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Nítíða saga: A Normalised Icelandic Text and Translation

Sheryl McDonald

Nítíða saga is one of the many sagas known as native or indigenous *riddarasögur* ('knights' sagas'), and which have sometimes been called *lygisögur* ('lie-sagas') for their inclusion of non-realistic, that is, obviously fictional, plots and motifs.¹ Though interest in these types of sagas has grown in recent years,² indigenous *riddarasögur* have not always enjoyed acceptance among scholars,³ despite their immense popularity in Iceland from the late Middle Ages to the early twentieth century, and there are still too few translations of Icelandic romances and especially indigenous *riddarasögur*.⁴ Extensive manuscript survivals testify to the popularity of many of the indigenous *riddarasögur*, and *Nítíða saga* is no exception, extant in at least sixty-five manuscripts,⁵ almost all of which are post-medieval, and the youngest of which was composed in the early twentieth century. Driscoll dates this saga to the fourteenth century;⁶ it was clearly enjoyed for hundreds of years after its original composition. Further study of *Nítíða saga*, which I aim to encourage with this normalised text and translation, will contribute not only to Old Norse-Icelandic studies, but also to the growing field of medieval popular romance

¹ Geraldine Barnes, 'Romance in Iceland', in *Old Icelandic Literature and Society*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 266–86; Matthew Driscoll, 'Late Prose Fiction (*lygisögur*)', in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. by Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 190–204; Jürg Glauser, 'Lygisaga', in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and others (New York: Garland, 1993), p. 398; Marianne E. Kalinke, 'Norse Romances (*Riddarasögur*)', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol Clover and John Lindow (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 316–63.

² Consider, for example, the many papers on native *riddarasögur* delivered at the two most recent Saga Conferences: *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature: Sagas and the British Isles, Preprint Papers of the Thirteenth International Saga Conference, Durham and York, 6–12 August 2006*, ed. by John McKinnell, David Ashurst, and Donata Kick, 2 vols (Durham: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006) [<http://www.dur.ac.uk/medieval.www/sagaconf/sagapps.htm>]; *Á austrvega: Saga and East Scandinavia, Preprint Papers of the Fourteenth International Saga Conference, Uppsala, 9–15 August 2009*, ed. by Agnete Ney, Henrik Williams, and Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, Papers from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, 14, 2 vols (Gävle: Gävle University Press, 2009) [<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hig:diva-48371>].

³ For an overview of this see Driscoll, 'Late Prose Fiction', especially pp. 196–97.

⁴ Though *Seven Viking Romances*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (London: Penguin, 1985) and *Icelandic Histories and Romances*, trans. by Ralph O'Connor (Stroud: Tempus, 2002) have certainly contributed to meeting this need, many more texts are still inaccessible to non-specialists.

⁵ Marianne E. Kalinke and P. M. Mitchell, *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romances*, *Islandica*, 44 (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 85–86.

⁶ M. J. Driscoll, '*Nítíða saga*', in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and others (New York: Garland, 1993), p. 432.

studies in general.⁷ It is for this reason that I have chosen to present both a normalised text of the saga and a full translation—to facilitate its study by the non-specialist, or student, who knows little or no Icelandic. While it is true that *Nítíða saga* is available in Loth's diplomatic edition with an English-language paraphrase,⁸ presenting the text here with a full translation should be beneficial, especially for non-specialists. For one thing, while Loth's summary may be a fine accompaniment for the expert who can easily compare it to the accompanying un-normalised text, it is itself published in Gillian Fellows-Jensen's translation from Loth's Danish,⁹ and is only cursory, glossing over some parts of the story, such as direct speech.

Nítíða saga is a relatively short, yet exciting tale, which, among other themes, draws special attention to the question of gender and its relation to power. Nítíða is not queen of France, but *meykóngur* ('maiden-king'), an appellation not uncommon among young female rulers in the indigenous *riddarasögur*. Kalinke has examined the maiden-king phenomenon in Icelandic romance,¹⁰ and has argued that it can be interpreted as an echo of the historical situation in the Middle Ages arising when daughters were left as sole heirs after fathers and brothers had died.¹¹ While this interpretation is valid, maiden-kings, whether consciously based on specific historical cases or not, can also be seen as a sort of late-medieval equivalent to the strong saga women of the earlier medieval Icelandic prose fiction that some might call classical. Maiden-kings, Nítíða included, are powerful, independent, wilful women, whose power lies, to some extent, in their virginity; thus the typical maiden-king resists marriage and is usually abusive to her suitors. On this point scholarship has understood Nítíða to be an exception.¹² It is true that Nítíða is more or less civil to each of her wooers, not resorting to violence herself, but she nevertheless sanctions the slaughter of Serkland's armies, which accompany the sons of King Soldán on their mission to win Nítíða's hand; no character from Serkland, not even Soldán himself, makes it to the end of the saga alive. Nítíða also firmly turns down her other suitors and tricks them, causing great humiliation to Ingi of Constantinople, for example. Nítíða is certainly no saint. But it is true that unlike in other maiden-king romances (or 'bridal-quest romances', to use Kalinke's terminology), such as *Klári saga*,¹³ Nítíða is not herself humiliated in the end, and agrees to marriage because she has found in Liforinus a man as

⁷ On which see Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); *Pulp Fictions of the Middle Ages: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, ed. by Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert (Harlow: Longman, 2000).

⁸ 'Nítíða saga', in *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances*, ed. by Agnete Loth, Editiones Arnarnæðar, 20–24, 5 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962–65), v (1965), pp. 1–37.

⁹ Loth, p. xii.

¹⁰ Marianne E. Kalinke, *Bridal-Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland*, *Islandica*, 46 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Marianne E. Kalinke, 'The Misogamous Maiden Kings of Icelandic Romance', *Scripta Islandica*, 37 (1986), 47–71.

¹¹ Kalinke, 'The Misogamous Maiden Kings', p. 60.

¹² For example, Driscoll, 'Nítíða saga', p. 432.

¹³ *Klári saga*, ed. by Gustaf Cederschiöld, *Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek*, 12 (Halle a.S.: Max Niemeyer, 1907). It has been suggested that *Nítíða saga* is a direct response to *Klári saga* (which has traditionally been classified as a translated romance, but see Sean F. D. Hughes, 'Klári saga as an Indigenous Romance', in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honor of Marianne Kalinke*, ed. by Kirsten Wolf and Johanna Denzin, *Islandica*, 54 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 135–63) and that the former portrays the *meykóngur* in an alternative, more positive light than the former. See for example Paul Bibire, 'From *riddarasaga* to *lygisaga*: The Norse Response to Romance', in *Les Sagas des Chevaliers (Riddarasögur): Actes de la Vième Conférence Internationale sur les Sagas (Toulon, Juillet 1982)*, ed. by Régis Boyer, *Civilisations*, 10 (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1985), pp. 55–74 (p. 67).

clever and resourceful as herself, rather than because she is coerced into submission.¹⁴

Nítíða saga also shows impressive geographical awareness. It is set for the most part in France, but involves expeditions to and from Apulia, Constantinople, India, an indeterminate Serkland, and an area ‘out by the North Pole’. *Nítíða* also gains possession of supernatural stones that allow her to see all regions of the world; towards the saga’s end, the various countries seen in each region are listed at length.¹⁵ But *Nítíða saga* does not only show familiarity with a wide variety of countries and regions — it also situates Iceland in relation to France (the location of the grand festivities that bring the story to a close) and to the rest of the world, in the form of an authorial-scribal aside right after a detailed description of the triple wedding feast near the saga’s end: ‘It is also not easily said with an unlearned tongue in the outer regions of the world, how it might be entertaining for people, what joy may be in the middle of the world when such courtiers come together’. Though obviously a modesty topos, considering that these protestations have been invalidated by the vibrant descriptions preceding them (and not to mention by the composition of the whole saga),¹⁶ this statement still may have reinforced for its readers the notion that Iceland is marginal and Europe is central, and that the Icelandic language was ‘unlearned’ or unsuitable for the task at hand and Latin (or even other European vernaculars?) would be better. However, Barnes notes that *Nítíða saga* locates France at the centre of the world despite the usual medieval understanding that Jerusalem holds that honour, and argues that this reflects not only the prominent place held by *Nítíða* and her kingdom, but also that France’s alliance with India at the end of the saga brings that peripheral kingdom into a more prominent, central, political role. In Barnes’s words, in the saga’s ‘fantasy of geopolitical desire, the power is with the periphery, East and North’.¹⁷ And in bringing peripheral India into the centre through partnership with *Nítíða*, the saga also suggests that Iceland, ‘unlearned’ and ‘in the outer regions’, might also be able to seem more central, through its ever-expanding body of literature that converses, if not allies itself, with the mainstream popular literature — romance — of Scandinavia and Europe in the late Middle Ages.

Nítíða saga has only been published once before, and it is accordingly this version of the saga that has been the basis for the present translation. Loth’s edition is largely diplomatic and, except for a few readings, the text is taken from two manuscripts, both now located at the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar (AM) in Reykjavík. AM 529, 4to (sixteenth-century, vellum) provides the majority of the text but ends defective; AM 537, 4to (seventeenth-century, paper) provides the remainder of the text, from where 529 breaks off, until the end. These are the two oldest manuscripts in which the saga survives and which also preserve the saga on more than 1–2 leaves (the oldest manuscript is the late-fifteenth-century vellum, Stockholm, Royal Library, MS Perg. 8:o nr 10, VII, but preserves only one leaf of *Nítíða saga*). The present translation and normalised Icelandic text are thus based on a composite of two manuscript versions, which together only approximate what the saga may have looked like in its original written form; just as Loth edited from the oldest ‘best texts’, so have I translated using the

¹⁴ Driscoll, ‘*Nitida saga*’, p. 432.

¹⁵ Barnes, ‘Romance in Iceland’, p. 272.

¹⁶ Geraldine Barnes, ‘Margin vs. Centre: Geopolitics in *Nitida saga* (A Cosmographical Comedy?)’, in *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature: Sagas and the British Isles, Preprint Papers of the Thirteenth International Saga Conference, Durham and York, 6–12 August 2006*, ed. by John McKinnell, David Ashurst, and Donata Kick, 2 vols (Durham: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), i, pp. 104–12 (p. 111) [<http://www.dur.ac.uk/medieval.www/sagaconf/barnes.htm>].

