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BLÓÐNÆTUR ERU BRÁÐASTAR – THE BELLICOSE BERSERKIR AS A SENSORY COMMUNITY?

Felix Lummer

The Old Norse berserkir, generally recognised for their shape-changing abilities and bellicose nature, have long since captivated academics and the public alike. So far, however, little emphasis has been placed on the study of the emotions of the berserkir in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. This paper addresses this gap, contending that, as I have discussed elsewhere, the berserkir not only constitute an 'emotional community', as proposed by Barbara Rosenwein, exemplified by their exclusive emotion of the berserksgangr ('berserker fury/wrath') and their collective disregard of silence and tranquillity, but that they also constitute a sonic community, characterised by their associations with animal-like sounds, such as howling, prior to or during battle. Utilising a broad range of literary sources, specifically the Íslendingasögur ('Sagas of Icelanders'), fornaldarsögur ('Legendary sagas'), konungasögur ('kings' sagas') as well as Skaldic poetry, this paper scrutinises the data through the lens of the Belliphonic, the study of the sounds of war. The literary manifestations of the acoustic phenomena of the berserkir's bellicoseness are investigated in conjunction with the notion of emotional communities to evaluate whether the berserkir represent solely an emotional community or if they set themselves apart by other means. This paper concludes that while it may be debated whether the berserkir exemplify a sensory community, they certainly typify a sonic community, an assemblage that shares and utilises the same acoustic phenomena, particular in the context of warfare.

THE VÍNLAND SAGAS AND SETTLER-COLONIAL ENTITLEMENT ON THE EAST COAST OF NORTH AMERICA

Jay Lalonde

In 1943, historian Thomas H. Raddall called his home province of Nova Scotia "the Markland of the Norsemen . . . the very land visited by [his] blood kinsmen of long ago," whose supposed presence in the province he supported with his reading of the Vínland Sagas (*Grænlandinga saga* and *Eiríks saga rauða*). The Norse settlement site in L'Anse aux Meadows in today's Newfoundland has fascinated the popular consciousness since its "discovery" in 1960. Long before then, however, many white settlers on the East Coast of both the US and Canada regularly related themselves to the Norse of the Vínland Sagas. Recently, scholars have focused on the use of Norse imagery by the far right and by Scandinavian migrant-settlers and their descendants in North America. Stories of Vínland and possible Norse voyages along the East Coast of North America, however, have been used widely to justify Anglo settler-colonial presence and Indigenous erasure. Settlers of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic origin also imagined themselves as related to the Norse—sometimes literally, like Raddall—and the supposed Norse history of the area exists in local histories, statues, alleged settlement sites and runic stones, business names, and, inevitably, tourism. Leifur Eiríksson has been cast as an alternative to Christopher Columbus, and imagined connections to the Norse offer convenient displacement of settler responsibility; instead, they justify claims to lands and waters portrayed as having been visited by the Norse a millennium earlier. In this paper, I examine how performative and literary commemoration of the Norse on the East Coast has been linked with white supremacy and Anglo-Saxonism: ordering settler time to begin with Norse explorers provides a fantasy in which both Indigenous history—since time immemorial—and the genocide that made way for an empire of Anglo settler colonies can be conveniently ignored.

HOW THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE HUMAN GYLFI AND THE MYTHICAL TRINITY TRANSFORMS HIS EARTHLY VISION THROUGH THE ILLUSIONARY ART OF NARRATIVE

Gísli Sigurðsson

In order to understand the nature of the Edda as a source it is important to agree on what is going on when the mythical trinity explains to Gylfi how the world came about and tells him great tidings of the sky. Gylfi knows terms like regnbogi but the illusion transforms it into a mythological bridge between heaven and earth. This is in line with Alvíssmál with its terminology for different phenomena among men and various mythological beings. If we take the references in Gylfaginning to the sky (á himni) as being to the literal location of staðir and salir mentioned therein (as opposed to some fictional world), and apply the thought from Alvíssmál, we see the illusionary effect transforming what Gylfi actually sees into the mythological abode of Æsir in salir and staðir (owned by the sun and stars, respectively)—with jötnar beyond the horizon and outer ocean, to be reached by Þór. I will discuss how this phenomenological approach to the illusion alters the way we can treat the Edda as source: Before we contemplate what it can tell about pre-Christian myths we can accept that the myths may be read as a living part of what young poets in Snorri's time had to study, using the sky as a memory tool and a point of reference. As such the Edda is a trustworthy reflection of traditional thinking about the sky in mythological terms for purposes of composing and understanding scaldic poetry (as opposed to a learned/creative reconstruction based on oral "sources"). Thus the mythological world view in Gylfaginning reflects a system of learning, where the sky is not only the limit but also holds everything together, allowing for continuity and constant updating of mythological lore as the planetary divinities (Sun, Moon, Týr, Óðinn, Þór, Freyja and ?) move and meet each other in new salir along the sun's path in the sky—whereas the staðir with their stars and the white half transparent Milky way in the sky are much more stable and will not crumble down until we all know when.

ENCOUNTERING THE HEATHEN OF ROMANCE

Mary O'Connor

From 1226 onwards a flurry of translation activity at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson in Norway introduced Old French romance literature into Old Norse. These translated texts included some of the most popular narratives disseminated throughout Europe in the High Medieval period, and amongst these translations was the story of Floire et Blanchefleur or Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr as it became known in Old Norse. This romance recounts the love between a pagan prince and a Christian slave woman's daughter in Spain in the Old French version. The girl is sold into slavery into the Middle East and the narrative follows the young boy's efforts to recover her. It is a text heavily influenced by crusader narratives as it explores the issues of love, encounters with the Middle East and religious tension. Increasing scholarship in Old Norse has examined the representations of heathens and Saracen in literary and historiographical sources. Scholars such as Jod Vidar Sigurdsson have examined the role of Muslims and Old Norse literature and how these representations differ but also share similarities to wider European traditions. Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr is understudied and little known text in Old Norse scholarship despite its popularity and extensive manuscript preservation in continental Europe. This paper will examine how the heathens in Flóres saga are depicted through an analysis of their physical characteristics as well as their speech and actions. By doing so, this paper will situate the translation of heathens within wider Old Norse scholarship on encounters of the Other in the Middle East as well as considering representations of religious difference and race.

FEUD IN OLD ICELANDIC FAMILY SAGAS AND IN POLISH LITERATURE OF 17TH-19TH CENTURY. ECHOES OF SOME REAL SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL PHENOMENA IN TWO GREAT WORKS OF OLD ICELANDIC AND OLD POLISH LITERATURES

Leszek Słupecki

Icelandic society in the Free State time (10th-13th century AD) and Polish society in the time of the First Republic (17th - 18th century AD) despite the chronological diachrony seems to be in some fundamental features similar. Those phenomena are as follow: lack of strong executive power and efficient state structure (with very special role played by the King(s) influencing the countries from the distance), highly developed bounds to the ideas of freedom, tradition, home, honour and law (with assemblies as centers of social relations), importance of family ties (including great families in kind of clans) and family feuds. In both Icelandic and Polish societies it caused the growth of the power of magnates, dominating originally free society with links of cliental dependence inside of the country, and looking for support among foreign powers. All that ended finally with the lost of the national independence. One of the symptoms of that kind of social development was the importance of family feuds and the ways how it was executed, including family organised revenge expeditions (in Polish called *zajazd*). Such events were portrayed in great works of respectively Old Icelandic literature like *Brennu-Njála* Saga and in Polish literature of Romanticism like Adam Mickiewicz' *Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie* (19th century); both works are considered to be the greatest works of, respectively, Old Icelandic and Polish literature.

OTHER THEN, OTHER NOW? REWRITING MELKORKA

Christine Schott

Laxdæla saga contains a vast array of memorable characters, but one of the most striking is Melkorka, the Irish captive who pretends for years to be unable to speak. Melkorka is Other to the Norse people around her on a number of levels: she is Irish, she is enslaved, and she is perceived as having a disability (mutism). To readers today, who are highly attuned to otherness and powerfully predisposed to sympathize with outsiders and underdogs, Melkorka is an arresting and unforgettable character. However, she is present only for a few chapters of the lengthy saga, and after the narrative shifts focus to her son Ólafr, she vanishes almost silently from the story. Perhaps because she receives so little “screen time,” Melkorka has attracted the attention of modern authors retelling her narrative in novel form. This paper will examine several such retellings of Melkorka’s story, including *Hush* by Donna Jo Napoli, *Irish Viking Princess* by Rachel Tsoumbakos, and *Melkorka* by Alfreða Jónsdóttir. The purpose of this examination is to understand how and perhaps why contemporary authors are so drawn to Melkorka’s story, and to establish patterns that exist among the retellings. For example, one common point of interest in Melkorka is her reason for refusing to speak; as the saga itself gives no explanation, both scholars and novelists must decide why she voluntarily spends years without a voice. Identifying these patterns and, perhaps more interestingly, deviations from such patterns, helps us to see how the present uses and understands the past, and how we in the here and now relate to what is Other in our literary history.

DAHEIM IN DER FREMDE ODER DER FREMDE DAHEIM – ZUM MOTIV DER FREMDHEIT IN AUSGEWÄHLTEN KÖNIGSSAGAS [“(HOME) AWAY FROM HOME – ON FOREIGNNESS IN SOME KINGS’ SAGAS”]

Jan Alexander Van Nahl

Das Gros der altnordischen Königssagas ist durch mehrere Forschergenerationen hindurch zu Erfolgsgeschichten stilisiert worden, herausragende Einzelgestalten hätten zielstrebig einen visionären Kurs verfolgt, der die Geschicke der nordischen Ländern nachhaltig bestimmt hätte. Das ist nicht ganz falsch, bleibt aber eine einseitige Beurteilung, die in der historischen Forschung unter bestimmten Prämissen des 20. Jahrhunderts herangewachsen ist. Politische und gesellschaftliche Wandlungsprozesse und Brüche in jüngerer und jüngster Zeit erinnern aber an eine Geschichtswissenschaft, der die Idee einer sich zielgerichtet und damit sinnvoll entfaltenden Menschheitsgeschichte, eine Geschichte großer Männer zutiefst suspekt geworden war. Im Schatten dieser großen Fragestellung können heute auch die Königssagas Auskunft über Eigen- und Fremdanschauungen zu historischer Entwicklung geben, Auskunft, nach der bisher allerdings nur verhalten gefragt wurde. Der geplante Vortrag will hier einhaken und in gegebener Kürze eine mögliche Antwort aus literaturanthropologischer Sicht skizzieren. Konkret wird der in einigen Königssagas auffällig ausführlich entfaltete Auslandsaufenthalt späterer nordischer Herrscher betrachtet, dies stets in jungen Jahren und oft unfreiwillig – ein Ausgeliefertsein in der Fremde, in einem Lebensabschnitt, in dem das Eigene, so die These, noch gar keine festigende Prägung erfahren hat. Was bedeutet solche Fremderfahrung, die zugleich zur eigentlichen Eigenerfahrung wird? In dieser Fremde und dann nach Rückkehr (wiederum in die Fremde?). Anhand ausgewählter Textbeispiele wird diese changierende Uneindeutigkeit von Eigenheit und Fremdheit in einer als zukunfts offenen und latent bis offen bedrohlichen sozialen und natürlichen Umwelt diskutiert. Neben narratologische Überlegungen treten dabei jene literaturanthropologischen Beobachtungen, mit der diese Fallstudie zu eingehenderer Neubetrachtung auch anderer Sagatexte anregen mag.

WHY SIGRFLUGA? KING SVERRIR AND HIS BANNER

Fjodor Uspenskij

Battle flag of the Norwegian King Sverrir, under which his supporters fought many times, was called 'Fly of Victory' (Sigrfluga), looking — to put it mildly — exotic even against the nontrivial names of weapons, ships and various military artifacts, which are known to us from the sagas. The paper deals with the question of what was depicted on the banner with such obscure name and why such a name was chosen for this insignia? Traditionally, Sigrfluga was considered as nothing else but a kenning of raven or eagle, but this explanation seems not entirely convincing. The paper attempts to provide an alternative version of the meaning and origin of the naming of the famous banner of King Sverrir.

'OTHERWORLDING' IN SAGA DISCOURSE

Frog

The concept of otherworld is linked to concepts of otherness and the other, but the concept of otherworld itself tends to be taken for granted as a fantastic location where the possibilities of imagination are realities. This paper introduces 'otherworlding' as the process of othering places and spaces through discourse, which I have theorized elsewhere (2020). The phenomenon will be introduced in relation to Old Norse traditions, including both mythology and Saxo's *Gesta*. Focus is on otherworlding in saga discourse. Bringing otherworlding into focus as a phenomenon of discourse breaks the polarized dichotomy of 'real' versus 'not real' or 'fantastic', which often tells more about the researcher's imagination of science-based epistemologies than about contemporary understandings of Old Norse sources. For example, most Icelanders' knowledge of Jerusalem, Bjarmia and the interior of a burial mound were independent of any first-hand experience of those places: they were constructed through discourse no less than understandings of Heaven, Hel and realms of *jǫtnar*. For people's knowledge and understanding, our evaluation of some of these places as 'real' and others as 'not real' is arbitrary and irrelevant. This paper will consider otherworlding as a process in the construction of temporalities of what are commonly described as different saga 'genres', producing, for example, differences in the ontology of mytho-heroic time versus more recent historical periods. Variations in ontology by temporal distance are then considered in relation to variation by geographical distance. The relationship between otherworlding and the dominant inhabitants of places are then considered, with consideration of dreams as a special category of place. Finally, the connection of traditional motifs and narrative patterns to otherworlding, with examples of the construction of outlaws in relation to supernatural others, the inhabitants of North America and also the otherworlding of Iceland.

RESONANCES OF OTHERNESS: THE MEDIEVAL GUSLI AND INTERCULTURALITY IN VIKING AGE NOVGOROD

Andris Mucenieks

The trade city of Novgorod, a crossroads of Scandinavian, Finno-Ugric, Baltic, and Slavic cultural groups during the Viking Age, offers a unique lens to explore alterity and otherness. This paper delves into the case of the Medieval Guslis (Baltic Psalteries), musical instruments unearthed from archaeological excavations in Novgorod. We propose that these Gusli serve as potent representatives of the city's rich interculturality. By analyzing the instrument's construction techniques, materials, and potential decorations, we will demonstrate how it incorporated elements from various cultural groups. We will explore how the Gusli, potentially perceived as an element of otherness by Scandinavians, might have been adapted to incorporate more familiar Scandinavian aesthetics. Through this investigation, the paper aims to shed light on the complex processes of cultural exchange, adaptation, and the perception of difference within Viking Age Novgorod.

THE VISION OF THE OTHER AROUND THE BALTIC SEA (9TH-12TH CENTURY)

Ella Le Peltier-Foschia

The aim of this presentation is to investigate the relationship with “the other” within a buffer zone: the Baltic Sea. Indeed, during the Viking Age, Christians engaged in a conflict against the Pagans, whom they sought to convert to the Western faith, which culminated in the Northern Crusades in the following centuries. Subsequently, the perception of the other has undergone a transformation over the decades, as they either refused or accepted the new faith. However, there were some questions: Is the Baltic Pagan considered as the Viking one by Christians? Are these people considered to be strength or weakness for conversion? How was the conversion depicted in the Baltic by the Chronicles? In order to answer these questions, it would be interesting to examine the perception of the other through the contacts between the Christians and the Pagans, as well as through the contacts between different groups of Pagan tribes. Pagans are not a singular entity, and the study of their interactions can prove challenging due to a dearth of sources. However, certain sources have provided valuable insights that we can comprehend for this research. Therefore, the relationships between people who are living in a common area with different religions, customs and visions of life are a clue to evaluate the notion of the frontier between communities. Furthermore, people who reside on the fringes of the central religious authorities have established a fully-fledged community that possesses distinct values and has the ability to represent a distinct authority. By extension, this study apprehends the manner in which national historiographies utilized these themes to promote themselves in opposition to other nations during the 19th and 20th centuries.

THE ROLE OF SVEINN ÚLFSSON AS CONVERSION KING IN BRAGÐA-ÖLVIS SAGA AND HÁKONAR SAGA HÁREKSSONAR

Teresa Freysdóttir Njarðvík

In this paper the image of Sveinn Úlfsson (Svend Estridsen), King of Denmark, as a conversion king in two lesser-known sagas will be explored. King Sveinn receives overall a positive image in the Konungasögur, however there is little mention of his ties to the Vatican, his work for the church and his role as a conversion king. Through his battles against the Vindr and work in Christianizing the northern realms, raising and adorning churches and strife to found an Archbishopric in Denmark, King Sveinn can acclaim an important role in history and has even been named the king that lead Denmark out of the Viking age and into the Middle Ages. The Konungasögur do not make mention of his strong connection to the Christian faith. However, this connection is mentioned in contemporary historical sources. Curiously enough in two lesser-known sagas which appear to be konungasagnabættir that have been isolated in their preservation, so as to be only independently preserved in extant textual sources King Sveinn plays an important role as a conversion king. These are Bragða-Ölvis saga and Hákonar saga Hárekssonar. Both texts appear to be woven intricately together to present an image of King Sveinn as a conversion king. Through the interaction of the protagonist with King Sveinn and the advice given by him their conversion to the Christian faith is strengthened, highlighting the good Christian values of King Sveinn. The hero which follows the advice of king Sveinn has good fortune in his ventures, however the hero which ignores his advice encounters various struggles leading eventually through his conversion and thus salvation.

LITHIC AFFECT IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND

Timothy Bourns

Building on my previous research on animal and arborescent emotionality, this paper will address the phenomenon of lithic emotion and affective display in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. My primary case study will be *Bergbúa þáttur*, in which the *bergbúi* ('rock-dweller', i.e. anthropomorphised stone) expresses its sorrow in the volcanic poem *Hallmundarkviða*. In my close reading of the verse, rather than shedding literal liquid tears, its earthen eyelids tremble. Lithic affect is thus achieved through metaphorical figuration. This interpretation accords with other instances of non-human emotionality in Old Norse texts, such as nature's weeping for Baldr in *Gylfaginning*, with melting frost as metaphorical tears, and the *trémaðr* ('tree-man') in *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* which feels the weeping of clouds (i.e. rain) upon his cheeks, metonymically representing his own tears through contiguity. Understanding the *bergbúi*'s emotive gesture offers a new interpretation of one of the key moments in medieval Icelandic history: the volcanic eruption in *Kristni saga* is an affective display caused by the anger of the gods in response to the Christian conversion. Human emotional experience is also conceptualised and expressed through nature-based metaphors and eco-emotive circumlocutions. The breast and the heart can be identified as the seat of human emotions in the Norse corpus, and numerous skaldic kennings figuratively establish this role through lithic and environmental base words. The study of emotion and affect emerges as a conceptual framework for deconstructing textual binaries and constructing hybrid identities in which human and environment are inextricably enmeshed.

FREYR AND FORTUNE'S WHEEL IN HRAFNKELS SAGA

Richard North

Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða was probably written in around 1300 and is set in eastern Iceland in the mid-tenth century. Its hero is a chieftain so devoted to Freyr that he swears to kill anyone who rides the stallion in which the god has a half-share, and carries out his oath when this happens. Consequently, as is well known, Hrafnkell is outlawed in the Althing, tortured by the victim's cousin and his supporters, and forced to live in poverty until after six years he builds a new chieftaincy, gets back his old one and forces his former usurper into a position even lower than before. The aim of my paper is to show the irrelevance of Hrafnkell's religion or indeed of any religion to the recovery of his power. The author of this saga seems well aware of Freyr's guiding role in Vatnsdœla saga and probably also in Víga-Glúms saga, and yet he goes in another, ironic, postmodern, direction. In what first appears to be a classical saga in miniature, one in which settlement and family are laid out in a likeness of local tradition, the author subverts expectations of Freyr with a plot in which all actions happen apparently by chance and yet really by the movement of Fortune's wheel. The ethical questions which have dogged most commentaries on this saga are shown to be equally irrelevant to a plot in which all human character, good or bad, is but a part of the same grand mechanism. As Lady Philosophy says, aping Fortuna in Boethius' Consolation II, 'I turn the wheel that spins. I delight to see the high come down and the low ascend. Mount up, if thou wilt, but only on condition that thou wilt not think it a hardship to come down when the rules of my game require it'. The relation of this saga and its possible source to saga predecessors is finally and briefly argued to be analogous to that of a later novella, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1899), through Dante's Divine Comedy to Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines (1885).

CONSUMED CREATURES AND HIDDEN HUMANS: ANIMAL-HUMAN HYBRIDISATION IN SAGA AF HRÓLF KONUNGI KRAKA

Francesca Squitieri

This paper analyses hybrid human-animal beings in the fornaldarsögur to explore how transformation into animal forms represented anxieties of the human experience in later medieval Iceland. The example of Björn from Saga af Hrólf Konungi Kraka– who transforms from a human into a bear– will be analysed alongside the unique thirteenth and fourteenth-century- Icelandic, Christian conceptions of transformation, consumption, and existence to consider how many philosophical, theological, and physiological ontological conceptions manifested in the fictional worlds of the fornaldarsögur. The maintenance of Björn's apparently human consciousness preserved within the bear form hints at a complex, multiplicit ontological understanding which was likely informed by popular Christian writers such as Augustine, Aquinas, and Isidore of Seville, who were influential throughout the later medieval period. Popular bestiaries and texts such as the Physiologus would also have informed the composition and reception of Hrólf's Saga Kraka and offer insights into perceptions of animalism and morality. This morality is especially represented in relation to consumption which was both integral to Björn's punishment, and also strictly regulated in biblical literature and Christian practice. Furthermore, the unique setting of thirteenth-century Iceland in which worldly interests were mingled with the ecclesiastic communities of textual production creates a fascinating environment for the consideration of theological questions of existence through the fantastical worlds of saga literature. By considering this example of human-animal hybridisation, we gain a more holistic understanding of how the natures of self and being were perceived in the minds of the writers and audiences of the fornaldarsögur.

TROLLING MALE SAME-SEX EROTICISM IN NJÁLS SAGA AND BÁRÐAR SAGA SNÆFELLSÁSS

Matthew Roby

Many trolls in medieval Icelandic literature embody sexual deviance, which is often implicitly criticised through the Otherness and antagonism of these beings. This deviance frequently pertains to female sexuality, with troll-women symbolising a range of undesirable behaviours from exhibitionism to elderly sexuality. However, there are instances in which trolls are associated with male same-sex erotic activity, including anal penetration. This is most famously demonstrated in Skarpheðinn's taunt to Flosi in *Njáls saga*: 'ef þú ert brúðr Svínfellsáss, sem sagt er, hverja ína níundu nótt ok geri hann þik at konu' [if you are the bride of the spirit of Svínafell, as is said, then he uses you as a woman every ninth night] (314). Considering the starkly different conceptions of active and passive sexual roles attested in Old Norse-Icelandic sources (*Bjarnar saga*, 155; *Völsunga saga*, 21), it is uncertain whether male same-sex eroticism is being criticised in this remark. It is possible that the barb of Skarpheðinn's insult is limited to Flosi's explicit adoption of the female role, with the male troll simply used as a convenient figure of sexual dominance, though it also seems likely that the paranormal Otherness of the latter is integral to the grotesque nature of their imagined union. In my paper, I will explore this question by analysing another episode in which trolls are more thoroughly associated with male same-sex eroticism: the farcical marriage feast in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* (146–58). Here, the hideous and evil Kolbjörn is stated to sleep with two other male trolls, Gljúfra-Geirr and Gapi, whose names—Gulley-Spear and Gaper/Hole—suggest that their activities in his bedchamber involve anal penetration. I argue that through the extremely negative portrayal of these figures, culminating in their violent destruction, this saga uses trolls to criticise both active and passive male same-sex eroticism, characterising it as grotesque, shameful, and ultimately untenable.

ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER AS AN ALTERED PERCEPTION OF THE MIND

Ines García López

This paper aims to analyse the concept of hallucination in medieval literature, focusing particularly on its representation in some of the Old Norse sagas. We will examine how different characters describe their altered perceptions (especially those referred to as *sjónhverfing*, *ginnung* or *sýn*) and the meaning given to these experiences within the sagas, often attributing them to magic. Religious visions with Christian content will be excluded from this analysis. Our focus will be on the literary use of visual and auditory hallucinations and how they differ from other phenomena such as collective apparitions or dream-visions. By considering hallucinations as a literary motif, we will explore their function within the narrative and their role in the world depicted in the sagas. In classical psychiatry – heir of the scholastic theory of perception (Thomas Aquinas) – hallucinations are seen as irrational, false perceptions occurring without an external stimulus. However, through various passages in the sagas, we will see that such experiences are not merely individual products of the mind. There is always an explanation for the seemingly paradoxical effect of these perceptions, often external to the character. Consequently, we will discuss whether the world represented in the sagas is structured as a totality where everything, including hallucinations, holds meaning.

THE CONCEPT OF “PAGAN” ON THE BEGINING OF SCANDINAVIAN RELIGIOUS CHANGE: VESTIGES OR NARRATIVE TOPOI?

João Ricardo Malchiaffava Terceiro Correa

"Vikings," like dragons, are a constant element of contemporary fantastic narratives. Whether through "historically accurate" adaptation or generic "barbarian" concepts, they are present in video games, television shows, literature, and politics. Varying in form and depth, the identity marker of this construct is often "paganism," represented by violent devotion, animal symbolism through ravens and wolves, blood sacrifices, and the observation of auspices. This work aims to discuss the figure of the pagan from a conceptual perspective, assuming that much of what constitutes the "pagan" construct in documentary remnants stems, on one hand, from Roman "ethnography" and, on the other, from medieval literary topoi, providing little to no actual information about these individuals beyond what the dominant discourse thought of them. As analysis material, I turn to the biographies of the monks of Hamburg-Bremen, Anskar and Rimbert, and the letters exchanged between them and notable figures of the 9th century. I aim to observe that their authors guided their descriptions of pagans and their daily, cultural, and political realities based on long-existing references: the Bible primarily, with the prevalence of miraculous deeds or the expression of divine potentia through auspices and fortunes; and Tacitus secondarily, in alignment with the cultural characteristics defining the Germani. The investigation is guided by Hans-Werner Goetz's *Vorstellungsgeschichte*, Berger and Luckmann's *Sociology of Knowledge*, and the *History of Ideas* as presented by Quentin Skinner. By confronting the remnants with theory, this research aims to reflect on the following questions: How does this reading influence the construction of media products, which in turn feed what we might call vikingmania? And, how has this condition directed—and still directs—the interpretation of historiography, considering its weight in constructing and signifying the contemporary political universe?

A BRAZILIAN VIKING STORY: THE RECEPTION OF THE 'VIKING PHENOMENA' AND OLD NORSE TEXTS IN BRAZIL

Pedro Botelho

Otherness, usually seen throughout history through an alterity relationship – as in, me versus the “other” – is in most cases depicted in horrendous ways, reflecting the depicter's perspective. Such is the case in most texts describing interactions between Christians and pagans in the Middle Ages, from which the medieval north is no exception. However, as we turn our focus to 21st-century Brazil, the opposite may be seen. Every age has its Viking, from the nowadays rather strange 16th-century visual portrayals of Egill Skallagrímsson to Travis Fimmel as Ragnar Loðbrók. The same can be said about how contemporaneous cultures from different places conceptualize something in particular ways. In this sense, the reception of the pop culture Viking in Brazil has led to the coinage of the expression “Tupiniviking” (‘Tupi’ being a native Brazilian ethnic family). Typically, the term is used to refer to people that either believe themselves as descendants of Vikings (whereas Vikings are understood as a people or ethnicity) or to people that somehow want to revive a ‘Viking experience’ in Brazil. Either way, the reception of the modern Viking here seems to be received with open arms by certain social groups. Most of which are likely due to the TV show Vikings. This reception however ranges from runic astral maps on social media to post Facist and neopagan groups aiming at an alleged Germanic inheritance to either justify or legitimize their political goals. That being said, in this presentation I shall explore the reception of the Viking – as a modern concept, resignified and in this case other to the Brazilian context – as well as the reception of old Norse texts through the translation to modern Portuguese, which I will relate to my own experience on translating said texts, especially the Ynglinga saga. In that way, I hope to contribute to an ongoing debate on medievalisms within the medieval north studies, naturally from a reasonably different perspective.

