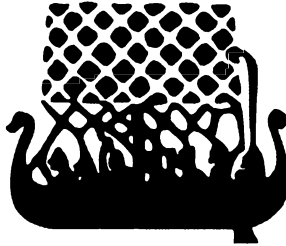


VIKING LANGUAGE 1

# VIKING LANGUAGE 1

LEARN OLD NORSE, RUNES,  
AND ICELANDIC SAGAS

JESSE L. BYOCK



Jules William Press

[www.vikingnorse.com](http://www.vikingnorse.com)

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**Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

**Byock, Jesse L., 1945-**

**Viking Language 1 : Learn Old Norse, Runes, and Icelandic Sagas / Jesse Byock. - 1st ed.  
v. cm. - (Viking language series)**

**Contents: v. 1. Viking language 1 : Learn Old Norse, runes, and Icelandic sagas. v. 2.**

**Viking language 2 : The Old Norse reader.**

**Summary: Old Norse Icelandic language introductory textbook with readings from sagas, runes, and the Viking Age in Scandinavia.**

**Includes bibliographical references, vocabulary, appendices, and student's guide.**

**ISBN-13: 978-1480216440 (v. 1, pbk.)**

**ISBN-10: 1480216445 (v. 1, pbk. )**

**1. Old Norse language-Grammar. 2. Old Norse language-Readers. 3.**

**Vikings-Language. 5. Sagas-Icelandic. 6. Runes-Scandinavian. I. Title.**

**PD2235.B9 2012/v.1**

**439/.6/v.1-dc 2012921210 (LCN)**

**Printed in Calibri**

**Cover Picture Permission: Cf24063\_C55000\_100\_VSH: Vikingskipshuset, det akademiske dyrehodet fra Oseberg © Kulturhistorisk museum, Universitetet i Oslo / Ove Holst**



### **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to my teachers of Old Norse: Einar Haugen at Harvard University; Kenneth Chapman and Eric Wahlgren at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); and Gösta Holm at Lunds Universitet. They were great scholars with deep learning in different aspects of Old Norse. It was an honor and a pleasure to learn with them. I believe this book would please them.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Viking Language* was long in the making, and I am indebted to many for their help. I thank the students and post docs who worked with me during the many phases of this project. I especially thank Kevin Elliott, a brilliant student in Indo-European Studies with an extraordinary knowledge of Old Norse. So also, I thank Randall Gordon, Marcin Krygier, Colin Connors, and Davide Zori for their insights and critique. It is a professor's joy to have such astute students. I also thank the undergraduates in my Old Norse classes at UCLA.

A good part of this book was written in Iceland, where for several years I was affiliated with the Medieval Studies Program at the University. I thank Professors Torfi Tulinius, Helgi Þorláksson, Ármann Jakobsson, and Ástráður Eysteinnsson for providing me with an office and assistance. I warmly thank my friends Aðalsteinn Davíðsson, Gunnlaugur Ingólfsson, and Kristján Jóhann Jónsson for their assistance. These specialists in Old Icelandic cast their sharp eyes over the manuscript. Camilla Basset, Chad Laidlaw, Miriam Mayburd, Rabea Stahl, and Arngrímur Vídalín Stefánsson, excellent graduate students at the University of Iceland, read the advanced draft. Their attention to detail and the additional suggestions by Sigrid Juel Hansen, Ilya Sverdlov, and Brett Langenberger were a boon for the last phases of the project.

Guðmundur Ólafur Ingimundarson, Jean-Pierre Biard, Robert Guillemette, and Ilya Sverdlov worked with me in making the charts and maps, and I warmly thank them for their great skill. I also thank Gayle Byock for her careful reading of the manuscript and constant cheerful support. David Lasson and J. Sebastian Pagani read portions of the manuscripts and contributed many useful suggestions. Any errors that remain are my own.

I am grateful to the Arcadia Foundation, Menntamálaráðuneyti (the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture), the Alcoa Foundation, the Institute for Viking and North Atlantic Studies, the Gelsinger Memorial Fund, the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and the UCLA Academic Senate. Their support made this project possible.

Finally, I thank the President of Iceland, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, for his constant support for this long project and Björn Bjarnason, the former Minister of Culture.

## ORGANIZATION AND NOTES FOR USING *VIKING LANGUAGE 1*



This book has two narratives. One is the tale of teaching Old Norse language, especially the Icelandic variant in which the sagas are written. The other is the story of the people who spoke Old Norse, traveled widely, and carved runes. Both tales are extraordinary.

**Figure 1.** Viking Age head carved on elk-horn found in Sigtuna, Sweden.

### The Book Includes

**Table of Contents** – a comprehensive listings so that all readings and grammatical information can be easily located.

**Introduction** – defines the sources and culture for learning Old Norse / Icelandic and runes.

#### Discussions, Lists, and Features

**Old Norse / Icelandic Alphabet and Spelling.**

**List of Abbreviations.**

**Extensive Grammar Index** telling where to find grammatical explanations and rules.

**A list of Sagas** and their locations on a map of Iceland.

**Maps, Charts, and Illustrations.**

**Lessons** – include Old Norse / Icelandic language, runic writing, and the history, mythology, and literature of the Viking Age. Each lesson focuses on an aspect of

language and life. The Old Norse reading passages and cultural sections in the first and second lessons concentrate on the settlement of Iceland and Greenland. Succeeding lessons turn to different locations in the Viking world including Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the British Isles, Europe, the Baltic region, Russia, Byzantium, the East. An extensive series of maps visualize the seafaring and travels of the Viking Age.

**All lessons** include grammar and exercises.

**Runes** are taught in almost all lessons.

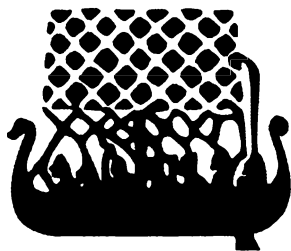
**Grammar Toolboxes.** Special review sections defining basic parts of speech are strategically located in the lessons. They offer overviews of core grammatical elements for those readers wishing to brush up their grammar while learning Old Norse.

**Appendix A – Quick Guide to Old Norse Grammar** is a study resource offering the most important tables of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs.

**Appendix B – The Most Frequent Words in the Sagas.** *Viking Language* is designed with a word frequency strategy to speed learning. Each lesson has a word frequency section and the symbol ♦ marks each of the 246 most common words in the sagas. Two listings in Appendix B give the 70 most frequent words in the sagas and the 246 most frequent words.

**Appendix C – Pronunciation of Old Icelandic.** In addition to this appendix, [www.vikingnorse.com](http://www.vikingnorse.com) offers an audio learning section with Icelandic speakers pronouncing reading passages from the early lessons.

**Vocabulary.** The rear of the book contains a comprehensive Vocabulary. So also, the reading passages in the first 7 lessons have their own specific vocabularies. These small vocabularies free the learner to concentrate on mastering the grammar of the early lessons. For those interested in word stems, the vocabulary entries offer all necessary information.



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## INTRODUCTION

**Icelandic Sources.** At the end of the eleventh century, Icelanders mastered writing. They adopted a slightly altered Latin alphabet that included the consonants ‘þ’ (called thorn) and ‘ð’ (called eth). With writing at their disposal, Icelanders soon began capturing on skin manuscripts their laws, genealogies, histories, sagas, legends, and myths. These medieval writings, many of which have survived, provide much of what we know from native Old Norse sources of the history and personalities of the Viking Age.

In composing their prose sagas and histories (among the latter, the most important are *The Book of Settlements* [*Landnámabók*] and *The Book of the Icelanders* [*Íslendingabók*]), Icelanders recognized that the origins of their community were not timeless or very distant. Instead they saw their personal roots and those of their island-wide community encapsulated in the relatively recent, memorable events of the Viking Age. Keeping these memories alive, they composed the family sagas (*Íslendingasögur*) about Icelanders and the kings’ sagas (*konungasögur*) about the rulers and history of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. These two groups of sagas (there are others, as discussed in this book) form a large literature of quasi-historical prose stories focusing on private and public life and Viking Age conflicts. With often great social detail, the sagas recount moments of honor and deceit as well as the banality and humor of everyday life.

Icelanders also wrote mythic-legendary sagas (*fornaldarsögur*). These ‘sagas of ancient times’ captured Viking Age stories of ancient heroes such as Sigurd the Dragon Slayer (Siegfried in the German Nibelung tradition) and King Hrolf Kraki. Other Icelandic writings such as *The Prose Edda* preserved Old Norse mythology, legends, and poetry. They recount tales of the Norse gods from their origins in the great void of Ginnungagap to their demise at the final battle of Ragnarok. Each of these sources of writing is included in the reading passages of this book.

In the medieval period immediately following the Viking Age, when the texts were written down, the Icelanders continued speaking Old Norse, as did Norwegians and other Scandinavians.

**RUNES.** Runic inscriptions are the second of the two major groups of native sources for learning the language and history of the Viking Age. Runes were an alphabetic writing system. The letters are made from short straight strokes carved on wood, bone, bark, wax tablets, and stone. Sometimes runes were engraved, inlaid, or etched onto steel objects



**Figure 2.**  
Helmet  
Nose-Piece,  
Sweden.

such as sword blades. At other times, they were carved on household artifacts such as spindle whorls and bone combs.

Many of the longer runic inscriptions were carved as memorials on stones. Such stones with their runes and sometimes pictorial ornamentation are called runestones. Runes were also used for everyday messages and grafitti. Many inscriptions had a magical context, and some are found on wooden healing sticks. The majority of runic finds are from mainland Scandinavia, but examples of runes have been found in many areas where the Northmen traveled or lived.

The runic alphabet is called the ‘futhark’ after the first six runic letters **F** **H** **T** **R** **K** **G**. Runes pre-date the Viking Age by many centuries, offering an efficient way of sharing and preserving information. The oldest runes date from the first century A.D., when writing in runes first caught on among Germanic peoples, spreading to Goths, Frisians, Anglo-Saxons, and the northerners who became the Northmen (*Norðmenn*) of the Viking Age.

Over the centuries there were several different futharks. The earliest from the first century is called the elder futhark with twenty-four characters.

**F** **H** **T** **R** **K** **G** **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G** **H** **I** **J** **K** **L** **M** **N** **O** **P** **Q** **R** **S** **T** **U** **V** **W** **X** **Y** **Z**

With variations, the elder futhark was in use into the late eighth century. At the beginning of the Viking Age, the elder futhark was replaced by the younger futhark, a shortened runic alphabet with sixteen characters.

**F** **H** **T** **R** **K** **G** **A** **B** **C** **D** **E** **F** **G** **H** **I** **J** **K** **L** **M** **N** **O** **P** **Q** **R** **S** **T** **U** **V** **W** **X** **Y** **Z**

The younger futhark was used throughout the Viking world, including Iceland, where archaeologists have found a small stone spindle whorl from the time of Iceland’s settlement with runes naming a woman as its owner. Runic inscriptions provide our most direct link to the speech of the Vikings.

Together the two major sources for Old Norse language – texts from Iceland and Viking Age runes – offer an extraordinary window into the language of the Vikings.

**OLD NORSE LANGUAGE.** Old Norse is the parent language of modern Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, and Faroese. During the Viking period, Old Norse speakers from different regions within Scandinavian and in overseas Norse settlements readily understood each other with few dialectical differences. For several centuries after the end of the Viking Age, Old Norse was spoken in Scandinavia and the Norse Atlantic settlements,

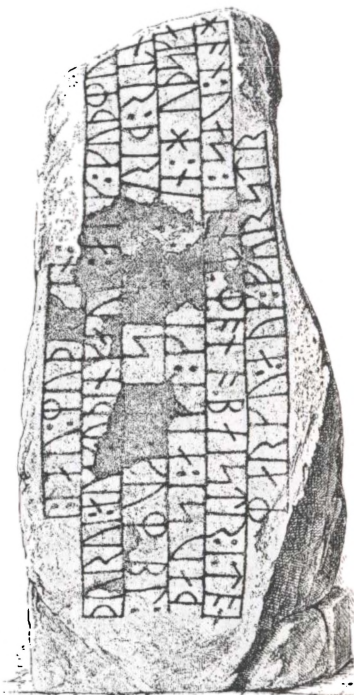


Figure 3. The Skivum Runestone, Denmark.



such as Iceland, with relatively small changes in grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics.

Medieval Scandinavians called their language the Danish tongue, *dönsk tunga*. No one is quite sure why this was so. Perhaps it was because Denmark was the first of the Scandinavian lands to become a powerful, centralized kingdom, and the speech of the influential Danish court became for a time the accepted standard. It may also have been because the Danes were closest to the Frankish Empire and the rest of Europe. The Danish tongue may have distinguished Scandinavians from speakers of other Germanic languages on the continent or in England.

Several questions concerning Old Norse arise. One is, How close was Old Norse to Old English? Old Norse was related to but different from the language spoken in Anglo-Saxon England. With a little practice, however, Old Norse and Old English speakers could understand each other, a factor that significantly broadened the cultural contacts of Viking Age Scandinavians. The two languages derived from a similar Germanic source, which had diverged long before the start of the Viking Age (see the accompanying Indo-European language tree). Another question is, Does learning Old Norse/Old Icelandic help in learning Modern Icelandic? The answer is that the two languages are quite similar. The Old Norse of the medieval Icelanders, especially the language of the sagas, remains the basis of Modern Icelandic with relatively few changes. Most of the grammar and vocabulary taught in this book are current in Modern Icelandic.

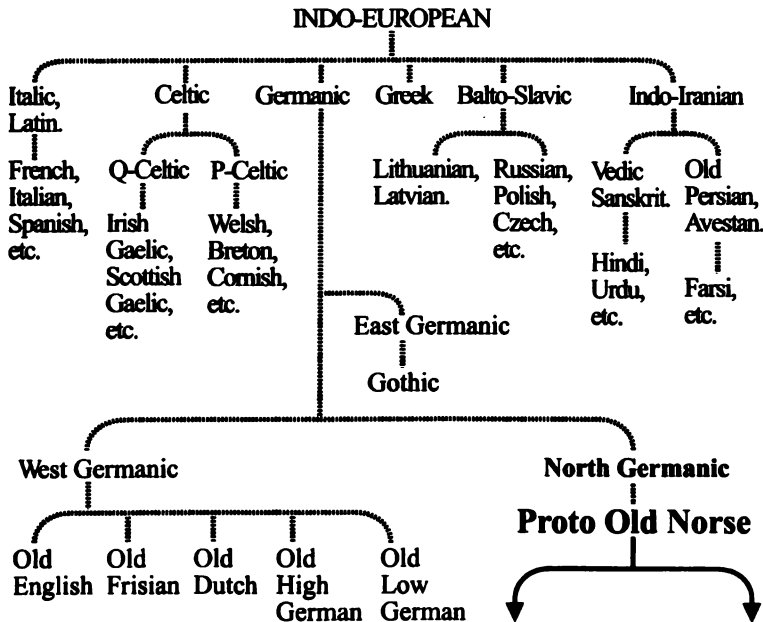
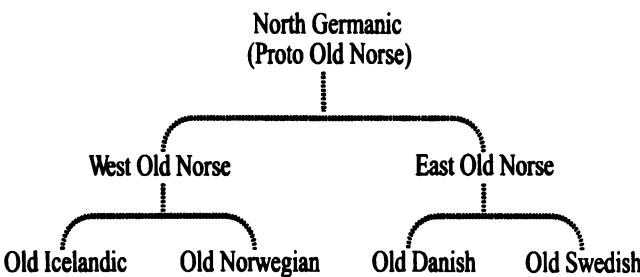


Figure 4. Indo-European Languages Arriving at Proto Old Norse.

As a distinct language, Old Norse has a traceable history. It is the most northerly and most westerly medieval member of the large Indo-European family of languages. The Indo-European language family tree offers an overview of the placement of Proto Old Norse (the

ancestor of Old Norse) in the Germanic branch of Indo-European. Old Norse shares a close relationship with early Germanic languages such as Old English, Gothic, and Old High German, while the relationship with other Indo-European languages, such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, is more distant.

At the start of the Viking Age, there were two closely related varieties of Old Norse. East Old Norse was spoken in Denmark, Sweden, and the Norse Baltic region. West Old Norse was spoken in Norway and the Atlantic Islands. Toward the end of the Viking period, around the year 1000, Old West Norse split into Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian.



**Figure 5. Proto Old Norse (North Germanic) and Its Descendant Languages.**

Icelandic and Norwegian share an especially close kinship, since Iceland was settled largely by Norwegian speakers. Today, we call the language of the sagas and the other written Icelandic sources Old Norse (ON) or more precisely Old Icelandic (OI). Old Icelandic is a branch of Old West Norse that developed in Iceland from the Old Norse speech of the first settlers. By the twelfth century, the differences between Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian was noticeable but still minor, resembling to some extent the present-day distinctions between American and British English. At roughly the same time, East Old Norse diverged into Old Swedish and Old Danish. Still the four languages remained similar and mutually intelligible until about 1500 A.D., and all the Old Norse sources, from either the Atlantic or the Baltic regions, are accessible with training in Old Norse.

By the modern period, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish changed considerably from Old Norse. These languages were strongly influenced by Low German dialects, and English. They dropped numerous aspects of Old Norse grammar and changed many sounds. Modern Icelandic, however, remained faithful to the older language and underwent remarkably few alterations. Today speakers of modern mainland Scandinavian languages can easily understand one other, but they cannot understand Icelandic without training. Old Icelandic grammar underwent relatively few changes on its way to Modern Icelandic. The most noticeable diversion from the medieval language to the modern is a series of sound shifts, spelling modifications, and the adoption of new words and meanings.

The most noticeable spelling difference between Old and Modern Icelandic is the addition of the vowel *-u-* before the consonant *r* in many Modern Icelandic words. For

example, the Old Icelandic words *maðr* 'man,' *fagr* 'beautiful,' and *fegrð* 'beauty' are spelled in Modern Icelandic *maður*, *fagur*, and *fegurð*. The addition of the -u- first appeared in manuscripts around the year 1300 and became standard in later Icelandic. Most alterations from Old to Modern Icelandic are small and systematic, and an Icelandic today can read the sagas much as English speakers can read Shakespeare.

**COGNATES AND BORROWINGS.** Many words in Old Norse resemble English words in pronunciation and meaning. For example, Old Norse *dalr* is similar to English 'dale,' and *taka* has its counterpart in English 'take.' Such words are classified as either cognates or borrowings.

'Cognate' is a Latin term meaning 'related by having the same ancestor' and is used to refer to words that derive from a common parent language. Old Norse and English both originate from (Proto) Germanic, which was spoken in parts of northern Europe between 500 BC and 100 A.D. This early language split into dialects, with words retaining similarities. For example, the word 'father' is *fadar* in Gothic, *fæder* in Old English, *fader* in Old Saxon, *fater* in Old High German, and *faðir* in Old Norse. Many of the most common words in Old Norse have cognates in English as evidenced in the following:

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	VERBS
<i>sonr</i> - son	<i>lítill</i> - little	<i>koma</i> - to come
<i>skip</i> - ship	<i>smár</i> - small	<i>bera</i> - to bear
<i>konungr</i> - king	<i>góðr</i> - good	<i>segja</i> - to say
<i>vápn</i> - weapon	<i>fár</i> - few	<i>vilja</i> - to will
<i>hönd</i> - hand	<i>fyrstr</i> - first	<i>hafa</i> - to have
<i>bróðir</i> - brother	<i>víss</i> - wise	<i>gefa</i> - to give
<i>land</i> - land	<i>dauðr</i> - dead	<i>láta</i> - to let
<i>dagr</i> - day	<i>langr</i> - long	<i>ríða</i> - to ride

Numerous cognates deriving from the ancient parent language have been lost in Modern English. Among archaisms there are many words no longer used such as 'quoth' (ON *kveða* 'to say') and 'sooth' (ON *sannr* 'true'). Others only survive in compounds, as in English *blackmail*, where the second element is cognate with Old Norse *mál* 'speech.'

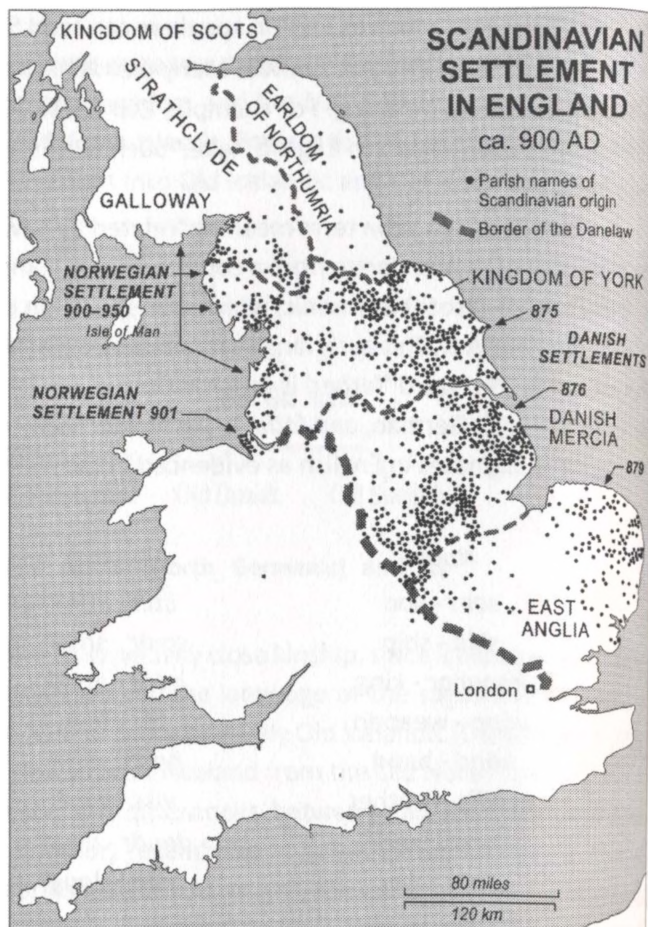
'Borrowings,' loan words taken from one language into another, are usually the result of close cultural contact. During the Viking Age, Scandinavian trade, conquest, and settlement in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe resulted in the adoption of Norse words into local languages. Some borrowed words are still present in the modern speech of different regions. Two contrasting examples of Old Norse influence on modern languages are found on either side of the English Channel. One is from the Danelaw, the area in northeastern England that saw widespread Scandinavian settlement, and the other from Normandy in northern France.

The closeness of Old Norse with Old English facilitated extensive adoption of

everyday Old Norse words, and there were many borrowings into local English dialects. Such borrowings included basic grammatical words such as 'they' (*þeir*), 'their' (*þeira*), and 'them' (*þeim*). In addition, most words in English that begin with *sk-* or *sc-* are borrowings from Old Norse (e.g., sky, scrape, skill), while those beginning with *sh-* are of English origin (e.g., short, shape, shell). Sometimes both the Old Norse borrowing and its Anglo-Saxon cognate survive in Modern English, as for example 'skirt' and 'shirt.'

Today there are at least nine hundred words in contemporary English borrowed from Old Norse. Among these are common words such as 'cast' (*kasta*), 'hit' (*hitta*), 'low' (*lágr*), 'egg' (*egg*), 'same' (*samr*), 'want' (*vanta*), 'wrong' (*rangr*), 'law' (*lög*), 'outlaw' (*útlagi*), 'viking' (*víkingr*), 'fjord' (*fjörðr*), and 'husband.' 'Husband' comes from ON *húsbóndi*, a compound word composed of *hús* + *bóndi* ('house' + 'farmer' or 'landowner'), meaning 'the master of the house.'

In the area of the Danelaw, the local speech today retains many borrowings. These include words such as *garth* for 'yard,' *beck* for 'stream,' and *mickle* for 'much' (ON *garðr*, *bekkr*, and *mikill*). Many place names in the Danelaw contain Norse elements such as *-by* and *-thorpe*, derived from ON *bær* and *þorp*, meaning 'farmstead.'



**Figure 6. Scandinavian Settlement in England.** Viking raids began in England in the 790s and eventually brought change to the vocabulary and structure of English. Serious Norse settlement began in 865, when the Great Army, consisting mostly of Danes, arrived in East Anglia. York was conquered in 866 and became the Viking Kingdom of York (*Jórvík*). Alfred the Great defeated the 'Danes' in the late 800s, who then withdrew north of the line on the map and settled among the Saxon population. As the map shows, the Vikings were most active in the north and east (K. Cameron, *Scandinavian Settlement*). The last Viking King of York Eirik Bloodaxe was killed in 954. The English re-conquered the Danelaw, and the Norse settlers were integrated into the English Kingdom.

The town of York derives its name from Old Norse *Jórvík*,



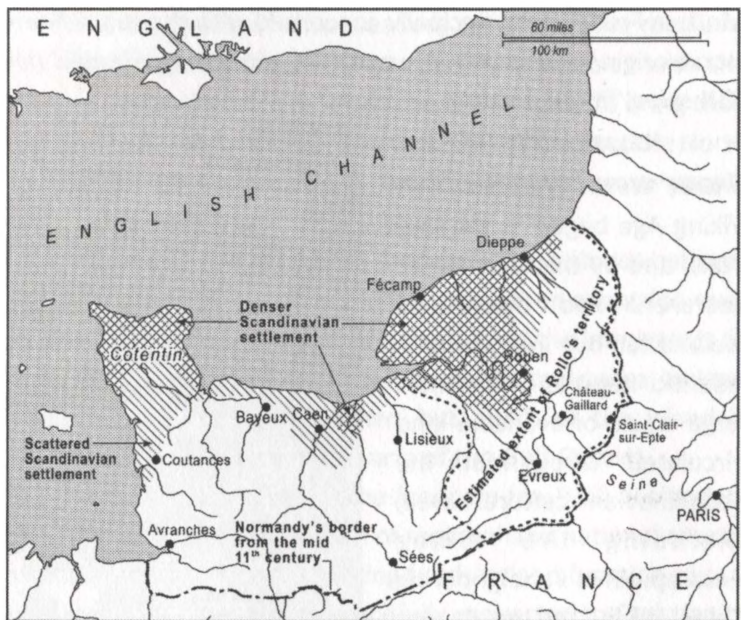
the Scandinavian adaptation of Eoforwic, the older Anglo-Saxon name for the town. Many parish names in the areas of Scandinavian settlement are of Norse origin.

English words of Old Norse origin often have an interesting history. For example, in Yorkshire the word 'riding' was officially used until 1974 to denote each of the shire's three parts. Most people assume the word relates to horses, but 'riding' comes from ON *þriðjungr*, meaning the third (*þriði*) part of an assembly or of a geographically defined region. The Old Norse word was adopted into Old English as *þrīðing*. The word continued as *thriding*, with *-riding* as its core, into middle English, where *thriding* continued to define the Northern, Eastern, and Western districts of Yorkshire. *Thriding* was adopted into medieval Latin as *tridingum*. Finally in its modern English form, the initial *th-* was dropped, and the word became 'riding.' In this modern form, 'riding' was taken to Canada by British colonial administrators, where today it is used in parts of the country to denote a parliamentary constituency.

The relative ease with which large numbers of Old Norse words were taken into English contrasts to what occurred in other languages. Only a few Scandinavian loan words have survived in Gaelic-, Irish-, and Russian-speaking areas, despite significant Scandinavian settlements during the Viking Age.

We have a good deal of information on what happened linguistically in Normandy. The Viking incursions in Normandy started in the 800s with

small settlements, but in 911, a Viking army under the leadership of the chieftain Rollo (*Hrólfr*) took possession of the lands around Rouen at the mouth of the river Seine. The settlers and their descendants rapidly established an aggressive new state, the duchy of Normandy, which became a powerhouse in tenth- to twelfth-century France. In the early years, Rollo's Norse followers were joined by small Viking warbands and probably some mixed Anglo-Scandinavian settlers. The Scandinavian colonists in the more westerly



**Figure 7. Norse Settlement in Normandy.** In 911 the Frankish King Charles the Simple ceded land at the mouth of the Seine around Rouen to the Viking chieftain Rollo. Rollo became a vassal of the Frankish King and undertook the region's defense against future Viking incursions. Rollo's descendants expanded their territory, forming the duchy of Normandy, a powerful feudal state.

Cotentin region appear to have been principally Norwegian, perhaps arriving from the Viking encampments in Ireland.

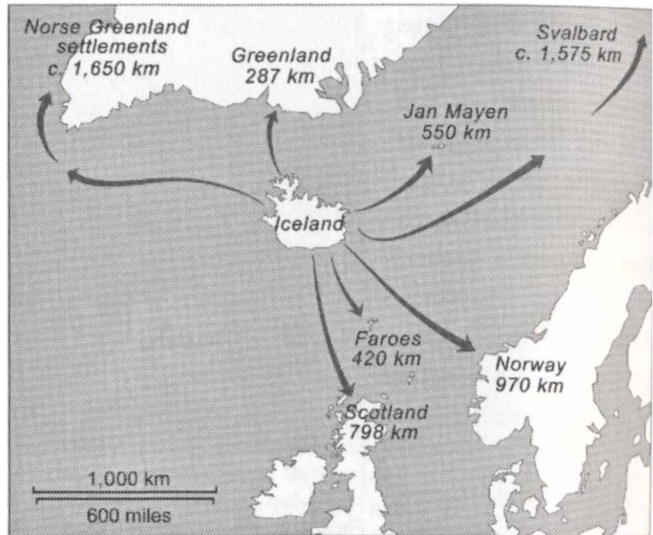
While politically dominant, the Viking contingents in Normandy were never large. The Scandinavian settlers retained relations with the Old Norse world until the beginning of the eleventh century, but they had, by a half century after 911, lost most of their old language. In place of Old Norse, they adopted the local Old French dialects of *langue d'oïl* derived from Vulgar Latin.

Many traces of Old Norse still exist in local place names in Normandy such as *Londe* 'grove,' (ON *lundr*) and *Bricquebec* 'slope' (ON *brekka*). Many words and terms remained in the local Norman dialects into the mid-20th century, when such local speech mostly died out. These dialects, however, never had a great influence on Modern French. Normandy remained distant from the center of French power and culture, and Modern French favored the dialects from the more inland regions. Today the traces of Old Norse in Modern French are principally concerned with the sea, a Norman specialty. Words of Old Norse origin include *vague* 'wave' (ON *vágr*), *crique* 'creek' (ON *kriki*), and *equiper* 'equip' (ON *skipa* 'fit out a ship').

**ICELAND WHERE THE SAGAS WERE WRITTEN.** The Viking Age began in the late 700s, and by the 800s Norse seafarers had discovered Iceland far out in the North Atlantic. Reports of Iceland's large tracts of available land circulated throughout the Scandinavian cultural area, including the Viking encampments in neighboring Celtic lands. The result was the rapid ninth- and early tenth-century settlement of Iceland, a period called the *landnám* (the land-taking).

Icelandic sources also tell of voyages further to the west of Iceland. At the end of the tenth century, Icelanders and Norwegians sailed from

Iceland into the far North Atlantic where they discovered and settled Greenland. About the year 1000, they reached the North American continent, which they called Vinland (Vinland, Land of Vines or Wineland), and Viking Age archaeological remains have been excavated at



**Figure 8. Sailing Distances from Iceland.** If somewhat isolated, Iceland was also well placed in the center of the Northern seas. Navigation across the North Atlantic was based on land sightings, astronomical observations, as well as knowledge of currents, bird-life, sea mammals, and light reflected from glaciers. In bad weather, when the sun in its east-west trajectory was obscured, mariners often lost their way. The sagas tell us that some seafarers sailed as far off course as North America.

L'Anse aux Meadows on the northern tip of Newfoundland.

Early Iceland, with its writings about the Viking Age settlement, is a laboratory for exploring Old Norse language, history, and social forces of the Viking Age, as well as the development of narrative. In most places, Norse colonists took land by force from indigenous populations. Iceland was different. It was uninhabited except for a few Celtic monks, who, seeking solitude, had earlier sailed there in small skin boats. The majority of Viking Age immigrants to Iceland were free farmers. The settlers came with their families, laborers, craftsmen, slaves, livestock, house equipment, and farm implements. They also brought their language Old Norse, the language of Scandinavia during the Viking Age.

From the Icelanders' medieval histories and sagas, we know a great deal about the men and women who settled Iceland. They were a predominantly Norse culture group with numbers of Celts, often women as determined by DNA studies. Among the colonists were small-scale chieftains who in Iceland came to be called *goðar* (singular *goði*, a term which carries the meaning of priest chieftain). Some of these leaders are said in the medieval Icelandic sources to have left Viking Age Norway because they had troubles with the centralization of royal power there. Iceland's settlers seized the opportunity to bring their families, their wealth, and their livestock nearly 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) over the North Atlantic in search of land. During the *landnám* perhaps ten thousand or more people immigrated to Iceland.

Far out in the North Atlantic, Iceland developed in semi-isolation without national or regional commanders powerful enough to lead disputes with other countries over dynastic claims, territorial dominance, trade, or wealth. The task facing the immigrants to this new land was to prosper on a empty island with only a limited habitable area. Iceland is two-thirds the size of England and Scotland together, but much of the island is uninhabitable, as only the coast is warmed by a northern arm of the Gulf Stream.

Beginning in the tenth century with the close of the *landnám* (ca. 930), Icelanders established a general assembly, the Althing, and a system of regional and national courts. With this basic governance structure sufficient for regulating feud, Iceland functioned as a single island-wide polity.<sup>1</sup> In the year 1000, Icelanders peacefully converted to Christianity by agreement at the Althing. In this decision, as in many decisions made at Icelandic assemblies, compromise played a large role, and for a time after the conversion, pagans were allowed to continue practicing the old religion in the privacy of their property.

During more than three centuries of independence, Iceland was never invaded nor to our knowledge mounted an attack against another country. In many ways, Viking Age Iceland was a decentralized, stratified society. It was kingless and operated with a mixture of pre-state features and state institutions. The island was an inward-looking country that was aware of, and at times influenced by, the cultures of other medieval lands, but which depended on its own institutions and leaders to maintain viability and stability. Iceland maintained its independence from the ninth-century settlement until the years 1262-1264,

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<sup>1</sup> Jesse Byock, *Viking Age Iceland*. London and New York: Penguin Books. See also, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*. Berkeley: University of California, Press.



when by agreement of the farmers, that is the property owners, at a series of local Icelandic assemblies, the Icelanders granted the king of Norway leadership of the country.

**The Viking Age.** Vikings were people of the ship, the first northern Europeans to harness and exploit a full technology of long-distance water travel. Their era, called the Viking Age, was an epoch of sea-borne expansion. It began in the late 700s A.D., when Scandinavia was a land of pagan chieftaincies. As part of their late Iron Age warrior culture, Vikings sailed from Scandinavia in all compass directions. Scandinavian shipwrights had advantages over most of their contemporaries. They could draw on native resources of high quality woods, tar, iron and salt-water resistant sea mammal hide for ships' ropes.

The navigational skills of the Northmen were prodigious. They reached four different continents, making their presence felt in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, North America, and Africa. Their voyages generated wealth for the Viking world from places as distant from Scandinavia as Ireland, the Byzantine Empire, and the Caliphate of Baghdad. Depending on the opportunities offered by different places, Northmen traded, raided, explored, and colonized. The distinction between Viking raiders and merchants was often unclear. Some sailors were mostly raiders, and others were mostly merchants, but all were armed. Depending on the defenses they met on the shores, Norse seamen might engage in raiding or commerce.

Wherever Scandinavians went, they brought with them their legends, myths, and language. Especially in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Britain, and Ireland, Vikings settled and brought their families. In some of these regions, as in parts of England, Viking customs and language had a lasting effect. In other regions, such as in Normandy (*Normandie*, meaning 'Northmen's Land,' from Old Norse) in northern France, the influence of the *Norðmenn* diminished.

The term Viking is not a modern invention. The early Scandinavians used *viking*, although they did not, as is done today, employ it in an ethnic sense. Almost surely they would have understood the concept of a Viking Age, but calling Scandinavian society a 'Viking society' would have been a misnomer to them. Throughout medieval Scandinavia, *vikingr* meant pirate or freebooter, and *vikingar* (plural) were bands who raided from ships. The term applied to those who sailed the seas to steal and conquer as well as to mariners who robbed neighbors at home in Scandinavia. *Vikingar* also referred to non-Norse pirates, such as the Slavic Wends, who harassed shipping and raided in the Baltic Sea.

Although the meaning of the term *vikingr* is clear, its origin is not. Probably it relates to the word *vík*, meaning 'inlet' or 'bay' — places where *vikingar* lived and lay in wait. A raid was called *viking*, and men were said to 'go raiding' (*fara í viking*). Viking plundering, extortion, and kidnaping differed little from the war practices of petty chieftains throughout Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages. Northern Europeans, mostly Christian by that time, made much of the fact that the Scandinavian raiders were pagan outsiders who did not respect holy sanctuaries. They called these raiders Northmen, Danes, and Vikings. In the East, Scandinavian warriors and traders were called Rus and Varangians.

Viking boats were the result of a long Scandinavian ship-building tradition, which saw

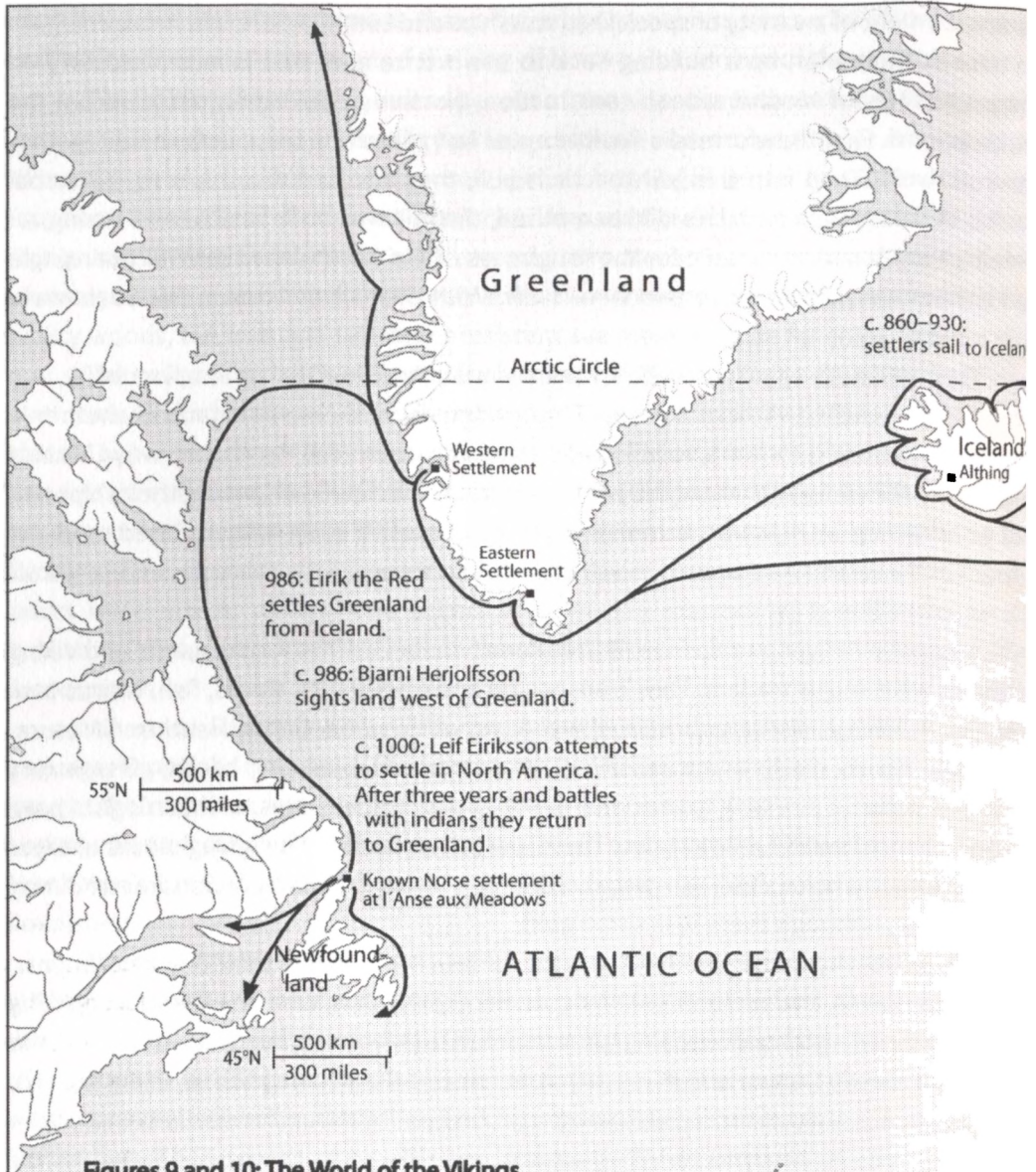


the development of a variety of specialized warships and commercial craft. Archaeologists can trace Scandinavian boat building back to the bronze age, that is into prehistory. In contrast to ships of Mediterranean construction, Northmen built their vessels from the outside inward. First they formed a flexible outer hull of overlapping planks held together with iron rivets. Then into this 'clinker' built hull, they inserted the ship's rigid internal wooden skeleton. Built with this clinker method, the hull was both flexible and strong, an innovative combination suitable for the rough seas of the North Atlantic. With their single mast and square sail, Norse vessels were swift. With the sail was down, the boats were easily rowed.

Designed with a shallow draft, Scandinavian ships offered exceptional mobility, and they could be beached without harbors. This feature allowed Norse seafarers, whether in war, commerce, or exploration, to sail a wide variety of ocean and inland waterways. Vikings tended to attack when and where they detected weakness. Speed at landing their ships and then withdrawing increased the terror of Norse raiders. If they miscalculated, and the defenses of those attacked proved too strong, Vikings returned to their ships and sailed off in search of weaker prey.

Seagoing Viking Age ships carried between twenty and fifty tons of cargo, and Viking merchants were major traders. They transported and traded furs, slaves, fish, walrus-tusk ivory, amber, honey, wheat, grains, iron, weapons, wool, wood, tin, and leather. In return, they bought slaves, cloth, weapons, silver, silk, spices, wine, jewelry, beads, glass, luxury goods, and pottery. In Viking graves and at Viking Age trading sites, archaeologists have found numbers of small folding scales. These were likely used for weighing pieces of silver and coins, either whole or cut into pieces. Silver was by far the most precious metal during the Viking Age, although there was some gold.

Viking activity continued for three centuries, with Vikings targeting settlements, monasteries, towns, and sometimes kingdoms. Foreign leaders, who faced repeated Viking attacks became accustomed to paying the Northmen to leave them in peace. In England, the Vikings were mostly Danes, and these payments were called 'danegeld.' In many regions, Vikings served as catalysts for social, commercial, and political transformations. In western Europe, the need to respond to Viking attacks contributed to the consolidation of the kingdoms of England and France and to a lesser extent the German Empire. In the East, the Scandinavian Rus gave their name to Russia and played a crucial role in the early formation of the Russian state.

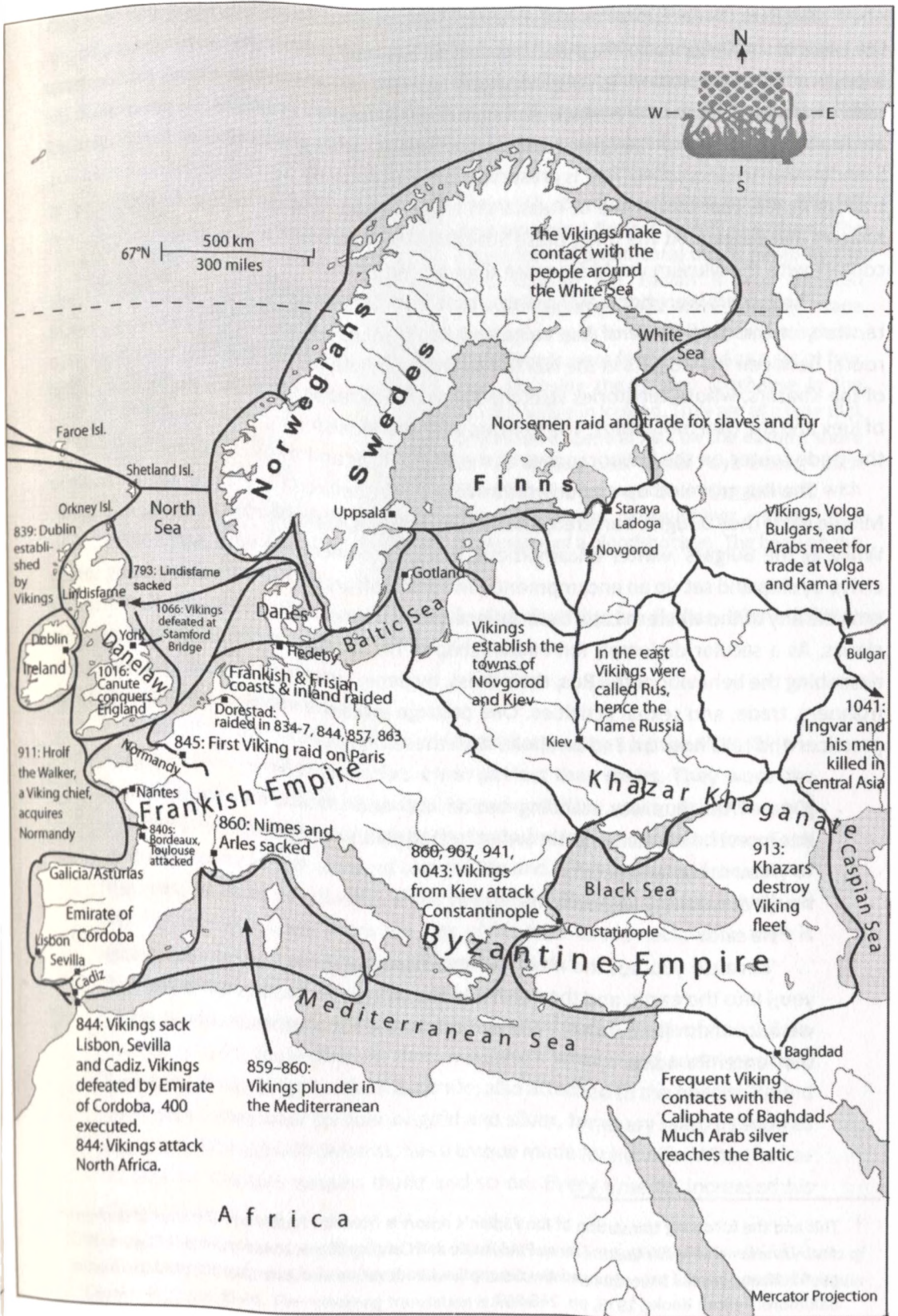


### Figures 9 and 10: The World of the Vikings

From their Scandinavian homelands, Northmen journeyed in all directions. Some sailed to the far Arctic regions, hunting for walrus ivory, skins, and furs. Others voyaged west across the North Atlantic seeking lands to settle as farmers and fishermen. They discovered and colonized the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland and unsuccessfully tried to settle North America (Vinland) shortly after the year 1000. Vikings plundered and conquered large parts of the British Isles and attacked the Frankish Empire, twice besieging Paris and acquiring Normandy (named for the Northmen).

To the east, they sailed across the Baltic Sea, and then rowed down the rivers of Russia. Some went down the Volga as far as the Caliphate of Baghdad, opening a major trade route between Northern Europe and the Middle East. Others sailed southwards across the Black Sea to Byzantium or Constantinople, the capital of the Greek speaking Byzantine Empire. From there, as merchants, raiders, and bodyguards to the Greek Emperors, they journeyed throughout the Near East and Mediterranean.





**THE RUS.** Contemporaries of the Vikings, from places as distant as the British Isles and the lands of the Caliphate of Baghdad, recorded their impressions of the Northmen. Three aspects of culture – seafaring, religion, and language – distinguished Vikings from others with whom they came into contact. Among the most detailed accounts is a description by an Arab diplomat and traveler named Ibn Fadlan, whose account of tenth-century Scandinavian traders called ‘Rus’ is preserved in Arabic sources. Ibn Fadlan encountered Rus traders in the year 922 while in Russia on a diplomatic mission to the Turkic-speaking Khazars and Bulgars. At the time, these Scandinavian merchants and warriors had been in contact with the Muslim world for more than a century.

The Bulgars were horsemen living in northern Russia on the upper Volga River. Their territory at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers controlled the rich Volga trade route. Between the Bulgars in the North and the Caliphate in the South lay the Khaganate of the Khazars, whose territories stretched across the steppes between the Rus city state of Kiev and the Ural mountains. The Khazars adopted Judaism, and their empire controlled the trade routes on the lower reaches of the Volga River and the north Caspian Sea.

The Rus traveled up and down the Volga River between the Baltic Region and the Middle East. They bought, bartered, and sold slaves, furs, glass beads, weapons, and silver. While at the Bulgars’ winter encampment, Ibn Fadlan encountered a party of Rus, who arrive by ship and set up an encampment. Ibn Fadlan offers an eye-witness account, which is unlike any of the western Latin descriptions of the Vikings, which were mostly written by clerics. As a secular diplomat, Ibn Fadlan shaped his account in the manner of a report describing the behavior of the Rus, their dress, hygiene, customs, religious practices, table manners, trade, and sexual activities. One passage gives the views of a Rus on mortuary practices and tells how Ibn Fadlan spoke with these travelers.<sup>2</sup>

[One of the Rus was standing beside me] and I heard him speak to my interpreter. I asked the latter [what he had said.] He replied:

‘You Arabs are fools!’

[‘Why is that?’ I asked him.]

He said:

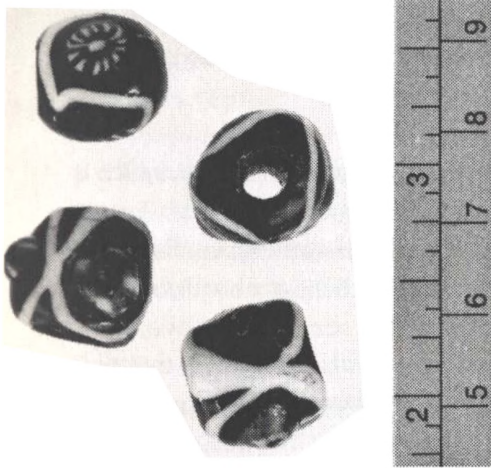
‘Because you put the men you love most, [and the most noble among you,] into the earth, and the earth and the worms and insects eat them. But we burn them [in the fire] in an instant, so that at once and without delay they enter Paradise.’

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<sup>2</sup> This and the following translation of Ibn Fadlan’s report is from *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North*. Transl. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. London: Penguin Classics, 2012, pp. 45-49 and p. 54. I have changed the descriptive headings. See also Johannes Brønsted, *The Vikings*. Baltimore: Pelican Books, 1973, pp. 266-267.



Ibn Fadlan's description of the use of Arabic silver coins (dirhams) and glass trade beads agrees with modern archaeological finds in Russia, the Baltic, and as far away as Iceland. Coin hoards of dirhams struck in the Caliphate's mints have been found throughout the Baltic and especially on the island of Gotland. The sometimes enormous size of the Gotland coin hoards of Arabic silver, some weighing up to eighty kilos, attest to the extent



**Figure 11. Beads Excavated by the Mosfell Archaeological Project (MAP) in Iceland.** The Viking love of ornamental beads noted by the Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan is well attested archaeologically. Beads were valuable trade goods, and both men and women wore them. These beads were found buried as a set of four in a pit inside the Hrísrú longhouse in the Mosfell Valley in Iceland. They are of a type that originated in Central Asia on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. Called 'eye beads,' each bead has clear glass rods in the centers, with colored circular surroundings, giving the impression of a bloodshot eye. The bead on the

of the money economy and the Volga trade described by Ibn Fadlan in the following passages from his report.

### **The Rus Arrive in Their Ships**

I saw the Rus, who had come for trade and had camped by the river Itil [the Volga]. I have never seen bodies more perfect than theirs. They were like palm trees. They are fair and ruddy. They wear neither coats nor caftans, but a garment which covers one side of the body and leaves one hand free. Each of them carries an axe, a sword and a knife and is never parted from any of the arms we have mentioned. Their swords are broad bladed and grooved like the Frankish ones. From the tips of his toes to his neck, each man is tattooed in dark green with designs, and so forth.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Rus – Women**

All their women wear on their bosoms a circular brooch made of iron, silver, copper or gold, depending on their husband's wealth and social position. Each brooch has a ring in which is a knife, also attached to the bosom. Round their necks, they wear torques of gold and silver, for every man, as soon as he accumulates 10,000 dirhams, has a torque made for his wife. When he has 20,000, he has two torques made and so on. Every time he increased his

<sup>3</sup> The translation of the first two paragraphs of Ibn Fadlan's report are from *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness: Arab Travellers in the Far North*. Transl. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone. London: Penguin Classics, 2012, pp. 45-46. The remaining translation is from

fortune by 10,000, he adds another torque to those his wife already possesses, so that one woman may have many torques round her neck.

The most desirable ornaments they have are green ceramic beads they keep in their boats. They will pay dearly for them, one dirham for a single bead. They thread them into necklaces for their wives.

### **Hygiene**

They are the filthiest of God's creatures. They do not clean themselves after urinating or defecating, nor do they wash after having sex. They do not wash their hands after meals. They are like wandering asses.

### **The Rus – Men**

When they arrive from their land, they anchor their boat on the Itil, which is a great river, and they build large wooden houses on the banks. Ten or twenty people, more or less, live together in one of these houses. Each man has a raised platform on which he sits. With them, there are beautiful slave girls, for sale to the merchants. Each of the men has sex with his slave, while his companions look on. Sometimes a whole group of them gather together in this way, in full view of one another. If a merchant enters at this moment to buy a young slave girl from one of the men and finds him having sex with her, the man does not get up off her until he has satisfied himself.

### **More Hygiene**

Every day without fail they wash their faces and their heads with the dirtiest and filthiest water there could be. A young serving girl comes every morning with breakfast and with it a great basin of water. She proffers it to her master, who washes his hands and face in it, as well as his hair. He washes and disentangles his hair, using a comb, there in the basin, then he blows his nose and spits and does every filthy thing imaginable in the water. When he has finished, the servant carries the bowl to the man next to him. She goes on passing the basin round from one to another until she has taken it to all the men in the house in turn. And each of them blows his nose and spits and washes his face and hair in this basin.

### **Gifts to the Gods for Favorable Trading Terms**

As soon as their boats arrive at this port, each of them disembarks, taking with him bread and meat, onions, mild and *nabidh*, and he walks until he comes to a great wooden post stuck in the ground with a face like that of a man, and around it are little figures. Behind these images there are long wooden stakes driven into the ground. Each of them prostrates himself before the great idol, saying to it:

'Oh my Lord, I have come from a far country and I have with me such and such a number of young slave girls, and such and such a number of sable skins...' and so on, until he has listed all the trade goods he has brought. [Then he adds:] 'I have brought you this gift.' Then he leaves what he has with

him in front of the wooden post [and says:]

‘I would like you to do the favour of sending me a merchant who has large quantities of *dinars* and dirhams and who will buy everything that I want and not argue with me over my price.’

Then he departs.

If he has difficulty selling and his stay becomes long drawn out, he returns with another present a second and even a third time. If he cannot get what he wants, he brings a present for each of the little idols and asks them to intercede, saying:

‘These are the wives of our Lord and his daughters and sons.’

Thus he continues to make his request to each idol in turn, begging their intercession and abasing himself before them. Sometimes the sale is easy and after having sold his goods he says:

‘My Lord has satisfied my needs and it is fitting that I should reward him for it.’

Then he takes a certain number of sheep or cows and slaughters them, distributing part of the meat as gifts and carrying off the rest to set before the great idol and the little figures that surround it. Then he hangs the heads of the sheep or cows on the wooden stakes which have been driven into the ground. When night falls, the dogs come and eat all this, and the man who has made the offering says:

‘My Lord is pleased with me and has eaten the gift that I brought him.’

### **Treatment of the Sick**

If one of them falls ill, [the others pitch a tent from him] in a place distant from them. They leave him some bread and water, but they neither go near him nor speak to him. [They do not even come to visit him] during all the days of his illness, particularly if he is a poor man or a slave. If he recovers and gets well, he comes back to them; if he dies, they burn him. If he is a slave, they leave him where he is, and the dogs and birds of prey devour him.

### **Punishment of Thieves**

If they catch a thief or a brigand, they lead him to a great tree, tie a stout rope round his neck and hang him [from the tree, and there he remains] until he drops to pieces [from exposure] to the wind and the rain.

**End of the Viking Age.** While the Viking Age is most known for voyages and raiding, only a small proportion of the Scandinavian population sailed on Viking journeys. Most people stayed home and farmed. The climate in northern Europe and the North Atlantic during the Viking centuries was a few degrees warmer than the average over the past thousand years, and in Scandinavia, the Viking Age was a time of population growth. Archaeology and landscape studies tells us that the amount of land devoted to agriculture increased. To bring more land into production, woodlands were cleared, wetlands drained,

and the use of highland pastures expanded. At the end of the Viking period, there were more farms, communal settlements, and cemeteries than at the start.

It is hard to calculate the exact end of the Viking Age, but around A.D. 1100 the raids on European countries mostly came to an end. At home in Scandinavia, the more than three centuries of the Age saw extensive social and economic changes. Socially and economically the societies became more complex. As signs of change, warfare by the eleventh century had in many ways moved from the local to the state level, and the older regional chieftaincies evolved into national kingdoms. By the twelfth century Scandinavia was firmly divided into the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Sweden in the Baltic Sea region, more distant from Western Europe than either Norway or Denmark, was the last of the Scandinavian kingdoms to abandon the worship of the Norse gods and become Christian.

The passing of the Viking Age saw little change in the lives of the majority of the Scandinavian population. Most people continued living their traditional farm life and went on speaking variants of their Old Norse language.

– Jesse Byock, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)



## TOOLS FOR USING VIKING LANGUAGE

**OLD NORSE/ICELANDIC ALPHABET AND SPELLING.** The Latin alphabet adopted by the Icelanders in the eleventh century was probably modeled on Anglo-Saxon writing, where the Icelanders may have learned the letters *þ* ('thorn', upper case, *Þ*) and *ð* ('eth', upper case, *Ð*). Old Norse writers, whether they wrote runes or manuscripts, did not follow a standardized spelling. Scholars addressed this issue more than a century ago by adopting a standardized Old Norse/Icelandic spelling and alphabetic order. Reading passages and vocabularies in the book generally follow standardized Old Norse spelling as found in the Icelandic *Íslenzk fornrit* saga editions.

The Old Norse vowels *ǫ* and *ø* coalesced in the medieval period into the single vowel *ö*, which is still used in Modern Icelandic. This book maintains the distinction between *ǫ* and *ø* but uses the modern letter *ö* in place of *ǫ*. A primary reason for adopting *ö* in the lessons is that it is included in almost all modern digital fonts. That said, *ö* is not a bad choice, because it is found in many manuscripts. Where the phonological distinction between *ö* and *ǫ* remains important, especially in pronunciation charts, *ǫ* is used.

Modern Icelandic has lost the distinction between *æ* and *ǣ* and employs *æ* for both letters. This book retains the original medieval distinction. Overall, the spelling differences between Old and Modern Icelandic are minor.

In the Old Norse/Icelandic alphabet, long vowels are distinguished from short vowels by an accent (for example, long *é* and short *e*). The long vowels *æ*, *ǣ*, *ø* and umlauted *o* (*ö/ǫ*) are listed at the end of the Icelandic alphabet. The letters *c*, *q*, and *w* are occasionally found in manuscripts but have not been adopted into the standardized alphabet.

*a, á, b, d, ð, e, é, f, g, h, i, í, j, k, l, m, n, o, ó, p, r, s, t,  
u, ú, v, x, y, ý, z, þ, æ, ǣ, ö(ǫ), ø*

**ANGLICIZING OLD NORSE PERSONAL NAMES.** Rendering Old Norse and Icelandic names into English is always a problem. This book employs a set of rules. The Icelandic vowels *ö* and *ø* are written as *o*, hence, Björn becomes 'Bjorn.' The long vowels *ǣ* and *æ* are retained, hence, *Æsir* remains 'Æsir.' Accents over long vowels are omitted in personal names when spelled in English, hence, Sigrún becomes 'Sigrun.' The letters *þ* and *ð* are spelled *th* and *d* in English, and Old Norse case endings are dropped, hence Þórðr (with case ending *r*) becomes 'Thord' and Öundur becomes Onund. The exception is weak masculine and feminine names that end in vowels and keep their endings, hence Bjarni and Gyða are 'Bjarni' and 'Gyda.'

Many names in Old Norse easily translate into English, as for instance, *Laxárdalur* = *Lax* 'salmon' + *ár* 'river' + *dalr* 'valley'. Others prove more difficult and some appear impossible. The Icelandic name of the Irish king Mýrkjartan does not easily lend itself to

translation. Older translators choose Moorkjartan from the word *mýri* ('moor,' 'swamp') the name Kjartan. In most of such instances, I give the original Old Norse name in  $E_{\eta}$  without accents, hence Myrkjartan. In some instances, where it seems best, the book, the Old Norse name.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1dual, 2dual</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person dual, etc.
<i>1pl, 2pl, 3pl</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, etc.
<i>1sg, 2sg, 3sg</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, etc.
<i>acc</i>	accusative
<i>adj</i>	adjective
<i>adv</i>	adverb
<i>art</i>	article (definite)
<i>aux</i>	auxiliary (verb)
<i>comp</i>	comparative (adjective or adverb)
<i>conj</i>	conjunction
<i>conjug</i>	conjugation
<i>dat</i>	dative
<i>def</i>	definite (article)
<i>defect</i>	defective
<i>dem</i>	demonstrative (pronoun)
<i>esp</i>	especially
<i>etc</i>	etcetera
<i>ex</i>	example
<i>f</i>	feminine
<i>fig</i>	figurative
<i>gen</i>	genitive
<i>impers</i>	impersonal (verb)
<i>indecl</i>	indeclinable
<i>indef</i>	indefinite (pronoun)
<i>indic</i>	indicative
<i>inf</i>	infinitive
<i>interrog</i>	interrogative (adverb or pronoun)
<i>intrans</i>	intransitive (verb)
<i>leg</i>	legal usage
<i>lit</i>	literally
<i>m</i>	masculine
<i>mid</i>	middle voice
<i>neg</i>	negative
<i>n</i>	neuter
<i>nom</i>	nominative
<i>num</i>	number
<i>obj</i>	object

<i>OE</i>	Old English
<i>OI</i>	Old Icelandic
<i>ON</i>	Old Norse
<i>ord</i>	ordinal (number)
<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>poet</i>	poetical usage
<i>poss</i>	possessive (pronoun)
<i>ppart</i>	past participle
<i>pref</i>	prefix
<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>pres</i>	present
<i>pres part</i>	present participle
<i>pret-pres</i>	preterite-present (verb)
<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>refl</i>	reflexive (verb or pronoun)
<i>rel</i>	relative (pronoun or particle)
<i>sb</i>	somebody
<i>sg</i>	singular
<i>sth</i>	something
<i>str</i>	strong (adjective or verb)
<i>subj</i>	subject
<i>subjunct</i>	subjunctive
<i>superl</i>	superlative (adjective or adverb)
<i>trans</i>	transitive (verb)
<i>transl</i>	translation
<i>usu</i>	usually
<i>var</i>	variant
<i>vb</i>	verb
<i>w</i>	with
<i>wk</i>	weak (adjective or verb)
<i>=</i>	equals
<i>~</i>	Alternative or alternating (spelling)
<i>=</i>	equals

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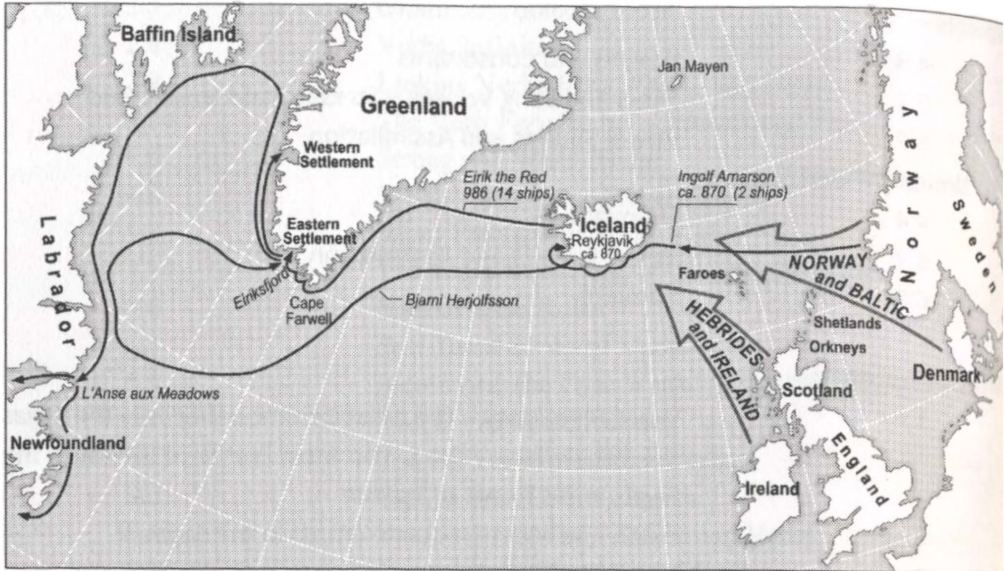
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## LESSON 1

### SAILING WEST TO ICELAND, GREENLAND, AND NORTH AMERICA

*Inn fyrsti fugl fær it fyrsta korn.*  
(The early bird gets the first grain.)



**Figure 12. The Norse Cross the Atlantic.** Routes taken by settlers to Iceland, Greenland, and North America (Vinland) from the ninth to eleventh centuries.

### 1.1 CULTURE – ATLANTIC SEAFARING

Medieval sailors followed the coast where possible, but Norse seafarers of the Viking Age were able to cross the open sea. *The Book of Settlements (Landnámabók)* records specific departure points from Norway for sailing to Iceland and Greenland. Weather permitting, an east-west course (one running along a line of latitude) could be fixed by noting the height of the sun at its midday zenith. Heading west, sailors corrected their course by sighting landmarks on the horizon such as Shetland and the Faroe Islands. Knowledge of geography was crucial. Without maps or navigational charts, mariners relied on personal experience and orally transmitted knowledge.

When land was out of sight, sun, winds, currents, and the north star served as directional indicators. Navigational experience was crucial. Weather conditions, sea animal sightings, seabirds, cloud formations, wave patterns, changing currents, water color, and the movements of whales indicated when land was near. In the far North Atlantic, light reflecting off glaciers was visible from considerable distances. Some Norse mariners may have relied on a navigational tool that utilized the sun's shadow as cast by a central pin onto a wooden



disc with radial markings around the edge (similar to the degrees on a modern compass). Part of such a device was first found in Greenland in 1948, but its use is disputed. To avoid reefs and shallows a simple weighted rope was cast overboard to measure water depth.

Icelandic medieval writings are our major source for information concerning Norse exploration and settlement of the North Atlantic. Based on older oral traditions, Iceland's sagas and historical writings recount the events of the settlement or *landnám* ('land-taking') of Iceland, the Faroes, Greenland, and Vinland on the North American continent. Icelandic manuscripts offer valuable historical information. They tell of individuals, families, and conflicts in the first century and a half after the ninth-century *landnám*, but the narratives are not always factual. The manuscripts were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when writing became common among Icelanders.

Icelandic historical writings are far fewer than the sagas. The main ones are *Landnámabók* (*The Book of Settlements*), probably first composed in the early-to-mid-twelfth century, and *Íslendingabók* (*The Book of the Icelanders*). *Íslendingabók* was written around the year 1122 by the Icelandic historian, Ari the Learned (*Ari fróði*), a careful historian who names his sources. Iceland's extensive medieval law books called *Grágás* (*The Grey Goose Law*) are an additional source of information about the society.

Ingolf Arnarson (*Ingólfr Arnarson*), whose name appears in the reading passage below, was the first recorded settler or *landnámsmaðr* ('land-taking man,' a term which includes women). Around the year 860, he sailed west from Norway and sighted land in the southeast of Iceland. Eventually Ingólfr settled in Iceland's southwest at a site which he named *Reykjavík* because of the smoke or steam escaping from hot springs. The older form of the name, *Reykjarvík*, means Smoky Bay, literally the 'bay of smoke.' Today, *Reykjavík* is the capital of Iceland. Ingólfr initially claimed a large portion of land, much of which he distributed to other settlers.

## 1.2 THE LETTERS Þ AND Ð

- The letter **þ** (upper case, **Þ**) is called 'thorn' and pronounced like 'th' in the English word 'thought' or the name of the god Thor (*þórr*).
- The letter **ð** (upper case, **Ð**) is called 'eth' and pronounced like 'th' in the English word 'breathe' or Othin (*Óðinn*), often spelled Odin in English.

## 1.3 READING – INGOLF GIVES LAND TO HERJOLF (*Grœnlendinga saga*)

The Old Norse reading passage below tells of Herjolf Bardarson, his wife Thorgerd, and their son Bjarni Herjolfsson. Bjarni's last name is derived from his father's first name plus *son* (the use of *son* and *dóttir* are discussed in a later lesson). *The Saga of the Greenlanders* (*Grœnlendinga saga*) was written in thirteenth-century Iceland. It was copied and preserved in a late fourteenth-century vellum (parchment) manuscript called *Flateyjarbók* (*The Book of Flatey*). This extensive compilation of Icelandic prose and poetry is so named because it was found on the island of Flatey (Flat Island) in Breiðafjörður (Broad Fjord) in western Iceland.

*Flateyjarbók* consists of 225 large sheets, some of which are illustrated. The book organized around the history of Norway's kings. It also includes many *pættir* (sg *báttir* 'short story') and whole sagas such as *Grænlandinga saga*. *Flateyjarbók* is the largest Iceland manuscript. It contains written sources not preserved in other manuscripts and is one of Iceland's greatest treasures.

### ***Grænlandinga saga (2. kap)***

Herjólfur var Bárðarson  
Herjólfssonar;  
hann var frændi Ingólfs  
landnámsmanns.  
Ingólfr gaf Herjólfu land  
á milli Vágs ok Reykjaness.  
Herjólfur bjó fyrst á Drepstokki.  
Þorgerður hét kona hans,  
en Bjarni sonur þeira,  
ok var efnilligr maður.

### ***The Saga of the Greenlanders (ch 2)***

Herjolf was the son of Bard,  
[who was]\* the son of Herjolf;  
he was [a] kinsman of [the] settler  
Ingolf.  
Ingolf gave land to Herjolf  
between Vag and Reykjaness.  
Herjolf lived first at Drepstokk.  
His wife was named Thorgerd,  
and their son [was named] Bjarni,  
and [he] was a promising man.

\* Brackets [ ] indicate words needed for English translation but missing in the Icelandic.

#### **VOCABULARY**

♦ *á prep* [w *dat*] on; upon; at; in; á  
**Drepstokki** at Drepstokk  
♦ *á milli prep* [w *gen*] between  
**Bárðarson** *m* the son of Bard  
**Bárður** <*gen* Bárður> *m* Bard (*personal name*)  
**Bjarni** *m* Bjarni (*personal name*)  
**bjó** (*inf* ♦ *búa*) *vb* lived  
**Drepstokkr** <*dat* Drepstokki> *m* Drepstokk (*place name*)  
**efnilligr** *adj* promising  
♦ *en conj* but; and (*in a contrastive sense*)  
♦ *frændi m* kinsman  
**fyrst** *adv* first  
**gaf** (*inf* ♦ *gefa*) *vb* gave  
**Grænlandingr** <*gen pl* Grænlandinga> *m* Greenlander  
♦ *hann pron* he  
**hans** *pron gen* his  
**Herjólfur** <*gen* Herjólf> *m* Herjolf (*personal*

*name*)

**Herjólfssonar** *m gen* 'of the son of Herjolf'  
**hét** (*inf* ♦ *heita*) *vb* was named  
**Ingólfr** <*gen* Ingólfr> *m* Ingolf (*personal name*)  
**Ingólfr landnámsmaður** *m* Ingolf the Settler (*personal name*)  
♦ *kona f* wife; woman  
♦ **land** *n* land  
**landnámsmaður** <*gen* landnámsmanns> *m* settler, *lit* land-take-man (the term refers both to women and men)  
♦ **maður** <*gen* manns> *m* man; person, human being  
**nes** *n* headland  
♦ **ok conj** and  
**papi** *m* pope; priest  
**Reykjaness** <*gen* Reykjaness> *n* Reykjaness (*place name*) Headland of Smoke  
**saga** *f* what is said, story, saga, tale, legend

history

◆sonr <gen sonar> m son

var (inf ◆vera) vb was

Vágr <gen Vágs> m Vag (place name) Bay

þeira pron (gen pl of ◆sá) their

Þorgerðr f Thorgerd (personal name)

## 1.4 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. NOUNS AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS

- Nouns are words that name persons, places, things, or acts.
- Personal Pronouns, such as 'I/me, he/him, she/her, we/us, they/them, you, it' stand in the place of nouns. Nouns and personal pronouns function as subjects, objects, or complements (an example of a complement is 'it is I'). Pronouns are discussed in Lesson 3.
- To translate Old Norse, the learner needs to recognize noun endings.
- All nouns in Old Norse decline; that is, they take endings indicating the noun's case and role in the sentence. In most instances: the subject of a sentence is in the nominative case; the direct object is in the accusative case; the indirect object is in the dative case; and the possessor (of something) is in the genitive. Nouns following a preposition fall into different cases. They can be accusative, dative, or genitive depending on the preposition.
- Nouns in Old Norse distinguish between singular and plural. This category is called **number**.
- All nouns in Old Norse belong to one of three **genders**: masculine, feminine, or neuter. The gender of a noun can be determined by looking at its set of case endings. For example, many masculine nouns, such as *maðr* 'man; person' and *sonr* 'son,' have the ending *-r* in the nominative case. If the noun denotes a living being, its gender often matches the being's sex, for example, *faðir* 'father' (*m*) and *móðir* 'mother' (*f*). However, sex is not a sure indicator of gender, and nouns referring to abstract concepts and objects can have a gender that bears no relationship to the word itself.
- All nouns in Old Norse fall into one of two **declension types**: strong or weak. Weak nouns take simpler endings than strong nouns. A noun's declension type never changes. For example, *dagr* 'day' is always strong while *goði* 'chieftain' is always weak.

In summary, the endings of nouns are determined by

- their **declension type**: strong or weak
- their **case**: nominative, accusative, dative, or genitive
- their **number**: singular or plural
- their **gender**: masculine, feminine, or neuter

1.5 GENDER OF NOUNS AND PRONOUNS – MASCULINE, FEMININE, NEUTER

As noted above, Old Norse nouns and pronouns belong to one of three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. The same is true for pronouns which stand in the place of nouns, and adjectives modifying nouns and pronouns agreed in gender.

The gender of most nouns cannot be predicted. For instance, *hlutr* ‘part’ is masculine, *brú* ‘bridge’ is feminine, and *nes* ‘headland’ is neuter. Except in rare instances, a noun’s gender never changes.

MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
<i>konungr</i> ‘king’	<i>dróttning</i> ‘queen’	<i>land</i> ‘land’
<i>frændi</i> ‘kinsman’	<i>kona</i> ‘woman; wife’	<i>korn</i> ‘grain, seed’

**Masculine Nouns.** The most common masculine ending in the nominative singular is *-r*, as in the noun *konungr*, the name *Herjólf**r*, and the place *Drepstokkr*. Another masculine ending is *-i*, as in the name *Bjarni* and the noun *frændi* ‘kinsman.’ Generally speaking, masculine nouns and names (proper nouns) that end in *-r* are called strong nouns, while those that end in *-i* are called weak nouns. Later lessons address the distinction between strong and weak nouns.

**Compound Words** are formed from two or more root words, as in English *farmland* (farm + land). Old Norse frequently employs compound words such as *landnámsmaðr* ‘settler,’ built from three words: *land* (‘land’) + *náms* (‘taking’) + *maðr* (‘man,’ ‘person’). Compound words always take the gender of the last noun. For example, *Herjólf**snes* (*Herjólf* + *nes*) is neuter because *nes* is neuter.

1.6 CASE OF NOUNS AND PRONOUNS – NOMINATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, DATIVE, GENITIVE

Old Norse nouns, pronouns, and adjectives always appear in one of the following four grammatical cases: nominative, accusative, dative, or genitive. The word’s role in the sentence determines which case is used; for example, the subject of a sentence typically takes the nominative case while a direct object takes the accusative. Compare the Old Norse pronouns *hann* and *hon* below with their English counterparts and note how these words take different forms depending on their usage in a sentence. Pronouns in Modern English are one area where the case system is preserved.

CASE	OLD ICELANDIC		ENGLISH
	PRONOUN	GRAMMATICAL ROLE	PRONOUN
<i>nom</i>	<i>hann</i>	<i>subject</i>	he, it
<i>acc</i>	<i>hann</i>	<i>direct object</i>	him, it
<i>dat</i>	<i>honum</i>	<i>indirect object</i>	him, it
<i>gen</i>	<i>hans</i>	<i>possessive</i>	his, its

<b>CASE</b>	<b>OLD ICELANDIC</b>		<b>ENGLISH</b>
	<b>PRONOUN</b>	<b>GRAMMATICAL ROLE</b>	<b>PRONOUN</b>
<i>nom</i>	<i>hon</i>	<i>subject</i>	she, it
<i>acc</i>	<i>hana</i>	<i>direct object</i>	her, it
<i>dat</i>	<i>henni</i>	<i>indirect object</i>	her, it
<i>gen</i>	<i>hennar</i>	<i>possessive</i>	hers, its

**Nominative.** The subject of a sentence generally is in the nominative case. Words modifying the subject, such as adjectives (for example, *efniligr maðr* 'a promising man') or in apposition, that is equal to, other nouns are also in the nominative (*Leifr, sonr hans* 'Leif, his son'). The same is true for predicate nouns and adjectives, which are words connected to the subject by way of a linking verb such as *vera* 'to be,' *verða* 'to become,' and *heita* 'to be named; to be called.' Two examples from the reading are *Herjólfur var efniligr maðr* 'Herjolf was a promising man,' and *Borgerðr hét kona hans* 'His wife was named Thorgerd.' 'Man' and 'Thorgerd' are predicate nouns because they refer to the same person, place, or thing.

**Accusative.** A noun which receives the action of the verb is a direct object and stands in the accusative case, as in the sentence, *Eiríkr nam land* 'Eirik took land.' The accusative case has some other functions, such as indicating the objects of certain prepositions (*eptir hann* 'after him').

**Dative.** The indirect object of a verb takes the dative case. For example, in the sentence *Ingólfr gaf Herjólfu land*, *Ingólfr* (subject) gave *land* (direct object) to *Herjólfu* (indirect object). A simple way to test if an object is indirect is to see if it can be translated into English with the preposition *to* or *for*. For example, the sentence above can be translated 'Ingolf gave Herjolf land' or 'Ingolf gave land to Herjolf.' One of the other common uses of the dative is with certain prepositions (*á Dreptokki* 'at Dreptokk,' in the reading passage of this lesson).

**Genitive.** The genitive case usually denotes possession. Two common genitive endings in Old Norse are *-s* (*Ingólfs*) and *-ar* (*sonar* and *Barðarson*). The English possessive ending *'s* (*John's*), like the Old Norse endings, is a remnant of the older Germanic case system, inherited in turn from Indo-European. In English the possessive may also be expressed by the preposition *of* (*gates of the city*). The genitive appears in other contexts, for example, as the object of some verbs as well as with a small number of prepositions such as *til* (*til Grænlands* 'to Greenland,' in the reading passage of the next lesson).

<b>CASE</b>	<b>MAIN FUNCTIONS</b>
<i>nominative</i>	subject; predicate nouns and adjectives
<i>accusative</i>	direct object; object of certain prepositions
<i>dative</i>	indirect object ( <i>to</i> , <i>for</i> ); object of certain prepositions
<i>genitive</i>	possessive; object of certain prepositions

The following table gives the declension of *Herjólf* in all four cases, with the endings in bold. Whereas Old Norse relies heavily on case endings, English depends most on word order and prepositions to distinguish a word's role in the sentence.

CASE	OLD ICELANDIC	ENGLISH	NOUN STEM +
			CASE ENDING
<i>nom</i>	Herjólfur bjó á Drepstokki.	Herjolf lived at Drepstokk.	Herjólf + r
<i>acc</i>	Þorgerður sá Herjólf.	Thorgerd saw Herjolf.	Herjólf
<i>dat</i>	Ingólfr gaf Herjólf land.	Ingolf gave land to Herjolf.	Herjólf + i
<i>gen</i>	Þorgerður hét kona Herjólf.	Herjolf's wife was called Thorgerd.	Herjólf + s

The charts below give the declensions in the singular of some frequently occurring nouns in the sagas. *Maðr*, *sonr*, *sök*, and *vík* have characteristics which are discussed in later lessons.

### MASCULINE

CASE	MAÐR	KONUNGR	SONR	HESTR	VÍKINGR	ENDINGS
<i>nom</i>	maðr	konungr	sonr	hestr	víkingr	-r
<i>acc</i>	mann	konung	son	hest	víking	-
<i>dat</i>	manni	konungi	syni	hesti	víkingi	-i
<i>gen</i>	manns	konungs	sonar	hests	víking	-s, -ar

Transl: *maðr* 'man,' *konungr* 'king,' *sonr* 'son,' *hestr* 'horse,' *víkingr* 'viking'

### FEMININE

CASE	FERÐ	SÖK	LEIÐ	VÍK	HLÍÐ	ENDINGS
<i>nom</i>	ferð	sök	leið	vík	hlíð	-
<i>acc</i>	ferð	sök	leið	vík	hlíð	-
<i>dat</i>	ferð	sök	leið	vík	hlíð	-
<i>gen</i>	ferðar	sakar	leiðar	víkr	hlíðar	-ar, -r

Transl: *ferð* 'journey,' *sök* 'cause,' *leið* 'way, road,' *vík* 'bay,' *hlíð* 'slope'

### NEUTER

CASE	SKIP	LAND	MÁL	SVERÐ	ÞING	ENDINGS
<i>nom</i>	skip	land	mál	sverð	þing	-
<i>acc</i>	skip	land	mál	sverð	þing	-
<i>dat</i>	skipi	landi	máli	sverði	þingi	-i
<i>gen</i>	skips	lands	máls	sverðs	þings	-s

Transl: *skip* 'ship,' *land* 'land,' *mál* 'speech,' *sverð* 'sword,' *þing* 'assembly'

## 1.7 EXERCISE – CASE: NOMINATIVE, ACCUSATIVE, DATIVE, AND GENITIVE

A. Rearrange the following sentences, putting the pronouns in the correct case.

INCORRECT

CORRECT

Ex: *Us* invited a friend to go with *we*.

*We invited a friend to go with us.*

1. *Him* went with *his* to *he* house.

2. *Her* gave a gift to *she*.

3. *Them* are sitting in *they* ship with *their*.

4. *Her* brought food for *he* and *I*.

B. Identify the function of the italicized nouns in the sentences below, and state what case must be used in Old Norse.

Ex: A man was called Herjolf, *Bard's* son.

*possessor: genitive*

1. Eirik took Eirik's *Fjord* and lived at Brattahlíð.

2. *Herjolf* was a kinsman of the settler Ingolf.

3. Ingolf gave him *land*.

4. Ingolf gave land to *her*.

5. Herjolf's *wife* was named Thorgerd.

6. *Herjolf's* wife was named Thorgerd.

7. Eiríkr nam *Brattahlíð*.

8. Dróttning gaf *Þorgerði* land.

## 1.8 APPPOSITION – CASE AGREEMENT OF NOUNS

When a noun follows another noun and refers to the same person, place, or thing, the second noun must be in the same case as the first. In the sentence below, *landnámsmanns* is in the genitive case as is *Ingólfs*.

Hann var frændi Ingólfs landnámsmanns. *He was a kinsman of Ingolf, the settler.*  
In grammatical terms, we say that *landnámsmanns* is in the genitive case because it is in apposition with *Ingólfs*. An appositive (like *landnámsmanns*) always matches the case of the noun it describes.

Ingólfr gaf Herjólfí landnámsmanni land. *Ingolf gave land to Herjolf, the settler.*  
In the above sentence, *landnámsmanni* is in apposition with *Herjólfí*, hence it too must be in the dative.

Eiríkr nam Eiríksfjörð ok bjó í Brattahlíð, *Eirik took Eiríksfjord and lived at*  
en Leifr sonr hans eptir hann. *Brattahlid, and Leif, his son, after him.*  
Here *sonr* [*hans*] is in apposition with *Leifr*. Both nouns are in the nominative case.

(Note that in English the appositive is often set apart by commas: *Herjolf, the settler*)

## 1.9 WORD FREQUENCY – THE MOST COMMON WORDS IN THE SAGAS

Word frequency is the key to learning both Old and Modern Icelandic, and this book is designed with a word-frequency strategy. It concentrates on the 246 most common words in the sagas. In the vocabularies, these words are marked with the symbol ♦.

