Eighteenth Century Saga Forgeries:

A Case Study on The Copenhagen Sagas, Forged Literature, and Old Norse-Icelandic Studies During the Late 1700s

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Introduction

In 1977, Peter A. Jorgensen published an essay titled "Hafgeirs saga Flateyings": An Eighteenth-Century Forgery" in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*. The essay exposed an eighteenth century Icelandic saga manuscript as a textual forgery written by an Icelandic student living in Copenhagen. Two years later, Jorgensen published another article on saga forgeries titled "Þjóstólfs saga hamramma: The Case for Forgery" in the 1979 edition of *Gripla*. According to Jorgensen's research, the saga forgeries were allegedly composed in Copenhagen within a few years of each other, and in both cases, the forgers responsible were two Icelandic scribes who were likely well-acquainted with each other. Stories of literary deception such as these are relatively rare in the history of Old Norse-Icelandic studies, and as such, saga forgeries are not a well-studied topic amongst Old Norse scholars. Seldom does Old Norse scholarship discuss the presence of saga forgeries within the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, assumedly because forged texts offer little insight into medieval Icelandic literature and culture. This oversight is a lost opportunity, however, for literary forgeries in other textual corpuses have long been studied for the insight they can provide into the cultural and literary milieus of the forged texts. In this manner, saga forgeries are no exception.

The progression of Old Norse-Icelandic studies is often mistakenly viewed in a strictly linear manner. This view builds upon research from the early decades of the discipline, yet ultimately disregards much of the preliminary research as archaic and outdated. Such an approach is myopic at best, for how can Old Norse-Icelandic studies continue to progress without a clear understanding of the discipline's past? As Old Norse-Icelandic studies moves forward in time, certain avenues of study are pursued and others are dropped. Modern researchers receive only those pursued avenues of study, but what of the ones left behind? Might they not—if revisited—present new ideas about how to approach Old Norse literature?

If one re-evaluated perspectives of earlier Old Norse scholars, observations could be made about how their contemporary literature and culture directed and influenced their perspectives. These observations could then serve as an example for Old Norse-Icelandic studies in the current era. One could observe that most choices made during research are not arbitrary, but rather stem from external stimuli in the environment. By their very nature, saga forgeries allow researchers to scrutinize external influences on the discipline. Saga forgeries function as repositories of their era—a snapshot in time—because the composition of a forgery requires knowledge about how a saga should look like during the eighteenth century (or any other time period). Therefore, saga forgeries from the eighteenth century reflect how scholars and readers of this time period approached the sagas, what issues were important to them, and what perspectives they brought to the study of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. In turn, this

information helps modern researchers understand the trajectory of the discipline, thereby stimulating their own contemporary research.

Two of the better-known Old Norse saga forgeries are *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma*. Both were allegedly composed in late eighteenth century Copenhagen by two Icelandic students named Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörd and Þorleifur Arason Adaldahl, respectively. In her dissertation on these two saga forgeries, Stephanie Schlitz refers to them as the Copenhagen sagas, a term used liberally throughout this thesis. To date, only three scholarly works have been written about the Copenhagen sagas, Schlitz's dissertation being one and Peter Jorgensen's essays the other two. Both scholars primarily focused on proving that the Copenhagen sagas were forged texts; this thesis picks up where Jorgensen and Schlitz left off by approaching the Copenhagen sagas from a cultural and literary perspective. Instead of a linguistic and historical investigation into these sagas (as has already been done by Schlitz and Jorgensen), this thesis focuses on the relationship between the Copenhagen sagas and their contemporary textual and cultural milieus.

This thesis consists of three main parts. First, the text gives a detailed description of the Copenhagen manuscripts, biographical information about the scribes, and a summary of Jorgensen's and Schlitz's arguments against the Copenhagen sagas. Then, a theoretical look at the history of literary forgery and how it applies to the Old Norse-Icelandic canon—including a case study of an earlier saga forgery—shall come next. Finally, elements of the Copenhagen sagas will be compared to three literary milieus which likely had the most influence on the sagas. The three literary milieus are the eighteenth century Icelandic literary milieu, the eighteenth century Danish literary milieu, and the eighteenth century Old Norse-Icelandic studies milieu. These three milieus have been chosen based on Jorgensen and Schlitz's biographical data on the scribes; the selected milieus are representative of three literary systems with which the scribes would have been familiar. Accordingly, if the eighteenth century influenced the Copenhagen sagas, it would have been by way of one (or all) of these literary systems. Approached holistically, the Copenhagen sagas hold the potential to reflect literary trends in eighteenth century Iceland and Denmark, as well as the state of Old Norse-Icelandic studies during this period. Therefore, forged texts offer yet another way for contemporary scholars to retrieve knowledge from eighteenth century readers (and writers) about the Icelandic sagas.

1 The Sagas and Scribes: An Overview of the Source Material

This chapter introduces the Copenhagen sagas and examines the previous research done by Peter Jorgensen and Stephanie Schlitz. Both forged texts will be described in their original, eighteenth century manuscript form and a summary of both sagas will be provided. Relevant biographical information about the scribes will also be given. The evidence that points to the Copenhagen sagas' dubious origins will be outlined and Jorgensen and Schlitz's arguments will be investigated.

1.1 Source Material for *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings*

Hafgeirs saga Flateyings is a mythical-heroic saga found in a late eighteenth century manuscript. The paper manuscript *KBAdd 6 folio* is the only extant copy of the saga, with a flyleaf inside the manuscript claiming this saga was copied from a 12th century notebook brought from Iceland to Copenhagen in 1774. In 1977, Peter A. Jorgensen exposed this saga as an eighteenth century hoax; he explained that the text was actually a clever re-working of *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra* composed by the young Icelandic scribe, Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörd, between 1774 and 1776.[1] According to handrit.is, *KBAdd 6 folio* has been housed in the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík since April 9, 1997 and prior to that, in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. The manuscript was dated to late eighteenth century Copenhagen by Kristian Kålund, librarian of the Árni Magnússon library during the late nineteenth century. An entry of the manuscript appears in no. 251 b folio in the 1783 auction catalogue of Bernhard Møllmann (head librarian of the Royal Library in Copenhagen from 1748 until 1778).[2] Jorgensen cites the short time span between 1783 and 1774-1776 as too short for the saga to have changed hands, indicating that Møllmann was the original buyer of the forgery.[3]

The saga text takes up 55 pages, with two additional pages in the front and back, respectively. According to Jorgensen, the flyleaf's title is written in humanist-antiqua, the italicized script in neo-Gothic cursive, and the rest of the text is a humanistic cursive. The flyleaf reads as follows: "Saga af Hafgeyre flateying *udskreven af en* Membran *der kommen er fra* Island 1774 in 4to exarata Seculo xij".[4] The saga is written in shorthand by one individual, Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörd. Ísfjörd was a prolific scribe, having made copies of at least 36 medieval Icelandic manuscripts and several other non-Icelandic texts during his short five year

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[1] Peter A. Jorgensen, "Hafgeirs saga Flateyings": An Eighteenth-Century Forgery," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* Vol. 76, No. 2 (Apr., 1977): 155-164.

[2] "KBAdd 6 fol.", handrit.is, accessed February 29,2020, handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/is/KBAdd02-0006.

[3] Ibid., 163.

[4] Ibid., 155.

stay in Copenhagen. According to Jorgensen, Ísfjörd's experience with medieval Icelandic manuscripts would have allowed him to differentiate between a genuine medieval manuscript and an eighteenth century forgery. Consequently, the unsigned flyleaf written in the same hand as the manuscript indicates an intentional work of deception.[5]

1.2 Summary of *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings*

Note on the Summary: The most recent scholarly work on these two eighteenth century sagas is Stephanie Schlitz's *The Copenhagen Sagas*[6] and the last part of the dissertation presents synopses and diplomatic editions of both sagas. Orthographic or paleographic analyses are beyond the scope of this thesis, therefore Schlitz's synopses will be referred to for summaries of the sagas.

King Artus, ruler of Sweden, has three sons, the youngest of which, Fenesius, he favors most. However, the queen prefers her two elder sons, so King Artus cleverly fosters Fenesius out to this old friend, Earl Skati. When he is twelve, Fenesius chases a hare into the forest where he meets and slays a cannibalistic giant. Fenesius then travels to the giant's hall and kills the giant's concubine, Lupa, as well. In the hall, Fenesius finds and rescues a beautiful woman, Godfreya, who is the daughter of a dwarf. Godfreya becomes pregnant by Fenesius and Fenesius instructs her to raise the child herself if it is a girl, but to send the child to Earl Skati if it is a boy. Once Fenesius returns to the earl, he sets off on a Viking expedition where he is killed by the infamous Viking, Sóti. Godfreya bears a son, Hafgeir, and takes him to Earl Skati per Fenesius' instructions. Hafgeir grows up to be a fine man and travels to Norway to meet King Halfdane the Black. His success in Viking expeditions curries favor with the king. Hafgeirs tracks down his father's killer, Sóti, and kills him to avenge his father. He then returns to Norway, remains friends with the king, marries, and has many descendants.[7]

1.3 Biography of Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörd

There is not much data available about the scribes, save for their short biographies in *Íslenzkir Hafnarstúdentar* from 1949. Below I have provided the Icelandic entry for the scribe, followed by an English translation. The translations are mine.

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[5] Jorgensen, "Hafgeirs saga," 158-9.

[6] Stephanie Schlitz, "The Copenhagen Sagas" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2003).

[7] Ibid., 120-145.

388. Thorlacus Magni filius Iisfiord, 22 ára; innr. 24. des. 1771. Præc.: Wadskiær. *Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörð*, mun vera fæddur í Meiri-Hlið í Bolungarvík 1748. Foreldrar: Magnús Sigmundsson, bóndi s. st., kallaður hinn auðgi, og kona hans, Élin Jónsdóttir, bónda á Hóli í Bolungarvík, Egilssonar. Cand. juris 6. febr. 1776 með 1. eink. Gerðist sama ár lögsagnari í Snæfellsnessýslu og settist að á Ingjaldshóli, kvæntist sama haust Soffíu Amalíu Erlendsdóttir, nr. 232. Fékk Suður-Múlasýslu 9. febr. 1778, setti bú á Eskifirði árið eftir og andaðist par 2. apríl 1781. Var skarpur maður, kvikur mjög og fjörugur.[8]

Thorlacus Magni filius Iisfiord, 22 years; intern. 24 December 1771. Preceptor: Wadskiær. *Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörð*, was born in Meiri-Hlið in Bolungarvík 1748. Parents: Magnús Sigmundsson, farmer in the same place, called 'the wealthy', and his wife, Elin, daughter of Jón Egilsson, farmer on Hólar in Bolungarvik. Candidatus juris Feb. 6 1776 with 1st in particular. In the same year, became a prosecutor in Snæfellsnessýsla and settled in Ingjaldshólar, the same fall married Soffía Amalía Erlendsdóttir, no. 232. Was given the [position at] Suður-Múlasýsla Feb. 9. 1778, settled on Eskifjörður the following year and died on April 2, 1781. Was a sharp man, very dynamic and merry. (My translation)

A footnote to the entry reads as follows:

Þessir 6 síðasttöldu eru allir 'e schola Skalholtensi´. -- Auknefnið Ísfjörð, sem vitanlega er dregið af Ísafirði, var síðar notað sem ættarnafn.[9]

These last 6 mentioned are all 'of the school Skálholt'. -- The nickname Ísfjörð, which is obviously derived from Ísafjörður, was later used as a family name. (My translation)

1.4 Source Material of *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma*

Þjóstólfs saga hamramma is a short adventure saga composed in Copenhagen during the second half of the eighteenth century. Until the late 1970s, the saga was thought to be an authentic medieval narrative, despite the oldest extant copy of the manuscript dating back to the eighteenth century. In the 1979 edition of *Gripla,* Peter Jorgensen revealed that *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* was also an eighteenth century text masquerading as a medieval saga, with

[8] Bjarni Jónsson, *Íslenzkir Hafnarstúdentar* (Akureyri: 1949), 119.

[9] Ibid., 119.

motifs lifted from *Grettis saga* and other popular sagas. Jorgensen argued that this saga was written under similar circumstances as *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings*; *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* was also written during the late eighteenth century in Copenhagen by a young Icelandic scribe, Þorleifur Arason Adaldahl. Jorgensen also believed that Ísfjörd was acquainted with Adaldahl, as both men enrolled at the same university on the same day, both worked as scribes in Copenhagen for P.F. Suhm, and both probably sold their individual forgeries to the same man, Professor Bernhard Møllmann, head librarian of the Royal Library in Copenhagen.[10]

Þjóstólfs saga hamramma exists in two extant manuscripts; *KBAdd. 376 4to*, dated to the second half of the eighteenth century, and *JS. 225 4to*, which was copied from *KBAdd. 376 4to* by Jón Sigurðsson in the nineteenth century. Both manuscripts reside in Reykjavík, with *KBAdd. 376 4to* housed in the Árni Magnússon Institute and *JS. 225 4to* housed in the National Library of Iceland as part of the Jón Sigurðsson collection. According to handrit.is, *KBAdd. 376 4to* is a paper manuscript with 62 leaves devoted to the saga and two pages at the beginning and one page at the end. There are many instances of lightening on the manuscript and the short-hand script has been traced to one man, Þorleifur Arason Adaldahl. Thought to have been written in Copenhagen between 1772 and 1777, the manuscript was later purchased at an auction by Werlauff Conference Council and became part of the Árni Magnússon collection on April 9th, 1997. The information on handrit.is does not clarify whether Werlauff Conference Council purchased the manuscript on behalf of the Árni Magnússon collection or not, but that is the general impression. The later copy of this manuscript, *JS. 225 4to*, is a paper manuscript consisting of 60 leaves of text, plus one additional page at the front and one additional page at the back. The manuscript was written by Jón Sigurðsson. There is an additional note under the title on 1r which reads: "Eftir afskrift B.U.H. í 4to frá 1770-1790 sem var keypt eftir Werlauff 1871. NB. Höndin er svipuð Guðmundi Helgasyni Ísfold..." ("After the copy of BUH in 4to from 1770-1790 which was purchased by Werlauff 1871. NB. The hand is similar to Guðmundur Helgason Ísfold...").[11] Ísfold was another Icelandic student who studied in Copenhagen during the late eighteenth century, but Jorgensen is quick to point out that "...an inspection of most of the 81 manuscripts in Copenhagen and Iceland attributed to [Ísfold] has shown that it cannot be his work."[12]

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[10] Peter A. Jorgensen, "Þjóstólfs saga hamramma: The Case for Forgery," *Gripla, vol.3* (1979): 96-103.

