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## THE AUTHOR OF SVARFDÆLA AND THE REVISER OF GLÚMA.

In a characteristically thorough and careful paper,<sup>1</sup> Finnur Jónsson reaches the conclusion that *Svarfdæla Saga* (*Svarfd.*), as we know it, was written about the first quarter of the 14th century.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, there can be no doubt that it existed in very much its present form before *Flateyjarbók* was written, for *Þorleifs Þáttr Jarlsskálds*<sup>3</sup> actually makes use of it.

In the course of his discussion, Finnur Jónsson throws much light on saga composition during the late 13th, or early 14th century. Though in no sense a reliable source, *Svarfd.* is not, as many have held, a simple *ævintýri*. On the contrary, it is evident that its author used genuine, and most probably oral traditions. At the same time, we see that he was a man better acquainted with the geography of Svarfaðardalur than he was with its history. He was not a great reader, nor in any sense a literary man. Indeed, it seems improbable that he was even aware of those brief statements in *Landnámabók* (*Lnb.*) which concern his heroes. He tells us, for instance, that Þórarna, daughter of Þorsteinn svörfuðr, was seized by the viking Snækollr, to whom she bore two children (c. XIV).<sup>4</sup> From the earlier account of *Lnb.*, however, we gather that the daughter of Þorsteinn was regularly married to this viking, and, moreover, her name was not Þórarna but Guðrún. Her viking husband was called Hafþórr (*Landnámabók*, ed. 1900, pp. 73 and 194).

It would, in fact, be hard to show direct influence on this saga from any of the written sources. Nevertheless, if we

<sup>1</sup> "Om Svarfdæla Saga" (*Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie*, 1884, pp. 120 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> We may be satisfied that the *Svarfdæla Saga* mentioned in *Landnámabók* (ed. 1900, pp. 73 and 194) bore little relation to our saga.

<sup>3</sup> *Flateyjarbók* (1868) I, 207 ff., also published in *Íslenskar Fornsgur* III (Copenhagen 1883), 115 ff.

<sup>4</sup> References to Finnur Jónsson's edition, *Íslenskar Fornsgur* III (Copenhagen 1883).

consider it in broad outline, we see that it largely agrees with *Lnb.* and other early writings. Its chief characters, Þorsteinn svörfuðr, Yngvildr fögrkinn (*Lnb.* rauðkinn), Klaufi, Ljótólfr etc. are recorded in *Lnb.*, though their names and their activities are not always identical.

It seems reasonable, then, to conclude with Finnur Jónsson, that the author of *Svarfd.*, living in the late 13th or early 14th century, collected the decayed legends of Svarfaðardalr. That he was himself a native of that district is suggested by his intimate knowledge of its geography, and the interest which he takes in local place-names such as *Siglufjörðr*, *Eikibrekka*, *Deildardalr*, etc. These he is never at a loss to explain. Where local tradition had gaps, the author would often fill them in with impossible adventures. He had probably read little, and his talents as an author are, perhaps for that reason, negligible.

We have said that the author of *Svarfd.* would often fill in gaps in historical tradition with impossible adventures. We need not, therefore, assume that all his extravagances are his own invention. On the contrary, it is apparent that he more often drew his inspiration from popular and conventional legend, for his own imagination was severely limited. Nor was he so learned that he could draw, like the reviser of *Grettis Saga*, from the Tristram legends and write a *Spesar-Þáttr*. His motives are more often of the sort which are known to have been popular in Iceland from its earliest period. For instance, after his death, Klaufi is made to haunt the valley like Þórólfr bægifótr, doing injury to man and beast. Still more like Þórólfr, he was dug from his grave long afterwards and found to be still intact. He had to be burned to ashes before he lay quiet (c. XXXII).

Such "static motives" are prominent in all sections of *Svarfdæla*. The more sparse his traditions were, the more eagerly did our author draw on these conventional, wandering legends, such as the sword-blunting eye and the *askeladd* hero. It is hardly surprising, then, that it is at the beginning of the saga that such motives are the most in evidence, and it is, therefore, with this section that the present study will deal.

