

An Old Norse Image Hoard:
From the Analog Past to the Digital Present

by

Patricia
Ann Baer

B.A., University of Victoria, 1991

M.A., University of Victoria, 1996

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Interdisciplinary Studies

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Raymond G. Siemens, (Department of English)
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Catherine Harding, (Department of History in Art)
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Dr. John J. Tucker (Department of English)
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Christopher Petter (Special Collections)
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Abstract

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My Interdisciplinary dissertation examines illustrations in manuscripts and early print sources and reveals their participation in the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology. My approach encompasses Material Philology and Media Specific Analysis. The reception history of illustrations of Old Norse Mythology affects our understanding of related Interdisciplinary fields such as Book History, Visual Studies, Literary Studies and Cultural Studies.

Part One of my dissertation begins with a discussion of the tradition of Old Norse oral poetry in pagan Scandinavia and the highly visual nature of the poems. The oral tradition died out in Scandinavia but survived in Iceland and was preserved in vernacular manuscripts in the thirteenth century. The discovery of these manuscripts in the seventeenth century initiated a cycle of illustration that largely occurred outside of Iceland. Part One concludes with an analytical survey of illustrations of Old Norse mythology in print sources from 1554 to 1915 revealing important patterns of transmission.

Part Two traces the technological history of production of digital editions and manuscript facsimiles back to the seventeenth century when manuscripts were hand-copied and published by means of copperplate engravings. Part Two also discusses the

scholarly and cultural prejudices towards images that are only now slowly fading. Part Two concludes with a description of my prototype for a digital image repository named MyNDIR (My Norse Digital Image Repository). MyNDIR will facilitate the emergence of images of Old Norse Studies from the current informal crowd sourcing of material on the web to a digital image repository supporting the dissemination of accurate scholarly knowledge in a widely accessible form.

Part Three presents two thematic case studies that demonstrate the value of applying the skills of visual literacy to illustrations of Old Norse mythology. The first study examines Jakob Sigurðsson's illustrations of Norse gods in hand-copied paper manuscripts from eighteenth-century Iceland. The second study examines illustrations by prominent Norwegian artists in the editions of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* published in 1899 and 1900 respectively. What emerged from these studies is an understanding that illustrations offer insights for the study of Old Norse texts that the words of the texts alone cannot provide.

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Dedication

To my father Pálmi Alfred Berg and my grandparents Guðmundur Berg (né Sigurðsson) and Guðbjörg Eyjólfsdóttir, who immigrated to Canada in 1904.

Introduction

The Visualization, Mediation, and Remediation of Old Norse Mythology through the Ages

The god Óðinn riding his eight-legged stallion—the god Þórr fishing for the serpent that encircled the world—the giantess Hyrrokkin riding a wolf to Baldr’s funeral.¹ Illustrations of Norse mythology represent a neglected resource that Old Norse scholars have overlooked when focusing on textual material. However, we live in an age that is increasingly visually orientated. Art historians such as Martin Jay have observed a refocusing of the rhetoric of scholarship in general from “a linguistic turn” to “a pictorial turn” (*Vision in Context* 3).² The significance of the “pictorial turn” is evident in the Chaucer scholar V. A. Kolve’s recent work on medieval images in terms of “culturally validated truth,” “governing images,” and “iconographic ‘literacy’” (*Telling Images* xv – xvi). The cycle of illustrations for Old Norse mythology spans not only centuries but also a variety of cultures and countries. Moreover these illustrations are preserved in analog media as varied as rune stones, hand-copied manuscripts, and early print sources

¹ Óðinn and Þórr are most commonly rendered as Odin and Thor in Modern English. However, I consistently use the Modern Icelandic graphemes eth and thorn for the voiced and unvoiced fricatives—or the sounds that we would render as “th” in Modern English. I also use Old Norse orthography in regard to accented vowels but do not use “hooked o,” “accented hooked o,” or the “o/e ligature.” Both Old Norse and its descendant, Modern Icelandic, are inflected languages. Therefore the final consonant in Óðinn and Þórr indicates that their declension is the nominative singular. In order to assure consistency, I follow the example set by the classic resource *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* by Richard Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, i.e., the stem of the name plus its nominative marker.

² In *Picture Theory*, Mitchell notes that “tending to the masterpieces” is no longer enough in the field of Art History in regard to the study of visual representations, and he states the need for “a broad interdisciplinary critique” that takes into account parallel efforts” and situates them in “the larger context of visual culture” (15). In “Seeing and Reading,” Michael Camille remarks on the need for interdisciplinary studies concerning text-image relationships and states that “Pictorial art becomes a statement or discourse of groups and individuals in history, especially when it is possible to establish its role within and alongside other systems of communication” (44).

beginning as early as 1554 and all of these representations are increasingly available as digital images disseminated on the internet.

My interdisciplinary Ph.D. dissertation addresses the neglected area of text-image relationships that resulted from the “linguistic turn” in studies of Old Norse mythology and extends the boundaries of investigation to embrace the emerging “pictorial turn.” In addition to the traditional print document, my dissertation provides an internet resource for research and the dissemination of knowledge in the form of a digital image repository named MyNDIR (My Norse Digital Image Repository) for illustrations of Old Norse mythology. My research focuses on the visual impact of illustrations of Norse myths in terms of text-image relations and of author/illustrator/patron relationships in regard to the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology in the analog past and the digital present.

The scholarly discourse in which I am participating employs new terminology such as “mediation” and “remediation,” terms that are often unfamiliar to scholars outside of the disciplines of Media Studies, Visual Studies, and Digital Humanities. The term “mediation” signifies the initial realization of the creative act into material form, such as first imagining the figure of Hyrrokkin using snakes for reins while riding a wolf to Baldr’s funeral and then carving the figure onto a rune stone. The digital humanists Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin remark that the term “remediation,” whose primary meaning “to heal or restore to health,” arises from the Latin verb *remederi*. This term has now been adopted “to express the way in which one medium is seen by our culture as reforming or improving upon another” (*Remediation: Understanding New Media* 59). What this means practically is that an image can be reproduced by means of an improved

technology, i.e., that a depiction on a rune stone can be translated into graphic form, reproduced in multiple copies and widely disseminated. “Remediation” is implicit in Marshall McLuhan’s statement that “the content of any medium is always another medium”; and, in tracing the cycle of remediations to its origins, McLuhan observed that ultimately “the content of writing is speech,” drawing our attention to a critical moment of initiation in communication (*Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* 23). My methodological approach builds on McLuhan’s observation and begins with a focus on the initiator of auditory, textual, or visual media in the cycle of creation. My research provides insights concerning the mediation of visualizations—initially seen only in the imagination of a creative individual—in material form, whether stone, parchment, or print, and their subsequent renderings and remediations. As print technology evolved, for instance, individual illustrations were frequently reprinted, and as my study demonstrates, significant modifications were often made when an image was remediated. My research reveals the manner in which the remediation of illustrations of Norse mythology contributes to the interdisciplinary fields of Cultural Studies, Book History and Media Studies. My research further reveals the contributions to Visual Studies and Digital Humanities scholarship that are inherent in the digital remediation and preservation of this important group of illustrations.

MyNDIR is a fully functional prototype for a digital image repository for illustrations of Old Norse mythology with a paradigm that is also applicable for the creation of digital image collections in other fields. MyNDIR’s features will not only enable the aggregation and comparison of illustrations but also have the potential to foster the genetic collation of illustrations and to facilitate the display of visual

relationships of renderings over a period of time via graphs or tree diagrams. Moreover, MyNDIR will act as an index of illustrations that were formerly concealed in early print texts; even now these images are not always easily accessible in e-texts due to the various natures of digital formats. Thus MyNDIR represents a valuable resource for scholars for research purposes and the dissemination of knowledge. MyNDIR also provides an accessible scholarly resource for the general public who are increasingly turning to the internet for the answers to their questions on a wide variety of topics including Old Norse mythology. To provide the basis for understanding the richness of the visual tradition for Norse mythology, and its complex text-image relations across the ages, the next section supplies a brief chronological survey of how the myths that were originally disseminated through oral poetry were translated into pictorial form—moving in some instances from rune stones through printed books through hand-copied books to digital format.

The Textual and Illustrative Traditions for Old Norse Mythology

Our knowledge of Old Norse mythology has its origins in oral poetry from the pagan era in Scandinavia. However, the transmission of the poetry through the ages was tenuous and it virtually disappeared from circulation for hundreds of years. After the conversion to Christianity in Scandinavia, the oral cycle of transmission for the poems ceased, with the result that the poems and the myths were eventually forgotten, with only the names of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg being retained. The ability to read runic texts on rune stones never completely faded out, but it was of little help because invariably the content of runic texts does not relate to or even refer to myths. Consequently, the figures and scenes from Norse mythology in illustrations on rune stones, i.e., rune stones and picture

stones, were a mystery to the descendants of the culture that produced them, and knowledge of the myths was lost.

Fortunately, Norse mythology was not lost forever because the emigrants from Scandinavia who began colonizing Iceland in 874 took the oral poems with them to their new land as a valued part of their cultural heritage. Circa 1220, the Icelandic politician, poet, and scholar, Snorri Sturluson³ preserved excerpts from a large portion of the oral poems in a text that is now generally known as *The Prose Edda*; and circa 1270, an anonymous scholar/scribe preserved a collection of the poems in a text that is now generally known as *The Poetic Edda*. These two eddic primary sources, together with the material on pagan beliefs in *Heimskringla*—a collection of sagas concerning the history of the kings of Norway that is also credited to Snorri circa 1225—are pivotal to the understanding of illustrations of Old Norse mythology represented in archaeological artifacts, parchment and paper manuscripts, and print sources. Given the date of their composition, it is remarkable that *The Prose Edda* and *Heimskringla* were written in the vernacular. Given the linguistic and geographical isolation of these texts, it is not surprising that Old Norse mythology remained almost completely unknown to scholars outside of Iceland for four hundred years.

However, in the seventeenth century, word reached antiquarian scholars in Scandinavia that a material record of their early cultural heritage existed in Iceland. The Nordic languages had changed to the point that Old Norse and its close descendant, Icelandic, were no longer understood by Scandinavians so their interest in these texts was

³ Throughout my dissertation, I will follow the Icelandic naming convention whereby a person is primarily known by his/her first name, which is accompanied by a patronymic in place of a surname. Consequently, I will refer to Icelanders only by their first name after the first use of their full name. By-names are sometimes also used in addition to first names for famous or learned people. Entries in Works Cited will follow the paradigm used in English publications and I will use the patronymic as if it were a surname.

initially frustrated. At last, the manuscripts were translated and the parchment witnesses for them were acquired and transferred to collections in Denmark and Sweden. The manuscript witnesses to the *Eddas* and *Heimskringla* were not illustrated, with just one exception, i.e., the Swedish King Gylfi standing before three figures of Óðinn seated on hierarchically arranged high seats in *Gylfaginning* (The Deluding of Gylfi) (Fig. B-1) in *The Prose Edda* manuscript that is now known as Codex Upsaliensis (hereafter U). The illustration was soon copied, albeit with a significant revision of an originally irrelevant detail, and was pressed into service in the cause of Swedish nationalism.

“The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration quickly gained iconic status throughout Europe and became one of a small number of illustrations regarded as historical artifacts: these ‘historical’ illustrations were frequently revised and included in scholarly texts. The fascination with a mythology that could be claimed as having originated in the north of Europe, as opposed to Classical mythology with its Mediterranean roots, caught the imagination of scholars and artists alike. The rediscovery of Norse mythology in the seventeenth century followed the spread of printing presses throughout northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the rise of nationalism along with the evolving technology for remediating and reproducing images had a decisive impact on the dissemination of this mythology. The combination of scholarly works plus material for the general public resulted in a flood of publications of translations, comprehensive works on the mythologies of the world, retellings of the myths for children, travel books and other texts that featured illustrations of Norse mythology that takes us well into the early twentieth century

Illustrations, whether in hand-copied manuscripts or early print texts, represent a

valuable resource for the study of Norse mythology for three major reasons. First, examining and comparing individual illustrations of scenes created in response to specific myths enables valuable insights into the cultures that participated in the transmission of Norse mythology through the ages. Second, comparing details in the re-workings of illustrations that were ubiquitous in scholarly works on Norse mythology for several centuries reveals important aspects of the politics of reception and the agendas of transmission in the cultures involved. Third, identifying the initial creation dates and the original media used to produce illustrations of the Norse myths, as well as their remediation to other formats, establishes the participation of Old Norse studies in the vanguard of technological changes that are fundamental to the history of the book in the twenty-first century—both in its print and digital incarnations.

Methodology

My research methodology is of necessity interdisciplinary in nature and draws upon recent aspects of Digital Humanities scholarship and from the *Histoire du Livre* movement from the mid-twentieth century and the Book History theories that continue to evolve from that movement. My research is especially influenced by the critical perspective of New or Material Philology that values paratextual elements such as illustrations in individual copies of textual artifacts as worthy of study and includes the wider prosopographical contexts relevant to their creation. I treat illustrations as individual cultural artifacts when creating files for MyNDIR and when comparing different renderings of a set scene, because this approach enables me to establish important variations that allow me to identify essential cultural information encoded in the images. I treat illustrations as members of paratextual groups when examining

specific texts for my case studies, helping us to understand the richness of text-image relations for this field of study.

I am also inspired by the post-modern literary critic and digital humanist N. Katherine Hayles' proposal in *Writing Machines* that we should examine texts in terms of Media Specific Analysis (hereafter abbreviated to MSA), with regard to materiality, singularity, and the experience of the reader (2002). Hayles envisioned MSA in connection with text, both print and digital. However, I have extended the range of MSA to include illustrated artifacts—inspired by oral texts that predate the advent of the book in manuscript, print, or digital form—that have undergone remediation into each new format as technology evolved. My dissertation will act as a corrective in dispelling the common misconception that illustrations in early print books were stable “repetitive reproductions” from one print run to the next, or, in the case of the remediation of illustrations, from one method of reproduction to another in subsequent editions.

The illustrations that are the focus of my dissertation arise from texts created or recorded by authors who are long since deceased and often anonymous. The texts that underlie the illustrations may have undergone variations during their transmission but the iconography that they employ is stable, even if it is fragmentary at times in regard to individual myths. Although my work concerns text-image relationships, it is essentially image-centric rather than text-centric. Consequently the questions that I apply and the terminology that I use when examining illustrations differ slightly from previous paradigms provided by critical literary scholarship. For example, I use “image” and “illustration” in a restricted sense as terms for material visual depictions that arise from texts, whereas these terms are often used in literary criticism to refer to the descriptive

power of the words of the text. Moreover, in Digital Humanities scholarship, “image” often refers to digital images of text without any notion of illustrations being involved.⁴

I consider any physical manifestation of an illustration to constitute “publication,” and by extension that any means of publication includes transmission. What holds true even for essentially non-portable items such as rune stones, where the method of dissemination is initially limited to engaging the attention of passersby until remediation of the illustration from an image carved in stone to an image in print results in a wider physical circulation of the image. Indeed, due to the chaos and vastness of the World Wide Web, I regard digital remediation and publication on the internet as a potentially inefficient means of dissemination that is similar to that of rune stones in their natural settings. Websites remain isolated and unfrequented unless their discovery is facilitated by the inclusion of metadata necessary for systematic indexing or enabled by links included on the pages of other sites.

My initial research was inspired by an interest in the sacred forces and secular influences—e.g., religious beliefs and political agendas—that were evident factors in initial creation and subsequent revisions of illustrations of Old Norse mythology and pagan prehistory. Collecting, digitizing, and marking up the illustrations for MyNDIR’s database raised specific research questions that became fundamental to my dissertation: Why do the images of Norse mythology and the text on rune stones lack an easily discernible narrative connection to the original myth? My study examines the apparent disconnection between the persons named in the runic texts with the mythological figures represented on the stones. Why is there a scarcity of illustrations of Norse mythology in

⁴ See Flanders’ discussion of electronic editions in “Trusting the Electronic Edition” 308-309.

textual artifacts from the thirteenth to the late nineteenth century, despite the inherent ability of the originally oral and then textual sources to evoke visual responses in the minds of audiences or readers? My study explores some of the parameters around this lack and surveys the history of transmission and reception of the myths in manuscripts and early print sources. In what manner do details within illustrations reveal aspects not only of the methods of production, and the transmission and reception of the original texts, but also at times of reciprocal relationships between illustrators and their patrons, or audiences, or editors? The analysis provided here, especially my work on comparative images, offers important insights into such relationships as those between self-taught scholars and their patrons. What are the moral issues implicit in subverting the materiality of analog images by digitizing them and removing them from their textual and cultural contexts? My study explores issues of cultural appropriation, which is not a new problem for illustrations of Old Norse mythology but has been exacerbated by their digital remediation.

My research methodology involves applying the seven classical questions—*quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando* (who, what, where, helped by whom, why, how, and when)—at a very basic level when compiling the primary descriptive data of illustrations for the metadata fields in my digital image repository. However, beyond the necessary task of providing the descriptive details for each illustration, the essential focus of my research is concerned with three fundamental questions. First, “what” does the illustration reveal concerning the illustrator, or the patron who commissioned it, or the editor’s reading of the text? Second, “what” do the illustrations—especially illustrations that represent revised renderings of earlier illustrations—reveal regarding the

ongoing transmission and reception of the text? Third, how does the method of production of the illustration contribute to the study of book history and visual studies? Modifying the focus of the seven classical questions to centre on illustrations of Old Norse mythology in individual texts in my two case studies reveals that illustrations participate not only as thresholds of investigation for specific texts but also at times for other texts that are only marginally related to the original.

My methodology for examining illustrations in texts is influenced by the terminology developed by the French literary theorist, Gérard Genette. However, I expand the semantic boundaries of Genette's definitions in regard to illustrations in texts and thus expand the research potential of examining illustrations. Genette coined the term "paratextual"—which included "peritextual" elements that constitute an integral part of the textual artifact such as covers, front and back matter, illustrations, etc. and also "epitextual" elements that are associated with the text such as reviews, advertisements, posters etc.⁵ Genette's approach was narrowly focused on the author and authorial intentions. He believed that paratextual aspects, such as illustrations, represented liminal devices that drew the reader into the text and controlled the reading experience in a manner consistent with the intentions of the author.

Indeed, Genette was not interested in illustrations of the text unless they were actually created by the author.⁶ Nor was he interested in texts or paratextual elements in terms of material production and he was only marginally interested in the socialization of the text. He acknowledged in his conclusion that he had "left out three practices whose paratextual relevance" seemed "undeniable," one of which was illustration (405 – 406).

⁵ See Genette 1 - 7.

⁶ See Finkelstein 14 - 15.

However, had he had time to address illustration, which he regarded as an “immense continent,” Genette would have limited his investigation to illustrations created by, commissioned, or approved of by the author (406). My approach goes well beyond the limitations imposed by Genette in terms of his narrow focus on text and author; my analysis reveals the potential of illustrations to contribute to our knowledge of texts as participants in all aspects of their transmission and reception.

In addition to the paratextual functions of illustrations, I also examine the “extratextual” use of illustrations whereby an original illustration that had achieved iconic status was copied more or less faithfully, but often with deliberate revisions, and associated with a completely different text. I will demonstrate the value of refocusing Genette’s terms to examine the paratextual elements, i.e., the peri- and epi- textual, as well as the extratextual elements of illustrations.⁷ A close examination of paratextual and extratextual visual elements enables not only a fuller understanding of the transmission and reception of texts and their illustrations but also their physical production in terms of book history.

Structure

My dissertation consists of three parts and ten chapters. Part One, “Illustrations of Norse Mythology in the Analog Past,” consists of Chapters One to Four. These four chapters provide a geographical and chronological overview of the initial visualization of images; the resulting creation and often subsequent remediation of illustrations as technology evolved; and the circumstances of the dissemination of illustrations.

Established paradigms from Book History and Digital Humanities scholarship regarding

⁷ In literary theory, the term “extratextual” is used to indicate the text before and after an excerpt. I am using “extratextual” to indicate situations where illustrations were used as paratextual material in texts other than their original texts.

mediation, remediation, and dissemination provide the methodological foundation for this section.

Chapter One begins with an examination of oral poetry in the pagan and conversion eras in Scandinavia, in regard to the poetic metaphors, i.e., kennings, that individually convey mythic details and collectively recount mythic narratives. Next, Chapter One moves on to illustrations of Norse mythology on purely pictorial rune stones and on rune stones that feature both runic text and illustrations. Chapter One concludes with a discussion of illustrations on wooden artifacts that are described in literary sources. Chapter Two describes the early days of the Settlement Period in Iceland circa 980 C.E., and Iceland's transition from oral to textual literacy. Chapter Two concludes with an overview of the history of the printing press in Iceland and the overlapping tradition of scribal culture and hand-copied manuscripts that persisted until the early twentieth century. Chapter Three examines the illustrative tradition and relative isolation of the Icelandic texts from the thirteenth to seventeenth century, when they first came to the attention of antiquarian scholars in Scandinavia. Chapter Three concludes with illustrations related to Norse mythology in early print sources in Scandinavia and the results of a cycle of dissemination that included Iceland. Chapter Four presents an analytical survey of illustrations of Norse mythology in early print sources from the early-modern period through to the end of what has been called the long nineteenth century, i.e., 1914. Chapter Four reveals a cycle of transmission for illustrations of Norse mythology that can be divided into two distinct periods. The first period features the repeated renderings and revisions of a small number of iconic illustrations that were regarded as historical artifacts. The second period features new illustrations that were

created for the translations and retellings of *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda* as well as other publications that included references to the Norse myths.

Part Two of my dissertation, “Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Digital Present,” consists of three chapters, i.e., Chapters Five to Seven. Chapter Five begins with a historiographical overview of the evolution of technology for the reproduction of texts and images that has led to the digital present. Chapter Five then moves on to an examination of scholarly prejudices in regard to illustrations, both in the print past and the digital present. Chapter Five concludes with a discussion of the current state of images of Norse mythology on the internet and establishes the need for a digital image repository for scholarly purposes that is also accessible to the general public. Chapter Six documents the creation of my prototype for MyNDIR (My Norse Digital Image Repository) by briefly describing its theoretical framework, and Chapter Seven briefly summarizes the pragmatic details of MyNDIR’s realization. These two chapters establish the importance of scholarly participation in the design and creation of digital projects for subject specific fields such as Old Norse.

Part Three of my dissertation, i.e., Chapters Eight to Ten, presents two thematic case studies on a micro level that demonstrate the type of contributions that the study of illustrations can make to the field of Old Norse studies. Chapter Eight consists of the rationales for the two thematic studies. The first thematic study in Chapter Nine is focused on illustrations by Jakob Sigurðsson of mythological scenes from the thirteenth-century Icelandic eddas that preserve the bulk of our knowledge concerning the Old Norse gods. Jakob was an eighteenth-century Icelandic tenant farmer, scribe and

illustrator, whose work is now ubiquitous in print and on the web but has received very little scholarly attention.

The second thematic study in Chapter Ten is focused on illustrations in the 1899 and 1900 editions of *Kongesagaer* by four prominent Norwegian artists, i.e., Erik Werenskiold, Gerhard Munthe, Christian Krohg, and Halfdan Egedius, that depict aspects of Old Norse mythology and pagan religious beliefs. *Kongesagaer* is the Norwegian translation of the thirteenth-century Icelandic collection of sagas known as *Heimskringla*. I focus primarily on the initial saga in *Kongesagaer*, “Ynglinge Saga” (The Saga of the Ynglings), which describes the mythological origins of the kings of Sweden, i.e., the Ynglinga dynasty, before the era of written records. I also examine illustrations in the later sagas in *Kongesagaer* from the Conversion era concerning pagan/Christian interactions.

The Old Norse scholar Diana Whaley observes that *Heimskringla* was regarded until the mid-nineteenth century as “a sound historical source which went back to venerable oral traditions” (114). However, this is no longer the case and *Heimskringla* is now “taken as a witness to a thirteenth-century Icelandic view of Norwegian history up to the twelfth century, rather than to the facts of Norwegian history. (Whaley 114 – 115). Whaley concludes that “*Heimskringla* is neither a novel nor a modern textbook of history, but it has much of the appeal of both” (143). My research establishes that the material from oral traditions in “Ynglinge Saga” is now primarily viewed as mythological and is routinely included in present-day reference texts on Old Norse mythology.⁸ The illustrations in *Kongesagaer* are often used in print and on the web, but they have

⁸ See Lindow’s *Norse Mythology*, Orchard’s *Cassell’s Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legend*, and Simek’s *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*.

received very little scholarly attention outside of Norway and even Norwegian scholars do not appear to have focused on the significant differences between the illustrations in the two editions.

In my Conclusion I present a discussion of new avenues for research, knowledge creation and dissemination. The digital age is increasingly an age of collaboration that my dissertation and MyNDIR's digital image repository will facilitate, participate in, and contribute to.

Part One

Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Analog Past

Chapter One

1. Norse Paganism, Visualizations, and Illustrations

1.1 Introduction

We can gain insights into the original reception and transmission of Old Norse oral poetry first by understanding the demands that this poetry made of its poets and audiences and then by examining the illustrations on cultural artifacts that originated during the pagan period and the overlapping conversion period circa 1000 C.E. I will begin this chapter with a brief discussion of the differences and the similarities between the two main branches of Old Norse oral poetry, i.e., eddic and skaldic.⁹ Then I will examine current scholarship concerning the nature of oral composition in regard to Old Norse poetry. Then I will introduce the thirteenth-century Icelandic handbook on poetics that is known as *The Prose Edda* and discuss at length the periphrastic poetic metaphors known as “kennings”¹⁰ that are crucial to understanding Old Norse poetry. Next I will review the scholarly literature concerning kennings, and I will establish that oral literacy required its audience to engage in a series of linked visualizations in order to decipher kennings as a type of riddle and thereby understand the mythological content of the poems.

I will further establish that illustrations on artifacts such as rune stones and pictorial stones represent a remediation of oral poetry, and particularly of its kennings in the form of visual riddles which functioned in an intertextual manner during the Conversion era. I

⁹ The terms “eddic” and “skaldic” are also frequently rendered as “eddaic” and “scaldic.” I use the former but will preserve the latter when these terms occur in quotations.

¹⁰ Kennings (in Old Norse, singular: *kenning*, and plural: *kennningar*) consist of a noun, which is often in the nominative form, that is used as a base word, and is defined by another noun, which is frequently in the genitive form. The etymology term of the “kenning” is unknown but it likely originated with Snorri Sturluson. Definitions of this term in dictionaries and scholarly articles are based on Snorri’s description of kennings in *The Prose Edda*.

will also briefly discuss the eventual loss of Old Norse oral poetry as a cultural tradition in Scandinavia and the subsequent loss of the ability to correctly identify images on pictorial stones and rune stones when the tradition of oral poetry was lost as a cultural practice. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of mythological scenes that were carved and/or painted on wooden artifacts that have not survived but are known from descriptions in literary texts.

1.2 Old Norse Poetry: Orality and Visuality

The earliest extant versions of Old Norse poems are from the Middle Ages with skaldic poems dating from the second half of the ninth century and eddic poems are generally believed to date from the early tenth century.¹¹ According to the Old Norse scholar Christopher Abram the term skaldic poetry “is used to describe a certain type of Old Norse poetry: one which was used for public performances at royal courts and other high-status gatherings....Kings, earls, and other noblemen in Norway, Denmark and the Viking-controlled territories in the British Isles recruited poets to sing their praises and commemorate their deeds” (*Myths of the Pagan North* 11). The characteristics of skaldic poetry are that 1) it is connected to historic events; 2) it is acknowledged as the work of a known poet—i.e., Norwegian and Icelandic poets from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries; and 3) it is “characterized by a highly elaborate and artificial form, requiring the use of a special poetic diction and complicated syntax and word order” (Kristjánsson “The Literary History” 14).

¹¹ For a thorough discussion of Old Norse oral poetry, see Fidjestøl *The Dating of Eddic Poetry* and Ross *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics*.

Eddic poetry on the other hand is not as sophisticated in its composition as skaldic poetry and is notoriously difficult to date. As the Old Norse scholar and translator Carolyne Larrington has observed

Although the poems were recorded in the late thirteenth century, it is thought that most of the mythological verse and a few of the heroic poems pre-date the conversion of Scandinavia to Christianity in the late tenth century. No satisfactory method has yet been found to date the poems relative to one another...(XI)

The characteristics of eddic poetry are that 1) it is concerned with material from pagan mythology regarding Norse gods and Germanic heroes; 2) it is always anonymous; 3) it is hard to date; and 4) it involves a variety of metres that are less complex than the traditional skaldic metre. However, the distinction between the two genres is not always clear, for example, *Ynglingatal*—a ninth-century poem by the skald Þjóðólfr ór Hvíni concerning the mythical origins of and history of the Yngling dynasty, which served as the basis for “Ynglinga Saga” in Snorri’s *Heimskringla*—“is not in skaldic *dróttkvætt* metre, but in an Eddaic metre, although its phraseology is skaldic” (O’Donoghue 74). What unites skaldic and eddic poetry is the use of alliteration and their use of kennings. However, eddic poetry as a rule makes far less use of kennings than skaldic poetry does.

Literary scholarship concerning the composition and recitation of Old Norse oral poetry and its dissemination arose from Milman Perry and Albert Lord’s research that was conducted in the 1920s on the textual sources of epic poems of Homer and the living tradition of Serbian oral epic poetry. For Perry and Lord, epic oral poetry was not composed and memorized but improvised during performance using oral-formulaic phrases that the poet drew upon but did not create. The scholarship that resulted from

applying the Perry-Lord oral-formulaic theory of epic poetry to Old Norse eddic poetry is generally preoccupied with: 1) discussing whether or not poets created and memorized their poems rather than improvising and creating them in performance in the manner of a ‘singer of tales’, 2) identifying patterns of “bound phraseology” as a method of composition, and 3) discussing whether or not oral poetry was preserved and transmitted by an ongoing process of memorization by subsequent poets.¹² Eddic poetry is not epic poetry, but it has been suggested that complete versions of the poems have not survived and therefore they may have originally been epic in length.

The Old Norse literary scholar Lars Lönnroth suggests that during the long period of transmission “prose had gradually taken over more and more of the narrative function from the earlier heroic lays, so that eventually dramatic speeches were highlighted in verse form: flytings, heroic boasts; the hero’s last words on the battlefield etc.” (5 – 6). The result of this transformation was that eddic poetry “was characteristically performed in the Middle Ages as part of a *prosimetrum*” with narrative sections in prose and dramatic speech in verse (9). Lönnroth does not believe that original oral poems resulted from improvisation during performance but instead were the “carefully polished products of poetic craftsmanship” that were “meticulously preserved from one performance to the next” (10).

The historical linguist, Winfred P. Lehmann also disagreed with the Parry-Lord theory and defended the literary status of Old Norse poetry when he stated that the “Eddic poems were compositions by highly trained poets—not rustic products of peasant

¹² For a survey of the scholarship concerning Old Norse oral poetry and Milman-Perry’s theory, see “A survey of oral-formulaic criticism of Eddic poetry” in Paul Acker’s *Revising Oral Theory: Formulaic Composition in Old English and Old Icelandic Verse* (85 - 110), and also Diego Ferioli’s article “On the Oral-Formulaic Theory and its Application in the Poetic Edda: The Cases of *Alvíssmál* and *Hávamál*” in the e-journal *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* Vol. 5.1. (2010).

conviviality” (4). John Miles Foley, a well-known scholar in regard to the comparative oral tradition, came to the defense of oral poetry in general in “Orality, Textuality, and Interpretation” when he observed that

one soon outruns the original Parryan conception of ‘formula’ and the underlying assumption that manipulation of fixed and substitutable units constituted the chief mode of poetic composition. Speaking more positively, we may say that an oral traditional diction is not a collection of relatively static, largely equivalent parts but rather a continually developing ‘wordhoard’ whose heterogeneous contents are the product of...traditional rules. Under these rules, and over time, a traditional phraseology evolves and serves generations of poets as an idiom, and like any idiom it is used not in a fossilized, lockstep routine but in a fluent compromise among idiolect, dialect, and language as a larger entity. (38)

Foley’s observation works against the Parryan notion of the oral poets using what Lönnroth objected to as a “a slot filler mode of composition” (70) and acknowledges the creativity of individual poets who used but were not bound by formulaic phrases.

The Old Norse scholar Robert Kellogg accepted Parry-Lord’s theory and also rejected the idea that the poems were memorized and passed on from one poet to another. Kellogg is of the opinion that

In an oral tradition, poetic narratives of the eddic sort exist as ‘texts’ only at the moment of performance. Like any other utterance, they exist in the silence between performances not as texts but only as an abstract cultural *competence*—the ability of some members of society to produce poems in performance. This distinction between a text of a poem and the competence to perform a poem is

parallel to, and derives from Saussure's distinction between utterance (*parole*) and language (*langue*). The text is *parole*, an actual event; the competence is *langue*, in terms of which the event is intelligible. (96-97)

If we accept the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction, first *langue* enables the thought processes for the act of composition and then the poems are mediated into a communicable form and disseminated by means of *parole*. However, Saussure's distinction appears to deny the poems an existence as oral texts, albeit with variations, in the minds of audience members and other poets after the conclusion of the performance. The question of originality on the part of poets in regard to oral poetry remains very much open to debate.

The oldest extant textual source concerning the art of composing Old Norse poetry is *The Prose Edda*, which is generally attributed to Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century.¹³ *Snorri's Prose Edda* preserves stanzas of skaldic poems, some of which are not found elsewhere, and also contains stanzas from eddic poems preserved in *The Poetic Edda*. *The Poetic Edda* is a compilation of eddic poems that were gathered and preserved by an anonymous thirteenth-century Icelandic scholar.¹⁴ I will summarize the salient points below concerning *The Prose Edda* in order to provide the necessary background for a discussion of the poetics of Old Norse poetry along with examples of the mythology that it preserves. Snorri set himself the task of preserving an oral tradition that was in grave danger of being lost and surely would have been if it were not for his

¹³ Snorri wrote his treatise on poetry circa 1220; it is often referred to simply as the *Edda* but is also known as: *The Prose Edda*, *The Younger Edda*, and *Snorri's Edda*, in order to differentiate it from *The Poetic Edda*.

¹⁴ *The Poetic Edda* was erroneously known in the past as *Sæmundar Edda* due to the misconception that it was compiled by Sæmundur hinn fróði, and it was also referred to as *The Elder Edda* in the mistaken belief that it was compiled before *The Prose Edda*. Several eddic poems are also preserved in whole or in part in other manuscripts.

efforts. Snorri's *Edda* contains extensive information concerning verse forms; provides a discussion of the construction of kennings and other poetic devices; and offers a wealth of details concerning the Norse gods and their adventures. *The Prose Edda* is comprised of a "Prologue" and three sections named "Gylfaginning" (The Deluding of Gylfi), "Skáldskaparmal" (Language of Poetry), and "Háttatal" (List of Verse Forms). The "Gylfaginning" and "Skáldskaparmal" sections contain details and narratives concerning Old Norse mythology but these are interspersed in "Skáldskaparmal" with a discussion of poetics.

Snorri's "Prologue" represents an euhemeristic account of the origins of the Norse gods which according to Snorri came about because mankind had become so preoccupied with worldly matters such as fame and fortune that they eventually forgot even the name of God. Snorri admonishes his readers in "Skáldskaparmal" that 'Christian people must not believe in the heathen gods, nor in the truth of this account in any other way than that in which it is presented at the beginning of this book' "En eigi skulu kristnir men trúa á heiðin goð ok eigi á sannynði þessa sagna annan veg en svá sem hér finnst í upphafi bókar (Faulkes, *Edda* 64 – 65; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 106). Snorri also explicitly states that his *Edda* is a book on poetics and that it is to be regarded as a 'scholarly inquiry and entertainment' "fróðleiks ok skemmtunar" (Faulkes, *Edda* 64; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 106) whose primary function is to provide young poets with a wide vocabulary of traditional terms and the ability to understand what has been expressed obscurely, i.e., kennings.

Snorri dramatized the lack of knowledge in his time concerning the myths and the difficulty of understanding kennings by including a conversation at a feast in

“Skáldskaparmal” between a giant named Ægir and his drinking companion, a poet named Bragi. The conversation begins with Bragi relating one of the adventures of the Norse gods to Ægir concerning the abduction of Iðunn and her apples of immortality by a giant named Þjazi. Then Bragi relates a myth concerning a giant named Ölvaldi who was Þjazi’s father that shows how names in Old Norse poetry could be concealed ‘in secret language or in poetry’ “í rúntal eða skáldskap” (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 101). Bragi explains that gold can be called ‘the mouth-count’ “munntal” of the sons of Ölvaldi—i.e., Þjazi, Iði and Gangr, who had measured their inheritance by taking mouthfuls of the precious metal—and therefore gold can also be called the ‘speech or words or talk of these giants’ “mál eða orð eða tal þessa jötna” (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 101).

Ægir expresses his approval of concealing such terms in a secret language and then asks, ‘How did this craft that you call poetry originate?’ “Hvaðan af hefir hafizt sú íþrótt, er þér kallið skáldskap?” (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 101). Bragi responds by relating the lengthy myth concerning the war between the two groups of gods, i.e., the Æsir and the Vanir, the creation of a wise being named Kvasir who was created from their spit that was used to seal the truce, and the mead that the dwarves created by mixing Kvasir’s blood with honey after they murdered him. Whoever drank the mead became either a poet or a scholar and the myth concerning this mead gave rise to many metaphors for poetry itself, such as ‘Kvasir’s blood or dwarfs’s drink’ “Kvasis blóð eða dvergadrekkur” and so on (Faulkes, *Edda* 62; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 102). Ægir comments that ‘it seems to him to be an obscure way to talk to call poetry by these names’ “Myrkt þykkir mér þat mælt at kall skáldskap með

þessum heitum” (Faulkes, *Edda* 62; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 103). Bragi attempts to explain the nature of the poetic metaphors by relating the myth concerning Óðinn’s theft of the mead of poetry from the giant’s daughter Gunnlöð. Bragi concludes, ‘Thus we call poetry Odin’s booty and find, and his drink and his gift and the Æsir’s drink’ “Því köllum vér skáldskapinn feng Óðins ok fund ok drykk hans ok gjöf hans of drykk ásanna” (Faulkes, *Edda* 64; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 105).

However, Ægir is aware that the metaphors of Old Norse poetry are even more complicated than Bragi’s brief explanation, and he asks a further question, ‘In how many ways do you vary the vocabulary of poetry, and how many categories are there in poetry?’ “Hversu á marga lund breytið þér orðtökum skáldskapar, eða hversu mörg eru kyn skáldskaparins.” (Faulkes, *Edda* 64; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 105). Bragi replies that there are two categories, namely language and verse forms, and that ‘there are three categories in the language of poetry’ “Þrenn er grein skáldskaparmáls” (Faulkes, *Edda* 64; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 105). Then Bragi goes on to explain that

The first category is to call everything by its name; the second category is the one called substitution; and the third category of language is what is called kenning [description], and this is constructed in this way, that we speak of Odin or Thor or Týr or one of the Æsir [Gods] or elves, in such a way that with each of those that I mention, I add a term for the attribute or another As [God] or make mention of one or other of his deeds. Then the latter becomes the one referred to, and not the one that was named; for instance when we speak of Victory-Týr or Hanged-Týr or

Cargo-Týr, these are expressions for Odin, and these we call periphrastic terms; similarly if one speaks of Chariot-Týr [i.e., Thor].

Svá er nefna hvern hlut, sem heitir. Önnur grein er sú, er heitir fornöfn. In þriðja málsgrein er sú, er kölluð er kenning, ok er sú grein svá sett, at vér köllum Óðin eða Þór eða Tý eða einhvern af ásum eða álfum, ok hvern þeira, er ek nefni til, þá tek ek með heiti af eign annars ássins eða get ek hans verka nökkurra. Þá eignast hann nafnit, en eigi hinn, er nefndr var. Svá sem vér köllum sig-Tý eða hanga-Tý eða farma-Tý, þat er þá Óðins heiti, ok köllum vér þat kennt heiti, svá ok at kalla reiðar-Tý. (Faulkes, *Edda* 64; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 105)

As the Old Norse literary scholar Guðrún Nordal has observed, the possible variations on this latter category, i.e., kennings, are innumerable (*Tools of Literacy* 6). Ægir would have been typical of the majority of the populace in medieval Iceland in thinking that the language of Old Norse oral poetry was obscure, and even the members of the original pagan audience would have had to gradually acquire the necessary knowledge of the gods and their deeds in order to understand the poetry.

It is my contention that we can also ascertain something of the experience of the original audiences of the oral poetry in pagan Scandinavia by considering the etymological roots and semantic range of “kenning” as both a noun and a verb. The standard resource, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, which is commonly referred to simply as Cleasby/Vigfússon, defines “kenning” as a noun meaning “*doctrine, teaching, lesson, esp. of preaching*” or “*mark of recognition,*” and in a secondary sense as “*a poetical periphrasis or descriptive name*” (336). The primary sense of the noun is interesting because of the possibility that it associates the poet’s intention in composing

kennings with teaching or preaching and hints at a purpose that goes beyond a desire to entertain.

The noun “*kenning*” is related to the verb “*kenna*,” and the semantic range of the verb “*kenna*” as indicated by Cleasby/Vigfússon includes 1) the primary meaning, “*to ken, know, recognize*”; and 2) a reflexive meaning “*to know as one’s own, claim*”; or additionally 3) “*to acknowledge as belonging to another, attribute to him*”; 4) “*to know, perceive, feel, taste, scent*”; and 5) “*to call, name*” (335). If we strictly follow Snorri’s account then the verb “*kenna*” would apply in the latter sense. Moreover, unlike its use in Modern Icelandic, Cleasby/Vigfússon indicate that in Old Norse the verb “*að kenna*” originally only meant “*to teach*” in a “*casual sense*” (336).

Nonetheless, the poet’s craft involved the passing on knowledge by means of calling or naming important details of pagan belief in the form of kennings. Members of an audience listening to kennings would have had a similar experience to those listening to a “*kenna*,” i.e., “*doctrine, teaching, lesson.*” Audiences listening to kennings would have engaged in the experience of listening to the kennings; deciphering the kennings; and assimilating the solutions to the riddles that the kennings posed, and then discussing their newly acquired knowledge with other members of the audience. Focusing on the secondary meaning of kennings simply as “*poetical periphrases*” or “*descriptive names*” denies them a role in initiating a learning experience or an affirmative experience as a confirmation of one’s knowledge, and fails to acknowledge the role of kennings in the communal, and possibly ritual, experience that the poets intended their audiences to engage in.

As previously mentioned, the process of deciphering of kennings was necessary in order to understand the poetry because a kenning essentially represents a type of riddle. The Old Norse scholar Heather O'Donoghue, who specializes in Old Norse poetry and literature, notes that "the base word alone may have only the most oblique – or even a paradoxical – connection with the object finally denoted by the kenning; it is the defining noun which hauls the base word into appropriateness" (65). Cleasby/Vigfússon cites Snorri's definition of "*kenning*" which indicates that kennings can be "either simple (*kennt*), double (*tví-kennt*), or triple (*rekit*) (336). As explained by O'Donoghue, whose observations also originate from *The Prose Edda*, kennings are complicated by

the principle of infinite regression: that each defining noun may itself be denoted by a kenning. If the phrase 'horse of the ocean' can denote 'ship', then in turn, 'home of the whale' can denote ocean. A kenning for a seaman might then run 'impeller of the horse of the home of the whale. (66)

Although eddic poetry typically makes less use of kennings than skaldic poetry, both forms rely on an extensive knowledge of Norse mythology in order to compose or to understand them. Thus the kenning, "the wine of the Way-farer," equals "the wine of Óthin" and ultimately stands for "skaldship, the poem" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 141). The ability to decipher the reference to "the wine of the Wayfarer" depends on the audience's familiarity with the many names of Óðinn, which are in the form of poetic synonyms known as *heiti*, along with knowledge of the myth concerning the mead of poetry and Óðinn's role in acquiring it for the gods (Faulkes, *Edda* 61 - 64). Thus kennings represent potent metaphors with the power to engage members of the audience

in a knowledge contest with the poet.¹⁵ Successfully deciphering the kenning would prompt a narrative image of the mythic scene in ‘the mind’s eye’ of the listener that by the power of association would set in motion the recall of the entire myth.

Abram remarks that the version of the myth of Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr in the ninth-century skaldic poem *Ragnarsdrápa* encapsulates the challenges that an audience would have encountered while listening to the poem. He notes that skaldic poems

owing to their non-narrative form — which is in part determined by the constraints of their complex form and style — they only reveal a myth bit by bit, one static image at a time. They always seem to presuppose prior knowledge on the part of their audience. To appreciate these poems fully, an audience needs both knowledge of this myth in particular — to provide the connections within the narrative that the poet does not make — and a wide range of knowledge in general — to understand the references to other myths that appear in the kennings.

(*Myths* 44)

Abram’s phrase “one static image at a time” can be taken as an indication of the experience of individual members of the audience. Initially, audience members would experience a kenning as a learning experience that required visualization, then link their initial visualization with another visualization based on their analysis of the kenning, and then revisualize the solution to the kenning. On subsequent hearings, members of the audience would experience satisfaction at having previously deciphered the kenning and

¹⁵ See “Snorri Sturluson’s View of Figurative Language” in Ross *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics* 236 - 245 for a discussion of the reasons why Snorri avoided defining kennings as metaphors.

consequently would have a mental image in mind to accompany the kenning when they encountered it again.

When we attempt to visualize the beginnings of the cycle of transmission and reception for oral poetry, we can adapt the cultural historian Robert Darnton's model of a post-Gutenberg communication circuit to that of a pre-Gutenberg communication circuit. I envision a model of a communication circuit for oral poetry that consists of the poet reciting his poem and his audience listening attentively and adding to their knowledge of details relevant to their religious and cultural beliefs. This model includes other poets among the audience who were engaged in memorizing the basic form of the poem and its kennings to add to their own repertoire. The further mediation of a poem, whether as illustrations on cultural artifacts in response to specific scenes or kennings or centuries later as text preserving the poem, in whole or in part, represents a remediation of the poet's initially mental composition. Thus oral performance can be seen as a means of publication and dissemination of cultural knowledge both within and eventually well beyond its initially isolated geographical location in pre-historical Scandinavia.

1.3 Artifacts as Visual Remediations of Old Norse Kennings

Archaeological artifacts such as pictorial stones and rune stones with pictorial content are valuable cultural objects because they provide tangible evidence that Norse paganism and oral poetry inspired pictorial representations of the gods and their myths. Dating these stones is difficult but archaeologists have established that standing stones with runic text date from well before the Viking Age in the pagan period, while most pictorial stones date from the Viking Age, which overlaps with the conversion period.¹⁶

¹⁶ Abram notes that "in Sweden, where Christianization took longer than in other areas of the region, mythological picture stones were still made after the year 1000" (*Myths* 9).

Thus pictorial stones and rune stones were a part of a living tradition at the time when Old Norse oral poetry was still being performed.

As a medium of publication, rune stones were essentially non-portable and were not intended to circulate but existed much more in the nature of modern-day commemorative plaques and consequently relied on the foot traffic of passersby to view their content. Kristel Zilmer, a member of “The ‘Forging’ of Christian Identity in the Northern Periphery (c.820-c.1200)” project, has remarked that the reception of Viking Age rune stones in their original settings is “intricate” in that “rune stones figure as public monuments and in this way seem to promote collective reception” in that

their features must have contributed to the creation of shared experiences; and in cases when one person was not able to decode the message, others could have helped to explain the message for them. People gathering around a rune stone and attempting to decode its exact wordings by voicing their way through the runic letters is not an unusual scene to imagine. (149 - 50)

Zilmer notes that there was “an interplay between the verbal and the visual” that would “affect one’s overall impression of the monument” in that the “ornamentation on rune stones functions as an active form of communication” (143). Consequently, I believe that it is possible to further imagine that the crowd gathered around a stone with pictorial content would also have been collectively engaged in deciphering the visual riddle presented to them.

The Swedish archaeologist L. Lager is among those who have identified a parallel between the densely packed, riddling images of kennings of Old Norse oral poetry and the illustrations in that both challenge their audiences to solve apparent contradictions

and word-games in order to reach the deeper meaning they conceal (126 - 127). L. Webster, a specialist on the Frank's Casket and formerly Keeper of the Department of Prehistory and Europe in the British museum, has also observed that the audience of oral poetry possessed "a fondness for visual riddles" (227 - 8). Consequently, it is feasible that the same mental processes involved in solving "visual riddles" contained in the oral poems were also necessary in order for viewers to decipher the illustrations on pictorial rune stones. Both activities required the individual to draw upon knowledge of Norse mythology in order to visualize images and solve the riddle.

However, with few exceptions, runic inscriptions are not poetic and consequently generally do not contain kennings as part of their texts. Runic texts sometimes include the name of the artist who created the rune stone, as well as the name of the patron who commissioned it, and in such cases the text usually state the reason for the creation of the stone, which often served as a commemorative marker for a deceased relative. According to Snorri in "Ynglinga Saga," the first saga in *Heimskringla*, the custom of erecting memorial stones was initiated by Óðinn who decreed that the deceased were to be cremated and their their 'ashes were to be carried out to sea or buried. For notable men burial mounds were to be thrown up as memorials. But for all men who had shown great manly qualities memorial stones were to be erected' "öskuna skyldi vera út á sjá eða grafa niðr í jörð, en eftir göfga menn skyldi haug gera til minningar, en eftir alla þá menn, er nökkut mannmót var at, skyldi reisa bautasteina" and Snorri notes that 'this custom continued for a long time thereafter' "helzk sjá siðr lengi síðan" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 12; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 11). Indeed, although standing stones are found throughout Scandinavia, the Uppland area in Sweden where the events

in “Ynglinga Saga” take place, has the highest concentration of extant standing runic and pictorial stones.

Standing stones containing runic text as well as pictorial elements do not identify the figures in mythic representations and do not contain mythic content or even the names of the gods other than occasionally including an invocation to Þórr to hallow the runes. In *The Viking-Age Rune-stones* the medieval historian, Birgit Sawyer states that “most runic inscriptions reflect rights to property by inheritance” (57). However, Sawyer accepts that

these monuments reflect the transition from pagan to Christian burial customs.

Some scholars argue that the erection of rune-stones answered emotional needs among the newly converted who, having buried their relatives in new ways and new places, that is in churchyards, wanted to honour them in traditional places; at home, beside a road, or in a place of assembly. (17–18)

Sawyer also points out that

The rituals associated with burial are not only for the sake of the dead, they are also a means of demonstrating the wealth and status of the survivors. Missionaries objected to the furnishing of graves with weapons, tools, and other goods and urged that gifts should be made to them instead, as payment for their prayers on behalf of the dead. In a transitional period, when the new Christian—and simple—burial customs must have been perceived as an enormous breach with the old rituals, and before churches and churchyards became the natural places for memorials, ostentatious rune-stones in public places were one way of displaying status and wealth. (18)

Sawyer does not address the significance of the fact that these newly converted Christians honoured their kin by commissioning pictorial rune stones featuring illustrations drawn from pagan religion and mythology.

However as Lager observes “ornamentation is the text of oral societies, a very elaborate form of communication” that “has an informational capacity of its own” and is never meaningless (118). He remarks that “our problem with grasping the rationality of the rune stone ornamentation can, according to Walter Ong, partly be explained by the fact that it is based on other principles of rationality than we are used to” (125). Lager argues convincingly that “for the Scandinavians, the Christian religion had to be understood through comparison with the traditional Scandinavian religion...and when the Christian message had been accepted and people converted, the Christian message was expressed using Scandinavian symbols and myths” (125 - 126). For example, runic text is often inscribed within the boundaries of a double line that can be seen as representing a band, and Lager notes that it is well-established among Old Norse scholars that “the runic-band could symbolize the Midgårds-serpent, which in turn would associate to Ragnarök” (127).

Richard N. Bailey, who has written extensively on Anglo-Saxon and Viking-age sculpture, notes that representations of Sigurðr Fafnisbani on gravestones “might be an attempt to equal the heroic acts of the deceased with that of Sigurðr and other dragon slayers” (123) and Bailey extends this visual association to rune stones as well (128). Lager makes the point that Christ is the most famous dragon slayer because he will kill the devil in the Apocalypse and that this “makes him an acceptable and appropriate god even for the Vikings” (129). It is interesting that Lager does not mention the god Þórr as a

parallel Christ figure which would be an appropriate in that Þórr slays Miðgarðsormr at the apocalyptic battle of Ragnarök.

The associative manner of thinking that is exemplified in kennings which use one god's name to covertly refer to another god, or even a human hero, would also account for the popularity of images on rune stones of Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr on pictorial standing stones. For example, the Altuna rune stone is a commemorative stone with a runic inscription and pictorial content that was erected in memory of a father and brother who died when their enemies burned them to death in their hall. The figures from Norse mythology on this stone can be identified with certainty solely by the details of the scene that it presents. The Altuna stone is one of three rune stones that depict Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr, a myth that is known from the eddic poem “Hymiskviða,” the skaldic poems “Ragnarsdrápa” and “Húsdrápa,” and from Snorri's account in *The Prose Edda*. The Altuna stone, along with the Hordum stone in Denmark, provide important witnesses to the transmission of the myth because they contain a detail that is only described in Snorri's prose version of the myth that is not in “Hymiskviða” and has not survived in records elsewhere—namely that when he caught the serpent, Þórr braced himself by sticking his feet through the floor of the boat down to the ocean floor. Despite the pagan origins of the myth, visually associating the deceased and his living kin with Þórr and Miðgarðsormr would serve as a riddle functioning in the same manner as a kenning. The answer to the visual kenning would associate Þórr with Christ which would identify the deceased and his kin as Christians.

Christian influence is more overtly visible on Manx rune stones, i.e., stone crosses in the Isle of Man that often feature runic inscriptions along with both scenes from Norse

mythology and Anglo-Saxon Christian images carved onto Celtic crosses. Thomas DuBois, a folklorist who specializes in the Nordic-Baltic region, comments that these crosses “carry on the tradition of memorial stones pre-existing throughout Scandinavia while reflecting the Christian and Celtic influences of the Isle of Man in particular” (148). DuBois describes a tenth-century slate cross fragment at Kirk Andreas (artifact no. 128) in which

flanking a depiction of the cross ornamented with interlace, we find two parallel figures: on the right, Óðinn with his spear and raven, treading on the jaw of a wolf (Fenrir); on the left, Jesus (or a saint), armed with cross and book, treading on a serpent, flanked by a fish...while the book and raven figure as parallel sources of wisdom, the cross and spear are clearly intended as parallel sources of divine power. (149–150)

The Kirk Andreas fragment is more overt than the Altuna stone in that it gives equal status to the Nordic and Christian iconography by juxtaposing a scene from Ragnarök with the coming of Christ. In this case, the artist appears to have visually depicted a riddle along with its solution in order to make an even stronger statement.

Not all rune stones have survived intact because they were sometimes repurposed as building material and consequently were incorporated in church walls or foundations, or as part of roads or bridges. For example, Kirby Hill 2, a fragment with a scene depicting the crucifixion of Christ along with a scene depicting Sigurðr cooking the dragon Fáfnir’s heart, was broken up and used in the construction of a church wall (Thompson 167). Sawyer argues against the notion that rune stones were simply recycled as building material and believes that few stones were

deliberately destroyed; indeed, all the signs are that they have normally been treated with respect. A large number of stones are now in the fabric of churches or in churchyard walls, but that was not due to the shortage of building material...many of the churches in which they are found are in areas with abundant suitable building stone. Some stones were transported several kilometres to a church...There is now a wide measure of agreement that rune-stones were put in churches for symbolic reasons, although opinions differ about what those reasons were. (14)

If Lager and Bailey are correct concerning the association of pagan images with a Christian context, then the inclusion of rune fragments in church walls would not have been seen as incongruous or as a symbolic victory over the pagan religion. However, the illustrations on the fragments gradually lost even a theoretical association with Christian parallels due to the eventual loss of the tradition of oral poetry and of mythological knowledge it provided.

Eventually the mythological figures on the stones completely lost their context and even major figures such as Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg were barely remembered beyond the spelling of their names. Without the poetry to provide mythic details, illustrations on pictorial stones and rune stones, and fragments of these stones in church walls, became cultural curiosities—visual riddles without answers. Olaus Magnus, the Swedish scholar and last Catholic archbishop of Uppsala, who published *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (A History of the Northern Peoples) in 1555, stated that

here in ancient times flourished the superstitious worship of idols and great contests took place among heroes, champions, and giants, as may be seen on the

huge stones which have been moved from the plains and mountains to the walls of the churches, and on which the feats of these giants are to be read in a long loop of runic letters. (7:24 324)

The “feats” of these giants” that Magnus refers to, as far as the textual content of the stones is concerned, are sea voyages, battles, or the deaths of human individuals.

Although runic literacy never died out, the runic texts on pictorial stones did not supply Olaus Magnus with the names or the deeds of the gods, giants, or heroes of the religion of his ancestors.

1.4 Literary Remediations of Cultural Artifacts

Although subject to the effects of weathering and reuse as building material, a large number of standing stones have survived but an unknown number of other cultural artifacts made of less durable materials have been lost. For example, three skaldic poems—*Ragnarsdrápa*, *Haustlöng*, and *Húsdrápa*—describe artifacts made of wood that featured scenes from Norse mythology that, presumably due to the fragility of their materials, have not survived. Indeed, only fragments of the three poems have survived and then only because some of their stanzas were preserved in written form in Iceland in the thirteenth century in *The Prose Edda*. The first poem, *Ragnarsdrápa*, which is the oldest extant skaldic poem, was composed by the Norwegian skald Bragi Boddason the Old in the first half of the ninth century to commemorate an ornamental shield that had been given to him by the Danish king Ragnarr Loðbrók. Such shields were not meant for warfare and were made of wood, which may have been covered with leather, and the scenes depicted on them would likely have been painted rather than carved (Hollander 27). *Ragnarsdrápa*, as we have it, is no longer complete but the twenty stanzas and half-

stanzas quoted in *The Prose Edda* describe 1) the fight of Hamðir and Sörli in Ermanarich's hall; 2) Gefjon and her giant sons; and 3) Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr. The second skaldic poem, *Haustlög*, is also a 'shield poem' and was composed by the Norwegian skald Þjóðólfr ór Hvíni in the ninth century when he was given a shield by a chieftain named Þorleifr hinn spaki Hörðakárason. *Haustlög* is also incomplete and the Old Norse scholar Lee M. Hollander comments in his translation that the poem "lacks two of the four episodes that we are led to expect" besides featuring a beginning that seems defective and lacking an ending (*Skalds* 39).

Hollander does not speculate as to the content of the missing scenes. The two scenes described in the stanzas of *Haustlög* preserved in *The Poetic Edda* give details from the myth concerning the giant Þjazi's abduction of the goddess Iðunn and the apples of immortality; and from the myth concerning Þórr's fight with the giant Hrungrnir. The third skaldic poem, *Húsdrápa*, is from the late tenth century and differs from the other two poems in that it was composed by an Icelandic skald Úlfr Uggason and is not a shield poem but describes carved and painted panels in Ólafur Pá's hall in Hjarðarholt, Iceland circa 950. The anonymous author of *Laxdæla Saga* (Magnússon 112) briefly describes the hall and mentions Úlfr's poem, but does not give any of the descriptive details concerning the mythological scenes featured in the carvings. However, Snorri quotes twelve and a half stanzas in *The Prose Edda* from *Húsdrápa* that describe the myths concerning 1) Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr, and 2) Heimdalr's fight with Loki for the return of Freyja's necklace, Brísingamen. The stanza in *Húsdrápa* concerning Heimdalr and Loki concerns an obscure myth and contains the detail—which is not

recorded elsewhere—that Heimdallr and Loki fought in the form of seals (Faulkes, *Edda* 76).

The three skaldic poems —*Ragnarsdrápa*, *Haustlög*, and *Húsdrápa*—and the mythological knowledge that they encapsulate could easily have slipped completely into oblivion, along with the physical artifacts that they describe, if they had not been described in the stanzas preserved in *The Prose Edda*. These poems also serve as a reminder that Icelanders in the Middle Ages not only preserved the skaldic poetry but also for a time continued to compose new poems of their own until the fourteenth century.

1.5 Conclusion

Old Norse oral poetry faded completely from the cultural memory of Scandinavia after the conversion to Christianity to the extent that only the names of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg survived. Illustrations on physical artifacts, chiefly rune stones and pictorial stones, survived as enigmatic witnesses to the religion and mythology of pagan times and also to the overlapping period of pagan and Christian religions during the conversion period, but the iconography of the illustrations was undecipherable without the context of the oral poems. As we have seen in this chapter, specialized knowledge in regard to mythology and the poetic metaphors known as kennings was necessary in order to understand the poems. Such knowledge was not only essential in the past but remains essential to understanding the poems in the present day and the gaining of it is intriguing because it offers a glimpse of the way in which pagan audiences experienced the poems. In the next section of this chapter, I will provide a historiographical overview of the fortuitous survival of Old Norse oral poetry when it traveled with the emigrants from Scandinavia

who settled in Iceland. I will also examine the effect of the paradigm shift from oral to textual and the surprising lack of an illustrative tradition regarding Old Norse mythology in Iceland, in both parchment and paper manuscripts and also in print.

CHAPTER TWO

The Illustrative Tradition in Iceland

2.1 Introduction

The Old Norse literary scholar Jónas Kristjánsson observed in regard to the preservation of Old Norse oral poetry in Iceland that “It is not without parallel for settlers in a new land to retain the memory of ancient lore better than their kinsmen who stay at home” (“The Literary History” 9). Nonetheless, the preservation of Old Norse poetry on the part of Icelanders is remarkable in its scope and unusual in that it ensured the survival of a unique cultural heritage and a mythology that otherwise would have been lost. This chapter is largely historiographical in nature and provides the context and contrast for subsequent chapters. In the first section, I will present a brief summary of the settling of Iceland, the circumstances of the survival of the oral tradition in Iceland, and the beginnings of the shift from an oral to a textual tradition. In the second section, I will discuss the early use of the vernacular in Icelandic manuscripts; the tradition of illustrating manuscripts in Iceland; and the first, and only, instance of an illustration featuring figures from Norse mythology in a parchment manuscript. Then I will provide a brief account of the history of the printing press in Iceland with an emphasis on the illustrative tradition in print and the overlapping tradition of producing hand-copied paper manuscripts based on parchment as well as print originals—a situation that persisted for a period of more than three hundred years.

2.2 Preserving the Norse Cultural Heritage: From Oral to Textual

Iceland was settled in the period from 874 - 930; during the middle part of the Viking Age, and the historian Gunnar Karlsson has noted that

Most of the settlers came from the western coast of Norway, either directly, or...via Viking settlements in the British Isles. A few settlers are said to have been of Irish or other Celtic origin, and a considerable number of Celts may have accompanied the settlers as slaves, servants, and perhaps wives. However, the Icelandic language shows clearly that the culture was was predominantly of Norse origin. (14)

The national genesis narrative regarding the reasons for immigration to Iceland asserts that the settlers left Norway to escape the oppression of Haraldr hárfagri (King Harald Finehair) and to establish a country without a king whose inhabitants would be free and equal. However, although the rule of Haraldr hárfagri may have played some part his role should not be exaggerated, as the literary scholar Njörður P. Njarðvík pointed out in *Birth of a Nation*,

the settlement of Iceland was a logical step in a general expansion and migration of people in the North during the Viking Age. Emigration has always been associated with the hope for better living conditions. In west Norway especially, people lived in marginal conditions where there were few opportunities for new territory. (19)

Other emigrants from Scandinavia—who had previously settled in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and were relocating once more—were also a factor in the settlement of Iceland because the option of returning to Scandinavia was unthinkable as far as they were concerned (Njarðvík 20).