[11] "KBAdd 376 4to", handrit.is, accessed on February 29, 2020, handrit.is/en/manuscript/view/is/KBAdd04-0376

[12] Ibid., 97.

1.5 Summary of *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma*

Þjóstólfur is raised by his mother, Ingvelldur, who is the granddaughter of Karl the Red. As a youth, Þjóstólfur is thought to be lazy and foolish. One summer, Ingvelldur's freeman is killed by another man, Þiðrandi, during the haymaking. The next summer Þjóstólfur is 14 and takes part in the haymaking. Þiðrandi's horse escapes and Þjóstólfur is so strong that he grabs it by the tail and the horse stops immediately. Þiðrandi says he shall lengthen Þjóstólfur's name to Þjóstólfur hamramma ('the strong') for this deed. Þjóstólfur confronts Þiðrandi about the killing of Ingvelldur's freeman the previous summer. The two men duel and Þiðrandi is killed by Þjóstólfur. In the spring, a shepherd and a horse go missing. Þjóstólfur meets a female troll and discovers that her father and brothers are responsible for the missing man and horse. The troll then leads Þjóstólfur to her family so he can slay them. Later in the saga, Þjóstólfur digs up his great grandfather's grave mound, exchanges verses with the ghost of Karl the Red, and receives a sword from him. Þjóstólfur travels abroad and meets Earl Hákon Sigurðsson, who recognizes Þjóstólfur as the man who killed his friend, Þiðrandi. The earl asks to see a display of Þjóstólfur's strength, so Þjóstólfur wrestles with and kills a polar bear. Þjóstólfur has some valuable clothing items which the earl admires, but when the earl asks for the valuables as gifts, Þjóstólfur says he would only give them to a poor man. The earl and Þjóstólfur then part on bad terms. Þjóstólfur meets a Danish-Irish man named Oddgeir and they compete in games to see which man is better. Þjóstólfur beats Oddgeir, yet Oddgeir still requests to fight against Þjóstólfur and Þjóstólfur unwillingly kills him. Þjóstólfur travels to Denmark and meets King Haraldur Gormsson, who has heard of Þjóstólfur's great feats of strength. A friendship forms between the two men and Þjóstólfur gives the King the gloves he had previous refused the earl. They part on good terms and after a few other adventures, Þjóstólfur returns home to Iceland and marries a fine woman. Around Yule people begin to go missing and Þjóstólfur discovers the troll woman is responsible, so he kills her. Þjóstólfur's wife falls ill and dies, so Þjóstólfur leaves Iceland again. After some traveling, he comes to Norway, which is now ruled by Olaf Tryggvason, and Þjóstólfur finds favor with the new king. He is later baptized and enters the king's service.

1.6 Biography of Þorleifur Arason Adaldahl

As with Ísfjörd's biography, this too is copied from *Íslenzkir Hafnarstúdentar* in the original Icelandic, then followed by my English translation.

389. Thorlevius Aræ filius Adaldahl, e schola Holensi, 22 ára; innr; s. d. Præc.: Wadskiær. ***Þorleifur Arason Aðaldal***, f. um 1749. Foreldrar: Ari Þorleifsson (nr. 180), síðast prestur að Tjörn í Svarfaðardal, og fyrri kona hans, Helga Þórðardóttir, bónda á Felli í Kinn, Magnússonar. Varð 'baccalaureus´ 6. ágúst 1774; að öðru leyti fór nám hans ut um þúfur vegna drykkjuskpar, gerðist svo undirforingi í lífverði konungs, en féll brátt úr þeirri tign og varð svo óbreyttur liðsmaður í hernum. Sagt er, að hann hafi dáið í vesaldómi í Khöfn, en óvíst hvaða ár.[13]

Thorlevius Aræ filius Adaldahl, of the school of Hólar, 22 years; intern. same day [as Ísfjörd]. Preceptor: Wadskiær. *Þorleifur Arason Aðaldal*, born in 1749. Parents: Ari Þorleifsson (nr. 180), last position as a pastor at Tjörn in Svarfaðardal, and his first wife, Helga, daughter of Þórður Magnússon, a farmer at Fell in Kinn. Received a baccalaureate degree 6 August 1774; in other respects, his studies fell by the wayside due to drinking, then became a non-commissioned officer in the king's bodyguard, but soon fell from honor and became an unarmed member of the army. He is said to have died in wretchedness [poverty] in Copenhagen, but it is uncertain which year. (My translation)

A footnote to the entry reads as follows:

Auknefnið er sjáanlega dregið af Aðaldal í Þingeyjarsýslu; hefur Þorleifur sennílega verið fæddur þar og ef til vill alizt þar upp. Var talinn fluggáfaður.[14]

The alias is evidently derived from Aðaldal in Þingeyjarsýslu [county]; Þorleifur had probably been born there and may have been raised there. Was considered intelligent. (My translation)

1.7 The Case for Forgery

The case against the Copenhagen sagas consists of three scholarly works: the PhD dissertation written by Stephanie Schlitz under the supervision of Peter Jorgensen and Jorgensen's two original essays. The following discussion provides an overview of the arguments against classifying the Copenhagen sagas as authentic medieval texts.

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[13] Bjarni Jónsson, *Íslenzkir*, 119.
[14] Ibid., 119.

Jorgensen on *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings*

The following is a summary of the evidence Jorgensen used to support his claim in his essay "Hafgeirs saga Flateyings": An Eighteenth-Century Forgery" from 1977.

The main physical feature cited as evidence of forgery is the flyleaf on the manuscript's cover which dates the manuscript to the twelfth century. The saga can be classified as a mythical-heroic saga and this genre first became popular in Iceland in the fourteenth century, not before. Additionally, the prose shows the influence of foreign romances, which was not seen in Icelandic sagas until the thirteenth century. Literature that romanticized the Vikings was common in eighteenth century Scandinavia. However, the flyleaf dated to the twelfth century rules out the possibility that the saga was intended as eighteenth century fiction. There exist other discrepancies as well, such as the saga verses cannot be philologically reconstructed and "[t]heir inconsistent meter, sporadic alliteration, and lack of stanzaic form also disqualify them from being classified as *rímur* (post fourteenth-century metrical romances) and the lack of refrain excludes their being called ballads or *vikivakar* (post sixteenth-century dance chants)."[15] Jorgensen posits that the lacunae found in the verses are intentional attempts at archaization, for the text is otherwise complete. In addition to the lacunae, there are also lexical cases of attempted archaization. The scribe also uses words unknown to both Old and modern Icelandic, but which instead appear to be Danish slang. Jorgensen thus concludes that *Hafgeirs saga* was not composed during the twelfth century, but rather the eighteenth.

Through handwriting analysis Jorgensen traces the manuscript to a young Icelandic scribe, Þorlákur Magnússon Ísfjörd, who worked as a manuscript copyist while studying in Copenhagen. Jorgensen notes that the manuscript was written entirely in Ísfjörd's hand. He reasons that a forgery might be more difficult to perpetuate if many scribes were involved or if there was an editor overseeing the process. By examining the few biographical details known about Ísfjörd, Jorgensen uncovers inconsistencies which support the case that Ísfjörd composed *Hafgeirs saga* illicitly to pass it off as a genuine twelfth century saga. For example, Ísfjörd was an experienced scribe and if his exemplar had been a medieval forgery, he surely would have known. However, the flyleaf dating the manuscript to the twelfth century is in Ísfjörd's handwriting. In addition to the flyleaf's suspiciously early date, an examination of other manuscripts transcribed by Ísfjörd prove that it was odd for him to write information about the manuscript's source on the flyleaf. Another discrepancy regarding the flyleaf was the alleged date of the manuscript's arrival in Copenhagen in 1774. During this period, there was

[15] Jorgensen, "Hafgeirs saga", 155.

widespread interest in saga literature and the arrival of such a manuscript would have almost certainly attracted scholarly attention.

There are additional, personal details that Jorgensen uses to suggest that Ísfjörd was capable of a saga hoax. For example, *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* shares eight recognizable motifs with *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra.* According to Jorgensen, scribal additions of faux skaldic poems in legitimate sagas were common, but the close borrowing of motif sequences was not. *Hafgeirs saga* has many similarities to *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra* and Ísfjörd would have been very familiar with the saga, for he authored a paper comparing three different versions of *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra*. Jorgensen therefore believes that *Hafgeirs saga* is merely a plagiarized version of *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra*. Jorgensen writes that Ísfjörd signed some of the manuscripts he copied with a pseudonym 'Magnus Jonsen', which Jorgensen believes meant the Icelander's reputation was tarnished. Ísfjörd's involvement in the loss of several leaves from manuscripts copied for his employer, Peter Frederik Suhm may have been the reason for his ill repute.

Jorgensen posits monetary gain as the motive behind Ísfjörd's composition of *Hafgeirs saga.* As Ísfjörd's employer, Suhm would have been the most likely buyer of the saga, but Kristian Kålund does not list the saga in Suhm's collection. Instead, the saga was found listed in Bernhard Møllmann's personal library when the library was sold in 1783. With the saga assumedly being written circa 1774-1776 and Møllmann's death in 1778, it is unlikely that Møllmann purchased the saga from a different buyer before his death. Møllmann was said to have been charitable towards students in need and "half-blind" towards the end of his life.[16] Jorgensen believes both these qualities would have made him an ideal buyer of *Hafgeirs saga.*

Jorgensen on *Þjóstólfs saga*

The almost-identical plot appropriation of *Hafgeirs saga* suggests its inauthenticity in a straightforward manner. However, the case against *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* is more convoluted than that of *Hafgeirs saga.* The following is a summary of the case Jorgensen brought against *Þjóstólfs saga* in his 1979 essay "Þjóstólfs saga hamramma: The Case for Forgery".

Jorgensen begins by acknowledging that there are authentic medieval sagas preserved only in younger manuscripts "for the unbroken scribal continuity in Iceland often preserved now-lost medieval sagas or parts thereof"[17]. However, he argues that *Þjóstólfs saga* is not one of them. Many of the younger sagas share motifs with one another, which does not inherently

[16] Jorgensen, "Hafgeirs saga", 155-164.

[17] Jorgensen, "Þjóstólfs saga", 96.

constitute plagiarism. Instead, Jorgensen cites a cultural change—the transition from medieval to modern, in which imitation becomes plagiarism—as the basis for classifying *Þjóstólfs saga* as a forgery. He claims that eighteenth century Denmark placed "...emphasis on the authenticity of sources and the value of the sagas as historical repositories... [and therefore] ...the rearrangement of a well-known saga's plot (which we would now call plagiarism), sold to a historian as genuine, constituted forgery."[18] In the case of medieval sagas preserved only in younger manuscripts, references to these sagas are often found in other older texts. However, no other manuscripts of *Þjóstólfs saga* seem to exist and the saga is not mentioned in older sources. *Þjóstólfs saga* also contains many modern Danish loanwords which would not have been found in Old Icelandic. For example, in Old Icelandic, "hamramma" refers to a shapeshifter or a berserker, yet Þjóstólfur is neither. However, "hamramma" in modern Icelandic refers to someone very strong and this is the intended meaning in *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma.*

Jorgensen writes that the manuscript of *Þjóstólfs saga* was originally ascribed to the Icelandic scribe Guðmundur Helgason Isfold. However, an examination (assumedly by Jorgensen) of Isfold's other manuscripts shows that it was not his hand, but that of another Icelandic scribe, Þorleifur Arason Adaldahl. In his description of Adaldahl, Jorgensen writes that "[i]t was reported by Bishop Hannes Finnsson, however, that although irresponsible, Adeldahl possessed a quick, sharp mind"[19], suggesting that Adaldahl was both intelligent and unscrupulous enough to perpetuate the forgery. Jorgensen further analyzes Adaldahl's scribal work for discrepancies, reporting that like Ísfjörd, Adaldahl worked for P.F. Suhm and was a prolific scribe, having copied at least 35 of his 36 total manuscripts for Suhm. Of these 35 manuscripts, 33 mentioned the source exemplar on the title page and Suhm made notes in the margins; evidently Suhm 'checked' Adaldahl's scribal work. Adaldahl must have fallen out of favor with his employer at some point, for one of Suhm's marginal notes reads as follows: "'Den er ellers meget ilde af skrevet, ligesom alt med Adeldahl' (Otherwise it is very poorly copied, just like everything by Adeldahl')."[20]

Unlike the other manuscripts attributed to Adaldahl, *Þjóstólfs saga* is unsigned, gives no source information, and lacks any marginal notes from Suhm. The only manuscript of the 36 attributed to Adaldahl lacking a signature or information about the exemplar had, in fact, been substituted for the original, lost exemplar. Jorgensen believes Adaldahl may have been connected to the exemplar's disappearance and that the lack of signature indicates foul play.

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[18] Jorgensen, "Þjóstólfs saga", 96.

[19] Ibid., 97.

[20] Ibid., 101.