These early chapters (I-X) of *Svarfd.* have been described by Guðbrandur Vigfússon as "an undoubted forgery of the sixteenth or seventeenth century."<sup>5</sup> No shred of evidence is given in support of this statement, and, since it was published, Finnur Jónsson has shown,<sup>6</sup> beyond reasonable doubt, that there is nothing to divide these chapters from the rest of the saga. In several instances, moreover, words are shown to be used here in an archaic sense of which a seventeenth-century interpolator would have been ignorant.<sup>7</sup>

Since memories of the first generations of Svarfdælir were already so vague and faded by the time this saga took shape, how much more vague must have been those of the settlers of Svarfaðardalr before they came to Iceland. Accordingly, their ancestors and their previous adventures had to be created for them.

Our author knew that Svarfaðardalr had been named after its settler Þorsteinn svǫrfuðr. He was aware too that Þorsteinn came from Naumudalir in Norway, but beyond that he knew nothing of him. He did not even know, as the author of *Lnb.* knew, that Þorsteinn was the son of Rauðr rugga. Accordingly, he invented a father for him and called him Þorgnýr, supposing that he was a chieftain in Naumudalir. He knew that Þorsteinn had children, but the name of his wife was obscure to him. Therefore, he called her Ingibjörg, and, for the glory of the family, he made an heroic and conventional story describing how Þorsteinn had won her.

If credit were to be given to the family of Svarfaðardalr, their founder, Þorsteinn svǫrfuðr, must be made to carry out bold and adventurous deeds before he came to Iceland. It was after him that the valley was named and, in the minds of the people, he must have taken the place of a tribal father. Unfortunately, however, little was known of his life in continental Scandinavia

<sup>5</sup> *Sturlunga* p. IV.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 123 ff.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. *krytja um* (II, 16), *hljóðlátt* (VII, 59), *seilamottull* (II, 64). For further examples see Finnur Jónsson, *op. cit.* p. 123.

or of the noble achievements to be attributed to him there. Therefore, the author was forced to embellish the scanty legends which had come down to him.

Our author was no innovator in this, for the method had often been used before. When the author of *Gretla* wrote of the ancestors of his hero, he too attributed to them viking expeditions and achievements for which there is probably little historical foundation. Nevertheless, when *Grettis Saga* was composed, traditions were more vivid than they were during the early 14th century. Furthermore, at the time of the earlier family sagas, the respect for truth was greater than during the later period and, accordingly, they include little that is not credible to a medieval mind.

As historical traditions decayed, the respect for truth decayed with them. Authors no longer felt themselves confined to stories which were historically possible, and as this new attitude spread, the *lygisaga* began to grow more luxuriantly than it had ever done before. The fantastic and impossible were, however, no longer confined to the *lygisaga* and the *fornaldarsaga*, their proper and traditional place. They now began to encroach more and more deeply into the field of the family saga. Even the lives of genuine Icelanders were now used for fantastic romances and, in several instances, such as *Víglundar Saga*, authors gave way to the influence of foreign models.

The author of *Svarfd.*, however, did not readily lend himself to such influences as these. Probably, in fact, he had no direct knowledge of foreign literature and, when he wrote the life of Þorsteinn in Scandinavia, he must rely solely on stories popular in Iceland, such as he himself had heard. These he used indiscriminately and with a regrettable lack of artistic sense. It is for this reason that his work gives so enlightening a picture of the state of oral tradition during the age in which he lived.

In the early chapters (I-IX) of *Svarfd.*, we read that the hero Þorsteinn, like Grettir, Glúmr and many others who afterwards became famous men, began life as a despised and lazy youth,

in contrast to his favoured brother Þórólfr. In order to prove his manhood, however, Þorsteinn seals friendship with his brother, and together they sail to Svíasker. Here they defeat a powerful and treacherous viking called Ljótr hinn bleiki and slay him. After the battle, however, Þórólfr dies of his wounds and Þorsteinn, taking the viking's sword, makes his way to jarl Herrgoðr in Svíþjóð. The jarl invites him to remain until the following spring. As yule approaches, however, men at the court become downcast. When Þorsteinn asks the reason for this, he is told that they expect the visit of a berserk called Moldi, who terrorizes the district with his following of ruffians. They are twelve together. Moldi, we are told, demands that the jarl should give him his daughter Ingibjörg in marriage, or else that he should meet him on the *hólmr*. Although he had been a brave man in his time, jarl Herrgoðr is now unfit to accept the challenge on account of his great age. Accordingly, he offers his daughter to anyone who will undertake the *hólmganga* in his stead.

