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From Sermon to Saga: Clerical Modes of Composition in *Dínus saga drambláta*

By

Michael David Lawson

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Scandinavian Languages and Literatures

and the Concurrent Degree

in

Medieval Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Kate Heslop, Chair

Jonas Wellendorf

Henry Ravenhall

Summer 2026

From Sermon to Saga: Clerical Modes of Composition in *Dínus saga drambláta*

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By

Michael David Lawson

Abstract

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By

Michael David Lawson

Doctor of Philosophy in Scandinavian Languages and Literatures with a concurrent degree in Medieval Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Kate Heslop, Chair

This dissertation examines the compositional methods used to create *Dínus saga drambláta*, a fourteenth-century original Icelandic romance whose elaborate plot has often been treated as evidence of the exuberance or excess of the late medieval *riddarasögur*. Focusing primarily on the saga's oldest redaction, preserved fragmentarily in AM 575a 4to, this study argues that the saga's perceived excess follows a coherent literary design shaped by modes of composition developed and circulated through medieval clerical, pedagogical, and rhetorical culture. The saga gathers inherited materials, organizes its narrative scenes through exemplary logic, and allows the speech of its wise characters to articulate their ethical implications.

This study traces this process across three related levels of composition. The second chapter reads *Dínus saga* through the medieval compositional practices of *compilatio*. Its heterogeneous mixture of biblical, encyclopedic, exemplary, romance, and supernatural materials acquires new functions through the process of *ordinatio*, or arrangement. The manuscript evidence of AM 575a 4to further preserves a visibly articulated sequence of textual units that allowed readers to navigate the saga's shifting locales and escalating narrative tensions. Compilation emerges therein as an active form of authorship in which inherited matter becomes a new literary construction through its organization.

The third chapter examines the saga's exemplary logic. The rivalry between Dínus of Alexandria and Philotemia of Bláland proceeds through repeated acts of deception, humiliation, and retaliation. Dínus's guarded beauty, contempt for women, social exclusivity, and appetite for novelty become vulnerabilities that his intellectual rival Philotemia exploits, while her own desire for superiority eventually draws her into a reciprocal cycle of public disgrace. The scenes involving the tricks and their reversals utilize exemplary logic to communicate ethical lessons, both to the parties that witness them within the saga as well as to its reading audience.

Chapter four then turns to the presence of sententious speech within the saga. The nuance of the saga's ultimate moral message is therefore communicated through its characters, specifically as a critique of wisdom. The contrast between the wise and enigmatic counselors Heremita and Anachorita provides the chapter's central distinction. Heremita's wisdom identifies causes, restrains destructive action, protects life, and acknowledges its own limits. Anachorita's

knowledge is equally effective, but it supplies rulers with the means to pursue desires shaped by injury and revenge and arises from a diabolical source. Their opposition directs attention toward the origin, purpose, and obligations of knowledge rather than toward wisdom as an abstract virtue.

Collectively, these chapters offer an account of how one representative sample of late medieval Icelandic romance brings together learned habits of gathering, exemplary narrative forms, and sententious speech formulations into a coherent whole. *Dínus saga drambláta* thus emerges as a deliberate vernacular composition whose originality lies in the arrangement and application of inherited forms.

Dedication

For my dearest wife, Ashley, for our beautiful children Erik and Nora, and for those friends and family who shared in this journey but were unable to see its end.

"Berr er hverr at baki, nema sér bróður eigi…"[1]

-- *Brennu-Njáls saga*

[1] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, *Íslenzk fornit XII*, ed., Einar Ól. Sveinsson (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1954), 152.

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To describe this study as a labor of love would understate the time, energy, and thought that have gone into its completion. I first encountered the *riddarasögur* at the University of California, Berkeley, in a survey course taught by my dissertation chair, Kate Heslop. I was immediately captivated by the bizarreness, imagination, and sheer narrative resplendence of these sagas, as well as by how much work remained to be done on them. *Clári saga* became my first great fascination, my introduction to the maiden-king romances, and the subject of my earliest academic publication. These stories have since brought me into contact with a generous international community of scholars from whom I have learned so very much.

I owe my deepest gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee, who supported this project through its many iterations, and who continue to encourage me. My committee chair, Professor Kate Heslop, has guided this work from its earliest stages and helped me learn how to ask better questions of difficult texts and, perhaps most importantly, to give myself the grace during the process to do so. From our illustrious Scandinavian department, Professor Jonas Wellendorf has continuously brought intellectual rigor, patience, and an extraordinary command of medieval Icelandic clerical culture to every stage of this study. The French department's Professor Henry Ravenhall has unceasingly offered incisive criticism and helped me think more carefully about the wider medieval traditions within which this study belongs. Their confidence in the project sustained it through periods when my own confidence faltered.

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This dissertation bears the marks of every conversation, correction, recommendation, and act of encouragement that I received from these scholars, teachers, colleagues, and friends. Its shortcomings remain my own, but whatever value it possesses owes much to them. This completed study is offered, in part, as an expression of my gratitude. Thank you, sincerely, for helping me bring it into being.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Many earlier men and wise masters have sought out, in many ways, arts and learning together, in order to compile them for those who come after, for remembrance and entertainment. And many of those men who were learned in many tongues traveled widely through the world for the sake of curiosity, to become wise about those matters and about the greatest events that have occurred in each land. And according to their accounts, each person who afterwards learned these same arts has rendered them into his own language, while some compiled them in Latin and later expanded them further, with a greater abundance of words than were at first. And many have thus shown their eloquence."

Adonias Saga, Prologue[1]

1.1 General Introduction

The opening chapter of the fourteenth-century *riddarasaga Adonias saga,* offers a distinct and revealing account of how stories come into being. Its compiler imagines that earlier, learned men sought out knowledge, gathering materials from many sources, translating them into new languages, expanding them with greater abundance, and reshaping it for later audiences, both for reasons of posterity as well as entertainment. Accordingly, the value of these tales does not reside in their originality, but in the skill with which such borrowed knowledge is compiled and arranged. The prologue also gives this work a purpose. Learned stories preserve knowledge for those who come afterward, and they offer entertainment to those who hear them. Later in the prologue, the compiler explains that a tale received for pleasure may still draw its audience away from folly and from the evil thoughts inspired by the devil.[2] Entertainment and instruction are consequently allowed to inhabit the same narrative space. A marvelous story can delight its audience while still carrying the judgment and moral concern that shaped its composition. This account provides a useful point of departure for the study of the late medieval Icelandic romances, as their study must account for both inheritance as well as transformation.

Shaun F. D. Hughes identifies a comparable form of literary fluency in the original *riddarasögur*. In a recent survey of the field, he compares the "intuitive production" of prose

[1] *Adonias saga*, *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances III*, edited by Agnete Loth (Copenhagen: Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, 1963), 69. ("<M>Arger fyre menn og froder meistarar leitvdv áá marga vega lister og fræde saman ath setia epter komandi monnum til minnis og skemtanar. og marger af þeim þeir menn sem frædder voru morgvm tungvm fórv vid<a> vm heiminn | fyrir saker fórvitni. ath verda viser þeirra hluta. og hinna stæstu atburda sem j þvi landi sierhveriv hafa giórzt. og epter þeirra frasógn hafa huerer sem einer þær saumu frædisaugr fært til sinnar túngv enn sumer sett j latinu og aukit so út sidan med meire fióld ordanna enn j fystv voru framit. og hafa þar marger áá synt sina malsnilld.") All translations here, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

[2] Ibid., 74.

romance with the "kaleidoscopic shapes" formed by the kennings of *rímur* and *þulur*. His comparison gives narrative composition a repertoire comparable to the inherited diction available to a poet, though the restrictions governing prose romance are less immediately evident. Hughes describes the process in the following terms:

> ...[C]ompilers of these sagas worked in a way parallel to how the rímur poets used kennings as they composed their verses, working as they did under severe metrical restrictions...I would suggest that the saga compilers also distributed their motifs in a way that must also have been virtually intuitive, steeped as they were in the rhetoric of their métier. The task for the modern reader is to develop a strategy for evaluating the use of motifs by a given compiler.[3]

Hughes suggests here that saga compilers operated within a defined system for deploying narrative material, one that modern readers must discern and evaluate. His description of their work as "intuitive" may describe the apparent ease with which these writers distribute familiar materials, but they obscure the training that made such fluency possible. However, his formulation is valuable precisely because it recognizes that saga prose, particularly that of the late medieval Icelandic romances, is not mechanically derivative or narratively inferior, as has been argued by past scholarship, but is produced through some type of instinctive process.[4] Yet, while Hughes' description of the phenomenon is apt, he leaves unresolved the underlying question of mechanism. What remains unclear is the organizing logic behind this practice of *riddarasögur* composition. The task is then to answer what, precisely, structures this apparently "intuitive" design.

This dissertation offers an answer to that question through an analysis of *Dínus saga drambláta*, a fourteenth-century original Icelandic romance. The saga serves as a test case for the construction of late medieval Icelandic prose narrative because it makes the work of construction unusually visible. Learned geography stands beside romance adventure, exemplary reversals grow out of magical contests, and moments of counsel condense the consequences of those contests into memorable speech. These elements acquire coherence through habits of composition associated with clerical education, where the gathering of inherited material was inseparable from the work of giving it a useful order. Such habits could be carried into vernacular writing and adapted to the demands of romance. The writers of the original *riddarasögur* were clerically trained scribes. Their education gave them repeated practice in handling received knowledge, while their work as writers placed them within a literary culture where stories circulated beside other forms of learned material. They could draw upon narratives already known in Iceland and upon scenes whose shape would have been familiar from other romances. Names and imagined geographies carried associations from earlier works. Exemplary stories provided recognizable ways of joining conduct to consequence. Proverbs and *sententiae* offered language through which experience could be interpreted. This repertoire was sustained through the contact of writers with books and with one another. Geraldine Barnes has described

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[3] Shaun F. D. Hughes, "Stories Found on Stone Walls: Contemporary Research on the Riddarasögur," *Scandinavian Studies* 93, no. 1 (2021), 132-3.

[4] W.P. Ker. *Epic and Romance. Essays on Medieval Literature*. 2nd edition. (New York: MacMillan, 1908), 278.

the authors of the bookish *riddarasögur* as a coterie whose members were familiar with one another's work. Her model places recurring names and locations within the same scribal environment that sustained familiar situations and forms of speech.[5] Hughes's intuition can therefore be understood as cultivated compositional fluency, developed through education and maintained through literary exchange.

1.2 Methodology

The method of this dissertation brings close reading into a historical and social account of textual practice. Discussions of medieval forms of composition provide a vocabulary for describing recurrent procedures within the saga, while the history of clerical education identifies environments in which those procedures were taught and sustained. The argument begins with the textual evidence of the oldest redaction and moves outward only as far as the supporting history allows. A source or analogue can be used to establish the prior availability of a textual element within the saga. The function of that element in *Dínus saga* must then be established through its placement within the developing narrative. This movement between transmission and use keeps the historical evidence in contact with the distinctive design of the romance.

The terms *compilatio* and *ordinatio* identify related habits of textual production and medieval writers used them with varying degrees of precision across different settings. In this study, *compilatio* refers to the gathering and reuse of received material, while *ordinatio* concerns the disposition through which that material acquires an intelligible sequence. Together they describe a learned manner of working with texts in which selection and placement participate in the creation of meaning. The analysis therefore moves beyond the identification of an analogue once its relevance has been established. A geographical description may carry associations formed through biblical history or encyclopedic writing. Its compositional history continues when the romance assigns it to one of the paired kingdoms and uses it to define the political world of the protagonists. The same principle applies to a familiar trick, a marvelous object, or a type of counselor. Source study explains what an element brought with it. Close reading explains what the new narrative asks it to do.

Exemplary logic describes the demonstrative relationship through which conduct becomes recognizable through a narrative event. The medieval exemplum provides the historical basis for this method because it joins a particular case to a judgment whose significance extends beyond the immediate occasion. *Dínus saga* adapts that demonstrative capacity to episodes unfolding across an extended romance plot. Dínus's appetite for novelty gives Philotemia access to his household, while her confidence in her own interpretation of signs later exposes her to Dínus's retaliation. The deception tests a flaw within a character which is already established by the narrative, and the resulting consequence confirms or revises the moral or ethical lesson invited by the scene. Public spectators and bodily transformations intensify that lesson by attaching shame to rank and political authority. The response to humiliation can then carry the exemplary sequence into the next act of revenge.

[5] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 181-184.

Sententious speech is used here for compact statements that formulate warnings, counsel, or conclusion. “Proverb” is reserved for an expression whose traditional status can be supported through external attested traditions, whereas other utterances may sound proverbial through verbal balance or familiar imagery even where no close parallel survives. Their authority remains dependent upon the speaker, the occasion, and the action that follows. A warning gains narrative weight when subsequent events confirm it, while a true statement spoken after humiliation may reveal a character recognizing a lesson intended to be learned within the saga as well as without by its reading audience. The analysis therefore records verbal form and narrative placement separately. External parallels establish traditional status, while the surrounding scene determines what the statement accomplishes within the story.

The manuscript evidence belongs first to the history of transmission. Chapter divisions, directional formulas, and changes of textual emphasis reveal how AM 575a 4to articulates the story for its readers. These features can support an account of medieval *ordinatio* within the surviving witness. Broader claims about narrative design depend upon the sequence and recurrence established by the romance itself. The later redactions of *Dínus saga drambláta* are largely ignored in this study, instead they are considered as subsequent and wholly independent acts of interpretation that are products of the early-modern period. The middle and youngest redactions, respectively, increasingly condense the oldest version’s narrative. They further make the saga’s ethical implications more explicit, and their omissions serve to alter the balance of their scenes, ostensibly adapting the story to the tastes and needs of their later literary environments. Such differences serve only to clarify the continuing reception of *Dínus saga*. They should therefore be considered only with attention to the historical distance separating them from the oldest recoverable form. While the identity of the saga’s anonymous writer remains a mystery, their clerical training leaves a more secure and perceptible trace on their work than anything otherwise would. The argument therefore concerns the compositional habits available to clerically trained scribes and the fluency those habits could sustain within vernacular romance.

1.3 Plot Synopsis

Despite its length and elaborate staging, *Dínus saga drambláta*’s narrative moves with considerable precision. It opens with a geographic survey of the world that is encyclopedic in its delivery before settling in Egypt, where Alexandria appears as its royal seat and a city laden with the prestige of its ancient past. Egypt is ruled by a king who bears the title Ptolomeus, following the custom by which its rulers receive that name upon assuming royal dignity. Ptolomeus’s queen, Diana, gives birth to a son of extraordinary beauty. The child is thus named Dínus after his mother, and, like any saga hero worth his salt, his appearance is described in terms that make him seem almost more divine than human.

Dínus’s childhood establishes the pattern of behavioral excess that governs the ethical logic of the saga. His first education encompasses the liberal arts, and he masters what his teachers can give him while he is still a child. He then turns to magical and esoteric knowledge before completing the martial training expected of a prince. By twelve years of age, he has surpassed his instructors and won public admiration for both the comeliness of his body as well as the alacrity of his mind. He entreats his father to build him a castle outside Alexandria, where

he arguably lives as a king himself among a court of forty sons of dukes and earls. A prince of Greece, Grammaton, becomes his closest companion. The saga counterbalances Dínus's magnificence with four "prides." He veils his face from anyone he considers unworthy of seeing his beauty. No one may enter his castle without permission, and the servants who fail to enforce this boundary face death. He despises women, especially any princess proposed as his equal. At the table, he refuses to eat unless his meal contains something he has never tasted before. His personal cooks, Nicius and Niciánus, bear the daily burden of satisfying this appetite. These habits give Dínus the name by which the saga remembers him and the public judges him, calling him *Dínus inn drambláti*, or Dínus the Proud.

The narrative then turns to Bláland, where the noble and wise King Maximiliánus rules from his capital city of Bláskumia. His daughter Philotemia is introduced as Dínus's counterpart. She matches him in rank and beauty, and her education has taken her through the learned arts into prophecy and magic. She understands the properties of the natural world and possesses remarkable skill in the construction of mechanical devices. Like Dínus, she keeps a separate courtly space, attended by forty noble maidens. Her rejection of suitors has become a public declaration of her all-encompassing superiority. Their romantic pursuits have left them so severely humiliated that other princes have learned to avoid her.

In a reversal of the expected course of the "maiden-king" romance formula, Philotemia learns of her counterpart Dínus when Egyptian merchants arrive at her father Maximiliánus's court bringing goods for sale along with accounts of their peerless Prince. Their report of his fame awakens a burning desire within Philotemia's heart to test herself against this Dínus the Proud. In his capacity as both sagely king and concerned father, Maximiliánus foresees the true scope of the danger involved with going against such a foe. He states that their first encounter will bring them dishonor, the second will produce shame and grief for those involved, and the third will leave an everlasting disgrace that cannot easily be repaired. Philotemia, despite the warning, proceeds with her plan. She sends the pair of Dasius and Dasiánus to Egypt with an enchanted apple and a mysterious method of assuming the appearance of Dínus's cooks. Once inside the castle, they serve the fruit to Dínus and his companions. The men awaken during the night consumed by desire for Philotemia and her maidens. Dínus suspects the apple, but knowledge of the cause gives him no control over the passion it has produced. He and his companions ride in secret to Bláland in pursuit of satisfaction.

Maximiliánus receives the visitors with royal ceremony, while Philotemia prepares the first humiliation. Her chamber overwhelms Dínus. Gemstones and painted surfaces surround moving figures whose music and fragrance make the room appear to him like paradise. Philotemia greets him with apparent affection, and her maidens pair themselves with his companions. When Dínus presses toward sexual fulfillment, a terrifying noise interrupts the chamber. Philotemia tells him that monstrous black knights have attacked the palace. She arms the visitors, who fight through the night against what appear to be giants. Morning reveals that their enemies were illusions and that the towering figures they struck were trees which, in turn, presumably struck back. Dínus and his men have been bloodied and beaten with switches. Their bodies have also been bruised and nearly broken. The people of the city gather to mock them as they crawl toward their horses and seek egress towards their homeland, transforming Philotemia's private deceit into a public assault upon Dínus's pride and prestige.

Dínus decides to go back to her tower, alone. He answers her betrayal with a trick of his own, retaliating with an enchanted tablet. Philotemia and her maidens find it in their chamber and immediately cast off their clothes before dancing and singing beyond their own control. The enchantment spreads to everyone who enters. Soon the royal family and the leading members of the court have joined the disorder, followed by the city's Archbishop and officers whose ecclesiastical dignity makes the spectacle more scandalous still. Damianus, the wisest man in Bláland, seeks the help of Anachorita, a dark, shaggy-haired, and enigmatic figure of pythonic knowledge who lives beneath the earth outside of the city walls. Anachorita accepts Damianus's plea to help the kingdom, but not for money. He covers his eyes before entering the room, removes the tablet and burns it, bringing the horrific ordeal to an end. The patterned deception and reversal is then repeated with greater cruelty. Philotemia sends another embassy to Egypt, this time carrying an enchanted drink. Dínus and his men fall asleep after consuming it and awaken again in lovesick compulsion. They return to Bláland, where Philotemia stages a reconciliation and receives Dínus tenderly. Another drink places the visitors into a deep sleep. When they awaken, the women have vanished and great horns have grown painfully from the heads of the men. Desire disappears beneath the weight of shame. Dínus flees, then turns back and overhears Philotemia boasting of her victory. Through a small opening he drops pieces of another enchanted apple into her chamber. Philotemia takes their fragrance as a heavenly sign confirming her triumph. She and her maidens eat, awaken consumed by desire for the men they have just humiliated, and find themselves transformed with the wings of crows. They fly after Dínus and his horned companions toward Egypt.

Heremita enters the saga at this point and changes the dynamics of the conflict, shifting the power back toward Alexandria. Dressed in a long linen surplice, he arrives at Dínus's castle carrying a drink that cures the horned men. The horns fall away and later become drinking vessels adorned for noble use, allowing the sign of humiliation to be transformed into an object of courtly memory. Philotemia and her maidens remain on the walls of the castle in the form of birds, weakened by hunger and cold. Anachorita comes after them in dragon form and casts darkness over Alexandria. Heremita has already warned the people of the city to remain indoors, and his foresight contains the danger. Once it has passed, the birds disappear from the walls and Philotemia returns home broken and weak.

Philotemia's next plan raises the stakes of the contest from social shame to mortal danger. She persuades Maximiliánus to invite Dínus to Bláland under the guise of a reconciliation, while furtively preparing a signal that will summon armed men into her chamber. Upon hearing this invitation as it is relayed by Bláland's envoy, Heremita recognizes it as a carefully constructed snare meant for Dínus. He counters this by giving the prince a pouch whose contents must be shaken outside the window when the danger appears. Dínus subsequently accepts the invitation and enters Philotemia's chamber once again. At the appointed moment, the ringing of a great bell brings Maximiliánus and his men toward the room. Dínus releases the powder. The attackers encounter darkness and earthquake, while fire and monstrous apparitions turn the palace into a landscape of terror. Inside the chamber, Dínus overpowers Philotemia in bed as she pleads for an honorable marriage. He then returns to Egypt. Philotemia is left in mourning, and Maximiliánus condemns the disgrace that has overtaken his daughter and his kingdom.

This act completes Maximiliánus's prophetic counsel by robbing the princess of her only social capital, her virginity. This shame extends beyond her into her entire kingdom, leading

Bláland and Alexandria to inevitable war. Upon the counsel of Anachorita, Maximiliánus gathers an enormous army for revenge. Troops from dark, distant regions advance toward Egypt in the company of giants and monstrous peoples. Heremita interrupts Dínus's meal with the news of the approaching army, having initially failed to perceive their encroachment. Dínus first proposes an ordinary military defense, yet Heremita devises a different and more elegant stratagem, one directed at Maximiliánus himself. During the night, he crosses the Nile and lures the king away from the safety of his tent. Appearing to take on a dragon form, he subjects Maximiliánus to a succession of terrible and seemingly otherworldly visions in which the forces of heaven and hell seem to stand against his campaign. Heremita offers him escape through surrender to Dínus. Maximiliánus sees no path other than to relent. He disperses the larger army and crosses the Nile with a smaller retinue, prepared to place himself in Dínus's power. Heremita kindly advises Dínus to preserve the dignity of the defeated king and to settle the conflict through marriage to Philotemia. Maximiliánus returns to Bláland with the news that she is betrothed to Dínus. Her grief turns quickly to joy, and she travels to Alexandria with a magnificent dowry. The wedding is celebrated with all the public splendor that the earlier deceptions had denied them.

During the feast, Heremita reveals that he is actually Walterus, the son of the king of India the Great. He had come to test his own skill and to assist Dínus after seeing that the prince lacked a counselor equal to his dangers. Walterus then displays Anachorita trapped in a fiery glass sphere, remarking that this being was relying upon diabolical powers, and then has the object cast into the Nile. He also explains the artifice through which he created Maximiliánus's visions, simple sleight-of-hand and the power of suggestion. The saga reaches its end with a political closure. Dínus receives Egypt and assumes the royal name Ptolomeus from his father's generous wishes. Philotemia is duly rewarded by her father as an expression of gratitude at King Ptolomeus's magnanimous gift. Philotemia's maidens likewise marry his companions, who are rewarded with lands and titles. Walterus asks that his friendship with Dínus endure. It is then told that Dínus and Philotemia rule together, with the final words thanking those who have listened to the saga as well as those who read it aloud for the entertainment of others.

1.4 Previous Studies

Scholarship on *Dínus saga drambláta* belongs to the larger history of research on the *riddarasögur*. That history has been shaped by questions of origin and classification, though judgments of literary value have often accompanied the attempt to give the corpus a stable taxonomy. Early scholars devoted considerable energy to deciding whether a romance was a translation, an adaptation, or an Icelandic composition assembled from foreign motifs. The term *lygisögur*, or "lying sagas," was frequently employed evaluatively as well as pejoratively, as romances that featured exotic locations and wondrous marvels were measured against the presumed realism and formal restraint of the *Íslendingasögur*, allowing their difference to be used as evidence for an argument of narrative decline.[6]

[6] W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 278; Jürg Glauser, *Isländische Märchensagas: Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 12 (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1983), 1-31.

Henry Goddard Leach introduced *Dínus saga* to a substantial anglophone readership in his work *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia*. Therein he made use of the categories of "Western," "Breton," and "Eastern" romance in an attempt to impose some kind of taxonomic order upon a decidedly heterogeneous corpus of material. Within that arrangement, he placed *Dínus saga* among Icelandic works shaped by classical and eastern material. Leach translated the middle redaction and catalogued its principal narrative components, treating the saga as a coherent object of comparison at a time when very little sustained work had been devoted to it.[7] His proposed route of direct Greek or Byzantine transmission has found little support in later research. In particular, Frederic Amory argued that French romance offers a more plausible intermediary for many of the features Leach regarded as Greek.[8] Even where the direction of his source history proved uncertain, Leach supplied an early map of the story and established questions that remained active in later scholarship.

Margaret Schlauch greatly widened the comparative field of riddarasögur research in her study *Romance in Iceland*. Her book brought classical lore and Latin learning into contact with French narrative, eastern geography, marvel traditions, and Icelandic literary practice. In the case of *Dínus saga*, she demonstrated the importance of the Alexander tradition and connected material in the middle redaction with *Alexanders saga*, through which it could ultimately be related to Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*.[9] The scale of Schlauch's reading remains remarkable, especially given the number of romances that were difficult to access when she wrote. She was also willing to ask why narratives dismissed by modern critics had proven so durable among medieval readers. Her organization around motifs and possible sources reveals the boundaries of the method she inherited. It can identify much of the matter out of which a romance has been made, but the new arrangement and purpose of that matter often remain beyond its field of vision.

The assumptions that governed such judgments were examined most thoroughly by Jürg Glauser in *Isländische Märchensagas*. Glauser reconstructed the critical history through which the *Íslendingasögur* came to occupy the healthy center of Icelandic literary culture while later romance was pushed toward a foreign and decadent margin. He then approached the original *riddarasögur* as products of a functioning late medieval literary world. The people who produced and received the sagas entered the argument, as did the movement between reading and listening. Manuscript transmission became part of the social life of the romance and brought the critic closer to the conditions under which these stories survived.[10] This shift created space for repetition and excess to be read as elements of a literary system. It also weakened the older expectation that aesthetic value must depend upon resemblance to the family sagas.

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[7] Henry Goddard Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 153-71.

[8] Frederic Amory, "Things Greek and the *Riddarasögur*," in *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (1984): 509-513.

[9] Margaret Schlauch, *Romance in Iceland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press and the American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1934), especially 92-94 and 119-48.

[10] Glauser, *Isländische Märchensagas*, 32-94.

Marianne E. Kalinke has traced the longer development through which translated romance became the basis for original Icelandic composition. Her work follows the reception of French and Anglo-Norman texts at the Norwegian court and their circulation in Iceland before turning to the romances created within the vernacular tradition itself.[11] Icelandic writers could expand the models they received, joining familiar situations to plots that gave those situations a new significance. This history provides the generic setting for *Dínus saga*. By the time of its composition, romance writers had inherited more than a group of translated texts. They had inherited a practice of rewriting through which the matter of romance remained available for further development.

Questions of function have accompanied this history, interrogated by both Marianne Kalinke and Geraldine Barnes. One line of interpretation treated the translated romances as instruments through which the Norwegian court could learn the ceremonies and values of chivalry, while another placed their fantastic worlds within a literature of amusement. The language of the texts has sometimes appeared to support the latter position. Kalinke drew attention to prologues that promise *skemtan* or entertainment, including formulations introduced by the Norse writers themselves.[12] Yet entertainment carried a range of possible meanings within medieval courtly culture. A story could offer diversion while also preserving useful knowledge.

Geraldine Barnes further developed the ethical dimension of this argument by examining changes made during the translation of romance into Old Norse. Her work shows that an addition can sharpen the exemplary force already latent in a story. The Norwegian version of Marie de France's *Equitan*, for example, adds a closing moral emphasis to the punishment of greed and injustice, while *Eskia* gives greater prominence to the patience and humility of its central figure.[13] Such changes show translators reading for consequence and reshaping their material so that the judgment of an episode becomes more readily available. The distinction between entertainment and instruction grows unstable in this setting. A romance may captivate its audience through the wonder of each dangerous reversal while allowing the same events to make conduct intelligible. This point bears directly upon *Dínus saga*. Its pleasure depends upon ingenuity. Philotemia's chamber is memorable because its crafted marvels bewilder Dínus, and the retaliatory spectacles become increasingly extravagant as each protagonist attempts to surpass the other. Judgment remains present within that pleasure. The tricks succeed through habits already established in the people deceived, so that wonder and humiliation become ways of revealing character. The moral force of the saga remains embedded in the arrangement of its action. The argument therefore follows that evaluation as it gathers through sequence and consequence.

Additionally, Barnes has provided the most influential account of the saga's intellectual concerns. In "Cognitive Dysfunction in *Dínus saga drambláta* and *Le Roman de Perceval*," she

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[11] Marianne E. Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words: The Evolution of Medieval Romance in Iceland* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), 1-42; Marianne E. Kalinke, "The Genesis of Courtly Romance in Iceland," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 123, no. 3 (2024): 271-92.

[12] Marianne E. Kalinke, "Scribes, Editors, and the *riddarasögur*," *ANF* 97 (1982), 42.

[13] Geraldine Barnes, "The riddarasögur: A Medieval Exercise in Translation" *Saga Book* 19 (1974-77): 439.

examines the relationship between education and failed interpretation. Both narratives place accomplished protagonists before situations that expose the limits of what they have learned. Dínus can identify the enchanted apple as the source of his desire, but the identification gives him little power over its effects. Philotemia repeatedly trusts her powers of discernment until she mistakes another enchanted apple for a confirmation of divine favor. Their knowledge becomes a means through which they deceive one another, while the repeated failure to understand consequence exposes the ethical poverty of their learning. Barnes also draws attention to the opposition between the arts of Heremita and Anachorita, whose knowledge is measured through the purposes it serves.[14] Further, Barnes's *The Bookish Riddarasögur* extends this inquiry across a wider group of original romances. She places their cosmography and classical learning within the worldview of educated late medieval writers, showing how biblical history could inhabit the same imaginative geography as eastern courts and romance adventure. Her description of an intellectual coterie provides an especially useful historical model for the recurrence of material across the genre.[15] Writers familiar with one another's work would have possessed a repertoire made up of books and of romances already produced within Iceland. Repeated names or scenes may therefore register a continuing conversation among authors who wrote for an outside audience while also writing for one another. The present dissertation takes that social availability as the setting in which compositional fluency could develop.

Research on style and affect has clarified the texture of the resulting prose. Robert Tannert treats the two medieval redactions as distinct stylistic artifacts and documents the dense use of parallelism within each. He also calls attention to the saga's unusually frequent similes and to the verbal display that surrounds scenes of spectacle.[16] His comparison places these features securely within the medieval form of the story. Daniel Sävborg approaches the saga through bodily signs of desire. His survey of Old Norse prose places *Dínus saga* among the romances most deeply invested in the physical expression of erotic feeling.[17] Desire makes itself visible in altered bodies and compulsive movement, giving the inward states of the protagonists a theatrical presence within the story. Together, these studies establish repetition and emotional excess as parts of the saga's narrative design.

Einar Ólafur Sveinsson offered an early and perceptive description of the formal problem of *Dínus saga*'s apparent narrative excess when he observed that the saga's rich play of imagination is brought within a fixed scheme and governed by strict symmetry.[18] The observation captures the strange balance of freedom and control that gives *Dínus saga* much of

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[14] Geraldine Barnes, "Cognitive Dysfunction in *Dínus saga drambláta* and *Le Roman de Perceval*," *Arthuriana* 22, no. 1 (2012): 53-63.

[15] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 183.

[16] Robert Tannert, "The Style of the *Dínus saga drambláta*," *Scandinavian Studies* 52, no. 1 (1980): 53-62.

[17] Daniel Sävborg, *Sagan om kärleken: Erotik, känslor och berättarkonst i norrön litteratur*, Historia Litterarum 27 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2007).

[18] Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, *Verzeichnis isländischer Märchenvarianten*, FF Communications 83 (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1929), 53.

its energy. Egypt and Bláland form paired centers. Dínus and Philotemia resemble one another in birth and education, and each maintains a household whose members mirror those of the other. Their embassies cross the same distance carrying new forms of deception. Every apparent victory produces the conditions for a reply.

Henric Bagerius locates that design within the formation of aristocratic identity in late medieval Iceland. His reading gives particular attention to sexuality and masculine honor, treating sexual domination as one means by which authority is restored after humiliation.[19] The oldest redaction makes the connection difficult to ignore. Dínus's coercive encounter with Philotemia follows a long sequence in which she has manipulated his desire and made his body an object of public ridicule. The eventual marriage absorbs the violence of their rivalry into a dynastic settlement, while leaving fully visible the unequal cost through which that settlement was achieved. Bagerius consequently clarifies the gendered stakes of the reversals studied in Chapter Three.

The *meykóngur* tradition places Philotemia within a wider conversation about female authority. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir has argued that the figure developed through continuing literary engagement, as writers adapted inherited models of the shield-maiden and the resistant queen to changing discussions of aristocratic conduct.[20] Such characters could respond to earlier texts while also testing the boundaries placed around gender and sexuality within their own historical moment. Philotemia's learning and political confidence belong to this tradition, but *Dínus saga* gives her struggle a peculiar symmetry by making the male protagonist equally resistant to marriage. Their resemblance supplies the basis for the contest even as its conclusion restores a hierarchy that the middle of the story repeatedly unsettles.

Ásthildur Helen Gestsdóttir provides the most sustained study of the *Dínus sag*a's redactional history. Her comparison of the oldest, middle, and youngest versions follows changes in courtly imagery and in the representation of gendered authority.[21] The differences show that the saga remained open to purposeful reformulation across several centuries. They also make methodological precision necessary. A development found in a later paper witness may preserve a thoughtful reading of the story without supplying evidence for its earliest recoverable form. This dissertation begins with the oldest redaction and turns to later material when the history of interpretation clarifies the questions raised by that text.

Hendrik Lambertus offers one of the most substantial recent readings of *Dínus saga* in his *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern: Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Fremden in den originalen Riddarasögur*. His study of alterity in the original *riddarasögur* approaches the romance through reciprocal mirroring. He argues that Egypt and Bláland each function as a

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[19] Henric Bagerius, *Mandom och mödom: Sexualitet, homosocialitet och aristokratisk identitet på det senmedeltida Island* (Gothenburg: Institutionen för historiska studier, Göteborgs universitet, 2009), 168-84.

[20] Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, "From Heroic Legend to 'Medieval Screwball Comedy'? The Origins, Development and Interpretation of the Maiden-King Narrative," *The Legendary Sagas: Origins and Development*, 229-250, (Reykjavik: University of Iceland, Press, 2012), 240.

[21] Ásthildur Helen Gestsdóttir, "Sagann af Dijnus hinumm drambläta," 40-49 and passim.

center from which the other kingdom can be rendered strange. The protagonists impose altered bodies upon one another, and the same estranging force spreads outward through the courts that witness the transformations. Lambertus also emphasizes the saga's reliance upon the theme of *Gelehrsamkeit*, or erudition, since learning gives Dínus and Philotemia the means through which they attempt to master rivals and spaces alike.[22] His account joins symmetry to the politics of knowledge and shows how the marvelous machinery of the saga belongs to a contest over interpretation.

1.5 Scope and Organization

The principal object of this study is the oldest redaction of *Dínus saga drambláta*, preserved fragmentarily in the fifteenth-century manuscript AM 575a 4to and recoverable in part through later paper witnesses. This redaction supplies the primary evidence for the medieval narrative considered here. The surviving manuscript is separated by time from the initial composition of the saga, and its divisions belong to the history of copying and reading. No recoverable authorial document survives against which they can be measured. Its evidence must therefore be used at the level it can sustain. Chapter divisions, directional formulas, and shifts of textual emphasis show how one medieval witness articulated the story for readers, while broader claims about narrative design depend upon patterns established across the sequence of the romance itself.

The later redactions are treated as subsequent acts of interpretation belonging to their own historical environments. The middle and youngest versions condense portions of the older narrative, redistribute emphasis, and sometimes render its ethical implications more explicit. Their alterations can illuminate the continuing reception of the saga, although they cannot be projected backward as evidence for the medieval form without qualification. This distinction also preserves the different labors involved in the life of the text. The writer responsible for the romance's initial composition, the scribe who copied and articulated AM 575a 4to, and the later redactors who reshaped the story all participated in its transmission, though their acts took place at different moments and cannot be conflated under a single category of authorship.

Chapter Two, "The Compilatory Structure of *Dínus saga drambláta*," establishes the learned practice of composition that provides the basis of the dissertation's overarching argument. It begins with medieval accounts of textual authorship and follows the handling of received material into Icelandic clerical culture. The chapter argues that the saga was composed through practices of selection, adaptation, and arrangement cultivated within medieval clerical textual culture. It traces those practices into Icelandic literary production, examines how received learned and romance materials were adapted to the conflict between Dínus and Philotemia, and considers how AM 575a 4to articulates the resulting narrative sequence through features of ordination, or arrangement.

Chapter Three, "The Exemplary Logic of *Dínus saga drambláta*," examines exemplary narration as one of the learned, procedural forms of composition carried from medieval homiletic

[22] Hendrik Lambertus, *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern: Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Fremden in den originalen Riddarasögur*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 52 (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke, 2013), 224-40.

and vita traditions into vernacular romance. It follows the exemplum through its various lives from its function as rhetorical demonstration in classical learning into the fourteenth-century's vernacular prose forms before turning to examples from the saga contained within its extended scenes of tricks and reversals that employ the logic of exemplarity to tell its story. The chapter argues that these episodes test habits already established in Dínus and Philotemia, so that each act of deception produces a consequence fitted to the character it exposes. The consequences of their actions are then acted out through recurrent public humiliations.

Chapter Four, "The Sententious Speech of *Dínus saga drambláta*," considers another, parallel form of storytelling inherited from the same learned textual culture that produced exempla. It examines how the wise utterances of certain characters acquire authority within the movement of the narrative. Some of these words participate in attested proverbial traditions, while others appear as though they are proverbial through their construction and placement. The opposition between the wise counselor characters of Heremita and Anachorita further highlights the chapter's contribution towards understanding how the saga was compiled. Both counselors possess knowledge capable of altering events, though the origin and use of that knowledge determine the authority the saga finally grants it.

The conclusion returns to Hughes's account of intuitive composition and draws the findings of the three chapters into a historical explanation of that intuition. Clerical education supplied habits through which inherited matter could be made available for new writing, while contact among scribes sustained a shared literary repertoire. The compiled elements brought together in *Dínus saga drambláta*'s oldest redaction create an exotic yet learned backdrop for the events of the saga's narrative. Classical, Biblical, and romance traditions further give the story its familiar face, while the use of exemplary scenes bring a relatability to the plight of its characters as they navigate the social, political, and ethical dimensions of the saga's world. Finally, the sententious speech of the saga's erudite characters engages with identifiable classical and biblical wisdom while constructing proverbial potential in new ways through its narrative. These three valences work in tandem to create an engaging, didactic, and entertaining saga that belongs to the larger fourteenth-century tradition of storytelling in Iceland.

In the context of earlier studies which have established the traditions from which *Dínus saga* draws, the generic history within which it emerged, the symmetry of its plot, the bodily and political consequences of its rivalry, and the continuing reorganization preserved by its redactions, this study complements existing scholarship by asking how these dimensions could have been joined within a single practice of composition. It follows Geraldine Barnes's argument by treating learned material as active within the narrative, though it places greater emphasis upon the procedures through which inherited matter acquires a new order. It also builds upon Einar Ólafur Sveinsson's description of symmetry by relating the saga's arrangement to clerical habits of compilation, and it extends the ethical questions raised by Barnes, Henric Bagerius, and Hendrik Lambertus through the demonstrative structure of exemplary narrative and the authority assigned to counsel. The surviving correspondences are therefore calibrated according to the evidence available for direct dependence, shared tradition, or broader cultural context. The resulting account explains how materials known through different textual histories could become mutually intelligible within the oldest recoverable form of the romance.

Chapter 2

The Compilatory Structure of *Dínus saga drambláta*

"…This work, then, is by no means simply mine, but rather belongs to those from whose sayings almost the whole of it has been woven together; for from myself are few things, or practically none. It is therefore theirs by authority, but mine only in the arrangement of the parts."[1]

— Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum maius*

2.1 Introduction

In the prologue to the *Speculum maius*, one of the twelfth century's most ambitious encyclopedic works, Vincent of Beauvais offers a revealing interpretation of authorship. Rather than claiming to be the originator of his own text, he insists that he is merely its compiler, contending that any authority he possesses is associated exclusively with the *ordo* of the work, or the arrangement of its borrowed materials into a coherent whole. Vincent credits the great thinkers of antiquity, along with the fathers of the early Church, as being the central sources for the wisdom contained within the text's many pages. Though such an admission may appear at the surface level as self-effacing, this move is itself a strategic as well as rhetorical one. Through his explanation, Vincent asserts the legitimacy of compilation as a distinct form of intellectual labor. His strategy here is not to trivialize or subvert the art of compiling, but rather to distinguish it as a discrete intellectual practice, granting it a precise definition and a clear account of the distinctive procedures that properly characterize it as a practice.[2] Additionally, his deliberate refusal of the role of auctor points to a broader medieval understanding of writing that distinguished between a work's originator and its designer.[3] The compiler, in this scheme, was neither simply a copyist nor fully identical with the author in the strongest sense, but rather one of several recognized kinds of writers whose contribution was understood in formal as well as intellectual terms. Bonaventure gives this distinction explicit shape in the prologue to his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Libri sententiarum*, where he outlines four different ways in which a book could be made:

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[1] Serge Lusignan, *Préface au speculum maius de vincent de beauvais: réfraction et diffraction*. Cahiers d´études médiévals (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 119. ("hoc ipsum opus utique meum simpliciter non sit, sed illorum potius ex quorum dictis fere totum illud contextui, nam ex meo pauca uel quasi nulla; ipsorum igitur est auctoritate, nostrum autem sola partium ordinatione.")

[2] Alastair Minnis, "Nolens auctor sed compilator reputari: the late-medieval discourse of compilation," in *La méthode critique au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 59.

[3] This practice of authorial distancing is also associated with what scholarship calls the "modesty topos." Both could be true here regarding Vincent of Beuvais. For more on this discussion see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans., Willard R. Trask (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1953), 83-85, 407-13.

> "The method of creating a book is fourfold. For someone transcribes the materials of others, adding or altering nothing, and this person is said to be merely the scribe. Someone else writes the materials of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler. Someone else writes both the materials of other men, and of his own, but the materials of others as the principal materials, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the commentator, not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the author."[4]

Bonaventure's taxonomy is useful not simply because it resolves the problem of medieval authorship once and for all, but because it clarifies the conceptual terrain upon which later discussions of compilation took place. It demonstrates, first, that medieval thinkers possessed a vocabulary for distinguishing among different textual labors, and second, that the compiler occupied a recognizable, if unstable, position within that hierarchy. Yet even as Vincent and Bonaventure may have separately articulated such a taxonomy of authorial roles, medieval thinkers did not universally agree on the status of compilation itself. In his own commentary to the *Libri sententiarum*, Thomas Aquinas remarks that Peter Lombard did not devise his arguments independently, but rather amassed those which were discovered by others, thereby gaining primarily the benefit of avoiding their errors.[5] That judgment does not deny the usefulness of compilation, but it does imply a limit to its prestige. Debates over whether the act of compiling constituted an inferior, even derivative mode of writing, or whether it could constitute a creative practice in its own right persisted throughout the period.[6] These discussions must be situated within the broader shift from monastic to scholastic *lectio*. The slow, continuous, meditative reading of authoritative texts gradually gave way to more discontinuous practices of searching, excerpting, and reorganizing material to serve specific argumentative, pastoral, and pedagogical ends. These changes were not merely conceptual; they were also material. The rise of increasingly sophisticated techniques of ordinatio, including advances in textual organization and mise-en-page, made compiled works easier to navigate, excerpt, and reorganize.[7] Compilation, in other words, belonged not only to an abstract theory of authorship but also to a changing culture of reading, writing, and textual use.

The art of compilation was therefore not always held in such high esteem, nor did its cultural authority emerge automatically. Compilers were thought by many to be nothing short of

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[4] Prooemii qu. 4, conclusion (Bonaventurae opera, I, 14-15). Stegmüller, Sent., 111.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *In qua uor libros sententiarum, 1.1.pr, in Opera omnia*, ed. Roberto Busa et al., 7 vols. (Stutgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), 1:1: (". . . ipse non invenit rationes, sed potius ab aliis inventas compilavit: et in hoc tangit unam utilitatem, scilicet exclusionem erroris").

[6] Neil Hathaway traces the origin and evolution of the term *compilo* and *compilator* from its harshly pejorative connotations in Antiquity to its gradual acceptance and flowering in the thirteenth century in his article "Compilatio: From Plagiarism to Compiling," *Viator* 20 (1989): 19-44. Cf also Alastair J. Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship (1984).

[7] Alastair Minnis, "Nolens Auctor Sed Compiltor Reputari: The Late-Medieval Discourse of Compilation," in *La Méthode Critique au Moyen Âge*, eds., Mireille Chazan and Gilbert Dahan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 49.

plagiarists, and there was a vocal group of critics who were skeptical of what was considered the "pillaging" of prior knowledge.[8] Over time, however, scholastic culture came to recognize the genuine intellectual labor of the compiler in the ordering of the voices of borrowed authorities.[9] The compiler's task was not exhausted by extraction. It required discrimination, ordering, juxtaposition, and the construction of relations among disparate materials that had previously circulated in other settings and for other purposes. By the thirteenth century, compiled encyclopedic works were so numerous and ubiquitous that the age has been referred to as the "century of encyclopedias."[10] This designation rests on a solid historical foundation and, taken more broadly, invites the extension of the same logic to the Middle Ages as a whole, which may rightly be understood as an age of compilation. For example, Isidore's *Etymologiae*, Gratian's *Decretum*, Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*, and the innumerable florilegia are easily identifiable to modern readers as compilations. The practice of compilation was the guiding principle that structured many of the most celebrated late-medieval secular works as well, including John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, all of which bring together collections of tales arranged with an eye toward theme and with carefully devised structures for reader support.[11]

Indeed, pedagogic discussions from the thirteenth century onward continued to distinguish between the literary role of the author, who supplied new matter, from the scribe, the compiler, and the commentator.[12] The compiler's reputation was, therefore, defended precisely on the grounds that his role in the structuring of the text constituted a meaningful intellectual act, even where original material was minimal.[13] Arrangement thus came to be understood as the practical technique by which compilation was legitimized as a literary mode, as the labor of positioning and coordinating diverse authorities substantiated the compiler's role as both

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[8] Cf., Isidore of Seville, Etymologies., ed., Wallace Martin Lindsay (1911), 10.44. Compilator, qui aliena dicta suis praemiscet, sicut solent pigmantarii in pila diversa mixta contundere. Hoc scelere quondam accusabatur Mantuanus ille vates, cum quosdam versus Homeri transferens suis permiscuisset et compilator veterum ab aemulis diceretur. Ille respondit: 'Magnarum esse virium clavam Herculi extorquere de manu.'" ("The compilator, who mixes things said by others with his own words as paint sellers are accustomed to mash together various mixes in a mortar. The Mantuan poet was once accused of this crime when, transposing certain verses of Homer, he mixed them in with his own and was called a plunderer of the ancients by his rivals. He responded: 'to wrench the club from the hand of Hercules is to be of a greater power.'"

[9] Neil Hathaway, "Compilatio: From Plagiarism to Compiling," *Viator* 20 (1989): 19-44.

[10] Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de XIII^e siècle en France: Étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Age et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1931), 23 : (« Le XIII^e siecle est le siecle des Encyclopedies »); Jacques Le Goff, "Pourquoi le XIII^e siècle a-t-il été plus particulièrement un siècle d'encyclopédisme?" *L'enciclopedismo medievale* (1994), 23-40.

[11] Elisabeth Dutton, Julian of Norwich: The Influence of Late-Medieval Devotional Compilations, (London D.S. Brewer, 2008), 26.

[12] Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. Second Edition. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 94.

[13] Alastair J. Minnis, "Late-Medieval Discussions of Compilatio and the Rôle of the Compilator," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 101 (1979), 390-396.

transmitter and author. This convergence of theory and practice offers a productive framework through which to examine the so-called "original" riddarasögur, texts penned by anonymous authors who, much like Vincent of Beauvais, fashioned novelty from many different narrative threads.[14] These Late Medieval romances bring together heterogeneous learned, biblical, and romance material into homogenous forms that engage with Icelandic concerns of political power, bodily autonomy, and social hierarchy in their own distinctive and engaging ways.

The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how compilation, as a mode of authorship, accounts for the mosaic-like quality of one such Late Medieval Icelandic *riddarasaga*, *Dínus saga drambláta*. This will be accomplished through tracing the development of ideas regarding authorship and compilation from Late Antiquity through the scholastic culture of the Middle Ages, with particular attention to fourteenth-century Iceland. To situate *Dínus saga* within this framework, it is first necessary to examine how compilation was conceptualized by medieval thinkers, how it became central to the education of mendicant preachers, and how this model of writing traveled through the Norwegian court before finding a receptive context among rural Icelandic scribes and elite. Having established the contours of compilatory practice in the medieval North, the chapter will turn to the saga itself, examining the oldest manuscript, AM 575a 4to for evidence of compilatory practice as it manifests at the textual level. The chapter will conclude by considering the range of learned and narrative traditions that may have contributed to the development of *Dínus saga drambláta*'s overall narrative design. Taken together, these lines of analysis illuminate how late medieval Icelandic romance writers fashioned something recognizably familiar, yet new, out of inherited material. Their works are deeply invested in European textual culture, but they are also newly configured to be meaningful to Icelandic audiences.

Given these variable historical attitudes towards compilation, it is necessary to define how this study will approach the act of compiling. Paul the Deacon offers one of the earliest neutral definitions in his epitome of Sextus Pompeius Festus's *De verborum significatu,* where he defines *compilare* simply as, "to bring together or put together into one."[15] Though it may seem an elementary definition, this is an elegant way of examining this practice in late medieval Icelandic romance, for several reasons. As Nicholas Watson has alluded to, writing in the vernacular is, by its very nature, the practice of compiling, as they are reliably mediating bodies of authoritative and useful knowledge that have received their first formulations elsewhere.[16] By the fourteenth century, compilatory techniques had developed well beyond earlier exegetical modes and could generate textual forms that were structurally and rhetorically innovative. Rather than contrasting disparate parts with clear glosses that signaled toward their origins, compilers increasingly fashioned works in which the discernable seams between the borrowed ideas

[14] Formerly called "indigenous" riddarasögur as a means of separating them from the translated Icelandic romances, scholarship is now moving away from this label towards a more practical terminology.

[15] Sextus Pompeius Festus. De verborum significatu…cum Pauli epitome, s.v. "Compilare." ed. Wallace M. Lindsay (Leipzig 1933) 35, 23: "Compilare cogere est et in unum condere." Cf., Neil Hathaway, "Compilatio: From Plagiarism to Compiling," Viator 20 (1989), 35.

[16] Nicholas Watson, "The Terminology and Ethos of Vernacular Compilatio," in *Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England*, eds., Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 445.

became increasingly blurred until they resembled less the 'fissured mirror' of Mary Franklin-Brown's formulation than a carefully constructed mosaic.[17]

Applied to the study of *Dínus saga drambláta*, this understanding of compilation shifts the task away from exhaustive Quellenforschung and toward the identification of the discrete narrative, rhetorical, and thematic elements assembled by its compiler into a coherent whole. The saga's sustained engagement with encyclopedic and exemplary material supplies the individual tesserae of the overall narrative image. A narrative sequence will thus be treated as compilatory when its form and function are best explained by the author's selective appropriation and transformation of recognizable learned or didactic traditions, whose exemplary or demonstrative logics are integrated into, and activated through, the unfolding story itself. Patterns of repetition, rhetorical expansion, and thematic accumulation will serve as corroborating indicators of this process rather than as independent criteria.

Finally, this conception of *compilatio* must be distinguished from several adjacent phenomena. It is not synonymous with intertextuality, which merely describes textual relationships, nor with influence or source-use, which accounts for origin without explaining arrangement.[18] Nor can the saga be reduced to romance convention, as the narrative's accumulative excess consistently surpasses what genre expectations alone would require. While scribal transmission may account for minor unevenness, the systematic deployment of encyclopedic and exemplary material throughout *Dínus saga* points toward intentional authorial design. Understood in this way, *Dínus saga* can be read as a romance authored through compilatory practice. It is therefore a text whose authority lies in its ordering of abundance, and whose narrative coherence is sustained both by causal sequence and by the cumulative force of assembled and transformed knowledge.

2.2 Clerical Pedagogy and the Habit of Compilation

The act of compiling was a familiar mode of writing in Iceland long before the fourteenth century. Studies of Old Norse codices have made it increasingly difficult to treat *compilatio* as an exceptional or marginal phenomenon. On the contrary, it now appears as a recurrent mode of textual production within a literary culture already well practiced in excerpting, ordering, and redeploying inherited material.[19] Much of this scholarship has focused, understandably, on

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[17] Mary Franklin-Brown, Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 221.

[18] Intertextuality, though William Irwin has noted it has "as many meanings as users," is understood here from Julia Kristeva's original vision in which a text's meaning is shaped by another text at the textual level via quotation, allusion, calque, plagiarism, translation, pastiche, parody, or at the reader level through audience perception. See Julia Kristeva, Desire in language: a semiotic approach to literature and art (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66; and William Irwin, "Against Intertextuality," *Philosophy and Literature* 28, no. 2 (2004), 227-8.

[19] Cf., Ármann Jakobsson, "The Amplified Saga: Structural Disunity in 'Morkinskinna,'" *Medium Ævum* 70, no. 1 (2001): 29-46; Matthew James Driscoll, "The Words on the Page: Thoughts on Philology, Old and New," in Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, variability, and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature, eds., Judy Quinn and Emily Lethbridge (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2010), 87-104; Guðrún P. Helgadóttir, "Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar and Sturlunga saga," Gripla 8 (1993): 55-80; Ármann Jakobsson,

compilation at the macro level, specifically with how large codices assemble heterogeneous works into carefully designed "libraries," whether by theme, function, or presumed reader interest.[20] Yet, the same habits that shape the codex as a collected object can also shape the internal logic of a narrative. In this sense, the move from codicological compilation to narrative compilation can be understood simple as a shift in scale. Recent research makes a strong case for the development of Icelandic vernacular texts whose function was exegetical, glosses of Latinate material into hagiographic works.[21] These works, in turn, share structural affinities with saga narrative more broadly, including those forms visible in the *Íslendingasögur* and *fornaldarsögur* as well as the *riddarasögur*.