On a different occasion, yet another manuscript transcribed by Adaldahl was turned in in place of its misplaced exemplar. There was no signature, but an unknown hand attributed it to Adaldahl, indicating that Adaldahl was held responsible for the loss. Another incongruity pointed out by Jorgensen is that the signature 'M. Magnússon' appears on at least one manuscript in Adaldahl's hand. Jorgensen believes this was not a pseudonym, but the signature of Markús Magnússon, a fellow Icelandic scribe. Jorgensen speculates that Adaldahl may have accrued a bad reputation and had to sell his work under his friend's name instead of his own.

Unlike *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings, Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* is not clearly based on the re-working of a single saga. Instead, Jorgensen suggests Adaldahl utilized motifs from *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar, Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra, Hjálmþés saga ok Ölvis, Finnboga saga ramma, Vilmundar saga viðutan,* and *Auðunar þáttr vestfirzka* to compose *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma.* Jorgensen maintains that the general idea for *Þjóstólfs saga* came from Adaldahl's familiarity with *Grettis saga* (he had copied a rímur version of the saga before). He points out various motifs shared by both Þjóstólfur and Grettir, such as both leading unremarkable childhoods, both killing a man at the age of 14, both manipulating a troll to kill her family in a cave, and both being baptized.[21] Jorgensen adds that the motif of a troll helping the protagonist murder her relatives appears in other sagas, such as *Hálfdanar saga* and *Hjálmþés saga.* Adaldahl was known to have copied *Auðunar þáttr* and the motif of the protagonist choosing a worthy king or earl to bestow gifts on appears in both *Auðunar þáttr* and *Þjóstólfs saga.* Adaldahl also copied part of a manuscript that contained *Finnboga saga ramma,* although he did not copy the saga himself. Plot elements from *Finnboga saga* such as the underwater fight with the polar bear and the saga's title 'ramma' all may have contributed to the plot of *Þjóstólfs saga.*

As Adaldahl's employer, Suhm would have been the most likely buyer for *Þjóstólfs saga,* but like *Hafgeirs saga,* the title was never listed in his collection. Instead, the title was listed in Bernhard Møllmann's library—the same Møllmann who had likely purchased Ísfjörd's forgery. Ísfjörd and Adaldahl enrolled in school on the same day, had the same preceptor, and both worked as scribes for Suhm, increasing the likelihood that composing and selling the forgeries to Møllmann was a shared idea between the two men.

Schlitz on the Copenhagen sagas

Stephanie Schlitz's dissertation "The Copenhagen Sagas" first reiterates the main points of Jorgensen's articles, then completes a linguistic analysis of both texts which ultimately supports Jorgensen's claim that both sagas are forgeries. In Schlitz's own words, the bulk of her dissertation research "...outlines Ísfiord's and Adaldahl's conventions for representing the

[21] Jorgensen, "Þjóstólfs saga", 101-3.

orthography, morphology, and syntax in each manuscript…"[22] by pointing out anachronistic inconsistencies in their scribal conventions to further Jorgensen's argument. She writes that the "…work of Haraldur Bernharðsson (1999) demonstrates that Icelandic scribes working in the seventeenth century, copying earlier fourteenth-century exempla, modernized older phonological features but left archaic morphological features intact."[23] Schlitz concludes that the sagas' phonological features are often inconsistently archaized, and "incongruities abound" as the scribes used both archaic and modern morphology, illustrating "…the kind of misdirected archaizing efforts typified by hypercorrection."[24]Put simply, the scribes' overt attempts to make the manuscripts look older instead identified them as younger texts masquerading as archaic texts.

A movement to safeguard the purity of the Icelandic language—most notably against Danish—arose in the sixteenth century and according to Schlitz, by the late eighteenth century, Danish scholars such as Rasmus Rask were advocating for the elimination of Danish orthography and spelling from the Icelandic language.[25] Against this backdrop Schlitz examines how linguistic traces of eighteenth century Denmark appear ubiquitously throughout both sagas. She writes that the sagas reveal themselves as much younger than the twelfth century because the scribes incorporated a variety of medieval orthographic forms dating anywhere from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. Schlitz also notes apparent Danish influences on the sagas, both in terms of orthography and vocabulary.[26] This evidence strongly suggests that either the saga exemplars were not from the twelfth century, or that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl did not follow the exemplars to any recognizable degree, or both. However, it appears that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl did in fact follow an exemplar—their own drafts of the sagas, according to Schlitz. She analyzes the common errors known to scribal copying—dittography (copying the same word twice), homeoteleuton (when a scribe's eyes jump from one ending to another ending, thereby omitting the words in between), and lacunae. The first two errors are common when copying from an exemplar, she writes, but the lacunae are probably intentional errors added for archaization.[27]

Schlitz also remarks on medieval saga transmission and scribal practices, concluding that both Ísfjörd and Adaldahl's sagas do not fit authentic scribal practices. She states that while the resemblance between *Hafgeirs saga* and *Hálfdanar saga* is pronounced, the relationship

[22] Schlitz, "The Copenhagen Sagas", 10.
[23] Ibid., 88.
[24] Ibid., 90.
[25] Ibid., 6-7.
[26] Ibid., 88-101.
[27] Ibid., 102-104.

between *Þjóstólfs saga* and *Grettis saga* is not so obvious. Many of the motifs in *Þjóstólfs saga* are found throughout the *fornaldarsögur* genre and redactions or multiple versions of a tale were not uncommon. What then classifies these two sagas as inauthentic texts rather than unoriginal redactions? Schlitz believes that the most damning evidence lies in the scribes' desire to distance themselves from their textual creations.[28]

2 A Theoretical Exploration of Saga Forgeries

In preparation for a cultural and literary analysis of the Copenhagen sagas, this chapter first treats saga forgeries from a theoretical perspective. The main theoretical concern is the history of literary forgery, especially relating to medieval Norse-Icelandic literature, while the next chapter addresses the specific role of eighteenth century Denmark and Iceland in the composition of the Copenhagen sagas. A theoretical exploration considers the Copenhagen sagas from yet another perspective, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding not only of the sagas' relationship to the eighteenth century, but also to the proceeding centuries.

2.1 Literary Forgery

Forged literature is nothing new to the Western literary canon. Anthony Grafton writes in his book *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* that the earliest known Western literary forgeries date back to the fourth century. The superficial motives for literary forgery tend to remain the same throughout the ages, however; monetary gain, career and/or social advancement, the desire to authorize a certain dogma, the reshaping of history from an alternate, but not necessarily untrue, perspective, and so forth. However, Grafton proposes that the underlying *need* fulfilled by literary forgeries is the same need served by forgery's consanguineous opposition, textual criticism. He writes:

> Forgery and criticism both offer ways of dealing with a single general problem. In any complex civilization, a body of authoritative texts takes shape; this offers rules for living and charters for vital social, religious, and political practices. Ways of life and institutions change, but the texts, like Dorian Gray, are eternally youthful. Eventually they clearly fail to correspond with the changed face of the civilization that relies on their guidance.[29]

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[28] Schlitz, "The Copenhagen Sagas", 110-115.

[29] Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and critics: creativity and duplicity in Western scholarship* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 124.

He explains that this problem is approached in a myriad of ways by textual criticism. There is the allegorical approach—the text is not to be taken literally, ergo its true meaning transcends time. Opposing this is the literal approach, where the text represents a 'golden age' to which the current, corrupt society endeavors to return. Alternatively, the more standard critical approach openly acknowledges the text as a product of its time and therefore new texts must be produced to accurately reflect the current period. Finally, there is forgery in which authors choose to "...restore the portrait instead of the face..."[30], continuing the Dorian Gray metaphor so cleverly employed by Grafton. The symbiotic relationship between forgery and criticism is highlighted by Grafton, who argues that forgery has advanced literary criticism, as literary critics must continuously improve their methods so that forgeries do not go undetected. Other times, the forger and the critic are one and the same, as in the case of a fifteenth century Dominican friar, historian and forger, Giovanni Nanni.[31] Overall, Grafton paints literary forgery as a natural response to a culture's textual corpus, adding that literary forgery also acts as a progressive force for both philology and textual criticism.

Returning to the North, how, then, did these elements unfold in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary tradition?

2.1.1 Literary Forgeries in the Old Norse-Icelandic Corpus

A cursory perusal of the Old Norse corpus might convince most scholars that forgeries are rare in this field. However, Old Norse-Icelandic literature must have been as susceptible to forgeries as any other literary corpus. Indeed, there are a few mentions of forgeries, usually appearing in essays concerned with the post-medieval reception of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. The majority of known forgeries of Scandinavian sagas were composed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What cultural forces allowed for these forgeries to take place at this point in Nordic history? How and when were these sagas exposed as fakes? Did the forgeries affect Old Norse-Icelandic philology and textual criticism to any degree? To understand the cultural milieu from which *Hafgeirs* and *Þjóstólfs saga* arose, questions such as these must be considered.

2.1.2 *Hjalmars och Ramers saga*: A Case Study

In "The Nordic demand for Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts", Mats Malm discusses how seventeenth century interest in medieval Icelandic manuscripts coupled with a competitive

[30] Grafton, *Forgers and critics*, 124-5.

[31] Ibid., 99-123.

spirit of Nordic patriotism together shaped the field of Old Norse studies. Within this context, Malm mentions a saga forgery, *Hjalmars och Ramers saga*, which was printed first in 1690 and then again in 1710. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the Scandinavian countries began to create national identities reflecting their worldviews and their hopes for the future. Classical Graeco-Roman culture still dominated the intellectual scene of Europe, putting the more remote Scandinavian countries at a cultural disadvantage. However, modern Scandinavians could trace their ancestry back to the Goths—Germanic tribes who had conquered Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries. Scandinavian nationalists (especially in Denmark and Sweden) seized upon this Gothic past, thereby aligning themselves with classical culture and arguing that they too were descended from a heroic race. Swedish and Danish scholars began mining the Old Norse-Icelandic textual corpus, fervently searching for texts and artifacts that would definitively prove their country was the heir to this Germanic heritage. The forged *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* was intended as an artifact that could support Sweden's claim as the true heir.[32] About *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* Malm writes:

> [The saga] was said to have been written in runes… [and its plot follows] Hialmar and Ramer [who] are conquered in Sweden by a powerful Olaf, reminiscent of Olaf Skautkonung who liberated Sweden from idolatry. The falsification, in other words, authenticates Sweden's importance for the establishment of Christianity in the Nordic countries, while at the same time the runic writing is to be understood against the background of [Ole] Worm's claim that the runes prove that Denmark's culture is the most original.[33]

To briefly return to Anthony Grafton's metaphor of forgery "restoring the portrait but not the face", it becomes clear how a saga such as *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* fits the paradigm. During the seventeenth century, the "face"—or the reality of the Nordic countries and their roles in authentic medieval sagas—was not satisfactory to certain individuals. Unable to change history, they instead modified the "portrait", painting a (false) literary picture of early Sweden and its critical role in the Christianization of Scandinavia. While medieval documents might not accurately reflect Sweden's role in the spread of Christianity, we cannot make assumptions without evidence. Therefore, this saga forgery was an idealistic forgery, endeavoring to rewrite a brighter history for ancient Sweden, but a forgery nonetheless.

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[32] Mats Malm, "The Nordic demand for Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts," in *The Manuscripts of Iceland*, ed. Gísli Sigurðsson and Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavik: Árni Magnússon Institute, 2004), 106.

[33] Ibid., 106.

As one of the earliest known Scandinavian saga forgeries, the history of *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* illustrates how textual criticism was used to denounce the text as a literary forgery. According to Philip Lavender,

> There were suspicions as to the saga's authenticity right from the start, but in 1774 Carl Gustav Nordin published a thesis at Uppsala entitled "Monumenta sviogothica vetustioris ævi falso meritoque suspecta" which dealt a death-blow to the saga as a reliable historical source. Many of the phrases used in the saga were shown to be taken verbatim from the saga editions and lexica which had appeared in the years prior to Hjalmars och Hramers saga's publication. Vilhelm Gödel corroborated the inauthenticity of the saga in an article from 1896 in which he declared it to be "ett literärt falsarium" ("a literary forgery").[34]

Like Jorgensen's case against *Hafgeirs saga* (and to a lesser degree *Þjóstólfs saga),* phrases, lexicon, and motif sequences from authentic sagas were compared against those found in *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* to expose the text as a literary forgery.

Although beyond the scope of this thesis, one might speculate that saga forgeries in the early days of Old Norse-Icelandic studies helped set a precedent for textual criticism. Motif study plays a prominent role in saga scholarship, not least because of the sagas' oral pre-history. Some Old Norse scholars speculate that pre-medieval storytelling practices were somewhat like a choose-your-own-adventure book; a certain character would have had many episodes composed about him (or her), and during a storytelling event, the storyteller would pick and choose which episodes to incorporate into his narrative. The sagas were thought to have later been written by selecting the known stories about a character or a region and incorporating these into a novel-like narrative.[35] The later Middle Ages also saw various 'redactions' of popular sagas; for example, authentic *rímur* versions of many of the *Íslendingasögur* openly existed without being labelled as forgeries. This is all to say that it is not uncommon for authentic sagas to share motifs, but it is suspicious when too many identical motif sequences

[34] Philip Lavender and Centre for Digital Humanities, "Introduction to a Forgery", University of Gothenburg, 2019, dh.gu.se/hjalmars_saga/introduction.html

[35] Further information about this topic can be found in *Medieval Icelandic Sagas and Oral Tradition; A Discourse on Method* (2002) by Gísli Sigurðsson, *Sagorna om Norges kungar: från Magnús góði till Magnús Erlingsson* (2002) by Tommy Danielsson, and *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180-1280)* (2012) by Theodore M. Andersson.

occur in two texts. Similarly, it is clearly plagiarism when entire pieces of plot or dialogue are copied almost-verbatim from another text. Because plagiarism and plot appropriation were the leading 'methods' of saga forgery, it follows that Old Norse-Icelandic studies might focus more on plot and motif analysis. This does not mean saga forgeries caused the close study of narrative elements of the Old Norse sagas; after all, any study of literature involves an analysis of narrative elements. However, detecting saga forgeries involved the study of these elements, so perhaps an immediate kinship exists between forgery and textual criticism in Old Norse-Icelandic studies, just as Grafton suggests.

