queen, Kalestris, in the *Alexanders saga mikla* (bk. VIII), but she has no shrewish traits and in her brief love affair with Alexander she is not "tamed" to a state of domesticity. The "taming-of-the-shrew" motif hinted at in the West Germanic legend of Mōdþrȳðo is indispensable to the prototype. Strictly speaking, a "maiden king" is a female ruler who is (a) unmarried, (b) unsubordinated to the royal authority of a male parent, and (c) unfriendly to suitors. The sagamen, however, do not adhere strictly to these conditions in characterizing the *meykóngr* : Marmoría, the Byzantine princess in *Partalópa saga*, is absolute monarch of her fairy realm, but not unfriendly to Partalópi ; Florentia, the Indian princess of *Gibbons saga*, is cruel enough, but her resistance to prospective suitors is stiffened by her father's arbitrary disapproval of them. The overall tendency of the characterization of the *meykóngr* in the *riddarasaga* is to exploit the sadomasochism in (c) and degrade her and her lovers to retaliatory acts of sexual bondage, as in the grotesque love-making of *Dínus saga dramblåta* I. Needless to say, the cold and brutal sexuality of the *riddarasaga* characters is an inversion of the tender amorousness of lovers in the Byzantine and French romances.[27]

E) Palatial architecture, statuary, and painting. Of quasi-Byzantine design is the architectural "paradise" built for Philotemia and her forty ladies-in-waiting in *Dínus saga* I (pp. 28-9), with frescoes on the walls that seem to sing when air is piped into apertures in them ; the dream palace in Rémundr's vision of his future Indian bride (Rs V, p. 170 ff.)- a many-splendored pile of gold and white marble, always rotating to the sun, from which the Princess Élina advances to be married in a procession which holds over her head a glass canopy starred with the heavenly bodies ; and the golden palace of the Byzantine emperor in *Kirialax saga* (pp. 86-7), containing a show room of twelve carved ivory chairs and as many statues

of maidens mounted on pillars, who play tunes on pipes through which the wind from the sea outside is wafted. Much of this astronomically-charted architecture and its animated decor can be reconstructed after Schlauch's researches (see fn. 17 above) from the description in the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* of Hugon of Constantinople's palace, which was translated into Old Norse literature in the *Karlamagnús saga*, the shorter *þáttr af sögu keisara Magnúsar Karls, and Mágus saga jarls* II (Rs II, ch. 6). The singing frescoes and the piping statues, like the artificial singing birds and roaring lions of famous memory in ninth century Byzantium, are operated by blown air, roughly in the fashion of the Byzantine organ, which was imported to the West in the ninth century (cf. the portable organ in F below)[28]. Two statues of horn-blowing youths in the French source were literary replicas of a pair of youthful trumpeters sculpted over the gate of the Boukoleon in Constantinople. Perhaps the very buildings and art objects of Constantinople, apart from the descriptions of them in the Byzantine romances, shed their lustre on the palace of Hugon, as Schlauch thought[29]. Alternatively, the poet of the *Pèlerinage* may have adapted to Hugon's magnificent abode Ovid's description of the palace of the sun-god in the *Metamorphoses* (II, 1-18), one in a series of architectural *ecphrases* which descended from Homer on down to the Greek novelists in late Antiquity[30]. Then the Byzantine and the Old French/Old Norse descriptions of solar palaces would be parallel extensions of an ancient literary stylization of monumental architecture.

F) Musical festivities. Weddings and the arrivals and departures of great personages are usually celebrated with instrumental music in the *riddarasögur*. In *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* (Rs V, pp. 172, 223 f., 322), an ensemble of

> simfón (a guitar-like stringed instrument) og salterium, hörpur og gígjur og timpanistría (tambourines ?) og organ (= the portable Byzantine organ)

performs at the visionary and the actual wedding of Rémundr and Élina, and a band of these instruments strikes up again for Rémundr at his arrival in the capital city of India. To vary the musical program, men engage in athletic games and martial-arts contests at the wedding of Dínus and Philotemia in *Dínus saga dramblåta* I (p. 93). So, at the happy endings of two popular-style Byzantine romances, instrumental music is played on

> organa, seistra, tympana, boukina, melos hapan
> (organs, timbrels, drums, trumpets, every kind of instrument)

in *Lybistros and Rhodamné* (Escorial MS, 4322), but recreational games - *a paignidia* - are instituted in *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoé* (1335). Schlauch, who quotes the above Greek and Old Norse sentences[31], did not attempt to account for the verbal resemblances between them. Since, as I have said, the sagamen of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries could neither have read nor even heard about the Byzantine popular-style romances, there must have been a common source which supplied the saga author of