WEAVING HEATHENDOM: THE LAYERS OF RECEPTION REGARDING MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA

Vitor Fortuna

Medieval Icelandic literature was responsible for producing works that, throughout history, provided knowledge about the Viking Age (understood as the period between the 8th and 11th centuries) and the pagan elements associated with Scandinavia during that same period. However, it is important to highlight that both the *pættir* and the Icelandic sagas, which compose the literary scope of medieval Iceland, were produced mainly in the 13th and 14th centuries by authors who had been living under Christian values for at least three hundred years, since the transition from the 10th to the 11th century. This work aims to discuss how these authors dealt with the past, transmitted through oral tradition over the centuries, creating a first layer of interpretation of the Viking Age. Additionally, it seeks to address the different subsequent layers of interpretation that arise from the moment this literary scope is consumed throughout time. The reflection continues by considering how the so-called "Vikings" were initially seen as the "other," fulfilling an antagonist role, and how, over the course of history, they have been reinterpreted—based on the reading of the sagas and *pættir*—until reaching the entertainment industry in the 21st century, which completely reshapes the figure of the "Viking," thus producing a recent layer of this reception. The work will incorporate contributions from the Theory of Reception by Hans Robert Jauss, Berger and Luckmann's Sociology of Knowledge, and the Narrative Theory, to provide a multidisciplinary investigation of the theme, considering how Medieval Scandinavia can be received in various layers.

SCÓCO ÆSIR SCIOLDO SÍNA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 'SHAKING' IN EDDIC POETRY

Manu Braithwaite-Westoby

The phenomenon of shaking is defined by irregular, quick and sometimes violent, movement, a quaking or trembling, often in relation to things that are normally stable or still. It is also sometimes identified in animate beings with certain diseases and loss of bodily control. In mythological eddic poetry the shaking of various things occurs relatively often and can connote destabilisation of space, breakdown of social order or the cosmic importance of an event. Shaking seems to be associated with certain mythic beings more than others, namely Þórr and Loki, but it also features importantly 'in its own right' in the eschatological section of Völuspá, which describes the destruction of the earth by the forces of chaos, as well as in several other Old Norse literary contexts. In this paper I will focus on the eddic poems Lokasenna and Þrymskviða, in which the shaking of objects or the writhing of characters' own bodies is notable. The major narrative thread recounted in these poems also involves a defilement of the gods' space by an outsider, which threatens to undermine divine society. This seems to trigger various acts of shaking: for example, in Lokasenna the gods shake their shields at Loki for killing Fimafengr in the sacred space of the hall, and in Þrymskviða the giant Þrymr's theft of Mjölnir causes Þórr and, indirectly, Freyja to shake with rage. I hope to show that the performative act of shaking, whether it be on a bodily or elemental level, was likely a trope in Lokasenna and Þrymskviða that expresses the severity of the threats faced by the gods and their world.

MEETING THE OTHER FROM THE MYTHICAL WORLD: ÓLÁFR TRYGGVASON'S SPECULAR ENCOUNTERS WITH NORNA-GESTR AND HELGI ÞÓRISSON

Piergiorgio Consagra

The D redaction of the Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta, preserved in one of the most remarkable manuscripts from the Icelandic Middle Ages (GKS 1005 fol., also known as Flateyjarbók), features several þættir which are heavily imbued with Scandinavian legendary material. In some of these brief episodes, king Óláfr Tryggvason confronts himself with his country's pagan past and present while attempting to convert Norway to Christianity. In this paper, I aim to analyse Óláfr Tryggvason's encounters with the eponymous characters of two þættir, Norna-Gests þáttur and Helga þáttur Þórissonar, ultimately presenting them as two parallel episodes where the Norwegian king must come to terms with the mythical worlds represented therein. Firstly, I will argue that these encounters should be read as a pair, as the oldest manuscripts preserving them suggest. Secondly, I will analyse them as specular episodes which offer on the one hand reconciliation with the mythical world of Scandinavian legend (Norna-Gests þáttur) and, on the other, provoke confrontation with it (Helga þáttur Þórissonar). If read as such, the supernatural encounters with Norna-Gestr and Helgi Þórisson represent two mirrorlike cases of encounters with the "other" from the mythical world which have hitherto received limited literary comment.

ENCOUNTERING PAGAN OTHERS IN THE POSTOLA SÖGUR: CONVERSION, CONVERSATION, AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Carl Phelpstead

The postola sögur, Icelandic versions of the Acts of the earliest Christian missionaries, are vital early witnesses to, and products of, the encounter between Icelandic and wider Eurasian literary traditions. Inspired by the recent 'global turn' in medieval studies, this paper examines intercultural encounters between Christians and pagans in the postola sögur through the lens of cosmopolitanism. Philosophical cosmopolitanism affirms a universal common humanity while also valuing and respecting the diversity of human cultures. Its proponents trace their tradition's roots from Stoicism via the Christian universalism articulated by St Paul in Galatians. Nevertheless, there is a tension inherent in the way in which medieval Christianity recognised the unity of humanity while also maintaining exclusivist convictions apparently at odds with a truly cosmopolitan affirmation of the value of different cultures. The editors of a pioneering collection of essays on Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages (ed. J. Ganim and S. Legassie, 2013) emphasize the value of the Middle Ages as a period preceding European global hegemony from which to re-theorize cosmopolitanism. This paper extends Ganim and Legassie's project 'to reassess cosmopolitanism from the vantage point of the global Middle Ages' (p. 3) by examining intercultural encounters in the postola sögur. The postola sögur are preoccupied with conversion, and thus with cultural conflict between early Christian missionaries and non-Christian peoples. Attempting to convert people to one's own worldview might appear irreconcilable with a cosmopolitan respect for other cultures, but this paper argues that the attempt to persuade is itself a recognition of the common humanity of one's interlocutor; missionary activity in the postola sögur can therefore be seen as a mode of cosmopolitanism.

THE GHOST BOX: HAUNTOLOGY, FOLK HORROR, AND AN OLD NORSE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Thomas Spray

Is it possible to create work of Old Norse medievalism while overlooking the sins of previous generations, or is modern medievalism inherently haunted by previous appropriations of Nordic culture? It is a question on most medievalists' minds. How do we square a love of the past with our knowledge of what others have done with it? In this paper, I examine the Nordic horror tabletop role-playing game Vaesen. In particular, I will look at Ellinor DiLorenzo's actual play podcast series *The Lost Mountain Saga* (2020-22), which uses the Vaesen system, along with both eddic and saga material, to create an alternate storyworld, a fantastic version of eighteenth-century Sweden replete with medievalism. Through this storyworld, DiLorenzo and her players use elements of Old Norse literature and Nordic folklore to highlight ethical questions of the age. We thus see revenants, giants, and Norse goddesses used as a springboard for themes such as nationalism, sexism, and industrialisation in Scandinavia. My analysis considers *The Lost Mountain Saga* – both the podcast and the subsequent role-playing game book (2023) – as an example of creative medievalism through hauntology, a concept coined by Jacques Derrida (1993) and later expanded to address a variety of artistic media by Mark Fisher (2014). DiLorenzo's work matches the fundamental aspects of hauntology in numerous ways. It has a notable desire to rewrite the past and relive lost futures. It also follows a framework of Nordic folk horror, a sub-genre that uses confrontation with forgotten pasts as a source of both desire and fear. Fisher suggested that proliferation of hauntology in the twenty-first century was a form of temporal disjunction, a sign of "white" culture no longer being able to deal with the collective guilt of past actions, and in this paper I argue that *The Lost Mountain Saga* offers us a clear-cut example of this thought process in action.

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD GODS: RELIGIOUS OTHERING IN OLD NORSE TEXTS

Lucie Korecká

The objective of this paper is to study various types of social strategies that are described in the narrative sources as means of othering or marginalizing individuals or groups whose religious beliefs differ from those of the majority. I will show how the strategies of religious othering are related to or intertwined with the marginalization of other social groups, such as sorcerers, outlaws, individuals who deviate from established social norms, or ethnic groups. I will analyse the functions and consequences of these strategies of othering, as well as the narrative and lexical means employed in the texts that depict them. On the basis of these analyses, I will attempt to formulate some conclusions about the connections between religious identity and other aspects of identity in narrative accounts of the turbulent historical period around the conversion of the North from heathenism to Christianity. I will focus on sources that describe this period: selected sagas of Icelanders, kings' sagas, and þættir contained in them or preserved separately.

PUNISHING LUST AND LUSTLESSNESS: FIRE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Grace O'Duffy

Fire and eros have a long history of intertwinement, no doubt due to the physical sensations of heat and burning that accompany lust. Fire in Old Norse texts is often used to punish women in the context of their sexual desire, whether it be for too much or too little of it. Punishing women with fire functions on two different levels: firstly for not giving men sex, as is the case when Skírnir threatens Gerðr with 'œði' and 'ópoli' in 'Skírnismál', words which 'refer to burning pains that afflict the genitals' (Price, 2019). Similarly in 'Virgilessrímur', a woman is punished because Virgiles feels that she owes him sex; when she does not have sex with him, he has his men blow a bellows into her genitals until a spark ignites and each man goes home with his fire lit. She is thus 'abused in a thinly veiled public gang rape' (Mitchell, 2007). The woman then announces that all women who resist men should face a similar fiery punishment. She and Gerðr are punished with metaphorical and physical fire, respectively, for withholding consent from sexually violent men. Secondly, fire is used to punish women who are guilty of being too lustful or adulterous; in 'Skikkjurímur' the women are threatened with feeling as though they are on fire 'frá nafla og ofan á kné' (from the navel to the knee) until they confess to adultery. This punishment is very much echoed in 'Hjálmþés saga ok Ölvis' when Lúða, after trying to sleep with Hjalmar, is made to stand with either foot on a rock with lit kindling beneath her. The fires of her lust are punished with real flame. This paper will explore the relationship between fire, lust and punishment, interrogating how the fires of lust are used to 'other' women by shaming them, and yet this persistent theme of fiery genital mutilation, whether it be physical or metaphorical, equalises all women as deserving of punishment for not feeling the amount of lust demanded by the sexually violent men in their narratives.

MEDIEVALISM AND THE ANTIPODES: THE SAGAS AND THREE AUSTRALIAN NOVELS

John Kennedy

Three novels published in Australia in recent decades have found their inspiration in the Íslendingasögur – perhaps not coincidentally in each case in the saga of an outlaw or a rather talented misfit, someone not well adjusted to the society around him. Craig Cormick's *Kormak's Saga* (1991), the work of a prolific writer, civil servant, and traveller, somewhat playfully reworks the career of the famous skald with multiple narrators in moving between eleventh century Iceland, fourteenth century Ireland, nineteenth century Australian colonial society, and the Australian present. *My first mistake* (1992), the only novel of Jeremy Stoljer, who went on to a distinguished legal career, transposes *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* and its central character's predicament to the 1980s in Australia's largest city, Sydney, replete with a pseudo-scholarly 'Note on the text' presenting the work as a long-lost Icelandic saga fortuitously discovered in an Australian library. In his *The Sorrow Stone* (2022) Professor of Creative Writing and Literary Studies at the Queensland University of Technology Kári Gíslason retains a medieval Icelandic setting in reworking *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, but focuses on a desperate journey across a hostile landscape undertaken by Disa (Þórdís Súrsdóttir) and her teenage son Sindri (Snorri). He highlights the female viewpoint and the psychological stresses, presenting the remote and bleak landscape in a way which would resonate with readers and students of Australian literature. This paper will aim to explore how the medieval saga texts in the new guises arguably speak in different and distinctive ways to audiences very far in time and place from medieval Iceland.

OTHERNESS AND MEDIEVALISM IN OLD NORSE-ICELANDIC SAGAS - WHY DOES SCHOLARLY WORK MATTER MORE THAN EVER IN AN AI-DRIVEN ERA?

Sirpa Aalto

Over the past two decades, the examination of otherness has become a prominent focus in the study of Old Norse-Icelandic sagas. This trend mirrors a broader movement in medieval studies, which emphasizes understanding societal perceptions of those who deviated from norms and the role of the supernatural in daily life. As research topics often reflect current societal concerns, this presentation aims to both review the topic of “otherness” in the study of Old Norse-Icelandic sagas and examine its relation to medievalism. The presentation then proceeds to its third part: assessing the role of scholarly work by experts dealing with Old Norse-Icelandic sources, the Viking Age, and the Middle Ages in Scandinavia. The proliferation of the Internet has dramatically transformed knowledge dissemination, enabling the spread of both accurate information and misinformation. Old Norse-Icelandic sources have inspired various activities, including Viking and medieval life reenactments, fantasy literature, and game creation. However, these sources have also been appropriated by groups seeking to advance political agendas and spread pseudohistories. The advent of AI further complicates this landscape, presenting unprecedented challenges and opportunities for scholarly work. Through selected examples, this presentation explores the intersection of otherness and medievalism and evaluates the evolving role of scholars of Old Norse-Icelandic literature in an era increasingly dominated by AI-driven knowledge production.

GERÐUR KRISTNÝ'S "BLOODHOOF" (2010) AND BEAIVVÁŠ SÁMI NAŠUNÁLATEÁHTER'S "SNØFRID" (2018) AS MODERN RETELLINGS OF THE NORSE WEDDING MYTH

Maria Sibińska

My paper focuses on two modern cultural texts: the poetry cycle "Bloodhoof" (2010, Blóðhófnir) written by the Icelandic poet Gerður Kristný, and the play "Snøfrid" (2018), performed by the Sami theater "Beaivváš" from Kautokeino. Both engage in a corrective dialogue with the wedding myth which, in the light of research by, among others, Gro Steinsland and Else Mundal, constitutes a significant concept within Norse royal ideology and the Norwegian unification myth. "Blóðhófnir" is based on the story of the giantess Gerd and the love-sick god Frey as depicted in the Edda poem "Skirnismál." "Snøfrid," on the other hand, revolves around the story of King Harald Fairhair's marriage to the Sami girl Snøfrid. This story is found in "Ágrip" and "Heimskringla," and its structure follows the myth of Gerd and Frey. In both tales the woman represents the foreign and peripheral and appears as an object of the god's/king's desire and a means to satisfying it. In contrast to their Norse precursors, "Blóðhófnir" and "Snøfrid" tell their stories from the woman's perspective. The aim of my paper is to examine the strategies used in these modern cultural texts to give the foreign and marginalized woman a voice and agency, and to explore the meanings created by placing the Norse wedding myth in a critical relief.

PERFORMATIVE EXPRESSIONS: THE ROLE OF EMOTIVE POETRY IN THE ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR

Brynja Thorgeirsdottir

Out of the roughly forty Íslendingasögur (sagas of Icelanders), twenty-six contain poetry, totalling over seven hundred stanzas. Prosimetrum, the alternation between prose and verse, is thus an intrinsic feature of the genre. The narrative voice in the prose is generally externally focalised, with emotional expression being mainly implicit. Several studies have concluded that the poetry in the sagas conveys feelings, such as love and grief, more openly and in greater detail, with speakers analysing and describing their own emotions and interiority more extensively than in the prose. This paper expands upon and problematises the assumption that one of the functions of saga poetry is to reveal the interiority or inner thoughts and feelings of the poets. Instead, it demonstrates that poets most often use modes of expression that create a narrative distance, implying rather than explicitly revealing their interiority. The analysis further underscores that emotive expressions in saga poetry function as performative displays, complicating the dichotomy between “inner” and “outer” expressions. By examining verse-based emotional expression in communal versus private settings across the sagas, the study reveals that poetic public expressions of emotions like anger and pride serve strategic social and political purposes, while emotions such as fear and sadness are most commonly expressed in private. Utilising the frameworks of emotional practice and performativity, the paper delves into the social and performative aspects of emotions within saga prosimetrum, supported by representative case studies.

LAYERS OF IDENTITY: SÁMI MEN AS THE OTHER IN THE FORNALDARSQUR

Ambra Ventura

This paper focuses on the Norse othering of Sámi men vis-à-vis Sámi women. That the Sámi were the 'cultural Other' for the Norse is not disputed, but by placing emphasis on the intersections of ethnicity and gender in the creation of Sámi identities, this paper aims to uncover the ways in which Sámi women became the 'standard' Other and, in turn, Sámi men became doubly othered in the fornaldarsqgur. In this set of sagas, Sámi women are often depicted as beautiful, acceptable spouses, while Sámi men are described as ugly, if not downright bestial, and unable to marry into Norse Society. Furthermore, although Sámi men are shunned, half-Sámi men can rise to the status of 'all-Norse hero'. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the reasons behind this and related issues through the introduction and use of an original model for the study of layers of identity. The model I hereby propose, highly informed by the intersections of ethnicity and gender, as well as medieval race theory, politics, and the centre-vs-periphery theory, will prove useful in dissecting the further othering that Sámi men go through at the hands of the Norse. The ethnic factor in othering the Sámi as a group is unmistakable, but what this paper wishes to highlight is the way ethnicity played into gender norms and coloured the Norse understanding of the Sámi. As the fornaldarsqgur are rife with depictions of the Sámi – one need to look no further than the Hrafnistumenn cycle for examples of this – a selection of episodes from this corpus will be used as a case study, highlighting the differences in treatment and depiction of Sámi men and women, and the underlying factors playing a part in this seemingly dichotomous Norse view of the Sámi and their layered identities.

“WEL 3ERNE HE THANKED GODES SONDE”: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
PERFORMATIVITY OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN THE NORTH AND WEST GERMANIC
VERSIONS OF FLOIRE ET BLANCHEFLOR

Moritz Draschner, Elliot Worrall

This paper aims to analyse the fundamental nature of religious identity as presented in the multi-lingual medieval tradition of Floire et Blancheflor. The paper will focus on the Scandinavian (Old Norse, Old Swedish, Old Danish) and West Germanic (Middle English, Middle High and Low German, Middle Dutch) versions. Whilst these texts represent a relatively small part of a larger tradition, their study will nevertheless serve to outline key themes and ideas which run throughout the tradition, as well as innovations unique to specific Scandinavian and West Germanic versions. Religious identity is a particularly pertinent topic in this tradition, given that the protagonist Floire is himself a heathen who is later converted to Christianity. Throughout this story faith is at times central to character identity, whilst at other times it is largely ignored. This paper thus hypothesises that this varying focus on religion demonstrates the tradition's treatment of religious identity not as a constant state of “being” but rather as an act of “performance.” Thus, utilising Judith Butler's theory of performativity, this paper will argue that religious identities in these texts are defined by the “performance” of that religion – be it heathen, Christian, or Muslim. To treat these three categories of religious identity, the paper focuses its analysis on the religiosity of the initially heathen and latterly Christian protagonist Floire, his heathen father Felix, and the Muslim King of Babylon. The paper's hypothesis was developed through close reading of the Old Norse and Middle English texts. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether it will prove consistent with the other texts of the Scandinavian and West Germanic traditions. Whether or not performativity proves to be a consistent aspect of religious identity, this paper promises to shed new light on how religious identity was understood in these texts.

EM EK BLÁR ÖÐRUM MEGIN: BLACKFACE AND PERFORMANCE IN MÁGUS SAGA JARLS

Basil Arnould Price

Histories of blackface – applying prosthetics to perform as or appear to be another race – often begin in the early modern theatre, in part because ‘performative blackness’ is, as Noémie Ndiaye (2022) argues, a ‘quintessentially colonial’ form. However, performative blackness and colonialism both have medieval histories, with scholars identifying the existence of colonial situations in the Middle Ages, as well as blackface. Despite examinations of the social politics of performative blackness in medieval English and continental European theatre, scholars have yet to consider racial impersonation in medieval Scandinavia, perhaps owing to the absence of a vernacular theatre tradition. Nonetheless, the multiple performance contexts of Old Norse-Icelandic sagas and poetry suggest that literary depictions of racialised alterity may not just illustrate medieval ideas of race, but also evince performed blackness in medieval Iceland. Contributing to recent considerations of race, colonialism, and their intersections in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, this paper examines the politics of performative blackness in the late medieval Mágus saga jarls. The titular Mágus adopts several disguises, including that of Háfliti-maðr (Half-coloured-man), who is said to be the son of a blámaðr (black man) and Norse mother. Despite some criticism on the racial logics of this disguise, the performative techniques adopted by Mágus – including the artificial darkening of his skin – have gone overlooked. Approaching this episode as articulating Ndiaye calls a ‘script of blackness’, I propose that this racial impersonation not only conveys and contributes to an emerging Old Norse-Icelandic racial ideology, but also illustrates how blackness was instrumentalised (and performed) to articulate late medieval anxieties around kinship and sovereignty. Through this reading, I suggest that Old Norse-Icelandic texts unsettle assumptions about when, where, and how blackness was performed.

THE OTHER IN US? OTHERNESS AS AESTHETIC AND RETROSPECTIVE CONCEPT IN THE TRADITION OF THE ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR

Andreas Schmidt

That Othering is a fundamental concept of human (social) behaviour is a well researched fact, and there is hardly any Old Norse textual genre which has more often been interpreted as proof of this than the Íslendingasögur. My paper will be set to demonstrate, however, that this is not only true of this genre's depiction of intradiegetical social relations, but that Otherness is also constitutive of these texts' aesthetics and even a factor of their very transmission. The Íslendingasögur do not only feature characters who are Others in relation to the central saga society, such as outlaws or foreigners, or situations in which Icelanders appear as Others at, e. g., courts, but they make Otherness a central element of their very mode of narration. They focus on ambiguous moments in the lives of their protagonists and thus on insecure choices in a highly open manner which leaves central elements as unclear to interpretation. By showing instances in which this is the case, I will argue that this is not an accidental byproduct of the Íslendingasögur's textuality, but the key which opens their transmission over centuries: their ambiguous narration invites audience immersion, and through that, these sagas can assume mirroring functions in several states of Icelandic society and culture throughout the times. In that, the Íslendingasögur as a genre relate to neighbouring text groups, in which such modes of narration are not in operation and which are transmitted in much larger number, like the adventurous riddarasögur, as Others themselves. On these grounds and through their use of Otherness as an aesthetic category, the Íslendingasögur can become socially relevant and productive tools of questioning throughout their times of production and transmission.

TURN IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND – KALEIDOSCOPIC NARRATION AND THE DEPICTION OF TROLLS IN THE FORNALDARSÖGUR

Hilkea Blomeyer

When thinking about the Other in Old Norse literature, we are inclined to talk about characters that are perceived as outside of society. They can be outlaws or paranormal creatures, figures that are seen as different from or even opposed to the Self. The Self in this context denotes the normative society that excludes the Other. But it is not only saga narratives that contain elements of Othering, but some of the texts themselves have been Othered in their perception by both audience and scholars. While traditional research has mostly focused on classical Íslendingasögur other narratives, and particularly the 'post-classical' Íslendingasögur, riddarasögur and fornaldarsögur, were marginalized. These sagas thus do not only often contain appearances of the Other but are in themselves Othered. Yet, the question remains how this double alterity can be studied in detail. In this paper I will therefore present a new methodological approach by introducing the idea of kaleidoscopic narration, in order to shine a light on the double perspective the texts present. Taking Marianne Kalinke's ideas as a starting point, I suggest that this narrative mechanism is based on the idea that new episodes and sagas can be created from a repository of common elements. The second part of the talk will focus on the presentation of the kaleidoscope of trollish characters in the form of a case study. These characters appear in both fornaldarsögur, e.g. Ketils saga hængs, and Íslendingasögur, e.g. Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss, but under different aspects. Selected fornaldarsögur and Íslendingasögur will therefore be analysed and compared with the help of the kaleidoscope to show how the Other is presented in the two genres and how the Othering of especially the fornaldarsögur is achieved. The aim is to showcase how the use of the kaleidoscopic approach may help in gaining a differentiated insight into the perception and description of the Other, as well as the Othering of certain saga genres.

DEGREES OF SEPARATION?: PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERNESS IN THE NON-ICELANDIC LANDSCAPES OF ORKNEYINGA SAGA, FÆREYINGA SAGA, AND THE VINLAND SAGAS.

Emma Horne

The landscape(s) of the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas and the unique geographical position of Iceland act as a key factor in understanding the sagas, particularly the Íslendingasögur. The entanglement between the physical environment and human interactions provide insight into medieval Icelandic perspectives on the environment, its place, and its value. The Icelandic sagas mostly engage with a landscape which can be considered their own, geographically and socially distinct from mainland Scandinavia. While the internal Otherness of the Icelandic landscape has been explored in the context of/with reference to the Outlaw Sagas, this paper will explore how sagas compiled in Iceland engage with the landscape of the Other; the landscape beyond Iceland. Primarily, this paper intends to present case studies from Grænlandinga saga, Eiríks Saga Rauða, Orkneyinga saga, and Færeyinga saga to establish to what extent these texts portray foreign landscapes as Other, by comparing depictions of non-Icelandic and Icelandic landscapes. Secondly, through this comparison, this paper aims to re-evaluate the use and prominence of Icelandic – and to a lesser extent, Norwegian – landscapes in the Íslendingasögur. Overall, this paper suggests a variable level of alterity ascribed to external landscapes, and that both regional and cultural proximity mitigate perceptions of Otherness in geographic locations beyond the familiarity of Iceland.

DATING AND RECONSTRUCTION: THE OTHERNESS OF THE PAST IN THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS TEXT

Tarrin Wills

The dating of Old Norse texts, particularly poetry, is the subject of highly differing methods producing very different results. The texts as we know them must be no older than their oldest unique physical record (usually a manuscript), and yet often the language is consistent with a much earlier date, and must be reconstructed to some extent to make sense of it. When it comes to the representation of otherness, particularly a pre-Christian world view, it can make a large difference to the interpretation how 'other' the paganism of the text is to the scribe or the author, and what other influences may have been brought to bear on their understanding and representation of the past. This in turn affects the way in which words and their meanings in such texts represent the alterity of the past. A nuanced approach to understanding the relationship between the text and the past should bring together the material, textual and linguistic context of the world represented in the text, the word represented by the text itself, and the world represented by the text's physical record, if possible. This paper outlines some practical tools and workflows for treating Old Norse text in such diverse ways, as well as projects in which this methodological diversity is being applied. I present scenarios of this complex relationship between the manuscript/text and its pre-Christian past, including: literature about Iceland representing its natural and supernatural past; literature drawing on pre-Christian poetry and language theory from both Iceland and the Classical world; and manuscripts that transform and record apparently pre-Christian material. The goal is to identify layers of meaning in the representation of pagan alterity.

