

Sigrarðs saga frækna: A normalised text, translation, and introduction

ALARIC HALL

STEVEN D. P. RICHARDSON

HAUKUR ÞORGEIRSSON

ABSTRACT: This article provides the first complete translation into English of the fifteenth-century Icelandic romance *Sigrarðs saga frækna* [the saga of Sigrarðr the Valiant], along with a normalised edition of the earliest manuscripts based on that of Agnete Loth. The introduction shows that the saga artfully combines material from both the learned tradition of romances and *exempla*, and from traditional wonder-tales, showing an unusual warmth towards low-status genres and characters. It argues that the setting of the story articulates Icelandic identity by associating it with the otherworldly setting of the heroes' climactic quest, and studies the constructions of gender implicit in the saga. While clearly heteronormative and potentially patriarchal in its ideological commitments, the saga probes and arguably destabilises the patriarchal culture of late medieval Iceland.

RÉSUMÉ: Cet article constitue la première traduction complète en anglais de *Sigrarðs saga frækna* [la saga de Sigrarðr le vaillant], un roman islandais du XVe siècle, avec une édition normalisée sur la base de l'édition par Agnete Loth des plus anciens manuscrits. Notre introduction indique que la saga combine adroitement la matière de la tradition savante des romans et celle des *exempla*, ainsi que des contes traditionnels; elle fait montre d'une chaleur inhabituelle envers les genres et les personnages de statut inférieur. L'introduction suggère aussi que le cadre de la quête finale des héros, qui se déroule dans un autre monde évoquant l'Islande, permet d'articuler une identité islandaise périphérique. Enfin, nous étudions dans cet article les constructions de genre implicites dans le texte : si l'idéologie de la saga est hétéronormative et potentiellement patriarcale, la saga examine néanmoins, et déstabilise sans doute, la culture patriarcale en Islande à la fin du Moyen Âge.

Alaric Hall is a lecturer in the School of English, University of Leeds. Steven D. P. Richardson is a freelance writer based in London. Haukur Þorgeirsson is a post-doc at the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík.

Introduction¹



his translation is part of a program—ongoing between the authors of this article, but representative of a wider movement—to bring scholarly attention to medieval Iceland’s romances, partly through editing and translating; partly by providing an interpretative introduction which emphasises the texts’ cultural-historical interest; and partly by doing so in a free-access forum, affording the text the widest possible readership. Icelandic romance-sagas constitute a genre which, traditionally considered to be of little literary merit or historical source-value, has enjoyed scant scholarly attention over the last two centuries. However, as the burgeoning study of the closely linked and until recently almost equally neglected genre of *fornaldarsögur* emphasises, medieval Icelandic romances have much to offer readers today. Indeed, they provide evidence which affords distinctive insights into later medieval Icelandic culture, are stories with an aesthetic appeal in our own time, and Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir has recently shown that an assessment of Icelandic culture which does not take into account the full range of genres supported by that culture is liable to be lopsided (2013, esp. 7–8). As an exceptionally rich body of literature from one of Europe’s most far-flung regions, evoking a vigorous and under-appreciated engagement with a wider European culture, Icelandic romance also affords a case-study in the rising wave of new work on so-called popular romance in Europe generally.² We also hope that work on Iceland’s prose romances will, in turn, help to underpin research on a yet more neglected late medieval Icelandic genre—the linguistically challenging *rímur*, verse-narratives, many of which derive from romance-sagas.

Finnur Jónsson’s judgment on *Sírgarðs saga* in his *Oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie* was “alt i alt er den en af de bedste og læseværdigste” [all in all, it is one of the best and most worthy of reading] of the Icelandic stepmother-sagas (1920–24, III 121). We hope we have lived up to his assessment in offering a rendering of the original that is transparent enough to give a good representation of its content and connotations, yet idiomatic enough to convey a good impression of its aesthetic appeal. We have also endeavoured to help readers access the original text by setting our translation facing a normalised text of the earliest version of the saga.

This introduction provides core information about the provenance of *Sírgarðs saga* along with a literary analysis. Notwithstanding the major contributions of recent scholars to understanding medieval Icelandic romance, there are still few detailed case-studies of individual sagas. Recent research has generally taken in numerous romances at once—and sometimes all of them—rightly emphasising the cohesiveness of the genre (for which see also Hall and Parsons 2013, §§9–13).

These studies have plausibly argued that romance-sagas reflected and promoted the development of aristocratic ideologies after Iceland became subject to Norway. They have also found that Icelandic romance, in contrast to many of the classics of the European romance canon, ostentatiously emphasised the importance of homosocial loyalty over heterosexual love (e.g. Glauser 1983; Kalinke 1990; Sävborg 2007; Bagerius 2009; Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2013). In offering a close analysis of one saga, then, we hope to develop a finer-grained understanding of the cultural work achieved by individual romances.

Text and manuscripts

Sigrarðs saga frækna survives in at least fifty-three manuscripts: one from the fifteenth century, one probably from the sixteenth, twelve from the seventeenth, and the rest later; the latest are from early in the twentieth century. It has been printed twice before, in Einar Þorðarson's popular edition (1884), and Agnete Loth's scholarly edition (1962–65, V 39–107). Hall (forthcoming) has examined the saga's transmission in manuscripts held in public and university collections in the Nordic countries, and we summarise relevant results of this study here.

Einar Þorðarson's edition³ does not record which manuscript(s) he used. His text differs markedly from all surviving manuscripts of the saga, but is most closely related to ÍB 426 4to (1877, Hvaleyri, Hafnarfjörður).⁴ Hafnarfjörður is about ten kilometres south of the centre of Reykjavík: Einar's edition thus seems to reflect a late, innovative, local version of *Sigrarðs saga*, considerably shorter than the earliest versions. It may have been a close copy of a lost manuscript, but it is just as likely that Einar introduced changes himself, in keeping with the values of scribal culture at the time, whereby copying tended also to be an act of rewriting. Einar's text has had no direct influence on the present edition.

Loth's edition of *Sigrarðs saga* follows the usual method in her milestone edition of romance-sagas of providing a more or less diplomatic transcription of the earliest manuscript, abetted by readings from other early texts in the Arnarnagnaean collection to fill lacunae, reinterpret incomprehensible sentences, or to record other divergences which she found noteworthy. Loth's principle manuscript was AM 556a 4to, once part of the same manuscript as AM 556b 4to (and probably, as Lethbridge has suggested, the latter part), and better known as the earliest manuscript of *Gísla saga Súrssonar* (Lethbridge 2012b, 396). Together, these are known as Eggertsbók after their earliest clearly identifiable owner, Eggert Hannesson (c. 1515–83). The manuscript itself dates from the last quarter of the fifteenth century; its provenance is currently unknown (cf. Hast 1960a, 15–30, 82–86; Lethbridge 2012a, 352–56). AM 556a 4to is fragmentary, its text of *Sigrarðs saga* commencing only partway through chapter 10 (the point is marked in the translation below). Loth filled the gap with AM 588m 4to, a

seventeenth-century manuscript of unknown provenance which, to judge from comparison with the surviving parts of AM 556a 4to, is its closest (and probably only) surviving descendant. She also referred to AM 123 8vo, from around 1600, again of unknown provenance, and the closely related and generally more innovative AM 167 fol., copied by Arnór Eyjólfsson in Flókastaðir, Rangárvallasýsla, around 1660.

As Loth's use of multiple manuscripts implies, AM 556a 4to, despite its early date, is unlikely to be the ancestor of all our surviving manuscripts: rather they derive from a lost common source. This is not self-evident: AM 556a 4to has been seen as the ancestor of all surviving manuscripts of *Harðar saga* (Hast 1960b), and all surviving manuscripts of the shorter version of *Gísla saga Súrssonar* (Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson 2010, 108). In a scribal tradition where scribes did not copy *literatim* but tended to adapt their source as they copied, it is hard to identify "errors" which distinguish particular readings and manuscripts as being closer than others to a lost original text. However, some other manuscripts (particularly the eighteenth-century Lbs 423 fol. and ÍB 165 4to) present linguistic forms which are more conservative than corresponding parts of AM 556a 4to and are unlikely to be deliberate archaisms, thus pointing to the existence of a different medieval exemplar. Among variant readings, the most striking is that AM 556a 4to and its copy AM 588m 4to alone present the kingdom over which Ingigerðr rules as the otherwise unknown *Taricia*. All other manuscripts identify this region as *Tartaría* [Tartary, the kingdom of the Tartars, the Great Steppe]. The *Taricia* form presumably arises from a misunderstanding of an abbreviated form like *Tart'ia*, where omission of the second t, or confusion of it with c or k, could easily give rise to the impression that the abbreviated syllable was *ríki* [kingdom]. On this point, then, we have diverged from Loth, rendering the name of Ingigerðr's kingdom *Tartaría* throughout.

This means that most manuscripts of *Sigrarðs saga* descend from a lost, medieval "Tartaría"-text of the saga. Bringing the many independent witnesses to bear, it would be possible to reconstruct a version of *Sigrarðs saga frækna* anterior to that preserved in AM 556a 4to. However, comparison of these manuscripts shows that, apart from the matter of *Tartaría*, this reconstruction would be much the same as AM 556a 4to in wording and almost identical in substance. Loth's decision simply to present our earliest text, where we have it, and a close copy thereof where we do not, bringing in alternative readings only at a few points where the manuscript text makes no sense, was a wise choice, and it is her version which we have normalised and translated here. Comparison of the different versions of *Sigrarðs saga* attested in its long transmissional history would of course be worthwhile, with rich potential for studying the responses across a wide range of audiences, and for mapping its change in meaning over time and space. This is beyond our present scope, but some impression of the fifteenth-century cultural context of the saga's production is afforded by its

earliest manuscript. AM 556a–b 4to is noteworthy for containing both romances and *Íslendingasögur*, providing an unusually generically diverse context in which to read *Sigrarðs saga* (Lethbridge 2012a; 2012b). The manuscript, while it must have been very expensive, was not top of the range, with some oddly shaped leaves (some not entirely shorn of hair). On the other hand, its association with Eggert Hannesson, the earliest known owner, is telling: he was the richest Icelander of his day, a merchant and politician, with close family ties to the Church. So although its content and form are undoubtedly partly folkloric and belong to a genre generally scorned by post-renaissance literary elites, *Sigrarðs saga* was, within the first century of its circulation, apparently being read by one of Iceland's greatest magnates. Eggert travelled to Norway, Denmark and Germany in his youth, and chose to end his days in Hamburg. Therefore, though the eastern geography of *Sigrarðs saga* is largely fantastic, it would be unwise merely to imagine that this was a fantasy composed by and for insular Icelanders with no better idea of what lay beyond their shores. Indeed, the impressive eighteenth-century manuscript Lbs 423 fol, which contains *Sigrarðs saga*, opens with *Heimskringla* and the title “norsku kónga krónika samandregin af Snorra Sturlusyni á Íslandi og hefst með Svíþjóðskóngum, hverja hann útfærir af Schytia eða Tartaríalandi” [the chronicle of Norwegian kings edited in Iceland by Snorri Sturluson and beginning with the kings of Sweden, whose lineage he derives from Scythia or *Tartaríaland*]; tucked in at the back is a printed picture of a Turk conquering Constantinople, emphasising the range of resonances which the geography of *Sigrarðs saga* might have had to its learned later readers.

Sources, date and state of text

Most past work on *Sigrarðs saga*—such as there has been—has focused on its origins and sources (see the survey by Glauser 1983, 290–91). Yet these studies have produced no plausible argument for where the saga originated: Stefán Einarsson baldly stated Oddi (1966, 272), but offered no argumentation. There has been good progress on dating though: work on intertextual connections culminated in Jorgensen's argument that *Sigrarðs saga* must be indebted to *Viktors saga ok Blávus* (ed. Jónas Kristjánsson 1964; Chapel 1972) for both the episode in which Sigrarðr tries to have sex with the ostensibly willing Ingigerðr, only to be put to sleep each time, apparently by magical means (chs. 5–6), and the succeeding one in which Sigrarðr attempts to capture Ingigerðr by luring her onto a magic carpet, only for her to push him off and fly away (ch. 7; Jorgensen 1997, clx–clxiii; cf. 1972; Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1964, cxi–cxliv). Since *Viktors saga* was itself dependent on *Jónatas Ævintýri*, probably translated from Middle English in 1429×34, Jorgensen dated *Sigrarðs saga*—or at least *Sigrarðs saga* as we know it from our surviving manuscripts—after the likely date of *Viktors saga*, somewhere

around 1430×50, and before the likely date of AM 556a–b 4to (1997, clxiii–clxiv). *Sigrarðs saga* is thus from around 1450×75.

Jiriczek, and after him Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, asserted that *Sigrarðr*'s adventures with his sworn brothers were “ultimately derived from *Bósa saga*” (Einar Ólafur Sveinsson 1964, cxxxviii; cf. Jiriczek 1893, lv fn). Indeed, it is easy to show that one saga is probably based on the other through a series of corresponding plot details (*Bósa saga*, ed. Jiriczek 1893):

	<i>Bósa saga ok Herraudðs</i>	<i>Sigrarðs saga</i>
1	King has son (Herraudr; ch. 1).	King has son (Sigrarðr; ch. 1).
2	King's neighbour has two sons (Smiðr and Bósi; ch. 2).	King's neighbour has two sons (Högni and Sigmundur; ch. 1).
3	(see 5 below)	King's son <i>mælti eftir</i> [spoke up for] foster-brothers when <i>hirðmenn</i> [king's retainers] played roughly with them (ch. 1).
4	King's son gives foster-brother (Bósi) clothes when his are torn (ch. 2).	King's son gives foster-brothers compensation when <i>hirðmenn</i> tear their clothes (ch. 1).
5	King's son <i>mælti eftir</i> [spoke up for] his foster-brother Bósi when he played roughly with others (ch. 2).	(see 3 above)
6	King's main counsellor (and illegitimate son) has <i>konungsmenn</i> push Bósi around during games but Bósi wounds and kills them (chs 2–3).	King's main counsellor has <i>hirðmenn</i> push foster-brothers around during games but they wound and kill them (ch. 1).
7	(see 12 below)	Foster-brothers kill king's main counsellor (in ball-game; ch. 1).
8	King's son protects foster-brother from attack and helps him to escape (ch. 3).	King's son protects foster-brothers from attack and helps them to escape (ch. 1).
9	King outlaws foster-brother (ch. 3).	King outlaws foster-brothers (ch. 1).
10	King equips son with a fleet (ch. 3).	King equips son with a fleet (ch. 8).
11	Foster-brother joins prince's ship by leaping fifteen ells from a cliff (ch. 3).	Foster-brother joins prince's ship by leaping thirteen ells from a cliff (ch. 8).
12	Foster-brother kills king's main counsellor (in battle; ch. 4).	(see 7 above)

Moreover, *Sigrarðs saga* and *Bósa saga* contain our earliest attestations in Iceland of the concept known in the latter and in modern Icelandic tradition as the *fjöregg*—an egg in which a character keeps their life-force, a concept widespread in international wonder-tales (Einar Ólafur Sveinsson 2003, 59–62).

There is no need to see *Sigrarǫðs saga* as a copy of *Bósa saga* in this respect, but the similarity reinforces the prospect of a connection between them, as does the detail of the earthquake which happens when the owner of the *fjöregg* is killed. *Bósa saga* is generally thought to be from the fourteenth century (Sverrir Tómasson 1996, 48), and while this might be worth reassessing, it can fairly confidently be taken as another source for *Sigrarǫðs saga*.

There is much in *Sigrarǫðs saga*, however, that cannot be attributed to Icelandic literary sources. Besides inventive story-telling, a vigorous engagement with oral wonder-tales is also likely. Work on a small group of medieval Icelandic romances featuring stepmothers and curses, principally *Hjálmþés saga ok Ölvis* and *Ála Flekks saga*, has shown that these are strikingly similar to, and likely in one way or another to be reflexes of, medieval Irish and Welsh stories (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1975; Power 1987; O'Connor 2000). *Sigrarǫðs saga* has not been the focus of any of this research, but the stepmother-saga element of the story surely arises from international wonder-tales. Accordingly, the saga has made occasional appearances as a point of comparison with other stepmother-sagas (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1975, 148 on the landscape associated with the *fjöregg*; Power 1987, 80–81 on yawning as part of cursing/prophetic speech). O'Connor's point that *Hjálmþés saga* is like Irish stories in that the hero has two foster-brothers rather than the usual one also applies to *Sigrarǫðs saga* (2000, esp. 14–15).

More strikingly, as O'Connor has pointed out, the booby-trapped hall into which the Maiden King sends Sigrarǫðr and his companions (led by his foster-brothers Stígandi and Hörðr) in chapter 9 has a fairly close parallel in the perhaps twelfth-century Middle Welsh *Branwen Ferch Lŷr* (Hall 2001, 33 n. 33). Here the king of Britain, Brân, and his army are to be guests in a specially built hall in Ireland (ed. Thomson 1961, 13). Brân's half-brother Efnisien arrives ahead of his compatriots and sees that tied to each pillar in the hall is a leather bag. Despite the assurances of his Irish guide that the bags contain flour, Efnisien divines that they contain warriors waiting in ambush and proceeds around the hall, squeezing the top of each one, crushing the warriors' heads. With cold, anatomical detail and terse repetitions, *Branwen* strikes a very different tone from Hörðr's burlesque capacity to crush thirty men to death with the hump of his hunched back, but the underlying similarities of the scenes are substantial: both depict a lone vanguard proceeding through a hall in which ambushers are hidden, crushing them to death in their hiding place(s). The sequential crushing of Irishmen in *Branwen* is echoed by Hörðr's implicitly sequential crushing of the steel spikes in the hall benches. Patrick Sims-Williams's survey of analogues for this scene in *Branwen* identifies no narrative closer to *Sigrarǫðs saga* than this Welsh text (2010, 280). Hall (2001, 31–33) and Miles (2006) have also argued that parts of *Branwen* are similar enough to *Hrólfs saga kraka*, and unusual enough elsewhere, to suggest that those texts too draw on a shared pool of traditions (cf. O'Connor 2000, 26 on the similarity of the *Bjarkabǫttur* section of *Hrólfs saga* to Old

Irish material). Indeed, as Einar Ólafur Sveinsson pointed out (1964, cxliii n. 1), *Hrólfs saga* also has an analogue for the hall-scene in *Sigrarðs saga*—albeit, as Sims-Williams has emphasised, one whose similarities to the hall-scene in *Branwen* are “vague” (2010, 280). The analogue arises when Hrólfr visits his uncle, King Aðils of Svíaríki: having set pit-traps which the heroes must jump across (closely paralleled in *Sigrarðs saga* but not *Branwen*), Aðils has the hall dimly lit, and positions armed men behind tapestries which accordingly bulge outwards. Unlike *Sigrarðs saga* and *Branwen*, however, *Hrólfs saga* has Aðils’s henchmen rush out from behind their hiding places and attack the heroes (ed. Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson 1943–44, II 70–71). These clusters of similarities between *Sigrarðs saga*, *Hrólfs saga*, *Branwen*, and a broader range of Irish and Icelandic analogues are surely not simply chance common innovations. Sims-Williams has understood Hall’s arguments about the similarities between *Branwen* and *Hrólfs saga* as a claim for “influence on *Branwen* from *Hrólfs saga*” (2010, 280 n. 68). Rather than direct literary influence, however, we are presumably seeing Icelandic adoption of narrative ideas during a fairly intense period of oral, rather than literary, contact between the Western Scandinavian and Irish Sea cultural zones during the Viking Age and the ensuing century or so (cf. Hall 2001, 36; cf. Almqvist 1978–81; Chesnutt 2001). Therefore, the similarities between these texts provide fairly strong evidence that *Sigrarðs saga* is a work drawing on traditional oral narratives, providing some substantiation for Einar Ólafur’s assertion that *Sigrarðs saga* “is clearly based on stories which had been around in Iceland for a long time” (2003, 235).

Finally, it is worth noting that the efforts of the nineteenth-century Icelandic folklore collector Jón Arnason produced a crop of three stories which feature a king or prince who, like Sigrarðr, is morally compromised by his history of womanising and gets his comeuppance from a princess who outwits and shames him (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1929, 130–31, no. 876*). Consultation of the manuscripts shows that the three witnesses to the type are fairly different from one another, a diversity which suggests that the tale was well established in Iceland in the nineteenth century. None shows similarities with *Sigrarðs saga* distinctive enough to suggest derivation from the saga itself, though that is still of course possible. The nineteenth-century stories at least indicate the overlap between *Sigrarðs saga* and oral wonder-tales, and emphasise the possibility that *Sigrarðs saga* drew on earlier instances of this orally circulating narrative.

There was a time when *Sigrarðs saga*’s inclusion of wonder-tale elements, while of interest to folklorists (e.g. Jiriczek 1893–94, 15–16), would have been seen as a mark of its literary decadence—a reading in keeping with Oddr Snorrason’s twelfth-century dismissal of stepmother-sagas as stories “er hjarðarsveinar segja, er engi veit hvert satt er, er jafnan láta konunginn minnztan í sínum frásögnum” [which shepherd-boys tell, whose truth no-one knows, and which always give the king the smallest role in his own saga] (normalised from Finnur Jónsson 1932,

2). However, it is also possible to interpret *Sigrarðs saga*'s fusion of literary romance with oral wonder-tale, partly through the medium of the *formaldarsaga*, as an exciting—if uneven—literary experiment, exemplifying the continued liveliness of romance-saga-writing in the fifteenth century. We cannot be sure whether the *Sigrarðs saga* that we now have access to represents the first written collision of this literary and oral material, or (less economically) whether different sources came together in the course of a lost literary transmission (which might have its origins earlier than the fifteenth-century *terminus post quem* for the saga as we know it). It is reasonable, however, to see the saga that we have as a cohesive, mid-fifteenth-century literary work, purposefully combining traditions both written and oral, to produce a text whose generic affiliations shift artfully between Latinate *exemplum* and vernacular wonder-tale.

This argument can be linked to some other distinctive characteristics of *Sigrarðs saga*. Icelandic romance seldom treats either poverty or the poor positively (Glauser 1983, 182–85), which is one of the various arguments for associating the genre with the development and expression of elite ideologies in Iceland under Norwegian rule. But *Sigrarðs saga* contravenes this convention. It undeniably takes a dim view of slaves, but it does indicate that Sigrarðr's free foster-brothers are poor: they are children to a *karl* and *kerling* [old man and old woman], and these epithets suggest that the parents are not only old, but also commoners. Whereas in *Bósa saga* the foster-brother Bósi is the son of a successful viking and a rich princess, and lacks clothes because of his enthusiasm for rough and tumble, *Sigrarðs saga* implies that Högni and Sigmundur lack clothes because of poverty. There may be a correlation, then, between *Sigrarðs saga*'s blending of literary romance with oral wonder-tales and its distinctive willingness to portray commoners in a positive light. The dual disruption of hegemony through the promotion of the low-status genre of the stepmother-saga and through the positive portrayal of commoners is paralleled by *Ála flekks saga*. *Ála flekks saga* is the pre-eminent Old Icelandic example of an *álög* tale—a story whose plot, like *Sigrarðs saga*'s, centres on breaking a stepmother's curse (*álög*). Like *Sigrarðs saga* too, it is one of the strongest candidates among the romance-sagas for Celtic and oral connections (ed. Lagerholm 1927, 84–120). At the same time, the couple who help Áli flekkr are perhaps the most prominent positively-portrayed poor people in the medieval Icelandic romance sagas, hinting that there may be more than a coincidental relationship between these characteristics in *Sigrarðs saga*. This does not necessarily mean, of course, that *Sigrarðs saga* represents any thoroughgoing commitment to social mobility or equality: as we have mentioned, the portrayal of the foster-brothers' poverty is not followed through with great conviction, the end of the saga emphasising their hitherto concealed high-tech equipment and splendid raiment. But it might reflect the concerns of elite clerics of relatively humble background like Laurentius Kálfsson, Bishop of Hólar 1324–31 (whose background is a continual theme of *Laurentius saga*, ed. Guðrún Ása

Grímsdóttir 1998), or of secular elites in similarly precarious conditions, whether because, like the audiences of many Middle English popular romances, they were *nouveau riche* or because specifically fifteenth-century Icelandic elites generally were placed in an increasingly tenuous position in the Baltic-focused Kalmar Union (Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2013, 5, 116; cf. Sigurdson 2011, 204–13). Perhaps *Sigrarðs saga* used commoner characters to create a discourse of meritocracy whose symbolic remit was in fact the promotion of disruptive elites—whether clerics like Lárentius Kálfsson or merchants like Eggert Hannesson (or, for that matter, the merchant Jónas, who despite being the richest person in the *Austrvergr* is willing in chapter 7 to give up some remarkable possessions for land and an aristocratic title). These readings must remain tentative until fuller work has been undertaken on the provenance and cultural meanings of a wider range of romance sagas, but it at least shows the possibility for reading medieval Icelandic romance as a dynamic genre, responding in the fifteenth century to new cultural pressures and possibilities.

