

The Anonymous Verse in the *Third Grammatical Treatise*

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The *Third Grammatical Treatise (TGT)* was composed around the middle of the thirteenth century by Óláfr Þórðarson, a nephew of Snorri Sturluson. It is divided into two parts: the first is a paraphrase of standard Latin grammatical treatises (specifically Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* I-II), supplemented with information about the runic alphabet. The second part is a much closer adaptation of the *Ars Major* of Donatus on the faults of speech (III, 1-6), illustrated with examples of Norse-Icelandic skaldic poetry. Of the poetic examples, a large amount of material is not found elsewhere and a large proportion of that is anonymous. The anonymous material consists of mostly very short fragments (usually two lines) on a variety of subjects. Despite the existence of six editions of the treatise and a number of scholarly commentaries on aspects of it spanning a century and a half, there has been no explicit attempt to identify, classify or contextualise the anonymous verses in *TGT* apart from one brief and one indirect attempt by Finnur Jónsson (1920-4 and *Skj*). This paper will begin to undertake this project. I will identify some sources, propose some reclassifications and assess Finnur's attempts at grouping and determining the provenance of the anonymous material.

A number of these verses are interesting in themselves, but the general significance of the anonymous material in *TGT* lies in the information it can provide about its status and transmission. This issue was first explored by Gísli Sigurðsson at the Akureyri saga conference. A revised version of the article was published in 2000; it contains a chronology of the life of Óláfr and a detailed account of the poetry of known provenance. I therefore refer the reader there for some of the details not discussed in the present paper. Gísli concentrated on the verse of known provenance, concluding that Óláfr's oral sources – and by extension literary knowledge in general – derived largely from either the royal courts of Scandinavia or from the author's own neighbourhood in Iceland (2000, 112-13). The present paper will show that this conclusion can be extended to the anonymous material, but requires some refinement with respect to that material.

The significance for Óláfr of Norse poetry in general, and by extension that of the treatise, is made quite explicit in the opening chapter of the second section (I have used Finnur Jónsson's edition of 1927 for the sake of providing a normalised text for these pre-prints; translations are my own unless otherwise noted):

Í þessi bók [Donatus, *Ars Major* I] In this book it may be clearly
má gerla skilja, at öll er ein listin understood that everything is the
skáldskapr sá, er rómverskir one art: the poetry which Roman
spekingar námu í Athenisborg á orators learnt in Athens in Greece
Griklandi ok sneru síðan í látínu-mál, and then turned into the Latin
ok sá ljóða-háttir eða skáldskapr, er language; and the song-metre or
Óðinn ok aðrir Ásíamenn fluttu norðr poetry which Óðinn and other men
hígar í norðrhálfu heimsins ok kendu of Asia brought north into the
mönnum á sína tungu þess konar list, northern half of the world, and

svá sem þeir höfðu skipat ok numit í sjálfu Ásialandi, þar sem mest var fegrð ok ríkdómur ok fróðleikr veraldarinnar. (*TGT* 1927, p. 39)

taught men this kind of art in their own language, just as they had arranged and learnt it in Asia itself, where beauty and power and knowledge were the greatest in all the world.

This is a clear attempt to position Norse-Icelandic poetry as a classical literature on a par with the literature of Greece and Rome. It is evidently influenced by Snorri's account of the origin of the *Æsir* in the prologues to *Snorra Edda* (Faulkes 1982, 4-6) and *Heimskringla* (*ÍF* 26, 11-16). In those works Snorri equates classical deities with the Norse gods and accounts for their origin in the migration of the *Æsir* from Troy.