The question motivating this section is therefore not simply whether Icelanders engaged in the practice of compilation, but how clerical education habituated writers to the practice of compiling as a method of writing, and how that practice could, and demonstrably did, migrate into vernacular narrative. One way this problem could be stated is deliberately provocative. The presence of compiled materials within vernacular romance narratives can be read as the direct result of clerical pedagogical and homiletic habits that have evolved over time, taking on the encyclopedic tendencies of the thirteenth century and becoming an increasingly self-conscious authorial practice. This claim does not imply that romance is merely sermons in a different skin, nor that saga writers mechanically transplanted homiletic literary forms into secular fiction. It means, more modestly, that clerical training normalized a transferable set of compositional habits. Beginning from glosses and commentaries on the Bible, Icelandic scribes learned how to organize material through *ordinatio* and to activate moral instruction through exempla. These methods were then realized across multiple genres, from kings' sagas to saints' lives to legendary sagas and the so-called "original" *riddarasögur* compositions. The role of translation is a key stage in this process. Indeed, the translation of Latin texts into the vernacular can be understood as the first step in the creation of new material from existing material. Each step of the process of translation, transmission, and copying of these texts represents an original approach to the same

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"Samtíðarsögur" in The Cambridge History of Old Norse-Icelandic Literature, eds., Heather O'Donoghue and Eleanor Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 499-517; Susanne Kramarz-Beim, "Transmission, Translation, and Manuscript History," in Charlemagne in the Norse and Celtic Worlds, eds., Helen Fulton and Sif Rikharðsdóttir (London: D.S. Brewer, 2022), Dario Bullitta, Niðrstigningar Saga: Sources, Transmission, and Theology of the Old Norse "Descent into Hell" (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); and Daniel C. Najork, Reading the Old Norse-Icelandic "Maríu saga" in Its Manuscript Contexts ().

[20] Cf., Erik Kwakkel, "Decoding the material book: cultural residue in medieval manuscripts," in The Medieval Manuscript Book: Cultural Approaches, eds., Michael Jonhston and Michael Van Dussen (Montréal: McGill University, 2015), 60-76: Kevin J. Wanner, "The Prose Edda," Ármann Jakobsson, "Samtíðasögur," Guðrún Nordal, "Learned Literature," and William Ian Miller, ´Grágás and the Legal Culture of Commonwealth Iceland," in *The Cambridge History of Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, eds., Heather O'Donoghue and Eleanor Parker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 477-558; Reidar Astås, *An Old Norse Bibilcal Compilation: Studies in Stjórn* (Lausanne: P. Lang, 1991); Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, *The Development of Flateyjarbók. Iceland and the Norwegian Dynastic Crisis of 1389*. (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005); Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "The World and its Ages: The organization of an 'encyclopaedic' narrative in MS AM 764 4to," in *Sagas, Saints and Settlements*, eds., Gareth Williams and Paul Bibire (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1-13.

[21] Cf., Simonetta Battista, "The Compilator and Contemporary Literary Culture in Old Norse Hagiography," Viking and Medieval Scandianvia, vol. 1, no. 1 (2005), 1-13.

subject matter.[22] It is through translation that these practices are further developed, therefore it will first be necessary to briefly discuss how and why the practice of translating foreign texts became a practice of Icelanders in the first place.

2.2.1 Schools and Textual Networks

The institutional conditions that made such practices possible were formed gradually. Iceland joined European Christendom by popular vote at their parliamentary gathering, the Alþing, in 1000 A.D., as is recorded in both *Kristni saga* and *Íslendingabók*, respectively.[23] The following century was one of profound transformation in the religious and cultural life of the island. Historians have often referred to this period as that of the *goðakirkja*, the "chieftain-church," when the interests of the Icelandic ruling class, the goðar, and the burgeoning entity of the Church worked together, in a symbiosis where the incumbent church became a vehicle for the consolidation of the chieftains' power and its agenda was further inculcated by these representative of the indigenous culture.[24] This era justifiably brought with it a great expansion of Christian thought and ushered in new forms of literacy that were previously unattainable in Iceland. By the late twelfth century, however, the Roman church was already vying for exclusive control of religious decisions in Scandinavia and the North Atlantic by using Parisian-trained Augustinian canons to attempt to wrest power away from Norwegian chieftains.[25] Over the following centuries, this contest gradually reshaped the institutional and intellectual landscape in which Icelandic textual production took place.[26] The thirteenth century is understandably known as the "golden age" of saga writing, as is it when the canonical texts of the *Íslendingasögur* were committed to writing. For this study it is also important due to the importation and translation of French romance texts at the court of Hákon Hákonarson in Norway. These translated texts survive largely in Icelandic copies apart from one extant Norwegian manuscript, De la Gardie 4-7, which preserves many of the lais of Marie de France, some anonymous Breton lais, referred to as *Strengleikar* in Old Norse, *Pamphilus de amore*, and *Elis saga*. The importance of these texts

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[22] Simonetta Battista, "The 'Compilator' and Contemporary Literary Culture in Old Norse Hagiography," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 1, no. 1 (2005), 1.

[23] Cf., *Kristni saga*, in *Biskupa sögur* I, Íslenzk fornrit XV, vol. 2, eds. Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, Ólafur Halldórsson, and Peter Foote (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag 2003), 36; *Íslendingabók*, in *Íslendingabók - Landnámabók*, vol. 1, Íslenzk fornit I, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1968), 17.

[24] Gottskálk Jensson, "Íslenskar klausturreglur og libertas ecclesie á ofanverði 12 öld," in *Íslensk klausturmenning á miðöldum*, ed. Haraldur Bernhardsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 2016), ##; Sigurðr Nordal, *Íslensk menning* I, 296.

[25] Gottskálk Jensson, "Íslenskar klausturreglur og libertas ecclesie á ofanverði 12 öld," in *Íslensk klausturmenning á miðöldum*, ed. Haraldur Bernhardsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 2016), 13.

Anders Bergquist, "The Papal Legate: Nicholas Breakspear's Scandinavian Mission," in *Adrian IV The English Pope* (1154-1159), eds., Brenda Bolton and Anne J. Duggan (London: Routledge, 2003), 40-48.

[26] Embla Aae, "Altar Foundations in the Nidaros Province: The Enduring Elite Influence on Ecclesiastical Networks in the Late Middle Ages," Scandinavian Journal of History 51, no. 1 (2026): 1-29.

to saga studies cannot be understated.[27] By the fourteenth century, in the Icelandic scribal culture that paired saints' lives, exempla, and romances within the same codices, compilation became a flexible technology of authorship. It allowed scribes to embed their own intellectual priorities into the "ordering" of others' words, producing what Arthur Bahr refers to as "new constellations of meaning" through juxtaposition.[28]

The same clerical networks that sustained literary production also sustained legal, episcopal, and historiographical writing. As Erika Sigurdson has noted, there is "a marked correlation between the circle of elite clerics responsible for the writing of bishops' sagas, annals, and religious and secular literature in the fourteenth century, and those producing legal writing in this early period."[29] This overlap matters because it indicates that saga production cannot be isolated from the broader clerical culture in which habits of reading, excerpting, and arrangement were formed. The evidence is especially vivid in the stories of Icelandic bishops themselves. In *Lárentíus saga*, for example, Lárentíus is presented explicitly as the *lærifaðir* of his pupil Bergr Sokkason.[30] Such relationships were central to the reproduction of clerical culture: between teacher and student, bishop and clerk, childhood companions in study, and later between priests who inhabited the same network of *mestháttar prestar*, the most powerful priests of the diocese.[31] These were not merely personal ties. They were channels for the transmission of textual habits and interpretive methods. Bergr Sokkason is particularly significant in this respect. He is explicitly named as the author of works such as *Nikulás saga erkibiskups* and *Míkaels saga höfuðengils*, and he may well have authored others.[32] *Míkaels saga höfuðengils* is, itself, a compiled work using encyclopedia references as commentaries in between the lines of Biblical material and legendary samples. One can see this authorial stance articulated with unusual clarity in vernacular prologues. Bergr Sokkason's statement of purpose in the letter prologue "Bref herra Bergs abota," to *Nikulás saga erkibiskups*, for example, frames his work as an act of adaptation and fuller gathering from older books. Within the text he states: "gjöra svo mikinn hlut…að snara

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[27] The content of the *Strengleikar* section of DG 4-7 had a lasting impact on Icelandic saga writing. Though it is absent from the *Strengleikar* collection, Marie de France's *Eliduc* may have influenced the writer of *Völsunga saga* to include the mention of animals using herbs to treat wounds in the Sigmundr and Sinfljötli running as wolves episode.

[28] Cf Arthur Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages: Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[29] Erika Sigurdson, The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 58.

[30] *Lárentíus saga, Biskupa sögur III, Íslenzk fornrit XVII*, ed., Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka fornritafélag, 1998), 382.

[31] Erika Sigurdson, The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity (Leiden: Brill, 2016),118.

[32] Peter Hallberg has gone so far as to claim that Bergr authored *Dínus saga drambláta*, though this study is not concerned with finding an author. Cf., Hallberg, "A Group of Icelandic 'Riddarasögur,' from the Middle of the Fourteenth Century" in Les saga de chevaliers (riddarasögur): Actes de la Ve Conférence internationale sur les sagas, ed., Régis Boyer (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1985).

lífssögu…heldur fullari en áður finnst skrifuð í fornum bókum…að þeir þyrmi minni fáfræði."[33] Sverrir Tómasson views the verb Bergr uses here, *snara*, as a signal of his editorial practice, which is to gather together available sources, elucidating them, and presenting them anew in vernacular form.[34] This is the same logic that underwrites compilatio as narrative practice which is elucidated in Vincent of Beauvais' prologue to the *Speculum maius*. This practice was not genre-bound. It permeated nearly every type of saga being written in varying degrees.

The template had been set from the time that Icelanders began learning Latin and producing texts of their own. In this sense, clerical pedagogy produced not only books, but habits of mind. The Icelandic intellectual culture has been described as a veritable "melting pot of ideas" from various European literary traditions as well as indigenous oral sources and storytelling.[35] Behind that were the schools and institutional pedagogies that were heterogenous in much the same way. The result of this was not merely a captivating body of literature but a priesthood that would help institutionalize Christianity through a universal Catholic church in Iceland. The education that was produced as a result of this became the glue that held people together within this society, from the rich to the poor, students to teachers, from the ideological to the financial.

2.2.2 Translation and the Icelandic Language of Compilation

If proliferation of educational sites for the purpose of training clerics establishes a pedagogical habitus, then translation provided a crucial early site where that habitus was exercised in vernacular narrative. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, for example, has argued that the translation of French and Latin texts in medieval Norway is best understood as cultural negotiation and as an interpretive reading that appropriates and reshapes foreign texts for new audiences.[36] Through such a lens, translation can be viewed as a type of compilatory practice since the same or similar processes of selection, restructuring, abbreviation, expansion, and accommodation are constitutive of the work. Translation does not merely transmit a foreign text into a new language. It repositions that text within a new literary horizon, absorbs it into local expectations, and often renders it legible through forms of emphasis or organization absent from the source. In this sense, translation is already an exercise in compositional authority. The translator, like the compiler, works under the sign of inherited material while nevertheless reshaping that material into a newly ordered form.

Yet translation is only the beginning. The "original" riddarasögur suggest something more ambitious than adaptation. They show heterogeneous learned, biblical, and romance

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[33] Nikulás saga erkibiskups. https://archive.org/stream/heilagramannasg00sggoog/heilagramannasg00sggoog_djvu.txt Accessed 02/10/2026.

[34] Sverrir Tómasson, *Íslensk bókmenntasaga*, 1, eds., Guðrún Nordal, Sverrir Tómasson, and Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík: Mál og Menning, 1992), 210.

[35] Ryder Patzuk-Russell, *The Development of Education in Medieval Iceland* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 1.

[36] Sif Rikharðsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

materials being synthesized into continuous plots whose authority lies in arrangement and transformation rather than in invention *ex nihilo*. Icelandic hagiography provides a close vernacular analogue for this authorial posture. Simonetta Battista, for example, has shown that Icelandic hagiographers frequently adopt the stance of the compiler explicitly, presenting themselves as humble transmitters while exercising agency through selection, ordering, and vernacularization.[37] The stance is one of deference, but the practice is highly interventionist. That combination is crucial for understanding later romance as well. A text may disclaim originality while still displaying a highly organized and purposeful mode of authorship. The compiler's humility, in other words, should not be mistaken for passivity.

2.2.3 Mendicant Pedagogy and Fourteenth-Century Iceland

The mendicant orders institutionalized these practices in a way that made *compilatio* not only a literary posture but a daily discipline. For example, from the moment of its foundation in 1216, the Order of Preachers conceived of itself as a community of preachers whose effectiveness relied on prolonged study. The earliest constitutions required each convent to maintain a school, and by 1220 the friars had established their studium at St-Jacques in Paris, which quickly became the intellectual center of the order. Dominican statutes structured every friar's life around a triadic pedagogical rhythm: *lectio*, the reading and exposition of authoritative texts; *repetitio*, the systematic rehearsal of material to secure it in memory; and *disputatio*, the oral testing of arguments and authorities in public forum.[38] Crucially, this regimen did not end with the completion of initial training. Once professed, a friar remained a lifelong student, obliged to attend lectures and sermons unless prevented by preaching duties. As Mulchahey notes, the friars themselves acknowledged that study was not preparation for ministry but ministry itself, an extension of their evangelical mission.[39]

Though Iceland never had a Dominican monastery, this absence should not be mistaken for a lack of Dominican influence on Icelandic clerical culture. Fourteenth-century Iceland was deeply integrated into the ecclesiastical networks of the Norwegian province of Niðarós and, through it, into the institutional life of the Universal Catholic Church.[40] Dominican friars were active throughout Scandinavia from the early thirteenth century, with houses in Bergen, Oslo, and Niðarós, and Icelandic clerics encountered Dominican modes of learning through episcopal service, study abroad, imported books, and itinerant ecclesiastical officials rather than through local monastic foundations.[41] The lack of a permanent Dominican foundation in Iceland was largely a consequence of the island's settlement pattern and the absence of the urban conditions

[37] Simonetta Battista, "The 'Compilator' and Contemporary Literary Culture in Old Norse Hagiography," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 1 (2005): 1-13.

[38] Mulchahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study*, 87-95.

[39] Mulchahey, *First the Bow is Bent in Study*, 211-214.

[40] Erika Sigurðsson, *The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 90.

[41] Astrid Marner, "Litergical Change and Liturgical Plurality in the Province of Nidaros: New Light on the Ordo Nidrosiensis Ecclesiae," In *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 196.

that typically sustained mendicant life.[42] Even so, Dominican influence belongs within the story of Icelandic intellectual life, though with exceptions. Where Dominican-trained figures, such as Jón Halldórsson, contributed to the circulation of exempla and preaching materials, they reinforced and intensified an already-existing clerical culture of excerpting and ordering. The argument is not that Dominican pedagogy alone caused saga writing, rather that it supplied a portable pedagogy that strengthened a pan-European clerical authorial mode in which authority is inherited and composition proceeds by selection, compilation, and interpretive ordering. Once that mode is recognized as culturally available, the mosaic-like construction of late romances becomes historically intelligible. It no longer appears as mere textual bricolage or haphazard borrowing, but as a narrative constructed through the logic of *compilatio*. The pedagogical emphases associated with the Dominican Order, such as systematic study, the disciplined reuse of authoritative sources, and the organization of those sources into models for preaching thus circulated as portable techniques rather than as institutionally fixed practices. In the Icelandic context, these techniques were absorbed into cathedral schools and Benedictine and Augustinian houses, where they reinforced already established clerical habits oriented toward excerpting, ordering, and interpretive compilation rather than supplanting local educational structures.

By the early twelfth century, the clerical culture that proliferated encyclopedic enterprises on the continent had already diffused across Latin Christendom, and Iceland was intellectually integrated into that world despite its geographical remoteness. That integration was sustained through cathedral and monastic schools, missionary bishops educated abroad, and reliance upon imported texts for instruction. Ryder Patzuk-Russell's study of medieval Icelandic education provides a much-needed lens through which this process can be understood, as it demonstrates that from the late eleventh century onward Icelandic learning was organized around the same discipline of *grammatica* that underpinned scholastic education elsewhere in Europe. The Old Norse grammatical treatises themselves provide particularly telling evidence. As Patzuk-Russell argues, these treatises are "unusual compilations of many different sources…a melding of at least two pedagogical worlds: the learning and practice of Old Norse poetry and the Latin tradition of ars grammatica."[43] The point is fundamental. The earliest vernacular theorization of language in Iceland is already a bilingual exercise in selective gathering, excerpting, adaptation, and pedagogical reordering. Compilation is therefore not a late anomaly entering vernacular culture from outside. It is there near the beginning of Icelandic learned vernacularity itself.

The institutional nodes that sustained this training, specifically the cathedral schools at Hólar in the north and Skálholt in the south, together with a small network of Benedictine and Augustinian houses, operated within a recognizably European educational framework, even without the scale of university *studia* or Dominican schools. Icelandic clerics absorbed the same Donatian and Priscinaic frameworks that elsewhere equipped compilers for commentary, exegesis, and encyclopedic endeavors. They did so, moreover, within what Patzuk-Russell describes as a bilingual educational culture in which *grammatica* both authorized texts and normalized interpretation.[44] In this miniature scholastic ecosystem, students learned a method of

[42] Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson, "Introduction," 1.

[43] Ryder Patzuk-Russell, *Education in Medieval Iceland*, 2.

[44] Ryder Patzuk-Russell, *Education in Medieval Iceland*, 77.

reading and writing whose basic operations were compilatory, to gather, gloss, divide, and reassemble inherited learning into pedagogically serviceable forms. At the level of method, the grammatical and poetic treatises replicate, in miniature, the operations of *ordinatio* and *compilatio* that governed scholastic encyclopedism. Patzuk-Russell's discussion of the Third and Fourth Grammatical Treatises emphasizes that they "make use of existing paradigms of bilingual Latin teaching to contextualize ON poetics in a clerical milieu."[45] Their authorities, Donatus, Priscian, Alexander de Villa Dei, and figure lists derived from Priscian's Instiutiones grammaticae, are not merely cited but reorganized within a composite vernacular apparatus.[46] The result is a textual form that is inherently compilatory: an anthology of authorities, examples, and definitions reordered to teach and to preserve. In precisely the way that Vincent of Beauvais ordered patristic and classical citations into thematic mirrors, Icelandic schoolmen gathered Latin doctrine and native poetic lore into composite treatises intended to instruct.

Seen from a wider European perspective, these developments place Iceland squarely within the same broad textual networks that produced encyclopedias, exempla collections, saints' lives, mirrors, and romance literature across the continent. The sagas cannot therefore be treated as merely insular creations. They emerge instead as vernacular realizations of a learned model of authorship in which to compose is to collect and to collect is to interpret. The emergence of greater structural unity in fourteenth-century Icelandic narrative further supports the argument that saga composition in this period reflects learned habits of arrangement rather than a turn toward autonomous literary invention. As Gottskálk Jensson has observed, Icelandic saga authors from the fourteenth century onward increasingly "glue narrative episodes together," employing recognizable structuring devices such as hidden identity, recognition scenes, apparent death, and recurring symbolic objects.[47] These techniques, many of which derive from Aristotelian and continental romance traditions, signal a refinement of the compilatory practice. They function as mechanisms of cohesion capable of binding heterogeneous narrative units into a legible whole. The pieces may yet be visible if one looks closely enough.

2.3 Tesserae: Pieces of the Mosaic

Dínus saga drambláta begins with orientation rather than action. The diverse materials that the scribe brought together are a fascinating sampling of some of the most important, widely circulated traditions of the Middle Ages. Encyclopedic knowledge, romance motifs both foreign and domestic, sermon exempla, vision literature, and insular traditions of the supernatural variety coexist within the saga. Their presence reflects a conscientious manner of selecting materials that would have been both recognizable as well as portable in form and function. This presupposed an intended reading audience that would have been arguably sophisticated in their tastes or, at least, well-read in the popular works of the time. The following section will isolate and identify

[45] Patzuk-Russell, 278.

[46] Patzuk-Russell, 278.

[47] Gottskálk Jenssen, "Bishop Jón Halldórsson and 14th-Century Innovations in Saga Narrative: The Case of Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar bersekjabana," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt*, ed., Gunnar Harðarson and Karl-Gunnar Johansson (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 59.

the most obvious of these borrowings, focusing on how these discrete units were refashioned for a fourteenth-century Icelandic reader base.

2.3.1 The Learned World of *Dínus saga drambláta*

Dínus saga opens with an Aristotelian-style prologue in which the "author(s)" of the text are purported to be the ancient wisdom contained with the learned books of bygone days. The saga reports:

> "Svá finnst í fornum fræði bókum skrifað, at heiminum sé skift í þrjá hluti eða parta. Ok heitir inn fyrsti suðr Asia, enn inn vestri Afrika, enn norðr álfann er kölluð Európá. Í Európá eru ágætligt ríki, ok frægðarlig ok í því er öll frigð ok blómi. Í Asia stendr it helga Jórsalaland, er öll inn stæstu stormerki hafa gjörst í hingat burði várs herra Jesu Christi, ok um holdgan hans ok pínu, um hans upprísu ok uppstigning, ok mörg önnur teikn, er var herra var á þessu landi."[48]
>
> "Thus, it is found written in ancient, learned books that the world is divided into three pieces or parts. The first is called Asia to the south, the second Africa to the west, and the northern half is called Europe. In Europe there are excellent and renowned kingdoms, and in them is all peace and prosperity. In Asia stands the holy land of Jerusalem, where all the greatest miracles were performed in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and concerning his incarnation and suffering, about his resurrection and ascension, and many other signs, when our Lord was in this land."

Having established the horizons of what a fourteenth-century audience would have considered the proper channels of authority; the saga launches into a geographical excursus of the environs for the events of the imminent story. The scribe divides the world into three main parts with Europe occupying the northern half of the globe while Africa lies within the southwestern quarter and Asia in the southeastern quarter of the southern half of the world. This tripartite division of the world was especially common recalling the familiar image of the T/O map, in which the continents are arranged around the Mediterranean, the Don, and the Nile. Such maps gave terrestrial space a sacred history in the Middle Ages and were known to Icelanders through several sources.[49] The first of these comes from Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae:

> "Post diluvium mundus in tres partes divisus est, quarum unam Asia, alteram Europa, tertiam Africa obtinuit. In Asia habitavit Sem, in Africa Cham, in Europa Iafeth."[50]
>
> "After the Flood the world was divided into three parts: Asia, Europe, and Africa. Shem lived in Asia, Ham in Africa, Japheth in Europe."

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[48] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 3.

[49] Rudolf Simek, "Cosmology," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 110.

[50] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* IX.2.29.

This same framework appears in several other Icelandic works, but this is the one of the most likely candidates for its source. The evidence for this theory is that Vincent of Beauvais' *speculum historiale*, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* and Peter Comestor's *historia scholastica* are referenced in the Genesis portion of *Stjórn* where this division of the world occurs.[51]

"Frá þessum iii sonum Nóa er komið allt mannkyn. þær þjóðir eru komnar frá Kam er byggðu suðrhálfo heimsins; en þer frá Sem er austrveg byggðu, ok þaðan er Gyðíngalýðr; en þær þjóðir frá Jafeð er norðrhálfu byggðu…"[52]	"From these three sons of Noah all mankind is descended. Those who are descended from Ham who inhabited the southern half of the world; and those from Shem who inhabited the eastern regions, and from them is the Jewish people; and those peoples from Japheth who inhabited the northern half…"

As in *Stjórn*, geographical exposition in *Dínus saga* is inseparable from Christian historiography. Space is not mapped abstractly, but arranged according to sacred descent, providential significance, and inherited textual authority. As compilers created their works with an intentional order, this type of beginning creates an appropriate narrative hierarchy within the text. Here, narrative action is subordinated within an already meaningful world-order. This historiographical knowledge bleeds over into the original riddarasögur whose stories occur outside the geographical confines of Iceland. *Adonías saga*, another fourteenth-century Icelandic romance, which shares a striking number of similarities with both Dínus saga and the Alexander legend, similarly engages in this stock encyclopedic opening:

"<S>vo hofum vær lesit i frædibókvm ath eftir Nóaflód skiptu þeir syner Nóa med sier heiminvm. bygdi Seem austurálfu og sudurálfu veralldar er heiter Asia. Enn nordrhalfuna bygde Jafeth. Káin þridi son Nóa bygdi vesturhálfv veralldar."[53]	"Thus, we have read in learned books, that after Noah's flood his sons divided the world among themselves. Shem settled the eastern and southern part of the world which is called Asia. But Japeth settled the northern half. Ham, third son of Noah, settled the western half of the world."

In both *Dínus saga* as well as *Adonías saga*, the anonymous compilers utilize the learned, Biblical geographies to place their stories within the frame of world history, rather than pure fantasy. Indeed, both protagonists of these sagas are embued with the qualities and characteristics of royal sons—good qualities and bad ones, in equal measure. The end goal for these may have been to situate them among the popular mirror literature of the time, by giving aristocratic youth something to aspire to or rustic literates entertaining distraction.

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[51] Cf., *Stjorn. Gammelnorsk bibelhistorie fra Verdens skabelse til det babyloniske fangenskab*, ed., Carl Rikard Unger (Christiania: Feilberg and Landmark, 1862), 63-66.

[52] *Veraldar saga*, in *Fire og fyrretyve for en stor deel forhen utrykte prøver af oldnordisk sprog og literatur*, ed., Konraður Gíslason (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske, 1860), 70.

[53] *Adonías saga*, Late Medieval Iceland Romance, vol. III (Copenhagen: , 1963), 74.

In Asia, *Dínus saga* mentions the holy city of Jerusalem, extolled for being the navel of Christendom. Also, ostensibly of equal importance to the saga writer is the city of Alexandria in Egypt, also described as being in Asia. It is upon this city that the narrative will focus. Having established Alexandria as the locus of the saga, the scribe maintains the structure of the narrative's opening frame. This is not the current Alexandria of the fourteenth century, but presumably that of the distant past, during the time of the Ptolemaic dynasty. It is described as a place of great importance not only to the story but to Christian history as well. A momentary narrative digression reminds readers that this Alexandria was the erstwhile home of the blessed martyr and saint, Katherine.[54] This choice of locales will become important later in this study, but what is particularly germane to the notion of the saga's compilatory nature is how closely the language of the opening of *Dínus saga drambláta* parallels that of Stjórn, the Old Norse translation of the Old Testament from Genesis to II Kings.[55][56]

Dínus saga drambláta	*Stjórn* (I. Mosebók)
"…þui þar kiemur alldre skij nie regn, og ei vindur so er þar loffted skiært, og ein aa, su er Nijl heiter, ein aff þeim Paradijsar am, fellur vmm landed, og friöfgar med sinni vøkuan, berande avøxt…."[57]	"Þar kann sealldan eðr nær alldri regn at koma edr uætur. enn aain Nilus hin fyrsta af paradisar áám. hueria er Genesis nefnir Phison er um landit flytr ok fellr. uókuar þat sua ok freouar meðr sinni döggvan."
"for there neither snow nor rain ever falls, nor does any wind blow, so the air there is clear. One river, called the Nile, one of the rivers of Paradise, flows through the land and fertilizes it with its waters, bringing forth fruit…"	"There rain or moisture seldom, or almost never, comes to pass. But the river Nile, the first of the rivers of Paradise, which Genesis calls Phison, flows through the land and falls there. It waters it thus and refreshes it with its dew."

This similarity to the biblical compilation is telling, particularly when consideration is given to the compilatory nature of *Stjórn* itself, a book that routinely and overtly engages with Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* as a type of commentary.[58] The Maccabean material of the apocrypha, for example, was already in circulation by the thirteenth century in Brandr Jónsson's *Gyðinga saga*, and this has been found in manuscripts—such as AM 226 fol.—alongside

[54] Katherine's importance in the medieval mind should not be understated. Her veneration was so ubiquitous in western Europe that several cults of Saint Katherine were established in areas such as Normandy and England, areas where cosmopolitan literature was being imported into Norway in the thirteenth century. Cf., Christine Walsh, *The Cult of Saint Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[55] Rudolf Simek, *Altnordische Komographie: Studien und Quellen zu Weltbild und Weltbeschreibung in Norwegen und Island vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 249-250.

[56] It is important to note that *Stjórn* is not a homogenous work but was completed in different stages over time, contains clear scribally-inserted commentaries from the great theological minds of late antiquity and the Middle Ages, and it usually divided by modern editors into Stjórn I, II, and III.

[57] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 3-4.

[58] C.f., Ian J. Kirby, *Bible translation in Old Norse* (Geneva: Libraire Droz, 1986), 52-53.

Rómverja saga and *Alexanders saga*, providing a history of the world up to the time of Christ.[59] In the case of its description of Egypt, the compiler of Stjórn goes even further back in time, citing his source for this information as an ancient authority:

"Ok þo segir Plato einn hinn uisazti meistari i fyrndinni. at alldri kemi regn aa Egiptalandi. J aanni Nilo fødiz þat ferfætt kuikendi."[60]	"And yet Plato, one of the wisest masters of ancient times, says that rain never falls upon Egypt. From the river Nile are nourished the four-footed living creatures."

Invoking Plato as an authority inside a collection dedicated to what was understood as the words of God, the ultimate auctor, might seem very strange, but this was commonplace. By the thirteenth century, clerical writers within the Dominican brotherhood were adding pagan material to the story of Christmas, though they found no occasion to mention their sources by name.[61] So too can this format of using biblical material alongside learned, even pagan, sources be found in other genres of Icelandic writing contemporaneous with the original riddarasögur: *heilagramanna sögur*, or hagiographies.[62]

Similar appeals to learned authority and geographical sketches appear across the original riddarasögur genre. In the fourteenth-century *Vilhjálms saga sjóðs*, for example, there is a similar globe-trotting prologue that attempts to orient the reader to the environs of the saga's story as well as ensure its historical veracity, or, at least, its historical lineage by appealing to one of the greatest thinkers of old:

"SAGA þessi hefzt fyst j Englandi og fer sidan ut til Saxlandz og þa til Gri<ck>landz og þui næst uester j affrika allt ut under solarsetRit og þadan j sudrhalfu heimsins til hinnar miklu borgar Ninive. og þadan ut at heims enda til *hinna miklu fialla Kakausi. þessi saga var tekin af steinuegginum j Babbilon hjnni miklu. og meistari Humerus hefer samsett hana."[63]	"This saga begins first in England and then goes out to Saxony and then to Greece, and next west into Africa, all the way to the sunset, and from there into the southern part of the world to the great city of Nineveh, and thence out to the world's end at the great mountains of Caucasus. This saga was taken from a stone wall in Babylon the Great. And master Homer put it together."

[59] Ian J. Kirby, "Bible: West Norse," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 40-41.

[60] *Stjorn: Gammelnorsk Bibelhistorie: fra verdens skabelse til det Babyloniske Fangenskab*, ed., C. R. Unger (Christiania: Feilberg & Landmarks Forlag, 1862), 77.

[61] Simon Tugwell, "Humbert of Romans, 'Compilator,'" in *Lector et Compilator: Vincent de Beauvais, frère prêcheur un intellectuel et son milieu au XIIIe siècle.* Centre Européen pour la Recherche et L'Interprétation des Musiques Médiévales. Fondation Royaumont. (Grane: Editions Créaphis, 1997), 48.

[62] Cf., Simonetta Battista, "The Compilator and Contemporary Literary Culture in Old Norse Hagiography" *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 1 (2005): 1-13.

[63] *Viljálms saga sjóðs*, Late Medieval Icelandic Romance, vol. IV, ed., Agnete Loth (1964), 3.

The fifteenth-century *riddarasaga*, *Jarlmans saga ok hermanns,* also appeals to prior auctoritas, in a unique tripartite fashion. In its introductory lines, the saga gestures towards the work of the poet Virgil, whose work was being consumed with fervor during the Middle Ages.[64] Fascinatingly, many of these sagas claim to have not only been garnered from prior authorities but done so from written sources that are not contained solely within books:

"<M>Eistare Uirgilius hefer samansett marga fræde til skemtanar maunnum j bok þeirre er Saxafræde heiter. Enn sógu þaa sem nu munu uær byria fann hann skrifada aa steinuegginum borgar þeirrar er Licibon heiter j Franz."[65]	"Master Virgil has put together much learning for the amusement of men in that book which is called Saxafræði. But the story which we shall now begin he found written on the stone wall of the city that is called Lisbon in France."

Such a rhetorical framing device may be indebted to the Ciceronian narrative of the finding of the tomb of Archimedes, which, according to Cicero, was buried under bushes, brambles, and thorns, that, when removed, featured verses of a poem.[66] This motif becomes such standard fare in the original riddarasögur corpus that nearly every extant saga features some sort of appeal to ancient authority, authorial distancing on the part of the scribe, and phantasmagoric provenance for the material. The opening lines of the presumably fourteenth-century riddarasaga *Sigurðar saga fóts*, the scribe begins with:[67]

"Þat er upphaf einnar litillar sogu *þeirrar er skrifut fanzt aa steinveggnum j Kolni at Knwtyr hefer kongr heitit sa er Ried fyrer Siolaundum."[68]	"This is the beginning of a little story that which was found on a stone wall in Cologne that a king was called Knútr he who ruled over Sjælland."

It is especially germane to this study that the places in which these sagas are allegedly found are the homes of some of the finest medieval centers of learning in the western world.[69] Even the

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[64] Cf., Fabio Stok, "The *Vita Donati* in the Middle Ages," in *The Ancient Lives of Veirgil: Literary and Historical Studies*, eds., Anton Powell and Philip Hardie (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2017), 133-152.

[65] *Jarlsmanns saga ok Hermanns*, *Late Medieval Icelandic Romance* vol. III, ed., Agnete Loth (1963), 3

[66] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations: Also, Treatises on The Nature of the Gods and on the Commonwealth*, trans. C. D. Yonge (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), 187

[67] Kalinke and Mitchell use this estimation for the saga, although the earliest extant manuscript is from the 17th century. The rationale is curious, as Cologne did not have an established university until 1388, though it was a significant site of ecclesiastical learning before the university itself was established. Cf., Marianne E. Kalinke and Peter M. Mitchell, *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 100; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[68] *Sigurðar saga fóts*, *Late Medieval Icelandic Romance* vol. III, ed., Agnete Loth (1963), 232.

[69] Cf., Ian P. Wei, Intellectual Culture in Medieval Paris: Theologians and the University., c. 1100-1330 (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2012); Lydia Schumacher, The Origins of Scholasticism: Theology and Philosophy in Paris, 1150-1250 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025); Ken Pennington, "The Beginnings of Law Schools in the Twelfth Century," in *A Companion to Twelfth-Century Schools*, ed., Cédric Giraud, trans.,

epilogues of some sagas contain such statements of auctoritas. They are, also, not limited to the riddarasögur but occur in a connected genre, the *fornaldarasögur*:

"svá sem meistari Galterus í Alexandrí sögu eðr Umeris skáld í Trójumanna sögu, ok hafa eftirkomandi meistarar þat heldr til sanninda fært, enn í móti mælt, at svá mætti vera; þarf ok engi meira trúnað á at leggja, enn hafa þó gleði af, á meðan hann heyrir."[70]	"Just as Master Galterus in the Alexandrian Saga or Homer the poet in the Trojan Saga, and subsequent masters have rather brought this forth as truth than spoken against it, so it might well be; nor is there any need to put more faith in it than to take joy in it while one hears it."

A second stratum of *Dínus saga*'s compilatory fabric derives from classical lore transmitted through Latin digests and encyclopedic works. Authors such as Valerius Maximus, Orosius, and the compilers of the *Rómverja sögur* provided medieval Iceland with moralized exempla and Roman history, often already reshaped in florilegial or compilatory formats.[71] It has been previously argued by Lars Lönnroth that some fourteenth-century manuscripts contain Latin medical tracts that could have influenced saga writers indirectly, and that these may have been known as early as the thirteenth century.[72] *Dínus saga*'s engagement with such material thus illustrates how cultural transmission is a natural effect of the compilation process. By embedding snippets of Roman or pseudo-classical lore, the saga thus performs the same moves as scholastic compilers by integrating fragments of antiquity into a new didactic and narrative frame.[73] The compilational proof does not end with how the saga orients its readers into the story world. The compiler of Dínus saga further mediates classical and learned archetypes to craft its dramatis personae.

2.3.2 Dínus: An Alexandrian Simulacrum

At the character level, *Dínus saga drambláta* models its dueling protagonists around another intellectual property that would have been easily recognized by a medieval reader, that of Alexander the Great.[74] The *Alexandreis* of Walter of Châtillon was widely circulated in the Middle Ages, eventually making its way into Iceland where it was adapted into prose in the

Ignacio Duran (London: Brill, 2019), 226-249; Joseph P. Huffman, *The Imperial City of Cologne: From Roman Colony to Medieval Metropolis (19 B.C.-1125 A.D.)*(Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

[70] *Göngu-Hrólfs saga* III, 200.

[71] Jakob Benediktsson, "Rómverja sögur," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, 537-538.

[72] Lars Lönnroth, *European Sources of Icelandic Saga-Writing* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1965), 22.

[73] Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World*, 188-194; C.f., also Margaret Clunies Ross and Rudolf Simek, "Encyclopedic Literature," MSE (2016), 164-166.

[74] Richard Stoneman, "Introduction: Formation and Diffusion of the Alexander Legend," In *A history of Alexander the Great in world culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7-8.

thirteenth century by Brandr Jónsson, bishop of Hólar.[75] Though this work is a mostly faithful prose-rendering of Walter's Latin original, Brandr, its translator, has the tendency to condense the narrative in some places.[76] He also tends to defer authority to the story's originator with stock phrases such as "segir meistare Galterus," or "says Master Walter."[77] Its influence on Old Norse sagas is manifest, as evidence for its appearance, at least in part, has been recognized in *Njáls saga*.[78] It is not the sole source of Alexandrian material, however, as the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* survives in several Icelandic manuscripts as well.[79] This legendary figure of Alexander is identified within the opening lines of the saga as the figure after whom the city in which Dínus and his father King Ptolomeus reside is named.[80] It was a common practice in the Middle Ages for scribes to create Alexandrian works for royal patrons, many of which went out of their way to highlight the storied hero's primary vice, that of his pride.[81] The combination of Alexander's strength and intelligence were further extrapolated from western epic tradition, one which, in France, had already reworked the legendary Aeneas into the medieval Alexander.[82] This Virgilian heroic ideal, which the medieval Alexander embodied, was therefore imparted to the knights and ladies of the riddarasögur through their courtly learning.[83] Though riddarasögur lack named commissioners, Jürg Glauser has made a persuasive argument for their audience as being the elite of fourteenth-century Icelandic society, and their originators as being from a distinctly clerical milieu.[84] Dínus' trajectory within the saga that bears his name closely aligns with that of the famous Macedonian King as well. It is told that he gains his name from his

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[75] Kirsten Wolf provides an excellent account of the differing theories surrounding Brandr as the author of *Alexanders saga* and *Gyðinga saga* in her article "*Gyðinga saga, Alexanders saga*, and Bishop Brandr Jónsson," *Scandinavian Studies* 60 no. 3 (1988): 371-400.

[76] Kirsten Wolf, "Alexanders saga" in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, eds., Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolfe (New York: Garland, 1993), 7-8.

[77] David Ashurst and Francesco Vitti, "Alexander Literature in Scandinavia" in *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed., Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 320.

[78] Cf., Lars Lönnroth, *Njáls saga: A Critical Introduction* (1976), 104-164; Lars Lönnroth, "Hetjurnar líta bleika akra: Athuganir á Njáls sögu og Alexanders sögu," *Skírnir* 144 (1970): 12-30; David Ashurst, "Bleikir Akrar - Snares of the Devil? The Significance of the Pale Cornfields in *Alexanders saga*" *Saga-Book* 25 (2000): 272-291.

[79] Kirsten Wolf, "Alexanders saga" in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, eds., Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolfe (New York: Garland, 1993), 7-8.

[80] *Dínus saga*, 3.

[81] Chrystèle Blondeau, "Les intentions d'une œuvre (Faits et gestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Vasque de Lucène) et sa réception par Charles le Téméraire: Ycellui Alexandre pas ne vous doit estre exemple de vertus..." *Revue du Nord* 83, no. 342 (2001): 749.

[82] Frederic Amory, "Things Greek and the Riddarasögur," *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (1984), 521.

[83] Frederic Amory, "Things Greek and the Riddarasögur," *Speculum* 59, no. 3 (1984), 521.

[84] Jürg Glauser, *Isländische Märchensagas: Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island* (Basel and Frankfurt am Main: Helbing & Lichtenhahn Verlag, 1983), 64-78.

mother, Diana, named after a pagan goddess.[85] He is a young royal, mentored by the finest minds of his age, but his constant restlessness, unbridled desire, and damning arrogance lead him into great misery and misfortune. Dínus' chief vice is his pride, which the saga enumerates four-fold and suggests that this is the only blemish on his otherwise perfect existence:

"So mikeláátur og megtugur, ad hann vil ongumm þess vnna ad lijta þá fegurd, med þeim blöma, sem bar hanz asiöna, helldur hulde hann hana med þeirre himnu, er so var hááttud sem hun væri holldgröinn vid hanz asiönu. þad var annad hanz dramb ad einginn skilldi so diarffur madur, huorke jnnlendskur nie wtlendskur, rijkur nie örijkur, ad sinn föt skillde jnn setia vmm þann kastala, sem köngsson og hanz þienarar saatu j, firer vtann ordlof, enn eff hanz þienustu sueinar giættu ecki ad sijnu starffe, þá skilldu þeir lijffed miss. þad var hid þridia hanz dramb, ad hann forsmaade allar konur og jömfrur j verølldinne, so hann gaff gillda reide j möti eff þad var talad vmm nockurt köngz barn, edur keisara ad væri honum jaffnkosta. þad var hid fiörda hanz dramb, ad hann villde önguann dag til bordz ganga, vtann hann feinge nijann riett, sem hann onguann tijma haffdi firr kiendann, annad huort aff eplum edur alldine, j vænumm drick edur kráásumm...og af þessu var hann kalladur Dijnus hinn drambláte, aff allre hird og alþijdu..."[86]

"He was so great and powerful that he would allow no one to behold the beauty, with that flowering, which his face bore; rather, he concealed it with a veil, which was so fashioned as if it were fused to his flesh. It was his second pride that no daring man, neither native nor foreigner, rich nor poor, should set foot in the castle where the king's son and his servants were sitting, except with permission. If his servants did not take care of their duties, they would lose their lives. It was his third pride that he despised all women and maidens in the world, such that he gave full anger towards it, if any king's or emperor's child was mentioned, to be his equal. It was his fourth pride that he would not go to the table any day unless he had received a new dish, which he had never known before. It was either of fruit or berries, fine drinks or delicacies…For this reason, he was called Dínus the Proud by all the court and people."

Pride was well recognized in medieval thought as being the chief of all sins. According to Augustinian thought "the haughtiness of pride, the delight of lust, and the poison of curiosity, are the motions of a dead soul."[87] Similarly, the various encyclopedic works of the scholastic age each feature their own interpretations of the pitfalls of pride. The use of pride as a narrative engine will be further explored in chapter three of this study.

[85] His name is therefore the male equivalent of Diana, which is Dianus, though the Norse compiler renders it as Djinus.

[86] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 10-11.

[87] Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. 2. The Loeb Classical Library, eds., T. E. Page and W.H.D. Rouse, trans. William Watts (London: W. Heinemann, 1950), 429.

The mutual pride of Dínus and Philotemia is displayed through their insistence upon self-isolation. Each character goes before their respective fathers and asks, in different registers, for their own castles. Dínus' request is a bit confrontational:

"Einn tijma geingur Dijnus firer fødur sinn, og sagdi so til hanz, minn sæte fader, hier til heff eg halldinn verid til namz og sköla og allra handa lista, og eff þier þiker eg off fatt numid hafa þa fa mier einn vngann meijstara, þui aller gieffast vpp sem til voru feingner, og kalla mig meire vijsdöms, enn eff þad er wte, þa vil eg þess beida ydur ad þier giored sem eg beindunst ad þad sie liöst ad eg sie helldur mecktugar köngzson, helldur enn af kotkalle kominn, þui lijtel frægd mun aff mier fara eff eg liffe sem mær j ydar garde, edur mukur j klaustre...eg bid ad þier laated smijda skamt fra ydare borg einn frijdann og sterkann kastala, og firer jnnann hans steinmur, eina sterka høll fagra og ferska, og prijdeliga pentada gler gluggum og gimmsteinumm, setta og grædda vel matuliga, so eg meigi veita dijrum høffdingiumm."[88]	"One time, Dínus went before his father and said to him, "My dear father, until now I have been kept to studies, school, and all kinds of learning. If you think that I have learned too little, then find me a young master, for all those who have been brought to me have given up and call me greater in wisdom. But if that is out, then I wish to ask of you that you do as I request, that it be made clear that I am rather a mighty king's son than born of a cottier. For little fame will come of me if I live as a maiden in your court or as a monk in a cloister…I ask that you have built, close to your city, a beautiful and strong castle, and within its stone walls, a strong hall, fair and fresh, and splendidly painted glass windows and gemstones, set and embedded most fittingly, so that I may host noble lords."

This scene echoes a similar one from *Elis saga ok rósamundu*, a thirteenth-century translation of the twelfth-century Old French chanson de geste *Elie de saint gille*. In the opening chapter of the saga, Eli's father, King Julian, reproaches his son before the court due to his untested skills and perceived laziness:

"Undra ec, hui hann vill sua hogliga lifa sem vapnhestr i stalli eða munkr i klaustri."[89]	"I wonder if he wishes to live so loftily like warhorse in a stall or a monk in a cloister."

This scene prompts the listless hero to prove his father wrong and thereby gain fame and renown, initiating the tale of his many deeds and adventures. What is more relevant to this study, however, is that the language remains virtually unchanged between the Old French poem and the Old Norse prose translation:

[88] *Dínus saga*, 7-9.

[89] *Elis saga ok rósamundu*, ed., Eugen Kölbing (Heilbronn: Verlag von Gbr. Henninger, 1881), 4.

"Mout me marvel confais est ses corages, S'il vaura ester, conme destriers en garde, Moine reclus a Noel u a Pasques?"[90]	"I greatly wonder what has become of his heart, If he intends to remain like a warhorse in a stall, [A] cloistered monk at Christmas or at Easter?"

Old French vernacular narratives commonly used this opposing juxtaposition of *clergie* vis a vis *chevalerie*.[91] The Old Norse translator presumably understood the binary well enough that he included it in his version and the compiler of *Dínus saga drambláta* also resonated with this idea of a noble youth not wanting to be seen as shamefully hiding within the power of his father but instead relying on his own skill.

2.3.3 Philotemia: Royal Rival and Quasi-Maiden King

Just as her male counterpart in the saga, Philotemia likewise asks her father for her own tower. It is a brief and unremarkable scene in the chapter where it takes place, but it has much larger implications later in the saga, when Dínus and his men first arrive in Bláland to sue for her hand. Upon entering her tower, they are beset by the marvel and beauty of Philotemia's home:

"…og sem þeir jnn stijga vmm dyr herbergissinz sia þeir ad þetta herberge er allt jnn penntad og pussierad, med raudt gull og godann cölör, þar áá voru marger glergluggar, og j sumumm voru hiner stæstu gimmsteinar, firer gler, og þa er sölinn skein áá gluggana, var nalega sem elldur logande lieke jnnann vmm herberged, þar j herberginu stödu 24 pijlaarar, so næffurlega og natturlega pentader, sem lifande væri huor lijkneskia, er áá þeim pijlaarum stödu, huor .esse lijkneskia haffde sier áá munne pijpu af þeim máálme sem best kunni hliöda, og bar so hliöd huor pijpann, enn vpp vnder herberginu var lofft giort allt fráá siönumm, og þegar sem haffgola kom áá, og blies vnder herberginu, enn pijlarar voru aller steijptter med eijr, og gilltter fagurlega, blies þa vindurinn vpp efftir pijlaarunum og kom so framm j pijpurnar, sungu þær þa med sijnu hliöde huør þeirra so fagurlega sem eingla søngur være, og litlu sijdar er þeir voru jnn komner, j skiemmuna töku lijkneskiurnar ad sijngia, huør j sijna	"…When they entered through the door of the magnificent chamber, they saw that it was painted and decorated with red gold and fine colors. There were many glass windows, and some contained the largest gemstones, set over the glass. When the sun shone through the windows, it was as if burning fire illuminated the chamber. Within the chamber stood twenty-four pillars, so intricately and naturally painted, as if each image that stood on those pillars appeared to be alive. Each of these images had a pipe at its mouth, crafted from the finest-sounding metal. Each pipe emitted its own sound. Beneath the chamber was space entirely open to the sea. When the sea wind came in and blew into the chamber, it traveled up through the hollow pillars, which were plated with brass and gilded beautifully, and emerged through the pipes. These then sang their sound each as beautifully as the songs of angels. And a little later, when the visitors had entered the chamber, the statues began to sing through

[90] *Élie de Saint Gille*, ed., Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, 1879), 2.

[91] Cf., Robert Fawtier, "Notes pour le commentaire des vers 1877-1881 et 485-487 de la chanson de Roland," in *Studies in French Language and Mediaeval Literature presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope*, ed., E. J. Arnould (Manchester: Publications of the University of Manchester, 1939), 99-102.

pijpu, og snerust j ymsar áátter sem allar væri brosande, og huor til annarar lijtande, enn saker þeirra jlamnde kridda sem j biuggu lykneskiunumm, þáá eckj blies vindinumm j pijpurnar, vard so sæt lyckt j herberginu, ad einginn daudlegur madur haffde þui lijka kient....”[92]

their pipes, turning in various directions, as if all were smiling and some looking at one another. Because of the fragrant incense that emanated from the statues, even when the wind did not blow through the pipes, the room was filled with such a sweet scent that no mortal man had ever experienced anything like it...”

There is a strikingly similar analogue to this scene in an older story, one translated by Icelanders in the late thirteenth century, the story of Charlemagne. In *Le Pelerinage de Charlemagne*, which was a part of the larger *Karlamagnús saga* in Old Norse, the French ruler encounters the wonders of the east in Hugon of Byzantium’s palace:[93]

“Su haull var einkanlig refurid var allt skrifad med ymsum saugum. su haull var kringlott ok ein stolpi j midio er hon stod aull aa. En vm þan stolpa voro .c. annarar stolpa allir gylltir. EN a hueriom þeira uar barnsliki gert af eiri. ok huer likneskian hafdi Oliuant horn j munni ser þeir stolpar uoro allir holir jnnan ok bles vndir hóllina vpp j stol|pana ok bleso baurin med þeim vindi a huerskonar lund er fagrt var. En huert þeirra retti fingr at audru sem kuik ueri. En Karlamagnus kongr vndradiz ok sannadi þa þat er kona hans hafdi sagt. þa kom aa vindr huass ok sneri haullinni sem mylna yllti þa bleso baurnin ok hlo huert at audru. En þeim þotti fagrt til at heyra er jnni uoro. aull glyggin voro af cristallo.Karlamagnus kongr vndradiz þat er hóllin sneriz ok han matti eigi a fetr standa ne engin hans manna ok hugdi þeim geruar giorningar. ‘hallar dyr eru oftnar” segir þeir ‘ok er þetta jd mesta vndr er ver megum eigi j brott komaz.’ þa kom til þeirra Hugon kongr <ok> bad þa eigi hredaz ‘ok mun vedrit minka jmot

“That hall was especially splendid; it was all decorated with various stories. The hall was round, and in the middle was a single pillar on which the whole of it stood. And around that pillar were a hundred other pillars, all gilded. And on each of them was made the likeness of a child, cast in bronze, and each likeness had an ivory horn in its mouth. Those pillars were all hollow within, and wind was blown up under the hall into the pillars, and the children blew with that wind in whatever manner was most pleasing. And each of them stretched out its finger toward another, as if alive. And King Charlemagne marveled and confirmed then what his wife had said. Then there came a sharp wind and turned the hall as a mill-wheel turns. Then the children blew and laughed one at another. And it seemed beautiful to those who were inside to hear it. All the windows were of crystal. King Charlemagne marveled when the hall turned, and he could not remain on his feet, nor could any of his men, and they thought enchantments had been worked on them. ‘The hall doors are shut,’ they said, ‘and this is the greatest wonder, that we cannot get away.’ Then

[92] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 28-29.

[93] In *Karlamagnús saga*, the section is called *Af Jórsalaferð* and is a very close translation of the Anglo-Norman version of *Le Pelerinage de Charlemagne*.

kuelldino' ok suo var. ok stuadaudiz þa haullin vano. bradara."[94]	King Hugon came to them and bade them not be afraid: 'the storm will lessen toward evening.' And so it was, and then the hall stood still again, as before."

This scene is a possible source for Philotemia's hall in *Dínus saga*. They are also doing similar work within their respective texts. In *Karlamagnús saga*, this scene is meant to convey the power and auspiciousness of the Eastern Roman Empire, and has also been argued as serving as a visual prelude to the Byzantine monarch's defeat at the hands of the Christian king Charlemagne due to how the palace seemingly rotates, participating in a wheel-of-fortune and last-judgement logic.[95] In Dínus saga, it may also operate along the same rhetorical lines of thought. The magnificence of Philotemia's hall certainly would have taken readers by surprise, as very little is made of her petition to Maximiliánus to have it constructed. Within the narrative, it provides a moment of much-needed humbling for the young prince Dínus, as he did not expect such grandeur in the empire of Bláland. It therefore establishes Philotemia as Dínus' equal. She is presented thus in terms of her knowledge and abilities, but now also in terms of her power and wealth.

Philotemia's position as intellectual and political foil to Dínus align *Dínus saga* with a tradition that would have been very familiar to Icelandic readers, that of the Maiden Kings. This particular narrative topos was made famous by the late medieval romance *Clári saga*. In her comparative literary study of *Clári saga*, Védis Ragnheiðardóttir makes several intriguing connections between the language used in this original *riddarasaga* and texts such as *Stjórn* and *Alexanders saga*, which serves to further explain why it shares such a strong similarity to *Dínus saga*.[96] Marianne E. Kalinke has argued for an overt link between *Dínus saga* and *Clári saga* in terms of how they enact the familiar maiden-king trope.[97]

Though *Dínus saga* and *Clári saga* diverge in several key areas, the aspect of male versus female testing and trickery are areas in which these texts follow one another closely. Neither story engages in a linear courtship between the romance pair. In *Clári saga*, the maiden king, Séréna is similarly haughty and prideful just as the pair of Dínus and Philotemia are. Similar to Dínus, she obfuscates her beauty by hiding access to it from the outside world by artifice.[98] But her cardinal sin is that of greed or, more obliquely, lust. Her desire for the riches of Prince Clárus

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[94] *Karlamagnús saga Branches I, II, VII er IX*: Edition bilingue projeté par Kund Togeby et Pierre Halleux. Ed., Agnete Loth and Annette Patron-Godefroit. (Jórsalaferð A. 4). La société pour l´étude de la langue et de la littérature danoises. (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels, 1980), 254-258.

[95] Cf., E. Janes Burns, "Portraits of Kingship in the Pelerinage de Charlemagne," *Olifant* 10, no. 4 (1984-1985), 173.

[96] Védis Ragnheiðardóttir, "Clári saga and Its Continental Siblings: A Comparative Literary Approach to an Old Problem," In *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skalhólt,* eds., Gunnar Harðarson and Karl-Gunnar Johansson. The Northern World, Vol. 91. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 92-122.

[97] Marianne E. Kalinke, *Bridal-Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 90-95.