Rémundar saga and the Byzantine romancer of *Lybistros and Rhodamné* with the same collections of musical instruments in their works. By the end of the Middle Ages, of course, the Byzantine organ was in use everywhere in the medieval West. Collections of the organ and the other instruments were enumerated in passages of the French romances *(Erec et Enide, Li romans d'Alixandre*, etc.), in books of the Old Testament (II *Samuel* vi, 5), and in the Psalms (cl, 3-4)[32]. These Old French and Biblical *loci* were as accessible to the Byzantine romancer as to the Norse sagaman, and any of them could have been the common source of the quoted sentences. One should keep in mind in this context France's cultural ascendancy over Scandinavia and Byzantium in the fourteenth century.

G) Autobiographical revelations. When in *Völsunga saga*, ch. 13, Reginn, the dwarf smith, says to the child Sigurðr about the urgency of killing Fáfnir, the dragon, "Saga er til þess, ok mun ek segja þér", he launches into an autobiography revelatory of the enmity between him and Fafnir which would be called in modern Icelandic an *aefisaga*, a literary genre inadmissible in a family saga, whose characters never participate thus in the story-telling[33]. Autobiographical intrusion of a character in a saga narrative is peculiar to the *riddarasögur* and the *fornaldarsögur*, into which it was spliced from the narrative interlacing of the French romances, as in *Ívents saga Artúskappa* (Rs II, ch. 2). Autobiography of this French weave will be inserted anywhere in a *riddarasaga* narrative according as a recapitulation of past events is needed, or a surprise turn of present events seems desirable. But besides the straight autobiographical intrusion, the *riddarasaga* also conforms to a complex autobiographical convention of the late antique Greek novel whereby long-lost persons come to recognize each other by exchanging autobiographies in conversation together. In *Flóres saga konungs og sona hans* (Rs V, chs. 20-2) the three sons of Flóres, who have been shipwrecked, separated, and then captured on a *Brautwerbung* expedition against their own father and sister, learn of each other's identities in captivity from their respective *aefisögur*. As Schlauch for once has to admit, the complex form of autobiography in this and other knightly sagas was not imitated directly from the Greek novel or the Byzantine romance, but, rather, was filtered through the Norse translation in the *Heilagramanna sögur* of the eighth century Latin *vita* of the early Christian martyr, St. Eustachius, and his family, who, under the old novelistic convention, exchange autobiographies in a recognition scene[34]. Thus only very indirectly can *Flóres saga* be said to relate to Greek fiction-writing. In our group of Byzantinesque *riddarasögur*, however, the French sort of autobiographical intrusion is the rule. The inscrutable companion of Rémundr, Vioförull ("The Far Wanderer"), reveals in the end, in *Rémundar saga* (Rs V, p. 326), that he is an Indian prince in disguise-Perciakus, son of Percius ; Dínus' right-hand man, Heremita, likewise reveals at his master's wedding in *Dínus saga* I (p. 89) that he is a disguised Indian prince-Valterus-

who has entrapped in a glowing glass ball in his hands the soul of his adversary, Anachorita, the adviser to the African king, Maximilianus ; in *Kirialax saga* (ad fin.), Kvinatus, the son of the boon companion of Kirialax, discloses his identity to the latter's two sons, after he has fought them to a draw in a tournament. The authors of these *riddarasögur* had a strong predilection for the autobiographical surprise ending.