To further contextualise Óláfr's project in writing *TGT*, I also refer to the preface to the *Gesta Danorum* of Saxo Grammaticus. Óláfr was resident in Denmark ca. 1240-1 at the court of Valdemar, whom he refers to as *minn herra Valdimarr konungr* 'my lord King Valdemar' (*TGT* 1927, 29) when introducing a runic formula attributed to him. An interest in runes at the court of Valdemar is already signalled in Saxo's history:

Non ignotum volo, Danorum antiquiores conspicuis fortitudinis operibus editis gloriæ æmulatione suffuses Romani stili imitatione non solum rerum a se magnifice gestarum titulos exquisito contextus genere veluti poetico quodam opere perstrinxisse, verum etiam maiorum acta patrii sermonis carminibus vulgata linguæ suæ litteris saxis ac rupibus insculpenda curasse. ... quibus scribendorum series subnixa non tam recenter conflata quam antiquitus edita cognoscatur (Olrík and Ræder, 4)

I should like it to be known that Danes of an older age, filled with a desire to echo the glory when notable braveries had been performed, alluded in the Roman manner to the splendour of their nobly-wrought achievements with choice compositions of a poetical nature; not only that, but they engraved the letters of their own language on rocks and stones to retell those feats of their own ancestors which had been made popular in the songs of their mother tongue... My chronicle, relying on these aids, should be recognised not as something freshly compiled but as the utterance of antiquity (Fisher, 5)

Saxo likewise posits the poetry and (runic) stone inscriptions of Scandinavia as a kind of alternative classical literature, although he represents it as parallel with that of Rome rather than sharing a common origin, as in Óláfr's account. This view of the status of poetry and runes forms the background to both parts of Óláfr's treatise. It is not then surprising that Óláfr uses runic letters in parallel with the Latin alphabet in the first section of *TGT*; it is also evident in his use of examples of native poetry to exemplify Donatus's figures of speech in the second section. What is puzzling is that he makes such frequent reference to unattributed skaldic poetry. Known skalds, such as those cited by Snorri in *Skáldskaparmál*, would seem to serve the ideological purpose better.

By comparing the distribution of verse types and attributions in related works, we can gain some information about how Óláfr approached and used his anonymous material. The various Norse-Icelandic treatises on poetry and poetics provide points of comparison on the use of verse to illustrate points of diction, metre, syntax and other grammatical features. The most important of these are *Skáldskaparmál* and *Hánatal* in *Snorra Edda* and the so-called *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*. The other grammatical treatises do not quote verse extensively, and the citations in *Gylfaginning* are of eddic verse and are meant to illustrate myths and cosmology rather than poetic or grammatical points.

In many ways *TGT* is comparable to Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál* (*Skm*; ed. Faulkes 1998): it is an instructional work on poetic composition illustrated with verses by more or less well-known skalds from the ninth century to the twelfth century (or later, in the case of *TGT*). In their poetic sources, the works are comparable in that only a small proportion of stanzas are found elsewhere (*Skm*: 61/394 (15% not including *pulur*); *TGT*: 35/116 (30%)). Of these, the largest number are found in *konungasögur* (*Skm*: 39; *TGT*: 12) followed by verses found in *Íslendingasögur* (*Skm*: 14; *TGT*: 9, with verses from *Egils saga* being the best represented in each case). However, they differ considerably in the proportion of anonymous material: *Skm* has 59 anonymous stanzas (15%), of which *Gróttasöngur* accounts for almost half; only 16 stanzas in the whole work (4%) are of wholly unknown provenance (that is, anonymous and not attributed to a named poem). *TGT* has a far greater proportion of material of no known provenance, 51 stanzas and fragments (44%).

The so-called *Fourth Grammatical Treatise* (*FoGT*; also ed. in *TGT* 1884) provides a further point of comparison, although it was written later than *TGT*. Like *TGT*, *FoGT* is an adaptation of Latin grammatical material illustrated with native poetry. Of the 62 verses cited, 51 are anonymous (82%); 11 are found elsewhere (18%: 4 from the Y version of *Laufás Edda*, 2 from *konungasögur* and 1 from an *Íslendingasaga*). They are mostly *dróttkvætt*, but there are also 4 *hrynhent*, 2 *runhent*, 2 *nyí háttir* and 1 *fornyrðislag* stanzas. Björn M. Ólsen confidently attributes 33 stanzas to the unknown author of the treatise, and a further 12 with less confidence (*TGT* 1884, 239ff). He does not do the same, however, with the anonymous fragments in *TGT*.