The settlers brought the tradition of oral poetry with them to the new land as well as runic literacy but they did not continue the tradition of carving runes or illustrations on stone. However, the recitation and composition of oral poetry flourished in Iceland to the point that Icelandic skalds, i.e., poets, soon became so highly respected that they frequently were accepted as members of Norwegian courts. Hollander notes that there are two hundred and fifty names of skalds on record and states that:

At first they are Norwegians. Then at the end of the tenth century, the Icelanders take over, to the almost complete exclusion of the Norwegians. The reasons why the latter abandoned the practice of the art they had originated seem less clear than those which impelled the Icelanders to devote themselves so strenuously to it. These voluntary or enforced exiles from their homeland were most intent on keeping alive their economic, religious, and cultural relations with Norway; bearing out the common observation that colonials are more conservative of their native social traditions than the people they left behind. (*Skalds* 4-5)

The Icelandic emigrants may have left their home countries in search of independence but they had no desire to cut all ties with their kin, their culture, and the economic necessities required for comfort and survival in their new land. Hollander remarks that poetic abilities ranked high in the accomplishments of young gentlemen in upper-class families in Iceland (*Skalds* 5).

Iceland officially converted to Christianity by decision of the judicial and legislative assembly known as the Alþingi in the year 1000, and with the new religion came the art of writing. Thus began the shift from a strongly oral culture—which, for example, relied on a Lawspeaker to annually recite a portion of the law code so that it was all recited over

a period of three years—to that of a book culture. Nonetheless, the tradition of oral poetry that was lost in Scandinavia in the period that followed Christianization survived in Iceland after conversion to the new faith.

Icelandic chieftains began sending their sons abroad to be educated after the conversion so that they could gain positions within the church. Opportunities for education were soon available in Iceland; the first Bishop of Hólar, Jón Ögmundarson (1052 - 1121) set up a school for clerics and provided its teacher with ample funds

both to teach the novices and further the holy Christian faith ... as he was able in his teachings and sermons. And whenever he preached to the people he had a book in front of him and took from it what he talked about to them, doing so with the most circumspection and humility; since he was young in years, those who heard him thought it was noteworthy that they could see him taking his teachings from sacred books and not from his own intuition alone. (qtd. in Óskardóttir, “The Church and Written Culture” 17-18)

The novelty of witnessing a text being read rather than recited represented the arrival of a new technology and medium of dissemination, and also a new element in the communication circuit in that a third party, in addition to the Bishop and his audience, was now necessary in order to remediate oral texts into a material form.

2.3 The Illustrative Tradition in Icelandic Parchment Manuscripts

Icelanders began to produce parchment manuscripts in Latin by at least the twelfth century and also at a remarkably early date, in the vernacular. One of the earliest vernacular texts is *Fyrsta málfraeðiritgerðin* (The First Grammatical Treatise) from the middle of the twelfth century, and it mentions other vernacular texts that were produced

even earlier (Óskardóttir, “The Church and Written Culture” 18).¹⁷ There is evidence that, although monks and nuns worked as scribes in Iceland, the copying of parchment manuscripts was carried out by a larger percentage of lay scribes than was common in Europe. Manuscripts were produced on a wide variety of subjects: “On the one hand we have translations of religious works from Latin – lives of saints and homilies – and on the other native material recorded for scholarly or practical purposes – law books, genealogies, and dry, concise historical works” (Kristjánsson, “The Literary History” 10).

The first illustrated and illuminated manuscripts in Iceland began to appear in the thirteenth century. Iceland was unusual in that, “unlike the countries of Europe where manuscript illumination is found most often in Bibles, prayer books, and other religious works, in Iceland it is in the legal codices where we discover the majority of decorated initials and pages which remain today” (Ryskamp 7), and of course many beautifully illustrated religious works have survived as well. Many of the most splendidly illustrated medieval manuscripts are copies of the law book known of as *Jónsbók* from 1281 that replaced an earlier law code known as *Grágás* (Grey Goose). *Grágás* was one of the first manuscripts to have been written in Iceland and consisted of the laws of the commonwealth and the laws of the Church. The writing of *Grágás* put an end to the necessity of having a law speaker who would memorize the laws and recite them at the Alþingi. However, it is no doubt a reflection of the importance of the oral tradition of reciting the laws that, despite the ill reception that *Jónsbók* initially received at the Alþingi, it soon became so popular that

It was common for young people to learn their letters from *Jónsbók*, and even

¹⁷ *Fyrsta málfraeðiritgerðin* is preserved in the early fourteenth-century manuscript AM 242 fol. (Codex Wormianus) that also preserves one of the four copies of *The Prose Edda*.

the contents too; some knew much of the book by heart. It was consequently the first book they turned to for guidance in matters of right and wrong, and few books, if any can have had such a formative effect on Icelanders' sense of justice. (Líndal 46)

Jónsbók is extant in over two hundred copies, at least one hundred of which are from before 1600, and the beautifully illustrated manuscript known as *Skarðsbók* from 1363 is now a national treasure.

Given the importance of skaldic and eddic poetry from an early stage in Iceland's history, it is noteworthy that the manuscript tradition for *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda* falls far short of *Jónsbók* in terms of the number of extant copies and in terms of the number of illustrations within the existing manuscripts. The Codex Regius manuscript with the shelf mark GkS 2365 4to, is the only complete parchment manuscript extant for *The Poetic Edda*.¹⁸ The Codex Regius manuscript was written in the thirteenth century but its whereabouts were unknown in Iceland until 1643 when Brynjólfur Sveinsson, who was the Bishop of Skálholt and a great collector of manuscripts, acquired it. Jónas Kristjánsson remarks that "Various imperfections show that it is a copy, not a first recording" which indicates that there was at least one previous manuscript which is no longer extant (*Eddas and Sagas* 26). Six sheets of another parchment manuscript of *The Poetic Edda*, AM 748 I a 4to, have survived from the first quarter of the fourteenth century. These six sheets of *The Poetic Edda* contain two complete poems and four

¹⁸ Faulkes notes that "there are seven manuscripts or manuscript fragments that contain independent texts of *The Prose Edda* or parts of it, six of them medieval, one written about 1600" (*Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning* xvii). The four relatively complete manuscripts of *The Prose Edda* are the Codex Regius of Snorra Edda, the Codex Wormianus, and the Codex Upsaliensis, all of which are from the first half of the fourteenth century, and the Codex Trajectinus, which is a sixteenth-century copy of a late thirteenth-century manuscript that is now lost.

partial poems, as well as a complete poem in eddic metre *Baldrs draumar* (Baldr's Dreams) that is not in the Codex Regius manuscript and has not been preserved elsewhere. The six sheets that survive from AM 748 I a 4to do not contain illustrations. As far as can be ascertained in the surviving manuscripts and manuscript fragments, *The Poetic Edda* was never illustrated in hand-copied manuscripts.

As previously noted, it is generally accepted that Snorri wrote his *Edda* as a handbook for poets who needed to know not only the poetic metres but also Old Norse mythology in order to compose skaldic poetry. However, Gudrun Nordal has proposed that the works of Snorri and his nephew, Óláfr Þórðarson, the author of *The Third Grammatical Treatise*, “are not merely textbooks for aspiring skalds, but form a branch of a textual culture that started to grow in the twelfth century,” and she places “twelfth- and thirteenth-century verse within the realm of the formal study of *grammatica*” (13). Perhaps the association with grammar rather than narrative is one of the reasons why the parchment manuscripts of *The Prose Edda*, with one exception, and the vast majority of the paper manuscripts were not illustrated.

Of the seven manuscripts preserving *The Prose Edda*, only U contains illustrations and only one of the illustrations, “The Deluding of Gylfi” (Fig. B-1), can be identified as a scene from *The Prose Edda*. There have been “different opinions on the relationship of U to the original version of *Snorri's Edda*....U is the only manuscript to refer to Snorri Sturluson as the one who put the *Edda* together: ‘Snorri Sturluson has put it together in the way which is presented here’ “*hana hefir saman setta Snorri Sturluson eptir þeim hætti sem hér er skipat*” (Nordal 53). However, it appears that the illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” was drawn sometime soon after the creation of U on a page

that had been left blank and was not copied from an earlier version of U (Guðmundsdóttir 13). I think that the figures in U were copied from another manuscript that was not a copy of *The Prose Edda* but was either religious or legal in nature. The “Deluding of Gylfi” illustration in U is unique because it represents the only extant illustration of an *Edda* scene in Icelandic parchment manuscripts; and raises questions concerning the reception of *The Prose Edda* in Iceland that I will examine further in Chapter Three and more closely in the thematic case study on Jakob Sigurðsson’s mythological illustrations in hand-copied paper manuscripts in Chapter Nine.

The parchment manuscript of *Heimskringla* produced in Iceland in the thirteenth-century was known as *Kringla* and was almost completely destroyed in the great fire of Copenhagen in 1728. All that remains of the *Kringla* manuscript is *Kringlublaðið* (the *Kringla* leaf), i.e., a single leaf with the shelf mark Lbs fragm 82 that now resides in the Icelandic National Library. However, Jón Eggertson and Ásgeir Jónsson made copies of *Kringla* in the seventeenth century. Jónsson’s copy was also destroyed in the great fire of Copenhagen but Eggertson’s copy, i.e., *Holm papp 18 fol.*, survived because it was in Sweden. The *Kringlublaðið* leaf is embellished with coloured capital letters but it is unlikely that the *Kringla* manuscript was illustrated. However, early print Danish and Norwegian editions of *Heimskringla* were illustrated and I will discuss early print illustrations of *Heimskringla* briefly in Chapter Four and in greater detail in the thematic case study in Chapter Ten.

2.4 The Printing Press and the Scribal Tradition of Paper Manuscripts

In this section of the chapter I will present a brief overview of the history of print in Iceland with a focus on illustrations and a brief description of the tradition of hand

copying manuscripts and print texts. The first, and for a long time the only, printing press arrived in Iceland circa 1530 when Jón Arason (c. 1480 - 1550), the last Catholic Bishop of Iceland, brought one to his bishopric at Hólar along with the printer, Jón Matthíasson, who was known as ‘Svenski,’ the Swede (Benedikz 13). The arrival of the press did not diminish the tradition of hand-copying parchment manuscripts as paper manuscripts.

Indeed, the tradition of hand-copying parchment manuscripts expanded in the age of print to include the hand-copying of printed texts. Although the latter activity may appear to be unusual, Davíð Ólafsson demonstrated in his Ph.D. dissertation, *Wordmongers: Post-Medieval Scribal Culture and the Case of Sighvatur Grímsson*, that Iceland is not unique in experiencing a period in which oral, print, and scribal culture overlapped (2009). I will discuss this phenomenon briefly in Chapter Three and more fully in Chapter Eight.

After the death of Jón Arason, the bishopric and the printing press passed into the hands of Lutheran bishops including Guðbrandur Þorláksson, who was appointed in 1571. Guðbrandur had been educated at the University of Copenhagen and is regarded as the “true father of printing in Iceland” (Benedikz 19). Guðbrandur initially used the old press but it was soon beyond repair. He purchased a new press and published the first complete Icelandic translation of the Bible in 1584. *Guðbrandsbiblía* (Guðbrand’s Bible) took seven years to produce and features many illustrations and decorated initials.

The press remained at the bishopric of Hólar until the early seventeenth century, when it was moved for a short period, from 1685 - 1697, to Skálholt in the west. During its sojourn in Skálholt, Bishop Þórður Þorlákson (1637 - 1697) published the two major primary sources of Icelandic history—*Íslendingabók* (*The Book of Icelanders*) and *Landnámabók* (*The Book of Settlements*)—as well as *Kristni saga* (*Christian History*),

Arngrímur Jónsson's *Grönlandia* (*Greenland*), and *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* (The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason). He also printed manuals of calendar computation, a Latin grammar, and the proceedings of the Althing in 1696. Several of the books that Bishop Gísli printed contained illustrations of historical figures such as Eiríkr hinn rauði (Erik the Red) in *Grönlandia* and Ingólfur Arnason in *Landnámabók*, both men are depicted wearing full suits of medieval armour (Tómasson 78).

After Bishop Gísli of Skálholt died in 1697, the press was moved several times and was often idle for long periods of time, and with the exception of “two omnibus volumes of sagas, *Margfrooðer sögu þættir* (Many Knowledgeable Stories) (1756) and *Aagætar Fornmanna sögur* (Outstanding Historical Sagas) (1756) printed nothing but the same devotional and catechetical treatises year in and year out” (Benedikz 35). Consequently, from the sixteenth century until the mid-eighteenth century, one of the few ways to acquire secular texts was to copy them or to have them copied. Initially, lay scribes came from the families of wealthy farmers or rich chieftains, but by the post-Reformation period in Iceland, many of the scribes who created paper manuscripts were servants and tenant farmers who did not have access to formal education and who were not well remunerated for their efforts.¹⁹

Some indication of the type of texts that were popular and of the Church's attempts to dictate reading material is indicated in the “Decree on house-visitations” from 27 May, 1746 to the effect that “The priest shall enjoin members of the household to protect themselves from unprofitable stories and unlikely fables and fictions, which have been found in this country, and in no way permit them to be read or recited in their houses, so

¹⁹ Davíð Ólafsson notes the scribe, who copied *Fostbraedrasaga* in January 25, 1863, received “a pair of trousers, a vest, some socks, and a rag of a shirt, all of it much mended and virtually useless” (“Handwritten Books” 10).

that children and young people will not be corrupted by them” (qtd. in Driscoll, *Unwashed Children of Eve* 14). It is ironic that on the one occasion when the church did publish secular material in 1756, it sold poorly “due not only to the general hardship in the country at the time but probably also because of a feeling on the part of many ordinary people that the printed word was the word of God, while entertainment was to be sought in manuscripts” (Driscoll, *Unwashed Children* 15). It is similarly revealing that when the vernacular Bible known as *Grútarbiblíá* became widely available in 1813, it was not accepted as a desirable substitute for the reading of sagas and apparently resulted in the saying which is still current: “The gospels aren’t any fun: there’s no fighting in them” (Driscoll, *Unwashed Children* 44).

Although the church was not in favour of “unlikely fables and fictions,” it was prominent clerics in the seventeenth century, such as Bishop Þorlákur Skúlason (1597 - 1656) of Hólar and Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson (1605 - 1675) of Skálholt, who initiated the extensive copying of Icelandic secular manuscripts onto paper (Steingrímsson 85). Both of these bishops had studied in Copenhagen and continued to be in contact with Danish scholars such as Ole Worm and Thomas Bartholin the Younger, as well as the Icelander Þormóður Torfason, or Tofaeus, as he was also known. Bishop Brynjólfur was an extremely learned man who had been educated in Denmark, had taught in Roskilde, and who had continued to correspond with Danish scholars after his return to Iceland. In addition to copying Icelandic manuscripts, lay scribes also hand-copied print texts of a non-religious nature that were of interest to antiquarian scholars such as Bishop Þorlákur and Bishop Brynjólfur.

2.5 Conclusion

Old Norse oral poetry survived because the immigrants who settled Iceland took the tradition of reciting and composing oral poems to their new country and valued both forms of the poetry, eddic and skaldic, as an important aspect of their cultural heritage. The Icelandic poets became so adept at composing skaldic poetry that they became welcome figures at court in Norway and pride in their poetic abilities became part of their national identity. The poems survived the paradigm shift in Iceland from oral to textual, initially in parchment manuscripts and then in the eighteenth century in hand-copied paper manuscripts. However, the manuscripts containing Old Norse poetry and mythology were not remediated into early print texts when Iceland acquired its first printing press circa 1530 or anytime soon thereafter.

Icelandic manuscripts were often illustrated, sometimes lavishly. However, mythology parchment manuscripts were not illustrated, with the exception of a single illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” that was executed by an anonymous reader who was likely not involved with the initial creation of the manuscript (Fig. B-1). Illustrations in print were predominantly religious or legal in nature, and Icelandic sagas were sometimes also illustrated. The period of print overlapped for a considerable period of time with the tradition of hand-copying, which was part of an informal process of book production and dissemination of texts. In Chapter Three, I will examine antiquarian scholarship in Scandinavia and Iceland and its consequences regarding illustrations and scholarship both in Iceland and on the continent.

Chapter Three

Antiquarian Scholarship in Scandinavia and Iceland

3.1. Introduction

Scandinavian scholars in the early seventeenth century were surprised to discover that their long lost cultural heritage, i.e., Old Norse poetry and mythology, was preserved in Icelandic manuscripts. In this chapter, I will provide the historical context that underlies the discovery of Icelandic manuscripts by antiquarian scholars outside of Iceland, and I will discuss the scholarly relationship that ensued between Icelandic clergymen and lay scholars and Scandinavian scholars with positions in academies and royal courts.

I will begin by examining the manner in which word reached Scandinavia that Old Norse poems as well as prose accounts of Old Norse mythology were extant in Icelandic manuscripts. Then I will provide details concerning the large-scale acquisition of Icelandic manuscripts by kings and scholars in Scandinavia and their difficulties in reading Old Norse. I will also describe the chain of events that eventually resulted in the Icelandic scholar Magnús Ólafsson (1574 - 1636) producing a redaction of *The Prose Edda* in Latin in a manuscript known as *Laufás Edda* that resulted in the Danish translation that is commonly known as Resen's *Edda*, and also resulted in illustrated paper copies of *Laufás Edda* in Iceland. Next I will examine the remediation of cultural objects, e.g. rune and pictorial stones, as illustrations in early print books in Scandinavia, and then I will examine the remediation of illustrations in early print texts from Scandinavia as illustrations in hand-copied manuscripts in eighteenth-century Iceland.

Iceland lost its independence when it came under the rule of the Norwegian crown in 1264, after many years of economic difficulties and political turmoil that had brought the island nation to the brink of civil war. Denmark and Norway were united under one monarch in 1380 when King Olaf II Haakonsson of Denmark, who was the son of Queen Margaret I of Denmark and King Haakon VI of Norway, assumed the thrones of both countries upon the death of his father. In 1536 Norway became a dependency of Denmark and Iceland came directly under Danish rule with the long-term result that a vast majority of Iceland's manuscripts, legal documents, and charters were collected and transferred to Denmark.

Scholarly interest in Iceland began in the sixteenth century and was initially part of the phenomenon of travel and geographical literature. Iceland was a popular topic due to its dramatic natural features such as geysers and volcanoes, along with sensational medieval misconceptions such as “the common contention that the volcano Hekla was the entrance to Hell” (Karlsson, *Iceland's Thousand Years* 157). Aside from medieval misconceptions, the descriptions of Iceland and of the Icelandic people and their customs were far from flattering in sixteenth-century travel literature. A German merchant Giores Peerse, who may also have been a ship's captain, wrote a long poem *Van Yslandt* (About Iceland) circa 1554 - 1586 concerning the difficulties of traveling in Iceland and the uncouth habits of its inhabitants.²⁰ Near the end of the poem, Peerse comments that it is “not possible to protect oneself from lice” in the houses” that are set in the ground and then goes on to say that

They go early to bed in the evening

²⁰ For a translation of the complete poem see David Koester's “Translation of Gories Peerse's *Van Yslandt*, an ethnographic poem that incited a historiographic revolution,” which is available online.

and they get up late in the morning.
 They sleep ten or more all together in one bed
 and both men and women lie together.
 They sleep head to foot
 snoring and farting like a group of pigs
 together under one *vaðmál* blanket.
 They all pass water in one large tub
 which they have left for the night
 and they wash their mouths and heads in it.

(250 - 257; Koester 7)

Peerse also describes the Icelanders as rolling in the snow “like pigs” in the winter time and sending their servants out “to look for dead sheep and rotten fish, which they then eat from their dishes” (261 d-e; Koester 7). The cultural anthropologist David Koester observes that while Peerce’s poem was typical of sixteenth-century travel poetry, it was unusual because of “the possibility of native ethnographic critique. Unlike the peoples of Africa, America and Asia who were also the subject of sixteenth-century travelers’ less-than-complimentary descriptions, Icelanders had access and were able to read and respond to published accounts” (1).

Arngrímur Jónsson hinn lærði, i.e., the Learned, (1568 - 1648) tried to redeem the reputation of Iceland and its inhabitants by writing two books in Latin describing Iceland and its history. Arngrímur’s first book entitled *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia* (A Brief Commentary on Iceland), which was commissioned by Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson, was published in Copenhagen in 1593 and was largely written in response to Peerce’s

poem. Arngrímur's second book *Crymogæa*, whose title is Greek for Ice-Land, was published in Hamburg in 1609. An English translation of *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia* was published in London in 1598 and an extract of *Crymogæa* was published in London in 1625. Arngrímur's attempts to correct the popular impression of Iceland circulating in travel literature was largely unsuccessful; however, when he was in Copenhagen arranging for the publication of *Brevis Commentarius*, he

made Danish scholars aware that Icelandic manuscripts contained information on the early history of Scandinavia. This was no small news in Denmark, because a Swedish historian had recently written a history of the Swedish dynasty, tracing it back to the grandson of Noah and thus taking it much further than the history of the Danes. (Karlsson, *Iceland's Thousand Years* 158)

The news that their history had been preserved in Icelandic manuscripts precipitated an intense scholarly interest in Iceland on the part of Scandinavian scholars. There was a strong rivalry between Denmark and Sweden during that period to prove that their respective nations had the most ancient origin and glorious past.²¹ The further revelation that Icelanders could still read Old Norse with relative ease made Icelandic scholars almost as welcome in the centres of learning on the continent as Icelandic skalds had previously been in the courts of kings.

Karlsson describes *Crymogæa* as “the manifesto of Icelandic patriotism” and observes that Arngrímur made up for the lack of kings and wars in Iceland's history by “retelling stories of saga heroes” and also introduced the idea that Iceland had “preserved the pure common Nordic language, which therefore should be kept free of foreign words” (*Iceland's Thousand Years* 157). Indeed *Crymogæa* contains an entire chapter on the

²¹ See Bandle “Nordic Language History” 354-360.

Icelandic language and includes a discussion of runes as well. The linguist and literary critic Tarin Wills notes that

the study of runes coincided with a much broader cultural movement in which non-Latin scripts became the focus of a great deal of scholarly attention. An enormous number of works were published in the seventeenth century which looked at a range of issues to do with writing and language. These works dealt with writing systems such as Chinese and Hieroglyphics: with magic languages, such as the secret language of the Rosicrucians; and they presented a range of theories about the concept of a perfect language and the origins of language: usually that they all derived from an original language, that which Adam spoke, which was Hebrew. (575)

Arngrímur's work inspired the Danish scholar, Ole Worm (1588 - 1655), or Olaus Wormius as he was also known, who published *Runer seu Danica literatura antiquissima* (*Runes or Most Ancient Danish Literature*) in 1636, and "the basis of his treatise was that all ancient northern poetry—including Icelandic—had originally been written in runes, and that runes were derived from Hebrew, then believed to be the most ancient script" (O'Donoghue 109).

Worm was typical of the type of scholars that dominated early study of archaeology in Scandinavia in that he was highly educated but lacked specialized training as an archaeologist. Worm was the personal physician to the king of Denmark, Christian IV, but also spent a great deal of time pursuing his interest in archaeology and runology. Along with Worm, the other prominent antiquarian scholars of the seventeenth century were Thomas Bartholin (1616 - 1680), a Danish physician, mathematician and

theologian, Johannes Bureus (1568 - 1652), a Swedish royal librarian and advisor to the King, Gustavus Adolphus, Olaus Verelius (1618 - 1682), a Swedish linguist and historian, Johannes Schefferus (1621 - 1679), a Swedish professor of eloquence and government at Uppsala University, and Olaus Rudbeck the elder (1630 - 1702), a Swedish scientist and a professor of medicine at Uppsala University. Ludvig Holberg, the Dano-Norwegian scholar and comedy-writer, commented in the mid-eighteenth century that “studying Nordic antiquities is like scrabbling in dung-hills: it is an occupation to which certain people might well be sentenced for their crimes, if there were not already so many keen amateurs in the field” (qtd. in Klindt-Jensen 32). Several of these scholars made significant contributions to their original fields as well as to antiquarian scholarship but Verelius and Rudbeck are also remembered, as is Worm, for their eccentric antiquarian theories that will be further discussed in the thematic study in Chapter Nine in regard to the “Deluding of Gylfi” illustration (Fig. B-1).

Wills remarks that Worm appears to have based his work on runes on only two sources: 1) the manuscript from 1350—lent to him by Arngrímur that is now known as the *Codex Wormianus*—that contains *The Prose Edda*, along with four grammatical treatises, and an eddic poem *Rígsþula* (The List of Rig) that is not contained in *The Poetic Edda*; and 2) the *Old Norwegian Rune Poem*. Wills also observes that “Worm’s contacts in Iceland do not seem to have sent him material. Nevertheless, they knew of his interests. Such material would not have supported his theory that runes were the original way of recording all early Scandinavian literature” (574).

Wills also observes that whether or not they were forwarding additional material on to Worm, Icelandic clergymen such as Bishop Brynjólfur were actively

commissioning works on runes and the poetic material concerning runes. For example, Björn of Skarðsá, a lay scholar, wrote a commentary on *Brynhildarljóð* (The Lay of Brynhild), i.e., *Sigdrífumál* (The Lay of Sigdrifa) as it is now commonly known as, and also one on *Völuspá* (The Prophecy of the Seeress); both of these eddic poems contain material on runes. Björn also wrote *Nockut Litit Samtak vm Runer* (*Several Small Extracts Concerning Runes*) (1642) and cites the eddic poems *Sigdrífumál*, and *Hávamál* (Sayings of the High One) largely for their information on runes. Wills considers this last work of Björn's to have been "unpublished" (574); however, it was included in the hand-copied paper manuscript NKS 1867 4to (hereafter N) on f. 76r - 80r, and if it was being circulated for copying and for reading, then it was effectively being published.

The study of runes by Icelandic clerics and lay scribes was somewhat a dangerous pursuit because the study of runology in Iceland was associated with the practice of magic and the European paranoia concerning witches had reached the island. For example, the seventeenth-century lay scholar, Jón Guðmundsson, commonly known as Jón lærði (Jón the Learned), who was the first scribe to produce a copy of U and its illustrations, became known as a "rune master" and was accused not only of using magic for exorcisms but also of running a school of necromancy. Jón was prosecuted in 1631 and was sentenced to outlawry but this was changed to exile in eastern Iceland. Jón's case was reviewed in Copenhagen in 1637 with Ole Worm as his interrogator; and, consequently, he was retried in Iceland but the previous verdict was upheld. Jón found refuge in Northeastern Iceland and lived out the rest of his life there (Pétursson, "English Translation" 444 - 445).

Jón was fortunate to have escaped so easily considering that the first person charged with witchcraft in Iceland never confessed but “when sheets with runic inscriptions were found in his possession, he was sentenced to be burned at the stake” (Gunnarsson 145). Jón came under the patronage of Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson, who encouraged him to write *Að fornu í þeirri gömlu norrænu kölluðst rúnir bæði ristingar og skrifelsi* (Runes were known both carved and written in ancient times in Old Norse) that is included in NKS 1867 4to (Pétursson, *Eddurit* 47). The association of the material in *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda* with runic knowledge made them especially attractive to scholars in Scandinavia.

As previously noted, Scandinavian antiquarians were generally more interested in runes as a writing system than as a potential source of magical knowledge. However, some scholars were also intrigued with the study of runes as a source of metaphysical knowledge. For example, Bureus was inspired to study runes when he visiting the Cistercian cloister on the island of Riddarholm in 1593. Bureus noticed

an ancient runestone which had ben set in the threshold of a door. The practice of removing stones from their original places to be used as building materials (especially for churches) had not been uncommon in medieval Sweden. Bure had been familiar with the sight of runestones in the countryside from his childhood—the region around Uppsala is scattered with hundreds of such stones. But when he saw *this* stone it is said that *hans nyfikenhet väktes—*”his curiosity was awakened.” (Flowers 1 - 2)

Bureus’ studies resulted in many publications on runes and included *Svenska ABC boken medh runor* (Swedish ABC Book with Runes) in 1612. Bureus had reached the

conclusion that “runes had been suppressed by the Christians and that a return of the use of runes was tantamount to a return of the Swedes to a place of honor” (Flowers 3). He wrote the *Svenska ABC* to act “as a handbook to teach contemporary Swedes how to write their language in runes” (Flowers 4). Despite his position at court, Bureus’ hope that runes would become the dominant writing in Sweden did not prevail, nor did his metaphysical notion that the laying out of the runic system in his book *Adalruna* (Noble Runes) would function as “a *mediator* between the divine and human levels of existence” (Flowers 7).

3.3 Antiquarian Scholars and Icelandic Manuscripts

Icelandic manuscripts were in great demand by collectors in Scandinavia and in other European countries from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century and their activities resulted in the removal of a great many manuscripts to Europe, most especially to Denmark and Sweden but also to other countries such as England. Initially manuscripts were sent abroad by Icelanders but it was not long before scholars came, or were sent, to Iceland to collect manuscripts directly. Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson, who was introduced in the previous chapter, was an avid collector of Icelandic manuscripts. Brynjólfur acquired many priceless manuscripts including the only manuscript extant of *The Poetic Edda*, as well as other important manuscripts such as *The Prose Edda*, *Flateyjarbók*, *The Saga of the Völsungs* and the *Grágás* law code. Bishop Brynjólfur sent the *Codex Regius* manuscripts containing *The Prose Edda* and *The Poetic Edda* as gifts to King Frederik III of Denmark in 1662. He sent other valuable manuscripts to the king as well, including the *Codex Upsaliensis*, which contains a version of *The Prose Edda* along with the previously mentioned illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi.” Bishop Brynjólfur did not

send the manuscripts to curry royal good will but with the hope that the king's scholars would make their contents available to the world at large. He expressed his fears and his purpose before sending the manuscripts when he wrote to the king's librarian Professor Villum Lange in 1656

to shut manuscripts up in libraries abroad, where no one will ever be able to understand them, and thus keep useful sources away from capable readers forever - a practice, which out of ignorance has long been tolerated, to the great detriment of historical enquiry – is indeed not to preserve old lore but to destroy it.

(qtd. in Óskarsdóttir, "To the letter" 7)

Before parting with the manuscripts, the Bishop commissioned scribes to make paper copies of them. Beyond his activities collecting manuscripts and having them copied, Bishop Brynjólfur intended to write a book on the old religion and beliefs of the Nordic people but apparently never did so. However, the Bishop's scholarly activities insured that valuable primary sources did not remain geographically isolated and made them available to scholars much sooner than would have been the case if they had remained in Iceland in the seventeenth century. The paper copies that Bishop Brynjólfur commissioned insured that the content of the manuscripts remained available to Icelandic scholars.

The competition for acquiring Icelandic manuscripts soon grew so strong that Bartholin wrote to the Danish king on April 4, 1685 to request the imposition of a Danish monopoly on the collecting of manuscripts in Iceland

since it is known that our neighbours have obtained from Iceland a great many beautiful manuscripts which they issue in print thereby causing us the greatest

detriment, I beseech most humbly your Royal Majesty that you command your treasurer in Iceland, Christofer Heidemann, that he shall not only forbid and see to it that no written histories or documents be sold out of the country to foreigners, but also that he collect all manuscripts that he can get hold of and send them to Copenhagen. (qtd. in Már Jónsson, “The Saga Heritage”)

Bartholin’s request was likely inspired in part by the fact that Sweden had purchased the *Codex Upsaliensis* (U) manuscript in Denmark from the widow of Stephanus Johannis Stephanius, who had originally received it as a gift from Bishop Brynjólfur. The Danish collection of Icelandic manuscripts expanded greatly during this period largely due to the efforts of an Icelandic scholar living in Denmark named Árni Magnússon (1663-1730). Árni worked for Bartholin from 1684 until Bartholin’s untimely death at the age of thirty-one in 1690. After Bartholin’s death, Árni was thereafter employed by Matthias Moth, who was a court official and who secured Árni a position as a secretary in the confidential document archive. Árni was a prodigious collector of Icelandic manuscripts—both parchment and paper—and I will discuss the ongoing consequences of his manuscript gathering activities and foresight regarding the use of his collection after his death in Chapter Five

3.4 From *The Prose Edda* to *Laufás Edda* to Resen’s *Edda*

The frustration that seventeenth-century Danish and Swedish scholars experienced due to their inability to read *The Prose Edda* was eventually relieved when it was translated into Latin by the Icelandic scholar Magnús Ólafsson (c. 1573 - 1663). Magnús was a cleric and a poet who created his version of *The Prose Edda* at the instigation of Arngrímur Jónsson. Arngrímur lent Magnús the thirteenth-century

manuscript, *Wormianus*, which as previously mentioned contains a version of *The Prose Edda*. Magnús appears to have accepted the task of translating and revising *The Prose Edda* somewhat reluctantly and apparently was not particularly pleased with the result. Magnús sent a fair copy to Arngrímur in 1609 and copies from this paper manuscript, in addition to copies from earlier drafts, began to circulate immediately and soon reached Denmark and Sweden. Magnús' redaction has been described as

a systematized, encyclopaedic version of Snorri's work, reorganized in such a way that the myths of Gylfaginning are presented as a series of exempla (dæmisögur) and the various kennings of Skáldskaparmál rearranged in alphabetical order; the last part of the work, Háttatal, is not included in Magnús' version. As a treatise on poetics, Snorri's text had thus been distorted, but it had become more convenient as a dictionary for people interested in looking up a particular myth or a particular poetic expression. Indeed, Laufás Edda was used quite extensively by later poets and antiquarians. (Ross, "The Norse Muse" 7 - 8)

The popularity of *Magnús Ólafsson's Edda*, which is more commonly known as *Laufás Edda*, is attested to by the fact that there are more than one hundred and fifty paper manuscripts containing *The Prose Edda* and the majority of them are based on the version by Magnús (Pulsiano 601). Faulkes notes in *Two Versions of Snorra Edda* that

Magnús' Edda has been harshly criticized, and his methods were not by modern standards particularly scholarly....Ole Worm indeed realised the limitations of Magnús' version, and insisted that any edition ought to be primarily based directly on one of the vellum manuscripts...but both Sephanius and Resen, who each had access to more than one vellum text, and who were among the best

scholars of their time...thought that the convenience of Magnús' Edda made it the most suitable basis for a printed text. (Vol. 1 25 - 26)

Peder Resen's *Edda Islandorum*, which is commonly referred to as *Resen's Edda*, was published in 1665 in Icelandic, Danish, and Latin and made *The Prose Edda*, along with Resen's edition of two eddic poems, *Völuspá* and *Hávamál*, easily available to scholars for the first time.

Magnús's fair copies of *Laufás Edda* were embellished with pen flourishes and coloured inks but were not illustrated, nor was *Resen's Edda*. However, a late-seventeenth-century copy of *Laufás Edda* in an Icelandic paper manuscript AM 738 4to—which due to its elongated shape is known as the *Edda Oblongata*—contains twenty-three iconic figures of the gods as well as depictions of Valhöll and Yggdrasil (ff. 34r - 44r). These illustrations are situated alongside their kennings and were likely intended to function as a finding aid for the text concerning each figure. The illustrations in the *Edda Oblongata* do not depict narrative scenes but their iconography does bring individual myths to mind. For example, Týr's one-handedness recalls the binding of the Fenris wolf (f. 39r), and Óðinn's theft of the mead of poetry is subtly suggested by the objects he is holding, i.e., a ewer and a goblet (f. 34v). The illustrations in the *Edda Oblongata* are significant because there is a gap in Iceland of over three hundred years between the illustration of the "Deluding of Gylfi" in U circa 1325 (Fig. B-1) and the iconic figures in the *Edda Oblongata* circa 1680.

3.5 From Cultural Artifacts to Illustrations In Print

Illustrations of artifacts such as rune stones and the “Deluding of Gylfi” illustration were commonly regarded during the seventeenth century as representing historical ‘facts’ that could be employed as evidence to support the nationalistic agendas of Swedish and Danish scholars in their efforts to claim cultural superiority for their respective countries. The illustration of the pictorial rune stones of the Hunnestad Monument, that Worm commissioned Jon Skonvig to produce circa 1626 - 1629 (Fig. B-9), is typical of the efforts of antiquarian scholars in seventeenth-century Scandinavia to create ‘paper museums’ for their publications on topics such as runology. The remediation of illustrations from rune stones to print not only removed them from their physical and geographical context but also introduced the inevitable possibility of errors in transmission and also provided the opportunity to revise details of the illustrative content.

The runologist Erik Moltke observes in *Jon Skonvig of de Andre Runetegnere* (Jon Skonvig and the Other Rune-Illustrators) that because Skonvig’s drawings were the originals for Worm’s illustrations in *Danicorum Monumenta* (Monuments of the Danes), “they represent unique material for the assessment of the relationship between draughtsman, wood-carver and scholar” (287). Moltke notes that although Skonvig was very capable when copying runic texts, he “completely lacked artistic ability” in his drawings of the stones (291). Indeed, he further observes that the block-cutter who reproduced Skonvig’s drawings, for Worm’s publication of *Monumenta*, made radical changes because

Skonvig's drawings were so inartistic, so childish and naïve, that the professional craftsman shrank from reproducing them in all their wretchedness....In all honesty and good faith he sought to make the best of Skonvig's material, and Worm, who personally was not acquainted with the monuments in question, was no doubt glad to realise how much his block-cutter could make out of so little. But he did not bother to read the proofs of the engravings. (293)

The illustrations in *Monumenta* are sometimes the only surviving sources for rune stones that no longer exist, but the illustrations can obviously not be trusted to faithfully represent the original rune stones or their illustrative content. As an example regarding the attitude of the time in regard to illustrations, Klindt-Jensen provides images in *A History of Scandinavian Archaeology* of 1) Skonvig's drawing of the Tullstorp rune stone; 2) Worm's metal engraving from *Monumenta*; and 3) a photograph of the stone itself, and notes that "the photograph shows how, in the early reproductions, the ornamentation was not rendered very closely, whereas the runic inscription, which chiefly interested Worm and his assistant, is copied correctly" (19).

The antiquarian use of drawings of rune stones was intended for an audience that differed from those who saw the images in their original context or even from the context of stones repurposed as building material in Christian contexts. In regard to desirability of viewing stones in their original settings as opposed to reading about them, Olaus Magnus described "a place where three roads meet" in which

can be seen three enormous rocks of the sort referred to above, most beautifully carved with Gothic inscriptions. If any curious investigator is willing to traverse wilderness and open plains in order to examine such stones, he will discover

innumerable marvels to gaze at, which would be unnecessary and irksome to introduce here. (1:30 67)

The experience of viewing the actual stones, whatever their location, cannot match looking at a remediation in a book where the stone is reduced to a curiosity on paper representing an image used as evidence to support nationalistic agendas.

3.6 From Scandinavian Print Sources to Icelandic Paper Manuscripts

Icelandic antiquarian scholars were interested in the writings of Scandinavian antiquarian scholars and commissioned scribes to copy excerpts from books to include in compilations in paper manuscripts. Examples of the practice of hand copying from print books are evident in the paper manuscripts produced by Jakob Sigurðsson who often also copied illustrations from the original print sources. However, it should be noted that Jakob did not copy illustrations such as Bartholin's in conjunction with their texts but included them as front matter for *The Prose Edda* in N (ff. 110r. - 111v.) and in ÍB 299 4to (hereafter Í). As previously mentioned, the purposes of Icelandic antiquarian scholars in studying rune stones and *The Prose Edda* did not match those of antiquarian scholars in Scandinavia.

Jakob's two renderings (Figs. D-33 and D-42) of Bartholin's rendering (Fig. B-10) of a figure riding an animal on one of the pictorial rune stones in Skonvig's illustration of the Hunnestad Monument (Fig. B-9) serve as reminders that, even after the publication of Resen's *Edda*, Scandinavian scholars sometimes had difficulties interpreting the iconography of Norse mythology. Moreover, it is evident in the text that Jakob included within his two renderings of Bartholin's illustration that Icelandic

antiquarians sometimes experienced the same difficulties (Figs. D-33 and D-42).²²

Bartholin states in *Antiquitatum danicarum de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis* (Danish Antiquities Concerning the Reasons for the Danes' Disdain for Death) that he is following Schefferus in identifying the figure riding a stylized animal on the stone from the Hunnestad Monument as that of Óðinn riding Sleipnir (369). However, Bartholin notes that the iconographical details on the stone do not match the description in *The Prose Edda* of Óðinn as being one-eyed and Sleipnir as having eight legs, but nonetheless goes on to associate the figure with Gestom Blindi (Blind Guest), which is one of Óðinn's many pseudonyms, in the second last riddle in *The Saga of Hervör and Heiðrik*. Jakob also associated his two renderings of Bartholin's illustration of the figure riding an animal on the pictorial rune stone with "*Gestom Blindi*" and included Bartholin's version of the riddle from *Hervarar Saga* beneath it in his renderings. The riddle in the saga poses the question, 'What two [beings] have three eyes, ten legs, and one tail? The answer is: The one-eyed god, Óðinn, riding his eight-legged horse.'²³

"Huorier eru þeir tueur, er tiu hafa fætur, þrui augu, oc eirn hala?" (Verelius, *Hervarar Saga* 152). Present day scholarship no longer associates the figures on the rune stone with Óðinn and Sleipnir, and the consensus now is that the figures represent the giantess Hyrrokkin using snakes for reins while riding a wolf as she does in *The Prose Edda* when she is summoned by the gods to Baldr's funeral.

²² Iconography was not only difficult for early scholars in Old Norse studies, but problematic for scholars in other disciplines as well. For example, Peter Burke notes that "the iconography of ancient images was often mysterious to post-classical eyes" and observes that in the early studies of Christian paintings in the catacombs "a figure now regarded as Noah in the Ark... was first interpreted as St. Marcellus in the pulpit" (291 - 292).

²³ The translation of the riddle is mine, as are other translations unless stated otherwise.

Skonvig's illustration of Hyrrokkin rune stone (Fig. B-9 detail), along with the renderings by Bartholin (Fig. B-10) and Jakob (Figs. D-33 and D-42) also demonstrate the gradual deterioration of details that typically occur in a cycle of renderings. For example, the pointed ear on the wolf and the snake-reins that Hyrrokkin is holding, along with other details featuring snakes such as the large over-arching snake that she is riding undergo changes through the cycle of renderings from the original carving on the rune stone. The transformation of the snakes begins with inaccuracies in the illustration that Skonvig produced for Worm and progresses through Bartholin and Jakob's renderings until the snake-reins and the wolf's ear merge into a vaguely harp-like object. Moreover, the other snakes either disappear altogether or else are no longer recognizable as snakes but rather appear to be vegetative in nature.

Jakob's two renderings of Bartholin's illustration of Hyrrokkin are of further interest in regard to idiosyncratic differences. In his first rendering in N (Fig. D-33), Jakob appears to have run out of room within the outline of the stone that he has drawn which makes the stone appear to be damaged. Consequently, he does not depict the full face of the wolf with its gaping mouth and sharp teeth, and he converts the wolf's eyebrow from the original into a large drooping ear. In his second rendering in Í, four years later (Fig. D-42), Jakob depicts the full head of the creature but its mouth is toothless and its snout is truncated, all of which along with the drooping ear contribute to a benign rather than a fierce affect for the beast. Jakob regarded Bartholin's illustration as an historical artifact but did not feel obliged to copy it carefully.

As previously mentioned, "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration in U was also regarded as an historical artifact and Swedish scholars identified the setting of the scene

as the Temple of Uppsala and used it to support their claim to the crest of the triple crowns against Denmark's determination to also lay claim to the same symbol. Verelius' copperplate rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration (Fig. B-2) set in motion a cycle of renderings in Sweden and Denmark that eventually resulted in Jakob's two close renderings (Figs. D-36 and D-41) and also the two idiosyncratic renderings of the scene (Figs. D-13 and D-27) which are part of Jakob's two sets of sixteen full-page illustrations of narrative scenes from *The Prose Edda*. I will examine "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration and the role that its remediation in early print Swedish and Danish publications played in Jakob's rendering of scenes from *The Prose Edda* in much greater detail in the thematic case study in Chapter Nine.

3.7 Conclusion

In the sixteenth century, Icelanders were aware of the sensational travel literature regarding the geography and ethnography of their country. Such literature often supplied highly negative details concerning traveling in Iceland, living conditions, and customs of the Icelandic people. Icelandic scholars attempted to rectify misconceptions concerning their country and its people and in doing so revealed to scholars in Scandinavia that the long lost Nordic cultural heritage had been preserved in Icelandic manuscripts. This revelation was of paramount importance due to the efforts of Scandinavian scholars to rediscover and glorify the history and origins of their respective countries for cultural and nationalistic purposes. Scandinavian scholars, such as Ole Worm, strove to reconcile Biblical history with the history of their respective nations and tried to prove that their individual countries were the originators of runic writing which they claimed predated the Roman alphabet.

Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson sent many valuable manuscripts as gifts to scholars and the king of Denmark, but the Bishop took care to have the manuscripts hand-copied in paper manuscripts so that the knowledge they contained remained available to Icelandic scholars. A rivalry ensued between scholars in Scandinavia concerning Icelandic manuscripts and a large number of Iceland's manuscripts were collected and exported to Denmark and Sweden. However, although Icelanders could still read Old Norse without having to learn a new language, Scandinavian scholars could not. Consequently, *The Prose Edda* was redacted for scholarly purposes, i.e., ease of use, and translated into Latin and soon thereafter into Danish. Antiquarian scholars such as Worm and Bartholin published works on antiquities containing illustrations of historical artifacts that included representations of rune stones and also an illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” from one of the manuscripts that Bishop Brynjólfur sent to Denmark.

Early print texts by Scandinavian antiquarian scholars reached Iceland and Icelandic antiquarian scholars were interested in the material on runes, which they associated with magic and esoteric knowledge. Iceland's printing press was largely devoted to printing religious material and occasionally sagas. The only way to disseminate further copies of books by Worm and others was to have them, or excerpts from them, hand-copied. Lay scholars and scribes such as Jakob Sigurðsson produced compilations hand-copied from print texts but Jakob was unique because he went on to create a cycle of his own full-page illustrations of scenes from *The Prose Edda*. I have briefly discussed Jakob's copies of illustrations in this chapter and I will thoroughly examine both his close copies of “The Deluding of Gylfi” and his idiosyncratic illustrations of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene as well as other scenes and figures from

The Prose Edda in the thematic study in Chapter Nine. In the next chapter I will present an analytical survey of early print illustrations of Norse mythology in Iceland—where they are notably absent, and then in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, France, England, and the United States.

CHAPTER FOUR

Illustrations of Norse Mythology in Print Sources from 1554 - 1914

4.1. Introduction

Scandinavian countries as well as England, and to a lesser degree France and the United States, published illustrations of Old Norse mythology in early print texts soon after acquiring their first printing presses. These illustrations have only recently begun attracting scholarly attention and have not been investigated as a means of identifying paratextual patterns and cultural variations concerning the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology.

In this chapter, I will present an analytical survey that is focused on the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology by means of illustrations in early print sources. I will use a macro view in my survey in regard to book history and culture in a variety of countries; and I will use a micro view to focus on specific editions and their illustrations. The first illustration depicting the Norse gods, Frigg, Þórr, and Óðinn was published by Olaus Magnus in his brother Johannes Magnus' *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* (A History of all the Kings of the Goths and Swedes) in 1554 and also in Olaus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (History of the Northern Peoples) in 1555 (Fig. B-5). Consequently, 1554 serves as the starting point for my survey. I chose 1914 as the end point for my survey because it marks the conclusion of the historical period known as "the long nineteenth century" and represents the end of a world view that changed with the beginning of the First World War.

My analytical survey fills a need for an overview of the body of illustrations in regard to Old Norse mythology; beyond an overview, my survey offers insights into these illustrations and their cycles of remediation; and my survey provides the basis for further scholarly work in this field. The nature of illustrated print sources varies in scope from editions of *The Prose Edda* and *The Poetic Edda* published primarily for scholars, to manuals on mythology intended for the general public, to retellings of the myths written for children. I will note editions that are not easily available but my major focus is on editions that have stood the test of time, either because they have been in print continuously, or else because they have been deemed worthy enough to be digitized and made available electronically.

My survey focuses on eight countries, i.e., Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, France, England, and the United States. I included Iceland because, although Iceland is famous for preserving Old Norse mythology, it is the only country in my survey that did not publish early print texts on the subject, illustrated or otherwise. My reason for including Sweden, Denmark and Norway is obvious given that Old Norse mythology is also part of their cultural heritage, albeit a heritage that was lost to these countries for hundreds of years and was only rediscovered in the seventeenth century. I have included Germany because the Old Norse and Germanic mythologies overlap, although there are significant differences that German scholars tried to reconcile in the past. My reasons for including France are less obvious but the Old Norse gods were associated in the past with the gods of the Franks—although this is no longer common knowledge—and therefore the Old Norse gods are also part of the cultural heritage of France. I have included England because Old Norse and Saxon mythologies also overlap,

and I have included the United States due to the presence of Old Norse figures in their national genesis narrative and also because of their close ties with England regarding early print book trade and publishing.

I will briefly discuss the advent of the printing press in each of the eight countries in the survey and indicate the first illustrated material printed in each country. Following this introductory material, I will examine the illustrated material published in each country in regard to Old Norse mythology. I will use my survey to demonstrate that illustrated print editions document the ongoing process of remediation and transmission of Old Norse mythology and illustrations also provide a valuable visual perspective regarding the early days of Book History.

4.2 Iceland

I have discussed the first printing press and subsequent presses in Iceland in the previous chapter and noted the lack of editions of the eddas or Old Norse mythology in the early days of publishing in Iceland. To my knowledge the lack of illustrations of Old Norse mythology in early print sources in Iceland has never been raised before. The only mythological illustrations produced in Iceland in the period 1554 - 1914 were those in hand-copied paper manuscripts that have been briefly discussed in the previous chapters and will be discussed in greater detail in the thematic study in Chapter Nine, i.e., Jón Guðmundsson's rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" in M when he copied U; the illustrations by an anonymous illustrator in AM 738 4to; and Jakob Sigurðsson's illustrations in NKS 1867 4to, ÍB 299 4to, and SÁM 66 4to (hereafter N, Í, and S). The absence of editions of the eddas and manuals of mythology published in Iceland likely reflects the unstable history of printing in Iceland due to economic conditions and also

the availability of such material in early print texts from other countries. However, the lack of print editions of Old Norse mythology in Iceland must also indicate a fundamental difference in the reception and transmission of the eddas in the nation that preserved them as part of its cultural heritage.

As has been noted, Snorri composed *The Prose Edda* in 1220 at a time when knowledge of the oral poems, the methods of their composition, and their content were declining in Iceland. Snorri feared that poets were losing the art of composing skaldic poetry and that their audiences were losing the ability to understand kennings. Snorri envisioned a thirteenth-century Icelandic readership for his work and composed it in the vernacular, which essentially restricted its circulation to Iceland for nearly four hundred years until it was translated into Latin and revised by Magnús Ólafsson in the early seventeenth century. The Old Norse literary scholars Margaret Clunies Ross and Lars Lönnroth observe in *The Norse Muse* that the transmission and reception of *The Prose Edda* can be “conveniently be divided into five stages”:

1. From *Snorra Edda* [*The Prose Edda*] to *Laufás Edda* (ca. 1230–1600)
2. The Era of Scandinavian Gothicism and Baroque (ca. 1600–1750)
3. The Nordic Renaissance and Preromanticism (ca. 1750–1800)
4. National Romanticism (ca. 1800–1870)
5. The Decline of National Romanticism (ca. 1870 onwards).

The first stage was exclusive to Iceland and I have discussed the cultural impact of this period, i.e., the preservation of the Old Norse mythological heritage in Iceland, in previous chapters. Iceland did not politically or culturally experience the other four stages in the same manner as Scandinavia, and this fundamental difference is reflected in the

lack of illustrations of Old Norse mythology in early print books in Iceland. Scandinavian countries and other countries in Europe were producing historical paintings of Vikings before Resen's *Edda* was published in 1665 and soon thereafter began creating illustrations of Norse mythology for print editions as well as paintings and other art objects.

I have identified three main factors that account for the lack of mythological texts and illustrations in Icelandic print sources. The first factor, discussed previously in this chapter, was that neither of the churches, first Catholic and then Lutheran, approved of the printing of secular material, although they did not actually ban such publications. However, it is evident from the output of the presses that the bishops who controlled them were not interested in the dissemination of eddic material in print. Steingrímur Jónsson remarks in regard to the printing of secular material that

after the new press in Akureyri in northern Iceland was started in 1852, the bounds began to break, and in the 1870s and the 1880s when the number of new printworks exploded and competition in the market became the way of life, the barriers of what to print disappeared and all sorts of popular literature, rhymes and sagas, were printed and sold to the readers. ("The Handwritten Book in Iceland"

23)

However, although the presses in Iceland began printing sagas and the rhymes known as *rímur*, they did not print editions of the eddas, let alone illustrated editions. Perhaps Icelandic publishers would have printed an edition of *The Prose Edda* if Resen's *Edda* was not available in print, or if there had been fewer copies of *Laufás Edda* circulating in

hand-copied paper manuscripts, or if the business of running a press had not been so precarious.

Concerning the output of the presses, Steingrímur Jónsson remarks that, “in the 17th and 18th centuries the average of 2 - 3 books a year were printed, almost entirely with religious contents” (“The Handwritten Book in Iceland” 18). Moreover, “in the years after the catastrophe 1783-84 caused by a volcanic eruption which indirectly killed 20% of the population, both Hólar and Hrapsey printworks ceased” (“The Handwritten Book” 18). Indeed, the many disastrous events of the eighteenth century included the smallpox epidemic of 1704; the famine in the 1750s: the pack ice that stayed in the harbours over the summer in the north in 1755 and then in the south in 1756 that prevented fishing; and the eruption of the volcano Katla in 1755 (Gunnar Karlson 179). Additionally, the Skaftáeldar volcanic eruption, which began in 1783, covered the farmlands with poisonous ash and was accompanied by extremely harsh winters along with the so-called Mist Famine that resulted from “the almost constant mist that accompanied the eruption” (Gunner Karlsson 180). The two presses were merged in the 1790s and run by secular authorities, but the output of editions would still have been low. Even at the best of times, Iceland lacked the economies of scale that were typically part of the printing process in other countries.

The second reason for the lack of mythological texts and illustrations in Icelandic print sources is that Old Norse mythology did not hold the same fascination for Icelanders as it did for Scandinavians. For Icelanders, the details of Old Norse mythology were familiar and not a revelation of material that represented lost knowledge concerning their language and culture. In Europe and North America, the Old Norse gods were

included in illustrated manuals of mythology and were the subject of illustrated retellings of the eddas that were written to include moral lessons and modes of behaviour intended for the edification of children. Part of the fascination with the Old Norse gods in countries whose languages evolved from the Germanic branch of Indo-European initially resulted from the *interpretatio germanica* (Germanic interpretation) and thus the presence of the names of Týr, Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg in the names of week days, i.e., Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.²⁴ However, the weekday names were stripped of their mythological associations in Iceland at some point relatively soon after the conversion to Christianity.²⁵ Consequently, the etymologies of weekday names were never a way of introducing Old Norse mythology to children in Iceland and the Victorian strategy of imbuing Old Norse myths with moral values for pedagogical purposes never took hold there either.

The third factor concerning the lack of mythological texts and illustrations in Icelandic early print sources resides in the fact that Icelanders were more interested in publishing and illustrating editions of sagas than they were in publishing the eddas. The lack of demand for print editions of the eddas was likely due to the large number of paper manuscripts of *Laufás Edda* that began circulating even before Resen's *Edda* was published and reached Iceland. Moreover, there was a broader audience for the sagas which were more closely connected with the Icelandic sense of national identity than the eddas were. Consequently, although there was a "Renaissance period" of increased scholarly and poetic interest in the eddas in Iceland in the eighteenth century, the eddas did not play the same role in regard to illustrations inspired by the spirit of National

²⁴ See Simek 174 - 175.

²⁵ See Björnsson, *High Days and Holidays* 9.

Romanticism in Iceland that they did in Scandinavia, Germany, and England, and to a lesser extent in the United States.²⁶

4.3 Denmark

In 1482, Bishop Johan Rønnow invited the German printer Johann Snell to start the first press in Denmark. Snell's first publication in Denmark was Guillaume and Gwilhelmus Caoursin's *De obsidione et bello rhodiano* (On the siege of Rhodes). Snell must have brought this project with him because Bishop Rønnow had originally invited him there to print a breviarium and other material of a religious nature.²⁷ Two of the earliest illustrations of Norse mythology to appear in print in Denmark were contained in *Stephani Johannis Stephanii Notae uberiores* (Stephanus Johannis Stephanius' Comprehensive Notes) in *Historiam Danicam Saxonis Grammatici Una cum prolegomenis ad easdem notas* (Saxo Grammaticus' History of the Danes with a prolegomena to the notes), which was published in 1644-1665. The first of the illustrations in Stephanius' *Notae uberiores* (Fig. B-6) is a rendering of the Magnus brothers' woodcut with the figures of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg (Fig. B-5). The text that accompanies Stephanius' rendering of the Magnus brothers' woodcut is also based on Olaus Magnus' text. However, Stephanius, or more likely an anonymous artist commissioned by Stephanius, elaborated on the scene and situated the three figures in a throne room in which Þórr's throne is elevated on a dais. The throne room in Stephanius' rendering also features four windows and banners above each figure with their respective

²⁶ For a discussion of National Romanticism in Iceland see Egilsson "Eddas, sagas and Icelandic romanticism."

²⁷ This book is also known by its longer title, *Incipit Gwilhelmus [caoursin] Rhodioru Vice Cancellarius De Obsidione Et Bello Rhodiano Sub Ano Dm Millesimoquadringsimo Octuagesimo Simo ... Finit Descriptio Obsidionis Orbis Rhodie Per Venerabilem Viru Iohanne Snel Artis Impressorie Magistrum in Ottonia Impressa Sub Anno.*

names. In Stephanius' illustration the figure of Þórr is holding a sceptre as he does in the Magnus brothers' woodcut, but Stephanius added an iconic object in Þórr's right hand that likely represents thunderbolts. Thus it appears that Stephanius was the first to publish an illustration depicting Þórr as a thunder god, an association that has endured ever after.

The second illustration with a connection to Norse mythology in *Notae uberiores* is a close rendering of Skonvig's drawing of the Hunnestad Monument rune stones (Fig. B-9). As previously noted, one of the rune stones features the figure of Hyrrokkin riding a wolf that was thought to be Óðinn riding Sleipnir at the time *Notae uberiores* was published (179). However, Stephanius does not identify the figure astride the stylized animal. Indeed, Stephanius only included Skonvig's drawing in order to discuss one of the other rune stones in the Hunnestad group which features a representation of a cross that Stephanius associates with Saxo and the topic of metallurgy.

Thomas Bartholin included a rendering of the "Deluding of Gylfi" in *Antiquitatum danicarum*, which was published in 1689 (Fig. B-4). Bartholin's rendering is a remediation of a rendering by Verelius (Fig. B-2) of the "Deluding of Gylfi" illustration in U (Fig. B-1), which has been previously mentioned and will be discussed at length in the first thematic case study concerning Jakob Sigurðsson's illustrations in Chapter Nine. Bartholin also included an illustration of Skonvig's drawing of a rune stone depicting Hyrrokkin riding a wolf (detail of B-9), which I previously noted in Chapter Three and will discuss in greater detail in the thematic study in Chapter Nine.

Paul Henri Mallet, a Swiss scholar who was appointed to a chair at the University of Copenhagen in 1750, published *Introduction à l'histoire du Danemarck* (An Introduction to the History of Denmark) and *Monuments de la mythologie et de la poésie*

des Celtes (Monuments of the Mythology and Poetry of the Celts) respectively in 1755 and 1756 in Copenhagen. O'Donoghue notes that Mallet “had been commissioned by the king of Denmark to write a scholarly work specifically designed to counter existing views of Scandinavia as a backward country” (111). The two works were revised, merged, and published in 1763 in Genève, and this edition was revised and translated into English by Bishop Percy and published in England in 1770 as *Northern Antiquities*.

The 1756 edition of Mallet's *Monuments de la Mythologie* contains an illustration, lacking in other editions, that functions as the header above the chapter title on page one of the section entitled “*Edda, ou Mythologie Celtique*” (Edda, or Celtic Mythology) (Fig. B-12). This illustration is a collage that features objects and figures from other illustrations such as the depiction of Hyrrokkin riding a wolf from the Hunnestad rune stone in Worm's *Danicorum monumentorum libri sex* (Danish Monuments in six books) (Fig. B-9); the figure of Frigg from the Magnus brothers' woodcut published in 1554 and 1555 (Fig. B-5); and a rune stave or calendar that is likely from an illustrated book of antiquities. The anonymous illustrator for the 1756 edition of Mallet's *Monuments* revised the figure of Hyrrokkin and added four extra legs to the four-legged animal that she is riding to encourage the identification of the rider and the animal as Óðinn and Sleipnir (Fig. B-12). The female figure standing to the left in the illustration in *Monuments* is a reverse image of Frigg holding a sword and a bow from the Magnus brothers' woodcut, but in this rendering she is only holding a sword. This illustration in *Monuments* is a further example of the use of images during this period as ‘historical’ evidence to support nationalistic agendas and also reveals the working methods of illustrators who revised the illustrations to suit their needs.

A tradition of using illustrations of Norse mythology for social events in Denmark was initiated by a student group called *Skandinavisk Selskab* (Scandinavian Society) that was founded in 1843 after a student meeting in Uppsala to foster a connection between Scandinavian nations. Kuhn remarks that, “in January 1842, students in Norway had celebrated their Nordic heritage with a feast called ‘*Fådrenes Minde*’, and they suggested that a similar ‘*nordisk høitid*’ should be held in other universities,” and in Copenhagen three young artists were commissioned to produce, in a hurry, cartons [sic] of Nordic gods for such a celebration on 13 January 1845. Lundbye, Frølich and Skovgaard did ten individual gods plus a cartoon depicting three legendary heroes, OØrvar-Oddr [sic], Starkaðr and Holger Danske. The originals are lost but we know what they looked like thanks to a memorial folder of lithographs. Most of the figures were Frølich’s while the frames were done by Lundbye. It is probably the frames with their genuine Viking-art elements - snakes and parts of gripping beasts in an ornamental arrangement - that give the pictures a measure of credibility as depictions of Old Norse mythology. (215)

Images from the event were reproduced in Adam Fabricius’ *Illustreret Danmarkshistoire for Folket* (Illustrated Danish History for the People), an illustrated history of Denmark that was first published in 1852 by the publisher Gyldendalske Boghandel and was frequently republished thereafter (Wilson, *Vikings and Gods* 43).²⁸

Lorenz Frølich’s illustrations were so well received that he went on to become “one of the best-known figures in the Danish artistic hierarchy of the late nineteenth and even the twentieth century” (Wilson, *Vikings and Gods* 43). Frølich was a prolific

²⁸ The edition of *Illustreret Danmarkshistoire for Folket* published in 1854 contains an additional twelve portraits of individual gods and goddesses by Constantin Hansen.

illustrator of Norse mythology. Among his many publications is a collection of prints that was published in 1877 entitled *Nordens Guder i Billeder* (Nordic Gods in Pictures). The prints often feature multiple scenes that are arranged on the page in a similar manner to those illustrations in “Pauper’s Bibles” from the later Middle Ages. Frølich is best known for his illustrations in Karl Gellerup’s *Den Aeldre Eddas Gudesange* (The Elder Edda’s God Songs), which was published in 1885.

Mallet’s *Monuments de la Mythologie* was not the only Old Norse mythology book to be published in French in Denmark. S. Ricard published *Précis de La Mythologie Scandinave, D’après Les Meilleures Sources, avec des Illus. Et un Commentaire* (A Summary of Scandinavian mythology, from the Best Sources, with Illus. and a Commentary) in Copenhagen in 1863. The *Précis de La Mythologie Scandinave*, contains four illustrations of individual figures of the gods, i.e., Óðinn, Þórr, Loki, and Baldr. The figures are medieval in regard to their attire and only two of them are easily identifiable. Óðinn is depicted with his iconic spear, ravens, and wolves, and Þórr is depicted with his iconic hammer, which in this instance has a somewhat unusual shape and it is sharply pointed at both ends. Ricard does not acknowledge that the source for his illustrations was the 1854 edition of Fabricius’ *Illustreret Danmarkshistoire for Folket* and that all of the illustrations he used were created by Constantin Hansen.

In 1886, the Danish publisher Fr. Winkel Horn published the first volume of *Norges Konge-sagær* (Norway’s King-Sagas), an illustrated translation of *Heimkringla* with illustrations by Louis Moe, that was originally intended to feature three hundred illustrations. However, publication of the remaining thirty-nine instalments was suspended when the Norwegian publisher J. M. Stenersen bought out the edition in order

to prevent it competing with *Kongesagaer* (Kings' Sagas), the Norwegian edition of *Heimskringla* that he was about to publish. I will discuss these two publications and their illustrations at length in the thematic case study in Chapter Ten.