2.1.3 Saga Sleuthing: A Contemporary Past Time?

From September 2017 through August 2019, Philip Lavender collaborated with the Centre for Digital Humanities at the University of Gothenburg to lead a project on Scandinavian saga forgeries. Unfortunately, his research has yet to be published, but there is a brief overview of the project online. The title is "Forging Ahead: Faking Sagas and Developing Concepts of Cultural Authenticity and National Identity" and the five sagas studied are *Hjalmars saga och Hramers* (Sweden), *Krembres saga Gautakonungs og Augis konungs I Uppsala* (Sweden), *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* (Denmark), *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* (Denmark), and *Þóris þáttr hasts ok Bárðar birtu* (Iceland). Lavender's project explores these sagas as repositories of the time periods from which they originated.[36]

Two of these sagas, *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma,* were not revealed as plagiarized reworking of other sagas until Jorgensen's essays in 1977 and 1979 respectively. Stephanie Schlitz writes that "*Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* is the first Icelandic saga forgery to have been identified, and for this reason, its historical importance cannot be overlooked."[37] Although not incorrect, this statement omits any information about previously outed Scandinavian saga forgeries. In fact, Schlitz does not even mention *Hjalmars och Ramers saga,* a known forgery since 1774 (which was again renounced in 1896). Nor does she acknowledge that *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* and *Krembre saga* were both publically recognized as forgeries during the nineteenth century by Peter Erasmus Müller (1776-1834), saga historian and bishop of Zealand. In one of the volumes of *Sagabibliotek,* Müller classifies some of the texts as sagas composed in more recent times.

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[36] Philip Lavender and Centre for Digital Humanities, "Forging Ahead: Faking Sagas and Developing Concepts of Cultural Authenticity and National Identity", University of Gothenburg, 2019, dh.gu.se/hjalmars_saga/project.html

[37] Schlitz, "The Copenhagen Sagas", 2.

> [T]wo are explained by Müller to be forgeries, those being *Hjalmars og Ramers saga* and *Krembre saga*, the latter apparently "opdigtet af en Islænder, som ventede god Betaling af svenske Oldforskere" (composed by an Icelander who expected a decent payment from Swedish antiquities researchers), and one, *Halfdan den gamles saga*, composed by an Icelander still living at the time in which Müller was writing and which imaginatively told of ancient deeds but with no apparent intent to pull the wool over anybody's eyes.[38]

It is unknown when the Icelandic forgery included in Lavender's recent study, *Þóris þáttr hasts ok Bárðar birtu*, was discovered to be a forgery, but considering the little to be found, the discovery was likely a recent one. Of the five sagas included in Lavender's project, at least one, *Hjalmars og Ramers saga*, was a known forgery during the period in which Jorgensen speculates Ísfjörd and Adaldahl composed their sagas. It is therefore plausible that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl were aware of Nordin's 1774 thesis denouncing *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* as a forgery. If this speculation is correct, there would be a few obvious implications. Assuming that Møllmann was the buyer for both Ísfjörd's and Adaldahl's sagas, it follows that these sagas were not produced with public consumption in mind. Perhaps Møllmann and the saga authors were the only contemporary readers of the sagas. If so, then the singular motive for writing these sagas was mostly likely monetary gain. With all the interest in medieval Icelandic manuscripts during this period, why did the scribes not try to make an academic career out the 'discovery' of a new saga? Perhaps it was because they feared the sagas being exposed as fakes and instead sold them privately to a less discerning patron. This fear of discovery may have been rooted in the competence and expertise of Old Norse scholars at the time. As Jorgensen notes, P. F. Suhm probably never read either saga manuscript, perhaps because he would have recognized the sagas as inauthentic. However, if Ísfjörd and Adaldahl knew about Nordin's thesis, they may have realized that their sagas could be exposed as forgeries, just as *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* had been. After all, *Hjalmars och Ramers saga, Hafgeirs saga Flateyings,* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* were all composed in a similar manner—through plot and motif appropriation of genuine sagas. Alternately, the methods used to compose *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* may have served as inspiration for Ísfjörd's and Adaldahl's sagas. Regardless of the relationship, *if* there was a relationship between Ísfjörd, Adaldahl, and Nordin's thesis on

[38] Philip Lavender, "The Secret Prehistory of the *Fornaldarsögur," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology Vol. 114, No. 4* (October 2015): 534.

Hjalmars och Ramers saga, such a connection could further explain choices made by the scribes.

Concluding this brief history of Scandinavian saga forgeries, it should be noted that the motives for forging saga texts were similar to motives seen in other forged literature. *Hjalmars och Ramers saga* was first presented as Lucas Halpap's thesis in 1690 at Uppsala University. Not only did it further Halpap's academic career, but it also supported nationalistic ideologies regarding Sweden's ties with the Gothic empire.[39] *Krembre saga* appears to have been written with nationalistic and monetary goals in mind too, for it was "[...]'opdigtet af en Islænder, som ventede god Betaling af svenske Oldforskere' (composed by an Icelander who expected a decent payment from Swedish antiquities researchers)"[40]. Both *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* probably had financial gain as their singular goal. Therefore, it is obvious that the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus was no more immune to forgeries than any other textual corpus. As some sagas were deemed forgeries early in the study of Old Norse-Icelandic literature, this also suggests that the philological and textual critical methods used to unmask these works became staples in the toolbox of Old Norse scholars. As Grafton writes, "in all cases criticism has been dependent for its development on the stimulus that forgers have provided".[41] Perhaps, then, Old Norse-Icelandic studies owes quite a debt to these early Scandinavian saga forgeries.

2.2 Conceptual Thoughts on Forgery

Our initial interest in literary forgeries speaks to our desire to solve crimes and unmask the illicit. I admit that the thrill of criminality was what first piqued my interest when I came across the essays on the Copenhagen sagas. Once the forgery has been revealed and the perpetrator identified, what is left to say about these literary works? Perhaps not much—an opinion attested to by the total of three scholarly works treating these sagas. However, this thesis argues otherwise, for a textual analysis of these sagas could reveal much about the Old Norse-Icelandic literary milieu of the eighteenth century. Additionally, these sagas could be treated as repositories of an era—just as the authentic Icelandic sagas are—and could reveal dominant literary and philosophical ideologies in eighteenth century Denmark. Before entering into such a discourse (that is the topic of the following chapter), a short study on the *concept* of literary forgery shall be undertaken to lay a foundation for further discussion on the matter.

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[39] Lavender, "Forging Ahead", dh.gu.se/hjalmars_saga/introduction.html

[40] Lavender, "The Secret Prehistory", 534.

[41] Grafton, *Forgers and critics,* 123.

In *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England,* Alfred Hiatt discusses the relationship between a literary forgery and its surrounding culture.

> A forgery, if it is given the form of a pseudo-original, manifests an idea of the way a document should look—how big it should be, what type of script is appropriate, how it should be authenticated. And even, when, as is more common, it is passed off as a copy, forgery still manifests a notion of the significance of a document: what its functions are, what it can prove or disprove, claim or disclaim; and more generally, what symbolic role it plays within a community, how it mediates history, responds to present and future exigencies.[42]

We can see these elements at play in the Scandinavian saga forgeries mentioned above. The two Swedish saga forgeries reinforced Sweden's prominent role in Christianization, thus supporting nationalistic aims of Swedish scholars and patriots. Neither of the Copenhagen sagas invoke a nationalistic agenda, but instead, attempt to quietly take their place in the Old Norse-Icelandic saga corpus. As their authors almost certainly wrote the sagas for financial gain, these sagas were not intended to have wide reaching effects on society. But what about their unintended effects on the saga corpus at a later date?

Hiatt continues,

> But in what way, then, are forged documents aligned with these other manifestations of the idea of the document? One answer to this question may be suggested by Jean Baudrillard's notion of the 'hyperreal': 'a real without origin or reality', generated by models.[43] Forged documents take a generic form and invoke and adapt it, sometimes elaborating it, at other times simply filling in its gaps...This generation by models can be performed with considerable creativity and freedom, or more conservatively. The important point, though, is that these texts...express the *concept* of documentation.[44]

Although genre is a somewhat ambiguous term in literary studies, *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* are most representative of the *fornaldarsögur* genre, with hybrid

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[42] Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: The British Library, 2004), 3.

[43] Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations", in *Selected Writings,* 2nd edn, ed. Mark Poster (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001): 169, quoted in Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: The British Library, 2004), 4.

[44] Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries,* 4.

characteristics of *the Íslendingasögur* genre in the case of the latter. Neither saga is particularly unique; in fact, both are somewhat banal, a trait that likely prevented their detection for close to two hundred years. Their presence as part of these genres—however insignificant—still contributed to defining the *fornaldarsögur* or *Íslendingasögur* genre. These two texts are thus material embodiments of two men's opinions of what it meant for a saga to belong to the *fornaldarsögur* or *Íslendingasögur* genre (assuming that the scribes had these genres in mind when composing their sagas). Perhaps the scribes had no intended genres when composing their sagas—they simply incorporated many saga-like elements to help their forgeries pass as authentic. This may be so, and we cannot ask the long-dead scribes about their intentions. However, it can still be argued that these sagas reflect ideas about what makes a saga a saga. For example, *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra*—the saga from which *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* borrows most generously—contains no poetry, yet *Hafgeirs saga* does. Ísfjörd's addition of poetry may have been to distance his saga from its plagiarized original, but he could have also added the poetry because he felt that poetry was an essential saga ingredient. Therefore, his work reflects not only a specific saga, but also his *concept* of what makes a text a saga.

To return briefly to the French philosopher quoted by Hiatt, Jean Baudrillard, it appears that his theories have more to offer the study of saga forgeries. In his essay "Simulacra and Simulations", Baudrillard describes *simulation* as the creation of the *hyperreal,* which as we might recall from above is "a real without origin or reality". He argues that an effective simulation is indistinguishable from the condition it simulates. He uses the example of a simulated illness. In a simulated illness, the patient must feel all the symptoms of sickness that he would were the illness a non-simulated illness. This is the difference between the feigning of an illness and the simulation of an illness. Were one to only feign illness, no physical symptoms would actually beset one. Therefore, Baudrillard asks, how can we discern the difference between the simulated and the non-simulated? We cannot, for the simulation has become the real—or rather the *hyperreal.*[45] To apply this to Old Norse-Icelandic studies, a saga forgery is a simulation of an authentic saga. Before the forgery is detected, Old Norse scholars do not differentiate between a forged document and an authentic one. If the forged saga is accepted into the Old Norse saga canon, then there is no difference between the forged and the authentic in terms of their function in the literary corpus. At least five Scandinavian saga forgeries have already been exposed and it is likely that more will be exposed in time. How then can we maintain concrete certainty about our sources when studying Old Norse-Icelandic texts? The truth is, we cannot. The past is always a place of ambiguity, often built from

[45] Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations", 169-87.

imaginative wishes more so than from historical circumstances. Grappling with the past will always be a herculean task, and only by acknowledging our uncertainties can we humbly progress.

One last conceptual problem must be faced before concluding this section and that is the problem of the word *forgery* itself. Both Jorgensen and Schlitz refer to *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* as forgeries and I too have followed this model in my thesis. This is not an argument on the soundness of Jorgensen's and Schlitz's arguments; rather this thesis endeavors to clarify why, in technical terms, these sagas are referred to as forgeries.

> The classic work of German and Austrian diplomatic criticism, Harry Bresslau's *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre*, makes a basic distinction between the 'diplomatic forgery' [...] defined as 'any piece of writing, which due to the intention of its producer, gives itself for something other than it really is', and the 'historical forgery' [...] a document which asserts something that never in reality took place, but whose issuer does not assume a false identity.[46]

Under this definition, both *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma* would be considered "diplomatic forgeries", albeit for different reasons. *Hafgeirs saga* is the clearest case of "a piece of writing, which due to the intention of its producer, gives itself for something other than it really is" not only because of its obvious plot appropriation of *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra,* but also because of the flyleaf dating the saga to the twelfth century. Regardless of any other indictment against the text, the obviously-false dating on the manuscript clearly classifies it as a forgery according to Bresslau's definition. The classification of *Þjóstólfs saga* as a forgery is more complex. Jorgensen's motif appropriation argument of *Þjóstólfs* saga is not as successful as with *Hafgeirs saga,* mainly because *Þjóstólfs saga* has allegedly drawn from so many sources. However*, Þjóstólfs saga* is academically suspect in other manners, such as its lack of signature by a well-known Icelandic scribe, or its intentional archaization via lacunae. Whether it is based on a rearrangement of other saga motifs or not, it does "give itself for something other than it really is", thereby fitting the definition of a "diplomatic forgery". Bresslau continues to break down forgeries into smaller subtypes, yet further classification will not advance the arguments presented in this thesis.

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[46] Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre f*ür *Deutschland und Italien,* 2 vols (Leipzig: Von Veit, 1889), 7, quoted by Alfred Hiatt in *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: The British Library, 2004), 5-6.

3 A Cultural and Literary Exploration of *Hafgeirs saga Flateyings* and *Þjóstólfs saga hamramma*

This chapter explores the relationship between the Copenhagen sagas and three eighteenth century literary milieus by way of genre theory and comparative literary analysis. This thesis proposes that although Ísfjörd and Adaldahl used medieval Icelandic sagas as the models for their saga forgeries, the contemporary literary and cultural milieus surrounding these men also influenced their works. Although by no means an exhaustive list, three cultural categories have been selected that likely had the most influence on the saga forgeries. The first category this thesis will explore is the late eighteenth century literary culture in Iceland. Since the scribes were raised in Iceland, the Icelandic literary tradition presumably laid the foundation for the scribes' knowledge of the saga tradition. The second category is the cultural and literary milieu of late eighteenth century Denmark, with a specific emphasis on Copenhagen. As Ísfjörd and Adaldahl attended university, held scribal jobs, and almost certainly composed the sagas in Copenhagen, this milieu must have influenced their work. The last category examined will be the state of Old Norse-Icelandic studies during the late eighteenth century in Scandinavia. As these sagas were written during a time of heightened interest in all things Old Norse, the contemporary trends of Old Norse-Icelandic studies probably guided the composition of the sagas.

