



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

Hall, A. (2005) 'Changing style and changing meaning: Icelandic historiography and the medieval redactions of Heiðreks saga'.
Scandinavian Studies 77:pp. 1-30.

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/archive/2889/>

Changing Style and Changing Meaning

Icelandic Historiography and the Medieval Redactions of *Heiðreks saga*

Alaric Hall

University of Glasgow

THE BROAD TRAJECTORIES of sagas' status as historical evidence will be well known to readers of *Scandinavian Studies*. They (re)appeared on Scandinavian scholars' horizons around the seventeenth century, when their narratives were accepted as reasonably accurate accounts of past events. Subsequently, in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they were increasingly recognized as literary creations that could rarely be taken as reliable narrative histories; this shift was particularly deleterious for the study of the *förmaldarsögur*, which not only fell from grace sooner, but were not generally thought very good literature either (see Mitchell, 32–43). However, the historical value of the sagas has recently been re-stated in terms of the light that they can shed on the culture in which they were composed. As Margaret Clunies Ross wrote,

In recent scholarship on the Icelandic sagas, the emphasis has shifted from an older attitude that sought to classify sagas as either history or fiction, but not both, to an approach that allows the two creative impulses, historical and fictional, to coexist in any text in a variable relationship. (444)

This article is a case-study in this approach: it seeks to anchor our assumptions more firmly in the surviving evidence by analyzing the changing styles, techniques, and intentions of the medieval redactions of *Heiðreks saga*. This approach helps to suggest thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelandic historians' attitudes to their past, with implications for how they used their history to construct their present.

Heiðreks saga survives in three distinct versions, attested principally in the manuscripts Copenhagen, Royal Library, Gl.kgl.sml. 2845 4to (R), a vellum dating from the early fifteenth century; Uppsala, University

Library, R:715 (U), a paper manuscript from the mid-seventeenth century; and Copenhagen, Royal Library AM 544 4to, known as Hauksbók (H) because it was owned, and apparently compiled and in large part written, by Haukr Erlendsson, who died in 1334. Palaeographic evidence suggests that the relevant part of the manuscript was written between about 1302 and 1310 (Stefán Karlsson). The existence of these different versions provides an exceptional opportunity to study how redactors altered and developed the original written text of *Heiðreks saga*. Here I concentrate on the differences between the most conservative version, R, and its first rewriting, U, though necessarily I frequently refer to H. H has its own potential as a subject of study because here a known individual conflated both R- and U-type texts and situated his version of *Heiðreks saga* in a manuscript whose contents and organization illuminate his techniques as a redactor and his conception of the place of *Heiðreks saga* in Scandinavian history and literature. But these possibilities are too extensive to be done justice here and demand first the close comparison of R and U. Of the various aspects of the development of *Heiðreks saga*, I concentrate here on establishing evidence for the interplays between oral and literate styles; I focus thematically on the saga's handling of paganism. Naturally, this approach has also demanded some detailed analyses of the characteristics and textual relationships of the different recensions.

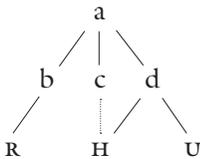
All the redactions of *Heiðreks saga* conform to the same rough summary in falling into seven sections, four of which contain poetry. After an introduction (1) which tells of the forging of a sword, Tyrfingr, for one Sigrlami (R) or Svafrlami (HU), we have an account (2) of a *hólmgangi* on Sámsey between, on the one side, Órvar-Oddr and Hjálmar and, on the other, the twelve sons of Arngrímr, descendants of Sigrlami, whose leader, Angantýr, wields Tyrfingr. (This section includes the "Sámsey poetry.") The brothers are killed, and Angantýr is implicitly buried with Tyrfingr. The next section (3) deals with Hervör, Angantýr's daughter, who raises Angantýr from the dead to reclaim Tyrfingr. (This section includes, and in large part comprises, *Hervarakviða*.) The saga goes on (4) to describe the career of Hervör's son Heiðrekr, to whom Hervör gives Tyrfingr. Heiðrekr is killed following a poetic riddle-contest (5) with Óðinn in fulfilment of a curse that Óðinn makes. (The riddle-contest comprises the poetic section called the *gátur*.) Finally, in a section lost from H and partially from R (6), we are told how Heiðrekr's sons Angantýr and Hlöðr go to war over their inheritance, with Angantýr wielding Tyrfingr. (Integrated into this narrative is *Hlöðskviða*.) U alone preserves an epilogue (7) in

the form of an annotated list of kings descended from Angantýr; this may or may not have been in H and R. (For more detailed summaries differentiating the three versions, see in English Malone 769–73 or in Danish Jón Helgason, *Heiðreks saga* lx–lxxxiv.)

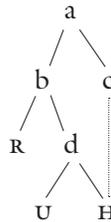
I refer in this paper to the edition of *Heiðreks saga* by Jón Helgason which gives diplomatic texts of R and U and a normalized version of H. However, I have for the R-text adopted the normalized spellings of Christopher Tolkien's edition. References give the redaction's siglum, followed either by page and line numbers (e.g. H 51:15), verse numbers (e.g. R v. 16), or chapter numbers (e.g. U ch. 3). Translations are my own and are intended solely as a guide to understanding the original text.

TEXTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Both of the versions of *Heiðreks saga* considered here originated well before the manuscripts in which they survive. Jón Helgason arrived at a schematic stemma for the texts' relationships (*Heiðreks saga* lxxxiv), which I give here; considerations that I present below concerning a textual corruption in R and U demand the slight amendment to the alternative given beside it:



Jón Helgason's schematic stemma



My modified stemma

As both stemmata show, it is accepted that our texts of *Heiðreks saga* descend from a common base-manuscript, now lost, each including alterations to the base-text (Jón Helgason, *Heiðreks saga* i–lxxxvi; see also Tolkien xxix–xxxi). I refer to this base-text, for convenience, as **Heiðreks saga*. HRU share some apparently scribal errors, that suggest either that **Heiðreks saga* itself derived in part from written materials or that the common ancestor of HRU is at least one remove from the base-text—or both.

The date of **Heiðreks saga* is unknown, and, as I discuss below, elements of its content must long pre-date the textual tradition. Torfi Tulinius has recently argued that *Heiðreks saga* influenced *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, in which case it would probably date to around the early thirteenth century (251–64; see also Hollander), but his argument is largely circumstantial. The more convincing similarities would only demonstrate the influence of a version of *Hlöðskviða* on *Egils saga*, and that version could have been an oral one predating the written **Heiðreks saga*. However, two points hint at contact between **Heiðreks saga* and *Ynglinga saga*. R, H, and *Ynglinga saga* share the otherwise unattested word *dísarsalr* (R 44:3; H 44:22; “disardalr” U 122:9; *Ynglinga saga* I: 58). Moreover, *Ynglinga saga* says that Óðinn, having left his home in Ásia, “fór ... fyrst vestr í Garðaríki ok þá suðr í Saxland” (I:14) [first went west into Garðaríki and then south into Saxland], a claim which is also made in the prologue to *Snorra Edda* (5–6). I know of this claim in no other text, but these are the two kingdoms where the Odinic Heiðrekr undertakes his adventures as part of the “Good Counsels of the Father” story. But these points offer rather insubstantial evidence of textual contact and could be due, for example, to oral links between the sagas’ composers.

The most conservative surviving version of **Heiðreks saga* is agreed to be R (Jón Helgason, *Heiðreks saga* lxxxv; Tolkien xxx–xxxi). Unfortunately, R suffers from lacunae within the text (at R 33:10) and at the end (from after the ninth verse of *Hlöðskviða*; R 88:24), and these are not rectified by later copies of the manuscript. Even so, the probable similarity of R to **Heiðreks saga* allows us to gauge how the more divergent redactions altered their received text and in what ways. Naturally, circumspection is required in this as R had certainly undergone some alteration in transmission, both accidental and deliberate, and may contain undetectable ones. However, this problem is limited as far as possible by the detailed analysis of R presented below; it is unlikely that any inaccuracy introduced by cautiously taking R as our representative of **Heiðreks saga* will be profound enough to invalidate my general conclusions.

