

THE CHRIST-BALDR MOTIVE IN SAGA LITERATURE

Dramatic Roles and Stock Characters

Structuralist saga research of later times has made it still more evident than before that the sagas, with regard to both subject-matter and form are to a great extent the result of moulding together relatively fixed units, that sometimes appear time and again in the same saga, and are sometimes used in several sagas. These units may have been created on the basis of domestic tradition or they were taken from foreign literature. But we have to suppose that they were propagated to our saga texts both through oral and literary transmission.

The fixed units of tradition that are of special interest in our connection are partly a series of typical dramatic roles, that appear in all or in many of the sagas (like returning roles in several kinds of drama, e.g. the comedies of Ludvig Holberg), partly a series of stock characters, that are common in this literature. Even Einar Ól. Sveinsson focused attention on the difference between dökkhærðu hetjurnar and ljóshærðu kappanna. He pointed out the Baldr type, the wise man and Kinck's "Loke-skikkelsen".¹ This demonstration of stock characters in the sagas has been promoted still more by other scholars,² and in his book on Njáls saga Lars Lönnroth has treated both dramatic roles and stock characters thoroughly.³ Lönnroth enumerates ten dramatic roles that according to him are to be found in Njáls saga, e.g. The Hero, The "Prima Donna", The Wise Counsellor, and so on.⁴

But in Njáls saga and in several other sagas there is also a particular dramatic role and stock character that Lönnroth does not mention in his book in spite of the fact that this role plays an especially prominent part in precisely Njáls saga. I mean the central figure in a pattern that I have here termed "the Christ-Baldr motive".⁵ In Lönnroth's terms the role might be called "the good mediator who loses his life". This dramatic role and character type we shall try to examine in this paper in its connection with some other roles and stock characters.

Closer Presentation of the Motive

The Christ-Baldr motive in saga literature is a stereotype, a special grouping of saga characters around a fixed pattern of action, that to a greater or lesser extent appears in all the sagas with which we are concerned. The motive is always connected with a central main character. The central main characters and the sagas concerned are as follows:

Helgi Arngrímsson	in Hǫensa-Þóris saga
Blund-Ketill Geirsson	- - - -
Váli	- Bandamanna saga
Þiðrandi Geitisson	- Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana
Askell goði Eyvindarson	- Reykðøla saga
Koðrán Guðmundarson	- Ljósvefninga saga
Ingimundur Þorsteinsson	- Vatnsdøla saga
Hǫskuldr Þráinsson Hvítanessgoði	- Njáls saga
Njáll Þorgeirsson	- - -
Ljótr Síðu-Hallsson	- - -

The central main characters have all these features in common:

- 1) They are all members of one of the parties in a serious conflict, but are not fighting themselves when they lose their lives.
- 2) They try to prevent or stop the conflict.
- 3) They lose their lives as a consequence of their connection with one of the parties.

In this paper I shall try to show that this motive has its main roots in the Christian demand for peace and love, but that its realisation in saga literature is more or less like the myth of Baldr and Baldr's death, which is recorded in the Edda of Snorri Sturluson.

The Christian Background

That element of Christian theory that was no doubt most impressive and was felt to be most paradoxical when Christianity was

brought to the Nordic countries, was the doctrine that God sacrificed his own son, and that the son of God of his own free will underwent death in order to save humanity. This doctrine was also made visible and palpable by means of innumerable crucifixes that were to be seen in all places where Christianity extended.

Another aspect of Christianity that necessarily made a great impression was the radical rejection of the heathen customary self-assertion and vengeance. The demand to forgive endured injuries was in absolute opposition to fundamental principles of heathen law and morality.

Side by side with the demand to forgive in private life, the church also engaged in energetic work to limit wars and to establish peace in society, within single kingdoms as well as between kingdoms.

It is well known that forgiveness and love of one's neighbour were central elements in ecclesiastical preaching in Iceland too during the times when saga literature came into being. When we meet corresponding ideas in saga literature it is therefore natural to conclude that they are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin.