[98] *Clarus saga - Clari Fabella. Islandice et Latine*, ed., Gustav Cederschiöld (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1879), 6.

borders on carnality. On three separate occasions, her greed is framed as a burning desire in her heart that causes her to physically swoon in response. Ultimately, she serves as a foil to Clárus and proves more than his equal in terms of cleverness, until she is eventually beaten, both metaphorically and in actuality, and forced to marry the Prince. Philotemia, in contrast does not desire anything but to prove herself Dínus' intellectual superior. Marriage is the last thing on either party's mind, though it eventually happens as a moral and political resolution of Dínus sexually violating Philotemia as the peak of his revenge. The resulting narrative is, therefore, a bridal-quest without a bridal telos: the structure remains, but its function is redirected toward moral formation rather than marital closure.

It is also likely that the bitter rivalry between Dínus and Philotemia has another, older and arguably more traditional source, in the story of Joseph and Aseneth. Aseneth is introduced as the daughter of Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis. She lives in both extreme luxury as well as extreme isolation. Her life is carefully enclosed, as she dwells in an upper chamber cut off from others, though attended to by several maidens. Like Philotemia, she is contemptuous of all men, especially foreign suitors. Rather than looking for love, she has thrown herself wholly into the worship of idols. When the foreigner Joseph arrives at her father's house as the Pharoah's chief administrator, the narrative emphasizes his beauty, describing him as quasi-angelic, radiant to behold, fragrant, and visibly holy. Aseneth's initial reaction is not attraction but disdain. She recoils from him due to his being formerly a slave as well as a foreigner. Her father insists that she greet Joseph with a kiss, but Joseph himself refuses the embrace, declaring that it would be improper for a worshiper of God to touch a woman who blessed dead idols. This refusal is the narrative hinge of the first section of the story. Joseph's rejection of Aseneth is a theological one rather than a personal one, but it nevertheless shatters Aseneth's sense of self. For all her prestige and beauty, she finds herself empty. The two eventually find love in one another, though not until she has converted. This tale would have been well-known in Iceland as it has at least four versions in Old Norse.[99] Scholars have also theorized that Aseneth's conversion experience was the exemplar for later portrayals of conversions of pagan princesses for marrying their Christian suitors in the chansons de geste genre.[100] If these postulations are true, Aseneth would be right at the heart of one of the most popular genres of medieval literature.[101] Whatever the case may be, Philotemia's initial relationship with Dínus bears some similarity to this tradition.

Within the Alexandrian framework, the figure of Philotemia emerges as a typological wisdom queen whose narrative function aligns closely with that of Candace Queen of Kush. The name Candace is itself a title denoting queenship, much like Ptolomeus denotes kingship in

[99] Richard Cole, "An Edition and Translation of the Icelandic Book of Joseph and Aseneth," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 26, no. 3 (2017): 167-200.

[100] Ruth Nisse, "'Your Name Will No Longer Be Aseneth:' Apocrypha, Anti-Martyrdom, and Jewish Conversion in Thirteenth Century England," *Speculum* 81, no. 3 (2006), 748.

[101] Richard Cole, "Echoes of *the Book of Jospeh and Aseneth*, Particularly in *Yngvars saga Víðförla*" Saga-Book 41 (2017), 7.

Dínus saga.[102] Philotemia is introduced in the fourth chapter of the saga in much the same way as Dínus, as an exceptional royal youth who surpasses all her peers in knowledge and beauty:

"þar fæddist ein döttur so væn og virduglig, ærlig og æskelig sem einskin mannz auga haffdi sied, þui lijkt blöm fædast áá jørdina, aff hollde og blöde mannligu, og einginn veralldar madur munde so hugkuæmur, ad koma sijnu hiartans sinne, ad öska so fagrar manneskiu og bijlætis vtann hun heffde áádur sied. þessi jömfru hiet Philotemia, hun hafdi so vel numid allar 7 bokligar lister med øllum greinumm sem aff sierhuorre list ma giorast, edur greinast, so einginn var hennar likke j øllu þui köngz rijki. so mikid haffde hun numid aff phitöns anda list, og rwnamaalumm, ad j þeim hlutumm hugde hun onguann vera munde sinn jaffna j allre verølldinni, þui henni var kunnug øll jardar nattura, og himenntungla gangur, og stiørnufræde øll, og natturur allra þeirra grasa, steina tria kuista og bruna, sem j voru øllumm heiminum og morg þau vitrumm monnum sem ei skal skiliast, ad teliast meige med nockre list manna, hier med var hun so mikill hagleijkz madur, bæði með viel og allra handa til tæke, ad þötti vijpur eitt er adrar könga dætur giørdu, þær sem þo hagastar voru kalladar."[103]

"There was born a daughter, so fair and worthy, honest and desirable, that no man's eyes had ever seen such a flower born on earth, of human flesh and blood. And no man in the world is so thoughtful, to form in his heart, to wish for so fair a person or image without having already seen her. This maiden was named Philotemia. She had so thoroughly mastered all seven liberal arts, with all branches that could be derived or divided from each art, that no one in the entire kingdom was her equal. She had learned so much of the art of prophetic spirit and runic language that she believed no one in the entire world could rival her in these things. She knew all the nature of the earth, the movement of the heavenly bodies, astronomy and the nature of grass, of stones, of trees, of branches, and of springs, all which were in the world, and many of them not known to wise men, as may be told with human skill. Moreover, she was an extraordinarily skilled artisan, both in mechanisms and various tools, such that what other princesses created, even those considered the most skilled, seemed trivial by comparison."

In this manner, she is representative of the eloquent virgins of vernacular lore, much like that of the aforementioned Catherine.[104] Her main objective differs, however, in that it is to prove herself superior to Dínus rather than anything else. She too has a proclivity for shaming and rejecting her suitors, as is the case with all maiden kings in Icelandic romance:

"..forsmaade hun all könga syne og jalla, og jlla vtliek, eff þeir freistudu hennar ad bidia, med einhuoriu möti þui sem þeim yrde til hneijsu og suivirdingar, og saker þess ad þetta

"…She scorned all suitors among kings' and earls' sons and harshly rejected them if they dared to court her, in any manner that would lead to their humiliation and disgrace.

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[102] Steffen Wenig, *Untersuchungen zur Ikonographie der Darstellungen der meroitischen Kigsfamilie und zu Fragen der Chronologie des Reiches von Meroe* (Berlin-London: Golden House Publications, 2015), 99-102;

[103] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 12-13.

[104] Cf., Maud Burnett McInerney, *Eloquent Virgins: From Thecla to Joan of Arc* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 165-194.

friettist nær vmm øll lønd, þa løttust aller könga syner hennar ad bidia, firer þáá smáán og mijnkun, er þeir aff henni feingu."[105]

Because of this, her reputation spread across all lands, and all princes refrained from seeking her hand, for fear of the shame and dishonor they would suffer at her hands."

It is worth noting that Philotemia begins her pursuit of Dínus from the angle of curiosity. Geraldine Barnes has much to say about the Augustinian philosophy of "too much curiosity" in regard to Philotemia's character that helps to reframe the saga's treatment of her character as a morally exemplary study.[106] The testing of wisdom, however, has an even older exemplar than that of the Maiden King romances or Alexander. The story of the wise king Solomon and Bilquis the Queen of Sheba will prove illustrative here. In biblical exegesis, the Queen of Sheba appears not primarily as a political rival but as a tester of wisdom.[107] In *Stjórn*, her visit is framed very much as a mission in which to test her own wisdom against Solomon's:

"J þenna tima for dorttning Saba at profa með eiginligri ravn hvat sannlæikr veri vm þa miklv fregð er flavg hvervtna vm heiminn af speki oc rikdomi Salomon konvngs. Kom hon i Hierusalem með mórgu fórvneyti oc miklvm avðæfum. Flutti hon a vlíðlldum oc óðrvm eykivm agætar vrtir oc vvégilikt gvll oc gimsteina dyrliga með marghattaðvm dyrgripvm. Sem hon fann konvng. talaði hon fyrir honom diarfliga alla lvti þa sem henne bio i hug oc hiarta. Enn konvngr lærði hann af mörgum visdomi. ok hvarki þeirra leyndi annat nockvt af siinv hvgarfari ok vitrv. Sem drottning sa speki Salomons oc hvs þat hit agæta sem hann hafði smiða latið oc allan hans borðbvnað oc vistagnott sva mikla sem hann hafði hversdagliga ser til borðz. þar með herbergi hans þionostvmanna. kvrtæsi kléðnað oc fagrlifa skipan þeirra sem honvm þionvðv ok hæverski hans skenkara oc skvtilsveina oc þær miklo fornir sem hann offraði i mvsteri drottins. þa bra henne sva miog við at hon gat verlla hvglæiðt allan hans rikdom. hon mællti þa til konvngs. Satt er þat þo at ek tryði æigi þi sem mer var sagt a minv landi fra þinni vitrv oc visdomi. þi at nv hefi

At this time the Queen of Sheba set out to test with her own experience what truth there was in the great renown that had spread everywhere throughout the world concerning the wisdom and wealth of King Solomon. She came to Jerusalem with great provisions and much treasure. She brought on camels and other beasts of burden precious spices, an immeasurable amount of gold, and costly gemstones of many kinds, with manifold precious objects. When she met the king, she spoke boldly before him of all the matters that lay in her mind and heart. And the king instructed her with great wisdom, and he concealed nothing from her of his understanding or knowledge. When the queen saw the wisdom of Solomon, and the splendid house that he had caused to be built, and all his table arrangements and the abundance of provisions that he had daily at his table; and moreover the dwellings of his servants, the courteous attire and fair order of those who served him, the refinement of his cupbearers and stewards, and the great offerings that he sacrificed in the temple of the Lord, then she was so struck with awe that she could

[105] *Dínus saga,* 13.

[106] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur* (2014), 57.

[107] Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, "*Queen Balquis, 'Queen of Sheba'*," in *The Routledge Companion to Black Women's Cultural Histories*, ed., Janell Hobson (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2021), 35-43.

ek sialf komit oc sannprobat at mæirr enn halfv meiri er þin spect enn sv fregð sem fra fluttiz. þi at mikla sømð oc sælv hafa þeir menn er þer na at þiona ok þer ro sva nakvemir at þeir megv hæyra þina speki. Lof ok dyrð se drottni gvði þinvm þeim er þv likaðir sva vel at hann virðiz at skipa þer yfir rikisstol sins lyðs Jsrael. er hann elskaði iafnan. Ok þvi setti gvð þik hinn hæsta konvng. at þv gerir hans vilia oc domir retta doma. þa gaf drottning onvngi .c. pvnda gvllz ok .xx. pvnd oc marga ageta gimsteina oc marghattaðar oc miklar vrtit oc ilmandi smyrls. sva at hvarki aðr ne siðan flvttvz slik i Hiervsalem sem Saba drottning gaf Salomon konvngi. Salomon konvngr gaf drotningv Saba alla hlvti þa sem hon villdi þiggia af honvm oc þackaði henne þær gersimar sem hon hafði gefið honvm. Vændi hon þvi næst aptr til sins rikiss með sinv förvnæyti.“[108]

scarcely comprehend all his wealth. She then said to the king: ‘It is true indeed that I did not believe what was told me in my land about your understanding and wisdom, for now I have come myself and proven it to be more than half again greater than the renown that was reported. Great honor and happiness have those men who are able to serve you and who are so fortunate as to hear your wisdom. Praise and glory be to the Lord your God, who has favored you so greatly that he has deemed it worthy to set you upon the royal throne of his people Israel, whom he has loved continually. And therefore God has made you the highest king, that you may do his will and judge righteous judgments.’ Then the Queen gave the king one hundred pounds of gold, and twenty pounds more, and many precious gemstones, and many kinds of costly and abundant spices and fragrant ointments, so that neither before nor afterward were such gifts brought to Jerusalem as those which the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba all those things that she wished to receive from him, and he thanked her for the treasures she had given him. She then returned back to her own kingdom with her provisions.”

This exchange goes well for both parties, so it departs from what we see in *Dínus saga drambláta* in a measurable way. The Queen of Sheba is impressed by Solomon’s wisdom and does not continue in her quest to prove herself, nor does she inflict any disgrace upon the king. It is worth mentioning, however, that Philotemia matches Bilquis in more than just her desire to test her wits against a storied rival. Sheba, in biblical thought, was understood to be within the realm of Ethiopia, or what the Norse called Bláland. There are hints of exoticism in both accounts, with emphasis being placed upon the strangeness of these peripheral foreign kingdoms in comparison to the central lands of the heroes.[109]

[108] *Stjórn*, 571-572.

[109] For discussions on the perceived dangers of foreign women in the Middle Ages, see S. B. Jonsson, “Konung Alexander i Orienten.” In *Medeltidens mångfald: studier i samhällsliv, kultur och kommunikation tillägnade Olle Ferm på 60 årsdagen den 8 mars 2007*, eds., Göran Dahlbäck, Christine Ekholst, Bo Eriksson, Gabriela Bjarne Larsson, Staffan Nyström and Mia Åkenstam, (Stockholm: Sandberg & Schultz AB2008), 191-212, 202-208.

This typology is further reinforced by the saga's participation in the broader medieval "Power of Women" discourse, in which female figures function as agents of moral exposure rather than seduction alone.[110] For example, the well-known exemplum of Phyllis and Aristotle, from the French "Le Lai d'Aristote," in which philosophical authority is temporarily undone through submission to desire, does not simply invert gendered power but dramatizes the vulnerability of wisdom to pride and curiosity.[111] Philotemia's narrative role draws on this same logic. Her interaction with Dínus exposes the instability of masculine authority when confronted with testing that is intellectual and moral rather than martial. The effect is not misogynistic satire but didactic correction. Sovereignty is revealed to be contingent upon humility and discernment rather than force.

If the internal framing of the saga itself gives any hint to its characterization of the dramatis personae of the narrative, it is that Philotemia may be, at least pedagogically, analogous with the blessed Saint Catherine of Alexandria who is mentioned in the saga's opening chapter. The thirteenth-century *Legend Aurea*, or the *Golden Legend*, a compilation of various exempla from saints' lives, describes Catherine's life in strikingly similar terms to Philotemia's, noting that St Catherine was "fully instructed in all the liberal studies," and "eighteen years old and living along in a palace filled with treasure and servants."[112] Though her narrative trajectory diverges from Philotemia, in that she is not seeking to prove herself against an intellectual superior for her own ends, Catherine does go on the offensive against pagan sacrifices in the city of Alexandria, running afoul the emperor himself and being forced to compete, by royal decree, against fifty of the city's finest orators, all of whom she bests. The emperor himself, though foiled by her incredible learning, is overwhelmed by admiration of her abilities, as well as her beauty. It is also relevant here that the emperor in the life of St Catherine is eventually named as Maximinus, and the father of Philotemia is rendered both as Maximiliánus as well as Maximiánus across the various manuscripts of the oldest redaction of Dínus saga.[113] This strongly suggests that, rather than simply repurposing a familiar name, the compiler of *Dínus saga drambláta* was seeking to engage with an older tradition of naming characters in regard to their purpose within the narrative. In other words, by giving an Ethiopian king a Roman name, the compiler sets the stage for a contest between the classical empires of Greece and Rome, rhetorically, in his narrative.

2.3.4 Anachorita: The Dark Advisor of Bláland

Geraldine Barnes and Marianne Kalinke have both made the case for narratives about the desert fathers having been imported into the romance genre of Iceland. The character of

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[110] Cf., Susan L. Smith, *The Power of Women: A 'Topos' in Medieval Art and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) and Maryan Wynn Ainsworth, et al., *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350-1600* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013).

[111] I cannot find any evidence of this story being transmitted, physically, in Iceland.

[112] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, vol. II: Readings of the Saints, trans. William Granger Ryan, 334.

[113] Cf., *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 27, for this first instance of this.

Anachorita, for example, engages with the late medieval legendary hagiography of John Chrysostom which Kalinke has proven was known in Iceland.[114] In the *book of Reykjahólar*, St. John's legend is recorded as *Jóns saga gullmunns* and it is easy to see how the presentation of his life might match up, at least aesthetically with that of Anachorita. In the legend, Jón moves into the desert to comtemplate his faith away from the perils of society. He moves into a hole in the earth that he is led to, presumably by God, that has a running stream as a source of water and a large stone above it to keep out wild beasts. This becomes his monastic cell while he resides in the desert. [115] The dwelling of Anachorita in *Dínus saga* is similarly in the earth but it appears to be less divinely-bestowed than Jón's, being described only as a certain hovel in the ground which lay outside the gates of Blachumia, the capital of Bláland. Within this hovel is a make-shift house though it is described as dank and foul-smelling.[116] The legendary saint is targeted by the devil and led into temptation by a noble woman who becomes lost in the desert near his cell. When he realizes what he has done, he murders her to prevent it from happening again. He undergoes a physical transformation that matches the extent of his sins, becoming a naked wild man with hair long and matted until he no longer appears human to others. He eventually repents his sins and is restored to his former position.

The only issue with the John Chrysostom legend is with its date. Per Kalinke herself, this legend was not written down in Iceland until the 16th century by Björn Þorleifsson.[117] This, of course, does not mean that this legend was unknown in Iceland by other means, but it is most certainly a factor that must be considered when considering it as an influence. Another possible candidate is that of King Nebuchadnezzar from the Old Testament book of Daniel. For his excessive pride, the biblical king was cursed by God to roam the wilderness as a wild man for seven years:

> "…he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, and the king said, 'Is this not magnificent Babylon, which I have built as a royal capital by my mighty power and for my glorious majesty?' While the words were still in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven: 'O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: The kingdom has departed from you! You shall be driven away from human society, and your dwelling shall be with the animals of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an oxen, and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals and gives it to whom he will.' Immediately the sentence was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven away from human society, ate grass like an oxen, and his body was bathed with the dew of

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[114] Cf., Marianne E. Kalinke, *The Book of Reykjahólar: The Last of the Great Medieval Legendaries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and Marianne Kalinke, "The Icelandic Legend of the Hairy Anchorite," in Sagnaþing helgað Jónasi Kristjánssyni sjötugum 10. april 1994, vol. 2 (Reykjavík: Íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1994), 485-496.

[115] Marianne E. Kalinke, "Jóhannes saga gullmunns: The Icelandic Legend of the Hairy Anchorite," in *Beatus Vir: Studies in Early English and Norse Manuscripts. In Memory of Phillip Pulsiano* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 202.

[116] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 40.

[117] Kalinke, *Book of Rekjahólar*, 188.

heaven, until his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers and his nails became like birds' claws."[118]

Nothing else is said about the king until the seven years have passed and he is returned to his former status as King. While the stories of John Chrysostom and King Nebuchadnezzar address some aspects of Anachorita's description, they fail to address his magical powers. It is, therefore, striking that neither Kalinke nor Barnes make mention of a character that the compiler of *Dínus saga* lists as their source:

"…heyrt hafdi hann getith at j fitonsanda fullr likami mundi buggia ner borginni huort er hann skal madr kallaz eda eigi þeir hafa allt edli af diöfuligum krapti eptir þui sem segir af þeirri fitons anda kono j Romueria sogum."[119]	„He had heard it said that a magic-filled being might dwell near the city, whether it could be called a man or not. They have all their nature from diabolical powers, according to what is told of the sorceress in the Sagas of the Romans."

The character being referenced here is Erictho, a Thessalian witch who aids Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great, in chapter 73 of *Romverjasögur* which is pulled from book 6 of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.[120] Therein, Erictho is explained as not living in the houses of men but in caves and graves of dead men. She is further described as having flesh blacker than earth and emanating a vile stench. Erictho uses necromancy as a means of seeing the future outcome of an upcoming battle for the Romans.[121] It is difficult to ascertain exactly which tradition *Dínus saga*'s compiler was utilizing for his shaggy anchorite, however, as Anachorita's story arc does not at all follow that of the desert saint nor does it follow that of the Chaldean King nor of the Thessalian witch. Though described as being dark, smelly, and shaggy like a sheep, Anachorita's magic is not necromantic. The saga writer introduces his character as having derived these powers from a diabolic source and in the story's denouement, he pays for this allegiance with his death. It is most likely, then that the character of Anachorita is as much a compilation as the saga in which he inhabits. He is a composite of these bogeymen of legend.

Astrid van Nahl has identified several Icelandic sagas that engage with the "human-to-flying-dragon" trope that will prove germane to this study, since they point to a narrative motif that was employed in several instances for differing effects.[122]

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[118] Daniel 4: 29-33. The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Fifth Edition: 1258.

[119] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 40.

[120] Cf., Philip Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 76-77; Richard Gordon, "Lucan's Erictho," in *Homo Viator*, eds., Michael Whitby, Philip Hardie, and Mary Whitby (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1987), 231-241.

[121] *Rómverja saga*, ed. Þorbjörg Helgadóttir (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 2010).

[122] Astrid van Nahl, *Originale Riddarasögur als Teil altnordischer Sagaliteratur* (Frankfurt am Main - Bern: Peter Lang, 1981), 207-208.

“Ok at kveldi þess dags kom yfir borgina mikill þyttr ok ógurligr gnýr. Hér með fylgir sú dimma, sem myrkvast má verða um vetrartíma. Váru nú tendruð ljós í hverju húsi ok herbergi, ok inni birgðr allr svá fénaðr, sem í var borginni. Nokkrir ungir menn ok forvitnir gengu af sínum herbergjum ok vildu vita, hvat þetta mundi vera. Ok sem þeir komu inn, sögðu þeir voffa einn flugdrekka ofurlega stóran yfir borginni, svá at hans vængir tóku út yfir alla borgina. Ok þar af varð þat mikit myrkr ok skuggi. Þessi dreki spjó svá eitrinu úr sér grimmiliga, at þessir menn gátu eigi forðað sér, ok sögðu slíkt sem þeir höfðu heyrt ok sét, ok féllu síðann dauðir niðr, blásnir af eitri.”[123]	“And in the evening of that day, a great roaring sound and a terrible din came over the city. Along with this came such darkness as may be an eclipse in wintertime. Now lights were lit in every house and chamber, and all the livestock in the city was brought indoors. Some young men and curious onlookers left their chambers, wishing to see what this might be. And as they went out, they reported a flying dragon, exceedingly large, weaving over the city, such that its wings stretched out over the entire city. And from this came great darkness and shadow. This dragon spat its poison so fiercely that these men could not escape, and they told what they had heard and seen, and afterwards fell dead, swollen by the poison.”

In *Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands*, a fourteenth-century riddarasögur, the protagonist, Sigrgarð Valdimarsson, the prince of England, sues for the hand of the lovely Florida, daughter of King Ptolemeus of Villusvínaland, or Wild-boars’ land. After defeating a rival suitor, Valbrand, both in the martial arena and in the musical one, the hero Sigrgarð marries her. Valbrand, in revenge, sets upon the hero with the supernatural powers afforded him, presumably, by his black-haired, dark-skinned, and wily description in the saga. During a climactic battle, Valbrandr physically transforms into a flying dragon, spitting venom:

“...Valbrandur grenjadi miog hatt og flo i lopted upp i dreka lijke, blasande ur sier so miklu eitre ad þad hefdi orded k(ong)s(yne) ad bana hafdi eckj brynjann Gustnautur hlí´jftt honum, Enn margt af hernum fiell hundrudum samann of brunnu af eytre...”[124]	“Valbrandr roared greatly and flew into the air in the likeness of a dragon, blowing out from himself so much venom that it would have brought about the death of the king’s son, had not the byrnie [Gustnauðr (blast/smell-necessity)] protected him. But many of the host fell by the hundred together and were burned by the venom.”

This dragon is fairly reminiscent of the “evil” flying dragon that Anachorita morphs into in *Dínus saga* above, complete with the poison-spewing offensive abilities. It should be noted, as well, that both of these characters, Valbrandr and Anachorita, are described as being dark-

[123] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 55.

[124] *Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands*, LMIR V, 181.

featured, a common saga trope used to signify evil or transgressive personalities.[125] Both *Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands* and *Dínus saga drambláta* are also, ostensibly, drawing upon the same repertoire of names, as the rival kings of both sagas are identified by the name Ptolomeus.

Though a full enumeration of this phenomenon of recurrent names among the original riddarasögur lies outside the confines of this study, it further supports the hypothesis that the compilers of these sagas were working with similar, temporally relevant materials when they were constructing their individual sagas.

The fourteenth-century *fornaldarsaga*, *Hálfdanar saga Eysteinsonar*, similarly engages with both learned and contemporary legendary works of its time. The central plot involves the adventures of Hálfdan in various locations from Northern Scandinavia to Russia and the fictitious Bjarmaland. It plays with several tropes familiar to readers of riddarasögur, specifically the evil-stepmother motif as well as a lost and subsequently retrieved bride. One of the primary villains of the story, Hárekr, possesses the ability to take on the shape of a dragon:

> Þá varð Hárekr at flugdreka, ok sló Skúla með sporðinum, svá hann lá í óviti. Þá kom at sá kappi, er Grubs hét, ok hjó fótinn undan drekanum, enn drekinn krækir annarri klónni til Grubs, ok reif hann á hol á náranum. Þá kom at Hálfdan, ok hjó til drekans á hálsinn, ok var þat hans bani; brast þá flótti í liðinu, ok flýðu víkingar til skipa, ok kómust undan á þremr skipum."[126]
>
> Then Hárekr became a flying-dragon, and struck Skúli with his tail, so that he lay unconscious. Then came the champion called Grubs and cut the foot from under the dragon, but the dragon hooked one of his claws into Grubs and tore him through at the groin. Then Hálfdan came up and struck at the dragon's neck, and that was his death. Then flight broke out in the host, and the vikings fled to their ships, and escaped with three ships."

The taking on of dragon shapes is quite common to the fornaldarsögur genre; slaying a transformed dragon plays an integral role in the development of the hero Sigurðr in *Völsunga saga*. The original of this motif is impossible to determine, as well as its provenance. Whatever the case, the ubiquity of this ability among the villainous characters of the legendary sagas and

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[125] C.f., Arngrímur Vídalín, „ Trölli sýnist mér það líkara": Merkingarleg þróun orðsins blámaðr > blámaður frá tólftu til tuttugustu aldar. *Andvari* (2020); Simonetta Battista, "Blámenn, djöflar and Other Representations of Evil in Old Norse Translation Literature" In *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature. Sagas and the British Isles. Preprint Papers of the Thirteenth International Saga Conference*, Durham and York, 6th-12th August, 2006, 113-122; Richard Cole, "Racial Thinking in Old Norse Literature: The Case of the Blámaðr" Saga-Book (2019); Basil Arnould Price, "Búi and the blámaðr: Comprehending racial others in Kjalnesinga Saga," postmedieval 11, no. 4 (2020): 442-450; Jesse Byock, "The Dark Figure as Survivor in an Icelandic Saga," in The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature, eds., E. R. Haymes and S. C. Van D'Elden, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 448. (Göppingen: Kummerle Verlag, 1986), 151-163.

[126] *Hálfdanar saga Eysteinssonar* III, 424-425.

chivalric romances, hints at a tradition that was deeply ingrained within the Icelandic textual culture in the post-classical period.

2.3.5 Heremita: Illusory Intervention and Wise Counsellor of Alexandria

The character of Heremita engages with several different traditions within the text of *Dínus saga*. He appears in the story shortly after Anachorita, in order to sway the balance of power in the contest between Dínus and Philotemia back to an equal footing. He is described as a large man, wearing a long linen surplice, with a hood that covered his face but bore the image of a man's face upon it.[127] Geraldine Barnes notes that the description of his clothes matches that of the mendicant order of friars.[128] He has also been likened to the shining visitant that appears in *Alexanders saga*.[129] His shapeshifting abilities, which are described merely as illusions and not real magic, put him in line with the Arthurian tradition displayed in the Occitan romance *Jaufre*. Though there is no evidence that this text circulated within Icelandic scribal communities, the parallels between the characters of Heremita and this character are tangible enough to suggest that these are scribal interpretations of a known medieval trope. In the story there is a character referred to simply as the "enchanter-knight" who can transform into a giant bird at will. At a wedding feast held for the knight Jaufre and the lady Bruisen, regent of Monbrun, the festivities are interrupted by a terrified squire breaking the celebratory mood with the dire message that Arthur and his knights must avail themselves of their weapons and armor immediately. When probed by the king for further information, the distraught young man informs them that a giant bird, so large that its feet were the size of the doors of Cardueil, is outside flying overhead and nearly alighted with him into the air. Before the knights Gawain, Jaufre, and Melian can react, King Arthur has sprung into action, declaring that he and he alone will face this adversary. Despite the multitudinous protestations of his court, the king had his way. He rides out to meet this presumed foe and is summarily bested:

> "The bird flew here and there, holding the king tightly. The knights and ladies who were in the gardens and fields prayed intently and humbly to God to give them back their lord. The bird began to climb higher and higher as they mourned and lamented. Suddenly, when it had gone very high, it dropped the king and he plummeted down. The sorrow was wild and fierce, and they ran as fast as they could to the spot where the king would land so they could catch him in their arms. But the bird, which wasn't really wicked, and flew down to the king, picked him off, and flew right up again. Then the lamentations were such as no one has ever heard. They cried, "True, glorious God, Lord, please, by Your mercy, give him back to us safe and sound!...

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[127] Joseph Braun S. J. Die Liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient: Nach ursprung und Entwicklung Verwendung und symbolic (Freibrg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1907), 138.: "Die Gesta archiepiscoporum Rothomagensium (geschr. ca 1080) berichten von einer linea superpellicialis, welcher der Erzbischof Johannes von Avranches (1079) trug, als er an einem Festtage dem Gottesdienst in St-Ouen inmitten der Chorsanger wie ein Praecentor beiwohnte."

[128] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Medieval Iceland* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 62.

[129] David Ashurst, *Ethics of Empire in the Saga of Alexander the Great: A Study Based on MS AM 519a 4to* (Reykjavík: Bókmennta- og listfræðastofnun Hákóla Íslands, 2009), 157-164.

> The bird flew along the bank of a river and continued its way, with the king, and entered the castle so that no man or woman saw where it went. It went into the palace and put the king down. Then the bird became a knight, tall and handsome, strong and proud. He knelt before the king and said, "Good my lord, I pray you, by God and by love, to pardon me for the fright I've given you, so great that I think you've never felt its like."[130]

Rather than focusing on Arthur's terror, the poem centers on the effect that the avian abduction has on Arthur's court. His knights, as well as his queen Guilalmier, tear their clothes completely asunder across two instances. The great flying beast eventually brings Arthur back into the castle, where he reveals that it was all an illusion and Arthur "recognized the enchanter—he had no better knight in all his court, or more esteemed in battle—and took him by the hand and raise him up," pardoning him and then ordering Kay to fetch the best silken fineries in all the land with the best tailors to replace the sundered clothing of the court.[131] Ross G. Arthur claims that this episode is meat to highlight the problem of being a leader who is too impetuous.[132] The argument could also be made that the abduction functions as an exposure test for Arthur's court, revealing how brittle the Round Table of Cardueil is when fear and confusion strike.

One of the most thrilling episodes in *Dínus saga drambláta* occurs between Dínus's associate Heremita and King Maximiliánus of Bláland. As tensions created by the perennial tricks and deceptions between Dínus and Philotemia spill over into larger saga world, the two kingdoms of Egypt and Bláland are on the verge of war, with the Blálanders gathered for battle and awaiting the words of the king to begin the siege of Alexandria. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Heremita takes it upon himself to be mediator, in one of the most assertive ways possible. Disguising himself first as a chamber-servant of the king, he lies to one of the Bláland knights and gains entry into Maximiliánus's tent. Then with another disguise described as a "leðr mjög þunt skinn," or "a very thin leather skin," he approaches the bed of the sleeping king Maximiliánus.[133] Heremita places his hand on the covering of the bed, which the king feels, thinking it to be his advisor, Anachorita. This "Anachorita" throws a golden cloak over him and the king, thinking this to be a signal of some sort of private counsel he wishes to have with him, follows him out of the tent. King Maximiliánus is then confronted by a spectacle the likes of which he has never experienced:

> Konungrinn litast um sér hann hjá sér einn stóran ok hræðiligan flugdreka. Við þessa sín var konungrinn ótta fullr, ok ætlar skjóttliga eptir í landtjaldit, þessa var enginn kostr, því at þessi dreki þrífr klæði konungsins, ok fleigir honum uppi millum handa sér, ok sinna vængja ok hefr sik af jörðu, ok flýgr með hann bæði hátt ok langt.
>
> The king looked around and saw beside him a large and terrifying flying dragon. At this sight, the king was filled with fear and intended to rush back to the tent, but this was not a choice, for the dragon snatched the king's clothes, flung him up between his arms and wings and lifted himself from the

[130] *Jaufre: An Occitan Arthurian Romance*, trans. Ross G. Arthur (New York: Routledge, 2014), 175-176.

[131] *Jaufre: An Occitan Arthurian Romance*, trans. Ross G. Arthur (New York: Routledge, 2014), 176.

[132] *Jaufre: An Occitan Arthurian Romance*, trans. Ross G. Arthur (New York: Routledge, 2014) xxxix.

[133] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 75.

Hjarta konungsins sturlaðist nú alt, ok óttaðist hræðeliga megi, halldanði sér í vængi ok fiðr drekans, skjálfandi ok óttandi, því hann hugði at hann mundi æ ofan falla. Þat varð um síðr at þessi dreki setist með hann í einnri fjalls hlíð, ok þar lætr hann konungrinn níðr. Ok sakir mikils ótta er konungrinn hafði fengit, var hann svá ómáttugr, at hann mátti eigi á sínar fætr standa. Sem sú sturlan ok óti leið nokkut af honum burt, settist hann upp svá sem nokkut óframmliga því at hann óttadist megi drekann. Ok sem hann um litast sér hann hjá sér standa einn mann, klæðan fotsíðri línslippu. Þá mælti konungr, "Hvert ertu? Heldr maðr eða dreki fljugandi? Með því mér líst ýmisliga á þik, eða hvert er nafn þit?" Hann segir, "ek er maðr, enn sínast má ek dreki þá er mér líkar svá. Nafn mitt er Heremita. Víst gjörir þú undarliga hlúti, ok gjör svá vel at þú flit mik til minna landtjalda. Víst skal ek þik eptir flytja þegar tími er til segir Heremita enn ek skal birta þér áðr í hvern voda ok vandræði, svá vondi svikari hefr þik leiðan, er þik eggjaði þessarar ferðar, stattu nú upp á þínar fætr, ok vit hvat þér ber fyrir augu.[134]

ground, and flew with him both high and low. The king's heart became utterly distraught, and he was filled with dreadful fear, holding onto the dragon's wings and feathers, trembling and terrified, for he thought he would surely fall at any moment. It happened afterwards that this dragon alighted with him on the side of a mountain and set the king down there. Due to the overwhelming fear which the king had endured, he was so weakened that he could not stand on his feet. Once his confusion and terror subsided somewhat, he sat up, though still feebly, for he continued to fear the dragon. As he looked around, he saw a man standing nearby, dressed in a long linen robe reaching his feet. Then the king said, "What are you? Are you a man or rather a flying dragon? As to me various forms are in you, and what is your name?" He says, "I am a man, but I may appear as a dragon when I choose. My name is Heremíta. Truly, you are involved in strange affairs." "Now, do me the favor of carrying me back to my tent." "I will indeed take you back when the time is right," said Heremíta, "but first I will show you the danger and trouble that a wicked deceiver has brought upon you, for he led you into this journey. Now stand up on your feet and see what lies before your eyes."

What follows is an apocalyptic vision journey of frightening proportions. Heremita shows Maximiliánus the river Nile which seems to be populated with a great army of giants, some with crowns. Maximiliánus strains to count all of them, deciding it impossible, before Heremita confirms his vision. Heremita adds that not only has the king seen true, but this innumerable army is also comprised of both giants and ancient men of the northern half of the world's kingdoms, reborn and risen. An instantly identifiable name, Theodoric, is among them, as are his champions Ísungr and Álfr, playing to the audience's familiarity with history. Maximiliánus reels at this news, begging to be returned only for Heremita to reply that this was only the beginning of what he had to show him. Once again, in dragon form, Heremita lifts the Blálander king high

[134] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 75-76.

into the sky with a dreadful speed, so much so that every bone in his body shakes. Landing on a nearby mountain, Heremita asks again for Maximiliánus to appraise the terrain. This time he sees Hell itself spitting out clawed devils armed with torturous weapons, bent upon the destruction of the world, as they believe Hell is not filling up fast enough. Heremita opines that Maximiliánus's army of grotesqueries will not even be enough to withstand this foe which ostensibly fights for Dínus. Once again, the king pleads with his captor to return him to the safety of his tent and once again this request is postponed for another vision. This flight is more terrible for the king than the prior ascents, taking Maximiliánus all the way to the peaks of Atlanias. So weakened by the experience that he must take time to recuperate, the king eventually looks up into the sky and sees a most horrible sight. When Heremita inquires as to what he has witnessed, Maximiliánus describes an immeasurable host of angels with flaming swords descending from the clouds. Heremita confirms this vision and informs him that the angelic army intends to aid Dínus if Maximiliánus leads Bláland's forces against Alexandria. This allows Heremita to broker a peace between the kingdoms, as Maximiliánus affirms that he will surrender to Dínus. He is then returned to his tent by Heremita, who ensures his comfort by tucking him in personally. Though Geraldine Barnes has stated that this vision quest closely aligns with the *Visio Pauli* tradition, it has much more in common with the *Visio Tnugdali* narrative as the visionary himself is being asked what he sees rather than asking his attendant. This vision literature was well-known in Iceland under the name *Duggals leizla.*[135] It survives in four parchment manuscripts ranging from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries.[136]

Heremita's true nature is revealed in the final chapters of *Dínus saga*, where it is disclosed that he is a Prince of India called Walterus. This biographical revelation engages with the medieval conception of "Greater India," which was envisioned as a large, Christian kingdom drawing upon traditions such as the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas as well as legends related to the Christian King of India known as Prester John. This fact is made all the more tangible when he is described as having hair that was "so fair and shining, like blazing fire, that it covered all his shoulders in flowing locks as graceful as any man could wish."[137] Like the other characters that have been mentioned in this chapter, Heremita is most likely a composite of several different traditions. He functions both as a Merlin analogue as well as Callisthenes referent in regard to his relationship with Dínus.

This list has not been exhaustive, but illustrative that several different traditions supplied the compiler of *Dínus saga drambláta* with a wealth of material with which they could reposition and implement to their own desire. It is apparent that the scribe not only drew upon a diverse collection of sources, but he repurposed them with great skill into his own narrative. The ubiquity of shared sequences and motifs within the other original riddarasögur and *fornaldarsögur* suggests that the traditions being drawn upon were familiar ones for the fourteenth century. It is, therefore, logical to make the case for such inherited material being reshaped by the hands of compilers to create these different sagas. One of the great difficulties of working with such sundry list of sources is how to best manage them so that a reader can

[135] Eira Kathleen Ebbs, "Pain, Fear, and the Emotional Regime of Hell: Chieftains and the Church in Thirteenth-Century Iceland," *Collegium Medievale*. Novus forlag (2022), 94-54.

[136] Jonas Wellendorf, *Kristelig visionslitteratur i norrøn tradition* (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2006), 207-208.

[137] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 89.

navigate the text without confusion. For a clerically trained scribe, however, this was part of the art of compilation. The collecting of material was important, but the ordering of said material was crucial for the narrative to work.

2.4 The Ordo of *Dínus saga*'s Oldest Manuscript Redaction

One of the defining features of a compiled work is the evidence of the intentional ordering of the material into discrete and recognizable divisions, designed to facilitate access and comprehension for a reading audience. Indeed, the scholarly apparatus that modern readers take for granted, such as the table of contents, divisions in chapters and paragraphs, and footnotes and indices, were systematized and increasingly refined by thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century compilers.[138] Vincent of Beauvais, for example, in the apologia to the *Speculum maius* states that he has divided his encyclopedic work into books and chapters explicitly to ease its use by readers.[139] With the founding of the order of friars in the thirteenth century, texts were made for the purpose of making material available in a form that was easy to access in the field.[140] In this context the definition of *ordinatio* informs the development of *compilatio*, both as a system of writing and as a means of structuring material for practical use.[141] With these compilational practices in mind, then, the structural features of the text can be analyzed alongside questions of episodic source material and narrative sequences to assess whether a medieval text exhibits the marks of a compiled work. As this chapter has already demonstrated that *Dínus saga drambláta* draws extensively from a range of medieval traditions, the order in which these traditions are employed within the text must be interrogated. Therefore, the physical layout of its earliest manuscript warrants closer examination.

2.4.1 The Visual Organization of AM 575a 4to

Only sixteen leaves of manuscript AM 575a 4to survive today, eight of which preserve the oldest redaction of *Dínus saga drambláta.* Through careful codicological investigation, Jónas Kristjánsson has argued that this manuscript, which he designates as "S," though the oldest extant version of the Dínus narrative, is itself a copy of a now-lost exemplar.[142] The narrative begins in media res, due to a lacuna at the beginning of the manuscript. The reader thus encounters Dínus immediately after he has been outwitted by Philotemia for the first time, as he is addressing his men, informing them that he intends to return to her castle in Bláland, if only briefly, to somehow get his revenge. This episode corresponds to the latter portion of chapter six

[138] Malcolm B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers. Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 66.

[139] *Speculum maius*, apologia (Dijon MS.), cap. ii: "Ut huius operis partes singulae lectori facilius eluscescant, ipsum totum opus per libros, et libros per capitula distinguere volui."

[140] Malcolm B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers. Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 68.

[141] Ibid., 68.

[142] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), vii-xvi.

in Jónas Kristjánsson's 1960 edition of the saga, which is modeled on the oldest redaction's own internal chapter divisions, as his architecture follows the existing manuscript's chapters with faithful precision.[143] The presence of chapter divisions rather than a running text suggests that the compiler had envisioned the saga as a sequence of discrete narrative units, presented episodically to its audience.

AM 575a 4to provides substantial evidence for the visual hierarchy that the scribe intended for the reader to follow. Although it was ostensibly copied from a lost exemplar, it is an unfinished manuscript, as several chapters feature partial decorated initials while others have clearly demarcated spaces for these features to have been added later by the scribe or someone with whom he was working to create this manuscript. Notably, in the surviving folios of this manuscript, the even-numbered chapters have completed decorated initials while the odd-numbered chapters have the blank space reserved for these. In several place within the manuscript, space has also been left presumably for chapter or section headings.[144] Dialogue in chapter seven is further highlighted through the use of enlarged, thickly penned initial letters at the beginning of sentences, visually distinguishing speech from surrounding narration.[145] Of the whole chapters that exist after the opening lacunae the compiler's attempt at creating an apparatus for reader orientation is consistently apparent. Chapter seven contains a large blank space for a decorated initial as well as an empty break in the first line which suggests this was left open for a chapter heading. The eighth chapter, which begins on 2r of the manuscript, has a partially decorated "O" that is stylized to look like a dragon curling around the letterform, with its head and neck reaching into the margins. Though the manuscript is very dark and has been damaged by water in the nineteenth century, there seems to be traces of red ink within the letter, though it has all but faded away.[146] There is also a blank space within the first line of text of this chapter which could have been left for a rubricated narrative division which also features what looks to be faint traces of red ink so light that can barely be made out. In the lower margins of the page are what appear to be pen trials. This chapter is important to the saga's story because it introduces the character of Anachorita, who will become advisor to Philotemia and Bláland later in the story. The ninth chapter of the saga is missing its initial but similarly reserves space for it as other chapters missing theirs have done. Reader engagement with the text can potentially be seen at the end of this on 3v, where someone has scribbled a phrase in the lower margin that appears to read as "er góður penninn iecke um," though its meaning remains opaque. These examples prove that whoever owned the manuscript during its lifetime engaged with it using the apparatus of its chapter divisions and creating chapter commentaries of their own. A large and decorated "R" begins the tenth chapter of the saga in the S manuscript, though it is not quite as complex as the dragon of chapter eight, looking like a banner or scroll. Two-thirds of the way

[143] Kristjánsson supplements the lacunae of AM 575a 4to (S) with an 18th century manuscript that was copied from S when it was presumably still whole. This manuscript, Stockholm Papp 4to nr. 16 (which Kristjánsson dubs A^1), maintains the same chapter divisions as the extant *Dínus saga* of the S manuscript.

[144] Cf., AM 575a 4to. https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/da/AM04-0575-a/0#mode/2up. Accessed 02/08/26. 1r, 2r, 5v.

[145] For an example of this in Old Norse texts, see the Menota Handbook. Particularly section 7.3.2 "Hierarchy of Initials" https://www.menota.org/HB3_ch7.xml?#sec7.3.3 Accessed 02/08/2026.

[146] This event is detailed by Jónas Kristjánsson, *Dínus saga drambláta* (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), vii-viii. Here, he explains that this was done in order to prepare the manuscript for reading and inclusion in the *Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* in 1850.

through this chapter ends with a large lacuna that consumes chapter eleven through twenty-seven and half of chapter twenty-eight. Of the remaining chapters, only chapter thirty-two features a decorated initial, as the others leave only the blank spaces for theirs.

One reader appears to have been particularly visually engaged with the narrative. In the margins of folio 5v, corresponding to chapter twenty-nine, a rudimentary drawing of what appears to be a camel has been added, likely prompted by the text's description of the lavish caravan accompanying Philotemia to Egypt:

"...hon dreckr nu inni j holl fedr sins ok her eptir bodar Maximianus kongr til sin ollum sinum hinum villdoztum hofdingium ok byz at sekia <til> brvdlaups dottur sinnar j Egipta land uar þersi ferd buinn med miklum rikdomi var þar flytt afiolda *ulfallda* allra handa dyrgripir Philact(emia) var sett j einn gulligan vagn ok slikt sama hennar þionustu konur ok hallda sua j vegh til Egipta landz."[147]	"She drinks now in her father's hall, and hereafter King Maximiliánus bids all his best chieftains to himself and invites them to attend his daughter's wedding in Egypt. This journey was made with great wealth. There were brought an immense host of *camels* all bearing treasure. Philotemia was placed in a golden wagon and so also were her handmaidens and thus they made their way to Egypt."

This engagement with the text does not stop with illustration, however, as there are several prayer-like phrases scribbled into the margins of 6v. One phrase in the left margin of the leaf begins with "guds," but is otherwise indecipherable. In the upper margins of the leaf, however, a clear invocation reads "kom til myn gud myn gud," or "come to me, God, my God." This marginal prayer corresponds with chapter thirty-two of the saga in which it is revealed that Anachorita was no mere man but actually an agent of the devil:

"…þuiat ek villdi profa huor ockar driugari vydi annan yfir at vinna. Enn nu skulo þer her sia hersu ek hefi fangat hann. Hans mynd mun her nu litaz j þersum gler kentti sua piniz hann nu af þeim sem hann hafdi sitt traust aa. enn þar uar pukin sialfr nu sem þeir at hyggia þersum gler kentti syniz þeim hann allr loga innan ok j midium þeim loga syniz þeim þuilik mynd sen Anachorita hafdi a ser."	"…'Because I wanted to test which of us might prove superior to the other. And now you will see how I have captured him. His image will now appear in this glass ball. He is now tormented by the one in whom he had placed his trust. And it was the devil himself.' Now, as they looked at this glass ball, it seemed to them to be entirely aflame inside, and in the midst of the fire, they saw a figure resembling Anacorita."

Such moments of phantasmagoria within a saga likely elicited both fascination and unease, prompting this reader to inscribe a prayer for divine protection in response to the infernal spectacle unfolding in the narrative.

Though the extensive lacunae of AM 575a 4to make it difficult to reconstruct the manuscript's intended final appearance, Kristjánsson explains that another witness, Stockholm 4to n. 16, which he names $A^{1,}$ allows modern readers to at least read the entirety of the saga. This

[147] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 87.

manuscript was copied from S in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century by Þórður Jónsson at the behest of Magnús Jónsson of Vígur, a popular patron of scribal work, when it was still intact and undamaged.[148] When consulting the A^1 manuscript, one of its defining features is that it also has chapter divisions that follow S closely, though it is much more restrained in its aesthetics, featuring a modestly decorated S at the saga's beginning and nothing else. The only other direct manuscript witness to AM 575a 4to is JS 27 fol., or A^2 per Kristjánsson's taxonomy. This manuscript is also a later paper copy, from the eighteenth or nineteenth century, but the scribe of this text, Hannes Gunnlaugsson, curiously decided to break some of the chapters down into even smaller narrative units, adding three new chapters in total.

2.4.2 The Narrative Voice and Discourse-Level Transitions

At the textual level, there are narrative intrusions on the part of the scribe that are intended to steer the reader into new material. The first of these occurs in chapter five of the saga when the narrator describes the construction of Philotemia's extraordinary chamber. There the description is deliberately deferred by the following phrase:

"og med Meira meijstara döm giort smijdi var giørd enn menn kunnu skin aa edur nockurz mannz augu heffdu fir sied, sem sijdar mun sagt verda j þessari fräsøgu."[149]	"…and with greater mastery a craftsmanship was made than than men could understand, before any man's eyes had ever seen the like, as will later be told in this account."

The narrator purposely withholds the fuller account of the marvels of this hall until an ostensibly more suitable moment. They thus flag future material in advance, creating expectation and reserving the descriptive payoff for the eventual moment that Dínus and his men are finally led inside, creating an almost reader surrogate.[150] The phrase is therefore proleptic as well as organizational, as it tells the reader that the present account is incomplete by design.

The same chapter in which this occurs then turns from architectural anticipation to the directing of the audience's attention. After Philotemia's chamber has been furnished and adequately populated by her maidens, the narrator pauses the narrative briefly to say:

"Gieffum nu gaum ad glede og gödre fräsøgn, þui eff vier hlijdumm, þä høffnumm vier illum hugrenningumm og røngumm."[151]	"Let us now give heed to joy and to a good story, for if we listen, then we cast off evil and false thoughts."

[148] For more information of both Þórður Jónsson the scribe as well as Magnús Jónsson the patron, see The Icelandic Scribes Project website: https://icelandicscribesproject.com/ Accessed 02/08/2026.

[149] Ibid., 14.

[150] Cf., Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), specifically xiii.

[151] Ibid., 15.

This is arguably one of the clearest narrative intrusions in the saga. Its focus is entirely on reception rather than narrative progression or expectation. The audience is told how to attend to what follows, and listening itself is cast as a corrective discipline that turns the mind away from wrong or harmful thoughts. The transition into the arrival of the merchants who first recount the majesty of Dínus to Philotemia and thereby spark the core narrative action of the saga, immediately after this is therefore framed didactically.

More than merely deferring the expectation of the reader, however, the narrator of Dínus saga also engages in the overt direction of the saga and its intended reader. The opening of chapter seven intentionally shifts the narrative to a different location. The scene that precedes this chapter involves Dínus and his men dealing with the consequences of Philotemia's first deceptive act against them and their subsequent public ridicule and shame. It ends with the implication that Dínus has avenged himself in some manner, as he has successfully slipped back into Philotemia's tower while she was elsewhere. At precisely that point, the narration breaks and deliberately reorients itself away from Dínus and back toward Philotemia:

"[N]u er her fyrst at huerfa enn þar til uikia sem Phil(actemia) k(ongs)d(otter) uar at siden hun hafdi suo leingi setid j hall fedr sns sem hana lysti uill hun ok hennar meyiar til sins herbergis."[152]	"Now it is first to turn here and to where Philatecmia, the king's daughter, was; after she had so long sat in the hall of her father as it pleaser her, she and her maidens wish to go to her chamber."

This is an explicit directional cue, specifically one that tells the audience that one narrative track is being abandoned for another. The phrasing works to make this rhetorical shift demonstrably visible.

In chapter thirteen of the saga, a new scene unfolds in Philotemia's chamber, where she and her maidens encounter Dínus' answer to their deception. Upon returning from a celebratory victory drink at her father's hall, they are confronted by a runic tablet that drives them into an episode of frantic dancing and nakedness. The chapter once again announces the transfer of narrative perspective, drawing attention to its internal sequence of time:

"Tuiemur døgumm sijdar enn nu var frä sagt…"[153]	"Two days later, which now was recounted…"

This phrase reminds readers of what has previously transpired between Philotemia and Dínus, and how this is to be resolved for Dínus and his men through the introduction of the character Heremita. The narrator names an elapsed interval of time and thereby reorients their reader in the precise narrative moment that they wish them to focus upon.

Finally, the saga also uses backward-looking formulas to secure continuity after major episodes, reminding readers what they have experienced is important to future developments. When

[152] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 37-38.

[153] Ibid., 50.

Philotemia's first trick against Dínus begins to work upon him and his men the audience is reminded that Dínus dwells in his own castle now:

"Dijnus situr nu vmm kirt j sijnumm kastala, sem fir var sagt…"[154]	"Dínus sits now quietly in his castle, as was said before..."

This is resumptive signposting. The phrasing does more than simply reminding the reader of Dínus' location, it deliberately ties the present episode back to an earlier narrative moment, as though the text were stitching its dispersed units back into a coherent sequence. Such formulas help the saga recover its bearings after digression, marvel, or embedded action sequences.

The manuscript evidence of *Dínus saga drambláta* proves that the saga exhibits a clear and deliberate system of *ordinatio* in the sense of Malcolm Parkes' definition. AM 575a 4to exhibits a visible arrangement of textual units designed to guide access, orientation, and reference. Rather than chapter divisions being modern editorial impositions, the manuscript itself demonstrates that the saga's structural articulation is embedded in its earliest surviving scribal tradition and persists even under conditions of later copying. These divisions provided an apparatus through which medieval audiences could navigate the saga's numerous episodes, mark transitions between narrative spaces such as Egypt and Bláland, and register moments of character introduction and dramatic escalation.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has argued that *Dínus saga drambláta* is best understood not merely as a late medieval Icelandic romance, but as a work authored through the practice of *compilatio*. Read against medieval theories of textual production, from Vincent of Beauvais' insistence that authority exists in a text's arrangement of borrowed material to Bonaventure's distinction between scribe, compiler, commentator, and author, the saga's method becomes legible as a form of literary design rather than derivative patchwork. The point of this argument is not merely that the saga borrows material, as nearly all medieval texts do this in one way or another. The point is that its coherence depends upon a specifically learned logic. Although Dínus saga is a romance rather than a sermon, its organization draws upon portable habits of selection, arrangement, and exemplary narration cultivated within clerical textual culture. The compiler's labor lies in selecting and ordering inherited material so that it acquires a new function within the romance, a practice learned through the crafting and sourcing of material.[155]

This chapter has further shown how such a practice did not arise in a vacuum. It was made previously available by a clerical culture in which acts of excerpting, translating, glossing, ordering, and redeploying inherited material were routine features of education and textual practice. Icelandic literary culture, though geographically peripheral, was intellectually integrated into the wider pedagogical and ecclesiastical networks of Latin Christendom. Its

[154] Ibid., 22.

[155] Alan J. Fletcher and Anne Hudson, "Compilations for preaching and Lollard literature," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, volume II 1300-1400*, eds., Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 317-329.

bilingual culture of *grammatica*, its cathedral and monastic schools, its habits of vernacularization, and its participation in broader clerical modes of study all helped normalize a transferable compositional method. Whether encountered through hagiography, translation, exempla, grammatical treatises, episcopal writing, or the portable pedagogies associated with mendicant and reforming clerical cultures, compilation became both a way of preserving knowledge as well as a method of making new texts. What emerges from this context is a deep continuity between learned writing and vernacular narrative. The same habits of arrangement that shaped scholastic and pastoral prose were recognized as being able to be realized in romance.

