CULTURAL PATERNITY IN THE FLATEYJARBÓK *ÓLAFS SAGA TRYGGVASONAR*

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The magnificant manuscript Flateyjarbók needs little introduction; let me just remind you that it was commissioned by Jón Hákonarson, a wealthy farmer from northern Iceland, and that the manuscript was begun by the priest Jón Þórðarson in 1387. Ólafur Halldórsson (1990) speculates that Flateyjarbók was originally intended as a gift for the young king of Norway, Ólafur Hákonarson, and was supposed to contain only *Eiríks saga víðförla* and the sagas of Ólafr Tryggvason and St. Ólafr. He shows that there was a connection in the popular mind between the king and his holy namesake, and he cites a contemporary story that St. Ólafr appeared to Queen Margareta when she was in labor, declaring that she would not be delivered until her husband swore to uphold the laws that St. Ólafr had held. Ólafur also reads Jón Þórðarson's afterword to *Eiríks saga*, in which wise men are said to praise above all others those men who advance the cause of the church, as advice directed at the king. When the king died later that year, Flateyjarbók's original purpose as a gift to him lost its point. Ólafur Halldórsson conjectures that Jón Þórðarson thus became unemployed and decided to go to Norway, and that Jón Hákonarson later brought the priest Magnús Þórhallsson in to finish the manuscript.

Ólafur's hypothesis is an attractive one, and easy to elaborate on. If the first part of Flateyjarbók is an appropriate gift for a king named Ólafur, it is also a gift with an implied purpose, that of encouraging the king to follow the example of his revered namesakes. Icelanders had presumed to advise a young king before; in ch. 15-16 of *Magnúss saga ins góða* in *Heimskringla*, Snorri tells how the vengeful behavior of King Magnús Ólafsson ended when his godfather, the Icelandic skáld Sigvatr Þórðarson, recited a poem, the *Bersöglisvísur* ("Plain-Speaking Verses"), in which he praises the laws of Jarl Hákon and urges the king to treat his people more mercifully. Assuming that the manuscript Hulda had come into Jón Hákonarson's possession by 1387, when Flateyjarbók was begun, Jón would have owned and been familiar with this account of an Icelander's use of literature to influence his Norwegian king towards a greater respect for the law. Perhaps it even gave him the idea for Flateyjarbók.

In this paper, I would like to consider the nature of the advice that can be discerned between the lines of Flateyjarbók, particularly as it appears in *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*. Let me begin by mentioning the places in which this advice might be manifested, namely, the texts that Jón Þórðarson added to his exemplar and the introductions and conclusions that he himself is believed to have written.

In compiling the Flateyjarbók redaction of *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, Jón Þórðarson simply continued the techniques of his predecessors, who started with the *Ólafs saga* from *Heimskringla* and inserted into it many complete *þættir* and portions of longer sagas. Jón expands his base text with still more *þættir* and excerpts from the lives of Ólafr by the monks Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr, and he copies the other sagas in unabridged form from independent manuscripts. According to Finnur Jónsson's (1927) comparison of Flateyjarbók with AM 61 and AM 62, Jón Þórðarson added *Eiríks saga víðförla, Þorleifs þáttr jarlaskálds, Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts, Sörla þáttr, Hrómundar þáttr halta, Þorsteins þáttr skelks,* the end of ch. 406 of *Ólafs saga*, which he wrote himself, and *Orms þáttr Stórólfssonar*. He also added a sentence or two here and there, shortened some passages, and reordered many sections of his exemplar, evidently with a view towards improving the chronology.

Not surprisingly, Jón Þórðarson does not address his royal audience directly in any of his additions. What is unusual in an Icelandic scribe is that some of those additions explain why he included certain texts: *Eiríks saga víðförla*, *Fóstbræðra saga*, and *Ásbjarnar þáttr selsbana*. *Eiríks saga víðförla* is placed before *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, and in his afterword, Jón says it was added because it teaches a valuable moral lesson (I:37). *Fóstbræðra saga* and *Ásbjarnar þáttr selsbana* are interpolated into *Ólafs saga helga*. In his introduction to *Fóstbræðra saga*, Jón says it was added because it illustrates St. Ólaf's relationship with his retainers (II:170). In his introduction to *Ásbjarnar þáttr selsbana*, Jón says he included it is because in the end it touches on the honor and glory of St. Ólafr (II:322). Apparently, Jón thought that his choice of these texts as appropriate additions to the Ólaf-sagas might not be intelligible or self-evident. Jón's felt need for justification seems rather odd, in light of the fact that the sagas he was copying had been repeatedly expanded over the years. Yet Jón's defensiveness turned out to be warranted, for the strikingly different editorial practices of Magnús Þórhallsson in his portion of Flateyjarbók are carried out in direct response to Jón's work, and thus can be said to constitute a critique of it.