The foregoing tabulation of prominent literary features of the *riddarasaga* could be lengthened, but it already suffices to demonstrate at least that as between a prime Greek source and a secondary Latin or French one under a given feature (C, E, F above), the *riddarasaga* author had no option in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but to take the secondary one ; and indeed, as has been exposed in the pseudolearning of the author of *Kirialax saga* [35], he will often prefer, where he has a choice (as for G), a tertiary source in Old Norse to a secondary one in Latin. Our Byzantine-Indian *riddarasögur* turn out to be neither Greek nor Oriental. It is a sad tribute to the authors of the fifteenth-to-sixteenth century versions of *Dínus saga drambláta* I-II in the group that Henry Goddard Leach should have classed their caricatures of Egypt and North Africa as "Oriental features", jumping erratically to the conclusion that the saga was "pure Greek romance" which had been brought intact from Byzantium to Iceland [36]. His confused first impressions seemed to be confirmed by Schlauch, who detected in *Dínus saga* II (p. 100 f.) a faint aura of the Graecized Buddhist legend, *Barlaam and Joasaph*, in which Joasaph like Buddha is shielded in boyhood from the pain of human suffering [37]. Though in the sixteenth century final version of the saga Dínus is made to shrink from ugliness and suffering, in the fifteenth century draft of it (I, p. 10) he is only worried lest a sun-tan mar his good looks- the natural reflex of a northern European aristocrat. This unsaintly prig, who is a worthy match for the untamed shrew, Philotemia, has a character which is basically prepared to inflict cruelties rather than shun them, and his (bad) character-type is European Christian, not Buddhistic; *his dramblaeti*, the vice of the proud man, is glossed under "Umm of-metnað" in the *Gamal norsk homiliebok* [38]. In the future the misinterpretations of Leach and Schlauch are to be avoided by a fuller comprehension of the French-dominated cultural situation of Scandinavia and Byzantium in the later Middle Ages. By virtue of that situation analogous works of romance could be produced at the two extremities of the European continent without literary intercourse between them. No wonder, then, that in the composition period of the *riddarasögur* "es ist... ausserordentlich schwer, Art und Weg derartiger Einwirkungen in jedem einzelnen Fall sicher abzuwägen", as Kurt Schier has complained of the elusive Byzantine influences [39]. Merely the ghost of Byzantium haunts the Byzantinesque *riddarasögur* that we have sampled.

FOOTNOTES

To the memory of P.J. Alexander. A fuller version of this paper was published in *Speculum* LIX (July, 1984), 509-23.

1 *Romance in Iceland* (reprint, New York, 1973), pp. 17, 63-4.

2 See Hans Kuhn's article, "Das älteste Christentum Islands", reprinted in *Kleine Schriften* IV (Berlin, 1978), p. 176 f.

3 See Magnús Már Lárusson, "On the so-called 'Armenian' Bishops", *Studia Islandica* XVIII (1960), 23-38.

4 So the snippets of transliterated Greek in the saga stories of the Varangians would seem to indicate ; see on the cognomen "drómundr" (Greek *dromōn*, a naval vessel) in *Grettis saga* the note of Guðni Jónsson in *Íslenzk fornrit* VII (Reykjavík, 1936), p. 34, and on the exclamation "miðhaefi" (= Greek *mē diabe*, pronounced [míy + ðiyávih], "don't step over !"), as in *Orkneyinga saga*, R.M. Dawkins, "Greeks and Northmen", in *Essays presented to R.R. Marett* (London, 1936), p. 43.

5 On this balladry see John Mavrogordato's introduction to his translation and edition of *Digenes Akrites* (Oxford, 1963), pp. xxvi-xxix.

6 *Romance*, p. 57.

7 See on the "pure"-style Byzantine romances in verse or prose M.A.Ch. Gidel, *Etudes sur la littérature grecque moderne* (Paris, 1866), pp. 11-19, and Franz Dölger's essay, "Byzantinische Dichtung in der Reinsprache", in *Euxaristerion : Franz Dölger zum 70. Geburtstage* (Thessalonica, 1961), p. 22 ff. The "pure"-style prose romance of Eustathius Macrembolites, *Hysminias and Hysminé*, left its mark on passages of the popular-style verse romances cited below, fns. 12-14.

8 For the gossip about Haraldr and the regimental recollections, see Sigfús Blöndal and Benedikt S. Benedikz, *The Varangians of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1978), ch. 4 ; for the travellers' tales and oriental folktales, see Schlauch, *Romance*, ch. iv, and Blöndal and Benedikz, p. 214 f.

9 On the translated literature of Byzantium in demotic Greek see H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinische Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), pp. 135–47.

10 See R.R. Bezzola, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200)* III (Paris, 1963), ii, pp. 475–80 on the crusade epics ; outside them, he finds, p. 455, the literary harvest from the crusades is extremely meagre.

11 See Robert Browning's handbook, *Medieval and Modern Greek* (London, 1969), ch. 4, and R.M. Dawkins' linguistic sketch in *Byzantium*, eds. N.H. Baynes and H.St.L.B. Moss (Oxford, 1961), ch. ix, on the Greek language in the Middle Ages.