At the textual level, this chapter has argued that *Dínus saga* bears the marks of that clerical habitus in both its materials and its manner of organization. The saga's proposed compilatory pieces suggest that its narrative is built from heterogeneous but recognizable traditions such as biblical and encyclopedic discourse, Alexandrian matter, saints' lives, exemplary structures, learned geography, romance topoi, and insular supernatural motifs. These materials are accretional and repositioned within a narrative architecture that gives them new function. The question, therefore, is not simply where a given motif or sequence may have come from, but how the borrowed matter is made to work once placed inside the new narrative. That shift of emphasis, away from source hunting alone and toward compositional procedure, is essential. It allows *Dínus saga* to be read as more than merely a loose anthology of allusions, but as a deliberate narrative construction whose plurality is disciplined by arrangement.

The saga's earliest manuscript tradition further supports this claim. The surviving leaves of AM 575a 4to reveal that the saga's earliest extant redaction was not transmitted as undifferentiated running prose, but as a visibly articulated sequence of narrative units. Its chapter divisions, reserved spaces for initials and headings, visual hierarchy, and signs of readerly engagement together indicate a system of *ordinatio* designed to facilitate access, orientation, and use. Even allowing for the fragmentary condition of the witness and the mediation of later copies, the surviving codicological evidence suggests that the saga was conceived as something navigable. This matters because it affirms that *ordinatio* is more than simply a feature of layout external to meaning. It is one of the means by which meaning is made operable. The same impulse toward structured accessibility that shaped scholastic and encyclopedic books is here realized within vernacular romance.

Taken together, these arguments establish the basis for reading *Dínus saga drambláta* as a text that is governed by *compilatio*. Its authority lies in the successful disposition of inherited forms. Its narrative coherence depends upon the compiler's ability to coordinate heterogeneous materials into a persuasive whole. What makes the saga "original," then, is that it transforms prior tradition through arrangement. The compiler of *Dínus saga*, rather than preserving the voices of earlier texts, repositions them, vernacularizes them, and sets them into new relation with one another so that they generate fresh narrative and ethical effects for an Icelandic audience.

The next chapter narrows the focus from this broader compositional logic to one of its most important operative mechanisms. While this chapter has argued for the compilatory structure of *Dínus saga*, the next will demonstrate how one particular kind of inherited material, the exemplum and its allied demonstrative forms, functions within that structure. There the concern will be less with compilation as a general authorial method than with the specific

narrative engine by which the saga organizes scenes of testing, humiliation, deception, and reversal into morally charged sequences. In that sense, the chapter that follows pushes the idea of *Dínus saga drambláta* being the product of compilatio logic even further by examining one of the principal ways in which compilation utilized specific and identifiable story segments from homiletic tradition, the exempla.

Chapter 3

The Exemplary Logic of *Dínus saga drambláta*

"And there are some for whom examples incite towards love of the heavenly homeland more than preaching does."[1]

— Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Prologue.

3.1 Introduction

Gregory the Great's prologue to the *Dialogues* exposes an idea that will come to be an important feature of later medieval literature, that moral lessons resonate with an audience most deeply when they take the form of a memorable story. The *Dialogues* itself begins from this premise as well, with a narrative frame that prefaces the larger work as a conversation between a master and apprentice. Peter, Gregory's deacon, notices his mentor's recent sullen mood and enquires about what ails him. Gregory confesses that he has become wearied by the burdens of ecclesiastical administration and his estrangement from the contemplative life for which he longs has left him in his present, dour temperament. In response, Peter suggests that if Gregory misses the simplicity of his former position, perhaps the solution lies in recounting the examples from the lives of holy men whom he so reveres. The wisdom in doing this, in Peter's opinion, is that the act of recalling these deeds might give Gregory some consolation and, perhaps, revive his spirit. This counsel gives the *Dialogues* their immediate premise, while also revealing the larger scale of the "example" and its utility in medieval storytelling. For his part, Gregory was so fond of employing the exemplum to illustrate a moral point that he used it across most of his works.[2] These works, in turn, gained such popularity that they enjoyed an exceptionally long life after him. Stories from *the Dialogues* and his related works continued to be excerpted, circulated, and reused in the centuries following his death. An eleventh-century manuscript from Saint-Martial de Limoges, for example, contains exemplary material drawn from Gregory's homilies.[3]

Gregory's work represents an important turning point in the later literary development of the exemplum. Earlier church writers had certainly used illustrative narrative in both moral and

[1] Gregory the Great, *Sancti Gregorii Papæ I. Cognomento magni Opera omnia: iam olim ad manuscriptos codiecs romanos, gallicanos, anglicano emendate, aucta, et illustrata notis* (Venetiis: Sumptibus Caroboli et Pompeati, 1768), 56 ("Et sunt nonnulli, quos ad amorem patriae cœlestis plus exemplam quam praedicanmenta succendunt.").

[2] Bruno Judic, "Grégoire le Grand et la notion d'*exemplum*," in *Le Tonnerre des exemples. Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds., Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieau, Pascal Collomb, and Jacques Berlioz (Rennes: University Presses of Rennes, 2010), 131.

[3] Bruno Judic, "Grégoire le grand et notion d'exemplum," in *Le Tonnerre des exemples. Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds., Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieau, Pascal Collomb, and Jacques Berlioz (Rennes: University Presses of Rennes, 2010), 142.

catechetical instruction.[4] Through the adoption of formulas specific to St. Ambrose, Gregory gives the exemplum a new prominence within preaching itself, using it as a practical instrument of persuasion, one that he was convinced was uniquely effective on the "mind and heart" of his listeners.[5] Gregory employs his exempla in a particularly deliberate way, using them as evidentiary cases as well as homiletic closures. In his writings, he typically places an exemplum after the exposition of one or more points of evangelical doctrine and sometimes lets it serve as the concluding movement of a homily, where the narrative more precisely delineates the moral lesson.[6] This configuration likewise demonstrates how the exempla are later utilized by medieval writers, as Gregory is already, much earlier, demonstrating how these stories can be used within a narrative model. Gregory's *Dialogues* contain so many useful examples that the stories gathered therein actually go on to fuel the collections of exempla that are compiled during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after having "nourished" the hagiographies of the early Middle Ages.[7] This chapter begins from that history by examining how far exemplary narration can travel once it leaves the sermon frame and enters the growing world of vernacular fiction. In doing so, it proposes a new model through which medieval Icelandic texts, in this case, the original *riddarasögur*, can be understood both conceptually and narratively. The definition of what an exemplum is and what it can do must, therefore, first be addressed, as it is a far from static term that continues to produce scholarly debate.

The history of the term exemplum is a rich one that reaches far back into classical rhetorical theory. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the example appears as the παράδειγμα (paradeigma) which is an illustrative case through which one thing may be understood by means of another, belonging to analogical reasoning rather than deductive demonstration.[8] Within this intellectual framework, a speaker presents an exemplary case from which a general principle may be inferred, rather than demonstrating a proposition deductively.[9] The example, thus, operates analogically, in that, from one case, another case is illuminated. Before the exemplum becomes a short moralizing tale embedded in medieval sermons, it functions as a mode of argument. Its

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[4] Marcia L. Colish, "Classicism and Catechesis in the Patriarch Treatises of Ambrose of Milan," *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 61, no. 1, *Filosofie e teologie* (2006), 9-10; 16; cf., Ivor J. Davidson, "Ambrose's de officiis and the Intellectual Climate of the Late Fourth Century," *Vigiliae Christianae* 49, no. 4 (1995), 313-315.

[5] Jean Thibaut Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Mouyen Âge* (Paris and Toulouse: Occitania, 1927), 14.

[6] Jean-Thibaut Welter, *L'Exemplum*, 15.

[7] Bruno Judic, "Grégoire le grand et notion d'exemplum," in *Le Tonnerre des exemples. Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds., Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieau, Pascal Collomb, and Jacques Berlioz (Rennes: University Presses of Rennes, 2010), 139.

[8] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and The Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 59-60.

[9] Cf., Aristotle, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle with a Commentary by the late Edward Meredith Cope* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1877), 36. 1357b ("ἔστιν γὰρ τὸ μὲν παράδειγμα ἐπαγωγή, τὸ δ' ἐνθύμημα συλλογισμός, τὸ δὲ φαινόμενον ἐνθύμημα φαινόμενος συλλογισμός. καλῶ δ' ἐνθύμημα μὲν ῥητορικὸν συλλογισμόν, *παράδειγμα δὲ ἐπαγωγὴν ῥητορικήν*.")

persuasive force lies in its relatability, in how it gives a presumably real, or, at least, plausible illustration for the audience to consider and identify with.

The oldest surviving book on rhetoric in the Latin language, the anonymously authored *Rhetorica ad Herennium* adds another layer to the complex nature of the exemplum.[10] Therein, it is defined as a demonstration rather than a strict proof. It occupies the place of testimony, though it does not itself constitute empirical evidence. Rather, it confirms what has already been advanced by a precept by stating that what the rule has lightly impressed upon the mind is confirmed by the example as if by testimony.[11] That rhetorical background remained important in the Middle Ages, where the term continued to carry the force of demonstration through instance.

Medieval usage, however, greatly widened the range of material to which the term could be applied. Jean-Thibaut Welter defines the medieval exemplum in the broadest sense, outlining it as a story or anecdote, fable or parable, a moral lesson or description capable of serving as supporting evidence of a doctrinal, moral, or religious exposition.[12] This definition is a practical one, as it preserves the exemplum's connection to the wider circulation of medieval didactic narrative, yet its broad nature creates a methodological problem. If every short, pointed, or moralizing narrative can be called an exemplum, according to Welter's formulation, the term risks becoming too loose to remain analytically useful. It, therefore, becomes necessary to distinguish between the *exemplum* as an "example" in the general sense and the *exemplum* as a more specific kind of illustrative narrative. Thomas Frederick Crane makes a case for this precise distinction by observing that ecclesiastical writers used the word in two senses. First, the exemplum could operate as an "example" broadly defined, and second as an "illustrative story," a usage which he dates to no earlier than the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century.[13] Crane's model is dated, but the taxonomy he imagined remains useful as a starting point.

Modern French scholarship has refined Crane's second, narrower sense of the term. Jacques Le Goff, Claude Brémond, and Jean-Claude Schmitt define the exemplum as a brief story, presented as truthful, and inserted into a discourse, usually a sermon, in order to persuade an audience by means of a salutary lesson.[14] Jacques Berlioz notes that this definition is also lacking in clarity, but can serve as a useful heuristic tool for distinguishing rhetorical exempla

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[10] Though modern scholarship has moved away from this attribution, the work is commonly ascribed to Cicero.

[11] Loeb Classical Library, [Cicero] Ad Herennium, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard, 2004), 230. ("id enim quod admonuerit et leviter fecerit praeceptio, exemplo sicut testimonio comprobatur")

[12] Jean-Thibaut Welter, *L'Exemplum*, 1.

[13] Thomas Frederick Crane, *The "exempla" or illustrative stories from the "sermons vulgares" of Jacques de Vitry* (London: Publications of the Folk-lore Society, 1890), xviiin.

[14] Jacques Le Goff, Claude Bremond, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L'"Exemplum"* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 37-38.

from homiletic ones.[15] Jean-Claude Schmitt likewise emphasizes that from Antiquity the exemplum comes to be thought of as an anecdote describing an exemplary action or person, such as a saint or Christ himself.[16] The medieval exemplum, therefore, occupies an intersectional space between rhetoric and ethics. It functions as a narrative instrument, the force of which lies in the relation between a particular case and the general principle it makes visible.

Some exemplary material could likewise take abbreviated forms. W. J. Aerts outlines this in his study of Alexandrian exemplary tales, where he demonstrates that many of these exempla do not take a fully narrativized structure. In some cases, specifically with famous figures such as Alexander the Great, the exemplum appears merely as a compact reference to the person or to an episode they are known for, and the audience is subsequently expected to supply the remainder of the story themselves. Aerts, therefore, postulates that an exemplum can simply be a reference to any person or circumstance that could be considered paradigmatic, so long as the reference stresses a conviction or reinforces an opinion.[17] He separates exemplarity from detachable anecdote by demonstrating how a reference can work exemplarily when audience memory supplies the absent narrative.

The exemplum's instrumental quality helps to explain why the form helped organize moral knowledge across medieval clerical culture. Exempla made instruction portable. What might otherwise remain abstract in the form of a homiletic maxim could be carried, remembered, and reapplied through a simpler story. In that respect, exempla belong not only to the history of preaching, but also to a broader culture of textual use in which narrative matter was selected, excerpted, arranged, and put to new purposes, making it a powerful tool in the hands of a medieval compiler.[18] An exemplum could easily be ported from one setting to another because it condensed a problem into a scene. Its practical value becomes clearest at the level of reception, in other words, for the work it actually does at the reader level. What is difficult to retain in the abstract can often be recalled more readily once it has been attached to a conspicuous deed, such as a humiliating trick or an elaborate reversal of fortune. In instances such as these, the use of the exemplum or exemplary logic is the means by which an otherwise unassuming narrative can become morally intelligible.

Defining "exemplarity" for this study, thus, requires a corresponding degree of precision. In later narrative, the exemplum may remain active as source, model, instrument, or narrative ground even when it no longer survives as an independent didactic unit.[19] The question must be

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[15] Jacques Berlioz, "Introduction à la recherche dans les exempla médiévaux," in *Les Exempla médiévaux: Introduction à la recherche*, 17-18.

[16] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples: Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Age* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1985), 10.

[17] W. J. Aerts, "Alexander the Great in 'Exempla' and 'similitudines' in Byzantine Literature," *Exemplum et Similitudo: Alexander the Great and other heroes as points of reference in medieval literature*, eds., W.J. Aerts and M. Gosman (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988), 10.

[18] Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 3-4.

[19] Claude Cazalé-Bérard, "L'exemplum est-il un genre littéraire? II - L'exemplum et la nouvelle," 29.

functional as well as genealogical. A scene may derive from an identifiable analogue, but it also needs to be read for the work it performs within the narrative that now contains it. Proceeding from that definition of exemplarity, the manner in which *Dínus saga drambláta* employs exemplary scenes makes it a particularly useful case study. The saga's repeated contests between Dínus and Philotemia provide an overt evaluative structure. Pride generates notoriety, which, in turn, invites testing, and these tests culminate in public spectacles of humiliation. The saga's tricks and counter-tricks, while comically entertaining, also produce cases through which the defects of one's character are ultimately revealed. The repeated exposures of Dínus' prides, and arguably Philotemia's as well, thus give the saga much of its episode-level architecture.

3.2 Exempla in the Middle Ages

Once exemplary stories could be drawn from nearly any body of narrative material, their usefulness depended upon the systems that made them available to compilers. Medieval exempla only enjoyed such a wide circulation due to the culture of clerical writers who developed habits for indexing and redeploying them. A story that could not be recovered at the right moment had little practical value. A history of exemplarity is, therefore, also a history of the exempla's accessibility. Sermon compendia, florilegia, pastoral manuals and preaching aids created a system through which material could be searched, selected, and imported into a place where it could meet a particular moral or didactic need. Those systems were necessary because the preacher needed access to stories according to occasion rather than narrative origin. A story useful for a thematic sermon frame, therefore, had to be recoverable under some practical heading. Modern repertories can be used to gain a better sense of the scale of the medieval problem. Welter's study remained one of the most extensive guides to medieval works containing exempla, while Tubach's *Index exemplorum* identified nearly six thousand types, even as its limits in titles, indexing, and manuscript coverage required further correction.[20] Medieval collections answered the same problem with different tools. The use of apparatuses such as alphabetization, rubrics, subject headings, tables, and cross-references created a searchable index that could be mined for narrative materials.

The *Alphabetum narrationum* is one example of such an apparatus. In the prologue to the work, Arnold of Liège explains the practical need for such a collection by joining affective usefulness to portability. Edifying narratives and examples, he says, are more easily grasped by the understanding, more firmly impressed in memory, and more willingly heard by many audiences; yet because a preacher cannot memorize all the examples needed for the office of preaching, and because it is burdensome to carry many large books on long journeys, he gathers them into a usable collection.[21] Alphabetical arrangement therefore answered a pastoral problem as much as a documentary one. Preachers needed stories that could be retained by the hearer and that they themselves could recover. The immediate advantage from such a design is that it meant a preacher no longer had to read continuously or carry a library through memory. They could, instead, simply search. The story became a retrievable unit inside a documentary system, ready

[20] Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples*, 26; Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, FF Communications 204 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1969).

[21] Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples*, 108.

to be recalled according to topic, audience, occasion, or moral need. Alphabetization made the collection tidier and, in doing so, changed the way exemplary matter could be used.

Pastoral use likewise shaped these stories themselves at nearly every level. Étienne de Bourbon's treatment of confession places exempla within the post-Lateran IV effort to promote auricular confession, surrounding them with citations, arguments, and practical confessional instruction.[22] Jacques de Vitry's preaching materials similarly assume that sermons must be adapted to particular audiences enumerated as prelates, priests, canons, clerics, students, monks, friars, hermits, knights, merchants, laborers, women in different states, servants, and children.[23] This attention to audience highlights an interesting reason as to why exempla could not remain static. The same vice or doctrine required different cases when addressed to a different audience. Exempla made doctrine socially translatable because they placed moral instruction into recognizable situations that were easily interpretable.

The moment exemplary stories were organized for use, variations upon tales quickly followed. A story might be shortened in one setting, expanded in another, placed under a new rubric elsewhere, or made to bear a different moral weight through a different frame. Latin exempla incorporated into vernacular sermons, miscellanies, translations of the *Vitae patrum*, miniatures, and narrative collections were often reread and reshaped according to audience, medium, and authorial interest. Some versions preserved the core of the tale with minimal alteration whereas others expanded scenes, shifted emphasis, highlighted different characters, or altered the interpretive direction of the story.[24] Once exempla moved into vernacular settings, they could become longer, more complex, and less suitable for insertion into sermons, even while preserving their moral purpose.[25]

The mobility of the exemplary form gave later writers license to alter familiar stories. Mario Sassi, for example, has observed that the anonymity, instability, and ancillary status of exempla allowed them to travel across genres and languages, become independent, and accommodate the expectations of different audiences.[26] The form's apparent austerity helped it survive, while its dependence on context made it easier to change. A writer could take the same tale and make different aspects of it communicate their intent. One version might direct attention toward penitence, another toward clerical authority, another toward the dangers of deception, and yet another toward the exemplary patience of a figure under trial. The moral force of the story did not vanish in these changes. It was redirected by a new frame within them. This redirection helps explain why explicit moralization is not always necessary. For example, the anonymous Franciscan collection in BnF lat. 3555, probably compiled in southern France in the late

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[22] Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples*, 84.

[23] Ibid., 48.

[24] Mario Sassi, "Strategies of Interpretation in French and Italian Exempla," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 66, no. 1 (2022): 3-4.

[25] Ibid.," 18.

[26] Ibid.," 18-19.

thirteenth century, draws from monastic and patristic sources including Cassiodorus, Jerome, the *Vitae patrum*, Gregory's *Dialogues* and Homilies, Bede, Peter Damian, Pseudo-Turpin, and Caesarius of Heisterbach. Its compiler uses serial citation and dispersion, often abridging, simplifying, and stylizing the material, and in some cases omitting moralization even where the source had supplied it.[27] A rubric, sermon frame, oral explanation, or surrounding discourse could provide the interpretive pressure that the written source no longer states. The exemplum's lesson could likewise be carried by the context of its placement within a sermon or narrative as much as by explicit commentary on its meaning.

The range of exemplary material that was conserved was extraordinarily broad. Jean-Thibaut Welter's description of the exemplum as drawing upon, "all the narrative and descriptive background of the past and the present," captures the size of the reservoir from which a compiler could draw.[28] This breadth also explains why tracing exempla often requires movement beyond the formal collections themselves. When a story cannot be found in one of the expected repertories, the search must often turn toward the narrative tradition from which the preacher, compiler, or moralist may have borrowed it. Scripture, hagiography, fable, bestiary lore, classical anecdote, miracle story, natural history, and local tale could all become exemplary under the right conditions.[29] The exemplum often begins elsewhere. It becomes an exemplum when a compiler places it where an audience can read a particular event as a case. That range made the form powerful, but it also made it difficult to manage. If almost any tale or description could yield moral instruction under the right conditions, then the exemplum's practical force depended upon a secondary act other than the narration itself, its placement. Therefore, a story became useful when it could be attached to a theme, such as a vice, a virtue. The distinction between older and newer modes of preaching helps clarify why placement became so important. Thomas Waleys distinguishes the ancient manner of preaching, associated with the Church Fathers and saints and still audible in some popular forms, from the more common modern sermon of his own day.[30] The *sermo modernus* organized a scriptural theme through division, dilation, authorities, and inserted narrative material, making the sermon into a structure in which an exemplum could be placed at a precise argumentative or affective point. Basevorn's reading of Gregory's river image gives that placement a spatial form, as sacred eloquence may turn briefly into a neighboring valley, but it must return to its intended course.[31] The exemplum belongs to

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[27] Valérie Ferval, "Grégoire et les autres dans le recueil anonyme et sans titre du manuscrit latin 3555 de la BnF de Paris," in *Le Tonnerre des exemples: Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, Pascal Collomb, and Jacques Berlioz (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 386.

[28] Jean-Thibaut Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Âge* (Paris and Toulouse: Occitania, 1927), 2.

[29] Jacques Berlioz, "Introduction à la recherche dans les exempla médiévaux," in *Les Exempla médiévaux: Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques de l'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach*, ed. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Carcassonne: GARAE/HESIODE, 1992), 35.

[30] M. Michèle Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is Bent in Study…": Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 401.

[31] Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 136-37.

that controlled movement. It can interrupt the main line without abandoning it, provided the story returns the hearer to the sermon's governing moral purpose.

The sermon gives the clearest view of this conversion of narrative into pastoral action. A sermon on marriage attributed to Jacques de Vitry shows how densely such material could gather around a single pastoral concern. The sermon moves through confession, canonical requirements after Lateran IV, clerical concubinage, feminine vice, and masculine weakness, all supported by exempla, to the point that the sermon begins to resemble a working cluster of instructions rather than a single continuous exposition.[32] A sermon of this kind behaves almost like a collection in miniature. It gathers narrative cases around a social and spiritual problem, preserves them within a structure of use, and leaves them available for later preaching, compilation, or adaptation. Jean Gobi's *Scala coeli* gives the same principle a more spiritual and affective charge, describing exempla and parables as narratives that move listeners, hold attention, remain fixed in memory, and raise the mind from earthly concerns toward eternity.[33] The memory of a doctrinal claim could fade shortly after a sermon ended, but a relatable story could endure in one's memory, ready to be recalled when confronted with a similar scenario in one's own life.

Exemplary collection did not begin with the mendicants, although mendicant preaching gave the form a new public and institutional strength. Cistercian collections from roughly 1160 to 1225 were often produced for internal consumption within the order. Their stories, visions, and miracles helped create shared memory, discipline, and corporate identity among monks and nuns before the preaching orders adapted such material for public instruction.[34] The same name therefore covers different institutional uses. Dominican preaching gave exemplary material a different institutional setting. The Order of Preachers was built around study and preaching from the beginning. M. Michele Mulchahey notes that the primitive Dominican constitutions required each convent to have a teacher, known as the community's "doctor," who instructed the brethren in Scripture and sacred theology, and that every Dominican convent should likewise be a school, which allows for a better understanding of how Dominican education worked.[35] The order's preaching depended on this institutional discipline. By the later thirteenth century, Dominican *schola* training involved lectures, repetitions, disputations, and a scholastic routine designed to form friars who were under the influence of the secular pedagogy of the university.[36] Dominican preaching aids became important for this exact reason. The friar needed not only doctrine, but recoverable material that could be adapted to different occasions and audiences. Mulchahey describes Dominican sermonaries, notebooks, and personalized collections as working tools through which friars studied, copied, reused, and sometimes exchanged sermons and sermon

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[32] Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples: Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Stock, 1985), 44.

[33] Ibid., 124.

[34] Stefano Mula, "Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Cistercian Exempla Collections: Role, Diffusion, and Evolution," *History Compass* 8, no. 8 (2010): 903-4.

[35] Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is Bent*," 132-33.

[36] Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is Bent*," 134.

material.[37] Anne Holloway's account of thirteenth-century Dominican argues that Dominican preaching cannot be understood only through formal rules or the *artes praedicandi*, since preaching was also a performance whose authority depended on the preacher's conduct, audience, and context. Exempla collections answered that difficulty by offering a more flexible way to manage the preaching vocation outside the strict genre of preaching manuals.[38] They taught friars how preaching might work in practice by preserving cases in which conduct, error, and correction could be seen in narrative form.

3.3 Exempla in Iceland

The Icelandic evidence for exempla is clearest when approached through a change of terminology. Medieval Icelandic sources use *dæmi*, *dæmisaga*, and *ævintýr* in ways that overlap with the Latin category *exemplum*. A *dæmi* can designate an example or exemplary case, while *dæmisaga* names the narrative form of such an example. Sverrir Tómasson notes that *ævintýr* is often used in medieval sources for short, realistic *dæmisögur* of the kind Latin sources call *exempla*. These tales could be secular or Christian and edifying, but Tómasson stresses that the boundary between the two is not clear, since both kinds could carry a moral message.[39] The material belongs to the broader reservoir of medieval exemplary writing described above, but the Icelandic evidence also points to specific works and traditions, including Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, the *Gesta Romanorum*, Gregory's *Dialogues*, and the *Vitae patrum*. The evidence, however, does not begin with the large fourteenth-century collections. Tómasson notes that individual exemplary stories were known in Iceland in the thirteenth century, while separate collections of dæmisögur become visible only in the fourteenth. In this later development, Bishop Jón Halldórsson is suggested as having encouraged the use of exemplary stories in clerical preaching.[40]

Old Norse learned prose confirms that vernacular terminology did not reproduce Latin conventions. In *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga*, Odd Einar Haugen notes that interpolated narratives are introduced by *dæmi*, *dæmisaga*, and *saga*, while the Latin text uses a looser range of terms, including *parabola*, *sermo*, *narratio*, and, only once, *exemplum*.[41] The Latin source does not provide a stable terminological model that the translator simply follows. Haugen remarks instead on "the lack of terminological unity in the Latin text," while the Old Norwegian

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[37] Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is Bent*," 422.

[38] Anne Holloway, "Performance Management: Creating Order in Thirteenth-Century Dominican Preaching," in *Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation, and Consequences of Dominican Legislation*, ed. Cornelia Linde (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 306.

[39] Sverrir Tómasson, "Dæmi eða ævintýr," in *Íslensk bókmenntasaga II*, ed. Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1993), 274-275.

[40] Ibid., 275-276.

[41] Odd Einar Haugen, "Exempla in *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga*," "Sagas and the Norwegian Experience" Saga Conference 10, 3-9 August, 1997, Trondheim (1997), 227.

version repeatedly reaches for *dæmisaga*.[42] His conclusion gives the vernacular evidence a more nuanced position, as in *Barlaams saga*, apologues are normally called *dæmisögur*, *New Testament* parables are usually called *saga*, and the translator's additional legendary or biblical interpolations are called *dæmi*.[43] The terminology does not produce a perfect equivalent for the Latin *exemplum*, but it shows a West Norse learned prose environment in which embedded instructive narrative could be distinguished by source, use, and degree of integration into the surrounding argument.

The breadth of *ævintýr* keeps the Icelandic evidence from collapsing into a series of direct Latin-to-vernacular equivalents. As a loan from French *aventure*, *ævintýr* could signify event or occurrence, overlapping with Old Norse *atburðr*, while also naming the kind of tale that later editors and scholars gather under the heading of Icelandic exempla.[44] The term therefore preserves a narrative flexibility that *exemplum* alone can potentially obscure, namely how an instructive tale did not have to enter Icelandic prose solely through a formal Latin version. It could begin as an event worth telling, acquire force from the circumstances of its telling, and become exemplary through the frame that received it. A story could carry an explicit moral, as in a sermon collection, but it could also present a striking action whose significance emerged from placement, audience, and narrative consequence.

Old Norse Christian prose had cultivated such an arrangement well before the fourteenth century. Sermons, homilies, saints' lives, and translated religious instruction gave vernacular audiences repeated access to moral narrative. For example, the Old Norse *Physiologus*, preserved in fragments from around 1200, the mid-twelfth-century sermon fragment AM 237 fol., and the Icelandic and Norwegian Homily Books from the beginning of the thirteenth century all show the vernacular being used for doctrine, moral explanation, and the interpretation of created things as signs. In such preaching and instruction, saints' lives and exempla supplied compact narratives of moral difficulty and spiritual consequence.[45]

The same vernacular habit of moral instruction also appears outside explicitly ecclesiastical prose, most clearly in *Konungs skuggsjá*, where exemplary reasoning is adapted to the education of rulers and courtiers. Written in Norway in the middle of the thirteenth century, the work belongs to a courtly environment in which instruction was organized as dialogue, practical counsel, and moral formation. David Brégaint reads both *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirdskrá* as part of a deliberate pedagogical effort to teach new forms of self-restraint, etiquette, and courtly conduct to a Norwegian aristocratic audience. His comparison with Western mirror literature, including Hugh of St Victor's *De institutione novitiorum*, Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, and Johannes de Garlandia's *Morale scolarium*, suggests that *Konungs skuggsjá*

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[42] Odd Einar Haugen, "Exempla in *Barlaams ok Josaphats saga*," 230.

[43] Ibid., 232.

[44] Jonas Wellendorf, "Rising from the Grave: The Tale of the Duke's Son in Iceland, Denmark, and Elsewhere," draft of April 28, 2025, 1-2.

[45] Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Prose of Christian Instruction," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 338-39.

participates in a wider culture of practical didactic prose. The text teaches through staged advisory dialogue and memorable cases for those who must learn how to act within a royal household.[46] Its use of the allegorical story of the "Four Daughters of God" shows how even inherited theological allegory could be turned into a case of judgment.

The "Four Daughters of God" are the personified virtues of Mercy, Truth, Justice, and Peace, developed from the Psalm verse in which mercy and truth meet, and justice and peace kiss. In *Konungs skuggsjá*, the allegory is given a distinctly judicial form. Adam and Eve stand before God after the Fall, and the four sisters assist in the judgment by bringing different claims to bear upon it. In this reading mercy restrains cruelty, truth prevents falsehood, justice guards against wrongful partiality, and peace checks the anger that might turn judgment into vengeance.[47] Matthias Tveitane places the Old Norse version within the wider European tradition of the allegory, especially the Anglo-Norman and Latin traditions associated with Robert Grosseteste's *Château d'Amour*, while noting that *Konungs skuggsjá* gives the Four Sisters a more immediate role in the judgment of Adam.[48] The allegory enters the text, then, as a teachable scene of adjudication. The Fall becomes a case through which royal readers are taught to weigh punishment, mercy, truth, and peace together rather than allowing any single impulse to govern judgment.

Sunde develops this legal and political dimension through the stories of David and Solomon in *Konungs skuggsjá*. David's unjust act releases divine wrath upon the realm, and the approach of punishment toward Jerusalem forces him to acknowledge his fault. Solomon's treatment of Shimei gives the opposite configuration: mercy and peace are granted under conditions, and their violation returns the case to punishment. Sunde reads these stories as didactic exempla for princes and young aristocrats.[49] Placed beside *Barlaams saga*, *Konungs skuggsjá* highlights another form of thirteenth-century West Norse exemplary prose. *Barlaams saga* uses interpolated narratives within learned religious dialogue whereas *Konungs skuggsjá* uses biblical history and allegory within royal instruction. The two works differ starkly in subject and institutional setting, but both make inherited narrative matter serve a larger didactic frame.

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[46] David Brégaint, "Civilizing the 'Viking': A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behaviour in 13th Century Norway," *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (2016), 3-5; cf. Laurence Marcellus Larson, trans., *The King's Mirror (Speculum Regale—Konungs Skuggsjá)* (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, 1917), 9-10, 26.

[47] Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde, "Daughters of God and Counsellors of the Judges of Men: Changes in the Legal Culture of the Norwegian Realm in the High Middle Ages," in *New Approaches to Early Law in Scandinavia*, ed. Stefan Brink and Lisa Collinson, Acta Scandinavica 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 162-69.

[48] Mattias Tveitane, "The 'Four Daughters of God' in the Old Norse 'King's Mirror,'" *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73, no. 4 (1972): 795-804, esp. 803.

[49] Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde, "The Virtues Building Jerusalem: The Four Daughters of God and Their Long Journey to Norwegian Law in the Thirteenth Century," in *Tracing the Jerusalem Code, Volume 1: The Holy City: Christian Cultures in Medieval Scandinavia (ca. 1100-1536)*, ed. Kristin B. Aavitsland and Line M. Bonde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 500-504.

Formal exempla appear only sporadically in indigenous Old Norse literature, but their structure and narrative content could be adapted to native saga tradition. Marlene Ciklamini suggests that the emphasis should fall on function rather than formal stability in that the exemplum is defined by persuasive and didactic intent rather than by a fixed narrative setting. Thus she reads Snorri's "Áki tale," *Auðunar þáttr*, Ketill Þorsteinsson's account in *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða*, and Sighvatr Sturluson's warning to Sturla in *Íslendinga saga* as experiential exempla embedded in historiographic or biographical narration. In several of these cases, exemplary narration links private conduct to public consequence so that moral error or moral insight alters not only an individual life but the condition of the polity.[50]

A source-historical approach can identify routes of transmission, but it does not fully account for the formal proximity between exemplary narrative and saga prose. Régis Boyer's formulation gives that proximity a stronger structural basis. Although his account of *vita*, *historia*, and *saga* is shaped by an older developmental model, he does not treat exemplary material as a merely detachable source or ornament. Rather, he places *dæmisögur* within the larger ecclesiastical and historiographical inheritance through which Icelandic prose learned to organize narrative as instruction. Boyer argues that Icelanders received the medieval exemplary tradition in several forms, including *similitudo*, *parabola* or *dæmisaga*, and *fabula* or *ævintýr*, and used these forms both independently and as components within longer sagas. His example of Ketill priest's *dæmisaga* in *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða* pushes the point further, since he suggests that the exemplary tale may stand near the generative center of the surrounding saga rather than merely interrupting it. Exemplary narrative therefore belongs, in Boyer's account, to the formal conditions under which saga prose could turn inherited material into Icelandic literary design.[51] A more modern, and arguably less linear model for this relationship has been argued by Siân Grønlie. Rather than treating hagiography as an early stage from which saga-writing gradually emancipated itself, she argues that saints' lives and sagas remained in active contact throughout the saga-writing period. Icelanders continued to translate, copy, compose, and revise hagiographic literature well into, and sometimes beyond, the Reformation, while saints' lives occupied a central enough position in the literary system to shape and interfere with other vernacular genres.[52] The relationship is therefore a sustained interaction in which hagiography could influence saga narrative even as saga-writing reshaped hagiographic materials.

Ellen Peters's reading of *Víglundar saga* brings that proximity into late medieval Icelandic narrative. The saga, probably composed around 1400, belongs to the post-classical *Íslendingasögur*, a body of texts long burdened by the assumption that lateness somehow signaled decline. Peters complicates such a simplification by demonstrating the stratified nature of the saga. She argues that *Víglundar saga* is a carefully constructed narrative whose closest affinities are with the *riddarasögur*, even though its setting in the *söguöld*, its Icelandic

[50] Marlene Ciklamini, "Exempla in an Old Norse Historiographic Mold," *Neophilologus* 81 (1997): 71-87, esp. 71-77, 83.

[51] Régis Boyer, "Vita — Historia — Saga," *Gripla* 6 (1984): 114-18.

[52] Siân Grønlie, *The Saint and the Saga Hero: Hagiography and Early Icelandic Literature*, Studies in Old Norse Literature 2 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017), ix-x, 37.

genealogical anchoring, and its narrative style keep it within the frame of the *Íslendingasögur*.[53] Peter's reading helps clarify how flexible the saga form could be. If a late *Íslendingasaga* can draw upon couple romance and exemplary structure without ceasing to function as an *Íslendingasaga*, then a romance can likewise also absorb exemplary logic without becoming reducible to a sermon tale. Peters's particular focus on the *söguöld* as the temporal and geographic setting of *Víglundar saga* provides an interesting example of the multiplicity of forms available to and inherent within saga writing. Foreign or romance-derived material enters *Víglundar saga* through an Icelandic saga-age frame and is acculturated to that frame, sometimes almost beyond recognition.[54] The original *riddarasögur,* though they operate in a different generic register, participate in the same broader habits of dynamic recombination. Imported motifs, clerical compositional habits, and Icelandic prose technique could be made to work together.

Romance was particularly suited to this kind of absorption because it was already a redactional and adaptive form in Iceland. The translated *riddarasögur* constitute a wide field of prose translations and adaptations, including courtly romance, chansons de geste, lais, fabliaux, encyclopedic materials, and other foreign narratives that entered Old Norse under broad chivalric or courtly headings.[55] Icelandic romance develops through cultural transfer and acculturation, with the imported texts being translated, altered, and sometimes radically recreated. In many cases, the "text" of a *riddarasaga* exists only in the form preserved by a particular manuscript or redaction.[56] Such a literary environment created a site for rearranging inherited narrative matter. Tests of fidelity, humiliations of pride, scenes of disguise, recognitions, reversals, and courtly conclusions could be received from romance tradition, refined by exemplary habits of moral case-making, and redeployed in Icelandic prose.

The fourteenth-century clerical milieu gives these formal possibilities a social and manuscript setting. The older view of the period as a thin aftermath to the classical age of saga-writing has obscured the density of its literary production. Bishops' sagas, annals, documentary writing, translated saints' lives, religious prose, manuscript production, and romance reception all belong to an overlapping literary environment shaped by elite clerical writers, ecclesiastical administration, and late medieval manuscript culture.[57] In the period after Iceland's submission to Norway, ecclesiastical reform increasingly concerned itself with marriage, sexuality, discipline, and gendered conduct and bishops such as Árni Þorlákssonand Jón Halldórsson

[53] Ellen E. Peters, "Íslendingasaga — Couple Romance — Exemplum: *Víglundar saga* and the Mediality of the *Söguöld*," in *RE:writing: Medial Perspectives on Textual Culture in the Icelandic Middle Ages*, ed. Kate Heslop and Jürg Glauser (Zurich: Chronos, 2018), 295-96.

[54] Ellen Peters, "Íslendingasaga — Couple Romance — Exemplum," in RE:Writing (2018), 296-302.

[55] Jürg Glauser, "Romance (Translated *riddarasögur*)," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 372-74.

[56] Marianne E. Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words: The Evolution of Medieval Romance in Iceland* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017), 37.

[57] Erika Sigurdson, *The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: The Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 4-9, 30-31, and 59-61.

worked within a legal and pastoral culture that sought to align Icelandic practice more closely with canon law.[58] Exempla belonged naturally to that culture because they offered a narrative means of correction. Dominican preaching relied heavily on short anecdotes as instruments of moral instruction, and the multiplication of exempla collections in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries answered the same pastoral need.[59] The Icelandic versions of the *Disciplina clericalis* should be placed within this larger history of clerical teaching and vernacular adaptation.[60]

Jón Halldórsson is perhaps the most recognizable Icelandic figure in terms of the tradition of utilizing exemplary tales to create memorable stories. His career joins the Dominican milieu in Bergen, study in Paris and Bologna, episcopal authority in Skálholt, and Icelandic narrative memory. His Dominican education would have included training in preaching through exempla, and his life places him within a North Atlantic clerical world in which this form of preaching by storytelling would have been common.[61] In the introduction to the Íslenzk fornrit edition of Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar, Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir observes that members of the Dominican brotherhood presented their message in exempla of the kind that appear in Jón's repertoire.[62] *Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar* remembers him both as a bishop and as learned individual whose reputation as a teller of rare stories preceded him. The text says that he delighted those present with seldom heard exempla acquired abroad both through books and through his own experiences, and that some Icelanders gathered his narratives for their own pleasure and that of others.[63] Jón's own account in his "Sermon of Staðarhóll" demonstrates this transmission most concretely. Probably delivered in 1330, the sermon is introduced in *Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar* as an ævintýr that Jón "setti í sína predikan," a tale placed into his preaching.[64] It occupies almost a third of *Jóns þáttr* in AM 657 4to and nearly half in AM 624 4to, and its concerns are explicitly juridical and spiritual involving divine judgment, equality before God's law, and the duty of ecclesiastical officials to preserve that order.[65] The embedded *ævintýr* works in much the same

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[58] Shaun F. D. Hughes, "The Old Norse Exempla as Arbiters of Gender Roles in Medieval Iceland," in *New Norse Studies: Essays on the Literature and Culture of Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. Jeffrey Turco (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2015), 255-60.

[59] Ibid., 260.

[60] Ibid., 260.

[61] Viðar Pálsson, "Bishop Jón Halldórsson and Clerical Culture in 14th-Century Iceland," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt*, ed. Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 41; Christian Etheridge, "Canon, Dominican and Brother: The Life and Times of Jón Halldórsson in Bergen," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 7-16.

[62] Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, "Söguþáttur af Jóni Biskupi Halldórssyni," in *Biskupa sögur III*, ed., *Íslenzk fornrit XVII* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fronritafélag, 1998), i.

[63] *Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar*, 25

[64] Ibid., 25

[65] Astrid Marner, "Forgotten Preaching: A Latin Sermon on Saint Þorlákr in Uppsala UB C 301," *Gripla* 27 (2016): 248-50; Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ed., *Biskupa sögur III: Árna saga biskups, Lárentíus saga biskups, Söguþáttur Jóns Halldórssonar biskups, Biskupa ættir*, Íslenzk fornrit XVII (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1998), 449-50; Viðar Pálsson, "Bishop Jón Halldórsson and Clerical Culture in 14th-Century Iceland," in *Dominican*

way in which exempla do in Gregory's *Dialogues*. Here, Icelandic exemplary narration appears in full vernacular force: named as *ævintýr*, placed inside a sermon, preserved within a *þáttr*, and made to carry the weight of ecclesiastical judgment.

The shorter *ævintýri* associated with Jón's milieu show the same movement at a smaller scale. The Icelandic redaction of "Af þrimr kumpánum," or the "Three Companions" exemplum from the *Disciplina Clericalis* has been connected with the frame structure of *Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana*, suggesting that an *ævintýr* can preserve a narrative frame or device capable of expansion into saga architecture.[66] Gottskálk Jensson argues that *Egils saga einhenda* borrows from the Dolopathos-inspired *ævintýr*, while Jonas Wellendorf reads the connection more cautiously, noting that the suggestion is difficult to prove but not implausible. [67] Therein, however, the tale is absent its moralizing message that appears in Petrus Alfonsi's work. A more cautious reading suggests that "Af þrimr kumpánum" has no obvious moral in isolation and may primarily entertain. Exemplary force need not reside only in an explicit moral. It can reside in a frame, a test, a memorable configuration of action, or an episode whose meaning becomes available when placed in a larger structure. A short tale can become the seed of saga design.

The broader Icelandic exempla corpus requires similar caution. Jón's prominence and the density of fourteenth-century material associated with him can make the evidence look more unified than it is. A study of ten Icelandic exempla and their Middle English source shows that some Icelandic exempla belong to a later phase of transmission. Edited fragments preserve Icelandic translations from Middle English prose and are dated broadly to the fifteenth century, probably its final decades, though an early sixteenth-century date remains possible.[68] Some preserved materials are a bit harder to place, however. AM 629 4to is a paper miscellany completed in Iceland in 1697 and is the only Icelandic witness to the Cyprian-and-Justina exemplum and a Gregory-derived exemplum on blasphemy from *Dialogues* 4.18. Its apostolic material belongs to an older line of transmission connected at several removes to AM 630 4to and ultimately to the thirteenth-century AM 652 4to, but the two exempla themselves cannot simply be projected back into that medieval codex.[69] A late witness may preserve medieval exemplary material while still telling us little about the precise date or setting of its Icelandic translation. The corpus must therefore be read as layered, not as a single fourteenth-century block.

Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt, ed. Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 47.

[66] Gottskálk Jensson, "Bishop Jón Halldórsson and 14th-Century Innovations in Saga Narrative: The Case of *Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana*," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 69-75.

[67] Wellendorf, "Rising from the Grave," 6.

[68] Peter A. Jorgensen, "Ten Icelandic Exempla and Their Middle English Source," *Opuscula* 4, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 30 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1970), 177-78.

[69] Kirsten Wolf, "Two Exempla from Post-Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts," *Gripla* 24 (2013): 77-89; cf. Handrit.is entries for AM 629 4to, AM 630 4to, and AM 652 4to.

The extant manuscripts that can be confirmed as medieval and of Icelandic origin should therefore be consulted as witnesses. AM 657 a-b 4to, dated around 1350, is comprised of several differing genres that are in conversation with exemplary materials. The manuscript, dated around 1350, contains *Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar* alongside Marian miracles, *Mikaels saga*, *Drauma-Jóns saga*, *Hákonar þáttr Hárekssonar*, *Clári saga*, and several exempla.[70] The codex proves that saints' lives, romance texts, royal biographies, and exempla could stand beside one another in a single manuscript environment. Regrettably, much of the discussion around codices such as this one are concerned with the individuals who created or commissioned them. Johansson's work on AM 657 a-b 4to keeps the evidence from being over domesticated into an author-centered corpus. His emphasis on *mouvance*, scribal transmission, variation, and reception shift the question away from ownership and toward textual ecology.[71] The manuscript's force lies in adjacency and movement. Its contents show how several saga genres could be copied, preserved, and encountered together. AM 624 4to gives this layered corpus a concrete late-medieval manuscript setting. The codex, dated to around 1490-1510, is a parchment miscellany that preserves two substantial groups of *Íslensk ævintýri*, one of eighteen tales on fols. 27r-43r and another of nine tales on fols. 149v-170r, the latter with a prologue and a continuation in AM 657 b. These tales are not isolated from clerical or devotional writing. They appear beside Bernardine devotional material, spiritual sermons, church-law and penitential materials, *Skriftaboð Þorláks biskups*, instruction on the seven deadly sins, homilies, *Duggals leiðsla*, and astronomical prose.[72] Astrid Marner's discussion of *Jóns þáttr Halldórssonar* confirms the same manuscript profile from another direction. She identifies AM 624 4to as one of the two witnesses to the *þáttr* and describes it as a collection of religious and canonistic texts in which Jón's preaching and use of exempla are preserved.[73] The codex therefore gives manuscript form to the argument made above. Icelandic ævintýri could circulate as short narratives, but their surviving contexts place them among practical materials of instruction, correction, devotion, and learned compilation.

Hugo Gering's *Íslendzk æventýri* collection preserves precisely this kind of heterogeneous material. In his introduction, Gering explains that he used nineteen manuscripts, with two core witnesses being AM 624 4to, which he labels A, and AM 657 B 4to, which he divides into B and C¹ because it is made from fragments of two different manuscripts.[74] The resulting edition gathers material that survives in different manuscript settings and under different conditions of transmission. Some tales descend from identifiable written works, including Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, while others belong to a broader circulation of

[70] Sigurdson, *The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland*, 42-47.

[71] Karl G. Johansson, "AM 657 a-b 4° and the *Mouvance* of Medieval Texts: Roles and Functions in the Transmission of Texts in a Manuscript Culture," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 151-179, esp. 166-174.

[72] 68 AM 624 4to, Handrit.is, contents and manuscript description: Iceland, 1490-1510; *Íslensk ævintýri* materials on fols. 27r-43r and 149v-170r.

[73] Astrid Marner, "Forgotten Preaching: A Latin Sermon on Saint Þorlákr in Uppsala UB C 301," *Gripla* 27 (2016): 248 n. 50.

[74] *Íslendzk æventýri: Isländische Legenden, Novellen und Märchen*, 2 vols., ed., Hugo Gering (Halle a. S.: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1882-83), viii.

medieval European narrative in which the immediate exemplar is harder to recover. Gering's edition therefore illustrates not only the survival of Icelandic *ævintýri*, but also the difficulty of describing their movement with the modern category of "translation" alone. Lars Lönnroth's discussion of the Old Norse verb *snara* suggests that since Old Norse did not possess a separate medieval term that corresponds neatly to the modern term "translation," *snara* could potentially describe such an act, but also the adaptation or compilation of a story from existing written material.[75] The ambiguity describes a practical literary environment in which foreign matter could be translated, adapted, compiled, and reused without requiring a rigid distinction between translation and composition. Exemplary narrative depends on that model of movement. A useful story can be taken over into a new structure, where its meaning changes according to the frame that receives it. *Dæmisögur*, for example, could circulate independently as short narratives intended to teach and entertain, but they could also appear as digressive units inside legends or profane sagas. Lönnroth further points out that the Icelandic shortform narratives known as *þættir* first indicates a strand, section, or division before developing into a more specialized term for short prose narrative.[76] Ármann Jakobsson's study of the "medieval Icelandic short story" supplies a necessary caution beside Lönnroth's formulation. Ármann argues that "there was never any such thing as a medieval Icelandic short story," even though the þáttr became a powerful twentieth-century scholarly category.[77] He further describes the modern history of the þættir as a story about "how twentieth-century scholarly thought was dominated by the work of editors."[78] Jakobsson's caution returns the discussion from modern genre labels to medieval habits of arrangement.

Clári saga is yet another example of this adjacency acquiring a romance structure. Its epilogue presents Serena as a clear example of how good women should keep faith with husbands or betrothed men, and Hughes accordingly reads the romance as an elaborate exemplum for marital conduct.[79] The saga's source history complicates any easy claim for pure Icelandic invention. Ragnheiðardóttir's comparison with *Die halbe Birne* and *Bianca di Tolosa* argues that *Clári saga* ultimately rests on a foreign written source rather than an entirely indigenous composition.[80] This complication, however, only further strengthens the case for how exempla and compilation work together. A foreign narrative enters Icelandic prose, is reworked within a clerical-literary milieu, and closes by naming its heroine as an exemplary character. The

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[75] Lars Lönnroth, *European Sources of Icelandic Saga-Writing: An Essay Based on Previous Studies* (Stockholm: Thule, 1965), 6-7.

[76] Ibid., 7-9.

[77] Ármann Jakobsson, "The Life and Death of the Medieval Icelandic Short Story," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 112, no. 3 (2013): 257.

[78] Ibid., 259.

[79] Shaun 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. Kirsten Wolf and Johanna Denzin, Islandica 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2008), 157.

[80] Védís Ragnheiðardóttir, "Clári saga and Its Continental Siblings," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 96-99, 113-19.

saga's final arrangement of social order positions the romance narrative tendencies in subordination to the exemplary form. Séréna's story thus becomes a cautionary tale of what happens when a maiden abandons the tradition that medieval society dictated.

Other romances show the exchange moving in a different direction. *Mírmanns saga*, read by Sverrir Tómasson as a hagiographical romance, bends courtly movement toward renunciation, hermitage, and spiritual life.[81] Placed beside *Clári saga*, it shows how porous the functional boundary could be by suggesting that romance could become a vehicle for exemplary discussions around marriage and, relatedly, how hagiographical narrative can borrow romance structure in order to guide worldly action toward spiritual withdrawal. The shared procedures are trial, recognition, correction, conversion, and the exposure of inward truth through outward event. These procedures do not belong exclusively to one genre. They move where narrative use requires them.

The Icelandic evidence places *Dínus saga drambláta* within a literary culture in which exemplary narration was already available in several forms. Exempla entered Icelandic literary culture through vernacular Christian instruction, preaching, translated religious prose, clerical education, manuscript compilation, and later vernacular transmission. Romance developed through a parallel habit of translation, adaptation, redaction, and acculturation. These histories meet most visibly in fourteenth-century clerical manuscript environments, but they do not belong only there. By the time a saga such as *Dínus saga drambláta* is composed, Icelandic prose had long possessed the conditions needed for exemplary narrative to circulate across genres and manuscript environments that placed religious, didactic, and romance materials beside one another, and a clerical culture trained to make narrative useful. *Dínus saga* can therefore be approached from within this Icelandic field of availability, where exemplary material, romance structure, and clerical prose habits already belonged to overlapping systems of narrative use.

3.4 From Exempla to Novella

The novella supplies a formal bridge between this Icelandic availability and the narrative design of *Dínus saga*. The term is used here as a heuristic for what happens when an exemplary case expands beyond the preacher's frame. A sermon story usually confirms a lesson supplied by the surrounding discourse. A novella-like narrative places more weight upon motive and circumstance. Moral pressure remains, though the audience must recover it from the telling. The case becomes a narrative problem whose meaning emerges through action and consequence.

Narrative theory gives the relation between action and example a broader shape. Texts may be understood as fixations of verbal actions, and verbal actions, like other actions, take place through codified and institutionalized schemes. These schemes can then be actualized fictionally, detached from an immediate pragmatic situation.[82] The exemplum begins as a communicative act within a practical setting, but its underlying structure can be reactivated

[81] Sverrir Tómasson, "Mírmanns saga: The First Old Norse-Icelandic Hagiographical Romance?," in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland*, 319-36.

[82] Karlheinz Stierle, "L'Histoire comme Exemple, l'Exemple comme Histoire: Contribution à la pragmatique et à la poétique des textes narratifs," *Poétique* 10 (1972): 176-77.

inside literary narrative. A minimal narrative model clarifies the mechanism like how a subject occupies one state, something happens, and the subject arrives at another state.[83] That elementary transformation gives the exemplary case its narrative basis. Conduct becomes legible through change. A person is proud and then humbled, deceived and then exposed, confident and then made vulnerable, ignorant and then forced into recognition. The case is much more nuanced than an idea in story form.

The novella builds upon such a structure by making the transformation less typical and more circumstantial. It emerges from a plurality of smaller medieval narrative practices such as exemplum, fabliau, legend, miracle, lai, vita, and many others.[84] Because the novella is polygenetic, the exemplum cannot serve as its sole origin. Yet the exemplum remains one of the forms through which medieval narrative learned to make compact cases bear interpretive pressure. The movement from "typical case" toward "unique case" gives the key distinction.[85] The exemplum tends to make a particular event readable as a type. The novella complicates type through circumstance. The same moral pattern may remain visible, but the story's force comes from the particular arrangement of persons, motives, timing, accident, and consequence.

Vernacularization accelerates this movement as the passage from Latin collection into the vernacular sermon was rarely a neutral act of transfer. Exempla were adapted according to language, audience, medium, and authorial interest. When they moved into written vernacular contexts, they often became longer and more complex, blurring the boundary between exemplum and other literary genres, including *novelle* and *cantari*.[86] That process gives the exemplum a double life. It remains attached to moral instruction, but the new setting allows other features to grow such as character, motivation, scene, pathos, social specificity, and narrative pleasure. The story's moral work does not disappear. It becomes less dependent on a preacher's frame and more dependent on how the narrative itself arranges meaning.

The passage from sermon exemplum to literary narrative depends on the exemplum's older function as narrated proof. Against definitions that reduce the form to a didactic-moral proposition, Sebastiano Lo Nigro stresses its character as testimony as that of a narrated fact or action used to confirm the truth of a moral or religious maxim. His discussion of the *Disciplina clericalis* distinguishes the exemplum from *sententia*, *proverbium*, *auctoritas*, and *similitudo*. *Sententiae* and *proverbia* may state the rule, but the exemplum supplies the concrete case through which the rule is tested against experience.[87] His account of Jacques de Vitry pushes the point further by tying the exemplum to vernacular preaching and to the practical need for vivid,

[83] Stierle, "L'Histoire comme Exemple," 178-79.