Jón is explicit about what he wants the reader to learn from *Eiríks saga*: "the one who wrote this book...wishes each man to know that there is no true faith except in God" and that therefore those who fought for Christianity have accomplished better things and have received a better reward than pagans, whose reward of earthly fame is paltry compared to the Christian's reward of eternal life in heaven.[1] Jón's emphasis on the contrast between pagans and Christians seems anachronistic, coming as it does from the end of the fourteenth century, when Iceland had been Christian for nearly four hundred years. If Ólafur Halldórsson's hypothesis about Flateyjarbók being intended as a gift for King Ólafur Hákonarson is correct, we must consider the implications of this moral being addressed to the young king.

Although it is tempting to try to read a contemporary allusion into Jón's valorization of those who fight for the freedom of the Church, it does not seem likely that Jón would suggest to King Ólafur that the Icelandic church should be "freed" from the foreign bishops appointed by his mother, Queen Margareta, especially considering that Jón seems to have enjoyed a good relationship with these bishops. Rather, the lesson to be learned from *Eiríks saga* seems to have been simply that those who fought to establish Christianity in the North, like the two Ólafs whose sagas followed, were greater heroes than Sigurðr Fáfnisbani or Helgi Hundingsbani. From there it is a short step to presume that Jón compiled the Ólaf-sagas as he did not only in order to acquaint the king with the greatness of his forebears of the same name, but also to encourage him to emulate their example and avoid that of such evil pagans as Jarl Hákon of Lade. As we shall see, the desired royal behavior combined spiritual greatness with a certain perspective on the relationship between Norway and Iceland.

This relationship is the focus of Jón's introduction to *Fóstbræðra saga*:

> The Lord God, Jesus Christ, saw our need—the need of all Northmen—to choose for us

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1. *En því setti sá þetta ævintýr fyrst í þessa bók, er hana skrifaði, at hann vill, at hverr maðr viti þat, at ekki er traust trútt nema af guði, því at þó at heiðnir menn fái frægð mikla af sínum áfreksverkum, þá er þat mikill munr, þá er þeir enda þetta hit stundliga líf, at þeir hafa þá tekit sitt verðkaup af orðlofi manna fyrir sinn frama, en eigu þá ván hegningar fyrir sín brot ok trúleysi, er þeir kunnu eigi skapara sinn. En hinir, sem guði hafa unnat ok þar allt traust haft ok barizt fyrir frelsi heilagrar kristni, hafa þó af hinum vitrustum mönnum fengit meira lof, en þat at auk, at mest er, at þá er þeir hafa fram gengit um almenniligar dyrr dauðans, sem ekki hold má forðast, hafa þeir tekit sitt verðkaup, þat er at skilja eilíft ríki með allsvaldanda guði utan enda sem þessi Eirekr, sem nú var frá sagt.* (I:37-8)

> such a intercessor as thus with great goodness strove with our need, as this shining beam and light-shedding lantern, the holy King Ólafr Haraldsson, who not only loved his subjects in Norway, but also equally those who lived in Iceland, those who sought his favor and esteem, decorating each one with worldly honors as he thought appropriate, some with gifts of money, some with titles. Experience also showed that those who loved God the most received the greatest affection and love from King Ólafr. King Ólafr loved his retainers dearly, and he took it very ill if they were treated maliciously, especially those whom he thought the most highly of. Because of this, it seems proper to set down here a certain *þáttr* about two of his retainers, Þorgeirr Hávarsson and Þormóðr Bersason, who were with him for a long time and in many perils, although they are not always mentioned in Ólaf's saga itself. From this one must notice the grace and good luck of King Ólafr, that he showed that restraint to such terribly unruly men as those foster-brothers were, who loved the king above all other men. Also, all their deeds, which they performed in honor of the king and which showed their excellent defense, valor, and courage, afterwards brought them fame and renown before they ended their life and suffering of this wretched world.[2]

I do not think it is reading too much into this passage to suggest that the unruly foster-brothers synecdochically represent all of Ólafr's Icelandic subjects. If so, then although Jón appears to be celebrating the "grace and good luck" (*gæzku ok giftu*) of St. Ólafr, he is simultaneously suggesting that young King Ólafr take a leaf from his namesake's book and reward his loyal (if unruly) Icelandic subjects, "some with gifts of money, some with titles."[3]

The double theme of religion and the relationship with Iceland that we have just seen in Jón´s introduction recurs in the *þættir* he adds, where the importance of Christianity is rendered in a typological view of Scandinavian history. *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* was particularly fertile ground for such narratives, since King Ólafr, who began the process of converting Iceland and Norway, had been understood at least since the days of Oddr Snorrason as "prefiguring" St. Ólafr (who finished the conversion) in the same way that John the Baptist prefigured Christ.