On yule-eve, when the fires burn brightest, Moldi and his men ride up to the hall and stride into it, wading through the flames as they bite the ends of their shields. Moldi goes before the jarl, and greets him with sinister courtesy. He asks politely that he may go round the hall, demanding whether anyone present considers himself *jafnsnjallr sér*. The jarl himself, however, shall be spared this question, for Moldi does not wish to insult a man so old and venerable.

Moldi then goes around the hall, asking every man his foolish question, and none dare challenge him. Finally, however, he comes to Þorsteinn, who lies with a cloak spread over his head.<sup>8</sup> Moldi asks who is this lout, who has not the good manners to sit up like other men. In due course Moldi asks Þorsteinn whether he considers himself his equal. Þorsteinn answers that he has no wish to be compared with Moldi :“ *því at ek kalla*

<sup>8</sup> A particularly frequent motive. In most cases it would seem to imply deep cogitation, or great stress of emotion, such as anger or grief. Cf. *Egils Saga* LVI, *Grettis Saga* XXXV, *Ljósvetninga Saga* XVII, *Kristni Saga* XII. For further examples see H. Falk *Altwestnordische Kleiderkunde* (Oslo 1919) p. 177.

*Þik þess kvikindis læti hafa, sem gengr á fjórum fótum, ok vér kollum meri.*" In reply, Moldi challenges Þorsteinn to meet him on the *hólmr* three nights after yule.

As they go out for the fight, Herroðr asks Þorsteinn what sword he intends to use, and Þorsteinn shows him that which he has taken from Ljótr hinn bleiki. This, the jarl tells him, will not do to fight against Moldi, and he gives him another covered with rust. They strike the boss on a stone, and the blade glitters like silver. Moldi must not see it before it strikes him, for his eye blunts every weapon with its glance.

Now they go to the *hólmr*, and the jarl offers to hold the shield before Þorsteinn. Þorsteinn, however, refuses this offer: "*ok skal ek sjálf bera skjöld minn.*" Moldi, as the challenger, recites the laws of *hólmganga* and afterwards demands, significantly, to see the sword with which Þorsteinn intends to fight. Þorsteinn, carefully concealing that which Herroðr had given him, shows Moldi the sword of Ljótr hinn bleiki. Ljótr, it turns out, was Moldi's brother.

They begin to fight, but, at this point (IX, 43), the MSS. have a considerable gap. From later chapters, we learn that Þorsteinn was victorious in the fight, and, as a reward, he obtained Ingibjörg, the jarl's daughter, in marriage. Herroðr offered Þorsteinn his own dominions after his death. Þorsteinn, however, returned to Norway. He settled later in northern Iceland and became the eponymous hero of the Svarfdœlir.

The most remarkable feature of this story is its lack of originality. In fact, it may be said that it hardly contains one original motive. Practically every detail recounted here has appeared elsewhere, and most of them several times. The sword-blunting eye, for instance, recurs in *Gunnlaugs Saga* (IX) and, most probably, in *Egils Saga* (LXV) and *Kormáks Saga* (XXII) besides other sources.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the game of *jafnsnilli* will be remembered from *Hrólf's Saga Kraka* (Rafn ch. XXII).

<sup>9</sup> Further instances of the sword blunted by the evil eye are given by H. Falk *Altordische Waffenkunde* p. 44.

In its outlines the story is no less conventional than in its details. It is, in fact, merely the widespread legend of the palace raided by a monster at night. In such cases, the owner is too old or too feeble to resist, and the hall remains a prey to nocturnal ravages until it is purged by some noble-minded stranger. If we were to read *Hrōðgār* for *Herrǫðr*, *Grendel* for *Moldi* and *Bēowulf* for *Þorsteinn*, we should conclude that we merely had to deal with an elaborated and rationalized version of the *Bēowulf* legend. It is, however, unnecessary to go so far afield, for parallels are numerous in Icelandic, not only in the *fornaldarsögur*, where we should most expect them, but in the *Íslendingasögur* as well.<sup>10</sup> The majority of these are staged outside Iceland, generally in Norway, for it is evident that the Icelanders early became less critical of events which were supposed to have happened abroad.