[84] Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer, *Boccaccio und der Beginn der Novelle: Strukturen der Kurzerzählung auf der Schwelle zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1969), 7-10.

[85] Neuschäfer, *Boccaccio und der Beginn der Novelle*, 45-46.

[86] Mario Sassi, "Strategies of Interpretation in French and Italian Exempla," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 66, no. 1 (2022): 3-4, 18-19.

[87] Sebastiano Lo Nigro, "L'exemplum e la narrativa popolare del secolo XIII," in La letteratura popolare della valle padana (Firenze: Olschki, 1972), 320-28.

concrete, and sometimes comic or satirical stories capable of reaching non-learned audiences. The exemplum therefore belongs not only to written collection or formal sermon structure, but also to a social scene of performance, adaptation, and reception. That scene helps explain why exemplary material could move so readily into popular and literary narrative. Once the narrated case had been loosened from the immediate conditions of preaching, it could retain its evidentiary force while acquiring fuller characterization, circumstance, and narrative pleasure.

The exemplary tale of "Alexander and the pirate" offers yet another compact example of how exempla could transform over different iterations. In its ancient form, the anecdote presents a pirate brought before Alexander and accused of robbery. The pirate turns the accusation back upon the ruler, pointing out that he is called a thief because he attacks by means of a small ship, while Alexander, doing the same on a vast scale, is called emperor. In the fuller version preserved through Pseudo-Caecilius Balbus, the story becomes a three-part exemplary narrative involving capture, confrontation, and Alexander's decision to transform the pirate, Diomedes, into a lawful soldier.[88] The exchange exposes the difference between brigandage and empire as a difference of scale rather than moral kind, while Alexander's clemency allows the story to end as conversion. Diomedes's argument is just, and the king's response makes him magnanimous.

Augustine draws a different lesson from the same anecdote. In *The City of God*, the story provides an illustration for his meditation on empire without justice. His rhetorical throughline is that kingdoms without justice resemble the great robberies committed through piracy. The pirate remains unnamed, the ending is cut short, and Alexander's reaction disappears because Augustine's interest lies in the ethical position of power itself.[89] Later versions of this exemplum continue to change shape. John of Salisbury combines Augustinian political critique with the fuller narrative shape of the earlier version. John Gower places the exemplum in book three of the *Confessio Amantis*, where unjust war, royal mercy, and the vanity of power meet. Jacques de Cessoles and later collections help spread the version in which Alexander's magnanimity becomes central. François Villon, in the fifteenth century, finally turns the story toward the poet himself, making Diomedes the figure of a man who might have been saved had he encountered "a merciful Alexander."[90] The same narrative unit survives by changing what it is made to prove. It can condemn empire, praise clemency, expose fortune, imagine conversion, or become a poet's self-exculpatory fiction of missed rescue.

The Griselda tradition provides the same process within a more elaborate literary form. It is one of medieval Europe's most productive and controversial tales and one that is female-centric. A ruler chooses a peasant woman, extracts a vow of obedience, strips and redresses her, takes away her children, repudiates her, prepares a second marriage, and finally reveals that the second bride is actually their daughter. Reduced to these elements, the plot moves through a series of taboo violations involving misalliance, apparent infanticide, rejection, and ostensible

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[88] Laurence Harf-Lancner, "Métamorphoses d'un exemplum: Alexandre et le pirate," *Medioevo Romanzo* 30, no. 2 (2006): 229-231.

[89] Ibid., 231-32; Cf., Augustine, La Cité de Dieu, IV 4, eds., B. Dombart and A Kalb, trans., G. Combés (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960).

[90] Laurence Harf-Lancner, "Métamorphoses d'un exemplum," 235-39.

incest before order is restored through a repaired dynastic reunion.[91] The folk structure can allow the wife's endurance and final speech to reform the husband. Literary versions must account for motive, blame, and realism. In this tradition, the patient wife's role is not only to suffer, but to reform her husband and restore order to marriage and family. The tale moves from disorder to order, and the husband's cruelty is the force that must finally be checked.[92] When the story enters medieval European literary form, that structure remains recognizable, but the interpretive pressure changes. Boccaccio, Petrarch, Chaucer, and Christine de Pizan all take this popular tale-type, then adapt it in different ways to redirect the reader's sympathy. Boccaccio rationalizes the ruler's behavior as self-indulgence, political and sexual. Boccaccio places the tale at the end of the Decameron, where Dioneo's narration leaves the reader with a spectacular case of obedience shadowed by cruelty, social violence, and aristocratic caprice. Griselda's patience can be admired, but Gualtieri's testing remains morally grotesque; the story's placement at the close of a work devoted to wit, erotic maneuvering, fortune, and social intelligence prevents the tale from settling into a single edifying lesson.[93] Petrarch, on the other hand, recasts the story into a more controlled moral and allegorical form by translating Boccaccio's novella into Latin as the *De insigni obedientia et fide uxoria* and enclosing it within the *Rerum senilium libri*. His version circulated widely by the end of the fourteenth century and helped stabilize Griselda as a figure of obedience and patience, even as the story's central virtue remained difficult to separate from the violence that produces it.[94] Chaucer inherits Petrarch's moralized version in the Clerk's Tale, but he reopens its discomfort through performance, irony, and audience. His Clerk tells a story that asks to be exemplary while forcing the audience to confront the brutality required to make Griselda into an example.[95] Finally, Christine de Pizan shifts the tale again by placing Griselda in the Livre de la Cité des dames among many women whose lives answer misogynist writing. In that frame, Griselda is no longer a solitary emblem of abstract patience. She becomes one woman among many whose endurance exposes the injustice of the structures that demand it.[96] The Griselda tradition therefore turns exemplarity into a field of contest. The same plot can defend obedience, test the ethics of rulership, expose domestic tyranny, unsettle masculine authority, or become evidence in a broader defense of women.

Boccaccio is central to this larger transformation because the *Decameron* repeatedly places inherited exemplary material in situations where contingency and social intelligence unsettle moral certainty. The work engages classical and medieval didactic traditions, including Aesopic fables, Islamicate tale collections, sermon stories, saints' lives, and compilations of

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[91] Filios, "Rewriting Griselda," 46-49.

[92] Denise Keyes Filios, "Rewriting Griselda: From Folktale to Exemplum," *Mediaevalia* 24 (2003): 45-46.

[93] Ibid., 45-46.

[94] Ibid., 49-50; Olivia Holmes, *Boccaccio and Exemplary Literature: Ethics and Mischief in the Decameron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 1-8.

[95] Simone Ventura, "Novellas of Walter and Griselda: The Circle of Obedience and the Aesthetics of Uncertainty," *Romania* 137, nos. 547-48 (2019): 277-78.

[96] Filios, "Rewriting Griselda," 49-50, 58-59.

historical anecdotes.[97] In Boccaccio's hands, the case remains charged, but it no longer arrives enclosed by a preacher's moralizing apparatus. Trickery, erotic mischief, clerical corruption, timing, misunderstanding, wit, and social position force interpretation to move through circumstance. The reader must judge the event as event, more so than as illustration.

The transformation is clearest where Boccaccio rewrites sermon material into the novella form. In the older sermon exemplum, the story serves the preacher's doctrinal or moral aim, whereas in Boccaccio, the inherited case is enlarged, redirected, and made socially specific. Olivia Holmes notes that this process belongs to the culture of Due- and Trecento preaching, sermon collections, *reportationes*, and mendicant exemplary material.[98] The example of Frate Alberto in *Decameron* day four, story two, shows the transformation sharply. Boccaccio draws on sermon-story material but turns the inherited target by recasting an anti-Jewish exemplum as an anticlerical and comic exposure of a corrupt Franciscan and a gullible Venetian merchant's wife. The old exemplary structure remains legible, but its force has been refocused. Moral judgment persists, but it is produced through literary arrangement rather than homiletic framing. The formal change can also be described as a shift in the handling of truth. Brevity becomes a sign of narrative virtuosity, linearity is complicated by secondary actions and embedded stories, truth no longer points simply to absolute and eternal Truth but to the coherent exploitation of narrative premises, and delight becomes the pleasure of the text.[99] The novella therefore changes the way narrative verifies meaning. Truth moves from the authority of a moral frame toward the internal plausibility, coherence, and pressure of the narrated case. The story still asks to be evaluated, but its verdict is produced through narrative form.

John Gower provides a different witness because he brings romance under exemplary expectations. In book eight of the *Confessio Amantis*, the *Apollonius of Tyre* story has been described as an ancient romance construed according to the expectations of an exemplum. Other medieval versions of Apollonius may be exemplary in a broad sense, but Gower's version is shaped by the more precise structure of the late thirteenth-century sermon exemplum, introduced into fourteenth-century narrative as a way of linking story to moral argument.[100] This reverses the expected direction of influence. Gower is making romance answerable to exemplary form. The friction arises because romance and exemplum organize experience differently. An exemplum carries both narrative and rhetorical force in that it presents a particular case of an abstract vice or virtue and directs the audience toward moralization. Romance, especially in the Apollonius tradition, is governed by wandering, loss, recovery, recognition, displacement, and

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[97] Janet Levarie Smarr, "Women Rewrite Griselda: From Christine de Pizan to Julia Voznesenskaya," *Heliotropia* 15 (2018): 206-7; Viviana Pezzullo, "Reimagining Griselda: Christine de Pizan's Rewriting of Boccaccio," *NeMLA Italian Studies* 43 (2021): 187-204; Olivia Holmes, *Boccaccio and Exemplary Literature: Ethics and Mischief in the Decameron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 1-8.

[98] Holmes, *Boccaccio and Exemplary Literature*, 51-53.

[99] Claude Cazalé-Bérard, "L'exemplum est-il un genre littéraire? II - L'exemplum et la nouvelle," in *L'Exemplum est-il un genre littéraire?*, 36.

[100] William Robins, "Romance, Exemplum, and the Subject of the *Confessio Amantis*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 19 (1997): 157-60.

the motions of fortune.[101] Gower's version places the reader at the intersection of these two discursive modes. The exemplary frame presses romance toward moral legibility, while the romance plot keeps exposing how contingency complicates interpretation. In *Dínus saga*, however, contingency is less an alternative to exemplary patterning than one of the means through which that patterning becomes visible. The saga's tricks, disguises, substitutions, and reversals appear as circumstantial events, but their recurrence around Dínus's prides turns accident into design, since each episode tests a reputation, converts private disposition into public spectacle, and makes interpretation depend on the relation between one ordeal and the next.

Geoffrey Chaucer's use of exemplarity is still yet more unstable because he repeatedly makes exemplary authority depend on audience, performance, and speaker credibility. The *Pardoner's Tale* is organized around two audiences: the "lewed peple" to whom he normally preaches and the pilgrims before whom he performs and exposes his own techniques.[102] The exemplary tale is compromised before its moral is even tested. It is sermon material, professional demonstration, social performance, and self-indictment at once. The tale can still show the destructive power of greed, but the speaker's corruption makes exemplary instruction difficult to separate from manipulation. Chaucer dramatizes the conditions under which that force can be exploited. The *Clerk's Tale* addresses this problem differently. Griselda can be read as a figure of patience, obedience, political subjection, spiritual endurance, or gendered violence, but Chaucer's version repeatedly exposes the discomfort of making her suffering exemplary. The reason lies in the tale's movement from folk narrative into literary treatment which forces authors to explain the husband's cruelty, assign blame, and decide how much order has really been restored.[103] Chaucer inherits Petrarch's moralization rather than blithely reproducing its authority. His Clerk tells a story that asks to be exemplary while making the audience confront the brutality required to produce the example. The case remains memorable precisely because it resists settling into one lesson.

Returning to the Old Norse *Disciplina clericalis* material that Hugo Gering catalogued in his aforementioned *Íslendzk Æventýri* collection, consideration should be given to the sources he records as Novellen. This group of texts demonstrates, within an Icelandic context, how counsel could be developed into a narrative test without surrendering its didactic purpose. His sequence opens with brief statements of practical wisdom, but the tale he denotes as "L" makes one of those statements especially germane to the study of exemplarity and how it can develop within narrative systems. Therein, a father rejects his son's claim to possess a hundred friends and instructs him to test them. The son kills a calf, cuts it into pieces, smears the sack containing them with blood, and tells each friend that it holds the body of a murdered man. Every supposed

[101] Robins, "Romance, Exemplum," 160-64.

[102] Larry Scanlon, "Redefining the Exemplum: Narrative, Ideology, and Subjectivity," 30-31.

[103] Filios, "Rewriting Griselda," 49-50.

friend refuses to help. The father's "half-friend," by contrast, clears his household, prepares a grave, and agrees to conceal the deed.[104] The tale fixes its judgment in the following maxim:

"Margir teljaz vinir svá lengi sem vel gengr, en í nauðsyn eru þeir fáir."[105]	"Many are counted as friends for as long as all goes well, but in times of need they are few."

The tale's exemplary weight lies in the sequence by which an assertion about friendship becomes observable. A father's wise and practical counsel establishes the terms of the test, and the resultant outcome returns the listener to that counsel clarifying its meaning through the action of the story.

The later tales marked LXIII through LXV extend this procedure into a serial critique of female treachery. A teacher answers his pupil's request for examples of women's cunning with three domestic stories whose plots grow increasingly more elaborate. The first story opens with a statement about fowler's traps that will prove germane to the study of *Dínus saga* later in this chapter. The ensuing narrative involves a husband being away tending to his vineyard while his wife entertains her secret lover. The husband suffers an accidental injury and is compelled to return home early, prompting his wife to hide her paramour and surreptitiously bar her husband entering too far into the house. She contrives a "remedy" for her husband by licking his uninjured eye so that it will not fail him as his injured one has and, thus, render him blind. While this occurs, her lover is able to beat a hasty retreat.[106] In the next tale, a mother and daughter distract the returning husband with a woven cloth while the concealed man leaves. The pupil repeatedly asks for more and explains that the stories may be carried away for general enjoyment. The master accordingly promises a third story for pleasure and entertainment.[107] The third story turns concealment into performance when the mother places a drawn sword in the lover's hand and persuades the husband that they have sheltered him from pursuers. Their antifeminist instruction remains explicit, and the dialogue also records the pleasure produced by repetition, suspense, and ingenious resolution.

This combination of practical warning and serial entertainment offers a close vernacular precedent for the contest in *Dínus saga*. The romance expands the test across the relationship between its protagonists and allows both to occupy the role of deceiver. Philotemia first turns Dínus's established habits against him, and Dínus responds by subjecting her to the same arts. Each new trick acquires significance through its relationship to the ones that preceded it, while the recurrence invites the audience to anticipate how the balance between them will next be altered. The arrangement inherited from exemplary narrative remains visible because a disposition becomes clear only once circumstances have tested it. The sustained rivalry allows

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[104] Hugo Gering, ed., *Íslendzk æventýri: Isländischee Legenden, Novellen und Märchen*, 2 vols. (Halle a . S: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1882-1883), 164-165.

[105] Ibid., 165.

[106] Ibid., 176-177.

[107] Ibid., 178.

that test to recur until its consequences extend beyond the protagonists and threaten the political order surrounding them.

Turning to the Old Norse material, it is understood that the *riddarasögur* were already composite forms, shaped by translation, adaptation, and the refashioning of heterogeneous narrative matter. Marianne E. Kalinke describes the translated corpus as "anything but a single genre," since it drew on "French and Latin romance and hagiography," yet these varied sources emerged in Norse translation with a "stylistic unity" that gave the corpus its "peculiar character and homogeneity."[108] Ralph O'Connor gives a necessary methodological caution to sticking strictly to genre boundaries by arguing that when a text or genre crosses a linguistic or cultural boundary in adapted form, "transformation as well as continuity takes place," and the genre "does not retain all its features unchanged."[109] Stefka Georgieva Eriksen's survey of *riddarasögur* scholarship frames the same development from the side of reception and method: translated chivalric sagas are no longer measured chiefly against their source texts as inferior derivatives, but are read as "an integral part of Old Norse literary tradition," with attention to individual manuscript versions, social contexts, and changing functions.[110] Exemplary logic can therefore be treated as one more transferable narrative procedure within an already adaptive romance field.

The *Íslendingasögur* should not be reduced to parables or moral tales, though they invite and require interpretation.[111] Thirteenth-century saga-writing also moves from the recording of available tradition toward more deliberate literary shaping, with authors increasingly responsible for selecting narrative mode and determining the main thrust of the story.[112] These claims make it possible to read saga episodes as purposeful narrative constructions capable of carrying significance beyond the sequence of events.

The movement from exemplum to novella therefore clarifies the larger argument of this chapter. Exemplary narration survives beyond the sermon because it is not only a genre but a way of making action intelligible. Collections, sermons, and florilegia preserve the short case while Icelandic manuscript culture makes exemplary material available in the vernacular. The development of the novella, romance, and related narrative forms show how the case can expand, complicate, and become part of larger literary design. *Dínus saga drambláta* belongs to this broader history of redistribution.

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[108] Marianne E. Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 322-23.

[109] Ralph O'Connor, "History and Fiction," in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (London: Routledge, 2017), 97.

[110] Stefka G. Eriksen, "Riddarasögur Scholarship Contextualized," in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (London: Routledge, 2017), 65-66.

[111] Vésteinn Ólason, *Dialogues with the Viking Age: Narration and Representation in the Sagas of Icelanders* (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1998), 10.

[112] Theodore M. Andersson, *The Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180-1280)* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 17.

3.5 Exemplary logic in *Dínus saga drambláta*

Dínus saga drambláta arranges Dínus and Philotemia as rival figures through whom pride becomes evident through consequence. Though the saga is overtly preoccupied with the acquisition of excessive, and ostensibly dangerous, knowledge, it is the defect of pride that is the locus of all the ills that befall each character. The means through which this abstract trait is explored within the saga is through the almost satirical back-and-forth instances of deceptions and counters enacted between Philotemia and Dínus. These episodes play at the heart of the saga's ethical framework, expressly communicating the idea that pride is damaging both to the self and to those in one's orbit. For two individuals as significant as Dínus and Philotemia, for example, the saga demonstrates that the effects of their haughtiness quickly spill over into the larger political world of the story, bringing both of their kingdoms to the brink of war. This concept was inextricably linked to an enduring medieval belief that the sins of one could endanger the whole kingdom setting up the precedent that it was incumbent upon the royal household, in particular, to remain without fault.[113] The compiler's use of pride as a central and patently undesirable trait, thus, forces them to call upon recognizable motifs that were commonly associated with pride in the Middle Ages. Rather than engaging overtly with the "example" of a saint, however, the compiler of *Dínus saga*, chooses a different archetypal character for their purposes. To satisfy a fourteenth century Icelandic audience's fascination with nobility, there was no better choice than that of a prince as their main character.

Chivalric romance is explicitly concerned with the development of the hero's education. The more complex texts tend to present not only the curriculum studied by the protagonist but also the immediate effects of these studies, usually through putting the learning into action, and how the skills that are learned in their *enfance* later distinguish the hero's adulthood.[114] Though both Dínus and Philotemia receive the finest education of their time, mastering both the trivium and quadrivium, they quickly move beyond this scholastic realm. The pair engage with fields that Geraldine Barnes has argued stress the limits of what would have been considered proper, thereby crossing another moral boundary by being dissatisfied with the knowledge that had already been given to them.[115] This knowledge, ill-gained or otherwise, equips both parties with the skills they will need in the ensuing chapters; skills they will use to match wits with one another. Dínus, for example, learns sorcery (kukl), knightly skills (riddaraskap), runes (runer), and ropewalking (reipagøngu).[116] Philotemia, for her part, exhausts the seven liberal arts and then turns to learning divination (phitöns anda list), the runic alphabet (rwnamaalumm), natural science (øll jardar nattura), astronomy (himenntungla gangur og stiønufrœde øll), and artificing

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[113] Rob Meens, "Politics, mirrors of princes and the Bible: sins, kings and the well-being of the realm," *Early Medieval Europe* 7, no. 3 (1998): 357.

[114] Madeleine Pelner Cosman, *The Education of the Hero in Arthurian Romance* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), xv.

[115] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland*, (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 58.

[116] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 7.

(giorde hun mikil kinnstur).[117] When paired side-by-side, it appears as though Philotemia is disputably more educated than Dínus. This appraisal is only relevant in the grand scheme of the saga's internal political landscape, however, where one's reputation for being great seemingly carries more inherent worth than the substance of one's knowledge. This point is crucial in terms of how the saga works, as Dínus's reputation greatly precedes him, whereas Philotemia's fame seems to be contained solely to the environs of the kingdom of Bláland. Philotemia therefore enters the contest not as an external moral corrective but as Dínus's rival and mirror. Her superiority, if the saga grants it, lies less in virtue and more in her ability to turn Dínus's own habits of pride against him.

Dínus's prides are so central to his character that they overshadow his sundry other more positive achievements, becoming what he is best known for. He is famously referred to in his own country as Dínus "the Proud," and the saga suggests that this is not a title that is at all intended as flattering but one that communicates the collective frustration of the realm. In chapter four, these prides are enumerated for the reader accordingly:

"So mikeláátur og megtugur, ad hann vil ongumm þess vnna ad lijta þá fegurd, med þeim blöma, sem bar hanz asiöna, helldur hulde hann hana med þeirre himnu, er so var hááttud sem hun væri holldgröinn vid hanz asiönu. þad var annad hanz dramb ad einginn skilldi so diarffur madur, huorke jnnlendskur nie wtlendskur, rijkur nie örijkur, ad sinn föt skillde jnn setia vmm þann kastala, sem köngsson og hanz þienarar saatu j, firer vtann ordlof, enn eff hanz þienustu sueinar giættu ecki ad sijnu starffe, þá skilldu þeir lijffed miss. þad var hid þridia hanz dramb, ad hann forsmaade allar konur og jömfrur j verølldinne, so hann gaff gillda reide j möti eff þad var talad vmm nockurt köngz barn, edur keisara ad væri honum jaffnkosta. þad var hid fiörda hanz dramb, ad hann villde önguann dag til bordz ganga, vtann hann feinge nijann riett, sem hann onguann tijma haffdi firr kiendann, annad huort aff eplum edur alldine, j vænumm drick edur kráásumm...og af þessu var hann kalladur Dijnus hinn drambláte, aff allre hird og alþijdu."[118]

""He was so great and powerful that he would allow no one to behold the beauty, with that flowering, which his face bore, rather, he concealed it with a veil, which was so fashioned as if it were fused to his countenance. It was his second pride that no such daring man, neither native nor foreigner, rich nor poor, should set foot in the castle, where the king's son and his servants were sitting, without permission. And if his servants did not take care of their duties, they would lose their lives. It was his third pride that he despised all women and maidens in the world, such that he gave full anger towards it, if any king's or emperor's child was mentioned, to be his equal. It was his fourth pride that he would not go to the table any day unless he had received a new dish, which he had never known before. It was either of apples or fruit, fine drink or dainties…and because of this, he was called Dínus the Proud, by all the court and people."

[117] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 7.

[118] Ibid., 9-10.

There are a few matters of importance to mention regarding the compiler's description of Dínus and his prides. The first, and perhaps most obvious, point is that medieval thinkers were almost universally in agreement as it came to their prescription of how destructive pride, as a vice, was. Gregory the Great once again provides a perfect formulation of this notion. In his work exploring the moral fabric of the biblical book of *Job*, called the *Moralia*, he explains that pride is both "the root of all evil" as well as "the queen of all vices," going so far as to explain that the "seven principal vices" spring forth from its roots, namely vanity, envy, wrath, sorrow, avarice, gluttony, and lust.[119] This is an incredibly poignant formulation when considered against the narrative trajectory of *Dínus saga*, as pride seemingly further opens the characters of both Dínus and Philotemia up to these concomitant sins. Gregory's thesis is also particularly useful for any study of the medieval view of pride precisely because his work was so widely disseminated in the Middle Ages. His allegory of pride being the root of all evil circulated within Thomas of Ireland's florilegium the *Manipulus Florum*.[120] Secondly, and most germane to the present study, is that by outlining these prides, *Dínus saga*'s compiler provides themselves a means through which Philotemia is able to enact her plans to shame, and thereby surpass, this famous Egyptian prince. This feat is made ever the more possible due to Philotemia's not inconsiderable knowledge, as overreaching as it will prove to be.

The Old Norse translation of Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis* likewise places Dínus's epithet within a vernacular practice of moral recognition. Alcuin addresses Wido as a layman occupied with warfare and worldly responsibilities and asks him to return frequently to a short work arranged under separate headings. Repeated reading should enable Wido to see himself within its instruction, recall its lessons amid external cares, and direct his conduct toward its proper end. This organization gives the manual a practical purpose. Barbara H. Rosenwein describes it as therapeutic because its account of virtue and vice assumes that dispositions can be understood through their causes and redirected through deliberate practice.[121] The text provides its reader with a structure through which inward habits may be recognized before they determine further action.

The Old Norse rendering makes the lexical connection to *Dínus saga* unusually close. In the chapter concerning pride, it is explained that this vice arises when a person elevates himself through his good works, judges himself better than others, seeks praise, or refuses obedience. The later account of the eight principal vices calls pride the first spiritual vice and the king of all wickedness, from which disobedience, recalcitrance, conflict, and boasting proceed. The proud person is repeatedly described as *dramlátr*. The chapter on humility warns that it is shameful for one to be prideful and explains that the more glorious a proud man appears among people, the

[119] Gregory, *Morals on The Book of Job*, vol. 3, part 2, Book XXX-XXXV (Oxford and London: John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington, 1850). 489-490.

[120] Cf., Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto: PIMS, 1979), 236-238.

[121] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 68 and 82-86; Alcuin, De virtutibus et vitiis, Old Norse version, ed. and trans. Jonas Wellendorf, 2-3.

more wretched he becomes before God.[122] Dínus's byname therefore belongs to an Old Norse moral vocabulary that joins public elevation to inward degradation. The renown that distinguishes the prince also identifies the moral register through which his entire persona should be perceived.

Alcuin's ordering of the principal vices also helps explain why the saga counts Dínus's appetite among his prides. The first bodily vice is *ofát*, defined as an uncontrolled desire for food and drink. One of its recognizable forms is the demand for food more splendid than bodily need or social rank requires.[123] Dínus's requirement that a new dish be prepared every day turns novelty at table into a repeated assertion of exceptionality. His household must continually confirm that ordinary provision cannot satisfy him. Philotemia enters through the same appetite that should display his distinction, since the unfamiliar dish gives her access to the prince whom ordinary visitors cannot approach. The correspondence supports the presence of a shared moral vocabulary without establishing direct textual dependence. Dínus's fourth pride participates in an established vernacular account of appetite exceeding the requirements of the body and the social position it serves.

Since the compiler's goal is to scrutinize the sin of pride, they must therefore link this character with another prideful figure that would have been the most easily identifiable for a fourteenth century reader. As was argued in chapter two of this study, Alexander the Great lends much of his legendary substance to the character of Dínus. The eminent Macedonian prince's reputation, at least in sermon exempla of the twelfth century, was far more nuanced than has been previously argued, noting both his military genius as well as his excessive pride.[124] Dínus, similarly, gains from this archetype, among many positive features, his similarly detrimental lack of self-control and avarice.[125]

The Alexander material examined in Chapter 2 acquires a more precise moral shape in the Old Norse *Alexanders saga*, where princely excellence and pride develop together. When Alexander stands at Achilles's tomb, he envies the fame that has preserved the hero's name and declares:

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[122] Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, trans., Jonas Wellendorf (2026), 16-17, 44-45, 50-51.

[123] Ibid., 50-52.

[124] Gerrit H. V. Bunt, "Three Middle English Sermon exempla of Alexander the Great," in *Media Latinitas: A Collection of Essays to Mark the Occasion of the Retirement of L. J. Engels*, eds., Renée Nip, H. Van Dijk, and Elisabeth M. C. van Houts. *Intrusmenta Patristica et Mediaevalia: Research on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity*, 28. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 193-197. Cf., also Chrystèle Blondeau, "Les intentions d'une œuvre (Faits et gestes d'Alexandre le Grand de Vasque de Lucène) et sa réception par Charles le Téméraire. Ycellui Alexandre pas ne vous doit estre exemple de vertus," in *Revue de Nord: Revue d'Histoire et d'Archéologie des Universités du Nord de la France* 83 no. 342 (2001): 731-752.

[125] W. J. Aerts, "Alexander the Great in 'Exempla' and 'similitudines' in Byzantine Literature," *Exemplum et Similitudo: Alexander the Great and other heroes as points of reference in medieval literature*, eds., W.J. Aerts and M. Gosman (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988), 1-18.

"Ef ec scyllda annars hvars. þa villda ec himinrikes helldr missa en frægðarennar." [126]	"If I should be compelled either of the two, then I would rather lose heaven's kingdom than fame."

This statement establishes the value by which Alexander will measure his life before his conquests have reached their greatest extent. His learning, courage, and military ability become the instruments through which this desire for lasting renown can continue to grow.

That desire reaches its clearest expression near the end of the saga when one of Alexander's generals, Craterus, urges him to bring his campaigns to a close. Alexander dismisses the value of a long life if his fame must be buried with him, and he judges universal dominion more valuable than reaching old age. The world has become "altogether too narrow and small for one lord," and Alexander proposes to make war upon another world once the present one can no longer contain his ambition.[127] The narrative then supplies the vocabulary through which this excess can be judged. Nature receives his words as an injury against herself and the world and descends to hell seeking a means to "bring down this king's arrogance."[128] Among the forces assembled there is the literal embodiment of pride, Superbia, which the Old Norse text glosses as *drambsemi*.[129] Alexander's conquests have become the visible expression of an appetite whose desired object has expanded beyond the limits of the created world.

The saga's conclusion further turns Alexander's career into an exemplum. Once nearly every people has submitted to him, Alexander again proposes that his army seek the inhabitants of another world so that his fame will leave nothing untried. The narrator answers that ambition by asking what profit the pursuit of wealth and renown can finally produce. Alexander, for whom the whole world had seemed too small, now receives only the five feet of earth required for his body. The saga explicitly introduces this reduction as a *dæmi*, compressing the distance between universal rule and the grave into a final judgment upon the desire that has governed Alexander's life.[130] His achievements remain extraordinary, yet their inability to satisfy him determines how the narrator finally interprets them.

It is through a chance moment of eavesdropping on Philotemia's part that the two royal children are brought together. Egyptian merchants arrive at her father Maximiliánus' court to sell balsam with spices and other fineries and pass the time by telling the king about the most famed individual from their country. As the princess hears the merchants extol the sundry virtues of their prince, her heart is filled with a burning desire. The saga is quick to dismiss any romantic quality in this desire and instead pronounces that Philotemia's desire is less atavistic than this, as

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[126] *Alexanders saga: Islandsk Oversættelse ved Brandr Jónsson (Biskop til Holar 1263-64)*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel—Nordisk Forlag, 1925), 16.

[127] Ibid., 144.

[128] Ibid., 145.

[129] Ibid., 146.

[130] Ibid., 150-54.

she wishes to prove herself to be greater than Dínus and the only way to do this is to lure him to her kingdom so that she may test her abilities against his.[131] A similar formula can be found among Old French fabliaux of the time, which play with the notion of male/female relationships as being a battle of wits rather than a union of love.[132] At the character level, Philotemia additionally fulfills the archetypal role of the trickster in the narrative. Alison Williams distinguishes the trickster by motive, in that they seek "material gain or psychological victory using wit and deception."[133] Philotemia's stratagems fit this model succinctly, as they are intentional acts of humiliation for Dínus and self-elevation for herself. Williams further describes the trickster's somewhat paradoxical position of "central marginality," a condition in which disruptive force arises from within the very structures it unsettles.[134] Philotemia's influence works in precisely this way. Though she is a foreign power attacking from without the kingdom of Alexandria, she does not attack Dínus from outside the courtly order, but from within it, exploiting the rules upon which that order depends. In the case of female tricksters in particular, Williams's argument refines their model by emphasizing both the medieval association of women with quick-wittedness and the anxiety that such intelligence might become a source of disorder.[135] Philotemia's tricks recurrently convert that dreaded potential into a tremulous narrative fact, as she turns courtly hospitality into a weapon. Her deception is a structurally disruptive intelligence that exposes the vulnerability of Dínus's pride, his domestic safety, and his social stability all at once. Thus, the stage is set for the exemplary sequences that will follow.

The Candace episode in Thomas of Kent's *Roman de toute chevalerie* offers a close Alexander analogue for this battle over knowledge and gender. Candace receives Alexander within her own sphere, knows more about his identity than he realizes, and gains mastery over the conqueror. The narrator then turns that encounter into an antifeminist exemplary catalogue:

"De nature lur vient, de Eve ont le don Pur qui Adam perdy tote sa descrecion … E donc ne fu Joseph ly bels mis en la prison Par la femme a l'eunuche, le sergant Pharaon, E donc ne fu deceu ly pruz, ly fors Sampson, E David exillez, mort son fiz Absolon, E qui fu plus vaillanz del sage Salomon	"By nature it comes to them; from Eve they have the gift, Through whom Adam lost all his discretion. … And was not fair Joseph put in prison By the eunuch's wife, Pharaoh's servant? And was not the valiant, strong Samson deceived,

[131] Ibid., 15.

[132] The Old French fabliau La Borgoise d'Orliens contains a narrator intrusion in which it is said: "Einsi la borjoise deçut, Son mari, qui la vot deçoivre: Il meïmes brasça son boivre!" ("Thus, the boureoise lady deceived her husband, who wanted to deceive her: he himself brewed his own drink.") Cf., "La Borgoise d'Orliens," in *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, vol. 3, eds., Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), 374.

[133] Alison Williams, *Tricksters and Pranksters: Roguery in French and German Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2000), 1.

[134] Ibid., 4.

[135] Ibid., 6.

Qui sa loi reniad? Feme fu l'achaison. Troie en fu destruite par fer e par arson, E Grece malbaillie e meint[e] autre region."[136]	And David exiled, his son Absalom dead? Who was more worthy than wise Solomon, Who renounced his law? A woman was the cause. Troy was destroyed by iron and by fire, And Greece laid waste, and many another land."

The catalogue places Candace's victory inside a tradition in which female intelligence becomes an inherited danger to famous men. Its misogyny is explicit, yet its exemplary structure remains useful for reading Philotemia. Dínus resembles the men named in the passage through the qualities on which his fame rests. Philotemia can reach him through those same qualities and can make the celebrated prince ridiculous before others. The Candace episode also anticipates the instability of that victory. The saga lets Philotemia become the deceiver who is later deceived, so the inherited warning cannot remain a simple verdict upon women.

The tale of Phyllis and Aristotle brings learned authority into the same bodily grammar. Phyllis overcomes the philosopher through desire and arranges for Alexander to witness his humiliation. The oldest and wisest teacher becomes an animalized body beneath the woman who has bested him.[137] Philotemia's contest with Dínus repeatedly produces the same collision between learning and exposure. Their knowledge leaves them vulnerable to appetite and gives each of them more elaborate means of turning the other into a spectacle.

Candace and Phyllis therefore clarify the kind of contest in which Philotemia places herself. She can best Dínus because his fame has made him readable, and she can convert that knowledge into a spectacle witnessed by others. The inherited material carries misogynist judgments about female deception, but the saga refuses to let those judgments settle the rivalry. Philotemia exposes masculine confidence and then repeats the same failures of appetite, interpretation, and retaliatory excess.

The tricks and reversals between Dínus and Philotemia utilize the didactic formulae of vernacular exempla to create the dramatic tension within the saga as well as critique the larger moral issue at play within the narrative.[138] One of these formulae is the "deceptive woman" trope, which can be seen here in a section of thirteenth-century Old French Arthurian romance *L'estoire del Saint Graal*:

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[136] Thomas of Kent, *The Anglo-Norman Alexander* (Le Roman de toute chevalerie), ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short, 2 vols., Anglo-Norman Text Society 29-33 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1976-77), 243 (lines 7623-24 and 7633-40). See also Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, "Alexandre et Candace dans le Roman d'Alexandre d'Alexandre de Paris et le Roman de toute chevalerie de Thomas de Kent," *Romania* 112 (1991): 18-44.

[137] Susan L. Smith, The Power of Women: A 'Topos' in Medieval Art and Literature (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 66-102.

[138] Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 34.

„Qant il oï que la dame li disoit que volentiers feroit sa volenté se ele en venoit en liu, si cuida que ele le deïst de buen cuer, mes non faisoit, car ele ne baoit fors a lui trichier et a faire honte voiant le pueple. Et qu'en diroir je? Il n'est nus engins que feme ne porpenssast, ne onques hom terriens ne fu si sages que feme nel peüst decevoir : Salemons, qui fu li plus sages des pers, ne s'en pot onques garder, einz en fu deceüz et engingniez ; et Sansons Fortins en morut ; Absalon, qui fu li plus biaus hom del monde, en fu destruiz. Et Ypocras, qui n'estoit pas si sages que autre si sages n'eüst esté, por coi n'i poïst il ester deceüz ? Si vos dirai coment."[139]

"When he heard that the lady told him that she would gladly do his will if she came there in person, he thought that she said it with a good heart, but she did not do so, for she desired nothing except to deceive him and to shame him before the people. And what shall I say of it? There is no trick that a woman would not devise, nor has there ever been any earthly man so wise that a woman could not deceive him. Solomon, who was the wisest of men, could never guard himself against it, but was deceived and tricked by it; and Samson the Strong died from it; Absalom, who was the most beautiful man in the world, was destroyed by it. And Hippocrates, who was not less wise than any other who had ever been wise; why could he not also be deceived by it? Thus I shall tell you how."

The usefulness of this passage for *Dínus saga* lies in its catalogue of masculine qualities made vulnerable. Within Dínus all these traits are central to his character description and all of them are associated with his pride. The figuration of Absalom as an exemplary figure associated with pride and ruin is especially relevant because his beauty already had a vernacular scriptural life in Old Norse. *Stjórn* describes him as more beautiful and nobly formed than any other man among the Jewish people, flawless from heel to crown, and marked above all by the extraordinary hair whose weight becomes a sign of bodily magnificence:

"Absalon var fegri oc friðari skapaðr fyrir allra lvta sakir en engi maðr annarr i Gyðinga kyni. sva at þat er sannsagt af honvm. at milli hæls oc hvirfils fannz hvergi fleckr eða lyti a hans likam at maðr myndi sik annan veg kiosa skapaðan. Hann var oc frægðarsamliga hærðr fra þi sem aðrir menn beði at fegrð oc vexti. oc þat til marks vm mikilleik hars hans. at þat þyngði hann sva at hann varð vm sinn a hverio ari at lata reka af ser. Ok einn tima

"Absalom was more beautiful and more nobly formed in every respect than any other man among Jewish people, so that it is truly said of him that between heel and crown there was nowhere any spot or blemish on his body such that one might have chosen to be formed otherwise. He was also gloriously haired with hair beyond what other men might desire in beauty and growth; and as a sign of the greatness of his hair, it weighed him down so that each year he had to have it cut off. And once the barber had the curiosity to weight the

[139] *L'estoire del Saint Graal* vol. 2, ed., Jean-Paul Ponceau (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1997), 354 [86 in .pdf] : (Et pour quoi Ypocras, qui n'estoit pas si sages ne si forz ne si beaus com li autre, ne pooist bien ester desceus ? C; Et Ypocras, qui (+ ne fu M ; n'estoit N) pas si sages, (+ por coi ne peust il ester M; ne fust N) deceus? NM; Et Ypocras, que ne fut pais si saiges com fut Salemons, por quoi n'an fust il donques deceuz? P; et Ypocras qui ne fu pas sages, ne sout pur quoi il peust ester deceuz> L; B resume tout ce passage.)

hafði klipparinn forvitni til at færa a vag har af höfði honvm. oc va .cc. skillinga."[140]	hair from his head and it weighed two hundred shekels."

When read alongside the characterization of Dínus, the *Stjórn* passage provides a medieval intellectual insight into how masculine beauty could become a moral failing. Absalom's beauty is presented as exceptional, almost excessive, and his hair becomes the visible sign of that excess. Dínus's first pride likewise concerns beauty, but with a crucial difference, rather than displaying his beauty, he hides his face beneath a veil. The two figures therefore do not match point for point, but they belong to the same moral imagination. Therein, beauty can become synonymous with one's reputation as well as presage one's inner inadequacy. Dínus's hidden beauty therefore prepares the later humiliations of his body, since the saga repeatedly turns what he cherishes into something despoiled and exposed before others. He is beautiful like Absalom, learned like Hippocrates, royal and powerful like the exemplary princes and kings invoked in such traditions, yet none of these qualities protects him once Philotemia begins to exploit them. The passage from *L'estoire del Graal* also explains the necessity for the public dimension of Dínus's shame. The goal is not only to trick him, but to shame him before the people. Ásthildur Helen Gestsdóttir reads *Dínus saga* as a *meykóngasaga* and uses this framework to describes the struggle between Philotemia and Dínus as a contest in which each seeks to damage the other's *mannorð*, or public standing.[141] That goal of public humiliation thus becomes central to Philotemia's first sequence of snares.

The saga's frequent use of repetitions provides an apparatus through which Dínus and Philotemia's rivalry can be viewed systematically. Robert Tannert's study of the saga's style emphasizes its ornate parallelism, alliteration, amplification, and recurrent phrasing, especially in heightened descriptive passages.[142] Indeed, the machinery of the plot rests upon comparable recurrences within their contest. Food and drink repeatedly carry danger. Chambers promise intimacy yet produce nothing but frustration and comic exposure. Visual curiosity draws characters into either doom or coercion. Bodies are routinely transformed, distorted, wounded, or mockingly exposed. Public voices narrate the magnitude of the shame after a trick has been completed. Shame works because the body is made to contradict the role it had been meant to display.[143] These recurrences therefore teach the reader how the saga's world works. A later episode recalls an earlier one, changes its medium slightly, and displays yet another way in which one's pride can be used as a weapon to humiliate them.

The contrast with *lítillæti*, or humility, explains the role of humiliation in the saga. Alcuin identifies humility as the virtue through which pride is overcome.[144] Dínus is repeatedly lowered

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[140] II. Samuels Bog 14. in *Stjorn: Gammelnorsk Bibelhistorie - Fra Verdens Skabelse til det Babyloniske Fangenskab,* ed., C. R. Unger (Christiania: Feilberg & Landmarks Forlag, 1862), 524.

[141] Ásthildur Helen Gestsdóttir, "Sagann af Dijnus hinumm drambläta: Þróun hirðlegra einkenna og minna í handritagerðum riddarasögunnar Dínus sögu drambláta" (M.A. thesis, Háskóli Íslands, 2012), 40-49.

[142] Robert Tannert, "The Style of the *Dínus saga drambláta*," *Scandinavian Studies* 52, no. 1 (1980): 53-62.

[143] Hendrik Lambertus, *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern: Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Fremden in den originalen Riddarasögur*. (Tubingen and Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2013), 227-35.

[144] Ibid., 58-59.

before witnesses, yet the experience does not alter the valuation that produces his conduct. Each disgrace provokes another stratagem because public defeat threatens the reputation he continues to treat as proof of worth. Alcuin's remedy requires the proud person to reorder his own desires, whereas Dínus experiences abasement as an injury imposed from outside. He can recognize that Philotemia has surpassed him without acquiring the humility that would bring their contest to an end. The repeated tricks consequently expose the limits of punishment when shame remains external. This failure also prepares for the saga's later distinction between the knowledge that enables domination and the wisdom capable of correcting its use.

3.5.1 The gift of an apple

Philotemia's first trick plays at the four prides of Dínus through different registers. She devises a plan to exploit the Egyptian prince's proclivity for gastronomic novelty, which is mentioned as his fourth pride. Philotemia employs her two trusted servants, the similarly named Dasius and Dasiánus, to travel to Egypt and take with them a fragrant, yet bewitched, apple. They are instructed to find Dínus' chefs, the brothers Nicius and Niciánus and barter precious gifts with them so that they may magically take on their likenesses and thereby gain entry into Dínus' hall, additionally subverting his second pride of barring entry to anyone other than those he explicitly trusts.[145] Philotemia's dispatching of the pair Dasius and Dasiánus is an intriguing episode of doubling, a common motif in medieval literature and audiences would have recognized the echoing of the counterfeit pair's names against the original.[146] Their mission is ultimately successful, as they effectively exchange appearances with Dínus' cooks and deliver the apple directly to the prince who truly believes them to be his allies, newly returned from the market. The ruse proves too cunning for Dínus, as he is immediately and wholly taken by this wonder of sight and smell. It is divided among him and his men, and they consume it completely. They drink well into the night and take their rest. The counterfeit pair make a hasty retreat and return to Bláland to report their mission a resounding success.

The gift of an apple, whether beneficent or harmful, has numerous analogues across medieval literature. Because *Dínus saga* engages so explicitly with Alexandrian material, that tradition should provide the first lens through which this motif is examined. As chapter two of this study has already shown, Alexander's story was well established in Iceland before the fourteenth century. One later episode from the wider French Alexander tradition, transmitted as an interpolation within manuscripts of the Alexander cycle, such as *Le Roman d'Alexandre*,

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[145] This theme occurs broadly across the texts of the Middle Ages, but specific studies have been conducted on Celtic and Old French texts. Cf., Andrew Welsh, "Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi," *Speculum* 65, no. 2 (1990): 344-62 and Loren Ringer, "Exchange, Identity and Transvestism in Le roman de Silence," *Dalhousie French Studies* 28 (1994): 3-13.

[146] Further, the concept of twinned named pairs would have been familiar to Norse readers, as they had previously been exposed to an Old Norse translation of the Old French *Amis et Amiles* as *Amícus saga ok Amilíus* which was, incidentally, translated from Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale* during Hákon Hákonarson's reign in Norway, for more on this, see Marianne E. Kalinke and Peter M. Mitchell, *Bibliography of Old-Norse-Icelandic Romances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 23.

features several motifs that recur in *Dínus saga*, the first of which is the gift of the apple.[147] After conquering much of the known world, Alexander pushes beyond ordinary imperial space into the marvel-filled East, where conquest gives way to the testing of cosmic and sacred boundaries normally withheld from mortal men. One of Alexander's lieutenants, Emenaus, goes ahead and encounters the guardian of the Earthly Paradise. Acting as Alexander's envoy, he announces that Alexander has arrived and demands tribute. The guardian responds with a pointed rebuke, declaring that Alexander has committed great wickedness in presuming to approach such a place in the spirit of conquest. The tribute he offers is an apple, but it is no nourishing gift. Instead, it functions as a prophetic token: when Alexander takes it in hand, its strange lightness reveals that he will conquer no more and that his death is near:

Sagement li demande et par humle amistié:
"Amis, qui vous a ça si armeit envoiet?
N'i deüssiez venir se n'eüssiez congiet."
Emenedus respond, n'a gaires detriiet:
"Sire rois Alixandres, qui tout a justiciet.
Le mont si com la mers, l'a de ses bras liiet.
Et vuelt que ceste terre li metez a sson fief.
Ou treüt li rendez. L'avez aparilliet?"
Cil dedens li respond: "Molt fist hardit
pichiet Li rois quell commanda, et tu qui l'as
nonciet; C'est Paradis terrestres, trop as mal
esploitié. Çai ens ne puet par force nus hons
mettre le piet;
C'il pooit ensi ester çai ens fussiens segiet,
N'i seriensmes par houme de riens
amenuisiet.
Mais por ce que te voi peneit et travilliet,
Et que li rois connoisse que il a foloiet,
Atent moi un pau ci, ja serai repairiet,
Et avras le treüt teil comme il est jugiet."
Por tenir convenant cil dedens se hasta,
Une molt belle pume en sa main aporta
Et vint a la fenestre ou le conte laissa;
Quant parvenus i fu, la pume li donna.
„Tien, vez ci le treü que tes sires manda;
Teil loi a ceste pume, li voirs provera,
Quant iert contrepesee, li rois pau vivera,
Ne ja mais puis cest terme terre ne

Wisely he asked him, with humble
friendship: "Friend, who has sent you here
so armed? You should not have come unless
you had leave."
Emenedus replied, without long delay:
"Lord King Alexander, who has judged all
things, the world as the sea he has bound in
his arms, and he wishes you to place this
land under his fief, or else pay him tribute.
Have you prepared it?" The man inside
answered: "He did a very bold sin who
commanded this, and you who proclaimed
it. This is the earthly Paradise; you have
badly erred. No man by force can set foot
here; if it were possible, we would already
be seated here, nor would we be diminished
by man in any way. But because I see you
weary and troubled and that the king may
recognize he has acted foolishly, wait here a
little, I will soon return, and you shall have
the tribute as it has been decreed." To keep
the covenant, this one within hastened, A
very beautiful apple he carried in his hand,
and he came to the window where the tale
left off; When he arrived there, he gave him
the apple. Take, see here the tribute your
lord has demanded; such is the law of this
apple, the truth will prove it: when it is

[147] Geraldine Barnes has demonstrated that there is an inventory note from 1397 for the monastery of Viðey, where it is recorded that there is a book there called Alexander Magnus, though which version of the many different Alexandrian legends there were in the fourteenth century it was cannot be accurately determined. It is an attractive notion that this could have contained this material about Alexander's journey to the Earthly Paradise, but this is only speculation. For more on this see *Diplomatarium Islandicum: Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn* volume 4, ed., Hinu íslenzka bókmenntafélagi (Copenhagen: S.L. Möller, 1876), 111 and Geraldine Barnes, The Bookish Riddarasögur, 66.

conquerra,
Sachiés que a envis le contrpesera.
Molt fist grant estoultie quant il ça t'envoia,
Car c'est ci Paradis que Dieus donneit nous a
Et donra a cellui qui bien le servira;[148]

weighed, the king will live but little longer, and never again after that time will he conquer the earth. Know well that he will scarcely balance it. He acted with great folly when he sent you here, for this is Paradise which God has given us, and which he will give to him who serves him well.

The earliest extant version of Alexander's visit to the Earthly Paradise belongs to the *Babylonian Talmud* and dates to before 500. The Latin *Alexandri Magni Iter ad Paradisum* was probably written in the twelfth century as part of the same Jewish-influenced tradition. That Latin text then became the main source for the thirteenth-century *Voyage au Paradis Terrestre*, a work regularly interpolated into manuscripts of Alexandre de Paris's *Roman d'Alexandre*.[149] Interestingly, the Norse were already familiar with the concept of the Earthly Paradise, as it is described in both Icelandic biblical and learned literature, from *Stjórn* to *Konungs skuggsjá*. In both works, this land lies to the East and is associated with apple trees.[150] This example frames the apple as a fruit associated with ruin and decline. It is important to contextualize this formulation, however, as the terminology of the apple itself has a complex history.

The apple entered medieval literary culture burdened with several incompatible histories. Latin exegetes offered little support for the familiar claim that the forbidden fruit of Eden was an apple. Major authorities such as Augustine, Alcuin, and Aquinas seem to assume some other fruit, often the fig. At the same time, Christian allegorical readings of the Song of Songs regularly made the apple a remedy to the Fall of mankind, associating it with Christ and salvation.[151] The Latin tradition therefore leaves the matter curiously unresolved, as it does not establish the apple as the fruit of original sin, yet by the high Middle Ages visual culture in northern France was already depicting Edenic fruit in recognizably apple-like form.[152] The symbolic life of the apple had plainly outrun the strict boundaries of learned exegesis.

What emerged from that shifting terrain was a cluster of related meanings for the apple, if we interpret it as a symbol. Across vernacular and classical traditions alike, the apple appears as a gift offered in love, as an erotic signal, and as an object bound up with desire, fertility, and the

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[148] "Le Voyage d'Alexandre au Paradis Terrestre," in *La Prise de Defur and Le Voyage d'Alexandre au Paradis Terrestre*, eds. Lawton P.G. Peckham and Milan S. La Du (Paris and Princeton: Les Presses Universitaires de France and Princeton University Press, 1935), 78-79.

[149] John Cartwright, "Gilbert Hay's 'Alexander:' A Study in Transformations," *Medium Ævum* 60, no. 1 (1991): 61.

[150] Cf., Michael Micci, "Off the Map: Modes of Spatial Representation in the Indigenous Icelandic riddarasögur," PhD Dissertation, University of Iceland (2023), 203.

[151] Azzan Yadin-Israel, *Temptation Transformed: The Story of How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 2.

[152] Azzan Yadin-Israel, Temptation Transformed, 42.

choice of a mate.[153] Its force could be beneficent or dangerous. As a sexual symbol, the apple was an important element in erotic magic. Within this tradition, a spell would be recited over the apple, and it would then be thrown at or to the object of one's affections.[154] This usage of the apple has strong analogues in Indian, Persian, and Arabic folktales, where apples often appear as love tokens that arouse suspicion of female chastity or fidelity.[155] In the Norse mythological tradition presented in the Eddic poem *Skírnismál*, Freyr sends golden apples to Gerðr as part of his marriage suit.[156] Similarly, the gods intervene on behalf of King Rerir and his wife wishing for a child in *Völsunga saga*, when an apple is delivered by the gods Frigg and Óðinn via the Valkyrie Hljóð, initiating a successful conception.[157] Archaeological evidence such as the votive apples from the Oseberg ship suggests that this association between apples and divine or life-giving potency was materially ingrained upon the Norse mind.[158] Elsewhere the apple slips more openly into erotic and magical practice. In Greek tradition it could serve as the charged object of a love spell, thrown toward the desired body in an attempt to bend affection. Narrative traditions from the eastern Mediterranean and beyond preserve the same doubleness. Apples may operate as tokens of desire, but they also arouse anxiety, suspicion, and danger; they can provoke jealousy, test fidelity, or carry a power that hovers between enchantment and death.[159] In the eleventh-century Irish *Aisling Meic Con Glinne* the apple manifests as a much more malevolent offering. Therein, Lígach sends gifts including apple to communicate her love for Cathal Mac Finguine, but they are filled with heathen spells and charms. This scene in particular has been analyzed as a Christian message about the perils of gluttony.[160] Even in tales where the apple kills, it may also restore life, so that the fruit remains poised between destruction and renewal.

In the case of *Dínus saga drambláta*, the apple is an inciter of lust, playing a bit closer to the aforementioned Irish tale. After the enchanted apple has done its work, the narrative shifts almost immediately from private ingestion to collective affliction. Dínus and his companions retire for the night apparently unharmed, but at midnight the prince wakes first in visible distress,

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[153] A. R. Littlewood, "The Erotic Symbolism of the Apple in Late Byzantine and meta-Byzantine Demotic Literature," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 17 (1998), 83-84.

[154] Meriel Jones, "The Wisdom of Egypt: Base and Heavenly Magic in Heliodoros' Aithiopika." *Ancient Narrative* 4 (2005), 87.

[155] Tommaso Braccini, "An Apple between Folktales, Rumors, and Novellas: Malalas 14.8 and its Oriental Parallels," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 58 (2018): 302-304 and 308-309.

[156] Skírnismál,19.

[157] Jackson Crawford, trans., *The Saga of the Volsungs: With The Saga of Ragnar Lothbrok* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2017), 2-3.

[158] H.R. Ellis Davidson, *Myths and symbols in pagan Europe: Early Scandinavian and Celtic Religions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 117.

[159] Rui Carlos Fonseca, "The Ring, the Gown, and the Apple: The Role of Magical Objects in the Byzantine Vernacular Romance Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoi," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 44 no. 2 (2020), 244-246 and 253-254.