Jón's exemplar of *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* contained many *þættir* informed by Christian themes and structures, such as *Kjartans þáttr Ólafssonar* and *Norna-gests þáttr.* Whether consciously or not, Jón's choice of *þættir* with which to expand the saga further seems to have

2. *Guð drottinn, Jesus Christus, sá til þess þörf vára allra Norðmanna at velja oss slíkan formælanda sem svá kostgæfði með mikilli góðfýsi vára nauðsyn sem þessi skínandi geisli ok lýsanda ljósker, hinn heilagi Ólafr konungr Haraldsson, hverr at eigi at eins elskaði sinn undirgefinn lýð í Noregi, heldr ok jafnvel þá, sem á Íslandi byggðu, þá sem sóttu hans tign ok virðing, prýðandi hvern eftir því með veraldar virðingu, sem hann fann til felldan, suma með fégjöfum, en suma með nafnbótum. Gáfust ok þær raunir á, at þeir fengu mesta ást ok elsku af Ólafi konungi, sem guð elskuðu framast. Ólafr konungr unni mikit hirðmönnum sínum ok þótti sér í því mjök misboðit, ef þeim var með öfund misþyrmt, ok þeim öllum framast, er honum þótti mestr maðr í. Þykkir af því tilheyriligt at setja hér nokkurn þátt af hirðmönnum hans tveimr, Þorgeiri Hávarssyni ok Þormóði Bersasyni, er lengi váru með honum í mörgum mannraunum, þó at þeirra sé eigi jafnan við getit í sjálfri Ólafs sögu. Má af slíku merkja gæzku ok giftu Ólafs konungs, at hann veitti þat athald svá miklum óeirðarmönnum sem þeir váru fóstbræðr, at þeir elskuðu konunginn yfir alla menn fram. Urðu þeim ok síðan sín verk öll at frægð ok frama, þau sem þeir unnu í heiðr við konunginn, ok sýndu af sér ágæta vörn, dáð ok drengskap, áðr þeir enduðu sitt líf ok erfiði þessarar veslu veraldar* (II:170).
3. Jón drops a hint again in his introduction to the second interlaced section of *Fóstbræðra saga*: "King Ólafr was very popular with his men because of his liberality and all his accomplishments—not only in Norway, but also in all his tributary lands, and widely in other places" (*Konungrinn Ólafr var harðla vinsæll af sínum mönnum sakir örleiks ok allrar atgörvi, eigi at eins í Noregi, heldr í öllum hans skattlöndum ok víða annars staðar*, II:234).

been influenced by a similar typological orientation, with the result that all six of the texts he added can only be understood within the context of *Ólafs saga*'s typological history. The first one, *Þorleifs þáttr jarlaskálds*, takes place in the days of the pagan Jarl Hákon of Lade, when the release of the Scandinavians from the devil's power is not even a possibility glimpsed on the horizon. The second and third *thættir, Thorsteins tháttr uxafóts* and *Sörla tháttr*, serve to introduce the conversions of Iceland and Norway respectively, and accordingly show the pagan afterlife to be like Hell before the Harrowing–containing both good and evil spirits, with the good ones in need of a Christian to free them from their oppression. The fourth, fifth, and six *þættir* that Jón added (*Hrómundar þáttr, Þorsteins þáttr skelks*, and *Orms þáttr*) take place after the conversion and demonstrate the extent to which this event has changed the nature of reality in Iceland and Norway. *Hrómundar þáttr* (which takes place in Iceland) does not deal with the supernatural at all. *Þorsteins þáttr skelks* (which takes place in Norway) shows how Ólafr protects those who trust in him from the devil. *Orms þáttr* (which ranges throughout Scandinavia and includes a pilgrimage to Rome) contains both helpful and harmful monsters, but nothing of the pagan deities. In the Christianized world of these *þættir*, Óðinn and the rest of the gods have vanished completely, and the dead are now depicted as inhabiting Heaven or Hell, rather than the magic islands, mountains, stones, and grave-mounds of pagan belief.

Medieval historians did not seem to have thought that the Old Dispensation was populated solely by virtuous pagans; rather, this period was often viewed with ambiguity and depicted in such a way as to show the happy necessity of the conversion. Gerd Wolfgang Weber (1986) thus understands the red- and blue-clothed *jarðbúar* of *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts* as the spiritually positive and negative aspects of the heathen age, an interpretation we may extend to the two pagan heroes in Hell that we learn about in *Þorsteins þáttr skelks*, where the "good" pagan hero Sigurðr endures his sufferings well, while the "bad" hero Starkaðr shrieks and bellows in pain (Harris 1976; Lindow 1986). Þorsteinn's liberation of the good *jarðbúar* is the first step of freeing pagan man from the earthly tyranny of the devil; not until baptism can man be redeemed in the spirit. The synchronic representation of the positive and negative aspects of pagan man by the two *jarðbúar* brothers has its diachronic counterpart in the representation of the succession of paganism by Christianity in the successive generations of a family, as Paul Schach (1977) and Joseph Harris (1986) have pointed out. In *Þorleifs þáttr*, Þorleifr and his siblings are the ill-fated, older generation. His brothers' inability to avenge him is historically controlled; it is explained that they fail because *[Hákon] hafði þá enn eigi öllu illu því fram farit, sem honum varð lagit sér til skammar ok skaða* ("[Hákon] had not then yet accomplished all the evil that was fated for him for shame and scathe," I:237), i.e., the time had not yet come for the Old Law to be overturned. Þorleifr, whose poetry brings death to himself and others, is contrasted with the younger Hallbjörn, whose poetry brings him wealth and a high reputation. In *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, Brynjarr the *jarðbúi* is succeeded by his Christian namesake Brynjarr Þorsteinsson, and the proud Ívarr is contrasted with his humbler and more spiritual son. In *Sörla þáttr*, even Högni, who at first seems pitiably victimized by the gods, appears in battle as a figure of wrath crowned with a helm of terror. Heðinn's sincere attempt to bring about a reconciliation surely marks him as the "improved" younger generation.