Structure and narrative world

There is no denying that *Sigrarðs saga* has a lot of rough edges, most if not all of which must have been present in the lost archetype of our surviving manuscripts. The ball game in chapter 1, while being of interest for affording one of the most detailed accounts of a ball game in Old Norse, is rather confusingly narrated, perhaps diminishing its amusement for a modern audience.⁵ Some of the later fight-scenes are also confusing. The death of Ingigerðr's father becomes known, as if for the first time, twice in chapter 2. Sigrarðr's foster-brothers are exiled in chapter 1, only to rejoin him in disguise in chapter 8; but while their true identity is not hard to guess, it is not formally revealed until the beginning of chapter 10, when the text off-handedly calls them foster-brothers, and continues to do so for the rest of the saga. If this is a deliberate move to privilege the audience with transparency while the deception goes on for the saga's characters, it is made without fanfare, and it reads more as if the saga-author lost interest in maintaining the deception. Nor, at the end of chapter 14, does this stop Sigrarðr referring to Sigmundr as “fóstbróður minn” [my foster-brother] to his other foster-brother, as if Sigmundr's identity needed explaining. In chapter 16, we are told how the disguise is lifted from Högni but not Sigmundr, leaving the audience simply to infer that his identity is also revealed. And it transpires only in this same chapter that the curse under which the Maiden King has lived since chapter 2 has also afflicted two of her uncles—who, having gained this belated introduction to the cast-list, are never mentioned again. In chapter 8 the pirate Gráboli is introduced as having a horn on each cheek, but the fact that he also has one coming out of his forehead—a detail which one might view as noteworthy even

in a thumbnail sketch—is only mentioned in chapter 9. Numeracy is not the story’s strong suit (though problems caused by mis-copying are quite likely and fuller analysis of the manuscripts might explain these): chapter 10 has Sigrgarðr set out on a quest with six men, of whom five are said to die in chapter 11; the sixth simply vanishes from the text. Chapter 11 has Sigrgarðr say that there are ninety trolls hiding in a mound, but chapter 14 gives us forty.

Comparison with the source-texts also points to some poorly digested literary borrowings. *Viktors saga* features a goblet with a secret compartment containing a sleeping potion. The Maiden King drinks from the goblet to prove that the contents are safe, releases the potion, and passes it to her prospective husband, with obvious effects. *Sigrgarðs saga* takes this scene, borrows its discussion of who should drink first, but then simply has Sigrgarðr fall asleep without drinking (chapter 4; Jorgensen 1997, clxii; cf. clxiii on the handling of the magic carpet). Some of these loose ends could be reconciled with a degree of interpretative cunning. Still, the rough edges give the saga a somewhat improvised character and are endemic enough that, on balance, it seems likely that *Sigrgarðs saga* never reached the stage of a final draft before it entered circulation.

These rough edges, however, should not obscure the saga’s merits. *Sigrgarðs saga* throws itself with unswerving commitment into a wonder-tale of stepmothers and foster-brothers, curses, flying carpets, deception, disguise, shape-shifting, trolls, and bedroom antics. Numerous romance-sagas open with an ostentatiously learned introduction—as for example the “graffiti sagas,” which recount how the saga was first written on a street or city wall (cf. Hall, Haukur Þorgeirsson, Beverley, et al. 2010, 67–69). In *Sigrgarðs saga*, chapter 4’s mention of a banner embroidered with “all kinds of stories” perhaps nods to this motif, but the saga prefers to get underway in the no-nonsense style of the *fornaldarsögur*: “Ríkarðr hét konungr. Hann réð fyrir austr í Görðum” [there was a king called Ríkarðr who ruled over the east in Garðar] (ch. 1; cf. Richter-Gould 1980, 425–26). In doing so, it also avoids the kind of apologetic prologue exhibited by, amongst others, its sources *Viktors saga* and (in some manuscripts) *Bósa saga*, where the narratorial voice works to explain or excuse the fantastical content to follow (cf. O’Connor 2009, 363–66). The closest *Sigrgarðs saga* comes to this is the wry aside when Sigrgarðr and Jónas trade appearances, that “þat kunnu margir menn vel í þann tíma” [many people knew well how to do that at that time].

Indeed, the saga is, overall, tightly and powerfully structured. Sigrgarðr’s misfortunes in attempting to woo the Maiden King begin when she gives him a golden goblet to drink from in chapter 4; and fittingly they end with another such goblet in chapter 15. As in *Viktors saga*, most maiden kings in Icelandic literature reject prospective husbands out of simple haughtiness, and shame them primarily with violence and mutilation aimed, in Kalinke’s reading, at stripping them of their social status (Kalinke 1990, 76–78). But *Sigrgarðs saga* uses Sigrgarðr’s own relentless womanising to provide a moral framework for his repeated rejection

as a suitor: the *svívirðing* [shame] he inflicts on women by sleeping with them and then abandoning them is visited back on him by a woman who ostentatiously implies that he is impotent (Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2013, 125–26). Meanwhile, whereas in *Viktors saga* the protagonist's key helper-figure, his foster-brother Blávus, appears out of thin air (literally: he turns up on a magic carpet), *Sigrarðs saga* builds in its opening chapter on *Bósa saga* to develop a convincing bond of duty and loyalty between hero and foster-brothers.

With a wink to an audience familiar with romance and folktale convention, Sigrarðr himself comments that “þrísvar hefir orðit allt forðum. Skal prófa til um sinn ef kostur er” [everything has happened three times in the past. I must try once more, if there is the chance] (ch. 5). Tripartite structures indeed give the saga its rhythm: Sigrarðr sleeps with women for no more than three nights; his first visit to Ingigerðr's court from Garðaríki involves three nights of escalating humiliation; and two other visits ensue. The third of these itself entails the three foster-brothers working together to fulfil three quests which act sequentially to build up to Sigrarðr undoing the curse on Ingigerðr. The source-study above, however, also reveals a striking two-mode dynamic cutting across these tripartite cycles: a tale of high courtliness and literary resonances gives way to an action-packed denouement drawing on traditional narratives.

The first chapter of the saga, where Sigrarðr's father, Ríkarðr, condemns the foster-brothers to outlawry and which ends with the pregnant statement that “fréttist nú ei til þeira lengi” [nothing was now/will now be heard of them for a long time], sets up the expectation that Sigrarðr's foster-brothers will have an important role to play, so the fact that Sigrarðr undertakes his first two seduction attempts alone is itself a clue that he will not succeed. The saga's audience is in a position to recognise that his wooing fails to connect with the plot of the stepmother's curse: even when Sigrarðr comes to recognise that “ei sé allt logit frá slægðum konu þessarar” [the cunning of this woman may not have been entirely misreported] (ch. 5), he makes no attempt to understand the underlying causes of his rejection. The imagery of this section of the saga is accordingly redolent of Icelandic literary romance and exemplum, featuring international travel, exotic textiles, banquets, and, especially on Sigrarðr's part, elaborate (if pointedly unsuccessful) speechifying. Admittedly it occasionally betrays a distinctively Icelandic imagination: Ingigerðr's *borg* (it is hard to judge whether we should see this more as a city or a castle) is surrounded, rather unambitiously for a ruler who sees herself as on a par with the King of Constantinople, by *garðstaurar* [fence-posts] (ch. 3); Jónas's magic carpet (unlike Blávus's in the source-text) is woven with runes. But the tone is predominantly one of courtly grandeur. However, as Sigrarðr comes to grips with the *álög* plot in his third and final voyage to Tartaría, the imagery shifts to that of a quest whose resonances are oral and local, marking this section of the saga as otherworldly in content, but familiar in form, converging with our expectations for narrative resolution.

Sigrarðr turns to the advice of his elderly foster-mother, reunites with his foster-brothers, tests and proves his mettle fighting pirates, and embarks on the journey that leads to the *ffjoregg*.

Infamously, romance-sagas do not employ the specific and vivid localisation that characterises the *Íslendingasögur*. Romance-sagas' conceptualisation of space, however, still establishes a complex dialogue between the local and the international, the European periphery and the mainstream (Barnes 2006; 2007). In *Klári saga*, for example, the waking nightmare of the fabulously wealthy French princess Séréna commences when she opens her eyes to what is in all but name "the humble *færíkvi*, or portable sheep-pen, which was a ubiquitous sight in the Icelandic countryside from the Middle Ages until well into the nineteenth century" (Hughes 2008, 139). One way to read this kind of topography is as the insular imaginings of people who naively envisioned the wider world in identical terms to their own island. But they can also be read as knowingly negotiating Icelandic cultural identity: they relate Iceland to Continental Europe both at the level of literary form (taking the European genre of romance and putting a local spin on it), and at the level of the story's setting.

Thus as Sigrarðr undertakes his quest for the *ffjoregg*, he enters what is, relative to the courtly life of Garðaríki and Tartaría, an otherworld associated with supernatural beings and magic, marked by mirroring and inversion. The saga has all three foster-brothers changing form through the magical intervention of Sigrarðr's foster-mother Gerðr. This reverses the pageantry of arming the hero in mainstream romance: the arming of the heroes in *Sigrarðs saga* renders them ugly and seemingly unmarriageable, playing on the undesirability of the Maiden King's first suitors, her stepmother's brothers Skjöldr [Shield] and Hjalmr [Helmet]. The Maiden King demands that her animals be gathered not in the autumn, but on the first day of summer, when they might normally be expected to be led out to upland pastures. Stígandi walks on water; Sigrarðr fights Knútr underwater; the *jötunn* who guards Hlégerðr's *ffjoregg* rows a stone boat (*Giant has stone (as) boat* is a well-attested motif in Old Icelandic literature and beyond—Boberg 1966, F531.4.8—but familiarity need not displace the sense of wonder that it evokes).

But although Sigrarðr's third expedition leads him from court into otherworld, in some ways the setting grows increasingly familiar from an Icelandic point of view. This partly entails a move from the trappings of romance to those of the more traditional *foraldarsaga*: merchants give way to vikings; Ingigerðr's elaborate manipulation of social convention is replaced with a booby-trapped hall; Sigrarðr's earlier asymmetrical encounters with Ingigerðr switch to a symmetrical inversion of identity, the transformation of the three foster-brothers, implicitly through Gerðr's magic, matching Hlégerðr's transformation of Ingigerðr and her two sisters. The increased sense of familiarity also involves the environment with which the characters interact. As Sigrarðr proceeds inland

on his quest from Ingigerðr's court to round up her horses and pigs, we arguably recognise the world of the Icelandic transhumance economy. The inland cliffs, steep slopes, meadows, valleys, and lakes recall Iceland's summer pastures. The herding of horses was a part of this economy (see Sundqvist 2004), and although sheep are a more familiar feature of Icelandic transhumance than pigs, at least in the thirteenth century, Icelandic pigs seem to have been "allowed to roam free like sheep," needing to be rounded up again in the autumn. Fittingly, they had a particular reputation for being hard to handle (Kovářová 2011, 86–88). The foster-brothers pause to enjoy watching horse-fighting, a pastime more prominent in *Íslendingasögur* than romance. The earthquake which follows Hlégerðr's death is an imaginative deployment of Iceland's distinctive geology (of a kind which, as Barraclough 2012, 79 has recently emphasised, never occurs in *Íslendingasögur*, despite their celebrated local texture).

One interpretation of the Icelandic character of Tartaría's otherworld would simply be that the saga offers an unthinking reproduction of Icelandic geography, in which civilisation occurs on the coast; the sea is a thoroughfare rather than a barrier; and otherworlds are found by proceeding inland—just as the wilderness of Serkland (presumably corresponding to our North Africa or Middle East) in *Jarlmanns saga ok Hermanns* is characterised, *inter alia*, by glaciers (ed. Loth 1962–65, III 49). In this reading, Tartaría is in a fairly straightforward sense a mapping of Iceland's own cultural geography. However, something more self-conscious may have been at work: a fifteenth-century Icelandic audience listens to a story whose hub is in the heart of the Eurasian continent and whose courts are ostentatiously unlike settlements in Iceland itself. Yet the audience relate their own uplands to romance characters' otherworlds. This reading implies a discourse which recognised and emphasised Iceland's peripherality—and in doing so marginalised the island—but which also privileged Icelanders with an intimate understanding of the otherworld implicitly inaccessible to the people in what *Nítíða saga* calls "miðjum heiminum" [the middle of the world] (McDonald 2009, 142; cf. Hall 2013, 22–23). This kind of discourse is well paralleled in other contexts, not least the nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalisms of the Celtic-speaking British Isles. It also parallels the somewhat subversive discourse of social status implied by Sigrgarðr's foster-kin: though they may be low in status, Sigrgarðr's foster-parents and foster-brothers provide the foresight and access to magical technology on which the prince Sigrgarðr relies in order to negotiate the paradoxical world of the stepmother's curse.

Einar Ólafur Sveinsson called *Sigrgarðs saga* a "tale of enchantment" (1964, cxxxviii): indeed, it is a saga where paradox suspends reason's grip, opening up new worlds of possibility; enchantment is a power to this end. In a tale dominated by spells, charms, and transformations, the author deploys paradox itself as a form of literary magic. As in the cowing of Séréna in *Klári saga*, the inversions of the natural order and the disruption of romance's generic conventions give

Sigrarðs saga's quest-sequence a dream-like character—though Séréna's experience is more firmly nightmarish. Fittingly, the rage in which Sigrarðr returns from his quest abates only after he has been administered what we might assume to be a sleeping potion, to find himself, on waking, back in the courtly setting of Tartaría, of castles, great armies, diplomacy, and, of course, weddings. But it is in this dream-like sequence, this journey from romance to *formaldarsaga*, that Icelandic writers and audiences were able to articulate their own identity.

Gender

As Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir has recently emphasised, medieval Icelandic romance is fundamentally concerned with exploring gender norms and boundaries, and more perhaps than any other saga-genre, runs the gamut from extreme and explicit misogyny (epitomised by *Klári saga*) to proto-feminism (at least in *Nítíða saga*; 2013, 107–33). Critics have debated how we should understand the saga's take on gender and gendered behaviour and this would have ramifications for how we read the text as an intervention into the discourses of gender of its own time. As Jóhanna Katrín has shown (2013, 107–8), for the most part medieval Icelandic maiden-king sagas

are fundamentally conservative: the ideal woman who is submissive to her father and husband is foregrounded, and a common result of the maiden-king's departure from this standard is her rape or other mistreatment and consequent loss of reputation. However, the process of assimilating new ideas is not seamless. In scenes where the male hero fails to win the woman he woos, and where she manages (temporarily) to gain the upper hand, the texts also reveal male anxieties deriving from redefined social status and power.

It is certainly possible to make this case for *Sigrarðs saga*. Jóhanna Katrín has suggested that, like *Nítíða saga*, "*Sigrarðs saga frækna* presents the ... view that using violence to woo a maiden-king is unproductive" at the moment when Sigrarðr's foster-mother Gerðr advises Sigrarðr against invading Tartaría. On the other hand, Bagerius (2009, 163) has argued, in a similar vein to Glauser's earlier analysis of *Sigrarðs saga* (1983, 208–15), that

Både *Gibbons saga* och *Sigrarðs saga frækna* lyfter fram könsakten som en hierarki. När riddaren deflorerar jungfrun återskapas den naturliga maktordningen mellan man och kvinna. Samlaget blir könsskapande; det bevisar att riddaren är en man som kan erövra och härska och att jungfrun är en kvinna som kan besegras och kuvas. Det är ingen tillfällighet att riddaren griper till våld för att tvinga mökungen till underkastelse. I den höviska kulturen sågs våldet som nödvändigt för riddaren.

Det var med våld som han fick makt över andra män, och det var också våldet som gav honom makt över kvinnor.

[Both *Gibbons saga* and *Sigrarðs saga frækna* emphasise the hierarchical character of the sexual act. When the knight deflowers the maiden, the [supposedly] natural power-relations between men and women are reproduced. Sexual intercourse is productive of gender; it shows that the knight is a man who can conquer and rule, and that the maiden is a woman who can be vanquished and suppressed. It is no coincidence that the knight resorts to violence to force the maiden king into submission. In courtly culture, violence was seen as necessary for a knight: it was through violence that he gained power over other men, and it was also violence that gave him power over women.]

Kalinke has characterised Sigrarðr as “the hero least attractive ethically” in the corpus of maiden-king sagas (no small achievement), on account of his womanising (1990, 74). Weighing against Kalinke’s negative take on Sigrarðr here, Glauser found a parallelism between Sigrarðr’s misdemeanours and the Maiden King’s. The statement that Sigrarðr’s men’s behaviour did not make them popular, and that “af þessu urðu þeir víðfrægir” [they became widely known for this] is paralleled in chapter 3 by the statement that the Maiden King became “víðfræg en ei vinsæl” [well known but not popular]. This might suggest that Sigrarðr’s moral failings are no greater than the Maiden King’s own thefts and murders, leaving the characters ethically equal (1983, 208–9). But although Einar Ólafur Sveinsson too found that “the author strikes a certain balance in his allotment of sympathy to the prince and the maiden queen,” he also ventured that the author “seems to want to show that she has more to excuse her than he does” (1964, cxxxviii). Thus it is not immediately clear that we should approve of Sigrarðr’s actions. It is clear, however, that the saga can support multiple readings and responses, and whether calculated or accidental this ambivalence gives the saga a valuable richness as an avenue into Icelandic cultural history.

While clearly not ideal, Sigrarðr’s characterisation as a womaniser is perhaps less damning than it might look at first sight. Sigrarðr is introduced into the saga as a supporter of his foster-brothers Högni and Sigmundur, which establishes him as a character committed to his friends—a commitment which is rewarded on his final journey to Tartaría. And things could be worse: unlike Hákon jarl inn ríki Sigurðsson, as portrayed in the *konungasaga* tradition culminating in *Heimskringla* (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 45: Snorri Sturluson 1941–51: I 290–91), Sigrarðr is not portrayed as a rapist, but rather a seducer. The closest analogue in the romance-saga corpus, the introduction of Liforinus in *Nítíða saga*, says that Liforinus “var svo mikill til kvenna að engi hafði náðir fyrir honum, en enga kóngs dóttur hafði hann mánaði lengur” [was so keen on women that no-one had any peace from him; but he didn’t stay with any princesses longer than a month] (McDonald 2009, 128; for other analogues see Einar Ólafur Sveinsson 1964, cxxxviii).

Nítíða saga's brevity (at least in the manuscripts which furnish the editions of Loth 1962–65 and, following her, McDonald 2009) perhaps leaves us scope to read Liforinus's sequential seductions merely as a sign that he has yet to meet the right woman, and this is conceivably how we should read *Sigrarðs saga* (cf. Kalinke 1990, 75 n. 11). Indeed, in emphasising Sigrarðr's irresistibility to women, his saga can be read as misogynistically implying that at least part of the problem is women's lust rather than Sigrarðr's. Meanwhile, the implicit criticism of Sigrarðr's actions is in terms of its effect on the relatives of the women he beds, which tends to devalue the women themselves (Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2013, 123).

On the other hand, the Maiden King forces the audience to scrutinise Sigrarðr's actions not from the point of view of his conquests' kinsmen but from the point of view of the conquests themselves. Misogamous maiden kings seldom delay in degrading their suitors through violent assaults which strip them of the physical trappings of their social rank (with a brutality which generally reduces our sympathy for the maiden kings themselves); this is also true in the later Icelandic folktale analogues to *Sigrarðs saga*. But the Maiden King of *Sigrarðs saga* takes an unusual and psychologically more complex approach, challenging the sense of self-worth Sigrarðr derives from (public knowledge of) his sexual exploits. This deepens our perception both of her character and his. Sigrarðr's previous amorous conquests have been dishonourable; the irony inflicted by the Maiden King is that, because of his existing bad reputation, his present failure is even more dishonourable than his past successes. (She redeploys this technique later in the saga, using the ostensibly good reputation of the supposedly dead Sigrarðr to browbeat Knútr the Brisk, who she knows is really Sigrarðr in disguise.) The Maiden King's elaborate charade of sexual desire for Sigrarðr and frustration at his impotence, combined with her manifest ability to resist his advances, provides a counterweight to any misogynistic ideas of female lustfulness suggested by Sigrarðr's earlier conquests. Indeed, Jóhanna Katrín has argued that, in an interesting subversion of the later medieval Icelandic constraining of elite women's sexual freedom, the Maiden King deliberately courts "the stigma attached to losing virginity before marriage ... to avoid marriage" (2013, 125). Not all audience members may have approved of her strategy, but it seems beyond question that *Sigrarðs saga* uses its feisty female protagonist to problematise the moral status of the hero and the gender-norms within which he operates. Indeed, we could read this aspect of *Sigrarðs saga* as a riposte to *Bósa saga* (cf. Bibire's reading of *Nítíða saga* as a response to *Klári saga*, and *Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns* as a response to *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*: 1982, 67, 70): Bósi's sexual exploits comprise Old Icelandic literature's most unabashed account of womanising, and the various women Bósi sleeps with are implausibly untroubled by his advances. *Sigrarðs saga*, however, problematises this aspect of its source text in ways which do not simply express patriarchal disapproval at the damaging of other men's

goods, but which expose the tight social constraints and double-standards with which women contend.

The complexities of reading gender in *Sigrarðs saga* are multiplied by Hlégerðr's curse, which calls into question how far Ingigerðr has agency in her guise as the Maiden King. Thus when the Maiden King hears the news (which the audience knows to be untrue) that Sigrarðr has been killed by the viking Knútr, "hon brosti við ok kvað margt skrökvað þó at skemra væri at spyrja; enn þó sáu menn þá at hagl hraut úr augum henni rautt sem blóð" [she smiled and said that many reports were untrue, even though they may be heard from nearer at hand. Even so, people saw that hail fell from her eyes, as red as blood] (ch. 9). Tears like or (more melodramatically) of hail are a saga-convention, appearing in *Viga-Glúms saga*, *Njáls saga*, *Sturlunga saga* and *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*; they usually follow news of the death of a close relative, and portend violent revenge (served cold; Nordal 1998, 49).⁶ But in *Sigrarðs saga* do they represent the Maiden King's sorrow at Sigrarðr's death and desire for revenge on Knútr? This would be psychologically interesting, since it would reveal that the Maiden King has an inner affection for Sigrarðr, thrust by force of feeling through the hypnotic prison of Hlégerðr's curse. But the Maiden King seems sceptical about the news and in chapter 15 claims to have seen through Sigrarðr's transformation into Knútr all along. So is the Maiden King actually revealing her vengeful rage at Sigrarðr's continued temerity? Or is she merely pretending that she wants to avenge Sigrarðr's death to legitimate killing him when he arrives in the form of Knútr? The weeping of hail, therefore, is significant not only for its vividness but also its ambiguity—an ambiguity which can be thought of as a means for creating psychological depth. Likewise, when the Maiden King sends Sigrarðr (disguised as Knútr) into the hands of Hlégerðr and her brothers, is she simply sending her unwanted suitor on a suicide mission, or is she, consciously or unconsciously, trying to open up the possibility of breaking Hlégerðr's curse? Or is she, at different levels of her personality, doing both? By taking a predictable plot and deploying vivid but ambiguous hints as to the Maiden King's motivations for advancing it, the saga gives readers the scope to find realistic psychological complexity within a highly conventional narrative form. In this way, the saga explores the complex nature of human desire, and accommodates the possibility of subliminal desire.

The curse in some ways exonerates Ingigerðr from blame for her socially unacceptable avarice, violence, and misogamy and can be seen as a device to ensure audience sympathy for her. On the other hand, it is while under the curse that Ingigerðr mounts her most trenchant critiques of Sigrarðr and arguably, by implication, of patriarchal and heteronormative customs generally. Is the audience, then, to dismiss these critiques as readily as Sigrarðr dismisses the curse when he breaks the *fjöregg*? This question can be addressed through a close look at a key moment towards the end of the saga which has yet to receive critical analysis. This is Sigrarðr's response, after he has just broken Hlégerðr's curse,

to the Maiden King's attempt at making peace with him: "enn þegar meykonungurinn gat nökkut hrært sik þá skreið hon at fótum Knúts ok vildi kyssa á þá, enn hann vildi stíga í andlit henni ef Hörðr hefði eigi bannat honum" [as soon as the Maiden King was able to move herself, she crawled to Knútr's feet and tried to kiss them, but he would have stamped on her face had Hörðr not prevented him] (ch. 15). The fact that when the curse is lifted, Ingigerðr crawls to Sigrgarðr's feet and tries to kiss them is a startling reversal of her previous actions—and Sigrgarðr's brutal response is no less striking. Multiple questions arise of both characters here.

Ingigerðr establishes herself at the beginning of the saga, before being cursed by Hlégerðr, as perceptive, charismatic, and quick-thinking; Hlégerðr comments on Ingigerðr's "höfðingskapr" [lordliness], which comes from the masculine *höfðingi* [chief]. As the Maiden King, Ingigerðr continues to exhibit all these qualities—thus she grasps instantly how to fly Jónas's magic carpet, and does not mince words in her sarcastic parting shot to Sigrgarðr, whereas in *Viktors saga Fulgida* seems slower on the uptake, and is accorded no direct speech. Moreover, Ingigerðr's assumption of the kingship of Tartaría, as the heir to her father, is not directly imposed by Hlégerðr's curse. We might simply argue, then, that at the end of the saga, consistent characterisation of Ingigerðr is subordinated to an ideological drive to present a paradigm for proper female behaviour, presenting us with an example of ideology trumping creativity. After all, as with most maiden kings and shieldmaidens of Icelandic sagas (Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir 2013, 113–14), Ingigerðr's adoption of masculine identity is patchy: her male name of Ingi is never used beyond its first mention, and indeed the saga repeatedly lapses into calling her *drottning* [queen]. Ingigerðr is noted for her womanly handicrafts (ch. 3), and although her one effort to wield weapons commands respect in a context where martial activity was aspirational, it is, like the attempt by Þordís Súrzdóttir in *Gísli saga* (ch. 37, ed. Björn K. Þórólfsson and Guðni Jónsson 1943, 116), ineffectual, a detail brought into relief by the fact that the weapons the Maiden King fails to use are Sigrgarðr's own.