The total vocabulary of the sagas is surprisingly small.<sup>4</sup> Excluding names, there are only 12,400 different words in the corpus of the family sagas out of a total word count of almost 750,000. The 70 most frequently used words account for nearly 450,000 or 60% of the total word count. As one might expect this 70 contains the most frequently repeated prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, verbs, and adjectives. The greatest benefit is found in learning the 246 most frequent words divided into parts of speech in groups of 50 each. This way the learner can concentrate on the 50 most frequent nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.

Starting with List 1 below, the most frequent words are presented incrementally over the next twelve lessons. As one sees from the first list, *maðr* (man or person) is the most common noun in the sagas, and *konungr* (king) the second.

*Appendix B: The Most Frequent Words in the Sagas*, offers two lists. The first gives the 70 Most Common Words in the Sagas. The second list gives all 246 of the Most Common Words. These are divided by parts of speech into the 50 most common nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs, prepositions and adverbs, and conjunctions. The majority of the 246 entries remain among the most commonly used words in modern Icelandic.

The *Saga of the People of Weapon's Fjord* (*Vápnfirðinga saga*, see *Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*) offers an example of the word frequency learning strategy. The short saga contains all 246 most frequent words except for the word *vísa* 'poetry' and a few numerals. *Vápnfirðinga saga* employs 1,000 different words and has a total word count of roughly 9,500 word entries. The 246 most frequent words make up about one quarter of the saga's vocabulary of 1000 distinct words, but because the words are frequently repeated and in compounds, they account for large percentage of the saga's total word count.

As in most sagas, the majority of the most frequent words appear early in *Vápnfirðinga saga*, and 175 of them occur in the first four chapters. These four first chapters from *Vápnfirðinga saga* are the readings in Lessons 12 and 13 in this book. The learner might want to finish the saga in *Viking Language 2* where there the saga is given with extensive maps and notes.

### VOCABULARY – LIST 1 . THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS IN EACH PART OF SPEECH

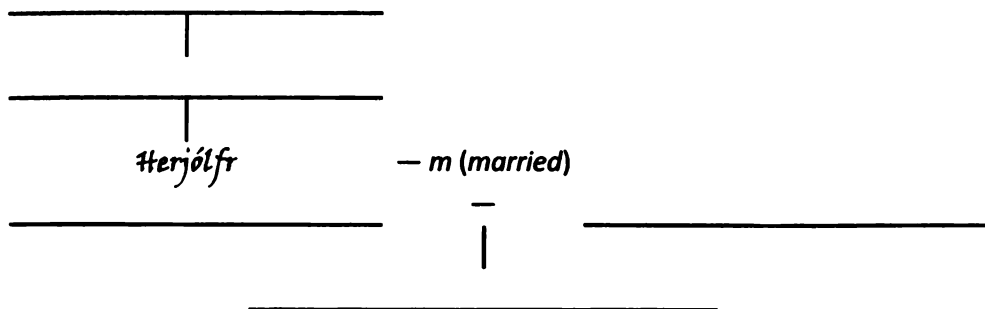
This first list gives the most common of the 246 most frequent words in the sagas. In their different forms, these words below comprise 34.43% of all words in the sagas.

<sup>4</sup> *Íslendinga sögur orðstöðulykill og texti: Handbók*. Eds. Bergljót S. Kristjánsdóttir, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (chief editor), Guðrún Ingólfssdóttir and Örnólfur Thorsson. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1998.



**NOUNS****maðr** – man, person**konungr** – king**skip** – ship**ADJECTIVES****mikill** – great**margr** – many**góðr** – good**PRONOUNS****sá** – that (one)**hann** – he, it**NUMERALS****einn** – one**VERBS****vera** – to be**hafa** – to have**segja** – to say**PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS****til** – to**í** – in, into**á** – on, onto**CONJUNCTIONS****ok** – and**at** – that**EXERCISES**

**1.10 Genealogy.** Most Icelandic sagas begin with genealogical information. Chart the genealogy from *Grænlandinga saga* given in the first reading passage in this lesson by listing the Old Norse names (with accents) in the tree below. The connection with Ingolf Arnarson, who is mentioned as a kinsman, is unclear. Note that there are two men named Herjolf, a grandfather and his grandson (whose name has been entered in the proper place).



**1.11 Nouns from *Grænlandinga Saga*.** Use the following nouns to complete the sentences below from the first reading and translate.

*maðr kona var efniligr faðir sonr land fugl korn*

Ex: Inn fyrsti fugl fær it fyrsta korn.

The first bird gets the first grain.

1. Þorgerðr hét \_\_\_\_\_ hans, en Bjarni \_\_\_\_\_ þeira.

2. Herjólfr hét \_\_\_\_\_, Bárðarson Herjólfssonar.

3. Bárðr var \_\_\_\_\_ Herjólfss.

4. Bjarni \_\_\_\_\_ maðr.
5. Ingólfr gaf Herjólf \_\_\_\_\_.

1.12 Vocabulary. Match the nouns in each column with their English meanings by draw a line between the two.

Ex: korn	bird
fugl	grain
1 maðr	bay
2 kona	daughter
3 víkingr	man, person
4 fjörðr	settler
5 vík	son
6 frændi	fjord
7 dóttir	country, land
8 konungr	viking
9 sonr	woman, wife
10 land	kinsman
11 landnámsmaðr	king

1.13 Translation. Translate the following reading passage from *Grænlendinga saga* into Norse. Remember to include accent marks where needed.

Herjolf was the son of Bard,  
[who was] the son of Herjolf;  
he was [a] kinsman of [the] settler Ingolf.  
Ingolf gave land to Herjolf  
between Vag and Reykjanes.  
Herjolf lived first at Drepstokk.  
His wife was named Thorgerd,  
and their son [was named] Bjarni,  
and [he] was a promising man.

Herjólfur var Bárðarson  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1.14 Gender and Meaning of Nouns. Complete the chart below with words from the lesson's reading passage.

NOUN	GENDER	ENGLISH MEANING
Ex: kona	<u>feminine</u>	<u>wife/woman</u>
1 _____	_____	story/history
2. Vágr	_____	_____
3 _____	_____	land, country
4. frændi	_____	_____
5 _____	_____	settler

The following words are the three most frequent nouns from *List 1. The Most Frequent Words in the Sagas in Each Part of Speech* given in this lesson. Their genders can be found in the *Vocabulary* at the end of the book.

	NOUN	GENDER	ENGLISH MEANING
6.	maðr	_____	_____
7.	konungr	_____	_____
8.	skip	_____	_____

**1.15 Cases.** Rewrite the following sentences so that they refer to *Haraldr* and *Eiríkr*, which decline the same as *Herjólf*.

- Herjólf* bjó á Dreptokki. *Haraldr*

Þorgerðr sá *Herjólf*. \_\_\_\_\_

Ingólfr gaf *Herjólf* land. \_\_\_\_\_

Þorgerðr hét kona *Herjólf*s. \_\_\_\_\_
- Herjólf* bjó á Dreptokki. *Eiríkr*

Þorgerðr sá *Herjólf*. \_\_\_\_\_

Ingólfr gaf *Herjólf* land. \_\_\_\_\_

Þorgerðr hét kona *Herjólf*s. \_\_\_\_\_

**1.16 Apposition.** Fill in the correct form of *landnámsmaðr* (declines the same as *maðr*) in the spaces below and translate.

- Hann var frændi Ingólfs \_\_\_\_\_.
- Herjólf* gaf Ingólfi \_\_\_\_\_ land.
- Maðr hét Ingólfr \_\_\_\_\_.
- Þorgerðr sá Ingólfr \_\_\_\_\_.

Hint: *sá* comes from *sjá*, meaning 'to see'

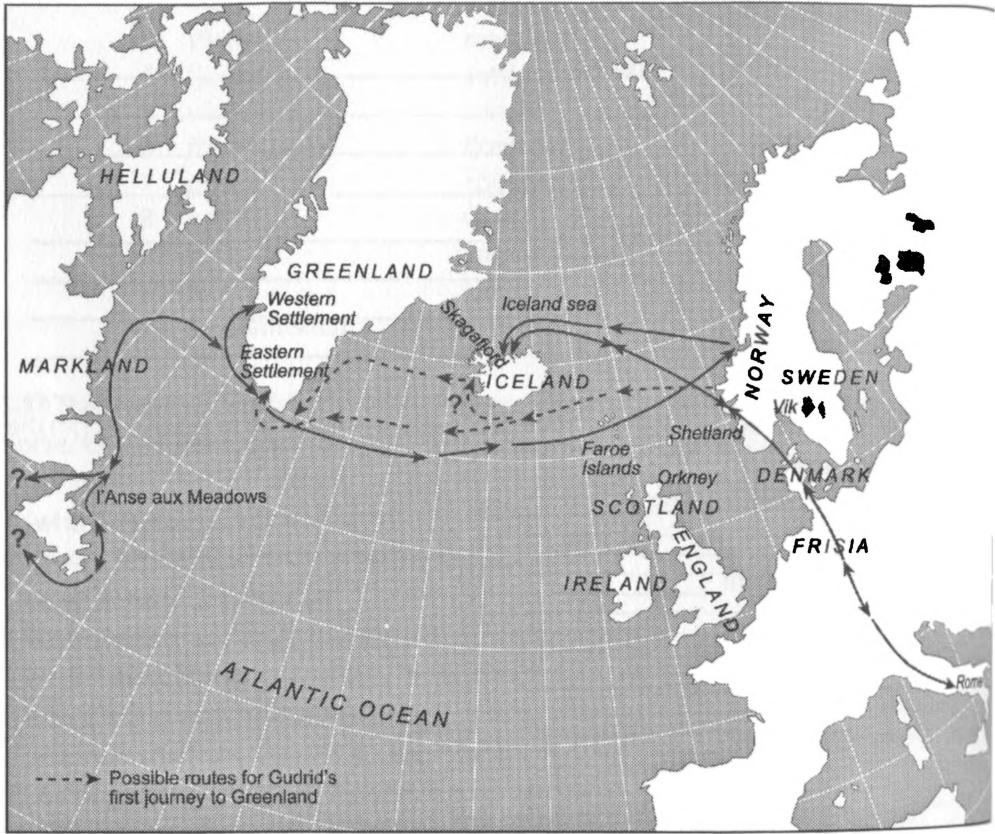
**1.17 Word Frequency.** Using *List 1. The Most Frequent Words in the Sagas*, write below the most frequently used words in each part of speech and translate.

OLD NORSE	ENGLISH	OLD NORSE	ENGLISH
<b>NOUNS</b>		<b>ADJECTIVES</b>	
1	_____	4	_____
2	_____	5	_____
3	_____	6	_____

VERBS			PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS		
7	_____	_____	10	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	11	_____	_____
9	_____	_____	12	_____	_____

1.18 CULTURE – GUDRID TRAVELS FROM VINLAND TO ROME

Another example at the turn of the first millennium of a traveler from the far North Atlantic is Guðríðr Þorbjarnardóttir (Gudrid Thorbjorn’s daughter). Gudrid lived and journeyed



**Figure 13. The Travels of Gudrid Thorbjarnardottir** from *The Saga of the Greenlanders* and *The Saga of Eirik the Red* are indicated by dotted lines. Together the solid and dotted lines give the routes of the Viking period.

across the then known world, and she stands out as one of the most widely traveled Viking Age Icelanders. Her voyages are reported in the sagas in part because she was a respected ancestor of later Icelanders, including three twelfth-century bishops.

*Grænlandinga saga* and *Eiríks saga rauða* (*The Saga of Eirik the Red*) describe Guðrún’s life and travels. *Eiríks saga* is preserved in two manuscripts: the *Hauksbók* compilation from the early fourteenth century and *Skálholtsbók* from ca. (that is, circa or ‘around’ the year) 1420. Although *Grænlandinga saga* and *Eiríks saga* are different

numerous ways, they are in general agreement about Gudrid's journeys, with *Grænlendinga saga* recounting additional travels after Gudrid leaves Greenland.

Gudrid's North Atlantic journeys, a mixture of entrepreneurial trading voyages and pioneering attempts at colonization, are a medieval picture of the long-range sailings undertaken by the Norse. According to *Grænlendinga saga*, Gudrid arrives in Greenland with her husband Thorir around the year 1000. The couple may have married in Norway, but it is more likely that Thorir, a Norwegian, first sailed to Iceland and there met and married Gudrid. With his wife on board, Thorir continues to Greenland, where his luck runs out. The two are shipwrecked on the Greenland coast and lose their boat. After they and their crew are rescued, Thorir dies of an illness during the winter in the Eastern Settlement.

A widow, Gudrid now marries Thorstein Eiriksson, the son of Eirik the Red (*inn rauði*) the settlement's leader. With her new husband, Gudrid moves north up the Greenlandic coast to a farm in the Western Settlement, but then Thorstein dies of illness. Widowed again, she returns to the Eastern Settlement, where she stays with her brother-in-law, Leif the Lucky (*inn heppni*), at the farm Brattahlid. Not long afterward, Gudrid marries Thorfinn Karlsefni, an Icelander recently arrived from Norway.

The next year (ca. 1010), Gudrid and Thorfinn Karlsefni set out in Karlsefni's ship in an ambitious attempt to settle Vinland (Vínland). The directions to the possible locations of Vinland are noted on the map by the two question marks with arrows leading west and southwest from L'Anse aux Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland. L'Anse aux Meadows is a modern English corruption of the French placename L'Anse aux Méduses (The Bay of Jellyfish). Accompanied by men and women in two other ships, they sail west to the North American continent and then south along the coast.

Reaching Vinland, they settle in, some using the cabins (*búðir*) built by Leif Eiriksson on his earlier Vinland voyage. Gudrid gives birth to a son named Snorri, the first European child born in North America. After a few years, the Vinland settlement fails. Gudrid and Thorfinn Karlsefni sail back to Greenland, spending the winter in the Eastern Settlement. The following spring the couple sails east to Norway. They sell the cargo they acquired in Vinland and Greenland and winter in Norway.

In the spring, Thorfinn and Gudrid sail back to Iceland, presumably with a shipload of valuable Norwegian goods. According to *Grænlendinga saga*, the couple landed in Skagafjord, Thorfinn's home region. There they buy a farm called Glaumbær, and after a successful life together, Thorfinn Karlsefni dies. *Eiríks saga rauða* also places Thorfinn Karlsefni and Gudrid in Skagafjord, but at Reynines.

*Eiríks saga rauða* stops at this point. *Grænlendinga saga*, however, says that Gudrid, a widow for the third time, manages the farm with the help of her son Snorri, the child born in Vinland. When Snorri marries, Gudrid, now a woman of advanced age, sets off on a pilgrimage south to Rome. Surviving this arduous and dangerous journey, she returns to Iceland. There she lives out the rest of her life in solitude as one of Iceland's first Norse anchorites, or independent nuns, dying about the year 1050. She outlived three husbands and saw the world from Vinland to the Mediterranean.

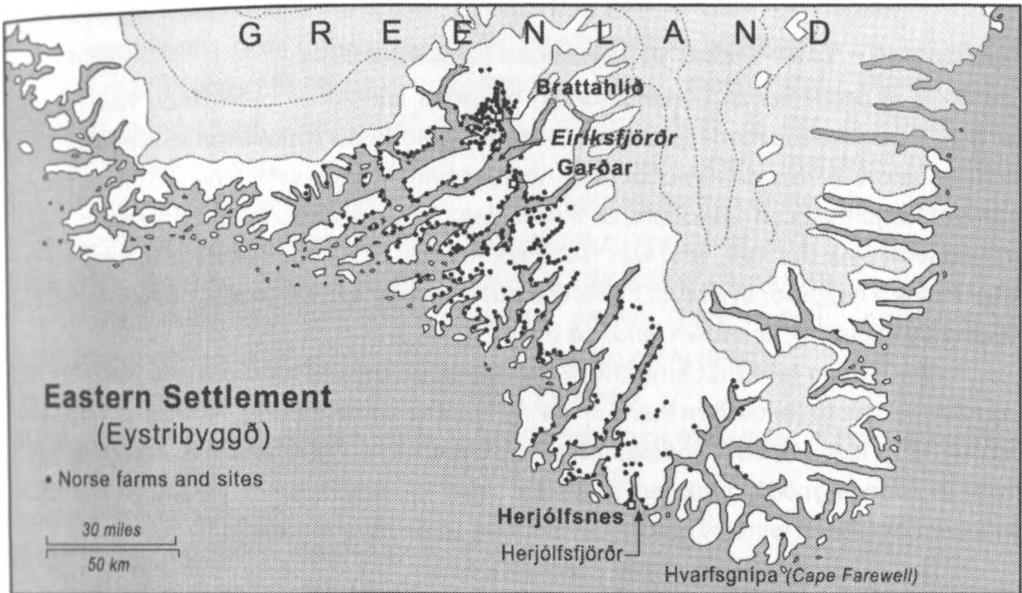
Was Gudrid unique? The medieval visitors' book at the Swiss monastery of Reichenau hints about the travels of other Icelandic women. This register, used mainly to record names of pilgrims heading south, contains a page with the heading *Hislant terra* (Iceland). It lists eight Icelandic men and four Icelandic women (Vigdis, Vilborg, Kolthera and Thurid), who probably stopped at the monastery in the eleventh century.



## LESSON 2

### NORSE SETTLERS IN GREENLAND AND VINLAND

*Eigi fellr tré við fyrsta högg*  
(A tree does not fall with the first blow)



**Figure 14. The Eastern Settlement (Eysribyggð) of Norse Greenland (Grænland).** The farm Herjólfssnes of Herjolf Bardarson is in Herjólfssfjörðr ('fjord'). Eirik the Red settled at Brattahlíð (Steep-Slope) in Eiríksfjörðr. The original settlers converted to Christianity around the year 1000. After the year 1124, Garðar became the seat of Greenland's bishop.

### 2.1 CULTURE – NORSE GREENLAND

Within a century of its settlement, Iceland was already crowded. New settlers, as well as established Icelandic families, looked to Greenland, the new land that Eirik the Red had discovered to the west of Iceland around the year 985. The family of Herjolf Bardarson, who appears in this and the preceding reading passage, sailed with Eirik to Greenland and settled at Herjólfssnes (Herjolf's Promontory) in the Eastern Settlement (See map above). At that time, the climate in Greenland was relatively mild on account of the 'medieval climate optimum,' a medieval warm period in the North Atlantic from ca. 950 to 1250.

The Norse settlers were members of a herding culture, and Greenland's southwestern coastline was appealing with its sheltered fjords and good grazing lands. Eirik's followers established the Eastern Settlement (Eysribyggð) on the southwestern tip of Greenland, and soon there was a Western Settlement (vestribyggð) on the coast 300 miles to the north. Native inhabitants had earlier lived along the coastline but at the time

when the Norse settlers arrived the areas were uninhabited. The ancestors of the modern Inuit Greenlanders were living in what is today Northern Canada. A century or so later, they began migrating to Greenland and came into contact with the Norse settlements.

Between the Eastern and Western settlements lay a small middle Norse region of approximately twenty farms. Of the three areas of Norse habitation, the Eastern Settlement was the most populated with approximately 190 farms, 12 parish churches, a cathedral, and Augustinian and Benedictine monasteries. The Western Settlement had approximately ninety farms and four churches. The count of sites increases as archaeologists undertake more excavations.

## 2.2 READING – ‘LAND-TAKING’ IN GREENLAND (*LANDNÁMABÓK*)

*The Book of Settlements* (*Landnámabók*) provides additional information about Herjólf Bardarson. Unlike the reading passage in the previous lesson from *Grænlendinga saga*, the passage below from *Landnámabók* does not mention Herjólf's wife or his son Bjarni. Instead it tells of Herjólf's second *landnám*, or ‘landtaking,’ this time in northwest Greenland. Herjólf arrived with Eirík the Red, who was Norwegian-born. Eirík lived in Iceland for many years. After killing a neighbor in a feud, he served out a sentence of three years' banishment from Iceland by exploring unknown lands to the west.

*Eirík's Saga* tells that Eirík chose the name ‘Greenland’ for these new lands in order to entice people to follow him there, knowing that the name ‘Iceland’ sounded inhospitable. Returning to Iceland, Eirík announced his intention to settle Greenland. According to the Fróði in *Íslendingabók*, Eirík led fourteen ships of settlers from Iceland to Greenland ‘fourteen or fifteen winters before Christianity came here to Iceland.’

This reading selection from *Landnámabók* is found in entries 79 and 92 from the *Hauksbók* and *Sturlubók* versions of *Landnámabók*. As in this reading selection, *Landnámabók* is a compilation of often short accounts about Iceland's first settlers. There were several versions of *Landnámabók*. The first was written in the early twelfth century but is lost, and we know little about it. Another version called *Melabók* (*M*, the book of Mel placename) exists chiefly as parts incorporated into the two principle versions, *Hauksbók* (*H*, named for its author Haukr Erlendsson, a lawspeaker in the early 1300s) and *Sturlubók* (*S*, named for its author a famous 13<sup>th</sup> century chieftain, Sturla Þórðarson).

### *Landnámabók* (H79, S92)

Herjólfur hét maður  
Bárðarson Herjólfssonar;  
hann fór til Grænlands með Eiríki.  
Herjólfur nam Herjólfssfjörð  
ok bjó á Herjólfssnesi. (H79)  
Eiríkr nam Eiríksfjörð ok bjó í  
Brattahlíð,  
en Leifr sonr hans eptir hann. (S92)

### *The Book of Settlements* (H79, S92)

[A] man was called Herjólf  
the son of Bard, the son of Herjólf;  
he went to Greenland with Eirík [the Red].  
Herjólf took [claimed] Herjólf's Fjord  
and lived at Herjólfssnes.  
Eirík took Eirík's Fjord and lived at  
Brattahlid,  
and Leif, his son, after him.

## VOCABULARY

◆ **á** *prep* [w *dat*] on; upon; at; in  
**Bárðr** <-ar> *m* Bard (*personal name*)  
**Bardarson** *m* Bard's son (*personal name*)  
**bjó** 1/3 *sg past of* búa lived  
**Brattahlíð** *f* Brattahlid (*place name*),  
 Steep-Slope  
 ◆ **búa** <býr, bjó, bjuggu, búinn> *vb* live in  
 a place, dwell, inhabit, live  
**Eiríkr** <-s> *m* Eirik (*personal name*)  
**Eiríksfjörðr** *m* Eiríksfjord (*place name*),  
 Eirik's Fjord  
 ◆ **en** *conj* but; (less frequently) and  
 ◆ **eptir** *prep* [w *acc*] after (*in time*)  
 ◆ **fara** <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go,  
 travel; move  
**fór** 1/3 *sg past of* fara went  
**Grænland** *n* Greenland  
 ◆ **hann** <*acc* hann, *dat* honum, *gen*  
 hans> *pron* he  
**hans** *pron* (*gen of* hann) his  
 ◆ **heita** <heitr, hét, hétu, heitinn> *vb*  
 call, give a name to; call, call on;

(*intrans w pres* heitir) be called,  
 be named; [w *dat*] promise  
**Herjólfur** <-s> *m* Herjolf (*personal name*)  
**Herjólfssfjörðr** *m* Herjólfssfjord (*place*  
*name*), 'Herjolf's Fjord'  
**Herjólfunes** *n* Herjólfunes (*place name*),  
 Herjolf's Headland  
**hét** 1/3 *sg past of* heita was named  
 ◆ **í** *prep* [w *dat*] in, within; at  
 ◆ **maðr** <*acc* mann *dat* manni, *gen*  
 manns, *nom & acc pl* menn, *dat*  
 mönnum, *gen* manna> *m* man;  
 person, human being  
 ◆ **með** *prep* [w *acc/dat*] with  
**nam** 1/3 *sg past of* nema took  
**nema** <nemr, nam, námu, numinn> *vb*  
 take; claim (land)  
 ◆ **ok** *conj* and  
 ◆ **sonr** <*dat* syni, *gen* sonar, *pl* synir, *acc* sonu>  
*m* son  
 ◆ **til** *prep* [w *gen*] to

In the vocabularies, the notations <-s> or <-ar> appear immediately following masculine nouns. These notations indicate whether that noun takes its genitive with -s (for example, *Eiríkr*, genitive *Eiríks*) or with -ar (for example, *Bárðr* genitive *Bárðar*). The -s is the more common of the two masculine genitive endings.

2.3 EXERCISE – THE READING SELECTION FROM *LANDNÁMABÓK*

Match the Old Icelandic on the left with the correct English translation on the right.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Herjólfur hét maðr           | a. Herjolf took (claimed) Herjolf's Fjord |
| 2. Bárðarson Herjólfssonar;     | b. Eirik took Eirik's Fjord and lived at  |
| 3. hann fór til Grænlands       | Brattahlid,                               |
| með Eiríki.                     | c. and Leif his son after him.            |
| 4. Herjólfur nam Herjólfssfjörð | d. [A] man was called Herjolf             |
| 5. ok bjó á Herjólfnesi.        | e. the son of Bard, [who was] the son of  |

6. Eiríkr nam Eiríksfjörð ok  
bjó í Brattahlíð,  
7. en Leifr sonr hans eptir  
hann.

- Herjolf;  
f. he went to Greenland with Eirik [the  
Red].  
g. and lived at Herjolfsnes.

## 2.4 CULTURE – VINLAND (VÍNLAND)

Shortly after Herjolf Bardarson settled in Greenland, his son Bjarni Herjolfsson set out from Iceland to join his father in Greenland, but Bjarni became lost in fog. He sailed off course and sighted a new land of forests to the west and south of Greenland. *Grœnlendinga saga* tells that Bjarni refused to land and explore his discovery. For his lack of initiative, he was much criticized when he finally reached Greenland and settled there.

We know for certain that Norse seafarers reached the North American continent because Norse archaeological remains dating to about A.D. 1000 have been found at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland. But exactly who these settlers were is not clear. The sagas tell that in Greenland, Leif Eiríksson bought Bjarni's ship and then set out as the leader of an expedition intent on settling the new land. Leif the Lucky (*inn heppni*), as he was called, visited several places on the North American coast. These included *Helluland* ('Slab-Land', Baffin Island), *Markland* ('Forest-Land', Labrador), and *Vínland* ('Vine-Land').

Leif's attempt to settle in Vinland failed, and he and his party returned to Greenland. Others, such as Leif's brother and sister, Thorvald and Freydis, and later Thorfinn Karlsefni and his wife Gudrid, are said to have led further parties west. Ultimately, they were outnumbered and driven off by the *skrælingjar* (sg *skrælingr*), the unflattering Norse term for both North American Indians and Greenlandic Inuits.

Although the Norse Greenlanders had neither the resources nor the population to colonize the North American continent, they continued to sail there for wood and perhaps other provisions. An entry in the Icelandic Annals for the year 1347 states, 'In this year a Greenlandic ship arrived in Iceland loaded with wood. It had been blown off course returning from Vinland.' The Norse colony in Greenland began to decline after 1300. The climate grew colder and sailing became more dangerous due to increased drift-ice. The Greenland settlement became isolated from the outside world for years at a time, and by the 1500s the Norse colony ceased to exist. The exact end of the colony is unknown. Possibly the last of the nearly forgotten Norse of Greenland abandoned the colony. They may also have died out or been carried off by European slavers or pirates.

## 2.5 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE ARTICLE

The definite article is the word 'the.' As noted below, the Old Norse definite article declines for case, number, and gender. There is no indefinite article (*a*, *an*) in Old Icelandic, although sometimes the numeral 'one,' (*einn*) or its variations is used for emphasis.

In translation into English, the indefinite article usually has to be added.

Hann var frændi Herjólf.      *He was a kinsman of Herjolf.*  
Hann var efniligr maðr.      *He was a promising man.*  
Hon var dóttir Þorgerðar.      *She was a daughter of Thorgerð.*

The ON definite article.

	M	F	N		M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	inn	in	it	<b>PI</b>	inir	inar	in
<b>acc</b>	inn	ina	it		ina	inar	in
<b>dat</b>	inum	inni	inu		inum	inum	inum
<b>gen</b>	ins	innar	ins		inna	inna	inna

When the definite article is used with an adjective, as in *inn fyrsti fugl* 'the first bird,' *ít fyrsta korn* 'the first grain,' and *Eiríkr inn rauði* 'Eirik the Red,' the article precedes the adjective.

When used without an adjective, the definite article is added as a suffix to the noun after its case ending. For example, the nouns *maðr* 'man,' *bók* 'book,' and *land* become *maðrinn* (*m*) 'the man,' *bókin* (*f*) 'the book,' and *landit* (*n*) 'the land.' When the case ending of a noun ends in a vowel, the initial *-i-* of the article is dropped. For example, *kona* 'woman' plus the feminine article *in* becomes *konan* (*kona* + *in* > *konan*). So also *frændi* 'kinsman' or 'friend' becomes *frændinn* (*frændi* + *inn* > *frændinn*). The definite article is discussed in more detail later.

When the definite article stands alone, it is sometimes spelled with an initial *h-* (for example, *hinn*, *hin*, *hit*). Modern Icelandic always uses the *h-*.

## 2.6 PROPER NOUNS

Below are examples of names encountered in the readings of the first lessons. With a few exceptions, proper nouns decline like regular nouns. For instance, *Eiríkr* and *Herjólf* take the same set of endings as the masculine nouns *konungr* and *víkingr*. Each proper noun, like all nouns, is either strong or weak. They do not change. The names below are divided into strong and weak. As we'll see in the next lesson, weak nouns take a simpler set of endings than strong nouns.

	STRONG MASCULINE					WEAK MASCULINE	
<b>nom</b>	Eiríkr	Herjólf	Þorsteinn	Bárðr	Björn	Bjarni	Hjalti
<b>acc</b>	Eirík	Herjólf	Þorstein	Bárð	Björn	Bjarna	Hjalta
<b>dat</b>	Eiríkl	Herjólf	Þorsteini	Bárði	Birni	Bjarna	Hjalta
<b>gen</b>	Eiríks	Herjólf	Þorsteins	Bárðar	Bjarnar	Bjarna	Hjalta

Nouns have their peculiarities. For example, the name *Þorsteinn* ends with an *-n* rather than the more usual nominative masculine ending *-r*. Rather than being absent, the nominative *-r* has changed to *-n* in order to match the preceding *-n*. This change is a regular process discussed later, but probably because it is simply easier to pronounce the sound of

double -n than -nr. Other masculine names, such as *Björn* and *Bjarni* (see above), deal with different sets of endings. These too are explained in later lessons.

The first reading passage of this lesson contains only one feminine name, *Þorger*. An example of a common type of feminine noun, *Þorgerðr*, like many masculine nouns, ends in -r in the nominative singular. Feminine names in -r follow the pattern of *Þorgerðr*: -r, -i, -ar. Other feminine names take different sets of endings.

	STRONG FEMININE				WEAK FEMININE	
nom	Þorgerðr	Sigríðr	Freydís	Ólöf	Gyða	Þyri
acc	Þorgerði	Sigríði	Freydís	Ólöfu	Gyðu	Þyri
dat	Þorgerði	Sigríði	Freydís	Ólöfu	Gyðu	Þyri
gen	Þorgerðar	Sigríðar	Freydísar	Ólafar	Gyðu	Þyri

2.7 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. VERBS

Verbs express action, existence, or happenings. Verb usage in Old Norse largely corresponds to Modern English. Verbs are at the core of language, and this section provides an overview of the different aspects of Old Norse verbs. It is not to be memorized, but used as a resource as verbs are presented in the coming lessons.

- A verb agrees with the subject of the sentence in **person** (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) and **number** (singular and plural). Person and number are indicated by endings, called **person endings**.
- Old Norse has two verb **tenses**: present and past. Reference to future events is expressed in several ways: use of the present tense; use of auxiliary verbs such as *munu* ('shall', 'will') and *skulu* ('shall'); and use of time expressions, such as *á morgun* ('tomorrow').
- Verbs have three **moods**: indicative, subjunctive, and imperative. Mood reflects the speaker's attitude toward the reality of a statement. The indicative is the most common and is used when an utterance is believed to be true. The subjunctive expresses doubt or uncertainty. The imperative is used in commands.
- Old Norse verbs have three types of **voice**: active, middle, and passive. The active and middle have their own sets of endings, while the passive is formed using an auxiliary verb and past participle (a verb form which indicates certain tenses and can function as an adjective). For example, the heart is beating or the enemy is/has been beaten, carrying the meaning of a beating heart and a beaten enemy.
  - In the **active voice** the subject performs the action (for example, he kicks/he kicked).
  - In the **passive voice**, the subject undergoes the action (for example, he is kicked/he was kicked).
  - Verbs with **middle** endings have a range of functions, but fundamentally they are used in a reflexive manner. That is, they express action where



reflects back onto the subject (for example, he kicked himself). Hence the subject both performs and undergoes the action. The middle occasionally has passive meaning.

Verbs in Old Norse are either **strong** or **weak**, depending on the formation of their past tense. A small third type of verb, called **preterite-present** verbs, shows features of both strong and weak verbs.

- **Strong verbs** distinguish present and past tense by changing their root vowel. English is similar. For example, the present tense of the verb 'take' is 'takes,' but changes its root vowel in past tense 'took.'
- **Weak verbs** form their past by adding a **dental suffix** (*d*, *t*, or *ð*). For example, the past tense of *kalla* 'call' is *kallaði* with dental suffix *ð*. English also employs a dental suffix 'd' (sometimes 't'). For example, the past of 'call' is 'called.'
- **Preterite-present** verbs show features of both strong and weak verbs. There are only ten of these verbs in Old Norse. Despite being few in number, they are frequent because they are often employed as **modal auxiliaries**, helping verbs that denote a sense of obligation, intention, need, or probability. Modals are also frequent in English, which employs modals in a manner similar to Old Norse. For example, 'I sail to Iceland' can be modified by adding an auxiliary to express obligation, 'I **ought** to sail to Iceland' (*Ek skal sigla til Íslands*) and or 'I **have** to sail to Iceland (*Ek á at sigla til Íslands*).

Old Norse makes frequent use of **infinitives** and **participles**.

- **Infinitives** are fixed, unchanging verb forms. For example, *taka* meaning 'to take' and *kalla* meaning 'to call' are infinitives. Infinitives do not take endings in order to indicate person, number, or tense. Whereas English employs the word 'to' to denote an infinitive, Old Norse on occasion employs *at* ('to') but mostly does not. Instead the infinitive in Old Norse is the core verb form by itself. Dictionaries of Old Norse, as those of English, refer to verbs by their infinitives.
- **Participles** are adjectives derived from verbs. There are present and past participles, each having its own set of endings. For example, *takandi* 'taking' is a present participle (adjective, ON *-andi* = English '-ing') and *tekinn* 'taken' is a past participle (adjective).

In summary, verbs are **strong** or **weak** (with a few preterite-presents) and have:

- person**: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>
- number**: singular or plural
- tense**: present, past and future
- mood**: indicative, subjunctive, or imperative
- voice**: active or middle or passive (usually with an auxiliary verb)

2.8 VERBS, INFINITIVES

Almost all Old Norse verbs form the infinitive by adding *-a* to the verb stem (the basic minus any endings), for example, *at gefa* ‘to give’ and *at fara* ‘to go.’ The infinitive commonly used with auxiliary verbs as, for example, in English ‘I want to give.’ When the infinitive is used in this way, it is called a complementary infinitive.

Ek vil nema land.	<i>I want to take land.</i>
Ek vil fara.	<i>I want to go.</i>
Hon vill búa á Dreptokki.	<i>She wants to live at Dreptokk.</i>
Ingólfr vill gefa Herjólfu land.	<i>Ingolf wants to give land to Herjolf.</i>

The following list gives the infinitive and the past tense of verbs in this lesson. In order to help distinguish infinitives in Old Norse, such words will be frequently preceded by the particle *at*, which corresponds to English ‘to.’

INFINITIVE	TRANSLATION	PAST TENSE (3 <sup>rd</sup> PERSON SINGULAR)	
at búa	to live	bjó	lived
at fara	to go	fór	went
at sjá	to see	sá	saw
at gefa	to give	gaf	gave
at heita	to be named	hét	was named
at nema	to take	nam	took
at vera	to be	var	was
at verða	to become	varð	became

2.9 LINKING VERBS – *VERA*, *VERÐA*, AND *HEITA*

In the sentence *Herjólfur nam land* ‘Herjolf took land,’ the subject (*Herjólfur*) performs an action (*nam* ‘took’) on an object (*land*). Many verbs, such as *nema*, *gera*, and *gefa* describe actions. Some verbs, however, such as *vera* ‘to be,’ *verða* ‘to become,’ and *heita* ‘to be called’ do not convey action; rather, they link the subject to a noun, adjective, or pronoun usually following the verb (thus linking the two words). Given its function, one could substitute an equals sign for a linking verb and lose little of the meaning. Hence one might consider the sentence *Leifr hét maður* as *Leifr = maður* and the same sentence could be *maður hét Leifr* (a man was called Leif).

A word connected to the subject by a linking verb is known as a subject complement because it is equal to or describes the subject. For example, ‘The land was Greenland’ (noun = noun) or ‘The land was fertile’ (Noun described by adjective). A subject complement, like the subject of the sentence, is in the nominative case. Adjectives or nouns used as subject complements are commonly known as predicate adjectives and predicate nouns.

Below are examples of sentences in which linking verbs connect the subject with

subject complement. Both subject and subject complement are in the nominative case.

#### PREDICATE NOUNS

<b>Leifr er sonr</b> Eiríks.	<i>Leif is the son of Eirik.</i>
<b>Hon var dóttir</b> Ingólfs.	<i>She was a daughter of Ingolf.</i>
<b>Haraldr varð konungr</b> Nóregs.	<i>Harald became king of Norway.</i>
<b>Maðrinn hét</b> Ingólfr.	<i>The man was called Ingolf.</i>
<b>Þorgerðr hét kona</b> hans.	<i>Thorgerd was the name of his wife.</i>
	<i>[His wife was called Thorgerd.]</i>

#### PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

<b>Bjarni var efnilligr.</b>	<i>Bjarni was promising.</i>
<b>Freydís er fögr.</b>	<i>Freydis is beautiful.</i>
<b>Barnit er lítit.</b>	<i>The child is little.</i>
<b>Óðinn er vitr.</b>	<i>Odin is wise.</i>
<b>Frígg varð reið.</b>	<i>Frigg became angry.</i>
<b>Þórr er sterkr.</b>	<i>Thor is strong.</i>

In contrast to the examples above, the sentences below contain action verbs with direct objects in the accusative case. For example in English, 'She kicked the ball.'

<b>Ingólfr gaf</b> Herjólfu land.	<i>Ingolf gave Herjolf land.</i>
<b>Herjólfur nam</b> Herjólfssjóð.	<i>Herjolf took Herjolfssjord.</i>

## 2.10 CULTURE – THE FAMILY AND STURLUNGA SAGAS

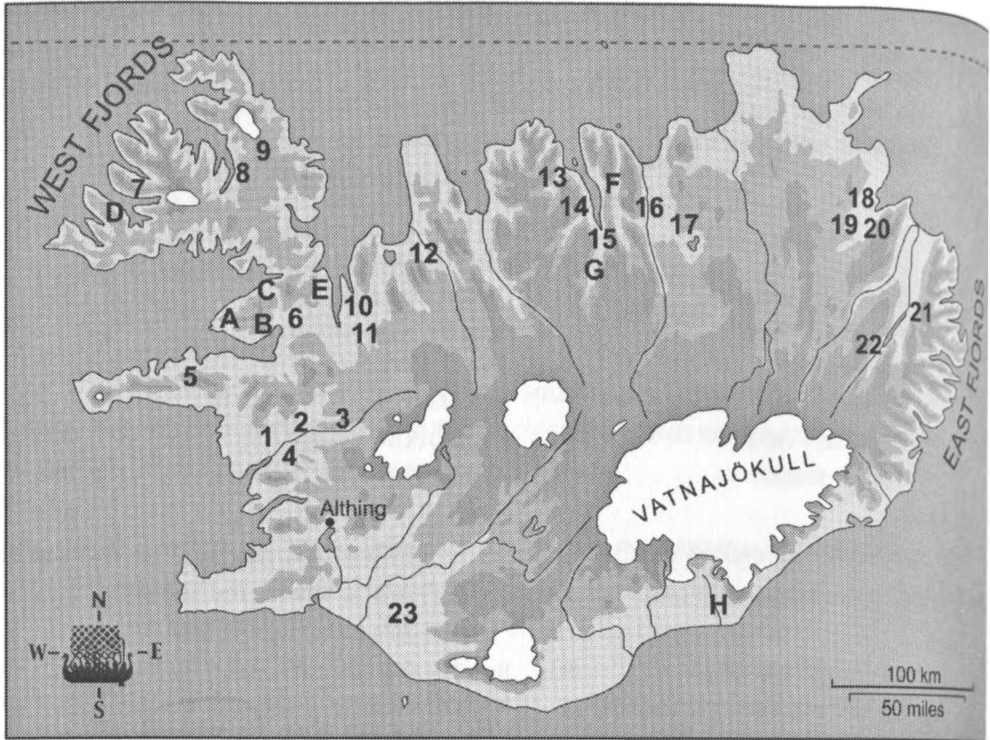
The word *saga* is connected with the Norse verb 'to say' (*segja*) and means both 'history' and 'story.'

The family sagas are one of the world's great literatures. Called in Icelandic *Íslendingasögur* (*Sagas of the Icelanders*), they are prose stories written in Old Norse/Icelandic about people and events during the years 860 to 1030. Based on oral stories and genealogies from the Viking Age, saga writing on parchment began in Iceland in the twelfth century and reached its height in what is called the classical period in the thirteenth century.

The family sagas are a literature of conflict. Region by region and often family by family, they lavish attention on intimate details of private life that other medieval literatures largely ignore. Many issues can stir the action. Disputes begin over insults, property claims, honor, status, power, seductions, inheritance, love, bodily injury, and missing livestock. There are accusations of witchcraft, fights over beached whales, cheating, stealing, harboring of outlaws, and vengeance sought for scurrilous or erotic verse. Repeatedly in the stories, individuals and families contend for prestige and survival in a rural society that accepted open feuding as the means for regulating wealth, power, and honor.

The family sagas vary in length from slim, tightly woven tales with several key players

to sprawling epics spanning generations. Additionally there are *þættir*, episodic short tales which tend to concentrate on a particular anecdote, event, or conflict in the life of a notable individual or travels abroad.



**Figure 15. Locations of Major Family and Sturlunga Sagas.** Numbers refer to family sagas and letters to Sturlunga sagas. English and Old Norse titles are given in the list below. When a saga takes place in several regions, the map shows where the main character was raised.

*Sturlunga Saga* is a compilation of sagas named after the Sturlungs, an influential Icelandic family of chieftains who became especially powerful in the thirteenth century. The sagas in the Sturlung compilation (*Sturlunga saga*), along with the bishops' sagas (*biskups sögur*) are often called contemporary sagas (*samtíðarsögur*). The twelfth- and thirteenth-century events that the contemporary sagas describe transpired about the same time that the narratives were written.

Like the family sagas, the sagas that make up the Sturlung compilation often concentrate on conflict and feud. The two groups of sagas differ from each other in social emphasis. The family sagas are regional in nature. *Sturlunga Saga* focuses on quarrels among powerful chieftains with aspirations for large-scale control. In particular, *Sturlunga Saga* details events of the last decades of the Old Icelandic Free State, recounting the power struggles that led to the Norwegian takeover of Iceland in 1262-64.

**MAJOR FAMILY SAGAS (ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR)**

1. *Egil's Saga (Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar)*
2. *Hen-Thorir's Saga (Hænsa-Þóris saga)*
3. *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue (Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu)*
4. *The Saga of the Slayings on the Heath (Heiðarvíga saga)*
5. *The Saga of the People of Eyri (Eyrbyggja saga)*
6. *The Saga of the People of the Laxardal (Laxdæla saga)*
7. *Gisli Sursson's Saga (Gísli saga Súrssonar)*
8. *The Saga of the Sworn Brothers (Fóstbræðra saga)*
9. *The Saga of Havard of Isaffjord (Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings)*
10. *The Saga of the Confederates (Bandamanna saga)*
11. *Grettir's Saga (Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar)*
12. *The Saga of the People of Vatnsdal (Vatnsdæla saga)*
13. *The Saga of the People of Svarfadardal (Svarfdæla saga)*
14. *Field-Ljot's Saga (Valla-Ljóts saga)*
15. *Killer-Glum's Saga (Víga-Glúms saga)*
16. *The Saga of the People of Ljosavatn (Ljósvetninga saga)*
17. *The Saga of Reykjadal and of Killer-Skuta (Reykðæla saga ok Víga-Skútu)*
18. *The Saga of the People of Weapon's Fjord (Vápnfirðinga saga)*
19. *The Tale of Thorstein Staff-Struck (Þorsteins þáttr stangarhöggs)*
20. *The Tale of Ale-Hood (Ölkofra þáttr)*
21. *The Saga of Droplaug's Sons (Droplaugarsona saga)*
22. *The Saga of Hrafnkel Frey's Priest (Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða)*
23. *Njal's Saga (Njáls saga, also known as Brennun-Njáls saga, The Saga of Burnt Njal)*

**STURLUNGA SAGA (STURLUNGA SAGA)**

- A. *The Saga of the Icelanders (Íslendinga saga)*
- B. *The Saga of Sturla (Sturlu saga)*
- C. *The Tale of Geirmund Helskin (Geirmundar þáttr heljarskinns)*
- D. *The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson (Hrafn's saga Sveinbjarnarsonar)*
- E. *The Saga of Thorgils and Hafliði (Þorgils saga ok Hafliða)*
- G. *The Saga of the Priest Gudmund the Good (Prestssaga Guðmundar góða)*
- F. *The Saga of Gudmund the Worthy (Guðmundar saga dýra)*
- H. *The Saga of the Men of Svinfell (Svínfellinga saga)*

**2.11 CULTURE – SAGA GENRES**

In addition to the family and Sturlunga Sagas, medieval Icelanders wrote several other kinds of sagas. These include the bishops' sagas, concentrating on the lives of distinguished Icelandic churchmen; the kings' sagas (*konungasögur*), which relate the history of Scandinavian kings with a focus on the kings of Norway; sagas of antiquity (*fornaldarsögur*), consisting of mythic-legendary tales recounting fabulous and sometimes mythic stories of

epic heroes such as the dragon slayer Sigurd, the slayer of Fafnir (*Sigurðr Fáfnisbani*), the bear warrior, Bodvar Bjarki (*Böðvarr Bjarki*). In addition, there are the saints' sagas (*heilagramanna sögur*) mostly about foreign saints; the knights' sagas (*riddarasögur*) which are translations or adaptations of continental medieval romances; and tall tales called *lygisögur*.

2.12 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. ADJECTIVES

Adjectives are words that describe and modify nouns and pronouns. In the reading passage, *mikill* ('big') and *sterkr* ('strong') are adjectives. They describe the noun *maðr*, hence *má mikill maðr og sterkr* ('a big man and strong').

- In Old Norse, adjectives agree in gender, case, and number with the nouns they modify
- Old Norse adjectives have both strong and weak forms with different endings.
- Adjectives take strong endings unless preceded by a definite article, demonstrative pronoun, or other determining word, in which case they take weak endings.
- Adjectives decline similar to nouns and are discussed in coming lessons following the presentation of nouns.

2.13 OLD NORSE WORD PARADIGMS

'Paradigm' is an English word derived from Latin *paradigma* and Greek *paradeigma* meaning 'model.' In descriptions of Old Norse grammar, paradigms are models or patterns of verb, nouns, and adjectives. They show endings according to the different cases (nom, acc, dat, gen) and sound changes within words. See *Appendix A: Quick Guide to Old Norse Grammar* which contains the most useful basic paradigms. This study tool will help with mastering the basic paradigms of verb conjugations and noun and adjective declensions.

2.14 VOCABULARY – LIST 2. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	NUMERALS
mál – speech; case, matter sonr – son hönd – hand	lítill – little illr – bad, ill sannr – true	ek – I þú – you	tveir – two
VERBS	PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS		CONJUNCTIONS
koma – to come fara – to go, travel munu – will	þá – then þar – there um – about		en – but

## EXERCISES

**2.15 Vocabulary.** Match the verbs in each column with their English meanings by drawing a line between the two. If needed, use the Vocabulary at the rear of the book.

<b>Ex:</b>	<b>vilja</b>	<b>to live</b>
	<b>búa</b>	<b>to want</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>sjá</b>	<b>to become</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>nema</b>	<b>to go</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>heita</b>	<b>to give</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>fara</b>	<b>to be named</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>vera</b>	<b>to take, claim</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>gefa</b>	<b>to see</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>verða</b>	<b>to be</b>

**2.16 Cases.** The genitive case usually denotes possession. Give the genitive form for each name below to complete the saga title. Then use the list of Family Sagas in this lesson to translate the title.

	PERSONAL NAME	OLD ICELANDIC TITLE	ENGLISH TITLE
Ex:	Glúmr	<u>Víga- Glúms saga</u>	<u>Killer-Glum's Saga</u>
1	Ljótr	<u>Valla-</u>	
2	Gísli	<u>saga Súrssonar</u>	
3	Gunnlaugr	<u>saga ormstungu</u>	

**2.17 Verb Forms.** Complete the chart below.

	VERB (PAST TENSE)	ENGLISH MEANING	INFINITIVE
Ex: gaf		<u><i>gave, granted</i></u>	<u><i>at gefa</i></u>
1	<u>                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>	at búa
2.	fór	<u>                                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>
3.	sá	<u>                                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>
4	<u>                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>	at heita
5.	nam	<u>                                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>
6	<u>                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>	at vera
7	<u>                    </u>	<u>                                    </u>	at verða

**2.18 Translation Review.** Translate the following passage from *Landnámabók* back into Old Norse. Refer to the previous reading sections.

[A] man was called Herjolf  
the son of Bard, the son of Herjolf;  
he went to Greenland with Eirik.  
Herjolf took Herjolf's Fjord  
and lived at Herjolfsnes.  
Eirik took Eirik's Fjord  
and lived at Brattahlid,  
and Leif, his son, after him.

Herjólfur hét maðr  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2.19 Gender and Meaning of Nouns.** Complete the chart below. Refer to the previous reading sections.

NOUN		GENDER	ENGLISH MEANING
The words are found in the reading passages.			
Ex:	hlíð	<u>feminine</u>	<u>mountain-side, slope</u>
1.	_____	_____	son
2.	nes	_____	_____
3.	fjörðr	_____	_____
4.	hönd	_____	_____
5.	fé	_____	_____
6.	bróðir	_____	_____
7.	land	_____	_____
8.	dagr	_____	_____

**2.20 Word Frequency.** Referring to the list of *The Most Frequent Words* given in this lesson write the words from the different grammatical categories and translate.

OLD NORSE		ENGLISH	OLD NORSE		ENGLISH
<b>NOUNS</b>			<b>ADJECTIVES</b>		
1	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	5	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	6	_____	_____
<b>VERBS</b>			<b>PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS</b>		
7	_____	_____	10	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	11	_____	_____
9	_____	_____	12	_____	_____



**2.21 The Definite Article.** Decline the definite article.

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	_____	in	_____	PI	inir	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	it		_____	inar	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____		_____	_____	inum
gen	ins	innar	_____		inna	_____	_____

Add the suffixed definite article to the nouns below. (The following nouns are in the nominative case.) Check the gender of each word in order to use the correct article.

Ex: maðr maðrinn

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. fjörðr _____ | 6. hlíf _____    |
| 2. hönd _____   | 7. konungr _____ |
| 3. land _____   | 8. skip _____    |
| 4. sonr _____   | 9. frændi _____  |
| 5. nes _____    | 10. kona _____   |

**2.22 Proper Nouns.** Give the correct form of the proper noun in parentheses and translate. Refer to the section on proper nouns in the lesson.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ bjó fyrst á Dreptokki. (Herjólfur)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Þorgerður sá \_\_\_\_\_. (Eiríkr)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Ingólfr gaf \_\_\_\_\_ land. (Þorgerður)

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Hann var frændi \_\_\_\_\_. (Bárður)

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ bjó fyrst á Dreptokki. (Þorsteinn)

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Þorgerður sá \_\_\_\_\_. (Bjarni)

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Ingólfr gaf \_\_\_\_\_ land. (Björn)

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Hann var frændi \_\_\_\_\_. (Þyri)

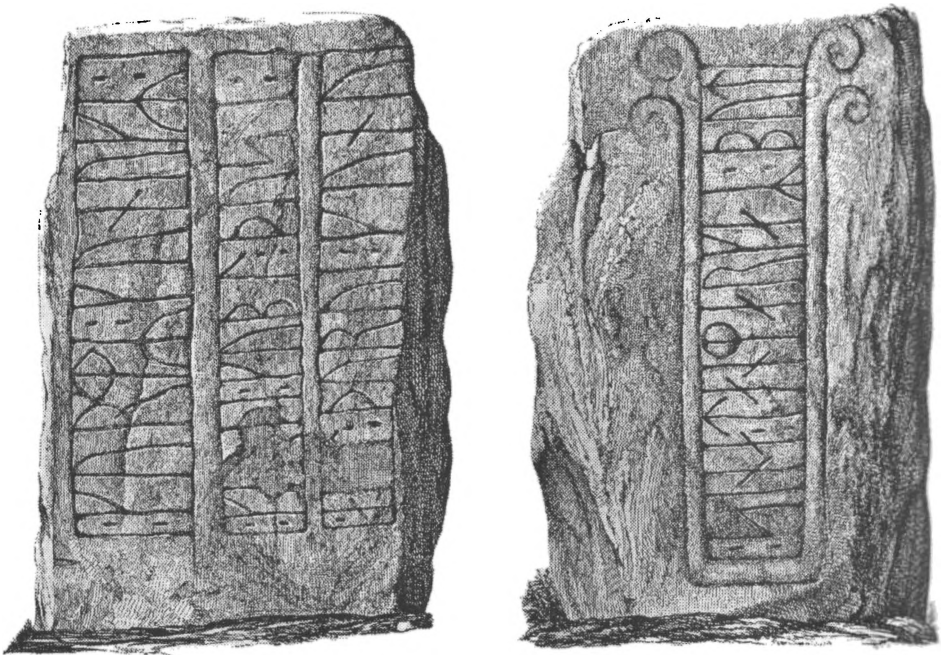
\_\_\_\_\_

### LESSON 3

## DENMARK: RUNESTONES AND THE FIRST VIKING STATE

*Skalat maðr rúnar rísta, nema vel ráða kunni*

(A man should not carve runes, unless he well knows how to control them)



**Figure 16. The Runestone, front and back, of King Gorm the Old (Gormr inn gamli) at Jelling, Denmark.** Gorm was the last pagan king of Denmark. He founded the Jelling Dynasty.

### 3.1 CULTURE – RUNES

Runes were the writing of the ancient Scandinavians, and surviving runic inscriptions are a main source of social, historical, and linguistic information. Runes are an alphabet, not a pictographic or a syllabic script. Much as we might call our alphabet the ABCs, the runic alphabet was composed of letters and called the futhork after the first six runes or runic letters, *F H T T R K*. Runes were carved on wood, stone, bone, antler, and metal. They were used for identification, commemoration, messages, and magic. Runic inscriptions are the closest of all written sources to the speech of the Viking Age.

The earliest runes date to the first century A.D. Almost surely, the runes were adapted from writing systems in use in the Roman Empire. At that time there was considerable contact between the Roman world and Germanic peoples. Speakers of Proto-

Old Norse and other Germanic languages probably adapted the letters of either Latin or Northern Italic alphabets to fit the sounds of their own languages. They modified the letters in order to make them more suitable for carving.

Those who designed the individual runes used straight strokes, a feature which worked well with wood grain. Messages were usually short due to the limitations imposed by pieces of wood, strips of bark, bones, or tablets of wax. The use of pen and ink and the art of preparing pages of vellum for manuscripts were unknown in Scandinavia before the conversion to Christianity, beginning in the tenth century.

In Viking times the use of runes was common, and the Norse of the period left traces of their runic writing in most places where they traveled. Spelling was not standardized and letters were often left out of words. For example, *-m-* is missing from the word *kubl* (= *kumbl*) and *-n-* from *kunukR* (= *konungr*) in King Gorm's stone pictured above and translated in the Reading selection below. Rune carvers sounded out words and missing letters such as the *-m-* in *kumbl* were sometimes barely pronounced and easily dropped. Words were abbreviated, punctuation erratic, and word divisions often missing. Modern runologists sometimes are at odds on how to translate a passage.

Runes were carved by members of all social classes, but runestones were especially raised or paid for by property owners. Many runestones honor the dead, and they often indicate the wealth and authority of those who erected the monuments. Inscriptions proclaim family relationships, inheritance rights, authority, and property claims. Runestones, such as those at Jelling, announce the claims of aristocrats and royalty. Runes were sometimes written in poetic meter (see the runic verses in *Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*.)

### 3.2 READING – THE SMALL RUNESTONE AT JELLING, DENMARK

#### RUNES

(front) : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ :

: ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ :

: ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ :

(back) : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ : ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ : ƿ ƿ ƿ

#### TRANSLITERATION

(front) : kurmR : kunukR :

: karpi : kubl : þusi :

: aft : þurui : kunu

(back) : sina : tanmarkaR : but

#### STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE

Gormr konungr gerði kumbl þessi ept  
þurvi (þyri) konu sína, Danmarkar bót.

#### TRANSLATION

King Gorm made these monuments in  
memory of Thyri, his wife, Denmark's  
adornment.

#### VOCABULARY

bót <acc bót, pl bætr> *f* cure, remedy;  
adornment

Danmörk <gen Danmarkar> *f* Denmark

◆eptir (also ept) *prep* [w acc] after (in  
time); in memory of; [w dat] after, along

◆gera (also gøra) <-ði, -ðr~gerr> *vb* make;

do, act	plural)
<b>gerði</b> 3sg past of <b>gera</b>	♦ <b>sinn</b> <f acc sg <i>sína</i> > refl poss pron his, her
<b>Gormr</b> <-s> m Gorm (personal name); first king of the Jelling dynasty in Denmark	its own
♦ <b>kona</b> <acc konu, gen pl <i>kvenna</i> > f wife; woman	♦ <b>þessi</b> <n acc pl <i>þessi</i> > dem pron this
♦ <b>konungr</b> <-s, -ar> m king	<b>Þurvi</b> f Thurvi (personal name corresponding to Old Icelandic <i>Þyri</i> )
<b>kumbl</b> <pl kumbl> n burial monument, mound or cairn (frequently used on Danish and Swedish rune stones in the	<b>Þyri</b> <acc <i>Þyri</i> > f Thyri (personal name)

### 3.3 CULTURE – THE ELDER AND YOUNGER RUNIC ALPHABETS

The futhark had several regional variations, and after its appearance in the first century A.D., it changed over time. Different Germanic peoples, including Goths, Anglo-Saxons, Frisians, and early Scandinavians, used somewhat different runic alphabets. Until into the eighth-century, the basic runic alphabet consisted of 24 letters and is known as the elder futhark. We know the full elder futhark from carvings on the Gotlandic Kylver runestone from ca. 400 A.D. and the Vadstena bracteate from ca. 600. The elder futhark divides into three groups or families called *ættir*, as below:

#### The Elder Futhark (24 Letters)

ƿ	ᚋ	ᚒ	ᚔ	ᚕ	<	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚱ	ᚴ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚰ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚱ	ᚴ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚰ	ᚷ	ᚹ
f	u	þ	a	r	k	g	w	h	n	i	j	ē	p	r	s	t	b	e	m	l	ŋ	o	d

Roughly 260 of the approximately 350 known elder futhark inscriptions are found in Scandinavia. The remainder are from continental Europe, with some from as far east as the Black Sea. Surviving inscriptions in the elder futhark are usually short and appear on artifacts such as jewelry, tools, and weapons. Typically they are found in graves and on materials that have the best chance of preservation, such as bone and metal. Presumably, there were longer inscriptions on wood, leather, and other organic materials which have been lost. The 65 or so early inscriptions found on runestones appear late in the elder futhark period and only in Scandinavia.

#### The Younger Futhark (16 Letters)

ƿ	ᚋ	ᚒ	ᚔ	ᚕ	ᚷ	ᚹ	*	ᚴ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚱ	ᚴ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ
f	u	þ	a	r	k		h	n	i	a	s	t	b	m	l	r

Around the start of the Viking Age, the futhark was shortened to 16 letters. This shortened runic alphabet is known as the younger futhark and is the futhark taught in this book. The

Gørløv runestone from Sjælland in Denmark preserves the earliest complete example of the younger futhark. It dates from ca. 900.

The runic letters of the younger futhark are simpler than those of the elder futhark. Each letter of the Viking Age futhark has only one vertical mark or 'stave' and can be carved easily and quickly. The individual runes of the younger futhark are called 'long-branch runes,' because they are carved with full or long strokes. With local variations and differences among carvers, the younger futhark, with its sixteen long branch runes, was the common form of writing throughout the Viking Age. Like the elder futhark, the younger futhark is divided into three *ættir*, but the 'families' are shorter in the younger futhark.

Inscriptions in the younger futhark have been found in many overseas regions of Norse activity. For example, they existed in the north of Greenland, where an inscription from the fourteenth century has been found. A runic inscription has been found in Iceland from around the year 900. Carved on a stone spindle whorl, the runes name a woman called Vilbjörg as the owner. Writing runes is also mentioned repeatedly in the sagas. Inscriptions have also been found in southern regions as far away as Greece. Especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Byzantine Empire was a frequent destination for Norse traders and warriors.

Short-twig runes are a variant of the younger futhark. They are usually found in Sweden and Norway.

### Short-twig Runes

ƿ	ᚢ	ᚦ	ᚨ	ᚱ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚰ	ᚲ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ	ᚾ	ᚿ
f	u	p	a,	o	r	k	h	n	i	a	s	t	b	m	l	r		

Short-twig runes were easier to carve than long-branch runes, and they were often used as a cursive script among traders. Some inscriptions mix the two systems, such as those found on the Isle of Man, where Viking Age settlers came from different regions of Scandinavia.

### Notes on Runes:

- As letters in an alphabet, individual runes reflect sounds. The following discussion of these sounds relies on the International Phonetic Alphabet which provides a uniform system of letters and symbols for writing speech sounds.
- One quickly noticeable feature of the futhark is that there are two *r*-runes. In the elder futhark, ᚱ represents the sound /r/, while ᚲ represents the sound /z/. In West Scandinavia (Norway and Iceland), the two sounds merged in the early Viking Age into a trilled *r*, while in East Scandinavia (Denmark and Sweden), the two sounds remained different until the end of the Viking Age. Nevertheless rune carvers in the late Viking Age sometimes used the two runes interchangeably. The modern convention is to transliterate the ᚱ rune as lower case *r* and the ᚲ rune as upper

case *R*.

- There are also two runes for variants of the sound *-a-*: *ᚠ* and *ᚡ*. The *ᚠ* rune represents /a/ as in modern English ‘father,’ while *ᚡ* is nasalized as the /a/ in ‘tank’
- The younger futhark did not distinguish between a number of vowel and consonant sounds in use during the Viking Age. For example, the runes *ᚱ*, *ᚦ*, and *ᚨ* are letters for the vowels /i/, /a/, and /u/, but there are no specific runes for the common sounds /e/ and /o/ (although *ᚡ* later came to be used for /o/). Similarly there are letters for the consonants /b/, /t/ and /k/, but not for /p/, /d/ and /g/. It is not certain whether rune carvers saw the lack of separate letters as much of a problem. As explained below, they often employed one letter for several similar sounds, a solution which simplified spelling but not reading.
- The runes *ᚠ* and *ᚦ* (/n/ and /m/) were often dropped before certain consonants. Hence on the runestone at Jelling, the word *konungr* is spelled *ᚱᚢᚠᚱᚱ* (*kunuddr*, dropping the second /n/).
- The long-branch *m*-rune is carved in two variants: *ᚦ* and *ᚧ*.

3.4 RUNIC LETTERS WHICH SPELL MORE THAN ONE SOUND



Figure 17. Runic and Latin Equivalents.

RUNE	LATIN LETTER EQUIVALENTS
ᚢ	b / p
ᚦ	d / t
ᚱ	g / k
ᚦ	v / f
ᚡ	ð / þ
ᚱ	i / e/ æ/ j
ᚨ	u / o / y/ ø/ w
ᚠ	a / æ
ᚡ	a / o/ ö

The reduction in the number of characters from 24 letters of the elder futhark to 16 of the younger resulted in a single letter representing several similar sounds. For example, in the younger futhark the runic symbol *ᚢ* represents both sounds /b/ and /p/, and *ᚦ* represents /d/ and /t/.

In the same way, a single rune could represent several distinct vowel sounds with some overlap. For instance, the rune *ᚨ* represented the vowels /u/, /o/, /y/, /ø/, and /w/. The two *a*-runes show considerable overlap with *ᚡ* and *ᚠ* representing the sounds /a/, /æ/, /o/ and /ö/.

### 3.5 RUNIC SPELLING VARIATIONS AND STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE

Spelling often varies among runic inscriptions because of differences in pronunciation, regional dialects, and the lack of a recognized spelling standard. For example, *gerði*, the past tense of *gera*, is spelled ᚷᚱᚳᚢ (*karpi/gærði*) on the Jelling stone in this lesson and ᚷᚱᚳᚢ (*kiarpi/gjærði*) in the Swedish Ramsund inscription given in a later lesson.

Similar spelling variations exist in manuscripts. For example, the verb *gera* 'do, make' is spelled *gøra*, *göra*, *gørva*, *görwa*, *giörva*, *giora*, and *gjöra* in different manuscripts. To overcome the problem of variation, scholars adopted a standardized Old Norse spelling, which is often used in saga editions, dictionaries, and transcriptions of runic inscriptions. Standardized Old Norse is based principally on Old Icelandic, the most conservative of the dialects and the one that we know most about because Iceland has the largest number of written sources.

**Later Runic Variations** Toward the end of the Viking Age additional variants of the younger futhark were developed. For example, in the eleventh century, dotted runes appeared, adding sounds such as /e/, /g/, and /y/.

ᚢ	ᚦ	ᚨ
e	g	y


In the mid-eleventh century toward the end of the Viking Age, an expanded medieval futhark came into use in Norway and a few other areas. Sometimes called 'futhork,' it incorporated short-twig runes. This alphabet, like other revised, later runic alphabets, continued in active use for several centuries after the Viking Age.

Following the conversion to Christianity, runic writing was increasingly influenced by medieval Latin. In some instances, runes were used to carve Latin inscriptions. One such inscription is found on a leather shoe from Bergen dating to the end of the twelfth century. It bears a variation of the phrase known from Virgil, *Amor vincit omnia* (Love conquers all). Runes with varying alterations remained in usage until early modern times especially in rural parts of Scandinavia.

### 3.6 EXERCISE – RUNIC SCRIPT

Follow the pattern below for changing or transliterating runes into standardized Old Norse.

RUNIC SCRIPT	TRANSLITERATION	STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE
Ex: ᚱᚠᚳᚢᚱᚦᚢᚱ	<u>tanmarkar</u>	<u>Danmarkar</u>
1. ᚱᚠᚳᚢᚱ	_____	_____
2. ᚱᚠᚳᚢᚱ	_____	_____
3. ᚱᚠᚳᚢᚱ	_____	_____
4. ᚱᚠᚳᚢᚱ	_____	_____

RUNIC SCRIPT	TRANSLITERATION	STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE
5. 	_____	_____
Reverse the process above and write the following words in runes.		
STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE	TRANSLITERATION	YOUNGER FUTHARK LONG-BRANCH RUNES
6. konungr	kunukR	_____
7. konu	kunu	_____
8. kumbl	kubl	_____
9. þessi	þusi	_____
10. bót	but	_____

3.7 READING – GORM AND THYRI (ÓLÁFS SAGA TRYGGVASONAR IN MESTA)

King Gorm and his wife Thyri are also know from Icelandic writings. *The Greatest Saga of King Olaf Tryggvason (Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar in mesta)* contains the reading passage below. Both the thirteenth-century Icelandic saga and the tenth-century Danish runestone agree in their reference to Queen Thyri as *Danmarkarbót* (Denmark’s Adornment’).

Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar in mesta  
(63. kap)

Gormr, sonr Hörða-Knúts, var mikill maðr ok sterkr. Hann var atgervimaðr. En ekki<sup>5</sup> var hann kallaðr vitr maðr.

Gormr fekk konu, er Þyri hét. Hon var dóttir Haralds jarls af Jótlandi. Hann var kallaðr Klakk-Haraldr. Þyri var fríð kona. Hon var mestr skörungr af konum á Norðrlöndum. Hon hét Þyri Danmarkarbót.

The Greatest Saga of King Olaf Tryggvason  
(Ch 63)

Gorm, son of Horda-Knut, was a big and strong man. He was an accomplished man. But he was not called a wise man.

Gorm married a woman, who was called Thyri. She was the daughter of Earl Harald of Jutland, who was called Klakk-Harald. Thyri was a beautiful woman. She was the most notable of women in Scandinavia. She was called Thyri, Denmark’s Adornment.

VOCABULARY

- ♦af prep [w dat] of, by; off (of), out of, from
- atgervimaðr m a man of accomplishments
- ♦á prep [w dat] on; upon; at; in
- ♦dóttir <acc, dat, & gen dóttur, pl døtr, dat døtrum, gen døtra> f daughter
- ♦ekki adv not

- ♦en conj but; (less frequently) and
- ♦er rel particle who, which, that
- ♦fá <fær, fekk, fengu, fenginn> vb get, take, procure; grasp; marry; fekk konu got married, lit. got a wife
- fekk 1/3sg past of fá
- ♦fríðr <f fríð, n frítt> adj beautiful,

<sup>5</sup> ekki: Ol had two words for ‘not’: ekki and eigi. (Modern Icelandic employs ekki.)



handsome, fine

♦**hann** <acc hann, dat honum, gen hans>  
pron he

♦**heita** <heitr, hét, hétu, heitinn> vb be  
called, be named

**hét** 1/3sg past of heita

♦**hon** <acc hana, dat henni, gen hennar>  
pron she

**Hörða-Knútr** <-s> m Horda-Knut (personal  
name)

♦**jarl** <-s, -ar> m earl

**Jótlendi** (dat) n Jutland

♦**kalla** <-að-> vb call

**kallaðr** ppart of kalla called

**Klakk-Haraldr** <-s> m Klakk-Harald  
(personal name)

♦**kona** <gen pl kvenna> f wife; woman

♦**maðr** <acc mann dat manni, gen manns,  
nom & acc pl menn, dat mönnum,

gen manna> m man; person, human  
being

**mestr** superl adj greatest

♦**mikill** <f mikil, n mikit, comp meiri, superl  
mestr> adj big, tall, great; much

**Norðrlönd** <dat Norðrlöndum> n pl the  
Northern countries or region,  
Scandinavia

♦**ok** conj and

**skörungr** <-s, -ar> m a notable man or  
woman, leader

♦**sonr** <dat syni, gen sonar, pl synir, acc  
sonu> m son

♦**sterkr** adj strong

**var** 1/3sg past of vera

♦**vera** <er; var, váru; verit> vb be

♦**vittr** <acc vitran> adj wise

### 3.8 CULTURE – GORM THE OLD AND THE DANISH JELLING DYNASTY

Danish history begins in the fifth or sixth century with the legendary Skjöldung Dynasty. This famous family had its royal seat at Hleiðr, modern-day Lejre, on the Danish island of Sjælland (in Old Norse, Sjáland). The Skjöldungs figure prominently in the Icelandic *Hrólfs saga kraka* and the Old English *Beowulf*. Both epics are set in Denmark during the Migration Period, and many of the same people appear in both stories.

Although Frankish writings hint at events in Denmark and mention Danish kings such as Godfred, who opposed Charlemagne and the Frankish Empire, there are relatively few historical sources for Danish history until about 930. At that time a new family of overlords emerges in Demanrk in central Jutland (Jótlend) with a power base at Jelling (Jalangrsheiðr). Members of the Jelling dynasty immortalized themselves through ambitious building programs and monuments. These latter include the runestones read in this and the next lesson.

The founder of the Jelling dynasty, King Gorm the Old, was the last pagan king of Denmark. King Gorm's runestone, mentioning his wife Thurvi or *Þyri*, is the first native documentary source to use the term 'Denmark.' During Gorm's lifetime, Hedeby (Heiðabýr/Heiðarbýr or Heiðarbær, 'town' or 'dwelling' [bær] on the heath [heiðr]), became a major Viking trading center for goods moving between the Baltic region and Western Europe. Merchants arrived in Hedeby transporting exotic wares and large quantities of silver coinage. Some of the trade goods had come up the great rivers of Russia from places as far away as the territory of the Volga Bulgars, the Khaganate of the Khazars,

regions of Central Asia, the Greek Byzantine Empire, and the Caliphate of Baghdad. On in Hedeby, trade goods from the Baltic and further east were transported on roads across southern Jutland. This valuable traffic was protected by the Danavirke ( Old Norse Danavirki, the fortified 'wall of the Danes') before arriving at the Danish port town of Ríb (Ripar) on the North Sea. There the freight was again loaded onto ships for distribution to Frisia, Britain, and Western Europe. This overland route from Hedeby on the Baltic to Ríb on the North Sea avoided sailing north of Jutland through the Eyrarsund and the Jótlandshaf ('The Jutland Sea') waters where Vikings lay in wait.



**Figure 18. Viking Age Denmark (Danmörk)** included parts of what is today southern Sweden. Although the smallest of the Scandinavian countries, Denmark had the highest percentage of arable land and was the wealthiest and most densely populated of the Viking states. Exposed to attacks from the Frankish Empire to the south, Vikings to the north, and Slavic pirates on the Baltic (Eystrasalt), Denmark developed early into a cohesive monarchy capable of resisting foreign threats.

About the year 930, Gorm's kingdom probably included all of northern and central Jutland. The southern part of the Jutland peninsula, including Hedeby, seems to have come under his power a few years later, giving him control of the valuable trade route protected by the Danavirke. Gorm's authority to the east of Jutland is more difficult to determine. It probably extended at times to the islands of Fyn (Fjón) and Sjælland (Sjálánd), areas which outsiders, such as the Franks and peoples of England, considered Danish. At times Gorm's power may have also extended across the straits to Skåne (Skáney), Halland, and Blekinge.

(Bleking), which today are in Sweden.

Gorm sired a long-lived line of powerful Viking Age kings. His son, Harald Bluetooth (Haraldr blátönn, ca. 958–987) solidified the authority of the dynasty and expanded the Danish kingdom. Harald christianized the Danes and probably built the Viking Age ring fortresses in Denmark. His son Svein (Sweyn) Forkbeard (Sveinn tjúguskegg, 987–1014) revolted against Harald, and Svein may have killed his father.

Soon after ascending the throne, Svein began a series of Viking raids against England. In the years 1013 and 1014 the raids turned into a full scale invasion, and Svein succeeded in conquering England. In 1014, Svein was recognized as king of England, only to die five weeks later. Svein was succeeded by his son, Knut. Known as Canute the Great (Knútr inn ríki), he became the king of England in 1016. A few years later, after the death of his brother in Denmark, Canute also became king of Denmark.

Canute the Great died in 1035, and Danish control of England ended with the early deaths of Canute's sons. The Danish claim to English kingship resurfaced in 1066. At that time, Harald Hardradi (Harðraði, 'Hard Counsel') of Norway asserted that, because he had a claim to the throne of Denmark, he was holder of the Danish claim to England. Harald Hardradi's defeat in 1066 at Stamford Bridge outside of York ended his claim.

Many written sources about the medieval history of Denmark as well as extensive archaeological evidence have survived. The written sources include the Old English poem *Beowulf*, Alcuin's biography of St. Willibrord (the 'Apostle of the Frisians'), Rimbert's *Life of St. Ansgar*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Annales Regni Francorum* (*The Royal Frankish Annals*), the *Orosius* of Alfred the Great, the eleventh century *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* (*History of the Archbishops of Bremen*) by Adam of Bremen, the *Gesta Danorum* (*History of the Danes*) by Saxo Grammaticus (ca. 1200), the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Icelandic *Knýtlinga saga* (*The Saga of Canute's Descendants*), scraps of *Skjöldunga saga* (*The Saga of the Skjoldungs*) and *Hrólfs saga kraka* (*The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*). So also there are numerous runic inscriptions.

### 3.9 PERSONAL PRONOUNS – 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> PERSONS

Leaving runes aside and returning to Old Norse Grammar. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns ('I' and 'you') have singular, plural (more than two), and dual (only two) forms. They show many parallels with English (*mín* 'mine,' *þú* 'thou,' *þín* 'thine,' *oss* 'us'). The distinction between possessive pronouns and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns in the genitive is explained later.

	1 <sup>ST</sup>		2 <sup>ND</sup>	
Sg nom	ek	í	þú	you
acc	mik	me	þik	you
dat	mér	me	þér	you
gen	mín	my	þín	your

	1 <sup>ST</sup>		2 <sup>ND</sup>			1 <sup>ST</sup>		2 <sup>ND</sup>	
Pl <i>nom</i>	vér	we	þér	you	Dual	vit	we	þit	you
<i>acc</i>	oss	us	yðr	you		okkr	us	ykk	you
<i>dat</i>	oss	us	yðr	you		okkr	us	ykk	you
<i>gen</i>	vár	our	yðar	your		okkar	our	ykkar	your

Old Norse has two ways to say 'we' (*vér* and *vit*) and likewise two ways to say 'plural' (*þér* and *þit*). One is plural and the other is dual. The dual pronouns *vit* and *þit* refer to only two people, while the plural pronouns *vér* and *þér* refer to three or more. The plural pronoun (*þér*) and dual pronouns (*þit*) also have older forms *ér* and *it*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> plural possessive pronoun *yðar* also has an older form, *yðvar*.

**Vér** förum heim.

**We** [more than two] are going home.

**Vit** förum heim.

**We** [the two of us] are going home.

**Þér** gerðuð þessi kumbl.

**You** [more than two] made these monuments.

**Þit** gerðuð þessi kumbl.

**You** [the two of you] made these monuments.

Speakers could be more specific with pronouns by adding a name. For instance *Þorsteinn* means 'we, Þorsteinn and I.'

### 3.10 EXERCISE – PERSONAL PRONOUNS – 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> PERSONS

Fill in the correct personal pronoun in each of the following sentences.

Ex: Vér (we) höfum bók.

We have a book.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (I) geri kumbl.

I make a monument.

2. Þú spyrr \_\_\_\_\_ (me).

You ask me.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ (you, sg) kallar.

You call.

4. Ek gaf \_\_\_\_\_ (you, sg) land.

I gave you land.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ (we, the two of us) höfum land.

We have land.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ (I) fór heim.

I went home.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ (you, pl) gerið kumbl.

You are making monuments.

### 3.11 PERSONAL PRONOUNS – 3<sup>RD</sup> PERSON

The 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*) decline in the following way.

	M		F		N	
Sg <i>nom</i>	hann	he/it	hon	she/it	þat	it
<i>acc</i>	hann	him/it	hana	her/it	þat	it
<i>dat</i>	honum	him/it	henni	her/it	því	it

	gen	hans	his/its	hennar	her(s)/its	þess	its
		<b>M</b>		<b>F</b>		<b>N</b>	
Pl nom	þeir	they	þær	they	þau	they	
acc	þá	them	þær	them	þau	them	
dat	þeim	them	þeim	them	þeim	them	
gen	þeira	their(s)	þeira	their(s)	þeira	their(s)	

Because gender in Old Norse is largely arbitrary, many words considered neuter in English have masculine or feminine gender in Old Norse, for example *fjörðr* (m) 'fjord' and *bók* (f) 'book.' When pronouns refer to such masculine and feminine nouns, the pronouns *hann* and *hon* are employed and translated as 'it.' For example, *Herjólfssfjörðr er á Grænlandi* becomes *Hann er á Grænlandi* 'It is in Greenland.'

Old Norse distinguishes gender in the plural: *þeir* (m), *þær* (f), and *þau* (n). When referring to a mixed group of males and females, the neuter form *þau* is used, as in the following example from *Völsunga saga*:

Rerir fekk sér konu ok eru þau  
mjök lengi ásamt.

Rerir got himself a wife, and they were  
together (*ásamt*) a very (*mjök*) long [time].

A plural pronoun followed by one or more names can have more than one meaning. For example, *þeir Þórólfr ok Björn* could mean 'Thorolf and Bjorn,' or it could signify 'Thorolf and Bjorn and their companions or followers.' One relies on the context in the sentence to decide which of the two meanings fits best.

### 3.12 EXERCISE – PERSONAL PRONOUNS – 3<sup>rd</sup> Person

A. Identify the personal pronouns below. State the gender, case, and number of each and translate.

Ex: henni	<u>henni: f dat sg</u>	<u>her</u>
1.		
hann		
2.	hen	
	nar	
3.	þat	
4.	þær	
5.	þei	
	m	

B. Fill in the correct missing pronoun below and translate.

Ex: <u>hann</u> (m nom sg)	<u>he</u>
1. _____ (m dat sg)	_____

2.	_____	(fem gen sg)	_____
3.	_____	(m gen pl)	_____
4.	_____	(n dat sg)	_____
5.	_____	(f nom pl)	_____
6.	_____	(f dat sg)	_____

3.13 NOUNS – STRONG AND WEAK

All nouns in Old Norse fall into one of two broad declension types: *strong* or *weak*. Weak nouns have a simpler set of endings than strong nouns. A particular noun’s declension type never changes. For example, the noun *konungr* is always strong while *goði* (chieftain) is always weak. Likewise the proper noun *Herjólfur* is strong and *Bjarni* is weak.

In the nominative, most strong masculine nouns end in *-r*, and many weak masculine nouns end in *-i*. Many weak feminine nouns end in *-a*, and many weak neuter nouns end in *-t* or *-d*. This simple guideline works in many instances but there are numerous exceptions.

Below are examples of the most important types of strong and weak nouns. Using these words as models the student will be able to identify the majority of Old Norse nouns.

Most nouns that end in *-a* are feminine and decline like *tunga*. But note, a few weak neuter nouns also end in *-a*. The most common of these are the body parts *auga* ‘eye,’ *eyra* ‘ear,’ *hjarta* ‘heart,’ *lunga* ‘lung,’ *ökla* ‘ankle,’ and *nýra* ‘kidney.’ All decline like *auga*.

STRONG	M	F	N	WEAK	M	F	N
	KONUNGR	RÚN	KUMBL		GOÐI	TUNGA	AUGA
Sg nom	konungr	rún	kumbl	Sg nom	goði	tunga	auga
acc	konung	rún	kumbl	acc	goða	tungu	auga
dat	konungi	rún	kumbli	dat	goða	tungu	auga
gen	konungs	rúnar	kumbls	gen	goða	tungu	auga
Pl nom	konungar	rúnar	kumbl	Pl nom	goðar	tungur	augu
acc	konunga	rúnar	kumbl	acc	goða	tungur	augu
dat	konungum	rúnum	kumblum	dat	goðum	tungum	augum
gen	konunga	rúna	kumbla	gen	goða	tungna	augna

Transl: *konungr* ‘king,’ *rún* ‘rune,’ *kumbl* ‘monument,’ *goði* ‘chieftain,’ *tunga* ‘tongue,’ *auga* ‘eye’

3.14 THE VERB *VERA* ‘TO BE’ – PRESENT AND PAST

*Vera*, one of the most frequently used verbs, is, as in English, irregular.

PRESENT TENSE							
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	em	(I am)	PI	vér (vit)	erum	(we are)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	ert	(you are)		þér (þit)	eruð	(you are)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann	er	(he, she, it is)		þeir	eru	(they are)

**PAST TENSE****Sg 1<sup>st</sup>**ek var (*I was*)**2<sup>nd</sup>**þú vart (*you were*)

hann

**3<sup>rd</sup>**hon var (*he, she, it was*)

þat

**Pl**vér (vit) várum (*we were*)þér (þit) váruð (*you were*)

þeir

þær váru (*they were*)

þau

ns and runestones often employ archaic forms of *vera*, with -s- instead of -r- (es 'is' for er, vas 'for var).

**3.15 EXERCISE – THE VERB VERA**

A. Fill in the spaces next to the pronouns with the appropriate verb forms from the list below and translate.

em var váruð ert várum eru vart er váru eruð var erum

**PRESENT TENSE**Ex: vér erum: we are

1. þú \_\_\_\_\_

2. ek \_\_\_\_\_

3. þér \_\_\_\_\_

4. hon \_\_\_\_\_

5. þær \_\_\_\_\_

**PAST TENSE**Ex: þau váru: they were

6. vér \_\_\_\_\_

7. þú \_\_\_\_\_

8. þér \_\_\_\_\_

9. ek \_\_\_\_\_

10. þat \_\_\_\_\_

B. Fill in the spaces below with the correct form of *vera* 'to be' and translate.

**PRESENT TENSE**Ex: Þau eru frá Íslandi.They are from Iceland

1. Sigríður \_\_\_\_\_ kona.

2. Þeir \_\_\_\_\_ konungar.

