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(La 'Heimskringla' e le Saghe dei Re / 'Heimskringla' and the Kings' Sagas)

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ABSTRACTS

ÁRMANN JAKOBSSON, 'Inventing a saga form: the development of the Kings' Sagas',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 1-22.

This study concerns form and the aesthetics of the Kings' Sagas, a subject that has been somewhat neglected by previous kings' saga scholars. Among the formal categories that will be given particular attention are the role of anecdotal material and skaldic verse within the framework of a larger saga. Five texts usually categorised as kings' sagas will receive particular attention. The article aims at highlighting important concerns for further study of the aesthetics and form of the kings' sagas, using the texts to demonstrate the development and the variation.

SVERRE BAGGE, 'One god and one king: the unification of Norway according to Snorri Sturluson',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 23-47.

This article is a diachronic analysis of Snorri's account of the unification of Norway, partly supplementing and partly revising the argument put forward in my book *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley 1991). During this discussion, I will attempt to show that Snorri regarded Harald Finehair's conquest as a radical change in the history of the country. Although there was no peaceful transmission of Harald's power during the following generations, Snorri depicts all the conflicts in the period up to the mid-eleventh century as being linked to the question of who should succeed to Harald's inheritance. This account is the result of a considerable reworking of events on Snorri's part. Using only a few scattered skaldic poems and various stories of conflicts within the country, he builds a picture of a conqueror with the explicit aim of creating a Norwegian kingdom and a systematic plan to subdue the various parts of the country. In accordance with the genealogies created by his predecessors, he identifies the two Olafs as Harald's descendants, depicts the younger of them as explicitly proclaiming himself the heir to the realm Harald conquered, and, by securing the final victory of Christianity, fulfilling the promise in Harald's appeal to an Almighty God, unknown to him. Finally, Snorri shows how the combination of Olaf's sainthood and the Danish tyranny after his death united the people in resistance to the conquerors and laid the foundation for the more stable kingdom that flourished in the following period.

MASSIMILIANO BAMPI, 'The king in rhyme: some observations on *Óláfs Ríma Haraldssonar* as a reworking of Snorri's *Óláfs Saga Helga*',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 49-65.

The oldest extant example of the *rímur* genre is *Óláfs ríma Haraldssonar*, which is preserved only in *Flateyjarbók* and in a number of paper manuscripts derived from it. According to a commonly shared opinion, this *ríma* is based on Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga*. The aim of the present study is to make some observations on *Óláfs ríma Haraldssonar* as a reworking of Snorri's account of St Óláfr's life in *Heimskringla* in order to discuss some of its major characteristics at the content level. In particular, the attention will be directed at some thematic aspects of the *ríma*, with special reference to the illustration of the king's qualities and to the depiction of the relationship between the king and members of the two opposing armies before and during the battle at Stiklastaðir.

ADELE CIPOLLA, 'A legendary ancestry for poets: *Skáldatal* in *Heimskringla* and *Edda* manuscripts',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 65-89.

As is widely known, *Skáldatal* is a list of court poets and of their aristocratic patrons, from the 9th to the 13th century, i.e. from *Starkaðr inn gamli* to the Sturlung family. It is recorded twice, both inside Snorri's *Heimskringla* and in *Edda* manuscripts. However, being contained in a shorter and in a longer version, respectively, in *Kringla* (the lost vellum codex of the Norwegian kings' history) and in *Uppsala-Edda*, *Skáldatal* was omitted in some editions of both Snorri's works (and, before them, in the 17th-century transcripts of the lost *Kringla*). In spite of editorial attempts to publish it as a unique autonomous writing, by means of hybrid editions which conflated the *varia lectio* in new redactional units, its textual variability is highly meaningful and reveals different contextual attitudes. The inventory of these specific textual issues is the main aim of the present paper.

MARIA CRISTINA LOMBARDI, 'Poetics and politics in *Haralds Saga Sigurðarsonar*',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 91-115.

Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar contains many skaldic stanzas composed by different poets and by King Haraldr himself. The aim of this article is to discuss the rhetoric of self-praise and other techniques that Haraldr Sigurðarson and the skalds around him employ, examining the hypothesis of their function as rhetorical speeches. Through analyzing some skaldic stanzas of Haraldr's, we can observe a great concern and control over the process of memorialization through the correct spreading of information regarding his deeds. As it clearly emerges, Haraldr stresses the strict link between him and his brother St Olaf, in order to present himself as the rightful heir to the Norwegian throne. It is also possible to notice a change between the stanzas composed before and after Haraldr Sigurðarson's ascent to the throne with respect to the choice and density of kennings and other rhetorical devices, mirroring the passage from being a Viking to becoming a king.

