

Sif Rikhardsdottir
Oceanic Networks

Literary Production, Transmission, and Mediation across
the North

Icelandic literary history has traditionally been defined by borders, particularly the sea as the geographical barrier separating Iceland (as a nation and as a people) from other countries. Yet in terms of content, even the most fundamentally “native” of the Icelandic sagas extend beyond those boundaries; their stories frequently begin in Norway, their characters spend years abroad. This crossing of the seas of the saga characters in search of home, valour, and selfhood replicates the movement of peoples, ideas, and texts that shapes and characterizes Northern literary history. This chapter considers how a transnational approach to the literary history of Iceland can reshape our perception of literary activity and its function both as a regional product of terra firma, and as evidence of the complex and multifaceted movement of ideas and texts across the Northern seas.

This approach draws its conception of literary geography from David Wallace’s (2016) notion of history as movement in time and space as well as from Sebastian Sobecki’s (2007) conceptualization of the ocean as emblematic of British geography as well as literature. The focus here is not on the literary symbolism of the ocean, so wonderfully expounded by Sobecki (2007) and by Helen Cooper (2004), but rather on the physicality of the ocean as a means of engaging and enforcing exchange. The ocean is here understood as a pathway that serves as the route of transmission and movement, as opposed to a geographical border of enclosure. At the same time, such an approach provides insights into a distinctive local engagement with literary ideas, suggesting both a diachronic view of narrative movement and a synchronic insight into the particular cultural dialogue occurring within a community of readers and their literary representations.

Iceland’s history is indeed defined by movement. Its origins in Viking excursions across the sea and, ultimately, settlements in Iceland reveal a history steeped in geographical expansionism that defies the national demarcations that nineteenth-century nationalism was to impose upon its history. The cultural expansion of the Vikings (southwards and south-westwards), and later of the Normans (Norsemen), is replicated in the opposite movement of textual or narrative material north and north-east in the importing of courtly material at the royal court of Norway in the mid-thirteenth century. The translated material passed from Norway to Iceland, presumably shortly after it was translated, where it sparked a flourishing native

Sif Rikhardsdottir, University of Iceland

tradition of romance writing that was to be active for five hundred years.¹ This circularity of cultural movement across the Northern seas underlies the origins of the inhabitation of Iceland as well as its later literary history.

Following Wallace's (2016: xl) conception of literary history as viewed synchronically across space, rather than diachronically within defined borders, encourages us to envisage literary history as an expansive network of connections where "topoi are to be seen not only as literary figures, rooted in classical antiquity, but as places on the ground". According to him, "the space of this new Europe, expanded and interconnected, has no hard and fast borders but rather sites of cultural negotiation producing literatures of extraordinary variety, ingenuity, and regenerative power" (Wallace 2016: xl). Geography thus features here as the tangible surface upon which the travels, intersections, and translations (understood in the medieval sense of the word) of objects and ideas can be traced. Shifting attention away from the European landmass and its associated insular margins, this essay argues that the ocean features as a significant channel of cultural interaction and transmission, serving as the means of mediation between the settlement of Iceland in the North Atlantic and the medieval maritime empires in the Mediterranean Sea. This is obviously particularly apparent for the Viking and settlement periods, when the ocean served literally as a pathway for exploration, trade, and eventual settlement, both in Iceland and elsewhere. Yet these routes persisted as conduits for political and/or religious ideologies, cultural conventions and symbolisms, and artistic representation in the wake of the so-called Viking expansion. Diplomatic, mercantile, and religious connections across Scandinavia and the British Isles (and extending down to Rome and Byzantium) provided a platform for the mediation of material and ideas, both in Latin and in the vernaculars, that formed the basis for a flourishing production of literary material in Old Norse.²

Returning to the concept of transnational literary history, how can we determine such interdependencies, and what can they tell us about the particular local literary developments? Given the space constraints here, this chapter will expand very briefly on three separate examples that are intended to provide an insight into the way in which a transnational approach impacts the perception of literary history.

Materiality and mediation

The first example is based not on textual transmission, but on materiality and the mediation of narrative material across both geographical and, significantly, medial

¹ See e.g. Kalinke (2011; 2017); Sif Rikhardsdottir (2012); Johansson & Flaten (2012); Glauser & Kra-marz-Bein (2014); Barnes (2014).

² For the transmission of Latin material, see e.g. Würth (2005), Mortensen (2017), and the *Islandia Latina* database (<http://islandialatina.hum.ku.dk>).

or material borders.³ The wooden door depicted here (see Figure 1) belonged to a medieval wooden church at Valþjófsstaðir in the east of Iceland. The door is slightly over two metres tall and one metre wide, and contains two carved circular images. It is believed to have been approximately one third taller originally and to have contained a third carved image, which must at some point have been cut off, perhaps when the church was torn down in the eighteenth century and replaced with a smaller church.⁴ The medieval door is now preserved in the National Museum in Iceland, but a replica can be found in the church at Valþjófsstaðir.⁵



Figure 1: Valþjófsstaðahurð, National Museum of Iceland.

³ For works on mediality generally, see e.g. Kiening & Stercken (2018). For works on mediality in relation to Old Norse literature specifically, see e.g. Heslop & Glauser (2018) and works cited there.

⁴ For further information, see Björn Magnússon Ólsen (1884–1885); Kristján Eldjárn (1962: section 68); Paulsen (1966); Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir (2017: esp. 306–309).

⁵ National Museum of Iceland, nr. 11009. All images are reproduced by permission of the National Museum.

Looking more closely at the images, the bottom circle features familiar Norse motifs of interlaced dragons biting their own tails. The carved image depicts four serpent- or snake-like dragons, whose bodies are entangled with each other in an intricate knot, each biting their own tail. Their wings and claws are similarly enmeshed in the centre of the image, forming the midpoint of the circular frame that is bordered by the interlinked bodies of the dragons. Both the content – i.e. the dragons – and its framing – i.e. the intertwining limbs, branches, or animal forms – are typical of Viking art. Admittedly, both animal forms and interlacing can also be found in Celtic and Romanesque art, and indeed, Viking art is considered to share some affinities with both art forms, particularly insular art forms. Nevertheless, the image of the intertwined snake-like animal bodies is a typical ornamental motif found in Viking art and decoration.

