

HISTORY IN THE 'POLITICAL SAGAS'

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HISTORY

When Isidore of Seville defined historia as narratio rei gestae,¹ he went on to emphasise its origins in eyewitness accounts: 'None of the ancients would write history unless he had been present and seen what he narrated...'² Nowadays, historians are suspicious of eyewitness accounts and aim 'to discover, select, analyse and interpret' their sources.³ According to Beryl Smalley, a 'critical study of the remote past, as distinct from mere compilation of earlier sources, called for tools and equipment which were lacking in the Middle Ages,' so Isidore may have performed a useful service by redirecting the energies of medieval historians into 'contemporary history'.⁴

We find medieval Icelandic historians somewhere along the scale between the ancients copying out firsthand reports and the modern historian, hiding behind apparatus and jargon, distanced from events by the use of editions, translations and secondary sources. Ari Þorgilsson was careful to distinguish between eyewitness accounts and secondhand reports, he used (foreign) written sources and had a modern interest in chronology. But while Ari's methods may be recognisable to modern historians, most Icelandic historical narratives are thought to fall on the fictional side of the divide between historia and fabula, and are correspondingly dismissed by historians for failing accurately to divulge the res gestae. But rather than blaming the medieval Icelanders, it might be more productive to make positive use of their 'failure' to become modern historians. Icelandic texts are our main gateway to the medieval Norse past and for the philologist⁵ there is still much to learn about the approach to recording and transmitting the past that can be discerned in these texts.

THE 'POLITICAL SAGAS'

I propose to look at aspects of how medieval Icelanders went about the narratio rei gestae in Orkneyinga saga, Íomsvikinga saga and Færeyinga saga. The grouping together of these three sagas has sometimes been by default, because they do not fit neatly into the categories of Íslendingasögur, kings' sagas and the like. But

¹ Etym., I xli.

² Translation by Beryl Smalley, Historians in the Middle Ages, 1974, 24. Isidore's Latin is: Apud veteres enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset.

³ Smalley, p. 24.

⁴ p. 25.

⁵ I like to use this word in the broad (dare I say interdisciplinary?) sense discussed in Odd Einar Haugen and Einar Thomassen (eds), Den filologiske vitenskap, 1990. In English usage, it sometimes becomes virtually identical with 'historical and comparative linguist'.

some scholars see positive similarities between them. Melissa Berman⁶ classifies them together on thematic grounds, because they all deal with 'issues of political power'. Peter Foote⁷ would also see a thematic link, in his case a Christian one, and he emphasises similarities in their narrative methods. In my view, the most important link between these three sagas is the probable early date of composition of their first (now lost) versions (around 1200), and their complicated textual history and fragmentary preservation. Such an early date would place these sagas right at the beginning of Icelandic historical writing and disentangling their intricate textual history can provide insights into the development of attitudes to and methods in Icelandic historiography.

ORKNEYINGA SAGA

A large part (about two-thirds) of *Orkneyinga saga* tells of 12th-century events and it gets particularly detailed from just before the middle of that century. It is generally believed that the saga was based on traditions from Orkney, even that its author 'had probably met some of the people who figure in his account.'⁸ It would thus appear to be a prime candidate for the type of history based on eyewitness reports advocated by Isidore. And indeed there is one clear reference to such a report.⁹ In ch. 75, after Sveinn Ásleifarson's kidnapping of Jarl Páll, we are told that Sveinn returned to Orkney, while Páll remained in Scotland: Ok er þetta frásögn Sveins um þenna atburð. Not only an eyewitness, but a participant! But the historian who transmitted this was not an uncritical compiler of eyewitness reports, for he goes on immediately to cast doubt on this account by giving an alternative version, en þat er sögn sumra manna (telling of Páll's sticky end at the hands of his sister Margrét and Sveinn). He claims not to know which of these two versions is sannara, but points out that Páll was never heard of again, in either Orkney or Scotland. Indeed, he has been exercising caution throughout the episode leading up to the reference to Sveinn's account, for he twice points out a lack of information: Ekki er getit orða þeira Páls jarls ok Sveins, meðan þeir fóru báðir saman and Ekki er getit fleiri orða jarls en þessa. These are heavy hints to distrust the eyewitness account being presented in such detail.