But when in saga literature persons of heathen times or the missionary period are told to express the same ideas one is apt to believe that this at least in many cases is due to construction: To saga heroes of the 10th and 11th centuries are ascribed Christian ideas and dispositions that the authors knew from church preaching and instruction of their own times, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Peace Mediators in General

Not all persons in the sagas that try to promote peace and agreement are connected with the Christ-Baldr motive. In the sagas there are several powerful peace promoters whose efforts are rewarded with success, and who not only bring their projects to victory without losing their lives, but who also gain honour and fame as a result. Examples of this kind are the scald Guthormr sindri in Haralds saga Hárfagra, Þorgnýr lögmaðr in Óláfs saga helga, Þorgeirr Ljósvefningagoði in Íslendingabók, Kristni saga and Njála, and Ketill Þorsteinsson in Þorgils saga ok Haflíða.

In the sagas of Icelanders we also have examples of prominent and successful peace promoters, heroes like Gellir Þorkelsson and Skegg-Broddi Bjarnason in *Ljósvetninga saga*, or Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson and Ófeigr Járngerðarson in *Vöðu-Brands þáttur*. But the greatest of all peace promoters in the sagas of Icelanders is Síðu-Hallr in *Njáls saga*. He managed to bring about reconciliation after the great battle on the Althing. But to obtain this he had to yield a unique personal sacrifice.

In the sagas of Icelanders we also find a particular peace promoter motive of minor dimensions. That is the noble son of a chief who forces his implacable father to yield and to give up a cruel plan. Examples of this motive are Halldórr Guðmundarson in *Ljósvetninga saga*, Þóroddr Tungu-Oddsson in *Hönsa-Þóris saga* and Eiðr, the son of Miðfjarðar-Skeggi, in *Þórðar saga hreðu*.

Women in the sagas are often the origin of enmity and disaster. But in *Vápnfirðinga saga* the noble and strong Jörunn, daughter of the famous chief Einarr at Þverá, takes the initiative in reconciling her husband Þorkell Geitisson and the neighbouring chief Bjarni Brodd-Helgason.

As is to be seen, the motive of the good peace mediator who loses his life is a special case among several types of peace mediator, a case that shows particular connection with Christian ideas. Of course a mediator of this type is also conceivable in a heathen context. But as a matter of fact we have no instance of a type like this in literature that can be judged to be free from Christian influence.

The Mythological Background

Normally the Christ-Baldr motive has three actors:

- 1) The character who causes conflict.
- 2) The partaker of the conflict who kills the central main character.
- 3) The central main character who loses his life.

These three actors are also to be found in the Old Norse myth of the death of the god Baldr. The myth is more or less completely transmitted both in the eddaic poems *Völuspá* (31-35),

Lokasenna (28), Baldrs draumar (7-12), Hyndlulj6ð (29), and in the scaldic poems Húsdrápa (7-11), composed by the scald Ólfr Uggason towards the end of the tenth century, the anonymous Málsháttakvæði, probably composed in the thirteenth century, and another anonymous verse, which has been told to be from the twelfth century. Most explicit the myth is rendered in Snorra Edda.

This myth is so well known that we shall not repeat it here. The similarities between Baldr of the myth and the central main character of our motive are as follows:

- 1) Baldr and the central main character are both good.⁸
- 2) Both are killed.

But there is an important difference: Baldr of the myth is passive whereas the central main character of the saga motive is active in his effort to prevent or to stop conflict. This difference makes it difficult to regard Baldr of the myth as the origin of the central main figure of the motive. The Christian doctrine of Christ is here an easier explanation.

But as to other aspects of the myth the similarities with the saga motive are more striking:

Loki corresponds to the character who causes conflict.⁹

The blind Höðr corresponds to the partaker in the conflict who kills the central main character.⁹

The background of Baldr, Loki and Höðr in heathen religion and mythology we shall not touch on here, nor the question of Christian influence on the myth itself.¹⁰ In this connection it is sufficient to state that the myth is related in its most complete form in Snorra Edda, that was probably composed in the 1220s. A number of manuscripts of Snorra Edda from about 1300 and later, and mention made of the book in medieval literature permit us to assume that Snorra Edda was relatively well known in Iceland in the second half of the thirteenth century, the period when probably all of the sagas containing our motive were written.