3. Vér \_\_\_\_\_ frá Grænlandi.

4. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ góður maður.

5. Þit \_\_\_\_\_ frá Nórægi.

6. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ konungr.

**PAST TENSE**Ex: Þau váru frá Íslandi.They were from Iceland

7. Sigríður \_\_\_\_\_ kona.

8. Þau \_\_\_\_\_ frá Norðrölöndum.

9. Hon \_\_\_\_\_ Danmarkar bót.

10. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ góðr maðr.

11. Þér \_\_\_\_\_ frá Nóregi.

12. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ konungr.
- 

3.16 CULTURE – SON AND DÓTTIR IN NAMES

Scandinavians during the Viking period and Icelanders today have patronyms, a Greek word meaning a name received from the father rather than a family last name. Eirik Thorvaldsson (the Red) is a good example of the way people were named. According to Icelandic written tradition, he was born in Rogaland, Norway, the son of Thorvald Asvaldsson. Hence Eirik carried the patronym Thorvaldsson (*Eiríkr Þorvaldsson*). His nickname, ‘the Red’ (*inn rauði*), probably refers to the red color of his hair.

Patronyms are formed according to the rules of ON grammar. Þorvaldr, the name of Eirik’s father, is a proper noun. It ends in *-r*, is in the nominative case. Note the double *-ss-* in *Þorvaldsson*. The first *-s-* (Þorvalds-) is the genitive marker, the second *-s-* starts the word *son*. In English the name would be *Thorvald’s son*. Some names, such as *Bárðr*, have a genitive in *-ar*, hence *Bárðarson*. Other names such as *Atli* have a genitive in *-a*, hence *Atlason*.

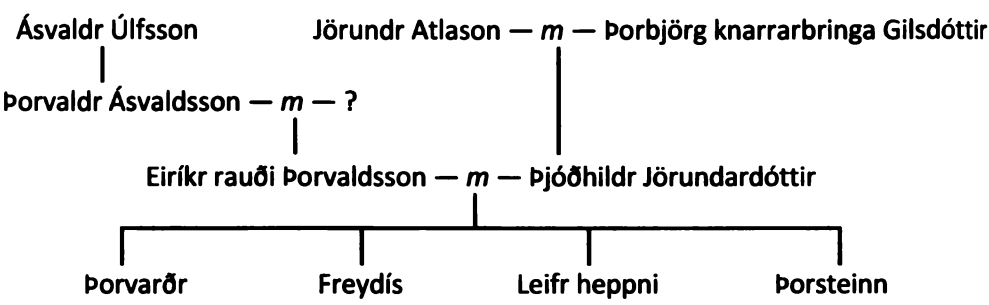


Figure 19. The Family Tree of Eirik the Red (*Eiríkr rauði*). ‘m’ = ‘married’

On occasion, men were known by their mother’s name, especially if they were raised without a father. For example, the *Hildiríðarsynir* (‘sons of Hildiríðr’) in *Egil’s Saga* were named after their mother *Hildiríðr*. Men could also be known by their mother’s name if she was viewed as more prominent or capable than the father. For example, the *Droplaugarsynir* in *Droplaugarsona saga* took their name from their mother *Droplaug*.

Women were also known by their father’s name to which they added *dóttir*, hence *Freydís Eiríksdóttir*. Women did not change their names when they married, which followed from the lack of family surnames. For example, when *Þjóðhildr Jörundardóttir* married *Eiríkr inn rauði Þorvaldsson*, she continued to be *Þjóðhildr Jörundardóttir*. She and her husband had two different last names, just as did her parents *Jörundr Atlason* and *Þorbjörg*



*Gilsdóttir*. When *Þjóðhildr* and *Eiríkr* had a son named *Leifr*, he was called *Leifr Eiríksson* and his sister *Freydís* was called *Freydís Eiríksdóttir*.

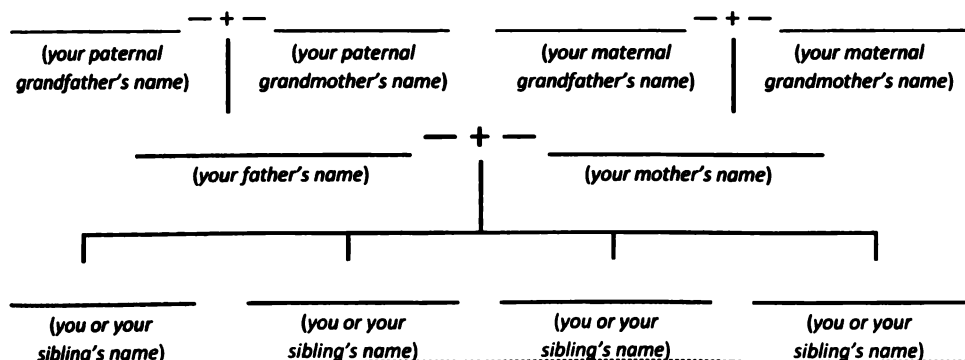
People were known not only by their first names and patronyms (father's name) but also by nicknames. Hence *Leifr Eiríksson* was known as *inn heppni* ('the lucky') or *Leifr inn heppni Eiríksson* (often the *inn* is dropped), while his maternal grandmother was called *Þorbjörg knarrarbringa* ('boat-breasted'). *The Saga of Thorstein the White* (*Þorsteins saga hvíta*, Ch 8) offers insight into how nicknames were viewed. Discussing the young man *Brodd-Helgi* and his nickname *Brodd*, 'Spike', the saga explains that when *Brodd-Helgi* was alive in the tenth century, 'people thought that it was much more auspicious to have two names. It was a common belief then that people who had two names lived longer.'

### 3.17 EXERCISE – SON AND DÓTTIR.

Genealogies are a crucial aspect of Old Icelandic texts. They date events and providing a means for people to understand their relationships to others within the small society. In contrast to the modern nuclear family, medieval families were large, extended groups. Icelanders were keenly aware of genealogical and marital relationships. Saga narratives often cannot be fully understood unless the reader is able to work out the relevant family connections.

Review the information about family trees and Icelandic names in this and the previous chapter and fill in the information below. Create your family tree in the Old Norse style! Give both first and last names for each individual and remember that each person is someone's *son* or *dóttir*. If you are uncertain about the name of an ancestor, invent a name.

**Ex:** John has two siblings, Pete and Kate. Their parents are Phil and Jennifer. Phil's parents are Mike and Helen, while Jennifer's parents are Jack and Ann. In Icelandic terms, John would be known as John Philsson, Pete as Pete Philsson, Kate as Kate Philsdóttir, Phil as Phil Mikesson, and Jennifer as Jennifer Jacksdóttir.



3.18 VOCABULARY – LIST 3. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	NUMERALS
fé – wealth, livestock	fár – few	sinn – his/her/their (own)	þrír – three
bróðir – brother	dauðr – dead		
vetr – winter	stórr – big		
land – land			
VERBS	PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS	CONJUNCTIONS	
mæla – to speak	nú – now	er – who, which, that;	
vilja – to want	við – with; against	when; where	
taka – to take	með – with		
skulu – shall	svá – so; such		

EXERCISES

3.19 Timetable of Early Danish History. Put the following important events from the Early History of the Danish Kingdom in the correct chronological sequence.

- 1
- First construction of the Danevirke and Hedeby.
- 
- The Icelandic saga *Hrólfs saga kraka* is written.
- 
- King Godfred opposes Charlemagne’s northerly expansion.
- 
- Harald Bluetooth builds the great ring fortresses of Denmark.
- 
- King Gorm the Old reigns at Jelling as the last pagan king of Denmark.

3.20 Personal Pronouns. Decline the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns in the singular and plural. Remember, 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns have three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter – *hann, hon, þat* ‘he, she, it’ – and are the most common pronouns in Old Norse.

	M	F	N
Sg nom	<u>hann</u>	<u>hon</u>	<u>þat</u>
acc	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
dat	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
gen	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
Pl nom	<u>þeir</u>	<u>þær</u>	<u>þau</u>
acc	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
dat	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
gen	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>

**3.21 Verb Conjugation: Present Tense of *Vera*.** Fill in the correct form of *vera* 'to be' in the present tense and translate the sentences.

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ek _____ konungr.<br>_____   | 4. Þér _____ í Brattahlíð.<br>_____      |
| 2. Vit _____ konungar.<br>_____ | 5. Hann _____<br>landnámsmaður.<br>_____ |
| 3. Þú _____ sterkur.<br>_____   | 6. Þeir _____<br>landnámsmenn.<br>_____  |

**3.22 Strong and Weak Nouns.** On the model of strong and weak nouns presented in this lesson, decline the following six nouns: *haugr*, *nál*, *mál*, *tími*, *tunga*, and *eyra*.

STRONG	HAUGR (M)	NÁL (F)	MÁL (N)
Sg nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *haugr* 'mound,' *nál* 'needle,' *mál* 'speech'

WEAK	TÍMI (M)	VIKA (F)	EYRA (N)
Sg nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *tími* 'time,' *vika* 'week,' and *eyra* 'ear'

**3.23 Review: Gender and Meaning of Nouns.** Complete the chart below.

	NOUN	GENDER	ENGLISH MEANING
Ex:	maður	<u>masculine</u>	<u>man, person</u>
1	_____	_____	woman

2.	skörungr		
3			daughter
4.	atgervimaður		
5.	land		
6			earl
7.	konungr		
8.	kumbl		
9			son
10.	bót		

**3.24 Verbs.** Complete the chart below by giving the English translation and the infinitive of the verb.

VERB (PAST TENSE)	ENGLISH MEANING	INFINITIVE
Ex: vildi	<u>wished</u>	<u>vilja</u>
1. hét		
2. gerði		
3. var		
4. nam		
5. fekk (konu)		

**3.25 Linking Verbs.** As discussed earlier, a noun connected to the subject by a linking verb is called a predicate noun, and an adjective, a predicate adjective. In Old Norse, predicate nouns and adjectives are in the same case as the subject, that is, the nominative case. In the passages below, circle the linking verbs, underline the predicate nouns and adjectives, and translate. Use the Vocabulary as needed.

- Herjólfur hét maður Bárðarson Herjólfssonar; hann fór til Grænlands með Eiríki. Herjólfur nam Herjólfsfjörð ok bjó á Herjólfssnesi. Eiríkur nam Eiríksfjörð ok bjó í Brattahlíð, en Leifr sonur hans eptir hann.

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- Gormur konungur gerði kumbl þessi ept (eptir) þyri konu sína, Danmarkar bót.

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- Gormur, sonur Hörða-Knúts, var mikill maður ok sterkr. Hann var atgervimaður. En ekki var hann kallaður vitr maður.

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4. Gormr fekk konu, er þyri hét. Hon var dóttir Haralds jarls af Jótlandi. Hann var kallaður Klakk-Haraldr. Þyri var fríð kona. Hon var mestr skörungr af konum á Norðrlöndum. Hon hét þyri Danmarkabót.

3.26 Word Frequency. Using List 3. The Most Frequent Words given in this lesson, write the second group of the most frequently used words from the different grammatical categories and translate.

OLD NORSE	ENGLISH	OLD NORSE	ENGLISH
NOUNS		ADJECTIVES	
1		4	
2		5	
3		6	
VERBS		PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS	
7		11	
8		12	
9		13	
10		14	

## LESSON 4

### KINGS AND HEROES

*Opt kemr sólskin eptir skúr*  
(Often sunshine comes after a shower)



**Figure 20. The Large Jelling Runestone, Denmark,** was commissioned by King Harald Bluetooth (*Haraldr blátönn*) Gormsson. Side A is shown here.

#### 4.1 READING – THE LARGE RUNESTONE AT JELLING

Harald Bluetooth (ca. 958-987) centered his power at Jelling in Jutland. He is the first Danish king of the Viking Age who is more historical than legendary, and Harald's reign was a time when the monarchy in Denmark consolidated its power. One of Harald's most enduring legacies was the conversion of the Danes to Christianity around 965. It is unclear whether Harald's own baptism, supposedly by the missionary Poppo, was a political move or an action motivated by religious belief. However, Harald's handling of his parents' memorials, two large burial mounds at Jelling, shows that he adjusted the authority of his dynasty to the new religion.

The Jelling mounds were placed on top of an earlier monument, a huge outline of

ship constructed from large erected stones. One of the mounds contained a chamber grave, while the other was a cenotaph, an empty monument commemorating an event or someone's life or death. Harald's monuments were integrated into the new Christian religious culture by the construction of a church between the mounds and the carving of the large Jelling runestone. This runestone has three sides. Side A is shown above and sides B and C are pictured below. Side C is carved with one of the earliest images of Christ known in Scandinavia. Harald's massive Jelling stone is found near the smaller runestone of Gorm the Old, Harald's father. Parts of the Jelling stone, particularly on Side C, are weathered.

## RUNES

**Side A**

\*ተገደለ ጥቅም፡ የሰነድ አይነት፡ ባለው የተጠበቀ  
የሰነድ፡ ከተሳሳተ ሆኖ፡ የሰነድ ዋና ተጠቃሚነት  
ተሳሳተ ሆኖ፡ በሰነዱ፡ የሰነድ፡ ካርታ፡ ካርታ  
\*ተገደለ ጥቅም፡ ካርታ፡ ካርታ፡ ካርታ፡ ካርታ፡ ካርታ፡

**Side B**

ተተ:ተሆ:ተስጋተሆ

**Side C**

†N††††††††††††††††

## TRANSLITERATION

**:haraltr : kunukR : bap : kaurua**

**kubl : pausi aft : kurm fapur sin**

**auk aft : pǎurui : mupur : sina : sa**

**haraltr ias : sãR : uan : tanmaurk**

**ala : auk : nuruiak**

**auk tani karpi kristnā**

## STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE

Haraldr konungr bað gera kumbl þessi<sup>6</sup>  
ept Gorm föður sinn ok ept Þyri móður  
sína--sá Haraldr es<sup>7</sup> sér vann Danmörk  
alla ok Norveg ok Dani gerði kristna.

## TRANSLATION

King Harald commanded these monuments to be made in memory of Gorm his father and Thyri his mother--that Harald who won all Denmark for himself and Norway and made the Danes Christian.

## VOCABULARY

**alla f acc sg of allr**

**þallr** <*f* öll, *n* allt> *adj pron* all, entire, whole

**lað 1/3sg past of biðja**

**biōja** <biōr, baō, báōu, beōinn> *vb* ask,  
beg; command, tell; **biōja gera**

**command to be made**

**Dani acc pl of Danir**

**Danir *m pl* (the) Danes**

♦ **eptir** (also **ept**) *prep* [w *acc*] after (in time); in memory of; [w *dat*] after, along

<sup>6</sup> **bað gera kumbl þessi:** 'commanded these monuments to be made.'

es = er, the relative particle 'who.' The runestone has the spelling **lŕh**. However, the initial rune of this word is somewhat obscured and not depicted in the illustration at the beginning of the lesson.

- ♦**er** (also **es**) *rel particle* who, which, that  
 ♦**faðir** <acc föður, dat föður~feðr, gen föður, pl feðr, dat feðrum, gen feðra> *m* father  
 ♦**gera** (also **gøra**) <-ði, -ðr~gerr> *vb* make; do, act  
**gerði** *3sg past of gera*  
**kristinn** *adj* Christian  
**kristna** *m acc pl of kristinn*  
**kumbl** <pl kumbl> *n* burial monument, mound or cairn  
 ♦**móðir** <acc, dat, & gen móður, pl mæðr, dat mæðrum, gen mæðra> *f* mother

- Noregr** (also **Norvegr** or **Nóregr**) <-s> *m* Norway  
 ♦**sá** <f sú, n þat> *dem pron* that (one)  
 ♦**sik** <dat sér, gen sín> *refl pron* him-/her-/it-/oneself, themselves  
 ♦**sinn** <m acc sg sinn, f acc sg sína> *refl poss pron* his, her, its own  
**vann** *1/3sg past of vinna*  
**vinna** <vinnr, vann, unnu, unninn> *vb* gain, win; work; perform, accomplish  
 ♦**þessi** <n acc pl þessi> *dem pron* this, these



Figure 21. Sides B and C of the Jelling Runestone.



## 4.2 EXERCISE – READING THE LARGE RUNESTONE AT JELLING

Review the reading above and decide whether the following statements are true (*rétt*) or false (*rangt*).

RÉTT eða RANGT?

1. Haraldr konungr bað gera kumbl þessi eptir föður sinn.
2. Þyri var móðir Haralds.
3. Haraldr var faðir Gorms.
4. Gormr var faðir Haralds.
5. Haraldr vann sér Ísland.

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## 4.3 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Vowels and consonants are the phonetic building blocks of word sounds.

**VOWELS** are sounds made by the free passage of air through the mouth, without closing the mouth or narrowing it to the point where the sound is obstructed. Vowels in Old Icelandic had no glide immediately following as is often the case in English and Modern Icelandic. A glide is a sound that begins with one vowel and changes to another vowel within the same syllable, as (-oi-) in *boil* or (-i-) in *fine*.

**Consonants** are sounds made by narrowing or closing the vocal tract, resulting in an obstruction of the free flow of air. Most Old Icelandic consonants are similar to corresponding sounds in modern English.

## 4.4 U-UMLAUT

Umlaut, also called vowel mutation or vowel shift, is a linguistic term borrowed from German referring to the change in pronunciation that some vowels undergo when followed by certain other vowels. Old Icelandic has two systems of umlaut: *u*-umlaut and *i*-umlaut. This section presents *u*-umlaut; *i*-umlaut comes in a later lesson.

*U*-umlaut is the change of the vowel *-a-* to *-ö-* (sometimes *-u-*) in specific grammatical contexts. For example, the root vowel *-a-* in the word *saga* (nom sg) becomes *-ö-* in the accusative, dative, and genitive, hence *sögu*. *U*-umlaut has its origins in a pre-Viking Age sound assimilation, in which the vowel *-a-* changed because of a *-u* in a following syllable or ending and became more like the following *u*. In many instances, the change simplified pronunciation.

***U*-Umlaut in Initial (Stressed) Syllables.** In Old Norse, *-a-* in an initial (stressed) syllable changes to *-ö-* when a *-u-* follows in the next syllable (*saga*, pl *sögur*).

NOUNS			VERBS			
	ARMR	STAÐR	SAGA		KALLA	VAKA
Sg nom	armr	staðr	saga	1sg	kalla	vaki
	acc	arm	stað	2	kallar	vakir
	dat	armi	stað	3	kallar	vakir
	gen	arms	staðar			
Pl nom	armar	staðir	sögur	1pl	köllum	vökum
	acc	arma	staði	2	kallið	vakið
	dat	örmum	stöðum	3	kalla	vaka
	gen	arma	staða			

Transl: armr (m) ‘arm,’ staðr (m) ‘place, stead,’ saga (f) ‘what is said, story’

U-umlaut can also occur when no vowel at all follows in the next syllable. An example is the nominative plural of strong neuter nouns like *land* (pl *lönd*). In such instances, the -u in the ending which originally caused the change was lost. Words like *lönd* are discussed in later lessons.

**U-Umlaut in Non-Initial (Unstressed) Syllables.** In non-initial syllables (that is, in unstressed second or third syllables) -a- shifts to -u-. For example, *herjaði* (he raided) becomes *herjuðu* (‘they raided’). This change is less frequent. It mostly occurs in the past plural of weak verbs. For example *leita* ‘look for’ and *elska* ‘love’:

3sg past	leitaði	‘he/she/it searched’	3pl past	leituðu	‘they searched’
3sg past	elskaði	‘he/she/it loved’	3pl past	elskuðu	‘they loved’

Notes on U-Umlaut

- U-umlaut does not occur if a vowel other than -u- follows in the next syllable. For example, *landinu* ‘the land (dat)’ does not show u-umlaut because an -i- intervenes between -a- of the stem and -u of the article.
- U-umlaut applies to words containing -a- in both stressed and unstressed syllables followed by -u-. For instance *kallaði* ‘he called’ and *kölluðu* ‘they called.’ In this example, the -u of the ending shifted the -a- of the unstressed syllable to -u- (stem *kallað-* became *kalluð-*), in turn triggering the change of -a- to -ö- in the initial syllable (*kölluðu*).
- In some compound words a shifts to ö (*viðtaka*, gen *viðtöku*; *atganga*, gen *atgöngu*).
- Some Old Norse grammars and texts use the letter *q* for ö (for example, *dqlum* and *kqlluðum*). This book always employs ö, hence *döllum* and *kölluðum*.

4.5 EXERCISE – U-UMLAUT

Decline the nouns *garpr*, *garðr*, and *gata* below. *Garpr* and *garðr* decline like *armr*, and *gata* like *saga*.

GARPR

GARÐR

GATA

<b>Sg</b>			
<i>nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____
<b>Pl</b>			
<i>nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *garpr* (m) 'bold man,' *garðr* (m) 'enclosed space,' *gata* (f) 'path'

## 1.6 STRONG AND WEAK VERBS

Verbs in Old Norse are either strong or weak. The difference between strong and weak verbs cannot be determined by the infinitive alone but in how verbs form their past tense.

A strong verb forms its past tense by changing its root vowel. For example, the 3sg past of *taka* is *tók*, *hefa-gaf*, and *vinna-vann*. English strong verbs form their past tense in the same way: *take*, *give*, *win* become *took*, *gave*, *won*.

Weak verbs form their past tense by adding to the stem a suffix containing *-ð-*, *-d-*, or *-t-*. For example, the 3sg past of *kalla* is *kallaði*, *telja-taldi*, and *mæla-mælti*. Because the tip of the tongue comes into contact with the teeth during pronunciation of *-ð-*, *-d-*, and *-t-*, this suffix is called a dental suffix. English similarly adds a dental suffix to the past tense of weak verbs (*call*, *count*, *tell*, and *have* become *called*, *counted*, *told*, and *had*).

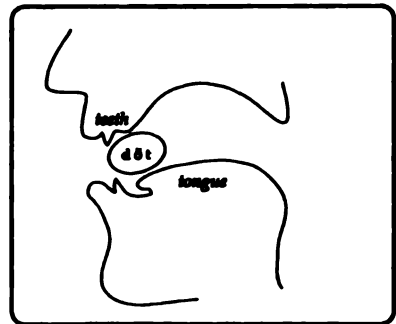


Figure 22. Dental Consonants. Old Norse *d*, *t*, and *ð* are called dental consonants because these sounds are pronounced where shown in the mouth when the tongue advances to touch the front teeth.

## 4.7 EXERCISE – STRONG AND WEAK VERBS

Identify the following verbs as weak or strong and translate.

- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. nam ( <i>inf</i> nema) _____      | 5. fór ( <i>inf</i> fara) _____      |
| 2. kallaði ( <i>inf</i> kalla) _____ | 6. tók ( <i>inf</i> taka) _____      |
| 3. mælti ( <i>inf</i> mæla) _____    | 7. herjaði ( <i>inf</i> herja) _____ |
| 4. bjó ( <i>inf</i> búa) _____       | 8. gerði ( <i>inf</i> gera) _____    |

4.8 WEAK VERBS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Verbs agree with the subject of the sentence in person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) and number (*sg* or *pl*). Person and number fuse into *one* set of endings, given in the box to the right.

Weak verbs fall into four conjugations. They all take the same endings in the present tense, but they show small differences which help to distinguish them. A verb stays in its particular conjugation,

Present Tense Endings

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-r	-ið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-r	-a

- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation verbs insert a linking vowel before the endings in the singular. In the 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation the linking vowel is *-a-* (*kallar*), in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> *-i-* (*mællir*, *vakir*), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> has no linking vowel (*telr*).
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugations have the same endings in both present and past, but they show several small differences including variations of stem vowels and past participles.

The verbs below demonstrate the four conjugations. (Note there are three ways to translate the Old Norse present tense into English. For example, *ek kalla* can be translated ‘I call,’ ‘I am calling,’ or ‘I do call’) since they all denote present tense in English.

Verbs – Prsent Tense

	PRONOUN	1 <sup>ST</sup> CONJUG <i>KALLA</i>	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONJUG <i>MÆLA</i>	3 <sup>RD</sup> CONJUG <i>TELJA</i>	4 <sup>TH</sup> CONJUG <i>VAKA</i>
<b>Sg</b> 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	kalla	mæli	tel	vaki
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	kallar	mællir	telr	vakir
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann, hon, þat	kallar	mællir	telr	vakir
<b>Pl</b> 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér	köllum	mælum	teljum	vökum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þér	kallið	mælið	telið	vakið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir, þær, þau	kalla	mæla	telja	vaka

The 1<sup>st</sup> plural ending *-um* triggers *u*-umlaut (*kalla*, *köllum*; *vaka*, *vökum*).

Verbs in Old Norse consist of stems and endings (the stem is the basic part of the word to which the linking vowel and endings are added). For example, *kalla*, *mæla*, *telja*, and *vaka* have in the present tense the stems *kall-*, *mæl-*, *telj-*, and *vak-*.

Verbs with stems endings in *-j-* (such as *telja*) only retain *-j-* when followed by an ending beginning with *-a-* (*selja*) or *-u-* (*teljum*), otherwise *-j-* is dropped (*telr*, *telið*). *Vilja* is irregular in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons (*vill*). All verbs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation have stems ending

-j- (called 'stem final -j'). The other conjugations have only a few such verbs, for example *heita* (1<sup>st</sup> conjug), *fylgja* (2<sup>nd</sup> conjug), and *segja* (4<sup>th</sup> conjug).

A few weak verbs have stems ending in -v- (*søkkva*, *byggva*). These verbs only retain before an ending beginning with -a- or -i- (*søkkvir*, *søkkvið*), otherwise -v- is dropped (*sökkum*).

## 9 WORD FREQUENCY – WEAK VERBS

Below, arranged by conjugation, are the most common weak verbs found in the sagas.

1 <sup>st</sup> CONJUG	2 <sup>nd</sup> CONJUG	3 <sup>rd</sup> CONJUG	4 <sup>th</sup> CONJUG
<i>kalla</i> 'call'	<i>gera</i> 'do; make'	<i>leggja</i> 'lay'	<i>segja</i> 'say'
<i>leita</i> 'search'	<i>mæla</i> 'speak'	<i>setja</i> 'set'	<i>hafa</i> 'have'
<i>svara</i> 'answer'	<i>senda</i> 'send'	<i>skilja</i> 'part'	<i>trúa</i> 'believe'
<i>tala</i> 'talk'	<i>veita</i> 'grant'	<i>spyrja</i> 'ask'	<i>þola</i> 'tolerate'
<i>ætla</i> 'intend'	<i>sækja</i> 'seek'	<i>vilj</i> 'want'	
	<i>þykkja</i> 'seem'		

Many of the weak verbs below appear in the reading passages and exercises.

1 <sup>st</sup> CONJUG	2 <sup>nd</sup> CONJUG	3 <sup>rd</sup> CONJUG	4 <sup>th</sup> CONJUG
<i>blóta</i> 'sacrifice'	<i>dæma</i> 'judge'	<i>berja</i> 'strike'	<i>vaka</i> 'be awake'
<i>eggja</i> 'incite'	<i>fella</i> 'fell'	<i>flytja</i> 'move, carry'	<i>þegja</i> 'be silent'
<i>elska</i> 'love'	<i>flýja</i> 'flee'	<i>hyggja</i> 'think'	
<i>herja</i> 'raid'	<i>færa</i> 'bring'	<i>krefja</i> 'demand'	
<i>gnaga</i> 'gnaw'	<i>leiða</i> 'lead'	<i>selja</i> 'give'	
<i>lofa</i> 'praise'	<i>nefna</i> 'name'	<i>telja</i> 'count'	
<i>skipa</i> 'arrange'	<i>sigla</i> 'sail'	<i>temja</i> 'tame'	

## 4.10 EXERCISE – WEAK VERBS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Fill in the correct form of the verbs in the present tense. Give conjugation and number and translate in the spaces below.

Ex: (*kalla*) Vér *köllum*; 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation; we (pl) call

1. (*mæla*) Þú \_\_\_\_\_.

2. (*kalla*) Þér \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. (*vaka*) Vit \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. (*telja*) Ek \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_.

5. (*eggja*) Hon \_\_\_\_\_.

4.8 WEAK VERBS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Verbs agree with the subject of the sentence in person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) and number (sg or pl). Person and number fuse into *one* set of endings, given in the box to the right.

Weak verbs fall into four conjugations. They all take the same endings in the present tense, but they show small differences which help to distinguish them. A verb stays in its particular conjugation,

Present Tense Endings

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-r	-ið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-r	-a

- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation verbs insert a linking vowel before the endings in the singular. In the 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation the linking vowel is -a- (*kallar*), in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> - ( *mæli*r, *vakir*), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> has no linking vowel (*telr*).
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugations have the same endings in both present and past, but they show several small differences including variations of stem vowels and past participles.

The verbs below demonstrate the four conjugations. (Note there are three ways to translate the Old Norse present tense into English. For example, *ek kalla* can be translated 'I call,' 'I am calling,' or 'I do call') since they all denote present tense in English.

Verbs – Prsent Tense

	PRONOUN	1 <sup>ST</sup> CONJUG KALLA	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONJUG MÆLA	3 <sup>RD</sup> CONJUG TELJA	4 <sup>TH</sup> CONJUG VAKA
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	kalla	mæli	tel	vaki
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	kallar	mælir	telr	vakir
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann, hon, þat	kallar	mælir	telr	vakir
Pl 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér	köllum	mælum	teljum	vökum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þér	kallið	mælið	telið	vakið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir, þær, þau	kalla	mæla	telja	vaka

The 1<sup>st</sup> plural ending -um triggers u-umlaut (*kalla*, *köllum*; *vaka*, *vökum*).

Verbs in Old Norse consist of stems and endings (the stem is the basic part of the word to which the linking vowel and endings are added). For example, *kalla*, *mæla*, *telja* and *vaka* have in the present tense the stems *kall-*, *mæ-*, *tel-*, and *vak-*.

Verbs with stems endings in -j- (such as *telja*) only retain -j- when followed by a ending beginning with -a- (*selja*) or -u- (*teljum*), otherwise -j- is dropped (*telr*, *telið*). *Vak* is irregular in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons (*vill*). All verbs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation have stems ending

in -j- (called 'stem final -j'). The other conjugations have only a few such verbs, for example *herja* (1<sup>st</sup> conjug), *fylgja* (2<sup>nd</sup> conjug), and *segja* (4<sup>th</sup> conjug).

A few weak verbs have stems ending in -v- (*søkkva*, *byggva*). These verbs only retain -v before an ending beginning with -a- or -i- (*søkkvir*, *søkkvið*), otherwise -v- is dropped (*sökkum*).

#### 4.9 WORD FREQUENCY – WEAK VERBS

Below, arranged by conjugation, are the most common weak verbs found in the sagas.

1 <sup>st</sup> CONJUG	2 <sup>nd</sup> CONJUG	3 <sup>rd</sup> CONJUG	4 <sup>th</sup> CONJUG
<i>kalla</i> 'call'	<i>gera</i> 'do; make'	<i>leggja</i> 'lay'	<i>segja</i> 'say'
<i>leita</i> 'search'	<i>mæla</i> 'speak'	<i>setja</i> 'set'	<i>hafa</i> 'have'
<i>svara</i> 'answer'	<i>senda</i> 'send'	<i>skilja</i> 'part'	<i>trúa</i> 'believe'
<i>tala</i> 'talk'	<i>veita</i> 'grant'	<i>spyrja</i> 'ask'	<i>þola</i> 'tolerate'
<i>ætla</i> 'intend'	<i>sækja</i> 'seek'	<i>vilj</i> 'want'	
	<i>þykkja</i> 'seem'		

Many of the weak verbs below appear in the reading passages and exercises.

1 <sup>st</sup> CONJUG	2 <sup>nd</sup> CONJUG	3 <sup>rd</sup> CONJUG	4 <sup>th</sup> CONJUG
<i>blóta</i> 'sacrifice'	<i>dæma</i> 'judge'	<i>berja</i> 'strike'	<i>vaka</i> 'be awake'
<i>eggja</i> 'incite'	<i>fella</i> 'fell'	<i>flytja</i> 'move, carry'	<i>þegja</i> 'be silent'
<i>elska</i> 'love'	<i>flyja</i> 'flee'	<i>hyggja</i> 'think'	
<i>herja</i> 'raid'	<i>færa</i> 'bring'	<i>krefja</i> 'demand'	
<i>gnaga</i> 'gnaw'	<i>leiða</i> 'lead'	<i>selja</i> 'give'	
<i>lofa</i> 'praise'	<i>nefna</i> 'name'	<i>telja</i> 'count'	
<i>skipa</i> 'arrange'	<i>sigla</i> 'sail'	<i>temja</i> 'tame'	

#### 4.10 EXERCISE – WEAK VERBS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Fill in the correct form of the verbs in the present tense. Give conjugation and number and translate in the spaces below.

Ex: (kalla) Vér köllum; 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation; we (pl) call.

1. (mæla) Þú \_\_\_\_\_.

2. (kalla) Þér \_\_\_\_\_.

3. (vaka) Vit \_\_\_\_\_.

4. (telja) Ek \_\_\_\_\_.

5. (eggja) Hon \_\_\_\_\_.

6. (gera) þær \_\_\_\_\_
7. (veita) þú \_\_\_\_\_
8. (þegja) Vér \_\_\_\_\_
9. (spyrja) Vit \_\_\_\_\_
10. (vilja) Ek \_\_\_\_\_
11. (elska) Þeir \_\_\_\_\_
12. (leggja) Hann \_\_\_\_\_
13. (senda) Þit \_\_\_\_\_
14. (setja) Hon \_\_\_\_\_
15. (færa) Þér \_\_\_\_\_
16. (lofa) Ek \_\_\_\_\_
17. (tala) Vér \_\_\_\_\_
18. (segja) Þú \_\_\_\_\_
19. (hyggja) Hann \_\_\_\_\_
20. (skilja) Þau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4.11 THE REFLEXIVE POSSESSIVE PRONOUN SINN

In English there is ambiguity in the possessive pronouns *his*, *her*, *its*, and *their*. For example, in the statement *Hrolf killed his king*, a wider context is needed to determine whether Hrolf killed his own king or somebody else's king.

Old Icelandic is more precise. When a possessive pronoun ('his,' 'her,' 'its,' 'their') refers back to a subject in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (*þórólfr, Ísland*, etc.), a special pronoun *sinn* 'his [own], her [own], its [own], their [own]' is used. Compare the sentences below.

**Þórólfr drap konung sinn.**      *Thorolf killed his [own] king.*  
**Þórólfr drap konung hans.**      *Thorolf killed his [somebody else's] king.*

The difference in meaning is also evident in the following sentences adapted from *The Prose Edda*, the thirteenth-century treatise on mythology and poetry:

Tók Óðinn þá við konu sinni. *Then Odin lived with his [own] wife.*  
Tók Óðinn þá við konu hans. *Then Odin lived with [received] his [another's] wife.*

**Sinn** behaves much like an adjective. It agrees with the noun it modifies in gender, case, and number. In the example above, **sinnl** is feminine dative singular because the



feminine noun it modifies, *konu*, is in the dative singular. The full declension of *sinn* is given in the table below. It is the same as the definite article *inn* given earlier.

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg</b> <i>nom</i>	sinn	sín	sitt	<b>PI</b>	sínir	sínar	sín
<i>acc</i>	sinn	sína	sitt		sína	sínar	sín
<i>dat</i>	sínum	sinni	sínu		sínum	sínum	sínum
<i>gen</i>	síns	sinnar	síns		sinna	sinna	sinna

Note that the *-i-* in *sinn* is short when it precedes a double consonant (*-nn-* and *-tt-*), while it is long elsewhere. (The possessive pronouns *minn* 'my' and *þinn* 'your' decline the same way as *sinn*.)

Unlike the possessive pronoun *sinn*, *hans* is the genitive of the personal pronoun *hann* given earlier and only changes to reflect the gender of the subject.

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>ALL GENDERS</i>
<b>PI</b> <i>gen</i>	hans ( <i>his</i> )	hennar ( <i>her</i> )	þess ( <i>its</i> )	<b>PI</b>	þeira ( <i>their</i> )

*Sinn* is used only when it refers back to the subject in the same sentence. In the following examples from the readings, *sinn* and *sína* refer back to the subject *Haraldr*.

Haraldr konungr bað gera kumbl þessi ept Gorm föður **sinn** ok ept Þyri móður **sína**.

*Hans*, *hennar*, *þess*, *þeira* are used when the possessive pronoun refers back to the subject of a different sentence.

Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maður ágætr í Nóregi. **Hans** sonr var Björn.

#### 4.12 EXERCISE – THE PRONOUN *SINN* AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Complete the following sentences with the correct pronoun.

- Hann sá konuna \_\_\_\_\_ (He saw his [own] wife)
- Hann sá konuna \_\_\_\_\_ (He saw his [someone else's] wife)
- Hon hjálpaði dóttur \_\_\_\_\_ (She helped her [own] daughter)
- Hon hjálpaði dóttur \_\_\_\_\_ (She helped her [someone else's] daughter)

Note: *hjálpa* takes a dative object.

- Hann ok konan \_\_\_\_\_ hittu Gunnar (He and his wife met Gunnar)

Remember: reflexive pronouns only refer *back* to the subject.

#### 4.13 READING – MIDFJORD-SKEGGI (*LANDNÁMABÓK*) AND HROLF KRAKI'S SWORD

Medieval Icelanders had a good understanding of the northern world. Some traveled widely during the Viking Age, and many were well versed in the legends, history, and myths of their northern culture. In the twelfth century, when writing in Old Icelandic with ink on parchment became common, many oral traditions were written down.

Midfjord-Skeggi was a famous tenth-century Icelander who appears in a number of sagas, including *Laxdæla Saga*, *Kormak's Saga* (*Kormáks saga*), and *The Saga of Thorð Menace* (*Þórðar saga hreðu*). The passage below from the *Book of the Settlements* tells of Skeggi's father and grandfather, and the settling of the family in Midfjord (*Miðfjörður*) in northern Iceland. Skeggi travelled widely and was known as a *Hólmsgarðsfari*, a merchant who voyaged to Novgorod (*Hólmsgarður*), deep in northern Russia, for trade in furs, slaves, Arabic silver coins, and valuable glass beads.

The passage recounts that Skeggi, while on a Viking voyage in the Baltic, broke into the grave mound of Hrolf Kraki and carried away that king's famous sword *Skofnung*. In the *Saga of King Hrolf Kraki* (*Hrólfs saga kraka*), Hrolf uses *Skofnung* to slice off the buttocks of Adils, the sorcerer king of Sweden.

Weapons frequently had names and special magical power. Some were said to be forged by dwarves (*dvergar*, sg *dvergr*) or dark-elves (*dökkálfr*, sg *dökkálfr*). Special weapons, such as Hrolf Kraki's sword, had histories and were well known. Hrolf's sword *Sköfnungr* means 'Shin-Bone' and is known from several tales. It is briefly mentioned in the reading passage below, but the Old Norse audience would have understood its value. Likewise, Sigurd the dragon slayer had a famous sword called Gram (*Gramr*). A renowned treasure, its origin is carefully recounted in *The Saga of the Volsungs*. Other swords of legend are *Hneitir* ('Wounder'), *Dragvendill* ('Draw-Wand'), and the cursed sword *Tyrfingr* ('Tarry'). Axes were often named after giantesses and troll-wives (*trollkonur*, sg *trollkona*) and had names such as *Gnepia* ('Towering'), *Fála* ('Frightener'), and *Vígglóð* ('Battle-Bright'). The gods' most famous weapons were Odin's spear, *Gungnir*, and Thor's hammer, *Mjöllnir*.

**Landnámabók (S 174)**

Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr ágætr í Nóregi. Hans sonr var Björn. Hann var kallaðr Skinna-Björn, því at hann var Hólmgarðsfari ok farmaðr mikill. Hann fór til Íslands ok nam Miðfjörð ok Línakradal.

**Book of the Settlements (S 174)**

Hans sonr var Miðfjarðar-Skeggi; hann var garpr mikill ok farmaðr. Hann herjaði í austrveg í Danmörk við Sjáland ok fór at brjóta haug<sup>8</sup> Hrólfs konungs kraka ok tók hann þar ór haugi<sup>9</sup> Sköfnung, sverð Hrólfs, ok øxi Hjalta,<sup>10</sup> ok mikit fé annat

**VOCABULARY**

at *inf* marker to

♦annarr <*f* önnur, *n* annat> *adj pron* one of two, other, another

austrvegr <-s, -ir> *m* the east, i.e., the Baltic (*lit* the 'eastern way'); fara í austrveg trading or raiding in the Baltic or journeying east and south down the rivers of Russia

♦ágætr *adj* excellent, noble, distinguished  
brjóta <brýtr, braut, brutu, brotinn> *vb* break, break up, break open

♦fara <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go, travel; move

farmaðr *m* sea-farer, merchant, trader

♦fé <*gen* fjár, *gen pl* fjá> *n* cattle, sheep; wealth, money

fór 1/3sg past of fara

garpr <-s, -ar> *m* a bold, daring, courageous, or warlike man or woman

haugr <-s, -ar> *m* burial mound

herja <-að-> *vb* raid, harry; make war

herjaði 3sg past of herja 'raided'

Hjalti *m* Hjalti (*personal name*) (*hjalt* = 'sword hilt')

Hólmgarðr <-s> *m* Holmgard (*place name*, modern Novgorod in northern Russia)

Hólmgarðsfari *m* voyager to Hólmgarðr

Hrólfr kraki <*gen* Hrólfs kraka> *m* Hrolf Kraki (*personal name*)

♦í *prep* [*w acc*] into (*motion*); [*w dat*] in, within, at (*position*)

Ísland *n* Iceland

♦kalla <-að-> *vb* call

kallaðr *ppart* of kalla 'called'

♦konungr <-s, -ar> *m* king

Línakradalr <-s> *m* Linakradale (*place name*), 'Valley of Linen Fields'

Miðfjardar-Skeggi *m* Skeggi of Midfjord (*personal name*)

Miðfjörðr *m* Midfjord (*place name*)

♦mikill <*f* mikil, *n* mikit, *comp* meiri, *superl* mestr> *adj* big, tall, great; much, very

mikit fé annat *n* other great treasure

nam 1/3sg past of nema

nema <nemr, nam, námu, numinn> *vb* take; claim land

Nóregr <-s> *m* Norway

♦ór (*also* úr) *prep* [*w dat*] out of, from

Sjáland *n* Zealand (*place name*, Sjælland in Modern Danish)

skinn *n* skin

Skinna-Björn *m* Bjorn Fur-Skins (*personal name*)

Sköfnungr *m* Skofnung, possibly 'Shin Bone,' name of King Hrolf's sword

<sup>8</sup> fór at brjóta haug: 'he went to break open the burial mound.'

<sup>9</sup> tók hann þar ór haugi: 'there he took from the mound.'

<sup>10</sup> Hjalti was one of King Hrolf Kraki's legendary champions.

- ◆sverð *n* sword

◆taka <tekr, tók, tóku, tekinn> *vb* take

◆til *prep* [*w gen*] to

tók *1/3sg past of taka* ‘took’

◆við *prep* [*w acc*] at, by, close to
- ◆þar *adv* there

því *at conj* for, because

øx <*acc/dat* øxi, *gen* øxar, *pl* øxar> *f* axe

Skutad Skeggi was the name of an excellent man in Norway. His son was Bjorn. He was called Bjorn Fur-Skins, because he was a voyager to Holmgard [Novgorod, in northern Russia] and a great merchant. He went to Iceland and took Midfjord and Linakradale.

His son was Skeggi of Midfjord; he was a very bold man and a seafarer. He

raided in the East [the Baltic region] in Denmark near Zealand and went to break open the burial mound of King Hrolf Kraki, and there he took from the mound Skofnung, the sword of Hrolf, and the axe of Hjalti, and other great treasure

4.14 EXERCISE – READING LANDNÁMABÓK

Based on the reading above, are the following statements true (*rétt*) or false (*rangt*)?

- |   | RÉTT eða RANGT? |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Skútaðar-Skeggi bjó í Nórægi.          | _____           |
| 2. Skinna-Björn var sonr Hrólfis konungs. | _____           |
| 3. Björn fór til Íslands.                 | _____           |
| 4. Miðfjarðar-Skeggi var farmaðr.         | _____           |
| 5. Miðfjarðar-Skeggi herjaði í Nórægi.    | _____           |
| 6. Konungr hét Skinna-Björn.              | _____           |
| 7. Miðfjarðar-Skeggi var garpr mikill.    | _____           |

4.15 CULTURE – HARALD BLUETOOTH FORGES A VIKING AGE STATE

Harald Bluetooth expanded the power, which he inherited from his father Gorm, and forged Denmark into Viking Age Scandinavia’s first enduring royal state. As part of his state building, Harald undertook a series of large-scale building projects throughout the Danish kingdom. In particular he augmented the border defenses. On the southern border he strengthened the Danevirke fortification and the rampart around Hedeby in response to military and economic pressure from the Frankish Empire. A series of German invasions began in 974, and it was nine years before Harald’s son, Svein Forkbeard, defeated the Germans. Around 980 powerful circular forts were constructed in the major subdivisions of the Danish kingdom at Trelleborg on Sjælland, Nonnebakken on Fyn, Fyrkat and Aggersborg in Jutland. A simpler fort at Trelleborg in Skåne (Old Norse *Skáney*) was also

constructed.

The forts were mostly close to the sea. They provided training grounds for royal warriors and housing for their families. The forts may have also served as centers of royal administration and tax collection. Probably they were royal strongholds designed to control the local populations. At about the time the forts were constructed. Jelling received a massive wooden palisade, and an enormous one kilometer-long, two-lane wooden bridge leading to Jelling was built nearby at Ravninge Enge. This bridge consumed huge quantities of lumber. It must have been a highly impressive construction, a monument to the dynasty.

While Harald seems to have increased his authority over parts of what is today southern Sweden, he also suffered defeat on several occasions. Runestones in Skåne refer to a defeat at Uppsala, probably in the 980s, where Harald’s son Toki is said to have died. Harald’s Jelling runestone also claims that he ruled Norway. This claim is probably exaggerated. More likely Harald exercised control over southeast Norway for a time. After a long life, Harald was deposed and perhaps killed during a revolt by his son Svein Forkbeard.

4.16 VOCABULARY – LIST 4. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	NUMERALS
kona – woman	gamall – old	sjá – this	tólf – twelve
ráð – advice; plan	kyrr – quiet		
dagr – day	fyrri – former		
frændi – kinsman	varr – aware		
VERBS	PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS	CONJUNCTIONS	
ganga – to walk	eigi – not	sem – who,	
gera – to do; make	fyrir – before; for	which,	
verða – to become	af – of; from	that; as	
kveða – to speak	ekki – not		

EXERCISES

4.17 U-Umlaut. Decline and then translate *gata*, *kona*, and *saga* in the spaces provided below, applying *u*-umlaut where necessary. (Note, *kona* has an irregular genitive plural, *kvenna*.) Use the resources of the lesson and the Vocabulary.

	SAGA	GATA	KONA
Sg nom	<u>saga</u>		<u>kona</u>
acc			
dat			
gen		<u>götu</u>	

Pl nom	_____	<i>götur</i>	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	<i>sögum</i>	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	<i>kvenna</i>

Translate: saga \_\_\_\_\_, gata \_\_\_\_\_, kona \_\_\_\_\_.

**4.18 Vocabulary Review.** Match the Norse word with its meaning in English.

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>mikill</i>       | A. for, because        |
| 2. <i>garpr</i>        | B. won                 |
| 3. <i>sverð</i>        | C. man                 |
| 4. <i>maðr</i>         | D. excellent           |
| 5. <i>øx</i>           | E. his (own)           |
| 6. <i>ágætr</i>        | F. bade, commanded     |
| 7. <i>því at</i>       | G. sword               |
| 8. <i>at kalla</i>     | H. woman; wife         |
| 9. <i>at gera</i>      | I. earl                |
| 10. <i>at spyrja</i>   | J. to ask              |
| 11. <i>bað</i>         | K. to call             |
| 12. <i>ept</i>         | L. father              |
| 13. <i>sá</i>          | M. that (one)          |
| 14. <i>sinn</i>        | N. was called          |
| 15. <i>vann</i>        | O. a bold man          |
| 16. <i>kona</i>        | P. to do; to make      |
| 17. <i>faðir</i>       | Q. axe                 |
| 18. <i>var kallaðr</i> | R. time                |
| 19. <i>jarl</i>        | S. after, in memory of |
| 20. <i>tími</i>        | T. great               |

**4.19 U-Umlaut.** For each of the words below, give the form indicated in parentheses and mark its gender. Note that some words do not show *u*-umlaut.

Ex: saga (acc pl): *sögur* *f*

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. dalr (dat pl): _____  | 5. kalla (1pl pres.): _____ |
| 2. vargr (acc sg): _____ | 6. saga (acc sg): _____     |
| 3. kambr (dat pl): _____ | 7. gata (nom pl): _____     |
| 4. armr (dat sg): _____  | 8. tala (1sg pres.): _____  |

Transl: vargr (m) 'wolf', kambr (m) 'comb.' **Note:** Words in the exercises that do not appear in the lesson can be found in the vocabulary at the end of the book if no definition is given in the Exercise.

**4.20 Present Tense of Common Weak Verbs.** Conjugate the following verbs and translate. Assume the neuter objects are singular.

**gera**

1. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ kumbl.

4. Vér \_\_\_\_\_ skip.

2. Þú \_\_\_\_\_ sverð.

5. Þér \_\_\_\_\_ haug.

3. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ øxi.

6. Þeir \_\_\_\_\_ hús.

**spyrja**

7. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ konung.

10. Vit \_\_\_\_\_ landnámsmann.

8. Þú \_\_\_\_\_ Ingólf.

11. Þit \_\_\_\_\_ hana.

9. Hon \_\_\_\_\_ farmann.

12. Þau \_\_\_\_\_ konu.

**kalla**

13. Ek \_\_\_\_\_.

16. Vér \_\_\_\_\_.

14. Þú \_\_\_\_\_.

17. Þér \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Hann \_\_\_\_\_.

18. Þær \_\_\_\_\_.

**4.21 Translation and Parsing.**

A. Translate the following passage from the reading . Some words are underlined for use in exercise B.

Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr ágætr í Nóregi. Hans sonr var Björn. Hann var kallaðr Skinna-Björn, því at hann var Hólmgarðsfari ok farmaðr mikill. Hann fór til Íslands ok nam Miðfjörð ok Línakradal. Hans sonr var Miðfjarðar-Skeggi; hann var garpr mikill ok farmaðr. Hann herjaði í austrveg í Danmörk við Sjáland ok fór at brjóta haug Hrólfs konungs kraka ok tók hann þar ór haugi Sköfnung, sverð Hrólfs, ok øxi Hjalta, ok mikit fé annat.

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**B.** Identify grammatically the underlined words in the text above. If you need help, see the vocabulary under the reading passage in the lesson.

**Examples:**

- maðr in nom sg of the noun maðr 'man'  
 hann in nom sg of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun  
 tók 3<sup>rd</sup> person sg past tense of the verb taka 'take'  
 til prep with gen. 'to'  
 1. hét \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Nóregi \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Hans \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. var \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. nam \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. haug \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. konungs \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. sverð \_\_\_\_\_

**4.22 Reading Comprehension.** Based on the reading passage in the lesson, decide which of the following statements are *rétt* or *rangt*.

**RÉTT Eða RANGT?**

- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 1. | Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr.                                | _____ |
| 2. | Björn var farmaðr.                                       | _____ |
| 3. | Skútaðar-Skeggi var Danmarkarbót.                        | _____ |
| 4. | Sonr Skútaðar-Skeggja nam Línakradal.                    | _____ |
| 5. | Skútaðar-Skeggi fór at brjóta haug Hrólfs konungs kraka. | _____ |
| 6. | Sköfnungr var sverð Hjalta.                              | _____ |
| 7. | Björn herjaði í austurveg.                               | _____ |
| 8. | Miðfjarðar-Skeggi tók øxi Hjalta ok mikit fé annat.      | _____ |

**4.23 Weak Verbs.** Translate the following phrases into Old Norse using the verbs: *svara* 'answer,' *leita* 'search,' *leggja* 'lay,' *sækja* 'seek,' *sigla* 'sail,' *segja* 'say,' *tala* 'talk,' *veita* 'grant,' *hyggja* 'think,' and *þykkja* 'seem.' Identify the conjugations of these weak verbs.



	<i>Ek mæli.</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup> conjug</i>
Ex: I speak.		
1. You (sg) answer.		
2. We (dual) search.		
3. You (pl) lay.		
4. They (f) seek.		
5. She sails.		
6. He says.		
7. They (n) talk.		
8. I grant.		
9. They (m) think.		
10. It seems.		

**4.24 Weak Verbs.** Give the present tense of the following verbs and translate.

**senda**

1. Vér sendum.
- We (pl) send.
2. Þær \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ek \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
4. Þau \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. Þat \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
6. Hon \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
7. Þú \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
8. Þit \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

**setja**

9. Ek set.
- I set.
10. Þeir \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
11. Þér \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
12. Hann \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

13. Þú \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
14. Þau \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
15. Hon \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
16. Vér \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

**svara**

17. Hann svarar.
- He answers.
18. Vér \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
19. Þú \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
20. Ek \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

21. Þér \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
22. Þær \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
23. Hon \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_
24. Vit \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.25 The Reflexive Possessive Pronoun *Sinn*.

A. Fill in the correct form of *sinn* for the noun it modifies and translate.

Ex: Eiríkr gaf Herjólfvi spjót (sg) sitt.

Eirík gave Herjolf his spear.

1. Eiríkr gaf syni \_\_\_\_\_ land.

2. Þeir gera kumbl (pl) \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Hon gaf móður \_\_\_\_\_ land.

4. Hrólfr tók ór haugi sverð (sg) \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Hjalti tók ór haugi øxi \_\_\_\_\_.

B. Fill in the correct form of *sinn* or the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun (*hans* or *hennar*) as appropriate and translate.

Ex: Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr ágætr í Nóregi. hans (his) sonr var Björn.

Skeggi of Skutad was the name of an excellent man in Norway. His son was Björn.

1. Gormr konungr gerði kumbl þessi ept þyri konu \_\_\_\_\_ (his own).

2. Ásgerðr bjó á Drepstokki með syni \_\_\_\_\_ (his: that is, Herjolf's)

3. Haraldr konungr spýrr frænda \_\_\_\_\_ (his own).

4. Haraldr jarl af Jótlandi var faðir \_\_\_\_\_ (her).

5. Kona Herjólf's hét Ásgerðr. Björn var sonr \_\_\_\_\_ (their).

6. Óláfr ok Bjarni fara til lands \_\_\_\_\_ (their own).

Possessive pronouns *minn* 'my' and *þinn* 'your' decline like *sinn*. Fill in and translate.

Eiríkr sá son minn (my).

Eiríkr sá son þinn (your).

Eirík saw my son.

Eirík saw your son.

Ek mæli við (with) son \_\_\_\_\_ (my).

Þorsteinn reist (carved) rúnar \_\_\_\_\_ (your).

Þyri fór til Nóregs með syni \_\_\_\_\_ (my).

Gormr konungr var frændi \_\_\_\_\_ (your).

Verbs in Past Tense. Complete the chart below, giving the infinitive and translation.

VERB (PAST TENSE)	ENGLISH MEANING	INFINITIVE
Ex: vildi	<u>want</u>	<u>véla</u>
1. tók	_____	_____
2. gaf	_____	_____
3. fór	_____	_____
4. herjaði	_____	_____
5. bað	_____	_____
6. vann	_____	_____
7. gerði	_____	_____

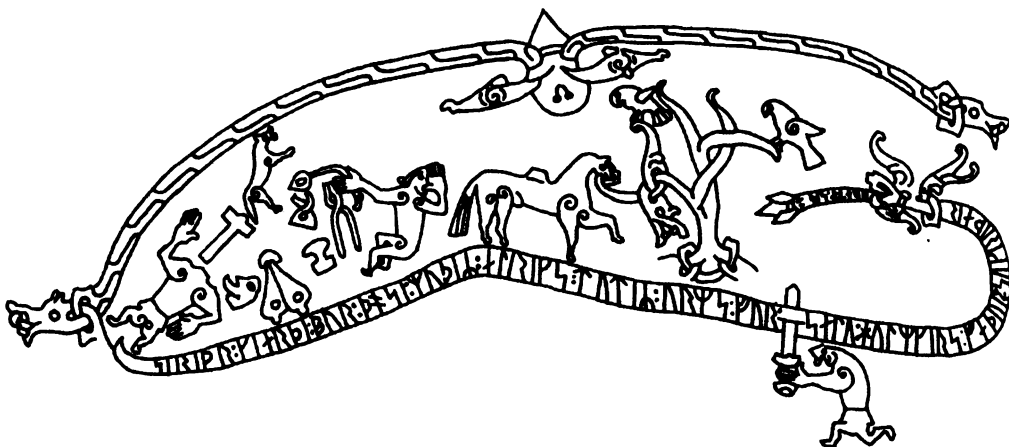
Word Frequency Review. Write out List 4. The Most Frequent Words and translate.

NORSE	ENGLISH	OLD NORSE	ENGLISH
<b>NS</b>		<b>ADJECTIVES</b>	
_____	_____	5	_____
_____	_____	6	_____
_____	_____	7	_____
_____	_____	8	_____
<b>IS</b>		<b>PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS</b>	
_____	_____	13	_____
_____	_____	14	_____
_____	_____	15	_____
_____	_____	16	_____

## LESSON 5

### SWEDEN: A FAMILY RUNESTONE

*Eigi er allt gull sem glóar*  
(All that glows is not gold)



**Figure 23. The Ramsund Runestone, Sweden** depicts the tale of Sigurd, the slayer of the serpentine dragon-monster Fafnir. The carving shows Sigurd roasting Fafnir's heart, sucking the dragon's blood from his thumb, and listening to the forest birds. Sigurd follows the advice of the birds and kills the smith Regin, who lies decapitated alongside his tools and bellows. Grani, Sigurd's horse which was chosen for young Sigurd by Odin, is tethered to the tree. On Grani's back is the treasure taken from Fafnir. This treasure, which contains the magical ring, becomes the 'Rhine Gold.'

#### 5.1 CULTURE – LANDS OF THE SWEDES (SVÍAR) AND GOTHs (GAUTAR)

The Ramsund Runestone is in Uppland Sweden, and runestones are among our major sources for the Viking Age history of the people of this region. Otherwise, there is little documentary evidence from the region regarding early political history and state development. A single national identity does not emerge until the late twelfth century. Forests and bogs separate the populated regions of Central Sweden, making communication between areas difficult for much of the year. Long standing clan and tribal rivalries were also a factor. The two major regional divisions were the lands of the Goths (Gautar) in modern south central Sweden around lakes Vättern (Vatnsbú) and Vänern (Vænir) and the territory of the Swedes (Svíar) further north in central Sweden around Lake Mälaren (Lögr). These two regions, known as Gautland and Svíaland, were economically and politically independent for much of their earliest history.

The Svíar developed elements of statehood as early as the Late Germanic Iron Age (ca. 600–800). This historical period in central Sweden is known as the Vendel Period because of rich boat graves and other archaeological finds from burial mounds at Vendel and Valsgarde north of Lake Mälaren. The kingdom of the Svíar was centered at Uppsala



through trade across the Baltic and down the rivers of Russia to the Byzantine Empire, central Asia, and the Caliphate of Baghdad. The burials on Björkö, many of which are high-status chamber graves, attest to a wealth of imported items in the form of glassware, jewelry, bronze vessels, coins, and pottery. Excavations also point to a sizeable population of resident merchants and craftsmen. Birka remained important until the 900s, when changes in water levels, religion, and politics resulted in the rise of Sigtuna as a royal Christian center on the northern shore of the lake.

The Gautar (the Geatas or Geats of the Old English poem *Beowulf*) from Gautland did not attain the prominence or wealth of the Svíar. For several centuries the Gautar maintained a separate kingdom in the face of competition from the Svíar as well as from neighboring Danes and Norwegians. Svíar and Gautar may have had at times an uneasy alliance. Óláfr Skautkonungr (Olaf Eiriksson), king of the Svíar (ca. 980–1022) was the first in king in Viking times to rule both regions. Olaf's reign was troubled. He was a Christian but, because of the strength of the pagan majority, he did not force conversion. The union of the two peoples under Olaf did not survive his reign. Lasting unification occurred only after Christianity took hold throughout the regions at the end of the twelfth century, a period relatively late in the conversion of Scandinavia.

## 5.2 READING – SIGURD THE DRAGON-SLAYER ON THE RAMSUND RUNESTONE

The Jelling runestones in the previous lessons were carved at the order of King Gorm the Old and his son, King Harald Bluetooth. However, most of the approximately 3,000 runestones known from Scandinavia were carved for non-royal people. Most often, runestones were commissioned by local elites, who used the stones to commemorate their dead, note events, record the deeds of the living, proclaim inheritance rights, property ownership, and group identity to passers-by.

The eleventh-century memorial stone from Ramsund in Södermanland, Sweden, is a non-royal runestone. Members of a family of local landowners had the stone carved to commemorate the construction of a causeway, a raised earthen path or bridge (*brú*) across swampy ground. The carving is on a large flat rock outcropping near the causeway. The runes tell that Sigríðr, a prominent local woman, commissioned the carving. Sigríðr publically makes known her relationships to the men in her family. These include her father, Ormr, her recently deceased father-in-law, Hólmgeirr, and her husband, Sigrðr Hólmgeirsson, as well as her son Alrekr, from a previous marriage. The nearby Kjula runestone adds that the father of Alrekr was Spjútr, a known Viking.

This information had a purpose. If, as seems likely, one or both of the sons of Sigríðr were dead at the time this stone was carved, she or her surviving son stood to inherit from three lines of descent: from Ormr, Spjútr, and Hólmgeirr. The stone announces the considerable inheritance of Sigríðr to all who wish to use the public causeway and keep their feet dry.

The runic inscription implies that Sigríðr and/or Hólmgeirr was Christian. The choice of the pagan hero, Sigurd the Dragon Slayer, as the decorative motif accompanying a

Christian inscription is indicative of the contemporaneous mixing of religious cultures.

**RUNES**

HIRIBR:PI+RPI:BNR:ÞÞHI:YNPIA:  
 TRIPY:TN+TIA:NRYP:PNR:  
 HTN: \*NYPYIRY:PTBNR:  
 HNPYNPTR: BN+T+T:HIH

**TRANSLITERATION**

siripr : kiarpi : bur : posi  
 : mupiR : alriks : tutiR : urms :  
 fur : salu : hulmkirs : faþur :  
 sukrupar : buata : sis

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

Sigríðr gerði brú þessa móðir Alreks<sup>11</sup>  
 dóttir Orms fyr sálu Hólmgeirs föður  
 Sigrðar búanda síns.

**TRANSLATION**

Sigrid, Alrek's mother, Orm's daughter,  
 made this bridge for the soul of Holmgeir,  
 the father of Sigrod, her husband.

**VOCABULARY**

Alrekr <-s> *m* Alrek (*personal name*)

◆bóndi (*also búandi*) <*gen* bónda, *pl* bændr> *m* husband; farmer

brú <*gen* brúar, *pl* brúar~brúr~brýr> *f* bridge; causeway built over swampy ground

búandi <*pl* búendr> *see* bóndi

◆dóttir <*acc, dat, & gen* dóttur, *pl* døtr, *dat* døtrum, *gen* døtra> *f* daughter

◆faðir <*acc* föður, *dat* föður~feðr, *gen* föður, *pl* feðr, *dat* feðrum, *gen* feðra> *m* father

◆fyrir (*also fyr*) *prep* [*w acc*] for, on behalf of

◆gera (*also göra*) <-ði, -ðr~gerr> *vb* make; do, act

gerði *see* gera

Hólmgeirr <-s> *m* Holmgeir (*personal name*)

◆móðir <*acc, dat, & gen* móður, *pl* mæðr, *dat* mæðrum, *gen* mæðra> *f* mother

Ormr <-s> *m* Orm (*personal name*)

sála *f* soul

Sigríðr <*acc & dat* Sigríði, *gen* Sigríðar> *f* Sigrid (*personal name*)

Sigrðr <-ar> *m* Sigrod (*personal name*)

◆þessi <*f acc sg* þessa> *dem pron* this

### 5.3 CULTURE – SIGURD THE DRAGON SLAYER

The Ramsund stone depicts part of a longer tale whose origins lie deep within the protohistoric Iron Age. The complete story is told in *The Saga of the Volsungs* (*Völsunga saga*), one of the great tales of western storytelling. The unknown Icelandic author who wrote the saga in the thirteenth century based his prose epic on stories found in older heroic poetry. *Völsunga saga* recounts the mythic deeds of the dragon slayer, Sigurd the

<sup>11</sup> The noun phrases *móðir Alreks* and *dóttir Orms* are in apposition with *Sigríðr*. Similarly, *föður Sigrðar* is in apposition with *Hólmgeirs* and *búanda síns* is in apposition with *Sigrðar*.

**Volsung.** It is a story of love, betrayal, the vengeance of a barbarian queen, and schemes of Attila the Hun.

The saga describes events from the ancient wars among the kings of the Burgundians, the Huns, and the Goths. It treats some of the same legends as the Middle High German epic poem, the *Nibelungenlied*. In both accounts, though in different ways, Sigurd (Siegfried in the German tradition) acquires the Rhine Gold and then becomes tragically entangled in a love triangle involving a supernatural woman. In the saga, this woman is a Valkyrie, one of Odin's warrior-maidens who choose the slain for Valhalla following a battle. In a section of the saga, the Valkyrie recounts runic lore.

The pictorial scenes on the Ramsund stone witness that this legendary/mythological story told in Icelandic saga and poetry was also known in Viking Age Sweden. The carving contains considerable detail about a tale filled with magic and shape-changing. On the bottom right of the carving, Sigurðr Fáfnisbani (the slayer, or bane, of the dragon Fáfnir) thrusts his sword up into the monster. In the center Sigurd's horse Grani is loaded with Fafnir's treasure. Forest birds perch in the tree branches. To the left, Sigurd roasts Fafnir's heart. According to *The Saga of the Volsungs*, Sigurd tests if the heart is fully roasted by touching the meat with his thumb. The boiling blood burns the young hero's finger, and Sigurd sucks his burned thumb. When the blood enters his mouth, he understands the speech of the birds. They warn him that the smith Regin, his companion, foster-father, and the brother of Fafnir, intends to kill him. Alerted to Regin's treachery, Sigurd kills the smith, whose smithing tools and decapitated head are shown on the stone.

In the nineteenth century, the Volsung story with the schemes of one-eyed Odin, a magical ring, and the sword that was reforged was rediscovered and became widely known throughout Europe. Translated into many languages, *The Saga of the Volsungs* became a primary source for writers of fantasy and for those interested in myths, legends, and the ancient past of Northern Europe.

The saga deeply influenced William Morris in the nineteenth century and J. R. R. Tolkien in the twentieth. Tolkien, in particular found inspiration in *The Saga of the Volsungs* and the account of the Sigurd story in *The Prose Edda*. He adapted the sword that was reforged, ring of power, the dragon lying on the hoard, and the creature who lived a shadow life in the earth and early possessed the ring. So too, Richard Wagner drew heavily upon the Norse Volsung material in composing his operatic Ring Cycle. Wagner especially focused on Odin's single-minded obsession with regaining the ring by means of the hero, Siegfried/Sigurd.

## 5.4 SHORT AND LONG VOWELS – STRESSED AND UNSTRESSED

Vowels in Old Norse are short or long. A quick distinction is that short vowels are those in the alphabet without accents. Short vowels are pronounced in a more lax (unstressed) manner and often more rapidly than long vowels, which tend to be stressed. Long vowels are:

- those with an acute mark (á, é, í, ó, ú, ý)



digraphs (a combination of two letters spelling one sound), for example *æ* and *œ*  
 diphthongs (vowels of two parts) such as *ei*, *au*, *ey*, *jö*, and *ja*.

Stress in ON words is usually on the first syllable. This means vowels occurring in initial syllables are usually stressed. For example, the short *-i-* in the word *vinr* 'friend' or the short *-e-* in *selr* 'seal' is stressed. The concepts of stress and long vowel length are of importance for the following discussion of the Special Stem Rules.

## 1.5 SPECIAL STEM RULES

Much can be gained by learning two rules which we call the Special Stem Rules. These rules explain changes at the end of many words that would otherwise seem irregular, and they account for some of the more puzzling aspects of Old Norse and Modern Icelandic. Learning these two rules makes it possible to avoid otherwise endless memorization of individual words.

The two rules concern changes at the boundary between a word's stem (a word minus its ending) and the ending. They apply specifically when an ending *-r* is added to words whose stem ends in *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-*. Adding the ending *-r* potentially forms the combinations *-lr*, *-nr*, or *-sr* at the end of words, but this is not always what happens.

**Special Stem Rule 1, The *-r* Change Rule.** Rule 1 concerns doubling of the stem final consonant instead of adding the ending *-r*. The result is *-ll* instead of *-lr*, *-nn* instead of *-nr*, and *-ss* instead of *-sr*. Specifically, **when a vowel precedes a stem-final *-l-*, *-n-*, or *-s-***, the ending *-r* changes to match the preceding *-l-*, *-n-*, or *-s-* (hence *-ll*, *-nn*, or *-ss*). Examples are the nouns *stóll* (stem *stól-*), *steinn*, *áss*, *jökull*, and the adjectives *sæll*, *mikill*, *litill*, *vænn*, and *lauss*. A few exceptions occur when *-l-*, *-n-*, or *-s-* follows a stressed short vowel, as in the nouns *vinr* and *selr*.

**Special Stem Rule 2, The *-r* Drop Rule.** Rule 2 concerns no replacement for the dropped *-r* ending. **When a consonant precedes a stem-final *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-*** is, the ending *-r* drops. For example, the nouns *vagn* (gen *vagns*, stem *vagn-*), *karl*, *hrafn*, *sigr*, *vetr*, *Björn*, *þurs*, and the adjectives *fagr*, *vittr*.

In a few words, such as *sigr* and *fagr*, the *-r-* at the end is not an ending *-r* but the final consonant of the stem. These words do not add the nominative masculine ending *-r* to the stem. The genitive singular (for example, *sigrs* with the stem *sigr* + the genitive *-s* ending) shows that the *-r-* at the end of the word in the nominative case is not a nominative ending. Other words in this group include *akr* (gen *akrs*), *aldr* (gen *aldrs*), *hafr* (gen *hafrs*), *otr* (gen *otrs*), and *vetr* (gen *vetrar*).

Words with stems ending in *-s-* drop genitive singular *-s* as well as the ending *-r*, for example, *þurs* (gen *þurs*) and *þorgils* (gen *þorgils*). The word *lax* (where *-x* is pronounced *ks*) behaves in the same way.

•  
In light of the two Special Stem Rules, consider the list of the 246 most frequent words given in Appendix A.

5.6 VERBS AND THE SPECIAL STEM RULES

With a few exceptions, verbs also follow the special stem rules. For instance, 3sg present *skínn* (*skín* + *r*) ‘it shines’ and *kýss* (*kýs* + *r*) ‘he chooses’ come from the infinitives *skína* and *kjósa*.

5.7 EXERCISE – SPECIAL STEM RULES

Give the stem of the following strong masculine nouns and state the applicable rule. If no Special Stem Rule applies, write ‘n/a’ (not applicable).

Ex: steinn ( <i>gen</i> steins)	<u>stein-</u>	<u>Rule 1 (r-Change)</u>
vetr ( <i>gen</i> vetr)	<u>vetr-</u>	<u>Rule 2 (r-Drop)</u>
1.     stóll ( <i>gen</i> stóls)	_____	_____
2.     selr ( <i>gen</i> sels)	_____	_____
3.     hrafn ( <i>gen</i> hrafns)	_____	_____
4.     akr ( <i>gen</i> akrs)	_____	_____
5.     karl ( <i>gen</i> karls)	_____	_____

5.8 WORDS WITH STEM ENDINGS -J- AND -V-

As noted earlier, the stem is the part of the word to which one adds endings. For example, the nouns *haugr*, *konungr*, and *saga* have the stems *haug-*, *konung-*, and *sag-*.

Some words, such as the noun *söngr* ‘song,’ the adjective *ríkr* ‘powerful,’ and the verb *telja* ‘count’ have stem-final *-j-* or *-v-* in certain forms: *söngva* (*gen* pl), *rikjum* (*dat* pl), and the verb *teljum* (2<sup>nd</sup> pl). Two basic rules govern the presence of *-j-* or *-v-* in these words.

- Stem-final *-j-* precedes endings which begin with *-a* and *-u*, (vowels that disappear), for example *segið* ‘you (*pl*) say,’ from *segja*.
- Stem-final *-v-* precedes endings which begin with *-a* and *-i*; *-v-* also occurs before *-u* when between two vowels (*hávum*, *dat* pl of *hár* ‘high’). Stem-final *-v-* between vowels is also sometimes spelled *-f-* (*háfum*).

5.9 STRONG NOUNS – INTRODUCTION

All nouns in Old Norse fall into one of two broad declension types: strong or weak. The terms strong and weak have little significance but are mostly useful for classification. Strong nouns have a wider range of endings than weak nouns and are grouped into four major types. By looking at the nominative singular form alone, it is not possible to determine a strong noun’s type. Instead, the types are based on common characteristics

of the endings the nouns take and the root vowel changes that take place in the stems.

The following chart shows common examples of the different types of strong noun across the three genders.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
Type 1	konungr, hersir	rún, för	skip, kvæði
Type 2	staðr, vinr	höfn, borg	
Type 3	fjörðr, skjöldr		
Type 4	maðr, vetr	vík, tönn	

Masculine strong nouns are found in all four types. Type 1 masculines are by far the largest group. Feminine strong nouns are found in all types, but rarely in Type 3. Neuter strong nouns are always Type 1. There are also nouns which do not easily fit into these categories, such as nouns whose stems end in a long vowel, and these are discussed in later lessons.

### 5.10 STRONG NOUNS – TYPE 1 MASCULINE

The majority of strong masculine nouns belong to Type 1, including names such as *Haraldr*, *Ragnarr*, *Porgeirr*, *Óláfr*, *Eiríkr*, and *Herjólf*.

	KONUNGR	ARMR	SKÓGR	HERSIR	SÖNGR	ENDINGS
Sg nom	konungr	armr	skógr	hersir	söngr	-r
acc	konung	arm	skóg	hersi	söng	-
dat	konungi	armi	skógi	hersi	söngvi	-i
gen	konungs	arms	skógar	hersis	söngs	-s, ar
Pl nom	konungar	armar	skógar	hersar	söngvar	-ar
acc	konunga	arma	skóga	hersa	söngva	-a
dat	konungum	örmum	skógum	hersum	söngum	-um
gen	konunga	arma	skóga	hersa	söngva	-a

Transl: *konungr* 'king,' *armr* 'arm,' *skógr* 'forest,' *hersir* 'lord,' *söngr* 'song.'

- The great majority of Type 1 masculines follow the declension of *konungr* and *armr*.
- Some Type 1 masculines have gen sg *-ar*, for example, *skógr* (gen *skógar*).
- About 20 Type 1 nouns, such as *hersir*, *hirðir*, and *læknir*, insert *-i-* in the singular, as do proper names such as *Grettir*, *Skírnir*, *Rerir*, and *Ymir*.
- A few Type 1 masculines, such as *söngr*, show stem final *-v-*. Others are *hörr*, *már*, *sær*, *spörr*, as well as the names *Sigtryggr*, *Nörr*, and *Niðhöggr*.

**Masculine with Special Stem Rules** (See Special Stem Rules above). *Sveinn*, 'boy,' (also the man's name, *Sveinn*) shows Rule 1 (-r Change) and *otr*, 'otter,' and *karl*, 'old man,' exemplify Rule 2 (-r Drop).

	SVEINN	OTR	KARL	ENDINGS
Sg nom	sveinn	otr	karl	-l, n, s, -
acc	svein	otr	karl	-
dat	sveini	otri	karli	-i
gen	sveins	otrs	karls	-s, ar
Pl nom	sveinar	otrar	karlar	-ar
acc	sveina	otra	karla	-a
dat	sveinum	otrum	körlum	-um
gen	sveina	otra	karla	-a

5.11 EXERCISE – STRONG NOUNS – TYPE 1 MASCULINE

The strong masculine nouns *vikingr* and *hest*r follow the pattern of *konungr*. *Jarl* follows *karl*. Decline these nouns below.

	VÍKINGR	HESTR	JARL
Sg			
nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl			
nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *vikingr* ‘Viking,’ *hest*r ‘stallion,’ and *jarl* ‘earl’

5.12 THE NOUNS *MAÐR* AND *SONR*

Two of the most commonly used nouns in the sagas are somewhat irregular. These are *maðr* and *sonr*, words which are cognate with English *man* and *son*.

*Maðr* means ‘man’ as well as ‘person,’ whether male or female, and in the plural ‘men’ or ‘people.’ It is frequently used in compounds, such as *landnámsmaðr* ‘settler,’ *farmaðr* ‘trader,’ and *þingmaðr* ‘thingman, the follower of an Icelandic *goði*.’

The *-ð-* in *maðr* is the result of a sound change in which *-nn-* changed to *-ð-* when followed by *-r-*. Hence, *mannr* from an earlier stage of the language became *maðr* in the nominative singular while *-nn-* was retained in other cases. Another example of this change occurs in the adverb *suðr* ‘to the south,’ based on the stem *sunn-* (compare the adverb

nnan 'from the south').

	MADR	SONR	EGILSSON
<b>Sg nom</b>	maðr	sonr	Egilsson
<b>acc</b>	mann	son	Egilsson
<b>dat</b>	manni	syni	Egilssyni
<b>gen</b>	manns	sonar	Egilssonar
<b>Pl nom</b>	menn	synir	Egilssynir
<b>acc</b>	menn	sonu	Egilsonu
<b>dat</b>	mönnum	sonum	Egilssonum
<b>gen</b>	manna	sona	Egilssona

*Sonr* declines with a -y- in the dat sg (*syni*) and nom pl (*synir*). It also drops the nom ending when used in compounds (*Egilsson*, *Bárðarson*).

### 5.13 EXERCISE – MADR AND SONR

Decline *maðr* and *sonr* in the following sentences and translate. The case is provided for you in the column on the left.

Ex: Þorsteinn hét maðr. Menn fara til Grænlands.  
There was a man named Þorstein. Men travel to Greenland.

#### CASE SINGULAR

#### PLURAL

- |     |  |                          |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| nom | 1. Herjólfur hét _____.                  | 5. _____ gera brú þessa. |
| acc | 2. Þorgerður sá _____.                   | 6. Þyri sá _____.        |
| dat | 3. Hon bjó á Dreptokki með _____.        | 7. Hon var með _____.    |
| gen | 4. Hon gerði brú þessa fyrir sálu _____. | 8. Þeir fara til _____.  |

Ex: Bjarni hét sonr Herjólfur. Synir hans búa á Dreptokki.  
The son of Herjolf was named Bjarni. His sons live at Dreptokki.

#### CASE SINGULAR

#### PLURAL

- |     |                                  |                                    |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| nom | 9. _____ hans fór til Grænlands. | 13. _____ hans fóru til Grænlands. |
| acc | 10. Óláfr mælir við _____ sinn.  | 14. Ingólfr mælir við _____ sína.  |

11. Hann bjó á Drepstokki með             
dat            sínum.

15. Hann bjó á Drepstokki með             
sínum.

12. Hon var móðir            hans.

16. Móðir            hans hét Ásgerðr.

5.14 THE WEAK VERB Hafa IN THE PRESENT TENSE

The weak verb *hafa* 'have' is one of the most frequently used verbs in Old Norse. It belongs to the 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation and is irregular in the present singular.

Present Tense

Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	hef	(I have)	Pl	vér (vit)	höfum	(we have)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	hefr	(you have)		þér (þit)	hafið	(you have)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann	hefr	(he, she, it has)		þeir	hafa	(they have)

*Hafa* also frequently occurs with the vocalic link *-i-* between verb stem and ending in the present singular: *ek hefi*; *þú hefir*; *hann hefir*.

5.15 EXERCISE – Hafa

Complete the sentences with the correct forms of *hafa* in the present tense.

Ex: ek hef

6. hann

7. vit

1. þér

8. þau

2. vér

9. þit

3. þeir

10. þær

4. hon

11. Haraldr

5. þú

5.16 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words that introduce phrases specifying time, place, direction, and manner. In prepositional phrases, nouns and pronouns become objects. Prepositions affect nouns by governing or determining their case.

There are relatively few prepositions, and it is best to learn them according to the way they govern. Some prepositions require their nouns to be in the accusative, some dative, and some in the genitive. Another important group takes either the accusative or the dative, depending on the intended meaning.

**Prepositions Taking the Accusative.** A few prepositions principally take the accusative.

**umfram** beyond, more than

**gegnum** through (also **í gegnum**)

**gegnum vegginn** (acc)

**through the wall**

**í gegnum eyjarnar** (acc)

**through the islands**

**Prepositions Taking the Dative.**

**af** of, out of, from

**nær** near

**at** towards, against, at, to

**ór** or **úr** from

**frá** from, about

**undan** (from) under, (from)

**hjá** by, near, with

beneath, near (to)

**móti** against, contrary to, toward  
(usually **á móti** or **í móti**)

**af skipi** (dat)

**from a ship**

**hjá Harald** (dat)

**with Harald**

**móti honum** (dat)

**against him**

**ór Noregi** (dat)

**from Norway**

**undan ströndum** (dat)

**near to shore**

**Prepositions Taking the Genitive.**

**meðal** among, between

**milli** between

(also **á milli**, **í milli**)

**til** to

**á milli Vágs ok Reykjaness** (gen) **between Vag and Reykjaness**

**til skipsins** (gen)

**to the ship**

**Prepositions Taking Either the Accusative or the Dative.**

**á** on, onto

**of** over, for

**eptir** (ept) after

**um** around, about; across

**fyrir** (fyr) before, in front of

**undir** (und) under

**í** in, into

**við** against, toward, with

**með** with

**yfir** over

Hann gekk á skip (*acc*).

*He went onto a ship.*

Hann gekk á skipi (*dat*).

*He walked about on a ship.*

Hann stóð á skipi (*dat*).

*He stood on a ship.*

These prepositions usually take the accusative when they express motion (for example, moving into, onto, or towards something). In contrast, they usually take the *dative* when expressing static position (that is, lack of motion, for example 'walking on a ship' or 'standing on the deck').

In the first example, *á* indicates motion toward the ship, requiring the noun to take the accusative. In the second and third examples, *á* indicates a stationary position with respect to the ship, thus requiring the dative.

The preposition *um* normally takes the accusative, for example, *um skipit* (*acc*) 'around the ship,' *bera öl um eld* (*acc*) 'carry ale across the fire.' On occasion, as for example in time expressions, *um* takes the dative, *bæði um haustum* (*dat*) *ok várum* (*dat*) 'around both the fall and spring.'

*Með* ('with') is somewhat special. The object of this preposition usually takes the accusative case if it is a thing or person being brought, carried, or forced.

*Þeir hljópu á brott með konur* (*acc*) *þeirra*, *lausafé* (*acc*), *ok bátinn* (*acc*).

*They ran off with their women, chattels, and the boat.*

If the object of *með* is a person or thing and expresses accompaniment (being 'with' someone or something), then the dative is mostly used.

*Þórólfr var með konungi* (*dat*).

*Thorolf was with the king.*

**Prepositions Taking Either the Accusative or the Genitive.** Prepositions ending in *-an* take accusative when expressing motion and genitive when expressing static position.

*handan* 'on the other side of'

*innan* 'from the inside'

*neðan* 'from below'

*ofan* 'above the surface of'

*útan* 'from the outside'

Hann kom útan fjörðinn (*acc*). *He came (from the outside) into the fjord.*

Hann stóð útan dyra (*gen*). *He stood outside the door.*

When preceded by *fyrir*, prepositions ending with *-an* answer the question 'place where' and take the accusative case, for example

*fyrir ofan sjó*

*above the water*

*fyrir útan hús*

*outside the house*

*fyrir ofan garð*

*above the farm*

*fyrir neðan brú*

*below the bridge*

*fyrir útan fjall*

*beyond the mountain*



## 5.17 READING – A MAN OF MODERATION (*GUNNLAUGS SAGA ORMSTUNGU*)

Icelandic chieftains (*goðar*, sg *goði*, or *höfðingjar*, sg *höfðingi*) played the role of advocate and upheld a standard of moderation, termed *hóf*. An individual who observed this standard was called a *hófsmaður*, a person of justice and temperance. The opposite of a *hófsmaður* was an *ójafnaðarmaður*, an unequal, overbearing, and aggressive person. *The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue* (*Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*) describes the chieftain Thorstein Egilsson, whose penchant for restraint was in marked contrast with the temperament of his father, the Viking warrior-poet Egil Skalla-Grimsson.