Once the reference to Sveinn has alerted us to the fact that the narrative is following an eyewitness account, we can find other indications of this. I have examined elsewhere¹⁰ the narrative devices (primarily that which narratologists call 'focalisation') by which the story of the kidnapping (chs 74-6) is told from at least two different points of view, first Sveinn's, then that of the supporters of Jarl Páll. Once we are aware of the context, we can also see that some references to eyewitness

⁶ 'The political sagas', *Scandinavian studies* 57 (1985), 113-29, esp. 113, 125-6.

⁷ 'Observations on *Orkneyinga saga*', in Barbara E. Crawford (ed.), *St Magnus Cathedral and Orkney's twelfth-century renaissance*, 1988, 192-207, esp. 192-5.

⁸ Foote, p. 195.

⁹ *Orkneyinga saga* is cited from Sigurður Nordal's 1913-16 edition, but in normalised orthography.

¹⁰ In an article ('Narrating *Orkneyinga saga*') to be published in *Scandinavian studies*.

accounts¹¹ that operate at the diegetic level (i.e. as events within the story) may also have extradiegetic significance (i.e. that they may refer to reports used as sources by the author/narrator). In these chapters at least, the historian's critical approach is expressed not only at the metatextual level, with explicit source references, but also in the way in which the story is presented. Close literary analysis reveals this critical presentation.

Despite Isidore, medieval historians did try to write history even where they lacked eyewitness accounts. And although *Orkneyinga saga* is at its most detailed when dealing with recent history, the critical attitude is also apparent when it is dealing with events from the remoter past, not based on firsthand reports. Just as competing eyewitness accounts are balanced in chs 74-6, so other traditions, of various types, are juggled throughout the saga. References to alternative or additional information, often using a phrase such as *sumir menn segja*, can be found in chs 20, 29, 42 and 50. In ch. 42, one of the alternative versions of the place of death of Erlingr Erlendsson is supported by a reference to Snorri Sturluson.¹² Besides such unspecified traditions, references to named texts give the appearance of being to written works, even if we cannot identify them with surviving texts. Such references include a *saga Magnúss konungs* and an *ævi Nóreagskonunga* in ch. 21, and a *saga* of Erlingr skakki in ch. 89. There are also two references to poems which are not quoted, a *drápa* about Hákon Pálsson in ch. 43 and a *kvæði* about Magnús and Hákon in ch. 46.

Then there are the many skaldic verses quoted throughout the saga. Like the reports of events just discussed, these can operate at the diegetic level, i.e. they can themselves be narrated as events, or at the extradiegetic level, i.e. they can be the reports on which the narrative is based. A few examples should make these distinctions clear:

The majority of skaldic poems in *Orkneyinga saga* are cited as speech acts that are an integral part of the events being narrated. For example, when Rognvaldr kali is shipwrecked in Shetland, *spurðu menn at um ferðir hans* and, in reply, *jarl kvað vísu* and his verse describing the shipwreck is quoted (ch. 85). The verses in the second half of the saga (from ch. 58 onwards) are almost always introduced by the verb *kvað* as a part of the narrative in this way and most of them are spoken by Rognvaldr himself. Even when, after Rognvaldr's men have captured a *drómundur* off Sardinia (ch. 88) and there is some discussion about the exact sequence of events and who was the first to board, the speculation takes place entirely at the diegetic level. Although our narrator may have agreed with the view of some of Rognvaldr's men that *þat væri ómerkiligt, at þeir hefði eigi allir eina sögn frá þeim stórtíðendum*, the doubt is banished at the level of the story by Rognvaldr in a verse in which he declares Auðunn to have been the first to board.

The verses in the latter part of the saga had not yet been in the tradition long enough to achieve their place in the 'historical perspective' which was the

¹¹ There are two examples in ch. 76: Borgarr's report of having seen Sveinn's kidnapping journey in both directions (p. 190) and Sigurðr of Westness' account to his friends of his meeting with Hákon karr when the latter brought the news of Páll's kidnapping (p. 193).