In terms of distribution of metrical forms, the poetic material in *TGT* is comparable to *Hánatal* (*Ht*; ed. Faulkes 1999) in very broad terms: the majority are *dróttkvætt* verses, or sub-categories and variants thereof. The remainder represent a variety of metrical forms, including variants of *dróttkvætt*, *kviðuháttir*, *hrynhent* and *tæglag* and a number of stanzas in eddic metres. All but 3 of the 105 stanzas in *Ht* are the work of Snorri, although none of them are attributed to him in the text of *Ht* itself. *Ht*, it should be noted, is Óláfr's most valuable identifiable poetic source, with seven fragmentary examples taken from it, all but one of which are attributed to Snorri.

There appears to be good evidence that the author of *Ht* and to a lesser extent *FoGT* composed the majority of verse citations in their treatises. However, this conclusion has not been extended by editors to the anonymous citations in *TGT*. It is quite possible that Óláfr composed at least some of the anonymous verse in his treatise under the influence of *Ht*. The provenance of these anonymous stanzas, however, has

received very little attention. They differ from Snorri's poetic material in *Háttatal* in that Snorri's verses there are very consistent in their subject matter, whereas the material Óláfr uses is somewhat eclectic. However, the identification of Snorri as the author of the verses in *Ht* is not on internal grounds and there is no reason why we should find internal evidence of Óláfr's authorship, if that was the case.

There is one stanza attributed to an Óláfr in *TGT*; Björn M. Ólsen identified this Óláfr with the author of the treatise (*TGT* 1884, 198), which has been accepted since (e.g. *Stj* BII, 110). The verse is as follows (*TGT* 1927, 60):

Stundum verður þessi	figúra	Sometimes	this	figure
[<i>amphibolia</i>] svá, at eitt orð hefir		[<i>amphibologia</i>]	occurs	when a
fleiri merkingar, sem Óláfr kvað:			word	has more than one meaning,
49. Kænn njóti vel vænnar			as Óláfr said:	'May my wise friend
vin minn konu sinnar –			enjoy	his beautiful wife and have
víst er at dapr um drósr			her	[<i>or</i> and not] for a long time; the
drengr – ok eigi lengi.			man	certainly isn't downcast
Hér er óvíst, hvárt þessi sögn, eigi, er			concerning	women.' Here it is
viðrorð neitiligt eða orð eiginligt.			uncertain	whether this word <i>eigi</i> is
			a	negative adverb or an actual verb.

This stanza may provide an implicit argument for not attributing the anonymous stanzas to Óláfr, because, if this verse is attributed to the author of the treatise, then the verses which are not attributed to him are probably not his compositions

However, there are at least two reasons to doubt Björn M. Ólsen's attribution: firstly, there is no reason why Óláfr would refer to himself in this way in his own treatise – Snorri does not do the same in *Ht*, for example, although the evidence for his authorship of the verses there is otherwise quite solid. Secondly, there is a fragment earlier in the treatise attributed to Óláfr Leggsson (a contemporary of Óláfr Þórðarson) which appears also to refer to a woman and which would make that Óláfr seem a much more obvious identification than the treatise's author. No other poetry which treats such a private topic is attributed to Óláfr Þórðarson.

The evidence for dating the *helmingr* is equivocal. It was probably composed before the middle of the thirteenth century and therefore before the treatise, as *kænn* (*kænn*) would have formed *aðalhending* with *vænnar* after that date, which would have been incorrect in an odd line. However, other stanzas in the treatise also have *aðalhending* in the odd lines. It is also clear from a discussion of diphthongs in ch. 4 (*TGT* 1927, 31; cf. Raschellà 2000) that Óláfr would have considered the vowels in the two words as distinct.

There are five unattributed fragments in the treatise which, in other sources, are attributed to known poets. It is likely that some of the anonymous stanzas were once the work of known skalds, but do not survive elsewhere. There is only one other anonymous fragment in *TGT* which is known from elsewhere, st. 47/1-2 of the eddic poem *Grímnismál* (*TGT* st. 82).