The upper circle features, on the other hand, a different set of motifs (see Figure 2). The two half-circles depict scenes of a knight, his lion companion, and the knight's battle with a dragon to save the lion – images that correlate closely with the medieval tale of the Knight with the Lion. The story of the Knight with the Lion is best known from Chrétien de Troyes's late twelfth-century romance *Yvain ou Le Chevalier au lion*, but it also features in the Middle Welsh *Mabinogion* as *Owain, neu Iarllles y Ffynnon*



Figure 2: Carved image from Valþjófsstaðahurð (upper circle).

(*Owein, or the Lady of the Fountain*) as well as in multiple translations of Chrétien's romances into the various medieval European vernaculars, including translations into Old Norse and Old Swedish. The scenes depicted are specific enough to refer to the story as we know it in Chrétien's version (or the Welsh version, for that matter), and hence likely reflect familiarity with that particular version, whether in Chrétien's rendering or an alternative form or medium.⁶ Most likely, the story matter circulated in the British Isles and passed from there to Iceland, either directly or through Norway. That said, it is difficult to ascertain where the content might have come from or what the artist might have intended – or, for that matter, how the images might have been perceived or interpreted.

If we take a closer look at the images, we see that the bottom half (see Figure 3) shows the “chevalier au lion” as he strikes the dragon with his sword, saving the lion. The carving depicts a moment in action, yet the images are intricately woven together so that the horse, dragon, lion, and the surrounding vegetation are all interlinked, intimating that their respective fates are entwined. The intricate interweaving of the animals in the image defies the action it depicts, revealing a movement in stasis.



Figure 3: Bottom half of upper circular carved image on Valþjófsstaðahurð.

⁶ For a discussion of the legend of the Knight with the Lion in Iceland and its relation to the image on the door more broadly, see e.g. Harris (1970) and Kjesrud (2014).

This is, indeed, reminiscent of the way in which the medieval literary heritage has come down to us. The preserved manuscripts of literary works can be said to represent a moment of stasis that defies the previous mobility of the works in their transmission history as well as in their codicological history. The carved image thus, in a sense, not only freezes the action described in the story at the moment of its reception, but it moreover epitomizes the contradictory reality of medieval textuality, that is, the inherent mobility of medieval narrative transmission on the one hand and its stasis through the act of textual (or visual) preservation on the other.

Given the religious context of the door's setting, the tale of a knight killing a dragon to save a lion might have been mistaken for (or fused with) the legend of St George, with the lion possibly featuring as a royal symbol. Alternatively, it could have drawn on or been associated with popular and widespread legendary stories – such as the Nibelung material or the legends of Theodoric the Great (Dietrich von Bern) – featuring a battle with dragons and/or symbolic representations of animals like the lion and the dragon/serpent.⁷ Yet both the horse and the bird (a falcon?) that apparently accompanies the knight evoke direct associations with a knightly *chevalier* and the symbolic realm of chivalry. The knight's outfit and gear similarly call to mind images of Norman knights with their nasal helmets and kite shields.⁸ The accoutrements depicted, from the animals to the image of the knight and his armour, thus seem to foster associations with courtly conventions rather than biblical scenes (although the two are certainly connected). Additionally, the narrative structuring of the images, moving from the bottom half, which depicts the killing of the serpent/dragon and the salvation of the lion, to the upper two panels, which showcase the subsequent stages of the story, suggests that the carvings feature the visual depiction of an embryonic (or possibly a fully fledged) narrative tale of the Knight with the Lion.

Turning to the top half of the upper circle (see Figure 4), two scenes are portrayed: the left half depicts the knight (now at ease) and his faithful lion, while the right half shows a grave with the grieving lion resting on it (see Figure 5). Below the lion is a

7 Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir (2017: 308), indeed, suggests that the story of the knight featured in the carved image may be derived from the Germanic heroic epic *Wolfdietrich*. While this may certainly be the case – not least as oral narrative topoi tend to be conflated with alternative local or imported legends with similar narrative elements – the correlation with the material featured in Chrétien's *Yvain* is fairly compelling. The carving includes scenes that are surprisingly accurate in their representation of the narrative progression of the tale of the Knight with the Lion as it is known today. Moreover, the visual imagery of the knight and his feline companion, and the details of the accoutrements, clearly draw on a courtly context, although this may of course follow (either directly or indirectly) from the Romanesque style of the carved image.

8 Piotr Grotowski (2009: 231–234) has suggested that the kite shield, featured so prominently in the Bayeux Tapestry for instance, was introduced to continental Europe by the Vikings. There has, however, been no archaeological evidence to support this hypothesis. The round shields typically associated with Viking armour are notably different from the clearly distinguishable triangular form depicted here.



Figure 4: Top half of upper circular carved image on Valþjófsstaðahurð.



Figure 5: Close-up of the right half of the upper section of the carved image (upper circle).

runic inscription *Sjá inn ríkja konung hér grafinn er vá dreka þenna* ‘see the mighty king buried here who slew this dragon’.⁹ The inscription acts as an annotation to the story, a textual commentary on the visual depiction of the story matter, presumably by the artist who carved the door. It replicates the aural mandate to “harken” or “listen” in its invitation to “see” what the image is conveying. The carving thus invites the visual reading of its narrative material in the manner of stained-glass windows, murals, or frescoes in churches, merging text and art to convey its story.

The two circles thus enact a mirroring effect that enhances the visual impact of the figure of the knight. The bottom half of the upper circle replicates the interlaced imagery of the bottom circle through the visual arrangement of the entangled bodies of the lion (to the far left), the serpent-like dragon (to the far right), and the surrounding vegetation. Featuring front and centre is the figure of the knight on his horse brandishing a sword – a clear visual shift from the non-figurative ornamental patterning of the bottom image. The visual cue of the figure of the knight is then taken up in the upper half, where the intricate interlacing of the lower half and bottom circle are dispensed with to enact instead a narrative sequence that features the relevant protagonists, the setting, and the main narrative elements. The images thus stage the companionship of the knight errant and the lion and, ultimately, the presumed death of the knight and the mourning of his companion beast. While the upper circle thus shifts the focus to the narrative elements of the story, the interlocking branches and limbs replicating the interwoven imagery of the lower circle reveal how the Matter of Britain has been enmeshed with the artistic conventions of the North. The story of Yvain – which originates in Celtic folklore and assumes its courtly form in Chrétien’s romance *Yvain ou Le Chevalier au lion* – is here featured in an image that merges the courtly romance content with visual forms associated with Viking art (and possibly Celtic and other art forms).¹⁰