¹² According to Firmbogi Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 1965, xlili, this was a 'personal communication' from the great man, rather than a reference to a written work. In any case, it is unlikely to have been in the first version of the saga.

prerequisite for Norse history writing.¹³ It is otherwise with most of the other verses in the saga, referring to events much further back in time. Here, the verses are the reports on which the narrative is based. These reports can have a peripheral function in relation to the rest of the narrative, serving to confirm or amplify information that does not seem entirely dependent on the verse, as when, in ch. 19, a verse by Óttarr svartí is quoted to illustrate Rognvaldr Brúason's relationship with King Óláfr. Mostly, however, the verses function as eyewitness reports, either by implication or explicitly. Thus, seven of the 18 verses attributed to Arnórr jarlaskáld in the saga contain the first person pronoun ek or possessive adjective minn. Many of the remaining verses can be associated with Arnórr's eyewitness report of events: in ch. 20 two verses (one containing an ek, one not) are quoted after the introduction Þessa getr Arnórr í Þorfinnsdrápu, and most of the others must be from this poem. A verse preserved only in the Uppsala ms. 702 emphasises the poet's visual and aural impressions of Þorfinnr's battles in England: hornablástr, hristisk hugsterks jofurs merki, vígljóst, skulfu járn.¹⁴ While Arnórr saw and heard the events he is describing, his eyewitness report is not reproduced purely mechanically. His Þorfinnsdrápa is dismembered and plundered for historical information, it has been 'selected, analysed and interpreted'. Extracts from Arnórr's verses are almost invariably introduced with the formula svá segir Arnórr or one very similar, emphasising their function which is to support the statements in the narrative.

JÓMSVÍKINGA SAGA

The version of Jómsvíkinga saga found in AM 510 4to contains a number of verses not preserved in other manuscripts of the saga.¹⁵ In ch. 39 a description of Hákon jarl and his sons just before the battle of Hjørungavágr ends with the information: þeir stýrðu allir skipum. Svá sagði Þorðr Kolbeinsson, er hann orti um Eirik, supported by two stanzas describing the Norwegian fleet on its way to the battle. In chs 45-6 (describing the course of the battle after Hákon's sacrifice to Þorgerðr Hjørðatröll), nine whole and two half stanzas by Tindr Hallkelsson are quoted. In ch. 45, the occasion is Hákon's casting off of his armour: Hákon jarl barðisk svá djarfliga, at um síðir steypti hann af sér brynjunni fyrir sakir hita ok erfðis; svá segir Tindr. This is followed by three verses, in two of which this action is described.¹⁶ Then the statement that 25 of the Jómsvíkings' ships were cleared introduces five and a half stanzas of conventional battle description, the first of which includes the relevant numeral.¹⁷ But first the compiler felt moved to stress the importance of the source of this hard fact: þat segir Tindr Hallkelsson í flokki þeim,

¹³ See Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'Sogekvæde', in Kurt Braummüller and Mogens Brøndsted (eds), Deutsch-nordische Begegnungen: 9. Arbeitstagung der Skandinavisten des deutschen Sprachgebiets 1989 in Svendborg.

¹⁴ Nordal (ed.), p. 65.

¹⁵ Cited from the edition by Carl af Petersens, 1879, in normalised orthography.

¹⁶ In Heimskringla, quite logically, only the 1½ verses mentioning Hákon's discarding of his armour are quoted (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson (ed.), 1979, I 281-2).

¹⁷ Again, Heimskringla quotes only the verse that mentions the number of ships (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson (ed.), 1979, I 286).

er hann orti um Jómsvíkinga, og heyrir svá þar til, at hann var þar sjálf. Indeed two of the following verses (although it is hard to be sure, for they are quite mangled) contain the first person pronoun, although not in a context which would necessarily indicate that the poet was present at the battle. In ch. 46 the description of Búi jumping overboard with two chests of gold is followed by one and a half stanzas referring to his watery end.

These are the only verses that are cited as historical reports in Jómsvíkinga saga. All the other verses in AM 510 4to (in chs 42, 46-7, 49 and 53) are presented as diegetic events, i.e. speech acts in the narrative. Some of these verses are also cited in one or more of the other versions of the saga and are presented in the same way there, as the speech of the characters.

AM 510 4to is a late (16th-century) manuscript of Jómsvíkinga saga, the main merit of which is that it appears to have made use of a lost version of the saga which was also a source for both Fagrskinna and Heimskringla.¹⁸ Since the verses by Þórðr Kolbeinsson are also quoted in Fagrskinna¹⁹ and some of the verses by Tindr are, as we have seen, quoted in Heimskringla, it is likely that these particular sections of AM 510 4to represent this lost version of the saga. They are therefore worth more careful consideration.