JOHN MCKINNEL, 'Baptising an image: rivers in Pre-Christian and early Christian tradition',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 117-140.

This paper suggests that after the conversion of the North to Christianity, the underlying emotional colouring of religious imagery changed much more slowly than explicit mythology and religious belief did. An instance of this can be seen in the associations of rivers, which in sources derived from pre-Christian culture are usually seen as dangerous and threatening, whereas their associations in Christian tradition are mostly positive and often associated with baptism and salvation. The paper

looks at episodes in the synoptic histories and *Orkneyinga saga* in which rulers bathe in the River Jordan, and shows that the expected Christian associations are present only where there is a clear propagandist motive. Elsewhere, the positive associations of bathing in the Jordan are undermined, either by discordant details within the episode itself, or by later events in the protagonist's life that parallel but undercut it. In *Morkinskinna* these episodes generally use Christian-derived imagery, while in Snorri's *Heimskringla* they include some echoes of pre-Christian mythology, but both adopt a view of rivers and other stretches of water which seems emotionally akin to the pessimistic pre-Christian attitude towards them.

MARCELLO MELI, 'La preistoria del *Ynglingatal*',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 141-157.

Vǫlundi hinum fróða

THE PREHISTORY OF 'YNGLINGATAL'. The paper aims to examine not *Ynglingatal* itself but rather its role in Snorri's historiographical perspective. To this end, a description of the main genres of poetic expression among the ancient Germanic peoples will be provided, starting from the earliest reports in Tacitus. The role of 'genealogical poetry' in Germanic historiographical tradition will be analysed, from Jordanes to Widukind and then in Saxo and Snorri, occasionally considering also juridical texts (*Leges Burgundionum*). The aim of the investigation is twofold, as it purposes on the one hand to show how traditional Germanic poetry belongs to the historiography of the non-Orosian tradition, and on the other hand to document how Snorri brings to completion the slow and laborious process that had begun with Jordanes. The paper finally intends to stress the ideological value of *Ynglingatal* in Snorri's historiographical programme, both as a filter from the distant past into the recent past of Harald Fair hair's political reform and as a necessary complement to Ari Þorgilsson the Wise's historiography.

AGNETA NEY, 'Young men's journeys in *Heimskringla* and the influence of queens',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 159-169.

In Scandinavian Viking Age society, expeditions abroad were a prerequisite for political and economic power, as described in *Heimskringla*, and also to some extent in contemporary European medieval romances, as in Parzival. However, in the latter, the journeys are by nature an individual progress of a knight. The aim of this article is to study young men's journeys in *Heimskringla*, and above all, in relation to this, the role of the queens. Not only the departure but also the welcoming home of young men will be of importance to the analysis. For example, in contrast to the romantic farewells in chivalric literature, *Heimskringla* seems to reflect young men's leaving home without the influence of knightly ideals, but on the other hand, the welcoming motif seems to have similarities with European romance narratives. The article thus investigates how political power, according to Snorri, is legitimized and manifested over time, and it may also shed light on Snorri as a historian and on his use of different sources.

GIOVANNA SALVUCCI, 'Grand finales in the Kings' Sagas between Christian piety and Germanic stoicism',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 4 (2012), pp. 171-203.

The Old Norse kings' sagas often display grand finales and impressive endings. From time to time, they also display the so-called 'beautiful deaths', i.e. those deaths that have the immediate advantage of rousing admiration in a secular sense and to convey immortality, at least in the

memories of people. The authors of the kings' sagas seem to be fascinated by the ability to endure physical suffering and to maintain a virile and cool attitude at the moment of death, and by glorious and spectacular deaths on the battlefield, as were the poets from whom they took inspiration and information. However, with the conversion to Christianity, the heathen conception of a 'beautiful death' interpreted as being a violent death, was gradually replaced by the notion of 'good death', that not only required the fulfilment of the last duties to ensure eternal life but, if it was a violent death, it had to occur while fighting for a just cause. As the Christian faith became firmly established, its insistence that a king should be morally worthy of his role became more important: a king who was thought to be living in a state of mortal sin or to be suffering damnation in Hell after his death was seen as being in fundamental conflict with his royal function. The aim of this paper is to discover, through the methods of literary analysis, the attitudes of 13th-century historians towards the death of their royal characters in the light of Christianity, the way they coped with the new dictates of their faith and how they attempted a reconciliation between Germanic stoicism and Christian piety.