It seems necessary to establish some sort of connection between the myth and our motive. But whether this is only a folklore connection of motive similarity, or whether we have also to suppose concrete literary influence from the complete form in Snorra Edda on the sagas is at first hand not so easy to decide.

Here, however, another item has to be observed. In Snorra Edda the motive of Baldr's death is connected with another motive, the motive of the good plan that fails. This last motive is very wide-spread and common in folklore and literature.¹¹ In Snorra Edda the gods and Frigg lay a plan to save Baldr, but still Baldr is killed.¹² A similar connection between the motive of the good plan that fails and the good mediator who is killed is to be found in two of our sagas, Bandamanna saga and Njáls saga, as will be dealt with later.

This combination of two unrelated motives both in Snorra Edda and in these two sagas makes it tempting to reckon with direct or indirect literary influence from Snorra Edda not only on these two sagas but on all sagas that contain the Christ-Baldr motive.

The Individual Characters

The older literary prototypes that return in the Christ-Baldr motive are simple and unproblematic: The Christ of the Church is merely good, helpful and self-sacrificing. In Snorra Edda Baldr is also merely good, Loki on the other hand merely evil and sly, Høðr not evil, but an unconscious instrument for the evil Loki. When saga authors incarnate these prototypes in earthly, more or less "realistically" drawn human figures, these figures gain individuality and new social and aesthetic functions. We shall now try to see how the single roles of the motive are represented in our sagas.

The Christ-Baldr Role.

In the sagas several of these characters are still practically "pure" types. Exclusively good are Helgi Arngrímsson and Blund-Ketill in Høensa-Þóris saga, Váli in Bandamanna saga, Þiðrandi Geitisson in Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana, Koðrán Guðmundarson in Ljósvetninga saga and Høskuldr Þráinsson in Njáls saga.

More complicated and not so easy to judge are Askell goði in Reykðæla saga and Njáll Þorgeirsson in Njáls saga. To be sure, both of them are incessantly righteous. They always

want to do good, and they are not involved in combat when they are killed. But in their earlier lives they have been so actively concerned with lawsuits and party controversies that for a long time they look like relatively ordinary saga heroes. But in the last conflict, that brings them to death, they are obviously innocent and "pure". Indeed it has been maintained that Njáll is too guilty to be a representative of the Christ-Baldr type,⁴³ and this view may be connected with the interpretation of Njáll's free-will death as an attempt at atonement.⁴⁴ But when the agreement after Þráinn's death is broken Njáll is not to be blamed. Valgarðr and Mörðr are the root of the fateful development, and the sons of Njáll kill Høskuldr against Njáll's will. I therefore find it justifiable to count Njáll in the type representatives.

The greatest contrast within the lives of this type representatives is to be found in the life of Ingimundr Þorsteinsson in Vatnsdæla saga. He is a viking in his youth, but undergoes a change of personality that to some extent reminds us of Snorri Sturluson's Óláfr inn helgi.

Of the "pure" types we can say that we can follow them during a comparatively short period. All of them, except Blundketill, are young when they lose their lives. They belong to what has been called the "static" type of saga figure (as opposed to the "development" type), and are therefore of minor interest as to psychology. But only one of them, Helgi Arngrímsson, can be classed as a subordinate character, the picture of him being rather sketch-like and not explicit.

Askell goði, Ingimundr Þorsteinsson and Njáll Þorgeirsson on the other hand we can observe over a long time. Only Njáll's life lasts into the Christian period so that he becomes baptized. These three heroes are just and righteous all the time, but develop the special non-resistant attitude in their last hours.

Some of the Christ-Baldr types resemble Jesus in a quite striking way, being in their last moment exclusively occupied with the welfare of the person who kills them. This is true not only of the Christian Váli in Bandamanna saga and Høskuldr Þráinsson in Njáls saga⁴⁵ but also of the heathens Askell goði and Ingimundr Þorsteinsson. Cp. the words of Christ in

the Sermon on the Mount: "pray for those who persecute you" (Matth. 5.44) and his prayer for the people who crucified him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luc. 23.34).

