On the Receiving End
The Role of Scholarship, Memory, and Genre in Constructing Ljósvetninga saga

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Abstract

*Ljósvetninga saga* takes place in Northern Iceland during the tenth and eleventh centuries and focuses on the political maneuverings of the chieftain Guðmundr inn ríki Eyjólfsson and his son Eyjólfr. Most of the academic debate surrounding *Ljósvetninga saga* has focused on the issue of its origins. This saga, most likely written in the thirteenth century, is atypical in that it has two separate redactions that offer highly divergent information and narratives in several segments, dividing the saga between the A-redaction, based on the late fourteenth–early fifteenth-century manuscript AM 561 4to, and the C-redaction, based on the mid-fifteenth-century manuscript AM 162 c fol. and its approximately fifty post-medieval paper copies. The divergent redactions are the source of much speculation about the text’s origins, split between an interpretation of oral composition, commonly referred to as Freeprose, and one of written composition, commonly referred to as Bookprose. These two understandings of the saga are also tied to two different editions of the saga, which have been alternately used to elevate one redaction over the other. Theodore Andersson’s attempt to shift the debate toward a compromise between Freeprose and Bookprose has only been partially successful, due, among other reasons, to his continued elevation of one redaction (the C-redaction). This thesis approaches both redactions as independent, internally-coherent texts rather than stressing their literary relationship. The thesis deals with its primary question: *How did the reception of Ljósvetninga saga influence its construction?* It shows that *Ljósvetninga saga* has been constantly rewritten over time by its oral performers, its literary authors, its scribes, its publishers, and its scholars.

In the introduction, the thesis establishes its material philology approach, presents its assumptions about medieval authorship and intentionality, and argues for the use of the paper manuscript AM 485 4to as the
base manuscript for its treatment of C-redaction. The scholarly debate about the saga is presented with special attention paid to matters of origins and dating, examining Ljósvetninga saga’s relationship with Brennu-Njáls saga, and what is gained from a literary connection between the two. A literary interpretation of both redactions as texts that have their own intrinsic value is provided, showing how each of these texts creates meaning using internal connections, including the C-redaction’s þættir. Ljósvetninga saga is used as a tool to discuss the role of cultural memory in composition and interpretation, with a stress on the scholar Bardú Guðmundsson, AM 162 c fol.’s fifteenth-century scribe Ólafur Loftsson, and AM 561 4to’s hypothetical fourteenth-century context. The thesis offers a synchronic and a diachronic reading: the first treats memory as a template for events and people contemporaneous with the author, whereas the second acknowledges both past and present as significant for interpretation. The thesis also examines Ljósvetninga saga in its generic context, questioning and expanding the definition of the Íslendingasögur (Sagas of Early Icelanders) category, and rejecting the usefulness of the term ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur altogether. Using Rick Altman’s concept of generic crossroads, the thesis analyses both redactions’ manuscripts’ approach to the issue of power.

This thesis reveals how scholarly preconceptions guided the reception of a specific saga, Ljósvetninga saga, and contributes to a wider understanding of how saga, Old Norse, medieval, and general literature are each constantly changing and unstable, both in their preservation, and in the ways they are presented to the general public and scholarly community.
Útdráttur

Aðferðir efnislegrar textafræði eru grundvöllur rannsóknarinnar. Í inngangi eru kynntar forsendur rannsóknarinnar er varða höfunda á miðöldum og bókmenntalegan atbeina þeirra, og rök eru færð fyrir því að pappírshandritið AM 485 4to sé grundvallarhandrit að C-gerðinni. Áhersla verður lögð á þá fræðilegu umræðu um söguna sem hefur að gera með uppruna hennar og aldur. Þar með verða tengsl \textit{Ljósvetninga sögu} við \textit{Brennu-Njáls sögu} skoðuð og hvaðað samband þessara texta getur sagt okkur. Báðar gerðir sögunnar eru greindar með aðferðum bókmenntafræði enda eru þær sjálfstæðar gerðir sem hvor hefur gildi í sjálfri sér, og það er sýnt hvernig merkingarsköpun þessar texta hangir samsam við innbyrðis tengingar, þar með talið þætti C-gerðarinnar. \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} er ennfremur notuð sem rammu um umræðu um hlutverk menningar á samsetningu og tulkun sögunnar, með áherslu á fræðileg skrif Barða Guðmundssonar, skrifara fimmtándu aldar handritsins AM 162 c fol., og ætlað fjörtándu aldar samhengi handritsins AM 561 4to. Ritgerðin býður hvort tveggja upp á samtúmalegan og sögulegan lestur á sögunni; hinn fyrri litur á minni sem skapalón fyrir notkun atburða og persóna samtíða höfundinum, meðan hinn síðari viðurkennir að hvort tveggja fortið og nútið skipta máli fyrir túlkun texta. Ritgerðin kannar einnig bókmenntagrein \textit{Ljósvetninga sögu} og færir fram efasemdir um og útvíkkin á skilgreiningu Íslendingasagna, og hafnar jafnframt alsarið hugtakinu ‘unglegar’ eða ‘póstklassískar’ Íslendingasögur. Með stuðningi í hugtaki Rick Altman ‘vegamót bókmenntagreina’ (e. generic crossroads) er ráðist í greiningu á nálgun handrita beggja gerða sögunnar á völd.

Ritgerðin leiðir í ljós hvernig fyrirframgefnar ályktanir fræðimanna hafa haft áhrif á viðtökur \textit{Ljósvetninga sögu}. Hún er framlag til aukins skilnings á því hvernig fornísIslamicar sögur og bókmennir almennt eru stóðugt breytingum háðar, bæði hvað geymd þeirra snertir og hvernig þær eru kynntar almenningi og fræðasamfélaginu.
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In its essence, this acknowledgements chapter is an act of memory that rewrites the last five years according to the authorial present, reinterpreting the importance of the many events I experienced and people I came across then through the perspective of the now. Therefore, if anyone is not mentioned who should be mentioned, I sincerely apologize.

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My doctoral committee’s comments were invaluable, and I believe greatly improved the text from its initial, raw stages. My PhD supervisor Ármann Jakobsson has been helping me to navigate Old Norse scholarship since my very beginnings in academia, when as a BA student in Israel I cheekily emailed him to ask for an article of his that I did not have access to. His support and guidance have meant a lot to me, then and now. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir and Pernille Hermann have both been a part of
my scholarly development from before my PhD thesis as well. Svanhildur has contributed much to my interest in manuscripts and understanding of their importance—especially in the Icelandic context. I wish to thank Pernille for her refreshing approach to theory as something that is accessible without losing its sophistication, and also for her support during my productive 2017 stay in Aarhus.

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Prologue: Lentils and Lenses—Intent, Audience, and Genre

The Saga of the People of Ljosavatn was written late in the 13th century and takes place around the Eyjafjord district, North Iceland, from about 990-1060. Dealing with the common theme of regional feuds and disputes, the saga contains a number of memorable scenes, characters, and dialogues. The saga contains three independent tales (short accounts of Icelanders): The Tale of Sorli, The Tale of Ofeig and The Tale of Vodu-Brand, which were later added to the saga. As a whole, the saga itself appears more as a collection of a number of independent oral tales than a fully constructed saga.¹

Many family sagas break down into more or less independent parts or episodes, as for example Ljósvetninga saga, and this too is no compositional device, but is forced upon the saga by its material, i. e. ultimately by reality.²

In the midst of finishing up this thesis, I sat with a good friend for coffee. She told me that she had recently heard someone suggest that the Íslendingasögur, the Sagas of the Early Icelanders, were nothing but tabloid press: the sex lives of the rich and famous, who killed who, who hated who. Maybe these sagas were just thrown together with no thought behind

¹ Ellert B. Magnússon, Quotes and passages from the Icelandic sagas, 36.
them, just like tabloids, and the only reason we find meaning in them is because we stare at them for long enough until we find patterns. She reminded me of a recent event in which we were both staring at lentils spinning around in a water pot, and how we both found this extremely fascinating and eerily purposeful. Regardless to say, as any person who has ever been close to finishing a major project might understand, I made a mild scene at the coffee shop and responded unfavorably to her suggestions. But even as I protested, the notion that she was also right had started creeping into my head.

My friend pointed out three major points: 1) that the sagas lack any meaning, it is scholarship that creates this meaning; 2) that the interest that the medieval audience had in the sagas was much more trivial than saga scholarship usually pretends, and 3) that I am looking at the Íslendingasögur with the wrong set of generic expectations. Where I seek meaning, all that was meant was entertainment. That I got upset is instructive. This PhD thesis is built on the assumption that there is meaning behind Ljósvetninga saga—meaning that is not incidental, but intended, whether or not that intention is uncoverable. That the medieval Icelanders could read into these texts anything other than grandiose statements about the use and distribution of power seemed to me preposterous. And the icing on the cake, grouping in the Íslendingasögur with that lowly genre of the tabloid, was an unbearable thought.

These three issues, that of authorial intent, audience, and the text’s genre, are the main issues that lead my discussion in the present thesis. The thesis’s emphasis on the text’s meaning and inner-coherence is a response to years of Ljósvetninga saga scholarship, which saw the saga as an assortment of tales rather than as an authored whole. An illustrative example is found in Ellert B. Magnússon’s summary of Ljósvetninga saga: “As a whole, the saga itself appears more as a collection of a number of independent oral tales than a fully constructed saga.”5 The implication here is that someone threw these stories together and labelled it Ljósvetninga saga.

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5 Ellert B. Magnússon, Quotes and passages, 36.
In opposition to this, I posit throughout this thesis that there is nothing random about this selection of stories, that these make a coherent whole. While it is not argued here that ‘collection’ equates to carelessness, it seems that Ellert was operating within these connotations. The question of whether or not the C-redaction’s þættir—short stories that do not revolve around Ljósvetninga saga’s main feud between the Ljósvetningar and the Móðruvellinger—are intentionally present is evident from scholarship as early as Bååth. The opposite assumption, that the A-redaction’s creator had intended the second part of the saga as part of its version, despite codicological evidence that points otherwise, is also apparent in nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship. Steblin-Kamenskii’s quote at the beginning of this prologue strips Ljósvetninga saga of all manuscript and philological context, and simply presents us with an intentionless text, the composition of which was dictated by the reality of the historical situation described. The only solace one has is that for Steblin-Kamenskii, all sagas are intentionless.

The audience of this saga, as with others, has varied across time. Some of the text’s concerns are indeed on high literary themes, but some are also more trivial, tabloid: the defamation of one person through the negative portrayal of his ancestors. It is this plurality of target audiences that is often forgotten in saga analysis, the audiences that go beyond the original implied thirteenth-century audience, but rather the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century audiences as well. Furthermore, it is worth considering that we usually hear the voice of a social elite in these texts. How did the thirteenth- or fifteenth-century petty farmers react to these texts? Would they treat them as the stories of their own ancestors? Or did they look at these stories from afar, as we do when we read of the lives of the rich and famous in tabloid press?

My reaction to grouping tabloids and the Íslendingasögur together is quite telling in that it reveals the power of genre. I would not have reacted the same way had my friend suggested that the Íslendingasögur were like the historical novels of their time. We have set notions of the hierarchy of
certain texts, but it seems—at least according to AM 162 c fol.—that fifteenth-century Icelanders did not share these prejudices. A *riddarasaga* alongside *Íslendingasögur* did not seem odd, or at any rate not odd enough to warrant its exclusion. Preconceived notions of genre have also influenced Old Norse scholarship, which has picked and chosen what sagas are ‘classical’ based on subjective taste and a somewhat inflexible historical understanding of how Icelandic literature developed.

My friend’s drifting lentils are the lenses through which this thesis should be read. While the different chapters each provide a different focus, they all attempt to understand what we lose and what we gain from the biases that have led scholarship of *Ljósvetninga saga* specifically, and the *Íslendingasögur* at large. These extant texts, I will argue, were shaped by someone to mean something, and the audience perceived this to be the case—the medieval audience, that is. It is up to the readers to determine if my literary interpretations, historical analysis, and theoretical suggestions convince them, but these lentils should always be on their minds, silently drifting away in a pot, until a cook decides to scoop them up and create something.
1. Introduction

Tönn tímans hefur búið illa við Ljósvetninga sögu.¹

Ljósvetninga saga is a thirteenth–fourteenth-century saga concerning the Eyjafjörður district in Northern Iceland. It focuses on the Möðruvellir (the people of Möðruvellir, a farm south of modern Akureyri) chieftain Guðmundr inn ríki and his attempts to expand his district’s power at the expense of the Ljósvetningar (the people of Ljósavatn, a lake east of modern Akureyri) and other Northeastern rivals, as well as his retaliation for attacks against his masculinity. Following Guðmundr’s death by paranormal means, his son Eyjólfr becomes chieftain of the Möðruvellir and continues to vie for power against the Ljósvetningar, at the price of his brother Koðrán’s death. Ljósvetninga saga is extant in two fragmentary medieval manuscripts: AM 561 4to with several lacunae from the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the fragments of AM 162 c fol. from the middle of the fifteenth century. There is only one nineteenth-century paper manuscript copy of AM 561 4to, and all others—around fifty—can be traced to AM 162 c fol. The two medieval manuscripts and their copies are exceptional in that, while in certain parts they follow the same wording and order of events, in other parts several stories are completely omitted from AM 561 4to, or are executed in significantly different details, wording, and narrative. This issue has been the center of much of the debate surrounding the saga, and it is this to which this thesis wishes to contribute.

In the following introductory chapter, a short summary will be provided as a reference for those less acquainted with the saga. The chapter then discusses some theoretical considerations that lie behind the thesis as

a whole, with an emphasis on issues of authorship and the concept of au-
thorial intent. Finally, the saga’s manuscripts will be introduced, with an
explanation of their transmission history and an argument for a preference
of the 1830 edition over the Íslenzk fornrit edition more commonly used
in scholarship.

1.1 Ljósvetninga saga’s Plot in the A-redaction and C-redaction

Chapters 1–4: The saga begins with the badly behaving Sólmundr
wreaking havoc on his district. He is outlawed for three years after he kills
a Norwegian merchant, who was friends with a þingmaðr of Þorgeirr
Ljósvetningagoði. He performs well abroad and catches the attention of
the ruler of Norway, Hákon jarl. Despite only two years of his three-year
sentence passing, the jarl pushes to commute Sólmundr’s lesser outlawry,
sending him back to Iceland with gifts for the lawspeaker, Þorgeirr Ljósvet-
ningagoði, and an Eyjafjörður chieftain, Guðmundr inn ríki. This irregu-
lar request from a foreign ruler begins a violent dispute between
Guðmundr and Þorgeirr on the one side, and Þorgeirr’s sons Tjórví,
Höskuldur, Finni, and Þorkell on the other. Despite Sólmundr’s timely
death, the feud continues until an uneasy settlement is forced. The saga
then moves to relate Guðmundr’s dealings with the people of the North-
east in chapters 5–12.

Chapter 5: It is Guðmundr’s wont, we learn, to host the young sons
of influential people. One such youth, Sórlí Brodd-Helgason, joins
Guðmundr after the almæð as a guest at Móðruvellir. There he earns the
good graces of Guðmundr’s daughter Þórdís, much to the chieftain’s cha-
grin. When the daughter is moved to Guðmundr’s brother Einarr’s farm
of Íverá, the visits continue, but when Einarr attempts to persuade his
brother to allow the two to marry, the latter bluntly refuses. The marriage
is eventually made possible through the mediation of Þórarinn Nefjólfsson,
who is at some point before or after this narrative a member of king Óláfr
helgi’s retinue.
**Chapters 6–7:** Next it is told how Guðmundr makes it a habit to visit his þingmenn in the Reykjadalur district with a very large entourage of thirty people, and thus strains the farmers in a time of famine. The farmers call upon Ófeigr Járngerðarson, a friend of Guðmundr and his brother Einarr. Ófeigr teaches Guðmundr a lesson by visiting his farm with a large gathering of thirty men and thirty stallions and staying there for a week, which causes quite a strain on the godi’s household. Despite Guðmundr acknowledging Ófeigr’s point well-made, he sees it as an omen that the man will give him trouble in the future.

**Chapters 8–12:** Guðmundr enters a legal dispute with the Eastfjords chieftain Þorkell Geitisson around the troublesome youth Voðu-Brandr, who following a successful útanferð, returns and gets into trouble in Iceland. Guðmundr insists on having the youth outlawed, but his plans are thwarted by the intervention of Ófeigr, as the godi predicted would happen.

**Chapters 13–21:** The saga then turns to relate the wedding between a dependant of Guðmundr and of another Eyjafjörður godi called Þórir Helgason. During the wedding, an insult to Guðmundr’s masculinity is voiced, devised by Þórir Helgason and the son of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði, Þorkell hákr. Guðmundr proceeds to prosecute cases against Þórir Helgason’s men. One of them gets complicated and Þórir is implicated in a legal indiscretion and is sentenced to lesser outlawry. Guðmundr then focuses his efforts on his other insulter, Þorkell hákr. He enlists the help of the somewhat useless spy Rindill, and attacks and kills Þorkell. After Þorkell is killed, his cousin avenges his death by killing the spy Rindill. Guðmundr overreacts and threatens to burn a house where the killers are staying, despite the fact that his wife and son are both present there as well. Guðmundr then goes on to live to an old age, and is plagued by fears of vengeance. Eventually Finni Þorgeirsson sends a man to relate a dream to Guðmundr, an act which apparently kills him.

**Chapters 22–31 (Eyjólfr’s bulk):** The rest of the saga continues by relating the dealings between Eyjólfr, the son of Guðmundr, and the Ljósvetningar. The Ljósvetningar reject a parental claim made by
Friðgerðr, the daughter of Eyjólfr’s dependent. This causes a conflict that reaches its climax when Eyjólfr and the Ljósvetningar, led by Þórarðr Hóskulđsson, meet in battle in Kakalahóll, where Guðmundr’s other son Koðrún is killed while trying to stop the fighting. In the following trial, many of the Ljósvetningar are outlawed and exiled from Iceland, but Eyjólfr nevertheless kills Þórarðr’s brother Þórarinn in retaliation. The main story concludes with several anecdotes where the value of peace is promoted.

Chapter 32: The saga ends with an ostensibly interjected and fragmented tale relating the early dealings of Eyjólfr and Þórarinn ofsi, the killer of Þorgeirr Hávarsson, a retainer of king Óláfr helgi, one of Fóstbræðra saga’s protagonists.

The A-redaction contains chapters 1–4 and 13–21, whereas the C-redaction contains all the narrative stated above. Chapters 1–4 and the middle of chapters 18–21 in both the A-redaction and C-redaction tell the same stories in the same words—though scribal variance is important to remember—but chapters 13–18 tell a very similar story with a notable difference in narrative and certain details such as place names and character names. Scholarly consensus has it that chapters 5–12 were never present in the A-redaction, and (as will be shown) chapters 22–32 were possibly not incorporated into that redaction as well. One could compare this with the difference between the king sagas Heimskringla and Morkinskinna—at times they tell the same story with the same words, at times they relate a similar story but with a significant difference in wording and details, and at times they each incorporate stories that were never present in the other.

1.2 How to Approach Ljósvetninga saga

Ljósvetninga saga is a tale of political intrigue, with relatively few battle scenes. Its characters managed to remain lively and compelling throughout the millennium that passed from their alleged existence, passing from mouths to ears, quills to parchment, pen to paper, and press to Íslensk fornrit. While the saga itself is (subjectively) as beautiful a piece of art as
Brennu-Njáls saga and Grettis saga, its preservation is a sordid affair that has affected the way this saga has been received over the last two centuries. Since no complete medieval manuscript of the saga is extant, scholars allowed themselves to pick and choose what parts of the post-medieval material to include and what to omit. Scholars therefore projected on this saga their own notions of how Íslendingasögur should look and behave. This makes Ljósvetninga saga an interesting case study for how scholarship has perceived the Íslendingasögur as a whole, and the radical editorial choices that they allowed themselves to practice in the name of that belief. This thesis’s primary question is therefore: How did the reception of Ljósvetninga saga influence its construction? The circular nature of the question is intentional. The leading assumption is that Ljósvetninga saga is and has been constantly rewritten by its oral performers, by its literary authors, by its scribes, by its publishers, and by its scholars. This thesis is another step in that process of reception and construction, arguing for yet another way to approach and to read Ljósvetninga saga.

1.2.1 How to Approach This Thesis

This thesis seeks a better understanding of the editorial choices that were made along the winding path of Ljósvetninga saga’s transmission. It focuses on three milestones: the thirteenth century, when the saga was probably put down in writing; the end of the fourteenth and middle of the fifteenth century, when the two extant medieval manuscripts were scribed; and the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the critical Old Norse editions of the saga were printed.

The first chapter, The Part About the Critics, concerns itself with how Ljósvetninga saga has been treated in Old Norse scholarship and how this evolved. Ljósvetninga saga was a major point of contention for the oral and written theories of saga composition, known as Freeprose and Bookprose, and their differing opinions left Ljósvetninga saga a misunderstood text, which affected much of the debate surrounding it and its subsequent relative neglect. Special attention is placed on the attempt to date the saga,
contending that the current Íslendingasögur dating is based mostly on biased suppositions rather than on clear methodology. Dating is and will remain tied to the specific scholarly zeitgeist if considerations like manuscript evidence and oral origins are not taken more into account. This is illustrated with a case study of the connection between Ljósvetninga saga and Brennu-Njáls saga, which exemplifies both the advantages of seeking out literary connections, and the pointlessness of dating based on this uncertain method in a literature highly based in oral transmission.

The second chapter, Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent? sets out to understand how each of the redactions’ texts works as an internally-coherent whole: What meanings can be found if these redactions are considered on their own merit? This is offered as an alternative to the common scholarly practice attempting to trace which of the two redactions is the closer to the original. Rather than attempting to trace which of the versions could have been written earlier and whether these differences stem from written or oral origins, the thesis interprets these differences as indicative of meaning, and the focus turns to how each redaction corresponds with itself rather than how the redactions correspond with each other. Most importantly, the chronological discrepancies in the text pointed out by scholars are intentional literary moments where the differences and similarities in the intergenerational strife between the Ljósvetningar and the Móðruvellinger are underlined.

The Part About Memory takes a look at Barði Guðmundsson’s approach towards Ljósvetninga saga as a roman à clef, and discusses its approach towards memory. It then turns to look at the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively and suggests both a more restrictive Barði Guðmundsson-ian reading of AM 162 c fol., and a perspective that takes into account the interplay between generations.

The Part About the Genres takes a look at the Íslendingasögur as a group of texts to which Ljósvetninga saga allegedly belongs, and questions our understanding of the concept of genre. The current generic definitions are too narrow, and a more pluralistic approach will allow scholarship to work
within categories and yet be less limited by them. By analyzing *Ljósvetninga saga’s* manuscript neighbors in AM 561 4to *Gull-Póris saga* and in AM 162 c fol.’s *Finnboga saga* and their place within the *Íslendingasögur,* an alternative, complimentary approach towards genre will also be suggested. This more comprehensive approach takes into account manuscript context, focusing on the regional history as the organizing principle of the extant AM 561 4to, and of plot expansion and the theme of power as the organizing principles of AM 162 c fol.’s extant sagas.

The focus of this thesis is on *Ljósvetninga saga’s* reception and development through both medieval times and modern scholarship, with three primary themes:

− First and foremost, the thesis offers a literary interpretation of *Ljósvetninga saga’s* redactions, which sheds light on the mechanisms of these texts. The thesis advances a reading wherein everything in the text is intended. As such, rather than glancing over chronological discrepancies, the interpretation dwells on them. Rather than settling ambiguous readings, the analysis explains what is gained from the dual interpretations. In addition, this thesis stresses the creation of internal meaning and coherence in each redaction. The analysis of the connections between *Ljósvetninga saga* and *Njáls saga* also offers an alternative to the Bookprose insistence of direct literary influence, replacing this with a model of mutual interaction in a literature that is orally (in)formed.

− The thesis focuses on the late fourteenth–fifteenth-century context of the saga’s manuscripts rather than the thirteenth century, when it was probably composed. The fifteenth century, while attracting interest in recent years, is an under-studied period of Icelandic history. This is particularly unfortunate when it is considered that many of the Old Norse sagas we possess are first attested to in fifteenth-century text witnesses. Since Björn Þorsteinsson’s work in the mid-twentieth
century, no comprehensive history of the fifteenth century has been written, though historians such as Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, Árni Daniel Júlíusson, and Hans Jacob Orning have made significant contributions to our understanding of the period. This thesis wishes to contribute to knowledge of the fifteenth century through its use of primary sources to analyse scenes from Ólafur Loftsson’s life and debate with the period’s historiography.

- The thesis offers new questions on the subject of genre in Old Norse literature. It suggests a new approach by introducing film theory as a guide to break through the firm generic boundaries that have been dealt with in that field of studies. In particular, the concept of generic crossroads offers a new possibility for the interpretation of sagas in their generic setting, but even more so, in their wider manuscript setting. With this in mind, while the application of material philology on the Old Norse matter is far from new, the thesis’s application of manuscript-oriented thinking for genre alongside innovations from the field of film studies hopes to bring something new to the debate. The thesis questions the usefulness and, in fact, truthfulness of the term ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur, and its conclusions promote rejecting the use of this concept altogether. In addition, the thesis repositions the Íslendingasögur category, expanding it and allowing for texts generally considered outliers to be included within it.

The ideal reader of this thesis would have Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 Ljósvetninga saga edition, and Íslenzk fornrit volume 10 at hand. Guðmundur Þorláksson’s 1880 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga edition offers a highly detailed critical apparatus, and Guðbrandur Vigfússson and F. York Powell’s posthumous partial translation and

3 Archive.org, accessed 7 June 2019, https://archive.org/details/slenzkarfornsgu00sagagoog/. It is a poor scan of the text.
edition, *Origines Islandicae*, is also a useful edition to consult. Most of the translations provided here are from Andersson and Miller’s *Law and Literature* and will only be marked with page numbers. My revisions to their translations will be marked with square brackets, and those places that I chose to translate myself will be marked as such. For other sagas, the standard Íslendingasögur edition is used, unless otherwise specified. This decision is made out of considerations of scope, but many of the issues raised here in regard to the *Ljósvetninga saga* Íslendingasögur as well.

1.2.2 Material Philology

This present attempt to engage with *Ljósvetninga saga* is inspired by my thesis supervisor Ármann Jakobsson’s *A Sense of Belonging*, and Elizabeth Ashman Rowe’s *The Development of Flateyjarbók: Iceland and the Norwegian Dynastic Crisis of 1389*. In these works, the role of the þættir, short stories otherwise treated as interpolated texts, was reassessed and put into the larger context of the kings’ saga *Morkinskinna* and the manuscript Flateyjarbók. These studies showed how various texts can form a new meaning when put together, contextualizing this in their thirteenth- and fourteenth-century historical context, respectively. The comparison with *Morkinskinna* is particularly revealing: much like the A-redaction and C-redaction of *Ljósvetninga saga*, this text tells many of the same stories as *Heimskringla*, but in different words and by employing a different narrative style that includes more individual tales about Icelanders in the Norwegian court. This caused *Morkinskinna* to be dismissed to the extent that some Old Norse scholars of the past and present deemed it a synoptic without awarding it a second glance. This is comparable to *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction, where the þættir’s functions within the narrative were dismissed before Theodore

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4 Available at: https://archive.org/details/originesislandic02gudb (as of 2 Jan. 2019).
5 For example, see Emily Lethbridge, “Gísla saga Súrssonar. Textual Variation, Editorial Constructions and Critical Interpretations,” 150. Lethbridge debates the problematic editorial choices made in regards to the issue of *Gísla saga Súrssonar*’s three different redactions.
Andersson’s research into the text. The present thesis also found inspiration in research conducted by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir and Emily Lethbridge into the logic of compilation and its connection to generic thinking, which has been an invaluable step in my understanding of Old Norse literature and genre. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir has shown how sagas belonging to the traditionally divided fornaldarsögur, Íslendingasögur, and riddarasögur could be united in one manuscript using thematic logic in her research of AM 152 fol., further contextualizing her results in the historical circumstances of compilation. Emily Lethbridge analysed Eggertsbók (AM 556 a-b 4to) from the perspective of its single fornaldarsaga, Þórsteins saga Víkingssonar, and showed how, viewed thematically, the saga finds its place in its manuscript, which includes three Íslendingasögur and three indigenous riddarasögur. Finally, Hans Jacob Orning’s investigation into manuscript compilation and riddarasögur composition in relation to the historical circumstances of the late fifteenth century is a good example of how to perform historical research based on sagas that describe a very different reality than the one lived by the late fifteenth-century Icelanders, extracting unifying themes that embody historical concerns of the Icelandic aristocracy. Fittingly, the focus of Orning’s research is on Margrét Vigfúsdóttir, who resided in Möðruvellir, the farm where both Guðmundr inn ríki and Ólafur Loftsson’s father, Loftur Guttormsson, lived.

Because of the importance that individual manuscripts have for the present research, this thesis takes a material philological approach towards the Ljósvetninga saga manuscripts, looking at both redactions as texts with independent worth, rather than trying to trace their thirteenth-century original form, or trying to rank their primacy. Material (or new) philology approaches the philologist’s work by embracing variants as a natural part

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7 Emily Lethbridge, “The Place of Þórsteins saga Víkingssonar in Eggertsbók, a Late Medieval Icelandic Saga-book,” 396–400.
8 Hans Jacob Orning, The Reality of the Fantastic, the Magical, Political and Social Universe of Late Medieval Saga Manuscripts, 303–339.
of medieval studies, rather than as a problem that requires solving. As Stephen G. Nichols has it: “It is that manuscript culture that the ‘new’ philology sets out to explore in a postmodern return to the origins of medieval studies.” Much of Old Norse scholarship has embraced the advantages that such an approach has given us, and it has coincided with recent trends, such as looking at the sagas as cultural memory rather than as history versus fiction, and the problematizing of long-standing genre definitions. It is worth noting that while the thesis’s approach is a textually pluralistic one, it goes about it in a traditional way. Since only three leaves of AM 162 c fol. are extant, any discussion of the medieval C-reduction text as a whole is by definition reconstructive; I will try to alleviate this contradiction through an insistence on finding a single post-medieval manuscript and sticking to it, rather than trying to reconstruct the text. A ‘full’ material philological approach may have chosen to focus either on the extant three leaves, or on the seventeenth-century context of my preferred manuscript, AM 485 4to. The former will not be attempted, and the latter is certainly grounds for future research.

Material philology grounds the elusive text in a very tangible object. The challenge of medieval literary study in a post-structuralist, post-modern world was charted out almost three decades ago by Gabrielle M. Spiegel. Spiegel reminds us that text is situated within a very specific set of linguistic and societal circumstances, outside of which it cannot be understood. True literary history can only be achieved, according to her, by

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10 Nichols, 7.
11 See references in Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “Expanding Horizons: Recent Trends in Old Norse-Icelandic Manuscript Studies,” 210–212; Jóhanna Katrin Friðriksdóttir, “Ideology and Identity,” 88, n. 3, refers to further material philology research conducted in Old Norse scholarship at the onset of the twenty-first century. See also Jürg Glauser, “The Speaking Bodies of Saga Texts,” 13–18, 20–21, which connects together much of these recent trends.
12 Though this is not to say that I do not condone such attempts in the future, since the Íslenzk fornrit version of Ljósvetninga saga should not remain the final word in the saga’s critical editions.
both contextualizing the text in its specific historical and societal circumstances, and by recognizing its constructs and form.\textsuperscript{14}

1.2.3 Authorship and Intentionality

Throughout this thesis, the assumption is that these texts were authored. But its definition of author is different from how this character has been traditionally viewed. A model differentiating three kinds of authorship has been offered by television studies scholar Jason Mittell, who distinguishes between a (perceived) single authorship of a literary piece, which he terms “authorship by origination”; a cinematic authorship that does not make every creative decision but has a (perceived) final say over the finished product, called “authorship by responsibility”; and the serial nature of television authorship, where the important voice is not of an episode’s specific director or writer, but rather the show’s producer/s or showrunner/s, which he terms “authorship by management.”\textsuperscript{15}

In Old Norse literature, the lines between origination, responsibility, and management are often confused, due to a lack of context and paratext. Often, we cannot ascertain whether a certain aspect of the extant text stems from the person designated as its originator (nor, as the Freeprose–Bookprose debate expounded below illustrates, can we agree on whether this originator is a text’s oral or literary author), from the responsible scribe/s, or from the project’s managing compiler and/or patron. These lines are further blurred by the fact that sometimes a manuscript’s scribe can also be its compiler, and sometimes even the originator of the literary text. The people in charge of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}’s transmission are both readers and authors at once. Each edition, be it a fifteenth-century, seven-

\textsuperscript{14}``There is no way to determine \textit{a priori} the social function of a text or its locus with respect to its cultural ambience. Only a minute examination of the form and content of a given work can determine its situation with respect to broader patterns of culture at any given time. What this means is that a genuine literary history must always, to some extent, be both social and formalist in its concerns, and must pay attention to a text’s ‘social logic’ in the dual sense of its site of articulation and its discursive character as articulated ‘logos.’'' Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic,” 77–78.

\textsuperscript{15}Jason Mittell, \textit{Complex TV, the Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling}, 87–89.
teenth-century, or twentieth-century copy situates the *Ljósvetninga saga* text within a new framework and context. In a sense, the medieval and post-medieval manuscript culture of copyists preserving old (and lost) texts is the embodiment of the post-Structuralist claim of the reader becoming the author of the text, since the copyists do not only copy, they also re-interpret, and in this action influences how we receive the texts. It is important to note a distinction between the medieval notion of authorship and a modern one. While ties to the continental writings were stronger than scholars of the Bookprose approach believed, there is a lack of research in medieval Icelandic literary theory in general, and particularly on their approach to concepts such as *auctor*. Steblin-Kamenskii’s work is perhaps almost notoriously opposed to the notion of any similarity between Modern continental authorship and Old Norse literature saga composition. He interprets saga authors as merely conveying what they perceive as truth, which he defines as *syncretic truth*: a worked description of historical events that the saga author perceives as truthful. Slavica Ranković’s notion of distributed authorship is also important to bear in mind when approaching the *Íslendingasögur*; these were oral texts constantly developing and reacting to each other, even after they were put to parchment. Even if inspired by their oral material, the saga authors had a great degree of control over what to include and not include in their texts. The textual transmission discussed in this thesis goes hand in hand with the notion of the dynamic medieval authorship, which is to be commented upon and revised.

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16 On continental medieval authorship, see Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*. See also Margaret Clunies Ross, “Criticism and Literary Theory in Old Norse-Icelandic.”
21 While the assumption in scholarship is more often than not that the author of a particular piece is male, it is important to remember the role of women as female scribes (and authors). See Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, “Genbrug í Skagafjörður: Arbejdsmetoder hos skrivere i klostret på Reynistaður,” 148–150 and Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, “Cultural Memory and Gender in Iceland from Medieval to Early Modern Times,” 385–389.
The concept of the *intentional fallacy* warns us against confusing what the author had intended when they put their work to words and the final meaning that the audience derives from it.\(^{22}\) According to Frye’s presentation of this approach, if one were to ask Shakespeare what he had meant by including a certain part in *Hamlet*, he would respond to us that he “meant it to form part of the play.”\(^{23}\) Knapp and Michaels, on the other hand, warned against separating intention from meaning, claiming that the two concepts are inseparable.\(^{24}\) While the author’s intent cannot be ignored, it does not mean that they managed to successfully convey this intention perfectly onto the final product. To clarify, the intention of the text is not, in any part of this thesis, the final aim of the discussion. Rather, intention is a theoretical assumption that underlies the research. A literary interpretation affixed by the audience and its reaction to a piece of literature ignores the fact that this audience is guided by its understanding of the author’s intentions and adjusts its reaction accordingly.\(^{25}\) In what he calls *postfoundational intentionalism* or, discouragingly, *weak intentionalism*, Mark Bevir stresses that one is not rejecting theory simply by acknowledging intentionality. Rather, one suggests that there was a certain set of beliefs that existed in the mind of the author of the piece, and while this belief is external to the text, it is the key to understanding the author’s world, which is the historian’s task.\(^{26}\) Actually, acknowledging intentionality and

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\(^{22}\) W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy.” As Wayne Booth points out, the far-reaching cries to completely disconnect the author from the literary piece were never Wimsatt and Beardsley’s intention, Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 126, n. 13.

\(^{23}\) Northorpe Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 86.

\(^{24}\) Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, “Against theory,” 138–139.

\(^{25}\) See A. J. Close, “Don Quixote and the ‘Intentionalist Fallacy,’” and Mittell, *Complex TV*, 105–117, who suggests shifting the question from the implied author to the audience’s understanding of certain implied authors in their “reception and comprehension,” and instead discusses the “inferred author function,” which he defines as “the inferred author function is a viewer’s production of authorial agency responsible for a text’s storytelling, drawing on textual cues and contextual discourses,” 107.

\(^{26}\) “When historians ascribe meanings to texts, therefore, they do so by appealing to objects external to those texts—to beliefs, which might be sincere or insincere, conscious or unconscious, rational or irrational. Although historians only have access to the text, they still can legitimately postulate beliefs external to the text in order to ascribe a meaning to it,” Mark Bevir, “How to Be an Intentionalist,” 215.
authorship are pre-requisites when approaching manuscripts from a material philological approach, since this approach grounds texts in a specific sociological context. Simply put: “work and life are not opposed, not even in the casual manner by which night is opposed to day.” As Umberto Eco points out with a simple discussion of the Woodsworth sentence “A poet could not but be gay,” an interpretation stripped of its context would posit that this sentence discusses the poet’s sexual orientation rather than mood. A literary interpretation must be grounded in the author’s time, but this notion of authorship—in the case of Ljósvetninga saga, at any rate—must be informed by the fact that we are facing a text that has changed from the one that first was set to parchment in the 1200s. If you kill the author, you kill context. If you kill the author, you kill the possibility of trying to interpret the text in a meaningful, historical way. Umberto Eco insists that answers to the text can be found, not in seeking the intentions of the authors or seeking the intentions of the audience, but rather in seeking the intentions available to us in the text. He is both right and wrong. It is all a matter of the questions being asked.

27 For the existence of a clear intentionality behind manuscript compilation, see a good survey in Orning, Reality of the Fantastic, 62–67.
28 Seán Burke, The Death and Return of the Author, 188.
29 Umberto Eco, “Between author and text,” 68.
30 Booth states in A Rhetoric of Irony, “a reconstructing of implied authors and implied readers relies on inferences about intentions, and these often depend on our knowing facts from outside the poem,” 133; see also 132, n. 17. In “Overinterpreting Texts” Umberto Eco states: “Deciding what is being talked about is, of course, a kind of interpretative bet. But the contexts allow us to make this bet less uncertain than a bet on the red or the black of the roulette wheel,” 63. As Seán Burke points out about Paul de Man’s outing as a closeted anti-semite: “The fact is that his fellow theorists have defended de Man as a person and often with considerable dignity and passion,” Death and Return, 5; emphasis in the original. Seán Burke argues that the author has always been a blindspot in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida (and Paul de Man’s) theories, and that they never really managed to detach the author from the work. It is important to situate the authors and remember that, of all these theorists, Paul de Man was very radical in his interpretation of these ideas (and had grave personal reasons to do so, see Burke, 1–8), and he is the one that led post-structuralist thinking in the US. Knapp and Michaels are not responding to Barthes, Foucault, or Derrida. They are responding to de Man. I thank Roderick McDonald for stressing to me to not underestimate the importance of location when it comes to theoretical discussion.
31 Umberto Eco, “Between author and text.” His analysis of the audience and critical reception of his own works in this chapter is a fascinating (perhaps unwitting) response
While further theoretical discussion of authorship is not taken up directly in the thesis, different notions of authorship are at play. The Part About the Critics is concerned with the saga’s audience, and how these became the authors of their own versions of *Ljósvetninga saga*. The saga cannot be read or even thought about without their mediation. The chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent? and its investigation into the inner workings of the text is underlined by the assumption that someone had intended the saga’s redactions to take these shapes. In The Part About Memory, the focus is on the authors’ intentions, more specifically on *Ljósvetninga saga*’s audiences of Barði Guðmundsson and the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century compilers, who become its authors: Barði by offering a reading that completely changes the way the saga is read, and the compilers by actively manipulating the text through the mere action of choosing a redaction. Finally, The Part About the Genres is where authorial, textual, and audience intent come together, since all three operate when discussing genre. The author creates the text within a set of certain generic conventions, the text embodies these and interacts with other texts of the same and different genres, and the audience receives the text with their own notions of genre, informed by their perception of the author’s generic intent, their own individual and historical circumstances, and the text’s place in the manuscript.

1.3 The Manuscripts

*Ljósvetninga saga* has two extant medieval manuscripts, AM 561 4to and AM 162 c fol., both fragmentary. In addition, forty-four paper copies have been listed by Guðvarður Már Gummlaugsson, to which three more can be added (see Appendix). Forty-six of these are copies of AM 162 c fol., the C-redaction medieval manuscript, and one, written by the Icelandic to Frye quoting a ghostly Shakespeare above. It also presents Eco’s urge as an author to deem which interpretations of his own works are admissible and which are not, under the guise of his position and prestige as literary critic (which is itself fueled by his position and prestige as literary author).
scholar Guðbrandur Vigfússon, is a copy of AM 561 4to, the A-redaction medieval manuscript. The present discussion introduces these manuscripts, though a stemma is not attempted. AM 561 4to will be introduced, followed by the issue of AM 162 c fol.’s scribal attribution. Finally, the editions of Ljósvetninga saga will be compared regarding their choice of paper manuscripts, with the argument that, despite its flaws, Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 edition best reflects the extant C-redaction tradition.

1.3.1 AM 561 4to

A has abbreviated clumsily and become entangled not only in illogicalities but also in breaches of taste. He is an abridger in the worst sense, either bereft of any literary sense (including a sense of drama and a sense of humor) or too precipitate to take heed. His revision shows a pragmatic interest in the plot but little concern for the incidentals of preservation.32

AM 561 4to is the only extant medieval text-witness of Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction.33 It is better preserved than AM 162 c fol. and allows a good understanding of how the manuscript would have looked. This cannot be said of AM 162 c fol., which can be only somewhat reconstructed through its non-direct paper manuscript copies. However, unlike AM 162 c fol., much less is known about its origins and scribe, and so we can say much less about it than we can about its fellow medieval manuscript. While it is

33 Notice that in ÍF 10:LVII (and elsewhere), Björn Sigfússson mistakenly cites AM 461 4to as a text witness for Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction, when in actuality it is a c. 1700 paper manuscript of Egils saga Skallagrímsson. The actual A-redaction textual witness is AM 561 4to, which Björn Sigfússson himself refers to in other places, e.g., ÍF 10:2. Pointing out this mistake might seem nitpicky, but it is a crucial mistake since it is recreated by, for example, Guðni Jónsson’s 1947 edition of the saga, Þingeyinga saga, VII. Elsewhere he names the medieval C-redaction manuscript “AM 162, 4to” rather than AM 162 c fol, Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 3.
taken as axiomatic that all paper manuscripts are of AM 162 c fol., it is very important to note that there exists at least one paper copy of AM 561 4to scribed by Guðbrandur Vigfússon himself, Bodleian ms Icelandic c. 9.

AM 561 4to has been dated by Kålund to c. 1400. It presently contains three sagas: Reykdœla saga, Gull-Þóris saga (or Þorskfirðinga saga), and Ljósvetninga saga. Unfortunately, as Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson shows, wear had damaged the external sides of all of the gatherings. Two sides of Reykdœla saga (9r and 16r) have been lost, and examples of younger rímur were written on the parchment. Two sides of Gull-Þóris saga (23v and 24r) have also been lost, but these made space for Úlfhams rímur, and two sides (31v and 32r) have disappeared. Ljósvetninga saga has only one damaged side (37v), which was replaced with a summary based on the content that was legible to its scribe. Guðvarður argues, based on a codicological analysis, that one or more additional sagas could have been in the manuscript before it was damaged.

Guðvarður discusses the extent of the lost leaves in the first lacuna of Ljósvetninga saga. According to him, it is most likely that only one leaf is missing in the first lacuna between chs. 4–13 (34v–35r). He finds it unlikely that more than this is missing, since the manuscript is consistently composed of gatherings of eight leaves. As such, Særla þáttr, Öfeigs þáttr, and Vǫðu-Brands þáttr would not have been in the missing part. This thesis accepts the absence of the þættir in their present form from AM 561 4to, since the codicological argumentation is convincing. About the second lacuna—the damaged 37v and the leaves that could have come after it—Björn Sigfússon states that “afrit þetta þarf ekki að vera neitt afbakað, svo langt

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35 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, 76.
36 On Úlfhams rímur, see Adalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, Úlfhams saga, XLVIII–XLIX.
37 ÍF 10:36, n. 1.
38 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “AM 561 4to,” 77–78. Though a significant loss of the first part of the manuscript would then need to be accounted for.
39 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, 78–79. See also Adolfine Erichsen, Untersuchungen zur Ljósvetninga Saga, 10 and Origines Islandicae, eds. Guðbrand Vigfús and F. York Powell, 347–348.
downplaying the lost material. Guðvarður, however, points out that Björn’s logic does not follow through, since the extant summary contains 210 words: if only one leaf in an eight-leaf gathering is missing, and we count at least 400 words per side, we have lost 1200 words of the A-redaction’s account of the legal dealings of Guðmundr inn ríki and Þórir Helgason. The 210-word summary must have lost much. The corresponding segment in the C-redaction contains around 650 words, and thus the A-redaction account of the events leading up to Þórir’s exile would have been significantly longer. This, Guðvarður argues, discounts the possibility that more than one leaf is missing before 38r; two leaves would mean an astronomical 2000 words missing, a 1350-word difference between the redactions. Such variance is unheard of in the other deviations in chs. 13–18. Finally, Guðvarður argues that after 41v only one leaf is missing, one that would have contained the ending of chapter 21. This would also mean that this six-leaf gathering would be the final one in the manuscript, otherwise the presence of Eyjólfr’s bulk and Þórarins þáttr would make for an odd manuscript. One or more sagas would need to come after it, or the gathering would be of a very odd size.

Guðvarður’s argument stands on several literary assumptions:

1. The summary in 37v indeed reflects the lost material, and the A-redaction and the C-redaction followed a similar plot throughout the Þórir Helgason episode. It is therefore unreasonable to expect 2000 missing words.
2. The C-redaction’s version of Eyjólfr’s bulk is the only way to finish the narrative.
3. Þórarins þáttr ofsa was never included in the A-redaction.

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40 ÍF 10:36, n. 1.
41 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “AM 561 4to,” 75–76.
42 Adolfine Erichsen expressed a similar sentiment, Untersuchungen, 11.
43 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “AM 561 4to,” 79.
44 Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, 80, n. 28.
Both Björn Sigfússon and Hallvard Magerøy would agree with the first assumption. As noted above, Guðvarður assumes that the A-redaction would not have significantly varied from the plot of the C-redaction. This is not unreasonable, but in the abbreviation provided in 37v, the plot already strays somewhat from the path of the C-redaction. Þorkell Geitisson’s presence in the dealings between Guðmundr and Þórir is unparalleled in the C-redaction. Gísli Sigurðsson uses Þorkell’s presence to support his theory of a separate oral tradition that informs the A-redaction version. What seems abrupt to us would have been reasonable in an oral tradition that tied Þorkell Geitisson with the lives of Guðmundr and Einarr. Gísli acknowledges the fragmentary state of the extant AM 561 4to, but his attempt to explain the abruptness of Þorkell Geitisson’s appearance does not take into account the fact that this takes place in a 210-word summary of a sequence at least 1200 words long. In the lost narrative, it is likely that more words would have been spent on Þorkell’s appearance, even if it would have remained no more than a cameo. Andersson’s dismissal of the A-redactor similarly does not take into account that the apparent rush to conclude the feud between Þórir Helgason and Guðmundr inn ríki stems from the fact that around 1000 words are missing from the narrative, which are in fact 350 words more than the C-redaction allocated for this part of the narrative.

As will be suggested in this thesis’s chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent? it is not hard to imagine that Þorkell Geitisson’s presence would be explained, for example, through his marriage to Einarr’s daughter, or as the very event that would facilitate the wedding between the two. This deviation should already cause us to question how much is known about the course of events beyond the fact that the

45 ÍF 10:36, n. 1, and Hallvard Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet i Ljósveitinga saga, 53.
46 See also the discussion in the chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?
48 In his equally abrupt appearance in the C-redaction’s chapter 30, for example, Þorkell Geitisson receives a speaking line that justifies his presence.
49 Attested in Vápnfirðinga saga as well as Vöðu-Brands þáttr, though presenting a contradicting chronology.
endpoint is similar: Guðmundr meets Rindill, and Þórir Helgason spends three winters abroad. However, considering that scholars unanimously dismiss the possibility of Vǫðu-Brands þáttr appearing in the A-redaction following chapter 4, is it not possible that elements of that story have entered the A-redaction’s account of the alþingi proceedings? Furthermore, before we entirely dismiss the possibility that 2000 words are missing from the A-redaction (that is, that two leaves rather than one are missing between 37v and 38r), we should consider the roundabout way Vǫðu-Brands þáttr takes to arrange a confrontation between Guðmundr inn ríki and Þorkell Geitisson. Is it not within reason to allow for such an elaborate build-up before Þorkell Geitisson’s appearance in the A-redaction as well?

The second assumption is also interesting; after all, AM 514 4to and its abbreviated ending show that in the narrative sense, other endings for the saga can be imagined. Indeed, the synopsis provided by AM 514 4to could have even fit into the remaining, unaccounted for, side and a half left of AM 561 4to. If the A-redaction and the C-redaction have shown themselves to be capable of significant variation in ch. 13–18, could this not have been the case in later chapters as well?

The final assumption regards the (non-) presence of Þórarins þáttr ofsa in the A-redaction. This þáttr could have presumably filled up two sides. The story, which brings the Mǫðruvellinger back into the fold of Christianity by avenging a hirðmaðr of king Óláfr helgi, could be a perfectly reasonable ending for Ljósvetninga saga. There has never been a convincing attempt to explain Þórarins þáttr ofsa’s origins: it has instead been explained away as an apocryphal þáttr. Both narrative- and plot-wise it would make perfect sense to include this story at the end of a version of Ljósvetninga saga that does not include Eyjólfr’s bulk. Like the saga’s opening chapters, it starts with a reference to Grettir and continues with the killing of a follower of the Norwegian ruler. It then continues with the Mǫðruvellinger’s leader being enlisted to the cause of said ruler, and it ends, presumably, with a martial and legal battle (the outcome of which we cannot possibly presume). Length and narrative-wise, then, there is a perfectly fitting ending.
that could have appeared in an 8-leaf gathering of the A-redaction, even if this were the last gathering of the manuscript. Therefore, the possibility that the description of the legal dealings between Guðmundr inn ríki and Þórir Helgason were significantly longer in AM 561 4to cannot be discarded.

Guðvarður’s most convincing argument in regard to the saga’s ending is that there is little way to account for a more than 600-word difference between the A-redaction and the C-redaction. While this argument certainly rings true, this is not the only possible explanation for the conundrum. An anecdotal and swift ending also characterizes the two other extant sagas of AM 561 4to: Gull-Þóris saga moves quickly from the protagonist’s final battle to a brief summary of his older age, while Reykideila saga ends with a brief summary of the legal settlements conducted after the betrayal and killing of the saga’s second protagonist, Víga-Skúta. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the saga’s ending would have looked like the synopsis offered in AM 514 4to, though perhaps less hastily written.

AM 561 4to, then, is an incomplete text, and has been further misunderstood by scholars, who have underplayed the importance of the significant lacuna between 37v and 38r to understanding the text’s workings. Technological advances could reveal more of the text hidden under 37v, which is partly legible to the naked eye and was made more visible thanks to Þorgeir Sigurðsson and Haukur Þorgeirsson’s ultraviolet and infrared photos of the damaged side. Further research will allow for a more extensive reading of 37v than is presently available, and could reveal more about the manuscript’s composition from its at times illegible marginalia.

1.3.2 AM 162 C fol.

AM 162 C fol.’s current state reveals what a significant loss it is for the present understanding of saga literature. In their Origines Islandicae, Guðbrandur Vigfússon and F. York Powell argue that: “In importance this once splendid codex must, as a collection of Islendinga Sagas, rank next only to AM. 132 and the lost Waterhorn-book, and before Mela-book
They claim that it contained not only Ljósvetninga saga, Vápnfirðinga saga, Droplaugarsona saga, Finnboga saga, and Þorsteins þátr stangarhögg's (leaves of which are still extant), but also suggested that it would have contained within it Reykdœla saga ok Víga-Skútu, Valla-Ljóts saga, Hrafnkels saga Freysgða, and *Njarðvíkinga saga, making the size of its Íslendingasögur portion around 86 folios.

Presently, however, AM 162 C fol. is composed of seven extant leaves of these Íslendingasögur, and four additional leaves of the riddarasaga Sálus saga og Nikanórs, which were added by Kålund. Jón Helgason argues that Kålund added these leaves due to similarities in the scribal hand and decided to exclude them from his reading of AM 162 c fol., but Kålund seemed to be much more convinced about this than Jón lets on. Guöbrandur Vigfússon and Powell, who accepted Sálus saga og Nikanórs's inclusion into the manuscript, preferred as early a date as possible for the manuscript, namely the end of the fourteenth century. Scholarly consensus, however, places the manuscript in the middle of the fifteenth century, and this has been strengthened by Stefán Karlsson's attribution of the scribal hand to Ólafur Loftsson.

1.3.2.1 What Is Ólafur Loftsson?

Ólafur Loftsson is believed to have been a son of the late fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century Icelandic magnate Loftur Guttormsson, from an unknown mother. His activity is mentioned in documents from 1424–

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50 Origins Islandicae, 346.
51 Note that Guöbrandur Vigfússon and Powell argue that a third of the manuscript would have been with riddarasögur material, Origins Islandicae, 345.
56 If in Íslenzkir ættstuðlar vol. 1:198–199, Einar Bjarnason argues that Ólafur was “væntanlega sonur Lofts Guttormssonar,” he later asserts this as fact, treating Eiríkur Loftsson’s representing Ólafur’s daughter Margrét in a marriage contract in 1461 (DI 5: item 551, pp. 610–611; presumably 3 years after Ólafur’s death) as “staðfesting” for the family relationship, Íslenzkir ættstuðlar vol. 1:211. This argument is more than reasonable,
1449, and his death would have occurred sometime around the year 1458, since his inheritance is handled in the year 1459 by his daughter Margrét and his son Jón.57

Stefán Karlsson has attributed six diplomas, several manuscript segments, and two manuscripts to Ólafur’s scribal hand. Before we look into the logic behind the scribal attribution, a survey of the material attributed to him is provided:

1. AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VII 29 = DI 4: item 335, pp. 273–275 = IOD: item 172, pp. 217–219. (1420) pertains to a land dispute case regarding Grund í Eyjafirði, and features Loftur Guttormsson as a witness.58

2. AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VIII 11 = DI 4: item 372, pp. 313–314 = IOD: item 193, pp. 243–244. (1424) pertains to a post-plague inheritance dispute between Hrafn Guðmundsson and Ari Guðmundsson.60


and at any rate this proves that Ólafur must have been very closely connected with the Skarðverjar. In DI 4: item 555, p. 520, n. NB, the editor Jón Þorkelsson lists Ólafur as a son of Loftur Guttormsson’s mistress Kristín Oddsdóttir, but Einar Bjarmanon deems this “rangt,” Íslenzkir ættstuðlar, Vol 1:208, n. 99. The editor of DI 2, Jón Þorkelsson, left no room for doubts when discussing a certain Eiríkur: “þessi Eiríkr var sonr Torfa í Klopafjörðum, Olafssonar, Loftssonar, hins ríka,” DI 1: item 22C, p. 100, and the annotation in DI 1: item 95, p. 354. See also Páll Eggert Ólason et al., Íslenzkir æviskrár frá Landhúsmálum til ársloka 1940, vol. 4:65. It is also curious that in Skardsvآrnآlآ’æs A-redaction, Ólafur’s name is removed from the list of Loftur ríki Guttormsson’s children, while the H-redaction adds his name, Annálar 1400–1800, vol. 1.1:58. Fjármál too has Ólafur as a son of Loftur (whose death is moved back to 1416!), but does not specify his mother, Annálar 1400–1800, vol. 2.1:16.

57 DI 5: item 186, pp. 200–201. See also DI 4 index, p. 1011.
58 Stefán Karlsson, “Ritun Reykjarfjarðarbókar,” 137, and Íslenzk bókagerð á miðöldum,” 290. Cf. Lasse Mårtensson, Studier I AM 557 4to [...], 28. Of the diplomas attributed to Ólafur Loftsson, this one was the latest to have been identified by Stefán Karlsson, and is not mentioned in this context in Islandske originaldiplomer indtil 1450.
59 Not to be confused with 373, wrongly marked as 372 as well in p. 314 of DI IV.
60 IOD, p. II. Stefán Karlsson pays extra attention to explain why the scribal hand of this document could not have been the aformentioned Hrafn Guðmundsson.
Einars-son and Jón Jónsson over Sandar í Miðfirdi, also in Aðalból, Bessa-staðir, Oddstaður, and Bálkastaðir.\textsuperscript{61}

4. AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. LXVI 6 = DI 4: item 562 = IOD: item 241, pp. 308–309. (1433) pertains to a land exchange between Björn Sæmundsson and Oddr Snorrason.\textsuperscript{62}

5. AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 16 = DI 4: item 780 A, pp. 756–757 = IOD: item 320, pp. 389–391. (1449) is a land exchange agreement between Ásgrímr Jónsson and Ólafur Loftsson. Ólafur Loftsson gives his lands in Tjörn and Hafralaek í Aðaldal to Ásgrímr Jónsson and gets Lundarbrekka in return (with the consent of Ásgrímr’s wife Guðrún Magnúsdóttir).\textsuperscript{63}

6. AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 10 = DI 5: item 33, pp. 33–34 = IOD: item 330, pp. 403–404. (1449) has Jón Helgason and Þorvaldr [sic] Jónsson swear that Þorkell Guðbjartsson sold Lundarbrekka to Ásgrímr Jónsson.\textsuperscript{64}

7. Stock. Perg. 4to 16 (Helgastaðabók)
   a. ii r: is a record of a transfer of the Helgastaðir church to Ólafur Loftsson from Þorkell Guðbjartsson (DI 4: item 781, p. 758);
   b. 60v: features a copy of diplomas 5 and 6 above.\textsuperscript{65}

8. AM 557 4to (Skálholtsbók) contains various sagas, some complete and some fragmentary: Valdimars saga, Gunlaugs saga ornstungu, Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds, Hrafnis saga Sveinbjarnarsonar, Eiríks saga rauða, Rögnvalds þátrr og Rauðs, Dámusta saga, Hroða þátrr heimska, Eiríks saga viðjörla, Stúfs þátrr, Karls þátrr vesæla, and Sveinka þátrr Steinarssonar.

9. AM 162 c fol. could be considered two manuscripts if one considers leaves 8–11 to be separate, though this thesis argues that these texts belong together.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{61} IOD, p. II.
\textsuperscript{62} IOD, p. II.
\textsuperscript{63} IOD, pp. II–L.
\textsuperscript{64} IOD, pp. II–L.
\textsuperscript{65} IOD, p. I. Helgastaðabók [...], eds. Selma Jónsdóttir et al., 84–85 (Icelandic), 194–196 (English).
Stefán Karlsson poses two assumptions that must be dealt with here:

a. that all of these texts can be attributed to the same scribe.

b. that said scribe was Ólafur Loftsson.

Recently, Lasse Mårtensson has argued that AM 557 4to can be split into three parts: 1–23r, 23v–40v, and 41r–48.\(^{67}\) This in itself is not contradictory to Stefán Karlsson’s argument,\(^{68}\) rather Mårtensson advances the argument by analyzing these and arguing that they stem from a change of hands. If Parts One and Three share the same hand at slightly different time periods, Part Two is written by a different hand entirely; the difference between the parts is most striking due to the abrupt change in script size. The abruptness of the change is made more visible as it happens relatively early into *Hrafnis saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*. As Lasse Mårtensson attests, this is not a necessarily new idea. Louisa Fredrika Tan-Haverhorst had already argued along these lines as early as 1939, though this was immediately contested by Dag Strömbäck the following year. Strömbäck argued that the same scribe could have written different parts of the manuscript at different periods of time, accounting for the differences in script size. Since then there has been no significant discussion of the change in script size.\(^{69}\)

Mårtensson provides 4 possible explanations as to why the script changed:

1. The same hand would have written both Parts One and Two, but changed size in order to save space.

2. The same scribe wrote both parts but after taking a significant break. He thinks that this is unlikely because of the point in which the break happens (mid-sentence),\(^{70}\) but does not immediately dismiss it.

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\(^{67}\) Mårtensson, *Studier i AM 557 4to*, 30–38.

\(^{68}\) Mårtensson himself says that his “studie är avsvedd att utgöra åtminstone en del av Stefán Karlssons efterlysta undersökning,” 29.

\(^{69}\) Mårtensson, 32–33.

\(^{70}\) This argument holds less water considering the context of the present thesis; the abruptness with which *Ljósvetninga saga’s* ch. 19 suddenly converges has up to now not been
3. A new scribe took over after a long or short period of time, though Mårtensson thinks a long period is unlikely for the same reasons as explanation two.\textsuperscript{71}

4. Fol. 23v and following would have been erased or damaged and would have needed to be rewritten. Mårtensson says that there is no evidence for this.\textsuperscript{72}

Mårtensson’s study continues into a micropaleographic, macropaleographic, and orthographic analysis of the three manuscript parts. The main conclusions that he draws from this are that the micropaleographic evidence points to a clear distinction between Parts One and Two, and a clear similarity between One and Three, though with a certain amount of time (short or long) passing between the latter two. His macropaleographic analysis argues similarly, that Parts One and Three are similar and One and Two different. He dismisses the option that a long break would explain these changes, arguing that it would be unnatural for a scribe to adopt new features and then abandon them, as the scribe of Part Two seems to have done. In terms of orthography, while some words feature a clear change between Part One and Part Two, others exhibit a gradual change. In addition, Part One tends to be more heavily abbreviated than Part Two, with Part Three in the middle. This tendency for fewer abbreviations in Part Two indicates, according to Mårtensson, less likelihood that the change of style was meant to save space. In addition, Mårtensson believes that Part Three was written before Part One.

The importance of Mårtensson’s study to the present discussion of Ólafur Loftsson lies in the fact that if the manuscript is split into two scribal hands, the similarities found by Stefán Karlsson, even if proved to be correct, would only fit a single hand of the two. Mårtensson, however, does

given a convincing explanation. Sometimes things work in a logic foreign to ours, and the reason for it is forever lost in a no longer extant exemplum or archetype.

\textsuperscript{71} This is less convincing: If parts 1 and 2 indeed have different hands, we do not know for what reasons these were switched; therefore, any period of time (justified by codicological evidence) could have passed between these two.

\textsuperscript{72} Mårtensson, \textit{Studier i AM 557 4to}, 33–34.
not discuss at length the implications of his study on Ólafur’s scribal hand, nor does he provide an analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities between the different diplomas and manuscripts. In connection to the texts attributed to Ólafur Loftsson by Stefán Karlsson, Mårtensson indicates a similarity between Parts One and Three of AM 557 4to and AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VII 29, the first diploma Stefán Karlsson attributed to Ólafur, which is dated to 1420. Mårtensson uses this diploma to date AM 557 4to to before 1420. Mårtensson argues that AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VII 29 and the other five diplomas attributed to Ólafur are dissimilar, but does not expand the argument. He allows for Ólafur’s relative inexperience and development to explain these differences. AM 162 C fol., however, is most similar to Part Two of AM 557 4to. This creates a problematic division for the present thesis, since now the works attributed to Ólafur Loftsson can be split up into these three groups:

1. AM 557 4to Parts One and Three and AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VII 29.
2. The five remaining diplomas and Helgastaðabók copies.
3. AM 557 4to Part Two and AM 162 C fol.

While Mårtensson allows that groups one and two could be attributed to the scribe’s change of style with time, group three stands alone. Therefore, even if we accept Stefán Karlsson’s external reasoning for attributing the diplomas’ scribal hand to Ólafur, this does not help identify AM 162 C fol.’s scribal hand. In fact, if we accept Mårtensson’s argument, we might determine that AM 162 C fol.’s scribe could be anyone other than Ólafur Loftsson.

73 Stefán Karlsson himself indicated that AM 557 4to is most similar to this diploma, “Íslenzk bókagerð,” 290.
74 Mårtensson, Studier i AM 557 4to, 286–290.
75 Mårtensson, 28. Stefán Karlsson said in regards to this: “Óvist er að Ólafur hafi verið af unglingsaldri 1420, og skriftin á bréfinu frá því ári ber þess merki að vera ekki fullmótuð,” “Ritun Rekjarfjarðarbókar,” 325.
76 Mårtensson, Studier i AM 557 4to, 29.
It is possible to approach the matter in another way, and that is the assumption under which this thesis operates. Since Stefn Karlsson himself indicated that AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VII 29 is exceptional, we could venture to remove it along with Parts One and Three of AM 557 4to, and retain groups two and three, which could still be associated with Olafur Loftsson. This assumption remains a hypothesis that cannot be affirmed without paleographical research into the connections between the diplomas and AM 162 C fol. Furthermore, even if AM 162 C fol. and Part Two of AM 557 4to are not scribed by Olafur, these two scribes were nevertheless connected, and operated in the same cultural and perhaps political milieu. The thesis will continue in a careful manner to attribute AM 162 C fol. to the hand that scribed the five diplomas identified by Stefn Karlsson.

The second assumption that needs to be dealt with is whether or not the scribe here consistently identified is, indeed, Olafur Loftsson. Stefn Karlsson provides little paleographical information as to why all six diplomas were written by the same hand, besides the common feature of an ‘o’ hooked from above (ð) “without regard for phonetic value.” It is noteworthy that in his analysis of AM 557 4to, Mårtensson finds that Part One and Part Two share a similar use of ‘ð’ for /ö/ and /o/, arguing that the scribe of Parts One and Three had gradually picked this usage up. Mårtensson does not address why this unique feature would appear in both the hands of Part One and Three and of Part Two, but it strengthens a connection between the two hands of the manuscript. Once he determined a single hand for these diplomas, Stefn based his scribal attribution on external evidence. Stefn responds to the Diplomatarium Islandicum

77 Stefn Karlsson, “Íslenzk bókagerð,” 290.
78 Helgastaðabók, 84 (Icelandic), 195 (English).
79 Mårtensson, Studier i AM 557 4to, 200–201.
80 Mårtensson, 282, 287.
81 Stefn Karlsson had explained his general method for dating and localizing manuscripts in his 1999 “The Localisation and Dating of Medieval Icelandic Manuscript.” There he argues the benefits of using circumstantial evidence: “a greater number of charters reduces the number of persons who can be seen to have been present on all the occasions when the charters were executed or to have had an interest in them all. And it is also an
editors’ argument that AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VIII 16 was scribed by Hrafn Guðmundsson, noting that the other diplomas by the same hand were written after the latter’s death, which automatically dismisses him as the possible scribe.82 Stefán traces Hvassafell in Eyjafjörður to Ólafur Loftsson’s family, first with a mention of its possession by Halldór Loftsson in 1403,83 and then with mention that it was under the control of Margrét Ólafsdóttir, Ólafur Loftsson’s daughter, in 1488.84 Stefán Karlsson then uses this information to determine that Ólafur Loftsson was in possession of Hvassafell, so that when AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 10 is written down at Hvassafell, it would be by Ólafur Loftsson’s hand.

The argument makes sense: AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 16 attests to the land transaction in which Ólafur Loftsson acquired Lundarbrekka and the church of Helgastaðir.85 In the letters from Bishop Gottskálk,86 Ólafur Loftsson’s possession of the church is said to be contested by Þorkell Guðbjartsson, and that a serious dispute had arisen around this, to the point where the bishop intervened. Therefore, AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 10—the document in which witnesses attest to have been present when Þorkell Guðbjartsson sold Ásgrímr Jónsson his property in Lundarbrekka—is clearly a document that would have been dear to him, especially in light of him being summoned by the bishop to defend his possession of the land. That the same hand, according to Stefán Karlsson, copies AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 16 and AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. XII 10 into Stock. Perg. 4to 16, as well as writes a statement regarding the change of the church’s ownership, strengthens the conviction that it would have been Ólafur Loftsson.87 All subsequent attributions that Stefán makes stem from this point of advantage if the relevant charters are chronologically spread over a longish period, since this reduces the possibility that likely candidates had the same secretary the whole time; and one can in certain cases observe small changes in writing which can contribute to a closer dating of any manuscript which might be in the charter-writer’s hand,” 145.

82 IOD, p. IL.
83 IOD: item 155, pp. 198–202.
84 DI 4: item 568, pp. 640–641. On this document see also IOD, p. IL. Margrét is the one deciding regarding the property in this case rather than her husband Bjarni Ólason.
85 DI 4: item 781, p. 758; a text found in Helgastaðabók.
86 DI 5: item 60, pp. 74–75 and DI 5: item 63, pp. 77–78.
87 IOD, p. L.
departure, strengthened by the fact that AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. VIII 16 con-
tains Ólafur Loftsson as a named witness. The fact that Ólafur Loftsson
was Hrafn Guðmundsson’s son-in-law further supports Stefán’s argu-
ments, especially in light of Diplomatarium Islandicum’s attribution of one of
these to Hrafn himself. It is important to note that Stefán wrote that a
more extensive discussion needs to be conducted.88

The fact that we have a named person whose interests are best served
by a text does not mean that that person is the one who wrote it. It is clear
from the diplomas we possess that the scribe assumed to be Ólafur Loft-
sson is someone who has the latter’s best interests in mind, or someone em-
ployed at his service. Not committing to a precise identity, but acknowl-
edging whose side the scribe is on might be the best compromise. It allows
us to avoid a reading of the manuscript that is too invested in the personal
history of one specific man, and allows us to zoom out to his kin group, his
region, and, perhaps, his shared ideologies. A future paleographical study
could either strengthen or entirely dismiss this argument, and as such one
should be careful not to pull a Barði Guðmundsson89 and invest too much
of the interpretation in the identity of one man.

To conclude this discussion, it is almost impossible to ascertain
whether Ólafur Loftsson was the scribe of AM 162 C fol. Nonetheless, this
person must have been closely tied to Ólafur, to the extent that he would
copy a document declaring his control of Helgastaðir into a manuscript
with a Saint’s life. The issue of whether or not there is a direct link between
Helgastaðabók and the five diplomas of the same hand to AM 162 C fol.
remains open, but this thesis will trust Stefán Karlsson’s reasoning as the
basis for its historical assumption.