BRIDGING WORLDS: OTHERWORLDLY OBJECTS IN THE FORNALDARSÖGUR AND HEROIC LAYS

Daniela Hahn

This paper explores the role of otherworldly objects in Old Norse literature, focusing on the fornaldarsögur and the Heroic Lays of the Edda. These narratives are renowned for their wealth of mythical and fantastical elements, prominently featuring magical objects that play crucial narrative roles. By investigating the narrative functions and symbolic significance of these objects, this study elucidates how these elements influence both character development and plot progression and facilitate interactions between the human and supernatural realms, impacting their respective story-worlds. Originating in mythical realms or associated with divine beings, these objects frequently act as catalysts for adventure, transformations, or trials of valor. Things mark critical turning points, condense storylines and embody themes like fate, loyalty or love. The analysis centers on a selection of otherworldly objects that range from enchanted swords and armor to cursed treasures and magical skins. The paper examines the dynamics between human characters and supernatural entities such as dwarfs, valkyries, and gods. Additionally, it will analyze how these objects guide the recipients' expectations and motivate events, a function particularly important in action-oriented texts like the Eddic heroic lays, which rarely use explanatory retrospection. The brief mention of a sword or ring can evoke chains of action, interconnections, and emotions in the audience. In conclusion, it is argued that otherworldly objects in the fornaldarsögur and Heroic Lays are crucial for understanding deeper narrative structures and as well as the interaction between the mortal and the magical in these narratives.

LAST RIGHTS: LEGAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND PERSONHOOD IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND AND SCANDINAVIA

Hannah Burrows

In a very famous scene from *Eyrbyggja saga*, a group of troublesome revenants are finally persuaded to leave their former home at Fróðá following a combination of exorcism rites and a hastily convened 'door-court', at which legal sentences are passed on each revenant in turn. Each appears to respect the judgement of the law and accept that its reach extends to them even after death. To modern readers, this may seem an amusingly extreme manifestation of what William Ian Miller has termed 'a cultural obsession with law'. Rather than being purely a literary construct, however, various clauses in medieval Nordic lawcodes do extend rights and even responsibilities to the dead. For instance, it is prohibited in Grágás to compose poetry about the Christian dead, or to recite poetry in mockery of any dead person (K§238), while the older Gulaping law states: 'There are three cases in which legal action may be brought against a dead man' (§160). This paper will explore how the medieval Nordic lawcodes confront and challenge the threshold of death, comparing attitudes to the dead to those of additional legal others, such as women and enslaved persons. By utilizing legal perspectives on alterity, it will offer new ways to probe the boundaries of personhood and understandings of selfhood in medieval Iceland and Scandinavia, which in turn can shed new light on our readings of otherness in the sagas.

FEMALE REVENANTS: A DIFFERENT TYPE OF TROLL?

Irina Manea

In Icelandic sagas, most female revenants appear in groups haunting collectively or as brief apparitions at funeral feasts after their death, e.g. Þorgríma from Eyrbyggja saga, with no concrete descriptions. This paper aims to investigate the female revenant body at the confluence of corporeality, age, sexuality and monstrosity, following the idea of monster as a signifier constitutive of the social order. The revenant woman's image results from the amalgamation of several layers of otherness, most visible in the case of Þorgríma of Eyrbyggja saga - origin, character, social status, yet also elements that bind her to the community – Christianity, non-violent behaviour – thus maximizing her liminality. The most intriguing element of her otherness seems to be the nakedness of an ageing woman, which solidifies the ambiguities of conceptual boundaries. The female monstrous body produces fissures in the “stability of the self” (Miller 2010) reinforced by demonising female flesh, decay, or the post-menopausal body. Gyða from Flóamanna saga meets the prerequisites for becoming an *aptrgangr* given her skills in magic, and her body manifests resistance to burial – she too represents the foreign and the strange, yet the difference to her masculine counterparts seems superficial. The behaviour of Sigríð from Grœnlendinga saga, however, indicates a commentary on the sexualised female body becoming more aggressive after death. Despite some similarities shared with the male *aptrgangr*, the female may present more contradictions in the light of the disrupted female body's power to challenge men's health and social order and toy with medieval anxieties about attractiveness and repulsion. Otherwise, the noteworthy absence of female revenants could indicate a moral integration within the context of conversion or an inferior object of legal clauses – in this sense female revenants pose less troublesome otherness than trollish characters e.g. performing witch-rides.

A HOLY HANDMAID: KÁTRÍN AS 'AMBÁTT' IN KÁTRÍNAR SAGA AND KÁTRÍNARDRÁPA

Alicia Maddalena

This paper will explore the relationship between Kátrínar saga and Kálfr Hallsson's skaldic poem Kátrínardrápa, both of which recount the story of St Catherine of Alexandria. In particular, the use of the word ambátt [handmaid] in both texts is striking, supporting, I argue, Bernhard Kahle's 1898 observation that Kálfr knew and referred to the saga when he composed his poem. Ambátt appears in the skaldic corpus in only six poems, amounting to a total of fifteen occurrences. Ten of these occurrences are in Kátrínardrápa, the other five accounting for the word's only use in their respective poems. Further, it is only in Kátrínardrápa that ambátt refers to a handmaid of God. The word is used only in this sense in the poem, exclusively for Kátrín. Ambátt is much more prevalent in the prose corpus, the Dictionary of Old Norse prose listing ninety-nine occurrences. According to my own observations, ambátt appears fifteen times in Kátrínar saga, which is more than any other saint's saga I have explored. That this word should appear in both texts with such relatively high frequency – especially when the word is so rare in the skaldic corpus – warrants our attention. I hope to address two lines of inquiry in this paper. First, I intend to look closely at each occurrence of ambátt in the saga and in the skaldic poem, and ask what the translation of this single word from a prosaic to a poetic context might begin to tell us about the process of adapting a saga into a poem more generally. Further, the word ambátt itself is a fascinating one, as readily translated as 'concubine' in the prose corpus as 'handmaid'. Especially taking into consideration Margaret Clunies Ross' suggestion that Kálfr might have composed this poem for religious women, what might his use of ambátt tell us about how the word was used in late 14th-century Iceland?

A PAGAN CHRISTIAN? HARALDR SIGURÐARSON'S PORTRAYAL IN KINGS' SAGAS

Maciej Lubik

A medieval text which most extensively depicts Haraldr is contained in Morkinskinna. As much as 60% of this compendium of kings' sagas is devoted to him and his nephew, Magnús the Good. A combined depiction of their lives seems to provide a comparative portrayals of both kings, where the former is presented as a short-tempered, warlike ruler resembling a pre-Christian model, whereas the latter appears to reflect a Christian ideal of a just, good-natured and beloved ruler. This antithetic parallelism seems to juxtapose that what is evil, condemned, pagan in nature, that what belongs to the foregone epoch, and that what is good, praised, Christian, that what belongs to the new era. However, does Haraldr's portrayal in the Old Norse tradition in general reflect his alleged pagan nature? How is he depicted in other compendia of kings' sagas? To what extent does his nature differ from those of the most Christian kings of the late Viking Age depicted there (Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson)? Is there a concrete point in the narratives of these compendia which allows one to say that here the new era of Christian kings in Norway begins? The aim of this paper is to reflect upon these questions.

ONTOLOGIES OF THE UNFREE: INTERSECTIONS OF SLAVERY AND OUTLAWRY IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND

Alexander Wilson

What did it mean to be unfree in medieval Iceland? Unfreedom encompasses the myriad ways in which one's bodily and political autonomy can be restricted by other people. When we think about unfreedom, we often focus on the institution of slavery, which some scholars characterise as restricting autonomy so completely that it results in 'social death', where people are treated as if they are dead or non-existent. Yet in Iceland, where slaves were not isolated from others, but part of the household unit, there was scope for their otherness to be downplayed or subverted through regular social interaction. Outlawry in Iceland can also be investigated as a form of unfreedom. Conceptually, to be a full outlaw in Iceland meant to forfeit any societal presence: outlaws are othered as animalistic, monstrous figures, and there were harsh legal prohibitions on those who harboured outlaws or failed to kill them if given the opportunity. Yet in practice, outlaws with prominent supporters could maintain some societal influence, while others could seek unofficial patronage from like-minded chieftains, a form of asymmetric dependency. What happens when we think about unfreedom not as a monolithic category, but as a range of ontological experiences involving the systematic denial of autonomy – in other words, a spectrum of distinct yet related ontologies of unfreedom? This paper takes such a comparative approach by studying the intersections between ontologies of slavery and outlawry in medieval Iceland. We discuss how slaves and outlaws were able to negotiate their unfreedom with powerful figures, and in some cases to make significant social gains. The diminished legal and social status of outlaws and slaves facilitated them taking on illicit activities, especially in relation to extralegal violence. We also consider the hierarchy between these ontologies: were slavery and outlawry comparably influential forms of unfreedom, or was one more fundamental in defining the Icelandic other?

TRAUMA AS INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Yoav Tirosh

The work of Torfi H. Tulinius has effectively shown that the sagas are a fruitful scene for harrowing trauma accounts. His work, alongside that of Marion Poilvez and Anna Katharina Heiniger, has brought to light the benefits of this theory on the bloody saga literature prose. But, as M. Mayburd has suggested, trauma in its current understanding might not always be the ideal framework for interpreting these texts; applying a modern term on medieval (fictional!) people rarely is. This paper sets out to explore the wonderful world of individual and collective trauma in medieval Icelandic prose, both in saga literature as well as diplomatic writing. Embracing the term's anachronism and its modern background and application can be an advantage, as it is a framework that helps us communicate in the past with our own language, and approximate their experiences through a language intelligible to us.

MINOR CHARACTERS AND MINORITY DISCOURSES IN STURLUNGA SAGA

Thomas Morcom

This paper is intended for the 'Methodological diversity in Old Norse studies' strand. It employs current research in narratology to analyse saga literature, particularly the work of Alex Woloch on minor characters. This theoretical framework will allow for the more fruitful analysis of sagas that feature expansive casts of characters, particularly focusing on a significant 'othered' group within saga literature – unnamed, impoverished, or otherwise socially marginal Icelanders. This paper will discuss the function of these minor characters in the compilation of *samtíðarsögur* that comprise *Sturlunga saga* and their effect on the narrative's structure. *Sturlunga saga* offers a case study of the methods by which a multi-generational, intertextual network of elite men who serve as the central characters of the compilation is destabilised to the point of self-destruction through violent infighting. As Icelandic social norms collapse and the cast of main character self-destruct, minor characters find new space and action open to them within the storyworld and revised forms of participation become available to these 'other's'. Anonymous women, beggars, elderly men, and the disabled take on alternative and more active roles within the compilation; for example, poor women are depicted physically assaulting men, a phenomenon almost never depicted in earlier Icelandic saga, and vagrants compose the verses that arbitrate amongst elite men and assess and mock their contests. This 'alternative community' of minor characters is intriguingly also closely associated with minority forms of representation within the narrative discourse: dreams, slander, gossip, rumour, and insults. These forms of narration stand in opposition to the objective, omniscient report of the saga narrator and offer alternative, often errant, accounts of seemingly fixed action and characterisations, substantially complicating the compilation's narrative structure.

FILLING THE LANDSCAPE: THE PHANTOM SETTLERS OF LANDNÁMABÓK

Cassidy Croci

Landnámabók scholars have long identified phantom landnámsmenn ‘settlers’, who are invented to ‘fill’ sparsely populated land-claims in the text so that an uninterrupted chain of settlements can be enumerated around the coast of Iceland, which in turn gives the impression that Iceland was fully settled by the end of the landnámsöld (c.870-930). Traditionally, these ‘invented’ or ‘phantom’ settlers have been detected using onomastic analysis, particularly the ‘nature-name’ theory. In this theory some place-names were originally derived from nearby topographical features, but over time the place-name was reinterpreted as being derived from a personal name i.e. Kollafjörður, which either comes from the genitive singular of the name Kolli, or the genitive plural of the noun kollr ‘head’, but can be used for a head-shaped mountaintop. There is some merit in this approach; however, it is too simplistic to be used as a catch-all model to identify invented settlers. Therefore, are there other measures that can be used in conjunction with onomastics to detect phantom settlers in Landnámabók? This paper uses Social Network Analysis to construct, visualise, and quantify the narrative networks of the Sturlubók redaction of Landnámabók, which are formed of the approximately 3,100 individuals in the text and their 8,000 relationships. Applying degree centrality, a measure that detects the number of relationships a person has with other individuals in a network, to Landnámabók’s narrative networks has identified that 19 of the 425 landnámsmenn have zero relationships. This indicates that these settlers are not important to Landnámabók’s network structure and that their historicity should be reevaluated. Furthermore, 13 of these 19 individuals have a personal name or byname that shares an element with a place-name in their designated land-claim. Thus, degree centrality is an effective way to detect potential ‘invented’ individuals in Landnámabók alongside more traditional methods.

TROUBLED UNDERSTANDING: MIXED RACE EXPERIENCES IN THE HRAFNISTUMANNASÖGUR

Arwen Thyse 陳藹文

In the realm of racial mixing and mixed race experience, encounters with “otherness” and “alterity” occur in the intimate spheres of family and personal identity. These encounters and experiences of the other are not unfamiliar in the saga literature, and raise questions about the ways in which these sources portray the perception and experience of racial mixing: What did it mean to live in a relationship with a racialized partner in medieval Norse society? What did it mean to be that racialized partner? And what did it mean to be a person with mixed race background? This paper explores the portrayal of one set of mixed race relationships and individuals found in the Hrafnistumannasögur, a set of late medieval fornaldarsögur concerned with a family from Hálogaland with significant connections to the Sámi. Approached with the premise that these sagas demonstrate racial thinking directed towards the Sámi, this paper examines the portrayal of Norse-Sámi relationships and individuals for insight into mixed race experiences in the Scandinavian Middle Ages. In particular, the disjuncture between the racializing tendencies and the sympathetic and nuanced portrayal of racial mixing in the Hrafnistumannasögur provides a window into the complicated socio-cultural dynamics generated and experienced by multiracial and multiethnic societies in medieval Scandinavia. Drawing on concepts of ethnomemory and the importance of stories in reflecting contemporary societal realities and values, the coexistence of a racialized perception of the Sámi alongside a nuanced understanding of mixed race issues, seems to suggest that these sagas recall an earlier less racialized period while simultaneously acknowledging the continued presence of racial mixing in the later Middle Ages. Examining these sagas thus allows for greater understanding about changing attitudes towards otherness and how societies perceived alterity that existed within as lovers, family, children, and the self.

THE UNCANNY OTHER: NARRATIVE DOUBLES IN SOME SCENES OF OLD NORSE CHILDBIRTH

Katherine Olley

The paper will explore the appearance of narrative doubles in connection with three scenes of giving birth in Old Norse literature. In *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, the titular hero is enslaved by the evil Vilhjálmr who takes credit for Hrólfr's feats of valour while forcing Hrólfr to be his servant, thus becoming his narrative double, masquerading as the man that Hrólfr truly is. Hrólfr is ultimately delivered from this servitude in part due to his assistance at the dangerous childbirth of an elf-woman and the valuable ring he receives in thanks. In *Óláfs þáttir Geirstaðaálfs*, the mound-dweller Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr is doubled by his namesake Óláfr Haraldsson, whose birth he assists in bringing about by allowing his belt to be taken from his burial mound and used as a birthing girdle. Finally, in *Adonias saga* the birth of the hero Adonias occurs at exactly the same moment as the birth of his half-brother Constantinus as was foretold by the appearance of a double star prior to their conceptions. I argue that these pairs may be interpreted as uncanny doubles, which challenge the boundaries between two and one, self and other, in the same way as pregnancy and childbirth, and that their frequent appearance in connection with childbirth is an expression of the uncanniness of childbirth as depicted in Old Norse sagas. By deploying The Uncanny as a fresh theoretical approach to scenes of giving birth in Old Norse literature I suggest we can advance beyond simplistic 'rites of passage' analyses to a more nuanced understanding of childbirth and its role in Old Norse literature.

NAMING SAGAS, NAMING PEOPLE: NEW HISTORICAL AND LITERARY PERSPECTIVES ON SAGA TITLES AND THE IDENTITIES BEHIND THEM

Nikolaus Frenzel

The -inga suffix features within the titles of a number of sagas, irrespective of scholarly categorisation (e.g., the Icelandic Family Sagas), and generally implies a meaning of 'the saga of the people of X'. Leaving to one side the debate of book-prose and free-prose understandings of the sagas as pieces of history and/or fiction, with the (sometimes limited) knowledge of how contemporaries referred to the sagas that survive to us, it is possible to deduce the overall inferences that authors made towards their purposes of writing about different peoples. Additionally, this is very telling for defining group identities, because in scholarship we have seemingly no better way to refer to groups of people than as 'nationalities' and 'ethnicities', when in essence neither of these terms are representative of Norse group situations. In this discussion, I will introduce the premise that the -inga suffix represents a literary category which intended to present group identities in contexts of contrast and otherness. This will be presented using (predominantly) the case studies of Orkneyinga saga and Jónsvíkinga saga, sagas which represented societies situated on geographical and social borders of the unknown, and which both exemplify the challenges and rewards in pursuing sagas of group identities.

LOOKING ANEW: COMBINING AND WIDENING OUR APPROACHES TO GENDER, EMOTION, AND MONSTROSITY IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Juliane Witte

My project explores the way in which gender, emotion, and monstrosity impact one another within the representation of female characters in Old Norse literature. What emerges from this research is that using a single approach prevents us from truly grasping the complexity and nuance of the texts themselves. A theoretical and methodological framework is required which is flexible and complex enough to appreciate and explore the way different themes and elements connect and build on one another in the literature. As such, I will present the framework that has crystallised out of my current doctoral work. To demonstrate this framework, I will present a case study: Helga from *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*. Through the lens of gender, one can appreciate her singular portrayal of female struggles regarding relationships, while monster studies elucidates her supernatural background. Both encourage a reading of alterity, but analysing her emotions allows for the true complexity of her character to emerge. It centres her as an active subject, exploring her deep sadness and determined independence. The case study will demonstrate how a methodological framework which includes a wider range of approaches can allow for new perspectives to emerge. I will demonstrate the flexibility of this framework by also including psychological approaches. In broadening our analysis to feature various, including opposing, approaches, we prevent the siloing of our field and can connect to interdisciplinary research taking place in other disciplines.

THE HOWS AND THE WHYS OF MAKING A DIGITAL MANUSCRIPT EDITION IN THE SWEDISH SETTING: THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SWEDEN, ISL. PERG. FOL. 2 CASE STUDY

Alexandra Petrulevich

More than 20 years has passed since Medieval Nordic Text Archive cooperation was established in 2001. It could be argued that West Norse philologists—at least in the Nordics—should have by now figured out what the best way to make a digital edition is, both when it comes to theory such as definitions of the key concepts, and method such as the best technical solutions for the basic tasks of transcription, normalization and lemmatization (e.g. Wills 2012, Haugen et al. 2014, Burghart 2017, Paulsen 2017). Moreover, most of the oldest West Norse manuscripts should definitely have already been made available in digital editions—ideally, through a dedicated academic publishing venue. However, this does not seem to be the case. There are still both choices to make and ambiguities to handle—and hundreds of manuscripts left to transcribe. The present paper presents and discusses the approach to digital editing chosen by the Swedish project “Digitization of the West Norse Manuscripts in Swedish Collections” (2022–2026) exemplified by the digital edition of National Library of Sweden, Isl. perg. fol. 2. Additionally, the paper will demonstrate what this type of outputs can be used for in terms of further linguistic research (e.g. Pettersson et al.) and discuss the problems some transcription methods can cause for this type of studies.

GERALD OF WALES AND THE KING'S MIRROR: A NORTH-WESTERN PERIPHERAL DISCOURSE

Jonas Zeit-Altpeter

The Old Norwegian King's Mirror (*Speculum regale*), a mid-13th century didactic dialogue between a father and a son, covers a variety of topics, including cosmology, proper behaviour at court, and the theory and practice of kingship. Its first part, the so-called 'Merchant's Chapter', prominently discusses a number of marvels located in the north-western periphery of the mental map of the world as conceptualised in Latin Europe. Several of the marvels located in Ireland in particular closely parallel those discussed in the 12th century *Topographia Hibernica* of Gerald of Wales, although the precise relationship of the two texts is unclear. In my paper I will argue against the purely oral provenance of the material found in both the King's Mirror and *Topographia Hibernica* asserted by older scholarship (Meyer 1910, Young 1938). Instead, parallels with Gerald's work go beyond individual motifs, including the structure of the texts and wider issues addressed. The King's Mirror seems to take part in a written, learned discourse shared by both Latin and vernacular texts. These texts seek to negotiate the position and undergird the authority of voices located in peripheral regions of the map, where significant wonders abound, the end of the world is close at hand, and Christianity cannot be taken for granted. Employing Foucault's terminology of power, I will also present outlooks and discursive strategies found in these texts that sometimes vary widely--from Gerald's Norman 'colonial' (Bartlett 2013) gaze to Norwegians grappling with their own identity as 'the other' to the hegemony of Latin learning.

'FROM THE WITCH OF DEATH AND THE EVIL SPRITE': ANN RADCLIFFE'S DEPICTION OF OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY IN AN ORIGIN STORY OF STONEHENGE.

Sarah McAllister

Before the middle of the eighteenth century, knowledge of Old Norse literature in Britain had been largely limited to small antiquarian circles. During the 1750s to 1820s, the unfamiliarity of Old Norse mythology in British culture provided artists and writers with an attractive new subject matter. Amongst the early attempts of translating the works into English, its 'otherness' enabled innovative adaptations which saw the imagery being interwoven into an array of contemporary ideas. It is within this context that Ann Radcliffe incorporated Norse mythology into a druidic origin story of Stonehenge. At the end of the eighteenth century, Ann Radcliffe was one of the most popular and bestselling novelists. Despite her renown, Radcliffe shied from public life and actively avoided any literary social circles. She did not stop writing in later life; however, it was not until 1826, three years after her death, that a posthumous collection of her works was published. It is in this collection that we find the poem 'Salisbury Plains: Stonehenge'. Radcliffe's conflation of Norse and Druidic traditions presents a unique mythological tale where the wizard Warwolf has overthrown Odin with the support of Hela and Loki, leading Odin to seek the help of the first of all the Druid race and his 'spell of Minstrelsy'. Radcliffe's later works have only recently received some much-deserved scholarly attention, however 'Salisbury Plains: Stonehenge' remains neglected by scholars of Ann Radcliffe and of the post-medieval reception of Old Norse mythology. This paper will begin by contextualising how the otherness of Old Norse imagery enabled it to be interwoven within a range of different ideas in British culture, before exploring in more depth how Radcliffe incorporates this imagery within her own poetry. Furthermore, this paper will assert that the poem challenges our understanding of Radcliffe as a writer and conception of Old Norse reception in the Romantic Period.

KING VALENTINUS OF FRANCE MEETS EMPEROR JÓHANNES OF GREECE: REMOVING, ADDING AND CHANGING ELEMENTS OF OTHERNESS IN POST-MEDIEVAL ICELANDIC VERSIONS OF MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Reynir Þór Eggertsson

The aim of this paper is to examine how post-medieval Icelandic rewriters, such as, translators, scribes and “rímur” poets, of the medieval stories of the “Patient Griselda” (“originated” in Boccaccio's Decamerone, c. 1350, Italy) and the “One-Handed Helena” (La Belle Hélène de Constantinople, c. 14th Century, France), added, removed or changed elements of Otherness, as the stories made their way into the Icelandic literary heritage. Both stories are found in various versions in Icelandic, both in prose and verse, most of which are only preserved in paper manuscripts from the 17th to the early 20th Century. In many of these manuscripts, Icelandic Griselda and Helena rewritings (Gríshildar saga þolinmóðu/góðu and Helenu saga einhentu) are found together with contemporary versions of Old Norse medieval literature. Both stories are found in numerous rímur versions, and Griselda has even been rewritten in the style of a “riddarasaga” (3 prose + 2 rímur). Therefore, this material can be regarded as a part of the Icelandic literary culture, in the same way as medieval translations into Old Norse. In my paper, I would like to reverse the strand, Medievalism and the Sagas /Reception of the “Other” in Old Norse Literature, and investigate the cultural confrontations and encounters and alterity present in post-medieval and early-modern Icelandic adaptations of medieval continental European literature.

DWARFS, OTHER SUPERNATURAL BEINGS, AND HUMANS

Ugnius Vizgirda Mikucionis

Dwarfs (dvergar) in Old Norse texts appear to be a group of supernatural (i.e., non-human) beings that is distinct from other groups such as æsir, álfar or jötnar. A close look at the sources reveals however that the relationship between dwarfs and other beings is not always straightforward. The distinction between dvergar and álfar is a particularly blurry one, especially in the Prose Edda. Snorri Sturluson identifies Svartálfaheimr as the realm where dwarfs live (possibly meaning that the dvergar are identical to the svartálfar) and certain dwarfs' names – such as Álf, Gandálf, Vindálf – confirm the impression that at least some of the dwarfs must have had a close connection to the álfar). Some of the nornir are said to be of dwarfish origins (they are called Dvalinn's daughters in Fáfnismál). Reginn is described as a “dvergr of vøxt” (a dwarf in stature/shape) in the prose introduction to Reginsmál but is referred to as “inn hrímkaldi jötunn” (the rime-cold giant) by one of the nuthatches in Fáfnismál (stanza 38), leading to wonder whether a creature could have been – or, at least, resembled – both a dvergr and a jötunn at the same time. Allviss intended to marry Þórr's daughter. In Sörla þáttr it is said that the dwarfs “mingled more with humans then, than now” (“blönduðusk þá meir við mannfólk en nú”). In more than one saga a dwarf is referred to as a foster-father (“fostri”) by a human hero (Þjalar Jóns saga, Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar), and the relationship between a human being and a dwarf is described as a great friendship (“in mesta vinátta”). All these facts invite to a discussion about the relationship between the various groups of supernatural beings, and also about the relationship between supernatural beings – such as dwarfs – and humans. It is not always obvious who is the Self, and who is the Other. It may be argued that Otherness is, in some cases, a matter of degree rather than a categorical distinction.

BJÖRN IRONSIDE AND THE SCANDINAVIAN ATTACK ON PISA IN 860. BETWEEN THE ACCOUNT FROM THE SAGAS AND LATIN SOURCES.

Marcin Böhm

Björn Ironside is today perceived as one of the most famous, semi-historical Viking leaders who devastated Europe in the 9th century. This alleged son of Ragnar Lodbrok in the sagas was said to have traveled to the Mediterranean Sea in his bandit raids, where he attacked both Christian and Muslim lands. During one such raid in 860, the city of Pisa in Italy was attacked and captured. The sacking of this port, which was subject to the Carolingian line ruling in Italy, became one of the elements of the legend associated with this Scandinavian. Therefore, the main goal of this speech will be to present the accounts of Latin sources (*Annales Bertiniani*, *Chronicon de gestis Normannorum in Francia*) related to this event, in the light of the accounts of the sagas talking about Björn's actions, also from the point of view of military history.

FACETS OF OTHERNESS: SCALING PROXIMITY AND DISTANCE IN KINGS' SAGAS AND SAXO

Roland Scheel

Modern thought has conceived of the nation not only as a coherent sphere but also as a community with a shared history and a common descent. While the partly abysmal consequences of this social construction are well-known, modern narratives of the nation very often rest upon medieval sources, especially historiography. In fact, pre-modern concepts of (elite) history employ a genealogical principle which facilitated later constructions of nations as communities of descent; even modern racism had its predecessors in medieval texts, and the ancient ethnographic tradition contributed to the manifestation of ethnical stereotypes which could be revived in the era of nationalism. While nationalistic exploitations of medieval narratives certainly misunderstand and deform their sources, there nevertheless was a manifest 'proto-nationalism' especially during the centuries when saga literature emerged. The paper rests upon the hypothesis that medieval constructions of 'other' groups did not aim at coherent images and classifications but rather present us with a 'scaled otherness' which serves different purposes in different narrative situations, oscillating between the creation of proximity and difference to one's 'own' group, also regarding the relevance of paganism vs Christianity. This hypothesis will be tested in case studies from the Kings' Sagas and Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*, especially around the time of conversion to Christendom. In this regard, it will also be discussed how far the integration into/exclusion of groups from the 'Northern' sphere, i.e. a historicised concept of 'Scandinavia', is made relevant.