Among all the examples of this story in Icelandic, however, there is none so full nor so complete as that which we have retold from *Svarfd*. More precisely, it is two stories or more, for, combined with the tale of the harassed palace, we have that of the maiden delivered from the hands of a giant, troll or berserk.

In Icelandic, however, it is not unusual for the two stories to be combined as they are here. As a parallel, we may cite *Grettis Saga* c. XIX. In that passage, we read that Grettir, a despised and shipwrecked stranger in Norway, delivered the home of Þorfinnr from the incursions of Þórir þomb and Ógmundr illi. In doing so, he defended the honour of Þorfinnr's wife and daughter.

There is one saga, however, which gives a far closer parallel to *Svarfd*. than any we have mentioned. In *Víga-Glúms Saga* (*VGl.*)<sup>11</sup> we are told (cc. II-IV) that Eyjólf, the father of Glúmr, an Icelander by birth, went abroad in his youth, just as

<sup>10</sup> See Heinz Dehmer: *Primitives Erzählungsgut in den Íslendingasögur* (Leipzig 1927), particularly c. I passim and pp. 86 ff.

<sup>11</sup> References to Guðmundur Þorláksson's edition: *Íslenskar Fornögur I* (Copenhagen 1880).



Þorsteinn in *Svarfd.* had done. Eyjólfur went to Norway, and was the guest of the brothers Ívarr and Hreiðarr at Vors. At first he was held in some contempt by his Norwegian companions, until he had proved his valour by slaying a young bear. One winter, Þorsteinn, a kinsman of these brothers, came to Vors, and said that he would have to surrender his sister to the berserk Ásgautr if they would not help him. Fittingly, it was the stranger Eyjólfur who gave this help and dared to meet the berserk on the *hólmr*. Ívarr offered to hold the shield before him, but this Eyjólfur proudly refused, with the proverb *sjálfs hönd er hollust*. The berserk now recited the laws of *hólmganga* and they began to fight. Eyjólfur was victorious and, as a reward, he was offered the sister of Þorsteinn and material wealth as well. These he refused too, most probably because he had already chosen another woman, Ástriðr, who was to become the mother of Víga-Glúmr.

Similarity between this story and that of *Svarfd.* is obvious. It may be said that it includes practically no motive which does not find its counterpart in *Svarfd.* The story of Eyjólfur is, however, briefer and less detailed than that of *Svarfd.* for *Svarfd.* contains many motives which are not to be seen here. Most prominent among them are, perhaps, the number twelve, the game of *jafnsnilli* and the hero lying with the cloak spread over his head.

*VGl.*, however, contains another story somewhat similar to that which we have retold from *Svarfd.* In *VGl.* cc. V-VI, we read that Glúmr, at that time a backward youth of fifteen, went to Norway as his father had done. His exploits there, however, are reminiscent of Þorsteinn svørfuðr rather than of Eyjólfur. When he came to Vors, he went to the home of his Norwegian grandfather Vigfúss, by this time an old man. At the approach of winter (*at vetrnóttum*) a feast (the *disablót*) was held in the hall at Vors, but men appeared to be less merry than one might have hoped on such an occasion. As the evening drew on and men were set at table, they were told that Björn járnhauss had come to the hall with his following of ruffians.

They were twelve together. It was Björn's custom, we are told, to visit such gatherings uninvited, and to ask if any thought themselves equal in manhood to himself (*jafnsnjallr sér*). Björn did not spare Vigfúss this question; nonetheless, he showed the same courtesy towards his host as Þorsteinn had done towards Herrðor. Vigfúss answered that perhaps, when he was a young man, he had been Björn's equal, but surely not now, for he was old and weak. Finally, Björn came to Glúmr. Glúmr lay on the raised floor (*pallr*), and presumably, since it was his custom (VI, 23), his cloak was spread over his head. Björn objected to Glúmr's ill manners, kicked him and asked if he was *jafnsnjallr sér*. Glúmr answered only that he had no wish to be compared with such a ruffian, for: *út á Íslandi mundi sá maðr kallaðr fól, er þann veg léti sem þú lætr*. Glúmr then jumped up, struck the berserk with a firebrand and drove him out of the house. On the next day, men heard of Björn's death. Vigfúss invited Glúmr to take his own dominions after him, but the Icelander answered that he must first attend to his own interests at home.