U offers a substantially different version of *Heiðreks saga* from R, which must originate in a medieval recension **U* (represented by *d* in the stemmata above) because H used a **U*-text (giving **U* a *terminus ad quem* around the first decade of the fourteenth century). As I have mentioned, U itself, Uppsala R:715, is from the mid-seventeenth century. This text is supplemented by another, roughly contemporaneous

manuscript, AM 203 fol, which follows an R-text where that is available but otherwise gives a *U-text that is independent of Uppsala R:715. The manuscripts' precise relationship cannot certainly be gauged, but Jón Helgason judged that U was only once removed from *U and AM 203 perhaps even a direct copy (*Heiðreks saga* xx–lx, lxxxiv–lxxxv). Minor words and names aside, the overlapping parts of U and AM 203 are usually identical; where they differ, AM 203 is usually the more similar to H and therefore probably the more reliable witness to their medieval ancestor. The differences between U and AM 203 warn against accepting U as a word-for-word witness of the medieval *U. However, Jón Helgason argued convincingly that U “ganske vist er et meget fejlfuldt haandskrift med overspringelser og urigtige læsemaader, men det synes ikke at have ændret med vilje undtagen paa enkelte underordnede punkter” (*Heiðreks saga* lxxxv) [is certainly a very flawed manuscript with omissions and incorrect readings, but it seems not to have been altered deliberately except in single minor points]. With due caution, then, U may be taken to represent the recomposition, *U, of **Heiðreks saga* (itself represented today by R). Where we have both U and AM 203 (and sometimes H) in agreement, we may speak fairly confidently of *U.

*U included an extensive introduction that, at least in the form in which we have it, may show influence from *Ynglinga saga* and the prologue to *Snorra Edda*, conventionally assumed to have been published by or around 1241, when Snorri died. Either of these works might have inspired *U's euhemerization of the *Æsir* as “Asiamenn” (U 91:20). The use of *Snorra Edda* specifically is suggested by the *U-texts' unusual combination (discussed below) of the two major paradigms for medieval European history provided by the Old Testament (predicated on descent from Noah) and the *Aeneid* (whereby Europe was settled by escapees from the fall of Troy). However, *Snorra Edda* and the *U-texts show no verbal similarity, and my discussion below suggests that the *U-redactor was himself capable of this sort of syncretism. On the other hand, a possible verbal connection between *Ynglinga saga* and the introduction to the *U-texts occurs in the description of *Álfheimar*: “Albur [Alffur AM 203] hiet kongur, er riede fyrer Albheimum [Alfheimum AM 203]; Alfhildur hiet dottir hans. Alfheimar hietu þa milli Gautelfar og Raumeluar [Runnelfar AM 203]” (U 91:1–3) [There was a king called Álf, who ruled over Álfheimar; his daughter was called Álfhildr. The lands between the Gautelfr and the Raumelfr were called Álfheimar]. This section is similar to *Ynglinga saga* (ch. 48), which

says that Guðröðr Hálfðanarson “átti þá konu, er Álfhildr hét, dóttir Alfarins konungs ór Álfheimum.... Álfheimar váru þá kallaðir millum Raumelfar ok Gautelfar” (1:79) [married that woman who was called Álfhildr, the daughter of King Álfarinn from Álfheimar ... The lands between the Raumelfr and the Gautelfr were named Álfheimar]. The texts otherwise record different material about these characters and a textual link here, as opposed to an oral one, is not assured; but the prospect is bolstered by the evident use of *Heimskringla* in the king-list at the end of the *U-texts.

The remaining version of *Heiðreks saga*, H, can, as I have said, be dated fairly confidently by palaeographic comparison with two datable letters written by Haukr to between 1302 and 1310. H fails after the second of the *gátur*, but two manuscripts copied from Hauksbók, AM 281 4to and AM 597b 4to, give the H-text to the end of the *gátur*. Hauksbók was almost certainly compiled and largely written by Haukr Erlendsson, who rewrote the sagas that he copied, generally shortening them (Helgason, *Hauksbók* x, xii, xviii). Haukr based his *Heiðreks saga* on two texts: one close to **Heiðreks saga* and one close to *U. Although, as I have mentioned, to analyze the evidence of H fully would require more space than is available here, I advert to some features of H when they are illuminating for my analysis of R and U.

*HEIÐREKS SAGA AND THE R-TEXT

It seems likely that **Heiðreks saga* derived much of its material directly from oral tradition, rather than authorial invention. This supposition is most straightforward regarding the first and last poetic sections of RU—the Sámsey poetry and *Hlöðskviða*, the latter of which is considered to be among the oldest eddaic poetry. *Hlöðskviða* has a range of analogues, verbal and narrative, from the medieval Germanic world and possibly from further east (for surveys see Tolkien xxi–xxviii, and on the eastern connections Mundt and Ahyán), the oldest probably being the Old English poem *Widsith*. These analogues give *Hlöðskviða* convincing credentials as a codified traditional poem. Similar arguments stand for the Sámsey poetry. What would appear to be memorial, as opposed to textual, variants of the poetry are recorded in chapter 14 of *Örvar-Odds saga* (97–9, 103–6), while apparently independent but similar variants of the frame-story also appear in books 5 and 6 of Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum* (1:137–9, 161–5).

This is not the case for *Hervararkviða*. If Ahyan is correct that this part of *Heiðreks saga* exhibits the same tale-type as the nineteenth-century Armenian *Epic of Sasoon*—though his case does not, with regard to Hervör's part of the story, seem very strong—then an episode of similar narrative content to *Hervararkviða* may have been integral to *Heiðreks saga* in its pretextual stages. Either way, it is hard to believe that *Hervararkviða* itself is old as eddaic poetry goes. Its stanzas are almost invariably eight lines long, and its dialogue usually alternates stanza by stanza, while textual criticism of HRU implies a more tightly constructed base-text yet (see Tolkien 76–9). The style is consistent and the poem coherent, both within itself and within the saga. It connects the Sámsey episode with Heiðrekr and his sons. Moreover, it provides a crucial narrative link between the Sámsey material and *Hlöðskviða*, which appear separately in the saga's analogues in developing the role of the sword Tyrfingr (whose name seems to have been invented on the basis of a misunderstood word in *Hlöðskviða* [see Tolkien xxiv]). It seems likely, then, that *Hervararkviða* was specifically composed for a narrative very like the *Heiðreks saga* we know, possibly partly on the model of *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* (Tolkien xii) and put into writing soon enough afterward that it was not substantially corrupted by oral transmission.

That *Hervararkviða* was composed earlier than **Heiðreks saga* is, however, suggested by a blind motif in one of the verses. When Hervör is told that her father was a slave, R (v. 13) has Hervör say regarding her mother:

*Aka ek várrí
vegsemd brósa,
þótt hon Fróðmars
fengi [ms: fengit] hylli*

(I should not boast of our glory, though she may have received Fróðmarr's favor)

“Hon” must be Hervör's mother, but we do not know who Fróðmarr was. Nor, apparently, did the *U-redactor, as U reads (v. 14)

*Ætla eg vorri
vegsemd brosa,
þott ad hefði bratt mannz
fæingid hylli*

(I intend to boast of our glory, though I (she?) might soon have received a person's favor)

This unmetrical reading must be an effort to excise the obscurity; modern scholars have fared little better (see Tolkien 91; H truncates this passage and omits the verse). However, I suggest that the R-text is explicable, to a degree, by comparison with chapters 6–13 of the A-version of *Sturlaugs saga starfssama* (dated to c. 1300 by its editor, 5–6). Like a number of sagas (for some examples see Liestøl 133–5), this tells a story of a *hólmganga* using a narrative template similar to *Heiðreks saga*; it was adduced by Liestøl alongside *Heiðreks saga* as an analogue for the Icelandic *Ormars rímur* (120–36, esp. 133–5). Each saga is by turns the better parallel for the *rímur*, and Liestøl's observations suggest that these texts attest to a long-standing tradition, oral and written, using the same template and similar character names. In *Sturlaugs saga*, Sturlaugr becomes a champion for one King Haraldr in a *hólmganga* for Haraldr's bride but wins the bride himself beforehand and receives a magic sword for use in the *hólmganga* from his bride's foster-mother, Véfreyja. These motifs are paralleled in R by Hervör's father, Angantýr, effectively the champion of Hjörvarðr, his brother, in the *hólmganga* in which Hjörvarðr, like King Haraldr, fights to win a bride on whom he made the first claim. Just before the *hólmganga* in which Sturlaugr is supposed to be fighting on Haraldr's behalf, he marries Haraldr's bride; meanwhile, just before fighting for his brother at the *hólmganga*, Angantýr rather suddenly marries an otherwise unmentioned woman (so begetting Hervör). Sturlaugr fights in his *hólmganga* with a magic sword given to him by his bride's foster-mother. For his part, Angantýr wields the magic sword Tyrfingr given to him by his father Arngrímr for the purpose. Arngrímr himself gained Tyrfingr when he married Eyfura, who subsequently gave birth to Angantýr: in each case, then, the hero receives the magic sword from a female parental figure by means of a marriage. These similarities are striking and surely represent some shared narrative template.