¹⁷ Barnes, ‘Margin vs. Centre’, p. 110.

Nítíða saga

same approach. Loth's edition has very little critical apparatus, containing notes indicating textual variants in just five other manuscripts;¹⁸ nor does the text presented here pretend to be a critical edition: I aim only to provide an easily readable, normalised version of *Nítíða saga*, along with an accessible, contemporary English translation. The translation is not meant to be literal, and some liberties have been taken to provide a modern rendering, again, primarily with those in mind who know little or no Icelandic. For example, while Icelandic *einn* 'one' often functions as an indefinite pronoun which might most accurately be rendered 'a certain', I have translated it simply as the indefinite article throughout. In normalising the Icelandic, I have used Modern, rather than Old, Icelandic, for that is the form of the language to which the two manuscripts seem closer. Thus, for example, Loth's *Nitida* is modernised to *Nítíða*. I have kept the characters' names consistent with those in AM 529, 4to (the earlier manuscript) to avoid confusion towards the end of the saga: when Loth's edition switches manuscripts, the spellings of the names of some characters shift slightly. Again, I do this primarily because my motivation for this translation is to present a story, not a reproduction of every scribal idiosyncrasy. All that said, I have kept the five chapter divisions from Loth's edition, for convenience's sake, and in the process of normalisation I have also attempted to introduce regular punctuation to the text.¹⁹

¹⁸ These are AM 537, 4to; AM 567, 4to, XVIII; AM 568, 4to, 6–7; Stockholm, Royal Library, MS Papp. 4:o nr 31; and Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, MS Rask 32. See also Loth's brief preface (p. vii).

¹⁹ For their help and support in many ways before, during, and after the preparation of this article, I must thank my anonymous reviewers, Catherine Batt, Sarah Cason, Alaric Hall, John Tucker, and Stephen Werronen.

Nítíða saga

I

Heyrt ungir menn eitt ævintýr og fagra frásaga frá hinum frægasta meykóngi er verið hefur í norður hálfu veraldarinnar er hét Nítíða hin fræga er stýrði sínu ríki með heiður og sóma eftir sinn föður Ríkon keisara andaðan. Þessi meykóngur sat í öndvegi heimsins í Frakklandi hinu góða og hélt Parísborg. Hún var bæði vitur og væn, ljós og rjóð í andliti þvílíkast sem hin rauða rósa væri samtprað við snjóhvíta lileam, augun svo skær sem karbunkulus, hörunðið svo hvítt sem fíls bein, hár þvílíkt sem gull, og féll niður á jörð um hana. Hún átti eitt höfuðgull með fjórum stöplum, en upp af stöplunum var einn ari markaður, en upp af aranum stóð einn haukur ger af rauða gulli, breiðandi sína vængi fram yfir hennar skæra ásjónu jungfrúinnar að ei brenndi hana sól. Hún var svo búin að viti sem hinn fróðasti klerkur, og hinn sterkasta borgarvegg²⁰ mátti hún gera með sínu viti yfir annara manna vit og byrgja svo úti annara ráð, og þar kunni hún tíu ráð er aðrir kunnu eitt. Hún hafði svo fagra raust að hún svæfði fugla og fiska, dýr og öll jarðlig kvikindi, svo að unað þótti á að heyra. Hennar ríki stóð með friði og farsæld.

Ypolitus hét einn smiður í Frakklandi með meykónginum. Hann kunni allt að smíða af gulli og silfri, gleri og gimsteinum, það sem gerast mátti af manna höndum.

Nú er að segja af meykónginum, hún býr nú ferð sína heiman út á Pul. Þar stýrði ríki síu drottning er Egidía hét; hún hafði fóstprað meykóng í barn-æsku. Hún átti son er Hléskjöldur hét. Siglir drottning nú með sínu dýru fólki fagurt byrleiði, þar til er hún kemur út á Pul. Gengur frú Egidía móti meykóng, og hennar son, og öll þeirra slekt og veraldar mekt og heiður, gerandi fagra veislu í sinni höll, um allan næstan hálfan mánuð.

Einn dag veislunnar gengur meykóngur á dagþingan við sína fóstur-móður svo talandi: 'Mér er sagt að fyrir eyju þeirri er Visio heitir ráði jarl sá er Virgilius heitir; hann er vitur og fjölkunnigur. Þessi ey liggur út undan Svíþjóð hinni köldu, út undir heimsskautið, þeirra landa er menn hafa spurn af. Í þessari eyju er vatn eitt stórt, en í vatninu er hólmi sá er Skóga-blómi heitir og svo er mér sagt að hvergi í heiminum megi finnast náttúrusteinar, epli, og læknis-grös fleiri en þar. Nú vil ég halda þangað einn skipa og son þinn Hléskjöldur með mér'.

Drottning Egidía talaði tormerki á ferðinni, og þótti háskaleg. Meykóngur varð þó að ráða, býst Hléskjöldur nú í ferð þeirra og sigla með heiður út af Pul fagurt byrleiði. Hef ég ei heyrt sagt frá þeirra ferð né farlengd fyrr en þau taka eyna Visio.

Einn dag, leggjandi skipið í einn leynivog, ganga síðan upp um eyna þar til er þau finna vatnið. Þau sjá einn bát fljóttandi, taka hann og róa út í hólminn. Þar voru margar eikur með fagri fruckt og ágætum eplum. Sem þau fram koma í miðjan hólman sjá þau eitt steinker með fjórum hornum. Kerið var fullt af vatni; sinn steinn var í hverju horni kersins. Meykóngur leit í steinana; hún sá þá um allar hálfar veraldarinnar, þar með kónga og kónga sonu og hvað hver hafðist að, og allar þjóðir hvers lands og margar ýmislegar skepnur og óþjóðir. Drottning

²⁰ Emended from MS *hinn sterkasti borgarveggur* (Loth, p. 4).

Nítíða's Saga

I

Young people have heard an adventure and wonderful tale about the most famous maiden-king there has ever been in the northern region of the world. She was called Nítíða the Famous, and ruled her kingdom honourably and gloriously, after her father, the Emperor Ríkon, died. This maiden-king sat on the throne of the world in the good kingdom of France, and ruled in Paris. She was both wise and fair, her face bright and rosy just as if the red rose had been mingled with a snow-white lily; her eyes were as bright as a carbuncle, and her skin as white as ivory; her hair was like gold and hung down to the ground around her. She had a gold head-dress with four pillars, and up on top of the pillars, an eagle was depicted. On top of the eagle stood a hawk made of red gold, spreading its wings forward over the pure face of the young woman so that the sun did not burn her. She was as endowed with knowledge as the wisest scholar, and, surpassing other people's intelligence, she could make the strongest castle-wall with her own intellect, and thus outmaneuver others' plans; and she knew ten answers when others knew one. She had such a beautiful voice that it made birds, fish, wild animals, and all worldly creatures sleep, so delightful was it to hear. Her kingdom enjoyed peace and prosperity.

There was a smith named Ypolitus in France with the maiden-king. He knew how to craft all things—from gold and silver, glass and gemstones—that could be made by human hands.

Now it is to be said of the maiden-king that she prepared for a journey from her home to Apulia. A queen named Egidía ruled the realm there; she had fostered the maiden-king as a child. Egidía had a son named Hléskjöldur. Queen Nítíða sailed with her nobles on a fine, favourable wind, until she arrived in Apulia. Lady Egidía and her son and all their kin went with honour and ceremony to meet the maiden-king, and held an excellent feast in the hall for the whole of the next fortnight.

One day during the feast, the maiden-king went to a meeting with her foster-mother and said, 'I have heard that beyond the island which is called Visio rules the earl who is called Virgilius; he is wise and skilled in magic. This island lies out beyond cold Sweden, out by the North Pole, the edge of those lands of which people have had reports. On the island is a large lake, and in the lake is the islet which is called The Flower of the Woods, and I have heard that nowhere in the world might one find more supernatural stones, apples, and healing herbs than there. Now I wish to travel there in a ship and to take your son Hléskjöldur with me'.

Queen Egidía raised difficulties about the journey, and thought it dangerous, but the maiden-king nevertheless decided to go, and arranged with Hléskjöldur for their journey. They sailed with ceremony out from Apulia on a beautiful, favourable wind. I have not heard tell of their journey, nor of their journey's length, before they reached the island of Visio.

One day, mooring the ship in a hidden cove, they walked up across the island until they found the lake. They saw a boat floating there, took it, and rowed out to the islet, where there were many oaks with beautiful fruit and fine apples. When they came to the middle of the islet they saw a stone vessel with four corners. The vessel was full of water, and there was a stone in each corner of the vessel. The maiden-king looked into the stones; then she saw all the regions of the world, including kings and princes and what each did, and all peoples, of every land, and many diverse creatures and monsters. The queen grew pleased at this sight,

gladdist nú við þessa sýn, takandi kerid og alla þessa steina, epli, og læknis-grös, því að hún undirstóð af sinni visku hverja náttúru hver bar. Skundar nú sínum veg aftur til skips síns, siglandi burt af Visio hvað þau máttu.

Nú er að segja að jarlinn verður vís hverju hann er ræntur. Má þar sjá mart skip siglandi og róandi eftir þeim. Sjá nú hvorir aðra. Meykóngur tók nú einn náttúrustein og brá yfir skipið og höfuð þeim öllum er innan borðs voru. Sá jarl þau aldri síðan, en þau meykóngur og Hléskjöldur halda fram ferðinni, léttandi ei fyrr en þau koma heim á Pul.

Gengur frá Egidía móti þeim með miklum prís og fagnaði. Situr nú meykóngur þar um hríð. Síðan lætur hún búa sína ferð og skipastól heim til Frakklands, beiðandi frá Egidía að Hléskjöldur hennar son fylgdi henni að styrkja hennar ríki fyrir áhlaupum hermanna. Hennar fóstur-móður veitir henni þetta sémilega, sem allt annat það er hún beiði, út leiðandi hana með fögnum fégjöfum og ágætum dýrgripum í gulli og gimsteinum og dýrum vefjum. Skilst þessi hoflýður með miklum kærleik. Siglir meykóngur í sitt ríki með miklum heiður og veraldlegri mekt. Verður allur lands-lýður henni feginn stýrandi sínu ríki með friði og náðum.