Interestingly, the final scene deviates from the tale as we know it from Chrétien’s version, where the lion merely vanishes from the story once it has served its narrative purpose and Yvain is reconciled with his wife, Laudine. The deviation suggests either an alternative plot structure in the source, a deviation from the ending for a specific purpose, or contamination between sources and/or various cultural influences. The cross on the grave intimates a Christian burial, and while the building featured behind the lion remains indistinctive, it could have been intended as a stave church, given its steep triangular roof and the apparently timber-plank structure. Yet the

⁹ All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

¹⁰ Indeed, if the story matter originated in alternative sources, whether associated with the legend of St George, *Wolfdietrich*, or alternative popular narrative motifs, it nevertheless reveals a similar movement of material across geographical and medial borders and the fusion between legendary material (classical, Germanic, or courtly) in narrative form and visual mediation in multiple art forms and styles. See also Liepe (2008) for a discussion of the visual representation of such images in manuscript illuminations.

runic inscription seems an odd choice given the presumed Christian courtly context. By 1200, the Latin alphabet would have long since replaced runic inscriptions as the conventional script, although runes may still have been used for decorative purposes. Given the medium of the material (i.e. wood) and the convention of runic carvings on wood, the choice of runes can perhaps be rationalized, yet the combination of the courtly matter in its ecclesiastical context with a runic inscription that the audience may or may not have been able to decipher is peculiar at best.¹¹

What is perhaps most remarkable about this door is that it is considered to have been carved in Iceland around 1200. Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir (2017: 307–308) has suggested in a recent book that the door was built specifically for a convent at Keldar in Rangárvellir in the south-west of Iceland. She hypothesizes that Sæmundur Jónsson (1154–1222), son of Jón Loftsson (1124–1197) in Oddi, may have had the door to the convent at Keldar carved in honour of his father and that the door may later have travelled to Valþjófsstaðir with Randalín Filippusdóttir, the grandchild of Sæmundur Jónsson, as part of her dowry when she married the chieftain Oddur Þórarinnsson at Valþjófsstaðir in 1249. If she is right, the door was likely carved around 1200, most likely in Iceland.¹² Chrétien’s romance of *Yvain*, from which we know the story of the Knight with the Lion, is, however, believed to have been translated at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson IV (r. 1217–1263). Even dating the translation to the early years of Hákon Hákonarson’s reign, it is unlikely to have been made before the 1220s. Assuming the text passed relatively directly from Norway to Iceland, the translated version of Chrétien’s story still postdates the door (this assumes of course that the dating of the door is accurate). If the door was indeed carved in Iceland around 1200, we can assume that the material was already known in Iceland – although possibly in a different form or state – prior to the translation of Chrétien’s story in Norway. The carvings on the door therefore reveal artistic engagement with the underpinnings of the *matière de Bretagne* (Matter of Britain) in Iceland as early as 1200, or approximately twenty to fifty years before King Hákon Hákonarson presumably requested that the French romance of *Yvain* be translated into Old Norse.

The door therefore stands as evidence not only of early engagement with the Matter of Britain in Iceland (or Norway) but also of native artistic visual renderings of narrative material stemming from a semi-Celtic and semi-courtly French origin. The runic inscription furthermore signals the entangling of multiple media forms that in turn

¹¹ Admittedly, runic inscriptions are frequently found in Christian contexts, where they may have been considered as decorative or traditional. Yet their choice here is nevertheless curious considering the courtly context of the imagery depicted.

¹² The catalogue at the National Museum lists a date for the carving of the door between 1175 and 1200, and states that it was “án efa skorin hér á landi og er nú einstæð, fleiri skornar hurðir kunna þó að hafa verið til því að svipaðir hringir hafa varðveist frá kirkjum á Austurlandi” (“without doubt carved here [i.e. in Iceland] and is now unique, although more carved doors may have existed, since similar rings [i.e. iron door rings] have been preserved in churches in the east of Iceland”).

belong to and reflect different cultural realms, associated belief systems, and narrative modes and mediums. Ultimately, the carvings on the door reveal the meeting of two worlds usually conceived as opposites: the Icelandic pagan past, represented by myth and the pre-Latinic runic evidence, and the courtly romance tradition as represented by *Yvain*, mediating the Celtic narrative lore of Owain. Its representation on the carved door, which thus features both conventional artistic imagery from an earlier cultural history and the anachronistic images of Yvain with his lion embedded into the circular interlaced imagery, stands as evidence of the creative force of cultural fusion.

The image thus bears witness to the crossing of multiple borders; those of historical linearity and periodization, those of form and functionality, and, ultimately, linguistic and cultural borders. Here we see, in essence, how the sea has acted as a means of intercultural, intermedial, and cross-historical mediation, resulting in the enmeshing of Celtic folkloric material, French courtly figural representations, and Nordic art forms stemming from a pre-Christian runic and Viking past.

Literary traces

The second example shifts the focus from visuality to textuality as it aims instead to trace textual mediation across cultural and linguistic borders. It draws on the complex transmission pattern of the romance of *Partonopeu de Blois*. This anonymous French text was composed at the end of the twelfth century in France and spread from there across Europe, where it was translated into various vernaculars, including Middle English, Middle High German, and Middle Low German, along with a loose adaptation in Italian. The story begins by tracing the genealogy of Clovis, the king of France, and his favourite nephew, Partonopeu de Blois, back to Troy, thereby affirming the topos of *translatio imperii* for the French royal line. It then recounts how during a hunt with his uncle, Partonopeu is lost in the woods. He boards a magical ship that carries him to a mysterious kingdom where the citizens are invisible. He is served food in a resplendent hall and is later brought to a bedchamber to rest. During the night, he is joined by an enigmatic being, who we later find out is the empress of Constantinople. He is not allowed to see her (despite sharing her bed) for two years or until he is of age and they can be united publicly in marriage. As in the case of the Cupid and Psyche myth, Partonopeu eventually breaks his promise and Melior, the empress, is exposed. In the end, they are reconciled, and Partonopeu marries Melior and becomes the ruler of Constantinople.¹³

The story of Partonopeu also exists, however, in a second version, and it is this second version that I will be focusing on here. The main difference between the

¹³ The following discussion draws partially on an analysis of gender and representation in the various versions of the Partonopeu story in Sif Rikhardsdottir (2012: 113–151).

two versions is an alternative narrative order, as the second version begins with Melior, who has Partonopeu transported to her kingdom to share her bed at night. While the second version thus features a more basic narrative order (and hence is frequently considered to be older), it also shifts the emphasis from the male protagonist to the female protagonist and her agency in bringing Partonopeu to her kingdom. This second version is either a derivative version of one of the translations – England being a likely place of origin given that both versions exist in Middle English – or a derivative or earlier version of the French text that has, however, not been preserved in French.¹⁴ This second version spread north and south, creating a complex pattern of transmission that reveals the mobility of literary material in the Middle Ages. It exists in a Middle English fragment (distinct from the longer version, which is instead a close translation of the French source text), in Old Norse, in Old Danish, and in Catalan – with English being the only language in which both variant versions are preserved.