There is no easily identifiable organisation of any of the verses in *TGT*, let alone the anonymous ones. Finnur Jónsson in *Stj* makes the only attempt to group the anonymous fragments which are not attributed to a poem. Finnur considers all but one to be from the twelfth century. They are included under the headings: 'Vers om

ubestemmelige personer og begivenheder' (Anon. twelfth century 'Verses about indeterminate persons and events'; 34 sts.); 'Andre religiøse vers og herhen hørende digtbrudstykker' (Anon. twelfth century 'Other religious verses and poetic fragments belonging here'; 4 sts.); 'Vers om bestemte personer og begivenheder' (Anon twelfth century 'Verses about particular persons and events'; 2 sts.); 'Vers, hentydende til sagn og lign.' (Anon. twelfth century 'Verses referring to legends, etc. '; 2 sts.); plus one verse 'Om Tor' (Anon tenth century 'About Thor') and one attributed to Einar Skúlason's **Øxarflokk* on apparently scant internal evidence: it refers to an axe (this fragment has been reclassified as anonymous for the new skaldic edition). Within the largest grouping, Finnur has made a rough attempt to group verses with the same metre and on related subjects by marking off each group with a line. No further description or justification is given. Finnur's categories mean that any fragment with an identifiable reference is removed from a potential grouping with fragments with no identifiable points of reference – even when they share the same general subject matter and verse form.

There are a number of fragments in *TGT* which can be grouped according to subject matter and verse form (the number of the stanza in *TGT* 1927 is given in bold, followed by Finnur's attribution in the anonymous twelfth century section of *Skj*; the editions of verses here and translations are my own):

- Ten *dróttkvætt* fragments about battle, one of which is identified:
- 67. Herr búask hvatt til snerru. The army prepared themselves keenly for battle.
C. 18
- 23. Hér fregna nú hyggvir The thoughtful trees of the sword [WARRIORS]
C. 10 hjörflaug brimis draugar. now experience spear-flight [BATTLE].
- 10. Svanr þýr beint til benja The swan of blood [RAVEN] rushes by the
C. 11 blóðs vindára róðri. rowing of wind-oars [WINGS > FLIGHT]
straight to the wounds.
- 14. Lofðungr gekk at Lakkar The prince went to the onslaught of Hlökk
C. 16 – laut herr í gras – snerru. [BATTLE]; the army fell in the grass.
- 97. Hár rauð hvassa geira – The high one reddened the sharp spears in
C. 23 hneig þjóð í gras – blóði. blood; people sank into the grass.
- 24. Hringlestir gekk hraustan The ring-breaker [GENEROUS MAN], known to
C. 22 herjum kunnr at gunni. people [i.e. famous], went brave[ly] to battle.
- 27. Rann hræddari hranna The more afraid fire-breaker of the waves
C. 13 hyrbjótir frá styr ljótum. [GOLD > GENEROUS MAN] ran from the grim battle.
- 95. Braut stókk bauga neyvir The enjoyer of rings [MAN] fled, pale, away
C. 14 bleikr frá sverða leiki. from the play of swords [BATTLE].
- 47. Hermenn gátum hinnig We have found out that the single-minded
C. 17 hugstinnan gram vinna. lord there defeated the warriors.
- 111. Ekl vasa ógn á Stiklar- The not pleasant fighting was not lacking
B. 26 óblíf -stóðum síðan. later at Stiklarstaðir.

All of these are *dróttkvætt* fragments describing a battle. All are couplets except for 23 (one line). 14 and 97 are quite similar; and 24 provides a contrasting motif with 27 and 95. 44 mentions Stiklarstaðir, the site of the battle in which Óláfr helgi died, to

illustrate the figure *tnesis*, that is, the separation of parts of a compound. All six instances of the name 'Stiklarstaðir' in the skaldic corpus have *tnesis* (cf. *LP*, p. 537). It is therefore unlikely that Óláfr would have had to compose this couplet himself to illustrate this point. It is possible that some or all of the fragments belong to a poem about Stiklarstaðir, which Óláfr may have learnt during his time in Nidaros/Trondheim. If this is the case, it would support Gíslí's argument for the provenance of the verse in *TGT*.