12 *Belthandros and Chrysantza*, ed. A. Ellissen in *Analekten der mittel - und neugriechischen Literatur* IV (Leipzig, 1860), 769 ; *Le roman de Libistros et Rhodamné*, ed. J. A. Lambert née van der Kolf (Amsterdam, 1935), Neapolitan MS, 35–40, and Escorial MS, 2066 ff. ; cf. Lambert's introductory remarks, pp. 45 and 46 f. (All Textual references to the Byzantine romances are to verse lines).

13 Chrysantza is princess of Antioch, and Lambert infers, ed. cit., p. 42, that Rhodamné's family seat, the Argyrokastron, is located in a Latin principality too. W. Wagner in his edition of *Lybistros and Rhodamné*, in *Trois poèmes grecs du moyen âge* (Berlin, 1881), wrongly emended the epithet for Rhodamné in the Neapolitan MS, 334, to read *korès Indikès*, "Indian maid", for *korès synthèkès*, "a charming girl", thereby misleading Schlauch, *Romance*, pp. 64, 65. The occidental character of Rhodamné comes out in her spirited reaction to Lybistros' suit, Escorial MS, 1769–76 ; cf. on her character, Lambert, p. 43.

14 On the personifications of the months in *Lybistros and Rhodamné* see Lambert, pp. 38–9, and Ch. Gidel, *Etudes*, p. 180 f., and on the *Tristan* motif of the substituted lady-in-waiting in *Belthandros* and *Chrysantza*, Gidel, p. 144 f., and Ellissen's note 119 in *Analekten* IV, p. 249. Unlike the months in the literary calendar of Eustathius Macrembolites, *Hysminias and Hysminé* IV, 5–19, those personified in *Lybistros and Rhodamné* bear Franco-Latin names.

15 *Le roman*, p. 49. The summary nicely counterbalances the chauvinism of Ch. Gidel, who in his *Etudes* exaggerated the influence of French medieval literature on the Byzantine, and the hypercriticism of H.-G. Beck, who minimizes the Frenchness of the popular-style Byzantine romances in *Gesch.d. byz. Volkslit.*, p. 117 f.

16 See K. Helle, *Norge blir en stat 1130-1319* (Bergen, etc., 1974), chs. 17-22.

17 *Romance*, pp. 66 ff., 157-64, and "The Palace of Hugon of Constantinople", *Speculum* V (1932), 500-14.

18 The last influx of Greek words besprinkled the twelfth century *þulur*. "That these þulur are late", Guðbrandur Vigfússon conjectured in the Prolegomena to his edition of the *Sturlunga saga* (Oxford, 1878), p. clxxxviii, "the occurrence of modern Greek words-fengari, φεγγάριον, the moon ; nis,νύξ, the night (as Bugge noticed) ; Kipr, Κύπρος, Cyprus, such as may have been brought back by Rögnvald's crusading crews... prove pretty conclusively". Cf. in Finnur Jonsson's *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (reprint, Copenhagen, 1973), B I, pp. 674, 679 : (11) "Tungls heiti", (mm) "Doegra heiti", and (bbb) "Eyja heiti", st. 3.

19 Ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1920), p. 10.

20 The selection is from the following editions : *Gibbons saga*, ed. R.I. Page (Copenhagen, 1960) ; *Dínus saga drambláta I-II*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík, 1960) ; *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson with a foreword by Einar Ól. Sveinsson (Reykjavík, 1964) ; and *Kirialax saga*, ed. K. Kålund (Copenhagen, 1917). *Partalopa saga*, *Flóres saga og Blankiflúr*, *Mágus saga II*, *Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns*, *Konráðs saga*, *and Rémundar saga keisarasonar*, as in the multivolume anthology, *Riddarasögur* (abbreviated Rs), ed. Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík, 1961), whose normalized texts I cite for the sake of convenience - with corrections where necessary ; references to other *riddarasögur* will be to texts of them in this anthology.

21 See the foreword to *Viktors saga*, pp. cxii and clxxix f., and *Jóns þáttr byskups Halldórssonar* in *Byskupa sögur*, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík, 1948), I, p. 483.

22 Cf. the formulaic phrase, "...fann...skrifaða...", in the cited passages of *Konráðs saga* and *Clari saga* - a suspicious sign. On the Latinisms in *Clari saga* see A. Jakobsen, *Studier i Clarus saga* (Bergen, 1964), pp. 33-40. The Latinate style of the saga author is not *prima facie* evidence of a Latin source for *Clari saga*. As against Sveinsson and Jakobsen, Jan de Vries was right- the "translated" *rhythmus* is "reine Erfindung", *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1967), II, p. 535.