In ch. 39, the verses by Tindr are introduced by a fairly detailed description of Hákon jarl's fleet, as seen by the Jómsvíking:

var hann eigi einskipa ok eigi með .ii., heldr váru meir en .ccc.; þat váru snekkjur ok skeiður ok kaupskip ok hvert fljótanda far, er jarl fekk til þeira, þau er há váru borði, ok ǫll váru skipin bæði hlaðin af mǫnnum ok vápnum ok grjóti.

This could be based on the verses: the first stanza contains the words snekkja, knorr and skeið, and the second talks of háva stafna. There is no equivalent passage in the other versions of the saga. For instance, Cod. Holm. 7 4to does not describe Hákon's fleet at all,²⁰ while AM 292 4to, after noting the Jómsvíking's perception that the inlet was covered with (Hákon's) ships, tells what the Norwegians saw:²¹

þá sá þeir jarlarnir, Hákon og synir hans, hvar þeir eru komnir Jómsvíkingar

Tindr's verses in ch. 45 of AM 510 4to also follow a shift of perspective towards Hákon in the prose narrative. After a colourful description of the trollwomen fighting on his side, the reprehensible devilishness of it all is somewhat undermined by the emphasis on Hákon's bravery in fighting:²²

Þat er sagt, at þeir Hákon jarl gǫrðu harðar atlogur ok þorðusk nú djarfliga. Nú er þess getit, at Hákon jarl barðisk svá djarfliga, at um síðir steypiti hann af sér brynjuni fyrir sakir hita ok erfiðis;

The only counterpart to this in the other versions is a general comment (at a different point in the narrative) that it was so warm that many men took their clothes (but not

¹⁸ Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.), Jómsvíkinga saga, 1969, 11-12, 14-15.

¹⁹ Bjarni Einarsson (ed.), 1984, 129-30.

²⁰ N.F. Blake (ed.), The saga of the Jomsvikings, 1962, 32.

²¹ Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.), p. 176.

²² af Petersens (ed.), p. 81.

their armour) off.²³

The vignette of Búi leaping overboard with two chests of gold is told with gusto in all versions of the story, but in AM 510 4to, the clear statement of Tindr's verse that he was forced overboard somewhat undermines the preceding heroic description:²⁴

er þat mál manna, at engi einn hafi meiri kappi verit í liði þeira
Jómsvíkinga, en Búi digri; hafði hann ok svá margan mann drepit í
bardaganum, at þat kunni enginn maðr at telja.

This unevenness in chs 39 and 45-6 arises from the incomplete integration of sources which basically concentrate on the Hlaðajarls (Tindr's and Þórðr's poems)²⁵ into a text that is otherwise primarily interested in the deeds of the Jómsvíkinga. Norman Blake²⁶ called Jómsvíkinga saga 'pure fantasy' and 'the end product of many years of literary accretion.' Most of all in the version he edited (Cod. Holm. 7 4to), but also in the others, this process resulted in a highly fictional and entertaining narrative, with the Jómsvíkinga as heroes, continuing into Bjarni Kolbeinsson's Jómsvíkinga drápa with its glorification of Vagn Ákason. But what AM 510 4to demonstrates is that, at an earlier stage in the development of the saga, parts of it were attempts at historical narrative, based on the testimony of skaldic verses, at least some of which were thought to be eyewitness reports.

FÆREYINGA SAGA

Like Orkneyinga saga and Jómsvíkinga saga, Færeyinga saga²⁷ is preserved in Flateyjarbók (but not in complete form). It is also associated with other expanded versions of the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and St Óláfr. But there are no traces in it of the critical historical approach that is prominent in Orkneyinga saga and detectable in Jómsvíkinga saga. The only verse quoted is Þrándr's kredda (ch. 56). The only allusion to the traditions on which the saga was based is the reference to two Icelandic(?) informants and Ari Þorgilsson (ch. 27), but this has been explained by Ólafur Halldórsson²⁸ as a device on the part of the author to make his saga more plausible.

What Færeyinga saga does demonstrate is the way in which techniques deriving from the historical interest in eyewitness reports could be transformed into effective literary devices, and could be used to write fabula rather than historia.

Peter Foote²⁹ has discussed in some detail the way the saga has of 'presenting

²³ Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.), p. 182; Blake (ed.), p. 35.