• Five fragments of *dróttkvætt* verses which mention women:

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| 22. | Hér liggja brot beggja, | Here lie pieces of both the painted ship-sides, |
| C. 27 | brúðr, strykvinna súða. | woman. |
| 30. | Því hefki heitit mey mætri, | I have promised the excellent maiden that, |
| C. 28 | mest nema hamlan bresti... | unless the greatest obstacle fails... |
| 33. | Vættik harms, nema hitta | I expect sorrow, unless I manage to meet with |
| C. 29 | höfuðgulls náim Fullu. | the Fulla of head-gold [HEADBAND > WOMAN]. |
| 78. | Band gaf oss með endum | The Ilmr of the fire of the fish-hall [SEA > |
| C. 30 | Ilmr lýskála bála. | GOLD > WOMAN] gave me [<i>lit. us</i>] a band with ends. |
| 86. | En skinnbjarta skortir – | But the bright-skinned Njörun of stones |
| C. 31 | skap kannask mér svanna – | [WOMAN] lacks straw-harm [FIRE]; the |
| | dýrs hón hætt at hváru – | temperament of the woman is known to me; |
| | halmmei Njörun steina. | she is in any case a dangerous animal. |

Finnur likewise groups these fragments together in *Sky*. The first, however, addresses a woman, whereas the others refer to a woman. There is no internal or external information to determine the provenance of these fragments.

• Seven fragments from a *kviðuhátt* court poem about a Norwegian ruler. Five of these are grouped together by Finnur (Anon XII, C. 1-5), but there are only two other anonymous *kviðuhátt* fragments and both could belong here:

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------|---|
| 73. | Hlýð, hlýð, konungr, | Listen, listen, king, to this praise poem. |
| C. 1 | hróðri þessum. | |
| 101. | Ok stórhöggr | And the people of Trøndelag's hard-hitting |
| C. 2 | stillir Þröenda... | leader... |
| 103. | Í herská | In the king's war-torn country... |
| C. 3 | hilmis ríki... | |
| 43. | Fór hvatráðr | The resourceful one went to meet the king, |
| C. 4 | hilmi at finna, | before the ruler undertook reconciliation. |
| | áðr siklingr | |
| | til sættar gekk. | |
| 72. | Konungr kappgjarn, | The energetic king, better in (good) qualities |
| C. 5 | kostum betri | for all the people, the excellent king... |
| | allri þjóð, | |
| | alframr konungr... | |
| 75. | Sterkum stilli | ...for the strong ruler... expectation of battle... |
| C. 20 | styrjar væni... | |

39. Þat hefk sagt, I have said that which I myself knew; I am
 C. 39 es sjálfr vissak; ignorant of that, about which the man is
 dulðr ferk hins, silent.
 es drengr begir.

TGT verse 101 refers specifically to *Prændir* 'people of Trøndelag'. Some of these at least are quite possibly a composition of Óláfr's from his time at the court of King Hákon in Nidaros/Trondheim in the years c. 1237-40.

The remaining anonymous material comprises:

- Three verses from a *málahaðtr* praise poem: 66 (C. 6); 69 (C. 7); 77 (C. 8). Finnur groups three of these; 76 (C. 21) is *fornyrðislag* but similar. 119 (C. 15) is *málahaðtr* but more of a narrative nature.
- Three *dróttkvætt* fragments possibly about a sea journey: 15 (not in *Skj*); 52 (B. 25 – referring to Ingólfr/Hjörleifr); 105 (C. 25).
- Two *tøglag* fragments: 44 (C. 26 – see below); 74 (C. 19).
- Three *dróttkvætt* fragments possibly from court poems: 37 (ESK 11. 11 – about the gift of an axe); 48 (C. 38); 98 (C. 9).
- Two *dróttkvætt* fragments about Þórr: 85 (Anon X. II. B. 3 – see below); 96 (D. 4 – poor metrically).
- Three unrelated Christian fragments: 65 (G [5]. 1 – about Christ); 106 (G [5]. 2 – about a bell); 110 (G [5]. 3); 123 (G [5]. 4 – about Mary).
- Two fragments with mythological/legendary references: 8 (D. 1 – about Atili); 64 (not in *Skj* – see below).
- Two single-line fragments, the subject of which is uncertain: 19 (C. 41); 90 (C. 12).
- Three fragments of named poems: 61 (G. [3]. *Bjúgar vísur* – apparently Christian); 28 (A. 1. *Haflíðamál* – probably Icelandic); 115 (A. 4. *Kúgadrápa* – possibly from Orkney; cf. *TGT* 1884, 231).