Meanwhile, it is certainly possible that audiences greeted Sigrgarðr's efforts to kick Ingigerðr in the face with approval. Within the ideology of the saga's composition, Hörðr's restraint of Sigrgarðr at this moment would serve to provide a platform for Sigrgarðr to perform masculine violence unbridled by self-control—a performance of which we would, in this reading, implicitly approve and for which we might have yearned during his clumsy and effete attempts at courtly wooing earlier in the saga. The moment when Sigrgarðr definitively asserts his violent dominance over Ingigerðr would be the culmination of a transformation in his character—not, this time, a transformation of appearance, but a fundamental shift in his status. Despite the saga's hyperbolic and conventional opening description of Sigrgarðr's prowess, he is always one step behind the Maiden King, and what we actually see of him for much of the saga amounts to hubristic

self-confidence, hapless buffoonery, and a tendency to run to his (not entirely sympathetic) father for help whenever things go wrong. Sigrgarðr's third visit to Tartaría, however, sees him turning for support to the foster-brothers whose assistance he has earned both through his own good deeds and in opposition to his father. Although Ríkarðr gives Sigrgarðr a great army for this third expedition, Sigrgarðr dispenses with this assistance after defeating Knútr (establishing his martial credentials in so doing: cf. Glauser 1983, 210–14; Bagerius 2009, 163–64). Faced with a series of lethal tests of physical and martial strength, he is able to demonstrate his abilities and even, at times, to emerge from the shadow of his foster-brother Högni as a planner and decision-maker. He finishes the saga by taking command of the situation when his father arrives, showing himself to be a successful and independent ruler in his own right—a classic “family drama,” to use Brewer’s term (1980).

There is another way to interpret the sudden submissiveness which Ingigerðr adopts after Hlégerðr’s curse has been broken, however. Arguably, while the curse on Ingigerðr imposes various problems on her and her family which she needs to overcome, it is more or less redundant as an explanation for her psychology—rather, she can be read throughout the saga as acting rationally in her own interest and that of her family, as a woman who does not wish to spare her sisters from marriage to the trolls Hjalmr and Skjöldr only to subordinate herself to an unreliable, unproven, and unbecoming suitor. Bagerius argued that Ingigerðr comes to realise that “om hon inte kan försvara sig och sitt rike får hon inte bära kungsnamn, och då kan hon inte längre uppträda som en man” [if she cannot defend herself and her kingdom, she cannot bear the name of king, and so can no longer act like a man] (2009, 162). But Ingigerðr herself addresses this kind of reasoning earlier in the saga: pretending to accept Sigrgarðr’s suit, she comments that “vér þurfum forstöðu, bæði fyrir oss ok vart ríki” [we need protection, both for ourselves and our kingdom]. Of course, this is really another manipulation and subversion of a patriarchal discourse: the Maiden King has in fact proved eminently capable of looking after her kingdom for herself (“hon er ósigrandi” [she’s invincible] says Ríkarðr in chapter 7). Ingigerðr defends her sisters from unwholesome marriage proposals at the beginning of the saga, and despite her submissive stance to Sigrgarðr at the end, she sustains this commitment there even in the face of the threat of enslavement.

Sigrgarðr’s implacable rage after he returns to the Maiden King’s court with the *fjöregg* means that care for his longer-term wellbeing falls into the hands of his more diplomatic foster-brothers. Against this backdrop, it is possible to read Ingigerðr’s submissive actions—even at the point of her groggy first recovery from the curse—as wily diplomacy, entirely in keeping with her own demonstrated ability to control the world around her. She switches from being wooed to being the wooer, eloquently and effectively, leaving us in little doubt as to who the real statesman in the relationship will be.

However subversive, *Sigrarðs saga*, like *Nítíða saga*, still presents a marriage of man and woman as—if the match is a good one—the most important aspiration in life; it is also broadly a royalist text. But within this, for those audiences which were not too caught up in a patriarchal world-view to notice, we argue that *Sigrarðs saga* afforded a challenging investigation and some incisive critiques of male hegemony.

Conclusions

Our primary goal as translators and editors has been to allow audiences to make their own judgements about the meanings of *Sigrarðs saga* as it (must have) stood in its earliest surviving manuscript. We have endeavoured to make this possible by providing a text and translation which are both accurate and accessible. However, we have also endeavoured to show in this introduction that *Sigrarðs saga* is a dynamic and—notwithstanding its manifest inconsistencies of detail—tightly-structured narrative, which, through its colourful characterisation, opened up questions about both gender- and socio-economic hierarchies in late medieval Iceland.

Whether we read *Sigrarðs saga* as conservative, subversive, or something more ambiguous, is open to question: different critics have taken it to support various positions on gender in recent years, and there is no reason to doubt that it supported various readings among its medieval audiences too. The saga promotes the homosocial loyalties conventional in Icelandic romance, and offers a coming-of-age narrative for its main protagonist familiar from a wide range of romances and fairy tales. But by problematising the hero's sexual conduct and using the voice of the wooed maiden king to articulate this problematic status, the saga opens up a discursive space in which female desire can be discussed and, implicitly, debated. In this, the saga deserves to be read as a response to its main sources, *Viktors saga ok Blávus* and the more widely studied *Bósa saga*. *Bósa saga*'s main protagonist wins the knowledge to complete his foster-brother's bridal quest by seducing low-status women; *Viktors saga*'s foster-brother willingly tricks his sister into a marriage she has hitherto resisted. *Sigrarðs saga* demands that we at least consider these kinds of actions from the point of view of a woman who—whether from her own desire or from her stepmother's curse—is charismatic, witty and wily, and who arguably emerges from the saga as having proved herself at every turn an abler statesman than her eventual husband.

Meanwhile, more than most other texts in the medieval Icelandic romance corpus, and certainly more than its identifiable written sources, *Sigrarðs saga* puts non-aristocratic characters at the centre of its story, hinting at the emergence of a slightly different ideology among the literate elites of fifteenth-century Iceland from the more firmly aristocratic attitudes expressed by earlier romances.

This is consistent with the saga's literary form: while borrowing and adapting from written romances, *Sigrarðs saga* shifts partway through into a lively quest narrative which seems to derive from oral forms. While this tale need not actually have been garnered from shepherd boys, it shows a readiness to bring relatively low-status narrative material into written romance, deepening an existing fusion of literary influence from continental Europe with local cultural values. Indeed, we have argued that *Sigrarðs saga* embodies Icelandic attitudes regarding Iceland's perceived spatial and cultural peripherality, in which the otherworld of mainstream European romance is appropriated as the dangerous but still relatively familiar environment of the island's summer pastures, on the one hand entrenching a discourse of Iceland's peripherality, but on the other recouping cultural capital by positioning these peripheries as necessary to the success of the questing Continental hero, and so positioning Icelanders as more knowledgeable in matters important to European culture than those at the centre. In this way, we can read the Icelandic use (and, as it were, abuse) of the European romance genre as an active engagement with European identity.

Normalisation and translation

We have normalised Loth's text to a standard consonant with the generally conservative spellings of AM 556a 4to, which are consistent with fourteenth-century written conventions, preserving for example final unvoiced stops in low-stress syllables like *ok*, *þat*, and *eggit* and the pre-epenthesis *-r* in words like *Sigrarðr*, but showing the collapse of earlier <ɔ> and <ø> (represented in our edition, as in Modern Icelandic, as <ö>), and of <æ> and <œ> (represented in our edition as <æ>), and the development of the reflexive verb inflection from *-sk* to *-st*.

Our translation aims to present a faithful but readable text, often adjusting sentence boundaries, conjunctions and adverbs. (While, on account of its slightly different purpose, this introduction sometimes deployed more literal translations.) We chose in almost all cases to maintain the tense-switching of the original, feeling that, while unconventional in modern English prose, this is such an integral feature of sagas' style that it is worth sustaining.

Names have been preserved in their Old Icelandic form, except for place-names with a straightforward present-day English equivalent (*Eystrarsalt*, the Baltic Sea; *Miklagarðr*, Constantinople). Although the geography of *Sigrarðs saga* is fundamentally fantastic, most of its other place-names, while not readily translatable, are familiar in saga-literature: *Garðaríki*, *Sigrarðr*'s home, can be understood to correspond to Scandinavian-speaking Russia of the Viking Age; the *Austrvegr* [the eastern route] is the series of arterial river-routes running from the Baltic to the Black and Caspian Seas. As discussed above, *Ingigerðr*'s own

home, Tartaría, is more problematic in terms of its manuscript attestations. But we view the saga as set in a Tartary of the imagination, characterised by its easternness, both in terms of its stated geography and by details like Jonas's flying carpet.

The personal names of monstrous beings, in this saga as in others, tend not to be formed within the dithematic naming system prevalent in Iceland, rather being transparently meaningful simplexes. We have left these in Icelandic form in the text, so it is worth explaining here that Hlégerðr's brothers Skjöldr and Hjálmr are "Shield" and "Helmet" respectively. *Hjálmr*, at least, is a familiar element in the everyday personal-name system, aligning Hlégerðr and her family with normal people, but not as a simplex—marking the characters as suspicious. The names of Hlégerðr's three herdsmen, Kampi, Skeggi and Toppr, however, mean "Moustache," "Beard" and "Forelock" and are far from usual—and fittingly the facial hair of the latter two proves to be their downfall in battle. The bestial henchmen of Knútr the Brisk are the equally exotically-named Jógrímr [horse-Grímr] and Gráboli [grey bull]. While in disguise, Sigrgarðr's foster-brother Sigmundur goes under the name of (Vel)stígandi [walking (well)], which of course correlates with his possession of magic shoes, and marks his identity in this part of the saga as an assumed one.

Otherwise, most of the personal names in *Sigrgarðs saga* are formed on the usual pattern of Icelandic dithematic personal names, albeit with varying degrees of conventionality. Sigrgarðr's name is very unusual: it does not appear in Lind's survey of medieval West-Scandinavian names (1905–15; 1931) though it does appear in *Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands*, and some connection between the sagas is to be suspected. *-garðr* is an unusual second element: in mainstream Icelandic naming, it appears only in *Valgarðr*; *Sigrgarðr* perhaps has its origins as a folk-etymologisation of *Sigurðr* (actually from **Sigvǫðr*, De Vries 1962, s.v. *Sigurðr*). The website *Íslendingabók* (<http://www.islendingabok.is>) attests to only six Icelanders called Sigurgarður, living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of whom two pairs were related (Sigurgarður Hallgrímsson, 1825–26, and his eponymous younger brother, 1830–1910; and Sigurgarður Sturluson, 1867–1932, uncle to Sigurgarður Kristófersson, 1900–23). It is not clear whether their name was borrowed from either romance-saga, or independently coined. Either way, Sigrgarðr the Valiant is a protagonist whose name is perceptibly formed within the conventions of Icelandic personal naming, but which is not itself a conventional Icelandic name: a suitable combination, perhaps, of the familiar and the exotic.

Rather arbitrarily but in keeping with convention, we have translated the Old Icelandic monster-words *tröll*, *jötunn*, and *þurs* as *troll*, *giant* and *ogre* respectively. Unlike some Old Icelandic texts (for relevant comparisons see Ármann Jakobsson 2009; cf. Hall 2009, 198–201), *Sigrgarðs saga* does keep these terms distinct, never referring to the same monster by more than one word, so

it seems appropriate to use separate English terms. *Tröll* in *Sigrarðs saga* seems to have the most negative connotations, being used both as a term of abuse and to denote undifferentiated monstrous hordes, but beyond that there is no particular evidence that these different monster-words have very different denotations in this saga.

Sigrarðs saga frækna

1. **1.** Ríkarðr hét konungr. Hann réð fyrir austr í Görðum. Hann var ríkr ok mikill höfðingi. Silvæn hét drottning hans. Hon var af dýrum ættum. Son áttu þau þann er Sigrarðr hét. Hann óx upp heima hjá föður sínum. Hann var allra manna fríðastr sýnum, sterkr at afli, ok svá fimr við allar íþróttir at engi maðr kom til jafns við hann hvat sem prófa skyldi. Hann var kappsamr ok ríklýndr hvat sem hann tók upp. Hann var örr af fégjöfum við vini sína ok þat var hans skemmtan at veita lið sínum vinum en fordjarfa sína óvini. Hans heit váru öll föst hvárt sem hann lofaði góðu eðr illu.
2. Sá maðr bjó þaðan ei langt er Gustólfr hét. Gerðr hét kona hans. Þau áttu tvá sonu. Hét annarr Högni en annarr Sigmundr. Þeir váru stórir menn ok sterkir, ok ófyrirleitnir þegar í uppruna sínum, ok vildu ráða meir enn at hálfu við hvern sem þeir áttu. Þeir váru leiksveinar konungssonar, ok mælti hann opt eptir þeim þá er hirðmenn gjörðu þeim harðleikit, því at þeir unntu þeim sjaldan jafnleikis. Þeir váru sjaldan vinsælir. Þeir váru lítt settir at klæðum, en þau sem váru rifu hirðmenn af þeim en konungsson bætti þeim ávalt. Úlfr hét ráðgjafi konungs. Hann vandaði um þetta við konungsson. Hann kvað honum þat ofráð. Hann réði ei hverjum hann

The Saga of Sigrarðr the Valiant

1. There was a king called Ríkarðr who ruled over the east in Garðar. He was a great and powerful ruler. His queen was called Silvæn; she was of excellent birth. Ríkarðr and Silvæn had a son called Sigrarðr, who grew up at home with his father. Sigrarðr was the most handsome of all men in looks, strong, and so nimble in all feats that no-one could match him, whatever the task. He was both impetuous and lordly in all his undertakings. To his friends he was generous with his wealth, and enjoyed giving them assistance—but would destroy his enemies. He was a man of his word, whether he promised good or ill.

There was a man who lived not far from there called Gustólfr. His wife was called Gerðr. They had two sons—one called Högni, the other called Sigmundr. These brothers were big and strong, already ruthless while they were young, seeking more than their half, no matter whom they were dealing with. Högni and Sigmundr were playmates of the prince, who frequently spoke up for the brothers when the king's men played roughly with them, because they rarely gave them a fair match. They were not very popular. They possessed little by way of clothing, and the king's men tore off the garments they did have; but the prince always compensated them. The king's advisor was called Úlfr, and found fault with the

gæfi niðrlagsföt sín. Þá bað Úlfr hirðmenn gjöra þeim harðleikit svá þeir þyrði ei til leiks at fara. Hirðmenn gjörðu svá.

3. Melsnati hét þræll. Hann var mikill ok sterkr svá at hann hafði tólf karla afl til hvers sem hann gekk. Úlfr beiddi at Melsnati skyldi drepa annanhvárn þeira bræðra karlssona. Var nú leikit af kappi um daginn. Sló Melsnati knöttinn yfir höfuð Högna. Varð hann langt at elta hann. Högni sótti knöttinn ok bar ólatliga, en Úlfr henti knöttinn, ok snaraði til Sigmundar. Kom á kinnbeinit ok sprakk fyrir, ok varð þat mikít sár. Sigmundr snaraði knettinum at Melsnata, en Úlfr hljóp fyrir ok náði knettinum ok snaraði at Högna. Högni henti knöttinn. Melsnati hljóp þá at Sigmundi, ok rak báða knefana fyrir brjóst honum svá hann hogaði um tvö fet aprt. Úlfr sló til Sigmundar með knattrepunni, en hann brá fyrir manni. Brotnaði hausinn í þeim. Högni greip í hönd honum ok sleit af honum í axlarliðnum, ok sló á nasir Úlfi svá hann fell ok kom höfuðit á stein. Brotnaði hausinn ok varð þat hans bani.
4. Nú hlupu menn til vopna. Þá kom Sigrgarðr konungsson ok stóð fyrir þeim bræðrum. Var þá sagt til konungi. Sigrgarðr kom hesti undir þá karlssonu, ok komust þeir i skóginn í því konungr kom, ok var þá inn reiðasti, ok lét leita þeira. Fundust þeir ei. Lét konungr gjöra þá útlæga,

prince over this. The prince told him he was in over his head and that it was none of his business whom he gave his handmedowns to. But Úlfr instructed the king's men to play rough with Högni and Sigmundr so that they wouldn't dare to show up at games, and the king's men obeyed.

There was a slave called Melsnati: he was so big and strong that he brought the strength of twelve men to any task he undertook. Úlfr commanded Melsnati to kill one or the other of the old man's sons. The games were now played with enthusiasm throughout the day. Melsnati threw the ball over Högni's head, and Högni had to chase it a long way. He reached the ball and ran with it quickly; but then Úlfr snatched the ball and aimed it at Sigmundr. It caught and smashed his cheekbone, causing a great wound. Sigmundr launched the ball at Melsnati, but Úlfr ran between them, seized it and hurled it at Högni; but Högni caught it. Then Melsnati ran at Sigmundr and drove both his fists into his chest so that he staggered two steps back. Hitting the ball, Úlfr struck at Sigmundr but Sigmundr squared up to the king's man and cracked his skull. Högni grabbed the man's arm and tore it from the shoulder-joint and struck Úlfr on the nose so that he fell and dashed his head against a stone. His skull broke, and that was the end of him.

At this the king's men ran for their weapons, but Prince Sigrgarðr appeared and stood up for the brothers. The king was then told; Sigrgarðr got the old man's sons onto a horse, and they escaped into the wood just as the king arrived. Infuriated, Ríkarðr had the brothers searched for; but they could not be found,

dræpa ok tiltæka, hvar sem þeir yrði fundnir. Fréttist nú ei til þeira lengi.

5. **2.** Sigrgarðr bað föður sinn fá sér lén nökkut þat er hann mætti halda sik ok sína menn. Konungr fekk honum einn kastala ríkan ok þrjú skip ef honum þætti skemmtan at fara af landi burt. Sigrgarðr valdi sér unga menn ok fríða ok frækna, ok mjök eptir skaplindi sínu. En hann var svá fríðr maðr sýnum at engi kona geymdi sín fyrir honum. Hann færði sér þat vel í nyt því hann var svá tilhalla við konurnar, at hann missti aldrei einhverja, ok þótti þat mörgum mikit at um hans ráð at hann fekk aldrei svá væna konu eðr velættaða at hann sinnti lengr enn þrjár nætr, ok þótti ríkum mönnum mikil smán í at þeira frændkonur eðr dætr váru svívirðar. En þeir urðu sjálfir svábúit at hafa, en engi þorði um at vanda. Menn Sigrgarðs vöndu sik mjök eptir honum um kvennafarit. Urðu þeir af því ei vinsælir en af þessu urðu þeir víðfrægir. Sigrgarðr fór í hernað stundum ok veitti honum þat vel því at hann hafði sigr hvar sem hann barðist. Stundum fór hann fyrir land fram at skemta sér; sömu hélt hann fram um kvennafarit i hverju landi sem hann var.
6. Í þenna tíma réð fyrir austri i Tartaría konungr sá er Hergeirr hét. Hann var gamall. Hann átti þrjár dætr: ein hét Hildir, önnur Signý; Ingigerðr hét hin elsta. Hon var allra meyya fríðust. Hergeirr hafði snemma misst drottningar sinnar. Váru dætr hans þá ungar en síðan tók hann at sér þá

and so the king proclaimed them outlaws, to be seized or killed wherever they might be discovered. Nothing more is heard of Högni and Sigmundur for a long time.

- 2.** Sigrgarðr asked his father to give him an earldom so that he could support himself and his men. The king presented the prince with a great castle and three ships, in case he found it amusing to travel abroad. Sigrgarðr chose young, handsome, valiant men of a character much to his liking. But the prince himself was so handsome that no woman could resist him; and he made such good use of his attractiveness to them that he was never without one. This seemed a serious matter to many: Sigrgarðr never seduced a woman so beautiful or well-born that he stayed longer than three nights with her; and it seemed a great dishonour to powerful people that their kinswomen or daughters were shamed by him. But they had to put up with it, and besides, no-one dared make trouble about it. Sigrgarðr's men behaved much the same way regarding their conquests. This did not make them popular, but they did become widely known. Sometimes Sigrgarðr would go raiding, which went well for him because he was victorious wherever he fought. Sometimes he ventured abroad to amuse himself, and wherever he visited indulged in his womanising as before. At that time a certain king ruled over the East, in Tartaría, called Hergeir. He was old, and had three daughters: one was called Hildir, another Signý, and the eldest was called Ingigerðr. She was the most beautiful of all maidens. Hergeir had lost his queen early on when his daughters were only young; but he later took as his

konu er Hlégerðr hét. Ókunnig var mönnum ætt hennar. Hon átti tvá bræðr. Þeir váru miklir fyrir sér. Hét annarr Skjöldr en annarr Hjalmr. Konungur hélt mikit af þeim. Ei váru þeir þokkasælir af alþýðu. Hlégerðr var mikil fyrir sér; konungur var henni eptirlátr. Ekki fell mjök á með þeim Ingigerði ok Hlégerði.

7. Hjalmr bað Signýjar en Skjöldr bað Hildar. Hlégerðr var mjök eggjandi; konungur spurði dætr sínar hversu þeim væri um þetta gefit. Þær sögðust vera ungar ok óráðnar mjök, en vita lítit hvat mönnum þeir væri. Þá mælti Ingigerðr til föður síns: “Margir menn undrast þat at þú leggr svá mikit upp á fólk þetta er menn vita engi skil á, ok grunar suma um þá sem yðrir vinir eru hvat konu at drottningin er sem þér haldið svá mikit til, en ef systr mínar vildu mín ráð hafa, þá skyldu þær bíða betra gjaforðs enn þessa, ok ætla ek lítit fyrir því.” “Snemma þyki mér þú vilja bera mik ráðum,” segir konungur, en þær systr sögðu báðar at þær skyldu fyrr ógiptar alla æfi “en við eigum þessa menn.” Lýkr þar þeira tali at sinni. Segir konungur Hlégerði tal þeira, en hon sagði, at sér þætti hann gjöra sik at lítilmenni, at hann léti börn ráða fyrir sik. Varð þeim þá at orðum nökkut.
8. Þessa nótt ina næstu varð konungur bráðdauðr. Um morguninn spurðist þetta um borgina. Kom Hlégerðr með þessi tíðindi til Ingigerðar “Ok vil ek

wife a woman called Hlégerðr. No-one knew her lineage. She had two brothers, who were a bit big for their boots—one called Skjöldr, one called Hjalmr. Hergeir thought highly of them, but they were not much appreciated by his subjects. Hlégerðr was also very imperious, but the king was compliant towards her. There was no love lost between Ingigerðr and Hlégerðr.

Hjalmr requested Signý in marriage, and Skjöldr requested Hildr. Hlégerðr was very keen on this, and the king asked his daughters how they would feel about these marriages. They replied that they were young and very unsure, and that they knew little about what sort of men Hjalmr and Skjöldr might be. Then Ingigerðr said to her father, “Many people are amazed that you set such store by these people, about whom no-one knows a thing. And some of those who are among your friends are suspicious as to what sort of woman the queen is, of whom you think so much. If my sisters would like my advice, they should wait for a better proposition than this. I think little of it.” “You’re rather young to be trying to over-rule me,” the king says. But the sisters both said that they would rather remain unmarried for their whole lives “than marry these men.” Their discussion ends there for the time being. The king reports their conversation to Hlégerðr, and she said that in her opinion he was being a weakling in letting his children have their own way. They had words about that.

The very next night, the king died suddenly. In the morning, this became known in the castle, and Hlégerðr brought the news to Ingigerðr—“and I

ekki annat,” segir hon, “at vit látum batna með okkr, ok muntu gipta systur þínar bræðrum mínum ok skal ek þá fá þér miklu betri gipting.”

9. “Auðna mun ráða giptingu minni,” segir Ingigerðr, “en ei mun ek því launa þér at þú hefr myrt föður minn at eiga mörg mök við þik. Heldr skaltu heðan í burt verða í dag ok aldrei aprt koma, ok báðir þínir bræðr ok farið til þess eðlis sem þér eruð til sköpuð, því at þér meguð heita tröll.”
10. Þá svaraði Hlégerðr: “löngu var mér þess ván, at ek mundi illt af þér hljóta. Nú legg ek þat á systur þínar, at Hildr skal verða at gyltu: skulu grísir mínir súga hana. En Signý skal verða at flókafolaldi: skal minn graðhestr elta hana, ok mín stóðhross henni illt gjöra, þangat til at þær verða fegnar at eiga bræðr mína. Ellegar skulu þær ór þeim ósköpum aldrei komast á meðan þeir bræðr lifa. En þér er laginn höfðingskapr svá mikill, at ek get honum ei hnekkt. En þat legg ek á þik at þú skalt öngvum trú vera, ok hvern þinn biðil forráða, aldrei er þér svá vel til hans at þú skalt ei æ sitja um hans líf en þú skalt vera svá eigingjörn, at þú skalt allt vilja eiga þat sem þú sér, en allt skaltu þat illu launa, ok skulu þessi ummæli haldast svá lengi sem þú lifir nema því at eins at einhver biðill þinn sprengi þat egg sem í er falit fjör mitt í nösum þér ok ek geymi sjálf ok vildi ek at þat væri seint í yðrum höndum.”

desire nothing more,” she said, “than for us to put our differences aside and for you to marry your sisters to my brothers; then I will find you a much better marriage.”

“Fate will decide my marriage,” says Ingigerðr, “and I shan’t reward you for murdering my father by throwing my lot in with you. Get out of here today and never come back, and your brothers too. Go back to your true nature—it wouldn’t be wrong to call you trolls.”

Hlégerðr replied, “I’ve been expecting for a long time that I would only get trouble from you. Now I lay this curse on your sisters: Hildr will turn into a sow and my pigs will suckle her, and Signý will become a touselled foal, and my stallion will chase her, and my stud-horses will treat her badly, until they are only too glad to marry my brothers. They will have no other escape from this curse as long as my brothers live. You are of such nobility that I cannot deny you it; but I curse you with this: you will be faithful to no-one, you will destroy your every suitor, you will never be so well disposed to them that you will not seek their lives; and you will be so avaricious that you will covet everything you see, but you will repay everything with evil. And these statements will hold as long as you live, unless one of your suitors smashes right up your nose the egg which contains my spirit. But I look after that egg myself, and I don’t intend it to come into your hands any time soon.”