This story, as will be seen, is considerably closer to that of *Svarfd.* than the story of Eyjólf. Nevertheless, the story of *Svarfd.* has several important motives which are absent here. Strangely enough, however, it is precisely on these points that the story of *Svarfd.* corresponds so strikingly to that of Eyjólf. In the story of Glúmr, for instance, we see that there is no *hólmganga* with all its ritual. Neither insults the other's courage, and there is no woman to be delivered from a berserk lover. If, however, we were to combine the motives contained in the two stories of *VGl.*, we should be able to reconstruct a story very similar to that of *Svarfd.* At any rate, apart from any general similarity, our stories would agree closely on no less than nineteen points.

If we call the story of Þorsteinn *Svarfd.*, that of Eyjólfur *VGl.E.* and that of Glúmr *VGl.G.*, we shall see that the last two practically make up the first. All three of them include much common matter, but in instances where *VGl.E.* fails to show correspondence with *Svarfd.*, the missing motive is most often to be found in *VGl.G.* The converse is equally true, and, speaking generally, we may say that *Svarfd.* = *VGl.E.* + *VGl.G.* The following points may show the general truth of this equation:—

*Svarfd.* (cc. VII-IX)

*VGl.E.* (c. IV).

*VGl.G.* (c. VI).

A. Nú leið at jólum . . .  
(VII, 16).

[Þat var einn vetr . . .]  
(IV, II).

Þar var veizla búin at vetr-  
nóttum ok gørt disablót . . .  
(VI, 24).

B. ok gerðisk skipan á lund  
þeira; þar hafði verit glaumur  
ok gleði mikil, en nú tóksk  
þat af, ok gerðisk hjóðlátt  
í hollinni. (VII, 16).

Þá var eigi svá mikil gleði,  
sem líkligt mundi þykkja  
fyrir fagnaðar sakir ok vina  
fundar (VI, 27).

C. (Hirðmaðr segir): “Maðr  
heitir Moldi; hann er vfk-  
ingr eðr berserkr; þeir eru  
tólf saman. (VII, 28).

Þá var sagt, at sá maðr var  
kominn at boenum með tólfta  
mann, er Björn hét ok kallaðr  
járnhauss; hann var ber-  
serkr mikill. (VI, 36).

*Svarfá.* (cc. VII-IX)*VGl.E.* (c. IV).*VGl.G.* (c. VI).

D. Moldi vill mæla til mægða  
við jarl, en til samfara við  
dóttur hans Ingibjörgu . . .  
(VII, 32).

. . . hann mundi láta sys-  
tur sína, ef þeir vildi hann  
eigi efla . . . (IV, 19; cf. E  
below).

E. ella býðr hann honum á  
hólm þrem nóttum eftir  
jól . . . (VII, 34).

(Ásgautr) hafði skorat á  
hann til hólmgöngu fyrir þá  
søk at hann synjaði honum  
systur sinnar. (IV, 14).

F. "Myndi hann (jarl) skjótt  
kjósa ef hann væri ungr  
maðr, en nú er hann ór  
bardögum fyrir aldrs sakar."  
(VII, 35).

"Em ek ekki traustr til  
hólmgöngu, nema ek njóta  
yðvarrar gæfu við." (IV, 20).

"Ek em gamall ok ørvasi."  
(VI, 61).

G. "Þat hefi ek talat" segir  
jarl "at þeim manni mynda  
ek gifta dóttur mína, er  
þenna mann gæti af ráðit."  
(VII, 46).

Þá leita þeir við menn sína,  
hverr þat vildi vinna sér til  
konu, at ganga á hólm við  
Ásgaut. (IV, 24).