### *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu* (ch 1)

Þorsteinn hét maður; hann var Egilsson, Skalla-Grímssonar, Kveld-Úlfssonar hersis ór Nóregi; en Ásgerður hét móðir Þorsteins ok var Bjarnardóttir. Þorsteinn bjó at Borg í Borgarfirði; hann var auðigr at fé ok höfðingi mikill, vitr maður ok hógværr ok hófsmaður um alla hluti. Engi var hann afreksmaður um vöxt eða afl sem Egill,<sup>12</sup> faðir hans, en þó var hann it mesta afarmenni<sup>13</sup> ok vinsæll af allri alþýðu.

#### VOCABULARY

♦ *af prep* [w *dat*] of, by; off (of), out of, from

afarmenni *n* a big or strong man

afl *n* physical strength

afreksmaður *m* outstanding or exceptional man

♦ *allr <m acc pl alla, f dat sg allri, f öll, n allt> adj pron* all, entire, whole

alþýða *f* all the people, the majority of the people, the public, the common people

at *prep* [w *dat*] at, in; as to, as, with respect to; on account of, by reason of; close up to, around, by

♦ *auðigr <acc auðgan> adj* rich, wealthy; *auðigr at fé* very wealthy

Ásgerður <*acc & dat Ásgerði, gen Ásgerðar*> *f* Asgerd (personal name)

Bjarnardóttir *f* daughter of Bjorn (personal name)

Borg *f* Borg (place name)

Borgarfjörður <*dat Borgafirði*> *m* Borg's Fjord (place name)

búa *vb* live in a place, dwell; bjó (3sg past)

♦ *eða conj* or

Egill <*dat Agli, gen Egils*> *m* Egil (personal name)

en þó *adv* nevertheless

♦ *engi <f engi, n ekki> indef pron* no one, none, no

♦ *fé <gen fjár, gen pl fjá> n* cattle, sheep; wealth, money

hersir <-is, -ar> *m* regional military leader in Norway; chieftain; lord

♦ *hlutr <-ar, -ir, acc pl hluti> m* lot; thing

hófsmaður *m* man of moderation

hógværr *adj* gentle

höfðingi <*gen -ja, pl -jar*> *m* leader; chieftain; captain

inn, in, it *art* the

Kveld-Úlfsson *m* son of Kveld-Ulf (personal name), kveld-Ulfr, Night-Wolf

<sup>12</sup> Engi var hann ... sem Egill: 'He was not an outstanding man in size or strength like Egil.'

<sup>13</sup> It mesta afarmenni: 'a most powerful or strong man.'

**mesta** *wk n nom sg superl adj from mikill*  
most

♦**mikill** <f mikil, n mikit, comp meiri, superl  
mestr> *adj* big, tall, great; much,  
very

**Nóregr** <-s> *m* Norway

♦**ór** (also **úr**) *prep* [w dat] out of, from

♦**sem** *conj* as

**Skalla-Grímsson** *m* the son of Skalla-Grim  
(personal name), Bald-Grim

**um alla hluti** in every way

♦**vinsæll** *adj* beloved, popular

♦**vittr** <acc vitran> *adj* wise

**vöxtr** <acc vöxt, dat vexti, gen vaxtar, pl  
vextir, acc vöxtu> *m* size, stature,  
growth; shape

**Þorsteinn** <-s> *m* Thorstein (personal  
name)

### TRANSLATION

There was a man named Thorstein. He was the son of Egil, the son of Skalla-Grim, the son of Kveld-Ulf, a chieftain from Norway; and Thorstein's mother was named Asgerd and was the daughter of Bjarni. Thorstein lived at Borg in Borg's Fjord; he was very wealthy and a great leader, a wise man and gentle and a man of moderation in all respects. He was not an outstanding man in size or strength as Egil, his father. Nevertheless he was an extremely strong man and popular among the people.

## 5.18 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 5. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

### NOUNS

**jarl** – earl  
**faðir** – father  
**ferð** – journey  
**sumar** – summer

### ADJECTIVES

**sterkr** – strong  
**ungr** – young  
**víss** – certain; wise  
**vándr** – bad

### PRONOUNS

**hon** – she, it  
**allr** – all

### NUMERALS

**fjórir** – four

### VERBS

**þykkja** – to seem  
**eiga** – to own  
**láta** – to let  
**heita** – to call; be named

### PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

**eptir** – after  
**vel** – well  
**upp** – up  
**síðan** – then

### CONJUNCTIONS

**ef** – if  
**eða** – or

## EXERCISES

**5.19 Readings.** Give the gender, case, number and English meaning of the underlined nouns from the Ramsund runestone.

Sigríðr gerði brú þessa móðir Alreks dóttir Orms fyr sálu Hólmgeirs föður Sigræðar búanda síns.

	NOUN	GENDER	CASE	NUMBER	ENGLISH
1.	Sigríðr	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	brú	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	móðir	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	Alreks	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	dóttir	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	Orms	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	sálu	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	Hólmgeirs	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	föður	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	Sigræðar	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	búanda	_____	_____	_____	_____

**5.20 Readings.** The following sentences come from the readings. Put the words into proper order.

Ex: þessi / Haraldr / eptir / kumbl / gera / Gorm / það / konungr

Haraldr konungr það gera kumbl þessi eptir Gorm.

1. gerði / Hólmgeirs / brú / Sigríðr / fyrir / þessa / sálu

2. móðir / Ásgerðr / en / Þorsteins / hét / Bjarnardóttir / var / ok

3. höfðingi / hann / mikill / fé / ok / auðigr / var / at

4. afreksmaðr / eða / Egill / afl / engi / vöxt / var / sem / um / hann

**5.21 Readings.** Translate the following passage from the *Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent Tongue*.

Þorsteinn hét maðr; hann var

Egilsson, Skalla-Grímssonar,

Kveld-Úlfssonar hersis ór Nóregi;

en Ásgerðr hét móðir Þorsteins

ok var Bjarnardóttir.

**5.22 Special Stem Rules.** Give the stem of the following strong masculine nouns and state the applicable rule. If no Special Stem Rule applies, write 'n/a' (not applicable).

Ex: steinn (*gen steins*)

stein-

Rule 1 (r-Change)

vetr (*gen vetr*s)

vetr-

Rule 2 (r-Drop)

1. hafr (*gen haf*s)

2. hamr (*gen ham*s)

3.	morginn ( <i>gen</i> morgins)	_____	_____
4.	hungr ( <i>gen</i> hungrs)	_____	_____
5.	vagn ( <i>gen</i> vagns)	_____	_____
6.	sveinn ( <i>gen</i> sveins)	_____	_____
7.	sigr ( <i>gen</i> sigrs)	_____	_____
8.	jötunn ( <i>gen</i> jötuns)	_____	_____
9.	þegn ( <i>gen</i> þegns)	_____	_____
10.	hagr ( <i>gen</i> hags)	_____	_____
11.	angr ( <i>gen</i> angrs)	_____	_____

**5.23 Nouns.** Decline the following Type 1 strong masculine nouns. *Hundr* and *fiskr* decline like *konungr*, *læknir* like *hersir*, and *hörr* like *söngr*.

	HUNDR	FISKR	LÆKNIR	HÖRR
<b>Sg</b> <i>nom</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Pl</b> <i>nom</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____

*Transl: hundr 'dog,' fiskr 'fish,' læknir 'physician,' hörr 'flax, linen'*

**5.24 Sonr and Maðr.** Identify the case and number of the nouns *maðr* and *sonr* in the passage below from *Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu*.

Þorsteinn hét maðr; hann var Egilsson, Skalla-Grímssonar, Kveld-Úlfssonar hersis ór Nóregi.

1. maðr \_\_\_\_\_

2. Skalla-Grímssonar \_\_\_\_\_
3. Egilsson \_\_\_\_\_

4. Kveld-Úlfssonar \_\_\_\_\_

**5.25 Prepositions.**

**A.** Translate the following sentences.

1. Bjarni gekk á skip. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Ásgerðr gekk á skipi. \_\_\_\_\_

fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition.

í til eptir á á milli

1. Haraldr konungr bað gera kumbl þessi \_\_\_\_\_ Gorm föður sinn ok eptir þyri móður sína.
2. Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr ágætr \_\_\_\_\_ Nóregi.
3. Hann fór \_\_\_\_\_ Íslands ok nam Miðfjörð ok Línakradal.
4. Hann var \_\_\_\_\_ skipi.
5. Ingólfr gaf Herjólfri land \_\_\_\_\_ Vágs ok Reykjaness.

**Verb Review.** Conjugate the verbs *vera* and *hafa* in the present tense.

**vera**

- |                           |    |                      |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------|
| Ek _____ kona Herjólfis.  | 4. | Vér _____ víkingar.  |
| Þú _____ kona Herjólfis.  | 5. | Þér _____ víkingar.  |
| Hon _____ kona Herjólfis. | 6. | Þeir _____ víkingar. |

**hafa**

- |                  |     |                  |
|------------------|-----|------------------|
| Ek _____ skip.   | 10. | Vér _____ skip.  |
| Þú _____ skip.   | 11. | Þér _____ skip.  |
| Hann _____ skip. | 12. | Þeir _____ skip. |

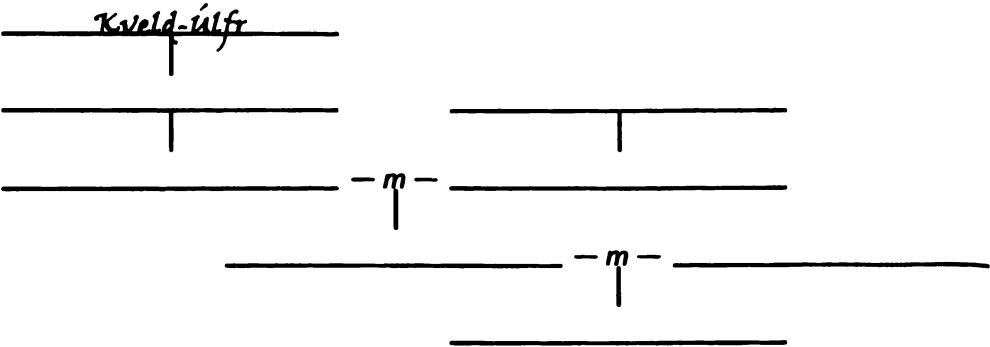
**Pronoun Review.** Fill in the blanks with the correct pronouns.

Ex: Ingólfr gaf Herjólfri land.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hann gaf Herjólfri land. Ingólfr gaf \_\_\_\_\_ honum land.

1. Herjólfir var frændi Alreks.  
\_\_\_\_\_ var frændi Alreks. Herjólfir var frændi \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Herjólfir fór til Grænlands með Eiríki.  
\_\_\_\_\_ fór til Grænlands með Eiríki. Herjólfir fór til Grænlands með \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Móðir Bjarna hét Þorgerðr. (Remember that Bjarni is a man's name)  
\_\_\_\_\_ hét Þorgerðr. Móðir \_\_\_\_\_ hét Þorgerðr.
4. Haraldr gerði kumbl eptir Gorm.  
\_\_\_\_\_ gerði kumbl eptir Gorm. Haraldr gerði kumbl eptir \_\_\_\_\_.

**5.28 Genealogy.** Beginning with *Kveld-Úlfr*, chart the genealogy in the reading passage from *Gunnlaugs Saga* by filling in the family tree below. The wife of *Þorsteinn* was *Jófríðr* and one of their children was *Helga in fagra* (Helga the Fair).



**5.29 Runic Script.** Fill in the blanks below. The first line has been done as an example.

	RUNIC SCRIPT	TRANSLITERATION	STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE
Ex:	HIRIR	<i>sirir</i>	<i>Sigrir</i>
1.	YNPIA		
2.	PTPNR		
3.	HTNN		
4.		hulmkirs	
5.	BNtTt		
6.		fur	
7.		tutiR	

**5.30 Runic Script.** Write your name and the names of three other people.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Note on Runic spelling:** Represent the pronunciation of the word as closely possible. See the preceding lesson for a list of runic equivalents for some letters in the English alphabet not found in the younger futhark. If you don't know which rune to use, experiment by pronouncing the rune and word aloud. Viking Age rune masters followed the same process. They depended on their ear.

## LESSON 6

### SACRAL KINGSHIP IN ANCIENT SCANDINAVIA

*Er mér úlfsins ván, er ek eyrun sé*  
(I expect a wolf when I see its ears)



**Figure 25. The Swedes Kill Their King, Domaldi.**

#### **.1 CULTURE – THE YNGLINGS IN SWEDEN AND NORWAY**

The passages in this lesson recount legendary history from Icelandic written sources. The first reading is from *The Saga of The Ynglings* (*Ynglinga saga*), the opening section of Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, a history of the kings of Norway. *Ynglinga saga* is a mixture of mythic and legendary stories about the Ynglingar, a line of Swedish rulers who claimed descent from the fertility god Yngvi-Freyr, and the family took its name from this god. Although the Ynglings were from Sweden (Svíþjóð or Svíaland), its members formed alliances with families in other Scandinavian regions.

One branch of the Ynglings rose to prominence in the Vík region of southern Norway. The second reading of this lesson tells of Halfdan the Black (*Hálfðan svartí*) an early member of the Norwegian Ynglingar. Halfdan started as a petty king ruling the small kingdom of Agder. Through war and negotiation, he greatly increased the size of his kingdom until he became a powerful chieftain in Vestfold. Halfdan was the ancestor of Norway's Viking Age kings, who called themselves Ynglingar.

## 6.2 READING – DOMALDI SACRIFICED FOR BETTER HARVESTS (YNGLINGA SAGA, FROM HEIMSKRINGLA)

The following passage is about Domaldi, a Swedish Ynglingr King. It takes place during severe famine in Sweden, which lasted over three autumns. The story is told according to a chronology involving *it fyrsta haust* 'the first autumn,' *annat haust* 'the second autumn' and *it þriðja haust* 'the third autumn.'

### Ynglinga saga (ch 15)

Dómalði tók arf eptir föður sinn, Vísbur, ok réð löndum. Á hans dögum gerðisk sultr seyra<sup>14</sup> í Svíþjóð. Þá hófu Svíar blót stór at Uppsölum. It fyrsta haust<sup>15</sup> blótuðu þeir yxnu en batnaði ekki árferð. En annat haust hófu þeir mannblót, en árferð var söm eða verri. It þriðja haust kómu Svíar fjölmennt til Uppsala at hefja blót. Þá áttu höfðingjar ráðaga sína, ok kom þat ásamt með þeim,<sup>16</sup> at hallærit stóð af Dómalda, konungi þeira, ok þat með,<sup>17</sup> at þeir skyldu blóta honum ok veita honum atgöngu ok drepa hann ok rjóða sta með blóði hans, ok svá gerðu þeir.

### VOCABULARY

*af prep* [w dat] from, by

◆ *annarr* <f önnur, n nom & acc sg annat>  
adj pron one of two, other, another;  
second

*arfr* <-s> m inheritance

*at prep* [w dat] at, in

◆ *at conj* that

*at inf marker* to

*atganga f* attack

◆ *á prep* [w acc] onto, on, towards  
(motion); with respect to; [w dat]  
on; upon; at; in (position)

*árferð f* season, harvest

*ásamt adv* together

*áttu 3pl past of eiga*

*batna* <-að-> vb improve; *impers* [e-m]  
*batnar* one recovers

*batnaði 3sg past of batna*

*blóð n* blood

*blót n* sacrifice

*blóta* <-að> vb [w acc] worship; worst  
with sacrifice; [w dat] sacrifice  
sacrifice in worship

*blótuðu 3pl past of blóta (wk vb)*

◆ *dagr* <dat degi, gen dags, pl dagar, c  
dögum> m day

*Dómalði m* Domaldi (personal name)

◆ *drepa* <drepr, drap, drápu, drepinn>  
slay, kill, smite

◆ *eða conj* or

◆ *eiga* <á, átti, áttir> pret-pres vb ov  
have, possess; *eiga ráðagörð* ta  
council

◆ *ekki adv* not

*fjölmennt adv* in crowds, in large number

◆ *fyrstr* <wk n acc sg fyrsta> superl adj  
*fyrri* first

◆ *gera (also göra)* <-ði, -ðr~gerr> vb make

<sup>14</sup> *gerðisk sultr ok seyra*: 'there was hunger and starvation.'

<sup>15</sup> *it fyrsta haust, annat haust, it þriðja haust*: In Old Norse, the accusative case is used without preposition to express the time when something happens.

<sup>16</sup> *kom þat ásamt með þeim*: 'it was agreed among them.'

<sup>17</sup> *ok þat með*: 'accordingly,' 'and along with that.'



do, act; **gerask** *mid* become, come to pass, occur, happen  
**k** 3sg past *mid* of **gera**  
 3pl past of **gera**  
**ri** *n* famine; **hallæri-t** the famine  
*n* autumn  
**chefr**, **hóf**, **hófu**, **hafinn** > *vb* lift, raise, heave; begin  
 1pl past of **hefja**  
**igi** <gen -ja, pl -jar> *m* leader; chieftain  
**ep** [w acc] into (motion); [w dat] in, within, at (position)  
 1/3sg past of **koma**  
**ia** <kemr~kømr, kom, kómu~kvámu, kominn> *vb* come  
 3pl past of **koma**  
**blót** *n* human sacrifice  
 1 prep [w acc] with (in the sense of bringing, carrying, or forcing); [w dat] with (in the sense of accompanying or togetherness);  
**með** *adv* as well, with it  
 1 <ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn> *vb* [w dat] advise, counsel; rule, govern, manage; **réð löndum** ruled over (his) lands  
**þrð** *f* council  
 1/3sg past of **ráða**  
 <rýðr, rauð, ruðu, roðinn> *vb* redden  
**r** <*f* söm, *n* samt> *adj pron* same  
*f* starvation  
 1 refl poss pron his, her, its own  
*acc sg* of **sinn**

♦**skulu** <skal, skyldi, past inf skyldu> *pret-pres vb* shall (obligation, purpose, necessity, fate); should  
**skyldu** 3pl past of **skulu**  
**stalli** *m* altar (heathen)  
 ♦**standa** <stendr, stóð, stóðu, staðinn> *vb* stand; **standa af** [e-u] be caused by [sth]  
**stóð** 1/3sg past of **standa**  
 ♦**stórr** <*n acc pl* stór> *adj* big  
**sultr** <-ar> *m* hunger  
 ♦**svá** *adv* so, thus; so  
**Svíar** *m pl* the Swedes  
**Svíþjóð** *f* Sweden (place name)  
**söm** see **samr**  
 ♦**taka** <tekr, tók, tóku, tekinn> *vb* take; **taka arf** inherit  
**tók** 1/3sg past of **taka**  
**Uppsalir** <dat pl Uppsölum, gen pl Uppsala> *m pl* Uppsala (place name)  
**uxi** (also **oxi**) <acc, dat, & gen uxa, pl yxn~øxn, dat yxnum~øxnum, gen yxna~øxna> *m ox*  
 ♦**veita** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* grant, give, offer; assist; **veita** [e-m] **atgöngu** attack [sb]  
**verri** *comp adj* of illr worse  
**Vísburr** <-s> *m* Visbur (personal name)  
**yxnum** see **uxi**  
 ♦**þá** *adv* then, at that time  
**þeir** <acc þá, dat þeim, gen þeira~þeirra> *pron* they (*m pl*)  
**þriði** <*n acc sg* þriðja> *ord num* third

#### ATION

Idi took the inheritance after [the death of] his father Visbur and ruled over his lands. days there was famine and starvation in Sweden. Then the Swedes began large ces in Uppsala. The first autumn they sacrificed oxen, but the season did not improve. and autumn they sacrificed humans, but the harvest was the same or worse. In the uthumn, the Swedes came in great numbers to Uppsala to make sacrifices. Then the

chieftains held a council. They agreed that the famine was due to Domaldi, their king, and because of that, they should sacrifice him and attack him and kill him and redden the altars with his blood. And so they did.

### 6.3 CULTURE – THE TEMPLE AT UPPSALA AND HUMAN SACRIFICE

Accounts of pagan religious practice survive in medieval Christian writings. A famous example comes from the German cleric Adam of Bremen. Writing ca. 1070, Adam described what he had heard of the temple at Uppsala in Sweden. This building, he reports, contained cult statues of gods similar to Thor, Odin, and Frey. Adam, who wrote in Latin, gives an account of a pagan festival which a traveler described to him:

It is customary also to solemnize in Uppsala, at nine-year intervals, a general feast of all the provinces of Sweden. From attendance at this festival no one is exempted. Kings and people all and singly send their gifts to Uppsala and, what is more distressing than any kind of punishment, those who have already adopted Christianity redeem themselves through these ceremonies. The sacrifice is of this nature: of every living thing that is male, they offer nine heads, with the blood of which it is customary to placate gods of this sort. The bodies they hang in the sacred grove that adjoins the temple. Now this grove is so sacred in the eyes of the heathen that each and every tree in it is believed to be divine because of the death or putrefaction of the victims. Even dogs and horses hang there with men. A Christian seventy-two years old told me that he had seen their bodies suspended promiscuously.

(Trans. Francis J. Tschan. *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*)

Adam's Christian viewpoint, education, and perhaps his imagination may have influenced his description. Nevertheless, from this and other sources, it seems clear that open-air, blood sacrifice was a part of pagan Norse religious practice.

### 6.4 STRONG NOUNS – TYPE 1 FEMININES AND NEUTERS

**Feminine.** Most strong feminine nouns belong to Type 1. An important feature is *u*-umlaut in the nominative, accusative, and dative singular. *U*-umlaut in these nouns recalls a time in the language when *-u* existed as an ending. This ending was dropped before the time of the Viking Age, but its effect remained on stems containing the vowel *-a-*, as in the words *mön* (stem *man-*, gen *manar*) and *för* (stem *far-*, gen *farar*).

RÚN	FÖR	KERLING	SKEL	ÖR	HEIÐR	ENDINGS
rún	för	kerling	skel	ör	heiðr	-, -r
rún	för	kerling	skel	ör	heiði	-, -i
rún	för	kerlingu	skel	ör	heiði	-, -u, -i
rúnar	farar	kerlingar	skeljar	örvar	heiðar	-ar
rúnar	farar	kerlingar	skeljar	örvar	heiðar	-ar
rúnar	farar	kerlingar	skeljar	örvar	heiðar	-ar
rúnum	förum	kerlingum	skeljum	örum	heiðum	-um
rúna	fara	kerlinga	skelja	örva	heiða	-a

'rune,' *för* 'journey,' *kerling* 'old woman,' *skel* 'shell,' *ör* 'arrow,' *heiðr* 'heath'

arge majority of Type 1 feminines follows the declension of *rún* and *för*.

• Type 1 feminines, such as *skel* and *ey*, have a stem final -j- which appears only before -a- and -u-. So do many feminine names, such as *Signý* (acc *Signýju*).

•, such as *ör* (see above), have stem final -v- which appears only before -a- and

•, such as *laug*, *ull*, *ey*, *hel*, and those ending in -ing (*kerling*) and -ung (*lausung*) the ending -u in the dative singular.

•, such as *heiðr* and *hildr*, have -r in the nominative and -i in the accusative and the singular. Feminine names ending in -r decline like *heiðr* (*Ásgerðr*, *Þorgerðr*, *hildr*, *Gunnhildr*, and *Sigríðr*). Names ending in -dís, such as *Freydís* and *Ásdís*, have no -r in the nominative singular, but otherwise decline like *Ásgerðr*. Nouns like *ylgr*, but whose stems end in -k- or -g-, show stem-final -j- before -a- and -u-: *ylgr* (acc *ylgr*), *gýgr* (pl *gýgjar*) and *rygr* (pl *rygjar*).

strong neuter nouns belong to Type 1 and decline much like the masculines. They show u-umlaut in the nominative and accusative plural, as in the word *land* and words of more than one syllable, u-umlaut shifts -a- to -ö- in the first syllable and to -u- in following (unstressed) syllables, for example *herað*, pl *heruð*.

SKIP	LAND	HERAÐ	KYN	HÖGG	KVÆÐI	ENDINGS
skip	land	herað	kyn	högg	kvæði	-, -i
skip	land	herað	kyn	högg	kvæði	-, -i
skipi	landi	heraði	kyni	höggvi	kvæði	-i
skips	lands	heraðs	kyns	höggs	kvæðis	-s, -is
skip	lönd	heruð	kyn	högg	kvæði	-, -i
skip	lönd	heruð	kyn	högg	kvæði	-, -i
skipum	löndum	heruðum	kynjum	höggum	kvæðum	-um
skipa	landa	heraða	kynja	höggva	kvæða	-a

'ship,' *land* 'land,' *herað* 'district,' *kyn* 'kin,' *högg* 'blow,' *kvæði* 'poem'

- The majority of Type 1 neuters follow the declension of *skip*, *land*, and *herað*.
- Some Type 1 neuters, such as *kyn*, have stem-final *-j-*. So also *egg*, *men*, *nef*, and *ský*.
- Some, such as *högg* (see above), have stem-final *-v-* (which appears before *-a-* and *-i-*). So also, *böl*, *mjöl*, and *smjör*.
- Others, like *kvæði*, insert *-i-* before the endings except in the dative and genitive plural. So also *leyfi*, *ørendi*, *enni* and *fylki*. Nouns of this group with roots ending in *-k-* or *-g-*, such as *fylki* and *ríki*, have stem-final *-j-*, for example, *fylkjum*, *fylkja* and *rikjum*, *rikja*.

**6.5 EXERCISE – STRONG NOUNS, TYPE 1 FEMININES AND NEUTERS**

Decline *mön* (feminine), *nál* (feminine), and *bak* (neuter).

	MÖN	NÁL	BAK
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>Pl nom</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *mön* ‘mane,’ *nál* ‘needle,’ *bak* ‘back’

**6.6 PAST TENSE OF WEAK VERBS**

All weak verbs form their past tense by adding a suffix containing a dental consonant (*-ð-*, *-d-*, or *-t-*) plus the past tense ending. For example: *kall-að-a* ‘I called,’ *mæl-t-a* ‘I spoke,’ *tal-d-a* ‘I counted,’ and *vak-t-a* ‘I woke.’ All weak verbs share the same past tense endings but differ somewhat in the dental suffix.

1<sup>st</sup> conjugation weak verbs insert the past tense dental suffix *-að-* before the endings (*kall-að-i*). The past endings *-um*, *-uð*, and *-u* trigger *u*-umlaut in the plural, changing *-að-* to *-uð-* (*köll-uð-u*). All other weak verbs add a dental suffix without a linking vowel (*mæl-t-i*, *tal-d-i*, *vak-t-i*).

**Past Tense Endings of Weak Verbs**

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-a	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-ir	-uð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-i	-u

		1 <sup>ST</sup> CONJUG <i>KALLA</i>	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONJUG <i>MÆLA</i>	3 <sup>RD</sup> CONJUG <i>TELJA</i>	4 <sup>TH</sup> CONJUG <i>VAKA</i>
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	kallaða	mæлта	talda	vakta
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	kallaðir	mæltir	taldir	vaktir
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann	kallaði	mælti	taldi	vakti
Pl 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér	kölluðum	mæltum	töldum	vöktum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þér	kölluðuð	mæltuð	tölduð	vöktuð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir	kölluðu	mæltu	töldu	vöktu

A few important 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation weak verbs have irregular past tense stems. These are *sækja* (3sg past *sótt-i*), *þykkja* (*þótt-i*) and *yrkja* (*ort-i*). Note that in English the same verbs, such as *seek* (past *sought*) and *think* (past *thought*), show similar irregularity. The same pattern can be seen in *work* and the archaic past tense form *wrought* (*worked*).

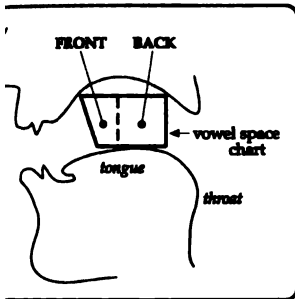


Figure 26. The Vowel Space Chart of the Vocal Tract, showing the position of the vocal tract used for production of vowels.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation weak verbs often show vowel alternation between present and past. The two most common patterns are *e-a* (*telja, taldi*) and *y~u* (*spyrja, spurði*).
- The past tense of the important 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation weak verb *hafa* is regular: *ek hafða, þú hafðir, hann hafði, vér höfðum, þér höfðuð, þeir höfðu*.

## 6.7 VOWEL SOUNDS AND ASSIMILATION

Assimilation is a process in which one becomes more like a neighboring sound in its pronunciation, acquiring one or more of its attributes. The differences in differentiating one vowel from another are functions of the tongue and lips. For example, when pronouncing the vowel in the English word 'see' (the phonetic symbol *i* in the Figure), the lips are spread and the tongue is forward and up toward the roof of the mouth. When pronouncing the vowel in the English word 'beet', the lips assume a more rounded shape and the tongue is farther back.

Vowels can be charted according to whether they are high or low and front or back. The terms describe the position of the tongue. Additionally each vowel is rounded or unrounded, depending upon the shape of the lips while the vowel is being pronounced. The vowel in the word 'see' is

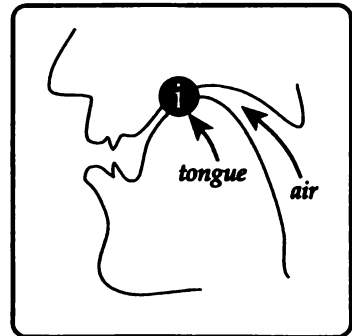


Figure 27. Pronunciation of the Vowel *i*, as in English 'see.'

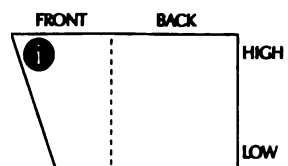


Figure 28. The Vowel *i*.

high, front, and unrounded, while the vowel in 'sue' is high, back, and rounded.

Vowels can be plotted on a vowel space chart which is an effective tool for visualizing the relative position of vowels in the mouth. Because the sound *i* (as in 'see') is produced high in the mouth with the tongue raised toward the front of the mouth, it is found high and front on the vowel space chart.

The two charts below, one for short vowels and one for long vowels, plot the positions in the mouth of thirteenth-century Old Icelandic vowels.

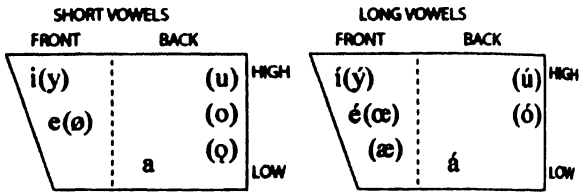


Figure 29. Old Icelandic Vowel System. Vowels within parentheses are rounded.

6.8 I-UMLAUT

Old Icelandic exhibits a series of regular vowel alternations known as *i*-umlaut. Unlike *u*-umlaut, which applies only to the vowel *-a-* (*saga*, gen *sögu*), *i*-umlaut operates on a range of vowels. The following chart gives the full set of *i*-umlaut vowel alternations.

VOWEL		WITH I-UMLAUT	VOWEL		WITH I-UMLAUT
a	>	e	u	>	y
á	>	æ	(j)ú/jó	>	ý
o	>	ø (later e)	ð(ɔ)	>	þ
ó	>	œ	au	>	ey

These alternations occur throughout Old Icelandic grammar.

- The plurals of certain types of nouns; for example, *faðir*, pl *feðr*; *maðr*, pl *menn*; *bróðir*, pl *bræðr*; *áss* 'god,' pl *æsir*.
- The dative singular of some nouns; for example, *völlr* 'field, plain' (stem *vall-*), dat *velli*; *hönd* 'hand' (stem *hand-*), dat *hendi*.
- The comparative and superlative forms of adjectives; for example, *fagr*, *fegri*, *fegrstr* 'fair, fairer, fairest'; *hár*, *hær(r)i*, *hæstr* 'high, higher, highest'; *stórr*, *stærri*, *stærstr* 'big, bigger, biggest.'
- The present singular of strong verbs; for example, *fara*, *hon ferr* 'she travels'; *standa*, *hon stendr* 'she stands'; *ráða*, *hon ræðr* 'she rules'; *róa* 'row,' *hon rær* 'she rows.'

Like *u*-umlaut, *i*-umlaut in Old Icelandic goes back to a process of sound assimilation

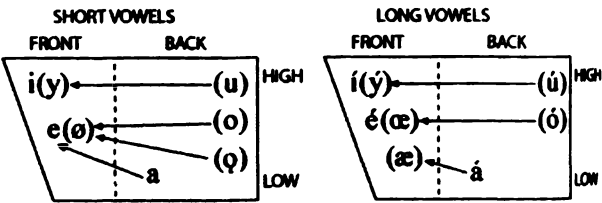


Figure 30. I-Umlaut of Old Icelandic Vowels. Vowels within parentheses are rounded.

in pre-Viking times. Back vowels were fronted when followed by a suffix containing *-i-* (or *-j-*). For example, *á* (back and low) in *áss* becomes *æ* (front and high) in *æsir* as noted in the accompanying vowel charts.

By the Viking Age, the conditioning environment for *i*-umlaut was lost in many words, but the fronted vowels remained. These fronted vowels became part of the grammar of the language. For instance, a shifted vowel marks the difference between singular and plural in many nouns, such as *maðr* (pl *menn*), *gás* (pl *gæss*), *fótr* (pl *fætr*), and *nús* (pl *mýss*). English also went through a period of *i*-umlaut and employs a shifted vowel in the plural of the same words: *man* (pl *men*), *goose* (pl *geese*), *foot* (pl *feet*), and *mouse* (pl *mice*). *i*-umlaut plays a similar role in strong verbs, distinguishing present singular from plural.

INFINITIVE		3SG PRES WITH I-UMLAUT
fara	>	ferr
ráða	>	ræðr
koma	>	kømr
fljúga	>	flýgr
hlaupa	>	hleypr

In Old Icelandic, a suffix containing an *-i-* cannot be used to predict the application of *i*-umlaut. Some examples which do not show shifted vowels are *landi* (dat sg of *land*), *tadi* (dat sg of *staðr*), *farinn* (ppart of *fara*), *standinn* (ppart of *standa*), *farið* (2pl pres of *fara*), and *standið* (2pl pres of *standa*). Some examples which do show shifted vowels are *legi* (dat sg of *dagr*) and *tekinn* (ppart of *taka*).

### 5.9 IDENTIFYING THE FOUR WEAK VERB CONJUGATIONS

This section introduces a series of steps enabling the identification of a weak verb's conjugation, provided one knows its infinitive and past tense stem (the 3sg past minus its ending).

**Step 1.** Does the weak verb have a past tense stem ending in *-að-* (for example *kalla*, *kallaði*)? If yes, it is 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation. If no, proceed to step 2.

**Step 2.** Does the root vowel of the infinitive show *i*-umlaut (is the vowel *-e-*, *-æ-*, *-ø-*, *-œ-*, *-y-*, *-ý-*, or *-ey-*)? If no, the verb is 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation. If yes, proceed to step 3. **Exceptions:** *segja* and *þegja* are 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation, *vilja* is 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation, and a small number of single-syllable verbs ending in *-á* or *-já*, such as *spá*, are 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation.

**Step 3.** Is the stem long or short (see explanation in the box below)? If long, the verb is 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation. If short the verb is 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation. **Exception:** *gera* belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation.

To determine a weak verb’s stem length, one counts the number of vowels and consonants in the stem, starting with the vowel.

**Long stems** consist of a short vowel followed by two consonants (*send-a, erf-a, fylg-ja, yrk-ja, pykk-ja*) or a long vowel followed by a single consonant (*mæl-a, býð-a, sæk-ja, heyr-a*). These are 2<sup>nd</sup> conjugation.

**Short stems** consist of a short vowel followed by a single consonant (*tel-ja, ber-ja, spyr-ja, vil-ja*) or a long vowel followed by no consonant at all (*kný-ja*). These are 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation. (Note that *-gg-* counts as a single consonant when determining stem length, hence *leggja* (past *lagði*) and *hyggja* (*hugði*) are 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation verbs.)

6.10 EXERCISE – IDENTIFYING WEAK VERB CONJUGATIONS

Identify the conjugations of each weak verb below and translate.

- Ex: kalla, kallaði      1<sup>st</sup>. call
- |                   |       |                    |       |
|-------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. ætla, ætlaði   | _____ | 8. mæla, mælti     | _____ |
| 2. veita, veitti  | _____ | 9. svara, svaraði  | _____ |
| 3. tala, talaði   | _____ | 10. segja, sagði   | _____ |
| 4. hafa, hafði    | _____ | 11. þora, þorði    | _____ |
| 5. skilja, skildi | _____ | 12. leita, leitaði | _____ |
| 6. vaka, vakti    | _____ | 13. senda, sendi   | _____ |
| 7. setja, setti   | _____ | 14. una, unði      | _____ |

6.11 VERBS – VOICE, AN INTRODUCTION

There are three **voices**: active, middle, and passive. In Old Norse, verbs have active and middle endings, while the passive voice is usually expressed with a helping verb and past participle. Voice answers the following important question: what is the role of the subject in the sentence?

Verbs with **active** endings indicate that the subject *performs* the action expressed by the verb. All the verb endings and formations discussed to this point in the book are active, and the readings contain many examples.

- |                     |                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dómaldi réð löndum. | <i>Domaldi ruled the lands.</i>     |
| Blótuðu þeir yxnum. | <i>They sacrificed oxen.</i>        |
| Hófu þeir mannblót. | <i>They began human sacrifices.</i> |

A verb generally takes **middle** endings when the subject performs an action on or for him- or herself. This use of the middle is called reflexive because the action reflects back on the subject. Although usage of the middle voice centers around the reflexive, it has been extended to encompass a range of related functions, such as the expression of reciprocal



(actions performed by subjects on 'each other'). These will be discussed in more detail in this book.

middle voice is easily recognized by its distinctive endings. In the 1sg the ending is *-umk* and in the 1pl *-umk* or *-umsk*. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons add *-sk* to the active endings. Following examples come from the readings.

Á hans dögum **gerðisk** sultr ok seyra í Svíþjóð.

*In his days there was famine and starvation in Sweden.*

**Beiddusk** allir at hafa líkit með sér.

*All asked to take the body for themselves.*

En þeir **sættusk** svá, at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði.

*And they agreed among themselves that the body would be divided between four places.*

	ACTIVE GERA		MIDDLE GERASK	
	PRES	PAST	PRES	PAST
<b>Sg 1<sup>st</sup></b>	geri	gerða	gerumk	gerðumk
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	gerir	gerðir	gerisk	gerðisk
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	gerir	gerði	gerisk	gerðisk
<b>Pl 1<sup>st</sup></b>	gerum	gerðum	gerum(s)k	gerðum(s)k
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	gerið	gerðuð	gerizk	gerðuzk
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	gera	gerðu	gerask	gerðusk

middle voice *-r-* drops before *-sk* (for example, *gerir* becomes *gerisk*). When a *-d-*, *-t-* precedes *-sk*, the dental drops and *-sk* changes to *-zk* (for example, *gerið* becomes *gerizk*).

Passive voice is used when the subject undergoes an action rather than performing an action. Passive does not have a distinct set of endings but employs the auxiliary verb *vera* (to be) or *hafa* (to have) with a past participle. The reading contains several examples.

His body **var flutt** á Hringaríki.

*His body was moved to Hringariki.*

The head **fuðit lagt** í haug at Steini.

*The head was placed in a mound at Stein.*

They **kallaðir** Hálfðanarhaugar.

*and [they] are called Halfdan's mounds.*

#### EXERCISES – SNORRI STURLUSON AND HEIMSKRINGLA

Examples in this lesson come from *Heimskringla*, attributed to the Icelandic chieftain Snorri Sturluson.

Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241). *Heimskringla* is a major source for the medieval history, myth, and legend of the Scandinavian countries as well as a work of great literary merit.



Figure 31. Snorri Sturluson

The oldest, complete extant manuscript of *Heimskringla* dates from the seventeenth century. It was probably about this time that *Heimskringla* acquired its name, which means 'Orb of the World.'

*Heimskringla* begins with *Ynglinga saga* whose opening words are '*Kringla heimsins*,' a phrase that may originally be a translation of Latin *Orbis Terrarum* ('The Orb of the World'). *Ynglinga saga* uses these words because it provides a description of world geography before tracing the lineage of the Yngling kings back to their mythical origins.

Although we know a good deal about Snorri as one of the most powerful Icelandic chieftains of his time, the medieval sources tell little about him as a writer. For this reason, it is not certain how much, if any, Snorri himself wrote of *Heimskringla* or the other texts which are often attributed to him. Perhaps Snorri, who was a rich

man, supplied the vision for the work and commissioned writers, whom he oversaw. It seems likely that the majority of *Heimskringla* was written in the 1220s and 1230s.

*Heimskringla* consists of a short prologue and 16 individual sagas. The first, *Ynglinga saga*, begins in mythic times and traces the descent of the Norwegian kings from the gods down to Halfdan the Black (*Hálfðan svarti*), who is the focus of the second saga. The rest of the sagas are dedicated to individual kings, arranged chronologically according to their reigns. *Heimskringla* reveals the characters of the individual kings through their actions. The work tells history as collections of stories motivated by the personalities of the different kings.

*Heimskringla* relies on three main sources: oral tradition, skaldic verse, and written Icelandic and Norwegian prose. Snorri had the opportunity to collect local oral traditions when he visited Norway in 1218–1220, and he would have known stories of the kings told in Iceland. Of the probable written prose sources, several have survived. These include the manuscripts *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, the Norwegian *Ágrip af Nóregs konunga sögum*, as well as several Icelandic sagas. Snorri also incorporated some 600 verses from over 70 skalds into his work. Some of these poems, often a stanza or two, were used for dramatic

effect in well-known stories. Others seem to have been the sole source for the episodes



Figure 32. King Halfdan's Sleigh Falls Through the Ice

in which they appear. Even today, *Heimskringla* remains a major source for early Scandinavian myth, legend, and history. Without it, our knowledge of Viking Age, especially in Norway, would be much diminished.

### 6.13 READING – HALFDAN THE BLACK'S BODY IN FOUR PARTS (*HÁLFÐANAR SAGA SVARTA*, FROM *HEIMSKRINGLA*)

*The Saga of King Halfdan the Black (*Hálfðanar saga svarta*) is found in *Heimskringla* and*

*Fagrskinna*. Halfdan was a petty king in the *Vikin* region of Southern Norway. He carved out a small kingdom on the Vestfold side of the Oslo Fjord in the mid-ninth century.

Halfdan was the son of Queen Asa, who may be one of the two women, whose skeletons were found buried in the Oseberg ship. This extensively carved royal coastal barge was excavated in 1904 and is one of the two most complete ship burial sites unearthed in Norway. The other major ship burial is the Gokstad ship as in the Oslo Fjord area.

From Halfdan came a great dynasty. His son was Harald Fairhair (*Haraldr hárfagri*), the king who is said to have conquered most of Norway in the late ninth century. The saga reports that Halfdan died unexpectedly at the age of 40 at the height of his power while returning from a feast. He and his entourage drowned when his sleigh fell through the ice of Lake Rand during a spring thaw.

The reading passage below relates that, upon Halfdan's death, people from each of the four *fylki* ('counties' or 'districts') of his kingdom sought to have the king buried in their own region in order to secure the continued prosperity and fertility of future harvests. The account may be an echo of sacred kingship in Old Scandinavia. The solution was to divide the king's body into four parts and build burial mounds for the parts in different regions of the kingdom.

#### *Hálfðanar saga svarta* (ch 9)

Hann hafði verit allra konunga ársælstr. Svá mikit gerðu menn sér um hann, at þá er<sup>18</sup> þat

<sup>18</sup> þá er: 'then when,' but better translated as simply 'when.'

spurðusk, at hann var dauður ok lík hans var flutt á Hringaríki ok var þar til graptar ætlat,<sup>19</sup> þá fóru ríkismenn af Raumaríki ok af Vestfold ok Heiðmörk ok beiddusk allir at hafa líkit með sér ok heygja í sínu fylki, ok þótti þat vera árvænt þeim,<sup>20</sup> er næði. En þeir sættusk svá, at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði,<sup>21</sup> ok var höfuðit lagit í haug at Steini á Hringaríki, en hverir fluttu heim sinn hluta ok heygðu, ok eru þat allt kallaðir Hálfðanarhaugar.

# VOCABULARY

◆allr <m nom pl allir, gen pl allra, f öll, n

allt> adj pron all, entire, whole

allt adv completely; everywhere

◆á prep [w acc] onto, on, towards (motion); with respect to; [w dat] on; upon; at; in (position)

ársæll adj fortunate as to the seasonal harvest; allra konunga ársælstr of all kings the most harvest-fortunate

ársælstr superl of ársæll

árvænn <f árvæn, n árvænt> adj promising a good seasonal harvest

beiða <beiddi, beiddr> vb ask, beg; beiðask mid ask for, request on one's own behalf

beiddusk 3pl past mid of beiða

◆dauður <f dauð, n dautt> adj dead

◆er rel particle who, which, that

◆fara <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> vb go, travel

◆fjórir <m acc pl fjóra> num four

flutt moved, carried (ppart of flytja)

flytja <flutti, fluttr> vb convey, move, carry

fóru 3pl past of fara

fylki n province

◆gera (also gøra) <-ði, -ðr~gerr> vb make; do, act; gera sér mikit um [e-n] make much of or admire [sb]

graptar see gröptr

gröptr <dat grepti, gen graptar> m digging,

burial

◆hafa <hef(i)r, hafði, haft> vb have; hold, keep; take

haugr <-s, -ar> m burial mound

Hálfðanarhaugar m pl Halfdan's Mounds

Heiðmörk f Heidmork (place name)

◆heim adv (to) home, homeward

heygja <-ði, -ðr> vb bury in a mound

hluti m part

Hringaríki n Hringariki (place name)

hverir m nom pl of hverr

◆hverr <m nom pl hverir> indef pron each, every, all

◆höfuð <dat höfði, pl dat höfðum, gen höfða> n head; höfuð-it the head

kallaðir called (ppart of kalla)

lagit placed (ppart of leggja)

◆leggja <lagði, lagiðr~lagðr~laginn> vb lay, place, put

lík n body; corpse; lík-it (acc), lík-inu (dat) the body

◆með prep [w acc] with (in the sense of bringing, carrying, or forcing); [w dat] with (in the sense of accompanying or togetherness)

◆mikit adv greatly

ná <náir, -ði, nát> vb [w dat] get, obtain

næði would get (3sg/pl past subjunct of ná)

Raumaríki n Raumariki (place name)

<sup>19</sup> til graptar ætlat: 'intended for burial'

<sup>20</sup> þótti þat...þeim: 'that seemed to them'

<sup>21</sup> at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði: Note that líkinu is dative singular and there is no nominative subject in this clause to agree with the verb var. Impersonal constructions such as these are discussed later in the book.

**ismaðr** *m* great man, prominent man,  
wealthy man, man of power  
**ípt** divided (*ppart of skipta*)  
**ípta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* [*w dat*] divide; share  
**urðusk** was learned (*3pl past mid of*  
*yrja*)  
**spyrja** <spurði, spurðr> *vb* ask; hear, hear  
of, learn, be informed of, find out  
**staðr** <*dat* stað~staði, *gen* staðar, *pl*  
staðir, *acc pl* staði> *m* place  
**einn** <-s> *m* Stein (*place name*), 'Stone'  
**ætta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* reconcile; make peace  
among; **sættask** *mid* come to terms,

agree, be reconciled  
**sættusk** *3pl past mid of sætta*  
♦**vera** <er; var, váru; verit> *vb* be  
verit been (*ppart of vera*)  
**Vestfold** *f* Vestfold (*place name*)  
**þótti** *3sg past of þykkja*  
♦**þykkja** <þykkir, þótti, þótt> *impers vb*  
seem to be; [*w dat subj*] think, seem  
(to one)  
♦**ætla** <-að-> *vb* intend  
**ætlat** intended (*ppart of ætla*)

## TRANSLATION

For all kings he had been the most fortunate with good harvests. Men admired him so much  
that when it was learned he was dead, that his body had been carried to Hringaríki and was  
tended for burial there, prominent men traveled from Raumaríki and from Vestfold and  
Svídmörk [to Hringaríki]. All asked to take the body for themselves to bury it in their own  
districts. It was thought to ensure good harvests for whoever obtained it. And they agreed  
among themselves that the body would be divided among four places. The head was  
placed in a mound at Stein in Hringaríki, and each of them took home his part and buried  
it in a mound, and [these mounds] are all called Halfdan's Mounds.

## 14 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 6. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	NUMERALS
dóttir – daughter	langr – long	sik – him/herself/	sex – six
þing – assembly	sárr – wounded	themselves	
orð – word	hálf – half	annarr – other;	
hest – horse	vænn – beautiful	second	

## VERBS

búa – to live, dwell;  
prepare  
sjá – to see  
ríða – to ride  
svara – to answer

## PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

þó – nevertheless  
heim – (to) home  
út – out  
frá – from

## CONJUNCTIONS

hvárt – whether

EXERCISES

6.15 Readings. Are the following statements true or false?

	RÉTT eða RANGT?
1. Dómaldi tók arf eptir sonr sinn.	_____
2. Vísburr var faðir Dómalda.	_____
3. Var í Svíþjóð sultr ok seyra.	_____
4. Svíar blótuðu yxnum.	_____
5. Svíar blótuðu mönnum.	_____
6. Svíar áttu ráðagørð.	_____
7. Svíar blótuðu konungi.	_____

6.16 Readings. Use the following words below to complete the sentences.

- réð      haust      sultr      yxnum      seyra      blót      þriðja
- Dómaldi \_\_\_\_\_ löndum.
  - Þá hófu Svíar \_\_\_\_\_ stór at Uppsölum.
  - It fyrsta \_\_\_\_\_ blótuðu þeir \_\_\_\_\_.
  - En it \_\_\_\_\_ haust kómu Svíar fjölmennt til Uppsala.
  - Var í Svíþjóð \_\_\_\_\_ ok \_\_\_\_\_.

6.17 Vocabulary. Match each of these verbs with its English meaning by drawing a line between the two.

Ex:

vilja		to live
búa		to want

VERBS	
hefja	take
flytja	sacrifice
taka	hold; begin; raise
blóta	bury in a mound
ráða	carry, move
heygja	advise

NOUNS	
lík	attack
haust	famine
fylki	mound
hallæri	altar
sultr	province
haugr	harvest
atganga	hunger
árferð	body
stalli	autumn

6.18 Nouns. Decline the following Type 1 strong nouns:

Feminine. *Skör* and *nál* decline like *för*, *dögg* like *ör*, and *elfr* like *heiðr*.

Sg nom	SKÖR	NÁL	DÖGG	ELFR
acc	_____	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____	_____

<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *skör*, 'edge,' *nál* 'needle,' *dögg* 'dew,' *elfr* 'river'

**Neuter.** *Barn* and *þing* decline like *land*, *egg* like *kyn*, and *fylki* like *kvæði*.

	<i>BARN</i>	<i>ÞING</i>	<i>EGG</i>	<i>FYLKI</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Pl nom</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *barn* 'child,' *þing* 'assembly,' *egg* 'egg,' *fylkt* 'province'

**6.19 Weak Verbs.** Conjugate the weak verbs *kalla*, *mæla*, *telja*, and *vaka* in the past tense.

	1 <sup>ST</sup> CONJUGATION <i>KALLA</i>	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONJUGATION <i>MÆLA</i>	3 <sup>RD</sup> CONJUGATION <i>TELJA</i>	4 <sup>TH</sup> CONJUGATION <i>VAKA</i>
<i>ek</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>þú</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>hann</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>vér</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>þér</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>þeir</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____

**6.20 Vowels and I-umlaut.** Fill in the blanks in the chart below.

VOWEL		WITH I-UMLAUT	VOWEL		WITH I-UMLAUT
1. a	>	_____	5. u	>	_____
2. á	>	_____	6. (j)ú/jó	>	_____
3. o	>	_____	7. ö	>	_____
4. ó	>	_____	8. au	>	_____

**6.21 Identifying Weak Verb Conjugations.** The infinitive and 3sg past are given below for ten weak verbs. Identify the conjugation of each, using the three-step method discussed earlier in the lesson. Pay special attention to the *-gg-* in *hyggja* and *leggja*. Are these long or short stems?

Ex: *svara*, *svaraði*

1. *gera*, *gerði*

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>ft</sup>

6. *hyggja*, *hugði*

\_\_\_\_\_

2. sækja, sótti

3. kaupa, keypti

4. vilja, vildi

5. þykkja, þótti
7. horfa, horfði

8. spyrja, spurði

9. skipa, skipaði

10. leggja, lagði

6.22 Weak Verbs. Translate the following phrases into Old Norse and identify the weak verb’s conjugation.

	OLD NORSE	CONJUGATION
Ex: I called ( <i>kalla</i> ).	<i>ek kallaða</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>
1. They ( <i>f</i> ) said ( <i>segja</i> ).		
2. You ( <i>pl</i> ) raided ( <i>herja</i> ).		
3. We ( <i>dual</i> ) made ( <i>gera</i> ).		
4. He sacrificed ( <i>blóta</i> ).		
5. She answered ( <i>svara</i> ).		
6. They ( <i>m</i> ) carried ( <i>flytja</i> ).		
7. You ( <i>sg</i> ) intend ( <i>ætla</i> ).		
8. They ( <i>f</i> ) say( <i>mæla</i> ).		

6.23 Weak Verb Conjugations. Identify each weak verb below and indicate its conjugation.

	PERSON, NUMBER, TENSE	CONJUGATION
Ex: köllum	<i>1pl pres</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup></i>
gerði	<i>3sg past</i>	<i>2<sup>nd</sup></i>
1. geri		
2. herjaði		
3. veittir		
4. blótuðu		
5. þegi		
6. leiðið		
7. setti		
8. töluðuð		
9. mæltu		
10. spurðu		

6.24 Weak Verb *hafa*. Conjugate *hafa*.

	PRESENT	PAST
Sg <i>ek</i>		
<i>þú</i>		
<i>hann</i>		
Pl <i>vér</i>		



<i>pér</i>		_____	_____
<i>þeir</i>		_____	_____

**6.25 Voice.** Identify the underlined verbs and verb phrases as active, middle, or passive.

Ex: Ít fyrsta haust blótuðu þeir yxnum. active

1. Á hans dögum gerðisk sultr ok seyra í Svíþjóð. \_\_\_\_\_
2. En í þriðja haust kómu Svíar fjölmennt til Uppsala at hefja blót. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Hann hafði verit allra konunga ársælstr. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Þeiddusk allir at hafa líkit með sér ok heygja í sínu fylki. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Hann herjaði í austrveg í Danmörk við Sjáland. \_\_\_\_\_
6. En þeir sættusk svá, at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði. \_\_\_\_\_
7. En þeir sættusk svá, at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Ok eru þat allt kallaðir Hálfðanarhaugar. \_\_\_\_\_

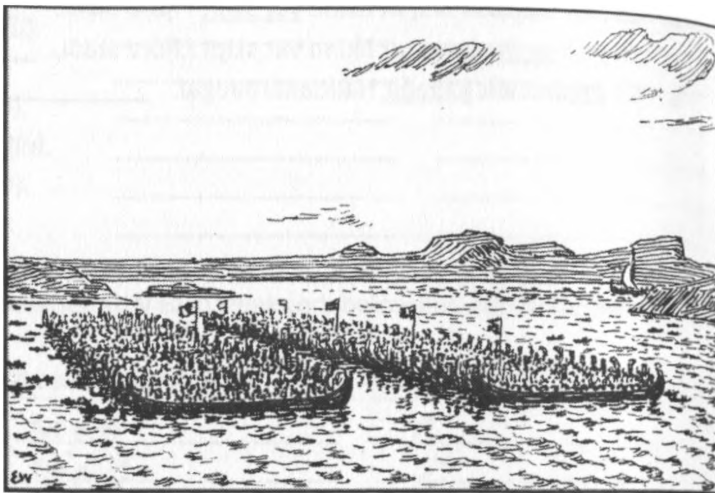
## LESSON 7

### NORWAY'S HARALD FAIRHAIR AND HIS SON EIRIK BLOODAXE

*Illt er at fljúga fjaðralauss*  
(It is bad to fly without feathers)

#### 7.1 CULTURE – HARALD FAIRHAIR

Harald (*Haraldr hárfagri*) was the son of Halfdan the Black and a member of the Norwegian Yngling Dynasty. Harald began his career as a chieftain. He ruled a series of small, separated kingdoms which his father had acquired in Vestfold in the *Víkin* region (see the accompanying map in this lesson). In the 860s, Harald began the conquest of all Norway (*Nóregr*).



**Figure 33. The Sea Battle at Hafrsfjord.** Sea battles were often fought as floating land battles. Ships of allies were tied together, and men moved from one ship to another. Here, King Harald meets his opponents in the battle at Hafrsfjord in Western Norway.

According to the sagas, Harald had vowed not to cut his hair until he attained his goal, and Icelandic sources often refer to him as Harald Shaggyhair (*Haraldr lúfa*). After his conquest, in which he seems to have brought a large part of the southern coastal region of Norway under his control, he had his hair cut and was called 'Fairhair.'

#### 7.2 READING – HARALD FIGHTS HIS WAY TO THE THRONE (*GRETTIS SAGA ÁSMUNDARSONAR*)

At the time of Harald's conquest, Norway was divided into chieftaincies and petty kingdoms. Harald conquered many of them. His final victory came at Hafrsfjord (ca. 885-990) in southwestern Norway, where Harald and his allies defeated the combined fleet of his remaining opponents. Many Icelandic sagas begin with stories about Harald, and according to *Grettir's Saga* (*Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*) in the passage below, Harald's enemies were led by Kjetvi the Wealthy (*Kjötvi inn auðgi*), Thorir Long Chin (*Þórir haklangr*).

and King Sulki.

### *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* (ch 2)

Þenna tíma var ófriður mikill í Nórég; brauzk þar til ríkis Haraldr lúfa, sonr Hálfðanar svarta; hann var áður konungr á Upplöndum. Síðan fór hann norður í land ok átti þar margar orrostur, ok hafði hann jafnan sigr. Herjaði hann svá suður eptir landinu ok lagði undir sik, hvar sem hann fór; en er<sup>22</sup> hann kom upp á Hörðaland,<sup>23</sup> kom í móti honum múgr ok margmenni. Váru þar formenn: Kjötvi inn auði ok Þórir haklangr ok þeir Suður-Rygirnir ok Súlki konungr.<sup>24</sup> Fundr þeira Haralds konungs varð á Rogalandi, í firði þeim, er heitir í Hafrsfirði.

#### VOCABULARY

♦áður *adv* before; already

átti *3sg past of elga*

brauzk *3sg past mid of brjóta*

brjóta <brýtr, braut, brutu, brotinn> *vb*  
break, break up, break open; brjótask  
til ríkis fight for the kingdom

♦elga <á, átti, áttir> *pret-pres vb* own, have,  
possess

en er *conj* but when

♦eptir *prep [w dat]* after, for; along; eptir  
landinu along the coast

♦er *rel particle* who, which, that; *conj*  
when; where

♦fara <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go, travel;  
move

firði *see fjörðr*

fjörðr *m* fjord; firði (*dat*)

formaður *m* leader, chieftain

fór *1/3sg past of fara*

♦fundr <-ar, -ir> *m* meeting; finding,  
discovery

♦hafa <hef(i)r, hafði, haft> *vb* have; hold,  
keep

Haraldr lúfa *m* Harald Shaggyhair (*personal*  
*name*)

Hafrsfjörðr *m* Hafrsfjord (*place name*); í  
Hafrsfirði in Hafrsfjord

Hálfðan svartir *m* Halfdan the Black  
(*personal name*)

herja <-að-> *vb* raid, harry; make war

♦hvar *interrog adv* where; hvar sem  
wherever

Hörðaland *n* Hordaland (*place name*)

jafnan *adv* always; constantly; equally

Kjötvi inn auði *m* Kjetvi the Wealthy  
(*personal name*)

kom *1/3sg past of koma*

♦koma <kemr~kømr, kom, kómu~kvámu,  
komin> *vb* come

♦leggja <lagði, lagið~lagðr~laginn> *vb* lay,  
place, put; leggja undir sik conquer

margmenni *n* multitude, many men

♦margr <f mörg, f *acc pl* margar, n  
margt~mart> *adj (w sg)* many a; (*w pl*)  
many

♦móti (*also á móti and í móti*) *prep [w dat]*  
towards; against, contrary to

múgr <-s, -ar> *m* crowd

norður *adv* north, northward

orrosta *f* battle

<sup>22</sup> en er: 'but when'

<sup>23</sup> Rogaland and Hörðaland: Rogaland and Hordaland are regions in Western Norway. In early times, before King Harald Fairhair unified Norway, many such small regions in Norway were independent chiefdoms ruled by warlords or petty kings.

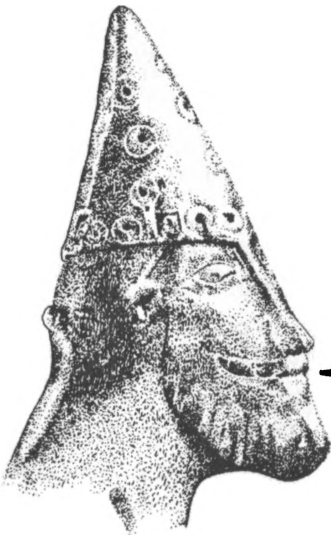
<sup>24</sup> þeir Suður-Rygirnir ok Súlki konungr: 'King Sulki and his South Rogalanders'

**ófriðr** <-ar> *m* war, strife; *lit* un-peace, unrest  
**ríki** <dat *pl* ríkjum, *gen* *pl* ríkja> *n* power; realm; kingdom  
**Rogaland** *n* Rogaland (*place name*)  
**❖sá** <*f* sú, *n* þat> *dem pron* that (one)  
**sigr** <-rs> *m* victory  
**❖síðan** *adv* then  
**suðr** *adv* south, southward  
**Suðr-Rygirnir** *m pl* South Rogalanders  
**Súlki konungr** *m* King Sulki (*personal name*)  
**❖svá** *adv* so, thus; such; then; so (*denoting degree*)  
**tími** *m* time  
**❖undir** *prep* [*w acc/dat*] under,

underneath  
**❖upp** *adv* up  
**Upplönd** *n pl* uplands, highlands (*place name*)  
**varð** 1/3sg *past of verða*  
**❖verða** <verðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> *vb* become; happen, take place  
**þeim** *dat sg of sá*  
**þenna** *see þessi*  
**❖þessi** <*m acc sg* þenna> *dem pron* this, these  
**Þórir haklangr** *m* Thorir Longchin (*personal name*)

**TRANSLATION**

At this time there was great strife in Norway. Harald Shaggyhair, the son of Halfdan the Black, was fighting his way to power. He was previously a king in the Uplands. Then he went north into the country, and there he had many battles and always had victory. He then raided south along the coast and he conquered wherever he went. But when he came up into Hordaland, a large number of men opposed him. The chieftains there were Kjotvi the Wealthy, Thorir Longchin, and King Sulki and his South Rogalanders. Their encounter with King Harald took place in Rogaland, in that fjord which is called Hafrsfjord.



The negative prefix **ó** gives the opposite meaning to any root word. It has the same function as *un-* in English. Hence, *ófriðr* (from *friðr*, 'peace') literally means 'un-peace' and can be translated as 'strife' or 'war.' Consider the following examples:

- óvinr      'un-friend'      *enemy*
- ólífi      'un-life'      *death*
- óþýðr      'un-amiable'      *unfriendly*

**Figure 34. The Negative Prefix ó.**

### 7.3 CULTURE – HARALD FAIRHAIR

Sources about Harald, all of which were written centuries after his death, suggest that he pursued his goals with intelligence and ruthlessness. He obtained an alliance with Hakon, the Earl of Lade (Hákon Hlaðjarl), the powerful ruler of the Trondelag region (Þrændalög,

Modern Norwegian Trøndelag) further north up the coast. The alliance secured both ends of a lucrative trade route between Vestfold and Trondelag. Together the allies subdued West Norway, the fjord region whose Vikings had preyed upon the rich trade moving north and south along the coast.

Harald and his northern allies relied on substantial sea power. Their efforts culminated in the decisive victory at Hafrsfjord. Although Icelandic sagas refer to Harald as ruler of all Norway, his control over Norway's inland and northern regions was weak.

The cohesiveness of Harald's mostly coastal realm did not last long after his death in the 930s. In becoming Norway's recognized king, Harald Fairhair set a pattern for later Norwegian kings.



Figure 35. Viking Age Norway (Noregr).

After Harald's death, dynastic struggles among his many heirs and conflicts with the rival dynasty of the northern earls of Lade, launched Norway into violent power struggles that lasted into the thirteenth century.

### 7.4 REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Old Norse employs the 3<sup>rd</sup> person reflexive pronoun *sik* when referring back to the subject. This pronoun, in both singular and plural, has only three forms: *sik*, *sér*, *sín* (acc, dat, gen). These are used for all three genders and mean ‘himself,’ ‘herself,’ ‘itself,’ and ‘themselves.’ Compare the following:

Reflexive Pronoun <i>Sik</i>	
<i>nom</i>	—
<i>acc</i>	<i>sik</i>
<i>dat</i>	<i>sér</i>
<i>gen</i>	<i>sín</i>

*H e l g i*  
took *him*

Helgi hafði **hann** í brott. [someone else] away.  
Helgi hafði **sik** í brott. Helgi took **himself** away.

Mennirnir fengu þeim skip. The men procured a ship for them [for others].  
Mennirnir fengu sér skip. The men procured a ship for themselves.

Ásgerðr fór heim til hennar. Asgerd went home [to someone else’s home].  
Ásgerðr fór heim til sín. Asgerd went home [to her own home].

There is no distinction between personal and reflexive pronouns in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> persons. Hence *mik*, *mér*, *mín* means either ‘me’ or ‘myself,’ and *þik*, *þér*, *þín* ‘you (sg)’ or ‘yourself.’ Likewise *oss*, *oss*, *vár* means either ‘us’ or ‘ourselves,’ and *yðr*, *yðr*, *yðar* ‘you (pl)’ or ‘yourselves.’

Hann sér <b>mik</b> .	He sees <b>me</b> .
Ek sé <b>mik</b> .	I see <b>myself</b> .
Hon sér <b>þik</b> .	She sees <b>you</b> .
Þú sér <b>þik</b> .	You see <b>yourself</b> .

7.5 EXERCISE – REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Choose the Old Norse equivalent, a or b, of each English sentence below.

- 1. I have given myself a name.  
a) Þeir hafa gefit mér nafn.  
b) Ek hefi gefit mér nafn.
- 2. King Gormr made a monument for himself.  
a) Gormr konungr gerði sér kumbl.  
b) Gormr konungr gerði oss kumbl.
- 3. Hrafnkell had a great temple built for himself.  
a) Hrafnkell lét gera þér hof mikit.  
b) Hrafnkell lét gera sér hof mikit.

## 7.6 STRONG NOUNS – TYPE 2

Type 2 strong nouns include masculines and feminines but no neuters.

**Masculine.** The principal difference between Type 1 and Type 2 masculines is that Type 1 has *-a-* in the nominative and accusative plural (*konungar*, *konunga*) and Type 2 has *-i-* (*staðir*, *staði*). Also, Type 2 masculines usually lack dative singular *-i*.

	STAÐR	VINR	GESTR	ELGR	BÆR	ENDING
<b>Sg nom</b>	staðr	vinr	gestr	elgr	bær	-r
<b>acc</b>	stað	vin	gest	elg	bœ	–
<b>dat</b>	stað	vin	gesti	elg	bœ	–, -i
<b>gen</b>	staðar	vinar	gests	elgs~elgjar	bœjar	-ar, -s
<b>Pl nom</b>	staðir	vinir	gestir	elgir	bœir	-ir
<b>acc</b>	staði	vin	gesti	elgi	bœi	-i
<b>dat</b>	stöðum	vinum	gestum	eljum	bœjum	-um
<b>gen</b>	staða	vina	gesta	elgja	bœja	-a

Transl: *staðr* 'place,' *vinr* 'friend,' *gestr* 'guest,' *elgr* 'elk,' *bær* 'farmstead'

- Some Type 2 masculines have genitive singular ending *-ar*, some *-s*; a few employ both.
- Some have stem-final *-j-* (*bær*, *bœjum*).

**Feminine.** Type 2 has *-ir* in the plural where Type 1 has *-ar*. These nouns show *u*-umlaut in the nominative, accusative, and dative singular when the stem contains *-a-*. Some Type 2 feminines, such as *jörð* and *borg*, have the ending *-u* in the dative singular. Nevertheless, most follow the declension of *öxl*, *höfn*, and *norn*, shown below.

	ÖXL	HÖFN	NORN	JÖRD	BORG	ENDING
<b>Sg nom</b>	öxl	höfn	norn	jörð	borg	–
<b>acc</b>	öxl	höfn	norn	jörð	borg	–
<b>dat</b>	öxl	höfn	norn	jörðu	borgu	–, -u
<b>gen</b>	axlar	hafnar	nornar	jarðar	borgar	-ar
<b>Pl nom</b>	axlir	hafnir	nornir	jarðir	borgir	-ir
<b>acc</b>	axlir	hafnir	nornir	jarðir	borgir	-ir
<b>dat</b>	öxlum	höfnum	nornum	jörðum	borgum	-um
<b>gen</b>	axla	hafna	norna	jarða	borga	-a

Transl: *öxl* 'shoulder,' *höfn* 'harbor,' *norn* 'Norn,' *jörð* 'earth,' *borg* 'town'

## 7.7 EXERCISE – TYPE 2 STRONG NOUNS

Decline the masculines *hugr* (like *staðr*), *svanr* (like *gestr*) as well as the feminines

*þökk* (like *öxl*), *höll* (like *jörð*).

	HUGR M	SVANR M	ÞÖKK F	HÖLL F
Sg nom	<i>hugr</i>	<i>svanr</i>	<i>þökk</i>	<i>höll</i>
acc				
dat				
gen				
Pl nom				
acc				
dat				
gen				

Transl: *hugr* 'mind,' *svanr* 'swan,' *þökk* 'thanks,' *höll* 'hall'

Manuscripts show some nouns declining as both Type 1 and 2, and for these nouns both forms probably existed in the spoken language. For instance, the dative of *staðr* in some texts is *stað* and in others *staði*. Similarly, *gestr* shows alternate dative forms *gest* and *gesti*, *skógr*, 'forest' has *skógi* and *skóg*, and *vegr* 'wall' has *vegi* and *veg*. In the plural, the word for whale, *hvalr*, has either *hvalar* or *hvalir*, and the word for a prosecution or accusation, *sök*, either *sakar* or *sakir*. In some instances there is a chronological sequence. For example, the word for dale or valley, *dalr*, has *dal* (with *dali* attested in the oldest texts), and in the plural *dalar* or *dalir* (with *dalir* winning out in Modern Icelandic).

7.8 WEAK NOUNS

Weak nouns come in all three genders. In general they are quite regular and have a simpler set of endings than strong nouns.

**Masculine.** Weak masculine nouns, such as *goði*, *hluti*, and *arfi* always end in *-i* in the nominative singular. The plural endings are identical to Type 1 masculine strong nouns such as *konungr*. Some weak masculine nouns, such as *bryti*, *höfðingi*, and *vöðvi*, have stems ending in *-j-* or *-v-*.

	GOÐI	HLUTI	ARFI	BRYTI	VÖÐVI	ENDINGS
Sg nom	<i>goði</i>	<i>hluti</i>	<i>arfi</i>	<i>bryti</i>	<i>vöðvi</i>	-i
acc	<i>goða</i>	<i>hluta</i>	<i>arfa</i>	<i>brytja</i>	<i>vöðva</i>	-a
dat	<i>goða</i>	<i>hluta</i>	<i>arfa</i>	<i>brytja</i>	<i>vöðva</i>	-a
gen	<i>goða</i>	<i>hluta</i>	<i>arfa</i>	<i>brytja</i>	<i>vöðva</i>	-a



<b>Pl nom</b>	<b>goðar</b>	<b>hlutar</b>	<b>arfar</b>	<b>brytjar</b>	<b>vöðvar</b>	<b>-ar</b>
<b>acc</b>	<b>goða</b>	<b>hluta</b>	<b>arfa</b>	<b>brytja</b>	<b>vöðva</b>	<b>-a</b>
<b>dat</b>	<b>goðum</b>	<b>hlutum</b>	<b>örfum</b>	<b>brytjum</b>	<b>vöðum</b>	<b>-um</b>
<b>gen</b>	<b>goða</b>	<b>hluta</b>	<b>arfa</b>	<b>brytja</b>	<b>vöðva</b>	<b>-a</b>

Transl: *goði* 'chieftain,' *hluti* 'part,' *arfi* 'heir,' *bryti* 'bailiff,' *vöðvi* 'muscle'

The noun *uxi* ('ox' sg, 'oxen' pl) is irregular in the plural: *yxn*, *yxn*, *yxnum*, *yxna*.

**Feminine.** Weak feminine nouns are characterized by *-u* in most endings and show *u*-umlaut, for example *saga*~*sögu*. The genitive plural ending is *-na*. Genitive plural *kvenna* (from *kona* 'woman') is irregular.

	<b>SAGA</b>	<b>KONA</b>	<b>KIRKJA</b>	<b>VÖLVA</b>	<b>ENDINGS</b>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<b>saga</b>	<b>kona</b>	<b>kirkja</b>	<b>völva</b>	<b>-a</b>
<b>acc</b>	<b>sögu</b>	<b>konu</b>	<b>kirkju</b>	<b>völu</b>	<b>-u</b>
<b>dat</b>	<b>sögu</b>	<b>konu</b>	<b>kirkju</b>	<b>völu</b>	<b>-u</b>
<b>gen</b>	<b>sögu</b>	<b>konu</b>	<b>kirkju</b>	<b>völu</b>	<b>-u</b>
<b>Pl nom</b>	<b>sögur</b>	<b>konur</b>	<b>kirkjur</b>	<b>völur</b>	<b>-ur</b>
<b>acc</b>	<b>sögur</b>	<b>konur</b>	<b>kirkjur</b>	<b>völur</b>	<b>-ur</b>
<b>dat</b>	<b>sögum</b>	<b>konum</b>	<b>kirkjum</b>	<b>völum</b>	<b>-um</b>
<b>gen</b>	<b>sagna</b>	<b>kvenna</b>	<b>kirkna</b>	<b>[unattested]</b>	<b>-na</b>

Transl: *saga* 'story,' *kona* 'woman,' *kirkja* 'church,' *völva* 'seeress'

- The stems of some weak feminine nouns, such as *kirkja* and *gyðja*, end in *-j*. Of these, only those with roots ending in *-k*- or *-g*- take *-na* in the genitive plural (*kirkna*). The genitive plural of all others with stem-final *-j* is *-a* (*gyðja*).
- The stems of a few weak feminine nouns end in *-v*- (*völva*, *slöngva*). The genitive plural of these nouns is unattested (i.e. no examples known from manuscripts or runic inscriptions).
- A small group of weak feminine nouns ends in *-i* in all cases of the singular. Most denote abstract notions and have no plurals.

<b>SPEKI</b>	<b>REIÐI</b>	<b>ELLI</b>	<b>FRÆÐI</b>
<b>speki</b>	<b>reiði</b>	<b>elli</b>	<b>fræði</b>
<b>speki</b>	<b>reiði</b>	<b>elli</b>	<b>fræði</b>
<b>speki</b>	<b>reiði</b>	<b>elli</b>	<b>fræði</b>
<b>speki</b>	<b>reiði</b>	<b>elli</b>	<b>fræði</b>

Transl: *speki* 'wisdom,' *reiði* 'anger,' *elli* 'age,' *fræði* 'knowledge'

**leuter.** There are only a few weak nouns, and all take the ending *-a* in the singular. Most refer to parts of the body (*auga*, *hjarta*, *lunga*, *eyra*, *nýra* and *eista*).

	AUGA	HJARTA	LUNGA	EYRA	ENDINGS
<b>Sg nom</b>	auga	hjarta	lunga	eyra	-a
<b>acc</b>	auga	hjarta	lunga	eyra	-a
<b>dat</b>	auga	hjarta	lunga	eyra	-a
<b>gen</b>	auga	hjarta	lunga	eyra	-a
<b>Pl nom</b>	augu	hjörtu	lungu	eyru	-u
<b>acc</b>	augu	hjörtu	lungu	eyru	-u
<b>dat</b>	augum	hjörtum	lungum	eyrum	-um
<b>gen</b>	augna	hjartna	lungna	eyrna	-na

Transl: *auga* ‘eye,’ *hjarta* ‘heart,’ *lunga* ‘lung,’ *eyra* ‘ear’

7.9 EXERCISE – WEAK NOUNS

Decline *bardagi* (m), *gata* (f), and *eyra* (n).

	BARDAGI M	GATA F	EISTA N
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>Pl nom</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *bardagi* ‘battle,’ *gata* ‘path,’ *eista* ‘testicle’

7.10 NOUNS WHOSE STEMS END IN A LONG VOWEL

A few common nouns, such as *mór*, *skór*, *á*, *brú*, and *bú*, have stems ending in a long vowel. These nouns often drop the vowel of the case ending; for example, *á* + *ar* becomes *ár* ‘rivers.’

	MÓR M	SKÓR M	Á F	BRÚ F	BÚ N	TRÉ N
<b>Sg nom</b>	mór	skór	á	brú	bú	tré
<b>acc</b>	mó	skó	á	brú	bú	tré
<b>dat</b>	mó	skó	á	brú	búi	tré
<b>gen</b>	mós	skós	ár	brúar	bús	trés

	M	M	F	F	N	N
Pl nom	móar	skúar	ár	brúar~brúr~brýr	bú	tré
acc	móa	skúa	ár	brúar~brúr~brýr	bú	tré
dat	móm	skóm	ám	brúm	búm	trjám
gen	móa	skúa	á	brúa	búa	trjá

Transl: mór 'moor,' skór 'shoe,' á 'river,' brú 'bridge,' bú 'farm,' tré 'tree'

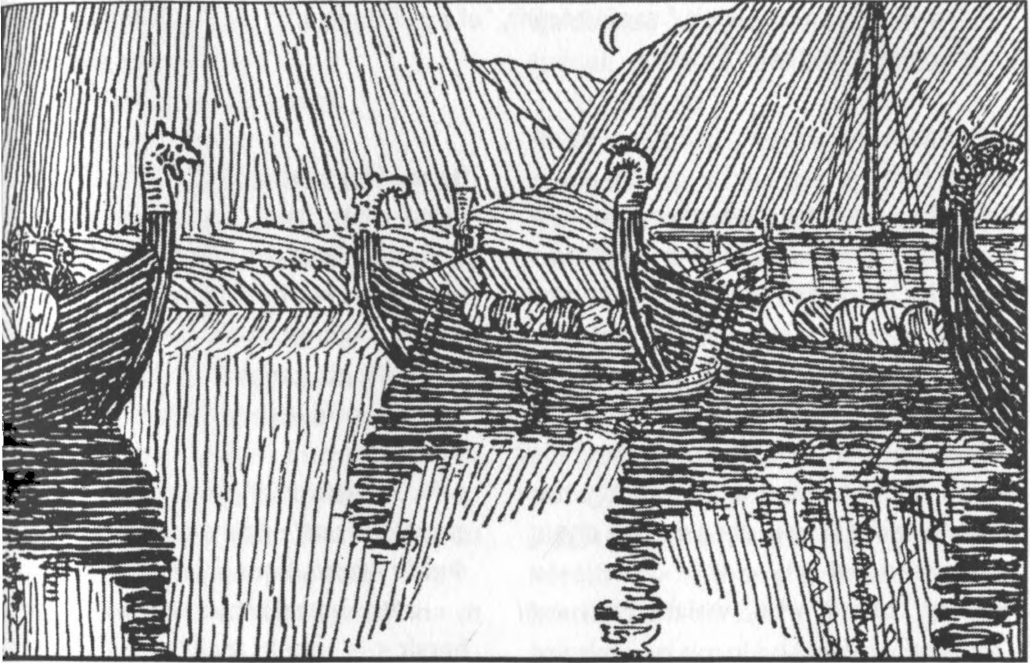


Figure 36. Ships Riding at Anchor in a Fjord. The sails of the two ships on the right have been taken down and used as tents for the crew in harbor.

### 1.11 READING – EIRIK BLOODAXE, THE KING'S SON, RECEIVES A SHIP (EGILS SAGA SKALLA-GRÍMSSONAR)

In the following passage from Egil's Saga, Prince Eirik Bloodaxe (Eiríkr blóðøx), the favorite son of King Harald Fairhair, admires a ship owned jointly by two companions, the Iclander Thorolf Skalla-Grimsson and the well-born Norwegian Bjorn Brynjolfsson. The companions see an opportunity to gain favor with the future king of Norway.

#### Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar (ch 36)

Órólfur ok Björn höfðu karfa,<sup>25</sup> er reru á borð tólf menn eða þrettán,<sup>26</sup> ok höfðu nær þrjá gu manna;<sup>27</sup> skip þat höfðu þeir fengit um sumarit í víking; þat var steint mjök fyrir ofan

<sup>25</sup> Karfi was a fast, coastal rowing ship often used in raiding. It was long and narrow with 6, 12 or 16 rowers on each side. Such boats were also used on large lakes.

<sup>26</sup> er reru á borð tólf menn eða þrettán: 'which 12 or 13 men rowed on a side.'

<sup>27</sup> höfðu nær þrjá tigu manna: 'they had (a crew) of nearly 30 men.'

sjó ok var it fegrsta. En er þeir kómu til Þóris,<sup>28</sup> fengu þeir þar góðar viðtökur, ok skipit flaut tjaldat fyrir böenum.

Þat var einn dag, er þeir Þórólfr ok Björn gengu ofan til skipsins. Þeir sáu, at Eiríkr konungsson var þar, hann gekk stundum á skipit út, en stundum á land upp, hann stóð þá ok horfði á skipit.

Þá mælti Þórólfr: "Vandliga hyggr þú at skipinu, konungsson; hversu lízk þér á?"

"Vel," segir hann, "skipit er it fegrsta," segir hann.<sup>29</sup>

"Þá vil ek gefa þér skipit," sagði Þórólfr, "ef þú vill þiggja."<sup>30</sup>

"Þiggja vil ek," segir Eiríkr.

## VOCABULARY

at *conj* that

á *prep* [w *acc*] onto; with respect to

borð *f* side of a ship; á borð on each side

bær (also bær) <gen bæjar~býjar, pl bæir, dat bæjum, gen bæja> *m* farm, farmhouse, farmstead; landed estate; bæ-num ) the farmstead

◆dagr <dat degi, gen dags, pl dagar> *m* day

◆einn <f ein, n eitt, ord fyrstr 'first'> *num* one; indef pron a, an, a certain one

en *conj* and, but

◆er *rel particle* who, which, that; *conj* when; where

◆fagr <f fögr, n fagrt, comp fegri, superl fegrstr> *adj* beautiful, fair, attractive

◆fá <fær, fekk, fengu, fenginn> *vb* get, take, procure; fá góðar viðtökur be welcomed well

fegrstr *superl adj* of fagr; it fegrsta the most beautiful

fengit *ppart* of fá

fengu *3pl past* of fá

flaut *1/3sg past* of fljóta

fljóta <flýtr, flaut, flutu, flotinn> *vb* float; skipit flaut the ship floated (at anchor)

fyrir ofan *prep* [w *acc*] above

◆ganga <gengr, gekk, gengu, genginn> *vb* walk; go; ganga til go up to, go toward  
◆gefa <gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefinn> *vb* give, grant

gekk *1/3sg past* of ganga

gengu *3pl past* of ganga

◆góðr <f góð, f *acc pl* góðar, n gott; comp betri, superl beztr> *adj* good

hersir <-is, -ar> *m* regional military leader in Norway; chieftain

horfa <-ði, horft> *vb* turn, look (in a particular direction); horfði á skipit he looked at the ship

◆hversu *adv* how

hyggja <hugði, hugðr~hugaðr> *vb* think, believe; vandliga hyggr þú at skipinu you carefully consider the ship

karfi *m* a fast, coastal rowing ship

<sup>28</sup> En er þeir kómu til Þóris: 'And when they arrived at Thórir's home.' Earl Thorir Hroaldsson (*Jarl Þórir Hróaldsson*) was a *hersir* in Firdafylki in Western Norway. A *hersir* was a Norwegian regional military leader. King Harald Fairhair abolished the regional small kings of Norway but kept the title of *hersir*, giving it to some of his own followers such as Þórir *hersir*. Although not royal, a *hersir* had noble status and functioned much as a local chieftain. The office was hereditary.

<sup>29</sup> Present tense *segir* contrasts with past tense *mælti* in the previous sentence. The abrupt change from past to present within a narrative is common in Old Norse texts and is sometimes called the 'historic present.'