The placement of these *þættir* in salvation-historical time also governs their use of the imagery of hell. Þorleifr's *níð* seems to turn Hákon's hall into hell on earth: it is dark, weapons terrifyingly fight by themselves, and men experience physical torments. We may compare this with the *dökk dyflissa dáligra kvala með eymð ok ánauð utan enda* ("dark dungeon of bad torments with misery and oppression without end," I:229) of Hell, to which Jón Þórðarson condemns Hákon eternally in the preface; it is as if Þorleifr were revealing the true nature of Hákon's hall. When the purely pagan world of *Þorleifs þáttr* yields to the pre-Christian world of *Þorsteins*

þáttr uxafóts and *Sörla þáttr*, hellish places are limited to geographical sites associated with the pagan afterlife, such as the grave mound of Brynjólfr and his brother, or the island where the daily renewal of the battle between Heðinn and Högni seems to parody life in Valhalla. However, the pagan characters trapped in the "anti-Valhalla" on Háey are not savoring the barbaric joys of eternal mayhem. With a grave, anxious face (*áhyggjusvip*), Heðinn complains of the great *atkvæði* ("spell" or "judgment") and *ánauð* ("oppression") which they suffer, and speaks of lifting Óðin's curse in terms of *undanlausn* ("release" or "redemption"). The *þáttr*-author reinforces the hellishness of the *Hjaðningavíg* by referring to the curse as *áfelli* ("damnation") and *skapraun* ("trial, tribulation"). In the entirely Christian world of *Þorsteins þáttr skelks*, Hell is identified as such and appears to occupy its proper cosmographical position.[4]

Recognition of the use of typology, conversion stereotypes, and Augustinian notions of salvation history in Old Norse literature has led to the further recognition of the joint nature of religion and politics in the Middle Ages–a particular problem for Iceland, which for several centuries was a nation without a king (Harris 1986; Weber 1987). In the added *þættir*, Jón's emphasis on Ólafr Tryggvason's power over pagan gods and evil demons joins religion and politics in two ways. The first way has to do with these texts' equation of economic oppression with the spiritual oppression of sin. Although salvation was viewed in economic terms throughout the Middle Ages, chiefly in the notion of Christ's paying off mankind's debt of sin by means of the Crucifixion, four of Jón's six added *þættir* characterize paganism as involving the forced payment of a tax or tribute. For example, in the purely pagan milieu of the *jarðbúar* of *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, the spiritual oppression of the good pagans is represented by their economic oppression by the bad ones. Each night Brynjarr and his fellows must pay his evil brother either one mark of gold, two of silver, or a treasure of equivalent value. Brynjarr says of his brother, "He is a bad neighbor to me" (*Hann veitir mér þungar búsifjar*, I:280). In the same *þáttr*, spiritual redemption immediately leads to economic redemption; Þorsteinn is rewarded with twelve marks of silver and a magic piece of gold for freeing Brynjarr from the tyranny of his brother, and the first thing he does afterwards is to give the silver to his thrall companion to purchase his freedom with. The phrase "He is a bad neighbor to me" recurs in *Orms þáttr*, when the friendly half-troll Menglöð says it of her monstrous half-brother, Brúsi (II:10). She is explaining to Ormr how Brúsi rules an island that is better than her island, which she might be forced to leave. After Ormr kills Brúsi and Brúsi's mother, he gives the islands and most of the troll's treasure to a grateful Menglöð, taking the less valuable part for himself.