II

Hugon er kóngur nefndur; hann réð fyrir Miklagarði. Hann átti drottning og tvö börn. Son hans hét Ingi; hann var allra manna sémilegastur og best að íþróttum búinn. Hann lá í hernaði hvert sumar og aflaði sér svo fjár og frægðar; drap ránsmenn og víkinga, en lét friðmenn fara í náðum. Listalín hét dóttir hans; hún var frið sýnum og vinsæl, og hlaðin kvenlegum listum.

Soldán hét kóngur; hann réð fyrir Serklandi. Hann átti þrjá sonu: hét einn Logi, annar Vélogi, þriðjungur Heiðarlogi—hann var þeirra elstur. Hann hafði svart hár og skegg. Hann var hökulangur og vangasvangur, skakktentur og skjöpulmyntur, og út-skeifur. Annað auga hans horfði á bast en annað á kvist. Hann var hermaður allmikill, og fullur upp af göldrum og gerningum og rammur að afli, og fékk sigur í hverri orrostu. Bræður hans, Logi og Vélogi, voru vænir og gildir menn og herjuðu öllum sumrum.

Blebarnius er kóngur nefndur; hann réð fyrir Indíalandi hinu mikla. Hann átti son er Liforinus hét; hann var væn að álitu, ljós og rjóður í andliti snareygður sem valur, hrokkinnhærður og fagurt hárið, herðabreiður en keikur á bringuna, kurteis, sterkur og stórmannlegur. Hann kundi vel sund og sæfarar, skot og skylmingar, tafl og rúnar og bækur að lesa, og allar íþróttir er karlmann mátti prýða. Hann átti dóttur er Sýjalín hét; hún var svo væn og listug að hún mundi forprís þótt hafa allra kvenna í veröldinni, ef ei hafði þvílíkur gimsteinn hjá verið sem Nítíða hin fræga.

Liforinus lá í hernaði bæði vetur og sumar og aflaði sér fjár og frægðar, og þótti hinn mesti garpur og kappi, hvar sem hann fram kom, og hafði sigur í hverri orrustu. Hann var svo mikill til kvenna að engi hafði náðir fyrir honum, en enga kóngs dóttur hafði hann mánaði lengur.

and took the vessel and all the stones, apples, and healing herbs, because she understood from her wisdom how magical each was. Then they hurriedly made their way back to their ship, and sailed away from Visio as best they could.

Now it is to be said that the earl Virgilius became aware that he had been robbed. It was possible to see many ships sailing and rowing after them, and then each saw the other. Then the maiden-king took a supernatural stone and quickly waved it over the ship and the heads of all who were on board. The earl never saw them again, and the maiden-king and Hléskjöldur held fast on their course, not stopping before they came home to Apulia.

Lady Egidía went to meet them joyfully and with great ceremony, and the maiden-king remained there for a while. Afterwards she had people prepare for her journey and ready her fleets of ships to go home to France, and asked lady Egidía that Hléskjöldur her son accompany her to strengthen her realm against attacks by raiders. Her foster-mother granted her this graciously, as with everything else that she asked for, and led her out with fine gifts of money, excellent jewels of gold and gemstones, and precious cloth. The retinues parted with great friendship. The maiden-king sailed to her kingdom with great honour and worldly strength. All the people of the land rejoiced at her ruling the kingdom so peacefully and gracefully.

II

There was a king named Hugon who ruled over Constantinople. He had a queen and two children. His son was called Ingi, and was the most honourable of all men and the most accomplished in athletic arts. He went plundering each summer and in doing so won himself wealth and fame; he killed robbers and vikings, but let peaceful people travel in peace. King Hugon's daughter was named Listalín; she was beautiful and popular, and skilled in feminine arts.

There was a king called Soldán who ruled over Serkland. He had three sons: one was called Logi, the second Vélogi, and the third Heiðarlogi — he was the oldest of them and his hair and beard were black. He had a long chin and thin cheeks, he was crooked-toothed, and had a twitchy, crooked mouth. One of his eyes looked inwards and the other outwards. He was a very great warrior, and knew much sorcery and witchcraft. He was physically strong and won every battle. His brothers Logi and Vélogi were promising and respected men and plundered all summer.

There was a king named Blebarnius who ruled over the great kingdom of India. He had a son called Liforinus, who was handsome in appearance, his face bright and rosy; he was sharp-eyed as a hawk, had beautiful curly hair, was broad across the shoulders with a good straight back, and was courteous, strong, and magnificent. He was a good swimmer and could sail well, and he was also good at shooting, fencing, board games and runes, reading books, and all physical activities which a man should pursue. King Blebarnius also had a daughter called Sýjalín who was so beautiful and skilled that she would have been considered the most prized of all the women in the world, if there had not been such a jewel to compare her with as Nítíða the Famous.

Liforinus engaged in plundering both winter and summer and earned himself wealth and fame, and was thought the greatest hero and champion wherever he went, and was victorious in every battle he fought. He was so keen on women that none had any peace from him, and he did not stay with any princess longer than a month.

Nítíða saga

Nú er að segja af Inga kóngi að hann býr sinn skrautlega skipastól, siglandi með fagrann býr út af Miklagarði, léttandi ei fyrir sinni ferð en hann hlóð sínum seglum framan fyrir Parísborg. Nú sem meykóngur sá þeirra sigling og gullskotin segl, þá sendir hún Hléskjöld ofan til skipa að bjóða þessum kóngi til ágættrar veislu, ef hann fer með friði. Hléskjöldur fullgerir frúinnar erindi, gengur til skipana, heilsandi Inga kóngi, bjóðandi honum heim til hallar með öllum sínum skara. Mátti þar sjá margan stoltan riddara í hvorum tveggja flokkinum.

Meykóngur fagnar vel Inga kóngi, heiðrandi hann í orðum. Drottning spurði Inga kóng hvert erindi hans væri útan allt af Miklagarði og í svo fjarlæg lönd. Hann segir 'það er mitt erindi í þetta land að biðja yðar mér til eigin-konu, gefandi þar í móti gull og gersimar, land og þegna'.

Drottning segir 'það viti þér, Ingi kóngur, að þér hafið eingan ríkdóm til móts við mig. Hafa og lítið lönd yðar að þýða við Frakkland hið góða og tutugu kónga ríki er þar til liggja. Nenni ég og ekki að fella mig fyrir neinum kóngi nú ríkjanda, en fullboðið er mér fyrir manna sakir, en þó þurfi þér ekki þessa mála að leita oftar'.

Kóngur verður nú reiður við orð hennar, og hugsar það að þau skulu ei skiljast við svo búið. Heldur hann burt af Frakklandi þegar byr gaf og herjar víða um sumarið.

Það var eitt kveld að þeir lágu undir ey einni, þeir sjá mann einn ganga ofan af eyjunni, heldur mikinn og aldraðan. Kóngur spurði þenna mann að nafni. Hann kveðst Refsteinn heita. Kóngur spyr ef hann væri svo sem hann hét til. Hann segir 'það ætla ég að mig skorti við engan mann kukl og galdur og fjölkyngi hvað sem gera skal'.

Kóngur mælti 'ég vil gera þig fullsælan að fé og börn þín ef þú kemur mér í hendur Nítíða bardaga-laust'.

Refsteinn segir 'fyrir þessu er mér ekki'.

Kóngur mælti 'gakk út á skip mín með mér og fullger það er þú hefir heitið, er hér gullhringur stór er ég vil gefa þér og tutugu álnir rautt skarlat er þú skalt færa konu þinni'.

Refsteinn þakkar nú kóngi mikillega, býr sig og ganga á skip. Sigla nú in beinasta býr til Frakklands því að Refsteinn gaf þeim nógan býr og hagstæðan, svo að stóð á hverju reipi. Þeir koma að landi og leggja í einn leynivog.

Refsteinn gengur nú á land og kóngur með honum. Þá steypir Refsteinn yfir kóng kuffi svörtum. Þeir ganga nú, þar til er þeir koma til skemmu drottningar. Hún var þá á leiki með sínum leikmeyjum. Kóngur undirstendur að engi maður sér hann, og gengur að meykóngi og steypir yfir hana kuffinum, gengur með hana til herskipa. Vinda síðan segl og sigla í burt og leggja sín segl ei fyrir en í Miklagarði.

Listalín gengur í móti bróður sínum og meykónginum kærlega og öll ríkisins ráð. Er drottning nú leidd í höllina með miklum heiðri og prís. Verður nú skjótt búist við ágætri veislu og brúðlaupi og þangað boðið öllu ríkissins ráði, er dýrast var í landinu. Nú er meykóngur settur í háseti hjá Listalín og allur kvenna-skari, sem frúna skyldi til sængur leiða, og þær voru út undir beran himin komnar. Þá nemur meykóngur staðar og mælti 'litum í loftið; gætum að stjörnuangi; má þar af marka mikla visku um örlög manna'.

Now it is to be said about King Ingi that he prepared his splendid fleets, and sailed with a fair wind out from Constantinople, not stopping his journey before he furled his sails at the city of Paris. When the maiden-king saw Ingi's fleets, with their sails woven with gold, she sent Hléskjöldur down to the ships to ask this king to a handsome feast, if he came in peace. Hléskjöldur carried out this task, went to the ships, greeted King Ingi, and invited him home to the hall with all his troops. One could see there many proud knights among each of the two retinues.

The maiden-king welcomed King Ingi warmly, praising him with her words. The queen asked King Ingi what his errand might be all the way out from Constantinople and in such a distant land. He said, 'I have come to this land to ask you to be my wife; in return, I would give you gold and treasures, land and servants'.

The queen said, 'You know, King Ingi, that you have no kingdom to compare with mine. Your lands have little to add to the good kingdom of France and the twenty kings' realms it contains. In fact, I am not inclined to give myself up to any king now ruling, and I am well off enough regarding men, and you need not pursue this matter again'.

The king then became angry at her words, and thought that they must not part in this way. He headed out from France as soon as the wind permitted and plundered far and wide throughout the summer.

One evening, when Ingi's ships were lying near an island, he and his men saw a person walking down from the island who looked rather large and old. The king asked this person his name. He said he was called Fox-Stone. The king asked if he lived up to his name. Fox-Stone said, 'I don't suppose that I lack sorcery and spell-craft and wizardry compared with anyone else, whatever needs to be done'.