From here, however, R and *Sturlaugs saga* diverge significantly: the Arngrímssynir all die at the *hólmganga* (Angantýr's otherwise poorly motivated marriage beforehand is, therefore, important, as it produces the next generation for the saga); Sturlaugr, on the other hand, survives his *hólmganga* but subsequently has to face one Franmarr, the half-brother of the man he has slain. He defeats Franmarr, but his new wife's foster-mother, Véfreyja, from whom Sturlaugr got his sword, heals Franmarr, and the two men become foster-brothers. If a pre-textual version of *Heiðreks saga* used this narrative template, then it could

explain why Hervör might tell of her mother (in the texts, Sváva, but in lost versions this figure could plausibly have been linked with the Véfrejya/Eyfura complex) winning the favor of one Fróðmarr. If so, then *Hervararkviða* must have existed in oral form before the writing of **Heiðreks saga* as part of a slightly different narrative from the one which we have. Adaptation of the story, most likely the removal of narratives mentioning the Fróðmarr figure either before or at the inception of the textual history of *Heiðreks saga*, subsequently left Fróðmarr's appearance in a verse obscure, and in the **U*-tradition, the inconsistency was accordingly removed.¹ If this conjecture is correct, then *Hervararkviða*, although probably a comparatively late composition, must predate **Heiðreks saga*.

The remaining poetry in *Heiðreks saga* is Gestumblindi's *gátur*. These are certainly unusual—they are nearly the only riddles recorded in Old Icelandic and as verse-riddles are almost unique. A few are international types (Alver; Tolkien xix, 90), but none of the *gátur* appears in later riddle collections except where direct derivation from *Heiðreks saga* seems probable (Tolkien xix n. 3). However, comparison of *RU* with *H* elucidates the matter somewhat. *RU* agree on the content of the *gátur* (though not on their order), but Hauksbók included seven riddles not in *RU*. The additional riddles were not composed by Haukr—*AM* 281 and *AM* 597, which preserve this text, share mistakes demonstrating scribal transmission to *H* (e.g. Tolkien 80 n. 3, 81 n. 2, 82 n. 1). This fact might suggest that Haukr added riddles from another text. However, the only evidence for the existence of written poetic riddles independent of *Heiðreks saga* are three verse lines in Óláfr hvítaskáld's grammatical treatise. These correlate with the opening lines of *R* verse 51 (*H* v. 54, *U* v. 69), and some direct literary connection seems likely, but whichever

¹ Not only does *U* omit Fróðmarr from Hervör's verse, but at *R*'s later mention of Fróðmarr (“[Hervör Heiðreksdóttir] fœddisk upp í Englandi með Fróðmari jarli”; *R* 54:3), *HU* read “Ormarr” (*H* 54:18, *U* 128:29), thus not mentioning Fróðmarr at all. It is hard to know which text is more conservative. Ormarr appears as Hervör Heiðreksdóttir's foster-father in the *Hlödskviða*-section, although only in prose passages after *R* fails (*U* 148:6 *et passim*), and the relevant lines of *Widsith* mention one Wyrmhære fighting the Huns, so *an* Ormarr doubtless appeared in **Heiðreks saga*. It is hard to see why the *R*-tradition should have expanded the role of Fróðmarr, particularly as *R* includes the inconsequential detail that Fróðmarr brought Hervör up in England (absent from *HU*), so an economical explanation would be that *HU* replaced a second obscure reference to Fróðmarr, surviving like the first as a blind motif in **Heiðreks saga* by the transference of Ormarr from elsewhere in the story. But this is guesswork.

direction the borrowing went, the case for the existence of other riddle-texts that Haukr might have used is weak.² Moreover, if Haukr added his extra riddles from other texts, he either chose to add profoundly corrupt riddles or copied his source badly, and neither of these prospects is attractive compared with the possibility that H's riddles were original to **Heiðreks saga* and were omitted, perhaps due to their corruption in a branch of the tradition common to RU.

This question is clarified by the presence in the H-type *gátur*-section of a fragmentary (presumably, therefore, copied) verse. After Óðinn (also in a fragmentary verse) asks his last riddle, Heiðrekr in RU replies, “Þat veiztu einn, rög vættr!” (R 83:6–7, U 140:6) [You alone know that, cowardly creature]. However, H (83:18–20) gives:

*undr ok argskap
ok alla bleyði,
en engi vissi þín þau orð,
utan þú einn,
ill vættr ok orrm*

(Scandal and perversity, and all cravenness, but none knew those words
of yours but you alone, evil and wretched creature)

Jón Helgason printed this as prose, but a verse original corresponding to the lineation of my quotation is likely. H occasionally offers a superior reading to RU elsewhere in the poetry (e.g. “hraðlega” for “elligar” in H v. 2, see R v. 19, U v. 20), which increases the likelihood that the exemplar that Haukr used besides a *U-text was in some ways closer to **Heiðreks saga* even than R and that the extra riddles derive from it. RU must share a later source that had removed some riddles, probably the more corrupt ones, hence the revision of Jón Helgason's schematic stemma proposed above. All this being so, it seems likely that no literary source was used for the riddles of **Heiðreks saga* and that they were composed together as part of a story of Heiðrekr's death which was at least partly inspired by eddaic poems like *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Grímnismál*. A collection so rambling and encyclopedic without being obviously mnemonic would probably be literary and originate with **Heiðreks saga* itself.

²The principal manuscripts of the treatise, as determined by Ólsen (1884 xlviiii–lxiii)—AM 748 4to and AM 757a 4to—offer the superior reading “nár” in line 3, for *Heiðreks saga*'s “naðr;” so the treatise's reading may be the original; on the other hand the Codex Wormianus text shares *Heiðreks saga*'s reading, and the principle of *lectio difficilior* could be invoked.

It is more difficult, of course, to judge how far the major prose elements of R may derive from a pre-textual version of *Heiðreks saga* since the transmission of prose, unlike poetry, allowed relatively free recomposition. However, a consideration of these sections serves to show the stylistic characteristics of R and so, presumably, of **Heiðreks saga*. The main prose section of R comprises Heiðrekr's biography, which itself consists of two stylistically and narratively distinct sections: his youth and time in Saxland and Garðaríki, which, as Liestøl noted, derives much of its material from the folk tale, "The Good Counsels of the Father" (AT 910/911; cited by Tolkien xiv–xv); and an account of how Heiðrekr came to power in his first kingdom, Reiðgotaland. In the sections dealing with the "Good Counsels" narrative, R's style is much more reminiscent of oral story-telling than that of HU, which are literate reworkings. In the course of this narrative, R marks the opening of each episode by repetitive reference to a summer (e.g. *Eitt sumar...*), an orally effective structural device (R 44:3–4, 44:11, 45:6, 47:6). By contrast, while U often mentions summer at the start of an episode, it does not do so at the very opening of the episodes as the technique demands. Likewise, R shows a greater predilection for triads than HU. In all texts, Heiðrekr invites the men at Höfundr's feast three times (R 34:1–35:13; U 115:29–116:7; H 34:27–35:25) and exposes the infidelity of the king of Saxland's daughter through three requests (R 46:1–47:2; U 123:13–124:10; H 46:20–33). A further triad appears only in R thus producing a rare instance where R's text is longer than U's: following an attempt by the king of Garðaríki to hang Heiðrekr for the murder of his son, of which Heiðrekr proves innocent, the queen urges the king to compensate Heiðrekr. In a repetitive dialogue of offer and refusal, the king and queen offer "fé" [wealth] then "ríki" [power]. Finally they offer their daughter, whom Heiðrekr accepts (R 52:1–53:7). In the R-text of these episodes, unlike the U-text, Heiðrekr's opponents are unnamed—like the folktale ciphers they are. These features suggest a redactor or author writing a story more in the form in which he would tell it than did the *U-redactor or Haukr.

The other section of Heiðrekr's biography, his rise to power in Reiðgotaland, is less obviously folkloric in narrative type and technique. It is outside the "Good Counsels" frame and lacks the oral structural features mentioned above, while many characters are named—though there is little to mark it particularly as a literate product. However, it is crucial to the events of *Hlöðskevída*. Moreover, an episode from this section in which Heiðrekr is required to sacrifice his son to Óðinn may

have a parallel in the *Epic of Sasoon*, which seems to offer close parallels to *Hlöðskviða* (see Ahyan), so its relationship to the poem may be based on a traditional tale-type. Together, these points hint that this section reflects a “legendary” stratum of material as opposed to a (perhaps later) “folktale” stratum.

R’s text can confidently be characterized, therefore, as deriving through earlier copies of **Heiðreks saga* from what was at least in part an oral saga of poetry and prose. Parts, at least, of what is now the prose narrative of Heiðrekr’s biography may also have had oral equivalents. The prospect that **Heiðreks saga* was based fairly directly on an oral saga need not surprise us since most references in Old Icelandic literature to oral storytelling seem to refer to *formaldarsaga*-type material (see Mitchell 98–102). The meanings of the earliest redaction of *Heiðreks saga* to its original audience, represented for us by R, is harder to ascertain than those of the later redactions, since we can see where those deviate from this base. But they may be sought partly in the context of Icelanders’ first efforts to codify and comprehend in writing their inherited oral stories.