Horn reused some of the illustrations that Moe had created for *Norges Kongesagaer* in his illustrated edition of Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* (Deeds of the Danes), which Horn published as *Danmarks Krønike* (Denmark's Chronicle). Moe's illustrations for the prehistory of Denmark in *Danmarks Krønike* feature euhemerized depictions of the Norse gods along with romantic depictions of Valkyries. For example, one of the illustrations that Moe reused from *Norges Kongesagaer* depicts a sword swinging Valkyrie riding a horse with a polar bear skin for a saddle (on an unnumbered page [330c]) that is incongruous in either text.

4.4 Sweden

Sweden acquired its first printing press in 1483 when the German printer Johann Snell, who had introduced the printing press to Denmark a year earlier, published an edition of Nicolaus Pergamenus' *Dialogus Creaturarum Moralisatus* (The Moralized Dialogue of Creatures), which contained one hundred and twenty-two fables illustrated with woodcuts. As previously mentioned, the first known illustration of the Old Norse gods—Frigg, Þórr, and Óðinn—ever to appear in print was a woodcut published in Johannes Magnus' *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* in 1554 and reprinted in his brother Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* in 1555 (Fig. B-5).²⁹ However, it should be noted that due to the Protestant Reformation and the

²⁹ Olaus' book was better known than his brother's and in 1658 was translated into English as *A Description of the Northern Peoples*.

political situation at the time, both books by the Magnus brothers were initially printed in Rome where Olaus was living in exile due to his strong Catholic beliefs.

The art historian David M. Wilson suggests that the Magnus brothers' illustration was likely based on the Saxon gods in

the image from the *Cronecken der Sachsen*, published in Mainz in 1497, where Prono, Ridegust and Siwe are closely comparable in stance and attributes. Until the middle of the eighteenth century most representations of the Viking North outside of Scandinavia are probably based on a knowledge of the North and of its mythology, history and artefacts, lightly superimposed on current taste in historical illustration. This was normally based on classical models.....

(“The Viking Age in European Art - a note” 178)

Wilson does not cite a page reference, or signature, for the illustration of Prono, Ridegust and Siwe in Conrad Bote's *Cronecken der Sachsen* (Chronicle of the Saxons), but he must be referring to the illustrations of the three figures indicated by those names on page 246 where they are depicted standing on pedestals.³⁰ However, the three figures in the illustration that Wilson is likely referring to in *Cronecken der Sachsen* are very different from those in the throne room scene in *Historia de gentibus*. In *Cronecken der Sachsen*, the female figure on the right is naked and is holding fruit; the male figure in the middle is standing rather than sitting on a throne, and he is holding an axe and a distinctive shield with an emblem of an animal head with horns, and he also has a bird with outstretched wings standing on his head; and the male figure on the left is naked and is wearing a crown while holding a shield and a spear with a banner. On the other hand, the Magnus

³⁰ For a copy of this illustration online, see <<http://diglib.hab.de/wdb.php?distype=img&dir=drucke%2Fgl-4f-91>>.

brothers' woodcut depicts Frigga, i.e., Frigg, standing on the left, wearing a distinctive headdress and holding a sword and a bow; Þórr holding a sceptre and sitting on a throne between the figures with an arc of twelve stars above his head; and Óðinn standing on the right wearing armour and holding a sword (Fig. B-5).

The Magnus brothers' woodcut was based on Adam of Bremen's brief description of the Temple and its gods in *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* (*Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church*) circa 1075. According to Adam and his sources

In this temple, entirely decked out in gold, the people worship the statues of three gods in such wise that the mightiest of them, Thor, occupies a throne in the middle of the chamber; Wotan and Frikko have places on either side. The significance of these gods is as follows: Thor, they say presides over the air, which governs the thunder and lightning, the winds and rains, fair weather and crops. The other, Wotan—that is the Furious—carries on war and imparts to man strength against his enemies. His likeness, too, they fashion with an immense phallus. But Wotan they chisel armed, as our people are wont to represent Mars.

Thor with his sceptre apparently resembles Jove. (*History of the Archbishops* 207)

If the Magnus brothers' woodcut was based on another illustration, it has yet to be discovered. The text accompanying the illustration in the *Historia de gentibus* indicates that very little was known about the three Norse gods during the sixteenth century beyond Adam's brief description. Consequently, the Magnus brothers' woodcut achieved the status of a cultural artifact and inspired many other renderings that will be discussed later in this chapter.

The *Historia de gentibus* also contains a woodcut of the Temple of Uppsala that was based on the description of the temple in a marginal note in Adam's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*. The illustration of the temple in *Historia de gentibus* depicts a building with a golden chain encircling its roof, a tree in the courtyard and a well with a person in it, who is presumably about to be sacrificed by means of drowning (Magnus 156). For the next hundred years, until Resen's *Edda* was published in 1665, the Magnus brothers' illustrations of the trio of gods and the Temple of Uppsala visually represented the little that was known about the Norse gods and consequently these two illustrations also represent the extent of the loss of Norse cultural heritage outside of Iceland prior to the seventeenth century.

Antiquarian Swedish scholars, who have been mentioned previously, published a number of renderings based on the few illustrations of Old Norse mythology that were available in the seventeenth century. Olaus Verelius in 1664 published his rendering of U's "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration in his notes to *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia: Lingua antiqua Gothica conscripta* (History of the Goths and King Rolf of the Western Goths: Written in the Ancient Language of the Goths). Johannes Schefferus published a rendering of Verelius' copperplate in *De Antiquis Verisque Regni Sueciae Insignibus Liber Singularis* (A Unique Book about the Ancient and True Kingdom of Sweden) in 1678 to support his argument that the icon of the triple crown belonged to Sweden. Olaus Rudbeck also published a rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" in *Atland Eller Manheim (Atlantis or the Home of Men)*³¹ in 1679 and included a rendering of the Magnus brothers' woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg, as well as a

³¹ Rudbeck wanted to prove that Sweden was the lost Atlantis. Consequently, "manheim" could likely also be translated as "Sweden."

rendering of the Hyrrokkin pictorial runestone from Ole Worm's *Danicorum Monumentorum* published in 1643.

The Swedish artist Hugo Hamilton (1802 - 1871) published a collection of historical drawings *Teckningar ur Skandianaviens Äldre Historia* (Sketches of Scandinavia's Ancient History) in 1830. Hamilton's illustrations reflect the euhemeristic belief that the Old Norse gods were originally men of exceptional talents and abilities who came to be thought of as gods. For example, one of the drawings depicts King Gylfi welcoming Óðinn upon his arrival in Sweden. Many of the illustrations in Hamilton's *Teckningar* are based on the events described in the late-ninth-century skaldic poem *Ynglingatal* concerning the Swedish royal line from which Norwegian kings are descended that Snorri used when writing the first saga in *Heimskringla*.

Oscar Montelius et al. in 1877 published *Sveriges Historia från Äldsta Tid till Våra Dagar* (Sweden's History from the Earliest Times to Our Day), which features illustrations of archaeological artifacts including one of the rune stones from Tjängvide Gotland. Montelius does not identify or discuss the distinctive figure on one of the stones as representing Óðinn riding his eight-legged horse (283). However, he does identify the figures of Óðinn and Sleipnir in an illustration of a rune stone from Hablingbo and this illustration opens the section for the descriptions of the Old Norse gods (366). An illustration of the Ramsund stone, which is not technically a rune stone because it is not a standing stone but is carved onto a rock that has never been excavated let alone raised, serves in the chapter "*Sveriges Historia*" ("Swedish History") to introduce the story of Sigurd the dragon slayer (349).

Fredrik Sander's *Nordisk Mythologi* (Norse Mythology) was published in 1887 but

it was not heavily illustrated. However, Sander reused the illustrations from *Nordisk Mythologi* in his edition of *The Poetic Edda*, i.e., *Edda Sämund den Vises* (*Sæmundr the Learned's Edda*), which was published in 1893 and is still in print. In addition to the illustrations from *Nordisk Mythologi*, Sander's edition of *Edda Sämund den Vises* was lavishly illustrated by six xylographers with woodcuts of artistic works such as gallery paintings and sculptures by twenty-four well-known artists, including Peter Nicolai Arbo, Carl Larsson, Jenny Nyström and Mårten Eskil Winge. The Old Norse literary scholar Hans Kuhn observed in "Greek Gods in Northern Costumes" that

northern mythology, long the province of antiquarians and scholars, was in the 19th century claimed as a regional heritage in the Scandinavian countries, and the rising tide of nationalism and an eagerness to extend education to all classes combined to make it a focus not only of literary efforts but also of pictorial representation. (209)

The artists and their works featured in Sander's *Edda Sämund den Vises* serve as a reminder that academies of art and royal patrons in Scandinavian countries in the nineteenth century actively promoted the creation of artworks on Old Norse themes.

4.5 Norway

Norway's political situation should be kept in mind when discussing the period from 1554 - 1914. Norway was essentially under Danish rule beginning in 1397 when the Union of Kalmar brought Denmark, Sweden and Norway under a single monarch with Denmark as the dominant power. In 1814, Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden in the peace treaty of Kiel following the Napoleonic Wars, and Norway did not achieve independence from Sweden until 1905. A Norwegian priest, Kristen Steffensen Bang set up the first printing press in Oslo in 1643, which was considerably later than the presses

in Denmark and Sweden. Bang was motivated by a desire to print his own works, among which was the eight volume *Postilla Catechetica* (Catechetical Commentary) which was published over a five year period from 1650 - 1655 and ruined Bang financially (Evjen 176).

Despite lacking status as an independent nation for much of the period under discussion, Norway can still be regarded as a discrete country during that period because Norwegians never ceased to consider themselves Norwegian. In “Norse Literature in 18th-century Norway,” Old Norse philologist Jan Ragnar Hagland notes that, “there is a long-standing tradition in Norwegian literary history of referring to eighteenth-century Dano-Norwegian writing as Norwegian, with an individual’s author’s place of birth seen as the determining factor” (27). Hagland concludes that

Norwegian interest in Snorri, from the time of Johan Nordahl Brun, paid less heed to poetry and more to history, accordingly Norwegian interest in Snorri tended to be centred on *Heimskringla* rather than the *Edda*. It shared nothing of the fondness for ideas about the wild and exotic Norse past, about that pursuit of the sublime which so characterized the reception of Old Norse writings in eighteenth-century England, Germany, and Denmark. Such notions could play no part in a project whose principal aim was the construction of a national identity which was to be so important a part of Norwegian literature in the years thereafter. (37-38)

The publisher J. M. Stenersen participated in the construction of a Norwegian national identity in literature with his lavishly illustrated publication of *Kongesagaer*, i.e., Gustav Storm’s translation of *Heimskringla*, with a deluxe first edition in 1899 and a second edition intended for a more popular market that was subsidized by the Norwegian

parliament in 1900. For the most part, the details in the illustrations of Norse mythology in *Kongesagaer* are historical rather than mythological in nature and I will discuss them in detail in the thematic study in Chapter Ten.

4.6 Germany

Gutenberg completed the invention of his printing press in Germany in 1440 and it was quickly adapted to include the use of woodcuts for printing illustrations simultaneously with the text. However, the initial earlier production technique of printing the illustrations separately and pasting them into blank spaces left for them in the text also continued. Gunther Zainer's publication of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (Golden Legend) in 1471 was the first large illustrated book and featured one hundred and thirty-one woodcuts. Publishers in Germany produced many illustrated editions of Classical mythology and in 1777 published a German edition of *The Prose Edda* entitled *Die Isländische Edda* (The Icelandic Edda) by a Lutheran clergyman named Jacob Schimmelmänn.

Árni Björnsson notes in *Wagner and the Volsungs* that it would be more accurate to call Schimmelmänn's translation a summary or a retelling (85). Indeed Schimmelmänn's views on *The Prose Edda* were eccentric and "a retelling" is likely the more accurate description. The Old Norse philologist and translator Bjarne Fidjestøl remarks that Schimmelmänn had "boldly stated" in his dissertation in 1774 that "the Edda was without a doubt the oldest book in the world, second only to the Bible" and that "Schimmelmänn was prone to dating the Edda to a period not far from the days of the patriarch Noah" (9). For Schimmelmänn, *The Prose Edda* was a "special revelation to the peoples of the North" and he "looked at the *Edda* primarily as a Christian work of

edification” (Fidjestøl 50). Björnsson remarks that Schimmelman saw Snorri Sturluson “as an enlightened ruler, governor and judge who had rescued the Edda manuscripts from the ‘barbarism’ of the Popish church” (85), and he had other eccentric views as well concerning the origins of Old Norse mythology.

The full title for Schimmelman’s *Edda* reveals that Schimmelman did not associate *The Prose Edda* exclusively with Norse gods: *Die Isländische Edda: Das ist: Die geheime Gottes-Lehre der ältesten Hyperboräer, der Norder, der Veneten, Gethen, Gothen, Vandaler, der Gallier, der Britten, der Skoten, der Sueven, [et]c. kurz des ganzen alten Kältiens, oder des Europäischen Skytiens* (The Icelandic Edda: That is: the secret teachings of the most ancient Hyperboreans, Northerners, Venetens, Gethens, Goths, Vandals, Gauls, Britons, Scots, Suevi, [et] c. in short of all the old Celtic, or the European Scythia). Schimmelman’s *Edda* was influenced by Mallet’s translation of Resen’s *Edda* in *Monuments de la Mythologie*. Like Mallet, Schimmelman was mistaken in the belief “that the language beliefs of the Nordic peoples and the Celts were of the same origin” (Arnold 88). Moreover, Schimmelman believed that *The Prose Edda* was actually “a product of Pomerania,” i.e., a province of Prussia,³² due to “the many linguistic remnants of the German language” that he discerned in the Old Norse text (Fidjestøl 17).

Schimmelman’s *Edda* features five illustrations of Norse mythology that he borrowed from other sources. Two of the illustrations are from Christoph Hartknoch’s *Alt- Und Neues Preussen oder Preussischer Historien Zwey Theile* (Old and New Prussia, or a history of Prussia in two parts) that was published in 1684 (Figs. B-13 and B-15). Schimmelman’s first illustration based on Hartknoch is of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg

³² Pomerania is located on the south shore of the Baltic Sea.

with their names below each figure and the names of the Prussian gods “Patrolli,” “Percvni,” and “Potrimpi” above their heads (Fig. B-16). The dual titles indicate that Schimmelman associated the three Norse deities with the gods of death, thunder, and fertility from Baltic mythology, i.e., the Prussian gods Patollos, Perkunas, and Potrimpos. In Hartknoch’s illustration the three Prussian gods are depicted on an illustration of a flag situated in front of a monument and heraldic iconography (Fig. B-15).³³ In Schimmelman’s rendering the figures are presented without a background or other objects, and Schimmelman introduced a significant iconic detail. In Hartknoch’s illustration, the head of middle figure Percvni is using his left hand to make a speaking gesture. This is the figure with a corona of flames that Schimmelman associates with Þórr and Schimmelman’s figure is represented holding a bundle of thunderbolts. The iconic thunderbolts are not surprising given that Percvni was a thunder god and, as we shall see below, Schimmelman was also familiar with Rudbeck’s illustrations in *Atland Eller Manheim*, one of which depicts Þórr holding a similar handful of thunderbolts (Fig. B-7).

The connection between Schimmelman’s illustrations and Hartknoch’s appears to have gone unnoticed in recent scholarship in regard to the second of Hartknoch’s illustrations that Schimmelman copied for *Die Isländische Edda*. Björnsson remarks that Schimmelman’s illustration of Ásgarðr “the citadel of the gods...seems to be based on contemporary villages in northern Germany” (*Wagner and the Volsungs* 84). However, the illustration that Schimmelman associates with Ásgarðr (Fig. B-14) is also from Hartknoch’s *Alt- und Neues Preussen* and is a depiction of a Prussian shrine (Fig. B-13)

³³ Hartknoch’s illustrations may be renderings rather than originals. See Puhvel for a list of early print sources on the subject of Prussian gods (82).

that Harknoch included twice in *Alt- und Neues Preussen* (116 and 139).³⁴ The village is on an island and the shrine consists of an enormous tree surrounded by a wall with a large opening. The whole of the tree is visible through this opening and there are three figures within the tree that are depicted looking out of arched windows. A row of objects is situated on the ground at the base of the tree consisting of a simple round face, a fire, and a jug.³⁵ The sanctuary is encircled with piles of firewood that are presumably serve as a visual reminder of the religious duty to keep a perpetual fire burning in the shrine.

Aside from repurposing Hartknoch's illustrations of the Prussian shrine and the three gods, Schimmelmänn's *Edda* features three illustrations that are related to previous illustrations of Old Norse mythology. The first of these illustrations is Schimmelmänn's rendering (102b) of U's "The Deluding of Gylfi" (Fig. B-1) that Schimmelmänn copied from Rudbeck's rendering in *Atland Eller Manheim* (Fig. B-3). I have established that Rudbeck was Schimmelmänn's source for "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration. Schimmelmänn's rendering shares the same orientation of the figures as Rudbeck's, i.e., Gylfi is on the left-hand side, and also the lower of the three seated figures is definitely female, i.e., the same level of detail concerning her left breast is present in both illustrations.

The second illustration of Norse gods that Schimmelmänn copied from another source is a close rendering of Óðinn and Sleipnir (268a) that Schimmelmänn copied from Mallet's *Monuments de la Mythologie*, which has been discussed above in regard to the

³⁴ See 156a. I discovered in the National Library of Iceland that Google Books not only digitized an edition that is missing many of the illustrations as well as Schimmelmänn's notes but also scanned this illustration, as well as the illustration of Scipio's altar with the carving dedicated to Cybele, without unfolding them. The edition in the National Library contains all of Schimmelmänn's illustrations and this can be verified by looking at the list of illustrations at the end of the book.

³⁵ Puhvel notes that the iconography associated with the Prussian trio was the skulls of man, horse, and cow for Patollo; a perpetual fire for Perkunas that worshippers "were to maintain on pain of death"; and "a snake in jar covered with sheaves of grain and fed with milk" for Potrumpo (80).

depiction of Hyrrokkin on one of the Hunnestad rune stones in Worm's *Danicorum monumentorum* (Fig. B-9). Schimmelman's rendering is an exact copy and he cites Mallet as the source of the illustration. Schimmelman's inclusion of the Óðinn and Sleipnir illustration establishes that he based his text on the 1756 edition of Mallet's *Monuments de la Mythologie*, which is the only edition containing the header for "*Edda, ou Mythologie Celtique*" (Fig. B-12). In the header, the illustrator provided Hyrrokkin's wolf with four additional legs so that it could be identified as Sleipnir and its rider could therefore be identified as Óðinn.

The third illustration from Norse mythology that Schimmelman copied from another source for *Die Isländische Edda* is of the Norse goddess Frigg seated in a chariot pulled by lions that is travelling towards a man standing under a tree (188). Ultimately, renderings of this scene can be traced back to Classical sources and are based on the depiction of a woman riding in a chariot pulled by lions carved on the altar in the Phrygianum in Rome that Scipio Orfitus dedicated to the earth goddess Cybelé and her lover Attis in the late third century C.D.. Schimmelman included an illustration of the altar itself at the end of *Die Isländische Edda* and labeled it "Herthe" (102a) thereby indicating that he associated the illustration with Tacitus' description of Hertha, or Nertha, in *Germania* (2:40).³⁶ However, Schimmelman's rendering is closer to Rudbeck's rendering in *Atland eller Manheim* rather than the illustration of the altar in regard to the depiction of the female figure, the chariot, the lions, the tree, the male figure, and the objects that the figures are holding (307). The reuse of the illustration of Cybelé to represent Hertha and then Frigg is a logical progression given that Cybelé, who

³⁶ Simek notes that the name Hertha "originated in earliest scholarship from a misreading for Nethus and an etymology of 'earth' parallel to ON Jorð. Unfounded speculation has led to a connection being seen with the cult of Nerthus at Herthasee and Herthaburg on the Baltic island of Rügen" (145).

was originally a Phrygian goddess, had long been associated with Earth goddesses such as the Greek fertility goddess Ops, the obscure Gallic fertility goddess Berecynthia, and the Roman goddess Magna Mater (Bath 225).³⁷

The remaining illustrations in *Die Isländische Edda* are for the most part generic in nature and consist of winged cupids, angel heads, scenery, and flourishes between blocks of text. In addition to the illustrations of the Norse gods and the generic illustrations, Schimmelman's *Edda* ends with an illustration of the Saxon god known as the Idol of the Sun. In Saxon mythology, the Idol of the Sun is male and usually consists of a male torso with a sun in place of the face or else a stylized figure with a sun face. In Schimmelman's illustration the Idol of the Sun is not male but depicted as a broken statue consisting of the top half of an armless female torso with a sun for her face. The fact that Schimmelman included this illustration demonstrates that he also associated the Norse gods with the Saxon gods.

Dr. C. A. Vulpius' *Handwörterbuch der Mythologie der Deutschen, Verwandten, Benachbarten und Nordischen Völker* (Concise Dictionary of the Mythology of the German, Related, Neighboring and Nordic Peoples), which was published in Leipzig in 1826, contains three illustrations of the Norse gods. The first illustration is a modified version of Verelius' rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" from U and, given the orientation of the three seated figures, Vulpius' rendering was likely based on Bartholin's (Fig. B-4). However, the "Deluding of Gylfi" illustration in *Handwörterbuch der*

³⁷ The association of Cybelé follows the scholarly practice of *interpretatio romana* and is less egregious than the use of woodcuts from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* to illustrate the New Testament in the Leda-Bible of 1572 or the reuse of 72 wood cuts to represent "8 or 9 different personalities" in "596 portraits of emperors, popes, and other celebrities" in Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Chronicarum* which was published in 1493 (Steinberg, 116).

Mythologie der Deutschen lacks the figure of Gylfi and, contrary to the description of the figures in the text of *The Prose Edda*, Vulpius labels the three figures of Óðinn from top to bottom as “Thor,” “Odin” and “Freia.” Vulpius also altered the faces of the three figures somewhat, i.e., the male figures are all beardless, and he updated the clothing of the three figures.

The second and third illustrations in *Handwörterbuch der Mythologie der Deutschen* of Old Norse gods are of “Wodan,” i.e., Óðinn, holding a shield and a sword and “Freia,” i.e., Freyja with a sword and a bow and distinctive clothing (352). These figures of Óðinn and Freyja in *Handwörterbuch der Mythologie der Deutschen* were copied from the figures in the woodcut by the Magnus brothers (Fig. B-5) that has been previously been discussed in this chapter. It is interesting that Vulpius ignored Schimmelman’s use of illustrations from Hartknoch, although he must have been familiar with Schimmelman’s *Edda*, which may be an indication that Vulpius did not wish to associate the Norse gods with other gods, not even Prussian gods.

Soon after these initial publications, illustrators in Germany began to draw upon their own imaginations when creating illustrations for texts on Norse mythology. Gustav T. Legis published *Alkuna: Nordische und Nord-Slawische Mythologie* (Alkuna: Nordic and North-Slavic Mythology) in 1831 with thirteen illustrations by an unacknowledged illustrator that depict figures of the Norse gods dressed in a Classical style. R. Reusch published *Die Nordischen Göttersagen* (The Nordic Myths) in 1865, with seventeen illustrations by Ludwig Pietsch that are for the most part more Teutonic in aspect. Pietsch’s illustration of Óðinn on his high seat holding his spear, and flanked by his ravens, Huginn and Muninn, as well as his wolves Geri and Freki, features the standard

iconography associated with Óðinn in *The Prose Edda*, but Pietsch chose not to depict Óðinn's blind eye (22).

Dr. Wilhelm Wagner published *Nordisch-germanische Götter und Helden* (Nordic–Germanic Gods and Heroes) circa 1874 that was heavily illustrated with one hundred and forty illustrations contributed by six artists.³⁸ *Nordisch-germanische Götter* was frequently reprinted thereafter in Germany and the mythological section concerning the Norse gods was adapted and translated into English in 1880 as *Asgard and the Gods: Tales and Traditions of Our Northern Ancestors: Told for Boys and Girls*. The material in the first section of Wagner's work is primarily based on the eddas but includes an account of the German goddess Hulda; the legend of Starkaðr; Saxo's version of Baldr and Höðr competing for the hand of Nanna; the myth of the Wild Hunt; and the Germanic legends of "The Lake Maiden," "The Loreley," and "The Water Neck." Wagner frequently locates the narratives as having occurred in the Black Forest, but he also associates Baldr's son Forseti with the twelve Frisian wise men who compiled the *Lex Frisionum* (Law Code of the Frisians). Additionally, Wagner often makes comparisons of the Norse myths with local myths from other areas of Germany, as well as myths from England and France. The style of the illustrations in Wagner's edition reflects Classical models, especially in regard to the clothing and the style of chariots. However, Óðinn's attire is distinctively Teutonic but also reflects Victorian influences in the wings on Óðinn's helmet and the style of his high seat. I will further discuss the English adaption

³⁸ According to Worldcat and other searches, the 1874 edition is the second edition but I have yet to find a citation for an earlier edition. The illustrations in the 1882 edition were by Karl Ehrenberg (1840-1914), Carl Emil Doepler (1824-1905), Friedrich Wilhelm Heine (1845-1921), Friedrich Wilhelm Engelhard (1813-1902), and Ludwig Pietsch (1824-1911). The six illustrations by Pietsch were previously published in Reusch's *Die nordischen Göttersagen* in 1865.

and translation of Wagner's *Nordisch-germanische Götter und Helden* below when examining illustrated editions in England.

Felix Dahn published *Walhall: Germanische Götter- und Heldensagen* (Valhalla: Stories of German Gods and Heroes) with illustrations by Johannes Gehrts in 1880. Gehrts' illustrations feature clothing and armour, such as helmets with wings or horns that conform to the popular image of Vikings of the time that continues to the present day. Gehrts' illustration of Óðinn on his high seat is similar to the illustration in Wagner's edition. However, Gehrts includes decorations on the pillars that frame his illustration of Óðinn on his high seat, as well as elsewhere in the book, that are modeled on the Urnes style of ornamentation found on late-eleventh- and early-twelfth-century Viking artifacts. The majority of the figures in Gehrts' scenes are fully clothed, with the exception of the cloaked figures of Óðinn on his high seat and of Freyr with his boar. The inspiration for representing Óðinn and Freyr as semi-nude may have come from the description provided by Tacitus, in section 6 of *Germania*, "Arms, Military Manoeuvres, and Discipline." Tacitus describes warriors of the Germanic tribes as being able to throw their spears for long distances because they were "naked or lightly clad with a little cloak" (711). *Walhall* was frequently reprinted; and the majority of its illustrations reflect the style of illustrating scenes rather than merely depicting individual figures of the gods.

4.7 France

France acquired its first printing press in 1470, when Johann Heynlin, a German theologian and scholar helped to initiate a press at the Sorbonne and financed the printing of works of the Fathers of the Church ("Johann Heynlin of Stein"). There was a thriving market in France for books on Classical mythology; however, although there was an

interest in the eddas, there does not appear to have been much interest in publishing books on the subject of Norse mythology. Mlle. Rosalie du Puget translated both of the eddas into French in 1838 with the title *Les Eddas, traduites de l'ancien idiome scandinave* (The Eddas, translated from the ancient Scandinavian idiom) and it was published in Paris. Neither *Les Eddas* nor other translations of the eddas into French during this period were illustrated. Although illustrations of Norse mythology were lacking in French editions of the eddas, illustrations were included in French publications concerning travel and in compendiums of mythology.

Xavier Marmier published *Histoire de l'Islande* (History of Iceland) in Paris in 1840. The majority of the illustrations in *Histoire de l'Islande* concern the geography and culture of Iceland, but the book does contain two illustrations related to Norse mythology. The first illustration is of the tree, Yggdrasil, and the cosmology that it supports (127).³⁹ The second illustration is a portrait of Thor wearing a crown with a corona of stars and holding his hammer (142). The crown and the stars appear to have been inspired by the Magnus brothers' woodcut from 1554 and 1555 but there are fewer stars in the illustration in *Histoire de l'Islande*.

Jules Raymond Lamé-Fleury published a comprehensive mythology book for children in Paris in 1833 entitled *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* (*Mythology Related to Children*) with engravings by J. J. Leroy.⁴⁰ The list of mythologies for the text of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* includes Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Scandinavian, and Celtic. We no longer associate Old Norse gods with France's cultural

³⁹ I am still trying to track down the original illustration of Yggdrasil. This one predates the illustration by Oluf Olufsen Bagge that appears in the 1847 edition of Percy's *Northern Antiquities*.

⁴⁰ The first edition of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* was published in 1833. *Mythology Related to Children* is the title of an English translation by an anonymous translator that was published in Charleston, South Carolina in 1853.

heritage, except perhaps in Normandy. However, Lamé-Fleury states in his introduction that ‘The gods, whose adventures are related in these fables, were formerly the gods of the Franks, the ancestors of the French nation, which must render them particularly interesting to French youth’ “Les dieux dont elles rapportent les aventures étaient d’ailleurs ceux des Francs, ancêtres de la nation française; et sous ce rapport, ils doivent encore plus vous intéresser, vous qui êtes de jeunes Français” (*Mythology Related to Children* 150; *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* 223-234). Thus France along with Germany and England could claim Old Norse mythology as part of their cultural heritage. *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* was used as a school textbook and was often revised and reprinted.

La Mythologie racontée aux enfants was frequently revised and reprinted. However, there is no stable tradition in the editions regarding the placement of the illustrations. Sometimes the illustrations are situated in appropriate places in the text but they are also frequently confined to the conclusion of the edition. Such is the case with the 1891 edition of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* that finishes with a selection of illustrations and concludes with two illustrations for Norse mythology. The details in the illustrations of the Old Norse gods in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* are interesting in light of the *Avertissement* (Notice) at the beginning of the 1871 edition which states

For those who regard engravings as indispensable accompaniments of a mythology retold, we have made a special edition. The design of our plates has been based on the most authentic models, on bas-reliefs and other art objects which are found in the museums of France and abroad.⁴¹

⁴¹ This translation is mine. The *Avertissement* was only included in the French edition.

Pour ceux qui regardent les gravures comme l'accompagnement indispensable d'une Mythologie racontée, nous avons fait une édition spéciale. Le dessin de nos planches a été pris sur les modèles les plus authentiques, sur les bas-reliefs et autres objets d'art qui se trouvent dans les musées de la France et de l'étranger.

(La Mythologie racontée aux enfants IV)

Despite Lamé-Fleury's claim in the *Avertissement* that the engravings were based on the most authentic models of art objects, my research reveals that the two illustrations of the Norse gods included in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* differ considerably from his source for the illustrations in Rudbeck's *Atland Eller Manheim*.

The first illustration in the 1891 edition of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg in a throne room (Fig. B-8) was obviously modeled on Rudbeck's rendering (Fig. B-7) of Stephanius' rendering (Fig. B-6) of the Magnus brothers' woodcut (Fig. B-5) because the figure of Þórr in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* is holding both a sceptre and the iconic bundle of thunderbolts. The anonymous illustrator changed other minor details in his rendering in that he updated Óðinn's sword and shield, omitted Þórr's corona of stars, and changed the shape of the windows and wainscoting to emphasize the central position of Þórr on his throne. However, the most interesting difference in the rendering in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* is that the figure labeled Frigg is not from Magnus or Rudbeck but is instead a copy of the lower seated figure in U's illustration of "The Deluding of Gylfi" (Fig. B-1). The use of the figure from "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration suggests that the illustrator was familiar with Rudbeck's rendering of the scene in which the figure is obviously female (Fig B-3), and that he was also familiar with the Swedish association of the three figures of Óðinn in

“The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration with Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg in connection with the Temple of Uppsala which will be discussed at length in the thematic case study in Chapter Nine. Lamé-Fleury quite obviously preferred a more courtly figure for Frigg than the goddess armed with a bow and sword in Rudbeck’s illustration of the three figures (Fig. B-7).

The second illustration in the 1891 edition of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* is titled “Le Dieu Thor en Voyage” (The God Thor Traveling) which is used to illustrate Lamé-Fleury’s retelling of the myth regarding Þórr’s trip to the court of the giant Útgarða-Loki (Fig. B-18). In Snorri’s version of the myth in *The Prose Edda*, Þórr and Loki set out on their journey in Þórr’s chariot that is pulled by Þórr’s magic goats. The two travelers stop for the night at a farmer’s home and Þórr provides a meal by slaughtering his goats. Þórr places the goat skins on the ground and tells everyone to throw the bones on the skins when they have finished eating. During the meal the farmer’s son Þjálfi breaks one of the bones to suck out the marrow. In the morning, Þórr hallows the bones and skins with his hammer in order to make the goats whole again and discovers that one of the goats is lame. Þórr is so enraged that the terrified farmer offers to give Þjálfi and his sister Röskva to Þórr as servants in compensation for the crippled goat. Þórr accepts and the four travellers continue their journey on foot and leave the goats behind.

Lamé-Fleury’s retelling of the myth matches Snorri’s until the point that the four travellers leave the farm. In Lamé-Fleury’s version, Þórr leaves the lame goat behind and rides the other one while Þjálfi and Röskva pull the chariot, which has the appearance of a sledge in the illustration that accompanies Lamé-Fleury’s text. Unlike Snorri, Lamé-

Fleury inserts an explicit moral into the myth and addresses his readership immediately after Þjálfi sucks the marrow out of the bone with the comment ‘You will see now how he was punished for his greed and disobedience’ “Vous allez voir, maintenant, comment il fut puni de sa gourmandise et de sa désobéissance” (*Mythology Related to Children* 169; *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* 255).

Beyond depicting the punishment of Þjálfi and his innocent sister Röskva, Lamé-Fleury’s illustration of Þórr’s trip to the court of the giant Útgarða-Loki is fascinating due to the details such as Þórr’s attire, the object that he is holding, and the fact that he is riding a goat. In Lamé-Fleury’s illustration Þórr is wearing a crown that is topped with three vegetative fronds that resemble grains of barley and are suggestive of plumes on the helmets of suits of armour; his leotard has a peculiar aspect that recalls the clothing of a court jester; and he is holding the same iconic bundle of objects resembling thunderbolts that he does in Lamé-Fleury’s illustration of the Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg.

The bundle of objects that Þórr is holding in Lamé-Fleury’s illustration is familiar from Stephanius’ rendering of Þórr, Óðinn, and Frigg (Fig. B-6) or from Rudbeck’s rendering of Þórr, Óðinn, and Frigg in the Temple of Upsala (Fig. B-7) and does not in the least resemble a ‘club’ “massue” which is the term used for the item in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* (248). In the *Interpretatio Romana* used by Tacitus, Þórr was associated with Hercules whose weapon was a club and Saxo describes Þórr as fighting with a club in Book Three of Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum*.⁴² However, the objects that Þórr is holding in Rudbeck’s rendering of the Magnus brothers’ woodcut and in Lamé-Fleury’s illustration do not resemble a club.

⁴² See Louis Moe’s illustration of Þórr fighting with a club on page 70 in Fr. Winkel Horn’s *Danmarks krønike* which is a translation into Danish from 1898 of Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum*.

My search for the original inspiration for Lamé-Fleury's peculiar illustration of Þórr (Fig. B-18) resulted in the discovery that it was based on an illustration by Rudbeck of the legendary Swedish Queen Disa (Fig. B-17) from a Swedish folktale with connections to the worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis in Northern Europe. It is highly probable that Rudbeck's illustration was originally based on an illustration of Isis from Classical Antiquity. Needless to say, Lamé-Fleury took considerable liberties when he revised Rudbeck's rendering of Disa to fit his retelling of the myth concerning Þórr, Þjálfi and Röskva. He changed the figure of Disa clothed in a net to that of Þórr dressed in a peculiar leotard with a diamond pattern and changed the figures of two men pulling the sledge to that of the children Þjálfi and Röskva. Lamé-Fleury also left out the iconography associated with the sun and moon and inserted the iconic thunderbolts into Þórr's hand.

4.8 England

William Caxton established the first press in England in London and the first dated book that he published in 1477 was *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (The Sayings of the Philosophers) featuring twenty-seven woodcuts. Publications on Norse subjects did not begin in England until the seventeenth century with translations of individual poems from *The Poetic Edda*, and Amos S. and Robert Southey published *Icelandic Poetry: Or the Edda of Sæmund* in 1797. Judy Quinn and Margaret Clunies Ross have observed in "The Image of Norse Poetry and Myth in Seventeenth-Century England" that

The conceptual world of Norse mythology was introduced to England in the

seventeenth century through the works of English antiquarians in contact with Scandinavian scholars but its impact beyond a small circle of septentrionalists, as they were known, appears to have been slight during that century. (189)

Scholarly publications in England, as elsewhere during the seventeenth century, did not feature illustrations of Norse mythology beyond renderings based on the Magnus brothers' woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg (Fig. B-5) from the *Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, which as previously mentioned was published in Rome in 1555 and translated into English in 1658.

Richard Verstegan's *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities concerning the most noble and renowned English Nation* was initially published in Antwerp in 1605 and then reprinted in London in 1628. The fact that Verstegan was familiar with the Latin version of Olaus Magnus' *Historia Gentibus*, rather than its English translation that was published in 1658, is evident from the publication date for *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*. Verstegan used the figures from the Magnus brothers' woodcut to create three illustrations of Óðinn and Frigg. However, Verstegan removed the figures from the context of the throne room in the woodcut and placed them in individual scenes to create three new illustrations.

Verstegan's illustration of Óðinn depicts him as an idol on a pedestal who is wearing a crown and holding an upraised sword and a shield with a town and mountains in the background. Verstegan's illustration of Þórr is obviously based on the Magnus brothers' woodcut, in that he is wearing a crown with a corona of twelve stars and is sitting indoors on a throne on a dais. Verstegan's Þórr is holding a sceptre in one hand and nothing in his other hand, which likely would not be the case if Verstegan had based

his figure of Þórr on the rendering by Rudbeck (310). Verstegan's illustration of Frigg depicts her as an idol on a pedestal in the countryside with a worshipper kneeling in prayer before her and a house in the background. Frigg's attire, weapons, and stance are all familiar from the Magnus brothers' woodcut.

Goldsmith's *History of England: From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Death of George II, with a Continuation to the Present Time* was first published in London in 1771 and was reprinted frequently thereafter. The thirty-sixth edition, which was printed in 1844 in Paris, contains two hundred woodcuts and the first illustration in the "Introductory Chapter" depicts a "Brief Sketch of the Saxon Idols From Which the Days of the Week Received Their Names" with a row of idols in a line across the page representing the seven days of the week (Goldsmith vii). Norse gods were frequently introduced in publications in the English and other West Germanic languages by means of the etymological history of the names for four of the weekdays. The figures of Týr, Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg represent Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The depiction of Þórr, in Goldsmith's illustration appears to have been modeled on the figures in the Magnus brothers' woodcut. Þórr is holding a sceptre but not lightning bolts, and he is sitting on a throne but his corona of stars is mostly hidden by a canopy. Óðinn is not in armour in Goldsmith's rendering but he is brandishing a sword. Frigg is holding a sword but her clothing is very different from the Magnus brothers' woodcut.

Frank S. Dobbins also published an illustration representing the etymology of the days of the week in *Error's Chains: How Forged and Broken. A Complete, Graphic, and Comparative History of the Many Strange Beliefs, Superstitious Practices, Domestic Peculiarities, Sacred Writings, Systems of Philosophy, Legends and Traditions, Customs*

and Habits of Mankind Throughout the World, Ancient and Modern in 1883. The figures of the Norse gods in *Error's Chains* are closer to those in the Magnus brothers' woodcut, and, as in the woodcut, the figures are depicted in a throne room (Dobbins 198). The illustration in *Error's Chains* is in the subsection entitled "Paganism of the Saxons" in a chapter entitled "Our Ancestors."

Illustrations from Norse mythology sometimes served as frontispieces in nineteenth-century British publications that were otherwise not illustrated. One example is *Northern Antiquities*, Bishop Thomas Percy's revision and translation of Mallet's *Monuments de la Mythologie* that was first published in 1770 and was reprinted frequently thereafter. The 1847 edition of *Northern Antiquities* features a frontispiece of a painting of Yggdrasill by Oluf Olufsen Bagge that is a reverse image of the illustration previously published in *Historie de L'Islande* in 1840 (Marmier 127). Another example of a frontispiece in a publication without other illustrations is Benjamin Thorpe's *Northern Mythology: Comprising the Principal Popular Traditions and Superstitions of Scandinavia, North Germany, and the Netherlands* that was published in 1851. Thorpe's frontispiece consists of a rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" that appears to have been modeled on Bartholin's rendering (Fig. B-4) in that the lowest of the seated figures is male and, as in Bartholin's rendering, the scene is a reverse image of the copperplate rendering by Verelius (Fig. B-2) of the manuscript illustration in U (Fig. B-1).

David Ashurst notes that the first book to popularize Old Norse mythology in Britain was Grenville Pigott's *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology Containing a Popular Account of the Two Eddas and of the Religion of Odin*, which was published in 1839. Like the Swedes and the Danes, Pigott laments in his Introduction that although the

myths of Greece and Rome are “made familiar to us from our childhood, we have been so long content to remain in great measure ignorant of the religious superstitions of our immediate ancestors” (xxii qtd. in Ashurst 46). Ashurst comments that Pigott links the Victorians with their Viking ancestors by praising the Vikings as innovators who he believes invented oil painting and “aligns them with three of the main pillars of the Victorian value system; mercantile expansion, technical innovation and the more equivocal military virtue of military vigour,” the latter of which was tempered in the Victorian military “by justice and Christian charity unknown to our heathen ancestors” (47). Ashurst also observes that “a fourth pillar —belief in the Almighty— is by no means lacking in Old Norse mythology as expounded in Pigott” (47). For Pigott and the Victorians the figure of Almighty in Norse mythology. i.e., *Alfaðr* was not to be confused with Óðinn who would perish in the battle of Ragnarökr and thus would not be present when a new earth arose from the ashes. Pigott’s *Manual of Scandinavian Mythology* was not illustrated, but the notion that Ragnarökr represented the doom of the pagan gods and the coming of Christ is evident in one of W. G. Collingwood’s illustrations that will be discussed below.

Andrew Wawn has identified a phenomenon that he calls the “cultural trickle down effect” in Victorian England by which scholarly labours progressed from the creation of editions of the Norse material, to the writing of dictionaries and grammars, and then to the production of translations (“Victorian Viking Novels”). Wawn observes that a further trickle-down effect occurred when scholarly translations enabled the writing of paraphrases of the original material which further inspired the production of paintings, poetry, drama, and novels for the Victorian public (“Victorian Viking Novels”). Thus the

trickle-down effect in the Victoria era whereby publications progressed from scholarly works to popular publications soon went beyond dictionaries, grammars, and translations to illustrated manuals of Old Norse mythology for adults. Publications of illustrated mythology manuals written for children and illustrated retellings of Norse myths for a young audience began to appear in England soon after the publication of Bullfinch's *The Age of Fable* in 1855.

Wawn notes that “the most influential attempt to introduce Viking-age mythology to young Victorian readers was Annie and Elizabeth Keary’s *The Heroes of Asgard and the Giants of Jotunheim; or, The Week and its Story*, which was first published in 1857” (*Vikings and the Victorians* 197).⁴³ The framing story for *The Heroes of Asgard and the Giants of Jotunheim*

describes a family Christmas, during which the children find Aunt Helen and Uncle Alick in the library studying Percy’s *Northern Antiquities*. Starved of such knowledge at school, the children are promised that on each of the seven days of the Christmas week, they will learn about the name of the day and at least one related old northern myth. (*Vikings and Victorians* 197)

The book was published frequently thereafter—with the abbreviated title *The Heroes of Asgard*—and in 1905 was “adapted for the use of schools, with new introduction, glossaries, etc.” (Stephens 31).⁴⁴ *The Heroes of Asgard* has since lost its scholarly

⁴³ The illustrations by the French painter, engraver and illustrator Charles Huard (1813 – 1874) were used in publications of *The Heroes of Asgard* from 1870 until 1932 and the illustrations of the English artist and illustrator Charles Edmund Brock (1870 - 1938) from 1898 up to the present, with some overlap between reprints of editions illustrated by the two artists.

⁴⁴ See Stephens *Bio-bibliography of Annie Keary, 1825-1879* for a annotated bibliography of *The Heroes of Asgard* from 1857 – 1902 (29 - 32).

apparatus that included material from Norse scholars such as “Simrock, Mallet, Laing, Thorp, Howitt and Dasent” (Keary “Preface”), but is still in print today.

Ashurst remarks that Thorpe’s *Northern Mythology* “exerted influence on the Keary sisters and their highly successful popular account of the eddic myths” for two reasons. First because Thorpe provided “a mass of material on the modern folk beliefs, practices and tales” that “encouraged people to have more confidence in being part of a living tradition that connected them to the early Middle Ages” (Ashurst 56). And second because Thorpe’s philological analysis “encouraged an interest in etymology and the ways in which the myths may have resonance in modern languages” (Ashurst 56). Ashurst also notes that the title of the Keary sisters’ book reflects that for the Keary sisters “the nature of heroism as they conceive it is thoroughly moral—a matter of resolutely combatting evil and of the strong defending the weak” (60). The adult characters in the framing story of *The Heroes of Asgard*, who are relating the myths to children, explicitly state that they are adapting the material to suit their young audience, and “thus by means of this framing narrative, the authors account for the fact that the myths have been embroidered and sanitized” (Ashurst 58).

An illustration by Louis Huard that was used as a frontispiece in the Keary sisters’ 1908 edition of *The Heroes of Asgard*, provides an example of an illustration that is not faithful to the description in the text concerning the giantess Skaði in the process of choosing a husband from among the gods (Fig. B-19). In the version of the myth in *The Prose Edda*, Snorri states that Skaði came seeking revenge for the death of her father, ‘But the Æsir offered her atonement and compensation, the first item of which was that she was to choose herself a husband out of the Æsir and choose by the feet and see

nothing else of them’ “En æsir buðu henni sætt ok yfirbætr ok it fyrsta, at hon skal kjósa sér mann af ásum ok kjósa at fótum ok sjá ekki fleira af” (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 100).⁴⁵ It appears obvious that the gods are trying to trick Skaði and they succeed. Snorri’s text makes it clear that she does not get the husband that she wanted because she is only allowed to see their feet: ‘Then she saw one person’s feet that were exceptionally beautiful and said: ‘I choose that one; there can be little that is ugly about Baldr.’ But it was Njord of Noatun.’ “Þá sá hon eins manns fætr forkunnarfagra ok mælti ‘Þenna kýs ek. Fátt mun ljótt á Baldri.’ En þat var Njöðr ór Nóatúnum” (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Snorri Sturluson Edda* 100).

In Keary’s text, as in Snorri’s, Skaði also has only the feet of the gods on which to base her decision. However, in Huard’s illustration, Skaði, who appears dressed in the style of a Roman matron, is depicted looking down at a row of feet wearing shoes so it appears that she is basing her choice on the most appealing pair of shoes rather than the most beautiful feet, which in the myth she incorrectly presumes would be those of Baldr (Fig. B-19). Huard’s illustration as a mediation of the text represents either his sensibilities concerning the portrayal of nude feet in connection with the choosing of a husband or else a lack of attention to detail. In the final analysis, Huard’s illustration visually undermines the point of the myth.

E. E. Speight published *Children of Odin* in 1903 with illustrations by three unacknowledged illustrators, of which only Frederic Lawrence is easily identifiable.⁴⁶

The illustrations in *Children of Odin* vary in artistic quality and were likely copied from

⁴⁵ The Old Norse noun *fótr* can be translated as either “foot” or “foot and leg” but translators of this passage such as Faulkes and illustrators of this scene invariably choose “foot,” or rather “feet” in the plural. See the definition in Cleasby-Vigfússon (168).

⁴⁶ Speight’s *Children of Odin* should not be confused with Padraic Colum’s *The Children of Odin* that was published in New York in 1920 with illustrations by Willy Pogány.

other sources. It is interesting to compare Speight's illustration by an unidentified illustrator in *Children of Odin* of Skaði choosing her husband from among the gods (Fig. B-20) with Huard's rendering in *The Heroes of Asgard* (Fig. B-19). Speight's Skaði is dressed as a Viking warrior, and aside from the wings on her helmet, her attire matches the description in the *Prose Edda* in that she put on 'helmet and mail-coat and all weapons of war' "hjálmm ok brynju ok öll hervápn" (Faulkes, *Edda* 61; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 100) before going to demand compensation from the gods for the death of her father. In Speight's illustration, Skaði is pointing imperiously at the bare feet of a god, who along with his fellow gods is standing draped with a cloth that covers him from his head to his ankles. As previously noted, in Huard's illustration the gods are wearing shoes which are visible at the bottom of the curtain that they are standing behind. Of course, the scene in the text is lacking in descriptive details which makes the illustrative choices regarding the concealment of the gods and what was visible to Skaði all the more interesting.

Dr. Wilhelm Wagner's *Nordisch-germanische Götter und Helden* (Nordic-Germanic Gods and Heroes), which as previously discussed was published in Germany circa 1878, was translated, revised, and published as a children's book in England in 1880 with the title *Asgard and the Gods*. The editor W. S. W. Anson does not discuss his editorial agenda in his Preface; however, a comparison of the original work and its English edition reveals that revising *Nordisch-germanische Götter* involved stripping it of the purely German myths and the illustrations pertinent to that material. The English edition was well received as indicated by the words of an anonymous reviewer:

This volume of "Tales and Tradition of our Northern Ancestors told for Boys and

Girls” is an admirable work, and one full of interest for people of all ages. It is the best written and most readable connected account of the strange, weird-like superstitions, customs, and singular religious beliefs of the old Northmen ever written, and the subject is treated throughout in that masterly manner that must ensure for it general acceptance and approbation....We ought to add that it is illustrated with a large number of spirited engravings...which add immensely to its value and interest. (Rev. 186)

The reviewer, like the editor, does not mention Wagner as the original author, which is an indication of the state of copyright in regard to foreign works at the time. The transformation of the text and illustrations of *Nordisch-germanische Götter* into *Asgard and the Gods*, also serves as a reminder that although German and Norse mythologies have elements in common they have enough differences to stand on their own as separate mythologies.

The influence of *The Heroes of Asgard* in bringing Old Norse mythology into the realm of children’s books is evident in bibliographies of the period in titles such as: Julia Goddard’s *Wonderful Stories from Northern Lands*, 1871; David M. Smith’s *The Silver Star*, 1880; Hamilton W. Mabie’s *Norse Stories: Retold from the Edda*, 1882; Victor Plarr’s *Thor and the Giants; Or, Some Very Old Stories for Very Young People*, 1901; Katherine F. Boulton’s *Heroes of the Northland: Their Stories Retold*, 1903; Thomas Cartwright’s *One for Wod and One for Lok, Or, Asgard, Midgard and Utgard*, 1907; E. M. Wilmot-Buxton’s *Told by the Northmen, Stories from the Eddas and Sagas*, 1908; and many others. The retelling of Norse myths for Victorian children represents a remediation of the texts of the eddas that is essentially a misappropriation of the Norse cultural

heritage that brought the Norse gods and their myths into the mainstream of popular culture. Many of the early print children's books based on Norse mythology have either been in continuous print, or else have been frequently resurrected in new editions, or are still available as "print on demand" items.

Aside from children's books, books on comparative mythology were a popular genre for adults in England and several illustrated German manuals of mythology were revised and translated into English during the nineteenth century. A. S. Murray published *Manual of Mythology: Greek and Roman, Norse and Old German, Hindoo and Egyptian Mythology* in 1872. In the preface to the second edition of his *Manual* in 1876, Murray notes that the section on Norse and Old German mythology has "been further made more readily comprehensible by the addition of new illustrations" (v). However, Murray does not acknowledge that the illustrations of Óðinn, Frigg, Freyja, Þórr, and Freyr, which represent five of his six illustrations of Norse mythology, are exact reproductions of illustrations by Ludwig Pietsch for Reusch's *Die Nordischen Göttersagen* (The Norse Sagas of the Gods) published in Germany in 1865. The illustration of Fenrir in Murray's *Manual of Mythology* was likely copied from another source that I have yet to identify. The development of copyright restrictions had begun in England with the Statute of Queen Anne in 1709, but it was still relatively new and possibly its application for derivative works, translations, and illustrations was not yet clear.

Olive Bray published a dual language edition of *The Poetic Edda* entitled *The Elder or poetic edda, commonly known as Saemund's Edda* with illustrations by the antiquarian scholar and artist W. G. Collingwood for the Viking Club in London in

1908.⁴⁷ Bray addressed her readers in her “Introduction” concerning the purpose of Collingwood’s illustrations:

Where we have failed to catch the spirit of the Icelandic or to find for it worthy English expression, we hope that the illustrations will suggest that a wealth of beauty is waiting to be represented in modern art by the painter as it was pictured of old by the Icelandic poets. (i)

Carolyne Larrington remarks in “Translating the Poetic Edda into English” that Bray was “very conscious of the vivid visual images which the mythological poems produced, and attributes some translation difficulties to their interference” (27). In Bray’s own words the difficulty in translating the poems arose because “their style is so essentially graphic without being descriptive that the more familiar we are with their works the more difficult does it seem to translate them into words instead of colour and form” (i).

Collingwood created facing-page illustrations for the title pages for each poem of Bray’s edition that often function as a dynamic pair; e.g. the illustrations for “Hárbarðsljóð” (Greybeard and Thor) depict Þórr and Óðinn gesturing angrily at each other across the gutter of the pages which suggests the strait of water that separates them in the poem (182 - 183). Collingwood’s illustration for “Baldrs Draumar” (Baldr’s Dreams) depicts the gods engaged in one of their favourite games which involved throwing objects at the supposedly invincible Baldr, and Loki is depicted in the process of guiding Höðr’s hand to throw the fatal sprig of mistletoe at Baldr (239). This

⁴⁷ Collingwood is a well-known scholar but Bray is very obscure and I could not track down any information about her. Google searches reveal that Olive Bray is traditionally a very popular name in Britain but none of them are identified as an Old Norse scholar and translator. Alison Finlay enquired on my behalf and Matthew Townend commented in a personal email that “when I was researching my Collingwood book, I remember thinking how odd it was that there was so little information about Olive Bray. I don’t recall her featuring much, if at all, in (e.g.) Viking Club minutes or meetings...”.

illustration concerning the death of Baldr serves as a visual reminder that details from the myths of *The Prose Edda* are often conflated with the versions of the myths in *The Poetic Edda*. Only *The Prose Edda* explicitly states that Baldr's brother Höðr is blind and that Loki guides Höðr's hand to throw the mistletoe at Baldr. Moreover, only *The Prose Edda* and "Völuspá" describe mistletoe as the instrument of Baldr's death (Larrington 31-32).

One of the pair of Collingwood's illustrations for "Völuspá inn Skamma" (The Vala's Shorter Soothsaying) depicts a mysterious figure mentioned in the first two lines of stanza 17; "There shall come hereafter another mightier whose name I dare not now make known" that Collingwood depicts as Christ on the cross (219). Collingwood's Christ figure serves as a reminder of the interpretation and visualization of the poem by Christian readers in the Victorian era, and also the often debated possibility that the poem itself was composed during the conversion era.

The British historian Héléne Adeline Guerber published *Myths of the Norsemen from Eddas and Sagas* in 1909, which is illustrated by means of black and white photographs of gallery paintings and other artworks. Guerber's *Myths of the Norsemen* sometimes features connections to Old Norse mythology that were no longer credible in her day but were still of interest. For example, she states that "As Odin was the leader of all disembodied spirits, he was identified in the middle ages with the Pied Piper of Hamelin" (27). Consequently, a reproduction of H. Kaulbach's painting "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" (22b) is situated rather incongruously on the recto side of a page with J. C. Dollman's painting of "A Viking Foray" (22a). Nonetheless, despite the intrusion of images from other sources, Guerber's illustrations provide her readers with images of Norse mythology by famous artists that otherwise would have been inaccessible to them.

4.9 United States

The printing press arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1639 and its first publication was a broadsheet of a Pilgrim pledge entitled “The Freeman’s Oath” (Burt 8). The foundation myth of the United States features an emphasis on their love of freedom and the institution of democracy and these ideals made Americans receptive to the remediated versions of the eddas and sagas that were being published in England. The enthusiasm on the part of some Americans for claiming the Norse discovery of America as a foundation myth is clearly expressed in a lecture by A. Davis entitled “A lecture on the Antiquities of Central America, and on The Discovery of New England by the Northmen, Five Hundred Years Before Columbus.”⁴⁸ This lecture was published in the early nineteenth century as *Antiquities of Central America: And the Discovery of New-England by the Northmen, Five Hundred Years Before Columbus, a Lecture, Delivered in New-York, Washington, Boston, and Other Cities* and was frequently reprinted thereafter. In the sixth printing of the pamphlet in 1840, Davis expresses his admiration for Leif the Lucky and his crew in no uncertain terms:

A word in praise of the Scandinavians. Like the Patriarch, they went
search of a region, they knew not where. We praise them for their courage, we
applaud them for their zeal, we respect them for their motives; for they were
anxious to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge. They reached the wished-for
land,

“Where now the western sun

O’er fields and floods, o’er every living soul,

⁴⁸ Burt does not mention this lecture in *The Chronology of American Literature*. I discovered it during a search on WorldCat.

Diffuseth glad repose.”

The Scandinavians have opened to view a broad region, where smiling hope invites successive generations from the old world. (22 - 23)

Davies stresses that the Norse were Christians after the conversion of Leif the Lucky, and the conversion of Iceland in the year 1000, and observes, “what a contrast between the condition of the Icelanders and that of their forefathers. They were the worshippers of the god Wodin....But the Prince of Peace has broken the scepter of the Father of Carnage” (22). Consequently, Davies and his fellow Americans were able to envision the conversion-era Vikings as brave explorers who found new lands ready for occupation by Christian immigrants who were fleeing oppression in their European homelands.

It seems unlikely but the first illustrations of Norse gods published in the United States appear to have been in an English translation of Lamé-Fleury’s *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* (Mythology Related to Children) by an anonymous translator that was published in Charleston, South Carolina in 1853. The review of *Mythology Related to Children* in 1854 notes that the translator was “a lady of South Carolina” (255). The translator herself appears to have determined to remain anonymous and autographed copies of the book on at least two occasions simply as “the Translator.”⁴⁹ The two illustrations of the Norse gods in *Mythology Related to Children* are absolutely identical to the illustrations in the 1891 edition of *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants*, i.e., the illustration of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg in the throne room based on figures from the Magnus brothers’ woodcut and the illustration of Þórr riding a goat with Þjálfi and

⁴⁹ One of the autographs is in a copy that I purchased from ABE Books and is of interest because it is addressed to Mrs. R. P. Tillinghast who was the wife of Joseph L. Tillinghast (1790 -1844), US representative from Rhode Island. The other autograph is in a copy in the collection of Duke University and is addressed to Miss Larah L. Lehley.

Röskva pulling a sledge that is supposed to represent Þórr's chariot. The illustrations in *Mythology Related to Children* were printed separately and pasted into ornate borders that were printed on the page opposite their text.

There are also illustrations of Óðinn and Þórr in Thomas Bulfinch's *The Age of Fable, Or, Stories of Gods and Heroes* that was published in Boston in 1855. In the first of Bulfinch's illustrations, Óðinn is standing holding a large shield and a sword and wearing a distinctive helmet (436). The style of Óðinn's attire and weapons has more of a crusader quality than Norse and may have been repurposed and reused from another source. Bulfinch's illustration of Óðinn also features the two birds sitting on his shoulders, and although they do not resemble ravens, the birds were likely intended to suggest Óðinn's ravens Huginn and Muninn. There is also an ill-defined canine creature at Óðinn's feet that might be construed as one of his wolves.

Bulfinch's second illustration depicts Þórr holding his hammer in one hand and a cloak over his head with the other hand as if to shield or hide himself while riding in a cart pulled by goats (447). This illustration is associated in Bulfinch with the myth from *The Prose Edda* concerning Þórr's visit to the court of Útgarða-Loki (447). However, in Snorri's version of the myth and also in Bulfinch's redaction, there is no mention of Þórr's goats and Þórr and his companions travel on foot, which suggests that Bulfinch reused an illustration from another source that has yet to be identified.

Many editions of books on Norse mythology from the nineteenth century onwards were jointly published in England and the United States. There is at least one notable instance when the creators of an edition collaborated in a trans-Atlantic project that was only published in England, possibly without the translator and the illustrator ever having

met in person, i.e., Bray and Collingwood's edition of the *Elder Edda* in 1908 that has been discussed above. Matthew Townend does not believe that Bray and Collingwood worked closely together. It is more likely that "he received and illustrated a set of translations that had already been done" (Townend). With the exception of figures such as Bray and Collingwood, it is often difficult to distinguish the nationalities of the authors and illustrators of English-language editions without spending more time conducting research than my dissertation allows. Consequently, I will now briefly discuss some of the notable examples that were published simultaneously on the grounds that, as a whole, they represented a target audience identified by publishers on both sides of the Atlantic.

British manuals of mythology that I have previously discussed were frequently reprinted in the United States, such as the second edition of Murray's *Manual of Mythology: Greek and Roman, Norse and Old German, Hindoo and Egyptian Mythology* that was reprinted in New York by C. Scribner's Sons in 1876 with the editorial comment that it had previously only been available in British editions. Similarly *Asgard and the Gods*, the British revision and translation of Wagner's *Nordisch Germanische Götter und Helden*, was published in 1880 in London by S. Sonnenschein and also by E. P. Dutton in New York. Children's books of Norse mythology written in Britain or the U. S. were also often published in both countries. Examples of simultaneous publications include the second edition of Annie Keary's *The Heroes of Asgard* in London and New York in 1871; Mary H. Foster's *Asgard Stories: Tales from Norse Mythology* in 1901; Hamilton Wright Mabie's *Norse Stories Retold* in Boston and London in 1902; and Jennie Hall's *Viking Tales* in Chicago, New York and London in 1902; to name but a few. Thus

children on both sides of the Atlantic were being taught a similar set of moral values from remediated versions of the eddas and sagas.

4.10 Conclusion

Prior to the seventeenth century, knowledge of Norse mythology outside of Iceland was limited to the works of a few scholars such as Saxo Grammaticus, Adam of Bremen, and Olaus Magnus. The only illustration of Norse gods during this period was the woodcut published by Olaus Magnus of Frigg and Óðinn standing on either side of Þórr seated on a throne in 1555 (Fig. B-5). The print editions, translations, and retellings that followed the discovery of the Icelandic textual material concerning the Norse cultural heritage in the seventeenth century resulted in further remediations of illustrations that were considered to be historical artifacts. In the seventeenth century, illustrations in print were primarily based on renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration in a fourteenth-century Icelandic manuscript (Fig. B-1) and the Magnus brothers’ sixteenth-century woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg (Fig. B-5); and Skonvig’s seventeenth-century illustration of the giantess Hyrrokkin riding a wolf from a pictorial rune stone that was misidentified for a long period of time as representing Óðinn riding Sleipnir (Fig. B-9). The seventeenth-century print renderings from Scandinavia of “The Deluding of Gylfi” and the Hyrrokkin runestone inspired Jakob Sigurðsson’s hand-copied illustrations in Icelandic paper manuscripts, which serve as a reminder that the scribal practice of hand-copying manuscripts and early print books did not cease in Iceland with the arrival of the printing press. Jakob’s illustrations are of special interest because the Icelandic press did not publish books on Old Norse mythology, either with or without illustrations.

A wide variety of new illustrations of Norse mythology began to appear in print in the late eighteenth century and increased greatly in number when Norse mythology was discovered by popular culture. The initial popularization of Norse mythology occurred in countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Germany, all of which claimed the Norse cultural heritage as a national genesis myth for their respective countries. Scholars in England and the United States also considered Norse mythology to be part of their national cultural heritage and the ‘trickle down effect’ resulted in the inclusion of Norse mythology in aspects of popular culture, especially in England. France could also claim a cultural connection between the gods of the Franks and the Norse gods. However, French scholars were not generally as interested in claiming Old Norse mythology as part of their cultural identity as Scandinavian scholars were. New illustrations of the eddas and sagas for popular publications were based at first on the original texts. However, the subsequent paraphrases and retellings of the primary texts resulted in the creation of entirely new illustrations that represent a further remediation of the descriptive textual material that originated from Old Norse oral poetry.