The king said, 'I will make you and your children very wealthy if you get me Nítíða's hand in marriage, without battle'.

Fox-Stone said, 'That's no problem for me'.

The king said, 'Come out to my ships with me and fulfil that which you have promised; here is a large gold ring which I want to give to you, and twenty ells of red scarlet which you must bring to your wife'.

Fox-Stone then thanked the king warmly and prepared himself, and they went onto the ships. Then they sailed the straightest course to France because Fox-Stone gave them enough of a favourable wind so that it filled all the sails. They came to land and moored in a hidden cove. Then Fox-Stone went onto land, along with the king. Fox-Stone cast a black cloak over the king, and they walked until they came to the queen's chamber. She was then at leisure with her maidens. The king realised that nobody could see him, and went to the maiden-king, cast the cloak over her, and took her to the warships. Then they hoisted the sails and sailed away, and did not furl their sails before reaching Constantinople.

Listalín, along with all of the kingdom's council, went lovingly to meet her brother and the maiden-king, and the queen was led into the hall with great honour and ceremony. A handsome feast and a wedding were now prepared, and all those of the kingdom's counsellors who were noblest in the land were invited to it. The maiden-king was placed in the high-seat, next to Listalín and all the women who had to lead the wife to the marriage-bed; and they had come out under the open sky. Then the maiden-king paused and said, 'Let us gaze at the heavens and keep watch over the courses of the stars; there we can gain great insights into people's fates'.

Ok eftir svo talað, bregður hún einum steini yfir höfuð sér, þann hafði hún haft úr eygni Visio. Í þessu líður drottning upp úr höndum þeirra. Hverfur hún burt úr höndum þeirra og augsýn. Hlaupa menn nú í höllina og segja kóngi þessi tíðindi. Kóngur og öll hirðin verður mjög hrygg við þenna atburð.

En næsta dag eftir kemur meykóngur heim í Frans gangandi hlægjandi í fagra höll. Verður nú allur Frakklands her henni feginn. Fer þetta nú á hvert land hversu drottning hafði Inga kóng út leikið. Unir Ingi kóngur allilla við og hyggst aftur skulu rétta á frúnni sína smán og svívirðing.

Líður nú af veturinn og þegar er vorar, leggur hann í hernað allt þetta sumar, og eitt-hvert sinn síð um kveld leggur hann undir eitt nes, takandi stórt strandhögg. Þeir sjá mann ganga ofan af nesinu. Kóngur spyr þenna mann að nafni. Hann segist Slægrefur heita. Kóngur mælti 'ég vildi að þú værir sem þú heitir til, eða kanntu nokkuð kukl?'

Slægrefur segir 'ei kann ég minni fjölkyngi en Refsteinn og ei mundi meykóngur hafa hlaupið burt úr höndum þér ef ég hefði svo nær verið sem hann var'.

Kóngur segir 'ef þú kemur drottningu svo í mitt vald sem hann, þá skal ég gefa þér þrjá kastala og gera þig jarl'.

Slægrefur segir 'ég er alþúinn að fylgja þér'. Þeir ganga á skip og sigla blásanda býr hinn beinasta til Frakklands.

III

Nú er að segja af meykóngi að daglega litur hún í sína náttúrusteina að sjá um veröldina ef víkingar kæmi og vildi stríða á hennar ríki. Sér nú hvar Ingi kóngur siglir og er kominn að Frakklandi síðla eins dags. Drottning hugsar sitt ráð og kallar til sín eina arma þýgju er þjónaði í garðinum. Hún átti bónda og þrjú börn. Þau geymdu svina í garðinum. Drottning tekur nú ambáttina, hún hét Íversu. Færir hana nú úr hverju klæði takandi einn stein og lætur þýgjuna sjá sig í laugandi áður steininn í vatni einhverju, er þar var. Hún þvo og allan hennar bók, og þar með gefur hún henni mörg náttúruæpli að éta, þau er hún hafði sótt í eyna. Eftir svo gert færir hún hana í skínanda drottningarbúnað setjandi hana upp á einn gullstól. Ambáttin bar þá svo skæra ásjónu sem meykóngur að hvoruga mátti kenna frá annari. Eplin báru þau náttúrulef að hún mátti ekki mæla á næsta mánuði. Drottning leit þá í annan náttúrustein og mátti þá engi sjá hana hvort er hún sat eða stóð.

Nú er að segja að þeir Ingi kóngur eru land-fastir vörðnir. Gengur hann á land upp, og Slægrefur með honum, hinn beinasta veg til skemmu drottningar og sem þeir inn ganga sjá þeir hvar meykóngur situr með skínandi ásjónu á gullstóli. Kóngur hleypur að og steypir yfir hana svartri sveipu, og fer þegar út af skemmumni og ofan til skipa. Kóngur lætur þegar búa sæng í lyftingunni, án allri dvöl, því að þeir vildu nú flýta brúðlaupinu svo að meykóngur mátti eingin undanbrögð hafa. Þau liggja nú bæði saman alla þessa nótt með fögrum faðmlögum. Ingi kóngur unir nú vel sínu ráði; þykist nú hefnt hafa sinnar sneypu. Vinda nú seglin og létta ei sinni ferð fyrr en þeir koma til Miklagarðs.

And after saying this, she quickly waved a stone over her head, the one she had gotten from the island of Visio. At this, the queen glided up out of their grasp; she vanished out of both their grasp and their sight. People then ran into the hall and told the king this news. The king and all the court became very sad after this incident.

The next day, the maiden-king came home to France, walking laughing into her beautiful hall. All of France's people became joyful for her. The news then travelled to every land, how the queen had outwitted King Ingi. King Ingi did not like this at all and planned again how to set right the disgrace and shame he got from the lady.

Now winter passed, and when it was spring he headed out plundering, and continued all summer. On one occasion, when it was late in the evening, he lay near a headland, raiding the coast extensively. He and his men saw a person walking down from the headland. The king asked this person his name. He said he was called Sly-Fox. The king said, 'I would like it if you lived up to your name — do you know how to do any sorcery?'

Sly-Fox said, 'I don't know any less magic than Fox-Stone, and the maiden-king wouldn't have escaped your hands if I had been as near as he was'.

The king said, 'If you get the queen into my power, as he did, then I will give you three castles and make you an earl'.

Sly-Fox said, 'I am ready to follow you'. They went onto the ship and sailed with a strong wind the straightest way to France.

III

Now it is to be said of the maiden-king that she looked into her supernatural stones every day to see throughout the world if vikings were coming to attack her kingdom. She saw where King Ingi sailed, and that, late one day, he came to France. The queen thought the matter over and summoned a pitiful bondwoman who had a husband and three children. This family kept swine in the yard. The queen then took the slave woman, who was called Íversa, and undressed her. She took a stone, and had the bondwoman see herself while bathing, with the stone already in some of the water which was there. She also washed her whole body, and gave her many supernatural apples to eat—those which she had gotten from the island. After this was done, she brought in shining, queenly clothes for her and placed her up on a golden seat. By this point, the slave-woman had just as a pure a face as the maiden-king, so that no one could tell one from the other. The apples held the supernatural property that she who ate them could not speak for the next month. The queen Nítíða then looked into another supernatural stone so that, whether she sat or stood, nobody could see her.

Now it is to be said that King Ingi and his men had landed. He and Sly-Fox went up onto land, straight to the queen's chamber, and as they walked in they saw where the maiden-king sat with a shining face on a golden seat. The king ran in and cast a black hood over her, then immediately went out of the chamber and down to the ship. The king at once ordered his men to prepare a bed in the aftcastle, without any delay, because they now wanted to hurry the wedding so that the maiden-king would not be able to evade him. Then they both lay together the whole night, with tender embraces. King Ingi was then well satisfied with his plan, thinking to have avenged his disgrace. The sails were then unfurled and they did not stop their journey before they came to Constantinople.

Frú Listalín og allur lýður gengur í móti kóngi og drottningu með allri mekt heiður og veraldar prís. Er nú mikill fagnaður í Miklagarði í meykónsins tilkomu. En að næsta mánuði liðnum var það einn dag að frú Listalín talar við kóng bróður sinn. ‘Er þér engi grunur á hverja konu þú hefur heim flutt í landið. Sýnist mér tiltæki hennar ei líft og meykónsins og fleiri greinir aðrar er mér sagt á að vér eigim vitbrögðum að sjá.²¹ Vil ég nú forvitnast um í dag að gera nokkra tilraun, en þú stalt í nokkru leyni og heyr á’. Kóngur gerir nú svo.

Þenna sama dag kveður frú Listalín burt af skemmumni allar frúar og hirðkönur, svo talandi: ‘Drottning mín, hvað veldur því er þér vilið eða megið við öngvan mann tala, eður þann beiska grát er aldrei gengur af yðrum augum, því að kóngur og allur lands lýður biðja svo sitja og standa hvern mann sem yður best líki’.

Hún svarar ‘það veldur mínum gráti og þungum harmi að meykóngur hefur skilið mig við bónda minn og börn og mun ég hvorki sjá síðan’. Listalín spurði hvar bóndi hennar eða börn væri. Hún svarar og segir þá allt hið sanna og hversu farið hafði.

Ingi kóngur sprettur þá fram undan tjaldinu mjög reiðuri og lét fletta hana hverju klæði og drottningarskrúða og fylgir þar þá öll fegurð og blómi. Kóngur unir nú stórilla við. Fer nú og flýgur á hvert land þetta gabb og svívirðing.

Látum Inga kóng nú hvílast um tíma, en vendum sögunni í annan stað og segjum af sonum Soldáns kóns, Heiðarloga og Véloga, að þeir spyrja hversu Ingi kóngur er út leikinn af meykóni. Búa þeir óvígán her af Serklandi. Skipa þeir sínum skipastól til Frakklands.

Nú er að segja af meykóni að hún heldur ei kyrru fyrir, því að hún lætur saman lesa smiðu²² og meistara; fyrir þeim var Ypolitus. Hún lætur gera glerhimin með þeirri list að hann lék á hjólum og mátti fara inn yfir höfuðport borgarinnar og mátti þar mart herfólk á standa. Hún lét og gera diki ferlega djúpt fram fyrir skemmumni og leggja yfir veika við, en þar yfir var breitt skrúð og skarlat.