*U AND U

R opens in a style familiar in saga and folktale by stating the name and rank of a protagonist. Indeed, Richter-Gould found that, as edited in Guðni Jónsson’s *Formaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, only the interrelated *Ketils saga hængs*, *Gríms saga lodinkinna*, and *Örvar-Odds saga* do not open by naming a fictitious king and his Scandinavian land (425–6). *U underwent a complete change, parading its re-orientation right from the opening of the saga: U and AM 203 begin with a title and the opening words “Suo finst ritad i fornum bokum” (U 89:0) [Thus is found written in ancient books]. *U’s situation of itself was therefore unambiguously literate and distant from *formaldarsaga* conventions. U goes on, moreover, to situate its narrative thus (U 89:3–6; cf. H 1:6–8):

adur Tyrkiar og Asiamenn komu a Norðurlond bygdu norduralfurnar risar og sumt halfrisar; giordist þa mikid sambland þiodanna; risar feingu sier kuenna vr Mannheimum, enn sumir gifftu þangad datur sinar

(Before the Turks and men of Asia came to the north-lands, giants (and some [of them] half-giants), dwelt in the northern regions; then a great mixing of the peoples happened; giants got themselves women from Mannheimar, and some married their daughters to the people there.)

This is surely inspired by Genesis 6:4 (*Biblia Sacra* I:10–1):

gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis postquam enim ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum illaeque genuerunt isti sunt potentes a saeculo viri famosi

(but in those days, giants were on the earth, because thereafter the sons of God entered in to the daughters of men, and those women gave birth to those who are the mighty and famous men of that age.)

As Hume has shown, *Íslendingasögur* were concerned in their openings with “distinction of kin and placement of the conflict within the span of Icelandic history” (600). For the *U-redactor, however, the context of *fornaldarsögur* was wider and older: subtly, but distinctly, *U opened near the very beginning of human existence. This interpretation is supported by U itself, which mentions “Adamz akur” [Adam’s land] against H and AM 203 “Odaens akur” (U 89:10; H 1:13) [the land of the undying]—a scribe in the tradition of U must have recognized the Biblical inspiration and altered *Ódáins akr* to fit it.

*U’s use of the Bible did not merely situate *Heiðreks saga* chronologically: it was also a protestation of the saga’s veracity. *Heiðreks saga* includes nothing that a medieval Icelander need have considered implausible (see Lindow 264–5). Even so, the *U-redactor seems to have been aware of the concerns evident in the introductions to *Þiðreks saga af Bern* and *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*, which are revealingly defensive of their stories’ veracity (see Hallberg 6–11). *Þiðreks saga af Bern* suggests that its heroes were men less affected than their fellows by a post-diluvian weakening of humankind (5–6). But *U’s approach was far neater: it makes the giants of its introduction as well as the heroes of the saga proper figures attested by the Bible itself. This was not a common technique in medieval Europe (though see Orchard 58–85 regarding *Beowulf*), and as far as I have discovered, it is unique in Old Icelandic (see Kirby 1:8, which observes no quotations from Genesis 6:1–4). The *U-redactor seems to have taken a remarkably original approach here that sets the tone for the whole text.

Later in the introduction U describes the arrival of the euhemerized Óðinn from Asia, but this reference is much less prominent than the Biblical allusion. As, for example, in the first chapters of *Sörla þáttur* (*Fornaldarsögur norðurlanda* II:97–100) and *Bósa saga* (II:465), the motif seems a conventional statement of antiquity and impressive lineage presuming the euhemerization of the pagan gods rather than presenting, as in chapters 1–8 of *Ynglinga saga* (I:9–22) or the first book of the *Gesta*

Danorum (1:25–6), a euhemerizing argument. But whereas *Bósa saga* and *Sörla þáttur* mention descent from Óðinn at their very beginnings, U's mention of Óðinn part-way through its narrative helps to give a sense of passing time and the progress of a world beyond the focus of the saga. This strategy again is an unusual approach—it was usual to base histories either on the Old Testament or on the fall of Troy, which were usually kept in separate worlds of historiography (see Reynolds; Southern 188–95)—though it is paralleled by the prologue to *Snorra Edda* and various Icelandic genealogies. It may be that the *U-redaction borrowed the derivation of the Æsir from Troy from Snorri Sturluson.

These considerations, it seems to me, provide an important context for interpreting the king-list with which U and AM 203 conclude. As a potential source of Swedish history, this list has been the subject of much scrutiny but rarely, in recent times, in the context of the rest of the saga (for surveys see Janson, Beckman). Early parts of the king-list show verbal similarities to *Heimskringla* and to the *Historia Norvegiae* and seem likely to have derived material from the lost *Skjöldunga saga*, while from Ragnarr Loðbrók onward its content is almost identical to a set of early fourteenth-century royal genealogies in AM 415 4to known as *Langfēðgatal* that trace the dynasties of the Scandinavian countries from Ragnarr and must have a common source (Janson 182–8). Accordingly, the consensus of historians is that the substance of the list was composed separately from the rest of the saga and integrated with it later, perhaps with suitable literary embellishment. This integration is neatly paralleled by the combination of *Völsunga saga* with *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* (the latter itself being mentioned in the king-list, U 157, 13–4) found in the only surviving manuscript of *Völsunga saga*, whereby the dynasty of the saga is continued from the legendary into the historical past by its connection with Ragnarr (von See). Moreover, if Janson's recent argument that the king-list used a Swedish genealogy imported to Iceland around 1270 is correct, then the list as we have it must post-date 1270 (187–91). Not only this date, but stylistic considerations make it very likely that we owe the king-list specifically to the *U-redactor. I have mentioned above that R begins like other *fornaldarsögur* without situating its events in a substantial genealogical context, whereas *U added a self-consciously literary and genealogical introduction to give the saga a historical context, arguably on the model of classical *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur*. As I discuss below, this stylistic distinction is characteristic of the two redactions. It seems unlikely, then, that R, or

**Heiðreks saga*, concluded with a list of kings whose presence would once more have been quite uncharacteristic both of *fornaldarsögur* generally and *R* specifically.

The king-list's analogues only clearly begin three generations in, with Hálfðan snjalli, the father of Ívarr inn víðfaðmi. **U* connected Angantýr's line to Ívarr's, with an unspecified coupling: the son of Angantýr Heiðreksson, "Heidrekur vílfshamur ... atti dottur, er Hilldur hiet; hun var modir Haldanar snialla, faður Iuars hins víðfadma" (*U* 156:1–4) [Heiðrekr vílfshamr ... had a daughter, who was called Hildir; she was the mother of Hálfðan snjalli, the father of Ívarr inn víðfaðmi]. This link lies sufficiently far from well-trodden genealogical ground to avoid dispute and is sufficiently ancient to ensure that the characters of the saga are related to a large number of illustrious descendants. This conclusion implies that **U* not only sought to put *Heiðreks saga* into a historical context, but to promote it using that historical context. As Janson argued, it also meets one of the two principal concerns that have vexed scholars of the king-list—why the list stops so suddenly with Phillipús and Ingi Hallsteinsson. The writer of the king-lists in *AM* 415 was able to continue his list of Swedish kings down to Birgir Magnús, who was ruling in the early fourteenth century, so it seems unlikely that the king-list in **U* stopped simply because the redactor had run out of information; however, Phillipús, Ingi's nephew, was thought to be the last of Heiðrekr's line and so was an obvious point at which to stop the chronicle (Janson 188).

The other major query regarding the list is why the struggle between Ingi Steinkelsson and Blót-Sveinn, which comprises about two-fifths of the king-list, is recounted at such great length. Given the known sources of the king-list, it seems clear that the **U*-redactor could have expanded other parts instead had he so wished. Janson once more supplied the most plausible explanation: the expanded passage describes the Christian Ingi's "slutgiltiga seger över den så omskrivna hedendomen i *Svíþjóð*" (189) [decisive victory over heathendom in *Svíþjóð*, which is thus circumscribed]. Situating this observation within the overall structure of **U* adds a new perspective to Janson's observation: with its added introductory material and the king-list (whether or not the **U*-redactor added it), **U* situated *Heiðreks saga* in a complete historical continuum from the times of Genesis, through the arrival of the *Æsir* in Scandinavia, to the conversion of Sweden, the last of the Germanic Scandinavian countries to convert. The fact that it included a couple of generations

beyond the conversion to the end of the dynasty in question would, again, be characteristic of *Íslendingasögur*, with their habit of including epilogues tying up loose ends (in this case, Heiðrekr's dynasty). *U's use of the king-list, then, served to conclude a history of Sweden encompassing its whole history from the past referred to in Genesis to the single most important event in its history, the conversion. This is a radical departure from the conventions of *formaldarsaga*-writing, though it is consistent with the writing of *Íslendingasögur*, with their conventional framework of Iceland's settlement to its conversion.