SUPERNATURAL SAGA SWORDS AND THEIR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARALLELS

Katherine Beard

This paper endeavors to understand the meaning of the sword symbol in the Viking Age by putting the literary corpus in conversation with archaeological material. The sword was assuredly a symbol of power and status, as it befits a weapon expensive to manufacture. Extant medieval Icelandic literature makes their importance clear, and swords in the sagas often have otherworldly origins. Several literary motifs about swords survive through the sagas, including swords used as genealogical mnemonics, swords representing virility (or impotence, when damaged), swords as a conduit for curses, or swords having preternatural abilities on the battlefield. Some sword narratives found in sagas have roots that originate in the archaeological record of the Viking age, such as the literary trope of mound-breaking to retrieve valuable, sometimes legendary, swords there entombed. Some notable examples of these special saga swords are Kvernbítr from *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*, Sköfnungr from *Hrólfs saga kraka*, and Tyrfingr from *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*. The sword's importance is felt in the archaeological record of the Viking Age, where many full-sized swords are found in graves and ground deposits. These full-sized swords could have many meanings, depending on their find contexts. Several dozen small, sword-shaped amulets have also been found, some drilled for presumed use as amuletic jewelry. This paper will analyze full-size swords and sword amulets with a data analytics platform created in 2019 named Eitri (<http://www.eitridb.com>). Eitri combines the collected archaeological finds with modern data analytics tools to provide a powerful new way to search, analyze, and understand data trends. By backgrounding the extant literary sources concerning the sword with their archaeological counterparts using digital humanities techniques, perhaps new insights will be revealed about the sword's symbolic meaning to people in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

HUMAN AND INHUMAN: DOGS, SLAVS AND HUMANITY.

Natalia Radziwillowicz

The physical body is perhaps at the core of human identity, providing each person with their own unique vessel, while also firmly establishing them as part of a wider, complex community. This paper will explore the ways in which medieval authors could alienate and dehumanise others – in this case Slavs – by referring to them as dogs. This research is undertaken as part of a PhD project focusing on the interactions between Scandinavians and the populations on the southern Baltic coast. As part of this research, I examine the ways in which different people were conceived of and portrayed in the literature written about them. In this paper I will assess how the Saxon authors Thietmar of Merseburg and Helmold of Bosau wrote of the neighbouring Slavs, and in particular focus on the instances where they are conflated with dogs. This terminology – levied by Christian authors against their pagan neighbours – highlights the perceived divide between the two groups – faithful versus faithless, controlled versus chaotic, human and civilised versus animal and uncultured. Writing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries respectively, the authors were both aware of and involved with the keen interest the Church had in the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity. From a Christian perspective, while the body was certainly perishable and somewhat weak, it was an important symbol of belonging, and of propriety, with mankind being made in God's image. To have one's humanity mutated into a dog is to lose all one's rights, connections, respect and awareness – to be feral and shunned. While neighbouring Scandinavians could also be classed as 'other' by these authors, and even considered somewhat untamed, it is the Slavs who seem to occupy a more conspicuous hinterland of existence. The question then becomes: if such creatures were so abject, then why was it considered so important for them to be converted? There is, perhaps, still humanity in the dog Slav.

THE EXILE OF THE GODS

Jonas Wellendorf

In my presentation, I will discuss how Christianity's transcendentalist ontology has influenced the perception of the pre-Christian divine forces known as Æsir. These forces were once part of this world but have been in the Eddas been made denizens of a mythic story world. In this world, gods engage in battles with giants and other adversaries, but they rarely involve themselves actively in human affairs. As part of the process of Christianization, the understanding of religious ontologies therefore changed, leading to the exile of the pre-Christian divine forces from the realm of human concerns. To comprehend pre-Christian ideologies, one must metaphorically reintegrate the gods into this world. Drawing on recent historical and anthropological scholarship (Strathern's *Unearthly Powers*, Sahlins' *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe*, and Moin and Strathern's *Sacred Kingship in World History*) I will outline some of the main differences between immanentist and transcendentalist ontologies and demonstrate how aspects of the immanentist ideology can be pieced together by drawing on the oldest skaldic encomia and comparative materials.

(RE)SHAPING THE PROSE EDDA: ADDRESSING THE CONSTITUTIO TEXTUS OF A 'MODERN' CLASSIC

Lyonel Perabo

Few Medieval Scandinavian texts have received more attention, both from scholars and laypeople, than the Prose Edda. However, the process by which this text, stemming from the Icelandic Middle Ages took on the shape it is most commonly known today remains obscure to all but a few specialists. Generally attributed to the thirteenth century Icelandic polymath Snorri Sturluson, the Prose Edda first received scholarly attention in the beginning of the sixteen-hundreds. While the academic debate surrounding this text has most notably revolved around its function, its truthfulness, and its somewhat obscure origins, comparatively little attention has been devoted to its early reception and the form it took on in the pre-Modern era. In this talk, I will argue that this relative disinterestedness stems not from the absence of a methodological framework, nor from the lack of exploratory research on the topic, but rather from the legacy of earlier editorial practices. As a result, the Prose Edda (among many other texts), has been edited and taken on forms that do not always accurately reflect the configurations, and degree of variance it displays in manuscript form. Focusing on that matters such as textual variation, codicological context, and early commentary and reception, I will re-situate the Prose Edda in its Medieval and early Modern environment, putting particular emphasis on frequent followers and alternative recensions. I will then make the case for reconsidering what the Prose Edda actually is, how it should be edited, and what ought to be included in such editions

ON MULTIFACETED SHAPESHIFTING CREATURES IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir

In Norse mythology, Óðinn and Loki are capable of changing into different types of animals. In Old Icelandic literature, however, shapeshifting is more often than not about characters who were able to change into the form of just one specific animal, like a wolf or a bear. In this paper, I will examine those few saga characters who are capable of adopting two or more animal forms. The main emphasis will be on sagas from the fourteenth century and later, and especially the late medieval fornaldarsögur (legendary sagas), the original riddarasögur (tales of knights), and even the post-Reformation sagas in the style of these two genres, late sagas that in many cases share the characteristics of the earlier medieval genres. Examples drawn from literature will be presented and compared to see if they have anything in common. They include the three examples from Inger Boberg's Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature (Sturlaugs saga starfsama, Göngu-Hrólfs saga, and Bósa saga ok Herrauðs), listed under type D610 (Repeated transformation), as well as some additional examples. In these accounts, some individuals turn into fantastic beasts like dragons, worms, and lions, while others change into Northern animals like wolves, bears, boars, bulls, dogs, and whales. Yet others take on the shape of birds, like a crow or an eagle. In most cases, however, they turn into fierce and dangerous creatures aiming to harm others, usually during a battle or a war. The paper seeks to shed some light on the nature of these multifaceted shapeshifting creatures. It will examine what distinguishes these versatile shapeshifters from those who are only capable of changing into one particular animal, considering whether their roles in the narrative differ from those in the more traditional stories of shapeshifting.

RITUAL TRANSFORMATIONS: THE JOURNEY OF BLÓT FROM OLD NORSE SAGAS TO MODERN PRACTICES

Sarah Matilda Rysková

This paper explores the adaptation and interpretation of pagan blót rituals as depicted in sagas, highlighting their connection to the contemporary neo-pagan movement Ásatrúarfélagið in Iceland. Officially recognized as a religious organization by the Icelandic state in the early 1970s, Ásatrúarfélagið is authorized to conduct ceremonies such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals. The group sees itself as a continuator of pre-Christian pagan traditions, aiming to revive ancient religious practices that existed before Iceland's adoption of Christianity around the year 1000. Initially, this paper delves into how blót rituals are presented in medieval sagas. Subsequently, it examines how Ásatrúarfélagið employs these saga materials to construct its rituals, focusing on the influence of medieval Icelandic literature in shaping modern neo-pagan practices. The study explores the reinterpretation and integration of these medieval texts into the movement's ritual framework, thus highlighting their ongoing relevance and transformative potential within contemporary religious contexts. The study is underpinned by two years of research involving semi-structured interviews with prominent members of Ásatrúarfélagið and a detailed literary analysis of the Old Norse texts employed in their practices. This research aims to provide insights into the dynamic afterlife of sagas as they are repurposed in neo-pagan rituals, offering a unique perspective on the adaptation of medieval literature within contemporary spiritual movements.

THE CREATION OF THE 'OTHER' HERO – THE CASE OF KRÓKA-REFR

Viktória Gyönki

Króka-Refs saga is one of the younger sagas of the Icelanders, written around the second half of the 14th century. The saga was analysed by a few scholars in recent decades, and was summarised as constructed text that used elements and episodes of various other sagas. In previous presentations I examined the figure of Króka-Refr and came to the conclusion that the hero is very much similar to the protagonists of outlaw sagas, like Grettir Ásmundarson. My aim with this current presentation to analyse the idea behind the construction of such a saga and the main protagonist Refr. I will compare Króka-Refs saga to other medieval Icelandic sagas to discover the possible sources of the author of Króka-Refs saga. The presentation will argue that the author of saga was construction the saga with a purpose: to create a different type of hero than the well known and often tragic heroes of more popular sagas, such as Njáls saga or Grettis saga.

ALLURING, DANGEROUS, POWERFUL, BUT WERE THEY HUMAN? HEATHEN WOMEN FROM EASTERN EUROPE DEPICTED IN THE ICELANDIC SAGA.

Anna Kaiper

The main topic of this text is a phenomenon of women as characters encountered by the heroes of Icelandic sagas taking place in the East. The most characteristic are women in power, or those who are transmitters of power - queens and princesses. There is also a group of female characters whose only characteristic feature is their non-Christian origins. They are presented as extremely dangerous because it was believed that they could use magic, which is feared by the heroes of the sagas. This reception of Eastern Europe inhabitants cannot be treated as a source of knowledge about Eastern Europe, but as remnants of information that reached Iceland. There is a significant gap between the times of Scandinavian activity in Eastern Europe when the sagas' action took place, and the moment they were written. What we can take from the sagas is information that has been remembered and survived in the minds of the authors and their audience. Women of power were in the sagas a significant personae, because that archetype was based on famous historical figures, wives of Gardariki rulers, strongly associated with the Scandinavian political scene. Queen of Gardariki as that archetype was quite independent, had some political power and participated in ruling the kingdom. The pagan women found east of Gardarika belong to a world unfamiliar to the saga characters and as all unknown phenomena seem dangerous. They were treated with apprehension, reserve and sometimes surprising brutality. These women were perceived not as ordinary people, but as belonging to an unfamiliar and alien world. Female giants and trolls have experienced similar treatment.

INVENTIO CRUCIS, HAUKR ERLENDSSON, AND THE NORWEGIAN COURT

Sabine Walther

The narrative known under the Latin titles *Inventio crucis* or *Origo crucis* (Legend of the Cross) tells the history of the cross-tree down to Christ's passion. This fascinating legend was widespread during the Middle Ages. It exists in several Latin versions and was included in larger works and compilations such as *Legenda aurea*. Translations in many languages include Old Norse, which has seven versions. However, the first manuscript witness is only *Hauksbók*, which dates from the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it provides a quite short text. The later manuscripts are from the seventeenth century (and later) and transmit longer versions. This paper will address some basic questions about the origin of the earliest transmitted Old Norse text, called A by its editor Mariane Overgaard, and its relation to the longer version B. Overgaard suggests that the longer version B may be based on A "or a sister MS" through an intermediary manuscript (p. xlv). Overgaard finds it plausible that A may be abridged, is, however, undecided whether the abridgment happened already to the Latin source or to the Norse translation (p. xlii). She is further not sure whether the source was Norwegian because there is "no trace" of the cross legend in medieval Norway (xliii). According to Wilhelm Meyer and Overgaard, the version in *Hauksbók* seems to be based on two source texts. The paper will test the hypothesis that the "original translation" was made in Norway. A translator combined all material known to him. This comprehensive version was shortened for the insertion in *Hauksbók* and thus received the same treatment as other texts within this manuscript. The paper will ask further whether the late long version B could be – partially – based on this lost longer "original translation" instead of using A as a source text.

NIHON NI HOKUŌ NO SHINWAGAKU: THE EDDAS REIMAGINED IN JAPANESE VISUAL MEDIA

Brent Johnson

During the 8th century CE, concurrent with the oral tradition of Norse mythology to be penned in the Poetic and Prose Eddas a few centuries following, Japan wrote its own mythology into the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, and then entered its own golden age of poetic enlightenment which would rival the great skáldic culture of Norway and Iceland. The diffusion of Chinese and Korean literature, as well as a strong overlay of Buddhist thought would impact these chronicles, but it was more than a thousand years before the Germanic myths would enter Japanese translation. Wagner's operas broadly introduced the stories, followed by the first Japanese rendering of the Poetic Edda in 1933. The poet Shizuka Yamamuro made a massive contribution to this effort, introducing to Japan the eddas and sagas as well as pan-Scandinavian literature from 19th and 20th centuries, including H.C. Andersen, Henrik Ibsen, Sigrid Undset, Halldór Laxness, and Selma Lagerlöf among others. Continuing his work were two scholars, Kenji Matsutani and Yukio Taniguchi. Now that Japan had specific insight of the Eddic corpus, it was equipped with fresh motifs from the ancient West to weave into a new distinctly Japanese medium of graphic storytelling, progressing through light novels, manga, and anime. Here I will review some of the representations of Norse cosmogony and cosmology as it was transmuted from the Icelandic manuscripts into vivid Japanese visual narratives, and how the literary descriptions formerly bound to the mind's eye have been interpreted into hard visual art and flowed into adjacent creative media which were already threaded with a rich Japanese literary and folkloric tradition to synergize entirely new stories. Further, I will make a case that the contemporary media studios of Japan are uniquely positioned to direct the collective global imagination of the eddas and the sagas.

TROLLS IN DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS: INSPIRATIONS AND EVOLUTIONS OF A FIGURE OF OTHERNESS

Laurent Di Filippo

Trolls are common foes for playable characters since the first edition of the famous role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. Derived from the monsters of Old Norse texts and from the scandinavian folklore, trolls appear in the nordic culture at least since the middle ages and are now a part of contemporary popular culture. As research about trolls left games out of their scope, this communication wants to fill this blind spot. It aims at presenting the sources that inspired this famous monster and their evolution through the five editions of the game that was first published 50 years ago. The body of documents of this study is composed of the various publications of the game about trolls throughout its history, meaning gamebooks as well as magazines and other publications. The first part will focus on the origins of these monsters in the fantasy genre and more specifically Poul Anderson's novel Three Hearts and Three Lions, where they gain their regenerative ability from. This power places them in opposition with the biological life. The second part will focus on the evolution of the monster through many editions of the game and several ways by which they are represented as figures of otherness, especially due to their primitive culture and matriarcal organisation. The last part will show their association with giants in the last edition of the game and the mutations they can gain. This diachronic approach will show various sides of how monstrous alterity and otherness is built in a RPG and contribute to the reflexion about the reception of myth.

"RENOUANTUR IAM NOSTRO TEMPORE ANTIQUA SAECULA": THE PAGANISATION OF ISLAM AND THE ISLAMISATION OF PAGANS IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Karl Farrugia

The portrayal of Muslims in medieval European literature is a colourful collage of dubious details. From their equivalence to Arians, Nestorians and other ancient heresies, to their attribution of polytheism, the "Saracens" were touted as a continuation of a millennial struggle between Christendom and its enemies. The assimilation of Saracens to ancient paganism was achieved by applying it in two directions. In the chansons de geste, the pantheon of contemporary Saracens was imbued with gods from the Classical world, with Apollo, Jupiter and Mars amongst the more popular choices. Conversely, Alexander of Paris's Roman d'Alexandre, the eponymous Alexander the Great is faced by "Sarrasin", "Arrabis" and "Amoravis", invoking the Almoravid dynasty that ruled Al-Andalus in the 11th and 12th centuries. Guibert of Nogent claimed that the Turks are the surviving Parthian Empire, differing solely in nomenclature. The practice of paganisation of the Saracens was imported wholesale into Norway and Iceland with the translations of chansons to riddarasögur, seeping into the originally composed chivalric sagas. Icelandic literature shows evidence of an active participation in the Saracenisation of ancient peoples, moving beyond the strict confines of simple translation. The collection of Biblical translations and "Antikenroman" sagas in AM 226 fol. provide a fertile ground to explore this phenomenon. The antagonists of Stjórn I and III, Alexanders saga and Rómverja saga, which geographically span Persia and Assyria to North Africa, covering the majority of the Islamic ummah in the 13th century, are folded together into the common label Serkir, evoking a sense of continuity with the familiar contemporary Serkir. The 2-way assimilation ultimately served to bring the struggle between Christianity and Islam into the 'preconceptions of divine history and divine geography' codified in Biblical and patristic literature.

“HERO SLAY SERPENT”: MAKING THE OTHER FAMILIAR

Virginie Adam

Legendary sagas are the genre per se where heroes are confronted to the Other, an Other so radically different partly because it is solely fictional: dragons, giants, imaginary places such as Glæsisvellir, etc. The confrontation to this otherness and exoticism was part of the pleasure of the narration. A great deal of these texts are also characterised by strong generic features which makes them look alike from an outsider point of view. One of these strong regularities can be observed in one of the topoi of this genre: the monster fight or the dragon fight. In a great deal of sagas, the fight between Sigurðr and Fáfnir works as a subtext. Vǫlsunga saga although solely extant in a fifteenth-century manuscript, is a much older story. It can thus be used as a source for 13th-century and 14th-century sagas. There seems to be a paradox: the meeting and killing of the Other is rendered in a familiar way. In which cases can we see the monster fight as an intertextual literary reference (Rauer, 2000) and not a set-motif or old Indo-European formula (Watkins, 1995)? To which purpose this literary feature is employed? If we can safely assume it creates a positive subtext for the hero, which effects does that induce, concerning the representation of the Other?

THE GEOGRAPHY OF HRAFNKELS SAGA. NEW THOUGHTS ON ITS TOPIC AND SOURCE VALUE

Eldar Heide

This interpretation begins with the geography of the saga. Sámr lives in the east but can only find support at the opposite end of the country. The chieftains who support Sámr have a strikingly Atlantic basis, with Þorskafjörður as their centre of gravity. In contrast, Hrafnkell's valley is one of the most inland settlements in Iceland. The saga repeatedly emphasizes how long and difficult the journey from the ocean to Hrafnkell's valley is. At the same time, Hrafnkell is explicitly linked to Freyr, who was most popular in Uppland, the least Atlantic of Scandinavia's populous regions. He also seems to be connected to Óðinn. Hrafn- reminds us of Óðinn's ravens; "raven's cauldron (-kell)" could be a kenning for the mead of poetry, and when Hrafnkell is driven from his farm, he is only allowed to take his spear, after being tortured by hanging (cf. Óðinn in Hávamál 138). The links to both gods fit with Hrafnkell being portrayed as a born ruler. Neither Freyr nor Óðinn were much worshipped in Iceland. Þórr was the preferred god, which is reflected in the flood of Þór- names in the western, coastal coalition in the saga. Based on this, we may see the saga as alluding to a conflict between native Icelanders and a foreign ruler – the Norwegian king, mirroring the situation Iceland experienced when the saga was written. If this interpretation is correct, there could be several reasons why the author chose to emphasize Freyr: 1 Þórr was the preferred god in Norway as well. 2. Norway, like Iceland, was a coastal country, so a Swedish connection was needed to create the desired contrast. 3. It would be dangerous to directly challenge the Norwegian king. This interpretation implies that Hrafnkatla has limited value as a source for the Freyr cult in Iceland, although place names do link Freyr to eastern Iceland. This may be how the author got the idea.

ALTERITY IN ÞÓRR'S JOURNEY TO ÚTGARÐR

Blake Middleton

The term alterity is not inherently a negative concept, merely referring to 'the quality or condition of being different, especially of being fundamentally different from or alien to the sense of identity of a person or cultural group; otherness' (dictionary.com 2024, s.v. 'alterity'). However, when it comes to eddic narratives concerning the interactions between the æsir and the jǫtnar, being 'different' tends to be viewed through a lens of aggression and hostility. Even though the jǫtnar are regularly regarded as being the hostile party, most of their aggressive actions are in reality reactions to unprovoked belligerent acts performed by the æsir. Indeed, many of the æsir's acts of negative alterity towards the jǫtnar occur while the gods are within the jǫtnar's territory, i.e. when the æsir are themselves technically the 'other'. This paper will examine one example of the jǫtnar being 'othered' while within their own realm. Focusing on the encounters between Þórr (and his companions) and the jǫtnar in the Snorra Edda narrative of 'Þórr's Journey to Útgarðr' (Gylfaginning chs 45-47), I will discuss the ways in which alterity is utilised, not only by the áss and his companions, but also by the story's narrator Þriði and its composer Snorri. As we will see, the process of othering varies with the location of the story's action: while Þórr and his companions are in the wooded exteriors of Jǫtunheimar the acts of negative alterity are both through description and physical acts, but once inside Útgarðr, when participating in the various contests conjured by Útgarðaloki, alterity is indicated through the wild and strange descriptions of activities that would otherwise be viewed as normal if they occurred in any hall within Ásgarðr (or, albeit without the supernatural qualities, within any hall in Scandinavia or Iceland).

MAKING HISTORY: NARRATIVES OF CHRISTIANIZATION AND THEIR SHAPING OF ICELANDIC CHRISTIAN IDENTITIES IN THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES.

Lukas Grzybowski

The Christianization of Iceland is certainly one of the most distinguished narratives of religious change recorded in medieval Europe. It differs from typical images of miraculous intervention or political conquest and imposition and presents itself as the first and only religious change by “democratic” agreement at the general assembly. Such image was first presented by Iceland’s first chronicler, Ari Þorgilsson, in his *Íslendingabók*, as has since been adopted as the standard explanation for the Icelanders’ adoption of Christianity, thus setting the earliest historical foundation for the promotion of Christian identities in the island and strongly influencing later renderings of the episode of conversion, both medieval and modern. Nonetheless, there are competing narratives as to how Iceland came to Christianity, as in *Hungrvaka* and the *Gesta Hammaburgensis*. These are, however, recurrently dismissed either as biased, fanciful, or simply wrong. In my paper I present a group of varying perspectives on the Christianization of Iceland, both from Icelanders and from foreign observers, and discuss why Ari’s became predominant. For this analysis I use different theories from the human sciences – Berger/Luckmann, Bourdieu, Assmann, Jauß – and raise hypotheses to explain the success of Ari’s reception, pointing to the contexts that led to the making of history.

UNDERSTANDING “THE OTHER” IN THE SAGAS AND TALES OF ICELANDERS: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS

Solveig Bollig

In the context of the sagas and tales of Icelanders, “the Other” is most often read as an absolute, typically paranormal “Other”. Berserkers, revenants, and individuals with magical abilities are thought to inhabit the social periphery, threatening the Icelandic society, which ultimately must forcefully remove these “Others” to maintain the social equilibrium. Traditionally, the positive subject of the narrative inhabitant is contrasted by the negative, absolute “Other”. However, with the emergence and implementation of post-colonial perspectives on “Otherness” in Old Norse studies, this rigid dichotomy has been increasingly criticised. Opening the interpretation to encompass the fluidity and situational aspects of “Otherness” creates grey areas of “Other” where everyday life expressions of “Otherness” appear. I argue, that “Otherness” should not inherently be interpreted as negative, but that the definition that ‘the “Other” is, what the Self is not’, also offers the interpretation of “Otherness” as a positive. Drawing on linguistic disciplines, such as onomastics and cognitive linguistics, this study aims to examine the conceptualisation of everyday Otherness in the tales of Icelanders. By exploring the nuances visible in for example personal names and linguistic expressions used to describe characters, this research seeks to deepen our understanding of the non-absolute “Other” in the tales of Icelanders.

INN RÍKI AS THE “OTHER”: SEMANTIC AND STYLISTIC HARMONIZATION IN VǪLUSPÁ H58

Miriam Conti

Considerable scholarly discussion has arisen concerning the stanza 65 (H58) in VǪluspá, particularly with regards to its authenticity. Several suggestions have been forwarded concerning inn ríki “the powerful one”, involving religious undertones (most scholars take inn ríki to be Christ, but some identify him as Heimdallr or Alfǫðr). The consensus that it is a Christian interpolation is justified by several factors: firstly, the image of a powerful ruling figure from above recalls the Book of Revelation; secondly, the stanza is not attested in any other witness except Hauksbók, which contains many Christian texts. H58 may therefore have been added secondarily to the recension to justify the presence of a markedly pagan poem. Something that could undermine a Christian interpretation of this half-stanza, however, is the word regindómr. There is evidence in the eddic corpus, as well as in VǪluspá itself, of the root regin referring to heathen gods. The compound regindómr, however, appears to be unattested elsewhere. Most translations focus on either the root or the suffix, thus affecting the interpretation of the stanza. For instance, although the translation “divine judgement/empire” (U. Dronke, *The Poetic Edda*, Volume II, *Mythological Poems*, 1997: 87) is reasonable, it carries a Christian meaning which ignores the pagan semantic component of regin. This paper will discuss H58 in relation to the rest of the poem found in Hauksbók. The analysis will focus on semantic and morphological aspects of relevant lexical items, such as, for instance, the first half-line ‘þá kǫmr inn + weak adjective’, recurring elsewhere in the poem. This will allow a better understanding of how the interpolator intervened on the poem combining Christian references and stylistic modelling to make a pagan poem fit in a Christian context.

THE VARGR AND A VIKING AGE CONCEPT OF CRIME NÍÐINGSVERK

Anne Irene Riisøy

In my opinion Viking Age Scandinavia had nuanced and sophisticated concepts of crime and punishment. The worst kind of perpetrator was a vargr, and the actions of a vargr were classified as the penal concept níðingsverk (or alternatively níðingsvíg). The occurrence of vargr and the associations it invoked, including compounds in Old Norse, Old English, Old Saxon, Old High German, Gothic and as a loan term in Finnish, indicates it was a common Germanic term of great antiquity. The vargr and the níðingsverk are most readily detected in the Vest-Norse area, Iceland, and Norway, but were probably applied all over Scandinavia, as traces are also found in Sweden and Denmark, for example in the oldest version of the Västgöotalagen and in runic inscriptions. The concept of níðingsverk / níðingsvíg applied to a certain class of outrageous offences, mostly killings which entailed irredeemable and permanent outlawry, and while the penal concept is coined in níð-terms, the perpetrator who did the deed was a vargr. So, what kind of deeds did a vargr do, were the actions of a vargr always classified as níðingsverk, is the connection between vargr and níðingsverk, similar, regardless of types of sources, and regardless of type of society: presence of kings or not, pagan or (early) Christian? To flesh out a better understanding of vargr and níðingsverk / níðingsvíg, I will also look at other relevant legal terms, for example víg versus morð, and how the criminal as a vargr, ties in with additional terms like úbotamál.

MARCIA CATONIS IN RÓMVERJA SAGA: CATO MINOR'S WIFE (MARITA) OR CONCUBINE (FRÍÐLA)? A CASE OF ABJECTION AND OTHERNESS.

