

*HISTORICAL INVASIONS/HISTORIOGRAPHICAL
INTERVENTIONS: SNORRI STURLUSON AND
THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD BRIDGE*

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Snorri Sturluson's account in *Heimskringla* of the events of 1066 is strongly colored by his Scandinavian perspective on English history. He treats the Battle of Stamford Bridge at length, since the subject of his narrative is King Haraldr of Norway, who is killed in this engagement together with his men. The Battle of Hastings, which might be considered equally deserving of attention, if not more so, is passed over quite briefly, as neither Norwegians nor Icelanders are involved. Curiously enough, the Icelandic descriptions of the Battle of Stamford Bridge — Snorri's in particular — have long been recognized as being based on details of the Battle of Hastings.¹ This borrowing has never been adequately explained and is usually considered some sort of historiographical failure on the part of the Icelanders. I will argue that Snorri's goal was not to provide a historically accurate account of these events at all, in the modern sense of the phrase "historically accurate." Instead, I suggest that Snorri deliberately appropriates the Hastings material for reasons of ideology. In exploring Snorri's manipulations of political, Christian, and heroic rhetoric in the service of his own nationalistic program, we will find that his account of the ill-fated Norwegian invasion tells us very little about eleventh-century England, but quite a lot about the historical consciousness that produced *The Battle of Maldon* and *Heimskringla* alike.

However, the sagas of *Heimskringla* are prefaced with an introduction that suggests otherwise: Snorri's prologue discusses the nature of his various sources, which include genealogical poems, skaldic verses, and oral reports, together with his assessment of their reliability. Although the prologue begins disingenuously — far from claiming to be telling "the" truth, Snorri's only certainty is that old men of wisdom considered such ancient poems to be true — his concern is apparently to establish the facts

of what happened in the past.² Nonetheless, modern readers thus lulled into thinking that Snorri's assumptions about historiography must be the same as ours today are in fact being misled. For one thing, certain kinds of data that Snorri treats as historical (e.g., reports of miracles, visions of saints, and supernatural occurrences) are no longer considered so. For another, Snorri often "substantiates" his story with references to objects whose existence is claimed to attest to the historicity of certain events—even when comparison with other sources makes it clear that these "events" are of his own creation. Most importantly, Snorri's accounts of the kings of Norway are emplotted in a specific literary form: the biographical saga.³ As a result, the shape of his histories is dictated by the techniques of saga composition, and not necessarily by other patterns that might be detected in the data that constitutes the historical field.⁴ Theodore Andersson poses the question thus:

Can such a narrative be called history? It clearly does not deserve the name if history has to do with proximity to the truth because it is more than doubtful that Snorri had anything in the way of sources anterior to [the saga he drew on] and closer to fact. Nor does it qualify if history has to do with the faithful representation of earlier documents because it is obvious that Snorri took scandalous liberties with his sources. His work is in some ways a fictional revision of the history transmitted to him. But if history in a period without firsthand records is rather to be judged in terms of shrewdness and plausibility, if history's mission is simply to make sense of the past, then Snorri's history writing in *Heimskringla* observes a high standard.⁵

Andersson is right to question what we mean by calling *Heimskringla* "history." However, to judge that Snorri is "simply" making sense of the past is to fail to question what Snorri means by "history"—to fail to take into account Snorri's own historical position and historical project. I want to argue that the sagas of *Heimskringla* are not "in some ways a fictional revision of . . . history," but are in the largest sense fictional. They are not an imagining of "how it might have been" that is justified by an approximation to the facts of the past; they are a depiction of "how it had

to have been" that is justified by its usefulness to the demands of the present.⁶

Snorri's account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge is part of the saga of King Haraldr Sigurðarson of Norway (1015-66), who after his death acquired the nickname "hárðráði" ("hard-ruler, tyrant"). Haraldr was the half-brother of St. Óláfr and, from 1046-47, co-regent with King Magnús the Good, St. Óláfr's son and successor. After Magnús's death, Haraldr ruled Norway until he was killed at Stamford Bridge in a brief but costly attempt to pursue his claim that he had inherited the throne of England from Magnús (who had inherited it from the son of Canute the Great).

Both Snorri's emplotment of the events of Haraldr's life and his mode of explaining them are literary, rather than historical or "realistic." Some modern critics have tended to read their own assumptions about historical causality into *Heimskringla*, but I believe they are mistaken. For example, Marlene Ciklamini claims that Snorri sees the Norwegian kings' insatiable desire to extend their political dominion as a recurrent, unchanging force or passion in the history of Norway.⁷ I would argue that Snorri, like most historians of aristocratic ages, had little notion of general or external historical forces acting on people, and instead attributed historical force to the will and character of prominent individuals.⁸ His means of explaining this historical force is no different from his depiction of a similar force in a more fictional text: Snorri presents both the ruling dynasty of Norway and the family of Egill Skallagrímsson as patterns of successive generations of contrasting personalities.

Also typical of saga style is *Haralds saga's* lack of an overt moral at the end of the narrative. This absence, however, should not be taken to mean that Snorri did not want his audience to draw such a moral. Although Snorri exerts only an indirect control over his audience's reading of the saga, it is an inescapable one. His method is to situate Haraldr's actions so definitively within the historical context established by St. Óláfr, and confirmed by Magnús, that to judge him by any other standard becomes almost impossible.

1. *The legacy of St. Óláfr*

Snorri uses a number of techniques of saga composition to achieve this end, chief of which is the use of parallelism and antithesis. By this means he is able to link the three sagas of St. Óláfr, Magnús, and

Haraldr, and yet set Haraldr apart from the other two.⁹ For example, each saga contains a set of two pivotal dreams or visions. While in Jerusalem, Óláfr dreams of a man who tells him to return to his native land, for he is destined to be king of Norway forever (*Óláfs saga helga*, Ch. 18). After fifteen years of ruling Norway, Óláfr is deposed, but while in exile in Russia, he has another dream in which he is told to return to the kingdom God gave him (Ch. 188). Similarly, when Magnús is debating whether to defend Denmark against an enormous army of heathen Swedes or to flee because of the great odds against him, his father appears to him in a dream and counsels him to fight (*Magnúss saga ins góða*, Ch. 27). Miraculously, Magnús's army defeats their opponents. Many years later, when Magnús and Haraldr have subjugated Denmark for the second time, St. Óláfr appears to his son again and offers him the choice of coming to him that moment or living to be an old and powerful king, but one who had committed a terrible crime. Magnús asks him to choose, and the saint chooses to have Magnús come to him. Magnús soon falls ill and dies (*Haralds saga*, Ch. 28).¹⁰ Like Magnús in Denmark, Haraldr's return to Norway is prefaced by a vision and made possible by a miracle (Ch. 14). At the end of his life, before leaving for England, Haraldr dreams of St. Óláfr, who warns him that death awaits him, and that God is not to blame for it (Ch. 82). Like Magnús, Haraldr chooses death, but in contrast to his good nephew, he makes his choice by ignoring the saint's wishes, and his death seems an evil one.¹¹

The use of parallelism and antithesis is especially noticeable in the parts of the sagas recounting the kings' dealings with England and the battles in which they are killed.¹² Again, Haraldr is both linked and contrasted with St. Óláfr and Magnús. For example, early in his career as a warrior, Óláfr joins King Æthelred in driving the Danes out of England (Ch. 11). Æthelred's success is made possible by a stratagem Óláfr devises for removing the Danes from London Bridge (Ch. 12), yet this triumph of Norwegian cunning is overshadowed by Canute's later successful invasion of England. Haraldr, on the other hand, is unsuccessful in his attempt to win England for himself in a bridge battle, yet this Norwegian defeat foreshadows the defeat of the English Harold by William the Conqueror. In general, Haraldr's harsh behavior towards the end of his life is contrasted with St. Óláfr's greater gentleness towards the end of his; one example of this is the brothers' differing views of

plundering before their last battles. St. Óláfr forbids his men to plunder, for if they should die in battle, it is best to depart without ill-gained wealth (Ch. 217). When Haraldr lands in England, he starts plundering at once, subjugating the whole district; his men kill a large number of people there and seize all the booty they can (Ch. 83). Finally, of course, Haraldr's decision to claim England stands in contrast to Magnús's decision to let King Edward hold his kingdom in peace for him and to keep the kingdoms God gave him directly (Ch. 37).