Returning to *U's introduction, we also find concern there for structural coherence. The first characters that U and AM 203 describe are Guðmundr king of Glæsisvellir and his son Höfundr (U 89, 6–90: 2). Höfundr later marries Hervör and begets Heiðrekr (U 115, 1–11): thus *U opened by giving Heiðrekr's short patriarchal line. It then gave his long matriarchal line, descending from a giant called Arngrímr. Thus, in view of my analysis of the king-list above, *Heiðreks saga* was also made in *U into a comprehensive account of a dynasty. As the long account of Argrímr's line proceeds toward Hervör, the focus of the saga approaches Heiðrekr, its central character. In the introduction, *U also emphasized and consolidated the role of Tyrfingr, which despite being the main unifying feature of *Heiðreks saga*'s plot, receives little emphasis in R. *U gave more detail regarding Tyrfingr's forging but also had Dvalinn, its creator, curse it. Dvalinn declares that a man will die by it every time it is drawn and then adds to Sigrlami, “med þui sie vnninn iij nidingsverk hin mestu; það verdi og þinn bani” (U 92, 23–93:1) [may the three most evil deeds be done with it; may it also turn out to be your slayer]. Admittedly, U never defines the *nidingsverk* [evil deeds], which would have clarified matters further. Milroy has suggested, however, that this omission may be a deliberate reflection of the fact that the *nidingsverk* are not defined in their likely source-stories, those of Starkaðr Stórvirksson (which we know from *Gautreks saga* and Saxo Grammaticus; Milroy 125)—a reading corresponding well with *U's self-conscious development of Heiðrekr's Odinic traits—and its alteration remains effective and thorough. Tyrfingr's property of killing a man whenever it is drawn is utilized in the Garðaríki episode in HRU, but as part of Heiðrekr's fratricide only in HU. Likewise, when Heiðrekr tries to kill Óðinn with Tyrfingr, HR simply has Heiðrekr fail, but U ties up the loose end, adding, “suerdid ... kom a eirn hirdmanna, og fieck sa þegar bana” (U 140:8–9) [the sword fell on one of the royal guards, and he got from that his death].

This tendency to clarify events pervades U. Elsewhere, U achieves this by increasing the number of characters and giving more of them names while re-ordering and adding events thus producing a narrative very different in character from R, which recalls instead the burgeoning detail of the *Islendingasögur*. The events of Heiðrekr's banishment by Höfundr, for example, may be shown schematically:

R	U
Heiðrekr incites repeatedly at Höfund's feast, and his brother Angantýr tries to make peace.	Heiðrekr incites repeatedly at Höfund's feast, and his brother Angantýr tries to make peace.
Heiðrekr is sent from the feast.	Heiðrekr is sent from the feast.
Heiðrekr throws a stone at voices in the dark accidentally killing Angantýr.	Hervör and Angantýr plead that he should be made a king's man.
Höfundr outlaws Heiðrekr.	Höfundr outlaws Heiðrekr instead.
Hervör has Höfundr give Heiðrekr advice.	Hervör has Höfundr give Heiðrekr advice
	Hervör gives Tyrfingr to Heiðrekr.
	Heiðrekr kills Angantýr in revenge against his father. Heiðrekr lives in a forest until he desires to win "gott frasnagnar" (U 117:25) [good repute].
"Good Counsels," first episode.	"Good Counsels," first episode.

U's account is much more detailed, with more characterization; it motivates Heiðrekr's fratricide by developing the characters' personalities and relationships. In R, Heiðrekr throws a stone toward voices out of malice but does not appear to intend the resulting fratricide, for which he is outlawed (R 36:1–10). But in U, Heiðrekr is outlawed for his incitement at the feast; Angantýr's subsequent intervention on behalf of his brother emphasizes the contrast in character between the two; and Heiðrekr's subsequent killing of Angantýr is a deliberate act of revenge: before he draws Tyrfingr, Heiðrekr declares, "alldrei giet eg giort slikann mun fodurz mins og modur sem þau giordu min" (U 117:7–9, see also H 35:29–31) [never will I be able to make such a differentiation [in my treatment] of my father and mother as they made [in their treatment] of me] to show that in killing the son of both parents here, he is taking

revenge only on his father. Furthermore, after Heiðrekr's exile, HR send Heiðrekr directly to Reiðgotaland; U first has him become captain of a viking band as in Hervör's biography, which helps to demarcate the movements of the saga and emphasizes the association in character between Hervör and Heiðrekr. Likewise, U reorders the Arngrímssynir's rather ill-motivated journeys before their *hólmganga*. Numerous similar examples could be given.

Another structural innovation in U is the revelation of important information outside the chronological sequence of the story. The device is most effective in the part of the saga describing Heiðrekr's adventures in Garðaríki, where Heiðrekr pretends to have killed the king's son in order to test some of Höfundr's advice. R, like oral folktales (see Olrik 137–8), describes events chronologically, but H and U delay revealing some of Heiðrekr's actions thus making our expectations and judgments of events uncertain. This strategy adds tension and enriches the portrayal of Heiðrekr's contrary character; once more, its literate style recalls the classical *Íslendingasögur*. For example, in *Eyrbyggja saga* chapter 18, we are neither told what happens to Þorbjörn's horses when they are lost, nor when Spá-Gils divines it, nor when Þorbjörn avenges their loss: we only learn when Þorbjörn himself finds out that his vengeance was misdirected, in chapter 23 (58). U embroiders the Garðaríki episode besides: R has Heiðrekr invited to a feast, but U has him visit while "i hernad" [raiding]; before the feast, H and U have Heiðrekr deploy his men ready for trouble. Elsewhere, when Heiðrekr's mother, Hervör, is named, her name recalls that of a *valkyrja* given in the prose introduction to *Völundarkviða*, but U adds that "var það margra vilie, að ei væri vppfædt og kolludu ei hafa mundi konuskap, ef fodur frændum yrði lík" (U 102:1–3, see also H 14:25–30) [it was the desire of many that she should not be brought up, and they said she would not have woman's temper, if she turned out like her father's kinsmen]. These examples could be multiplied. This sort of foreboding is again more in keeping with *Íslendingasögur* than *formaldarsögur* occurring, for example, in the first chapter of *Brennu-Njáls saga* (7) when Hrótr comments on the young Hallgerðr.

*U's changes, then, have literary merit and move *Heiðreks saga*'s style toward that of the classical *Íslendingasögur*. This progression also appears in U's diction. Shifting narrative focus is characteristic of classical saga-style, but unfamiliar in folktale. Correspondingly, R shifts the narrative focus only once, at the point where the rather distinct *gátur*-episode begins (R 54:14, U 129:23). U, however, does so often. For example,

for R's "Þessu næst fara þeir brœðr til Bjarmars jarls" (R 8:1–2) [Next the brothers travel to Jarl Bjarmarr], U has, "Eftir það foru þeir leid sína. // 5. Jall er nefndur Biartmar; hann ried fyrir Aldeio borg" (U 95:29–96:2) [After that they went their way. // 5. There was a jarl called Biartmarr; he ruled over Aldeigjuborg]. Bjartmarr's introduction lacks the genealogy typical in *Íslendingasögur*, but U's thumbnail sketch of his situation is consistent with classical conventions (U 118:19–20; see also U 90:2, U 91:1, U 118:19–20). Additionally, U sometimes has characters begin a sentence in indirect speech but end in direct—again, a classical stylistic feature more appropriate to literary storytelling than to oral. R does this twice, but U uses the device five times (R 37:2ff., R 51:2–4, U 114:21ff., U 116:12–4, U 116:27ff., U 118:28–30, U 128:11–4. The first citation from U is in R's lacuna, but see H 33:30ff.).

My final comparison of R and U is in terms of their verse-content. R seems to have lost verses from most poetic sections but seems generally to offer a text relatively faithful to **Heiðreks saga*. R's losses were sometimes accidental. *Hervararkviða* lacks two verses in R, but where present in HU, they tie into the progression of question and response, while the version in R is rather disjointed (H vv. 19, 20; U vv. 35, 36; Tolkien 78–9), making loss from the R-tradition more likely than interpolation into HU. But some verse was deliberately omitted from the R-tradition. Thus R deletes the first four lines of verse 18 but seems to have based corresponding prose on them (R 18:1–2; see also H v. 1, U v. 19; and Tolkien 76–7, 83). This process would also be apparent in the omission of riddles earlier in the R-tradition, suggesting a prolonged but slow attrition of the verse-content. The *U-redaction also omitted and altered verse. But, as Ebel observed (62–4), where *U omitted verse, it seems to have been systematic and again to be moving toward conventional saga-style: in *Hlödskviða*, *U omitted all narrative poetry and replaced it with prose. All the other verse in *Heiðreks saga*, and in most *Íslendingasögur* and *fornaldarsögur*, represents direct speech, and the removal of narrative verse from *Hlödskviða* was an obvious normalization of style paralleled, for example, by the writer of *Völsunga saga*, who paraphrased the vast majority of his verse-sources in prose, retaining verse almost exclusively for representing direct speech. The redactors of *Heiðreks saga* frequently reworded the prose speech in their exemplars, so presumably did not consider it to represent the precise words a person may have spoken. On the other hand, the fact that HR sometimes give a dialogue in prose and then again in verse suggests that characters were not considered actually

to have conversed in poetry. But R nonetheless suggests that the verses represent the content of speech with greater veracity than prose: “Þetta viðræði þeirra sanna þessar vísur, er Hjálmar kvað” (R 10:15–6) [This conversation of theirs is verified by these verses, which Hjálmar spoke]. This assumption was presumably based on the premise that the author of **Heiðreks saga* was aware that they were actually older. Retaining verse-speech, then, while omitting other verse, enabled *U to be more conventional in terms of style while retaining a crucial statement of veracity, both concerns consistent with its introduction.