[160] Caroline McGrath, "The Apple in Early Irish Narrative Tradition: A Thoroughly Christian Symbol?" *Studia Celtica Fennic* VII (2010), 20.

sighing heavily and describing a violent and unprecedented sickness. He identifies its source not as bodily illness in any ordinary sense, but as an overpowering erotic compulsion directed toward the foreign princess in Bláland. The language of the scene presents desire as both incendiary and terminal stating that Dínus's heart "burns and blazes" with longing, and he fears imminent death if the condition remains unresolved.[161] Grammaton, once roused, reveals that he has been struck by the same ailment for one of the princess's attendants, and the rest of the company, when awakened, confess an identical suffering. What had first seemed an individual crisis quickly proves communal and patterned. The apple has distributed desire across the whole male company, pairing prince with princess and followers with her retinue in a way that anticipates the structured erotic encounters to come.

Dínus himself is the first to recognize the likely cause. He suspects that the apple they consumed the previous evening was far less wholesome than its sweetness suggested.[162] The fruit's pleasing exterior has concealed an internal, possessive force that now governs both the body and the will of him and his company. Yet, even here, the narrative does not allow the retinue to remain in a passive state of enchantment. Dínus converts his affliction into action almost at once. The men must not tarry long enough to plan their endeavor, instead they must saddle horses with arms and ride immediately to Bláland. The prince's declaration that he will either die or win the princess's love compresses the situation into courtly romance terms, but under conditions the reader already understands to be narratively compromised. His desire for courtship, or sport, here is born not out of freely developing desire but out of magically induced urgency, similar to how it is staged in earlier translated romances.[163] The subsequent secrecy of their departure only deepens that sense of compulsion. They leave under cover of night, place guards over the castle, conceal their plans from others, secure guides, and travel at speed through forests and wilderness, provisioning themselves through villages and marketplaces as needed. Lambertus emphasizes that the saga's action repeatedly turns on crossings between Egypt and Bláland rather than on a single heroic movement from courtly center into alien wilderness.[164] Through the magically tainted apple, Philotemia has made Dínus leave the protected space his pride had built and enter the rival court whose existence ostensibly unsettles his claim to singularity.

When Dínus finally approaches the city of Bláskumia, the narrative broadens again, this time from male compulsiveness to female prescience. Philotemia, though outwardly silent, already knows of his approach through her *náttúrusteinar*, the "natural stones" in which she can observe events at a distance.[165] The scene therefore frames her as a vigilant and technically adept

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[161] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 23.

[162] Ibid., 23.

[163] In the thirteenth-century Icelandic redaction of Thomas de Bretaigne's *Tristram et Iseult*, *Tristrams saga Ísöndar*, for example, Tristram's love for Ísönd is incited by a magical tonic, intended for Ísönd and her husand-to-be King Marcus.

[164] Lambertus, *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern*, 226-27.

[165] Not coincidental to this episode, the eponymous protagonist of *Nítíða saga* also owns so-called "natural stones" stolen from a sorcerer named Vergilius on the enigmatic island of Visio. She too can see the comings and goings of the three groups of suitors who are vying for her hand and uses this knowledge for strategic, and arguably

observer who has seen the prince coming before he enters the city. Her response to this knowledge is strategically double. Before her father she counsels a public reception of the highest magnificence and encourages him to grant Dínus whatever he requests. At the same time, she assures him that even if the prince seeks her love, she possesses sufficient devices and skills to prevent disgrace to herself or her household. Maximiliánus voices some unease, suspecting that any attempt to shame such a prince may rebound upon them, but the text has already made clear that Philotemia intends to manage the encounter on her own terms.

King Maximiliánus ensure that the city's reception of Dínus is staged in a lavish, ceremonial opulence befitting his guest's honor. The streets of Bláschumia are richly adorned, musical processions usher the foreign prince into the interior of the kingdom, and he is personally led by the bishops of Bláland into its foremost church before being seated beside the king himself at a splendid feast in his honor. Everything in the scene communicates royal hospitality and welcome. Yet the arrival of Philotemia and her maidens introduces a second spectacle, one that overwhelms the first. Their appearance is even described in terms of that suggest a sort of visual excess. Radiantly garbed, their dress seems to illuminate the hall, and all the men are so captivated by their beauty that they neglect the practical business of eating and drinking. Philotemia, naturally, outshines all the others. Her crown, gemstones, and blazing hair intensify the fire already burning in Dínus's heart.[166] The apple-born desire has now found its object, and the text carefully shows that the prince's condition worsens at the very moment of beholding her. The metaphor of fire returns with renewed force, as what had been kindled before now flares as if fresh tinder has been cast upon it.[167]

Dínus's response at table is even more evocative of how completely at Philotemia's mercy he has become. He cannot eat, cannot drink, and sits in visible grief. His refusal of food and wine contrasts sharply with his earlier portrayal as an avid reveler and connoisseur of extraordinary delicacies. What once nourished him now cannot sate his appetite which has been narrowed into a single desire. When Maximiliánus inquires after his condition, Dínus answers in openly courtly terms, requesting Philotemia's love and offering honorable marriage if she will consent. The request is formally respectful, but the speed with which it is made, and the extremity of the language surrounding it, gesture that this is no ordinary progression from admiration to suit. Dínus has scarcely arrived before the induced longing demands immediate consummation. Maximiliánus's answer is cautious but accommodating, though he does not like

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comedic, ends in the saga. This is suggestive of a borrowing on the part of the compiler of *Dínus saga drambláta* from that of *Nítíða saga*, as well as the potential for a literary culture that was in conversation with itself during the fourteenth-century in Iceland. See Sheryl McDonald, "*Nítíða saga*: A Normalised Icelandic Text and Translation," Leeds Studies in English 40 (2009): 119-145; Cf., also Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcout, Brace and World, inc., 1968), 12.

[166] Once again, this scene is stylistically similar to the introduction of both Séréna in *Clári saga* and Nítíða in *Nítíða saga*.

[167] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 26.

the idea, he will not refuse, provided the union is honorable and the maiden's own will is preserved.[168] Thus the public scene appears, for a moment, to move toward legitimate courtship.

What follows, however, transfers the action out of the hall and into Philotemia's own carefully controlled space. Through intermediaries and serving women, Dínus and his companions are led to her chamber, a place described with extraordinary detail and sensory richness.[169] The room is painted with gold and brilliant colors, filled with jeweled windows, fragrant incense, and a marvelously engineered musical mechanism in which wind moves through gilded hollow pillars and pipes to produce angelic song. Statues seem alive; scent and sound combine to create a nearly otherworldly atmosphere. The company themselves interpret it in paradisal terms. Dínus remarks that one might believe they had entered heavenly paradise, and his companions agree.[170] The chamber thus functions as a threshold space in every sense: enclosed and intimate, but also wondrous, deceptive, and poised between artifice and enchantment. It temporarily displaces the apple's erotic urgency, cooling what the text calls the "wine" of their love because the marvels of the room distract them from desire itself.

Philotemia then re-enters this stage with her chosen maidens and receives Dínus with extraordinary warmth. She embraces him, kisses him, and speaks in the language of singular preference, claiming that she has long desired such a meeting and has extended this privilege to no other prince. Her speech flatters, isolates, and reassures. She presents the chamber as a display of her own splendor, one designed both for Dínus and for his trusted men. The effect is immediate. The company pair off according to rank and inclination with Dínus's closest companion Grammaton joining with Philotemia's chief maiden Peticula, and the others likewise choose partners from among the maidens. The scene seems to fulfill, almost too perfectly, the erotic pairings first generated by the apple. Dínus then presses for the next step, asking that the night now be completed by shared beds and sexual play. Philotemia gives her consent in a form carefully framed to preserve courtesy, stating that if he will not interpret it as looseness or impropriety, she will not oppose him.[171] Consent is granted, but always under the sign of controlled appearance.

3.5.2 Forty knights of blackened oak

It is at the point of apparent consummation that the playful scene turns into a climactic one. Clothes are removed, the couples prepare for bed, and Philotemia herself has placed one foot into Dínus's bed when a tremendous rumbling interrupts the moment. The whole house shakes as if on the verge of collapse.[172] Philotemia immediately interprets the disturbance

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[168] Cf., Jenny M. Jochens, "Consent in Marriage: Old Norse Law, Life, and Literature," *Scandinavian Studies* 58, no. 2 (1986) and Bjørn Bandlien, *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

[169] See chapter one's discussion of this hall and its possible analogues.

[170] This scene is reminiscent to Alexander's journey to the Earthly Paradise, thematically.

[171] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 31.

[172] Similar episodes occur in *Clári saga* and *Sigrgarðs saga frækna*. This corresponds with the ATU motif type #5304, "Wine, drugged, left for enemy."

through a narrative of external threat. She tells Dínus that her father commands forty monstrous knights from the burning south, black as pitch and more like devils than men, who covet treasure and destroy whatever they approach. This correlates with medieval iconography which frequently represented the Devil and his minions in colors ranging from dark brown to purple.[173] If they have learned of Dínus's arrival, they will surely kill him and his companions. Here Philotemia shifts from erotic hospitality to crisis management. The same woman who seemed to yield now directs the men into armed defense. Dínus, in turn, responds exactly as she requires, lamenting only the absence of his armor. She promptly supplies magnificent weapons from a chest, arming him and ensuring that each maiden arms her chosen man.

The ensuing combat occupies the whole night. Just as Philotemia foretold, forty black knights burst in and attack Dínus and his company. The maidens prudently retreat into the beds while Dínus and his companions fight ferociously but with ever-diminishing strength. The black knights are huge, their armor resists blows, and Dínus's men gradually become wounded and weakened by blood loss. By dawn, just as they can barely stand, the attackers vanish. This disappearance is the first clear signal that something is extraordinary about the entire ordeal. The men cast off their torn garments, look for the maidens, and, finding themselves abandoned, collapse into sleep from sheer fatigue. They receive a revelation upon waking from this slumber, as the chamber is gone, its high ceiling has become open sky, and they quickly surmise that the paradisal room was no room at all but an exposed place in the woods. Nearby stand forty oaks, stripped and mutilated, rather than the forty black knights of the night's combat. Dínus and his companions lie naked and bloodied beside switches, their bodies flayed and blackened as though scourged. This scene has a striking analogue, at the thematic level, in the Welsh *Kad Goddeu* tradition, attributed to the legendary bard Taliesin as well as the Math fab Mathonwy from the fourth branch of the Mabinogion, both instances involving the sorcerer Gwydion. In the former, trees are militarized through enchantment and divided in ranks according to their species. In the latter, the terrible sounds of an invading army are produced to elicit a reaction of an enemy.[174] Marged Haycock's reading of the *Cad Goddau* tree-list offers a useful analogue for this kind of comic militarization. Rather than treating the list chiefly as sacred-tree symbolism or hidden alphabetic code, Haycock reads it as mock-heroic parody: trees, shrubs, and flowers are made to perform the role of warriors, while the clichés of heroic verse are transferred onto bodies comically unsuited to heroic combat.[175] In *Dínus saga*, the wounds they believed won in noble combat now appear as the marks of public bodily disgrace. The men conclude that they have been subjected to powerful sorcery and illusion. Dínus himself recognizes the truth of the social

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[173] *The Image of the Black in Western Art II*: From Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery," ed., Jean Devisse, trans. William Granger Ryan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 64.

[174] "Kat Goddeu," in *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin*, 2nd edition, ed., and trans., Marged Haycock (Aberystwyth: CMCS Publications, 2015), 167-239; *Math Uab Mathonwy: The Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi*, ed., Ian Hughes. Medieval and Modern Welsh Series 13. (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2013); Cf., also Geraldine Barnes, "Cognitive Dysfunction in Dínus saga drambláta and Le Roman de Perceval," Arthuriana 22, no. 1 (2012): 53-63.

[175] Marged Haycock, "The Significance of the 'Cad Goddau' Tree-List in the Book of Taliesin," in *Celtic linguistics - ieithyddiaeth geltaidd: readings in the brythonic languages. Festschrift for t. Arwyn watkins* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 1990), 297-332.

outcome with painful clarity, admitting to his companions that Philotemia has humbled his pride, and successfully so.[176] Even this recognition, regrettably, does not conclude the ordeal.

When they recover their horses, arms, and clothing and ride back past the city, the final stage of Philotemia's stratagem unfolds as public mockery. Crowds gather on the walls to jeer at them, mocking Dínus by name:

„og sem þeir eru áá bak komner, siä þeir ad vtdrijffur áá borgarveggina mikill fiølde fölkz, og þä hædande, og spottande, so seigiande þar fer nu Dijnus hinn drambläti, sneijptur, suijvirtur og hudstrijktur sem hinn veste þiöffur. huar er nu mikelæti þitt og dramb, nu er þui meirj hädung yfer þig kominn, sem þu þöttist huoriumm meire, þeir æptu áá þä med miklumm hlaatre, eigi vnderstödu þeir annad enn huor fanntur og dääre sä er j var borginni, mundi til þess settur ad spotta þä, efftir allre sinni kunnättu..."[177]

„And when they return, they see a great crowd of people rush out to the walls of the city, mocking and jeering at them, saying,'There goes Dínus the Proud, disgraced, dishonored, and flayed like the worst thief. Where now is your magnificence and pride? Now you face even greater humiliation that you once believed yourself superior to other.' They shouted at them with great laughter. They endured nothing except that every footman and fool in the city had been set to mock them with all his skill…"

The language used by the Blálander crowd further externalizes what the forest revelation had already made symbolically clear. Their humiliation has been expertly orchestrated by Philotemia and staged as private revenge set for public consumption. Everyone in the city is described as participating in the laughter. The company ride on until they can no longer see the city, eventually reaching a grassy valley where they can regroup.

3.5.3 The "Dínus Dance"

Dínus, though shamed and thoroughly exhausted from his very real battle against imagined enemies, manages to answer Philotemia's trick in kind. Against the advice of his companions, who now clearly recognize Philotemia as deceitful and suspect that her trickery may not yet be exhausted, he returns secretly to the city alone in order to hear what she says in his absence. His decision confirms that the earlier ordeal has not broken his attachment to her or extinguished his investment in the conflict. He remains compelled not only by injury and shame but by the desire to know how his humiliation is being interpreted by the woman who staged it. Presumably using his aforementioned "ropewalking" abilities, he scales the princess' tower and sneaks inside. Though it is not overtly outlined in the saga, Dínus uses yet another of his skills, that of the runes, to create a gilded tablet which he writes (skrifat) esoteric letters into and hangs on the central pillar within her opulent tower. This moment of metatextuality highlights the fantastical potential of the written word in fictional accounts and how it can push against the

[176] *Dínus saga*, 35.

[177] Ibid., 36.

boundaries of writing itself.[178] When Philotemia and her entourage of maidens return from their celebratory drinks in her father's court; they are confronted with this magical tablet. One of the most convenient aspects of tablets is their inherent portability and that they are also texts that cannot be closed, facing their readers at all times.[179] The mere sight of this enchanted plaque causes Philotemia and her ladies to strip off all their clothes and dance uncontrollably, never taking their eyes off the object. Geraldine Barnes describes this in terms of intellectual befuddlement, carnivalesque frenzy, and social chaos.[180] Dínus' trick not only affects Philotemia and her followers, it extends beyond them, consuming curious onlookers within the city and then eventually dismantling the very socio-religious fabric of her empire, as the Archbishop of Bláschumia also falls victim to the nude saltation that the tablet evokes in any who look upon it.[181] Armed with crosses, holy water, shrines, and other sacred objects, the clergy proceed ceremonially to the princess's chamber in order to expel the unclean force at work there. Yet the sacred apparatus of ecclesiastical order has no protective effect. The moment the churchmen behold the tablet, they too are undone. At this point the enchantment has consumed every rank in the city from the nobility to the clergy all become participants in the same degrading spectacle. The chamber itself seems to expand in response, as though its walls move outward so that space never runs short, the marvel assuming a wider, civic scale. Dínus's answer to Philotemia's deceit is no longer confined to one act of private revenge, instead it has become a nearly all-encompassing social affair. The reaction of the inhabitants of the city of Bláschumia is correspondingly one of horror.

At this point the narrative introduces Damianus, described as wiser than others, as the figure who seeks practical counsel where royal authority and ecclesiastical ritual have both failed. His solution takes him beyond the city and outside the formal structures of court and church to a liminal, almost subterranean dwelling inhabited by a strange being named Anachorita. This figure is black, shaggy like a sheep, and human in reason despite his monstrous appearance. Damianus explains the catastrophe, and Anachorita quickly surmises that the enchantment is the work of Dínus, who has returned dishonor with dishonor. He agrees to help, not out of desire for wealth, but through his own peculiar skill.[182]

Anachorita's idea for a cure is notably procedural rather than sacramental, further highlighting the implied uselessness of the clergy in Bláland. Anachorita covers his eyes with a cloth before entering the chamber, thereby protecting himself from the visual force of the tablet.

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[178] Christine Neufeld and Ricarda Wagner, "Introduction," in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Ricarda Wagner, Christine Neufeld, and Ludger Lieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 1-2

[179] Ricarda Wagner, "Tablets and the Poetics of the Premodern Post-It," in Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature, eds., Ricarda Wagner, Christine Neufeld, and Ludger Lieb (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 239.

[180] Geraldine Barnes, "Cognitive Dysfunction in Dínus saga drambláta and Le Roman de Perceval," *Arthuriana* 22, no. 1 (2012): 58-59.

[181] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 39.

[182] Ibid., 40-41

He then moves directly to the object, shrouds it, removes it from the pillar, and throws it into the fire, burning it to ashes. His methods prove that the source of enchantment must be approached without sight, physically covered, removed, and destroyed. Once the tablet is taken away, all those who had been dancing fall to the ground as though they had crossed into another world. On waking, they become conscious of what they have done and grieve over their monstrous condition. Philotemia weeps bitterly and calls for her clothes. The king and court are garbed, and the city begins to recover the forms of order that had dissolved in the chamber. Yet Maximiliánus's rebuke to Philotemia frames the whole sequence as the fulfillment of his earlier warning. He reminds her that he had already told her any attempt to test her cunning against Dínus would bring dishonor not only upon herself but upon him and many others besides. The present disaster therefore appears, in his speech, as the predictable return of her own deceptive violence upon her household. Yet the scene does not end in moral correction or submission on Philotemia's part. She immediately vows vengeance again. This time she imagines a punishment more prolonged and more total than what has yet occurred. Dínus shall not die quickly, instead he shall endure torment together with extended disgrace.

The scene draws upon a medieval tradition in which dancing could mark disorder, sacrilege, or communal breakdown. A proper comparative analogue can be seen in the medieval "cursed carolers" tradition because it binds dancing to sacred violation and failed clerical control. In one story from this tradition, referred to as the "Kölbigk Dancers," a group dances and sings in a churchyard on Christmas Eve, ignoring the priest's commands until a curse fixes them in motion for a year. In several versions, the tale becomes a vehicle for thinking through ecclesiastical authority, pastoral responsibility, and the regulation of bodies in or near sacred space.[183] Relatedly, the version of this story contained within the thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman didactic poem *Manuel des Péchés* introduces the exemplum as a warning against carols or games in church, and the dancers' refusal to stop leads directly to priestly curse and divine punishment.[184]

The Icelandic afterlife of the cursed-dance tradition brings clerical failure even closer to the center of the comparison. In the Hruni legend, the parson delays the Christmas service, participates in drinking and dancing, and ignores repeated warnings from his mother until the church and churchyard sink into the earth.[185] A similar tradition at Bakkastaður has the parson and congregation dancing with noisy merriment around the church before disaster follows.[186] These Icelandic legends condemn sacred disorder by implicating the priest himself in the collapse of order. *Dínus saga* relocates the dance from church or churchyard to royal chamber,

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[183] Lynneth Miller Renberg and Bradley Phillis, "The Tale of the Kölbigk Dancers: Transmissions, Translations, and Themes," in *The Cursed Carolers in Context*, ed. Lynneth Miller Renberg and Bradley Phillis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 1-4.

[184] Krista A. Murchison, "'Desturné en us de secularité'?: Authority and Narrative Framing in the Cursed Dancers Episode of the Manuel des Péchés," in The Cursed Carolers in Context, 78-79.

[185] Shaun F. D. Hughes, "The Cursed Carolers in Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavia," in *The Cursed Carolers in Context*, 137-138.

[186] Ibid., 138.

but the later entrance of the clergy brings the same problem into view. The authorities who should end disorder become part of its display. Though commonly seen in fabliaux, depictions of priests' failings also occur in exempla form both Latin and vernacular traditions. In fabliaux, these scenes are almost always sexually charged, whereas the criticisms of the priesthood are more polemical in their potential in exempla.[187]

The archbishop's entrance twists the episode from one of private revenge into one that ostensibly highlights an institutional failure on the part of the Bláland Church. Once the dance has spread through the city, the clergy approach Philotemia's chamber with crosses, holy water, shrines, and other sacred objects in order to expel the unclean force at work there.[188] The procession should restore order. Instead, the sight of the tablet undoes them at the threshold of their intervention. The archbishop tears off his mitre, throws away his crozier and vestments, and strips naked along with the abbots, monks, and clergy who follow him into the chamber. The sacred objects fail because the danger has been misread. Nakedness, in this context, is a form of punishment commonly ascribed to priests. Esther Cohen remarks that "the divestiture of clothing was probably the most common mechanism of status deprivations," which thereby reflected both "dehumanization and savagery."[189] In *Du Prestre crucefié*, the priest hides naked among religious images and becomes subject to the threat of mutilating correction by the husband whose household he has entered.[190] *Dínus saga* does not reproduce that sexual plot, but it uses a related grammar of clerical exposure.

This collapse of clerical authority provides the dancing episode with a dual audience. Kate Greenspan's reading of Robert Mannyng's Handlyng Synne argues that Mannyng's exempla often address laypeople and priests at the same time. Lay listeners receive explicit instruction, while priests receive a more veiled correction concerning clerical weakness, authority, and responsibility.[191] Her discussion of the cursed carolers of Colbek shows this double movement clearly in that the tale warns laypeople against sacrilege and disobedience, while also admonishing priests against the abuse of spiritual power. The priest's curse displays terrifying ecclesiastical authority, but the narrative also exposes his failure to govern that authority rightly. Dínus saga changes the direction of failure. Its clergy do not curse dancers into motion, instead they enter the dance they came to stop. Even so, the structure is comparable.

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[187] Daron Burrows, *The Stereotype of the Priest in the Old French Fabliaux: Anticlerical Satire and Lay Identity* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), 44-45, n 42.

[188] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson, 37-38.

[189] Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France*, Studies in Intellectual History 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 169.

[190] "The Crucified Priest," in The Fabliaux: A New Verse Translation, trans. Nathaniel E. Dubin, intro. R. Howard Bloch (New York: Liveright, 2013), 51-53; see also R. Howard Bloch's discussion in the introduction, xix.

[191] Kate Greenspan, "Lessons for the Priest, Lessons for the People: Robert Mannyng of Brunne's Audiences for Handlyng Synne," Essays in Medieval Studies 21 (2004): 109-10.

The sacred-space problem persists even though the scene has moved indoors. Renberg's work on cursed carolers and pastoral care ties cursed dancing to sacrilege, churchyard disorder, clerical vulnerability, and the difficulty of protecting liturgical space from bodily disruption.[192] Dínus saga transfers that anxiety into a royal chamber charged with erotic display and magical writing. The chamber is not a churchyard, but it becomes a space where bodies in disorder compromise the authorities charged with correction. The archbishop and clergy do not simply witness Philotemia's shame. They enter the spectacle and make clerical office visible as another body under compulsion.

3.5.4 Four horns, four prides

The narrative resumes only after Philotemia has publicly vowed further revenge, one that she swears will take the form of a ruin more protracted and degrading than simple death. A great feast is then held in the king's hall, and within that courtly setting she declares before her father and the assembled lords that she intends, through her cunning, to bring Dínus back to Bláskumia and avenge upon him all the dishonor she has suffered. Philotemia's trickery is now openly announced as a strategy of vengeance sanctioned, if uneasily, by the courtly environment around her. Many of the lords approve her plan, while the king again voices reluctance and foreboding. As before, however, his misgivings do not harden into effective resistance. The father's hesitation functions less as a check upon Philotemia than as a repeated acknowledgment that her schemes tend toward dishonor even when the structures around her fail to prevent them.

Philotemia's next stratagem returns to the mechanism that first ensnared Dínus, leaning once again on the deceptive guise of her intermediaries bearing an enchanted drink. Having withdrawn to her chamber with her retinue, she summons the same brothers who had previously served her and instructs them to undertake again the journey to Egypt with a mission parallel to the earlier one. The narrative reactivates the earlier pattern of deception in modified form, showing both Philotemia's memory and her willingness to work through recursive humiliation. Yet the men object at once, and with good reason. They fear that a second journey to Egypt will expose them to recognition by Nicius and Niciánus and bring certain execution for the harm already done. Philotemia answers this practical objection not by abandoning the plan but by intensifying the deception. This time she orders that an old, grey-bearded man be brought before them, and by weaving the same enchanted pouch over their faces, she transforms the brothers so completely into the likeness of the old man that no one could distinguish their true identity.

The disguised men take with them gold and gemstones, outfit a merchant ship with every kind of good, and sail to Egypt, anchoring at a harbor near Alexandria and pitching a tent ashore. As in the earlier episode, the deception depends upon exploiting Prince Dínus's appetites, one of his well-known prides. Their arrival quickly reaches Nicius and Niciánus, who come to inspect the goods in search of fine treasures, spices, or any delicacy suitable for the king's son and his companions at table. The supposed merchants offer "certain potions for drinking," made from rare Armenian herbs and so fragrant that Egypt has never known their equal.[193] The language

[192] Lynneth Miller Renberg, "Priests, Cursed Carolers, and Pastoral Care in Handlyng Synne, Of Shrifte and Penance, and Instructions to His Son," in *The Cursed Carolers in Context*, 106-7.

[193] *Dínus saga*, 43.

here carefully replays the earlier charm of the apple and the first enchanted drink, highlighting its sweetness, rarity, fragrance, and foreignness combine to make the object desirable before it is dangerous. The merchants then insist, again as before, that they wish to see Dínus and share the excellent drink with him. The scene thus depends upon the reestablishment of trust under altered conditions, with wonder and appetite once more serving as the entry point for manipulation.

The brothers' fear of recognition is briefly voiced again when Niciánus warns them against repeating the deception of the former visitors, even threatening the gallows if he discovers such fraud. Yet the warning remains impotent. The disguised men deny any connection to prior trickery, and Nicius himself observes that they do not resemble the earlier deceivers in appearance. Gold and gemstones again are used in the exchange, clothes are swapped, and the disguised agents are admitted before Dínus, who believes them to be his own men. The enchanted drink is shared among the prince and his companions, and each man receives his portion. They praise its fragrance and sweetness, declaring that never before have they tasted anything like it. The counterfeit envoys then withdraw, change clothes once more, rejoin their ship, and return safely to Bláland, where Philotemia rewards them generously for their labor. The entire operation is executed with an efficiency that underscores both the continuity and the refinement of her methods.

The effect of the potion is immediate and all-too familiar in the setting of romance, where foods and drinks given to suitors are almost always nefarious in nature.[194] Dínus and his companions drink, go to bed, fall swiftly asleep, and awaken seized once more by the same lovesickness and unbearable passion that the earlier enchantment had produced. The text itself marks the repetition explicitly, refusing to dwell at length on what follows because "everything happened in the same manner as before," they ride as quickly as possible back to Bláskumia in Bláland. The narrative no longer needs to labor over the mechanics of induced desire, because both reader and characters have already passed through this structure once. The more important detail is how Philotemia uses the recurrence of longing to lead Dínus into a second, more grotesque humiliation. Enchantment has become a cyclical apparatus. Rather than learning from prior disgrace, the prince is made to repeat his movement toward the very site of his undoing.

Philotemia once again seeks counsel with her father before Dínus's arrival. She tells the king that the prince will come the next day and instructs him to show no sign of displeasure over what has previously passed between them. The king says little, instead remarking once more that her plans do not seem likely to end honorably. As before, however, the court outwardly receives Dínus with grace. The feast is enlarged, and he is welcomed with all the appearances of affection, though the text notes pointedly that their hearts are not in it. This discrepancy between outward display and inward intention becomes one of the governing tensions of the entire episode. Philotemia herself approaches Dínus affectionately and asks that neither of them mentions the tricks already played between them. She reframes the earlier humiliations as a test of skill and cunning, adding that a woman's nature could hardly have aided his craft and wisdom and promising that henceforth she will do everything according to his will. The speech is

[194] Cf., Michael Lawson, "Weaponizing the Feast: Type-Scene Analysis in Clári saga," The Bryggen Papers Main Series no. 12 (2026): 17-32.

expertly pitched. It flatters, excuses, and seduces all at once. Because Dínus remains tormented by fervent love, he receives these assurances with joy and relief.

The transition from feast to Philotemia's bedchamber is one of marked rapidity. After only a short time drinking that evening, Dínus asks to depart, and he and his companions go to the king's daughter's castle. Philotemia and her maidens soon join them there, warmly declaring that now no deceit should prevent Dínus from receiving all he desires.[195] The maidens serve the men toward the beds, each pairing with one of the company, and Philotemia herself climbs into bed dressed in a silk gown. The scene is framed as if the earlier interruption and violence have been fully replaced by cooperation and fulfillment. Yet the decisive act comes through another female intermediary. Philotemia calls for Selicula and orders her to bring the "sleep basins" and serve them all.[196] The drink is administered, and as soon as the men consume it, they fall into a deep sleep upon their cushions. Once again Dínus is conquered through his stomach.

When Dínus and his companions awaken, it is already well into the morning, the sun at its third hour. The maidens are gone, and the men immediately sense something wrong in their heads. They soon discover that flesh-grown horns have appeared upon their foreheads, as large as those of an old ox. Each man has four horns, deeply rooted in the bone and so painful that they cannot bear to touch them. The horns damage more than Dínus's appearance. His altered body becomes incompatible with the courtly identity that had previously sustained his reputation.[197] Dínus had hidden his beauty beneath a veil and guarded access to his castle in order to control how others see him. Philotemia's deception has given him a body that cannot be concealed. The horns mark him as excessive, animalized, and ridiculous. The prince who defined himself through singular beauty is made singular again, but in a form that destroys the very distinction he wanted to preserve.

The moral vocabulary associated with horns makes Dínus and his companions' transformation all the more shameful. Returning to Gregory the Great, in book 31 of his *Moralia in Job*, he states that "Pride can be seen as a horn."[198] The compiler of *Dínus saga*, thus, gives the prince a horn for each of his prides, and propagates this number across his retinue. Similarly, there is a biblical context for horns being associated with sin. In the Book of Psalms, horns are described as the equipment of sinners: "I said to the wicked, 'deal not wickedly,' and to the sinners, 'lift not up your horn.'"[199] There is also a folkloric logic behind the association of a magical source bestowing horns upon a person after it is consumed. A Gaelic folktale describes such an event: "So there he was in the island alone, no one with him but himself. He came across

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[195] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 44.

[196] Ibid., 44.

[197] Hendrik Lambertus, *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern: Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Fremden in den originalen Riddarasögur* (Tübingen and Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2013), 227-35.

[198] Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job, vol. 3, part 2, Books XXX-XXXV* (Oxford and London: John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington, 1850), 425.

[199] *Psalms* 75:4.

some red apples, and ate them, and two huge deer's antlers grew upon him, so heavy that he was unable to raise his head. He endeavoured to find out how to get them off by trying every sort [or living plant], and he ate another sort of apple, and the antlers fell off." [200] In *Dínus saga*, the transformation is both corporeal and symbolic. Earlier humiliations had left their bodies scourged, blackened, and publicly mocked and now, here, their bodies themselves have become visibly monstrous, marked in a form legible as ridicule to the reader. At the same time, all the burning desire they had previously felt for the maidens vanishes at once. The lovesickness that had driven them back to Bláskumia is replaced by a new feeling of utter shame.

Dínus calls his companions to leave the chamber at once before the full extent of the shame becomes known, and they attempt to recover their horses and flee the city. Even this is physically difficult, since they are so sore they can scarcely move. Outside, however, they find the horses already prepared, weapons laid upon them, as if their departure has itself been staged in advance for maximum visibility. Mounting with difficulty, they ride away while once again hearing loud cries behind them all while the city's inhabitants proclaim them horned scoundrels who have brought shame, torment, and near-death upon themselves. As with the earlier scourging, private enchantment becomes civic mockery almost instantly. The men's efforts to escape only carry them more visibly into a chorus of derision.

3.5.5 A murder of maidens

Dínus falling into Philotemia's trap a second time is further proof of his earnest belief in his own superiority. His subsequent humiliation is the result of a sustained strategy in which he assumes he is the greater of the pair. Philotemia repeatedly exploits his trust as well as his reputation for pridefulness. The prince's own conduct opens him up to these traps, as they demonstrate a fatal susceptibility. He is deceived not only because Philotemia is cunning, but because he continually returns, continually seeks to hear her words, and continually hopes that the contest has yielded to peace. The narrative therefore refines its portrait of both figures at once by portraying Philotemia as increasingly methodical in deception, and Dínus as increasingly trapped in a cycle where desire and pride drive him back into the very conditions of his undoing. The symmetry is unmistakable in its retaliatory reversal, as Philotemia becomes subject to the same coercive desire she had first weaponized against Dínus, while her bodily transformation makes visible the pride and appetite she had presumed to master in him.

After the second humiliation, Dínus again withdraws with his men to the valley outside the city, but once more he cannot relinquish his fixation on Philotemia or leave the contest unfinished. He tells his companions that he wishes to return to the city in order to hear the princess's praise and learn what she is saying. The phrasing is ironic from the start as what he seeks is not reconciliation, but access to the recollection of his own defeat as it is being recounted within Philotemia's chamber. Returning secretly to the castle, he discovers a vantage point at a small hole near a glass window and looks in. There he sees Philotemia seated upon a golden chair, combing her hair with a golden comb while boasting to the other women of the

[200] J. G. McKay, "Gaelic Folktale," *Folk-Lore* 36 no. 2 (1925), 156-157.

victory they have won over Dínus and his men.[201] The scene is carefully staged with Philotemia appearing enthroned, adorned, and self-possessed, her bodily grooming and verbal triumph elevating her to a position of feminine, and perhaps more importantly, royal mastery. Dínus, by contrast, is reduced to the position of an unseen watcher, literally peering through an aperture at the woman who has publicly dishonored him.[202]

It is from this compromised but observant position that he initiates his next counterstroke. Reaching into his pouch, he takes out an apple, divides it into forty pieces, and begins to throw them one by one through the hole into the hall. The first fragment falls into Philotemia's lap and among the folds of her clothes. Its effect is immediate and sensory before it is interpretive: an extraordinary sweetness rises from it; unlike anything she has encountered before. Philotemia at once supplies the meaning. Convinced by the fragrance, she declares that this delightful morsel has come from Paradise itself and reads it as absolute proof that God has been pleased by the way Dínus has been outplayed and deceived. The scene is one of profound irony. She interprets the apple not as a weapon sent by her adversary, but as divine confirmation of her own triumph. In that moment the fruit becomes an instrument of misreading as much as enchantment. Philotemia's confidence in her interpretive mastery is itself the opening through which Dínus acts.

Because the first piece is too small to divide among them all, Philotemia invites the maidens to kneel and pray that God will reveal the matter further and allow them all to share in the heavenly gift. They respond by raising their hands to heaven and singing *Kyrie eleison* loudly. Philotemia's own pride is communicated to the reader through this seemingly liturgical parody. She and her maidens perform a pious ritual of gratitude before an object that in fact comes from the very man she believes herself to have conquered. The sacred frame is thus hollowed out from within. Dínus, still outside and weakened from his prior suffering, finds the spectacle "somewhat amusing," and while they remain absorbed in prayer, he continues dropping in the apple fragments until the whole fruit has been distributed.[203] Philotemia then shares the pieces among the women, and when they taste them the already wondrous fragrance intensifies beyond anything the mere fragments had promised. The episode turns on a sequence of responses that mirrors earlier enchanted gifts while decisively reversing their direction. The apple that once served Philotemia's designs now becomes the medium through which Dínus transmits affliction back into her own enclosed female space.

After the women have eaten, they go to sleep, while Dínus quietly withdraws and rejoins his companions. The next morning, as in earlier apple scenes, the enchantment manifests first as

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[201] This scene is, perhaps, evocative of the Melusine tradition. Cf., Lydia Zeldenrust, *The Mélusine Romance in Medieval Europe: Translation, Circulation, and Material Contexts* (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2020).

[202] Several romance texts from the continent invoke this voyeur aspect of the male character. For examples of this, Cf., Andrew James Johnston, "The Keyhole Politics of Chaucerian Theatricality: Voyeurism in The Knight's Tale," *Medieval English Theatre* 24 (2002): 3-26; Elizabeth S. Leet, "Objectification, Empowerment, and the Male Gaze in the Lanval Corpus," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 42.1 (2016): 75-87; and A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge, 1993).

[203] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 47.

bodily and emotional disturbance upon waking. Philotemia and the maidens rise from sleep sighing sorrowfully. Philotemia speaks first, and her speech directly recalls Dínus's earlier lovesick complaint:

"þuiad mitt hiarta brennur aff girnd Dijnus k(öngs)s(onar) og ei veit eg huorsu heilnæmt þad epli heffur vered, sem vær áátumm j giær kuelld, og ei ætla eg þad hafi aff hinumm sent verid, helldur higg eg þui filgt hafa fulann krafft, þuiad þesse brune sem eg heffe mä ei vera af ødru enn illu kinstre…"[204]	"For my heart burns with desire for Prince Dínus and I do not know how healthy that apple was, which we ate last night. And I do not think it was sent from heaven; rather, I suspect it was accompanied by a foul power. For this burning that I feel cannot come from anything other than wicked arts."

Her recognition, belated though it may be, is precise. Philotemia, who had earlier induced lovesickness in Dínus through enchanted food and drink, now diagnoses in herself the same coercive erotic affliction and even identifies it as the product of malefic enchantment. Her maidens immediately confirm that they suffer the identical burning passion. What had previously been distributed among Dínus and his companions through the apple and through potion now circulates back through Philotemia's own female community. The symmetry is unmistakable in its retaliatory reversal. The next transformation escalates the reversal from inward affliction to outward metamorphosis. As soon as Philotemia and the maidens rise from bed, wings feathered like those of crows appear upon their bodies, and they take on the coloration of those birds. Lifting themselves from the ground, they fly out of the castle in the direction of Dínus and his horned companions. The metamorphosis is extraordinary from a physical standpoint of changing the women into birds, and also from a metaphysical standpoint as it renders both visible and mobile the lovesickness they have ingested. In the *Metamorphoses*, the daughters of Pierus challenge the Muses because they are swollen with pride over their number and talent. After their defeat, they are changed into chattering magpies, birds marked by mimicry and restless speech:

> "So spoke the Muse. And now was heard the sound of pennons in the air, and voices, too, gave salutations from the lofty trees. Minerva, thinking they were human tongues, looked up in question whence the perfect words; but on the boughs, nine ugly magpies perched, those mockers of all sounds, which now complained their hapless fate. And as she wondering stood, Urania, goddess of the Muse, rejoined;— 'Look, those but lately worsted in dispute augment the number of unnumbered birds.—Pierus was their father, very rich in lands of Pella; and their mother (called Evippe of Paeonia) when she brought them forth, nine times evoked, in labours nine, Lucina's aid.—Unduly puffed with pride, because it chanced their number equalled ours these stupid sisters, hither to engage in wordy contest, fared through many towns;—through all Haemonia and Achaia came to us, and said;— 'Oh, cease your empty songs, attuned to dulcet numbers, that deceive the vulgar, untaught throng. If aught is yours of confidence, O Thespian Deities contend with us: our number equals yours. We will not be defeated by your arts; nor shall your songs prevail.—Then, conquered, give Hyantean

[204] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 48.

Aganippe; yield to us the Medusean Fount;—and should we fail, we grant Emathia's plains, to where uprise Paeonia's peaks of snow.—Let chosen Nymphs award the prize—.'"[205]

The women in *Dínus saga* are driven bodily out of their domestic enclosure and into pursuit. The transformation also places them in a striking relation to Dínus's earlier disgrace. He and his men ride in shame, avoiding inhabited places because of the horns grown upon their heads, while above and around them now follow the crow-maidens, who are now living emblems of the enchantment's reversal. No one in the city sees their departure because it happens so early, before the household awakes. The pursuit unfolds outside the ostensible panopticon of civic witness in the saga, in a liminal space between city and wilderness.

The journey back to Egypt therefore unfolds under a doubled burden. Dínus and his men remain horned, shamed, and anxious to avoid public scrutiny, relying on a servant to procure food because they do not wish to be seen in their altered state. Philotemia and the maidens, transformed into crows, fly with them day and night and sustain themselves only on fruit from trees or apples. Their new avian condition is not detached from the enchantment that produced it, simply because they continue to live from the same symbolic economy of fruit that first conveyed desire into them. The movement from Bláskumia to Egypt is a miserable procession in which both parties remain marked by one another's retaliatory magic. Dínus bears the visible signs of Philotemia's earlier mockery while Philotemia bears the compulsive desire and bestial transformation that his apple has imposed in reply.

When all arrive in Egypt at night, the prince and his company immediately enter the castle and take to their beds in great discomfort, while the crows perch upon the walls surrounding the stronghold. This scene creates a fascinating spatial arrangement where Dínus and his men are enclosed within, immobilized by the painful weight of their horns, while Philotemia and the maidens remain outside, exposed upon the walls, enduring hunger, thirst, and cold to the point of near death. Dínus orders his men to feed the birds, a gesture that betrays a bizarre intimacy that now seems to bind both persecutor and victim. Dínus and his retinue languish, as their horns weigh the men down so heavily that they cannot rise from their beds, and it is told that their servants begin to fear they will die within days if no help comes. Outside, the crows likewise suffer nearly to death.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has traced the movement of exemplary narration from its earliest form as rhetorical argument to its usage within homiletic literature and then into vernacular romance. The exemplum presents a case to which a general claim can be associated. Set within the frame of preaching, it becomes a portable story that can be used to give a relatable model for a moral message. When this tradition enters Icelandic learned prose circles, these stories are adapted to teach and entertain. Saga romance provided another narrative environment in which exemplary logic could be adapted, expanded, and joined to longer structures of character and consequence. The argument has been that exemplary logic supplies one of the principal mechanisms through

[205] Ovid, *Metamorphoses (Books I-II-III-IV-V) In English Blank Verse*, trans. Brookes More (Boston: The Cornhill Publishing Company, 1922), 187-188.

which *Dínus saga drambláta* structures its narrative. It serves as an appropriate test case for demonstrating how a story can communicate the norms for proper conduct by placing its action within a recognizable sequence of cause and consequence.

As an original chivalric romance, *Dínus saga drambláta* belongs to a history of adaptation that begins with Latin rhetoric. Its episodes work within a moral register that positions conduct within a sequence of tricks and reversals that occur between the royal children of Alexandria and Bláland. Dínus's beauty, guarded dwelling, contempt for women, and appetite for novelty position pride as a flaw that can be exploited. Philotemia understands this and gains entry to Dínus through the very features of his character he is so known for. Her first victories expose the weaknesses inside Dínus's reputation, while his subsequent retaliations draw her into the same contest for control. The pair's rivalry thus turns both figures into examples, each royal child's pride made readable through the pressure one exerts on the other. The bodily transformations inflicted upon the characters of Dínus and Philotemia contain the saga's strongest moralizing force. Through public exposure of nakedness and bodily transformation, both Dínus and Philotemia's inward conditions are made patently visible to all. Both attempt to control how they are seen, yet the saga repeatedly makes their bodies disclose what courtly performance tries to conceal. The characters of Anachorita and Heremita further define the limits of this pattern by showing that correction requires a different type of knowledge than that which is possessed by these highly educated dueling royals.

These elements show that *Dínus saga* uses exemplary logic as a principle of romance composition. Its episodes teach by arrangement. Pride is given form through action; action produces visible consequence; consequence enters memory through repetition, spectacle, and reversal. The saga therefore extends the compilatory model established in Chapter two by showing how one inherited clerical procedure could organize the movement of a vernacular romance from within.

Chapter four turns from exemplary narrative to sententious and proverbial speech. Just as this chapter has examined how *Dínus saga* makes proper conduct decipherable through episodes, the next examines how compact verbal forms contextualize the meanings produced by those episodes. Though sententiae belong to the same learned environment as exempla, and are known to travel with them, they operate differently. They compress judgment into speech, and their force depends on when, where, and by whom they are spoken. Reading them beside the saga's exemplary structures makes it possible to see how *Dínus saga* joins event and utterance in its larger critique of the excesses of pride, the limits of knowledge, and the abuse of power.

Chapter 4

The Sententious Speech of *Dínus saga drambláta*

"If the beginning would shed a brighter light without disturbing the sequence of its subject, let it take up a maxim. Let the maxim descend in no way to the particular but raise its head toward something more general. With fresh grace, let it refuse to remember the shape of the material or, as though disdainful, to sit in its lap. Let it stand above the given subject yet face it directly. Let it say nothing of it but draw its thought from it."[1]

— Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*

4.1 Introduction

The writings of Geoffrey of Vinsauf provide a productive place from which to begin a chapter on sententious speech because they belong to the same university and clerical culture that has informed the previous chapters of this study, and because they offer a practical example of how the embedded moral or didactic message of a story begins before the story is even written. As a historical figure, Geoffrey of Vinsauf has proven difficult to recover with any real degree of certainty. In the introduction to the edition of his famous works, the *Poetria nova*, Ernest Gallo notes that the firm evidence establishes only that Geoffrey had lived in London before going to Rome and that he was in Rome during the pontificate of Innocent III, to whom the work was dedicated.[2] Even the status of his surname has been questioned, with Roger Parr suggesting that *Vinsauf* may have been a *nom de guerre*, "de vino salvo," which itself was derived from Geoffrey's treatise on the conservation of wine, *De vino vitibus conservandis*.[3] Though his origins and much of his existence may remain obscure, his works had a long and celebrated afterlife. Marjorie Curry Woods observes that his treatise on the composition of poetry, the *Poetria nova,* served as the fundamental textbook of rhetorical composition for three centuries after it was written and was used at several levels in medieval schools and in some Central European universities.[4] Within this work, Geoffrey recommends the sententia as a means of

[1] Geoffrey of Vinsauf, "*Poetria nova*," in *Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle: Recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du Moyen Âge*, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1924), 201: "Si pars prima velit majus diffundere lumen, THematis intacta serie, sententia sumpta. Ad speciale nihil declinet, sed caput edat. Altius ad quoddam geneale; novoque lepore. Materiae formam nolit meminisse, sed ejus. Abneget in gremio, quasi dedignata, sedere: Supera thema datum sistat, sed spectet ad illud. Recta fronte; nijil dicat, sed cogitet inde."

[2] Ernest Gallo, *The Poetria Nova and Its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 135.

[3] Roger P. Parr, trans., *Geoffrey of Vinsauf: Documentum de Modo et Arte Dictandi et Versificandi (Instruction in the Method and Art of Speaking and Versifying)* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968), 35.

[4] Marjorie Curry Woods, "A Medieval Rhetoric Goes to School—and to the University: The Commentaries on the *Poetria nova*," *Rhetorica* 9, no. 1 (1991): 56.

illuminating narrative material without merely restating its content. The maxim, in his opinion, should draw a general logic from the subject from which it is drawn. Although he describes the use of such a rhetorical device at the opening of a composition in this particular case, he goes on to describe how this can be placed in the middle or at the end of a sequence as well.

Geoffrey's regard for sententia, therefore, establishes the primary premise of this chapter, specifically that the rhetorical meaning behind a story is yet another lens through which it can be evaluated. The primary difficulty in applying this type of evaluative approach to *Dínus saga drambláta,* however, is that the saga does not present its moral concerns through explicit declarations as some of its contemporaries do. Its meaning often emerges when the events of the narrative have placed a character under pressure, such as when they have been outmaneuvered by their enemy or when they must impart vital counsel that should be remembered in anticipation of an upcoming challenge. In such moments, both speech and event become intertwined, with the former evaluating the latter. Further, these verbal utterances effectively crystallize the moral weight of a scene in a shape that can be drawn upon by the memory of a reader, functioning in much the same way as the exemplum, yet in an even more compact, pithy expression of communal, or as will be illustrated in the case of *Dínus saga*, perceived proverbial wisdom.

4.2 Sententious Speech and Proverbiality

Evaluating the proverbial speech of *Dínus saga drambláta* requires a method that can distinguish the authority of proverbs from the much wider field of memorable utterance. The problem inherent in such an approach is partly one of source, as some sayings can clearly be connected to externally attested proverb traditions, while others only resemble proverbial speech through form, tone, or placement. That difference affects how evidence should be handled. A saying with external parallels, for example, can be discussed as part of a proverb tradition, while an unattested saying must be approached more cautiously through the qualities that make it appear proverb-like through its context. For instance, once a short utterance enters a narrative scene, it should be interpreted through the speaker who delivers it, the context or situation within which it occurs, and the consequences that follow from its reception. This chapter, therefore, uses the term "sententious speech" for its broadest working category, while proverb scholarship supplies the method for asking how utterances can sound older, wider, and more repeatable than the immediate voice that speaks it. A proverb often sounds as though it does not belong only to the speaker who uses it. It appears to come from a shared store of communal experience, and it can usually be transferred from one situation to another. Further, it carries the impression of having been tested by prior use, as though people have repeated it due to its proven utility.

The term *sententia*, therefore, is the necessary starting point for this chapter because it allows for the discussion of condensed meaning without making every such utterance into a proverb. Geoffrey's opening principle has already outlined *sententia* as the fundamental meaning of words; namely the sense, thought, or judgment that gives words life. In such a rhetorical model, narrative form should be dependent upon a preceding cluster of meaning. This relationship between statement and implication appears in Aristotle's description of the γνώμη, ("gnōmē") or "maxim." He states that, "a maxim is a statement, not however concerning particulars, as, for instance, what sort of a man Iphicrates was, but general; it does not even deal with all general things, as for instance that the straight is the opposite of the crooked, but with the

objects of human actions, and with what should be chosen or avoided with reference to them."[5] The maxim is thus embedded within the sphere of conduct, in that it brings a particular circumstance under a broader understanding of consequence.

Latin Christian and scholastic culture further gave such a practice of compact formulation a long institutional life. Scholasticism made sentence-form part of the machinery of teaching, reading, and commentary. Isidore of Seville's *Sententiae*, Prosper of Aquitaine's Augustinian sentences, Robert of Melun's *Liber Sententiarum* or *Summa Theologica*, Peter Lombard's *Libri quattuor sententiarum*, and the commentary traditions that formed around Lombard all testify to a culture in which meaning could be preserved, ordered, and transmitted through short statements.[6] Indeed, Robert of Melun's career provides a germane case study for the institutional aspect of sententious wisdom. As an Englishman trained in France under Hugh of St Victor and Abelard, he taught on Mont Sainte-Geneviève, later settled at Melun, and counted among his pupils such renowned individuals as John of Salisbury, Thomas a Becket, and Roger of Worcester. David Knowles identifies his chief work as the *Liber Sententiarum* or *Summa Theologica*, which was highly celebrated in its own day and treated as an important link between the methods of Abelard and Hugh of St Victor and the age of Peter Lombard.[7] Robert's career places *sententia* among teachers, pupils, books, and commentary, where thought became material for instruction and transmission. In such a setting, proverbial wisdom statements belong to learned analysis as one of the forms through which such analysis becomes both teachable as well as enduring.

Perhaps the primary cause of such a durability within the proverb's form is that it tends to claim authority by sounding older than the moment in which it is spoken and communicates its truth in a register that insinuates that it has been tested before the present moment. Shirley Arora begins from such a premise, suggesting that proverbs are most certainly felt to be traditional and that this traditionality gives them a "historically derived authority" or the force of "community-sanctioned wisdom."[8] Proverb scholarship is useful even when a given utterance cannot be identified as an attested proverb because it offers a way to recognize why a sentence may still feel proverbial. Oftentimes, a proverb may even seem as though it does not belong only to the speaker who uses it. Arora's distinction between traditionality and perceived proverbiality is essential for examining saga speech whose external history is often uncertain. A reader or

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[5] Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric*, 2.21, trans. John Henry Freese, Loeb Classical Library 193 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1926), 279.

[6] See Graham Barrett, "God's Librarian: Isidore of Seville and His Literary Agenda," in *A Companion to Isidore of Seville*, ed. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 42-100; David Knowles, *The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket: Being the Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 28-30; Steven Muhlberger, "Prosper's *Epitoma Chronicon*: Was There an Edition of 443?" *Classical Philology* 81, no. 3 (1986): 240-44; Philipp W. Rosemann, *The Story of a Great Medieval Book: Peter Lombard's Sentences* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

[7] Knowles, *Episcopal Colleagues*, 29.

[8] Shirley L. Arora, "The Perception of Proverbiality," in *Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (New York: Garland, 1994), 3-4.

listener actually may not know whether a sentence has circulated widely, yet the sentence may still ask to be heard as proverbial due to how it adopts proverb style. That style can arise from syntax when the ordering of words feels patterned rather than ordinary, such as speech that invokes a clear call to what "they say" rather than what the speakers themselves are saying. Perceived proverbiality can therefore arise from cues that detach the sentence from ordinary speech, including introductory formulas, performance cues, repetition, and resemblance to known patterns.[9] These features cannot prove that a saying is either traditional or proverbial, but they can explain why it sounds as though it belongs to a shared store of wisdom.

Some suggest that the study of proverbs in literature should rightly begin with identification of the proverb before turning toward its placement. Wolfgang Mieder, for example, insists that proverbs should be located, sourced, and verified wherever possible, yet he also argues that literary proverb study cannot stop once the verbal item has been found.[10] The critic must ask how the saying works in its new setting, investigating who speaks it, how it enters the scene, and what the surrounding work makes of it. His formulation that a proverb in a collection is dead and lives only when used suggests that a collection preserves a saying, while a narrative makes the saying act.[11] Once a proverb enters a literary work, its previous life meets the new instance in which it has been absorbed. Relatedly, Roger D. Abrahams and Barbara A. Babcock describe literary proverbs as signs that name recurrent situations and gather meaning through use across contexts.[12] A proverb can make an event recognizable by attaching it to an older pattern. The work that receives it can also alter that pattern. A saying may console in one scene and accuse in another. It may offer sound counsel, or it may reveal the limits of the person who speaks it. The inherited form does not remain untouched once it enters narrative speech.

Medieval narrative makes this mobility especially poignant when proverbs are embedded inside a larger work. Their boundaries are sharply marked enough for them to retain formal force within the larger text, but permeable enough to be inflected by speaker, scene, and narrative design. Nancy Mason Bradbury describes such embedded proverbs as "generative miniature theories," arguing that they can transform the situations to which they are applied, indicate courses of action, encapsulate worldviews, console or reconcile their recipients, and mediate lived experience.[13] Her later work further argues that the origins of a proverb may remain uncertain even when the "perception of proverbiality" confers its status as usable wisdom.[14] A literary text can therefore make a proverb-like utterance operate with authority even when the historical status of the saying remains unresolved. Additionally, Bradbury's account of proverb-

[9] Arora, "Perception of Proverbiality," 13-15.

[10] Wolfgang Mieder, "The Essence of Literary Proverb Studies," New York Folklore Quarterly 30, no. 1 (1974): 66-76.

[11] Ibid., 73-74.