The two English versions have both been preserved in fifteenth-century manuscripts, creating a significant divide between the composition of the French original and the writing of the preserved copies of the English translations. The Norse text has similarly only come down in fifteenth-century or later manuscripts, yet there is evidence that the text existed in a fourteenth-century manuscript that is now lost.¹⁵ This manuscript is conventionally referred to as the Ormsbók (or the Book of Ormr), and has been attributed to Ormr Snorrason at Skarð in Skarðströnd (c. 1320–1402), a royal legislative official and lawspeaker.¹⁶ The lost vellum manuscript is conventionally dated to the second half of the fourteenth century and so provides a *terminus ante quem* for the translation.¹⁷ Multiple lexicon entries from the seventeenth century stem from the lost manuscript, and much of the content was copied in later

14 There are multiple textual witnesses to the French *Partonopeus de Blois*, as the romance seems to have been immensely popular in the Middle Ages. There is, however, no evidence of the second version's existence in French, whether in France or in England, although this could simply mean that manuscripts containing version II were lost, or that version I became the standardized form at the cost of the other one. For a discussion of the manuscript tradition of the French romance, see e.g. Simons (1997) and Eley (2011).

15 The last listing of the manuscript is from a late seventeenth-century inventory. It is generally assumed that the manuscript was lost when the Royal Palace burned down in Stockholm at the end of the seventeenth century, or that it perished in a large fire in Uppsala at the turn of the eighteenth century.

16 For further information on the manuscript, its dating, and its potential content, see Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson (forthcoming).

17 Ormr is thought to have owned and potentially commissioned two other major codices: the legal codex Skarðsbók Jónsbókar (AM 350 fol) and a large collection of the Acts of the Apostles, Skarðsbók postulasagna (SÁM 1 fol) – considered to be two of the more resplendent Icelandic codices that have been preserved in Iceland. The copy of *Partalopa saga* in the paper manuscript Holm papp 46 fol is thought to stem from the Ormsbók. See *Partalopa saga* (1983: lxi–lxv) and Sanders (1979).

paper manuscripts, partially preserving the presumed content of the lost fourteenth-century manuscript. The codex is believed to have contained multiple romances, both translated and indigenous, including *Partalopa saga*, along with the Norse translations of the story of Troy, the *Historia regum Britanniae*, and the *Disciplina clericalis*. I have suggested before (Sif Rikhardsdóttir 2012: 117–119), and so has Lise Marie Præstgaard, the editor of the Icelandic *Partalopa saga* (xi–xxii), that the text may in fact have been translated in Iceland around the mid-fourteenth century. If this is so, it reveals not only that Icelandic reading communities were recipients of the romance material flowing through Norway in the thirteenth century, but that the fourteenth century saw independent translation activity besides the copying of existing saga and romance material, whether translated or native.

The actual routes of transmission and potential manuscript connections are, however, dizzyingly convoluted. When the four translations of version II are compared with the existing French manuscript copies, it becomes apparent that none of the preserved textual samples is a direct translation of another. Moreover, the English text of version II only exists as a fragment, making it particularly difficult to trace potential textual correlations or deviations. It is apparent, however, that the Old Norse text is not a direct translation of the Middle English text, although both share clear deviations against the French text. Moreover, the Old Danish text is not a direct translation of any of the extant manuscript copies of the Norse text, though it is clearly closely related. Finally, the Catalan text is an independent variant.

A couple of examples tracing textual variants demonstrate the complexity of the transmission pattern of the story. In the Old French version, Partonopeu becomes lost in the woods when following *un grant sengler* ‘a wild boar’ (*Partonopeu de Blois*: l. 608). In the fragmented Middle English text (version II), the boar has become a hart: *an hart with hornis wyde*.¹⁸ The longer Middle English version, which correlates closely with the Old French text, features a *wylde boore* like the French text (*Partonope of Blois*: l. 541). The change might simply signal a shift to an animal that would have been more familiar locally, or it might indicate an adaptation of the material to the Middle English romance convention, where the hart has a specific symbolic function. The Old Danish text follows suit by featuring a hart (*hiort*) as well (*Persenober og Konstantianobis*: 156).

The Old Norse text befuddles the issue here, as the story is preserved in two variant versions, A and B. A is represented by several manuscripts, the oldest of which is AM 533 4to, dated to the mid-fifteenth century or later. The B variant is represented by a single manuscript, Holm papp 46 fol, which was copied in 1690. Interestingly, the manuscript was presumably copied from the lost Ormsbók manuscript, thereby

¹⁸ *The Middle English Versions of Partonope of Blois* (fragment l. 102). The edition of the two English versions will hereafter be referred to as *Partonope of Blois* for the sake of simplicity. For a comparison of the various versions of the Partonopeu story, see Rikhardsdóttir (2012: 152–163).

theoretically providing a textual copy close to the ostensible time of the translation.¹⁹ The B version follows the English fragment in featuring a hart: *þà sà Partalope / hiort eirn mikinn laupa at sier* ‘then Partalopi saw a large hart run towards him’ (*Partalopa saga*: 10, l. 40 in B1). The A variant, however, contains a wild boar like the French manuscript: *P(artalopi) sa hlavpa fyrir hvndvnm einn mikinn *villi göllt* ‘Partalopi saw a large wild boar run before the dogs’ (*Partalopa saga*: l. 7 in A1). So does the Catalan version (*História de l'esforçat cavaller Partinobles*: 25). It is therefore apparent that either both the hart and the boar variants must have been in circulation, or that there was cross-contamination somewhere along the way (unless the choice of the two animals is simply a random coincidence).