More information on the provenance or transmission of the anonymous verse can be gleaned from a number of fragments which are closely related to other known verses. These include the following stanza about Þórr:

85. ...áðr djúphugaðr dræpi ...before the deep-minded, mighty, reliable,
 dolga ramr með hamri victory-blessed father of Magni [=Þórr]
 gegn á græðis vagna struck the enemies of the sea of wagons
 gagnsæll faðir Magna. [LAND > GIANTS] with [his] hammer.

This *helmingr* is very similar to Þjóðólfr ór Hvini's *Haustlög* st. 6b, both in the opening words and in the kenning for giant:

- ...áðr djúphugaðr dræpi ...before the deep-minded guarding-Týr of
 dolg ballastan vallar booty [=Loki] struck the very strong enemy
 hirð: Týr meðal herða of the field [GIANT] from above between the
 herfangs ofan stöngu. shoulders with a pole.

This type of giant-kenning, 'enemy of the land', is unique to these two stanzas. The close correspondence, but nevertheless variance between these two stanzas would suggest oral transmission. The verse is presumably quite old – Finnur dates it to the tenth century.

Also of interest is the following couplet:

44. Sás af Íslandi The one from Iceland ploughed [the sea]
arði barði. with the prow.

This is in *tæglag* ('journey metre'), and it appears to conform to the type known in *Ht* and *Háttalykill* as 'the Greenlandic metre' (*hinn grænlenzku háttur*). It is quite similar to the Södermanland inscription Sö65 (Djulefors), which contains a *tæglag*-like (*hinn skammi háttur*) *helmingr*:

han : austarla : arþi : barþi : He ploughed with the prow in the east

auk : o : lakbarþi|lantl : and died in the land of the Langobards.

[anlapis

It is unlikely that Óláfr knew this particular inscription, but the verse may have been conventional or had a certain currency, such as the runic verses about the ill-fated expedition to the east led by Ingvarr (e.g. Sö131, Sö173, Sö281, Sö320, Sö335, U439, U644, U654, U661, U778), which mostly follow a similar pattern. Sö65 (I, 50) also cites a couplet from a verse by Rognvaldr jarl (Lv 31/3-4; *Skj* BI, 486: *erjum úrgu barði, / út at Miklagarði*) but the similarity seems coincidental. The inclusion of this verse appears to reflect the interest in runes at the Danish court at the start of the thirteenth century, which I have pointed out above. Given the correspondence of these two otherwise-unique fragments and Óláfr's known interest in runes, it is quite possible that he drew on runic epigraphy in citing this stanza.

A less direct correspondence between the runic corpus and the verses in *TGT* is found in the following fragment:

57. Svanr þyrr beint til benja The swan of blood [RAVEN] rushes by the
blóðs vindára róðri. rowing of wind-oars [WINGS or FEATHERS >
FLIGHT].

This verse is said by Óláfr to contain a shortening of the syllable to correct the line length, namely, that *vindára* should be pronounced *vindara* 'of the wind-eagle'. The word is *ofljóst* 'punned' according to Óláfr. There is no other parallel for this kenning in the corpus, apart from in an inscription from Lund (DR Tillæg 5; Lund bone-piece 4), the B-side of which reads:

arar × ara × æru × fiaþrar the oars of the eagle are feathers

The pun here seems to be a play on *ára* 'of the oars' and *ara* 'of the eagle'. There is also a visual play on the letter combination *ararara*. Once again, the connection between the anonymous stanza and the inscription is unclear, except that both share otherwise-unique features.