Translations and editions of the *Poetic Edda* initially inspired more illustrations than translations and editions of *The Prose Edda*, which is evident in Sander’s Swedish edition of *The Prose Edda* in 1893, Gellerup’s Danish edition of *The Poetic Edda* in 1895, and Bray’s dual-language Old Norse and English edition of *The Poetic Edda* in 1908. Indeed, early editions of *The Prose Edda* were meagrely illustrated and often consisted merely of renderings of U’s “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration. However, in the mid-nineteenth century illustrators moved beyond “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration (Fig. B-1) and the Magnus brothers’ woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg (Fig.

B-5) when the text of *The Prose Edda* was remediated as material for manuals of mythology and for retellings in children's books. Illustrations in retellings in children's books sometimes reflect a significant departure from the original myth in order to supply a moral. Such is the case in Lamé-Fleury's depiction of Þórr in *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants* where the god is riding a goat and Þjálfi and Röskva are pulling Þórr's 'chariot' as a consequence of Þjálfi's gluttony that resulted in the crippling of one of Þórr's goats (Fig. B-18).

My discussion of the small number of illustrations in non-print media prior to 1554, along with my brief survey of illustrations in print from 1554 - 1914, clearly demonstrates the potential of illustrations to contribute to our knowledge of the transmission and reception of Norse mythology that includes aspects of cultural history and book history. An analog image-hoard for Old Norse mythology exists only in the unrealized potential of illustrations in diverse media in a wide variety of locations throughout the world that will never be physically gathered together in one geographical location. However, the advent of the digital age and its technology has advanced to the point that a digital image-hoard is now possible, which will enable scholarly research along with knowledge creation and dissemination for this field. In Part Two of my dissertation I will present the history of the production of facsimiles as images beginning in the analog past and progressing to the digital present. I will conclude Part Two with an overview concerning the creation of my digital image repository, its methodological underpinnings, and its future applications.

PART TWO

**ILLUSTRATIONS OF OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY IN THE
DIGITAL PRESENT**

Chapter Five

From the Analog Past to the Digital Present

5.1 Introduction

The scholar and library systems innovator Frederick G. Kilgour observed in *The Evolution of the Book* in the late nineteen-nineties that “it is the print lithography process of the last century and a half that produces the tiny integrated circuits of microprocessor chips” (159). Kilgour’s comment serves as a reminder that the roots of the digital present extend far back into the analog past. As long as there have been textual scholars there has been a desire to produce copies of manuscripts, books, and illustrations as accurately as possible. Old Norse scholarship has participated in the evolution of technological advances for the mechanical reproduction of manuscripts and illustrations beginning with the early efforts of antiquarian scholars to produce facsimiles in the seventeenth century through to the digital editions of the present day. Thus the digital images of analog illustrations in MyNDIR—the digital image repository that is part of my Ph.D. project—also reflect the history of the technologies that enabled the initial production and subsequent remediations of illustrations in manuscripts and early print books.

This chapter presents the context for MyNDIR in terms of the history of knowledge dissemination regarding text and images of Old Norse material. I will begin with an examination of the historiographical and technological transition of print material from analog representations beginning in the sixteenth-century to digital facsimiles in the present day, and I will discuss the institutions that were involved in the process for the field of Old Norse. Next I will present an overview of digital projects that have focused

on Old Norse material. Then I will discuss the academic discourse and cultural biases concerning the scholarly and pedagogical value of image-based humanities computing, specifically in regard to images of illustrations as opposed to images of textual material. Next I will examine popular culture web sites and their use of Old Norse texts and illustrations. Then I will discuss the state of digital projects such as the *William Blake Archive* that only incidentally include illustrations of Old Norse mythology and the reaction of the general public to scholarly presentation in regard to the navigation of such sites. I will conclude the chapter by considering the potential of crowd-sourcing in an academic context, i.e., combining the efforts of scholars and self-directed learners in an collaborative online project that maintains academic standards.

5.2. Old Norse Scholarship and Digital Materiality

The scholarly interest in the manuscripts containing Old Norse mythology and sagas that began in the seventeenth century has endured to the present day, which is demonstrated by the ongoing demand for print copies of Icelandic manuscripts and, as technology progressed, for facsimile editions and most recently for digital editions. The ongoing production of facsimile editions insured that the remediation of Icelandic manuscripts not only kept abreast of analog forms of reproduction but also insured that Old Norse texts and facsimiles participated in the digital age soon after the emergence of the World Wide Web in 1991. The evolution of the technological tools used through the years to produce and publish transcriptions, facsimile editions, and digital editions of Icelandic manuscripts spans book history and culture.

The scholar Árni Magnússon, who was born and grew up in Iceland, began working for Thomas Bartholin in Copenhagen in 1684 when Iceland was still under

Danish rule. Árni became a prodigious collector of Icelandic manuscripts and documents, both for his personal collection and for the Danish state. It is not known exactly how much of Árni's collection was destroyed in the great fire of Copenhagen in 1728, but a substantial part of it was rescued. Árni died in 1730 and bequeathed what remained of his collection to the University of Copenhagen along with funds to care for the manuscripts, to copy them, and to publish editions. Árni's wishes were respected and *Den Arnamagnæanske Kommisson*, which was established soon after his death, published the first print edition of a transcription of a manuscript from Árni's collection in 1770. Publications based on Árni's manuscripts continued to be produced after his death in ways that Árni could not have foreseen but no doubt would have approved. The technology for creating facsimiles during Árni's time initially involved hand-copying manuscripts and then using the copies to create copperplate etchings for the printing process. The use of copperplate press gave way to lithography, which was developed in the early nineteenth century, and hand copying became unnecessary with the invention of photolithography, which was surpassed by photography and then by digital photography (Colceriu 5).

Árni's personal collection remained intact in Copenhagen for almost two hundred years after his death. Iceland did not gain home rule until 1904 and only achieved full independence when it became a republic in 1944. The Icelandic government began petitioning the Danish government in 1907 to repatriate the legal documents and charters from Episcopal sees and other Icelandic institutions that had been taken to Denmark. The Danish government complied in part when a large number of documents, seven hundred charters, and four manuscripts were delivered to the National Archive of Iceland in 1928.

However, Danish politicians and many Danish scholars were against fully acquiescing to Iceland's request for the return of the rest of the manuscripts, which included Árni Magnússon's collection, i.e., the largest collection of Icelandic manuscripts in Denmark.

A lengthy process of negotiations ensued between the Icelandic and Danish governments over the course of the next thirty-three years that was finally resolved with a compromise in 1961, with the agreement that Denmark would divide Árni's collection and return "material written or translated by Icelanders" or that "mainly or entirely dealt with Icelandic or Icelandic subjects" (Sigurðsson, "Bring the manuscripts home!" 174). Manuscripts from the Danish Royal Library were also included in the agreement. Iceland agreed to waive any rights to other claims to other national treasures that resided in Denmark and established *Handritastofnun Íslands* (The Manuscript Institute of Iceland) at the University of Iceland in 1962. The terms of the agreement stated that the repatriation of the manuscripts would take place over a period of twenty-five years that would begin when the agreement had been ratified by the Danish parliament. The Danish parliament passed acts concerning the agreement in 1961 and again in 1965 but "legal challenges after the law was passed delayed the treaty from being validated until a ruling by the Danish Supreme Court on March 19, 1971" (Sigurðsson, "Bring the manuscripts home!" 174).

A Danish coast guard ship delivered the *Codex Regius of the Elder Edda* and the *Flateyjarbók* manuscripts to Reykjavík on April 21, 1971 and thousands of Icelanders were waiting on the pier to witness the historic event. In 1972, *Handritastofnun Íslands* was renamed *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi* (The Árni Magnússon Institute in Iceland), which is often simply referred to as *Árnastofnun* (Árni's Institute). In 2006,

Árnastofnun was merged with four other institutes, to create *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum* (The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies), which is an academic research institute that is independent of the University of Iceland. As part of *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi*, *Árnastofnun* continues to work closely with *Den Arnamagnæanske Samling* (The Arnamagnæan Collection), formerly *Det Arnamagnæanske Institut* (The Arnamagnæan Institute) at the University of Copenhagen that the Danish Government established in 1956 while the subject of repatriating the manuscripts was still a topic of intense debate between the two countries.

Det Arnamagnæanske Institut oversaw the long process of returning the manuscripts which included making any necessary repairs to the artifacts before transferring them and thoroughly documenting the repair process, as well as producing images of each manuscript before transferring them to Reykjavík. The *Árnastofnun* and *Arnamagnæan* institutes have continued the publication of facsimile editions that began almost two hundred and fifty years ago with hand-copying in the eighteenth century and now involves the use of digital photography along with the use of XML mark up to produce electronic editions. Icelandic manuscripts in collections in other institutions around the world are gradually also being digitized, although often not with the same thoroughness that the *Árnastofnun* and the *Arnamagnæan* institutes bring to their projects.

Scholarly initiatives for digital projects for Old Norse material, from the beginnings of the internet to the present day, consist of five basic types, all of which are generally focused on textual material, with the exception of digital image databases of archaeological artifacts. The first type of textual project involves the digitization of

manuscript catalogues either by simply providing digital images of print sources or by marking up manuscript descriptions to create finding aids. The latter type of project for Old Norse materials is largely the result of the MASTER's (Manuscript Access Through Standards for Electronic Records) project that was initiated in January 1991 and concluded in June 2001.⁵⁰ The second type of project focuses on marking up the textual material to provide machine-readable editions of medieval Nordic manuscripts that began with MENOTA (Medieval Nordic Text Archive), which was initiated in 2001 and came online in 2003.

The third type of project unites manuscript descriptions with digital images of the primary source, an early example of which was Sagnanet <sagnanet.is>. Sagnanet was a collaborative project by the National and University Library of Iceland, the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík, Iceland, and The Fiske Icelandic Collection at the Cornell University Library. Sagnanet consisted of an online virtual collection of approximately 250,000 manuscript pages. The Sagnanet project began in 1997, went online in 2001, became inaccessible sometime in 2008, and thus represents an example of the transitory nature of digital resources.

The fourth type of digital project unites manuscript catalogue descriptions marked up with XML with digital images of the complete manuscript, and a current example is *Handrit* (Manuscripts), which went online in the spring of 2010 and is accessible at <handrit.is>. *Handrit* is a collaborative project by the National and University Library of Iceland, the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík, and the Arnarnagæan Institute in Copenhagen. *Handrit* is engaged in the process of digitally

⁵⁰ "The Electronic Access to Medieval Manuscripts" (EAMMS) was created in North America while the European Union was funding a project called Manuscript Access through Standards for Electronic Records (MASTER)" (Colceriu, 22).

reuniting Árni Magnússon's original collection, and will also include the National and University Library's large collection of paper manuscripts.

The fifth type of digital project consists of sites for comprehensive collections of electronic critical editions of a specific genre, a current example of which is the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* site, which is "an international project to edit the corpus of medieval Norse-Icelandic skaldic poetry." The site for the *Skaldic Poetry* project presents texts marked up with XML along with digital images of the primary sources and the terms for its database search fields include skalds, poems, texts, manuscripts, and words. Other comprehensive textual sites are in the works such as the *Arnarnagnæan's Stories for all times: The Icelandic Fornaldarsögur (Alle tiders historier: De islandske fornaldarsagaer)*. The *Fornaldarsögur* project will "survey the entire transmission history of the Fornaldarsögur and produce new digital editions of some of the principal manuscripts in which they are preserved" (Driscoll "Den Arnarnagnæanske Samling").

Faulkes and others have thoroughly documented the textual transmission of *The Prose Edda* and *Heimskringla*. Ursula Dronke and other Old Norse scholars have examined the obscure origins and transmission of the poems of *The Poetic Edda*. Digital projects have focused on textual content and have only incidentally included illustrations of Old Norse mythology when they appear in textual artifacts. Consequently, the transmission and reception of illustrations in manuscripts and early print sources in regard to the texts of *The Prose Edda*, *Heimskringla*, and *The Poetic Edda* has received scant critical attention. Thus the creation of a digital image repository for illustrations, i.e., MyNDIR, represents a sixth type of digital project for Old Norse studies in that it

will provide a comprehensive collection of images with descriptive metadata for linking individual images to their texts.

Illustrations and remediations of illustrations of the eddas, as well as *Heimskringla*, in early print sources constitute paratextual elements representing significant points of cultural engagement in the ongoing reception and transmission of the texts. Providing a digital image repository for this material will enable scholarly engagement with the visual record of transmission and reception for the field of Old Norse studies. Uniting digital images of the illustrations with descriptive metadata marked up with XML will create a second-generation digital image repository that will provide opportunities for computational research when the number of image entries reaches a sufficient mass to enable data mining on a productive level.

In “The Value of Digitization for Libraries and Humanities Scholarship,” the digital humanist John Unsworth observes that at a very basic level, “the most obvious benefit of digitization, for the humanities, is access to primary source materials.” He comments that, “the aggregation of these resources, in digital form, is bound to provide new sources for humanities scholarship.” Unsworth goes on to explain that “the value of digitization for humanities scholarship is that it externalizes interpretation, re-presents it to us in the form of the surrogate, and forces us, as humanities scholars, to confront and evaluate our beliefs and understandings, concerning the object of digitization, as well as our perspectives and purposes with respect to it” (“The Value of Digitization”). The value of a digital image repository specifically for illustrations of Old Norse mythology is that, although the removal of illustrations from the context of their sources initially isolates them from their texts, the repository foregrounds the illustrations and then sends the

scholar back to the text. The resulting confrontation between the visual and the textual encourages a re-evaluation of the relationship of the illustration to its text and has the potential to engender a fresh perspective concerning aspects of Book History and Cultural History in regard to the artifact as a whole.

5.3 Digital Images and Fundamental Scholarly Biases

There are deep-seated prejudices against illustrations in general, and illustrations of Old Norse mythology in particular, that underlie the scholarly neglect of the study of illustrations in this field. Firstly, scholarship concerning illustrations of Old Norse mythology has suffered through the ages from biases that relegate their subject to a second-class status that arises from the privileged position of Classical Greek and Roman art and literature in the traditional curriculum of Western pedagogy. A related prejudice concerns the perception that illustrations in manuscripts and print sources are culturally and materially inferior to the products of the fine arts such as statues, friezes, paintings, etc. Secondly, aside from these aesthetic preconceptions, the traditional scholarly preoccupation with textual studies elevates the text above paratextual elements and denigrates illustrations in particular as constituting an unfortunate distraction from the act of reading.

The digital humanist and literary scholar Julia Flanders has noted that the distrust of visual material is well documented in our literature. Flanders provides examples from the description of the Bower of Bliss in Spencer's *Faerie Queen* from 1590 and comments that

to a text concerned with surfaces and the truths they conceal, visibility is a dangerous thing, and 'seeing for oneself' doesn't have quite the self-reliant ring

for a Spenserian knight that it does for a modern consumer of image. This early distrust of images - the need to explicate them, to demonize them, to hedge them about with safety nets - is a crucial feature of Reformation discourse and one which places the focus of truth squarely on text, on The Text, on the Book itself. (303)

Flanders herself disapproves of the use of images to enhance text on internet pages. She states that “images are in some sense the locus of pleasure on the Web: they are the thing that captures and holds the user’s attention, the source of titillation without which a site’s mere content will appear dull” (303). Indeed, the misuse of illustrations of Old Norse mythology as ‘eye candy’—in which illustrations appear without identification or citation—is a frequent phenomenon on sites related to Old Norse material.

The digitization of images is also a source of mistrust in respect to their lack of materiality and also to their questionable reliability as representations of the original source in regard to aspects such as colour. In regard to materiality, the literary critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin’s observations concerning analog photographs in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” published in 1936 holds true of digital images today. “The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated...that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art,” which according to Benjamin is “a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition” (223). Benjamin summons a worst case scenario that anticipates the internet and its

images when he quotes the French poet and philosopher Paul Valéry's vision of the future that was first published in *Aesthetics* in 1928

Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign. (Valéry 226, qtd. in Benjamin 8)

However, despite the loss of aura and analog materiality, digital images of analog artifacts do have some advantages in terms of remediation. In regard to the reproduction of colour, digital images do have the potential to come closer to the original than slides, which have always been susceptible to fading, and print sources that have not always been true to the original either. The digital humanist Carole L. Palmer notes that "through advances in information technology, creators of *The William Blake Archive* have been able to produce images that are more accurate in color, detail, and scale than commercially printed reproductions, and texts more faithful to the author's originals than existing printed editions" (350).

Flanders remarks that Adobe Photoshop and other such programs are making the trustworthiness of images an even greater concern for our era and this is a further aspect of visual literacy that must be kept in mind (302). Indeed, visual literacy is no different than textual literacy in that both require a scholarly evaluation of sources in regard to reliability of the material being reproduced. Although there are obviously several degrees of separation between an original illustration and its digital image, such images do provide accessibility and material for research, collaboration, and the dissemination of knowledge. The time has come to set aside scholarly prejudices concerning illustrations

and set about exploring the potential that they embody for contributing to our knowledge of the reception and transmission of Norse mythology.

5.4 Popular Culture and Mythology Websites

The need for images of Old Norse mythology on popular culture websites is easily met by out-of-copyright material and often includes illustrations from early print sources enumerated in the previous chapter. However, popular websites often do not observe copyright for material that has not yet entered the public domain and frequently try to excuse their oversight with statements such as “artist unknown.” The use of such phrases represents an attempt to suggest that a proper citation would have been provided but has not been given for lack of information. While it is true that many illustrations of Old Norse mythology are out of copyright, failing to acknowledge the source of an illustration is exploitative and hinders the efforts of those who would like to see other illustrations from the original source, or other illustrations by the same illustrator, or to properly cite the original source of an illustration.

The *Encyclopedia Mythica* is an award-winning site that came online in 1995 and is often linked to on academic websites and cited in academic contexts, e.g. in the reference work *Reference Sources on the Internet: Off the Shelf and Onto the Web* (Diaz, 234). The editor of *Mythica* M. F. Lindemans states on its homepage that “the encyclopedia will serve the serious researcher, the student, and the casual reader with equal success,” and also states that in order “to bring our entities to life, we have created an image gallery, where you will find hundreds of images of all kinds of deities, heroes, and strange creatures of every description.” However, *Mythica* only contains six images in its “Image gallery” for “Norse mythology,” the first four of which are archaeological

objects that are simply cited as “Image courtesy of JBL Statues.” JBL Statues is essentially a new-age website that is “devoted to the goddess in all her forms” whose online catalogue of archaeological reproductions has been used as a source for *Mythica*’s images. The fifth digital image in *Mythica* is an illustration of Þórr fighting at Ragnarok that is cited as “a 19th-century book illustration,” but I have identified it as an illustration that has been cropped and colourized from Wagner’s *Asgard and the Gods: The Tales and Traditions of our Northern Ancestors* from 1884 (299). The sixth digital image is an illustration of Þórr riding in his chariot that *Mythica* does not provide any citation for other than the information that it was “created” on “22 March 1999.” However, my research reveals that the illustration of Þórr riding in his chariot is a reverse image of Pietsch’s illustration in Reusch’s *Die Nordischen Gottersagen* from 1865 (47).

Both *Mythica* and *Wikipedia* use images in a similar manner to antiquarian scholars in the past, and indeed those of the present, in order to provide visual evidence as a type of authentication for their entries. *Wikipedia* is generally conscientious in providing copyright information for the illustrations in its items on Old Norse mythology; however, the citations for its images frequently lack page numbers and other bibliographic details. The advantage of *Wikipedia* over other sites is that scholars can provide a community service by updating bibliographical information and by correcting textual inaccuracies that occasionally occur. The history of the book scholar Christian Vandendorpe states that it takes an average of three to five minutes to correct vandalism on *Wikipedia* and that the number of errors in *Wikipedia* articles in general is on a par with the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (“Who’s Afraid of Wikipedia”).

5.5 The Potential of Collaborative Old Norse Scholarship

Scholarly image-encoding projects to date have not focused on illustrations of Old Norse mythology, although it is sometimes included in their content such as William Blake's watercolours for the poems of Thomas Grey that are part of the digital humanist Matthew G. Kirschenbaum's *William Blake Archive (WBA)*. However, the difficulty of navigating the *WBA* proved so frustrating to the general public in the past that it inspired *The Blake Archive for Humans*. In 2004, Kirschenbaum described *The Blake Archive for Humans* as

a page that collects William Blake resources on the Web. It is authored and maintained by an amateur enthusiast who links together a wide range of material. As visitors quickly learn, however, the page defines itself in part through explicit contrast to the Blake Archive for “non-humans”: that is, the *William Blake Archive (WBA)*, an extensive scholarly text- and image-encoding project that has been freely available online since 1995, with funding and support from the Getty Grant Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress, and the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia. (“So the Colors Cover the Wires” 534)

Unfortunately, “The Blake Archive for Humans” is no longer extant on the internet so a comparison cannot be made. However, the fact that it once existed to serve the needs of self-directed learners is an indication that scholarly projects should make an effort to serve both the scholarly community and the wider public communities.

Kirschenbaum discusses the problems with the *WBA*'s interface that frustrated non-specialists, and surely the interface difficulties must be annoying to scholars as well,

such as having to navigate “four levels down to get to the texts of the individual illuminated works” and the awkward positioning of navigation icons on the page (“So the Colors Cover the Wires” 539). Kirschenbaum explains that many of the problems with his site’s interface and navigation cannot be changed due to the underlying “idiosyncratic architecture” of the DynaWeb software used to create the site that “imposes constraints that manifest themselves at the level of the site’s interface” (539). Kirschenbaum defends the *WBA* as being “emphatically” for humans and notes the impossibility of pleasing everyone all the time. He states that “a design team must at least insure that it is meeting the needs of its most important user communities most of the time” (539).

However, the “most important user communities” even for a scholarly project should be seen to include the general public as a community of self-directed learners and as a potential source of future scholars. The literary critic and digital humanist John Lavagnino remarked in 1995 in “Reading, Scholarship, and Hypertext Editions” regarding hypertext editions that the only way to deal effectively with the formidable editing problems that often arise when preparing hypertext editions is to work collaboratively by distributing the work among scholars and providing the tools to share editorial findings. His comments concerning the necessity of providing help for neophytes and the desirability of creating a broader readership can be seen as part of the process of expanding the pool of possible collaborators. Regarding readers, he noted that “a hypertext edition can go beyond the inclusion of edited texts: it can attempt to bring more of its readers into the process of editing, by including tools for doing editorial work” (120). According to Lavagnino, scholars need to do a better job not only of furthering knowledge but also of increasing the number of potential scholars to join in the

effort.

Lavagnino observed that hypertext editions have the ability to engage the reader by raising him/her from the role of a passive receiver of knowledge to that of an active contributor by providing tools that enable him/her to participate and that hypertext editions could continue to grow incrementally if they were well designed from their very inception. Both hypertext editions and digital image repositories can benefit from the collaborative efforts of scholars and self-directed learners if the sites allow for the participation of all of their users. In 2002, in “Image-based Computing,” a special edition of *Computers and the Humanities*, Kirschenbaum’s “Editor’s Introduction” provided an overview of the scholarly image-based projects current at the time, and he remarked that

all of this activity is transpiring at a moment when there is an unprecedented interest in images and visual phenomena in literary studies and the humanities at large. The rise of fields such as cultural studies and the resurgence of interest in various forms of historicism (so-called “old” and “new”) have drawn a vast array of visual artifacts — maps, woodcuts and engravings, paintings, drawings, illustrations, and photographs — into the fold of mainstream textual scholarship.

(6)

Kirschenbaum was addressing the scholarly community and their potential to bring their “specialized knowledge and know-how to bear on some of the most urgent agendas” of their colleagues (6). However, well-constructed projects could also allow the scholarly community to bring their “specialized knowledge and know-how” to bear on illustrations of Old Norse mythology in such a way as to interact and perhaps collaborate with the segment of the general population that has long had an interest in Old Norse mythology.

The textual scholar Jerome McGann begins his “Preface” in *The Scholar’s Art* with the observation that “scholarship is a service vocation” (ix). For McGann, “the scholar’s vocation is to preserve and pass on our cultural heritage” not just for scholars but also for the “wider circle of people who also have an interest in the cultural values that are at the center of our lives” (x-xi). Although Old Norse mythology stands in the shadows of Classical Greek and Roman mythology as far as scholarship is concerned, it is very much a part of our cultural heritage and its reception and transmission have contributed significantly to our cultural values. Preserving and passing on scholarly knowledge in regard to illustrations of Old Norse mythology and making the illustrations easily accessible to the general public in a resource with academic standards will benefit both scholars and members of the general public.

5.6 Conclusion

Old Norse scholarship and the technology that supports it has come a long way from the sixteenth century when European scholars first became aware of the existence of the Icelandic manuscripts containing *The Prose Edda* and *The Poetic Edda* and of the fact that the eddas preserved the cultural heritage of Scandinavia in regard to Old Norse mythology. The Icelandic manuscript collector Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson displayed the caution typical of a scholar when he had the Codex Upsaliensis manuscript of *The Prose Edda* copied before he sent it as a gift to Stephanus Johannis Stephanius in Denmark in 1639. The copying of Icelandic manuscripts and the production of facsimiles has continued unabated ever since and made use of technological advances as the means of producing copies evolved from hand-copying to copperplate etchings to lithography, photolithography, photography, and digital photography in the present day. Scholarly

activity in the present day is enabled not only by the use of digital images for exact copies of illustrations and texts but also by XML mark-up for the machine readable editions of textual content.

The production of copies and facsimiles began in Denmark with the activities of an Icelander named Árni Magnússon, who made a provision in his will when he died in 1730 for his extensive collection of Icelandic manuscripts to be transferred to the University of Copenhagen and for a stipend to support publication of the manuscripts on a yearly basis. Árni's wishes were respected and are currently carried on by The Arnamagnæan Institute which photographed the Icelandic manuscripts in his collection before they were repatriated to Reykjavík beginning in 1971. The Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen and its counterpart The Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík have digitally reunited Árni's collection and continue to produce a variety of digital projects based on the manuscripts.

Until recently scholars were preoccupied with “a linguistic turn” that focused on words and texts, but we are in the midst of a paradigm shift reflecting “a pictorial turn” as we become more visually orientated. In the past western culture and its scholars were distrustful of the seductive nature of analog images as well as their susceptibility to manipulation. This negative attitude has carried over to digital images, which are often regarded scholars as being inferior to analog images such as slides and photographs. However, these attitudes are also undergoing changes and digital images are gaining respectability in academic contexts for purposes of research and knowledge dissemination.

The general public is very receptive to digital images on the internet but popular

webpages for Old Norse mythology are often negligent in citing the origins of the images they use and lax in acknowledging rights holders, although this is changing and *Wikipedia* models the new approach. Members of the public with scholarly interests have at times been frustrated with scholarly websites that are hard to navigate and not designed to include those who are not specialists in the fields that the page represent. John Lavignino points out the value of collaboration for scholars and that scholars need to help neophyte in order to increase scholarship and encourage potential scholars (120). Jerome McGann states that “scholarship is a service vocation” that is not just for professional scholars but interested members of the public as well (ix – xi) . Scholars need to provide for and to encourage opportunities for collaboration for people outside of academia who wish to participate and increasingly expect the right to do so due to social media and its integration into our institutions and media resources.

My model for My Norse Digital Image Repository (MyNDIR) will become a scholarly resource when it is transformed from a version suitable for the purposes of my dissertation to a polished version that will be launched as a public website. MyNDIR will provide the basis for a comprehensive repository of images of Old Norse gods and heroes for scholars as well as the general public, all of whom will be invited to contribute to the site. The use of crowd sourcing for MyNDIR’s digital image repository could result in the contribution of illustrations from texts all over the world and also the identification of illustrations that have been previously published without citations. Thus, MyNDIR will model academic standards in regard to citations and respect for copyrighted material. MyNDIR will also foster visual literacy and demonstrate the value of illustrations for the advancement of knowledge concerning Old Norse studies. MyNDIR’s comprehensive

collection of illustrations of Old Norse mythologies will provide the basis for a truly global understanding of the reception and transmission of *The Prose Edda*, *The Poetic Edda*, and *Heimskringla*.

Chapter Six

Project Implementation: MyNDIR (My Norse Digital Image Repository)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the design process for MyNDIR in regard to subject specific and methodological considerations along with the presentation of paradigms and applications that are extensible to other disciplines and other projects. The chapter begins with an overview of the computer skills, applications, and available resources required to create the repository. The essential factors in the creation of MyNDIR included 1) choosing applications to create the site, 2) designing the user interface, 3) addressing copyright issues, 4) planning timeline priorities, and 5) comparing paradigms for data entry. Subject specific concerns included: 1) making decisions regarding Old Norse orthography, 2) creating naming conventions for files and identifiers, 3) surveying available vocabularies and then designing one specific to MyNDIR's needs, and 4) providing a field to accommodate research notes that will be contributed by users for individual illustrations. I will also present the analytical underpinnings for my repository's design and functionality throughout the chapter and will explore the pedagogical concerns that I wanted to address when designing the repository. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of MyNDIR's scholarly value and its potential when it becomes available on the internet.

6.2 Skills Assessment And Initial Project Considerations

Digital Humanities projects such as MyNDIR are not, and should not be, the work of individuals working in isolation. I have the necessary computer skills for word

processing, creating eXcel spreadsheets, scanning images, manipulating images in Adobe Photoshop, IrfanView etc., and ftp-ing files to servers. I am familiar with both PC and Mac operating systems. Beyond the basic computer skills, I have advanced skills in tagging text with Extensible Markup Language (XML), in creating ROMA schemas for XML, and experience in using the oXygen software for editing XML markup. However, I am not a programmer. I do have some experience in applying Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) directly to XML documents to provide formatting for web display and a beginner's knowledge of using Extensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT) to convert XML to HTML for web pages. However, I have the resources of UVic's Humanities Computing and Media Centre (HCMC) to draw on for support and guidance in these matters. Moreover, it was not necessary for me to 'reinvent the wheel' for the basic stages of my project or even the advanced stages. The efforts of a community of digital humanities scholars and the digital repositories that represent their work are available on the web, and there are also resources online such as help sheets, training via PowerPoint presentations, and the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) guidelines for XML markup along with its listserv.

The first step in getting the MyNDIR project started was to meet with Martin Holmes of the University of Victoria's Humanities Computing and Media Centre (HCMC) on December 15th, 2008 to discuss my design for the site and its functionality and then to choose the applications for building the site. We discussed the basic metadata fields to describe the essential details for the illustrations in order to provide a full bibliographic record consistent with academic standards. Due to my familiarity with XML markup, I planned to use the TEI P5's "Manuscript Module" for encoding the

descriptive metadata. The combination of XML with TEI P5 was attractive due to its fundamental portability to a variety of data management applications and its adherence to international standards. Consequently, we decided to use 1) Apache Cocoon for the web framework, along with 2) the XML database management system eXist, which includes XQuery processing, and 3) an Apache Tomcat server to provide the basic setup for the site. When I had marked up a sufficient number of images to represent the variety of material the site would incorporate, Holmes used JavaScript programming language, along with CSS and XSLT to transform my XML documents into a dynamic website with enhanced user interfaces. As the project progressed, Holmes incorporated Asynchronous JavaScript and XML (AJAX) to enable data retrieval without disrupting the behaviour and display of the page online, and incorporated JQuery along with NetBeans so that the thumbnail strip of images would be scrollable. We also created a blog named MyNDIR that details the creation of the repository from the very beginning and is available on the HCMC site.⁵¹

However, before settling on XML, TEI P5's "Manuscript Module," and Cocoon/eXist, I examined other options such as the Getty's Cultural Descriptions of Works of Art (CDWA), which uses a restricted subset of Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and the XML schema CDWA Lite. CDWA Lite is designed for describing core records for works of art and material culture that are disseminated to union catalogues and other repositories using the Open Archives Initiative (OAI). The interoperability provided by XML in addition to a standards compliant taxonomy and OAI harvesting protocol made CDWA especially attractive. I also looked at open-source software for digital content management such as Greenstone and Fedora, and explored institutional

⁵¹See < <http://hcmc.uvic.ca/blogs/index.php?blog=42>>.

options such as the University of Toronto's Fine Arts Digital Imaging System (FADIS) and CONTENTdm, which is digital collection management software that the University of Victoria's MacPherson Library uses to display its digital collections. CONTENTdm offers customizable templates for webpages, supports the OAI harvesting protocol, and also includes the option of using the Getty's thesaurus.

In the end, I decided that TEI P5 and the web framework that HCMC could provide was the best choice for my project given that 1) the nature of the mythological material I am marking up is not as complex as the range covered by CDWA; 2) TEI P5 is mappable to Dublin Core (DC) which is harvestable by OAI; 3) the terms contained in MyNDIR's vocabulary consists of proper nouns from Old Norse mythology many of which are not currently part of the Getty's vocabularies, such as The Art and Architecture Thesaurus (ATT); 4) FADIS is not accessible to the general public; and 5) the flexibility provided by HCMC's expertise in web design is preferable to that provided by CONTENTdm. Timeline constraints were also a factor in my decision to use the skills that I already possessed. I knew that TEI P5 files could easily be transferred to other applications as the project evolved if the benefits of doing so became apparent.

6.3 Designing the Interface

Kirschenbaum noted in regard to the initial stages of development for the *William Blake Archive* in the early nineteen-nineties that "the interface tends to come very late in a project's development cycle" ("So the Colors Cover the Wires" 538). However, I began designing the Homepage interface from the very beginning of my project and it evolved as my project took shape. For example, the thumbnail strip for my first design progressed from a design item that had visual appeal but was of limited functionality, to that of a

search tool for the entire database that changed the nature of the home page and was incorporated into every page as part of the search apparatus.

6.4 Copyright Concerns and Accommodations

Copyright restrictions represent a fundamental issue that must be addressed at every level when designing an image repository and the onus of individual responsibility for use of the images must be clearly communicated to users. Sites such as Princeton's *Index of Christian Art* require that users indicate that they have read a copyright notice and accepted its terms every time they choose to view an image; however, this seems like an overly legalistic and tedious requirement that hinders use. A different approach is demonstrated by the *Perseus Project* and the University of Victoria's *Internet Shakespeare* both of which feature copyright notices stating that the material on their sites can only be used for educational, non-profit purposes, thereby placing the responsibility of obtaining copyright on the users of the site if they intend to use the images for other purposes.

It is important to keep in mind that Fair Dealing in Canada is not the same as Fair Use in the States. The Fair Dealing clause in the Canadian Copyright Act (Section 29) supports the creation of digital images for private study and research, and the court case "The Law Society of Upper Canada vs. CCH Canadian" has established that "a library can stand 'in the shoes of its patron,'" which means that material can be supplied to patrons/users with the assumption that they will only use it for lawful purposes (Geist "Low-tech case"). I believe that MyNDIR possesses the same terms of use for its images as a library does with its texts, and that the onus is on the user to respect copyright and to

proceed accordingly.⁵²

Consequently, I have made information concerning copyright a major visual component of the descriptive data for every image by providing a field labelled “Rights” which indicates the status of the illustration. The “Rights” identifies the rights holder if the image is not in the public domain and states any conditions that I agreed to in order to use the illustration for my dissertation project. The “Rights” field also provides a link to the contact information for the rights holder if the viewer needs to contact them regarding usage and states when a restricted image will come into the Public Domain. When applicable, I have also included links in the “Rights” field to e-manuscripts and e-books posted online by the institutions that own the illustrations.

For restricted images, I have posted thumbnails that represent a cropped area of the original illustration situated in a scrollable strip of MyNDIR’s images. Clicking on the restricted thumbnail 1) does not result in enlarging it, 2) does not result in access to the entire image, 3) provides a complete citation, 4) provides contact information for the rights holder for material in archives or other institutions, and 5) includes a message indicating the date when illustrations protected by copyright will come into the public domain. The feasibility of using cropped portions of copyright restricted material is dependent on clarification of the current situation concerning Canadian Copyright and Fair Use in regard to images. However, I believe that providing complete citations for copyright restricted images and posting only a small portion of the image will stand the test of copyright changes.

⁵² In his blog on November 7, 2012, Geist posted the headline “Canadian Copyright Reform In Force: Expanded User Rights Now the Law” and noted that the reform bill marked “the most significant changes to Canadian copyright law in decades. While there are still some further changes to come...all the consumer oriented provisions are now active. These include: The addition of education, parody, and satire as fair dealing purposes.”

The prototype that I created for the purposes of my dissertation contains one hundred images, plus one that was added when I decided on the image for the title banner. Fifty-six illustrations out of the hundred and one digital images in MyNDIR are from the first and second editions of *Kongesagaer* and are in the Public Domain, a further fifty-five of illustrations are from monographs that I have purchased, and one is from the Snorrastofa library in Reykholt, Iceland. MyNDIR also contains thirty-seven illustrations from manuscripts, both parchment and paper, and I have permission from the archives who own the rights to use their illustrations for the purposes of my dissertation. I will seek further permission before posting images from manuscripts online. The Danish Royal Library and the Icelandic National Library have assured me that permission will be forthcoming and that we can work collaboratively.

Six of the remaining images in MyNDIR are from early print sources that are in the Public Domain and were photographed from books in the collection of the Danish Royal Library. The final two images, out of the one hundred and one currently in MyNDIR's prototype, are by Louis Moe and will not be in the Public Domain until 2016. The images in MyNDIR's prototype represent a small portion of the material contained in early print sources and it would have been easy to avoid the use of copyright restricted material altogether. However, I included the cropped thumbnails and descriptive data for two of Louis Moe's illustrations for two reasons. Firstly, I believe that MyNDIR should direct users to illustrations that are not yet in the Public Domain so that their research is not restricted to images available on the internet, and secondly, I wanted to demonstrate the manner in which MyNDIR will handle images that are copyright restricted. The majority of the images that I used for MyNDIR's prototype, i.e., ninety out of the one

hundred and one, are from four sources, which greatly facilitated data entry because I could create paradigms for their XML documents. Moreover, the concentration of images from a small number of sources minimized the amount of work involved when I requested copyright permissions for the purposes of my dissertation.

6.5 Time Management

Time management is a crucial aspect of any project because there are always deadlines imposed either by grant criteria, or the availability of staff, or the constraints of capital resources and so on. In my case it was a matter of moving between completing the repository site and meeting submission deadlines for drafts and the final version of my dissertation as well as the necessity of paying fees for additional terms beyond the minimum set for completing my degree. The web site had initial priority in order to design the basic look and functionality of the site and extra time beyond that was necessary for modifications that arose unexpectedly as the work progressed. A site such as MyNDIR has the potential to include many useful features for users; however, practical concerns required that I should concentrate on the basics for my proof of concept such as display and search features. Other than incorporating a field for “Research Notes,” I have had to delay the implementation of the Web 2.0 features to provide for crowd sourcing and user participation until Phase II of the project when MyNDIR will be ready to go online. I originally intended that a functional model of the site would be ready to start testing in the spring of 2009 but we did not reach this stage until the spring of 2010. The delay was largely due to the fact that it took longer to design the paradigms for cataloguing and marking up the illustrations than I envisaged, as will be discussed below.

6.6 TEI P5's Manuscript Description Module and MyNDIR's Illustrations

Initially, I began marking up the metadata for illustrations first by creating an individual XML doc using the TEI P5's "Manuscript Description" module for each manuscript or print source and then by marking up the metadata for each illustration within that document by using the TEI P5's "Digital Facsimiles" component from the TEI P5's "Representations of Primary Sources" module. However, marking up illustrations in a group file proved to be unwieldy for sources containing a large number of illustrations that are related to each other by artist and subject matter, such as Jakob Sigurðsson's two groups of sixteen related *Edda* illustrations in the paper manuscripts Nks 1867 4to and SÁM 66 4to. This approach was awkward because the paradigms in the TEI P5's "Digital Facsimiles" module are intended for marking up pages for digital editions of texts, but MyNDIR does not display the illustrations within the context of their individual pages, let alone represent every page of an edition. Consequently, I started over and created XML docs using the TEI P5 "Manuscript Description" for each individual illustration and then marking up the text of the descriptive metadata for each illustration. I found that this method improved the retrieval process at the file level while entering, marking up, and revising the metadata for the illustrations.

The overview for TEI P5's "Manuscript Description" module reveals an emerging flexibility on the part of Digital Humanists in regard to textual objects

although originally developed to meet the needs of cataloguers and scholars working with medieval manuscripts in the European tradition, the scheme presented here is general enough that it can also be extended to other traditions and materials, and is potentially useful for any kind of inscribed artefact. (10.1)

I believe that the uniqueness of the material in question justifies using “Manuscript Description” for individual illustrations from manuscripts as well as from print sources as they present similar problems. For example, Verelius’ copperplate rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi” (Fig. B-2) was not included in every edition of his text *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia*, and the bibliographic information within individual editions does not indicate whether the copperplate illustration is present within its covers. Thus the only way to direct a user to a copy with the copperplate illustration is to describe where the relevant print artifact is currently located. Further examples of variable illustrative content occur in the first and second editions of *Kongesagaer*—most notably Christian Krohg’s two renderings of a naming ceremony that appear in different print runs of the second edition that are not identified in their bibliographic details (Figs. F-1b and F-1c). The only definitive manner for indicating the identity of the monograph involved for illustrations such as these is to include a field for the archive or collections in which the physical item resides.

I also considered using the “Edition Statement” element in the standard TEI P5 “Header” but this also proved unsuitable for describing the material from early print sources. The TEI P5 states that “(edition) describes the particularities of one edition of a text” (TEI P5 Header 2.2.2), and also notes that “For printed texts, the word edition applies to the set of all the identical copies of an item produced from one master copy and issued by a particular publishing agency or a group of such agencies” (“The TEI Header” 2.2.2). Thus the TEI P5 “Header” is designed for addressing the “particularities” of an edition and does not provide a way of accounting for the peculiarities of an edition with differences in its print runs.

Using the “Notes Statement” element in the TEI P5 “Header” may have provided a way to describe individual copies of a text but it would have required using the “Digital Facsimiles” module in order to describe individual illustrations, which was unsuitable because, as already noted, the illustrations in MyNDIR are not presented as part of a digital edition. I decided that the consistency provided by using “Manuscript Description” as paradigm for both parchment and print sources would maximize the ease and efficiency of data entry for MyNDIR’s illustrations. Moreover, using the “Manuscript Description” paradigm proved to be ideal because it allows individual copies of early print sources to be treated as cultural artifacts in a manner that facilitates Material Philology.

6.7 Orthography and Naming Conventions for Textual Content

Before data entry could begin, it was necessary to establish consistent naming conventions for the personal names of the gods—which are subject to a great deal of variation. Consistency in rendering the names of the gods is complicated by the necessity of choosing between the orthography of Old Norse or the Modern Icelandic standardization of the spelling of Old Norse, and is further complicated by the inflectional case endings that are part of both Old Norse and Modern Icelandic. The lack of standardization in English of Old Norse and Modern Icelandic orthography as well as inconsistencies in English regarding the inflectional endings further complicates the task. Introductions to scholarly editions such as John Lindow’s *Norse Mythology* provide useful discussions of naming convention strategies, as do Wikipedia Talk pages.

I decided to use Modern Icelandic graphemes and Old Norse orthography for rendering all the proper nouns in the illustrations. Consequently I used eth and thorn for

the voiced and unvoiced fricatives—or the sounds that we render as “th” in Modern English, and accented vowels and the a/e ligature but not “hooked o” or the o/e ligature. As noted above, both Old Norse and its descendant, Modern Icelandic, are inflected languages. Therefore the final consonant in Óðinn and Þórr indicates that their declension is the nominative singular. In order to assure consistency, I decided to use Old Norse orthography, based on the classic resource *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* by Richard Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, i.e., the stem of the name plus its nominative marker. When put into practice, this strategy results in always using the nominative form, regardless of the noun’s grammatical function in the sentence. Consequently, the resulting names often appear very odd to viewers who are familiar with the Old Norse, especially when an English apostrophe “s” is added on the end of the nominative. However, retaining Old Norse forms serves as a reminder that these names represent beliefs from pagan antiquity and a culture different from our own.

Academic papers and monographs are increasingly using Old Norse forms for the names of the gods. However, many current reference resources both in print and online, including *Wikipedia* entries for “Norse mythology,” persist in labelling Óðinn and Þórr with English transcriptions, i.e., Odin and Thor, but use the graphemes eth and thorn, i.e., ð and þ, in all other entries as in the name for the giant Þjazi or the gods Hermóðr and Höðr. I believe that it is time to distance the Old Norse god Þórr, by means of orthography, from the American comic super-hero Thor—who currently has an alter ego as a construction worker, who flies by means of holding onto his hammer, and who has apparently recently relocated Ásgarðr—the home of the gods—to Oklahoma (“Marvel Comics revives Thor” 12). Consequently, I have used Óðinn and Þórr in titles for the

images and their descriptions as well as for keywords. However, I have included the English renderings Odin and Thor as spelling alternatives for their respective keywords so that both the Old Norse and the English renderings are featured in the alphabetic keyword menu and the paired versions of each name appear as underlined items in the keywords at the bottom of search result pages. This practice of providing both the Old Norse and English for names in the drop down menu will help familiarize the general public with the Old Norse versions of the names but will not create a problem when searching.

6.8 Creating Naming Conventions for Files and Identifiers

The next issue, after establishing a standard orthography for proper names of gods, giants, etc., was to create naming conventions for 1) keys for the names of gods, giants, etc. to use as in the markup process and enter in MyNDIR's naming authority file, i.e., names.xml, 2) file names for images, and 3) the unique identifier, i.e., xml:id, for individual xml files. I used English orthography and created mixed case keys for the names.xml authority file that reflect syllables and inflectional endings of proper names and included a number when necessary for purposes of disambiguation. For authors, illustrators and other historical personages, I used the first three letters of the forename along with the first three letters of the patronym or last name, i.e., Snorri Sturluson = SnoStu, Gerhard Munthe = GerMun etc. The latter paradigm is especially easy to create and also to decipher.

I wanted the file names for images to contain explicit metadata in an abbreviated form that could be read almost like a descriptive sentence. The sources that preserve our knowledge of Old Norse mythology are largely limited to *Snorri's Edda*, the *Poetic*

Edda, and *Heimskringla*, along with a few miscellaneous sources such as Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and anonymous sources such as *Sörla þátttr*. These sources contain details that sometimes are in conflict with the other sources or else are unique to the individual source. I also wanted to include the original source that inspired the creation of the illustrations for the artifacts containing them and this identification of subject titles forms the first element in the image file names for both manuscripts and print sources, i.e., *Snorri's Edda*, which is also known as *The Prose Edda* = PrE; the *Poetic Edda* = PoE; *Heimskringla* = Hms; *Gesta Danorum* = Saxo; and miscellaneous sources = Misc.

File names for images from manuscript and print sources differ after the first element identifying the subject title, rather than the title of the original artifact containing the illustration, for the myth being depicted. For manuscripts, the image file names are constructed as follows:

- the primary source title, e.g. Prose Edda = PrE
- the manuscript title or shelf mark, i.e., Nks 1867 4to = Nks1867
- the repository identifier, e.g. Danish Royal Library = DRL
- folio number plus recto = "r" recto or verso = "v"
- an optional two-digit number indicating the possibility that there is more than one illustration on the page, e.g. 01
- the digital image file type

For example, PrE-Nks1867-DRL-098r.jpg describes a digital image of an illustration of material from *The Prose Edda* in the manuscript known as Nks 1867, which is part of the collection in the Danish Royal Library, and is situated on the recto side of folio 98r.

For print sources, the image file naming convention is as follows:

- the primary source subject title, e.g. *Heimskringla* = Hms
- the title of the book, e.g. *Snorre: Kongesagaer* = SKng
- the publication date, i.e., for this source either the 1st or 2nd ed. = 1899 or 1900
- the repository identifier, i.e., University of Victoria copy = UVic; Reykholt copy = RkHt: Oslo copy = Oslo
- the saga or chapter title if applicable
- the page number
- a number indicating the possibility of multiple images on a page, e.g. 01
- the digital image file type

For example, Hms-SKng-1899-Oslo-Yngl-012-01.jpg describes a digital image of an illustration of material from *Heimskringla* in the print source known as *Snorre: Kongesagaer* from Oslo in the 1899 edition from the saga “Ynglinga Saga” on page twelve, and the designation 0-1 indicating that it is the first, or perhaps the only, illustration on the page. For illustrations from *Snorre: Kongesagaer*, I also added a designation as to whether the illustration represented a title header = Hdr, an initial capital = Cap, a map = Map, or a vignette = vgNet. The latter is especially useful due to the large number of vignettes that Gerhard Munthe created for *Snorre: Kongesagaer*.

The identity designation for individual XML files, i.e., xml:id, is a scaled-down version of the image file name. For manuscripts the unique identifier consists of the manuscript name or shelf mark plus the folio number and the file type, e.g. Nks1867-98r.xml. For print sources the unique identifier consists of the title of the print source, the year of publication, the repository, the page number, the number indicating the order of illustrations on the page, and the file type, e.g. SKng-1899-Oslo-012-01.xml.

6.9 MyNDIR's Vocabulary

Our sources concerning Old Norse mythology reveal a belief system in which naming and names played a fundamental role. Not only are gods, giants, elves, dwarves, animals, monsters, plants, places, and events given proper names, but unique artifacts that feature in the myths such as weapons, tools, halls, wells, articles of clothing and armour have proper names as well. Consequently, I decided to create MyNDIR's vocabulary by tagging all the proper nouns in the illustrations because these are the search terms that users will use most frequently. Rather than a vocabulary file, MyNDIR has a names.xml file and its items are linked to the names in the field labelled "Description" on individual pages. The names.xml file also provides the keywords at the bottom of individual pages and the terms for the drop down alphabetic keyword menu bar at the top of each page.

I created: <persName/> tags for beings such as gods, giants, humans, authors, illustrators, etc.; <placeName/> tags for places; <name/> tags for animals, monsters, artifacts, plants; as well as <name/> tags for events such as Fimbulvetr and Ragnarök. I also used a type, and sometimes a subtype or role attribute to further define the tagged names. In addition to tagging proper nouns, I created additional keyword items consisting of simple nouns that correspond to the proper nouns, e.g. Megingjörð = belt, Sleipnir = horse, Jörmungandr = serpent. The simple noun keywords enable users to find items that they cannot remember the proper names for. Moreover, items that are not names, and therefore not tagged as keywords, are still searchable if they are included in the description of the scene. For example, entering the word "club" in the search box provides two results. The first search result is an illustration is by Louis Moe is of Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* text in which Þórr is described as using a club for a

weapon (70). The second search result is Jakob Sigurðsson's depiction of the Binding of Fenrir in Nks 1867 4to (Fig. D-14) that includes a figure holding a spiked-club, who is quite likely is meant to be Þórr. However, although Þórr was present at the Binding of Fenrir, Snorri's text never associates him with such a weapon.

6.10 Pedagogical Concerns and Markup Strategies

XML markup is not only extensible but also inherently hierarchical and these two characteristics presented pedagogical temptations when marking up the metadata for Old Norse mythology concerning MyNDR's images. I initially designed markup paradigms that would address some of the problems and misconceptions that I had encountered while teaching Old Norse mythology, but found that many of these markup strategies were counterproductive because they were not useful in producing search results for images. In regard to hierarchical structure, I initially spent time in creating XML attributes for the name elements that would distinguish gods as belonging to the Æsir or the Vanir. For example, Loki is traditionally counted among the gods when in fact he was a giant and therefore an anomaly. Similarly Hel is frequently designated as a goddess; however, Hel and her siblings, i.e., Fenrir and Miðgarðsormr, were giants due to their parentage and monsters due to the nature of their birth. In the end, I decided that these details were not likely Search terms but were useful details to include in the glossary items related to them or in the descriptions for the illustrations in which they appear.

I also initially wanted to address the question of euhemerism in regard to Óðinn and thought it would be useful to use markup in the individual name keys to distinguish between illustrations from *The Prose Edda* and those from *Heimskringla*. The desire to create a distinction arises because Snorri included an explicit explanation of euhemerism

regarding the Old Norse gods in the Prologue to his *Edda* and in the framing device that he used for the section involving the “Deluding of Gylfi.” However, Snorri did not include Christian commentary when retelling the myths, and Óðinn is presented throughout as a god. Gylfi’s first question, ‘Who is the highest and most ancient of gods?’ “Hver er æðstr eða elztr allra goða?” elicits the response ‘All-father’ “Alföðr” and twelve names are listed for him. (Faulkes, *Edda* 8; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 12). According to Snorri, Óðinn is said to have made

heaven and earth and the skies and everything in them ... but his greatest work is that he made man and gave him a soul that shall live and never perish though the body decay to dust or burn to ashes. And all men who are righteous shall live and dwell with him himself in the place called Gimle or Vingolf, but the wicked men go to Hel and on to Niflhel; that is down in the ninth world.

himin ok jörð ok loftin ok alla eign þeira....Hitt er þó mest, er hann gerði manninn ok gaf honum önd þá, er lifa skal ok aldri týnast, þótt líkaminn fúni at moldu eða brenni at ösku, ok skulu allir menn lifa, þeir er rétt eru siðaðir, ok vera með honum sjálfum, þar sem heitir Gimlé eða Vingólf, en vándir menn fara til heljar ok þaðan í Niflhel. Þat er niðr í inn níunda heim. (Faulkes, *Edda* 8-9; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 12 – 13)

On the other hand, the process of euhemerization is implicit in the details in “Ynglinga Saga,” the first saga in *Heimskringla*, where Óðinn is described as a human chieftain with superior leadership skills who dabbled in magic and had the ability to shapeshift.

Modern-day mythology resources for the general public, both in print and on the web, generally attempt to consolidate details from *The Prose Edda*, the poems of *The Poetic*

Edda, *Heimskringla*, and other miscellaneous sources into a supposedly comprehensive whole and are often negligent in identifying their sources.⁵³ This process of consolidation is confusing for students who expect consistency but notice that the details concerning the myths vary between sources.

Sources in MyNDIR are cited in an explicit manner; however, I thought at first that additionally tagging Óðinn as OdiN01 for illustrations from *The Prose Edda* and OdiN02 for *Heimskringla* would be useful in producing search results that would underline the fact that some of the illustrations depict a mythological narrative rather than a pre-historical account. I believed that this distinction might serve to generate discussion of the processes that engender myths, and also to remind viewers that Snorri's euhemeristic views concerning the pagan gods were current in the Middle Ages. However, this markup strategy would also have required menu entries consisting of "Óðinn (*Edda*)" and "Óðinn (*Heimskringla*)" which I decided was unnecessarily pedantic as far as Search results for images are concerned. Once again, I decided to include pedagogical details in the glossary and descriptions rather than in the markup. Consequently, searches for "Óðinn" produce results that include all sources but searching for illustrations from "*Heimskringla*" include only images of Óðinn from the prehistorical source, and the results of searches for "*Snorri's Edda*" include only the more purely mythological images of Óðinn.

⁵³ As previously discussed in this chapter, the Old Norse mythology section of the award-winning, and frequently linked to, web site *Encyclopedia Mythica* is indicative of this trend and often cites other encyclopaedias as the only sources consulted for its articles, e.g. for "Thor," and no sources at all for "Odin." Moreover, the illustration that *Mythica* includes with the Thor article is vaguely identified as "a nineteenth-century book illustration" without any further bibliographic details.

6.11 Providing a Field for Research Notes

Markup that facilitates search results should not be speculative but it should not ignore identification of details in the illustrations that are based on solid research. Details emerging from research should be represented in some manner and this is accomplished for MyNDIR's images by means of a field with the label "Research Notes" that can be included in the TEI Header for each illustration as required. For example, from the perspective of research potential, the linking of Moe's illustration of Þórr holding a club, instead of the hammer that we usually associate with him, to the figure in Jakob Sigurðsson's illustration in N (Fig. D-14) is valuable because it has the power to initiate a discussion of the differences between Snorri's and Saxo's sources along with a discussion of the scholarly texts that were available to Sigurðsson in rural eighteenth-century Iceland. A similar example concerns the fact that Bartholin's illustration on page 473 of *Antiquitatum danicarum* is an exact copy of Verelius' copperplate rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" scene from DG 11 4to f. 26v, which as previously noted occurs on page 43a inserted into some, but not all, editions of *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia*. Bartholin's rendering does not include Verelius' text but retains Verelius' asterisk for the note referring to page 43 and this provides definitive proof that Bartholin's source was an illustration produced by Verelius' copperplate.

I had originally thought that the best solution regarding the identification of questionable figures would be to include a new icon—such as "i/?" which is a combination of the information icon and the question mark icon—with the headword. This hybrid icon would have led to a comment citing the source of the proposed identification, and the underlying markup could have included a "level of certainty" attribute. However, I think

that the “Research Notes” solution takes the onus off the editor and provides a convenient, and ultimately more productive, participation option for the site’s users.

6.12 Conclusion

When the site goes online, MyNDIR will provide illustrations with metadata conforming to academic standards, tools for encouraging participation and collaboration for users, and a venue for knowledge dissemination that is currently lacking for images relating to Old Norse mythology. Palmer commented in 2004 that “common scholarly activities, such as the ‘scholarly primitives’ identified by Unsworth have yet to be adequately supported by the digital resources designed for scholars” (355). These ‘scholarly primitives’ include the basic activities of annotating, comparing, referring, selecting, linking, and discovering that are continually carried out by scholars as part of the complex processes of reading, searching, and writing (Palmer 355). Palmer was referring to textual scholarship but MyNDIR will present a resource firmly based on scholarly primitives that will enable a deeper examination of illustrations that can also enhance the study of text/image relationships in the field of Old Norse studies. Palmer acknowledges Unsworth with the observation that “when electronic sources are brought together for scholarly purposes they become a new, second-generation electronic resource” and further comments that “scholars are not only constructing environments where more people can do research more conveniently, they are also creating new research. Like other scholarship in the humanities, research takes place in the production of the resource, and research is advanced as a result of it. Thus, scholarship is embedded in the product and its use” (352).

The two thematic studies that I have included in Part Three of my dissertation

demonstrate the scholarly potential of MyNDIR as a second-generation electronic resource, and the thematic case studies also document the research discoveries that accumulated as part of my work in creating the initial prototype. MyNDIR's users will benefit from the work that has already gone into establishing the initial collection of images but the benefits will be greater if they choose to participate by contributing to the on-going development of the site. MyNDIR's design will facilitate participation from its users in regard to augmenting its database of illustrations and to furthering visual literacy concerning the content of its illustrations.

Chapter Seven

Project Specifications: Digital Identity and Digital Longevity

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is largely pragmatic in that it describes the appearance and functionality of MyNDIR's pages and features in the absence of internet access to its site.⁵⁴ The chapter also provides further insights into the design of the site. In addition to describing MyNDIR's prototype for the purposes of my dissertation, this chapter explores options for future promotion and development of the site.

7.2 MyNDIR's Title

As previously noted, the title MyNDIR stands for My Norse Digital Image Repository and the letters that it is comprised of spell the word for "pictures" in Icelandic. The pronunciation for MyNDIR is determined by the Icelandic pronunciation for "myndir," i.e., two syllables comprised of 'myn' and 'dir' with the stress on the first syllable. Both syllables contain a short letter "i" phoneme that is pronounced the same as the "i" in the English word "pin."

7.3 MyNDIR's Digital Identity

The first view of a website establishes its digital identity in the eye of the viewer and in a split second determines whether the viewer will stay to explore the site or click away to other internet offerings. MyNDIR's identity as a searchable digital image repository is established at first glance due to 1) the title box with the distinctive illustration of Óðinn riding Sleipnir and the expansion of acronym MyNDIR, i.e., "My Norse Digital Image Repository" which explicitly describes the site in English, 2) the

⁵⁴ The website is password restricted until I have fulfilled the requirements for my degree and until it is prudent to make it available to all users.

alphabet menu bar for keyword searches, which offers a choice of English and Icelandic characters and orthography, is positioned immediately below the title banner, and 3) the highly visible strip of scrollable thumbnail images that span the page that provides the site's major visual impact as well as access to the original illustration and its descriptive metadata (Fig. C-1).

All of the features of MyNDIR's site are available on every page and the choice to return to the "Home" page is included in the menu list of choices situated immediately below the title. In addition to "Home," the menu choices include "About," "Bibliography (complete)," "Contact," and "Links" which are part of the title box and thus are also available on every page. The search box is positioned in the upper right hand corner conforming to current user expectations regarding page layout and it is also accessible on every page, as are the alphabet menu bar and the thumbnail strip. Access to digital images of Norse gods and heroes is the primary function of the site and access to these images is provided on every page. Ease of use will encourage use and thus help to insure longevity.

As previously noted in Chapter Five but worth repeating at this point, Flanders dislikes homepage images that act as a "source of titillation without which a site's mere content will appear dull," and she dislikes any image that is not utilitarian in regard to research possibilities (303). I agree with Flanders criticisms of current web design practice regarding illustrations. It is frustrating to view pages with images or graphics that are obviously relevant to their topic but are not identified either by title, artist, or creation date. One way to discover the source of the image in such cases is to 1) right click on "image info"; 2) examine the file name of the image for a likely search term, such as title

or the artist's name, 3) enter the term as a Google image search; and 4) scroll through the results to find an image that matches the one on the page. It is possible to discover the descriptive metadata for an image in this tedious fashion, but it is much more work than it should be and would not be undertaken by a casual viewer. Unidentified images on webpages concerning Old Norse mythology, along with the high volume of completely irrelevant images in Google image search results for illustrations of Old Norse gods, hindered my research on the transmission and reception of Norse Mythology through illustrations and provided the initial inspiration for creating MyNDIR as part of my Ph.D. project.

MyNDIR's site presents an attractive, uncluttered interface for the repository's home page, all of its images are relevant to the site, and all of its images are provided with descriptive metadata concerning their origin and provenance. For example, the illustration of Óðinn riding his eight-legged stallion by Gerhard Munthe that I have chosen for the title banner is linked to the page for the original illustration and its descriptive data, which are accessible by clicking on the image in the banner. The illustration in the title banner is included in the scrollable thumbnail strip which can be accessed from the alphabetic menu of keywords by clicking on Óðinn, Sleipnir, Gungnir, Heimskringla etc. or by entering terms associated with the illustration in the search box. Accessing the page for title banner image by clicking on the illustration in the banner produces a result that includes the thumbnails for the entire repository. Searching for the title banner illustration by means of clicking on an item in the alphabet menu, or by entering one of the keywords associated with it in the search box, or by clicking on one of

the keywords at the bottom of a page on which they occur, results in the inclusion of the illustration in a set of relevant thumbnails.

7.4 The Title Banner Menu

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, MyNDIR's homepage functions as a search page with a welcome message and a brief survey of search instructions for the variety of search strategies that the page offers that are part of every page in the repository. In addition to Gerhard Munthe's illustration of "Óðinn riding Sleipnir" and MyNDIR's acronym and expanded title, the title banner also contains the main menu for the site "Home," "About," "Bibliography (complete)," "Contact," and "Links." As the site evolves further menu items such as "Participate" will be added to the banner to provide the means for users to participate in a variety of ways.

7.5 The Search Box

At this phase in MyNDIR's development, entering a term into the "Search" box results in a complete search that is performed in three stages. First the system performs a text search of MyNDIR's vocabulary file in names.xml, and then performs another text search of the documents themselves, and then combines the results into a single list and displays the thumbnails along with a number for the total images found for the viewer to choose from. The search process looks for keywords for the illustrations, as well as untagged text in the descriptions for each illustration. As previously discussed, users can also find illustrations by scrolling through the entire contents of the repository via the thumbnail strip, or by selecting keywords from the alphabet menu bar, or by selecting keywords from the box at the bottom of individual pages. In the future it will likely be desirable to further provide modified options for "Search" box so that users will be able

to restrict their search to illustrations that are free of copyright restrictions or conversely search only for restricted illustrations. As is customary on other sites, users can bookmark any page, which for MyNDIR effectively establishes a de facto home/search page with the illustration of their choice.

7.6 The Dropdown Menu

The dropdown menu is positioned immediately below the title banner and offers a choice of English and Icelandic characters and orthography (Fig. C-2). The choice of languages enables users to search for “Óðinn” and “Þórr” by their English transliterations “Odin” and “Thor,” which can also be used as terms in the Search box.