²⁴ af Petersens (ed.), p. 85. Although the verse is obscure, the relevant statement that fyrir borð...at ganga...Búa kendu is clear enough.

²⁵ Although AM 510 4to refers to a flokkr which Tindr orti um Jómsvíkinga, the frequent references to the jarl in the verses make it clear that the stanzas quoted are from one poem about Hákon jarl (on this poem, see Bjarne Fidjestøl, Det norrøne fyrstediktet, 1982, 24, 102).

²⁶ 1962, p. vii.

²⁷ Edited by Ólafur Halldórsson, 1987 (here quoted in normalised orthography).

²⁸ p. dxiv.

²⁹ 'On the Saga of the Faroe Islanders', in his Aurvandilétá: Norse studies, 1984, 165-87, esp. 175-82.

events and circumstances without comment and as they appeared to people who were partly or totally misled by them'.³⁰ An example of this is the scene in chs 2-3 in which we, along with Hárekr, believe he is giving the money to his brother Sigurðr, only to discover that it was in fact someone (we never find out who) impersonating Sigurðr. Narratologists call this device 'focalisation', a term which serves to distinguish 'between the question who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective? and the very different question who is the narrator?'³¹ This term is useful in discussing Icelandic texts which are invariably third person narratives with an omniscient narrator and a panoramic narrative perspective, but where occasionally the narrative perspective is limited to the perceptions of an individual character. This is done quite regularly in Færeyinga saga, often in a scene leading up to an attack of some kind. Thus, in ch. 6, Hafgrímr goes to get help from his father-in-law, and the audience is made to share in his puzzlement as he arrives at the farm, where they are clearly awaiting visitors but there is no one to be seen. The next morning he sees Snæúlfur and his household arrive in a boat, having made their point that they do not wish to be involved in his quarrel with Brestir and Beinir. In the next chapter we are on Little Dímun with Brestir and Beinir, watching the arrival of 'three ships laden with men and weapons, with 12 men on each ship' whom they go on to recognise as Hafgrímr, Pránder and their followers. There are similar uses of focalisation in chs 36, 45, 48 and 55; and in ch. 23 the temple of Þorgerðr Hǫrðabrúðr is revealed through Sigmundur Brestisson's eyes.

In Færeyinga saga, this device increases suspense, mystery, enjoyment, but does not appear to have any function beyond a ludic literary one. It is quite different from Orkneyinga saga where, in chs 74-6, shifting focalisation gives us the same event from two different points of view. In chs 74-5, the kidnapping of Jarl Páll is presented with a strong tendency to focalise through Sveinn Ásleifarson, the kidnapper, leading up to the reference to 'Sveinn's account of this event', discussed above. In ch. 76, the kidnapping is revealed as it appeared to Sigurðr of Westness and his men, with contributions by other eyewitnesses, such as Borgarr of Geitaberg. There is no suspense in telling the same story twice, but in Orkneyinga saga it is done for historical reasons, to give a comprehensive narratio rei gestae.

The total artistic control of the narrator is further revealed in chs 14-16 of Færeyinga saga. In this, Úlfr, the Norwegian foster-father of Sigmundur and Þórir, tells them the life story of someone called Porkell. It is only at the end of this narrative that Úlfr reveals that he is, in fact, Porkell, by a sudden switch to the first person pronoun:

ok er stund lífr ferr hann burt ór hellinum ok til bæjar þess er Þórálfr bóndi hafði átt ok tekr nú Ragnhildi í burt í annan tíma ok ræðsk nú á fjöll ok eyðimerk; 'ok hér nem ek staðar', sagði hann, 'sem nú hefi ek bygð mína setta, ok hér hefi ek verit síðan ok við Ragnhildir átján vetr...

Within Úlfr's narrative, the fiction that he is narrating a story about a third person is deliberately maintained. Thus Úlfr says (ch. 15): er þat sogn manna at Porkell yrði banamaðr hans, referring to his alter ego in the third person and pretending not to know something he, as Porkell, must have known. In narratological terms, we have

³⁰ p. 177.

³¹ Gérard Genette, Narrative discourse, 1980, 186.