Another typical saga technique Snorri uses is that of stranded or interwoven narrative. Accounts of St. Óláfr's miracles are spliced into the events of Haraldr's story, producing a thematic counterpoint between the saint's supernatural powers and the king's cunning, which he uses to obtain and keep power in this world. For example, Snorri recounts the stratagems by which Haraldr, the commander of the Varangian Guard, captures four towns in Sicily (Chs. 6-10): trapping the birds of one town and tying burning twigs to them, so that they fly back to their nests and set them afire; digging a secret tunnel under the walls of another; holding games outside the walls of a third for so long that the inhabitants let the besiegers come closer and closer to the gates; and starting rumors of his own illness and death, so that his funeral procession is welcomed into the fourth town.¹³ In contrast to Haraldr's ploys to enter edifices closed to him is the miraculous escape from prison which St. Óláfr provides for his half-brother after the Empress Zoc has him imprisoned for wanting to return to Norway (Ch. 14).

Third, Snorri provides a direct comparison of St. Óláfr and Haraldr in the voice of a man who knew them both, again using parallelism and antithesis. It is worth repeating this passage in full:

A man named Halldórr, the son of Brynjólfr Carnel the Old, was a shrewd man and a great chieftain. This is what he said when he heard people saying how unlike one another the two brothers, St. Óláfr and King Haraldr, had been. "I was held in high regard by both brothers, and so I knew their natures very well; and I have never known any two men so much alike. They were both highly intelligent and extremely brave in battle, hungry for wealth and power, imperious and haughty, able rulers, and ruthless in punishment. King

Óláfr forced the people to adopt Christianity and the true faith, and cruelly punished those who were slow to obey him. The chieftains would not endure his just and rightful rule and raised an army against him, and killed him in his own kingdom. For that reason he was made a saint. King Haraldr, however, went to war for fame and power, and he forced everyone he could into submission; and so he was killed in another king's land. Both brothers were considerate and generous in their everyday manner. They travelled widely, and were men of great enterprise. And all this made them outstanding and famous far and wide."¹⁴

As is usual in saga narrative, the summary provided by a man respected in the community may be taken as representing the author's own views.¹⁵ This is certainly the case here, for Halldórr is a fiction invented by Snorri—he is unattested in any other historical source.¹⁶ Reinforced by the multiple instances in which Snorri has depicted Haraldr and Óláfr as parallel yet contrasting figures, Halldórr's evaluation can therefore be accepted as Snorri's.

The moral we are evidently to draw from the saga of Haraldr, then, does not only concern the proper relationship between king and chieftain, as has been the focus of several scholars' study of *Heimskringla*.¹⁷ Rather, the other lesson of *Haralds saga* is that political boundaries are divinely established, so that even a king who is the rightful ruler of his own land loses his divine mandate when he wages war on a country that God has set another over.¹⁸ King Haraldr was only a middling student of history; he learned from Óláfr's experiences in domestic politics, but his half-brother's religious example went unheeded, as did the example which Haraldr's nephew, King Magnús, set both in foreign affairs and in the care of his soul, when he declined to press his claims in England and preferred to die young rather than commit a great sin.

It is irresistible to connect this second moral with Snorri's own historical situation, in which another wily Norwegian king, Hákon Hákonarson, was attempting to extend his dominion over another sovereign country, Iceland. Snorri's indirect criticism of Haraldr's literally overstepping the bounds of his responsibility as king of Norway would therefore imply a criticism of Hákon's aims in Iceland, and most scholars

take it as such. But if we accept this reading of Haraldr's invasion of England, does it not imply a condemnation of William the Conqueror's invasion as well? Surprisingly, perhaps, I will argue that it does not. To explain this apparent inconsistency, we must return to Snorri's additions to his source text and consider the philosophy of history implicit in *Heimskringla*, as well as the ideology this theory supports.

Snorri's main source is the saga of Haraldr Sigurðarson found in the compilation of kings' sagas known as *Morkinskinna*, although he also made use of the redaction found in *Fagrskinna*, a compilation later than *Morkinskinna* but drawing from several other sources besides *Morkinskinna*.¹⁹ He made many revisions, but only two groups of them concern us here. One is the set of three miracles he adds in the middle of the saga; the other is the use of Anglo-Norman accounts of the Battle of Hastings as the basis of the account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge.²⁰

Unlike the earlier miracles and visions of St. Óláfr, which are integral to the action of the saga, the central miracles do not advance the plot of the narrative at all. Rather, they are included solely as an oblique commentary on Haraldr's actions, a commentary which is doubly powerful. For one thing, their status as miracles lays claim to a position of extra-textual, extra-historical authority from which to launch their criticism of the king. For another, their placement within the text gives them the force of primary events, so that the episodes of Haraldr's story to which they are thematically linked seem to be distorted reflections of the miracles, rather than primary events which the miracles have foreshadowed.

The first of the central miracles (Ch. 55) testifies that rightful agreements will be enforced by God, even when it is a king who commits the breach of contract. In this case, Guthormr, St. Óláfr's and Haraldr's nephew, is refused his agreed-on share of the enormous booty that he and the Irish king Margad had seized from the Welsh. Guthormr promises the church of St. Óláfr one tenth of the treasure, and with God and St. Óláfr's help, the Irish are defeated at three to one odds on St. Óláfr's feast day. We may contrast this situation with the dispute over the land-dues that later flares up between Haraldr and the Upplanders. Haraldr is angry at Hákon, the earl of the Upplands, for having helped his enemy, King Sveinn of Denmark, escape after the Battle of Nissa, and he decides to collect the land-dues from the Upplanders himself. For two years the Upplanders refuse to hand over the money, saying

that they will gladly pay it, but only to Hákon, unless he had forfeited his rights and his earldom (Chs. 70 and 72). The third year, after having defeated Hákon's forces, though not Hákon himself, Haraldr systematically lays waste to the Upplands, maiming or killing the farmers and burning whole districts, until the survivors submit to him completely (Ch. 73). In the miracle, St. Óláfr visits terrible destruction on the Irish for not keeping their agreement, whereas in its flawed secular reflection, Haraldr punishes the Upplanders with equal severity for keeping theirs.

The second miracle (Ch. 56) records a spiritual victory of the Norwegians over the Danes. Here an evil Danish duke who mocks the cult of St. Óláfr commands his Norwegian servant to bake some bread on the saint's feast day or be cruelly punished. The woman tearfully obeys, praying for Óláfr to avenge this outrage, and the saint obliges, demonstrating the duke's spiritual blindness and hardness of heart by simultaneously blinding the duke and turning the loaf of bread into stone. This miracle results in the Danes regularly observing St. Óláfr's feast day ever after, and stands in contrast to Haraldr's inability to conquer Denmark in spite of the defeats he inflicts on King Sveinn (Chs. 58, 63-64). More specifically, the blind, hard-hearted Danish duke is the opposite of the soft-hearted Norwegian, Earl Hákon, who after the Battle of Nissa "turns a blind eye" so that the captured Danish king, who once protected him from Haraldr's enmity, can be smuggled back into Denmark (Ch. 64).