7.7 The Thumbnail Strip

The scrollable strip of thumbnails images on MyNDIR’s homepage provides the user with the opportunity to explore the repository’s contents in a serendipitous manner that might lead to engaging with unexpected material (Fig. C-1). The illustrations for the repository vary in width and height, consequently the thumbnails of the illustrations are not scaled down versions but consist of a cropped area, of 100 x 100 pixels, that is focused on iconic details of the scene. Dragging the mouse over the thumbnail strip moves the strip in either direction with a speed that is relative to the movement of the mouse. Clicking on directional arrows located on either side of the thumbnail strip provides a way of navigating the strip by moving along it in either direction one thumbnail at a time.

Pausing over a thumbnail with the mouse results in a popup text box containing a title for the illustration and the name of the illustrator, and a message concerning copyright restrictions also appears when the image is restricted. Clicking on a thumbnail

brings up the individual page that displays the full size illustration and its metadata, which will be described below in greater detail, and the selected thumbnail appears in the thumbnail strip in a smaller format delineated by a blue border to indicate which image has been selected. Thumbnails whose content cannot be expanded to a view of the entire illustration are delineated by a thin red outline in order to warn users that clicking on the thumbnail will provide metadata but not the expanded image. The restricted thumbnail is provided in order to give the viewer some idea of the nature of the original illustration and the original can be found with the metadata on the page provided by clicking on the thumbnail (Fig. C-4).

7.8 MyNDIR's Individual Pages

7.8.1 The "Home" Page

As previously mentioned, The "Home" page also functions as a "Search" page (Fig. C-1). Clicking on "Home" in the menu at the bottom of the title banner returns the user to the "Home" page with the welcome message, which includes search instructions. Access to the full content of the repository via the thumbnails is the only reason that users might want to return to the homepage from a result page that is restricted to images produced by a search. Access to the full thumbnail strip can also be achieved by clicking on the illustration of "Óðinn riding Sleipnir" in the title banner, and, in this case, the resulting page shows the metadata for the banner image along with the full thumbnail strip. Therefore the link to the "Home" page is a somewhat redundant item but it is an explicit choice for inexperienced users and can be circumvented by clicking on the banner illustration for those who prefer not to see the welcome message every time they want to access the full strip of thumbnails.

7.8.2 The “About” Page

The “About” page explains MyNDIR’s acronym and contains information regarding images concerning: copyright, searching, viewing, and copying images. This page is intended primarily for first-time viewers.

7.8.3 The “Bibliography (complete)” Page

There are mini-bibliographies labeled “Bibliography” specific to each illustration on their individual pages and “Bibliography (complete)” in the title banner contains a comprehensive bibliography for the entire site. The “Bibliography (complete)” page is divided into sections for primary sources (manuscript and print), editions, and secondary sources.

7.8.4 The “Contact” Page

Initially the “Contact” page will contain an entry for contacting me as well as a comprehensive list of archives, libraries, etc. for the institutions and individuals who are the rights holders for copyright restricted illustrations in MyNDIR. However I foresee the “Contact” page evolving into a directory of users and their interests that will serve to foster scholarly collaboration.

7.8.5 The “Links” Page

The “Links” page will provide links to e-manuscripts and e-texts related to the images in MyNDIR, so that users can see MyNDIR’s illustrations situated within their original texts when such digital resources are available. The “Links” page will also contain links to e-manuscripts and e-texts whose illustrations have yet to be entered into MyNDIR’s repository and thus will direct researchers to further material available electronically beyond MyNDIR’s resources. My long-term goal is to have scholars add

their publications to “Links” to aid in the dissemination of their work and also to serve as examples of the type of scholarly inquiry that such images can facilitate. These contributions, presented from a variety of disciplinary viewpoints, have the potential to serve as scholarly apparatuses for the images.

7.8.6 The “Participation” Page

The “Participation” page is not presently part of the menu for the initial prototype but will constitute an integral element of the site when it goes online. This page will include information on the ways that users can participate in the ongoing evolution of MyNDIR’s site. Participation will be encouraged for all levels of users. For example, the page could feature a “Rogues Gallery page” of images from the web that have been posted without acknowledging the artist, etc. and users could help to identify the sources for such illustrations. The page will also provide forms for contributing images, research notes, citations or links to scholarly publications, and citations for material to add to MyNDIR’s “to do” list. Information for users to connect to social media resources relating to MyNDIR would also be featured on this page.

7.9 Pages and Metadata Fields for Individual Illustrations

Pages for individual illustrations feature the image on the left side of the page and metadata fields on the right (Fig. C-3). The metadata fields are 1) “Creator,” 2) “Description,” which includes a title that is generally a supplied title rather than one given to the illustration by the illustrator, 3) “Source,” 4) “Folio or Page,” 5) “Medium,” 6) “Date” for creation of the illustration, 7) “Dimensions,” 8) “Provenance,” 9) “Rights,” 10) “Bibliography” for the illustration and its page, 11) “Identity Number” for the illustration in MyNDIR’s files, 12) “Download Size” in bytes, 13) “Related Item,” which

provides links to renderings of the same scene by the same artist when applicable, 14) “Research Notes” for footnotes regarding the illustration which can contain links to other renderings of the scene by other illustrators, and 15) “Source code of this document [XML]” that provides a view of the fundamental XML markup of the page before its conversion to XHTML for the webpage

The first twelve fields on pages for individual illustrations conform to viewers’ expectations for descriptive content acquired from viewing illustrations on other digital image repository sites such as ARTstor. The thirteenth and fourteenth fields, “Related Item” and “Research Notes,” move the user into the basic academic areas of comparison, discovery, and research. The last field “Source code” is intended for digital humanists, and others interested in creating similar sites, and provides a deeper level of information than a user can access via a right mouse click and “view page source.” The “Source code” view is particularly useful in the development phase when debugging markup for the illustration that is being displayed. The keywords at the bottom of the page relate to source, creator, beings, artifacts, etc. and provide the user with the opportunity to explore other images relevant to the illustration on the page.

7.10 MyNDIR’s Glossary

MyNDIR’s standards for metadata creation, markup, and content are consistent with the needs of academically-orientated users, but are also intended to engage the curiosity of casual viewers who might be inspired to take a more active interest in the field of Old Norse studies. Consequently, the names of illustrators, sources, gods, artifacts, events, etc. have been linked to a glossary that supplies a brief description in a popup box when activated by clicking words that are underlined with a dotted line.

MyNDIR is not intended to serve as a comprehensive encyclopaedia for Old Norse mythology because the entries for its vocabulary and glossary will be limited to the contents of the images that it contains.

Initially, MyNDIR's content has been restricted by the sources that I have used for my thematic studies that for the most part reflect the small portion of the content of *The Prose Edda* that Jakob Sigurðsson chose to illustrate, and all of "Ynglinge Saga" from J. M. Stenersen's *Kongesagaer*, the Norwegian translation of *Heimskringla*. However, the next phase in MyNDIR's development, beyond the limits imposed by my dissertation, will serve to present a more complete representation of mythological figures by digitizing all of the illustrations by Lorenz Frolich of figures from the poems of *The Poetic Edda* in Gjellerup's Danish edition *Den Ældre Eddas Gudesange*. Scholars from the field of Old Norse mythology will have little need for or interest in the glossary—except perhaps for the bibliographic notes concerning individual illustrators; casual viewers will find the glossary of passing interest—if indeed they choose to access it at all; but self-directed learners will find it a convenient first step in the process of learning about the subject.

7.11 Conclusion

Vandendorpe remarks in *From Papyrus to Hypertext* that "As a result of the internet we are moving from a mass-media culture to a participatory culture" (155). Due to this cultural paradigm shift, users of the internet now expect websites to offer the opportunity to participate either by commenting on the site's material or else by contributing content. When MyNDIR is ready to go online for the general public, I will augment its digital presence by creating *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *Flickr* accounts for the

site, as well as participating in other social and academic media resources that will have arisen by that time. *Facebook* and *Twitter* can be used to provide updates when illustrations from out of print sources are added to the site, and announcements for the occasions when copyright restricted material comes into the Public Domain and are added to the site. Ensuring that MyNDIR always has a selection of files for illustrations that are only two or three years from coming into the Public Domain will create a ready source for announcements. *Facebook* and *Twitter* can also be used to acknowledge users who identify the sources of images from the “Rogues Gallery” or contribute research notes for individual images.

MyNDIR will be a natural choice to add as a link in *Wikipedia* in its entries for Old Norse mythology which will provide further visibility for the repository. Mutual linking and collaboration between MyNDIR and manuscript collections in Iceland and Denmark will also enhance MyNDIR’s usefulness, appeal, and scholarly reputation. Securing the funding to ensure a steady input of new material, largely from early print sources, and getting the word out as the repository grows will ensure MyNDIR’s connectivity and longevity.

Part Three

Thematic Case Studies

Chapter Eight

Rationales for the Thematic Studies

“We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice.”
(Berger 8)

8.1 Introduction

MyNDIR’s impact as a digital image repository depends on the manner in which its resources are used. There will always be casual users simply looking for illustrations to employ as visual enhancement for their own projects. Such users are welcome providing they cite the original sources of the illustrations in their projects. However, I have provided the images and their descriptive metadata so that scholars and others possessing intellectual curiosity can engage in and go beyond the activities that Unsworth has labelled “scholarly primitives,” i.e., annotating, comparing, referring, selecting, linking, and discovering (Palmer 355). I have written two thematic studies: 1) “Jakob Sigurðsson’s Illustrations of Snorri’s *Edda*” and 2) “J. M. Stenersen’s Editions of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer*” in which I initially use MyNDIR’s images to model the scholarly primitives in action on a pragmatic level. However, Unsworth also stated that his scholarly primitives are “‘self-understood’ functions [that] form the basis for higher-level scholarly projects, arguments, statements, interpretations” (“Scholarly Primitives”). Consequently, on an advanced level, my two thematic studies will demonstrate the manner in which these basic scholarly activities ultimately lead to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Old Norse studies in particular and visual literacy in general.

My examination of the illustrations in my thematic studies concerning mythological illustrations from eighteenth-century Iceland and the cusp of twentieth-

century Norway reveals insights concerning 1) the role of book history in the process of creation and dissemination of illustrations, 2) the circumstances concerning client/patron relationships inherent in the creation of these illustrations—whether in manuscript form or early print editions—, and 3) the triggering of pagan/Christian tensions within viewers when confronted with graphic depictions of their pagan ancestors’ religious beliefs, rituals and actions. Thus, my thematic studies also demonstrate MyNDIR’s potential to grow beyond its initial status as a ‘standing reserve’ of digital images to that of a thematic research collection as its community of users grows and contributes to the site.

I argue in my two thematic studies, the first from mid eighteenth-century Iceland and the second from early twentieth-century Norway, that the visual impact of illustrations concerning pagan material from 1) mythological sources, 2) accounts of the pre-historical pagan period, and 3) historical accounts concerning the conversion to Christianity was potentially distressing for Christian audiences despite their desire to engage with the texts. I suggest in the first study Chapter Nine that religious tensions inherent in the feelings of the eighteenth-century Icelanders towards the pagan past of their ancestors with their own Christian beliefs directly affected the initial creation of illustrations for hand-copied Icelandic manuscripts. I make the same suggestion in the second study Chapter 10 concerning late twentieth-century Norwegians that similar feelings toward their pagan ancestors had an impact on the choice of illustrations for the first edition of the early print Norwegian text *Kongesagaer* and especially on the revision of illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga” for the second edition. I will provide direct evidence—1) from iterations of related illustrations in hand-copied manuscripts, and 2) from revisions of illustrations in published editions—of the visual strategies that aided in

the process of distancing and Christianizing of illustrative material. I have selected illustrations from sources that range from a parchment manuscript from early fourteenth-century Iceland through to Icelandic hand-copied paper manuscripts in the eighteenth century, as well as illustrations in early print sources from the seventeenth to late twentieth centuries in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

My methodology when choosing illustrations for the thematic studies has been to select illustrations that are related either by artist, or subject matter, or both. For Chapter Nine, I have chosen 1) an illustration from an early-fourteenth-century Icelandic parchment manuscript that has been repeatedly copied over a period of years by different artists in different countries, i.e., “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene in U; 2) renderings that have been redrawn or revised by the same artist, i.e., Jakob’s four hand-copied renderings in of the “Deluding of Gylfi” scene in three eighteenth-century Icelandic paper manuscripts, i.e., N, Í, and S; and 3) items that are part of a larger set, each one of which has also been drawn more than once by the same artist, i.e., Jakob’s two sets of sixteen *Edda* scenes in N and S.

For Chapter Ten, I have chosen illustrations by four prominent Norwegian artists, out of a group of six, in the Norwegian early print first and second editions of *Kongesagaer* in 1899 and 1900. The illustrations of pagan beliefs and conversion history that I selected from the *Kongesagaer* editions are significant because they were 1) revised by the original artist for the second edition, or 2) replaced in the second edition with new illustrations by the original artist, or 3) deleted in second edition. Although separated by more than two and half centuries, and concerning illustrations of subject matter from the pre-historical and early historical eras, these two collections from Iceland and Norway

had viewers who still felt close enough to their ancestors to have an emotional investment regarding the manner in which Old Norse prehistory and mythology was portrayed.

8.2 Rationale: “Jakob Sigurðsson’s Illustrations of *The Prose Edda*”

I will begin Chapter Nine with a discussion of the state of literacy and book culture in eighteenth-century Iceland. An understanding of the literary situation is crucial to understanding the achievements of the illustrative and scribal work of Jakob Sigurðsson (1727 - 1779). Jakob was an Icelandic scribe, illustrator, and poet, who had no formal education and spent his entire life as a tenant farmer in a remote corner of north-eastern Iceland during an era when scattered trading ports, including Reykjavík, could scarcely be called villages. Jakob’s full-page illustrations of Old Norse mythology in hand-copied paper manuscripts have not only survived but have gone from several hundred years of relative obscurity to recent ubiquity and frequently appear on internet pages, on book covers, on conference pamphlets, and on postcards. Despite the present-day popularity of Jakob’s illustrations, very little has been written concerning the man himself; the significance of his work for his patrons; or the role of the illustrator/client relationship in determining the content of his illustrations.

Jakob’s illustrations and scribal activity were part of an informal process of book production and dissemination that flourished because the only printing press in Iceland was under the control of the Church since its arrival circa 1530. The Church did not generally regard secular material as suitable reading material for its adherents. Neither *The Prose Edda* nor *The Poetic Edda* appeared in print although, as has been previously discussed in Chapter Two, a limited assortment of secular material was published such as

law books, historical works concerning the founding of Iceland, and several sagas that were regarded as historical.

In spite of the Church's tacit disapproval, Old Norse mythology remained an integral part of Icelandic culture because it had been preserved in Icelandic literary classics extant at the time such as eddas and various sagas, and mythological knowledge had continued to function as part of the contemporary poetic lexicon when poets were composing popular ballads known as *rímur*. The eddas came to the attention of European scholars in the seventeenth century such as Bartholin, Worm and others. The European scholars were in contact with Icelandic scholars, and the books and illustrations that were a result of this contact soon found their way to Iceland where they were disseminated by means of hand-copied manuscripts. Consequently continental scholarship concerning runes and mythology was available and of interest to the Icelandic educated class in the eighteenth century. It is ironic that the Icelandic students who were most likely to receive a higher education, either in one of the local episcopal schools or in Copenhagen, were the sons of rich farmers and were often destined to become priests. Therefore despite the official disapproval of the Church in previous centuries, eighteenth-century Icelandic priests and laymen were often interested in Old Norse mythology and facilitated the hand-copying and dissemination of such material.

I believe that Jakob personally found a way not only to satisfy his own misgivings but also to reconcile the religious consciences of his Lutheran patrons with their desire to read Old Norse mythology and thus freed them to enjoy his illustrations as well. He accomplished this reconciliation by including one of his poems denigrating Óðinn and Gylfi in all four of his illustrations of the "The Deluding of Gylfi" scene. Consequently, I

will discuss, the textual origin and illustrative history of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene, because all of Jakob’s versions not only contain his poem but all of his illustrations of this scene feature significant differences from the fourteenth-century original in U. Differences from the fourteenth-century illustration are not surprising because Jakob did not have access to the original manuscript, or even the copy of it that was made in the early seventeenth century, i.e., M.

I will establish that Jakob’s exemplar was Bartholin’s lithograph version of the “Deluding of Gylfi” illustration which was published in 1689 in *Antiquitatum danicarum* (Fig. B-4). I will further establish that Bartholin’s rendering was a mirror-image copy of a copperplate illustration created by Verelius in 1664 for his notes that accompanied *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia* (Fig. B-2). Verelius’ illustration was sometimes, but not always, inserted between pages 42 and 43.⁵⁵ Verelius based his copperplate on the original manuscript illustration in U, which by this time was in Sweden (Fig. B-1). Although very similar to the original illustration in U, Verelius’ copperplate was not an exact copy. I will show that the continental scholars in Sweden and Denmark used Verelius’ version of “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration for nationalistic purposes in regard to their respective countries. However, Jakob returned the focus of the illustration to its roots in the *Prose Edda*, and to its original role as an illustration of Snorri’s text. Snorri’s purpose in describing the “The Deluding of Gylfi” was to reinforce his contention, which he explicitly stated in the “Prologue” of his *Edda*, that the Old Norse gods were not gods but men who had come to be thought of as divine due to the phenomenon known as euhemerism.

⁵⁵ The National Library of Sweden has five copies of *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia*, three of which contain the copperplate.

I will conclude Chapter Nine with a comparison of two sets of sixteen *Edda* scenes of Norse myths that Jakob first illustrated in 1760 in N and then for a second time in 1765 in S. I will suggest that the catalyst for creating these scenes was Jakob's initial encounter with Bartholin's "Deluding of Gylfi" illustration, and I will demonstrate that the differences between Jakob's two sets of *Edda* illustrations were due to the level of education and personal interests of the patrons who commissioned them. I am not the first to notice that there are differences between these two sets. However, I am the first to explore the differences, to ascertain their significance, and to establish their academic value in furthering our knowledge of the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology.

8.3 Rationale: "J. M. Stenersen's Editions Of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer*"

In Chapter Ten, I will examine illustrations, primarily from "Ynglinge Saga" along with several illustrations from the Conversion era sagas, in the first and second editions of *Kongesagaer* that were printed in Norway in 1899 and 1900. *Kongesagaer* is the Norwegian translation of the thirteenth-century Icelandic compilation of sagas, known as *Heimskringla*. The sagas in *Heimskringla* begin in the period of Scandinavian mythological prehistory starting with "Ynglinge Saga", which describes the origins of the Ynglinga dynasty in what is present-day Sweden, and the last saga is "Magnus Erlingssons Saga," which ends in 1163. Magnus Erlingsson (1156-1184) was the first Christian king to be crowned in Norway, and his coronation represents the end of the pagan period in Scandinavia.

Norwegians traditionally regarded *Heimskringla* as a reliable text documenting their nation's history. However, as previously mentioned, it is now "taken as a witness to

a thirteenth-century Icelandic view of Norwegian history up to the twelfth century, rather than to the facts of Norwegian history” (Whaley 115). Nonetheless, the illustrated editions of *Kongesagaer* published at the turn of the twentieth century played an important role in creating a national genesis narrative for Norway and aided Norway in gaining independence from Sweden in 1904. My focus is centered on the illustrations depicting Old Norse paganism and mythology, as well as scenes involving pagan/Christian interactions. I am especially interested in the illustrative agenda for pagan material in the first edition, the reception of the illustrations during the period immediately following their publication in 1899, and the revisions, deletions, and additions of illustrations for the second edition in 1900.

The first edition of *Kongesagaer* is a large-format deluxe edition, printed in two colours, containing approximately 220 illustrations and decorative details by six prominent Norwegian artists. The second edition, printed one year later, is smaller and plainer and yet still features almost all of the original illustrations and many of the decorative details. I will begin Chapter Ten with an examination of the physical materiality of *Kongesagaer* which will address 1) the circumstances of its creation and production, 2) the artists and their backgrounds along with the effect of their temperaments on the edition, and 3) the role that the illustrations in both editions played in creating a national genesis narrative and a national identity for Norwegians at a pivotal point in their history. These two editions were printed while Norwegians were campaigning to gain their independence from Sweden which they achieved in 1905. By this time *Kongesagaer* had become known as “a second bible” in Norway and copies of the second edition could be found in almost every home (Whaley 10).

Next I will focus on 1) the reception of the illustrations in the first edition on the part of politicians, scholars, and the general public, 2) the subsequent revisions of some of these illustrations for the second edition, 3) the deletion of a small number of the original illustrations for the second edition, and 4) the addition to the second edition of a small number of completely new illustrations. I will show that differences between the contents of the illustrations in the first and second editions were part of an ongoing editorial agenda to de-emphasize dramatic moments. I will also contend that there was a decision on the part of individual artists—mainly Erik Werenskiold—not only to downplay dramatic representations of the pagan past but also to enable the viewer to discern admonitions related to Christian paradigms in such scenes.

I will conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of the ongoing use of the illustrations from *Kongesagaer* in subsequent editions and in editions of *Heimskringla* in Icelandic and English. The additions and revisions for the second edition may have been in response to a public outcry and possibly some soul-searching on the part of Werenskiold but they have had no lasting impact in print editions. However, once MyNDIR is online, the illustrations of the second edition will join the illustrations of the first edition that are currently available on the internet.

8.4 Conclusion

A personal connection with mythical gods and pre-historical figures is so far removed from our time and beliefs that we do not see them as a threat to our immortal souls or self-images, and consequently we do not feel the need to distance ourselves from their subject matter. So, we require a reminder that these issues were of concern to their original creators and initial viewers. My thematic studies were created in order to

discover the forces that initially shaped such images and to discern the factors that resulted in their subsequent revisions and renderings. If we choose to look carefully at these illustrations, we will gain insights into the transmission and reception of Old Norse pre-history and mythology through the ages that the words of their texts alone cannot provide. These illustrations act as snapshots of the eras in which they were created and, like any family album, the contents of MyNDIR will require knowledge of the figures portrayed, and will also require diligence while exploring the provenance of their physical, and now digital, transmission. The conscious act of choosing to ‘look closely’ follows in the academic tradition of ‘reading closely’ and is an important activity to model in an age that due to modern multi-media is becoming increasingly oriented to visual material.

Chapter Nine

Jakob Sigurðsson's Illustrations of *The Prose Edda*

9.1 Introduction

Apart from the light it casts on medieval and post-medieval Icelandic illustrative practices, this thematic study offers insights into illustrator and patron relationships in book production and culture in eighteenth-century Iceland, as well as in seventeenth-century Sweden and Denmark. Illustrators through the ages have essentially adhered to the description of “The Deluding of Gylfi” in Snorri’s text and to the basic composition of the scene in the illustration in the U (Fig. B-1). However, illustrators of “The Deluding of Gylfi”—from the anonymous illustrator of U in the early fourteenth-century Iceland to Olaus Verelius (1618 - 1682) in Sweden to Jakob Sigurðsson (1727 - 1779) in North Eastern Iceland—have also individualized their renderings in ways that reveal fascinating aspects of the transmission and reception of U’s illustration, thus clarifying an important chapter in the textual reception of *The Prose Edda*. In addition to his four illustrations of “The Deluding of Gylfi,” Jakob also created two sets of idiosyncratic illustrations of scenes from *The Prose Edda* in N and S that on close examination reveal his relationship with his patrons and their individual interests.

I will begin this study with an examination of the social and economic conditions concerning manuscript production in eighteenth-century Iceland. I will take into account religious, economic, and cultural forces that fostered literacy such as Lutheran pietism; the working conditions in the communal room known as the *baðstofa*; and the social

tradition of *kvöldvaka* readings. A familiarity with the book culture of the era is crucial to understanding the achievements of Jakob's scribal and illustrative work.

Next, I will focus on the life and education of Jakob, who had no formal education and spent his life as a tenant farmer in a remote corner of North-Eastern Iceland. Jakob's full-page illustrations of Old Norse mythology in three hand-copied paper manuscripts—N, Í, and S—have not only survived but have gone from several hundred years of relative obscurity to recent ubiquity on internet pages, on book covers, and on conference pamphlets. Despite the present-day popularity of Jakob's illustrations, very little has been written concerning his life, the significance of his work for his patrons, or the importance of the illustrator/patron relationship in determining the content of his illustrations. Jakob's scribal activity was part of an informal means of book production and dissemination that coexisted with the advent of printing in Iceland circa 1530 and continued into the early twentieth century.

Before discussing Jakob's illustrations, I will look at the somewhat vexed question of scribal attribution for the manuscripts N and S and will concur with the scholars who attribute the text of N to the Reverend Ólafur Brynjólfsson (1713 - 1765) and the text of S to Jakob. I will then provide a comparison of the textual items in the two manuscripts in order to establish the differences in the levels of education and interests of their initial owners. I will begin the comparison with textual items that the two manuscripts have in common and then discuss the significance of the items that are peculiar to each manuscript.

Next I will examine the illustrations in N and S and, as with the text, I will begin with the question of attribution for the illustrative content of the two manuscripts.

Contrary to prevailing scholarly attribution for the illustrations in N and S, I will establish that Jakob was the illustrator for both manuscripts.

Next, I will examine the rendition of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene from U (Fig. B-1), which is the only parchment manuscript to feature an illustration of a scene from *The Prose Edda*. I will present the cycle of transmission and reception that U’s illustration engendered when the manuscript was sent to Denmark in 1639. I will establish that a rendering of this illustration in an early print source from Denmark inspired Jakob’s first mythological illustration of a scene from *The Prose Edda* (Fig. D-36). The illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” in U depicts the Swedish King Gylfi standing in front of three figures of Óðinn enthroned on high seats. Jakob’s rendering is very similar to the copperplate illustration created by Verelius in 1664 for the notes that accompanied *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia* (Fig. B-2). However, I will establish that the exemplar for Jakob’s rendering was Thomas Bartholin’s lithograph in 1689 in *Antiquitatum danicarum de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis libri tres* (Fig. B-4), which is a reverse image of Verelius’ copperplate rendering of the scene (Fig. B-2). I will also discuss the strategies used by antiquarian scholars, such as Verelius in Sweden and Bartholin in Denmark, in their use of “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration to further their nationalistic agendas in regard to their respective countries.

I will show that Jakob returned the focus of “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration to its roots in *The Prose Edda* and thus to its primary role as an illustration of Snorri’s text. Snorri invented the frame story concerning Óðinn and Gylfi for the “The Deluding of Gylfi” section of *The Prose Edda*. Snorri used the frame story to reinforce his contention, which he put forth in the Prologue, that the Old Norse gods were not gods at

all, but men who had come to be thought of as divine due to the phenomenon known as euhemerism. Scholars have long debated whether or not Gylfi was deceived. I believe that a verse Jakob composed containing the phrase ‘High’s lie is shown here’ “Hárs er lygin hérna sýn” (Fig. D-44) is a strong indicator concerning the reception of the text of “The Deluding of Gylfi” in Iceland. Jakob included the verse within all four of his renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene (Fig. D-13, D-36, D-27, D-41). I will briefly discuss earlier manuscripts whose texts equate “The Deluding of Gylfi” with “High’s lie” and the implications regarding the reception of text of *The Prose Edda* in Iceland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Jakob’s verse concerning ‘High’s lie’ exposes Óðinn’s mendacity and by extension Gylfi’s gullibility. I will show below that the verse is significant because it reveals tensions inherent in Jakob’s relationship with Norse mythology, as well as that of his patrons or clients, in regard to the act of reading, illustrating, or viewing pagan material.

Next I will continue the thematic study with an examination of the differences in Jakob’s idiosyncratic renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration followed by an examination of the differences in the other pairs of illustrations in Jakob’s sets of mythological scenes in N and S. I will demonstrate that the differences between Jakob’s two sets of *Edda* illustrations offer further evidence concerning the level of education and personal interests of the patrons who commissioned them and their relationship with Jakob.

9.2 Pietism and Book Culture in Eighteenth-Century Iceland

The desire to acquire entertaining, as opposed to spiritually-edifying, reading material in eighteenth-century Iceland is understandable in light of the social realities of

the period. Iceland had originally been founded as a Commonwealth in 930 but due to a period of anarchy and civil war came under the rule of Norway in 1262. In 1380, Norway and Denmark were united under the rule of Danish king Olav II, who was known as Olav IV in Norway. Following King Olav's death in 1387, Norway and Denmark formed the Kalmar Union with Denmark as the dominant power. Consequently, Iceland officially became a Danish possession and did not regain full independence until 1944. Iceland's economic and social configuration was rural during much of that long period—farms were organized into communal units known as *hreppar* in the tenth century (Karlsson 505) and, essentially, there was no urban development until the late-eighteenth century (Ísberg 57). As Davíð Ólafsson has noted concerning individual farms, “The farmer and his wife, their children, other relatives and servants formed a unit that functioned as a school, workplace, and social arena: a forum for entertainment, production and consumption” (“Handwritten Books” 2). Subsistence survival took the combined efforts of every member of the farm's household, and in the winter months their work was divided into doing farmyard chores, such as feeding and milking the livestock, during the three to four hours of daylight, and doing the indoor tasks associated with the production of woollen yard goods for the rest of the daytime hours and during the evening.⁵⁶

Icelandic dwellings, from the time of settlement in the tenth century until well into the nineteenth century, were built of turf with thick walls and few windows, and indoor activities were performed in a single room known as a “*baðstofa*, the size of which rarely exceeded about four metres by ten; here all the members of the household slept, worked, and ate....the only light came from a from a single lamp....[and] there was little

⁵⁶ See Davíð Ólafsson “Handwritten Books” 6 and Byock 44 for further details concerning the production of woolen goods and their fundamental importance to Icelandic economy at that time.

apart from the beds along both walls and perhaps a small table at the end” (Driscoll, *Unwashed Children* 73). The term *kvöldvaka* (“vigil”), which translates literally as “the act of keeping awake after twilight,” often included the practice of assigning someone to read while everyone else worked. According to an eyewitness account by Ebenezer Hendersen in the winter of 1814-15, “the work is no sooner begun, than one of the family, selected on purpose, advances to a seat near the lamp, and commences the evening lecture, which generally consists of some old saga, or other such histories as are to be obtained on the island” (qtd. in Driscoll, *Unwashed Children* 43). It is hardly surprising that, under such circumstances, people would prefer the stirring tales of ancient deeds and prose romances to readings from the Gospels as an aide to staying awake while performing their tasks.

The Church’s disapproval of the reading of secular material was part of the movement known as Pietism, which also discouraged other secular activities such as singing and dancing. Indeed, King Christian VI “issued decrees in the years 1741–46 in which Icelanders were, in effect, prohibited from all forms of amusement: “games (*leikir*) and other types of amusement were named among other things that people were to avoid in order to be able to give better attention to the word of God” (Guðmundsdóttir, “Prohibition on Dancing” 29). Nonetheless, the *kvöldvaka*, despite the inclusion of secular reading material along with religious texts, followed the dictates of Lutheran Pietism which stipulated that children must be able to read in order to be confirmed. Given that Iceland did not have elementary schools until the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is remarkable that the literacy level in eighteenth-century Iceland was almost one hundred percent. The high level of literacy is a testament to the effectiveness of

informal home schooling that often took place during *kvöldvaka* where grown-ups taught the children to read while everyone listened and worked (Davíð Ólafsson 4-6).

9.3 Jakob Sigurðsson's Life and Education

The few details that we have concerning the life of Jakob Sigurðsson (1727 - 1779) in combination with his scribal and illustrative output provide an intriguing glimpse into the era of Lutheran Pietism in eighteenth-century Iceland in regard to education, literacy, and book culture. Páll Eggert Ólason's *Íslenzkar æviskrár frá landnámstímum til ársloka 1940* (Icelandic Biographies from The Time of Settlement until 1940), which serves as "who's who" of Icelanders beginning with the first settlers in 874 and other notable inhabitants until 1940, describes Jakob as a *skáld* ('poet') (12). Ólason's designation for Jakob is a measure of the respect that Jakob gained in his lifetime but overlooks the reality that he earned his living as a tenant farmer. The exact date of Jakob's birth is unknown, but it is generally accepted that he was born in north-eastern Iceland circa 1727 - 1729 on a farm named Skeggjastaðir. His father was a clergyman named Sigurður Ketilsson (1689 - c. 1730), who is remembered as having been 'jovial and skilled in verse making' "hagmæltur og skemmtinn" (Gíslason 42). Sigurður was a student at Hólaskóli in 1712 and an indication of the quality of his education is that he could write poetry in both Icelandic and Latin. He was ordained on April 9th, 1724 and married Ingibjörg Jakobsdóttir, who was the daughter of a clergyman, the same year. They had three sons, one of whom died young. Sigurður became responsible for the church on the farm at Skeggjastaðir on March 2, 1729 but died soon after in 1730 or 1731, and Ingibjörg is said to have died soon after her husband.

Jakob, who would have been between one to three years old when his father died, was fostered by his aunt, Sigríður Ketilsdóttir, who was married to the clergyman Brynjólfur Halldórson at Kirkjubær in Vopnafjörður. Sigríður's only child with Brynjólfur died young but she was stepmother to his four sons and a daughter from a previous marriage. According to the biographical information in *Íslenzkar æviskrár*, Brynjólfur 'was a good poet and had composed many sets of rímur' "var skáld gott og hefir kveðið marga rímnaflökka" (Ólason 278). However, Brynjólfur 'was little inclined to farming, struggled with difficulties and was deep in debt, when he died' "var lítt hneigður til búskapur, veitti erfiðlega og var stórskuldugur, er hann lézt" (Ólason 278). Brynjólfur drowned in 1737 and his oldest son, the Reverend Ólafur Brynjólfsson, took over the farm and church at the age of twenty-four. Jakob was between the ages of ten and twelve when his foster father died and he became Ólafur's responsibility along with Ólafur's four siblings. Two of Ólafur's brothers also became priests and his sister married a priest, but it appears that Jakob's foster family lacked the inclination, or perhaps the resources, to send him to school.

If Jakob had been fostered at a different farmstead his informal education might have ended with his confirmation. However, Jakob no doubt benefited from the fact that Ólafur attended one of the episcopal schools, Skáholt, for two years in upper-level classes (Ólason 3). The educational opportunities provided at Skáholt were such that

after the Reformation, there were generally 30-40 pupils [at Skáholt]....Many of the masters and teachers at the seminary were trained abroad and taught their pupils the fundamentals of Western European culture: Latin grammar and composition, theology, arithmetic and music.

(“The Rythmic Office of St Þorlákur”)⁵⁷

Ólason notes that as a student Ólafur was ‘interested in the study of history and skilled in verse making’ “hneigður að sagnfræði og skáldmæltur” (33). Benedikt Gíslason observes that Ólafur ‘was the greatest virtuoso in handiwork, a calligrapher and a painter, as is still evident in his handiwork. From him Jakob had learned to write.’ “var hinn mesti snilldarmaður til handaverka, skrautskrifari og málari, svo sem enn sýna hans handaverk. Af honum hefur Jakob lært að skrifa” (42).⁵⁸ Thus Jakob’s informal education would have been furthered by conversations with Ólafur and also access to the books at Kirkjubær, as well as exposure to the books that Jakob copied for others. Most of the farms that Jakob lived at as a tenant farmer were located in the same North-Eastern district as Kirkjubær so a continued relationship between Jakob and Ólafur—both social and intellectual—was highly likely.

Jakob married Ingveldur Sigurðardóttir in 1749, when he was just over the age of twenty, and they started farming at Eydalir in Breiðdalur. They had seven children, were extremely poor, and moved around a great deal from one farm to another. In addition to farming, Jakob supported his family by hand-copying manuscripts as well as illustrating them whenever he was commissioned to do so. Aside from the necessity of earning a living, it appears that Jakob made the move south to Eydalir in 1749 with a view to furthering his education. Gíslason reports that ‘perhaps Jakob had gone to Eydalir to study, to Reverend Sigurður Sveinsson’s The hard times then made nothing of Jakob’s

⁵⁷ The site for this item is no longer active but can be accessed via The Internet Archive: <http://web.archive.org/web/20090603110432/http://www.hi.is/HI/Ranns/SAM/exhibition.html>

⁵⁸ It should be noted that learning to write was not initially one of the fundamental goals of Pietism. Gunnar Karlsson has observed that, “the art of writing seems to have been rare among the common people in the second half of the eighteenth century” (172). Writing did not become part of the educational vision of the Enlightenment era until the latter part of the 18th century.

learning aspirations, besides Reverend Sigurður was a great drunkard.’ “ef til vill hefur Jakob farið að Eydölum til náms, til séra Sigurðar Sveinssonar...Harðindin hafi síðan gert lærdómsvonir Jakobs að engu, svo var séra Sigurður mikill óreglumaður” (43). Jakob would have fared better as far as educational opportunities were concerned when he moved back north in 1768 and was a neighbour of the clergyman Guðmundur Eiríksson, who was ‘a clever man and a friend of education, skilled in verse-making and a prolific writer’ “gáfumaður og, skáldmæltur og ritaði ýmislegt” (43). Gíslason is of the opinion that it was likely Guðmundur who wrote the verse commemorating Jakob that will be quoted later in this chapter (40).

Ólafur and Jakob were clearly part of an ongoing informal group of scholars and lay scribes that functioned as a semi-institution which disseminated book culture throughout eighteenth-century Iceland and carried on into the early nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Jakob died in Breiðamýri in Vopnafjörður in 1779 and left a legacy of more than two dozen hand-copied manuscripts dispersed among his clients. The books that he copied cover a wide range of material. Jakob’s place in his community can be ascertained in this verse

Jakob now has passed away,	Nú er Jakob fallin frá,
from hardship’s torments free.	frí við raunir harðar.
A scribe and poet in his day,	Skifari og skáld var sá,
Vopnafjörður’s glee. ⁶⁰	skemmtun Vopnafjarðar.

(Sigurðsson, “Melsted’s Edda” 181)

(Gíslason 40)

⁵⁹ See Davíð Ólafsson’s article “Handwritten books” and also *Wordmongers*.

⁶⁰ The semantic range of the word “*skemmtun*” includes enjoyment, entertainment, and amusement.

This brief verse does not mention Jakob's illustrations but there is no doubt that his drawings, as well as his poetry and scribal work, would have been very much appreciated in the drab daily life of eighteenth-century Icelanders. Aside from the vicissitudes of a harsh climate and severe economic hardships in their struggle to provide the necessities of life, Icelanders during this period were subject to the previously mentioned puritanical dictates of the Lutheran Church regarding singing, dancing, and reading for pleasure.

9.4 The Textual Content of N and S

9.4.1 Scribal Attribution for N and S

Issues concerning the scribal and illustrative attributions for N and S must be addressed in regard to Ólafur and Jakob before embarking on a discussion of the textual items in N and S in this section and an examination of the two sets of mythological illustrations in N and S in the next section. This clarification is imperative because there are conflicting notes concerning scribal attribution for N in manuscript descriptions both in print and also on institutional websites. There are three instances of scholarly documentation concerning the attribution for the scribal hand in N and S.

The first instance of scholarly documentation that raised doubt concerning the scribal hand, or hands, for *The Prose Edda* in S and N is a brief manuscript description for S⁶¹—which was previously available online from Saganet, the joint digitization project by Cornell University and the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík.⁶² The

⁶¹ A full manuscript description of SÁM 66 is now available at <http://handrit.is/> but it is not currently available in English.

⁶² This electronic resource which was known as Saganet is no longer available online. Saganet has been replaced by the joint project undertaken by: 1) Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Kobenhavns Universitet; 2) Landsbókasafn Íslands, Háskólabókasafn; and 3) Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum. The new site will be superior to the old Saganet site; however, the new site is still under construction and incomplete

description in Saganet began with the statement that S is written in one hand and identified the scribe as Jakob Sigurðsson. The description went on to note that ‘The Snorri’s Edda section is modeled on Laufás Edda, **very similar to that which is in NKS 1867 4to, which is also in the hand of Jakob Sigurðsson**’ “Snorra-Eddu hlutinn er af Laufás-Eddu gerð, **mjög líkur þeim sem er í NKS 1867 4to, sem er einnig með hendi Jakobs Sigurðssonar**”⁶³ (*Saganet*).⁶⁴

The second instance of scholarly documentation concerning the similarity of the scribal hands in N and S occurs when Anthony Faulkes makes the same identification of Jakob as being the scribe for S along with a similar comment to the one above concerning N in *Two versions of Snorra Edda from the 17th century*: “This is dated 1765, and after a collection of Eddic poems **has a text of Magnúss Edda very similar to that in NKS 1867 4to** (see Introduction, section 168) **and in the same hand**” (Vol. 1 463).⁶⁵

However, the authoritative catalogue of manuscript descriptions by Kristian Kålund, *Katalog over de oldnorsk-islandske Håndskrifter i Det store kongelige Bibliotek og i Universitetsbiblioteket*,⁶⁶ clearly describes N as ‘**written in 1760 by the priest Ólafur Brynjólfsson**’ “*Skr. 1760 af presten Ólafur Brynjólfsson*” (Kålund 251).

In support of Kålund’s identification of Ólafur as the scribe of N are the two places in the manuscript where Ólafur signed his name and supplied the date for his work as well. The first instance occurs on the title page in N for Resens *Edda* where Ólafur

in many ways, i.e., an extensive manuscript description is available for S but the digital images of its pages are not up yet.

⁶³ Emphasis in bold throughout this section on scribal attribution is mine.

⁶⁴ However, it should be noted that the current manuscript description for S on the *handrit.is*, i.e., the web site that has replaced *Saganet*, does not feature the comment identifying Jakob as the scribe responsible for the text of *The Prose Edda* in N.

⁶⁵ Sjöfn Kristjándóttir of the National Library in Reykjavík stated, in a personal email on May 30, 2007, “This is interesting. This is a matter that has to be looked into. It is clear that Saganet takes it after Faulkes....I wonder whether Faulkes has seen Melsteðs Edda or just had it described to him.”

⁶⁶ This thematic study will demonstrate that Kålund’s description needs updating.

signed his name and included the date, 1660, and the location, Kirkjubær in Austfjörður, i.e., Kirkjubær in the East fjords (f. 2v). The second instance featuring Ólafur's signature occurs in a colophon at the end of "Guðrúnar Lok" (Gudrun's End),⁶⁷ which is the last item in N's selection of poems from *The Poetic Edda* (f. 60v). Ólafur does not identify himself as having been the scribe for any of the other texts in the manuscript.

Unlike Ólafur in N, Jakob did not sign his title page for Resen's *Edda* in S. Nor did he include the location where it was transcribed, but he did include the date, 1665. The location was likely Vopnafjörður because Jakob was a tenant farmer there in 1665. Vopnafjörður is in the same North-Eastern district of Iceland as Kirkjubær. Although Jakob did not overtly sign his name in S, he included it—albeit transcribed in code—at the end of "Guðrúnar Lok" (f. 72v), which is the same place where one of the instances of Ólafur's signature occurs in N (f. 60v).⁶⁸

The conflicting notes regarding scribal attribution for N have the potential to complicate the discussion of the differences between the two manuscripts, and it is a matter requiring further research in order to definitively settle the issue. However, even a brief examination of the hands in the two manuscripts gives evidence of the differences between them. The graphemes "g" "h" "ð" and "i" to name but a few, as well as their use of abbreviations, are significantly distinct in Ólafur and Jakob's cursive styles in "Dæmisaga I" ("Example I") in their copies of the text of *The Prose Edda* (N f. 117v and S f. 100r) (Figs. D-46 and D-47). Judging from the evidence, even based on this cursory

⁶⁷ *Guðrúnar Lok* is comprised of stanzas 13 - 22 from the eddic poem *Guðrúnarhvöt* (The Whetting of Gudrun). See Larrington *Poetic Edda* 236 - 237.

⁶⁸ The saga scholar Jónas Kristjánsson deciphered Jakob's name when S was repatriated to Reykjavík from Canada in 2000. I discovered during my research on N and S that the key to deciphering the code that Jakob used in S is in N (f. 170v).

survey of the scribal hands,⁶⁹ it seems safe to assume, as stated above, that the primary authoritative attributions are correct in that Ólafur was responsible for compiling and copying the text of N and that Jakob was responsible for compiling and copying the text of S.

9.4.2 Textual Items Common to N and S

Even a brief examination of the textual content of N and S provides clues concerning the patron/client relationship inherent in the commissioning of the two manuscripts as well insights into the education of the patrons and indications of their status in the community. N and S are physically of a similar size and contain a similar number of folios—N consists of 244 folios and S consists of 235 folios. As previously mentioned, both manuscripts contain an edition of *The Prose Edda* and both manuscripts feature title pages of Resen’s *Edda* of their own devising. However, upon examination, it appears that both N and S contain only the prefaces from Resen’s *Edda*. Moreover, as noted by Faulkes in reference to N—but it also holds true for S—the text of *The Prose Edda* in N is from an as-yet-unidentified witness of *Laufás Edda (Two Versions of Snorra Edda Vol. 1 140)*. Aside from *The Prose Edda* material, N and S also contain many of the poems from *The Poetic Edda*. The eddas, both prose and poetic, constitute almost all that has been preserved from oral sources concerning Old Norse gods and heroes, and they also contain mythological references to runes and their properties.

Both manuscripts also contain runic material; Björn of Skarðsá’s “Völuspárútlekking” (Commentary on *Völuspá*) is in both N (ff. 60v - 75v) and S (ff. 218r - 234r), and “Málruner” (Speech-runes) is in N (ff. 167r - 171r) and in S (ff. 162r -

⁶⁹ There are also distinctive differences in Ólafur and Jakob’s non-cursive styles, which may be easily observed in the opening lines of *Völuspá* in N f.6r and S f. 3r.

169v) along with runic alphabets. The runic alphabets are scattered as separate items in N (ff. 91r - 91v; 108v - 109v; 169r - 170v), whereas they are gathered into one group in S (ff. 162r - 169v). S also contains Greek and Hebrew alphabets and it also contains runic alphabets due to an interest in languages and the theory, current at the time, that runes originated from Biblical antiquity and were therefore related to the language of Adam.

The only non-runological item that N and S have in common, aside from the eddas, is “Ættartala Óðins” (The Family Tree of Óðinn) (N ff. 203r - 203v) (S ff. 234v - 235r), which traces Adam’s line “to Óðinn in the forty-third generation and on to Bishop Jón Arason of Hólar in the seventy-sixth generation, where it ends” (Sigurðsson, “Melsteds Edda” 183). The practice of including Óðinn in family trees was consistent with the euhemeristic view of the gods, which began in the Middle Ages and is featured in the Prologue to *The Prose Edda*, that the gods had originally been kings and chieftains who had come to be thought of as deities due to their extraordinary strength of character and abilities. As Jean Seznec notes in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, concerning the medieval attitude towards euhemerism, “the human origin of the gods ceases to be a weapon to be used against them a source of rejection and contempt. Instead, it gives them a certain protection, even granting them a right to survive. In the end it forms, as it were, their patent of nobility” (13). Identifying the gods as prehistorical figures made it possible to fit them even into Christian family trees and their reputation as having been superior figures made it desirable to have them there.

9.4.3 Textual Items Specific to N

N contains far more scholarly material on runes than S, such as 1) Björn of Skarðsá’s “Samantak um rúnar” (An extract about runes) from 1642 (ff. 76r - 88r); 2) Jón

the Learned's "Að fornu í þeirri gömlu norrænu kölluðst rúnir bæði ristingar og skrifelsi" (In the old days in Old Norwegian they called runes both carven and written); 3) an Icelandic translation of Runólfur Jónsson's "Lingvæ septentrionalis elementa tribus assertionibus adstructa" (Elements of northern languages in three structured statements), which is a runological scientific paper in three arguments (ff. 171v - 183r); 4) an unidentified author's "Þrydeilur, Islandica et Latina lingua conscriptæ, Klapprunarum ordo" (Three parts, written in the Icelandic and Latin languages, Klapp runes series) (ff. 202r - 203r); and 5) the eddic poem "Vafþrúðnismál" (The Lay of Vafþrúðnir) rewritten in prose (ff. 213r - 217r).

Aside from runological material, N contains a considerable number of items relating to poetics and language that are not in S. The texts in N include: 1) "Bragarhættur" (Poetry Metres) (f. 189v - 193v); 2) "Extractum af notis Olavi Vereli Svenska" (An extract of Olaus 'the Swede' Verelius' Notes) (f. 204 - 211) published in Uppsala, 1664; 3) "Hatta Likell Lopt's Ryka" (Wealthy Loftur's Collection of Poetry Metres) (f. 193v - 200v); 4) "Afgamlar fornyrða vysur" (Very Old Poems with Ancient Words) (f. 212r - 212v); 5) the eddic poem "Vafþrúðnismál" (The Lay of Vafþrúðnir) written in prose (213r - 217r) and followed by a metaphrasis (217r - 219r); 6) "Um uppruna nockra Latinskra málshátta" (Concerning the Origin of Several Latin Proverbs) (f. 219r - 220v); 7) "Hallmundar Vysur" to "Bergbúapáttur" (Hallmundur's Index to "The Tale of the Mountain Dweller") with the relevant verses and extensive commentary *argumentum-metaphrasis-paraphrasis* (f. 221r - 228v); and 8) "Notae Arna Böðvarssonar yfer Rymur" (Arni Böðvarsson's Notes about Rímur) (f. 229r - 239r).

The extract in N is from Verelius' notes in *Gothrici & Rolfi westrogothiae regum historia* that was published in Uppsala in 1664. Verelius was one of the Swedish scholars of the Hyperborean school who believed that Sweden was the cradle of civilization, and along with his fellow antiquarian scholars in Sweden "matched the patriotic antiquarianism of their Danish colleagues blow for blow" (Wawn, "Post Medieval Reception" 324). Verelius translated sagas that were wholly or in part about ancient Sweden. As previously noted, the text of Verelius' notes that accompanied *Gothrici & Rolfi* sometimes included his copperplate rendering of U's illustration of "The Deluding of Gylfi" scene from *The Prose Edda*.⁷⁰

N also contains three versions of a poem by Thomas Bartholin on the back of the title page for *The Prose Edda*, i.e., in Danish and Latin—and also with the Danish version transcribed in runic text (f. 100v). These verses appear in the preface to the *Edda Islandorum*. This poem does not occur in S despite the fact that Jakob was likely using the same edition of the *Edda Islandorum* as Ólafur, at least as far as copying the front matter of the text.⁷¹ The lack of Bartholin's poem in S is a reminder that choice of material was a selective process performed either by the scribe or the patron when compiling material from print sources.

The interest in runes and other non-Latin scripts was part of a much broader cultural movement that was interested in magic languages, such as the secret language of the Rosicrucians' (Wills 575-576). It is especially noteworthy that N contains keys to two

⁷⁰ Kålund's manuscript description for N needs to be updated and expanded to include items such as this one, which is easily identifiable because the opening lines of the extract in N state its publication details and subject matter.

⁷¹ I have previously established that Ólafur and Jakob copied the main body of "*The Prose Edda*" from one of the as-yet-unidentified witnesses of *Laufás Edda* circulating in Iceland before and after the publication of Resen's *Edda Islandorum*.

codes that S lacks, i.e., “Villu Letur” (Confused Letters) and “Rammvilling” (Extremely Confused) (f. 170v). As previously noted, “Rammvilling” in N is the key to deciphering Jakob Sigurðsson’s name that he wrote in an esoteric code in S at the end of the eddic poem “Guðrúnar Lok” (Gudrun’s End) (f. 72v).

The last item in the N manuscript that is not in S is “Nockrur Reglur” (A Few Rules) (f. 240r - 244v), which is a miscellaneous collection of instructions and recipes. This item of practical material seems slightly out of place amongst the more scholarly material that forms the bulk of N.

9.4.4 Textual Items Specific to S

S contains three items of a practical nature that are not in N. These consist of two small items relating to mathematics and a lengthy almanac: 1) “Mensa Pýþagoraë” (Pythagoras’ Table) (211v); 2) “Lítið ágríp um þær fjórar species af reikningskúnnstinni” (A little summary about the four kinds of calculations) (212r - 217v); and 3) “Calendarium” (Calendar)—i.e., Þórður Þorláksson’s almanac from 1662 with a commentary and appendix. Þórður was Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson’s successor and was the Bishop of Skálholt from 1674 to 1697. The Árni Magnússon Institute’s exhibition catalogue, which is no longer online, for “The Rythmic Office of St Þorlákur and Other Medieval Manuscripts from the See of Skálholt” notes that

[Þórður] had been educated in Copenhagen, Rostock and Wittenberg, traveled extensively in pursuit of education, practiced astronomy and cartography and composed a description of Iceland in Latin. During his time as bishop he transferred the Icelandic printing press from Hólar to Skálholt and had many religious works printed; he was also the first person in Iceland to publish saga

literature: Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar, Íslendingabók, Landnámabók and Kristnisaga (1688-89). (“The Rhythmic Office of St Þorlákur.”)

Bishop Þórður’s “Calendarium” is the third largest textual item in S and is very different in nature from any of the textual items in N. Bishop Þórður’s “Calendarium” focuses on matters such as the differences between his calendar and the calendar which was previously in use; information about the sun and the Zodiac; astronomical details relating to his calendar along with further information on the Zodiac; additions to the calendar concerning the seasons, the weather, and health issues such as the four complexions, along with home remedies, and the signs of good and ill health. The eighty pages, or forty folios, that the “Calendarium” and its apparatus occupy in S make up the bulk of the material that it does not share with N. As described in the previous section, N contains items on runology, poetics, and language not in S. The result is that both manuscripts have similar page counts.

It should be noted that neither N nor S would have supplied the type of reading material that was popular for *kvöldvaka* readings in the *baðstofas*. According to Driscoll, a type of late prose indigenous fiction known as *lygisögur* (“lying sagas,” i.e., romances) would have been the popular choice, even above such material as the more sophisticated *Íslendingasögur* (Sagas of the Icelanders) (*Unwashed Children* 196). Both N and S appear to have been compiled as sources of edification, although for different audiences. The inclusion of Þórður’s “Calendarium” gives S a much more practical aspect, while the greater variety of runological material in N is clearly more academic in nature. Thus the differences in their textual content indicate that N would have appealed to someone with esoteric interests and S to an educated owner with more practical interests. Moreover, I

will show in the next section that the illustrations in N and S also support the differences in education and interests between the original owners of the two manuscripts.

9.5 Attribution of the Illustrations in N and S

Given that Kålund identifies Ólafur as the scribe of N and that Jakob is without a doubt the scribe and illustrator of S, it is not surprising that scholars have attributed the illustrations of N to Ólafur and of S to Jakob. For example, Hans Kuhn remarks when describing one of the illustrations of Óðinn in N, which he attributes to Ólafur, that f. 94r (Fig. D-5) depicts

... a one-eyed Óðinn with sword and spear and the two rather pigeon-like ravens Hugin and Munin from an Edda ms. written by the priest Ólafur Brynjólfsson in Iceland around 1760. His very remoteness from the academies and a lack of proper training gave the amateur draughtsman the innocence to rely on his own imagination and ignore accepted canons of beauty. (Kuhn 216)⁷²

Describing Jakob's illustrations in S, Vésteinn Ólason comments that "In the 1760s a farmer named Jakob Sigurðsson, who lived in Vopnafjörður in East Iceland...made a copy of *Snorra Edda*. He was a self-taught artist, and he made some very amusing illustrations for his copy of *Snorra Edda*" ("Íslendingabækur"). Moreover, Gísli Sigurðsson remarks, as others have, that Jakob's illustrations are "not unlike" Ólafur's, but further notes that the illustrations are not "original" (180). The unstated assumption, when similarities between the illustrations in N and S are noted, is that Jakob copied his illustrations from Ólafur's originals in N, which was five years older than S and produced in the same district.

⁷² The weapon most commonly associated with Óðinn is his spear Gungnir. However, the object that he is holding in this illustration is clearly a staff or walking stick, which is also appropriate in his guise as Vegtarnr the Wanderer when he travels by foot disguised as an old man with a staff.

However, there are also instances of scholarly disagreement in regard to attribution of the sets of *Edda* illustrations in N and S. In his manuscript description for N, Kålund notes the text at the foot of illustration on f. 111v. ‘I Sigurðsson with own h.’ “I Sigurðsson med eiginn h.” (Kålund 253), which could be taken as Jakob Sigurðsson.⁷³ Indeed, I believe that a comparison of Jakob’s signature in the illustration in N (Figs. D-36 and detail in D-44) with his signature in several other manuscripts known to be in his hand resolves the issue beyond any doubt that the signature in N is Jakob’s.⁷⁴ For example the phrasing ‘J Sigurðsson with my own hand’ “J Sigurðsson með eiginn hond” as well as the hand itself in BL Add. 11162 (Fig. D-45, which is almost exactly the same hand as in N (Fig. D-44).

Moreover, the Old Norse scholar Anders Bæksted observed concerning the sets of *Edda* illustrations in N and S, that ‘various explanations and clumsy verses are written on the illustrations of Ólafur Brynjólfsson’s manuscript and of Jakob Sigurðsson’s manuscript. From all indications it appears that one and the same hand has written here; moreover the craftsmanship in the illustrations themselves is similar in both manuscripts.’ “á myndunum í handriti Ólafs Brynjólfssonar og handriti Jakobs Sigurðssonar er ritaðar ýmsar skýringar og ambögulegar vísur. Ekki verður betur séð en að hér hafi ein og sama höndin skrifað, enda er handbragðið svipað á myndunum sjálfum í báðum handritunum” (330).

⁷³ This possible connection to Jakob was corroborated by Sjöfn Kristjándóttir of the National Library in Reykjavík, in a personal email on May 30, 2007; “I have not seen the NKS1867 but it is noteworthy that in the History notes it says: At the foot of picture p. 111 is written: I Sigurðsson med eiginn h. That must be Jakob Sigurðsson so whether Kålund is wrong at least partly is not to be decided until after the manuscripts have been compared.”

⁷⁴ I found four instances of Jakob’s cursive signature while conducting research in the British Library, i.e., BL Add. 11157 (f. 89r), BL Add 11158 (f. 250 r), and BL Add. 11162 (f. 113r and f. 144v).

Given the evidence concerning the hands responsible for the textual components of N and S, in addition to the evidence concerning the hand responsible for the text contained within the illustrations, I believe that Ólafur was responsible for the text of N, and that Jakob was the creator of its illustrations and contributed them to Ólafur's manuscript. The style of drawing within the two sets does not support the notion that the illustrations are the work of two different illustrators. Details such as the manner of depicting the hand-grip on objects, anatomical errors such as arm and also leg positions, and other matters of style cannot be separated convincingly for the two sets. It seems much more likely that Ólafur either commissioned Jakob to create the illustrations for N or requested that Jakob do the illustrations as a favour. Consequently, Jakob was clearly responsible for creating both sets and revised his own illustrations from N when he was illustrating S.

9.6 Jakob's Source of Inspiration for His *Edda* Illustrations

In this section, I will clarify how a cycle of illustrations occurred that resulted in the transmission of U's "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration, three hundred years after its creation, from Iceland to Denmark to Sweden and then back to Denmark, and finally back to Iceland. Moreover, I will establish that Jakob was inspired to produce the first of his illustrations of *The Prose Edda* in N (Fig. D-36) by Bartholin's lithograph of the "Deluding of Gylfi" scene (Fig. B-4), which was published in 1689 (473).⁷⁵ Jakob not only went on to illustrate three further renderings of the "Deluding of Gylfi" scene but

⁷⁵ Some of the material in my dissertation concerning Jakob's renderings of "The Deluding of Gylfi" in regard to the rendering of the scene in U by Swedish antiquarians has been previously published in "Individuality and Iconography: Jakob Sigurðsson's Renderings of Codex Upsaliensis f.26v." in *Á austrvega. Saga and East Scandinavia: Proceedings of The Fourteenth International Saga Conference Uppsala Sweden 9th - 15th August 2009*. Ed. Agneta Ney. Gavle: Gavle University Press, 2009: 62-70. However, I have made revisions while incorporating the conference paper into my dissertation and present conclusive evidence in this thematic study that Jakob was inspired by Bartholin's rendering of Verelius' copperplate.

also created other illustrations of eddic scenes in manuscripts that he produced in the period 1760 to 1765 (N, Í, and S).

9.6.1 “The Deluding Of Gylfi” Illustration in U

The illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” (Fig. B-1) in U depicts the Swedish King Gylfi—disguised as Gangleri—standing before three regal figures seated on high seats hierarchically arranged so that they tower above him. The seriousness of the situation is only fully discernable to those familiar with the text. Gylfi has come to discover if the formidable abilities of the strangers from Asia are due to the gods that they worship. He is immediately ensnared in a wisdom contest and is threatened with bodily harm if he loses.

The wisdom contest serves as a narrative frame for the “The Deluding of Gylfi” section of *The Prose Edda*. The scene in the text explicitly reinforces the process of euhemerization that was introduced in the Prologue, and subtly raises the question as to exactly who is being deluded. Does Gylfi merely act dumb and play along, or does he actually come to believe that these men are gods? The text does not describe the seated figures but simply states that they are kings and identifies them with names from the large list of “Óðins heiti” (Óðinn’s names, i.e., poetic synonyms for Óðinn) as Hár (High), Jafnhár (Just-as-high), and Þriðji (Third).

Despite Snorri’s statement that the figures on the highseats are all kings, it is intriguing that U’s illustrator depicted the lower figure as a female, as evidenced by her feminine face and the contours of the robe outlining her breasts. It is possible that U’s illustrator may have chosen to use a feminine figure in order to represent a negative hypostatic representation of Óðinn’s true character. Óðinn was a practitioner of the type

of magic known as *seiðr*, which was so strongly associated with women that it was considered to be unmanly even in pagan times⁷⁶ and was demonized in the Christian era.⁷⁷

9.6.2 From Iceland to Denmark to Sweden

U eventually came into the possession of the manuscript collector Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson who had Jón lærði Guðmundsson make a copy of it, which is now known as Marshall 114 (hereafter M). It is possible that Jón lærði produced M when he was in Copenhagen in the winter of 1636 - 1637 to have the charges against him of witchcraft reviewed (Pétursson *Eddurit* 40, “English Translation” 444). Bishop Brynjólfur sent U to Denmark in 1639 as a gift to Stephanus Johannis Stephanius. At some point M found its way to Germany where Thomas Marshall acquired it and sent it to England in 1690. Consequently, M was not available to Jakob in his lifetime, and quite possibly M was never at any time in Iceland. However, “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene on f. 23v in M is of interest to my argument concerning the reception of Snorri’s text because it is not an exact copy of U and also because of the text contained within the illustration that I will discuss further below in regard to Jakob’s verse. Despite having had U’s illustration as an exemplar, Jón lærði portrayed the three seated figures as bearded kings and explicitly identified them within the illustration as ‘a trinity of Óðinn’ “þrenning Óðins” (f. 23v). M’s rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi” was copied by Jonas Salan in Oxford sometime before 1700, but his copy is no longer extant (Pétursson *Eddurit* 301) and along with M does not appear to have inspired any further renderings in England. Consequently, M did not participate in the further transmission of U’s illustration.

⁷⁶ See DuBois 136 - 137.

⁷⁷ See DuBois 116.

U's illustration does not appear to have engendered any renderings while it was in Denmark and consequently its transmission might well have ended there as well. Danish scholars were not interested in copying U because it was not considered to be the best text to base a translation on. The Danish edition, Peder H. Resen's *Edda Islandorum*, was published in Copenhagen in 1665 and was based on *Laufás Edda*. Resen's *Edda* made a text version of *The Prose Edda* accessible for the first time in Icelandic, Danish, and Latin. Resen's *Edda* was not illustrated.

U was acquired by the Swedish collector, Magnus Gabrielle de la Guardie, after Stephanius' death in 1650. U arrived in Sweden during a period of intensely patriotic antiquarian scholarship, and it was a welcome resource, given that Gylfi was a Swedish king and that the events concerning "The Deluding of Gylfi" took place in the vicinity of Uppsala.

9.6.3 Swedish Renderings of "The Deluding of Gylfi"

Verelius created his full-page copperplate (Fig. B-2) rendering of U's "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration (Fig. B-1) in 1664. Verelius' copperplate was sometimes inserted into his notes accompanying his translation of *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia* (42a).⁷⁸ Verelius' illustration is on an unnumbered page but has an asterisk with the note "Not. Pag. 43" which functions as an instruction regarding its place in the text. The reason for including or excluding Verelius' copperplate from editions may represent a subscription option offered by its publisher. U does not appear to have circulated but Verelius' copperplate engendered further renderings in Sweden.