Two of the added texts do not simply make a general equation between the two kinds of oppression, but specifically combine the spiritual burden of paganism with the particular economic oppression of Icelanders by Norwegians, thus hinting at the fourteenth-century Icelandic resentment of the Bergen merchants' monopoly on trade with Iceland. Icelandic ships were three times seized elsewhere in Norway for contravening the monopoly (Þorsteinsson and Jónsson 1991:136). In 1362, the royal agent in Hálogaland arrested Þorsteinn Eyjólfsson and his companions–who had come to plead a suit before the king–for contravening the monopoly, and he seized their ship and goods. Like Þorleifr in his *þáttr*, Þorsteinn had set off from Iceland once before and was driven back by a storm, only reaching Norway on his second try. The fate of Þorsteinn's ship and goods is only slightly exaggerated in the Flateyjarbók version of

4. The seat of an outhouse is a very appropriate place through which the devil might emerge from Hell into this world. Just as the entrance to Hell was often thought of as a mouth, so, too, was the exit from Hell thought of as an arse-hole. The use of an outhouse seat as the threshold of the exit from Hell has an artistic symmetry to it: the physical, human arse-hole on top of it is mirrored by the metaphysical arse-hole of Satan below it, and the downward passage of excrement is mirrored by the upward passage of devils.

Þorleifs þáttr, where Jarl Hákon hangs Þorleifr's crew, confiscates his wares, and burns his ship when Þorleifr refuses to let him determine to whom and for how much he will sell the goods he brought from Iceland. According to Jónas Kristjánsson (1956:xciv), these details are not original; the earliest version of the text, which is believed to be from the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth century and thus predates the monopoly, specifies only that Hákon burned Þorleifr's ship. There is no mention of the fate of the crew or the trading goods, as there is in the Flateyjarbók version, and I suspect that *Þorleifs þáttr* was deliberately revised in order to create a parallel with the 1362 incident.

The *þáttr*-redactor carefully makes Þorleifr's revenge fit Hákon's crime: Þorleifr pretends to eat greedily as a "punishment" for Hákon's greed in stealing his wares, and his spell making the weapons in Hákon's hall fight by themselves results in the death of some of Hákon's men, just as Hákon caused Þorleifr's men to be killed. The parallelism between Hákon's and Þorleifr's deeds is emphasized by the use of the word *vegsummerki* ("traces of a [bad] deed") with regard to both. But whereas the *vegsummerki* of Hákon's deed leave Þorleifr unscathed, the *vegsummerki* of Þorleifr's deed appear on Hákon's body. To use the language of kennings, we may say that Hákon's burning of Þorleifr's ship is punished by Þorleifr's damaging the ship of Hákon's soul. This is not the only punishment Hakon will receive, of course; we know from Jón's preface to the *þáttr* that Hákon will go to hell when he dies. His damnation—not to mention the humiliation that he suffers from Þorleifr's *níð* —may well have struck late-fourteenth-century Icelandic audiences as particularly satisfying and deserved. Certainly Hákon, who combines apostasy with hostility towards Icelanders, functions as the antithesis of King Ólafr.

The same audience might also have felt sympathetic sorrow when hearing of Þorleifr's death at the hands of the wooden golem that Hákon sends to Iceland to avenge that humiliation. Unlike Egill Skallagrímsson, another Icelander who declared *níð* against the ruler of Norway, Þorleifr—and the audience of Flateyjarbók—did not find Iceland to be a refuge from the long arm of the Norwegian king. A fourteenth-century audience might well have associated the Terminator-like assassin from Norway, who ignores the sanctions against killing at the Alþingi, with hated recent emissaries from the Norwegian throne.

The figure of the confiscating Norwegian official is metamorphosed into that of the thieving Norwegian bully in *Hrómundar þáttr halta*, in which the Norwegian "traders" are suspected of being vikings or robbers trying to sell their loot. *Hrómundar þáttr* may even have been reinterpreted by its fourteenth-century audience as a kind of allegory of Norwegian imperialism. Under duress, an Icelandic farmer agrees to give the Norwegian traders winter lodgings only if they swear an oath to obey the laws of the land, avoid aggressive behavior, and commit no crimes. They will receive shelter, but no food. (This last stipulation may have triggered memories of the lengthy Icelandic efforts to halt the export of food products during times of famine.) Instead, the Norwegians' leader seduces the farmer's daughter and is suspected of stealing and slaughtering a herd of horses to feed his party.[5] The Norwegians are outlawed, but on their way out of the country, the twelve burly vikings attack the family of the man who accuses them–Hrómundr, his two sons, and his fifteen-year-old grandson–who defend themselves with farm-implements and pieces of wood. The Norwegians' difficult behavior may well have struck a chord in Jón Hákonarson, who undoubtedly knew that in 1313 his grandfather, Gizur galli, had run into some trouble with Norwegian traders at the market-harbor of Gáseyri, and was wounded so severely that it took him a year to recover. In 1315, he–like Hrómund's surviving

5. A similar motif is found in *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, in which the Norwegian Ívarr ljómi comes to Iceland on a trading voyage and seduces the sister of the man who provides him with winter lodgings.

son, Hallsteinn–traveled to Norway, presumably to seek justice from the king.