In Bandamanna saga the motive of the good peace mediator that loses his life, as mentioned before, is combined with the motive of the good plan that fails. Oddr Ofeigsson's servant Váli conceives a plan to reestablish the good state of things: He himself, a friend of both parties, will find out who has stolen Oddr's sheep, and after stating that Óspakr is guilty he conceives another plan to rescue Óspakr by concealing the theft. But this Jesus-like behaviour of Váli's the villain Óspakr rewards by killing him.

Njáls saga is distinguished by especially frequent and varied use of the Christ-Baldr motive. In the case of Høskuldr Þráinsson the motive functions in the usual way the central main character being killed against his own will. And as in Bandamanna saga we have here also the motive of the good plan that fails. The sons of Njáll having killed Þráinn Sigfússon Njáll succeeds in establishing an agreement and tries to secure this still more by special arrangements: He takes Høskuldr, the son of the slain Þráinn, into his own family and friendship, and procures later on a goðorð and a bride from a family of power and high rank, Hildigunnr, for his foster son. But the magnificent plan for securing both Høskuldr and Njáll himself is spoilt by the blind naiveté of his sons (the Høðr representatives), who kill Høskuldr on the advice of the Loki representative Mørðr. Here the parallel to the Baldr myth seems especially close, and the belief in a literary influence from the myth on the saga appears closer to hand than anywhere else.

In the case of Njáll on the other hand we have the deviation that Njáll is not simply killed by an enemy's weapon, but that he himself chooses death together with his sons after realising that his great plan for securing peace has definitely got wrecked. Njáll's choice of death reminds us of the self-sacrificing death of Christ. Several scholars have believed they find an attempt at atonement in Njáll's behaviour.⁴⁶ But at the same time Njáll has not fully given up the heathen code of revenge. The case of Njáll is on the whole much more complica-

ted than any other instance of the Christ-Baldr motive.

The third instance of the Christ-Baldr motive in Njáls saga is connected with the promising young Ljóttr Hallsson, who helps his father Síðu-Hallr in his efforts to stop the battle at the Althing, but who is killed by a javelin. When in spite of this Síðu-Hallr afterwards takes the initiative to negotiate, offering to let his own dear son lie unavenged and without recompense, and in this way actually succeeds in bringing about reconciliation, this reminds us manifestly of the God of the Gospel, who also gave his dear son for the salvation of mankind.

In some sagas heroes are to be found that resemble the Christ-Baldr type but who still fall outside the definition.

Þiðrandi Geitisson in Fljótssögla saga is inherited from Gunnars þáttir Þiðrandabana and is on the whole depicted in the same way. But in Fljótssögla saga Þiðrandi is savagely attacked by Ketill þrymr and kills Ketill in self-defence.

Oláfr Hávardarson in Hávardar saga Isfirðings does everything to help other people, but is also attacked and has to defend himself before he is killed.

Eiðr Skeggjason in Þórðar saga hreðu tries constantly to prevent calamities when his father Miðfjarðar-Skeggi and Þórðr hreða come into conflict. But Eiðr is not killed.

Most of the Christ-Baldr types are persons whom the saga author has taken from tradition and who also appear elsewhere in saga literature. Others seem to have been invented by the author himself, who needed them as a wheel in his saga machinery: Helgi Arngrímsson, Váli and Høskuldr Þráinsson.

The Loki Role.

Just as we have a series of "pure" Christ-Baldr representatives we also have a series of pure Loki representatives, villains, in connection with our motive:

Hønsa-Þórir	in Hønsa-Þóris saga
Ásbjörn veggamarr	- Gunnars þáttir Þiðrandabana
Vémundur kögurr	- Reykðögla saga
Hrolleifr Arnaldsson	- Vatnsdögla saga
Valgarðr inn grái	- Njáls saga