HAUKR’S SAGA HEIÐREKS KONUNGS INS VITRA

As I have already mentioned, space does not allow the consideration of H in the detail that it deserves. However, some notes on the internal stylistic features of H may usefully be offered as these directly illuminate the reception of both **Heiðreks saga* and *U. Haukr appears to have been concerned primarily with creating a text that conformed in style to the genre of the *foraldarsögur*, but to have had a constant eye for the value of his redaction as a historical account, occasionally to the detriment of its literary quality. He included, by rationalization but never conflation, every turn of the plot and every character he met in either of his sources, whatever the consequences for the coherence of his narrative. Regarding the features of diction in which U diverges from the comparatively oral style of R, Haukr followed his R-type text and seems to have exaggerated its tendencies. Thus, while U has characters begin a sentence in indirect speech but end in direct five times, and R twice, Haukr has it only once (H 49:3off.; note that all the examples in U fall in the part of the saga which H preserves). U often shifts narrative focus, whereas R does so only once. Haukr followed the R-text where it was available, and where R shifts the narrative focus, he did his best to avoid doing so (H 54:17ff., see also R 54:14). Style was not important enough to Haukr to make him abandon *U’s historically interesting introduction; but it did make him alter its diction (of which we can be reasonably confident when U and AM 203 agree). The shifts of narrative focus remain, and the saga retains its initial declaration of previous authorities, but now with the phrase “er sagt” [is said] rather than “fint ritad” [is found written]. “Og gieck ad eiga hana” (U 90:4–5; U 90:9–10) [and went to possess her (in marriage)] becomes the less formal “ok fekk síðan” (H 1:22–3; H 2:3) [and then took (her in marriage)]. Having established kings’ nomenclature, Haukr simply uses “konungr,” and he uses more direct speech. This approach is paralleled

in Haukr's redaction of *Fóstbræðra saga*, from which he appears to have stripped the "digressions" in high literary and Latinate style, presumably to make the saga conform more nearly to his conceptions of an *Íslendingasaga*, as he wished *Heiðreks saga* to conform to his conceptions of a *fornaldarsaga* (Jónas Kristjánsson, esp. 59–80).

On the other hand, Haukr followed *U's non-chronological narrative sequencing and foreboding comments fairly consistently. Indeed, H adds some beautifully well-poised comments during the *gátur*-section to suggest Heiðrekr's growing suspicion that his guest is Óðinn (e.g. H 59:22–4; 80:32–3). We may interpret this dichotomy by the analogy of a speaker attempting to speak in a dialect other than his own: he is liable to adopt the phonology of the other dialect fairly successfully (with a measure of hyper-correction), but to maintain the syntax of his own dialect, not recognizing the dialectal differences in this area. Haukr wanted all the historical detail of *U but wanted his *Heiðreks saga* to sound like a traditional *fornaldarsaga*. His alterations to *U's diction, however, emphasize that *U breached the acceptable style of *fornaldarsögur* in the eyes of contemporary audiences as well as modern. This approach does not necessarily mean that he saw the saga primarily as a work of fiction, however. Haukr may have had historical verisimilitude in mind when he made his text sound not like "fornum bokum" [ancient books] but more like their raw material.

PAGANISM IN *HEIÐREKS SÖGUR*

I have compared the styles and methods of R, U, and to some extent H and shall now conclude with a thematic comparison of the texts. An issue that particularly invites consideration is the place of paganism in *Heiðreks saga*. The contrast between the pagan and Christian worlds seems to have been crucial to the sense of history that is so striking in Old Icelandic literature; its handling in *Heiðreks saga* ought to tell us something of the saga's meaning in Icelandic society (see Mitchell 60–6, 114–36).

Paganism is portrayed in the saga most fully through Heiðrekr himself and most prominently in a scene occurring just before the riddle-contest. In this passage, R describes Heiðrekr's practice of swearing on a boar with bristles that look as though they are golden. The passage comes at the point in the saga where, the good counsels all tested, Heiðrekr successfully marries, and "sest nú um kyrrt" (R 54:3–4; see also U 129:1–4, H 53:31–2) [now settles down]. The swearing is used in the story to establish a context for the riddle-contest. It is paralleled only in the

eddaic *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* in the prose following stanza 30 and was perhaps inspired by it. It would be fascinating to know how and why the episode was included **Heiðreks saga*, but what is certainly interesting is the development of the description in *U*. It adds that “Heiðrekur kongur blotadi Frey og tignaði hann mest af ollum sinum goðum” (*U* 129: 4–5, see also *H* 54:24) [King Heiðrekr sacrificed to Freyr and honored him the most of all his gods]. This development is simple enough given Freyr’s association with the boar Gullinbursti and with peace and prosperity, but it is a much more conventional description of Scandinavian pagan practice emphasizing sacrifice and polytheism. The boar is now “heilagur” (*U* 129:10; see also *H* 54:26) [holy]; moreover, *U* situates these sacrifices in that month “er Februarius heitir” (*U* 129:8) [that is called Februarius]. One cannot rely on the testimony of individual words in *U*, but if original, the register of this word is important: an ostentatious loan-word declaring Latinity and learning in counterpoint to Heiðrekr’s own culture. Moreover, *U* further emphasizes Heiðrekr’s coming of age by replacing *R*’s claim that Heiðrekr “gerist höfðingi mikill ok spekingr at viti” (*R* 54:4) [becomes a great chieftain and a wise man in knowledge] with the statement that he “giordist nu frægur kongur af speki, so og rikdomi” (*U* 129:1–2) [became now a king famous in wisdom, and also in power] recalling the Patristic pairing of *sapientia et fortitudo* so important to medieval political philosophy. But even discounting these details, we can see in *U* a more self-conscious attitude to paganism than in *R*. Admittedly, Óðinn’s arrival for the riddle-contest in *HR* is heralded by an explicit mention of a sacrifice to Óðinn by one of Heiðrekr’s opponents (*R* 55:5–8; *H* 55:27–9), and this event is omitted in *U*. But this omission is consistent with *U*’s technique of leaving its audience, like the saga’s protagonists, guessing what is afoot—and there is no real question that his guest Gestumblindi [Guest the Blind] is Óðinn. *U*’s approach might even be taken to invite a learned game of “god-spotting.”

This trend of more frequent references to paganism continues in portrayals of Heiðrekr. Heiðrekr begins his career in *R* as an Óðinn-hero (see Tulinius, 111–3), the character-type best known from Starkaðr Stórvirksson and Egill Skalla-Grímsson, but this theme was bolstered as the saga was recomposed. Heiðrekr begins his career as an inciter at a feast, which aligns him with Starkatherus at Ingeldus’s feast in book 6 of the *Gesta Danorum* (166–95) and with Loki in *Lokasenna*. His subsequent outlawry aligns him also with Grettir Ásmundarson (while Grettir is not an Óðinn-hero, he shares much with them, see Grimstad nn. 6, 8, with refs.): when Grettir and Heiðrekr are outlawed, their mothers each give

them their grandfather's sword, which eventually kills each recipient (*Grettis saga* chs. 17, 82).³ In R Heiðrekr becomes a king by sacrificing to Óðinn and ends his reign by a contest with Óðinn. As Much pointed out, this biography matches that of Geirröðr, another prince under Óðinn's patronage, in the prose introduction to *Grimmismál* (cited by Tolkien xvii). Additionally, as I have mentioned above, *Ynglinga saga* says that Óðinn "fór ... fyrst vestr í Garðaríki ok þá suðr í Saxland" (I:14) [first went west into Garðaríki and then south into Saxland]—the two kingdoms where Heiðrekr adventures in the "Good Counsels" story. *U developed this portrayal. It gave Heiðrekr a line descending both from Óðinn (U 91:21–5) and Starkaðr (U 90:10–91:14) and from heroes abducting giant-women, a pattern conducive, Meulengracht Sørensen has noted, to producing Odinic heroes. I have already mentioned the *U-redaction's addition of the three *níðingsverk*, probably from Starkaðr's story, and discussed how Heiðrekr's malicious and vengeful character is developed between R and U. The latter development brought Heiðrekr's story closer again to that of Geirröðr: Heiðrekr, like Geirröðr, now removes his brother deliberately. H generally adopted *U's alterations and maintained this trajectory.⁴

These observations are consistent with Mitchell's observation that "the ancient pagan gods actually *increase*, rather than diminish, their appearances in the *foraldarsögur*" (134), and as in the material considered by Mitchell, developments of paganism in *Heiðreks saga* seem not

³ Additionally, Grettir is distinguished from his elder brother Atli by the "two brothers as contrast" motif, which, as has been noted elsewhere, is characteristic of Odinic younger brothers (*Grettis saga* ch. 14; Hall 40–1; see also Boberg 1966, under AT P251.5.4). The motif is applied in HU to Heiðrekr and his brother Angantýr, which add that Heiðrekr's foster-father had the Odinically-named foster-father Gizurr (U 115:10–21; H 34:14–22), strengthening the comparison, but this passage is missing in R because of the lacuna in the manuscript, so it is not possible to be certain when it entered *Heiðreks saga*. Gizurr appears as an Odinic inciter after the failure of HR in verses of U's *Hlöðskviða* as well as prose (U vv. 99–103), so this appearance at least is probably original to **Heiðreks saga* (and old).