11. “Nóg er mælt um sinn,” segir konungsdóttir, “þetta skal þitt it seinasta orð hversu lengi sem þú lifir heðan af.”
12. Hlégerðr ætlaði þá at mæla, en hon geispaði kjaptinum ok gat ei mælt. Engi vissi þeira viðskraf nema þeir sjálfar, en um daginn fundu menn konunginn dauðan í sæng sinni. Var þá spurt eptir drottningu en hon fannst hvergi. Horfnir váru ok hennar bræðr ok báðar konungsdætrnar. Þótti mönnum þetta mikil tíðindi.
13. **3.** Ingigerðr lætr nú þings kveðja um allt landit. Hon var þá fimmtán vetra gömul. Hon lét taka sik til konungs um allt landit, ok var þat kallaðir meykonungar i þann tíma, er svá breyttu. Tók hon at sér ríkisstjórn ok lét kalla sik Inga. Hon var ríkynd ok stjórnöm ok stóð svá mikil ögn af henni at engi vogaði öðruvís at gjöra enn hon vildi.
14. Nú fréttast þessi tíðindi víða, ok þykir mönnum mikils um vert. Þótti mörgum góðr kostr þar sem Ingigerðr var, ok því réðu til ágætir menn at biðja hennar, en þat fórst öllum einn veg því hon lét alla drepa, ok binda höfuð þeira við garðstaura. En þeir menn sem sér tóku vetrvist hjá henni þá forréd hon alla, en tók fé þeira til sín. Varð hon af þessu víðfræg en ei vinsæl, ok þótti mönnum þetta mikil vandræði. Hon gaf sér ei mikit at þessu, ok helt uppteknum hætti.
15. Hon var á flesta hannyrði mjök kæn, ok barst þat víða, ok þótti því mörgum fýsiligt at fá hennar ef þess yrði auðit, stóð nú svá mikill ótti af
- “You’ve been talking long enough,” says the king’s daughter: “those will be your last words for as long as you live.”
- Hlégerðr meant to answer back, but just then she yawned and couldn’t speak. No-one else knew about their exchange. At day, people found the king dead in his bed. Enquiries were made after the queen, but she was nowhere to be found; her brothers, too, had vanished, as well as the two princesses, Hildir and Signý. People thought this big news.
- 3.** Now Ingigerðr announces an assembly throughout the land. She was then fifteen years old. She had herself accepted as king of all the realm. In those times, such people were called maiden kings: she assumed sole rule, and had herself called Ingi. She was imperious and statesmanlike, and so fearsome that no-one dared oppose her will.
- This news spread far and wide, and was thought very significant. To many, Ingigerðr seemed a good marriage prospect, and outstanding men decided to seek her hand. But it went the same way for all of them: she had them killed, and their heads tied to the stockade. And she betrayed all those who took winter quarters with her, seizing their money for herself. She grew well known for these deeds, and none too popular, and people started to think this was a serious problem. She didn’t pay them much attention though, and continued her reign as she had begun.
- Her excellence in many handicrafts was widely reported, and though it seemed desirable to many to marry her—if this proved to be their lot—there was now

hennar tiltektum at engi vágaði hennar at biðja, eðr nökkur viðskipti við hana at eiga, ok fór svá fram um hennar ráð, þangat til sem hon hafði þrjá vetr um tvítögt.

16. **4.** Tókum nú þar til máls sem Sigrgarðr er í hernaði. Honum varð gott til fjár ok mannorðs. Hafði hann þá aukit mikit um fjölmenni sitt; hafði hann nú fengit tíu skip skipuð með góðum drengjum. Hann var frægr af sínum hernaði, en sömu hélt hann í fram um kvennafarit.

17. Hann hefr nú frétt af meykoninginum í Tartaría ok fannst honum mikit um. Sét hafði hann margar hannyrðir þær sem meykoningrinn hafði gjört, ok þótti jafnt vera sem fölski allt þat sem aðrar gjörðu hjá því sem hon gjörði, en nú með því at hann treystir sér vel ok þóttist ei minna verðr eðr enn nökkuru framar enn þeir aðrir sem hennar höfðu beðit þá býr hann ferð sína austr í Tartaría.

18. En er hann kom fyrir hafnir þær er lágu fyrir borg meykönungsins hagaði hann svá siglingu sinni at þeim skyldi sem mest tilsynast ok tilfinnast er fyrir váru. Gullsaumaðir váru reftar á seglum þeira, veðrvitar váru allir sem á gull séi en drekahöfuð váru svá grimmlig at mörgum hélt við ótta er þau sá, en þegar þeir váru landfastir báru þeir á land í tjöld, ok fannst mönnum þá ei minna til hversu fögr ok kostulig þau váru, ok undruðust allir þeira fararblóma. Lét hann þá bera á land merki sitt. Stöngin var níræð at hæð. Þar fylgdi með gult silki með svá síðum streymum at þau tóku á miðja stöngina. Þar váru víðfestar

such great fear of her tendencies that no-one dared to seek her hand, or have any dealings with her. And so things continued according to her will until she had seen her twenty-third winter.

4. We now pick up the story as Sigrgarðr is raiding. He did well for money and fame. He had increased his following greatly: he had by now acquired ten ships, all crewed with good men. He was famed for his raiding, but he nonetheless continued his womanising.

In time, Sigrgarðr heard about the Maiden King in Tartaría and thought it very intriguing. He had seen many handicrafts of the Maiden King's, and the things that other women made seemed like mere ashes beside the work of her own hand. And now because he had such faith in himself, and considered himself of no less worth than—or, indeed, somewhat superior to—the others who had sought her, he prepares for a journey east to Tartaría.

When he came to the harbour which lay before the Maiden King's castle, he styled his sailing in such a way so as to strike the greatest awe into those who were looking on. The sail hems were sewn with gold. The weather-vanes were all like gold to look upon, and the dragon-prows were so terrifying that many were seized with fear on seeing them. When they landed they carried everything ashore under canopies, and people were no less impressed by how beautiful and desirable it was. Everyone was amazed at the grandeur of their train. Then Sigrgarðr had his standard borne ashore. The pole was ninety ells long, and from it hung a golden silk with such long streamers that

hundrað dymbjöllur af rauðu gulli. Þar váru á skrifaðar margs kyns sögur, ok var þat inn mesta gersimi.

19. Meykonungrinn gjörir nú menn til skips at forvitnast hverir menn þeir séu er þar komnir váru, eðr hvárt þeir vilja hafa þar friðland eðr ei eðr hver þeira erendi eru. Sendimenn komu til strandar ok fundu Sigrgarð, ok spurðu hvat manna hann væri, en hann sagði til it sanna. Þeir sögðust hans hafa heyrt getit, ok mikla frægð af honum fara, ok sögðu at meykönungrinn hefði eptir spurt, við hverju búast skyldi í hans þarkomu, en hann kveðst þar öngvan skyldi meina, ef enginn angraði hann, ok ei lengi þar dveljast þegar hann hefði skilað sínum erendum. Fóru sendimenn þá heim ok sögðu meykönunginum hverir at komnir váru, ok þeir léti ei ófriðliga. Hon spurði hversu fríðr maðr Sigrgarðr væri, en þeir sögðust öngvan á sinni æfi hafa séð fríðara ok stórmannliga at öllu ok þar eptir væri hans hæverska ok lítillæti. Hon sagðist þat löngum hafa heyrt frá honum sagt. Hon spurði hvárt þeim þætti ráðligt at hon byði þeim til veislu, en þeir segja at við slíka menn væri gott at vingast. Váru þá menn gjörðir til sjóar at bjóða Sigrgarði til sémiligrar veislu, með svá marga menn sem hann vildi, en hann þekktist þat gjarna, ok bjóst heim til hallar, með hundrað liðs, sitt vildasta fólk. En er þeir komu heim, leiddi meykönungrinn þá sémiliga inn í höll sína ok reis þar upp ágæt veizla.

they reached to the middle of the pole. A hundred tinkling bells of red gold were fastened to it, and all kinds of stories were embroidered on it. It was the greatest of treasures.

The Maiden King now sends men to the ship to find out what sort of people the new arrivals might be, whether or not they wish to have sanctuary, and what their objective is. They greeted Sigrgarðr by the shore and asked who he was—and he told them the truth. They replied that they had heard of him, and that his great fame preceded him, and they relayed that the Maiden King had enquired as to how she should anticipate his arrival. Sigrgarðr said that he would harm no-one, as long as nobody angered him, and that he wouldn't stay long once he had achieved his purpose. The messengers returned home and told the Maiden King who had come to meet them, and that they did not look like a threat. She asked how handsome a man Sigrgarðr was, and they replied that they had never in their lives seen anyone more handsome and more noble in all respects—not to mention his courtliness and humility. She declared that she had heard this told of him for a long time, and asked whether they thought it advisable to invite him and his men to a banquet. They replied that it would be good to befriend such a man. People were then sent down to the sea to invite Sigrgarðr to a magnificent banquet, along with as many men as he wished. He accepted gladly, and accompanied them back to the hall with a hundred of his chosen men. When they arrived, the Maiden King led them courteously into her hall and presented an excellent banquet.

20. Sigrgarðr settist í hásæti hjá meykonunginum. Var þá gleði mikil. Meykonungurinn gjörði sik blíða ok var málreitinn við Sigrgarð. Hon spurði hvat at manni hann væri en hann sagði henni af it ljósasta, ok nefndi sik ok sinn föður. Hon mælti, “þat er mér nú at sýn orðit sem ek hef áðr einart frétt til haft, ok þiki mér þat ei orðum aukit sem frá yðr er sagt um vöxt ok vænleik, ok vænti ek at svá munu eptir fara yðrar íþróttir, ok aðrir hlutir þeir sem yðr eru til sæmdar. Eðr hvert hafi þér yðra ferð ætlat?”
21. “Í yðru lofi vil ek gjarna segja, bæði hvert ek hefi ætlat, ok svá hvert mitt erendi er, ek hefi spurt til yðvarar tígnar ok þyki mér mikils um vert, nú er ek hefi séð bæði vald yðvart ok ríki, ok hefir mér þat nökkut í hug komit at leita þeira mála við yðr at okkart samþykki mætti þá vera meir enn áðr, en ei vil ek þau orð opinberliga tala, sem þér mættuð styggjast við.”
22. “Skilja þykjumst ek,” sagði meykonungurinn, “málaleitan þína, eðr hefir þú ei spurn af því hversu þeim hefir afferðar orðið, er slíkra mála hafa leitað, ok séð enn nökkut merki til þess hér hjá minni borg?”
23. “Mér kemr þat í hug,” segir hann, “þó at nökkut hafi áfátt orðið um yðra hagi at þér munuð þat best til vara taka at venda apr af því sem yður hefir yfirgefist.”
24. “Ekki hefir mér þat svá yfirgefist,” segir hon. “Þeir einir hafa til orðið þessa mála at leita at oss hefir þótt lítillræði í, nökkut við at skylda, ok Sigrgarðr sat himself on the highseat beside the Maiden King. Then there was great festivity, and she conducted herself joyfully and was talkative towards the prince. She asked what sort of person he was, and he replied very lucidly, and named himself and his father. She said, “That which I have only heard of is now evident; and what is said about your stature and good looks does not seem to have been exaggerated. I expect that your feats will follow the same pattern, and any other qualities you have too. Now tell me, why have you travelled to Tartaría?”
- “I will gladly speak, in your honour, both of my intention and of what my mission is,” answered Sigrgarðr. “I have heard about your glory and now that I have seen both your might and your kingdom, it seems most impressive to me. It has been in my mind to seek audience with you, whereby our accord might be increased; but I do not wish to speak those words in public at which you might find yourself offended.”
- “I think I understand your proposal,” said the Maiden King. “But have you not heard of how the suit has turned out for those who have previously broached such a discussion, and have you not seen some sign of this on display here beside my castle?”
- “Even though some challenges have arisen in your affairs,” he says, “it occurs to me that it might be most prudent for you to rethink your strategy, given how things have been going wrong for you.”
- “Nothing’s gone wrong for me,” she says: “only men whom we have felt it to be degradation to associate with have pursued this matter with us, and so we

höfum vér svá viljað leiða lítilsháttar mönnum at spotta oss.” Sigrgarðr svarar at honum þikir þat várkunn “en þó lystir oss,” segir hann “at vita hver svör þér vilið oss gefa ef ek væri svá djarfr at ek leitaði þeira mála við yðr at þú yrðir mín eiginkona.” En hon svarar, “vandfengin eru svör í móti þessum orðum, þvíat sá orðrómr rís um yðr,” segir hon, “at þér hafið mörgum hæverskum konum góðu lofat ok lítit gott af haldit, ok eru mér vandsénir slíkir menn, sem oss eru ókenndir.” Hann svarar þá brosandir: “Frú,” segir hann, “þér megið taka miðan á sjálfri þér, þær einar hafa til valist at oss hefr þótt lítilræði í við at skylda.” Hon svarar þá, “yðr mun þat ei alhugað sem þér vikuð á við oss, en ef ek vissi yðvarn fullan vilja þar um þá mundi ek yðr góð svör gefa, þvíat mér sýnist þú ólíkr flestum mönnum öðrum þeim sem ek hefi séð. En váru ráði gjörist svá komit af öfund margra manna at vér þurfum forstöðu, bæði fyrir oss ok vart ríki.”

25. “Þeir einir menn munu á setjast á yðr eðr yðvart ríki, at ek treysti mér at verja, ok ef þér vilið selja mér yðra trú, þá vil ek mína trú í móti gefa ok sjálfan mig ok allt mitt ríki, ok fá af yðr staðliga vissu, nær at við skulum þessu máli til leiðar snúa, með yðra góðra vina samþykki.”

26. Konungsdóttir svarar, “Ek á hér öðrum at ráða en ei aðrir mér, ok veit ek ei þeira manna ván at mér kenni betri ráð enn ek sjálf. Veit ek ei þess manns vánir at ek þurfi eptir at fréttu, hvern gjörning sem ek vil

have wanted to make men of little consequence loath to make fun of us.” Sigrgarðr replies that that seems understandable, “but permit us,” he says, “to know what sort of answer you would wish to give if I were to be so bold as to discuss with you whether you might become my wife?” She replies, “It’s hard to know how to answer this, because there’s a rumour going round that you have promised good things to many well-born women but fulfilled little; and it’s hard for me to judge men who are not well known to me.” He then replies with a smile, saying “My Lady, consider your own precedent: the only women who have presented themselves seemed to us to be degrading to associate with.” She replies, “What you suggest to us may not be entirely in earnest, but if I knew that you were sincere then I would give you a positive response, because you seem different to most other men I have seen. And it has become apparent to our mind that we need protection from the ill will of many people, both for ourselves and for our kingdom.”

“You can trust me to defend against anyone who would assault you or your kingdom, and if you wish to give me your pledge, then I wish to give my own in return, and my own person, and my whole kingdom, and I wish to receive from you absolute assurance of when we will conclude this suit, with the agreement of your good friends.”

The king’s daughter replies, “Here I rule over others, and not others over me; and I know of no-one whose counsel would expect to be better than my own. I don’t know of any man whom I’d need to ask, whatever action I wish to take. We can

gjöra. Megum vit því vel okkra trú binda tvö saman, þó at vit köllum þar ei fleiri at, utan okkra heimugliga smásveina, þá sem okkr skulu allan trúnað veita, því vil ek ei inn besta mann láta úr höndum ganga. Kenni ek þess á mik sem ek ætla at margri hafi orðit, at veik hafi orðit fyrir yðr ok yðri fagri ásjónu, en til þess at opinbert verði samþykki okkart, þá skaltu láta bera yðvart merki heim á þann kastala sem vit skulum í nótt í sofa, þvíat þat vil ek þiggja í mína tilgjöf, er þá öllum augljóst at yðvart vald er bæði á mér ok yfir öllu því sem mér til heyrir.”

27. Sigrgarði þikir vel á horfast ok verðr þetta þeira samkeypi. Fara nú í launkossar en jungfrúinnar orð eru svá fögr sem þau væri ór rauðu gulli gjör öll, ok var mjög áminnandi, at allir skyldu vera sem glaðastir ok gleðja Sigrgarð ok hans menn, ok segist ætla þenna mann sér til unnasta, en þeir menn sem kunnigt var hennar skaplyndi grunaði nökkut hvárt hennar gleði mundi góðu reifa. En mönnum Sigrgarðs þótti vel á horfast ok váru inir glöðustu, ok leið svá dagrinn til kvölds. Var þá mönnum Sigrgarðs fylgt at sofa, með sæmiligum umbúningi. En hann sjálf var leiddr í kastala konungsdóttur.

28. Þótti honum þar gott um at sjást. Sæng stóð þar tjölduð með purpura ok guðvef. Stólpar allir váru sem á gull sæi, en svá fögr sem sængin var,

therefore affirm our pledge, the two of us together, even if we don't ask anyone to witness it except our personal chamberlains—those who will show us total loyalty—because I do not wish to let the best of men slip through my fingers. I recognise that in myself which I imagine has happened to many other women—that they have grown weak because of you and your handsome appearance. But so that our agreement is made public, you must have your standard carried home to the castle in which we will sleep tonight, because I want to receive it as my bridal gift. It will then be completely clear to everyone that your power is over both me and all that pertains to me.”

Sigrgarðr thought this looked promising, and so things were arranged between them. They began to exchange secret kisses, and the words of the young lady were as refined as if they were wrought of red gold. She continually reminded everyone that they should be at their most cheerful and entertain Sigrgarðr and his men, and said that she intended this man to be her lover. But those who were familiar with the Maiden King's disposition were somewhat suspicious as to whether her gladness boded well. To Sigrgarðr's men, however, things seemed to be going well, and they were very pleased. And so the day turned to evening and Sigrgarðr's party were led to beautifully furnished chambers, and the prince himself was led to the keep of the king's daughter.

Sigrgarðr liked what he saw. A bed stood there, covered with purple cloth and priceless velvet, and all the pillars were like gold to look upon; but however

þá var sú þó enn fegri sem í lá. Því hugði Sigrgarðr gott til sín, ok stígr upp í sængina. Jungfrúin var in blíðasta, ok tekr eina gullskál, ok spyr hvárt hann vill drekka fyrr eðr síðar, en hann biðr hana fyrr drekka. Hon gjörir svá, en áðr enn hon hafði af drukkit þá hafði Sigrgarðr hallast at hægindum ok var þá svefn á honum, en síðan gengu menn í burt, en þau lágu þar um nóttina. Ei vaknaði Sigrgarðr fyrr enn jungfrúin var klædd ok í burt gengin. Váru hans menn þar innkominir ok spurðu hversu honum hefði sofist um nóttina, en hann segist nógu fast sofit hafa. Síðan klæddist hann ok gekk til hallar. Meykonungrinn var þar fyrir.

29. **5.** Meykonungrinn tók í hönd Sigrgarði, ok leiddi hann í háseti ok bað hann vera glaðan. Síðan settist hon niðr hjá honum ok tóku menn til drykkju, ok var jungfrúin in glaðasta. Síðan tekr hon eina gullskál. Drekkir hon til Sigrgarði ok mælti svá: “Því ertu ei glaðr?” segir hon.

30. “Frú,” segir hann, “mik uggir at yðr þiki ek litla gleði hafa sýnt yðr á þessi nótt.”

31. En hon svarar, “víst hugða ek til meira um, ok þó hefi ek þat heyrta talat, at drukknunum manni kynni margt til handa at bera þat at hann væri ei jafnrar náttúru sem þá er hann væri ódrukkinn, ok má þetta snart bætast ef þér er nökkur náttúra sköput, ok mun ek ei gefa þér þetta at skuld fyrst at sinni, en svá mun mér fara sem öðrum, at ek mun slíka luti ei þola lengi orðalaust.”

beautiful the bed was, the woman who lay in it was even more so. Sigrgarðr thought things were going well, and climbs into the bed. The maiden is extremely friendly, and takes a gold goblet, and asks whether he wants to drink first or second, and he asks her to drink first. She does so, but before she had drunk, Sigrgarðr had lain down on the pillows—sleep had fallen upon him. The Maiden King’s chamberlains withdrew, and the two of them lay there for the night. Sigrgarðr did not stir before the maiden had got dressed and departed. Later, his men came in and asked how their prince had slept that night, and he said that he had rested soundly enough. He got dressed and went to the hall. The Maiden King was already there.

5. The Maiden King took Sigrgarðr by the hand and led him to the throne and told him to be cheerful. She sat down beside him and everyone began to drink, and the girl herself was full of mirth. She raises a golden goblet, and drinks to Sigrgarðr, saying “Why aren’t you cheerful?”

“Lady,” he answers, “I fear that you may think that I showed you little merriment last night.”

“Certainly I expected more,” she replies, “but I have heard it said that it often befalls a drunk man that he is not of equal virility as when he is sober. This may quickly be remedied if there is any virility imbued in you. I will not hold it against you for now, but I will treat the matter as others would—I will not suffer such a thing in silence for long.”

32. Líðr dagr þessi ok er jungfrúin in blíðasta. Hon minntist opt við Sigrgarð um daginn, ok á meðal annarra hluta mælti hon svá til hans, “með hverju viltu yfir bæta þá ginning sem þú gjörðir mér í nótt? Þikjumst ek sæmda verð fyrir þat at ek þegi yfir skömm þinni. Þætti mér verða mega at þér yrði þetta optar þó at ek vágaði enn til við þik.”
33. “Eigi veit ek þann hlut,” segir hann, “at mér muni þikja þér ofgóðr.”
34. “Skjöld ok sverð sá ek hanga hjá merki yðru. Þat váru góðir gripir. Þat skulu þér láta fylgja merkinu.”
35. Hann svarar, “Þessir hlutir eru í þínu valdi sem allir aðrir þeir sem ek á, þegar et okkart samþikki verðr.” Sigrgarðr segist þat gjarna vilja. Tóku þau nú at gleðjast ok allir aðrir.
36. Líðr nú þessi dagr til kvölds, ok því næst koma þau til sinnar sængr, ok varast Sigrgarðr ofdrykkju, en þegar er hann kom í sæng þá bað hann sinn smásvein fá sér at drekka. Hann drakk til frúnni en hon drakk gjarna með honum ok fell svefnhöfgi á hana. Sigrgarðr bað þá alla menn í burtu ganga en hann hallaði sér á koddann. En þennan jungfrúinnar breiddi á klæðin upp yfir þau. Þegar fell svefn á Sigrgarð ok sváfu þau bæði til dags.
37. Jungfrúin vaknaði þegar er haninn gól. Tekr snart til fata ok klæðir sig, en Sigrgarðr svaf þangat til at hans menn komu inn í herbergit, ok fréttu eptir hversu honum hefði sofist. En hann kvað seint vilja frá hefja, “ok
- And so the day passes and the maiden is very cheerful. She kissed Sigrgarð often during the day, and among other things she said to him, “How do you want to make up for the trick you played on me last night? I consider myself to deserve redress for staying quiet about your dishonour. It occurs to me that this might have happened to you more than once before—even though I am still prepared to risk another try with you.”
- “I cannot think of anything too good for you,” he says.
- “I saw a sword and shield hanging beside your standard which were fine possessions. You must hand them over like the standard,” she says.
- He replies, “These things will be in your power like all the other things I own when we complete our agreement”—and Sigrgarðr says that he very much desired that. Thereupon, the two of them and everyone else turned to merrymaking.
- Now the day turns to evening, and they proceed to their bed. Sigrgarðr avoids drinking too much; only when he got into bed did he ask his page to fetch him a drink. He made a toast to the lady, and she drank eagerly with him; then drowsiness fell upon her. Sigrgarðr asked all the attendants to leave and he lay down on the pillow. But the lady’s maidservant drew the coverlet over them and Sigrgarðr drifted straight off, and he and the princess both slept till day.
- The maiden woke at cock-crow. She immediately took up her clothes and dressed; but Sigrgarðr continued to slumber until his men entered the chamber and asked how he had slept. He said that he was in no hurry to discuss it, “and I fear that the cunning of this

- uggir mik at ei sé allt logit frá slægðum konu þessarar.”
38. “Því skylum vér þá ei taka hana með harðri hendi?” segja þeir.
39. “Ekki sýnist mér þat ráðligt,” segir hann, “þvíat hon hefr lið miklu meira enn vér. Mun hon ok ei kalla þetta sína skuld þvíat hon mun þikjast leggja sik fullvel til við mik en þrísvar hefir orðit allt forðum. Skal prófa til um sinn ef kostr er.”
40. Sigrgarðr stendr upp ok klæðir sik ok gengr til konungs hallar. Meykonungrinn var þar fyrir ok var í illu skapi. Sigrgarðr gaf henni góðan dag en hon svarar “þikist þú ei fyrna djarfr at þú gengr fyrir augu mér svá mikinn dáraskap sem þú hefir gjört mér. Hefi ek látit drepa menn fyrir minna, ok hefr mér illa umvælst, forsmáð margan dándimann, en tekið nú þann í móti, sem ek veit fyrir víst at öngva karlmanns náttúru hefr ok mér má aldrei at manni verða. Hefi ek hvílt hjá honum tvær nætr, ok mun ek öngvar eiga jafn daufligar, eðr hvar er nú komin kvennsemin sú sem frá þér er sögð? Kemr mér þat í hug at þetta mun valda óvinsældum þínum þeim sem þú hefir af konunum, þó at þær hafi ei þorat upp at kveða. En ek mun ei óeinarðast við slíkt, svá mikit sem i húfi er. Þætti mér einkisvert ef ek mætti annan mann fá, en þat meira at nóttleiða þín vefst mér fyrir fótum svá ek má ei öðrum giptast.”
41. Þá svarar Sigrgarðr. “Bætr liggja til alls,” segir hann.
- woman may not have been entirely misreported.”
- “Then shouldn’t we seize her by force?” they say.
- “That doesn’t seem wise to me,” he says, “because she has a much larger retinue than we do, and she will not consider it her fault because she will claim to have made herself entirely available to me. But third time’s the charm, as the old saying goes. I’ve got to try once more, if I get the chance.”
- Sigrgarðr got up, got dressed, and walked to the royal hall. The Maiden King was already there and was in a bad mood. Sigrgarðr bade her good day but she replies, “Don’t you think you’re being mighty bold to walk into my sight, after making such a huge mockery of me?—I’ve had people killed for less. This has turned out badly for me: I’ve scorned many fine suitors, but now instead I’ve taken one I know for certain has none of the virility of a true man and can never be a man for me. I have lain beside him for two nights, yet no night’s ever been so dull—where’s your lustiness that everybody’s talking about? Actually, I suspect this explains the unpopularity you have with the ladies, even if they haven’t dared speak up about it; but I won’t hide this, because there’s so much riding on it. I wouldn’t take it so much to heart if I could get another man, but your nocturnal tedium has tied my hands so that I can’t marry anyone else.”
- Then Sigrgarðr replies: “Compensation can be made for everything.”

