

The Genetic Relationship Between the Two Versions of *Boglunga sǫgur*

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Introduction

Boglunga sǫgur is the name commonly used to designate the saga account covering the events in Norwegian history during the period of time 1202–17 and concerning especially the conflicts between the Baglar and the Birkibeinar, two opposing political and military parties, and their respective kings. The name is found in copies of one medieval manuscript of *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* in a reference to the record of events which transpired in 1204 and were of great import for the Birkibeinar, namely, the election by the Prændir of Ingi Bárðarson as king of Norway and Hákon galinn as jari (see Helle 1958: 9–10; cf. Magerøy 1992: 236–38). The adequate edition of the saga in volume nine of the Fornmanna sǫgur series had to suffice from 1835 until 1988, when Hallvard Magerøy published a modern, two-volume critical edition of the text, which was the first one to present all the transmitted material in its entirety.

There are two major versions of the saga, known as the shorter version and the longer version; these names are also employed by Magerøy and in a discussion of the genetic relationship between the two version should be preferred to the not impartial labels A and B used by most scholars since Finnur Jónsson (1894–1902, 2: 641). The versions are not well preserved. The shorter one is found in a somewhat streamlined form in *Eirspennill* (c. 1300, henceforth E) and in fuller form in AM 81a fol. (*Skálholtsbók yngsta*, c. 1460, henceforth 81a), where, however, the end is missing and there are a number of corruptions, for instance, of individual names; there also exists one parchment fragment which is both contemporary with E and contains a closely related text. The longer version is preserved in its entirety only in Peder Claussøn Friis' translation of kings' sagas into Danish from around 1600 published by Ole Worm in 1633 under the title *Snorre Sturlesøns Norske Kongers Chronika*. Sections of the longer version are in addition preserved in fragments from three different parchment manuscripts which have each been dated on paleographic and linguistic grounds to the period of time between the late 1200s and the later 1300s.

The relationships between the individual representatives of the different versions and between the two versions themselves have been the object of speculation and scholarly discussion since even before the first edition of the saga in 1813 by Thorlacius and Werlauff (cf. Magerøy 1988, 1: 35–46). The first text-critical evaluation is found in Finnur Jónsson's presentation of the saga in his history of Old Norse literature (1894–1902, 2: 640–43; cf. 1920–24, 2: 634–36), and in recent times the main text-critical contributions have been Knut Helle's published graduate thesis (“hovedoppgave”; 1958), Helle Jensen's edition (1979) of the oldest parchment fragments of

the longer version, and Hallvard Magerøy's introduction to his edition (1988, 1: 15–58). The discussion of the relationship between individual representatives of each version will not be repeated here.

Finnur Jónsson's considered opinion of the genetic relationship between the two versions was straightforward: the shorter version, which covers the years 1202–10 but concentrates on the activities of the Baglar 1204–08, was primary, and the longer version was a reworking from a Birkibeinar perspective of the shorter version which was also extended to include material from the years 1210–17. This viewpoint was illustrated with some few examples but not argued stringently. That task fell to Knut Helle, who performed a detailed analysis of both versions of the entire text, organizing the material chronologically and identifying it as (1958: 50–56): mutually shared content blocks (which could be in slightly different chronological order), content blocks found only in the shorter version, content blocks found only in the longer version. His examination of each of the groups of content blocks is fairly exhaustive, and his conclusion is that the material supports Finnur Jónsson's evaluation.

There is one unfortunate mistake in Knut Helle's presentation of the relationship between the two versions (1958: 89–90): he found one instance where it appeared that the longer version built directly on the 81a strand of the shorter version. This complicated the entire picture and, as Helle Jensen demonstrated in an excursus in her edition of fragments (1979: 63–73), invalidated several of Knut Helle's stemmatic evaluations of variant readings since they were based on his initial impression that the two versions were stemmatically independent. During conversations with Hallvard Magerøy, I identified the fallacy in Knut Helle's evaluation of the particular textual passage where the supposed contamination was evident, and Hallvard Magerøy has in the introduction to his edition (1988, 1: 41–46) demonstrated to the smallest detail that Knut Helle's evaluation of the particular passage was misleading and that the two versions do therefore indeed represent mutually independent manuscript classes.