Another minor textual detail might assist in throwing light on the potential manuscript transmission. In the French text, Partonopeu wanders through a large hall as he is led to his bedchamber upon his arrival in the mysterious land. The text states that the hall is lit by *cierges alumés* (i.e. lighted wax candles or tapers): *Vers l'uis de la cambre est alés, / Et voit deus cierges alumés / Qui vers la cambre vont adés* ‘He goes (is gone) towards the door of the chamber / and sees two lighted candles / that depart for the room at once’ (*Partonopeu de Blois*: ll. 1063–1065). While the B variant of the Norse text followed the English fragment against the French source in the previous example, here it follows the French instead. The B manuscript states that the hall is lit by *stafkerti*, i.e. long tapered candles (*Partalopa saga*: 20, l. 141 in B1). In the Middle English fragment, the hall is on the other hand illuminated by *greete torchys* ‘great torches’:

Atte Eeven whanne he sholde go to bedde,
 He was browght a fayir chavmber tille.
 This gentil chyilde Pertinope
 Into a Chavmber was hee * gone.
 Ryght greete torchys uppon to see
 By-fore hym were lyght fulle good wone (*Partonope of Blois*: fragment ll. 203–208)

In the evening when he should go to bed
 he was brought into a fair chamber,
 this gentle child (or honourable young knight) Pertinope.
 He goes to a chamber,
 Before him great torches were to be seen
 lighting the way.

¹⁹ Admittedly, the romance could have been translated earlier and been transmitted in two (or more) variant versions in Iceland, of which the Ormsbók (and its paper copy) would have preserved one variant while the other was copied more extensively, as there are approximately thirty extant manuscripts of the A variant of the text versus the single copy of the B variant. For further information on the manuscripts, see *Partalopa saga* (xxvi–xcv).

The Catalan text similarly features *una torxa encesa* ‘a lighted torch’ that lights his way (*História de l’esforçat cavaller Partinobles*: 31). The Old Danish version does not mention any details regarding the lighting.²⁰

The A variant of the Norse text features, however, an interesting deviation here. In the A text, the hall is lighted by *tortisar myklir* ‘great torches’, which includes a word that does not seem to be in evidence before the fourteenth century but can be found in manuscripts from the fourteenth century onwards.²¹ The meaning of *tortis* here remains uncertain. In later usage, it is clearly associated with a torch (the conventional sense of the word). Here, however, it remains unclear whether the term is intended to indicate a wax candle or a twisted tow dipped in wax, or whether these were indeed considered interchangeable:

Nv var kvæld dags ok hvgsadi hann hvar er hann skyldi sæng fa vm nottina því næst kvomv fram .ij. tortisar myklir med favgrvm loga þa hvgdi hann at þav mvndi til þess þar komin at visa honvm til sængvr hann stod vpp ok geck þangat eptir er kertin forv fyrir

(*Partalopa saga*: 19–20, ll. 32–37 in A1)

Now the day had turned to night and he thought about where he would find a bed for the night. Then two large torches appeared with a beautiful flame, and he presumed that they were there to show him to bed. He stood up and followed the candles.

Yet, the choice of the word *tortis* – otherwise rather uncommon – seems suggestive in this context when considering the cross-relations between the various versions and the affinities between the Middle English fragment and the Old Norse text.

Beside its appearance in *Partalopa saga*, the word can be found in a manuscript featuring *Maríu saga* (The story of the Virgin Mary) from the latter half of the fifteenth century (Holm perg 1 4to) and a manuscript copy of *Karlamagnús saga* (The Saga of Charlamagne) copied around 1700 (AM 180 d fol). In both cases, the precise meaning of the word remains unclear. In *Karlamagnús saga*, the reference to *önnur kerti* ‘other candles’ might suggest that it refers to candles rather than torches.²² The manuscript featuring *Maríu saga*, Holm perg 1 4to, may similarly indicate a derivative meaning similar to the English ‘torch’, as the story describes a vision featuring men dressed in

²⁰ All the versions are more or less in agreement here regarding the order of events. Partonopeu is provided with food by invisible servants, he marvels at the wonders of the place and the opulence of the decor, and is then taken to his bedchamber by the invisible servants carrying candles or torches.

²¹ *Partalopa saga* (20, l. 34 in A1 and A3). Holm perg 7 fol (A2) is dated to the late fifteenth century and has a variant spelling, i.e. *tortiSar miklar*, but otherwise agrees with AM 533 4to. JS 27 fol (A3) is dated to c. 1670 and follows A1 with only slight spelling variations and a minor deviation, as the torches are said to have bright flames as opposed to the beautiful ones in A1 (*ij. tostizar störer med biörttum logumm*).

²² See also *Karlamagnus saga ok kappa hans* (52). For information on the word *tortis*, see the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. <https://nors.ku.dk/english/research/arnamagnaean/a-dictionary-of-old-norse-prose/> (1 October 2020).

white carrying *digra tortisa med brennundum logum* ‘broad torches with burning flames’ and later states that a certain Bishop Bonus sought to do good *berandi sier i haundum logandi tortís godra verka til eptirdæmis sinum undirmonnum* ‘carrying in his hand a flaming torch as an example for his subordinates’, although these passages could certainly also indicate candles.²³ It is, therefore, tempting to think that the Old Norse *tortís* may have affinities with the Middle English *torchys* featured in the English fragment, although its derivation and meaning (torch, flame, or wax candle) remain unclear.

Retracing our steps back to England, we find the two versions extant there in the fifteenth century. Version I is a close translation of the French text that shows some possible influences of Chaucerian prose and mannerisms that would indicate that the translation postdates Chaucer and thus most likely stems from the fifteenth century. Version II is a much-simplified text reminiscent of the Breton lays. If the second version came into being in England (whether in French or in English) and passed through England to Iceland, then that version must already have been present there in the first half of the fourteenth century, as that is the latest possible date for the Icelandic translation. The interconnections between the versions would thus entail the existence of the Partonopeu story in England as early as the first half of the fourteenth century, almost a century earlier than the English manuscript history would indicate. The correlation between the Norse and the English versions thus offers an alternative literary history to what the English evidence on its own would do. The transmission pattern of the story therefore reveals an intricate pattern of literary engagement that is not unilateral, but rather complex and interactive.