<sup>30</sup> ef þú vill þiggja: 'if you are willing to accept [it].'

koma <kemr~kømr, kom, kómu~kvámu,  
 kominn> *vb* come  
 ómu *3pl past of koma*  
 onungsson *m* prince  
 ta <lítr, leit, litu, litinn> *vb* look; *mid lítask*  
 [e-m] appear (seem) to [sb]; *hversu*  
 lízk þér á? How do you like [it]?  
 tk *3sg pres mid of líta*  
 mjök *adv* much, very  
 mæla <-ti, -tr> *vb* say, speak  
 nær *adv* almost, nearly  
 ofan *adv* from above, down; downwards  
 ru *3pl past of róa*  
 ja <røer, røri~reri, røru~reru, róinn> *vb*  
 row  
 segja <sagði, sagt> *vb* say  
 iu *3pl past of sjá*  
 sjá <sér, sá, sá(u), sénn> *vb* see, look  
 ór <*gen* sjóvar~sjófar> *m* the sea; *fyrir*  
 ofan sjó above the waterline  
 skip *n* ship; skip-it (*nom & acc*), skipi-nu  
 (*dat*), skips-ins (*gen*) the ship  
 standa <stendr, stóð, stóðu, staðinn> *vb*  
 stand  
 elna <-di, -dr> *vb* paint

steint *ppart of steina*; steint mjök fully  
 painted  
 stóð *1/3sg past of standa*  
 stundum ... stundum *conj* sometimes ...  
 sometimes, at times ... at times  
 ◆sumar <*pl* sumur> *n* summer; um  
 sumarit in the summer  
 tjalda <-að-> *vb* pitch a tent  
 tjaldat *ppart of tjalda* tented with its  
 awning up  
 ◆tólf <*ord* tólfti 'twelfth'> *num* twelve  
 ◆upp *adv* up; á land upp up onto land  
 ◆út *adv* out; á skipit út out onto the ship  
 vandliga *adv* carefully  
 ◆vel *adv* well  
 viðtaka *f* reception  
 ◆vilja <*2/3sg pres* vill, vildi, viljat> *vb* wish,  
 want  
 vill *2/3sg pres of vilja*  
 víking *f* raid; í víking on a raid  
 þiggja <þiggr, þá, þágu, þeginn> *vb* accept  
 Þórólfr <-s> *m* Thorolf (*personal name*)  
 þrettán *num* thirteen  
 þrír tígir <*m acc pl* þrjá tigu> *num* thirty

## TRANSLATION

Thorolf and Bjorn had a fast ship, which twelve or thirteen men rowed on a side, and they  
 had a crew of nearly thirty men. They had gotten the ship in the summer on a raid. It was  
 fully painted down to the waterline and was extremely handsome. And when they came  
 to Hersir Thorir's home, they received there a good reception, and the ship floated (at  
 anchor) with its sail tented as an awning just off the farmstead.

One day when Thorolf and Bjorn went down to the ship, they saw that Prince Eirik was  
 there. He went first out onto the ship and then up onto land. Then he stood and looked at  
 the ship.

Then Thorolf spoke, "You are carefully considering the ship, prince; what do you think  
 of her?"

"I like it," he said. "The ship is extremely beautiful."

"Then I want to give you the ship," said Thorolf, "if you are willing to accept it."

"I will accept it," says Eirik.

## 7.12 CULTURE – EIRIK BLOODAXE – A VIKING KING IN ENGLAND

Harald Fairhair was succeeded by his favorite son, Eirik Bloodaxe. Eirik began his reign by sharing the throne with two of his brothers, but he killed them both. Despite his renown as a warrior, Eirik's cruelty made him unpopular, earning him many enemies. Around the year 936, Eirik's half-brother, Hakon the Good (Hákon góði), drove him from the country. Eirik sailed to England. In 948 the English Archbishop Wulfstan and Vikings in Northumbria invited Eirik to assume the kingship of York (Jórvík) which was in Viking hands. The English King Eadred drove Eirik out within the year. York was a great prize, and next Olaf Sigtryggsson, the Hiberno-Norse king of Dublin, took control of the town. But Olaf was expelled and Eirik regained York in 952.

Viking success in England often relied on local support, and Eirik's fortunes faded when Eadred arrested Archbishop Wulfstan. In 954 Eirik was again toppled from his shaky throne. That same year, he was ambushed while crossing the Pennines and fell at the battle of Stainmore. Norse power in the north of England now waned, and king Eadred assumed control of York and Northumbria.

## 7.13 READING – A CRUEL KING, A CUNNING WIFE, AND THEIR PROMISING CHILDREN (HARALDS SAGA INS HÁRFAGRA, FROM HEIMSKRINGLA)

This passage from the *Saga of King Harald Fairhair* (*Haralds saga ins hárfagra*) gives a memorable description of the royal pair, Eirik and his wife Gunnhild.

### *Haralds saga ins hárfagra* (ch 43)

Eiríkr var mikill maður ok fríðr, sterkr ok hreystimaður mikill, hermaður mikill ok sigrsæll, ákafamaður í skapi, grimmr, óþýðr ok fálátr. Gunnhildr, kona hans, var kvenna fegrst,<sup>31</sup> vitr ok margkunnig, glaðmælt ok undirhyggjumaður mikill ok in grimmasta. Þau váru börn þeira Eiríks ok Gunnhildar.<sup>32</sup> Gamli var ellstr, Guthormr, Haraldr, Ragnfróðr, Ragnhildr, Erlingr, Guðrøðr, Sigurðr slefa. Öll váru börn Eiríks fríð ok mannvæn.

### VOCABULARY

♦ **allr** <f öll, n allt, n nom & acc pl öll> *adj*  
pron all, entire, whole

**ákafamaður** *m* an aggressive man

**barn** <pl börn> *n* child

**Eiríkr** *m* Eirik (personal name)

**ellstr** *superl of gamall*

**Erlingr** <-s> *m* Erling (personal name)

♦ **fagr** <f fögr, n fagrt, comp fegri, *superl* fegrstr> *adj* beautiful, fair, attractive

**fálátr** *adj* silent, reserved, taciturn

**fegrstr** <f fegrst, n fegrst> *superl of fagr*

♦ **fríðr** <f frið, n fritt, n nom pl frið> *adj*  
beautiful, handsome, fine

♦ **gamall** <acc gamlan, f gömul, n gamalt, comp ellri, *superl* ellstr> old; ellstr oldest

**Gamli** *m* Gamli (personal name), the Old One

<sup>31</sup> **kvenna fegrst**: 'fairest of women.'

<sup>32</sup> **þau váru börn þeira Eiríks ok Gunnhildar**: 'These were the children of Eirik and Gunnhild.'

**laðmæltr** *adj* cheerful in speech  
**rimmastr** *superl of grimmr*  
**rimmr** *adj* cruel, savage; severe, stern; (*f nom sg wk superl*) in **grimmasta** the severest  
**gudrøðr** <-s> *m* Gudrod (*personal name*)  
**gunnhildr** *f* Gunnhild (*personal name*)  
**guthormr** <-s> *m* Guthorm (*personal name*)  
**ermaðr** *m* a warrior  
**reystimaðr** *m* a valiant man, champion  
**kona** <*gen pl kvenna*> *f* wife; woman  
**kvenna** *gen pl of kona*  
**mannvænn** <*n nom pl mannvæn*> *adj* promising  
**argkunnigr** *adj* skilled in magic

**óþýðr** *adj* unfriendly; intimidating  
**Ragnfrøðr** <-s> *m* Ragnfrod (*personal name*)  
**Ragnhildr** <*acc & dat Ragnhildi, gen Ragnhildar*> *f* Ragnhild (*personal name*)  
**sigrsæll** *adj* victorious, lucky in battle  
**Sigurðr slefa** *m* Sigurd the Slobberer (*personal name*)  
**skap** *n* state, condition; temper, mood  
**slefa** *f* slobber, slobberer (as nickname)  
**sterkr** *adj* strong  
**undirhyggjumaðr** *m* a guileful or deceitful person  
**vittr** <*f vittr, n vittr*> *adj* wise  
**öll** *see allr*

#### TRANSLATION

Eirik was a big and handsome man, strong and valiant, a great and victorious warrior, impetuous by nature, cruel, unfriendly and taciturn. Gunnhild, his wife, was the most beautiful of women, wise and skilled in magic, cheerful in speech, a person full of guile, and extremely severe. These were the children of Eirik and Gunnhild: Gamli was the oldest, Guthorm, Harald, Ragnfrod, Ragnhild, Erling, Gudrod, and Sigurd the Slobberer. All of Eirik's children were handsome and promising.

NOTE: At this point in the book, the English translations and vocabularies for the Old Norse reading passages end. The comprehensive Vocabulary at the rear of the book will aid your translations.

### 14 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 7. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

#### NOUNS

**nótt** – night  
**tíðindi** – news, tidings  
**fundr** – meeting  
**lið** – following, troops

#### ADJECTIVES

**verðr** – worthy  
**líkr** – alike  
**vittr** – wise  
**harðr** – hard

#### PRONOUNS

**hinn** – the other  
**hverr** – each, every; who?

#### NUMERALS

**fimm** – five

VERBS	PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS	CONJUNCTIONS
spyrja – to ask; learn	hér – here	bæði – both
biðja – to ask; tell	mjök – very	
mega – may	þegar – at once	
fá – to get, obtain	ór – out of, from	

EXERCISES

7.15 Reading Comprehension. Based on the second reading decide whether the following statements are true or false.

	RÉTT eða RANGT?
1. Þórólfr kom á skipi.	_____
2. Eiríkr er konungur.	_____
3. Þórólfr ok Björn váru víkingar.	_____
4. Þórólfr gaf Eiríki skip.	_____
5. Eiríkr vill (wants) þiggja skipit.	_____
6. Björn er konungsson.	_____
7. Konungsson hyggr vandliga at skipinu.	_____
8. Björn horfði á skipit.	_____
9. Þórólfr ok Björn gengu eigi ofan til skipsins.	_____
10. "Skipit er it fegrsta," sagði Björn.	_____

7.16 Reading Comprehension. Read the short passage below and give the case, number, and gender for each of the underlined nouns.

Þórólfr ok Björn höfðu karfa, er reru á borð tólf menn eða þrettán, ok höfðu nær þrjá tigu manna; skip þat höfðu þeir fengit um sumarit í víking; þat var steint mjök fyrir ofan sjó ok var it fegrsta. En er þeir kómu til Þóris, fengu þeir þar góðar viðtökur, ok skipit flaut tjaldat fyrir böenum.

Þat var einn dag, er þeir Þórólfr ok Björn gengu ofan til skipsins. Þeir sáu, at Eiríkr konungsson var þar, hann gekk stundum á skipit út, en stundum á land upp, hann stóð þá ok horfði á skipit.

NOUN	GENDER	CASE	NUMBER
Ex: skipi	<u>neuter</u>	<u>dative</u>	<u>singular</u>
1. borð	_____	_____	_____
2. menn	_____	_____	_____
3. sjó	_____	_____	_____
4. viðtökur	_____	_____	_____



igsson \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Pronouns.** Complete the following sentences with the correct pronoun.

afði \_\_\_\_\_ í brott (He got himself away)

afði \_\_\_\_\_ í brott (He got him [someone else] away)

ækk \_\_\_\_\_ skip (He got himself a ship)

ækk \_\_\_\_\_ skip (He got him [someone else] a ship)

Note: hjálpa takes a dative object

**bs.** Give the infinitives of the following verbs.

<u>vera</u>			
_____	5. gerði	_____	9. hyggr
_____	6. fór	_____	10. vill
_____	7. nam	_____	11. kómu
_____	8. hét	_____	12. reru

**Nouns Type 1.** Decline *heimr* (m) 'world,' *för* (f) 'journey,' and *land* (n) 'land'

HEIMR (M)	FÖR (F)	LAND (N)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Nouns Type 2.** Decline *fundr* (m) 'meeting' and *ferð* (f) 'journey.'

	FUNDR (M)	FERÐ (F)
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____
<b>Pl nom</b>	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____

7.21 Weak Nouns. Decline *goði* (m) ‘chieftain,’ *saga* (f) ‘story,’ and *hjarta* (n) ‘heart.’

	GOÐI (M)	SAGA (F)	HJARTA (N)
Sg nom	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
acc	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
dat	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
gen	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Pl nom	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
acc	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
dat	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
gen	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

7.22 Verbs. Change the underlined words from singular to plural and rewrite the sentences. Remember verbs must agree with their subjects, singular or plural.

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Ex: <u>Hann</u> hyggr at skipi.	<u>Þeir hyggja at skipi.</u>
1. <u>Ek</u> horfi á <u>skip</u> .	<hr/>
2. <u>Þú</u> gerðir <u>brú</u> .	<hr/>
3. <u>Hon</u> kallar at <u>manni</u> .	<hr/>
4. <u>Víkingr</u> herjaði <u>land</u> .	<hr/>
5. <u>Ek</u> mælti við <u>hana</u> .	<hr/>
6. <u>Maðr</u> hugði at <u>konungi</u> .	<hr/>

7.23 Sentence Completion. Complete the sentences with the correct forms of the words given below.

sála fara með segja hafa til vera höfðingi vilja gera brú

- 1. “Skipit er it fegrsta,” \_\_\_\_\_ hann. (present tense)
- 2. Vér \_\_\_\_\_ gefa þér skipit. (present tense)
- 3. Þeir \_\_\_\_\_ fengit skip í víking. (past tense)
- 4. Þorsteinn \_\_\_\_\_ mikill ok auðigr at fé. (past tense)
- 5. Hon \_\_\_\_\_ fyr \_\_\_\_\_ Hólmgeirs. (past tense)
- 6. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ Íslands \_\_\_\_\_ Eiríki. (past tense)

7.24 Review: Special Stem Rules. Give the stem for each of the following strong masculine nouns, and state the applicable Special Stem Rule (see earlier lesson). Remove the ending of the genitive singular to find the stem for each noun. If no Special Stem Rule applies, write “N/A.”

: steinn ( <i>gen</i> steins)	<u>stein-</u>	<u>Rule 1. r-Change</u>
vinr ( <i>gen</i> vinar)	_____	_____
otr ( <i>gen</i> otrs)	_____	_____
jökull ( <i>gen</i> jökuls)	_____	_____
fugl ( <i>gen</i> fugls)	_____	_____
hváll ( <i>gen</i> hváls)	_____	_____
ofn ( <i>gen</i> ofns)	_____	_____
íss ( <i>gen</i> íss)	_____	_____
hafr ( <i>gen</i> hafrs)	_____	_____
fundr ( <i>gen</i> funds)	_____	_____
1. kjóll ( <i>gen</i> kjóls)	_____	_____
2. fleinn ( <i>gen</i> fleins)	_____	_____
3. gísl ( <i>gen</i> gísls)	_____	_____

**Review: Prepositions.** Give correct forms of the nouns in parentheses and translate.

Hann gekk á \_\_\_\_\_ (skip) út.

Sigríður bjó hjá \_\_\_\_\_ (jarl).

Haraldr konungr fór til \_\_\_\_\_ (Nóreg).

Ingólfr bjó á milli \_\_\_\_\_ (Vágr) ok \_\_\_\_\_ (Reykjanes).

Elfráður inn ríki (Alfred the Great) var konungr í \_\_\_\_\_ (England).

Böðvarr gekk móti \_\_\_\_\_ (dýr).

[The neuter noun *dýr* 'beast' declines like *land* \_\_\_\_\_]

# LESSON 8

## HARALD HARDRADI IN CONSTANTINOPLE

*Frændr eru frændum verstir*  
(Kinsmen are worst to kinsmen)

### 8.1 CULTURE – HARALD AND THE VARANGIANS

The Norse name for Constantinople was Mikligarðr, meaning ‘the great city.’ The name is formed from *mikill* ‘great, large’ and *garðr* (cognate with English ‘yard’) meaning ‘enclosure,’ and suggesting a fenced-in area such as around a farm. In this instance it is a walled city. The word *garðr* is also found in Old Norse mythological place names such as Ásgarðr (home of the Æsir gods), Miðgarðr (‘Middle Enclosure,’ often called Middle Earth), and Útgarðr (‘Outer Enclosure’ or home of the giants).



**Figure 37. The Route Probably Taken by Haraldr Harðráði** after St. Olaf’s defeat at Stiklastaðir (Stiklastaðir) in 1030, as well as his later journey to Sicily. Many Norse merchants and warriors traveled to Constantinople (Mikligarðr) from the Baltic Sea, following this route.

The most famous Norse visitor to Constantinople was Harald Hard-Counsel (Haraldr harðráði), a descendent of Harald Fairhair. He ruled as king of Norway from 1045 to 1066, but his ascent to the throne was not easy. *Heimskringla*, other Icelandic writings, and a Greek chronicle recount his exploits and rise to kingship.

Harald’s half-brother was Saint Olaf Haraldsson, king of Norway from 1015 to 1028. Olaf’s reign came to an end when the Danish King Canute claimed the throne of Norway.

attempting to regain his kingdom, Olaf was killed in 1030 at the battle of Stiklastad (Old Norse Stiklastaðir, Modern Norwegian Stiklestad). Harald Hardradi, fifteen years of age, fought alongside his half-brother, and after Olaf was killed, a wounded Harald escaped across the mountains into Sweden.

For the next fifteen years Harald lived in exile. He went first to Sweden and then descended the rivers of what is today Russia and the Ukraine. There he served in the army of Jaroslav the Wise, the Prince of Kiev (Kænugarðr) from the Norse-Slavic Rurikid dynasty. Harald quickly rose to prominence in the service of the Kievan ruler and was promised Elizabeth, Jaroslav's daughter. Before the marriage, Harald set off with 500 warriors for Constantinople, the capital of the Greek-speaking Byzantine or eastern Roman Empire. There he offered his service to Emperor Michael IV. Norsemen called the Greek emperor *tólkonungr* 'throne king.' Michael reigned with his powerful wife, Empress Zoe, and they accepted Harald and his men into their service.

Scandinavians in the Byzantine Empire were called Varangians. In the Byzantine army, they formed the emperor's personal bodyguard and were known as the Varangian Guard. The name 'Varangian' comes from ON *várar*, meaning 'pledges' or 'oaths.' The Varangians *Væringjar*, sg *Væringi*) were 'men of the pledge,' referring to the customary pledge of fellowship taken by the groups of Scandinavians who traded along the Russian rivers.

Harald came to Constantinople with 500 men and was not immediately a member of the Varangian Guard. First, he and his mercenaries were incorporated into the Byzantine army and sent to fight corsairs (pirates) in the Aegean Sea. As the campaigns continued, the Varangians turned to him as their leader in battle. The Byzantine Greek source *Logos kuthetikos* (*Oration of Admonition to an Emperor*), written in the 1070s, confirms Harald's participation in military campaigns and his ascent to leadership of the Varangian Guard.

Harald campaigned widely in the Mediterranean from roughly 1035 until 1044. He fought against Bulgars, Saracens, and Lombards. Harald probably came into contact with Normans from Normandy, the descendants of Vikings who at that time were installing themselves in Southern Italy and Sicily.

Ostensibly, the Varangian Guard was subordinate to the leader of the Byzantine army. In Harald's time, the leader was the Greek general George (ON Gyrgir) Maniakes, a relative of the empress. Harald frequently clashed with him for control of the Guard and undermined Maniakes by holding back the Varangians from fighting when the full army assembled for battle. When Harald chose to fight, the Varangians fought successfully and distinguished themselves. Finally, a frustrated Maniakes gave Harald independent command. The Varangians then fought separately from the rest of the army and won victories. Harald became famous.

Harald spent over ten years in the Varangian Guard and amassed a huge amount of wealth as its commander. Icelandic and Byzantine sources agree that Empress Zoe forbade Harald to return to his native country. She imprisoned him, but Harald escaped from Constantinople. After stopping in Kiev to fulfill his wedding vow, he returned home to Norway in 1045. There he demanded a share of the throne of Norway and Denmark, which

at the time were claimed jointly by his nephew Magnus the Good. Magnus agreed reluctantly, and the two ruled uneasily together until Magnus died in 1047. After Magnus' death, Harald became sole ruler of Norway, though his grip on Denmark was tenuous.

## 8.2 READING – HARALD HARDRADI LEADS THE VARANGIAN GUARD (*HARALDS SAGA SIGURÐARSONAR*, FROM *HEIMSKRINGLA*)

Harald was the most famous Scandinavian to enter into the service of the Byzantine Emperor. The following passage from *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* (*The Saga of Harald Sigurdsson*) in *Heimskringla* describes his arrival in Mikligarðr and his rise to leadership.

### *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* (ch 3)

Þá réð fyrir Griklandi Zóe dróttning in ríka ok með henni Michael kátalaktús.<sup>33</sup> En er Haraldr kom til Miklagarðs ok á fund dróttningar,<sup>34</sup> þá gekk hann þar á mála<sup>35</sup> ok fór þegar um haustit á galeiðr með hermönnum þeim.<sup>36</sup> Þeir fóru út í Griklandshaf. Hélt Haraldr sveit af sínum mönnum. Höfðingi yfir herinum hét Gyrgir. Hann var frændi dróttningar. Haraldr var lítila hríð<sup>37</sup> í herinum, ok allir Væringjar fóru saman,<sup>38</sup> þegar er bardagar váru. Kom þá svá, at<sup>39</sup> Haraldr varð höfðingi yfir öllum Væringjum. Fóru þeir Gyrgir<sup>40</sup> víða um Griklandseyjar, unnu þar herskap mikinn á kussurum.

### 8.3 EXERCISE – TRANSLATING FROM *HARALDS SAGA SIGURÐARSONAR*

When translating an Old Norse sentence, first identify the verb and then find its subject. Match the verb to a noun which stands in the **nominative case** AND **agrees** with it in person (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) and number (singular or plural). For each sentence below, circle the verb, underline the subject, and translate.

1. Þá réð fyrir Griklandi Zóe dróttning in ríka.

In Old Norse when a word other than the subject appears before the verb (in

<sup>33</sup> **Michael kátalaktús:** Old Norse sources refer to Michael by his nickname *kátalaktús* (Greek for 'money-changer,' his profession before his marriage to Empress Zoe). He is more generally known as Michael the Paphlagonian, after his home country.

<sup>34</sup> **ok á fund dróttningar:** 'and to a meeting with the empress.'

<sup>35</sup> **þá gekk hann þar á mála:** 'there [at that meeting] he then entered into the service [of the empress].'

<sup>36</sup> **fór þegar um haustit á galeiðr með hermönnum:** 'he went that very autumn onto the galleys with his warriors.'

<sup>37</sup> **lítila hríð:** 'for a short time'; the accusative can be used without a preposition to express a duration of time.

<sup>38</sup> **allir Væringjar fóru saman:** 'all the Varangians assembled as a group'; that is, they abandoned their original units and formed a special troop.

<sup>39</sup> **Kom þá svá, at...:** 'It so happened that...'

<sup>40</sup> **þeir Gyrgir:** 'Gyrgir and his men.'

this instance the adverb *þá* 'then'), the subject follows the verb later in the main clause.

What is the infinitive of *réð*? \_\_\_\_\_

2. ok með henni Michael kátalaktús.

\_\_\_\_\_

This clause relies on an understood verb. What is this verb? \_\_\_\_\_

3. En er Haraldr kom til Miklagarðs ok á fund dróttningar,

\_\_\_\_\_

*En er* is composed of two conjunctions meaning 'but when.'

4. þá gekk hann þar á mála

\_\_\_\_\_

What type of word is *þar*? \_\_\_\_\_

5. ok fór [hann] þegar um haustit á galeiðr með hermönnum þeim.

\_\_\_\_\_

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and its object (*í Brattahlíð*, *á Íslandi*, etc). How many prepositional phrases occur in this clause?

\_\_\_\_\_

With the information above, translate the full passage: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 1.4 CULTURE – THE RUS ACROSS RUSSIA AND FURTHER

Norse ventures down the rivers of Russia began in the mid-seventh century and were dominated by Swedes. Traders were initially drawn to the region by the availability of furs and slaves (see the discussion of Ibn Fadlan and the Rus in the Introduction). Slavic peoples, inhabitants of Russia, and eventually Greeks, Arabs, and Western Europeans came to call these Norse traders the Rus. The name Rus was adopted by the traders themselves. It may have originated from *routsi*, a Finnish term for Sweden, which seems to have derived from *Nróðr* (gen *róðs*), referring to rowing or men who rowed such as 'a crew of rowers.' The name Rus is also the origin of the modern name Russia.

The Rus themselves called the region of the Eastern Baltic *austrvegr* ('the way east'). Further inland, they gave it the name, *Garðaríki* 'land of the towns,' which extended from Lake Ladoga in the north to the lands of the Greeks and the people down the Volga leading to Persia and Arab lands in the south. The fortified river towns of Novgorod and Kiev became important centers of Norse trade and influence. Both towns were near portages, areas where boats and trade goods were transported overland between rivers. Novgorod was especially well-placed for a trading center. It lay between the Volga, Dnieper, Dvina, and Lovat Rivers and could control movements between the Baltic and the Black Sea or the Caspian Sea.

The two towns Novgorod and Kiev were rivals until Prince Oleg of Novgorod captured Kiev ca. 882 and made Kiev his capital. Strong leadership along the rivers was necessary to protect trading fleets, which were open to attack on the Dnieper from neighboring Slavic tribes and steppe nomads, such as the Pechenegs and Bulgars. From Kiev, trade contacts stretched south to the Byzantine Empire and from there into the Mediterranean.

Those Rus traders and warriors, who took a more easterly route in Russia, sailed down the Volga River. Some left the Volga and went east overland along what became known as the silk road. Others reached the lands of the Khazars, a semi-nomadic group of Turkic peoples whose rulers in the seventh and eighth centuries adopted Judaism. At the time of the Rus in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Khazars guarded and taxed the river trade routes. They ruled a huge territory north, east, and west of the Black and Caspian Seas as well as lands between these two great bodies of water. Reaching the Caspian, some Norse traders and warriors continued further south to the lands of the Caliphate of Baghdad.

Especially in the late ninth and tenth centuries, Norse merchants and warriors returned from Russia to the Baltic with large quantities of Arabic silver coins called dirhams. In the Baltic area, as well as in parts of Eastern Europe, dirhams brought north by Rus traders were for a time, the major currency. Despite the huge coins hoards found buried in Baltic Scandinavia, the majority of imported Arabic silver was melted down. It was used in trade with continental Western Europe, which relied on the Rus trade links as a major source of silver and access to goods coming from the east.

In the tenth century, Norse leaders such as Saint Olaf of Norway and his half brother Harald Hardradi had many connections with the Kievan Rus. As the tenth century passed, the Rus in Russia integrated with the local Slavic population. Influenced by Byzantium, the Kievan Rus converted to Orthodox Christianity in 988. The last ruler of the Kievan Rus to have a Scandinavian name was Igor (a form of Ingvar), who died in 945, but Rus rulers recognized their origins and maintained dynastic ties with Scandinavian rulers well into the eleventh century.

## 8.5 NOUNS – KINSHIP TERMS IN -IR

Five words for family members, *bróðir*, *dóttir*, *faðir*, *móðir*, and *systir*, form a small class of nouns. All have *i*-umlaut in the plural. Along with dative *föður* and *bróður*, some manuscripts show the more archaic datives *feðr* and *bræðr*.



	<b>M</b>		<b>F</b>			<b>ENDINGS</b>
	<b>FADIR</b>	<b>BRÓÐIR</b>	<b>SYSTIR</b>	<b>DÓTTIR</b>	<b>MÓÐIR</b>	
<b>Sg nom</b>	faðir	bróðir	systir	dóttir	móðir	-ir
<b>acc</b>	föður	bróður	systur	dóttur	móður	-ur
<b>dat</b>	föður, feðr	bróður, bræðr	systur	dóttur	móður	-ur, <sup>(i)</sup> -r
<b>gen</b>	föður	bróður	systur	dóttur	móður	-ur
<b>Pl nom</b>	feðr	bræðr	systr	dætr	mæðr	<sup>(i)</sup> -r
<b>acc</b>	feðr	bræðr	systr	dætr	mæðr	<sup>(i)</sup> -r
<b>dat</b>	feðrum	bræðrum	systrum	dætrum	mæðrum	<sup>(i)</sup> -um
<b>gen</b>	feðra	bræðra	systra	dætra	mæðra	<sup>(i)</sup> -a

Transl: *faðir* 'father,' *bróðir* 'brother,' *systir* 'sister' *dóttir* 'daughter,' *móðir* 'mother'

More distant relations are expressed by compounds such as *móðurbróðir* 'uncle (mother's brother),' *föðurmóðir* '(paternal) grandmother (father's mother),' *föðursystir* 'aunt (father's sister),' and *bróðurdóttir* 'niece (brother's daughter).'

## 8.6 NOUNS WHOSE STEMS END IN -ND-

Nouns such as *bóndi* and *frændi* belong to a small group of masculine nouns known as *nd*-nouns. These end in *i* in the nominative singular and decline like weak masculines, but in the nominative and accusative plural have the ending *-r* with *i*-umlaut. *Nd*-nouns derive from present participles; for example, *gefandi* 'the giving one' from *gefa* and *bóndi* (a shortening of *búandi*) 'the one living (there)' from *búa*.

	<b>BÓNDI</b>	<b>FRÆNDI</b>	<b>GEFANDI</b>	<b>ENDINGS</b>
<b>Sg nom</b>	bóndi	frændi	gefandi	
<b>acc</b>	bónða	frænda	gefanda	-a
<b>dat</b>	bónða	frænda	gefanda	-a
<b>gen</b>	bónða	frænda	gefanda	-a
<b>Pl nom</b>	bændr	frændr	gefendr	<sup>(i)</sup> -r
<b>acc</b>	bændr	frændr	gefendr	<sup>(i)</sup> -r
<b>dat</b>	bóndum	frændum	geföndum	-um
<b>gen</b>	bónða	frænda	gefanda	-a

Transl: *bóndi* 'farmer,' *frændi* 'kinsman,' *gefandi* 'giver'

8.7 PRESENT TENSE OF STRONG VERBS

Strong verbs, of which there are about two hundred, are among the most frequently used verbs in Old Norse. They take the same basic set of endings in the present tense as weak verbs. The endings are added to the present stem (found by removing the *-a* of the infinitive). Additionally, in the present singular the root vowel shows *i*-umlaut where possible. For instance, strong verbs with root vowel *-á-* in the infinitive (*ráða*, *láta*, and *fá*) have *-æ-* in the present singular (*hann ræðr* ‘he advises,’ *hann lætr* ‘he allows,’ and *hann fær* ‘he gets’).

Present Tense Endings of Strong Verbs		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-r	-ið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-r	-a

The vowels *-i-*, *-í-*, *-e-*, and *-y-* never undergo *i*-umlaut and hence remain unchanged in the present singular. For example, strong verbs with *-e-* in the infinitive (*bera*, *verða*) show no change of vowel in the present singular (*hann berr*, *hann verðr*).

		LÍTA	BJÓÐA	VERÐA	BERA	GEFA	FARA	RÁÐA
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	lít	býð	verð	ber	gef	fer	ræð
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	lítr	býðr	verðr	berr	gefr	ferr	ræðr
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann	lítr	býðr	verðr	berr	gefr	ferr	ræðr
Pl 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér	lítum	bjóðum	verðum	berum	gefum	förum	ráðum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þér	lítið	bjóðið	verðið	berið	gefið	farið	ráðið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir	líta	bjóða	verða	bera	gefa	fara	ráða

Transl: *bera* ‘carry,’ *bjóða* ‘offer; invite,’ *fara* ‘go,’ *líta* ‘look,’ *ráða* ‘advise, counsel,’ *verða* ‘become’

There are two other important points to bear in mind when forming the present tense of strong verbs.

1. Verbs with root vowel *-a-*, such as *fara*, *standa*, and *ganga*, undergo *u*-umlaut in the 1pl, where the ending is *-um*. Hence *förum* ‘we travel,’ *stöndum* ‘we stand,’ and *göngum* ‘we go.’
2. Some strong verbs, such as *hefja*, *sitja*, *deyja*, and *liggja*, have present tense stem ending in *-j-*, while others, such as *höggva* and *syngva* have stem-final *-v-*. These verbs drop *-j-* and *-v-* according to the rules discussed earlier.

It is worth mentioning that *heita* is irregular in the present singular, inserting an *-n-* when it means ‘to be called’: *heiti*, *heitir*, *heitir*. When used with an accusative object, conjugates in a regular manner, that is, without an *-i-*: *heit*, *heitr*, *heitr*. For example, *Han heitir Gísli* ‘He is called Gísli,’ but *Gísli heitr á menn sína* ‘Gísli calls to his men.’

## 8.8 PAST TENSE OF STRONG VERBS

Strong verbs form their past tense by changing their root vowel, for example, *koma* (past sg *kóm*, past pl *kómu*, past participle *kominn*), *gefa* (past sg *gaf*, past pl *gáfu*, past participle *gefinn*). Compare English *come*, *came*, *has/is come* and *give*, *gave*, *has/is given*.

Strong verbs in Old Norse have five principal parts. Using *gefa* as an example, these are:

### Past Tense Endings of Strong Verbs

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	–	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-t	-uð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	–	-u

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) infinitive                 | <i>gefa</i> 'give'            |
| 2) 3sg present                | <i>hann gefr</i> 'he gives'   |
| 3) 3sg past                   | <i>hann gaf</i> 'he gave'     |
| 4) 3pl past                   | <i>þeir gáfu</i> 'they gave'  |
| 5) past participle (m nom sg) | <i>var gefinn</i> 'was given' |

Learning the principal parts of strong verbs is a short cut for mastering Old Norse, because they provide the stems to which one adds the endings. Using *gefa* as an example, the past singular adds endings to the stem *gaf-* (*gaf*, *gaft*, *gaf*) and the past plural to the stem *gáf-* (*gáfum*, *gáfuð*, *gáfu*).

Strong verbs fall into seven major classes according to the pattern of vowel alternations exhibited by their principal parts.

CLASS	EXAMPLE
I:	<b>líta</b> <lítr, leit, litu, litinn> <i>vb</i> look
II:	<b>bjóða</b> <býðr, bauð, buðu, boðinn> <i>vb</i> offer; invite
III:	<b>verða</b> <verðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> <i>vb</i> become
IV:	<b>bera</b> <berr, bar, báru, borinn> <i>vb</i> carry
V:	<b>gefa</b> <gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefinn> <i>vb</i> give
VI:	<b>fara</b> <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> <i>vb</i> go, travel
VII:	<b>ráða</b> <ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn> <i>vb</i> advise, counsel; rule, govern; decide

Each of the strong verb classes will be examined in more detail in upcoming lessons. These strong verbs conjugate in the past as follows:

		LÍTA	BJÓÐA	VERÐA	BERA	GEFA	FARA	RÁÐA
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek	leit	bauð	varð	bar	gaf	fór	réð
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú	leitz	bautt	vart	bart	gaft	fórt	rétt
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann	leit	bauð	varð	bar	gaf	fór	réð

Pl 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér	litum	buðum	urðum	bárum	gáfum	fórum	réðum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	pér	lituð	buðuð	urðuð	báruð	gáfuð	fóruð	réðuð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir	litu	buðu	urðu	báru	gáfu	fóru	réðu

Two rules help explain the change in consonants found in the principal parts of a few strong verbs. For instance, *verða*, *varð*, *urðu*, *orðinn* and *binda*, *batt*, *bundu*, *bundinn*.

- *v-* drops before *-o-* or *-u-*. Hence the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> principal parts of *verða* (above) and those of *vinna*: *vinnr*, *vann*, *unnu*, *unninn*.
- Strong verbs whose stems end in *-nd-*, *-ng-*, and *-ld-* have *-tt*, *-kk*, and *-lt* in the past singular (and the imperative, discussed below). Hence *binda*, *ganga*, and *halda* become in the past singular *batt*, *gekk*, and *hélt*.

8.9 EXERCISE – PRINCIPAL PARTS OF STRONG VERBS

Give the requested form of each of the following verbs by referring to the principal parts (see Vocabulary at end of book).

Ex: fara (3sg pres) ferr

1. gefa (3pl past)

2. koma (past part)

3. ganga (3sg past)

4. heita (2pl past)

5. hefja (1sg pres)
6. draga (1pl pres.)

7. ráða (2sg pres)

8. verða (3pl past)

9. nema (1sg pres)

10. halda (2pl pres)

8.10 PAST TENSE ENDING -T OF STRONG VERBS

When the 2sg past ending *-t* is added to strong verbs whose third principal part ends in a dental consonant (*-t-*, *-ð-*, or *-d-*) or a long vowel (such as *-é-*, *-á-*, or *-ó-*), the following rules apply.

- *-t-* or *-tt-* preceded by a vowel changes to *-z-*. For example, the third principal part of *geta* is *gat*; hence *gat* + *t* > *gazt*. Another example is *binda*: *batt* + *t* > *bazt*.
- *-ð-* changes to *-t-*. For example, the third principal part of *ráða* is *réð*; hence *réð* + *t* > *rétt*.
- A dental consonant preceded by *-r-*, *-l-*, or *-s-* changes to *-t* and no ending is added. For example, for the verbs *verða*, *halda*, and *ljósta*: *varð* + *t* > *vart*, *hélt* + *t* > *hélt*, and *laust* + *t* > *laust*.
- After a long vowel the ending *-t* doubles. For example, *sjá* has 2sg past *sátt*.

8.11 EXERCISE – PAST TENSE ENDING -T OF STRONG VERBS

Give the principal parts and 2sg past tense for each of the following strong verbs.

	PRINCIPAL PARTS	2SG PAST
Ex: geta	<u>getr. gat. gátu. getinn</u>	<u>gazt</u>
1. binda	_____	_____
2. ráða	_____	_____
3. verða	_____	_____
4. halda	_____	_____
5. ljósta	_____	_____
6. sjá	_____	_____

## 8.12 READING – HARALD HARDRADI SENDS FAMINE RELIEF TO ICELAND (*HARALDS SAGA SIGURÐARSONAR*, FROM *HEIMSKRINGLA*)

After Norway's King Magnus the Good (Magnús góði, 1024-1047) died without leaving an heir, Harald Hardradi set about brutally consolidating his power as sole king of Norway, and he gained a reputation among Norwegians as a harsh and uncompromising tyrant. Icelandic literature, however, generally paints a favorable picture of Harald, not least because of the aid he granted to Iceland during a famine by permitting the export of grain to Iceland. The following passage from *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla* claims that no chieftain seen in the northern lands was as *djúpvitr* ('deep-witted' or 'resourceful') as Harald.

### *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* (ch 36, from *Heimskringla*)

Haraldr konungr var maðr ríkr ok stjórnsamr innan lands, spekingr mikill at viti, svá at þat er alþýðu mál,<sup>41</sup> at engi höfðingi hefir sá verit<sup>42</sup> á Norðrlöndum, er jafndjúpvitr hefir verit sem Haraldr eða ráðsnjallr. Hann var orrustumaðr mikill ok inn vápndjarfasti. Hann var sterkr ok vápnfœrr betr en hvern maðr annarra,<sup>43</sup> svá sem fyrr er ritat.

Hann var ok inn mesti vinr hegat til allra landsmanna. Ok þá er var mikit hallæri á Íslandi, þá leyfði Haraldr konungr fjórum skipum mjölleyfi til Íslands.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>41</sup> alþýðu mál: 'common report,' 'talk or consensus of the general public.'

<sup>42</sup> at engi höfðingi hefir sá verit: 'that no one had been such a chieftain.'

<sup>43</sup> en hvern maðr annarra: 'than any other man.'

### 8.13 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. VERB MOOD

Mood is the expression of a speaker's attitude concerning the likelihood that a statement is true. It is also connected with commands and requests. There are three moods in Old Norse: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

The **indicative** is sometime called the mood of truth-telling. It is used when the speaker believes his or her utterance to be factual. For example, *gerði* is 3sg past indicative of *gera*, and *köllum* is 1pl present indicative of *kalla*. The indicative is generally the most frequently encountered mood in Old Norse texts, and the verb endings and formations learned to this point in the book have been indicative.

The **imperative** expresses commands and requests. Old Norse has only one imperative form: the 2sg imperative, used when addressing a single person. See the next section for the details on its formation.

The **subjunctive** is used when the speaker wishes to express uncertainty about the truth of a statement. Typically this occurs when describing an action which is potential, doubtful, or contrary to fact (something that *might be*) rather than concrete or factual (something that *is*). For example, in *Vápnfirðinga saga*, Brodd-Helgi makes a proposal for something he would like to see happen in the future, using the subjunctive of *vera*, "*en ek mun koma til þings, ok séð vit þá báðir saman.*" (And I will come to the assembly, and we would then be both together [in pursuing a legal case].)

The subjunctive is also frequently used in indirect speech; that is, speech which recounts what someone has said without necessarily using his or her exact words. In the following example from *Vápnfirðinga saga*, the saga writer reports Bjarni's question to the shepherd without quoting him and uses *segi*, present subjunctive of *segja*. *Í þetta mund kom smalamaðr inn at Hofi, ok spurði Bjarni, hvat hann segi tíðenda.* (At that moment a shepherd came indoors at Hof and Bjarni asked what news he had.)

### 8.14 COMMANDS AND THE IMPERATIVE MOOD OF VERBS

When addressing a command or request to a single person, Old Norse uses the imperative mood. When addressing more than one person, it employs the indicative.

**Commands to one person.** The imperative of 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation weak verbs looks just like the infinitive, for example, *tala* 'talk!' and *svara* 'answer!' Most other verbs form the imperative by dropping the *-a* of the infinitive. For example, the imperatives of the weak verbs *mæla* and *gera* are *mæl* 'talk!' and *ger* 'do!,' and the imperatives of the strong verbs *gefa* and *koma* are *gef* 'give!' and *kom* 'come!' Verbs such as *spyrja* and *höggva* drop stem final *-j-* or *-v-* along with the *-a* of the infinitive, giving *spyr* 'ask!' and *högg* 'strike!' *Vápnfirðinga saga* contains the following examples.

"Mæl við mik slíkt, er þér líkar," segir Þorsteinn, "en tala ekki slíkt við Brodd-Helga," segir hann.  
 "Far þú heim sem tíðast ok lát eigi verða við vart."

"Tell me such things as you like," says Thorstein, "but do not tell such to Brodd-Helgi," he says.  
 "Travel home as quickly as possible and let no one become aware of your journey."

Most 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation weak verbs drop the *-a* of the infinitive but add *-i*. for example, *þegja* and *duga* have imperatives *þegi* 'be silent!' and *dugi* 'be useful!'

Commands are often followed by a pronoun, as in *högg þú* 'strike!' In many of these instances, the pronoun loses its status as a separate word, with the initial *þ-* of *þú* assimilating to the preceding consonant, and the vowel becoming short: *kallaðu* (*kalla* + *þú*), *skjóttu* (*skjót* + *þú*), *þegiðu* (*þegi* + *þú*). Pronouns attached to the end of a verb are called enclitic pronouns.

As mentioned above in discussing the past tense of strong verbs, the imperative provides the environment for the change of *-nd-*, *-ng-*, and *-ld-* to *-tt*, *-kk*, and *-lt*, for example, the imperatives of *binda*, *ganga*, and *halda* are *bitt*, *gakk*, and *halt*.

The 3sg indicative is also sometimes used to express a command, as in the example from *Sturlunga saga* below, *Eigi skal [hann] höggva*, meaning 'He shall not strike,' or 'Don't let him strike.'

**Commands to more than one person.** Examples of commands given to more than one person using the indicative are *mælið* 'speak!', *takið* 'take!', *skjótið* 'shoot!' When the speaker is part of a group, there is

#### Snorri Sturluson's Death

Símon knútr bað Árna höggva hann.

"Eigi skal höggva," sagði Snorri.

"Högg þú," sagði Símon.

"Eigi skal höggva," sagði Snorri.

Eptir þat veitti Árni honum banasár, ok þeir Þorsteinn unnu á honum.

an additional way to issue a command. In these instances, the 1pl present indicative can be used, for example, *tökum* 'let's take,' *skjótum* 'let's shoot.' This usage is sometimes called the hortative, a term from Latin meaning 'encourage.'

An imperative is used in a famous passage from the *Sturlunga saga* compilation describing the violent death of Snorri Sturluson in *Íslendinga saga* (Ch. 152). In order to create alliances with other chieftains Snorri had married his daughters to important leaders, but the marriages ended and the alliances soured. In the year 1241, two of his former sons-in-law surprised Snorri at his state at Reykholt in western Iceland. They found Snorri hiding in his secret cellar under the house, and Símon knútr ordered Árni beiskr to strike (*höggva*) Snorri, who responds back to Árni 'he shall not strike.' In the end Símon, Árni, and Þorsteinn work over (*vinna* á) Snorri, killing him.

8.15 THE PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE OF VERBS

All verbs form the present subjunctive by adding the subjunctive endings to the verb stem (found by dropping the final *-a* of the infinitive). For example, the stem of *hlaupa* is *hlaup-* and the stem of *spyrja* is *spyrj-*. Verbs with stem final *-j-* such as *spyrja*, drop *-j-* before subjunctive endings beginning with *-i-*. Below are examples of verbs conjugated in the present subjunctive.

Subjunctive Endings		
	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-a	-im
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-ir	-ið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-i	-i

INFINITIVE	KALLA	GERA	SPYRJA	HAFJA	RÁÐA	EIGA
PRES STEM	KALL-	GER-	SPYRJ-	HAF-	RÁÐ-	EIG-
Sg <i>ek</i>	kalla	gera	spyrja	hafa	ráða	eiga
<i>pú</i>	kallir	gerir	spyrir	hafir	ráðir	eigir
<i>hann</i>	kalli	geri	spyri	hafi	ráði	eigi
Pl <i>vér</i>	kallim	gerim	spyrim	hafim	ráðim	eigim
<i>þér</i>	kallið	gerið	spyrið	hafið	ráðið	eigið
<i>þeir</i>	kalli	geri	spyri	hafi	ráði	eigi

- Verbs *vera* and *sjá* are irregular in the present subjunctive. They resemble each other, although they are not cognate forms: *vera* (*sé, sér, sé, sé, sé, sé*) and *sjá* (*sjá, sér, sé, sé, sé, sé*).

8.16 CULTURE – HARALD HARDRADI, A VIOLENT END

Harald’s reign in Norway was turbulent. Although he centralized power and founded the town of Oslo, he faced constant threats of rebellion from the prosperous Trondelag region in north-central Norway. A complex and forceful character, Harald ruthlessly suppressed any opposition to his power. He carried on a long and unsuccessful war to conquer Denmark and burned to the ground the Danish trading town of Hedeby. He and King Sveinn Ástríðarson (in English known as Sven Estridsson) of Denmark eventually signed a peace treaty in 1064. This truce freed Harald for his next adventure, his attempted conquest of England.

With the death of the Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Confessor in 1066, Harald saw a chance to claim England. He based his claim to the English throne on a treaty between his predecessor Magnus the Good (died 1047) and the earlier Danish King Horda-Knut (Hörða-Knútr, died 1042), who for a short period also ruled England. Harald gathered an invasion force of 300 ships and perhaps as many as 9,000 men. He landed on the coast near York and quickly defeated the northern English army. Before Harald could enjoy his victory, the English king Harold Godwinsson of Wessex surprised Harald at Stamford bridge near York. The Norwegians were caught without their heavy armor and Harald was killed. The English



defeated the Norwegians decisively and only a small portion of the invading army made back to Norway. With Harald's death, the twilight of the Viking Age arrived.

## 17 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 8. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

### NOUNS

bær – farm  
bóndi – farmer  
sverð – sword  
hlutr – thing;  
part

### ADJECTIVES

vanr – accustomed  
heill – whole  
lauss – loose, free  
sekr – guilty

### PRONOUNS

minn – my  
engi – no (one)  
nökkurr – some,  
a certain  
þinn – your

### NUMERALS

tíu – ten

### VERBS

ætla – to intend  
vita – to know  
leggja – to lay, place  
bera – to carry, bear

### PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

fram – forward  
yfir – over  
fyrir – before  
áður – before

### CONJUNCTIONS

þótt – although

## Exercises

18 Reading Old Norse. Circle the verb, underline the subject, and translate.

1. Þeir fóru út í Griklandshaf.

2. Hélt Haraldr sveit af sínum mönnum.

3. Höfðingi yfir herinum hét Gyrgir.

4. Hann var frændi dróttningar.

5. Haraldr var lítla hrið í herinum,

6. ...ok allir Væringjar fóru saman,...

7. ...þegar er bardagar váru.

8. Kom [þat] þá svá,...

9. at Haraldr varð höfðingi yfir öllum Væringjum.

**8.19 I-Umlaut.** Strong verbs show *i*-umlaut in the present singular. Fill in the blanks below.

INFINITIVE	3SG PRESENT	MEANING
Ex: fara	<u>ferr</u>	<u>go, travel</u>
1. draga	_____	_____
2. halda	_____	_____
3. standa	_____	_____
4. koma	_____	_____
5. láta	_____	_____
6. fá	_____	_____
7. fljúga	_____	_____
8. búa	_____	_____

### 8.20 The Present Tense of Strong Verbs and I-Umlaut.

**A.** Below are strong verbs in the 3sg present, all showing *i*-umlaut. Give the infinitive for each.

Ex: stendr	<u>standa</u>		
1. ræðr	_____	5. heldr	_____
2. tekr	_____	6. flýgr	_____
3. fær	_____	7. býr	_____
4. kómr	_____	8. dreggr	_____

**B.** Give the 3sg present for the following strong verbs. This exercise is the reverse of the previous exercise.

Ex: kala 'freeze'	<u>kelr</u>		
1. hlaupa 'leap'	_____	6. slá 'strike'	_____
2. krjúpa 'creep'	_____	7. grafa 'dig'	_____
3. róa 'row'	_____	8. gróa 'grow'	_____
4. snúa 'turn'	_____	9. aka 'drive'	_____
5. súpa 'sip'	_____	10. auka 'increase'	_____

**C.** Verbs with front vowels such as *-e-*, *-i-*, and *-í-* in their infinitives do not undergo *i*-umlaut. Give the 3sg present tense for the following strong verbs.

Ex: hefja	<u>hefr</u>		
1. gefa	_____	4. verða	_____
2. liggja	_____	5. ríða	_____
3. nema	_____	6. sitja	_____

**8.21 Past Tense of Strong Verbs.** Rewrite the following sentences so that the verb appears in the past tense, then translate.

Ex: Ek bý í Reyðarfirði. Ek bý í Reyðarfirði.

veð in Reyðarfjörð.

ngn á skip.

hann eigi Haraldr konungr?

omum þangat.

jáið son hans.

ganga til hans.

**Verbs.** Conjugate the following strong verbs using the principal parts provided

erðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> *vb* become

**PRESENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sg** *ek*

*þú*

*hann*

**PAST**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Pl** *vér*

*þér*

*þeir*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**

\_\_\_\_\_ konungr. 'He has become king.'

þakr, tók, tóku, tekinn> *vb* take

**PRESENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sg** *ek*

*þú*

*hann*

**PAST**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Pl** *vér*

*þér*

*þeir*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE**

var \_\_\_\_\_ af Ólafi. 'The horse was taken from Olaf.'

fer, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go, travel

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	<u>                                </u>	Sg ek	<u>                                </u>
þú	<u>                                </u>	þú	<u>                                </u>
hann	<u>                                </u>	hann	<u>                                </u>
Pl vér	<u>                                </u>	Pl vér	<u>                                </u>
þér	<u>                                </u>	þér	<u>                                </u>
þeir	<u>                                </u>	þeir	<u>                                </u>

PAST PARTICIPLE

Hann var \_\_\_\_\_ út til Íslands. ‘He had gone out to Iceland.’

**8.23 Present Tense of Strong Verbs.** Give the infinitive for each of the underlined verbs in the passage below and convert to 3sg or plural present, as appropriate.

Þá réð fyrir Griklandi Zóe dróttning in ríka ok með henni Michael kátalaktús. En er Haraldr kom til Miklagarðs ok á fund dróttningar, þá gekk hann þar á mála ok fór þegar um haustit á galeiðr með hermönnum þeim. Þeir fóru út í Griklandshaf. Hélt Haraldr sveit af sínum mönnum. Höfðingi yfir herinum hét Gyrgir. Hann var frændi dróttningar. Haraldr var lítla hríð í herinum, ok allir Væringjar fóru saman, þegar er bardagar váru. Kom þá svá, at Haraldr varð höfðingi yfir öllum Væringjum. Fóru þeir Gyrgir víða um Griklandseyjar, unnu þar herskap mikinn á kussurum.

	INFINITIVE	PRESENT		INFINITIVE	PRESENT
Ex: réð	<u>ráða</u>	<u>ræðr</u>	5. hélt	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>
1. kom	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>	6. hét	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>
2. gekk	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>	7. varð	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>
3. fór	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>	8. unnu	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>
4. fóru	<u>                                </u>	<u>                                </u>			

**8.24 Strong Verbs.** Fill in the blanks below with the correct form of the strong verbs in the past tense.

- 1. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ á Dreppstokki. (búa)
- 2. Vér \_\_\_\_\_ stundum á skipit út. (ganga)
- 3. Þau \_\_\_\_\_ skipit. (sjá)
- 4. Björn ok Þórólfr \_\_\_\_\_ til Grænlands. (koma)
- 5. Hon \_\_\_\_\_ Sigríðr. (heita)
- 6. Þú \_\_\_\_\_ með landnámsmönnum. (koma)
- 7. Þér \_\_\_\_\_ í Reykjavík. (búa)
- 8. Hon \_\_\_\_\_ hesta. (sjá)
- 9. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ Njáll. (heita)
- 10. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ til Nóregs. (fara)

**25 Weak and Strong Verbs.** Give the infinitives for the verbs in the sentences below and identify them as weak or strong.

	<i>INFINITIVE</i>	<i>WEAK OR STRONG?</i>
1. Eiríkr nam Eiríksfjörð.	_____	_____
2. Haraldr vann sér Danmörk.	_____	_____
3. Dómaldi réð löndum.	_____	_____
4. Hann herjaði í austrveg.	_____	_____
5. Ít fyrsta haust blótuðu þeir yxnum.	_____	_____
6. En at skilnaði mælti Óláfr.	_____	_____
7. Reið Gunnarr þá vestr.	_____	_____
8. Árferð batnaði ekki.	_____	_____
9. Hann stóð þá.	_____	_____
10. Þá svaraði Þórólfr.	_____	_____

**26 Strong Verbs.** Give the principal parts and 2sg past tense for each of the following strong verbs.

	<i>PRINCIPAL PARTS</i>	<i>2SG PAST</i>
Ex: geta	<u>getr. gat. gátu. getinn</u>	<u>gatz</u>
1. láta	_____	_____
2. ráða	_____	_____
3. draga	_____	_____
4. binda	_____	_____
5. bjóða	_____	_____
6. búa	_____	_____
7. heita	_____	_____



**Figure 38. The Ed (Boulder) Inscription from Uppland, Sweden.**

**8.27 Reading Exercise.** The Ed (Boulder) Inscription from Uppland, Sweden speaks of Rognvald, who served as a officer in the Byzantine army.

R N t t . R l h t t . n t . R t \* t n t t t r . \* n  
t r t . p r i p t t t t t . n t h . n h . p t r n t y l .

**TRANSLITERATION**

runa · rista · lit · rahnuatr · huar a griklanti · uas · lis ·  
forunki·

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

Rúna[r] rísta lét Ragnvaldr, hvern á Griklandi vas li[ð]s  
foringi.

**VOCABULARY**

- foringi** *m* captain, commander, leader
- Grikland** *n* Greece, Byzantine Empire (*place name*)
- hvern** *rel pron* who
- láta** <lætr, lét, létu, látinn> *vb* allow, permit;  
have something done
- lið** *n* band of men, troop
- Ragnvaldr** <-s> *m* Ragnvald (*personal name*)

- rísta** <rístr, reist, ristu, ristinn> *vb* carve,  
engrave; **láta rísta rúnar** have runes  
carved
- rún** <pl -ar> *f* rune, a letter in the runic  
'futhark'
- vas** (*older form of var*) *3sg past of vera*

**Translate:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8.28 Imperative Mood: Strong Verbs.** Give the imperative form for each of the strong verbs below. (Hint: the consonant clusters *-nd* and *-ng* require a change at the end of a word.)

Ex: koma kom

- |           |       |           |       |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. draga  | _____ | 4. gefa   | _____ |
| 2. fara   | _____ | 5. höggva | _____ |
| 3. standa | _____ | 6. ganga  | _____ |

**8.29 Imperative Mood: Weak Verbs.** Identify the conjugation of each weak verb and provide its imperative form.

Ex: mæla, mælti 2<sup>nd</sup> conjug mæl

- |                   |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. gera, gerði    | _____ | _____ |
| 2. spyrja, spurði | _____ | _____ |
| 3. svara, svaraði | _____ | _____ |
| 4. veita, veitti  | _____ | _____ |
| 5. tala, talaði   | _____ | _____ |
| 6. þegja, þagði   | _____ | _____ |

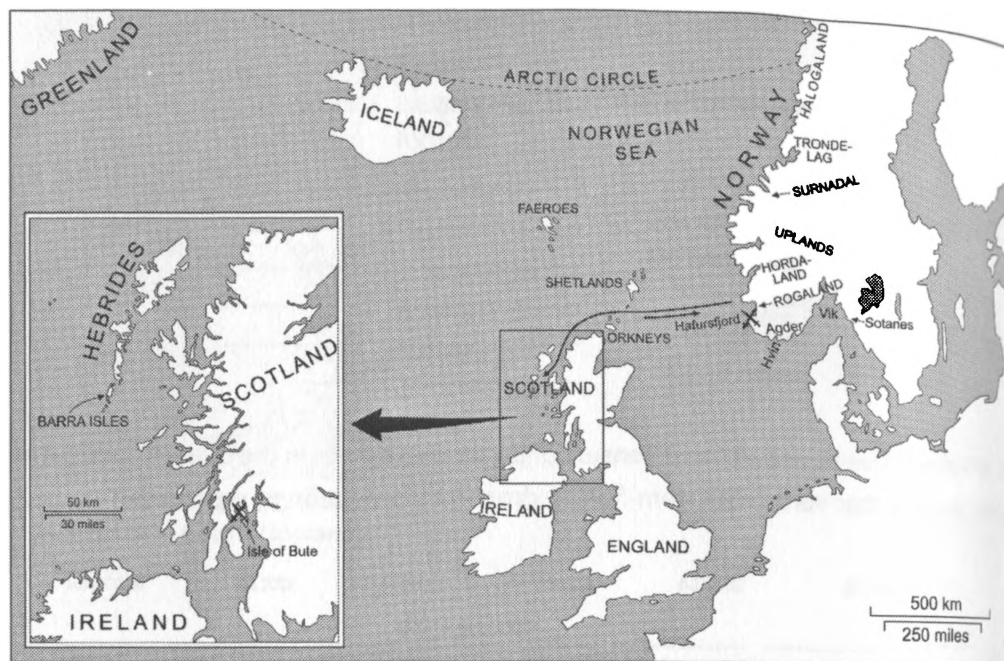
**8.30 Subjunctive Mood: Present Tense.** Conjugate these verbs in the present subjunctive. Keep in mind that verbs with stem-final *-j-* drop *-j-* before endings beginning in *-i-*.

	LEITA	DRAGA	KOMA	HORFA	SKILJA	HÖGGVA
Sg ek	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
þú	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
hann	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pl vér	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
þér	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
þeir	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## LESSON 9

### RAIDING IN THE WEST

*Af hreinu bergi kemr hreint vatn*  
(From a clean mountain comes clean water)



**Figure 39. Raids and Battles of the 9th-Century Norwegian Viking Onund Tree-Foot (Önund tréfótr).** Onund, who is from Rogaland in West Norway, raids in Scotland, the Hebride Islands, and Ireland. Returning to Norway, he fights against Harald Fairhair at the Battle of Hafsrfjord ca. 870. Fleeing Norway after Harald's victory, Onund sails to Iceland where he settles down.

#### 9.1 READING – ONUND TREE-FOOT RAIDS IN THE WEST (*GRETTIS SAGA ÁSMUNDARSONAR*)

*Grettir's Saga* opens with the story of Grettir's ancestor Onund Tree-Foot (*tréfótr*, meaning peg-leg), a Norwegian Viking. Onund raided for years in the Hebrides, Scotland, and Ireland. Before he settled in Iceland late in the *landnám* period, Onund had opposed Harald Fairhair's rise to power. In the sea battle of Hafsrfjord, Onund attacked King Harald's ship. In the fight, he lost a leg and earned his nickname. The saga says: 'Onund's wound was healed, but for the rest of his life he walked with a wooden leg.' The following passage introduces Onund's lineage and describes his Viking raids *vestr um haf* ('west across the sea' in the British Isles).



Þeir herjuðu um Suðreyjar, ok er þeir kómu í Barreyjar, var þar fyrir konungr sá,<sup>48</sup> er  
 Gjarvalr hét; hann hafði ok fimm skip. Þeir lögðu t'il bardaga við hann<sup>49</sup> ok varð þar hörð  
 irið;<sup>50</sup> váru Önundar menn ákafir. Féll mart af hvárumtveggjum, en svá lauk,<sup>51</sup> at konungr  
 lýði einskipa; tóku þeir Önundr þar bæði skip ok fé mikit ok sátu þar um vetrinn. Þrjú  
 umur herjuðu þeir um Írland ok Skotland; síðan fóru þeir til Nóregs.

**Translate:**

## 9.2 EXERCISE – READING *GRETTIR'S SAGA*

<sup>51</sup> en svá lauk: 'and so it ended.'

Based on the reading above, are the following statements *rétt* or *rangt*?

**RÉTT EÐA RANGT?**

- 1. Öundur var Ófeigsson.
- 2. Öundur var bróðir Ívars.
- 3. Föðurkyn Öundar var mest um Miðfjörð.
- 4. Bróðir Guðbjargar var Öundur.
- 5. Báلكi Blæingsson drap Öundur.
- 6. Inn þriðji félagi þeira var Hallvarðr.
- 7. Konungr hét Herjólfur.
- 8. Konungr hafði fimm skip.
- 9. Öundur ok menn hans herjuðu um Írland ok Skotland.

9.3 CULTURE – WESTERN NORWAY

*Grettir’s Saga*, a text whose author was well versed in Norwegian geography,<sup>52</sup> tells that Onund Tree-Foot’s paternal line was from Rogaland and Hörðaland. These districts of Western Norway, along with Sogn, Firðafylki, Sunnmœrr, and Raumsdal just to the north, bordered the Atlantic coastline with deep fjords, sometimes reaching far inland. The climate was temperate, due to a northern arm of the Gulf Stream, but arable land for tilling was in short supply. Western Norwegians exploited maritime resources to supplement their diet, and seafaring was a way of life.

The West Norwegians also watched the trading wealth of their neighbors to the north and south sail past the mouths of their fjords, and they were not averse to seizing trading ships when they could. Stamping out piracy in Western Norway was one of the goals of Harald Fairhair’s conquest. He was from the Vík region to the south, a center of trade. Harald’s goals were shared by leaders of Norway’s more northerly Trondelag region, and the Tronders allied with Harald. Faced with the rise of a centralized kingship in Norway aimed at ending their piracy, many West Norwegians sought land in newly discovered Iceland and other Atlantic islands.

9.4 MORE ON THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

A distinguishing feature of the Scandinavian languages is that they normally affix the definite article to the end of a noun, for example *hestinn* ‘the horse,’ *konan* ‘the woman,’

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of *Grettir’s Saga* and a series of maps showing Onund’s and Grettir’s travels and adventures see Davide Zori and Jesse Byock, ‘Introduction’ to *Grettir’s Saga*. Trans. J. Byock. Oxford: Oxford World Classics, Oxford University Press, 2009. The edition includes a full rendering of Grettir’s verses translated by Russell Poole.

child.' The declension of the definite article was introduced earlier. The rule is that the definite article follows the noun's case ending, for example *hestinn* (horse + *inn*). When the noun ends in a vowel, the initial *i-* of the suffixed article is dropped, for example *hestinum* (*hesti* + *inum*).

	HESTR + INN	KONA + IN	BARN + IT
	M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	hestinn	konan	barnit
<b>acc</b>	hestinn	konuna	barnit
<b>dat</b>	hestinum	konunni	barninu
<b>gen</b>	hestsins	konunnar	barnsins
<b>Pl nom</b>	hestarnir	konurnar	börnir
<b>acc</b>	hestana	konurnar	börnir
<b>dat</b>	hestunum	konunum	börnunum
<b>gen</b>	hestanna	kvennanna	barnanna

the suffixed definite article:

the initial *i-* of the suffixed article is always lost in the masculine nominative plural and the feminine nominative/accusative plural, for example *hestarnir* (*hestar* + *inir*), *allir* + *inar*), *konurnar* (*konur* + *inar*).

In the plural, the noun loses the final *-m* of the ending, and the article loses its initial *i-*, for example, *konungunum* (*konungum* + *inum*), *mönnunum* (*mönnum* + *inum*), *höllum* + *inum*), *börnunum* (*börnum* + *inum*).

Nouns of one syllable that end in a vowel, such as *á* 'river,' *brú* 'bridge,' and *bú* 'house,' do not drop the *-i-* when the article consists of one syllable, hence feminine singular *áin* (*á* + *in*). Otherwise the *-i-* is dropped as expected, for example, *ular* *ánni* (*á* + *inni*).

*naðr* has special forms, nominative plural *mennirnir* and accusative plural *meðr*.

### NOUNS – TYPE 3

Only masculine nouns, with most following the patterns of *völlr* and *skjöldr*. The vowel alternations as the result of *u-* and *i-*umlaut as shown in the chart below. The exception is the feminine noun *hönd* (hand), singular: *hönd*, *hönd*, *hendi*, plural: *hendr*, *hendr*, *höndum*, *handa*.

VÖLLR	ÖRN	SKJÖLDR	BJÖRN	FJÖRÐR	ÞÁTTR	
völlr	örn	skjöldr	björn	fjörðr	þátttr	} u-umlaut
völl	örn	skjöld	björn	fjörð	þátt	
velli	erni	skildi	birni	firði	þætti	i-umlaut

	gen	vallar	arnar	skjaldar	bjarnar	fjarðar	þáttar	
Pl nom	vellir	ernir	skildir	birnir	firðir	þættir		i-umlaut
acc	völlu	örnu	skjöldu	björnu	fjörðu	þáttu	} u-umlaut	
dat	völlum	örnum	skjöldum	björnum	fjörðum	þáttum		
gen	valla	arna	skjalda	bjarna	fjarða	þátta		

Transl: *völlr* ‘field,’ *örn* ‘eagle,’ *skjöldr* ‘shield,’ *björn* ‘bear,’ *fjörðr* ‘fjord,’ *þáttir* ‘tale’

- Some Type 3 nouns, such as *örn* and *björn*, drop nominative singular *-r*, in accordance with the Special Stem Rules.
- A few, such as *viðr*, *littr*, and *tigr*, have root vowel *-i-* with no alternation; for example, *tigr* ‘ten’ declines in the singular *tigr*, *tig*, *tigi*, *tigar*.
- *Áss* ‘god’ has variants in several of its case forms: *áss*, *ás*, *æsi*~*ás*, *áss*~*ásar*, (pl) *æsir*, *ásu*~*æsi*, *ásu*, *ása*.

9.6 STRONG NOUNS – TYPE 4

Type 4 is a small class containing only masculine and feminine nouns and is characterized by *i*-umlaut and the ending *-r* in the nominative and accusative plural.

**Masculine.** There are only five Type 4 masculine nouns:

	FÓTR	MAÐR	NAGL	VETR	FINGR	
Sg nom	fótr	maðr	nagl	vetr	fingr	
acc	fót	mann	nagl	vetr	fingr	
dat	fæti	manni	nagli	vetri	fingri	
gen	fótar	manns	nagls	vetrar	fingrar	fingrs
Pl nom	fætr	menn	negl	vetr	fingr	} i-umlaut
acc	fætr	menn	negl	vetr	fingr	
dat	fótum	mönnum	nöglum	vetrum	fingrum	
gen	fóta	manna	nagla	vetra	fingra	

Transl: *fótr* ‘foot,’ *maðr* ‘man,’ *nagl* ‘fingernail,’ *vetr* ‘winter,’ *fingr* ‘finger’

- *Nagl* drops the plural ending *-r*, as do *vetr* and *fingr*, whose stems end in *-r*, in accordance with the Special Stems Rules.
- Note *fótr* shows *i*-umlaut in the dative singular.

**Feminine.** There are fewer than 30 Type 4 feminine nouns.

	RÓT	MÚS	VÍK	TÖNN	KÝR
Sg nom	rót	mús	vík	tönn	kýr
acc	rót	mús	vík	tönn	kú
dat	rót	mús	vík	tönn	kú

	<i>gen</i>	<i>rótar</i>	<i>músar</i>	<i>víkr</i>	<i>tannar</i>	<i>kýr</i>
<b>Pl nom</b>	<i>rætr</i>	<i>mýss</i>	<i>víkr</i>	<i>tennr~teðr</i>	<i>kýr</i>	} <i>i-umlaut</i>
<b>acc</b>	<i>rætr</i>	<i>mýss</i>	<i>víkr</i>	<i>tennr~teðr</i>	<i>kýr</i>	
<b>dat</b>	<i>rótum</i>	<i>músum</i>	<i>vikum</i>	<i>tönnum</i>	<i>kúm</i>	
<b>gen</b>	<i>róta</i>	<i>músa</i>	<i>víka</i>	<i>tanna</i>	<i>kúa</i>	

Transl: *rót* 'root,' *mús* 'mouse,' *vík* 'bay,' *tönn* 'tooth,' *hönd* 'hand,' *kýr* 'cow'

- Some Type 4 nouns are irregular; for example, *vík* has genitive singular *víkr*, and *kýr* has nominative and genitive singular *kýr*.

### 9.7 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS *ÞESSI* AND *SÁ*

The pronouns *þessi* and *sá* mean 'this (one)' and 'that (one).'

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<i>þessi ~ sjá</i>	<i>þessi ~ sjá</i>	<i>þetta</i>
<b>acc</b>	<i>þenna</i>	<i>þessa</i>	<i>þetta</i>
<b>dat</b>	<i>þessum</i>	<i>þessar(r)i ~ þessi</i>	<i>þessu</i>
<b>gen</b>	<i>þessa</i>	<i>þessar(r)ar ~ þessar</i>	<i>þessa</i>

<b>Pl nom</b>	<i>þessir</i>	<i>þessar</i>	<i>þessi</i>
<b>acc</b>	<i>þessa</i>	<i>þessar</i>	<i>þessi</i>
<b>dat</b>	<i>þessum</i>	<i>þessum</i>	<i>þessum</i>
<b>gen</b>	<i>þessa ~ þessar(r)a</i>	<i>þessa ~ þessar(r)a</i>	<i>þessa ~ þessar(r)a</i>

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<i>sá</i>	<i>sú</i>	<i>þat</i>
<b>acc</b>	<i>þann</i>	<i>þá</i>	<i>þat</i>
<b>dat</b>	<i>þeim</i>	<i>þeir(r)i</i>	<i>því</i>
<b>gen</b>	<i>þess</i>	<i>þeir(r)ar</i>	<i>þess</i>

<b>Pl nom</b>	<i>þeir</i>	<i>þær</i>	<i>þau</i>
<b>acc</b>	<i>þá</i>	<i>þær</i>	<i>þau</i>
<b>dat</b>	<i>þeim</i>	<i>þeim</i>	<i>þeim</i>
<b>gen</b>	<i>þeira</i>	<i>þeira</i>	<i>þeira</i>

- The neuter singular and plural of all genders of *sá* are identical to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun.
- Sá* also often occurs with the suffixed article, for example, *sá konungrinn*.

Gormr konungr gerði kumbl **þessi**.

*King Gorm made these monuments.*

Sigríðr gerði brú **þessa** fyr sálu Hólmgeirs. *Sigríð made this bridge for Holmgeir's soul.*

<b>Þá vil ek gefa þér skip þetta.</b>	<i>Then I wish to give you <b>this</b> ship.</i>
<b>Þessi var ekki konungsmaðr.</b>	<i><b>This one</b> was not a follower of the king.</i>
<b>Haraldr er faðir manns þessa.</b>	<i>Harald is <b>this</b> man's father.</i>
<b>Af því var hann kallaðr Eiríkr blóðøx.</b>	<i>For <b>that</b> reason he was called Eirik Bloodaxe.</i>
<b>Þeim manni gaf Ingólfr land.</b>	<i>Ingolf gave land to <b>that</b> man.</i>
<b>Sú kona var dóttir hennar.</b>	<i><b>That</b> woman was her daughter.</i>
<b>Þeir menn fóru til Englands.</b>	<i><b>Those</b> men went to England.</i>
<b>Í þá tíð var hallæri mikit.</b>	<i>At <b>that</b> time there was a great famine.</i>

## 9.8 CLAUSES – INDEPENDENT, DEPENDENT, AND RELATIVE

Clauses are units of speech consisting of at least a subject and a verb. Being able to distinguish independent, dependent, and relative clauses helps in translating Old Norse.

**Independent clauses** stand by themselves as grammatically complete sentences.

Þorsteinn hét maðr.	<i>A man was called Thorstein.</i>
Þá vil ek gefa þér skipit.	<i>Then I wish to give you the ship.</i>
Hann fór til Grænlands með Eiríki.	<i>He went to Greenland with Eirik.</i>

Many sentences consist of two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, such as *ok* or *en*, or a two-part conjunction (correlative) such as *bæði ... ok* or *hvárki ... né*. The latter are called correlative clauses, which can be thought of as a subtype of independent clause.

Herjólfur nam land <b>en</b> Ingólfr var frændi hans.	<i>Herjolf took land <b>and</b> Ingolf was his kinsman.</i>
Önundr var upplenzkr at móðurætt, <b>en</b> föðurkyn hans var mest um Rogaland ok um Hörðaland.	<i>Onund was an Uplander (highlander) on his mother's side, <b>while</b> his father's family was mostly from Rogaland and Hörðaland.</i>
Tóku þeir Önundr <b>bæði</b> skip <b>ok</b> fé mikit ok sátu þar um vetrinn.	<i>Onund and his men took <b>both</b> ships <b>and</b> much treasure and stayed there for the winter.</i>
<b>Hvárki</b> Eiríkr <b>né</b> Björn gekk á skipit.	<i><b>Neither</b> Eirik <b>nor</b> Bjorn went onto the ship.</i>

In the first of the two correlative sentences above, there is one subject, Onund, who took two objects: ships in one clause, and treasure in the other. In the second correlative sentence, there are two independent subjects: Eirik and Bjorn with verb in the singular. Hence, each subject is performing an individual act and has its own clause.

When two or more independent clauses share the same subject or verb, the subject

verb is not repeated after the first clause.

Eiríkr stóð **pá ok** horfði á skipit.

*Eirik stood then **and** looked at the ship.*

þorgerðr hét kona hans, **en** Bjarni sonr þeira, **ok** var efniligr maðr.

*His wife was called Thorgerd, **and** their son (was called) Bjarni, **and** (he) was a promising man.*

**Dependent clauses** cannot stand alone as complete sentences but are linked to a main clause by a subordinating conjunction such as *er, ef, því at, at*. The dependent clauses are underlined in the following sentences.

Þat var einn dag, **er** þeir Þórólfr ok Björn gengu ofan til skipsins.

*That was one day, **when** Thorolf and Bjorn went down to the ship.*

Þá vil ek gefa þér skipit, **ef** þú vill biggja.

*Then I wish to give to you the ship, **if** you wish to accept [it].*

Herjólfur gaf Ingólfi land, **því at** hann var frændi hans.

*Herjolf gave land to Ingolf, **because** he was his kinsman.*

Hann segir, **at** hann sé konungr Nóregs.

*He says **that** he is king of Norway.*

*Þá er* 'then when' is frequently employed in place of *er*. Both are translated as 'when.'

Þá **er** Högni kom í Noreg, spurði hann at Héðinn hafði siglt vestr um haf.

***When** Hogni arrived in Norway, he learned that Hedin had sailed west over the sea.*

Relative clauses are a type of dependent clause which refers back to a noun in the main clause. In Old Norse, the relative particles *er* or *sem* ('who,' 'which,' or 'that') introduce relative clauses. *Er* and *sem* are indeclinable; that is, they never change form. In the following sentences, the relative particle is in bold and the word it refers to is underlined.

Eigi er allt gull **sem** glóar.

*Not all is gold **that** glows. (All that glows is not gold.)*

Konungur sá **er** Högni er nefndr átti dóttur, er Hildr hét.

*That king who is named Hogni had a daughter who was called Hild.*

Hann er maðrinn **sem** kom.

*He is the man **who** came.*

Þá mælti Eiríkr jarl við þann mann, er sumir nefna Finn.

*Then Earl Eirik spoke to that man **whom** some call Finn.*

Often a form of the demonstrative *sá* precedes the relative particle *er* or *sem* and agrees with the noun of the main clause in gender, number, and case.

Kringla heimsins, sú **er** mannfólkit byggvir, er mjök vágskorin. (*sú = f nom sg*)

*The circle of the world, (that one) **which** mankind inhabits, is much cut by bays.*

Hann sá konu, þá **er** hann fekk. (*þá = f acc sg*)

*He saw a woman, (that one) **whom** he got [in marriage].*

## 9.9 EXERCISE – MAIN AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES.

Identify the underlined clauses as either independent or dependent.

Ex: Þat kom ásamt með þeim, at hallærit stóð at Dómalði. main clause

1. Er þeir kómu í Barrevjar, var þar fyrir konungur sá, er Kjarvalr hét.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Þeir lögðu til bardaga við hann, ok varð þar hörð hrið. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Féll mart af hvarumtveggjum, en svá lauk, at konungur flýði einskipa; tóku þeir Önunder þar bæði skip ok fé mikit ok sátu þar um vetrinn. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Þrjú sumur herjuðu þeir um Írland ok Skotland. \_\_\_\_\_

## 9.10 VERBS – THE PAST SUBJUNCTIVE

**A. Weak verbs** form their past subjunctive by adding the subjunctive endings to the past tense stem, for example, *þeir kallaði, ek svaraða, þú talaðir*. In the past subjunctive, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation weak verbs show *i*-umlaut, hence 3sg past indicatives *spurði, taldi, krafði, vakti, hafði, sagði, þótti* become subjunctives *spyrði, teldi, krefði, vekti, hefði, segði, þætti*.

### Subjunctive Endings

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-a	-im
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-ir	-ið
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-i	-i

INFINITIVE	SVARA	MÆLA	LEGGJA	VAKA	HAFJA
PAST STEM	SVARAÐ-	MÆLT-	LAGÐ-	VAKT-	HAFÐ-
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	svaraða	mælt	legða	vekta	hefða
<i>þú</i>	svaraðir	mæltir	legðir	vektir	hefðir
<i>hann</i>	svaraði	mælti	legði	vekta	hefði
<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	svaraðim	mæltim	legðim	vektim	hefðim
<i>þér</i>	svaraðið	mæltið	legðið	vektið	hefðið
<i>þeir</i>	svaraði	mælti	legði	vekti	hefði

**B. Strong verbs** add the subjunctive endings to the past subjunctive stem found dropping the ending *-u* from the past plural and applying *i*-umlaut. (To find the past plural of strong verbs look to the fourth principal part, for example *gefa, gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefinn*. Take the past plural (*gáfu*), drop the ending *-u* (*gáf-*), then apply *i*-umlaut (*gæf-*).

INFINITIVE	BJÓÐA	VERÐA	BERA	FARA	RÁÐA
3PL PAST	BUÐU	URÐU	BÁRU	FÓRU	RÉDU
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	byða	yrða	bæra	fœra	réða



<i>pú</i> <i>hann</i>	byðir byði	yrðir yrði	bærir bæri	foerir foeri	réðir réði
Pl <i>vér</i> <i>þér</i> <i>þeir</i>	byðim byðið byði	yrðim yrðið yrði	bærim bærið bæri	foerim foerið foeri	réðim réðið réði

- The past subjunctive of *vera* is regular (past plural *váru*, past subjunctive stem *vær-*): *væra*, *værir*, *væri*, *værim*, *værið*, *væri*.
- Verbs with past subjunctive stems ending in *-k-* and *-g-*, along with the verb *sá*, insert *-j-* in the 1sg, for example, *fengja* (*fá*), *tækja* (*taka*), *drægja* (*draga*), *sæja* (*sá*).
- Class VII verbs such as *hlaupa*, *auka*, and *ausa*, with *-au-* in the infinitive and *-jó-* in the past, have alternate past subjunctive stems. For example, *hlaupa* sometimes forms its past subjunctive from the stem *hlyp-*, and sometimes from the stem *hlæp-*.

### 9.11 EXERCISE – THE PAST SUBJUNCTIVE OF VERBS

Conjugate the verbs *tala*, *hafa*, *gjalda*, and *koma* in the past subjunctive.

	TALA	HAFA	GJALDA	KOMA
Sg <i>ek</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>pú</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>hann</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pl <i>vér</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>þér</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>þeir</i>	_____	_____	_____	_____

### 9.12 READING – MURDER, FOSTERAGE, AND A WIDOW'S RESOURCEFULNESS (GRETTIS SAGA ÁSMUNDARSONAR)

During the Viking Age, women of the property-holding, free-farmer class had significant legal rights. By custom they ran the household and many of the farm industries. A woman was by law subordinate to her husband (*húsbóndi*) when he was home, but when her husband was away, the *húsfreyja*, or mistress of the house, often assumed full charge. In times of feud and conflict, many women acted independently, as in the following passage from *Grettir's Saga*.

Ondott Crow, a prominent Norwegian *bóndi*, landed in a dispute with Grim, the king's *hersir* (local military commander). The dispute over payments to the king resulted in Ondott's death. Anticipating an attack by the king's men on the family farm, Ondott's widow Signy gathers her husband's wealth under cover of darkness and escapes with their two sons by boat to her father's farm. She then sends her sons into fosterage with another

family, a common custom that was intended to seal political ties between families.

**Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar (ch 7)** Þetta haust drap Grímr hersir Öndótt kráku fyrir þat, er hann náði eigi fénu<sup>53</sup> til handa konungi;<sup>54</sup> en Signý, kona Öndóttis, bar á skip allt lausafé þeira þegar ína sömu nótt<sup>55</sup> ok fór með sonu sína, Ásmund ok Ásgrím, til Sighvats, föður síns. Litlu síðar<sup>56</sup> sendi hon sonu sína í Sóknadal til Heðins, fóstara síns, ok unðu þeir þar lítila hríð<sup>57</sup> ok vildu fara aptr til móður sinnar. Fóru þeir síðan ok kómu til Ingjalds tryggva í Hvini at jólum; hann tók við þeim fyrir áeggjun Gyðu, konu sinnar; váru þeir þar um vetrinn.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

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9.13 CULTURE – VIKING IN THE BRITISH ISLES AND WESTERN EUROPE

In the last years of the eighth century, a wave of seaborne raids in the British Isles and Western Europe announced the arrival of the Viking Age. Scandinavian navigational techniques and ship technology had developed to the point where Norse mariners were freed from the older sailing technique of following the coast. Now they were able to cross the open waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic. The speed and shallow draft of the Scandinavian clinker-built ships were ideal for launching surprise attacks inland along rivers where most wealthy trading sites were located.

Viking raiders took advantage of the political disunity and conflicts among the Picts, Scots, Anglo-Saxons, and Irish, and the leaders of Viking armies turned to their advantage dynastic problems within the Carolingian Empire. Employing the mobility afforded them

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<sup>53</sup> fyrir þat, er hann náði eigi fénu (fé + inu): ‘for the [reason] that, he did not get the payment.’  
<sup>54</sup> til handa konungi: ‘for the king.’  
<sup>55</sup> þegar ína sömu nótt: ‘at once on that same night.’  
<sup>56</sup> litlu síðar: ‘a little later.’  
<sup>57</sup> unðu þeir þar lítila hríð: ‘they didn’t like staying there but for a little while’

by their ships, Vikings moved opportunistically between different regions, preying upon the weakest opponent. By the end of the Viking Age, the raiders had left their mark on the political and social landscape of northern Europe.

In the Frankish domains Viking attacks undermined the power of the Carolingian rulers, and Vikings quickened the splintering of the Carolingian empire. In Ireland Vikings caused long periods of warfare and unrest, but also stimulated trade and the growth of towns. In England the northmen with their threat of conquest, were catalysts for the unification of the country under the Wessex kings who rose as the single power capable of resisting the Vikings. North of Scotland, the Earldom of Orkney became a Viking state, which developed into a regional maritime power. Its Earls (*jarlar*) continued to launch raids into the twelfth century. The coastal regions of Scotland were often harried and settled by Norse seafarers, while some of the inland regions were partly spared.