89 In the sense of understanding the choices made by the fifteenth-century compiler of
Ljóssetninga saga as a roman à clef, rather than in the sense of gathering men for a battle in
a heath (à la Heiðarviga saga’s Barði Guðmundarson).
1.3.2.2 Copies of the C-redaction: Choosing an Edition

The obvious choice for a working edition of *Ljósvetninga saga* is Björn Sigfús-
son’s Íslenzk fornrit edition from 1940, as it is considered the standard in
the field and is the basis for Andersson and Miller’s English translation.
However, I argue that Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s
1830 edition is the better choice, based on the use of AM 485 4to as its
main manuscript, with the reservation that Þorgeir and Þorsteinn were so
invested in their readings of the post-medieval manuscript that they pre-
ferred it at times over AM 162 c fol. itself.90

It is important to note that all of the C-redaction paper manuscripts
examined, including those that belong to the AM 514 4to tradition, are
most likely copies of the same copy of AM 162 c fol.91 There are several
indications of this. The abrupt ending of Þórarins þáttr ofsa is a sign that, by
the time the manuscript was copied for the first time, this story already
ended with a lacuna. However, AM 514 4to ends with a synopsis that
makes no mention of Þórarinn ofsi, so it could have potentially stemmed
from a copy of AM 162 c fol. that did not include the þáttr. The most illus-
trative example that includes AM 514 4to can be found in Sórla þáttr.
There, in AM 162 c fol., when Þórarinn discusses Sórli Brodd-Helgason’s
marriage proposal with Guðmundr inn ríki, the following dialogue ap-
pears: “satt er þat. s. Gud. þórarinn. 00 0ueriu letzu suarat uerda. eigi
syndizt mer þat. kuat hann. huat kom til þess. hefir hann eigi ættina til. e.
er hann eigi 00 uel mannadr sem þu uillt.”92 Here all of the paper manu-
scripts, including AM 514 4to 6r, write a variant of “Satt er þat, segir
Guðmundr. Þórarinn mælti: vel mannaðr, sem þú veizt.”93 The paper cop-
ies jump over a manuscript line in AM 162 c fol., and since they do this in
unison, the omission must stem from their common exemplar.94

90 E.g., *Ljósv.* 1830, 15, n. 3.
91 *Origines Islandiae*, 344, 346; Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, XIX–XX, XXV, XXVIII; ÍF
10:LVII; and Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson, “AM 561 4to,” 70.
92 “Syv sagablade,” ed. Jón Helgason, 44.
93 *Ljósv.* 1830, 15.
No proper stemma of *Ljósvetninga saga*’s manuscripts has been made, nor will it be attempted here,\(^95\) despite the fact that the following discussion provides some observations that will hopefully contribute to this goal.

1.3.2.2.1 *Ljósvetninga saga* Critical Editions’ Preferred Paper Manuscripts

Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 edition and first publication of *Ljósvetninga saga* was based mostly on AM 485 4to (which they marked as *A*), noting some variants in its critical apparatus of Isl papp 35 fol. (which they marked as *S*), AM 162 c fol. (which they marked as *C*), the A-redaction’s AM 561 4to (in the parts that are shared between the two redactions, and which they marked as *D*), and the B-redaction’s AM 514 4to (which they marked as *B*).\(^96\) Guðmundur Þorláksson, on the other hand, considered AM 485 4to “einna lélegast af öllum pappírshandritunum, og má heita fullt af vitleysum.”\(^97\) Guðbrandur Vigfússon says about AM 485 4to, that it is “a pretty good copy of ‘a,’ as far as we can test it against the vellum leaves.”\(^98\) About the 1830 edition’s choice of AM 485 4to, Björn Sigfusson says that it “fylgir afargölluðu pappírshandriti.”\(^99\) Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell’s *Ljósvetninga saga* edition, printed in their *Origines Islandicae*, which only follows until Guðmundur’s death in chapter 21, also followed AM 485 4to as the main text for the C-redaction.

As noted, Guðmundur Þorláksson dubbed Kall 616 4to (which he named C3) as “bezt af öllum handritunum og næst skinnblöðunum,”\(^100\) and used it as the basis for his own 1880 edition of *Ljósvetninga saga*. Guðbrandur Vigfússon called this “a second-rate MS.”\(^101\)

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95 A very initial one was offered by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell, in which AM 514 4to and BL ADD 4867 4to (written as “BM 4867”) were designated as separate from AM 485 4to, with all three stemming from the same seventeenth-century copy.

96 Unnumbered two-paged introduction.

97 *Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga*, XXIX.

98 *Origines Islandicae*, 346.

99 Björn Sigfusson, *Um Ljósvetninga sögu*, 3.

100 *Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga*, XXX.

101 *Origines Islandicae*, 348.
While Björn Sigfússoon avoided judgement of Guðmundur Þorláks-son’s choice of Kall 616 4to, he did note that it is a copy of his preferred manuscript, JS 624 4to, Látrabók. Jón Helgason pointed out that some of the readings in JS 624 4to were added to this post-medieval manuscript that were never in AM 162 c fol. itself. This implies that JS 624 4to does not strictly follow AM 162 c fol. While not addressing JS 624 4to, Guðbrandur Vigfússson did discuss BL ADD 4867 4to, which has many shared readings with JS 624 4to. He marked this manuscript as $a^3$ and said of it, that “The scribe has made one or two emendations, for instance, viner, 4.10, and he has slurred over corrupt clauses; thus he gives 4. 14 thus—‘ok kvaz hann hafa þer í hende sem þú vilder,’ instead of ‘ok kvað hann hafa half-bynnno eina í hende’ of the $a^1$ [AM 485 4to]. This last sample suffices to show that it would not be feasible to base the text on $a^3$ instead of on $a^1$.” JS 624 4to reads very similarly: “og qv(at) h(an)n hafa þi(er) í hende s(e)m þú vilder.”

1.3.2.2.2 JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

As is clear, there are two very contradictory approaches towards AM 485 4to on the one hand, and JS 624 4to and its connected manuscripts on the other hand. In order to choose between Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 edition and Björn Sigfússson’s 1940 edition, a comparison of their two base-manuscripts with AM 162 c fol. is needed to answer the question: which of the two reflect the only extant medieval manuscript of the C-redaction better? As will be shown, AM 485 4to offers a more accurate reading, while JS 624 4to has a tendency to add readings that are not present in AM 162 c fol.

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102 ÍF 10:LVIII, n. 2.
104 Origines Islandicae, 347.
105 JS 624 45v.
Example A: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

For example, in Vǫðu-Brands þátrr, AM 162 c fol. 2r:\(^{106}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 2r</th>
<th>ok  Tala nu um malit  ok urdu  a allt  sattir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JS 624 4to 44v</td>
<td>og  Tala  um málíð  urðed þeir  á allt  vel  sätter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 19r</td>
<td>og  Tala  um málíð og urdu  á allt  sætter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that both JS 624 4to and AM 485 4to remove the “nu.” This is common to all C-redaction manuscripts I have examined, whereas JS 624 4to changes the form of verða and adds a “þeir” and “vel” that are not to be found in AM 162 c fol., while AM 485 4to remains relatively faithful to the medieval manuscript.

Example B: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

Some further examples can be found in chapter 27 of Ljósveitinga saga, which is found in AM 162 c fol., 3v:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>ok  Er  þessir  hofðu  hladit  seglinu.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JS 624 4to 85r</td>
<td>og  Er  þeir  hofðu  hladed  seglum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>og  Er  þeir  hofðu  hladed  seglum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, both JS 624 and AM 485 replace “ok er þessir” with “og er þeir,” as seems to be the C-redaction copy rule. The same goes for “seglinu,” which all paper manuscripts I have examined read as “seglum.”

Example C: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>sidan  reid  Skeggbroddi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JS 624 4to 85r</td>
<td>leit  skeggbr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>sidan  reid  Skegg Brodde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noticeably, JS 624 4to replaces the reid with leit and drops the síðan, while AM 485 offers a correct reading.

\(^{106}\) All subsequent readings of AM 162 c fol. are based on “Syv Sagablade,” ed. Jón Helgason.
Here JS 624 4to offers a more correct reading than AM 485 4to.

Example E: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

Here the most dramatic difference is found between JS 624 4to and AM 162 c fol.’s reading of AM 162 c fol. 3v. JS 624 4to eliminates the “þeir gera nu sua,” and adds a new clause, whereas AM 485 4to follows the section, albeit replacing “þa” with “þar.” This change in JS 624 4to is significant, and it is clear that the manuscript’s exemplar, or its scribe, was trying to change the narrative flow.107

Example F: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

JS 624 4to adds “hann svarar,” while AM 485 4to adds nothing.

Example G: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

107 BL Add 4867 4to offers a similar reading.
JS 624 4to’s attempt to correct the unclear reading offered by AM 162 c fol. may make for a more streamlined text, but it takes the reading further away from the earlier manuscript.

Example H: JS 624 4to vs. AM 485 4to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>JS 624 4to 85r</th>
<th>AM 485 4to 55v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enn</td>
<td>hamingian</td>
<td>enn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hamingiu.</td>
<td>raðr</td>
<td>hamingian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uggir</td>
<td>mig</td>
<td>uggir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mig</td>
<td>þó</td>
<td>mig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at</td>
<td>ad</td>
<td>ad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ek</td>
<td>eg</td>
<td>eg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, once again, JS 624 4to adds text to clarify certain aspects of the text, but in doing so distances itself from AM 162 c fol.

In conclusion, it is quite clear that AM 485 4to is a significantly better choice than JS 624 4to, since Björn Sigfússon’s favorite manuscript interpolates, changes, and removes too many words. Though the words removed from JS 624 4to are mostly interjections, the words and clauses that are added are significant, since they distance the manuscript from AM 162 c fol.

AM 485 4to, then, sports a better reading of AM 162 c fol. than JS 624 4to. Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 edition, and Guðbrandur Þorláksson and Powell’s Origines Islandicae edition, are therefore a more reliable representation of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction than Guðmundur Þorláksson’s 1880 edition or Björn Sigfússon’s Íslenzk fornrit edition.108

1.3.2.2.3 A Selected Comparison of AM 485 4to to Other Paper Manuscripts

While it is outside of the scope of this thesis to compare all of the extant paper manuscripts, in order to establish the use of Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 Ljósvetninga saga edition, several additional

108 Though Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, ed. Guðmundur Þorláksson remains better for the variance-minded, as it marks most (though by no means all) of the significant variants between the extant AM 162 c fol. leaves and its paper copies, and between the paper copies themselves.
comparisons will be provided. Given the high number of extant C-redaction manuscripts, this investigation limits itself to manuscripts dated to 1750 and earlier, excluding JS 624 4to (Látrabók), which has already been discussed (see also manuscript list in the appendix):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript</th>
<th>Boreal 119</th>
<th>Kall 621 4to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 514 4to</td>
<td>Isl papp 35 fol</td>
<td>NKS 1704 4toI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to</td>
<td>AM 554 e 4to</td>
<td>NKS 1714 4to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL ADD 4867 4to</td>
<td>Thott 984 I–III fol.</td>
<td>NKS 1704 4toII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these, some can be immediately dismissed. As Björn Sigfússon argued, Kall 621 4to is a copy of JS 624 4to, or an associated manuscript. The manuscript Kall 621 4to omits too much of the narrative to be a good representative of *Ljósvetninga saga’s* C-redaction. In addition, it frequently omits words or slightly changes the text, perhaps to make a cleaner text, but nonetheless one that is further from AM 162 c fol. Lbs 1629 4to could be a copy of the earlier AM 554 e 4to, since both skip the opening dialogue of *Vöðu-Brands þáttr* in chapter 12, as well as share similar readings. Boreal 119 offers unique and interesting readings, but since it is merely a phrase-book, it is not helpful to advance our understanding of the C-redaction tradition. It distorts many of the quotes it takes from *Ljósvetninga saga*,

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1 ÍF 10:LVIII
2 *Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga*, XXX.
3 For example, for AM 162 c fol.’s “geingu up jmoti. þeim jlendingu,” Kall 621 4to reads “g(e)ngu ad lending á muote þ(e)jim”; AM 162 c fol.’s “þu farir til budar” is changed in Kall 621 4to to “þu kom(ír) i bud.” One curiosity is in chapter 4, where AM 561 4to reads “gior(ír) eftir vorn vilia.” Kall 621 4to alone recreates this with “þu gior(er) vorn villia,” whereas all the other copies of the C-redaction that I have examined read this as a “giorir þad sem vit/vier villium.” This could be a scribal innovation, but it certainly problematizes the transmission of the saga.
4 The most striking being chapter 4’s “kalla þeir oss onyta i kvidburdenum,” which all other C-redaction manuscripts I have examined read as “ómæta,” or chapter 19’s “nu liggia ute yduren i mier.” Of the earlier manuscripts, this adding of “i mier” is unique to AM 554 e 4to, which reads “nu liggia a uti ydrin i mier.”
5 For example, it reads “þar kom gudm(undr) og brá bonda þori Eintal” (206v), where AM 162 c fol., 2v reads “þar kom Gud’, ok bra bonda. þegar a eintal,” “Syv sagablade,” 54.
though it does offer at least one instance where it could have had access to a better copy of AM 162 c fol. or perhaps even had seen it in a better condition.\textsuperscript{6} NKS 1704\textsuperscript{10} is most likely a copy of AM 514 4to, and even offers the same summary of chapters 22–31.\textsuperscript{7} Guðmundur Þorláksson determined that Thott 984 I–III fol. is a copy of AM 485 4to and Kall 616 4to,\textsuperscript{8} but it could also be derived from JS 624 4to (or BL ADD 4867 4to).\textsuperscript{9} These remaining five manuscripts will be compared with AM 485 4to: AM 514 4to, AM 554 e 4to, Isl papp 35 fol.,\textsuperscript{10} NKS 1704 4to\textsuperscript{1}, and NKS 1714 4to. In addition, a short comparison between JS 624 4to and BL ADD 4867 4to will be provided.

**AM 514 4to**

AM 514 4to is considered a decent copy of AM 162 c fol., and certainly an early one, but its main flaw is that it ends with a synopsis of chapters 22–31, and skips over chapter 32, \textit{Þórarins þáttr ofsa}. Its importance in the discussion of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} warrants attention even though it cuts the story short. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell say about the manuscript that: “we note that the scribe, tiring of writing, gives his own abstract of Section VIII: that he often skips corrupt clauses, for instance 4.10 (p. 385, i. 1); and that he keeps a few clauses skipped in a\textsuperscript{1} [AM 485 4to], for

\textsuperscript{6} AM 162 c fol., 1r’s “enn ek mun foruitnæzt ok sennda þer ord” is followed by a lacuna, “Sylv sagablade,” 43. Boreal 119, 205v reads this as “Eg mun forvitnæst til at aljota mælum,” which is a unique reading.

\textsuperscript{7} ÍF 10:LVIII–LIX.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Glæna og Ljósvetninga saga}, XXX.

\textsuperscript{9} For example, in chapter 4 when JS 624 4to reads “ej fara malaefni vor þannen til,” Thott 984 I–III fol. reads “Ecki fara Mikhail ofni sua til,” which fits the more common C-redaction reading of this sentence, including the AM 485 4to reading of it. When AM 485 4to reads “Þórsteeinn quad su maer,” Thott 984 I–III fol. reads “þorstein suvar: Su maer,” which is the reading that JS 624 4to provides, but also that of AM 162 c fol. An illustrative example is in the AM 485 4to sentence “þoruf estar fram, skille brudkaup vera a þ vera,” and JS 624’s alternative reading “þóru estar fram oc skilid brudkaup vera ad þvera,” adding a superfluous “ok” and replacing an “á” with “at.” AM 162 c fol.’s reading is similar to AM 485 4to’s, so this variance does not contribute much to our understanding of that text.

\textsuperscript{10} These three, alongside AM 485 4to and JS 624 4to, were consulted by Jón Helgason in his reading of the AM 162 c fol. fragments, “Sylv sagablade,” 43.
instance 5.20 (p. 409, l. 1).” 11 Guðmundur Þorláksson shared this sentiment. 12 There is not an extant corresponding section in AM 162 c fol. with which to qualify these supposed improvements.

Another feature of the manuscript, which made Guðmundur Þorláksson and others dub it as a unique “B” redaction, 13 is that it replaces the story of Guðmundr inn ríki’s sons with a synopsis. Benedikt Sveinsson argued that the synopsis must be a copy, due to the illogical sentence “ok eigi vildi hann, at Koðrán bjó í Möðrufell.” 14 In actuality, the mistake is based on Guðmundur Þorláksson’s misreading, since the manuscript itself reads in 23v: “eigi vildi hann ad hann bygge hia ser a módru völum, samdist þa so ad kodran biö I módru felle.” 15 While the synopsis could be an original, it is by no means a perfect summary of the chapters: it replaces Friðgerðr’s father’s name Ísolfr with Friðgeirr, and replaces Hóskuldr Þorvarðsson’s patronym to Þorgeirsson. Benedikt says that it is wrong to describe Hóskuldr and Hrafn as eager for the battle of Kakalahóll, 16 but this can be strongly disputed, even if later the two seek an excuse to end the martial engagement. Despite these mistakes, nothing in the synopsis gives the impression that it is not derived from a copy of AM 162 c fol. The difference in names, like Hóskuldr’s father and the confusion between Ísólfr and Friðgeirr as Friðgerðr’s father are more likely to stem from forgetfulness than an artistic program or oral variants. This is supported by the position of Friðgerðr’s story in the synopsis: it is added at the end, before the description of Brandr’s death, which can be read as a sign that the synopsis’s author remembered to add the reason for the feud between the Ljósvetningar and the Möðruvellinger after already writing the bulk of it.

In some places AM 514 4to provides a better reading than AM 485 4to:

11 Origines Islandicae, 347.
12 Gílima og Ljósvetninga saga, XXIV–XXV.
13 Gílima og Ljósvetninga saga, XXIV.
14 Ljósvetninga saga, ed. Benedikt Sveinsson, VII.
15 This is very close to Benedikt’s guess as to what sentence was missing in the process of copying: “hafa tvíbýli á Möðruvöllum. En þat samdist svá,” Ljósvetninga saga, ed. Benedikt Sveinsson, VII; Ljós. 1830 provides a more accurate copy of the synopsis in pages 70–71.
16 Ljósvetninga saga, ed. Benedikt Sveinsson, VII.
On the other hand, there are cases where AM 485 (and other paper manuscripts) offer better readings of AM 162 c fol.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 1r</th>
<th>uel</th>
<th>manadr</th>
<th>sem</th>
<th>þu</th>
<th>uillt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 514 4to 6r</td>
<td>vel</td>
<td>manadur</td>
<td>sem</td>
<td>þu</td>
<td>villt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 8v</td>
<td>vel</td>
<td>maanadur</td>
<td>sem</td>
<td>þu</td>
<td>veist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite occasionally providing better readings, AM 514 4to does not offer a substantially better alternative to AM 485 4to. Considering it cuts the story short in chapter 21, AM 514 4to should be considered a lesser copy than AM 485 4to.\(^\text{17}\)

**AM 554 e 4to**

Guðmundur Þorláksson called AM 554 e 4to (which he marks as C2) better than AM 485 4to “að sjálflu efninu til,” but does not offer any readings or explanations to back it up, especially since he himself notes that AM 554 e 4to is “ekki vel skrifað og opt misritað.”\(^\text{18}\) Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason thought AM 485 4to and AM 554 e 4to read very similarly.\(^\text{19}\) AM 554 e 4to occasionally offers better readings than AM 485 4to. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>munu</th>
<th>uer</th>
<th>fara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 554 e 4to 34v</td>
<td>munum</td>
<td>vier</td>
<td>fara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>munu</td>
<td>vid</td>
<td>fara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{17}\) Erichsen emphasizes that the variant readings in this manuscript stem from a scribal correction rather than from closer access to AM 162 c fol. Erichsen, *Untersuchungen*, 15.

\(^{18}\) *Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga*, XXIX.

\(^{19}\) *Ljós*. 1830, unnumbered introduction.
In this instance, like JS 624 4to, AM 554e 4to offers a more correct reading of AM 162 c fol. 3v. Shortly after, however, there is an example where AM 485 4to offers a better reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>komdu</th>
<th>nu</th>
<th>heill.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 554 e 4to 34v</td>
<td>kom þu</td>
<td>nu</td>
<td>sæll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>kom þu</td>
<td>nu</td>
<td>heill,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another example of a better reading offered by AM 485 4to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>þu</th>
<th>farir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 554 e 4to 34v</td>
<td>ad</td>
<td>þu</td>
<td>gengir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>ad</td>
<td>þu</td>
<td>farir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An instance where AM 554e 4to adds text for clarification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>ef</th>
<th>saman</th>
<th>lysti</th>
<th>Lidinu.</th>
<th>þat</th>
<th>ætlack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 554 e 4to 34v</td>
<td>ef</td>
<td>saman</td>
<td>liste</td>
<td>lidinu,</td>
<td>hann</td>
<td>svarar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>ef</td>
<td>saman</td>
<td>Liste</td>
<td>Lidinu</td>
<td>þad</td>
<td>ætla eg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a final example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 3v</th>
<th>e’</th>
<th>þo</th>
<th>hugur</th>
<th>enn</th>
<th>hamingiu.</th>
<th>uggir</th>
<th>mig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM 554 e 4to 34v</td>
<td>en</td>
<td>hamingan</td>
<td>rædur</td>
<td>uggir</td>
<td>mig</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 55v</td>
<td>er</td>
<td>þo</td>
<td>hugur</td>
<td>enn</td>
<td>hamingian</td>
<td>uggir</td>
<td>mig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here AM 554 e 4to both omits and adds text to AM 162 c fol. Considering this comparison and the omission of, for example, the beginning dialogue of chapter 12 between Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson and Þorkell Geitsson in Vǫðu-Brands þáttir, AM 485 4to is a more reliable text witness than AM 554 e 4to.

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20 AM 554 e 4to, 12r.
Isl papp 35 fol.

Guðmundur Þorlákksson did not examine Isl papp 35 fol. at length, but stated that its readings mostly agree with AM 554 e 4to,\(^\text{21}\) and would presumably see it as superior to AM 485 4to. Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason thought that, like AM 554 e 4to, it offers a very similar reading to AM 485 4to.\(^\text{22}\) Isl papp 35 fol. is indeed a good copy of the saga, but when they differ, AM 485 4to usually offers better readings of AM 162 c fol. For example:

| AM 162 c fol. 2r | ecki | sidr | mun | þer. | þat | ef | þu | veitza |
| Isl papp 35 fol. 38v | ecke | sidur | mun | þiér | þad | þykja | ef | þu | veit |
| AM 485 4to 19v | ekke | sydur | mun | þiér | þad | ef | þu | veit |

As with the JS 624 4to branch and AM 554 e 4to (which reads “þekka”), Isl papp 35 fol., adds “þykja,” which was not in AM 162 c fol., rendering AM 485 4to’s reading as superior, though immediately after AM 485 4to omits a hann where AM 162 c fol. and Isl papp 35 fol. include it:

| AM 162 c fol. 2r | xxxxx xxxxx nu nyra tidenda. þorsteinn. hann suarar. |
| Isl papp 35 fol. 38v | hvad er nu nyra Tidinda þörsteinn? hann svarar |
| AM 485 4to 19v | hvad er nu nyra tydinda, þörsteinn svarar |

In general, the differences between AM 485 4to and Isl papp 35 fol. are minute. Another example:

| AM 162 c fol. 3v | ef saman lysti Lidinu. | þat ætlaxk |
| Isl papp 35 fol. 108r | Ef samann lysti lidinu? hann svarar: þad ætla Eg |
| AM 485 4to 55v | ef saman Lísti Lidinu | þad ætla eg |

Here Isl papp 35 fol. adds “hann svarar,” while AM 485 4to does not.\(^\text{23}\) In all my examinations the same trend held: both manuscripts offer generally correct readings, but AM 485 4to slightly better ones. The connection between this manuscript could actually indicate a family connection. AM

\(^{21}\) Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, XXXI.

\(^{22}\) Ljósv. 1830, unnumbered introduction.

\(^{23}\) Isl papp 35 fol., 108v.
485 4to was scribed by Jón Hákonarson between 1675–1700. His brother Árni was acquainted with Helgi Ólafsson in Copenhagen, the scribe of Isl papp 35 fol. It is possible that Árni could have procured his brother’s exemplar for Helgi, or procured the exemplar from Helgi for his brother.

NKS 1704 4to

The first copy of Ljósvetninga saga in NKS 1704 4to offers a good reading of the saga, but does feature small mistake readings or ‘corrections’ that distance it from AM 162 c fol.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 2r</th>
<th>þu gerir</th>
<th>þat ecki sidr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKS 1704 4to 11r</td>
<td>þú góírer</td>
<td>þíer ecki sijdur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 19r</td>
<td>þú giorer, ef Þat ecki sidur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here an ef was scratched out of the AM 485 4to text, but it is unclear when. NKS 1704 4to 1 exhibits a more dramatic variation, replacing “þat” with “þíer.” In another example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AM 162 c fol. 2r</th>
<th>xxxxx   xxxxx</th>
<th>nu nyrра tìdenda. Þorsteinn. hann svarar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NKS 1704 4to 11r</td>
<td>hvad er nu nyrра? Þorsteinn svarar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 485 4to 19v</td>
<td>hvad er nu nyrра týdinda, Þorsteinn svarar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here NKS 1704 4to 1 omits tíðinda and hann, the latter omitted by AM 485 4to as well. On the other hand, NKS 1704 4to 1 proves its reliability as one of the few manuscripts that does not add a þykja in the sentence “mun þíer þad ef þu veist”:

| AM 162 c fol. 2r | ecki sidr mun þer. þat ef þu veist |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-----|---|----|---|---|
| JS 624 4to 45r   | ekki sijdur mun þíer þad þíkja ef þú veist |
| Isl papp 35 fol. 38v | ecke sidur mun þíer þad þykja ef þú veist |
| AM 485 4to 19v   | ekke sydur mun þíer þad ef þú veist |
| NKS 1704 4to 11r | ecki sijdur mun þíer þad ef þú veist |

It is possible that NKS 1704 4to 1 used the same exemplar of AM 485 4to and Isl papp 35 4to, since it seems closest to their readings, occasionally

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surpassing both, but occasionally providing faulty readings. This excludes the possibility that AM 485 4to copied from it, unless it had another exemplar to consult with. Despite occasionally offering slightly better readings, AM 485 4to is to be preferred over NKS 1704 4to because of the latter’s occasional omissions.

**NKS 1714 4to**

NKS 1714 4to is a rather good copy. As Guðmundur Þorláksson’s critical apparatus shows, NKS 1714 4to frequently offers better readings than AM 485 4to, but occasionally worse. As with AM 554 e 4to, this is a problematic copy in that it cuts out the beginning of the *Vöðu-Brands þátr* chapter 12 dialogue between Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson and Þorkell Geitísson, but in addition to that, it also cuts out the end of *Sórla þátr*.

**Sidenote: JS 624 4to vs. BL ADD 4867 4to**

It is worth noting that Jón Þórðarson’s BL ADD 4867 4to is a better copy of the same tradition reflected in JS 624 4to, which Björn chose as the main representative of the C-redaction. One example suffices to illustrate this:

| AM 162 c fol. 3v | þeir gera nu sua. | ok |
| JS 624 4to 85r | og ganga hvórutveggiu til búda sina |
| BL ADD 4867 4to 180r | þeir giora nu svo og ganga huorutueggju til búda sina |

BL ADD 4867 4to keeps AM 162 c fol.’s “þeir giora nu svo,” before the added clause “og ganga hvorutveggja til búda sina,” which better reflects AM 162 c fol., though still interpolating new material, which makes this a less reliable copy. BL ADD 4867 4to’s *Ljósvetninga saga* was scribed c. 1691

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25 Glúma og *Ljósvetninga saga*, 129–136, 150–158. In some cases, the variances marked by Guðmundur Þorláksson are faulty or incomplete, for example when pointing out the much discussed above *þykja* being missing from AM 485 4to, Guðmundur does not note that it is missing from AM 162 c fol. as well, *Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga*, 152.

26 280v.

27 275r.
by Jón Þórðarson, who lived, among other places, in Strandsel in Ísafjarðardjúp. JS 624 4to was scribed at the year 1695, at the farm Látur, which is also in Ísafjarðardjúp, not far from Strandsel. Given the temporal and spatial proximity, it is likely that the two manuscripts either consulted the same exemplar, or that JS 624 4to used BL ADD 4867 4to as an exemplar.

In conclusion, it seems that AM 485 4to is the best manuscript if one wants to keep ‘on track’ with the saga and not miss many significant scenes or clauses (unless a closer investigation into the post-1750 manuscripts reveals a better one). It is not, however, a perfect copy. If one were to create an edition of the saga that is close to the original, they would have no choice but to do as Guðmundur Þorláksson and Björn Sigfússon did and create a composite text. The best course would be to use AM 485 4to as a basis, and supplement this mainly with Isl Papp 35 4to, as well as AM 554 e 4to, and of course AM 162 c fol. in the parts of the narrative where it is extant. For the narratalogical and plot-focused analysis of this thesis, however, AM 485 4to is the best choice, since Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s edition is readily available. References to the Íslenzk fornrit edition will be provided since it is considered the standard in the field. Since Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason were so invested in AM 485 4to that they at times preferred its readings over AM 162 c fol., Jón Helgason’s reading of the medieval manuscript is a useful supplement.

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29 JS 624 4to 1r.
2. The Part About the Critics

In the last few decades, *Ljósvetninga saga* has taken a relatively minor place in saga studies, but this was not the case in the early twentieth century, when it stood at the forefront of the Bookprose vs. Freeprose debate. Ever since the Freeprose scholar Knut Liestøl framed *Ljósvetninga saga*’s two redactions as a unique example of two separate oral traditions of the same story, scholarship has engaged with this argument, and it has become the main prism through which the saga has been looked at.¹ Freeprose and Bookprose were terms coined by Andreas Heusler,² and the debate between these theories reflected opposing stances on the origins of the Íslendingasögur. Freeprose theory advocates the position that these sagas were orally composed as unities before being written down. Bookprose theory, on the other hand, supposes that while the Íslendingasögur could have originated from oral traditions to one degree or another, these were effectively literary compositions.³ The opposition between these two general approaches led the debate surrounding *Ljósvetninga saga*, and the notions of the origins has influenced the way in which these sagas were edited, dated, and judged, but it is important to remember that the differences between the two theories were at times minute, and that the positions of scholars that operated within each framework were rarely as clear-cut as they appear from a distance.

This chapter first provides a survey of the main debates surrounding *Ljósvetninga saga*, most notably its origins and composition. Throughout,

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attention is given to the ways in which the saga’s editions have organized the saga’s material, with the assumption that these have had a profound impact on the reception of the saga. It then takes up the specific question of dating *Ljósvetninga saga*, with special attention to its relationship with *Brennu-Njáls saga*, and to the viability and the implications of dating these texts in relation to one another. In many ways the saga’s relative neglect in recent years is a blessed turn of events, which shows that Old Norse scholarship has moved beyond the unsolvable debate of oral vs. literary origins. But the issues of memory and genre debated in this thesis, which constitute a part of this paradigm shift in scholarly debate, cannot be separated from the past understandings of the text that were constructed by modern editions, the notions of origins that surrounded these, and the reasonings behind the saga’s dating. Before it is possible to question the preconceptions surrounding *Ljósvetninga saga*, it is important to outline what these preconceptions were.

2.1 The Debate on *Ljósvetninga saga*’s Origins in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Scholarship

2.1.1 Early Discussion of *Ljósvetninga saga*: A Compilation of Loosely Connected Episodes

Besides a brief eighteenth-century dictionary entry that hints at the various points that would later be the focus of scholarship,⁴ the first noteworthy discussion of *Ljósvetninga saga* is mentioned in Jon Erichsen’s letter to Danish historian Peter Frederik Suhm.⁵ There Jon says that *Ljósvetninga saga* was once two separate sagas put together, and also suggests that there existed a “Sagan af Thorkeli hák” on which the extant text is based.⁶

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⁴ George Hickes, et al., *Antiquae Literaturae Septentrionalis [...]*, 313.
⁵ Wrongly cited in the 1830 *Ljósvetninga saga* edition as p. 445, but actually in pp. 334–335 of the fifteenth volume of Suhm’s *Samlede Skrifter*.
The first publication of *Ljósvetninga saga* was in 1830 by Þorgeirr Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason. This edition is usually disregarded, mostly due to its lack of an in-depth discussion of the saga, and the fact that it uses a paper manuscript, AM 485 4to, as its basis, with few other manuscripts (including the two extant incomplete ones) cited to indicate variances. The critical apparatus is limited and barely scratches the surface as to the variance between the saga’s redactions, noting simply in the introduction that AM 561 4to relates the narrative “með öllum öðrum orðum,”7 and indicating certain differences in the content of the chapters. Basing their assertions on Erichsen’s letter to Suhm, the two also point at a structural element that they believe to be in common with *Reykdœla saga*, namely the joining of two separate sagas together: the saga of Þorkell hákr’s struggles with Guðmundr inn ríki, and the saga of Eyjólfr Guðmundarson. Despite the edition’s faults, the choice of AM 485 4to as its base manuscript makes it a valuable resource.

The publication of Þorgeirr Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s edition failed to make much of an impression even in its time. The matter was briefly picked up again in Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s discussion of the *Íslandingasögur* in his intro to *Sturlunga saga*. There he set the pace for most of the *Ljósvetninga saga* scholarship ahead: “The whole tale,” Guðbrandur asserts, “is a series of loosely-strung episodes, and affords perhaps the earliest example of the process of consolidation of the traditions of a district, which long afterwards results in such artistic Sagas as Laxdæla.”8 He follows Þorgeirr Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason in their relative disregard of AM 561 4to, stating that it must have ended before the saga turned to Guðmundr inn ríki’s descendants, and would not have included some of the þættir, singling out Sýrla þáttir and Vǫðu-Brands þáttir.

Heinzel’s 1880 *Beschreibung der Isländischen Saga* continued along this line, likewise treating *Ljósvetninga saga* as a disjointed text. He pointed out what he saw as a loose connection between the part about Guðmundr and

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7 Non-page numbered introduction.
8 *Sturlunga saga […] and other works*, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, lvi.
the part about Eyjólfr.\textsuperscript{9} Like those before him, Heinzel also saw the various disputes in \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} as unconnected.\textsuperscript{10} Heinzel hypothesized about a connection between \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} and the La Fontaine fable about the bear and the gardener. In this humorous poem, a priest-gardener strikes up a friendship with a bear, and the bear is tasked with swiping away the flies that land on the human’s forehead when he is sleeping. Eventually the bear deals with one persistent fly by slamming the priest-gardener’s head with a rock, killing him. Heinzel compares to a moment in \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} where the narrative flashbacks to Guðmundr and Einarr’s childhood. There it is related how Guðmundr hits his foster-father’s head with an axe on Einarr’s encouragement, when a fly buzzes around his bald head.\textsuperscript{11} This connection with La Fontaine’s fable established that folkloric motifs had entered such an early saga as \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, but would therefore be dismissed by Bookprose scholars Björn M. Ólsen and Björn Sigfússon.

\subsection*{2.1.2 \textit{Pátt}r theory}

A significant step in nineteenth-century \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} scholarship was Guðmundur Þorláksson’s edition of the saga, with the assistance of Finnur Jónsson. It was the first significant scholarship that focused on \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}\textsuperscript{12} and therefore helped rekindle an interest in this up-to-that-point poorly discussed saga. As such, it formed the way that people have perceived the saga in a long-lasting way. The edition’s chapter division has

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{9} Richard Heinzel, \textit{Beschreibung der Isländischen Saga}, 10 [114].
\item \textsuperscript{10} Heinzel, 163 [267].
\item \textsuperscript{11} Heinzel, 50 [154]. For the original, see Jean de la Fontaine, \textit{Fables De La Fontaine}, 463–497. See also Jan de Vries, “Een indisch Exempel in een ijslandsche Saga,” 63–80.
\item According to Hallvard Magerøy, the A-redaction’s account of these events fits better with the good intentions of the bear in the folktale, while in the C-redaction these good intentions are gone, \textit{Sertekstproblemet}, 48–49. See also Björn Sigfússon \textit{Um Ljósvetninga sögu}, 20–21, and Einar Ól. Sveinsson, \textit{The Folk-stories of Iceland}, 265, who associates this episode with story type AT 1586A ‘Fatal Killing of the Insect,’ also AT 163A and AT 1586 generally. A special thank you to Jules Piet for his help with the poem’s original French.
\item Though, as Adolfine Erichsen points out, hers is the first full study ever to focus solely on this specific saga, \textit{Untersuchungen zur Ljósvetninga Saga}, 63.
\end{itemize}
been criticized by scholars as early as Bååth, writing just a few years following the edition’s publication, as well as Björn Sigfússon in both his 1937 monograph on the saga and his own 1940 Íslenzk fornrit edition. This criticism of the chapter division is an important point of contention. By dividing the saga as he did, Guðmundur constructed a certain way by which scholars and readers perceived the saga, and this division’s influence is still felt today, despite Björn Sigfússon and Theodore Andersson’s best efforts. Guðmundur Þorláksson created the division of the manuscripts into the A-redaction, B-redaction, and C-redaction, though he might have been influenced by Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s marking AM 485 4to as A, AM 514 4to as B, AM 162 c fol. as C and AM 561 4to as D. Despite the separate designation, Guðmundur considers the B-redaction manuscript to be derived from the C-redaction. Guðmundur Þorláksson based his reading of chapters 1–4 and 19–21 on what is left of the A-redaction since it is older, while for 13–18 he prefers to use the C-redaction, since it is more elaborate and thus closer to the original. This reasoning reveals the subjectivity inherent in the practice of trying to find a text’s original—the same feature of expansion made Björn Sigfússon and Hallvard Magerøy consider the text a revision of the A-redaction later on.

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13 Albert Ulrich Bååth, Studier öfver Kompositionen i Några Isländska ättssagor, 1–2; see also Erichsen, Untersuchungen, 70.
14 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósveitinga sögu, 4–5. Björn agrees with Bååth’s criticism, but clarifies, “annars kemur það rit litlö við þessari grein,” 4, n. 1. Erichsen is criticized by Björn Sigfússon because her conclusions are based on Guðmundur Þorláksson’s division. See also Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 10, 13. Guðmundur would most likely have responded thus: “Ljósveitinga saga er svo auðsjaanlega safn af småáttum, að eg hefi ekki hikað mér við að skipta henni niður,” Glúma og Ljósveitinga saga, III.
16 Other criticism of this edition can be found in Björn M. Ólsen’s review of the book, but while he criticizes some editorial choices and some misreadings, his overall misgivings having more to do with it being aimed more toward the general public, and with Finnur Jónsson’s newfangled Icelandic, “Íslenzkar fornsögur gefnar út af hinu íslenzka bókmenntafélagi: I. Glúma- Og Ljósveitingasaga. Khöfn 1880.” On the influence of editions on the way a text is perceived, see discussion in the thesis’s conclusion in the context of Guðni Jónsson’s edition.
17 Cf. Björn M. Ólsen, “Íslenzkar fornsögur,” 266–7. Björn suggests that it would have been better to print the extant A-redaction material completely and separately, rather than in this fragmented manner, 266. On Björn M. Ólsen see Pétur Pétursson, “Með gyðingum og á móti.”
As part of his research into the composition of the Íslendingasögur, A.U. Bååth set out to understand whether or not Ljósvetninga saga could be said to have a consistent author. He did this by looking at the saga’s representation of various characters and seeing if their behavior and characterization are consistent throughout the text. His final observations were that, while he could find parts in the saga that were connected, he did not see it as a unified text.18 Bååth used this fragmented nature of the saga to establish his version of the þátrr theory for the origins of saga composition, meaning that the origins of the Íslendingasögur were short oral stories that, when combined and modified, comprised the sagas as we know them.19 Bååth’s thesis was initially highly influential, and could also be seen as connected to Bookprose theory, in that it tries to explain the work of an author who used the oral material—þættir—that was in his disposal. But as Heusler points out, Bååth’s þátr theory is insufficient for both the Bookprose and Freeprose doctrines, since those who advocate for written origins would argue that the þættir could not be sophisticated and artistic if orally composed, and the supporters of oral origins believed the sagas were composed and refined while still in the oral stage.20 Bååth’s theory was generally disregarded following Andreas Heusler’s heavy criticism of his work.21 It is noteworthy, though, that Heusler agreed with Bååth on the separate origins of Ljósvetninga saga’s þættir.22

In the meantime, much of scholarship continued its general trend of looking at Ljósvetninga saga as a non-coherent text. For example, W.P. Ker’s brief discussion of Ljósvetninga saga treats it as a saga that is composed of loosely related chapters.23

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18 Bååth, Studier öfver Kompositionen, 18.
20 Heusler, Die Anfänge, 74. See C. M. Lotspeich, “The Composition of the Icelandic Family Sagas” for the Bookprose position, though he does not address Bååth directly.
22 Heusler, Die Anfänge, 75.
23 W. P. Ker, Epic and Romance, 189.
2.1.3 Freeprose and *Ljósvetninga saga* as a “Unique” Example of Oral Variance: The Primacy of the C-redaction

Published after Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Frederick York Powell’s deaths, their *Origines Islandicae* translation and edition of *Ljósvetninga saga* ends with Guðmundr’s death in chapter 21.24 Of the saga’s inner connections they state: “This Saga, which in plan nearly resembles Eyrbyggja, is, like it, composed of a series of separate episodes strung together on the thread of the life and actions of a distinguished political figure.”25 Beyond contributing to the fragmented perception of *Ljósvetninga saga*, Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell had much to say on the manuscript AM 162 c fol. in which it is found.26 The two scholars connect the compilation of the manuscript with fifteenth-century Icelandic magnate Loftur Gutormsson—who is discussed below in The Part About Memory—admitting that this is but a conjecture.27 Style-wise they suggest that *Ljósvetninga saga* gives an impression of how *Njáls saga* would have looked before it was shaped by the hands of a law-minded individual, and they express strong opinions in regard to verse-making.28 Their edition also makes two rather unique assumptions: first, that the A-redaction and C-redaction variance ended with the employment of Rindill rather than with the spy’s visit to Þorkell hákr’s farm,29 and second, that the end of chapter 21, only extant in the C-redaction, is a lacuna.30 They consider the parts that comprise the Eyjólfr’s bulk “inferior” and out of their project’s scope, which means that

24 They choose to ignore the second part of the saga due to the “inferior” quality of this part, as well as it lying out of the scope of their project, *Origines Islandicae*, 350.
25 *Origines Islandicae*, 344.
26 *Origines Islandicae*, 344–346.
27 *Origines Islandicae*, 346. On this see also “Syv Sagablad,” 5.
28 “This Saga has never suffered the fate that has come upon many good Sagas of having thrust upon them those ugly, false, late, and unpoetical verses in a metre which was non-existent in the days when those persons lived, who are foolishly made to improvise in it (alive or dead) with the utmost facility, a laboured verse-making which never could have been perpetrated or perpetuated without the aid of books. From all this spurious would-be poetry the Saga is happily free,” *Origines Islandicae*, 349.
29 *Origines Islandicae*, 427.
30 *Origines Islandicae*, 427.
chapters 22–32 are not included in their edition.\textsuperscript{31} They also contribute to the Freeprose–Bookprose debate by offering that “it almost seems as if the story of Acre-Thore had been retold imperfectly from memory,”\textsuperscript{32} an argument later expounded by Adolfine Erichsen and Björn M. Ólsen.

Eugen Mogk’s history of Norwegian–Icelandic literature supported the line of thought that the \textit{þættir} were interpolated, and considered the A-redaction free of interpolations.\textsuperscript{33}

Andreas Heusler translated \textit{Sǫrla þáttr} and \textit{Ófeigs þáttr} as independent stories in a supplement to Arthur Bonus’s \textit{Isländerbuch}. These stories were presented outside of the \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} context and not connected with each other. Their manuscript order was even reversed, and \textit{Vgðu-Brands þáttr} was excluded. This publication is in itself a statement that Heusler regarded these texts as separate. As seen in the discussion of \textit{þáttr} theory above, Heusler does not count \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} as a single saga.\textsuperscript{34}

In 1918 Jan de Vries argued that the childhood flashback where Guðmundr hits his foster-father on the head with an axe was interpolated. De Vries argued that this scene contradicts the text itself: in the dialogue proceeding it, Einarr is outsmarted by Guðmundr, whilst in the childhood anecdote it is Einarr who is doing the outsmarting.\textsuperscript{35} He goes beyond the La Fontaine fable and examines a vast scope of similar tales, and in exact opposition to Björn M. Ólsen says that the correspondence between the two is so great that it could hardly be considered a coincidence.\textsuperscript{36} The incorporation of this tale, de Vries argues, points at our limited understanding of how medieval texts were composed, and we must open ourselves up

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Origines Islandicae}, 350. On these kinds of bold editorial choices that characterized Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s work, see Magnús Fjalldal, “The Man Who Knew It All.”
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Origines Islandicae}, 348.
\textsuperscript{33} Eugen Mogk, \textit{Geschichte der norwegisch-isländischen Literatur}, 761.
\textsuperscript{34} See also Heusler, \textit{Die Anfänge}, 68.
\textsuperscript{35} “Het behoeft niet breedvoerig te worden betoogd, dat dit tooneeltje eerst later in de \textit{Ljósvetningasaga} is ingevoeg.” Jan de Vries, “Een indisch Exempel in een ijslandsche Saga,” 64.
\textsuperscript{36} de Vries, 65. Admittedly, the scene that he examines involves a bishop and a fool and would maybe have been easier for people like Björn M. Ólsen to compare with the childhood-flashback, though one suspects that even this example would not have persuaded the university rector.
to the possibility of continental European influences.\(^\text{37}\) On the other hand, he states, the anecdote also points to the unique character of the Íslendingasögur in the Western European landscape; if other variants of the story have a comical feel and a moral, Ljósvetninga saga builds on the tradition to tell a harsher tale.\(^\text{38}\)

Adolfine Erichsen’s 1919 Berlin dissertation, the first full monograph dedicated to the saga, was a reaction to Bååth’s argument that the narrative was composed of disparate, non-related stories. In this study, she compared the two major redactions of the saga, and argued that the A-redaction was a slightly less logical version. Like Guðbrandur Vigfússson and F. York Powell before her, and Björn M. Ólsen after her,\(^\text{39}\) she suggests that this was due to a lacuna in chapters 13–18 of the manuscript that the A-redactor had at hand, while the C-redaction was closer to what the original Ljósvetninga saga would have looked like.\(^\text{40}\) She indicates three major discrepancies in the plot that do not make sense. First, the A-redaction does not mention the cloak gift that Guðmundr receives from the merchant who stays with him. Second, the A-redaction omits the mention of Þórir Akrakarl giving Þórir Helgason his cattle, and thus creates a logical discrepancy when Þórir is accused of theft. Third, there is a self-contradiction in the manner in which Einarr responds to his brother’s offer of allegiance.\(^\text{41}\) In response to Bååth’s þáttr theory, she argues that Ljósvetninga saga is in fact a unified piece, and that the four þættir (Sórla þáttir, Ófeigs þáttir, Vððu-Brands þáttir, and Þórarins þáttir ofsa) are interpolations to the original C-redaction.\(^\text{42}\) In addition, she argues that the first four chapters of the saga are flawed, not introducing Guðmundr inn ríki properly and inserting an irrelevant story regarding the famous outlaw Grettir Ásmundarson, and are

\(^{37}\) de Vries, 79.
\(^{38}\) de Vries, 79–80.
\(^{39}\) Though the lecture series on which this posthumous publication was based took place before Erichsen’s dissertation research was published.
\(^{40}\) Erichsen, Untersuchungen, 58.
\(^{41}\) Erichsen, 47; Andersson, Problem of Saga Origins, 154.
\(^{42}\) Erichsen, Untersuchungen, 11, 79–85.
an abbreviated rewrite of a defective text.\textsuperscript{43} She treats what she sees as digressions, like the childhood flashback, Ófeigr’s threat to Guðmundr over his seat of honor, and the two last chapters in Eyjólfr’s bulk, as interpolations,\textsuperscript{44} and in a sense anticipates the structural debates of Phillpotts, Andersson, and Clover by calling the saga a “zyklus” (cycle), or a “doppelsaga” (double-saga).\textsuperscript{45} The þættir that Bååth sees as the origins of the saga were actually interpolated at the end, when the writing of the main text had been done.\textsuperscript{46} Erichsen’s idea that chapters 1–4 are abbreviated, while not shared by me, is not a preposterous interpretation of the material. After all, AM 561 4to’s 37v had been rewritten based on what was decipherable from the smudged out late-medieval words. Why could this not have been the case in an earlier manuscript, where all the A-redaction author had at hand was damaged leaves or lacunae?

Benedikt Sveinsson’s 1921 \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} was the second edition of the \textit{Íslendingasögur} of Sigurður Kristjánsson, the first having been edited by Valdimar Ásmundsson.\textsuperscript{47} This edition’s significantly expanded introduction neglected much of the discussion of the origins of the saga, due to what Magerøy considers Benedikt Sveinsson’s relative scholarly isolation.\textsuperscript{48} Nevertheless, his observations are important, and he stresses in opposition to Guðmundur Þorláeksson that the B-redaction should be seen as a separate tradition,\textsuperscript{49} and that AM 561 4to would never have included \textit{Sprola þáttir}, Ófeigs þáttir, and \textit{Vǫðu-Brands þáttir}.\textsuperscript{50} If Erichsen sees the lack of character exposition for Guðmundr inn ríki and others as an indication of a

\textsuperscript{43} Erichsen, 63–68.
\textsuperscript{44} Erichsen, 78, 81. This approach is not dissimilar to the approach scholars of \textit{Eyrbyggja saga} such as Guðbrandur Vigfusson have taken, considering some chapters and occurrences as interpolations, indications that the original non-interpolated saga is now lost. See Elin Bára Magnúsdóttir, \textit{Eyrbyggja saga: Efni og höfundareinkenni}, 25.
\textsuperscript{46} Erichsen, \textit{Untersuchungen}, 88
\textsuperscript{47} On this publication see Ármann Jakobson, “Íslendingasögur í móton.”
\textsuperscript{48} Magerøy, \textit{Sertekstproblemet}, 13
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ljósvetninga Saga}, ed. Benedikt Sveinsson, VI; \textit{Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga}, XXIV–XXV.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ljósvetninga Saga}, ed. Benedikt Sveinsson, V–VI.
corrupted introduction, Benedikt Sveinsson sees this instead as an indication of the older age of the manuscript, written at a time when these characters were so well known that they needed no introduction.\textsuperscript{51} Benedikt Sveinsson suggests that \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} would have been written in Munkaþveráklaustur, or at any rate by someone from the Eyjafjörður–Fnjóskadalur region, by a descendant of the Môdruvellingar.\textsuperscript{52}

Unlike Benedikt Sveinsson, Wilhelm Ranisch’s discussion of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, in the introduction to his translation, assimilates Erichsen’s conclusions and takes the different origins of the \textit{þættir} as a working assumption.\textsuperscript{53} Despite this, he incorporates these parts of the saga into the translation, rather than removing them or moving them aside as Björn Sigfús-son later does, though he does finish the narrative before \textit{Þórarins þáttr ofsa}. In chapters 13–18 he prefers to use the A-redaction text, filling in the lacunae with the narrative from the C-redaction,\textsuperscript{54} and thus creates a disorienting hybrid text.

The discussion about \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} in Finnur Jónsson’s second edition of \textit{Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie} was influenced by Erichsen’s dissertation as well.\textsuperscript{55} In his first edition, Finnur supported Bååth’s theory that the saga is a composite of unrelated \textit{þættir};\textsuperscript{56} but in the second edition he adopts Erichsen’s position that, if the four \textit{þættir} are excluded, Guðmundr’s bulk and Eyjólfr’s bulk work together as a text.\textsuperscript{57} Likewise he agrees with Erichsen’s opinion on the first chapters’ fragmentary nature.\textsuperscript{58}

In his 1929 work on the origins of the \textit{Íslendingasögur}, Knut Liestøl controversially states that chapters 13–18 of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} offer us the “only reliable example”\textsuperscript{59} of two separate oral traditions for a saga. Liestøl, a
student of Andreas Heusler—to whom the book is dedicated—develops Erichsen’s argument that the AM 561 4to scribe wrote from memory, into an expanded theory of the differences between the redactions as oral variants. Liestøl argues that most of the differences in the saga derive from lapses of memory, and that the redactions tend to disagree on matters of little importance “and can thus be more readily altered or forgotten.”

The parts of the saga that appear in a different sequence between the redactions, such as when Einarr returns the cloak to his brother Guðmundr, or the childhood flashback where Guðmundr hits his foster-father, show that these stem from an oral tradition, where different parts of the stories were forgotten but then later incorporated into the narrative when they were remembered. Also, the fact that the childhood flashback is similar in both redactions fits Liestol’s understanding of how stories are transmitted:

2.1.4 Bookprose and Ljósveitinga saga as a Misrepresented and Authored Text: The Primacy of the A-redaction

Against this background, Björn Sigfússon set out to make a new edition of Ljósveitinga saga as part of the Íslenzk fornrit collection. He was visibly displeased with much of the work that was done on the saga before him, especially with the scholarly preference of the C-redaction over the A-redaction, and with the treatment of the saga as fragmentary. Before his more tactful Íslenzk fornrit edition, Björn Sigfússon released a monograph titled Um Ljósveitinga sögu—published in Sigurður Nordal’s Studia Islandica—which signified the first Bookprose response to the Freeprose analysis of the saga, represented mostly by Liestol but also Erichsen. Björn Sigfússon focuses much of the book on the explanation of his preference of the A-


60 Liestol, Origin, 50–51.

61 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósveitinga sögu, 20–21, and Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 48, would disagree.
redaction over the C-redaction. He saw the A-redaction as a clearer and
earlier telling of the story, and the C-redaction as an historical noveliza-
tion. What Erichsen argues to be consistency in the C-redaction, Björn
Sigfússon shows to be a lack thereof, while in the A-redaction, the linguistic
consistency is clearer. The characterization of Guðmundr, he argues, is
inconsistent in the C-redaction but rather consistent in the A-redaction. In
fact, he utterly denies that there would have ever been a complete re-
daction differing from the A-redaction, “nema í ímyndun manna.”

The responses to this monograph were noteworthy. Haakon Hamre
declared this publication as a “victory” for the Bookprose school of
thought, though he adds that “Sigfússon’s proof of the scribal relationship
between the variants has been generally accepted but not his explanation
of why the center section of the saga has been rewritten.” Andreas Heu-
sler, nearing the end of his life, used Björn Sigfússon’s work as an oppor-
tunity to restate the Freeprose position. In an ironic review, Heusler crit-
icizes the Bookprose choice to ignore the exact nature of the ‘tradition’
that lies behind the text, and defends his students Erichsen and Liestol’s
work, along with the idea that the divergent mid-section of the saga stems
from oral variations rather than literary ones. In her review of Björn
Sigfússon’s *Um Ljósvetninga sögu*, Anne Holtsmark questions his dismissal of
oral variance as a solution to the redaction question, stating that Björn did
not establish this well enough.

In between Björn Sigfússon’s 1937 monograph and his 1940 Íslenzk
dition, Hító íslenska bókmenntafélag published a series of lectures
from the years 1913–1917 by the first rector of Háskóli Íslands, Björn M.

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62 Björn Sigfússon, *Um Ljósvetninga sögu*, 38. In the English summary of the book he says
about the C-redactor: “Much more than an historian, he is an author, who rewrites
chapters of Ljósvetninga saga as an historical novel,” 42.
63 Björn Sigfússon, 11–19.
64 Björn Sigfússon, 22.
66 Magerøy, *Sertekstproblemet*, 16.
67 Heusler “Review of *Um Ljósvetninga Sögu*,” 1–2. One would think that in that particu-
lar moment of history there would be people in more need of defending.
68 See Andersson, *Problem of Saga Origins*, 155, for discussion and summary of this review.
69 Anne Holtsmark “Anmälan av ‘Studia Islandica. Íslenzk frædi 1–4,’” 138–139.
Ólsen, on the Íslendingasögur. Therefore, despite the fact that these lectures were given before Erichsen’s and Björn Sigfússon’s monographs, they were published only some 20 years afterwards. Björn M. Ólsen’s work lost traction with this delay, yet his words remained influential and were incorporated into Björn Sigfússon’s introduction to his edition of Ljósvetninga saga. Björn M. Ólsen considered Ljósvetninga saga as a literary rather than oral fourteenth-century composite of several stories, and the þættir as external to the rest of the saga. While the þættir never existed in the older A-redaction AM 561 4to manuscript, this redaction would have included the story of Guðmundr’s sons Eyjólfr and Koðrán, though its poorer quality suggests a different author. Björn based this on the literary function of the prophecy of the witch Þórhildr, which all but requires that the story of revenge against the sons of Guðmundr be told. Björn M. Ólsen offers a practical solution similar to Erichsen to account for the discrepancies between the redactions in chapters 13–18. The original C-redaction scribe did not have these parts of the A-redaction in front of him, so he wrote them down out from memory. Responding to Heinzel’s theory of the connections between the childhood flashback about Guðmundr and his foster-father and the folktale motif discussed above, Björn M. Ólsen argues that “hún er ekki íkja lík sögunni um Guðmund og fóstrann.” Björn admits, however, that he had only read the La Fontaine fable example of this motif. Though not his intention, the description he provides makes a compelling case for a connection between the stories.

Björn Sigfússon’s Íslenzk fornrit edition came at precisely the moment when a response by the Bookprose school was needed for the

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70 Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 16–17.
72 Björn M. Ólsen, 369.
73 Björn M. Ólsen, 372.
74 Björn M. Ólsen, 385. One striking moment in connection to this folktale type was when Arngrímur Vídalín had been reading Ljósvetninga saga and contacted me to inform me about this scene and its similarities with a folktale he knew from elsewhere. This kind of automatic and unsolicited invocation of the text brings to question what had caused Björn M. Ólsen to so sternly dismiss a connection between Ljósvetninga saga and the folktale type; one would suspect that other motivations were at play.
75 Björn M. Ólsen, 385.
overwhelmingly Freeprose approach that dominated most of the *Ljósvetninga saga* scholarship. As Stefán Einarsson states in his review: “B. Sigfús- son has had the difficult task of accommodating [*Ljósvetninga saga* and *Reykjadal saga*] to the Buchprosa theory. The results are rather complicated, and not always convincing.” As he established in his earlier monograph, Björn preferred the A-redaction over the C-redaction. This is visible in his organization of the material: in most cases where there is slight textual variation between the A-redaction and C-redaction, the A-redaction is preferred. In the variant chapters 13–18, the A-redaction is printed in large letters, while the C-redaction text is printed below it and in a smaller font. This is a disingenuous decision. Once the two redactions converge, they in essence tell us the same story in the same words, but once the story breaks off in the A-redaction, there is no way of knowing what followed, or if anything followed at all. Thus, keeping the large letters after the break is an editorial decision that implies the A-redaction’s inclusion of chapters 22–31 as a fact. If the reason was aesthetic, then it is not consistent; chapter 13 of the C-redaction is printed in small letters until the A-redaction picks the story up. The three segments designated as *Sórla þáttr*, *Ófeigs þáttr*, and *Vǫðu-Brands þáttr* are taken out of the main text and relocated to an isolated space immediately following the ‘saga proper.’ *Þórarin’s þáttr ofsa* receives an even harsher treatment. While the above-mentioned þættir are removed, they still influence the C-redaction chapter-count (to an odd and somewhat disorienting effect). *Þórarin’s þáttr*, however, is placed at the periphery of the saga. Björn writes in a non-numbered footnote that although the story barely concerns the *Ljósvetninga saga* characters (besides

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76 Stefán Einarsson, “Publications in Old Icelandic Literature, 1939–1940,” 46.
77 There are some exceptions to this, as in cases where the C-redaction version is more correct historically, e.g., “Forni hét maðr, er bjó í Haga í Reykjadal,” ÍF 10:3, which follows the C-redaction version, while in p. 2, n. 2, Björn points out that in the A-redaction the placename is “Reykjadal.” In addition, in most cases the chapter changes follow the C-redaction manuscripts (though this is a complicated matter in and of itself, as there is no consistency in the chapter change in the C-redaction manuscripts).
78 But see the discussion in the following chapter about the different word-choices in the extant A-redaction and C-redaction, chs. 1–4 and 19–21.
Eyjólfr Guðmundarson) and takes place around the events of chapter 12 (in the A-redaction count), it is printed after the saga because of the manuscript evidence.80

According to Björn, there was a general misconception in earlier scholarship as to the correct title of the saga, with scholars thinking that the text’s focus was actually on the Móðruvellingar and not the Ljósvetningar.81 In addition, scholarship showed a preference of the C-redaction as the earlier version of the saga.82 Björn Sigfússon stresses the clunky style of the C-redaction, and argues that chapters 13–18 (A-redaction count 5–8) indeed function more as an individual þátr than in the A-redaction, where they are more connected to the main narrative.83 According to Björn, this historical preference of the C-redaction over the A-redaction distorted the treatment of the saga and led to the general understanding of it as a collection of disconnected þættir. Regarding the intentions behind the C-redaction revisions, Björn argues that first and foremost, these are intended to improve Guðmundr’s image.84 He focuses on the illogical flaws found in the plot, such as Einarr’s somewhat contradictory reaction to his brother Guðmundr’s plea for friendship, or Rindill’s unclear function as a spy. Björn argues that such irregularities are proof that the story was not transmitted whole from one person to the other; oral storytellers would have fixed the clunky and illogical points where the plot does not work well.85

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80 ÍF 10:143, unnumbered note. See also ÍF 10:L. For a general discussion of the þættir, see pp. L–LVII. Interestingly, the chapter heading in the introduction changes in this part from “Ljósvetninga saga” to “Ljósvetninga saga (þættir).” Rather than being a helpful tool for the scholar consulting the edition, it feels as if Björn puts special efforts disconnect the þættir from the saga, even in the paratext, in order to further the distance between the saga and its interpolated parts. This approach to the þættir is backed up by another Bookprose scholar, Einar Öl. Sveinsson, Dating the Icelandic Sagas, 38.
81 The widespread notion that Ljósvetninga saga in fact centered around Guðmundr inn riki rather than the Ljósvetningar is evidenced, for example, in Ian Ramsay Maxwell, “Pattern in ‘Njáls saga,’” 19–20.
82 ÍF 10:XLVI.
83 ÍF 10:XXV.
84 ÍF 10:XXV.
85 ÍF 10:XXXIX
Icelandic alþingi member Barði Guðmundsson’s monograph *Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbæingar*—Later published as part of his *Höfundar Ælja* essay collection—sees *Ljósvetninga saga* as a collection of þættir,86 and reads the saga as a *roman à clef*, written by Þórðr Þórarðsson, Sturla Þórdarson’s son-in-law.87 Barði connects all the occurrences of *Ljósvetninga saga* with the power struggles that Þórðr and his father Þórarðarson had experienced in the mid- to late thirteenth century, and he notably frames *Ljósvetninga saga* as a response to another *roman à clef*: *Brennu-Njáls saga*. Barði makes the claim that *Njáls saga* was written by Þóvarður Þórarinsson, where he portrayed Þórðr Þórarðsson and Þórarðarson as the villainous Mórðr Valgarðsson and his father Valgarðr gráí Þórarðarson. Barði’s complex set of arguments is taken up at length in The Part About Memory. This monograph failed to have much effect on *Ljósvetninga saga* scholarship, especially since it diverged from the philological issues that dominated the academic discussion around this saga, until the publication of Andersson and Miller’s 1989 translation.88 Barði made the argument that the author of the two main parts of *Ljósvetninga saga* would have been the same, based on the distribution of place-names, and excluding the þættir,89 thus supporting Björn Sigfússon’s position.

Hallvard Magerøy’s 1957 monograph was something of a sequel to Björn Sigfússon’s *Um Ljósvetninga sögu* and the introduction to the Íslensk fornrit edition, much as his 1950 translation of *Ljósvetninga saga* into Nynorsk (*Soga om Ljosvetningane*) was itself based on Björn Sigfússon’s Íslensk fornrit edition and its interpretative decisions. Mageroy took up the challenge made by Anne Holtsmark’s criticism of Björn Sigfússon’s *Um

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88 See IF 12:CVIII–CXI for Einar Öl. Sveinsson’s response to Barði’s argument regarding the authorship of *Njáls saga*, with an interesting argument stressing the *Njáls saga* author’s lack of knowledge about things Þóvarðar would be knowledgeable about, such as geography and law. Cf. Lönroth who argues against him and believes that there would be overwhelming reasons why Þóvarðar would be involved in the writing of *Njáls saga*, yet avoids attributing direct authorship, *Njáls Saga*, 181, n. 40. See also discussion below.
Ljósvetninga sögu,\(^{90}\) where she questions Björn’s dismissal of oral variance as
a solution to the redaction question. Magerøy agrees with Björn Sigfús-
son’s premise that the A-redaction of Ljósvetninga saga was closer to the orig-
inial, but also agrees with Holtsmark’s criticism that this was not estab-
lished well enough,\(^{91}\) and thinks that the issue of Guðmundr’s representa-
tion is more complex than Björn lets on—the C-redaction adds not only
positive information about Guðmundr but also negative.\(^{92}\) Magerøy agrees
with Erichsen that the character introductions in chapters 1–4 are prob-
lematic and short.\(^{93}\) Throughout his study, Magerøy points to the C-re-
daction tendency to make things of a bigger scope and scale.\(^{94}\) He thinks
that there is a consistent logic behind the deviations between the redac-
tions, which he attributes to a conscious agency.\(^{95}\) However, Magerøy
questions the logical decisions of characters and portrayal of events in the
C-redaction throughout his text, and thinks that, with few exceptions, the
deviations from the original text are more apparent in that redaction than
the A-redaction.\(^{96}\) He concludes that, in historical philology, the most
parsimonious answer must be chosen, and literary origins make more
sense than two separate oral traditions.\(^{97}\) While there is a possibility that
the C-redaction compiler was working from memory in chapters 13–18,
Magerøy prefers the explanation that he had a copy of the original saga in
front of him and intentionally decided to deviate from it. Like Björn

\(^{90}\) On this response to Holtsmark, see Andersson, Problem of Saga Origins, 155, 158–159,
and Magerøy Sertekstproblemet, 17.

\(^{91}\) Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 16.

\(^{92}\) Magerøy, 15–16. He proves this by citing the alþingi scene, which is problematic be-
cause that scene in one variation or another had been in the A-redaction as well,
though it is now only extant in the 37v summary. However, the fact that the C-redac-
tion contains a scene that portrays Guðmundr as so wretched a character is telling in
itself and proof that it did not treat Guðmundr with kid-gloves.

\(^{93}\) Magerøy, 18–20.

\(^{94}\) Haakon Hamre finds this explanation of the C-redaction being written “in order to ‘increase
the dimensions’ in content and narration” as “not so convincing.” “ Reviewed Work,” 469.

\(^{95}\) “Det kan då ikkje vera tvil om at desse omlagingane er ein einskild persons medvitne
verk.” Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 64, 89.

\(^{96}\) Cf. p. 78, where the C-redaction portrayal of Rindill’s dialogue with Þorkell hákr
rings truer to Magerøy than the A-redaction one.

\(^{97}\) Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 80
Sigfússon, he argues that the logical gaps would have been emended by an oral storyteller. A copyist working mechanically, on the other hand, would have been more likely to miss certain mistakes and inconsistencies.\textsuperscript{98} As for the most striking piece of evidence for oral variation—the different names of characters and places—Magerøy thinks this could easily stem from various manuscript misreadings consistent throughout the text.\textsuperscript{99} In the introduction to his translation, Magerøy argues that the \textit{þættir} were interpolated, and singles out \textit{Sǫrla þáttr} as a “happy-end-soge.”\textsuperscript{100}

2.1.5 The Oral vs. Literary Composition Compromise and the Re-Establishment of the C-redaction’s Primacy

In his 1964 study on the origins of the \textit{Íslendingasögur}, Theodore M. Andersson dedicates an appendix for a discussion of the issue of variants, which naturally leads him to a discussion of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}. Andersson disagrees with Björn Sigfússon’s preference for the A-redaction over the C-redaction, and states that “his conclusions are based on the over-exploitation of minor differences.”\textsuperscript{101} What Björn sees as logical mishaps, Andersson sees as literary technique. Andersson goes on to say that the Íslenzk fornrit editor conflates a text’s quality with its age.\textsuperscript{102} Andersson responds to Magerøy’s study by refuting most of his claims regarding the C-redaction’s corruption, and points out that the inconsistencies that remain are not unique within the \textit{Íslendingasögur} corpus.\textsuperscript{103} Regarding Magerøy’s argument that the differences in names stem from erroneous and consistent manuscript readings, Andersson says: “The variants are not of the scribal type. Furthermore the sheer number of deviations overburdens scribal responsibility.”\textsuperscript{104} Andersson disagrees with Magerøy’s

\textsuperscript{98} Magerøy, 83–84.
\textsuperscript{100} \textit{Soga om Ljosvetningane}, trans. Magerøy, 10–11. Also his \textit{Studiar i Bandamanna saga}, 263.
\textsuperscript{101} Andersson, \textit{Problem of Saga Origins}, 152.
\textsuperscript{102} Andersson, 153.
\textsuperscript{103} Andersson, 156.
\textsuperscript{104} Andersson, 158.
premise that the person who inserted the þættir would then use those changes as a guide for the changes made to chapters 13–18, because these later changes do not help to integrate the þættir into the saga’s main narrative.105 Andersson, however, concurs with Magerøy’s statement that the most logical explanation for the relationship between the redactions is a literary one, but thinks that, from a stylistic analysis, it is clear that Erichsen was right and that priority should be given to the C-redaction.106 The A-redactor is thus an abbreviator, who rushes through Guðmundr’s dealings with Þórir Akrakarl in order to get to the saga’s more important event, namely the killing of Þorkell hákr.107 Andersson reverses the argument of “logical inadequacy”108 for the A-redaction, pointing out the moments where its narrative and details make less sense than in the C-redaction it shortens. His conclusion is that the A-redaction is “abbreviated clumsily” and he spares few words to show his dismay over the final result.109 The differences that remain unexplained, he explains, stem from oral traces, meaning the stories that still surrounded the saga’s events at the time that the A-redaction was written down. In this sense, Andersson’s reading could be seen as a compromise between the Bookprose and the Freeprose approaches, neither fully here (Ljósvetninga saga is a collection of oral tales; the variants stem from different oral accounts), nor there (Ljósvetninga saga is an authored piece and the variants stem from scribal decisions). Andersson’s reading successfully has its cake and eats it too: Ljósvetninga saga is an authored piece, based on traditional material, the differences between the

105 “Appealing as the thought is, I do not think that it is clearly conceived. It raises the question of the origin of the þættir. If they were copied from a written source, the scribe had no reason suddenly to abandon a faithful rendering when returning to the saga itself. The changes cannot be interpreted as an effort to interlock the þættir with the Þórir Akrakarl episode. On the other hand, if the scribe inserted the þættir from oral tradition it would be natural to see in the freedom he allows himself in chapters 13–18 a reflex of the same source which provided the þættir, namely tradition. In this case we would in fact be dealing with an oral variant.” Andersson, 159.

106 Andersson, 159.

107 “It is with a certain satisfaction that he can say after just sixty-three lines: ‘ok er hann ór sógunni.’” Andersson, 161.