The second way in which Jón Þórðarson's additions to *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* unite the issues of religion, politics, and economics lies in their treatment of the question of cultural paternity. Since the foundation of their country, Icelanders had been concerned with genealogies and the deeds of their ancestors, in part to answer charges that the first settlers were the descendants of slaves. The Icelanders' anxiety about their origins led them to create a large body of texts establishing Iceland as the legitimate and even noble child of Norway. By the time Flateyjarbók was being written, however, the relationship between Iceland and Norway no longer seemed as natural or inalienable as it had in earlier centuries. King Magnús Eiríksson reserved the rule of Iceland for himself in 1355, and the subsequent association between Iceland and Sweden lasted until 1374 and loosened the formal ties between Iceland and Norway. The oath of homage to Ólafr Hákonsson in 1383 was retrospectively felt to have begun the long attachment to Denmark. Even when the sovereign of Iceland was once more the same person as the ruler of Norway, the decline of Norwegian power and prosperity might well have filled Icelanders with a new sort of anxiety, a fear that the parent country had lost interest in or was abandoning its offspring—a fate that Greenland suffered in the fifteenth century. To put it in terms of another familial relationship, it is one thing to be constantly bickering with one's spouse in the framework of a stable marriage, and quite another–and much more frightening–thing to learn that one's spouse is contemplating divorce.

A king's saga lends itself well to the treatment of such themes, as one medieval political metaphor represented the king as the father of his people. In the case of *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, the Christian content adds a further dimension; in imitation of Christ's command that Christians leave their parents to follow him, protagonist after protagonist leaves (or loses) his natural father to serve his spiritual father, King Ólafr. Moreover, the narrative structure of the *þættir* specifically casts the acquisition of the spiritual father—and the concommitant privilege of giving one's life for him—as the compensation for worldly injuries suffered or the reward for feats of valor. For example, in *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, Þorstein's reward for slaying the trolls is not a gift of gold, land, a title, or the king's daughter, but the privilege of being able to follow King Ólafr all his life and to die defending him at the Battle of Svöldr. In *Sörla þáttr*, Ívarr similarly receives no reward for ending the *Hjaðningavíg*, except for Ólafr's praise and the opportunity to die in his service. In *Hrómundar þáttr*, Hallsteinn receives no compensation for the slaying of his father and brother but the privilege of becoming King Ólafr's man and dying for him on the Long Serpent. In short, all these texts confound our expectations for their genres. In the case of the two *þættir* that resemble folktales or monster-slayer stories, we would expect the narratives to end with the hero being rewarded with treasure and/or a wife. In the case of the *þáttr* with an Icelandic-family-saga plot, we would expect the narrative to end with the restoration of social balance—the deaths of the kinsmen will be compensated for with money, or the sons of the feuding protagonists will respect each other and keep the negotiated peace settlement. With either genre, we would expect a picture of a *functioning, continuing society.* Instead we see a group that essentially commits mass suicide at the Battle of Svöldr. The reward that Jón Þórðarson holds out is truly the Christian vision of the redemption of the individual soul, rather than the secular vision of a society harmoniously reproducing itself.

Jón and the *þáttr*-authors he uses do not neglect the political aspects of the notion of paternity. While Jón's exemplar included accounts of Norwegians leaving their fathers (e.g., *Sveins þáttr ok Finns*), his own emphasis on Icelanders leaving their fathers for King Ólafr foregrounds the relationship between the two countries. In *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, the acknowledgement of the illegitimate Þorsteinn uxafót by his natural father coincides with his baptism and acknowledge-

ment by his spiritual father, King Ólafr. The picture of of the illegitimate Icelandic son forcing the proud Norwegian father to acknowledge him (both because of his accomplishments and because the point of Þorsteinn's sword is aimed at Ívarr's chest) must have been another satisfying one for Icelandic audiences in the fourteenth century.

The fantasy of paternal acknowlegement undergoes a further development in Jón's next addition, *Sörla þáttr*, which deals with the same characters as *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*. This text depicts the recuperation of the natural father. That is, once Þorsteinn has proven himself, as related in his *þáttr*, it is his father's turn to do so next. Armed with the sword his son had once threatened to use against him and protected with the good luck of his king, Ívarr ljómi puts an end to the *Hjaðningavíg*, lifting Óðinn's curse and earning Ólafr's praise. Jón's second and third additions to *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* thus reaffirm the filial relationship between Iceland and Norway through the agency of Ólafr Tryggvason. The fourth through sixth additions to *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* restage the progression outlined above. *Hrómundar þáttr* relates another story of the loss of the Icelandic natural father and his replacement with King Ólafr; *Þorsteins þáttr skelks* demonstrates the benevolent co-existence of Ólafr's paternalism and the Icelanders' self-will; and the remarkable *Orms þáttr* transcends the power of Ólafr altogether.