⁷⁸ Anders Grape (1962:29) notes that the copperplate was rarely inserted into Verelius' notes. However, I discovered that Roll 366 of the Scandinavian Culture Series contains two editions of Verelius' notes and both of them contain the copperplate illustration inserted between pages 43 and 44. Moreover, the Swedish National Library has five copies, three of which contain the copperplate but I have not had the opportunity to examine them.

Johannes Schefferus placed his rendering of Verelius' copperplate onto a page crowded with other representations of triple crowns in *De Antiquis Verisque Regni Sueciae Insignibus* (318[g]) in response to Denmark's competing claim to the crest. Olaus Rudbeck included a similar rendering, also based on Verelius', on a page with other illustrations whose connections to "The Deluding of Gylfi" are not readily apparent (Fig. B-3). However, Rudbeck's rendering of the three gods in "The Deluding of Gylfi" was part of his efforts to prove that Sweden was in fact the lost Atlantis and the cradle of civilization. These early print renderings of "The Deluding of Gylfi" reflect the fact that Sweden was the first Scandinavian country to use an *Edda* illustration, in the patriotic spirit of the times, to promote their nationalistic agendas in print.

The lower seated figure in all of the Swedish renderings is very close to that of U but does not necessarily indicate a visualization of a female hypostatic representation of Óðinn. Verelius and Schefferus were minimalists when depicting folds in the figure's clothing, but Rudbeck emphasized the contour of her left breast with a triple line. However, for Verelius, and his fellow scholars, the temple trio at Uppsala would have been composed of Óðinn, Þórr, and the goddess Frigg. In Sweden, Frigg had supplanted the god Freyr in Adam of Bremen's description circa 1075 of the Temple of Uppsala in *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* (Deeds of Bishops of the Hamburg Church), due to an error in the transmission of Adam's text.⁷⁹ Schefferus appears to have been the first to claim that the trio of enthroned figures in U could be traced back to the temple gods in Uppsala (157). Consequently, the lower seated figure simply represents Frigg when it is depicted as a woman in seventeenth-century Swedish renderings of U.

⁷⁹ In Adam's description, Freyr's name was rendered as *Fricco*, which became *Frigh* in early Swedish versions and was later misinterpreted in the writings of Johannes and Olaus Magnus as representing Frigg. See Magnus 185 endnote 3-3.

It is significant that the Swedish renderings included a detail that was originally a pen trial in U (Fig. B-2), a face with a crown that the Swedish renderings transformed into an icon of the sun with a human face. In his text, Verelius makes a connection between Óðinn and the Sun based on Óðinn being *monoculus*. It is odd that Verelius remained faithful to U's illustration and did not depict Óðinn as one-eyed in his rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi." However, Verelius and Rudbeck were determined to establish a link between Norse and Classical mythology and asserted that the Temple of Uppsala had originally been the Temple of Apollo, and therefore both temples could have been associated with a sun icon. Schefferus opposed the association of the temple with that of Apollo on the basis of archaeological evidence (Ellenius 62-64). However, he may have retained the sun icon because the sun was considered to be the king of celestial bodies and Óðinn, being one of the Æsir, was an astral deity. Consequently, when the sun icon is present in renderings it indicates that the illustrator was not copying directly from U but from Verelius' copperplate or from one of the renderings of Verelius' copperplate by Rudbeck or Schefferus—or else on a rendering by Thomas Bartholin that is a mirror image of Verelius' copperplate.

9.6.4 From Sweden to Denmark to Iceland

An Icelandic summary of Verelius' notes to *Gautreks saga* were often included in eighteenth-century hand-copied paper manuscripts in Iceland such as N, and it is possible that a print edition of his text containing his rendering of U's illustration came to the attention of Jakob. Moreover, it is significant that Jakob's four renderings of "The Deluding of Gylfi" all contain the sun icon from the Swedish renderings, as well as the same manner of depicting Gylfi's clothes so that they generally conform to the outlines of

his robe in U. In addition to the sun icon, the basic layout of all of Jakob's renderings are mirror images of the Swedish renderings and the reversal of the layout suggests that Verelius' copperplate could have been his exemplar. Unlike the other Swedish renderings, Verelius' copperplate was printed on only one side of a page, but it sometimes has a mirror-image on what should be its blank side, which indicates that the printer stacked the pages while the ink was wet.⁸⁰ The renderings by Schefferus and Rudbeck have images printed on both sides of the page and greater care would have been taken when they were drying not to stack them until the ink was dry. Access to an edition with the copperplate and its mirror image would have given Jakob the choice of copying the reverse image, and it is noteworthy that all of his renderings use a reversed layout of Verelius.

Ultimately, however, the most likely candidate for Jakob's exemplar for his close rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" scene (Fig. D-36) in N is the lithograph from Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum*. Indeed, Jakob's illustration of "The Deluding of Gylfi" in N is part of a group of five illustrations out of a possible seven of Bartholin's lithographs in *Antiquitatum Danicarum* that Jakob copied for the group in the N manuscript. Bartholin's rendering of "The Deluding of Gylfi" is a mirror image of Verelius' copperplate which is an exact copy in every detail except for the text that Verelius added to his rendering. The detail that confirms that Bartholin's lithograph is a copy of Verelius' copperplate (Fig. B-2) is the asterisk—situated near the head of the topmost seated figure—that is part of both illustrations. Bartholin may have inadvertently

⁸⁰ See Roll 366 of the Scandinavian Culture Series: the verso side of the page with Verelius' illustration has a mirror image in item No. 2355 but does not in No. 2563. I previously thought that the ink must have bled through the page and am grateful to Dr. Randall McLoud for pointing the more obvious answer for the mirror image to me during a seminar at the University of Victoria on October 21, 2010.

copied the asterisk; however, Jakob evidently did not see it as a significant detail when he produced his close rendering of Bartholin’s lithograph (Fig B-4). Jakob had no way of knowing that Bartholin had reversed the scene and consequently Jakob’s rendering features a reversal of the layout which differs both from the original in U and Verelius’ copy of it.

As previously mentioned, the N manuscript is unusual because it contains both a close copy (Fig. D-36) and an idiosyncratic rendering (Fig. D-13) of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene. N is also unusual because, also as noted previously, Jakob signed the close copy in N (Fig. D-36) ‘J. Sigurðsson with my own h[and]’ “I. Sigurðsson með eiginn h.” and he also wrote a verse on the bottom of the scene.⁸¹

High’s lie is shown here	Hárs er lygin hérna sýnd
with strong eloquence	með hvopta púðri ólinu ⁸²
but King Óðinn’s majesty considered	enn Óðens kunungs talinn og týnd ⁸³
and exemplified in the highseat.	tign ⁸⁴ í hásetinu.

(Figs. D-36 and D-44)

I believe that it is significant that the text of the verse in the close copy of the scene in N (Figs. D-36 and D-44)—N also contains an idiosyncratic rendering of the scene—features a correction changing “og” (and) to “enn” (but). The placement of the verse, squeezed

⁸¹ I first consulted Helgi Skúli Kjartansson when translating this verse and any errors that may have been introduced since then are mine. For example, I did not initially transcribe the abbreviation mark expanding “en” to “enn.”

⁸² The literal meaning of “*hvopta púðri ólinu*” is “the strong powder of the jaws” which is a kenning referring to persuasive rhetoric. I am grateful to Bo Almquist for consulting Vésteinn Ólafsson on my behalf concerning how to translate this kenning and for sending me the answer in a personal email on February 14, 2009.

⁸³ The verb “týnd” is from the infinitive from “tína” meaning “to pick or gather” rather than “týna” meaning “to lose.” With the exception of losing one’s life, the verb “týna” only applies to substantial objects.

⁸⁴ The adjective “talinn” is masculine and therefore should not be modifying “tign” which is feminine. However, “tign” is the only available noun.

onto the bottom of the page in N (Figs. D-36 and D-44), along with the correction, suggests that this was the first *Edda* scene that Jakob illustrated, and that he simultaneously recorded the verse on the page as he composed it. The spontaneous nature of the composition and recording of Jakob's verse in N also suggests that it was Bartholin's lithograph that initially inspired Jakob to create his close renderings, and subsequently his idiosyncratic renderings. Jakob did not sign his other three renderings of "The Deluding of Gylfi" and his verse is more carefully placed and lettered in the other renderings in N, Í, and S (Figs. D-13, D-27, D-41).

Jakob's attention to detail in his close renderings of Bartholin's lithograph reveals that he regarded the lithograph to be an accurate rendering of an historical artifact, and he accorded it the respect that he would have given to the original illustration.⁸⁵ However, Jakob does vary somewhat from Bartholin in the close renderings as to the major detail in his depiction of all of the seated figures as bearded, and the minor detail of his inclusion of a tiled floor in Í (Fig. D-41). The status of the close rendering in N (Fig. D-36) is confirmed by the fact that the all four of Bartholin's images that Jakob copied represent historical artifacts: i.e., 1) the illustration of a rune stone from the Hunnestad monument that I have discussed in Chapter Three (Figs. B-10, D-33, and D-42); 2) the drawing of a selection of spears (Figs. D-35 and D-40);⁸⁶ 3) the depiction of a rune stone set into a wall (Figs. D-34 and D-43);⁸⁷ and 4) "The Deluding of Gylfi" scene (Figs. B-4, D-36 and

⁸⁵ Burke notes that "the woodcuts and engravings that appear in many treatises [in the seventeenth century] offer us evidence of a gradual emancipation from logocentrism and an increasing concern with the testimony of images" (279). Burke cites Shapiro (*Fact*, 51-53) when explaining that "artefacts, including images, were taken increasingly seriously as evidence of what were increasingly called historical 'facts'" by seventeenth-century scholars (293).

⁸⁶ I did not include an image of Bartholin's illustration of the spears in my discussion because it was of limited interest in regard to Old Norse mythology.

⁸⁷ I did not include an image of Bartholin's illustration of the runestone set into the wall for the same reason given above for not including the illustration of the spears.

Í-41). The inclusion in N of one of Jakob’s close renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” (Fig. D-36), in addition to one of his idiosyncratic renderings (Fig. D-13), indicates that Jakob’s close rendering of Bartholin’s illustration (Fig. B-4) in N was perceived differently than his idiosyncratic rendering in N (Fig. D-13).

Neither Verelius nor Bartholin labeled the three figures on the hierarchical highseats and Jakob’s labelling of the three kings in his two close renderings varies. In the two renderings in N (Fig. D-13 and D-36), the labels follow the order given in Snorri’s text but Jakob reversed them in Í (Fig. D-41), where he actually labeled the topmost figure as “Fyrste Haar eður þriðie” (First High or third) and the lower figure simply as “Haar” (High), and in S where the topmost figure is unambiguously labeled “Þriðie” (Third) and the bottom one “Haar” (High). The confusion regarding the labels indicates that eighteenth-century readers in Iceland struggled then, as we do now, to make sense of Snorri’s description in which Third is the topmost figure, Just-as-High the middle figure, and High the lowest.

Jakob’s idiosyncratic renderings in N (Fig. D-13) and S (Fig. D-27) feature many differences, both minor and major, from Bartholin’s lithograph (Fig. B-4) and represent a major break in the tradition of copying U (Fig. B-1). For instance, a major change occurs when Jakob depicts all of the seated figures more clearly as being one-eyed, thereby visually indicating that his figures are hypostatic representations of Óðinn. Moreover, Jakob also changed all of Óðinn’s declamatory hand gestures—a standard oratory gesture since antiquity—to a two-fingered gesture, which in the Christian tradition is associated with the conveyance of blessings or absolution. Possibly, by depicting the figures gesturing in a way that is inappropriate to them, Jakob is reminding his audience—who

would have been familiar with the gestural conventions of their Lutheran pastors—that the “gods” are engaged in a sort of fraud. Thus, as we can see, Jakob’s alterations to Óðinn’s gestures in the idiosyncratic renderings give a greater emphasis to the verse in all four of his renderings concerning Óðinn’s lie and his consequent loss of dignity.

Jakob also changed Gylfi’s declamatory gesture in the idiosyncratic renderings (Fig. D-13 and D-27) to an open-handed gesture, and his arm is thrown up over his head. This exaggerated gesture suggests enthusiasm and gullibility, and Jakob labelled Gylfi with text in the idiosyncratic renderings that describes him in S as ‘gaping’ “gapir” (Fig. D-27) and in N as ‘swallowing the lie’ “gleypir í sig lygi” (Fig. D-13). Taken all together the change in gestures along with the verse and the text indicates the manner in which Jakob and his patrons perceived the dynamics of the scene. Jón Lærði’s text – which Jakob had never seen—in the rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene in M is even more explicit: ‘Here sits High, Just-as-High and Third in highseats. Gylfi stands in front and swallows all of the profound half truths of High’s lie etc.’ “Hér situr Hár, Jafnhár og Þriðji í háseti. Gylfir stendur frammi en þeir rausa alla sína hálfanna djúpstæða Hárslygi etc.” (f.23v). Jón Lærði’s use of the term ‘High’s lie’ “Hárslygi” recalls the same terminology used by the redactor of *The Prose Edda*, Magnús Ólafsson, when describing “The Deluding of Gylfi” in *Laufás Edda*, which had circulated widely in Iceland from 1609 onwards.⁸⁸

It is significant that although Magnús included the Latin phrase for ‘High’s lie’ “Hari

⁸⁸ Jakob was obviously influenced either by the Latin phrase in Resen’s *Edda Islandorum* that describes “The Deluding of Gylfi” as “Hari Mendacium” (Faulkes) ‘High’s Lie,’ i.e., Óðinn’s lie, or by the equivalent Icelandic phrase “Haarslyge” ‘High’s lie’ which occurs in Magnús Ólafsson’s *Laufás Edda* (Faulkes 189). The seventeenth-century scribe Nikulás Finnsson also used the phrase “Hér byrjar Gylfaginningar eður Hárs lygi” ‘Here begins Gylfaginning or High’s lie’ (f. 10v) in the manuscript now known as *Hraundals Edda* (1664 - 1669). See Faulkes for the very complicated manuscript tradition concerning *Laufás Edda* (*Two Versions of Snorra Edda* Vol. I 34 - 155).

Mendacium” in his Latin translation of *Gylfaginning*, he did not use the corresponding Icelandic compound noun “Hárslygi,” or the corresponding phrase “Hárs lygi,” in the Icelandic version of his redaction of *Gylfaginning*. Jakob’s verse within all four of his “Deluding of Gylfi” illustrations reflects the attitude of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Icelanders towards the pagan gods. Thus Gylfi was viewed as having been thoroughly deluded by Óðinn’s eloquence, but seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Lutheran Icelanders no longer viewed pagan myths as material that might cause them to fall into believing ‘High’s lie.’ Gylfi’s gullibility had been exposed and Jakob’s verse served to reinforce the message conveyed by Gyfi’s exaggerated gesture.

Jakob also significantly altered the three figures of Óðinn and that of Gylfi in his idiosyncratic renderings (Fig. D-13 and D-27). The Óðinn figures are less dignified in their body language but Gylfi undergoes the greatest change. In the close renderings (N f.111v and Í f.59v) (Fig. D-36 and D-41), Gylfi’s disguise is that of a beggar, or possibly a paganised pilgrim, but in the idiosyncratic renderings (N f.98r and S f.78r) (Fig. D-13 and D-27), he appears to be a simpleton with a deformed body and face that seems less than human. Consequently, it appears that Óðinn and Gylfi were both viewed as foolish figures in eighteenth-century Christian Iceland, which is also indicated by Jakob’s verse denigrating Óðinn as a liar and his text identifying Gylfi as a gullible fool.

The kings are empty-handed in the idiosyncratic rendering (f.78r) (Fig. D-27) in S but in the idiosyncratic rendering in N (f. 98r) (Fig. D-13), which was owned by the clergyman at Kirkjubær, the highest king is holding an *orbis terrarum*. Moreover, the middle figure in the idiosyncratic rendering in N (Fig. D-13) is holding an object that represents a paganised *orbis cruciger*, with the head of Þórr’s hammer, Mjöllnir,

replacing the Christian cross. The orbs in N make it possible to identify the topmost figure as Óðinn, the middle figure as Þórr, and the lower figure as a pagan version of the Holy Spirit. Rory McTurk has observed that the three figures can be seen as offering support to Anne Holtmark’s suggestion that Snorri presents “the heathen religion partly as an inverted Christianity,” and he further suggests that Snorri’s three kings represent three figures of Óðinn as a pagan version of the Holy Trinity (“Fooling Gylfi” 11). In S, whose provenance and textual contents indicate that its owner had less esoteric interests than the clergyman who owned N, the three hypostatic depictions of Óðinn are empty-handed. It appears that S’ owner was not interested in subtleties of a paganised Trinity or in creative anachronisms.

Jakob stands out among illustrators of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene because he is the only illustrator to have created more than one rendering of the scene and also because his illustrations represent the most recent renderings of U’s illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” for almost two hundred years.⁸⁹ Moreover, as my work indicates, Jakob’s idiosyncratic renderings (Fig. D-13 and D-27) represent a fascinating chapter in the reception and transmission of *The Prose Edda* because they move beyond the ambiguous description in Snorri’s text by depicting the three figures of Óðinn as one-eyed bearded males and in depicting Gylfi’s enthusiastic gullibility. Jakob’s compilations preserve evidence of the reading interests of eighteenth-century Icelanders and his illustrations of “The Deluding of Gylfi” offer insights into their engagement with the text of *The Prose Edda*. Jakob’s labours as a scribe and illustrator insured that his clients were not restricted to reading the material deemed appropriate by the Church, which owned the

⁸⁹ Other than Jakob’s illustrations, the most recent rendering of U is likely the frontispiece in Dent’s publication of Anthony Faulke’s *Edda* translation (1987).

only printing press in Iceland during this period. The enthusiasm with which Jakob (presumably at the behest of his patrons or at least with their approval) took up the challenge of revisualizing U's medieval image that had returned to Iceland by means of a seventeenth-century engraving indicates a culture which at that particular moment was keen to engage with its mythological heritage.

9.7 Jakob Sigurðsson's Sets of Sixteen Mythological Illustrations in N and S

9.7.1 Further Visual Evidence that Jakob Illustrated N and S

I have previously established on the basis of the scribal hand for the text within the illustrations, as well as the over-all similarities in style between the illustrations, that Jakob created the illustrations in both N and S. Now I will provide a close examination in this chapter of the visual evidence contained in the two sets of illustrations in order to further establish Jakob as the sole illustrator of the *Edda* illustrations. Moreover, my examination will reveal the visual evidence concerning the differences in education and interests of the patrons who commissioned the illustrations in N and S. It should be noted at this point that the illustrations in both manuscripts occur as a group following the text of *The Prose Edda*, rather than being situated within the text. First, I will introduce the four illustrations from the two manuscripts that support Jakob as having been the original illustrator for both sets of illustrations. I will divide these four illustrations into the two pairs that they fall naturally into despite their minor differences. I will use these pairs throughout this chapter to establish that Jakob did not copy his illustrations in S from those in N that scholars have previously attributed to Ólafur Brynjólfsson.

The first pair of illustrations supporting Jakob as the illustrator of both manuscripts are of Óðinn riding his eight-legged horse, Sleipnir. In N, Óðinn and Sleipnir

have their heads turned looking back and Óðinn appears to be pulling on the reins to turn the horse around (Fig. D-12). There is some tension in the scene in N that suggests it is part of a narrative and that there may be an antagonist present who is out of view. In a similar scene in S, Óðinn and Sleipnir are depicted in profile facing forward and Óðinn is holding the reins up in a forward position (Fig. D-32). The scene in S lacks drama and may serve merely to present a description of Óðinn and Sleipnir, or it could be part of a narrative that precedes the illustration in N. The text in N does not give a *dæmisaga*⁹⁰ number referring to the relevant passage in Resen’s *Edda*, nor does S, but the caption in S cites from the eddic poem “Grímnismál” (Grimnir’s Sayings), which Snorri also quotes in *The Prose Edda*. Leaving aside the intriguing difference of the thunderbolt symbol in N and the sword in S for the moment, these two illustrations of Óðinn and Sleipnir are different enough in their respective orientations of the god and the horse to argue that one is not a copy of the other.

The second pair of illustrations that even more strongly support the argument that Jakob was not merely copying N are both from “The Abduction of Iðunn” myth and both manuscripts cite *dæmisaga* number fifty in Resen’s *Edda* in the text within the illustrations; however, these two illustrations represent distinctly different scenes from the myth. N’s illustration depicts Loki just after he has used a staff to strike at the giant, Þjazi, who is in the form of an eagle. The staff becomes stuck to the eagle and Loki’s hands stick to the staff. In this scene, Þjazi is just starting to fly off with the hapless Loki who is unable to let go (Fig. D-16). The scene from S precedes the action illustrated in N. In S the three gods who are traveling together—Loki, Óðinn, and Hænir—are sitting

⁹⁰ The term *dæmisaga* is singular and *dæmisögur* is the plural.

around the fire and wondering why their meal will not cook, and they have just heard the eagle in the tree above them claim that he is the one responsible for the difficulty (Fig. D-18). The fact that these two illustrations represent separate scenes from the beginning of the same myth suggests that Jakob was restricted by the number of pages in a quire or an unfolded sheet when his client for S requested a different scene from “The Abduction of Iðunn” myth.

9.7.2 Chronological and Narrative Disorder

The order of the illustrations in N and in S also works against the notion that Jakob was copying from Ólafur’s manuscript. It is striking that there does not appear to be any attempt in either manuscript to organize the images chronologically—i.e., to follow the order of the myths in *The Prose Edda* or even the chronologies inherent in the story lines of individual myths. For example, the set of illustrations in N begins with a scene from “The Mead of Poetry” myth with the eagle/giant/Suttungr pursuing the eagle/Bölverkr/Óðinn (Fig. D-1)—this illustration is the seventh in order in S (Fig. D-23) and nowhere near the creation descriptions that occur at the beginning of the text of *The Prose Edda*. On the other hand, S starts with a depiction of Valhöll (Fig. D-17) which is appropriate as a general scene unconnected with a specific myth but it is followed in S by a scene from “The Abduction of Iðunn” featuring (Fig. D-18) that is not in N. Moreover, the first two illustrations in S are followed with a depiction from the creation myth concerning “Auðhumla and Búri” (f. 74r) (Fig. D-19), which is a creation scene that should not come after the “The Abduction of Iðunn” illustration that precedes it (Fig. D-18). Even more striking in S is the fact that “Hermóðr’s Ride to Hel” (Fig. D-21) precedes “The Death of Baldr” (Fig. D-22), which precedes “The Binding of Fenrir” (Fig.

D-23). The latter example of chronological disorder, with these three illustrations in the reverse order of the narrative they are portraying, holds true in N as well (Figs. D-9, D-10, and D-14).

The lack of order in *dæmisögur* numbers that are referred to within the illustrations in the two manuscripts is clearly evident from the numbers in the order that they occur in the two manuscripts:

- 1) N: 61 [b], 26, 46, 41, Óðinn, Þórr, 5, 61 [a], 43, 42, 25, Óðinn and Sleipnir, 2-3-4-5, 29, 33, 50 [b];
- 2) S: 33, 50 [a], 5, 61 [a], 43, 42, 61[b], 26, Óðinn, Þórr, 2-3-4-5, 29, 46, 41, 25, Óðinn and Sleipnir.

I have transcribed the *dæmisögur* numbers as Arabic numerals. However, there is no consistency in the notation used for the *dæmisögur* numbers either in N and S where the numbers are often written as Roman numerals or Arabic numerals and sometimes as words and occasionally as runic transliterations of the Icelandic terms.

However, despite the lack of consistency in the order of the illustrations, it is interesting that the illustrative content for individual leaves in the two manuscripts matches each other exactly for the recto and verso of each leaf. For example, in N f. 92 the recto side shows Suttungr pursuing Óðinn (Fig. D-1) and Ullr on his skis is on the verso (Fig. D-2), and this folio is matched by S f. 76 with the same images on the recto and verso (Figs. D-23 and D-24). This pattern of the same recto and verso illustrations per leaf holds true for all of the individual leaves. It is as if they were copied from individual leaves and then the set for each manuscript was shuffled before it was bound. Initially there appears to be the possibility that order could be restored if leaves such as N

f. 96r and S f. 75r (Figs. D-9 and D-21), where “Hermóðr’s Ride to Hel” precedes “The Death of Baldr” (Figs. D-10 and D-22), could be flipped over and bound by their opposite edges. However, the possibility of this solution fades with the observation that the span of *dæmisögur* numbers is too great between the recto and verso *dæmisögur* numbers on individual leaves to allow the insertion of other leaves in between them in order to achieve a chronological order for the creation myths. Such is the case for N f.95 and S f.74, where the creation scene involving Auðhumla and Búri on the recto (Figs. D-7 and D-19) is followed by a much later scene chronologically from “The Mead of Poetry” on the verso (Figs. D-8 and D-20). Consequently, there is no way of reordering the leaves so that the order of the myths conforms to the order presented in *The Prose Edda* or even to the sequence of events within their individual narratives.

Despite the fact that N and S contain title pages for Resen’s *Edda*, the sets of *dæmisögur* numbers in both manuscripts do not correspond to the print edition of Resen’s *Edda*.⁹¹ Moreover, the *dæmisögur* numbers do not even correspond to the text that Ólafur and Jakob used for the *Edda* in their compilations, which as previously noted was an unidentified witness of *Laufás Edda*. In reference to *dæmisögur* numbers and illustrations in N, Faulkes notes that

On foll. 92ff. there are some illustrations to *Snorra Edda* with captions partly corresponding to passages in *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* but with references to *dæmisögur* numbers that do not correspond to Magnús’s *Edda* [*Laufás Edda*] and RE [*Resen’s Edda Islandorum*] or to the text in this MS.

(*Two Versions of Snorra Edda* Vol. 1 140).

⁹¹ All of the illustrations in N and S, except for three, have *dæmisögur* numbers within their illustrations.

The fact that *dæmisögur* numbers in N and S do not match the version of *Resen's Edda*, despite the fact that N and S both contain title pages for *Resen's Edda*, is likely because versions of Magnús Ólafsson's *Laufás Edda* circulated in Iceland very soon after it was completed. Faulkes notes that "Magnús sent a fair copy of his *Edda* to Arngrímur Jónsson in 1609...and further copies began to circulate very quickly, some originating from Arngrímur's copy, some evidently from a draft kept by Magnús" (*Two Versions of Snorra Edda* Vol. 1 17). The fundamental discrepancy between the *dæmisögur* numbers in the illustrations in N and S and the *dæmisögur* in *Resen's Edda* suggests that the illustrations were originally produced to refer to yet another unidentified witness of *Laufás Edda*. The lack of care taken in the order of the illustrations when compiling N and S in addition to the strategy of using a variety of sources when copying and citing *The Prose Edda*, i.e.—various witnesses of *Laufás Edda* and material from *Resen's Edda*—provides insights into the working methods and production of handwritten books in eighteenth-century Iceland.

9.7.3 Textual Differences within the Illustrations in N and S

The sets of the sixteen illustrations in N and S contain labels and text that differ considerably from each other, and these textual differences support my contention that Jakob tailored his illustrations to suit his clients. For example, Jakob only uses runic transliterations for the Icelandic text on objects such as Þórr's belt in S (Fig. D-26), but otherwise he uses the Roman alphabet in S. On the other hand, Jakob transcribes the entire caption in runes in the matching illustration in N (Fig. D-6) and he uses runes in whole or in part in N for several other captions (Figs. D-2, D-3, D-4, D-7, and D-11). The

greater use of runes in the illustrations in N, which belonged to Ólafur, is not surprising given the larger amount of textual content concerned with runes in N.

The placement of identifying names directly on figures and objects reveals another inconsistency within and between the two manuscripts. Jakob appears to have been confident when illustrating N that Ólafur's knowledge of iconographical details alone would allow him to identify 1) Loki with his net (Fig. D-3); 2) Þórr and Hymir fishing (Fig. D-4); and 3) Þórr with his hammer (Fig. D-6). It is odd, however, but typical of his tendency to be inconsistent, that Jakob places names in N directly on 1) Óðinn's hat (Fig. D-5) — despite icons that would clearly identify Óðinn: e.g. his blind eye and his ravens; 2) on Bölverkr's/Óðinn's clothing, Baugi's sleeve, the handle of the bore, and the side of the mountain (Fig. D-8); and 3) on Loki's hat, Höðr's clothing, and Baldr's clothing in “The Death of Baldr” scene (Fig. D-10). However, the only name that Jakob places on an object in S is the one on the handle of Baugi's bore (Fig. D-20)—an item whose name “Rati” would not have been widely known because it is only mentioned once in *The Prose Edda*.

Jakob was especially prone in S to squeezing textual descriptions into tight places between figures and the edges of his illustrations (Figs. D-25 and D-27), and he uses text to supply mythic details more often in S than in N. Despite the more frequent labelling of gods and iconic items in N, the difference concerning the amount of text within the illustrations of the two manuscripts represents a clear indication that Jakob was mindful that the people he was producing them for had different levels of knowledge concerning *The Prose Edda*.

9.7.4 Incidental Differences in the Illustrations in N and S

N and S also contain differences in the details within their illustrations beyond the textual differences that I have noted above. In many instances these differences are minor and might be expected in any illustration that has been copied by hand. The minor differences that include variations in the number of miscellaneous objects in a scene, such as the pots that the gods have set out in “The Mead of Poetry” illustration (Figs. D-1 and D-23) or the skulls in “Hermóðr’s Ride to Hel” (Figs. D-9 and D-21). There are also slight differences in the orientation of figures or their limbs that are of some interest, such as the physically awkward crossing of the sword and spear hands in S (Fig. D-28). There is another example in S in “The Death of Baldr” scene in S (Fig. D-22) that is of greater interest in regard to changes that might have occurred during the act of copying. In this illustration Loki’s head and his left arm appear to be disassociated from his body because Jakob has not drawn a portion of his shoulder and his torso. The lighting in the *baðstofa* was supplied by a single fish oil lamp (Driscoll, *Unwashed Children* 73), so it is not surprising that there are inconsequential differences and occasional mistakes that would have occurred during the process of reproducing illustrations of the same scene. However, there are other more significant differences within the illustrations that reflect Jakob’s habit of tailoring the eddic material in the illustrations to suit his clients.

9.7.5 Esoteric Mythological Details in N

Four esoteric iconographic details stand out in illustrations in N that are absent in corresponding illustrations in S and these details are not related to iconography associated with the text of *The Prose Edda*. The first esoteric detail, using the order for illustrations in N, is Óðinn’s staff which has a leafy top in N (Fig. D-5) but appears as a normal walking cane with an ornamental knob on the top in S (Fig. D25). The leafy staff motif is

familiar from Christian symbolism where it is associated with warrior saints such as St. Christopher, who according to early Greek sources, was so “appalled by the savage annihilation of Christians by the pagan Roman army, he converted, inspired by the vision of an angel. A miracle occurred; his staff sprouted leaves” (Walter 214).⁹² Associating Óðinn, who was often portrayed as a solitary wanderer with a walking staff, with the saint who was associated with travelers seems apt, but associating the chief pagan god with a saint who carried the Christ child on his shoulders seems an odd choice. However, like other Christian symbols, the leafy staff no doubt originally possessed attributes of pagan symbolism as well and a Christian reference might not necessarily have been intended.

The second esoteric detail in N is the thunderbolt which Óðinn brandishes in N when he is riding Sleipnir (Fig. D-12) in place of the sword that he is holding in a similar scene in S (Fig. D-32). Thunderbolts are associated in western pagan religions with sky gods such as Zeus and Jupiter; and they also are a feature of eastern religions such as Hinduism where it is the god Indra who is the god of war and weather, and who carries a *varja*, the symbol of lightning. Jupiter’s thunderbolt was a weapon that was “represented either as a double-ended, multi-pronged and barbed fork or as a bunch of flames, perhaps zigzag in shape” (Hall 303). According to the *Interpretatio Germanica* (Lindow 202), Óðinn was equated with Mercury and Þórr with Jupiter, and, indeed, it is Þórr who is most frequently associated with thunderbolts in Norse mythology. However, as Lindow

⁹² The leafy staff was also associated with the marriage of Mary and Joseph but it is unlikely that this legend is related to the detail in NKS.

“The staff St. Joseph holds comes from an apocryphal tale. According to *The Golden Legend*, several men besides Joseph wanted Mary’s hand in marriage. Each suitor, the story goes, was instructed by the high priest to place a staff on an altar. The staff that Joseph brought miraculously burst into leaf, a sign that he was God’s choice to be Mary’s husband {compare this story with the account of Aaron’s rod blossoming in Numbers 17:16-23}” (<catholic.net>).

notes, Óðinn was the head of the Norse pantheon “at least in the sources recorded in the thirteenth century” (Lindow 248); consequently by the seventeenth century it may have seemed natural to equip him with the thunderbolt as a symbol of power. Moreover, Óðinn was believed to have thrown his spear over the enemy host before going into battle (Lindow 155), and the flight of the spear falling from the sky is suggestive of a lightning strike. Although only the illustration in N (Fig. D-12) has Óðinn holding the lightning bolt, the triple-pronged top half of the lightning symbol appears on the top of Óðinn’s hat/crown and is also part of the trappings of his horse in both N (Fig. D-12) and S (Fig. D-32), and is also part of Valhöll’s architectural details in S (Fig. D-17).

The third esoteric detail of interest in N is the pair of orbs in “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene from *The Prose Edda* when King Gylfi in disguise confronts three figures seated on a triple throne that represent hypostatic figures of Óðinn. I have previously discussed this illustration in regard to U and Jakob’s other renderings along with the possibility that the three figures can be seen as a paganised version of the Holy Trinity. The three figures of Óðinn are empty handed in S (Fig. D-27), but this is not the case in N (Fig. D-13), where the topmost figure is holding an orb representing the world, a symbol that has long been associated with pagan kingship. The middle figure is also holding an orb but it is surmounted with a hammerhead that imitates the *globus cruciger*, which in Christian iconography is “a spherical globe surmounted by a cross to symbolize Christian dominion over the cosmos” (Strayer 564). A case might also be made that the figures in N represent three levels of authority, with the god Óðinn in the first and highest position, a king second, and a priest third. If this is the case then it is appropriate that the king figure in the middle is holding the orb with a pagan religious symbol on top.

Christian kings were often portrayed holding the *globus cruciger* in the middle ages to signify their duty to spread Christianity throughout the world. I believe that Jakob was inspired by the tradition of the *globus cruciger* to create an anachronism in regard to Norse paganism.

The hammerhead positioned on top of the orb in N must represent Þórr's hammer Mjölnir. However, the illustration depicting the head of Þórr's hammer positioned on top of the orb is unique to this manuscript. It is true that Þórr's hammer was equated with the Christian cross during the Conversion period (circa 1000 C.E.) and the *globus cruciger* analogy works to a point. In *The Prose Edda*, Þórr mainly used his hammer to kill giants, who were not only the mortal enemies of both gods and men but threatened the very cosmos, and therefore his hammer might be considered as an object that represented not only survival in a physical sense but also salvation in a religious sense. In Norse beliefs reflected in eddic poetry and sagas, Þórr's hammer was depicted as a sacred object that was used to hallow ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. Moreover, when the world is reborn after the battle of Ragnarök, Þórr's hammer in the possession of his sons represents continuity from "the old mythological order to the new one" (Lindow 221). Thus in pagan beliefs of the Viking era, the battle of Ragnarök was part of a cycle and did not represent the total destruction of the gods and their world.

Þórr's hammer pendants were popular pagan adornments during the Conversion period but the hammer was never venerated in the same way as the Christian cross (DuBois 163). Moreover, the Vikings were not interested in proselytizing because their religious beliefs were polytheistic and sacrifice to a particular god was a matter of personal preference. This attitude was even carried over to the early period of

Christianization. Óðinn tended to be worshipped on the Scandinavian mainland while Þórr was more popular in Iceland, and Helgi the Lean was famous for having called upon Þórr while he was at sea but to Christ when he was on land (DuBois 60). Therefore the paganization of a Christian icon or an augmentation of a secular pagan icon—i.e., an unadorned orb with a pagan religious symbol: i.e., Þórr’s hammer—presents a very striking incongruous detail in N.

The fourth, and last, esoteric detail worthy of mention in N is the spiked club held aloft by one of the gods in the illustration of “The Binding of Fenrir” (Fig. D-14). The spiked club might not spring readily to mind as an identifying icon. However, Saxo Grammaticus describes Þórr as fighting with a club rather than a hammer: “Thor shattered all their shield-defenses with the terrific swings of his club ... there was no armour which could stand up to his strokes, nor anyone who could survive them” (*Danmarks Kronike* Bk. III 70). There is no mention of Þórr’s club in *The Prose Edda*, although Snorri relates how Þórr came to have the hammer. Of course, myths do not adhere to chronological paradigms or logic. However, there presumably was a period when Þórr used a different weapon prior to acquiring his hammer. The club does not appear in the corresponding illustration in S f. (Fig. D-28), where the Þórr figure is holding a curved sword and is therefore totally anonymous. The curved sword in S is itself of some interest because it resembles Asian rather than Viking swords. Moreover, an Asian theme is in keeping with the long tunics that the two figures are wearing in these two illustrations as opposed to trousers, in all of the other illustrations—with the exception of the portrait of Óðinn (Figs. D-5 and D-25).

The Asian weapon and style of clothing may seem incongruous in an illustration of Norse mythology, but they are appropriate in light of the Prologue to *The Prose Edda* where the gods are dealt with euhemeristically, as having originally been men who migrated to the North from Turkey. In fact, in his prologue, Snorri erroneously suggests an etymology for the collective term for the gods, Æsir, as being ‘the men of Asia (who were called Æsir)’ “Ásíamanna, er æsir váru kallaðir” (Faulkes, *Edda* 4; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 7). If “The Binding of Fenrir” is conceived of as occurring relatively early in the chronology of Old Norse myths, then a case could be made that Asiatic details such as the curved sword and long tunics would be one way of illustrating that point; and therefore, Þórr’s club would also be appropriate. Here as in other illustrations, Jakob utilizes details from *The Prose Edda* for the illustrations in S, presumably for a well-to-do farmer, and chooses from a broader range of iconographical details that suggest a more scholarly breadth of knowledge for the illustrations in N for the clergyman Ólafur.

9.7.6 Mythological Details in S

The three iconographic details that differ in S from N are concerned with mythological elements that are closer to the descriptions in the text of *The Prose Edda* than the corresponding details in N’s illustrations. The first of these details is the knotted net in S (Fig. D-29), which is truer to the details of the myth concerning Loki’s invention of the net in that ‘he took some linen and tied knots in the way in which ever since a net has been’ “tók hann língarn ok reið á ræksna, svá sem net er síðan gert” (Faulkes, *Edda*. 51; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 85). The corresponding illustration in N (Fig.

D-3) has a woven net which would not only be unsuitable for fishing but would also have allowed Loki to escape when the gods tried to catch him.

The second iconographical detail from *The Prose Edda* is the depiction of Þórr holding what should be a pair of gloves (Fig. D-26). The gloves are an important detail in Snorri's description of Þórr, namely that 'he has a third thing that is a most important possession. This is a pair of iron gloves. He must not be without these when he grips his hammer.' "Inn þriðja hlut á hann, þann er mikill gripr er í. Þat eru járnglófar. Þeira má hann eigi missa við hamarskaftit" (Faulkes, *Edda* 22; Guðni Jónsson, *Edda Snorra Sturluson* 38). The gloves are depicted in S as mittens although *járnglófar* translates as "iron gloves." However, mitts were more likely to have been the item most familiar to Jakob as protective working gear for smiths or fishermen. In the corresponding illustration in N, Þórr is holding a walking cane instead of the iron gloves/mittens (Fig. D-6).

The third iconographical detail from *The Prose Edda* in S is the skis which Ullr is wearing despite the fact that the landscape lacks snow (Fig. D-24). The landscape, if the background can be called such, is white or at least blank in the corresponding illustration in N (Fig. D-2). It appears that Ullr was so firmly associated with his skis in *The Prose Edda* and the eddic poem "Grímnismál" that Jakob could not conceive of showing him without them regardless of the season.

Although it is not iconographical, the tree stump in the illustration of Ullr in S (Fig. D-24) is of special interest because the connection between Ullr and trees does not come from *The Prose Edda* but from primary sources concerning Old Norse beliefs. We know from Tacitus and Adam of Bremen that groves were places of worship for the

Germanic tribes and Vikings, and from other sources that various trees were associated with specific gods, e.g., Þórr and the oak. According to “Grímnismál,” Ullr lived in Yewdale (Larrington 52), which suggests a connection with forests and specifically with yew trees. Yew wood is particularly suitable for making bows and this is the weapon that is always associated with Ullr. Ullr might also have been associated with elder trees because of the similarity of his name to the Icelandic word “yllir” for the elder tree.⁹³ Ullr was also famous as a hunter and, although no quarry is in sight, he appears to be hunting in the illustration in N. The freshly cut tree stump in S is intriguing because the inscription alongside it appears to read ‘his arrow has parted [illegible text] stem of the birch’ “hans pijla hefr skileð s [illegible text] stofn biar karennar.”⁹⁴

The combination of the illustration and the text is puzzling because it seems to suggest that Ullr has shot at the tree and cut it asunder, which would contradict any suggestion that he might be in a grove that was sacred to him and is protecting it. Although Ullr’s name is well attested in kennings in *The Prose Edda* and in place names in Norway and Sweden, very little is known about him and there are no surviving myths concerning him aside from one in Saxo Grammaticus. The illustration in S (Fig. D-24) might be viewed as the god seeking revenge on the person who has cut down one of his trees. As such it has the air of a lost myth that could easily have come with the original immigrants from the Scandinavian mainland or perhaps have been native to Iceland. In Chapter 237 of the thirteenth-century *Landnámabók* (Book of Settlement), which concerns the original settlers of Iceland, is the statement that ‘Thorir afterwards settled all

⁹³ This possible etymology was suggested to me in a private email from Dr. Kristin Aðalsteinsdóttir who consulted an Icelandic forester on my behalf.

⁹⁴ This caption is very difficult to read or to translate because it is heavily abbreviated and parts of it have faded. Dr. Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson was kind enough to look at it with me in the summer of 2007 but it was not possible to decipher it completely.

Hnjóskadal to Odeila, and dwelt at Lund. He worshipped the grove.’ “Þórir nam síðan Hnjóskadal allan til Ódeilu og bjó að Lundi; hann blótaði lundinn” (Benediktsson vol. 2 270). Of course, *Landnámabók* does not specifically mention Ullr by name; however, present-day Icelanders believe it is plausible that this god was associated with Lund which is in north-eastern Iceland.⁹⁵ Perhaps Jakob knew of a local myth concerning Ullr’s guardianship of groves and decided to fill in the blank background of the original illustration with a tree stump.

9.8 The Nature and Provenance of N and S

It seems likely that Ólafur compiled and copied his N for his own personal use. Certainly, N did not leave Ólafur’s family until after his death when his son sold it, reportedly “to buy drink in Copenhagen,” which is why it now resides in the collection of the Danish Royal Library (Sigurðsson, “Melsted’s Edda” 180). Ólafur and Jakob compiled and copied other manuscripts aside from the two that have been the focus of this thematic study. Altogether, there are four manuscripts attributed to Ólafur’s hand, three of which are in the National Library in Reykjavík: ÍB 389 4to—an obituary poem in his own hand and by him; Lbs 1566 4to—a textbook on simple singing; and Lbs 128 8vo—traditional rímur or a chivalric saga poem written in 1765; and of course N which is in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Of these four manuscripts only N is illustrated and I have established in this thematic study that Jakob was responsible for the illustrations in N.

Altogether there are twenty-three extant manuscripts in Jakob’s hand: thirteen are in The National Library of Iceland, two are in the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík,

⁹⁵ The story of a forest in Iceland that was never cut down in medieval times because it was sacred to Ullr was told to me by Kládia Róbertsdóttir-Lewis who was a travel guide in Iceland for many years.

five are in the British Library, three are in The Royal Library in Copenhagen, and it is possible that there were others that have not survived or remain to be discovered.⁹⁶ Aside from the material in S, Jakob copied diverse texts such as “Lækningar eftir stafrófi” (An Alphabetical Guide to Healing); a collection of hymns; and a collection of romances and sagas of legendary heroes, in addition to Í, which as has been mentioned previously includes Resen’s *Edda*. This latter manuscript from 1764 is of particular interest because it contains illustrations of the Seeress, “The Deluding of Gylfi,” and “Týr portrayed as Mars” (Figs. D-37, D-41, D-39). Moreover, the title page for Resen’s *Edda* in Í (Fig. D-38) features ten roundels with details from *The Prose Edda* that are drawn in the same style as the illustrations in N and S. However, this illustrated title page in Í contrasts sharply with the title page for Resen’s *Edda* in S (f. 81r), which was created a year later in 1765 and is not illustrated. Jakob copied manuscripts upon request and presumably the patron would have decided upon the textual items and illustrations, and possibly even details such as illustrated title pages to include in the manuscript.

I have made the case in this thematic study that S was initially created for a well-to-do farmer. The provenance of S inscribed inside its covers indicates that it was owned at some point by St. Pedersen—who has not been identified, and surely would have been included in Ólason’s *Íslenzkar æviskrár* if he had been a clergyman—and also by Magnús Guðmundsson. According to Gísli Sigurðsson, “most probably this is the Magnús Guðmundsson who was a farmer at Sandur in Aðaldalur, since his daughter, Elín Sigríður, left Halldórsstaðir í Kinn in north-eastern Iceland for Canada with her six children in 1876” and took the manuscript with her (“Melsted’s Edda” 184). S was

⁹⁶ For the shelf marks for Jakob’s manuscripts, see Örn Hrafnkelsson’s footnote 4 on page 13 in *Jakob Sigurðsson. Handarlínulist og Höfuðbeinafræði*.

returned to Iceland in the year 2000 when it was purchased from Kenneth Melsted, a farmer of Icelandic descent in Canada, and donated to the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík. Consequently *S* is sometimes called *Melsted's Edda* in Iceland and in the Árni Magnússon Institute's exhibition, which prominently displays it, it is referred to as "the last manuscript sent home" (Sigurðsson, "Melsted's Edda" 179).

9.8 Conclusion

Lutheran Pietism inadvertently encouraged the emergence of an informal system of book production beginning in eighteenth-century in Iceland by fostering literacy and by banning secular entertainments. Although the Church was largely successful in banning singing and dancing, its attempts to discourage the reading and copying of non-religious material, as well as discouraging the composing of popular ballads known as *rímur*, were for the most part unsuccessful. The composition of *rímur* required a knowledge of Old Norse mythology that had been preserved in *The Prose Edda* and was made accessible as reference material in *Laufás Edda*—a redaction of *The Prose Edda* that circulated widely in Iceland in hand-copied paper manuscripts very soon after it was written in 1609. Resen introduced Old Norse mythology to European scholars in 1665 when he published the *Edda Islandorum*, which was a translation of *The Prose Edda* into Latin and Danish based on *Laufás Edda*. Material from *The Prose Edda* and the *Poetic Edda* resulted in variety of early print scholarly works in Denmark and Sweden in the seventeenth century. These books found their way to Iceland and were further disseminated by means of hand-copied paper manuscripts produced by scribes such as Jakob Sigurðsson.

The eighteenth century was a period of severe hardship in Iceland due to a series of natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions that affected agriculture and fishing and brought about two periods of famine. In fact the 1780s and 1790s in particular were a “time of extreme need for the whole country, so much so that at one point King Christian VII’s government seriously considered a mass removal of the entire population to the heathlands of Jutland” (Benedikz 30-31). Thus despite the Church’s attempts to keep the attention of their parishioners firmly focused on religious matters, it is evident that Jakob’s scribal activity, poetry, and no doubt his illustrations as well, brought the joys of secular entertainment to the drab existence of eighteenth-century Icelanders.

Jakob’s life and informal education provide a fascinating glimpse into book production and the book culture of eighteenth-century Iceland. Jakob’s extended family was well educated, his male kin on both sides of his family tree were clergymen who are frequently referred to as poets in the brief biographies that have come down to us. Jakob was an orphan at an early age and consequently did not receive the formal education that he surely would have had if his parents had lived. However, Jakob was fortunate in being fostered by Brynjólfur Halldórsson whose son Ólafur Brynjólfsson likely taught Jakob the art of writing and probably illustrating as well. Although, Jakob spent his life as a tenant farmer, he obviously benefited from his foster family’s level of education as well as that of the clients whose books he copied. Jakob copied a wide range of material ranging from chivalric romances, to a book of psalms, to texts on physiognomy, palmistry, and astrology. For the purposes of my dissertation, I have focused my thematic study on Jakob’s illustrations of Old Norse mythology in three hand-copied paper manuscripts: N, Í, and S, which were created in the period of 1760 and 1765.

The text and the illustrations in S and Í are entirely attributable to Jakob, while N is generally considered to have been produced by Ólafur Brynjólfsson. However, my thematic study confirms that Jakob created the illustrations in N and that Ólafur was responsible for the textual items. Consequently, the contents of N represent a collaborative effort and Jakob should be given credit for his illustrations in manuscript descriptions for N. Establishing Jakob as the illustrator of the mythological illustrations in N makes it possible to identify “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration on f. 111v (Fig. D-36) as Jakob’s first mythological illustration and as the initial inspiration for his two sets of sixteen mythological illustrations in N and S, and also for the “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration in Í (Fig. D-41). Acknowledging Jakob as the illustrator for N’s close rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi” (Fig. D-36) also recognizes him as the composer of the verse that the illustration contains, which describes Óðinn’s conversation with Gylfi as a lie that has been exposed. Jakob included this verse in all four of his “Deluding of Gylfi” illustrations and he also included text in his idiosyncratic rendering of the scene in N and S that describes Gylfi as a gullible fool who eagerly swallows Óðinn’s lies without question.

Rory McTurk considers the title “The Deluding of Gylfi” to be ambiguous and has suggested that Snorri intended his readers in the thirteenth century to perceive Gylfi as having been engaged in a wisdom contest which he ultimately wins. Christopher Abram has made the case that Gylfi’s barrage of questions directed at Óðinn matches the conversion paradigm that the eighth-century bishop, Daniel of Winchester, attributed to Boniface circa 723. According to the bishop’s theory, “When forced by subtle questioning to state their beliefs, the pagans will eventually come to realize the logical

fallacies that underlie their cosmological notions for themselves: they will run out of answers” (“*Gylfaginning* and Early Medieval Conversion Theory” 19). Abram suggests that thirteenth-century audiences could have seen Gylfi as “ingenuously playing the role of a Christian missionary...while the pagans to whom Gylfi passes on the Æsir’s stories seem to accept them uncritically, *Snorra Edda*’s audiences should see them for what they are” (“*Gylfaginning* and Early Medieval Conversion Theory” 19).

Judging by the verse and text that Jakob included in his illustrations of “The Deluding of Gylfi,” and also the text that Jón Lærði included in his rendering of the scene in M, readers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Iceland believed that Gylfi had been completely beguiled by Óðinn’s lies which they themselves could clearly identify as deceitful. Jakob’s verse and text within the illustrations acted as a reminder that enabled his audiences to view the illustrations secure in the knowledge that they would not make the same mistake as Gylfi and accept mortal men as divine beings.

Jakob’s renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” are remarkably similar to the illustration in U and therefore raise the question of whether or not it served as Jakob’s exemplar. However, U had left Iceland in 1639, before Jakob was born, and the only copy of it, M, was also unavailable to Jakob. It is quite possible that M was created while its scribe, Jón lærði, was in Copenhagen and it is unclear whether it ever was in Iceland for any period of time. Moreover, M became part of Thomas Marshall’s collection and was taken to Oxford circa 1690, which was before Jakob’s birth. U’s travels took it from Iceland to Denmark to Sweden in 1639 and it became a part of the manuscript collection of the University of Uppsala in 1669.

U's illustration of "The Deluding of Gylfi" was of special interest to Swedish antiquarians such as Olaus Verelius, Ole Rudbeck, and Johannis Schefferus, who used it in their efforts to establish that Old Norse culture had originated in Sweden and to strengthen Sweden's claim to the crest of the triple crowns in regard to the competing Danish claims at the time. Moreover, the Swedish renderings contain a detail of a sun face that was inspired by a pen trial in U of a face with a crown. The sun face was important to the Swedish scholars because "The Deluding of Gylfi" episode took place in Sweden and they identified the scene in *The Prose Edda* as taking place in the Temple of Uppsala, which they believed had originally been the temple of the Roman god Apollo, who was associated with the sun. Bartholin copied Verelius' copperplate rendering of the scene in 1689. Bartholin's lithograph is a mirror image of Verelius' that does not include Verelius' text but retains the asterisk that indicated a note to Verelius' printer as to where the page should be inserted. Jakob copied Bartholin's illustration, along with three other of Bartholin's illustrations of historical items, for N. Following his rendering of Bartholin's illustrations, Jakob went on to create idiosyncratic versions of the "Deluding of Gylfi" scene and other mythological scenes from *The Prose Edda* for sets comprised of sixteen illustrations for both N and S.

Establishing Jakob as the illustrator of the mythological illustrations in N makes it possible to compare them to Bartholin's illustrations and also to the set of mythological illustrations that Jakob created for S. A comparison of the differences between Jakob's illustrations in N and S reveals that many of the changes that Jakob introduced were likely due to individual preferences on the part of Ólafur for N and an unknown patron for S, rather than occurring as the result of normal variances in the copying process. For

example, in addition to the completely different scenes from “The Abduction of Iðunn,” there are two pairs of illustrations that are similar but have a different orientation of their figures and feature significantly different objects. The first pair of illustrations consists of a portrait of Þórr: in N he is standing still and holding his hammer and a cane (Fig. D-6), but he is walking and holding his iron gloves in S (Fig. D-26). The second pair of illustrations depicts Óðinn riding Sleipnir: in N they are in the midst of turning around with Óðinn brandishing an object suggestive of a thunderbolt (Fig. 12), but in S they are calmly traveling forwards with Óðinn casually carrying an unsheathed sword (Fig. 32). Individually the differences in details would appear to be minor but collectively they reveal a significant pattern pointing to the nature of Jakob’s editorial decisions when creating illustrations for his patrons.

Jakob’s illustrations in S reflect a close knowledge of *The Prose Edda*, which is not surprising considering that he copied the *Edda* several times, e.g. in Í, S, and possibly on other occasions. Jakob’s knowledge of the esoteric details which he included in the illustrations in N for Ólafur represent a reflection of Ólafur’s education and interests that he had obviously communicated to Jakob. Two years of formal education at Skáholt would explain Ólafur’s scholarly interest in runes, and the many items on runology that he included in his compilation of N further *dæmisögur* confirm his interest in this subject. As has been discussed previously in Chapter One of this dissertation in reference to Jón Lærði, too great an interest in runes and their magical properties could potentially lead to accusations of witchcraft. Indeed, twenty-five people were executed for witchcraft, between the years 1554 and 1719, and in Iceland “witchcraft was in many cases connected with writing, runes, magical letters and books of magic” (Gunnarsson 146).

Although the period of persecuting people for witchcraft seems to have died down in early-eighteenth-century Iceland, Ólafur likely compiled N for his own private use. On the other hand, the runic material in S, which merely enables the reader to read runes, was of a more prosaic nature and not necessarily associated with magic. The material on simply reading runes in S—as opposed to material in N on runology which was closely associated with the study of magic—along with the inclusion of Þórður’s *Calendarium* and the use of details for the illustrations reflecting the text of *The Prose Edda* all combine to make S a more practical and possibly a less controversial manuscript to have owned. S was likely commissioned by an educated layman and would have served as a useful reference item of practical knowledge on his bookshelf. Thus the illustrations in N and S reflect the interests of their intended owners and the astute illustrative decisions on the part of Jakob to satisfy his clients.

In the past Old Norse scholars such as Finnur Jónsson have dismissed paper manuscripts as being of “absolutely no worth” (qtd. In Gísli Sigurðsson, “Melsted’s Edda” 180). However, this thematic study suggests that if we accept such characterizations, we will overlook a rich resource for studying the very active manuscript culture that flourished in Iceland from early in the sixteenth century until the close of the nineteenth century. The richness of their production and the book culture that produced them provides an important counterpoint to scholars who too easily dismiss their medium. As Foster W. Blaisdell Jr. has pointed out in “The Value of the Valueless,” these late copies can be of significant use in producing editions because “whether one is most interested in matters literary or linguistic, in stylistic features or graphemes, in

folklore motifs or whatever, if one has his eyes open, editing [such material] can prove a virtual gold mine” (45).

The academic “gold” in N and S is to be found in their illustrations, which in the past have been undervalued when judged by scholarly criteria. Hans Kuhn dismissed the illustrations in N as “amateur” much in the same way that Finnur Jónsson evaluated the overall value of paper manuscripts as being of “no worth.” In Kuhn’s evaluation, the artwork associated with Old Norse mythology before the 1890s was not worthy of being called “fine art” (219). However, this thematic study has shown that when the illustrations are accepted on their own merits and are examined within the contexts of their accompanying textual contents and their era, these “late” paper manuscripts can tell us a great deal about manuscript production, book culture, and the reception and transmission of the eddas through the ages.

Chapter Ten

J. M. Stenersen's Editions of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer*

10.1 Introduction

Gustav Storm's nineteenth-century Norwegian translation of *Heimskringla*, a thirteenth-century Icelandic text by Snorri Sturluson,⁹⁷ consists of a compilation of seventeen sagas that relate the history of the kings of Norway. Storm's translation, entitled *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* (Snorri Sturluson: King Sagas—hereafter *Kongesagaer*),⁹⁸ was published by J.M. Stenersen in 1899. The first saga in the compilation, “Ynglinge Saga” (The Saga of the Ynglings),⁹⁹ identifies Freyr, the son of the chieftain Óðinn, as the progenitor of the Yngling dynasty in Sweden in the pre-historical pagan period circa 850 C.E., before Norway was conceived of as being a country, or even a unified kingdom. The compilation ends with “Magnus Erlingsons Saga” (The Saga of Magnus Erlingsson) in the late twelfth century, soon after the conversion to Christianity had finally been accomplished.

Stenersen's publication of the first edition of *Kongesagaer*, in a deluxe super quarto format, was followed one year later by the publication of a smaller, plainer, and therefore cheaper second edition, which was subsidized by the Norwegian parliament in

⁹⁷ Snorri is no longer unequivocally accepted as the author/compiler of *Heimskringla* but will be considered as such for the purposes of this chapter.

⁹⁸ Norwegian scholars often refer to this edition simply as *Snorre*, which is encouraged by the use of the Norwegian spelling of Snorri's first name as a title consisting of that word alone on its cover and spine. However, I will refer to the book *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* throughout my dissertation as *Kongesagaer* in order to avoid possible confusion between the historical person and the Norwegian translation of *Heimskringla*.

⁹⁹ I use Hollander's titles from *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway* for the equivalent Norwegian titles in *Kongesagaer*. I use Icelandic titles such as “Ynglinga Saga” when referring to Snorri's original text but Norwegian titles when referring specifically to *Kongesagaer*.

order to make it even more affordable for the general public.¹⁰⁰ These editions each contain approximately two hundred and twenty illustrations that, along with other paratextual elements, present a rich source of material to examine in regard to book history and production. Differences between the illustrations in the two editions have occasionally been noted but have never been subjected to critical examination. I will demonstrate that a comparison of the illustrations in the two editions of *Kongesagaer* reveals aspects concerning 1) the circumstances of their creation and the publication of the first edition; 2) the consequences of the initial reception of the first edition and its illustrations; 3) the criteria involved in the revisions of illustrations for the second edition; and 4) the impact of their subsequent transmission after the publication of the second edition.

I will begin by examining the reasons why the publication of an illustrated edition was a priority in Norway at the end of the nineteenth century and who was involved in initiating it. I will focus on the establishment of the artistic team and their abilities; the evolution of the illustrative agenda for the overall project; and the effect that individual artistic temperaments had on the illustrations in general and on the project as a whole. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the reception of the 1899 edition.

Next, I will focus on the 1900 edition, which is of particular interest because it featured illustrative changes such as additions, substitutions, deletions, and revisions.

These changes occurred not only from one edition to another, but also in several

¹⁰⁰ The second edition was published in the two official languages of Norway—Riksmål and Landsmål—or Bokmål and Nynorsk as they are now referred to. The title of Storm's Bokmål edition is *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* and the title of Steinar Schjøtt's translation into Landsmål (Nynorsk) is *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesogur*—so technically there are actually three editions of *Kongesagaer*. I will be focusing on the Storm's second edition because I have yet to find anything of interest in Schjøtt's; however, that could change as my research progresses.

instances between print runs of the same edition. I will show that the illustrative differences between the first and second editions were not, as might be expected, largely the result of the negative reception that the first edition received. Hilmar Bakken observed that “‘the educated public’ have often been indifferent to new art’ “‘den dannede almenhet’ har ofte stått kjolig overfor ny kunst” (107). It is not surprising that the public was not generally receptive to the new ‘saga style’ illustrations. The *Kongesagaer* illustrations artistically signified ‘a complete break with all older Norwegian saga interpretations’ “fullstendig brudd med all eldre norsk sagaskildring” (Bakken 110). Moreover, in addition to their negative reaction towards the style of the illustrations, many members of the general public were offended by the depictions of violence, and the depictions of “the kings of Norway and other noblemen in their death throes provoked particular outrage” (Ingólfsson 166).

Despite the public outcry, the negative response to the illustrations in the first edition appears to have had little impact on the revision of the illustrations as a whole for the second edition. Therefore, there must have been other criteria involved in the changes that were made in a number of the illustrations, as well as the removal of illustrations that were not used in the second edition, and also a number of illustrations that appear only in the second edition. I believe that many of the illustrative changes for Werenskiold’s illustrations in the first saga, “Ynglinge Saga,” resulted from an editorial decision to downplay the visual impact of illustrations concerning pagan religious beliefs and practices. I will contrast the style of Werenskiold’s illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga” with that of Munthe’s in “Ynglinge Saga,” none of Munthe’s illustrations for “Ynglinge Saga” were revised for the second edition.

I will examine the illustrations and their revisions for the 1900 edition of *Kongesagaer* to demonstrate that the revisions were made in order to 1) delete scenes that would have offended the religious sensibilities of nineteenth-century Lutherans; 2) to change the focus of scenes that were explicitly pagan in order to promote Christian morals and values; and 3) to downplay the content of dramatic scenes in order to bring them into line with an ideal “saga style” that would capture the “spirit of the times.”

I will conclude this chapter with a brief examination of the short- and long-term impact of the illustrations and the revisions in terms of their ongoing transmission both in Norway and beyond its borders through to the present day.

10.2 The Publisher

Bakken observes that it was the Norwegian Auditor General, L.A. Hafstad, who originally suggested that Stenersen should publish a new edition of *Heimskringla*. Apparently, Hafstad and Stenersen were collaborating on projects at that time although Bakken does not elaborate on the nature of their partnership (21). Nor does Bakken mention any other initial encouragement from, or participation by, other government officials; however, the project was very much in keeping with the nationalistic fervour of the day and would have had broad support. Bakken noted in his concluding remarks that, although there was some negative reaction on the part of the general public when the first edition was published, the illustrations received approval from academics and political figures such as Gerhard Gran, Fridtjof Nansen, Vilhelm Wexelsen—the Minister of Education and Church Affairs, and also ‘the nationalistic-minded’ “den nasjonalt orienterte” (107) architect H. M. Schirmer. Hafstad and Stenersen obviously had a strong group of supporters for their project.

The publication of an illustrated deluxe edition of *Heimskringla* was likely felt to be very much overdue by Norwegian intellectuals. Other countries had long since published deluxe illustrated editions of their national literary treasures, such as the publication in Denmark by Christiern Pedersen in 1514 of Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* and the publication in Sweden in 1555 of Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*. Oskar Bandle describes the former as featuring a "truly majestic typographical style" and the latter was lavishly illustrated with 481 woodcuts (355 - 56). Judging from the research and experimentation with typographical processes that he engaged in, Stenersen was determined from the start to produce a deluxe edition printed with state of the art print technology, including the use of colour, and also using the finest materials.