42. “Svei því öllu sem öngu er nýtt,” segir hon, “ok legg frammi í stað hvað sem þú vilt oss bæta fyrir vára svívirðing.”
43. “Frú,” segir hann, “allt vil ek til vinna yðars vinskapar en hér kemr þat fram sem víða er talat at vanséð sé heimskum við öllum þínum brögðum.”
44. “Þá snýst lagliga um,” segir hon, “ef þú vilt koma á mig skömm þinni. Legg nú fram drekann þann góða sem þér hingað stýrðuð, ok mun ek þá ei mein gjöra yðr ok yðrum mönnum.”
45. “Vel mun okkr þat semja, frú,” segir hann.
46. “Ekki vil ek deila yðr frá mat,” segir hon, “en í minni mun þetta haft vera, ok er tími til borðs herra.”
47. **6.** Sigrgarðr gengr nú til borðs ok er bæði rjóðr ok reiðr af þeim svívirðingarorðum sem meykonungurinn hafði valit honum á allra manna færi, en þó skipaði hann sínum mönnum at færa drekann í þær hafnir er drottningin vildi.
48. Litlu síðar mælti drottning við Sigrgarð: “Því ertu svá hljóðr, herra?” segir hon. “Eðr leikr þér aprt mundr at drekanum?”
49. “Lítills þiki mér hann verðr,” segir hann, “enn meira þiki mér vert at missa yðvarn vinskapar.”
50. “Ei þiki mér þat nú skuld,” segir hon, “ok munu ei margar leggja sik betr upp, ok sæl þættumst ek ef mætti þín njóta, en ef svá mætti verða at þetta væri lagit á þik þá mætti þik hér síðr um kunna.”
51. “Ekki veit ek þess ván,” segir hann, “en allr þikjumst ek annarr maðr síðan ek kom hér. Gjör nú svá vel at
- “Damn that for all the good it’s worth,” she says. “Just tell me how you want to compensate me for my dishonouring.”
- “Lady,” he says, “I will do anything to win your friendship, but what is taking place here is widely talked about: that it is hard for foolish people to see through all your tricks.”
- “It would be quite a turn,” she says, “if you want to blame me for your shame. Now pledge the fine dragon-ship which you sailed here, and I will do you and your men no harm.”
- “I will gladly agree to that, lady,” he says.
- “I do not want to keep you from your food,” she says, “but this will be remembered. It is time to eat, sir.”
- 6.** Sigrgarðr goes now to eat and is both blushing and angry from the mockery which the queen has dealt him within earshot of the whole court. Nevertheless, he arranged for his men to bring the dragon-ship to the harbour of her choice.
- A little later, the queen speaks to Sigrgarð. “Why are you so quiet, lord?” she says. “Or is the bridal gift of the ship playing on your mind?”
- “The ship seems of little importance to me,” he says; “and it would be much worse to lose your friendship.”
- “I hardly think that’s my fault,” she says. “And few women would submit themselves any more readily. But I would consider myself fortunate if I could enjoy you, and if it can be brought about that this could be achieved then you might be blamed less here.”
- “I’m not aware of any likelihood of this,” he says, “but I must say, I have felt like another man entirely since I came to this

- þér látið vera sleitnalaust ef þú mátt nökkuru umráða.”
52. “Ok enn ertu svá dulinn at þér,” segir hon, “at þú vilt auka þinn ósóma? Þá máttu freista enn eina nótt ef þú vilt.”
53. Hann lét sér þat vel líka, ok tekr nú at gleðjast ok svá bæði þau.
54. Líðr nú á daginn, ok er nú slíkt í fyrra lagi til sængr gengit. Sigrgarðr gengr í kastala konungsdóttur, ok liggr hon þar ok breiðir móti honum faðmynn. Hann stígr nú upp í sængina, ok jafnskjótt sem hann þar kemr þá grípr hann í burtu koddann undan höfðinu á sér ok áklæðit af sænginni, ok slítr niðr fortjaldit frá sænginni. Snýst síðan at brúðinni vakrt ok fimliga, en hon hefr hendr við honum. Brestr þá upp þilit at baki þeim. Koma þar fram tólf þrælar. Þeir höfðu sviga í höndum ok járnsvipur. Létu síðan ganga á honum, en hann var í línklæðum einum, ok markaði því skjótt fyrir hverju höggi, en hann hafði ekki at verjast með nema knefana. Náði hann þá einum at fótunum, ok þar með drap hann þrjá, en sá þóttist þó illa leikinn sem hann helt á.
55. En því næst kváðu við lúðrar, ok var þá upp slegin hurðin. Váru þar þá komnir menn drottningar með alvæpni, ok sóttu þegar at honum. Hann greip til þess sem fyrstr gekk ok náði í hjálminn ok snaraði þann úr háslíðunum. Hann sló annan með hjálminum til bana. Fekk hann þá sverð hans. Síðan ruddi hann sér götu til dyranna. Hafði hann þá drepit
- place. If you have any say in it, be so kind now as to allow no deceptions.”
- “And are you still so self-deluded,” she says, “that you want to increase your dishonour? Then you can try another night if you insist.”
- He made it clear that he would like that very much, and began to cheer up—as indeed they both did.
- Now the day passes, and just as on the previous occasions everyone goes to bed. Sigrgarðr enters the keep of the king’s daughter, and she lies there and extends her embrace towards him. He now climbs into the bed, and as soon as he’s there, he snatches away the pillow from under his head and the coverlet from the bed, and tears down the bed hangings. He turns towards his bride, watchful and ready to move, and she puts her hands on him. Suddenly, the partition behind them bursts open and twelve slaves spring out with switches and iron whips in their hands. The slaves set about the prince. He was dressed only in his underwear and so every blow left its mark, and he had nothing to defend himself with except his fists. Then he seized one of the slaves by the feet, and using him killed three of the others—and the one he was holding felt pretty hard done by too.
- The next thing, trumpets were braying, and the door burst open; in poured the queen’s men, fully armed, and they attacked him straight away. Sigrgarðr grabbed the first to run at him, seized his helmet, and twisted it from his neck. He struck another with the helmet, killing him; then he grabbed that man’s sword and cleared himself a path to the door. He had by that stage killed thirty men

þrítugra manna. Var hann þá ákaflega móðr. Fegnir hafði hann þá fimmtán sár.

56. Váru þar þá komnir menn hans ok urðu fegnir er þeir fundu hann með lífi. Var þá sótt at þeim öllu megin, en þeir létu hefjast undan, ok er komust svá til skipa sinna. Sigrgarðr var þá óvígr en meykonungrinn hafði dregið saman svá mikinn her, at þeir náðu hvergi landgöngu. Sigldi Sigrgarðr þá heim til Garðaríkis, ok segir sínar ei sléttar. Faðir hans segir honum slíks þaðan ván.

57. **7** ◆ Nú bað Sigrgarðr föður sinn at fá sér lið at hefna sinnar svívirðingar, en konungr segir at honum væri ei sínir menn svá falir at hann vildi vága þeim undir tröllskap hennar. Kvað hitt ráðligra at vinna með djúpsettum ráðum, “þvíat hon er ósigrandi, ok ætla margir at henni muni ei sjálfrátt um.”

58. Sigrgarðr hugsar nú sitt ráð.

59. Jónas hét maðr. Hann var ríkastr maðr í öllum austrveg. Hann átti dýrri gripi enn aðrir menn, ok var hann af því víðfrægr um allan austrveg. Hann átti klæði þat at leið í lopti, af náttúrusteinum þeim sem þar váru í fólgnir, ok rúnastöfum þeim sem þar váru í saumaðir, ef þeir væri réttiliga lesnir. Skikkja var annarr gripr, svá góð at slík fannst ei fyrir norðan Grikklands haf. Tafl var inn þriði gripr ok var þat með rauðu gulli. Carbunculus var inn fjórði, svá stórr at hann vá níu aurar.

60. Sigrgarðr fór at finna Jónas ok kaupslagaði við hann ok falaði af honum skipit ok gripina, ok gaf

and was exhausted; he had received fifteen wounds.

Then his men arrived, and they were glad to find him alive. They were under attack from all directions, but were able to escape, and made it to their ships. By then, Sigrgarðr was unable to fight, and the Maiden King had gathered so great an army that his men couldn't land anywhere. So Sigrgarðr sailed home to Garðaríki, only to report that things hadn't gone smoothly. His father told him that that was to be expected.

7 ◆ Now Sigrgarðr asked his father to muster an army for him to avenge his dishonour; but the king said that his men were not so expendable as to risk them against the Maiden King's witchcraft. He said it would make more sense to rely on careful strategising, “because the woman is invincible, though many suspect that she might not be in control of her own mind.”

Sigrgarðr now thinks up his plan.

There was a man called Jónas, the richest in the whole of the Austrvegr. He was renowned there for possessing more precious treasures than anyone else: a cloth which flew in the air because of the runic letters which were sewn into it, if they were read out correctly, and the magical stones which were concealed in it. The second treasure was a cloak, so precious that its like was not to be found north of the Black Sea. The third treasure was a game-board made of red gold. The fourth was a jewel so large that it weighed nine aurar.

Sigrgarðr went to meet Jónas and bargained with him. Jónas traded the ship and treasure for the castle which

honum í móti kastala þann sem faðir hans hafði honum gefit, ok jarlsnafn með, en hann fékk honum skipit í móti ok þessa góðgripi sem áðr eru nefndir ok þó skyldi hann eiga eptir jafnvægi skikkjunnar af rauðu gulli. Hér með skiptu þeir litum, þvíat þat kunnu margir menn vel í þann tíma. Síðan bjóst Sigrgarðr í kaupferðir ok ætluðu allir Jónas vera hvar sem hann fór.

61. Um síðir kom hann austr í Tartaría, ok ei allnær því sem meykönungrinn sat. Hann lét falan varning sinn ok sýndi gripina, ok mat svá dýrt at engi reiðaðist við at kaupa. Þetta var sagt meykönunginum, ok lofuðu menn mjög gripina fyrir henni. Hon gjörir nú heimanferð sína til móts við Jónas, en þá er hon kemur í þá höfn er hann lá fyrir, kallar hon hann til tals við sik ok spurði hvárt hann hefði gripi svá góða sem sagt væri. Hann segir at lítils væri vert um þá, en hon kveðst vilja sjá ok kaupa ef falir væri. Hann kvað ei fala vera. Hon spurði hvárt hann ætlaði sína gæfu meiri enn annarra, ef hann vildi synja henni kaups. Hann kveðst hafa ætlað gripina Miklagarðs konungi. Hon kveðst ei vita þann konung at hon vildi gripi fyrir missa. Hon bað hann meta svá dýrt sem hann vildi. Hann kvað hana mundu sjá vilja áðr, en sagðist ei sýna vilja nema hon lofaði at taka ei með ofríki af honum, en hon segir at hann þyrfti ei at minna sik á þat. Kveðst hafa nóga makt at taka bæði hann ok svá allt þat sem hann á ok færi með. Tala þau nú um kaupskap. Þeim kemr þat saman at

Sigrgarðr's father had given him, along with his title as Earl; in return, Sigrgarðr received from Jónas the ship and the wonderful treasures which have been named, though, in return for the cloak, Sigrgarðr had to give its weight in red gold. Finally, they swapped appearances, because many people knew how to do that in those days. Then Sigrgarðr set out on trading voyages, and wherever he ventured, everyone thought that Jónas was there.

In due course, he came east to Tartaría—but not too near to where the Maiden King lived. He put his wares on sale and showed off the treasures, but asked so much for them that no-one undertook to buy them. Reporting this to the Maiden King, people praised the treasures greatly; so she sets out to meet Jónas. When she arrives in the haven where his ship lay she summons him to talk with her, and asked whether he had treasures as good as had been reported. He said that they were unremarkable, but she insisted that she wanted to see them, and buy them if they were for sale. He said they weren't for sale. She asked whether or not he considered his good luck greater than others' if he wished to deny her the sale. He said that he had intended the treasures for the King of Constantinople. She said that she didn't know of any king for whom she would forgo treasure, and she asked him to value them as highly as he wished. He said that she would want to see them first, adding that he didn't want to show them unless she promised not to take them from him by force. But she says that he needn't worry himself about that, though she pointed out that actually she

hann skal sýna henni einnisaman gripina en þeira menn séu nálægir þegga hvárn veg sem þeira kaupskapr tækist.

62. Kemr nú morginn. Berr Jónas á land sína góðgripi, ok leggr niðr á klæðit it góða. Kallar síðan á meykonunginn. Hon gengr nú uppá klæðit ok sér gripina. Hon biðr hann á leggja verð gripina en hann segir þá ei fala vera nema fyrir sjálfrar hennar blíðu. “Um megin er þat einum kaupmanni at taka mik undir hönd sér.” Hann stendr þá ok les stafina, þá sem á klæðinu váru. Jungfrúin sér þat ok hleypr á hann ok hrindr honum svá hart at hann kom fallinn á jörðina, en klæðit var þá komit langt í lopt upp. Skildi hon náttúru klæðisins. Hon mælti þá, “haf góða nótt Sigrgarðr ok þökk fyrir góða gripi, ok fær mér slíka marga.” Skildu þau nú við svá búit ok sigldi Sigrgarðr heim aprt.

63. **8.** Kemr Sigrgarðr heim aprt ok þykir hans ferð litlu betri enn áðr. Bíðr hann nú föður sinn fá sér lið, ok vill hann hefna sinnar svívirðingar. Hann kvað honum liðit skyldu til reiðu svá mikit sem hann vildi. Samnaði hann nú liði miklu, svá hann hafði fengit fimm tigi skipa skipuð með góðum drengjum, en áðr enn hann sigldi, finnr hann Gustólf fóstura sinn ok Gerði konu hans, ok segir þeim til sinna vandræða ok bað þau leggja honum nökkur heilræði at hann geti hefnt sín á meykonunginum. Gerðr segir at þat

had the power to seize both him and all that he owned and take them with her. So they discuss the sale, and agree that he would show the treasures to her alone, but their men could be near at hand on either side while they bargained.

Morning now arrives. Jónas carries his treasures ashore and displays the merchandise on the fine cloth. Then he beckons to the Maiden King. She steps onto the cloth and examines the treasures. She bids him to name his price, but he says that he only will sell them for her own favour. “It’s mighty proud for a mere merchant to take my hand in marriage!” At that moment, Jónas stands up and reads aloud the letters on the cloth. The maiden sees this and runs at him and shoves him so hard that he fetched up flat on the ground, as the cloth had risen high into the air. The Maiden King realised the power of the cloth, and then said, “Have a good night, Sigrgarðr, and thanks for the excellent treasures—do bring me more like them.” They now parted with things as they were, and Sigrgarðr sailed back home.

8. When Sigrgarðr returns home his journey seems little better than the first. He again asks his father to call a war-band to avenge his dishonouring. This time King Ríkarðr granted his son an army as big as he desired. Sigrgarðr now mustered a great force, until he had fifty ships manned with good warriors. But before setting sail, he went to see Gustólfr his foster-father and Gerðr, Gustólfr’s wife. He tells them about his difficulties and asked them for advice as to how he might avenge himself against the Maiden King. Gerðr says that it would be a great test of his luck to try himself

væri mikil gæfuraun at fást við hana ok kveðst vita at henni væri ekki sjálfrátt um sína illsku. Ok kveðst hyggja hon mundi i ósköpum, ok það hann heldr annarra ráða leita enn at herja í Tartaría. “Þvíat þar er margt fólk ok grimmt, ok er illt at spilla góðum drengjum, ef þó væri ei sinn ávinningrinn.” Síðan tóluðu þeir einmæli lengi.

64. Því næst það Sigrgarðr þau vel lifa. Kerling fekk honum einn posa; sagði honum hversu hann skyldi með fara þat sem í var ef til þyrfti at taka. Hon það hann veita tveimr mönnum fari í skipi sínu þó at ei væri merkiligir ok hafa ráð þeira um þá hluti sem honum þætti miklu máli varða. Fór Sigrgarðr í burtu. Báðu þau vel fyrir honum.

65. Sigldu þeir nú austr fyrir Tartararíki. Einn dag sigldu þeir mikit veðr ok urðu nærri björgum nökkurum. Maðr kom fram á bjargit. Hann var mikill vexti ok undarliga skaptr. Hann hafði kring mikinn ok var í gráum veipustakki. Þat bar þó meir við hversu þjóabratr er hann var, því var líkast sem klæðsekk væri laginn um þverar lendar honum ok tók ofan í knésbót. Hann beiddist fars. Sigrgarðr spurði hvat honum væri til lista gefit en hann kveðst vel aka segli. Hann það hann hafa skip ef hann næði. Hinn stökk af berginu ok út á skipit, ok gekk skipit niðr um nagla. Þetta hlaup var þrettán álna af landi. Hann greip í aktauma ok dreif þegar skipit frá landi. Þeir spurðu hann at nafni. Hann kveðst Hörðr heita ok vera kallaðr harðstjöl. Þeir hlógu at honum.

against her, and said that she knew the Maiden King's wickedness would not be voluntary, adding that she suspected she must be under a curse. Gerðr advised him to seek plans other than to raid Tartaría, “because there are many fierce people there, and it is bad to kill good men if there is no gain from it.” Afterwards Sigrgarðr and Gustólfr had a long conversation alone.

Finally, Sigrgarðr bade them farewell, and the old woman brought him a certain bag, telling him how to make use of its contents, should the need arise. She counselled him further to offer passage on his ship to two men, even if they did not seem to be of great note, and to take their advice on matters he considered to be of importance. Gustólfr and Gerðr wished him well, and Sigrgarðr departed. Now they sailed east for Tartaría. One day they encountered heavy weather and were carried near a rocky cape. A man appeared on the cliff-top. He was large, but weirdly shaped. He had a huge hump and was wearing a coat of grey cloth which hung straight down below his buttocks. Thus it was just as if a clothes bag had been laid across his rump, reaching down to his knees. The stranger requested passage. Sigrgarðr asked what sort of skills he might have, and he replied that he was good at bracing sails. Sigrgarðr asked him to come aboard if he could reach the ship. The stranger leapt from the cliff and out onto the ship, and the ship sank down to the nails. This leap was thirteen ells from land. He grasped the sail-braces and immediately propelled the ship from the land. They asked what he was called. He said that he was called Hörðr and that he was known as

66. Annan níunda dag eptir sigldu þeir enn með landi fram. Þar var útgrynni mikit. Þar stóð maðr á landi. Sá beiddi fars, hann var hár vexti ok í vargskinnis stakki. Sigrgarðr spurði þann at nafni. Hann sagðist heita Velstígandi. Sigrgarðr spurði hvað honum væri til lista gefit, en hann kveðst troða vel marvað. Hann kvað þat góða íþrótt, ok bað hann troða til skips ef hann villdi farit fá. Hann sté út á sæinn; alda var mikil en þó rann hann til skipsins ok tók honum aldrei upp yfir skó, ok mundi þat vera sex tigu faðma frá landi. Þessi maðr hafði króksviðu i hendi.
67. Síðan sigla þeir leið sína. Sigrgarðr spurði þá margra tíðinda en þeir leystu vel úr öllu því sem hann spurði ok var ei sá hlutr at þeir kynni ei nökkura grein á at gjöra. Sigrgarðr spurði Hörð hvar hann vissi víking þann at mestr frami væri at berjast við. Hörðr sagði at í Eystrasalti væri víkingr mikill sá er Knútr inn knappi hét. Hann hefði fimmtán skip ok hefði aldrei ósigr fengit í bardögum, ok segir at þat væri enn meiri frami ok mannaun, at berjast við hann heldr enn við konur, þó at þær láti mikinn. Sigrgarðr spurði hvárt hann vissi hvert hans væri at leita. Hörðr kvaðst þat gjörla vita. Sigrgarðr bað þá þangat stefna.
- “Hard-arse.” They all burst out laughing at him.
- Nine days later they were still sailing out along the coast. A big headland came into view, on which a person was standing. The stranger requested passage. He was tall and wore a wolf-skin jacket. Sigrgarðr asked him his name and he said that he was called Velstígandi. Sigrgarðr asked what sort of skills he might possess, and he said that he was good at treading water. Sigrgarðr said that that was a good skill and asked him to tread his way to the ship if he wanted to get passage. Velstígandi stepped out onto the sea; the swell was great, but he ran to the ship without the water coming up over his shoes—and that was about sixty fathoms from land. He carried a billhook in his hand.
- After that they sail on their way. Sigrgarðr then enquired about all sorts of news, and the travellers answered well about everything he asked; there was nothing about which they didn't have something intelligent to say. Sigrgarðr asked Hörðr where they could find that Viking the fighting of whom would yield the greatest fame. Hörðr said that in the Baltic there was a great Viking called Knútr the Brisk, who had fifteen ships and had never met defeat in battle. Hörðr recommended that it would be an even greater achievement and test of manliness to fight against Knútr than against women—even if they did have big ideas about themselves. Sigrgarðr asked whether he knew where to look for him; Hörðr said he knew exactly where, and Sigrgarðr ordered the ship's course to be set.

68. Sigla þeir nú þangat til er þeir koma till þess staðar er Lóar heitir. Þar var Knútr fyrir með liði sínu. Hann hafði dreka; þat var mikill gersimi. Jógrímr hét stafnbúi hans. Hann var kallaðr skít í andliti því at nef hans var kolsvart ok kinnr báðar en hvítt hörundit annars staðar. Gráboli hét annarr. Hann hafði klaufir á fótum, ok sitt horn á hvárum vanga, ok váru þau hvöss sem spjótsoddar.
69. Sigrgarðr lagði til bardaga við hans menn með jafnmörgum skipum. Knútr spurði hverr þar gjörði svá gildan atróðr. Sigrgarðr segir til sín. “Várkunn er þat” segir Knútr “þótt þú vilir fjár afla, þó muntu víða þurfa til at drepa áðr skríðr í þat skarð sem meykungrinn hefr eytt af þér í Tartaría fyrir linleika sakir karlmennsku þinnar, ok er slíkt skömm mikil at opinbera þar skamm sína sem honum má mestr hljóðr at verða.” “Litlu þætti mér þat varða,” segir hann, “ef ek yrði þér karlmaðr.” “Nær muntu ganga verða,” segir Knútr. Sigrgarðr segir at þess skuli ei lengi bíða.
70. Tókst þá bardagi ok stóð hann með mikilli mannhættu. Sigrgarðr réð tvísvar til uppgöngu, en Jógrímr skít-í-andliti varði svá sterkliga stafnin at hann stakk hann hvártveggja sinni aprt á sitt skip. Velstígandi kom þá at, ok krækti með króksviðunni í kjaptinn á Jógrími, ok kippti honum ór stafninum. Sigrgarðr var þá nærri staddr ok hjó á háls Jógrími ok tók af höfuðit ok fekk hann þegar bana.
- And so they sail to their destination—a place called Lóar. There lay Knútr with his war-band. He had a dragon-ship, which was very valuable. His helmsman was called Jógrímr, known as “shit-in-the-face” because his nose and both his cheeks were coal-black but the rest of his skin was white. Another was called Gráboli; he had cloven hooves on his feet and a horn on each cheek which were sharp as spear-points.
- Sigrgarðr went into battle against Knútr’s men with the same number of ships. Knútr asked who was making such an impressive sea-attack there. Sigrgarðr tells him. “It’s understandable,” says Knútr, “that you should want to get wealth. Yet you will need to kill people far and wide before you get over the indignity which the Maiden King inflicted on you in Tartaría because of the limpness of your manhood. And it is a great dishonour that a man should publicise his shame where it can be most damaging to him.” “Why would that bother me, if I turn out to be harder for you?” says Sigrgarðr. Knútr says “You’ll have to come to close quarters for that.” Sigrgarðr says that he need not wait long. They joined battle and there was great mortal danger. Sigrgarðr made two attempts to board the dragon ship, but Jógrímr Shit-in-the-Face defended the prow so strongly that he pushed the prince back both times into his own ship. Then Velstígandi weighed in and hooked onto Jógrímr’s jaw with his billhook and jerked him off the prow. At that moment, Sigrgarðr was positioned nearby, and chopped into Jógrímr’s neck, lopped off his head, and he met his death instantly.

71. **9.** Þeir Hörðr ok Sigrgarðr hlupu þá báðir senn á skip Knúts, ok gekk með sínu borði hvárr, ok drápu margan mann. Gráboli sneri í móti Herði, ok sló til hans með gaddakylfu, en Hörðr beygði undir kenginn; kom á krippuna ok var fast við ok varð Grábola laus kylfan. Þá veifði Gráboli hornunum, ok vildi stinga Hörð með því horninu sem ór enninu stóð. Hörðr greip í hornit svá at brotnaði af honum. Gráboli vildi þá ljósta hann með því horninu sem ór vanganum stóð, en hann brá við stjelnum. Hornit sökk allt upp at hausinum. Hörðr vingsaði dausnum, ok vatt Grábola fyrir borð. Gráboli kipti honum fyrir borð með sér. Stígandi sá þat ok stökk fyrir borð ok krækti krókshyrnuni undir kjálkann á Grábola. Ei tók Stíganda meir sjórinna enn jafngegnt vörpum. Hann tók þá snæri ok renndi at hálsi Grábola, ok hengdi hann við kollarðinn á skipi sínu, en dró Hörð upp í skipit. Gengu þeir nú á skip Knúts ok ruddust um fast.