The Viking Age in Western Europe falls into essentially four phases. The raids began on a small scale in the late eighth century and were led by warrior chiefs, sometimes called sea kings, because they ruled from ships. The leadership of the Viking raiders reflects the splintered social organizations in Scandinavia, which at the time was divided into small-scale, petty kingdoms and local chieftaincies. During the middle of the ninth century, Viking armies began to spend the winter in foreign lands. They built camps and occupied fortified sites, which allowed them to continue raiding throughout much of the year. This change resulted in the conquest of certain regions. The third phase, from roughly the late ninth to mid-tenth century, was a period of response by the indigenous peoples of northern Europe and the British Isles to the conquests of the Vikings. With varying degrees of success, the local populations re-conquered areas from the raiders, who had become colonists and settled down in their midst.

The fourth phase of the Viking Age began in the late tenth century. By that time, the Scandinavian homelands were solidifying into larger kingdoms. Scandinavian princes had become powerful enough to attempt royal conquests. England was the great prize, and two future kings of Norway, Olaf Trygvason (995-1000) and Olaf Haraldsson (St. Olaf, 1015-1028), rose to prominence as Viking commanders in England. The Danish kings Svein Forkbeard and Canute the Great and the Norwegian Harald Harddradi led invasions of England in the eleventh century. Finally in 1066 William of Normandy conquered England. He and many of his Normans were descended from Viking invaders, who had settled in northern France a century and a half earlier.

#### 9.14 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 9. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	NUMERALS
sök – cause, reason	vinsæll – popular	slíkr – such	sjau – seven
bú– farm	skyldr – related;	báðir – both	
höfuð – head	necessary, obliged	várr – our	

**móðir** – mother  
**víg** – slaying

**miðr** – middle  
**fullr** – full

VERBS	PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS	CONJUNCTIONS
<b>gefa</b> – to give	<b>saman</b> – together	<b>nema</b> – except
<b>finna</b> – to find	<b>inn</b> – inside	
<b>ráða</b> – to advise; rule	<b>undir</b> – under	
<b>sitja</b> – to sit	<b>heldr</b> – rather	
<b>standa</b> – to stand	<b>brott</b> – away	

EXERCISES

**9.15 Definite Article.** Decline masculine *dvergrinn* ‘the dwarf,’ feminine *konan* ‘the woman,’ and neuter *landit* ‘the land.’

	DVERGR + INN	KONA + IN	LAND + IT
Sg nom	<u>dvergrinn</u>	<u>konan</u>	<u>landit</u>
acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Pl nom	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**9.16 Demonstrative Pronouns.** Complete the charts of *þessi* ‘this’ and *sá* ‘that.’

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	<u>þessi</u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	Sg nom	<u>sá</u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Pl nom	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	Pl nom	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	acc	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	dat	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	gen	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**9.17 Demonstrative Pronouns.** Fill in the correct demonstrative pronoun for the following sentences.

Ex: Gormr konungr gerði þessi (these) kumbl.

1. Haraldr gaf mér \_\_\_\_\_ (this) sverð.
2. Hann tók \_\_\_\_\_ (that) sverð.
3. Vér förum til \_\_\_\_\_ (that) manns.
4. Óláfr tók við \_\_\_\_\_ (this) konu.
5. Sigríðr gerði \_\_\_\_\_ (that) brú.
6. Hon nam \_\_\_\_\_ (this) land.
7. Þær sáu \_\_\_\_\_ (that) konung.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (that) kona hét Sigríðr.

**9.18 Strong Verbs.** Below is a list of common strong verbs and their principal parts.

**bera** <berr, bar, báru, borinn> *vb* bear, carry

**bjóða** <býðr, bauð, buðu, boðinn> *vb* offer; invite

**draga** <dregr, dró, drógu, dreginn> *vb* pull, draw, drag

**fara** <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go, travel

**fá** <fær, fekk, fengu, fenginn> *vb* fetch, get; give, deliver

**ganga** <gengr, gekk, gengu, genginn> *vb* go, walk

**gefa** <gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefinn> *vb* give

**halda** <heldr, hélt, héldu, haldinn> *vb* hold, keep

**hefja** <hefr, hóf, hófu, hafinn> *vb* lift, raise; begin

**heita** <heitir, hét, hétu, heitinn> *vb* be called

**koma** <kemr~kømr, kom, kómu~kvómu~kvámu, kominn> *vb* come

**nema** <nemr, nam, námu, numinn> *vb* take, learn

**ráða** <ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn> *vb* advise, counsel; rule, govern

**verða** <verðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> *vb* become

**vinna** <vinnr, vann, unnu, unninn> *vb* gain, win; work

1. Conjugate *bera* in the present and past tense.

	PRESENT	PAST
Sg ek	_____	_____
þú	_____	_____
hann	_____	_____
Pl vér	_____	_____
þér	_____	_____
þeir	_____	_____

1. Identify each of the verbs below as in the example.

Ex: berr 3sg pres of *bera* 'carry'

1. hélduð \_\_\_\_\_
2. gekk \_\_\_\_\_
3. verð \_\_\_\_\_
4. heitið \_\_\_\_\_
5. bar \_\_\_\_\_
6. réðum \_\_\_\_\_
7. hafinn \_\_\_\_\_
8. drögum \_\_\_\_\_

C. Provide the correct form for each of the verbs below.

Ex: gefa (2sg pres) gefr

1. koma (2sg pres)

2. vinna (2pl past)

3. hefja (2sg past)

4. ráða (3sg past)
5. nema (1pl past)

6. fá (1sg pres)

7. draga (3pl pres)

8. fara (1pl pres)

9.19 Verbs. Give the principal parts for the underlined strong verbs in the passage below.

Þeir herjuðu um Suðreyjar, ok er þeir kómu í Barreyjar, var þar fyrir konungr sá, er Kjarvalr hét; hann hafði ok fimm skip. Þeir lögðu til bardaga við hann, ok varð þar hörð hríð; váru Önundar menn ákafir. Féll mart af hvarumtveggjum, en svá lauk, at konungr flýði einskipa; tóku þeir Önundr þar bæði skip ok fé mikit ok sátu þar um vetrinn. Þrjú sumur herjuðu þeir um Írland ok Skotland; síðan fóru þeir til Nóregs.

INFINITIVE	PRES SG	PAST SG	PAST PL	PAST PARTICIPLE
			kómu	
		hét		
		varð		
		féll		
		lauk		
			tóku	
			sátu	
			fóru	

9.20 Strong Nouns – Type 3. Decline the nouns *völlr*, *kötttr*, and *fjörðr* below.

	VÖLLR	KÖTTTR	FJÖRÐR
Sg nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			
Pl nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			

9.21 Strong Nouns – Type 4. Decline the nouns *fótr*, *vetr*, and *bók* below.

	FÓTR (M)	VETR (M)	BÓK (F)
Sg nom			
acc			
dat			

gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

**9.22 The Conjunction, Relative Particle and Verb *er*.** Translate. Remember that *er* has several meanings: 'when,' 'who,' 'which,' 'that,' and 'is.'

Ex: Haraldr konungr bað gera kumbl þessi, sá Haraldr er sér vann Danmörk.

*King Harald commanded these burial mounds to be made, that Harald who won for himself Denmark.*

1. Skútaðar-Skeggi hét maðr ágætr í Nóregi. Hans sonr var Björn; er kallaðr var Skinna-Björn.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Þeir herjuðu um Suðreyjar, ok er þeir kómu í Barreyjar, var þar fyrir konungr sá, er Kjarvalr hét.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Þat var einn dag, er þeir Þórólfr ok Björn gengu ofan til skipsins.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. En er Haraldr kom til Miklagarðs ok á fund dróttningar, þá gekk hann þar á mála.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Haraldr var lítla hríð í herinum, ok allir Væringjar fóru saman, þegar er bardagar váru.

\_\_\_\_\_

**9.23 Subjunctive Mood: Past Tense of Weak Verbs.** Fill in the chart below.

	MEANING	CONJUGATION	PAST STEM
Ex: kalla	'call'	1 <sup>st</sup> conjugation	kallað
1. senda	_____	_____	_____
2. telja	_____	_____	_____
3. veita	_____	_____	_____
4. hafa	_____	_____	_____
5. tala	_____	_____	_____

Weak verbs add the subjunctive endings to the past tense stem to form the <sup>past</sup> subjunctive. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation verbs also show *i*-umlaut of the root vowel.

Give the past tense stems and past subjunctive stems for the following verbs.

	PAST TENSE STEM	PAST SUBJUNCTIVE STEM
Ex: kalla	<u>kallað-</u>	<u>kallað-</u>
6. tala	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
7. senda	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
8. telja	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
9. hafa	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

9.24 Subjunctive Mood: Past Tense of Strong Verbs. Fill in the chart below.

	MEANING	PRINCIPAL PARTS	PAST PLURAL STEM
Ex: draga	<u>'pull'</u>	<u>dragr, dró, drógn, draginn</u>	<u>dróg-</u>
1. brjóta	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
2. verða	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
3. líta	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
4. koma	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
5. taka	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

Strong verbs add subjunctive endings to the past plural stem with *i*-umlaut of the stem vowel. Give the past tense stems and past subjunctive stems for the following verbs.

	PAST PLURAL STEM	PAST SUBJUNCTIVE STEM
Ex: draga	<u>dróg-</u>	<u>dræg-</u>
6. brjóta	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
7. verða	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
8. líta	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
9. koma	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
10. taka	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

Conjugate the five strong verbs below in the past subjunctive.

	BRJÓTA	VERÐA	LÍTA	KOMA	TAKA
Sg ek	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
pú	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
hann	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Pl vér	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
pér	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
þeir	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>



**9.25 Reading Runes.** The Fläckebo (Hassmyra) Runestone commemorates a Swedish *húsfreyja* (lady of the house).

**RUNES**

B N Þ T T I Y N Þ R \* T N T Y P Þ T T R \*  
 N T \* R T H T \* N P T T A \* Þ B T T T H N \*  
 Y N T N \* H T T Þ \* Y N Y B R \* T P R A T \*  
 T I T \* T H N I Y N R T \* I P I \* B T T R \* Þ Þ T \*  
 B A I \* R T Þ R \* R Þ Þ B T T I R \*  
 R I H T I \* R N T I \* Þ I N T \* H I P Y N T T T A \*  
 N T A \* Þ B T T T I H \* N T H T R \* Y N Þ

**TRANSLITERATION**

buonti kuþr hulmkoetr lit resa ufter opintisu  
 kunu seno kumbr hifrya til hasuimura iki betr þon  
 byi raþr roþbalir risti runi þisa sikmuntar uar  
 opintisa sestr kup

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

Bóndi góðr Hólmgautr lét reisa eptir Óðindísu  
 konu sína. Kømr húsfreyja til Hasvimýra ekki betr, sú er býi ræðr. Rauð-Balli risti rúnar  
 þessar. Sigmundar var Óðindísa systir góð.

**VOCABULARY**

*bý* (var of *bú*) <dat pl býum> *n* home,  
house, household; farm; estate

*Hólmgautr* <-s> *m* Holmgaut (personal  
name)

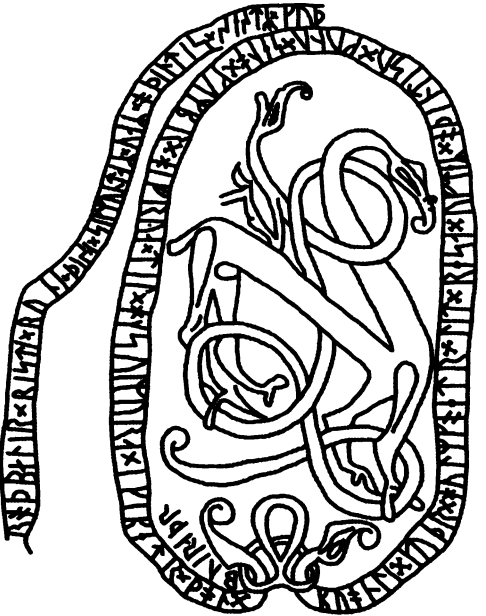
*Hasvimýrar* *m* pl Hasvimyrrar (place name)

*húsfreyja* (var of *húsfreyja*) *f* housewife

*kømr* (var of *kemr*) 2/3sg pres of *koma*

*láta* <laetr, lét, létu, látinn> *vb* allow,  
permit; have something done

*mýrr* <acc & dat mýri, gen mýrar, pl mýrar>



**Figure 40.** The Fläckebo (a) Runestone from Västmanland, Sweden.

*f* moor, bog, swamp

*Óðindísa* *f* Odindisa (personal name)

*Rauð-Balli* *m* Red-Balli (personal name)

*ráða* <ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn> *vb* advise,  
counsel; rule, govern

*reisa* <-ti, -tr> *vb* raise; *láta reisa* [stein]  
have a stone raised

*rista* <-ti, -tr> *vb* cut, carve, engrave

*Sigmundr* <-ar> *m* Sigmund (personal  
name)

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

LESSON 10

BEACHED WHALES IN ICELAND

*Betri er ein kráka í hendi en tvær í skógi*  
(Better one crow in the hand than two in the wood)

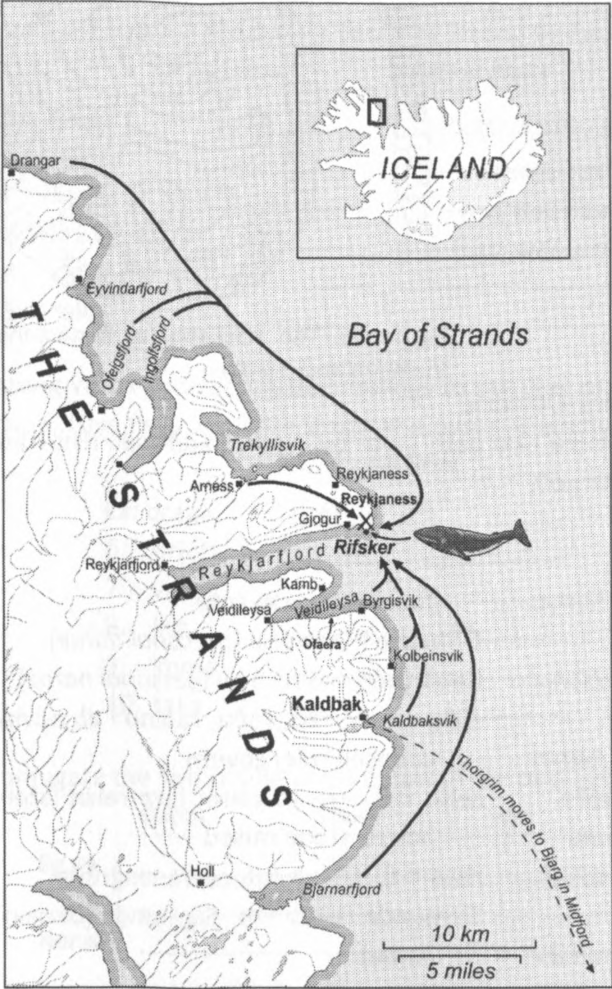
10.1 CULTURE – COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES

Although descended from Norse peoples with sea-going traditions, Icelanders lacked the forest resources of Scandinavia to ensure a cost-effective supply of ocean-going ships. This

factor restricted their fishing and limited their subsistence strategies. They became a largely land-locked livestock farming society in the midst of a fertile ocean teeming with whales and other sea life.

Without seaworthy ships to circumvent the island most travel was done on horseback and transport with pack horses. An extensive system of horse paths developed that led to almost every part of the country and formed a highly serviceable communications web. There were no roads for wheeled carts in the highlands, and few if any such roads in the valleys.

Icelanders relied on relatively small boats. These were built from mostly driftwood and were only suitable for close coastal fishing. Such fishing often yielded large quantities of catch. Lacking a good supply of salt, they wind-dried several types of fish, especially cod, for the winter. Given the limitations of their boats, Icelanders rarely hunted whales on the open sea. It is also unlikely that



**Figure 41. The Strands in Iceland’s West Fjords (*Grettir’s Saga*).** Trouble brews when a dispute over a beached whale at Rífsker escalates into a fight, involving people up and down the coast. The map traces their sailing routes to the battle.

they herded whales into bays, forcing them aground, as did their Norwegian counterparts with better ship-building timbers at their disposal. Icelanders searched the coastline looking for beached whales esteemed for their enormous quantities of meat, fat, and bone.

In the years following Iceland's settlement, social and economic development was dictated by competition for the land's limited resources. Common lands were called *almenningar*. Especially along the coast these public lands offered opportunities for enterprising individuals to find driftage (wood, whales, etc.) to increase their store of provisions and saleable merchandise. Leaving the protection of one's farmstead and neighborhood to hunt and gather foodstuffs in the often desolate *almenningar* could be dangerous. Competition was fierce and disputes often arose over finds. Seal-hunting was important for skins, meat, and oil, but beached whales were the real prizes along the coast.

*Grettir's Saga* offers some of the most detailed information in the medieval sources about the value of beached whales. Bloated and raised to the surface by the gases of decay in their stomachs and bowels, these dead creatures were huge treasures. Individuals and allies were prepared to fight for possession when whale carcasses washed ashore following storms.

## 10.2 READING – A WHALE WASHES ASHORE (*GRETTIS SAGA ÁSMUNDARSONAR*)

The readings for this lesson concern a famine in the West Fjords recounted in *Grettir's Saga*. Conflict over resources begins a feud which involves Onund Tree-Foot's sons, Thorgrim Gray-Streak (Hærukollr) and Thorgeir Flask-Back (flöskubakr). The sons have taken over their father's farm at Kaldbak ('Cold-Back Mountain') in the Strands (Strandir). Onund was given the farm by the original *landnámsmaðr* Eirik Snare. Eirik, whose farm was at Arness (Árnes) on the bay Trekyllisvík (called Vík or Víkin in the reading), originally owned all rights to driftage on the Strands. Flosi, Eirik's son and heir, resents that his father gave away these valuable driftage rights, particularly in this time of shortage.

After a storm, local inhabitants check the beaches for driftage. A man named Thorstein discovers a beached whale at Rífsker on Reykjanes, a headland midway on the coast between Kaldbak and Arness. The whale is a large rorqual (*reyður*), and Thorstein sends a messenger to notify his leader Flosi of the need for assistance. Thorgrim Gray-Streak also learns of the whale. Thorgrim and Flosi are heads of households. They are local leaders among the second generation Icelanders, and each claims the whale. As the news of the whale spreads, men in small boats row from all corners of the Strands to share in the find. They offer support to their allies, either to Thorgrim and the men of Kaldbak (*Kaldbeklingar*) or Flosi's people (*Víkrmenn*).

Flosi and his men reach the whale first. They immediately begin cutting and flensing (slicing the blubber from the bones). When Thorgrim and the men of Kaldbak arrive, the sides dispute who has the proper claim to the whale. The dispute centers around whether Flosi's father Eirik Snare, the first settler in the region, had legally given driftage rights to Thorgrim's father, Onund Tree-Foot. Thorgrim asserts his ownership. Using legal language, he forbids Flosi and Flosi's allies to take away any part of the whale.

**Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar (ch 12)**

Í þann tíma kom hallæri svá mikit á Ísland, at ekki hefir jafnmikit komit. Þá tók af nálíga allan sjávaraflla ok reka. Þat stóð yfir mörg ár.

Á einu hausti urðu þangat sæhafa kaupmenn á hafskipi ok brutu þar í Víkinni. Flosi tók við þeim fjórum eða fimm. Steinn hét sá er fyrir þeim var.<sup>58</sup> ...Um várit kom veðr mikit af norðri; þat helzk nær viku. Eptir veðrit könnuðu menn reka sína.<sup>59</sup> Þorsteinn hét maðr, er bjó á Reykjanesi. Hann fann hval rekinn innan fram á nesinu,<sup>60</sup> þar sem hét at Rífskerjum<sup>61</sup>: þat var reyðr mikil. Hann sendi þegar mann til Flosa í Vík ok svá til næstu bæja....Flosi kom fyrst ok þeir Víkrmenn; þeir tóku þegar til skurðar ok var dreginn á land upp sá [hvalr], er skorinn var...

Í því kómu Kaldbeklingar<sup>62</sup> með fjögur skip. Þorgrímr veitti tilkall til hvalsins ok fyrirbauð Víkrmönnum skurð ok skipti ok brautflutning<sup>63</sup> á hvalnum.

**Translate:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The saga goes on to tell how Flosi, having the larger force, demands that Thorgrim prove his rights to the driftage. Thorgrim initially decides not to attack, but at that moment a ship with reinforcements arrives from the south. The ship is captained by Svan, one of Thorgrim's allies. Svan quickly offers his support to Thorgrim. Returning to the Icelandic text:

<sup>58</sup> er fyrir þeim var: 'who was their leader.'

<sup>59</sup> reka sína: The men referred to here are the Icelandic owners of the shoreline checking their driftage.

<sup>60</sup> hval rekinn innan fram á nesinu: 'a whale washed onto Rífsker (the shallow rocky reef) out on the headland.' *Fram á nesinu* denotes the outermost point of the headland.

<sup>61</sup> þar sem hét at Rífskerjum: 'at that place which was called *at Rífskerjum* (beside Rífsker).' Place names in Old Norse frequently include prepositions. English has some examples of this as well, for instance, Stratford-on-Avon. The preposition is best omitted in translation.

<sup>62</sup> Kaldbeklingar: 'the men of Kaldbak.' The suffixes *-ingr* (pl *-ingar*), *-lingr* (pl *-lingar*), and *-ungr* (pl *-ungar*) are frequently used to denote members of a family or group.

<sup>63</sup> The phrase *skurð ok skipti* 'cutting and dividing' and the word *brutflutning* 'carrying away' were legal terms used in connection with driftage rights.

Þá rer skip innan yfir fjörðu, ok sóttu knálíga róðrinn; þeir kómu at brátt. Þat var Svanr Hóli ór Bjarnarfirði ok húskarlar hans; ok þegar hann kom, bað hann Þorgrím eigi láta æna sik;<sup>64</sup> en þeir váru áðr vinir miklir, ok bauð Svanr honum lið sitt.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Þorgrím accepts Svan's offer and the two prepare to fight. The story of the battle continues later in this lesson.

### 10.3 EXERCISE – GRETIR'S SAGA

Review Reading I and decide whether the following statements are true or false.

**RÉTT Eða RANGT?**

1. Hallæri stóð yfir mörg ár.
2. Kaupmenn urðu sæhafa.
3. Þorsteinn fann hval.
4. Þorsteinn bjó í Danmörk.
5. Kaldbeklingar kómu með fimm skip.
6. Þorgrím veitti tilkall til hvalsins.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 10.4 STRONG ADJECTIVES

As noted earlier adjectives modify nouns and agree in gender, case, and number with the nouns they modify. Old Norse adjectives have both strong and weak forms and decline in many instances similar to nouns. Adjectives take strong endings unless preceded by a definite article, demonstrative pronoun or other determining word, in which case they take weak endings. This section presents the rules for strong adjectives. The next lesson discusses weak adjectives.

The strong adjective *spakr* 'wise' is declined below as an example.

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>Sg nom</i>	spakr	spök	spakt	<i>Pl</i>	spakir	spakar	spök
<i>acc</i>	spakan	spaka	spakt		spaka	spakar	spök

<sup>64</sup> bað hann Þorgrím eigi láta æna sik: 'he told Thorgrim not to let himself be robbed.'

<i>dat</i>	<i>spökum</i>	<i>spakri</i>	<i>spöku</i>	<i>spökum</i>	<i>spökum</i>	<i>spökum</i>
<i>gen</i>	<i>spaks</i>	<i>spakrar</i>	<i>spaks</i>	<i>spakra</i>	<i>spakra</i>	<i>spakra</i>

- Adjectives containing *-a-* undergo *u*-umlaut (*spakr*, *dat spökum*).
- Some adjectives, such as *ríkr* and *dækkr*, have stem-final *-j-* or *-v-*, for example, *ríkr* <-j> 'powerful,' (m *ríkr*, *rikjan*, *rikjum*, *riks*, *rikir*, *rikja*, *rikjum*, *rikra*) and *dækkr* <-v> 'dark' (*dækkr*, *dækkvan*, *dökkum*, *dökks*, *dækkvir*, *dækkva*, *dökkum*, *dökkra*).
- The neuter singular ending *-t* is doubled when added to an adjective whose stem ends in a long vowel (for example, *fár*, *hár*, and *blár* become *fátt*, *hátt*, and *blátt*).
- When neuter singular *-t* is added to an adjective whose stem ends in a dental (*-ð-*, *-d-*, or *-t-*), the final dental of the stem changes to *-t-*. For example, *fríðr* and *óðr* become *frítt* and *ótt*. When a consonant precedes the stem final dental (*harðr*, *kaldr*), the dental assimilates to the ending *-t* (*hart-t*, *kalt-t*), and then the ending *-t* is dropped (*hart*, *kalt*).

10.5 EXERCISE – NOUNS AND STRONG ADJECTIVES

Decline *ungr maðr* 'young man,' *ung kona* 'young woman,' and *ungt barn* 'young child.'

	<i>UNGR MAÐR</i>	<i>UNG KONA</i>	<i>UNGT BARN</i>
<i>Sg nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Pl nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____

10.6 STRONG ADJECTIVES OF TWO SYLLABLES

Like two-syllable nouns, adjectives whose second syllable consists of a short vowel and single consonant, lose the vowel of the second syllable if the ending begins in a vowel. For example, the adjective *auðigr* (stem *auðig-*) in the accusative loses the *-i-* of the second syllable and becomes *auðgan* (*auðig-* + *-an*). Other common adjectives which shorten the stem are *mikill*, *lítill*, *gamall*, *göfugr*, and *heilagr*.

<i>auðigr</i> 'wealthy'							
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	auðigr	auðig	auðigt	<b>Pl</b>	auðgir	auðgar	auðig
<b>acc</b>	auðgan	auðga	auðigt		auðga	auðgar	auðig

<i>dat</i>	auðgum	auðigri	auðgu	auðgum	auðgum	auðgum
<i>gen</i>	auðigs	auðigrar	auðigs	auðigra	auðigra	auðigra

When the second syllable is dropped, long vowels in the first syllable tend to shorten before two consonants. For instance, the long *-f-* in *lífill* becomes short in dative *litlum* and the diphthong *-ei-* in *heilagr* shortens to *-e-*, giving dative *helgum*. In the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century, adjectives like these began to keep the second-syllable vowel in all cases (for example, *auðigan* rather than *auðgan*). The retention of this vowel in such adjectives is one of the distinctions between Old and Modern Icelandic.

## 10.7 STRONG ADJECTIVE ENDINGS

Strong adjectives take endings similar to strong nouns. Deviations are explained by a few rules. We suggest reviewing the earlier section on the Special Stem Rules. This section explains the patterns resulting when an *-r* ending is added to a noun or adjective whose stem ends in *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-* (stem-final *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-*). It also explains the apparent lack of the nominative *-r* ending in masculine words such as *Þorsteinn* and *fugl*.

Adjectives whose stems end in *-l*, *-n*, *-r*, *-s* follow the Special Stem Rules, either changing *-r* (*vænn*, *lauss*, and *gamall*) or dropping *-r* (*fagr*). These rules apply to all endings beginning in *-r* (*-r*, *-ri*, *-rar*, *-ra*), for example, *vænn*, *vænni*, *vænnar*, *vænna*; *fagr*, *fagri*, *fagarar*, *fagra*.

The adjectives *mikill* and *lítill* have a few slightly irregular forms: *mikinn* (m acc sg), *lítinn* (m acc sg), *mikit* (n nom/acc sg), and *lítit* (n nom/acc sg).

LAUSS 'LOOSE, FREE'				VÆNN 'BEAUTIFUL, FINE'			
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	
<b>Sg nom</b>	lauss	laus	laust	vænn	væn	vænt	
<b>acc</b>	lausan	lausa	laust	vænan	væna	vænt	
<b>dat</b>	lausum	laussi	lausu	vænum	vænni	vænu	
<b>gen</b>	lauss	laussar	lauss	væns	vænnar	væns	
<b>Pl nom</b>	lausir	lausar	laus	vænir	vænar	væn	
<b>acc</b>	lausa	lausar	laus	væna	vænar	væn	
<b>dat</b>	lausum	lausum	lausum	vænum	vænum	vænum	
<b>gen</b>	laussa	laussa	laussa	vænna	vænna	vænna	

FAGR 'BEAUTIFUL, FAIR'				GAMALL 'OLD'			
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	
<b>Sg nom</b>	fagr	fögr	fagrt	gamall	gömul	gamalt	
<b>acc</b>	fagran	fagra	fagrt	gamlan	gamla	gamalt	
<b>dat</b>	fögrum	fagri	fagru	gömlum	gamalli	gömlu	

	fagrs	fagrar	fagrs	gamals	gamalla r	gamals
<b>Pl nom</b>	fagrir	fagrar	fögr	gamlir	gamlar	gömul
<b>acc</b>	fagra	fagrar	fögr	gamla	gamlar	gömul
<b>dat</b>	fögrum	fögrum	fögrum	gömlum	gömlum	gömlum
<b>gen</b>	fagra	fagra	fagra	gamla	gamla	gamla

	MIKILL 'GREAT'			LÍTILL 'LITTLE'		
	M	F	N	M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	mikill	mikil	mikit	lítill	lítil	lítit
<b>acc</b>	mikinn	mikla	mikit	lítinn	lítla	lítit
<b>dat</b>	miklum	mikilli	miklu	litlum	lítilli	litlu
<b>gen</b>	mikils	mikillar	mikils	lítils	lítillar	lítils
<b>Pl nom</b>	miklir	miklar	mikil	litlir	litlar	lítil
<b>acc</b>	mikla	miklar	mikil	lítla	litlar	lítil
<b>dat</b>	miklum	miklum	miklum	litlum	litlum	litlum
<b>gen</b>	mikilla	mikilla	mikilla	lítilla	lítilla	lítilla

An adjective agrees with its noun, even when the two are not next to each other in a sentence. The word order of *vittr maðr ok hógværr* (adjective-noun-conjunction-adjective) is a common pattern in Old Norse. Notice in the example below that *göfugs manns ágæts* is in the genitive case and matches *Gríms*, and that *mikill maðr ok sterkr* is in the nominative case and matches *Egill*. The word order in the translation has been changed to make these relationships clearer.

Hann var auðigr at fé ok höfðingi mikill, *He was wealthy and a great leader, a wise and gentle man.*

Egill var sonr Gríms, göfugs manns ok *Egil, a big and strong man, was the son of* ágæts, mikill maðr ok sterkr. *Grim, a noble and excellent man.*

**10.8 EXERCISE – STRONG ADJECTIVES**  
Decline the adjectives *spakr* and *mikill* below.

	SPAKR MAÐR	MIKILL MAÐR
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____ maðr	_____ maðr
<b>acc</b>	_____ mann	_____ mann
<b>dat</b>	_____ manni	_____ manni
<b>gen</b>	_____ manns	_____ manns
<b>Pl nom</b>	_____ menn	_____ menn
<b>acc</b>	_____ menn	_____ menn



SPAKR MAÐR		MIKILL MAÐR	
dat	_____ mönnum	_____ mönnum	
gen	_____ manna	_____ manna	

Transl: *spakr maðr* 'wise man,' *mikill maðr* 'large man'

## 10.9 VERBS – PAST PARTICIPLES

Past participles are adjectives derived from verbs, and their endings are almost the same as the strong adjectives endings. Past participles, like adjectives, agree in gender, case, and number with the nouns they modify. For instance, in the sentence *Skipit flaut tjaldat fyrir bænum* 'The ship floated **tented** [with a cloth over the mast serving as a tent] in front of the farmstead,' the participle *tjaldat* agrees with the subject *skipit* (both neuter). In the sentence, *Hann var kallaðr Skinna-Björn*, the participle *kallaðr* agrees with the subject *hann*. Weak and strong verbs form their past participle stems differently. There is a fixed set of endings shared by all weak verbs and another fixed set of endings shared by all strong verbs.

**Weak Verbs.** Weak verbs add endings to the past-tense stem (for example, *kallað-*), found by removing the past-tense ending *-i* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sg (for example, past-tense stem *kallað-* from *kallaði*, and *nefnd-* from *nefndi*). The past participles of *kalla* and *nefna* are declined below as examples.

	KALLAÐR (KALLA)				NEFNDR (NEFNA)		
	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	kallaðr	kölluð	kallat		nefndr	nefnd	nefnt
acc	kallaðan	kallaða	kallat		nefndan	nefnda	nefnt
dat	kölluðum	kallaðri	kölluðu		nefndum	nefndri	nefndu
gen	kallaðs	kallaðrar	kallaðs		nefnds	nefndrar	nefnds
Pl nom	kallaðir	kallaðar	kölluð		nefndir	nefndar	nefnd
acc	kallaða	kallaðar	kölluð		nefnda	nefndar	nefnd
dat	kölluðum	kölluðum	kölluðum		nefndum	nefndum	nefndum
gen	kallaðra	kallaðra	kallaðra		nefndra	nefndra	nefndra

Some weak verbs show peculiarities in forming their past participles.

- The verb *gera* (also *gøra*) has past participle *gerr* (m), *ger* (f), *gert* (n).
- Some 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation weak verbs insert *-i-* before the dental suffix in the past participle. For example, the past participles of *berja* and *glymja* are *bariðr* and *glumiðr*. The verbs that follow this pattern end in *-ja* in the infinitive. However, not all verbs ending in *-ja* belong to the 3<sup>rd</sup> conjugation. For example, the past participle of the 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation verb *herja* follows the same pattern as *kallaðr*.
- 4<sup>th</sup> conjugation weak verbs typically have past participles with *-að-* (*-at*) like the 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation. These usually only occur in the neuter, *vakat*, *lifat*, *unat*, and *trúat*.
- A few employ the suffix *-in-* rather than a dental when the adjective ending begins with

a consonant. For example, the past participle of *erja* 'plow' is *arinn* and declines in the masculine singular *arinn* (nom), *arðan* (acc), *arðum* (dat), *arins* (gen).

- Some verbs derive past participles from related but somewhat different stems. For example, *leggja* has the past participle *lagðr* or *laglðr* or *laginn*.

## 10.10 PAST PARTICIPLES OF STRONG VERBS

The past participle of strong verbs is the fifth principal part (for example *taka*, *tekr*, *tók*, *tóku*, *tekinn*). Past participles are formed according to the Special Stem Rules (for example, *tekinn* from *tekin* + *r*), and two-syllable stem shortening (for example, *teknum*). The final *-n-* of the past participle stem drops before the neuter singular ending *-t* (for example, *tekit*, *farit*, *numit*). Note that the masculine accusative singular has the ending *-n* rather than *-an* (*tekinn* vs *kallaðan*). In other words, the past participle endings of strong verbs look very much like the declension of the definite article.

Past Participle of <i>Taka</i> 'Take'							
	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	tekinn	tekin	tekit	PI	teknir	teknar	tekin
acc	tekinn	tekna	tekit		tekna	teknar	tekin
dat	teknum	tekinni	teknu		teknum	teknum	teknum
gen	tekins	tekinna	tekins		tekinna	tekinna	tekinna

A few adjectives decline like the past participles of strong verbs, for example, *feginn* 'glad, joyful,' *heiðinn* 'heathen,' and *kristinn* 'Christian.'

## 10.11 VERBS – PRESENT AND PAST PERFECT OF VERBS

The verb *hafa* is used with a past participle to form either the present or past perfect (from the Latin *perfectum* 'completed'), constructions which have exact parallels in English (*has seen*, *had seen*). In Old Norse the perfect is formed by conjugating *hafa* in the present or past and adding the neuter singular past participle.

Eiríkr hefir numit Eiríksfjörð ok býr í Brattahlíð. (present perfect)

Ingólfr hefir gefit Herjólfu land á milli Vágs ok Reykjaness. (present perfect)

Skip þat höfðu þeir fengit um sumarit í víking. (past perfect)

Eirik **has taken** Eirik's Fjord and lives at Brattahlíð.

Ingolf **has given** Herjolf land between Vag and Reykjaness.

They **had gotten** that ship during the summer while raiding.

Verbs of motion such as *fara*, *koma*, *ganga*, and others which do not take direct objects are called intransitive verbs. They typically use *vera* rather than *hafa* in forming the perfect. Because *vera* is a linking verb, the past participle agrees with the subject in gender, case,

and number.

Haraldr er farinn. (*present perfect*)

*Harald has gone.*

Þá var Högni konungr farinn í konunga-  
stefnu. (*past perfect*)

*At that time King Hogni had gone to a  
meeting of kings.*

Occasionally the perfects of intransitive verbs are formed with *hafa* rather than *vera*. As a general rule, perfects of intransitive verbs formed with *vera* focus on the result of the action, while those with *hafa* focus on the action itself.

Aldri hefir dúfa komit ór hrafns egg.

*Never has a dove come out of a raven's egg.*

The verb *vera* always forms its perfect with *hafa*, while *verða* employs *vera*.

Þessi orrosta hefir einhver verit mest í  
Nóregi.

*This battle was (has been) the greatest ever  
in Norway.*

Haraldr var orðinn konungr Nóregs.

*Harald had become king of Norway.*

## 10.12 VERBS – PASSIVE VOICE

The past participle is also employed in passive constructions, where the subject does not perform an action but rather undergoes one. As in English, the passive voice is formed with an auxiliary verb and a past participle; for example, *þat er sagt* 'it is said'. In Old Norse, the auxiliary verb is either *vera* or *verða*, and the past participle agrees in gender, case, and number with the subject.

Hann var kallaðr Klakk-Haraldr.

*He was called Klakk-Harald.*

Skipit var steint mjök fyrir ofan sjó.

*The ship was fully painted above the  
waterline.*

Konungr sá er Högni er nefndr átti dóttur.

*That king who is named Hogni had a  
daughter.*

Dóttir hans var í braut tekin.

*His daughter was taken away.*

Héðinn var búinn at berjask.

*Hedin was prepared to fight.*

Passive sentences formed with *verða* introduce a sense of possibility.

Verða þeir ekki fundnir.

*They cannot be found.*

Blóð varð eigi stöðvat.

*The blood could not be stopped.*

## 10.13 READING – THE WHALE DISPUTE TURNS DEADLY (GRETTIS SAGA)

The story from *Grettir's Saga* of the fight over the whale at Rífsker continues. Men throughout the area are drawn into the conflict, including a group of Norwegian merchants called *austmenn* 'Eastmen' (as Norway is east of Iceland). The Norwegians' vessel was earlier shipwrecked in Trekyllisvík near Flosi's farm at Arness. Several of the shipwrecked foreigners accepted lodgings at Flosi's farm, a decision which put them under obligation to their host.

Thorgrim cannot prove his rights to the beached whale, and his brother Thorgeir now attacks Flosi's men, who are on the whale flensing. The shipwrecked Norwegian merchants are also on the whale with Flosi's men. They are dangerous opponents because as Viking Age merchants they have better weapons than the Icelanders who are poorly equipped farmers.

The following passage also features a colorful meeting between two enemies: Thorfinn, one of Flosi's men, and Thorgeir, Thorgrim's brother. In an earlier incident Thorfinn had ambushed Thorgeir in the dark and sunk his axe into Thorgeir's back. Hearing the squishy sound of the impact, Thorfinn assumed he had dealt Thorgeir a mortal wound, and he fled, leaving behind his axe. In fact, Thorfinn had buried his axe into a water flask slung over Thorgeir's back. Saved by the flask, Thorgeir gained the nickname Flask-Back. In the passage below, Thorgeir 'returns' the axe to Thorfinn, an example of Icelandic humor.

Following the battle, both sides bring lawsuits for the numerous killings. These suits ultimately end in a division of the disputed shoreline. Later, Onund's son Thorgrim, the grandfather of Grettir the Strong, leaves the area. He moves south to Midfjord, where he buys land at Bjarg, the farm where Grettir is born.

### *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* (ch 12)

Þorgeirr flöskubakr réð fyrst upp á hvalinn at húskörlum Flosa.<sup>65</sup> Þorfinnr var fram við höfuðit hvalsins<sup>66</sup> ok stóð í spori, er hann hafði gört sér.<sup>67</sup> Þorgeirr mælti: "Þar fœri ek þér øxi þína." Síðan hjó hann á hálsinn, svá at af tók höfuðit.<sup>68</sup> Flosi var uppi á mölinni, er hann sá þetta; hann eggjaði þá sína menn til móttöku. Nú berjask þeir lengi,<sup>69</sup> ok veitti Kaldbeklingum betr;<sup>70</sup> fáir menn höfðu þar vápn, nema øxar þær, er þeir skáru með hvalinn, ok skálmir.<sup>71</sup> Hrukku Víkrmenn af hvalnum í fjöruna.<sup>72</sup> Austmenn<sup>73</sup> höfðu vápn ok urðu skeinuhættir; Steinn stýrimaðr hjó fót undan Ívari Kolbeinssyni, en Leifr, bróðir Ívars, laust

<sup>65</sup> Þorgeirr flöskubakr réð fyrst upp á hvalinn at húskörlum Flosa: 'Thorgeir Flask-Back was the first to attack Flosi's men up on the whale.'

<sup>66</sup> fram við höfuðit hvalsins: 'forward on the head of the whale.'

<sup>67</sup> stóð í spori, er hann hafði gört sér: '(he) stood in the cuts [of the fatty hide], which he had made for himself [in order to secure his footing as he mounted the whale].'

<sup>68</sup> svá at af tók höfuðit: 'so that the head came off.'

<sup>69</sup> Nú berjask þeir lengi: 'Then they fought for a long time.'

<sup>70</sup> veitti Kaldbeklingum betr: 'the Kaldbak men had the better [of it].'

<sup>71</sup> skálmir: 'flensing knives' [long knives or short swords used for cutting up whales]; later *skálm* became the name of a blade affixed to a long wooden shaft.

<sup>72</sup> af hvalnum í fjöruna: 'from the whale (*hvali* + *inum*) onto the beach (*fjöru* + *ina*).'

<sup>73</sup> Austmenn: Norwegians, 'Eastmen.' Norwegians and Viking Age merchants were usually well armed.

félaga Steins í hel<sup>74</sup> með hvalrifi. Fellu þar menn af hvárumtveggjum.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 10.14 EXERCISE – FROM *GRETTIR'S SAGA*

Complete the following sentences from the Reading section above.

1. Þorfinnr var \_\_\_\_\_, ok stóð í spori.
2. Þorgeirr mælti: ' \_\_\_\_\_ øxi þína.'
3. Síðan hjó hann \_\_\_\_\_ höfuðit.

Are the following statements true or false?

**RÉTT Eða RANGT?**

4. Þorgeirr réð at húskörlum Flosa.
5. Austmenn höfðu eigi vápn.
6. Menn fellu af hvárumtveggjum.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 10.15 CULTURE – RESOURCES AND SUBSISTENCE IN ICELAND

From the tenth century on, Iceland suffered periodically from famine and sickness. This island country is a classic example of 'bad year economics,' where matters went well only if nothing went wrong.<sup>75</sup> The country was relatively prosperous in the early centuries, but bad times hit hard. The sagas often speak of these periods, giving a glimpse of the ways in which Icelanders dealt with their difficulties. Most Icelanders who survived to old age experienced several rough periods. By the late tenth century the population had begun to

<sup>74</sup> *ljósta í hel*: 'to strike dead.'

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 3, 'Curdled Milk and Calamities: An Inward Looking Farming Society.' Byock, *Viking Age Iceland*. Pp 43-62.

strain the natural resources. In the thirteenth century, when the climate began to seriously cool, the pressure on resources became even greater.

The variability of the weather and the short, often cool growing seasons at Iceland's northern latitude influenced the way Icelanders farmed and lived. The original settlers immediately saw that the grasses and shrubs were suitable for the cattle and sheep farming they knew in their homelands. The original birch forests, which stretched in many places from the shoreline to the base of the mountains, did not hinder these herdsmen. Since ownership of livestock was a measure of status and wealth, many settlers cleared their properties of trees to increase pasturage.

The native birch offered the settlers a supply of hardwood suitable for hearths and charcoal-making. The land clearings of the settlers, the staggering fuel requirements for making iron from bog ore, and erosion from the uncontrolled grazing of livestock soon reduced the original forests to small stands of trees. After the relatively small number of big trees had been cut down, the remaining birch was of limited use in shipbuilding and house construction. From early on, good timber suitable for building ocean-going ships had to be imported. This expense raised the cost of maintaining such ships, a factor that over time severely limited the Icelanders' ability to compete with Norwegian merchants. It also confined the Icelanders to building houses with driftwood and turf.

## 10.16 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY—LIST 10. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

### NOUNS

**vinr** – friend  
**vísa** – verse  
**leið** – path  
**sinn** – time  
**kveld** – evening

### ADJECTIVES

**fagr** – beautiful  
**auðigr** – wealthy  
**fríðr** – beautiful  
**réttr** – right,  
 correct

### PRONOUNS

**hvárr** – who,  
 which (of  
 two)?  
**sjálfr** – self  
**samr** – same

### NUMERALS

**fimmtán** –  
 fifteen

### VERBS

**bjóða** – to offer; invite  
**hlaupa** – to leap; run  
**kalla** – to call  
**halda** – to hold  
**falla** – to fall

### PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

**enn** – yet, still  
**niðr** – down  
**ofan** – from above  
**aptr** – back  
**móti** – against

### CONJUNCTIONS

**né** – nor

## EXERCISES

**10.17 The Väsby Runestone from Uppland, Sweden. A Viking in England. Translate the runes.**



Figure 42. The Väsby Runestone from Uppland, Sweden.

**RUNES**

†††† R†††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† †††††  
 ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† †††††  
 ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† ††††† †††††

**TRANSLITERATION**

alit raisa stain pin oftiR sik sialfan · hon tuknuts kialt  
 anklanti · kuþ hialbi hons ant

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

Áli [lé]t reisa stein þenna [e]ptir sik sjálfan. Hann tók  
 [K]núts gjald á [E]nglandi. Guð hjálpi hans önd.

**VOCABULARY**

Áli *m* Ali (*personal name*)

England *n* England

önd <dat önd ~ öndu, *gen* andar, *pl* andir > *f* breath; life;  
 spirit, soul

Knútr *m* King Canute the Great (*inn ríki*)

gjald *n* payment, tribute; reward

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**10.18 Strong Verbs List and Review.** In addition to the verbs in the lesson, here is a list of fifteen common strong verbs with their principal parts. Test yourself. These verbs are among the most frequent words in the sagas.

biðja <biðr, bað, báðu, beðinn> *vb* ask; command

binda <bindr, batt, bundu, bundinn> *vb* bind

bíða <bíðr, beið, biðu, biðinn> *vb* await

búa <býr, bjó, bjuggu, búinn> *vb* live (at a place); prepare

drepa <drepr, drap, drápu, drepinn> *vb* smite, kill

falla <fellr, féll, féllu, fallinn> *vb* fall

finna <finnr, fann, fundu, fundinn> *vb* find

kveða <kveðr, kvað, kváðu, kveðinn> *vb* say, to recite (verse)

- láta <lætr, lét, létu, látinn> *vb* let  
liggja <liggr, lá, lágu, leginn> *vb* lie  
ríða <ríðr, reið, riðu, riðinn> *vb* ride  
sitja <sitr, sat, sátu, setinn> *vb* sit  
sjá <sér, sá, sá, sénn> *vb* see  
standa <stendr, stóð, stóðu, staðinn> *vb* stand  
taka <tekr, tók, tóku, tekinn> *vb* take

A. Conjugate *taka* in the present and past tense.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	<div></div>	Sg ek	<div></div>
þú	<div></div>	þú	<div></div>
hann	<div></div>	hann	<div></div>
Pl vér	<div></div>	Pl vér	<div></div>
þér	<div></div>	þér	<div></div>
þeir	<div></div>	þeir	<div></div>

B. Identify each of the verbs below and translate the infinitive form.

- Ex: bindr 3sg pres. of binda 'bind'
- |          |             |           |             |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. lét   | <div></div> | 5. finn   | <div></div> |
| 2. láguð | <div></div> | 6. beið   | <div></div> |
| 3. riðu  | <div></div> | 7. sitjum | <div></div> |
| 4. sjáið | <div></div> | 8. drapt  | <div></div> |

C. Provide the requested form for each of the verbs below and translate the infinitive.

- Ex gefa (2sg pres) gefr 'give'
- |                      |             |                      |             |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| 1. falla (3sg pres)  | <div></div> | 5. búa (3pl past)    | <div></div> |
| 2. liggja (2pl past) | <div></div> | 6. binda (1sg past)  | <div></div> |
|                      |             | 7. standa (3sg past) | <div></div> |
| 3. biða (2sg pres)   | <div></div> | 8. biða (1pl pres)   | <div></div> |
| 4. kveða (1pl past)  | <div></div> |                      |             |

10.19 Strong Adjectives. Decline the adjective *langr* 'long.'

	M	F	N
Sg nom	<u>langr</u>	<u>löng</u>	<u>langt</u>
acc	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
dat	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
gen	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>



Pl nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			

**10.20 Strong Adjectives.** Decline the two-syllable adjective *auðigr*.

	M	F	N
Sg nom	<u>auðigr</u>	<u>auðig</u>	<u>auðigt</u>
acc			
dat			
gen			
Pl nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			

**10.21 Past Participles.** Give the infinitives for the underlined past participles.

INFINITIVE(S)

- Þann tíma kom hallæri svá mikit á Ísland, at ekki hefir jafnmikit komit.
- Hann fann hval rekinn innan fram á neginu.
- Hvalrinn var dreginn á land upp sá, er skorinn var.
- Þorfinnr var fram við höfuðit hvalsins ok stóð í spori, er hann hafði gört sér.

**10.22 Verbs.** Give the 3sg present tense and infinitive for the underlined verbs.

Þorgeirr flöskubakr réð fyrst upp á hvalinn at húskörlum Flosa. Þorfinnr var fram við höfuðit hvalsins ok stóð í spori, er hann hafði gört sér. Þorgeirr mælti: “Þar færi ek þér øxi þína.” Síðan hjó hann á hálsinn, svá at af tók höfuðit. Flosi var uppi á mölinni, er hann sá þetta; hann eggjaði þá sína menn til móttöku.

	3SG PRESENT	INFINITIVE		3SG PRESENT	INFINITIVE
Ex: réð	<u>ræðr</u>	<u>ráða</u>			
1. stóð			4. tók		
2. mælti			5. sá		
3. hjó			6. eggjaði		

**10.23 Verbs – Passive and Past Perfect Constructions.** Translate the following sentences and identify the underlined constructions as present or past passive/perfect.

1. Konungr sá er Högni er nefndr átti dóttur.

2. Skipit var steint mjök fyrir ofan sjó.

3. Héðinn var búinn at berjask.

**10.24 Strong Forms of the Adjectives *mikill* and *lítill*.** These important adjectives appear everywhere in Old Norse texts. In declining, keep in mind the following:

- The Special Stem Rules apply, and endings beginning in *-r* change to match the stem-final *-l-*, for example *mikill* (*mikil* + *r*), *lítilli* (*lítill* + *rī*).
- The loss of the vowel in two-syllable stems before endings beginning in a vowel. Compare strong *mikill* with weak *mikli* (*mikil* + *i*), hence *mikill maðr* and *inn mikli maðr*.
- Stem-final *-l* drops before the neuter singular ending *-t*, hence *mikit*, *lítit*.
- The ending of the strong masculine accusative singular is *-n* rather than *-an*, hence *mikinn*, *lítinn*.
- The long *i* in *lítill* becomes short when followed by two consonants (compare *lítill barn* with *it litla barn*).

	MIKILL MAÐR	MIKIL KONA	MIKIT BARN
Sg nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			
Pl nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			

	LÍTILL MAÐR	LÍTIL KONA	LÍTIT BARN
Sg nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			
Pl nom			
acc			

dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

**10.25 Runes.** Translate the following runestone from Tingsflisan in Köpings Parish on the Swedish island, Öland.

**RUNES**

ÞNR I ʔ : ʔ N Þ ÞNR ʔ ʔ ʔ ʔ :  
 ʔ N Þ : ÞNR ʔ ʔ ʔ ʔ R : Þ ʔ I ʔ :  
 BR ʔ Þ R : R ʔ I ʔ ʔ N : ʔ ʔ ʔ ʔ ʔ : ʔ ʔ :  
 ʔ N ʔ ʔ N ʔ : ʔ ʔ ÞNR : ʔ I ʔ : ʔ N Þ :  
 \* ʔ ʔ Þ I : ʔ I N Þ : \* ʔ ʔ ʔ :

**TRANSLITERATION**

þuriR : auk þurstein : auk : þurfastr : þaiR  
 : brypr : raistu : stain : at : kunfus : faþur  
 : sin : kup : hialbi : siul : hans :

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

þórir ok þorsteinn ok þorfastr þeir bræðr  
 reistu stein at Gunnfús föður sinn. Guð  
 hjálpi sál hans.

**VOCABULARY**

Gunnfúss<-ar> *m* Gunnfus (*personal name*)

hjálpa <helpr, halp, hulpu, hólpin> *vb* save; help; Guð hjálpi sál hans may God save his soul

reisa <-ti, -tr> *vb* raise

sál <-ar, -ar> *f* soul

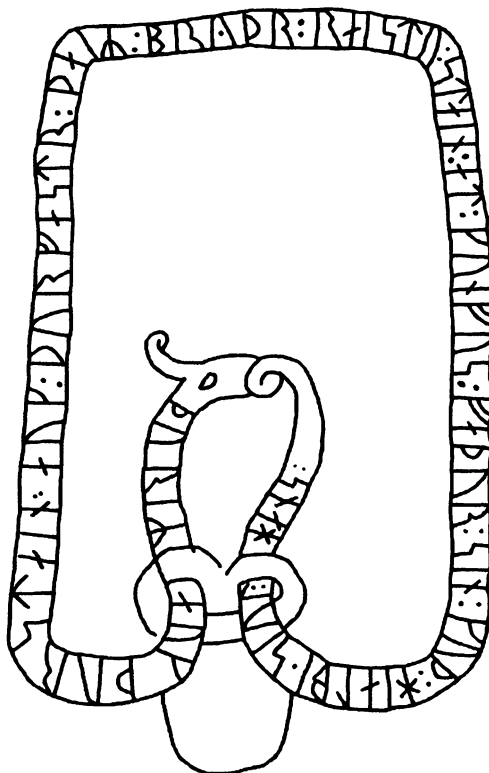
þorfastr <-s> *m* Thorfast (*personal name*)

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

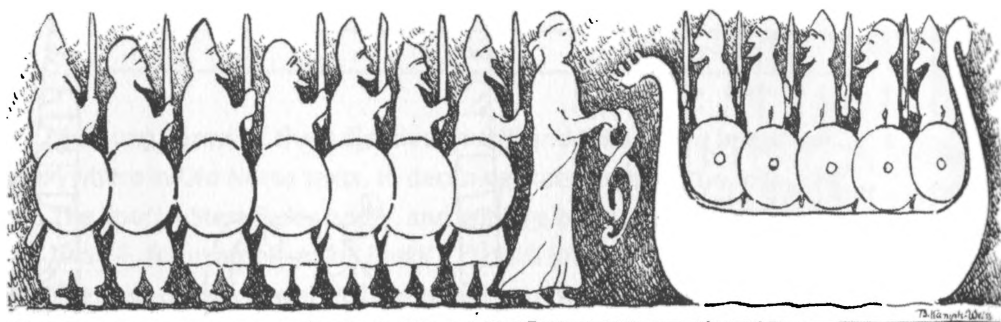


**Figure 43.** The Tingsflisan Runestone from Öland, Sweden.

## LESSON 11

### THE ENDLESS BATTLE

*Aldri hefir dúfa komit ór hrafns egg*  
(Never has a dove come from a raven's egg)



**Figure 44.** A Gotland Picture Stone shows a woman standing between two armies ready for battle, one on the land and the other arriving by sea. She appears to be welcoming or negotiating between the two sides much as Hild does in the reading passages below.

#### 11.1 READING – THE BATTLE OF THE HJADNINGS (*SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL*, FROM *THE PROSE EDDA*)

*Skáldskaparmál* in *The Prose Edda* tells the tale of an endless contest. Called *Hjaðningavíg* this battle (*víg*) was known throughout the northern lands. In addition to the *Prose Edda*, versions of the story are preserved in Saxo Grammaticus's *History of the Danes* and several sagas. In *The Prose Edda*, the story begins in the world of men when King Hedin steals a woman named Hild. Her aged father, King Hogni, sets out to find her. Hogni follows Hedin's ships along the coast of Norway. After sailing westwards, he catches Hedin in the Orkneys at High Island (*Háey*). Before the battle begins, it is clear that the father, Hogni, has little chance of victory, but he refuses all offers of reconciliation.

***Skáldskaparmál:*** Konungr sá er Högni er nefndr<sup>76</sup> átti dóttur, er Hildr hét. Hana<sup>77</sup> tók at herfangi konungr sá er Héðinn hét, Hjarrandason. Þá var Högni konungr farinn<sup>78</sup> í konungastefnu; en er hann spurði at herjat var í ríki hans,<sup>79</sup> ok dóttir hans var í braut tekin, þá fór hann með sínu liði at leita Héðins, ok spurði til hans at Héðinn hafði siglt norðr með

<sup>76</sup> **er Högni er nefndr:** 'who is named Hogni.' The first *er* is the relative particle ('who' or 'which') and introduces a relative clause. The second *er* is the 3sg present of *vera* 'to be.'

<sup>77</sup> **Hana:** *acc sg of the fem. pronoun hon* – this is a good reminder of the governance of case rather than word order in ON.

<sup>78</sup> **Þá var Högni konungr farinn:** 'At that time Hogni had gone.'

<sup>79</sup> **en er hann spurði at herjat var í ríki hans:** 'and when he heard that there had been raiding in his kingdom.' *En* is a conjunction meaning 'and' or 'but,' and *er* is a conjunction meaning 'when.'

Þá er Högni konungur kom í Noreg, spurði hann at Héðinn hafði siglt vestr um haf. Þá siglir<sup>81</sup> Högni eptir honum allt til Orkneyja; ok er hann kom þar sem heitir Háey,<sup>82</sup> þá var þar fyrir Héðinn með lið sitt. Þá fór Hildir á fund föður síns, ok bauð honum men at sætt af hendi Héðins,<sup>83</sup> en í öðru orði<sup>84</sup> sagði hon at Héðinn væri búinn at berjask, ok ætti Högni<sup>85</sup> af honum engrar vægðar ván.<sup>86</sup> Högni svarar stirt dóttur sinni; en er hon hitti Héðin, sagði hon honum, at Högni vildi enga sætt, ok bað hann búask til orrostu, ok svá göra þeir hváirtveggju, ganga upp á eyna,<sup>87</sup> ok fylkja liðinu.

**Translate:**

## 11.2 EXERCISE – CLOSE READING OF THE BATTLE OF THE HJADNINGS

**Ex:** *Konungur sá [er Högni er nefndr] átti dóttur [er Hildr hét].*

<sup>20</sup> *með landi*: 'along the coast.'

<sup>41</sup> It is common in Old Icelandic narrative for the author to switch from the past to the present tense for the sake of vividness, sometimes within the same sentence. This is usually rendered in the past tense in English translations.

<sup>12</sup> ok er hann kom þar sem heitir Háey: 'And when he came there [to the place] which is called Hoy.'

<sup>24</sup> ok bauð honum men at sætt af hendi Héðins: 'and she offered him a necklace as reconciliation on behalf of Hedin.'

<sup>14</sup> *í òòru oróì*: 'at the same time, likewise'

5 sagði hon að Hóðinn væri...ok ætti Hógni: 'she said that Hedin was...and Hogni had.' *Væri* from *vera* and *ætti* from *eiga* are examples of the subjunctive mood when used in indirect speech.

<sup>6</sup> *af honum engrar vægðar ván*: 'no hope of mercy from him' (*lit.* 'from him hope of no mercy').

<sup>17</sup> *ganga upp á eyrna* ('go up onto the islands'), a phrase in Old Norse texts. Islands were often the designated arenas for duels or battles.

The main clause of this sentence is *Konungr sá átti dóttur*. Note that a relative clause (*er Högni er nefndr*) intervenes between the subject and verb. A second relative clause (*er Hildr hét*) describes the noun *dóttur*. Leaving the relative clauses aside for a moment, the verb and subject of the main clause are *átti* (3sg past of *eiga* 'have') and *konungr sá* (m nom sg).

Each relative clause contains its own subject and verb. The subject of the first is understood to be *konungr sá* while the subject of the second is understood to be *dóttur*. The verbs of the two relative clauses are *er* (*nefndr*) 'is (named)' and *hét* 'was called.'

Verb: *er* (3sg pres of *vera* 'be')    Verb: *hét* (3sg past of *heita* 'be called')

**A. *Hana tók at herfangi konungr sá [er Héðinn hét, Hjarrandason].***

1. Identify *hana*: \_\_\_\_\_ (Hint: *Hana* cannot be the subject. Is it an object?)

Identify the verb and subject of the main clause.

2. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_    3. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

There is one relative clause in this sentence. Identify its verb and subject.

4. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_    5. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. *Þá var Högni konungr farinn í konungastefnu,***

1. What part of speech is *þá*? \_\_\_\_\_

Identify the verb and subject.

2. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_    3. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

The word *farinn* is a past participle meaning 'gone' or 'traveled.'

Verbs of motion like *fara* and others which do not take direct objects (intransitive verbs) use *vera* rather than *hafa* in forming the perfect (*var farinn* 'had gone'). The use of *vera* requires that the participle agree with the subject in case, number, and gender (here, m nom sg to agree with the subject).

4. A prepositional phrase includes a preposition, its object, and, if present, any modifiers of the object. What is the prepositional phrase in this sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

**C. *en er hann spurði***

This sentence begins with the conjunction *en* 'and, but' linking it with the previous sentence. The next word, *er*, is the conjunction meaning 'when.' Identify the subject and verb of this clause.

1. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_    2. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

The dependent clause *er hann spurði* sets up two more dependent clauses which tell the reader what Hogni learned.

**D. *at herjat var í ríki hans ok dóttir hans var í braut tekin***

In the clause *at herjat var í ríki hans* the subject is not expressed. The sentence *þat var herjat* has the meaning 'there was raiding.'

1. What kind of phrase is *í ríki hans*? \_\_\_\_\_ (Hint: Noun phrase, verb phrase, or prepositional phrase?)

Identify the subject and verb of the clause *dóttir hans var í braut tekin*.

2. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

*í braut* 'away' is a two-part adverb modifying the verb. In this clause, the auxiliary verb (*var*) and past participle form a verb phrase. The auxiliary verb takes the endings for person, number, and tense, while the main verb (here in the form of a past participle) supplies the meaning.

4. What is the meaning of the verb phrase *var tekin*? \_\_\_\_\_

**E. *þá fór hann með sínu liði at leita Héðins***

The main clause of the sentence begins with the adverb *þá*. Identify the subject and verb.

1. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

The verb *fór* is used here in connection with the infinitive *leita*, indicating purpose. Together the verb *fór* and the infinitive *leita* form a verb phrase (*fór at leita* 'went to seek').

3. What is the case of *Héðins* and why? Hint: Check the vocabulary entries for the verbs if you are unsure.

\_\_\_\_\_

**F. *ok spurði til hans***

1. Verbs are often used in connection with a preposition to render other meanings. What is the meaning of *spyrja til*? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who or what is the subject of *spurði til*? \_\_\_\_\_ (You may have to go back to the Reading passage.)

**G. *at Héðinn hafði siglt norður með landi*.**

What is the subject and verb of this clause?

1. Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Verb: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What kind of construction is *hafði siglt?* \_\_\_\_\_

11.3 WEAK ADJECTIVES

Adjectives take weak endings when preceded by a definite article (*inn, in, it*) or certain other preceding words, such as a demonstrative pronoun (*sá, þessi*) or a possessive pronoun (*minn, þinn*).

In the singular, weak adjectives take the same endings as weak nouns. In the plural the endings are the same for all genders: *-u, -u, -um, -u*.

ENDINGS OF WEAK ADJECTIVES							
	M	F	N		M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	-i	-a	-a	<b>Pl</b>	-u	-u	-u
<i>acc</i>	-a	-u	-a		-u	-u	-u
<i>dat</i>	-a	-u	-a		-um	-um	-um
<i>gen</i>	-a	-u	-a		-u	-u	-u

SPAKR 'WISE'							
	M	F	N		M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	spaki	spaka	spaka	<b>PI</b>	spöku	spöku	spöku
<i>acc</i>	spaka	spöku	spaka		spöku	spöku	spöku
<i>dat</i>	spaka	spöku	spaka		spökum	spökum	spökum
<i>gen</i>	spaka	spöku	spaka		spöku	spöku	spöku

- Some adjectives have stem-final *-j-* or *-v-*. For example, *ríkr* and *døkkkr* decline in the masculine singular as *ríki, ríkja, ríkja, ríkja*, and in the plural as *ríkju, ríkju, ríkjum, ríkju*. So also masculine singular *døkkvi, døkka, døkka, døkka*, and plural *døkku, døkku, døkku, døkku*.
- When used with adjectives, a demonstrative pronoun usually is accompanied by the definite article, for example, *sá inn goði konungr* 'that good king,' or *sú in spaka kona* 'that wise woman.'

Example of a Weak Adjective Declined with Definite Article and Noun.

	INN DJARFI KONUNGR	IN DJARFA DRÓTTNING	IT DJARFA BARN
Sg nom	inn djarfi konungr	in djarfa dróttning	it djarfa barn
acc	inn djarfa konung	ina djörfu dróttning	it djarfa barn
dat	inum djarfa konungi	inni djörfu dróttningu	inu djarfa barni
gen	ins djarfa konungs	innar djörfu dróttningar	ins djarfa barns
PI nom	inir djörfu konungar	inar djörfu dróttningar	in djörfu börn
acc	ina djörfu konunga	inar djörfu dróttningar	in djörfu börn



<i>dat</i>	inum djörfum konungum	inum djörfum dróttningum	inum djörfum börnum
<i>gen</i>	inna djörfu konunga	inna djörfu dróttninga	inna djörfu barna

Examples of Adjectives in Strong and Weak Usage.

<i>STRONG</i>		<i>WEAK</i>	
ágætr konungr	<i>an excellent king</i>	inn ágæti konungr	<i>the excellent king</i>
góð kona	<i>a good woman</i>	in góða kona	<i>the good woman</i>
stórt skip	<i>a large ship</i>	It stóra skip	<i>the large ship</i>
fyrstr fugla	<i>early birds</i>	Inn fyrsti fugl	<i>the early bird</i>

11.4 EXERCISE – NOUNS WITH THE DEFINITE ARTICLE AND WEAK ADJECTIVES

Decline the following noun phrases.

	<i>M– INN UNGI MAÐR</i>	<i>F– IN UNGA KONA</i>	<i>N– IT UNGA BARN</i>
<i>Sg nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Pl nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____

11.5 STRONG VERBS – GUIDELINES FOR DISTINGUISHING STRONG VERB CLASSES

Strong verbs fall into seven classes. Each class is differentiated by a particular series of root vowels. Class I has the following distinctive vowel series: long *-í-* in the infinitive and present tense; *-ei-* in the past singular; and short *-i-* in the past plural and past participle. Linguists refer to the system of root vowel change in strong verbs as ‘ablaut.’

**Guideline Chart for Distinguishing Strong Verb Classes.** A strong verb’s class can often be determined from the infinitive. For instance, Class I strong verbs have *í* in the infinitive while Class II have *jú, jó, ú*. The following chart is a guide to identify strong verb classes from the infinitive. ‘C’ refers to a consonant following the root vowel. ‘R’ refers to the four consonants *r, l, m, n*, known as resonants. On occasion there are exceptions to these rules. For example, Class V *fregna* and Class VI *standa* have two consonants after the vowel.

	<i>INFINITIVE</i>	<i>EXAMPLES</i>
Class I:	í	líta, rísa
Class II:	jú, jó, ú	krjúpa, bjóða, lúka
Class III:	eCC, jaCC, jáCC, iNC (also øCCv, yNCv)	verða, gjalda, hjálpa, binda sökkva, syngva

Class IV:	eR	skera, stela, nema
Class V:	eC, iCj	gefa, vega, biðja
Class VI:	aC, eCj	fara, aka, draga, hefja
Class VII:	aCC, au, á, ei (also ö, ó, á, ú)	halda, falla, hlaupa, gráta, heita

C = any consonant    R (resonant) = r, l, n, or m    N (nasal) = n or m

11.6 STRONG VERBS – CLASS I

Class I strong verbs, as mentioned above, have a characteristic *i* in the infinitive. Verbs of this first class do not show *i*-umlaut in the present singular since *-i* is already a front vowel (3sg *lítr*, *ríðr*, *skínn*, *svíkr*).

<i>i</i> INFINITIVE	<i>i</i> 3SG PRES	<i>ei</i> 3SG PAST	<i>i</i> 3PL PAST	<i>i</i> PPART
bíða ‘wait’	bíðr	beið	biðu	biðinn
bíta ‘bite’	bítr	beit	bitu	bitinn
drífa ‘drive’	drífr	dreif	drifu	drifinn
líta ‘look’	lítr	leit	litu	litinn
ríða ‘ride’	ríðr	reið	riðu	riðinn
skína ‘shine’	skínn	skein	skinu	skininn
svíkja ‘betray’	svíkr	sveik	sviku	svikinn

DRÍFA IN PRESENT AND PAST							
PRESENT				PAST			
Sg ek	dríf	Pl vér	drífum	Sg ek	dreif	Pl vér	drifum
þú	drífr	þér	drífið	þú	dreift	þér	drifuð
hann	drífr	þeir	drífa	hann	dreif	þeir	drifu

- Class I strong verbs such as *hníga*, *síga*, and *stíga* have in the past singular either *hné*, *sé*, and *sté* or *hneig*, *seig*, and *steig*.

11.7 STRONG VERBS – CLASS II

Class II strong verbs have the vowel *-jú-*, *-jó-*, or *-ú-* in the infinitive with past singular *-au-*. Verbs of this second class show *i*-umlaut in the present singular: *hann krýpr*, *lýkr*, *brýtr*, etc.

<i>jú (jó, ú)</i> INFINITIVE	<i>ý</i> 3SG PRES	<i>au</i> 3SG PAST	<i>u</i> 3PL PAST	<i>o</i> PPART
krjúpa 'creep'	krýpr	kraup	krupu	kropinn
lúka 'close'	lýkr	lauk	luku	lokinn
brjóta 'break'	brýtr	braut	brutu	brotinn
ljóta 'strike'	lýstr	laust	lustu	lostinn
skjóta 'shoot'	skýtr	skaut	skutu	skotinn
bjóða 'offer'	býðr	bauð	buðu	boðinn

Verbs with stems ending in *-g-* such as *fljúga*, *ljúga*, and *smjúga* have *-au-* or *-ó-* in the past singular, for example, *flaug~fló*, *laug~ló*, and *smaug~smó*.

Class II strong verbs have *-jó-* rather than *-jú-* in the infinitive when followed by *m*, *n*, *t*, *ð*, *s*, *r*, and *l*.

#### KRJÚPA IN PRESENT AND PAST

PRESENT				PAST					
Sg	ek	krýp	PI vér	krjúpum	Sg	ek	kraup	PI vér	krupum
	þú	krýpr	þér	krjúpið		þú	kraupt	þér	krupuð
	hann	krýpr	þeir	krjúpa		hann	kraup	þeir	krupu

#### 11.8 EXERCISE – STRONG VERBS, CLASS I AND II

Identify the class of the following strong verbs and define.

Ex: skjóta Class II, 'shoot'

- |          |       |          |       |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1. líða  | _____ | 4. njóta | _____ |
| 2. skína | _____ | 5. stíga | _____ |
| 3. ljúga | _____ | 6. lúta  | _____ |

#### 9 VERBS TAKING DATIVE AND GENITIVE OBJECTS

Some verbs take their objects in the dative rather than the accusative case. Examples are *forbanna*, *banna*, *spilla* and *þakka*. In the following examples, the verbs are underlined and the subjects are bolded.

Hann bannar mönnum at fara.

*He forbids men to go.*

Hann þakkar þeim.

*He thanks them.*

Hann þjónaði ekki konungi.

*He did not serve a king.*

Hon vill eigi spilla meydómi sínum.

*She does not want to spoil her maidenhood.*

Some verbs take objects in either the accusative or dative case depending on the intended meaning. For example, when the object appears in the dative, *bjóða* means 'invite,' but when the object appears in the accusative, it means 'offer.'

Hann býðr þeim at koma.

*He invites them to come. (dat)*

Hann býðr skjöld sinn konungnum.

*He offers his shield to the king. (acc)*

The objects of a number of verbs can be understood as 'instruments.' For instance, in sentence *hann leggir sverði* 'he thrusts with a sword,' the sword is the instrument of action. This usage of the dative case is called the instrumental dative.

Hann heldr sverði.

*He grasps a sword.*

Hann kastar steini.

*He throws a stone.*

Hann leggir spjóti.

*He thrusts with a spear.*

Hann skýtr ör.

*He shoots an arrow.*

Verbs taking their objects in the genitive often involve needing or lacking. Example *biðja* 'ask (for a woman in marriage),' *sakna* 'miss someone or something,' *hefna* 'avenge,' *gjalda* 'pay for,' and *þurfa* 'need.'

Egill biðr Ásgerðar.

*Egill asks for [proposes marriage to] Ásgerðr.*

Hann saknar Englands

*He misses England.*

Munu margir þess gjalda.

*Many will pay for this.*

Þeir þurfa hersis.

*They need a chieftain.*

### 11.10 EXERCISE – VERBS TAKING DATIVE OR GENITIVE OBJECTS

Complete the following sentences and translate.

Ex: Hann heldr sverðinn. (sverðit)

He holds the sword.

1. Óðinn leggir \_\_\_\_\_. (spjótít)

2. Haraldr bannar \_\_\_\_\_ at fara. (menn)

3. Þórólfr biðr \_\_\_\_\_. (hon)

4. Hon býðr \_\_\_\_\_ at koma. (þeir)

5. Hann saknar \_\_\_\_\_ (kona) sinnar.

6. Höfðingi þakkar \_\_\_\_\_. (menn þeir)

7. Loki kastar \_\_\_\_\_. (steinn)

### 11.11 READING – THE BATTLE OF THE HJADNINGS CONTINUES (SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL, FROM THE PROSE EDDA)

The earlier reading ended with the kings Hedin and Hogni ready for battle on Háey. In a last effort to avoid slaying his new father-in-law, Hedin offers Hogni reconciliation. Fate, however, is now running its course.

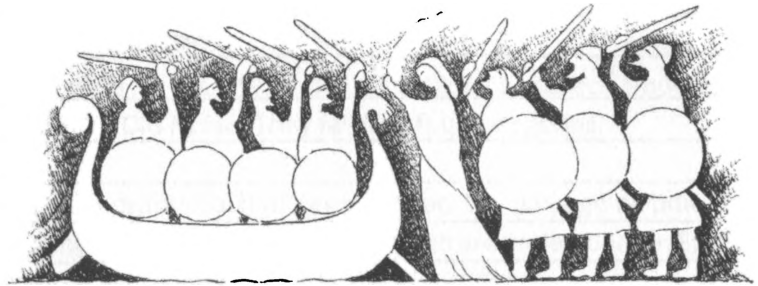


Figure 45. A Swedish Picture Stone from Lärbrö Hammars. Again the woman may be intervening between the two armies.

Hogni has already drawn ‘Dain’s Inheritance’ (*Dáinsleif*), a sword forged by the dwarves that must kill each time it is unsheathed. The battle begins, but it takes an otherworldly turn. It never concludes. Hild, who bears a valkyrie name meaning ‘battle,’ intercedes. Each night she raises the fallen warriors so that the fight begins anew and continues until Ragnarok, the final battle at the end of the world.

#### *Hjaðningavíg from Skáldskaparmál*

þá kallar Héðinn á Högna, mág sinn, ok bauð honum sætt ok mikit gull at bótum. Þá svarar Högni: ‘of síð bauztu þetta,’<sup>88</sup> ef þú vill sættask, því at nú hefi dregit Dáinsleif, er dvergarnir gørdðu, er manns bani skal verða, hvert sinn er bert er,<sup>89</sup> ok aldri bilar í höggvi, ok ekki sár grœr.’

Þá svarar Héðinn: ‘sverði hœlir þú þar, en eigi sigri.’ Þá hófu þeir orrostu þá er Hjaðningavíg er kallat, ok börðusk þann dag allan, ok at kveldi fóru konungar til skipa. En Hildir gekk of nóttina til valsins, ok vakði upp með fjölkyngi alla þá er dauðir váru;<sup>90</sup> ok annan dag gengu konungarnir á vígvöllinn ok börðusk, ok svá allir þeir er fellu hinn fyrra daginn.<sup>91</sup> Fór svá sú orrosta hvern dag eptir annan, at allir þeir er fellu, ok öll vápn þau er lágu á vígvelli, ok svá hlífar, urðu at grjóti. En er dagaði, stóðu upp allir dauðir menn, ok börðusk, ok öll vápn váru þá ný. Svá er sagt í kvæðum, at Hjaðningar skulu svá bíða ragnarøks.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>88</sup> of síð bauztu þetta: ‘Too late you offered this.’ The pronoun *þú* is often added in a reduced form to the end of the verb (here, *bauztu* < *bauzt þú*).

<sup>89</sup> hvert sinn er bert er: ‘each time when it (*sverð*) is unsheathed.’

<sup>90</sup> alla þá er dauðir váru: ‘all those who were dead.’

<sup>91</sup> hinn = *inn*.

11.12 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns function much like adjectives, agreeing with the nouns they modify in case, number, and gender. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person possessive pronouns are as follows:

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	minn ‘my’	okkarr ‘our’	várr ‘our’
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þinn ‘your’	ykkarr ‘your’	yð(v)arr ‘your’

- Possessive pronouns decline like strong adjectives (except in the masculine accusative singular, where the ending is -n).
- *Minn* and *þinn* decline like *sinn*, with short -i- before double -nn- and double -tt-, and long -í- elsewhere (nom *minn*, dat  *mínum*).
- The double -nn- is an assimilation of -n- and the -r- of the ending. For instance, feminine dative singular *minni* is composed of the stem *min-* and the strong ending -ri.
- The remaining possessives decline as expected, with *okkarr*, *ykkarr*, and *yð(v)arr* (dat. *yðrum*) obeying the two-syllable shortening rule. *Yð(v)arr* is declined below as an example.

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	yð(v)arr	yður	yð(v)art	PI	yðrir	yðrar	yður
acc	yð(v)arn	yðra	yð(v)art		yðra	yðrar	yður
dat	yðrum	yð(v)arri	yðru		yðrum	yðrum	yðrum
gen	yð(v)ars	yð(v)arrar	yð(v)ars		yð(v)arra	yð(v)arra	yð(v)arra

To express possession in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, Old Norse uses **personal** pronouns in the genitive: *hans*, *hennar*, *þess*, and *þeira* or the reflexive possessive pronoun *sinn*.

### 11.13 VERBS – IMPERSONAL CONSTRUCTIONS

An impersonal construction refers to the use of a verb without a subject. Impersonal constructions are very common in Old Norse. They fall into four categories.

1. Verbs which refer to natural events such as the weather, the passage of time, the changing of seasons, the coming of dawn and dusk, and so forth are impersonal. In English it is usually necessary to translate such sentences with a subject 'it.'

En er **dagaði**, stóðu upp allir dauðir menn. *And when [it] **dawned**, all the dead men rose.*

Nú **líðr** svá fram til jóla. *Now [it] **wears on** to Yule.*

Líðr fram haustinu ok **tekr** at vetra. *The autumn passes and [it] **begins to draw near** winter.*

Other such verbs are *nátta* <-að-> 'become night, grow dark,' *regna* <-di> 'to rain,' *snjófa* <-að-> 'snow,' *hausta* <-að-> 'draw near autumn,' *umra* <-að-> 'draw near summer,' and *vára* <-að-> 'draw near spring.'

2. A verb is sometimes used impersonally when the focus is on the action or the object, and the subject is of little importance. In sentences such as these, one must supply the omitted subject in translation.

Svá er **sagt** í kvæðum, at Hjaðningar skulu svá **bíða** ragnarøks. *Thus [it] **is said** in the poems, that the Hjadnings shall remain [abide] in this way until Ragnarok.*

Hér **hefr** upp ok segir frá þeim manni, er Sigi er nefndr. *Here [the tale] **begins and tells** about that man, who is named Sigi.*

3. With some verbs, such as *dreyma* 'dream,' *minna* 'remember,' *skilja* 'differ,' *líka* 'like,' and *batna* 'recover,' the subject plays the role of an experiencer of an emotional or physical state. Such verbs often place the subject in the accusative or dative case. The verb is impersonal, because there is no nominative subject with which it can agree in person and number. Such verbs are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> singular.

Mik dreymdi draum. (*accusative subject*) *I dreamed a dream.*

Ávalt er ek sé fagar konur, þá minnir mik þeirar konu. (*accusative subject*) *Whenever I see beautiful women, I remember that woman.*

Þetta líkaði Eiríki stórilla. (*dative subject*) *Eirík liked this very little.*

**Herjólf** batnaði síns meins. (*dative subject*) **Herjólf** recovered from his injury.

Þykkir mér ráð at þú farir at finna Gizur hvíta. *I think it is (it seems to me) a good plan that you go find Gizur the White.*

4. In the passive voice of verbs which do not take direct objects (intransitive verbs).  
 En er Högni spurði at herjat var í ríki hans, *And when Hogni learned that there had been raiding in his kingdom, he*  
 fór hann með sínu liði at leita Héðins. *went with his troops to seek out Hedin.*

### 11.14 THE INDEFINITE PRONOUN ENGI

*Engi* (or *eingi*) 'no one, none, no' is a compound of *einn* 'one' and the negative particle *-gi*, with masculine singular *engi* deriving from *einn+gi*, feminine *engi* from *ein+gi*, and neuter *ekki* from *eitt+gi*. Most other case forms add endings to the stem *eng-*.

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	engi	engi	ekki	Pl	engir	engar	engi
acc	engi~engan	enga	ekki		enga	engar	engi
dat	engum	engri	engu~einugi		engum	engum	engum
gen	einskis~engis	engrar	einskis~engis		engra	engra	engra

**Engi** heilsaði Þorvarði.

*No one* greeted Þorvarðr.

Högni átti af honum engrar vægðar ván.

*Hogni had hope of no mercy from him.*

Högni vildi enga sætt.

*Hogni wanted no settlement.*

Aldri bilar Dáinsleif í höggvi, ok ekki sár grœr.

*Dainsleif never misses when it strikes, and no wound [ever] heals.*

Neuter singular *ekki* frequently serves as an adverb in place of *eigi* 'not.'

### 11.15 THE INDEFINITE PRONOUN ANNARR

*Annarr* (stem *annar-*) 'one of two, other, another' is a common word whose declension makes sense in light of three sound changes.

1. *U*-umlaut applies, resulting in the change of *-a-* to *-ö-* or *-u-*.
2. The vowel of the second syllable drops when adding an ending beginning with a vowel in accordance with the two-syllable shortening rule.
3. The loss of the vowel of the second syllable brings the stem-final *-r-* directly into contact with the preceding *-nn-*, triggering a change of *-nn-* to *-ð-*. (This is the same change seen in the word *maðr*, stem *mann-* plus nominative ending *-r*.)



	M	F	N		M	F	N
<b>Sg nom</b>	annarr	önnur	annat	<b>Pl</b>	aðrir	aðrar	önnur
<b>acc</b>	annan	aðra	annat		aðra	aðrar	önnur
<b>dat</b>	öðrum	annarri	öðru		öðrum	öðrum	öðrum
<b>gen</b>	annars	annarrar	annars		annarra	annarra	annarra

*Annarr* is also used in the meaning 'second,' as in *annan dag* 'on the second day.'

## 11.16 DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

The readings in this lesson about the endless battle offer several examples of direct and indirect speech. Direct speech reports a speaker's exact words and is enclosed by quotation marks (*þá svarar Högni: 'Of síð bauztu þetta'*). Indirect speech recounts what someone has said without necessarily using his or her exact words and is usually introduced by a verb of saying, knowing, or thinking. Old Icelandic renders indirect speech in several ways.

The indirect statement can be expressed in a dependent clause (introduced by the conjunction *at*), where the verb of the indirect statement stands in the indicative mood. In the following sentences, the verbs of the indirect statement are bolded.

<i>Svá er sagt í kvæðum, at Hjaðningar</i>	<i>Thus it is said in poetry that the</i>
<i>skulu (3pl pres indic) svá bíða</i>	<i>Hjadnings will in this way remain</i>
<i>ragnarøks.</i>	<i>[abide] until Ragnarok.</i>

The indirect statement can also be expressed in a dependent clause (introduced by the conjunction *at*), where the verb of the indirect statement is in the subjunctive mood.