Nú sem kóngssynir koma í land kallar meykóngur Hléskjöld á sinn fund, og bað hann ganga til herskipa og segir honum fyrir alla hluti hverju hann skal fram fara. Hléskjöldur gengur nú til skipa og fréttir hvort kóngar fara með friði. Heiðarlogi segir ‘ef drottning vill giftast öðrum hvorum okkrum bræðra, þá er þetta land og ríki frjálst fyrir okkrum hernaði, ella munum²³ við eyða landið, brenna og bæla og þyrma öngu’.

Hléskjöldur svarar ‘eigi kennir meykóngur sig mann til að halda stríð við Serkja her, og svo ágæta kóns-sonu sem þið eruð. Vil ég segja þér, Véloga,²⁴ trúnað meykóns. Hún vill tala við sér hvorn ykkar og prófa visku ykkar og málsnilld. Vill hún að þú gangir snemma á hennar fund áður en bróðir þinn stendur upp, því að ég veit að hún kys þig til bónda’. Binda þeir þetta nú með sér.

Að næstu nóttliðinni gengur Vélogi heim til borgarinnar með eitt þúsund manna, og er þeir koma undir höfuð-port borgarinnar lætur Hléskjöldur vinda fram yfir þá glerhimininn, og hella yfir þá biki og brennisteini. En Hléskjöldur gengur að þeim af borginni með skotvopnum

²¹ AM 529 is corrupt here, giving ‘er mér sagt á að vér sem vitbrögðum at sjá’. The emendation used here is Loth’s (p. 17). Loth’s other MSS offer quite different readings, though with similar senses.

²² I have kept this unexpected accusative plural form from the MS (Loth, p. 18).

²³ Emended from MS *munu* (Loth, p. 19).

²⁴ Emended from MS *Vélogi* (Loth, p. 19).

Lady Listalín and all the courtiers went to meet the king and queen with all strength, honour, and worldly ceremony; there was great rejoicing in Constantinople at the maiden-king's coming. But when the next month had passed, it happened one day that Lady Listalín spoke to her brother the king and said, 'Do you not have any suspicion regarding that woman you have brought home to this country? It seems to me her actions, and many other characteristics, are not like the maiden-king's; it has been said to me that we may be looking at an illusion. I will inquire today about doing some kind of test, and you should stay in a hiding-place and listen'. The king then did so.

That same day, Lady Listalín ordered all the ladies and their maids in waiting to leave the chamber, and then said, 'My queen, why is it that you do not want to — or cannot — speak with anyone? And what causes that bitter weeping which never leaves your eyes? Because the king and all the courtiers of the land ask how to sit and stand each person as pleases you best'.

She answered, 'What causes my tears and oppressive grief is that the maiden-king has separated me from my husband and children, and I will never see them again'. Listalín asked where her husband or children might be. She then answered and told the truth about everything, and how it had happened.

King Ingi then grew very angry, came out from under the tapestry, and ordered that she should be stripped of all her clothes and queen's apparel, and all her beauty and radiance came off with them. The king was now very discontented. This mockery and disgrace then spread to every land.

We now leave King Ingi for a while, and we turn the story to another place and tell of how King Soldán's sons, Heiðarlogi and Vélogi, found out how King Ingi had been outwitted by the maiden-king. They prepared an invincible army from Serkland, and they readied their fleets of ships for France.

Now it is to be said of the maiden-king that she did not sit idle, because she summoned together her craftsmen and scholars; Ypolitus was in charge of them. She commanded them to use their skills to make a glass roof that could move on wheels and could go over the main gate of the castle so that many warriors could stand on it. She also commanded them to dig a monstrosly deep ditch in front of her chamber, and to lay weak wood over it — and costly cloth and scarlet was spread over that.

When the king's sons came to the land, the maiden-king called Hléskjöldur to a meeting with her, and asked him to go to the warships and told him everything about how he should proceed. Hléskjöldur then went to the ship and asked whether the kings came in peace. Heiðarlogi said, 'If the queen wants to marry either of us brothers, then this land and kingdom will be free from our plundering; otherwise we shall destroy the land, torch and burn it, and spare nothing'.

Hléskjöldur answered, 'The maiden-king does not think herself equipped to wage war against Serkland's army and such excellent princes as you. I want to tell you, Vélogi, the maiden-king's promise: she wants each of you to speak with her, and to test your wisdom and eloquence. She wants you to go early to meet her before your brother gets up, because I know that she chooses you as husband'. They then pledged this to each other.

At the end of the next night Vélogi went up to the castle with a thousand men, and when they came under the main castle gate Hléskjöldur commanded his men to winch the glass roof down over them, and to pour pitch and sulphur over them. And Hléskjöldur attacked them

og stórum höggum. Fellur þar Vélogi og hver maður er með honum var. Er nú rudd borgin og hreinsuð af dauðum mönnum.

Nú gengur Hléskjöldur ofan til herskipa og talar svo fallit til Heiðarloga: ‘Meykóngur biður þig koma á sinn fund, því að hún vill tala við ykkur báða bræðurna og prófa beggja ykkra visku og er Vélogi fyrir löngu upp kominn og situr nú í höllinni og drekkur. Vildi ég ei að hann talaði við hana; veit ég að hún kys þig en ekki hann, fyrir sakir afls og hreysti, að verja ríki sitt. Þætti oss mál að hún giftist svo að menn stæði ei lengur í stríði og ónáðum’.

Heiðarlogi þakkar honum sinn trúnað og fyrirgöngu. Byr sig nú með tvö þúsund manna og ganga til borgarinnar í stað. En Hléskjöldur talar þá: ‘Nú skulu þeir ganga til skemmu drottningar, en ég skal vitja Véloga bróður þíns og tálma fyrir honum því að ég vil að þú talir fyrri við drottningu’.

Heiðarlogi snýr fram að skemmuni, og sem þeir ganga fram á klæðin brestur niður viðurinn, en þeir steiptust í díkið. Í þessu þeysir Hléskjöldur óvígán her úr borginni og bera grjóti í höfuð þeim og skotvopn og drepa hvern mann er Heiðarloga fylgdi. Nú býr Hléskjöldur út óvígán her Frakka af Parísborg og býður þeim til bardaga, en þeir sjá ei sinn kost til varnar, höfuðingja-lausir við allan Frakka-her. Halda nú heim í Serkland. Fer og flýgur á hvert land frægð og mekt sú er meykóngur fékk.

IV

Nú er að segja af hinum fræga kóngi Liforino er fyrr var nefndur að hann réð út á skóg einn dag að skemmta sér. Litur hann í einu rjóðri einn stein standandi og þar nær einn dverg. Kóngssonur²⁵ rennir nú sínu ersi á milli steinsins og dvergsins og vígir hann útan steins. Dvergur mælti: ‘Meiri frægð væri þér í að leika út meykóng í Frans en banna mér mitt inni eða heyrir þú ei þá frægð er fer og flýgur um allan heiminn af hennar mekt að hún út leikur alla kónga með sinni spekt og visku’.

Kóngur segir: ‘Mart hef ég heyrð þar af sagt og ef þú vilt fylgja mér til Frakklands og vera mér hollur svo að með þínu kynstri og kukli mætti ég fá meykónginn mér til eiginnar þúsu þá skyldi ég gera þig fullsælan og börn þín’.

Dvergur mælti: ‘Þat mun ég upp taka að fylgja þér, heldur en missa steininn, því að ég veit að þú ert ágætur kóngur’.

Liforinus gaf honum gull-hring stóran ‘ok tak af hjörð minni naut og sauði, svín og geitur, sem þeir þarfast’.

Kóngur lætur nú búa úr landi skrautlegan skipastól með dýru hoffólki, leggandi sín segl ei fyrr en þeir komu í þær hafnir er lágu út við Parísborg. Meykóngur vissi fyrir komu Liforini kóng, berandi á sig alla sína náttúrusteina. Gengur Hléskjöldur ofan til skipa, bjóðandi heim kónginum til virðulegrar veislu, eftir meykónsins boði. Kóngur gengur nú á land með öllum sínum hoflýð.

Dvergurinn talar þá til hans: ‘Hér er eitt gull er ég vil gefa þér; drag það á þinn fingur. Legg þína hönd með gullinu upp á beran háls meykóns. Þá mun gullit fast við hennar ljósa líkam. Fanga hana síðan, en ég skal gera ráð fyrir að engi eftirför sé veitt’.

²⁵ Emended from Loth’s expansion of MS *kongss* to ‘kongss(on)’ (Loth, p. 21).

from the castle with projectiles and great blows. Vélogi fell there, and every man who was with him. The castle was then cleared and cleansed of the dead.

Then Hléskjöldur went down to the warships and said this to Heiðarlogi: ‘The maiden-king asks you to come meet with her, because she wants to speak with both of you brothers and test the wisdom of you both. Vélogi came up a good while ago, and is now sitting in the hall drinking. I didn’t want him to speak with her; I know that she chooses you to defend her kingdom and not him, because of your physical strength and prowess. It seemed to us that she should marry so that people would no longer remain in conflict and unrest’.

Heiðarlogi thanked him for his good faith and his visit. He prepared himself then with two thousand men and went to the castle straight away. But then Hléskjöldur said, ‘Now they must go to the queen’s chamber, and I shall visit your brother Vélogi and delay him because I want you to speak with the queen first’.

Heiðarlogi turned towards the chamber, and as they went across the cloth, the wood collapsed, and they tumbled into the ditch. At this Hléskjöldur charged out of the castle with an invincible army and they threw stones and projectiles down onto their heads, and killed every man who accompanied Heiðarlogi. Then Hléskjöldur led the invincible French army from Paris and ordered them into battle, and the Serks saw they could not defend themselves without a leader against France’s whole army, so they headed home to Serkland. The maiden-king’s new fame and glory spread to every land.

IV

Now it is to be said about the famous King Liforinus, who was mentioned before, that he rode out into the woods one day to amuse himself. He saw in a forest-clearing a standing stone, and near it a dwarf. The prince then ran between the stone and the dwarf, and cursed him to be out of the stone. The dwarf said, ‘You would gain greater fame by outwitting the maiden-king in France than preventing my entry — or have you not heard of the fame which has spread throughout all the world concerning her strength, that she outwits all kings with her foresight and wisdom?’