Hallvard Magerøy's other main accomplishment in the introduction to his edition was arriving at an entirely new understanding of the relationship between the shorter and the longer version. He maintains that the longer version, not the shorter one, represents the saga in its most original form. Magerøy bases this evaluation on several factors and as usual provides a thorough presentation of his considerations. Magerøy's new understanding of the genetic relationship between the two versions has been mentioned in reviews, but has not yet been thoroughly and critically examined. David Kornhall (1989) simply states that Magerøy claims "i en metodiskt interessant utredning" that the longer version is the one that best reflects the saga's original form. Tim William Machan, on the other hand, states specifically concerning the presentation of the relationship between the two versions (1991: 130): "In the main, Magerøy's thesis is convincing", pointing out though that the basis of his argument is literary and that it would be even more convincing if it drew on specific examples of textual transmission which could support the claim. Due to the extensive role I played in the preparatory work for Magerøy's edition, I did not feel that it would be proper of me to review the book. Now, however, the opportunity has presented itself for me to evalu-

ate Magerøy's demonstration of the genetic relationship between the two versions.

Hallvard Magerøy's demonstration of the genetic relationship

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH BY PREVIOUS SCHOLARS

Magerøy begins his discussion of "which version best resembles the author's original" by trying to determine why the main two previous scholars came to the—in his opinion—wrong conclusion concerning the relationship between the shorter and the longer version (Magerøy 1988, 1: 47–48). As for Finnur Jónsson, we are told that he (a) was probably influenced by the fact that venerable parchment manuscripts existed of the shorter version, (b) often arrived at his conclusions too quickly and in this case could not have been aware of all the mistakes in the shorter version, and (c) lived during a time when saga texts were thought to be the results of accumulation. Concerning Knut Helle, we are told that his mistake in believing that the longer version was dependent on one strand of the tradition of the shorter version kept him from really examining the fundamental problem and left him only embroidering Finnur Jónsson's conclusions.

It is always dangerous to attempt to determine the rationale behind another person's actions, and Magerøy does not seem to have been entirely impartial in this presentation of the previous two researchers. As he admits, Finnur Jónsson did know that Peder Claussøn's translation could very well have been based on a very old original, and he was not so blinded by theories of accumulation that he did not have a different understanding of the composition of the text of *Sverris saga*. One might add that it is unnecessary to know every minor mistake in the one version in order to evaluate correctly the relationship between the two versions, and Finnur Jónsson surely knew quite a few of the mistakes in the shorter version.

Knut Helle was clearly aware that Finnur Jónsson had not argued convincingly for his standpoint, but he felt that Finnur Jónsson's basic evaluation was attractive and that he himself had examined the details exactly enough to be able to draw valid conclusions. To let Knut Helle speak for himself (1958: 87): "De tidlige undersøkelserne av versjonenes innhold og komposisjon, den politiske tendensen i dem og deres innbyrdes historiske pålitelighet, danner hovedgrunnlaget for teorien om deres aldersforhold". He then recapitulates his basic arguments concerning the overall contents of the saga, the political bias of each version, the compositional differences, and the historical mistakes in the shorter version, outlining how they all indirectly support Finnur Jónsson's evaluation, and concluding (1958: 88–89): "Direkte beviser kan en ikke kalle de ovennevnte grunnene for A's [the shorter version's] opprinnelighet. Men de bygger hver for seg på detaljerte undersøkelser av versjonene i sin helhet og gir til sammen en meget høy grad av sannsynlighet, så meget mer som det ikke finnes eksempler som kan endre bildet vesentlig i motsatt lei." Only thereafter does he go on to mention individual details which would support the evaluation of the shorter version as the more original—and first among them is his mistake concerning the contaminated stemmatic relationship between the two versions. Knut Helle's extensive work and detailed efforts thus do not receive their full due.

GENERAL VIEWS CONCERNING THE SAGA

In the demonstration of his understanding of the relationship between the two versions, Magerøy outlines the "general views" on which his conclusions are based (1: 48–51). Because the author's original no longer exists, the relationships cannot be determined by comparison to it but must build on circumstantial evidence. Such circumstantial evidence does not exist in a void but is based on notions as to what the author's original was like. Since we know that *Boglunga sǫgur* was an Old Norse kings' saga written approximately contemporary with the events told about, Magerøy believes we can assume the following to be true:

- a. The saga author considered himself a historian. Therefore we must reckon that when one version presents the contents historically correct and the other is unhistorical, the historical version should be closer to the original one.
- b. The events in the saga should, as a rule, be ordered chronologically. The version with correct chronology should be the more original one.
- c. The belief in chronological correctness as a criterion can be further supported by a general consideration: People who lived at the same time as the events should have a better concept of the situations and chronology than other people would have when some time had passed and the events were more at a distance. A later, secondary collection of material would thus be more difficult, if not impossible.
- d. In general, a saga written by a single original author should be structured with inner consistency. This would not be the case with a later copyist, who would more likely make the mistakes of jumping over material and thus anticipating the course of events or trying to correct for such omissions by adding them at less appropriate spots later. The version that is most consistently structured should thus best correspond to the original version.