These villains are constantly occupied with creating complications, conflict and disaster. They are evil by nature. But only Hǫensa-Þórir and Valgarðr and Mörðr have a premeditated and vicious plan against the Christ-Baldr representatives Blund-Ketill and Høskuldr. Hrolleifr in Vatnsdæla saga is somewhat ambiguous, but it seems most reasonable to assume that he kills Ingimundr on account of excitement, not as the result of a plan. In Bandamanna saga the author has deliberately made Ospakr's conduct ambiguous. Ospakr develops from reliable servant to villain. But whether he really wanted to kill Váli, or whether he believed that he was killing Oddr as he maintains himself, is left open. Vémundr kǫgurr stands apart. He certainly does not want to have his mother-brother Áskell killed, but Áskell's death is an unexpected consequence of Vémundr's malicious machinations. The death of Koðrán Guðmundarson in Ljósvefninga saga is unexpected and not wanted by the main partakers in the conflict. Here the part of the Loki representative is replaced by another stereotype motive, the goading of women. This motive is also used in Njáls saga, where a woman, Hildigunnr, bears the Loki part in the events before the burning of Njáll. Ljótr Hallsson in Njáls saga is killed by a javelin, and nobody knew who had thrown it, but it came ór liði Guðmundar ríka. This information casts a shadow of suspicion on the wellknown chief Guðmundr Eyjólfsson of Mörðruvellir, on whom elsewhere in the sagas an unfavourable light is often shed.

A few of the villains, the Loki representatives, meet their deserved fate and are killed: Hǫensa-Þórir, Ospakr Glúmsson and Hrolleifr Arnaldsson. Ásbjörn vegghamarr is not killed in Gunnars þáttr Þiðrandabana, but on the other hand in Fljótsdæla saga, where the subject-matter of the þáttr is augmented. But some of the worst villains are not killed. It is tempting to take it as part of the irony of the complicated Njáls saga that the saga's three most noble characters, Gunnarr, Høskuldr and Njáll, all have to be killed, while the arch-scoundrels Valgarðr and Mörðr are exempted. Of Valgarðr we learn that he died from illness. The same is said of Vémundr kǫgurr in Reykðæla saga.

As in the case of the Christ-Baldr representatives most of

the Loki representatives are taken from tradition. Probably invented by the author are Ásbjörn vegghamarr in Gunnars þáttur Þíðrandabana and Hildigunnr in Njála.

The Höðr Role.

The parallels of the blind and seduced Höðr in our sagas also vary considerably. A resemblance that can scarcely be fortuitous is the parallelism of Höðr's blindness and simplicity with the circumstance that the Christ-Baldr representative is repeatedly killed by a person who does not know exactly what he is doing. First this is true of the two austmenn Örn in Hœnsa-Þóris saga and Gunnarr in Gunnars þáttur Þíðrandabana. These austmenn are not members of the conflicting groups, but feel obliged to their landlords by the hospitality rules. Örn shoots after the retreating offenders without knowing them. But the arrow of course hits the peace mediator Helgi Arngrímsson. Gunnarr is as ignorant as Örn of the factual circumstances, but wants to revenge his landlord as effectively as possible. An excited servant woman tells him that Þíðrandi is the most important of the retreating enemies, and Gunnarr behaves accordingly. Here the analogy with Loki and the blind Höðr who shoots is palpable. But also in Bandamanna saga Öspakr kills Váli through a mistake according to Öspakr's own words; and as to Ljótr Hallsson's death in Njáls saga the question of intended or unintended killing is left open.

Both Öspakr in Bandamanna saga and Hrolleifr in Vatnsdæla saga unite the Höðr role with the Loki role. But Hrolleifr knows very well what he is doing. The only thing that might excuse the behaviour of Hrolleifr is the contest situation and his excited state of mind when Ingimundr appears and tries to make him listen to reason.

Blinded by excitement so that they do not avoid anything, but fully conscious of whom they are killing are Hallr Ötryggsson in Ljósvetninga saga and Þórir Ketilsson in Reykdæla saga. Both kill from loyalty, Hallr avenging his father, Þórir his chief. Neither of them is instigated by an ordinary Loki representative.