This chapter begins with a discussion about concepts of genre and how genre can be applied to the Copenhagen sagas. Next a brief overview of the three literary milieus is given, followed by a discussion of how the Copenhagen sagas manifest evidence of these milieus. By examining *Hafgeirs saga* and *Þjóstólfs saga* through these three cultural and literary systems, the contemporary factors that influenced the Copenhagen sagas may come to light. Additionally, this study will provide further insight about a unique and pivotal period in the history of Old Norse-Icelandic studies and how this period gave rise to saga forgeries. As a whole, this chapter will explore two Old Norse saga forgeries and their positions within the eighteenth century literary milieus from which they originated.

3.1 Genre and the Eighteenth Century in the Copenhagen Sagas

In her dissertation, Stephanie Schlitz analyzed the language used in the Copenhagen sagas to support her hypothesis that both texts were eighteenth century compositions. Her study showed that the scribes used eighteenth century Danish forms of some words and 'Danicisms'—colloquial Danish phrases—throughout both sagas, firmly anchoring the texts not in medieval Iceland, but in eighteenth century Denmark. The original intention of this thesis

was to accomplish the same as Schlitz, yet from a cultural and literary perspective. The goal was to discover literary elements within the Copenhagen sagas that directly reflected Enlightenment ideals, the political and cultural climate of eighteenth century Denmark and Iceland, or any other obvious elements that would reinforce the relationship between the sagas and the eighteenth century. Although linguistic traces of the eighteenth century abound in the texts, the research for the thesis did not turn up many literary references to the eighteenth century within the Copenhagen sagas. However, research instead suggested similarities between the generic traits of the Copenhagen sagas and the genres popular in eighteenth century Iceland and Denmark.

Traditionally, saga genres were defined by their geographical setting (Iceland or abroad) and the historical time period covered (Scandinavian pre-history, Settlement Era, or Age of the Sturlungs). Since then, different methods for defining genre in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus have been suggested, but the traditional model still remains most prevalent. Genre is still a somewhat ambiguous classification bestowed on literature despite advances in genre and literary theory. With this ambiguity in mind, a brief description follows of how the thesis engages with genre. First, the Copenhagen sagas are generically defined in relation to the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus. These definitions operate as a sort of "baseline" generic classification. Next, common classifiers of genre, such narrative structure, motif, and theme, are used to draw parallels between the Copenhagen sagas and eighteenth century literature. The remainder of the chapter utilizes traditional literary analysis to examine the Copenhagen sagas' place within eighteenth century Icelandic and Danish literary culture. This evidence is not meant to convince readers that the Copenhagen sagas were written during the eighteenth century. The arguments put forth by Jorgensen and Schlitz have already accomplished that. Instead, this thesis suggests a certain context in which one might approach the Copenhagen sagas—as the product of a long, medieval tradition, as well as a product of the eighteenth century's reaction to and synthetization of that same tradition.

Genre and the Copenhagen Sagas

Jorgensen and Schlitz seem to agree that *Hafgeirs saga* is one of the *fornaldarsögur*. The saga resembles *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra* (a fornaldarsaga) to such a degree that both sagas fit into the same genre. Both Jorgensen and Schlitz believe that *Grettis saga* was the primary inspiration for the structure of *Þjóstólfs saga*, but are hesitant to define the saga's genre in any strict sense, probably because *Þjóstólfs saga* and *Grettis saga* draw from both the *fornaldarsögur* and *Íslendingasögur* genres. Elizabeth Rowe remarks that hybrids of *fornaldarsögur* and *Íslendingasögur* were relatively common and writes that "the two varieties [she] identify as

hybrids arise only from combining the setting of one genre with the structure of action of the other. The combination of family saga setting with mythic-heroic structure yields a hybrid [she] call[s] "Icelandic mythic-heroic saga", such as *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* and *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*."[47] Consequently, the Copenhagen sagas are loosely classified as *fornaldarsögur,* with *Þjóstólfs saga* leaning towards a hybridized subgenre.

Some scholars have suggested that the *fornaldarsögur* genre itself can be further divided into subtypes. One such scholar, Hermann Pálsson, is quoted by Tulinius as suggesting

> that the *fornaldarsögur* can be divided into two groups: 'hero legends' and 'adventure tales' [...] The 'adventure tales', which Pálsson would also like to label 'Viking romances' because they often take place in the world of seafaring Vikings, are none the less closer to a continental romance tradition that the 'heroic legends'. They usually end well for the hero, who is not necessarily of royal or aristocratic background. Though they sometimes portray more than one generation of heroes, this is by no means as common as in the former group. The adventure tales resort to other types of narrative technique in order to augment their subject matter and lengthen their stories.[48]

Hafgeirs saga fits the model of the adventure tale, for the narrative takes place in the "world of seafaring Vikings" and has romantic motifs, such as the flowery descriptions of female beauty and the mention of a chess game. The saga portrays two generations of heroes and both are of noble parentage, but unlike the 'hero legends', *Hafgeirs saga* ends happily for Hafgeir (but not for his father).

Þjóstólfs saga can also be classified as an 'adventure tale' *fornaldarsögur/Íslendingasögur* hybrid, or as Rowe refers to it, an "Icelandic mythic-heroic saga". *Þjóstólfs saga* is set in the world of seafaring Vikings, but its courtly elements are more minimal than those found in *Hafgeirs saga.* Structurally the saga resembles *Grettis saga* (another "Icelandic mythic-heroic saga" hybrid), but there are characteristics of *Þjóstólfs saga* which suggest an 'adventure tale' genre over an "Icelandic mythic-heroic" genre. For example, *Þjóstólfs saga* focuses on a protagonist not of noble birth and who lives happily ever after, in sharp contrast to *Grettis saga,* which ends with Grettir's death. There is only one generation of hero in *Þjóstólfs saga* and the

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[47] Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "Generic Hybrids: Norwegian "Family" Sagas and Icelandic "Mythic-Heroic" Sagas" in *Scandinavian Studies Vol. 65, No. 4* (Illinois, 1993), 541-2.

[48] Hermann Pálsson, "Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda" in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages vol.6,* ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York, 1985), 138 quoted in Torfi H. Tulinius, "Sagas of Icelandic Prehistory (*fornaldarsögur*)" in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature,* ed. Rory McTurk (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 447-461.

saga is composed of many episodes of Þjóstólf's adventures. These episodes do not lead to a central feud, but instead suggest the influence of *þættr* (which Jorgensen draws attention to as 'episodic inspirations' to *Þjóstólfs saga*).

The Copenhagen sagas are both made up of short episodes, which may have been a practical decision since short episodes are easier to stitch together than a multi-generational, masterfully interwoven narrative. Additionally, the brevity of the Copenhagen sagas might reflect the difficulty of saga writing— shorter narratives are less difficult to flesh out with "borrowed" episodes—but it could also simply reflect the genre of the adventure tale. Tulinius mentions that "adventure tales resort to other types of narrative technique in order to [...] lengthen their stories", so perhaps brevity was a common feature amongst genuine adventure tales. Why, then, did Ísfjörd and Adaldahl copy the adventure tale narrative structure for their forgeries? Perhaps it was because this generic structure was common in all three literary milieus (Icelandic, Danish, and Old Norse studies). We tend to write about the familiar, and the scribes would have been no exception. However, it is important to note that this thesis is not arguing for Adaldahl and Ísfjörd's conscious appropriation of popular genres. Instead, the evidence suggests that the Copenhagen sagas' resemblance to popular eighteenth century literature was a partially unconscious and completely natural phenomenon which frequently, if not always, occurs in literary endeavors.

3.2 The Eighteenth Century Icelandic Literary Milieu

Rímur: The Indigenous Romantic Poetry of Iceland

Until 1773, Iceland's only printing press was located at Hólar, one of the country's two episcopal sees and centers for learning (the other being Skálholt). This gave the Church a monopoly over printed material and secular texts were not printed until 1773, when a second printing press was established in Hrappsey.[49] Despite the Church's dismissal of secular texts, romance—both in prose and poetic (*rímur*) form—remained the most popular type of literature from the middle ages well into the twentieth century. Romance was popular across all of Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, yet in Iceland, the genre typically appeared as metrical romances called *rímur,* whose highly formulaic constructs remained unchanged for hundreds of years. *Rímur* were often composed in long cycles called *rímnaflokkar* and parts of the cycle would be told during the evenings as entertainment. Romance was the leading subject matter of *rímnaflokkar,* but the tradition also drew from *Íslendingasögur,* the Bible, and contemporary satire and comedy. It was through *kvöldvaka,* or

[49] Margrét Eggertsdóttir, "From Reformation to Enlightenment", 226-7.

evening storytelling, as well as an unbroken tradition of hand copying manuscripts that allowed many of these "lower" forms of literature, such as romance, to survive.[50]

According to Margrét Eggertsdóttir,

> From around 1400 *rímur* had had a solid place in Icelandic literature, and their popularity and production had increased steadily until 1800. By then they had come under attack by proponents of the Enlightenment and, later, by the romantic poets, although for different reasons. Still they remained popular throughout the nineteenth century. *Rímur* belong to the type of popular literature that we associate with leisure: they provided entertainment after a hard day's work, and good *rímur* poets were in high demand.[51]

Rímur was only one type of poetry that flourished in Iceland during the eighteenth century. Other genres included *ævintýrakvæði* (adventure poetry shorter than *rímur* with subject matter often imported from foreign tales), poetry modelled on the classical Greek, Roman, and Icelandic traditions, poetry instructing people on practical matters, such as farming, poetry praising Iceland's natural landscape, translated poetry (oftentimes brought from Denmark by Icelandic students), religious poetry, and comedic, satirical poetry in the spirit of the Enlightenment.[52] The numerous types of poetry found in Iceland indicate that poetry remained an important type of literature throughout Iceland's history.

Romance in the Prose Tradition

The eighteenth century saw the emergence of the novel in Europe and Scandinavia, but Iceland did not produce indigenous novels until later. Instead, the romance genre continued to flourish in various forms, such as adventure literature, *Bildungsroman*-like texts, and novel-esque narratives in the romantic tradition. However, most of this literature was not published until much later in Iceland.[53]Continental influences can be seen in some of the adventure literature during the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1760 *Þess engelska Bertholds fábreytilegar Robinsons eður lífs og ævi sögur* and *Þess svenska Gustav Landkrons* (translated from Danish texts published in 1740 and 1743, respectively) were published at the printing press in Hólar. Both

[50] Margrét Eggertsdóttir, "From Reformation to Enlightenment", 223–4.
[51] Ibid., 239.
[52] Ibid., 231-7.
[53] Ibid., 241.

texts drew heavily from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1714) and "...[it] was partly thanks to these Robinson stories that the Icelandic romance was now finally on its way to becoming the novel, although the novel did not secure its place in Icelandic literature until the beginning of the twentieth century."[54] The Icelandic romance tradition began to blend elements of adventure literature, realism, and coming-of-age narratives into the traditional structure of the romantic tale, a development illustrated by *Sagan af Parmes Loðinbirni*, written sometime between 1756-1775. Nevertheless, romance continued to have precedence over other genres until the twentieth century when the novel became the darling of Icelandic literature. Regarding Iceland's most celebrated body of literature, the *Íslendingasögur,* Margrét Eggertsdóttir remarks that,

> Interestingly, the Sagas of Icelanders had very little influence on eighteenth-century romances. The literary heritage on which the romances relied included the *rímur,* fairy tales, folktales, the Knights' Sagas, and the Legendary sagas as well as travel stories, the plot of the latter being often reminiscent of romances and foreign novels. Indeed, the influence from abroad is greater in the eighteenth century than previously thought; clearly, the country was not as isolated then as has been assumed.[55]

Although *Íslendingasögur* were no doubt still read in eighteenth century Iceland, the romance tradition from the 1400s would have been the type of saga literature most well-known by the contemporary Icelandic population. It then follows that the medieval romance genre would have been the saga genre most familiar to Ísfjörd and Adaldahl, as well as the type of saga most studied by Old Norse-Icelandic scholars. With these considerations, the following section shall investigate how the scribes' Icelandic literary heritage shaped and influenced their work.

3.2.1 The Icelandic Literary Tradition and the Copenhagen Sagas

As Ísfjörd and Adaldahl were born and raised in Iceland, Icelandic literary traditions must have influenced the scribes' beliefs about the sagas. First, this thesis revisits some of the characteristics that Jorgensen highlighted in his original arguments about the Copenhagen sagas; these characteristics help situate the Copenhagen sagas within their contemporary literary milieu. Then, any additional connections between Icelandic literary culture and the Copenhagen sagas shall be explored to further illuminate the relationship between the sagas and their contemporary literature.

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[54] Margrét Eggertsdóttir, "From Reformation to Enlightenment", 244.
[55] Ibid., 245.

Romance and the Copenhagen Sagas

Jorgensen begins his essay on *Hafgeirs saga* by saying that the lack of consistent meter and rhyme eliminates the possibility that the saga's poetry was from the *rímur* or *vikivakar* traditions. However, he notes that the prose style was similar to that found in foreign romance—a genre which made its way to Iceland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, not the twelfth as the flyleaf claims.[56] The poetry in *Hafgeirs saga* does not match the rigid verse form of the *rímur,* but the romantic and courtly elements of the saga echo the subject matter typically found in *rímur*. *Rímur* may have been unique to Iceland regarding their poetic form, but not their subject matter. Both *rímur* and continental romances belonged to a genre of literature designed for entertainment and this genre was wildly popular in Iceland until the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Iceland, romance was mainly influenced by the *rímur,* folk and fairytales, *riddarasögur, fornaldarsögur,* and travel narratives.