It is relatively easy to accept, in general, many of Magerøy's general views, but it is more difficult to apply them without reservation to the material at hand. The fact that *Boglunga sǫgur* is a contemporary saga written during the final stages of the Norwegian civil wars with as its topic the presentation of two parties strongly opposing one another could imply, in spite of the basic "objectivity" of sagas, some political bias. All researchers have been in agreement on the presence and influence of political bias in *Boglunga sǫgur*, and similar considerations apply also to, for example, *Sverris saga*. The presence of political bias in turn requires one to have a more nuanced definition of "unhistorical". In addition, Magerøy's general views take little account of the possibility of differing sources. Incorrect chronology, for example, might reflect that the information contained in a particular passage was derived from one of the conflicting parties and that the particular sources were less well informed about events in the enemy camp. Concerning the "later, secondary collection" of historical material, it must be remembered that the two versions under discussion were written at about the same time (around 1210, see below) and that that the events they record transpired less than eight years earlier. Other factors, such as access to informants from the opposition party, might allow extensive collection of good historical material

within such a short time after the events. In the comments about "inner consistency" there seems to be a problem with the role of a "redactor" versus that of a "copyist". Magerøy uses the term "copyist" ("avskrivar") and gives examples of some perhaps typical copyist practices, namely, anticipation and "damage control" (i.e., "føregriping" and "etterpøveling", terms which Magerøy coined in his dissertation (1957) on *Bandamanna saga*). These are not necessarily the same practices as one would expect to find with a conscientious redactor who tries to create a new version of a tale from already existing material. The great differences between the two versions of *Boglunga sǫgur* did not arise due to a copyist, but rather due to a redactor. I will return to these general views later.

EVALUATION OF THE "MAIN PLAN" OF THE SAGA

After outlining his "general views", Magerøy sketches the "main plan for the saga" (1: 51–53). He criticizes Finnur Jónsson and Knut Helle for considering *Boglunga sǫgur* to be a saga mainly about the Baglar party and the Baglar kings. On the contrary, he feels it is a work basically about the Birkibeinar kings. The main aspect which demonstrates this is, according to Magerøy, the time of reign of kings. The longer version covers the entire time of reign of three Birkibeinar kings: Hákon Sverrisson (1202–04), Guthormr Sigurðarson (1204), and Ingi Bárðarson (1204–17), whereas the entire reign of only one Baglar king, Erlingr steinvegg (1204–07), is to be found in the shorter version. Ingi Magnússon was the Baglar king 1196–1202, but only the half year of his reign in 1202, after King Sverrir's death, is presented in both versions of *Boglunga sǫgur*. Likewise, Philippús Símonarson was the Baglar king 1207–17, but most of his reign and his death are not even discussed in the shorter version, which ends in 1210. That both versions begin with King Sverrir's death is the crucial point for Magerøy. In other articles, Magerøy reiterates or references these arguments and states that there can be no doubt that the saga was originally meant as a presentation of Birkibeinar history (1989: 196; 1992: 236–37, note 20; cf. 1993).

In criticising Magerøy's arguments here, one might begin by simply asking why Snorri's *Heimskringla* ends in 1177; was the last saga there, *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar* actually meant as a saga of Eysteinn meyla, the Birkibeinar king who was killed that year at the battle of Ré? I think not. King Magnús Erlingsson did not die until 1184, but that was already told of in *Sverris saga*—which had been written by the time Snorri composed his *Heimskringla*—and therefore, for practical reasons, it was not necessary for Snorri to retell the last seven years of Magnús Erlingsson's reign. Similarly, if *Sverris saga* already existed when the original version of *Boglunga sǫgur* was composed, even the author of a Baglar version might not find it necessary to present again all the tales which had been told so masterfully in the last section of *Sverris saga*. Furthermore, if one were to accept Magerøy's comments, one would then have to assume that *Grýla* never really existed because that text did not treat the entire reign of a king. Thus it does not appear that these particular arguments hold well enough for Magerøy to be able to use them as support for his contention that the saga was original meant as a Birkibeinar history. I will return to this point below, under

the discussion of the historical background for the composition of the saga.