The closest parallels to the blind and consciously seduced Höðr of the myth are no doubt Þorvaldr Tungu-Oddsson in Hœnsa-

Þóris saga and Skarpheðinn Njálsson with his brothers in Njáls saga. Like Hǫðr they are all led astray by lies and false words of friendship, and they become willing instruments in the hands of the Loki representatives and go to the killing of the Christ-Baldr representatives fully conscious.¹⁷

Hǫensa-Þórir and Mǫrðr Valgarðsson are not only the originators of conflict and disaster, but are also present when the Christ-Baldr representatives are killed. Still they are not proper Hǫðr representatives because they mislead others into being the principal executors of the outrage, like Loki in the myth.

A Hǫðr representative of a specific kind is Flosi Þórðarson in Njáls saga. Flosi is by no means blinded either in thought or in feeling. He dislikes his engagement but feels forced by the honour codex of revenge and Hildigunnr's crafty goading. Like Órn in Hǫensa-Þóris saga, Gunnarr Þiðrandabani, Þórir Ketilsson and Hallr Ótryggsson Flosi carries out his Hǫðr activity on the basis of morally acceptable motives and without becoming a villain.

The Hǫðr representatives in these sagas all seem to be taken from tradition. For two of them their history was obviously connected with their fixed surnames: Gunnarr Þiðrandabani and Hallr Koðránsbani.

Place and Function of the Christ-Baldr Motive in the Saga Context

The Christ-Baldr motive is a special literary novelty created in the Old Icelandic area in Christian times. It alludes both to the best known and most impressive elements of Christian doctrine and to that one of all Old Norse myths that has the strongest emotional pathos. When a saga author made use of this motive he certainly did so according to a premeditated plan. He used it in places where he wanted particularly to enlarge the impact on the feelings of his public. Accordingly we see that everywhere the motive is taken into use it is connected with some especially important incident in the saga, a dramatic summit that is of vital consequence for the succeeding events.

Such dramatic summits naturally never occur at the very beginning of a saga. The Christ-Baldr motive always succeeds a thrilling series of incidents. On the other hand it can also never have its place at the end, being always a means of creating

new drama, attempts at revenge or at reconciliation. In a couple of coherent dramatic summits, e.g. killing versus revenge, the Christ-Baldr motive is frequently connected with the anterior of the summits (Blund-Ketill, Váli, Áskell goði, Ingimundr), but in Ljósvetninga saga with the second (Koðrán). In the cases of Høskuldr and Njáll in Njáls saga it is connected with both, and also with a third (Ljótr).

In my opinion Bandamanna saga has three dramatic summits, arranged higher and higher: The killing of Váli, Ófeigr's victory over two chiefs and the judges at the first Althing, and over all the confederate chiefs at the second Althing. If the motive here, against common practice, is connected with the least interesting of the dramatic summits the reason is of course that the saga author wanted to create another type of dramatic escalation than the traditional drama of killing. (The death of the villain Ospakr in the last chapter is here only a sort of "aftermath", not an ordinary revenge.) Unlike the other Christ-Baldr representatives Váli is a person of lower rank. The killing of such a man could not be the real maximum ("climax") of the saga,¹⁸ only a melodramatic introduction, where the Christ-Baldr motive constitutes an effective contrast with the juridical pedantry that is focused afterwards, and which is the main target of the author's arrows.

The other Christ-Baldr representatives are all of high rank, but not of the same significance in their respective saga texts. As mentioned above some of them are not real main characters in the saga, rather necessarily invented wheels of the saga mechanism, especially Helgi Arngrímsson and Høskuldr Þráinsson. Þiðrandi Geitisson and Koðrán Guðmundarson are obviously taken from tradition. But they are delineated in a rather scanty and sketch-like way, and not much is told of them except what concerns their role as Christ-Baldr representatives. Neither of them can be classified as saga characters of first rate.

Real heroes in every respect on the other hand are Áskell goði, Ingimundr Þorsteinsson and Njáll both in terms of their social standard and their dominant role in the saga. The extensive descriptions of their former lives and deeds make the readers especially familiar with them and sympathetically disposed, and when the author into the bargain adds the Christ-Baldr motive

the tragic effect reaches a maximum.

No doubt the same is to be said of the narrative of Síðu-Hallr sacrificing his own son, where the Christ-Baldr motive is part of an unusually grand scene, with allusions to the most monumental and affective elements in the message of Christianity.