This last addition of Jón's to *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* depicts an Icelander who is not only a greater fighter than the champions of the Long Serpent we have met in the earlier added *þættir*–Þorsteinn uxafót, Ívarr ljómi, Hallsteinn Hrómundarson, and Þorsteinn skelkr[6]–but who has also outgrown the role of son of the Norwegian father. Ormr proves himself to be stronger and luckier than his Danish sworn-brother, successfully calls on God and St. Peter–rather than Ólafr–to aid him against monsters, is said to have *hamingja* that is not attributable to the king, and misses the battle of Svöldr because he was on a pilgrimage to Rome. After Ormr demonstrates to Jarl Eiríkr how he would have defended the Long Serpent had he been on it, the jarl concludes that in that case, the ship never would have been captured. The implication is that Ormr could have saved Ólafr from defeat, or in other words, that an Icelander–no longer characterized as a son, as he was baptised in Iceland, not in Norway by Ólafr–has the power to save the agent of spiritual salvation himself. *Sörla þáttr*'s recuperation of the natural father is thus paralleled and expanded in *Orms þáttr* into at least the possibility of the recuperation of the spiritual father. *Orms þáttr* is also generically expanded; unlike most *þættir*, which usually treat a single episode of a man's life, *Orms þáttr* resembles the family saga in its chronological range, beginning in the days of Haraldr hárfagr and ending after the reign of Ólafr Tryggvason.[7] In terms of the Icelandic abandonment anxiety I hypothesized above—that the parent country had lost interest in its offspring—*Orms þáttr* offers a reassuring vision of an Iceland that has grown out of its childhood dependence on the fatherland and that can now assume its proper "adult" position as a member of European Christendom.

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6. In addition to his general prowess, Ormr specifically surpasses two of the champions in their specialties: he outdoes Þorsteinn uxafót in using a ship's boom, and handles Einarr þambarskelfir's mighty bow as if it were a toy. Faulkes comments that the Einarr episode seems a little feeble, coming after Ormr's other exploits, but I wonder if it is possible that Jón added this episode to show how Ormr surpassed the Norwegian champions as well as the Icelandic ones.
7. *Orms þáttr* also comments on saga genres in its many borrowings and loans, as the *þáttr*-author seems to be trying to paint Ormr as surpassing heroes like Örvar-Oddr, Grettir Ásmundarson, and Egill Skallagrímsson. The imitation of *Örvar-Odds saga* becomes unintentionally ironic; Oddr is depicted in his saga as a pre-Christian hero, which makes Ormr a post-pre-Christian. Again, I wonder if Jón picked up on this aspect of *Orms þáttr* and was inspired to re-work it so that Ormr would be depicted as surpassing the Long-Serpent champions as well as the other heroes. The historicization of the first part of the *þáttr* with loans from *Landnámabók* resembles the first part of *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts*, whose account of Úlfljótr is also drawn–by Jón?–from *Landnámabók*.

Jón Þórðarson seems to have chosen and/or (possibly) revised these six *þættir* to form two linked groups or cycles of three. *Þorleifs þáttr, Þorsteins þáttr,* and *Sörla þáttr* form one sequence that moves from the time of the Old Dispensation through baptism to the post-baptismal defeat of pagan gods and monsters, and the erasure of the signs of their presence. There is an escalation of evil from a golem to trolls and finally to Óðinn himself, and a corresponding escalation of the role of Ólafr Tryggvason, from complete absence to a distant benevolence, and finally to a close presence that even through an agent is stronger than Óðinn. *Hrómundar þáttr, Þorsteins þáttr skelks,* and *Orms þáttr Stórólfssonar* form a similar sequence illustrating the conditions before, during, and after Ólafr Tryggvason's rule. The role of Ólafr Tryggvason completes the trajectory of absence to a close presence, ending in *Orms þáttr* by being transcended altogether. Both groups of *þættir* enact the progression from the loss of the natural father and his replacement by Ólafr as spiritual father to the recuperation of the natural father (in *Orms þáttr,* this is superseded by the possibility of the rescue of the spiritual father).