In 1886, when work was just beginning on the *Kongesagaer* edition, Stenersen was forced to confront a major dilemma. In that very year, Fr. Winkel Horn published the first instalment, which consisted of only sixteen pages, of an illustrated Danish edition of *Heimskringla* entitled *Norges Konge-sagær* (Norway's King-sagas). Horn planned to publish this work as a three-volume edition, which would be printed in approximately forty instalments and would contain a total of three hundred illustrations by Louie Moe. Stenersen was tempted to simply let matters take their course because he felt fairly certain that the superior quality of his edition would triumph in the marketplace over the Danish edition. However, the uncertainty aroused by the appearance of Horn's first volume undermined the morale of Stenersen's artistic team, and this further motivated him to find a solution rather than trusting the long range forces of the marketplace to choose between the two editions (Bakken 17).

A clear indication of Stenersen's commitment to his edition is to be seen in the fact that he solved the problem of the Danish edition by buying out the edition from Horn. Consequently, the subsequent Danish instalments never appeared to complete Volume I, or the rest of the sets, or to compete with Stenersen's edition. Stenersen's move to buy out Fr. Winkel Horn was obviously motivated by concern for the success of his own edition and likely also by national pride—surely the major illustrated edition of Norway's national epic could not be credited to Denmark—but no doubt he was motivated even more strongly by a desire to control the content and quality of the illustrations. Carefully illustrating Norway's national genesis narrative, and subtly reinforcing the national identity of Norwegians, would not likely have been a high priority for a Danish publisher.

Indeed, the deficiencies of Horn's *Norges Konge-sagær* likely reinforced Stenersen and his artists' resolve to create a truly outstanding edition. For example, Horn's edition was illustrated 'according to the taste of most people and according to commonly held beliefs of the saga age' "efter smaken hos folk flest og efter de gjengse forestillinger om sagatiden" (Bakken 16). Nothing artistically new was being ventured in Horn's edition and even the layout was so poorly conceived that illustrations such as 'Gefjon plowing Zealand out of Sweden' "Gefion pløier Sælland ud af Sverrig" had been clumsily split across facing pages (Bakken 18 - 19). Moreover, according to Bakken, the cover of Horn's edition featured 'a high-breasted sword-swinging valkyrie on a galloping horse' "høibrystede, sverd-svingende valkyrje på en galopperende hest"

(16 - 17).¹⁰¹ Nothing could have been further from Stenersen's conception of the dignity of *Kongesagaer* than sensational illustrations of buxom valkyries.

Stenersen was firmly committed to his agenda that the artists should create a historical sense of the Viking Age era in the illustrations rather than sensationalize the narrative with romanticized images of Vikings.¹⁰² Both Stenersen and Hafstad were determined that their illustrations would be historically and geographically correct. In an address to the Stortinget, i.e., the Norwegian parliament,—for which Bakken unfortunately fails to supply the date—Stenersen spoke concerning the steps that were being taken to create ‘the best possible publication in history’ “den best mulige utgivelse i historisk” (35) which clearly involved insuring historical verisimilitude:

in regard to the illustrations, photographers have, with much difficulty, undertaken a tour throughout the land, to obtain accurate topographical renderings of the district places in the specific seasons; likewise the illustrators have been under the supervision of Professor Storm with regard to the rendering of building methods, traditions, weapons, clothing, etc. ...

henseende er der for illustrasjonenes vedkommende foretatt studiereiser rundt omkring i landet, fotografer har for nøiaktig topografisk gjengivelse av de forskjellige situasjonssteder på de bestemte årstider hatt megen møie, likesom man med hensyn til gjengivelsen av så vel bygningsskikker, seder, Våpen, drakter etc. har under kontroll av professor Storm... (35)

¹⁰¹ Louis Moe later recycled this illustration in Winkle Horn's 1896 edition of Saxo Grammatius' *Danmarks Krønike*.

¹⁰² It is indicative of the research that went into the *Kongesagaer* illustrations that Viking helmets in the illustrations never feature horns or wings.

Stenersen goes on to describe some of the research that was being done in museums, including an examination of the Bayeux tapestry, and consultations with other authorities in the field. His list makes it clear that every effort was being made to ensure that the illustrations would clearly and carefully depict Norway and Norwegians. On another occasion, Stenersen left no doubt concerning his respect for ‘our glorious past’ “den gamle stortid” with the remark that ‘The sagas were holy for me.’ “Sagene var hellige for mig” (Bakken 38). Given such sentiments, it is evident that behind Stenersen’s desire to be historically accurate lay an implicit agenda to emphasize the aspects of their “glorious” history that would fortify the spirit of Norwegians, as well as their claims to nationhood, in their struggle for independence.

10.3 The Professor

Stenersen hired the scholar Gustav Storm to translate *Heimskringla* and to oversee the edition as a whole. Storm was a respected historian and translator whose published works had begun with *Om den gamle norrøne literatur* (About Old Norse literature) (1869), which he followed up with the pioneering work of textual criticism *Snorre Sturlasons historieskrivning* (Snorri Sturlason’s historiography) (1873). Concerning the nature of Storm’s involvement with the illustrations in *Kongesagaer*, Bakken notes ‘There is no doubt that Storm, with his view of Norse kings’ sagas, naturally had to require that the work’s artistic aspect should be secondary to the historical, ethnological and topographical aspects.’ “Sikkert er at Storm, med det syn han hadde på de norske kongesagaer, som en selvølge måtte kreve at verkets kunstneriske side skulde underordne sig den historiske etnologiske og topografiske” (Bakken 37). The artists often turned to

Storm for general advice concerning the illustrations and he obliged them with references to book and resource materials (Bakken 37). However, as Bakken remarks,

according to Werenskiold, regarding practical things, such as house furnishings, house types, and the like, neither Storm nor our other historians could give a great deal of reliable information. All the drawings would go through Storm's hands, in order for him to criticize their historical accuracy. In this work, he often showed great thoroughness, but his advice and criticism were not always followed.

når det gjaldt praktiske ting, som bohøve, hustyper og lignende, kunde, ifølge Werenskiold, hverken Storm eller våre andre historikere gi stort av sikre opplysninger. Alle tegningene kom til å gå gjennom Storms hender, forat han skulde kritisere deres historiske riktighet. I dette arbeide la han ofte stor nidkjærhet for dagen, men hans råd og kritikk blev ikke alltid tatt til følge.

(Bakken 22)

When disagreements between Storm and the artists arose concerning historical details it fell to one of their own, Erik Werenskiold, to be 'the decisive one' "den avgjørende" (Bakken 22), and Werenskiold proved sufficiently knowledgeable to handle the role.

Bakken does not discuss the details of artistic disputes concerning the requirement for verisimilitude but something of their nature is suggested in the following comment:

It has been said that this restriction on the artists had hampered the work and in the some cases, we can see that this had been so. But one dares to say that in the larger picture this restriction, consideration and duties to self-study had forced the artists into a stricter form and into the saga's own plain epic lines.

Det har vært sagt at disse bånd på kunstnerne har virket hemmende, og i enkelte tilfelle kan vi også se at det har vært slik. Men i det store og hele tør man nok si at disse bånd, hensyn og plikter til selvstudium har tvunget kunstnerne inn i en strengere form og inn til sagaens egne enkle episke linjer. (Bakken 37 - 8)

The individual artists varied considerably in their commitment to Stenersen and Storm's requirements concerning historical, ethnological, and topographical verisimilitude.

Moreover, the artists also varied noticeably in their commitment to working towards creating a distinctive overall look for the illustrations, a look, that where they succeeded, would come to be known as 'saga style.'

10.4 The Team of Artists

Stenersen asked Werenskiold to be the sole illustrator for *Kongesagaer*, but Werenskiold wisely declined to take on the entire project by himself. He set about recruiting other artists and immediately approached Gerhard Munthe, who eagerly accepted. The other members of the original *Kongesagaer* team of four were Eilif Peterssen and Christian Krohg. Due to his extensive travels and lack of enthusiasm for the project, Peterssen was replaced early on by Halfdan Egedius, who at the age of eighteen was the youngest member of the group. Unfortunately, Egedius fell ill with a systemic fungus infection in the fall of 1898 and died a year later at the age of twenty-one. Egedius' friend Wilhem Wetlesen agreed to take his place. Of the two hundred and twenty illustrations for the 1899 edition Werenskiold drew fifty-seven, Krohg forty-seven, Wetlesen forty-three, Egedius thirty-seven, Munthe twenty-seven, and Peterssen eight.

When critics discuss the artistic team involved in creating the *Kongesagaer* illustrations, the six artists are often divided into two groups with the first group being given preferential treatment. For example, Bakken discusses Werenskiold, Munthe, and Egedius individually in *Snorre tegningene* (Snorri drawings), but he groups Krohg, Peterssen, and Wetlesen together into one section because he did not believe that their work for *Kongesagaer* had attained the same level of achievement as the other three. However, I will discuss the artists individually in this chapter because I believe that the fundamental reason underlying their success or failure to achieve a ‘saga style’ for the drawings can be discerned in the personalities of the six artists and their attitudes towards their work. Werenskiold and Munthe were responsible for the illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga,” which is my primary focus for this thematic study. Egedius and Krohg created illustrations that include pagan/Christian interactions for the Conversion era sagas. Peterssen and Wetlesen’s contributions do not illustrate prehistorical paganism or pagan/Christian confrontations, and are therefore of minimal interest to my case study. I will provide a brief overview of the artistic team by looking first at Werenskiold, Munthe, Egedius and then Peterssen, Wetlesen, and lastly Krohg, whose contributions to the illustrations appear to have been the most contrary regarding the achievement of ‘saga style’ and the most controversial in regard to the reception of the first edition.

10.4.1 Erik Werenskiold

Werenskiold was the obvious choice for Stenersen to approach first for the task of illustrating *Kongesagaer*, and he was well suited to leading the artistic team in such a venture. Werenskiold was well known due to his illustrations for Peter Christiern Asbjørnsen and Louis Moe’s collection of Norwegian folktales, *Folkeeventyr*, as well as

his illustrations for other tales such as *De Tre Kongsdøtre i berget det blå* (The Three Princesses in the Blue Mountain). According to Wilhelm Morgenstierne, Norway's ambassador to the United States in 1975, Werenskiold's folk-fairy drawings are considered to be "the first reliable artistic representation of Norway's folklife" (*Snorri Illustrations* foreword). Leif Østby succinctly sums up Werenskiold's talents thus:

With his fairy-tale drawings, Werenskiold had already established a reputation as an illustrator, he was moreover known as a firm and precise administrator and artistic supervisor and director—and he had played with saga motifs from a young age.

Med eventyr teikningane sine hadde Werenskiold alt eit grunnfesta ry som illustratør, han var dessutan kjend som ein fast og klartenkt administrator og kunstnarleg rettleiar og retningsvisar - og han hadde heilt frå unge år tumla med sagemotiv" (Østby, "Om Snorre-illustrasjon" xxxiii).

Werenskiold accepted the job and dedicated himself to historical accuracy. He wrote in a letter to Jonas Lie in 1896 that the activity involved in researching for the saga illustrations had become a school for him (Bakken 60).¹⁰³

Werenskiold became so totally immersed in his research for the illustrations that 'he had to immerse himself in the ornamenting art of the middle ages, and it struck him deeply 'that the middle ages were so solid, so broad and strong, while the modern age flowed out, limp and weak.' "Han måtte sette sig inn i middelaldersk ornamentikk. og det slo ham sterkt 'at det middelalderske var så fast, så bredt og sterkt mens det moderne fløt ut slapt og vekt'" (Bakken 60). There could be no doubt that due to his strong interest in

¹⁰³ See Bakken pages 39–60 for a thorough discussion of the sources that Werenskiold studied and their influence on his work.

folklore and sagas from a young age—Werenskiold had grown up in a household where the favourite material for reading aloud consisted of extracts from Snorri, the sagas, and the fairytales of Asbjorn and Moe (Østby, *Werenskiold* 263). Along with his artistic talents, Werenskiold was the perfect choice to undertake the artistic management of Stenersen's *Kongesagaer* project.

10.4.2 Gerhard Munthe

Werenskiold's first response, when assembling an artistic team for the *Kongesagaer* project, was to approach the internationally known Norwegian artist and decorator Gerhard Munthe. According to Werenskiold's recollection of their meeting,

When J. M. Stenersen in 1895 or 1896 asked if I wanted to be in charge of the illustrations of Snorri with Gustav Storm to manage the text, it was a given that I first and foremost turned to Munthe and asked if he wished to assume the decoration of the work: he seized the offer with both hands and was very enthusiastic about it. We were immediately in agreement about the project and the work's character; it arose on its own. Norwegian above all, simple, primitive...
Da så J.M. Stenersen i 1895 eller 1896 spurte om jeg vilde stå for illustreringen av Snorre med Gustav Storm til å greie teksten, var det en selvfølge at jeg først og fremst henvendte mig til Munthe og spurte om han vilde påta sig utsmykningen av verket: han grep tilbudet med begge hender og brant av iver og begeistring. Planen og verkets karakter var vi jo straks enig om; den gav sig av sig selv. Norsk fremfor alt, enkelt, primitivt. . . (Østby, *Snorre Tegninger* 8)

Given their artwork and interests, Werenskiold and Munthe were likely familiar with each others' work before this meeting. For example, in 1893, prior to the invitation to

join the *Kongesagaer* team, Munthe had exhibited eleven illustrations based on Norwegian folktales at the Black and White Exhibition in Christiania, present-day Oslo (Halén 2).

In retrospect it seems somewhat ironic, given the emphasis on the importance of Norwegian content in the illustrations, that Munthe's artwork was heavily influenced by Japanese art and woodcuts that had become available to the West when Japan emerged from its isolationist policy in 1853. Munthe is said to have single-handedly launched the Norwegian aesthetic movement (Halén 2), and he later wrote that "Japanese art had been one of the main sources of inspiration for him in his endeavours to revitalize the decorative arts in Norway" (Halén 1). The influence of Japanese art on Munthe resulted in his moving away from naturalism and "creating an almost perspective-less art form with stylized, contrasting patterns and shapes outlined by heavy contours with an angular appearance" (Halén 4). Munthe brought these Japanese influences to his illustrations and designs for *Kongesagaer*, and they contributed strongly to the 'saga style' that made the illustrations so distinctive—and also to the design and layout of the pages themselves. For Munthe and others who adhered to the aesthetic of the art nouveau movements, the responsibility of illustrating books went beyond simply providing a drawing to go along with the text, but involved designing the whole book including typography and its page layout as a harmonious whole.

The twenty-seven illustrations attributed to Munthe in the tallies for each artist are misleading concerning his contribution to the project because the tallies not take into account his design details for the cover, spine, brass corners, frontispieces, as well as the saga title headings, page headers, individualized borders for each saga, incipit capital letters, tapestry-style designs

to accompany the poetic content of the sagas, roundel and rectangular vignettes for “Ynglinge saga” and also the vignettes for the conclusion of each saga—which together are said to comprise one hundred and twenty-five items. Munthe obviously was instrumental in articulating the basic style for the look of the edition—as has been mentioned above, ‘Norwegian above all, simple, primitive’ “Norsk fremfor alt, enkelt, primitivt” (Østby, *Snorre Tegninger* 8)—and his designs for the bindings and page layout were clearly of fundamental importance in creating a format that provided a unifying framework for a somewhat diverse collection of illustrations.

10.4.3 Halfdan Egedius

Halfdan Egedius’ artistic talent had manifested itself at the age of five when he began to produce “grown-up” drawings by observing his subject first and then drawing “as carefully and as realistically as he could” (Parmann 158). Egedius seems almost to have been born to illustrate *Kongesagaer*. He is said to have taught himself to read before starting school; to have been an avid reader of history books; to have known Snorri’s *Heimskringla* in intimate detail; and to have done research for his drawings at the University Collection of Antiquities in order to get the details right before starting one of his elaborate compositions (Parmann 159). At the age of nine, Egedius spent part of each school day at Bergslien’s school of painting amongst grown-up artists, and at the age of eighteen he illustrated Fridtjof Nansen’s *Farthest North* when Werenskiold recommended him for the job (Parmann 161).

Egedius’ next project was to join the team illustrating *Kongesagaer* when Eilif Peterssen withdrew from the group. Bakken observes that ‘The Snorre-project filled Egedius with great joy, and he gave himself to it with eagerness, bordered on by nervousness.’ “Snorre-opgaven fylte Egedius med stor glede, og han gav sig stråks i kast

med den, ivrig inntil nervøsitet” (94). Werenskiold later wrote of Egedius that ‘He had imagined himself in the sagas since his childhood; but the great work awaited him yet with style, technique and all of the preparatory study from books and detailed works. He had his saga style already for his first drawing in *Snorre*.’ “Sagaene hadde han levd sig inn i alt fra sin barndom av; men det ventet ham likevel et stort arbeide med stil, teknikk og alle de forberedende studier av bøker og kildevert. Han ladde sin sagastil ferdig alt i sin første tegning i *Snorre*” (Bakken 94). Egedius had a talent not only for drawing people and animals but he could also easily handle the major battle scenes. According to Parmann’s assessment: “Egedius learned much of his manner of drawing from Werenskiold and some of his styling from Munthe, but to most of his drawings he adds something deeply personal” (161). The death of Egedius at the age of twenty-one in 1898 was a deep loss for the *Kongesagaer* edition in particular and Norwegian art in general.

10.4.4 Eilif Peterssen

Eilif Peterssen was the artist that Stenersen had hired Egedius to replace. Peterssen was a well known painter and illustrator who had worked with Werenskiold and other artists on Asbjørnsen and Moe’s collection of folk and fairy tales and was well known for his historical paintings. However, Peterssen’s contributions to *Kongesagaer* were so few that he is sometimes not mentioned at all in connection with it. Such was the case when the Library of Congress hosted an exhibition in 1975 entitled *Snorre Illustrations* and on the cover of its pamphlet identified the artists in the exhibit as Erik Werenskiold, Gerhard Munthe, and Halfdan Egedius. In truth, Peterssen probably would not have minded. He only contributed eight illustrations before deciding that he did not have the time to immerse himself in the necessary research to do the illustrations justice (Bakken 86).

Peterssen actually asked Stenersen to remove his name from the advertisement for the subscription list and also his illustrations from the edition, but was told that it was too late as the production schedule had been moved forward because of ‘the Danish competition’ “den danske konkurransse”—namely Winkel Horn’s edition (Bakken 88). According to Bakken’s assessment, Peterssen did not want to spend time researching historical details and appeared to be more inclined to produce paintings of chivalric tales for art galleries than sketch drawings of the coarse Norwegian past for *Kongesagaer* (86). In his foreword to the editions, Stenersen tactfully states that, ‘Mr. Eilif Peterssen found that owing to a long residence abroad he could only take part for a short time, and therefore Mr. Halfdan Egedius replaced him, and after his death Wilhelm Wetlesen.’ “Hr. Eilif Peterssen fik paa grund af et længere udenlandsophold kun i kort tid leilighed til at deltage, og derfor traadte i hans sted hr. Halfdan Egedius og efter dennes død hr. Wilhelm Wetlesen” (Foreword in the 1899 and 1900 editions of *Kongesagaer*).

10.4.5 Wilhelm Wetlesen

There is little information available concerning Wilhelm Wetlesen other than that he was a grocer’s son who came from Sandfjord, a painter, and a close friend of Halfdan Egedius. Wetlesen’s sister, Hedvig, reported that he was anxious about taking on the responsibility of trying to fill Egedius’ place, and understandably so (Bakken 89-90).¹⁰⁴ He had little time to assimilate the ‘saga style’ of drawing and he had to produce a large number of illustrations, some forty-three in all. Bakken comments that, ‘It is not surprising that there is something undeveloped about many of them.’ “Det er ikke å undres over at det er noe ufordøiet over mange av dem” (Bakken 90). Unfortunately,

¹⁰⁴ Bakken does not give a citation for Hedvig’s remarks.

Wetlesen's style of sketching was poorly suited for reproduction on the rough paper used for the 1899 edition. However, he was willing to engage in research and based some of his illustrations on scenes from the Bayeux Tapestry along with details from the Gokstad ship. Bakken dismisses the illustrations of Wetlesen along with Peterssen and Krohg with the comment that their contributions to Norwegian art lay in other areas (92).

10.4.6 Christian Krohg

Christian Krohg was a prominent Norwegian painter whose style followed the schools of realism and naturalism. He does not appear to have engaged in illustrating books before working on *Kongesagaer* but was part of the artistic team from the very beginning and contributed forty-seven illustrations. According to Bakken, Krohg had little enthusiasm or aptitude for the project—'The task did not suit Krohg, and the monumental epic from a distant time did not inspire him.' "Opgaven lå ikke for Krohg, og dette monumentale epos fra en fjern tid inspirerte ham ikke" (84). Moreover, Bakken states that Krohg was 'the least nationalistic of his generation' "den minst nasjonale av sin generasjon" (79). In light of his obvious disinterest and consequent lack of commitment to the project as a whole, it is odd that he did not follow Peterssen's example and quit early on to concentrate on his painting. Bakken further notes that Krohg found all the reading, research, and rough drafts to be onerous; his work was uneven, and he was not interested in adopting the 'saga style' for his illustrations (Bakken 80).

It is not surprising that, in the end, even Krohg himself was unhappy with the work that he had done: 'Apparently, he himself was not satisfied either. He later once said, as a joke, that he would like to have bought all of his *Kongesagaer* drawings and burnt them.' "Selv var han visst heller ikke tilfreds. Han sa siden engang, for spøk. at han

skulde gjerne ha kjøpt op alle Snorre-tegningene sine og brent dem” (Bakken 84). Aside from having spent four years working on a project for which he appears to have been ill-suited, Krohg’s dissatisfaction when looking back was likely also a response to the negative reception to his illustrations from both art critics and the general public, which I will discuss below in section 10.6.

10.5 ‘Saga Style’ And Other Design Considerations

The basic agenda for the style of the illustrations stated by Werenskiold and Munthe, as previously mentioned, was that they should be ‘Norwegian before all, plain, primitive.’ “Norsk fremfor alt, enkelt, primitivt” (Østby, *Snorre Tegninger* 8). Werenskiold and Munthe, and Egedius when he joined them, were committed to creating a style of illustrations that was new in Norwegian art and broke with the tradition of depicting saga scenes in the realistic and naturalistic style that had been used for illustrating books and also for gallery paintings. Stenersen and Storm’s determination that the illustrations should be historically correct fit perfectly with the artistic temperaments and nationalistic philosophies of Werenskiold, Munthe, and Egedius. These three artists strove to create illustrations that were monumental in nature and the most successful of them ‘sought to hit the time’s own rhythm and the mood in the sagas imposing accounts of great chieftains and dramatic events’ “søkt å treffe tidens egen rytme og stemningen i sagaens verdige beretning om store høvdinger og sterke hendelser” (Bakken 110). The commitment that this group of three artists possessed in regard to illustrating *Heimskringla* arose out of a relationship with the text that started in childhood. However, as mature artists, their intent was not to dramatize the text in a theatrical manner but to emphasize ‘type, genre, milieu and period, far more than individual persons’ “type, miljø

og tid, men i langt mindre grad det enkelte menneske” (Bakken 110). On the other hand, Peterssen, Krohg, and Wetlesen lacked a fundamental relationship with *Heimskringla* and this appears to have been the major factor responsible for their lack of success in the project. Peterssen, of course, withdrew from the project early on; Krohg stubbornly followed his own inclinations; and Wetlesen worked hard but his efforts were uninspired.

It should be stated before proceeding that it is not clear how the illustrative work was divided between the six artists. Apparently Werenskiold and Munthe started on illustrating the first saga, “Ynglinge Saga,” when the project had barely begun—before they had clearly defined their illustrative agenda to emphasize the spirit of the times rather than depicting dramatic moments and before they had fully defined the other elements of what came to be known as ‘saga style’ “sagastil” (Bakken 94). For example, Peterssen, who was only part of the project for a very short time, created one illustration for a scene in the middle of “Olav den Helliges Saga” (Saint Óláf’s Saga) (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 323) which is the seventh and longest saga in the compilation, and then he created all of the seven illustrations for “Magnus Blindes saga” (The Saga of Magnús the Blind and Harald Gilli) which is the thirteenth saga. Neither Peterssen’s style of drawing nor his choice of scenes conformed to ‘saga style’ or the decision to avoid illustrating overly dramatic scenes. Indeed, Peterssen chose to illustrate the blinding and mutilation of King Magnús as well as the hanging of Bishop Reinard. None of Peterssen’s illustrations are in keeping with ‘saga style’ and consequently look out of place when they are encountered in the midst of the other illustrations.

The decision to avoid portraying dramatic scenes was especially difficult to adhere to in the first saga, because Snorri based “Ynglinga Saga” on the skaldic poems

Ynglingatal (List of the Ynglings) and *Háleygjatal* (List of the Men of Hálogaland), which describe in a very summary fashion the lives and the frequently violent deaths of twenty-seven pagan kings in the prehistorical era. I believe that Munthe's solution to depicting the violent events described in "Ynglinge Saga" was to represent dramatic events within shapes that suggest historical artifacts. Munthe created a total of thirty of these illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga" and the majority of them are quite small in relation to the size of the page, i.e., they are usually the size of a small coin. Many of Munthe's circular illustrations resemble bracteates, i.e., coins that were often worn as necklaces in the Migration Period (circa 400 - 800 C.E.), which preceded the Viking Age in Scandinavia.¹⁰⁵ However, Munthe's circular shapes often feature vignettes that encapsulate narrative episodes, instead of merely presenting portraits as bracteates usually do. For example, Munthe illustrated the death of King Dag within a circular shape containing all the details pertinent to Dag's death (Fig. E-10). Dag was killed by a pitchfork wielding slave when Dag went to avenge the death of his prized sparrow. Dag could understand the speech of birds and the sparrow had gathered news for him from other lands but someone killed the sparrow while it was on one of its trips. The king riding with a bird on his hand and the pitchfork wielding slave poised to attack him are depicted in a highly dramatic fashion in Munthe's illustration.

Another example of Munthe's ability to deal with dramatic subject matter in a circular vignette is demonstrated in his rather poignant vignette of Ingjaldr and his daughter and the manner in which they chose to die (Fig. E-17). In Munthe's vignette, the two figures are holding hands and Ása has her free hand resting on her chest in a worried fashion; Ingjaldr is holding the torch to set the fire; and they are standing on wolves with

¹⁰⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of bracteates, see Axboe, "The Scandinavian Gold Bracteates" 1 - 100.

flaming tongues. Ingjaldr has just received news that his daughter Ása's nephew, Ívarr is coming with an overwhelming army to avenge Ása's having brought about the deaths of her husband and her brother-in-law, i.e., Ívarr's father. Rather than suffer defeat, Ingjaldr and Ása decide to hold a feast and then burn themselves, together with their inebriated followers, to death in their hall. Dying a violent death, at the point of spear or otherwise, was believed to guarantee a place among the ranks of Óðinn's warriors in Valhöll, and burning oneself or one's enemies to death could be construed as a sacrifice to Óðinn.

Munthe also created vignettes within rectangular shapes that suggest Viking age temple offerings known as *gullgubber* (circa 550 - 800), i.e., thin pieces of gold or silver foil stamped with motifs that frequently represent a man and a woman facing each other (Fuglesang 18 - 21). Munthe used the rectangular format for his depictions of Óðinn shape shifting (Fig. E-3) and Óðinn sitting on his highseat (Fig. E-4). In addition to the circular and rectangular illustrations in "Ynglinge Saga," Munthe also created stylized figures in shapes that were usually in a circular format but do not suggest bracteates or represent narrative scenes. For example, Munthe's concluding illustration for "Ynglinge Saga" consists of the fractured skulls of six warriors, possibly representing berserks, that are arranged around a shield that they are grasping with both hands and biting (Fig. E-18).

In contrast to Munthe's small illustrations shaped like historical artifacts, Werenskiöld created full-sized illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga" many of which he later altered for or deleted from the second edition. I will discuss Werenskiöld's illustrations and revisions for "Ynglinge Saga" later in this chapter along with the entirely new illustrations that he added to the saga in the second edition. I will use Werenskiöld's

illustrations and revisions to show that as the *Kongesagaer* project progressed Werenskiold avoided illustrating highly dramatic events and chose instead to depict less dramatic moments that preceded or followed sensational events in the text. The difference in the dramatic content between Werenskiold's illustrations in "Ynglinge Saga" in the first and second editions of *Kongesagaer* confirms that the criteria for the illustrations were not clearly established before the work began.

The wisdom of the decision not to 'dramatize the text by focusing on individuals' is best demonstrated in illustrations later in *Kongesagaer* such as Werenskiold's depiction of the armada of Viking warships returning from victory at the Battle of Svolder (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 188).¹⁰⁶ Similarly, although there are many battle scenes illustrated in *Kongesagaer*, other than the martyrdom of Óláfr, the most effective illustrations focus on non-dramatic moments: for example, Egedius' depiction of the twelve-year-old Óláfr Haraldsson standing by the side of his foster father, Hrani, as they embark on their Viking expeditions (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 190). It is significant that Óláfr's twelve years of Viking adventures are not further illustrated, with the exception of Egedius' illustration of Óláfr's daring use of Viking warships to pull down London Bridge, and it is even more significant on that occasion that Óláfr is not distinguishable amongst the tiny figures onboard the ships (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 195).

When Óláfr is shown in Viking Age armour in *Kongesagaer*, not only is he no longer living the life of a Viking, but has converted to Christianity, returned to Norway, been accepted as king, and is about to begin the forceful conversion of Norway (Storm,

¹⁰⁶ This image has stood the test of time, Bakken chose Werenskiold's depiction of the armada of Viking warships—without any visible warriors or other heroic figures—to represent the illustrations as a whole for his volume on the *Kongesagaer* drawings, as did the Library of Congress for its exhibition pamphlet when it displayed some of the illustrations in 1975.

Kongesagaer 217). Indeed, other than Egedius' illustration depicting Óláfr's dying moments during his martyrdom at Slaget ved Stiklestad (The Battle of Stiklarstad) (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 413), Óláfr is never portrayed in battle but is often shown from a distance in diplomatic moments before confrontations, e.g. Egedius' illustration of Óláfr addressing the pagan farmers of Gudbrandsdalen (Fig. F-3).

The folly of narrowly focusing on individuals in dramatic moments is demonstrated in many of Krohg's illustrations. Bakken commented that 'Krohg did not have Werenskiold's and Munthe's strong will to create something new with *Snorre*, and, among the artists, he was the one who had assimilated a great deal of the old school's empty theatrical gestures.' "Werenskiolds og Munthes sterke vilje til å skape noe nytt med Snorre hadde ikke Krohg, og han er den av kunstnerne som har mest av den gamle skoles tomme teaterfakter" (79 - 80). Krohg seems to have been particularly attracted to illustrating scenes concerning confrontations between individuals, violent deaths, humorous incidents, and other dramatic moments. Sandra Straubhaar singles out Krohg's drawing of "Swedish King Ólaf in a rage" as a significant example of an agenda to lampoon the Swedes in contrast to the heroic figure of the Norwegian king Óláfr Haraldsson (120).¹⁰⁷ However, both so-called "contrasting" illustrations were done by Krohg, and it is likely that the decision to illustrate the Swedish king's rage was Krohg's alone. It is unfortunate that Krohg's illustrative style in dramatic scenes often resembles modern comic panels, and they frequently create a jarring note when interspersed among those of Werenskiold, Munthe, and Egedius.

Given the range of artistic styles, individual agendas and artistic temperaments, it is impressive that the overall effect is generally perceived as cohesive. The credit resides for

¹⁰⁷ See illustrations in Storm's 1899 edition of *Kongesagaer* 217 and 225.

the most part with Munthe and the influences on his art from the aesthetics movement and art nouveau that he brought to the project. As previously mentioned, Munthe created a set of page details for each of the sagas and a layout that harmonized the work as a whole, in spite of the variations in the talents and styles of the six artists. Munthe's illustrated details for the individual sagas consisted of saga titles, page headers, incipit initials, and concluding vignettes, which serve as visual encapsulations for each of the sagas—and as such indicate an extremely close familiarity with the text. For example, the details for “Olav den helliges saga” include 1) the title illustration of Óláfr with a halo and sword confronting the pagan gods; 2) the page header of shields with crosses on them to represent the shields that Óláfr's men carried; 3) the incipit initial “O” pierced with spears to represent the Slaget ved Stiklestad where Óláfr's martyrdom occurred—the centre of the “O” has a darkened sun to represent the eclipse that occurred before the battle as an omen of Óláfr's martyrdom; and 4) the concluding vignette depicting St. Óláfr with a halo and sword defeating a dragon that represents paganism.

Munthe's choice of paratextual details for “Harald Haardraades Saga” (The Saga of Harald Sigurtharson Hardruler) contradicts Straubhaar's suggestion concerning Stenerson's *Kongesagaer* edition that “the Norwegian national identity as created by Snorri, could then become at the turn of the century almost a viking identity” and provide “such stark and solid Norwegian role models as Harald Hardruler” (120). Munthe's details for “Harald Haardraades saga” are all based on warships and battle scenes, and a dying warhorse in the midst of battle serves as the concluding vignette of the saga (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 528). The dying warhorse, with foreign architecture in the background, echoes Snorri's judgment of Haraldr Sigurðarson's life as compared to Óláfr

Haraldsson's:

Both men were exceedingly sagacious and skilled in arms, avid for wealth and power, imperious in manner, not very affable, jealous of their authority, and given to meting out stern chastisement. King Olaf forcibly converted the people to Christianity and the true faith, and cruelly punished those who turned a deaf ear to it. The leaders of the country would not accept his jurisdiction and equitable judgments, and gathered an army against him, laying him low in his own land. It was therefore he became a saint, but Harald made war to gain fame and power, subduing all those he could, and fell in the realm of other kings. (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 662)

Þeir váru báðir inir vitrustu ok inir vápn djörfustu, menn ágjarnir til fjár ok ríkis, ríkyndir, ekki alþýðligir, stjórnsamir ok refsingasamir. Óláfr konungr braut landsfólk til kristni ok réttra siða, en refsaði grimliga þeim, er daufheyrðust við. Þöldu landshöfðingjar honum eigi rétt dæmi ok jafndæmi ok reistu her í móti honum ok felldu hann á eigu sinni sjálfs; varð hann fyrir þat heilagur. En Haraldr konungr herjaði til frægðar sér ok ríkis ok braut allt fólk undir sik, þat er hann mátti. Fell hann ok á annarra konunga eigu. (Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 3 140)

It is doubtful that turn-of-the-century Norwegian Lutherans would have accepted Haraldr harðráða as a role model. The Viking yearning for earthly fame was an indication of a pagan desire to attain some measure of immortality, as expressed in the verse from “Hávamál”

Cattle die, kinsmen die,
the self must also die;

Deyr fé
deyja frændr,

but glory never dies,

deyr sjalfr it sama;

for the man who is able to achieve it.

en orðstírr

(Larrington v. 76 24)

deyr aldregi

hveim er sér góðan getr.

(Guðni Jónsson, *Eddukvæði* 40 - 41)

However, Haraldr's death at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 shares the date generally accepted as the end of the Viking Age. Snorri's description of Haraldr harðráða's desire for earthly fame in battle, without the redeeming quality of a Christianizing agenda, makes it clear that the glory attained by pagan warriors was of limited value in the eyes of a Christian audience.

Munthe's concluding vignette for the last saga in *Kongesagaer*, "Magnus Erlingsøn's Saga" (Saga of Magnús Erlingsson), depicts the first Norwegian king crowned in the manner of England and Denmark—whose coronation ceremonies had been sanctified by the Church and were performed by an archbishop—raising his gaze and sword heavenwards in fealty to God (Storm, *Kongesagaer* 807). *Heimskringla*, despite the other titles it has been given such as *The History of the Kings of Norway*, is essentially a record of the kingdom of Norway's progress from paganism to Christianity—from the pagan pre-historical period through the Viking Age, which in its later stages was a time of conversion, culminating in the Christian era. It is unlikely that *Heimskringla* was ever primarily intended as a glorification of pagan Viking marauders.

10.6 The First Edition of *Kongesagaer* (1899)

The first edition of *Kongesagaer* in 1899 is known as the monumentalutgave (monumental edition) and was available in two impressions.¹⁰⁸ The praktutgave (deluxe edition) featured an embossed leather binding, art deco brass corner fittings, illustrations printed in black and other decorative embellishments printed predominantly in black with red highlights. The folkeutgave (people's edition) featured a cloth cover with printed details of the praktutgave edition's bindings—including illustrative details representing the details of the brass corners—and an embossed leather spine which was glued onto the bindings. When placed with only the spine facing out in a row of books on a shelf, the folkeutgave edition would have been indistinguishable from the praktutgave edition. With the exception of the red and black details of the title page, the decorative details of the folkeutgave were printed in black, and it lacked the red page borders of the praktutgave edition. Both impressions were the same size—i.e., super royal quarto which equals 33 cm. x 26.5 cm. so even the price of the less luxurious folkeutgave impression would still have been considerable.¹⁰⁹

Øsby notes concerning the monumentalutgave that commercially the relatively expensive deluxe edition was hardly a success, however the cheap 'popular' second edition issued with government support in 1900 proved a real hit. The entire impression of 100,000 was sold off—no mean

¹⁰⁸ The first edition was produced in instalments between the years 1896 and 1899 which readers could subscribe to. The brochure for *Norges kongesagaer fra middelalderen til i dag: en bokhistorisk utstilling* exhibition features a subscription ad from 1897 for the fifth instalment (Eidsfeldt [11]). The original plan was to complete the booklets by Christmas 1897 but it took until 1899 for the last booklets to be printed and delivered to the book binders (Eidsfeldt [12]).

¹⁰⁹ The price list for the 1900 edition is printed on the back of its title page and frequently quoted in articles. The brochure for *Norges Kongesagaer Fra Middelalderen Til I Dag* contains an original advertisement for the 1899 edition for both the praktutgave and folkeutgave formats of the monumentalutgave along with prices and instructions to the bookbinder (Eidsfeldt [113 - 114]).

feat in a country with a population of only two and quarter million!” (Øsby, *Erik Werenskiold* 280).

Østby does not mention that the monumentalutgave received a mixed reception when it was published in 1899, and that the proposal for a subsidy for the 1900 nationalutgave (national edition) was met with considerable opposition in Parliament before being approved.

As previously notes, some of the negative reaction towards the first edition was on the part of ‘the educated public’ “den utdanne almenhet” (Bakken 107) who were unreceptive to illustrations that artistically signified ‘a complete break with all older Norwegian saga interpretations’ “et fullstendig brudd med all eldre norsk sagaskildring” (Bakken 110). Other members of the public were offended by the depictions of violence and the depictions of “the kings of Norway and other noblemen in their death throes provoked particular outrage” (Ingólfsson 166).¹¹⁰

Even those who were enthusiastic about the first edition in general were outspoken about the uneven quality of the illustrations. For example, Jen Thiis commented concerning the illustrations that ‘It is appalling and incomprehensible to encounter Chr. Krohgs undistinguished journalism in this monumental book.’ “Det er frastøtende og ubegripelig å møte Chr. Krohgs stilløse journalisme i denne monumentale bok” (80). It was also likely Krohg’s drawings that the politician, Bassøe, had in mind when he opposed Stenersen’s petition to Parliament in 1900, ‘When one looks in the large edition, there are drawings that one cannot be in doubt about belonging in a humour

¹¹⁰ Norwegians still have strong opinions concerning the *Kongesagaer* illustrations. A *Heimskringla* scholar, Jon Gunnar Jørgensen, wrote in a private email (September 11, 2007) concerning the differences between the 1899 and 1900 editions and commented that “a couple of disgusting motifs” were omitted and that some of the drawing in the 1899 were left out because of their poor quality.

magazine. It is outright caricature.’ “Når man ser i den store utgaven, er der tegninger som man kan være i tvil om ikke hører hjemme i et vittigletsblad. Det er helt ut karikaturer” (Bakken 83). Despite such criticisms, the Parliament voted to provide financial support for the publication of a smaller, plainer version of the illustrated edition, i.e., the nationalutgave, and *Kongesagaer* was on its way to becoming ubiquitous in Norwegian homes (Whaley 10).

10.7 The Second Edition of *Kongesagaer* (1900)

Despite the obvious priority to keep production costs to a minimum, the smaller format nationalutgave edition was as heavily illustrated as the monumentalutgave. However, it should be kept in mind that although the majority of the illustrations have the appearance of woodcuts, the printing technology used was a process known as zincography, which could be combined with photography for printing purposes. There was no need for the artists to physically recreate the illustrations in order to resize them, and the majority of the two hundred and twenty illustrations in *Kongesagaer* were resized by zincography’s photographic processes. The number of illustrations that were revised for the second edition are actually relatively few but these are therefore all the more significant.

In spite of the fact that Storm was in charge of the first edition as a whole and Werenskiold was in charge of the artists, it appears that the artists were given free rein to decide which illustrations to revise for the second edition. Munthe and Wetlesen do not appear to have made any significant revisions; Petersen had left the project and despite its faults his work was left as it was. Egedius was deceased and consequently his work was also left as it was, although there was likely very little that could have been improved on

in his work. The fact that the quality of the revisions depended on the motives of the artists involved is evident when one contrasts the revision activities of Werenskiold and Krohg.

Given their natures and their attitude toward illustrating *Kongesagaer*, it is not surprising that Werenskiold's revisions were of a positive nature that were in keeping with the 'saga style' imperative, i.e., to illustrate 'the spirit of the times.' On the other hand, Krohg's revision activities were erratic and often appear to have stemmed from his bitter reaction to the public criticism of his work; for example, Krohg did not remove any of his portrayals of violent death scenes. In many of his revisions, Krohg merely changed the shading and some of Krohg's other revision activities involved erasing the background and thickening the lines of the figures and excessively detailing their clothes. He also made changes that heightened the theatrical style of dramatic moments rather than toning them down. The most interesting of Krohg's revisions is the illustration of the pagan naming ceremony (Fig. F-1a) that I will discuss further in section 10.13 below. Krohg actually revised the naming ceremony illustration twice—first by removing the background, and then by filling it in—as well as every other available space on the figures themselves—with closely spaced lines that recall an older artistic style associated with woodcuts (Figs. F-1b and F-1-c).

Aside from complaints from the general public concerning violent death scenes in the first edition, as I will argue, Lutheran Norwegians in the late nineteenth-century were also offended by depictions of the pagan gods, rituals, and myths, unless they could be used, as St. Augustine advised, to 'convert Pagan gold to Christian currency' or more explicitly, to extract moral value from pagan texts.

10.8 Illustrations and the Process of Revision for the 1900 Edition

The majority of Werenskiold's illustrative changes for the 1900 edition of *Kongesagaer* occur in "Ynglinge Saga." This is not surprising given that the standards for producing the illustrations, and the decisions for creating the 'saga style' for them, had evolved as the project progressed. Moreover these initial illustrations were likely created in some haste due to Winkel Horn's illustrated Danish edition that was in progress at the time—until Stenersen bought out the publisher. Snorri's text for "Ynglinga Saga" stands out from amongst the other sagas because the only sources for the events that it describes are preserved in the skaldic poems *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal*, both of which are essentially genealogical records of the kings from that period beginning with the chieftain Óðinn. Snorri did not expand on the details preserved in the poems or create dialogue for the saga and consequently the narrative is rather terse. Snorri described the frequently violent deaths of many of the kings in a detached manner by simply presenting the facts and refraining from "interpreting events of mythological import" (Ciklamini 89). As Ciklamini further remarks, Snorri actually secularizes the deaths of kings, which often appear to have been sacrifices, as merely having been unfortunate accidents (90).

As previously mentioned, Munthe's approach to the problem of how to illustrate the violent content of "Ynglinge Saga" was to create small illustrative vignettes and other representations that suggest historical artifacts. For his part, Werenskiold had created ten illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga" for the 1899 edition. When it came to revising illustrations for the second edition, Werenskiold only left three of his ten illustrations unchanged; he deleted three of the remaining seven illustrations; and he revised the four that were left. Werenskiold also created two new illustrations for this saga and these two

illustrations provide further evidence for the effect that he wanted to achieve. I will discuss Werenskiold's illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga" in the order that I have just presented them.

10.9 Illustrations Retained by Werenskiold for "Ynglinge Saga"

The first of the three illustrations that Werenskiold retained for the second edition depicts the future King Ingjaldr as a tearful young boy who is being led by the hand by a slightly older boy towards a man sitting on a bench (Fig. E-13). Werenskiold provided captions identifying the figures in the illustration. The text of the saga relates that Ingjaldr is upset because he was not strong enough to be the victor in a game with other boys and his cousin Gautviðr has taken him to see Svipdagr blinda (Svipdagr the blind). Svipdagr gives Yngjaldr a cooked wolf's heart to eat the next day and 'from that time he became the most cruel and most ill-natured of men' "ok þaðan af varð hann allra manna grimmastr ok verst skaplundaðr" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 37; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla Snorra Sturluson* 36).

The second of the three illustrations that Werenskiold retained depicts Ingjaldr's men, i.e., the sons of Svipdagr blinda, marching towards an unseen destination armed with torches and spears (Fig. E-14). This illustration represents Ingjaldr's first decisive action when he became king but does not carry much visual impact without the context of the text. Ingjaldr had invited six kings from the surrounding districts to a funeral feast for his father, but he himself feasted in a separate hall and 'made the vow that he would increase his dominion to double its size in every direction, or else die' "strengdi hann þá heit, at hann skyldi auka ríki sitt hálfu í hverja höfuðátt eða deyja ella" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 40; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 38). Ingjaldr fulfilled his vow

by sending his men to burn the six kings to death inside the banquet hall and subsequently enlarged his kingdom by acquiring theirs.

It is interesting to compare Werenskiold's illustration of Ingjaldr's men on their way to set fire to the hall to Hugo Hamilton's illustration in a collection of drawings from 1830 of the same event (*Teckningar*). In Hamilton's illustration the kings are depicted trying to escape from the flames, but they are prevented from escaping by warriors, who are waiting outside with their weapons raised against them. In the words of the saga's text, the warriors 'went out to the new hall and put it to the torch; the hall blazed up, and the six kings and all their men were burnt [inside]. Those that tried to come out were quickly cut down' "gengu út ok til ins nýja sals, báru þar eld at, ok því næst tók salrinn at loga, ok brunnu þar inni sex konungar ok lið þeira allt, ok þeir, er út leituðu, þá váru skjótt drepnir" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 40; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 38).

The third illustration that Werenskiold left unchanged depicts warriors with spears and shields on horseback galloping towards what is once more an unseen destination (Fig. E-16). The caption simply states 'King Hogni and men ride into Sweden' "Kong Hågne of hans mænd rider op i Sverige" (59) and the king and his warriors have almost a chivalric appearance rather than a Viking aspect. However, despite the relative lack of menace in the scene, the illustration depicts warriors riding out to avenge yet another of Yngjaldr's burnings. King Granmarr's relative, King Högni, and his men are on their way to make a raid against the chieftains that Ingjaldr had set over their relatives' territories after he had killed them, i.e., King Granmarr and Hjörvarðr. These three illustrations all relate to King Yngjaldr and the consequences of the transformation of his character engendered by pagan magic. However, the first illustration does not actually depict a

little boy eating a wolf's heart as part of a pagan remedy for his timidity. The second illustration does not illustrate six kings being burnt to death in a feast hall at the beginning of Ingjaldr's reign. The third illustration does not depict the fighting waged to avenge King Granmarr and Hjörvarðr's having been burnt to death by Yngjaldr after he had made a peace treaty with them. The 'spirit of the times' is implied but Werenskiöld leaves the graphic details to Snorri's text and to the imaginations of its readership.

10.10 Illustrations Werenskiöld Deleted from “Ynglinge Saga”

Werenskiöld was dissatisfied enough with three of his illustrations that he deleted them altogether. It is probable that he was influenced by the public outcry against the illustrations of violent deaths of kings when he deleted the very graphic scene depicting the death of King Domaldr, who was sacrificed by his subjects in order to insure better crops during a period of famine (Fig. E-9). Werenskiöld's depiction of the scene very graphically depicts four men restraining Domaldr, who is lying naked on a stone altar in front of a pagan idol while the blood flows from his slit throat into a ceremonial bowl with a crowd of armed men watching from a distance. The details in the illustration are far more explicit concerning pagan rituals than Snorri's text, which merely states that Domaldr's followers decided that 'they should sacrifice him for better seasons, and that they should attack and kill him and redden the altars with his blood' "at þeir skyldi honum blóta til árs sér ok veita honum atgöngu ok drepa hann ok rjóða stalla með blóði hans, ok svá gerðu þeir" (Hollander *Heimskringla* 19; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 17). It is possible that Werenskiöld got carried away in his research, or in his imagination, concerning the ritual aspects of pagan sacrifices and later simply regretted the way in which he had depicted the scene.

Werenskiold's deletion of the scene depicting King Aun does not fit into the category of dramatically violent deaths, because it is not as visually explicit as the sacrifice of Domaldr. However, there is no denying that the subject matter would have been repulsive to Christian readers. Werenskiold depicts a feeble King Aun in the act of ordering his young son to be dragged from the room to become the tenth son that Aun will have sacrificed to Óðinn in order to prolong his own life (Fig. E-11). On this particular occasion, Aun also wanted to pledge to Óðinn 'Uppsala and the districts adjoining itBut the Swedes forbade him to do that, so no sacrifice was made' "Uppsali ok þau heruð, er þar liggja til....Svíar bönnuðu honum þat, ok varð þá ekki blót" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 28; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 27). Deluxe editions such as *Kongesagaer* were, and still are, often given as confirmation presents, and consequently Werenskiold may have decided to delete this illustration out of consideration for younger readers.

Werenskiold's deletion of the portrait of Óðinn is puzzling given that Snorri used "Ynglinga Saga" to present Óðinn as a remarkable chieftain who came to be regarded as a god through the process of euhemerization. Werenskiold depicts Óðinn's face in a rectangular frame along with the iconography of a harp, which represents the association of Óðinn with poetry, and the two ravens, Huginn and Muninn, whose reporting of worldly events served to grant Óðinn a measure of omniscience (Fig. E-5). Óðinn is grim faced in Werenskiold's illustration, but he does not appear to have maimed himself by surrendering an eye for wisdom as he does in the mythological sources concerning him. This particular illustration is really more in the nature of a sketch and Werenskiold may have deleted it simply because it did not measure up to the standard that became 'saga

style.’ Nonetheless it is surely significant that he deleted the portrait of the man who came to be thought of as the chief of the pagan gods rather than redrawing it. Thus all three of Werenskiold’s deletions for “Ynglinge Saga” are clearly related to the pagan gods and religious practices.

The fact that Munthe’s two small rectangular drawings of Óðinn— i.e., Óðinn on his high seat (Fig. E-3) and Óðinn shape shifting (Fig. E-4)— were not deleted in “Ynglinge Saga” is likely because they lack the force and immediacy of Werenskiold’s illustrations. In a similar manner to his circular vignettes, these two drawings of Munthe’s have the appearance of artifacts with an aura of a distant past. It appears from his deletions that Werenskiold—either on his own initiative or else in response to criticism— decided that Lutheran Norwegians should not be confronted with scenes relating to sacrificial victims, or even a portrait of the god who accepted such sacrifices. On the other hand, Munthe’s drawings captured the “spirit of the times” in representations of archaeological-type objects whose apparent antiquity appears to have provided a comfortable viewing distance for nineteenth-century Lutheran Norwegians that Werenskiold’s more graphic illustrations lacked.

10.11 Illustrations Werenskiold Revised in “Ynglinge Saga”

Given that Werenskiold deleted the portrait of Óðinn, it is interesting that he chose to keep a portrait of Hel, which he revised (Figs. E-7a and E-7b). He kept the illustration of Hel in spite of the fact that this illustration had been strongly criticized because it resembles the likeness of an American Indian. Moreover, as in the portrait of Óðinn, Werenskiold’s portrait of Hel is out of sync with the ideal represented by ‘saga style.’ However, although Werenskiold’s revision of his illustration further emphasizes

Hel's profile, the image has now shifted towards the Christianization of Hel and her domain. Werenskiold achieved the Christianization by removing the pagan iconography associated with Hel such as: 1) the wolf, which could represent her brother, Fenrir; 2) the snakes, which in Christian iconography were associated with pagan religion; and 3) the cock, which several sources suggest was an important part of Norse pagan funeral rites.¹¹¹ Moreover, the change in format from a square to that of a circle containing the unaccompanied profile resembles a coin, and money in association with Hel would serve to remind viewers of the Christian maxim that 'the love of money is the root of all evil.'

A Christian admonition also appears to be inherent in Werenskiold's revision of the illustration concerning King Fjölnir, who was drunk when he died an accidental death by falling into a vat of mead while returning to bed after a nocturnal trip to the privy (Figs. E-6a and E-6b). Werenskiold revised the illustration of King Fjölnir's death so that the mead vats are absent, and only the impression of the sin of drunkenness remains with no hint of drowning and therefore no possible connection to Óðinn. The details in Werenskiold's original illustration would have immediately identified the figure falling into a large vat in the dark as that of King Fjölnir but the revised illustration merely depicts a man, whose posture suggests that he is inebriated, making his way along a wall in the dark.

Werenskiold's revision of the death of King Fjölnir removes the pagan context, in which drinking mead was associated with Óðinn and drowning in mead was associated with being sacrificed to Óðinn. Georges Dumézil discusses hanging and drowning as

¹¹¹ H.M. Smyser notes "that the hen or cock played a role in the funeral rites more symbolic than that played by the other animals put into the grave is the implication not only of Ibn Fadlan's and Saxo's accounts...but by the fact that the Middleton cross depicts the Norse warrior entombed not only with his arms but also with a bird-like object—perhaps a chicken or the head of one" (110).

means of ritual death in the Germanic tradition in *From Myth to Fiction: The Saga of Hadingus* (127 - 151). Dumézil notes that “an alternate method of consecration to Odin was by means of fire, either in a postmortem cremation, or by burning the victim alive. An unequivocal example occurs in the Ynglinga Saga when the Swedes gathered together an army, made a raid against king Óláfr, surrounded his house, and burned him inside it; then they consecrated him to Odin, offering him up as a victim in exchange for a prosperous year” (150 - footnote 48).¹¹²

Werenskiold’s revision of the scene depicting the conversation between Queen Álöf and Queen Yrsa is very subtle in terms of presenting a Christian context (Figs. E-12a and E-12b). Queen Álöf has come to tell Queen Yrsa the startling news that she is Yrsa’s mother, and the decidedly shocking news that Yrsa’s son, a hero named Hrólfr Kraki, is the product of incest because Yrsa has unwittingly married King Helgi, who is her father. This story is extant in several sources and the details concerning the act of incest vary, although in all of them the father is unaware that Yrsa is his daughter. From a pagan perspective incest was regrettable but it often resulted in the birth of heroes and was also part of the mythology involving the gods known as Vanir such as Freyr and Freyja. Werenskiold’s original illustration and his revised version both feature dramatic body language. However, the effect of the women’s body language has been softened in the revision. Yrsa’s arms have moved together in a position suggesting distress rather than outright horror and Álöf is no longer keeping Yrsa at arm’s length, but instead she appears to be moving to comfort Yrsa. Perhaps Werenskiold did not intend the illustration to be seen as focusing primarily on the sin of incest but rather a representation of the virtue of compassion.

¹¹² Also see Lacy “Some Additional Celtic and Germanic Traces of the Tri-Functional Sacrifice” 337-341.

Werenskiold also subtly revised the scene in which the sons of King Vísburr, who are aged twelve and thirteen, visit the sorceress Huldr. The boys have come to the sorceress because their father has refused to return their mother's bridal gifts after he has taken a new wife. According to Snorri's text an

incantation was chanted to enable them to kill their father. Then Huldr, the sorceress, told them she would bring it about, but also that there would always be slaughter of kinsmen in the race of the Skyldings. They agreed to that. Then they gathered a host and fell upon Visbur unawares at night and burned him in his hall. Þá var enn fengit at seið ok siðit til þess, at þeir skyldi mega drepa föður sinn. Þá sagði Huldr völva þeim, at hon myndi svá síða ok þat með, at ættvíg skyldi ávallt vera í ætt Ynglinga síðan; þeir játtu því. Eftir þat sömnuðu þeir liði ok kómu at Vísbur um nótt á óvart ok brenndu hann inni. (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 17; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 16)

In the original illustration, Huldr the seeress is standing, apparently in mid chant with her arms outstretched, and one of the two boys appears to be holding out an offering to her (Fig. E-8a). However, in the revision the figures of the two boys are the same but they are now distanced from the Huldr, who is seated on a rock and is surrounded by a circle of women that are likely engaged in chanting to assist her ritual (Fig. E-8b). The figure of the Huldr is difficult to make out in the revised illustration, and she is no longer a figure that towers over the boys as in the original illustration. From a Christian perspective in the conversion era, the socially marginalized seeress would have been feared for her ability to introduce witchcraft into a community by involving the women in her rituals, and the revised illustration could serve as a reminder of this detail from the past.

10.12 Werenskiold's New Illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga"

Aside from his activities deleting and revising, Werenskiold also drew two new illustrations to insert into the second edition. The first new illustration is of the goddesses Gefjon and is interesting because it does not depict the iconographic scene that is usually associated with her. Munthe's vignette in "Ynglinge Saga" of Gefjon is in keeping with the manner in which she is usually portrayed, i.e., in the act of plowing with her four giant sons, who she has turned into oxen, in order to tear free a circle of King Gylfi's land in Sweden and haul it away to serve as an island named Zealand off the coast of Denmark (Fig. E-1). Werenskiold's depiction visually demotes Gefjon from the figure of a powerful goddess to that of a young girl, who is about to be led into a giant's cave, which presumably will result in the birth of her giant sons (Fig. E-2). Werenskiold's Gefjon does not look physically capable of driving a team of giant oxen, let alone relocating a large piece of land. Emphasizing Gefjon's relationship with the giant might also have been intended to cast aspersions on the Danish royal house and its progenitor, Skjöldr, who Gefjon is said to have married in *Heimskringla* after her implied sexual relationships with King Gylfi and the giant. Werenskiold's illustration subtly stresses Gefjon's promiscuity and visually strips her of her status as a goddess to the point that she appears to be a mere mortal.

The second of Werenskiold's new illustrations for "Ynglinge Saga" is ironic in nature because it depicts King Ingjaldr making peace with King Granmarr and King Hjörvarðr (Fig. E-15). The treaty the kings are making in the illustration was supposed to last as long as all they lived and was 'confirmed by oaths and pledges of faith' "var þat bundit eiðum ok tryggðum" (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 41; Páll Eggert Ólason,

Heimskringla vol. 1 40). Less than a year later, Ingjaldr makes a surprise attack at night and burns the two kings and their followers in their hall, and once again enlarges his kingdom. This new illustration complements the illustration on the page that faces it in the second edition, which is one of the three illustrations that Werenskiold retained from the first edition—namely King Högni and his men riding into Sweden to avenge the deaths of King Granmarr and King Hjörvarðr (Fig. E-16). As a pair, these two illustrations admirably illustrate Werenskiold’s editorial intention to illustrate ‘the spirit of the times,’ namely treachery and violence, while avoiding overly theatrical portrayals of dramatic moments.

Werenskiold’s illustrations for “Ynglinge Saga” for the first edition appear to have been motivated by an antiquarian interest in pagan religion, which is not surprising given the text that he was illustrating. However, his revisions for that saga in the second edition have the appearance of a carefully thought out agenda not only to downplay the pagan content, but, where possible, to visually encourage a Christian perspective. The changes that Werenskiold made to the illustrative content of “Ynglinge saga” combine to significantly reduce the visual impact of the pagan material in the saga, which seems somewhat futile given the explicitly pagan narrative of the text that contains them.

10.13 Conversion Era Illustrations in *Kongesagaer*

The first attempts to Christianize Norway are described in the fifth saga, “Haakon den Godes Saga” (The Saga of Hákon the Good) and represent the beginning of the Conversion that took place over a period of more than two hundred years. By the end of that period, Norway had its own native born saint Holy King Olaf. Moreover, King Magnus Erlingsson’s coronation had been sanctioned by the Church and performed by

bishops. Snorri describes pagan ceremonies during the Conversion period including a description of heathen Yule celebrations (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 107) and also a pagan sacrifice that King Hákon Haraldsson, who was actually a Christian, was coerced to participate in for reasons of political necessity. However, the only illustration in *Kongesagaer* in the Conversion era sagas that might depict a pagan ritual is Krohg's illustration of a naming ceremony (Figs. F-1a, F-1b and F-1-c). Egedius' two illustrations that depict pagan idols represent scenes that do not represent actual worship, or related moments of ritual activity, and avoid dramatic representations of the destruction of the idols in both cases (Figs. F-2 and F-3).

Krohg's naming ceremony illustration in "Haakon den Godes Saga" (Fig. F-1a) is especially interesting because Krohg revised it twice for the second edition. The original illustration in the 1899 edition, depicts King Hákon Haraldsson participating in what is very likely a pagan naming ceremony that was known as *ausa vatni* (sprinkling water).¹¹³ As noted above, Hákon was a Christian but his efforts to Christianize Norway were so ineffectual that he was given a pagan burial when he died and the skaldic poem *Hákonarmál* describes his arrival in Valhöll (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 124 - 127; Páll Eggert Ólasson, *Heimskringla* 128 - 132). Snorri states that Hákon gave the child his own name, which suggests that this event might have been a Christian christening. However, in a pagan ceremony the baby would have been named after one of his deceased kinfolk rather than a godparent. Indeed in the 1899 illustration, the deceased kinfolk appear to be represented by the ghostly figures in the background (Fig. F-1a). It is appropriate that

¹¹³ Cleasby-Vigfússon notes that the phrase "ausa vatn" occurs in the eddic poem *Hávamál* in regard to Óðinn (85) and that the term for a Christian baptism would be "skíra barn" (550). Unfortunately, neither "ausa vatni" nor "skíra barn" occurs in Snorri's description of the event. Williams discusses the naming ceremony in *Social Scandinavia in the Viking Age* (59 - 60).

these figures should be represented because of the pagan belief that the baby and its namesake would have had a reciprocal relationship throughout the child's life. Thus, the ghostly figures in the background of Krohg's 1899 illustration suggest that Krohg originally envisaged the scene as a pagan naming ceremony rather than a Christening in pagan times (Fig. F-1a).

The most surprising aspect of Krohg's revision of the naming ceremony illustration for the 1900 edition is that he revised it twice and that the revisions were published in separate print runs. One version of the scene for the second edition is very plain with an empty background (Fig. F-1b) and the other version of the scene has very little white space and includes the figures of an elderly couple in a background along with details of the room they are in (Fig. F-1c). There is no way of knowing which print run was first because the print history of the impressions was not included in the apparatus for the 1900 edition. However, I think that it is more likely that Krohg created the scene with the blank background first and then filled it in for the second scene. The revised scene with the extensively detailed background is more evocative of a Christian baptism due to Krohg's addition of the two elderly figures who could easily be perceived as godparents (Fig. F-1c). When revising this illustration, Krohg appears to have reacted to a public reaction concerning pagan rituals, a supposition which I have yet to corroborate within contemporary sources, and possibly to the public criticism concerning not only his own personal style but also in regard to 'saga style' as well.

Egedius' two illustrations with specifically pagan content are from the conversion period sagas of King Óláfr Tryggvason and King Óláfr Haraldsson. The former died while attempting to Christianize all of Norway and the latter was martyred and became

St. Óláfr. These two illustrations are both non-dramatic in nature, despite the possibilities that the text provides. For example in “Ólav Trygvesøns Saga” (The Saga of Óláf Tryggvason), Óláfr Tryggvason and his men are depicted standing and looking at the Þórr and the other idols in a temple (Fig. F-2). There is some tension in the faces and stances of Óláfr and his men, who have come into the temple on the pretext of seeing ‘what their custom was when they sacrificed’ “siðu þeira, er þeir blóta” (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 207; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 219). However, there is no indication in the illustration that Óláfr and his men are about to smash the idols or that he has ordered his men to kill the pagans’ leader in front of the temple door while Óláfr is inside. Consequently, the pagans are leaderless after the idols have been smashed when Óláfr gives them the choice of conversion or death. The pagans submit to baptism and the king demands hostages ‘to make certain that they will hold fast to Christianity’ “at þeir skyldi halda kristni sína” (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 208; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 1 219).