Úlfr, a diegetic character in the primary narrative, acting as a diegetic narrator of the secondary narrative. In this secondary narrative, the hypodiegetic character Porkell is revealed to be the same person as the diegetic narrator/character Úlfr, bringing us neatly back to the primary narrative. Úlfr/Porkell's total control over his narrative, revealing only what we need to know as we need to know it, mirrors that of the narrator of Færeyinga saga.³²

SUMMARY

Even in its present form, Orknevinga saga reveals an attempt at critical historical narrative. Most of the saga is preserved only in Flateyjarbók, yet many of the textual elements that betray the historian behind the saga are preserved only in the fragmentary manuscripts. Thus, cross-references which reveal a consciousness of the text as constructed text (such as sem fyrr segir or sem áðr var ritat) are rare in Flateyjarbók, but relatively common in the fragmentary manuscripts.³³ Similarly, none of the three references to prose sources in chs 21 and 89 is found in Flateyjarbók. Clearly, there were good reasons for the compiler(s) of Flateyjarbók to excise such metatextual references from the saga, but in doing so they have partially obscured the careful, consciously historical attitude displayed in earlier versions of the saga.

Jómsvíkinga saga exists in several other versions besides Flateyjarbók, and it is correspondingly difficult to arrive at a sense of the historical attitudes that may or may not have been displayed in the lost earliest version(s). The surviving versions show little historiographical awareness. Despite the availability of skaldic verse as a source, the stories about the Jómsvíkings are treated as fiction rather than as a narratio rei gestae, with the verses generally a part of the fiction. But if some of AM 510 4to does reflect a lost, earlier version of the saga, then it may not always have been so. The fictionalising of the saga of the Jómsvíkings seems to have taken place during the course of literary transmission, particularly with the increasing emphasis on the colourful exploits of the Jómsvíkings themselves. Despite the availability of alternative sources of information concentrating on the Hlaðajarls, the extant versions of the saga generally prefer to ignore them.

With Færeyinga saga, there is little, if any evidence that there ever was an earlier, more 'historical' version of the saga. Indeed, there is precious little evidence that even the main events of the saga ever happened, so it can hardly be called a narratio rei gestae. The saga was clearly written, even in its earliest version, primarily for enjoyment and entertainment, or for whatever other reasons literary texts were composed. But even Færeyinga saga can be shown to have made use of narrative techniques that arose out of the attempt at analytical historical writing. Its interest in visualising key scenes is akin to the emphasis on eyewitness accounts which led historical writers to value the testimony of skaldic poetry, for instance. Úlfr/Porkell's narrative shows a sophisticated awareness of how a teller can manipulate the tale, an awareness that arose in a tradition used to comparing different versions of tales. In Færeyinga saga, we can see how history is

³² When Færeyinga saga was excerpted into the version of the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason in AM 62 fol., this narrative device was abandoned, and Úlfr begins by saying ek heiti réttu nafni Porkell, see Ólafur Halldórsson (ed.), 1987, 32n.

³³ There are only two in Fib., see Nordal's edition (page/line references): 14/18, 179/12; but there are six in the other manuscripts: 43/7-8, 45/20, 55/4, 139/5-6, 279/3-4, 279/5-6.

'fictionalised'.

If these three sagas illustrate Icelandic approaches to historical narrative, we can also see in them the future development of Icelandic narrative art without a historical purpose. The medieval Icelanders did not succeed in developing a 'critical study of the remote past' that would satisfy a modern historian, although they do seem at least to have made the attempt, and to have been on the right lines. But the historical impulse was sidetracked into narrative for its own sake, giving us the fictions of the Íslendingasögur and Snorri Sturluson.³⁴

Critics may continue to discuss whether the 'political sagas' have thematic concerns in common and whether they therefore form a sub-genre. But perhaps more importantly, they provide a neat demonstration of the development of Icelandic fictional narrative, along with a sense of the road not taken.³⁵

³⁴ For a similar conclusion reached by somewhat different means, see Sverrir Tómasson, "Söguljóð, skrík, háð": Snorri Sturluson's attitude to poetry,' in Rory McTurk and Andrew Wawn (eds), Úr Döllum til Dala: Guðbrandur Vigfússon centenary essays, 1989, 317-27; (in Icelandic in Skáldskaparmál I, 1990, 255-63).

³⁵ For a demonstration of the road taken in the transformation of firsthand reports into an 'episk sagaform', see Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Historiefortælleren Sturla Þórðarson', in Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson (eds), Sturlustefna, 1988, 112-26.