The king said, ‘I have heard much said of this, and if you will accompany me to France and be loyal to me so that, through your magical arts and sorcery, I can get the maiden-king as my wife, then I shall make you and your children very wealthy’.

The dwarf said, ‘I will agree to accompany you, rather than lose the stone, because I know that you are an excellent king’.

Liforinus gave him a large gold ring — ‘And take cattle, sheep, pigs and goats from my herds, as you need them’.

The king then had a fleet of ornamented ships readied to leave his land, manned with noble courtiers, and he did not lower his sail before they came into the harbour which lay outside Paris. The maiden-king foresaw the arrival of King Liforinus because she kept all of her supernatural stones with her. Hléskjöldur walked down to the ship and invited the king home to a magnificent feast, according to the maiden-king’s instructions. The king then went on land with all his courtiers.

Then the dwarf said to him, ‘Here is a gold ring which I want to give to you; draw it onto your finger. Lay the hand with the ring on the bare neck of the maiden-king, and then the gold will be stuck to her radiant body. Seize her then, and I shall make sure that no chase will be made’.

Kóngur gengur nú heim til hallarinnar en drottning stendur upp í móti honum og setur hann í háseti hjá sér með góðum orðum og kærlegu viðbragði. Liforinus tekur nú sinni hægri hendi með gullinu upp á háls drottningu; var þá föst höndin með gullinu. Kóngur grípur sinni vinstri hendi undir hennar knésbætur, springandi með frúna fram yfir borðið. Meykóngur kallar á sína menn sér til hjálpar. Hléskjöldur og allur Frakklands lýður býst til upphlaups, en hann og allir meykónsins menn voru fastir í sínum sætum. Liforinus gengur nú til sinna manna án allri dvöl, og allur hans lýður dragandi upp sín segl flýtandi sinni ferð. Dvergurinn gefur þeim fagran býr heim til Indíalands.

Nú er að segja að kóns dóttir, Sýjalín, gengur í móti sínum bróður og meykóni, og allur Indíalands her með allri mekt. Þá voru hörpur og gígjur og allra handa strengfæri. Öll stræti eru þar þökt með skarlat og dýra vefi, en kórónaðir kóngar leiddu meykóng til skemmu drotningar Sýjalín. Er nú búist við virðulegri veislu og boðið til öllum Indíalands höfuðingjum.

Og það var einn dag að drottning var gengin fram undir einn lund plantaðan er stóð undir skemmuni. Þá var meykóngur allkát; hún hafði þá í hendi þann náttúrustein er hún hafði úr eygni Visio. Hún brá þá steininum upp yfir höfuð þeim báðum. Því næst líða þær báðar í loft upp svo að þær voru skjótt ur auglýs. Fara nú jungfrúar, og allt fólk það er við var á völlum hjá lundinum hlaupa inn og sagðu kónginum þenna atburða og varð hann mjög óglaður við.

Nú er þar af að segja að drottingar koma heim í París, tekur meykóngur Sýjalín kóns dóttur, og setur hana í háseti hjá sér drekkandi af einu keru báðar og skilur hvorki svefn né mat við hana. Tók hvör að unna annari sem sinni móður.

V

Nú er að segja af Soldáni kóni að hann fréttir lát sona sína; hann fyllist upp ferlegri reiði. Lætur ganga her ör um öll sín ríki og safnar að sér blámönnum og bannsettum hetjum og alls kyns óþjóð og ill þýði. Ætlar nú að halda þessum her til Frakklands brenna og bæla landið nema meykóngur vili giftast honum.

Það var einn dag að þær frúinnar lita í sína náttúrusteina og þær sjá hvað Soldán kóngur hefst að. Lætur meykóngur kalla Hléskjöld, svo talandi til hans: 'Þú skalt láta ganga herör um allt landið og öll mín kóna ríki og stefna hverjum manni til, þeim er skildi gæti valdið. Hald þessum her á móti Soldáni kóni, því að ég vil ekki hann komi í mitt ríki'.

Hléskjöldur gerir svo, og þegar herlið hans var búið, heldur hann burt af ríkinu. Sigla nú þessir skipastólar hvorir móti öðrum, og finnast undir ey einni er Kartagia heitir. Þar var víkinga bæli mikið. Þar þurfti ekki að sökum að spyrja. Taka þeir þegar að berjast er vígljóst var. Gengur Soldán kóngur hetjur hans og blámenn í gegnum lið Franseisa svo að ekki stóð við, er þá ei meira eftir en hálf þá er Hléskildi fylgdi.

Annan dag árla hefst annar bardagi af nýju, og að kveldi annars dags þá stóð ei fleira upp af hans liði en fimmtán hundruð manna. Halda menn upp friðskildi, og bindur hver sár sinna manna. Nú gera menn að líta hvar mikill dreki siglir og skrautlegur og ógrynni annara skipa. Sigla nú af hafi og halda sínum seglum öðru megin undir eyna. Fer maður af drekanum og

The king then went to the hall and the queen stood up to meet him and seated him in the high-seat beside her, with good words and a loving countenance. Liforinus then placed his right hand with the gold ring up onto the queen's neck; the hand was then stuck by the ring. The king gripped under the backs of her knees with his left hand and sprang off over the table with the lady. The maiden-king called to her men for help. Hléskjöldur and all the French courtiers tried to jump up, but he and all the maiden-king's men were stuck fast in their seats. Liforinus then went to his men without any delay, and his whole army hoisted their sails, speeding his voyage. The dwarf gave them a fair wind home to India.

Now it is to be said that Princess Sýjalín went to meet her brother and the maiden-king with India's whole army and all ceremony. There were harps and fiddles and every kind of stringed instrument. All the streets there were covered with scarlet and precious woven cloths, and crowned kings led the maiden-king to the chamber of Princess Sýjalín. Then a magnificent feast was prepared and all of India's nobles were sent for.

It happened one day that princess Sýjalín had gone down to a well-tended grove that stood below the chamber. The maiden-king was very happy then: she had in her hand the supernatural stone that she had from the island of Visio. She quickly waved the stone over the heads of them both; immediately, they both glided up into the sky so that they were quickly out of sight. The young ladies went their way, and all the people who were in the fields near the grove ran in and told the king this news, and he became very downcast.

Now it is to be said that the queens came home to Paris, and the maiden-king took Princess Sýjalín and set her in the high-seat next to herself, both of them drinking from one cup, and she parted from her neither in sleep nor during meals. Each came to love the other like her own mother.

V

Now it is to be said about King Soldán that he heard about the death of his sons and was filled with terrible rage. He ordered a swift army to go throughout all his kingdom, and recruited black men and exiles and all kinds of wild and evil people. He then planned to bring this army to France to burn and ravage the land unless the maiden-king wanted to marry him.

It happened one day that the women looked into Nítíða's supernatural stones and they saw what King Soldán was beginning to do. The maiden-king called to Hléskjöldur and said to him, 'You must order an army to go throughout all the land and all my kings' kingdoms, and summon every man who can bear arms. Lead this army to meet King Soldán, because I do not want him to come into my kingdom'.

Hléskjöldur did so, and as soon as his troop was ready, he travelled away from the kingdom. Each fleet then sailed against the other, and they met at an island called Kartagia, where there was a huge lair of pirates. There was no need to discuss anything; they began fighting as soon as it was light enough for battle. King Soldán went with his warriors and black men through the French ranks so that nothing withstood him; after, no more than half the army which Hléskjöldur led was left.

Early the second day a new battle began, and by the evening of the second day, no more than fifteen hundred members of his army were still standing. People held up a peace-shield, and each bound their men's wounds. Then people noticed a great and ornamented dragon-ship approaching with an enormous number of other ships, which sailed from the sea and

allur herliður gengur á land upp með fylktu liði. Hann var digur og hár svo að hans höfuð bar upp yfir allan herinn. Hann lét geisa sitt merki gullofið fram móti Soldáni kóngi, en Hléskjöldur móti Loga. Tekst nú hið þriðjung sinn orrosta hin harðasta.

Hefja kóngar nú sitt einvígi, Liforinus og Soldán, með stórum höggum og sterku stríði. Gengur þessi að gangur allt til nætur. Að síðustu þeirra viðskipti lagði hann einum brynþvara fyrir brjóst Soldáni kóngi svo að út gekk um herðarnar. Féll hann þá dauður niður. Liforinus leitar nú að Hléskildi en hann lá þá í einum dal sár nær til ólífis, en Logi lá dauður hjá honum. Liforinus tekur upp Hléskjöld og ber ofan til skipa. Kóngur lætur nú kanna valin. Voru þar gefin grið þeim er beiddi, en allir aðrir voru drepnir.

Tekur Liforinus þar nú mikið herfang og verður frægur af þessi orrustu víða um lönd. Sigla nú heim til Indfálans með fögrum sigri. Svo er sagt að kóngur sjálfur sat yfir og græddi Hléskjöld þar til er hann ver heill. En þegar vor kom var það einn dag að kóngur gekk til sjófar og Hléskjöldur með honum. Hann mælti þá: ‘Annað mun meykóngi hentilegra og hennar ríki en ég haldi þér hér lengur. Hér eru í höfn minni tíu skip er ég vil gefa þér með mönnum og herförum; skaltu ekki héðan fara sem förumaður’.

Hléskjöldur tekur nú orðlof, þakkaði kóngi sína veislu og stórar gjafir. Siglir Hléskjöldur heim til Frakklands. Verður meykóngur öll glöð við hans heimkomu.

Þetta sumar heldur Liforinus kóngur í hernað og kemur sínum skipum við Smáland. Þar ríkti sú drottning er Alduría hét; hún var móðir systir Liforini kóngs. Drottning tók við honum báðum höndum og situr hann þar í ágætri veislu.

Einn dag talar drottning við sinn frænda ‘hvað veldur ógleði þinni, hvort þreyr þú á meykónginn er nú er frægust í heiminum’.

Liforinus mælti ‘þú ert kölluð vitur kona og klók. Legg til ráð að ég mætti meykóng útleika og²⁶ ást hennar ná’.