72. Þeir mættust nú Knútr ok Sigrgarðr. Knútr lagði til hans með kesjunni þeirri er ávallt varð manns bani. Sigrgarðr stökk í loptit, en spjótit kom í lokugatit á vindásinum ok gat hann ei aprt kippt. Sigrgarðr kom niðr á spjótskaptit ok braut í sundr fyrir framan hendr honum. Hjó hann þá til Knúts. Knútr sá ei færi sitt til úrræða, hljóp hann þá fyrir borð, sverðit kom á borðstokkinn, ok var undir járnboltr mikill. Kom sverðit í járnboltinn, ok stökk í sundr undir hjóltunum. Sigrgarðr stökk fyrir borð eptir Knúti, ok fundust þeir á

9. Both at once, Hörðr and Sigrgarðr rushed onto Knútr's ship and each worked his way down one side of the decks, killing many men. Gráboli turned to face Hörðr and struck at him with a spiked club, but Hörðr twisted his hump to block the blow; the club hit Hörðr's hump and stuck there, forcing Gráboli to let go. Then Gráboli tried to pierce Hörðr with the horn that stuck out from his forehead. Hörðr grabbed the horn and broke it off. Then Gráboli tried attacking him with the horn protruding from his cheek, but Hörðr shielded himself with his arse. The horn sank in all the way to the root. Hörðr swung his rump and twisted Gráboli overboard, but Gráboli dragged Hörðr with him. Stígandi saw what was happening and jumped overboard after them. The sea only reached up to Stígandi's shoe-bindings. He hooked the crook of his weapon under Gráboli's jaw, lassoed his neck with a rope, and hanged him from his ship. Stígandi then drew Hörðr back on board. They now crossed over to Knútr's ship and cleared their way ferociously.

Now Knútr and Sigrgarðr faced each other. Knútr swung at Sigrgarðr with the spear which always proved a man-slayer. Sigrgarðr leapt into the air and the spear plunged into the lock of the windlass so that Knútr couldn't pull it out. Sigrgarðr landed on the spear-shaft and broke it in two just above Knútr's hands. Then he struck at Knútr with his sword. Knútr saw no way of escape so he jumped overboard; the sword came down on the sheerstrake, right onto a great iron bolt, and shattered just above the crossguard. Sigrgarðr leapt overboard after Knútr, and they met on the sea floor. Their set-to was both hard

mararbotnum ok var þeira atgangr bæði harðr ok langr, ok ætlaði hvárr at festa annan á grunni. Sigrgarðr hafði tekit í posann þann sem kerling hafði fengit honum, ok brugðit yfir andlit sér, ok mátti hann þá vera í kafi svá lengi sem hann vildi. Hann var þá svá líkr Knúti inum knappa at yfirlitum at hvárigan mátti frá öðrum kenna, en síðan sprengði hann Knút köfum. Síðan fór hann í öll hans klæði.

73. En þeir Stígandi ok Hörðr höfðu rutt skipin á meðan, ok gekk þeim þat vel, en þegar þeir skutu eða hjuggu til Harðar þá brá hann við ýmist dausnum eða krippunni, ok brotnaði hvert vápn sem þar kom í. Var þat allt jafndrjúgt at þeir höfðu rutt drekanum, enda kom þá Knútr upp úr kafinu á þat skip sem næst var drekanum. Kallaði hann þá, ok bað menn ei berjast við höfuðlausa menn. Kvað Sigrgarð vera dauðan á mararbotni. Brá mönnum mjök við þessa sögu. Gafst þá upp bardaginn.
74. Fátt var fallit af liði Sigrgarðs; en mestr hluti var fallinn af liði Knúts. Bauð hann þá öllum mönnum grið sem með Sigrgarði höfðu verit. Þeir Hörðr ok Stígandi gengu til handa, ok sóru honum trúnaðareiða. En eptir þat bað Knútr alla þá menn sem með Sigrgarði höfðu verit sigla heim aptr í Garðaríki eðr hvert sem þeir vildi, ok ei vildi hann af þeira herfangi hafa at væri eins skilding. Skúli hét sá maðr er þá tók forráð yfir liðinu. Sigldu þeir síðan heim í Garðaríki, ok sögðu konungi slík tíðindi sem orðit höfðu í þeira ferðum. Konungr lét sér

and long, and each struggled to pin the other down on the seabed. Sigrgarðr had taken down the bag which the old lady had given him; he drew it over his face, enabling him to remain submerged as long as he wanted. Then he was so similar to Knútr the Brisk in looks that they couldn't be told apart. Eventually he drowned Knútr under the water. Then he put all Knútr's clothes on.

Meanwhile, Stígandi and Hörðr had cleared the ships—and that went well for them, and whenever people shot or cut at Hörðr, he took it either on his rump or his hump, breaking every weapon that struck. Just when they had cleared the dragon-ship, Knútr came up from the depths into the vessel nearest the dragon-ship. He called out, commanding the warriors not to fight against leaderless men. He declared that Sigrgarðr lay dead on the seabed. This news made a great impression on everyone, and so the battle ended. Few of Sigrgarð's band had fallen, but the majority of Knútr's had. He offered a truce to all the men who had accompanied Sigrgarðr. Then Hörðr and Stígandi presented themselves and swore oaths of allegiance to him. After that Knútr ordered those who had been with Sigrgarðr to sail back home to Garðaríki, or wherever they wished; nor would he take a single shilling of booty from them. The man who took command over the war-band was called Skúli. They sailed home to Garðaríki and told the king the news of what had happened on their journey. The king didn't make much show

fátt um finnast en Sigrgarðr var mörgum manni harmdauði.

75. Fréttust þessi tíðindi nú víða. Þessi tíðindi komu austr í Tartaría til eyrnanna meykoningin en hon brosti við ok kvað margt skrökvat þó at skemmra væri at spyrja en þó sáu menn þá at hagl hraut ór augum henni rautt sem blóð.

76. Annat sumar eptir at áliðnu sumri sigldi Knútr inn knappi austr í Tartaría. Hann rataði strauma stóra ok storma mikla, ok leysti skipin undir þeim. Komst Knútr einskipa undir Tartaría, ok braut skipit í lending ok misti menn alla nema tólf eina. Fjárhlut rak á land allan. Spurðu menn hann hvað ráðs skyldi taka. Knútr sagði ekki annat til enn at reyna á drengskap meykönungsins. Hörðr segir at væri gæfuraun, en Stígandi segir at ekki dygði ófreistað, at einum degi gengu þeir fyrir meykönunginn.

77. Sat hon þá yfir borðum. Knútr kvaddi hana virðuliga sem henni sæmdi. Hon tók ei kveðju hans en spurði þó hvat manni hann væri. Hann kvaðst Knútr heita, “ok er ek kominn hér á yðrar náðir. Hefir oss tekist heldr slysliga, misst skip vár öll, en tókum land með skipbroti, ok vildum vér gjarnan þiggja hér vetrvist. Skortir oss ei fé fyrir oss at leggja, eðr aðra þjónustu ef þér vilit.”

78. Hon horfði á hann lengi ok þagði, en litlu síðar mælti hon: “ertu sá Knútr er drepit hefr Sigrgarðr inn frækna?”

of emotion—but to many, Sigrgarðr’s death seemed a great loss.

Word of the battle spread widely. The news travelled east into Tartaría to the ears of the Maiden King, but she smiled and said that many reports were untrue, even though they may be heard from nearer at hand. Even so, people saw that hail fell from her eyes, as red as blood.

At the end of the following summer, Knútr the Brisk sailed east to Tartaría. His fleet ran into treacherous currents and violent storms, and the ships were wrecked. He arrived in Tartaría with only one vessel, and even that was wrecked as they landed, losing all hands but twelve. All the cargo was washed ashore. His men asked him what course of action they should take. Knútr said that there was nothing for it but to test the chivalry of the Maiden King. Hörðr says it would be pushing their luck; but Stígandi says nothing ventured nothing gained. So one day they went before the Maiden King.

She was sitting at her table. Knútr greeted her nobly, as was fitting. She did not acknowledge his greeting, but rather asked what sort of man he might be. He said that he was called Knútr, “and I have come here at your mercy. We’ve had a rather hard time and lost all our ships—and landed, shipwrecked. We would very much like to receive winter quarters here. We do not lack wealth with which to pay for ourselves, or other skills to set at your service.”

She looked at him for a long time in silence, but after a little while said, “Are you the Knútr who killed Sigrgarðr the Valiant?”

79. “Ei mun ek þess þræta sem aðrir menn kenna mér; vænti ek þar helst fyrir sæmda af yðr er ek réði af yðr þann ófrið.”
80. “Margt hefðir þú þat mátt vinna at mér hefði betr líkat, en várkynni ek þat hverjum manni þó hann veri líf sitt, ok með því at þú hefir gengit á mitt vald, þá mun ek þess ei svá greypiliga hefna sem vert er; en hefir þú ei spurt hversu þeim hefir af ferðar orðit sem hér hafa vetrvist tekit hjá oss?”
81. “Ekki kvíði ek ókomnum degi,” segir hann.
82. “Þat þikjumst ek þér” segir hon, “ok á krippubaknum þeim sem hjá þér stendr at þit þikist eiga nökkut undir ykk. Hugsíð svá yðvart mál at þér séuð mér ei synsamir ef ek vil senda yðr nökkut. Máttu ok til þess ætla,” segir hon, “at ek mun ætla þér þegjandi þörfina fyrir þat er þú hefir drepit Sigrgarð þó at vit bærum ei alla gæfu saman.”
83. “Ei má sá böll bera” segir hann, “sem ei þorir at bíða, ok munu vér þat áhætta.”
84. Sendi hann þá eptir varningi sínum ok lét heimbera, ok var þeim skiput ein steinhöll.
85. En er þeir komu þangat þá var þar myrkt, ok illa þefat. Stígandi segist fyrst vilja innganga. Stakk hann niðr króksviðunni, ok fann at holt var undir ok var þar tálgröf gjör í gólfrit, ok skotit yfir þunnum skíðum ok breiddr á kögur. Síðan rann hann yfir gröfina, ok segir þeim at ófært var. Knútr ok Hörðr stukku yfir tálgröfina, ok var þat vel tólf álnar. Stígandi krækti með krókssviðunni,
- “I won’t deny that which other people report of me; I was rather expecting your praise for ridding you of that threat.”
- “You could have done many things that I would have liked better; though I would excuse any person for defending his life. Given that you have put yourself in my power I will not avenge it as fiercely as it deserves. But haven’t you heard how visits have gone for those who have taken winter quarters here with me?”
- “I’m not worried about a day that has not yet come,” he says.
- “It looks to me,” she replies, “that you and that hunchback who’s standing next to you think you’re pretty high and mighty. Remember your promise, so that you don’t deny me if I want to send you some task. You can also expect,” she says, “that I will resent you because you have killed Sigrgarð, even though the two of us didn’t get along well together.”
- “He cannot bear misfortune,” he says, “who doesn’t have the courage to wait, and we will take that risk.”
- Then he sent for his cargo and had it brought to him, and a stone-built hall was assigned to them.
- When they arrived at the hall, it was dark and bad-smelling. Stígandi said that he would go in first. He thrust down with his billhook and found the floor was hollow underneath, and that a pitfall had been set there, overlain with thin planks and covered with a rug. He ran over the pit, but advised the others that it was uncrossable. Knútr and Hörðr leapt over the trap—that was easily twelve ells. Using his billhook, Stígandi snatched the

ok kippti hinum yfir gröfina. Hörðr vildi fyrst niðr setjast. Settist hann niðr við dyrr utar ok brakaði mjök við. Framþrútin váru tjöldin. Hann setti krippuna upp við þilit ok váru þar menn undir með vápnum, ok kreisti hann líf frá þeim. Svá ók hann sér innar eptir höllinni, ok svá kringum hana, ok brakaði einart við, svá at undrum þótti gegna, en stundum skeldi hann herðunum upp á þilit. Var þá tekit af glugginum. Fundust þá þrír tigur manna dauðir, ok var þeim kastað í tálgröfina, ok fylltu af moldu, en i bekkjunum váru herbroddar af stáli, ok braut hann þá alla með dausnum.

86. Síðan settust þeir niðr. Höfðu þeir menn sína til matkaupa á torgum. Heldu þeir sik vel bæði til öls ok matar. Meykonungrinn sendi þeim opt góðar sendingar af borði sínu. Þeir váru jafnan boðnir ok búnir til hvers sem hon vildi þeim skipat hafa, en hon var svá vör um sik at hon vildi aldrei í þat herbergi koma er þeir váru í, ok aldrei áttu þeir kosti at sjá hana, eðr tala við hana nema allt hennar fólk stæði upp yfir. Ok leið nú svá fram um vetrinn þar til mánuðr var til sumars.

87. Þá lét meykönungrinn kalla þá kompána til sín ok mælti svá til þeira: “Yðr mun mál þykja at vita um sendiför yðra, ok mér þykir mál at vita hvat ek skal hafa í vistarlaun.” Þeir báðu hana fyrir sjá. “Þú Stígandi,” segir hon, “skalt sækja svín mín. Þau eru níu tigur saman. Lát þau koma heim til mín sumarsdaginn fyrsta ódrepin ok ómeidd ok far af

others over the pit. Hörðr insisted on being the first to take a seat; he sat down at the outer doors with a mighty crunch. The wall hangings were all bulging out, so Hörðr then shoved his hump up against them—there were men with weapons hidden behind the panelling, and he crushed them to death. He worked his way further down the hall, from time to time shoving his shoulders up against the wall, and crunched his way right round it, making amazing cracking noises. Then the hangings were taken down from the window and they found thirty dead men, whom they cast into the pitfall and buried with earth. The benches were shot with steel spikes, all of which Hörðr broke with his rump.

In time they sat down and got stuck into both ale and food, which they had their own men buy from the market. The Maiden King often sent them good offerings from her table. They were both ready and eager to do whatever task she assigned to them. Yet she was so guarded that she would never enter the room they were in, and they never had the chance to see or talk with her unless all her people were present. And so it went on through the winter until it was the month before summer.

The Maiden King had Knútr and his companions called before her and spoke to them: “You will think it’s about time to know about your errands; and it seems time for me to know what I might have as payment for your lodgings.” They asked her to speak her mind. “You, Stígandi,” she says, “must find my pigs; there are ninety altogether. Have them come home to me on the first day of

stað þegar í dag. Líf þitt liggur á ef þú meiðir svínin.”

88. “Hvert skal ek þeira leita?” segir hann. “Where shall I look for them?” he says.
89. “Ei er ek vön at hafa reikning á því” segir hon, “hvert þau renna.” “It’s not my business to know where they run,” she replies.
90. **10.** Stígandi ferr nú heiman ok vita menn ei hvat af honum verðr. En áðr enn hann fór töluðust þeir fóstbræðr við einmæli. Um morguninn eptir gekk Hörðr fyrir meykoninginn ok spurði, “Hverja sendiferð hefir þú mér ætlat?” **10.** Stígandi sets off, and no-one can tell what has become of him; but before he went, the foster-brothers spoke together alone. The next morning Hörðr went before the Maiden King and asked “What sort of mission have you planned for me?”
91. “Þú skalt sækja stóðhross mín,” segir hon. “Þau eru saman níu tigur; hestrinn er grár. Sjá svá fyrir attú komir aptr sumarsdaginn fyrsta með ómeidd hrossin. Þar liggur við líf þitt.” “You must find my stud horses,” she says. “There are ninety altogether; the stallion is grey. Be sure you return on the first day of summer with the horses unharmed. Your life depends on it.”
92. “Hvert á ek þeira at leita hér innan lands?” “Whereabouts should I look for them?”
93. “Ekki eru mér kunnigar leiðir, kenn þú þér sjálfum,” segir hon. Síðan bjóst Hörðr til ferðar, ok vissu menn ei hvat af honum varð. “Their paths are unknown to me—find them for yourself,” she says. After that Hörðr prepared himself for the journey, and no-one could tell what became of him.
94. Þrim nóttum síðar kallaði meykoningrinn Knút til sín. Hon mælti þá til hans, “sendiferð hef ek þér hugað.” Three nights later the Maiden King summons Knútr. She said to him, “I have thought of an errand for you.”
95. “Hvart skal ek fara?” segir hann. “Where shall I go?” he asks.
96. “Þú skalt sækja uxa mína. Þeir eru hundrað saman, ok koma þeim heilum ok ómeiddum til mín sumarsdaginn fyrsta. Horn þat sem fram stendr ór hausi einum þeira skaltu taka ok færa mér fult af gulli. Á þínum veg er eitt vatn. Þar er í einn hólmr, þar á ek í eggvarp nökkut. Þau skaltu týna. Þar liggur líf þitt á ef þú færir mér þau ei öll óbrotin, ok ef þú skilr nökkut eptir.” “You must find my oxen. There are a hundred of them altogether. Bring them to me, healthy and unharmed, on the first day of summer. On the head of one of them is a horn; you must take it and bring it back to me full of gold. There is a lake on your path, with an island where I have a certain place for gathering eggs. You must gather them up; and your life will be to pay if you leave anything behind or

97. “Hvert á þeira at vænta?” segir hann.
98. “Ei mundir þú mik at spyrja,” segir hon, “ef þér þætti eptirlæti í at fara. Ok eigi mundi Sigrgarðr torfelt hafa þessa för.”
99. “Minnst þú vel á þat,” segir hann.
100. “Þegi vanmenna,” segir hon. Var hon þá reiðulig at sjá.
101. Hann sneri þegar í burtu ok bjóst þegar at fara sína sendiferð. Ok hafði með sér sex menn sína. En aðrir váru eptir hjá því sem þeir áttu.
102. **11.** Knútr fór nú leið sína. Ferr hann margan ókunnigan stig. Eitt kveld koma þeir at einu sæluhúsi. Þat var timbrhús. Þeir komu þar snemma um kveldit. Bjuggust þeir þar um. Hann sendi þrjá eptir eldiviði en tvá menn at sækja vatn. Þótti honum þeir seinir apr. Fór hann síðan at vitja þeira, ok fann hann dauða hvártveggju. Ok váru aðrir snaraðir úr hálsliðinum. En af öðrum váru bitin höfuðin.
103. Ferr hann nú heim aprt í sæluhúsit. En er hann kom þar þá váru þar fyrir þrír menn. Þeir váru féhirðar meykönungsins. Einn hét Kampi, annar Skeggi, þriði hét Toppr. Þeir váru illvirkjar miklir ok drápu þeir menn. En færðu meykönunginum fé þeira. Þeir sóttu þegar at Knúti allir er þeir sjá hann. váru þeir bæði sterkir ok stórhöggvir. Aldri þóttist hann í viðlíka raun ok mannhættu komit hafa.
104. Þá sér hann hvar Stígandi hleypr. Hann krækir þegar króksviðunni í

if you do not bring them all back in one piece.”

“And where can one expect to find these?” he says.

“You would not⁷ ask me that, if you really were keen to go—Sigrgarðr wouldn’t have hesitated on this errand,” she says.

“Glad you brought that up,” he says.

“Shut up, parasite,” she replies. She was looking angry.

Knútr turns quickly away, and immediately prepares to undertake his quest. He had with him six of his men; the others were left behind to guard their belongings.

11. Knútr now went his way. He travels many unknown paths. One evening they come to a wooden refuge hut. It was early evening, and after they settled down, Knútr sent three men to gather firewood and two others to find water. They seemed late coming back, so he went searching for them, only to find both parties dead. One group had had their necks wrung; the heads had been bitten off the others.

Knútr returns to the refuge; but when he arrived, he found three men there before him. They were herdsmen of the Maiden King: the first was called Kampi, the second Skeggi and the third Toppr. They were terrible criminals, who killed people and took their money to the Maiden King. As soon as they saw Knútr, they all set upon him—they were mighty, and delivered powerful blows. Knútr thought that he’d never encountered such a trial or mortal danger.

Then he sees that Stígandi is running up, who immediately swings his billhook into

kampinn á Skeggja ok dregr hann at sér. Vatn eitt var nærri þeim. Hann dregr Skeggja út í vatnit. Fór þá svá sem vant var, at Stíganda tók eigi djúpara vatnit enn jafnsitt skóm. Skeggja var óhægt at koma sundlátum við þvíat krókrinn var fastr í kjaptinum, en þó kafaði hann svá nærri fæti hans at hann beit af honum tána ina stærstu. Stígandi stakk ór honum bæði augun. Ok sleppti hann honum síðan ok fáð hann þá eigi í burt af vatninu. Ok drukknaði hann þar.

105. Þeir Toppr ok Kampi sóttu báðir at Knúti. Þá kom Hörðr fram ór skóginum. Toppr sneri þegar í móti Herði ok hjó til hans öxi, en hann brá við stjölnum ok stökk úr munnin úr öxinni. Hörðr hljóp þá at honum ok rak hann niðr fall mikit. Settist síðan á hann ofan svá fast at brotnaði í honum hvert bein. Eigi bitu vápn á Kampa. Knútr greip í kampa honum ok snaraði hann úr hálsliðinum.
106. Sökkktu þeir þeim niðr í vatnit. Síðan fóru þeir heim í sæluhúsit ok bjuggust um. Hörðr lá við þilit öðru megin en Knútr öðru megin. Stígandi lá í miðit. En þegar er þeir váru nýsofnaðir þá lét Knútr illa í svefni; færði hann fætrna við þilinu. Var þá ylgr komin í fang honum ok vildi bíta hann. En hann tók sterkliga í mót; hon færði kryppuna við þilinu en setti klærnar í bringu honum. Hörðr hrökk undan sviptingum þeira. Setti hann kryppuna við timbrveggnum svá at hann brotnaði, ok komust þeir þar út. Stígandi krækti í huppinn á ylginni ok reif út ór henni garnirnar, en Hörðr hljóp á bak henni ok brotnaði

Skeggi's moustache and drags the robber towards himself. There was a lake nearby. He drags Skeggi out into the water. Of course, Stígandi sinks no deeper than the level of his shoes, but Skeggi was unable to make swimming strokes because the hook was fast in his mouth. Even so, submerged so near to Stígandi's feet, he was able to bite off his big toe. Stígandi put out both his eyes, then let him loose. He couldn't get out of the lake, and there he drowned.

Toppr and Kampi both made for Knútr; then from out of the wood appeared Hörðr. Toppr immediately turned to Hörðr and swung at him with his axe, but he bent his rump and broke off the axe-head. Hörðr ran at Toppr, driving him down hard. Then he sat down on him with such force that he broke every bone in his body. No weapon bit on Kampi; instead, Knútr grabbed his moustache and twisted his head from his neck. The foster-brothers sank the murderers in the lake, then returned to the refuge hut and settled down. Hörðr lay by the wall on one side and Knútr on the other; Stígandi lay in the middle. As soon as they dozed off, Knútr began to act wildly in his sleep, knocking his legs against the wall. A she-wolf had pounced on him and was trying to bite him; but he resisted strongly. She set her back to the wall and sank her claws into his chest. Hörðr dived out from under their wrestling, and squared his hump against the wooden wall so that it broke, and they escaped through the hole. Stígandi hooked into the wolf's belly and ripped out her intestines, while Hörðr jumped down

þá í henni hryggrinn. En svá hafði hon sett klærnar í bringu Knúti at berir skinu við bringuteinarnir. Þá var Hlégerðr þar komin. Knútr hjó til hennar, en hon varð at kráku ok fló upp. Höggit kom á vænginn ok tók af henni vænginn. Fló hon þá til norðrættar ok hvarf þeim skjótt.

onto her back and broke her spine. Even so, she had sunk her claws into Knútr's chest enough to strip away the skin to the ribs. Then Hlégerðr appeared. Knútr struck at her, but she turned into a crow and took off; the blow caught the wing and clipped it right off her. Then she flew northwards and soon disappeared from sight.

107. Þeir fóru nú eptir blóðdrefjunum þangat til sem þeir komu at hömrum nökkurum. Þeir váru brattir ok hávir ok svá sléttir at eigi mátti klífa. Þeir báðu Stíganda forvitnast á fjallit. Hann rann upp bergit ok kastaði þá skónum ofan til þeira ok renna þeir báðir bergit á skónum. Síðan ganga þeir um fjallit. En er þeir höfðu lengi geingit fundu þeir dal einn fyrir sér. Þar váru sléttirvellir. Þar sjá þeir níu tigi hrossa, ok var þar með einn hestr furðuliga fagr ok grár at lit. Eitt flókafolald sá þeir. Þat var at öllu skripiligt. Hrossin öll lömdu þat ok óþægðu. Hestrinn lagði þat í eineltu. Þótti þeim gaman at horfa á þetta.

The three now followed Hlégerðr's blood-trail until they came to some mountain cliffs, steep and high, and so smooth that no-one would be able to climb them. They asked Stígandi to reconnoitre. He ran up the mountain then threw down his shoes to them, and they each run up the precipice in the shoes. Then they proceed across the mountain. They had been going for a long time when they found a glen with level fields before them. There they see ninety horses, and with them a stallion, wonderfully handsome and grey in colour. They also saw a touselled foal—it was utterly hideous. All the horses were kicking and shoving it, and the stallion kept bullying it. The foster brothers enjoyed watching this.

108. Þeir sáu helli stóran. Þá mælti Knútr: “Hér muntu Hörðr eptir dveljast þó at mér þiki mikit fyrir at skilja við þik. En nú er tími svá stuttur at vantækt er á hvárt vér náum heim stefnudeginum, þó at oss beri eigi til tafa. En geym þú hellisdyr þessar þangat til sem ek kem aprtr, því at þar liggr líf vart allra við ef nökkut tröll kemst út ór hellinum.” Síðan skilja þeir.