The third miracle (Ch. 57) establishes a spiritual context for the events of 1066. A cripple in France has a vision in which he is told he will be cured if he goes to St. Óláfr's Church in London. Once in London, the cripple asks for directions, but the English don't know which church is St. Óláfr's. A stranger appears and leads the cripple to the church; when they cross the threshold, the cripple rises up, cured, but the stranger has disappeared. We may compare this spiritual master-narrative to the fractured course of secular history, in which Haraldr, unlike the French cripple, comes to England against St. Óláfr's advice. Once there, the failure of recognition is that of the Norwegians with respect to the English king (Haraldr doesn't recognize Harold Godwinsson, Ch. 91), rather than that of the English with respect to the Norwegian saint. In both cases, the Frenchman profits by the Norwegian intervention, William being consecrated king of England in a London

church. I will argue shortly that the implication here, that St. Óláfr aided William in his ascent to the English throne, is deliberate on Snorri's part.

What Snorri is doing by including these miracles is, first, to establish the cult of St. Óláfr as the spiritual parallel of Norwegian political hegemony in the secular sphere. Second, by contrasting St. Óláfr's prior successful "conquest" of Denmark and England with Haraldr's later failure to bring these realms under his political control, Snorri effects a separation between Norway's imperial ambitions and the divine mandate that had previously legitimized them. Interestingly, the strategy of separation that Snorri uses to criticize Norwegian imperialism is a reversal of the prevalent historical "myth" invoked in support of Iceland's claim to independence. Identified and named by Gerd Wolfgang Weber, the set of *topoi* constituting the Icelandic "myth of freedom" (*Freiheitsmythos*) is found in several genres of Old Norse literature and avails itself of both political and religious doctrine.²¹ The *Freiheitsmythos* situates itself within the Christian tradition, and does not dispute that Christianity and Norwegian imperialism were joined in the person of the king of Norway, beginning with Óláfr Tryggvason and continuing through Magnús the Good. This potent combination of secular and religious authority presented a serious retroactive threat to Icelandic independence, for according to the medieval reading of Paul (2 Cor. 3:17), if pagans will not accept Christianity willingly but must be converted by the sword, then they forfeit their secular sovereignty as well.²² The Icelandic historical myth insists that the country chose to accept Christianity of its own free will at the Althing, thus countering the Norwegian claim that Óláfr Tryggvason converted Iceland forcibly, and hence the Norwegian claim to sovereignty over Iceland in the political sphere as well. A well-known instance of the *Freiheitsmythos* is found in *Laxdæla saga*, when Kjartan Ólafsson reluctantly accepts baptism at the hands of Óláfr Tryggvason, but refuses to become his man and wear fealty to him.²³ Snorri's reversal of this strategy at this particular point in his history of the Norwegian kings is of profound importance, for now he is able to condemn Haraldr without implicating St. Óláfr in his half-brother's failures — in fact, while actively celebrating the patron saint of Norway. As we shall see, once Norwegian imperialism and its Christian legitimization have been forced asunder, it will be virtually impossible for later Norwegian kings to join them together again.

2. *The invasions of England*

The second locus of significant alterations Snorri makes is the account of Haraldr's invasion of England. These alterations form a curious mixture of corrections of factual errors found in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, and revisions evidently intended to support his own ideological program.²⁴ For example, Snorri lifts the discussion between the English earl Tostig and the Danish king Sveinn from *Morkinskinna* almost unchanged, except that he substitutes milder words for Tostig's originally angry concluding remarks (Ch. 78).²⁵ By thus establishing Tostig as a reasonable, level-headed man, Snorri has prepared his audience to take Tostig's next speech seriously. It comes in the middle of his attempt to persuade Haraldr to attack England, a conversation that Snorri substantially revised (Ch. 79). He has Tostig explain how important it is for a war-leader who wants to conquer a foreign people to enjoy that people's support, and has him use the examples of Magnús's conquest of Denmark, Haraldr's failure to do likewise, and Magnús's decision not to try to conquer England because of the popularity of King Edward. The tenors of Tostig's argument and Haraldr's subsequent dream of St. Óláfr reinforce one another, illustrating the truth of Alcuin's now proverbial words: "Vox populi, vox dei."

It is not necessary here to go into all the details of how the Icelandic accounts of Haraldr's invasion are less reliable than the English accounts they differ from, nor into the details of Snorri's use of *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*.²⁶ Rather, the essential point is that Snorri's originality in this respect lies not in the elements of his account, since for the most part they are already present in his Icelandic sources, but in the ends to which he puts them in exploiting their potential more fully: evil omens are reported before the invasion in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, but they are described in the most detail in *Heimskringla*.²⁷ Similarly, details of the Battle of Stamford Bridge in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* are based on Anglo-Norman descriptions of the Battle of Hastings, but the borrowings there are far less extensive than in *Heimskringla*.²⁸

The Icelandic borrowings from Anglo-Norman historiographers, particularly William of Malmesbury, function both on the level of content and on the level of ideology. As with the central miracles, Snorri's technique is to insert his invented parallels earlier in the narrative than the events he drew them from. In the case of Stamford Bridge, the intent is to characterize Haraldr and the Norwegians as heroic but deserted

by their luck.²⁹ By Snorri's time, the words for "(good) luck" or "(good) fortune" were fully harmonized with the Latin complex of terms and ideas referring to "grace," so that Haraldr's loss of luck, which is remarked upon by the English Harold, might well be taken as further evidence of the loss of Christian legitimation that I suggested above.³⁰ The identity between the Battle of Stamford Bridge and the Battle of Hastings that Snorri emphasizes in *Heimskringla* implies that the English occupy a position — in a historical as well as a military sense — similar to the one held by the Norwegians. Harold Godwinsson and his men are now as ill-fated as Haraldr and the Norwegians were earlier, and presumably for the same reason: God and St. Óláfr did not mean for either Harold to be king of the English.

Now at last we come to the answer to our original question: why does Snorri use the Anglo-Norman account of the Battle of Hastings as his paradigm for the Battle of Stamford Bridge? The answer is that at least part of William of Malmesbury's ideological program fitted Snorri's own view of the place of the Normans in European history, making the *Gesta regum anglorum* a source preferable to any English ones, regardless of their factual accuracy. In the context of Anglo-Norman historiography, William of Malmesbury's historical objectives are acknowledged to be contradictory.³¹ On one hand, he wanted to establish the continuity of English church history and prove that the Anglo-Normans had worthy predecessors in England. On the other hand, he wanted to justify the Norman conquest by demonstrating the deficiencies and decadence of the native inhabitants, arguing that the Normans were both God's chosen people in their own right and the agents of God's punishment of the sinful English. It is this second set of objectives that Snorri appropriates for *Heimskringla*, not only by the fact of the borrowing itself, but also by his repeated assertions that the descendants of William the Conqueror have occupied the throne of England down to the present day, which we may take as evidence that William founded the line of England's "rightful" kings.³²

It might well be asked why Snorri bestows God's mandate to rule England on a Norman, rather than on a representative of the Danish line, such as Harold Godwinsson, who could trace his ancestry back to the father of Canute, or on a representative of the English line, such as Edgar the Atheling, the son of the popular King Edward. Aside from the Anglo-Norman explanation — that the very fact of William's success

signifies God's favor—we must consider Normandy's place in Snorri's view of Scandinavian history.