Grzegorz Bartusik

Rómverja saga is a compilation of Old Icelandic translations of selected ancient Roman literary works: Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum* and *De coniuratione Catilinae*, and Lucan's *Bellum civile*. It covers the history of Rome in the 1st c. BC, focusing on the period of civil wars in Rome, the downfall of the Republic, and the foundation of the Roman Empire under Julius Caesar and Octavianus Augustus. One of the main characters of Rómverja saga is Cato the Younger (95–46 BC), a Roman statesman, a staunch defender of the Republic, and a practitioner of the philosophy of stoicism, praised for his moral virtue. In this paper, I will analyse an Old Icelandic translation of a passage from Lucan's *Bellum civile*, II, 326-372, in Rómverja saga. The discussed passage of *Bellum Civile* tells the story of Cato Minor's wife, Marcia Catonis. It concerns Cato's remarriage to Marcia which happened after they divorced each other so that she (as a fecund woman) could marry his friend Hortensius and help him prolong the lineage by giving birth to his child. Significant cultural disparities existed between medieval Icelandic Christians and ancient Romans in terms of sexual and reproductive ethics. Revered by Roman writers (Appianus, *Bellum civile*, II, 99 and Plutarch, *Cato Minor*, 25, 52), the reunification of Cato and Marcia after their divorce and Marcia's subsequent marriage to Hortensius would likely have been deemed a significant transgression of Biblical norms by the newly Christianised society of medieval Iceland. The act of reuniting a previously dissolved marriage was explicitly condemned in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Jeremiah 3:1-6 as an abomination in the eyes of God. This paper delves into the cultural motivations that led the Icelandic translator, a clergyman skilled in Latin, to make significant changes to the text of Lucan's *Bellum civile* in its Old Icelandic translation (dated to the 1180s at the earliest).

RASMUS RASK'S ORTHOGRAPHIC PRINCIPLES IN EDITIONS OF OLD NORSE TEXTS

Jóhannes B. Sigtryggsson

The Danish linguist Rasmus Rask (1787–1832) wrote the first modern grammar for Icelandic (published in 1811), edited the first modern dictionary, was among the founders of the Icelandic Literary Society and published numerous editions of Old Norse texts, for example a few volumes of the Fornmanna sögur, the Poetic and Prose Edda and two anthologies. He was also an important contributor to the standardization of Icelandic spelling in the early part of the nineteenth century, especially with the publication of his *Lestrarkver* ['Spelling book'] in 1830 and also a pioneer in standardizing the spelling of Old Norse texts. Rask seems to have believed that the difference between Old Norse and Modern Icelandic was minimal and this influenced his spelling proposals. An example of that is Rask's innovative system of vowel diacritics (<´>, <`>, <^>), e.g. in the use of the grave accent in <ì>, see for example Fornmanna sögur, 2nd volume (1826:169): , that was written *i* in Old Norse but *ji* in Modern Icelandic. Rask says that this [i.e. the use of <ì>] is a good way to show the pronunciation without changing the spelling of men from the olden times („án þess að umbreyta stafasetningu fornmanna“). In this article I will look at Rask's editions of Old Norse texts and his anthologies, study his normalization practices compared to his spelling rules for Modern Icelandic, changes in them and their influence, e.g. on later standardization practice in the 19th-century, e.g. Wimmer's influential spelling of Old Norse texts.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN LATE VIKING AGE NORWAY: A STUDY OF HEIMSKRINGLA AND THE REGIONS OF TRØNDELAG AND MØRE OG ROMSDAL

Guillaume Ferreire

The Battle of Stiklestad, which resulted in the death of King Olaf Haraldsson, is often attributed to the dissatisfaction of the Trøndelag peasants with the king's vindictive missionary policies. This event exemplifies religious conflicts initiated or exacerbated by religious motivations. The issue of conflicts between pre-Christian religion and Christianity during the conversion era has been extensively debated among scholars in Norse studies. Some, such as Anne-Sofie Gräslund (2016), argue that the transition to Christianity was relatively peaceful. In contrast, others, including Gro Steinsland (2005) and Brit Solli (1996), contend that there was resistance to Christianity, leading to a pagan revival. The sagas, particularly Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, frequently recount religious conflicts during the Christianization period. Additionally, scholars like Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide (2011) and Else Roesdahl (2019) have observed an increase in grave goods in late Viking Age cemeteries, which may signify an attempt to assert a strong pagan identity in reaction to the spread of Christianity, accompanied by ostentatious pagan symbols such as large cairns, barrows, and horse-riding items. This paper proposes to identify clusters of pagan reactions against Christianity through a dialogue between the sagas and archaeological evidence. Our primary literary source will be Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, with a focus on the sagas of Håkon the Good, Olaf Tryggvason, and Saint Olaf. The archaeological evidence will primarily consist of finds from the Norwegian regions of Trøndelag and Møre og Romsdal, where significant manifestations of pagan revival and religious conflict have been documented in both the sagas and archaeological records.

POISONOUS SERPENTS: THE BIBLICAL SEDUCTRESS IN OLD NORSE TRANSLATION

Natasha Bradley

There are numerous women in the Bible who might be described as 'seductresses': they seduce men to sleep with them or use sex to convince men to make certain decisions. In the religious translations *Stjórn* and *Gyðinga saga*, these women are rendered into Old Norse, with the translators making several changes to highlight certain aspects of their seductions. *Stjórn* is a biblical compilation which translates from Genesis to the end of the Books of Kings, containing figures such as Potiphar's wife, Delilah, and Ruth who seduce men. *Gyðinga saga* translates the Books of Maccabees and Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*; it also tells the story of Pontius Pilate. It contains seducing women such as Cleopatra, Potiphar's wife, and the perhaps-seductive Salome Alexandra. This paper examines a selection of the seductresses in these religious texts, which are on the periphery of Old Norse literary studies, considering how the Old Norse translators treat these Othered figures as they bring them into dialogue with female figures in the wider corpus. The translators frequently emphasise female verbal power when describing the seductresses, potentially drawing parallels with the inciter women well-known from the *Íslendingasögur* and *Fornaldarsögur*. Even though *Stjórn* and *Gyðinga saga* have different translators, they both use the metaphor of a poisonous serpent ('eitrligr ormr' *Gyð* XXII.111.14) or toad ('padda' *Gyð* XXIX.1439) when describing the seductresses. This is especially interesting as, in *Stjórn*, poisonous serpents are depicted extensively in the lists of marvels describing far away lands. This paper thus examines how the translators of *Stjórn* and *Gyðinga saga* both domesticate and Other biblical seductresses as they render their stories into Old Norse.

JUDGING HOLINESS, HUMANITY, AND OTHERNESS

Max Naderer

This paper will address the role of clerics as experts and judges of the humanity of individual person focusing on cases of ordeals and infanticide in medieval Norway. Using saga and legal texts as sources, I will explore the nature of their expertise in the contexts of ordeals and infanticide in high medieval Norway. Infanticide and child abandonment are usually associated with the pre-Christian past of the Norse world. The assumption is that with Christianisation these practices stopped, or at least faded out after some time. However, the Icelandic and Norwegian laws imply that even in Christian times the abandonment of children remained an issue. Maybe less in frequently encountered practical terms, but at least on a theoretical level people thought about it in terms of need and possibility. According to these laws, the humanity of newborn children was to be determined based on physical criteria, and clerical experts played a crucial role in this, investigating the boundary between the baptizable human and the 'monstrous' Other. Clerics were also experts in cases of ordeal in order to judge the culpability, virtue and humanity of the person on trial. In this way saints and their relics could be authenticated as well, contrasting the holy saint, Christian human, and the pagan Other. By bringing two contexts together in which clerical expertise played a significant role, the paper will elucidate the role of clerical educated authorities, priests and bishops, assessing the holiness, humanity, or otherness of individual persons in medieval Norway as depicted in the konungasögur.

FIGHTING THE OTHER IN THE HJØRUNGAVÁGR: THE YOUNGER JÓMSVÍKINGA SAGA AS A COUNTER NARRATIVE

Josef Juergens

Quite early on in the study concerning the Jónsvíkinga saga and accounts, which tell the tale of the battle in the Hjórunjavágr, it was noted, that the different strands of tradition diverge in a way, that the existence of an *Older Jónsvíkinga saga was proposed. Among the most debated differences between the *Older and the Younger Jónsvíkinga saga, especially the AM 291 4to version, is the attitude towards the main characters. This paper will show, that AM 291 4to takes the main events in the plot of the *Older Jónsvíkinga saga and leaves them unchanged, but adds details in proximity to these scenes, which alter the perception of the events severely. By this, AM 291 4to frees itself and the reader from the interpretation, which the *Older Jónsvíkinga saga offered and opens up room for its own interpretation, thereby depicting both Danish Kings and the Jarls of Hlaðir in an unfavourable light. It is a clear sign of a struggle for narrative hegemony, if a text declares different characters to be protagonists than the established pattern, while dissociating from others and marking them as the Other. This Othering occurs quite often, when a Counter Narrative is formed and challenges the dominance of the Master Narrative. Perceiving divergent traditions as a Master Narrative and Counter Narrative(s) could be a valuable tool in linking the different sub-traditions together while simultaneously acknowledging the artistic liberties, which those who crafted the individual works took, leaving both within the scope of research to gain a better understanding of complex mélanges within a tradition.

SEMANTIC AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF THE OLD NORSE WORD ANNARR

Ellert Johannsson

This paper investigates the different meanings of the Old Norse word annarr 'other'. This word functions as both a pronoun and a numeral. The starting point are the attested examples of this word in the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose (ONP) and a detailed lexical analysis which provides a nuanced understanding of how the concept of "other" or "another" was linguistically represented in Old Norse culture.

The meanings of annarr can be divided into five or more semantic spheres, each illustrating the contrast between "other" and "someone or something else":

1. Binary and Relational Definitions: Annarr primarily means "one (of two)" or "the other (of two)", emphasizing binary relationships and defining identity in opposition to others. This is central to the concept of othering.
2. Emphasis on Difference: Definitions like "different, other" and "one more, another" highlight distinction and differentiation. In the context of othering, this often implies marginalization or exclusion.
3. Value Judgment: The definition "person of lesser worth (in respect to somebody), second-rate person" links "other" to a value judgment, reflecting how othering assigns lower status to the out-group.
4. Inclusivity and Exclusivity: Definitions related to inclusion (e.g., "remaining, the remainder of") versus exclusion (e.g., "no one else" or "any other" derogatorily) show how language can include or exclude groups.
5. Temporal and Sequential Othering: Temporal definitions like "next, following" or "the day before, latest" suggest sequential othering, positioning groups historically or culturally as "before us" or "after us", impacting their perceived legitimacy or value.

ONP's information on annarr demonstrates meanings that align with the concept of othering, encompassing binary oppositions, value judgments, inclusion/exclusion, and sequential relationships. This highlights the ingrained nature of othering in language and cognition, and its specificity and generality in social interactions.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: WHAT CLASSICAL SOMALI POETRY CAN TELL US ABOUT ORALITY IN SKALDIC VERSE

Carsten Haas

Although skaldic poetry emerged in a highly oral context, the genre's relationship to standard theories of oral poetry is fraught. Certain aspects of the genre, such as the skaldic predilection for poetic formulae and the attestation of spontaneously composed *lausavísur*, would indicate that skaldic verse represents an oral-formulaic medium, as described by Lord and Parry. On the other hand, this conclusion is challenged by other aspects of the form, including its unusually strict metric and alliterative constraints, its tendency towards *tnesis* and unconventional syntax, and the existence of poems such as the *Höfuðlausn*, which was ostensibly composed in advance of its performance. These traits do not suggest a process of ad hoc poetic creation, where no two performances of a poem are the same, but rather a process of composition, in which a skald creates a fixed work that can be memorized and recited verbatim. This paper argues that we can better understand this tension by comparing skaldic verse to classical Somali poetry. Somali verse, with its strict prosodic structure, emphasis on alliteration, and capacity for verbatim repetition, resembles skaldic verse in numerous ways. But unlike skaldic verse, Somali oral poetry remains a living tradition, allowing us unique insight into the production of an oral genre that also contradicts oral-formulaic theory. This paper compares both the poetic structure and performance contexts of skaldic and classical Somali verse. It then argues that, with reference to cross-cultural evidence drawn from recordings of Somali oral poetry, we can conclude that skaldic composition was not oral-formulaic in nature, but rather a different form of oral composition unique in medieval Europe. Methodologically, this paper also argues for a global approach to Old Norse studies, in which linguistic and anthropological findings from societies exterior to the Old Norse sphere are used to draw conclusions regarding Old Norse language and society.

VIKINGS AND THE MANOSPHERE

Verena Höfig

This presentation will explore artworks and digital content created by individuals who operate within the so-called manosphere. By manosphere, we refer to a rather ill-defined space comprising of online fora, websites, blogs as well as some print media promoting masculinity, men's rights, and opposition to feminism. This includes communities focusing on the promotion of so-called masculine values; it also includes incels, that is, involuntary celibates or men unable to find romantic or sexual partners; and pick-up-artists (men whose goal is seduction and sexual success). While the specific goals and the rhetoric promoted by groups within this spectrum may at times differ, they find a common denominator in the belief that modern society is biased against men because of the influence of feminism, and that political correctness and the values and norms promoted by Western pluralist societies obscure reality. Why then do such groups turn to and appropriate cultural content taken from Viking Age Scandinavia? What is it that makes "Viking" such a productive label to the plethora of self-help books, dietary advice, spiritual manuals or work-out regimen directed at young men who feel disenfranchised and left behind by modern society? This talk will review the works of several popular online personalities and pay special attention to their use and creation of runes and rune-like symbols, "creative" interpretations of the sagas, and adaptations of contents from popular Eddic poems such as Hávamál.

A SCEPTICAL PILGRIM: ALICE SELBY (1895-1973) AND 20TH CENTURY SAGA PILGRIMAGE

Hannah Armstrong

During the mid-nineteenth century, a new form of literary tourism emerged. It was one which saw Victorian readers of the newly accessible Icelandic sagas make the (not insignificant) sea voyage to Iceland to walk in the footsteps of their saga heroes. Some of the better-known proponents of this practice included names such as William Morris, Anthony Trollope, and W.G. Collingwood, and their enthusiasm for the endeavour was such that they were willing to risk life and limb to see sites like Hlíðarendi and Bergþórshvöll. Indeed, Morris even wrote that he would be 'quite ready' to break his neck in his efforts to be a 'pilgrim to the holy places of Iceland'. These so-called 'Saga Pilgrims' have, in recent years, begun to receive greater scholarly attention (Wawn 2000; Spray 2016; Lethbridge 2020) and a recognition of their role in the centuries long relationship between the sagas and their landscapes. In this paper, I will extend this budding area of reception research by looking at a figure from the tail end of the saga pilgrimage phenomenon – the little-known twentieth-century scholar, Alice Selby (1895-1973). Drawing on her posthumously published 'Icelandic Journal' (Viking Society for Northern Research, 1974) as well as archival materials, I will use Selby's 1931 journey to Iceland as a case study for the evolution of saga pilgrimage in the early twentieth century. In doing so, I will demonstrate how perceptions of the supposed alterity of Iceland and its saga landscapes changed in the interwar years, as well as how British visitors continued to wrangle with the question of whether Iceland and its people were 'other' or in fact should be regarded as familiar kin. Finally, this paper hopes to shine light on the thus far overlooked figure of Selby and her role in the formation of Old Norse Studies in the UK.

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS: REFLECTIONS ON THE AESTHETIC OF DARKNESS IN SAGA LITERATURE

Jules Piet

In this paper, I argue that saga literature developed its own unique aesthetic of darkness, distinct from other vernacular literatures of medieval Europe. My demonstration will focus on the sagas of the Icelanders, particularly two sagas where the theme of shadows and darkness is most explicitly expressed: *Gísla saga* and *Grettis saga*. In these two sagas, the main characters have a special relationship with darkness: Gísli hides in the shadows, while Grettir fears darkness more than anything else. The authors of these sagas do not only describe darkness; they also create obscurity in a metaphorical sense. Gísli hides his feelings behind cryptic poetry, and in one version of the saga, the identity of Vésteinn's killer remains unknown. Even though this focus on obscurity is particularly perceptible in these two sagas, I will show that this theme is also important in several other texts. This specificity of saga literature may have several explanations, and I will explore two of them: first, the role of skaldic poetry, an art form that relies on ambiguity and hides its meaning behind complex wordplay; and second, the nature of medieval Icelandic society, in which clarity, honesty, and openness were ideals to strive for. In Icelandic laws, few offenses are worse than hiding a body rather than admitting to the murder. Similarly, contracts and trials were supposed to be conducted in front of witnesses, and the most important political events were held in front of the whole country during the Alþing. Therefore, hiding in shadows is subversive and disruptive behavior, and saga literature took a great interest in it.

GRAPHING THE ÍSLENDINGA SAGA: METHODS AND POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE GRAPHS IN OLD NORSE STUDIES

Shintaro Yamada, Jun Ogawa, Ikki Ohmukai

This study explores a concrete approach to representing the 'Íslendinga saga' as a knowledge graph and examines its potential applications. A knowledge graph represents various pieces of knowledge in a graph structure. By utilizing this technology, the content and interpretations of the saga can be expressed as a single graph. This research outlines an approach for constructing a comprehensive knowledge graph for the entire saga and examines its potential applications. Knowledge graphs can be integrated with a common vocabulary. Utilizing this feature, this study constructs two different graphs. The first is a relationship-oriented graph. It constructs the genealogical information found in the appendices of the 1946 edition and incorporates information from the proper noun index. This allows for the consolidation of information about kinship and marital relationships among the characters. The second is an event-oriented graph. Based on the text, this graph represents how events in the saga occur and develop within their respective contexts. Finally, these two graphs are integrated, with contextual information obtained through close reading. By constructing the knowledge graph of the saga, it becomes possible to alternate between close and distant reading in the analysis of the narrative. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of problem-solving within the saga as an example of the application of the knowledge graph. The saga narrates various problems, such as disputes, lawsuits, murders, and blood feuds. By using the graph, scenes and relationships with specific structures can be comprehensively extracted. Additionally, since the graph includes chronological information, it is possible to capture temporal changes. Furthermore, by linking various external information, such as manuscript and archaeological data, this graph can be utilized as Linked Open Data. Once such LOD is completed, it could also be developed into supplementary tools for reading the saga.

EDDIC ALTERITIES: SETTINGS OF ALIENATION AND FAMILIARITY IN MYTHOLOGICAL POETRY

Joshua Lee

This paper examines the ways in which Eddic poetry (and the prose framework in Codex Regius) uses descriptive language to indicate alterity, or conversely, familiarity, in the glimpses of other worlds (and their denizens) given in the mythological section of the Codex Regius and in AM 748 I 4to. Special focus is given to Völuspá, Grímnismál, Baldrs Draumar, and Hárbarðsljóð, in part responding to Carlyne Larrington's assessment of Grímnismál's cosmic geography of the divine as a utopian version of the human world (2002). I examine indications of travel, social setting, and human alterity to the mythical world in these poems and incorporate Michel Foucault's conception of 'heterotopia' in order to explain their relation to each other and to the human world (and a thirteenth-century audience). This draws from Foucault's 1984 article 'Of Other Spaces'. The paper suggests that specific textual indicators serve to punctuate the poetry with senses of familiarity or alienation at different times, positioning listeners in relation to poetic setting in specific ways. These occur through along geographic and temporal axes. It builds on Preben Meulengracht Sørensen's analysis of Ægir's hall (1988) and suggests several tensions positioning this hall and its proprietor as not-quite-familiar, or in other words, alterous. It also posits that poetry may have been seen as a path through alterity, a way to navigate and negotiate 'Other worlds' in a manner digestible to an Icelandic audience, with the poet as a guide.

BOREAL MEDIEVALISM, AN IDENTITY-BASED ALTERITY

Pierre-Brice Stahl

This paper aims to examine the notions of otherness and alterity within the concept of boreal medievalism (the imaginary and reception of the Viking Age). The geographical and cultural imaginaries of the Viking Age enable the development of a unique aesthetic within boreal medievalism, positioning it in contrast to Western medievalism. Consequently, the motifs of boreal medievalism can engage in a series of dichotomous motifs with those of Western Europe: hammer vs. cross, völva vs. priest or bishop, stave churches vs. stone churches or cathedrals, funeral pyre vs. burial, sword vs. axe, and high mountain vs. low mountain. Despite these contrasts, boreal medievalism cannot be defined solely by its opposition to Western medievalism, as there is an intertwining of these two imaginaries. Furthermore, boreal medievalism is characterized by its proximity to the audience. The Scandinavian North is situated in Europe, but at its extremity. This identity-based alterity is also evident in the periodization of the Viking Age, which takes place during the Middle Ages from an exogenous perspective, while predating it from an endogenous perspective. This paper will elaborate on how boreal medievalism can be understood as an identity-based alterity through its spatial, temporal, and ethnic dimensions.

ENCOUNTERING VÖLUNDARKVIÐA AS AN ANGLO-SCANDINAVIAN POEM

Harriet Soper

In 1990, John McKinnell made a case for a tenth- or eleventh-century Anglo-Scandinavian provenance for the eddic poem Völundarkviða, based largely on apparent linguistic influence from Old English. McKinnell drew on the work of Sophus Bugge, and numerous other scholars have alluded to Völundarkviða's affiliations with early medieval England with greater or lesser degrees of confidence. My proposed paper consists of two halves. The first revisits the linguistic evidence with the help of recently developed research tools, such as The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose and the Skaldic Project's Lexicon Poeticum. It also takes into account new scholarship on the dating of eddic poetry, such as Christopher D. Sapp's Dating the Old Norse Poetic Edda. The second half then takes a new, literary approach – what might it mean to situate Völundarkviða in an English poetic tradition? I argue we can perceive signs of English literary influence in the poem's staging of numerous moments of discovery and realisation, often appreciated as distinctive of Old English poetry. Going even further, I suggest specific influence from Beowulf, as a text which has long been understood to exert considerable influence over later Old English poetry. My literary analysis will finally turn to how Völundarkviða might meditate on some of the cultural anxieties of Anglo-Scandinavian settlers, not least in the poem's pervasive sense of how vulnerable a person is to those who live in proximity, but who may not wish them well. This paper deals with otherness on a variety of fronts. It not only reckons with the ways in which Völundarkviða sits on the fringes of the mythological poems of the Codex Regius, concerned with a supernatural figure who is not a god, but it also reckons with forms of cultural otherness and literary exchange within Anglo-Scandinavian England.

TWO JÖTNAR AND A KNIGHT WALK INTO A CAVE...: IDOLATRY AND OTHERING IN TRISTRAMS SAGA

Andrea Wetzler

Towards the end of Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar, the protagonist-knight Tristram constructs a gallery of statues depicting his beloved Ísönd and other characters. Tristram's extraordinarily lifelike creations place this riddarasaga at the center of medieval debates on idolatry. Enabling conceptions of the religious 'other,' idols both incited much discourse on the power of images and was the 'other' that Christian identity defined itself against. The setting of the cave, which Tristram beautifies and in which he places his potential idols, has largely been characterized as an appropriate backdrop to the products of his isolated lovesickness. Rather than dwelling on the psyche behind Tristram's idolatrous craftsmanship, I seek to emphasize the way in which the environment surrounding Tristram's Hall of Statues amplifies its transgressive potential. In particular, I aim to highlight the two jötnar from Afrikaland linked to Hall's setting. In the medieval romance tradition, the monstrous identity of the giant precedes the knight, fusing fears of sexual perversity, anarchic violence, disregard for authority and hierarchies, and gross appetites of all kinds. Romances typically mediate the blurred boundary between gigantism and knighthood by portraying the knightly triumph in combat and over the self through the code of chivalry, preventing the knight from reverting into the giant. During the Hall of Statues episode, Tristrams saga subverts the typical gigantomachia at the core of this battle over the self. Together with the particular pagan resonances of the jötunn figure, the African jötnar represent the perceived danger of the religious 'other,' mingling fears of pagans, Muslims, and ultimately original sin. I therefore argue that these jötnar not only critically inform any discussion of Tristram's idolatrous love, but are in fact essential to understanding the transgressive potential of Tristram's artistic endeavor.

„RIS UP ÐU OC FAR I BORGINA“ SPACE AND MOVEMENT IN PÁLS SAGA POSTULA I

Freya Schlaefer

The proposed paper examines Páls saga postula I's engagement with vertical and horizontal models of space and movement, demonstrating a sensitive translation of the theming and theology of its source material. Largely neglected thus far in Old Norse scholarship, is an Old Icelandic translated vita of the apostle Paul drawn from the Vulgate Acts, with the final scene from a Pauline passio of Pseudo-Linus. Since no other known vita in the Old Norse corpus is drawn directly from Biblical material, this saga provides a unique window into Old Icelandic perceptions of the Bible and the theology of Acts. This study examines the saga's adaptation of the Lukan-Pauline theology of Acts, focusing on Pauline teachings on the ascension of Christ and the strengthening and spreading of Christianity. The translation of Biblical material and addition of the extrabiblical Pseudo-Linian episode demonstrate a clear and specific interpretation of the theology of Acts, in which vertical movement is associated with the primary truth of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, while horizontal movement is associated with the spreading and strengthening of Christendom. These elements are emphasized and intensified in the translation, even where sections of the text are altered (such as when names of Roman gods are substituted for Norse pagan counterparts) or cut out entirely. Ultimately, the reading of Acts presented in Páls saga postula I allows the saga to subtly center its Norse audience by cutting or changing elements that could prove alienating or uninteresting (such as discussions of the necessity of circumcision or detailed descriptions of Mediterranean geography) while maintaining and reinforcing the horizontal and vertical spatial dynamics of salvation and proselytization which sit at the center of Paul's theology.

THE ROLE OF THE OTHER IN NORWEGIAN SAGA PLAYS: A STUDY IN SAGA RECEPTION AND NORWEGIAN MEDIEVALISMS

Karl Alvestad

Since the Second World War Medievalism in Norway changed and took on a local focus and spirit. During this time, local history plays set in the Viking age became popular. These were not the plays of Ibsen and Bjørnson of 19th-century historicism, but instead, local productions constructing memories and narratives in the landscape of the community in a distant past. The most famous of these plays is the Stiklestad Play, which tells the story of Olaf Haraldsson's last night on Earth. The Stiklestad Play is unusual in its success, quality, and focus on a national hero. While most plays are locally written, locally produced and locally consumed, and are focused on the local stories and hints untangled from the kings' sagas and Icelandic family sagas. This paper seeks to examine the role of the "Other" in two different Saga Plays. I'll examine the role of the Sami in "Ragnhilds Dream" from Skjerstad in Nordland, and heathenism in Vera Henriksen's "Sverdet" focused on Borg/Sarpsborg in Østfold. "Ragnhilds Dream" follows the experiences of the daughter of Raudr inn Rammi during Olav Tryggvassons conversion of Salten, in the play she is drawn between the loyalty to her father and the new faith which is also the faith of her deceased Irish born mother. Her troubled relationship with her Father's Sami advisors and paganism contrasts with her proto-Christian ideals. "Sverdet" follows Astrid Olofsdaughter's experience of Olaf II's loss of Norway. While the two plays are different in date, locality and form, they both have a female lead, and showcase a somewhat difficult and contested relationship between the heroine, and what she and/or we perceive as the "other". In examining these two plays, I seek to explore what is the role of the other in these plays, what is perceived as the other and what can it tell us about the contemporary reception of Heimskringla.