108 Andersson, 162.

109 Andersson, 165.
C-redaction and the A-redaction stem from an authorial program, but the differences in the details are largely connected with the oral tales that surrounded the saga.\footnote{This finds surprising support in the words of Einar Ól. Sveinsson, certainly an important voice for Bookprose: “If the author of a saga had succeeded in getting all the material from the best-informed people, it might well be that he had included everything with which the story was concerned, and there was then no good reason to add anything. But if much of the material had been left unused, there might then be good reason to make additions, or a new version.” Dating the Icelandic Sagas, 33. Liestøl supports it from the Freeprose end: “A manuscript of a saga may have been used for reading aloud or as a sort of prompt-book when reciting, and its contents may have become oral tradition again through the medium of the hearers.” Liestøl, Origin, 43.}

In Andersson’s influential structural analysis of the Íslendingasögur from 1967, he both promoted and argued against the perception of Ljósveleginga saga as a fragmented text by arguing that it “shares with Heiðarvíga saga a transcendent interest in the intricacies of plot,”\footnote{Andersson, Icelandic Family Saga, 259.} stressing that everything in the saga is uniquely doubled: “There are two conflicts, two climaxes, two vengeances, and two reconciliations.”\footnote{Andersson, 260.} On the one hand, by stressing this doubled structure, Andersson is supporting those scholars who treated the saga as a compilation of two or more þættir. On the other hand, in his analysis Andersson makes it clear that these two conflicts are “interlocked.”\footnote{Andersson, 260.} Andersson does not improve matters by providing only Bååth’s book as supplementary reading, which effectively points the reader towards the þættir theory and its perception of Ljósveleginga saga as a non-unified text. This must have been a result of his inclination toward a middle-ground solution between the Freeprose and the Bookprose interpretations of the saga.

Björn Sigfússon’s 1967 entry for the Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder is a tour de force of one-sidedness. In it he completely ignores Bååth, Andersson, and Guðmundur Þorláksson’s 1880 edition, or what any Freeprose scholar, particularly Erichsen and Liestøl, had to say about the topic of Ljósveleginga saga. Björn uses the entry to assert the primacy of

\footnote{Andersson, Icelandic Family Saga, 259.}
\footnote{Andersson, 260.}
\footnote{Andersson, 260.}
the A-redaction over the C-redaction,\textsuperscript{114} with a likely date of composition c. 1260, and gives too much weight to Barði Guðmundsson’s scholarship. His entry portrays his (well-argued) opinions as facts, and ignores an entire century of academic debate, referring only to his follower Magerøy, and to Barði.\textsuperscript{115}

In 1969, Hallvard Magerøy returned to the issue of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} in an article meant to show the inner workings of this saga, and to respond to Erichsen’s arguments that chapters 1–4 seem out of place in relation to the rest of the saga.\textsuperscript{116} He agrees with Erichsen that Guðmundr’s role in the first chapters is too minor compared to his role in the rest of the saga and suggests that perhaps the author initially intended a smaller part for the character in the saga.\textsuperscript{117} Magerøy finds various helpful and convincing parallels between Guðmundr’s bulk and Eyjólf’s bulk, such as the father–son strife motif, and similar narrative structures and techniques. His further language analysis shows that, contrary to Erichsen’s study, the language of the A-redaction has more in common with chapters 1–4 than the C-redaction.

In 1970, the C-redaction camp got a significant backing with the publication of Cecilia Borggreve’s “Der Handlungsaufbau in den zwei

\textsuperscript{114} “Originalversionen finns fragmentariskt på membranen AM 561, 4to, från o. 1400. En yngre utvidgad version fanns på 1400-talsmembranen AM 162 C fol.[...]” Björn Sigfússson, “Ljósvetninga saga,” 654.

\textsuperscript{115} Björn Sigfússson, “Ljósvetninga saga,” 653–655. Perhaps this citing of Barði Guðmundsson is meant to create a semblence of an academic debate, thus distracting the non-\textit{Ljósvetninga saga}-initiated reader from the many other debates that surround this/these text/s. The critical reader will be quick to point out that “he who smelt it, dealt it” considering the significant space this thesis awards Barði Guðmundsson.

\textsuperscript{116} Magerøy, “Den indre samanhengen i Ljósvetninga saga,” 118–146. In an earlier article, “Guðmundur góði og Guðmundur riki. Eit motivsamband,” published after his \textit{Sertekstproblemet i Ljósvetninga saga}, Magerøy discusses possible literary connections between Ófeigs þátr and Guðmundar saga góða, but the conclusions there are vague and do not have much significance in the larger debate surrounding the saga.

\textsuperscript{117} This is not unprecedented even in clearly authored modern creations, such as Aaron Paul’s Jesse Pinkman on the AMC TV show \textit{Breaking Bad}. Show creator Vince Gilligan initially intended to kill off Pinkman early in the show, but impressed by Paul’s acting, changed the plot to keep the character. PaleyFestLA 2010 Interview. Paley Center for Media, accessed 24 Oct. 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqnoJ10HqP0/. For a discussion of Gilligan as author see Jason Mittell, \textit{Complex TV, the Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling}, 102, 112–114.
Versionen der Ljósvetninga saga,” in Arkiv for nordisk filologi. She argues that rather than being the better version, the C-redaction was used as a template for the A-redaction, which allowed the latter’s redactor to put more finesse and form into an already existing text. Nothing is particularly flawed in the C-redaction version of the saga, but the A-redaction makes the narrative more symmetrical and applies more order. Borggreve establishes the C-redaction as the older and less successful text.

Tommy Danielsson’s PhD thesis on the construction of the Íslendingasögur used Ljósvetninga saga as a case study, reviving the 100 year old argument and supporting Bååth and Björn M. Ólsen as well as earlier readings of the saga as loosely connected episodes. Unlike Andersson, Danielsson argues that each of the seven parts of Ljósvetninga saga has its own individual climax, and as such functions separately.118 This study has failed to make much of an impression in the scholarship that followed, despite being a “controversial and provocative book […] that deserves attention.”119 Perhaps this is due to the fact that this was a PhD thesis (though Erichsen’s work had a similar context), or perhaps this is due to Danielsson repositioning the debate back at Bååth’s footsteps, which reinforces the stalemate from which Andersson wishes to finally break free, by advancing a literary interpretation of the saga using the C-redaction (though significantly ignoring Þórarins þáttr ofsa) as the main text.120 From this point onward, Ljósvetninga saga scholarship has been largely left in Andersson’s hands.

118 Tommy Danielsson, Om Den Isländska Släktsagans Uppbyggnad, 35–36.
119 Kirsten Wolf, “Tommy Danielsson. Om Den Isländska Släktsagans Uppbyggnad,” 452. The only mention of it that I could find in scholarship connected to Ljósvetninga saga, was Magerøy’s encyclopedic entry in Medieval Scandinavia, an Encyclopedia, “Ljósvetninga saga,” 39, which is generally more balanced than Björn Sigfrísson and Theodore Andersson’s encyclopedic entries on the saga.
120 Andersson is certainly aware of Danielsson’s other writings, per his “Five Saga Books” review article. See also Lars Lönnroth’s quite positive discussion of Danielsson’s thesis in connection with structural analyses of the Íslendingasögur. Lönnroth hints at another reason why Danielsson’s study failed to make a lasting impression on debates in the saga field: “It may be noted in this context that Danielsson was an engineer before he turned to saga studies. […] his approach to the sagas may be difficult to master for most ordinary humanists,” “Structuralist Approaches to Saga Literature,” 72.
Andersson, like Björn Sigfússson, uses his dictionary entry of *Ljósvetninga saga* to make his thesis into fact: “No final solution has been reached, but it seems most likely that redaction C is closer to the original and that A is an abbreviation.”\(^{121}\) Andersson’s grand *Ljósvetninga saga* statement can be found in his 1989 translation of the saga alongside William Ian Miller. While Miller uses *Ljósvetninga saga* to analyse the legal world found in the text and how it reflects on its society in general,\(^{122}\) Andersson provides an extensive analysis of the literary aspects connected to it.\(^{123}\) Andersson briefly summarizes the debates surrounding *Ljósvetninga saga*, but more importantly provides his own take on the redaction question, defending his own opinion of the A-redaction as an abridgement of the C-redaction.\(^{124}\) He discusses the problematic chronology of the saga, dating issues, character portrayal, the motivations behind its composition, and the value system reflected in the text. In addition, Andersson offers one of the few interpretations of the þættir as intrinsic to the text, suggesting that the structure of *Ljósvetninga saga* “is episodic with or without the þættir.”\(^{125}\) He argues that these texts connect with the main story thematically, and thus belong in the saga. An important contribution of the introduction is its discussion of Guðmundr inn ríki’s appearances elsewhere in the *Íslendingasögur* and *Landnámabók*. Andersson attributes differences in the portrayal of the powerful godi to the different “clan or regional biases” of the oral traditions that would later become the sagas,\(^{126}\) such as *Njáls saga*’s positive portrayal of

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\(^{122}\) In many ways this is a prelude to his more extensive analysis of *Njáls saga* in *Why Is Your Axe Bloody?* as well as his more recent monograph *Hrafnkel Or the Ambiguities: Hard Cases, Hard Choices*. In addition, it is clear that his extensive introduction and footnotes on legal matters were an important study leading up to his monumental 1990 study in Icelandic feud *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*, which makes frequent use of *Ljósvetninga saga*.

\(^{123}\) That the two had a clear division of material is clear from the forward to the translation’s introduction. Andersson moves between referring to his own work as “I” (e.g., p. 66) and “Andersson” (e.g., p. 70).

\(^{124}\) *Law and Literature*, 66–74.

\(^{125}\) *Law and Literature*, 73.

\(^{126}\) Finnur Jónsson has argued along similar lines in his discussion in the different attitude towards Guðmundr inn ríki in the chapter 6–12 þættir (excluding *Sölra þáttir*) from what he considers the main text; the þættir are overly negative towards the Eyjafjörður chieftain because they originate from a different region, *litteraturshistorie*, 2nd ed., vol.
Guðmundr due to his support of the Njálssynir, and Ljósvetninga saga’s negative portrayal of him for his opposition to the Ljósvetningar.\textsuperscript{127}

A recent exception to Andresson’s strong voice is a 2007 article by Gísli Sigurðsson, where he advances a much more extensive oral interpretation of the Íslendingasögur than Andersson and argues for a “coherence and consistency” in Guðmundr inn ríki’s different portrayals in the sagas, with differences in behavior explained by the different stages of his life in which the different sagas take place.\textsuperscript{128} The article is largely a reaction to Paul Schach’s research into character creation in the Íslendingasögur, where he argues that Njáls saga’s positive portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki is a response to the negative portrayal of Guðmundr in Ljósvetninga saga, therefore promoting a literary rather than an oral connection between these two sagas.\textsuperscript{129} Gísli Sigurðsson stresses that Guðmundr’s character is fleshed out in the tradition that surrounds him, with certain distinguishing features that make him identifiable to the audience.\textsuperscript{130}

In Andresson’s further discussions of Ljósvetninga saga, he develops issues he has discussed in the translation’s introduction. He goes deeper into the question of Ljósvetninga saga’s authorship and its connections to Munkaþverá and Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson,\textsuperscript{131} and advances an understanding of Ljósvetninga saga as a turning point in the Icelandic saga historiography, where the focus of the narrative turns inward to the Icelanders themselves, rather than the Norwegian kings.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{2:498.} Andersson would probably not subscribe to this opinion since he treats the þættir as part of the Ljósvetninga saga whole. These two opinions are not necessarily contradictory, as the oral origins of the tale may have originated elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{127} Law and Literature, 88–89.

\textsuperscript{128} Gísli Sigurðsson, “*The Immanent Saga of Guðmundr ríki,” 215.


\textsuperscript{130} Gísli Sigurðsson, “*The Immanent Saga,” 218.


\textsuperscript{132} Theodore M. Andersson, The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280).
2.2 Dating Ljósvetninga saga?

One issue that stands out in the scholarly debate about Ljósvetninga saga is its date of composition. Dating sagas has been seen recently as a somewhat pointless undertaking that is based on many false premises in need of revision. Dating decisions often tell us more about the scholar than about the saga they are trying to date. As is perhaps natural, each scholar puts something of their own inclinations and prejudices into the suggested date’s logic. As most of the extant saga manuscripts we have come from the fourteenth and fifteenth century, it is becoming abundantly clear that the saga texts themselves originate at least in part from those centuries. Jürg Glauser pointedly notes that when dating a saga, all that is available is a snippet of that text’s development in oral and literary transmission: “It is – to use an image from modern media history – a photographical recording, or perhaps a still of a film, which otherwise is largely lost.” This is especially true for Ljósvetninga saga. As Einar Ó. Sveinsson asks, “can we rely on these manuscripts to give evidence of the original text? One of them is certainly unreliable as a witness, but are they not both? Is not

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134 On this see Torfi Tulinius, “Dating Eyrbyggja saga,” 115–32. One particular sentence stands out: “Writing in 1978, Rolf Heller needed to date Laxdæla saga later than hitherto has been done, because he believed it echoes certain Icelandic events from after the middle of the thirteenth century” (127). This reveals much about the considerations for and motivations behind scholarly decisions about dating. Another illuminating example is Steblin-Kamenskii’s assertion that the Íslendingasögur cannot have been preceeded by the konungasögur’s composition. He assents that these texts may have existed in written form before the Íslendingasögur, because of the prestige of their subjects. However, stories of tenth- and eleventh-century Icelanders must have already existed in oral form—otherwise they could not have been composed—and therefore dated to before the konungasögur, The Saga Mind, 47–48.

135 Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, Dating the Icelandic Sagas, 95 shares a similar—though not as generalizing—sentiment.


Ljósvetninga Saga what might be called a badly preserved saga?” This original text, or more specifically the archetype, is especially hard to come by in the case of a “two-pronged stemma.” When this stemma is composed of two significantly differing redactions, as is the case of Ljósvetninga saga, matters are complicated even further. In addition, as Emily Lethbridge notes, the preoccupation with finding the original writer and original redaction, and consequently downgrading the significance of material that is not considered close to these, “shifts the critical focus away from this surviving evidence for the continuous, regenerative tradition of the saga narrative, to a single, hypothetical, irrecoverable articulation.” And yet, some benefit could still come from grappling with issues of dating and the search for an author. As Torfi Tulinius’s discussions of Egils saga’s connection to Snorri Sturluson have shown, sometimes assuming a text is connected with a certain author or a certain individual’s milieu can produce fruitful interpretative advancements.

The tendency to view Ljósvetninga saga as a collection of þættir meant that it was often dated early to the twelfth century. Björn Sigfússon cites in this connection a variety of nineteenth-century scholars: Peter Erasmus Müller, who argued that Ljósvetninga saga evinces the beginnings of Icelandic aristocracy; Guðbrandur Vigfússon in his prologue to the Sturlunga saga edition; Bååth; Mogk, who dated it to the beginning of the

138 Einar Ó. Sveinsson, Dining the Icelandic Sagas, 28. Einar Ólafur also warns that because of the nature of writing in the Eyjafjörður region which incorporated many loosely connected þættir, one should tread carefully when dating the sagas of this region (38). While disagreeing with his opinion on the þættir issue, it should be noted that such an authority recommended caution with dating sagas of this area.


140 Emily Lethbridge, “Dating the sagas and Gísla saga Súrssonar,” 104.


142 ÍF 10:XLVI.

143 ÍF 10:XLVI–XLVII, n. 2.

144 Müller, Saga Bibliothek, vol. 1:140.

145 Sturlunga saga, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, LVI. Guðbrandur and Powell estimate a similar date in Origins Islandicae, 346.

146 In fact, Bååth explicitly stated that he does not intend to date the four sagas discussed in his study, though he did place it as older than Laxdœla saga, Ýjuls saga, and Vatnsdœla saga, Studier öfver Kompositionen, VI.
and Finnur Jónsson, who dated the main saga and Ófeigs þáttir and Vöðu-Brands þáttir to the twelfth century, and Sýrla þáttir to the thirteenth. Valdimar Ásmundarson, in his non-critical edition, also asserted that Ljósvetninga saga is from the twelfth century and therefore one of the oldest Íslendingasögur. Rafn also dated the saga to the second half of the twelfth century.

Björn M. Ólsen subscribed to Bååth’s þættir interpretation of Ljósvetninga saga’s composition, and he therefore dated its parts separately. The compilation itself, according to Björn, is from the fourteenth century, but its various parts were written in different times. Because of misunderstandings of the law in chapters 1–4, he dates these to after 1300. Sýrla þáttir, on the other hand, could be dated to the mid-thirteenth century, based on its linguistic features. Ófeigs þáttir and Vöðu-Brands þáttir, which he groups together following Bååth, could not come from before 1300, since they show a misunderstanding of the quarters-system. Björn similarly places the final part of the saga that deals with Guðmundr’s son Eyjólfr at a later date, since it shows a misunderstanding of Icelandic law.

Björn Sigfússon responds to the misconceptions that according to him surrounded Ljósvetninga saga and the preference of the C-redaction, and argues for a second half of the thirteenth-century dating, going against Björn M. Ólsen’s later dating based on legal evidence. Björn Sigfússon dates the saga to no earlier than the last decade of the Icelandic commonwealth, but by no means after 1275, due to the C-redaction’s connections to

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147 Eugen Mogk, Geschichte, 761–762.
149 Ljósvetninga saga, ed. Valdimar Ásmundsson, unnumbered introduction page.
151 “Ljósvetninga þáttur er því naust samin fír enn svo sem einum mansaldri eftir að þjóðveldið og hín fornu lög þess líðu undir lok, eða ekki fír enn um aldamótin 1300.” Björn M. Ólsen, “Um Íslendingasögur,” 386.
152 Björn M. Ólsen, 386.
153 Björn M. Ólsen, 368. See Law and Literature, 79.
155 Björn M. Ólsen, 387–88. See also Law and Literature, 78–79.
156 ÍF 10:XLVII
Brennu-Njáls saga. According to Björn, the author of Njáls saga would have been aware of the C-redaction’s description of Guðmundr, since he shares much in Njáls saga with that version’s description of his character. It is also important to bear in mind that the C-redaction is dated later than the original A-redaction since, according to Björn Sigfússon, the former is based on the latter. It is clear that Björn Sigfússon bases much of his dating on the Icelandic grand narrative of subjugation to Norwegian rule. The Norwegian king referring to the Icelanders as “mina þegna,” my people, is inconceivable, according to Björn Sigfússon, before the very last years of the commonwealth, a point that Björn M. Ólsen agreed with, though in his case it caused him to advocate for an even later date. Björn Sigfússon’s arguments are tied with his Bookprose approach towards the sagas, an approach he championed with his edition of the allegedly highly oral Ljósvetninga saga and Reykðela saga. In the promotion of Ljósvetninga saga, or any other saga, as an authored piece rather than one where there are clear oral traces, the later the date, the better.

Theodore Andersson questioned Björn Sigfússon’s mid-thirteenth-century dating of Ljósvetninga saga, and wished to follow Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s “instinct” for an early dating. Influenced by a later trend that questioned the Icelandic grand narrative, he counters Björn Sigfússon’s arguments by citing a case where Icelanders are referred to as the king’s “þegna” in Gísli þáttir Illugasonar, which is dated to the early-

159 Ljósvetninga saga, 97.
160 Ljósvetninga saga, XLVII–XLVIII.
161 Björn M. Ólsen, “Um Íslendingasögur,” 388.
162 See, e.g., Heusler, Review of Um Ljósvetninga sögu, and Stefán Einarsson, “Publications in Old Icelandic Literature,” 46.
163 See Emily Lethbridge, “Dating the sagas,” 82.
thirteenth century, a scene that Björn himself referenced in a brief foot-
note. According to Andersson, service at the Norwegian court was not new to the late thirteenth century, and neither was the kind of relationship between Icelanders and the Norwegian king portrayed in *Ljósvetninga saga*. Andersson’s dating of *Ljósvetninga saga* to c. 1220 is connected with his idea that the saga was a turning point in Icelandic storytelling, as well as his assertion that the Northern monastery Munkaþverá was a center for saga production. *Ljósvetninga saga* must have been written around 1220 because of its relationship with *Morkinskinna*, its similarities with *Reykdœla saga* (which he prefers to date between 1207–1222), and the saga’s connections to Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson (d. 1207) and his family’s connection to Munkaþverá. *Ljósvetninga saga* reports to us Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson’s catchphrase: “Hófum nú Veisubragð,” as a reference to a scuffle that occurs in the farm of Veisa in the eleventh century. Andersson says that an unwitty sentence like that would not have been remembered more than a decade after the man passed away. We cannot always assess which events and witty retorts will be remembered and which ones will be forgotten. In addition, as Einar Ól. Sveinsson points out, there is nothing that clearly indicates that Þorvarðr was dead when the line was put on parchment; it could also have been in the latter years of his life when “he

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165 ÍF 10: 97, n. 4. That this was relegated to a footnote by Björn rather than discussed in the main introduction is noteworthy.

166 *Law and Literature*, 79. In the context of *Hreiddars þáttr* and the representation of interactions with the Norwegian court, see Yoav Tirosch, “Icelanders Abroad.” Finnur Jónsson, who subscribed to an even earlier dating of the saga, noted the use of *þegna* but did not make changes to his dating due to this. Finnur Jónsson, *litteraturshistorie*, 1st ed., vol. 2:504; 2nd ed., vol. 2:498.


169 *Law and Literature*, 82, based on arguments made in Dietrich Hofmann “Reykdæla saga und mündliche Überlieferung.”

170 *Law and Literature*, 79.

171 ÍF 10:73.

172 *Law and Literature*, 83–84.

173 Einar Ól. Sveinsson also argues that the citation makes more sense when Þorvarðr was dead, or at least after his retirement to a monastery in the latter part of his life, but does not state how long a period after his death this would have been cited: “they could very well have been written in 1208, or 1218, or later.” *Dating the Icelandic Sagas*, 56–57.
was off the scene.”

Nevertheless, Einar Ólafur’s inclination for dating *Ljósvetninga saga* was, like Andersson, towards a date close to Þorvarðr’s death. Björn Sigfússon argues that it is the people around Ógmundr sneis Þorvarðsson, the son of Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson, who wrote *Ljósvetninga saga*. This could be an alternative explanation for Andersson’s dating: it is likely that people would remember their fathers’ terrible dad-jokes long after their passing. Hallvard Magerøy suggests that this could also be an entirely different Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson, a son of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði who is mentioned in *Landnámabók*. While this option is doubtful, considering Þorvarðr’s likely advanced age in the mid-eleventh century, it remains a possibility due to *Ljósvetninga saga*’s proclivity to create chronological rifts, discussed below in the chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?

If it is believed that the *Njáls saga* author knew *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction, the latter should be at least a few years younger than the former. Barði Guðmundsson, who is discussed at length in The Part About Memory, suggested that both redactions of *Ljósvetninga saga* would have been written after *Njáls saga*, since, as will be shown, he read its depiction of Guðmundr inn ríki as a slander against the controversial late thirteenth-century Þorvarðr Þórarinsson. There is also the possibility that only *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction was written after *Njáls saga*, with the A-redaction having been written before, and the C-redaction using *Njáls saga* as a source, rather than the other way around. To understand this issue fully, it is important to address the argument that *Njáls saga*’s descriptions of Guðmundr inn ríki and Þorkell hákr are based on and respond to *Ljósvetninga saga*. The connection between *Ljósvetninga saga* and *Njáls saga* will now be explored with the aim of understanding how these texts communicate with and respond to each other.

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174 Einar Ól. Sveinsson, 56.
173 Einar Ól. Sveinsson, 57.
176 Magerøy, “indre samanhengen,” 89.
2.3 A New Look at the *Ljósvetninga saga-Brennu-Njáls saga* Connection

An interesting issue that arises from Barði Guðmundsson’s reading of *Ljósvetninga saga* is the fact that he sees it as a response to *Brennu-Njáls saga* rather than the other way around. After all, Björn Sigfússson asserts that *Njáls saga* would have been aware of *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction. As such, the saga’s A-redaction, which he deems as earlier, would have predated *Njáls saga* by quite some time. While the implications of which of the sagas were written first will be discussed below, the connection between these two sagas is, at times, overwhelming, almost to the point where it appears undeniable that one is responding to the other in various events, descriptions, and character representations. The question is: which is responding to which? The answer does not have to be so clear cut; in circumstances of oral composition, both sagas could be responding to each other. But whether the main thrust of the narrative comes from the story’s oral origins or from the moment(s) it was brought to writing, it will be shown that *Njáls saga* and *Ljósvetninga saga* each as a unity have deep connections to one another.

In his research into characterization in the *Íslendingasögur*, Paul Schach argued that, rather than there being a set of characters that existed in a “communal memory bank,” each representation of a character in each saga is based on its own function in that specific text and on the intent of its author. This is true, he argues, even for a character as ubiquitous in the *Íslendingasögur* as Snorri goði, about whom Steblin-Kamenskii argued that he is “treated in exactly the same way in various sagas.” Schach dedicates some space to the character of Guðmundr inn ríki and his representation in various texts. What connections he finds, he attributes to a literary connection between the texts. He argues that Guðmundr’s image in *Njáls saga* “is of almost superhuman dimensions,” and that it “is clearly

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177 ÍF 10:XLVIII–L, n. 3. See also ÍF 12: XL–XLI.
178 Schach, “Character Creation,” 249.
intended as a rebuttal to Ljósvetninga saga,”¹⁸⁰ In Gíslí Sigurðsson’s article on Guðmundr inn ríki discussed above, he calls Schach’s approach “untenable,”¹⁸¹ and states that “the views expressed by Paul Schach […] provide clear evidence of the way that misconceptions about the nature of oral tradition can mislead people in their conclusions regarding saga characters who, like Guðmundr ríki, appear in several written texts.”¹⁸² Gíslí criticizes Schach for conflating oral tradition with historical accuracy, not realizing that an oral storyteller can be just as creative with his material as a literary author.¹⁸³ In addition, Gíslí argues that Schach is wrong to assume that a character emanating from oral tradition must show a consistency in every text in which they appear. Different texts shine a light on different aspects of a certain character.¹⁸⁴ While Gíslí’s argument that Schach misunderstands oral tradition rings true, it is important to remember that even in oral composition two ‘independent’ stories could correspond to each other, precisely because of the concept of immanence discussed by Gíslí (as well as Clover and Foley before him).¹⁸⁵

The argument for a literary connection between Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction and Njáls saga is a strong one, but it is difficult to ascertain which preceded which. It could be argued that the C-redaction author, after reading Njáls saga in its written form, decided that more connections between the two sagas needed to be made than there were in an already existing A-redaction.¹⁸⁶ Thus, for example, Sórla þáttr could have been inserted into the narrative as a response to Flosi’s confrontation with Sórlí Brodd-Helgason. However, the argument in the opposite direction is just as likely: when, in Njáls saga, Flosi approaches Sórlí Brodd-Helgason for support in the alþingi following the burning of Njáll and his family, Sórlí

¹⁸⁰ Schach, “Character Creation,” 267. See also ÍF 12: XL–XLI.
¹⁸¹ Gíslí Sigurðsson, “*The Immanent Saga,” 213.
¹⁸² Gíslí Sigurðsson, 213.
¹⁸³ Gíslí Sigurðsson, 213. See also Rankovic “Who Is Speaking in Traditional Texts.”
¹⁸⁶ See ÍF 10:XLVIII–XLIX, n. 3, for Björn Sigfússon’s discussion of the linguistic ties between Ljósvetninga saga and Njáls saga.
refuses, stating that he needs to see first what Guðmundr inn ríki, his father in law, decides to do. To this Flosi responds: “Finn ek þat á svörum þínum, at þú hefir kvánríki.”187 Sǫrli’s answer, as well as Flosi’s response to it, make sense in the context of Njáls saga, and the situation in its entirety invokes Northeastern regional traditions. A literary connection with Ljósvetninga saga need not be proven for this scene to work. However, there is an extra layer of meaning added if we look at this scene in the context of Ljósvetninga saga. It is noteworthy that the word kvánríki is rather rare: according to the Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog it also appears in Finnboga saga ramma, Ragnars saga loðbrókar, and Steins þáttir Skaptasonar, and its cognate kvenríki appears in a mid-fourteenth-century law code on baptism.188 All of these appear in a negative context. Flosi’s use of kvánríki is straightforward: Sǫrli has married Guðmundr inn ríki’s daughter, and the statement implies that she is the one who determines things around the house. But there is a double meaning that is hard to ignore. As this is a rare word, it is interesting that it combines kván and ríki, after, as will be shown, the insults to Guðmundr’s manliness were already invoked in the saga. The woman that rules the house is not necessarily Sǫrli’s wife Þórdís, but could rather be Guðmundr himself. This becomes clearer by the use of the word ríki, Guðmundr’s epithet. Flosi is made even more admirable a character when, in his hour of need, he finds time to devise elaborate puns.

One aspect where Ljósvetninga saga and Njáls saga are clearly intertwined is in their treatment of the characters of Njáll and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði. As I have noted in a forthcoming publication,189 Ljósvetninga saga presents Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði and Hákon jarl as mirror-images of each other: both are famously pagan, manipulative in their conversion, and show a certain willingness to sacrifice their children. Ármann Jakobsson’s discussion of the Nasty Old Men of the Íslendingasögur—who wish

187 ÍF 12: 351 [ch. 134], “I can see from your answer that your wife rules here,” Njal’s saga, trans. Robert Cook, 235.
189 Yoav Tirosh, “Trolling Guðmundr: Paranormal Defamation in Ljósvetninga saga.”
death upon their children—is informative in this context.\textsuperscript{190} To call Þorgeirr a Nasty Old Man is more problematic than to call Njáll one. After all, he tries to back off from the battle against his sons, though Guðmundr presses him forward. But he fights them, nonetheless. The father-son dispute reaches its climax in the godablóð ceremony that removes Þorgeirr’s godord, taking away his power and weakening his side’s legal position. But this is also a very clear symbolic act: “Þorgeirr goði bjó at Ljósavatnir” are the first words of Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction, and most of its C-redaction versions. This byname follows him in many texts in which he appears, including Njáls saga,\textsuperscript{191} Reykdœla saga,\textsuperscript{192} and Finnboga saga.\textsuperscript{193} By stripping away Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði’s godord, the Þorgeirssynir are stripping away their father’s identity. At one moment during the battle between Þorgeirr and his sons, Þorgeirr’s side begins to show a sign of weakness. To this, Hòskuldr Þorgeirsson responds: “Ílt er þat, ef fðður minn þrýtr drengskapinn.”\textsuperscript{194} This generational strife between Þorgeirr and his sons connects Ljósvetninga saga even further to the Njáls saga narrative.

Old age connects Þorgeirr and Njáll elsewhere in the texts. In Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction, when Guðmundr and Þorgeirr meet rough opposition from the side of the Þorgeirssynir, Guðmundr says: “Synir þínir gánga nú fast fram, en þú eldíst.”\textsuperscript{195} This echoes both the scene in Njáls saga where Skarphéðinn points out that his father’s harsh words following Hòskuldr’s death should be attributed to his old age, and the compensation scene during which Skarphéðinn points out Njáll’s advanced age.\textsuperscript{196} The comment on Þorgeirr’s age is not proof of anything in itself; the expression “svá ergisk hverr sem eldisk” appears in Hrafnskels saga Freysgøda,

\textsuperscript{190} Ármann Jakobsson, “The Specter of Old Age: Nasty Old Men in the Sagas of Icelanders.”
\textsuperscript{191} ÍF 12:271 [ch. 105].
\textsuperscript{192} E.g., ÍF 10:209 [ch. 18].
\textsuperscript{193} E.g., ÍF 14:253 [ch. 1].
\textsuperscript{194} ÍF 10:13 [ch. 4]. “It’s a shame if my father’s courage is giving out,” 133.
\textsuperscript{195} Ljósvetninga Saga 1830, 11 [ch. 4]. ÍF 10:13. “Your sons are now taking strong measures and you are getting old,” 132.
\textsuperscript{196} ÍF 12:281 [ch. 111]; ÍF 12:314 [ch. 123]. See also Tirosh, “Víga-Njáll: A New Approach Toward Njáls saga,” 219, where references to Njáll’s old age are discussed.
and elsewhere,\textsuperscript{197} so clearly \textit{Njáls saga} and \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} did not ‘invent’ this concept. Nevertheless, the connection between getting older and the struggle with one’s children is a recurrent theme in both.

There is merit to Björn Sigfússon’s argument for a stronger literary connection between \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}’s C-redaction and \textit{Njáls saga}. As the following chapter lays out, the C-redaction stresses that it is specifically Þorgeirr to whom the \textit{taparøx} from Hákon jarl was given when he asks him and Guðmundr for support.\textsuperscript{198} This ties the \textit{taparøx} specifically to Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði and his commitment to oppose his sons at court and consequently in battle, not unlike Njáll who carries a \textit{taparøx} on his way to gather the support of Ásgrím Eilliða-Grimsson in court, in the midst of his scheming the deaths of his sons. If Njáll’s intention is not clear enough, the author drives the point home by dressing him in a “blárri kápu,”\textsuperscript{199} a piece of cloth that is frequently worn by future killers.\textsuperscript{200} The only other appearance of the word \textit{taparøx} in \textit{Njáls saga} is when Njáll instructs his ally Gunnarr to deceive the well-endowed Hríutr through trickery and manipulation of the law.\textsuperscript{201} This scene shows Njáll’s unnerving understanding of the way his fellow men operate.\textsuperscript{202} Gunnarr is told by Njáll that the conversation with Hríutr will turn to the people of Eyjafjörður, a rather obvious turn, since Gunnarr is meant to present himself as an Eyfljótingr. To Hríutr’s questions about the people of that area, Njáll tells Gunnarr to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See also Richard Lynn Harris, “The Proverbial Heart of Hrafnkels Saga Freysgoða,” where he discusses the uses of proverbs in that saga, and the “Concordance to Proverbs [...]”, University of Saskatchewan, accessed 2 Sept. 2017, https://www.usask.ca/english/icelanders/proverbs_HKLS.html/.
\item Hjalmar Falk points out the Eastern origins of the ‘taparøx,’ which is noteworthy considering it is grouped with a ‘hatt girzkan,’ \textit{Altnordische Waffenkunde}, 110.
\item ÍF 12:296 [ch. 118].
\item See, e.g., Anita Sauckel, \textit{Die literarische Funktion von Kleidung}, 80. Sauckel discusses Njáll’s choice of clothes as a disguise. This is a convincing interpretation and not necessarily contradictory to the one presented here.
\item ÍF 12:59 [ch. 22].
\item See William Sayers, “Njáll’s Beard, Hallgerðr’s Hair and Gunnarr’s Hay,” 11–12. Sayers posits that Njáll’s lack of a beard constitutes as a sacrifice of his manhood that allows him to understand better the ways of men.
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answer: “Œrinn hafa þeir klækiskap.”203 With these words, the Njáls saga author points to a connection between these two stories.

The word taparøx is a rather rare one, which, according to Íslenskt tex-tasafn, appears only five times in the Íslendingasögur corpus: twice in Njáls saga, once in Ljósvetninga saga, and twice again in Vatnsdœla saga.204 The Vatnsdœla saga scene where the word appears is also connected to Guðmundr inn ríki. There, a father presents his unacknowledged son, Þorkell krafla, with a taparøx and promises to acknowledge their kinship, in return for the death of a man destined by lot to become the Vatnsdœlir goði. Þorkell then uses that very axe to do the deed, i.e., to kill a goði. Vatnsdœla saga continues to relate the adventures of Þorkell krafla in the Orkney Islands. There, he catches the attention of Jarl Sigurðr, the very same jarl who participated in the battle of Brian, mentioned at length in Njáls saga and briefly in Ljósvetninga saga.205 Jarl Sigurðr gives Þorkell krafla an axe, which is accordingly named Jarlsnautr (Jarl’s Gift). The saga then relates that Þorkell krafla is harassed by Glæðir, a nephew of none other than Guðmundr inn ríki. Þorkell, Glæðir claims, had been suckling milk from the teats of sows and has laid beside them because he could not handle the cold of the mountain. Þorkell krafla responds by planting Jarlsnautr in Glæðir’s head. When he runs away, a woman called Hildr protects him by holding an axe. The prosecution for the killing is then handled by Guðmundr inn ríki, who, as is his wont, insists on nothing short of pronouncing Þorkell krafla as sekr—outlawed. Þorkell turns to the prophetess Þórdís for help, who instructs him to take the named staff Hognudr, and to strike Guðmundr with it. When Þorkell does this, Guðmundr loses his memory and ruins the prosecution; his memory is later restored by another hit from Hognudr. There are several interesting elements here, especially with the ties to Ljósvetninga saga’s portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki. The

204 Hjalmar Falk, Altnordische Waffenkunde, 110. See also ÍF 12:59, n. 5 and Anatoly Liberman, Word Origins, 142; because of its etymology, a ‘taparøx’ could be translated as ‘axeaxe,’ if one were so inclined. The use of the word can be found in http://corpus.arnastofnun.is, search word “taparöxi.”
205 ÍF 12:448–460 [ch. 157]; ÍF 10:61 [ch. 22].
character of Glœðir is a substitute for the usual portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki: Þórkell offers an alternative ending to the one sustained by Þórkell hákr. A taparóx is used to strike down a chieftain, and then an axe is given by a jarl, which is used to kill a kinsman of Guðmundr. This could be playing with the traditions surrounding Guðmundr and his Ljósvetninga saga ally, Þorgeirr. This is underlined by the fact that we have an axe-yielding woman—a rare feature in the Íslendingasögur—and yet something that also appears in Ljósvetninga saga, when a certain Þórhildr divines the future using an axe, clad in warrior’s clothes.206

Religion is another aspect that connects Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði and Njáll in Njáls saga. The Conversion of Iceland is described as a moment of crisis when pagans and Christians were on the brink of splitting the legal system in two. To avoid this, the man appointed lawspeaker of the Christian side gave three marks of silver to Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði, the lawspeaker of the pagan side, to pronounce which of the two laws should prevail, the Christian or the pagan. There is a lack of clarity in the sources and in scholarship regarding whether or not this was a bribe.207 It is hard to understand what other function the three marks of silver could have had, though some have tried to explain this away as the regular fee given to the lawspeaker.208 After this, Þorgeirr retreats to his booth where he covers himself with a cloak and speaks to no one for an entire day. When he emerges, people gather at the logberg, and Þorgeirr declares that one law should preside over all from now on, since “ef sundr skipt er logunum, þá mun ok sundr skipt friðinum,” and that it will be the Christian one.209 The choice of Christianity as the law of the land over heathen practice was surprising for the pagans, because Þorgeirr was one of their

207 See ÍF 12:271; Njal’s saga, 328, n. 2; Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders, trans. Siân Grønlie, 8–9. “The Icelandic verb (kaupa at) is ambiguous, and could mean either that Hallr and Þorgeirr negotiated a settlement, or that Hallr gave Þorgeirr money (either a bribe or the appropriate fee) to speak the law. […] Ari leaves the nature of the agreement deliberately murky,” Íslendingabók, 25, n. 71.
208 See Miller, Why Is Your Axe Bloody?, 185, n. 19; Íslendingabók, 25, n. 71 (cited in Miller).
209 ÍF 12:271 [ch. 103]. “If the law is split asunder, so also will peace be split asunder,” Njal’s saga, trans. Cook, 181.
own. Unlike Njáls saga, both Íslendingabók and Kristni saga relate that “of bar-
naútburð skyldu standa en fóru lög ok of hrossakjótsát,” meaning that
these traditions would be allowed. In Njáls saga, this concession is differ-
ent: the exposure of children and horse flesh are completely forbidden,
unless done secretly. This difference means that these two pagan cus-
toms are further condemned specifically in Njáls saga; emphasizing the kill-
ing of one’s children by Þorgeirr, a man who got close to the killing of his
own children, hits rather close to home.

Þorgeirr’s statement on the importance of keeping the country stable
stands out. It is logical that with two law systems, chaos would reign. Com-
ing from the lawspeaker, the words have even more weight. But it is hard
to ignore that these words are uttered by a man whom the text hints just
accepted a bribe. This is not the only case in Njáls saga where somebody
speaks of the importance of the law for the land. After a failed attack on
Gunnarr of Hlídarendi’s life, Njáll helps his friend by prosecuting the of-
fenders. During the arbitration, Njáll makes sure to demand an amount
that will be sufficient to compensate for an eventual killing of one of these
attackers, “þó at þat kunni við at bera.” During that very cynical ex-
change, Njáll utters the famous proverb “með lögum skal land várt byggja,
en með ólögum eyða.” Later on, chaos rules the alþingi after Njáll gives
out advice that causes several legal cases to reach a stalemate. Njáll comes
to the rescue with his plan for a Fifth Court—a court that conveniently
requires the establishment of new goðorð. This comes exactly when he
needs his foster-son Hóskuldr to become a goði in order to win the hand of
the picky Hildigunnr. Njáll has created the solution, but was also the one
who intentionally created the chaos. It is not beyond him to enact signifi-
cant constitutional change without regard for consequences in order to

210 ÍF 1:17 [ch. 7]. See also ÍF 15:36. “The old laws should stand as regards the
211 See Íslendingabók, 25–26, n. 73.
213 ÍF 12:172 [ch. 70]; see also 172–173, n. 6.
achieve his own ends. William Ian Miller, discussing Njáll’s Christian mindframe, illustrates the man’s manipulative and vengeance-minded nature in his last moments. While Njáll claims he is too old to avenge his sons, his very last ‘Christian’ act of lying down under an ox’s hide constitutes a performance that invokes that revenge. This vengeance is made possible by the systemic failings built into the institution of the Fifth Court that Njáll himself had created. Laws do not always build the land, they sometimes break it as well. If Þorgeirr lies covered in bed in order to perform a process of inner-contemplation and conversion, Njáll’s ‘Christian’ action of lying in bed covered in fur as his house and family burn around him is him using the religious language in order to achieve his ends. Þorgeirr’s ‘Christian’ act hides a bribe, Njáll’s ‘Christian’ act invokes revenge for deaths he himself orchestrated. Both men cover themselves in the name of Christianity, but both have very different things on their mind than Christianity as they do so.

Several other connections between Njáls saga and Ljósvetninga saga can be discerned. For example, the scene in which Njáll instructs Gunnarr how to fool Hrútr is very similar to the scene in Ljósvetninga saga where Guðmundr inn ríki instructs Rindill how to approach Þorkell hákr’s home. The deception itself is similar, as are the careful instructions on how to behave. When Guðmundr inn ríki’s men approach Þorkell hákr’s home,

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214 See Anita Sauckel’s analysis of Njáll as a trickster figure in her “Brennu-Njáls saga: An Old Icelandic Trickster (Discourse)?” 94–115. See also Schach, “Character Creation,” 263–265, who points out that in other sources it was the lawspeaker Skapti who created the Fifth Court. In Njáls saga the narrative takes special care to show Njáll instructing Skapti on his legal innovation, IF 12:242 [ch. 97].


216 Miller suggests but dismisses this possibility in Why Is Your Axe Bloody?, 265.

217 Njáll, it is related, “för opt frá Óðrum mǫnnnum einn saman og þulði, einn saman,” IF 12:255 [ch. 100]. “Often went apart and murmured to himself,” Njal’s saga, trans. Cook, 173. This can stem from genuine belief, but it could also be for show.

218 See also Lisa Bennett, “‘The Most Important of Events’: The ‘Burning-In’ Motif as a Site of Cultural Memory in Icelandic Sagas,” 78, and Íslendingabók, ed. Grønlie, 25, n. 72, which compares Þorgeirr’s blanket display with Njáll oddly murmuring to himself after becoming Christian.
we are told that “við gnýinn ok vápnabrak vaknaði Þorkell,” which could remind the audience of Gunnar’s own valiant defense, which begins once his loyal dog Sámr—otherwise underused in the saga narrative—is killed, and his cry awakens the doomed warrior. Njáls saga and Ljósvetninga saga also share the rivalry between Þorkell Geitisson and Guðmundr inn ríki. This is evident in the C-redaction’s Vǫðu-Brands þátt, as it is when they take opposing sides in the alþingi dispute following the burning of Bergþórhváll. Here it is related that, when Kári achieves a tactical victory against Þorkell Geitisson’s side: “Varð þá óp mikit at þeim af mónnum Guðmundar.” The alþingi battle also ties into the Ljósvetningar–Mǫðruvellinger dispute: it is related that a Þorvarðr Tjórvason from Ljósavatn received a grievous wound, which was inflicted by Guðmundr inn ríki’s son Halldórðr. Hall-dórðr, who died by the time of Ljósvetninga saga’s Kakalahóll battle, is given a chance to make his own contribution to the ongoing feud in Njáls saga. The narrative takes care to point out that Þorvarðr—who is not mentioned in Ljósvetninga saga—remains unavenged for his wound, and that this should be counted as an achievement for the Mǫðruvellinger. Finally, it is noteworthy that the battle at the alþingi in Njáls saga is a result of Mǫðrór’s mishandling of the kviðr in the Fifth Court. The word kviðr becomes significant in both the saga’s A-redaction and C-redaction, due to its dual meaning of ‘jury’ and ‘belly,’ discussed at length in the following chapter. That the defendant’s lawyer, Eyjólfr Bǫlverksson, is killed by a spear that “kom á hann miðjan” constitutes a significant tie in with Þorkell hákr’s death and the exposure of his guts.

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219 ÍF 10:51. “Thorkel woke up at the tumult and clash of arms,” 192. All the C-redaction manuscripts miss the words “ok vápnabrak,” Ghlúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 186.
220 ÍF 12:404 [ch. 145]. “There was much jeering at them from Guðmund’s men,” Njal’s saga, trans. Cook, 271.
221 ÍF 12:404 [ch. 145]. “Thorvard Tjórvason from Ljosavatn received a great wound; his arm was pierced, and men thought that Halldor, the son of Guðmund the Powerful, had thrown the spear. Thorvard never received compensation for that wound as long as he lived,” Njal’s saga, trans. Cook, 271.
One sequence of events in Brennu-Njáls saga has such a significance in the context of Ljósvetninga saga’s plot, that it would not be out of place if it were included in the latter’s narrative. Following the killing of their foster-brother Hóskuldr Práinsson, the Njálssynir are in a tough spot. Alongside their ally Ásgrímr Þóða-Grímsson, they move between the booths of different prominent Icelandic chieftains at the alþingi. This scene is a spectacle, since it gathers many of the most prominent and well-known of the tenth- and eleventh-century players in a single sequence, where they are put up against Skarphéðinn’s sharp tongue. Skapti Þóroddsson, Snorri godi, and Hafr Þorkelsson are all confronted by this quick-tempered killer, before he turns to the booth of the Móðruvellagar and their chieftain, Guðmundr inn ríki. The Northern chieftain refuses to promise his support, but nonetheless shows the group hospitality. Midway in the conversation, Guðmundr points out the fifth man standing in the row of guests, describing his features as exceptional but unlucky. Skarphéðinn responds by addressing his own guilt for Hóskuldr’s death, and reminding the chieftain of his blame for not avenging himself upon Þorkell hákr and Þórir Helgason.223

When this attempt to muster Guðmundr’s support fails, the group turns to the booth of the Ljósvetningar, where Þorkell hákr accepts them. The narrative takes special care to build up Þorkell’s character, listing his detailed genealogy, and many of his accomplishments outside of Iceland, which included the killing of a dragon. In Þorkell’s response to the Njálssynir’s plea for help, he inquires how Guðmundr inn ríki responded. When he learns that Guðmundr did not promise help, he declares that Guðmundr must have found the case highly unpopular, and that Ásgrímur must have thought him to be more dishonest to support the defense for this wrongful killing. Then, like the others before him, Þorkell hákr notices Skarphéðinn, and asks for the identity of this ominous-looking individual. Skarphéðinn answers by noting that “hefir mik aldri þat hent, at ek hafa

223 ÍF 12:302 [ch. 119].
kúgat fôdur minn ok barizk við hann, sem þú gerðir við þinn fôdur,” adding that before the *aðhingi* Þorkell was seen by his shepherd eating a mare’s ass. This insult crosses the line for Þorkell, who springs up and threatens Skarphéðinn with his sword. Skarphéðinn replies by brandishing his axe, which causes Þorkell to sit back down.

*Njáls saga*’s author here creates a bond between the stories of Njáll and his sons, and the Ljósvettingar’s inner strife, as well as their battle against the Móðruvellíngar. When dealing with this scene in his book *Why Is Your Axe Bloody?*, William Ian Miller mostly stresses the contrasts that the author created between the proven fighter Skarphéðinn, and the bed-post boaster Þorkell hákr. Miller’s choice to emphasize the contrasts between them, however, clouds the vast similarities between the two prominent Icelanders’ sons. Whenever they enter a chieftain’s booth, we are told, Skarphéðinn stands in the fifth place in line. Excluding Gizurr hvíti—who gives no trouble in lending his support to the Njálssynir—Þorkell hákr is the fifth person to be approached in this sequence. Since the author takes much care to point out that Skarphéðinn is the fifth in line, this could hardly be a coincidence, given the additional parallels between the two men. As Miller points out, the author takes time to reintroduce Skarphéðinn before his conversation with Þorkell hákr and almost immediately following Þorkell hákr’s description. Despite Miller’s convincing analysis, Skarphéðinn’s physical feats have a fantastical air to them: such ice-sliding and precise axe-swinging is certainly not within the reach of most of the saga’s modern readers, and likely not within grasp of anyone

224 ÍF 12:304–305 [ch. 120]. “It’s never happened that I threatened my own father or fought him, as you did with your father,” *Njal’s saga*, trans. Cook, 204.

225 ÍF 12:305 [ch. 120].

226 Miller, *Why Is Your Axe Bloody?*, 212. Apparently, Þorkell’s bedposts depicting his achievements abroad were famous enough to make an appearance in ch. 16 in the mid-nineteenth-century novel *Moby Dick*, 211, n. 3.

227 Miller points out “that five characters ask after the fifth man,” *Why Is Your Axe Bloody?*, 104, n. 28.

228 See Marion Poilvez, “Those Who Kill: Wrong Undone in the Sagas of Icelanders” on first killings in the *Íslendingasörgur* and how they influence one’s appearance.
but the most acrobatic of the saga’s contemporary audience.\textsuperscript{229} When Skarphéðinn calls Þorkell out for eating a mare’s ass, the Njálsson (or the \textit{Njáls saga} author) must have on his mind the accusation of him and his brothers being \textit{taðskegglægrar}, dung-beardlings, though according to Sverrir Tómasson \textit{tað} implies human rather than animal excrement.\textsuperscript{230} Beyond the multi-sensory humiliation of having poop smeared over one’s face, this accusation against Þorkell has a further bite to it: it is tied to both “oral–anal sex with farm animals” and consequently, “sloppily performed coprophagy.”\textsuperscript{231} This fits well with Skarphéðinn’s earlier accusation against Þorkell that he fought against his father. When Skarphéðinn points out that he himself did not fight with his patriarch, his phrasing stands out. I have argued elsewhere that Skarphéðinn’s use of the verb \textit{henda} indicates passivity: he did not oppose his father, but if circumstances were slightly different, he might have.\textsuperscript{232} Furthermore, Skarphéðinn is being disingenuous; as Njáll himself indicates in his infamous \textit{alþingi} speech, the killing of Hóskuldr hurt him in an almost physical sense. In addition, \textit{Njáls saga}’s representation of the Ljósvetninga father–sons dispute is not entirely coherent with the extant \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} text, since Þorkell hákr’s involvement in the feud with his father is minimized in the latter. His brother Hóskuldr takes the lead role in the father–sons dispute,\textsuperscript{233} and Þorkell is only mentioned once in chapters 1–4, in a list of Þorgeir Ljósvetningagöði’s sons.\textsuperscript{234}

While Skarphéðinn might be a more popular and colorful character, Þorkell had dealt with his father’s oppression in a ‘healthier’ manner; he does not share a household with his brothers and father (though this self-

\textsuperscript{229} Cf. Qays Constantine Stetkevych, \textit{Grappling Within the Sagas […]} for a discussion of medieval Icelandic knowledge of grappling.

\textsuperscript{230} Sverrir Tómasson, “The Textual Problems of Njáls saga: One Work or Two?,” 46.

\textsuperscript{231} Miller, \textit{Why Is Your Axe Bloody?}, 105.

\textsuperscript{232} Tirosh, \textit{Víga-Njall}, 224.

\textsuperscript{233} This makes his not avenging the death of his brother Þorkell hákr in the later chapters even more baffling, but perhaps an older age has made Hóskuldr more sedate, or Guðmundr’s growing power in the district had become too vast after the victory over his two main opponents, Þórir Helgason and Þorkell hákr.

\textsuperscript{234} \textit{ÍF} 10:7 [ch. 2].
seclusion would be his undoing), he is married and has a daughter who makes sure that his death is avenged, even at the expense of the lives of her husband and, eventually, her son. Skarphéðinn gets no such satisfaction. He can only be avenged through the mechanisms of Kári, a man who by the end of the saga and the deaths of his own wife and son, no longer has any physical ties to the Bergþórshváll kin group. Þorkell hákr and Skarphéðinn’s confrontation is a sum of the connections between the story of the Bergþórshváll dwellers and the Ljósvetninga saga conflicts. When Skarphéðinn accuses Þorkell of being a mare’s ass-eater, he both accuses him of breaking with Christian tradition, and with being argr, in essence breaking with the pagan tradition of masculinity. The family of the lawspeaker who ended the rule of paganism in Iceland, then, is openly accused of both a form of child exposure—killing one’s children—and of eating horse-flesh, from the son of a father who similarly exposes his children to fire, and who himself is accused of ‘eating ass.’

As mentioned above, Björn Sigfús son argued that the Njáls saga author must have had access to or knowledge of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction when working on his own text. An important point established is the higher volume of connections between Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction and Njáls saga over the A-redaction, manifest in, for example, Sörli Brodd-Helgason’s dealings with Flosi, or the taparøx connecting Njáll and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði. This opens up the possibility that even if Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction is firmly dated before Njáls saga, the C-redaction could have been written in response to it. This kind of argument is not unprecedented in saga scholarship, as a similar sequence of writing has been argued in connection with Gísla saga’s two versions and Eyþryggja saga. With

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235 Guðrún Þorkelsdóttir has rarely been compared with the more active female players of the Islingingasögur and fornaldarsögur, probably because she plays such a minor role. Nevertheless, her sacrifice of her husband and son in the name of vengeance for her beloved father is noteworthy. One can only imagine how she reacted when news of her son’s—Hallr Koðránshání—death arrived at her doorstep. Did she think of her namesake Guðrún Gjúkadóttir? On Guðrún, see also Ela Sefcikova, “The Women of Ljósvetninga saga,” 61–63.

236 Origines Islandicae, 353.


this, Barði Guðmundsson’s argument below on the possibility that Ljósvetninga saga is a response to Njáls saga becomes somewhat more convincing. While his analysis of the saga as a roman à clef is farfetched, we should not follow Njáll’s example and throw the baby out with the bathwater. While this sub-chapter re-affirmed the connections between Ljósvetninga saga and Njáls saga, it does not offer an ultimate solution to what was written first. However, as Else Mundal pointedly points out, “the relationship between written sagas” is ultimately tied to their previous existence as oral tradition, and the connections that these inherently entail. Sometimes what we see as literary connections were already present in the oral forms of these stories, and are therefore presently undateable.

2.4 Conclusion

Despite Björn Sigfússon’s claims otherwise, in both of the Ljósvetninga saga’s redactions, the focal point is Guðmundr inn ríki and the Möðruvellingar rather than the Ljósvetningar, to the extent that Bååth suggested that the saga should have been called “Möðruvellingasaga.” Nevertheless, the earliest extant title of the saga is found in the medieval AM 561 4to 32v, in faded red ink: “liośuetninga f.”—Ljósvetninga saga. The earliest post-medieval manuscripts of the C-redaction are variations of “Ljósvetninga saga eður Reykdæla;” “hier hefur søgu af þorgeyr goþa, Gudmunde rjika, z þorkel hák;” and even “hier biriast saga sá er

239 Else Mundal, “The Dating of the Oldest Sagas about Early Icelanders,” 43.
240 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 5; Bååth, Studier öfver Kompositionen, 2. Björn M. Ólsen solved this by suggesting that the first part where Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði’s sons battle Guðmundr inn ríki should be called Ljósvetninga saga, while the part that focuses on Guðmundr should be called Möðruvellingsaga. The parts of the saga were later put together. “Um Íslendingasögur,” 371. See also Saga om Ljösvetningane, trans. Magerøy, 9.
241 E.g.: Isl papp 35 fòl; AM 554 e 4to; JS 624 4to; BL ADD 4867 4to; NKS 1714 4to; Kall 616 4to; Kall 621 4to; Lbs 1629 4to; Thott 984 I–III fòl.; AM 395 fòl.
242 E.g., AM 514 4to; NKS 1704 4to (second copy); and NKS 1798 4to. Note that these three manuscripts are part of the branch marked as the B-redaction because of their different ending, but otherwise seem to stem from the same copy of AM 162 c fòl., as all other C-redaction manuscripts.
243 E.g., AM 485 4to and NKS 1785 4to.
Reikdæla heiter.” With these title changes, various post-medieval and, presumably, medieval scribes tried to deal with the unclear focus of these texts, and either shifted it to the main actors, Guðmundr, Þorgeirr, and Þorkell, or expanded the field of action to include a larger segment of the Northeast—Ljósavatn and Reykjadalur.

If the saga’s scribes found it difficult to settle on the name ‘Ljósvetninga saga,’ its nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors struggled to decide which group of texts actually comprise the saga. Attempting to create definitive texts for use of scholarship and the general public, editors of normalized editions make choices that influence the way a certain saga is perceived, as discussed in the thesis’s conclusion. Emily Lethbridge has shown in the case of Gísla saga Súrssonar how an edition’s choice to prioritize a certain redaction over another, as well as stylistic editorial choices of prioritizing different readings when the base-text does not match the editors’ expectations, can skew our understanding of a saga. The same is true for Ljósvetninga saga. Guðmundur Þorláksson’s edition from 1880, which was meant for the general public, was the first critical edition of the text since Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s 1830 edition, which was based mostly on the post-medieval manuscript AM 485 4to. Despite being a reliable edition in that it marks most—though not all—significant manuscript variants, Guðmundur’s edition has been criticized for its creation of a composite text that combines the A-redaction and C-redaction manuscripts, as well as its chapter headings that influenced readers to think of the saga in parts or þættir. In chapters 1–4 and 19–21, where both redactions of the saga agree, Guðmundur used the A-redaction rather than the post-medieval C-redaction manuscripts. Yet in chapters 5–18, he used the

244 NKS 1704 4to (first copy).
246 Guðbrandur Vigfússson and F. York Powell say of this “there are too many worthless various readings,” Origines Islandicae, 348.
247 See Báðth, Studier öfver Kompositionen, 1–2; Erichsen Untersuchungen, 70; Björn Sigfússson Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 4–5; Björn M. Ölsen, “Íslenzkar fornsögur,” XXIII, n. 1. Note that Björn Sigfússson criticizes Erichsen because her conclusions are based on Guðmundur Þorláksson’s division. See also Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 10, 13.
medieval C-redaction manuscript when possible, and the post-medieval ones when not. The same goes from the end of chapter 21 that is not in the A-redaction until the end of the saga. Guðmundur also divided the saga into Guðmundar saga and Eyjólfss saga, and further divided Guðmundr’s bulk into þættir. This composite text was the most useful edition of Ljósvetninga saga for the next 60 years or so.

What has become the standard when dealing with Ljósvetninga saga, Björn Sigfússon’s Íslenzk fornrit edition, prioritizes the A-redaction over the C-redaction. In the variant chapters 13–18, the A-redaction is printed in large letters, while the C-redaction text is printed below it and in a smaller font. This decision does not reflect the extant material: once the two redactions converge in chapter 18, they tell us the same story in almost the same words. But once the story breaks off in the A-redaction, we have no way to know what followed, or if anything followed at all. Keeping the large letters after the break is an editorial decision that makes it seem certain that the A-redaction included chapters 22–31. In addition, the three segments designated as Sǫrla þáttar, Ófeigs þáttar, and Vǫðu-Brands þáttar are taken out of the main text and presented separately. The final, fragmentary Pórarins þáttar ofsa is placed after the saga, with only an unnumbered footnote that indicates its connection with Ljósvetninga saga. This underplays the importance of these episodes to the integrity of the saga’s C-redaction. These two editions of Ljósvetninga saga on the one hand create a false impression of unity where this does not exist, and on the other create an impression of disunity when this is not necessarily the case.

Guðmundur Þorláksson’s edition gives the reader the impression that the text is a patchwork of sorts, an assortment of stories put together. Björn Sigfússon’s edition gives a similar impression for the saga’s C-redaction, that the saga’s þættir were added unnecessarily by its redactor. These editions of Ljósvetninga saga have each naturally formed the way the saga was received by scholarship. In 1885, based (though not uncritically) on Guðmundr’s edition, Swedish poet and scholar A.U. Bååth developed his theory that the Íslendingasögur were composites of þættir put together by their
redactors, with *Ljósvetninga saga* as an early and somewhat raw manifestation. While this perception of saga composition was eventually rejected, it signaled what was to come. Guðmundur’s edition helped to establish the notion that the *þættir* about Sørli, Ófeigr, Vǫðu-Brandr, and Þórarinn were external to the main narrative. When the Freeprose scholars Erichsen and Liestøl advanced a theory of oral variation between these two redactions, with preference for the C-redaction, Björn Sigfússon blamed Guðmundur Þorláksson’s edition for this. Björn therefore set out to promote his own Bookprose understanding of *Ljósvetninga saga* with the A-redaction as the saga’s main text, as outlined above. Despite his attempt to redeem the saga, Björn’s edition helped mostly to re-affirm the spurious nature of the saga’s narrative structure. Theodore Andersson’s work on the saga and his re-prioritization of the C-redaction has not managed to entirely change the discourse that surrounds it, and its transmission is still considered complicated. Andersson and Miller’s decision to keep the *þættir*’s names in their translation did not help to establish them as integral to the text.

The dating of *Ljósvetninga saga* is built on false premises as is the entire project of dating sagas as it is currently understood. Recent decades of Old Norse scholarship have questioned the overcommitment of dating to a grand narrative where the loss of independence to the Norwegian king is an inherently traumatic social event, along with a style-based analysis that was conjectural, at best. One such example is the case of *Ljósvetninga saga* and *Brennu-Njáls saga*, where the assumption was that the author of *Njáls saga* must have known *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction to write about Sørli or Guðmundr. While the literary connection exists between the two texts, it is far from certain that *Ljósvetninga saga* would have come before *Njáls saga*. Furthermore, *Ljósvetninga saga* has two redactions with an unclear time of composition. It is possible that the A-redaction would have already existed for some time and then—following the popular *Njáls saga*248—one would have revised the saga into the C-redaction. This newer redaction then incorporated the oral tales upon which *Njáls saga* based its

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characterizations of Guðmundr and Sörtli. Both redactions have their own logic and consistency, discussed below, and the possibility exists that Njáls saga chronologically separates the two extant redactions of Ljósvetninga saga. The characterization of Þorgeirr and Njáll (and to a certain extent Guðmundr), as well as of Þorkell hákr and Skarphéðinn Njálsson are all much more multifaceted and intriguing when looked at through the prism of the connection between these two texts. The advantage of an oral culture is that it allows for the authors of both to have known the other text as they composed their own. It is likely that the connection between Ljósvetninga saga and Njáls saga was a well-established fact long before either ever saw the skin of a calf.

Another point of contention regarding critical reception of Ljósvetninga saga is the variance between its two redactions. This helped support the early twentieth-century Continental school of Freeprose, and their assertion that the Íslendingasögur stem from an oral tradition. They asserted that the discrepancies in names and details between the two versions reflect differing oral traditions. The mostly Icelandic Bookprose school argued that the variances in Ljósvetninga saga stem from literary choices made by conscious authors of varying literary capacities. Since, according to Björn Sigfússon, the C-redaction featured more illogical narrative choices, it is the lesser one, and must have derived from the higher quality A-redaction. The question of the Ljósvetninga saga’s redactions’ internal coherence and consistency remains open to this date. It was important for Björn Sigfússon to establish a literary connection between the two redactions in order to cancel out the possibility of variant origins, as it was also for Andersson, so he could promote his vision of combined oral and literary influence. Establishing the primacy of one redaction means denouncing the other as inconsistent—with the exception of Borggrev. This thesis rejects that approach in favor of one where both redactions have their own intrinsic value, a more fruitful approach that reveals the meanings and motivations behind the choices made by their authors.
3. Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?

Before *Ljósvetninga saga* manuscript’s role from the perspectives of memory and genre are discussed, it is important to consider whether the two redactions each represent an internally-consistent narrative. The basic test of this is whether the extant text of each manuscript tradition exhibits unity of theme and plot. An intense examination of where the A-redaction and the C-redaction diverge has been done very competently by Hallvard Magerøy in 1957.\(^1\) Another very extensive examination of motifs and literary techniques in *Ljósvetninga saga* and the *Íslendingasögur* in general can be found in Heinzel’s 1880 *Beschreibung der Isländischen Saga*, though he does not address the saga’s A-redaction. The present examination seeks to determine how differences between the redactions create meaning. It will be shown that even if—as nineteenth-century scholarship argued—the components of these texts had separate origins, by the time they reached their extant A-redaction and C-redaction form, both of them had developed a complex and consistent narrative and characterizations. This is a reaction to arguments of scholars from the nineteenth and twentieth century who argued that either the A-redaction or the C-redaction is somehow lesser, or a less worthy work of art. Both redactions will be shown to be self-contained literary works, their meanings not dependent on the other.

The text has been divided into subsections that reflect varying concordance between the redactions. The beginning chapters (1–4)\(^2\) are extant both in the A-redaction (though the ending is missing) and the C-

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2. To avoid confusion the following discussion will follow the C-redaction chapter count presented in the 1830 *Ljósvetninga saga* edition, as well as marked in brackets in the Íslenzk fornrit edition of the saga. Andersson and Miller use this chapter count in their translation of the saga.
redaction. This section is followed by the þettir, i.e., Sýrla þátrr, Ófeigs þátrr, and Voðu-Brands þátrr. After the þettir are the highly divergent chapters 13–18 and the highly similar chapters 19–20. The story of Eyjólfr Guðmundarson’s struggles with the Ljósvetningar are only extant in the C-redaction, and finally Þórarins þátrr ofsa is also only extant in the C-redaction. Although this division re-enforces the feeling of Ljósvetninga saga’s episodic nature, it is not an admission of its þettir nature. One does not follow the other. Carol Clover’s concept of ‘stranding’ as a narrative technique is useful in this case. Clover defines stranding as “a shift of narrative focus from part to part, usually in a way that entails the discontinuous telling of something that could just as well, and more naturally, be told all at once.”3 If something is discontinuous it does not mean that it is interpolated, but could rather be part of the author’s design. The episodes that concern Northeastern politics constitute a break from the saga’s main feud between the Mððruvellingar and the Ljósvetningar in the C-redaction. Clover, however, stresses the “separability” of Ljósvetninga saga’s (as well as other sagas’) þettir,4 while the following analysis will stress their thematic and narrative connections.

The core of this examination is the portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki. The argument is that his portrayal is negative in both redactions of Ljósvetninga saga.5 As we have seen, this is not the scholarly consensus about the saga, as Björn Sigfússon has argued that Guðmundr’s representation in Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction is more positive than the A-redaction,6 and Bååth argued that the chieftain’s character is not consistent throughout the saga’s parts.7 Both of these arguments have been contested.8 Finnur Jónsson offers a reading of Guðmundr inn ríki’s character opposed to the

3 Carol Clover, The Medieval Saga, 65.
4 Clover, 35.
5 For my earlier discussions of the portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki, see *The Fabulous Saga, and “Argr Management,” 242–243, n. 10, along with “Trolling Guðmundr.”
6 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 27–38
7 See discussion above.
one presented here. He reads Guðmundr as an honorable, peaceful man who reluctantly enters battle but gallantly fights his enemies when his name is smeared. Likewise, Finnur considers Guðmundr’s son Eyjólfr to be treated as an overall positive individual by the text. It is understandable where Finnur Jónsson’s reading stems from: what is read here as cowardly, Finnur reads as honorable; what is read here as manipulative, Finnur could read as legal acumen. This is based on the way in which the society in which the story takes place is approached, especially when it comes to the treatment of masculinity throughout Old Norse literature in general, and specifically in Ljósvetninga saga’s portrayal of Guðmundr inn ríki.

This comparison is restricted to elements that are relevant to the discussion of Guðmundr inn ríki. The chapter is best read alongside Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s edition of Ljósvetninga saga. This edition is used for the saga’s C-redaction, but page numbers for the Íslenzk fornrit edition are also provided, as this is the standard edition used in scholarship today. In addition, readings of the C-redaction are supplemented by Jón Helgason, Björn Sigfússon, and Guðmundr Þorláksson’s readings of AM 162 c fol., since Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason’s investment in AM 485 4to at times made them prefer its readings over the medieval manuscript. In the case of chapters 1–4, citations from the C-redaction manuscripts are provided when the difference in wording is potentially significant. Recognizing the debate over Björn Sigfússon’s choice of JS 624 4to as the base-manuscript for his Íslenzk fornrit edition of Ljósvetninga saga, several places where other C-redaction manuscripts—especially AM 485 4to—offer a more interesting reading will be highlighted.

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10 On this, see Tirosh “Argr Management,” and “Trolling Guðmundr.”
3.1 Chs. 1–4: Where the Feud Between Guðmundr inn ríki and the Sons of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði Is Initiated

These four chapters are the part of *Ljósvetninga saga* where the two redactions offer an almost identical text. The variations between the A-redaction and the C-redaction are of the same nature as copyist variations of the same text. Guðmundr is not the main character in this sequence of events, or alternatively plays the role of a more of a behind-the-scenes kind of protagonist.\(^\text{11}\) Still, some of the differences, as slight as they might be, reveal meaning. As will be shown with the texts’ shifting generic roles—which is dependent on context—the process of reading changes the meaning of the same line’s interpretation for the audience.\(^\text{12}\) Therefore, the same line or word can be understood in a different light if it appears in a different place in each redaction.

3.1.1 Ólfeigr’s Daughter, Sólmundr, and Ófeigr

As pointed out in The Part About the Critics, it is commonly noted by scholars that Guðmundr inn ríki is not given a proper introduction in *Ljósvetninga saga*. This was used as evidence by Erichsen to show that chapters 1–4 were an abbreviation of a previously existing text: why else would such a prominent character in the saga not be introduced? Björn Sigfússson offered the plausible solution that Guðmundr would have been well-known enough to warrant no introduction,\(^\text{13}\) and Benedikt Sveinsson attributed this to the saga’s early date, which means both that the author was not accustomed to the genealogical introductions of saga-style, and that Guðmundr’s family-ties would have been well-known to an early audience.\(^\text{14}\) Such solutions underplay the artistic abilities of the saga’s authors. In *Morkinskinna*’s *Hreïðars þáttir*, for example, Þórðr is the first character to be introduced, rather than his brother Hreïðarr, the þáttir’s real

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\(^{12}\) See e.g., Iser’s description of the process of re-evaluating a text’s possible meanings in the reading process, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach.”

\(^{13}\) Björn Sigfússson, *Um Ljósvetninga sögu*, 8.

\(^{14}\) *Ljósv.* 1921, X–XI.
protagonist. Hreiðarr therefore needs only a short introduction because his brother would share the same genealogy. However, by introducing Þórdr first and Hreiðarr later, we are party to a playful bait and switch on the side of the kings’ saga author.\textsuperscript{15}

In \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, it could be argued that the lack of a proper introduction to Guðmundr is substituted with the story of Ólvír. Another point to consider in the saga’s introduction is that, while in the A-redaction Sölmundr’s brother is named Sǫxólfr, in the C-redaction his brother is named Eyjólfr.\textsuperscript{16} The C-redactor, then, chose a tradition that helps tie the narrative together: this Eyjólfr who goes against societal norms that demand that the household retains control over women, is later echoed in the Eyjólfr of chapters 21–32 (including Þórarins háttar ofsa), who goes against the societal norms that oppose honor-based violence.