Snorri relates the origins of the Normans in the saga of Haraldr Fair-hair, who forged the many district-kingdoms of Norway into a single domain (Ch. 24). Normandy, like Iceland, was settled by chieftains fleeing Haraldr's war of unification, although the Norwegians were not granted their duchy until 911, more than a quarter-century after the founding of the Icelandic republic. It might be imagined that Snorri, with his intense interest in origins, saw Normandy as a parallel to, or as a political sibling of Iceland, and therefore that he viewed the conquest of England by the Normans with a kind of fraternal pride, as the sort of thing that Iceland could have accomplished, if God had seen fit to make Iceland an aristocracy instead of a republic. The other side of the coin, the general Scandinavian sense of superiority to the English, also dates back to the time of Haraldr Fair-hair, who tricked King Æthelstan into fostering his son.

3. *Trojans, Romans, Æsir, and Vanir*

The critical neglect of origins that obscured Normandy's significance for Snorri has also obscured the historical function of the mythological material with which *Heimskringla* as a whole begins.³³ When scholars do turn their attention to Snorri's myth of the migration of the Æsir from Asia to Scandinavia, they conflate the account found in *Ynglinga saga* with that found in the *Edda*, assuming that both texts reveal Snorri's "opinions" about the matter.³⁴ In fact, Snorri's treatment of the migration in these two works differs significantly. The *Edda's* identification of the Æsir with the ancient Trojans is well known as the medieval Scandinavian instance of *translatio imperii*, the "transfer of empire" which Virgil invokes in his account of the divinely ordained founding of Rome by the Trojan Æneas, and which medieval historians, beginning with Nennius and Fredegar, invoked in turn to legitimize the founding of their countries.³⁵ The legend of the Trojan origin of the Æsir in Snorri's handbook of poetics, however, is primarily intended to legitimize the language of the Æsir (i.e., Old Norse poetry) by setting it in the context of the *translatio studii*, the "transfer of culture" that accompanied the political *translatio imperii*.

What has not been noticed until now is that nowhere in *Heimskringla* does Snorri mention Troy or a Trojan origin. All he says is that the

Æsir came from Asia (*Ynglinga saga*, Ch. 2) and that south of the mountain chain that divides the land of Svíþjóð the Great (by which he is assumed to mean Scythia), it is not far to Tyrkland, where Óðinn owned great possessions (Ch. 5). Now in the *Edda*, Snorri says that Tyrkland is the Scandinavian name for Troy, so this certainly constitutes an allusion to Troy, but it is the only one in all of *Heimskringla*, and a weak one, at that.³⁶ A comparison of the Eddic passages about Troy with the corresponding lines of *Ynglinga saga* shows the extent of Snorri's omissions.

In the Prologue to the *Edda*, Snorri says that the world is divided into three parts, Africa, Europe, and Asia (p. 4). He asserts that Asia is the center of the world, a place of great wealth and beauty. Next he mentions "the most excellent house and dwelling that existed, which was called Troy. We call it Tyrkland."³⁷ Snorri goes on to describe the skillful adornment of the city, its political structure, and a Trojan king named Munon or Mennon: "He married the daughter of the head-king, Priam; she was named Troan. They had a son—he was named Tror, the one we call Þórr."³⁸ *Ynglinga saga* also begins with world geography, but after Asia is listed (p. 10), Troy, Tyrkland, and the Trojans are not even mentioned, much less described in any detail.

At the end of the Prologue of the *Edda*, Snorri relates how Óðinn, having led the Æsir to Sweden, chooses to live in the town that is now called Sigtuna: "There he ordered the chieftains in the same arrangement which had existed in Troy; he set twelve head-men in the place to judge the laws of the land, and thus he arranged everyone's rights as they had previously been in Troy, as the Trojans had been accustomed to."³⁹ The corresponding passage in *Ynglinga saga* simply reads: "Óðinn set those laws for his land which had previously been current among the Æsir."⁴⁰

Towards the beginning of the next section of the *Edda*, the *Gylfaginning*, Hár tells Gangleri how the sons of Borr created the first man and woman, Ask and Embla: "Next, there they made for themselves a town in the middle of the world which is called Ásgarðr. We call it Troy."⁴¹ The corresponding passage in *Ynglinga saga* reads: "East of Tanakvísl in Asia was called Ásaland or Ásaheimr, and the chief town of the country they called Ásgarðr."⁴²

The last reference to Troy in the *Edda* is found at the very end of the *Gylfaginning*. After Gangleri has returned to his kingdom, the hall of the Æsir having vanished around him with a bang, the Æsir themselves

continue their reminiscences: "They give these same names to the men who were previously named and to those places which existed there, so that when a long time passed, men should not doubt that they were all the one and same, the Æsir who have now been spoken of and those who were then given the same names. Þórr was mentioned there, then — the one who is Ásaþórr the old, the one who is Þórr the Charioteer — and to him is attributed those great deeds which Þórr (Hector) did in Troy. And men think that the Trojans have told about Ulysses and they have called him Loki, because the Trojans were his greatest enemies."⁴³ No passage in *Ynglinga saga* corresponds to this insistent identification of the Æsir with the Trojans.

Instead, Snorri's Eddic myth of the Trojan origin of the Æsir is replaced in *Ynglinga saga* with another myth, that of the war and subsequent settlement between the Æsir and the Vanir.⁴⁴ It is perfectly clear that Snorri's contrastive allocation of these legends in their respective texts is deliberate. He could have included them both, if he had chosen; other myths, most notably that of Gefjon plowing Zealand from Sweden, are found in both the *Edda* and in *Heimskringla*. The question to be answered is why he distributed these legends as he did. One would think that the myth of the Trojan origin would be appropriate for a historiographical work; this was certainly the usual medieval reading of it. And conversely, one would think that the myth of the war between the Æsir and the Vanir would find a suitable home in a textbook of poetics largely based on mythological poems such as *Völuspá*, in which this war is of cosmological significance.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, this is not what Snorri chose to do. As the significance of the Trojan myth for the *Edda* is not relevant here, I will consider only the significance of his other choice, the Æsir-Vanir war, for *Heimskringla*.

Snorri follows the geographic opening of *Ynglinga saga* with a description of Ásgarðr and its ruler. "Óðinn was a great warrior and very widely travelled, and owned many kingdoms. He was so lucky in battle that in every conflict he won the upper hand."⁴⁶ Despite his luck, Óðinn is unable to prevail against the Vanir, who defend their land valiantly. After much damage on both sides, the Æsir and the Vanir come to terms and exchange hostages. After some mutual misunderstandings (the Vanir send the head of the hostage Mímir back to the Æsir, and the Æsir condemn the effeminate magic and incestuous marriages of the Vanir), a new political equilibrium is achieved. This myth of the harmonious recon-

ciliation and co-existence of alien cultures is as different as could be from the recurrent familial violence of the Troy story.⁴⁷

Only when the new political equilibrium is firmly established does Snorri situate the Æsir within a specifically historical context: “*At that time*, the Romans travelled widely around the world and laid all nations under them, but many chieftains fled from their own possessions before their aggression. But because Óðinn was prophetic and wise in magic, he knew that his descendants would inhabit the north. Then he set his brothers, Vé and Víli, over Ásgarðr, but he left, and all the gods and many other people left with him.”⁴⁸ Snorri here sets up the Roman chieftains as parallels to Óðinn, in that they are also widely travelled, victorious war-leaders. The simultaneity of the expansion of the Romans and the Æsir asserts the equivalency of their two empires without implying any prior relationship between them. Just as the Roman empire will give rise to the kingdoms of Europe, the empire founded by Óðinn will give rise to the kingdoms of the North: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and, as I argued above, England (by means of the Normans). Having freed the ancestor of the Scandinavian ruling dynasties from the tyranny of Virgilian historiography, Snorri is able to begin Norwegian history with a race of rulers as ancient as the Romans, but untainted by the ambiguities of Troy.