Drottning mælti ‘þar vilda ég allt til gefa þú næðir þínu yndi eftir þínum vilja. Nú er það mitt ráð, að þú siglir þetta sumar til Frakklands og nefnist Eskilvarður, sonur kóngs af Mundia, og haf þar vetursetu. Ég skal gefa þér gull það er þig skal einginn maður kenna, hvorki meykóngur né þín systir, ef þú situr þar allan þann vetur, þá er undur, ef þú fær ekki fang á henni’.

Nú tekur Liforinus²⁷ við þessu ráði, og býr sín fimmtán skip, siglir af stað og kemur til Frakklands um haustið. Meykóngur lætur nú bjóða honum til hallar og á tal við sig; virðist henni hann vitur maður. Drottning býður Eskilvarð að bíða þar um veturinn með sitt fólk. Það þiggur Eskilvarður kóngur og kemur jafnan til drottningar því hann var listamaður á hörpuslátt og öll hljóðfæri, hann kundi af hvoru landi að segja nokkuð. Drottning þótti að honum hin mesta gleði.

Leið nú veturinn af, að vori býst hann til ferðar. Nokkurn dag áður en hann var albúinn, talar meykóngur við hann ‘þú Eskilvarður hefur jafnan skemmt okkur frú Sýjalín í vetur, með þínum hljóðfærum, og fögrum frásögum, nú vil ég að þú gangir í dag með okkur: skulum við nú skemmta þér’.

²⁶ The text of AM 529 ends here. As noted by Loth, ‘after this word there is a lacuna (the rest of the saga = 2 ½ folios) in the MS; the [rest of the] text is taken from [AM] 537, 6r–8v’ (Loth, p. 28). Of course, the edition continues sometimes to take readings from the other manuscripts mentioned in the introduction (pp. 121–22 above).

²⁷ Here until the end, the name is *Livorius* in the MS. As mentioned in the introduction, I have chosen to keep the names used in the previous manuscript; this applies to the following two notes as well.

steered with their sails along one side of the island. A man left the dragon-ship, and all the troops went up on land with an assembled force. This man was stout, and so tall that his head was above the whole army. He had his gold-woven banner raised against King Soldán, and Hléskjöldur went against Logi. Then they started in on the third and hardest of their battles.

The kings Liforinus and Soldán began their single combat, with great blows and violent combat. This went on until night. At the end of their exchange Liforinus thrust a spear into King Soldán's breast so that it came out through the shoulders, and he fell down dead. Liforinus then searched for Hléskjöldur, who lay in a valley, wounded to the point of death. Logi lay dead next to him. Liforinus picked up Hléskjöldur and carried him down to the ships. The king then ordered a search for the slain. A truce was given to those who asked for it, and anyone else was killed.

Liforinus then took great booty there and became famous far and wide on account of this battle. Then they sailed home to India with a noble victory. It is said that the king himself tended and healed Hléskjöldur until he was well. And one day, when spring came, the king went on a sea-voyage with Hléskjöldur. Then he said, 'It would be more befitting to the maiden-king and her kingdom for me to do otherwise than to keep you here any longer. Here in my harbour are ten ships, which I will give to you with men and war-gear; you shall not journey from here as a vagrant'.

Hléskjöldur then praised him, thanking the king for his hospitality and great gifts. He sailed home to France, and the maiden-king was very glad at his homecoming.

That summer King Liforinus went plundering and arrived with his ships at Småland. The queen who ruled there was called Alduria; she was King Liforinus's aunt. The queen took him by both hands and he sat down to a handsome feast.

One day the queen said to her kinsman, 'Why are you unhappy? Do you long for the maiden-king who now is the most famous in the world?'

Liforinus said, 'You are considered a wise and cunning woman. Give me advice so that I can outwit the maiden-king and gain her love'.

The queen said, 'I want to give you everything you need to attain joy in accordance with your wish. My suggestion for you now is that you sail this summer to France and call yourself Eskilvarður, son of the king of Mundia, and stay there over the winter. I will give you a gold ring so that nobody will know you, neither the maiden-king nor your sister. If you remain there for the whole winter, it will be a wonder if you do not get a hold on her'.

Liforinus accepted this counsel and prepared his fifteen ships, sailed from that place, and came to France in the autumn. The maiden-king then had him asked into the hall to speak with her — and she judged him a wise man. The queen asked Eskilvarður to remain there throughout the winter with his retinue. King Eskilvarður accepted, and frequently came to the queen because he was good at playing the harp and all musical instruments, and he was able to say something about every country. The queen took the greatest delight in his company.

Now winter passed, and in spring he prepared himself for a journey. One day, before he was ready, the maiden-king said to him, 'You, Eskilvarður, have always entertained me and Lady Sýjalín during the winter with your music-making and wonderful stories. Now I want you to come with us today: we shall now entertain you'.

Eskilvarður þiggur það gjarnan, og gengur með þeim í skemmuna. Meykóngur tók upp stein og bað hann í líta. Hann sá þá yfir allt Frakkland, Provintiam, Ravenam, Spaniam, Hallitiam, Friisland, Flandren, Norðmandiam, Skottland, Grikkland, og allar þær þjóðir þar byggja. Meykóngur mælti ‘ekki siglir Liforinus kóngur í þessar hálfur heimsins, eða mun hann heima vera’.

Annan dag bíður drottning Eskilvarð til skemmunnar: ‘þú hefur jafnan skemmt oss í vetur’. Drottning bað Eskilvarð enn líta í steininn. Þá sáu þau norður hálfuna alla, Noreg, Ísland, Færeyjar, Suðureyjar, Orkneyjar, Svíþjóð, Danmörk, England, Írland, og mörg lönd önnur, þau er hann vissi ei skil á. Drottning mælti ‘mun Liforinus kóngur hinn frægi ekki sigla í þessi lönd’.

Eskilvarður sagði ‘hann er fjarlægur þessum löndum’.

Meykóngur vindur upp enn einn stein, sjáandi þá nú austur hálfuna heimsins, Indíaland, Palestinam, Asiam, Serkland, og öll önnur lönd heimsins, og jafnvel um brúnabeltið, það sem ei er byggt. Drottning mælti ‘bardagar miklir eru nú í Serklandi, og Ingi kóngur situr nú heima í Miklagarði og herjar hvorgi, en hvar mun Liforinus hinn frægi vera? Ég sé hann ekki heima í Indíalöndum, og ei er hann í Smálöndum hjá frændkonu sinni. Nú sjást öll úthöfin um lá og leynivoga, hvorgi er hann þar, og hvorgi er hann í öllum heiminum útan hann standi hér hjá mér’. Meykóngur talar þá ‘Liforinus kóngur’ segir hún, ‘legg af þér dularkufl þinn. Hinn fyrsta dag er þú komst kennda ég þig. Fær þú aftur gullið Alduria,²⁸ því yður stendur það lítið lengur með það að fara’.

Liforinus kóngur lætur nú að orðum drottningar, leggjandi af sér gullið og nafnið, takandi upp sín tignar klæði. Frú Sýjalín²⁹ gengur nú að sínum bróður, og verður þeirra á milli mesti fagnaðarfundur. Meykóngur setur Liforinus kóng í háseti hjá sér. Er þar ágæta veisla. Svo er sagt að meykóngur hafi sent í allar hálfur landsins til tuttugu kónga, er allir þjónuðu undir hennar ríki. Byrjar Liforinus kóngur nú bónorð sitt við meykóng með fagurlegum framburði og mikilli röksemd. Styrkja hans mál allir kóngar og höfðingjar að þessi ráðahagur takist. Meykóngur svarar orðum þeirra: ‘Ég hefi heyrt að höfðingjum landsins leiðist stríð og ónáðir í ríkinu. Er nú og líkast að það muni fyrir liggja að fá þann kóng er yður þikir mikils háttar vera’.

Hléskjöldur mælti ‘ef þér viljið mér nokkra þjónustu lengur gefa, þá vil ég að þér takið Liforinus kóng yður til herra, skal ég og ekki önnur laun þiggja, og lengur í yðar ríki vera’.

Meykóngur segir ‘mikinn heiður á ég yður að launa, fyrir margan mannháska og raunir, er þér hafið minna vegna. Er það líkast ég taki þetta upp síðan og sé það allra höfðingja ráð og vilji; veit og ei æðri kóng ríkjandi en Liforinus kóng’.

Liforinus kóngur verður við þetta allglaður. Var þetta nú staðfest og ályktað með öllu ríkis ráði; skyldi brúðkaupið vera um haustið. Meykóngur talar nú til Liforinus og annara manna: ‘Ég vil ekki yðar burtferð að sinni úr minni náveru, því ég meina við munum ekki lengi við kyrrt sitja mega’.

Nú er að segja af Inga kóngi, að hann spyr þessi tíðindi; verður hann reiður og kveðst öngva konu skyldi eiga útan meykóng ella liggja dauður. Lætur nú ganga herör um allt sitt ríki, og safnar saman múga og margmenni, skyldi þar koma hvor sá er skildi gæti valdið. Verður þetta

²⁸ From here until the end, the name is *Aldvia* in the MS.

²⁹ Here until the end, the name is *Suyialyn* in the MS.

Eskilvarður accepted the invitation readily, and went with them into their chamber. The maiden-king took up a stone and asked him to look into it. He then saw over all of France, Provence, Ravenna, Spain, Hallitia, Frisia, Flanders, Normandy, Scotland, Greece, and all the people living there. The maiden-king said, 'King Liforinus is not sailing in these parts of the world; might he be at home instead?'

Another day the queen asked Eskilvarður to the chamber: 'You have always entertained us during the winter'. The queen then asked Eskilvarður to look into the stone, and they saw all the northern regions: Norway, Iceland, the Faroes, the Hebrides, Orkney, Sweden, Denmark, England, Ireland, and many other lands which he could not distinguish. The queen said, 'Will King Liforinus the Famous not sail into these lands?'

Eskilvarður said, 'He is far from these lands'.

The queen raised up yet another stone and then they saw the eastern regions of the world: India, Palestine, Asia, Serkland, and all the other lands of the world, and even around the burning-belt, which is uninhabited. The queen said, 'There are now great battles in Serkland, and King Ingi is sitting at home in Constantinople and is not out raiding, but where must Liforinus the Famous be? I do not see him at home in India, and he is not in Småland with his kinswoman. Now everything is visible, from the oceans to the shoals and hidden coves; neither is he there nor is he anywhere in the whole world, unless he is standing here beside me'. Then the maiden-king said, 'King Liforinus, remove your cloak of disguise. I knew you the first day you came. Take off Alduria's ring, because it will do you no good to continue in this way any longer'.