<i>Hon sagði, at Héðinn væri (3sg past subj)</i>	<i>She said that Hedin was prepared to</i>
<i>búinn at berjask.</i>	<i>fight.</i>

The subject of the indirect statement is put into the accusative case, and the verb appears as an infinitive. This usage is discussed in more detail further on in the book.

### Direct Speech:

*Konungrinn sagði lögin.*

*The king recited the law.*

### Indirect Speech:

*Hon heyrði konunginn segja lögin.*

*She heard the king recite the law.*

## 11.17 GRAMMAR TOOLBOX. ADVERBS

Adverbs are words which describe verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They answer the questions *when? where? and how?*

- Adverbs add information about time, manner, or place. Examples are *nú* 'now,' *hér* 'here,' *vandliga* 'carefully', and *skjótliga* 'quickly.'

- Adverbs are indeclinable; they never change form to agree in gender, case or number with other words. Adverbs typically derive from adjectives or nouns, for example in English by adding ‘-ly’ hence brave / bravely and man / manly. In ON adverbs are usually formed by adding *-a*, *-liga*, *-um*, or *-t* to the stem of an adjective. The ending *-liga* corresponds to the English *-ly*.
- One adjective may engender multiple adverbs with different meanings, for example, the adjective *langr* ‘long’ underlies the adverbs *lengi* ‘for a long time,’ and *löngum* ‘a long time, constantly.’
- Adverbs ending in *-(a)t* denote motion towards a place; for example, *hingat* ‘to here.’
- Adverbs in *-an* denote motion away from a place; for example, *norðan* ‘from the north,’
- When *fyrir* precedes an adverb ending in *-an*, it forms a two-word adverb answering the question ‘place where,’ for example *fyrir útan* ‘outside’ and *fyrir ofan* ‘above.’ This method is also used to express points of the compass (*fyrir norðan*). ‘Place where’ employs *fyrir* (*fyrir norðan*), ‘place to’ uses the suffix *-r* (*norðr*), and ‘place from’ *-an* (*norðan*).

ADVERB	ADJECTIVE/NOUN	STEM
illa ‘badly’	illr ‘bad’	ill-
víða ‘widely’	viðr ‘wide’	við-
skjótliga ‘swiftly’	skjótligr ‘swift’	skjótlig-
vandliga ‘carefully’	vandr ‘difficult’	vand-
tómliga ‘slowly’	tómr ‘slow’	tóm-
bráðum ‘soon’	bráðr ‘sudden’	bráð-
tíðum ‘often’	tíðr ‘frequent’	tíð-
stundum ‘sometimes’	stund ‘a while’	stund-
skjótt ‘suddenly’	skjótr ‘quick’	skjót-
hátt ‘loudly’	hár ‘high’	há-
þykkt ‘thickly’	þykk- ‘thick’	þykk-

PLACE FROM	PLACE WHERE	PLACE TO
héðan ‘from here’	hér ‘here’	hingat ‘to here’
þaðan ‘from there’	þar ‘there’	þangat ‘to there’
hvaðan ‘from where’	hvar ‘where’	hvert ‘to where’

Points of the Compass		
PLACE FROM	PLACE WHERE	PLACE TO
norðan	fyrir norðan	norðr
sunnan	fyrir sunnan	suðr
austan	fyrir austan	austr
vestan	fyrir vestan	vestr

11.18 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 11. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

NOUNS

vápn – weapon  
morginn –

ADJECTIVES

næstr – next  
kunnigr – known;

PRONOUNS

sumr – some  
hvárrtveggi – each of the

morning  
 hús – house  
 fótr – foot  
 spjót – spear

cunning, skilled in  
 magic  
 líkligr – likely  
 reiður – angry

two, both

#### VERBS

skilja – to part,  
 separate;  
 understand  
 drepa – to kill  
 setja – to set  
 liggja – to lie  
 leita – to search

#### PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

hjá – by, near  
 illa – badly  
 lengi – for a long time  
 hversu – how  
 þangat – to there

#### CONJUNCTIONS

enda – and yet

## EXERCISES

**11.19 Definite Article Review.** Decline masculine *sveinninn* 'the lad,' feminine *leiðin* 'the path,' and neuter *bakit* 'the back.'

	SVEINN + INN	LEIÐ + IN	BAK + IT
Sg nom			<i>bakit</i>
acc	<i>sveininn</i>		
dat			
gen			
Pl nom		<i>leiðirnar</i>	
acc			
dat			
gen			

**11.20 Definite Article.** Fill in the blanks below with the correct form of the noun and the definite article.

#### *konungrinn*

- \_\_\_\_\_ (nom) gerði kumbl.
- Ek sá \_\_\_\_\_ (acc).
- Ek bjó hjá \_\_\_\_\_ (dat).
- Ek vil gefa þér hest \_\_\_\_\_ (gen).

**hersirinn**

- 5. Eiríkr hét \_\_\_\_\_ (nom).
- 6. Ek sá \_\_\_\_\_ (acc).
- 7. Eiríkr fór til Grænlands með \_\_\_\_\_ (dat).
- 8. Hann horfði á skipit \_\_\_\_\_ (gen).

**11.21 Weak Adjectives.** Decline *langr* below as a weak adjective.

	M	F	N
Sg nom	<u>langi</u>		
acc			
dat			
gen			
Pl nom			
acc			
dat			
gen			

**11.22 Weak Adjectives.** Fill in the correct forms of the adjectives below.

	M	F	N
Sg nom	inn <u>hagi</u> dvergr	in <u>vænna</u> kona	it <u>fagra</u> land
acc	inn _____ dverg	ina _____ konu	it _____ land
dat	inum _____ dvergi	inni _____ konu	inu _____ landi
gen	ins _____ dvergs	innar _____ konur	ins _____ lands
Pl nom	inir _____ dvergar	inar _____ konur	in _____ lönd
acc	ina _____ dverga	inar _____ konur	in _____ lönd
dat	inum _____ dvergum	inum _____ konum	inum _____ löndum
gen	inna _____ dverga	inna _____ kvenna	inna _____ landa

**11.23 Weak Adjectives.** Fill in the correct form of the adjective and translate.

- 1. Alrekr inn \_\_\_\_\_ (ríkr) var vænn.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Þessi \_\_\_\_\_ (góðr) dóttir Hólmgeirs gerði brú.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Þorsteinn var it \_\_\_\_\_ (stórr) barn.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Sá maður er skrifaði Íslendingabók hét Ari inn \_\_\_\_\_ (fróðr) þorgilssóttur.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Helgi bjó í inum \_\_\_\_\_ (grœnn) dal, sem kallaður er Helgadalr.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Óláfr sendi menn eptir inni \_\_\_\_\_ (ungr) konu.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**11.24 Proper Nouns.** Decline the names Eirík the Red and Helga the Fair below.

	EIRÍKR INN RAUÐI	HELGA IN FAGRA
<b>Sg nom</b>	_____	_____
<b>acc</b>	_____	_____
<b>dat</b>	_____	_____
<b>gen</b>	_____	_____

**11.25 Adverbs.** Fill in the correct adverb in the sentences below.

- Þeir vildu eigi vera \_\_\_\_\_ (here) við heiðna menn.
- Hann hleypr \_\_\_\_\_ (to there).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (from where) kemr vindr? (From *The Prose Edda*)
- Gunnarr sagði þeim \_\_\_\_\_ (to where) hann ætlaði [at ganga].
- Hús stendr \_\_\_\_\_ (there) út við garðinn.
- Haraldr kom \_\_\_\_\_ (to here) til Miklagarðs.
- Vándir menn fara til Heljar ok \_\_\_\_\_ (from there) í Niflhel. (From *The Prose Edda*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (where) er Grikklandshaf?
- Þórolfr kom \_\_\_\_\_ (from here).

**11.26 Strong Verbs – Class I.** *Klifa* 'climb' is a typical Class I strong verb with principal parts *klífr, kleif, klifu, klifinn*. Conjugate *klifa* in present and past.

	PRESENT		PAST
<b>Sg ek</b>	_____	<b>Sg ek</b>	_____
<b>þú</b>	_____	<b>þú</b>	_____
<b>hann</b>	_____	<b>hann</b>	_____
<b>Pl vér</b>	_____	<b>Pl vér</b>	_____
<b>þér</b>	_____	<b>þér</b>	_____
<b>þeir</b>	_____	<b>þeir</b>	_____

Other Class I strong verbs follow the pattern of *klifa*. Give the principal parts for each of the verbs below.

- Ex: *bíta*     *bítr, beit, bitu, bitinn*
- drífa*     \_\_\_\_\_
  - þrífa*     \_\_\_\_\_
  - skríða*     \_\_\_\_\_
  - líta*     \_\_\_\_\_
  - grípa*     \_\_\_\_\_
  - rísta*     \_\_\_\_\_

Give the infinitives for each of the verbs below.

Ex: bitum bíta

- |                 |                  |                 |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 7. gínnum _____ | 9. leið _____    | 11. skein _____ |
| 8. bíðið _____  | 10. risinn _____ | 12. sveið _____ |

Fill in the correct form of the Class I strong verbs below using *klífa* as a model.

Ex: ríða (1sg pres) ríð

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13. bíta (2pl past) _____  | 16. þrífa (2sg past) _____ |
| 14. rísa (1pl past) _____  | 17. drífa (1pl pres) _____ |
| 15. klífa (1sg past) _____ | 18. grípa (3sg past) _____ |

**11.27 Strong Verbs – Class II.** *Strjúka* ‘stroke’ is a typical Class II strong verb with principal parts *strýkr, strauk, struku, strokinn*. Conjugate *strjúka* in present and past.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	_____	Sg ek	_____
þú	_____	þú	_____
hann	_____	hann	_____
Pl vér	_____	Pl vér	_____
þér	_____	þér	_____
þeir	_____	þeir	_____

A small number of Class II strong verbs have -ú-, for example *lúka, lúta*. Verbs have -jó- rather than -jú- when followed by -m-, -n-, -t-, -ð-, -s-, -r-, or -l-, for example, *fljóta, bjóða, kjósa, ljósta*. Apart from the infinitive, most Class II strong verbs have principal parts following the pattern of *strjúka*. Give the principal parts for each of the verbs below.

Ex: ljúga ljúgr. lugg. lugu. loginn

- |           |       |
|-----------|-------|
| 1. drjúpa | _____ |
| 2. skjóta | _____ |
| 3. krjúpa | _____ |
| 4. bjóða  | _____ |
| 5. ljósta | _____ |
| 6. kljúfa | _____ |

Give the infinitives for each of the verbs below.

Ex: skutu skjóta

- |                |                   |                  |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 7. bauð _____  | 9. kaus _____     | 11. njótið _____ |
| 8. krýpr _____ | 10. lostinn _____ | 12. brýtr _____  |

Fill in the correct form of the Class II strong verbs below following the model of *strjúka*.

Ex: skjóta (1sg pres) skýt

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 13. krjúpa (2pl past) _____ | 16. gjósa (1sg past) _____  |
| 14. rjóða (3sg pres) _____  | 17. drjúpa (1pl pres) _____ |

15. kljúfa (2sg past) \_\_\_\_\_ 18. ljósta (3sg past) \_\_\_\_\_

11.28 Weak Forms of the Adjectives *mikill* and *lítill*. Decline, keeping in mind the following:

- Loss of vowel in two syllable stems before endings beginning in a vowel. Compare strong *mikill* with weak *mikli* (*mikil* + *i*), hence *mikill maður* and *inn mikli maður*.
- The long *í* in *lítill* becomes short when followed by two consonants (compare *lítill barn* with *it litla barn*).

	INN MIKLI MAÐR	IN MIKLA KONA	IT MIKLA BARN
Sg nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

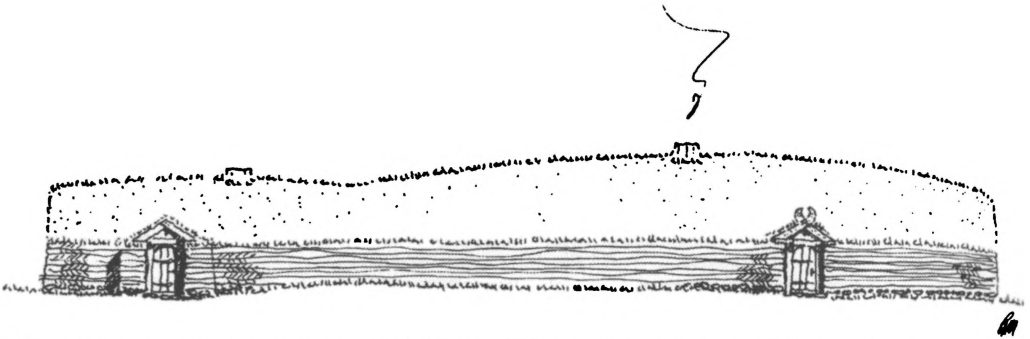
	INN LITLI MAÐR	IN LITLA KONA	IT LITLA BARN
Sg nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____	_____

## LESSON 12

### FEUD IN ICELAND'S EAST FJORDS

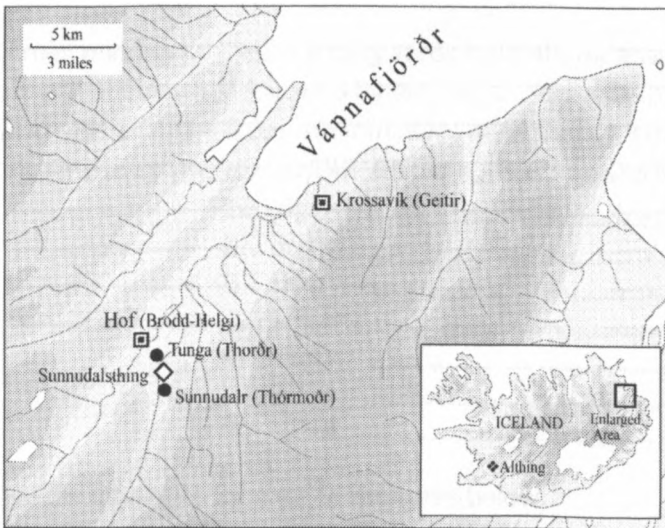
*Engi er allheimskr, ef þegja má*

(No one is a complete fool, if he is able to keep his mouth shut.)



**Figure 46. Reconstruction of a Turf Hall (*Skáli*) Worthy of a Chieftain.** This drawing of an Icelandic long house is based on an archaeological understanding of such buildings.

#### 12.1 READING – HELGI EARNS HIS NICKNAME (*VÁPNFIRÐINGA SAGA*)



**Figure 47. The Sites of a Tenth-Century Feud in *Vápnfirðinga saga*.** In addition to personal animosities, the feud was a contest over resources between two chieftains: Geitir, living on the coast at Krossavík, and Brodd-Helgi inland at Hóf.

This and the next lesson take their readings from the opening chapters of *Vápnfirðinga saga* (*The Saga of the People of Weapon's Fjord*). This saga, a tale of feud and vengeance, sweeps through two generations of closely related chieftain families in Iceland's East Fjords (*Austfirðir*). The narrative is steeped in local politics, and the reader is taken deep into the lives of medieval Icelanders – some honorable, some less so.

*Vápnfirðinga saga* is a model of saga narration. The

opening passage below presents the status of the story's main characters: contentious chieftains and farmers.

In particular, the passage introduces one of the story's main protagonists, Helgi, the



son of Thorgils. The history of the family begins with Helgi's grandfather, the *landnámsmaðr* Thorstein the White. In his old age, Thorstein raised Helgi after Helgi's father Thorgils was killed. The passage also relates how Thorstein's family came to possess the farmstead Hof, the best land in Weapon's Fjord, after its first owner, the *landnámsmaðr* Steinbjorn, squandered his wealth.

Following a description of Helgi's character and competitive nature, the saga tells a short story in which he uses trickery to ensure that his bull will win a fight. The episode, which exposes a feature of Helgi's bullying nature, explains how he got his nickname Brodd-Helgi (Spike-Helgi).

*Vápnfirðinga saga* is a typical family saga. Its narrative is built around a series of quarrels, feuds, and resolutions. Almost nothing is superfluous in the dense information given at the beginning. The sagas delineate familial, marriage, and fosterage relationships, and these bring with them obligations. Often the narratives trace lineages back to *landnámsmenn* and sometimes back to Norway. Genealogies take into account both major and seemingly minor figures who will later enter the tale.

Below are two columns. The column on the left contains the opening chapter of *Vápnfirðinga saga*. The one on the right identifies key elements in the order that they appear. Opening details in a saga often provide the background necessary to make sense of coming action, including long-simmering disputes and feuds. As with many sagas, *Vápnfirðinga saga* opens with Iceland's colonization or *landnám*. In this instance, it is 'landtaking' in Weapon's Fjord, and the first chapters explain kinship relations, land ownership rights, and hint at animosities.

### *Vápnfirðinga saga* (ch 1)

Þar hefjum vér þenna þátt, er sá maðr bjó at Hofi í Vápnafirði, er Helgi hét. Hann var sonr Þorgils Þorsteinssonar, Ölvis sonar, Ísvalds sonar, Øxna-Þóris sonar. Ölvir var endr maðr í Nóregi um daga Hákonar arls Grjótagarðssonar.

Þorsteinn hvíti kom fyrst út til Íslands þeira langfeðga<sup>92</sup> ok bjó at Toptavelli fyrir ítan Síreksstaði. En Steinbjörn bjó at Hofi, onr Refs ins rauða.<sup>93</sup> Ok er honum

**Protagonist:** Helgi.

**Setting:** Hof in Vapnafjord.

**Helgi's lineage:** father (Thorgils), grandfather (Thorstein), great-grandfather (Ölvir), etc.

**Aristocratic lineage:** Ölvir, a landed man in Norway.

**Dating:** Earl Hakon (ca. 900), contemporary of King Harald Fairhair.

**The founder of Helgi's family in Iceland:** The *landnámsmaðr* Thorstein the White.

**Thorstein's first land-claim:** the not-so-valuable farm at Toptavöllr.

**How Thorstein acquired the farmstead Hof:** the *landnámsmaðr* Steinbjorn mismanages his valuable land-claim at Hof and sells it to Thorstein. Steinbjorn's family.

<sup>92</sup> kom fyrst út til Íslands þeira langfeðga: 'was the first of that lineage to come out to Iceland.'

<sup>93</sup> sonr Refs ins rauða: 'the son of Ref the Red,' with *sonr* in apposition with *Steinbjörn*.

eyddisk fé fyrir þegnskapar sakar,<sup>94</sup> þá keypti Þorsteinn Hofslund ok bjó þar sex tigu vetra. Hann átti<sup>95</sup> Ingibjörgu Hróðgeirsdóttur ins hvíta.

Þorgils var faðir Brodd-Helga. Hann tók við búi Þorsteins. Þorkell ok Heðinn vágú Þorgils, föður Brodd-Helga, en Þorsteinn hvíti tók þá enn við búi ok fœddi upp Helga, sonarson sinn.

Helgi var mikill maðr ok sterkr ok bráðgörr, vænn ok stórmannligr, ekki málugr í barnœsku, ódæll ok óvægr þegar á unga aldri.<sup>96</sup> Hann var hugkvæmr ok margbreytinn.

Frá því er sagt<sup>97</sup> einnhvern dag at Hofi, er naut váru á stöðli, at graðungr var á stöðlinum, er þeir frændr áttu,<sup>98</sup> en annarr graðungr kom á stöðulinn, ok stönguðusk graðungarnir. En sveinninn Helgi var úti ok sér, at þeira graðungr dugir verr ok ferr frá.<sup>99</sup> Hann tekr mannbrodd einn ok bindr í enni graðunginum,<sup>100</sup> ok gengr þaðan frá þeira graðungi betr. Af þessum atburði var hann kallaðr Brodd-Helgi.

Var hann afbragð þeira manna allra, er þar fœddusk upp í heraðinu, at atgørvi.<sup>101</sup>

Helgi grows up without a father: Old Thorstein raises his grandson Helgi.

Helgi described: big and strong, difficult and taciturn, fiddle.

Helgi's character illustrated: a boy who likes to win.

Helgi earns his nickname.

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>94</sup> honum eyddisk fé fyrir þegnskapar sakar: 'he squandered his wealth on account of his generosity (by his open-handedness).'

<sup>95</sup> átti: 'was married to'; átti, past tense of *eiga*, literally means 'to have' or 'to possess,' but here it connotes 'to be married to.' This verb was used almost exclusively for the male partner in a marriage, as a woman was seldom said to 'possess' her husband.

<sup>96</sup> þegar á unga aldri: 'already at a young age.'

<sup>97</sup> frá því er sagt: 'it is said,' or, literally, 'about this it is told.'

<sup>98</sup> er þeir frændr áttu: 'which those kinsmen owned.'

<sup>99</sup> þeira graðungr dugir verr ok ferr frá: 'their bull gets the worst of it and backs off.'

<sup>100</sup> í enni graðunginum: 'on the bull's forehead.' Old Icelandic employs the dative case to denote possession of body parts, hence *graðunginum*.

<sup>101</sup> afbragð ... at atgørvi: 'the most outstanding ... in abilities,' 'the most talented.' Two of the major manuscripts use the word *afbragð*, 'outstanding example, paragon,' whereas one uses *afbrigði*, 'deviation, transgression, offense.'



12.2 CULTURE – NORSE FARMSTEADS

The basic element of a Scandinavian farmstead (*húsabær*) is the long house. The reconstructed long house at Stöng in southern Iceland is an example of an eleventh-century farmstead in Iceland. While the farm at Stöng contains some specifically Icelandic characteristics, it shares much in common with farms all over the Viking world.

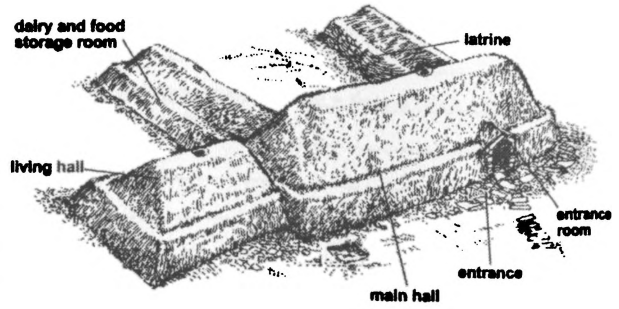
The Stöng farmstead was abandoned in 1104 due to the eruption of the volcano Hekla. The foundations lay buried under thick layers of volcanic ash and pumice until they were excavated in 1939 by a Scandinavian archaeological team led by Aage Rousell. This excavation and more recent ones provide an unusually clear picture of farm life in the late Viking Age. The large farmhouse faced southwest with turf walls between 1.3 and 2 meters thick (4.3 to 6.6 feet). Around the farmhouse was a cluster of outbuildings, including a smithy, a small church with a surrounding graveyard, and a cowshed with ten stalls.

Stöng was a costly building approximately 25 meters (82 feet) in length and was average-sized for a prosperous Icelandic farm. The main parts of the building were a central hall called a fire hall (*eldskáli*) with wood-lined walls and a longfire down the center of the floor. Attached to the fire hall and accessed by an interior passage way was a secondary large room called a *stofa* or ‘stove room.’ People slept in the fire hall on wide benches set against the long walls. A locking timber bed-closet (*lokrekkjugólf*, *lokrekkja* or *lokhvíla*) would have provided the master and mistress of the farm with some privacy (and protection in case of intruders). The house had one outside door at the front end of the

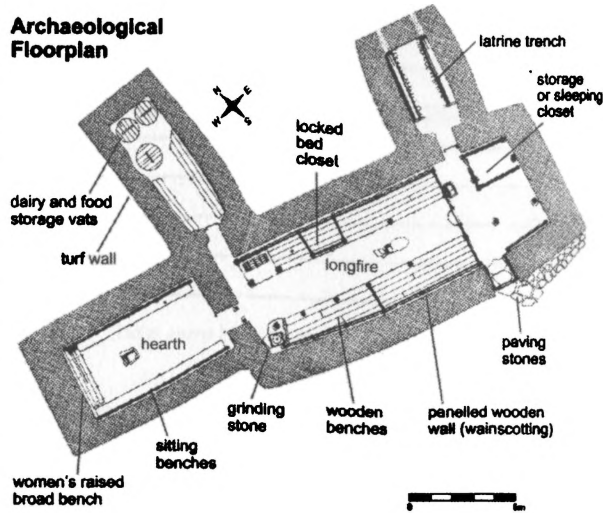
main hall. Two smaller rooms were attached to the back of the main hall. One was the pantry or food-storage room; the other was a large latrine.

The floor of the building was dirt. The floor surface became compact and hard because of the oils and lipids of everyday life. The entrance was paved with flat stones.

The room at the far left was probably a *stofa*, a room which had several uses. The name *stofa* is related to the English word 'stove' (Scandinavian *stue* / *stuga*), and originally it meant a heated room. At times the *stofa* may have been used for cooking and eating as well as for a family sitting room in the evenings. The fireplace was a partly sunken stone hearth box, in contrast to the long-fires (*langeldar*) that ran down the middle of the *skáli*. The wall benches in the *stofa* were much narrower than those in the main hall. They were used for sitting, and the room was likely used as a feasting hall. At the far



**Archaeological Floorplan**



**Figure 48. The Long House (*Skáli*) at Stöng, Iceland.**

end was a raised wooden platform called a *pallr*. Written sources mention women working on such platforms. Loom weights, spindle whorls and other evidence of wool-working were found in the *stofa*.

Of the two backrooms at Stöng, the one for food-storage was the larger. Impressions in its floor reveal the placement of three large wooden vats. The vats were sunk into the earth to keep them cool. They stored protein-rich curdled milk (*skyr*) and possibly meat pickled in sour whey.

The second backroom appears to have been a latrine. It had deep, stone-lined gutters along both side walls. Openings at floor level in the rear turf wall seem suitable for waste removal. The size of the latrine and the length of the trenches indicate that a substantial number of people could be accommodated at one time. Throughout Scandinavia, visiting the latrine was often a communal undertaking. One saga reveals that the latrine of a Viking Age farmhouse in Norway had room for 'eleven people to sit on either side.' Because the wooden fixtures have not survived, it is unclear whether the people at Stöng sat over holes on long wooden benches, as in the example from Norway, or whether they rested on a

horizontal wooden pole running just above and parallel to the trench as was also a custom in Norway into modern times.

### 12.3 THE INDEFINITE PRONOUN *NÖKKURR*

Indefinite pronouns, such as *nökkurr* ‘a certain,’ ‘any’ or ‘some,’ are pronouns which, even in context, have no specific identifiable referent. *Nökkurr* declines much like a strong adjective but does not follow the two-syllable shortening rule and drops the final *-r-* of the stem before neuter singular *-t*.

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	nökkurr	nökkur	nökkut	<b>PI</b>	nökkurir	nökkurar	nökkur
<b>acc</b>	nökkurn	nökkura	nökkut		nökkura	nökkurar	nökkur
<b>dat</b>	nökkurum	nökkurri	nökkuru		nökkurum	nökkurum	nökkurum
<b>gen</b>	nökkurs	nökkurra	nökkurs		nökkurra	nökkurra	nökkurra

Hann spyr, ef **nökkur** er fróðr maðr inni.

He asks if **anybody** inside is a wise man.

Þeir fengu **nökkura** njósn af ferð Ásgerðar.

They received **some** news about Asgerd's journey.

Þeir kómu at á **nökkuri** ok gengu með ánni til fors **nökkurs**.

They came to **a certain** river and followed the river to **a certain** waterfall.

*Nökkurr* has several variants, including *nakkvarr*, *nakkverr*, *nøkkvarr*, and *nekkvarr*.

### 12.4 PRONOUNS — *HVERR* AND *HVÁRR*

The pronouns *hverr* and *hvárr* function as both interrogative pronouns (used to introduce questions) and indefinite pronouns. *Hverr* is the more common of the two. As an interrogative, it means ‘who? what? which (one)?’ As an indefinite pronoun, *hverr* means ‘each, every (one).’ *Hvárr* has the same basic meaning as *hverr*, but is used when referring to two persons (*hvárr maðr*, ‘each’ or ‘one [man] of the two’) or groups (*hvárir þeira* ‘both’). In the neuter singular, *hverr* employs *hvat* as an interrogative, and *hvert* as an indefinite pronoun.

	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	hverr	hver	hvat~hvert	<b>PI</b>	hverir	hverjar	hver
<b>acc</b>	hvern	hverja	hvat~hvert		hverja	hverjar	hver
<b>dat</b>	hverjum	hverri	hverju		hverjum	hverjum	hverjum
<b>gen</b>	hvers	hverrar	hvers		hverra	hverra	hverra

Hverr sagði þetta?

**Who** said that?

Hvat er at segja frá þeim stað?

**What** is there to say about that place?

Sá baugr er hverjum höfuðsbani, er á.

That ring is death to **everyone**, who owns it.

Hvern dag ríða Æsir upp um Bifröst.  
Hvárr við annan.

Every day the Æsir ride up across Bifrost.  
Each to (or with) the other.

12.5 THE INDEFINITE PRONOUN EINNHVERR

*Einnhverr* ‘some, somebody, a certain one’ is a compound of *einn* ‘one’ and the pronoun *hverr*. Endings are added to the stem *einhver(j)-*, except in the nom and acc of masculine and neuter singular (These forms, where *ein-* declines, are in italics in the chart below).

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	<i>einnhverr</i>	einhver	<i>eitthvert</i>	PI	einhverir	einhverjar	einhver
acc	<i>einnhverr</i>	einhverja	<i>eitthvert</i>		einhverja	einhverjar	einhver
dat	einhverjum	einhverri	einhverju		einhverjum	einhverjum	einhverjum
gen	einvers	einverrar	einvers		einverra	einverra	einverra

12.6 THE PRONOUN HVÁRTVEGGI

*Hvártveggi* means ‘each of the two, either’ in the singular, and ‘both’ in the plural. *Hvártveggi* is a compound word (*hvárr* + *tveggi*) in which **both** elements decline.

	M	F	N
Sg nom	hvártveggi	hvártveggja	hvártveggja
acc	hvárntveggja	hváratveggju	hvártveggja
dat	hvárumtveggja	hvárritveggju	hvárutveggja
gen	hvárstveggja	hvárrartveggju	hvárstveggja
PI nom	hváirtveggju	hváartveggju	hvártveggju
acc	hváratveggju	hváartveggju	hvártveggju
dat	hvárumtveggjum	hvárumtveggjum	hvárumtveggjum
gen	hvárratveggju	hvárratveggju	hvárratveggju

Fellu þar menn af hvárumtveggjum.  
Höfðu þeir hváirtveggju mikit lið.

Men fell [died] there on both sides.  
Both sides had a large force.

12.7 STRONG VERBS – CLASS III

Class III is characterized by two, sometimes three consonants following the root vowel (*verð-a*, *dett-a*, *bjarg-a*, *vinn-a*, *finn-a* and *søkkv-a*). Below is the basic vowel pattern for this class, followed by a common variant. As noted earlier, in several verbs of this class, *-nd*, *-ng*, *-ld* changes to *-tt*, *-kk*, *-lt* in the second principal part, for example *gjalda*, past singular *galt*.

## Basic Pattern of Class III

<i>e</i> ( <i>ja, já</i> )	<i>e</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>o</i>
INFINITIVE	3SG PRES	3SG PAST	3PL PAST	PPART
bresta 'break'	brestr	brast	brustu	bróstinn
sleppa 'slip'	sleppr	slapp	sluppu	sloppinn
verða 'become'	verðr	varð	urðu	orðinn
gjalla 'yell'	gellr	gall	gullu	gollinn
gjalda 'pay'	geldr	galt*	guldu	goldinn
skjálfa 'shake'	skelfr	skalf	skulfu	skolfinn
hjálpa 'help'	helpr	halp	hulpu	holpinn

\* Strong verbs whose stems end in *-nd-*, *-ng-*, and *-ld-* have *-tt*, *-kk*, and *-lt* in the past singular.

A few verbs of this class, such as *gjalla* 'to yell,' *gjalda* 'to pay,' and *bjarga* 'to save' have *-ja-* in the infinitive, while others such as *hjálpa*~*hjalpa* 'to help' and *skjálfa*~*skjalfa* 'to shake' have both *-já-* and *-ja-*. These verbs all have *-e-* in the present singular: *hann gellr, geldr, bergr, helpr, skelfr*.

A number of Class III verbs have *-i-* in the infinitive when followed by *-n-* or *-m-* (*spinna*, *vinna*, *binda*, *finna*, and *svimma*) and follow a slightly different pattern. In these verbs, the vowels *-e-* and *-o-* in the infinitive and past participle are raised to *-i-* and *-u-*.

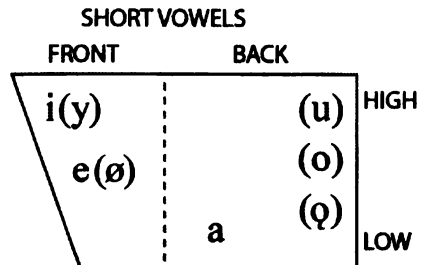


Figure 49. Short Vowel Placement in the Mouth

## Common Variant of Class III

<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>u</i>
INFINITIVE	3SG PRES	3SG PAST	3PL PAST	PPART
finna 'find'	finnr	fann	fundu	fundinn
binda 'bind'	bindr	batt†	bundu	bundinn
springa 'jump'	springr	sprakk†	sprungu	sprunginn
vinna 'win'	vinnr	vann	unnu*	unninn*
brenna* 'burn'	brennr*	brann	brunnu	brunninn
renna* 'run'	rennr*	rann	runnu	runninn

\* *brenna* and *renna* have older infinitive forms *brinna* and *rinna* with 3sg pres forms *brinnr* and *rinnr*.

† Strong verbs whose stems end in *-nd-*, *-ng-*, and *-ld-* have *-tt*, *-kk*, and *-lt* in the past singular.

\*A *-v-* drops before *-o-* or *-u-*.

A few Class III verbs have stem-final *-v-*, resulting in two other vowel patterns, illustrated by *sökkva* 'to sink' and *syngva* 'to sing.'

*sökkva* <*søkk*r, *sökk*, *sukku*, *sökkinn*> to sink

*syngva* <*syng*r, *söng*, *sungu*, *sunginn*> to sing

These verbs sometimes appear with *-j-* rather than *-v-*, as for instance *syngja*.

Two common Class III verbs show minor irregularities: *bregða* <*bregðr*, *brá*, *brugðu*, *brugðinn*> and *drekka* <*drekkr*, *drakk*, *drukku*, *drukkinn*>.

12.8 VERBS – PRESENT PARTICIPLES

Present participles describe ongoing actions and are formed by adding the suffix *-and-* to the present stem plus an ending (*sitjandi* ‘sitting,’ *gefandi* ‘giving’). They function as adjectives, agreeing in gender, case, and number with the nouns they modify and take a special set of weak endings, with *-i* in the feminine singular and in all genders of the plural.

THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE *GEFANDI* ‘GIVING’

	M	F	N		M	F	N
Sg nom	gefandi	gefandi	gefanda	PI	gefandi	gefandi	gefandi
acc	gefanda	gefandi	gefanda		gefandi	gefandi	gefandi
dat	gefanda	gefandi	gefanda		geföndum	geföndum	geföndum
gen	gefanda	gefandi	gefanda		gefandi	gefandi	gefandi

Verbs such as *sjá* and *fá*, which end in a long vowel, have contracted forms *sjáandi* and *fáandi*.

The following examples are taken from the *Saga of the Volsungs* (*Völsunga saga*).

Þeir finna eitt hús ok tvá menn <b>sofandi</b> í húsinu með digrum gullhringum.	<i>They found a house and two men <b>sleeping</b> in the house with thick gold rings.</i>
Á skildi váru [rúnar] ristnar, þeim er stendr fyr <b>skínanda</b> guði.	<i>On the shield, runes were cut, that one which stands in front of [protects] the <b>shining</b> god.</i>
Guðrún gekk <b>hlæjandi</b> ok gaf þeim at drekka af stórum kerum.	<i>Gudrun went <b>laughing</b> and gave them [something] to drink from large vessels.</i>

When used with *vera*, the present participle adds a sense of possibility or necessity.

Hjördís gekk í valinn eptir orrostuna um nóttina ok kom at þar, sem Sigmundur konungr lá, ok spyrr, ef hann <b>væri</b> græðandi.	<i>Hjordis went among the slain during the night after the battle and came to where King Sigmund lay, and asked [him] if he <b>could be</b> healed.</i>
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12.9 READING – THE OUTLAW SVART STEALS OLD THORSTEIN’S SHEEP (*VÁPNFIRÐINGA SAGA*)

In the second chapter of *Vápnfirðinga saga* the precocious twelve-year-old Spike-Helgi successfully prosecutes a man called Svart for killing his neighbor Skidi. Declared an outlaw, Svart lives in the mountains and steals livestock from the local people. When he takes sheep from Helgi’s grandfather, Thorstein, their shepherd tells Thorstein the news. The old



## Vápnfirðinga saga (ch 2)

Eptir þat lagðisk Svartr út á heiði þá, er vér köllum Smjörvatnsheiði, skammt frá Sunnudal, ok leggsk á fé Hofsverja<sup>104</sup> ok gerði miklu meira at en honum var nauðsyn til.<sup>105</sup>

**“Sem verst,” segir hinn;<sup>108</sup> “horfinn er geldingrinn þinn inn bezt,” segir sauðamaður, “ok þrír aðrir.”**

**"Komnir munu til sauða annarra manna,"<sup>109</sup> segir hann, "ok munu aptr koma."**

**“Nei, nei,” segir sauðamaðr, “þeir munu aldri aptr koma.”**

**“Mæl við mik slíkt, er þér líkar,”<sup>110</sup> segir Þorsteinn, “en tala ekki slíkt við Brodd-Helga.”**

**Translate:**

<sup>102</sup> **er kom út hingat: 'who came out here [to Iceland].'**

<sup>103</sup> Þá Svart ok Skíða skilði á um beitingar: 'Svart and Skíði disagreed over grazing rights.'

<sup>104</sup> **leggsk á fé Hofsverja:** 'began to prey upon the livestock of the people of Hof.'

<sup>105</sup> en honum var nauðsyn til: 'than was necessary for him.'

<sup>106</sup> **par sem:** 'there where.'

<sup>107</sup> *hversu hefir at farit í dag, félagi?:* 'how have things gone today, friend?'

<sup>100</sup> hinn: *dem pron* 'the other one.'

<sup>109</sup> **komnir munu til sauða annarra manna: 'they must have joined with some other people's sheep.'**

<sup>110</sup> slíkt er þér líkar: 'such as it pleases you.'

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## 12.10 CULTURE – ICELANDIC CHIEFTAINS, *GOÐAR*

*Vápnfirðinga saga* is set in a distinct social environment. The unknown medieval saga teller/author who committed to parchment this story of feud between the families at Hof and Krossavik understood the operation of power and politics in Icelandic society and concentrates on conflict between leaders. Icelandic chieftains were more political leaders than the warrior chiefs of many contemporary Scandinavian cultures. They possessed only slight formal authority to police, and until well into the thirteenth century had means to control the surrounding population. The *goðar*, unlike chieftains in more complex Viking Age societies did not oversee community works such as extensive irrigation systems, waterways or fortifications, whose upkeep and defense would offer a lucrative leadership niche. They were unable to limit access of local farmers to natural resources and had only limited privileged, control over a region's surplus production.

Not a commanding nobility, the *goðar* in *Vápnfirðinga saga* functioned as leaders of interest groups composed of free land-holding farmers (*bændr*, sg *bóndi*). *Bændr* chose their chieftain as the right to enter into alliances with leaders was not limited by the territorial location of their farms. Free farmers were called thingmen (*þingmenn*, sg *þingmaðr*) and were the chieftain's legally recognized followers. *Goðar* represented the interests of their *þingmenn* at assemblies and acted as their advocates in disputes.

Icelandic chieftains were legal specialists. They offered their service to farmers in need, often for payment although they were not formally obligated to as chieftains to help. A *bóndi* who had become a *þingmaðr* ('thingman', 'follower,' or 'retainer') of a *goði* was referred to as being *í þingi* ('in thing') with the chieftain.

Like other prominent farmers, chieftains were wealthy enough to weather bad times, but as individuals and as a group, they had only limited ability to compel farmers to do their bidding. As described in *Vápnfirðinga saga*, a chieftain's thingmen possessed the leeway both to resist their chieftain's demands and to make demands on the chieftain.

The office of a *goði* was called a *goðorð*, a term that means the "word" (*orð*) of a *goði*. A chieftaincy or *goðorð* was treated as a private possession that normally passed to a family member, though not necessarily to a first son. In addition to being inherited, a *goðorð* could be purchased, shared or received as a gift. The actual number of chieftains at any particular time in early Iceland was more than the number of chieftaincies, because each of those who shared part of a *goðorð* could call himself a *goði*.

Whether in pagan or Christian times, the *goðar* were a small-scale elite. The term *goði* is sometimes translated as priest-chieftain because it is derived from the Old Norse word

*goð*, meaning 'god.' Probably the term stems from the responsibilities that early Icelandic chieftains had as priests of the old religion. When Iceland peacefully converted to Christianity in the year 999-1000, many *goðar* exchanged their previous religious functions for that of Christian priests. In some instances, chieftains themselves became priests, in other instances they made their sons, relatives, or slaves priests. Embracing the new beliefs, many chieftains were able to profit through the management of church property in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

## 12.11 WORD FREQUENCY VOCABULARY – LIST 12. THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

### NOUNS

sveinn – boy, lad

vár – spring

kostr – choice

skjöldr – shield

bak – back

### ADJECTIVES

ríkr – powerful

fjölmennr – well

attended; numerous

skammr – short; brief

göfugr – noble

### PRONOUNS

yðr – you (*pl*)

okkarr – us (*dual*)

einhverr – someone

### VERBS

veita – to grant

sækja – to seek

höggva – to strike

senda – to send

geta – to get

### PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

aldri – never

nær – nearly

mikit – greatly

milli – between

útan – from out

### CONJUNCTIONS

hvárgi – neither

## EXERCISES

**12.12 Reading.** For each of the underlined words in this passage from *Vápnfirðinga saga*, provide the relevant grammatical information, dictionary (infinitive) form, and translation.

Helgi var mikill maðr ok sterkr ok bráðgörr, vænn ok stórmannligr, ekki málugr í barnoesku, ódæll ok óvægr þegar á unga aldri. Hann var hugkvæmr ok margbreytinn.

Frá því er sagt einnhvern dag at Hofi, er naut váru á stöðli, at graðungr var á stöðlinum, er þeir frændr áttu, en annarr graðungr kom á stöðulinn, ok stönguðusk graðungarnir. En sveinninn Helgi var úti ok sér, at þeira graðungr dugir verr ok ferr frá. Hann tekr mannbrodd einn ok bindr í enni graðunginum, ok gengr þaðan frá þeira graðungi betr. Af þessum atburði var hann kallaðr Brodd-Helgi.

Ex: sterkr adj. m nom sg of sterkr 'strong'

1. þegar \_\_\_\_\_

2. því \_\_\_\_\_

3. Hofi \_\_\_\_\_

4. naut \_\_\_\_\_
5. stöðli \_\_\_\_\_
6. stöðlinum \_\_\_\_\_
7. á \_\_\_\_\_
8. þeira \_\_\_\_\_
9. dugir \_\_\_\_\_
10. ferr \_\_\_\_\_
11. betr \_\_\_\_\_

**12.13 Strong Verbs Review: Present and Past Tense.** Fill in the correct form of each verb in the present or past tense as directed.

1. Hann \_\_\_\_\_ honum gripi (bjóða, *pres*).  
Hann \_\_\_\_\_ honum gripi (bjóða, *past*).
2. Gunnarr \_\_\_\_\_ hundinum (strjúka, *pres*).  
Gunnarr \_\_\_\_\_ hundinum (strjúka, *past*).
3. Konungrinn \_\_\_\_\_ um haustit (koma, *pres*).  
Konungrinn \_\_\_\_\_ um haustit (koma, *past*).
4. Maðr \_\_\_\_\_ í skóga (ganga, *pres*).  
Maðr \_\_\_\_\_ í skóga (ganga, *past*).
5. Hundr \_\_\_\_\_ eigi (bíta, *pres*).  
Hundr \_\_\_\_\_ eigi (bíta, *past*).
6. Vér \_\_\_\_\_ í hús (ganga, *pres*).  
Vér \_\_\_\_\_ í hús (ganga, *past*).
7. Þér \_\_\_\_\_ á eldaskálana (líta, *pres*).  
Þér \_\_\_\_\_ á eldaskálana (líta, *past*).

**12.14 Strong Verbs – Classes I-III.** Class I strong verbs have *í* in the infinitive while Class II have *jú, jó, ú*. Class III infinitives contain *-e-, -ja-, -já-* or *-i-* followed by two consonants (not counting a stem-final *-j-* or *-v-*).

	INFINITIVE	EXAMPLES
Class I:	í	líta, rísa
Class II:	jú, jó, ú	strjúka, bjóða, lúka
Class III:	eCC, jaCC, jáCC, iNC	verða, bjarga, skjálfa, vinna
	C = any consonant	N (nasal) = n or m

Identify the classes of the following strong verbs.

Ex: skjóta Class II

- |           |       |           |       |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. snerta | _____ | 5. bjarga | _____ |
| 2. drjúpa | _____ | 6. bíta   | _____ |
| 3. klífa  | _____ | 7. hverfa | _____ |
| 4. lúka   | _____ | 8. vinna  | _____ |

**12.15 Strong Verbs – Classes I–III.** Give the strong verb classes for each of the following infinitives and then provide the requested grammatical form.

	STRONG VERB CLASS	REQUESTED FORM
Ex: bíða (1sg pres)	<u>Class I</u>	<u>bíð</u>
1. finna (2pl past)	_____	_____
2. verða (1pl pres)	_____	_____
3. líta (3pl pres)	_____	_____
4. lúta (2sg past)	_____	_____
5. svíkja (1sg past)	_____	_____
6. ljósta (1pl past)	_____	_____
7. gjalla (3sg past)	_____	_____
8. ríða (3sg pres)	_____	_____
9. springa (2pl pres)	_____	_____
10. fljúga (3pl past)	_____	_____
11. sækva (2pl pres)	_____	_____
12. syngva (1pl past)	_____	_____

**12.16 Pronouns *Hverr* and *Einnhverr*.** Decline the noun phrases below.

	HVERR PENNINGR	EITTHVERT SKIP
Sg nom	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____
Pl nom	_____	_____
acc	_____	_____
dat	_____	_____
gen	_____	_____

**12.17 Strong and Weak Verbs.** Give the correct form of each verb below.

- |                                   |                        |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Ex: gefa <gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefit> | (3sg pres) <u>gefr</u> |
| 1. fara <ferr, fór, fóru, farit>  | (3pl past) _____       |
| 2. gera <-ði, -ðr~gerr>           | (2sg pres) _____       |
| 3. koma <kemr, kom, kómu, kominn> | (1sg past) _____       |

4. herja <-að-> (2pl past) \_\_\_\_\_
5. ganga <gengr, gekk, gengu, genginn> (3sg past) \_\_\_\_\_
6. verða <verðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> (2pl pres) \_\_\_\_\_

**12.18 Strong Verbs – Class III.** *Sleppa* ‘slip, slide, escape,’ a typical Class III strong verb with principal parts *sleppr, slapp, sluppu, sloppinn*. Conjugate *sleppa* in the present and past.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	_____	Sg ek	_____
þú	_____	þú	_____
hann	_____	hann	_____
PI vér	_____	PI vér	_____
þér	_____	þér	_____
þeir	_____	þeir	_____

A number of Class III strong verbs have infinitives with *-ja-* or *-já-* rather than *-e-* (*bjarga, hjálpa*). Apart from the infinitive, these verbs have the same principal parts as *sleppa*. Infinitives with *-i-* have *-u-* (rather than *-o-*) in the past participle. Remember that *brenna* comes from an older form *brinna*, which governs the vowel (*-u-*) in the past participle. Give the principal parts for each of the verbs below.

- Ex: spretta sprettr, spratt, spruttu, sprotninn
1. snerta \_\_\_\_\_
2. bjarga \_\_\_\_\_
3. spinna \_\_\_\_\_
4. hjálpa \_\_\_\_\_
5. bresta \_\_\_\_\_
6. brenna \_\_\_\_\_

Keeping in mind that *-v-* drops before *-o-* or *-u-* give the principal parts for the verbs below.

- Ex: hverfa hverfr, hvarf, hurfu, horfinn
7. verða \_\_\_\_\_
8. vinna \_\_\_\_\_
9. verpa \_\_\_\_\_
10. þverra \_\_\_\_\_

Strong verbs change *-nd-* to *-tt-*, *-ng-* to *-kk-*, and *-ld-* to *-lt-* in the third principal part. Give the 3sg past for the verbs below.

- Ex: binda batt
11. springa \_\_\_\_\_
12. gjalda \_\_\_\_\_
13. vinda \_\_\_\_\_

Give the infinitives for each of the verbs below.

Ex: vinnr vinna

- |                  |                   |                  |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 14. varð _____   | 16. dottinn _____ | 18. drukku _____ |
| 15. spunnu _____ | 17. fann _____    | 19. urðu _____   |

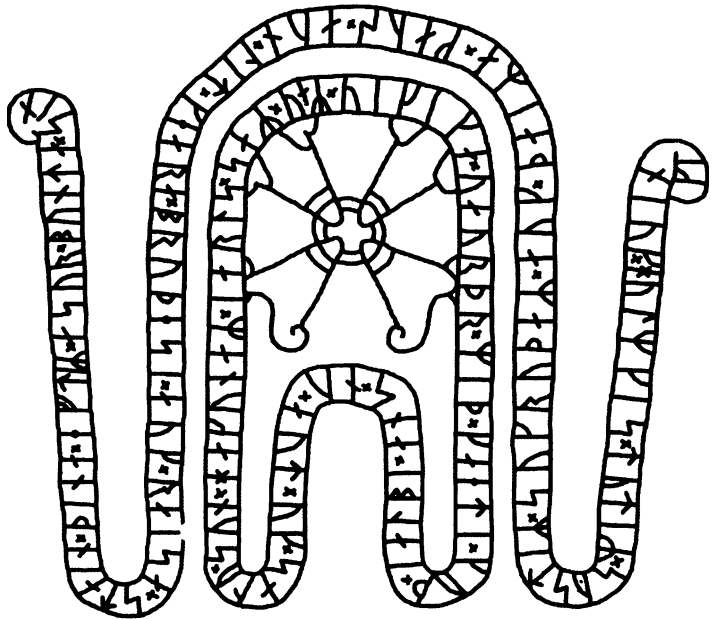
Fill in the correct forms of the Class III strong verbs below.

Ex: finna (1sg past) fann

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 20. bjarga (2pl past) _____ | 24. bresta (1sg past) _____ |
| 21. spinna (1pl pres) _____ | 25. snerta (1pl past) _____ |
| 22. svimma (3pl pres) _____ | 26. verða (3sg past) _____  |
| 23. gjalla (2sg past) _____ | 27. hjálpa (3sg pres) _____ |

**12.19 The Bro Church Rune-stone from Uppland, Sweden** speaks of Ginnlaug, the daughter of Holmgeir and sister of Sigrod (Sigröðr). These people are from the same extended family as those mentioned on the Ramsund Runestone.

Like the Ramsund Stone, the Bro Stone commemorates a wife, Ginnlaug's construction of a causeway over swampy ground and the raising of a memorial stone in memory of her husband Assur (Össur).



**Figure 50. The Bro Church Runestone from Uppland, Sweden**

Ginnlaug. It announces Ginnlaug's status to travelers who accept her gift of dry passage over the swamp. About the husband, Assur, the runestone tells that he held the military rank 'Viking-guard,' a warden (*vörðr*) or leader of the regional coastal defense force keeping watch against Viking raids from the sea. This information reveals the threat of Vikings to the Swedish coast.

Assur's father, Earl Hakon, was possibly the Norwegian Hákon hlaða-jarl ('Earl of Lade') Sigurðarson from Trondelag. Hákon, mentioned earlier, was the *de facto* ruler of most of Norway from ca. 970–995. The title *jarl* identifies him as a nobleman second only to a king.

Both this inscription and the one at Ramsund record Christian sentiments at a time when Sweden was still nominally pagan. These stones witness that elements of the two religions were current at the time of the conversion and perhaps afterward.

**RUNES**

ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|  
ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|  
ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|  
ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|  
ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|ƿ|\*|\*|\*|\*|

**TRANSLITERATION**

kinluk x hulmkis x tutiR x systiR x sukrupaR x auk x þaiRa x kaus x aun x lit x keara x bru  
x þesi x auk x raisa x stain x þina x eftiR x asur x bunta x sin x sun x hakunaR x iarls x saR  
x uaR x uikika x uaurþr x miþ x kaeti x kuþ x ialbi x ans x nu x aut x uk x salu x

**STANDARDIZED OLD NORSE**

Ginnlaug, Hólmgæirs dóttir, systir Sigrðar ok þeira Gauts,<sup>111</sup> hon lét gera brú þessi<sup>112</sup> ok  
reisa stein þenna eptir Assur, búanda sinn, son Hákonar jarls. Sá var víkingavörðr með  
gæti.<sup>113</sup> Guð hjálpi hans nú önd ok sálu.

**VOCABULARY**

<b>Assurr</b> <also Özurr> <-s> <i>m</i> Assur ( <i>personal name</i> )	<b>Gætir</b> <-is> <i>m</i> Gaetir ( <i>personal name</i> )
<b>Gautr</b> <-s> <i>m</i> Gaut ( <i>personal name</i> )	<b>vörðr</b> <dat verði, gen varðar, pl verðir, acc vörðu, gen varða> <i>m</i> warden; guard, watch
<b>Ginnlaug</b> <-ar> <i>f</i> Ginnlaug ( <i>personal name</i> )	
<b>gæta</b> <gætti, gætt> <i>vb</i> [ <i>w gen</i> ] watch, tend, take care of	
<b>gætir</b> <-is, -ar> <i>m</i> keeper, guard	

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

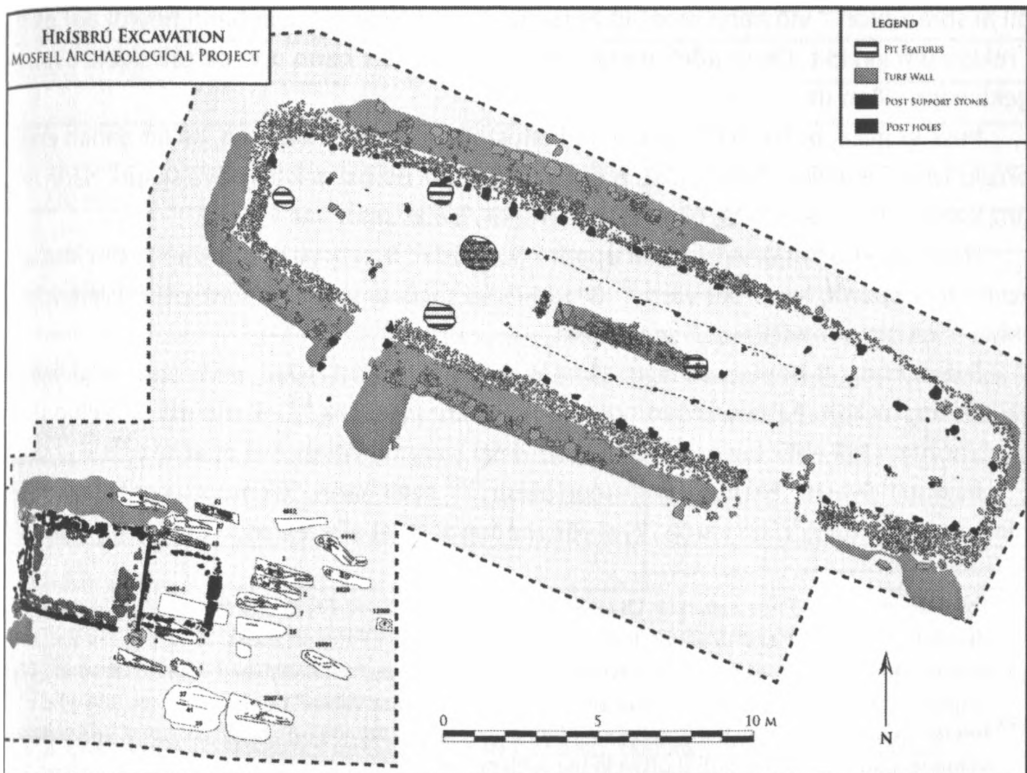
<sup>111</sup> ok þeira Gauts: ‘and of Gaut and his brothers.’  
<sup>112</sup> þessi: The correct form in Standardized Old Norse would be accusative *þessa* to match *bru*.  
<sup>113</sup> gæti: The meaning of *gæti* is unclear. If in the singular (*gæti*), it could be a man’s name (*Gætir*), but this is a very unusual name. Possibly the word could be plural (*gæta*), making Assur the commander of a troop of guards. It might also be part of a formulaic expression and read ...með. *Gæti* [*vor*] *Guð* [*ok*]... meaning, ‘...also. May God watch over us and...’



## LESSON 13

### SPIKE-HELGI KILLS A THIEF IN WEAPON'S FJORD

*Þá er hart þegar einn hrafninn kröppar augun ór öðrum*  
(Times are bad when one raven picks out the eyes of another)



**Figure 51. Archaeological Site Plan of a Icelandic Turf Hall (*Skáli*) and Stave Church at Hrísbú in the Mosfell Valley, Iceland.** The plan shows the excavation of a high-status Viking Age long house, church, and graveyard. This large longhouse was built early in the settlement period around the year 900. The smaller stave church (front bottom left) was built of drift wood timbers around the time Iceland converted to Christianity. The site, described in *Egil's Saga* and *Gunnlaug's Saga*, was the home of the Mosfell chieftains, including Grímr Svertingsson, Iceland's Law-Speaker from 1002-1004. The concluding chapters of *Egil's Saga* take place at this farmstead. Egil Skalla-Grimsson died and was buried there. The site was excavated as part of the Mosfell Archaeological Project.

### 13.1 READING – SPIKE-HELGI HUNTS DOWN SVART (*VÁPNFIRÐINGA SAGA*)

This lesson continues the reading of the opening chapters of *Vápnfirðinga saga*.

On the farmstead of Hof, Thorstein instructs the shepherd not inform his young grandson Brodd-Helgi about the theft of sheep. The shepherd disobeys Thorstein and tells

Helgi about the theft. Helgi arms himself for a fight. He shrewdly wedges the lower end of a thin, flat stone into his pants to shield his belly and chest. After sneaking out of the longhouse at night, Helgi follows the thief's tracks through the snow up onto Smjörvatnsheiðr (Butter Lake Heath). When they meet, the thief Svart curses Brodd-Helgi and his family. In the sagas, curses serve as a literary device of anticipation. They indicate that tragedy will follow. In this case, Helgi's family suffers two generations of blood feud.<sup>114</sup> In the passage below, a man of importance comes of age.

### Vápnfirðinga saga (ch 2)

Brodd-Helgi spurði sauðamanninn, hversu flakkat hefði,<sup>115</sup> um daginn eptir. En hann hafði öll in sömu svör<sup>116</sup> við hann sem við Þorstein. Brodd-Helgi lét sem hann heyrði eigi ok fór í rekkju um kveldit. Ok er aðrir menn váru sofnaðir, reis hann upp ok tók skjöld sinn, ok gekk hann síðan út.

Þess er getit, at hann tók upp einn hellustein, mikinn ok þunnan, ok lét annan enda í brækr sínar, en annan fyrir brjóst. Hann hafði í hendi boløxi mikla á hávu skapti. Hann ferr, unz hann kemr í sauðahús, ok rekr þaðan spor, því at snjór var á jörðu.

Hann kemr á Smjörvatnsheiði upp frá Sunnudal. Svartr gekk út ok sá mann knáligan kominn ok spurði, hvern þar væri.<sup>117</sup> Brodd-Helgi sagði til sín. "Þú munt ætla at fara á fund minn<sup>118</sup> ok eigi ørendislaust," segir hann.

Svartr hljóp at honum ok leggir til hans með höggspjóti miklu, en Brodd-Helgi brá við skildinum, ok kom á útanverðan skjöldinn ok kemr í helluna,<sup>119</sup> ok sneiddi af hellunni svá hart, at hann féll eptir laginu.<sup>120</sup> En Brodd-Helgi hoggir á fótinn, svá at af tók.<sup>121</sup>

Þá mælti Svartr: "Nú gerði gæfumun okkar,"<sup>122</sup> segir hann, "ok muntu verða banamaðr minn, en sá ættangr mun verða í kyni yðru héðan af,<sup>123</sup> at alla ævi mun uppi vera,<sup>124</sup> meðan

<sup>114</sup> For feud in *Vápnfirðinga saga* see Chapter 13, 'Friendship, Blood Feud, and Power: *The Saga of the People of Weapon's Fjord*' in Byock, *Viking Age Iceland*. London: Penguin Books, 2001, pp. 233-251. For more on feud, see Chapters 10, 'Systems of Power: Advocates, Friendship, and Family Networks,' 11, 'Aspects of Blood Feud,' and 12, 'Feud and Vendetta in a 'Great Village' Community,' pp. 184-232.

<sup>115</sup> *hversu flakkat hefði*: 'how things went wandering about [with the sheep]'; *hefði* is 3sg past subj of *hafa*. In indirect questions, the verb is often in the subjunctive.

<sup>116</sup> *öll in sömu svör*: 'all the same replies.'

<sup>117</sup> *ok spurði, hvern þar væri*: 'and he asked who might be there.' Another indirect question with the subjunctive (*væri*: 3sg. past subj. of *vera*).

<sup>118</sup> *Þú munt ætla at fara á fund minn*: 'You probably intend to come find me.' The verb *munu* is used when a speaker believes that a future event is likely to happen. *Munu* is a preterite-present verb (see section later in this lesson).

<sup>119</sup> *ok [högg] kom á útanverðan skjöldinn ok kemr í helluna*: 'and [the blow] landed on the outer part of the shield and struck against the stone.' The blow glances off the edge of the shield and strikes the stone covering Helgi's chest.

<sup>120</sup> *hann fell eptir laginu*: 'he [Svart] fell along with the blow.' Svart lost his balance.

<sup>121</sup> *svá at af tók*: 'so that [the foot] was cut off.'

<sup>122</sup> *Nú gerði gæfumun okkar*: *impersonal construction*, 'now the difference in luck between us has been revealed.'

<sup>123</sup> *mun verða í kyni yðru héðan af*: 'will come to pass on your kin henceforth.' Svart puts a curse on Spike-Helgi's family.

<sup>124</sup> *at alla ævi mun uppi vera*: 'that will last for all time.'



national assembly. This thing (*þing*) or assembly was founded around the year 930 to

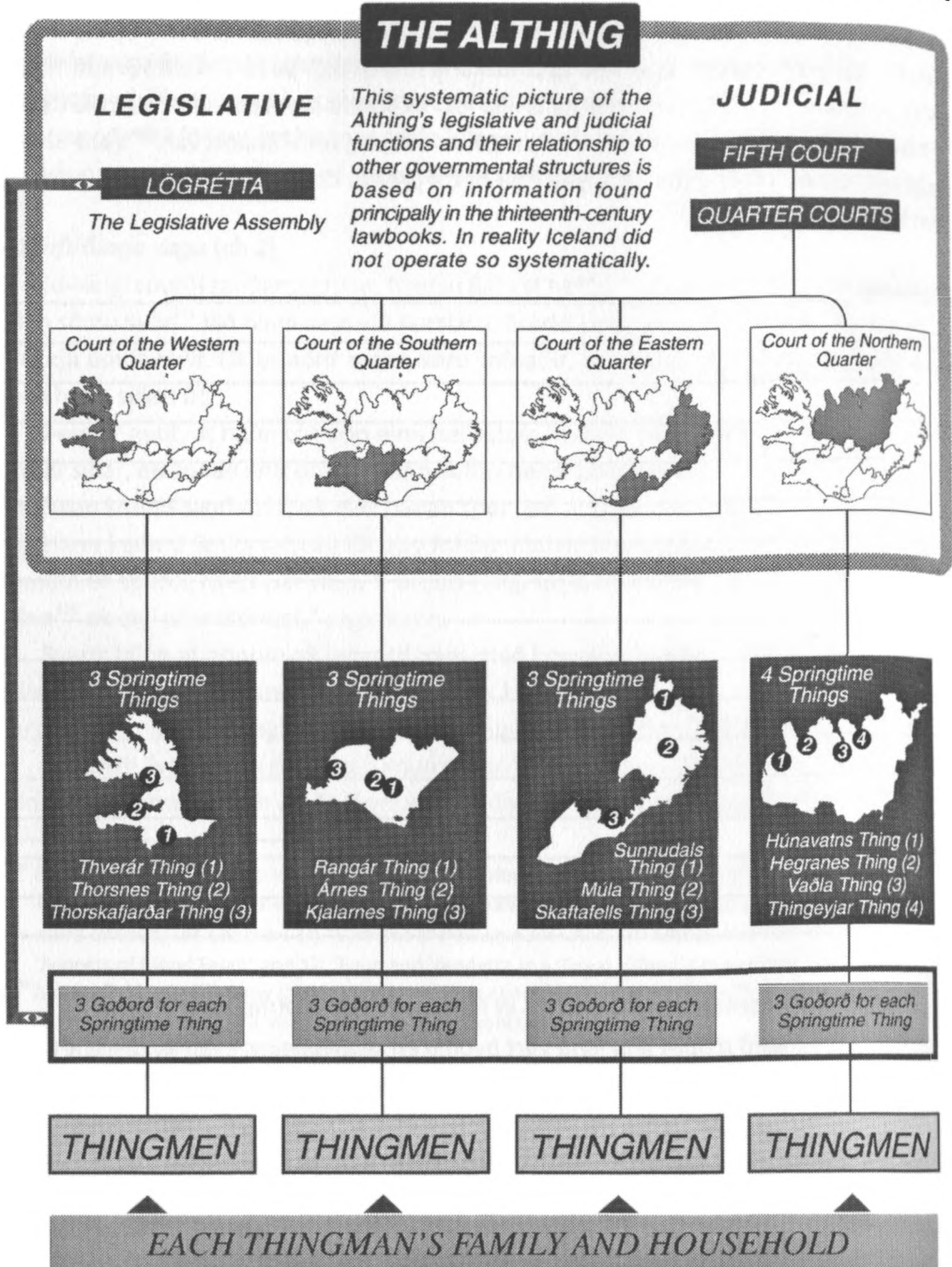


Figure 52. The Icelandic Althing.

provide a basis for country-wide governance, hence the name Althing. The Althing met in June at *Þingvöllr* (the Thing Plain) in the southwestern part of the island and lasted for two weeks. This was the time when travel was easiest, the days longest, and the weather mildest. Hundreds of people from all over Iceland, including pedlars, ale-brewers,

tradesmen, and young adults seeking spouses converged on *Pingvöllr*. With its large lake and the mountains in the distance, the site is one of great natural beauty. For two weeks the Althing became a national capital. Friendships and political alliances were initiated, continued, or broken. Marriages and divorces were arranged, information passed, promises given, business transacted, and sagas recounted. *Vápnfirðinga saga*, like many sagas, includes scenes of legal actions and negotiations at the Althing and at local assemblies. These smaller regional assemblies were called spring time assemblies (*várþing*).

The *goðar* managed the proceedings of the assemblies. At the Althing they made and amended laws at the *lögrétta*, the legislative council of the Althing. There is little information about the operation of the earliest Althing, but sagas, histories, and lawbooks give detailed accounts of the assembly's composition after it underwent a constitutional reform in the mid-960s.

The reform of ca. 965 divided the island into quarters. It established four quarter courts at the Althing for resolving serious conflicts at the national level. Now, as long as the matter was of consequence, individuals could begin an action at the Althing rather than at a local spring assembly. The quarter courts at the Althing also served as appellate courts for decisions taken at the spring time assemblies. Cases that were deadlocked at a *várþing* could also be referred to that region's quarter court at the Althing.

The only significant national office in the Icelandic governmental system was that of law-speaker (*lögsögumaður*). He was elected chairman of the *lögrétta* for a three-year term. Annually at the Althing's law rock (*lögberg*), the law-speaker recited a third of the law from memory. Attendance at this ceremony was required of each *goði*, accompanied by two advisers. They and other interested people sat on the surrounding grassy slope, probably offering emendations or corrections and taking part in discussions of legal issues. Among other duties, the law-speaker had to announce publicly any laws passed by the *lögrétta*. The *lögrétta* could also call on the law-speaker to furnish any part of the law its members needed in considering legislation. If faced with a difficult point of law or a lapse of memory, the law-speaker was required to consult five or more legal experts (*lögmenn*).

### 13.3 STRONG VERBS – CLASSES IV AND V

Class IV and V strong verbs share a number of features. Both classes in their basic patterns have *-e-* in the infinitive (*bera*, *gefa*), *-a-* in the past singular (*bar*, *gaf*), and *-á-* in the past plural (*báru*, *gáfu*). Class IV typically has *-o-* in the past participle while class V has *-e-* (*borinn*, *gefinn*).

Class IV verbs generally have a single *-l-*, *-r-*, *-m-*, or *-n-* following the root vowel of the infinitive; for example, *bera*, *stela*, *nema* (exceptions: *vefa*, *sofa*, *troða*).

Class V verbs generally have a single consonant other than *-l-*, *-r-*, *-m-*, or *-n-* following the root vowel; for example, *drepa*, *gefa*, *geta* (exceptions: *vera*, *fregna*, and verbs with stem-final *-j-*).

Class IV

<i>e</i> INFINITIVE	<i>e</i> 3SG PRES	<i>a</i> 3SG PAST	<i>á</i> 3PL PAST	<i>o</i> PPART
bera 'carry'	berr	bar	báru	borinn
stela 'steal'	steln	stal	stálu	stolinn
skera 'cut'	skerr	skar	skáru	skorinn
nema 'take'	nemr	nam	námu	numinn
fela 'hide'	felr	fal	fálu	fólginn
koma 'come'	kemr	kom	kómu~kvámu	kominn

BERA IN PRESENT AND PAST							
PRESENT				PAST			
Sg <i>ek</i>	ber	PI <i>vér</i>	berum	Sg <i>ek</i>	bar	PI <i>vér</i>	bárum
<i>pú</i>	berr	<i>þér</i>	berið	<i>pú</i>	bart	<i>þér</i>	báruð
<i>hann</i>	berr	<i>þeir</i>	bera	<i>hann</i>	bar	<i>þeir</i>	báru

*Nema* and *fela* have slightly irregular past participles (*numinn* and *fólginn*). *Koma* is irregular.

The verbs *troða*, *sofa*, and *vefa* are somewhat irregular.

INFINITIVE	3SG PRES	3SG PAST	3PL PAST	PPART
troða 'tread'	treðr~trøðr	trað	tráðu	troðinn
sofa 'sleep'	sefr~søfr	svaf	sváfu ~ sófu	sofinn
vefa 'weave'	vefr	óf ~ vaf	ófu ~ váfu	ofinn

Class V

<i>e</i> INFINITIVE	<i>e</i> 3SG PRES	<i>a</i> 3SG PAST	<i>á</i> 3PL PAST	<i>e</i> PPART
drepa	drepr	drap	drápu	dreppinn
gefa	gefr	gaf	gáfu	gefinn
geta	getr	gat	gátu	getinn
kveða	kveðr	kvað	kváðu	kveðinn
vera	er	var	váru	verit ( <i>n sg only</i> )
biðja	biðr	bað	báðu	beðinn
sitja	sitr	sat	sátu	setinn
liggja	liggr	lá	lágu	leginn
vega	vegr	vá	vágu	veginn
fregna	fregn	frá	frágu	freginn

DREPA IN PRESENT AND PAST							
PRESENT				PAST			
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	<i>drep</i>	<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	<i>drepum</i>	<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	<i>drap</i>	<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	<i>drápum</i>
<i>bú</i>	<i>drepr</i>	<i>þér</i>	<i>drepið</i>	<i>bú</i>	<i>drapt</i>	<i>þér</i>	<i>drápuð</i>
<i>hann</i>	<i>drepr</i>	<i>þeir</i>	<i>drepa</i>	<i>hann</i>	<i>drap</i>	<i>þeir</i>	<i>drápu</i>

Class V verbs with stem-final *-j-* have *-i-* in the infinitive (*biðja*, *sitja*). When a *-g-* precedes stem-final *-j-*, the *-g-* doubles (*liggja*, *þiggja*). Verbs which end in *-g(g)-* (*vega*, *liggja*) drop the *-g(g)-* and lengthen *-a-* to *-á-* in the past singular (*vá* 'he killed,' *lá* 'he lay'). The *-g-* is retained in the past plural (*vágu*, *lágu*). *Fregna* 'learn' follows this pattern but is unusual in having an *-n-* in the infinitive and present tense.

The verb *sjá* is irregular.

INFINITIVE	3SG PRES	3SG PAST	3PL PAST	PPART
<i>sjá</i> 'see'	<i>sér</i>	<i>sá</i>	<i>sá(u)</i>	<i>sénn</i>

### 13.4 PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS

The preterite-presents are a group of ten important verbs, whose present tense looks like the past tense of strong verbs. For example, the present singular of the preterite-present verb *þurfa* 'need' is *ek þarf*, *bú þarft*, *hann þarf*. This corresponds to the past singular of a strong verb like *finna* 'find': *ek fann*, *bú fannt*, *hann fann*. This peculiar feature of the class, with the present looking like the past, gives rise to its name. Preterite is an old grammatical term referring to the past tense, hence 'preterite-present' means 'past-present.'

Preterite-presents are often used as modal auxiliaries, helping verbs which modify the meaning of main verbs. They often correspond in meaning and form to English verbs: *kann* ('can'), *má* ('may'), *skal* ('shall'). Modals inject a sense of obligation, intention, need, or probability to main verbs. For example, a sense of obligation can be added to the sentence 'I sail to Iceland' by adding a modal auxiliary: 'I ought to sail to Iceland' or 'I have to sail to Iceland' (*Ek skal sigla til Íslands* and *Ek á at sigla til Íslands*).

#### THE TEN PRETERITE-PRESENTS

*elga* 'own, possess; be married or related to;' (w at) 'have to'

*kná* 'be able to'

*kunna* 'know, understand;' [with *at*] 'be able, can; know how to; happen, chance'

*mega* 'may, be permitted to, can'

*muna* 'remember'

*munu* 'will (probability), would'

*skulu* 'will (obligation), should'

*unna* 'love'

*þurfa* 'need, want;' (with *at*) 'need (to do something)'

*vita* 'know'

Two general rules describe the formation of preterite-present verbs.

- In the present tense, preterite-presents behave like the past tense of strong verbs. All preterite-presents apart from *munu* show a change of root vowel between singular and plural; for example, (*þarf* ~ *þurfum*).
- In the past tense, preterite-presents behave like the past tense of weak verbs. They add the past tense endings of weak verbs to an invariant past tense stem containing a dental suffix (*þurf-t-*).

**PURFA CONJUGATED IN PRESENT AND PAST**

PRESENT				PAST			
Sg <i>ek</i>	þarf	Pl <i>vér</i>	þurfum	Sg <i>ek</i>	þurfta	Pl <i>vér</i>	þurftum
<i>þú</i>	þarft	<i>þér</i>	þurfuð	<i>þú</i>	þurftir	<i>þér</i>	þurftuð
<i>hann</i>	þarf	<i>þeir</i>	þurfu	<i>hann</i>	þurfti	<i>þeir</i>	þurftu

**The Remaining Preterite-Presents**

PRESENT	<i>EIGA</i>	<i>MEGA</i>	<i>KUNNA</i>	<i>MUNA</i>	<i>MUNU</i>	<i>SKULU</i>	<i>VITA</i>
Sg <i>ek</i>	á	má	kann	man	mun	skal	veit
<i>þú</i>	átt	mátt	kannt	mant	munt	skalt	veizt
<i>hann</i>	á	má	kann	man	mun	skal	veit
Pl <i>vér</i>	eigum	megum	kunnum	munum	munum	skulum	vitum
<i>þér</i>	eiguð	meguð	kunnuð	munuð	munuð	skuluð	vituð
<i>þeir</i>	eigu	megu	kunnu	munu	munu	skulu	vitu
PAST							
Sg <i>ek</i>	átta	mátta	kunna	munda	munda	skylda	vissa

Like weak verbs: (*þú áttir, hann átti, vér áttum, þér áttuð, þeir áttu*, etc).

Two preterite-presents, *unna* and *kná*, do not appear above. *Unna* conjugates like *kunna*, and *kná* like *mega*. The verb *kná* is rare and does not possess a full set of forms.

**Regarding *munu* and *skulu***

- Two preterite-presents, *munu* and *skulu*, have infinitives ending in *-u*. Although both are often translated as ‘will,’ *munu* expresses probability and *skulu* expresses obligation or intention. *Munu* and *skulu* have special forms *mundu* and *skyldu* (called past-tense infinitives) used in indirect speech; for example, *Hann kvazk mundu fara til Nóregs*, ‘He said he would travel to Norway.’
- *Munu* and *skulu* frequently occur as subjunctive *myndi* and *skyldi*. The subjunctive add a sense of doubt or uncertainty and can be translated as ‘would’ and ‘should.’
- Variants of *munu* and *skulu* sometimes occur in the present subjunctive with *i*-umlaut for instance, *hann myni* and *hann skyli* rather than *hann muni* and *hann skuli*.



### 13.5 PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS – MODALS WITH AND WITHOUT AT

When employed as modal auxiliaries, three of the preterite-presents (*eiga*, *kunna*, and *þurfa*) require the infinitive marker *at* to be used with the infinitive of the main verb.

Hann á at gera brú.	<i>He must make a bridge.</i>
Hann kann at gera brú.	<i>He knows how to make a bridge.</i>
Hann þarf at gera brú.	<i>He needs to make a bridge.</i>

Four others (*mega*, *kná*, *munu*, and *skulu*) generally omit *at*.

Hann má gera brú.	<i>He may [is permitted to] make a bridge.</i>
Hann kná gera brú.	<i>He can [is able to] make a bridge.</i>
Hann mun gera brú.	<i>He will [is likely to] make a bridge.</i>
Hann skal gera brú.	<i>He shall make a bridge.</i>

The remaining three preterite-presents (*vita*, *muna*, *unna*) are chiefly used as main verbs.

### 13.6 EXERCISE – PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS

Complete the following sentences with the correct form of the verb in the present tense.

1. Eiríkr \_\_\_\_\_ (*eiga*) at gera kumbl.
2. Ek \_\_\_\_\_ (*mega*) gefa þér land.
3. Þú \_\_\_\_\_ (*þurfa*) at koma.
4. Otrinn \_\_\_\_\_ (*munu*) eta laxinn.
5. Þú \_\_\_\_\_ (*skulu*) fara til Danmarkar.
6. Ormr \_\_\_\_\_ (*kunna*) at sigla skip.
7. Sigríður \_\_\_\_\_ (*skulu*) spyrja konuna.
8. Konan \_\_\_\_\_ (*mega*) fara at Dreppstokki.

### 13.7 COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

In addition to their simple forms, adjectives have comparative and superlative degrees. An example is English 'wise,' whose comparative is 'wiser' and superlative, 'wisest.' ON comparative and superlative adjectives are similar to English, with most adding to the adjective stem the suffix *-ar-* in the comparative and *-ast-* in the superlative, followed by a case ending. For example, the adjective *spak-r* 'wise' has the stem *spak-*; its comparative is *spak-ar-i* and superlative is *spak-ast-r*.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
spakr 'wise'	spakari 'wiser'	spakastr 'wisest'
sterkr	sterkari	sterkastr
hvítr	hvítari	hvítastr

A smaller number of adjectives add the comparative suffix *-r-* and superlative suffix *-st-* and show *i*-umlaut. For example, *lang-r* becomes *leng-r-i* and *leng-st-r*.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
langr	lengri	lengstr
ungr	yngr	yngr
hár	hæri ~ hærr	hæstr

Comparatives with *-r-* follow the Special Stem Rules. For example, *sæll* ‘blessed’ has comparative *sælli* ‘more blessed’ (*sæl-* + *-ri*).

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
sæll	sælli (sæl + ri)	sælstr
vænn	vænni (væn + ri)	vænstr
fagr	fegri (fagr + ri)	fegrstr

Two-syllable adjectives with a short second syllable drop the vowel preceding the suffixes *-ari* and *-astr*. For instance, the comparative of *auðigr* is *auðgari* and the superlative is *auðgastr*.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
auðigr	auðgari	auðgastr
göfugr	göfgari	göfgastr

Just like English ‘good, better, and best,’ a few common adjectives have different roots in the comparative and superlative.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
gamall ‘old’	ellri ‘older, elder’	ellztr ‘oldest, eldest’
góðr	betri	beztr
illr	verri	verstr
váandr	verri	verstr
lítill	minni	minnstr
margr	fleiri	flestr
mikill	meiri	mestr

13.8 COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVE ENDINGS

Comparatives take the same set of weak endings as found in the present participle, bolded in the chart below.

-AR- PLUS ENDING				-R- PLUS ENDING			
	M	F	N	M	F	N	
<b>Sg nom</b>	spakari	spakari	spakara	lengri	lengri	lengra	
<b>acc</b>	spakara	spakari	spakara	lengra	lengri	lengra	
<b>dat</b>	spakara	spakari	spakara	lengra	lengri	lengra	
<b>gen</b>	spakara	spakari	spakara	lengra	lengri	lengra	
<b>Pl nom</b>	spakari	spakari	spakari	lengri	lengri	lengri	
<b>acc</b>	spakari	spakari	spakari	lengri	lengri	lengri	
<b>dat</b>	spökurum	spökurum	spökurum	lengrum	lengrum	lengrum	
<b>gen</b>	spakari	spakari	spakari	lengri	lengri	lengri	

### 13.9 SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVE ENDINGS

Superlatives decline as regular adjectives, taking strong or weak endings according to whether they are preceded by a definite article, demonstrative pronoun, or other determining word.

-AST- PLUS ENDING			-ST- PLUS ENDING		
	STRONG	WEAK	STRONG	WEAK	
<b>m</b>	spakastr maðr	inn spakasti maðr	hæstr maðr	inn hæsti maðr	
<b>f</b>	spökust kona	in spakasta kona	hæst kona	in hæsta kona	
<b>n</b>	spakast barn	it spakasta barn	hæst barn	it hæsta barn	

Adjectives whose stems end in a dental consonant (-t-, -d-, -ð-) drop the dental when adding the superlative suffix -st-, which becomes -zt-, for example, *beztr* from *bet-* + -st-.

### 13.10 USAGE OF COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

Comparison is often expressed with the conjunction *en*, corresponding to English 'than.' The persons, places, or things which are compared are in the same case.

<b>Þetta skip</b> er lengra en <b>þat</b> .	<i>This ship is longer than that one.</i>
<b>Sól</b> er bjartari en <b>máni</b> .	<i>The sun is brighter than the moon.</i>
Hann á fleiri <b>óvini</b> en <b>vini</b> .	<i>He has more enemies than friends.</i>
<b>Skipit</b> var skjótara en <b>fugl</b> .	<i>The ship was swifter than a bird.</i>

Comparison can also be expressed when the subject is in the nominative case and the noun compared is in the dative without *en*.

Skipit var <b>fugli</b> skjótara.	<i>The ship was swifter than a bird.</i>
Haki ok Hekja váru <b>dýrum</b> skjótari.	<i>Haki and Hekja were swifter than animals.</i>
Sól er <b>mána</b> bjartari.	<i>The sun is brighter than the moon.</i>

The dative case is also used by the adjective when answering questions such as ‘by how much’ or ‘by how little.’

Hafði Sigmundur lið miklu minna.  
En litlu síðar kom Óðinn heim.

Sigmund had a **much** smaller ('smaller **by much** force).  
And a **little** later ('later **by a little**') Odin came home.

Below are a few more examples of the comparative from the readings.

En annat haust hófu þeir mannblót, en árferð var söm eða verri.  
Hvat er fleira at segja?  
Bjarni hét son þeira inn yngri, en Lýtingr inn ellri.

And the second autumn they sacrificed humans, but the harvest was the same or worse.  
What **more** is there to say?  
Bjarni was the name of their **younger** son and Lýting, the **elder**.

Below are examples of the superlative from *The Prose Edda* and sagas.

Þat er allra grasa hvítast.  
Hann er vitrastr ásanna.  
“Skipit er it fegrsta,” segir hann.  
Sigurðr var inn ágætasti allra herkonunga.

It is the **whitest** of all herbs.  
He is the **wisest** of all the Æsir.  
“The ship is **very fair**,” he says.  
Sigurd was the **most excellent** of all warlords.

13.11 EXERCISE – COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

Fill in the spaces below.