The first chapter of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} presents the plight of one Ólvír from the farm Reykja. Ólvír is “búandi góðr”\textsuperscript{17} and “hafði átján þræla.”\textsuperscript{18} Ólvír is in an unfortunate situation: Sölmundr Viðarsson has taken notice of his daughter and begins to frequent her at their farm, despite the wishes of her kinsmen. While at no point do we hear the unnamed woman’s voice in this matter,\textsuperscript{19} the A-redaction says she is offered no protection due to “lítilmennsku fǫður hennar.”\textsuperscript{20} The C-redaction is slightly more accusatory towards Ólvír’s kinsmen: “ok ná vilja frænda, ok fékst þó engin

\textsuperscript{15} See Yoav Tirosh, “Icelanders Abroad.”

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{ÍF} 10:3 [ch. 1], and n. 6; \textit{Ljósv.} 1830, 3, n. 4. See also \textit{Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga}, 113, which settled this dilemma by having both brothers’ names, based on Gísl Konráðsson’s Lbs 143, 4to.\textsuperscript{17} \textit{ÍF} 10:3 [ch. 1]. “A good farmer,” 121. C-version has it as “góðr bóndi.” \textit{Ljósv.} 1830, 3. See, e.g., AM 485 4to 1v and JS 624 4to 26r.\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ÍF} 10:4 [ch. 1]. “had eighteen slaves,” 122. \textit{Ljósv.} 1830, 4.\textsuperscript{19} This woman’s silence is the exception rather than the rule in \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, where Guðmundr’s daughter Þórdís clearly shares Sǫrli’s interest with her, while the narrative implies that Fríðgerðr is active in her seeking out the attention of men. The narrative seems to have sympathy towards Fríðgerðr and her father’s plight of an unacknowledged pregnancy. Brandr Gunnsteinson does not deny having slept with her, and the narrative introduces her as “kona vax ok ættgöð ok skóruðig, sýslumaðr mikill,” 73 [ch. 22]; Beautiful, of great lineage and imposing, hardworking (my translation). In addition, this text gives much agency to Guðmundr’s wife Þóraða: at first, she initiates a feud, and later, she forces Guðmundr not to seek retribution for his dead companion Rindill. On female agency in this saga see also Ela Sefcikova, “The Women of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}.”\textsuperscript{20} \textit{ÍF} 10:4 [ch. 1]. The feebleness of her father (my translation).
forstaða af lítilmenni,” though this could stem from a scribal mistake between án and ná, it could also emphasize the family’s feebleness, since in this version the text does not note that they were explicitly opposed. Ólfr must then seek out the help of Öfeigr Járngerðarson, who is described as “höfðingi ok garpr mikill.” When Sólmundr and his brothers arrive at the farm to snatch Ólfr’s daughter, the eighteen slaves either feel incompetent or are indifferent to this illicit act, stating: “Hvat gerðu vér nú átján, er þeir Viðarssynir kómu at þrir?” The dauntless Öfeigr, however, who is also present in the farm, immediately jumps up, takes his weapons, and runs after the brothers, and the two sides play a tug-o-war of sorts with the woman. At this stage of the saga, a contrast is created between the rich, but weak Ólfr, and the courageous, admired Öfeigr. In the A-redaction, the implications on Guðmundr’s character are faint. It could be argued that when Öfeigr threatens Guðmundr with his fist at the end of Guðmundr’s part of the saga, the act corresponds with this earlier display of courage, and in turn Guðmundr’s feebleness is foreshadowed by Ólfr’s, but this is less pronounced in the narrative. In the C-redaction, however, the similarities between Guðmundr and Ólfr are more prominent. In Sórla þáttr, Guðmundr is introduced into the saga, where we are told that he “hafði 100 hjóna ok 100 kúa.” Despite the difference in wording (þræla/hjóna), these descriptions of Ólfr and Guðmundr could suggest a connection between the two. In Sórla þáttr, it is related how Guðmundr’s daughter Þórdís is frequented by a youth named Sórlí Brodd-

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21 Ljós. 1830, 4 [ch. 1].
22 ÍF 10:3, n. 5; Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland [...], eds. Theodore M. Andersson and William Ian Miller, 121, n. 3; and Magerøy, Studiar i Bandamanna saga, 262, designate him as Guðmundr’s þingmaðr, but this is not explicitly stated at any stage of the text. See Tirosh, *The Fabulous Saga*, 37, n. 65.
23 ÍF 10:3 [ch. 1]. A prominent leader and greatly courageous (my translation). “Höfðingi mikill ok garpr,” Ljós. 1830, 3 [ch. 1].
24 ÍF 10:4 [ch. 1]. What can us eighteen do, when the three Viðarssynir come? (My trans.) “Hvat munum vèr nú 18, ef þeir koma til 3 Viðarssynir,” Ljós. 1830, 4 [ch. 1].
25 Interestingly, this takes place at Tjórn, where Fríðgerðr and her father also come from. Thus, the two narratives are possibly tied together in the C-redaction story.
26 Ljós. 1830, 13 [ch. 5]. He has a hundred (120?) ÍF 10:109, n. 2) servants and a hundred (120?) cows (my translation), ÍF 10:109.
Helgason. These interactions are not to Guðmundr’s liking, and yet he is helpless to stop them. When he sends Þórdís to his brother’s farm in Þverá, the latter does nothing to stop the young lovers’ interactions, and even promotes Sórlí’s case as a suitor. In the C-redaction, then, Ólfrir could be looked at as a stand-in for Guðmundr, whose ability to control his own household is put into question. This is reinforced by how the later Ófeigs þáttir follows Sýrla þáttir in presenting Ófeigr as the sensible voice that puts Guðmundr in his place. In addition, Guðmundr’s antagonist Þórir Helgason’s introduction as “garpr mikill,” in the part of chapter 13 that is now only extant in the C-redaction, supports this parallel between Guðmundr and Ólfrir.

3.1.2 Jarl Hákon Enlists Guðmundr inn ríki and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði’s Help

When Sólmundr is exiled for three years after he and his brothers kill a Norwegian, he appears before jarl Hákon who decides to promote his return to Iceland after only two years. This act is gratuitous, and is more a display of power from the jarl than a reflection of any real necessity. The jarl then decides to send gifts to Guðmundr inn ríki and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði. The A-redaction and C-redaction have a very slight variation in how he does this. According to the A-redaction: “Hann sendi út hatt girzkan ok taparøxi þeim Guðmundi ok Þorgeiri goða til trausts.” According to the C-redaction: “Hann sendi girzkan hatt Guðmundi enum ríka, en Þorgeiri Ljósvetningagoða taparøxi.”

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28 Sólmundr is “fýstisk út” (‘most eager to come out’ [i.e., back to Iceland]), but a little patience rarely killed anyone.
29 If 10:6 [ch. 2]. He sent a greek hat and a small decorative axe to Guðmundr and Þorgeirr goði for support (my translation). Andersson and Miller’s assertion in their translation is interesting, that “this sentence is found only in the A redaction,” 125, n. 12. This is misleading, as it implies that, in the C-redaction, it is only Þorgeirr who receives the gifts, thus making Guðmundr’s support in the case rather curious.
30 Ljós. 1830, 6 [ch. 2]; ÍF 10:6, n. 6 He sent a greek hat to Guðmundr inn ríki, and a small decorative axe to Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði (my translation).
two sentences seems immaterial at first, and yet it is significant that in the C-redaction one gift is specifically assigned to Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði, and one is specifically assigned to Guðmundr. In addition, in the C-redaction we are told that Sölmundr “færði Þorgeiri þá ena góðu gripi, er jarl hafði sendt honum.” As Magerøy points out, there is much ambiguity in the representation of the events in the A-redaction. In his analysis, Guðmundr claims that Þorgeirr alone was sent the gifts from the jarl when they were, in fact, sent to both of them. In the C-redaction, Magerøy argues, the point of the story is missed, since if the gifts were given to both chieftains, the ambiguity is lost. But then there remains a contradiction, since one gift was supposedly given to Guðmundr. It is possible that besides the hat and the axe other gifts were brought, and these were merely the ones highlighted. The C-redaction features an unclear contradiction here, though, which is difficult to explain away as a narratological decision. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the C-redaction makes more of a point to share the blame of the regional and familial tensions that arise from the following events between Þorgeirr and Guðmundr, perhaps even leaning towards Þorgeirr. The implications are minute: in both cases Guðmundr is represented as the manipulative go-getter that continuously presses for family discord in order to have the lawspeaker on his side. In the A-redaction, however, the blame on Þorgeirr’s side is lessened, since he is possibly tricked by Guðmundr to assist Sölmundr’s case.

When, in the C-redaction, Þorgeirr gives Guðmundr legal advice, he advises: “Sé ek ráð til, segir Þorgeir, at við komum honum á þínar sveitir, á Eyfurðinga leið, ok Reykdaela leið, ok Ljósvetninga leið, ok höldum samt leiðum öllum þeim öllum, þótt mínir þingmenn sé meirr norðr þar, ok mun þá maðrinn vera friðheilgaðr, ef svá gengr.” This is interesting because of the double meaning of the word leið. While here leið obviously means a local assembly, the fact that the word could also mean ‘way’ could

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31 Ljósv. 1830, 3 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:6, n. 7. He (Sölmundr) then gave Þorgeirr the valuable gifts that the jarl had sent him (my translation).
32 Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 23–4.
33 Ljósv. 1830, 7 [ch. 2]; ÍF 10:7, n. 4.
be a set up for the rest of the saga: Guðmundr must participate in power struggles in Eyjafjörður, Reykjadalur, and the Ljósvatn area before he could rest peacefully in control of the district. The variant A-redaction “Þverár leið”\textsuperscript{34} could imply also that Guðmundr is yet to deal with his own brother, Einarr, whose residence is in the farm of Þverá.

When Arnórr comes to Þorgeirr for his support, the latter replies: “Mér þykkr þú ills ráð hafa upp tekit, at leggja sömð sina í virðing við eins manns múl útlends, ok sé sá þó láttinn nú. Og mun ek Guðmundi veita.”\textsuperscript{35} It is unclear whether Þorgeirr is actually scolding himself and Guðmundr here,\textsuperscript{36} or if this is an ironic device on the side of the author. Hákon jarl\textsuperscript{37} is a foreigner to whom Þorgeirr has tied his honor, though not quite dead yet. Sölundr might not be a foreigner but he will be dead soon in the very next scene following Arnórr and Þorgeirr’s dialogue. In addition, in the next A-redaction episode and the one following the C-redaction þettir, Guðmundr inn ríki will wager his honor in legal support of the seemingly foreign Helgi Arnsteinsson/Ingjaldr,\textsuperscript{38} when a hingmaðr of Þórir Helgason gives him a raw deal—the pot calling the kettle black.

\textsuperscript{34} ÍF 10:7, n. 4. AM 514 4to has it as “þrjár leiðir,” Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 118.

\textsuperscript{35} ÍF 10:8 [ch. 2]. I think you have made a bad decision, to lay your honor in legal support of one man, a foreigner, and one who is now dead. I will continue to support Guðmundr (my translation). Notice the slight variations in the C-version, most significantly “dauðr” instead of “látinn,” Ljósv. 1830, 7 [ch. 2]; Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 119.

\textsuperscript{36} This double-scolding is not unprecedented, for example, in Valla-Ljóts saga when Bóðvarr is scolding an unclear target (presumably his guide) for losing their way in the snow, but also seems to be scolding himself, ÍF 9:249 [ch. 6].

\textsuperscript{37} Also, interestingly, named Hákon inn ríki in Heimskringla, ÍF 27:221 [ch. 129].

\textsuperscript{38} While Björn Sigfusson argues that Helgi Arnsteinsson would have been an Icelander, and an historical one to boot, ÍF 10:22, n. 3 and Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósvetningu sögu, 35–36, nothing in the text implies this. It is clear from the text that the C-redaction’s Helgi has no home when coming to Iceland, since Guðmundr tells him: “Út er mitt erendi, Helgi! at bjóða þér heim hvört sinn, er þú ert hér á Íslandi,” Ljósv. 1830, 41 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:22, C-redaction. The A-redaction’s Ingjaldr is even more clearly a foreigner, since he is referred to as “Austmaðr” and “Austmaðrinn” in the text, ÍF 10:23, A-redaction. See also Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 29–31, who suggests that the story of the lesser known foreigner Ingjaldr could have been put on the more historical Helgi Arnsteinsson, as is sometimes wont to happen in folklore.
3.1.3 Guðmundr and Þorgeirr Contend with the Þorgeirssonir

As Magerøy and Andersson have noted, bad family relations are a strong motif in this saga.39 Besides the obvious dispute between Þorgeirr and his sons, a subtler friction is revealed between the godi and his brother Þórdr. Þórdr gives the Þorgeirssonir advice that is hostile to his brother, and later scolds the lawspeaker for going into battle against his sons. This anticipates Einarr of Þverá’s long-lasting discord with his brother Guðmundr inn ríki, and Eyjólf Guðmundarson and his brother Köðrán. In the center of it all is Guðmundr, who sows family discord amongst the Ljósvetningar, between himself and his brother Einarr, and with his wife Þórlaug and son Halldórr, who he is at one point willing to burn in a farmstead. The instability of his sons’ relations attest to this as well.

In the C-redaction, when Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði and Guðmundr inn ríki challenge Þorgeirr’s sons at court, Þorgeirr uses his status as lawspeaker to argue that his sons did not summon the jury correctly. The Þorgeirssonir in turn approach Arnsteinn, who controls a third of their chieftaincy alongside them and their father, and they complain to him that: “ok kalla þeir oss ómæta í kviðinum.”40 In the A-redaction, this is given as: “og kalla þeir oss ómaga, er í kviðinum eru.”41 This could contain a pun on the words magi (stomach) and ómagi (helpless, incapable),42 which is reinforced by the double meaning of the word kviðr as ‘jury’ and ‘stomach.’ In the C-redaction phrasing of this clause this wordplay is slighter, but ómætr could mean ‘void’ but also ‘worthless.’ In a later scene in the saga, Þorkell hákr, the son of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði, is waving his spilled-out intestines at Guðmundr, saying “Enda ráðstú nú hingat ok

39 Magerøy, “Den indre samanhengen i Ljósvetninga saga,” 74–77; Law and Literature, 89–90, 110–113. “It is surely not coincidental that each subsection of the saga is prefaced with the story of a seduction, that is, a threat to family integrity,” 110.
40 Ljósv. 1830, 10 [ch. 4]; ÍF 10:12. They say our summoning of the jury is void (my translation). Kviðburðinum in JS 624 4to 30v.
41 ÍF 10:12, n. 1. They say we are incapable in the summoning of the jury (my trans.).
42 Cf. Clover’s “Regardless of Sex,” 14, for her interpretation of magi and úmagi as contradicting terms in her proposed one-gender model, though she does not address Ljósvetninga saga in this context.
finnumst við, þvíat nú liggja úti iðrin mín, þar hefir þér jafngjarni verit, er þik lysti þessa” in the C-redaction. The A-redaction is shorter, ending the sentence with “úti liggja nú iðrin mín.” I have suggested elsewhere that Þorkell waving his intestines could be likened to him waving his genitalia at Guðmundr. To this it can now be added that in both redactions, Þorkell makes reference to him and his brother’s former dispute with Guðmundr, his laid out phallic intestines being the obvious resolution to the matter raised by the chieftain and Þorkell’s father Þorgeirr years before. The connection is strong in both redactions: the C-redaction makes explicit a possible phallic interpretation of Þorkell’s intestines, whereas in the A-redaction, before Guðmundr offers Rindill the position of a spy, he says to him “ok má þó vera, at þú metisk eigi til ómaga.” This creates a lexical connection between the two scenes, that in turn anticipates Þorkell’s A-redaction taunt: here are my guts, Guðmundr, come at me.

3.2 The “þættir”: Where Guðmundr inn ríki Gets Involved in the Northeastern Inner-Family Dispute

As discussed in the previous chapter, the connection between this three-story segment and the ‘main’ story of Ljósvetninga saga—namely the battle between the Móðruvellinger and Ljósvetningar—has been widely contested. Adolfine Erichsen treats these as secluded narratives, not connected to each other. Finnur Jónsson has furthermore argued that Ófeigs þáttr and Vóðu-Brands þáttr treat Guðmundr more negatively than the main text because of different regional origins of the story, while Björn Sigfússon has argued that Guðmundr’s honor in the þættir is portrayed “hvergi

43 JS 624 4to adds here “ef þú þorer,” 63v.
44 Ljósv. 1830, 62 [ch. 19]; ÍF 10:52, n.4. “Come at me, Guðmund, and fight […] for my guts are hanging out. That is what you wanted when you were so eager to meet,” 193.
45 Tirosh, *The Fabulous Saga.*
46 ÍF 10:45[ch. 8 (18)]. “And then perhaps you won't be considered such a burden,” 253.
47 Erichsen, Untersuchungen […], 5–6; “Jeder der þættir 2–4 erzählt eine in sich abgeschlossene Handlung, die keine Beziehung hat zu den Ereignissen der andern,” 6.
minni” than in the main text.\footnote{ÍF 10:LI.} Here it is argued that, rather than this-or-that, it is both: regardless of the origins of these stories, they constitute a consistent portrayal of the Eyjafjörður chieftain. Furthermore, it will be shown that all three \textit{þættir}, whether or not composed together, function together both thematically and in relation to the story’s plot development.

3.2.1 \textit{Sórla þáttir}

When the youth Sórlí Brodd-Helgason tries for the hand of Guðmundr’s daughter Þórdís, Guðmundr’s opposition to Sórlí’s engagement makes little sense. Björn Sigfússon came closest to a logical historical explanation when he suggested that Guðmundr would have been opposed to a match based on love since it went against the way society worked in those days.\footnote{ÍF 10:LI. Cf. Steblin-Kamenskii, \textit{The Saga Mind}, 89–90, for a more skeptical reading of the love story, though he does not provide an alternative reading of the scene and \textit{þáttir}.} However, there are still question marks regarding this narrative, and Guðmundr’s reactions stand out. The final dialogue in which Þórarinn guesses Guðmundr’s mindset reveals much about the chieftain’s character:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
If Þórarinn Nefjólfsson’s reputation proceeds him, we know him as the cunning Icelandic courtier of king Óláfr helgi, made famous in the pages of *Heimskringla*. In this dialogue, the real reason behind Guðmundr’s decision is left unaccounted for. Guðmundr does not seem like a person concerned with the welfare of the district so much that he would begrudge his
daughter an eligible suitor. If anything, the thought of his lineage expanding its scope is what convinces him to allow the wedding rather than to refuse it. It is not beyond probability, then, that the reason Guðmundr initially opposes a marriage between Sørli and his daughter Þórdís is due to his attraction towards, or even love of, the male youth as Gunnar Karls-son suggested. At any rate, Þórarinn Nefjólsisson’s prediction is somewhat accurate, as Sørli and Þórdís’s descendants end up marrying into the powerful family of the Oddaverjar.

Þórarinn Nefjólsisson’s presence in the story is significant as well, since in Heimskringla he functions as the mediator who tries to acquire Grímsey for king Óláfr helgi. In this debate, Guðmundr and his brother Einarr are pitted against each other, the former arguing for giving the island to the king, the latter warning in a long and persuasive speech about the dangers of giving Norwegian monarchy a foothold in Iceland. Earlier in the C-redaction narrative, Einarr of Íverá states that “en opt virðir Guðmund annarra manna orð ekki minna enn mín.” That Þórarinn Nefjólsisson is the man who finally convinces Guðmundr to allow Þórdís to marry Sørli is valuable to our analysis. Guðmundr not only prefers other men than Einarr—i.e., prefers people unrelated to him over his kin—but he also

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52 It is possible that Guðmundr’s stated reason is indeed the source of his initial refusal, and that Þórarinn’s manipulation changes his mind. This is a matter of interpretative choices. However, the evasiveness of Guðmundr’s responses to Þórarinn and the initial refusal itself both support that something else is lying behind this decision.

53 Ljósv. 1830, 16–17 [ch. 5]; ÍF 10:113 and n. 1. The genealogy is fragmentary, so it could have included other historically dramatic figures besides Sæmundr inn fröði.

54 Which one could compare with the Biblical “king’s speech” by Samuel before appointing a king over the Israelites. This speech is important since it clearly shows that some Icelanders felt a sense of opposition to Norwegian rule and influence. Paul Schach states that “this episode and various other confrontations between the two brothers rather cast a shadow on Guðmund’s character and intelligence,” “Character Creation,” 265. The episode certainly casts shadow on Guðmundr’s character, in connection with how much he has the Icelandic people’s interest close to his heart. However, it is only read as a sign of lack of intelligence if one does not take into account Guðmundr’s striving to become a major representative of the Norwegian rulers in Iceland, which is also clear from Ljósweininga saga. See Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Age of the Sturlungs, 159ff.

55 Ljós. 1830, 14; ÍF 10:110. But often Guðmundr values the words of other men no less than mine (my translation). Andersson and Miller translate this sentence as “But Guðmund often honors the words of other men more than mine.” 136. Which is much more firm than the way that I read this sentence.
prefers a man who would be a symbol of Norwegian influence, if not in the entirety of Iceland, then certainly in the Eyjafjörður region. Guðmundr’s disregard for kinship ties—already apparent when he encouraged strife between Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði and his sons—both fuels and is fueled by his disregard for the interest of his fellow countrymen. This is epitomized in his disregard for his brother Einarr of Þverá and his opinion. Bååth pointed out that the narrative delays informing the audience that Einarr and Guðmundr are brothers. This is symbolic of the tension between them.

In JS 624 4to, it is said about Sørli that he “för af þingi með Guðmundi.” This is the same language used for Rindill in the A-redaction: “Ok för hann með Guðmundi af þinginu.” In the C-redaction Rindill’s path to Guðmundr’s home is made more complicated, so it is interesting that Sørli’s introduction in JS 624 4to and Rindill’s introduction in the A-redaction are made similar. If a literary connection between the two redactions is advocated, it is clear that Sørli and Rindill are meant to fill the same function in the text as Guðmundr’s love interest. However, since this reading is only offered in JS 624 4to and its connected manuscripts, it is probably not more than an interesting coincidence, and it would mainly indicate a similar function in the sense of a dependency on Guðmundr.

3.2.2 Ófeigs þátrr and Vǫðu-Brands þátrr

Bååth argues that Guðmundr’s portrayal in Vǫðu-Brands þátrr is consistent with Ófeigs þátrr to the degree that the two “höra organiskt sammen; den senare är författad i samband med den förra.” Nevertheless, of all the

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56 Albert Ulrik Bååth, Studier öfver Kompositionen i Några Isländska ättsagor, 4.
57 JS 624 4to, 32v; see also ÍF 10:109. Traveled from the þing with Guðmundr (my translation). Other C-redaction manuscripts have it as “af þingi riði með Guðmundi,” Ljósv. 1830, 13 [ch. 5], Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 127.
58 ÍF 10:43. And he traveled with Guðmundr from the þing (my translation).
59 E.g., BL ADD 4867 4to, 158v.
60 Bååth, Studier öfver Kompositionen, 9.
parts of *Ljósvetninga saga*, *Vöðu-Brands páttr* is the most difficult to fit into a coherent scheme of Guðmundr’s negative portrayal. It depicts Guðmundr as a worthy opponent, feared not only for his numerical superiority in his supporters, but also for his legal acumen. In addition, Guðmundr’s insistence on outlawing *Vöðu-Brandr* sounds convincing: “ok er landhreinsan at slikir menn séu afráðnir at lögum.”61 Guðmundr’s refusal to take money in order to ensure the safety of the district is ironic when contrasted with its immediate antecedent in *Úfeigs páttr*, which shows a Guðmundr with little concern for his þingmenn and district. Since no other reason for his refusal is provided, we are forced to accept this part of the saga as the odd-text-out, where a capable and more district-concerned side of Guðmundr is shown.

But another reading of this is possible. Later on in the C-redaction, when Guðmundr prosecutes Þórir Helgason for concealing sheep given to him illegally by Akra-Þórir, Einarr says: “Þat ætlal ek, at Guðmundr hyggi at reka þat fjándskapar við þik, er honum er sagt frá ordum þinum, meira enn honum gángi siddendi til við héraðsbyggð, þó Akra-þórir næði eigi at sitja hjá mönnum í bygð fyrir honum.”62 Andersson and Miller translate this as “‘In my opinion,’ replied Einar, ‘because of what you said about him, Gudmund intends to pursue his vendetta against you with greater vigor than he is otherwise accustomed in the district, though it is true that Akra-Thorir could not maintain himself in the region in the face of his opposition.’”63 Guðbrandur Vigfússon and F. York Powell, on the other hand, translate this as: “I think this, that Gudmund means to avenge thine enmity toward him, since he was told of thy words, more than that he cares about ridding the country-side, although Acre-Thore . . . to stay here in the country before him.”64 Guðbrandur and Powell’s translation shows

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61 *Ljósv.* 1830, 28; ÍF 10:131 [ch. 10]. “And using the law to eliminate such men would be a good riddance for the land,” 152.
62 *Ljósv.* 1830, 49 [ch. 15]; ÍF 10:35.
63 *Law and Literature*, 78.
64 *Origines Islandicae […]*, eds. Gudbrand Vigfússon and F. York Powell, 403. The three dots in this translation stand out as an odd choice, and imply a lacuna though such is not the case in the extant manuscript.
more clearly that Einarr does not think that Guðmundr’s motivation is to rid the district of a negative individual. It is not Guðmundr’s wont, it appears, to care much for his district, though one should be careful to remember that this is reported by a man hostile to Guðmundr’s intentions, his brother Einarr. What, then, could Guðmundr’s motivation be?

An explanation can be found if we decide to take Vöðu-Brands þættir not in isolation, but rather in the context of the full saga. After all, two þættir before, we read that Guðmundr has just aligned himself with Sórli Brodd-Helgason by marriage. Sórli is the brother of Bjarni Brodd-Helgason, who has famously feuded with his relative Þorkell Geitisson.65 While Sórli is not recounted in the extant corpus as having been involved in the dispute against Geitir Lýtingsson and his son Þorkell, the fact that Brodd-Helgi is called “foður Sórla”66 in Íslendingadrápa is indication that Sórli was not far from anyone’s mind in the context of that family connection.67 As Gísli Sigurðsson points out about Ljósvetninga saga:

No attempt is made to explain the dispute between Bjarni and Þorkell; instead, it is referred to as if it were already well-known to the audience. The same is true of Bjarni himself; he is not specifically introduced into the saga but spoken of like some generally known character. It thus appears that the author here assumes that the audience has a wide enough knowledge of the tradition for them to [be] able to provide the extra information needed to make sense of the story being told.68

This holds true for Sórli as well, who would have been well-known enough to be included as part of a kenning for his father. In fact, this also sheds

68 Gísli Sigurðsson, Medieval Icelandic Saga, 148. See also ÍF 11:XVIII.
light on Guðmundr’s refusal to allow Sórlí and Þórdís to marry. It is possible that Þórarinn is not far off the mark after all, and that, while Guðmundr does not have the district’s best interest in mind, he is also thinking in terms of regional politics and that if he aligns himself to a son of Brodd-Helgi, he must choose a side in a dispute he has thus far avoided.\footnote{This is true to the current generation, as Guðmundr was involved in the dispute between Geitir Lýtingsson and Brodd-Helgi that originated the current conflict, as is made clear in Vápnfirðinga saga. Finnur Jónsson argues that it is Brodd-Helgi’s failure to pay Guðmundr for his legal support and his move to supporting Geitir are the motivation behind the Eyjafjörður-chieftain’s refusal to accept the marriage, litteraturrs historie, 2nd ed., vol. 2:496. This is further supported by the presence of both Vápnfirðinga saga and Ljósvetninga saga in the AM 162 c fol. manuscript. However, as is apparent from his invitation to host Sórlí Brodd-Helgason, his friendship with Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson in the C-redaction’s telling of the legal dispute between Þórir Helgason and Þórir Helgason’s renewed alliance, this also supports the argument that Þórkell Geitisson would have played the same function in the A-redaction as Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson in the C-redaction’s telling of the legal dispute between Þórir Helgason and Þórir Helgason’s renewed alliance. This also supports the argument that Þórkell Geitisson would have played the same function in the A-redaction as Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson in the C-redaction’s telling of the legal dispute between Þórir Helgason and Þórir Helgason’s renewed alliance.} In Bjarni Brodd-Heðlason’s admonishment of Guðmundr, Bjarni reminds the chieftain of his avoidance to help him achieve a reconciliation with his kinsman Þórkell Geitisson. The marriage between Einarr’s daughter Jórunn and Þórkell Geitisson, then, allows the two sides to be re-established as kinsmen and work towards reconciliation, facilitated, according to the saga, by Jórunn herself. It is likely that Guðmundr enjoyed having his powerful neighbors to the east at loggerheads, which allowed him to focus on the consolidation of power in his own neck of the woods. Indeed, seen in an even larger context, the feud between Guðmundr and the local strongmen Þórir Helgason and Þórkell hákr Fosgeirsson that follows the pettur could be explained by the chieftain’s need to exert more power over his own region, now that the East was stabilized through Þórkell Geitisson and Bjarni Brodd-Heðlason’s renewed alliance.

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\footnote{This is true to the current generation, as Guðmundr was involved in the dispute between Geitir Lýtingsson and Brodd-Helgi that originated the current conflict, as is made clear in Vápnfirðinga saga. Finnur Jónsson argues that it is Brodd-Helgi’s failure to pay Guðmundr for his legal support and his move to supporting Geitir are the motivation behind the Eyjafjörður-chieftain’s refusal to accept the marriage, litteraturrs historie, 2nd ed., vol. 2:496. This is further supported by the presence of both Vápnfirðinga saga and Ljósvetninga saga in the AM 162 c fol. manuscript. However, as is apparent from his invitation to host Sórlí Brodd-Helgason, his friendship with Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson in the C-redaction, his alliance with Þórkell Geitisson and his sons, and the threatened burning of his own son, Guðmundr’s loyalties are generation-specific. Kinship does not matter much to Guðmundr inn ríki.
Guðmundr inn ríki at the *alþingi*,\(^{70}\) though it is odd why Þorkell would oppose his father-in-law Einarr in such a violent manner.\(^{71}\)

*Vǫðu-Brands þáttr* also highlights Guðmundr’s hypocrisy. If, in chapters 1–4, he employed all of his figurative might to allow for a violent and troublesome youth to return to Iceland, in the *þáttr* he does the opposite:\(^{72}\) here he tries to mundify the land of a troublesome youth with fake invocations of the country’s best interest. His only motivation in both cases is power and how it can be enhanced by each individual affair.

Overall, the *þættir* add to the saga an understanding of how Guðmundr inn ríki became as powerful as he is—ríki. His invitation of youths like Sǫrli Brodd-Helgason to Möðruvellir shows that he knows to create the necessary ties with important political figures, while his refusal to commit to a side in the dispute between Bjarni Brodd-Helgason and Þorkell Geitisson shows him to be manipulative and inclined to perpetuate his power through the feuds of others. Why Guðmundr eventually takes a side in the dispute seems to be tied to his familial relationship with Sǫrli Brodd-Helgason, but this is complicated by Bjarni Brodd-Helgason’s begrudging behavior.\(^{73}\)

### 3.3 Chs. 13–18: Where Guðmundr inn ríki Plots Against Þórir Helgason and Þorkell hákr Þorgeirsson

As shown in The Part About the Critics, chapters 13–18 of *Ljósvetninga saga* constitute the most widely discussed segment of the saga because they

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\(^{70}\) But see Magerøy, *Sertekstproblemet*, 85, who opens up the possibility that Vigfúss’s absence is due to the manuscript’s lacuna.

\(^{71}\) It could be suggested that if Þorkell Geitisson did align with Guðmundr in this scene, his support could have been removed following an offer of marriage with Jórunn Einarsdóttir. Highly speculative, but a thought worth considering, nonetheless. Andersson suggests that Þorkell Geitisson is portrayed over-positively to downgrade Guðmundur, *Law and Literature*, 91.

\(^{72}\) See Heinzel and his observation that both Sólmundr and Sóxólfur/Eyjólfr, and Vǫðu-Brandr are “Unverträglich, streitsüchtig,” *Beschreibung der Isländischen Saga*, 77 [181]). On Sóxólfur/Eyjólfr’s two possible names see ÍF 10:3 n. 6 and *Law and Literature*, 122, n. 4.

\(^{73}\) This is consistent with the image of Bjarni in *Vápnfirðinga saga* and *Porsteins þáttr stangarhögg*, as a peace-loving individual who is forced into violence but evades it when possible, according to Gísli Sigurðsson, *Medieval Icelandic Saga*, 146–157, esp. 155.
display a similar plot but different narrative in the redactions, and are framed by segments that are almost identical in their wording (though with noteworthy variances). It is important to restate that discussions of chapters 13–18, with the slight exception of Magerøy, frequently ignore the þættir, which constitute an additional dramatic difference between the A-redaction and C-redaction.

3.3.1 The Wedding and the Insult

Since I have discussed the wedding—during which Þórir Helgason and Þorkell hákr Þorgeirsson’s insult against Guðmundr inn ríki’s masculinity is revealed—elsewhere, only a few points will be touched upon. What is interesting to reiterate is that the scene is only extant in the C-redaction, but would have, in all likelihood, appeared in one variation or another in the A-redaction. There is, sadly, no way of knowing if this segment would have been identical to the C-redaction’s representation of the events like chapters 1–4, or entirely different, like the segment that follows. At the point where the A-redaction picks up the narrative, though, the differences are already significant. Due to the extant similarities in the plot of both redactions’ chapters 13–18, it is likely that there was a wedding in the A-redaction as well. However, the discussion above regarding the connections between Ljósvetninga saga and Njáls saga puts this into slight but significant doubt. It could be that if Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction was written after Njáls saga, it would have borrowed the wives’ dispute motif to explain the feud. The point is that it is impossible to tell what form and shape the insults against Guðmundr’s masculinity would have taken in the A-redaction; nevertheless, these most likely appeared. Therefore, while all that can be said about the A-redaction is that there would have been insults directed at Guðmundr’s masculinity, in the C-redaction it is possible to

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75 Sadly, the Þórir-Guðmundr alþingi confrontation is also no longer extant in the A-redaction so we cannot know if Þórir addresses the sexual insults, as he does in the C-redaction, though it is likely that he would have.
look at their nature, though this remains intentionally elusive until the confrontation between Þórir Helgason and Guðmundr at the alþingi.76

During the wedding, Geirlaug reveals the insult against Guðmundr’s masculinity to Þórlaug that had been circulating in the district: “þá værir þú vel gefin, ef þat væri einmælt um, at bóndi þinn væri vel hugaðr eða snjallr.”77 This is translated by Andersson and Miller as: “You would indeed be well married if there were general agreement about your husband’s manliness,”78 while Guðbrandur Vivfússon and Powell translate this as: “Thou wert surely well married, if the common talk would allow thy husband was brave and bold.”79 Andersson and Miller’s translation is more interpretative while Guðbrandur Vivfússon and Powell’s is more literal. From Þórlaug’s reaction, it is clear that Geirlaug says something unspeakable.80 Gunnar Karlsson implies that Fritzner’s glossing of úsnjallr81 as “uforstandig” (unreasonable) or “uøvet” (unpracticed) is insufficient.82 Björn Sigfússon suggests that “ósnjallr gat þýtt ragur, og ragur gat þýtt kyn-villtur,”83 but as Andersson and Miller point out, there is an “indirection” in the insult.84 Geirlaug is not explicitly saying that Guðmundr is argr. Rather, she is saying that he lacks courage and finesse. The fact that Þórir later addresses having spoken “rángliga”85 of Guðmundr immediately

76 To what extent the insults that Þorkell hákr showers at Guðmundr in their final confrontation reflect the original insults will remain a mystery.
77 Ljósv. 1830, 38 [ch. 13.]; ÍF 10:18.
78 Law and Literature, 165.
79 Origines Islandicae, 391.
80 Gunnar Karlsson, Ástarsaga Íslendinga af forn, 280–281. Erichsen reads this unspeakable nature of the insult as insufficient, and it is another piece of evidence that causes her to argue that chapters 1–4 are abbreviated versions of a no longer extant introduction, Untersuchungen, 67.
81 Johan Fritzner, Ordbok over Det gamle norske Sprog, vol. 3:807.
82 Gunnar Karlsson, Ástarsaga, 280.
84 Law and Literature, 165 n. 76. Erichsen has gone so far as to call the insult evidence that chapters 13–21 do not stand alone, and that the insult would have been explained in the now abridged (according to her) chapters 1–4, Untersuchungen, 67.
85 Ljósv. 1830, 52 [ch. 16.]; AM 485 4to 30r.; Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 176. Notice that ÍF 10:40—based on JS 624 4to 56v—reads this as “raglega,” meaning “spoke of Guðmundr’s ragr.” This reading, preferred by both Guðmundur Þorláksson and Björn
before he challenges him confirms the weight of the insults. And indeed, throughout the segment only preserved in the C-redaction, Guðmundr’s lack of courage is exemplified in various ways; his hesitation to meet Þórir Helgason at his power base in Hórgárdalur, his unwillingness to acknowledge Þórir’s insult when he teases him during a hestafing, his preference not to attend the wedding itself, and his regretting having left the wedding are all signs of weakness of character and cowardice. Consistent with the way he deals with Sǫrli’s courting, Guðmundr wishes to remain as non-confrontational as possible.

3.3.2 Guðmundr’s Case against Akra-Þórir

When Einarr of Þverá rides to meet his brother and discuss the matter of Akra-Þórir, in most C-redaction manuscripts Guðmundr replies: “eigi ann ek þess Þóri, at fara sektalæs um af þessu máli,” and later: “engin vorkunn þíki mér þat þér, at þú leggir hlut þinn við máli okkar Þóris, er hann ok ekki bundinn í vináttu við þik.” In his Íslenzk fornrit edition, Sigfusson, is more explicit than one would expect from the usually soft-spoken Þórir Helgason. However, since it represents the climax in the conflict between the two chieftains, it is not beyond probability that he would speak in this manner. Since Guðmundur Dórláksson and Björn Sigfusson base their readings on the JS 624 4to tradition, though, I prefer the AM 485 4to reading “rángliga.”

Law and Literature, 165, n. 76.

See Tirosh, “Argr Management,” 250–251, where I argue that Þórir Helgason’s words (or the saga’s author’s) echo the reason for Einarr’s recent fallout with his brother over Guðmundr’s overbearing demeanor.

The last act could be read as more cunning and shrewd—still, the fact that Guðmundr does not want to ‘show his cards’ might be the more politically savvy move, but certainly not the more courageous one.

This is also apparent in his choice of words. When his wife insists that they go home, he says “en fússari væri ek at kyrt væri á meðan boð þetta stræði,” Ljós. 1830, 39 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:19; “but I’d prefer that everything run its normal course for the rest of the feast,” 167. When Dórlaug reveals to him the insults, he says: “nú þætti mér ek betr ráðit hafa, at við hefðum hvorgi farit, ok væri þá óhættara við orðum manna,” Ljós. 1830, 39 [ch. 13], ÍF 10:19; “I think now it would have been better if I had prevailed and we hadn't left, […] That would have given less grounds for gossip,” 167. Both statements encourage a non-confrontational approach, which could be understood as cowardly. See for example, Miller, Bloodtaking and Peacemaking, 271–284, and 368, n. 20.

Ljós. 1830, 45 [ch. 14]; Gláma og Ljósventinga saga, 167. See also ÍF 10:32, n. 5.

Ljós. 1830, 45 [ch. 14]; Gláma og Ljósventinga saga, 167–168. See also ÍF 10:32, n. 5.
Björn Sigfússon decided to adopt JS 624 4to’s “Þóri” to “Akraskegg” and “Þóris” to “Akraskeggs,”92 but this choice misses the point that the other C-redaction manuscripts make: Guðmundr may be speaking about Akra-Þórir, but he is also speaking about Þórir Helgason. This is indicated by several signs. Guðmundr’s ultimate goal with Þórir Helgason is his expulsion from the district. Why Þórir is not on Guðmundr’s hit-list despite being the person in whose household the insult was discovered and despite being an equal partner to Þorkell hákr’s blame is a matter of speculation, but we can provide an educated guess: though Þorkell hákr’s home was isolated, Guðmundr has expressed hesitancy earlier in the saga to venture so deep into the valley where Þórir Helgason has such a significant power base. Risking an attack there could be a dangerous misstep on his part, since it might spark retaliation from other neighbors associated with the chieftain. That Þórir Helgason is a godi is another reason why he does not make for an easy target. By first removing Þórir from the political map in a legal way that would not spark vengeance, Guðmundr clears the way for dispensing with Þorkell hákr without the fear of retaliation from the northwest. The vengeance from his southern neighbors (Eilífr dispatching Rindill) is limited and half-hearted, which makes Guðmundr’s exaggerated reaction even more curious. The sentence “Er hann ok ekki bundinn í vináttu við þík” also clarifies the artistry of the C-redaction usage of the two Þórar. Akra-Þórir is indeed not bound in friendship to Einarr of Þverá, but his chieftain Þórir Helgason certainly is.93 This double-entendre is made possible by the C-redaction’s choice to call Akrakarl Þórir rather than Þorgils; it allows Guðmundr to speak of one Þórir while thinking about the other.94 Similar to how Einarr is slighted by the fact that Guðmundr listens to other men’s advice rather than his, Guðmundr shares the same jealous sentiment.

92 ÍF 10:52, n. 5.
93 ÍF 10:16; On this see Law and Literature, 174, n. 95.
94 This use of a character with a similar name as a representation of its namesake is not unique to Ljósvetninga saga. Torfi Tulinius has, for example, exemplified it on Egils saga Skallagrímsson and the protagonist’s killing of a boy named Grímr, like his violent father Skallagrímur, The Enigma of Egill, 281–282.
When, in the C-redaction, Guðmundr brings Akra-Þórir to court, Þórir Helgason points out the difference in power between himself and Guðmundr inn ríki. To this, Akra-Þórir responds both in reported and in direct quotation, to quote Íslenzk fornrit: “Akraskeggr kvað þá mjök undir fótum troðna. ‘Ok væri betr, at menn talaði við Guðmund með varygð heldr en láta sœmð sína.’”\(^{95}\) Ófgeir Guðmundsson and Þórsteinn Helgason’s edition gives the first part of the sentence as: “Ok væri betra, at menn tali þat við Guðmund varliga.”\(^{96}\) Andersson and Miller, who use the Íslenzk fornrit edition as the basis for their translation, read this as: “Akraskegg said that Gudmund was running roughshod over them: ‘It would be better to proceed warily against Gudmund instead of sacrificing our honor altogether.’” They then add a footnote that explains Akra-Þórir’s sentence as tactical advice to Þórir Helgason. Guðbrandur Vigfússson and Powell’s translation reads this as “But Acre-beardie declared they were much trodden under foot, ‘and it would have been better that men had talked warily of Gudmund than to lose one’s honor as thou art doing.’”\(^{97}\) While the italicized text is the translators’ interpretation, Guðbrandur Vigfússson and Powell’s reading remains more likely; Akra-Þórir reproaches his godi for not holding his tongue and speaking without caution about the powerful Guðmundr. Hallvard Magerøy points out that this is too soon in the narrative to reveal the suspicion that Guðmundr acts out of revenge. Einarr of Þverá will only later offer this reasoning to Þórir Helgason,\(^{98}\) and that “Denne replikken er mistenkjeleg.”\(^{99}\) Magerøy’s reading is somewhat limited; it could be suggested that the wedding scene, Akra-Þórir’s words and then Einarr of Þverá’s words are each used to anticipate

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\(^{95}\) ÍF 10:33.

\(^{96}\) Ljósv. 1830, 46.

\(^{97}\) Origines Islandicae, 400–401. Italicized in the original.

\(^{98}\) He also suggests that here the C-redaction is making use of the A-redaction’s phrasing earlier in the narrative: “Nú er ok öllum kunnig, hvé mjök Þórir leitr sína sœmð, er hann mátti ekki þingmenn sína halda. Ok fekk hann af því övirðing mikla, er hann helt eigi sína þingmenn,” ÍF 10:21 [ch. 5 (13)]; “It now became apparent to everyone how much Thorir was losing face because he couldn't protect his thingmen. His failure to protect them earned him great dishonor,” 246.

\(^{99}\) Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 36.
Þórir Helgason’s outburst about speaking rángliga/ragliga about Guðmundr. Thus, what the C-redaction adds here is that the rumors of Þórir Helgason’s words against Guðmundr were widespread, and were discussed amongst his þingmenn (e.g., Akra-Þórir) and friends (Geirlaug, Einarr of Þverá). Thus, both Geirlaug’s statement that the insult is spoken by every man “er tungu hrærir” and Þórir Helgason’s reproach of Guðmundr (in the C-redaction) for singling him out for those words “er margir mæla” and “sem vör höfum aðr orðum tilkomit ok allmargir hafa sagt fyrir oss” are validated.

3.3.3 Guðmundr’s Case Against Þórir Helgason

When Guðmundr inn ríki discovers that Þórir Helgason had concealed sheep from him after the judgement against Akrakarl, he has the legal excuse to prosecute this powerful rival. The differences between the two redactions in the description of the sheep’s concealment and their revelation are significant. Hallvard Magerøy would argue that the Íslendingasögur “krev jamt det av lesarane sine at dei kan leggja saman to og to. Dei likar å lata oss slutta til dei roynlege samanhengane i staden for a sei alle ting beint fram og naïvt.” The way the A-redaction dialogue between Guðmundr and Oddr the shepherd unfolds, he argues, shows a deception that is meant to be understood by the audience. The C-redaction representation of the event, according to him, is much less damning of Guðmundr. In the C-redaction, Akra-Þórir explicitly gives Þórir Helgason his sheep, while in the A-redaction this is not explicitly mentioned. Another detail that supports the conspiracy between Oddr the shepherd and Guðmundr in the A-redaction is in the words that the chieftain uses: “En þér, Oddr, mun verða annat hvárt at þessu gipta eða

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100 Ljósv. 1830, 38 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:18.  
101 Ljósv. 1830, 52 [ch. 16]; ÍF 10:40.  
102 Ljósv. 1830, 53 [ch. 16]; ÍF 10:40.  
103 Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 39.  
104 Magerøy, 39.
ógæfa.”

These words are much like those that Guðmundr says later on in the A-redaction to his co-conspirator Rindill: “Ok mun þér verða at því annathvárt gæfa eða hófutbrot.”

In the A-redaction, when Guðmundr reproaches Þórir Helgason for hiding Akra-Þórir’s sheep, the Hörgárdalur chieftain responds: “Eigi vissa ek þetta. En nú er ok bæði, at þú fæði at geystr, enda má vera, at eigi hafi vel verit til gört.” This reads like an admission of an illicit act. In a footnote Björn Sigfússon writes: “Hér víkur Þórir að illmælinu.” But this is due to his apparent interpretative assumption that Þórir is meant to be understood as the ‘good guy,’ and thus could not be guilty of the crime Guðmundr accuses him of. Therefore, Þórir must be admitting to another crime, that of spreading the rumors impugning Guðmundr’s masculinity. Magerøy, though, reads this otherwise. According to him, Þórir Helgason is voicing a suspicion that there is a ploy afoot. It could just as easily be suggested that there is intentional ambiguity, reflected in Þórir Helgason’s words: “Enda má vera, at eigi hafi vel verit til gört.” Indeed, as Magerøy pointed out, the sagas invite reading between the lines. But they also invite ambiguity and multiple interpretations. The fact that Þórir Helgason’s guilt is made more explicit in the C-redaction does indeed reflect better on Guðmundr’s character there. In addition, the fact that Guðmundr mysteriously comes to his brother Einarr before news can arrive about the legal case against Þórir Helgason supports the argument that he is being much

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105 ÍF 10:26 [ch. 6 (14)]. “And you, Odd, stand to gain either good fortune or bad from this information,” 248.
106 ÍF 10:46 [ch. 8 (18)] & n. 1. “They will bring you either good fortune or death,” 253.
107 ÍF 10:26 [ch. 6 (14)]. Andersson and Miller translate this as “I did not know about this, [...] But now the fact is both that you are proceeding belligerently, and that I am perhaps not without fault,” 248, though notice that this is more of an interpretation of Þórir’s words as an admission of guilt. A more direct translation could be the more passive: “it is indeed possible that not all was done properly.”
108 ÍF 10:26, n. 1.
109 On these kinds of roles in the Íslendingasögur, see Daniela Hahn and Andreas Schmidt, Bad Boys and Wicked Women, and Ármann Jakobsson, Illa fenginn mjöður, 56–60.
110 Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 42.
112 Ármann Jakobsson, “Some Types of Ambiguities in the Sagas of the Icelanders.”
more devious in the A-redaction than in the C-redaction, where he approaches his brother before he even takes action against Akra-Dórir.\footnote{Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 44–47.}

Looking at Guðmundr’s interactions with his brother Einarr, the chieftain appears to be more blatantly manipulative in the A-redaction than the C-redaction. However, it is not as if Guðmundr is not cunning in the C-redaction representation of the events, it is simply that he shows more premeditation (or was perhaps advised to do so by his collaborator Einarr Kónalsson). In this sense, both redactions portray him in a similarly bad light—as one who would manipulate his brother for his own ends—but the A-redaction shows him making a more on-the-spot decision to align himself with his brother, while in the C-redaction it is a much more calculated action. The description of the meeting in which Einarr returns the cloak that represents their alliance is noteworthy. The A-redaction provides the following description: “Guðmundr gengur út í dyrr ok heilsar Einari bróður sinum. Hann tók því vel. Einarr vildi ekki af baki stíga, en Guðmundr gekk eigi út ór durunum, og tóluðusk þeir svá við.”\footnote{ÍF 10:36 [ch. 6 (15)]. “Gudmund [comes to the door and greets] his brother Einar. Einar responded in kind. Einar didn’t want to dismount and Gudmund didn’t leave the door, so they conversed as they were,” 251, my revision.} This is a somewhat comical situation, both brothers refusing to budge, which is also the fate of the cloak that is left on the floor, the reader left to ponder on the object’s fate.\footnote{Björn Sigfússon, Úm Ljósvetninga sögu, 30. It is possible that the fate of the cloak was left out by the 37v post-medieval scribe due to a lack of space.} But this situation might have a social-legal meaning as well. The doorway is a legal site, where certain actions take place, as is exemplified in the doorway trial from Eyrbyggja saga.\footnote{ÍF 4:151–152.} It is possible that besides the obvious comic effect of the two brothers refusing to budge, Guðmundr remains at the doorway because of a possible legal implication that we are not privy to; by remaining in the doorway, Einarr’s disavowal of their alliance is negated.\footnote{For the legal significance of doorways, see Marianne Hem Eriksen, “The Powerful Ring. Door Rings, Oath Rings, and the Sacral Place,” 81.} If so, Guðmundr’s action shows legal
acumen, though it remains a pusillanimous act. When, in the A-redaction, Einarr throws down the cloak, Guðmundr’s response is: “Engi skal hana hér upp taka minna manna, ok missir þú bæði drengskapar [míns] ok skikkjunnar.” Interestingly, “míns” is amended to “þíns” by Björn Sigfússon, though Guðmundr Þorláksson kept it as is. This wording is from the AM 561 4to 37v redactor, and therefore could be an emendation or a novelty introduced by that individual; the AM 561 4to 37v redactor’s misreading of the faded letters is unlikely, considering how substantially different ‘m’ and ‘þ’ are in the original AM 561 4to script, but it is possible that the entire word or letter had been lost or smudged to non-recognition. The mistake is, however, interesting, and while Björn’s emendation is logical, it closes off possible readings. What do we gain from the reading: “missir þú bæði drengskapar míns ok skikkjunnar”? Björn Sigfússon argues that “það væri ótrúlegt oflæti af Guðmundi, þótt ekki væri dæmalaust að fornu, að tala hér um sinn eigin drengskap (ásamt skikkjuni) sem gjaldeyri fyrir væntanlega aðstoð Einars í deilunum.” This justification of the emendation is problematic—could it really be said that Guðmundr’s vanity knows any bounds? Guðmundr’s treatment of his honor as a prized commodity that could be lost by someone else is exactly the kind of behavior we have come to expect from the powerful chieftain. While þíns makes sense, míns is actually more in character for Guðmundr inn ríki. Another, less likely, reading could be offered, which is that here Mundi had a slip of

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118 Einarr’s action should equally be seen as more than humorous. It is possible that remaining on the horse is simply a ‘power move,’ remaining taller than his brother on top of his steed. It could also be meant to illustrate that the two brothers treat themselves as almost violently hostile, one ready to hide inside his house at any given moment, the other ready to gallop away at the first sign of danger. Yet another possibility is that if Einarr would have gotten off his horse he would be seen as accepting Guðmundr’s hospitality: could it be that the act of throwing the cloak to the ground could be equally negated if he were to become his brother’s guest at Móðruvellir?

119 ÍF 10:37 [ch. 6 (15)]. “None of my men will pick it up and you will lose both my honor and the cloak,” 251–252.

120 ÍF 10:37 n. 1.

121 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 266. Note that Guðmundur Þorláksson published his edition with the A-redaction as an appendix (though, confusingly enough, he used the A-redaction as the basis for his chs. 1–4. See Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, XX–XXI).

122 ÍF 10:37 n. 1.
the tongue. If we follow Björn’s logic, Guðmundr, who is known to not have much self-control, could perhaps have meant to say þíns but instead said míns, which fits with a man so self-obsessed. This is not unprecedented in the Íslendingasögur, most famously in Bjarnar saga Hítadalakappa, where one character’s slip of the tongue is addressed within the text itself. That the parallel segment in the C-redaction contains the phrase “þær verði at bæði heimska ok klækiskapr”—echoing Bjarnar saga’s klækishöggu—is probably nothing more than a coincidence. In addition, Einarr’s C-redaction comment “þat er honum eigi opt tíðt, at riða sveinalausum” is both another point that establishes the chieftain as a coward, and could also be construed to refer to Guðmundr’s possible attraction to the presence of young men in Spíla þáttr, discussed above.

The story of Einarr and Guðmundr’s childhood flashback is often discussed in the context of its possible folkloric background. Magerøy went into detail about the differences between the two redactions’ accounts of this story. According to him, the story in the A-redaction makes much more sense than the C-redaction one. In the A-redaction Einarr gives ambiguous advice, which Guðmundr botches. In the C-redaction, however, according to Magerøy, Einarr’s advice is downright cruel, and Guðmundr’s reaction is not meant for the benefit of the foster father. Magerøy thinks that Guðmundr’s behavior in this scene is consistent with the rest of the saga, accusing Einarr for what he himself had done. Interestingly, in the A-redaction we are told that “en sveinninn sat undir

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123 E.g., in the following scene (only extant in the C-redaction), when Guðmundr laughs at a farting child and thus gives away his and Vigfúss’s plan. But see the discussion below that suggests that this laugh could be calculated.
124 ÍF 3:201–202 [ch. 32].
125 Ljósv. 1830, 50 [ch. 15]; ÍF 10:37; “I think you stand to earn both ridicule and disgrace,” 179.
126 Ljósv. 1830, 43 [ch. 14]; ÍF 10:25; “It isn’t his custom to ride without a retinue,” 171.
127 See discussion in The Part About the Critics.
128 Magerøy, Sertektsproblemet, 47–9. Erichsen believes that this story was interpolated into the narrative, as it does not serve the main plot, Untersuchungen, 78, 81. The saga Erichsen envisions as Ljósvetninga saga’s original form would have been a boring saga, indeed. See also Jan de Vries, “Een indisch Exempel in een ijslandsche Saga,” 47, 64.
129 Magerøy, Sertektsproblemet, 48
130 Magerøy, 48
while this detail is missing from the C-redaction. Einarr may be seen as reacting to what he deems too close a relationship between the foster-son and foster-father, emphasized by the A-redactor’s note that the bald foster-father was lying on Guðmundr’s lap. In other words, even though this case leads Guðmundr to state that Einarr does not always have his best interest in mind, it may be that the latter simply wants to control his brother’s behavior that he is uneasy with. This is consistent with his conduct in Sǫrla þáttr as well, when Einarr keeps in check what he considers Guðmundr’s rash decision by allowing Sǫrli’s visits to occur under his own supervision at Þverá.

Gísli Sigurðsson argues that the overall portrayal in the sagas of Einarr is as a check for Guðmundr’s wrath. This fits with Ljósvetninga saga’s specific portrayal of Einarr, though clearly it is not only his brother’s wrath that he checks. Without reading too much into the use of the verb unna—since it is often used to describe the love that can exist between two men or more—the adding of the ‘mikit,’ could suggest strong emotions that would bother Einarr. In both redactions it is related that the foster-father was skollótr (bald). This baldness, although it has a function in the narrative and could be an influence from the folkloric origins of the tale, may also convey something about the character. Baldness, especially at old age, could indicate a loss of virility and sexual potency, and thus, a blurring of the gender boundaries that separate the masculine from the feminine. Both loss of hair and loss of virility come with old age, both

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131 ÍF 10:29; “And the boy had his head in his lap,” 249.
132 Gísli Sigurðsson, “*The Immanent Saga,” 216. Later in the saga, after Guðmundr’s son Eyjólfr ignores a certain Einarr’s warnings against confronting an enemy, the latter causes him to fall off a horse so that the fight is postponed, ÍF 10:86. Miller reads this character as Einarr Eyjólfssson, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*, 67; *Law and Literature*, 225–226, 320–321, though Björn Sigfússon glosses him as Einarr Þveræingr Járns-Skeggjason, Einarr Eyjólfssson’s grandson, ÍF 10:267. Whether this is the grandfather or grandson, it is clear that the Þveræingar continue to function as a check for the leader of the larger Módruvellirgar faction. See also Magerøy, “in-dre samanhangen,” 77, who states that this is Einarr Járns-Skeggjason.
involve the loss of an ability to make something grow. Baldness is not always equal to femininity: consider Skalla-Grímr, Egill’s father, whose masculinity Egils saga does not question. But Skalla-Grímr is also descended of what appears to be a werewolf, and similar monstrous elements are observable in his character as well. These elements make him a liminal character, a shape-changer whose identity can be flexible, which goes along with the liminality associated with his baldness. Notice that later we are told that Guðmundr’s son Eyjólfr similarly has a foster-father who interprets a dream for him. He is introduced with: “Eyjólfr átti sér fóstra,” a phrase not found elsewhere in the saga corpus besides here and in both the A-redaction and the C-redaction’s telling of the foster-father and the fly. In this parallel between father and son, Ljósvetninga saga takes a stab at the relatively more balanced individual that is Eyjólfr, using the same language to describe the son as his much-humiliated father.

One of the more problematic speculations of Björn Sigfússon is that Vigfúss Viga-Glúmsson would not have appeared in the A-redaction. Despite the fact that he opens up the possibility that Vigfúss would have appeared, Björn states about the C-redaction that “í stað […] Þorkels Geitissonar, virðist koma Vigfúss Viga-Glúmsson.” While not explicitly stated, this could imply that Vigfúss is meant to play in the C-redaction the role of Þorkell in the A-redaction, and that the challenge against Einarr could have been made by Þorkell instead. Guðmundr’s alliance with Vigfúss Viga-Glúmsson, though, speaks volumes. While Þorkell is an out-of-the-district player with ties to the Möðruvellingar, Vigfúss Viga-Glúmsson is an enemy of Einarr Eyjólfsson, Guðmundr’s brother. Vigfúss openly resents the manner in which Einarr took away Þverá from him and his

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135 Cf. the sexuality of the shape-changing Loki, though in his case he changes genders as well, so his sexual liminality is more apparent. Bandlien, Man or Monster? 69–72.
136 Ljósv. 1830, 91 [ch. 26]; ÍF 10:85 [ch. 16 (26)].
137 Rísamálheildin, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, (under headings: fornrit, einföld; search term “sér fóstra”), accessed 10 Nov. 2018, http://malheildir.arnastofnun.is/; ÍF 10:28 [ch. 6 (14)] and 37 [ch. 6 (16)].
138 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 37. Magerøy disagrees, Sertekstproblemet, 85.
139 Björn Sigfússon, Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 37, n. 1
140 Björn Sigfússon, 37.
father Víga-Glúmr Eyjólfs.\textsuperscript{141} Guðmundr’s alliance with Vigfúss, then, appears highly illogical.\textsuperscript{142} As Björn Sigfús points out about Vigfúss: “Vinätta hans við Guðmund, þrátt fyrir fjandskap við Einar á Þverá, er hvergi skýrd. En sættir hafa tekizt með ættunum einhvern úma eftir dauða Glúms.”\textsuperscript{143} This explanation ignores the bad blood that still exists between Vigfúss and Einarr. The alliance, though, is consistent with Guðmundr’s behavior elsewhere in the text. After all, like his alliance with Þórarinn Nefjólfs, the alliance with Vigfúss shows a preference to courtly ties over those of kinship: like Guðmundr, Vigfúss Víga-Glúmssson was allied with Hákon jarl and even fought alongside him in the battle of Hjörunga-vágr against the Jómsvíkingar.\textsuperscript{144} Another consideration is that in Víga-Glúms saga and Reykðela saga, Einarr and Guðmundr’s father Eyjólfr was an ally of Víga-Glúmr. While Einarr’s takeover of Þverá hindered the families’ friendship, Vigfúss and Guðmundr could have taken up old family alliances to vie for district power. Guðmundr’s alliance is thus not irrational or indicative of a corrupted saga, but rather simply not looked at through the correct prism by previous studies.

Scholars have not paid much attention to the fact that Þorkell Geitisson’s appearance in the A-redaction is confined to the seventeenth-century summary in AM 561 4to’s 37v. We know that the leaf would have reached the alþingi scene thanks to Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s reading of the manuscript’s faded lines.\textsuperscript{145} Since his appearance is so abrupt and out of place, it might be worth raising the question of whether this is somehow a corruption: the scribe could not read the name Vigfúss Víga-Glúms properly and thus replaced it with another famous Icelander. This is not entirely convincing, especially when considering that the manuscript also

\begin{itemize}
\item[141] ÍF 9:87–89 [ch. 26] and ÍF 10:41. See also Law and Literature, 184, n. 108.
\item[142] Erichsen thought as much, Untersuchungen, 67.
\item[143] ÍF 10:39, n. 2.
\end{itemize}
contains *Reykdœla saga*, and thus the name Vigfús Vigá-Glúmsson would have been a likelier guess than Þorkell. The abrupt presence of Þorkell Geitisson in the A-redaction is strengthened by the character’s abrupt presence in most paper copies of *Reykdœla saga*, which are derived from AM 561 4to.\(^146\) There, Björn Sigfússon amended “Þorkell Geitisson” to “Þorkell Þorgeirsson,” due to the latter’s later appearance in the plot,\(^147\) and Finnur Jónsson amended it to “Þorgeirr” for reasons of chronology.\(^148\)

In the A-redaction, when Þórir Helgason declares his intention to challenge Guðmundr, Einarr’s response is “Mikit ráð er þat.”\(^149\) In the C-redaction, he says, “Þat er ørendi ógott, en eigi lítilmannligt.”\(^150\) The first part of the sentence echoes Öivir’s *lítilmennska* or his family’s *lítilmenni* from the saga’s first chapter, which contrasts Þórir Helgason’s ‘manliness’ with Guðmundr’s lack thereof. The scribal variation in the second part of the sentence creates two significantly different interpretations. In JS 624 4to, Einarr uses the word “ógott” (76v) or BL ADD 4867’s “úgott,” while AM 485 4to and AM 554 e 4to’s have it as “gott” (29r; 19r). With the “ógott” reading, Einarr clearly states that this is a bad, yet needed challenge; his brother’s overbearing behavior has gone too far and he must be stopped. The alternative “gott” is rather cold to the prospect of Guðmundr dying. When Vigfús shares his plan to counter-challenge Einarr, Guðmundr’s reaction is likewise outwardly unmoved by the possibility of his brother’s death in case Vigfús’s plan backfires and an actual duel does take place: “Slíka menn getr varla til vitrleiks, sem þú ert, þótt menn eigi góða marga kosti.”\(^151\) While neither Einarr nor Guðmundr do anything to stop the

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\(^146\) But see Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson’s note that further research into the assertion that all of the paper manuscripts are derived from AM 561 4to is warranted, “AM 561 4to og Ljósvetninga saga,” 85.

\(^147\) ÍF 10:156, n. 2.

\(^148\) *Reykdœla* og *Valla-Ljóts saga*, 10.

\(^149\) ÍF 10:39

\(^150\) ÍF 10:38; *Ljós*. 1830, 51 [ch. 16].

\(^151\) *Ljós*. 1830, 54 [ch. 17]; ÍF 10:41. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell translate this as: “There are no such men for wisdom as thou, though men have many good choices,” *Origines Islandicae*, 184; and Miller and Andersson provide a similar reading “There are not many men as resourcesful as you, […] even though there are plenty to choose from,” 184.
challenge against their brother, Guðmundr’s reaction portrays him as neglecting the ties of kinship, if contrasted with “ógott.”

Noteworthy, however, is that Guðmundr breaks into laughter following the child’s fart. While fart jokes are most entertaining, Guðmundr could have ‘let loose’ as a conscious decision. Aware of the hostility Vigfúss has for his brother and thus the actual danger to Einarr’s life, Guðmundr could be allowing himself to laugh while fully conscious of the implications. Einarr may see into his brother’s mood and that this will force his hand to convince Þórir Helgason to give Guðmundr what he wants. This interpretation is one possibility, but it is clear that Guðmundr can control himself when needed, as is illustrated at the beginning of the chapter when he appears in high spirits despite being frightened of his coming battle with Þórir Helgason. On the other hand, that he let loose on account of a fart—which is emitted from the anus—could be a telling sign that Þórir’s accusations of his unmanliness and the implied sodomitic nature that comes with it are rather true. Similarly, in the A-redaction, Einarr’s question to Þórir Helgason, “Nær ætlar þú þetta upp at bera/taka?” could indicate that Einarr was planning on figuring out a way to help his friend Þórir without his brother Guðmundr getting hurt. Also noteworthy about this scene is Þórir’s statement: “Eigi hefi ek varðr verit við Guðmund, sem margir aðrir.” This is found in the C-redaction but not in the A-redaction, and it further supports the proposition that, in the C-redaction, the

152 Law and Literature, 184–5, n. 110. On the humor of farts in medieval times, see also Anatoly Liberman, “Gone with the Wind,” 102–103. A very similar fart-and-laugh scene takes place in Droplaugarsona saga. While Liestøl asserts that Ljósvetninga saga rather than Droplaugarsona must be the original, The Origin of the Icelandic Family Sagas, 161; it would have been interesting to compare with the no-longer extant part of Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction’s manuscript that does not contain Droplaugarsona saga—between leaves 37v and 38r—and see whether or not the scene would have been there as well. See also IF 9:172 [ch. 13] and Heinzel, Beschreibung, 55 [159].

153 Since I have discussed Guðmundr’s sexuality in depth, I will not expand much on the topic here; see Tirosh, *The Fabulous Saga; “Argr Management”; and “Trolling Guðmundr.”

154 IF 10:39 and Origines Islandicae, 430 “When do you intend to announce it?” 252. With taka it could be translated: “do you intend to raise the matter soon?” (My trans.)

155 Ljós. 1830, 51 [ch. 16]; IF 10:38.
rumors against Guðmundr were widespread, at least according to the bi-
ased account of Þórir Helgason.

As discussed, most of what pertains to the legal dealings and hólmenga challenge between Þórir Helgason and Guðmundr inn ríki has been lost in the A-redaction, and only remains in the C-redaction paper manuscripts. We can speculate that the A-redaction would probably have been subtler about the insults against Guðmundr, keeping in line with the rest of that redaction. Þórir Helgason’s speech has been said to not fully reveal the insult directed at Guðmundr, and as such needs to be fully addressed:

Þórir mælti hátta: eigi mun ek enn láta þrjóta boðin við þik, Guðmundr! þvíat ek veit at þér þikir annat miklu stór-
mannligra við mik, enn um haframerkingina Þóris Akrakarls, þvíat ek veit at þú kennir mér þat, er margir mela, ok eru eigi minna afvaldir, at ek haft vælt ránligra við þik; vil ek þat nú reyna at þat eru eigi sannmæli, því ek vil skora á þik til hólmgaungu, at þú komir á 3 náttu fresti í hólm þenna, er liggr í Öxará, ok menn hafa áðr vanir verit á hólm at ganga, ok berjumst þar, svá sem forn lög liggja til; ætla ek, áðr enn þeim fundi ljúki, at færast skal af tvímælit, hvort sannra er, at þú sèrt maðr snjallr ok vel hugaðr, eðr sè hinn veg, sem vèr höfum áðr orðum tilkomit, ok allmargir hafa sagt fyrir oss, at þú sèrt eigi snjallr.156

This passage indicates that there is little basis for Erichsen’s argument that something is missing in Þórir’s insult, which would have been explained in

156 Ljós. 1830, 52–53 [ch. 16]; ÍF 10:39–40. “Then Thorir spoke for all to hear: ‘I ha-
vænt gotten to the last of my offers yet, Gudmund, for I know that you have a lot more against me than just the marks on Thorir Akraskegg’s goats; I know that you blame me alone for saying what many say, though others are no less implicated, namely that I have called you an effeminate pervert. I now wish to test whether that is true or not, so I am challenging you to single combat to be held in three days on the islet in Oxar River where duels used to be fought. Let the two of us do battle according to the ancient laws. Before this encounter is over, I suspect the doubts will be removed about whether you have an altogether manly disposition or whether, as I have mentioned be-
fore and a great many have already stated, you are not a man,’” 182–183.
an earlier passage. The wedding scene and the challenge scene work perfectly together, and one builds up to the other, both narratologically and in word choice. As for the indirectness of the insult that Andersson and Miller argue for, both Geirlaug and her husband Þórir Helgason were actually rather explicit. Þórir Helgason’s double use of “því at ek veit” could be read as an echo of Sørla þáttr, where Þórarinn Nefjólfsson hints at a hidden meaning to Guðmundr actions as well. There, as discussed, one possible reading of his purportedly irrational behavior is his love for the young Sórli Brodd-Helgason and, consequently, his being ragr.

After Guðmundr receives Þórir Helgason’s challenge, he appears cheerful, but Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson claims to be able to see into his real mood: “Þú ert verr enn dáðlauss,” he tells him. Like Þórir Helgason a few lines earlier, Vigfúss shows that he can see the thoughts Guðmundr is hiding. As with Þórarinn Nefjólfsson, here a courtier of a Norwegian ruler sees through him. This moment is charged with irony. Þórir Helgason argues that he knows Guðmundr’s true intentions—that he means to avenge the words spoken against him. Vigfúss argues that he knows Guðmundr’s true mood—that he is hopeless against the challenge. It is also important to bear in mind while reading this that just a few lines after being challenged to prove that he is “snjallr ok vel hugaðr,” Guðmundr’s ally Vigfúss implicitly tells him that he is neither snjallr nor vel hugaðr. Guðmundr is ridiculed by Vigfúss and, in turn, the author: he is so afraid of Þórir’s challenge to prove that he is not a coward that he does not realize it when he is called a coward by Vigfúss. This has happened before, when Guðmundr went to the hestaping—a place in Íslendingasögur literary conventions where confrontations are sparked—simply to avoid confrontation. In Vǫðu-Brands þáttr, we are told that Guðmundr would rather give up his life than lose his honor. Guðmundr indeed appears unwilling to lose his honor and seems

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157 Erichsen, Untersuchungen, 68. On this, see Björn Sigfússon Um Ljósvetninga sögu, who argues that “hún skilur ekki list sögunnar í medferð niðsins,” 10.