They spied a large cave. Then Knútr said “Hörðr will remain here, though I don't take it lightly to split us up. But time is now so short that it will be difficult for each of us to get home on the appointed day, even without hindrances. Look after the doors of this cave until I return, because all our lives will depend on it if any troll gets out.” And so they part.

109. Fara þeir Stígandi ok Knútr í burtu þangat til sem þeir koma at hólum nökkurum. Þar sjá þeir svín mörg, ok váru þau þá komin í svefn. Eina gyltu

Stígandi and Knútr journey on until they arrive at some hills. There they saw lots of pigs sleeping, and a sow lying under a crag, suckling two pigs. She was so

sáu þeir liggja undir hamri einum. Hana sugu tveir grísir. Hon var svá mörg at hon gat varla risit. En þegar at aðrir grísir fóru frá henni þá fóru aðrir til hennar at sjúga hana. Knútr gekk at háli einum ok mælti til Stíganda: “Hér munt þú eptir verða, ok bíða mín þangat til at þrjár sóllir eru af himni. En ef ek kem þá eigi aptr þá þarf eigi mín at vænta. En ekki skaltu við svínin eiga fyrr enn úr kullit er um mína komu. Ok muntu þó ærit eiga at vinna. Hér í hólí þessum eru níutígir trölla, en svínahirðirinn er farinn á skóg at afla þeim matar. Ok veit ek at hann mun glettast við þik þá er hann kemur heim. En hér er einn gluggr á hólnum ok er þar við stigi. Ok er hvergi útgangr úr hólnum nema þar. Líf þitt liggr á ef þau komast út.”

110. **12.** Knútr skilr nú við fóstbræðr sína. Fór nú síðan langan veg um mörkina. Optast hafði hann nökkurn leiðarvísi: blóðdrefjar af krákunni. Ferr hann nú þangat til sem fyrir honum verða mýrar. Þar sér hann mörg naut í einum skíðgarði, en þegar sem þau sjá hann þá beljuðu þau með svá öskrlegum hljóðum at honum var búit at standast eigi. Uxi var þar fyrir svá stórr sem fjall væri. Hann hafði þrjú horn: eitt stóð fram úr miðju enni, en annat stóð þvert upp í lopt, en it þriðja beint niðr í jörð, ok reist hann með því torfu. Hann sté svá fast í klaufirnar at jörðin gekk at lak klaufum upp.

111. Knútr gekk at hliðinu ok lauk upp grindinni. Uxinn hljóp út beljandi ok ætlaði at reka hornit fyrir brjóst

emaciated that she could hardly get up—and as soon as the first pigs went away from her, other pigs came to suckle. Leading Stígandi to one particular hill, Knútr said, “You stay behind here, and wait for me until the sun has passed from the sky three times. If I don’t come back then there’s no need to wait for me any longer. But don’t do anything with the pigs until there’s no hope of my return—even so, you’ll have plenty on your hands. Here in this mound are ninety trolls, and the swineherd has gone to the woods to gather food for them, and I know that he will provoke you when he comes back. There is an opening here in the hill and next to it is a ladder, and there is no other way out. Your life will be on the line if they get out.”

12. Knútr now continues his quest alone. He journeyed deep into the forest, but he had something to guide him most of the time: the blood-trail from the crow. He now continues, until some meadows appear before him. There he sees many heifers in an enclosure. As soon as they saw him they bellowed with such an incredible din that he could hardly stand it. Leading the herd was an ox as big as a mountain, with three horns: the first stood out from the middle of the forehead, the second stood straight up into the air, and the third turned down into the ground, and he tore up the grass with it. He stamped so hard with his hooves that the earth came up to his hocks.

Knútr walked to the fence and opened the gate. The ox rushed out, bellowing, and tried to drive a horn into Knútr’s

Knúti. En hann greip báðum höndum í hornit ok kippti af honum horninu, en slóin stóð eptir. Hann hafði til reiðu posann kerlingarnaut, ok dreifði hann því yfir uxann sem í var ok varð hann svá hægr sem hann hefði aldri ólmr orðit. Nautin þreyngdust utan í hliðit, en hann dreifði yfir þau því sem í posanum var ok tók þegar af þeim ærslin. Gengu þau síðan hógvær á gras.

112. Vatn eitt var skammt í burtu þaðan. Þar var í ein ey mikil. Hann sér hvar maðr rær á steinnökkva. Hann var fylgjumaðr Hlégerðar ok hét Giparr. Hann geymdi nautin. Hann var eigi góðorðr. Hann sá at nautin váru út komin, “ok veit ek at þessu mun valda vetrtraksmaðrinn armi er höggit hefir vænginn af Hlégerði fóstru minni. Ok skyldi ek þess grimmliga hefna ef ek gæta náð honum.” Verðr nökkvinn nú landfastr. Hljóp jötunninn nú fyrir borð. Knútr kom þar fram á bakkann. Jötunninn var óða málugr. Knútr tók upp stein ok snaraði til hans, ok kom við eyra honum. Hann hristi við höfuðit ok mælti “hvasst er nú á hömrnunum svá feykir vindrinn fjöðrunum.” Tók hann þá gaddakylfu, járnvaða, ok hljóp neðan einstigit. Hálfprítugr var hamarrinn. En þá er hann var kominn í it efsta stigit, renndi Knútr at honum ok rak spjótit fyrir brjóst honum. Spjótit gekk á kaf, en jötunninn datt ofan fyrir hamarinn ok brotnaði í honum hvert bein.
113. En Knútr tók kylfuna til sín en síðan sté hann á nökkvann ok reri til eyjarinnar, gekk á land ok litaðist um.

chest, but he grabbed it with both hands and tore it from the bull, leaving only the bone core behind. He had the bag which the old lady had given him at the ready and sprinkled some of its contents over the ox, which became docile, as if it had never been in a rage. The cows stampeded out from the enclosure, but he also sprinkled them with some of what was in the bag and immediately it took away their madness. Then they went peaceably to graze.

Not far from the meadows was a lake with a large island. Knútr spies someone rowing in a stone boat. It was one of Hlégerðr's retainers; he was called Giparr and looked after the cattle. Giparr was not gently spoken. He saw that the cattle had been released, “and I know that this must be that horrible winter-guest who chopped the wing off my foster-mother Hlégerðr—I'd avenge this fearsomely if I could get hold of him.” The boat comes to land, and the giant now jumps out. Knútr arrived at the edge of the lake; the giant was in a towering rage. Knútr took up a stone and threw it at Giparr, hitting him on the ear. The giant shook his head and said, “It's so blowy on the headland that the wind's blowing feathers.” Grabbing his iron-bound, spiked club, Giparr rushed up a narrow path where the headland was twenty-five ells high. But when he'd reached the final step, Knútr rushed at him and sank his spear deep into Giparr's breast; it went right through into the water, and the giant tumbled down to the bottom of the cliff and smashed every bone in his body. Then Knútr took the club for himself, stepped into the boat and rowed across to the island. He walked up the shore and

Hann sá hól einn háfan með fögrum grösom. Þangat gengr hann. Hann finnr þar á glugg; hann setr gler fyrir augu sér. Hann sér hvar krákan lá á mikilli dyngju. Hann sá af henni var vængrinn. Hann tók þá í posa kerlingar ok sáði inn í glugginn því sem þar var í. Fell þá svefn á krákuna. En síðan fór hann inn í hólinn. Hann tók um háls krákunnar ok snaraði hana úr hálsliðnum í millum handa sér en í hennar fjörbrotum varð svá mikill landsskjálfti at undrum gegndi.

114. **13.** Knútr tekr sér nú eld ok gekk til dyngju krákunar ok rubbar henni upp allri. Finnur hann eggit ok lætr þat koma í posa kerlingar. Niðri undir dyngjunni fann hann jarðhús. Þar lá fyrir ormr einn. Hann bles þegar eitri ok sakaði Knútr ekki fyrir taufrum kerlingar. Ormrinn fló út um glugginn. Gull mikit ok gersimar var þar. Hann fylldi upp uxahornit. Tók hann þat af gullinu sem honum likaði. Vendi hann síðan í burtu.

115. Kemr hann nú til nökkvans ok rær síðan at landi. En er kemr á vatnit þá kemr ormrinn upp úr vatninu með gapanda munni ok leggst at nökkvanum ok lagði bægslið upp á barðit. Knútr breif kylfuna ok keyrði á nasir orminum. En hann dró nökkvann í kaf með sér, en Knútr hljóp á bak drekanum ok spenti um hálsinn. Ok fóru þeir svá þangat til at skammt var til lands. Tók hann þá í posa kerlingar ok sáði yfir drekan, ok varð hann þá svá máttreginn at hann sökk í vatnit. En Knútr lagðist þá til lands.

looked around. He saw a high mound covered with beautiful herbs. He approaches the hill and finds a window there. He puts his face to the glass and sees the crow lying on a big heap. He saw that her wing had been severed. Knútr delved into the old lady's bag and sprinkled some of its contents in through the window; sleep descended upon the crow. Knútr entered the hill, grabbed the crow's neck and twisted it from her shoulders with his bare hands. Her death-throes caused such a great earthquake it was amazing.

13. Knútr makes himself a fire, goes to the crow's heap and rifles through everything. He finds the egg and places it in the old lady's bag. Beneath the heap he found an underground dwelling. A dragon was lying there. It immediately blew poison; yet Knútr remained unharmed because of the old lady's magic. The dragon flew out through the window, revealing much gold and treasure. Knútr filled the ox's horn, and took what he wanted of the gold for himself, then made his exit.

Now he returns to the boat, and makes to row back to the edge of the lake; but as he launches, the dragon rushes out of the water, mouth gaping, and attacks the boat, sinking its wide jaws into the vessel. Knútr swung his club, smashing it into the dragon's nose; even so, the dragon dragged the boat under. Knútr jumped on the dragon's back and clasped his hands around its neck; and so they were locked together like this until they were not far from the shore. He delved into the old lady's bag again and sprinkled dust over the dragon, which weakened it so

116. Var hann þá bæði stíðr ok móðr. En sér at eigi gjörist setuefni. Vill nú flýta sér til fóstbræðra sinna. Rekr nú saman nautin. Eru þau mjög bagræk, en þó kemr hann um síðir til Stíganda fóstbróður síns.

117. **14.** Nú er at segja frá Stíganda at þá er þeir skildu Hörðr, settist hann fyrir dyr hólsins. En er hann hafði eigi lengi þar verit þá kemr svínahirðirinn heim fram úr skóginum. Þat var Hjalmlr bróðir Hlégerðar. Hann gekk þar fyrst at sem gyltan lá sú in magra. Hann gaf henni mikit vandarhögg, en hon gat tregliga upp staðit. Síðan reisir hann upp svínin ok rekr þau upp at hólnum. Stígandi var þar fyrir. Þá mælti Hjalmlr til hans: “Illu heilli ok óþörfu sjálfum þér, komtu hér: Mikla dirfð ætlar þú þér, at þú ætlar at reka svínin úr höndum mér.” “Eigi dugir ófreistat,” sagði Stígandi. Hjalmlr hafði atgeir í hendi ok hjó til Stíganda, en hann laust af sér lagit. Í því opnaðist haugrinn. Stígandi krækti svíðunni til Hjalmls ok kippti honum áfram ok fell hann inn í glugginn.

118. Í hauginum váru fjór tigur trölla. Sóttu þau nú út úr hauginum ok Hjalmlr með þeim. Stígandi varði dynnar vel ok hraustliga. Fekk hann þá mörg sár ok stór. Opt krækti hann tröllin með svíðunni ok kastaði þeim inn í hauginn. Svínin tóku at sækja at honum, en hann vill þeim eigi vánt gjöra. Gekk þessi sókn allan daginn ok alla nóttina eptir.

much that it sank into the water. And so Knútr made his way to land.

He was by then stiff and tired. But he sees that this is no time to be sitting about. He now wants to hurry to his foster-brothers and sets about driving the cattle together. They are very hard to herd, but after a while he reaches his foster-brother Stígandi.

14. It is now time to tell of Stígandi. After parting from Hörðr, he sat down in front of the door of the mound. He hadn't been there long, when the swineherd comes home from the woods. It was Hjalmlr, Hlégerðr's brother. He first walked to where the thin sow lay and gave her such a mighty blow that she could stand up only with difficulty. Then he herds the pigs together and drives them up to the mound. Stígandi is there waiting. Hjalmlr said to him, “You've brought bad luck and harm for yourself here; you fancy yourself very bold to plan on driving the swine from my hands.” “Nothing ventured, nothing gained,” said Stígandi. Hjalmlr had a spear in his hand and thrust at Stígandi, but he parried the blow. At that moment, the barrow opened up. Stígandi swung at Hjalmlr with his billhook; he hooked him forward and he toppled in through the opening.

Inside the mound were forty trolls. They and Hjalmlr now charged towards the mound entrance; Stígandi guarded the door well and bravely, but received many large wounds. He repeatedly struck the trolls with his billhook and threw them back into the barrow. The pigs, too, started to attack, but he doesn't want to do them any harm. This battle continued all day and through the next night.

119. Einn göltr var stærstr af svínunum. Hann sótti mest at Stíganda. Hjalmr lagði spjóti til Stígandi ok var þat allt í einu at göltrinn greip í kálfan á honum. Þá fell Stígandi ok dró göltrinn hann ofan fyrir holinn. Þeystust þá öll tröllin út úr holnum ok létu öll heimsliga. Í þessu kom Knútr fram úr skóginum með nauta flokkinn. Sneri hann þá at tröllunum ok lét hann þá ganga kylfuna. Hjalmr sneri þá at honum ok lagði til hans. Þá var við mörgu at sjá. Stígandi var þá á færtr kominn. Hjóp hann þá at baki Hjalmi ok krækti sviðunni fram yfir hann ok kom í augat ok kipti honum at sér. En kesjan kom í rist Knúti. Ok hjóp niðr í gegnum í jörðina ok var þat sár mikit. Hann lagði þá kylfuna á nasir Hjalmi ok brotnaði þá allr haussinn, ok varð þat hans bani.
120. Svínin sóttu at Stíganda. En hann var svá vakr á skóm sínum at þau gátu honum eigi náð. Hann krækti at sér tröllin ok kipti þeim undir högginn. En Knútr veitti þeim skjótan dauða. Þá var sól í suðri er þeir höfðu drepit tröllin öll. Ok váru þeir þá bæði stirðir ok móðir. Dreifðu þeir þá yfir svínin moldu þeirri er í var posa kerlingar. Ok váru þau þá þegar hogvær.
121. Síðan bjuggust þeir til ferðar. Gyltan in magra var svá mögur at hon gat eigi gengit ok varð þeim trafali at henni. Ok tók Stígandi hana ok bar hana á baki sér. Svínin váru mjök bagræk. Ok bað Knútr þá at Stígandi skyldi fara seinna eptir á með svínin—“En ek mun flýta mér í móts við Hörð fóstbróður minn.”
- The biggest of the pigs was a boar, which attacked Stígandi most. Then, at the same time, Hjalmr thrust his spear into Stígandi just as the boar bit into Stígandi's calf. He collapsed in a heap and the boar dragged him down to the foot of the mound. Then all the trolls swarmed out from the barrow and started messing around. At that moment, Knútr came out of the wood with the herd of cattle: he faces the trolls and set to with the club; Hjalmr turns to Knútr and sets upon him. Then there was great confusion. By now Stígandi had got onto his feet. He ran at Hjalmr from behind and caught the billhook over him; he hooked his eye, and yanked him backwards. But at the same time the billhook cut deeply through Knútr's instep and drove into the ground. Yet Knútr smashed his club against Hjalmr's nose, breaking the skull to smithereens. That was his death.
- The pigs attacked Stígandi, but he was so nimble in his shoes that they couldn't catch him. He hooked the trolls towards him and rained blows on them; then Knútr sent them swiftly to their deaths. By the time they had killed all the trolls the sun was in the south and they were both stiff and tired. They scattered some of the dust that was in the old lady's bag over the pigs and suddenly they were docile.
- In time, they prepared to journey on. The thin sow was so emaciated that she couldn't walk and became a nuisance, so Stígandi picked her up and carried her on his back. The pigs proved very hard to drive, and so Knútr said that Stígandi should follow after him with the pigs, “since I must hurry to meet Hörðr my foster-brother.”

122. **15.** Nú er at segja frá Hörð. Þá er þeir Knútr skildust gekk hann til hellis dyranna. Þar váru inni sextigir trölla. Eigi vildi Hörðr glettast við þau á meðan þau sváfu. Litlu síðar sá hann ganga mann fram úr skóginum. Sá var mikill vexti. Hann hafði jarnstaf í hendi ok var geir Óðins markaðr á framan verðum, ok syndist honum sem eitr sindraði ýr oddinum. Þat var Skjöldr, bróðir Hlégerðar. Hann gengr at skíðgardinum ok lykr upp grindinni. Flóka trippan hleypr þegar út. Ok öll hrossin eptir henni. Hesturinn fylgir henni. Hon hefir uppi ýmsa endana ok stefnir þangat sem blautastar váru mýrarnar, ok gefr henni þat líf at hrossin komust þangat eigi.

123. Skjöldr gengr til hellisins. Hörðr sprettr þar upp fyrir honum. Hann hafði gaddakylfu í hendi. Hann sló til Skjaldar en Skjöldr skaut undan en kylfan kom í jörðina ok sökk it dígrasta. Skjöldr sló til hans með jarnstafnum ok kom á kryppuna ok brotnaði í sundur geirinn. En stöngin var föst í kryppunni á honum, ok kipti hann honum á lopt. Hordur spyrndi fótunum við bergit svá fast at Skyldi varð laus stöngin. Þá opnaðist hellirinn ok kom út þurs mikill, ok var þríhöfðaðr. Hörðr laust hann með kylfunni ok fell hann um þverar dyrnar ok var þegar dauðr. Þá losnaði stöngin ok náði Skjöldr henni. Sló hann þá til Harðar í öðru sinni. Hörðr stökk undan ok inn yfir inn dauða. En stöngin sökk í þursinn er hon kom á hann, ok var föst við þursinn, en hendr Skjaldar við

15. It is now time to tell of Hörðr. When he and Knútr parted he approached the doors of the cave. Inside were sixty trolls. Hörðr was in no mood to attack them while they were asleep. A little later he saw someone walk out of the woods. He was very big, and carried an iron staff in his hand; it was marked with the spear of Óðinn on the front, and it seemed to Hörðr that poison flowed from the tip. It was Skjöldr, Hlégerðr's brother. He walks up to the horses' enclosure and unlatches the gate. The tousled foal bolts straight out and the stallion and all the horses gave chase. She runs for her life up to the far end of the meadow and heads for where the marshes were wettest and the horses couldn't reach.

Skjöldr walks to the cave. Hörðr springs up in front of him with a spiked club in his hand. He struck at Skjöldr, but Skjöldr dived from under the blow and the club sank deep into the earth. Skjöldr struck at Hörðr with his iron staff; it comes down on the hump, shattering the spear-head to pieces. But the shaft stuck fast in the hump, and Hörðr jerked Skjöldr into the air. Hörðr braced his feet on the rock so firmly that Skjöldr let go of the shaft. Then the cave opened up and out came a huge, three-headed ogre. Hörðr struck the ogre with his club; it collapsed right across the doors and died instantly. The pole loosened from Hörðr's hump; Skjöldr grabbed it and struck at Hörðr a second time. Hörðr dived from under the blow, over the ogre's corpse and into the cave; the spear shaft lodged in the ogre instead and stuck fast. In turn, Skjöldr's hands remained stuck to the

stöngina ok varð honum þá mikit fyrir at reiða hana.

124. Tröllin sóttu nú at Herði ok var þat mikil mannhætta. Skjöldr vildi nú inn í hellinn ok var honum óhægt um ferðirnar þvíat þursinn loddi við hann. Ok fór hann mjök lágt í dyrunum. Hörðr opaði at honum ok setti stjöllinn á nasir honum ok stukku úr honum allar tenurnar. Hrokk hann þá út aptr ok vogaði hann þá eigi inn í hellinn þaðan í frá.

125. Hörðr barðist tvö dægr við tröllin. Hafði hann þá drepit þau öll. Bar hann sik þá at at hlafa út. Skjöldr stóð fyrir hellis dyrunum. Hörðr hljóp í milli fóta honum. Ok vó hann upp á baki sér ok rak hann niðr fall mikit. Losnuðu þá hendr Skjaldar af stönginni.

126. Þá kom gradhestriinn ok greip í hárit á Herði með tönnunum ok sykti honum til falls ok dró hann eptir sér. Hrossin öll komu þangat ok vildu bíta Hörð. Hann komst seint á fætur, en hvar sem þau kiptu til hans þá festi hvergi tennrnar á honum, en ef þau slogu til hans þá kiptu sjálf fótunum ok lysti eigi at slá optar enn um sinn. Skjöldr hleypr þá þangat. Þá kom Knútr fram úr skóginum. Hleypr þá til móts við Skjöld. Skjöldr laust þá til hans með stönginni. En hann laust í móti með kylfunni. Ok var þá hvárgi þeira svá næri öðrum at eigi mátti höggunum við koma. Gripust þeir þá ok váru þá harðar sviptingar. Eigi mátti Hörðr honum björg veita þvíat hrossin óþægðu honum, en hann ók við hlaununum ok vildi þeim eigi mein gjöra.

pole, making it a big job for him to swing it.

Now the trolls attacked Hörðr so that he was fighting for his life. Skjöldr wanted to get into the cave, but it was hard for him to enter because the ogre was stuck to him, so that it was a really tight fit going through the doors. Hörðr backed against him and thrust his rump into his nose, knocking all his teeth out. Skjöldr retreated back out of the cave and didn't dare to try enter again.

Hörðr fought against the trolls all day and all night, eventually killing them all. Then he turned his attention to getting out, but Skjöldr stood, barring the door of the cave. Hörðr dived between his feet, struck him up on his back, and drove him tumbling down. Then Skjöldr's hand came free from the pole.

Now the stallion appeared and grabbed Hörðr's hair with its teeth, jerked him to the ground, and dragged him along. All the horses clamoured together wanting to bite Hörðr. He got back on his feet slowly, but wherever the studs snapped at him, none sank their teeth into him; and if they kicked at him then they tangled their own feet, only landing a blow occasionally. Then, just as Skjöldr returns to the fray, Knútr came out from the woods and rushes to meet him. Skjöldr swung at Knútr with the pole, but Knútr parried the blow with Gipar's club. By then each was so near the other that neither could land a blow. Then they seized each other and there were hard exchanges. Hörðr couldn't offer any assistance because the horses were harassing him; but he would only slap them on the hindquarters since he didn't want to do them any harm.

127. Þeir Knútr ok Skjöldr gengust nú at svá at þursinn óð jörðina til knjá. Ok varð Knútr sýnt orkuvana fyrir honum. Þessu næst kom Stígandi fram úr skóginum með svínaflokkinn. Hann sneri þangat til sem þeir áttust við Skjöldr ok Knútr. Hann krækti sviðunni í huppinn á Skildi ok sókk hon á kaf. Hann rykkti at sér ok skar út úr ok lágu þar þarmarnir. Röktust þeir þá úr honum ok lágu þar á króknum. Fellu þá út iðrin. Hann greip þá í eyrat á Knút ok reif þat af honum. Fell Skjöldr þá. Þá kom Hörðr at ok rasaði sér ofan á hann ok svá á brjóstit á honum, ok brotnaði þá í honum hvert bein.
128. Var nú unnin þessi þraut. En þeir váru bæði sárir ok móðir. Dreifðu þeir þá öskunni yfir hrossin. Flókatrippit hljóp undan. Komust þeir Knútr ok Hörðr hvergi á mitt skeið við hana. Stígandi neytti þá íþróttar sinnar, ok var lengi í framkrókum með þeim áðr enn hann gat náð henni. Vildi hon þá bæði bíta ok berja. En hann gjörði henni orkumun svá at hon gat hvárki gjört. Komu þeir nú til þeira Knútr ok Hörðr. Ok sáði Knútr yfir hana úr posa kerlingar. Fell hon þá niðr sem dauð væri.
129. Síðan tóku þeir tal með sér hversu þeir skulu með fara. Ok kom þeim þat ásamt at sá skyldi fyrst heim koma er fyrst fór heiman. Fara nú síðan þott þeir væri stirðir af sárum ok kreistingum er tröllin höfðu þeim veitt. En þá er þeir komu þar sem vegir þeira skildust, þá skildu þeir flokka sína þviat úr sinni átt átti hverr þeira at koma. En þat ætlaði Knútr and Skjöldr now fought so hard that the ogre was squashed up to his knees in the earth. Knútr was clearly tiring against his enemy. But then Stígandi appeared from the woods with the herd of pigs. He turned to where Skjöldr and Knútr were fighting. He hooked the billhook into Skjöldr's belly and it sank right in. He pulled it towards himself and sliced outwards, exposing Skjöldr's intestines. They unravelled and lay there on the blade; then the entrails fell out. Skjöldr still managed to grab onto one of Knútr's ears and rip it off. He then collapsed. Hörðr rushed up and thrust right down onto his chest, and so broke every bone in his body.
- The battle was now won, but Knútr and Hörðr were both wounded and tired. They sprinkled the ash over the horses, but the tousled foal ran out of the way. They couldn't get anywhere near catching up with her. Then Stígandi used his skills, though he was struggling a long time before he got hold of her. She struggled and tried to bite, but he prevailed against her so that she couldn't do anything. Now Knútr and Hörðr come to them, and Knútr sprinkled the foal with dust from the old lady's bag. Then she collapsed as though she were dead.
- After the ordeal they turned to discussing how they should proceed. They decided that the one who left home first should return first. And so they set off, even though they were stiff from the pounding and the wounds that the trolls had given them. And when they came to where their roads parted they divided their herds because each was supposed to come from a different direction, so that the Maiden

meykonungrinn at þeir mundu eigi fundist hafa.