[12] Roger D. Abrahams and Barbara A. Babcock, "The Literary Use of Proverbs," in Wise Words: Essays on the Proverb, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (New York: Garland, 1994), 415-37.

[13] Nancy Mason Bradbury, "The Proverb as Embedded Microgenre in Chaucer and *The Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*," *Exemplaria* 27, nos. 1-2 (2015): 55-57.

[14] Ibid., 37-38.

conscious reading argues that a proverb or proverb-like utterance may be small, but it can alter the way a larger fiction is read. She maintains that attention to Chaucer's proverbs reveals local structures of meaning that modern readers can easily pass over, especially because premodern readers were trained to notice sentences and proverbs as marked units within longer works.[15] A compact utterance can therefore do more than state a lesson like redirecting a scene, inviting a competing interpretation, or narrowing a story's meaning.

4.3 Icelandic Wisdom-Speech and Learned Vernacular Practice

Old Norse-Icelandic prose inherited several ways of making wisdom available as speech through multiple channels. *Málsháttr* and *orðskviðr* can designate a proverb in a stricter sense, whereas *spakmæli* and *heilræði* point toward wise saying and prudent counsel more broadly. These terms allow proverb, sentence, counsel, and remembered instruction to stand near one another inside vernacular prose without becoming identical.

Within the second portion of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, *Málskrúðsfræði*, or "the lore of rhetoric," Óláfr "hvítaskáld" Þórðarson adapts Latin grammatical and rhetorical learning for an Icelandic learned audience by explaining forms of verbal adornment, faults, and figures through Old Norse terminology and examples. Óláfr cites the Latin saying *malum non vitatur, nisi cognitum* ("evil is not avoided unless it is known") and renders it as *eigi má illan löst varast, nema hann sé fyrri kenndur*, ("one cannot avoid a bad fault unless it has first been recognized").[16] In other words, one learns beautiful speech by learning the defects that must be avoided. The saying is therefore both ethical and technical at the same time, as it carries evaluative force into Icelandic prose through the practice of learned composition. Such an example shows that translation did not have to produce a native proverb in order to produce usable Icelandic wisdom-speech. A sentence could remain visibly learned, even school-like, while still entering vernacular use. Once such a formulation entered Icelandic, its origin did not determine all later functions. It could be Latin in ancestry, Icelandic in wording, pedagogical in its immediate setting, and sententious in literary use.

The medieval Icelandic reception of Cato illuminates the vernacular life of proverbial moral instruction. *Hugsvinnsmál*, or "Sayings of the Wise-Minded One," for example, adapts the *Disticha Catonis*, one of the most durable school texts of medieval Europe, into the shape of Old Norse wisdom poetry. The Latin collection offered short instruction in conduct and practical judgment under the authority of Cato. Brittany Schorn notes that the *Disticha* became a fundamental text of Christian learning despite its late antique roots, and that its form allowed it

[15] Ibid., 12-13.

[16] *Den tredje og fjærde grammatiske afhandling i Snorres Edda tilligemed de grammatiske afhandlingers prolog og to andre tillæg*, ed. Björn Magnússon Ólsen. SUGNL 12. (Copenhagen: Knudtzon, 1884), 12. Cf., also Hermann Pálsson, "Malum non vitatur, nisi cognitum: A Moral Theme in Old Icelandic Literature," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 1, 1968, 27-28.

to be adapted to different moral and religious settings.[17] Iceland participated in that transmission early, since the *First Grammatical Treatise* cites both Latin and an unattributed Old Norse rendering of a Cato saying, and *Hugsvinnsmál* is usually dated around the early thirteenth century.[18]

The scribe of *Hugsvinnsmál* treated his translation venture as composition rather than tedious mechanical transfer. Victor Frans demonstrates that the Old Norse poem gives Latin moral instruction an Icelandic title, an Icelandic verbal body, and an Icelandic claim to wisdom. The title performs part of that transformation as the Old Norse word *mál* "speech" or "sayings" answers to the Latin *dicta*, while *Hugsvinnr* or "wise-minded" renders Cato through wisdom or clear-sightedness.[19] The translator also knew the Latin source well enough to rearrange sayings according to subject matter.[20] The Icelandic poem therefore engages in the same habits of selection, ordering, and reinterpretation of prior authority that have guided this study as a whole. Indeed, the Icelandic reception of Cato points towards the act of adaptation instantiating a type of cultural ownership. In the fourteenth-century codex AM 764 4to, the *Reynistaðarbók*, a redaction of *Rómverja saga* labels Cato the Younger as "Cato spekingr, er gjört hefir Hugsvinnsmál," or "Cato the wise," who composed *Hugsvinnsmál*.[21] Frans stresses the implication that the Icelandic title appears where the Latin source text might have been expected, and the translation is treated as equivalent to the original despite substantial alteration.[22] A Latin school text had become recognizable as an Icelandic wisdom poem with its own standing. Learned moral instruction could acquire a vernacular literary identity and still retain the force of inherited teaching. The adaptation was lexical, social, and imaginative. Alessia Bauer's study of *Hugsvinnsmál* indicates that Latin moral instruction could become meaningful through Icelandic vocabulary, landscape, and social categories. She highlights an example of the Latin terms *litteras* ("letter") being rendered as *rúnar* ("rune") in the Old Norse, suggesting that the translator could have used *letr* or *stafir*, both expected terms for letters or writing, but chose *rúnar*, a word with cultural resonances to hidden knowledge and traditional learning.[23] Bauer also notes the rendering of Latin *patria* ("fatherland") through *óðalsjǫrð*, ("ancestral land") which shifts emphasis from

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[17] Brittany Schorn, "*Hugsvinnsmál* and the Old Norse Reception of Cato," in *Sages et sagesse au Moyen Âge*, ed. Armelle Leclercq, Nicolas Garnier, and Laurent Hablot, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2018, 311-12.

[18] Ibid., 312-13.

[19] Victor Frans, "Translating Cato: Hugsvinnsmál and the Old Norse Reception of the Disticha Catonis," *Gripla* 30, 2019, 42-43.

[20] Ibid., 47-48.

[21] Ibid., 41-42. Cf., also AM 764 4to, 13v "(…7 med ham kato spekingr er g(ö)[r]t hef[r] hugsvin[n]z mál...") https://handrit.is/manuscript/view/da/AM04-0764/47?iabr=on#page/13v/mode/2up

[22] Frans, "Translating Cato," 42-43.

[23] Alessia Bauer, "Die Adaption der lateinischen Dicta Catonis an die isländischen Rezipienten," in Analecta Septentrionalia: Beiträge zur nordgermanischen Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte, ed. Wilhelm Heizmann, Klaus Böldl, and Heinrich Beck (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 44-45.

Roman civic belonging toward inherited landholding, a category with strong Scandinavian legal and social associations. Additionally, she points to the replacement of the story's erstwhile Mediterranean maritime setting with a more northern landscape of fjord, including the term *byrr*, ("favorable sailing wind") one that would be both familiar and recognizable to those accustomed to saga diction.[24] These changes help the reader enter the translated text through local forms of land, kinship, movement, and speech. Classical Latin moral instruction is thus reinterpreted through Icelandic social and literary forms.

Adapted wisdom could also circulate without preserving its original wording intact. Bauer notes that *Hugsvinnsmál* affected more than one hundred Old Norse works, with parallels ranging from individual words or phrases to paraphrased or nearly literal sentences in poetry and prose.[25] This evidence bears directly on the method used here. Even when no direct Cato quotation can be claimed for a saga, Icelandic literary culture had long been trained to receive short moral instruction through adaptation, paraphrase, rephrasing, and local use. Brittany Schorn, for example, treats both *Hávamál* and the *Disticha Catonis* as flexible wisdom traditions whose authority did not depend on verbal fixity, arguing instead that the Old Norse translator's use of the ljóðaháttr meter does much more than render Latin material into the vernacular, but rather places inherited moral instruction within a form that an Icelandic audience would recognize as ancient and, therefore, authoritative and native to the idiom of wisdom poetry.[26] A sentence could be recognized as wise because it belonged to a mode of discourse, not because it preserved an original text unchanged. *Hugsvinnsmál* also changes the scene in which Catonic wisdom is heard. The Latin *Disticha* present instruction through written authority, imperatives, and the generalized paternal voice of teaching. *Hugsvinnsmál* recasts that posture through conventions associated with Old Norse wisdom poetry. Its audience is invited to hear what the wise man taught his son, and the poem is said to be spoken before men.[27] Latin school authority thereby enters an oral scene of instruction. A father speaks, a son hears, an audience receives, and the poem presumably becomes a vessel for remembered conduct.

The later Icelandic history of Cato confirms the durability of this vernacular wisdom culture. Guðrún Brjánsdóttir's study of Jón Bjarnason's *málsháttakvæði* in AM 427 12mo begins from the premise that moral teaching has long been expressed through *málshættir* and *spakmæli* designed to teach people how to act rightly. She places the *Hávamál* and the *Disticha Catonis* within the same broad history of durable wisdom collections, noting that such texts could be read, adapted, and reinterpreted over long periods.[28] Four Icelandic translations of the *Disticha* survive, beginning with the thirteenth-century *Hugsvinnsmál*, and Jón Bjarnason's seventeenth-

[24] Ibid., 47-50.

[25] Ibid., 36.

[26] Brittany Schorn, *Speaker and Authority in Old Norse Wisdom Poetry* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 142.

[27] Schorn, "Hugsvinnsmál," 314-16.

[28] Guðrún Brjánsdóttir, "'Ráð hef ég kennd í kvæði': Málsháttakvæði Jóns Bjarnasonar í AM 427 12mo," *Gripla* 35, (2024): 309-310.

century translation was printed in the Hólar Cato of 1620 alongside the Latin text, apparently as a schoolbook.[29] The later evidence extends beyond the medieval period, but it confirms the persistence of Icelandic habits of translating, teaching, and reformulating moral speech.

The genre of romance entered Iceland through a comparable habit of vernacular transformation in that both traditions show imported texts becoming functionally Icelandic through translation, copying, and adaptation. The thirteenth-century translation program associated with King Hákon Hákonarson brought French and Anglo-Norman romance into Norse through works such as *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar, Ívens saga, Möttuls saga, Strengleikar, and Elis saga ok Rósamundu*.[30] These translations soon circulated in Iceland. Marianne Kalinke notes that AM 580 4to, dated around 1300-1325, already preserves Icelandic manuscript evidence for translated romance material, including *Elis saga, Flóvents saga, Mágus saga jarls, and Bærings saga*.[31] Romance therefore arrived through the same broad cultural motion evident in wisdom poetry and moral instruction: imported material was translated, copied, adapted, and made available in Icelandic literary form.

Late medieval Icelandic romance also belonged to clerical and intellectual networks that made learned verbal forms available in vernacular prose. Dario Bullitta's study of *Niðrstigningar saga* reconstructs a scholarly environment in which Victorine biblical commentary and related Latin materials were likely available in Iceland around the period when the first redaction of that saga was probably composed at the Skálholt cathedral school. Another of his studies surveys evidence for Norwegian and Icelandic clerics at Saint-Victor and Sainte-Geneviève in the second half of the twelfth century.[32] Michael Micci further offers a more concrete model for recognizing continental learning in an indigenous romance when no single source can be recovered. His argument begins with the marked vocabulary of *amor*. Forms of *amor* and *amur* occur primarily in Icelandic *riddarasögur*, while the Norwegian translations he compares generally render similar French language through native terms such as *ást* and *unna*. *Dínus saga* participates in this distinctive usage when it describes erotic conduct through the paired expressions *elsku leikir* (love play) and *afmörs brögð* (love moves).[33] Micci reads this combination of native and borrowed language as evidence that the saga incorporates a specifically courtly conception of erotic behavior into Icelandic prose. In *Sigurðar saga þögla*, he suggests that the saga reverses the pursuit of Apollo and Daphne, gives Sigurðr transformations and powers of environmental

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[29] Guðrún Brjánsdóttir, "'Ráð hef ég kennd í kvæði': Málsháttakvæði Jóns Bjarnasonar í AM 427 12mo," *Gripla* 35, (2024): 323.

[30] Marianne E. Kalinke, "The Genesis of Courtly Romance in Iceland," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 123, no. 3 (2024): 271-72.

[31] Ibid., 272.

[32] Dario Bullitta, *Niðrstigningar saga: Sources, Transmission, and Theology of the Old Norse "Descent into Hell"*, Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Series 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 85-88 and 92-96; Dario Bullitta, "The Victorine Library and Scholarly Networks Behind *Niðrstigningar saga*," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 123, no. 2 (2024): 215-245.

[33] *Dínus saga*, 64-65.

manipulation resembling those used by Ovidian gods, and amplifies these materials until they acquire a parodic character. The assumed names Amas and Amelon further associate the episode with the Insular tradition of *Amys e Amillyoun* rather than with the Norwegian *Amícus saga ok Amilíus*. Taken together, these features allow Micci to propose that the author encountered Ovidian and courtly materials through Anglo-Norman or English channels and reworked them within an Icelandic narrative rather than simply reproducing a Norwegian translation.[34] Micci's analysis demonstrates the mediation of such materials through the convergence of vocabulary, narrative motif, and rhetorical use. For *Dínus saga*, where direct verbal correspondence is difficult to map, such an approach reinforces both traditional as well as constructed forms of sententious speech. A romance may reveal its participation in clerical and continental literary traditions through the ways it vernacularizes and redeploys inherited forms, even when the precise text or route of transmission cannot be recovered.

Icelandic writers had learned to move thought across forms, from the Latin *distic*h into Old Norse wisdom poem, grammatical maxim into vernacular prose, clerical doctrine into narrative instruction, French romance into saga, written school authority into moralizing poetic teaching. The sententious statements within *Dínus saga* can draw authority from inherited habits of speaking wisdom even when no single source text stands behind them, and the next section turns from this learned vernacular environment to the saga's own mechanics, where spectacle, rivalry, humiliation, and misrecognition prepare the conditions under which sententious speech produces meaning.

4.4 Sententious Speech as Narrative Practice in the *riddarasögur*

Unlike several of its contemporaries in the original *riddarasögur* corpus, *Dínus saga drambláta* uses sententious speech through its own narrative habits rather than by attaching explicit moral declarations to the surface of the story. The scholastic setting discussed above explains why compact wisdom-speech was available to Icelandic romance, but the saga's own method is more local and dramatic. The saga often lets an action establish its meaning before allowing its character to give that meaning a fixed verbal shape. Dínus is shown practicing pride before he is known as *drambláti*, and his humiliation is staged before the people of Bláland turn it into public mockery. Speech gives an already observable pattern a form that can circulate inside the story. Sententious utterance in the saga therefore is procedurally dependent. In other words, a saying can be remembered because the narrative has already taught the reader how to understand the situation in which it appears.

Additionally, exempla collections demonstrate how often medieval writers trusted this partnership between illustrative story and proverbial speech. Hugo O. Bizzarri describes sapiential and exemplary writing as related traditions that served ethical instruction at different scales. A proverb could state a lesson synthetically, while an exemplum could make a lesson

[34] Michael Micci, "Amors Leikir: The Reception of Ovid and the Poetics of Love Games in Late Medieval Iceland," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 125, no. 1 (2026): 1-37.

unfold through an event.[35] Indeed, medieval rhetorical teaching encouraged contact between the two forms, and Bizzarri further notes that Matthew of Vendôme recommended the use of a general sentence at the beginning or end of a narrative, and Geoffrey of Vinsauf observed that beginning from a proverb could clarify the matter to be told.[36] A saying placed before a narrative could orient the audience toward the action, and a saying placed after a narrative could turn completed action into instruction that might be remembered beyond the original case. In their study of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century exempla collections, Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu and Jacques Berlioz begin from the difficulty of identifying proverbial material in such compilations, because a proverb may appear in vernacular form, in Latin, or in a Latinized frame marked by expressions such as *vulgariter dicitur* ("as it is commonly said.")[37] This instability reveals a practice of movement rather than a failure of evidence. A saying could pass through oral to written culture while retaining its ability to sound familiar. Polo de Beaulieu and Berlioz describe such proverbs as *connexions culturelles*, or points of shared understanding between preacher and audience.[38]

The early fourteenth-century exempla collection, *Ci nous dit*, for example, gives a clear instance of such a cooperation in practice. Its compiler uses proverbs with unusual frequency, placing them before a narrative, after a narrative, or within the action itself.[39] Each position alters the proverb's function. A proverb before the story frames the case in advance. A proverb after the story draws a verbal lesson from completed action. A proverb inside the story intervenes where a scene has become interpretively charged. In the same collection, Polo de Beaulieu observes that a proverb or biblical citation may draw the teaching of a fable into a lapidary formula, extracting the "quintessence" of the lesson from the narrative's movement.[40]

Saga prose therefore can be seen to employ a similar rhetorical strategy in its own unique ways. Drawing on the work of Shirley Arora, Richard Harris emphasizes that an artificially produced saying can be perceived as proverbial if it bears enough proverbial markers, while even a genuinely traditional proverb may fail to function proverbially if its audience does not

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[35] Hugo O. Bizzarri, "Introduction: Le passage du proverbe à l'exemplum et de l'exemplum au proverbe," in Tradition des proverbes et des exempla dans l'Occident médiéval / Die Tradition der Sprichwörter und exempla im Mittelalter, ed. Hugo O. Bizzarri and Martin Rohde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 9.

[36] Ibid, 9.

[37] Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu and Jacques Berlioz, "'Car qui a le vilain, a la proie': Les proverbes dans les recueils d'exempla (XIIIe-XIVe siècle)," in Tradition des proverbes et des exempla dans l'Occident médiéval / Die Tradition der Sprichwörter und exempla im Mittelalter, ed. Hugo O. Bizzarri and Martin Rohde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 25-26.

[38] Ibid., 25-26.

[39] Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, "Usages et fonctions des proverbes dans le Ci nous dit," in Le Tonnerre des exemples: Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, Pascal Collomb, and Jacques Berlioz, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010, 392.

[40] Ibid., 345.

recognize it as such.[41] His account of later saga prose then gives this chapter its central principle: "At least some of the later sagas…exhibit a more sophisticated level of paroemial involvement in a narrative, implying ethical value by alluding to proverbial wisdom rather than making a direct statement."[42] Harris's shorter discussion of "paroemial cognitive patterning" shifts attention from plot content to phraseological detail, treating proverbs and other wisdom texts as a relatively fixed inventory of formulas available to saga composers.[43] Harris's reading of *Hreiðars þáttr heimska* also shows that proverbial knowledge in later Old Icelandic prose can be used ironically or placed in the mouth of those who do not possess the wisdom such speech seems to carry.[44] I adapt Harris's account of *paroemial involvement* to a romance whose marked utterances are not always identifiable as traditional proverbs, but often behave like proverb-related or sententious speech within the narrative. The implication being that saga narrative can and demonstrably does draw upon proverb-related knowledge without always presenting a fully quoted proverb.

This study adapts Harris's, and by extension, Arora's model to the looser verbal field of *Dínus saga*. Therein, only a few utterances can be reliably traced to identifiable classical traditions. Many others approach proverbiality through their phrasing and context, their utility remaining contingent upon the narrative itself, where it is tested. Crucially, this is where the saga's comedic irony comes into play, as a character may sound wise while later betraying this characterization by engaging in foolish actions, or they may similarly come to the realization of wisdom only too late after the opportunity for prudence has passed.

Other original *riddarasögur* continually adapt this precise didactic staging of perceived proverbiality as well. Hermann Pálsson's survey of Latin proverbs and sententiae in the *riddarasögur* illuminates that movement within the original riddarasögur romances themselves. He shows Latin sentential structures appearing across a wider saga field, noting that *Sigurðar saga þögla* and *Parcevals saga* preserve versions or analogues of the phrase *arbore de dulci dulcia pomma cadunt* ("from a sweet tree fall sweet apples") and that *Flóvents saga*, *Dínus saga drambláta*, *Gibbons saga*, *Jarlmanns saga ok Hermanns*, *Orkneyinga saga*, *Flóamanna saga*, and *Þórðar saga hreðu* likewise participate in the death-before-shame tradition he places under *honestam mortem vitae turpi praefero* ("I prefer an honorable death to a shameful life.") Pálsson also notes the aforementioned shame formula *forn synd gerir nýja skömm* in *Bærings saga* under the Latin exemplar *inveterata novum faciunt peccata pudorem*, ("old sins make new shame").[45]

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[41] Richard L. Harris, *Wisdom of the North: Proverbial Allusion and Patterning in the Icelandic Saga*, Islandica 64 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2022), 15-16.

[42] Ibid., 197.

[43] Richard L. Harris, "An Example of Paroemial Cognitive Patterning in an Old Icelandic þáttr," in *"Most Evident" or "Most Trick"? Toward a Methodology for the Paremiological Study of Medieval Literature and Culture*, eds., Karl A. E. Persson, Brett Roscoe, Susan E. Deskis, Richard Harris, Brian O'Camb, and Michael Drout (2017), 12.

[44] Harris, Wisdom of the North, 1, xi, 47, 276.

[45] Hermann Pálsson, "The Use of Latin Proverbs and Sententiae in the Riddarasögur," in *Les Sagas de chevaliers (Riddarasögur): Actes de la Ve Conférence Internationale sur les Sagas*, edited by Régis Boyer, 385-91.

The value of Pálsson's investigation lies less in any single verbal parallel than in the broader literary habit it reveals. *Riddarasögur* prose could absorb, reshape, and redeploy Latin sententiae as Icelandic romance speech. While source hunting has its own usefulness, it is only one part of a larger account of how proverbial forms entered vernacular narrative.

A scene in *Dínus saga* may begin with deception and end with humiliation but its later intelligibility often depends on the shorter speech acts that follow from it or, in some instances, precede it. Though the reader may remember the specificities of the narrative event they also internalize a phrase through which the stakes of that event can be understood. The saga's sententious speech belongs to this movement from narrated experience to condensed wisdom, although it works inside the deceits and retaliations of the couples' romance rather than within an explicitly homiletic frame. The saga's ornate style makes that change in scale especially obvious. Robert Tannert identifies parallelism, often joined to alliteration, as a marked feature of the saga's style, and he also notes the saga's reliance on variation, repetition, antithesis, exaggeration, and figurative language.[46] Similarly, Daniel Sävborg's account of formula in saga prose argues that *Dínus saga*'s formulaic recurrence pattern is a matter of semantic stability across variation rather than only repeated wording.[47] These stylistic habits effectively build the saga's world, one in which repeated verbal forms teach the reader how to interpret the conduct of its characters and then reinforce it through a character's speech. The first, and arguably best representation of a wise counselor can be seen in the mysterious character of Heremita, whose utterances routinely manifest at the intersection between danger and decision.

4.5 The "Wise Words" of *Dínus saga drambláta*

Heremita enters *Dínus saga* at a point in the story where the rivalry between Dínus and Philotemia has exceeded the prince's ability to continue unaided. As was discussed in chapter two, Philotemia's second deception has left him and his companions each with four painful horns grown from their flesh, so heavy that they can scarcely hold up their heads. The injury is comic in its grotesquerie, but it also gives an embodied consequence to Dínus's pride of vanity. Heremita is introduced as an ambiguous and liminal character, described as a strangely dressed man clothed in a linen robe so long it sweeps the ground, while over his head he wears a hood.[48] The description gives him an unsettling doubleness, presenting him as measley and humble in dress yet physically imposing, and so large and stately that the text remarks he would appear a man of great consequence were he adorned more ostentatiously. Even the name "Heremita" brands him as a type of hermit or eremitic figure, one associated with an extra-courtly world of austerity and mystical insight. He carries in his hands a large horn filled with wine. From the moment of his arrival, then, the narrative frames him through a multitude of symbols that are

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(Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1985), 388. For the death-before-shame formula, Hermann compares Tacitus, Agricola 33, "honesta mors turpi vita potior,"

[46] Robert Tannert, "The Style of the Dínus saga drambláta," *Scandinavian Studies* 52, no. 1, 1980, 53-57.

[47] Daniel Sävborg, "The Formula in Icelandic Saga Prose," *Saga-Book* 42 (2018): 81.

[48] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 51.

difficult to interpret. He appears at the castle neither as a courtly emissary nor as a warrior, but as a figure whose material presence suggests that he belongs to a different order than those around him and belies his profound abilities. His first request is one of urgency. He commands that he must be admitted at once, for it does not suit him to linger any longer at the door, as he has heard that Dínus has been weakened to the point of death and is in dire need of aid.[49] This scene recalls yet another feature of Dínus's pride, his desire to set himself apart from others and deny access at his leisure. Thus, the prince who once kept himself apart from ordinary sight must now decide whether to admit an unknown figure through the very boundary that had preserved his separation. Dínus allows him to enter because deceit can scarcely worsen his present condition, while any possibility of healing is worth receiving:

"k(öngs)s(on) seiger huad mun nu varda þö hann komi hier, þui eff hamingiann vill vid mig með øllu skiliast, og bui j þessum manne suik edur flærd, þä er mier þad liuffligt ad mig take burt wr þessare pijnu, enn ef hann vill lækna mig, þä vil eg þui ecki j möti briötast, med einu samann þräe mijnu, þui lääted hann giora sem hann vill."[50]

"The prince says, 'What will now come of it, even if he comes here, for if fortune wishes to part from me altogether, and deceit or treachery dwell in this man, then it is welcome to me that I be taken away from this torment. But if he wishes to heal me, then I will not resist it, despite my stubbornness, so let him do as he wishes.'"

His words here convey an unspoken change in his character already at this point in the narrative. The royal child who was once so haughty that he commanded only those he knew and trusted be allowed in his presence, is now so helpless that he admits a total stranger on the off chance that he will either meet a swift end to his pain or receive much-needed assistance. This can be read as desperation, but the fact that Dínus acknowledges his own obstinacy as a perceived failing coupled with the trajectory of his character journey later in the narrative hints at something more nuanced than this. Each of his prides is being systematically tested and dismantled, and the implication is that this is proving the folly of holding on to such habits as well as the prospect of growth towards better conduct, or, in any case, behaviors that are overtly more socially acceptable. This is never stated outright in the saga, instead the character of Heremita is employed as its most authoritative interpreter. This is demonstrated simply by how Heremita's sagacity is afforded such an unusually commanding influence. Robert Tannert notes that he receives the only long speeches in the saga, and this concentration of direct discourse distinguishes him from the other figures in the story.[51] Yet the importance of his words transcends their length. Heremita's words tend to appear at moments when the apparent facts of the scene have become difficult to interpret. Dínus's body bears an injury whose cause must be understood before it can be undone. Heremita then states the principle of the cure in a sentence that binds remedy tightly to cause, as the same affliction that was bound with wine must be undone with wine:

[49] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 51.

[50] Ibid., 51-52.

[51] Robert Tannert, "The Style of the Dínus saga drambláta," *Scandinavian Studies* 52, no. 1 (1980): 53-57.

"hann sagdest heita Heremita, 'enn so lijst mier áá þig sem annars mune þier nu þørff, enn dreiss edur drambz, skialz edur skrums, þuiad þad sama äfelle sem þeir haffed feingid og med wijne var bunded, verdur med vijne ad leisa...'"[52]	"he said he is called Heremita, 'and so it seems to me that you now need something other than boasting or pride, empty talk or nonsense, because the same calamity that you have received and that was bound with wine must with wine be loosed.'"

This is one of the most striking moments in the episode, because it presents healing as something not radically dissimilar from enchantment, but as a reversal enacted through the very medium that produced the harm. What entered the body under the guise of perfumed pleasure and fraudulent hospitality must now be displaced by another drink, one that uses the same vehicle but toward a contrary end. Richard Kieckhefer notes that this is a common representation of magic in the middle ages noting that, "…the choice of healing ingredients was sometimes dictated by the symbolic considerations of sympathetic magic."[53] Romance more characteristically celebrates female magical agency, whereas university-trained men disrupt romance expectations and they often do so especially by taking the expected place of women's magic, or by putting magic to a different purpose.[54] Once they have drunk, the men fall asleep after their long vigil, and when they wake they discover that the horns have entirely fallen away from their heads and now lie loose in the bed. The horns that so vexed Dínus and his entourage are immediately repurposed for good. They are taken away and divided among chieftains, adorned with gold, and repurposed as drinking horns to be used at feasts, ceremonies, and assemblies. The very object that had once been rooted painfully into living flesh becomes a crafted artifact passed among elites in public gatherings. Geraldine Barnes reads this episode as natural magic based on sympathetic likeness as the cure depends upon correspondence rather than replacement.[55] The same substance that carried injury becomes the substance through which injury is undone.

Latin medical analogues further show how familiar this kind of practical reversal could be. One formulation from book sixteen of the *Regimen sanitatis Salenitanum* states:

"Si tibi noceat potatio vini, hora matutina rebibas et erit medicina." [56]	"If the drinking of wine should harm you, drink it again in the morning hour, and it will be a medicine."

[52] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 52.

[53] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67.

[54] Megan G. Leitch, "From Sorceresses to Scholars: Universities and the Disenchantment of Romance," in *Medieval Romance, Arthurian Literature: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth Archibald*, ed., A.S.G. Edwards (London: D.S. Brewer, 2021), 19.

[55] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 62.

[56] The *Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum* is generally dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century, with some scholarship suggesting that a core *Flos medicinae* existed by the middle of the twelfth century. Its authorship is uncertain, though it is often attributed to John of Milan. See Robert Lafaille and Hennie Hiemstra, "The regimen of Salerno, a contemporary analysis of a medieval healthy lifestyle program," *Health Promotion International* 5, no. 1 (1990): 57-74.

These lines belong to a different bodily register, closer to the comic logic of a hangover cure than to the enchanted humiliation of Dínus and his companions, yet their usefulness lies in the thought pattern they preserve. A substance may harm in one circumstance and heal in another. *Dínus saga* draws upon that practical logic in its magical logic, where wine becomes the medium through which bodily shame is first imposed and then released.

Two more Latin maxims collected by Peter Halkerston regarding the binding and unbinding logic in medieval thought offer further parallels for *Dínus saga*'s explanation in the wine cure scene:

"Naturale est quidlibet dissolve eo modo quo ligature."[57]	"It is natural for anything to be dissolved in the same manner in which it is bound."
"Eodem modo quo quid constituitur, eodem modo dissolvitur, --destruitur."[58]	"In the same manner in which anything is constituted, in the same manner it is dissolved, --destroyed."

These analogues clarify the abstraction latent in Heremita's sentence. The saga effectively turns the recipe for this cure into an overtly formal maxim. The verbs "bundit" and "leysa" allow the scene to become more than a singular episode of magical medicine. The wound, the substance, the cure, and the remaining horns are all organized by the same relation. What has been bound through wine must be loosened through wine. Heremita's speech makes that relationship spoken and memorable.

After Heremita cures Dínus and his company of their cursed horns, the saga turns back to Bláskumia, where Philotemia and her maidens are missing. The court searches the city and the surrounding places, but no one can find them. Daciánus then calls Anachorita and asks him to discover what has happened to Maximiliánus's daughter. Anachorita answers briskly:

"…so lijst mier sem þid sieud varla einhlijter, nema eg sie til kalladur, enn þad mun flestumm þraut verda, ad sækia þær þangad sem þær eru komnar, enn eff eg fæ þetta giort ad koma þeim aptur j ydar borg, edur huoria umbun munu þier mier þä giefa..."[59]	"so it seems to me that you are hardly sufficient, unless I am called for, and it will become a trial for most people to seek them wherever they have gone, but if I can manage to bring them back into your city, what reward will you then give me…"

While Heremita is seemingly offering his aid to Dínus altruistically, Anachorita's support is conditional, coming with an unstated price. Maximiliánus promises him whatever may fittingly be granted, and Anachorita leaves so secretly that no one knows what becomes of him. The saga then shifts its focus to Egypt. Dínus is poised in his high seat within his guarded sanctuary, and

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[57] Peter Halkerston, *A Collection of Latin Maxims and Rules, in Law and Equity* (Edinburgh: Peter Halkerston, 1823), 92.

[58] Ibid., 43.

[59] *Dínus saga*, 54.

Heremita sits next to him, having ostensibly replaced Grammaton as the prince's closest companion. Dínus's household does not yet know what has been set in motion. Anachorita has left to recover Philotemia and the maidens, and Heremita senses that the attempt will bring danger to Alexandria before anyone around Dínus can see it. As Dínus and Heremita sit together and speak, Heremita takes his knife and works it against the table, first downward before himself and now upward into the air. The table would ordinarily be the place where food, conversation, and service continue the rhythm of courtly life. Heremita interrupts that rhythm before the next marvel reaches the city. He does not wait until the dragon is overhead. He speaks while the danger is still unseen, and his command teaches the city how to survive what no ordinary observer could safely investigate. After this enigmatic action, he speaks:

"'mikid mein er þad,' s(eiger) hann, 'að menn eru so ovijser, og eff vor borg skillde ei hrapa, og lijdur tapast, þä mun vidsiär veita verda, þui er sáá minn bodskapur, ad aller birge sig jnne j sijnumm herbergiumm, vmm þrär nætur og þriä daga, enn eff aff er brugded þessu, þä munu þeir siä sinn enda dag.'"[60]	"'It is a great misfortune,' he says, 'that men are so foolish. If our city is not to collapse and lives are not to be lost, great caution will be needed. Therefore, my command is that everyone lock himself inside his own chamber for three nights and three days. If this command is broken, those who break it will see the last days of their lives."

His declaration is brief, immediately addressing the action that follows. The pronouncement moves directly from lament to command, stating that men are unwise, lives are at risk, and the only safe conduct is to remain hidden before the imminent danger arrives.

The subsequent appearance of Anachorita in poison-spewing dragon form proves the necessity of Heremita's command. His warning is successfully carried through Alexandria, and the people shut themselves indoors. That evening a terrible noise comes over the city, together with a darkness as deep as winter night. Lights are kindled in every house, and even the animals are brought inside. Some young men, however, driven by curiosity, leave their rooms because they want to know what is happening. They see a huge flying dragon over the city, so large that its wings stretch across Alexandria and cast the shadow that has darkened the place. The dragon spits poison so violently that the men cannot escape. They return long enough to report what they have seen and heard, and then they fall dead, swollen with poison. Thus, the foolishness that Heremita condemns in his speech is tied to the dangers of curiosity. The young men die because they leave the protection of the command in order to see for themselves. Their deaths are an indication that Heremita's words qualified the only form of safe conduct in such a situation. In this scene, wisdom is obedience. Heremita somehow, perhaps through his mystical wisdom or arts, knows that the city must refuse the impulse to look until the marvel has passed.

Heremita's next major intervention begins when danger arrives under the appearance of reconciliation. After Dínus has answered Philotemia's humiliation with the cursed apple, turning her and her maidens into crows, Maximiliánus and Philotemia send messengers to Egypt with gifts for the prince, by way of an apology, as well as a formal invitation to be received as an

[60] *Dínus saga*, 54.

honored guest for a second time in Bláland. Dínus, being rightly skeptical of their performative benevolence, asks Heremita if they should indeed be admitted. Heremita replies:

"wijst eiga sendebodar ad heirast, sagde H(eremita) og skal þä jnnläta, og vita med huoriumm erindumm þeir fara..."[61]	"Certainly, messengers ought to be heard, said Heremita, and they shall be admitted, so that it may be known with what business they come…"

Konungs skuggsjá specifically discusses receiving messengers and the courtly customs associated with this:

"Svá kann ok optliga til at bera, at hœveskir sendimenn af öðrum löndum komi til konungs fundar ok hans hirðar, ok hyggja þar þvi görr at hans þjónostu ok hœveski hans ok hans hirðar ok öllum siðum í hans hirð, er þeir eru sjálfir hœveskari. Ok ef þeir kom heim aptr til sins lands, þá segja þeir slíka siðu ok öll önnur tiðendi, sem þeir sá eða heyrðu með þeim konungi, er þá váru þeir tilsendir. Enn öll þau tíðendi, er til annarra landa koma ok flytjask um höfingja, ok verða þau með sönnu flutt, þá er þat optast, at þau snúask annathvárt til háðs ok gabbs eða til sœmdar."[62]	"Thus it can also often happen that courteous messengers from other lands come to meet a king and his court, and there they observe all the more carefully his service, his courtesy, the courtesy of his court, and all the customs in his court, the more courtly they themselves are. And when they come back home to their own land, they tell of such customs and all other news as they saw or heard with the king to whom they had been sent. And all such news that comes to other lands and is carried about concerning rulers, when it is carried truthfully, most often turns either to mockery and derision or to honor."

Such conventions in traditional mirror literature such as *Konungs skuggsjá* reflect how a court should act and, therefore, have a crucial place in the examination of a saga that places much of its emphasis on the proper, or in this case, improper, conduct of a prince and princess. Courtly convention requires that messengers be received and heard within this system, and *Dínus saga*'s narrative should be indicative of this.

The Bláland emissaries speak in the formal terms of diplomacy, obfuscating the princess's plan to harm Dínus. They sue to be received under the auspices of restored amity, and the terms under which they make their plea make refusal difficult. The leader of the company states:

"'Hinn mikle og mekttuge köngur Blälandz. Maxim(ilianus) og þar med hanz en væna og kurtijsa döttur Philötemia, bad ydur kiærrar heilsu med heilumm hug, og saker þess ad	"'The mighty and powerful King Maximilian of Bláland, together with his fair and courteous daughter Philotemia, sends you warm greetings with a sincere heart. Because

[61] *Dínus saga*, 58.

[62] *Speculum regale. Konungs-skuggsjá. Konge-speilet: Et philosophisk-didaktisk skrift, forfattet i Norge mod slutningen af det tolfte aarhundrede*, ed., Rudolf Keyser, P.A. Munch, and C. R. Unger (Christiania: Tryckt hos C. C. Werner, 1848), 63-64.

þier tökud eckj so gott leijfe frä hanz borg sem hann villde, þuiad hann hugde ad ydar burtferd skillde viela laus vered hafa, og allt þad sem illa hefur fared hans döttur og ydur, jdrast hun nu hiartanliga, og villdu þau nu ad saatt og samþicke yrde ydar a mille, þuj bijdur köngur og köngz döttur ydur j sitt bod og veitslu þegar sem þier verded liduger, og ad þier vited ad vor før er ei med false edur hiegöma, bädu þau oss ad tiä firer ydur sijn öfølsud brieff, og jnnsigle, og so þær gáaffur sem þau sendu ydur, bera þeir nu framm brieffinn,' og søgdu þau miøg mötlijka, sem sendebodarner hafa framm sagt, og hier med bera þeir framm giaffernar, settar med gimmsteinumm, og gödrar nätturu, aff orma vefnade..."[63]

you did not take leave of his city as graciously as he would have liked, for he thought your departure would have been without guile, and because of all that has gone badly between his daughter and you, she now repents wholeheartedly. They wish now for reconciliation and agreement to be made between you. Thus, the king and the princess invite you to their feast and hospitality as soon as you are able. And so that you know their intent is neither deceitful nor hollow, they asked us to present to you their genuine letters and seals, as well as the gifts they have sent you.' The messengers now presented the letters, which were much in agreement with what they had said, and with them, they brought forth the gifts, adorned with gemstones and of fine quality, crafted by worms."

He allows the diplomatic performance to occur, but he refuses to accept the claim of its benevolent self-description until the embassy has first disclosed what its business is at Dínus's court.

Once the message has been delivered, Dínus asks for Heremita's counsel regarding what should be done. His advice to Dínus is, once again, couched within proverbial terms:

"Heremita suarar, 'þad mun hugad ad viela þig þangad og veida, sem fugl j snøru, og firer alltt þetta skalltu voga ad hallda bod þetta, sem til er mællt.'"[64]

"Heremita answers, 'It will be meant to betray you there and catch you, like a bird in a snare, and despite all this you shall dare to keep this appointment, just as it has been proposed.'"

This statement has a long history in sententious speech. Returning to the *Disticha Catonis*, therein lies a similar warning against trusting too much in flattering words:

"Noli homines blando nimium sermone probare;
Fistula dulce canit, volucrem dum decipit auceps."[65]

"Do not accept men who have smooth tongues;
The pipe sings sweetly, when the fowler deceives the bird."

[63] *Dínus saga*, 58-59.

[64] *Dínus saga*, 59.

[65] Pseudo-Cato, *Disticha Catonis* I.27, ed. Marcus Boas, completed by H. J. Botschuyver (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1952), 65.

Curiously, the Old Norse translator who rendered Cato's words in the *Hugsvinssmál* omitted this particular verse. Hugo Gering in his edition of the translation provides a speculative answer as to why this may have taken place, claiming that the translator may not have quite understood the allusion to the decoy-pipe of the fowl hunter.[66] The traditional wisdom that can be matched to Heremita's words ties this statement closer to a clerical lineage. In the Latin Vulgate the book of *Ecclesiastes* uses the same language of birds in a snare:

"Nescit homo finem suum: sed sicut pisces capiuntur hamo, et sicut aves laqueo comprehenduntur, sic capiuntur homines in tempore malo, cum eis extemplo supervenerit."[67]	"Man does not know his end; but just as fish are caught with a hook, and just as birds are caught in a snare, so people are caught in an evil time, when it suddenly comes upon them."

An evil time is precisely what awaits Dínus if Philotemia has any say in the matter. What's more germane to this study, however, is that Heremita's words of wisdom and counsel are inextricably tied to a traditional thought pattern where perceived proverbiality and practical judgment converge, imagining human fortune as a precarious thing when entangled with ruthless individuals or, perhaps more pointedly, when engaging in unsavory behaviors.

Heremita returns to the subject of wisdom, or its lack, after the rivalry between Dínus and Philotemia has pushed Maximiliánus toward treating war as the only adequate answer to the shame suffered by his daughter and kingdom. One of his closest advisors, Daciánus, directs him to Anachorita, whose counsel gives the king a way to convert injury into invasion.[68] Anachorita advises Maximiliánus to summon forces from across his dominion into a grand army, gathering together a multitude greater than any ever led out of Africa, and bring with it giants, blámenn, and other threatening peoples. He then promises that by his own craft no one in Egypt will be able to discern the movements of these forces before they have arrived.

This promise works so effectively that it even circumvents the considerable foresight and knowledge of Heremita himself. The invading army is already at the Nile before Dínus and his men have a chance to understand what is happening. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, Dínus and his company have sat down to eat in the evening, with Heremita seated in a place of honored counsel right beside him, though troubled. As the dishes are brought forward, Heremita refuses to eat with his comrades, instead driving his knife down into the table in frustration as he begins to proclaim:

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[66] Hugsvinnsmál. *Eine altisländische übersetzung der Disticha Catonis*, ed., Hugo Gering (Hiel: Druck von Schmidt & Klaunig, 1907), viii: ("Mehrere davon sind Sicher unübersetzt geblieben, weil ihr sinn dem Isländer dunkel blieb (z.b. I, 27 in welchem ihm die anspielung auf die lockpfeife des vogelstellers vermutlich unverständlich war), aber die erklärung ist wol nicht für alle fälle zutreffend.")

[67] *Ecclesiastes.* 9:12, in Michael Hetzenauer, ed., *Biblia Sacra secundum Vulgatam Clementinam*, Vetus Testamentum III (Ratisbonae: Fridericus Pustet, 1922), 71.

[68] Interestingly, in the middle redaction of the saga, this character is named Elenterius and is brother-in-law to Maximiliaánus.

"Miked mein er þad,' s(eiger) hann, 'ad þeir menn sem nockurn vijsdöm þikiast haffa j sier skulu so blindader vera, ad þä eru þeir övijsaster er sem mest liggur vid, og eg vndrast huar aff minn vijsdömur heffur so villtur verid, ad eg heffe ei firer sied, þau hin miklu tijdinde, sem oss mun nu ad høndumm koma, þuiad til áárinaar Nijl er komenn so mikill öflijande her, ad ei mä tølu áá koma, eru þar med allskinz hrædligar þiöder, med risumm og blämønnumm, firer þessum hinumm ögurlega her rædur Max(imilianus) köngur, og ætlar nu áá ydur ad heffna, allra suivirdinga, og sinnar döttur, mun hann eida þitt rijki ok þijnz fødurz, enn þiä og þrælka þitt fölk konur og karla sem hann vill hertaka, og med sier j burt flitia."[69]	"It is a great harm," he says, "that those men who think themselves to have some wisdom in them should be so blinded that they are most unwise when the greatest matter is at stake. And I wonder how my own wisdom has gone so astray that I did not foresee the great events that are now coming upon us. For to the river Nile there has come such an army that cannot be counted and from which there is no escape. With it are all kinds of terrifying peoples, with giants and blámenn. King Maximiliánus commands this dreadful army, and he now means to avenge upon you all the dishonors done to him and to his daughter. He will lay waste your kingdom and your father's, and torment and subjugate your people, women and men, whom he wishes to capture and carry away with him."

Juxtaposed with the same complaint he made before the invasion of Anachorita's dragon form in Alexandria, this speech is as self-effacing as it is assertive. Heremita now speaks of men who think they possess wisdom, including himself in that failure. He says that his own wisdom has gone astray because he did not foresee the events now coming upon them. Heremita's admission is stark as he has already more than earned the right to be trusted.

Heremita's words also counter Anachorita's counsel from the other side of the Nile. Anachorita promised that no one in Egypt would know the army was coming until it was already there. Heremita's speech is the first moment in which that concealed invasion becomes usable knowledge in Egypt. He both announces that an army has arrived and then explains who commands it, why it has come, what it intends to avenge, what peoples it comprises, and what will happen if it is not answered rightly. The knife driven into the table is semiotically coded because the court has not yet entered the posture of war. The meal is still underway. Heremita's action stops the meal and turns the table into the place where Dínus first receives the shape of the threat.

Richard Harris's reading of *Hrafnkels saga* gives a better way to understand the kind of work Heremita's maxim performs. Harris uses a universal Old Norse maxim as a valence for Sámr's spoken testament "mér þykkir þar heimskum manni at duga, sem þú ert" ("to me it seems there a foolish man to do, where you are.") in the form of an isolated insult.[70] He reads it as an allusion to a wider proverbial warning against helping foolish people, especially the well-known

[69] *Dínus saga*, 72-73.

[70] *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jón Jóhannesson, Íslenzk fornrit 11 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1950), 108.

proverb “Illt er heimskum lið at veita” (“It is bad to help the foolish”). The proverb itself does not appear in *Hrafnkels saga* but is effectively brought into the narrative through Sámr’s words. Harris argues that the story repeatedly returns to foolish action in different figures, so that the alluded proverb helps organize the saga’s account of failed self-knowledge.[71] Heremita’s speech after realizing the danger at the Nile should be understood in a similar way, though with an important difference. His sentence is not a hidden allusion to a single recoverable proverb in the same manner as Harris’s *Hrafnkels* example. It is an explicit sententia spoken inside the narrative. Yet it also opens a larger proverbial field, because it activates a proverbial statement found in one of Dínus saga’s contemporaries.

In *Grettis saga* the line “skýzk þeim mörgum vísdómrinn, er betri ván er at” (“wisdom shuns many of those from whom better is expected”) gives a neat Icelandic formulation of the same disappointment.[72] Wisdom fails many from whom better might be expected. The saying fits Heremita’s Nile speech because Heremita is one of those figures. He has already healed Dínus’s horns, warned him against the Bláland embassy, and taught him how to move through a deceptive invitation without trusting its surface. The reader has reason to expect his foresight to hold. At the Nile, however, the army has already arrived before he has understood what Anachorita and Maximiliánus have set in motion. The *Grettis saga* saying names the proverbial shape of Heremita’s own admission that wisdom is most exposed when the one expected to possess it has failed to see in time. This makes Heremita’s confession more severe than a general warning against self-confidence. He says that his own wisdom has gone astray. He therefore places himself under the same sentence he speaks against others. The speech preserves his authority by making the failure usable before Dínus chooses a response. Heremita is late, but he is not silent. His wisdom has failed to prevent the army from reaching the borders of Alexandria, but it still prevents Dínus from treating that army as if his city’s walls could survive an assault from it.

Christian warnings against confidence in one’s own wisdom further the field of reference for Heremita’s words. The Book of Proverbs asks whether one has seen a man wise in his own eyes, adding that there is more hope for a fool than for him:

“Vidisti hominem sapientum sibi videri? Magis illo spem habebit insipiens.”[73]	“Have you seen a man seem wise to himself? A fool will have more hope than he.”

Heremita’s speech belongs near these warnings, but his position is not identical to the person condemned by them. He does not remain enclosed in the appearance of wisdom. He admits the lapse. The sentence therefore works as correction rather than self-display. Heremita becomes

[71] Richard L. Harris, *Wisdom of the North: Proverbial Allusion and Patterning in the Icelandic Saga*, Islandica 64 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2022), 218-19.

[72] *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit 7 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1936), 41.

[73] *Proverbs* 26:12, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 980.

useful again by refusing to let his reputation as a wise counselor hide the fact that he has missed the danger until it is already close.

4.6 Failed, Belated, and Corrupted Wisdom

Heremita's words represent the clearest examples of wisdom-speech in *Dínus saga* because they engage with the conventions of proverbial speech that would have been recognizable to a medieval reading audience. His advice is practical and actionable, as his words reach Dínus, and his kingdom, before any real tragedy befalls either. The horns can still be loosened from the body. The invitation to Bláland can still be accepted with knowledge of the snare beneath its courtesy. The danger at the Nile can still be measured before Alexandria is committed to a defense that belongs to an ordinary military crisis. In each of these scenes, Heremita speaks at the interval between recognition and decision. The utterances of others within *Dínus saga* fall into four broad categories that can best be understood by their function within the narrative. They recognize behavior that should be altered but persists, they attempt to advise but are ignored, they represent the lamentations of their speaker after their downfall, or they pronounce wisdom that is misplaced from its source. Dínus knows that he has been humbled, but the knowledge does not immediately correct him. It first deepens his sense of injury, so that humiliation becomes something to be answered rather than understood. Philotemia will come to speak truly about her fall, but only after her body and court have already been made to bear the consequence of her ambition. Maximiliánus sees the future disgrace before it arrives, yet his own position as father and king draws him into the very shame that his warning had imagined. Anachorita reads hidden causes with real precision, while the source and purpose of his knowledge finally make his wisdom destructive. The question after Heremita is no longer whether sententious speech can name the truth of a situation, as it often can. The more difficult question is whether a true sentence can change the speaker who utters it, restrain the action it names, or redirect the social demand created by shame. Dínus is the necessary first case because his speech recognizes humiliation without yet triggering reform.

4.6.1 Dínus: Education without wisdom

Dínus first appears as a child whose physical appearance has already placed him beyond ordinary measure. His father, King Ptolomeus, says that, had the boy been born under the old religion, he would have seemed divine rather than human.[74] The language is extravagant, but it establishes more than beauty. It gives Dínus an embodied exceptionality before the reader knows anything else about him. His education then adds a cultivated capacity to that exceptional body. He studies the school arts, surpasses his teachers, defeats them in questioning, and then acquires knowledge of sorcery, runes, chivalric arts, and bodily feats.[75] The saga prepares his later humiliation by first making his superiority real. Dínus is exceptionally gifted in body and mind, and his gifts become dangerous when they justify arranging the world around himself. He is exceptionally gifted both physically and mentally, having mastered the seven liberal arts to the

[74] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 5.

[75] Ibid., 7.

point of ostensibly surpassing their use, and the danger begins when those gifts become the grounds for arranging the world around himself.

After Philotemia's first deception has left Dínus and his men bloodied and their flight from Bláland has made their shame the fodder of public spectacle, he acknowledges his shortcomings for the first time. Confessing his knowledge of the loss to his men he says:

„...so mun k(öngs)d(ötter) virda sem hun haffe lægt vortt dramb, er þad og sannindi, og vijs von, ad eg mun ä henni ei heffnt fáá þessarar suijvirdingar, villda eg giarnan heimsækia, eff eg feinge mijn vopn, hesta og klæde..."[76]	„...so the princess will feel she has humbled our pride, and that is true. And it is clear that I will not be able to avenge myself for this disgrace. Yet I would gladly go visit her, if I could get my weapons, horse, and clothing..."

The phrase is spare, but it is not empty. Dínus understands the meaning of what has happened. He does not deny the injury or mistake it for an accident. The humiliation has taught him something about his own condition, and he can name the truth of it. Yet the recognition remains tied to the wound itself. He knows that pride has been lowered, but the knowledge does not release him from the need to answer the lowering. The sentence gives him a true account of the damage and leaves the appetite for repayment intact. The middle redaction makes the moral implication of this more explicit than the oldest redaction does. In it, when Dínus has regained his former honor, the narrator says that he has cast off his arrogance, no longer avoids all manner of people, no longer covers his face when he leaves his hall, and no longer refuses unfamiliar things for his table.[77]

Proverbs 16:18 supplies the clearest Latin Christian analogue for this movement from elevation to fall:

"Contritionem praecedit superbia, et ante ruinam exaltatur spiritus." [78]	"Pride precedes destruction, and the spirit is lifted up before ruin."

Dínus saga stages a comparable moral pattern to frame its protagonist. Dínus falls through the habits that had made him exceptional. The table that marked his refinement admits Philotemia's apple. The contempt for women leaves him unready for a woman whose knowledge can govern him. The veiled body becomes a body beaten and exposed. The closed castle cannot prevent a humiliation that begins elsewhere and returns to him through appetite, desire, and spectacle.

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[76] Ibid., 35.

[77] *Dinus saga II*, in *Dínus saga dramblata*, ed., Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskoli Íslands, (1960), 129. ("Nu situr Dynus vmm kyrt med sijnum monnum og heffur nu aptur tekid sinn fyrra heydur, þad er nu og aff teked hanz metnade...")

[78] *Proverbs* 16:18, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 971.

The underlying sententious maxim is clearer in Dínus's second utterance. During the standoff at the river Nile, Dínus admits to everyone around him, but specifically Heremita, that, in all of his vast and superior knowledge, he can find no use for it against such a terrifying and hopeless scenario:

"räd kann eg lijtid s(egir) Dijnus, enda sijnist mier sem ei sie hægt rädumm vid ad koma, enn þad sijnist mier ei annad lijkare, enn giora sem tijdast fødur minn vijsann aff þessumm tijdindumm, og sie saffnad lide vmm hin næstu hierud førumm sijdann j borgina Alexandriam og veriunst þadann, mun hun ei skiött vnninn verda, þuiad hun er so traust wijge, enn þä eff þu villt ønnur räd wt gieffa, munumm vier þau hafa..."[79]

"I know little of counsel," says Dínus, "and it seems to me that counsel will hardly avail here. Yet it seems to me that no other course is more fitting than to inform my father of these tidings as quickly as possible, and that a host should be gathered from the surrounding districts. Let us then go to the city of Alexandria and defend ourselves from there. It will not quickly be taken, for it is such a strong fortress. But if you wish to put forward another counsel, we will take it."

The plan that follows Dínus's admission confirms his wisdom is inadequate in a situation involving a supernatural and concealed army. Dínus turns first toward his father, local troops, Alexandria, and the strength of the city walls. This is royal common sense applied to the wrong kind of army. The Catonian tradition helps clarify the timing of this failure. *Hugsvinnsmál* 74 adapts *Disticha Catonis* II.24, where the reader is taught to look ahead to coming harms and prepare to endure them. *Hugsvinnsmál* 76 adapts *Disticha Catonis* II.27, where one is told to look at what follows and to see beforehand what threatens.[12] Dínus reaches truth by another route. He recognizes his pride only after Philotemia has humiliated him and admits poor counsel only after Heremita has already uncovered the army. His speech is true, but its truth comes after narrative events have done the work that foresight should have done sooner.