158 Law and Literature, 165 n. 76.

159 Though the JS 624 4to branch reading “ragliga” would be more explicit than the other G-redaction manuscript readings “rängliga.”

160 Ljósv. 1830, 53 [ch. 17]; ÍF 10:40; You are worse than pathetic (my translation).
to be facing death at the hands of Þórir Helgason, who is described as “garpr mikill” when introduced into the saga. It is interesting that “sástu eigi at feldarröggvarnar hræðusk, er hann hló?” are the words Einarr uses to describe his brother when he gave himself away by laughter. The “hræðusk” could echo the “hvörr maðr mælir þat sá, er tungu hrærin” that Geirlaug, Þórir Helgason’s wife, says about the rumors circling around Guðmundr’s masculinity. It is revealing that Guðmundr’s revelation of himself comes in the same verb, as if the accusation and the proof are of the same making.

3.3.4 Guðmundr Uses Rindill Against Þorkell hákr

Another noteworthy difference between the two redactions is that, in the A-redaction, it is Rindill who approaches Guðmundr in his booth, while in the C-redaction it is Guðmundr who notices Rindill as he travels between booths. He spots Rindill amongst the Svinfellingar, the antagonists of Njáls saga. This fact is significant even if Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction was written before Njáls saga, since the timing of the events in the former makes them contemporaneous to the events related in the latter. While it is not argued here that every mention of the Svinfellingar is a reference to Njáls saga (they are also featured in Droplaugarsons saga, for example), the connections between the C-redaction and Njáls saga imply that this story, whether written or oral, was on the author’s mind. Thus, Rindill’s association with the ‘baddies’ could be something that detracts from his character. As we shall see in the discussion of memory below, Rindill’s appearance in the Svinfellingar booth could support Barði’s argument of Ljósvetninga saga’s opposition to the Svinfellingar’s Þórarar Þórarinsson. In the A-redaction, there is hint of Rindill’s problematic nature when it is stated that “hann kvezk vera sekr maðr.” As Magerøy pointed out, Guðmundr

161 Ljósv. 1830, 36 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:16.
162 Ljósv. 1830, 55 [ch. 17]; ÍF 10:42; “Didn’t you see the fibers on his cloak ripple when he laughed?” 185.
163 Ljósv. 1830, 38 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:18.
164 ÍF 10:42 [ch. 7 (17)]. He said he had been declared an outlaw (my translation).
is more active in the C-redaction, since he is the one approaching Rindill there. This builds up his character as having more control over the events of the saga than in the A-redaction. Magerøy questions Guðmundr’s C-redaction logic. There, instead of taking him along following the alþingi, as he does in the A-redaction, Guðmundr has Rindill approach him in the Eyfirdinga leið, where he takes him under his employ. In the local þing, all can ascertain that Guðmundr had taken Rindill in, which goes against the secrecy that the chieftain aimed for.¹⁶⁵ This is a fair point, but it should also be noted that when Guðmundr instructs Rindill to approach Þorkell, he tells him: “En þú ert öngvum mönnum jafnlikr, sem þeim, er komit hafa austan úr Hálfdánartungu, ok skaltu látast þaðan vera.”¹⁶⁶ He is relying on Rindill’s out-of-district appearance to keep his identity a mystery. It is also possible that to take a man as a worker at the alþingi as Guðmundr does in the A-redaction could have raised more eyebrows and be seen as a more noteworthy event than if he does this in his own district’s þing.

When Guðmundr notices Rindill he says to Vigfúss: “Hefir þú nokkut þann sét, at síðr sè nokkr verðr, enn þessi maðr?”¹⁶⁷ When Vigfúss agrees to the lowliness of the man, Guðmundr continues: “Eigi hefi ek sét þann mann, at betr er fallinn til flugumanns.”¹⁶⁸ Guðmundr has not seen many men, then, because when he tells Rindill about the true reason he was hired, his response in the C-redaction is: “Þessu muntu fyrir trúna þínnum atráða, en hugat mun mér at gæta lífs míns, ok treysta vil ek því, at ek mun vera þér trúr; en ef hætta er í sendifórum, ok vilir þú þat fyrir mik leggja, þá mun ek um njósna, en áræði er ek ekki trúr.”¹⁶⁹ This could be a logical misstep by the author, but it could also be another opportunity to ridicule

¹⁶⁵ Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 67–68.
¹⁶⁶ Ljósv. 1830, 58 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:48 [ch. 18]. “And since you resemble no one quite so much as the men who come from the west from Halldánartongue, you should say that you come from there,” 189–190.
¹⁶⁷ Ljósv. 1830, 56 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:44. “Have you ever seen a more worthless man than this?” 188.
¹⁶⁸ Ljósv. 1830, 56–57 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:44. “I haven’t seen a man better suited to be an assassin than this one.” 188.
¹⁶⁹ Ljósv. 1830, 58 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:46–47. “It’s up to you to decide whether you will act in good faith or not, but I will take care to guard my own life. I count on being loyal to you; but if there is a risk in the job you want to give me, I can’t be counted on for direct action, although I will spy and inform,” 189.
Guðmundr and his lack of ability to read people. Vigfúss agrees that Rindill appears to be useless, but we do not hear his opinion on the matter of his worthiness as a flugumadr. The opinion of a famous warrior such as Vigfúss on the matter is priceless, and his silence speaks volumes.

As mentioned above, in the A-redaction, Guðmundr suggests that Rindill take on a position of messenger: “Ok má þó vera, at þú metisk eigi til ómaga.”\textsuperscript{170} This sentence, beyond its connection with Rindill facilitating Þorkell’s impending doom—and of the spilling of his magí—also hints at Rindill’s fate to be killed by a spear that will enter “á Rindil miðjan.”\textsuperscript{171} This reading suggests that Guðmundr leads the outlaw to certain death, either through his own mechanisms, or through the foreshadowing of the author.\textsuperscript{172} The elaborate plans that Guðmundr has for Rindill echo (or are echoed by) Njáls saga’s description of Njáll laying out plans for Gunnarr to retrieve Auðr’s dowry.\textsuperscript{173} Njáll’s predictions have more to do with a deep understanding of the ways of men and how they operate; the frustrations are bigger when these plans are foiled by chaotic unexpected elements. Therefore, when Guðmundr overreacts following Rindill’s death and threatens to burn the house where his wife and son are present, this could also be connected with the chieftain’s deep frustration at the loss of control over the fate of his chess-pieces, to the extent that he loses his ability to distinguish between the socially-accepted difference of the significance between an ally and family members, preferring to avenge Rindill over keeping his wife and son alive.

In the A-redaction, Guðmundr is rather honest with Rindill, promising him good fortune or danger as a result of his deeds and warning him not to deviate from his plan at the cost of death. Despite the dangers,

\textsuperscript{170} ÍF 10:45 [ch. 8 (18)]. “And then perhaps you won’t be considered such a burden,” 253.

\textsuperscript{171} ÍF 10:55.

\textsuperscript{172} Though if he were aware of the death that would result in his actions, why would he appear so genuinely infuriated and grief-stricken by Rindill’s death?

\textsuperscript{173} ÍF 12:58–65 [ch. 21–23]. This kind of trickery is not unique to Old Norse literature. See, for example, the tale of Pwyll in The Mabinogion and how Rhiannon instructs him in detail how to disrupt an unwanted marriage between her and a deceitful suitor, The Mabinogion, trans. Sioned Davies, 12–14.
Guðmundr expects his just deserts for the favors he has awarded Rindill, and is quite honest about his motivations.\textsuperscript{174} In the C-redaction, Guðmundr is much more ingratiating, fitting with his initial approach to Rindill in this redaction, when he promises him, “ok er eigi örvænna, at ek göri þik tignum mônnum kunnugan.”\textsuperscript{175} Magerøy suggests that this refers to Þorkell hákr, and points out that this is not much of an accurate description of the poor farmer.\textsuperscript{176} Magerøy had perhaps not seen enough Hollywood films in his time to recognize the promise of high society as a common incentive used to exert one’s power over one’s dependents. Even if Guðmundr refers to Þorkell ironically, he also promises Rindill a form of social currency and connections unavailable to him in his current status.

Another small note on the employment of Rindill in the A-redaction pertains to the comment, “fannsk mónnum mjök orð um þat ok þóttusk vita, at nøkkut myndi undir bú.”\textsuperscript{177} It has been argued that the whispers about Guðmundr and Rindill were both in connection with the plot on Þorkell hákr’s life as well as about the intimate nature of the two.\textsuperscript{178} One argument for this claim is that we are again referred to the opinion of other people in all things Guðmundr: that people speak about Guðmundr rángliga/ragliga behind his back. On the other hand, this is a common expression in Old Norse. The same expression is used in the C-redaction’s chapter 23 by Eyjólfr Guðmundarson—“en þú skalt vita hvat undir býr”\textsuperscript{179}—in the context of sending out a spy. There is presumably no textual connection between the two scenes, since they appear in Ljósveitinga saga’s separate redactions.

Guðmundr’s prediction of how things play out is more accurate in the C-redaction, as Magerøy notes, especially when it pertains to Þorkell hákr’s unpleasantness. This is consistent with the þættir’s portrayal of Guðmundr’s

\textsuperscript{174} Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell’s translation is the bluntest: “for I am minded to get some return for my maintenance of thee,” \textit{Origines Islandicae}, 413.

\textsuperscript{175} Ljós. 1830, 58 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:46. “I might just acquaint you with some high society,” 189.

\textsuperscript{176} Magerøy, \textit{Sertekstproblemet}, 72.

\textsuperscript{177} ÍF 10:48 [ch. 8 (18)]. “People took notice of it and suspected that something was afoot,” 254.

\textsuperscript{178} Tirosh, \textit{The Fabulous Saga}.

\textsuperscript{179} Ljós. 1830, 80 [ch. 23]; ÍF 10:72. “And I will tell you what I have in mind,” 212.
abilities and forspár, and sheds some positive light on the character. This unpleasantness manifests in an amusing stream of questions that are aimed at Rindill by Þorkell: “Hvörr er sá herramaðrinn, eðr því komstu hér, eðr hvört skaltu fara, eðr hvar áttu heima?” The attentive saga reader will notice similarities with the well-known and clearly comical Morkinskinna redaction of Snegla-Halla þáttur, where the unidentified king Haraldr shoots out an exhausting stream of questions at the unidentified skáld Sneglu-Halli: “Hverr stærir skipinu, eða hvar várú þér í vetr, eða hvaðan ýttu þér, eða hvar kómu þér við land, eða hvar várú þér í nót?” Andersson has argued for a connection in the literary production of Ljósvetninga saga and Morkinskinna, and quotes like this support the argument. The contrast between Haraldr, a king who is in a position to demand such information, and Þorkell hákr, a poor farmer with, admittedly high social connections, sheds a light on the kind of revenge that Guðmundr takes. If he thought half-hearted exile to be a sufficient punishment for the relatively powerful Þórir Helgason, he comes with a large force of twenty—even sending a scout beforehand to ensure that not a single thing goes wrong—against the poor farmer Þorkell. On the other hand, Þorkell himself is somewhat ridiculous here, a poor farmer using the rhetorical techniques of a king. Even if we were to dismiss that this stems from a literary connection between Ljósvetninga saga and Morkinskinna, there is something overly demanding and comical about Þorkell’s stream of questions, and it certainly gives a sense that he is being both (justifiably) paranoid, and (unjustifiably?) self-important. Finally, this comic moment also helps to endear Þorkell to an audience that has never met the character before. His use of the hilarious term “fretkarl” (Fart-Man) has a similar effect, as well

180 Ljós. 1830, 59 [ch. 18]; ÍF 10:49. “Who are you, why have you come here, where are you headed, and where do you come from?” 190.
181 ÍF 23:270 [ch. 47]. “Who commands the ship, and where were you last winter? Where did you embark, and where have you landed? Where were you last night?” Morkinskinna [...], eds. Theodore Murdock Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, 244.
182 This is not the only scene that is shared with Morkinskinna; Hallr Ótryggssón’s death has been much discussed in this context. See ÍF 10:XXXIV–XXXVII and Law and Literature, 79–80 for differing explanations on literary connections between these scenes.
as his moment of father-daughter tenderness with Guðrún, and, perhaps, his taunts against Guðmundr in his final moments. Ultimately, in the C-redaction Þorkell hákr’s character is much more endearing than the A-redaction one, but also more complex. This works to further taint Guðmundr’s character in both narratives—the more likeable his victim is, the more reviled the chieftain is for killing him.

3.4 Chs. 18–21 (Including the Part Only Extant in the C-Redaction)

At this point the redactions converge again and the same story is told of Guðmundr: his killing of Þorkell hákr, vengeance of Rindill, and of his final days.

3.4.1 Þorkell’s Death

It is almost needless to say that Þorkell hákr goes at great lengths to humiliate Guðmundr in his last moments. When Þorkell mocks Guðmundr for the last time, his words in the A-redaction are: “Enda rázk þú nú hingat, Guðmundr; úti liggja nú iðrin mín.” In most C-redaction manuscripts the text reads: “Enda ráðst þú nú hingað ok finnumz vit, því at nú liggja úti iðrin mín. Þat/þar hefir þú jafngjarn á verit er þik lysti þessa.” This last sentence stands out in the manuscript transmission of the C-redaction. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell write about this that “something is missing; meaningless is það hefer þer iafni-giarnt vert er þik lyste þessa.” Their edition and Björn Sigfússon’s Íslenzk fornrit move

183 Law and Literature, 191, n. 122.
184 Though, in a forthcoming article I will discuss the complex reaction to this death scene in its medieval and post-medieval manuscript context.
185 I have discussed Þorkell’s death at length elsewhere, both in *The Fabulous Saga*, and in “Argr Management.”
186 ÍF 10:52 [ch. 9 (19)].
187 JS 624 4to (*Látrabók*) and BL ADD 4867 4to add: “ef þú þórir.”
188 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 187 and ÍF 10:52, n. 4.
190 Origines Islandicae, 418.
this sentence to the footnotes. Andersson and Miller instead chose to grapple with this sentence directly in their translation, noting that “this sentence is translated only approximately because the readings in the manuscripts are unclear.” They render it as: “That is what you wanted when you were so eager to meet.”  

Þorkell implicates Guðmundr in a desire to be penetrated by him, thus rendering him argr. As is clear from the manuscript sentence’s transmission outlined above, some of the saga’s audience reacted with dismay and others with humor to Þorkell’s bold display. Nevertheless, this serves to both further Guðmundr inn ríki’s humiliation in the C-redaction, and to establish Þorkell as a witty fellow who makes a grandiose exit upon his death.

When Guðmundr and Einarr Konálsson approach Þorkell’s brothers Tjórví and Hóskuldr, the two offer very faint resistance, with Hóskuldr stating that “ótrúligar munu sættir várar verða, þótt Guðmundr hafi nú ríki mikít.” To the casual, one-time reader of Ljósvetninga saga this seems like an empty threat; Guðmundr’s death is rather peaceful, after all. But if it is looked at more attentively, it is clear that this death is a result of a deliberate action by the brother of Þorkell who is not accounted for in the compensation scene, Drauma-Finni, as will be expounded below.

3.4.2 Vengeance for Rindill

Before direct vengeance against Guðmundr himself is exacted, it is first related how his spy and hot-pot companion Rindill is killed. In this case, a brother of one of the killers, Brúni, is not only connected to Þorkell hákr but also to Guðmundr by marriage. The fact that he supports vengeance for Þorkell’s death—though it is his brother who does the stabbing—is

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191 Law and Literature, 193, n. 126.
192 Law and Literature, 193.
193 Tirosh, “Argr Management,” 259–260. But see Lucy Keens’s opposite interpretation, where Guðmundr’s desire is to penetrate Þorkell, in “Scenes of a Sexual Nature.”
194 ÍF 10:53 [ch. 9 (19)]. “Our reconciliation will not be reliable even though Gudmund has all the power now,” 194.
revealing in terms of Guðmundr’s lack of success to achieve a good alliance within his expanded kin group.195

After the killing, when Eilífr arrives at Hlenni’s with a plea for protection, the old man’s reaction in the A-redaction is short: he will help him if he can, and indeed does. In the C-redaction, though, Hlenni is much wittier: “Hvat er til saka, Eilífr, eða hefir þú skotit Rindil?”196 When Eilífr affirms this, Hlenni says: “Lítill mannskaði.” Hlenni’s character could be having a ‘senior moment’ here, since he asks what Eilífr and his companion did after they “sögðu honum, hvat þeir hofðu gört.”197 But both Guðmundur Þorláksson and Björn Sigfússon read the statement about “shooting Rindill” as a pun on the nickname’s meaning, ‘wren.’198 The fact that Hlenni’s reaction is to make a pun and then follow it with a direct estimation on the lowliness of the deceased man’s worth is a stain on the honor of poor Rindill, as well as on Guðmundr, whose over-reaction to the spy’s death becomes even worse with these insults on his character in mind.

In general, Hlenni comes out of Ljósvetninga saga with much wit and a very rich character.199 The fact that in the C-redaction, Guðmundr’s son Koðrán is fostered by Hlenni and is consequently “einn bezti maðr úr Eyjafjörði,”200 works to discredit Guðmundr’s honor, since his other son Eyjólfr—not fostered by Hlenni—is much less popular, though as powerful and well-allied as his father.201 When Guðmundr arrives at Hlenni’s farm, the blind man says—after noting that Rindill’s death was not a

195 For a discussion of the sexual meaning of the stabbing scene, see Tirosh, “Argr Management,” 260–262.
196 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 191.
198 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 191 and ÍF 10:55, n. 2. According to Guðmundur Þorláks- son, AM 485 4to and Kall 621 4to attribute this play on words to Eilífr. While it takes a bit of the flair from Hlenni’s character, it is still a smear on Rindill, and consequently Guðmundr’s honor, to be commemorated with a demeaning pun. See also Origines Islandiae, 421, where the pun was missed, though it still attributes the quote to Eilífr.
199 The portrayal of Hlenni is so positive that it was used by Barði Guðmundsson to support his argument that Ljósvetninga’s author came from there. See discussion below.
201 “Eyjólfr var ríkastr maðr fyrir norðan land,” Ljósv. 1830, 72 [ch. 22]; ÍF 10:62. Eyjólfr was the most powerful man in the North (my translation).
“harmsaga”\textsuperscript{202}—that he prefers that the killers of Rindill will be executed elsewhere: “betra þykki mér, at þeir sé eigi fyrir augum mér drepnir nú.”\textsuperscript{203} As Guðmundur Þorláksson shows in his critical apparatus, some manuscripts of the C-redaction removed the word “augum” from the sentence.\textsuperscript{204} That this word was in the common ancestor of both the A-redaction and the C-redaction is self-evident since it is present both in AM 561 4\textsc{to} and some of the C-redaction paper copies, such as Kall 616 4\textsc{to}, Kall 621 4\textsc{to},\textsuperscript{205} JS 624 4\textsc{to},\textsuperscript{206} and BL ADD 4867 4\textsc{to}.\textsuperscript{207} The comical effect of a blind-man asking for something not to happen before his eyes is obvious. Hlenni’s solution to have the killers hidden in a cart is rather ingenious, since it allows him to both tell Guðmundr the truth and nevertheless save their lives. When he gives the instructions, there is a moment when Hlenni changes his audience from Eilífr and his comrade to his own servant without any textual indication of the change: “En ef þig berr skjótt fram hjá, þá kipp þú þegar knappinum ór hripsgrindinni.”\textsuperscript{208} In their editions Guðmundur Þorláksson explained: “p. e. húskarlinn.”\textsuperscript{209} and Björn Sigfússon found it necessary to clarify: “húskarlinn.”\textsuperscript{210} Andersson and Miller bypassed the issue by changing the text: “And if the farmhand gets by, he should pull the release in the pack frame and fate will take its course.”\textsuperscript{211} Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell avoid dealing with the issue and provide a vague translation: “And if ye get a good start, then do ye slip the latch out of the drop of the hamper, and may luck be with you.”\textsuperscript{212} Þorgeir Guðmundsson and Þorsteinn Helgason choose the C-redaction “skífðu

\textsuperscript{202} ÍF 10:55 [ch. 10 (20)]. Tragedy (my translation). Most of the other C-redaction manuscripts read this as “hrein saga,” Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 191.

\textsuperscript{203} ÍF 10:56 [ch. 10 (20)]. I think it is better if they were not killed now before my eyes (my trans.).

\textsuperscript{204} Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 191.

\textsuperscript{205} Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 191.

\textsuperscript{206} ÍF 10:56 [ch. 10 (20)].

\textsuperscript{207} 172r.

\textsuperscript{208} ÍF 10:56 [ch. 10 (20)].

\textsuperscript{209} Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 192.

\textsuperscript{210} ÍF 10:56, n. 2.

\textsuperscript{211} Law and Literature, 196.

\textsuperscript{212} Origines Islandicae, 422.
þegar” rather than the A-redaction’s “kíptu þegar,”213 but alone of all the critical editions do not mark anything as out of the ordinary in Hlenni’s words. Hallvard Magerøy supposes that this confusing sentence stems from the common ancestor of the A-redaction and the C-redaction, or perhaps even the archetype.214 Given the self-aware humor exhibited by Hlenni before this moment, though, this may be a moment when the Ljósvetninga saga author plays with narrative conventions to make his audience be in the blind man’s show for a few moments. While a blind man would nonetheless direct his speech to different people, this could be less pronounced in the flow of a conversation where plans are being hatched. As such the author does not feel the need to provide us with a ‘sagði húsarkerlinum.’ Finally, when Hlenni’s servant arrives at the designated meeting place supposedly without Rindill’s killers, Guðmundr demands to know where the two are. The servant’s reply, “Ek ætla, at þeim þykki eigi til þils boðit,”215 is so witty that it can either be explained by a sentence rehearsed by Hlenni himself, or that the farmer’s servants are as witty as their master. Either way, the whole affair is designed to elevate the blind farmer’s honor, and consequently diminish Guðmundr’s own.

In discussing the foiled burning, I have pointed out that the Ljósvetninga saga narrative plays with the burning type-scene and provides a reversal of the literary convention. Rather than being a passive head of household who allows his house to burn with little ceremony, Guðmundr is as active as they come: he is the one doing the burning.216 As mentioned in the context of thehestaþing, this is not the first time the Ljósvetninga saga author subverts literary convention to highlight Mundi’s ridiculousness. When Guðmundr approaches the house where the killers are hiding, Brúni criticizes him in the A-redaction for his threats of violence: “Ok kynligt er, at

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213 Ljós. 1830, 65.
214 Magerøy, Sertekstproblemet, 21.
215 ÍF 10:56 [ch. 10 (20)]. Andersson and Miller’s translation takes out some of the flair: “I suppose they don’t feel they’ve been invited to a party,” 197. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell’s translation is more on-point: “I guess they do not think they are bidden to an ale banquet,” 422. Note that they connect this line with the poem Bjarkamál.
216 Tirosh, “Feel the Burn,” 38.
þér sýnisk at hafa stórvirki á várum frændum ok leita eptir svá frekt um men skíka, er einskis eru verðir.” 217 In the C-redaction manuscripts, he rather says, “ok endimlegt er þat.” 218 While the meaning is similar, Brúni’s word choice takes us back to the opening episode of the saga, when Arnórr declares the alliance between Þorgeir Íjósvetningagoði and Guðmundr inn ríki as “kynlig veizla, ok at illu mun verða.” 219 There both Arnórr (directly) and Þorgeirr (indirectly) are criticized for allying themselves with an útlendingur, and Þorgeirr specifically for aligning himself with Guðmundr inn ríki. The A-redaction points to this same sentiment with the same words; there is something unnatural about Guðmundr and Rindill’s alliance, and the fuss that Guðmundr makes seems inappropriate considering that his targets are from his kin group. The use of the type-scene makes all of this even more pronounced. 220 The three foiled attempts to catch Eilífr and his comrade, and especially his threat on two of these occasions to burn down the farm-house where the killers hide, give the impression that the narrative is connected with folktale type AT-124 “Blowing the House In,” 221 its most famous instance being the Three Little Pigs. Given the discussion of genre below, it is important to remember that these texts often echo or make use of common folktale motifs.

Following these events, there is a calm in Guðmundr’s life. The expression that is used to illustrate this is “Guðmundr sat yfir metordum mestum í heraðinu.” 222 Again Ljósvetninga saga exhibits self-referentiality: when Guðmundr and Einarr’s tense relationship is first discussed in chapter 13, it is reported that it arised “þvíat Guðmundr sat mjók yfir metordum manna norðr þar.” 223 Since the corresponding passage in the

217 ÍF 10:57 [ch. 10 (20)]. “It’s strange that you have such great designs against our kinsmen and take the part of worthless men with such determination,” 197.
218 Glíma og Ljósvetninga saga, 193.
219 ÍF 10:8 [ch. 2]. “That’s a strange alliance, […] No good will come of it,” 127.
220 See also Knut Liestol, who compared Signý’s dying words in Volsunga saga to Bergþóra in Njáls saga, Origin, 177). He then goes on to connect this refusal to leave a burning home to Ljósvetninga saga as well, though his approach to the matter is far less ironic than my own.
221 See Aarne and Thompson, The Types of the Folktales, 50–51.
222 ÍF 10:57 [ch. 10 (20)]. Guðmundr was most oppressive over the district (my translation).
223 Ljósv. 1830, 36 [ch. 13]; ÍF 10:16. Because Guðmundr oppressed the people of the North (my translation).
A-redaction is no longer extant, it is impossible to know whether or not this phrasing appeared in the A-redaction as well. But it is safe to say that the C-redaction closes this episode of Guðmundr’s life with a bit of a moral: all of this happened because he was lording it over the area. It is not beyond possibility that the A-redaction would have used a similar phrasing; it certainly would have expressed a similar sentiment.

3.4.3 Guðmundr’s Death

While the dramas of Guðmundr’s life might have calmed down, his inner demons have not. Guðmundr was a friend of Þórhildr the pagan witch, who is introduced into the saga as “forn í lund.”224 When the two meet, Guðmundr asks her whether or not there will be vengeance for his killing of Þorkell hákr. Dressed in breeches, a helmet, and carrying an axe, she asks Guðmundr to join her in the fjord: “Hon óð út á vaðlana, ok hjó hon fram ðxinni á sjóinn, ok þótti Guðmundi þat enga skipan taka.”225 Þórhildr then replies: “Eigi ætla ek, at menn verði til at slá í mannhefndir við þik, ok muntu sitja mega í sæmd þinni.”226 The C-redaction’s reading is slightly different, replacing “menni” with “maðr” and “slá” with “sjá.”227 Indeed, as Þórhildr predicts, it is not a man that eventually brings about the death of Guðmundr, but a dream. Its dispatcher, Draum-Finni Þorgeirsson, has a connection to the paranormal which could make him something other than a man. Sverrir Jakobsson argues that the dream interpreter’s powers in the Íslendingasögur are actually in understanding the symbolic meanings of dreams rather than in seeing the future,228 thus the assertion that the interpretation of dreams is necessarily connected with the paranormal is uncertain. Indeed, there is an interesting parallel

224 ÍF 10:59. “[S]he was still a heathen in spirit,” 199.
225 ÍF 10, 59. “She waded out into the shallows and struck her ax into the water, and Guðmund could observe no change,” 200.
226 ÍF 10:59. “I don’t think there will be men to take up vengeance against you. You will be able to maintain your honorable position,” 200.
227 Glúma og Ljósvidinga saga, 197.
228 Sverrir Jakobsson, “Galdur og forspá í ríkisvaldslausu samfélagi,” 79.
between the saga’s earlier mention that Drauma-Finni was “skygn” (had good eyesight) and the C-redaction’s use of the same words to describe Einarr, Guðmundr’s brother.229 As both men are dream interpreters, both demonstrate a certain understanding of the paranormal. However, in Finnboga saga ramma we learn that Finni was Finnish from his mother’s side.230 That Finni was a considered a foreigner, and a Finn to boot, lowered his social status and made him more easily defined, and used, as an Other.231 As Ármann Jakobsson has argued in regards to Grettis saga, “monster fighters . . . are not and can never be normal,”232 they are always outside of society, always an Other. Finni is arguably not entirely a man. By implication and association, Guðmundr is not as well. Guðmundr’s Otherness is emphasized by the ominous paranormal forebodings that lead up to Guðmundr’s death and subsequently the way his body is treated: “Síðan kom Einarr ok veitti honum umbúnað.”233 As Andersson and Miller note, this treatment of a dead person’s body is something the saga audience usually encounters in the context of ghost hauntings.234 It is noteworthy that in some C-redaction manuscripts, Þórhildr is named Þórhalla instead.235 This similarity with the name Þórhallr/Þórhalli works to frame Guðmundr’s death: Þórhalla tells Guðmundr that something other than a man will bring about his death, and Þórhallr is the Othered Finni’s messenger, delivering the killing dream.

229 Ljósv. 1830, 8 [ch. 2] for Finni; 44 [ch. 14] for Einarr. ÍF 10:9, 30, respectively.
230 ÍF 14:268. In Landnámabók we only hear that Finni’s mother is called “Lekný/Lækný,” and that she is “útlend,” rather than Finnish, ÍF 1:273; Sturlubók ch. 241; Hauksbók ch. 206. The fact that Finni is Finnish comes in a scene where the name Finnbogi is passed on by its rightful owner to Urðarköttur, so perhaps the choice of the mother’s origins had something to do with this repetition of ‘Finn.’ Finnboga saga ramma shares AM 162 c fol. with Ljósvetninga saga. This means that Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction audience would have an awareness of Finni’s ancestry, even if not mentioned in Ljósvetninga saga—its fifteenth-century audience, at any rate.
233 Ljósv. 1830, 70 [ch. 21]; ÍF 10:61. “Einar arrived and closed Gudmund’s eyes and nostrils and attended to his corpse,” 201.
234 Law and Literature, 201, n. 138.
235 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 196.
236 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 196.
Dreams are abundant in saga literature, and often involve the death of the dreamer or someone connected to them. In *Ljósvetninga saga*, however, the dream itself does not only prophesize death, but actually appears to be its cause. In chapter 21, Guðmundr relates his dream to Drauma-Finni, after he bribes him: “Ek þóttumk riða norðr um Ljósavatnsskarð, ok er ek kom gagnvert bönum, þá sýndisk mér hófuð Þorkells háks á aðra hón hún már, þá er at bönum vissi. Ok er ek reið norðan, sat hófuðit á annarri qxl már, þeiri er þá horði við bönum. Nú stendr mér ótti af þessu.” Drauma-Finni interprets Þorkell hákr’s floating head to be a reminder to Guðmundr of his killing, and of the fear that overcomes him with the knowledge that his relatives are close by in the surrounding farms. The immediate irony of this situation is obvious: Guðmundr’s having approached Finni with the contents of his dream is essentially the thing that eggs the half-brother to take vengeance. That Guðmundr asks Finni of all people to interpret the dream could either reflect a loss of common sense due to trauma and anxiety, or on the other hand a sly—yet poorly executed—attempt to bribe a representative of the Ljósvetningar into letting go of his resentments. As William Ian Miller shows, through the retelling of a dream, the dreamer has the power to both enlist and manipulate their audience. Guðmundr wants to enlisted Finni’s help by recounting his distressed dream, but ends up inciting him to vengeance instead.

Guðmundr’s dream reflects a tortured soul, perhaps filled with regret for the killing he committed, but mostly filled with fear for its

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238 In the A-redaction the farm is not named, but the C-redaction names it as Óxará, Þorkell hákr’s farm. See *Ljósv.*, 1830, 67 and ÍF 10:58, n. 1.

239 ÍF 10:58. “I dreamed I was riding north through the pass at Ljosavatn, and as I came opposite the farm at Oxara, Thorkel Hake’s head appeared on the side of me which was facing the farm. And, when I rode from the north, the head sat on my other shoulder, still facing the farm. This has now filled me with fear,” 198.

240 It is possible that Guðmundr indeed did not realize what he was doing by approaching Finni due to his general disregard of kinship ties.

241 Miller, “Dreams, Prophecy and Sorcery,” 106.
consequences.\textsuperscript{242} The floating head in Guðmundr’s dream was likely as unnerving to a medieval audience as it is for a modern one, and the chieftain’s loss of common sense following this experience is understandable. Later on, after Þórhallr approaches Drauma-Finni and is shooed away to Guðmundr, it is related that “Einar bróðir hans lagðist niðr, ok sofnaði; hann dreymði þat, at uxi gekk upp eptir héraðinu, skóruðligr mjök ok hyrndr fast, ok kom upp á Móðruvöllu ok gekk til hvörs húss, er var á bænum, ok síðarst til öndvegis, ok fell þar niðr dauðr. Síðan mælti Einar: ‘Slikt mun fyrir miklum tíðendum, ok er þetta mannafylgjur.’”\textsuperscript{243} Fylgjur—‘fetches’ that are usually tied to certain people or certain kin groups—prophesying death or an imminent attack are a common occurrence in the \textit{Íslendingasögu}, either dreamed by the attacked person or someone who is associated with him.\textsuperscript{244} The fact that Guðmundr traces the fylgja’s steps—as well as the fact that it was his habit to enter every building of the farm\textsuperscript{245}—implies that it is Guðmundr’s.\textsuperscript{246} This ties in to later on in \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, where another dream with an ox fylgja appears. Eyjólfr, the son of Guðmundr inn ríki, describes the following dream to his foster-father: “dreymt hefir mik í nótt: ek þóttist ríða norðr Háls, ok sá ek nautaflok koma í móti mér, þar var í oxi einn mikill rauðr, hann vildi ílla við mik gjöra, þar var ok graðúnr mannýgðr, ok margt smáneyti; þá kom yfir mik þoka mikil, ok sá ek eigi nautin.”\textsuperscript{247} Eyjólfr’s foster-father’s interpretation is highly reminiscent of his uncle Einarr’s words: “þat eru

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{Origines Islandicae}: 349: “one notes, not without pleasure, that this one scene of not unprovoked slaughter haunts Guðmund to his dying day.”

\textsuperscript{243} ÍF 10:60 [ch. 11 (21)]. “His brother Einar lay down for a nap and fell asleep. He dreamed that a magnificent ox with great horns went through the district and came to Modruvellir, going to each building on the farm and lastly to the high seat, where he fell dead. ‘This must signify great tidings,’ Einar said. ‘Such are the fetches of men,’” 200–1.

\textsuperscript{244} E.g., Gabriel Turville-Petre, “Dreams in Icelandic Tradition,” 98–101. For the fylgjur see, most recently, Zuzana Stankovitsová, “Following up on Female fylgjur: A Re-Examination of the Concept of Female fylgjur in Old Icelandic Literature.”

\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Ljósv.} 1830, 70 [ch. 21]; ÍF 10:60.

\textsuperscript{246} Turville-Petre certainly believes so, “Dreams,” 100.

\textsuperscript{247} \textit{Ljósv.} 1830, 91 [ch. 26]; ÍF 10:85. “I seemed to be riding north by Hals, and I saw a herd of oxen coming towards me. In it was a large reddish ox, intent on doing me some harm. There was also a vicious bull and lots of smaller animals. Then a thick fog came over me and I could not see the oxen,” 224.
mannafylgjur, óvina þína.”

When an Einarr of Þverá appears in the following scene, it becomes clear that this similar phrasing is no coincidence. Whether or not this is Guðmundr’s brother or Einarr Jarn-Skeggiason remains uncertain, but if it is the latter, he is there to invoke the memory of Einarr Eyjólfsón. The outcome of Eyjólfr’s dream is foggy because in ‘reality,’ once his enemies pass him by, an Einarr of Þverá strikes Eyjólfr’s saddle with an axe, causing him to fall. That Einarr does not warn his brother Guðmundr, but instead resigns to making vague statements about paranormal beings, supports the argument that he does not always have his brother’s best interest in mind. This is especially true when compared with Ñjáls saga’s chapter 69 where a dream of fylgjur gets the normally passive Njáll up on his feet to protect his friend Gunnarr. The established connections between Ñjáls saga and Ljósvetninga saga, as well as certain similarities between the characters of Njáll and Einarr, highlight Guðmundr’s brother’s inaction in not warning him of his impending doom.

Axes and oxen come together in both these fylgjur scenes. Perhaps this is more than a coincidence. In the A-redaction, when Earl Hákon wants to enlist Guðmundr and Þorgeirr’s help at the beginning of the saga, he sends them “hatt girzkan ok taparøxi.” Thus, when Þórhildr strikes the water with an axe, the bloody water could represent the bloody repercussions of the feud for Guðmundr’s descendants, but it could also be regarded as a symbol for the axe that initially caused the feud in the A-redaction, and the viðarøxi that will kill Koðrán Guðmundsson in the C-

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248 Ljósv. 1830, 91 [ch. 26]; ÍF 10:85. “Those are the fetches of your enemies,” 224.
249 Andersson and Miller read him as Einarr Eyjólfsón, while Björn Sigfússon reads him as Einarr Jarn-Skeggiason, neither seeing this issue as problematic and thus not explaining their choice (see indexes of both editions). Knocking Eyjólfr off his horse is ‘classic’ Einarr Eyjólfsón, and corresponds with his behavior with Guðmundr, especially since defending the outcome of a settlement is at stake. Einarr Jarn-Skeggiason’s father later tries to attack the Ljósvetningar when these are exiled in Norway following the Kakalahöll. However, as we have seen, in Ljósvetninga saga the son frequently does not follow his father’s footsteps.
250 ÍF 10:6. “A Russian hat and a battle-ax,” 125. Although Andersson and Miller’s translation is based on the C-redaction, they choose to translate this as well (with the use of square brackets), perhaps due to Miller’s interest in gift exchange.
251 ÍF 10:60, n. 1.
The C-redactor drives this connection home by the later Einarr of Þverá’s use of an axe to stop Eyjólfr from doing battle with the Ljósvetningar. Further, the helmet Þórhildr puts on echoes the “hatt girzkan” given to Guðmundr by Earl Hákon. Considering the parallels between the appearances of fylgjur in Guðmundr and Eyjólfr’s lives, it is interesting that the cattle fylgjur represent here the Ljósvetningar, rather than the Móðruvellir. It is then unclear whether or not the fylgja is really Guðmundr’s. The fact that the same animal is used to represent a person from the Móðruvellir’s opponents could, at least in the C-redaction of the text, imply a certain intentional ambiguity surrounding the fylgja that appears before Guðmundr’s death. This could also explain why Einarr is coy as to whom the ox fylgja belongs to, using a proverb where an actual warning would be more helpful.

After Einarr handles his dead brother, he declares: “Kaldr hefir hann nú verit innan, er hann kendi sín eigi.”254 This line implies an emotional coldness expressed by an estranged brother (at least to modern ears), but also that something was eerie in Guðmundr’s body, Othered and weakened. This physical inferiority or weakness is anticipated in chapter 21 by a story about how Ófeigr Járngerðarson humiliates Guðmundr one last time. The humiliation that Guðmundr suffers is closely tied with Ófeigr’s superior masculine body and his own fear.255 As Guðmundr occupies Ófeigr’s seat of honor at the farm of Tjörnes, Ófeigr responds with a display of his powerful fist, asks Guðmundr to comment on it and suggests that if he does not want it to strike him, he should vacate his seat. Guðmundr’s paranormal ties, eerie body, and his unmanliness are thus regarded as going, figuratively, hand in hand.

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252 ÍF 10:80.

253 The place names Óxarár (Þorkell hákr’s abode) and Óxnadalshéðiði are mentioned in the C-redaction’s chapters 21 and 26 respectively, which also contribute to the mirroring of chapters.

254 Ljósv. 1830, 70 [ch. 21]; ÍF 10, 61. “He must have been cold inside already since he felt nothing,” 201.

255 Arguments that Guðmundr is at this point old and frail are negated by the fact that Ófeigr is his likely contemporary, given that he has been an active player in the saga from its beginning in the late tenth century.
Given the similarities between the texts leading up to the end of the extant AM 561 4to, it is hard to imagine that the A-redaction of Ljósvetninga saga looked much different than the extant C-redaction. It is probable that Guðmundr’s death scene in the A-redaction played out in very similar words, otherwise Einarr’s dream about the ox fylgja would make little sense.

3.5 Chs. 22–31: Where Eyjólfur Guðmundsson Takes Over the Narrative

At this point Guðmundr is dead and since we get no news from the mound, we assume he has quietly left the building. But, despite arguments like those of Jon Erichsen’s or Bååth’s that this later section was composed separately and then the two sagas put together, there are many convincing parallels and connections between the two parts. Despite his absence, the events that enfold after his death reflect on Guðmundr inn ríki’s character, and show a consistency in the themes and elements that are dealt with in the earlier parts of the saga.

3.5.1 Eyjólfur Guðmundarson Struggles with His Brother Koðrán to Inherit Möðruvellir

Once Guðmundr dies, the Guðmundarsynir prove that the apples do not fall far from the tree, and a dispute between the brothers arises around their father’s inheritance. The brothers deal with the problematic sibling relationship between their father and uncle that they have seen during their childhood by recreating it. We are also told that the two Ljósvetningar troublemakers, Höskuldr Þorvarðsson and Brandr Gunnsteinsson, “áttu mikít lag við Þverærínga.” This sentence baffled Guðmundur Þorláksson, who pointed out that when Einarr Þverárger Járnskeggjason

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256 These have been explored by both Magerøy in “indre samanhangen” and Tommy Danielsson “Om Den Isländska Släktagsagens Uppbyggnad,” 33–34.
257 Ljós.1830, 73 [ch. 22]; ÍF 10:65. “had close relations with the people at Thvera,” 203.
appears in the saga he is allied with Eyjólfr;\textsuperscript{258} though Einarr knocking Eyjólfr off of his horse to stop him from attacking the Ljósvetningar could demonstrate a mixed loyalty. Björn Sigfússon said that this must be “Þverá í Dalsmynni í Fnjóskadal,”\textsuperscript{259} which makes sense since the place name appears elsewhere, connected with the Ljósvetningar.\textsuperscript{260} Björn is likely right, but the author’s explicit avoidance in naming which Þverá creates ambiguity and hints at the inner familial discord that characterized Móðruvellir–Þveræingar relations in the previous generations. Another function that the out-of-place mention of Þverá could have is to recall the events of Sórla þáttur: there Guðmundr tries to stop Sórlí’s wooing by sending Þórðís to Þverá. In this case, Ísólfir tries to stop the courting of his daughter Friðgerðr by sending her to Móðruvellir, only to have her impregnated in a farm nearby another Þverá. As a side note, Friðgerðr is advised to go back home to Fornastaðir but instead decides to go to Draflastaðir. While drafl is connected to curdled milk, it is also etymologically connected to drafl, meaning tattling or chatting.\textsuperscript{261} It is the wont of youth to prefer idle chatter over the dictates of the older generation.

When Ísólfir approaches Eyjólfr about the pregnancy of his daughter Friðgerðr, the Móðruvellir chieftain comes across just as preoccupied with honor as his father Guðmundr. While he is initially reluctant to take a course of action that is too aggressive against the individual who impregnated Friðgerðr, Eyjólfr changes his mind when Ísólfir hints at contacting men more honorable than him.\textsuperscript{262} Later on he declares that he will pursue the case “sem föðurarf minn,”\textsuperscript{263} which is ironic considering the fact that he pried away his inheritance from his own brother.\textsuperscript{264} On the other hand, this also clarifies that Eyjólfr means business. Incidentally Koðrán dies in

\textsuperscript{258} Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 201.
\textsuperscript{259} ÍF 10:63 n. 2.
\textsuperscript{260} Ljósv. 1830, 84 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:76–77 and 77, n. 1.
\textsuperscript{261} Vladimir Orel, A Handbook of Germanic Etymology, 73.
\textsuperscript{262} Ljósv. 1830, 76 [ch. 22]; ÍF 10:67. His hints are so vague that Guðmundur Þorláks-son prefers Scheving’s correction. Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 205; see also ÍF 10:67, n. 2.
\textsuperscript{263} Ljósv. 1830, 78 [ch. 23]; ÍF 10:69. “As if it were my own inheritance,” 209.
\textsuperscript{264} ÍF 10:69, n. 3.
the battle that arises from this dispute and his claims for their father’s inheritance are thus voided. It is stressed that Koðrún could have been saved if it was not for Eyjólfr’s mismanagement of his brother’s wounded body. While Koðrún’s death was probably not what Eyjólfr was wishing for, his words and actions sing a different tune.

Hrafn Þorkelsson’s hostility towards his own kinsman Þorvarðr Hóskuldsson reveals inner kin group tensions that are hinted at earlier as well. During the battle with Guðmundr inn ríki, only Hóskuldr and Tjórví are reported as actively against the alliance of their father and the powerful chieftain. Later, it is Þorkell hákr’s half-brother Finni who makes sure vengeance is delivered, while Hóskuldr and Tjórví merely voice some vague threats and accept money as compensation.

3.5.2 The Battle at Kakalahóll

The battle at Kakalahóll is proceeded by two appearances that make little sense chronologically: Þorsteinn inn rammi, who was present at Þorkell hákr’s killing, and Þórir Finnbogason, who according to Björn Sigfússon, would have been born in the mid-tenth century. Neither would be in any form to fight (if even alive) in the mid-eleventh century, yet these two men help Eyjólfr when his horse gets stuck in the river. Since this is literature, it does not need to conform with historical truth; it does, however, comport with saga tradition, where Þórir was said to have joined the ranks of the Móðruvellinger in Finnboga saga’s Melrakkahólsbardaga, which is most likely another name for the battle in Kakalahóll. As for Þorsteinn, Andersson and Miller suggest that his appearance invokes the killing of

265 Ljós. 1830, 88 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:82.
266 Ljós. 1830, 80 [ch. 23]; ÍF 10:72, and n. 1. Guðmundur Þorláksson and Finnur Jónsson gloss him as Þorsteinn inn rammi, Gláma og Ljósvetninga saga, 292.
267 Ljós. 1830, 80 [ch. 23]; ÍF 10:72, and n. 2.
268 Ljós. 1830, 82 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:74.
269 ÍF 14:324 [ch. 38].
270 Kakalahóll is now called Orrustuhóll, according to ÍF 14:324, n. 1, and the locals of the area (personal communication), so the fluidity of the hill’s name is not surprising. Kakali, the sound of an animal, is associated with the gobble of birds.
Þorkell hákr,271 where his excellence in battle highlighted Guðmundr’s feebleness. The father’s shame now extends to the son and spotlights the similarities between the two. The same function arises from the mention of Hlenni the Blind making an assessment on Eyjólfr’s actions; Hlenni should be long dead by this point.272 His presence reminds us how Guðmundr was outwitted by the man many decades before.

Þórir and Þorsteinn helping Eyjólfr and his horse is the first in a series of instances when Eyjólfr’s mishandling of his horse hinders his advancement. First, they are attacked by the Ljósvetningar and the horse gets caught in the river, then the horse is stuck in the marsh as the battle at Kakalahóll begins, and later Eyjólfr is knocked off the horse by his kinsman Einarr of Þverár. This could simply be a comical effect—Einarr is not a very good equestrian—but it is also be a stab at his masculinity and his competence as a leader. Finally, after the killing of Þórarinn Háskulðsson, Eyjólfr stumbles off his horse. It is from this fall that he gets his famous limp, for which he is nicknamed Eyjólfr halti. There is something almost lyrical to the description of his fall: “Þá hrapaði hestr undir Eyólfi, ok féll hann af baki.”273 The author’s alliteration sends us back to the moments before Eyjólfr’s father killed Þorkell hákr: “En þá er Guðmundr hopaði, hrapaði hann í mjölkretillinn.”274 a connection made even stronger when considering that the A-redaction telling of this scene has “hrataði” rather

271 Law and Literature, 212, n. 157.
272 Ljósv. 1830, 81–82 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:73–74, and 74 n. 1.
273 Ljósv. 1830, 104 [ch. 30]; ÍF 10:100. “Eyjolf’s horse stumbled under him, and he fell off,” 240. This is certainly not the only lyrical moment in Ljósvetninga saga. The scribe of NKS 1785 4to (a late eighteenth-century critical copy of AM 485 4to that marks variants from AM 162 c fol. and AM 514 4to) identified this moment from chapter 24:

“þá mælti Otriggur.
Hiálmurinn úngi
hver skal her í dag
vig vekia?
hver nema þú
Hákr [sic] mágur.”
NKS 1785 4to, 139r [marked as p. 275]. The scribe did not note anything specific regarding Guðmundr’s stumbling, NKS 1785 4to, 96r–96v [marked as pp. 191–192].
274 Ljósv. 1830, 61 [ch. 19]; ÍF 10:52. “Gudmund danced away and tumbled into the milk vat,” 193.
than the C-redaction’s “hrapaði,” which means that the choice of the verb could have been amended by the C-redactor to fit the events in the Mððruvellinger’s future. It is important to stress that Eyjólfr is unlike his father in the sense that he does not avoid military confrontation; he is even willing to face unlikely odds, in a manner that is “mikilmannligt […] ok eigi råðligt.” That this echoes Einarr’s C-redaction words to Þórir in chapter 16, “Þat er ørendi ó/gott, en eigi litilmannligt,” shows that the Ljósvetninga saga C-redaction author does not spare Eyjólfr compliments when they are due. The apple may not fall far from the tree, but it may be significantly less wormy.

3.5.3 Legal Proceedings After the Battle

Skegg-Broddi’s cold reply to Eyjólfr’s request of support after the battle at Kakalahóll could be a callback to the C-redaction Eastfjords þættir; the Mððruvellinger had not made very strong bonds following the events of Vððu-Brands þættir, despite the marriage ties with Sððli Brodd-Helgason (Skegg-Broddi’s uncle) and Þorkell Geitisson. One of Skegg-Broddi’s reasons for not promising to support the Mððruvellinger is actually their treatment of his wife Guðrún, who is their own kinswoman. When Hárek of the Ljósvetningar approaches Skegg-Broddi and presents him with a ring for his support, he presents it to his wife Guðrún and tells her that it was sent to her by Þorvarðr. It is as if Skegg-Broddi says that, while the Mððruvellinger would not honor her, the Ljósvetningar would. This is a tease between husband and wife, since Guðrún can see clear as day that the ring was not sent for her, and says as much. Perhaps it is also a way to show that, while the Mððruvellinger offer no gifts and rely simply
on kinship bonds that they themselves do not respect, the Ljósvetningar are willing to put their rings where their mouths are.

As Þórvarr and his men prepare for their exile, Eyjólfr has second thoughts and wishes to exact vengeance on them for his brother Koðránn’s death. Eyjólfr arrives at his friend Þorkell’s house and tells him his plans, to which he strongly objects. When night comes and everyone is asleep, “þá var barit á hurð, ok gekk bóndi út, ok kom inn aptr. Eyólfr spurði, hvörr kominn væri. Bóndi segir, at sá var útan úr Dalnum. Eyólfr mælti: ‘Hvat mun tíðt um Austmennina?’ Bóndi segir þá hafa utan látit.”281 This causes Eyjólfr to give up his attempt on Þórvarr’s life, only to discover later that he had still been within arm’s reach. This deception is reminiscent of Rindill’s spying on Þorkell hákr’s house before his killing: the name of the Hlíð farmer is likewise Þorkell, and the reporter is identified as “útan ór dalnum,” like Rindill who presented himself as a man from Hálfdanartunga. The narrative pays back Eyjólfr for his father’s actions and his planned violence. Unsurprisingly, when Þórvarr hears of how Þorkell helped to stop the bloodshed, he sends him a stud horse and a twenty-gallon kettle—something for Eyjólfr to stumble into, if he ever attacks the place.

3.5.4 Chronological Discrepancies

Critics have noted that Þorkell Geitisson’s appearance in the later part of the saga is anachronistic. He should not be alive or, at any rate, active during the þing meeting following the Kakalahóll battle.282 It is noteworthy and ironic that we now have two abrupt appearances of Þorkell Geitisson: one in the A-redaction’s 37v summary, the other in the C-redaction’s chapter 27, where he is mentioned briefly and then dropped. In Vǫðu-Brands þátr, Þorkell Geitisson also threatens to summon Guðmundr to a hólmnga after

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281 Ljós. 1830, 98 [ch. 28]; ÍF 10:93. “there was a knocking on the door; [the farmer] went out, then returned. Eyjolf asked who had come. [the farmer] said that it was a man from the lower valley. "What is the news of the Norwegian vessel?" asked Eyjolf. [the farmer] said that it had set sail,” 232, my emendations.

282 Björn Sigfusson says he would be in his hundreds. ÍF 10:101, n. 3.
the Eyjafjörður chieftain frustrates all of his legal options in a court case. Since his mention is so out of place and chronologically illogical, it may be there to highlight the changing of the times; in Þorkell Geitisson’s heyday, a threat of hólmganga was the honorable course of action.

The mention of Þorkell Geitisson also traces a line between the problematic Guðmundr inn ríki and his now problematic son Eyjólfr halti. Þorkell Geitisson, to risk over-extending the metaphor, is the Newton who observes that the apple does not fall far from the tree. The scene provides another parallel with Guðmundr. When Skegg-Broddi calls for a peaceful end to the post-battle legal proceedings, he starts this by saying “má Eyjólfr heyra mál mitt?”283 This is the same phrase used by both Þorlaug and her son Halldórr (Eyjólfr’s deceased brother) when Guðmundr inn ríki threatens to burn them in.284 This ostensibly mundane phrasing is actually rare in the saga corpus: according to the Árnastofnun Málheildir website, it only appears once more in the saga corpus, in Ólafs saga Skallagrímssonar chapter 57.285

This part of the saga is odd for the number of people who ought to be long dead, or at any rate inactive, and yet keep popping up. Björn Sigfússon names Hlenni the Blind, Skeggi the brother of Álfr úr Dölum, Þorkell Geitisson, Þórir Finnbogason, and even king Knútr inn ríki.286 In addition to these, there is the mention of a slave designated “Einars Guðmundar bróður,” who is compensated for well after the Þverá resident would have been dead. This anachronism caused Guðmundur Þorlákssson to correct the name to “Einars Járnskeggjasonar” and Björn Sigfússon to correct the

283 Ljósv. 1830, 96 [ch. 27]; ÍF 10:91 [ch. 27]. “Can Eyjólfr hear my words?” 230.
284 Ljósv. 1830, 66 [ch. 21]; ÍF 10:57 [ch. 20].
285 This is tellingly before a threat of a duel. While I will not argue that the probably later Ljósvetninga saga had borrowed the phrase from Egla, it is noteworthy that Skegg-Broddi’s expression comes at a time when a duel is imminent, not least because of Skegg-Broddi’s kinship ties with Þorkell Geitisson (Skegg-Broddi is the son of Bjarni Brodd-Helgason). For the use of the phrase “má xxx heyra mál mitt,” see Risamálheildin, Stofnun Árna Magnussonar, (under headings: fornrit, útvikkuð; orðmynd “má”; orð á milli: 1; orðmynd “heyra”), accessed 15 Oct. 2018, http://malheildir.arnastofnun.is/.
286 ÍF 10:XXVIII. See also Law and Literature, 78, and Finnur Jónsson, litteraturshistorie, 2nd ed. vol. 2:497, where he suggests that much can be reconciled if it takes place during Knútr’s lifetime. But then the mention of king Haraldr harðráði makes little sense.
wording to “Einars Þveræings.” While this may be chronologically more accurate, it does not reflect the extant manuscripts, and probably AM 162 c fol. Another odd appearance, discussed above, is Þorsteinn inn rammi’s prominent participation in the Kakalahóll battle, probably the same Þorsteinn inn rammi from the killing of Þorkell hákr who would therefore be quite old. As discussed above, Hallvard Magerøy also suggested that the Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson connected with the veisubragð could be a son of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði. This would bring yet another player into the action who should have been dead or out of commission in the mid-eleventh century. Another example of odd chronology occurs when Þorvarðr refuses to join his son in battle and his wife threatens that she will not bear him any more sons. This is a peculiar threat when they already have at least one grown up son and are unlikely to still be in prime age for childbearing.

Another element that contributes to this general sense of unheimlich connections between past and present is different characters with similar names appearing, each serving a similar function as their namesake: Einarr of Þverá Járnskeggjason knocks Eyjólfr off a horse to prevent him from foolishly attacking the Ljósvetningar and breaking an agreed truce; a certain Finní makes vague statements about fylgjur;289 an unruly son called Hóskuldr and a Brandr make trouble in the district. Another feature of narrative repetition in Ljósvetninga saga is different characters with different names who play similar functions in the narrative as other characters from earlier on. Skegg-Broddi, for example, recreates the role of Ófeigr Járngerðarson by going against the Móðruvellinger despite being nominally allied to them. When Skegg-Broddi’s support of the Ljósvetningar is reported to Eyjólfr, he comments: “Fjandmaðr vorr gjörist Skeggbroddi; hefir hann nú tveim sínunum brugðiðt mér. Skeggbroddi svarar: ek firrta þik ok næst á Hegranespíningi vandræðum, sem von var at verða mundi, ef þú sáktir Þorvarð ok frændr hans; drapstu bróður hans, ok viltu þat nú öngvu þæta, eða hvar ætlar þú til? eru nú tveir kostir fyrir höndum, láta okkr Gelli ráða

287 Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 234, ÍF 10:92, n. 3.
288 Finnur Jónsson, litteraturshistorie, 2nd ed. vol. 2:497.
289 Ljós. 1830, 104 [ch. 30]; ÍF 10:100–101.
ok dæma, eða hólmgauungur munu framfara.”290 This echoes a similar dialogue between Guðmundr inn riki and Ófeigr Járngerðarson in Vǫðu-Brands þáttir, where the chieftain accuses the powerful farmer of hurting his honor, as he predicted would happen. Ófeigr replies “eigi hefi ek hallat virdingu þinni at heldr, þóat ek hafi fengi þær mága betri ok fleiri enn áðr.”291

This accusation-justification dialogue structure points to a connection in the representation between the two prominent farmers. When Hrólfr declares his intention to call for several hólmgöngur and states that he will challenge “Einarana tvo,”292 Andersson and Miller translate this as “Einar Arnorsson, Einar Jarn-Skeggjason,”293 but it is likelier that the author chose to not name who these Einarar are as a callback to the earlier scene in Ljósvetninga saga when Vígfrú Viga-Þlúmsson declares his intention to call Einarr Eyjólfsson to a duel. While sagas can be bad at chronology,294 these repetitions litter this part of Ljósvetninga saga to the extent that they are not signs of poor time-keeping, but rather they are meant to represent something. At times it feels as if the walls of reality are breaking down around the characters.295 Þórarins þáttr ofsa’s presence in the extant text witnesses out of its chronological place helps to support this sense of chronological disorientation, even if it had originally been located elsewhere, perhaps between Guðmundr’s death and Eyjólfr’s takeover of Möðruvellir. These discrepancies in time highlight an inter-generational continuity of the Möðruvellingar’s tendency towards forceful and violent district politics.

290 Ljósv. 1830, 106 [ch. 30]; ÍF 10:102. “‘You are again my enemy, Skegg-Broddi, […] You have now failed me twice.’ ‘I got you out of the difficulty that threatened at the Hegranes thing if you had outlawed Thorvard and his kinsmen,’ Skegg-Broddi said. ‘Then you killed his brother, and now you refuse to pay compensation. What is it you have in mind? There are two choices available: to let Gellir and me determine and judge the issue, or proceed with the duels,’” 242.

291 Ljósv. 1830, 34 [ch. 12]; ÍF 10:138. “‘I have not diminished your honor in the least by having secured you better and larger kinship connections than you had before,’” 161.

292 Ljósv. 1830, 195 [ch. 30]; ÍF 10:102.

293 Law and Literature, 21.

294 Finnur Jónsson, litteraturhandskrifta, 2nd ed., vol. 2:497 argues that Ljósvetninga saga is rather good at chronology, but other scholars disagree, at any rate in regard to chapters 22–31. See e.g., ÍF 10:XXVII–XXIX and Law and Literature, 74–78.

295 See the epilogue of Tirosh, “Trolling Guðmundr.”
The C-redaction narrative ends on a complex and ambiguous note in regard to both the Mǫðruvellingar and the Ljósvetningar in general, and Guðmundr inn ríki in particular. Oddi Grímsson is highlighted at the end of the saga by three anecdotes, all noteworthy. The first has him call out king Knútr inn ríki for his lack of generosity. This is meant to echo Ófeigr of Ófeigs þáttr fame, in which the prominent farmer criticizes Guðmundr inn ríki for not being in touch with the needs of his þingmenn and for over-exploiting their hospitality. When king Knútr tries to shame Oddi in return by reminding him that he fought against his own kinsmen in the battle at Kakaláhóll, the Icelander announces that he avoided hurting those men who are related to him.296 Two stories of forgiveness are then related: one of bishop Ketill who forgives Oddi’s son Guðmundr, and one of Oddi himself who forgives the debt-slave Þorsteinn for reddening his scalp.

Much earlier in the narrative, Oddi Grímsson is described as “sköllóttr ok gamall.”297 This recalls the similarly bald foster-father of Guðmundr inn ríki.298 Furthermore, Oddi Grímsson is “í Hǫfði,”299 or “frá Hǫfða,”300 The placename Hǫfði, which translates as ‘headland,’ directing the audience’s attention to the Oddi’s head. What is the function of bringing back the bald foster-father into the narrative? Besides the general disruption of reality discussed above, the narrative works its way to forgiving Guðmundr inn ríki by having Oddi forgive the debt slave who hit him on the head, mirroring the two scenes. But the text still stings: Guðmundr is likened to a debt-slave, albeit a noble-minded one.301 Finally, the saga’s final words carry within them two meanings worth considering. When Skegg-Broddi

296 Note that since Oddi’s lineage is never told in the saga, we are never sure of his exact kinship ties, but according to Björn Sigfusson he seems to be a grandson of Einarr Eyjólfsson, and his connection to the Ljósvetningar remains uncertain, ÍF 10:105, n. 1.
297 Ljósv. 1830, 85 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:78. Bald and old (my translation).
298 ÍF 10:37 [ch. 6 (16)].
299 ÍF 10:73 [ch. 14 (24)].
300 ÍF 10:80 [ch. 14 (24)]; a feature of the JS 624 4to branch, see Glúma og Ljósvetninga saga, 219.
301 The Christian aspect of forgiveness that is clearly present in these scenes will not be expanded upon at present.
declares about Hárekr that “ekki þiki mèr þú sterkr, en drengr erti gòðr,” he closes the circle on several similar sentences uttered previously. The connection between Oddi Grímsson’s “mikilmannligt […] ok eigi ráðligt” with the C-redaction Einarr’s “þat er ørendi ó/gott, en eigi litilmannligt” was pointed out above, but it should also be noted that later on, when Hrólfr declares his intentions to challenge the Móðruvellinger to a series of hölmöngur, Skegg-Broddi replies: “þú ert hetja mikil! ok eigi ráðlauss.” This sentence’s structure first praises the man’s prowess or manliness and then judges his character, and encapsulates the saga’s main theme—something that is prevalent and consistent throughout—a discussion of the right way to exercise power. But this also takes the sentence out of its immediate context. Before the three Oddi Grímsson anecdotes, it is related that that upon his return to Iceland, Hóskuldr Þorvarðsson intends to avenge his uncle by attacking Eyjólfr and his men. However, “Hrærekr hleypr eptir honum, ok grípr hann í fang sèr, ok mælti: still þik, vinr! þetta er ekki færi.” Skegg-Broddi is here either implying that Hóskuldr Þorvarðsson—famous for authoring the “Veisubragð” that Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson found so amusing in his own day—did not really want to exact vengeance for his uncle, and let himself be stopped by Hárekr, or that Hóskuldr’s strength is not that impressive. By challenging the nominal Móðruvellinger Skegg-Broddi, in such a strange way, the nominal Ljósvetningr Hárekr could be making an overture of peace, or a quip on the Ljósvetningar in the closing lines of the so-called Ljósvetninga saga.

302 Ljós. 1830, 109 [ch. 31]; ÍF 10:106.
303 Ljós. 1830, 82 [ch. 24]; ÍF 10:74 [ch. 14 (24)].
304 Ljós. 1830, 105 [ch. 30]; ÍF 10:102. “You are tough and not unresourceful,” Law and Literature, 241.
305 And, as we shall see below, of the entirety of AM 162 c fol.
306 Compare also with the arm-threat scene from ch. 21, where Ófeigr threatens Guðmundr out of his seat of honor with a display of practical strongarming vs. Guðmundr’s political strongarming. See also Magerøy, “indre samanhangen,” 73–74, who connects this chapter’s closing sentence to Einarr’s statement about his brother’s coldness upon death.
307 Ljós. 1830, 107; ÍF 10:104. “Harek ran after him and got his arms around him and said, ‘Calm down, friend. This is no such chance,’” 244.
3.6 Ch. 32: Which Ends with an Abrupt

The A-redaction of *Ljósvetninga saga* is a much more straightforward tale of regional rivalry, which does not include the tales *Srólja þáttr, Ófeigs þáttr, and Vþú-Brands þáttr*, where Guðmundr must contend with his neighboring region’s notable Þorkell Geitisson, and where he is taught lessons on checking his power and desires by Þórarinn and Ófeigr. During the earlier discussion of the saga’s manuscripts, the possibility was raised that *Þórarins þáttr ofsa* would have been included in the A-redaction. It is worth considering what this þáttr would add. *Þórarins þáttr* is a tale that mirrors chapters 1–4 of *Ljósvetninga saga*. In the saga proper, Jarl Hákon uses gifts to persuade Guðmundr and Þorgeirr to help him reintroduce a negative character into Iceland. Similarly, in *Þórarins þáttr*, Guðmundr’s son, Eyjólfr embarks on avenging the death of an ill-liked and negative character in service of king Óláfr helgi. Likewise, *Þórarins þáttr ofsa* would be a good frame for an expanded discussion of rulership in the A-redaction, in the same manner of the tale at the end of the C-redaction. The similarities between the beginning and the end of the saga are made stronger by the casual reference to Grettir sterki Ásmundarson.

This story at the end of the C-redaction, assuming this was indeed its location in AM 162 c fol., frames the saga with a tale of regency that elevates the discussion of the local chieftains’ behaviors to a more significant statement about governance in general. The disorienting chronology created by putting this story at the end of a saga that is already, essentially, finished, is lessened by the inconsistencies that proceed it: king Knútr inn ríki appearing out of proverbial thin air in chapter 31, for example, can be equated to king Óláfr helgi’s appearance in chapter 32. This can contextualize the inconsistencies for the audience, and allow the focus to return to the intended theme: proper rulership.

Finally, it is worth noting that ending *Ljósvetninga saga* with *Þórarins þáttr ofsa*, does not constitute a significant break from standard Íslendingasögur practice. This story brings the Mþrúvellingar back into the fold of Christianity by serving the will of saintly King Óláfr. Many Íslendingasögur, such
as Brennu-Njáls saga, Laxdæla saga, Grettis saga, and even Egils saga Skallagríms-sonar, end on a Christian note. The unpopularity of the man whose death King Óláfr demands Eyjólfr avenge is consistent with Ljósvetninga saga’s general partisanship against the Móðruvelli. The author of Ljósvetninga saga, by including this story, would have achieved both the goal of finishing his Íslendingasaga with a Christian tone, while reminding the audience that the Móðruvelli do not always have the safety of their district and country in mind.

3.7 Conclusion

In his study of the structure of Ljósvetninga saga, Theodore Andersson dispenses some harsh words:

Ljósvetninga saga shares with Heiðarvíga saga a transcendent interest in the intricacies of plot. There is no visible concern with moral, ethical, temperamental, or metaphysical issues. The merits of the conflict between Ljósvetningar and [Móðruvelli] are not the center of discussion, and characterization is quite neglected, to the extent that the personalities are pale or disjointed, Þorgeirr goði is a sequence of not quite consistent actions with no unifying principle. Guðmundr is a powerful and effective chieftain, but the justice of the charge against him is left unsettled so that he remains in a dubious light, Þórir Helgason does not emerge as a personality at all; he is futile without being pathetic in his futility or arousing respect or sympathy by his posture, Þorkell hákr is impressive in his death, but this is a flash in an otherwise undeveloped personality. Eyjólfr likewise has no coloring. Only Þorvarðr has some personal dimension. He is imbued with that combination of
moderation and unflamboyant firmness particularly favored by the saga-writers (for example, Valla-Ljótr).308

This chapter hoped to prove Andersson’s point wrong, at least to some extent. Þorgeirr góði’s “unifying principle” is his dilemma between the will of his overlord Hákon jarl and the will of his sons, and perhaps a tinge of self-loathing, which makes him more relatable than many other violent fathers.309 The dubious light Guðmundr is left in is in no way a result of slack writing; it is one of the very points the saga has to make. Þórir Helgason is indeed a character meant mostly to orchestrate events, but what of it? He comes out of the narrative as a typical góði who is big with words and in managing his own business, but not so careful with protecting his þingmenn.310 The statement about Þorkell hákr is baffling. His death scene and the scene that proceeds it constitute his only real appearance in the saga; he comes out as a colorful, redeemable character. If Schach’s Njáls saga redeems Guðmundr after Ljósvetninga saga humiliates him, the opposite is true with Þorkell hákr: if he appears boastful and is humiliated in Njáls saga, he is transformed into a loveable introvert in Ljósvetninga saga. And Eyjólfr’s lack of coloring is in the eye of the beholder, but his character may be seen as a compelling portrayal of a man who tries to be—and in many ways is—better than his father, but ultimately succumbs to his need for honor and unrestrained vengeance.

This chapter argues against the primacy of either the A-redaction or the C-redaction by pointing out the artistry and consistency of both. Undoubtedly, one redaction must have preceded the other. But this does not say anything about the intrinsic value of either of these redactions; both show a self-referentiality that indicates that whatever their origins, by the time they reached their extant forms, the redactions were already imbued

308 Andersson, Icelandic Family Saga, 259.
309 A similar description of Þorgeirr can be found in Fünf Geschichten aus dem östlichen Nordland, trans. W. H. Vogt and W. Ranisch, 11.
310 See Marion Poilvez, “Discipline or Punish? Travels and Outlawry as Social Structures in Medieval Iceland.”
with the qualities that qualify them as independent from each other. This is important to remember in the discussion of genre and the role of dating: quality does not indicate how close or far a saga is from its origins, and indicates nothing regarding its place within the generic system. The corrections of textual ambiguities by editors who have passed qualitative judgments on the redactions can serve to obscure original meanings. The best example of this is the fact that, in the C-redaction, Þórir Helgason’s problematic pingmaðr is also called Þórir. This creates a situation where Guðmundr’s anger at his brother Einarr’s alliance with his slanderer is first taken out on an ersatz. By changing the name Þórir to Akra-Þórir to avoid confusion, Björn Sigfússon’s Íslenzk fornrit lost touch with the ambiguity the saga sought to achieve. The connections between Sǫrla þáttr on the one side, and Ófeigs þáttr and Vǫðu-Brands þáttr on the other—usually considered separate in the debate of origins—become clearer with the realization that by allowing a wedding between Sǫrli and his daughter Þórdís, Guðmundr inn ríki becomes more involved in Northeastern politics. Thematically and in regard to plot development, it was shown that these þættir are all an integral part of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction, as is the fragmentary Þórarins þáttr ofsa.