130. Svá er sagt at Stígandi kom fyrst heim ok var þá sól í landsuðri er hann kom. Meykonungrinn var þá í nýklæddr. Stígandi rak svínin inn í skíðgarðinn þar sem meykönungrinn var fyrir. Hann kvaddi eigi meykönunginn, en kastaði inni mögru gyltinni niðr fyrir fætr henni. Ok bað hana at hyggja hvárt at ómeidd væri. hon sagði at hann hefði mannlíga efnit sína sendiferð. “Hefir þú fram lagit slíkt sem þú hefr meðferðar?” Hann tók höfuðit Hjalms úr serk sér ok snaraði fyrir brjóst henni. Menn gripu til vopna. Hon bað þá kyrra vera. “Eigi skal þessa hefna.” Stígandi sá at hreyfðist gyltan in magra. Meykongurinn hljóp þá at ok greip í burstina ok snaraði til Stígandi, en hann greip við ok sneri í burtu. Sáu menn þá at þar lá kona fögr sem hamrinn hafði verit. Meykonungrinn lét næra hana. Stígandi brenndi svínshaminn.
131. En litlu síðar kom Hörðr með hrossin ok kastaði flókafolaldinu fyrir fætr henni ok bað hana at hyggja hvárt nökkut væri af hans völdum meitt. Hon sagðist þat eigi sjá en spurði hvat hann vissi til Knúts. En hann kvað hana næri mundu geta hversu hon hefði fyrir honum sét. Hon spurði hvat hann hefði gjört af hestamanninum. Hann tók þá höfuðit af Skildi ok snaraði fyrir brjóst henni. Hon greip í fax flókafolaldinu ok var þá lauss belgrinn ok sló um nasir honum. En hann sneri í burt með ok brenndi þar sem engi vissi. En menn sá at lítill meyllá lá þar sem fylbelgrinn

King wouldn't suspect they had met each other.

It is related that Stígandi came home first. When he arrived the sun was in the south. The Maiden King had just got dressed. Stígandi drove the pigs into the courtyard where the Maiden King now was. He didn't greet her, but threw the wasted sow down at her feet and demanded she check that it was unharmed. She said that he had carried out his mission in a manly way. “Have you presented everything that you got on the journey?” He took Hjalmr's head out of his shirt and threw it at her breast. Her men seized their weapons. But she told them to be calm, saying, “No-one must avenge this.” Stígandi saw the thin sow stir. The Maiden King rushed forward and grabbed its bristles and twisted them at Stígandi; he grabbed them and tore the hide away. Everyone saw that a beautiful woman lay where the skin had been. The Maiden King had her fed; Stígandi burned the pig-hide.

A little later Hörðr came with the horses and threw the tousled foal at the Maiden King's feet and told her to check whether anything had been harmed under his care. She said that she couldn't see that it had and asked what he knew about Knútr. But he remarked that she would guess better than him how her arrangements had turned out. She asked him what he had done with the horses' man. Then he took Skjölldr's head and flung it at her breast. She took hold of the mane of the tousled foal, the hide came loose and she slapped Hörðr on the nose with it. He carried it out of sight and burned it. Where the foal-skin had lain,

hafði legit. Lét meykönungrinn dreyfa víni ok heilnæmum drykk á varir henni, ok nærðist hon skjótt. Ok því skjótara sem fylbelgrinn brann meir.

132. Liðr nú deginum ok lystir meykönunginn at ganga til borðs. Hon gjörðist þá heldr ill yfirsýnis. Ok vágaði engi maðr hana orða at beiða ok engi vágaði at skenkja henni nema Hörðr. Hon bað sína menn alla vera með vápnum. En síðan sezt hon undir borð. En er miðr dagr var kominn, þá tók hon skjöld ok sverð þat sem átt hafði Sigrgarðr. Hon setti skjöldinn fyrir brjóst sér en bendi sverðit um kné sér.

133. Í því bili kom Knútr í höllina ok gengr vakrt eptir hallargólfinu.

134. Meykönungrinn spratt upp ok hjó til hans með sverðinu, en hafði skjöldinn fyrir andliti sér. Hörðr bar undir kryppuna ok kom sverðit þar í ok brotnaði skarð í sverðit. Stígandi krækti skjöldinn frá andliti meykönungsins en Knútr setti eggit á nasir henni svá at stropinn fór niðr um hana alla, en hon fell í óvit. Tók hann þá sverð sitt ok hjó til hennar með tveim höndum, ok stefndi á hálsinn. Hörðr hljóp þá undir hann ok váru þá sviptingar harðar með þeim. Stígandi tók þá meykönung ok dreypti víni á varir henni ok vaknaði hon skjótt við.

135. Hirðmenn sóttu þá at þeim. Sleppti Hörðr þá Knúti. En þeir sem til hans hjuggu þá brotnuðu sverð þeira í kryppu hans eðr þjóum. Hörðr bað þá hætta. Hafði Knútr þá drept tíu menn. En þegar meykönungrinn gat nökkut hrært sik þá skreið hon at

everyone saw a little maiden instead. The Maiden King had wine and health-giving drinks trickled on her lips, and she quickly grew stronger—and all the more quickly as the foal-skin burned up.

The day now goes on, and the Maiden King wants to dine. She commanded all her men to have their weapons at hand and then sat down at the table. She looked rather ill-disposed, and no-one dared speak to her or serve her except Hörðr. At midday, she took the shield and sword which Sigrgarðr had owned. She braced the shield before her breast and held the sword at her knees.

At that moment, Knútr entered and walks, alert, down the middle of the hall. The Maiden King sprang up and struck at him with the sword, holding the shield in front of her face. Hörðr raised his hump to block the blow, making a nick in the sword blade. Stígandi pushed the shield away from the Maiden King's face and Knútr smashed the egg into her nostrils so that the yolk ran right down her, and she fell unconscious. Then he took his sword with both hands and struck at her, aiming for the neck. Hörðr leapt in the way of the blow, and there were tough struggles between them. Stígandi took the Maiden King and trickled wine onto her lips and at that she quickly woke up.

But her retainers attacked the foster-brothers. Hörðr let Knútr go, and those who struck at him broke their swords on his hump or thighs. Hörðr charged them to stop, by which time Knútr had killed ten men. As soon as the Maiden King was able to move herself,

fótum Knúts ok vildi kyssa á þá, en hann vildi stíga í andlit henni ef Hörðr hefði eigi bannat honum. Reisti Hörðr þá upp meykoninginn. Knútr sneri þá í burt úr höllunni. Hörðr bað Stígandi fara með honum ok kveðst ætla at hann mundi stilling á fá gjört.

136. En er kom í steinhöll þá sem hann skyldi vera bað hann sína menn vápnast ok ganga at borginni ok brenna hana. Stígandi sagði at nú mundi af it ólmasta. Knútr vildi eigi á hlýðast ok sagðist borgina brenna skyldu. Kveðst meykoninginum eiga svá mikit illt at launa at hann kveðst eigi þat mega melta með sér. Stígandi kveðst eigi letja vilja. Tók hann þá eina gullskál fulla af víni ok bað Knút drekka. Hann var þá þyrstr mjök en þegar at hann hafði drukkit fell svefn á hann.

137. Meykoningrinn tók nú at hressast ok spurði Hörðr eptir hvar at Knútr væri, en hann sagði hana þat öngu varða, ok kveðst ætla at henni mundi ekki verða mein at honum at svá búnu. “Hefir þú oss þungar þrautir fengit svá at hefnda væri fyrir vert. Eðr ætlar þú lengi at halda á ryskingum við oss?”

138. En hon svarar þá hógliga: “Þat á ek yðr at þakka,” segir hon “at af mér eru öll mín ósköp, þau sem Hlégerðr in arma lagði á mik. Ok svá á mínar systir it sama, en þegar it fyrsta kveld er þér komut hér þekkti ek Sigrgarð, ok höfum við mjök ójafnt. Hann hefir gefit mér líf, en ek hefi á marga vega viljað forráða hann. Eðr hverju ætlar þú at hann vili nú til sín snúa?”

she crawled to Knútr's feet and tried to kiss them, but he would have stamped on her face had Hörðr not prevented him. Hörðr lifted the Maiden King back to her feet, but Knútr turned and stormed out from the hall. Hörðr told Stígandi to go with him, and said that he would help Knútr would find some self-control.

But at the stone hall, Knútr was telling his men to arm themselves, march on the castle and burn it down. Stígandi said that the worst of his fury should be over, but Knútr had no intention of listening and said that they had to burn the castle. He argued that he had so much evil to repay the Maiden King that nothing could placate him. Stígandi said that he wouldn't stand in his way. Then he took a golden cup full of wine and asked Knútr to drink. Knútr was very thirsty—but as soon as he had drunk, sleep fell upon him.

The Maiden King now began to recover, and asked Hörðr where Knútr was. He replied that that was of no concern, and said that he thought that no harm would come to her as things stood. “You have given us such terrible trials that they would be worthy of being avenged. Or do you intend to continue to treat us so roughly?”

She answers courteously: “I have you to thank,” she says, “that all the curses which that awful Hlégerðr laid upon me have been lifted, both from me and from my sisters. I recognised Sigrgarðr the very first evening that you came here—we behaved very differently then. He has given me life, yet I wanted to destroy him in so many ways. But how do you think he wants to act now?”

139. “Eigi þarf ek til þess at geta. Hann ætla at eyða allt yðvart land. En taka þik sjálfa hertaki. Gerir hann þá annat hvárt at hann selr þik mannsali. Eðr gefr þik þræl nökkurum.”
140. “Engi mun ván til,” segir hon “at þú getir komit sáttmáli á með okkr.”
141. “Eigi þiki mér þat vænliga horfa,” segir hann, “því at eigi mun hann því trúa vilja, því at miklu illu hefir þú af stað komit ok margan svikit. En við þat má ek leita at fara með þeim boðum sem þú vilt honum gjöra. Eðr ef þú vilt gipta okkr bræðrum systr þínar.”
142. “Eigi ætla ek,” segir hon, “at þit sýnist mjök girnligir meyjunum ef þit breytit eigi bragðinu. Eðr váru þær girnligar í morgin er þær komu heim. Ok tölum síðar um slíkt. En þau boð skaltu mega segja honum með fingrulli því er hann gaf mér fyrsta sinni, at ek gef mik ok allt mitt ríki í hans vald, ok vera hvárt sem hann vill frilla hans eðr eiginkona. Ok heldr vil ek vera frilla hans en eiga nökkurn þann konungsson er ek veit.”
143. “Nú skaltu,” segir Hörðr, “láta tjalda hallir þínar á morgin, ok allir þínir menn taki inn besta búning. Gangit síðan út á víðan völl ok látit opin öll borgarhlíð. Ok bíðit svá þess sem at höndum kemr.”
144. Síðan gengr Hörðr í burtu. En meykungrinn breytir nú at öllu svá sem Hörðr hafði fyrir sagt.
- “No need to guess that. He intends to lay waste to all your land and take you as a captive. He will do one of two things—sell you, or marry you to some slave or other.”
- “There wouldn’t be any hope,” she says, “that you would be able to arrive at a settlement between us?”
- “That doesn’t look easy to me,” he says, “because he will not be keen to trust it, because you have brought much evil and dishonour upon him. I can try, nevertheless, to go with those messages which you want to send him. Or how about giving us brothers your sisters in marriage?”
- “I don’t think,” she says, “that you will seem very attractive to the girls if you don’t change your appearance—though they weren’t very desirable themselves when they arrived home this morning. We will discuss such things later. But you must make sure you pass on these entreaties to him, along with this golden finger-ring which he gave me on his first visit, that I give myself and my whole kingdom into his power, and will be whichever he wants—either his concubine or his wife. Indeed, I would rather be his concubine than marry any other prince whom I know.”
- “Now you must have your halls hung with tapestries in the morning,” says Hörðr, “and all your courtiers should put on their best clothing. Then walk out onto the wide plain and leave all the castle gates open. And in this way await whatever comes about.”
- Hörðr departs, and the Maiden King arranges everything just as he had advised.

145. **16.** At morni dags þá er menn vöknudu gengu menn í vígskörð. Sá menn þá at allr sjár var skipaðr með herskipum. Var þar þá kominn Ríkarðr konungr faðir Sigrgarðs. Gengu þeir á land ok reistu síðan herbúðir.

146. Nú er at segja frá Sigrgarði er hann vaknar um morguninn ok var honum þá runnin reiðin in mesta. Hörðr kom þar þá ok sagði honum hvat þau meykönungrinn höfðu mælst við. Segir honum ok þat at faðir hans sé þar kominn með óvígán her, ok Gustólfr karl með honum. Ok sagði at nú væri vildast at þiggja góð boð af meykönunginum. Hann kvað henni eigi sjálfrátt hafa verit um sína illsku.

147. Sigrgarðr gengr nú út af steinhöllunni ok hafði hann þá tekit aprt ásjónu sína. Gengu þeir nú með alvæpni þar næri sem meykönungrinn var með sínu sýniliga liði. En þegar er hon sá Sigrgarð gekk hon í móti honum burt frá sínum mönnum ok tók gullkórónu af höfði sér. Ok fell á kné fyrir honum ok lagði sik í hans vald ok allt sitt vald ok land. En hann svaraði þá, “lengi hefir þú þrálát verit. En lægðr sýnist mér nú metnaðr þinn. En ef þú giptir systir þínar sveinum mínum þá mun ek taka sættum við þik. Hef ek nú svá mönnum skipat at ek má láta drepa þik.” Sagði hon at þat skyldi á hans valdi sem allt annat er hann beiddi hana. Hann bað hana þá ganga í borgina með sína menn ok búast við virðuligri veislu ok láta bosuna þá er hann gengr frá skipum.

16. At dawn the next day, the palace arose and everyone ascended up to the battlements. They saw that the whole sea was covered with warships. King Ríkarðr, Sigrgarðr's father, had come. They landed and pitched their tents.

It must now be said of Sigrgarðr that when he awakes in the morning the worst of the anger has drained from him. Then Hörðr came and reported the things which he and the Maiden King had discussed. He adds that Sigrgarðr's father has arrived with an insuperable army, and the old man Gustólfr with him. Hörðr advised that it would be highly desirable to accept the Maiden King's bargain. He explained that she had not been in control of her own mind when she did evil.

Sigrgarðr walks out of the stone hall and had by then returned to his own form. He and Hörðr went, fully armed, up to where the Maiden King stood with her magnificent army. As soon as she saw the prince she stepped away from her own men to meet him. She took the golden crown from her head and fell on her knees before him and put herself in his power, along with the whole of her dominion. Then Sigrgarðr replied, “You were enslaved for a long time and now I consider your worth reduced. But if you will marry your sisters to my companions, I will accept a settlement with you. I have ordered my men to kill you at my command.” She said that that would be at his discretion, just like anything else which he might ask of her. Then he told her to return to the castle with her army and prepare a worthy feast, and to have

148. Tveir menn váru þá komnir í lið meykonungsins, ok hét hvártveggi Álfr. Þeir váru móðurbræðr drottningar. Þeir höfðu orðit fyrir ósköpum Hlégerðar ok hafði annarr verit hestrinn en annarr uxinn, ok höfðu þeir fóstbræðr hjálpat þeim ór ósköpum. Nú ferr Sigrgarðr til sjóvar. Faðir hans var þar kominn með herbúðir sínar. Gekkk hann í móti syni sínum ok urðu þar fagnafundur. Sagði konungr svá til hans, “því er ek nú hér kominn at ek vildi hefna þinnar svívirðingar, ok förum ok eyðum landit eða gjörum henni hverja svívirðing sem þú vilt.”
149. “Þat veit nú eigi svá við,” segir Sigrgarðr, “vit erum nú sátt. Hefir hon nú gefit í mitt vald allt sitt ríki ok sik ok systir sínar tvær.”
150. Segir hann þá föður sínum allt hversu farit hafði um ósköp hennar. Sefaðist konungr þá, en var þó inn reiðasti. Þá spurði konungr hverir þeir menn væri í flokki hans at svá væri ólíkir flestum mönnum öðrum at sköpun. “Ok líkari eru tröllum enn mönnum.”
151. “Þessir hafa mér líf gefit,” segir hann, “ok heitir annarr Hörðr en annarr Stígandi. Ok vænti ek,” segir hann “at þú munir gefa þeim upp reiði þína, þvíat þetta eru þeir bræðr Sigmundr ok Högni, synir Gustólfs karls. Ok hefði ek aldri úr þessi þraut komist nema þeir hefði hjálpat mér, ok Gerðr móðir þeira. En þat sem þeir hafa við þik brotit viljum vér bæta með gulli ok silfri.” Konungr gefr þá í vald sonar síns. Ok spurði því þeir væri svá

the trumpets sound when he returns from the ships.

Two men had appeared in the retinue of the Maiden King, and both were called Álfr; uncles of the queen, they had also been under Hlégerðr’s spell. One had been the stallion and the other the ox, but the foster-brothers had helped rescue them from the curse. Now Sigrgarðr goes down to the sea, where his father had pitched his tents. The king came to meet his son and they had a glad reunion. The king said to the prince, “I have come here because I wanted to avenge your dishonouring; we will set forth and lay waste to the land, or do that woman any dishonour you desire.”

“Things don’t stand that way now,” says Sigrgarðr: “we have come to a settlement. She has given herself into my power, and her two sisters and all her kingdom.”

He now tells his father about her curse and how everything had turned out. The king was somewhat appeased, though he was still very angry. Then he asked who those people in Sigrgarðr’s band were who looked so unlike other people in form “and are more like trolls than people.”

“These men have saved my life,” Sigrgarðr says. “One is called Hörðr and the other Stígandi. And I request,” he says, “that you spare them your anger, because these are the brothers Sigmundr and Högni, the sons of Gustólfr. I would never have got through this struggle had they and their mother Gerðr not helped me. And any offence they have caused you I desire to repay with gold and silver.” The king leaves that to his son’s discretion, and asked how they had

skrípiligir orðnir. En Gustólfr karl sagði at hann hefði keypt at einum dverg at gjöra Högna fangastakkinn þann at hvert stál brotnaði sem á kom. “En belgr sjá sem hann hefir í milli herðanna ok þokar þeir sem hanga við stjöl honum eru fullir af gresjárni ok brotnar því allt þat sem hann sest á.” Færði karl þá sonu sína úr búningi þessum ok læsti niðr í kistu. En þeir váru þar undir í skarlaksklæðum ok þóttu þeir manna vænstir.

152. Fóru menn síðan frá skipum ok til hallar. Skorti þá eigi glaum ok gleði með fögrum hljóðfærum. Váru þeir með þessum prís leiddir í borgina. Var konungi fylgt til hallar ok settir í háseti. Sigrgarðr settist í háseti hjá föður sínum. En þessu næst kom drottning í höllina með miklum fjölda meyka ok kvenna ok annat hoffólk. Hon fagnaði öllum vel þeim sem komnir váru, en síðan gekk hon at Sigrgarði ok settist í kné honum ok lagði báðar hendr um háls honum ok kyssti hann ok bað hann fyrirgefningar um stríð ok mótgang þann sem hon hafði veitt honum; gaf sik ok allt sitt ríki í hans vald, ok beiddi hann skipa sem hann vildi. Sigrgarðr svarar, “þat er helst í at virða við þik,” segir hann, “at yðr hefir eigi sjálfrátt um verit, en svá munt þú til ætla at ek mun smáþægr við þik um mótgjörðirnar. En ek vil nú vita hvern enda eiga mun um gipting systra þinna.” En hon spurði hvar þeir væri nú mennirnir sem hann hefði ætlat þeim. Þá stóðu upp tveir ungir menn á bekknum. Eigi hafði hon sétt áðr vaskligri menn.

become so monstrous. Gustólfr explained that he had paid for a certain dwarf to make Högni a jerkin that would break any blade which came upon it. “And the bags which he has between his shoulders and the bags that hang from his rump are full of dwarf-iron so it smashes anything he sits on.” Then Gustólfr helped his sons out of their equipment and packed it away in a chest. Underneath, they wore scarlet robes and they looked to be the most handsome of men.

The men of Garðaríki proceeded from the ships to the hall. There was no lack of merriment and mirth, with beautiful musical instruments playing; and with this ceremony they were led into the castle. The king was guided to the hall and placed on the throne. Sigrgarðr sat on the throne next to his father, and next the queen came into the hall with great hosts of maidens and women and other courtiers. She welcomed all those who had come, then walked up to Sigrgarðr and sat herself on his knee, put both her arms around his neck and kissed him and begged his forgiveness for the strife and opposition she had given him. She placed herself and all her kingdom in his power, and asked him to do with them as he wished. Sigrgarðr replies, “It counts somewhat in your favour that you have not been in your right mind; so you may anticipate that I will be lenient on you for your transgressions. But I still wish to know how it will be regarding the marriage of your sisters.” She asked where the men might now be whom he had promised to them. Two young men stood up from the benches, more gallant-looking than any she had ever

Hon spurði hvat þessir menn heiti. Annarr kveðst heita Högni harðstjölur en annar Sigmundur stífgandi. “Mikit hafið þit nú skipast,” segir hon, “enda verður nú ok svá fleirum.” Hon vill eigi virða þær minna en spyrja þær at. Bað Sigrgarðr þær þá gefa svör til hversu þeim væri gefit. Þær sögðu báðar at þeir hefði nóg til unnit. Ok segjast þeim eigi neita mundu.

seen. She asked what their names were. One said that he was called Högni Hard-Arse, and the other Sigmundur Strider. “Greatly have you changed now,” she says, “and so now it will also be regarding other things.” She doesn’t want to show any disrespect towards the girls, but requests their opinion; Sigrgarðr asked them to give their answer as to how they would be married. They both said that the young men had performed well enough, and they said that they would not refuse them.

153. Því næst fóru festar fram, ok reis þar upp sæmilig brullaup. Fekk Högni Hildar en Sigmundur Signýjar. Váru brullaupin öll undir eins drukkin. Ok er þá eigi þess getit at Ingigerðr hefði nökkurar sleitur við Sigrgarð í hvílubrögðum. En hins er getit at Sigrgarðr gaf jarlsnafn þeim bræðrum ok mikit ríki.

Next, the celebrations began, and an honourable wedding was held there. Högni took Hildr and Sigmundur took Signý, and the weddings were all toasted together. It is not mentioned that Ingigerðr made any attempts to get away from Sigrgarðr in matters of the boudoir. There is record that Sigrgarðr gave the title of earl, along with great powers, to his foster-brothers.

154. Nú at liðinni veislunni fóru allir í burt med sæmiligum gjöfum. Leysti hann föður sinn vel af garði ok sigldi hann heim í Garðaríki. En Sigrgarðr varð konungr í Tartaría ok réð þar fyrir til elli. Ok váru ástir þeira góðar. Ok lúkum vér þar sögu Sigrgarðs.

Now at the end of the feast, everyone departed with honourable gifts. Sigrgarðr saw his father off nobly from the court, and Ríkarðr sailed back to Garðar. Sigrgarðr was crowned King of Tartaría and ruled there until his old age. And their love was good. And there we end of the saga of Sigrgarðr.

NOTES

1. The core drafting of the normalised text, translation, and introduction was undertaken by Hall. Richardson and Haukur both took an integral role in generating the introduction and developing and correcting the translation, and in Haukur’s case correcting the Icelandic text. Hall first read the saga with the University of Helsinki Old Norse reading group while at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, to both of which institutions he is much indebted. We also thank Erika Sigurdson and Andrew Wawn for their comments on the text and Véronique Favéro for her assistance with the translation of the abstract.

2. For a survey of recent work on medieval romance, see Hall et al. 2010, 56–60, to which may be added the Finnish translations by Helga Hilmisdóttir, Kanerva and Päivärinne 2013 and the English translations of Wick 1996; McDonald 2009; Divjak 2009; Wawn 2010. For work on *fornaldarsögur* see especially the article-collections of Ármann Jakobsson, Annette Lassen and Agneta Ney 2003, 2009 and 2012.
3. We have transcribed this and made it available at <http://www.alarichall.org.uk/teaching/sigrgardssaga.php>.
4. Unless otherwise stated, MSS are Reykjavík, National Library of Iceland or, if their call number begins AM, Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar.
5. The rules of the ball game, which is handled in greater detail than the equivalent passage of *Bósa saga*, seem to be these: there are two teams and two or more players on each team. In this case Úlfr and Melsnati are on one team and Sigmundur and Högni are on the opposing team. There is one ball (*knöttur*) and at least one bat (*knattdrepa*). At any given time, one team has the bat(s) and is trying to score by using the bat(s) to hit the ball over the goal line of the opposing team. The defending team's objective is to block service against them, while at the same time trying to score a point of their own by throwing the ball over the opposing team's goal line. When the defending team scores a goal, they get the bat(s) and use it/them to serve the ball for a new round. The saga seems to have the game breaking down into violence when Úlfr, ostensibly by accident, throws the ball into Sigmundur's cheek; after the players have used the ball as a projectile a couple more times, Melsnati attacks Sigmundur with the bat and a fight breaks out.
6. The closest parallel to *Sigrgarðs saga* is *Ragnars saga*, where, hearing of the death of her son and stepsons, Áslaugr "felldi tár, en þat var sem blóð væri álit, en hart sem haglkorn" [let fall a tear, but it was like blood in colour and as hard as a hailstone] (Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson 1943–44, I 121; cf. Ívarr Beinlauss's somatic response to bereavement in the same saga, ch. 16, p. 138).
7. After this word, the source manuscript switches from AM 588m 4to to AM 556a 4to.

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