Snorri's choice of an originary legend is illuminating in several regards. In a general sense, the Æsir-Vanir settlement endows the history of *Heimskringla* with an unproblematic heroic past to be re-enacted and recuperated. More specifically, the myth of the harmonious co-existence of the two peoples provides a legitimization of the defusing of Norwegian imperialism which I have argued takes place in *Haralds saga*. If part of Snorri's historical project was to justify Iceland's continuing independence from Norway without severing the economic and cultural ties that joined the two countries, then a legend about an equitable settlement between two conflicting groups was more appropriate than one in which the conflict is resolved in terms of domination and subjugation. Marlene Ciklamini asserts that Snorri found no solution to the problem of Iceland's relationship to Norway, but I would suggest that in beginning *Heimskringla* with the Æsir-Vanir war, Snorri at least offers the paradigm of a solution.⁴⁹

4. *Interpreting Heimskringla*

Snorri's choice of this legend also illuminates his philosophy of history. A. Ya. Gurevich has denied that the kings' sagas contain any philosophy of history, allowing them only "a certain attitude to the course of human affairs," which is not expressed in a "conscious, worked-out system of ideas and values."⁵⁰ Hayden White, however, has shown that a philosophy of history of some sort or another informs all historiographical endeavors, regardless of whether the philosophy is made explicit in the narrative or not.⁵¹ Attempts to articulate the philosophy of history in *Heimskringla* have varied. Siegfried Beyschlag asserts that, in Snorri's view, the ultimate goal of Norwegian history was the high medieval feudal monarchy, with one king, crowned in church, ruling the entire country.⁵² Since *Heimskringla* ends with the saga of Magnús Erlingsson, the first sole ruler of Norway to be consecrated, Beyschlag would presumably see the philosophy of history underlying *Heimskringla* as integrative or comic. Marlene Ciklamini, however, points to Snorri's "deepening sense of pessimism which in the last sagas reaches its nadir"; her focus on the later kings' falling away from the spiritual legacy of St. Óláfr would make *Heimskringla's* philosophy of history a reductive or tragic one.⁵³

I would suggest that the philosophy of history underlying *Heimskringla* is neither comic nor tragic, but ironic. Weber has argued that Snorri is applying the model of theological or salvation history, in which historical time is divided into two large periods (i.e., that of the Old Law, and that of the New), to the secular history of Scandinavia, with the conversion to Christianity signalling the beginning of the New Dispensation.⁵⁴ The philosophy of history here would be integrative, in as much as salvation history, Snorri's model for secular history, will end with the reunion of the bodies and souls of the saved in the Kingdom of Heaven. To conclude the analysis at this point, however, is to stop too soon. Snorri's apparently comic philosophy of history is rendered self-conscious and ironic both by his depiction of men manipulating the signs of God's presence in history for their own ends, and by his own historiographic procedures.

Within the narrative, the most notable example of this irony has special relevance for my argument, since it provides additional evidence of William the Conqueror's significance to the Norwegian monarchy. This is the consecration of the young Magnús Erlingsson as king of

Norway, an act which results not from the extra-historical will of God, as manifested by miracles, visions, or omens, but rather from the political machinations of Magnús's father, Earl Erlingr, and the Archbishop of Nidaros. Their discussion starts off on a rather hostile note, with the Earl suggesting that the Archbishop's recent revenue increases are illegal, and the Archbishop retorting that for the country to have a king who is not a king's son is more illegal still. The Earl immediately becomes more conciliatory. "Now, I see a better thing to do here than for each of us to accuse the other of breach of promise; rather, let us keep our special agreement in every respect. You support the power of King Magnús, just as you have promised, and I shall support your power in all things that are to your advantage," and Snorri adds that "their conversation then took a friendlier turn."⁵⁵ Archbishop Eysteinn has no interest in seeking to do God's will in the matter of Norway's rightful ruler; as long as he can set the archdiocesan fees, the illegality of Magnús's kingship will go uncontested.

Magnús's father, however, wants to settle the question for good. He cites the example of William the Conqueror, who was the son of the Duke of Normandy and yet became King of England, and wheedles the Archbishop with flattering appeals:

But if you will give him royal consecration, then no one can legally remove him from the kingdom afterwards. William the Bastard was not a king's son, and he was consecrated and crowned king over England, and the kingdom has been held by his kin in England, and all were crowned . . . Now there is an archepiscopal seat in the country, a great honor and glory for our land. Let us now increase these good things; let us have a crowned king, no less than the English or the Danes.⁵⁶

Snorri's depiction of the Norwegian king-makers is, at best, a cynical one. Moreover, if I am correct about Snorri's view of Normandy, Earl Erlingr's choice of William is an ironic one, for then the Earl is suggesting that they take as a model for Norway's first consecrated king a man whom Snorri figures as a surrogate for Iceland in the arena of medieval imperialism.

For all of Snorri's ostensible attention to the historical value of skaldic

poetry or reliable witnesses, the cumulative effect of *Heimskringla's* series of sagas is literary, rather than historical. Between the bipartite, theological structure of history and the interventions of St. Óláfr, events seem to be controlled by divine providence, but a closer examination of the sagas reveals otherwise. Snorri's historiographical procedures involve such radical revisions of the past that he himself becomes the *primum mobile* of a providence that functions within the narrative as though it were divine.

As Weber points out, the use of salvation history as a model for the pattern of secular history is not sacrilegious: "There is, according to St. Augustine's irrefutable authority in these matters, no such thing as 'profane' history. All *historia* occurs within the *tempus* [from the Fall of Adam to the Last Judgment] and thus forms part of God's divine plan."⁵⁷ This is certainly true for the many sagas that take the theological interpretation of Scandinavian history seriously, but Snorri's ironic manipulation of this model is radical at best, and dangerously close to blasphemy at worst, as when Óðinn, usually portrayed in Old Norse literature as an evil demon, appears to prefigure St. Óláfr.⁵⁸

Robert Hanning traces what is recognized as the two types of medieval historiography (i.e., the rhetorical tradition of the ancients and the theological tradition of Christianity) in the historical writings of the Anglo-Normans, and derives the tension of their historiographical goals from the co-existence of two mutually distinct views of the past.⁵⁹ Snorri's appropriation of only one element of Anglo-Norman ideology drastically simplifies this tension, resulting in a representation of the past as unproblematic and susceptible to recuperation.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, Snorri's own historiographical goals are not without their inconsistencies.