The second aspect which according to Magerøy demonstrates the primacy of the Birkibeinar, longer version, concerns necrologies, an element which had long been a fundamental part of historical writing. The fact that Hákon Sverrisson, one of the two Birkibeinar kings who died during the mutually covered period, is the only person provided with a necrology in both versions, and that none of the Baglar kings who died during the common period, neither Ingi Magnússon nor Erlingr steinvegg, warrants a necrology, not even in the shorter, Baglar version, is striking. Magerøy goes on to mention that whereas two additional Birkibeinar, the chieftain Hákon galinn and King Ingi Bárðarson, receive necrologies in the longer version, the death of the last Baglar king, Philippús Simonarson, is not even mentioned.

What particular necrologies occur in the part of *Boglunga sögur* preserved only in the longer version is irrelevant, and it is not at all surprising that the Birkibeinar version has eulogies for two leaders of their party but does not even mention the death of the opposing leader. Erlingr steinvegg was a king for whom even the Baglar themselves had ambivalent feelings, so the fact that he does not warrant a eulogy upon his death is not really that striking. Concerning the necrology for Hákon Sverrisson, which as Magerøy notes is modelled on the one for King Sverrir in *Sverris saga*, we must remember that Hákon was so popular that the Baglar had made peace in 1202 and basically disbanded; thus he was the only king in the country for two years. At least equally important, however, is the fact that he was the half-brother of the Baglar queen, Kristín Sverrisdóttir, and this circumstance—coupled with his general popularity—could have influenced even a Baglar author to include a necrology of Hákon Sverrisson in a Baglar version. That the fact that Ingi Magnússon lacks a necrology could perhaps be considered a minor problem; however, not all kings in kings' sagas receive necrologies.

After his evaluation of the "main plan", Magerøy compares the two versions with other historical material, but the evidence is inconclusive. Sturla Þórðarson's *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* follows the longer, Birkibeinar version, for instance, in terming the fall of 1207, when the Birkibeinar were at Seleyjar, "seleyjavetr" in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* corresponding to "Sæløhesten" in Peder Claussøn's translation; no such name is found in the shorter version. This is, however, only as one would expect, since the longer version was among Sturla's sources, as Magerøy writes (1: 54–55), and since both the longer version and *Hákonar saga* are Birkibeinar works; one should not expect that the Baglar version would term a part of a year by the name of the place where the Birkibeinar stayed that particular season. Comparison with the historical material about Guðmundr Arason's consecration in Norway as bishop of Hólar shows that each of the two versions contains slightly different, incomplete historical material. And finally, there is a mistaken identification of a person in the shorter version when in 1204 the Norwegian archbishop is called Þórir, whereas the longer version has, correctly, Eiríkr. Þórir became archbishop in 1205, but no convincing argument can be based on this particular detail of mistaken identity.

TEXTUAL REVISIONS AND CHRONOLOGICAL ABBERATIONS

In a final overview near the end of his introductory volume, Magerøy returns to the relationship between the two versions, sketching first their respective political biases. He then proceeds to "other forms of textual revision" in the shorter version (1: 190–93), listing first fifteen examples where he claims that the editor of the shorter version intentionally changed the original composition. In each incident, two smaller bits of material are presented separately and in chronological order in the longer version but appear as a single, larger unit in the shorter version with partially incorrect chronology. The principle of chronological order which Magerøy posits for the original version is applied to determine the relationship: they are "joined" in the shorter version.

An examination of each of the individual fifteen instances listed by Magerøy—without the constraint of "chronological correctness"—might, however, on pragmatic grounds, suggest the opposite conclusion. A person collecting material for the saga could have been told typical two-part tales concerning various participants in the events of the period, for example, an incident where the particular person killed one of his party's opponents and then the revenge meted out on him when he was killed. These narrative units could have originally been recorded in the saga in the form they were told to the author. A later redactor might then have noticed the chronological inconsistencies, and if correct chronology were a special interest of his, he could have split up the narrative units and placed the individual elements in chronological order. It may simply be a question of wholesale versus piecemeal inclusion of short narrative tales in the composition of the saga.

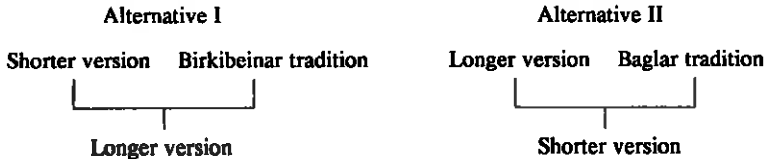
Magerøy also finds that the shorter version has a greater abundance of other instances of incorrect chronological order and that the particular breaks are more drastic for the composition of the saga. An evaluation of this aspect will again be dependent on one's opinion as to the validity of Magerøy's assumption of chronologically correct order in the original saga.