Monastic and mercantile networks

Returning to Icelandic literary history, the Partonopeu story has a second significant implication, one that pertains particularly to the development of Icelandic romance. The French romance tells the story of a Franco-Byzantine imperial affair that in the Norse romance has metamorphosed into an apparently uniquely Icelandic narrative representation, the maiden king romance. The maiden king romance is directly related

²³ See also *Maríu saga* (408 and 544 respectively). Holm perg 1 4to is dated to the second half of the fifteenth century. The word appears in several other manuscript copies of *Maríu saga*, always associated with torches or candles being carried. The earliest of these would be Holm perg 11 4to, from around the mid-fourteenth century (the earliest dating of the manuscript would be 1325, the latest one 1375), where the text refers to *digrvn tortisvm* ‘large torches/candles’. It is, of course, quite possible that the word was in existence before that, and it may very well have been mediated via alternative routes, whether by means of the Middle English *torchys* or the Old French *torche*, which is the source for the Middle English word.

to the Germanic/European bridal quest romance, yet there are subtle differences in the narrative orientation that separate the maiden king romances from their European counterparts. While in bridal quest stories the focus is on the quest of a male for a bride, in the maiden king stories the emphasis shifts from the quest of the male to the resistance of the female object. These stories form a small group within the corpus of the Icelandic romances and were apparently fairly popular based on manuscript preservation.²⁴ The motif of the female ruler who refuses to marry appears in legendary material stemming from the thirteenth century, but the earliest extant fully fledged maiden king romance is *Clári saga* (The Saga of Clarus).²⁵

The oldest preserved copy of the tale of Clárus (although incomplete) is a vellum manuscript from the latter part of the fourteenth century, AM 657 a–b, 4to.²⁶ The prologue to the story declares that Jón Halldórsson translated the story from Latin into Norse:

Þar byrjum vér upp þessa frásögn, sem sagði virðulegur herra Jón biskup Halldórsson, ágætrar minningar, – en hann fann hana skrifaða með latínu í Franz í það form er þeir kalla rithmos, en vér köllum hendingum. (*Clári saga*: 1)

We begin this story, as told by the honourable reverend Bishop Jón Halldórsson, blessed be his memory – which he found written in Latin in France in the form that they call ‘verse’ [Lat. *rhythmus*] and we call verse lines.

Jón Halldórsson was a bishop in Skálholt, the episcopal see in south-west Iceland, in the early fourteenth century. He was born sometime before 1300 and was likely of Norwegian descent, although he may have been Icelandic. It is known that he entered a Dominican monastery in Bergen as a youth and that he later travelled to both Paris and Bologna for his studies. He returned to Bergen in the early fourteenth century and then became a bishop in Iceland from 1322 to his death in 1339.²⁷ If the

24 The number of manuscripts preserved (both medieval and post-medieval) ranges from twenty-nine to sixty-four for the so-called indigenous maiden king romances, exceeded only by two other indigenous romances, *Hermanns saga ok Jarlmanns* with sixty-eight manuscripts and *Mágus saga jarls* with an astounding seventy-five manuscript copies preserved. For comparative purposes, *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, the Old Norse translation of the well-known *Tristan* by Thomas de Bretagne, has been preserved in a total of eight copies, several of which are in a fragmented state. The Norse translation of the noted *Alexandreis*, *Alexanders saga*, has been preserved in twenty-three manuscript copies, mostly post-medieval (as is the case with the majority of the romances).

25 For further information about the maiden king topos, see Kalinke (1990). The interconnections between *Clári saga*, *Partalopa saga*, and the maiden king motif are elaborated on at greater length in a recent article (Sif Rikhardsdóttir (2018)).

26 For further information on the manuscripts of *Clári saga*, see *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romance*: 72–73.

27 For details of Jón Halldórsson’s life, see Gunnar Kristjánsson & Óskar Guðmundsson (2006: 36–37, 505).

prologue is accurate in ascribing the story to Jón Halldórsson, this would mean that the manuscript copy of the tale may have been written as early as two decades after his death (if one assumes the manuscript dates back to the mid-fourteenth century).

It remains uncertain whether the manuscript is a copy of Jón Halldórsson's own text (or a version of such a text), or a copy of a text written down from Jón Halldórsson's recital of the story (directly or indirectly), or whether the scribe merely attributed the tale to Jón Halldórsson for authenticity or by mistake. Jón was known to have translated and incorporated exempla and tales into his sermons, and so the notion that he could have brought with him a Latin tale from his journeys or sojourns abroad may have been considered plausible. The presumed Latin original cited in the prologue to *Clári saga* has never been found, and critics disagree on whether the text is indeed a translation or a native rendition, although there is no particular reason to doubt the prologue's veracity, given Jón's penchant for adopting Latin exempla in his sermons.²⁸

The transmission pattern and dating of *Clári saga* are significant, as it may be the earliest fully fledged maiden king romance to have been preserved. While there is evidence of the topos of the maiden king as a typecast figure in the thirteenth century in at least two legendary sagas – and, in fact, in figures such as Brunhild in the *Nibelungenlied* – it is seemingly only in the fourteenth century that we see a sustained attention directed at the maiden king as the main focus of narrative arrangement and functionality. Given the dating of *Clári saga*, it is not unlikely that the translation (or writing) of the story of Clárus took place during a similar period to that of *Partalopa saga*. It is, moreover, perfectly conceivable, based on the evidence of the adaptation of *Partalopa saga*, that the narrative reshaping of the presumed Latin original of *Clári saga* shows a similar shift in emphasis to accommodate an apparent interest within Icelandic reading communities in the haughty bride who refused to relinquish her power to her male suitor.

It is therefore tempting to think that the two translations, containing similar structures of powerful women and their suitors, were not only translated for their interesting and entertaining stories of faraway adventures, but may have been the ideal *locus* for addressing the apparent cultural concerns that Icelandic medieval audiences had about female power (Rikhardsdóttir 2018). The two translations may have taken an undeveloped narrative motif, known from other bridal quest romances, of the haughty bride and made it into the underlying source of narrative agency. The subsequent maiden king romances would then have drawn their inspiration and motifs from the prototype established in the merging of native narrative patterns with an imported narrative framework of romance that provided the ideal form with which to address such cultural concerns within the imaginative realm of adventure in exotic lands. The

²⁸ See e.g. the discussions in Jakobsen (1964), Johansson (1997), Kalinke (2008), and Hughes (2008).

generic flexibility of romance may well have provided the textual space for engaging with such social or cultural concerns.

The key point I want to make here is to call attention to the historical and socio-literary circumstances surrounding the conception of *Clári saga* and its afterlife. Jón Halldórsson's travels epitomize the widespread web of interlinked mendicant orders, monasteries, and sites of learning that reached across Europe and beyond. In the figure of Jón Halldórsson, we can therefore trace lines of exchange and interconnections extending from the farthest reaches of the known world in the North, Iceland, to Norway, passing potentially across England (as Norwegian monastic orders had extensive connections with fraternal orders in England) to Paris, and reaching as far south as that other major European centre of learning, Bologna in Italy.