Snorri's ambivalence towards the Norwegian monarchy has long been noted, being articulated as an uneasy combination either of a respect for the throne but not necessarily for the individual occupying it, or of the desire for royal recognition and the fear of royal power.⁶¹ This personal reaction is manifested historiographically in contradictory strategies of depicting the relation between the individual and the historical process. In the saga of St. Óláfr, Snorri ultimately casts the narrative in the shape of a tragedy of princes. After being deposed, Óláfr is torn between the historical life's difficult demand that he attempt to regain his kingdom, and his private desire to become a monk and devote the rest of his days to God. The pathos of Óláfr's situation solicits the sym-

pathy of Snorri's audience, and with it, their political consent to the institution of the monarchy. In the saga of King Haraldr, however, Snorri invokes quite a different rhetoric. Rather than opposing the historical and the individual within a Christian context, he sets the historical against the heroic. Haraldr's situation is never depicted as pathetic; when he closes the shrine of St. Óláfr for the last time and throws the key into the river (Ch. 80), we see not a king's tragic fall, resulting from a character flaw or the working of an ineluctable fate, but a deliberate refusal of all that St. Óláfr represents, to the extent of approaching apostasy. Haraldr turns his back on the institution of the monarchy that the saint legitimized, on the salvation of a hard man's soul, which Óláfr showed could be achieved through martyrdom, and on the familial mentality that judged him only by how he measured up to his half-brother. Haraldr rejects the role of Óláfr-imitator and adopts that of Germanic hero instead. From this point on, the discourse of heroic poetry accordingly replaces that of hagiography: visions of troll-women and the beasts of battle signal the coming defeat, a causeway of corpses enables the Norwegians to cross Fulford dryshod, and Haraldr's men display the loyalty of Byrhtnoþ's, who fight until they are killed rather than survive their slain leader.⁶²

Snorri succeeds in manipulating his audience's sympathies for St. Óláfr, but his final effort to condemn Haraldr backfires. His aim seems to have been to represent Haraldr's return to an anti-Óláfr heroism as an act of perdition, but his reluctance to forgo the language of heroism — that is, poetry — undoes him. As a composer of skaldic poetry whose artistry was less than his knowledge of the technicalities of the verse-form, Snorri must have had a personal sympathy for Haraldr, who before Stamford Bridge uttered a verse mixing *fornyrðislag* and *rínhenda* meters, and then declared that it was bad, and a better one should be made (Cb. 91). His last verse is in *dróttkvætt* meter, rich in kennings and metrically perfect; as Gabriel Turville-Petre notes, at last he had succeeded in creating the kind of poetry which he had admired from his professional skalds.⁶³ More generally, Snorri's treatment of Haraldr as the last of the great Vikings is no different from his treatment of Egill Skallagrímsson. These two literally larger-than-life characters whose lives bridge the two epochs of history evoke both "admiration and abhorrence" from the perspective of the thirteenth century.⁶⁴ What has been interpreted as a personal ambivalence towards the monarchy on Snorri's part

is equally an ambivalence towards the past; his nostalgia for the heroic age is balanced by his ironic view of its irrecoverability by the lesser men of the present day.

The contradictory effects of Snorri's historiographical strategy for Haraldr are matched by the gaps and contradictions of *Heimskringla's* ideology. All ideologies present themselves as "natural" systems of social relations, deflecting questions and challenges to their authority by labeling some of their enabling assumptions as "obviously" true, and passing over others in silence. The most important example in *Heimskringla* of the former is the status of St. Óláfr as the standard by which all later Norwegian kings are to be measured — this is "obviously" true because God ordained him to be king of Norway "forever" ("at eilífu," *Óláfs saga helga*, Ch. 18). The most important example of the latter is Iceland's status as a country without a king. Non-Icelandic clerics from Saxo Grammaticus onward protested that such a situation was unnatural and ought to be rectified at once, but Snorri is silent on the matter, treating it as unproblematic.⁶⁵ We may view in a similar light Snorri's suppression of the conflict between Haraldr and Pope Alexander II that may have resulted in Haraldr's excommunication; in *Heimskringla*, God's will is made known through St. Óláfr, not the pope.⁶⁶

To sum up, Snorri's account of the kings of Norway, which on the surface of the narrative appears to judge them on their own terms, in fact provides an iron-clad justification for his Icelandic audience's reluctance to yield to Norwegian claims on their country. As I argued above, Snorri converts Norway's secular imperial ambitions into religious ones, substituting the spread of the cult of St. Óláfr for the spread of Norwegian political hegemony. He uses the compositional technique of parallelism and antithesis to separate the powers of Christianity and the Norwegian monarchy, which had previously been united in Icelandic historical thinking. He then valorizes Óláfr as an agent of providential history while alive and as a transcendent, extra-historical force after his death, to the disadvantage of Haraldr, who is shown as rejecting a place outside of history and returning to the purely human rhetoric of heroic death. Once this separation is effected, Snorri is able to hold out the possibility of the recuperation of the original unity by offering the example of St. Óláfr to his successors, while simultaneously preventing this recuperation from ever actually taking place by his depiction of the reigns of the later kings of Norway. After the death of Haraldr's son, Magnús

Bareleg, the reigns of Magnús's sons and their successors are characterized by the withdrawal of God and St. Óláfr from Norwegian affairs; miracles, visions, and omens are no longer found in the narrative. According to the theory of the divine mandate of kings, only a king who tried to model himself after St. Óláfr could be sanctioned by God to increase his dominions, as Óláfr's son Magnús did, becoming the ruler of Denmark; the attempts of any other king to do so would not be right in God's eyes.⁶⁷ Given the "evidence" of *Heimskringla's* portrayal of the twelfth-century falling away from St. Óláfr's example and their knowledge of the Norwegian kings of their own day, thirteenth-century Icelanders could feel reasonably secure that no saints were likely to occupy the Norwegian throne in "modern" times.

In establishing St. Óláfr as the model and legitimating authority for all later Norwegian kings, *Heimskringla* seems to have been an act of historical intervention on Snorri's part, a pre-emptive literary strike against the Norwegian monarchy's ambitions in Iceland. As we know, Snorri's efforts in this direction were a failure: he was killed in 1241 by Gissur Þorvaldsson, an Icelandic chieftain operating under orders from the Norwegian king Hákon Hákonarson, and Iceland yielded to King Hákon twenty-one years later. Where Snorri's intervention was successful was in historiography, rather than in history. His Icelandic reading of Norwegian history completely pre-empted any Norwegian attempts to do the same. If there were any historians — Norwegian or Icelandic — writing for the monarchy, neither their names nor their works survived.⁶⁸

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NOTES

1. The details borrowed include the description of the Norman cavalry, Harold Godwinsson's stand on the heath, the repulse of the Norman army's first attack, the breaking of formation by a company of the English to pursue some of the enemy, who promptly turn and kill them, and the death of Harold by an arrow in the head. See Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ed., *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3 (Reykjavík, 1951), pp. xxxi-xxxiii. Further references to *Heimskringla* will be to this edition. For alternate sources of Snorri's account, see Bruce E. Gelsinger, "The Battle of Stamford Bridge and the Battle of Jaffa: A Case of Confused Identity?", *Scandinavian Studies*, 60 (1988), 13-29, and Shaun F.D. Hughes, "The Battle of Stamford Bridge

and the Battle of Bouvines," *Scandinavian Studies*, 60 (1988), 30-76. Neither of these views has won widespread acceptance.