There is also a section about other, unintentional changes of the contents which result, according to Magerøy, from the working methods of the redactor of the shorter version. We are told that this person did not take his job seriously and worked too quickly and carelessly. The first example listed concerns statements in the shorter version that King Hákon Sverrisson travelled to Víkin during the summer of 1202 and then again in the summer of 1203, but that he was there only one summer. Here the internal inconsistency in the shorter version most likely indicates that the error is simply a copyist's mistake in the tradition, rather than the mistake of the redactor of the shorter version. Special problems are created by the last two examples, the placement of Styrkárr stagnál's death and of the tale of the smith and Óðinn at the end of the shorter version. These tales are found only in the E version; 81a breaks off before this point. Finnur Jónsson was inclined to view these passages as later interpolations.

THE "LITERARY BASIS" AND "HYPOTHETICAL ADDITIONAL MATERIAL"

Somewhat after the discussion of textual revisions and chronological abberations, there follows a section about the "literary basis and hypothetical additional material"

(1: 201–04). Whereas scholars had previously held that the longer version consisted basically of the shorter version plus hypothetical additional material from oral Birkibeinar tradition, according to Magerøy's new model, the shorter version should be considered an abbreviation of the longer version, with hypothetical additional material from oral Baglar tradition. The alternatives are presented schematically:



Magerøy mentions that one could get the impression that these two models were equally good, but he claims that one can still decide between them based on the difference between the amount of Birkibeinar tradition in the first scheme and the amount of Baglar tradition in the other. The Birkibeinar tradition in the first alternative is found, by counting the lines of new material, to amount to almost 40 percent of the longer version, whereas the Baglar tradition in the second alternative would only amount to around five percent of the shorter version. Thus in alternative II both versions would derive basically from the literary author's original. Magerøy sketches two alternative ways in which the first model might still function: (a) around 1210 the Birkibeinar party might have begun collecting materials, especially concerning the period 1202–04, and added them to the shorter version; this would be 6–8 years after the events, and Magerøy finds it difficult to comprehend that the new materials would be so copious and have so few mistakes compared to the shorter version; or (b) the Birkibeinar might have collected material the entire time but only after the Baglar version existed did they decide to record their own version, taking inexplicably the Baglar version as the basis for their own recounting. He finds no reason to examine these further.

Here I think that a possible confusion between the work of a "copyist" and the work of a "redactor" comes into play again. A five percent increase would not seem out of the range for a copyist with a slight bit of knowledge. The material, as Magerøy mentions, would—for the entire eight year period—total less than two pages in his edition. The almost 40 percent more Birkibeinar material which the other alternative would entail in order to convert the Baglar version into one the Birkibeinar could use, does not seem out of the question. We are not dealing with a historical recounting of events a few hundred years in the past, but of basically contemporary events. The Norwegian civil wars may have been tumultuous, but enough of the participants were still alive less than a decade after various events that the amount of material to be collected presents no real problem. Furthermore, a historical fact must also be taken into consideration: Quite a large portion of the 40 percent extra Birkibeinar material concerns the years 1202–04, a period of time when the Baglar did not have a king, but were at peace with the Birkibeinar and had accepted the popular

Hákon Sverrisson as king of Norway. It is reasonable that the Baglar had little to tell about that time in their party's history. Since they no longer were the main participants in the activities, they could also have made mistakes in their framework for the period, for instance, in the chronology of Birkibeinar events.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE COMPOSITION OF *BOGLUNGA SÖGUR*

Magerøy concludes with a presentation of his understanding of the historical background which made the composition of *Boglunga sögur* possible and which also supports his thesis that the longer, Birkibeinar version is primary (1: 204–09). He points out that a Birkibeinar court existed during the late 1100s and the 1200s, and that from this court emanated all the other examples of contemporary kings' saga composition: *Sverris saga*, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, and *Magnúss saga lagabætis*. He describes how further historical material could have been collected energetically during the several years after Sverrir's death in 1202 until his saga was finally completed, perhaps around 1210, and speculates that Ingi Bárðarson maybe did not support this activity strongly enough and that his lack of support could explain the decline of material after 1210. At any rate, the fact that the shorter version ceases around this time and that the longer version evidences a change in composition at about the same time, thereafter becoming less full and more episodic, imply—according to Magerøy—that the original, Birkibeinar version of *Boglunga sögur* was composed in stages. The period 1202–10 was composed first, and the tales of the period 1210–17 were added on later, either by the same author or a new one. The person responsible for commissioning the completion may have been Skúli Bárðarson, King Ingi Bárðarson's brother. The final version was probably completed before 1223 when King Hákon Hákonarson's right to kingship was established at a national assembly and Skúli was relegated to the position of jarl.