The similar dynamics of the two groups of *þættir* are set up by the parallels between the pairs of beginning and middle *þættir.* The pair of ending *þættir* contains fewer parallels; instead, these texts demonstrate what the conversion has and has not changed. The *þættir* that begin their respective sequences—*Þorleifs þáttr* and *Hrómundar þáttr*—both depict the wretchedness that prevailed in Ólafr Tryggvason's absence. The plots of *Þorleifs þáttr* and *Hrómundar þáttr* describe Icelandic resistance to the economic oppression of evil Norwegian pagans and the unjust suffering that results from it. In both narratives, compensation is merely hinted at, and that only for the next generation: the shepherd Hallbjörn gains the gift of poetry on Þorleifr's grave-mound, resulting in good and goods, and Hallsteinn Hrómundarson joins the court of Ólafr and dies defending him on the Long Serpent. Both *þættir* depict the figure of Miðfjarðar-Skeggi as the protector and/or teacher of the protagonist; the pagan-age *Þorleifs þáttr* has Miðfjarðar-Skeggi help Þorleifr by teaching him magic, but *Hrómundar þáttr,* inserted into *Ólafs saga* after the account of the conversion, has Miðfjarðar-Skeggi use the laws of Iceland to exile those who rob his countrymen. The two middle *þættir* both recount the experiences of good and bad pagans in the afterlife. In the pre-baptismal section of *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts,* the evil pagans oppress their good brothers and demand tribute from them, a practice which the designated pre-Christian Þorsteinn is able to end. In the post-baptismal *Þorsteins þáttr skelks,* good and bad pagans alike are discovered to be suffering in hell. Both Þorsteinns are saved from danger by their faith in Ólafr and his religion, and both are rewarded by being privileged to serve Ólafr for the rest of their lives and to die for him on the Long Serpent. In addition to the similarity of names linking the two narratives, part or all of both take place on the Norwegian farm called *á Reinu.* The two final *þættir* tell how Christian heroes make use of their "good luck" to put an end to a conflict between monstrous pagans on an island setting. Ívarr ljómi's luck comes from Ólafr, and like the other Long Serpent heroes, he is privileged to live and die with him. Ormr, never a retainer of Ólafr's, calls on God and St. Peter, and while he is not present at the Battle of Svöldr, it is judged that if he had been there, the Long Serpent would not have been captured. The differences between *Sörla þáttr* and *Orms þáttr* are partly those of their respective typological ages: the pagan gods have been replaced by monsters, and the combination of factors working towards the oppression of the Icelanders has lost its spiritual component. However, further differences between these two *þættir* suggest that the meaning of Ólafr Tryggvason for the Icelanders is more than just religious: at the end of the first cycle, Ólafr Tryggvason's power is shown to be greater than that of Óðinn himself, but at the end of the second, Ólafr Tryggvason has been eclipsed as a source of power—the protagonist calls on God and St. Peter instead. And the protagonist, too, is radically changed; in *Sörla þáttr* he is the Norwegian father whose achievements equal those of his

Icelandic son, but in *Orms þáttr* he is the Icelandic son who surpasses the retainers of Ólafr in his physical accomplishments and who has no need for Ólaf's spiritual aid.

The structural parallels and thematic development of the added *þættir* suggest that they were carefully chosen and–perhaps–reworked to convey their morals as emphatically as possible. Jón's placement of these six texts within *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* seems equally purposeful. *Þorleifs þáttr* is inserted well ahead of the first *þáttr* in his exemplar, and serves to introduce Ólafr's defeat of Jarl Hákon and conquest of Norway. Significantly, it is the first embedded narrative with an Icelandic protagonist; this not only emphasizes by example Hákon's evilness, but also suggests that the religious-economic relationship that inextricably links Iceland and Norway is nearly as old as Iceland itself. *Þorsteins þáttr uxafóts* and *Sörla þáttr* occur close together and quite a bit later in the saga. As is discussed above, they are themselves a pair of linked *þættir*, partly as a result of their function of introducing the two conversions. The second cycle of *þættir* form a chiasmus with the first cycle. *Hrómundar þáttr* and *Þorsteins þáttr skelks* occur one chapter apart in the second half of the saga. Like *Þorleifs þáttr* at the beginning, *Orms þáttr* is placed almost at the end of the saga; it and the end of *Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds* form the Icelandic reaction to the fall of King Ólafr.

As Joseph Harris observes in his discussion of Icelandic typological perspectives, "The categories of secular and sacred turn out to be at very least intricately interwoven..." (1986:200). This is certainly true for Jón Þórðarson. His dependence on Christian doctrine and his particular belief in the spiritual power of Ólafr Tryggvason turn out to be inseparable from his Icelandic perspective, which includes a strong sense of Norway as the fatherland.

Towards the beginning of this paper, I made a pun when I suggested that Jón Þórðarson wanted King Ólafur to "take a leaf from his namesake´s book." This was not idle linguistic play; when you consider the precarious position of the Norwegian ruling dynasty, which died out in the male line with Hákon háleggur in 1319 and was to end with the young king Ólafur, it is impossible not to draw a connection between the theme of Jón´s added *þættir*—the redemption of the Norwegian father by the Icelandic son—and Jón´s own act of saving on vellum the history of the Norwegian kings, which is silently set against the context of the rule of that non-male, non-Norwegian, Queen Margareta. And this might account for one of the mysteries of Flateyjarbók —the use of *Eireks saga víðförla* as a preface. It is unlikely that Jón would have identified with one of his warrior protagonists, such as Þorsteinn uxafót or Ormr, but he might have seen himself in the figure of Eirekr, whose stories about his travels to the Earthly Paradise enable the message of Christianity to be accepted more quickly by the Norwegians. Eirekr helps prepare Norway for the process of conversion and thus can be said to prefigure Ólafr Tryggvason. Jón, another teller of moral adventure tales (*ævintyri*), might have seen himself as the Icelandic heir of this particular father of Norwegian Christianity.

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