*Svarfd.* (cc.VII-IX)

H. Þá er eíðarnir váru sem bjartastir, var jarli sagt at Moldi reið at höllinni. (VII, 57).

I. gengu síðan inn í höllina tólf saman. (VII, 59).

J. Moldi segir: “Ek vil, at þú leyfir mér at ganga um höllina, ok spyrja, hvárt nokkurr telsk mér jafnsnjallr.” (VII, 68).

K. Síðan gengr hann útarr frá öndvegi fyrir hvern mann, ok spurði hvárt nokkurr teldisk honum jafnsnjallr, þar til er hann kom fyrir öndvegismann (i.e. Þorsteinn, VII, 74).

*VGl.E.* (c. IV).

Ok er á leið kveldit, er menn váru komnir . . . Ok er menn váru komnir undir borð . . . (VI, 26 and 36).

En Björn gekk í skálann inn . . . (VI, 45).

(Björn) leitaði orðheilla við menn, ok spurði á enn æðra bekk enn yzta mann, hvárt hann væri jafnsnjallr honum. VI, 46).

Síðan spurði hann hvern at öðrum, þar til at hann kom fyrir öndvegít (i.e. Vigfúss, VI, 48).

*VGl.G.* (c. VI).

*Svarfá.* (cc. VII-IX)

L. Sá (Þorsteinn) lét dragask  
foetr af stokki ok hafði  
breiddan feld yfir höfuð sér  
(VII, 77).

M. Moldi spyr, hverr sá  
hrottinn væri, er þar sæti  
eigi upp, sem aðrir menn, í  
öndvegi . . . Moldi segir:  
"þú ert drjúglátr, eðr telsk  
þú jafnsjallr mér?" (VII,  
78).

N. "Eigi nenni ek því,"  
segir Þorsteinn "at teljask  
jafnsjallr þér, því at ek  
kalla þik þess kvikindis læti  
hafa, sem gengr á fjórum  
fótum, ok vér kóllum meri"  
(VII, 82).

*VGl.E.* (c. IV).*VGl.G.* (c. VI).

Þá er aðrir menn drukku eða  
höfðu aðra gleði, þá lá hann  
(Glúmr) ok hafði feld á höfði  
sér (VI, 22, cf. VI, 65).

"Hví liggir sjá maðr svá"  
kvað Björn, "en sitr eigi?"  
. . . Björn spyrnir á honum  
føti sínum, ok mælti, at hann  
skyldi sitja upp sem aðrir  
menn, ok spurði ef hann væri  
jafnsjallr honum (VI, 65).

(Glúmr): "Vil ek af því engu  
við þik jafnask, at út á Íslandi  
mundi sá maðr kallaðr fól, er  
þann veg léti sem þú lætr"  
(VI, 73).

*Svarfd.* (cc. VII-IX)

O. Jarl bauðsk at halda skildi fyrir honum, en Þorsteinn kvað, at engi maðr skyldi sik í hættu hafa fyrir hann (IX, 7).

P. Kvaðsk Moldi mundi segja upp hólmgöngulög (IX, 10).

Q. (Moldi): “Þrem mörkum silfrs skal sik af hólmi leysa, sá er sárr verðr eða óvígr.” Þorsteinn mælti: “Þó at þar liggji við sex merkr heldr en þrjár, þá þykki mér því betr, sem ek tek meira” (IX, 15).

*VGL.E.* (c. IV).

Ívarr bauð at halda skildi fyrir honum. Eyjólftr svarar: “vel er þat boðit, en mér mun mest um hugat, ok er satt et fornkveðna, at sjálfrs hönd er hollust.” (IV, 44).

(Ásgautr): “Lögin mun ek þér segja upp um hólmgöngu (IV, 52).

(Ásgautr): “.III. merkr skal mik leysa af hólmi, ef ek verð sárr.” Eyjólftr svarar: “óskyldt ætla ek vera at halda lögum við þik, er þú döemir sjálfr hvers þú ert verðr, fyrir því at á váru landi mundi slíkt þykkja þrælsgjöld . . .” (IV, 53).

*VGL.G.* (c. VI).