Bologna itself was one of the largest European cities in the late Middle Ages, and strategically placed mid-way between Florence – another key centre for art and literature – and the Republic of Venice – the ancient maritime empire whose rule extended across the Adriatic Sea, reaching as far down into the Mediterranean Sea as the island of Crete. The Florentine Republic had produced literary brilliance in the form of Dante, who died in 1321, a year before Jón took up office in Iceland, and Giovanni Boccaccio, another major literary figure, who would have been twenty-six years of age when Jón died in 1339. At that time, Boccaccio would have been living in Naples – a city that boasted a cultural heritage from the Sicilian Kingdom and a new-found prestige through a conglomeration of bankers, merchants, and Renaissance artists – and writing his early works, including *Filocolo* and *Filostrato*. Francesco Petrarca, the third of the so-called *tre corone* (three crowns) of Italian literary history, similarly has cross-ties across the geographical region described above, being born in Arezzo in Toscana, approximately seventy-eight kilometres south of Florence, spending time in Naples, and residing for several years in Venice. Indeed, he studied in Bologna in the years between 1320 and 1323, or around the same time as Jón took up the bishopric in Skálholt, signalling an interacting network of literary productivity before and after Jón's residency in the area.

It is in this complex web of interacting literary productivity, mercantile exchange, and ecclesiastical and scholarly environments that we find the Norwegian-Icelandic Dominican. The *Clári saga* motif of wifely obedience and patience bears a resemblance to the Griselda motif, elaborated on by both Boccaccio and Petrarca, and later by Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales*. Yet the plotline and motivations of *Clári saga* are radically different, suggesting either a different treatment (with or without a potentially Latin source) or, possibly, an innovative elaboration of the motif of female autonomy and wifely obedience or resistance. Either way, Jón's travels place him in key sites for cultural fusion, productivity, and the transmission of material, motifs, and learning. Bergen itself, where Jón resided or may even have been born, was a multicultural city as it served as the hub for the Hanseatic network that, like the Venetian empire in the south, extended across the North Sea and into the Baltic Sea,

providing routes of trade and exchange for both goods and non-material products, such as linguistic and/or cultural identities and, potentially, literary motifs.²⁹

Marteinn H. Sigurðsson has called attention to a little-known anecdote by Jón Halldórsson, located in *Jóns þáttur biskups Halldórssonar* (The Tale of Bishop Jón Halldórsson), that has been shown to be based on an older version of a tale also found in Petrarca's *Res memorandae* (Memorable Tales).³⁰ The story tells of two stone statues of lions – that most likely flanked the entrance to the cathedral in Bologna at the time – and a death caused by a snake (in Jón's version) or a scorpion (in Petrarca's version) lurking in the mouth of one of the lions. The anecdote may have been intended as a cautionary tale. As with *Clári saga* before – and indeed the carved door as well – the travelling anecdote reveals the complex interacting web of oral, visual, and written material plundered, adapted, and reworked for diverse purposes within each literary community. Jón Halldórsson's far-reaching oceanic networks, extending across the Norwegian Sea from Iceland to Bergen and across the North Sea to Paris and perhaps into the Mediterranean Sea, thus reveal again the complex patterns of transmission that lie at the roots of local creativity and literary identity. Those convergences interlink the various localities and their respective traditions, resulting in the creation of artistic material that is, however, uniquely localized in its cultural relevance and functionality.

Conclusion

Returning to the notion of insular identity, literary development, and the concept of the ocean as a pathway, both romance and the more “native” genre of the sagas exemplify both geographical isolationism and expansionism. While the focal point of the saga material was Iceland, the saga characters drew their symbolic substance from crossing the seas and engaging with other cultures. Questions of manhood, respect, value, and selfhood are, indeed, settled by departing from the Icelandic centre to Norway or the British Isles (or further), making the sea a pathway for the negotiation of identity, or at the very least of male identity. This identity, however, only assumed meaning once it was repositioned within the context of the centre. In romance, however, the geographical centre was far removed from insular regionalism, yet its material provided a means of addressing local concerns in a non-contextualized and

²⁹ The Hanseatic League was a powerful mercantile guild and confederation that originated in northern Germany in the twelfth century and expanded in the subsequent centuries across the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, dominating maritime trade across the region for several centuries until the League slowly lost its position of prominence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

³⁰ Marteinn H. Sigurðsson (2004) and *Islendzk æventyri* (447–448). My thanks go to the external readers for drawing my attention to this.

non-local specific narrative functionality. With romance, the audience could be transported across the ocean to faraway lands and imaginary realms, only to encounter cultural concerns that did not originate in those same faraway lands but rather reflected the very local concerns of the reading community for whom the romances were written and by whom they were being read.

David Wallace (1986: 36) once described England – when viewed from a continental European perspective – as both eccentric and delayed, its eccentricity being geographical. If England’s geographical location on the margins made it of scant literary consequence within the broader context of European literary history, how would the even more remote island of a few struggling Vikings have been viewed? While geographical marginality and/or centrality may determine literary prominence, it does not necessarily affect literary production. It is not so much marginality or centrality as *contact* that impacts production. This contact may be sporadic, minimal, or overwhelming. Tracing these routes and the often unique and singular literary results of such contacts reveals a history that can be viewed as both native *and* transnational in its origins.

The three examples trace different routes of transmission and different means of mediation, from the appearance of the story of the Knight with the Lion on the church door in Valþjófsstaðir in Iceland in 1200, to the complex web of literary transmission and manuscript connections of the story of Partonopeu de Blois, and ultimately to the monastic and mercantile networks that are exemplified through the travels of Jón Halldórsson and that in many cases underlie such cultural exchange. Tracing such transmission patterns may reveal vibrant literary activity where previously none was discernible, it may reveal intricate social probing in material that was assumed to be frivolous, and it may allow for a literary history that acknowledges that literary sophistication is rarely reached in isolation, but is generally the result of cultural, literary, and/or linguistic encounters.

Bibliography

Sources

Chrétien de Troyes. *Le Chevalier au Lion ou Le Roman d’Yvain*, ed. David F. Hult. Paris: Livre de poche, 1994.

Clári saga, ed. Gustav Cederschiöld. Halle: Niemeyer, 1907.

História de l’esforçat cavaller Partinobles, ed. Jordi Tiñena. Barcelona: Editorial Laertes, 1991.

Islendk æventyri: Isländische Legenden, Novellen und Märchen, ed. Hugo Gering, 2 vols. Halle: Waisenhauss, 1882–1884.