When the debate of the saga’s origins is set aside, the internal logic of the different texts begins to surface. Most significantly, the function of the mirror characters, chronological inconsistencies, and repetitions found in the saga’s final chapters are recontextualized to reveal their meaning in a way that is only possible if they are acknowledged as intentional. Characters that should be dead or inactive come back to life (without being un-dead) to comment on the saga’s themes. Repetitions are meant to highlight characteristics that are inherent in a certain family; Eyjólfr’s tendency to fall off horses, for example, points at his inherited incompetency from his father. The repetition of phrases that contrast physical power and character assessments also indicate the saga’s aim to comment on the correct forms of behavior and leadership.
These repetitions should be kept in mind in the following discussion of memory. Since the saga points out so many connections between the tenth and eleventh century, it could also be hinting that the problems that face the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries are not so different from the past. Assuming that the contemporary medieval audiences knew to detect chronological inconsistencies just as competently as contemporary scholars, they would be able to notice the moments when people seemed out of place, and would have considered what this means for the story, and what this means for their own time. The literary interpretations suggested above and the connections found within each redaction would have been apparent to the audience who would ask themselves what the saga is saying about their own time, through their ancestors’ successes and failures.
4. The Part About Memory

4.1 Introduction

The fact that *Ljósvetninga saga* was put to parchment, copied to paper, and eventually pressed to print means that in various points of history, it has meant something to someone. The process of copying, especially on expensive parchment, means that someone took the time to think about the component pieces of the saga, choosing them out of a larger repertoire of literature and oral tales. *Ljósvetninga saga*, as with other *Íslendingasögur*, takes place in Iceland at a specific geographical and temporal point and reflects the stories of the direct and/or cultural ancestors of the people who recorded it. This chapter discusses two authors whose investment in *Ljósvetninga saga* is apparent: the thirteenth-century author hypothesized by Barði Guðmundsson, and Ólafur Loftsson, the fifteenth-century scribe/compiler/author of AM 162 c fol. Their intent as authors is contrasted with the literary text’s historical context—an historical context that is, however, only knowable through knowledge of the scribal hand. This difficulty is illustrated by the inability to say much about the context of AM 561 4to’s *Ljósvetninga saga* A-redaction without more specific dating. The social difference between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century is a dramatic one, with a significant portion of the population having been wiped out by a plague in between, and with new real estate and political opportunities emerging after.

Maurice Halbwachs’s notion of collective memory is one of the more productive models for looking at the way that past and present interact. Collective memory as a theory looks at how society is constructed and unified through the use of memory. These memories can consist of literature and sacred texts, religious practices, calendar events, or architecture, and
all these serve to unite a people through a common heritage.¹ The most popular advancement of Halbwachs’s concept came from the German scholars Aleida and Jan Assmann, who developed the concept of cultural memory:

The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of re-usable texts, images, and rituals specific in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.²

The Assmanns further developed a distinction between cultural memory and communicative memory, which are both components of collective memory. They designate the span of communicative memory as no longer than 80–100 years into the past, and define its participation structure as diffuse, while cultural memory harks back to mythical times, and is only obtainable through specialized mediators, such as priests, rabbis, shamans, bards, or written texts.³

Collective and cultural memory have developed as concepts alongside the rise of memory studies as its own academic discipline since the 1980s, manifested in many volumes dedicated to presenting and theorizing on the topic of memory and cultural memory such as A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies, The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies, Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies, and many more. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, this field of research reached Old Norse scholarship as well, advanced initially by Thomas Fechner-Smarsly and Jürg Glauser,

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¹ Maurice Halbwachs, The Collective Memory.
² Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 132.
and later most notably by Pernille Hermann. The special attraction cultural memory has to the study of Old Norse literature is largely in its ability to move scholarship beyond “the dichotomy between history and fiction.” This dichotomy has largely been tied up in the Freeprose-Bookprose debate, though the Freeprose investment in the sagas as historical texts is sometimes overstated. Collective and cultural memory studies, then, offer the possibility of shedding away the debates that have bogged down literary appreciation of the Íslendingasögur, with the focus shifting from the period when the story occurs to the periods that wrote down and transmitted these texts.

This chapter looks at the ways in which thirteenth- and fifteenth-century Icelanders dealt with their past, and examines various ways in which this past could have meant something to them. It offers a way to differentiate between author-focused interpretations of the sagas and an interpretation that mediates between different periods of times—one that seeks to understand what the story of eleventh-century Iceland meant for its fifteenth-century descendants. To better understand the differences between these two approaches towards the past in a text, Barði Guðmundsson’s reading of Ljósvetninga saga will first be presented, an extreme case of reading the present through a highly distorted past.

4.2 Barði Guðmundsson and the Search for an Author

Barði Guðmundsson, an Icelandic alþingi member, produced much research where he tried to track down the authors of various sagas, Þjóðs saga

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4 Thomas Fechner-Smarsly, *Krisenliteratur. Zur Rhetorizität und Ambivalenz in der isländischen Sagaliteratur*, Jürg Glauser, “Sagas of Icelanders (Íslendingasögur) and þættir as the Literary Representation of a New Social Space;” For Pernille Hermann, see e.g., “Concepts of Memory. Approaches to the Past in Medieval Icelandic Literature,” “Founding Narratives and the Representation of Memory in Saga Literature,” and “Saga Literature, Cultural Memory, and Storage.”


in particular, and tied the texts to events in the thirteenth century. His attempts at approaching these representations of the past as pure fiction reveal a flattening of the eleventh-century Icelandic past to nothing but, essentially, names that are freely open to the manipulations of an author. His approach—highly influenced by Icelandic Bookprose—reveals a very simplistic understanding of how people approach stories of their ancestors.

When she discusses the attempts of others to find the author of *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, Emily Lethbridge notes that these “are representative of the ways in which in modern saga scholarship the anachronistic desire to attribute a written narrative to an individual, thereby situating it firmly within an historical and ideological framework, often supersedes the evidence for that narrative itself and distorts our understanding of the distinctive nature of medieval and post-medieval Icelandic textuality.”8 Despite being less dismissive of the project of dating sagas and even the discussion of authorship, Einar Ól. Sveinsson pointed out the trap of dating based on a specific author, or specific occurrences:

> It must be said that all these attempts to find similarities between the sagas and events of the age in which they were written present exceedingly difficult problems. In the first place, similar incidents often occur in real life, without there being any relationship between them. Secondly, while there may be some literary relationship between a Family Saga and a story of contemporary life, it may be difficult to decide which is the borrower. If we can be sure that there is some direct relationship between a Family Saga and contemporary history, then it is certainly probable that the saga is the borrower, but it need not be so in every case.9

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8 Emily Lethbridge, “Dating the sagas and *Gísla saga Súrssonar,*” 103–104.
Barði Guðmundsson paid no heed to these warnings. Sagas such as *Ljósvetninga saga* and *Njáls saga* are seen by him as *romans à clef*, meaning texts where each event can be read through a corresponding event or character in real life or in history. However, these terms are already problematic, since the history described by Barði is tied directly to the literary representations of these events, rather than the real events themselves, and even historical writing is itself manipulated consciously or subconsciously by the historian.\(^{10}\) As scholars such as W.P. Ker and Peter Hallberg have shown, *Sturlunga saga*, Barði’s historical source, should be looked at as literature, and not just contemporary history.\(^{11}\) With that in mind, we should be careful when discussing the elements in *Ljósvetninga saga* that were taken from ‘real’ events. In many cases, even if similarities are found, these could also correspond with other representations of these events rather than with the events themselves.

The premise of Barði Guðmundsson’s discussion of *Ljósvetninga saga* is therefore problematic from the onset. He suggests that Þorvarðr Þórarinsson wrote *Njáls saga*.\(^{12}\) Þorvarðr Þórarinsson of the Svínfellingar kin group\(^{13}\) is less of a household name from the thirteenth century than Snorri

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\(^{12}\) Cf. ÍF 12:CVIII–CXI for Einar Öl. Sveinsson’s response to Barði’s argument regarding the authorship of *Njála*, with an interesting argument stressing the *Njáls saga* author’s lack of knowledge about things Þorvarðr would be knowledgeable about, such as geography and law. However, as Lars Lönroth has it: “It would be impossible to determine to what extent all these kinship relations were historically correct, but it is evident at least that Þorvarðr had better reason to feel personally involved in the character of Njála than most of his contemporaries,” *Njáls saga*, 181. If we are to follow Lönroth, a connection between *Njáls saga* and Þorvarðr is very plausible, though his direct authorship cannot be proven.

\(^{13}\) While the terms Svinfellingar or Sturlungar are extant in medieval literature (see the above discussion of Guðmundr inn ríki meeting Rindill in the Svinfellingar booth in *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-reduction), it is important to remember that these terms are not always clear; Þorgils skardî could be considered an Æsirningar no less than a member of the Sturlungar (*Sverrir Jakobsson, Auðnaronðal: Baráttan um Íslending 1096–1281*, 274). Sverrir Jakobsson also points out that although the Sturlungar (i.e., the sons of Hvamm-Sturla Þórðarson) are indeed mentioned in contemporary documents, it is “varla hægt að talna
Sturluson, Sturla Þórdarson, or even Gizurr Þorvaldsson, and he is known chiefly as the rather despicable killer of the almost saintly Þorgils skarði.\textsuperscript{14} The fact that this individual is not very well known is especially striking, considering that he had a major role in the introduction of the legal code Járnsíða in 1271,\textsuperscript{15} and from 1273 and until his death, he had been given control of almost half of Iceland by order of King Magnús Hákonarson.\textsuperscript{16}

In his reading of Njáls saga as a roman à clef, Barði identified the antagonists Mörðr Valgarðsson and his father Valgarðr grái Jørundarson as stand-ins for Þórðr Þorvarðsson and Þorvarðr Þórdarson, of the farm Saurbær. Barði offers many arguments for this, some sound and some that sound odd, such as the similarities between the names Mörðr and Þórðr in letter-count and sound.\textsuperscript{17} As a target of libel in Njáls saga, Barði argues that Þórðr set out to redeem his and his father’s names and humiliate Þorvarðr Þórarinsson by writing Ljósvetninga saga. The saga, then, is a niðrit,\textsuperscript{18} a defamatory text meant to humiliate a clear target: Þorvarðr Þórarinsson. This is done through the humiliation of Guðmundr inn ríki. “Þorvarðr Þórarinsson,” Barði decisively asserts, “er niðdur undir nafni Guðmundar ríka forfóður sins.”\textsuperscript{19}

Barði’s argument treats moments from the saga as literary representations of events meant to invoke scenes from Iceland’s history, and more specifically, scenes from Þorvarðr Þórarinsson’s life. One example of this is the scene where Rindill goes to Þorkell hákr’s house. Rindill’s function in the attack on Þorkell hákr’s house is considered redundant by scholars.\textsuperscript{20} Barði, however, has an answer for this redundancy: Rindill’s role in the narrative is to invoke the memory of Halldórr skraf, the wretched fellow

\textsuperscript{um Sturlungaætt,” 122. See also Gunnar Karlsson, “Nafngreindar höfðingjaættir í Sturlungu,” where he surveys the use of these kin group names, and points out that only the Sturlungar, Haukdælir, and Oddaverjar are consistently named in the sources.

\textsuperscript{14} See also Lönnroth, Njáls saga, 183–84.

\textsuperscript{15} Lönnroth, 180.

\textsuperscript{16} Lönnroth, 176.

\textsuperscript{17} Barði Guðmundsson, Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbeingar, 91.

\textsuperscript{18} Barði Guðmundsson, 114.

\textsuperscript{19} Barði Guðmundsson, 114.

\textsuperscript{20} E.g., ÍF 10:XXXIX–XL, although this ignores the fact that he unlatches the door and allows Guðmundr and his men to burst into Þorkell hákr’s house.
that allows Þorvarðr Þórarinsson to kill Þorgils skarði. This is supported, according to Barði, by the (this time persuasive) similarity between Hálldór’s name and the assumed name Rindill takes upon himself: Þórhallr. After Rindill is killed, Guðmundr inn ríki overreacts, and is so bent on avenging his henchman’s death that he is willing to burn a house where his wife and son are present. Barði compares this with the killing of Kolbeinn grön by Gizurr Þorvaldsson following the Flugumýrarbrenna, and Þorvarðr’s exaggerated reaction to the act. Guðmundr inn ríki’s victim Þorkell hákr is, according to Barði, designed after the character of Þorgils skarði, and the battle scenes where Þorkell and Þorgils are killed share many similarities as well.

Barði’s examples tend to take random moments from Ljósvetninga saga and fit them with events in the thirteenth century. For example, Sólmundr’s attempt at the beginning of the saga to take away the daughter of Ólvír—foiled by Ófeigr—is compared by Barði to Þorfinnr Þmundarson’s attempt at taking away Guðmundr dýri’s daughter—foiled by a Sóxólfr. When Guðmundr and Einarr meet up several times following the subpoena against Þórir Helgason for the hiding of the sheep, Barði argues for many similarities to Þorvarðr and Þorgils’ travels before their final confrontation, and the temporal and spatial contradictions are meant to make the Ljósvetninga saga narrative fit with Þorgils saga skarða. The carrying of Koðrán Guðmundsson’s body is meant to remind the audience of

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21 Barði Guðmundsson, Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbæingar, 11–12.
22 Barði Guðmundsson, 60–63.
23 For Barði Guðmundsson’s reading of Þorgils skarði and Þorkell hákr’s characters as eintynið (stubborn), see Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbæingar, 15–21. Like Þorgils, who is described as saintly towards his death, Andersson and Miller argue that the description of Þorkell hákr is a rather positive one and could be meant to redeem his character from his earlier provocations, Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland […] , 191, n. 122. This interpretation, however, ignores that this is actually Þorkell’s only significant appearance in the saga. Earlier he is always named as either the son of Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði, or as spreading defamatory speech about Guðmundr, but is not an actor in a scene. In addition, unlike Þorgils skarði, Þorkell hákr goes down after making a lude gesture that was so provocative that some saga copyists had to remove it from their narrative.
24 Barði Guðmundsson, Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbæingar, 94.
how Þorgils skarði’s body was handled.26 Þorvarðr Hóskuldsson’s travels abroad following the battle at Kakalahóll parallel certain scenes from Sturla Þórðarson’s visit to Norway, as depicted in Sturla þátr. Most notably, King Haraldr refers to the Icelanders as “mina þegna” because the Ljósvetninga saga author had Sturla Þórðarson’s visit to the Norwegian king in mind.27

Barði’s reading of Ljósvetninga saga relies on establishing Þorvarðr Þórarinsson as the author of Njáls saga. Einar Ól. Sveinsson argued in response that Þorvarðr Þórarinsson could not have been the author of Njáls saga, and stressed its author’s lack of knowledge about things Þorvarðr would be expected to know, such as the geography of the South and Icelandic law.28 Þorvarðr lived in the region, and was the king’s agent, enforcing the law code Járnsíða. The connections with Þorvarðr’s life, Einar Ólafur argues, could very easily be found in other sagas, as well as could be found with other living people.29 As Lars Lönnroth points out, this criticism is somewhat contradictory to the fact that Einar Ólafur himself proposed the author to be one of Skeggi Njálsson’s sons, either Þorsteinn or his brother Klængr.30 Lönnroth reconsidered Njáls saga in this context quite extensively in his 1976 Critical Introduction, where he finds the connection of that saga to Þorvarðr Þórarinsson to be a likely possibility. He states that “it is evident at least that Þorvarðr had better reason to feel personally involved in the character of Njála than most of his contemporaries.”31 A connection between Njáls saga and Þorvarðr, then, is very plausible, at least if we follow Lönnroth. Nevertheless, it is important to note that his direct authorship cannot be proven.

26 Barði Guðmundsson, 52–54.
27 Barði Guðmundsson, 71.
28 ÍF 12:CVIII–CXI.
29 “Barði Guðmundsson hefur sínt í rannsóknum sínum mikla hugkvæmni og tengigáfu. En mér er spurn: Mundi ekki slikur maður geta fundið með sama hætti líkingu og tengsl með atvikum úr ævi ýmissa annara kunnra manna og sögunni?” ÍF 12:CIX.
31 Lönnroth, 181.
Þórðr Þorvarðsson’s authorship of *Ljósvetninga saga* is an even higher hurdle to jump. Several other authors or milieus have been suggested for *Ljósvetninga saga*, especially in connection with Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson (not to be confused with Þorvarðr Þórarinsson), who is briefly and rather abruptly mentioned in the saga. This mention, as Barði Guðmundsson himself also notes, is connected with the events that surround Friðgerðr’s problematic pregnancy. Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson had a similar event in his life, so the connection is obvious. While it is impossible to completely dismiss Þórðr Þorvarðsson as *Ljósvetninga saga*’s author, it does not help that we do not know much of the fellow, as he is only mentioned twice in the *Sturlunga saga* compilation. He could not have been an unimportant figure in Icelandic politics—after all, he ends up marrying Sturla Þóðarson’s daughter Ingbjörg. Also, his father Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ was a minor figure in the Eyjafjörður region associated mainly with the Sturlungar, but also rumored to have aligned with Þorvarðr Þórarinsson before the killing of Þorgils skarði, and to have given him ill advice. Barði Guðmundsson suggests that, in *Njáls saga*, Mórðr’s successful attempt to convince the Njálssynir to kill Hóskuldur Hvítanesgoði is a way to implicate Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ in the killing of Þorgils skarði. In *Ljósvetninga saga*, however, this blame is shifted back to Þorvarðr Þórarinsson through his ancestor Guðmundr inn ríki. While the connection between the literary representations of Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ in *Þorgils saga skárða* and Mórðr Valgarðsson in *Njáls saga* is plausible, it is slight and Barði builds too much on it. After all, as Bjarni Einarsson astutely observes, if *Ljósvetninga saga* had been intended as a níðrit, then vengeance for it would presumably have been reported in *Þorgils saga skárða*. Furthermore, Bjarni argues, “Í Þorgils sögu skarða hafði Þorvarði Þórarinssyni verið reist sík níðstöng”—that there was very little need for

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33 Barði Guðmundsson, 108.
34 “Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ var inn mesti vin nafnaði af bóndum í Eyjafjörð; hafði Þorvarðr Þórarinsson jafnan tal við hann. Hann þótti vera nökkut óheil og illráð,” *Sturlunga saga [...] and Other Works*, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússson, 244. Of the Eyjafjörður farmers, Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ was the greatest of friends with his namesake; Þorvarðr Þórarinsson frequently spoke with him. He was thought to be somewhat devious and incendiary (my translation).
further finger-pointing in regard to this kin-murder.\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} as a \textit{núðrít} therefore appears to be somewhat redundant, since a more direct and equally accusatory account existed. Also, there remains the confusion between who is meant to be represented by Mǫrrðr in \textit{Njáls saga}—Þórhðr or his father? Barði contradicts himself in his different writings on this fact.\textsuperscript{36} Finally much rides on the question of whether \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} or \textit{Njáls saga} was written first. The idea that \textit{Ljósvetninga saga’s} A-redaction would have been written first, then \textit{Njáls saga}, then the C-redaction, could give some air of validation to Barði Guðmundsson’s theories, at least from the perspective of dating and of how these stories could have reflected a late thirteenth-century—rather than an early/mid-thirteenth-century—present.

4.3 Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to the Past

Barði Guðmundsson’s understanding of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} as a \textit{roman à clef} sees the main goal of the saga as a defamatory document meant to humiliate Þórarðr Þórarinsson and to avenge the honor of Þórarðr úr Saurbæ and his son Þórhðr. Barði Guðmundsson’s reading musters minute details from the saga, and in doing so denies the past of an independent existence, tethering all possible interpretation of the tenth- and eleventh-century plot to the political developments of late thirteenth-century Iceland. It is clear that Barði’s Þórhðr Þorvarðsson did not aim to preserve the past, but rather to make a statement about the present. Barði’s model of reading the saga could be called a \textit{synchronic} approach to the past, written by the people of late thirteenth-century Iceland, about the people of late thirteenth-century Iceland, for the people of late thirteenth-century Iceland. The historical setting is merely a device. An alternative reading, one in which the past

\textsuperscript{35} Bjarni Einarsson, 88. On the concept of \textit{núðstöng} see most recently Lawing, “The Forest Pleas of Rockingham.”

\textsuperscript{36} In an earlier study of \textit{Breemu-Njáls saga}, Barði Guðmundsson argues that Þórarðr úr Saurbæ is meant to be represented by the character of Mǫrrðr Valgarrðsson, “Írgumleifði, gerþir, Arnljotarson,” 87–91. In his study of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, however, as shown above, he firmly argues that Þórhðr Þorvarðsson was represented in \textit{Njáls saga} by the character of Mǫrrð, and his father Þórarðr úr Saurbæ represented by Mǫrrðr father Valgarrðr.
has its own intrinsic value, would be a diachronic approach. The diachronic approach recognizes the significance of both past and present for the author and interpreter. In other words, the synchronic approach reflects society only as it sees itself, while the diachronic one compares and negotiates between the past and the present.37

It could be argued that Barði’s synchronic reading of Ljósvetninga saga uses the tenth- and eleventh-century setting as an ersatz, a meaningless background meant to convey a message about the real story, which is the drama of the thirteenth century and the vindication of the Saurbæingar in face of their humiliation by Þorvarðr Þórarinsson. While the search for an author does not automatically invalidate the intrinsic value of the past, the kind of research conducted by Barði reduces Ljósvetninga saga to a simple authorial message along the lines of ‘Þorvarðr Þórarinsson is a bad man.’ A diachronic reading of Ljósvetninga saga requires that we study the thirteenth-century society that produced it rather than focus solely on the argued author’s background. These opposing synchronic and diachronic readings can be compared to the Assmanns’ above-mentioned communicative and cultural memory, respectively, with the caveat that communicative memory is considered by the Assmanns as non-specialized and diffuse, while the authoring and scribing of an Íslendingasaga requires a degree of specialization. Alternatively, Barry Schwartz suggested that collective memory has “two faces”; one as “a model of society,” in which a society projects its own concerns on the past, and “a model for society,” in which a society looks to the past as something to aspire to, an idealized reflection of its current values.38 Borrowing from sociological models, Schwartz suggests the process of framing, by which past events become an interpretative prism for the present. The mechanism that allows this is through keying events of the past to the present through cultural artefacts.39 While the

37 Astrid Erll discusses a similar synchronic vs. diachronic approach towards generation and memory in “Generation in Literary History: Three Constellations of Generationality, Genealogy, and Memory,” 395–397.
process of keying is a similar mechanism to the one described in Barði Guðmundsson’s work, the kind of authorship he suggests for Þórdór Þorvarðsson is even more extreme in its attitude to the past. In an extreme manifestation of Bookprose theory, the past is rewritten to suit the present, with the only detail that is allowed to the domain of the past being the ancestor’s names, preferably with their character-count matching. From this it does not follow that a diachronic description of the past is not constructed to say something about the present: whether intentionally or through a subconscious process, works of literature and history are always shaped by the person who sets them down to writing. But the represented past is still acknowledged as the past, as the acts of the people of the past, which reflect on the present.

The following discussion offers two more examples of synchronic readings of Ljósvetninga saga, which center on AM 162 c fol.’s supposed fifteenth-century scribe, Ólafur Loftsson. Through the focus on this individual, certain interpretative possibilities open up, but others are closed. The text will therefore turn to a diachronic reading of Ljósvetninga saga in the fifteenth century, one that relates the manuscript’s present to its forebears. The final reading is a diachronic one that pertains to Ljósvetninga saga’s AM 561 4to in the fourteenth-century fin de siècle. While some points of interpretation are offered, what is primarily shown is the importance of the search for an author, if only as the linchpin for a contextual reading of the texts. In these discussions, the synchronic readings are better compared to Schwartz’s concept of memory as a model of society than Barði Guðmundsson’s complete deflation of the past. Memory is oriented to reflect characters and events of the manuscript scribe’s present, but it is by no means the authoritarian manipulation Barði suggests. The diachronic reading, on the other hand, treats memory as a model for society, and offers the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century lessons to learn from their past.
4.3.1 A Synchronic Reading of *Ljósvetninga saga*: Lundarbrekkumálið

An example for a synchronic reading of *Ljósvetninga saga* is found in the parallel between the saga character of Hrafn Þorkelsson and the fifteenth-century Þorkell Guðbjartsson. The dispute between the priest Þorkell Guðbjartsson and scribe Ólafur Loftsson left an imprint on *Ljósvetninga saga*, even if a minor one. Ólafur Loftsson’s attempt to take over the Lundarbrekkja parish church and his takeover of Helgastaðir put him at odds with the elite cleric. As the only significant event in the scribe Ólafur’s life we can access through diplomatic material, it is important to see if and how it factored into his decisions when incorporating *Ljósvetninga saga* into AM 162 c fol. It is presented as an example of how synchronic memory can operate, and hinges on Ólafur Loftsson’s identification as AM 162 c fol.’s scribal hand.

Who was Þorkell Guðbjartsson, Ólafur Loftsson’s rival? According to the *Diplomatarium Islandicum* V index, Þorkell was a priest in Múli í Aðaldal and provost in Þingeyjarþing between 1423 and 1430. Between 1430–1440, he held the benefice of Grenjaðarstaður, one of the major churches of the Hólar district. In addition, he was the *officialis* of the Northern Hólar bishopric in 1423, and from 1432 to 1440. Later on, he held the benefice of Helgastaðir, which was essentially a downgrade after Grenjaðarstaður, and eventually took over Laufás from 1449 until his death in 1483.40 In a quick summary of Þorkell’s life, Björn Þorsteinsson and Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir argue that “Hann átti í deilum við ýmsa ríkismnenn eins og séra Jón Pálsson Mariuskaðið um Grenjastað og við Jón biskup Vilhjálmsson um ýmisleg mál; annars för vel á með þeim.”41 This is an understatement

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40 DI 5:1084. Björn Þorsteinsson and Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir posit the years 1423–1431 for Múli í Aðaldal, and are undecided about the year he took over Laufás, either 1438 or 1439, “Enska Øldin,” 63. The smaller size and importance of Laufás is manifest in the number of clergy present in the *staðir*, according to the Kirknatal from the days of bishop Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxton (1429): While Grenjaðarstaður had 3 priests and 2 deacons, Laufás had 2 priests and 1 deacon. DI 4: item 414, p. 380.

41 Björn Þorsteinsson and Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, “Enska Øldin,” 63.
when you consider this priest’s eventful life. When Bishop Jón Henriks-
son/Tófason was near his own death, he appointed Þorkell as ráðsmáður of
Hólar and the Norwegian Michael prestr Jónsson as officialis, against
popular opinion, which would have preferred Jón Bjarnason as officialis
and Ari Þorbjarnarson as ráðsmáður. Michael was displeased with both
Þorkell and Ari, and wrote a firm letter of protest against the two. The
secular húrostjóri Hannes Pálsson, however, took matters into his own
hands, and the issue was resolved by his support of Michael as the ap-
pointed officialis, and Jón Pálsson Mariuskáld as ráðsmáður. Despite his
continued elevated position as an elite cleric throughout the decades,
Þorkell was not on good terms with the subsequent bishops. Þorkell’s dis-
putes with an unnamed bishop of Hólar survived all the way to the seven-
teenth century, when his memory was connected to stories of wizardry,
and he was nicknamed Galdra-Þorkell. Such a long shadow through his-
tory implies a large impact on events of his own time. In 1430, Þorkell
Guðbjartsson supported Bishop Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxton’s opposition to
the archbishop’s appointment of Jón Pálsson as the holder of the Gren-
jaðarstaður benefice. This paid off for Þorkell, since he was appointed to
Grenjaðarstaður in Jón’s stead, perhaps also retribution for Jón having
taken the coveted appointment as ráðsmáður in Hólar. In 1431, however,
Bishop Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxton sent Þorkell a harsh letter of protest,
where he criticizes him for 8 points: (1) presenting himself as a representa-
tive of the bishop in trade dealings and keeping to himself what belonged
to the church; (2) having further unauthorized dealings with English trad-
ers; (3) approving layman as witnesses without the permission of the

42 Comparable, perhaps, to Sigmundr Steinþórsson, see Lára Magnússardóttir, “Case(s)
of Excommunication.”
43 For the function of these most important of Icelandic clerical positions, see Erika Sig-
44 Lögmannsannáli 1423 entry, in Islandske annaler indtil 1578, ed. Gustav Storm, 293–
45 DI 4: item 365, pp. 303–308.
46 See note 44.
47 Bjarni Einarsson, Munnuælasögur 17. Aldar, LXXIX; Helgastaðabók […]], eds. Selma
Jónsdóttir et al., 193, n. 18.
48 DI 4: item 461, p. 419.
bishop; (4) conspiring with these laymen against the bishop; (5) not keeping proper records of his provostship; (6) at the most haunting moment of his letter, the bishop describes Þorkell Guðbjartsson mistreating and injuring his kinswoman Ragnfríður Gautadóttir, who resided in Hólar; 49 (7) Þorkell’s general conduct of riding with weapons with a large following: “synandæ þigh so mæir likan einom ribbalda oc hermannæ en preste,” and; (8) ignoring the bishops three previous letters. 50 Þorkell behaved like the overbearing chieftains of old, and while the bishops used him for their own ends—such as with his supporting the archbishop’s intervention in Grenjaðarstaður—this also caused them more than their fair share of problems.

Records of Ólafur Loftsson’s attempt to take over Lundarbrekka are only extant in diploma form, and we are thus witness to a dramatic historical event only through indirect evidence, and are forced to put the pieces together, as is natural in a period that lacks narrative evidence such as the sagas and the annals of the previous age. According to an inventory in Helgastaðabók, Ólafur Loftsson took control over the church of Helgastaðir from Þorkell Guðbjartsson. 51 According to Stefán Karlsson, this would have taken place sometime in 1448, if not earlier, since he is present

49 The powerful description of this event is worth citing: “item firir þa settu sauk at þu tok(t) oc fangader sem ræningia ragnfríð ðu tok(t) oc fangader sæm ræningia ragnfríð ættinga uora frendkona heima a holum oc brygder hana med sinom syni tolf vetra gomblum bædi saman kældlaus þj miklu frostæ oc kulda oc þa þau komu vt sa márn hana bædi blaa oc bloduga oc þar med tokt þu vpp hennar godz an doms oc laga oc þeir godz sem reiknadh uar heigagr hola kirkiu oc hon skaðindizst af þinom knifæ sem þu hafder a þær j ykaræ samaehgn oc þu vilder henne þrugat hafa sem hon hafuer fram boret firir oss optliga.” [DI 4: item, p. 528] [Item for the accusation that you took and imprisoned like a picaroour our kinswoman Ragnfríður Gautadóttir when she was home in Hólar, and shut her and her twelve year old son in [a shed?] without clothes in the biting frost and cold. And when they came out men saw that she was both blue and bloody. And then you took from her her property without legal warrant, and uncourteously those goods that belonged to the Holy Church of Hólar. And she was cut by your knife that you have in your possession. And you wanted her to be distressed, as she often attests. [My translation, with the help of Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir] See also Skarðsáramáll 1431 entry, Annálar 1400–1800, vol. 1:1:55. The power of this description must have inspired Vilborg Davíðsdóttir’s historical novel on the Icelandic fifteenth century, Galdur: Skáldsaga.

50 DI 4: item 528, pp. 489–490. On this letter see also Björn Þórsteinsson, Enska öldin í sögu Íslinginga, 138–139.

51 Stock. Perg. 4to 16 ii r. See Helgastaðabók, 194–195.
there when he writes down DI IV 780 A, discussed below.\textsuperscript{52} Despite the staður status of the church,\textsuperscript{53} which would have made the bishop the authority in deciding on the church’s appointments, Helgastaðir had been long under the sway of Ólafur Loftsson’s father Loftur Guttormsson.\textsuperscript{54} While the bishop had to approve the appointments of the holders of the Helgastaðir benefice, it was the layman Loftur that had the most say in who was to be appointed to this staður. The importance of this is that when he took over Helgastaðir from Þorkell, Ólafur had already incurred the ire of this elite cleric.

On the 19\textsuperscript{th} of February 1449, when Ólafur was likely already resident in Helgastaðir,\textsuperscript{55} a land exchange between him and Ásgrímur Jónsson took place, where Ólafur (in agreement with his wife Guðrún) gave Ásgrímur the properties of Tjörn and Hafralækur í Aðaldal, and Ásgrímur gave Ólafur (also in agreement with his wife, also named Guðrún) Lundarbrekka í Bárðardal.\textsuperscript{56} Lundarbrekka was Ásgrímur’s to give because Þorkell Guðbjartsson, the land’s previous owner, had given it to him in 1448. This initial transaction is attested to in two places, though neither seems particularly trustworthy. The first, DI 5: item 33, records the transaction with two witnesses who were produced a year after the fact (Jón Helgason and Þorvaldr Jónsson). The second, DI 4: item 780 B, is a copy of a still extant diploma (DI 4: item 780 A), which pertains to the land exchange between Ásgrímur and Ólafur. This copy was written into Helgastaðabók, and adds this key information to the original diploma’s text:

\begin{quote}
reiknadi asgrimvr. at sira þorkell hefti lagt til kirkivnnar j 
kaypi þeirra. ýst þa bot sem hann hafdi giort æ kirkivnnne
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52} Helgastaðabók, 194–196.

\textsuperscript{53} See Magnús Stefánsson, Staðir og staðamál, 143, 311, 316, 321, 326, 331; (Helgastaðir marked “12,” p. 265).

\textsuperscript{54} Helgastaðabók, 195, and 194 n. 25. See also DI 4: item 424, p. 389 and DI 4: item 451, pp. 409–410. On identifying Loftur Guttormsson as Ólafur’s father, see above.

\textsuperscript{55} At any rate, this is where he writes down the diploma DI 4: item 780 A, pp. 756–757. See also Helgastaðabók, 196. A letter from Bishop Gottskálk to him from c. 1450 supports this as well, though it cannot be firmly dated, DI 5: item 63, pp. 77–78.

\textsuperscript{56} DI 4: items 780 A and B, pp. 756–758.
oc þar til lofadi hann ad leggja fimm lanngbavnd. tvo bi-ora oc allar spurrvr. messvklædi. tvö merki. tveggja avra kalek med silfvr. tvær jarnstikvr nýar. olafs likneski. oc mar- tinnvs likneski. allt saman j kirkivreikning.57

There is no mention of Þorkell’s previous sale to Ásgrímur in the original. Both of these references to the transaction between Þorkell and Ásgrímur are in what Stefán Karlsson believes to be Ólafur Loftsson’s scribal hand.58 The fact that the added passage is in the copy of the diploma but not in the original diploma itself gives it the air of a partisan interpolation. This is not to say that such a transaction had never occurred: Ásgrímur Jónsson had had a land transaction with Þorkell Guðbjartsson in 1437,59 and this supports that there were previous financial connections between the two men. Based on this previous transaction, Þorkell had perhaps sold Ásgrí- mur the land but expected to receive it back in the future. There is no extant document that pertains directly to this deal. Whatever agreement there was between Ásgrímur and Þorkell, it was poorly documented when it was made, hence Ólafur’s need to produce witness testimony after the fact in DI 5: item 33.

Þorkell was not happy with Ólafur’s takeover of the church at Lundarbrekka, as is evident in the letters written by Hólar Bishop Gottskálk to Þorkell Guðbjartsson and Ólafur Loftsson. In the first letter, addressed to Þorkell, we learn that the priest had written a letter to the bishop where he accused Ólafur Loftsson of stealing the possessions of Lundarbrekkukirkja from him. The letter relates how Þorkell had ridden towards Lundarbrekka and accused Ólafur and his men of having taken the land’s property and goods “jafnvel j kirkiv sem annars stadar,”60 and that he demanded these back. When Ólafur refused, Þorkell had declared

58 See discussion above.
59 DI 4: item 607, p. 544. See also IOD, p. L.
60 DI 5: item 60, p. 75.
Ólafur and those of his men present excommunicated. Þorkell then showed Ólafur a letter from the bishop: “ok sva ei sidur j lasen firir honom vart bref ok þat giorde ýdr ei stora hialp.” The contents of the letter are unclear. Presumably it concerned Þorkell’s general authority to excommunicate, since the bishop seems uninformed of the Lundarbrekkumál before he received Þorkell’s initial letter. Alternatively, the letter could have pertained to Þorkell’s authority over Lundarbrekka itself, though since this was a bændakirkja, the bishop’s authority would not have extended beyond the property’s church. In his letter to Þorkell, the bishop says that he cannot respond to these accusations without further documentation from Þorkell, and also notes that “þetta er stort mal sem þier kærit til bondans.”

Þorkell’s displeasure with this takeover could be explained through other land transactions he was involved in. He had been accumulating land in the Lundarbrekka parish, and acquired the farms Bær, Bjarnastaður, and Jarlstaður. From the wedding agreement of his daughter Guðrún, we know that he also controlled Sigurðarstaður and Sandvík from the Lundarbrekka parish. All these lands paid tithe to Lundarbrekka. In addition, according to the 1686 and 1696 land registers, the tax value of Lundarbrekka was determined to be between thirty and forty hundreds (long hundreds, meaning that each ‘hundred’ designates one hundred and twenty), which makes it the third most valuable territory in the Ljósavatnshreppur, after the farm in Ljósavatn itself (sixty to seventy-five hundreds) and Hóll (fifty to sixty hundreds). In 1471, the land

61 “sidan gafvt j honom fyllar saker æ ok lyster ræn ok grip ok bondan j bann ok hans men sem ath vorv med honom.” DI 5: item 60, pp. 74–75.
62 DI 5: item 60, p. 75.
63 Ármann Jakobsson suggested this to me in a personal correspondence.
64 DI 5: item 60, pp. 74–75.
65 DI 4: item 579, p. 544.
66 DI 4: item 736, pp. 704–705.
67 DI 5 item 401, pp. 454–455.
68 Björn Lárusson, The Old Icelandic Land Registers, 292–295 and 32.
would have been valued at around sixty hundreds.\(^69\) To lose Lundarbrekka meant a significant loss of wealth for Þórkell Guðbjartsson, both in the property’s inherent value, and in the church’s tithe.

In the subsequent letter to Ólafur Loftsson, Bishop Gottskálk asks him to produce evidence to prove his legal rights over Lundarbrekka\(^70\) and urges him to settle with Þórkell Guðbjartsson or to discuss the matter on the next prestastefna. However, in the same letter, the bishop also extends Ólafur’s appointment over Helgastaðir by twelve months, despite Þórkell declaring him excommunicated.\(^71\) As noted above, in his letter to Þórkell, the bishop mentions the severity of his accusations against Ólafur. This adds to the impression that Bishop Gottskálk is somewhat partial towards Ólafur Loftsson in the dispute. Stefán Karlsson suggests that this friendly tone towards Ólafur could be attributed to the fact that his half-brother, Skúli Loftsson, was the scribe of DI 5: item 63; “Det er ikke utænkeligt at [Skúli Loftsson] har haft en finger med i spillet og har lagt et godt ord ind for sin broder.”\(^72\) But it could also be that the tone has more to do with Þórkell, and his previous run-ins with the Hólar bishopric.

We do not know how the matter was resolved, but we do know that in 1461 a Jón Jónsson sold half of Lundarbrekka to a Jón Sigmundsson,\(^73\) so at least half\(^74\) of the territory seems to have exchanged hands from both Ólafur Loftsson and Þórkell Guðbjartsson’s immediate families. The last

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\(^69\) This is supported by the fact that “the private church on Lundarbrekka owns 30h of the farm,” in both DI 5: item 297 (sub-item LIV in the máldagar), pp. 320–321 and DI 15: item 248, p. 343, as well as Árni Magnússon and Páll Vídalín’s land register, where it is stated that “Nálægir segjast heyrta hafa [hafa in manuscript, n. 1] að jörðin væri að forngildu lx [hundreds], og ætti kirkjan önnur xxx, er það til líkinda hjer um að prestur- inn tekur jafnan hálfa landskuld af heimastaðnum, en máldaginn er nú ekki til staðar, sem úr þessu mun skera,” *Jarðabók Árna Magnússonar og Páls Vídalíns […],* 147–148; referred to in Björn Lárusson, *Icelandic Land Registers*, 294, n. 38.

\(^70\) DI 5: item 33, pp. 33–34 then, could be a response to this request by the bishop, as Stefán Karlsson argues in *Helgastadbók*, 196 n. 32.


\(^72\) IOD, p. LII

\(^73\) DI 5: item 220, pp. 233–234.

\(^74\) Magnús Stefánsson indeed lists Lundarbrekka as a church that is a “Partsciekirkested med bondekirke” in documentary evidence, *Staðir og staðamál*, 311, 316; marked as “17.”
document Þorkell Guðbjartsson was involved with in connection to the Lundarbrekka parish is the wedding agreement where he gave away his daughter Guðrún. There he gave her the lands he had left in Bárðardalur, both of which paid tithe to the Lundarbrekka church.  

With this background in mind, we turn to *Ljósvetninga saga*. In chapter 23 of the C-redaction, after Friðgerðr, daughter of a Moðruvelligar pingmaðr, points at a Ljósvetningrar as the father of her child, the two sides agree to conduct an ordeal to settle the paternal claim. The ordeal takes place at Laufás, where Þorkell Guðbjartsson spent his last three and a half decades of life. Laufás at the time was a Moðruvelligar estate, and accordingly the priest who presided over the ordeal is dubbed “Moðruvellín-gaprestr.” Why the Ljósvetningar allow him to conduct the ritual in the first place is unclear, but once he confirms the Moðruvelligar claim of paternity, they call foul and refuse to accept the ruling.

This scene anticipates the introduction of Hrafn Þorkelsson into the saga, who lives in Lundarbrekka. We would expect Hrafn to hold a grudge over the Moðruvelligar for the death of his father Þorkell hákr, yet from his introduction he pays more attention to his inner-kin group politics than to the conflict at hand: “Eyjólfr vill nú gánga yfir alla þjóð, en þeim þíkir ekki til vor koma, nema til Þorvarðar eins.” Hrafn uses the conflict to establish a better position for himself among the Ljósvetningar, hinting that if he were in charge and not Þorvarðr, things would take a different and better course. Initially, Hrafn appears to stand by his words. He dispenses valuable advice by the suggestion to recruit his brother-in-law for the cause, as well as gives decent military advice in the initial stages of the

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75 DI 5: item 401, pp. 454–455.
76 ÍF 10:69, n. 1.
78 *Ljósv.*, 1830, 79 [ch. 23]. ÍF 10:70. “Eyjólfr now want to lord it over everyone, and they think that nobody matters except Thorvard,” 211.
79 “Arfur þessa sonar Háks var sú frekja í orðum, sem varð fóður hans að bana, en í stað hetjuskapar hugleysið eitt, þegar hann átti að standa við orðin leysa af höndum þá skuld lífs sins að hefna frægs fóður,” ÍF 10:XVIII.
Kakalahóll battle, and insists that the information be kept secret from Þorvarðr. Hrafði, however, quickly loses control over the escalating battle and declares the need to recruit Þorvarðr: “nú erum vèr farnir, nema Þorvarðr ráðist í.”80 At this stage Hrafði is on the sidelines of the events and is only mentioned again as the going gets rougher: “Þá sögðu ok menn, at Hrafði gætti ekki miðr skógarins, enn fundarins.”81 Hrafði then advises to either run to the woods, or report that Þorvarðr was “sáran til ólífis.”82 Hóskuldur recognizes that “þat er öruggt ráð ok fjærri skapi fòður míns.”83

In a masculinity-obsessed society such as medieval Iceland, the safe solution is never the manly solution. Nevertheless, Hóskuldur consults his father about this, who quickly dismisses the idea of lying about him being injured as cowardly. It is then reported that Hrafði dwells away from the battle overnight. The fact that he is the only one who reportedly rests singles him out as a non-enthusiastic participant in the battle. And indeed, we are told that “var þat meirr af atburð, enn honum þætti þar allgott.”84 Hrafði then returns to the battlefield and approaches Eyjólfr, where he reports the fake news of Þorvarðr’s injury. When Þorvarðr learns of this, he retorts “heyrðu á endimi, at ljúga til sára manna! verði fundr sá, sem auðnar, erum vèr jafnan til óhæfu, en skilja eigi nú fyrr, en öðrum þikir mál.”85 Þorvarðr’s words—a de facto criticism of his own father lying about his wounds at the beginning of the saga—are empty, however, since nobody will pass this on to Eyjólfr, and the battle ends, with Koðrán insisting that his mortal wounds are not that bad.86 Hrafði, then, manages to undermine Þorvarðr

81 Ljósv. 1830, 87 [ch. 24]. ÍF 10:81. “People said that Hrafði had no less an eye to the woods than to the battle,” 220.
82 Ljósv. 1830, 87 [ch. 24]. ÍF 10:81. “Mortally wounded,” 220. This seems to be the ultimate Ljósvetningar solution against the Móðruvellningar, as a similar technique is used earlier in the saga in the battle between Þorgeirr and his sons. See also Law and Literature, 128–129, n. 18.
84 Ljósv. 1830, 88 [ch. 24]. ÍF 10:81. “The action was more than he had a stomach for,” 220.
85 Ljósv. 1830, 88 [ch. 24]. ÍF 10:82. “What a disgrace to lie about men's wounds! Let this battle go as fate wills. We are always slow to evil deeds, but let's not back off now until the others think they have had enough,” 221.
86 Notice also the implied criticism against Koðrán for pacifying the situation by lying about his wounds.
with this cowardly-seeming strategy. When Þorvarðr hosts a post-battle feast at his farmstead, his son inquires about the seating arrangements: “hvort skal skipta mönnum at mannvirðingu, eðr eptir framgaungu?” Þorvarðr answers: “Hrafn skal mér næstr sitja.” In their interpretations of the scenes, the Ljósvetninga saga translators Miller and Andersson contradict each other to comic effect. When he discusses the exchange, Andersson calls Hóskuldr’s question “an obvious slap at Hrafn Thorkelsson,” and does not expand on this. Presumably he reads Hóskuldr as saying that Hrafn is the man with the most social standing, who also did not show himself to be worthy at battle. “Thorvard,” Andersson continues, “reprimands him tersely: ‘Hrafn shall be seated next to me.’” Miller, however, has it the other way around: “Consider Thorvard’s cutting wit directed at the double-dealing and cowardly Hrafn.” Miller does not expand on why this line is witty, but presumably he finds Þorvarðr’s diverting his son’s question a stab at Hrafn. As often happens, these dual interpretations indicate the ambiguity in the scene: Hrafn might have displayed cowardice and ended the battle manipulatively, but he also established his place within the Ljósvetningar kin group, and as such deserves a seat of honor. Very rarely do people make political sacrifices in the name of a joke. The author then takes his own swing at Hrafn when he tells us that the Móðruvellingar decide not to prosecute because him specifically because “honum þótti ekki mannhættigr verit hafa fundrinn.” But as is often in Ljósvetninga saga, no joke is for the sake of humor alone; Eyjólfr’s next move is to elicit support from Hrafn himself through declarations of friendship and an ounce of gold. Hrafn accepts this offer, and later when the

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87 Ljósv. 1830, 89 [ch. 25]. ÍF 10:83. Should we seat men according to rank, or according to their valiance? (My translation.)
88 Ljósv. 1830, 89 [ch. 25]. ÍF 10:83. Hrafn shall sit closest to me (my translation).
89 Law and Literature, 113.
90 Law and Literature, 113. Andersson does not sway from this interpretation in his 2006 The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180–1280), 130.
91 Law and Literature, 60. Björn Sigfússon argues that through Koðrán’s death, Þorkell hákr’s death is avenged and his son Hrafn can take a seat of honor, ÍF 10:XVIII.
92 Björn Sigfússon’s interpretation is rather close to this one, ÍF 10:XVIII.
93 Ljósv. 1830, 89 [ch. 25]; ÍF 10:84. “he was judged not to have been a threat during the battle,” 223.
Ljósvetningar are faced with the Móðrulvellingar, he supports a non-confrontational stratagem. Nevertheless, when a large group of his family and kin are exiled, following the battle of Kakalahóll, Hrafn travels with them abroad because he “þorði eigi eptir at vera.”94 The joke at Hrafn’s expense is also an indication of his prestige: he believes that in Þorvarðr’s absence, he would be targeted by the Móðrulvellingar.

Hrafn of Lundarbrekka is, then, both a respected member of his kinship group and a man who caters to his own self-interest. Both groups—the Ljósvetningar and the Móðrulvellingar—make use of him when it suits their purposes, which is why he remains influential. The argument is not that Hrafn Þorkelsson of Lundarbrekka was authored to fit with the character of Þorkell Guðbjartsson. Surely, there were many other people whose characters’ Hrafn resembled in the time since his hypothetical existence and until the mid-fifteenth century.95 Rather, the argument is that Þorkell Guðbjartsson would have been in the mind of the scribe and of the audience. I would venture as far as to argue that the scribe—Ólafur—chose to preserve the C-redaction over A-redaction in his manuscript not because of a lack of access to the latter, but because, among other reasons, it included this character and his shameful portrayal. Notice that in the A-redaction, the daughter of Þorkell hákr remains unmentioned; in the C-redaction, she is given the name Guðrún.96 Guðrún is also the name of the daughter of Þorkell Guðbjartsson, and thus we have two Guðrúnir Þorkelsdætur. Indeed, Guðrún is the commonest of names for women in Iceland, then as now. Ólafur Loftsson himself was married to a Guðrún. It is nevertheless interesting to consider that Ólafur could have chosen this redaction in part to defame his rival, who was both hated and admired by many of his contemporaries. That a Hrafn of Lundarbrekka is mentioned

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94 Ljósv. 1830, 98 [ch. 28]; ÍF 10:93. “Hrafn did not dare to stay behind” (232).
95 Barði Guðmundsson certainly found one: he argues Hrafn Þorkelsson is meant to invoke the thirteenth-century Vigfúss Gunnsteinsson, Ljósvetninga saga og Saurbæingar, 86.
96 ÍF 10:51. Björn Sigfússson argues that this name was given in the C-redaction retroactively in reaction to the child being named in chapter 24; Um Ljósvetninga sögu, 36.
in Reykdœla saga as “góðr bóndi”\textsuperscript{97} indicates that there could have been ‘alternative facts’ about this man or his direct lineage floating around in the immanent saga of Eyjafjörður.\textsuperscript{98}

4.3.2 A Synchronic Reading of Ljósvetninga saga: AM 162 c fol. and Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki

The striking similarity between fifteenth-century Westfjords-magnate Guðmundur Arason’s byname “hinn ríki” and Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki make the comparison between the two almost obvious. Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki was a man of unclear origins who came to dominate a large part of Northwest Iceland. Árnór Sigurjónsson defined him as “tvímælalaust mesti bóndinn á Íslandi á sínum tíma og líklega mesti bóndinn hér á öllum tínum fram á þennan dag.”\textsuperscript{99} Through two strategic marriages into the Seldælir in the Westfjords, Guðmundur’s father, Ari Guðmundsson, managed to collect a significant fortune, made even more substantial by his son’s strategic marriages.\textsuperscript{100} Guðmundur’s uncle Hrafn Guðmundsson was also an important figure, the Western and Northern lögmaður from 1405 to his death in 1432. In addition, Guðmundur had

\textsuperscript{97} ÍF 10:160. Björn Sigfússon discusses this Hrafn from Reykdœla saga’s lineage at length in 163–4, n. 2. He does not even consider the possibility that this man is not Hrafn Þorkelsson hákr, but rather Hrafn Þorkelsson svarta, the brother of the younger Hrafn’s grandmother Guðrúðr (see ÍF 1:270, 271). Since Þorkell Porgeirsson is a character in Reykdœla saga he is already old enough to bring children, ÍF 10:156, 158. Whether this Hrafn is Þorkell’s son or his mother’s brother is uncertain. For another positive representation of a resident of Lundarbrekka, see Hrana saga hrings, the earliest extant manuscript of which is found in late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century manuscripts. Píngeyinga saga, ed. Guðni Jóhannsson, XI, 417–440. To what extent this tale would be based on oral tradition is uncertain. Note that Lundarbrekka is mentioned in Bárðar saga Snæfellsás as Bárðr’s initial settlement (hence the name Bárðardalur), ÍF 13:109 [ch. 3].

\textsuperscript{98} Though if Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s argument is to be adopted, he would include Reykdœla saga among the lost texts of AM 162 c fol. We do not, however, know if this was indeed the case, and even if it was, in what shape and form this saga would have appeared. As will be discussed below, AM 162 c fol. had a tendency to expansion and change, and such could likely have been the fate of the *AM 162 c fol. Reykdœla saga. If, one day in 40 years, a leaf of such a saga is found in the binding of a seventeenth-century bible in a Catalan monastery, this argument could be revised.

\textsuperscript{99} Árnór Sigurjónsson, Vestfirðingasaga 1390–1540, 66.

\textsuperscript{100} See also Hans Jacob Orning, The Reality of the Fantastic […], 321, n. 29.
probably developed ties with the family of Loftur Guttormsson, especially his in-law Ormur Loftsson. Arnór Sigurjónsson tried to calculate the significant fortune of Guðmundur Arason, and infers that the only way that Guðmundur could make a profit through these substantial holdings was through mercantile dealings with the English.

The most noteworthy event in Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki’s public life—and the one that eventually led to his downfall—was his above-mentioned raid of the Húnavatnssýsla farmers. Nýja annáll (grouped with Lögmannsannáll in Storm’s Islandske annaler indtil 1578), writes this in its 1427 entry: “Nordur reid Guðmundar Ara sonar til Hunuetninga. þotti morgvm þvngt ad verda fyrir henne af þeira manna fram ferdi er med bondanum ridv.” In his discussion of heimreiðir (raids) in fifteenth-century Iceland, Helgi Þorláksson concedes that Guðmundur Arason’s raid in 1427 must have been an exceptional one and therefore it also warranted such a harsh punishment. Arnór Sigurjónsson argued that Guðmundur’s subsequent punishment by the Danish crown for this raid was in actuality an excuse to get rid of Guðmundur. The real crime, Arnór suggests, was rather his forbidden dealings with the English. Helgi Þorláksson disagrees, and states that “There is not a shred of evidence for this, not even a hint for any contacts of Guðmundr with the English.”

101 Helgi Þorláksson, “Who Governed Iceland in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century?” 272. See also Orning, Reality of the Fantastic, 225. 102 Arnór Sigurjónsson, Vestfirðingasaga, 64. 103 Arnór Sigurjónsson, 68–73. 104 Arnór Sigurjónsson, 75. 105 Islandske annaler indtil 1578, 294. 106 Helgi Þorláksson, “Vald og ofurvald […].” 107 DI 5: item 323, pp. 370–371; DI 7: item 6, pp. 6–7; Orning, Reality of the Fantastic, 322, n. 32. 108 Arnór Sigurjónsson, Vestfirðingasaga, 113. 109 Helgi Þorláksson, “Who governed Iceland,” 272, n. 31. Elsewhere he states, “Petta er forvitnileg tilgáta um Guðmund ríka,” “Vald og ofurvald,” 281. Helgi questions Björn Porsteinsson and Arnór Sigurjónsson’s analysis of Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki, and argues that it is based on shaky evidence. For example, Loftur Guttormsson’s overstated friendship with Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxon does not indicate he belonged to the English camp, if there ever was one. In regard to Helgi’s general skepticism regarding English and Danish camps in Iceland, one can respond that this difference in alliances was already present in the fourteenth century, when Skálholt had the greatest of ties with the merchant town of Bergen, while Hólar had much fewer connections and was
If we consider his immense wealth and his problematic behavior on at least one occasion, it is unlikely that a mid-fifteenth-century receiver of Ljósvetninga saga would read or hear the name “Guðmundr inn ríki” without thinking of Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki.\textsuperscript{110} This is especially true for a man as engaged in the politics of his time as Ólafur Loftsson (or presumably any other Northern notary or cleric). Guðmundr inn ríki, then, would be read by the manuscript’s contemporary audience as at least a partial representation of Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki; even if no change would have been done to the text to reflect this.\textsuperscript{111}

But another major Guðmundr Arason existed in Icelandic history, namely bishop Guðmundr Arason inn góði, who was bishop of Hólar between 1203 until his death in 1237. Due to his controversial nature, much of the bishop’s reign was spent in exile from his seat at Hólar. As shown, AM 162 c fol. preserves the segment of Ljósvetninga saga commonly referred to as Ófeigs þátrr, unlike AM 561 4to, which probably would not have fit this story into the manuscript’s now lost leaf. Hallvard Magerøy points out some peculiar similarities Ófeigs þátrr shares with an anecdote from bishop Guðmundur Arason inn góði’s Jarteiknabók [Book of Miracles]: (1) both have a strong leader and a strong farmer who are friends; (2) the Guðmundar in the stories obviously share a personal name; (3) both stories take place in the same area of Iceland; (4) both Guðmundar habitually travel through their district, and the point of both stories is to have the prominent farmer comment on that; (5) both teach a lesson, through a trick of a powerful farmer; (6) both take place in years with exceptionally bad weather; (7) there are many similarities in the way the lesson is constructed; (8) in both cases the leaders take the comments to heart; (9) the sentence structure and other narratological aspects of the tales are similar.\textsuperscript{112} Magerøy does not find other similar occurrences in the saga corpus, though he does name

\textsuperscript{110} Cf. Helgi Þórlaksson’s argument regarding Snorri Sturluson and Snorri góði, “Snorri góði og Snorri Sturluson.”
\textsuperscript{111} See mention above of Jorge Luis Borges’ “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote.”
\textsuperscript{112} Hallvard Magerøy, “Guðmundr góði og Guðmundr ríki,” 24–25.
Ásbjörn of Meðalhús from Håkonar saga góða\textsuperscript{113} and Þorgnýr son of Þorgnýr Þorgnysson of Ólafs saga helga\textsuperscript{114} in Heimskringla as somewhat following this scheme.\textsuperscript{115} One can point out other instances where someone uses trickery to teach the king a lesson, e.g., Morkinskinna’s Hreiðars páttr heimska where the fool-esque Icelander Hreiðarr hints to the regent Magnús góði that it is best not to intervene in an island’s ownership,\textsuperscript{116} or Flateyjarbók’s redaction of Sneglu-Halla páttr, where another provocative Icelander eats gruel in order to teach the king a lesson about under-feeding his hird.\textsuperscript{117} Nevertheless, the similarities between the Guðmundar are striking, and clearly indicate literary connections, though in which direction is uncertain.\textsuperscript{118} A thirteenth–fourteenth-century Icelandic (or, at any rate, a Northern Icelandic) audience of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction, then, would have likely seen their own Guðmundur Arason inn góði in the text’s Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki; either because the Ófeigs páttr narrative was modelled after the bishop, or the writer of the saint’s miracles modelled his account on the story. The fifteenth-century Northern audience of AM 162 c fol., could, in turn, have seen Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki in both his partial namesakes: Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki and Guðmundr Arason inn góði. Since—according to Stefán Karlsson’s dating—the manuscript could have been written anytime between 1420–1450 we cannot say for certain what proceeded what: the writing down of the manuscript or Guðmundur Arason’s raid of Húnavatnssýsla. Nevertheless, its incorporation in light of Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki’s prominent character does make sense, even if there were other reasons to incorporate the story.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{113} ÍF 26:169–170 [ch.14].
\textsuperscript{114} ÍF 27:115–116 [ch. 80].
\textsuperscript{115} Magerøy, “Guðmundr góði,” 25.
\textsuperscript{116} ÍF 23:164 [ch.26]. On this see Yoav Tirosh, “Icelanders Abroad,” 505.
\textsuperscript{117} On the differences between the redactions’ portrayal of Sneglu-Halli see Yoav Tirosh, “Scolding the Skald: The Construction of Cultural Memory in Morkinskinna’s Sneglu-Halla páttr,” 3. In the Morkinskinna version, the message of the gruel eating is more about issues of Icelandic identity.
\textsuperscript{118} Magerøy, “Guðmundr góði,” 28. Note that his dating of Ljósvetninga saga is 1260–1280 (28). Miller and Andersson’s earlier dating of c. 1220 makes things more complicated, since this was in the middle of Guðmundr’s tenure as bishop.
\textsuperscript{119} See discussion of AM 162 c’s organizing principles in The Part About the Genres.
While Ófeigs þáttir is the obvious example, it is possible to read the whole of AM 162 c fol.’s representation of Guðmundr Eyjólfs son inn ríki as a Bæði Guðmundssonian nýðit of Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki. While we know little to nothing about the wealthy man’s personality, the massive disputes that surrounded his inheritance\textsuperscript{120} could indicate a man not too concerned by what happens after his death, though admittedly his departure from Iceland in 1445 was unexpected and abrupt. This fits well with the problematic familial ties that Guðmundr Eyjólfs son has throughout Ljósvetninga saga. Like Guðmundr Eyjólfs son, Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki also lost his father by drowning.\textsuperscript{121} If we are to believe Björn Þorsteinsson and Arnór Sigurjónsson, Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki—like Guðmundr Eyjólfs son, as discussed in the chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?—had problematic relations with foreigners that put him at odds with his contemporaries. Guðmundr Eyjólfs son’s paranormal and somewhat abrupt death also echoes Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki’s mysterious fate.

Things are further complicated, however, when one considers that Guðmundr Eyjólfs son inn ríki lived all his life in Möðruvellir í Eyjafirði. Loftur Guttormsson, AM 162 c fol.’s scribe Ólafur Loftsson’s father, also lived in Möðruvellir í Eyjafirði, and was also considered an immensely wealthy person. Like the Guðmundar Eyjólfs son and Arason, Loftur’s epithet was hinn ríki. As Robert S. Lopez said about the European tenth century, “never was this epithet [‘the Great’] used more frequently [than] in that century, so unpropitious to greatness.”\textsuperscript{122} Indeed, everybody seems to be ríki in the fifteenth century. In addition to Guðmundur Arason and Loftur Guttormsson, Björn hirðstjóri Þorleifsson was also awarded the by-name ríki, interestingly after he raided and seized Guðmundur Arason’s wealth, alongside his brother Einar, in the year 1445. When Einar died some years later, Björn Þorleifsson hinn ríki became the wealthiest man in

\textsuperscript{120} Hans Jacob Orning, “Feuds in Fact and Fiction.”
\textsuperscript{121} Though death by drowning was certainly an unexceptional way of losing one’s life in medieval Iceland.
\textsuperscript{122} Robert S. Lopez, The Birth of Europe, 116.
the country. Björn had also been Loftur Guttormsson’s son-in-law; he married Ólöf ríka Loftsdóttir, probably the most famous female Icelander of the fifteenth century.

When in 1427 Guðmundur Arason raided Húnavatnssýsla, it was Loftur’s obligation as the hirdstjóri of the North and West to put him to justice. Nevertheless, we hear of no repercussions to Guðmundur’s actions until two decades later, when Loftur was no longer hirdstjóri (or alive). In addition, Loftur was on friendly terms with Hólar bishop Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxton. Jón was an English clergyman, who is argued by Björn Þorsteins-son to have been Norwegian by birth. Like the bishop Guðmundr Arason and Guðmundr inn ríki Eyjólfsson, Bishop Jón needed a reminder from his officialis, Ari Þorbjarnarson, in regard to how many people he was advised to take with him for his visits along the bishopric, and in one case granted truce to Englishmen who were involved in a battle against Icelanders in Skagafjörður. These connections with Bishop Jón and Guðmundur Arason puts Loftur in the strange situation of being tied to enemies of the Icelandic people. Guðmundur as an aristocratic assailant, and Jón Craxton as a foreign bishop who imposed a foreign interest and protected men who wronged Icelanders in his bishopric. This is not dissimilar to Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði joining together against the latter’s sons by the invocation of a foreign leader, Hákon jarl. Loftur Guttormsson’s loyalties could have been both split between the financial benefits that arose from his association with the English and the English bishop, and the Danish crown and its power to politically make and break a person through its control over royal offices in Iceland as well as over outlawry. The fifteenth-century Icelanders also needed the Danish crown itself to lift the prohibitions concerning trade with the English, trade that was happening anyway, albeit illegally so.

123 Arnór Sigurjónsson, Vestfirðinga saga, 115.
124 Björn Þorsteinsson, Æska öldin í sögu Íslingenda, 83–84.
125 DI 4: item 468, pp. 425–426. On this see Arnór Sigurjónsson, Vestfirðinga saga, 96.
126 Arnór Sigurjónsson, Asæjar saga, 73–75; Björn Þorsteinsson, Æska öldin í sögu Íslingenda, 66–68.
127 Boulhosa, Icelanders and the Kings of Norway, 132–139.
How is Ólafur Loftsson’s scribing of AM 162 c fol., or even Guðbrandur Vigfússon’s suggestion of a connection between the manuscript and Loftur Guttormsson,\textsuperscript{128} settled with this negative portrayal of the main character who shares so many similarities with Loftur Guttormsson and his alleged ally, Guðmundur Arason hinn ríki, the cousin of Ólafur Loftsson’s wife? Ólafur was a relatively older son of Loftur Guttormsson who aided his father, at least in his capacity as scribe, from early on in his father’s career.\textsuperscript{129} Nevertheless, and despite his noteworthy marriage to Hrafn Guðmundsson’s daughter Guðrún, he is nowhere near as successful and powerful as his legitimate half-siblings Þorvarðr or Ólöf.\textsuperscript{130} Interestingly, Ólafur himself was a witness to his father’s will and testament, and one can perhaps imagine that this added to any resentment when he heard of the vast amounts awarded to his half-siblings.\textsuperscript{131} All this to say that while Ólafur probably had his father’s best interests in mind—the stronger his father’s political and financial powers were, the stronger his own were—it is not beyond possibility that he would keep a stab or two at his powerful dad in Ljósvetninga saga, especially since that character is named Guðmundr and brings to mind Guðmundur Arason more immediately than it does Loftur Guttormsson.

This discussion of the synchronic elements, as with the Lundarbreykumál, are fascinating, but also in danger of being easily disproved. What if a well-trained codicologist concludes ten years from now that the scribe was rather Jón Pálsson Mariuskláld, or some other anonymous figure from the fifteenth century? The idea that Guðmundr inn riki Eyjólfsson would have reminded a mid-fifteenth-century audience of Guðmundr hinn ríki Arason is likely, regardless of the scribe’s identity, but other thoughts could need re-evaluation. Could the twelfth-century magnate Guðmundr dýri Þorvaldsson, who burned down Þnundr Þorkelsson, also be a figure

\textsuperscript{128} Origines Islandicae […]\textemdash{}, eds. Gudbrand Vigfússon and F. York Powell, 346.
\textsuperscript{129} Evidenced, for example, in the 1424 document DI 4: item 377, pp. 317–319, where Ólafur witnesses a land purchase by his father.
\textsuperscript{130} Compare with the illegitimate Þorsteinn Þorleifsson’s support of his legitimate brother Björn Þorleifsson, Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, “Ideology and Identity,” 110.
\textsuperscript{131} DI 4: item 555, pp. 518–520.
through which Guðmundr Eyjólfsson in ríki was viewed? In addition, it would be wise to remember that Ljósvetninga saga was not the only saga in the AM 162 c fol.; there are currently six extant sagas (including Þorsteins þáttir stangarhöggs) in the manuscript, and Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell posited that there must have been at least four or five more within its leaves. This means that the overall manuscript was bigger than just the story of Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki, and we therefore do not need to reconcile every occurrence in the saga with events and characters from the fifteenth century. It is also important to consider that different details meant different things to different people at different times. This is important to remember when conducting a synchronic analysis like this. As twenty-first-century people, we pick and choose events that seem to us more significant than others, but the fact is that we only have a very limited picture of the lives lived by the fifteenth-century people discussed. What is deemed here to be significant details for them can therefore sometimes be less important than assumed. Nevertheless, synchronic readings illuminate the past and point at possible aims that the author/compiler could have had.

4.3.3 A Diachronic Reading of Ljósvetninga saga: AM 162 c fol. and the Fifteenth Century

One thing that is clear from the examples of Guðmundr Eyjólfsson inn ríki, Guðmundr Arason inn góði, and Guðmundur Arason himn ríki, is that throughout Icelandic medieval history, similar concerns kept rising.

132 Barði Guðmundsson made this connection, for example, but then reminded readers that the main point of comparison should be between Þorvarðr and Guðmundr inn ríki, Ljósvetninga saga og Saurheingar, 64–65. Another noteworthy Guðmundr is Guðmundr á Glæsivöllum, who would make this long line of Guðmundar in Old Norse memory even longer. Guðmundr was a heathen king (who is sometimes described as monstrous) appearing both in several fornlagsögur, but also in Saxo Grammaticus’ Gesta Danorum (where he is called Guthmundus). For a review of the character’s abundance in Old Norse texts, see, for example, the recent Master’s thesis written by Felix Lummer: Guðmundr á Glæsivöllum: A Study of Potential Foreign Influences. The connection in the traditions between Guðmundr á Möðruvöllum and Guðmundr á Glæsivöllum is tempting but requires further study.

133 Origines Islandicae, 345.
Overbearing local-leaders who rode in large numbers and who disrupted daily life, either through raiding farms or exploiting their hospitality, were an issue that concerned the tenth–eleventh century just as much as it concerned the thirteenth century and the fifteenth century. The same people who reminded the Danish government of its duties towards Iceland by the invocation of *Gamli sáttmáli*\(^\text{134}\) were the people that recognized the benefits of the Danish system of governance, and saw the Icelandic aristocracy as a volatile, self-serving force. These people also had to negotiate between pleasing the Danish court and maintaining financially beneficial ties with the English. All these concerns are apparent in a text like *Ljósvetninga saga*, which allowed its authors to describe a past where things were sometimes better, sometimes worse, and sometimes the same—but always a relevant comparison with the present.

In general, *Ljósvetninga saga*’s C-redaction offers a vision of right and wrong leadership. Guðmundr inn ríki clearly falls on the far-wrong side of that spectrum, as does his son Eyjólfr. In chapters 1–4, *Ljósvetninga saga* presents Guðmundr as so concerned to please Hákon jarl that he is willing to pit a father against his sons. In *Sǫrla þáttr*, we have the vision of a father who denies his daughter an ideal marriage due to issues of ego and, possibly, misguided lust.\(^\text{135}\) In *Vǫðu-Brands þáttr*, Guðmundr over-reaches and tries to hurt a pingmaðr of the powerful chieftain Þorkell Geitisson. Other prominent Icelanders such as Ófeigr Járngerðarson and Þorsteinn Síðu-Hálsson, as well as Guðmundr’s own brother Einarr, unite to stop this. In chapters 13–21 we see the portrait of a man who has it all and uses his power to avenge any slight against him. Though vengeance against insults towards one’s masculinity is understandable if not encouraged in the eleventh century, Guðmundr goes about it in a roundabout way: he uses his superior legal clout to humiliate and outlaw Einarr, and employs a large, unproportional force to kill his enemy Þorkell hákr. Eyjólfr, like his father Guðmundr, also prefers the continuation of feud over settlement, at the

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\(^\text{134}\) Boulhosa, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway*, 132–139. See Helgi Þorláksson’s partial response to the legal issues Boulhosa raises in “Er Gamli sáttmáli tómur tilbúningur?”