The presence of romance narrative structures and courtly romance motifs in *Hafgeirs saga* suggest the influence of romance and *rímur* genres on the text. *Hafgeirs saga* lacks moralizing motifs and complex feudal structures, instead being composed of adventurous episodes and a happy ending. These elements indicate a text designed to entertain, not educate or admonish. The saga contains continental romance elements, including, but not limited to: non-Germanic names like Fenesius, Alanus, and Vernesius, descriptions of a chess game, Fenesius' ownership of an "Italian scarlet red tunic", the description of Godfreya as having a "complexion white as wool", "cheeks like red roses", and hair "soft and golden".[57] Some might object to using such an ubiquitous genre as romance to situate *Hafgeirs saga* within the eighteenth century. The *rímur* (and romance) genres were popular in Iceland from around 1400 until the early nineteenth century, and *Hafgeirs saga* could have been influenced by romance any time within those four hundred-plus years. However, these similarities are not being used to date *Hafgeirs saga* to the eighteenth century, but to examine the saga text in relation to its historical context. As Ísfjörd would have grown up entertained by *rímur* and other recited romances, the similarities between *Hafgeirs saga* and the Icelandic romance tradition suggest that Ísfjörd's saga was influenced by the literary milieu of his childhood.

One likewise sees this milieu reflected in *Þjóstólfs saga,* which has the setting of an *Íslendingasaga,* but the structure of an adventure tale *fornaldarsaga*—which in turn is similar to that of the continental romance. Jorgensen's description of the saga as "an entertaining adventure"[58] suggests that he too categorized the saga as an adventure/romance narrative. Of

[56] Jorgensen, "Hafgeirs Saga", 155.

[57] Ibid., 155.

[58] Jorgensen, "*Þjóstólfs saga*", 96.

course genre is a somewhat arbitrary categorization and that the same genre may be defined differently depending on the scholar. The romance genre is an almost all-encompassing one, for all fiction can be classified under the umbrella term of 'romance'. For the purpose of this thesis, a working definition of romance has been selected from Bryan Reardon's book, *The Form of Greek Romance.*

> Romance is difficult to define, but may be described generally as narrative fiction. It is usually idealizing and sentimental, and the specimens we shall be concerned with are in prose; but none of these attributes is essential to the genre, since the quality of romance is so ubiquitous that it readily dispenses with specific formal characteristics. Perhaps even realistic fiction, which we generally call "novel," tends towards romance— "all fiction has a way of looking like romance and in a sense this is just, since all fiction frees us into an imaginative world." And that is really at the heart of the matter: romance inhabits an imagined world.[59]

It is this "imagined world" which differentiates the Copenhagen sagas from the *Íslendingasögur*. Hafgeir's magical sword, Þjóstólf's visitation of the ghost of Karl the Red, and mythical creatures such as giants and trolls all occur within an imaginary world, whereas the *Íslendingasögur* are realistic to such an extent that their narratives have previously been regarded as historical documents. Although *Hafgeirs saga* contains more sentimental and courtly elements than *Þjóstólfs saga,* both texts present an idealized picture of the Viking world and both reflect the imaginative worldview of the romance genre.

Icelandic Ethics and the Copenhagen Sagas

Jón Karl Helgason has suggested that the Icelandic saga tradition may have served a purpose besides pure entertainment. He argues that in post-medieval Iceland, saga characters were looked to not only for courage and valor, but also for ethics.[60] While *Hafgeirs saga* does express some heroic ethics (avenging the death of his father, sending his offspring to be raised up by the earl), *Þjóstólfs saga* illustrates the code of ethics more commonly seen in the *Íslendingasögur*—the same ethics likely celebrated by Icelanders during the post-medieval period. For example, Þjóstólfur takes revenge by killing the man who killed his mother's

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[59] Bryan P. Reardon, "The Genre Romance in Antiquity." In *The Form of Greek Romance*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3 quoting Gillian Beer, *The Romance* (London, 1971), 5.

[60] Jón Karl Helgason, "Continuity? The Icelandic Sagas in Post-Medieval Times" in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature,* ed. by Rory McTurk, (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 64-81.

servant. Although revenge killings were outlawed by the eighteenth century, ethics of honor still dictated that compensation must be made. Consequently, Þjóstólf's actions can be viewed as a fictional representation of this compensation. Later in the saga Þjóstólfur refuses to give his fine gloves to the earl, claiming they are for "a poor man", yet he later gifts them to the Norwegian king in an act of friendship. The king is not "a poor man", but he does prove himself more worthy of the gloves than the earl. While Jorgensen points to the influence of *Auðunar þáttr vestfirzka* on this particular scene, one might also read it as an attempt to include Christian and/or Enlightenment ethics in the saga. The European Enlightenment movement still clung to a conservative Christianity in some aspects, but it also integrated philosophical and technological advances to create a more prosperous and egalitarian society. It was during this period that the lower class saw many reforms to their working and living conditions. Consequently, Adaldahl's emphasis on wanting to give the gloves to a poor man may reflect this social awareness.

Alternatively, this motif may simply illustrate Þjóstólf's ethical character, in turn reflecting the role of saga characters as ethical models in eighteenth century Iceland. Jorgensen's comparison between Grettir and Þjóstólfur propounds the influence of *Grettis saga* on *Þjóstólfs saga,* yet Grettir remains a more morally-ambiguous character than Þjóstólfur. Unlike Grettir, Þjóstólfur is ethically consistent. He does not have a short temper or a fear of the dark, nor do his flaws—of which there are few to none—lead him into a life of outlawry and death. Þjóstólfur promotes a certain heroic code of ethics, perhaps in lieu of the Christian ethics often seen in other sagas. Neither of the Copenhagen sagas make any mention of religion, with the exception of Þjóstólf's baptism at the end of the saga. If the sagas had been written during the medieval era, Christianity (as in the *Íslendingasögur*) or Old Norse religion (as in the *fornaldarsögur*) would have likely occupied a greater portion of the narrative. The lack of religion in the Copenhagen sagas might indicate an increasingly secular society whose influence spilled over into the sagas. These features could simply be the byproduct of Adaldahl's "cut and paste" borrowing from different sagas, but they could also be a reflection of societal shifts happening in eighteenth century Iceland.

Textual Traditions in Medieval and Post-Medieval Iceland

As Jorgensen observes in one of his essays, the main value of the Copenhagen sagas lies in their insight into the eighteenth century literary milieu.[61] He refers to the Danish literary milieu, yet this statement likewise applies to Iceland. One unique feature of the post-medieval Icelandic literary milieu was its unbroken transmission of saga traditions from the Middle Ages

[61] Jorgensen, "*Þjóstólfs saga*", 97.

up until at least the nineteenth century. Consequently, eighteenth century saga culture reflects the dynamic aspect of medieval literature, or rather how Icelanders altered this literature so that it might remain relevant throughout time. Two specific examples of alteration spring to mind in relation to the Copenhagen sagas: medieval/post-medieval scribal practices and the tradition of translated literature in medieval Iceland.

One of the most common aspects of the Icelandic scribal tradition was the prolific generation of redactions, variations, and heavily-edited versions of medieval sagas. It is no secret that Icelandic scribes reworked popular saga narratives, often taking creative liberties and producing texts hardly resembling the original document. Motif sharing and thematic repetition occurs across saga genres and yet, these texts are still considered authentic. One might therefore question the difference between the Copenhagen sagas and "authentic" redactions. In her dissertation, Schlitz presents a two-fold answer to this question. First, she writes that "*Hafgeirs* nor *Þjóstólfs saga* can properly be viewed as a redaction, as neither is titled or catalogued in any way to suggest an affiliation with its model". She then continues by saying "[w]hat clearly marks the distinction between Ísfiord and Adaldahl and the not uncommon liberties taken by scribes in the role of editors creating new versions of a tale, however, is that in both instances there is an obvious aversion by the scribes to being associated with the texts in an authorial capacity."[62]

Schlitz does not base her argument around this fact however, for anonymity nor lack of affiliation with a model alone cannot classify the Copenhagen sagas as forgeries. After all, many forgeries are attributed to an author or reference a model, yet remain forgeries. Schlitz does indicate that some medieval redactions would be considered plagiarized forgeries by today's standards, yet she considers redactions and variations characteristic of Icelandic scribal culture, and as such, authentic texts.[63] The question of authenticity in saga literature is a difficult problem to unravel and this thesis professes no solution. However, examination of this scribal tradition could shed light on the scribal practices used by Ísfjörd and Adaldahl. For example, assuming that the tradition of 'editorial intervention' was passed down along with the texts, eighteenth century Icelandic scribes may have continued to alter texts to fit their needs. Ísfjörd and Adaldahl attended school in Iceland and worked with other Icelandic scribes in Copenhagen, which may have put them in touch with this tradition of textual editing. In this light, the Copenhagen sagas could be viewed as simply the opportunistic application of Icelandic scribal conventions—a "genre" not so different from the redactions seen elsewhere in copies of medieval Icelandic literature.

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[62] Schlitz, "The Copenhagen Sagas", 115.
[63] Ibid., 115.

In fact, *riddarasögur* is an authentic genre of medieval Icelandic literature composed entirely of translated re-workings of continental chivalric tales. *Riddarasögur* are closely related to the *fornaldarsögur* and *lygisögur* in terms of narrative style and subject matter, the main difference being that *riddarasögur* are translated from foreign source texts. *Riddarasögur* are mostly Norse variations on French *chansons de geste, fabliaux, lais,* and other courtly romances. They differ from saga forgeries because the readers of *riddarasögur* knew that the texts were translations and variations on (usually) French medieval literature. Often the prologue accompanying *riddarasögur* explained that the saga was a Norse translation and sometimes, the name of the translator or commissioner of the translation (often a Norwegian king) was given.[64] If the Copenhagen sagas were influenced by *fornaldarsögur, rímur,* and other Scandinavian romance tales, then the forgeries were also inadvertently influenced by *riddarasögur* as well. Many of the *rímur* retold stories from the *riddarasögur, fornaldarsögur* and *Íslendingasögur,* while also mimicking narrative structure, narration modes, subject matter, and motifs from these genres as well .[65] This process of 'updating' and re-working is invaluable to the survival of the texts, for it helps literature remain current despite the relentless passage of time.

This process can be further explained by hermeneutics, or the study of literary theory. According to Luis Alonso Schökel, texts only remain relevant to a society when they are accompanied forward in time by their corresponding textual traditions. He writes:

> All texts live, carried by tradition, like water that sustains the vessel and makes it advance. Hermeneutically, this aspect is so essential that we could establish the equation Text=text + tradition [...] If tradition is broken, comprehension is made extremely difficult. [...] Tradition is a medium necessary for the intelligibility and life of the text. A text lives and continues to live in tradition; without it, the text dies. Tradition enters a dialectic process of reciprocity with the text in such a way that it is capable of conditioning its intelligence and comprehension. Not only does tradition sustain the text, but it also becomes an unavoidable horizon of comprehension of the text.[66]

Unlike some cultures, Icelandic society never had to "rediscover" its indigenous literature, nor did it suffer from a breakage in literary tradition which often results in a disconnect in

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[64] Jürg Glauser, "Romance (Translated *riddarasögur*)", in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature,* ed. by Rory McTurk, (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 372-7.

[65] Ibid., 377.

[66] Luis Alonso Schökel, "A Manual of Hermeneutics", ed. Brook W.R. Pearson, trans. Liliana M. Rosa, (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 138-9.

understanding. Instead, its saga traditions continued unbroken from the medieval era to the modern era, illustrating an ideal example of Schökel's equation Text=text + tradition.

In the case of the Copenhagen sagas, the movement between text and tradition occurs in the following manner. The preservation, copying, and continued interest in sagas—especially of the *fornaldarsögur, rímur, riddarasögur* and other foreign romance genres—sustained this body of literature across a period of almost four hundred years. As this tradition moved forward in time, it adapted to the current literary trends to remain relevant. This movement began when medieval Icelandic scribes copied and redacted foreign romances (*riddarasögur*) in the fourteenth century. Foreign romance and indigenous literature was later used as source materials for the *rímur*. These literary genres and traditions blended with the romances of the eighteenth century, helping to shape texts such as the Copenhagen sagas.

Ísfjörd and Adaldahl had to understand the medieval saga tradition before they could incorporate this tradition into their own works and create the Copenhagen sagas. Schökel writes that "[n]ot only does tradition sustain the text, but it also becomes an unavoidable horizon of comprehension of the text"[67]; the interplay between textual tradition and comprehension of that tradition is fundamental for writing in any established tradition, for the author must understand where the textual tradition is coming from before they can define where their own text is going. However, this movement flows both ways, for tradition—as it moves forward in time—is constantly influenced and altered by the contemporary culture, for without this modernizing effect, the text would become obsolete. From this perspective, the Copenhagen sagas can be viewed as a continuation of the Icelandic saga tradition. Although both are plagiarized forgeries without much narrative originality, the Copenhagen sagas still stand as textual representations of engagement with and perpetuation of the forward-moving flow of the medieval saga tradition.