Karlamagnus saga ok kappu hans: Fortællinger om keiser Karl Magnus og hans jævnninger, ed. Carl R. Unger. Christiania: Jensen, 1860.

- The Lady of the Fountain in The Mabinogion*, trans. Gwyn Jones & Thomas Jones, rev. edition. London: Everyman, 1993 [1949].
- Mariú saga: Legend af jomfru Maria og hendes jartegn efter gamle haandskrifter*, ed. Carl R. Unger. Christiania: Bentzen, 1871.
- Partalopa saga*, ed. Lise Præstgaard Andersen. Editiones Arnarnagnæanæ, Series B, vol. 28. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels forlag, 1983.
- Partonopeu de Blois: A French Romance from the Twelfth Century*, ed. Joseph Gildea. Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1967.
- Partonope of Blois = The Middle English Versions of Partonope of Blois*, ed. A. Trampe Bødtker. Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1981 [1912].
- Persenober og Konstantianobis*, ed. Jørgen Olrik, in: *Danske folkebøger fra 16. og 17. aarhundrede*, ed. J. P. Jakobsen, Jørgen Olrik & R. Paulli, vol. 6, 149–208. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1925.

Literature

- Barnes, Geraldine. 2014. *The Bookish Riddarasögur. Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland*. Copenhagen: University Press of Southern Denmark.
- Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romance*, compiled by Marianne E. Kalinke & Phillip M. Mitchell. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Björn Magnússon Ólsen. 1884–1885. “Valþjófsstaðahurðin.” *Árbók hins íslenska fornleifafélags*, 24–37.
- Cooper, Helen. 2004. *The English Romance in Time. Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eley, Penny. 2011. *Partonopeus de Blois. Romance in the Making*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- Glauser, Jürg & Susanne Kramarz-Bein, eds. 2014. *Rittersagas. Übersetzung, Überlieferung, Transmission*. Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag.
- Grotowski, Piotr. 2009. *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints. Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography*. Leiden: Brill.
- Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson. Forthcoming, “Arthurian Materials in Icelandic Manuscripts.” In: *Late Arthurian Tradition in Europe*, ed. Christine Ferlampin-Acher. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- Gunnar Kristjánsson & Óskar Guðmundsson, eds. 2006. *Saga biskupsstólanna. Skálholt 950 ára–2006 – Hólar 900 ára*. Reykjavík: Hólar.
- Heslop, Kate & Jürg Glauser, eds. 2018. *RE:writing: Medial Perspectives on Textual Culture in the Icelandic Middle Ages*. Zürich: Chronos.
- Harris, Richard L. 1970. “The Lion-Knight Legend in Iceland and the Valþjófsstaðir Door.” *Viator* 1: 125–145.
- Hughes, Shaun F. D. 2008. “*Klári saga* as an Indigenous Romance.” In: *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honor of Marianne Kalinke*, ed. Kirsten Wolf & Johanna Denzin, 135–63. Ithaca: Cornell University Library.
- Jakobsen, Alfred. 1964. *Studier i Clarus saga: Til Spørsmålet om sagaens norske proveniens*. Årbok for Universitetet i Bergen, Humanistisk serie, 1963.2. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.
- Johansson, Karl G. 1997. “A Scriptorium in Northern Iceland. *Clárus saga* (AM 657 a–b 4to) Revisited.” In: *Sagas and the Norwegian Experience: 10th International Saga Conference Trondheim 3–9 August 1997. Preprints*. Trondheim: Senter for Middelalderstudier, 323–331.
- Johansson, Karl G. & Rune Flaten, eds. 2012. *Francia et Germania. Studies in Strengleikar and Piðreks saga af Bern*. Oslo: Novus forlag.

- Kalinke, Marianne E. 1990. *Bridal-Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kalinke, Marianne E. 2008. "Clári saga. A Case of Low German Infiltration." *Scripta Islandica* 54: 5–26.
- Kalinke, Marianne E., ed., 2011. *The Arthur of the North. The Arthurian Legend in the Nors and Rus' Realms*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Kalinke, Marianne E. 2017. *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words. The Evolution of Medieval Romance in Iceland*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Kiening, Christian & Martina Stercken, eds. 2018. *Temporality and Mediality in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Kjesrud, Karoline. 2014. "A Dragon Fight in Order to Free a Lion." In: *Riddarasögur. The Translation of European Court Culture in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Karl G. Johansson & Else Mundal, 225–244. Oslo: Novus.
- Kristján Eldjárn. 1962. *Hundrað ár í Þjóðminjasafni*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning.
- Liepe, Lena. 2008. "The Knight and the Dragon Slayer. Illuminations in a Fourteenth-century Saga Manuscript." In: *Ornament and Order. Essays on Viking and Northern Medieval Art for Signe Horn Fuglesang*, ed. Margrethe C. Stang & Kristin B. Aavitsland, 179–199. Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press.
- Marteinn H. Sigurðsson. 2004. "'Djöfullinn sem gengur um sem öskrandi ljón'. Af Jóni Halldórssyni Skálholtsbiskupi, Francesco Petrarca og fornu ljónahliði dómkirkjunnar í Bologna." *Skírnir* 172.2: 341–348.
- Mortensen, Lars Boje. 2017. "The Sudden Success of Prose. A Comparative View of Greek, Latin, Old French and Old Norse." *Medieval Worlds* 5: 3–45.
- Paulsen, Peter. 1966. *Drachenkämpfer, Löwenritter und die Heinrichssage*. Köln: Böhlau.
- Sanders, Christopher. 1979. "The Order of Knights in Ormsbók" *Opuscula* 7: 140–156.
- Sif Rikhardsdóttir. 2012. *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- Sif Rikhardsdóttir. 2018. "The Phantom of a Romance: Traces of Romance Transmission and the Question of Originality." In: *Medieval Romances Across European Borders*, ed. Miriam Edlich-Muth, 133–151. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Simons, Penny C. 1997. "A Romance Revisited. Reopening the Question of the Manuscript Tradition of *Partonopeus de Blois*." *Romania* 115: 368–405.
- Sobecki, Sebastian. 2007. *The Sea and Medieval English Literature*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir. 2017. *Leitin að klaustrunum. Klausturhald á Íslandi í fimm aldir*. Reykjavík: Sögufélag – Þjóðminjasafn Íslands.
- Wallace, David. 1986. "Chaucer's Italian Inheritance." In: *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Piero Poitani & Jill Mann, 36–57. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wallace, David. 2016. *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Würth, Stefanie. 2005. "Historiography and Pseudo-History." In: *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk, 155–172. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.