The possibilities for drama are even greater in the second of Egedius’ illustrations involving pagan idols, which depicts a conversion scene in “St. Óláfr’s Saga” (Fig. F-3). This seemingly peaceful scene takes place at an outdoor gathering in a village by a lake where a male figure, whom the text identifies as King Óláfr Haraldsson, is depicted standing outdoors in front of a statute of Þórr. The statue is surrounded by a large group of farmers, many of whom are seated, and King Óláfr is directing their attention to the rising sun. According to the text, King Óláfr identifies the rising sun with the coming of the Christian God, and, while the farmers are distracted, one of Óláfr’s men suddenly attacks the statue of Þórr and smashes it. The statue is hollow, but not empty, and ‘out

jumped mice as big as cats, and adders, and snakes’ “hlópu þar út mýss, svá stórar sem kettir væri, ok eðlur ok ormar” (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 374; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 2 146).¹¹⁴ The frightened farmers panic and try to escape but are thwarted because the king’s men have scuttled their ships and driven off their horses. King Óláfr gives the pagans the choice of converting or engaging in battle, with the subtle warning ‘let them have the victory whom the God we believe in wishes to have it’ “beri þeir sigr af öðrum í dag, er sá guð vill, er vér trúum á” (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 374; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 2 147). Guðbrandr, who is the leader of the farmers, admits that their god was not able to help them and accepts baptism along with his followers because Óláfr has demonstrated that his God is more powerful than theirs.¹¹⁵ The scene ends on a peaceful note without any suggestion of lingering hostilities, ‘And they parted as friends who before had been enemies. And Gudbrand had a church built in the Dales’ “ok skilðusk ðeir vinir, sem fyrr váru óvinur. Ok lét þar Guðbrandr gera kirku í Dölunum” (Hollander, *Heimskringla* 374; Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 2 147).

¹¹⁴ Louis Moe’s illustration of this scene in Winkel Horne’s *Norges Konge-sagaer* is a dramatic rendering of the smashing of the idol and represents the type of illustration that the *Kongesagaer* team considered unsuitable for the ideals of ‘saga style’ [18].

¹¹⁵ As previously mentioned, Óláfr was not always diplomatic when he was engaged in conversion activities, and is remembered after his death in *Heimskringla* as a king who forcibly ‘converted the people to Christianity and the true faith, and cruelly punished those who turned a deaf ear to it’ (Hollander *Heimskringla* 662) “braut landsfólk til kristni ok rétttra siða, en refsaði grimliga þeim, er daufheyrðust við” (Páll Eggert Ólason, *Heimskringla* vol. 3 140).

10.14 Conclusion

Due to the evolution of rigorous standards for the examination of primary sources, *Heimskringla* no longer has the status of a reliable historical document.¹¹⁶ However, *Heimskringla* is still primarily referred to in our largely secular age as a political history of the Kings of Norway and there is no denying that it addresses the frequently turbulent relationship between Norwegian kings and the farmers who were their subjects. In “Visions of Sovereignty in Snorri Sturluson’s *Heimskringla*,” Richard Gaskins observed that Snorri managed “through his accounts of historical kings, to engage broad issues of common welfare, social justice, and stability of the political order. Rather than elucidating kingship as such, he illustrated central ‘uses of authority,’ all of which point in the direction of future theories of sovereignty” (177). However, *Heimskringla* also describes Norway’s progress from paganism to Christianity, as Abram notes in regard to “Ynglinga Saga”

As a Christian author, Snorri could not believe in the pagan gods or be seen to advocate any such belief; yet he was aware that Scaninavian culture was founded in paganism, and that it retained important cultural resonances long after the conversion. *Ynglinga saga* is part of his attempt to reconcile these apparently antagonistic ideas. (*Myths of the Pagan North* 23)

I believe that the revisions of the pagan era illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga” and the illustrations for the conversion-era sagas in *Kongesagaer* support my contention that, despite cultural resonances, late nineteenth-century Norwegian Christians did not want

¹¹⁶ See Whaley 114 - 115.

either to be reminded of, or to too closely identify with, their pagan past in terms of the religious beliefs and ritual practices of their ancestors.

Nonetheless, in regard to the revisions and their subsequent transmission it appears that then as now the first impression remains the lasting impression. I have an as yet unsubstantiated notion that the changes in the second edition received little or perhaps no attention in letters to the editor or in contemporary reviews. Despite the overwhelming success of the second edition it is remarkable that the revised illustrations were not used in subsequent editions, and that the illustrations from the first edition that were deleted in the second were reinstated in the third edition in 1915. Indeed, the illustrations of the first edition have prevailed in subsequent editions up to the present day, but the majority of such editions use a limited selection of the two hundred and twenty original illustrations.

The editorial decisions involved when selecting illustrations from *Kongesagaer* for modern editions are implicit in their choices. For example, Hollander includes a total of seventy of *Kongesagaer*'s two hundred and twenty illustrations in his edition of *Heimskringla*, and he only uses four of Werenskiöld's thirteen illustrations for "Ynglinge saga" and none of Munthe's vignettes for that saga. Hollander includes Werenskiöld's illustrations of the pagan seeress Huldr and the sons of King Vísbur in "Ynglinge Saga" (Fig. E-8a) and the scene where Gautviðr takes his young cousin Ingjaldr to see Svipdagr (Fig. E-13a)—this is the scene that leads up to Svipdagr giving Ingjaldr a wolf's heart to eat in order to change the boy's timid nature. However, Hollander leaves out the other scenes regarding pagan beliefs and rituals and focuses instead on scenes of kings and warriors not only in the "The Saga of the Ynglings" but throughout his edition. A thorough accounting of the illustrations selected for modern editions and translations,

such as Hollander's, would contribute to our understanding of the transmission and reception of *Heimskringla*, but is beyond the scope of this chapter and my dissertation.

Conclusion

The Synergy of the Analog Past and the Digital Present

My interdisciplinary dissertation on illustrations of Old Norse mythology raises questions concerning illustrations and visual literacy that necessarily cross the boundaries of several fields. Consequently, I address a diverse readership in the areas of Old Norse Studies, Book History, Cultural Studies, Literary Studies, Visual Studies, and Digital Humanities. I have therefore provided background information in my dissertation, beyond what would usually be expected in order to accommodate my readership, particularly for those unfamiliar with Old Norse Studies. At the most basic level my questions represent the seven classical questions—*quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando* (who, what, where, helped by whom, why, how, and when)—that are fundamental to providing the descriptive data for illustrations in any field. At a deeper level such questions address the initial inspiration for an illustration; the consequences concerning the material mediation of a visualization; issues in regard to text and image relationships; cultural factors that influence the choice of iconic details; prosopographical relationships; cycles of transmission, reception, and remediation; and aspects of material philology in regard to individual artifacts of the printing process.

The textual content of my dissertation consists of three parts: 1) “Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Analog Past”; 2) “Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Digital Present”; and 3) “Thematic Case Studies: Realizing the Potential of MyNDIR’s Digital Image Repository.” MyNDIR represents the Digital Humanities component of my dissertation and is currently accessible online—but is password protected and thus is only available to my committee for the purposes of my dissertation.

In my Conclusion, I will revisit the three sections of my dissertation and briefly summarize my research and my contributions to scholarship. I will finish with an examination of MyNDIR's potential as a scholarly resource to enable research, knowledge creation and dissemination for the study of illustrations of Old Norse mythology in a scholarly milieu that is frequently interdisciplinary, potentially collaborative, and increasingly digital.

Part One: “Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Analog Past”

Part One of my dissertation begins in the prehistorical period in the area that is now Scandinavia. By definition the term ‘prehistorical’ indicates the time period that occurred before recorded history, i.e., before the invention of writing and the creation of written records. However, prehistorical Old Norse religious beliefs in Scandinavia were preserved and communicated by means of oral poems that were not committed to writing until the thirteenth century—i.e., *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda*—in Icelandic which was then, and remains today, very close to the original Old Norse. I draw upon the Icelandic eddas in order to describe the tradition of Old Norse oral poetry; to explain its poetic forms; and to discuss the ability of its riddle-like kennings to inspire visualizations. I examine Milman Parry and Albert Lord's oral-formulaic theory and its applicability to Old Norse oral poetry in order to discuss the composition, performance, reception and transmission of the poems. I believe that the relationship between the poet and his audience was essentially a *de facto* wisdom contest that instructed the members of the audience in mythic knowledge concerning their pagan gods and world view.

I present the performance of Old Norse poetry as a means of publication and dissemination of cultural knowledge that was at times mediated as illustrations on rune

stones and on purely pictorial stones. Contrary to standard expectations concerning text-image relationships, runic inscriptions do not explicitly refer to the illustrations that they accompany. Many rune stones were intended to act as public memorials that were erected for the deceased by their next of kin and the content of the runic text accompanying the illustrations contains prosaic text rather than mythological details. I support the assertion put forth by scholars such as K. Zilmer, L. Lager, and L. Webster that illustrations on rune stones function as visual riddles. I agree with these scholars that solving visual riddles on rune stones requires associative thinking, e.g. the same methodology and mythological knowledge required to decipher kennings. I further note that illustrations of the pagan gods and the cultural habit of associative thinking functioned to facilitate the pagan conversion to Christianity. Rune stones featuring both pagan and Christian illustrations, as well as other carved stones such as the stone crosses on the Isle of Man, participated in an intertextual context that was also associative and reveals a great deal about the conversion to Christianity in Scandinavia.

The conversion to Christianity circa the year 1000 insured the eventual demise of the tradition of Old Norse oral poetry as a cultural practice in Scandinavia. Memory of the poems and the knowledge based on their content faded in Scandinavia to the point of almost utter extinction. Eventually only the names of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg remained along with a vague recollection of the significance of the gods that associated Óðinn with war, Þórr with weather, and Frigg with fertility. Without textual content to identify them, the illustrations on rune stones could not be identified and thus the illustrations were no longer linked to Old Norse gods. The Magnus brothers' woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg and the text that accompanies it in *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* provides

compelling evidence of the almost total loss of knowledge concerning Old Norse mythology up to the middle of the sixteenth century.

Nonetheless, the poetic oral tradition and some of the poems survived because the immigrants who settled Iceland circa 874 took the Old Norse poems with them as part of their cultural heritage. Icelanders never produced rune stones but, even after Iceland was Christianized, the Icelanders never abandoned the tradition of reciting and composing Old Norse oral poetry. I include a brief overview of the history of the settlement of Iceland in order to discuss the shift from an oral culture to a written culture that occurred in Iceland soon after Christianization; the early adoption of writing in the vernacular; the advent of the printing press; and the tradition of hand copying manuscripts and printed books that persisted for hundreds of years after the advent of the printing press. I identify a remarkable overall lack of mythological illustrations in Icelandic manuscripts and print sources. The illustrative tradition for manuscripts in Iceland is dominated by illustrations of religious material and by illustrations for legal texts. The illustrative tradition for early print artifacts is similar to that of Icelandic manuscripts but includes illustrations of figures from the Icelandic sagas.

I believe that the three factors responsible for the absence of mythological illustrations in early print Icelandic sources were religious, economic, and cultural. The religious factor was that the clergymen who controlled the only press in Iceland for a long period of time were not interested in publishing mythological material. The economic factor was that the press was dormant for long periods and that publishing was expensive. The cultural factor was that the sagas rather than the eddas were more fundamental to the formation of the Icelandic national identity. Although the eddas were

culturally very important, they did not present a high priority for print editions, and although the eddas were frequently hand-copied in paper manuscripts these eddas were only illustrated in four manuscripts, i.e., in A.M. 738 4to by an anonymous illustrator in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and in N, Í, S by Jakob Sigurðsson in the mid-eighteenth century.

The phenomenon of travel and geographical literature in early print sources beginning in the last half of the seventeenth century that first brought Iceland to the world's attention not only contained medieval misconceptions but also presented a decidedly negative portrayal of Iceland's climate, geography, and inhabitants. Arngrímur Jónsson tried to redeem his nation's reputation by writing two books in Latin, *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia* and *Crymogæa*, to convey the virtues of Iceland and its culture. It was through meeting Arngrímur that Danish scholars discovered that the long lost cultural heritage of Scandinavia was extant in the eddas. Thereafter the eddas played an important part in the rivalry between Danish and Swedish scholars in their efforts to claim Old Norse cultural heritage as having originated in their respective countries. The most immediate consequence was that the discovery of the eddas initiated the collecting of Icelandic manuscripts on a large scale and their removal primarily to Denmark and to a lesser extent to Sweden.

However, collecting Icelandic manuscripts was only part of the solution for recovering the Old Norse cultural heritage because Scandinavian scholars could not read Old Norse. Icelandic scholars were now sought after and collegial relationships were established with Scandinavian scholars concerning antiquarian scholarship in regard to the eddas, sagas, and the study of runes. The Icelandic scholar Magnús Ólafsson (c. 1573

- 1663) edited *The Prose Edda* and translated it into Latin for the benefit of Scandinavian scholars. Magnús' *Edda* is also known as *Laufás Edda* and witnesses of Magnús' autograph copy circulated widely in Iceland. The *Laufás Edda* was sent to Denmark, where it was translated into Danish and was published in 1665 as *The Edda Islandorum*, which is also known as Resen's *Edda*.

The removal of manuscripts from Iceland initiated a cycle of renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene from the manuscript U—which is the only illustration of a scene from *The Prose Edda* in an Icelandic parchment manuscript. Jón Guðmundsson produced the first remediation of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene from U when he copied it in the paper manuscript M in 1638. However, it appears that M never circulated in Iceland, was not copied thereafter, and was practically forgotten after it was acquired by the Bodleian Library circa 1690. U was sent to Denmark in 1639 and then was donated by Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie to the University of Uppsala in 1662. A remediation of U's illustration as a copperplate rendering by Olaus Verelius was published in 1664 in *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia* and was frequently copied. Verelius' copperplate was remediated as a lithograph by Thomas Bartholin that was published in 1689 in *Antiquitatum danicarum*. I compare the many renderings of Verelius' copperplate and establish that Bartholin's lithograph inspired four hand-copied renderings by Jakob Sigurðsson in three hand-copied eighteenth-century Icelandic paper manuscripts (N, Í, and S).

I believe that scholars viewed “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene from U as a cultural artifact and its inclusion in editions and translations of *The Prose Edda* and in other scholarly works on Old Norse mythology visually conferred academic authenticity on

such texts. I also identify two other illustrations that achieved the status of cultural artifacts. The first is the previously mentioned woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg, first published by Olaus Magnus in 1544 in his brother Johannes's *Historia de omnibus gothorum sueonumque regibus* and then again in 1555 in Olaus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*. The Magnus brothers' woodcut served as an almost official portrait of the three deities both before and after the discovery of "The Deluding of Gylfi" illustration in U. The second illustration is a drawing by Jon Skonvig of the giantess Hyrrokkin riding a wolf from a rune stone that was originally part of the Hunnestad Monument in Sweden. Skonvig was commissioned by Ole Worm circa 1626 - 1629 to draw the Hunnestad Monument and Worm published Skonvig's drawing in 1643 in *Monumenta Danica*. Renderings of both of these illustrations, along with "The Deluding of Gylfi" from U, are ubiquitous in early print sources related to Old Norse mythology. My examination of the three illustrations that represent the beginning of the illustrative cycle in print for Old Norse mythology reveals that not only the details featured in their initial creation but also the revisions and differences in their subsequent remediations must be included when studying the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology.

I conclude Part One with a survey of illustrations beginning in early print sources in Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, France, England, and the United States from 1554 up to the end of the long nineteenth century in 1914. As noted above, illustrations of Old Norse mythology are lacking in Icelandic early print sources, but this is more than made up for by illustrations in the other countries in my survey, with the exception of the United States where publications on the subject were often reprints of British books. Nonetheless, my survey confirms that there are several thousand

illustrations to enter into MyNDIR for scholars to examine in regard to the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology that spans centuries and crosses national boundaries. My survey situates illustrations of Old Norse mythology on the global timeline for Book History and on individual timelines for print history in their respective countries. My survey further clarifies the illustrative history of the three illustrations that functioned as cultural artifacts: i.e., “The Deluding of Gylfi” in U; the Magnus brothers’ woodcut of Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg; and the steel engraving of Skonvig’s drawing of Hyrrokkin riding a wolf. I demonstrate that variations in the details in the frequent remediations of these three illustrations provide significant information in regard to the cultural agendas involved in their creation and their contribution to the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology.

I identify three basic groups for the illustrations in my survey. The first group consists of the illustrations regarded as cultural artifacts and their remediations that were close copies; renderings based on close copies but featuring significant differences; or idiosyncratic renderings that nonetheless remain close to the original illustration. The second group consists of illustrations of the Old Norse gods based on illustrations of gods from Classical Antiquity. The third group consists of entirely new illustrations such as Jakob’s rendering of scenes from *The Prose Edda* in hand-copied paper manuscripts; the illustrations by Werenskiold, Munthe, Krohg, and Egedius in the editions of *Kongesagaer*; illustrations from early print manuals of mythology; and illustrations from the many retellings of Old Norse mythology for children in early print sources. All of this illustrative material represents a significant resource for scholars and my survey

demonstrates the potential of its digitization and online dissemination in MyNDIR to facilitate further research and dissemination.

Part Two: Illustrations of Old Norse Mythology in the Digital Present

Part Two of my dissertation begins in Denmark in the seventeenth century with the manuscript collector Árni Magnússon who initiated the hand copying of Icelandic manuscripts to create copperplate etchings in order to produce facsimiles. Árni's efforts were in accordance with Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson's wishes that the contents of Icelandic manuscripts, such as the ones that Brynjólfur sent to as gifts to King Frederik III of Denmark in 1662, would not be hidden away in libraries but instead should be made available to the scholars of the world. Árni's scholarly nature prompted him to leave a bequest in his will to support the ongoing production of editions and facsimiles of Icelandic manuscripts that has continued to the present day and kept abreast of technological innovations.

The practice of hand copying in Árni's era became unnecessary when the copperplate press was replaced by lithography and then by photo-lithography. It is a remarkable technological detail that photo-lithography is now used for manufacturing the integrated circuits of microprocessor chips that are a fundamental component for modern computers and thus for the production of digital images. Old Norse scholars did not actively participate in inventing technological innovations during the print era but they were quick to adopt them as a means of production. However, Old Norse scholars in the digital age are engaged in furthering the methodologies for producing electronic editions of edda manuscripts that incorporate text markup, such as XML, and thus go well beyond the production of facsimiles that consist simply of digital images.

I include an overview of the history of the manuscript institute that was created in Copenhagen in 1760 to administer Árni's bequest and also the parallel institute in Reykjavík that was created in 1962 to house the Icelandic manuscripts that Denmark gradually returned to Iceland beginning in 1971. My description of the two manuscript institutes, i.e., *Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum* in Reykjavík and *Den Arnamagnæanske Samling* in Copenhagen, and their ongoing activities to produce electronic editions of the manuscripts, establishes the position of my digital image repository project in the fields of Old Norse studies and Digital Humanities.

Next I examine the distrust of images ingrained in our culture concerning art and literature in the past, in textual scholarship that was almost totally preoccupied with the linguistic turn until very recently, and in digital scholarship that is still adjusting to the pictorial turn in the present. I discuss the Digital Humanist Julia Flanders' observations in "Trusting the Electronic Edition" concerning the general mistrust of images in our culture, which she presents with examples drawn from Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. Flanders also points out that the frivolous use of images as enhancers of text on internet pages is of little scholarly value, and she has concerns in regard to the fundamental unreliability of images due to the possibilities of photo manipulation. I also note the literary critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin's views concerning the loss of aura and materiality in reference to photographs of art objects and observe that his views can easily be applied to digital images of illustrations today.

However, I include the digital humanist Carole L. Palmer's remarks that, due to advances in technology, digital remediations of William Blake's drawings in the William Blake Archive (WBA) website are more accurate in colour and superior in detail and

scale to Blake's illustrations than remediations in print sources are. I believe that it is time to put aside prejudices concerning visual material and examine illustrations of Old Norse mythology in the spirit of V. A. Kolve's methodology, with an eye to perceiving their impact as "culturally validated truth"; to considering them as "governing images"; and to acquiring the skills of "iconographic 'literacy'" in order to understand their significance (*Telling Images* xv - xvi). Illustrations of Old Norse mythology not only have the potential to reveal aspects of the transmission and reception of Old Norse mythology in the past but also to reveal the quality, or lack thereof, of visual literacy in the present. Visual literacy is becoming as crucial as textual literacy in our research and in our everyday life. I believe that Old Norse scholars not only need to model the skills of visual literacy for their peers but that they must also accept the responsibility of communicating the skills of visual literacy to the general public.

Old Norse mythology has remained a popular topic with the general public since the Victorian Era. The Victorians' fascination with 'Vikings'—a term which they coined—resulted in the acceptance of Old Norse gods and heroes in popular art and culture throughout the western world. A related interest in other mythologies has ensured the inclusion of Old Norse mythology on webpages intended for the general public that aspire to be taken seriously. One such webpage is the self-described "award winning" *Encyclopedia Mythica* site that first came online in 1995. Despite its claims to "serve the serious researcher, the student, and the casual reader with equal success," the quality of *Mythica*'s illustrations and its standards for citations are very poor: i.e., colourized images and citations that are incomplete or non-existent. *Wikipedia*'s Old Norse

mythology content is generally superior to that of *Mythica* but *Wikipedia*'s citations frequently lack page numbers.

However, *Wikipedia*'s entries provide evidence of the potential of collaborative scholarship between experts in the field and the general public, and its entries can always be corrected or updated. The textual scholar Jerome McGann commented that “scholarship is a service vocation” and that a scholar’s vocation to disseminate knowledge is not just for his or her peers in academia but also for the general public (ix-xi). The collaboration of scholars in regard to material posted on popular sites and the creation of websites that adhere to scholarly standards can provide a corrective influence for self-directed learners who might otherwise be led astray in fanciful efforts, due to the difficulty of working with primary sources that require highly specialized skills such as proficiency in an obscure language or knowledge of another culture in the distant past.

I designed the prototype for my digital image repository with the intent of creating a resource for the benefit of Old Norse scholars and self-directed scholars, and also to serve as a model for the benefit of scholars in other fields wishing to undertake similar projects. Consequently, I conclude Part Two with a description of the subject-specific and methodological considerations for MyNDIR. I then document the analytical underpinnings for MyNDIR’s design and functionality followed by a largely pragmatic description of the appearance and functionality of its pages and features. The description in my dissertation of my design processes for MyNDIR, along with the blog of the same name on the Humanities and Computing Media Centre webpage, as well as the “Source code of this document: [XML]” field for every image file in the repository, all serve to provide highly transparent and accessible documentation for my prototype. The

uncluttered visual design of MyNDIR's interface, in addition to efficient navigation with a minimal number of levels, assures ease of use and attractiveness for scholars and also for others with a more casual level of interest. Christian Vandendorpe commented that "we are moving from a mass-media culture to a participatory culture" (*From Papyrus to Hypertext* 155) and MyNDIR is part of the paradigm shift because it will act as a venue for participation for the study of illustrations of Old Norse mythology.

Part Three: Thematic Case Studies

Part Three of my dissertation consists of two thematic case studies whose purpose is to model the scholarly value of applying the skills of visual literacy to illustrations of Old Norse mythology in textual artifacts that originated in two very different circumstances and cultures. My first thematic study focuses on Jakob Sigurðsson, an eighteenth-century Icelandic farmhand, poet, scribe, and artist. Jakob's illustrations of Old Norse mythology were isolated first in North-Eastern Iceland and then in Northern Canada and consequently were little known for several hundred years after their creation. However, Jakob's illustrations are ubiquitous today and frequently appear on the internet, on the covers of scholarly editions, and on pamphlets for conferences and scholarly projects.

Jakob's pen and ink illustrations were created during a period in Iceland when hand-copied manuscripts overlapped for several centuries with the advent of print. My comparison of Jakob's illustrations in N, S, and Í reveals a great deal concerning the reception and transmission of Old Norse mythology in his era. Moreover, my study of the details in his illustrations reveals aspects of the patron/client relationships concerning the content of his work. I further demonstrate that such details provide an indication of the

levels of education and the social standing of his patrons for N and S. My study augments Davíð Ólafsson's work on scribal culture in post-medieval Iceland and the informal academy that enabled Jakob to create a lasting legacy despite his lack of a formal education and the circumstances of his life on a poverty-stricken island far from the centres of learning in Scandinavia.

Very little material concerning Jakob's life, education, and working conditions is available in English and my study addresses this lack. I am the first scholar to undertake a comparative examination of Jakob's mythological illustrations. I establish that Jakob was not only responsible for the illustrations in S but also for those in N that currently are credited to Jakob's benefactor the Reverend Ólafur Brynjólfsson. I establish that Jakob created the illustrations for Ólafur to include as part of the content of N and that Jakob tailored the details in the illustrations specifically to suit Ólafur's interests. I assert that Jakob's verse that he included in all four of his "Deluding of Gylfi" illustrations served to assure his Luthern readership that they were in no danger of being tricked into believing "High's lie" as their pagan ancestors had been. My study advances knowledge concerning Jakob's work and provides a corrective for the casual use of illustrations from N and S for visual appeal in scholarly publications and in the content of popular culture websites.

My second thematic case study is situated in Norway at the turn of the nineteenth century and focuses on a publisher, a professor, and four out of the six professional artists who produced a lavishly illustrated deluxe translation of *Heimskringla* entitled *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* that was completed and published in 1899. *Kongesagaer's* pen and ink illustrations have the appearance of woodcuts but were printed by means of

zincography. The illustrations in *Kongesagaer* were part of a politically motivated agenda to foster a national identity for the Norwegian people who were in the process of achieving independence from Sweden, which they achieved in 1904. Due to a subsidy from the Norwegian parliament, a smaller less expensive second edition of *Kongesagaer* was in almost every Norwegian home soon after it was published in 1900. *Kongesagaer* is still in print which is an indication of its secure status as a cultural treasure in Norway. Consequently the *Snorre teckningar* (Snorri illustrations), as they are commonly referred to in Norway, were well known in Norway from the time of their initial publication and they are gradually becoming known outside of Norway, largely because of the internet and its use of images.

My comparison of related sets of images in the first two editions of *Kongesagaer*, reveals a pattern of revision in the second edition for illustrations concerned with the pagan era in “Ynglinge Saga,” which is the first saga in the book. I demonstrate that Erik Werenskiold’s illustrations in the second edition of *Kongesagaer* represent a de-paganizing of his illustrations for “Ynglinge Saga” in the first edition. I suggest that the differences between the pairs of illustrations indicate that Werenskiold was aware that his Lutheran countrymen were uncomfortable when they were confronted with the deeds of their pagan ancestors. I note that Gerhard Munthe’s illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga” are presented in the form of small cultural artifacts, e.g. illustrations contained within shapes resembling bracteates, which distanced their illustrative content from the lives of turn of the century Norwegians.

In addition to the illustrations from “Ynglinge Saga,” I also examine an illustration of a scene by Krohg in one of the Conversion era sagas, as well as two revised

versions of the scene, that is either a pagan naming ceremony or else a Christening (Figs. F-1a, F-1b, and F-1-c). Krohg's intention appears to have been to represent the pagan ceremony in the first instance and the Christian ceremony in his revised versions of the scene, which may reflect revisions made for a Christian audience that was enabled by ambiguity in the text. As well as Krohg's illustration, I further examine two scenes of pagan/Christian confrontations regarding idols of the Old Norse gods by Egedius (Figs. F-2 and F-3) and demonstrate that he chose to illustrate them in a non-dramatic fashion that was consistent with the illustrative agenda for the *Kongesagaer* project. If Egedius had depicted the smashing of the idols, the nineteenth-century Lutheran audience would have experienced less detachment from the events described by the text and experienced greater involvement in the scenes.

The agenda to depict scenes in a non-dramatic fashion was not strictly adhered to in *Kongesagaer*. However, I demonstrate that the public outcry in reaction to the scenes of graphic violence in the first edition—i.e., Christian Krohg's graphic depictions of the deaths of kings and nobles—had remarkably little effect on the small number of illustrations that are different in the second edition. Consequently, I believe that it was Werenskiold's awareness of his countrymen's religious sensibilities that provided the impetus for the revised content of "Ynglinge Saga" in the second edition.

The circumstances concerned with the creation of *Kongesagaer*, and the personalities involved in its production and publication, are little known in English outside of the minimal content in introductions in English editions and in the limited descriptions in biographies of the artists. My thematic study addresses the lack of available information concerning *Kongesagaer* in English and advances the study of its

illustrations for Old Norse studies. *Kongesagaer* is no longer regarded as a reliable historical text in Norway, especially in regard to “Ynglinge Saga” and its depiction of the prehistorical pagan period. However, *Kongesagaer* and its illustrations represent a rich resource for the further work in the fields of Old Norse Studies, Book History, Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, and Visual Studies.

MyNDIR’s Potential

Scholarly interest in Old Norse literature initially began in Scandinavia in connection with the rise of Nationalism in the seventeenth century when the collecting and exporting of Icelandic manuscripts to Denmark began in earnest. Latin translations and scholarly treatises related to linguistic and antiquarian interests soon helped to disseminate the material to the rest of Europe. English Romantic poets and novelists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries drew inspiration from such material and their literary creations brought Old Norse gods and heroes to the attention of the general public. The Victorians’ fascination with “Vikings” resulted in the entrance of Old Norse gods and heroes into popular art and culture throughout the western world. Old Norse mythology has retained a niche in popular culture, found a place in our elementary school curriculums, and is a popular elective when offered at universities. This broad combination of scholarly and general public interest will provide a diverse group of users for MyNDIR and use of its resources at every level. Beyond providing access to images, MyNDIR will act as a scholarly correction to the circulation of undocumented material on the internet, will reground reception theory, and will bring the resulting scholarship into wider circulation.

For Humanities Computing, my dissertation documents the creation of a second-generation digital image repository and in doing so provides information for others interested in such a venture. For History in Art, MyNDIR's database of images, and the open-source digital tools that can be used in conjunction with them, benefits Visual Studies. For Book History, my dissertation and MyNDIR's resources contribute to the largely neglected area of word and image in relation to illustrated texts. For Cultural History, MyNDIR enables an overview of our evolving relationship with myths and stories as a reflection of pre-historical religious beliefs that comprise a global cultural heritage.

For Old Norse studies, my prototype of MyNDIR and its database represent a future resource that will remove the frustrations of searching for images via Google searches that typically result in a multitude of false returns. Moreover, the citations for images in MyNDIR comply with academic standards that will provide the necessary documentation for academic work and will facilitate further research. Indeed, an examination of the illustrations will raise questions that will be challenging to answer. For example, Olaus Magnus, in his illustrated work *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* from 1555, describes Þórr as the god who received the deepest reverence and “was worshipped sitting in the middle of a cushioned couch, flanked on either side by Odinn and Frigga” (151). Similarly, Richard Verstegan's text accompanying his illustration of Þórr in *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* in 1605 describes Þórr seated “as if he had reposed himself upon a covered bed” and Verstegan's illustration is obviously related to the one by Magnus (74). Does the now forgotten iconography of a couch or a bed suggest that Þórr was considered to be a fertility god or

does it merely represent a visual misreading of the Viking high seat and its pillars? These and other research questions will multiply as MyNDIR's collection of digital images increases. At the very least, the variable iconography associated with Óðinn, Þórr, and other mythological figures will serve as a visual reminder that iconography remained in a state of flux for Old Norse paganism and never achieved the stability of early Christian iconography.

My dissertation makes three major contributions to scholarship for those engaged in Old Norse studies. First, my digital image repository provides digital resources that will enable John's list of 'scholarly primitives' for textual material to be applied to visual resources. As noted by Carole Palmer "the basic activities of annotating, comparing, referring, selecting, linking, and discovering...are continually carried out by scholars as part of the complex processes of reading, searching, and writing. Just as materials can be structured for scholarly purposes as we transform our bodies of texts into digital format, tools can be tailored for specific scholarly tasks" ("Thematic Research Collections" 355). Tools such as the Image Markup Tool (IMT) and the Virtual Lightbox have provided the means to conduct scholarly work with images and MyNDIR provides a database for the material to be examined in the field of Old Norse studies as well as a venue for disseminating the fruits of such research. Second, my analytical survey of illustrations from early print sources from 1554 to 1914 provides an indication of the work that lies ahead. Third, my two thematic studies provide a close examination of material that has remained largely unexamined until now, and these two studies demonstrate the contributions to scholarship to be gained from focusing on illustrations and illustrators in the context of reception and transmission.

Viewed from a philosophical perspective William Lovitt's summation in his "Introduction" to *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays by Martin Heidegger* seems apt in regard to digital image repositories:

Today all things are being swept together into a vast network in which their only meaning lies in their being available to serve some end that will itself also be directed toward getting everything under control. Heidegger calls this fundamentally undifferentiated supply of the available the 'standing reserve'" (Lovitt xxviii-xxix).

MyNDIR will provide the database of images along with their descriptive metadata and provide a venue for user collaboration. Moreover, by re-grounding mythological details in the context of their original sources, MyNDIR will reveal the homogenization of mythological narrative that results from the globalization of cultural knowledge. The emerging disciplinary interests of Book History, Visual Studies, and Cultural Studies will insure MyNDIR's resources will play a part in research and knowledge creation that will take Norse studies in new directions. The challenge for Old Norse scholars is to take up the work of examining the digital images 'standing' in the repository's 'reserve' and to start bringing into critical focus the unexamined images that to this point have been scattered around the world in manuscripts and books in geographically isolated libraries and collections.

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Appendix A: Timeline

- c. 1220 *The Prose Edda* - Snorri Sturluson - Iceland
- c. 1230 *Heimskringla* - Snorri Sturluson - Iceland
- 13th C. Codex Regius ms. - GKS 2367 4to - *The Poetic Edda* - Iceland
- c. 1325 U - Codex Upsaliensis - DG 11 4to - Iceland
This parchment manuscript is one of three mss. containing *The Prose Edda*. It has a full page illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” on f. 26v. (Now in the collection Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala, Sweden.)
- 1609 Laufás Edda - Magnús Ólafsson - Iceland
This is a redaction of Snorri’s *Edda* that presents the myths as numbered examples for easy reference.
- 1638 M - Marshall 114 - Jón Lærði Guðmundsson - possibly Denmark
Jón Lærði Guðmundsson made this copy of U at the request of Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson. (Now in the collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England.)
- 1639 Brynjólfur Sveinsson, the Bishop of Skáholt, sent U to his friend, Stephanus Johannis Stephanius, who was a professor in Sorö, Denmark.
- 1662 The Swedish Chancellor, Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie bought U from Stephanius’ widow and later gave it to the University of Uppsala.
- 1664 *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia Lingua Antiqua Gothica Conscripta* - Olaus Verelius - Uppsala, Sweden.
Verelius made a copperplate rendering of U’s “The Deluding of Gylfi” illustration. Verelius’ illustration was sometimes but not always, inserted in his notes to *Gothrici* between pages 43 and 44.
- 1665 *Edda Islandorum* - Peder H. Resen - Denmark
This is the first print edition of Snorri’s *Edda*. It was based on Laufás Edda and published in Danish, Latin, and Icelandic. Also known as Resen’s *Edda*.
- 1669 de la Gardie donated U to the University of Uppsala
- 1678 *Argentoratensis De Antiquis Verisque Regni Sueciae Insignibus* - Johannis Schefferus - Stockholm, Sweden.
This book contains an illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” that is based on Verelius’ copperplate rendering of the illustration in U.
- 1679 *Atland Eller Manheim* - Olaus Rudbeck - Uppsala, Sweden.

This book contains an illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” that is based on Verelius’ copperplate rendering of the illustration in U.

- 1680 AM 738 4to - *Edda Oblongata* - Iceland
This paper manuscript is an unusual shape in that its height is tall in proportion to its width. It consists of thirteen pages with twenty-three small illustrations of figures from Old Norse mythology.
- 1685 Thomas Bartholin wrote to the Danish King to request the imposition of a Danish monopoly on the collecting of manuscripts in Iceland.
- 1689 *Antiquitatum Danicarum De Causis Contemptae a Danis Adhuc Gentilibus Mortis* - Thomas Bartholin - Copenhagen, Denmark
This book contains an illustration of “The Deluding of Gylfi” that is a mirror image of Verelius’ copperplate rendering of the illustration in U. It lacks the text within the illustration but does have Verelius’ asterisk indicating that the illustration should be inserted facing page 43.
- 1690 Thomas Marshall acquired Marsh. 114, possibly in Germany, and later sends it to Oxford.
- 1690 Jonas Salan made a copy of Marsh. 114 that is no longer extant.
- 1760 N - *Nks 1867 4to* - Jakob Sigurðsson’s illustrations - Iceland
This manuscript contains two renderings of “The Deluding of Gylfi” scene, ff. 98v and 111v, the latter is a close rendering copied from Bartholin’s lithograph and the former is an idiosyncratic rendering. The idiosyncratic rendering is part of a set of sixteen scenes from Snorri’s *Edda* that are similar to the set of illustrations in SÁM 66 4to.
- 1764 Í - ÍB 299 4to - Jakob Sigurðsson’s illustrations - Iceland
This manuscript contains a rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi” on f. 59v that is based on Bartholin’s lithograph which is a copy of Verelius’ copperplate rendering of the illustration in U.
- 1765 S - SÁM 66 4to - *Melsteðs Edda* - Jakob Sigurðsson’s illustrations - Iceland
This manuscript contains an idiosyncratic rendering of “The Deluding of Gylfi Scene” on f. 78r. which is part of a set of sixteen scenes from Snorri’s *Edda* that is similar to the set of illustrations in Nks 1867 4to.
- 1899 First edition of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* was published in Oslo.
- 1900 Second edition of *Snorre Sturlason: Kongesagaer* was published in Oslo.

Appendix B: Early Illustrations and Their Remediations



Fig. B-1: The Deluding of Gylfi.
Codex Upsaliensis: early 14th century - f. 26v
© Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek



Fig. B-2: The Deluding of Gylfi.
Verelius, *Gothrici & Rolfi Westrogothiae Regum Historia*. 1664. 43[a].
© National Library of Sweden, Stockholm



Fig. B-3: The Deluding of Gylfi.
Rudbeck, *Atland Eller Manheim*. 1939.
309. (The first edition was published in 1679.)

Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-4: The Deluding of Gylfi.
Bartholin, *Antiquitatum danicarum*. 1689.
473.

Photo: P. A. Baer



Detail from Fig. B-2



Detail from Fig. B-4



Fig. B-5: Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg
Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*. 1555. 151.
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-6: Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg.
Stephanius, *Notae uberioris in Historiam Danicam Saxonis Grammatici* 1645. 139.
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-7: Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg.
Rudbeck, *Atland Eller Manheim* (310) 1939. 310. (The first edition was published in 1679.)
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-8: Óðinn, Þórr, and Frigg.
Lamé-Fleury, *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants*. 1878. [361].
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-9: Hunnestad Monument.
Skonvig's drawing circa 1626-1629 (Moltke 127).
(First published in Worm's *Monumenta Danica* in
1643.)

Photo: P. A. Baer



Detail from Fig. B-9
Hyrrokkin Stone. (Moltke 127)

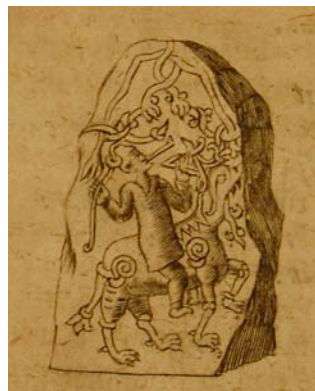


Fig. B-10: Óðinn riding Sleipnir.
Bartholin, *Antiquitatum danicarum*. 1689.
418.

Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-11: Hyrrokkin Stone.
Kulturen Museum in Lund, Sweden.
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-12: Óðinn riding Sleipnir.
Mallet, "Edda, Ou Mythologie Celtique"
Monuments De La Mythologie. 1756. 1.

Photo: P. A. Baer



Detail from Fig. B-12
Óðinn riding Sleipnir.



Fig. B-13: Prussian shrine.
Hartknoch, *Alt- Und Neues Preussen Oder Preussischer Historien*. 1684. 116.
© National Library of Sweden, Stockholm



Fig. B-14: Ásgarðr.
Schimmelman, *Die Isländische Edda*. 1777. [156a].
Photo: P. A. Baer



Detail from Fig. B-13



Fig. B-15: Prussian gods.
Hartknoch, *Alt- Und Neues Preussen Oder Preussischer Historien*. 1684. 226.
© National Library of Sweden, Stockholm



Detail from Fig. B-15



Fig. B-16: Prussian-Norse gods.
Schimmelman, *Die Isländische Edda*. 1777. 417.
Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-17: Disa riding on a goat.
 Rudbeck, *Atland Eller Mannheim*. 1939. 223. (The first edition was published in 1679.)
 Photo: P. A. Baer

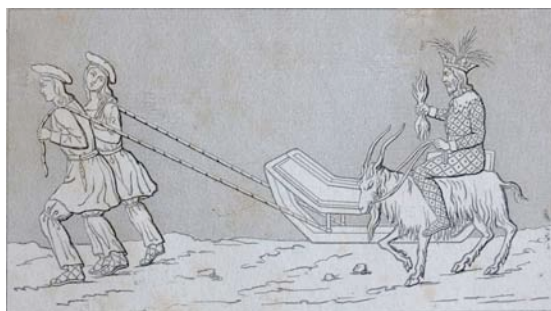


Fig. B-18: Þórr riding on a goat.
 Lamé-Fleury, *La Mythologie racontée aux enfants*. 1878. [363].
 Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-19: Skaði choosing her husband.
 Keary, *The Heroes of Asgard*. 1924.
 [frontispiece].
 Photo: P. A. Baer



Fig. B-20: Skaði choosing her husband.
 Speight, *Children of Odin*. 1903. 55.
 Photo: P. A. Baer

Appendix C: MyNDIR Screenshots

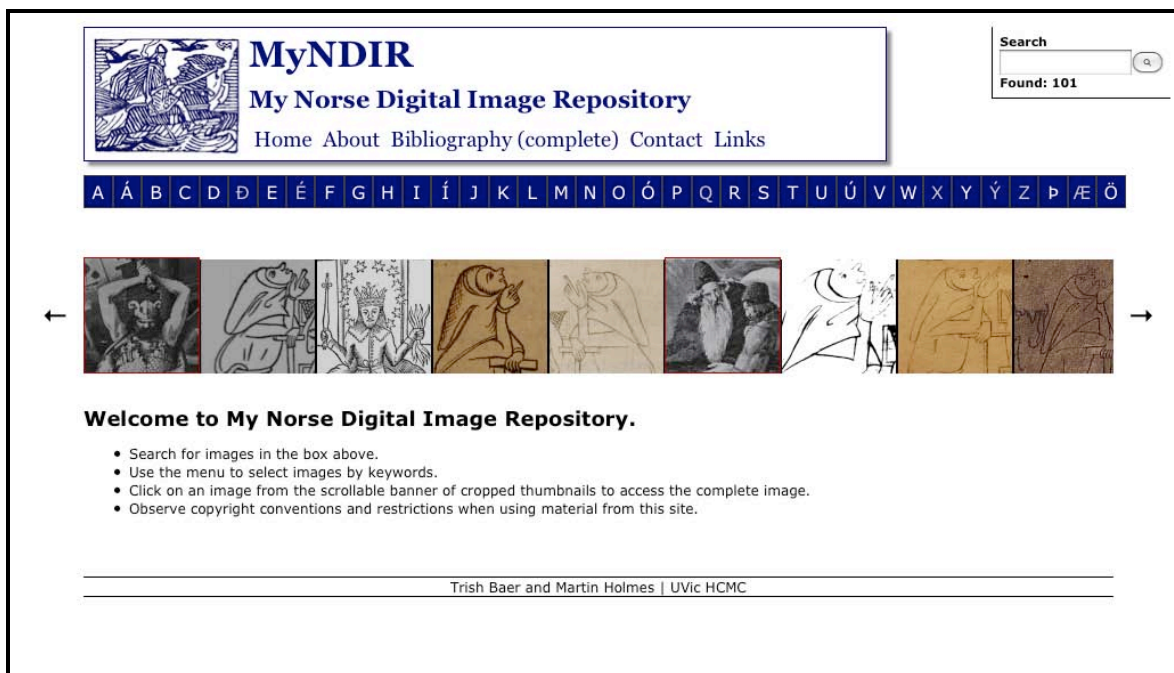


Fig. C-1: MyNDIR screenshot - home page.

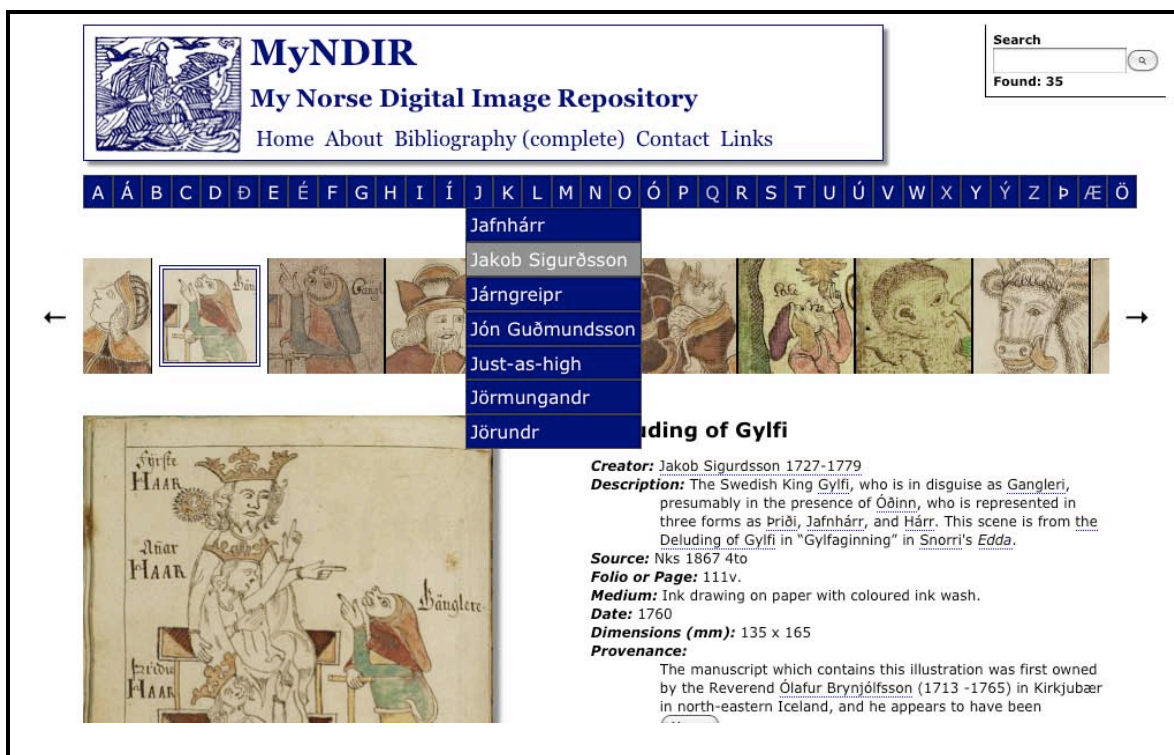



Fig. C-2: MyNDIR screenshot - dropdown menu, strip of 35 thumbnails for "Jakob Sigurðsson," and one of the Deluding of Gylfi image views.



The Deluding of Gylfi

Creator: Jakob Sigurdsson 1727-1779

Description: The Swedish King Gylfi, who is in disguise as Gangleri, presumably in the presence of Óðinn, who is represented in three forms as Þriði, Jafnhárr, and Hárr. This scene is from the Deluding of Gylfi in "Gylfaginning" in Snorri's *Edda*.

Source: Nks 1867 4to

Folio or Page: 111v.

Medium: Ink drawing on paper with coloured ink wash.

Date: 1760

Dimensions (mm): 135 x 165

Provenance:
The manuscript which contains this illustration was first owned by the Reverend Ólafur Brynjólfsson (1713 -1765) in Kirkjubær in north-eastern Iceland, and he appears to have been

[More...](#)

Rights:
Images from Nks 1867 4to are available with permission from Det Kongelige Bibliotek in Copenhagen. Link to E-manuscript: <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/738/dan/111+verso/?var=>

Bibliography:
[More...](#)

Identity Number: Nks1867-111v


Download size: 3.1 MB

Related items: [IB299-059v](#) [Nks1867-098r](#) [SAM66-078r](#)

Source code of this document: [\[XML\]](#)

[Snorri Sturluson](#) [Prose Edda](#) [Nks 1867 4to](#) [Jakob Sigurdsson](#) [Ólafur Brynjólfsson](#) [Deluding of Gylfi](#) [Gylfi](#) [Gangleri](#) [Óðinn](#) [Odin](#) [Þriði](#) [Third Hárr](#) [High](#) [Jafnhárr](#) [Just-as-high](#)

Fig. C-3: MyNDIR screenshot - full screen view of an image with descriptive fields and keywords.



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map

Marsh. 114

mead

mead of poetry

Mead of Poetry

Megingjardar

Midgard Serpent **With a Club**

Miðgarðsormr 1857-1929

mjöðr fighting with a club, in Book Three of Saxo's Gesta Danorum. This scene, which is part of a naval battle, is from Winkler Horn's Danish edition, *Danmarks Kronike*.

Mjöllnir is *Kronike*

Moe, Louis ink wash drawing.

Muninn (p): 108 x 155

Munthe, Gerhard This copy of *Danmarks Kronike* was donated to the MacPherson Library at the University of Victoria by Ejnar Dohmann. It contains a bookplate acknowledging his gift on the inside of the

[More...](#)

Illustrations by Louis Moe in the 1898 and 1939 editions of *Danmarks Kronike* will not be in the public domain until January 1, 2016.

Fig. C-4: MyNDIR screenshot- dropdown menu and view of a restricted image thumbnail and copyright message.

Appendix D: Jakob Sigurðsson's Illustrations

1) NKS 1867 4to: First Set of Sixteen Edda Illustrations (1760)



Fig. D-1: Suttungr Pursuing Óðinn.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 92r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-2: Ullr.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 92v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-3: Loki.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 93r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-4: Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 93v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-5: Óðinn.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 94r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-6: Þórr.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 94v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-7: Auðhumbla and Búri.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 95r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-8: Óðinn and Baugi drilling into
Hnitbjörg.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 95v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-9: Hermóðr's Ride to Hel.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 96r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-10: The Death of Baldr.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 96v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-11: Heimdalr and the Gjallarhorn.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 97r
©The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-12: Óðinn riding Sleipnir.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 97v
©The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-13: The Deluding of Gylfi.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 98r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-14: The Binding of Fenrir.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 98v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-15: Heiðrún standing on the roof of Valhöll.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 99r
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen



Fig. D-16: The Abduction of Iðunn.
NKS 1867 4to - f. 99v
© The Royal Library, Copenhagen

2) SÁM 66 4to: Second Set of Sixteen Edda Illustrations (1765)



Fig. D-17: Heiðrún standing on the roof of Valhöll.

SÁM 66 4to - f. 73r

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-18: The Abduction of Iðunn.

SÁM 66 4to - f. 73v

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-19: Auðhumbla and Búri.

SÁM 66 4to - f. 74r

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-20: Óðinn and Baugi drilling into Hnitbjörg.

SÁM 66 4to - f. 74v

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-21: Hermóðr's Ride to Hel.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 75r

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-22: The Death of Baldr.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 75v

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-23: Suttungr pursuing Óðinn.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 76r

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-24: Ullr.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 76v

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-25: Óðinn.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 77r
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-26: Þórr.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 77v
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-27: The Deluding of Gylfi.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 78r
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-28: The Binding of Fenrir.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 78v
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-29: Loki.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 79r
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-30: Þórr fishing for Miðgarðsormr.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 79v
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-31: Heimdalr and the Gjallarhorn.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 80r
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík



Fig. D-32: Óðinn riding Sleipnir.
SÁM 66 4to - f. 80v
© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík

5) ÍB 299 4to: Renderings of Thomas Bartholin's Illustrations (1764)



Fig. D-40: Spears.
ÍB 299 4to - f. 59r
© The National Library, Reykjavík



Fig. D-41: The Deluding of Gylfi.
ÍB 299 4to - f. 59v
© The National Library, Reykjavík



Fig. D-42: Hyrrokkin.
ÍB 299 4to - f. 60v
© The National Library, Reykjavík



Fig. D-43: Rune stone in a wall.
ÍB 299 4to - f. 134v
© The National Library, Reykjavík

6) Examples of Jakob Sigurðsson's Signature

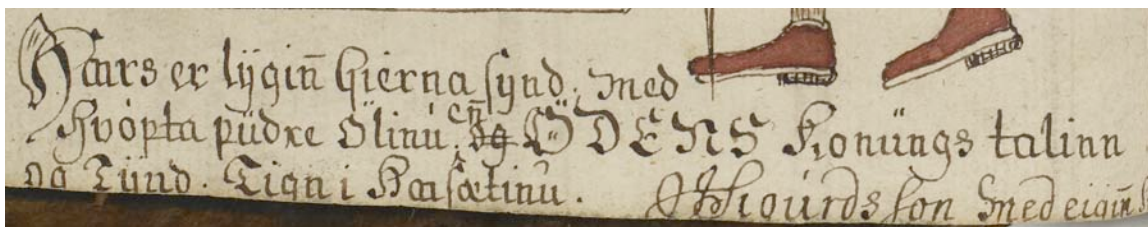


Fig. D-44: Jakob's verse and signature.

NKS 1867 4to - f. 111v

© The Royal Library, Copenhagen

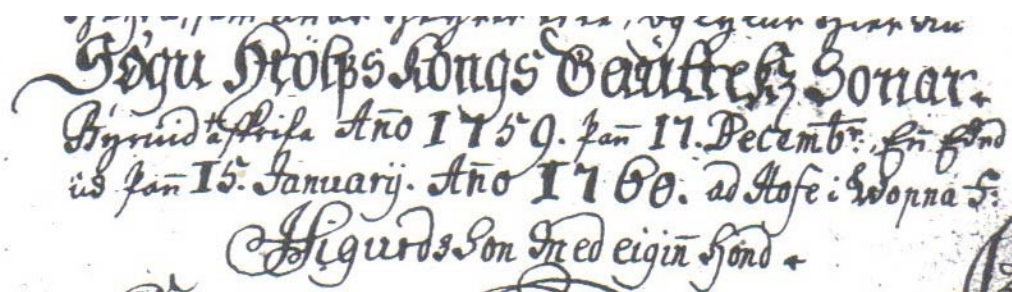


Fig. D-45: Jakob's note and signature at the end of *The Saga of King Hrolf Gautreksson*.

BL. ADD. 11162 - f. 113r

© The British Library, London



Fig. D-46: Jakob's name transcribed in Rammvilling code.

SÁM 66 4to - f. 72v

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík

7) A Comparison of Ólafur Brynjólfsson and Jakob Sigurðsson's Scribal Hands

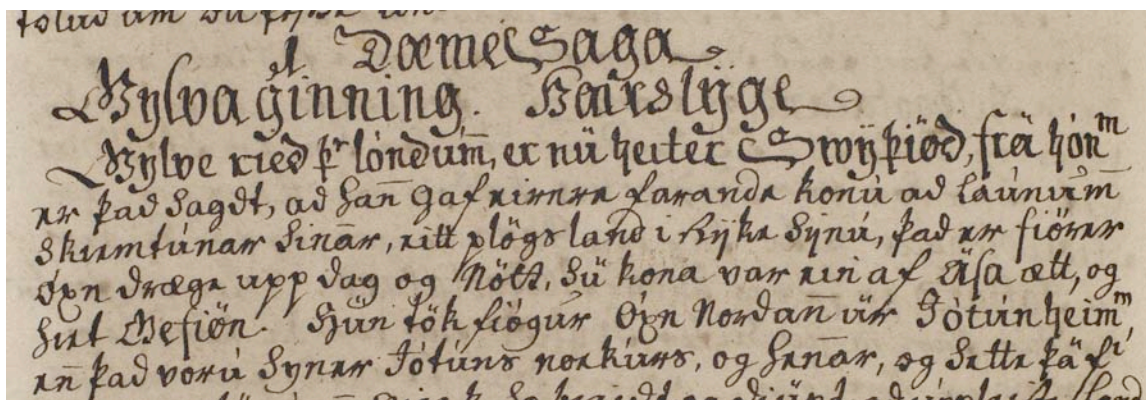


Fig. D-47: Ólafur Brynjólfsson's scribal hand.

NKS 1867 4to f.117v

© The Royal Library, Copenhagen

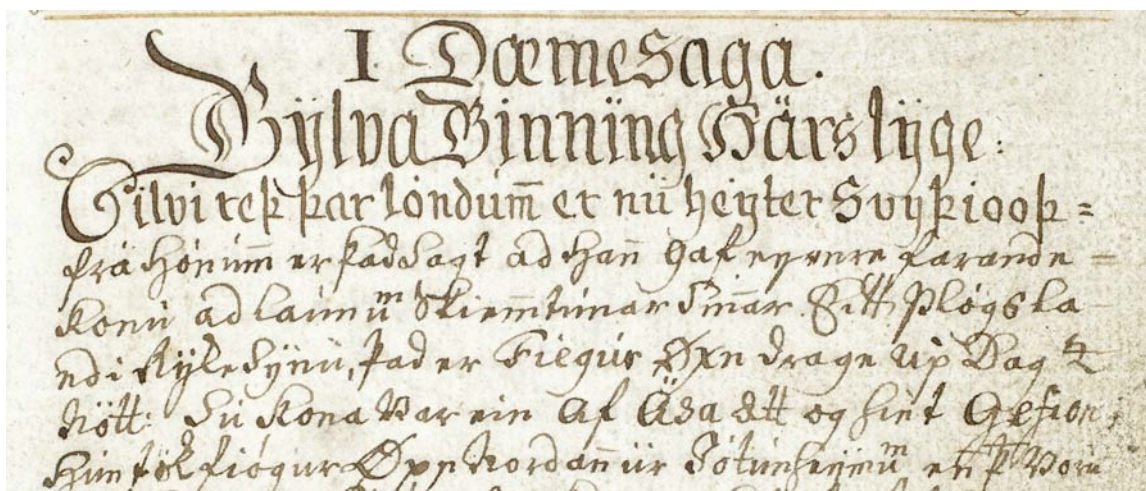


Fig. D-48: Jakob Sigurðsson's scribal hand.

SAM 66 4to f.100r

© The Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík

Appendix E: Illustrations in “Ynglinge Saga” in *Kongesagaer*¹¹⁷

Sources

Oslo..... 1899 edition purchased in Oslo.
 ABE..... 1900 edition purchased from AbeBooks.com.
 Reykholt..... 1900 edition examined in the collection of Snorrastofa, Reykholt, Iceland.

Artists

E.W. Erik Werenskiold (1855-1938)
 G.M. Gerhard Munthe (1849-1929)

1899 – Oslo (8)



1900 – ABE (10)



1900 – Reykholt (10)



Fig. E-1: Gefjon plowing with her oxen sons. (G.M.)
 Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (13)



1900 – Reykholt (13)



Fig. E-2: Gefjon and the giant. (E.W.)
 Photo: P. A. Baer

¹¹⁷ I have only included six of Munthe’s vignettes from “Ynglinge Saga” in this appendix. Munthe created a total of thirty vignettes for “Ynglinge Saga, some of which are iconic rather than presenting dramatic scenes.”

1899 – Oslo (9)



1900 – ABE (11)



1900 – Reykholt (11)



Fig. E-3: Óðinn shape shifting. (G.M.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (9)



1900 – ABE (12)



1900 – Reykholt (12)



Fig. E-4: Óðinn on his highseat. (G.M.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (11)



Fig. E-5: Óðinn. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (12)



Fig. E-6a: The Death of King Fjölnir. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (15)



1900 – Reykholt (15)

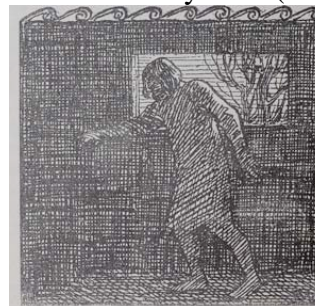


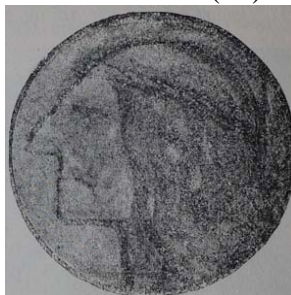
Fig. E-6b: The Death of King Fjölnir. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (14)



Fig. E-7a: Hel. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (17)



1900 – Reykholt (17)



Fig. E-7b: Hel. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (15)



Fig. E-8a: The seeress Huldr and the sons of King Vísburr. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (18)



1900 – Reykholt (18)



Fig. E-8b: The seeress Huldr and the sons of King Vísburr. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (16)



Fig. E-9: The Sacrifice of King Dómaldr. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (15)



1900 – ABE (18)



1900 – Reykholt (18)



Fig. E-10: Gerhard Munthe – The Death of King Dagr.
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (23)



Fig. E-11: King Aun. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (27)



Fig. E-12a: Queen Yrsa and Queen Álöf. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (30)



1900 – Reykholt (30)



Fig. E-12b: Queen Yrsa and Queen Álöf. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (30)



1900 – ABE (34)



1900 – Reykholt (34)



Fig. E-13: Ingjaldr, Gautviðr, and Svipdagr the Blind. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (32)



1900 – ABE (39)



1900 – Reykholt (39)



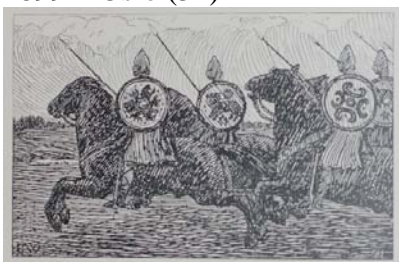
Fig. E-14: The Sons of Svipdagr going to burn six kings in the feasting hall. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (38)

1900 – Reykholt
(38)

Fig. E-15: King Ingjaldr making peace with King Granmarr and King Hjörvarðr. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (34)



1900 – ABE (38)



1900 – Reykholt (38)

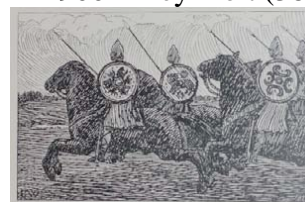


Fig. E-16: King Högni and his men ride into Sweden. (E.W.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (35)



1900 – ABE (40)



1900 – Reykholt (40)



Fig. E-17: King Ingjaldr and his daughter Ása. (G.M.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (40)



1900 – ABE (46)



1900 – Reykholt (46)

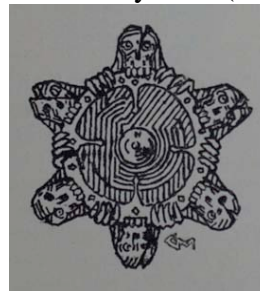


Fig. E-18: Berserks. (G.M.)
Photo: P. A. Baer

Appendix F: Conversion Era Illustrations in *Kongesagaer*

Sources

- Oslo..... 1899 edition purchased in Oslo.
 ABE..... 1900 edition purchased from AbeBooks.com.
 Reykholt..... 1900 edition examined in the collection of Snorrastofa, Reykholt, Iceland.

Artists

- C.K. Christian Krohg (1849-1929)
 H.E. Halfdan Egedius (1877-1899)

1899 – Oslo (82)



Fig. F-1a: Naming Ceremony. (C.K.)

Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – ABE (99)



Fig. F-1b: Naming Ceremony. (C.K.)

Photo: P. A. Baer

1900 – Reykholt (99)



Fig. F-1c: Naming Ceremony. (C.K.)

Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (163)



1900 – ABE (196)



1900 – Reykholt (196)



Fig. F-2: King Óláfr Tryggvason and his men in a pagan temple. (H.E.)

Photo: P. A. Baer

1899 – Oslo (294)



1900 – ABE (362)



1900 – Reykholt (362)



Fig. F-3: King Óláfr Haraldsson and the statue of Þórr. (H.E.)

Photo: P. A. Baer

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¹¹⁸ For the purposes of this index, I have placed Þórr (Icelandic) before Thor (English) in order to avoid separating the illustrations of Þórr/Thor in the list.

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