3.3 The Eighteenth Century Danish Literary Milieu

<u>Popular Literature of Eighteenth Century Denmark</u>

As in much of Europe, classicism reigned supreme at the beginning of the eighteenth century and vernacular culture was looked down upon by the learned class. Literary tastes began to shift, however, and "...the early part of the century [marked] the establishment of a secular imaginative literature in the vernacular, while the end of the century [was] punctuated by enthusiastic works engendered in part by a rejuvenation of indigenous tradition and in part

[67] Schökel, "A Manual of Hermeneutics", 138-9.

by an awareness of a new literature to the south: German classicism."[68] Classical literature was still the prerogative of the intellectual upper class, but eighteenth century Denmark was by no means an illiterate nation. Poetry in the form of religious hymns, indigenous ballads dating back to the medieval ages, popular and folk ballads, and folktales were some of the main types of literature encountered by the average Dane. Chapbooks—small books containing popular tales, poems, and ballads of a romantic and often foreign nature—were also widely read in Denmark. Although this type of literature was looked down upon by the educated upper class, Denmark's consumption of romance, adventure tales, and other leisure texts indicated an increasing literate public and the emergence of pleasure reading.[69]

Eighteenth Century Danish Poetry

Poetry continued to be a popular type of literature throughout the eighteenth century, although its subject matter became more varied as the century progressed. Danish poetry began the century heavily saturated with theology, whereas by the end of the century, imaginative secular poetry was the most common type of verse. Poetry in Denmark was still composed in languages other than Danish—French, Latin, and German verse was commonplace during the 1700s. Occasional verse, despite its rigid form and lack of innovation, was frequently written as well, perhaps because "a sense for the appropriateness of poetic expression was felt on notable occasions, indeed enough so that he who could not compose verse himself hired another to produce appropriate public sentiment."[70] Poetry, even if it was lacking in quality, seemed to have a social function during this time period and the production of mediocre verse was better than no verse at all. Of the non-occasional poetry written in the eighteenth century, much of it was still inspired by classical poetry (including Old Norse poetry) and its subject matter was often pious and pastoral.

One of Denmark's most lauded poets during the Enlightenment period was the Danish poet and dramatist, Johannes Ewald (1743-1781). Besides poetry, Ewald also composed satirical works, such as *The Story of Mr. Panthakak*, a comedic, picaresque tale in the same vein as Voltaire's *Candide*. However, Ewald's literary genius is seen most clearly in his poetic works. Composing in the neoclassical style, Ewald not only drew upon continental classicism, but also the Old Norse-Icelandic past. His 1774 tragedy *Balders Død,* "became a milestone in the revival of Old Icelandic literature, and because of its happy transmutation of Old Norse

[68] P.M. Mitchell, "The Age of Enlightenment" in *A History of Scandinavian Literatures*, ed. by Sven Hakon Rossel (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 121.
[69] Ibid.,125-6.
[70] Ibid.,139.

mythology into imaginative, dramatic form, it served as an inspiration to several later poets, notably Adam Oehlenschläger, at the beginning of the nineteenth century."[71] This poetry was part of the movement dubbed the "Germanic renaissance"—a period in which Old Norse-Icelandic and Old Germanic texts were in vogue.

3.3.1 Eighteenth Century Danish Literature and the Copenhagen Sagas

Like elsewhere in Europe, the Danish lower class enjoyed reading chapbooks filled with foreign tales of adventure and romance. Literary trends of the Enlightenment were still relegated to the upper, intellectual class and tales of romance were looked down upon as a lower class leisure pursuit. A similar dichotomy between 'intellectual' literature and romances likewise existed in Iceland, but Iceland's population was not as stratified and the romance tradition (in the form of *rímur*) seems to have existed ubiquitously throughout the population. Although romance and adventure tales were common in Denmark, any Danish influence on the Copenhagen sagas most likely came from picaresque novels and Danish poetry. In the following discussion, the two aforementioned groups of literature will be compared with the Copenhagen sagas to discover how Danish literature may have influenced the sagas.

Popular Danish Literature and the Copenhagen Sagas

Perhaps the most quintessential genre of Enlightenment fiction was the picaresque novel. Voltaire's satirical novella from 1759, *Candide,* best exemplifies the genre, although the genre itself is older than the Enlightenment. *Candide* made its way across Europe, inspiring other European authors to produce their own Candide-like novels. One finds at least two Danish authors, Christen Pram and Johannes Ewald, writing their own Danish Candide novels towards the end of the eighteenth century. The picaresque novel was evidently a well-known genre in Denmark and the genre may have influenced texts such as the Copenhagen sagas.

At first glance, picaresque novels appear to have little in common with *fornaldarsögur*. Picaresque novels critiqued the world around them through satire and hyperbole. Neither of the Copenhagen sagas undertook social critiques, however, some of the Icelandic *rímur* did incorporate contemporary satire into their narratives. A connection between *rímur* and the Copenhagen sagas has previously been suggested, as both genres share subject matter, romantic motifs, and narrative patterns. *Rímur* and the Copenhagen sagas both have characteristics of the popular romance genre, so the question becomes: What could popular romance and the picaresque novel have in common? This question could be answered in many ways, but one possible answer may lie in genre theory.

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[71] Mitchell, "The Age of Enlightenment", 155.

In his 1937 essay “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel”, Russian literary theorist Mikael Bakhtin developed the concept of the literary *chronotope.* Although never explicitly defined by Bakhtin, the chronotope can be described as a literary motif concerning time and space and how these two elements are represented in language. The chronotope is additionally used to define genre, for time and space function differently across genres. In his forthcoming work on the literary chronotope, Bart Keunen suggests that Bakhtin’s original generic chronotopes can be divided further into sub chronotopes. One such chronotope, “the *regeneration chronotope*” is defined as “where a series of conflicts is overcome in a final equilibrium” and some of the generic examples given include “the picaresque novel, the gothic novel, [and] the popular romance”.[72] If one accepts Keunen’s proposal that both the picaresque novel and the popular romance have a regeneration chronotope as their conflict structure, then a tangible relationship is established between the two genres. The episodic nature of the Copenhagen sagas reflects the regeneration chronotope, for each episode is a small conflict which—instead of building up to a final climax as in the *Íslendingasögur*—moves the narrative forward towards its ‘final equilibrium’. Likewise, the picaresque novel (as represented by *Candide*) is composed of a series of conflicts that Candide must overcome to restore final equilibrium and live happily ever after with his true love. Although conflict patterns are not the only parameters for defining genre, similar conflict patterns across traditionally-separate genres might point to the simultaneous existence of these genres during a particular time period.

In their essay on Bakhtin’s chronotope, Bemong and Borghart write that “Bakhtin’s assessment of narrative genres, moreover, contributes to a theoretical tradition that underscores the cognitive functionality of literary genres; the belief, that is, that fixed poetic and narrative structures should be understood as means for storing and conveying forms of human experience and knowledge.”[73]If genre is to be understood as a “means for storing and conveying forms of human experience and knowledge”, then perhaps tales of adventure and romance reflected something unique about the eighteenth century. The appeal of the romance genre is relatively straightforward; until recently, daily life was difficult for most Europeans, hence fantastical stories of good triumphing over evil would have been well received. Regarding the adventure genre, seafaring travel occurs frequently in the Icelandic sagas, not necessarily as a generic motif, but as a reflection of the Vikings’ way of life. Likewise, the rise of adventure and travel tales such as Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1714) may reflect the greater mobility open to the upper class during the eighteenth century. For example, small groups of

[72] Bart Keunen, *Time and Imagination: Chronotopes in Western Narrative Culture*, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), (forthcoming) quoted in Bemong et al., eds., *Bakhtin’s Theory of the Literary Chronotope,* 7.
[73] Nele Bemong et al., eds., *Bakhtin’s Theory of the Literary Chronotope,* 8.

Dano-Norwegians were able to travel and study abroad during the eighteenth century. One of these privileged individuals was Ludvig Holberg, a Norwegian born historian, essayist, satirist, and playwright who rose to prominence as *the* face of the Danish Enlightenment movement. This trend of increased travel was likely behind the popularity of adventure and travel narratives, thus reflecting genre's role as a "container" for human experience. Although Ísfjörd and Adaldahl borrowed from a pre-eighteenth century literary tradition, both sagas and their seafaring travels would be at home amidst the eighteenth century adventure and travel literature. As it was mainly the *fornaldarsögur* and other adventure-like sagas studied during the eighteenth century, interest in this genre could be attributed not only to nationalistic goals, but also to the increasingly popularity of European travel.

Danish Poetry and the Poetics of the Copenhagen Sagas

The poetry in the Copenhagen sagas has received little commentary beyond Jorgensen's comment that "[a]n examination of the verses found in *Hafgeirs saga* reveals that they could not be from a twelfth- or thirteenth-century manuscript, since no amount of philological cosmetics could restore the necessary skaldic or eddic structure."[74]In a footnote, Jorgensen gives the reader the following stanzas of poetry from *Hafgeirs saga* to illustrate his point.

"mædiz margur hvór/ymser ganga auds stig/eru þeirra listig/hæru hard vidur/fiórgin fallds búna/fegre en glams rúna/vopnatúna/vist óluna/veit ek en hvar/þu ert núna

sá þar loga/eld a skydum/ok Syrpaleid/sat vid elldinn/svaf hin leida Lúpa/ser a hendur fram/haldsen þá/ek hió a flagðe"[75]

Jorgensen cites "inconsistent meter, sporadic alliteration, and lack of stanzic form"[76]as proof of the poetry's inauthenticity. Echoing Jorgensen's 'diagnosis', Karl G. Johansson adds that the structure is sloppy and atypical of medieval Icelandic poetry and the poem's assonance would have seemed strange to a medieval reader. Some of the words are nonsensical and overall these stanzas do not reflect well-written poetry.[77] Jorgensen and Schlitz agree that Adaldahl was the more poetically-gifted of the two scribes (the above stanzas are Ísfjörd's), but both scribes used lacunae in some areas rather than write out the verses. Both scholars attribute this to the

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[74] Jorgensen, *Hafgeirs saga,* 155.

[75] Ibid., 155.

[76] Ibid., 155.

[77] Karl G. Johansson, email message to author, April 21, 2020.

difficulty of skaldic and eddic poetry, but neither scholar suggests other, non-medieval traditions which may have inspired the poetry of the Copenhagen sagas.

Although the above stanzas may or may not be representative of the other verses in the Copenhagen sagas, the following commentary will be based upon these stanzas alone. It is obvious that the scribes drew upon subject matter from the skaldic/eddic traditions for their poetry—it is the form of the poetry that is suspect. It is possible that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl tried to imitate the poetry found in other medieval Icelandic sagas and that their imitations fell short—which was perhaps not a problem. Denmark's recruitment of Icelandic scholars suggests that not many Danish scholars could read Old Icelandic, let alone medieval Icelandic poetry. However, it is also possible that at least Ísfjörd incorporated features of a contemporary type of poetry popular in Denmark—occasional poetry—into his stanzas. As its name suggests, occasional poetry was poetry composed for important occasions, such as deaths, births, weddings, and other ceremonies. Occasional poetry was meant to be read aloud and it was often lyric and evocative, striving evoke a certain mood without being overly concerned with originality. The majority of skaldic poetry is written in the first person and relates a direct and succinct narrative of the poet's accomplishments, typically through elaborately crafted kennings. The verses above possess no discernable kennings and their style is meandering and one might even say, mood-evoking. The assonance is foreign to medieval Icelandic poetry, yet in the first cluster of stanzas, there are sporadic attempts at end rhymes. The end rhymes (when present) give the verses a lyrical quality, despite the somewhat nonsensical words used in the poem. From this we can conclude that Ísfjörd focused on *how* the stanzas would sound when read aloud, rather than the meaning they would convey. This indicates that the intended reader of *Hafgeirs saga* would have expected poetry to rhyme. The poetry found in *fornaldarsögur* does contain rhyme, but the rhyming structure is different than Ísfjörd's poetry. Perhaps Ísfjörd knew that his poetry must contain rhyme and Viking-era imagery, but he was more familiar with the occasional poetry tradition than the medieval Icelandic tradition, thus elements of occasional poetry made their way into his stanzas.

There is one additional piece of evidence that indicates a connection between the scribes and occasional poetry: Ísfjörd and Adaldahl's preceptor, Wadskiær. In their short biographies in *Íslenzkir Hafnarstúdentar*, Ísfjörd and Adaldahl are listed as having had the same preceptor, Wadskiær. A first name is not given, but it is highly likely that their preceptor was Kristian Frederik Wadskiær, a prolific writer of occasional poetry and professor of poetry at the University of Copenhagen from 1751 until his death in 1779.[78] Ísfjörd and Adaldahl enrolled at the University of Copenhagen in 1771, hence their enrollment dates match when Wadskiær

[78] Mitchell, "The Age of Enlightenment", 139.

would have been a professor at the university. As Wadskiær was a professor of poetry and writer of occasional verse, Ísfjörd and Adaldahl probably gained a fair bit of knowledge about occasional poetry during their time at the university. This knowledge may have been utilized in the pseudo-medieval Icelandic poetry that the scribes composed for the Copenhagen sagas.

3.4 Old Norse-Icelandic Studies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Scandinavian Interest in Old Norse Literature

During the second half of the seventeenth century interest in Old Norse-Icelandic studies began to intensify within the Scandinavian countries. Interest began in Sweden, but rapidly spread to Denmark—and by extension, Iceland, which was under Danish rule at this time. Motivated by the spirit of competitive nationalism, Old Norse studies sought to establish a classical Scandinavian past equal to the classical Greco-Roman tradition. In turn, Swedish and Danish scholars competed against each other to legitimize their respective country as the original seat of this classical Scandinavian culture. In both countries, this movement—labelled the Germanic or Nordic renaissance—led to the study and publication of several Old Icelandic texts of central importance to the discipline, such as the *Prose Edda* (published in Denmark in 1660 and later Sweden in 1746) and *Heimskringla* (published in Sweden in 1697 and Denmark in 1633 and again in 1757). However, the eighteenth century publication most responsible for widespread interest in an Old Norse past was *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves,* a somewhat-embellished history of the Scandinavian past written in Copenhagen in 1756 by Paul-Henri Mallet. Besides history, Mallet's work also brought three of the poems of the *Poetic Edda* to the attention of European society.[79]Ancient poetry of all sorts was popular during the eighteenth century, which helped Old Norse poetry gain immediate traction within literary circles.