As tenuous as these connections between the verse in *TGT* and the runic corpus appear, they are nevertheless highly unusual. Only three other examples of close correspondence between the manuscript and runic corpora exist and none are from the East Norse area: Egill Skallagrímsson, *Lausavísa* 38/1-3 (*Skj* BI, 51) and N829; Haraldr harðráði, *Lausavísa* 7/1-3 (*Skj* BI, 329) and N B88; and Hallar-Steinn, *Rekstefja* 16/7 and N B57.

Two fragments should be mentioned here because they are omitted from *Skj* by Finnur.

64. Flugu hrafnar tveir Two ravens flew from Hnikar's [Óðinn's]
af Hnikars oxlum; shoulders; Huginn to the hanged and
Huginn til hanga, Muninn to the slain [*lit.* corpses].
en á hræ Muninn.

This fragment is presumably omitted because it looks very much like an Eddic poem; however it belongs to no known poem and other such verses are found in *Slj*.

There is also a fragment attributed to 'Starkaðr (gamli W)'. A number of stanzas are also attributed to Starkaðr in *Gautreks saga*; these are considered inauthentic by Finnur; this however, does not explain the exclusion of the following from *Slj*, which at least has Óláfr's authority for the attribution:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 13. Þann hefi ek manna
mengkra fundit
hringhreytanda
hrammastan at afli. | I have met the mightiest ring-distributor
among humankind as regards strength. |
|---|---|

This fragment is meant to illustrate the barbarism of adding aspiration (*viðrlagning áblásningar*): *Hér er hrammastan sett fyrir rammastan at kveðandi haldiz i bálkarlagi* (*TGT* 1927, 46) 'Here *hrammastan* is placed instead of *rammastan* so that the alliteration is preserved in the *bálkarlag* metre'. The word *rammr*, however cannot be derived from an earlier **hrammr*, which would make the alliteration an unusual back-formation. Björn M. Ólsen attempts to resolve this problem by normalising the couplet in light of its apparent Danish provenance, namely: *ringreytanda / rammastan at afle* (*TGT* 1884, 176; the sound change *hr > r* occurred in the ninth century in Denmark). Although this contradicts Óláfr, who would have had a good knowledge of Danish, it does provide an explanation for the unusual alliteration.

Sveinbjörn Egilsson (*SnE* 1880-7, 139) speculated that the subject of the verse is the Saxon champion Hama, whom Starkaðr fought according to Saxo (Book VI; Saxo, 156; Fisher 174). More likely, however, is Jón Sigurðsson's suggestion in the same work that Gegathus (Geigaðr) is referred to here (*SnE* 1880-7, 294). Saxo states that Starkaðr mentioned Gegathus in a poem:

unde postmodum in quodam Later in a song he [Starkaðr] told how he
carmine non alias tristiore sibi had never encountered, before or since,
plagam incidisse perhibuit such a rigorous blow (Fisher, 173)
(Saxo 154)

It is more than likely that Óláfr learnt this verse at the Danish court; it probably belongs to a tradition of poetry attributed to Starkaðr to which Saxo refers.

The fragmentary poems identified above support Gíslí's assertion that Óláfr would have gained much of his knowledge of skaldic poetry from the royal courts of Scandinavia: the fragments apparently in praise of a Norwegian ruler and those possibly about Stiklarstaðir would have most likely been learnt or composed in Trondheim and were likely to be the work of court poets, probably Icelanders.

However, some of the other anonymous fragments would quite likely have originated from non-Icelandic, and some cases East Norse sources. There is good reason to think that the Starkaðr fragment is Danish in origin; and the *tøglag* fragment (44) is modelled on a runic epigraph, the only surviving example of which is from Sweden. Óláfr's sources therefore comprehended a broader base than Old Norse-Icelandic court poetry and its Icelandic domestic equivalents; it included East Norse sources and potentially runic ones. He also appears to have had oral sources beyond what Gíslí discusses, namely, otherwise-unrecorded Eddic poetry (64) and pre-Christian skaldic poetry (85). While there is little evidence for runic sources beyond

stanza 44 (the *arði bardi* fragment), the use of runic sources would reflect both Óláfr's stated project in the opening part of the second section of *TGT*, together with that of Saxo.

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