\(^\text{135}\) Misguided in the eyes of the medieval audience.
price of his own brother’s life. When a negotiation between the sides is discussed, the Mǫðruvellingar representative Gellir states: “ek veit vilja Eyólfs, at hann vill sjálfr ákveða ok fjársektum ráða, vill hann eigi sættast við Þorvarð, ok Brandr ok Höskuldr, Þorkell ok Hallr fari utan skógarmenn serjandi.” While Eyjólfr is willing, unlike his father, to participate in battles when he has a chance of losing—like the skirmishes that lead to the battle of Kakalahóll—he still shows a similarity to his father when he avoids both the options to turn the Ljósvetningar into skógarmenn úferjandi or to reach a settlement, and sends his enemies away from Iceland instead. This choice makes sense, but considering the number of condemned people, it seems excessive. Finally, in Þórarins þátr ofsa, when the unpopular psychopath Þorgeirr Hávarsson is killed, Eyjólfr, like his father, prefers to go against the will of the people and instead avenges the death of this hirðmaðr of King Ólafr helgi. Unfortunately, we do not know how the story ends, but if we follow the Fóstbræðra saga account, Eyjólfr (in Fóstbræðra saga, it is his father Guðmundr) probably achieves vengeance for the king, either through financial compensation, blood-vengeance, or both. The image of the Mǫðruvellingar, then, is of a group that plays against the rules, uses their large numbers ‘unfairly’ in their favor, and prefers foreign powers and prestige over loyalty to their countrymen. As was already noted, for a saga that features the Ljósvetningar, the story of the conversion—or at least some kind of mention of it—is sorely missing. This is due, I believe, to the fact that Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði is on the side of Guðmundr inn ríki. If, in the later chapters, the Ljósvetningar represent Christian thinking and morals, the Þorgeirssynir also perform a pagan goðablóð ceremony to strip their father of his goði status. To mention the

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136 Ljós. 1830, 94 [ch. 27]; ÍF 10:89. “I am well enough acquainted with Eyjolf to know that he will want to set the terms himself and assess the amounts of the compensation awards, [...] He will not settle with Thorvard unless Brand, Hoskuldr, Thorkel, and Hall are exiled as full outlaws with passage abroad allowed them” (228).

137 ÍF 6:215 [ch. 18].

138 This is not an image of Guðmundr inn ríki unique to Ljósvetninga saga. See Heimskringla ÍF 27:215–217 [ch. 125].

139 See Lauren Poyer’s forthcoming PhD chapter on Ljósvetninga saga.

140 ÍF 10:14.
conversion would have created too much of a contrast between the Christian Þorgeirr and his pagan sons, with which the saga’s sympathies lie. Better, then, to get rid of the story altogether.

Another preoccupation of the two time periods that emerges when reading diachronically is the interaction with foreigners, which is met with ambivalence in the C-redaction text.141 If, in the A-version, the character Akra-Þorgils is localized to Akrar í Hörgadal,142 the C-redaction’s Akra-Þórir is introduced without the exact location of his farm. This is noteworthy since in Sálus saga ok Nikanórs, the Middle-Eastern brothers kidnap Nikanór’s sister Potentia to Akur/Acre, whence she is freed. When we consider that the siege of Acre was the scene of the Danes’ greatest known involvement in the Third Crusade,143 the possibility arises that these AM 162 c fol. mentions of Akur and Akrar are meant to invoke the Danish achievement, which endorses a positive attitude towards foreigners. While Þorgeirr and Guðmundr are judged harshly for their alliance with jarl Hákon, and while Eyjólfr’s employment by Ólafr helgi to avenge Þorgeirr Hávarsson is not in accordance with popular opinion, we also come across cases where the opposite is the case: namely, the Ljósvetningar’s travels after the battle at Kakalahóll are not portrayed negatively, rather they have honorable interactions with kings and venture on pilgrimages to Rome during their exile. In addition, Guðmundr’s estranged son Halldórr, portrayed in the saga as an honorable man who protects his mother at all cost, is also related to have died in the battle of Clontarf,144 presumably under the employ of a king.145 This kind of ambivalence makes sense in the context of the fifteenth century, where, generally, power and respect came from the Danish and papal courts, but the riches came from

142 Unfortunately, I was not able to localize Þorgils’ farm in Hörgadalur. Many thanks to Emily Lethbridge for her advice on the matter.
143 Janus Møller Jensen, “Martyrs for the Faith: Denmark, the Third Crusade and the Fall of Acre in 1191.”
144 According to Björn Sigfússon, Halldórr should have been dead already when the failed burning scene takes place. See ÍF 10:XXVII–XXIX.
145 ÍF 10:61 [ch. 12 (22)] and ÍF 12:453, 460 [ch. 157].
England. Interestingly, when one of the minor Mðruvellings, Oddi Grímsson, comes back from his travels to Rome, he goes to the court of King Knútr inn riki, thirty years after this regent’s passing, rather than the current king of Denmark at the time, Sveinn Úlfsson. Oddi criticizes the powerful king for paying him and his men too small a gift. The king, in reaction, gives a significantly larger sum. Knútr, who controlled both England and Denmark, represents both countries, and this often-discussed moment of blatant historical discrepancy highlights the fact that herein lies a general statement about foreign rulers, both Danish and English: They must be generous if they wish to earn their people’s respect—at least when it comes to the Icelanders. It is important to bear in mind that this is a nation that was struggling at the time to get their rights recognized by the Danish king and to allow for legal trade with the English.

A concern of both the saga and the fifteenth century are people who are disloyal to their families. These are also criticized throughout the text: the cowardly Hrafn is blinded by Eyjólfr’s powers and does not always keep his kin group’s best interest in mind; Guðmundr inn riki’s problematic relationship with and lack of loyalty to his family have been much discussed; Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði fights his own sons; and Eyjólfr becomes estranged from his morally-superior brother Koðrán. These characters are contrasted against the wise marriage of Sørli Brodd-Helgason to Þórdís the daughter of Guðmundr, and then Þorkell Geitisson’s marriage to Einarr of Íverá’s daughter Jórunn. Both marriages help resolve the long-lasting discord between Þorkell Geitisson and Bjarni Brodd-Helgason. The late fifteenth-century inheritance dispute surrounding Guðmundr Arason himn riki shows that ties of kinship through birth and marriage did not matter to all.

The change in societal structures had a significant impact on the fifteenth-century audience of Ljósvetninga saga. As Jón Viðar Sigurðsson has pointed out, with the introduction of Norwegian rule over Iceland, the

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146 ÍF 10:104, n. 4; *Law and Literature*, 244, n. 212.
connections between the chieftains and their followers were replaced with
the aristocracy’s direct connection to the king: “the duty of the service
aristocracy was to govern rather than to lead.” Since the aristocracy lost
interest in the support of household members to maintain feuds, the
_hreppr_ support system gained more significance in society. This commu-
nal system designated usually twenty farms or more, based on geographical location and independent on the _godar_ and parish system, as a community, which took care of its poor but also settled small matters such as grazing rights and fire and livestock insurance. This kind of societal shift is reflected in Ófeigs_þáttar_. During a _hreppr_ meeting, the farmers ask the prominent leader for help. As noted above, Ófeigr’s status is never confirmed as a _godi_ or a _pingmadr_, it is simply stated that he was “vinur þeirra bræður,” meaning Guðmundr and Einarr. The _þáttar_ reflects a society where the chieftain has significance: Guðmundr inn ríki becomes most overbearing precisely in the moment when he caters to his district, but does so in his own excessive way. But in a way the text also pits the exploitative chieftain against the solidarity of the _hreppr_ leader. It is interesting that Hans Jacob Orning points at the ducal tendency of _Sálus saga ok Níkanórs_. This preference towards the lower ranks of governance, then, is common to both _Ljósvetninga saga_ and _Sálus saga ok Níkanórs_, though it does not wish to promote a break within traditional rank, which is apparent in the vanquish of the Droplaugarsynir in their eponymous saga. These stories would be preaching to the fifteenth-century Icelandic choir; the _godar_ system brought to power characters such as Guðmundr inn ríki and his unbearable demands on his _pingmenn_. The legal change that came from the Norwegian rule, then, is actually a blessing.

148 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson “The Changing Role of Friendship in Iceland, c. 900–1300,” 57. For the _hreppr_ system, see also _Law and Literature_, 140, n. 36.
149 Cf. Erika Sigurðsson, _The Church in Fourteenth Century Iceland_, 31–32, for the argument that feud continued despite Norwegian rule.
151 Jesse Byock, _Viking Age Iceland_, 137–138; Miller, _Bloodtaking and Peacemaking_, 19–20.
152 Based on “Syv Sagablade,” 45.
153 Orning, _Reality of the Fantastic_, 125, 142, n. 13.
This diachronic reading allows for the similarities and differences between past and present to be charted more significantly than in a synchronic reading, where most events are seen as a key to understanding the period of writing, rather than the importance of the period when the story takes place. The fifteenth-century Icelanders saw their ancestors living lives that were in many ways similar—overbearing chieftains imposing their wills on the local farmers—but also saw more champions who looked after local interests rather than big-picture politics. The upper classes would also recognize their own dilemmas and struggles in the stories of their predecessors, and would be able to think through issues of mixed loyalties between different societal forces.

4.3.4 A Diachronic Reading of *Ljósvetninga saga*: AM 561 4to and the Fourteenth-Century *fin de siècle*

The origin of AM 561 4to is unclear, and the dating of the manuscript is broad (sometime between late fourteenth and early fifteenth century). This makes it hard to determine much about the interests of the people who wrote down the manuscript. Social and political concerns must have shifted after a traumatic event such as the Black Plague, so whether the manuscript was written before or after this is significant. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider the A-redaction in light of the end of the fourteenth century in Iceland, if only as a contrast to the C-redaction.

If, as we shall see below in the discussion of genre, the focus of the extant AM 162 c fol. sagas is Northeastern Icelandic politics, the three extant sagas of AM 561 4to pose us with a problem of a clear focal point. As will be discussed in The Part About Genre, if *Reykdœla saga* and *Ljósvetninga saga* together create a larger narrative and an almost straightforward

154 The disagreement on the number of Black Plague victims is irrelevant to this point. Chris Callow and Charles Evans state: “It seems unlikely that either outbreak in Iceland killed much more than about 25% of the population” (“The mystery of plague in medieval Iceland,” 30). These numbers, despite being lower than the common estimate, are certainly dramatic. Imagine that one in four *Íslendingasögur* characters named Þórsteinn died abruptly: this would certainly be a significant and immediately felt loss.
sequence of events, *Gull-Póris saga* disrupts this. The scope of *Ljósvetninga saga* itself, then, is also significantly narrower. If the stories of Sǫrli, Ófeigr, Vǫðu-Brandr and Þórarinn ofsi are excluded, all that is left is a straightforward story of a single-generation conflict between a group of brothers and a forceful goði. But what themes can be found within this story? *Ljósvetninga saga* discusses the disintegration of kinship ties: at his death Guðmundr inn ríki becomes alienated from his son Halldórr, his wife Þórlaug, his brother Einarr, and his larger kin group, reflected in Brúni’s assistance to his brother Eilífr following the killing of Rindill. Þorgeirr’s fight against his own sons in the name of a foreign ruler also reflects this, as does the minimal effort the Þorgeirssynir make in order to avenge their problematic brother Þorkell hákr. This neglect of kinship ties could be associated with the same phenomena mentioned above in the discussion of the fifteenth century, the move from a “kin-based aristocracy” to direct service of the king.\textsuperscript{155}

This propensity to “govern rather than to lead” discussed above escalated in the mid-fourteenth century. In 1354, King Magnús Eriksson—in need of quick cash—introduced the idea that instead of transferring taxes on a regular basis, the *hirðstjórar* of Iceland would pay him a large sum for the right to keep whatever they collect, making this position essentially ‘rented.’ As Elizabeth Ashman Rowe states, “this system encouraged violence and extortion.”\textsuperscript{156} Indeed, this position had become occupied by forceful men who did much to maximize their profits from their positions, the climax of which was the Grundarbardagi, where the present rental-*hirðstjóri*—a Norwegian—and one of his Icelandic predecessors were killed by a force that included another past rental-*hirðstjóri*.\textsuperscript{157} Árni Daniel

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\textsuperscript{155} Jón Viðar Sigurðsson “The Changing Role,” 56.
\textsuperscript{156} Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, *The Development of Flateyjarbók [...]*, 149.
\textsuperscript{157} According the *Annalbrudstykke fra Skálholt*, Jón Guttormsson skráveifa had with him 30 men, *Íslandske annaler indtil 1578*, 225–226. This is three times the amount he was allowed, Ashman Rowe, *The Development of Flateyjarbók*, 251. It is certainly possible that this dramatic event would have been on the AM 162 e fol. author’s mind when he wrote of Guðmundr inn ríki’s retinue of 30 people in Ófeigs þátr. 
Júlíusson frames this event in the context of peasant revolts, and Ljósvetninga saga certainly represents a distrust towards the chieftain class: they bicker among each other, and it is their householders who suffer. Even the relatively positively portrayed Ljósvetningar employ violence and coercion to get their way. At the beginning of the saga, Arnsteinn never gets his part of the Ljósvetningar-godarð back, which was taken from him by force. The A-redaction text criticizes Þórir Helgason twice: once indirectly, for his inability to protect his þingmenn, and later on he is slyly criticized by Þorgils for losing ground against Guðmundr inn ríki, the implication being that many of his þingmenn suffer, while Þórir essentially does nothing. Indeed, as Marion Poilvez points out, the implications for Þórir Helgason himself are minute: his travels help to increase his wealth and prestige. The aristocracy bickers amongst itself for power, and the householders suffer. This is much more pronounced in the A-redaction, since in the C-redaction the Ljósvetningar solidarity and Vǫðu-Brands þáttr offer a more positive form of godar-ship, while Spóla þáttr and Ófeigs þáttr offer an alternative for the godar, Þórarinn as the powerful hirdsmadhr who can sway the heart of Guðmundr inn ríki, and Ófeigr, the hreppr’s only hope.

159 Though, admittedly, this part is missing in AM 561 4to, so perhaps in this version Arnsteinn got back his chieftaincy. This is unlikely, due to the fact that, while names and order of events change in the narrative, the contradictions between the two redactions’ portrayal of events are usually minute. See this thesis’s chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?
160 ÍF 10:20–21.
161 ÍF 10:24.
162 Marion Poilvez, “Discipline or Punish? Travels and outlawry as social structures in medieval Iceland.”
4.4 Conclusion

You got a nine to five, so I'll take the night shift, / and I'll never see you again if I can help it. / In five years I hope the songs feel like covers / dedicated to new lovers.

—“Night Shift,” Lucy Dacus¹⁶³

If the same examples were sometimes to illustrate synchronic and diachronic readings of *Ljósvetninga saga*, this should not surprise us. As Schwartz points out, “[t]he distinction between memory as a “model of” and “model for” society is an analytic, not empirical, distinction; both aspects of it are realized in every act of remembrance.”¹⁶⁴ The multitude of overlapping, but not contradictory, interpretations allows for the (perhaps obvious) realization that these texts meant different things to different people in different stages of history, like Lucy Dacus’s songs that are meant for one lover at one point of history, but then turn into cover songs for new lovers as time progresses. This realization allows us to step back from the search for a presently unattainable original form of the text, since certain elements could have been added by later scribes and compilers. What we should do instead is contemplate the extant text and speculate on the meaning that it signified for its audience in different stages of its reception. Such analysis reveals the persistent relevance of these founding narratives that reaches far beyond the original impulse to put these stories to parchment.¹⁶⁵

Different avenues of interpretation—situated in history and related to memory—can contribute to our understanding of a saga and its variances. While in no way a complete analysis of the possible implications the historical circumstances might have on our reading of *Ljósvetninga saga*, this chapter questioned the advantages of keying historical events too strictly.

¹⁶³ Historian, Matador, 2018.
¹⁶⁴ Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System,” 910.
¹⁶⁵ For the application of the Assmanns’ “founding narratives” concept in Old Norse literature, see Pernille Hermann, “Founding Narratives.”
to the authorial present, but also addressed the avenues and alleyways that such interpretations open up to us. Barði Guðmundsson’s reading of *Ljósvetninga saga* in relation to late thirteenth-century politics is productive at times, his meticulous method points out similarities between Gizurr Þorvalsson and Guðmundr inn ríki, or Móðr Valgarðsson and Þorvarðr úr Saurbæ. But Barði’s extreme Bookprose interpretation, in a sense, ransacks the memory of the past, with all that is left behind being authorial construction. This author-based approach has its benefits, however, and it was therefore applied not to the saga’s thirteenth-century author, but rather to its fifteenth-century scribe, Ólafur Loftsson. By tracing his life and his milieu, the saga’s relevance to his own life and lifetime were made clear. In this reading, memory offers a synchronic model of society, one that used Hrafn Þorkelsson of Lundarbrekka to condemn Þorkell Guðbjartsson, and Guðmundr inn ríki Eyjólfs to condemn Ólafur’s father’s circle, most prominently Guðmundur Arason himn ríki. But “a past that merely reproduces the present suggests no answers to its dilemmas,” and therefore a diachronic approach that uses memory as a model for society viewed the issues that preoccupied the fifteenth century more generally. This diachronic reading offered ways in which the Icelanders dealt with—and condemned—the problematic behavior of their own aristocracy, and the negotiation between the need to appease both the royal Danish interest and the financially-beneficial English merchants. If AM 162 c fol.’s context offers us various avenues of interpretation, the lack of context for AM 561 4to makes a similar analysis more difficult. This highlights the advantages and disadvantages of a manuscript-based collective memory analysis: it requires more context than is sometimes available to us in the generally paratext-less world of medieval Icelandic manuscripts.

166 For a much more positive approach towards Barði Guðmundsson’s study, see Peter Hallberg, “Nyare Studier,” 244–47, and Hallberg, “Njálas författare.”
167 Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System,” 922.
5. The Part about the Genres

On April 3rd, 2018 the episode titled “Roseanne Gets the Chair” of the then-renewed Roseanne featured the following dialogue:

ROSEANNE
Dan, you’re snorin’, wake up.

DAN
What time is it? Did I miss dinner?

ROSEANNE
It’s eleven o’clock. We slept from ‘Wheel’ to ‘Kimmel.’

DAN
We missed all the shows about black and Asian families.

ROSEANNE
They’re just like us. There, now you’re all caught up.1

Since then the show has been cancelled by its broadcaster ABC because of racially problematic tweets by the show’s creator and star, Roseanne Barr, and there are certainly problematic undertones in the quote above: who are “they” and who is “us”? But an important element of this scene is that it reveals how connected genre and society can be. Roseanne is referring to television shows that feature African- and Asian-American actors in the lead roles,2 which operate within the same genre as the show Roseanne, namely the sitcom.3 The characters in Roseanne are white, and

1 Roseanne, 225, “Roseanne Gets the Chair,” directed by John Pasquin, written by Sid Youngers, April 3, 2018, ABC.
2 See Sonia Saraiya, “‘Roseanne’: Is the Show Really ‘Just Like Us’?” Variety, April 4, 2018, https://variety.com/2018/tv/columns/roseanne-abc-blackish-fresh-off-the-boat-column-1202744021/. She argues that Roseanne is specifically referring to “Black-ish” and “Fresh Off the Boat,” both featured on ABC like Jimmy Kimmel Live!, Wheel of Fortune, however, belongs to the NBC network, so it could be that this joke did not target any specific show.
3 Jason Mittell, Genre and Television, 182.
therefore belong to the American sitcom “us,” whereas the “black and Asian families” belong to the American sitcom “them,” *The Cosby Show* notwithstanding. By stating, “they’re just like us,” Roseanne is essentially stating that through the genre of the sitcom, groups that are in marginal positions in American society become incorporated into the societal norm. Genres and genre divisions have the power to indicate what is the norm and what is the exception, the “us” and the “them.” This, it seems, is why genres persist as a topic of discussion and why they are constantly being shifted and negotiated in scholarship. Indicating that a text belongs to a certain genre, and determining how this genre operates, is a statement about the society that produced these texts, just as much as it is about literature. In the Old Norse field, this has been best articulated in recent years in the debate surrounding polysystem theory—originally developed by Itamar Even-Zohar⁴—which posits that within every literary system are a myriad of corpora that exist side by side, with their own—at times autonomous and at times interconnected—operations.⁵ This theory suggests a complex connection between individual literary and cultural systems (or “repertoires”) operating within almost every society in the world. Polysystem theory is an effective prism through which to consider saga texts, in that it highlights the connection between power and literature: different forces in society are represented by different literary systems. The question we need to keep in mind is to what extent the different genres in Old Norse literature indeed represent different cultures. While it is easy to argue a difference in regard to translated literature that introduces a foreign world of courtly values and behaviors to a mostly rural society, to what extent

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⁴ Itamar Even–Zohar, “Polysystem Theory.” This approach is heavily influenced from Russian Formalism and their systematic and diachronic analysis of literature (Even–Zohar, “Factors and Dependencies in Culture: A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research,” 16–7. See also Jurij Tynjanov, “On Literary Evolution”), while Even-Zohar’s model is best used to explain the position of translated literature within a certain society’s literature (Even-Zohar, “Polysystem,” see also Stefka Georgieva Eriksen, “The Change in Position of Translated *Riddarasögur* within Old Norse Literary Polysystems: A Case Study of *Eliss saga ok Rásumundar*”).

can we call the Icelandic bishops, the Norwegian kings, and the Icelandic feuding farmers from both the Íslendingasögur and the samtíðasögur representatives of different cultures as opposed to different aspects of the same culture?6

Successful application of polysystem theory requires a clear understanding of the diachronic developments within a system. This understanding is unattainable for Old Norse material because of the problems inherent with dating the sagas. This thesis then elects to treat genre from a wider, cultural perspective, with the acknowledgment that a more specific look into the individual forces that were in operation in Old Norse medieval society is not possible. Furthermore, this chapter’s focus on manuscript context for generic grouping necessarily means that the period discussed is the fifteenth century rather than the thirteenth. The focus on scholarship, in turn, means that the notions being questioned are that of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries rather than the thirteenth, or even the fifteenth. The category of post-classical Íslendingasögur, it will be shown, was invented by scholarship and did not exist in any sense in the medieval understanding of genre.

This chapter sets out to understand what Ljósvetninga saga is from a generic point of view. Previous chapters explored how the saga’s reception has been influenced by constant scholarly debate that figuratively and literally took the saga apart, even though both of its redactions’ inner-logics are solid. These are both stand-alone pieces, whether they are derived from each other or developed side-by-side. After each redaction has—especially the C-redaction—has been situated within its own historical time and place, the next step is to understand the generic place of the saga itself, with the goal to reveal whether our generic expectations from the saga are

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6 In her post-colonial criticism of the use of the term “hybridity” in film genre studies, Janet Staiger questions whether or not Hollywood generic filmmaking could ever be truly termed as hybrid: “I seriously doubt that the strands of patterns that intermix in Hollywood filmmaking are from different species. Rather, they are in the same language family of Western culture. The breeding occurring is not cross-cultural, but perhaps, and with a full sense of the derogatory implications involved, even a case of inbreeding.” Janet Staiger, “Hybrid or Inbred,” 17. Italics in original.
similar to the ones that existed during the time of its extant compilation. The chapter starts with a discussion of what *Ljósvetninga saga* is generically, and how we can define the *Íslendingasögur*. It then contends with the often used but little criticized term ‘post-classical’ *Íslendingasögur*, revealing the false premises behind the concept. After discussing this group of texts in general, the chapter focuses on two important sagas for the discussion of *Ljósvetninga saga*’s manuscript context: *Gull-Póris saga*, which appears in AM 561 4to, and *Finnboga saga*, which appears in AM 162 c fol. The discussion of *Gull-Póris saga* will reveal the fallacy of dating based on somewhat arbitrary criteria, while the discussion of *Finnboga saga* will question the assumptions of our current definition of the *Íslendingasögur*. Finally, the chapter will suggest another way of looking at genre: manuscript context. Manuscript context will be offered as one such point of departure, and the sagas of both AM 561 4to and AM 162 c fol. will then be looked at as how they work together, and what organizational principle could be behind these decisions. The main differences between *Ljósvetninga saga*’s A-redaction and C-redaction, will be explained through their respective positions in the manuscript.

This chapter makes use of film and television genre studies with two aims. The first is the belief that our notions of genre are in many ways established by our own world. By showing that even the Western’s status as a stable film genre is uncertain, the aim is for us to reconsider how much our own beliefs in the obvious shared qualities accepted of Old Norse genres are based on false notions. Another aim is to disrupt our usual frameworks in Old Norse research by bringing in material that is seldom used in comparison beyond anecdotes and quips.7 The multiplicity of voices involved in the production of a film mirrors the plural voices that are involved in the production of a saga, and it is therefore an even more beneficial point of comparison than the modern novel, where the voices present are usually that of the omnipotent author and editor.

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7 For example, Carol Clover’s career as a film studies scholar and her career as an Old Norse scholar rarely intersect in the discussion of her work. Clover addressed this in a speech at the conferral of her honorary doctorate from Háskóli Íslands, on October 2, 2015.
5.1 Genre in Old Norse Studies

In the 1975 Scandinavian Studies debate between Lars Lönnroth, Joseph Harris, and Theodore Andersson, three approaches towards the Old Norse generic system can be mapped out:

(1) The **Descriptive**, or Emic Approach, represented by Lönnroth. Lönnroth insisted that when analyzing the workings of genre in Old Norse literature, one must use terms contemporary to the literature itself. According to this approach the Íslendingasögur were never a single genre; to argue that they were hurts our understanding of the composition and workings of these texts.

(2) The **Prescriptive**, or Etic Approach, represented by Harris. Harris agrees with Lönnroth that these terms were never used by the saga authors themselves and their contemporaries, but that these terms are nevertheless useful and are in fact needed to facilitate communication about these texts between our own contemporaries and modern scholars.

(3) The **Pragmatic**, or ‘Le Sigh’ Approach, represented by Andersson. While Andersson leans towards Harris’ prescriptive approach, he mostly argues that a loose generic definition serves us best and allows us to move on with the debate.

What we are left with is a methodological stalemate, similar to the one reached in the 2005 debate concerning the fornaldarsögur at a round-table discussion in Denmark, where scholars could not reach an agreement on how to define fornaldarsaga or what sagas could be counted in its corpus. It could be argued that this circular stalemate stems from a reluctance to

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9 See Judy Quinn, et al., “Interrogating Genre in the Fornaldarsögur: Round–Table Discussion.”
let go of the descriptive approach, even as we are choosing a pragmatic approach: for example, Massimiliano Bampi’s eye-opening work on the development of the Íslendingasögur and its literary influences through a polysystemic analysis still assumes the existence of such an entity as the Íslendingasögur.10

Following Lönnroth’s groundbreaking but controversial work on the Old Icelandic generic system in 1964 and the 1975 Scandinavian Studies debate,11 scholarly discussion has gained further momentum from increased awareness that current generic divides stem from premises established by seventeenth- to nineteenth-century scholars. While they provide a frame of reference when discussing sagas, they may also distort our perception of the similarities and differences between these different modes of writing. Scholars have increasingly broadened their approach, but a predilection to work within the traditional genre system is still strong. A fault in the descriptive approach is that in some cases the terminology we are framing as ‘emic’ is in fact ‘etic.’ A well-known example from Þorgils saga ok Haflíða tells of a wedding where several tales are told by the participants. The narrative then relates that Norwegian King enjoyed some of these tales, which he called bygisögur, lying tales.12 This is a telling example: the wedding in Reykjavikar where the kind of stories King Sverrir refers to are told took place in 1119. King Sverrir’s reign was between 1184 to 1202. There is more than a half-century gap between the event and the use of the term. Moreover, the wedding obviously takes place in Northwest Iceland, whereas King Sverrir is a Faroese man who became the king of Norway: these are separated in both time and space. Then we need to consider that Þorgils saga ok Haflíða, where this event is narrated, was written sometime in the thirteenth century, and compiled into its extant form at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Therefore, when the ‘emic’ source Þorgils

11 Lars Lönnroth, “Tesen om de två kulturerna: kritiska studier i den isländska sagaskrivningens sociala förutsättningar.”
12 For the wedding at Reykjavikar and bygisögur, see O’Connor, “History or Fiction? Truth-Claims and Defensive Narrators in Icelandic Romance-Sagas,” 133–139.
saga ok Haflíða cites King Sverrir, there is a gap of almost two centuries from the event. People of the fourteenth century likely had better access to the ideas of the twelfth century than we do in the twenty-first, but it is not perfect access, and would be affected by their own biases and notions of genre.

With Alastair Fowler’s understanding of ‘generic repertoire’ as a theoretical basis—i.e., “the whole range of potential points of resemblance that a genre may exhibit”13—Margaret Clunies Ross argues that all sagas are actually of the same genre; their differences constitute sub-genres, which are modally-mixed. These sub-genres, for example, are governed by different storytelling tones,14 usually connected with the story’s space and time. The Íslendingasögur, for example, feature a legendary and/or folkloric tone for stories related in Norway, a more realistic and bleak one when action takes place in Iceland, and a perhaps more hagiographic atmosphere around the time of the conversion in Iceland. The Íslendingasögur, samtíðarðar, fornaldar- sögur, and konungasögur—but not the sagas dealing with saints and the riddarasögur—use the same generic language to deal with different subject material and generic modes,15 and are therefore hard to significantly distinguish.16 This invokes the arguments made by Lönnroth that saga genres should be considered according to descriptive terms rather than prescriptive terms. These thoughts of Lönnroth, in turn, are not unlike Hans Robert Jauss’ discussion of genre as something that is established through a horizon of expectations: “A literary work, even if it seems new, does not appear as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its readers to a very definite type of reception by textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics or implicit allusions.”17

13 Alastair Fowler, Kinds of Literature, an Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes, 55.
14 Fowler, 56, 106–111.
16 Clunies Ross, Prolonged Echoes, 53.
The insistence on distinguishing between the terms ‘genre’ and ‘sub-genre’ may seem pedantic, but when the sagas are grouped together into a single genre that encompasses all its variants, the distance between these becomes significantly smaller. Thus, if we are to choose the term genre over sub-genre for the different manifestations of saga literature, it is as if we are saying that the distance between an Íslendingasaga and a riddarasaga is as significant as the distance between Guðmundar saga helga and the Fyrsta malfræðritgerðin, or between Njáls saga and eddic poetry. While this might be an exaggerated opposition, it is clear that behind defining two texts as belonging to separate genres lies the implication that there is a significant enough distance between the texts to warrant such differentiation. Others have used this terminology when referring to the distinction between riddarasögur, fornaldarsögur, Íslendingasögur, etc.18 Ármann Jakobsson took these matters a step forward and argued that the sub-generic distinctions themselves are unnecessary, and that there is need to first get rid of them before more productive work can be done on the matter of the saga generic system.19 When discussing the Íslendingasögur, Vésteinn Ólason says that the common attributes of the corpus “hardly justify referring to these 40 works or so as a separate genre,” but that it is productive looking at them “as a single entity, regarding them as a separate family within the saga-tribe.”20

Responding to Clunies Ross’s minimal generic demarcation, Torfi Tulinius offers five principles by which to distinguish these texts: “genealogy, geography, religion, relation to the supernatural and social status of the protagonists.”21 These principles are probably the best way to reaffirm the existing generic system, though the selection of the criteria revolves around

Expectations’ was originally conceived by Karl Popper (Jauss, “Literary History,” 32–33, and Jonathan Culler, “Semiotics as a Theory of Reading,” 54). See also Culler’s criticism of Jauss’s search for a text’s “original meaning” (as if this were the gravest of sins!), 54–58.

18 Margaret Clunies Ross, in “The Intellectual Complexion of the Icelandic Middle Ages: Toward a New Profile of Old Icelandic Saga Literature,” uses “sub-genre” and “subclass” interchangeably.
our notion of the Íslendingasögur. If these were written with the translated riddarasögur, for example, in mind, different organizational principles might have surfaced, such as relation to a previous oral or literary tradition, treatment of time and space, and portrayal of heroism.

To understand literary genres, generic expectations are important: authors operate within an already existing framework, which they merely manipulate.22 Michael Riffaterre argues that meaning is created when literary expectations are foiled,23 while Wolfgang Iser takes this further and argues that “the reader must act as co-creator of the work by supplying that portion of it which is not written but only implied.”24 Literature is built on the concept of the audience filling in the gaps left by the piece’s author.25 These gaps are filled in differently by different readers, “and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential.”26 Stanley Fish tried to further expand this process of interpretation. According to him, the experience of reading is itself fraught with meaning, every sentence informed by the one that proceeded it; every word is informed by the word that led up to it.27 These, in turn, are informed by training and convention.28 Generic expectations are what lead these conventions, and these expectations, as Jauss shows, are historically bound.29

5.2 Towards a Definition of the Íslendingasögur

Ljósvetninga saga is a member of the Íslendingasögur corpus, and as such operates within a set of generic expectations that was clear, if not consistent, at the time they were composed and transmitted. But what does the term Íslendingasögur actually mean? At face value, it would seem that of all the

22 Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author.”
23 See Yoav Tirosh “Feel the Burn: Línguhlíðarvenna as Literary Type-Scene,” for how literary meaning is created by the type-scenes of house burnings, though I do not use the language of reader-response theory there.
26 Iser, 55.
saga genres or sub-genres, the Íslendingasögur or ‘family sagas’ are the least problematic to define, and the least disputed. These are sagas that deal with the early settlers of Iceland from c. 870–930 and their descendants, the cut-off point being around the third quarter of the eleventh century, when Bandamanna saga and Ljósvetninga saga end.

One way to approach the Íslendingasögur is to give them a stricter definition. In his chapter about the “Family Sagas” in *A Companion to Old Norse–Icelandic Literature and Culture*, Vésteinn Ólason defines the Íslendingasögur thus:

Sagas about Icelanders from a certain period and written by anonymous authors are known as Íslendingasögur, ‘sagas of Icelanders’, or, as they are frequently referred to in English, ‘family sagas’, albeit that this latter term is really only appropriate for some of them. It is used only about tales of considerable length which centre on the lives of people from a relatively small group of Icelandic families. The important part of the action in such tales takes place during the first century of the Icelandic Commonwealth, from c.930 to c.1030, though introductory sections may deal with events in Norway and Iceland during the main period of the settlement of Iceland, c.870–930. While the saga heroes may travel to foreign lands, most frequently Scandinavia or the British Isles, the main action usually takes place in Iceland and is rooted in the ways in which men feuded vigorously and eventually resolved their conflicts through the operation of a judicial system whose courts were unsupported by any common executive power.30

This definition, as Vésteinn himself points out, excludes *Egils saga*, which mostly involves feuds between a family of Norwegians–Icelanders and

various members of the Norwegian royalty, or the Vínland sagas, which take place primarily outside of Iceland.31

Some attempts have been made to focus on the Íslendingasögur’s structural generic elements rather than by their setting. Theodore M. Andersson’s *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading* is the most influential structuralist approach towards the Íslendingasögur, and it seems to encompass all the sagas that are considered classical.32 Andersson argues that almost every ‘Family Saga’ fits the schema of Introduction, Conflict, Climax, Revenge, Reconciliation, and Aftermath. Some sagas, such as *Ljósvetninga saga* (dated elsewhere by Andersson and Miller to c. 1220, thus by no means post-classical in his view),33 have a double conflict pattern.34 Others, like *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Vatnsla saga* entirely fail to conform to the structure he proposes.35 This approach is soon to become half a century old, and though it is still appreciated for its importance in treating the sagas as literature, criticism has been voiced against its praise of the ‘classical’ Íslendingasögur for its marginalization of those sagas that do not fit the model. Andersson’s influence has meant that many sagas’ important contributions and strengths are ignored.36 As Daniel Sävborg has pointed out, Andersson’s structural study skips over sagas such as *Finnboga saga* and *Gullþóris saga*, and the decision not to include them seems mostly dictated by the editorial decisions behind the Íslenzk fornrit series.37 It should be noted

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31 Vésteinn Ólason seems inclined to exclude the Vinland sagas from the Íslendingasögur corpus. Vésteinn Ólason. “The Icelandic Saga as a Kind of Literature with Special Reference to its Representation of Reality,” 38.

32 Or, perhaps, what Vésteinn Ólason (“Family Sagas”) calls ‘Early’ and ‘Classical.’ See Lars Lönnroth, “Structuralist Approaches to Saga Literature” as well as Ármann Jakobsson “Structure.”

33 Law and Literature, 74–84.


35 Andersson, 153–62, 215–22, respectively.


37 Daniel Sävborg, “Búi the Dragon: Some Intertexts of Jómsvíkinga Saga,” 102–3. These are divided into ÍF 13: *Harðar saga*, which also includes Bórðar saga, Porskröðinga saga, Flóamannasaga, þórir Þórðarson, Porsteins þátr unxfóts, Egils þátr Síðu-Hallssonar, Porsteins þátr Tjaldstœnings, Porsteins þátr forviina, Bergbúla þátr, Kumlía þátr and Stjörnu-Odda draumr and ÍF 14: Kjalnesinga saga, which includes also jökuls þátr Búasonar, Viglundar saga, Króka-Refs saga, Bóðar saga hrðu, Finnboga saga and Gunnars saga Keldugnýpsfís.
that these decisions were made by editors many years before Andersson started his structuralist project, and as such were already worth re-examination before the corpus for that study was decided. In addition, as Lönnroth observed, the narrative schema Andersson suggests could easily fit some konungasögur and fornaldarsögur. This last observation by Lönnroth takes us back to the question of whether or not there is a significant benefit to considering the Íslendinga- and konungasögur as separate genres.

The main tension here is between a focus on the plot elements that unify these sagas on the one hand, and their structure and themes on the other. If Vésteinn Ólason suggests a definition that breaks down the period, locations, characters, and plot points of the Íslendingasögur, Andersson looks instead at the inner structure that is common to these texts as the defining criterion. Vésteinn Ólason’s set of criteria, as mentioned, excludes a text as major as Egils saga from the corpus. Andersson’s criteria, on the other hand, singles out Eyrbyggja saga as a misfit. One way to deal with this tension lies in what film genre theorist Rick Altman dubs the “Semantic/Syntactic” approach, based on Todorov’s influential work, which connects two major ways of looking at genre. Altman describes the differences between the semantic and the syntactic approaches to film genre:

While there is anything but general agreement on the exact frontier separating semantic from syntactic views, we can as a whole distinguish between generic definitions that depend on a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like—thus stressing the semantic elements that make up the genre—and definitions that play up instead certain constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders—relationships that might be called the genre’s fundamental syntax. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre’s building blocks,

38 Lönnroth, “Concept of Genre,” 420.
39 Andersson, Icelandic Family Saga, 160–162.
While the syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged.\textsuperscript{40}

When looking at the film genre of the Western, the semantic approach would provide a set definition, such as Jean Mitry’s, which Altman translates: “The western […] is a ‘film whose action, situated in the American West, is consistent with the atmosphere, the values, and the conditions of existence in the Far West between 1840 and 1900.’”\textsuperscript{41} On the other hand, a syntactic approach would look at how the Western genre is constructed through its common use of cinematography and stock characters, as well as the themes discussed. Films such as John Ford’s 1939 \textit{Drums along the Mohawk} are American frontier narratives dealing with the settlement of Eastern United States in the eighteenth century rather than Western United States in the nineteenth century; these are given the title ‘Pennsylvania Western,’ which acknowledges their similarities, but also their difference in location. An attempt to brand \textit{Star Wars} as a Western failed, however, “for the general tendency of genre theorists and the popular audience alike is to recognize genre only when both subject and structure coincide.”\textsuperscript{42} As Rick Altman points out, “the ‘Pennsylvania western’ (like the urban, spaghetti, and sci-fi varieties) represents a quandary only because critics have insisted on dismissing one type of definition and approach in favor of another.”\textsuperscript{43} What he suggests, then, is that rather than separating these two approaches, they should be treated together, since “to insist on one of these approaches to the exclusion of the other is to turn a blind eye on the necessarily dual nature of any generic corpus.”\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{40} Rick Altman, “A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre,” 31.
\textsuperscript{41} Altman, 31, citing Jean Mitry, \textit{Dictionnaire du cinema}, 276.
\textsuperscript{42} Altman, \textit{Film/Genre}, 24. Altman insists on the exclusion of \textit{Star Wars} from the Western corpus “even though it shares certain syntactic patterns with that genre,” in “Semantic/Syntactic,” 36. It would be interesting to see his response to the Science-Fiction TV Show \textit{Firefly} (2002–2003), and its use of the syntactical language of the Western, as well as much of the semantic elements; a post-Civil War, frontier-driven plot dealing with outlaws and using the aesthetics of the western genre.
\textsuperscript{43} Altman, “Semantic/Syntactic,” 33.
\textsuperscript{44} Altman, 34.
Altman’s approach opens up an alternative to giving the *Íslendingasögur* a set definition such as the one provided by Vésteinn Ólason, which excludes sagas that are thought to be masterpieces of the genre such as *Egils saga*, or on the other hand treating the *Íslendingasögur* as a set of conventions, such as the structural analysis that Andersson conducts and in essence excludes some sagas that clearly ‘feel’ *Íslendingasögur*-y, such as *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Vatnsdœla saga*.

The semantic/syntactic approach offered by Altman makes creating a prescriptive definition of the *Íslendingasögur* almost impossible. However, to avoid being vague, here is an approximation:

The *Íslendingasögur* are a group of prose or prosimetric texts that concern the medieval Norse world, usually taking place in the period between the end of the ninth and the mid-eleventh centuries, and usually focusing on Iceland. Their structural elements usually revolve around a feud or feuds, usually with at least one family of farmers.

The reason for offering such a broad definition for the *Íslendingasögur* is a practical one: the present thesis is of two minds in relation to the existence of these texts as a distinct genre: they sometimes belonged together, and sometimes did not, depending on the manuscript editor’s goals. In addition, such a broad definition helps to elucidate that there is nothing post-classical about the post-classical *Íslendingasögur*; they are all simply *Íslendingasögur* that were grouped together by twentieth-century scholars who based dating decisions on a saga’s quality and themes. Altman uses his semantic/syntactic approach to champion a diachronic approach towards genre, which he felt was lacking in film studies at the time he was writing. This chapter’s present goal is the opposite: when we realize that

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45 And, perhaps, would easily accommodate for the inclusion of *Færeyinga saga* and *Áns saga bogsvegis* into the corpus.

46 See also Margaret Clunies Ross’s prediction of “a more pluralistic definition of the dominant genre of Old Icelandic literature,” in “The Intellectual Complexion,” 452, as well as Jürg Glauser, “The Speaking Bodies of Saga Texts,” 15.
our generic definitions are firmly tied with a now anachronistic diachronic premise, there is need to distance ourselves from these historical notions in order to better understand the generic expectations that accompany these kinds of texts.

This broad definition expands the repertoire of the Íslendingasögur. Færeyinga saga could certainly be included in this definition, and justifiably so: its structure, themes, and characters are all very similar to some of the Íslendingasögur, with only a few days’ boat-voyage separating between these two geographical locales. Áns saga bogsveígis is not inherently different from Egils saga in its structure. Without dismissing its status as a generic hybrid, this approach allows that the saga could be seen in the outskirts of the Íslendingasögur; much like Víglundar saga takes on the structure of a romance in an Íslendingasögur setting. One argument against a broad definition such as this is that, by saying that the Íslendingasögur are “usually taking place in the period between the end of the ninth and the mid-eleventh century,” with a stress on the word ‘usually,’ the door is opened to even include the samtíðarsögur into the Íslendingasögur-fold; Sturla Þórðarson’s Íslendinga saga is as close to an Íslendingasaga as Færeyinga saga is. It is hard to see why Guðmundur saga dýra cannot be considered both an outlier of the Íslendingasögur, as well as a full-fledged member of the samtíðarsögur. As will be shown, medieval Icelanders were little concerned with genre exclusivity. This approach hopefully brings the prescriptive and the descriptive approaches somewhat closer together, more in line with the flexible system that seems to be apparent in these modally-mixed texts.

47 In fact, Andreas Schmidt argues along these lines in his recent PhD thesis on the topic of Færeyinga saga. See Ármann Jakobsson “Sögurnar hans Guðna: Um lýðveldisútgáfu Íslendingasagnanna, hugmyndafraði hennar og áhrif,” for a discussion of Guðni Jónsson’s more inclusive Íslendingasögur corpus, though the publisher did not include Færeyinga saga among this group of texts.
48 See Eldar Heide “Áns saga bogsveígis. A Counterfactual Egils saga and yet Another Twist on the Myth of Dórr’s Visit to Útgarða-Loki.”
49 As it is presented in Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, “Generic Hybrids: Norwegian ‘family’ Sagas and Icelandic ‘mythic-heroic’ Sagas.”
50 Marianne E. Kalinke, Bridal-quest Romance in Medieval Iceland.
5.3 Post-Classical Íslendingasögur

After the Íslendingasögur—to which Ljósvetninga saga belongs—have been defined, there is a need to better understand what is meant by the term ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur. Two manuscript neighbors of Ljósvetninga saga are commonly referred to as post-classical: Gullþóris saga and Finnboga saga. The former appearing in AM 561 4to and the latter in AM 162 c fol. The meaning of the post-classical designation is not always clear, though it seems to have more to do with dating (fourteenth century onwards) and the presence of influences from the fornaldarsögur and the riddarasögur than anything else. The post-classical sagas are characterized by what Elizabeth Ashman Rowe has referred to as ‘generic hybridity,’ a concept later adopted by other scholars. Generic hybridity argues that certain sagas sport features that are characteristic of more than one saga genre. Ashman Rowe suggests that Íslendingasögur such as Egils saga and Grettis saga that feature influence from the fornaldarsögur should be considered ‘mythic-heroic,’ a significantly less general and ambiguous term than post-classical Íslendingasögur, which also allows significantly more chronological flexibility. This pluralistic approach notwithstanding, the term post-classical Íslendingasögur persists in scholarship. Since two of these texts are grouped with Ljósvetninga saga in its medieval manuscripts, it is worth understanding what makes these generically different from one another, if indeed they are. This will help to better understand Ljósvetninga saga’s place within its manuscripts. Furthermore, the flawed notions about what comprises proper Íslendingasögur set generic expectations that are prescriptive rather than descriptive, and advance a false diachronic perception of these texts. Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction, which does not always conform to generic

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52 Stefán Einarsson, A History of Icelandic Literature, 150–1.
53 E.g., Bampi, “Literary Activity,” 63.
54 Ashman Rowe, “Generic Hybrids,” 542.
expectations, is therefore deemed to be a later product, though the tag ‘post-classical’ was never attached to it.\(^{55}\)

The distinction between classical and post-classical \textit{Íslendingasögur} is both diachronic and thematic, with the thematic considerations including “a diminished sense of Icelandic-ness” in the post-classical works.\(^{56}\) The distinction then feeds circularly into attempts to date these sagas. The diachronic understanding of the divide implies that something happened c. 1300 that changed the way sagas were written, tying Icelandic independence—both past and present—to the quality of Icelandic literature.\(^{57}\) If the early \textit{Íslendingasögur} dealt with the turmoil of the \textit{Sturlungaöld} and the classical ones dealt with the loss of independence and submission to Norway, the sagas created post-1300 could free themselves from these issues and feature more unambiguous heroes that raise fewer moral questions.\(^{58}\) Einar Ól. Sveinsson bemoans the loss of classical \textit{Íslendingasögur} objectivity and synthesis of realism and ideology for an interchange between “vulgar realisme og blodløs romantic.”\(^{59}\) As Vésteinn Ólason has it, “more clearly than ever before, sagas are now works of entertainment.”\(^{60}\) As with Einar Ólafur, this seems to imply degeneration.\(^{61}\) What was once a great genre had devolved to become a simple vehicle of entertainment,\(^{62}\) like the similarly undervalued \textit{riddara-} and \textit{fornaldarsögur}.\(^{63}\) Another designation these

\(^{55}\) Though note Magerøy’s designation of \textit{Sørla þátr} as a “happy-end-soge,” in Soga om \textit{Ljósvetningane}, 10–11.
\(^{56}\) Martin Arnold, \textit{The Post-Classical Icelandic Family Saga}, 104.
\(^{57}\) On this see Arnold, 87–106.
\(^{59}\) Einar Ól. Sveinsson, “Íslendingasögur,” 507.
\(^{60}\) Vésteinn Ólason, “Family Sagas,” 114.
\(^{61}\) See also Clunies Ross, “Intellectual Complexion,” 140.
\(^{62}\) The assumption is that simple entertainment lies in contrast to more serious literature that deals with important issues for the specific society. There is a fallacy that lies behind this approach, since every piece of art, even the ‘simplest,’ has a certain agency behind it, whether conscious or unconscious. Even automatic writing is driven by the psyche of the author, and whether they admit or are aware of this or not is not relevant.
\(^{63}\) Knut Liestøl offers a perhaps more positive take on this similar process, and sees it as the natural result of the \textit{Íslendingasögur} stories getting older and thus closer in their nature and intertwined with the \textit{fornaldarsögur} tradition: “At such a distance of time the two
sagas have received is simply ‘late,’ distinguishing them from the ‘early’ and the ‘classical.’ This designation refers to sagas written c. 1300–1450, the ‘classical’ period ending c. 1310. While it is a less qualitative term than ‘post-classical,’ the only generic criterion is the actual date of writing, which is usually hard to pinpoint, inaccurate, and constantly shifting, as will be shown in the discussion of *Gull-Póris saga* below. In addition, while it eliminates the ‘classical’ component from this sub-genre’s name, it is clear that these sagas are ‘non-classical.’

Sävborg has questioned the dating of the *Gull-Póris saga*, *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings*, *Harðar saga ok Höfnverjar*, and *Svarfðela saga*, but does not question their place in an “efterklassiska” category. According to him, “Vi kan inte självklart utgå från att Droplaugarsona saga och Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls är skrivna vid olika tidpunkt, men det är tydligt att deras litterära egenart är mycket olika.” Sävborg, then, rejects a dramatic difference between the classical and post-classical *Íslendingasögur* in terms of dating, but insists that they are separated thematically. If we compare this to the gap between semantic and syntactic approaches to genre discussed above, the classical and post-classical *Íslendingasögur* are separated by their syntactic elements—the use of paranormal, the “happy ending”—rather than their semantic elements, since the narrative still focuses on Iceland in the ninth to eleventh centuries. There is an insistence that something is inherently different in the sagas that are called post-classical. Martin Arnold has suggested that, rather than being degenerate literature, the post-classical sagas constitute a “reworking of the genre” that is a direct response to the break experienced by society due to the loss of independence, again tying temporal considerations with thematic ones. Arnold argues against those who associate

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64 E.g., Vésteinn Ólason, “Family Sagas,” 114–6.
65 As are the ‘early’ period Íslendingasögur.
lower quality with lateness, but nevertheless does not attempt to question the premise of these sagas’ dating.

Thematically, when separating the classical from the pre- and post-classical Íslendingasögur, Vésteinn Ólason argues that the way that these texts represent reality is a key to understanding the differences between them. In the classical Íslendingasögur, compared with the post-classical ones, magic does not have a significant impact on the characters and their fates. Vésteinn elsewhere connected theme and time of composition, arguing that the more fantastic elements were incorporated into the later Íslendingasögur because the local stories, which were the source material for twelfth- and thirteenth-century sagas, had dried up by the time of their composition. This is highly speculative, and there is no way to prove or disprove that the story-well dried up, since there is nothing on which to base an assumption that the backlog of usable stories had dwindled. Indeed, as the example of the unwritten saga of Guðmundr inn ríki shows, it seems that the saga authors had many immanent sagas up their sleeves, and it does not seem likely that they used them all up. Andersson’s argument that the thirteenth-century compiler of Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction drew on different oral tales in order to make changes to the saga speaks to this same plurality of available material. Knut Liestøl suggested that with time, oral tales about the period before the settlement of Iceland—which became the fornaldrasögur—and the tales about its first settlers and their descendants—which became the Íslendingasögur—would have blended together because of prolonged exposure to each other, influencing each other’s style and motifs. Following this logic, the later the saga, the more it is influenced by the fantastic style of the fornaldrasögur, thus explaining

68 Arnold, 143–147.
69 Vésteinn Ólason, “Kind of Literature,” 38–43.
71 See Gíslí Sigurðsson, “The Immanent Saga of Guðmundr ríki,” as well as The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition, a Discourse on Method, 161–184. For another example of how this theory has been used, see Jamie Cochrane “Sólu-Halls saga ok sona hans: Creating a Saga From Tradition.”
72 Liestøl, Origin, 153, 163.
the fantastic elements in these texts. However, as Liestøl himself pointed out, *fornaldarsögur* influence can also be detected in sagas such as *Gísla saga*, *Brennu-Njáls saga*, and *Ljósvetninga saga* when these seem to feature motifs from *fornaldarsögur* such as *Völsunga saga*, or the heroic lays that were these sagas’ sources.73

It is important to address the stylistic change that would have purportedly occurred with the introduction of romance literature to medieval Iceland. Romance in Old Norse literature is usually associated with King Hákon Hákonarson’s project of commissioning translations, mentioned in several sources.74 King Hákon’s translation project must have affected Iceland by the mid-thirteenth century and opened the island’s residents to influences from continental literature. That the translated texts were modified to fit Icelanders’ tastes is important to note, yet not significant enough to change the fact that these were foreign courtly texts.75 However, King Hákon’s importance should not be overstated: other romance texts were translated into Old Norse beforehand as well, though less systematically.76 Therefore the introduction to translated text is not what sparked a stylistic change attributed to the post-classical *Íslendingasögur*. Eriksen argues that from their central position in thirteenth-century Norway, “translations of *riddarasögur* may seem to have become not peripheral, but rather internalized and undistinguishable from the indigenous Icelandic compositions” in the fourteenth–fifteenth-century Icelandic literary polysystem.77 While the process of internalization was one that took place in the generic system of the *riddarasögur*, it might also indicate that the literary world of the translated *riddarasögur* or romances was less foreign to the Icelanders of the time.

73 Liestøl, 169–180.
74 Jürg Glauser, “Romance. (Translated *riddarasögur*),” 375–376.
75 Glauser, 372–87. For a complex analysis of the changes in emotion and narrative that took place within this translated literature, see Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia*, where she argues that rather than looking at translated texts through the prism of either the source material or the receiving culture, translations to Old Norse should rather be understood and “studied on the basis of their internal coherence and as evidence of the cultural capacity for assimilation and adaptation of foreign material,” 70.
77 S. G. Eriksen, “Change in Position,” 56.
This works well with Bampi’s observation that indigenous *riddarasögur* such as *Samsons saga fagra* and *Vilmundar saga víðutan* are a combination of the world of Romance and the world of the *Íslendingasögur*. In the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries, it was more possible than before to write in a way that bridged the gap between these once significantly more distant societal systems.

With these thematic and diachronic considerations in mind, *Gull-Póris saga* will now be examined in more detail. An individual look at *Gull-Póris saga* will highlight the false notions that stand behind the category of ‘post-classical’ *Íslendingasögur*, and reveal the biases that lead to dating decisions based on personal taste.

### 5.3.1 Gull-Póris saga

Since AM 561 4to included *Gull-Póris saga* alongside *Ljósvetninga saga*, it is important to understand if these sagas are significantly different from each other generically. The focus here will be on how *Gull-Póris saga* has been dated, which reveals a different treatment from sagas like *Ljósvetninga saga*, based on notions of what motifs belong and do not belong in the *Íslendingasögur*-proper. It is important to first deal with the perhaps obvious question: is *Gull-Póris saga* really an *Íslendingasaga* at all? It certainly fits the schema suggested by Andersson for a ‘family saga,’ with the main dispute being between Þórir and Steinólf fr, or alternatively Þórir and Hallr. The former is resolved by the killing of Steinólf fr and his associates, the latter ends with Þórir killing Hallr and the payment of compensation to his estranged son, Hyrningr. As with other *Íslendingasögur*, the narrative concerns itself with honor, feuds, familial ties, and dealings with the Norwegian king, and there is no reason why it should be excluded from the corpus. Guðbrandur Vigfússon included it in his list of ‘minor’ sagas—which includes *Ljósvetninga saga* as well—though he deemed it a “late recension,”

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and differentiated between the “mythical” part in Norway, and the “historical” part in Iceland.\textsuperscript{79}

The earliest manuscript evidence for \textit{Gull-Þóris saga} is AM 561 4to, which has been dated to c. 1400. This is rather late, and might imply that the saga is itself late, but AM 561 4to is also the first extant text witness of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}, which, as we have seen, Andersson dated as early as c. 1220, as well as \textit{Reykdaela saga ok Viga-Skútt}, commonly considered an early \textit{Íslendingasaga}.\textsuperscript{80} Vésteinn Ólason does not attempt to justify his late date for this saga. He sees it as part of the natural evolution of the \textit{Íslendingasögur} discussed above, and states that “The saga has crossed the boundaries to heroic myth and fairy tale while retaining significant generic indicators that pin it down as an \textit{Íslendingasaga}. It is closer to folktale and myth than \textit{Grettis saga}, although its fantastic elements are not as effectively integrated in the narrative.”\textsuperscript{81} Vésteinn sees the fantastic element as an indicator of the saga belonging to the post-classical \textit{Íslendingasögur}.\textsuperscript{82}

But how much can we rely on these fantastic elements for a later dating? Phil Cardew argues that the generic treatment of the supernatural is different between the scenes where the action takes place in Norway and where the action takes place in Iceland, especially in regard to Þórir’s transformation into a dragon.\textsuperscript{83} This is disputable, since he might be reading too much into the phrase “þat hafa menn fyrir satt.”\textsuperscript{84} While he is correct in pointing out that there is little reference to the gifts Þórir received following his meeting with his dead Viking ancestor in Norway,\textsuperscript{85} he also argues that the incorporation of the supernatural in the Icelandic part of the saga introduces an “aspect of fornaldar saga.”\textsuperscript{86} This essentially

\textsuperscript{79} Sturlunga Saga […] and Other Works, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, LII.
\textsuperscript{80} Vésteinn Ólason, “Family Sagas,” 115, but not by Björn Sigfússon, ÍF 10:XLII–L.
\textsuperscript{81} Vésteinn Ólason, "Fantastic Element," 17.
\textsuperscript{82} Though in the specific article discussed, he refers to them as “Fourteenth-Century Íslendingasögur.” See also Liestøl, Origin, 165–166, for \textit{Gull-Þóris saga}'s borrowing from the fornaldarsögur tradition, which he associates with its younger age.
\textsuperscript{83} Cardew, “The Question of Genre,” 20, 26.
\textsuperscript{84} ÍF 13:226. “People believe,” “Gold-Thorir’s saga,” 359.
\textsuperscript{86} Cardew, 23.
means that every appearance of the supernatural in an Íslendingasaga is of fornaldaarsaga nature, an argument that Vésteinn Ólason would disagree with—according to him exaggerations and fantastic occurrences are prevalent in the entire Íslendingasaga corpus. In his opinion, it is their abundance rather than their presence that is unique to the later ones, along with their influence on characters’ fates, as mentioned above. Cardew’s analysis indicates that there is confusion regarding the fantastic, a confusion made evident from Vésteinn Ólason’s short discussion of the topic in his article.

Passages from the thirteenth-century Landnámabók indicate that a version of Gull-Þóris saga existed at a much earlier point of time than the c. 1400 AM 561 4to. Kålund speculated that the saga must have existed in a more ‘realistic’ mode in its older version. As Þórhallur Vilmundarsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson point out, when dating the saga, the consideration of supernatural elements may be too prominent: “Skoðun þeirra Kálunds styðst við þá grundavallarhugmynd, að sögurnar hafi verið ritaðar að raunsæi fram eftir 13. öld, en ævintýrilegt fornaldaarsagnaefni hafi sótt á um og eftir 1300. Þetta fær ekki staðiðt. Slíkt efni var í Íslendingasögum frá byrjun og í ríkum mæli í sumum þeirra fyrir miðja 13. öld. Og [það] hefur verið að koma í ljós á síðustu árum, að sumar Íslendingasagnagerðir, sem eru með miklu ævintýra- og fornaldaarsagnaefni og áður voru taldar yngri gerðir gagnanna, séu að öllum líkindum eldri gerðir, en hafi verið styttur á 14. öld.” In addition, in a recent study Daniel Sävborg has shown that the most fantastic element in Gull-Þóris saga, the dragon motif, actually draws its inspiration from one of the oldest pieces of extant saga literature, Jómsvíkinga saga, rather than fornaldaarsögur or the translated riddarasögur. Both these studies place a big question mark on the late dating of this saga, and on the ‘lateness’ of its use

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88 Vésteinn Ólason, 7–9.
89 See, e.g., Sturlunga Saga, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon, LII.
90 Gull-Þóris saga eller Porskfirdinga saga, ed. Kristian Kålund, XXII.
91 ÍF 13:CXIII.
93 See also Sävborg, “Efterklasiska,” 43–45.
of supernatural themes, and therefore on its status as a post-classical Íslendingasaga. But as is reflected in Daniel Sävborg’s debate of the dating of post-classical Íslendingasögur, proving that these texts’ dates skew earlier does not mean that the concept of the ‘post-classical’ is entirely irrelevant. The question should be whether or not the texts commonly grouped together as post-classical Íslendingasögur by scholarship can indeed be considered significantly different from each other. For this discussion the focus will turn to Finnboga saga.

5.3.2 Finnboga saga

The case of Finnboga saga and its definition as a post-classical Íslendingasaga is curious because it reveals once again how much bias is involved in the generic divisions between the classical and the post-classical Íslendingasögur. After the issue of how Finnboga saga had been dated is dealt with, a comparison to Vatnsdœla saga will be attempted, because of the large character overlap between these two texts. This will help understand whether or not Finnboga saga as a text is significantly different from or similar to the Íslendingasögur genre. The issues that will be examined are the sagas’ narrative structure and their connection with folklore.

Based on its literary sources, Jóhannes Halldórsson dated Finnboga saga to sometime between the last years of the thirteenth century or the first decade of the fourteenth century. Due to its incorporation in the main section of Möðruvallabók, dated to sometime between 1316–1350,94 it must have been composed before that; Jóhannes declared that the Möðruvallabók text is not the saga’s “frumrit,” though he does not expand on his reasoning.95 Björn M. Ólsen suggests that it would have been composed sometime between 1300–1325.96 That it must have been written before—or during—its incorporation into Möðruvallabók is logical. Its earliest

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94 ÍF 14:LXVIII, which references Jón Helgason, Ritgerðakorn og reðustúfar, 103–104. See also Stefán Karlsson’s “Möðruvallabók,” where he says it was “skrevet omkr. midten af 1300-tallet,” 185.
95 ÍF 13:LXVIII.
possible dating to the last years of the thirteenth century is based on the
texts it seems to correspond with, such as *Vatnsdœla saga*, which tells a very
similar tale of the dispute between Finnbogi and the people of Hof, but
with no significant verbal correspondences and many discrepancies in the
details.\(^97\) These discrepancies are explained as the result of differing oral
traditions,\(^98\) but the assumption is that the take-off point of *Finnboga saga* is
*Vatnsdœla saga*,\(^99\) commonly dated to c. 1270.\(^100\) Presumably, this is what
prompted Einar Ól. Sveinsson to assert that, during the post-common-
wealth period, “people cease to concern themselves with history, and sagas
in the end become pure fiction, like Viðlundar Saga and Finnboga Saga.”\(^101\)

A saga that does show verbal correspondences and has been used to
date *Finnboga saga* is *Gunnlaugs saga*, which Sigurður Nordal and Guðni
Jónsson dated to 1270–1280, based on intertextual evidence.\(^102\) Jóhannes
Halldórsson calls *Gunnlaugs saga* a source for *Finnboga saga*, referring to
Björn M. Ólsen, who determines that “Nú getur enginn efi verið á, að
Gunnlaugs saga er eldri enn Finnboga saga.”\(^103\) This confidence is backed
up by tenuous arguments that pertain to the rationale behind the exposure
of children in both sagas. In *Gunnlaugs saga*, the protagonist’s love interest
Helga is exposed at birth due to her father’s ominous dream, and in
*Finnboga saga*, the protagonist is exposed at birth since his father is dis-
pleased with his daughter’s unwanted marriage. Exposing one’s child as
punishment for an unwanted marriage of another child seems like a less

\(^97\) ÍF 13:LXIII–LXIV.
\(^98\) Though, as Gíslí Sigurðsson points out, these traditions seem to be considered “mea-
ger and sketchy” (*Medieval Icelandic Saga*, 320), which is translated from Jóhannes’s
“fáskrúðugar,” ÍF 13:LXIV.
\(^99\) ÍF 13:LXIV. Jóhannes also notes a mention of Finnbogi in *Landnámabók*, though he
argues that the inconsistency concerning his father shows that the author of *Finnboga saga*
would not have had it in front of him while composing the text, ÍF 13:LVIII.
\(^100\) ÍF 13:LXIV.
\(^101\) Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Dating the Icelandic Sagas, An Essay in Method*, 126. In Sävborg,
“Búi the Dragon,” 104.
\(^102\) ÍF 3:LX. Referenced in ÍF 13:LXVIII, n. 2.
\(^103\) Björn M. Ólsen, “Um Íslendingasögur,” 340. Jóhannes Halldórsson states that
“Gunnlaugs saga er vafalaust eldri en Finnboga saga,” ÍF 13:LXVI.
logical narrative decision than exposing them based on a prophetic
dream,\textsuperscript{104} but the act of exposure in \textit{Finnboga saga} is a narratologically nec-
essary step in a series of events that leads the protagonist to be recognized
by his powerful kinsman \textit{Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði} and, following him, his
father Ásbjörn. The fact that \textit{Finnboga saga} makes \textit{Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði}—the pagan lawspeaker who allowed child exposure practice to persist
into post-Christian Iceland—the one who convinces a father to recognize
his abortively exposed child seems like an ironic and witty choice; this is a
similar use of \textit{Þorgeirr} as in \textit{Njáls saga}, where the narrative compares \textit{Þorgeirr}’s son \textit{Þorkell} and Njáll’s son Skarphéðinn by stressing the eating of a
mare’s ass and the characters’ father–son struggles, which both correspond
with the prohibitions decreed by \textit{Þorgeirr} himself at the moment of Ice-
land’s Christianization. It is also unclear why the allegedly better and more
logical text needs to be the older one. \textit{Au contraire}, when thinking of a less
controversial genre like the TV crime drama, is it not true that the socially-
aware \textit{The Wire} (2002–2008) was qualitatively ‘better’ than the more pop-
ular \textit{NYPD Blue} (1993–2005)? Similarly, is it not common consensus that
Christopher Nolan’s 2008 \textit{The Dark Knight} is significantly better than Joel
Schumacher’s disastrous 1997 \textit{Batman and Robin}? Of course, one can im-
mediately point out Zack Snyder’s much-criticized 2016 \textit{Batman v. Super-
man: Dawn of Justice} as a counter example, but the exception proves the
point: the age of a piece of art within an established genre does not indicate
its quality.\textsuperscript{105} Snyder did not learn from Nolan’s example, but Nolan cer-
tainly learned from Schumacher, as did David Simon (\textit{The Wire}) from Ste-
ven Bochco and David Milch (\textit{NYPD Blue}).

Björn finds other similarities between \textit{Finnboga saga} and \textit{Gunnlaugs
saga},\textsuperscript{106} and argues that because \textit{Gunnlaugs saga} is from the late thirteenth

\textsuperscript{104} Though is exposing one’s child ever logical in modern eyes? Notice that this expo-
sure of children based on prophetic dreams is a common folktale motif, worth consider-
ing in the discussion ahead. Compare with \textit{Þorkell Geitisson}’s demand that a child be
exposed in \textit{Þorsteins þattir uxafóts}, ÍF 13:348 [ch. 4].

\textsuperscript{105} It is possible that in the future, when tastes change, Snyder’s directing will be hailed
as masterful and compelling.

\textsuperscript{106} Björn M. Ólsen, “Um Íslendingasögur,” 340–341.
century, *Finnboga saga* could “varla” be before the early fourteenth.\textsuperscript{107} The dating of *Gunnlaugs saga*, in turn, is based on intertextual connections between it and several other sagas.\textsuperscript{108} As seen in *The Part About the Critics*, these dates need major revision. While Björn argues convincingly that the author of *Finnboga saga* would have operated under a law other than *Grágás*, this is also true for *Njáls saga*, and that saga is considered to have been written sometime between 1265–1275.\textsuperscript{109} Björn M. Ólsen argues that the language of *Finnboga saga* has a fourteenth-century “smekk,” and that some of the language is “víða einkennilegt og einhver bóndalegur alþiðukeimur.”\textsuperscript{110} While that may be, it is unclear why a unique ‘commoner’s’ language would necessarily indicate a younger age. On the contrary, opposite arguments were made in reference to *Hreïðars pátr* and its archaic, awkward language, though this was discounted by Faulkes, who would rather attribute the unique lexical features to the artistry of the pátr’s composer, than to linguistic evidence for dating.\textsuperscript{111} Finally, fifteen to thirty years passed between *Njáls saga*’s Skarphéðinn calling Hallgerðr a “púta”\textsuperscript{112} and *Finnboga saga*’s use of the word “krækill.”\textsuperscript{113} What makes these so dramatically different to warrant the different generic sticker of ‘post-classical’?

Jóhannes Halldórsson states that “Áhrif frá riddarasögum og höflausar ýkjur um afl Finnboga með sniði fornaldarsagna benda einnig til ungs aldurs medal Íslendingasagna.”\textsuperscript{114} In his discussion of the fantastic, Vésteinn Ólason does not seem to give any indication of anything unique about *Finnboga saga* that is inherently different between it and earlier sagas, stating that “its first half has many folktale elements. His bare-handed fight with a bull, whose head he rips off, while he is still a youth, and shortly after the killing of a bear that seems to understand human language, are

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\textsuperscript{107} Björn M. Ólsen, 342.  
\textsuperscript{108} ÍF 3:XLIX, LX.  
\textsuperscript{109} ÍF 12:LXXVI–LXXXI.  
\textsuperscript{110} Björn M. Ólsen, “Um Íslendingasögur,” 343.  
\textsuperscript{111} See *Two Icelandic Stories*, ed. Anthony Faulkes, 18–19.  
\textsuperscript{112} ÍF 12, 228 [ch. 91]. See discussion in ÍF 12:LXXXII–LXXXIII.  
\textsuperscript{113} ÍF 14:257 [ch. 4], and 260 [ch. 6].  
\textsuperscript{114} ÍF 14:LXVIII.
definitely fantastic.”

However, once Finnbogi returns to Iceland the events described “are more of a kind well known from thirteenth century sagas.”

A comparison between *Finnboga saga* and *Vatnsdæla saga* stresses that there is more in common generically between these two texts than there are significant differences. From a narrative structure perspective, both *Vatnsdæla saga* and *Finnboga saga* have a beginning typical for the Íslendingasögur. *Vatnsdæla saga* tells of the Norwegian origins of the Vatnsdœlir and their progenitor Þórsteinn; *Finnboga saga*, on the other hand, starts the narrative in Iceland, with Finnbogi’s father Ásbjörn. The two narratives share the element of one man taking on the social role of another, exemplified in the adoption of the dead man’s name. *Vatnsdæla saga*’s Þórsteinn Ketilsson starts off the narrative by killing Jökull and assumes his social position. He marries his sister and promises to name one of his descendants after him. Finnbogi enters the saga as Urðarkóttur, the unwanted child of the Eyjafjörður chieftain Ásbjörn, who is raised by peasants. The name Finnbogi is taken from a Norwegian he saves in a shipwreck, whose last dying wish is that Urðarkóttur assumes his name and possessions. Furthermore, after killing the jarl’s man Álfr, Finnbogi eventually assumes his social role as the jarl’s follower and marries Álfr’s daughter. *Vatnsdæla saga* is quite literally a family saga, giving its attention to several generations of the Vatnsdœlir chieftains, with no central feud or climax, and starting off its narrative with a long description of the family members’ exploits in Norway. *Finnboga saga*, on the other hand, focuses on one individual: Finnbogi hinn rammí, and rather than telling the tale of a district, it follows him through the various districts he visits after a years’ long expedition to Norway. *Vatnsdæla saga*’s Jökull Ingimundarson is *Finnboga saga*’s main antagonist, constantly trying to avenge an insult to his honor by disturbingly killing many of Finnbogi’s loved ones and dependents in attempts to get at him. Both of these narrative structures are not unlike other

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116 Vésteinn Ólason, 11.
Íslendingasögur; the significant focus on the exploits in Norway before the settlement in Iceland of Vatnsdœla saga is comparable with Egils saga Skálagrímssonar,118 Grettis saga, or Gísla saga Súrssonar, to name only three examples, and the strong focus on generational district politics is similar to Ljósvetninga saga, Reykdœla saga, and Heiðarviga saga. Finnboga saga’s strong focus on a single hero with exploits in Norway as well as Iceland is comparable to Bjarnar saga Hítulakappa.119 Finnboga saga and Vatnsdœla saga also share the motif of using outlaws to kill one’s opponents, which is also a feature of Grettis saga. In the way that the saga is constructed, then, nothing in Finnboga saga stands out to make it significantly different than Vatnsdœla saga.