'YET SHE WAS A CHRISTIAN, AND NO SUPERSTITIOUS HINDOO': ALLUSIONS TO SATI IN VICTORIAN NORSE MEDIEVALISM

Maggie Pavleszek

In his narrative of his travel to Iceland in 1860, Frederick Metcalfe placed the Christian Bergthora, wife of Njal in the family saga, in opposition to a 'superstitious Hindoo'. Bergthora choosing to die with her husband in the burning homestead was thus made disparate from the practice of sati in India, or widow-burning. This paper will examine the comparisons Victorian writers made between Norse cremation scenes from both legendary and family sagas and the practice of sati in colonial India. While the practice of sati was outlawed by the British government in 1829, the practice remained a colonial reference image both in literary circles and the periodical press. Despite its presence in the nineteenth-century imagination, sati as a cultural touchpoint for writers engaging with Old Norse and Viking Age material has not yet been interrogated. The complexity of this image will be placed in conversation with topics of gender, agency and colonial concerns. Where the wives or widows who chose to die with their husband in scenes of homestead burning, like Bergthora, or wives and loves who were burned in the funeral pyre next to their husbands, like Nanna of the eddas and Brynhildr of the Volsung legend, the practice of sati acts a moral and racial opposite for writers in the nineteenth century. My paper aims to interrogate what colonial rhetoric and imagery can be seen in Norse medievalism in nineteenth-century Britain in relation to sati and what such connections reveal about Victorian attitudes towards death and cremation.

CONSTRUCTING THE SUPERNATURAL OTHER AND HEROIC DIS/ABILITY IN THE LEGENDARY PAST

Erin Benton

Many modern disability theorists will argue that the disabled body is the archetypal othered body, citing sources ranging from the tragic Oedipus to the nefarious Richard III. While there is certainly a degree of othering that occurs in the representations of disabled figures in Old Norse literature, further examinations reveal more complex paradigms. Recent studies have focused on disability either in the mythological material or Íslendingasögur, or on the relationship between monstrosity and disability. This leaves many depictions of disability unexamined. In some of these cases, heroic figures demonstrate a simultaneous spectrum of physical disability and supernatural ability. Two examples are Völundr, as he appears in Völundarkviða, and Ívarr hinn beinlausí in Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sona hans. These figures share several similarities, despite the different mediums: They both exist within a temporal liminality, with the stories taking place between the mythical past and the contemporary present of the authors; they are both physically disabled, in that neither are able to walk; and they both have certain supernatural aspects or abilities juxtaposed with their disability. Most importantly, in both cases, the supernatural dis/ability plays a key role in depicting the embodiment of narrative elements, culminating in the construction of a heroic figure. However, these two case studies offer contrasting details that exemplify the complexity of supernatural dis/ability, i.e. the morally ambiguous and isolated Völundr differs compared to Ívarr, who acts as the epitome of a saga hero and leader of his brothers. By examining supernaturally dis/abled bodies, and where they fall on the spectrums of heroism, othering and marginalisation, we can further understand how dis/ability was constructed, used, and perceived in Old Norse literature.

THE RECEPTION AND ADAPTATION OF ÆLFRICIAN DEMONOLOGY IN HAUKSBÓK

Thomas Hughes

The Old Norse version of the Ælfrician homily *De auguriis* is significantly truncated compared to its source material, but it expands considerably upon Ælfric's commentary concerning the ability of demons to surveil the world from the air, and disseminate predictions which falsely appear to be prophecies. In the Ælfrician homily the logical connection between the devil's aerial mobility and his false prophesying is comparatively weak, the text stressing that the devil will only reveal distorted half-truths so as to deliberately lead his followers to harm. The Old Norse text, conversely, considers the logical applications of demonic flight in specifically Old Norse-Icelandic contexts, thereby attributing sorcerers with the ability to remotely monitor one's cattle, and predict success or failure in romantic ventures. In stressing the efficacy of demonic foresight, the Old Norse text strikingly inverts the sentiment and didactic purpose of its source material, and contrasting both the Old English and Old Norse versions of *De auguriis* with Ælfric's source — a pseudo-Augustinian sermon by Caesarius of Arles — this paper argues that the Hauksbók text represents not only a reworking of Ælfrician material into a novel cultural context, but a fundamentally more involved and logically coherent account of the devil's physical nature and faculties, and their practical ramifications for the suppression of witchcraft. Seemingly unable or unwilling to dispute the efficacy of the devil's power, the Old Norse version instead resorts to strengthening and reiterating Ælfric's warnings of the spiritual consequences of accepting the devil's aid, and reorders the Ælfrician text to this effect. Finally, the paper demonstrates the basis of these conceptions of demonic physicality in wider Old Norse-Icelandic learned thought, with recourse to the Old Norse *Elucidarius*, *Antóníuss saga* and *Þiðranda þáttur ok Þórhalls*.

CRAFTS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN "RÍGSPULA"

Jens Eike Schnall

No one who enters a house knows for sure what might be waiting inside, and none inside knows who might pay a visit. In Old Norse literature, there are many instances where the Other comes as a guest, as is the case with Rígr-Heimdallr in the eddic poem "Rígsþula". "Rígsþula" has primarily been viewed through the lens of the institution of the three social classes, the servants, the farmers, and the nobles, resulting from the god's visits of three couples. Yet, I argue that "Rígsþula" is at the same time very much about crafts, technologies and knowledge transfer in their own right. The aim of my paper is twofold: 1) I will show how that poem is carefully crafted concerning the aspect of beginnings and transitions, and 2) I will investigate how the topic of crafts and technologies is dealt with within that framework.

WILD NIGHTS: CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF DARKNESS IN THE ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR

Andrew Pfrenger

Night is the realm of the unknown, the uncertain, and the unnerving. As darkness consumes the light, sensory input overloads the mind, imagination takes flight and the lines of reality begin to blur. Trolls emerge from their caves. Predators stalk in the shadows. Night, as Hamlet observes, is a time “when churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out.” While most of the action of the Íslendingasögur takes place during daytime, many of the most critical set-pieces occur at night. This is especially true when authors seek to explore the moral boundaries of societal norms or to investigate layers of psychology. Perhaps the most famous of these examples would be Grettir Ásmundarson’s late-night encounter with the undead Glámr and the his subsequent fear of the dark. Another equally famous set of examples can be found in Gísla saga, where men lurk under the cover of darkness to murder their enemies and the nighttime brings forth the psychological terror of prophetic dreams. In both cases, night is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the narrative. Darkness and its chaotic potential are significant but underappreciated features of saga literature that reveal much about medieval Scandinavian attitudes towards night. These scenes shrouded in darkness can also shed some light on medieval Icelandic understanding of human psychology and the value of strong social bonds. Through an interdisciplinary approach that draws on literary and folkloric studies, history, anthropology, archaeology, and psychology, I hope to address the following two questions:

1. “What was night for people of medieval Scandinavia?”
2. “What rituals did they use to circumscribe the night and contain its potential for chaos?”

This paper examines how the sagas portray night as a threshold where human and non-human worlds intersect, and where societal and psychological alterities are confronted, thereby enriching our understanding of Old Norse literature and medieval Scandinavian culture.

GEIRRIÐR, KATLA AND THE CURRENCY OF WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE IN EYRBYGGJA SAGA

Clare Mulley

This paper presents a close-reading of key passages in Eyrbyggja saga pertaining to the feud between Katla, the widow of Holt, and the family of Geirriðr at Máfalíð, with the aim of proposing a more nuanced interpretation of the feud in question. Regarding the troll-riding of a young man named Gunnlaugr (carried out by Katla and initially blamed on Geirriðr), most academic readings focus on the sexual element, describing Katla's actions as the result of her failed seduction. While it is clear that the author is coupling age and deviance, and that Katla's actions are partially driven by the practicalities of narrative structuring, I nevertheless propose that, by centralising the issue of sexual desire and menopausal aggression, such readings focus on the more immediate, but far lesser source of tension, and do not fully reflect the author's preoccupation with women's stories. As I shall show, by reading certain passages throughout the episode more carefully, it becomes clear that a far deeper, more complex social feud is being depicted between the two women, which is based in knowledge and social power above all, and for which the assault on Gunnlaugr is only the touchpaper. In examining the thematic treatment of women's magical knowledge and competition within this episode, I shall discuss what we may, subsequently, begin to decipher about medieval Icelandic perceptions of the relationship between femininity, knowledge, attractiveness and social standing.

“A POWER BEYOND IMAGINATION” - A DIFFERENT READING OF BIFRÖST IN THE PSYCHO-PASS SERIES

Anja Blode

Elements of Norse mythology have been included in Japanese popular culture for decades. In some cases, systems and programs are given Norse names, e.g. in Oh! My Goddess (Yggdrasil system), Soukyou no Fafner (Siegfried system), Jormungand (Jormungand system) or Jyu-Oh-Sei (Valkyrie system). In Psycho-Pass Season 3 and Psycho-Pass: First Inspector, the Bifröst system plays a leading role. Nordic mythology is cleverly used and reinterpreted here. In the 22nd century, Japan is the only peaceful country in the world. Security is maintained by an AI called Sybil System, which provides people with a type of compass for life. An organization and an AI called Bifröst appear on the scene as opponents. In contrast to the medieval sources, Bifröst has a different, but particularly active, function here. It is an entity that stands in contrast to the Sybil system. Its actual purpose has been reversed and now offers only a few people an alternative idea of how society can be controlled in a different way. Social categories are turned upside down so that a parallel society can emerge. Through strategical confrontations that influence the cultural, political and economic supremacy, individuals are favoured, while many social groups are excluded from a better life and become victims of a game over freedom and authority. The presentation sheds light on this modern reinterpretation of Bifröst and thus the confrontation with the prevailing norms of society. Bifröst acts independently and stands in opposition to the prevailing system. In contrast to the Nordic sources, Bifröst must be destroyed so that society does not perish but can continue to exist without hindrances. Only by destroying this symbolic rainbow bridge can the end of the world be prevented.

BARNAÚTBURÐR: SOME ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHILD ABANDONMENT IN THE ICELANDIC SAGAS

Łukasz Neubauer

The practice of infanticide, both pre- and post-natal, easily ranks amongst the most contemptible crimes against humanity, bringing to mind the words of Christ, who, in the Matthean gospel says, "in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (25:40). In pre-Christian Iceland, the most common instrument of 'birth control,' to use the modern parlance, appears to have been the so-called barnaútburður, that is to say, the abandonment of an unwanted infant (on account of its disability or because the child's sex was not what the parents wanted) in the wilderness (to die of hypothermia or starvation, or to be eaten by animals). The Church naturally forbade any such practices, but the "Íslendingabók" relates that, in order to make the conversion to Christianity more acceptable to the local people, barnaútburður was tolerated for some time, raising questions of ethical concern. The provision was abolished within less than two decades, nonetheless the practice of child abandonment would continue in secrecy, so long that it resonates in, for instance, the popular nineteenth-century lullaby "Sofðu unga ástin mín." The barnaútburður was naturally 'justified' in a number of ways, leading to such cases of twisted logic as in "Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu," where Þorsteinn and his wife Jófríður argue over whether it is more tolerable to abandon a boy or a girl, or whether the more affluent members of society have a right to do so or not. The proposed paper seeks to investigate the ethical implications of child abandonment in pre- and early Christian Iceland in consistency with the teaching of the Church at the time, firmly rejecting any form of infanticide.

SYNCHRONIZING WORLDS: BRINGING THE OTHERWORLD TO EARTH IN OLD NORSE FUNERARY RITUALS

Gerður Sigurðardóttir

Funerary Rituals in Old Norse Religion were evidently extremely complex, multifaceted performances that made use of various elements, ranging from the landscape they took place in, to the structures and objects employed, actions, such as processions and the sacrifice of animals (and sometimes even humans). This paper will argue that all of these elements taken together created a performative whole, perhaps using some kind of narrative framework, in which each component played an essential role in a performance that included, but also extended beyond mere words. This encompassing performance would possibly have had the effect of combining, for those present, the earthly site of the funeral with the otherworldly place in which the deceased was believed to reside from this point onwards.

A SPURIOUS STANZA IN LANDNÁMABÓK? THE POTENTIAL OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY AS A METHOD OF DATING AND AUTHENTICATION FOR SKALDIC VERSE IN PROSE CONTEXTS

Edel Porter

In chapter 122 of the Hauksbók redaction of Landnámabók, a certain Hallbjörn Oddsson, son of Odd of Kidjaberg has a dispute with his new wife Hallgerðr, with whom he did not have a good relationship; the saga emphasizing that 'there was no love lost' between them. In Spring, at the removal days, Hallgerðr refuses to leave with her husband, preferring instead to sit combing her hair on the dais. Hallbjörn tries to pull her off three times without success, then he recites a stanza and tries to pull her off again by the hair. When Hallgerðr still doesn't budge, Hallbjörn cuts off her head with his sword and rides away. In the stanza Hallbjörn recites before the killing, he accuses his wife of humiliating him, expressing his sadness in the phrase: 'snertumk harmr í hjarta' (sorrow touches my heart's roof > breast). Apart from the fact that the content of the stanza has little bearing on the prose context, the authenticity of this stanza, or at least this helming, is brought into question by this line, especially by the kenning 'hjarta hrót', which is unique in the skaldic corpus. 'Hrót' is understood to form a kenning with 'hjarta', so that 'hjarta hrót' (roof of heart) would refer to the breast where the heart resides. However, apart from a number of highly dubious exceptions, the kenning pattern 'chest is the house/land of the heart', does not occur in skaldic diction until the twelfth century, suggesting that this stanza contains an anachronism. This paper aims to use Conceptual Metaphor Theory to demonstrate how conceptual models of breast in skaldic diction can be used for dating purposes and, consequently, as part of an authentication methodology for lausavísur embedded in Old Norse-Icelandic prose texts.

BOOKS OF MAGIC IN MEDIEVAL AND POST MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA

Maria Cristina Lombardi

In medieval and postmedieval Scandinavia, the lack of medical care and the harsh living conditions, especially in rural areas, led to a widespread use of folk medicine and home remedies. Certain marginal individuals, called 'de kloka' "the wise" were considered particularly skilled in healing and were consulted by people. Later, with the coming of Lutheranism, many of them were accused of witchcraft and imprisoned. They often underwent trials and sometimes were sent to death. Such episodes are registered in the Icelandic local Annálar together with court trials and legal documents. Experts in magic and healing often wrote down their repertoires in the so-called black books ((Sw. svartkonstböcker, No. svartebøker, Da. sortebøger, Isl. Galdrabækur), some of which are preserved in several archives, libraries and museums in all Northern Europe. These texts are important primary sources for a range of subjects such as folk magic, folk medicine, botany, history of mentality and of marginality. At present I am researching some Swedish and Icelandic books of magic, trying to find the peculiarities of the two different traditions, and to get more information about the Icelandic Galdrabækur comparing them with episodes narrated in the Icelandic Annálar.

GROWING VIKINGS: APPROACHES TO CHILD SOLDIERS AND NARRATIVES OF ADOLESCENCE

Caitlin Ellis

There is no obvious Old Norse word for the concept of 'adolescence' (Larrington, 2008, p.145), yet it must have been a crucial period in which boys could enter the martial sphere and become 'vikings'. Informed by anthropological approaches, Raffield (2019) suggests that viking martial ideology was encultured in children. Nevertheless, children may have been eased into war bands through supporting roles, such as cooks and weapon cleaners (Raffield, 2019, p. 826; Woolf, 2018, p. 137). Recent work in Viking studies has noted that more women and children were involved in viking migrations than previously thought. Stray references to the youthfulness of princelings involved in military campaigns usually receive little scholarly comment, with the exception of Jesch (2004). Skaldic verse refer to when kings first launched a ship and likewise the kings' sagas often contain episodes depicting individual's early careers, demonstrating their suitability for kingship. This paper will consider to what extent these literary depictions should be taken as reflecting reality and to what extent they are tropes about boyhood deeds. Youngsters in Icelandic sagas have agency at a very early age and use it to act out against their fathers, whereas real-life princelings often had to act as their fathers required. In terms of new methodologies, this paper is informed by the author's recent collaboration with an International Relations scholar (Dr Jana Tabak, State University of Rio de Janeiro) specialising in child soldiers in modern warfare. We are considering narratives of child soldiers and supposed defining moments in becoming an adult. For example, 'child soldiers' implies a sense of illegitimacy or alterity to a conflict in the developing world, whereas in the western world teenagers are commonly recruited into armies. Examining children and adolescents as victims and participants in violence and warfare is an uncomfortable but important topic.

WHAT IS HUMAN? A STUDY OF DEHUMANIZATION IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Arngrímur Vídalín

Old Norse literature is rife with narratives of inhuman beings, monstrous individuals, and people who belong to the borderline between beast and man. The question arises: Where lies the difference between man and monster? What qualities are necessary to demarcate someone as either/or? What does it take to flip a person's status from humanity to becoming less than human? This paper seeks to delve into layers of medieval Scandinavian humanity presented in saga literature, as well as which traits, the possession or lack of which, are used to qualify certain groups as human and others as inhuman. It will then be argued that such literary dehumanization mirrors the historical reality of dehumanized others in medieval Scandinavia.

IRONWOOD

Ármann Jakobsson

Old Norse mythology as preserved in the Edda of Snorri Sturluson and the Poetic Edda revolves around the gods but not as such since the point of view is theirs and they are presented as the norm rather than a higher power that needs to be feared, placated and appealed to. These mythological narratives thus do not seem to concern the transcendental and the gods even seem strangely mundane at times. What these narratives do provide are undefined, vague, mysterious and powerful antagonists that are referred to in various terms and are believed to encircle the non world of the middle. These are also predicted to eventually get the better of the Gods and thus their lack of cohesion can be seen as an advantage, as they flock from every corner of the world to the final battle. This paper concerns these various adversaries, their wolfish nature, size and cunning and whether they can be seen as stronger and smarter than the actual gods.

THE DEMISE OF NORSE RELIGION: DISMANTLING AND DEFENDING THE OLD ORDER IN VIKING AGE SCANDINAVIA

Olof Sundqvist

When describing the transition from Old Norse religion to Christianity in recent studies, the concept of “Christianization” is often applied. To a large extent this historiography focuses on the outcome of the encounter, namely the description of early Medieval Christianity and the new Christian society. The purpose of the present lecture is to concentrate more exclusively on the Old Norse religion during this period of change and to analyze the processes behind its disappearance on an official level of the society. More specifically, this paper concentrates on the role of Viking kings and indigenous agency in the dissolution of the old religion. Thus, this study takes an actor-oriented perspective, focusing on the actions, methods and strategies applied by the early Christian Viking kings as they dismantled the religious tradition that had previously formed their lives. In addition, the resistance that some pagan chieftains offered against these Christian kings is discussed as well as the question why they defended the old religious tradition.

WHO IS AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD EVIL GUY?: OLD NORSE MONSTROSITY IN DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS AND NEW AVENUES OF ADAPTATION.

Elliott Little

The Old Norse period, particularly the Viking Age, is currently at the forefront of popular culture, and has been featured in countless games in the past few years, including video games, board games, role playing games, and more. Such is the case in the fifth edition of Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). Though Old Norse influence is spread throughout the game, it is most acutely seen in the game's monsters, the enemies which function as obstacles which the players must fight, defeat, or otherwise overcome. This paper will analyse the ways in which this other is coded with modern perceptions of the Old Norse world - how its giants, dragons, and dwarves are problematically presented in the fiction of the game - as well as lack of representation within its ludology. Like every game, D&D has rules that govern the actions of the monster, which reduces their cultural capacity for horror. When a giant is coded into a stat block, it loses its power as a cultural object that embodies a specific fear and becomes simply a large, rock-wielding obstacle that is vaguely suggestive of the violence of the Viking Age. However, though fear is difficult to code, the equally culturally specific mechanism for invoking that fear is codable within the D&D system. This paper will end with a discussion of possibilities of using the ludology of D&D to create monsters that feel representative of the Old Norse other that we see in the sagas, and how we might divert from the problematic, one dimensional understanding of the Viking Age.

SVÍÐJÓÐ REVISITED: SCYTHIAN SWEDES, ICELANDIC SCYTHIANS, AND THE ULTIMATE OUTSIDERS

David Ashurst

Here I revisit the subject of the paper I gave at my very first Saga Conference, 1997 in Trondheim, in which I demonstrated how a passage in Alexanders saga adapts its Latin source to emphasise the ways in which a description of the Scythians, identified as the people of Svíþjóð in mikla, resonates with Icelandic Commonwealth values of kingless freedom, self-respect, and relative equality under the law. I now look more broadly at what was believed of the Scythians in Old Norse literature seen against the background of the Latin learning widely available in medieval Europe, especially in the works of Justinus, Orosius and Curtius. The Romans, I point out, were prolific creators of Others and outsiders, and to these builders of roads and of the urbs romana the supreme Others were the citiless, trackless Scythian nomads. If we set aside our modern knowledge of real history, real geography and real etymology, I ask, what kinds of ambiguity or associative 'seepage' result from the dual use of Svíþjóð to designate the land of the Swedes and that of the Scythians? In Heimskringla, I note, the euhemerised gods who are the ancestors of Scandinavian kings and of the best Icelandic families are explicitly said to be Scythians displaced by the Roman armies, placing them as outsiders to the Roman world, but in Snorra Edda they are Trojans who leave Troy because of a prophecy and are thus, implicitly, members of the proto-Roman club whose peoples claim descent from Trojan refugees (and there is no mention of the Scythians). What might this tell us about how the Icelanders, in particular, sought to position themselves as insiders or outsiders relative to medieval Europe?

THE OTHER SAGAS: DIGITAL APPROACHES TO ESTIMATING LOSS OF ICELANDIC SAGA LITERATURE

Katarzyna Anna Kapitan

How much of medieval literature is lost? For generations, this question has inspired and intrigued scholars who have developed various methods to estimate the loss rates of medieval manuscripts, early prints, and literary works. In Icelandic saga scholarship, a significant methodological approach was systematised and outlined by Judith Jesch in her 1984 unpublished study of the lost sagas of Icelanders. This approach involves examining the formulaic mentions of other seemingly well-known stories to the saga-writer, which are unknown to the modern reader, following the pattern used to refer to other known and still extant texts (“sem segir í sögu hans”). This method has proven very fruitful in the study of Íslendingasögur, where such references appear relatively frequently. However, it is of limited help in estimating the loss of different genres of Icelandic literature, such as romances, where direct citations are far less common. Recently, in 2022, an international and interdisciplinary collaboration, spearheaded by Mike Kestemont, led to the development of a new method for approaching the question of loss. Borrowing its methodology from the fields of ecology and statistics, the study enabled scholars, for the first time, to compare loss rates across different linguistic traditions, with a particular focus on the genre of romance (including Icelandic romances). In my paper, I will present my hitherto unpublished work inspired by the 2022 study and discuss the differences in survival rates of various types of Icelandic saga literature, as well as the features that seem to influence the loss and survival of these texts.

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE IN SAGA DREAM EPISODES

Kendra Willson

I discuss linguistic features typical of dream accounts and the episodes in which they are embedded in sagas as reflections of both universal dream psychology and culturally specific aspects of ways in which dream etiology and the relationship between the dream and waking worlds are understood. Such characteristics as the Aktionsart and tense of verbs, use of impersonal constructions, epistemic markers, and ways of referring to persons and other named entities mark the otherness of the dream world.

There is an extensive literature on saga dreams, including their narrative functions, differences among genres, and pagan and Christian sources of symbolism. Genre-typical features for the structure of narrative units such as the scene have also been analyzed in detail and linguistic constructions typical for particular types of action sequence have been identified. I focus on the grammar of dreams and their interpretation. Dreams tend to be introduced using the verb *dreyma* 'to dream', emphasizing the process. Only in the interpretive stage is the noun *draumr* m. 'dream' used, reifying the experience into an entity. The verb *vitask* 'to manifest' appears only in Christian contexts, while the phrase *koma til* 'come to' appears in pagan and secular contexts. Epistemic markers such as the verb *þykja* 'to seem' are common. The historical present tense, which has been connected with a "perfective" function and vividness, is rare in dream accounts. Dream scenes may lack references to specific places. I further compare the language of saga dreams with selected Modern Icelandic dream accounts, making reference to studies of dream narratives in other languages, which find stylistic differences correlated with whether the dreams are interpreted as omens.

HOW (NOT?) TO FIGHT THE GERMANIC PEOPLES IN THE LIGHT OF THE STRATEGIKON

Łukasz Różycki

The aim of the text titled "How (not?) to Fight the Germanic Peoples in the Light of the Strategikon" is to present the methods of combating the Germanic peoples as described in the Roman military treatise, the Strategikon. In his analysis, the author outlines the main principles of Roman military tactics aimed at light-haired peoples. Despite the influence of ancient topoi, the ethnographic content of the Strategikon retains significant analytical value.

TRIAL APPROACHES: MULTIDISCIPLINARITY AND THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF OTHERNESS IN MEDIEVAL ICELANDIC LITERATURE

Rebecca Merkelbach

The literature medieval Icelanders produced and recorded between c. 1150 and 1450 is full of 'Others': giants opposing the gods, trolls opposing humans, the undead opposing the living – it all looks quite clear-cut at first. However, over the last several decades, scholarship has shown that, between these extremes, many shades of grey exist, and that it is the fluidity of these medieval Icelandic 'Others' that gives them meaning, both in their original socio-cultural context as well as today. In this lecture, I will investigate how these fluid, nuanced and complex depictions of 'Others', of monsters and outsiders, of racialised or gendered forms of alterity, only become readable if we approach them from more than one angle – if we combine the 'trial approaches', as Preben Meulengracht Sørensen called them, of more than one scholar, and more than one theory or discipline. Examining examples from different types of saga literature in their narratological, socio-cultural, and generic context, I hope to emphasise that the field is at its best when we collaborate, and that it is indeed the sum of all our attempts that comes closest to a true understanding of medieval Icelandic literature, monsters and all.

THE ELUSIVE ANDRA RÍMUR

Pétur Björnsson

Andra rímur – a 15th century rímur-cycle supposedly based on a now lost 14th century prose saga – are one of the most elusive phenomenon in the corpus of early Icelandic literature. At some point they gained a reputation as being exceptionally profane and vulgar and are referred to as such in various sources, especially by the clergy, and in folk-tales they are presented as a favorite entertainment of trolls. Andra rímur do not seem to include material justifying them garnering this reputation, and as they are preserved in a number of manuscripts dating from the 16th to the 19th century they seem to have been popular and widely known. Since the beginning of rímur research Andra rímur have been misrepresented by scholars – sometimes actively – and their supposed content has even been used to bolster fancyful theories on other rímur and sagas; theories that turn out to be utterly baseless when the actual content is analyzed. The actual content of Andra rímur appears to be a stereotypical lygisaga of a princess saved from a berserk suitor by a strong kolbítur, but a closer inspection reveals that as a facade for a satirical deconstruction of toxic masculinity, where a resourceful woman is allowed agency without posing as a masculine meykóngur. This paper will trace the transmission and research history of Andra rímur as series of othering, and the possible reasons for it.

'HOW COULD I FIGHT FOR CHRIST-GOD, A STRANGER?' - IDEOLOGICAL SUBTEXTS OF THE PAGAN-CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION IN THE VIKINGS TV SHOW

Barbora Davidek

This paper will explore the depiction of religions in contemporary Viking themed popular culture, with a focus on Old Norse paganism and its opposition to Christianity. In the TV show Vikings (2013-2019), pagan practices and beliefs are depicted as central to the identity of the Viking warriors. Conversions to Christianity are regularly perceived by the fellow Norsemen and women as a treason, and the show's sequel, Vikings – Valhalla (2022-) even imagines a pagan hostility strong enough to fuel a war against Christians. Starting with a brief overview of the ways in which pagan practices' depictions mirror contemporary Christianocentric expectations (prayers, temples, priests, ...) in order to be comprehended as 'religious' by the viewers, a comparison will then be made with the depiction of Christian institutions, practices and practitioners within the show. Special attention will be paid to the underlying gendering of specific beliefs and behaviors, as well as to the ways power-dynamics between the two different religions are built, and the resulting implicit categorization and hierarchisation between them. The paper will then reflect about the way 'Viking' is used as an ethnonym in the show, and how paganism is central to its construction, by exploring the ways in which different pagan characters signal their belonging to the 'Viking' community via their religious practices and beliefs, and how the depiction of those who convert is impacted. The valorization of paganism, its opposition to Christianity – best summarized by the show character Ubbe's line 'How could I fight for Christ-god, a stranger?' (S5E19) – added to paganism's instrumentality in the show's identity-building discourse, will in turn be used to question the extent to which the show's depiction mirrors pre-existing subtexts, such as the ones linking pre-Christian 'religions' to European cultural heritage present in various historical and current far-right ideologies.