2. "And although we do not know the truth of [these old poems and lays], yet we know of examples of old wise-men having considered such as true" ("En þótt vér vitum eigi sannendi á því, þá vitum vér dæmi til, at gamlir fræðimenn hafi slikt fyrir satt haft," *Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 4).
3. See Hans Kuhn, "Narrative Structures and Historicity in *Heimskringla*," *Parergon*, 15 (1976), 30-42.
4. The standard study of saga composition, including that of the kings' sagas, is by Carol J. Clover, *The Medieval Saga* (Ithaca, NY, 1982).
5. Theodore M. Andersson, "The Conversion of Norway according to Oddr Snorason and Snorri Sturluson," *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 10 (1977), 83-95 (p. 91).
6. My approach to *Heimskringla* is obviously much indebted to Lee Patterson's brilliant treatment of the problem of the medieval historical consciousness in *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, 1987), pp. 157-230.
7. Marlene Ciklamini, *Snorri Sturluson* (Boston, 1978), p. 65.
8. See Hayden White's discussion of Tocqueville in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 200-05.
9. See also Kuhn ("Narrative Structures"), who outlines the general similarities found in Snorri's accounts of the candidate for the Norwegian throne returning from exile or foreign adventures in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, *Óláfs saga helga*, and *Haralds saga Sigurðssonar*.
10. There is no known source for Magnús's second dream (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxi), so it would not be unreasonable to infer that Snorri added it in order to increase the structural parallels between the saga of Magnús and that of his father. Marlene Ciklamini maintains that the terrible crime would have been to kill Haraldr, but it is not clear that this is what is meant (*Snorri Sturluson*, pp. 133, 139).
11. Arne Odd Johnsen claims that Haraldr had been excommunicated at the time of his death. For his ingenious reconstruction of Haraldr's defiance of Rome, see "Biskop Bjarnhard og kirkeforholdene Norge under Harald hardråde og Olav Kyrre," in *Björgvin bispistol: Fra Selja til Björgvin*, ed. Arne Odd Johnsen et al. (Bergen, 1968), pp. 11-26.
12. Snorri's treatment of Haraldr's fall from his horse just before Stamford Bridge

has been the subject of a deft analysis by Ludvig Holm-Olsen, who considers both the sources of the motif of the king's fall from his horse and its use in this particular scene. See Ludvig Holm-Olsen, "En replikk i Harald hardrådes saga," *Maal og minne* (1959), pp. 35-41.

13. These ploys were borrowed from other sources, such as classical history, medieval chronicles, and so on. See *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, pp. xvii-xix.
14. "Halldórr, sonr Brynjólfs gamla úlfalda, var vitr maðr ok hqfðingi mikill. Hann mælti svá, þá er hann heyrði ræður maanna, at menn misjqfmuðu mjök skaplyndi þeira bræðra, Óláfs ins helga konungs ok Haralds, Halldórr sagði svá: 'Ek var með báðum þeim bræðrum í kærleikum miklum, ok var mér hvárs tveggja skaplyndi kunnigt. Fann ek aldri tvá menn skaplíkari. Þeir váru báðir inir vitrustu ok inir vápnqjrfustu, menn ágjarnir til fjár ok ríkis, ríkyndir, ekki afþýðligir, stjórnsamir ok refsingasamir. Óláfr konungr braut landsfólk til kristni ok rétttra síða, en refsaði grimluga þeim, er dautheyrðusk við. Þoððu landshqfðingjar honum eigi réttðærni ok jafndærni ok reistu ber í móti honum ok felldu hann á eigu sinni sjálfs. Varð hann fyrir þat heilagr. En Haraldr herjaði til frægðar sér ok ríkis ok braut allt fólk undir sik, þat er hann mátti. Fell hann ok á annarra konunga eigu. Báðir þeir bræðr váru menn hverdagliga síðlátir ok veglátir. Þeir váru ok víðfqrilir ok eljanarmenn miklir ok urðu af slíku víðfrægir ok ágætir" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, pp. 200-01).
15. See Lars Lönnroth, "Rhetorical Persuasion in the Sagas," *Scandinavian Studies*, 42 (1970), 157-89.
16. *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxxiv.
17. E.g., Gudmund Sandvik, *Hovding og konge i Heimskringla* (Oslo, 1955), and Lönnroth, "Ideology and Structure."
18. Certainly the ordained boundaries were not permanent; the Norwegian Magnús is the rightful ruler of Denmark after the death of Hördá-Knútr, but this right reverts to the Danish royal family after the death of Magnús.
19. A general survey of Snorri's many additions to and adaptations of his main sources for *Haralds saga* is found in the introduction and notes of *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, pp. xv-xlii, and *passim*, pp. 68-202.
20. Snorri also used these miracles in his *Separate Saga of St. Olaf* (*Óláfs saga ins helga in sérstaka*): Chs. 54-55 and 56-57 of *Haralds saga* correspond to Chs. 266 and 269, respectively, of the *Separate Saga*.
21. Gerd Wolfgang Weber, "Irreligiosität und Heldenzeitalter: Zum Mythencharakter

der altisländischen Literatur," in *Speculum Norrænum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. Ursula Dronke et al. (Odense, 1981), pp. 474-505.

22. The Vulgate text is "Ubi autem spiritus Domini, ibi libertas"; the medieval understanding of it was that freedom from sin was connected with secular freedom or liberty. For the application of the converse — that the sinful bondage of paganism was connected with secular servitude, see Weber, "Irreligiosität," pp. 499-505, and pp. 125-27 of "Intellegere Historiam: Typological Perspectives of Nordic Pre-history (in Snorri, Saxo, Widukind and Others)," in *Tradition og historieskrivning: Kilderne til Nordens ældste historie*, ed. Kirsten Hastrup et al., Acta Jutlandica 63, Humanistik Serie 61 (Aarhus, 1987), 95-141.
23. See Weber, "Irreligiosität," p. 503, and "Intellegere Historiam," pp. 125-27.
24. These corrections are listed in *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxviii.
25. See *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxix.
26. See *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxx-xxxiii.
27. See *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxx.
28. See *Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. xxxiii.
29. Holm-Olsen, "En replikk," p. 40.
30. For a discussion of this harmonization, together with pertinent bibliography, see Carol J. Clover, "Icelandic Family Sagas," in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Ithaca, 1985), p. 266.
31. See Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain* (New York, 1966), pp. 128 ff., and Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca, 1974), p. 173.
32. *Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 125; Vol. 3, pp. 197 and 397.
33. For example, Ciklamini asserts that Snorri included legendary materials about the early history of Norway because he "recognized that . . . folktales and myths articulate in poetic form essential truths about the quality of life and the actions of men" (*Snorri Sturluson*, p. 69).
34. For example, Anthony Faulkes, "Descent from the Gods," *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 11 (1979), 92-125, and Gerd Wolfgang Weber, "Sidaskepti: Das Religionsgeschichtliche Modell Snorri Sturlusons in Edda und Heimskringla," in