NOTES

1. Einar Ól. Sveinsson: *Á Njálsbúð Bók um mikið listaverk* (Reykjavík 1943) p. 23; idem: *Njáls saga Kunstverket* (Bergen-Oslo 1959) p. 26.
2. Hallvard Magerøy: *Studiar i Bandamanna saga*, Bibliotheca Arnsmagnæana Vol. XVIII (Copenhagen 1957) pp. 274-276, 279-282; Rolf Heller: *Die literarische Darstellung der Frau in den Isländersagas* (Halle-Saale 1958) pp. 98-136; Lars Lönnroth: *Kroppen som själens spegel - ett motiv i de isländska sagorna*, *Lychnos* 1963-64 (Uppsala 1965) pp. 24-25.
3. Lars Lönnroth: *Njáls Saga A Critical Introduction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976) pp. 61-68.
4. Lönnroth op. cit. in note 3 p. 61.
5. Magerøy op. cit. in note 2 pp. 274-276; Gunnar Kåsin: *Kristus-Baldr-motivet i noen islendingesagaer. Hovedoppgave i nordisk litteratur ved Universitetet i Oslo våren 1974* (xeroxed). - This work of Kåsin's has been useful to this paper in several respects.
6. In his paper *Christliches Lehngut in der Sagareligion* Walter Baetke points out a series of instances in the sagas of Icelanders which the saga authors place in the heathen period where hatred and revenge are condemned and forgiveness presented in a positive way. Baetke explains this as examples of Christian influence. Walter Baetke: *Kleine Schriften* (Weimar 1973) pp. 344-45.
7. Baldr's goodness is explicitly stressed only in *Snorra Edda* (F. Jónsson: *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, Copenhagen 1931, p. 29), but some phrases in the *Edda* poems give hints to the same effect: *Völuspá* 33 Frigg weeps after Baldr's death, that is called vá Valhallar "the disaster of Valhøll"; *Grímnismál* 12 In Baldr's home are fæsta feiknstafi "no horror"; *Baldrs draumar* 12 meýjar weep on account of Baldr's death. - On the other hand in *Loka-senna* 27 Baldr is referred to as a great fighter (cf. the belli-

- cose Baldr of Saxo Grammaticus).
8. Loki is active in this manner both in Snorra Edda and in Lokasenna, and his punishment in Völuspá 35 must be a consequence of the same activity.
 9. Hödr is mentioned in Snorra Edda, Völuspá 32 and Baldrs draumar 9-11.
 10. Sophus Bugge was the first to stress the Christian influence on the Baldr myth. See his Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse (Christiania 1881-1889) pp. 32-79. As to other literature on this item cf. Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder and the wellknown books of Jan de Vries, Folke Ström and G. Turville-Petre.
 11. The "plan" is here a sort of interdiction. Such interdictions, as well as injunctions and proposals, that are constantly violated are very widespread and common in folklore, as is stated in for instance Vladimir Propp: Morphology of the Folktale (Indiana 1958) pp. 25-26.
 12. The good plan of saving Baldr is explicitly mentioned only in Snorra Edda. But closely connected to this in Snorra Edda is a second good plan to save Baldr that also fails: Everything should weep for Baldr. This second good plan is alluded to in Málsháttakvæði 9 and the other anonymous verse.
 13. Kásin op. cit. in note 5 p. 58.
 14. On atonement see note 16.
 15. Lönnroth has stressed the similarity of Höskuldr with a Christian martyr, op. cit. in note 3 p. 96.
 16. On Njáll's atonement cf. Lönnroth op. cit. in note 3 p. 129 and note 40 there.
 17. Lönnroth op. cit. in note 3 p. 95 says that the killing of Höskuldr "should appear senseless in order to make Skarphedinn fall low in the eyes of the audience". I do not think that the saga author wanted to reduce Skarphedinn's drengskapr, but prefer to stress his spiritual blindness.
 18. For another view on this special point in the saga see Theodore M. Andersson: The Icelandic Family Saga (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1967) p. 17.