Dínus's two sententious moments are therefore admissions rather than maxims. "Er þat ok sannendi" accepts the truth of humiliation and immediately carries that truth toward revenge. "Ráð kann ek lítit" accepts the poverty of his counsel and then waits for Heremita's better plan. In each case Dínus reaches a true sentence from within a situation that has already surpassed him. His learning and reputation remain real, but the saga measures wisdom by the ability to govern action before shame, appetite, fear, or ordinary political habit has narrowed the available response. Dínus can speak truth after injury. He still needs another person to turn truth into counsel.

4.6.2 Philotemia: The Belated Realization of Wisdom

Philotemia enters the rivalry through a desire to qualify her own knowledge against Dínus, whom she has heard is peerless in this regard. The merchants who return from Egypt regale her with reports of Dínus's beauty, pride, learning, and renown, and the saga carefully distinguishes her response from ordinary erotic attraction. Lambertus's account of mirroring in the saga reveals that Philotemia is not Dínus's moral opposite but rather his rival in a structure

[79] *Dínus saga*, 73.

that makes likeness dangerous.[80] Both figures are defined by their beauty, their learning, and their reputation before they meet one another directly. Both use controlled access to shape how others approach them. Both turn knowledge into a means of superiority. Their rivalry therefore develops as a contest over who can interpret and manipulate the other more effectively. Philotemia should be taken seriously from the start because the saga gives her real capacity. She does not enter the plot as an irrational temptation placed before Dínus. She enters as another learned figure whose knowledge seeks proof through another person's fall.

Defying traditional romance conventions, what enters her heart is not first carnal love but a burning fire of a different sort:

"Nu kiemur j hug k(öngs)d(öttur) ein logande girnd j hennar hiartta og freistne, ei til holdigrar girndar edur nockrar elsku, helldur til as pröva sijna kunnättu, j möti Dijnus og hann vtleijka og yffer vinna, med þui lijkre skømm vid hann giøra, sem vid adra fleijre er hennar høfdu vitiad…"[81]	"Now there came into the princess's mind a burning desire and urge in her heart, not for bodily lust or any love, but rather to test her own skill against Dínus, and to outplay him and overcome him, and by that means to do him the same shame as she had done to many others who had sought her out…"

A useful analogue for this kind of staged female mastery relatedly appears in the fourteenth-century *riddarasaga Clári saga*, where the maiden-king Séréna hosts a feast for one of her suitors that turns courtly hospitality into a public test of male reputation. Much like Philotemia's admission that she had done this before to others, Séréna is introduced to the reader through her own reputation for doing so:

"En hitt er miklu fleira af henni at segja, er illt er ok úviðrkvæmiligt. Því at hversu margan dýran dreng hon dáraði allt hér til með sínu kukli ok klókskap, verðr seint talit, þann sem sama erendis fór ok nú vili þér fara.Ok því gør svá vel, hinn elskuligsti son, ok leggið brott þaðan yðvarn hug! Því at engi lifanismaðr fær móti sét hennar kyndugskap."[82]	"But there is much more to say about her which is ill and unbecoming. It would take a long time to count how many splendid fellows, who went on the same errand as you now wish to, she has already mocked with her magic and wiles. And so do well, most beloved son, and turn your thoughts away from there. For no living man manages to see through her guile."

Enthralled by this story rather than dissuaded by it, young Prince Clárus invites himself to her kingdom in France and is received, unbeknownst to himself, by a staged feast designed to humiliate him. Séréna's banquet functions as a political weapon, because the host controls a familiar courtly setting and uses it to measure the visiting suitor under conditions he cannot fully

[80] Hendrik Lambertus, *Von monströsen Helden und heldenhaften Monstern: Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Fremden in den originalen Riddarasögur, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie* 52 (Tübingen: A. Francke, 2013), 224-27, 240.

[81] *Dínus saga*, 15-16.

[82] *Clári saga*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 12 (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1907), 5.

perceive.[83] Clárus enters Séréna's tower as an honored guest and prospective husband. The scene is prepared with unusual splendor, the servants receive him with golden basins, and the meal appears to move according to the recognizable forms of aristocratic hospitality.[84] Yet the final course reveals the true structure of the encounter. Séréna offers him a soft-boiled egg under the sign of courtesy, touches it with her fingers as he receives it, and causes the yolk to spill across his costly clothing.[85] The smallness of the gesture intensifies the humiliation rather than diminishing it. A nearly invisible act of female interference produces a tangible stain on the male body, and that stain becomes available for verbal disgrace.

Philotemia's later admission to her father, King Maximiliánus, proves that she not only has no intention of mollifying Dínus, but that she is also going to use his ensuing shame as the vehicle for her own social elevation:

"'eg harla listug ad pröua hanz vitsku, og vielar, og þar til vil eg haffa ydar ordloff, hann yffer ad vinna, so þar aff mætti eg fä frægd yffer allar jömfru(r) j heiminum, eff mijn kunnätta yffer jnne þann sem listugastur er j allre verølldinne kalladur.'"[86]	"'I am very eager to test his wisdom and wiles, and for that I wish to have your leave, to overcome him, so that from that I might gain fame over all maidens in the world, if my skill overcomes the one who is called the most skilled in all the world."

Dínus is the right adversary for the kind of victory Philotemia imagines. A lesser man would give her a private success or a triumph too small to enlarge her name. Dínus's fame supplies the scale of the contest.

Her first victory comes with the enchanted apple and the subsequent deception of Dínus and his retinue into fighting against the phantom knights of the illusory forest but is quickly answered in turn. Dínus's gilded tablet "gift" to Philotemia which causes the uncontrolled dance madness in Bláland is perhaps the first time in which Philotemia is faced with the real consequences of her own actions. Maximiliánus's response brings the episode back to the warning with which the contest began. He finds Philotemia in sorrow and reminds her that the outcome he feared has arrived. The dishonor he predicted has come true, and, in his anger, he treats the tablet not only as an injury to his daughter but as damage to royal dignity. Bagerius notes that Maximiliánus fears from the beginning that Philotemia's action will awaken contempt around them and dishonor his rule.[87] He admonishes her to cease this folly and not chance another encounter with the prince. Philotemia, undaunted by her father's words, replies:

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[83] Michael Lawson, "Weaponizing the Feast: Type-Scene Analysis in Clári saga," in *Food and Feast in the Arthurian World*, ed. Daniel Brégaint, Ingvil Brügger Budal, and Jens Eike Schnall, The Bryggen Papers Main Series 12 (2026): 17-18, 21-22.

[84] *Clári saga*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 12 (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer, 1907), 17-19.

[85] Ibid., 21-22.

[86] *Dínus saga*, 16.

[87] Bagerius, *Mandom och mödom*, 180.

“Mêrin s(egir) ‘þa eigi skal suo um uendaz þuiat j hefnd fyrir mik ok ydr skal ek suo medr hann skiliaz at þat af skal hann lifit lata eigi fyrir suerd eda ôxi ok eigi fyrir eitrdreck helldr skal hann faa pinu med langri suiuirding‘...”[88]	“The maiden says, ‘It shall not turn out so, for in vengeance for myself and for you then I shall so part with him that he will lose his life because of it, not by sword or axe, and not by poised drink, but rather he shall suffer torment together with lasting disgrace.’”

Maximiliánus’s warning has now been spoken once before the contest and once after the tablet has pulled the Bláland court into public shame. Philotemia still answers as though the injury can be mastered by a better act of retaliation. She has seen her father, mother, bishops, clergy, nobles, and townspeople drawn naked into the dance, and she has heard Maximiliánus tell her that the disgrace he foresaw has arrived. Her reply turns that disgrace into a reason to continue. Dínus will lose his life, she says, not by sword, axe, or poisoned drink, but through torment joined to lasting shame.

After she suffers both bodily and intellectual conquest at the hands of Dínus, Philotemia provides one of the most overt maxims in the saga. Her humiliation has spread beyond her own body into the social world around her. Her father’s anger returns her to the counsel she had resisted, and Philotemia answers with the most concentrated cluster of self-judgment in her story:

“‘Maklega er mier falled’ s(eiger) hun, ‘og vijst være mier betur, ad eg hefde ei til slijkz ötijma fædd vered, veij sie þeim er j mote brijst fødurlegumm vilia, og er eg þui verd suijvirdingar ad eg ei kunne siälffa mig er eg villde med offbellde þreita vid þann sem mier var meire, og giarnann helldur villda eg nu vera wtleidd og haalzhøgguinn enn þola leingur brixl og harm, skømm og smáán.’”[89]	“‘Deservedly has this befallen me,’ she says, ‘and certainly it would have been better for me if I had not been born for such misfortune. Woe be to those who break against paternal will, and I am therefore worthy of disgrace because I did not know myself when I wished by force to contend with the one who was greater than I. And I would rather now be led out and beheaded than endure longer reproach and grief, shame and humiliation.”

Philotemia begins by saying that the fall was deserved. *Maklega* makes the first sentence an act of judgment upon herself, and *fallit* keeps that judgment attached to the event that has overtaken her. She does not treat the humiliation as chance or as an injury that came from outside her own conduct. What has happened to her belongs to what she chose. The line is close to the moral logic of *Hugsvinnsmál* 96, which adapts *Disticha Catonis* III.17:

“Optlig mein skala maðr illa bera, ef hann es vítis verðr; margsnotr gumi, sás fyr meinum verðr, látit sinn hryggjask hug.”[90]	“Frequent troubles a man should not bear badly, if he is deserving of blame; a very wise man, he who becomes subject to

[88] *Dínus saga*, 41-42.

[89] Ibid., 69.

[90] *Hugsvinnsmál*, 28.

troubles,
lets his own mind grieve little."

Philotemia's words move in the same direction as she becomes judge of herself after the consequence of her ambition has passed through body, household, and name.

The maiden-king tradition becomes a useful lens through which such scenes can be examined, provided the comparison remains exact. Kalinke treats *Dínus saga* within her chapter on misogamous maiden kings, and she identifies *Clári saga* as the prototype for the maiden-king subgenre in Icelandic romance.[91] The comparison helps because these romances repeatedly turn female command into a problem that must be resolved through humiliation, marriage, paternal authority, or moral exemplarity. Séréna's story in *Clári saga* is the clearest case. Kalinke notes the unusual force of its long didactic epilogue and its clerical bias, while Hughes reads the saga as an elaborate exemplum for marital conduct.[92] In that ending, the heroine who had humiliated Clárus becomes an example for how good women should remain faithful to husbands or betrothed men. Séréna's mastery at the feast is finally absorbed into wifehood and exemplary fidelity:

"'Nú eru þér, frú Séréna!' segir hann, 'hér komnar, ok hafi þér þolat fáheyrt válk ok vandræði um stund ok um borit með frábærri þolinmæði ok sjaldheyrðri dydð. Mun ok hvárttveggja í minnum haft vera langan tíma, hverr grimðarmaðr þér váruð fyrrmeirr eða hverr dygðarmaðr þér váruð síðar mierr í jafnmikilli raun...Nú fyrir yðra staðfestu ok fáheyrða dygð dæmum vér yðr alþingis kvitta ok sátta við oss fyrir yður brot ok í alla staði verðuga þvílíks heiðrs, sem þér eruð til bornar. Ok fyrir standið nú, at flieri menn kunn enn nökkut klókt, en þér einar!"[93]

"'Now you have, lady Séréna!' he said, 'come here, and you have endured unheard of worry and trouble for a while, and borne it with superb patience and seldom-heard-of virtue. And remember both in your memory for a long while, how grim-hearted a person you were earlier and how dutiful-hearted a person you were afterwards in just as difficult a test…Now for your steadfastness and unheard of virtue we judge you in all ways acquitted and reconciled with us for your insult and in all ways worthy of such honor, to which you were born. And understand now that more people know yet some cunning than just you!'"

Philotemia's correction follows a related pattern through a different relation. Her speech first measures her through daughterhood rather than wifehood. The line about paternal will does the work that the ending of *Clári saga* performs through marital fidelity. Both romances imagine

[91] Marianne E. Kalinke, *Bridal-Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland, Islandica* 46 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 66, 204.

[92] Kalinke, Bridal-Quest Romance, 102; Shaun 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. Kirsten Wolf and Johanna Denzin, Islandica 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2008), 157.

[93] *Clári saga*, ed., Gustav Ciederschiöld (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1907), 70-71.

female intelligence as powerful enough to unsettle male honor and courtly order. Both then subject that intelligence to a social relation that can contain it. Both translated and adapted romance have been examined by Sif Ríkharðsdóttir as sites where literary forms expose social and ideological assumptions rather than simply repeating foreign matter.[94] The anxiety in these scenes then is really that female intelligence may act publicly, competitively, and independently before father, husband, or court has brought it back under a sanctioned form.

Philotemia's speech is therefore sententious in the sense that it accurately repeats a socially sanctioned wisdom whilst simultaneously being tragic because its accuracy arrives only after a heavy cost has been paid. Her main failing is that she can presumably read Dínus early, but she reads herself far too late. Her one cluster of speech moves from deserved fall, to warning against resisting paternal will, to the confession that she did not know herself when she tried to contend by force with one greater than she was. The order being established in the narrative is that the event is first judged, then generalized, and then traced back to the self that chose the contest. Further, her expansive education has become moot because it has only produced insight after the consequences of the rivalry have been visited upon her own body, household, and name.

4.6.3 Maximiliánus: A Father's Unheeded Wisdom

Maximiliánus enters Philotemia's rivalry with Dínus as a figure already marked by the language of discernment. Similarly to Dínus and Philotemia, the saga endorses him as both "vitur" ("wise") and "forspáár" ("foresighted") before ever placing him into a situation in which these qualities are tested. [95] When he is eventually tried by Philotemia's desire to overcome Dínus purely for her own social gains, his response verifies that he is indeed capable of wise counsel. Though he understands her wish to contend with a royal of equal substance, seeing it as more than just a passing fascination with the prince's fame, he is shrewd enough to recognize that this desire threatens to draw both his daughter and his realm into a public contest whose consequences cannot possibly remain under her control. He issues a threefold warning to his daughter, saying:

"Eptir lidinn þagnar tijma sagde hann so, 'betra þætti mier ad ei bædi þier mig þessa, og eff þesse girnd mætti vtkastast aff ydar hiarta, þä villda eg giarnann ei þess freista lääta, þuiad minn hugur bijdur mier so, ad aff firstu samkomu yckar, munu vier fää vanvirding,

"After a time of silence had passed, he said thus, 'it would seem better to me that you did not ask me this, and if this desire might be cast out of your heart, then I would gladly not allow this to be tried, because my mind tells me so, that from the first meeting of you two, we shall get dishonor, but from the second

[94] Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 3. See also Bjørn Bandlien, *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe* 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 291.

[95] *Dínus saga drambläta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 15-16.

enn af annare mikla skømm og harma, enn aff þridiu æfinnlega suijvirding'…"[96]	great shame and sorrow, and from the third eternal disgrace'…"

His warnings come from a ruler whose wisdom frames his identity within the narrative. He imagines the rivalry as an intensifying series in which one encounter gives rise to another and each new movement deepens the social cost. Maximiliánus knows that a contest between Philotemia and Dínus will not remain an intellectual exercise between two unusually gifted young people. It will mean ruin for the body, the household, and the court.

This early counsel belongs near the wisdom tradition that defines prudence as the ability to look ahead before danger arrives. *Hugsvinnsmál* repeatedly treats wisdom as anticipation. It adapts the Catonian warning that one should foresee coming events and be prepared to bear them:

"Buinn við meinum skyli bargna hverr, þótt gangi t óskum allt; sterklig stríð hykk at standask megi hverrs þeira bíðr buinn."[97]	"Prepared against troubles each man should be making himself sage, though everything go according to his wishes; strong struggles I think may be withstood by each of those who awaits them prepared."

Additionally, *Hugsvinssmál* adapts the instruction to look at what follows and see beforehand what threatens:

"Umb lítask þarf maðr á alla vega auk við villu varask; gløggþekkinn skyldi gumna hverr ok fróðr ok frosjáll vesa."[98]	"A man must look carefully in every direction and beware of being led astray; one should be clear-sighted, wise, and prudent."

Maximiliánus's speech does precisely that within the saga's own narrative situation. He sees the coming pattern before Philotemia accepts that the pattern can apply to her. His wisdom is therefore not theoretical. It is practical, paternal, and political.

Philotemia's reply exposes the limit of that wisdom without making it false. She does not refute the warning. She makes refusal costly. If Maximiliánus denies her request, she will take no joy, food, or drink. [99] The father who can foresee the danger cannot make his foresight govern the daughter whose will has fixed itself upon Dínus. The moment separates discernment from

[96] *Dínus saga*, 16.

[97] *Hugsvinnsmál: Eine altisländische Übersetzung der Disticha Catonis*, ed. Hugo Gering (Kiel: Lipsius & Tischer, 1907), 22.

[98] Ibid., 22.

[99] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 16.

control. Maximiliánus knows how the story is likely to go, but knowledge cannot compel Philotemia to abandon the desire that will bring the warning into being.

The saga later returns to Maximiliánus's warning in the language of fulfilled prophecy. After the rivalry has passed through repeated deception and has brought Philotemia into the public disgrace her father had feared, Maximiliánus addresses her with anger and grief:

"huort er nu ecki frammkomenn su späsaga sem eg sagde, ad aff þinne forvitne munder þu fáá æffinlega suijvirding. Nu er af þinni frammferd nidrad vorre köngligre tign, enn þu siáálff skiemd, sem makligt er, so ad þesse háádung ok skømm mun fara vmm alla verolldina...[100]	"has the prophecy I told you not now come to pass, that because of your curiosity you would suffer eternal disgrace? Now, through your conduct our royal dignity has been brought low, and you yourself have been shamed, as is fitting, so that this mockery and disgrace will travel throughout the whole world."

The word he uses to describe his prophecy ("späsaga") suggests that he himself believes he knew precisely where this venture would end. Maximiliánus's first warning was not a vague expression of worry. The saga now treats it as the speech that had already told the truth of the event. Philotemia's curiosity ("forvitne") situated within a desire to test herself, has produced eternal disgrace, just as he had said. Her virginity can never be returned to her and, as these words are spoken, the man who took it from her has absolutely no intention of remedying this grave situation through marriage. The disgrace also spreads beyond Philotemia herself. Maximiliánus says that royal dignity has been lowered and that the mockery will travel through the whole world. His first counsel understood this from the beginning. Shame in a royal household becomes public property because others can carry it outward.

This accuracy makes his later failure all the more remarkable. Maximiliánus is not wrong about Philotemia. He is right too early to stop her and then right too late to prevent the consequences from becoming political. Once his daughter and royal dignity have been shamed, he turns immediately to retaliation. The desire to repair disgrace pulls him toward Anachorita, whose knowledge can serve revenge. The king who first counseled restraint now seeks counsel for war. Anachorita tells him to summon the subject rulers of Bláland, gather a monstrous army of giants, blámenn, and other terrifying peoples, cross into Egypt before resistance can be prepared, and destroy the realm, promising that by his arts no certain news of the army will reach Egypt until the army has already arrived. Maximiliánus asks for wisdom, and the answer he receives from Anachorita is instead a plan to defeat Dínus without allowing the armies of Alexandria to know anything of their movements.

When Heremita intervenes in the situation, Maximiliánus's wisdom reveals itself as a different sort of failure. On the night before battle, Heremita enters the Bláland camp in disguise. Maximiliánus feels a hand and thinks he recognizes Anachorita. He assumes that his adviser has found some secret plan that must be told to him alone. That simple assumption is enough to lead him away from his own army. The king who foresaw the stages of Philotemia's disgrace now follows a touch in the dark because it seems to belong to the counselor on whom he has come to

[100] *Dínus saga drambláta*, 68-69.

rely. Comically, he has already seen the future accurately in counsel, but he cannot read the immediate scene in front of him. The scene is almost cruel in its simplicity. Maximiliánus is not defeated by an argument. He is misled by mistaken recognition, by a hand that seemed familiar. Maximiliánus accepts the identity of the figure beside him because the situation fits what he expects from Anachorita. His dependence on the wrong counselor has trained his perception before Heremita's illusions have fully begun.

This episode should be read beside Maximiliánus's first warning to Philotemia. In the first scene, he sees the future better than his daughter does. At the Nile, he sees the present worse than Heremita wants him to see it. This contrast defines the boundary of his own wisdom. Maximiliánus can understand social consequence with extraordinary accuracy. He knows what shame will do once a royal daughter's folly comes back upon her kingdom. Yet he cannot recognize the counselor who leads him toward destruction, and he cannot trust his own sight when Heremita turns the night landscape into an illusory theater of terror.

Heremita shows Maximiliánus an overwhelming host that will aid Dínus, and the terrified king asks how he can avoid mortal danger, and the answer to this dilemma requires only surrender. Maximiliánus must send away his army, come to Dínus with an equal number of men, and place himself within the authority of the prince he had meant to destroy. The king remains governed by the same concern that shaped his first warning, that of public disgrace. He can stop the war only if his surrender does not turn into yet another unbearable shame. Maximiliánus's final sententious utterance therefore invokes the courtly system that governs, or should govern, the behavior of these royal families. Once he has entered Dínus's power, he asks how his affairs will be arranged because his army and loyal retainers wait in the tents and will fear the outcome if he does not return as promised. He then asks Dínus to arrange matters so that his disgrace will not increase:

"med þui (seiger hann) ad vier erumm áá ydart valld komner, þä viliumm vier first, vita vorn veg, og huorsu þier skiped voru rääde. firer þui ad vortt herlid og heimuglegar hyrd sueiter. bijda vor j landtiølldunumm, og eff vor ferd duelst nockud, og komum vier ei so aptur sem vier jáátudumm þeim, munu þeir miøg öttast huorsu vortt erinde heffur licktad, þui bid eg firer ydar tign og hæversku, ad þier skiped suo ad vor suijvirding aukest eckj hiedann af þui betra er ad deyia, enn vid dapra skømm leinge ad liffa."[101]

"Since we have come into your power," he says, "we wish first to know our position and how you will arrange our affairs. Our army and loyal retainers are waiting for us in the tents, and if our journey is delayed and we do not return as we promised them, they will greatly fear how our errand has ended. Therefore I ask, by your dignity and courtesy, that you arrange things so that our disgrace does not increase from here, for it is better to die than to live long with dreary shame."

This final sentence belongs to the wider death-before-disgrace tradition. It appears in *Flóvents saga* as, "betra er að deyja dýrlega en lifa við skömm" ("better to die gloriously than live with

[101] *Dínus saga*, 84-85.

shame"),[102] in *Gibbons saga* as, "betra er að deyja skjótum dauða en life við skömm" ("it is better to die a swift death than to live with shame")[103], and in *Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns* as, "er betra að falla með heiður en lifa við skömm" ("it is better to fall with honor than to live with shame"),[104] and *Flóamanna saga* as, "betra er að deyja virðulega en að lifa við skömm" ("it is better to die with honor than to live in shame").[105] This is a known Latin maxim that Hermann Pálsson has identified with the pseudo-Publilius Syrus tradition as, "honestam mortem vitae turpi praefero" ("I prefer an honorable death to a shameful life).[106] This can further be compared with Tacitus's "honesta mors turpi vita potior" ("an honorable death is preferable to a shameful life."). Perhaps more germane to the composition of Dínus saga however is that this tradition is also voiced within *Gyðinga saga*:

"...þvi að betra er að deyja í bardaga með hreysti en life með bleyði og vita skömm vorra manna og niðurbrot laganna."[107]	„...For it is better to die in battle with valor than to live with cowardice and know the shame of our men and the breaking down of the laws."

This itself is a rendering of the Latin Vulgate's *First Book of Maccabees*, chapter three:

„Quoniam melius est nos mori in bello, quam videre mala gentis nostrae et sanctorum."[108]	„For it is better for us to die in battle than to see the evils of our people and of the holy things."

This tradition demonstrates that Maximiliánus's statement is not only a dramatic plea for generous treatment, rather it is the last verbal form of the fear he has carried since Philotemia first asked to test Dínus. The shame that he envisions is dangerous because of its duration. The language used makes the sentence more than a contrast between death and dishonor. It imagines shame as extent, as a life extended under public memory and report.

Maximiliánus's place within a failed-wisdom sequence therefore depends on a double truth. He truly is a wise king. He reads Philotemia's desire before she understands it, and the saga later says that his prophecy has come to pass. His counsel is suitable, and, as he foresaw, his daughter's refusal proves disastrous. Yet the wisdom that predicts shame cannot keep him from

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[102] *Flóvents saga*, in *Fornsögur Sudrlanda: Magus saga Jarls, Konraðs saga, Bærings saga, Flovents saga, Bevers saga*, ed., Gustaf Cederschiöld (Lund: Fr. Berlings Boktryckeri och Stilgjuteri, 1884), 166.

[103] *Gibbons saga*, ed. R. I. Page, *Editiones Arnamagnaeanae* B, 2 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), 93.

[104] *Jarlmanns saga ok Hermanns*, in *Riddarasögur* VI, ed., Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1951), 201.

[105] *Flóamanna saga*, ed., Þorleifr Jónsson (Reykjavík: Sigmundur Guðmundssonar, 1884), 25.

[106] Hermann Pálsson, „The Use of Latin Proverbs and Sententiae in the Riddarasögur," *The Fifth International Saga Conference* (1982), 388.

[107] *Gyðinga saga*, ed., Guðmundur Þorláksson (Copenhagen: S.L. Møllers Bogtrykkeri, 1881), 14.

[108] *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), 1441.

being governed by shame after it arrives. He turns to Anachorita because disgrace demands an answer, and he is then easily led by Heremita because his trust has already attached itself to the wrong guide. The father who first saw the future must finally be taught to see the present. Heremita's illusions save him from the war that his own accurate foresight could diagnose but could not prevent.

4.6.4 Anachorita: Wisdom from a corrupted source

Anachorita enters Dínus saga after Dínus's tablet has thrown Bláskumia into true social and spiritual disorder. Philotemia, her maidens, and the court have been drawn into a humiliating spectacle, and the ordinary resources of royal authority cannot identify the cause or bring the marvel to an end. Damiánus then remembers hearing of a strange being who lives near the city, one filled with a pythonic spirit. The saga describes him as taking his nature from devilish power, as is told of the pythoness in Roman histories.[109] Damiánus finds him near the city, apart from the court, in a place that resembles eremitic withdrawal without the holiness that such withdrawal should imply. His body is black, shaggy, and degraded, yet he understands human speech and answers intelligently.[110] The name Anachorita evokes an image of a holy recluse, but as a dark mirror of Heremita, because the figure who bears it has been seemingly separated from sanctity rather than physically representing it. The saga gives him the outward signs of distance from the world and then fills that distance with devilish knowledge. His introduction gives the source of his knowledge before the reader sees what that knowledge can do. Anachorita is not presented first as a counselor whose skill later proves suspect. He is introduced through entry into his liminal space beneath the city at the very moment when Bláland needs someone who can read what ordinary sight cannot explain.

His entry into the story shares similarities with the Vulgate passage in Acts 16:16, where Paul and his companions meet a girl with a similar description as Anachorita. She has within her a "pythonic spirit" that affords her the power of divination that she uses to profit for her masters:

"factum est autem euntibus nobis ad orationem puellam quondam habentem spiritum pythonem obviare nobis quae quaestum magnum praestabat dominis suis divinando."[111]	"And it happened, as we were going to prayer, that a certain slave-girl possessed by a pythonic spirit met us. She brought her masters great profit by fortune-telling."

This places Anachorita inside a familiar scriptural suspicion about mysteriously channeled knowledge. In *Acts of the Apostles*, the girl with the pythonic spirit can tell what others cannot know, and her masters profit from that power. Paul's answer to this abominable behavior is to force the expulsion of the spirit from the girl. The spirit's effectiveness does not guarantee its

[109] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 40.

[110] Ibid., 40.

[111] *Acts* 16:16, in Michael Hetzenauer, ed., *Biblia Sacra secundum Vulgatam Clementinam*, Vetus Testamentum III (Ratisbonae: Fridericus Pustet, 1922), 1726.

safety. This is displayed within the narrative of *Dínus saga* when the sovereign powers of Bláskumia turn to the howe-dwelling Anachorita after the tablet has defeated every ordinary form of authority. Nearly the entirety of the city's inhabitants have been affected by the literal writing on the wall.[112] The court needs someone who can read the hidden cause of the spectacle, and the only figure able to do so has already been described in terms that suggest that his nature is derived from diabolic authority.[113]

Deuteronomy states the prohibition against dealing with such spirits more directly when it forbids anyone to consult pythons and diviners or seek truth from the dead:

"nec qui pythones consulat, nec divinos, aut quaerat a mortuis veritatem."[114]	"Nor anyone who consults pythons, nor diviners, nor seeks the truth from the dead."

The situation is dire, however, as Philotemia, Maximiliánus, the clergy, and the people have all been caught in the same dance, and no one inside ordinary authority can stop it. Anachorita can tell the court what has happened because his knowledge comes through the very kind of power the biblical tradition marks as forbidden.

His first intervention succeeds because he somehow understands the dangers of the tablet better than anyone else and understands how to circumvent its powers. The bishops and priests enter with crosses, candles, holy water, and relics, but they also look at the writing and are drawn into the same naked dance as the rest of the court. Anachorita approaches differently. He covers his eyes, gropes through the hall, finds the tablet, takes it down, and removes it.[115] The magic is explained through how Anachorita defeats its power. The tablet works through sight, so the person who can mitigate it must refuse the kind of looking that has mastered everyone else. Barnes's discussion of signs and dangerous cognition in *Dínus saga* would suggest that this episode turns a written object into a trap for perception.[116] The episode extends the saga's recurrent preoccupation with curiosity by making vision itself dangerous, in that those who look at the tablet surrender their agency entirely to it, while Anachorita succeeds by refusing to give into the temptation to look upon it.

The recovery of Philotemia and her maidens repeats the same pattern. When Dínus transforms them into crows and hides them in Alexandria, Anachorita knows where they are. He

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[112] This tablet may, thus, have its origins in the same story of Nebuchadnezzar which potentially informed the portrayal of the shaggy form of Anachorita, as he sees writing that drives him into his madness.

[113] *Dínus saga drambláta*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands, 1960), 40.

[114] *Deuteronomy* 18:11, in Michael Hetzenauer, ed., *Biblia Sacra secundum Vulgatam Clementinam*, Vetus Testamentum III (Ratisbonae: Fridericus Pustet, 1922), 260.

[115] *Dínus saga*, 41.

[116] Geraldine Barnes, "Cognitive Dysfunction in Dínus saga drambláta and Le Roman de Perceval," *Arthuriana* 22, no. 1 (2012): 58-60; Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 61.

goes in monstrous flying form, carries them back to Bláskumia, and releases them by dividing an apple among them.[117] The court therefore has practical reasons to keep seeking him. He has removed the tablet, restored the people to themselves, found the missing women, and undone the crow transformation. His knowledge solves problems that royal command and clerical authority ostensibly could not solve. The use of that knowledge changes when Maximiliánus seeks revenge for the dishonor to Philotemia and his kingdom. The king no longer asks Anachorita to end a marvel or recover his daughter. He asks how the shame suffered by himself, Philotemia, and Bláland can be answered. Anachorita gives him a plan suited to that desire. Maximiliánus should gather forces from across his dominion, bring terrifying peoples with him, move toward Egypt before resistance can be prepared, and seize Dínus and his companions for punishment.

At that point Anachorita's knowledge begins to teach a king how to act. First Timothy warns against those who attend to "spirits of error" and the "doctrine of demons."[118] The phrase fits the role Anachorita now occupies in the story. He tells Maximiliánus how to turn shame into concealed invasion. He does not only supply power for the campaign. He instructs the king in the method that he will employ, to gather the army, hide its movement, and strike before Egypt can answer. Bailey's account of late medieval clerical anxiety over demonic magic helps explain why the saga can let such knowledge work while still treating it as spiritually dangerous. An art may heal, reveal, or protect in one scene and lead a ruler toward destruction in another when its power comes through demons.[119]

When Heremita reveals himself to be the Indian prince Valterus, he subsequently reveals the spiritual dependence already disclosed to the reader in Anachorita's introduction to Dínus and his company. He brings a glass sphere, and inside it Dínus and his men see fire. In the fire they see an image like Anachorita himself. Valterus explains that within the sphere is Anachorita:

"sua piniz hann nu af þeim sem hann hafdi sitt traust aa. enn þat uar pukin sialfr..."[120]	"so now he is tormented by that one whom he had trusted in, which was the devil himself."

For his trust in the devil, Anachorita now receives punishment from the self-same entity. The sphere thus effectively turns Anachorita into the kind of object he had once interpreted for others. Earlier he could interpret images that no one else had the ability to read. Now others look upon him as an image enclosed in flames. His knowledge has led him back to the power that sustained it, and that power appears as torment. After Valterus has shown this to the court, the

[117] *Dínus saga*, 53-55.

[118] *1 Timothy* 4:1.

[119] Michael D. Bailey, "From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages," *Speculum* 76, no. 4 (2001): 963-67.

[120] *Dínus saga*, 89.

sphere is thrown into the Nile. It has served its single purpose. It has exposed Anachorita's true nature and ended the spiritual rivalry between the kingdoms.

The character of Anachorita therefore provides a visual representation of Heremita's rebuke over failed wisdom, even in its darkest form. This further engages with known material from Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*, which suggests that those deceived by confidence in false wisdom cannot arrive at true wisdom:

"Quid est enim quod eos ad sapientiam vocat et tamen optat ne illos sapientes inveniat, nisi quod ad veram sapientiam venire non possunt qui falsae suae sapientiae fiducia decipiuntur?"[121]	"For what does it mean that he calls them to wisdom and yet wishes not to find them wise, except that those who are deceived by confidence in their own false wisdom cannot come to true wisdom?"

Anachorita knows enough to solve immediate problems, and kings seek him because his answers work. He can identify hidden causes, manage dangerous signs, retrieve what has been lost, and hide an army from sight. The saga follows that usefulness back to its source and shows the cost of trusting it. Knowledge taken from the devil can disclose hidden things, but it finally serves and punishes according to the power from which it comes.

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

Compared with its more openly sententious contemporaries in the *riddarasögur* corpus, *Dínus saga drambláta* contains a relatively small body of readily identifiable proverbial speech. Its participation in Icelandic wisdom traditions consequently cannot be measured by the number of maxims that can be detached from the narrative and matched with external parallels. However, its real value as a case study lies in precisely how the saga uses the sententious moments that it contains. Perceived proverbiality makes that scarcity intelligible. A balanced construction can make an utterance sound communal. A familiar image gives present judgment an inherited reach, while placement allows a particular sentence to open toward recurrent conduct. Such authority remains inseparable from the events around it. Its tendency is toward placing its most consequential utterances within exemplary scenes in which a problem has been acted out through its characters. The wise-sounding speech of its characters serves to condense the moral or ethical message prepared by these events and preserves that message in a form capable of being remembered and applied beyond the immediate scene. More precisely, it demonstrates one manner through which fourteenth-century Icelandic scribes could combine inherited forms of wisdom with exemplary scenes, allowing an utterance to interpret its immediate scene while remaining memorable beyond it, much as *exempla* and *proverbia* circulated together within Latin literary traditions.

Heremita provides the clearest model of this process because his utterances usually occur at the confluence between recognition and decision. He uses what sounds like gnomic or ancient

[121] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 13.40, ed. Marc Adriaen, *Gregorii Magni Moralia in Iob*, CCSL 143A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 692, lines 2-5: This sentence is excerpted in Thomas of Ireland's Manipulus florum under "Sapiencia uel sciencia n," See https://manipulus-project.wlu.ca/lemmata/Sapiencia.html

communal knowledge to communicate the causal relationship between the wine that afflicted Dínus and his men with their painful horns and the curative wine that will purge them of their condition. His discerning language further helps to identify the proverbial snare concealed within the courteous language of the Bláland embassy. Though it is at the eleventh hour, his wisdom allows him to warn Alexandria of the arrival of Anachorita's terrifying army before they have a chance to completely overwhelm Dínus and his people. Even when Maximiliánus's army reaches the Nile without his knowledge, Heremita places himself under the judgment of his own sententious rebuke. He acknowledges that his wisdom has failed before immediately launching into the response that such a crisis required. His authority therefore arises through the relation between speech and action. He interprets what others cannot yet understand and then proposes a course of conduct whose consequences test and confirm his pronouncement.

Anachorita occupies a comparable position outside ordinary royal and clerical knowledge. Like Heremita, he can identify hidden causes and alter events through extraordinary arts. His first interventions restore order to Bláskumia. He removes the tablet that has defeated the clergy, locates Philotemia and her maidens, and reverses their transformation into crows. The saga has already associated these abilities with a pythonic and devilish source, however, and their later use reveals the danger contained within that association. When Maximiliánus seeks an answer to the shame suffered by his daughter and kingdom, Anachorita assumes effective control of Maximiliánus's army, spearheading the concealed invasion after the spiritually defeated king has yielded strategic authority to him. His position recalls other, wise counselor figures from Icelandic romance whose intellectual superiority authorizes them to exercise powers of command that properly belong to the king.[122] Anachorita's knowledge remains effective, but its effectiveness becomes subordinate to the retaliatory purposes of the ruler who consults him and to the nefarious powers from which his abilities proceed. His fiery torment within the glass sphere and subsequent death in the River Nile are presented as a fitting end for a figure who misplaced their trust in diabolic forces, converting his final appearance into a final exemplary conclusion. Heremita and Anachorita therefore function as rhetorical counterparts rather than as uncomplicated embodiments of wisdom and falsehood. Both possess real knowledge, both operate through marvelous arts, and both act beyond the capacities of ordinary institutions. Their divergence emerges through the purposes toward which their knowledge is directed and through the narrative consequences that follow. The saga consequently separates efficacy from authority. The ability to discover hidden things or accomplish an intended result does not by itself make knowledge worthy of trust.

The utterances of Dínus, Philotemia, and Maximiliánus extend this inquiry from the counselor to the speaker and hearer. Dínus understands that Philotemia has humbled him, but his recognition fails to do anything other than further the rivalry between the two. Philotemia, on the other hand, speaks accurately about her own fall only after its bodily and public consequences can no longer be avoided. Maximiliánus foresees the disgrace that will follow from his daughter's ambition, yet the same fear of disgrace later draws him toward war. Their statements demonstrate that accurate judgment possesses no automatic power over conduct. Wisdom may remain unheeded or even be subordinated to the desire that it should have corrected. Sententious

[122] Cf., The character of Master Perus in *Clári saga*, ed. Gustav Cederschiöld (Halle: Niemeyer, 1907).

speech, therefore, becomes practically effective only when its speaker or hearer accepts the action demanded by its judgment.

The saga's treatment of sententious speech should be understood as belonging to the same compositional practice examined throughout this study. Its writer assembled inherited wisdom from both scriptural and scholastic sources with the marvels of vernacular romance. Exemplary scenes stage conduct and its consequences and sententious utterance then condense the ultimate conclusion those scenes are intended to produce. *Dínus saga* thus feels intuitively designed because these inherited materials interpret one another, leaving the narrative to decide what their authority is worth.

Chapter 5

General Conclusion

5.1 Synthesis of the Argument

This dissertation began from Shaun F. D. Hughes's previous description of the "intuitive" nature with which writers of the original *riddarasögur* texts distributed various motifs throughout their narratives.[1] The apparent intuitiveness of their composition arose from fourteenth-century Icelanders' sustained experience with inherited material. This experience was cultivated within an educational system in which clerically derived practices of writing taught and reinforced the processes of selection, editing, and repurposing prior knowledge that had previously circulated in other forms and in other languages. The schools and ecclesiastical networks of medieval Iceland gave such writers access to textual practices developed through Latin pedagogy, while the circulation of vernacular religious prose and translated romance allowed those practices to operate in Old Norse. Within that setting, *Dínus saga*'s combination of apparently incongruous elements from Latin, French, and domestic traditions can be understood as the product of the cultivated authorial practice underlying the fluency Hughes describes. Its writer appears to have worked within a repertoire whose materials had already acquired associations through earlier books and stories yet remained capable of being placed into new relations. Hughes's original observation can therefore be situated within a history of literary training and repeated textual use, where compositional fluency arose through familiarity with inherited forms and through a literary culture that was ostensibly committed to ensuring their continued adaptability.

The three modes examined in the preceding chapters describe successive movements within such a compositional process. The practice of *compilatio,* which makes inherited matter available by gathering it from textual traditions whose original purposes may have differed considerably from those of romance, provides the logic through which the composition of *Dínus saga drambláta* took place. Its use of and "cannibalization" of other texts and traditions makes this argument clear, whereas the related practice of *ordination*, or arrangement, gives that borrowed material a new structure and allows one element to qualify another across the developing narrative. Exemplary logic then reveals the true natures of the saga's characters through events whose consequences disclose the ethical implications of their conduct. Sententious speech follows from those scenes by giving their moral or ethical results a compact verbal form, although the value of any utterance remains dependent upon the speaker, the occasion, and the action that follows. These procedures repeatedly converge in *Dínus saga*. The learned associations surrounding Alexandria and Bláland establish the political and intellectual world in which Dínus and Philotemia encounter one another. Their repeated deceptions draw upon recognizable romance situations, yet the order of those situations turns each apparent victory into the cause of another reversal. The embodied and public consequences of the sequences of tricks and reversals stage pride within the courts that sustain the protagonists'

[1] Shaun F. D. Hughes, "Stories Found on Stone Walls: Contemporary Research on the Riddarasögur," *Scandinavian Studies* 93, no. 1 (2021): 114-140.

authority, while the warnings and moral or ethical conclusions spoken around those consequences determine how accurately the characters understand what has happened to them. The saga's coherence develops through this continued interaction among received matter, narrative arrangement, and interpretive speech. Each mode remains distinguishable for the purposes of analysis, though the saga itself rarely permits one to operate without the others.

The rivalry between Dínus and Philotemia demonstrates how this compositional method could give fantastical narrative an ethical and political direction without sacrificing its narrative largesse. Dínus's prides, his guarded beauty and social exclusivity, serve to establish the avenues through which Philotemia first reaches him, while his other prides, his contempt for women and appetite for novelty, define the form of her approach. Similarly, her own confidence in her interpretive and magical superiority later exposes her to the openings through which Dínus retaliates. Their contest consequently develops through actions fitted to dispositions already established by the narrative, and the magnificence of each trick increases the prominence of the flaw that affords its success. Humiliation, however, provides only a limited form of correction. Both protagonists become capable of recognizing their flaws while remaining committed to the rivalry that was instigated through them, so that knowledge of consequence repeatedly enters the service of revenge. The counselor figures on either side of the dispute highlight the repercussions of this failure. Heremita's authority develops through his ability to recognize danger, propose an effective response, and preserve the dignity of those affected by his intervention. Anachorita possesses comparable powers of discovery and action, yet his counsel advances the retaliatory campaign of a ruler whose judgment has already been distorted by shame. Their opposition suggests that the saga measures wisdom through the relation between knowledge and its use, with particular attention to the lives and political communities placed under the authority of the learned speaker. The final marriage ends the rivalry and restores dynastic order, although the settlement retains the unequal cost of its last stages. Philotemia's bodily violation and loss of political autonomy remain embedded within the peace that follows, leaving the romance's ethical resolution arguably less complete than its ceremonial ending might initially suggest.

Geraldine Barnes's work on the bookish *riddarasögur* has supplied the most productive account of the learned repertoire available to the writers of these romances and of the literary exchange through which recurring material could acquire new life.[2] The argument developed here extends that account into the procedures by which such a repertoire may have been transformed into narrative. A source or analogue establishes the prior availability of an element, while the sequence of the new work determines the function it acquires after transmission. The distinction becomes particularly clear when the same material is followed across several scales. Learned geography carries associations formed through biblical and encyclopedic writing, yet its placement within the paired kingdoms of *Dínus saga* helps construct the rivalry between their courts. Exemplary narration belongs to a clerical history of instruction, yet its demonstrative structure becomes the engine of extended romance episodes in which conduct is tested through spectacle. Sententious forms possess their own histories within scriptural, classical, and vernacular wisdom traditions, yet their authority in the saga arises through the circumstances in which they are spoken and through the decisions they produce. The manuscript evidence of AM 575a 4to adds a further scale by showing how the surviving medieval redaction was divided and

[2] Geraldine Barnes, *The Bookish Riddarasögur: Writing Romance in Late Mediaeval Iceland*, The Viking Collection 21 (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), 181-84.

made navigable for readers. The method pursued throughout this dissertation therefore moves between textual history and narrative function, allowing the institutional availability of a form to be considered alongside the particular work assigned to it within a surviving witness.

5.2 Utility of the Argument

The familiar distinction between translated and original *riddarasögur* describes the immediate linguistic and textual status of individual works, though it offers only a partial account of the literary culture from which the later romances emerged. Translation carried continental narratives into Old Norse and established a vernacular repertoire through which courtly fiction could be recognized and further developed. Latin remained active within this history through the institutions that trained writers and through the books that supplied clerical education. Its role was ecclesiastical and transregional, connecting Icelandic schools and religious houses to practices of reading that circulated across the wider Church. The writers who produced vernacular texts could encounter learned material in Latin or in vernacular forms already shaped by Latin rhetoric and pedagogy. The movement of clerics and books through the Norwegian ecclesiastical province linked Icelandic schools to this wider textual economy.[3] This layered transmission complicates any account in which foreign matter enters Iceland through a single movement from one national literature into another. The evidence assembled in this dissertation suggests that Latinity persisted within Icelandic romance as a compositional disposition, visible in the handling of inherited materials and in the expectation that a narrative could carry ethical conclusions through its arrangement. Such a claim concerns the practices through which material was reworked for new purposes, together with the forms of exemplary demonstration and sententious interpretation that clerical culture kept available. The resulting Latinity is therefore latent in the procedures of the vernacular work, even where its immediate narrative matter has passed through several linguistic and performative intermediaries.

This institutional perspective also helps explain why the learned character of the original *riddarasögur* has sometimes been difficult to harmonize within earlier literary histories. Scholarship formed around national language and native origin tended to value works that appeared to preserve an autonomous Icelandic tradition, particularly when that tradition could be aligned with the stylistic and historical expectations associated with the *Íslendingasögur*.[4] The conspicuous foreignness of late romance then became available as evidence of cultural dependence or declining taste. Source study could reinforce that judgment when its primary aim

[3] Ryder Patzuk-Russell, *The Development of Education in Medieval Iceland*, The Northern Medieval World (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), 2, 77, 278; Åslaug Ommundsen, "Traces of Latin Education in the Old Norse World," in *Intellectual Culture in Medieval Scandinavia, c. 1100-1350*, ed. Stefka G. Eriksen, Disputatio 28 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 252-57; Christian Etheridge, "Canon, Dominican and Brother: The Life and Times of Jón Halldórsson in Bergen," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt*, ed. Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson, The Northern World 91 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 17-23; Astrid Marner, "Liturgical Change and Liturgical Plurality in the Province of Nidaros: New Light on the *Ordo Nidrosiensis Ecclesiae*," in *Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland*, 183-202, esp. 185-97; Dario Bullitta, "The Victorine Library and Scholarly Networks Behind *Niðrstigningar saga*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 123, no. 2 (2024): 215-45.

[4] Jürg Glauser, *Isländische Märchensagas: Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 12 (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1983), 1-3; Cf., Jan de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, (1942), 359.

was to separate imported matter from whatever remained locally distinctive. The history traced here suggests a different account of literary production, though the limits of a single case study should remain clear. In *Dínus saga*, material associated with Latin learning and continental romance enters a vernacular composition whose arrangement addresses the ethical and political concerns of its own narrative world. The saga's originality resides in the sustained relations produced among those materials, including the sequence through which marvelous invention becomes a means of examining pride, counsel, and the exercise of power. A category such as "original romance" therefore identifies an Icelandic act of composition while retaining the long history of transmission that made its repertoire available. Latinity belongs within that history as an ecclesiastical medium whose influence could continue after the movement into Old Norse, carried through the habits of writers and readers as securely as through the direct translation of particular books.

Centering the figure of the compiler changes the temporal shape assigned to literary meaning. A work composed through inherited materials participates in earlier traditions at the moment of writing, and it also depends upon readers capable of recognizing enough of those traditions to follow the relations created by the new arrangement. The learned audience implied by *Dínus saga* need not have identified every possible source or analogue. Its members could have recognized the prestige attached to Alexandria, the exemplary pressure of public humiliation, or the authority claimed by balanced forms of counsel without possessing identical bodies of knowledge. Meaning would then arise through variable acts of recognition within a shared bookish culture, where stories, wisdom traditions, and clerical forms of interpretation circulated at different levels of precision. A proverb or proverb-like statement acquires force through inherited form, yet the narrative context determines whether the speaker has earned the authority that the utterance appears to claim.[5] Readers must therefore relate speech to character, circumstance, and consequence, carrying the memory of earlier scenes into the judgment of later ones. The compiler arranges those relations, while the audience activates them through reading or listening. Such a model places literary production within an extended textual network that linked the circulation of books to the labor of writers and the responses of audiences. The anonymous writer remains central as the designer of the surviving arrangement, though the coherence of the work depends upon a culture of recognition that extends beyond an isolated moment of creation.

The redactional history of *Dínus saga* gives this extended model of composition a further historical dimension. The present study has concentrated upon the oldest recoverable redaction and has treated the middle and youngest versions as later acts of interpretation whose evidence belongs to their own periods. That distinction remains necessary, since changes preserved in early modern paper manuscripts cannot be projected backward into the medieval form of the saga without qualification. Their differences nevertheless show that the story continued to invite purposeful reorganization. The later redactions condense portions of the narrative in ways that alter its emphasis and sometimes state ethical implications with greater directness, thereby adjusting the relation between spectacle and interpretation for new audiences. These interventions resemble the broader compositional procedures examined in the medieval redaction, since inherited narrative matter remains available for selection and renewed

[5] Richard L. Harris, *Wisdom of the North: Proverbial Allusion and Patterning in the Icelandic Saga*, Islandica 64 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 2022).

arrangement. The continuity established by these witnesses concerns a manner of textual engagement. It cannot establish continuity of personnel or institution, and no evidence requires the later redactors to belong to the same clerical networks that shaped the medieval work. Their revisions still testify to the durability of a reading culture in which copying could include interpretation and in which a familiar romance could be made newly serviceable through alteration. AM 575a 4to preserves one materially articulated stage within that history, its divisions and directional formulas guiding readers through the elaborate sequence of the story. The paper redactions preserve later stages in which the inherited sequence was reconsidered. Together, the witnesses present *Dínus saga* as a work whose meaning continued to be produced through transmission, with each redaction recording a new judgment about the shape and emphasis of the inherited narrative.

5.3 Roadmap for the Future

The wider corpus of bookish *riddarasögur* offers the closest field of comparison, especially where learned narrative forms appear within manuscripts connected by demonstrable textual or codicological relationships.[6] Comparison across that corpus could establish whether the convergence found in *Dínus saga* represents a common compositional tendency or an unusually concentrated realization of practices that elsewhere remain separate. Such work would require attention to the different textual histories of individual romances. A recurring name or scene may reflect direct borrowing, while another may register a wider tradition or availability within a shared scribal environment. The method gains precision when these possibilities remain distinct and when close reading follows the function acquired by the repeated element in each narrative. Its extension to the *Íslendingasögur* and *fornaldarsögur* would require an additional degree of caution.[7] The *Íslendingasögur* provide the next field for this test because their structures of their genealogical openings are analogous to the stone walls of the original riddarasögur texts. Further, their advice and judgment are embedded within the relationships that organize their societies. Counsel in these sagas tends to pass horizontally through kinship networks. Its force depends upon the position of the speaker and upon the obligations binding speaker and hearer. Those traditions make different claims upon remembered history and poetic authority, and their forms of counsel operate within structures that cannot be assumed to resemble romance.[8] Selected comparisons may nevertheless clarify how medieval Icelandic writers across several genres arranged received matter and assigned authority to speech.[9] The

[6] Astrid van Nahl, *Originale Riddarasögur als Teil altnordischer Sagaliteratur,* Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 1, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur 447 (Frankfurt am Main and Bern: Peter Lang, 1981); Katarzyna Anna Kapitan and Tarrin Wills, "Sagas and Genre: A Case for Application of Network Analysis to Manuscripts Preserving Old Norse-Icelandic Saga Literature," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 38, no. 3 (2023): 1130-44.

[7] Carol J. Clover, *The Medieval Saga* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Matter of the North: The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*, trans. Randi C. Eldevik, The Viking Collection 13 (Odense: Odense University Press, 2002).

[8] Kimberly Aneuteeda Anderson, "An Investigation of Advice Giving in the Íslendingarsögur" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2023) 1-3, 152-165.

[9] Brittany Schorn, *Speaker and Authority in Old Norse Wisdom Poetry* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017): 6-7.

results may confirm only part of the model developed here, or they may reveal other procedures better suited to feud narrative and legendary prosimetrum.

Additionally, the *fornaldarsögur* offer a related but distinct field of comparison. Their writers assembled heroic tradition, genealogy, eddic and skaldic verse, folklore, marvel, romance, and learned historiography into imagined accounts of the Scandinavian past. The relations between these sagas and the original *riddarasögur* are already evident in their manuscript transmission. Their claims upon legendary history give the shared materials another purpose. A device used to regulate courtly rivalry in romance may participate in heroic identity, dynastic origin, or the fulfillment of inherited fate within a *fornaldarsaga*. Wisdom in the fornaldarsögur often enters from beyond the ordinary society of the hero. Prophecies, curses, and general knowledge may belong to supernatural figures whose understanding exceeds that of the protagonist. Judy Quinn, for example, has demonstrated the close prosimetric association among prophecy, advice, and curse in these sagas, particularly in the speech of female figures connected with chthonic and supernatural spaces. She argues that these utterances do not all perform the same act.[10] Prophecy discloses a future already apprehended by the speaker. Advice proposes a course through the danger ahead. A curse attempts to impose or accelerate an outcome. The narrative placement of each form determines what kind of authority it claims and how the hero's response should be understood.

The larger contribution of this dissertation lies in the historical relation it establishes between clerical learning and the craft of vernacular romance. *Dínus saga drambláta* consequently offers a model for understanding originality within a literary culture deeply invested in transmission. Its writer inherited materials shaped by linguistic and institutional histories extending through earlier narrative forms, and the surviving romance gives those materials a collective direction that cannot be reduced to any one of them. The saga's composition appears to have depended upon a learned confidence that received matter could be made new through disposition, and its reception depended upon audiences willing to follow the sequence through which spectacle yields consequence and judgment. Its redactional history carries that process beyond the medieval witness, showing how later readers continued to treat the narrative as material capable of renewed use. Within the limits of the evidence, this history places *Dínus saga* and the original *riddarasögur* near the center of medieval Icelandic literary production. They preserve the movement through which Latinate habits of reading and composition remained active within vernacular storytelling and continued to generate new arrangements. The apparent extravagance of *Dínus saga drambláta* is therefore the visible form of its literary intelligence, revealing how a learned Icelandic writer could gather inherited worlds and use their arrangement to test the responsibilities that accompany knowledge and power.

[10] Judy Quinn, "Ok verðr henni ljóð a munni:" Eddic prophecy in the *fornaldarsögur*," *Alvíssmál* 8 (1998): 29-50.

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