*Svarfd.* (cc.VII-IX)

R. (Þorsteinn): "þat var Eyjólfur mælti: "er eigi þat sagt, at þú kynnr eigi at at þér ægi við mik at þerjask? hræðask, hver ógn sem þer Kann þat vera at þér sé eigi væri boðin; nú skil ek, at þú vel farit, er þú æðrask mikinn vill bera bleyðiorð fyrir mér" mann, en gambrar yfir litlum." (IV, 48).

*VGL.G.* (c. VI).

S. "Mun ek auka þína söemð í því, at þú ráðir ríki þessu eftir minn dag ok komir aldri til Nóregs" (X, 15).

Vigfúss bauð Glúmi at taka ríki eftir sik ok virðing . . . (VI, 91).

Considering this close similarity, there can be no doubt that the relevant passages of the two sagas are related. It remains, however, to explain their relationship. *VGL.*, as is generally agreed, is a much earlier work than *Svarfd.* We see that it was made in the days when local legends of settlers and their sons were still living and vivid. As a result, it contains much material valuable to the student of mythology and legal history. Indeed, Finnur Jónsson even suggested that it was written before the end of the 12th century.

At first sight we might incline, therefore, to suspect that *Svarfd.* had been influenced in this passage by the written *VGL.* This, however, is improbable. In spite of the close similarity which we have shown between these passages, their differences are many and radical. In the first place, it is notable that in *Svarfd.* all of the motives are included in one story,



and it is unlikely that so illiterate an author, as we have seen that of *Svarfd.* to be, would consciously weld together two stories from the written *VGl.* It should be added that *Svarfd.* contains a considerable number of motives wholly absent in *VGl.* The latter, for instance, has nothing corresponding to the rust-covered sword and the evil eye, to which practically the whole of c. VIII of *Svarfd.* is devoted. We have already seen that the author of *Svarfd.* was little influenced by literary sources. It should be added that, in some instances, the two sagas use similar expressions under different circumstances (e.g. in K), and in others the same motives reappear in a different context and without verbal similarity (e.g. in S).

Earlier in this paper, we expressed the view that the chapters in *Svarfd.* with which we deal are an integral part of that saga. In fact, they are in no way out of keeping with the rest of it, and there is little reason to suppose that this saga has been seriously interpolated since it left its author's hands. In the case of *VGl.*, however, the situation is somewhat different. Its earliest extant MS. is found in *Mǫðruvallabók*, which is believed to have been written during the first half of the 14th century. In its present form, however, *VGl.* is agreed to contain several extensive interpolations. These include the story of *Hlǫðu-Kálfr* (cc. XIII-XV), that of *Skúta* (c. XVI) and that of *Hríseyjar-Narfi* (c. XXVII). All of these passages break the sequence of the story and, in addition to them, there are other passages where the text has been tampered with.

Indeed, it is particularly in the early chapters of *VGl.* that we see indications of revision. In c. III, as we read how *Eyjólfr* slew the bear, we find ourselves in the realm of the post-classical or of the *fornaldarsaga* rather than that of the archaic family saga. Still more foreign to the archaic nature of *VGl.* are the Norwegian adventures and the berserk fables of *Eyjólfr* and his son. Admittedly, the most classical sagas tell us of heroes who went abroad in their youth. *Snorri goði*, for instance, did so, but *Eyrbyggja* (c. XIII) tells us little of his life there.

A closer parallel to the stories of Glúmr and Eyjólfur is perhaps to be seen in *Grettis Saga*, for Grettir too spent a part of his youth in Norway. It is likely, however, that some of the more extravagant accounts of his achievements there, such as his struggle with Kárr the Old, have been embellished by a reviser, whose hand is so often apparent throughout the text. The story of Þorsteinn and Jökull in *Vatnsdæla Saga* (cc. III f.), containing several motives in common with *VGl.* and *Svarfd.*, may perhaps have arisen in the same way. *Vatnsdæla Saga*, like *Grettis Saga*, is constructed on a classical foundation, but, in its present form, it contains much post-classical embellishment. In *Landnámabók* (ed. 1900, pp. 59 and 182), we find the same story of Jökull, but in a simpler and, without doubt, an earlier form.