King Liforinus then obeyed the queen's words and removed from himself both gold ring and name, and took up his noble clothing. Lady Sýjalín then went to her brother, and there was the most joyful reunion between them. The maiden-king sat King Liforinus in the high-seat beside her, and there was an excellent feast. It is said that the maiden-king had sent word to all parts of her country, to the twenty kings who served under her rule. King Liforinus then began his marriage proposal to the maiden-king with an eloquent speech and excellent judgement. All the kings and nobles at this council supported his speech, agreeing that this proposal should be taken. The maiden-king answered their words: 'I have heard that the nobles of the land are growing tired of war and unrest in the kingdom. The most likely way to forestall that is to accept the king who seems to you to be of great promise'.

Hléskjöldur said, 'If you want me to offer my service any longer, then I want you to take King Liforinus as your lord; indeed I shall not accept any other repayment, or remain any longer in your kingdom'.

The maiden-king said, 'I have great honour to repay you, for the many dangers and trials which you have had for my sake. It is most fitting that I should take this up, especially since it is the counsel and desire of all the nobles, for I do not know a nobler king ruling than King Liforinus'.

King Liforinus was delighted at this. This was now firmly arranged, and agreed with all the kingdom's councillors; the wedding was to be in autumn. The maiden-king then said to Liforinus and other men: 'I do not want you to journey away at once from my presence, because I think that we will not be able to remain at peace for very long'.

Now it is to be said of King Ingi, that he learned of these tidings and became angry and said that he would marry no woman except the maiden-king, and would otherwise lie dead. He summoned all his kingdom to war, and collected together a crowd and mob; everyone had

ótal lið, svo að sjór þótti svartur fyrir herskipum. Heldur Ingi kóngur öllum þessum skipastól í Frakkland með ákefð og reiði, því hann vildi koma áður brullaupið væri drukkið.

Nú sem Ingi kóngur var landfastur orðinn lætur hann tjalda herbúðir á landi. Liforinus kóngur ríður þegar ofan til skipa, bjóðandi Inga kóngi alla sætt og sæmd meykóns vegna, hvað er Ingi kóngur vill ei: hann vill ei annað en berjast. Síga nú saman fylkingar. Lætur Liforinus kóngur bera sitt merki mót Inga kóngi. Tókst nú hörð orusta með geysilegum gný og mannfalli. Gengur Ingi kóngur í gegnum Frakkaher höggvandi tvö menn í hvorju höggi. Slíkt hið sama gerir Liforinus kóngur, þar sem hann fer verður meiri manxnföll í liði stólkóns. Verður mikið mannfall af hvoru tveggja hernum, og allir vellir voru þaktir af dauðra manna líkum.

Í þrjá daga gengur þessi aðgangur, og árla hinn fjörð daginn kallar Liforinus kóngur hárrí röddu til Ingja kóns: 'Þetta er óviturlegt bragð að berjast svo, því vit látum hér þá vildustu frændur, vini, og höfðingja. Er það betra ráð að við berjumst tveir, eigi sá meykóng er herra hlut ber af okkar viðskiptum'.

Ingi kóngur játar þessu blíðlega, og hefja þeir sitt einvígi með stórum höggum og sterkum aðgangir, bresta hlífar hvorutveggja, berast og sár á báða, en þó fleiri á Ingja kóng. Lúktist svo þeirra einvígi að Ingi kóngur féll til jarðar af mæði og blóðrás, því hann flakti allur sundur af sárum. Liforinus kóngur lætur leggja Inga kóng í veglega sæng, en hann leggst í aðra og taka þeir nú að smyrja þeirra sár með dýrum smyrslum.

Liforinus býður systur sinni, að leggja góða hönd á Inga kóng sem sinn sár. Hún gerir síns bróður boð, því hún var hinn ágætasti læknir og enn kunni hún framar í þessu en meykóngur. Færðist nú gróður í sár kóna; sér Ingi kóngur að Sýjalín er afbragð annara kvenna um öll norðurlönd að fráteknum meykóngi. Lýtur hann skjótt ástaraugum til hennar. Hefur nú sjótt sitt bónorð við kóns dóttur. Meykóngur og allur landslýður er fylgjandi að sá ráðahagur takist að öll ríkin fengu frið og náðir og Ingi kóngur sættist við Liforinus kóng.

Kóngurinn talar þá til Ingja kóns: 'viljir þú gifta Hléskildi mínum góða vin og fóstbróður Listalín, þá skulu þessi ráð takast: stendur hann einn til arfs og ríkis út á Puli eftir móður sína Egidíam; þar til vil ég gefa þeim þriðjung Indíalands, og er hann þó betra verður'.

Nú gengur meykóngur og allir ríkjanna höfðingjar með þessum erindum, og með þeirra bæn og fagurlega framburði; fullgerðust þessi kaup hvorutveggju. Eru nú orð send eftir frú Listalín; kemur hún þar eftir liðinn tíma til Frakklands með dýrlegu föruneyti. Hefjast nú þessi þrjú brúðkaup í upphafi augusti mánaðar og yfir stendur allan þann mánuð með miklum veraldar-prís og blóma. Þar var fallega étið og fagurlega drukkið með allskyns matbúnaði og dýrustu drykkjum. Þar var allskyns skemmtun framinn í burtreiðum og hljóðfæraslætti, en þar sem kóngarnir gengu var niðurbreidd pell og purpuri og heiðurleg klæði. Er og ei auðsagt með ófróðri tungu í útleigðum veraldarinnar, svo mönnum verði skemmtilegt, hvor fögnuður vera mundi í miðjum heiminum af slíku hoffólki samankomnu. Stendur nú svo hófið í mikilli þessa heims gleið með dýrlegum tilföngum. Og nú með því að öll þessa heims dýrð kann skjótt

to come there who could bear arms. Countless troops arrived, so that the sea seemed black with warships. King Ingi eagerly and angrily directed all these fleets to France, because he wanted to arrive before the wedding was over.

When King Ingi had reached land, he commanded that tents be pitched. King Liforinus rode at once down to the ships and offered King Ingi honour and a settlement on behalf of the maiden-king, which, however, King Ingi did not desire: he wanted nothing other than to fight. Then armies descended on one another. King Liforinus raised his banner against King Ingi, and then a hard battle began, with enormous noise and loss of life. King Ingi went through the army of the French killing two men with each blow. King Liforinus did the same, but, wherever he went, more casualties appeared in the army of the Byzantine Emperor Ingi. There was great loss to each of the two armies, and all the fields were covered with the corpses of the dead.

This assault went on for three days, and early on the fourth day King Liforinus called with a loud voice to King Ingi, 'It is an unwise move to fight like this, because we are losing our dearest kinsmen, friends, and nobles here. It is better counsel that the two of us fight each other: let the one who gains the upper hand in our exchange win the maiden-king'.

King Ingi agreed to this gladly, and they began their single combat with great blows and strong assaults. They broke each other's shields; both also were wounded, though King Ingi was more so. Their single combat ended with King Ingi falling to the ground from exhaustion and bleeding, for he was coming to pieces from his wounds. King Liforinus made King Ingi lie in a magnificent bed, and he lay in another, and they began to anoint their wounds with precious salves.

Liforinus asked his sister to lay her gentle hands on King Ingi's wounds. She did her brother's bidding, because she was the most excellent doctor and she knew even more about this than the maiden-king. The king's wounds then began to heal, and King Ingi saw that Sýjalín surpassed other women throughout all the northern lands, excepting the maiden-king. He quickly yielded to her loving eyes, and soon made his marriage proposal to the princess. The maiden-king and all of the land's courtiers agreed that this proposal should be accepted, so that the whole kingdom should receive peace and harmony, and King Ingi was seated beside King Liforinus.

The king said then to King Ingi, 'Should you want to marry Listalín to Hléskjöldur, my good friend and foster-brother, then this proposal would be accepted: his mother Egidía means that he is outstanding in his hereditary rights and the power of his realm, out in Apulia; and in addition I will give them a third of India — though he is worthy of more'.

Then the maiden-king and all the kingdoms' nobles went with these messages, and with their request and fine proposal; they succeeded fully in both these things. Word was sent to Lady Listalín; after a little while she came to France with a splendid entourage. Then they held these three weddings at the beginning of the month of August and they lasted the whole month, with great worldly ceremony and glory. There was excellent dining and exquisite drinking, with all kinds of dishes, and the most expensive drinks. There were all kinds of entertainment, such as jousts and musical concerts, and costly fabrics, and purple, and magnificent cloths wherever the kings walked. Indeed, it was so entertaining for everyone that it is not easily said with an unlearned tongue in the outer regions of the world what joy there may be in the middle of the world when such courtiers come together. So the celebration continued in this great worldly gladness, with costly provisions. And because all of this world's splendour can

Nítíða saga

að líða, þá voru brúðkaupinn útdrúkkinn, og höfðingjarnir útleiddir með fögrum féggjöfum í gulli og gimsteinum og góðum vefjum. Skildist þar hoflýðar með fögrum friði og kærleika hvor við annan.

Siglir nú Ingi kóngur og hans frú til Miklagarðs, en Hléskjöldur og Listalín út á Pul, stýrandi þar ríki til dauðadags. Liforinus og meykóngur stýrðu Frakklandi. Áttu þau ágæt börn, son er Ríkon hét eftir sínum móður föður er síðan stýrði Frakklandi með heiður og sóma eftir þeirra dag. Og lýkur svo þessu ævintýri af hinni frægu Nítíða og Liforio kóngi.

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quickly pass away, the wedding then was over, and the nobles were led out with wonderful gifts in gold and gemstones and good woven cloth. There each of the courtiers parted peacefully and lovingly.

King Ingi and his lady sailed to Constantinople, and Hléskjöldur and Listalín out to Apulia, ruling the kingdom there until they died. Liforinus and the maiden-king ruled France. They had handsome children, including a son who was called Ríkon after his mother's father, who, after their day, later ruled France with honour and glory. And so ends the adventure of Nítíða the Famous and King Liforinus.