AQUEOUS ALTERITY IN THE ICELANDIC SAGAS: THE PARANORMAL ECOLOGIES OF WATER IN SNÆFELLSNES

Miguel Andrade

This paper will draw on landscape studies (Egeler 2024) and ecocriticism (Hennig et al 2023) to analyse the enmeshment of the natural/human/paranormal categories (Ármann Jakobsson 2017; Mayburd 2017) through literary representations of watery landscapes of the Snæfellsnes peninsula of Iceland. I will focus on the presence of the monstrous in aqueous environments in Landnámabók, Eyrbyggja saga and Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss. Monstrosity will be considered broadly as anthropomorphic/zoomorphic beings which exhibit paranormal traits. Monsters are mirrors of sociocultural tensions (Cohen 1996) and the study of monstrosity in Old Icelandic literature has focused on its use as expression of behavioural/social/proto-racial anxieties, applied to anthropomorphic marginalized figures (Vidalín 2020; Merkelbach and Knight 2020). Studies on paranormal spatiality/landscapes have also been fronted (Mayburd 2014; Ármann Jakobsson and Mayburd 2020). However, ecologically minded approaches to monstrosity encompassing zoomorphic beings have been few, especially oriented by landscape materiality. Studying monsters' relationships to aqueous landscapes and their interactions with humans is expected to reveal medieval Icelanders' notions of the paranormal ecologies (Mayburd 2018) they inhabited. I will observe landscapes of different aqueous materialities, focusing on those where water permeates land or actively borders/interacts with it—liminal landscapes tied to liminal ontology. I will focus on case-studies connected to three types of landforms: marine shoreline, freshwater bodies, and glaciers. For texts set in Snæfellsnes, landscape holds structural import and is clearly linked to the paranormal (Phelpstead 2014; Egeler and Gropper 2020). My goal is to explore how settlers/their descendants are represented in sagas/cultural memory to have negotiated their presence in this region's space with water and related monsters, revealing a complex, multifaceted relationship with their environment.

COLLABORATION OR AUGMENTATION? THE GENESIS OF AM 233 A FOL. AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR HELGAFELL

Beeke Stegmann

The fourteenth-century manuscript Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 233 a fol. preserves remains of what once was an impressive codex of considerable size. It is considered one of the key manuscripts in the traditional grouping of the “Helgafell manuscripts” as it is the only one in the group, in which the hands of two of the so-called main scribes of Helgafell are known to co-occur. Ólafur Halldórsson argued that the leaves of the two scribes were part of the same manuscript from early on. However, details about the codex’s production history had not been established. Applying recent codicological theory (syntactical manuscript analysis) to both material, scribal and decorative elements in the manuscript, I aim at a more nuanced understanding of this manuscript’s genesis. While hitherto the illuminations in the two main parts were generally considered a unifying element, our analysis identifies multiple initiatives of adding decorative elements, which can be aligned with material and scribal differences. Accordingly, I argue that the leaves of the two main parts were likely produced in separate production processes, the second one augmenting what had resulted from the first production process. That means, while the two scribes appear to have been contemporaries and could have known each other, the evidence from AM 233 a fol. is not sufficient to claim that they collaborated. This result has significant implications for the scholarly understanding of book production at the Augustinian house at Helgafell in the late fourteenth century, as it gives reason to reconsider previous assumptions.

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS: TOWARDS A STATISTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING INTRA-WRITER AND INTRA-GROUP VARIATION IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND

Katrín Lía L. Mikaelisdóttir

The use of digital methods in the humanities has considerably increased in recent years. This trend includes the application of various quantitative, computational approaches for processing and analysing data, as well as theoretical considerations of these methods. While the study of the Old Norse-Icelandic language and script is a productive area of research, previous studies have, so far, largely relied on extensive analyses of single manuscripts, with only a few empirical studies conducted using statistical approaches. Synchronic analyses of categorical data prove particularly valuable in the widely relevant topic of scribal practice and networks, advancing research on writer identification and verification, as well as orthographic variation between individual scribes. This paper discusses the benefits and limitations of quantitative approaches using the example of intra-writer variation in the works of the scribes associated with the Augustinian house at Helgafell, Iceland in the fourteenth century. Drawing on results from a recent case study that employed categorical and nonparametric data analysis, empirical evidence indicates high internal variability within the writings hitherto attributed to one of the most productive scribes of the collective, designated as H1. These findings suggest that these works represent a collaborative effort of related hands rather than being written by a single scribe. Instead of relying on estimates, this paper advocates for the application of a reliable, reproducible, and robust theoretical framework aiming to combine and complement humanistic approaches with statistical analysis. Such a framework has broad applicability in several areas of linguistic, orthographic, and palaeographic research in Old Norse.

CHOICE AND CONTEXT - SCRIBAL DECISIONS DURING MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION

Lea Pokorny

This paper examines possible choices taken late-fourteenth-century scribes during the making of manuscripts and discusses in how far they were influenced by the production context. The circumstances of medieval Icelandic book production are barely documented in contemporary sources. Thus, the best way to shed light on this important chapter of Icelandic cultural history is to investigate the products of scribes directly. Through the analysis of the pricking, ruling and mise-en-page of the so-called “Helgafell books” in connection to their main scribes, recurring methods and patterns become visible, such as the preference for a pricking tool or a repeated size of the writing area. When comparing the scribes to each other, a certain “freedom of choice” becomes apparent. At the same time, the repetition of layouts as well as two “outliers of appearance” point towards a commercial production context. This contribution demonstrates how a codicological approach can shed light on the habits and possible connection of people as well as the circumstances around the book production. Its focus tries to shift the “Helgafell debate” from one of location to one of context and gives food for thought for our understanding of medieval Icelandic manuscript makers.

COLOURS WITHIN THE LINES: A SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION OF COLOURFUL INITIALS IN THE “HELGAPELL MANUSCRIPTS”

Giulia Zorzan

Colours play an important role in the complex structure of manuscript books. The analysis of recurring colourful elements, notably minor initials, provides new perspectives on the genesis of codices and the different stages involved in their production. This paper examines how colours are used in the group of manuscripts that have been traditionally connected to the Augustinian monastery at Helgafell. Based on information derived from the systematic analysis of minor initials, different clusters sharing similar colour palettes can be identified within the corpus. Of these, the group formed by Skarðsbók Jónsbókar AM 350 fol., AM 233 a fol., AM 239 fol. and Holm Perg 5 fol. stands out for the way in which similar colour practices characterise the individual production units composing them. While this evidence enables to better understand the network of relationships that ties these codices together, it also provides new insights on the collaborative nature of bookmaking in medieval Iceland. This study aims to contribute to research on manuscript production in fourteenth-century Iceland by comparing the results to colour practices characterising the previous centuries, as well as to contemporary West-European traditions.

PAPER TRAILS: MATERIALITY AND NARRATION IN LATE PREMODERN LITERATURE

Madita Knöpfle

The first secular prints in Hólar such as “Þess Svenska Gustav Landkrons og Þess Engelska Bertholds Faabreitleger Robinsons edur Liifs Og Æfe Søgur” (1756) are frequently considered as a turning point in Icelandic literary history as they officially introduced the early modern novel and possibly inspired the making of late premodern narratives such as “Sagan af Parmes Albertssyni Loðinbirni” (e.g. Lbs 896 4to), which still circulated in manuscript form. This means that a genre that is known for being strongly influenced by book printing has entered the spheres of a manuscript culture, in which no two copies of a text are ever identical and in which people predominantly read aloud as a group. A central assumption of my paper is that the novel as a genre is characterised by its curiosity about its own textuality and mediality, which it constantly seeks to explore. Accordingly, this paper aims to investigate the interplay of materiality and narrative techniques in Icelandic prose literature, focusing on text variants preserved in manuscripts from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. By utilizing a historical narratological approach informed by material philology and cultural studies, I analyse both the literary devices and paratextual features such as layout, chapter headings or script changes against the backdrop of Icelandic literary culture in the late 18th century. I will show that Icelandic saga literature embraced new influences but did not introduce all features immediately. In the words of Mikhail Bakhtin, one could say that the saga was ‘novelized’ but did not become a ‘novel’.

THE ART OF TELLING SAGAS IN MANUSCRIPTS

Lena Rohrbach

Up to this date, the theoretical-methodological premises of material philology and narratology have not been brought together systematically to think about the ways the materiality of texts influences the modalities of narration and how narratives make use of the materiality of written texts. Such an attempt seems particularly promising for narratives that are transmitted in manuscripts that change from copy to copy – not only in terms of their contents, but also in terms of their material presentation. In this paper, I will discuss potential outlines of a materially informed narratology with special focus on the historical developments of saga manuscripts and (Icelandic) narrative traditions from the late medieval to the late premodern period. I will address the question whether certain changes in the narrative art of saga telling such as complex diegetic constellations or self-reflexivity of narration go along with distinctive material features and maybe even rely on a specific materiality of a text, and whether such interrelations ought to be approached by means of adjusted narratological categories as compared to the repertoire of an utterly immaterial structural narratology. The paper will furthermore argue for and explore potential avenues of a materially oriented narratology that takes the codex in its unique, specific textual composition as basic unit as departure point rather than individual, isolated, stable texts. Examples to be discussed in the paper stretch from the earliest transmitted manuscripts over late-medieval saga compilations such as *Flateyjarbók* to manuscripts from the era of printing that allow to examine cross-influences from the early typographic tradition in this development.

SEEING THE SEA IN THE SAGAS: OCEANIC ENTANGLEMENTS IN MEDIAEVAL ICELAND WRITING

Jonas Koesling

What do the Old Icelandic sagas and related works tell us about the sea? Under this rather broad initial question, this paper will look into smaller issues of how the sagas refer to facets of the sea such as the names for specific seas, the descriptions of individual oceanic phenomena, and the way(s) in which they picture how humans and the sea are entangled with each other. In short, this paper creates a dialogue between modern oceanography and mediæval literature. Building on my current doctoral project, *Material Entanglements of Humans and Seas in Mediaeval Iceland* at the University of Iceland, I will discuss case-studies covering not only various literary sources but also different areas of the northern seas. Amongst them will be examples from *Orkneyinga saga*, *Knýtlinga saga*, and *Eiríks saga rauða*. This paper presents central conclusions of my work studying the sea in its own right as it appears in mediaeval Scandinavian. Inspired by recent advances in “blue humanities” (Mentz 2023; Oppermann 2023; cf. Dobrin 2021) this paper attempts a synthesis of my own approach in integrated sea-criticism combining philological close-readings of mediæval Scandinavian works of writing with a careful consideration of historical environmental-oceanographic research. Of course, there exist countless opinions and commonplace ideas about the sea in the context of Mediaeval Scandinavian Studies and beyond. Whilst, for instance, archaeologists and historians frequently highlight the sea as a significant aspect of mediæval Scandinavian culture, literary scholars or philologists are more prone to neglect the role of the sea. Most commonly, perhaps, the sea is seen as the great other of land. There are notable exceptions, however, and this paper will follow their lead and turn to the sea itself as a multi-faceted aspect of the Scandinavian Middle Ages with regards to Old Icelandic sagas and their intimate sea-knowledge.

FICTIONALISED RULER GENEALOGIES AS SOCIAL ADHESIVE

Sophie Bønding

In this paper, I explore the cultivation of fictionalised ruler genealogies in Viking-Age courts, as reflected in the skaldic poems *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal*. I focus my analysis on *Ynglingatal*, composed c. 890 and ascribed to Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, beginning with a brief discussion of the poem's dating. Next, I outline some of the previous interpretations, which have centred on the problem of the strange deaths that are suffered by many of the enumerated rulers. Departing from these interpretations, I propose instead that the poem, in fact, shows little interest in the fate of the individual rulers, but is more concerned with the act of listing: when one ruler dies, a new one follows. Drawing on cultural memory, I argue that by establishing an unbroken line of rulers back to an ancient, foundational past, this invented lineage served as a tool of chronological orientation that created a perception of the stability and durability of rulership across time. This practice served not only to build socio-political legitimacy and authority for the leader himself but also to create social cohesion by providing his retinue and the wider community centred on him with a shared sense of belonging and identity.

BOOK BURNING AT HELGAFELL

Guðvarður Már Gunnlaugsson

In this lecture, I will begin with a brief sketch outlining the history of bookmaking in the monastic house of Helgafell in Iceland, from its foundation until the Reformation in the middle of the 16th century. The main discussion will, however, focus on the fate of the canonry's library after the Reformation, and pay particular attention to the burning of books in 1623 and the legend that Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson took Latin books from the former religious house with him to Skálholt. Jón lærði tells in his book *Samantektir* that in 1623 Sigurður Jónsson, a minister at Helgafell, burned books from the old canonry. This account has been taken as an indication of how negative the attitude of the Reformers was towards the Catholic traditions and how far they went to eradicate the old religion. Sigurður drowned a year later and Jón seems to indicate that Sigurður's death was a kind of justice for what he did. But what exactly did Jón say about the book burning? In his book, he says: Before books of Helgafell were burned together with the other old church rubbish on two big or three fires, ... then people (especially those who understood Latin) could find many unheard-of things there and could see old knowledge and lore. It is known that Sigurður took over as minister in the spring of 1623, so he may have started his new post by cleaning the church and perhaps the whole church site. At stake here is what Jón means when he says: "books of Helgafell were burned together with the other old church rubbish"? Does this mean that he considered the books to be rubbish? In the paper, I will look closer at the meaning of the word *rusl*, and consider the possibility that the minister was only burning what he considered to be trash but not usable books. In this connection, the story about Bishop Brynjólfur should be considered, but one could ask whether there would have been many Latin books left for him to take away if the minister had intentionally burned all the Latin books.

WE AND I: THE POET AS THE VOICE OF THE VIKING AGE WARBAND

Declan Taggart

In the court poetry of early Scandinavia, skalds could refer to themselves with singular or plural personal pronouns and singular or plural first-person verb forms, sometimes alternating between singular and plural forms within a single stanza. Modern translations of skaldic poetry tend to translate this variety of forms into a monolithic 'I', and in some cases, they have good reason to do so. Sometimes nosism has been prompted by the dictates of alliteration and internal rhyme; at others, it may be simply pluralis majestatis and signal an attempt to elevate the poetic persona. However, on some occasions, a more appropriate translation may be 'we', if the poet is speaking on behalf of a wider warrior group in the court. To investigate this possibility, I will survey pronoun use in the poetry of the konungasögur, identifying the poetic and situational factors involved in word choice, from alliteration to poets' motivations and the identities of their audiences. I will compare this usage with word choice in the poetry of the Íslendingasögur as well as with poetic episodes in which the narrator clearly self-identifies as an intermediary within or for a court and or attributes an innate truth-telling quality to poetic composition. I will thereby demonstrate that the 'we' of some early skaldic poems is not a poetic fiction but rather an acknowledgement of the role of the poet within the court structure as a voice for the warband, making the poet's praise (and, infrequently, warnings or complaints) those of a wider group. In doing so, I will illuminate contemporary perceptions of skaldic poetry as a self-conscious representation of collective identity and build towards a better understanding of the warrior retinue and their relationship to power.

BETWEEN INTEGRATION AND OTHERNESS: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON VIKING-AGE WARRIOR GROUPS

Ben Raffield

Since the 19th century, the stereotypical image of the heavily armed viking warrior has lain at the forefront of both popular and academic representations of the Viking Age. To date, however, there have been few attempts to critically appraise and explore the identities, roles, and position of warrior groups within Scandinavian society. Prevailing research paradigms in archaeology place an overwhelming emphasis on the functional aspects of armed conflict, meaning that the persona and influence of warriors remain closely tied to (and rarely extend beyond) the battlefield. This tendency has been reinforced by discussions taking place within text-oriented disciplines, which have emphasised the deeply exclusive and autonomous character of warrior groups. Relatively little thought, in contrast, has been given to the ways in which the lives of these individuals intersected with, impacted, and were shaped by those of local and regional populations. In this paper, I will present the results of a multi-proxy, interdisciplinary study that seeks to examine and redefine the notion of warriorhood in Viking-Age Scandinavia. Drawing on institutional and intersectional frameworks, the study combines discussions of archaeological data with evidence from historical and literary sources in order to explore the structures, norms, and patterns of interaction that not only upheld and reinforced the internal structures of warrior groups, but also the relationships that they shared with their communities and society at large.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MELABÓK – MATERIAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE NARRATIVIZATION OF LANDSCAPE KNOWLEDGE

Nora Kauffeldt

In the 14th and 15th century, during a first peak of saga writing in Iceland, the transmission of Icelandic sagas is characterized by the creation of compilations—meaningful combinations of texts, or rather textual variants. Nevertheless, mainly due to proto-philological developments in early modern Denmark and our editing traditions, saga studies have often focussed on individual texts and their variants without the context of transmission—meaning without considering the other texts with which they were compiled. However, I argue the transmission in compilations plays a crucial part in the process of place-making and memorizing landscape knowledge through narrativization. The reconstructed Icelandic compilation Melabók (commonly known as Pseudo-Vatnshyrna) includes a specific redaction of Landnámabók, the so-called Melabók Landnámu. If we understand this redaction as a prologue to the compilation and not a stand-alone text, it explains why this version does not need the narrative expansions known from other Landnáma redactions. Instead, the narratives appear in the particular saga texts that follow in a circular order and thus connect not only the different parts of the manuscript compilation but also the geographical area of West and North West Iceland. In my paper, I will demonstrate what we can gain from a manuscript reconstruction that is informed by a material narratological approach that incorporates the crucial aspects of material philology into a historically informed and landscape oriented narratology. It allows analyzing the compiled texts and the landscape depicted in them within the context of the codex, thus investigating the sense of place inherent to this specific manuscript.

THE PAST AS OTHER THAN US. THE METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF POSING NEW QUESTIONS TO OLD TEXT

Yulia Osovtsova

The idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce stated that “all history is contemporary history”, acknowledging how our interest for the past is rooted and, to some extent, inevitably informed by the preoccupations of our own times. Nonetheless, understanding the past requires an effort to come to terms with the fundamental alterity of historically determined cultures, bearers of ideas, values and concerns irreducible to our own. This contextualizing imperative inspired the ‘history of mentalities’ inaugurated by the French medievalists of l'École des Annales that has successfully dominated the investigations on the Middle Ages in the second half of the twentieth century. The situation today appears significantly changed. Reception studies, addressing the presence of ‘the medieval’ in today’s culture and society is a lively and constantly expanding branch within our discipline. By contrast, however, the study of the Middle Ages as an object of interest of its own, irreducible to contemporary concerns and agendas, seems to be losing ground against a widespread tendency to force today’s views on the interpretation of the past. ‘The contemporary’ seems to be more and more present in our reading of ‘the medieval’. In lack of an explicit historical methodology, the boundaries between reception and historical investigation thus appear to be blurred. Old Norse philology, meant as the study and interpretation of the medieval texts produced in the Viking Age and Northern Middle Ages, is a discipline traditionally inspired by a historicizing and contextualizing imperative. This session will address the methodological challenges involved in posing new questions to our sources.

PERFORMANCE AND CONSTRUCTIONS OF AUTHORITY IN THE SJÚRÐAR KVÆÐI

Helen Leslie-Jacobsen

As part of the small section 'Performing a Dragon Slayer,' this paper will analyse how performance markers in narrative intersect with the construction of authority in the medieval Faroese ballads the *Sjúrðar kvæði* (three ballads about Sigurðr fáfnisbani). These ballads tell the Völsung legend in a group performance setting, since the ballads are danced and chanted at the same time. The chanting is led by a performer known as the skipari. By analysing performance markers such as self-reference by the narrator that relate him to the skipari, references to groups in the story that might mirror the dancers, and the identification of the performance space with the spaces in the narrative, I analyse how the telling of the ballad narrative connects to the experience of the dancers. This would be an extension of the double scene (Lönnroth) into performance archaeology (see the work of Simon Nygaard). Building on this, the paper will then consider the ways in which these self-referential aspects of the ballad performance intersects with the establishment of narrative authority by the narrator: performance markers such as the use of first person pronouns and possible acknowledgment of the performance space work together with other authenticating techniques such as references to sources and common knowledge by the narrator to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the story-telling voice. In this way, the performance of the ballad and the mode of story-telling in the ballad become intimately connected in the Faroese tradition. This creates an immersion in the story world for the dancers of the ballad.

BOUNDARY SIGNALS AND RUNIC POETRY: THE PHONOLOGICAL WORD AS THE BASIC UNIT OF RUNIC METRICAL TEXTS

Michael Schulte

The older runic inscriptions feature different kinds of boundary signals, not least word-dividers (cf. DR col. 995; Jørgensen 1973). A case in point is the Gallehus goldhorn B:

ekhlewagastir...holtijar...horna...tawido...

This type of word-dividers (...) may be assessed as one of the four major types of runic separators (see Jørgensen 1973). The word-dividing function is evident on the Gallehus horn where these separators obviously mark each single word-unit with one main stress. But the lacking word-divider between ek and hlewagastir has been interpreted in different ways. The paper shows that separators have been used from the “archaic period” (AD 1/50-300) on, e.g. on the Skovgårde clasp from Danmark (Sj 79) which reads lamo:talgida (see Lerche Nielsen 2018). On this basis it seems reasonable to argue that the older runic inscriptions (including those displaying metrical structures) feature the word unit which signals one main stress only. To put it differently, the rune-carvers must have been aware of the unit “word” both in the written and spoken language. To quote Jørgensen (1973: 123) once more: “ordskilletecken är det absolut vanligaste i inskrifter från vikingatiden och den tidiga medeltiden” (Jørgensen 1973: 123). So, we may ask, why there are there no separation-marks between ek and hlewagastir on the Gallehus horn B? Is this a prosodic clue of unaccentedness? The paper addresses different types of evidence to show that initial ek on the Gallehus horn B is probably proclitic and part of the metrical scheme. Hence this is not a case of “Auftakt” or anacrusis (pace Lehmann 1956). My claim is that the long-line on the Gallehus horn is comparable to Old Norse metrical structures such as vara sandr né sær | né svalor unnir (Völuspá 3.3-4) where resolution is at play (svalor resolves to provide a fully stressed alliterative lift). The same applies to the proterotheme Hlewa- on the Gallehus goldhorn. To explore this case runic evidence will be adduced and scrutinized.

CHANGES IN THE ALLITERATIVE ORDERING OF SYNONYMS FROM OLD TO MIDDLE ENGLISH

Maria Volkonskaya

The origins of Middle English alliterative poetry and the complex relationship between Old English alliterative tradition and later alliterative poetry have been the subject of an ongoing discussion for more than a century. One of the most puzzling questions is the possible route of influence of Old English poetic tradition on the later alliterative works. While earlier researchers believed in a continuum of oral alliterative verse, recent scholarship focuses more on written transmission (for instance, Pearsall 1981; Frankis 1996; Hanna 2002; Weiskott 2016). However, one needs to find grounds that will allow them to compare the two systems in order to understand their mutual relationship better. The study of synonyms in Old English verse allows one to glimpse how verbal content is organized according to rhythmical and semantic patterns. The synonyms that Old English poets had at their disposal are large groups of words that denote the most important concepts and objects of the heroic world (such as 'man, warrior', 'sword', 'sea', 'battle' etc.). As Shippey (1972) and Smirnitskaya (1994) note, the lexemes that are part of each system are not interchangeable, but have their metrical preferences: what positions they usually occur in and whether or not they are marked by alliteration. As most of the synonyms are well preserved in Middle English alliterative poetry, their properties make perfect grounds for comparison. Based on the data from the Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus, this paper will consider a number of examples (in particular, four simplexes for 'man, warrior' – beorn, cempa, guma, wer) that shed new light on the nature and limits of "poetic diction" in Old English. Then, tracing these lexemes, it will analyze the data from Middle English sources with particular focus on Lawman's Brut but also taking into consideration later evidence with the help of the Middle English Dictionary and Oxford English Dictionary.

THE SJÓNHVERFING OF A FEATHERED BIPED, OR, WHAT IS WRONG IN SEEING A SHORT LINE OF FORNYRÐISLAG IN A DRÓTTKVÆTT LINE WITH CODA REMOVED

Ilya Sverdlov

It is a commonly held assumption in Old Norse studies that skaldic metre dróttkvætt's line (DL) evolved from the Eddaic metre fornyrðislag's short line (FSL) by addition of a coda - a fixed structure at the end of each DL, prosodically shaped like a so-called long disyllable (a two-syllable word with 1st syllable long and 2nd short) and restricted to complete words. The dominant practice so far is to analyze the DL's "rump" - i.e. DL's first part with the coda cut off - in terms of Sievers' famous five types, with the common claim, from R.Frank via K.Gade to the majority of today's specialists on the subject, being that the rump is nothing else but FSL, essentially defining a DL as "FSL + coda", a definition resembling, reversely, the famous one of a man from Plato's "Republic", i.e. "non-feathered biped". Exponents of this approach also commonly dismiss the evidence of hendings - the stem or root "rhymes" mandatory in DLs - as metrically irrelevant. This paper, building on the insights of O.Smirnitskaya's book "Verse and Language of Old Germanic Poetry" (its English translation, by the author of this abstract, is expected to be published in late 2024), aims to show this claim is an illusion, a sjónhverfing misleading the researchers into seeing in DL a "feathered" FSL. Study of lexical positioning data - which words prefer which position in the "rump" when the latter is scansioned, for the argument's sake, according to Sievers' types - reveals that the metrical rankings of words, as identified in real Eddaic FSLs by Müller, Sievers, and Smirnitskaya, are broken in DL "rumps", meaning the "similarity" "observed" between the latter and FSLs is only superficial. This shows that a Sieversian analysis is inapplicable to DL (as it fails to correctly identify metrical stresses in "rumps") - and the only known alternative, unsurprisingly, is an approach that identifies metrical stresses in a DL by relying on the evidence of hendings.

A PREHISTORY OF SKALDS

Anatoly Liberman

This paper aims to solve several issues in semantics & phonetics of the Old Norse word "skáld" and attendant issues in history of skaldic and wider ON poetics. We start from the fact that the word "skáld" is the only attested ON word for "poet". It logically follows that it did change its semantics somewhat during its history. As a designation for a versifier, and with the skaldic poetry, as it has a degree of conscious authorship, emerging later than the epic poetry, the word "skáld" must necessarily have denoted the practitioners of unconscious poetic authorship, known as singers of tales; only later did its meaning shift to "author of skaldic verses" (as opposed to eddic). Such singers of tales, of high enough talent, were retainers of "big men" of their times, and from what we know of the traditions of poetry recitation, the key social setting for that would have been the feasts, where a cup would be passed around the guests, with each taker reciting verse. This, against the background of lack of a good etymology for the word, which we discuss in detail, supports our etymology, deriving "skáld" from the "skál" "cup", with a long á and a dental suffix (cf. ON fjǫlǫð, so skáld from *skálǫð); the result is a collective neuter noun meaning "a member of a collective of a cup". In this way, we solve the issue of the original length of the vowel - it is long. However, skaldic hendings, which rigorously match vowel lengths, employ short a's as hending pairs for "skáld", a problem that has dogged the previous attempts at etymology. We propose a solution - because hending is a fundamental feature of skaldic verse, and because skalds constantly talk about themselves, they had to have had many hending pairs for "skáld" - yet ON hardly provides any -áld sequences. Therefore, the pressure of the poetics results in an emergence of a poetic license: skalds legalized -ald sequences, with short vowels, as hending pairs for "skáld", out of dire need.