23 See Fr. Paasche, "Über Rom und das Nachleben der Antike im norwegischen und isländischen Schriftum des Hochmittelalters", *Symbolae Osloenses* XIII (1934), 134.

24 *Romance*, p. 65 ; Schlauch speaks inaccurately here of Belthandros "dreaming" like Lybistros of his ladylove, when Chrysantza appears to him by magic in a waking state (*Belthandros and Chrysantza*, 523 ff.).

24a Bjarni Vilhjalmsson normalized the diplomatic text of O. Klockhoff (Uppsala, 1877) to "meykonungur", but this form is nonexistent in Icelandic.

25 Historically, the Byzantine Empire was governed by the "Emperor" Irene in the eighth century and the Princesses Zoé and Theodora in the eleventh century, but officially no woman was ever entitled *autokratorissa*, "sole ruler", except in a jesting line of the fourteenth century popular-style romance, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoé*, 2076, on which see M. Pichard's note to his edition (Paris, 1956), p. 73.

26 *The Maiden King in Iceland* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 23-4, 62-3.

27 Aberrant from the Byzantine romantic corpus is the bondage scene in *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoé*, 439 ff., in which a naked woman suspended by her hair from a ceiling is given a daily flogging by her dragon husband. Schlauch, *Romance*, p. 93, predictably ascribes the sexual cruelty of the *riddarasaga* heroine to more orientalism, in the *Dolopathos* version of the pound-of-flesh story.

28 On Byzantine automata and the organ see A. Schultz, *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1889), I, p. 96 ff., and J. Perrot, *L'orgue de ses origines hellénistiques à la fin du xiiie siècle* (Paris, 1965), pp. 222 f., 251 f.

29 *Romance*, pp. 67 and 157.

30 See P. Friedländer, "Die Beschreibung von Kunstwerken in der antiken Literatur", in *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 21, on Ovid, and 47-55, on the Greek novelists.

31 *Romance*, p. 66.

32 For the Old French passages, see the *Belege* of A. Schultz, *Das höfische Leben*, I, pp. 554-62. My thanks to Asst. Prof. Elaine Tennant of the University of California, Berkeley, for the relevant Biblical references.

33 As Carol Clover has said in her new book, *The Medieval Saga* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1982), p. 112, fn. 8, "something worth telling is worth telling by the narrator" in the family sagas. *Völsunga saga* has been edited by F.G. Finch (London, 1965).

34 *Romance*, p. 62 f. Literary forms of the late antique Greek novel- the dialogue, the autobiographical frame-story, and the exchange of autobiographies - were soon transferred to Christian hagiography, as in the *Actus Silvestri*, Jerome's *Vita S. Malchi*, and the *Vita Eustachii vel Placidi*. See on the transferal H. Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (reprint, Brussels, 1966), pp. 227-30, and W. Levison, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvester-Legende", reprinted in *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit* (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 413-17, 425-36. Old Norse translations of the three *vitae* are in the *Heilagramanna sögur*, ed. C.R. Unger (Christiana, 1877), I, pp. 437-46, II, pp. 193-203, and 245-80.

35 See K. Kålund, "Kirjalax sagas kilder", *Aarboger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* (1917), 1-15.

36 *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), p. 271. Leach based his opinion on *Dínus saga* II.

37 *Romance*, p. 74 f.

38 Ed. G. Indrebø (reprint, Oslo, 1966), p. 22. The monastic magicians, Heremita and Anachorita, must have strayed into the saga from the *Vitae Patrum*, translated into Old Norse in the *Heilagramanna sögur*, II, pp. 335-671. Cf. the anecdote of the sinful *anachoreta/einsetumaðr* who got a virgin with child, II, pp. 585-6.

39 *Sagaliteratur* (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 108. Schier cites approvingly as a successful source study of Greek and oriental influences on saga literature Dag Strömbäck's article, "Uppsala, Iceland, and the Orient", in *Early English and Norse Studies presented to Hugh Smith*, eds. A. Brown and P. Foote (London, 1963), pp. 178-90- an English abridgement of a longer essay in Swedish, "En orientalisk saga i fornnordisk dräkt", reprinted in Strömbäck's collected essays, *Folklore och filologi* (Uppsala, 1970), pp. 70-105. In the saga text, *Hróa þattr heimska*, the *senex caecus* who accuses the hero of stealing his eye is an oriental character-type, but he reached the Icelandic *þáttr* from the Middle English *Tale of Beryn*.