⁴ Regarding Heiðrekr's sacrifice of the slain in Reidgotaland, RU mention Heiðrekr sacrificing Harald's slain to Óðinn only after the battle (R 44:1–2; U 122:6), but H has Heiðrekr speak before the battle, saying "Svá líz mér: goldit muni vera Óðni fyrir cinn svein, ef þar kómr fyrir Haraldr konungr ok son hans ok herr hans allr" (H 43:26–8) [It seems thus to me: Óðinn will be repayed for one boy, if instead come Haraldr and his son and all his army] and thus emphasizes his Óðinn-worship. H also has Höfundr give the extra counsel, "at setja aldri Týrfing at fótum sér" (H 37:28–9) ["that he should never lay Týrfing at his feet," emended from "at skyldi jannan kerski"], suggesting that Haukr intended Heiðrekr to receive Óðinn badly and fall on his sword, as Geirröðr does. (Admittedly, this threat does not manifest itself in H—presumably, Haukr thought better of it before he reached the relevant passage because it would unbalance other aspects of the saga and its plot.) As I have mentioned, in H the riddle-contest with Óðinn is particularly well-developed.

to reflect direct knowledge of pre-Christian practice. Mitchell instead read such developments as a means whereby Icelanders, politically and economically dominated by Norway, were able to demonstrate and maintain their cultural vitality and, moreover, lay claim to a greater knowledge and understanding of the common Scandinavian heritage than their oppressors (see 126–36). Paganism inevitably played a large role: medieval Scandinavians were well aware of their distinctively recent pagan heritage, and Icelanders grew increasingly confident in deploying it to claim Icelandic dominance over the Scandinavian past. However, in another respect, *Heiðrekr* is a very unusual *formaldarsaga*-hero: anti-heroes are rare in the genre. Instead, *formaldarsaga*-heroes are not ostentatiously pagan and often distrust pagan practice (Mitchell 61–2; see also *Sturlaug's saga* 395). Heroes begin their careers often enough in conflict with their families, in sagas and elsewhere (see Boberg, 1100–99), but *Heiðrekr's* acts of malice set him apart. This unusual development demands further explanation.

Tulinus has recently argued that *Heiðrekr* symbolically redeems himself for the murder of his brother at the end of the *Garðaríki* episode when he is almost hanged for allegedly killing the son of the king of *Garðaríki* (see 89–92), just as he ought to have been hanged for actually killing his brother. Certainly, it is clear that here *Heiðrekr* finishes testing *Höfundr's* advice (despite, in *H*, not having tested quite all of it) and settles down to rule peacefully and well. *Heiðrekr's* final reply in the riddle-contest even describes *Óðinn* in terms like those used by such noble heathens as *Hrólfkraki* (who characterizes *Óðinn* in chapter 46 of *Hrólf's saga kraka* as an “illr andi” (*Formaldarsögur norðurlanda* 11:81) [evil spirit]). This development in *Heiðrekr's* behavior, as Tulinus argues, is antithetical to the nature of the *Óðinn*-hero and therefore provides a convincing reason for *Óðinn's* turning on *Heiðrekr*. This reasoning has a particularly close and, I think, illuminating parallel among the *Íslendingasögur* in *Flóamanna saga* (especially chapters 20–1: 274–81), where *Þórr* responds to the conversion of his one-time worshipper *Þorgils Örrabeinsfóstri* with vicious attacks. As a faithful Christian, *Þorgils* is ultimately protected from *Þórr's* assaults. Likewise, *Gestr*, the son of the eponymous *Bárðr* of *Bárðar saga Snafellsáss*, converts at the end of the saga in chapter 21 (providing it, like the king-list to *U, with the essential anchor to the crux of medieval Scandinavian historiography) and is consequently attacked by his one-time *bjargvattr* [guardian-being], his inherently pagan father. Although *Gestr* is killed, he is effectively martyred: killed for his faith while still emphatically clad in his baptismal

robes and so washed from sin. Thus, from a Christian viewpoint, the outcome of Gestr's struggles with pagan gods at his conversion is even more positive than for Þorgils.

While supporting Tulinus's point to a degree, these parallels suggest to me an alternative reading: Heiðrekr is not allegorically saved by becoming a noble heathen since unlike his Christian counterparts in *Flóamanna saga* and *Bárðar saga*, he is not ultimately protected from the revenge of his old patron Óðinn. Despite mending his ways and in \mathfrak{U} even coming to echo Christian virtues, Heiðrekr is killed at night through Óðinn's agency, in \mathfrak{RU} at the hands of slaves whom he had himself captured. This is not the stuff of martyrdom: it suggests that even where a pagan rises above the darkness of ignorance, he cannot ultimately escape it. Moreover, Heiðrekr's descendants by sexual liaisons of which the Church disapproved plunge into war and fratricide through the incitement of the Odinic Gizurr. Closer comparison with *Grímnismál* is also revealing in this context. There, Óðinn arrives in Geirröðr's hall to test the quality of Geirröðr's hospitality; finding it lacking and that of Geirröðr's son Agnarr to be better, Óðinn causes the death of Geirröðr and rewards Agnarr. He operates, then, as an arbiter of appropriate behavior by upholding social ideals, in what we may imagine to be a manner rooted in pre-conversion culture. Once more, all recensions of *Heiðreks saga* suggest a diametrically opposite understanding: now Óðinn's visit to Heiðrekr's hall is to punish good kingship and to provoke strife. In short, this comparison adds the demonization of Óðinn to my reading of *Heiðreks saga*'s presentation of the heathen past. Although Óðinn's less pleasant characteristics are often taken as the more characteristic of a dark and gritty Norse mythology, one wonders if they might not owe more than has traditionally been supposed to Christian writers and redactors.

Like many folktales, Heiðrekr's story can at one level be read as one of wish-fulfilment, representing the life an aristocratic audience could pursue were they not constrained by moral, social, and political limitations. He is for most of his career an autocrat of vast power, free from overlordship or taxation, apparently free from reciprocal obligations of kingship, and free from the bonds of marriage. (For a modern Scandinavian tale with similar significances, see Tangherlini 212–5.) However, the redactors of *Heiðreks saga* seem not to have wished to promote this image carelessly. This may be because they, as was traditional for medieval historians, had a moralizing agenda, but it is common enough for folktales, while presenting wish-fulfilment, also

to mitigate the yearning prompted by such stories by highlighting the drawbacks of wish-fulfilment in order to reveal the value of the *status quo*. One example of this in *Heiðreks saga* is provided by the account of the acquisition of Tyrfingr by Svafhlami in *U (U 92:1–93:16; see also H 2:20–4:25): by trapping two *dvergar*, he wins a magical sword, thus destabilizing the *status quo*. This development is counterbalanced by the curse that the *dvergar* put on the sword that leads both to Svafhlami's death and, indirectly, all the mishaps in his line. (For another analogue see Tangherlini 238–41.) Heiðrekr had a career to envy, but it brought fratricide and anarchy to his descendants and to Heiðrekr himself an ignominious death and, presumably, damnation. These must have been among the meanings of Heiðrekr and his paganism apparent to the redactors and audiences of each of HRU. *Heiðreks saga* may have served to emphasize Icelanders' dominance in remembering the Scandinavian pagan heritage, but it invites us to view the lives of the pagans whom it depicts from a Christian perspective and, especially in *U, in a Christian historical framework. From this point of view, their lives may have been glorious but not, ultimately, enviable.