THE AUTHORIAL CONSTRUCTION OF 'OTHERNESS' IN SNORRI'S EDDA

Yulia Osovtsova

The study of Old Norse pre-Christian poetry and mythology relies heavily on the medieval treatise known as Snorra Edda. This text offers an overview of mythological events from the creation of the world to its eventual destruction, with its recreation briefly mentioned at the end. The worldview is cyclical, while the depicted universe appears symmetrical, consisting of opposing forces that create a central conflict – with the *Æsir* and humans on one side of the spectrum, and the giants and associated creatures on the other. This dichotomy is clearly maintained throughout the narration, with specific characters unambiguously assigned to one side or the other. A comparison of this cosmography with its pre-Christian poetic sources reveals, however, significant reworkings of the traditional material. In the eddic poems, the interrelation between the individual groups and characters is more nuanced, while the myths occur in versions that are diverging and inconsistent when compared to the tidy one presented in Snorra Edda. This encompassing 'restructuring' of the poetic sources seems attributable to the authorial agency of Snorri, who harmonized pagan lore into a dichotomic cosmos. It is, however, this version of the myths that we most often encounter in general introductions and reference works on Old Norse mythology. In recent years, the notion of 'medieval authorship' has been challenged and, even though Snorra Edda is exceptional in Old Norse literature for being a prose work with a medieval attribution (Codex Upsaliensis), today Snorri's authorship of the text is sometimes questioned. In this paper, I will argue that retaining the concept of authorial agency is necessary to correctly disentangle the fragments of genuinely pre-Christian lore present in the poems from the later reworking operated by the medieval author.

GÍSLI SÚRSSON: THE HERO IN THE CLOSET

Bianca Patria

Even by the standards of its genre, *Gísli saga Súrssonar* is famously rich in complexity and subtle ambiguities. The relatively concise narrative resembles a psychological thriller, driven by the unspoken feelings and suppressed emotions of the siblings Þorkell, Gísli, and Þórdís, as well as of the people they love. Gísli's desire to please his father by adhering to an old-fashioned honor code creates an irremediable conflict with his siblings. This is further intensified by his 'elective affinity' with his acquired family, Vésteinn and Auður. The murky nature of Gísli's family conflicts is best illustrated by the infamous scene where Þorgrímr, Þórdís' husband, is killed in the intimacy of the couple's sleeping closet. This paper will present an interpretation suggesting that the true motive behind the characters' actions is ultimately the protagonist's struggle with his own homoerotic desires. At the same time, the aim of this paper is to question and problematize the validity of such an interpretation.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE. MEDIEVAL MEN AND MEDIEVALISTS

Daniel Sävborg

In Old Norse research, there has been a tendency during the last decades to focus more on supernatural themes. Such themes are rather common in Old Norse literature as a whole, although unevenly distributed between different genres and authors. In some cases, the presence of the supernatural has been used by scholars as a distinguishing feature. Two cases will be discussed in my paper: the post-classical Íslendingasögur are often claimed to differ from the classical ones by their stronger focus on supernatural events, and Snorri's sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr helgi are often claimed to differ from their primary sources, Oddr Snorrason's saga about Óláfr Tryggvason and the Legendary saga about Óláfr helgi, by their far less focus on supernatural events and miracles. Relevant questions are if (or to what extent) this picture is correct and, if so, why these differences are at hand. Several scholars have claimed that the strong focus on the supernatural in the post-classical sagas is an expression of their character of pure fiction, in contrast to the classical sagas, which are supposed to have the pretension of real history, transmitted orally. Snorri's reduction of supernatural motifs and miracles is claimed to bear witness of a more 'rationalistic' view of reality. However, we know for certain that people in the Middle Ages generally believed in miracles and supernatural beings and events which are not in accordance with modern science. This difference makes it problematic, and probably anachronistic, to interpret the treatment of the supernatural in Old Norse literature by dichotomies such as history vs. fiction, and superstition vs. rationalism. In my paper, I will discuss what we can know about the view of the reality of the supernatural in medieval Scandinavia and what different explanations there might be for the different treatment of supernatural motifs in different Old Norse works.

KLAUS VON SEE AND THE ANTI-GERMANIC FRONTIER

Mikael Males

Klaus von See's scholarship from 1972 onwards is especially instructive about the correlation between bias and otherness in Old Norse scholarship, and it is worthy of our attention due to von See's considerable influence. Like Eric Stanley's *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past* (1975) in Old English, von See's *Die Gestalt der Hávamál* (1972) inaugurated an "anti-Germanic" turn in Old Norse. The Germanic past that had preoccupied previous generations of scholars was deemed inaccessible, and this view subsequently became highly influential. Von See went very far in his claims. Thus, for instance, he dated *Hávamál* after Snorri's *Edda*, even though Snorri uses the poem's first and last verses as a frame for *Gylfaginning*. Other key arguments are of a comparable nature, favouring vague similarities over concrete counterindications. Scholars were bound to disagree, and von See responded not with empirical evidence, but with unfounded claims and invective. This led to an unpleasant debate which, at least in some respects, von See won. He was simply more insistent and carried on for longer than others. The talk explores the debate through a combination of Popper's simplificator and a 'what if?' format. In short, unnecessarily vague or complex statements are simplified and the question 'what would a probabilistic perspective suggest?' is asked. The aim is to evaluate ways to minimise polarisation and retain focus on knowledge production through the analysis of a debate that has now subsided but remains highly influential.

NATIONAL BIAS TRANSFORMED INTO “OTHERNESS”

Klaus Johan Myrvoll

In the early days of Old Norse philology, the struggle for “ownership” to the medieval sources preoccupied many practitioners in the field. The earliest act of this “national drama” was played out between Germans and Scandinavians, primarily Danes, in the early nineteenth century. Later, the focus shifted to a household settlement among the Scandinavians. The hitherto latest act in this drama was the staging of the purely Icelandic origin of Old Norse literature, initiated by the Icelandic national movement in the early twentieth century. At center stage in this movement were philologists like Sigurður Nordal and Einar Ól. Sveinsson, who in the inherited medieval literature saw the core of the Icelandic nation. No need to say, this development was shaped by national bias. The loosing part in this latest act was the Norwegians, who were assigned only the most peripheral, minor role in the cast of Old Norse literary developments. Peculiarly, this script was followed by international colleagues, above all from English-speaking countries, who soon adopted the hybrid term “Old Norse-Icelandic”, when not going all the way to “Old Icelandic”. That there ever existed an “Old Norwegian” was easily forgotten. This talk will address this development and argue that the key role that Icelanders assigned themselves as “chosen people of the North” has misled the scholarly discourse into a sort of exotism, projecting an “otherness” to Icelanders and Icelandic culture that is both unhealthy for the participants and disruptive to normal scientific progress. By re-introducing the principles of probability and falsifiability, we finally can set the stage anew for a more sophisticated and coordinated literary play of the Nordic peoples.

THE “OTHER” SCHOLAR – E. A. KOCK VERSUS FINNUR JÓNSSON AND HANS KUHN

Haukur Þorgeirsson

The editing of the entire corpus of skaldic poetry is a monumental task and today it would be seen as unrealistic for a single scholar to attempt this. Yet, this happened not once but twice in the early 20th century, first by Finnur Jónsson (1858–1934) and then by Ernst Albin Kock (1864–1943). Finnur’s accomplishment is the more impressive since he came first and worked directly from the manuscripts, in many cases editing texts that had never been printed before. Kock’s edition, on the other hand, represented a revision of Finnur’s text based on Kock’s criticism of Finnur’s methods and principles. Kock’s extensive critique is needlessly harsh and Finnur mostly refrained from responding to it or making use of it. In Kock’s old age, however, a new skaldicist rose to challenge him – Hans Kuhn (1899–1988). While Kock had once accused Finnur of arbitrary emendations to the text of the manuscripts, Kock now had to endure the same accusation from Kuhn. A new weapon in Kuhn’s arsenal was the meticulous collecting of statistical data which he used to make inferences about plausible and implausible versions of skaldic lines. The talk will review the history of skaldic editing in the early 20th century and the “Kuhnian” paradigm shift of the 1930s.

‘SÁ ER ENN TALÐR MEÐ ÁSUM’: LOKI AND ALTERITY IN MEDIEVAL ICELANDIC LITERATURE

Ela Sefcikova

This paper explores the ways in which alterity, in relation to Loki, can be theorised through a queer lens. Gender fluidity is one of the main aspects of Loki's identity that mark him out as other in comparison to other æsir and ásynjur in texts such as Lokasenna and Gylfaginning. This paper will argue that the theoretical approaches to gender developed within queer studies, such as Judith Butler's concept of performativity and Eve Sedgwick's work on gender norms, are useful to understanding the ways in which the medieval texts portray Loki's role within his social group. The lists of æsir in Gylfaginning, for example, perform a double function of including and excluding Loki from this group: although Loki is on the list, he is marked out as last and least among the æsir, and thus placed on the social margins. Loki's gender performance within the text, meanwhile, is characterised as transgressive while often resulting in the reinforcement of existing power dynamics between the æsir and their opponents. When he transforms into a mare to distract the horse Svaðilfœri during the building of the walls of Ásgarðr, Loki transgresses gender norms by taking on a feminine form and bearing a child, but through his actions he prevents the giant builder from fulfilling his contract and is thus responsible for the reestablishment of the æsir's superiority over the giants. On the basis of such examples, this paper aims to show how the language of queer theory, which theorises the ways in which alterity is constructed within and in relation to hegemonic norms, can be used to better understand Loki's role within the medieval Icelandic texts.

THE PAST AS OTHER THAN US. THE METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF POSING NEW QUESTIONS TO OLD TEXTS

Bianca Patria

The idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce stated that “all history is contemporary history”, acknowledging how our interest for the past is rooted and, to some extent, inevitably informed by the preoccupations of our own times. Nonetheless, understanding the past requires an effort to come to terms with the fundamental alterity of historically determined cultures, bearers of ideas, values and concerns irreducible to our own. This contextualizing imperative inspired the ‘history of mentalities’ inaugurated by the French medievalists of l'École des Annales that has successfully dominated the investigations on the Middle Ages in the second half of the twentieth century. The situation today appears significantly changed. Reception studies, addressing the presence of ‘the medieval’ in today’s culture and society is a lively and constantly expanding branch within our discipline. By contrast, however, the study of the Middle Ages as an object of interest of its own, irreducible to contemporary concerns and agendas, seems to be losing ground against a widespread tendency to force today’s views on the interpretation of the past. ‘The contemporary’ seems to be more and more present in our reading of ‘the medieval’. In lack of an explicit historical methodology, the boundaries between reception and historical investigation thus appear to be blurred. Old Norse philology, meant as the study and interpretation of the medieval texts produced in the Viking Age and Northern Middle Ages, is a discipline traditionally inspired by a historicizing and contextualizing imperative. This session will address the methodological challenges involved in posing new questions to our sources.

TRANSLATIO CRUCIS: NARRATIVES OF HOLY THINGS IN THE NORTH

Sabine Walther

In the study of hagiography, few scholars have studied thing narratives as opposed to saints' lives. This section will explore examples of narratives of the True Cross and other 'holy things' in saga literature. The Holy Cross and the other arma Christi, such as the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Lance, inspire narratives since Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, discovered the True Cross in the Holy Land. A renewed interest from the early twelfth century onwards was initiated by the First Crusade. This interest also reached Scandinavia, when Sigurd the Crusader brought a splinter of the Cross from Jerusalem with him back to Norway. This splinter was not only an exceptional devotional object but also served as the first building block for a new royal ideology. The papers in this section will primarily examine two Old Norse-Icelandic texts: the legend *Inventio crucis*, a text that tells about the "Finding of the Cross", and *Karlamagnúss saga*, a saga compilation around Charlemagne and his paladins. *Inventio crucis* builds a grand narrative of salvation history around the origin of the Cross-tree, the crucifixion, and the finding of the Cross, spanning pre-Christian and Christian eras. *Karlamagnúss saga*, based on French chansons de geste, projects the interest in Jerusalem and the Cross back to Charlemagne, forging a link between the Carolingian Emperor and the Crusades. All papers in this section are interested in the ideological potential of these thing narratives for the Scandinavian Middle Ages. Tiffany N. White will analyze the connections between the motif of Solomon's temple in *Inventio crucis* and the literary construction of pagan temples and Christian churches. Kathrin Chlench-Priber will analyze passages on Charlemagne's fictitious crusade and his translation of the arma Christi to France. Sabine H. Walther will ask for the link between the European Cross-legend and the Icelandic texts, postulating an interest of the Norwegian kings in the cross legend.

"OTR, BRÓÐIR MINN, HAFÐI AÐRA IÐN OK NÁTTÚRU": NORSE CONSTRUCTIONS OF PERSONAL NATURE.

Santiago Barreiro

The Norse literary corpus offers a wealth of information on the ideas of personal nature, most often marked with the local noun *eðli* or with the Latin loanword, *náttúra*. Both are semantically complex terms with broad semantic range, such as essence, situation or condition. This paper argues that notions of activity and work (which are also identified through rich vocabulary, such as the nouns *iðn*, *verk*, *erfiði* and the corresponding verbal forms) often have a direct implication in how a the nature of beings was understood. Drawing parallels with the work of the ethnographer Jane Fayans amongst the Papuan Baining people, it will be argued that Norse literature often portrays personal nature as constructed by action, where individuals "make themselves", rather than as inborn unchanging essences preordained by birth or divine will. Moreover, I will suggest that this might be related with the relatively flexible social structure depicted in some texts (such as many family sagas), while contrasting with a competing view of inherent qualities that appears entwined with aristocratic ideologies.

CONTEXTUALITY OF OLD NORSE IDENTITY

Marie Novotná

In my contribution, I would like to develop the position that the Old Norse concept of „nature“ or „identity“ is, on the one hand, in most of its instances strongly autonomous: the autonomy of nature is attributed even to inanimate things, which are thus closer to the living ones than today. On the other hand, it is unthinkable independently of context and is constantly changing. It is closer to the Greek concept of *physis*, which can never be fully grasped or explained, objectivised, than to our modern concept. Another parallel can be found in contemporary ideas about the nature of medieval texts, which are seen as inherently variable and unstable, existing in a different way from objective reality. The concept of shape, which combines the inner and outer aspects, may help to illustrate this approach. Examples from different genres of Old Norse literature help to diversify this idea that the Old Norse „nature“ shows itself best in the plurality of its possible perpetuations.

THE SEAFARING AND THE MILITARY ACTIVITY AT SEA OF THE SCANDINAVIANS IN THE LIGHT OF ANGLO-NORMAN AND CAMBRO-NORMAN SOURCES (11TH-13TH CENTURIES).

Marcin Böhm

For medieval Scandinavians since the beginning of their historical activity, the sea and ocean were an open window to the world. That gave them a path to plundering or settling expeditions and played an important role in trade, in which they also achieved mastery. Their maritime expansion was in various directions, with particular emphasis on one: the British Isles and the waters surrounding this archipelago. The great epic of the Viking Age began there, which changed the face of Europe forever. The maritime activity of the Scandinavians in this area did not reach a void and undeveloped land and water, but had to come into contact with fierce opponents: the Picts, Scots, Welsh, Irish tribes, and the Anglo-Saxons. In the period after the 11th century, descendants of other Scandinavians who grew up in the land-Normandy will also join this mosaic of peoples. Therefore, this speech will aim to present how Scandinavian seafaring was depicted in the light of historical Anglo-Norman and Cambro-Norman sources (11th-13th centuries). Authors such as Gerald of Wales, William of Jumieges, William of Poitiers, and Orderic Vitalis left valuable testimony to this issue in their works, which will become the basis for our considerations.

UN-, SUPER-, NATURAL: BOUNDARIES OF 'NATURE' IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE

Gwendolyne Knight

Definitions of 'the supernatural' tend to focus on lexical items that fit (more or less comfortably) within that category. Thus, the characteristics that define the category 'supernatural' must be identified and particular lexical items included – leading to the issue, highlighted by the classical approach to the classification of concepts, that few lexemes or senses of polysemous words will possess all the components necessary for inclusion. Adam Mearns, however, has pointed out that in Old English, the essence of the category identifiable in modern English as 'supernatural' is exclusion, rather than inclusion. This contribution thus revisits the fraught question of 'the supernatural' in Old Norse from the perspective of náttúra, probing its boundaries and in particular its role in establishing in- and out-group belonging.

THE SAGAS OF OBJECTS: MATERIAL NARRATIVES IN THE MEDIEVAL NORSE WORLD

Bjørn Bandlien

In the sagas we find all kinds of material objects, such as chairs, drinking horns, clothing, ships, amulets, jewelry, tapestries, and swords. When mentioned in a saga narrative, we tend to look for how these items signal or problematize issues of power, community and identity. At the same time, there are several such objects that were quite famous during the Middle Ages, that attracted attention and sometimes written comments in the sources. This talk will focus on a selection of such objects from the Middle Ages – and especially those famous at the time sagas were written down, and the ways these objects were given an agency and a history. By using insights from landscape and memory studies, as well as epistemological approaches in art studies and archaeology, it will be argued that such ‘material narratives’ can be related to well-known discussions of genres and so-called ‘immanent sagas’.

A LAND WITHOUT ICE? MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR GLACIAL FORMATIONS IN GYLFAGINNING AND BERGBÚA ÞÁTTTR

Timothy Liam Waters

Where do glaciers reside in the cultural imagination of medieval Scandinavia? Are these natural formations, which feature so prominently in the landscape of Iceland, treated as marginal phenomena that exist only on the fringes of human society? Or do they possess a greater cultural significance which draws them closer to society than their physical proximity to human habitation would suggest? As Cheryl Katz (2013) asked, “What is Iceland without ice?” This paper foregrounds such questions to assess the role glaciers and ice play in medieval Icelandic texts not in defining the human/social against the natural, but in demonstrating the intersections between culture and environment to highlight their ontological multiplicity. Drawing on the theoretical framework of my doctoral thesis, *Mythological Things: New Materialist Approaches to the Old Norse Myths and Legends* completed at the University of California, Berkeley, this paper takes a pragmacentric approach to the icy landscapes of several literary case-studies. Among these include an examination of the cosmogonic myth of Gylfaginning and the cataclysmic volcanic event depicted in *Bergbúa þátttr*. These literary events bookend the origins of the universe and a seemingly apocalyptic event with the formation and destruction of glacial ice, underscoring the overlooked significance of freeze, melt, and flow. Rather than attempting to uncover a historical, geological event, this paper deals with the glacier qua glacier, probing questions like why the origins of the gods stems from glacial ice and why the violence enacted against glaciers is described with such horror. The clear relationship between humanity and ice intersects with Latour’s rejection of the Cartesian dualism which bifurcated nature and culture. The supposition that neither humans nor glaciers exist “in” nature, but are part of the same continuous phenomenon, will be the primary line of inquiry which this paper follows.

NATURE, THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, AND THE ARROGANCE OF MAN IN ALEXANDERS SAGA

Stefka Eriksen

The starting point of this paper is book X of Alexanders saga (translated to Old Norse in the second half of the 13th c.) where Náttúra (Nature) is provoked by Alexander's arrogance and excessive ambition to conquer the whole world. She visits the underworld, where she asks the prince of darkness (myrkra höfðinginn) for help with this issue. The paper will discuss the possible meanings and connotations of the concept of náttúra in this passage by comparing it to its Latin source-text *Alexandreis*, as well as to similar motifs in other Old Norse texts that circulated in the same cultural and historical context.

EXPLORING MANUSCRIPT VARIATION IN SKALDIC POETRY

Gudrun Nordal, Tarrin Wills, Kate Heslop, Soffía Guðný Guðmundsdóttir, Guðrún Brjánsdóttir,
Haukur Þorgeirsson

This roundtable aims to delve into issues surrounding the manuscript record of skaldic poetry, presenting the preliminary work of the Rannís-fudning project 'The Reception of Skaldic Poetry: Variation in Metre and Diction in Icelandic Manuscripts'. The complex structure of skaldic verse theoretically ensures minimal corruption over time, but manuscript evidence reveals significant variations affecting metre and diction, challenging the textual stability and authority of these verses. The primary objective of this roundtable is to examine how variation in skaldic manuscripts reflect changing perceptions of poetry and its metre and diction. We aim to analyse the habits of scribes and manuscript producers in transmitting and modifying the verses. By doing so, we hope to uncover how these manuscript variations inform us about the cultural and social attitudes of the medieval and early modern audience. We will explore several key questions during the discussion. How does manuscript variation reflect a changing understanding of skaldic poetry's metre and diction? Do these variations adhere to or diverge from the rules defined by Snorri Sturluson, such as syllable count, alliteration, and internal rhyme? Additionally, we will investigate how changes in the representation of kennings signal developments in the perception of skaldic imagery. We will also consider what manuscript punctuation and lineation reveal about evolving performance practices and textual representation.

OTHERING THE 'POETIC EDDA

Kate Heslop, Carolyne Larrington, Judy Quinn, Lukas Rösli, Brittany Schorn

In our ongoing project 'Eddic Books' we are assessing the interpretive implications of reading the eddic manuscripts (Gks 2365 4to and AM 748 I 4to) as books. Interrogating the ways the so-called Poetic Edda has been encountered since it was transported away from Iceland in 1643 reveals how the heuristic, radically creative nature of the eddic codices has been marginalized in scholarship. Indeed, our project questions the minoritization of the eddic verses in the fornaldarsögur and the othering of the collection of poetry in AM 748 I 4to. The dissection of the latter book as recently as 1996 obscures the medieval imbrication of eddic poetry with broader theorizations of poetics in the manuscript, prior to its dismemberment. Acknowledging the complete range of paratextual features, prosimetric complexity, and the experimental nature of the scribes' enterprises, brings us closer to the works as books. 'The Poetic Edda', a construction of centuries of interventionist styles of textual criticism, has in fact othered the material poetics of the eddic books. In this roundtable presentation, we will discuss how engaging with practices of eddic writing brings to the fore the exceptional nature of this literary medium.

INNOVATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS IN OLD NORSE-ICELANDIC LEXICOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL RESOURCES

Simonetta Battista, Tarrin Wills, Johnny F. Lindholm, Ellert Þór Jóhannesson, Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, Sheryl McDonald, Jóhannes B. Sigtryggsson

This roundtable brings together scholars working on dictionary projects in the field of Old Norse-Icelandic studies, offering a platform to share progress, challenges, and collaborative opportunities. Central to our discussion is the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose and historical lexicography archives at the Arni Magnússon Institute. These aim to further develop comprehensive and user-friendly resources for Old Norse-Icelandic language. We will present various projects and their methodologies and technological innovations, highlighting how they address gaps in existing resources. The scope of this panel is both to present new features and approaches as well as to gain feedback and input from the Old Norse research community for our projects.

Topics and projects that will be presented and discussed may include:
Domain-specific dictionaries, specifically a dictionary of the lexicon of magic in Old Norse,
Integration with digital editions of Old Norse
Connections with early modern Icelandic lexicography and corpora
End-user perspectives on digital resources

This roundtable seeks to foster an open exchange of ideas and experiences among lexicographers, philologists, and digital humanists. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the speakers, contributing their perspectives on the future of Old Norse lexicography. Through collaborative dialogue, we hope to identify potential synergies and chart a course for future research and development in this dynamic field.

GLOBALISING THE NORSE WORLD: PERSPECTIVES ON VIKINGS FROM OVERLOOKED REGIONS AND LANGUAGES

Jonas Wellendorf, Caitlin Ellis, Karl Farrugia, Christian Cooijmans, Daria Segal

This roundtable brings into dialogue perspectives from several supposedly ‘marginal’ or ‘peripheral’ regions of the Viking or Norse worlds, which have often been overlooked and understudied. This is particularly true of the languages and literary traditions of these areas, so we hope to bring these into greater focus. Caitlin Ellis will provide broader reflections on the uneven geography of scholarly attention, often connected to later historical developments and notions of heritage. This varies even within the well-studied British-Irish Isles; while many Norse scholars read Old English, a smaller number engage directly with Irish and Welsh. Karl Farrugia’s contribution focuses on Iberia, encompassing both Arabic and Latin depictions of Scandinavians in Iberia and at home. Christian Cooijmans will discuss the later narrative presence and portrayal of vikings in regional sources from across the later medieval Low Countries (11th–16th centuries). While much attention is paid to Frankia in Viking studies, the Low Countries have not featured so prominently, and this is particularly true of their literary traditions. Daria Segal will examine general Scandinavian presence in Rus’ according to the Slavonic sources as well as borrowings from Old Norse into Slavonic. This will be complimented by Alexandra Vukovich, who also utilises Slavonic sources on Rus’, but with the added dimension of Byzantium. There is an increasing desire for decentred and decolonised approaches, and a recognition not just of the wide geographical spread of the Vikings but the heterogeneity of their world. However, comparatively few Viking and Norse Studies scholars look at the actual Slavonic, or Greek, or Arabic, or Celtic, sources in the original. What impact does this have? How should we proceed in the future — through diversity of language training, more collaborative scholarship, or publishing more editions and translations?

RETELLING HISTORY: (EVER) NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ÓLÁFR HARALDSSON, REX
PERPETUUS NORVEGIAE

Joanna Srholec-Skórzewska, Karl Christian Alvestad, Bjørn Bandlien, Marie Novotná, Lena
Rohrbach

Our round table discussion will allude to the approaching Jubilee "Norway in a Thousand Years" that will be held in 2030 to commemorate Óláfr Haraldsson's death at Stiklestad in 1030. The session's aim is to reflect upon various aspects of the king's secular life and fama sanctitatis: versions and editions of texts narrating them, the structure of those texts but also their function in the cultural memory. The Jubilee creates an opportunity to discuss the commemoration of Óláfr Haraldsson in modern times as well, including the aspect of nationalism throughout the millennium after his death and the meaning of his cult in modern times.

DIGITAL MANUSCRIPT STUDIES: CATALOGUES AND DATA SETS

Tarrin Wills, Juliane Tiemann, Guðrún Laufey Guðmundsdóttir, Elisabeth Magin, Eline Elmiger, Svenja Walkenhorst

The Digital Humanities have come a long way in recent years, also in Old Norse Studies. While especially Linguistics but also Literary Studies have adopted a wide range of computational methods, the field of Manuscript Studies has not yet seen such a development. At the same time, libraries have made great efforts to digitize manuscripts, preexisting catalogues, and adapt their catalogueing practices. Some scholars have tried to use these catalogue data for quantitative research purposes, such as text and manuscript networks (Hall and Parsons 2013; Kapitan and Wills 2023). They all agree on certain caveats that come with the catalogue data: They reflect the state of the manuscripts as-is and were made for very different purposes. This raises the question whether and how these data can be used for quantitative research and what differentiates catalogue data from data sets. It is this question that we want to take as a point of departure to discuss the relation between catalogue data and data sets, and between the libraries and the researchers. How can we describe manuscripts digitally in a way that allows for detailed quantitative studies of e.g. quire structures? How can we create models to track codicological variability diachronically? What can be gained from a more detailed understanding of codicological history and why are data sets, data modelling, and computational methods beneficial here? Addressing this question opens up new avenues of research that can allow for a much more accurate understanding of the relationship between genre and manuscript composition or specific trends in manuscript rearrangements, to name just two. The round table brings together persons from major libraries and researchers to address these questions and develop ideas for the future collaboration between libraries and research. It is hosted by the Network for Digital Methods in Old Norse Studies, and we will use the opportunity to briefly introduce the network.