It is, however, unnecessary to go so far as Vigfússon did, in discussing *Svarfd.* (cc. I-X), and assign passages to the 16th or 17th centuries simply because they contain a number of stereotyped motives. Nevertheless, a superfluity of such motives is generally characteristic of a post-classical text. Accordingly, since cc. I-X are clearly an integral part of *Svarfd.*, they should be taken, as Finnur Jónsson points out,<sup>12</sup> to indicate that the saga is somewhat late. Similarly in *VGl.* the superfluity of these motives in cc. IV and VI is most easily explained as a sign of post-classicism. This, however, does not mean that *VGl.* as a whole should be assigned to the post-classical period. On the contrary, it contains many passages which are among the most typically classical of all Old Norse prose, and its author shows himself to be no slavish follower of traditional motivation.

Most probably, then, we are justified in concluding that cc. IV and VI of *VGl.* have been embellished, like many other passages in this text, by the hand of a late reviser. It is probably part of the original saga that Glúmr and Eyjólfur went to Norway in their youth, but the details of their adventures there are more likely to have been inserted at some later date.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 125.

Such a view would most easily explain the abrupt change from the austere sentences of c. V to the loose construction of c. VI.

It is suggested, then, that the details of cc. IV and VI were introduced into *VGl.* somewhat later than its original composition, though necessarily before 1350. The date of composition of *Svarfd.* as we have seen, cannot be decided with any degree of precision. Nevertheless, it is clear that it must have reached its present form at some time between those two dates. It is not improbable therefore that the berserk motives were introduced into *VGl.* during the same generation as *Svarfd.* was written. The sagas of *Svarfd.* and of *VGl.* are close geographical neighbours. Both of them deal with Eyjafjörðr in north-eastern Iceland. *Svarfd.* is concerned with its outer, and *VGl.* with the inner districts. From Grund, the home of Þorsteinn, to Þverá, that of Víga-Glúmr, is a distance of some thirty-five miles. Following Finnur Jónsson, we stated earlier in this paper that the author of *Svarfd.* was intimately acquainted with the district of which he wrote, and was most probably a native of it. The same has been said of the author of *VGl.* and, it may be added, some of the interpolations in this saga (e.g. c. XXVII) show the same detailed topographical knowledge as other passages in that text. It is suggested, moreover, that *Möðruvallabók* was itself written in Eyjafjörðr and, not impossibly, in the monastery of Munkaþverá, which once was Glúmr's home.<sup>13</sup> It would seem likely, therefore, that *VGl.* did not leave that district until *Möðruvallabók* was written, and its final form was reached.

We may suggest, then, that the relevant passages in these two sagas were written in the same district of Iceland and during the same generation. In that case, their relationship must be even closer than we had previously suggested. We might, in fact, conclude that the similarity between *Svarfd.* and *VGl.* is due to the fact that such motives as they relate were commonly grouped together among story-tellers popular in Eyjafjörðr at

<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. Ó. Sveinsson: *Corpus Codicum islandicorum medii ævi V*, introduction pp. 21-2 (Copenhagen 1933).

that period. Alternatively, and this seems more probable, we may suggest that the relevant passages in *Svarfd.* and *VGl.* were the work of men whose lives were closely associated.

To carry the latter suggestion still further, and to say that they were the work of one man, would perhaps be rash. Nevertheless, such an hypothesis would, at least, be a pleasing one. It might, in fact, imply that after he had finished his "brutal" *Svarfd.*, this author turned his vandalistic energy to *VGl.* This would, to some extent, explain the contradictions of style and construction which characterise *VGl.* in its present state.

In this paper, we have called attention to the similarity between *Svarfd.* c. VII-IX and *VGl.* cc. IV and VI. This similarity is seen to be so close that it cannot be due to mere chance. As an explanation, we suggested that it might be due to the geographical proximity of the districts with which the two sagas deal, and in which their authors most probably lived. Alternatively, we suggested that the similarity was due to intimate association between the authors of *Svarfd.* and the relevant passages in *VGl.*

Since cc. IV and VI are probably not contemporary with the original *VGl.*, the latter explanation is perhaps the more plausible.

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