It was earlier in the seventeenth century that Sweden, noticing that mention of their country was often absent from all but the *fornaldarsögur,* began to publish mythical-heroic sagas to legitimize Sweden's role in ancient Scandinavia. The first of the *fornaldarsögur* to be published in Sweden was *Gautreks saga* in 1664. This saga was used by antiquarians to draw parallels between Atlantis and ancient Sweden, suggesting that the lost city of Atlantis was, in fact, located in Sweden. When the widow of renowned Danish historian Stephan Hansen Stephanius fell on hard financial times, Swedish scholars were able to purchase her manuscript copy of *Snorra Edda* (today known as the *Uppsala Edda*), further rounding out Sweden's fast-growing library of Old Icelandic texts. In 1658, the Copenhagen-bound Icelander Jón Rúgmann was captured, along with his manuscripts of *Herrauðs saga og Bósa* and *Hervarar*

[79] Mitchell, "The Age of Enlightenment", 153-4.

saga, both of which were later published in Sweden during the 1660s and 1670s, respectively. It was during this period (1690) that one of the first known saga forgeries, *Hjalmars og Ramers saga,* was published in Sweden. The forgery was again published in 1710 before its exposure as a fraudulent document later in the century. Seventeenth century Sweden also witnessed the publication of a slightly more historical saga genre: *konungarsögur,* or the kings' sagas. In 1670, *Heimskringla* was published in Swedish, followed by a Swedish translation of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar.* In contrast, Denmark began the earnest publication of saga manuscripts towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially after 1772—the establishment date of the Arnamagnean Commission. Around this period, Danish translations of many well-known sagas, such as *Brennu-Njáls saga, Kristni saga, Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu, Hungurvaka, Orkneyinga saga, Rímbelga, Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks,* and *Víga-Glúms saga* were published in Copenhagen.[80] To summarize, the primary topics of discussion are summed up by Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir's assessment that "interest had in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries been focused on poetry and on prose texts which were seen as valuable sources of Scandinavian history (primarily kings' sagas and the so-called legendary sagas (*fornaldarsögur*))."[81] Interest in *Íslendingasögur* would not come about until the nineteenth century when a mood of romantic nationalism would sweep across Europe, replacing the reason and order of the Enlightenment.

P.F. Suhm and the Germanic Renaissance

One of eighteenth century Denmark's lesser-known figures of the Germanic renaissance was Peter Frederik Suhm—book collector, historian, critic, playwright—and the employer of both Ísfjörd and Adaldahl. Suhm's private book collection, which ultimately exceeded one hundred thousand books and manuscripts and is still mostly preserved in the Royal Library of Copenhagen today, was generously opened to the public in 1775 before public libraries were common. Icelandic manuscripts from this collection would have been the texts Ísfjörd and Adaldahl copied during their scribal employment with Suhm. It appears that Suhm's primary interest in medieval Icelandic literature began as a byproduct of his Danish patriotism. Suhm wrote *Til Kongen,* a pamphlet rejecting the advancement of foreign cultures (German) at the expense of native Danish culture in 1772, the year that Struensee was beheaded. The same year he drew upon his knowledge of ancient Scandinavia to write the novella *Sigrid*—a history with which he was well acquainted, having published several histories of the Scandinavian countries decades before. Fierce loyalty to his country coupled with an interest in medieval Icelandic

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[80] Malm, "The Nordic Demand for Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts", 104-7.

[81] Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Expanding Horizons: Recent Trends in Old Norse-Icelandic Manuscript Studies", in *New Medieval Literatures 14,* ed. Rita Copeland, et. al. (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2012), 204.

manuscript reflect Suhm's active participation in and perpetuation of ideologies of the Germanic renaissance.[82] Although historians and book collectors such as Suhm were surely moved by the artistic qualities of the medieval Icelandic sagas, one must not disregard the undercurrents of nationalism which stretched ubiquitously throughout the Germanic renaissance.

3.4.1 Eighteenth Century Old Norse-Icelandic Studies and the Copenhagen Sagas

Many of the characteristics relating to Old Norse-Icelandic studies have already been discussed in the previous sections. Accordingly, this last section wraps up any additional elements that the Copenhagen sagas drew from eighteenth century Old Norse-Icelandic studies. Genre plays a critical role in the Copenhagen sagas' relationship to Old Norse-Icelandic studies. The scribes' decision to write in the *fornaldarsögur* tradition has already been discussed in relation to their Icelandic background and the *rímur* tradition. Likewise, generic similarities between *fornaldarsögur,* popular romance, and adventure tales have also been suggested. This next section discusses how the Copenhagen sagas relate to the authentic *fornaldarsögur* circulating during the eighteenth century.

Fornaldarsögur and the Copenhagen Sagas

Fornaldarsögur first gained prominence in Scandinavia as a result of Sweden's nation-building efforts in the seventeenth century. Although the *fornaldarsögur* were allegedly chosen because Sweden appeared in these texts more frequently than in other sagas, the subject matter of the *fornaldarsögur* undoubtedly helped their popularity. Almost all Old Norse-Icelandic texts published during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had a highly mythological component. The publishing of texts such as the *Prose Edda,* the *Poetic Edda,* and Mallet's *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves* all contributed to the construction of national myths about the Scandinavian countries. *Heimskringla*—while somewhat more historical in tone—further perpetuated myths about the Swedish and Norwegian ruling dynasties. Regardless of their historical accuracy, these myths were collected to serve as a basis for a national identity.

Of course nation building was not only limited to the Scandinavian countries. All across Europe nationalism surged in response to Enlightenment ideologies, and nations looked to indigenous literature to assert their individual nationhood. Nationalism movements peaked during the nineteenth century, but one can see the collection of indigenous literature taking place as early as the seventeenth century. The indigenous Scandinavian texts used for nation

[82] Mitchell, "The Age of Enlightenment", 152-3.

building were typically *fornaldarsögur* or *konungarsögur*—the former dealing with the mythological past and the latter covering pre-modern, Scandinavian dynasties and lineages. Use of the *fornaldarsögur* and their ancient settings allowed for mythological tropes such as magical weapons, trolls, dragons, berserkers, etc.; these fantastical narratives then played an aetiological role in the development of national identity. For example, eighteenth century readers of the *Poetic Edda* read about Sigurður the Volsung and how he slew the dragon, Fafnir. It was the Enlightenment where reason championed over superstition, so an eighteenth century reader might not believe dragons *still* existed, yet they could take pride in the fact that they were descended from men like Sigurður.

It seems unlikely that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl composed their sagas for nationalistic purposes, as was the case with the 1690 forgery of *Hjalmars og Ramers saga.* Despite the absence of nationalistic intentions, the Copenhagen sagas were still firmly rooted in the *fornaldarsögur* tradition—the genre most used to promote national interests. Many of the sagas published during (or before) the eighteenth century were *fornaldarsögur,* with *Gautreks saga* and *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* being the first *fornaldarsögur* to be published in Sweden during the seventeenth century. *Fornaldarsögur* such as *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra* and *Hjálmþés saga ok Ölvis* are cited by Jorgensen as sagas which Ísfjörd and Adaldahl, respectively, copied. *Íslendingasögur-fornaldarsögur* hybrids—or "Icelandic mythic-heroic sagas"—such as *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* and *Finnboga saga ramma* were known to and incorporated by Adaldahl into his saga. *Vilmundar saga viðutan*—another influence on *Þjóstólfs saga* according to Jorgsensen—was a chivalric saga heavily influenced by the romance tradition.

From the texts used to reconstruct the Copenhagen sagas, one has a general idea of the Old Norse-Icelandic literature that was copied and read in eighteenth century Denmark. It follows then that both scribes wrote within a literary tradition that was well-known in eighteenth century Denmark. Furthermore, one can speculate that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl would have been given scribal assignments that matched the interests of their employer, P.F. Suhm. Suhm was a proponent of the so-called "Germanic renaissance", ergo he would have been most interested in texts which kindled the spirit of Scandinavian patriotism. Therefore, by genre alone, the Copenhagen sagas serve as a testament to the eighteenth century Old Norse-Icelandic literary milieu. After all, were these forgeries perpetuated one hundred years later during the intense interest in the *Íslendingasögur,* both sagas would probably resemble *Íslendingasögur* more so than *fornaldarsögur.*

Old Norse Poetry and the Copenhagen Sagas

The poetry found in the sagas and the Eddas was one of the first aspects of Old Norse-Icelandic literature to be studied. Ancient poetry was in demand across Europe partially because of the 'insight' it offered into the psychology of ancient peoples. The idea of 'Viking' poetry reflecting the heroic ethics of ancient Scandinavians coupled with Romanticism and Gothicism in the nineteenth century led to many embellished stereotypes about the Vikings. Mallet's *Monumens de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves* (1756) gave much of Europe its first taste of the *Poetic Edda*. Mallet's book became an immensely popular text and Thomas Percy translated Mallet's work into English in 1770 under the title *Northern Antiquities*. Several contemporary poets—for example, Thomas Grey and Thomas Percy—likewise took an interest in Old Norse-Icelandic poetry and translated select poems from the corpus, in addition to creating their own Norse-inspired verse.[83] One might therefore expect this obsession with poetry to be reflected in the Copenhagen sagas.

It appears that Ísfjörd and Adaldahl were indeed aware of the importance of ancient poetry in Old Norse-Icelandic studies. To state the most obvious piece of evidence, both of the Copenhagen sagas contain poetry. Apropos the previous discussion on poetry and the Copenhagen sagas, it is evident that composing poetry was challenging for the scribes. Their lack of skill resulted in poetry that was both poorly written and obviously anachronistic. Why, then, did they include poetry at all? Perhaps it was because of their ideas about what a saga should consist of, formally speaking. For example, poetry is found ubiquitously throughout the Icelandic sagas and in many cases, is a central hallmark of the textual corpus. However, the same cannot be said about the *fornaldarsögur* genre, for many authentic texts are devoid of or sparsely populated with poetry. In fact, the source material for *Hafgeirs saga, Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra,* contains no poetry whatsoever. If Ísfjörd was not especially adept at composing medieval Icelandic poetry, why would he feel the need to include it in his saga? One hypothesis is that Ísfjörd added poetry and poetic lacunae into *Hafgeirs saga* as a mark of authenticity. Many of the Old Norse-Icelandic texts known in eighteenth century Denmark contained poetry and it was often the poetry which captivated readers and scholars alike. Consequently, perhaps Ísfjörd believed that the omission of poetry from an Icelandic saga (forgery) would raise suspicion, whereas the addition of poetry—regardless of its quality—would reinforce the text's authenticity.

[83] Heather O'Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Short Introduction* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 110-112.

4 Concluding Remarks

Within the current field of Old Norse-Icelandic literature, reception studies are beginning to gain traction, yet there continues to be a preference towards the indigenous *Íslendingasögur,* perhaps because translations and redactions still smack of disingenuity. The stigma is even greater towards saga forgeries, for saga literature is regarded as a window into the cultural happenings of medieval Iceland and anachronistic saga forgeries are unproductive in that aspect. However, this thesis has illustrated the merit in studying saga forgeries by approaching the Copenhagen sagas as valuable repositories of their contemporary literary milieus. This analysis began by presenting all known information about the Copenhagen sagas; details about the manuscripts, narrative structures, and previous research done by Jorgensen and Schlitz gave the reader an introduction to the forgeries and their creators. The first chapter also examined the methodologies used by Jorgensen and Schlitz, thereby contextualizing this thesis in relation to the research already put forth on the Copenhagen sagas. The second chapter explored the history of saga forgeries in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary canon and the methods previously used to approach these liminal texts. This chapter also meditated on the theoretical and conceptual concerns relating to forged literature and the place of forgeries within a literary corpus. The third chapter was a three-part approach to the cultural and literary milieus which potentially exerted influence on the Copenhagen sagas. The discussion utilized literary analysis and genre theory to compare and contrast the Copenhagen sagas and the three literary milieus listed above. Ultimately, this study concluded that the Copenhagen sagas reflected the eighteenth century more in their subtleties—such as narrative structure, literary subject matter, and generic concerns—than in their overall impression. The exception to this statement would be the eighteenth century Old Norse-Icelandic literary milieu; the characteristics of the Copenhagen sagas clearly mirror the types and styles of Old Norse literature popular during this time period. Essentially, this is perhaps their most important contribution to future research about Old Norse-Icelandic literature.

Approaching the Copenhagen sagas as repositories of the eighteenth century, one might now reflect upon Alfred Hiatt's thoughts on literary forgery from chapter two. He wrote that any forgery—even when the forgery presents itself as a copy of an authentic text—"manifests a notion of the significance of a document: what its functions are, what it can prove or disprove, claim or disclaim; and more generally, what symbolic role it plays within a community, how it mediates history, responds to present and future exigencies."[84] The Copenhagen sagas illustrate what a saga—or more specifically, a *fornaldarsaga*—was thought to look like in eighteenth

[84] Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries,* 3.

century Denmark. For example, the eighteenth century's focus on the legendary sagas and Old Norse-Icelandic poetry are reflected by the Copenhagen sagas. In this manner, saga forgeries provide insight into how forged texts mediate history. To compose the Copenhagen sagas, Ísfjörd and Adaldahl drew upon a textual tradition that had been carried forward in time by their ancestors. Within that tradition, they then incorporated its ideologies, narrative structure, and worldview into their own creative reservoirs to produce their texts. The texts may have been forgeries, but the process of engaging with medieval literature was authentic. When approaching literary forgeries, perhaps scholars could mitigate stigmas by focusing on the forger's process rather than their product. As with the Copenhagen sagas, it is more fruitful to observe how the forgeries interacted with their contemporary time period rather than disregarding their (lacking) contribution to an authentic corpus. That is to say, all texts—even forged ones—have some value to their respective scholarly communities. We simply must realize that different approaches are required to garner insight from different texts.

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