Does Finnboga saga’s use of folklore indicate that it is somehow different than other, ‘older’ Íslendingasögur? The basis of this argument is somewhat vague. The term ‘folktale’ is used as a frequent shorthand in Old Norse studies, but it is rarely defined.120 Liestøl, for example, on the one hand talks about how, “in their general character,” the Íslendingasögur “resemble folk-tales or romances,”121 and on the other hand about how “there are remarkably few traces of ordinary migratory legends or migratory anecdotes in the Icelandic family sagas.”122 What he means by these migratory legends and anecdotes are stories such as the tale of Guðmundr hitting his foster-father with the butt of the axe in Ljósvetninga saga, and its connections with the international folktale about the bear who hurts or kills his human companion while trying to swat away a fly. The scholarly consensus is that Ljósvetninga saga probably existed in some written form in the middle of the thirteenth century. The fact that a folktale motif was incorporated into it

118 And, in part, the allegiance with king Haraldr hárfagri.
119 As well as, for example, Egils saga and Grettis saga, though both include long sequences in Norway prior to the settlement of Iceland.
121 Liestol, Origin, 163. He says further of folktales in the context of fornaldarsögur’s influence on the Íslendingasögur: “their influence on the family sagas was not so great, and they certainly did not serve in any way as a model. On the other hand we can see that features and situations in the folk-tales were running in the mind of the saga-teller or saga-writer while he shaped his account of certain incidents,” 166.
122 Liestol, 169. Italics in original.
did not influence the general discussion surrounding this saga’s dating, or its status as a classical Íslendingasaga. Thus, the incorporation of such migratory tales is not useful evidence for a saga’s age. Similarly, several of the early-dated þættir have been argued as examples of the International Popular Tale. Joseph Harris has shown an influence of the King in Disguise tale on Heimskringla’s description of the Battle of the Nissa, as well as on Þorsteins þáttir austfirðings and Auðunar þáttir vestfirzka. Regardless of the dating of Þorsteins þáttir, Auðunar þáttir has been dated to 1190–1220, and Heimskringla to c. 1220–1230. These are by no means late texts. Auðunar þáttir vestfirzka has also been tied to AT 1161, ‘The Bear Trainer and His Bear,’ as well as several other folktales, though Björn K. Þórólfsson and Guðni Jónsson suggested that the historical Auðunn was the originator of these stories. Lindow discounts the connection with the folklore type for several convincing reasons and points out that, most importantly perhaps, the story bears little resemblance to AT 1161. A. R. Taylor, making an argument concerning the dating of Auðunar þáttir in connection to Hungvaka, dismissed the connection between the þáttir and AT 1161 as “slight,” but agreed with the connection between it and several other

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123 Magerøy, for example, uses this as more evidence for the superiority of the A-redaction in Sertekstproblemet i Ljósvetninga saga, 47–49. Some exceptions to this do exist, however, such as Eugene Mogk’s assertion that the foster-father scene is different from the “Romantischer Einfluss” that is entirely missing from the saga, in Geschichte der norwegisch-Isländischen Literatur, 762 and n. 1.
124 Harris, “The King in Disguise.” Harris misses an opportunity to show how the beginning of Sneglu-Halla þáttir plays on this motif, since the þáttir’s first scene has the protagonist insult the king, whose identity is far from clear in the Morkinskinna account. The usually self-critical Joseph Harris repeats the fallacy of ‘older is better’ here when discussing the connection between Auðunar þáttir vestfirzka and Þorsteins þáttir austfirðings: “As literary works the two þættir stand at opposite poles, Auðunar þáttir being one of the great short stories in European literature, and Þorsteins þáttir an ill-executed outline. There can be no doubt in which direction the putative influence flowed,” 163. This and subsequent dating of the þáttir to the fourteenth century does not allow more discussion on the possible influence of this story on, for example, the Morkinskinna narratives Hreiðars þáttir and Sneglu-Halla þáttir. On Auðunar þáttir and folktales see also Lindow, “Hreiðars þáttir heimska,” 155–158.
125 ÍF 6:CV–CVII.
126 Heimskringla Volume 1 […] , eds. Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, VII–IX.
127 ÍF 6:CI–CIV.
folktales.\textsuperscript{130} Hreiðars þáttr has been discussed in connection with AT 326, the story of ‘The Boy Who Wanted to Learn Fear.’\textsuperscript{131} This text, which cannot be younger than its first text witness in Morkinskinna (c. 1280), has been dated to the mid-thirteenth century the latest,\textsuperscript{132} and perhaps even older than c. 1217 if it was indeed incorporated into the Earliest Morkinskinna, as Ármann Jakobsson argues.\textsuperscript{133} Using the appearance of folktale motifs for the promotion of younger date for a text such as Finnboga saga, then, seems unfruitful.

It is worth considering that it is unclear why Finnboga saga is said to exhibit more folkloric influence than Vatnsdæla saga. Vatnsdæla saga begins with describing Þórstæinn Ketilsson as a kolbítr, a common motif in old as well as young Old Norse texts,\textsuperscript{134} which has a background in folktales that go beyond the Old Norse world.\textsuperscript{135} After the egging on of his father, a violent confrontation is initiated between Þórstæinn Ketilsson and Jókull the highwayman in the woods. The encounter of an outlaw in the woods is also a common motif in folklore,\textsuperscript{136} and the association between outlaws and the woods runs deep in Scandinavian literature.\textsuperscript{137} Beyond the Old Norse world, the English author Walter Map described in his late twelfth-century De Nugis Curialium, a tale of the Welsh king Llywelyn’s youth that is reminiscent of Vatnsdæla saga. King Llywelyn is an ash-lad in his youth, and is provoked by his sister to get up and eavesdrop on a stranger’s house,

\textsuperscript{130} Taylor, 94.
\textsuperscript{131} Lindow, “Hreiðars þáttr heimskra,” 173–177.
\textsuperscript{132} Two Icelandic Stories, ed. Anthony Faulkes, 20–22.
\textsuperscript{133} Ármann Jakobsson, A Sense of Belonging. Morkinskinna and Icelandic Identity, c. 1220.
\textsuperscript{134} Ásðís Egilsdóttir, “Kolbítur verður karlamæður,” but see Einar Ól. Sveinsson’s description of these as a late motif: “The Icelandic Family Sagas and the Periods in Which Their Authors Lived,” 81. See also Jan Brunvand, “Norway’s Askeladden, the unpromising hero, and junior-right,” 21, n. 6. Liestøl insists on a connection with the folktale motif of the “Askelad,” either directly or through the fornaldarsögur in Origins, 166–167.
\textsuperscript{135} See, e.g., Brunvand, “Norway’s Askeladden.”
\textsuperscript{136} See, e.g., Maurice Keen, The Outlaws of Medieval Legend, 1–8; Einar Ól. Sveinsson, The Folk-stories of Iceland, 217–218, 220.
\textsuperscript{137} This is brought home by the Old Norse term for outlaws, skóggangr. See Rissoy, “Outlawry: From Western Norway to England,” 101–102, 105–107. These terms reflect a Norwegian natural world rather than an Icelandic one, supporting the older association between the outlaw and the forest (and the wolf), 110–111.
a ritual that somehow reveals omens for his future.\footnote{Walter Map, \textit{De Nugis Curialium = Courtiers’ Trifles}, 188–190.} \textit{Vatnsdœla saga}’s narrative similarly dwells on the description of Þorsteinn first examining the outlaw Jökull’s house from the outside. Another folklore motif in \textit{Vatnsdœla saga} is the magical forgetfulness that comes upon Guðmundr inn ríki after he is hit by spáköna Þórdís’s staff Hjómnudr. This is reminiscent of \textit{Volsunga saga} and the magical drink of forgetfulness, but also fits with the folktale motif J2046, ‘Law Student Forgets His Speech,’ and the common folktale motif of magical forgetfulness (D2004). How are these elements of \textit{Vatnsdœla saga} any less inspired by folktales than \textit{Finnboga saga}’s similarities with folktale motifs R131 ‘Exposed Child or Abandoned Child Rescued’ or H41.5 ‘Unknown Prince Shows His Kingly Qualities in Dealing with His Playmates’?

\textit{Færeyinga saga}’s use of folktale motifs and types is also interesting to examine, since this saga is considered quite early, certainly earlier than \textit{Finnboga saga}. Both the story of Finnbogi and that of \textit{Færeyinga saga}’s Sigmundr and his cousin Þórir seem to be borrowing from folktales like AT 567A ‘The Magic Bird-Heart and the Separated Brothers.’ The path of \textit{Færeyinga saga}’s two cousins Sigmundr and Þórir is similar to many a folktale narrative. After their fathers’ murderer Þrándr pays Hrafn money to have the children as slaves, the latter frees them and gives them Þrándr’s money. This could be a variation of AT 567A’s ‘Spared by the Man Charged with Executing Them,’ which in turn is much like \textit{Finnboga saga}’s Syrpa saving Urðarköttr’s life despite knowing him to have been intentionally exposed. When, in \textit{Færeyinga saga}, Sigmundr and Þórir wander off from their savior they become stranded and wet on a mountain. They eventually find their way into a house, where they are taken in by two women who take care of them. When the master of the house arrives, he sniffs the air and recognizes that there are guests, and his wife convinces him to let them stay. This sniffing of the air, as Liestøl points out, is very much like folktale motif G84, ‘Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum. Cannibal Returning Home Smells
Human Flesh and Makes Exclamation.'139 Úlfr/Þorkell is not a flesh-eating ogre, but his home in a secluded location suggests an Otherness.140 Liestol perhaps manipulates his reading of the narrative a tad too much to fit with G532, ‘Hero Hidden and Ogre Deceived by His Wife (Daughter) When He Smells Human Blood,’ when he says that the master’s “attention is diverted by one of the women,”141 whereas Úlfr/Þorkell has no intentions on eating the lads, and his wife rather gets to the point and pleads for their lives. Nevertheless, it is hard to avoid the impression that the narrative is in line with folktales and types. That both Finnbogi and Sigmundr have an encounter with a bear that they subsequently kill and then set up to look alive at first sight seems like a variation of K2321 ‘Corpse Set Up to Frighten People.’142 All this to say: since Færeyinga saga is commonly dated to the early thirteenth century,143 here we have an example of a rather early saga that makes heavy use of folktales motifs. Our expanded definition of the Íslendingasögur accepts Færeyinga saga as an outlier of the genre. Even if this is too liberal a definition, other similarities between Færeyinga saga and other Íslendingasögur make it clear that these texts were operating within the same generic framework.144 Rather than an indication of age or of a different genre, it could be said that the influence from folktales is a common feature in many of the Íslendingasögur, regardless of their age. We can conclude that there is no significant reason to relegate Finnboga saga to the post-classical Íslendingasögur, based on either manuscript evidence, or the supernatural or folkloric elements in the saga. I suspect

139 Liestol, Origin, 168.
140 Another example of this is Dórisdalr in Grettis saga. When Úlfr/Þorkell later tells his tale we learn that he, together with a group of 12 men and his kidnapped wife, lived in a forest until they were attacked by the kidnapped woman’s father; see discussion above about the folkloric connection between outlaws and the forest.
141 Liestol, 168.
142 See Inger M. Boberg, Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature, 186. Ólafur Halldórsson suggests a literary connection between the two, with Finnboga saga’s account influenced by Færeyinga saga (Færeyinga saga, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson, CLXXXIV).
143 See Andreas Schmidt, “‘hinn verstí mædr á gllum norðrlyndum’, or House of Cards in the Faroe Islands: Conceptualising the ‘Boys Guys’ in Færeyinga saga,” 275–276, n. 7. See also Yoav Tirosh, “Eyrbyggja saga: efní og höfundareinkenni. (Review),” 163.
144 Færeyinga saga, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson, CLXX–CXIV.
individual studies of other sagas commonly treated as post-classical will yield similar results, to the extent that the term itself will eventually be rendered pointless.

5.3.3 Do Ljósvetninga saga, Gull-Þóris saga, and Finnboga saga Belong to the Same Genre?

It could be argued that Ljósvetninga saga on the one hand, and Gull-Þóris saga and Finnboga saga on the other represent two ends of the spectrum of narrative structures that the Íslendingasögur can take on. Despite their alleged varied dates of composition, all three texts lack the prosimetric style commonly associated with the Íslendingasögur. All three of them skip the story of the ancestry in Norway and jump straight to the action. Gull-Þóris saga and Finnboga saga both focus on a specific individual, as does Ljósvetninga saga to a certain extent with Guðmundr inn ríki. Following his death, though, the saga—while still focusing on Eyjólfr Guðmundarson—spends much of its narrative relating the side of the Ljósvetningar. Structurally, if Ljósvetninga saga’s A-redaction and Gull-Þóris saga focus—at least while the narrative takes place in Iceland—on a single feud, Finnboga saga, though highlighting the feud between Jökull and Finnbogi, focuses on the various disputes that the eponymous hero gets himself into. When the story takes place in Iceland, the literary techniques employed by all three sagas are similar enough, featuring the characteristic relatively laconic Íslendingasögur style. If we turn to our broad definition of the Íslendingasögur suggested above, all three texts certainly match these criteria: they are prose texts that concern the medieval Norse world; they take place in the period between the tenth and the mid-eleventh century; and their main focus is Iceland. Their structure revolves around a feud or several feuds, all belonging to the class of independent farmers or goðar.


146 For a general survey regarding the particularities of saga style, see Daniel Sävborg, “Style.” See also Chris Crocker, “Emotions,” on the scholarly problematizing of the “laconic, emotionally repressed hero of the sagas of Icelanders,” 240.
Both the Bookprose and the Freeprose approaches towards saga origins created an isolated perception of the *Íslendingasögur* texts, either as a literature that was developed in a secluded Iceland, or as a wholesale Germanic tradition that took very little from sources that were not oral. In response to the generic studies stalemate in his own field, Rick Altman posits: “As long as Hollywood genres are conceived as Platonic categories, existing outside the flow of time, it will be impossible to reconcile genre theory, which has always accepted as given the timelessness of a characteristic structure, and genre history, which has concentrated on chronicling the development, deployment, and disappearance of this same structure.”

Any assertion regarding the very existence of such a sub-subgenre as the post-classical *Íslendingasögur* needs to rely on a firmer agreement on issues of dating than the one we currently have. A synchronic look of the *Íslendingasögur*, then, must ignore this post-classical distinction. A diachronic one requires an entire re-evaluation of the dating on the sagas that is not available at present.

5.4 Location, Location, Location? Genre in its Manuscript Context

Material philology’s stress on individual manuscripts means that much more attention can be paid to the text’s role as part of a wider context. Genre at times dictates that context and, in turn, is dictated by context, in this case of manuscripts. The way a text is received cannot be isolated from its material surroundings, which includes the texts that it is grouped with. Generic context is ever-present in the construction of text, and in fact constructs the text. Without context, phrases could and do mean many things, sometimes to the point of being non-intelligible. Their place in a larger picture is what grants them their meaning.

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148 See also Pernille Hermann, “Saga Literature, Cultural Memory, and Storage,” 338.
The First Grammarian lists in his eponymous work the genres that were known to him at that time:149

\[\text{til þess at hægra verði at rita ok lesa sem nu tíðiz ok a þessv landi bæði log ok átvisi eða þyðingar helgar eða sva þau hín spaklegu fræði er ari þorgils son hefir a bækir sett af skynsamlegu viti.150}\]

If one looks at the genres that the First Grammarian names, the possibility arises that when set to writing, the ancestral oral tales, by means of inclusion,151 incorporated into them the already existing literary genres152 of genealogy,153 interpretations of sacred writings,154 sagacious lore, and law. The sagacious lore referred to could be both the extant Íslendingabók, which relates Saga-Age events in a more concise style than the Íslendingasögur, but also the no-longer extant kings’ history that Ari had supposedly written.155 While some of the more historically-dry elements in the Íslendingasögur156 could have originated with the oral storytelling that proceeded their

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149 There is room to doubt whether or not he was including all of these, or only those genres of which he approved. The First Grammarian seems to have been quite a complex character (For a [light-toned] attempt at the identification of The First Grammarian, see Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson, “‘Mjög eru þeir menn framir’: Fyrsti málfræðingurinn fundinn,” 10–12.

150 Partially normalized based on The First Grammatical Treatise […], ed. Hreinn Benediktsson, 208; “In order that it may become easier to write and read, as is now customary in this country as well, both the laws and genealogies, or interpretations of sacred writings, or also that sagacious (historical) lore that Ari Þorgilsson has recorded in books with such reasonable understanding,” 209.

151 Fowler, Kinds of Literature, 180–182.

152 This might contribute to what Slavica Ranković calls the “heteroglossia” of the Íslendingasögur in “The Oral–Written Continuum as a Space,” 57–64.

153 Margaret Clunies Ross, “The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organisation in Early Iceland.”


155 Íslendingabók: The Book of the Icelanders, ed. Siân Gronlie, XII–XIII.

156 It is important to point out that this is a judgment coming from a specific perspective, and as such is not an objective observation. William Ian Miller, addressing descriptions of the law in Brenna-Njáls saga, points out that while some find it boring and cannot wait for the killings to pick up again, others find these scenes fascinating, Why Is Your Axe Bloody?, 259–260.
writing, it is also possible that certain parts have been composed using the example of the writings of authors such as Ari Þorgilsson (and, presumably, Sæmundr inn fróði Sigfússson). It is hard to single these out in *Ljósvetninga saga*, which focuses mostly on detailed descriptions of regional events rather than grand scale national occurrences, but in other sagas such as the famous account of the Christianization of Iceland in *Brennu-Njáls saga*, it is easy to see the influence of more concise texts such as *Íslendingabók* and *Kristní saga*. In addition, saga style came to the *Íslendingasögur* already somewhat established by the *konungasögur*. One example of this is *Ljósvetninga saga*’s borrowing of *Morkinskinna*’s description of the killing of Hallr Ótryggsson, one rare case where a scene of one saga was incorporated into the text of another saga, dealing with entirely different material.

I have left one genre named by the First Grammarian, namely *lög*, out of the debate above because it warrants some further attention. Law is an important component in many of the *Íslendingasögur*, either as a major theme as in *Brennu-Njáls saga*, or as a source of misfortune and facilitator of events as in *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga*. Some scenes in *Njáls saga*, for example, seem like they were lifted straight from a courtroom transcript, had such a genre existed in thirteenth-century Iceland. It is likely that the written (and oral) genre of law was a component involved in the origins of the *Íslendingasögur*. But law itself is a good example of the process I wish to illustrate in connection to genre and manuscripts. When, at the beginning episode of *Ljósvetninga saga*, the sons of Þorgeirr explain about their father and Guðmundr: “kalla þeir oss ómaga, er í kviðinum eru” in the A-redaction and “kalla þeir oss ómæta í kviðinum” in the C-redaction, they are using legal language. But the context of the saga transforms this meaning into something that discusses the Þorgeirssynir’s masculinity. As Thomas Beebee, discussing Wittgenstein’s approach to language, points out, “the

158 See Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, *Jómsvíkinga saga*. Séstäða, varðveisla og viðtökur, on other texts predating the *Íslendingasögur* such as *Jómsvíkinga saga*.
meanings of words cannot be separated from the systems within which they are located. ‘Brick’ may point to an object in the world, or it may mean ‘hand me a brick,’ depending on the game being played. The value of ‘brick’ is more informative than the word’s ‘meaning’ in the dictionary sense.”

Beebee argues that the same applies for any given text: a text’s meaning is defined by the way that it is used. Discussing the genre of legal discourse specifically, Beebee looks at Barthes and his description of the language of the law as competing with the language of the people who are external to its construction process (the accused). The text of legal procedure, then, is a heteroglossia. But Beebee takes this further: “If, as Barthes argues, the law is really literature in disguise, then we might argue that literature […] is really law in disguise.”

Literature can be created through the language of law, and it is the context in which these words and phrases appear that create the genre.

The importance of context can therefore be expanded beyond the level of sentences and kinds of speech to text-groups. When trying to define the fornaldarsögur genre, Torfi H. Tulinius offers this witty ‘minimal definition’: “Fornaldarsögur are the sagas that C. C. Rafn published under this blanket title.” While meant to trigger a debate about the lack of uniformity in the fornaldarsögur corpus, Torfi also sheds light on an important genre-defining aspect that is frequently ignored or is simply given lip-service: the genre corpus as we have it is defined by editorial choices made by nineteenth- and twentieth-century publishers and scholars. To say that the post-classical Íslendingasögur are a modern construct is a disservice to those men and women of the centuries before the nineteenth, who read these texts without our biases and discriminations. In one of the two

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161 Beebee, 175.
162 See also Gun Widmark, “Om nordisk replikkonst i och utanför den islandska sagan,” and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *Fortælling og øre: Studier islændingesagaerne*.
163 Quinn et al., “Interrogating Genre,” 379. But see Lavender “The Secret Prehistory of the Fornaldarsögur,” where he problematizes Rafn’s role in creating the fornaldarsögur sub-genre and points the creation of the corpus to “Peter Erasmus Müller in the second volume of his *Sagabibliothek* and not Carl Christian Rafn as commonly thought,” 551.
first ever printed volumes of the Íslendingasögur in 1756, Ágetar forman-

nasögur, Björn Markússon published such texts as Kjalnesinga saga and Króka-

Refs saga, as well as the female-empowered Harðar saga ok Hölmverja, along-

side Gisla saga and Víga-Glúms saga. In the second volume, Nokkrir margfróðir

sóguhættir, Björn published Bandamanna saga, Viglundar saga, Ólkofra þátrr,

Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings, Þorðar saga hreðu, Grettis saga hins sterkas, Bárðar saga

Snefellssáss, Gests þátrr Bárðarsonar (usually considered a part of Bárðar saga),

and Jökuls þátrr Búason. The logic of this compilation is different than the

ones we are used to, since it groups many sagas that are considered now-

adays ‘post-classical’ with ‘classical’ Íslendingasögur. The fact that more sa-

gas that are today considered late were the first Íslendingasögur texts to be

published indicates a difference in tastes from now and then. This publi-

cation shows that, at least in mid-eighteenth-century Iceland, the generic

division between classical and post-classical Íslendingasögur was not always

intuitive. This in itself is not something to lament; the later editions and

the categories they offered indeed captured something that was common

between different saga groups, though this was by no means the only pos-

sible way of dividing the saga corpus.164 It gave us a useful group of texts

that allowed the advancement of literary interpretation, despite the stale-

mates that it produced.

But Torfi’s observation also leads to another important point: in the

case of the saga genre, context has a crucial role. The mid-fourteenth-cen-

tury AM 132 fol.—better known as Möðruvallabók—currently contains

within its pages the following sagas: Njáls saga, Egils saga, Finnboga saga

ramma, Bandamanna saga, Kormáks saga, Víga-Glúms saga, Droplaugarsona saga,

Ólkofra þátrr, Hallfreðar saga, Laxdela saga, and Fóstbreðra saga. Seeing this list,

one cannot escape the feeling that indeed, these texts worked together and

were organized as members of the Íslendingasögur genre.165 On the other


164 See, e.g., Kalinke’s Bridal-quest Romance in Medieval Iceland in the discussion above.

165 It has been pointed out that Njáls saga and Egils saga seemed to have originally been

intended for separate codices, perhaps with the purpose of being sold. Michael Chest-

nutt, “On the Structure, Format, and Preservation of Möðruvallabók”. See also Emily

Lethbridge, “Hvorki glansar gull á mér,” 61–64. As Lethbridge has pointed out, it is

possible that other sagas were included in the main codex before or after the extant
hand, though, the fourteenth-century manuscripts AM 371 4to, AM 544 4to and AM 675 4to that together compose Hauksbók contain within their pages Fóstbræðra saga (which is also in Móðruvallabók) and Eyríks saga rauða, alongside texts as varied as Elucidarius, Bretasögur, Hervar saga ok Heiðreks, a version of Landnámabók, Völuspá, Algorismus, and various others. Much ink has been shed to convincingly argue that the compiler of Hauksbók felt that these belonged together. Was one of these compilers wrong? Obviously not. Fóstbræðra saga fit in Móðruvallabók, and it fit in Hauksbók. The saga remained (mostly) the same, what was different was the context.

A focus on a saga’s manuscript context—or, as Beebee calls it, a text’s ‘use value’—would stress that Ljósvetninga saga’s status as an Íslendingasaga is not as stable as it would seem, even less so than if we follow the semantic/syntactic approach discussed above. Both in our contemporary as well as in past imaginations, the Íslendingasögur are very real concepts, even if their canon was arranged differently in the eighteenth-century publications, for example. But we need to accept that these texts had different uses besides those we usually assign them. As Fish points out, “readers don’t just ‘decide’ to recharacterize a text; there has to be some reason why it would occur to someone to treat a work identified as a member of one genre as a possible member of another; there must already be in place ways of thinking that will enable the recharacterization to become a project, and there must be conditions in the institution such that the prosecution of that project seems attractive and potentially rewarding.” One of the best way that these uses can be estimated in medieval Icelandic literature is by looking at their manuscript context.

texts (she bases this on Sigurjón Páll Ísaksson), and these could, obviously, concern the Nordic mythic-heroic past, the period of the settlement, or the non-historical happenings in a geographically far away land. This does not detract from the fact that we have a number of Íslendingasögur grouped together, and nine of these clearly belonged together in the eyes of the compiler or his commissioner (as noted above, the existence of such an individual has been put into question).


5.4.1 AM 561 4to Organizing Principle: Regional History with Entertaining Interlude

As seen above, AM 561 4to is a challenging manuscript, because very little is known about the hand that wrote it, because of the many lacunae in it, and because we have no idea if what we have of it presently reflects its entirety or if other sagas were included in it. The manuscript currently contains sixteen leaves of Reykdæla saga, followed by seventeen leaves of Gull-Póris saga. The manuscript then introduces Ljósvetninga saga and contains ten leaves of it. While the three sagas in this manuscript are riddled with missing and damaged leaves, their presence still provides us with much information about the texts themselves.

It is of significance that Ljósvetninga saga is placed after Reykdæla saga and Gull-Póris saga. Reykdæla saga takes place in much the same area as Ljósvetninga saga, albeit in a different time period and with the focus slightly more northeast, though it indeed has some characters, places, and kin groups in common.\(^\text{168}\) It also is divided very similarly to the C-redaction of Ljósvetninga saga in a two-part structure, the first part focusing on the district ruler Áskell, and the second part focusing on Áskell’s son Víga-Skúta.\(^\text{169}\) Gull-Póris saga is a very different case: its action focuses initially on Þórir’s útanferð to Norway, where he gains the gold that justifies his name Gull-Þórir, and then moves on to the Westfjords, where politics and vengeance cause Þórir’s men to be killed one by one. Eventually, Þórir runs away and hides his gold and there are rumors that he has become a gold-guarding dragon. This saga is more adventure-oriented than Reykdæla saga and Ljósvetninga saga. It is interesting, then, that Gull-Póris saga was placed by the manuscript’s compiler between two sagas that deal very clearly with regional history, and neighbouring regions to boot. In many ways, Ljósvetninga saga could be seen as a sequel to Reykdæla saga and the regional dynamics of Eyjafjörður. The interruption by Gull-Póris saga, then, is curious.

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\(^{169}\) See Bertha S. Phillpotts, Edda and Saga, 200.
Assuming that the compiler had a plan in mind, it can be argued that, after the politically heavy *Reykdœla saga*, the compiler wanted to turn to a lighter tone of adventures in Norway and battles with magical users in Iceland before going back to the mostly sober, or ‘realistic’ A-redaction of *Ljósvetninga saga*. The C-redaction includes at least three, if not four, stories that were attached to the main plot of the saga in the process of its transmission, and it seems likely that the compiler of the A-redaction chose not to include these. I believe that, by incorporating *Gull-póris saga*, he compensated for the lack of flair that characterizes the somber and slowly paced *Ljósvetninga saga*.

While the possibility remains that other sagas would have existed in AM 561 4to, the current situation of these three sagas works together quite well. Here the concept of generic crossroads could be of significance. When discussing approaches to genre films, Rick Altman presents two main trends. One approach, inspired by Lévi-Strauss, is the one called the ritualistic, which suggests that the audience has control over Hollywood generic formation and it shapes the way that genre films are made;\(^ {170} \) the opposite approach, developed in several film studies journals such as *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Screen*, and *Jump Cut*, based on the cultural theories of the Frankfurt school, is that film genres are actually an ideological force that Hollywood uses to manipulate its audience towards the goals that they wish to promote.\(^ {171} \) Rather than focusing on these approaches as contradictory, Altman suggests that these are in fact complementary. In every genre film, there are moments that he terms “generic crossroads”: “Strategically simplifying, we may say that one fork offers a culturally sanctioned activity or value, while the other path diverges from cultural norms in favour of generic pleasure.”\(^ {172} \) These forks in the road delineate a choice between the ethics of the genre and the ethics of society, which are often contradictory. For example, a gangster film requires non-sanctioned

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\(^ {170} \) See Hans Jacob Orning, *The Reality of the Fantastic [...]*, 72, for his discussion of Lévi-Strauss’s use of myth in the context of Old Norse scholarship.


\(^ {172} \) Altman, *Film/Genre*, 145.
violence to allow for the generic pleasure; this goes against the ethics of modern Western society where such actions are unwanted and harmful. Altman stresses that these ethical forks in the road are not to be confused with narrative forks in the road that are tied with character development. These narrative crossroads are choices that are open to the text and the audience; the texts’ characters may or may not be involved in this crucial ethical moment. In the Íslendingasögur, the path of generic pleasure is that of fighting, of revenge-based violence, whereas the path of cultural norms is that of resolution and settlements. Looked at through this perspective, Reykdaela saga’s Áskell goði is a moderate chieftain, who can be seen as maintaining the order that cultural norms demand. Once Áskell is killed, however, his violent son Víga-Skúta is unleashed upon the narrative and gives the genre audience what they seek from an Íslendingasaga: action and wit. After a series of violent confrontations, Víga-Skúta is betrayed and killed, with the narrative only briefly summarizing the peaceful resolution of the affair. Gull-Dóris saga’s narrative is an almost constant state of battle, first in Norway and then in Iceland. The protagonist sees all his adventuring companions die around him, and eventually elects to seclude himself away from society. In other words, this is a saga that consistently chooses generic pleasure over cultural norms, though the tone is darker, the many paranormal occurrences perhaps a manifestation of Gull-Dórir’s trauma. Ljósvetninga saga starts in a similar state of societal unrest: the district chieftains Guðmundr inn ríki and Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði prefer commitments to foreign rulers and personal financial gain over their own countrymen and þingmenn’s interests. As we have seen in The Part About Memory, the saga in its A-redaction is a constant display of chieftains preferring their own wealth and power over the well-being of their district.

173 Altman, 146–147.
174 Altman, 145.
175 Martin Arnold calls these “the ethical problems that arise when the standards of personal honour conflict with the standards of communal peace,” Arnold, Post-Classical, 233.
176 On the idea that the paranormal in the Íslendingasögur can be seen as a manifestation of trauma, see Marion Poilvez, “A Troll Did It? Trauma as a Paranormal State in the Íslendingasögur.”
Eventually, it is up to the Reykjadalur hrepp’s charismatic leader Ófeigr to check Guðmundr’s strength, and it is up to the half-brother of Þorkell hákr, Drauma-Finni with his ties to the paranormal, to end the chieftain’s life. This does not offer a round, positive ending to the preference of generic pleasures over cultural norms that started with Áskell göði’s death, but it also ends this three-saga arc with a sigh of relief as the overbearing chieftain’s power is checked through strong individuals, and dies mysteriously without clear recourse for vengeance, promising a period of peace.

5.4.2 First AM 162 c fol. Organizing Principle: Plot Expansion

In its extant form, AM 162 c fol. features fragments of Ljósvetninga saga, Vápnfirðinga saga, Droplaugarsona saga, Finnboga saga, and Þorsteins þáttir stangarhöggis, all texts set in the north of Iceland, and besides Finnboga saga focused on regional politics. Guðbrandur Vigfússon has suggested that it would have also contained within it many more political sagas. In addition to these five Íslendingasögur, an indigenous Icelandic romance called Sálus saga ok Níkanórs was contained in the manuscript. This led Guðbrandur Vigfússon to assume that around a third of the manuscript would have been sagas of similar nature. Before dealing with Sálus saga ok Níkanórs’s place in the manuscript, the logic of the five extant Íslendingasögur grouped in AM 162 c fol. will be dealt with. Magerøy’s arguments regarding the C-redaction’s tendency toward expansion could be the key to its role in the manuscript as a whole as well. While his arguments characterizing chapters 13–18 as an expansion of the plot are impossible to determine without AM 561 4to’s missing leaves, it is true that AM 162 c fol.’s choice of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction over the A-redaction is aimed at expanding the saga’s narrative. The narrative here includes three þettir that were almost certainly not a part of the A-redaction—at least not in its AM 561 4to

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177 Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell hypothesize that one-third of the AM 162 c fol. manuscript would have been riddarasögur material. They suggested that with Reykdela saga ok Víga-Skálu, Valla-Ljóts saga, Hrafnkels saga Freysgöba, and *Njarðvíkinga saga, the size of its Íslendingasögur portion would have been around 86 folios. Origines Islandicae, 345.
manifestation—and Eyjólfr’s bulk and Pórarins þáttr ofsa, which were most likely not a part of the A-redaction as well. I believe that, at least partially, the same logic applies to the other four Íslendingasögur texts of AM 162 c fol.

It is believed that the version of Droplaugarsona saga preserved in AM 162 c fol. is actually older—or at any rate reflects a differing tradition—than the one available to us in Móðruvallabók, and the same is true for Fínnboga saga. The fragmentary Póristeins þáttir stangarhögg’s represents a slightly different tradition than the one preserved in the paper manuscripts. The four extant leaves of Sálus saga ok Nikanors also reveal to us a different version. The decision made by the AM 162 c fol. compiler of which version to use in the other Íslendingasögur can, in turn, help us understand why Ljósvetninga saga in this manuscript appears as it does.

Prescriptive generic thinking causes us to edit out things that do not belong to the genre as we perceive it, and thus impose an often false and anachronistic logic to the way texts were thought of, composed, and assigned to manuscripts. This is why short stories such as Sýrla þáttir, Ófeigs þáttir, and Vjóu-Brands þáttir are frequently understood as interpolated in the Ljósvetninga saga text, and even as a part of a different genre, as short stories rather than the novel-like saga, and in some editions are removed entirely or relegated to after the end of the ‘saga proper.’ The case of Ólkofra þáttir is a good example of where the prescriptive approach fails to give us a good picture of the medieval perception. According to Emily Lethbridge, when Ólkofra þáttir appears in Móðruvallabók, its rubric is “Ólkofra saga,” rather than þáttir. As she points out, “Modern critics deciding on one or the other generic type (i.e., saga/þáttir) may well be implicitly perpetuating certain hierarchical value judgements founded on assumptions about the relative lengths and narrative value or complexity of sagas (longer, more

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179 Cf. variant readings in Late Medieval Icelandic Romances, vol 2. [...], ed. Agneta Loth.
sophisticated) and þættir (shorter, less sophisticated).” Mathias Blobel’s initial steps at network analysis of the saga corpus came to the conclusion that Íslendingasögur, fornaldarsögur, and riddarasögur were clustered together in manuscripts, and rarely separated. While a handful of manuscripts exist that do contain only Íslendingasögur, the rule is rather one of “decidedly mixed or generically heterogeneous character.” While text compilations such as Móðruvallabók reinforce our notion of the Íslendingasögur genre, their scarcity should reinforce our notion that these genres mattered very little to the thirteenth–fifteenth-century Icelandic audience that wrote and consumed this body of literature. The texts’ place within their respective manuscripts should then be examined, more than their place within their specific genre. The treatment of the Íslendingaþættir as a separate genre has also worked to widen the difference between the Íslendingasögur and the konungasögur. Like the Íslendingaþættir in the konungasögur, one could argue for konungaþættir in the Íslendingasögur. The problem with the prescriptive method offered by Andersson’s structural analysis or Harris’s approach towards Old Norse genre is that, while they illuminate the workings of certain texts from a structural perspective, they blur the similarities that these texts would have in the eyes of their contemporaries. Thus, we forget what a large role the Íslendingaþættir themselves play in the konungasögur, and the significant similarities these have with to Íslendingasögur.

All three of the so-called þættir, Sórla þáttir, Ófeigs þáttir, and Vǫðu-Brands þáttir, are extant in AM 162 c fol. In addition, most paper copies of Ljósvetninga saga, which are believed to have derived from a copy of AM 162 c fol., include a fragment of Pórarins þáttir ofsa; this makes it likely that that story would have been in the complete AM 162 c fol. as well. The inclusion

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180 Lethbridge, “Hvorki glansar gull á mér,” 70. On the þættir as a unsustainable generic category that was constructed in modern editions, see Ármann Jakobsson “The Life and Death of the Medieval Icelandic Short Story.”
181 Such as Móðruvallabók and Pseudo-Vatnshyrna. Lethbridge, “Hvorki glansar gull á mér,” 85, see also 72. It is important to note that while Lethbridge treats Íslendingaþættir and Landnámanabók as texts of a genre different from the Íslendingasögur, no essential distinction between these texts is recognized in the present discussion.
182 Lethbridge, 73.
183 See Lethbridge, 76.
of these þættir expands the story to a wider scope, what Vésteinn Ólason calls “composition by accretion.” The C-redaction narrative expands beyond the dealings of the people from Möðruvellir with the people of Ljósavatn: the three þættir bring the story farther northeast, and the story of Þórarinn ofsi brings in connections with events that take place in the west of Iceland.

But this is not a flawless argument. While for Ljósvetninga saga and Droplaugarsona saga, the compiler of AM 162 c fol. had chosen longer redactions over others that were available, the extant Finnboga saga version in the manuscript is noticeably shorter than the one in Möðruvallabók; unfortunately the extant part concerns events connected with the west rather than the northeast of Iceland. It would certainly have been interesting to see how the narrative dealt with those sections dealing with Finnbogi’s youth in Eyjafjörður. One hint of this can be found in AM 510 4to, a manuscript which has a redaction that is closer to AM 162 c fol. than Möðruvallabók. We find there increased mention of Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði by name. This could simply be a stylistic choice, but it could also indicate an attempt to make him a more prominent character in the saga, rooting the narrative more firmly in the Northeast, or at any rate connecting it more explicitly to a prominent character in Icelandic history, Þorgeirr the Lawspeaker. This tendency toward expansion can also explain the presence of Þorsteins þáttir stangarhöggs in the manuscript. While it could be seen as a standalone narrative, it could also be seen as a text tied to Vátnsfirðinga saga and Bjarni Brodd-Helgason. This text, then, could

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184 Vésteinn Ólason, Dialogues with the Viking Age, 92.
185 E.g., Finnboga Saga Hins Ramma, ed. Hugo Gering, XXI. See also XXI–XXIV.
186 ÍF 14:LXIX.
187 Finnboga Saga, ed. Gering, e.g., 10–11, 50, 55. Though, again, this is not the rule in general dealings with the Northeast. For example, see how many details about Finnbogi’s engagement to Eyjólfr Valgerðarson’s daughter are taken out of AM 510. Finnboga saga, 53. This brings to mind Hans Jacob Orning’s statement that “a manuscript cannot be regarded as a diligently crafted product made up according to some master plan without inconsistencies,” Reality of the Fantastic, 63.
188 Its post-medieval reception confirms this. If AM 496 4to calls it “þáttir ur voknafyrðinga sogú” (32v), AM 156 fol. calls it “Af Þorsteinne Stangarhögg” (8r).
either have been incorporated into Vápnfrönda saga, or could have been appended to it, thus expanding the world of its characters.

One organizing principle of AM 162 c fol., then, could be that of plot expansion. The inclusion of Porsteins þátr stangarhögs, whether we look at it as a stand-alone text or one that was incorporated into Vápnfrönda saga, as well as the longer versions of Droplaugarsona saga and Ljósvetninga saga point in this direction. The manuscript compiler aspired to contextualize his sagas within a wider world, perhaps with the aim of putting the immanent sagas to vellum, after the trauma of the plague presumably revealed how unstable these memories’ existence actually were. Another possibility—assuming Ólafur Loftsson’s identity as a scribe—was the Skarðverjar’s wish to establish a firmer connection to the Northeast. In this scenario, the story of Finnbogi who moved to the Northwest but was born and raised in the Northeast, would certainly be a key text for the Skarðverjar to preserve. But the sagas of AM 162 c fol. also share a common theme, one that connects the Íslandingasögur within it to the single extant riddarasaga, Sálus saga ok Nikanórs. That theme is the debate surrounding the use of power.

### 5.4.3 Second AM 162 c fol. Organizing Principle: Power as Theme

Several scholars have argued that Sálus saga ok Nikanórs, and other indigenous riddarasögur, show a combination of the Íslandingasögur style as well as that of the riddarasögur. It could very well be that this saga would find its place among family sagas. In AM 557 4to (Skálholtsbók), which is partly attributed to Ólafur Loftsson, we see Íslandingasögur, riddarasögur, and konungasögur set alongside each other. While a study of that manuscript’s literary organization is wanting, what is clear from this is that these stories could be seen as fitting together in a manuscript that has been shown to be tied to the same milieu as that of AM 162 c fol.

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If the organizing principle of the Íslendingasögur in AM 162 c fol. is one of expansion, the connection with Sálus saga ok Nikanórs seems to be a thematic one. Ljósvetninga saga (including each of its þættir), Finnboga saga, Vápnfirðinga saga, Porsteins þáttr stangarhöggss, and Droplaugarsona saga, all discuss issues of the exercise of power. The closing lines of Ljósvetninga saga’s C-redaction’s main narrative exemplify this with Skegg-Broddi’s statement: “I don’t think you are a strong man, but you are a sound one,” showing a preference of moderate behavior over brute strength. The message of Ljósvetninga saga is therefore about the moderate exercise of power. Too much power causes trouble and imbalance. In Porsteins þáttr stangarhöggss we see the chieftain Bjarni Brodd-Helgason exercise his power moderately by finding a way to avenge his honor without killing. In Droplaugarsona saga we learn of the dangers of overstepping one’s bounds when the upstart Helgi Droplaugarson takes on the local chieftain Helgi Ásbjarnarson. Vápnfirðinga saga contrasts the relatively peaceful Geitir with the greedy Brodd-Helgi, and Finnboga saga similarly contrasts the two strongmen Finnbogi, who just wants to be left in peace, and Jökull, who is constantly seeking vengeance. This message was relevant in the fifteenth century, just as it was in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries when the sagas were put down in writing, or the tenth and eleventh centuries when the stories that would become the sagas were unfolding and developing.

Here the concept of generic crossroads once again offers an interesting possibility for interpretation. As in the case of AM 561 4to, honor and vengeance are the söguligt generic pleasure, while peacemaking represents the cultural aspiration for peace and conflict resolution.190 Ljósvetninga saga is full of textual forks in the road where generic pleasure competes with cultural norms. In the C-redaction, after two frustrated duel threats (Vóðu-Brands þáttir’s Dorkell Geitisson and ch. 17’s Þórir Helgason), ch. 30 brings the possibility of another duel between the Módruvellíngar and the Ljósvetningar. Geilir, friend of arbitrator Skegg-Broddi, functions as the voice of society: “Illa læt ek yfir því, er hólmgaungur takast upp, ok er þat

190 See William Ian Miller’s Bloodtaking and Peacemaking generally, and n. 19, p. 368.
And indeed, once again—against the logic of the narrative law of thirds—a duel is averted, and cultural norms are restored. To drive this point home, Þórarinn, the most prominent of the Ljósvetningar, learns of the death of his brother Þórarinn. Rather than follow the path of vengeance, the typical decision that would be made in an Íslendingasaga, Þórarinn decides to follow the wish of St. Peter and avoids perpetuating the violent Ljósvetningar–Móðruvellingsar feud. In Vápnfjördinga saga, the feud is only resolved when Bjarni Brodd-Helgason and Þorkell Geitisson neglect their duty of vengeance and honor and adopt the cultural norm of peacemaking. The choice Bjarni Brodd-Helgason makes in Þorsteins þáttr stangarhöggs to employ Þorsteinn rather than kill him is another example of a choice between vengeance and honor and peace. The two Droplaugarsynir upstarts disrupt societal convention by disputing with the district chieftain and eventually killing him. Once they outlive their usefulness from a generic pleasure perspective, the story does away with them, restoring cultural norms. The frustration one might feel when reading of the constant torture by Jökull against Finnbogi in the latter’s eponymous saga may also stem from the narrative’s insistence on offering action and battles instead of the cultural norm of resolution for the sympathetic Finnbogi. This trait could be what made saga scholars insist that this is a ‘late’ saga, despite lack of conclusive evidence to support this; too much generic pleasure and too little conformation to cultural norms could be somewhat off-putting. Despite the fact that Finnboga saga chooses a path different from the other Íslendingasögur in AM 162 c fol., it still discusses a similar theme of balanced power.

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192 Poyer discussed this scene in detail at The Seventeenth International Saga Conference (Reykjavík, 13 August, 2018) in a paper titled “Vernacular Christianity and the Book of Jonah in Ljósvetninga saga.” There she presented her future Doctoral thesis chapter regarding Ljósvetninga saga, which will further explore the religious elements in the saga that are sporadically discussed in the present thesis.
Sálus saga ok Nikónars similarly discusses matters of power. The story starts off with two prominent Mediterranean rulers, Prince Sálus and Duke Nikanór, who are invited to Rome for a feast with the emperor. When people start to praise duke Nikanór and his abilities, Prince Sálus becomes jealous and challenges him to a game of chess and then to a jousting match. Following the joust, the two are near-fataly wounded. When they recover, they are asked by the emperor to become sworn brothers. They agree to this, and the deal is supposed to be sealed through a marriage between Prince Sálus and Nikanór’s sister Potentiana. Here the author drives his point home by the use of the Latin word for power, potentia, in the name for the coveted woman. However, resolution is delayed once the sister is kidnapped to the Israeli/Palestinian city of Acre by Abel and Matteus, two Middle Eastern rulers, and the two sworn brothers Sálus and Nikanór must unite to bring Potentiana back by travelling to the Levant. When they succeed in this through trickery, they prepare for a large battle against Abel and Matteus that is waged in Rome, at the cost of many lives. Throughout the text, Prince Sálus always tries to solve things by force of arms and even murder; Duke Nikanór always checks his behavior, and by tying their fates together, saves Rome and perhaps Europe from the forces that wish to conquer it. The saga clearly favors the cool-headed yet very able Duke Nikanór over the hot-headed Prince Sálus, but it also shows that through checking Sálus’ power, it can be used for the good. Sálus saga ok Nikanórs employs clearly different semantics from its manuscript Islendingasögur neighbours; its values, narrative style, word choice, character building, time and space are literally worlds apart, yet syntactically the sub-plotline of the interactions between Sálus and Nikanór are very similar in nature, though turned somewhat upside-down. Here, interestingly, cultural norms and generic pleasure fit: both kinds of texts shy away from senseless murder as a way of solving disputes. Once the violence of

193 See Orning, Reality of the Fantastic, 125, 178. Orning stresses Sálus’s realization of the fault of his ways, whereas the present analysis focuses on the checking of power through the mechanisms of another agent.
194 It is important to consider the similarities between these texts, discussed above.
prince Sálus is contained, Western society can focus on the real threat
coming from the land of Israel/Palestine. This saga could function to
close off the saga compilation that was AM 162 c fol. as a coda of sorts,
but we will most likely never know its true place within the complete man-
uscript.

5.5 Conclusion

An aversion to all evaluative categorization is in my opin-
ion one of the unfortunate tendencies accompanying post-
modernism as well as the excessive emphasis on one man-
uscript by the New Philologists. In both cases, it was a pos-
itive move to increase scholars’ awareness of the relative
nature of some ideas about literary and textual quality, but
the negative aspect of these schools of thought is a tendency
to undermine the most important function of criticism,
which is to make distinctions and to evaluate; to say, this
saga is different from that one in certain respects and in my
opinion better for it, and this manuscript is more important
and has a better text than another one, although each of
them has its own intrinsic value.

The Íslendingasögur’s nature as a stable group of texts has not changed much
throughout the last two centuries. It is easy to decide what fits and what
does not fit into this group of text. These notions of what makes a proper
Íslendingasaga and what makes a less proper Íslendingasaga have had, how-
ever, sad effects on the way that scholarship has dealt with texts such as
Gull-Tóris saga, Finnboga saga, and most importantly (for the purposes of this
project) Ljósvetninga saga. Scholarship has refused to see Ljósvetninga saga—
its C-redaction at any rate—as a proper Íslendingasaga because it does not
work the way that a proper Íslendingasaga should work. The þættir are seen

195 Orning, 157 and n. 29.
196 Vésteinn Ólason, “Kind of Literature,” 40, n. 28.
as parasitic texts that leached onto a main story without adding much to the mix. I believe that this stems from a false understanding of what the proper Íslendingasögur are. Following from that is a false understanding of how these stories fit in with each other, one that excludes too many texts for either narrative reasons (Ljósveitinga saga), for employment of different modalities (Gull-Dóris saga), or simply because they do not fit with our notions of natural Íslendingasögur development (Finnboga saga).

If, instead of looking at Ljósveitinga saga’s parts separately, we zoom out and look at its generic function within its manuscripts’ context, an alternative generic interpretation for the texts can be established. More specifically, if we do not try to fit the narratives into the generic narratological rules we assume we know, other narratological interpretations open up. Within AM 162 c. fol., Ljósveitinga saga functions as a part of a grander collection of stories of the Icelandic North and Northeast, and as a part of a grander thematic discussion of the uses and abuses of power. Within this framework, the þættir are not unneeded interpolations, but rather integral to the overall aim. This is not to say that the texts do not work well together; as I have showed in the chapter Are Each of the Redactions Internally Consistent?, there is a consistency of characterization and narrative between all parts of Ljósveitinga saga’s C-redaction. Rather than call the þættir interpolated—or even þættir, for that matter—the stress should be on AM 162 c fol.’s scribe (Ólafur Loftsson?) and his choice to incorporate a longer redaction of the saga over the shorter one that was, presumably, available to him. He could have chosen to take out the þættir, like the scribe of AM 561 4to, or Eyjólfr’s bulk of the saga, like the scribes of AM 561 4to and AM 514 4to.

As such, this chapter and the thesis at large contend with the quote by Vésteinn Ólason that opens this conclusion. Indeed, we can agree that certain versions of sagas are more enjoyable or even more artistic than others. An imaginative and creative scribe could turn a middling saga into a masterpiece, with the right change of pacing and the insertion of witty retorts. But since we lack so much by way of paratextual information in
medieval Icelandic manuscripts, we cannot always achieve with certainty an understanding of which redaction or which individual wordings are the ‘original.’ In addition, in the case of Ljóssetninga saga, the insistence on finding an original blurs the fact that both of its redactions are in fact medieval literature, and have equal value in a study of literary history. Indeed, there are times when the C-redaction is more entertaining and tells a better, more expansive story. This says nothing about its precedence, though, since what the present writer finds better, another finds worse. Jason Mittell shows in his research into the generic history of cartoons that our understanding of the genre as directed toward children is a misconception born out of programming decisions: shows like The Flintstones and The Jetsons were originally produced with the aim of an adult audience, and the move from prime-time TV had more to do with the overexploitation of a popular genre than anything that is inherent in the programs.\footnote{Mittell, \textit{Genre and Television}, 56–93.} What Vésteinn Ólason ignores in his insistence on the importance of the evaluative function of criticism, is that this same evaluation creates moments where we decide on the literary history of a certain nation—in this case medieval Iceland—based on the literary tastes of our own times. Decisions based on personal tastes and political interests carry across time, creating concepts such as ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur, or better and worse redactions, long after the debates that these were judged by died down and lost their relevance.
6. Conclusion and Final Thoughts

Guðni Jónsson’s edition of the Íslendingasögur is not frequently used or referred to in scholarship about these texts and general Old Norse topics. It was a popular edition with no critical apparatus except for the rare footnote and a short introduction. However, as Ármann Jakobsson points out, many saga readers have first encountered the Íslendingasögur through Guðni Jónsson’s publications, and as such they shaped their understanding and future interpretations of the sagas.1 This is comparable to how the first version of a symphony you hear rules your interpretation of that piece after and how you judge other performances. Many people and scholars, then, came across Ljósvetninga saga for the first time in the ninth volume of Guðni Jónsson’s Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, titled Pingeyinga sögur. In the short introduction, Guðni repeats Björn Sigfússon’s conclusions regarding the fact that the three þættir had been interpolated into the C-redaction, and therefore prints them separately, after the main saga and with a different heading, just as Björn Sigfússon did. In addition, he repeats Björn Sigfússon’s mistake in citing AM 561 4to as AM 461 4to, as well as the Íslenzk fornrit editor’s choice to separate Pórarins þátr ofsa from the rest of the saga, and even to distinguish between it and the other three þættir’s position in the text. If Sǫrla þátr, Ófegís þátr, and Vǫðu-Brands þátr are interpolated, Pórarins þátr ofsa is treated as a text that is entirely external. In all of these decisions (and mistakes), Guðni follows Björn. One specific decision, however, shines through for its chutzpah: rather than use the A-redaction text and its lacunae, Guðni appends that version of the saga to the end with the title “Viðbætir,” and instead presents the C-redaction without its þættir.

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This is a text that never was and never could be.\textsuperscript{2} Guðni Jónsson had become the author of a new redaction of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}.

This thesis’s primary question has been: \textit{How did the reception of Ljósvetninga saga influence its construction?} Its main conclusion is that \textit{Ljósvetninga saga}—and perhaps all of the \textit{Íslendingasögur} with it—is constantly being re-written. By aiming to go a step backwards, the scribes and editors go two steps forwards. The theoretical debates of saga origins have had a profound impact on the shaping of the saga. Scholarship about \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} had mostly focused on one thing: the saga’s oral versus literary origins. In the name of Bookprose, Björn Sigfússson took it upon himself to contend with Erichsen and Liestol, manipulating the text to eliminate traces of orality—i.e., the narratologically divergent \textit{þættir}—and establishing a firm literary superiority of the A-redaction, the text of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} as it should have been before the interpolated \textit{þættir} and the historical novelization of the C-redaction. Andersson tried to salvage the text from the origins debate by offering a midway, but only succeeded in creating an opposite hierarchy: his A-redaction was a clumsily created abbreviation of the textually superior C-redaction.

If the origin debate of the \textit{Íslendingasögur} affected the saga’s construction, the debate on the dating of \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} influenced the way it was received and analysed. While scholars such as Björn M. Ólsen dated the saga’s various parts separately rather than trying to understand when it was unified as a whole, others such as Björn Sigfússson and Theodore M. Andersson tried to fit it within their own literary-historical frameworks. The problem with these grand theories is that they are built on too many variables, and while they are appealing and provoke discussion, they always have blindspots. One such blindspot is the relationship between \textit{Ljósvetninga saga} and \textit{Brennu-Njáls saga}. A literary connection between these two undoubtedly exists, and sheds a light on these two sagas’ characters and their actions—especially the murderous Víga-Njáll Þorgeirsson and

\textsuperscript{2} Guðni Jónsson, \textit{Pingeyinga sögur}, 97. Though, as seen in the discussion about Erichsen, this sentence is perhaps overstated. Some could conceive of a \textit{þættir}-less C-redaction.
Þorgeirr Ljósvetningagoði—the order of composition will remain unknowable as long as a revision of the dating system and its foundations does not take place.

When it comes to the redactions of the saga, these two texts both work well and consistently in their own rights. Rather than try to find the logical gaps and instances of clear literary influence, like Adolfine Erichsen, Björn Sigfússon, Hallvard Magerøy, and Theodore M. Andersson did, this thesis opted to look at these texts as they are and ask the question not properly answered since A.U. Bååth: Are they internally consistent and what do we gain from seeing them as a whole? With the focus on the representation of Guðmundr inn ríki anchoring the discussion, the narrative and the plot were shown to shed different lights on a complex character, rather than an inconsistent one. It was stressed that both redactions were negative towards Guðmundr inn ríki, rather than the C-redaction somehow coming in to redeem his character from the negative portrayal found in the A-redaction. Most importantly, it was shown that most of the chronological inconsistencies and mirror-characters in the C-redaction serve to shed a critical light on the saga’s characters, mainly the Móðruvellingar. When Knútr inn ríki appears in the saga as the reigning king, thirty years after his death, this could be a chronological misstep on the side of the author, but it is also a way to point out that Guðmundr inn ríki was not truly all that powerful. At the same time, the shared nickname means that King Knútr’s stinginess also reflects poorly on Guðmundr. These kinds of moments reveal the full artistry of the Ljósvetninga saga C-redactor, rather than constitute any blemish on his skills.

The interpretation of Ljósvetninga saga has always focused on issues of origins, with one exception: Barði Guðmundsson. This left-field scholar deserves attention in that he shifts the discussion, though offering us a somewhat disenchanting interpretation of the Íslendingasögur, where all the details only have relevance for their parallels to the Sturlungaöld. While admitting the allure of this analysis, its set of assumptions about the authorship of Njáls saga and inconsistencies are just cause to dismiss, at least
partially, Barði’s main results. Some of the connections he makes—such as the fake Þórhallr name given to Rindill and Þorvarðr Þórarinsson’s spy Halldórr skraf—are too striking to be ignored. While the sagas can reflect the historical times in which they were written, the attempt to see the entire saga as a roman à clef, where the past is stripped of all meaning, is misguided. The debate of synchronic and diachronic approaches to memory illustrated this point. Barði’s interpretation is a synchronic one in which the past is an almost empty vessel, while a diachronic approach to memory offers a more fruitful inter-generational interaction. Synchronic readings offer a model of society that the audience can see itself in. Diachronic readings, however, serve up the past as an, at times, ideal to aspire to, something to learn from. In this way, diachronic readings see more significance in the past than synchronic ones that can strip away the differences and focus on the similarities through the process of keying. The mid-fifteenth-century circumstances surrounding AM 162 c fol., the C-redaction manuscript, offered an illustrative synchronic interpretation. Lundarbrek-kumálíð serves to showcase a diachronic approach to memory, where Þorkell Guðbjartsson reveals how a character’s entire story arc can be a consideration for the choice of a redaction, in its representation of the untrustworthy Hrafn Þorkelsson of Lundarbrekka and the corrupt priest from Laufás, both places associated with Þorkell Guðbjartsson. Another kind of synchronic reading is offered through the similarities between the tenth–eleventh-century Guðmundr inn ríki Eyjólfsson, thirteenth-century Guðmundr inn góði Arason, and fifteenth-century Guðmundr hinn ríki Arason, whose names and behavior interplay with each other, adding layers to a pre-existing (in some form or another) text. Other connections such as Loftur Guttormsson ríki and bishop Jón Vilhjálmssson Craxton also create a plurality of interpretations that is more fruitful and complex than a narrow single interpretation like the one offered by Barði Guðmundsson. Analysing Ljósveitinga saga’s A-redaction through a hypothesized late fourteenth-century dating for AM 561 4to, while offering a variety of interpretative directions, shows us that, obviously, without a context for a
manuscript, it is hard to get a firm grip on the historical circumstances of its writing. Vague statements about the fourteenth century are possible and connections can still be found, but nothing as rewarding and as firm as those made for fifteenth-century AM 162 c fol.

The focus on the fifteenth century and the historical discussion surrounding it was meant to expand the debate beyond the immediate thirteenth-century context of composition toward the time of its transmission. The fifteenth century has been far too neglected in saga research, which is surprising, considering that it is the century when many of the extant material was produced. This thesis constitutes a step toward amending this gap in research, with the recognition that the sagas had an importance to the people of this period, who transmitted their vernacular literature with the hopes of preserving their ancestors’ stories and learning from them. Further research into the post-medieval context of transmission is also needed; the seventeenth-century scribes that kept Ljósvetninga saga’s C-reduction alive, for example, must have found something in it that spoke to them and their lives.

The reception of Ljósvetninga saga also pertains to its generic affiliations. The generic expectations that lead scholars to prefer one redaction over the other influences the way the saga was constructed editorially. Influenced by observations from film genre studies, the thesis provides a pluralistic semantic/syntactic definition that incorporates both themes and structure on the one side, and specific plot elements on the other. This leads to questioning of the concept of ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur. The term is a late-Modern invention, not even relevant to the early printings of the Íslendingasögur in the eighteenth century. By re-examining the dating of Gull-Póris saga and the significant thematic differences between Finnboga saga and Vatnsdœla saga, it is shown that no significant basis has been provided to differentiate these two texts from the proper Íslendingasögur corpus. The assumption is that, with further research, most, if not all, of the texts commonly referred to as ‘post-classical’ will be shown to belong to the Íslendingasögur corpus without much adjustment.
The focus on the manuscript context advances an understanding about the way these saga texts were grouped. It shows that the medieval Icelanders transmitting the sagas were less inclined to think in the generic conventions scholarly discussions usually attribute to them. Texts seen as ‘classical’ and ‘post-classical’ Íslendingasögur and even riddarasögur could be easily placed together in one manuscript, which happened more frequently than not. Indeed, in AM 561 4to, a story such as Gull-Bóris saga provides significantly more entertainment value than Reykdœla saga and Ljósvetninga saga, but this is also due more to choices of redaction than anything inherent in the genre or subgenre of the text. The A-redaction of Ljósvetninga saga is a much more straightforward tale and, as such, lacks much of the other redaction’s flair. As such, I agree with Hallvard Magerøy that AM 162 c fol. aims to expand the saga’s plot and world, as seems to be case for most of the Íslendigasögur incorporated into the manuscript. The AM 162 c fol. scribe or compiler aimed to expand the world of the Íslendingasögur incorporated into them, especially in regard to Northeastern politics. Choosing a redaction of Ljósvetninga saga that incorporated three or four þættir that expand the Mǫðruvellingsar’s playing field makes sense with this agenda in mind. Connecting the discussion to the manuscript’s single extant riddarasaga, it seems like these texts, Ljósvetninga saga, Vápnfirðinga saga, Droplaugarsona saga, Finnboga saga, Þorsteins þáttr stangarhögg’s, and Sátus saga ok Nikanórs all feature a discussion of the theme of power, its execution, and its distribution. If the C-redaction þættir are interpolations, then they are very fortunate ones, since all four stories contain a discussion of power, its application, exploitation, and its reigning in, alongside further connections that make them fit well with the C-redaction text.

Application of Rick Altman’s concept of generic crossroads showed how similar dilemmas are presented within the narrative of both the AM 561 4to texts and those of AM 162 c fol. Both manuscripts showcase a dialogue between the societal norms of peace and reconciliation versus the generic pleasures of violence and vengeance. The interaction between these two forces unifies the manuscripts’ sagas and their debates of power
use and distribution within Icelandic society. This use of film genre theory is meant to help open up Old Norse research into less explored theoretical avenues that have dealt with dilemmas similar to the ones presented by the saga corpus.

Overall, this thesis wished to reveal how scholarly preconceptions guided the reception of a specific saga, *Ljósvetninga saga*, and to contribute to a wider understanding of how saga, Old Norse, medieval, and general literature are each constantly changing and unstable, both in their preservation, and in the way they are presented to the general public and scholarly community. Instead of aspiring to an unattainable original text, scholarship should seek value in what we have: the traces of two distinct redactions, both in their own internal logic and in the manuscripts in which they were placed. If you are to take anything away from this thesis, it would be that each saga should be looked at in its generic, historical, and manuscript context. We need to always be aware of the building blocks of our thinking. Who decided to call a certain saga ‘post-classical’ and another ‘classical,’ and why? Who deemed one redaction older than another, and what were the theoretical assumptions that enforced this decision? What purpose did the saga serve at the time it was written down, and the time it was copied? Much of our preconceived notions about how sagas work and how they even look can be questioned if we remember to always ask what the manuscript said.

Maybe the real *Ljósvetninga saga* was the editions we made along the way.
Appendix: Ljósvetninga saga’s Manuscripts

The following list was compiled mostly by Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugson, with a few emendations and additions by me. Some of Guðvarður’s comments were expanded and translated by me. Any mistakes found in the list are therefore my own. Special thanks to Katelin Parsons and Ryan Eric Johnson for providing me access to the Western Icelandic manuscript Mss Isl 25, and to Matthew Roby for providing me with scans of Boreal 119 and Bodleian Icelandic ms. 9.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Material</th>
<th>Dating</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Scribe</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>AM 561 4to</td>
<td>parchment</td>
<td>c. 1400</td>
<td>32v–37r, 38r–41v</td>
<td>Defective manuscript. Guðmundr Pórláksson marked it as: A. Björn Sigfusson marked it as: A.</td>
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<td>parchment</td>
<td>c. 1420–1450</td>
<td>1r–3v</td>
<td>Fragments. GÞ: C BS: C</td>
<td>Ólafur Loftsson</td>
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<td>parchment</td>
<td>c. 1600–1700</td>
<td>37v</td>
<td>Post-medieval palimpsest rewriting. GÞ: A BS: A. This thesis refers to this side as “37v.”</td>
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<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1650–1700</td>
<td>1r–24r</td>
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<td>paper</td>
<td>1686–87</td>
<td>1v–126v</td>
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<td>1728</td>
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<td>116v–255v</td>
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<td>Jón Þorkelsson</td>
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<tr>
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<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1700–1800</td>
<td>68–89</td>
<td>Based on JS 624 4to. Guðmundr Þorláksson marked it as C3 and called it the best C-redaction paper manuscript.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Kall 621 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1700–1800</td>
<td>1r–35v</td>
<td>Gð:C4 BS:621</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lbs 1629 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1700–1800</td>
<td>27r–62v</td>
<td>BS:1629</td>
<td>Magnús Einarsson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Thott 984 I–III fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1700–1800</td>
<td>434–489r</td>
<td>AM 485 4to &amp; Kall 616 4to its exemplars. Gð:C6</td>
<td>Jón Ólafsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>AM 395 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1764</td>
<td>2r–37r</td>
<td>Latin translation, using AM 485 4to as an exemplar.</td>
<td>Þorkell Sigurðsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>NKS 1217 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1750–1800</td>
<td>1–88</td>
<td>Main exemplar AM 485 4to + variants from AM 162 C 1 fol. &amp; 514 4to</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>NKS 1785 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1750–1800</td>
<td>1–186</td>
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<td>Adeldahl</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>NKS 1798 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1750–1800</td>
<td>1–104</td>
<td>c. AM 514 4to</td>
<td>T. Olavius</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Kall 262 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1750–1800</td>
<td>1–78</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>JS 315 V 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1750–1800</td>
<td>96r–107v</td>
<td>Fragmentary. BS:315</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lbs 151 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1780</td>
<td>145r–193v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Halldór Jakobsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>ÍB 184 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1775–1800</td>
<td>135v–166v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ólafur Sveinsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Lbs 1339 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1790</td>
<td>106r–138v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Porsteinn Sveinbjarnarson?</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Rask 30</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>29–87r</td>
<td>Guðmundur Þorláksson said that its exemplar was Kall 616 4to</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Lbs 117 1 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>1r–84v</td>
<td>c. AM 485 4to</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lbs 117 2 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>Beginning of the saga.</td>
<td>Þorsteinn Gísla-son</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lbs 266 fol</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1800</td>
<td>52v–73v</td>
<td>Incomplete.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Lbs 3712 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>c. 1775–1825</td>
<td>229r–274v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Halldór Hjálmars- son</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Lbs 1846 4to</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>1798–1806</td>
<td>64r–111r</td>
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<td>Tómas Tómasson</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Lbs 1846 4to²</td>
<td>paper</td>
<td>1798–1806</td>
<td>137r–162v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tómas Tómasson</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Lbs 1849 8vo paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1810</td>
<td>1r–52v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Markús Eyjólfsó</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lbs 933 II 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1800–1820</td>
<td>47r–93v</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Lbs 147 8vo paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>2r–91v</td>
<td>According to Guðmundur Þorláksó the exemplar is likely the 1830 Ljósvetninga saga edition (based on AM 485 4to)</td>
<td>Sveinn Pétursó</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Lbs 1489 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1810–14</td>
<td>96r–112v</td>
<td>Last part of the saga (Eygjólfr's bulk) summarized.</td>
<td>Jón Jónssó</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Lbs 1489 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1810–14</td>
<td>112r–122r</td>
<td>Adds both summary of last part of the saga (Eygjólfr's bulk) and the full text itself.</td>
<td>Jón Jónssó</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Lbs 187 fol paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1810–1816</td>
<td>158r–203v</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Lbs 2139 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1812–16</td>
<td>78r–108v</td>
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<td>Þórhell Björnssó</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>ÍB 469 4to paper</td>
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<td>c. 1810–1820</td>
<td>1r–26v</td>
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<td>Þórsteinn Gíslason</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>ÍBR 3 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1816–18</td>
<td>2r–66v</td>
<td>Guðmundur Þorláksó said that its exemplar was AM 514 4to.</td>
<td>Einar Bjarnason</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>JS 437 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1820</td>
<td>1r–87v</td>
<td>c. AM 485 4to</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Lbs 143 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1823</td>
<td>72r–101v</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gísli Konráðsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>JS 428 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1820–1840</td>
<td>2r–?</td>
<td>Makes emendations to the saga’s lacunae. GÞ:C7</td>
<td>Hallgrímur Scheving</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>JS 428 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 1820–1840</td>
<td>?–27r</td>
<td>End of the saga uses Hallgrim Scheving previous copy as exemplar. GÞ:C7</td>
<td>Hallgrímur Scheving</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Lbs 1355 IX 4to paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1841–42</td>
<td>125r–128v</td>
<td>Only the beginning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Lbs 748 fol paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1871–75</td>
<td>220r–256r</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guðmundur Magnússon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mss Isl 25, Icelandic Collection, U. of Manitoba paper Late 19th–early 20th century</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seems to clearly be derived from 1830 edition (the end of PÞ indicates)</td>
<td>Guðlaugur Magnússon</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bodleian ms Icelandic c. 9 paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paper copy of AM 561 4to, incl. reading of 37v legible words</td>
<td>Guðbrandur Vigfússon</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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AM Dipl. Isl. Facs. LXVI 6
AM 156 fol.
AM 162 c fol.
AM 461 4to
AM 485 4to
AM 496 4to
AM 514 4to
AM 554 e 4to
AM 561 4to
BL ADD 4867 4to
Boreal 119
Isl papp 35 fol
JS 624 4to (Látrabók)
Kall 616 4to
Kall 621 4to
Lbs 1629 4to
NKS 1704 4to
NKS 1714 4to
Stock. Perg. 4to 16 (Helgastaðabók)
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