CONCLUSIONS

In the redactions of *Heiðreks saga*, then, we may glimpse, in R, a *formaldarsaga* entering its written form from a predecessor that was probably substantially oral. We may then view in U (and to some extent *U) a response to the text, which reacted to an increasingly literate context of saga-style, transmission, and meaning. The ways in which U differs from R bring it closer to the style associated with the canonized *Íslendingasögur*. This point and Haukr's evident discomfort with aspects of *U's style emphasize the literate character of the *Íslendingasögur* and suggests the extent to which, within Old Icelandic genres and modes, these were distanced from traditional narrative forms and arguably marked stylistically as *historiae*. **Heiðreks saga* evidently had the capacity to be understood as a historical record and conceivably was written down on that account. But at least by comparison with its first recomposition, *U, its stance was predominantly (oral-)literary. The *U-redactor juxtaposed the pagan setting of the saga to a Christian, historical frame of reference. He developed the portrayal of the saga's obviously pagan elements into a more striking and lurid depiction of paganism which more strongly suggested contrasts with his own

Christian culture. Although these processes may also have underlain **Heiðreks saga*, they came to the fore in *U. The *U-redactor also situated what was obviously traditional narrative material in an ostentatiously literary stylistic context by once more contrasting the culture portrayed with the culture portraying. He reversed the oral process of reducing the cast and leaving them without names and produced a text more reminiscent of the *Íslendingasögur* than *fornaldarsögur*. Moreover, he situated *Heiðreks saga* in an explicitly literate historical context, both Biblical and secular, demarcating the story both in terms of what happened before its events and what happened after. The alterations of the *U-redactor not only promoted verisimilitude, but also increased the saga's literary quality. Stylistic devices that add so much to the tension and suspense of the classical *Íslendingasögur* (such as artfully relating events out of sequence) were introduced or promoted, while blind or semi-blind motifs and narrative verses were removed. These changes suggest a desire for progressively subtler modes of narration less conducive to oral improvisation and for narration that purported to report a codified, fixed historical truth. Finally, I have suggested that we can see how Haukr Erlendsson, like many in his time, was caught between oral and literate paradigms and that we can even see something of how he attempted to mediate between them. Ultimately, in his version of the saga, diction was directed back from the scholar's toward the storyteller's. Of course, a medieval audience need not have drawn a sharp line between literary and historical approaches, style, and genres; but the *U-texts and Haukr's responses to them emphasize that there was a line to be drawn, and suggests where.

WORKS CITED

- Ahyan, Stépan. "A New Mythical Theme in the Saga of Hervör and King Heidrekr and the Armenian 'Epic of Sasoon.'" *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 28 (2000): 373–83.
- Alver, Brynjulf. "Norrøne gåter frå mellomalderen." *Syn og segn* 60 (1954): 29–36.
- Bárðar saga*. Eds. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson. *Harðar saga*. Íslenzk fornrit 13. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1991.
- Beckman, Bjarne. "Hur Gammel är Herverarsagans Svenska Kungakrönika?" *Scripta Islandica* 22 (1971): 25–37.
- Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*. Ed. Robertus Weber. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969.
- Boberg, Inger M. *Motif-Index of Early Icelandic Literature*. Bibliotheca Arnarnagæna 27. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1966.
- Brennu-Njáls saga*. Ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson. Íslenzk fornrit 12. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1954.
- Clunies Ross, Margaret. "Realism and the Fantastic in the Old Icelandic Sagas." *Scandinavian Studies* 74 (2002): 443–54.
- Ebel, Uwe. *Beiträge zur Nordischen Philologie*. Frankfurt/Main: Haag und Herchen, 1982.
- Eyrbyggja saga*. Eds. Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson. Íslenzk fornrit 4. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1935.
- Flóamanna saga*. Eds. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson. *Harðar saga*. Íslenzk fornrit 13. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1991.
- Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*. Ed. Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson. 3 vols. Reykjavík: Forni, 1943–44.
- Gesta Danorum*. Eds. J. Olrik and H. Ræder. *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*. 2 vols. Havnia: Levin & Munksgaard, 1931–57.
- Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*. Ed. Guðni Jónsson. Íslenzk fornrit 7. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1936.
- Grimismál*. Ed. Gustav Neckel. *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern 1: Text*. Rev. Hans Kuhn. Heidelberg: Winter, 1962. 56–68.
- Grimstad, Kaaren. "The Giant as Heroic Model: The Case of Egill and Starkaðr." *Scandinavian Studies* 48 (1976): 284–98.
- Hall, Alaric. "Gwyr y Gogledd? Some Icelandic Analogues to Branwen Ferch Lyr." *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 42 (2001): 27–50.
- Hallberg, Peter. "Some Aspects of the Fornaldarsögur as a Corpus." *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 97 (1982): 1–35.
- Hollander, L. M. "The Battle on the Vin-Heath and the Battle of the Huns." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 32 (1933): 33–43.
- Hume, Kathryn. "Beginnings and Endings in the Icelandic Family Sagas." *The Modern Language Review* 68 (1973): 593–606.
- Janson, Henrik. "Kring kungakrönikan i Herverarsaga." *Gudar på jorden: Festskrift till Lars Lönnroth*. Eds. Stina Hansson and Mats Malm. Stockholm: Östlings Bokförlag Symposium, 2000. 181–94.
- Jón Helgason, ed. *Heiðreks saga: Herverar saga ok Heiðreks konungs*. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur 48. København: Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 1924.

- Jón Helgason, ed. *Hauksbók: The Arna-Magnæan manuscripts 371, 410, 544, 410, and 675, 410*. Manuscripta Islandica 5. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960.
- Jónas Kristjánsson. *Um Fóstbræðrasögu*. Stofnun Ánna Magnússonar á Íslandi 1. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1972.
- Kirby, Ian J. *Biblical Quotation in Old Icelandic-Norwegian Religious Literature*. 2 vols. Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi 9–10. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1976–80.
- Liestøl, Knut. *Norske Trollviser og Norrøne sogor*. Kristiania: Norlis, 1915.
- Lindow, John. "Þorsteins þáttr skelks and the Verisimilitude of Supernatural Experience in Saga Literature." *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*. Eds. John Lindow, Lars Lönnroth, and Gerd Wolfgang Weber. Odense: Odense UP, 1986. 264–80.
- Malone, Kemp. "Widsith and the Hervararsaga." *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 40 (1925): 769–813.
- Meulengracht Sørensen, Preben. "Starkaðr, Loki, and Egill Skallagrímsson." *Sagas of the Icelanders: A Book of Essays*. Ed. J. Tucker. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 758. New York: Garland, 1989. 146–59.
- Milroy, James. "Starkaðr: An Essay in Interpretation." *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 19 (1974–77): 118–38.
- Mitchell, Stephen A. *Heroic Sagas and Ballads*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991.
- Mundt, Marina. "Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs Revisited." *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages: The Seventh International Saga Conference: Atti del 12° Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 4-10 settembre 1988*. Ed. Teresa Pàroli. Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro studi, 1990. 405–25.
- Olrik, Axel. "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative." *The Study of Folklore*. Ed. Alan Dundes. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965. 129–41.
- Ólsen, Björn Magnússon. *Den tredje og fjerde grammatiske afhandling i Snorres Edda til-ligemed de grammatiske afhandlingers prolog og to andre tillæg*. Samfund til utgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur 12. Copenhagen: Knudtzon, 1884.
- Orchard, Andy. *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1995.
- Reynolds, Susan. "Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm." *History* 68 (1983): 375–90.
- Righter-Gould, Ruth. "Fornaldar Sögur Norðurlanda: A Structural Analysis." *Scandinavian Studies* 52 (1980): 423–41.
- See, Klaus von. "Die Kulturideologische Stellung der *Völsunga saga* ok *Ragnars saga*." *Europa und der Norden im Mittelalter*. Ed. Klaus von See. Heidelberg: Winter, 1999. 397–412.
- Snorra Edda*. Ed. Anthony Faulkes. *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.
- Southern, R. W. "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5.20 (1970): 173–96.
- Stefán Karlsson. "Aldur Hauksbókar." *Fróðskaparrit* 13 (1964): 114–21.
- Sturlaugs saga starfsama*. Ed. Otto J. Zitzelsberger. *The Two Versions of "Sturlaugs Saga Starfsama": A Decipherment, Edition and Translation of a Fourteenth Century Icelandic Mythical-Heroic Saga*. Düsseldorf: Tritsch, 1969.
- Tangherlini, Timothy R. *Interpreting Legend: Danish Storytellers and their Repertoires*. New York: Garland, 1994.

- Tolkien, Christopher, ed. and trans. *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*. London: Nelson, 1960.
- Torfi H. Tulinius. *The Matter of the North: The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*. Trans. Randi C. Eldevik. The Viking Collection, Studies in Northern Civilization 13. Odense: Odense UP, 2002.
- Ynglinga saga*. Ed. Bjarni Adalbjarnarson. *Heimskringla*. 3 vols. Íslenzk fornrit 26–28. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritfélag, 1941–51.
- Þiðreks saga af Bern*. Ed. Guðni Jónsson. Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnauðgáfan, 1951.
- Örvar-Odds saga*. Ed. R.C. Boer. Leiden: Brill, 1888.