On the other hand, the Baglar could scarcely have had a court of their own before the peace at Hvítungseyjar in 1208 and King Philippús' marriage to Kristín Sverrisdóttir the following year. Magerøy speculates that perhaps Philippús himself set an Icelander to revise the Birkibeinar account of the period up to 1210 as a history for his party. Magerøy at any rate assumes that the Birkibeinar court and the Baglar court each had their own version of the saga at about this time.

It is indeed true that the Birkibeinar court was stronger than their opponents' and that one cannot image a historical work emanating from the Baglar court before about 1210, but that is exactly the time when most scholars assume the initial *Boglunga sögur* was composed. There are, in addition, several elements in this presentation which break with Magerøy's own argumentation elsewhere. He previously determined that kings' sagas were only written about entire reigns of kings and used this "fact" to establish the nature of *Boglunga sögur* as originally a Birkibeinar history, whereas here the same saga is composed in stages, and the first stage covers only half the reign of the present Birkibeinar king. His arguments against the primacy of the shorter version would almost equally apply to his own explanation of the first half of the longer version and the entire concept of composition in stages.

According to Magerøy's model, the proposed course of events for the composition of *Boglunga sögur* becomes more complicated. Instead of consisting of two steps: (a) a shorter, Baglar version completed about 1210 and (b) a derivative and longer, Birkibeinar version completed about 1220, it consists of three: (a) a shorter, Birkibeinar version completed about 1210, (b) a derivative and even shorter Baglar version completed soon thereafter, and (c) a longer, Birkibeinar version built on the initial shorter, Birkibeinar version.

Conclusion

Knut Helle's detailed presentation and his extensive discussion of the contents of *Boglunga sögur* demonstrate the inductive process he went through to arrive at his conclusions concerning the genetic relationship between the two versions of the saga. Hallvard Magerøy's argumentation, on the other hand, has the appearance of a deductive process, although he himself might call his reasoning inductive, based as it is on a thorough knowledge of the individual details. Magerøy is open and honest in his arguments. He presents the assumptions on which he founds his conclusion and then demonstrates how, based on those assumptions, his interpretation would have to be considered the most logical. After he establishes to his own satisfaction the genetic relationship between the two versions, he views all incidents in the saga, especially in his commentaries to individual text passages, from his new perspective.

There are great similarities between what Hallvard Magerøy did for *Bandamanna saga* and what he has attempted to do with *Boglunga sögur*; the procedure is also very similar. In a review of Magerøy's dissertation on *Bandamanna saga* (Magerøy 1957), Anne Holtmark made some astute observations (1958: 75). Magerøy himself had said that his method was inductive, but admitted that he had to build much of his proof on untested suppositions and logical conclusion. She mentions that she often does not agree on his "untested suppositions" and can therefore with "logical conclusions" arrive at entirely different results. That has been my experience too, with *Boglunga sögur*.

Magerøy's commentaries to 275 individual text passages in *Boglunga sögur* in his edition (1: 59–177) are extremely useful mines of information. They should lead to a much more nuanced understanding of each of the preserved versions of the saga and give insight into the procedures of redactors as well as those of several copyists. The commentaries often concern passages in which textual divergences occur. The differences between the shorter and the longer version of the saga are always couched in terms of Magerøy's understanding of the general relationship between them. This method of presentation can have a very persuasive effect but is no substitute for cogent argumentation. Everything is viewed in terms of the system Magerøy would like to prove, and almost everything can be made to fit that system. If we go back to the schematic presentation of alternative I and alternative II detailed above (Magerøy 1988, 1: 202), however, my evaluation is that the two models have equal theoretical validity, and I find several reasons based on general considerations to opt for the traditional version in alternative I. Perhaps a new, inductive evaluation of all the dif-

ferences outlined in Magerøy's commentaries—but without his a priori assumptions—would bring us closer to an understanding of the genetic relationship between the two version of *Bøglunga søgur*.

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