35. England and France, respectively.
36. References to Snorri's *Edda* are from the edition of Anthony Faulkes: *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning* (Oxford, 1982). This quotation is from p. 4.
37. "Þat hús ok herbergi er ágætast hefir verit, er kallað var Troja. Þat kǫllum vér Tyrkland" (*Edda*, p. 4).
38. "Hann átti dóttur hǫfuðkonungs Priami, sú hét Troan. Þau áttu son, han hét Tror, þann kǫllum vér Þór" (*Edda*, p. 4).
39. "Skipaði hann þar hǫfðingjum ok á þá líking sem verit hafði í Troja, setti tólf hǫfuðmenn í staðinum at dæma landslǫg, ok svá skipaði hann réttum ǫllum sem fyrir hǫfðu verit í Troju ok Tyrkir váru vanir" (*Edda*, p. 6).
40. "Óðinn set lǫg í land sínu, þau er gengit hǫfðu fyrir með Ásum" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 20).
41. "Þar næst gerðu þeir sér borg í miðjum heimi er kallaðr er Ásgarðr. Þat kǫllum vér Troja" (*Edda*, p. 13).
42. "Fyrir austan Tanakvísl í Asíá var kallað Ásaland eða Ásaheimr, en hǫfuðborgin, er var í landinu, kǫlluðu þeir Ásgarð" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 11).
43. "En Æsir . . . gefa nǫfn þessi hin sǫmu er áðr eru nefnd mǫnnum ok stǫðum þeim er þar váru, til þess at þá er langar stundir liði at menn skyldu ekki ifask í at allir væri einir, þeir Æsir er nú frá sagt ok þessir er þá váru þau sǫmu nǫfn gefin. Þar var þá Þórr kallaðr — ok er sá Ásaþórr hinn gamli, sá er Ǫkubórr — ok honum eru kend þau stórvirki er Þórr (Éctor) gerði í Troju. En þat hyggja menn at Tyrkir hafi sagt frá Ulixes ok hafi þeir hann kallað Loka, þvíat Tyrkir váru hans hinir mestu óvinir" (*Edda*, pp. 54-55).
44. Symmetrically enough, *Ynglinga saga's* one allusion to Troy is matched by a single allusion to the Æsir-Vanir conflict in the *Edda*. This is found in the description of the god Njörðr, who was raised in the land of the Vanir but was given by them as a hostage to the Æsir, traded for an Ás hostage named Hænir. "He [i.e., Njörðr] was present at the settlement between the gods and the Vanir" ("Hann varð at sætt með goðunum ok Vǫnum," p. 23).
45. See Ursula Dronke, "The War of the Æsir and Vanir in *Vǫluspá*," in *Idee — Gestalt — Geschichte: Festschrift Klaus von See*, ed. Gerd Wolfgang Weber (Odense, 1988), pp. 223-38.

46. "Óðinn var hermaðr mikill ok mjök viðfgrull ok eignaðisk mǫrg ríki. Hann var svá sigrsæll, at í hverri orrostu fekk hann gagu" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 11).
47. That Snorri is well aware of this violence is shown by his account in the *Edda* of the first Trojan to be known by both a Trojan and a Scandinavian name, Tror/Pórr: "When he was twelve years old he had his full strength. Then he lifted ten bearskins from the ground at once, and then he killed Loricus, his foster-father, and his wife Lora, or Glora, and took the kingdom of Thracia for himself" ("Pá er hann var tólf vetra hafði hann fullt afl. Pá lypti hann af jǫrðu tíu bjgrnstǫkum qllum senn ok þá drap hann Loricum fóstra sinn ok konu hans Lora eða Glora ok eignaði sér ríkit Thracia," p. 5).
48. "Í þann tíma fóru Rúmverjahǫfðingjar víða um heiminn ok brutu undir sik allar þjóðir, en margir hǫfðingjar flýðu fyrir þeim ófriði af sínum eignum. En fyrir því at Óðinn var forspár ok fjǫlkunnigr, þá vissi hann, at hans afkvæmi myndi um norðrhálfu heimsins byggva. Pá setti hann bræðra sína, Vé ok Víli, yfir Ásgarð, en hann fór ok dfar allir með honum ok mikit fólk annat" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 1, p. 14; italics mine).
49. Ciklamini, *Snorri Sturluson*, p. 67.
50. A.Ya. Gurevich, "Saga and History: The 'Historical Conception' of Snorri Sturluson," *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 4 (1971), 42-53; these quotations are from p. 53.
51. White, *Metahistory*, pp. 30-38.
52. Siefried Beyschlag, "Snorris Bild des 12. Jahrhunderts in Norwegen," in *Festschrift Walter Baetke, Dargebracht zu seinem 80. Geburtstag am 28. März 1964*, ed. Kurt Rudolph et al. (Weimar, 1966), pp. 59-67.
53. Ciklamini, *Snorri Sturluson*, pp. 164-65.
54. Gerd Wolfgang Weber, "Sǫðaskipti," and "Intellegere Historiam."
55. "Nú sé ek hér betra ráð til en hvárr okkarr kenni qðrum brigrðmæli: Hǫldum heldr qll einkamál vár. Styrkið þér Magnús konung til ríkis, svá sem þér hafidð heitit, en ek skal styrkja yðart ríki til allra farsælligra hluta.' Fór þá qll ræðan mjúkliga með þeim" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. 396).
56. "En ef þér vilid gefa honum konungsvígslu, þá má engi hann taka síðan af konungdóminum at réttu. Eigi var Vilhjálfr bastardr konungs sonr, ok var hann vígðr ok kórónaðr til konungs yfir Englandi, ok hefir síðan haldizk konungdómr í hans ætt á Englandi ok allir verit kórónaðir. . . . Nú er hér í landi erkistóll. Er þat mikill vegr ok tign lands várs. Aukum vér nú enn með góðum hlutum,

hofum konung kórónaðan eigi síðr en enskir menn eða Danir" (*Heimskringla*, Vol. 3, p. 397).

57. Weber, "Intellegere Historiam," p. 98, and the references cited there.
58. *Pace* Weber, who holds that Snorri must have viewed the old gods as demons ("Síðaskipti," pp. 311 ff.).
59. Hanning, *The Vision of History*, pp. 128-31. See also Richard W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing, I: The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 20 (1970), 173-96.
60. In this respect, his philosophy of history is the political equivalent of the philosophy of language underlying the *Edda*, in which the knowledge of Scandinavian mythology serves to recuperate the transparent, prelapsarian relationship between signifier and signified latent in Old Norse poetry. Snorri abandons the standard language theories of Donatus and other early grammarians in order to assert that the poetic language of the Æsir directly represented their perception of God's creation -- especially in the case of metaphor, where Snorri uses myths to prove that kennings ("the ship of dwarves" to mean "poetry") were not mere figures of speech, but were literally true. See Margaret Clunies Ross, *Skáldskaparmál: Snorri Sturluson's 'Ars Poetica' and Medieval Theories of Language*, The Viking Collection (Studies in Northern Civilization), 4 (Odense, 1987).
61. Magnús Magnússon and Hermann Pálsson, *King Harald's Saga* (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 36; cf. Lars Lönnroth, "Ideology and Structure," p. 25.
62. Indeed, the echoes of *The Battle of Maldon* are persistent as well as ironic, with the attacking Northmen appropriating the heroism of the English.
63. Gabriel Turville-Petre, *Haraldr the Hard-ruler and His Poets* (London, 1968), pp. 19-20.
64. See Joseph Harris, "Saga as Historical Novel," in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature*, ed. John Lindow et al. (Odense, 1986), pp. 187-219; this quotation is from p. 214.
65. Saxo is cited in Weber, "Intellegere Historiam," p. 95.
66. See note 11.
67. It is true that a king modelling himself on St. Óláfr might think to claim Iceland, or a part of it, as Óláfr did (*Óláfs saga hins helga*, chs. 215-17), but the fact that God did not punish the Icelanders for rejecting the king's request shows that the

request was unlawful and not to be repeated. In contrast, the Norwegians' punishment for rising up against St. Óláfr was many years of hardship and tyranny under Danish rule.

68. See Theodore M. Andersson, "Kings' Sagas," in Clover and Lindow, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*: "Every work [about the kings of Norway] from Ari's *Íslendingabók* to Sturla's *Hákonarsaga* thus shows some Icelandic coloring" (p. 227). I am much obliged to Professor Andersson for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.