	MEANING	COMPARATIVE	MEANING	SUPERLATIVE	MEANING
Ex: spakr	<u>wise</u>	<u>spakari</u>	<u>wiser</u>	<u>spakastr</u>	<u>wisest</u>
1. svartr					
2. bjartur					
3. langr					
4. ungr					
5. hár					
6. góður					
7. illr					
8. lítill					
9. margr					
10. mikill					

13.12 COMPARATIVE AND SUPERLATIVE ADVERBS

Comparative and superlative adverbs are indeclinable words formed with the suffixes -or or -r in the comparative and -ast or -st in the superlative. Those taking -r and -st show i-umlaut.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
opt 'often'	optar 'more often'	optast 'most often'
síð 'late'	síðar 'later'	síðast 'latest'
viðá 'widely'	viðar 'more widely'	viðast 'most widely'
skjótt 'speedily'	skjótar 'more speedily'	skjótast 'most speedily'
fagrt 'fairly, finely'	fegr 'more fairly'	fegrst 'most fairly'
lengi 'for a long time'	lengr 'for a longer time'	lengst 'for the longest time'
tómliga 'slowly'	tómligar 'more slowly'	tómligast 'most slowly'

- Adverbs formed with suffix *-a*, *-t*, or *-i* drop this suffix before adding comparative *-ar/-r* or superlative *-ast/-st*.
- The comparative suffixes *-ar* and *-r* often appear in early texts as *-arr* and *-rr*; for example, *optarr* and *síðarr*.
- Some adverbs form their comparatives with the suffix *-ara* or *-ra*; for example, *tíðara* 'more frequently,' *breiðara* 'more broadly,' *spakara* 'more wisely.' Those taking *-ra*, such as *lengra* 'longer (of space or distance),' show *i*-umlaut.

Some common adverbs form their positive and comparative/superlative degrees from different roots.

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
vel 'well'	betr	best~baszt
illa 'badly'	verr	verst
mikit 'much'	meir(a)	mest
mjök 'much'	meir(a)	mest
lítit 'little'	minnr~miðr	minnst
snemma 'early'	fyrr	fyrst
gjarna 'willingly'	heldr	helzt

Examples of comparative and superlative adverbs from the readings.

Böðvarr mælti: 'Ekki muntu fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr.'	<i>Bodvar said, "You will not be able to make your shield wall any longer."</i>
Herjólfur bjó fyrst á Drepstokki.	<i>Herjolf lived first at Drepstokkr.</i>
Önundr var upplenzkr at móðurætt, en föðurkyn hans var mest um Rogaland ok um Hörðaland.	<i>Önund was an uplander (highlander) on his mother's side, but his father's family was mostly from Rogaland and Hordaland.</i>

### 13.13 READING – BRODD-HELGI'S RELATIONSHIP TO GEITIR (VÁPNFIRÐINGA SAGA)

Family connections over several generations play a particularly important role in *Vápnfirðinga saga*, which focuses on two families: the *Hofsverjar* (the people of Hof) and the *Krossvíkingar* (the people of Krossavík). The early part of the saga describes the friendship between the youths Brodd-Helgi of Hof and Geitir of Krossavík. This friendship is not destined to last after they become brothers-in-law and prominent local chieftains.

The passage below defines the kinship and political relationships between the groups.

### ***Vápnfirðinga saga* (ch 3)**

Í þann tíma, er Þorsteinn [hvíti] bjó at Hofi ok Brodd-Helgi óx upp með honum, þá bjó sá maðr í Krossavík inni ýtri,<sup>128</sup> er Lýtingr hét ok var Ásbjarnarson, Óláfs sonar langhals. Hann var vitr maðr ok vel auðugr at fé.

Hann átti konu, er Þórdís hét, dóttur Herlu-Bjarna Arnfinnssonar. Þau áttu tvá sonu,<sup>129</sup> þá er við þessa sögu koma.<sup>130</sup> Hét annarr Geitir, en annarr Blængr. Halla hét dóttir Lýtings, en önnur Rannveig, ok var hon gipt í Klifshaga í Øxarfjörð þeim manni, er Óláfr hét.

Þeir váru mjök jafngamlir, bræðr ok Brodd-Helgi, ok var með þeim vinfengi mikit. Brodd-Helgi fekk Höllu Lýtingsdóttur, systur þeira bræðra. Þeira dóttir var Þórdís todda, er átti Helgi Ásbjarnarson. Bjarni hét son þeira inn yngri, en Lýtingr inn ellri. Bjarni var at fóstri í Krossavík með Geiti. Blængr var rammr at afli ok hallr nökkut í göngu. Geitir átti Hallkötlu Þiðrandadóttur, föðursystur Droplaugarsona.<sup>131</sup>

Svá var vingott með þeim Brodd-Helga ok Geiti, at þeir áttu hvern leik saman ok öll ráð ok hittusk nær hvern dag, ok fannsk mönnum orð um, hversu<sup>132</sup> mikil vinátta með þeim var.

Í þann tíma bjó sá maðr í Sunnudal, er Þormóðr hét ok var kallaðr stikublígr. Hann var sonr Steinbjarnar korts ok bróðir Refs ins rauða á Refsstöðum ok Egils á Egilstöðum. Börn Egils váru Þórarinn, Hallbjörn, Þröstr ok Hallfríðr, er átti Þorkell Geitisson. Synir Þormóðar váru þeir Þorsteinn ok Eyvindr, en þeir synir Refs Steinns ok Hreiðarr. Allir váru þeir þingmenn Geitis. Hann var spekingr mikill.

Samfarar þeira Höllu ok Brodd-Helga váru góðar. Lýtingr var at fóstri í Øxarfirði með Þorgílsi skinna. Brodd-Helgi var vel auðigr at fé.

Translate the reading above: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>128</sup> Krossavík inni ýtri: 'Krossavík the outer,' distinguishing its position on the bay. The phrase is in the dative case.

<sup>129</sup> Hann átti konu...Þau áttu tvo sonu: 'He was married to a woman...They had two sons.' The verb *eiga*, ('own') here denotes familial relationships through marriage or kinship.

<sup>130</sup> Þá er við þessa sögu koma: 'those who come forward in this saga.'

<sup>131</sup> föðursystur Droplaugarsona: 'the aunt [father's sister] of the sons of Droplaug,' for whom *Droplaugarsona saga* is named.

<sup>132</sup> ok fannsk mönnum orð um, hversu 'and people commented on how....'

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### EXERCISES

**13.14 Strong Verbs.** Classes IV and V are very similar, differing principally in the vowel of the past participle (IV has *-o-*, V has *-e-*). For example, *bera* (IV) has principal parts *berr*, *bar*, *báru*, *borinn*, while *gefa* (V) has *gefr*, *gaf*, *gáfu*, *gefinn*. Conjugate *gefa* in present and past below.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg <i>ek</i>	<hr/>	Sg <i>ek</i>	<hr/>
<i>þú</i>	<hr/>	<i>þú</i>	<hr/>
<i>hann</i>	<hr/>	<i>hann</i>	<hr/>
Pl <i>vér</i>	<hr/>	Pl <i>vér</i>	<hr/>
<i>þér</i>	<hr/>	<i>þér</i>	<hr/>
<i>þeir</i>	<hr/>	<i>þeir</i>	<hr/>

When the vowel of the infinitive (*-e-*) is followed by a single *-l-*, *-m-*, *-n-*, or *-r* the verb is Class IV. When followed by any other consonant, the verb is Class V. A few Class V strong verbs have stem-final *-j-* and have *-i-* in the infinitive and present tense, but otherwise follow the pattern of *gefa*.

Give the principal parts of the verbs below.

Ex: <i>bera</i>	<u><i>berr, bar, báru, borinn</i></u>
<i>reka</i>	<u><i>rekr, rak, ráku, rekinn</i></u>
<i>biðja</i>	<u><i>biðr, bað, báðu, beðinn</i></u>
1. <i>skeira</i>	<hr/>
2. <i>leka</i>	<hr/>
3. <i>geta</i>	<hr/>
4. <i>meta</i>	<hr/>

5. drepa \_\_\_\_\_
6. stela \_\_\_\_\_
7. sitja \_\_\_\_\_
8. kveða \_\_\_\_\_

Class V strong verbs having *-g(g)-* in the infinitive (*vega*) drop *-g(g)-* in the third principal part and lengthen *-a-* to *-á-* (*vá*). The *-g-* doubles in the infinitive and present tense for verbs with stem-final *-j-* (*liggja*, *piggja*). Give the principal parts for the following verbs.

Ex: *vega* *vegr. vá. vágu. veginn*

9. *liggja* \_\_\_\_\_
10. *piggja* \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the correct forms of the verbs below.

Ex: *reka* (1sg pres) *rek*

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 11. <i>kveða</i> (2pl past) _____ | 14. <i>nema</i> (1pl past) _____   |
| 12. <i>leka</i> (3sg past) _____  | 15. <i>skera</i> (2sg past) _____  |
| 13. <i>geta</i> (1pl pres) _____  | 16. <i>liggja</i> (1sg past) _____ |

**13.15 Strong Verbs.** The class of most strong verbs can be identified from the infinitive alone. Below are rules that help distinguish among the five classes introduced so far.

Class I: infinitive contains *-í-*

Class II: infinitive contains *-jú-*, *-jó-*, or *-ú-*

Class III: infinitive contains *-e-*, *-ja-*, *-já-* or *-i-* (also *-ø-* or *-y-*) followed by two consonants (not counting stem-final *-j-* or *-v-*)

Class IV: infinitive contains *-e-* followed by a resonant (either *-l-*, *-m-*, *-n-*, or *-r-*)

Class V: infinitive contains *-e-* or *-i-* followed by a single consonant other than *-l-*, *-m-*, *-n-*, or *-r-* (not counting stem-final *-j-*)

There are a few exceptions to these rules; for example, *búa* is a Class VII strong verb (not Class II) and *fregna* is Class V (not Class III).



	INFINITIVE	EXAMPLES
Class I:	í	líta, rísa
Class II:	jú, jó, ú	strjúka, bjóða, lúka
Class III:	eCC, jaCC, jáCC, iNC (also øCCv, yNCv)	verða, bjarga, skjálfa, vinna hrökkva, syngva
Class IV:	eR	stela, skera
Class V:	eC, iCj	gefa, eta, sitja

C = any consonant    R (resonant) = r, l, n, or m    N (nasal) = n or m

Based on the table given above, identify the class of the following strong verbs.

Ex: binda Class I

- |           |       |           |       |           |       |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 1. leka   | _____ | 5. lesa   | _____ | 9. reka   | _____ |
| 2. bera   | _____ | 6. hjálpa | _____ | 10. bjóða | _____ |
| 3. njóta  | _____ | 7. súpa   | _____ | 11. nema  | _____ |
| 4. spinna | _____ | 8. hverfa | _____ | 12. líða  | _____ |

**13.16 Preterite-Present Verbs.** Translate the sentences and give the infinitive for each of the underlined preterite-present verbs.

**Meanings**

elga 'own, possess; have to'

kná 'be able to'

kunna 'be able'; (w at) 'happen, chance'

mega 'may, be permitted to'

muna 'remember'

munu 'will (probability), would'

skulu 'will (obligation), should'

unna 'love'

þurfa 'need'

vita 'know'

Ex: Hon mun koma hingat it sama haust.

She will come here the same autumn.

munu

1. Þú átt at fara til Noregs.

2. Vér skulum gera öl.

3. Þér kunnuð at ríða hesta.

4. Þær þurftu at spyrja goðann.

5. Ek má mæla við konunginn.

6. Þú munt verða frændi.

The following sentences come from *Hrólfs saga kráka*.

VOCABULARY

ey *f* island

hátt *adv* loudly

haukr *m* hawk

lundr *m* grove

nærri *comp adv* very near

♦sjálfr *adj pron* self, oneself, himself  
herself, itself, themselves

♦þegar *adv* at once, immediately; þegar á morgin first thing in the morning

7. Lundr einn stóð nærri höllinni, er konungr átti.

8. Skal ek fara sjálfr til eyjarinnar þegar á morgin.

9. Svipdagr mælti svá hátt, at allir máttu heyra.

10. En Hrólfur konungr átti þann hauk, er Hábrók hét.

13.17 Preterite-Present Verbs. Give the infinitives and meanings of the following verbs.

	INFINITIVE	FORM	TRANSLATION
Ex: skalt	<u>skulu</u>	<u>2sg. pres.</u>	<u>you will</u>
1. þurfum	_____	_____	_____
2. munt	_____	_____	_____
3. mátt	_____	_____	_____
4. skal	_____	_____	_____
5. meguð	_____	_____	_____
6. kann	_____	_____	_____
7. skuluð	_____	_____	_____
8. veizt	_____	_____	_____

13.18 Comparative Adjectives. Comparative adjectives always take the special set of weak endings given in this lesson. Decline *sterkari* below.

	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<u>sterkari</u>		
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			
<b>Pl nom</b>			
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			

**13.19 Superlative Adjectives.** Superlative adjectives take the same set of strong and weak endings as regular adjectives. Decline strong and weak *ríkastr*.

STRONG	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<u>ríkastr</u>		
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			
<b>Pl nom</b>			
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			

WEAK	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Sg nom</b>	<u>ríkasti</u>		
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			
<b>Pl nom</b>			
<b>acc</b>			
<b>dat</b>			
<b>gen</b>			

**13.20 Reading Exercise.** Translate the following stanza from the Eddic poem *Hávamál* (*The Sayings of the High One*). The High One refers to Odin, and the stanza is in *ljóðahátt*, meaning 'chant-meter.' For ON poetry see *Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*.

Deyr fé, \_\_\_\_\_  
 deyja frændr, \_\_\_\_\_

deyr sjálfr it sama;  
 Ek veit einn,  
 at aldri deyr:  
 dómr um dauðan hvern.

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# VOCABULARY

♦aldri *adv* never

♦dauðr <f dauð, n dautt> *adj* dead

deyja <deyr, dó, dó, dáinn> *vb* die

dómr <-s, -ar> *m* court; judgement

♦einn <f ein, n eitt, ord fyrstr 'first'> *num*  
 one; *indef pro* a, an, a certain one

♦fé <gen fjár, gen pl fjá> *n* cattle, sheep;  
 wealth, money

♦frændi <pl frændr> *m* kinsman

♦hverr <f hver, n hvert> *indef pron* each  
 every, all

♦samr <f söm, n samt> *adj pron* same;  
 sama the same, likewise

♦sjálfr *adj pron* self, oneself, himse  
 herself, itself, themselves

♦vita <veit, vissi, vitaðr> *pret-pres vb* know

## LESSON 14

## NORSE MYTHOLOGY AND THE WORLD TREE YGGDRASIL

*Fróðr er hvern f. egnvís*  
(Wise is he who is curious)

## 14.1 CULTURE – THE WORLD TREE

In Old Norse mythology, the World Tree Yggdrasil (Yggdrasill) was the *axis mundi* or cosmic pillar at the center of the universe. The Tree united the nine mythological worlds, binding them into a dynamic cosmos. Rising into the highest reaches of space, Yggdrasil is a giant, holy ash tree whose branches spread over all realms.

The concept of a world tree exists in many mythologies. In the case of the Scandinavian world tree, the idea may have an Indo-European origin. A world tree is also a feature of circumpolar peoples as far back as the Stone Age.

Although Viking Age Scandinavians likely interpreted the tree in different ways, the name 'Yggdrasill' offers some clues. A possible interpretation is that *Ygg-* comes from one of Odin's many names. *Ygg* means the 'terrible one' and is perhaps connected to Odin's role as god of the hanged. *Drasill* is an ancient term for 'horse.' Hence Yggdrasill may mean 'Ygg's horse' and is a metaphor for a gallows tree.

This view assumes that ancient

Scandinavians saw a similarity between how people ride horses and how a hanged person bobs as he 'rides' the gallows. The gallows tree is a fitting symbol for the causeway connecting the heavens and the underworld. It is a significant site for the passage between

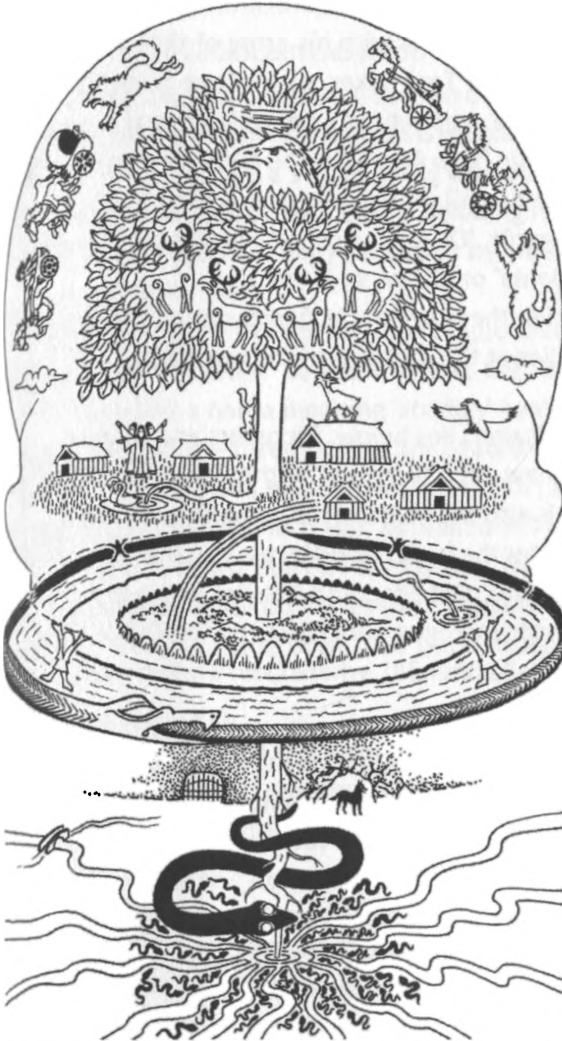


Figure 53. The World Tree Yggdrasil as described in *The Prose Edda* and the reading sections of this lesson.

life and death.

*The Prose Edda* and several Eddic poems, such as *Grímnismál* (*The Lay of Grímnir*) and *Vafþrúðnismál* (*The Lay of Vafþrúdnir*), describe the different worlds and their dwellers. Heaven (*himinn*) rises above the Tree's foliage. It was formed early in the history of the world by the gods and is contained within the vault of the skull (see the accompanying Illustration) of the primordial giant *Ymir* ('Roarer'). Four dwarves, each standing at one of the four geographical directions, hold the skull in place. Daily the sun and the moon ride across the heavens in their chariots chased by two cosmic wolves. At the end of the world, at Ragnarok, the wolves will finally catch the two celestial bodies and swallow them.

Below the branches of the World Tree lies Asgard (*Ásgarðr*), the home of the gods. Odin lives there in his hall Valhalla, which he shares with his army of slain warriors, the Einherjar. In Asgard, one of the roots of the Tree takes sustenance from Urd's Well (*Urðarbrunnr*, 'the Well of Fate') where three prophetic women called Norns (*Nornir*) live.

The Rainbow Bridge (*Bifröst*) leads down from Asgard to the home of men in Midgard (*Miðgarðr*, 'Middle Enclosure' or 'Middle Earth'). A wall encloses Midgard, separating it from the outer region called Utgard (*Útgarðr*, 'Outer Enclosure'). In this outer region lies Jotunheim (*Jötunheimr*, 'home of the giants' or *jötnar*, sg *jötunn*).

Beyond Utgard is the outer sea. In it lies the fearsome *Miðgarðsormr* ('Midgard worm' or 'serpent'). This malevolent creature lies at the far edge of the sea, biting his tail as he encircles Middle Earth.

The Underworld called Niflheim (*Niflheimr*) lies below. Monsters and serpents live in this dark region of ice rivers. They gnaw on the roots of the Tree. Hel lies in the underworld. The realm of the dead, Hel is also the name of the goddess who oversees this place of the dead. Her unlucky charges enter the underworld by passing through the Gates of Hel before crossing the bridge Gjallarbrú. Old Scandinavian Hel was a pre-Christian concept that was understood to be a shadowy region much like the Greek Hades. As the bleak realm, Hel stood in contrast to Valhalla (*Valhöll*), where Odin's fallen warriors fight and feast each day.

*The Prose Edda* often provides mythological information through an exchange of questions and responses. For example, in reply to the question, 'How shall we name the sky?' *The Skáldskaparmál* section of *The Prose Edda* lists several kennings (poetic descriptions), revealing a vision of the Norse cosmos.

By calling it Ymir's head and hence the giant's skull, the burden or heavy load on the dwarves, and the helmet of the dwarves Vestri, Austri, Suðri or Norðri (West, East, South, or North), the land of the sun, moon and heavenly bodies, constellations and winds, or the helmet or house of the air, of the earth and of the sun. So said Arnór the Jarls' Poet.

Hvernig skal kenna himin? Svá at kalla hann Ymis haus ok þar af jötuns haus ok erfiði eða byrði dverganna eða hjálm Vestra ok Austra, Suðra, Norðra land sólar ok tungls ok himintungla, vagna ok veðra, hjálma eða hús lofts ok jarðar ok sólar. Svá

kvað Arnórr jarlaskáld.

*Skaldskaparmál* specifies that these lines were said by the Icelandic poet Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld. Although he lived a thousand years ago, we know something about Arnor. In some ways, he is a good example of the depth of information that we have about people who were not especially important. A good poet, Arnór was a seafaring merchant, who lived from ca. 1012-1070s. He often sailed between Norway and the Orkney Islands where it is said that he composed for the Orkney Earls and was remembered in Icelandic sources as jarlaskáld, ‘the Jarls’ Poet’.

## 14.2 READING – GANGLERI ASKS ABOUT YGGDRASIL (*Gylfaginning*, FROM *THE PROSE EDDA*)

*Gylfaginning*, the main narrative section of *The Prose Edda*, tells the story of the creation, the struggles and doom of the gods. *Gylfaginning* means the ‘deluding (*ginning*) of Gylfi,’ and Gylfi, we are told, is a Swedish king who purposefully wanders into the hall of the Æsir in order to learn about them. Gylfi’s deluding refers to his being a victim of an elaborate optical illusion (*sjónhverfing*) practiced by three formidable god-like figures whom he meets in the hall.

*Gylfaginning* is written as a dialogue between Gylfi and the three figures, all manifestations of Odin. Before meeting the Æsir, Gylfi disguises himself as a traveler named Gangleri, a name meaning ‘strider,’ ‘walker,’ or ‘wanderer.’ In the Æsir’s majestic but illusory hall, the three figures are seated upon three thrones, one above the other. They name themselves Hár, Jafnhár, and Þriði (‘High,’ ‘Just-As-High,’ and ‘Third’).

Gangleri’s dialogue with Hár, Jafnhár, and Þriði quickly becomes a contest of wisdom. Gangleri is told at the start of the contest that he will not escape unharmed unless he grows wiser, a threat which raises the stakes of the mythological exchange. In the following passages, Gangleri learns about the three roots of the World Tree and more.

### *Gylfaginning* (ch 15)

Þá mælti Gangleri: ‘Hvar er höfuðstaðrinn eða helgistaðrinn goðanna?’

Hár svarar: ‘Þat er at aski Yggdrasils; þar skulu goðin eiga dóma sína hvern dag.’

Þá mælti Gangleri: “Hvat er at segja frá þeim stað?”<sup>133</sup>

Þá segir Jafnhár: “Askinn er allra trjá mestr ok beztr; limar hans<sup>134</sup> dreifask yfir heim allan, ok standa yfir himni. Þrjár röetr trésins halda því [tré] upp, ok standa afar breitt.

Ein er með Ásum, enn önnur<sup>135</sup> með Hrímpursum, þar sem forðum var Ginnungagap; hin þriðja [rót] stendr yfir Niflheimi, ok undir þeirri rót er Hvergelmir, en Níðhöggur gnagar neðan rótina. En undir þeirri rót, er til Hrímpursa horfir, þar er Mímisbrunnr, er spekt ok

<sup>133</sup> Hvat er at segja frá þeim stað?: ‘What is there to say about that place?’

<sup>134</sup> limar hans: ‘its limbs’ (referring to *askr*, a masculine noun).

<sup>135</sup> enn önnur: ‘yet another.’





vitandi;<sup>142</sup> en í milli augna honum sitr haukr sá, er heitir Veðrfölnir. Íkorni sá, er heitir Ratatoskr, rennr upp ok niðr eptir askinum, ok berr öfundarorð milli arnarins ok Níðhöggs. En fjórir hirtir renna í limum asksins ok bíta barr. Enn svá margir ormar eru í Hvergelmi með Níðhöggi, at engi tunga má telja.”

“Enn er þat sagt, at nornir þær, er byggja Urðarbrunn, taka hvern dag vatn í brunninum, ok með aurinn þann er liggr um brunninn, ok ausa upp yfir askinn,<sup>143</sup> til þess at eigi skyli limar hans tréna eða fúna.<sup>144</sup> En þat vatn er svá heilagt, at allir hlutir, þeir sem þar koma í brunninn, verða svá hvítir sem<sup>145</sup> hinna sú, er skjall heitir, er innan liggr við eggskurn.<sup>146</sup> Sú dögg, er þaðan af fellr á jörðina, þat kalla menn hunangsfall, ok þar af fœðask býflugur.<sup>147</sup> Fuglar tveir fœðask í Urðarbrunni; þeir heita svanir, ok af þeim fuglum hefir komit þat fuglakyn, er svá heitir.”

Translate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Gangleri also asks about the gods. In the passage below, he learns about Baldr, Odin's enigmatic son. (Note the five superlatives.)

### ***Snorra Edda (ch 22)***

Þá mælir Gangleri: ‘Spyrja vil ek tíðinda af fleiri Ásunum.’

Hár segir: ‘Annarr sonr Óðins er Baldr, ok er frá honum gott at segja. Hann er beztr, ok hann lofa allir. Hann er svá fagr álitum ok bjartr, svá at lýsir af honum,<sup>148</sup> ok eitt gras er

<sup>142</sup> ok er hann margs vitandi: ‘and it knows much,’ lit ‘is knowing of much,’ that is, the eagle sees much of the world from the limb of the ash.

<sup>143</sup> If the Norns are themselves pouring their mixture over the ash tree, perhaps this locates Asgard (and, oddly, one of its roots) above, or nearly above, the tree. On the other hand, perhaps it is the root that draws the Norns’ mixture up over the tree from the well in Asgard. It is also possible that the Norns are either quite large or quite mobile.

<sup>144</sup> til þess at eigi skyli limar hans tréna eða fúna: ‘so that its limbs should not dry up or rot.’ The verb *skyli* is 3pl present subjunctive of *skulu*.

<sup>145</sup> svá hvítir sem: ‘as white as.’

<sup>146</sup> er innan liggr við eggskurn: ‘which lies within against the eggshell.’

<sup>147</sup> ok þar af fœðask býflugur: ‘and bees nourish themselves on this.’

<sup>148</sup> svá at lýsir af honum: ‘that light shines from him.’

svá hvítt, at jafnat er til Baldrs brár.<sup>149</sup> Þat er allra grasa hvítast, ok þar eptir mátt þú marka fegrð hans,<sup>150</sup> bæði á hár ok á líki.<sup>151</sup> Hann er vitrastr ásanna ok fegrst talaðr ok líknsamastr. En sú náttúra fylgir honum at engi má haldask dómr hans. Hann býr þar, sem heitir Breiðablik. Þat er á himni.

14.4 STRONG VERBS – CLASS VI

Long -ó- in the past tense is the distinguishing feature of Class VI strong verbs, whose basic pattern is -a- in the infinitive, -ó- in past singular and plural, and -a- in the past participle (*fara, fór, fóru, farinn*). In the present singular, Class VI strong verbs show *i*-umlaut (*ekr, dregr, tekr, ferr, stendr*). Similarly, *flá* and *slá*, with long -á-, have present singular *flær* and *slær*.

<i>a</i> ( <i>e, á, æ, ey</i> ) INFINITIVE	<i>e</i> 3SG PRES	<i>ó</i> 3SG PAST	<i>ó</i> 3PL PAST	<i>a</i> PPART
fara 'go, travel'	ferr	fór	fóru	farinn
standa 'stand'	stendr	stóð	stóðu	staðinn
aka 'drive'	ekr	ók	óku	ekinn
draga 'drag'	dregr	dró	drógu	dreginn
taka 'take'	tekr	tók	tóku	tekinn
flá 'flay'	flær	fló	flógu	fleginn
slá 'strike'	slær	sló	slógu	sleginn
hefja 'begin'	hefr	hóf	hófu	hafinn
sverja 'swear'	sverr	sór	sóru	svarinn
hlæja 'laugh'	hlær	hló	hlógu	hleginn
deyja 'die'	deyr	dó	dó(u)	dáinn

<sup>149</sup> *eitt gras er svá hvítt, at jafnat er til Baldrs brár*: 'one herb is so white that it is likened to Baldr's eyelash.'  
<sup>150</sup> *ok þar eptir mátt þú marka fegrð hans*: 'and accordingly, you can judge his beauty.'  
<sup>151</sup> *bæði á hár ok á líki*: 'both of his hair and of his body.'

FARA IN PRESENT AND PAST							
PRESENT				PAST			
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	<i>fer</i>	<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	<i>förum</i>	<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	<i>fór</i>	<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	<i>fórum</i>
<i>þú</i>	<i>ferr</i>	<i>þér</i>	<i>farið</i>	<i>þú</i>	<i>fórt</i>	<i>þér</i>	<i>fóruð</i>
<i>hann</i>	<i>ferr</i>	<i>þeir</i>	<i>fara</i>	<i>hann</i>	<i>fór</i>	<i>þeir</i>	<i>fóru</i>

- When the stem ends in *-g-* or *-k-* (*draga*, *aka*), the past participle has *-e-* instead of *-a-* (*dreginn*, *ekinn*).
- A few have *-á-* in the infinitive (*flá*, *slá*) and *-g-* in the past plural (*flógu*, *slógu*).
- Those with stems ending in *-j-* show *i*-umlaut in the infinitive (*hefja*, *hlæja*).

### 14.5 VERB MIDDLE VOICE – INTRODUCTION AND FORMATION

The middle voice in Old Norse primarily describes reflexive actions, actions which the subject performs on him-, her-, or itself. The endings derive from the reflexive pronouns *mik* and *sik*. The sentences below illustrate the difference in meaning between the active and middle voice.

Hon klæddi barnit. (3sg past active)

*She dressed the child.*

Hon klæddisk. (3sg past middle)

*She dressed (herself).*

The middle voice also has reciprocal, passive, and other specialized meanings, which are explained in more detail below.

#### Formation of the Middle Voice

The middle voice is formed according to the following rules.

- The 1sg ending is *-umk* (*gerumk* ‘I become,’ *gerðumk* ‘I became’). In strong verbs the root vowel of the 1sg matches the root vowel of the 1pl (see the past tense of *gefask* in the chart below).
- Apart from 1sg *-umk*, the middle ending is *-sk*, added directly to the active endings (*nefndi* + *sk* > *nefndisk* ‘he named himself,’ *börðu* + *sk* > *börðusk* ‘they fought [among themselves]’). Two important sub-rules apply here.
  - 1) *-r-* drops before *-sk* (*gerir* + *sk* > *gerisk*, *eignar* + *sk* > *eignask*).
  - 2) A dental (*-ð-*, *-d-*, *-t*) plus *-sk* changes to *-zk*, for example, *eignizk* (*eignið* + *sk*) and *kva<sup>z</sup>zk* (*kvað* + *sk*). This change also applies when a loss of *-r* before *-sk* exposes a dental (*kveðr* + *sk* > *kveð* + *sk* > *kvezk*).
- The 1pl sometimes has the ending *-umk* rather than *-umsk* (*brjótumk* or *brjótumsk*).

Below are four examples of weak verbs, *gerask* ‘become,’ *eignask* ‘claim for oneself,

get to own,’ *berjask* ‘fight,’ and one strong verb *gefask* ‘show oneself, prove good (bad).’

PRESENT	GERASK	EIGNASK	BERJASK	GEFASK
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	gerumk	eignumk	berjumk	gefumk
<i>þú</i>	gerisk	eignask	bersk	gefisk
<i>hann</i>	gerisk	eignask	bersk	gefisk
<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	gerum(s)k	eignum(s)k	berjum(s)k	gefum(s)k
<i>þér</i>	gerizk	eignizk	berizk	gefizk
<i>þeir</i>	gerask	eignask	berjask	gefask
PAST				
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	gerðumk	eignuðumk	börðumk	göfumk
<i>þú</i>	gerðisk	eignaðisk	barðisk	gafzk
<i>hann</i>	gerðisk	eignaðisk	barðisk	gafsk
<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	gerðum(s)k	eignuðum(s)k	börðum(s)k	gáfum(s)k
<i>þér</i>	gerðuzk	eignuðuzk	börðuzk	gáfuzk
<i>þeir</i>	gerðusk	eignuðusk	börðusk	gáfusk

Other Forms of the Middle Voice

- Participles add -sk to their corresponding active forms.
- Middle past participles are confined to perfect constructions (neuter singular only). For instance, *eignazk* derives from *eignat* + *sk*, and similarly *farizk* (*farit* + *sk*), and *litizk* (*litit* + *sk*). For example, from *Heimskringla* about King Harald Fairhair of Norway: *Hafði hann þá eignazk land allt* ‘He had then taken for himself the entire country.’
- Middle present participles are rare. Examples are *brjótandisk* (broken) and *farandisk* (traveled).
- Middle imperatives are also rare. They add -sk to their corresponding active forms; for example, the 2sg command *bersk* ‘fight!’ < *berj* + *sk*, 2pl *berizk* ‘fight among yourselves!’, and 1pl *berjumsk* ‘let’s fight!’.

14.6 VERB MIDDLE VOICE – MEANING AND USE

Middle verbs have reflexive, reciprocal, passive, as well as idiomatic meanings.

**Reflexive meaning:** *Verja* ‘defend’ becomes *verjask* ‘defend oneself.’ In the sentence below from *Völsunga saga*, the verbs *bregðask* and *leggjask* have reflexive meanings.

Fáfnir brásk í ormslíki  
ok lagðisk á gullit.

Fáfnir changed himself into the likeness of a  
dragon and laid himself (lay) on the gold.

**Reciprocal meanings** convey actions that two or more parties do to one another. Note the

reciprocal meanings in the verbs *skilja* 'part' and *berja* 'strike' in the following sentences.

Nú <b>skiljask</b> þeir.	Now they <b>part</b> (from each other).
Bræðr <b>börðusk</b> .	The brothers <b>fought</b> (struck each other).
Nú <b>berjask</b> þeir lengi, ok veitti Kaldbeklingum betr.	They <b>fight</b> (struck each other) for a long time and the Kaldbak men had the better of it.

Middle verbs can have either reflexive or reciprocal meaning; for example, *þeir sjásk* means either 'they see **themselves**' (reflexive) or 'they see **one another**' (reciprocal).

**Passive meanings** are seen in the following sentences where the verbs *byggva* 'settle' and *draga* 'pull, drag' express actions performed on their subjects.

Ísland <b>byggðisk</b> .	Iceland <b>was settled</b> . ( <i>Íslendingabók</i> )
Stafirir <b>drógusk</b> með grunni, allt til þess er þeir váru lausir undir bryggjunum.	The pilings <b>were dragged</b> along the bottom, until finally they were loose under the bridge. ( <i>Heimskringla</i> , describing the Vikings pulling down London Bridge.)

**Idiomatic meanings** frequently occur, particularly when used in combination with a preposition; for example, *lagðisk út*. Idiomatic meanings can usually be traced back to one of the functions above, although in some instances the connection is obscure. For example:

Eptir þat <b>lagðisk</b> Svartr út* á heiði þá, er vér köllum Smjörvatnsheiði.	After that Svartr <b>set</b> (literally, 'lay or set himself') out onto that heath, which we call Smjörvatnsheidi. ( <i>Vápnfirðinga saga</i> , ch 2)
* <b>leggja</b> 'lay, set,' <b>leggjask</b> 'set oneself (reflexive),' <b>leggjask út</b> 'set out (into the wilderness to live as an outlaw)'	

[þorleifr] talði veðrit ótrúligt <b>gerask</b> *.	[Thorleifr] said the weather <b>was becoming</b> unpredictable. ( <i>Vápnfirðinga saga</i> , ch 5)
---	--

Á hans dögum <b>gerðisk</b> * í Svíþjóð sultr ok seyra.	In his days <b>there was</b> a famine and starvation in Sweden. ( <i>Ynglingasaga</i> )
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\***gera** 'make, do,' **gerask** 'make itself (reflexive); to become, occur, happen'

Some middle verbs are used in **impersonal** constructions; that is, they are used without an expressed or overt subject in the nominative case. These are often verbs of *perception* (seeing, hearing, etc) where the subject is placed in the dative case.

Hversu lík þér á* mey þessa?	How <b>do you like</b> this maiden?
* <b>líta</b> 'look,' <b>lítask</b> 'appear, seem,' <b>lítask [e-m]</b> á 'seem (good) [to somebody], to be pleasing [to	

somebody]’

En er hann sá bauginn, þá **sýndisk\*** honum fagr.

And when he saw the ring, then it *seemed beautiful to him.* (“Otter’s Ransom,” from *The Prose Edda*)

\**sýna* ‘show,’ *sýnask* ‘seem,’ *mér sýnisk* ‘it seems to me’

14.7 CARDINAL NUMBERS 1 TO 20

The cardinal numbers one through four decline, agreeing in case, number, and gender with the nouns they modify. When used in the plural, *einn* means ‘some.’ The first four numbers decline in a manner similar to the definite article and to strong adjectives.

	M	F	N		M	F	N
<b>Sg</b> <i>nom</i>	einn	ein	eitt	<b>Pl</b>	einir	einar	ein
<i>acc</i>	einn	eina	eitt		eina	einar	ein
<i>dat</i>	einum	einni	einu		< einum >		
<i>gen</i>	eins	einnar	eins		< einna >		

	M	F	N	M	F	N	M	F	N
<i>nom</i>	tveir	tvær	tvau	þrír	þrjár	þrjú	fjórir	fjórar	fjögur
<i>acc</i>	tvá	tvær	tvau	þrjá	þrjár	þrjú	fjóra	fjórar	fjögur
<i>dat</i>	< tveim(r) >			< þrim(r) >			< fjórum >		
<i>gen</i>	< tveggja >			< þriggja >			< fjögurra >		

The cardinal numbers *fimm* through *tuttugu* do not decline.

1	einn	6	sex	11	ellifu	16	sextán
2	tveir	7	sjau	12	tólf	17	sjautján
3	þrír	8	átta	13	þrettán	18	átján
4	fjórir	9	níu	14	fjórtán	19	nítján
5	fimm	10	tíu	15	fimmtán	20	tuttugu

For cardinal numbers above 20 and ordinals, see the next Lesson.

14.8 THE PAST SUBJUNCTIVE OF PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS

These verbs form their past subjunctive stems by applying *i*-umlaut to the past tense stem. Below are five of the most common.

INFINITIVE	EIGA	ÞURFA	SKULU	MUNU	MEGA
PAST STEM	ÁTT-	ÞURFT-	SKYLD-	MUND-	MÁTT-
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	ætta	þyrfta	skylda	mynda	mætta
<i>þú</i>	ættir	þyrftir	skyldir	myndir	mættir
<i>hann</i>	ætti	þyrfti	skyldi	myndi	mætti

PAST STEM	ÁTT-	ÞURFT-	SKYLD-	MUND-	MÁTT-
PI <i>vér</i>	ættim	þyrftim	skyldim	myndim	mættim
<i>þér</i>	ættið	þyrftið	skyldið	myndið	mættið
<i>þeir</i>	ætti	þyrfti	skyldi	myndi	mætti

- Variants of past subjunctive preterite-presents without *i*-umlaut sometimes occur: *mynda* ~ *munda*, *þyrfta* ~ *þurftra*, *skylda* ~ *skulda*, *kynna* ~ *kunna*.

### 14.9 TWO-SYLLABLE NOUNS – SYNCOPATED STEMS

Syncope refers to the loss of a vowel or consonant in a word. In Old Norse, syncopated nouns are nouns that lose the vowel of their second syllable in certain case forms. In nouns where this occurs, the second syllable is part of the stem and consists of a short vowel and a single consonant. Some examples are the strong masculine nouns *hamarr* (stem *hamar-*), *jökull* (stem *jökul-*), *himinn* (stem *himin-*), *jötunn* (stem *jötun-*) as well as the strong neuter noun *sumar* (stem *sumar-*). These nouns drop the vowel of their second syllable before endings that begin with a vowel, hence syncope occurs in dative *hamri* (*hamar* + *-i*) but not genitive *hamars* (*hamar* + *-s*).

Note that names often do not follow this rule, for example, *Gunnarr* (dative *Gunnari*), *Einnarr*, and *Reginn*.

	HAMARR (M)	JÖKULL (M)	SUMAR (N)
Sg <i>nom</i>	hamarr	jökull	sumar
<i>acc</i>	hamar	jökul	sumar
<i>dat</i>	hamri	jökli	sumri
<i>gen</i>	hamars	jökuls	sumars
PI <i>nom</i>	hamrar	jöklar	sumur
<i>acc</i>	hamra	jökla	sumur
<i>dat</i>	hömrum	jöklum	sumrum
<i>gen</i>	hamra	jökla	sumra

Transl: *hamarr* 'hammer; crag' *jökull* 'glacier,' *sumar* 'summer'

### 14.10 EXERCISE – VOWEL LOSS IN TWO-SYLLABLE NOUNS

Masculines *aptann* and *þumall* follow the pattern of *hamarr*, and neuter *höfuð* follows the pattern of *sumar*. Decline these below.

	APTANN	ÞUMALL	HÖFUÐ
Sg <i>nom</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>acc</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>dat</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>gen</i>	_____	_____	_____

Pl	nom	_____	_____	_____
	acc	_____	_____	_____
	dat	_____	_____	_____
	gen	_____	_____	_____

Transl: *aptann* 'evening,' *þumall* 'thumb,' *höfuð* 'head'

EXERCISES

14.11 Reading Passage Review, *Askr Yggdrasils*.<sup>152</sup> Referring to the reading passage, use the words below to fill in the blanks.

- rót      hvern      dag      þar      goðin      himni      drykkjar      heilagr
- brunninn      auga      þriðja      forðum      gnagar      horninu      vísindum
- svarar      himni      afar      breitt      dóma      beztr      heim      helgistaðrinn

Þá mælti Gangleri: “Hvar er höfuðstaðrinn eða \_\_\_\_\_ (holy place) goðanna?” Hár \_\_\_\_\_ (answers): “Þat er at aski Yggdrasils; þar skulu goð eiga \_\_\_\_\_ (judgments / court) sína hvern dag.” Þá mælti Gangleri: “Hvar er at segja frá þeim stað?” Þá segir Jafnhár: “Askinn er allra trjá mestur \_\_\_\_\_ (best); limar hans dreifask yfir \_\_\_\_\_ (earth) allan, standa yfir \_\_\_\_\_ (heaven). Þrjár røetr trésins halda því upp, ok standa \_\_\_\_\_ (extremely broad).”

Ein er með Ásum, enn önnur með hrímpursum, þar sem \_\_\_\_\_ (one of old) var Ginnunga-gap; hin \_\_\_\_\_ (third) stendr yfir Niflheimi, ok undir þeirri \_\_\_\_\_ (root) er Hvergelmir, en Niðhöggur \_\_\_\_\_ (gnawed) neðan rótina.

En undir þeirri rót, er til hrímpursa horfir, \_\_\_\_\_ (there) Mímisbrunnr, er spekt ok mannvit er í fólgit; ok heitir sá Mímir, er á \_\_\_\_\_ (the well). Hann er fullr af \_\_\_\_\_ (wisdom), fyrir því at hann drekkir brunninum af \_\_\_\_\_ (horn) Gjallarhorni. Þar kom Alföðr, ok beiddisk \_\_\_\_\_ (drink) af brunninum, en hann fekk eigi fyrr en hann lá \_\_\_\_\_ (eye) sitt at veði.

Þriðja rót asksins stendr á \_\_\_\_\_ (heaven); ok undir þeirri rót er brunninn, sá, er mjök er \_\_\_\_\_ (holy), er heitir Urðarbrunnr; þar sitja \_\_\_\_\_ (the gods) dómstað sinn. \_\_\_\_\_ (each day) Æsir þangat upp um Bifröst; hon heitir ok Ásbrú.”

<sup>152</sup> *Askr Yggdrasils*: The name of the World Tree also appears as *Askr Yggdrasill* (two nominatives).



**14.12 Reading Passage and Demonstrative Pronoun Review.** Fill in the correct form of the demonstrative *sá* in the spaces below.

1. En í milli augna honum sitr haukr \_\_\_\_\_, er heitir Veðrfölnir.
2. Íkorni \_\_\_\_\_, er heitir Ratatoskr, rennr upp ok niðr eptir askinum.
3. Enn er þat sagt, at nornir \_\_\_\_\_, er byggja Urðarbrunn, taka hvern dag vatn í brunninum, ok með aurinn \_\_\_\_\_ er liggr um brunninn, ok ausa upp yfir askinn.
4. En \_\_\_\_\_ vatn er svá heilagt, at allir hlutir, \_\_\_\_\_ sem þar koma í brunninn, verða svá hvítir sem hinna \_\_\_\_\_, er skjall heitir, er innan liggr við eggskurn.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ dögg, er þaðan af fellr á jörðina, þat kalla menn hunangsfall, ok þar af fœðask býflugur.
6. Þeir heita svanir, ok af \_\_\_\_\_ fuglum hefir komit þat fuglakyn, er svá heitir.

**4.13 Strong Verbs Class VI.** *Fara* is a typical Class VI strong verb with principal parts *ferr, fór, fóru, farinn*. Conjugate *fara* in present and past.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	_____	Sg ek	_____
þú	_____	þú	_____
hann	_____	.ann	_____
PI vér	_____	PI vér	_____
þér	_____	þér	_____
þeir	_____	þeir	_____

Give the principal parts of the verbs below. Keep in mind that a few Class VI verbs deviate slightly from the pattern of *fara*.

When the vowel of the infinitive (*-a-*) is followed by a *-k-* or *-g-*, the vowel of the past participle is *-e-*, for example, *taka*, pppt *tekinn*.

Class VI strong verbs with stem-final *-j-* have shifted vowels in the infinitive rather than *-a-*, for example, *sverja*, pppt *svarinn*.

Ex: ala	<u>elr. ól. ólu. alinn</u>
taka	<u>tekr. tók. tóku. tekinn</u>
1. skapa	_____
2. aka	_____
3. mala	_____
4. grafa	_____
5. hefja	_____
6. skaka	_____



8. Give the 3sg present indicative for each of the following strong verbs.

Ex: láta lætr

1. gróa \_\_\_\_\_  
2. standa \_\_\_\_\_  
3. nema \_\_\_\_\_  
4. auka \_\_\_\_\_

5. ljósta \_\_\_\_\_  
6. sitja \_\_\_\_\_  
7. höggva \_\_\_\_\_  
8. lúka \_\_\_\_\_

**14.16 The Altuna Church Runestone, Sweden**, has runes and a mythic illustrations. The runes on two sides of the stone tell us among other things that it was carved by Balli and Fröysteinn, followers of Hlífsteinn. The stone seems to commemorate two men who burned to death in a fire.

Depicting the god Thor and his adventures was popular in Viking Age Scandinavia, particularly the tale of Thor's battle with the Miðgarðsormr (the Midgard serpent). On the lower part of the third panel one sees a man with a hammer in his hand standing in a boat. From his other hand, a thick line runs into the water with a large object hanging at the end. A serpentine sea monster lurks coiled below the boat.

These elements fit well with the tale of Thor fishing for the Midgard Serpent from *The Prose* and *Poetic Eddas* and several other West Norse literary sources. The giant Hymir invites Thor to go fishing, and the two row far out to sea. Thor baits a strong hook with the head of Hymir's ox and casts his line into the ocean. He is fishing for the world-encircling serpent.

But hooking the catch is easier than landing it. Thor pushes his feet through the bottom of the boat (note what looks like a foot underneath the boat). Using the sea floor to brace himself, Thor hauls the serpent up. Thor raises his hammer Mjöllnir, but before he can strike the serpent, the terrified giant Hymir cuts the line. The serpent sinks back into the

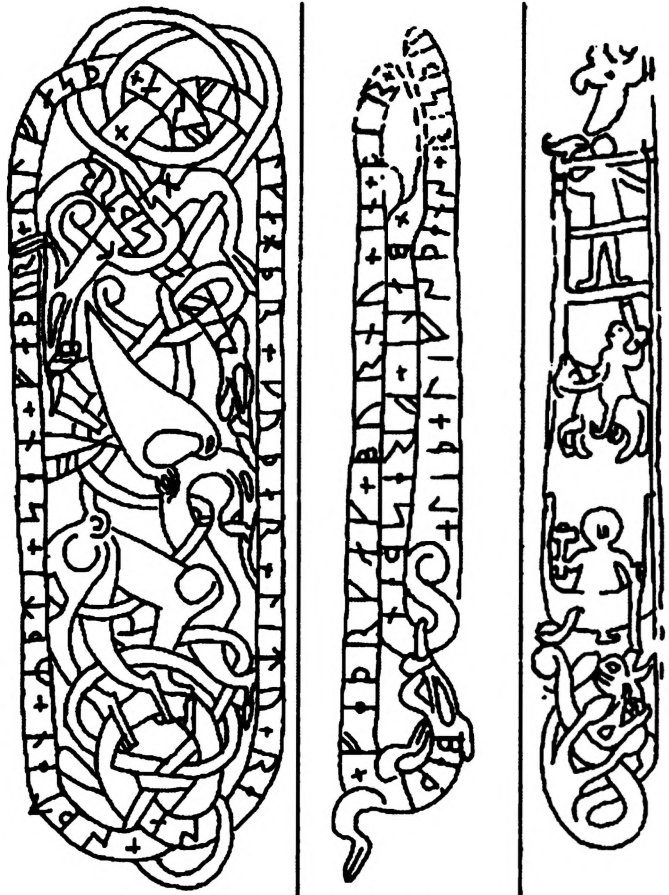


Figure 54. The Altuna Church Runestone, Sweden.

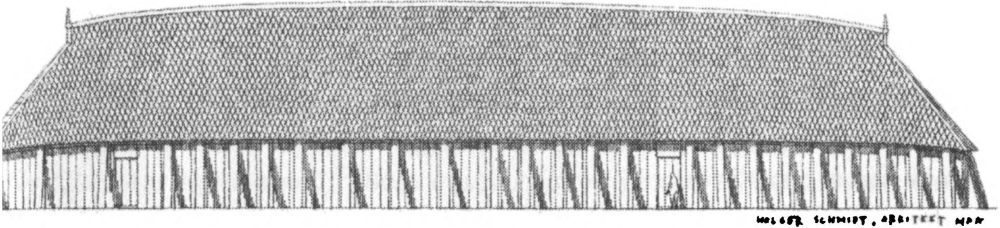


## LESSON 15

### THE SAGA OF KING HROLF KRAKI

*Hálfsögð er saga, ef einn segir*

(A story is only half-told, if only one [person] tells it)

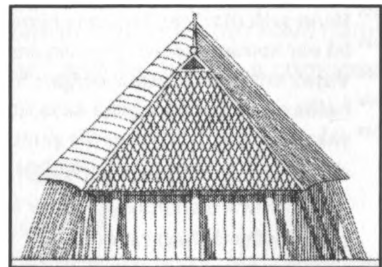


**Figure 55. Reconstruction of the Ninth-Century Great Hall at Lejre, Denmark (48.3 meters/52.8 yards gth).** A massive wooden building, this princely Viking Age dwelling covered approximately 500 eters (598 sq. yards). Its size can be judged by the man entering the door toward the middle right. ables at either end of the curved roof ridge are shown as ported to let smoke escape.

#### READING – BODVAR RESCUES HOTT FROM THE BONE PILE (*HRÓLFS SAGA KRAKA*)

*Saga of King Hrolf (Hrólf's saga kraka)* is one of the major *fornaldarsögur*. It recounts rtunes of King Hrolf, a warrior chieftain who ruled in Denmark in the sixth century before the Viking Age. Hrolf was widely remembered in the medieval North during the period and afterward as one of the most magnificent kings of 'ancient times.' His which draws on a long oral tradition, narrates the history of Hrolf's treacherous and the exploits of his twelve champions. Hrolf is mentioned in numerous Icelandic including *The Prose Edda*, *Ynglinga saga*, and *Landnámabók*, and *Hrolf's Saga* shares affinities with the Old English verse epic *Beowulf*.

Hrolf's greatest champion was Bodvar Bjarki (Bjarkir Bjarki). Bodvar's father, Bjorn, was turned bear by his scheming stepmother, and Bodvar possesses the power of shape-shifting. While going to King Hrolf's hall at Lejre (Hleiðargarðr), he meets an old woman. She tells him the tale of her wardly son Hott (Höttr), who lives in a pile of bones in the king's stronghold. The king's men make a game of throwing their gnawed meat bones at Hott in the pile. The old woman implores Bodvar that if he reaches the king's court, he throw only small bones at her son. The passage below relates how Bodvar rescues Hott, who eventually becomes one of King Hrolf's champions.



**Figure 56. End-View of the Ninth-Century Great Hall at Lejre (11.5 meters/12.6 yards in width) showing the covered walkway under the roof eaves.**

### *Hrólfs saga kraka* (ch 23)

Síðan fór Böðvarr leið sína til Hleiðargarðs. Hann kœmr til konungs atsetu. Böðvarr leiðir síðan hest sinn á stall hjá konungs hestum hinum beztu[m] ok spyr engan at,<sup>154</sup> gekk síðan inn í höllina, ok var þar fátt manna.

Hann sezk útarliga,<sup>155</sup> ok sem hann hefir verit þar lítla hríð, heyrir hann þrausk nökkut útar í hornit í einhverjum stað. Böðvarr lítr þangat ok sér at mannshönd kœmr upp ór mikilli beinahrúgu, er þar lá; höndin var svört mjök. Böðvarr gengr þangat til ok spyr hvern þar væri í beinahrúgunni. Þá var honum svarat<sup>156</sup> ok heldr óframliga: ‘Hötttr heiti ek, bokki sæll.’

‘Hví ertu hér,’ segir Böðvarr, ‘eða hvat gœrir þú?’

Hötttr segir, ‘Ek gœri mér skjaldborg, bokki sæll.’

Böðvarr sagði, ‘Vesall ertu þinnar skjaldborgar!’<sup>157</sup> Böðvarr þrífr til hans ok hnykkir honum upp ór beinahrúgunni.

Hötttr kvað þá hátt við ok mælti, ‘Nú viltu mér bana! Gœr eigi þetta, svá sem ek hefi nú vel um búizk áðr, en þú hefir nú rótat í sundr skjaldborg minni, ok hafða ek nú svá gört hana háva útan at mér,<sup>158</sup> at hon hefir hlíft mér við öllum höggum ykkar,<sup>159</sup> svá at ekkert<sup>160</sup> högg hafa komit á mik lengi, en ekki var hon enn svá búin sem ek ætlaða hon skyldi verða.’<sup>161</sup>

Böðvarr mælti: ‘Ekki muntu fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr.’<sup>162</sup>

Hötttr mælti ok grét: ‘Skaltu nú bana mér, bokki sæll?’

Böðvarr bað hann ekki hafa hátt, tók hann upp síðan ok bar hann út ór höllinni ok til vatns nökkurs sem þar var í nánd, ok gáfu fáir at þessu gaum,<sup>163</sup> ok þó<sup>164</sup> hann upp allan. Síðan gekk Böðvarr til þess rúms sem hann hafði áðr tekit,<sup>165</sup> ok leiddi eptir sér Hött ok þar setr hann Hött hjá sér. En hann er svá hræddr at skelfr á honum leggr ok liðr,<sup>166</sup> en þó

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<sup>154</sup> ok spyr engan at: ‘but he asks no one about it.’ Bodvar does not seek permission to stable his horse among the king’s best.

<sup>155</sup> Hann sezk útarliga: ‘He seats himself far out (from the center of the hall).’

<sup>156</sup> Þá var honum svarat: ‘Then an answer was given to him,’ *lit* ‘then it was answered to him.’

<sup>157</sup> Vesall ertu þinnar skjaldborgar: ‘You and your shield-wall are pathetic.’

<sup>158</sup> hafða ek nú svá gört hana háva útan at mér: ‘I had built it (the shield-wall) so high around me’

<sup>159</sup> ykkar: although Hott uses the genitive of the dual pronoun *þit* here, the sense is the same as the genitive of the plural pronoun *þér*. Though an old saga, *Hrólfs Saga* survives in rather late manuscript copies, and in later Icelandic usage *ykkar* becomes indeclinable and is used instead of the plural, as is the case here. Evidently Hott takes Bodvar to be in league with Hrólf’s champions.

<sup>160</sup> ekkert: a later form of *ekki*, the nom n sg form of the pronoun *engi*. *Ekkert* agrees with *högg*.

<sup>161</sup> en ekki var hon enn svá búin sem ek ætlaða hon skyldi verða: ‘but it was not yet as complete as I had intended it should be’ (*skyldi*: 3sg past subj).

<sup>162</sup> fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr: ‘be able to build the shield-wall any longer.’ *Gerða* agrees with *skjaldborgina* and is the feminine accusative singular form of the past participle *gerðr*. When used with a following past participle, *fá* takes the metaphorical sense ‘to be able to.’

<sup>163</sup> gáfu fáir at þessu gaum: ‘few paid attention to this.’

<sup>164</sup> þó: 3sg past of *þvá* ‘to wash.’

<sup>165</sup> That is, the sitting and sleeping bench that Bodvar had taken earlier.

<sup>166</sup> leggr ok liðr: ‘leg and joint,’ a stock expression that gives the sense, ‘all over his body.’

þykkisk hann skilja, at<sup>167</sup> þessi maðr vill hjálpa sér. Eptir þat kveldar ok drífa menn í höllina ok sjá Hrólf's kappar at Höttr er settr á bekk upp, ok þykkir þeim sá maðr hafa gört sik ærit djarfan, er þetta hefir til tekit.<sup>168</sup> Illt tillit hefir Höttr, þá er hann sér kunningja sína, því at hann hefir illt eitt af þeim reynt;<sup>169</sup> hann vill lifa gjarnan ok fara aptr í beinahrúgu sína, en Böðvarr heldr honum, svá at hann náir ekki í brottu at fara,<sup>170</sup> því at hann þóttisk ekki jafnberr fyrir höggum þeira, ef hann næði þangat at komask,<sup>171</sup> sem hann er nú.

Hirðmenn hafa nú sama vanda, ok kasta fyrst beinum smám um þvert gólfrit til Böðvars ok Hattar. Böðvarr lætr sem hann sjái eigi þetta.<sup>172</sup> Höttr er svá hræddr at hann tekr eigi mat

né drykk, ok þykkir honum þá ok þá<sup>173</sup> sem hann muni vera lostinn.<sup>174</sup>

Ok nú mælti Höttr til Böðvars: 'Bokki sæll, nú ferr at þér stór knúta, ok mun þetta ætlat okkr til nauða.'<sup>175</sup> Böðvarr bað hann þegja. Hann setr við holan lófann<sup>176</sup> ok tekr svá við knútunni; þar fylgir leggrinn með.<sup>177</sup> Böðvarr sendi aptr knútuna ok setr á þann sem kastaði, ok rétt framan í hann<sup>178</sup> með svá harðri svipan at hann fekk bana. Sló þá miklum ótta yfir hirðmennina.<sup>179</sup>

## 15.2 CULTURE – THE SAGA OF KING HROLF KRAKI AND BEOWULF

The story of *Hrolf's Saga* was well known before the saga was written as a comprehensive prose rendering in thirteenth or fourteenth-century Iceland. Hrolf's story has close similarities with *Beowulf*, written from the eighth to the early eleventh centuries. Both compositions draw on a common legendary tradition of events concerning the actions of the fifth- and/or sixth-century Danish kingdom of the Skjoldungs (OE Scyldinga). Although separated by time and place, the later Icelandic and the earlier Danish narratives agree on many of the characters and the settings. This affinity is based on shared oral traditions.

*Hrolf's Saga* and *Beowulf* tell of a powerful champion whose bear-like characteristics may echo distant cultic practices. The similarities are striking. Both heroes, Beowulf and Bodvar Bjarki, begin their journeys to Denmark from the land of the Goths (ON Gautar, OE Geatas, Modern Swedish Götar). Each is related to the Danish king and both have names that connect to the word 'bear.' Bjarki means 'little bear,' and Beowulf is a compound

<sup>167</sup> en þó þykkisk hann skilja, at...: 'although he seemed to understand that...'

<sup>168</sup> er þetta hefir til tekit: 'who has undertaken this.'

<sup>169</sup> hann hefir illt eitt af þeim reynt: 'he has experienced only evil from them.'

<sup>170</sup> svá at hann náir ekki í brottu at fara: 'so that he is not able to get away.'

<sup>171</sup> ef hann næði þangat at komask: 'if he should be able to get to there' (*næði*: 3sg past subj of *ná*).

<sup>172</sup> Böðvarr lætr sem hann sjái eigi þetta: 'Bodvar lets on as if he does not see it' (*sjái*: 3sg pres subj of *sjá*).

<sup>173</sup> þá ok þá: 'nearly every moment.'

<sup>174</sup> sem hann muni vera lostinn: 'as if he would be struck' (*muni*: 3sg pres of *munu*).

<sup>175</sup> mun þetta ætlat okkr til nauða: 'that will be intended to do us harm.'

<sup>176</sup> Hann setr við holan lófann: 'He readies his open palm.'

<sup>177</sup> með: 'along with it (i.e., the knucklebone).'

<sup>178</sup> rétt framan í hann: 'right in his face.' *Framan*, 'from the front,' indicates that Bodvar and the assailant face each other across the floor.

<sup>179</sup> Sló þá miklum ótta yfir hirðmennina: 'Great fear fell upon the king's men.'

meaning ‘bee-wolf,’ a plausible description for a bear. In each instance, a monster is threatening the Danish king’s hall and attacks the hapless retainers of the king at night. The creatures are described differently in the two texts. In *Hrolf’s Saga* the attacking monster is called a ‘great troll’ but then described as a fire-breathing, winged dragon. *Beowulf’s* monsters, Grendel and his mother, are more chthonic. They are human-haters who live in a watery underground in the dangerous outlands. Years after Beowulf kills Grendel, when Beowulf is an old king, he is killed by a fiery dragon.

In addition to the characters Beowulf and Bodvar Bjarki, *Hrolf’s Saga* and *Beowulf* share other similarities. In *Hrolf’s Saga*, King Hroar is a notable figure ruling over the northern English kingdom of Northumberland, while his counterpart in *Beowulf*, King Hrothgar (Hrōðgār), is king of the Danes. Hrothgar is the builder of the magnificent hall Heorot, the object of the monster Grendel’s depredations. Although somewhat different, a theme of a treacherous uncle-nephew relationship exists in both the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian stories. Halga, the OE counterpart to Helgi in *Hrolf’s Saga*, appears in *Beowulf* as a son of Healfdene and brother of Hrothgar. These relationships agree with the saga, where King Halfdan is Helgi’s father and Hroar is his brother. In Old English Hrólfr is Hrōðulf.

Old Norse *Hrólfs Saga*, Old English *Bēowulf*, Saxo Grammaticus’ Latin *Gesta Danorum* (*History of the Danes*), and the Latin paraphrase of the Old Norse *Skjöldunga Saga* often speak of the same or similar characters. Below is a table giving the comparable names and characters in the different stories.

EQUIVALENT CHARACTERS IN OLD NORSE, OLD ENGLISH AND LATIN ACCOUNTS OF KING HROLF KRAKI			
<i>Hrólfs Saga</i>	<i>Skjöldunga Saga</i>	<i>Gesta Danorum</i>	<i>Bēowulf</i>
Aðils	Adillus	Athislus	Ēadgils
Böðvarr Bjarki	Bodvarus	Biarco	Bēowulf
Fróði	Frodo	Frotho	Frōða
Hálfðan	Halfdanus	Haldanus	Healfdene
Helgi	Helgo	Helgo	Hālgā
Hróarr	Roas	Roe	Hrōðgār
Hrólfr Kraki	Rolfo Krake	Roluo Krake	Hrōðulf
Skjöldr	Skioldus	Skioldus	Scyld Scēfing
Yrsa	Yrsa	Vrsa	Yrse

15.3 ENCLITIC PRONOUNS

Pronouns tacked onto the ends of verbs are known as enclitic pronouns (a Greek term meaning ‘leaning on’). Some examples in Old Norse are *ertu*, *muntu*, *veiztu* for *ert þú*, *munþú*, and *veizt þú*, with *þú* becoming (t)*u*. In *heyrðu* (*heyr þú*) and *segðu* (*seg þú*), the initial *þ*- of *þú* changes to -ð-. With the pronoun *ek*, the initial vowel is usually lost, hence *mættak* from *mætta ek*, and *heyrðak* from *heyrða ek*. The vowel loss is sometimes indicated in texts by an apostrophe (*mætta’k* and *heyrða’k*). The readings in this lesson from *Hrolf’s Saga*



contain several examples of enclitic pronouns.

'Hví ertu hér,' segir Böðvarr, 'eða hvat gærir þú?'	'Why are you here,' said Bodvar, 'and what are you doing?'
Höttur kvað þá hátt við ok mælti, 'Nú viltu mér banal'	Hott then replied loudly and said, 'Now you want to kill me!'
Böðvarr mælti: 'Ekki muntu fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr.'	Bodvar said, 'You will not get your shield wall made any longer.'
Höttur mælti ok grét: 'Skaltu nú bana mér, bokki sæll?'	Hott spoke and cried, 'Are you going to kill me now, good sir?'

## 15.4 STRONG VERBS – CLASS VII

Class VII strong verbs fall into five subgroups. In most instances, the vowels of the infinitive and past participle are the same (*heita*, *heitinn*). The vowels of the past singular and plural are also the same (*hét*, *héttu*). Like all strong verbs, Class VII verbs show *i*-umlaut in the present singular (*eykr*, *býr*, *fær*, *gengr*, *lætr*, *blætr*).

INFINITIVE	3SG PRES	3SG PAST	3PL PAST	PPART
(i) heita 'to be named'	heitr	hét	héttu	heitinn
leika 'to play'	leikr	lék	léttu	leikinn
(ii) auka 'to increase'	eykr	jók	jóttu	aukinn
búa 'to live, dwell'	býr	bjó	bjóttu	búinn
hlaupa 'to leap'	hleypr	hljóp	hljóttu	hlaupinn
höggva 'to strike'	höggv	hjók	hjóttu	höggvinn
(iii) fá 'to get'	fær	fekk	fengtu	fenginn
falla 'to fall'	fellr	féll	féltu	fallinn
ganga 'to walk, go'	gengr	gekk	gengtu	genginn
halda 'to hold'	heldr	hélt	héltu	haldinn
(iv) blása 'to blow'	blæs	blés	bléttu	blásinn
gráta 'to weep'	grætr	grét	gréttu	grátinn
lata 'to let'	lætr	lét	létu	látinn
ráða 'to rule'	ræðr	réð	réðu	ráðinn
blóta 'to worship, sacrifice'	blætr	blét	bléttu	blótinn
(v) snúa 'to turn'	snýr	sneri~snøri	sneru~snøru	snúinn
sá 'to sow'	sær	seri~søri	seru~søru	sáinn
róa 'to row'	rær	reru~røri	reru~røru	róinn

The past tense of a handful of Class VII strong verbs (subgroup v), including *sá* 'sow,' *róa* 'row,' *snúa* 'turn,' *gnúa* 'rub,' and *gróa* 'grow,' is unusual in two ways. First, their stems in the past tense end in *-er-* or *-ør-*. For example, *sá* has past tense stem *ser-~sør-*, and *róa* has past tense stem *rer-~rør-*. Second, these strong verbs use the past tense endings of weak verbs. For example, the past tense of *sá* conjugates *sera*, *serir*, *seri*, *serum*, *seruð*,

*seru*. There are also variants with stems ending in *-ør-* (3sg past *seri~søri*).

Handbooks of Old Norse often refer to Class VII as the 'reduplicating class,' so-called because at an earlier stage of the language these verbs formed their past tense stems adding a partial copy of the verb stem as a prefix. Remnants of this process can be seen in the past tense of the Old Icelandic verbs *róa* (3sg past *rerir*) and *sá* (3sg past *serir*).

## 15.5 VERBS – SUBJUNCTIVE MIDDLE

The middle voice uses the same set of subjunctive endings for both present and past tense. Apart from 1sg *-umk*, these are formed by adding *-sk* to the active subjunctive endings, for example, *hann gerisk* (*gerir* + *sk* > *gerisk*), *þér gerizk* (*gerið* + *sk* > *gerizk*), and *þeir gerisk* (*geri* + *sk* > *gerisk*). *Gerask* and *brjótisk* are conjugated below in the middle subjunctive.

### SUBJUNCTIVE MIDDLE ENDINGS

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-umk	-im(s)k
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-isk	-izk
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-isk	-isk

PRESENT	GERASK	BRJÓTASK
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	gerumk	brjótumk
<i>þú</i>	gerisk	brjótisk
<i>hann</i>	gerisk	brjótisk

PAST	GERASK	BRJÓTASK
<b>Sg</b> <i>ek</i>	gerðumk	brytumk
<i>þú</i>	gerðisk	brytisk
<i>hann</i>	gerðisk	brytisk

<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	gerimsk	brjótim(s)k
<i>þér</i>	gerizk	brjótizk
<i>þeir</i>	gerisk	brjótisk

<b>Pl</b> <i>vér</i>	gerðimsk	brytim(s)k
<i>þér</i>	gerðizk	brytizk
<i>þeir</i>	gerðisk	brytisk

The 1pl subjunctive sometimes has the ending *-imk* (*brjótimk*) instead of *-imsk* (*brjótimsk*).

## 15.6 VERBS – SUBJUNCTIVE AND INDIRECT SPEECH IN MAIN AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

In main clauses the subjunctive is used to express a wish, sometimes with the force of a command, or to describe events which are hypothetical, unlikely, or otherwise unreal.

*Friðr sé með þó.*

*Peace be with you.*

En er Hoenir var staddr á þingum eða stefnum svá at Mimir var eigi nær ok *kœmi* nökkur vandamál fyrir hann, þá svaraði hann æ inu sama. 'Ráði aðrir,' sagði hann.

And when Hoenir was present at the assemblies or meetings such that Mimir was not nearby and a difficult matter would come before him, then he answered always the same. *Let others decide,* he said. (*The Prose Edda*)

In dependent clauses the subjunctive is most frequently encountered in conditional

sentences expressing possibility (Consider a sentence in English such as: If I were to go to Iceland, I would have to eat hákarl [cured shark]) or speculation about a contrary-to-fact state of affairs (If I had lived in medieval Norway, I would have gone raiding in England).

The subjunctive is also frequently used in indirect speech (speech that is reported rather than quoted) and indirect questions. Below are some examples from *Hrólfs saga kraka*.

Hötrr er svá hræddr at hann tekr eigi mat né drykk, ok þykkir honum þá ok þá sem hann muni vera lostinn. (possibility)	<i>Hott was so afraid that he took neither food nor drink, and it seemed to him again and again that he <b>would</b> be struck.</i>
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Konungr sagði, at henni væri þat makligt fyrir draumblæti sitt ok stórlæti. (indirect speech)	<i>The king said that it <b>was</b> fitting, because of her pride and arrogance.</i>
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Indirect speech recounts what someone has said without using his or her exact words. Old Norse often renders indirect speech in a construction known as the **accusative subject plus infinitive**. In this construction the subject of the indirect statement stands in the *accusative* case and the verb appears as an *infinitive*. (Consider a sentence in English such as: *He knew him to be a man of honor.*) In the examples below the indirect statements are in bold.

**Direct Speech:**

Hann hældi Úlfari mjök ok kvað, 'þú ert göfugr maðr.'	<i>He praised Ulfar greatly and said, 'You are a noble man.'</i>
---	--

**Indirect Speech:**

Hann hældi Úlfari mjök ok <b>kvað hann vera göfgan mann.</b>	<i>He praised Ulfar greatly and <b>said he was a noble man.</b></i>
--	---

When the subject of the main clause refers to the same person as the subject of the indirect statement (*Harald said he [himself] was the rightful heir*), the reflexive pronoun *sik* is used. However, *sik* (the accusative subject) does not stand as an independent word but is attached in the reduced form *-sk* to the end of the verb of the main clause.

**Direct Speech:**

Úlfarr kvað, 'Ek á arf eptir bróður minn at taka.'	<i>Ulfar said, 'I ought to take the inheritance after my brother.'</i>
--	--

**Indirect Speech:**

Úlfarr kvazk arf eiga eptir bróður sinn at taka. (kvazk = kvað + sk)	<i>Ulfar said he ought to take the inheritance after his brother.</i>
--	---

When the subject of an impersonal construction starts off in the dative or genitive case, it stays in that case when moving into indirect speech.

**Direct Speech:**

Geitir kvað, 'Henni tóksk óvitrliga til.'	<i>Geitir said, 'She behaved foolishly.'</i>
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**Indirect Speech:**

Geitir **kvað** henni hafa óvitrliga til tekisk.     *Geitir said she had behaved foolishly.*

**15.7 PAST INFINITIVES OF THE VERBS *MUNDU*, *SKYLDU*, AND *VILDU***

The verbs *munu* and *skulu* have special forms *mundu* and *skyldu*, known as past infinitives. These are only used in indirect speech with the accusative subject and infinitive construction and typically occur when the verb of the main clause is in the past tense. *Mundu* and *skyldu* are usually translated into English as ‘would’ or ‘should.’ *Mundu* and *skyldu* are commonly used in prose; another past infinitive *vildu* (for *vilja*) occurs but is rare.

Ok því næst æpir Höttr slíkt sem hann má ok kvað dýrit mundu gleypta hann.     *And then Hott cried out as loud as he could and said the beast would swallow him.*  
(*Hrólfs saga*)

Þorbrandssynir kváðu hann eigi mundu meira stjórna, ef hann hirði eigi um slíkt.     *The sons of Thorbrand said that he would command no more, if he did not care for such [matters].*  
(*Eyrbyggja saga*)

Hrafn kvazk enga gripi vildu á frest selja.     *Hrafn said he didn't want to sell any [of his] goods on credit.*  
(*Vápnfirðinga saga*)

In poetry, past infinitives such as *mæltu* ‘have spoken’ and *fóru* ‘have gone’ are used more freely.

Þær hykk (hygg ek) mæltu þvígít fleira.     *I believe them to have spoken not much more. (I do not believe they said much more.)*  
(*Oddrúnargrátr* 7)

Nú frák (frá ek) Þórolf und lok fóru.     *Now I heard Þórolf to have passed away.*  
(*Egil's saga*, verse 1)

**15.8 CARDINAL NUMBERS ABOVE 20**

Cardinal numbers up to 20 were covered in the preceding lesson. Numbers above 20 are counted as follows: *tuttugu ok einn* (or *einn ok tuttugu*), *tuttugu ok tveir*, etc.

Multiples of ten from 30 to 110 are expressed with the plural of the masculine noun *tigr* ‘ten.’ *Tigr* declines as a Type 3 strong noun: *tigr*, *tig*, *tigi*, *tigar*; *tigir*, *tigu*, *tigum*, *tigi* (variants include *tegr*, *togr*, *tugr*, and *tøgr*). In the numbers 30 (*þrír tigr*) and 40 (*fjórir tigr*), *þrír* and *fjórir* decline.

30 þrír tigr	60 sex tigr	90 níu tigr
40 fjórir tigr	70 sjau tigr	100 tíu tigr
50 fimm tigr	80 átta tigr	110 ellifu tigr

When one is counting in multiples of ten with *tigr*, the noun is in the **genitive** case.

Hann sá þrjá tigu manna. *He saw thirty men.*

Fjórir tigr skipa sigldu til Íslands. *Forty ships sailed to Iceland.*

Hann átti fimm tigu yxna. *He owned fifty oxen.*

All numbers above 20 which end in 1, 2, 3, or 4 decline like 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Hann drap tuttugu ok tvá (*m acc*) menn. *He killed twenty-two men.*

Fjórir tigr ok þrjú (*n nom*) skip sigldu til Íslands. *Forty-three ships sailed to Iceland.*

Hann átti sex tigu ok átta (*indecl*) sauði. *He owned sixty-eight sheep.*

When the number modifying the subject ends in 1 (for example 1, 21, 51, 101), the verb is in the singular. For all other numbers, the verb is conjugated in the plural.

Einn maðr ok tuttugu **bjó** í Vápnafirði. *Twenty-one men lived in Weapons Fjord.*

Tveir menn ok tuttugu **bjuggu** í Vápnafirði. *Twenty-two men lived in Weapons Fjord.*

The neuter noun *hundrað* and feminine *þúsund* were based on the number 12. In most cases in Old Norse texts, *hundrað* referred to the 'long hundred' 120 and *þúsund* to the 'long thousand' 1200.

HUNDRAÐ				ÞÚSUND			
<b>Sg nom</b>	hundrað	<b>Pl</b>	hundruð	<b>Sg nom</b>	þúsund	<b>Pl</b>	þúsundir
<b>acc</b>	hundrað		hundruð	<b>acc</b>	þúsund		þúsundir
<b>dat</b>	hundraði		hundruðum	<b>dat</b>	þúsund		þúsundum
<b>gen</b>	hundraðs		hundraða	<b>gen</b>	þúsundar		þúsunda

- *Hundrað* is a neuter noun and has *u*-umlaut in the nominative and accusative plural.
- Large numbers were generally counted by tens and duodecimal hundreds: *tíu hundruð* '1200,' *ellefu hundruð* '1320,' *tólf hundruð* '1440,' etc.
- As with *tigr*, nouns counted with *hundrað* and *þúsund* stand in the genitive case, for example *tíu hundruð manna* '1200 men,' *þúsund skipa* '1200 ships.'

## 15.9 ORDINAL NUMBERS

Ordinal numbers denote ordering or ranking, that is, 'first, second, third.' With the exception of *fyrstr* and *annarr*, ordinal numbers always take weak adjective endings. Note that *þriði* has a stem-final *-j-* (*it þriðja haust*).

*Fyrstr* is a superlative adjective and takes both strong and weak endings, for example *fyrstr maðr*, *inn fyrsti fugl*. *Annarr* is a pronoun and hence has no weak declension.

1 <sup>st</sup> fyrstr	6 <sup>th</sup> sétti	11 <sup>th</sup> ellifti	16 <sup>th</sup> sextándi
2 <sup>nd</sup> annarr	7 <sup>th</sup> sjaundi	12 <sup>th</sup> tólfti	17 <sup>th</sup> sjautándi
3 <sup>rd</sup> þriði <-j->	8 <sup>th</sup> átti, áttundi	13 <sup>th</sup> þrettándi	18 <sup>th</sup> átjándi
4 <sup>th</sup> fjórði	9 <sup>th</sup> níundi	14 <sup>th</sup> fjórtándi	19 <sup>th</sup> nítjándi
5 <sup>th</sup> fimmti	10 <sup>th</sup> tíundi	15 <sup>th</sup> fimmtándi	20 <sup>th</sup> tuttugandi

Ordinal numbers above twenty are counted *tuttugandi ok fyrsti* (or *fyrsti tuttugandi*), *tuttugandi ok annarr*, *tuttugandi ok þriði*, etc. Counting by tens the ordinals from thirty to ninety are as follows.

30 <sup>th</sup> þrítugandi	70 <sup>th</sup> sjautugandi
40 <sup>th</sup> fertugandi	80 <sup>th</sup> áttugandi
50 <sup>th</sup> fimmtugandi	90 <sup>th</sup> nítugandi
60 <sup>th</sup> sextugandi	

There are no corresponding ordinals for *hundrað* and *þúsund*. Ordinal numbers are sometimes used in the expression of cardinal numbers. For instance, the number 25, cardinal number, can be expressed in several ways: *tuttugu ok fimm*, *fimm ins þriðja tig* ('five of the third ten'), or *hálf þriði tigr* ('half the third ten').

### 15.10 EXERCISE – ORDINAL NUMBERS

The names of the horses of the gods are given in *Gylfaginning*. Fill in the correct form of the ordinal numbers in the spaces below.

Hestar ásanna heita svá: Sleipnir er beztr, hann á Óðinn, hann hefr átta fœtr.

\_\_\_\_\_ (2<sup>nd</sup>) er Glaðr, \_\_\_\_\_ (3<sup>rd</sup>) Gyllir,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (4<sup>th</sup>) Glenr, \_\_\_\_\_ (5<sup>th</sup>) Skeiðbrimir,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (6<sup>th</sup>) Silfrintoppr, \_\_\_\_\_ (7<sup>th</sup>) Sinir,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (8<sup>th</sup>) Gils, \_\_\_\_\_ (9<sup>th</sup>) Falhófnir,  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (10<sup>th</sup>) Gulltoppr, \_\_\_\_\_ (11<sup>th</sup>) Léttfeti.

### 15.11 READING – BODVAR KILLS THE MONSTER (HRÓLFS SAGA KRAKA)

In the passage below from *Hrólfs Saga*, Bodvar sets out against the monster terrorizing Denmark. Having been forbidden by the king to engage the beast, Bodvar steals away in the night with Hott in tow.

#### *Hrólfs saga kraka* (ch 23)

Ok sem leið at jólum, gerðusk menn ókátir. Böðvarr spýrr Hött hverju þat sætti.<sup>180</sup> Hann

<sup>180</sup> Böðvarr spýrr Hött hverju þat sætti: 'Bodvar asked Hott what caused that.'

segir honum, at dýr eitt hafi þar komit tvá vetr í samt,<sup>181</sup> mikit ok ógurligt, 'ok hefir vængi á bakinu, ok flýgr þat jafnan. Tvau haust hefir þat nú hingat vitjat ok gert mikinn skaða. Á þat bíta ekki vápn, en kappar konungs koma ekki heim, þeir sem at eru einna mestir.'<sup>182</sup> Böðvarr mælti: 'Ekki er höllin svá vel skipuð sem ek ætlaða ef eitt dýr skal hér eyða ríki ok fé konungsins.' Höttr segir, 'þat er ekki dýr, heldr er þat mesta tröll.'...

Böðvarr leyndisk í burt um nóttina. Hann lætr Hött fara með sér, ok gerir hann þat nauðugr, ok kallaði hann sér stýrt í bana. Böðvarr segir, at betr mundi takask.<sup>183</sup> Þeir ganga í burt frá höllinni, ok verðr Böðvarr at bera hann, svá er hann hræddr. Nú sjá þeir dýrit. Ok því næst cæpir Höttr slíkt sem hann má ok kvað dýrit mundu gleypa hann.<sup>184</sup> Böðvarr bað bikkjuna hans þegja ok kastar honum niðr í mosann, ok þar liggir hann ok eigi með öllu óhræddr.<sup>185</sup> Eigi þorir hann heim at fara heldr. Nú gengr Böðvarr móti dýrinu...Sverðit gengr ór slíðrum, ok leggr þegar undir bægi dýrsins ok svá fast, at stóð í hjartanu, ok datt þá dýrit til jarðar dautt niðr.

Bodvar then picks Hott up. He carries Hott to the dead beast and forces him to drink two mouthfuls of its blood and to eat some of the heart. Hott grows strong and courageous. He no longer fears Hrolf's retainers, and he is given a new name. Hott becomes Hjalti, meaning 'sword hilt.' King Hrolf later mentions that Bodvar's greatest achievement was making Hott into one of the king's champions.

## 15.12 CULTURE – LEGENDARY LEJRE (HLEIÐARGARÐR)

According to *Hrolf's Saga*, the seat of the Skjoldung dynasty was Lejre (*Hleiðargarðr*). There is little doubt that in the early Middle Ages Lejre was a center of power, and several medieval texts preserve the memory of Lejre's social and political prominence. The German chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg knew Lejre as an important capital and pagan cult site. In 1015 he wrote the following description of Lejre based on information learned earlier in 934, when the German Emperor Henry I had invaded Denmark:

Because I have heard marvellous things about their ancient sacrifices, I will not allow these to pass by unmentioned. In those parts, the centre of the kingdom is a placed called Leire, in the region of Seeland. Every nine years, in the month of January, after the day on which we celebrate the appearance of the Lord [6 January], they all convene here and offer their gods a burnt offering of ninety-nine

<sup>181</sup> dýr eitt hafi þar komit tvá vetr í samt: 'a beast has come there the past two winters.' (*hafi* 3sg pres subj of *hafa*, used in indirect speech)

<sup>182</sup> sem at eru einna mestir: 'who are the greatest of all men' (*einna* signifies an evaluation one-by-one as opposed to an evaluation of all together as a group).

<sup>183</sup> Böðvarr segir, at betr mundi takask: 'Bodvar says that things would go better than that.' (*mundi* 3sg past subj of *munu*)

<sup>184</sup> ok kvað dýrit mundu gleypa hann: 'and said the beast would swallow him' (*mundu* pst infin of *munu*).

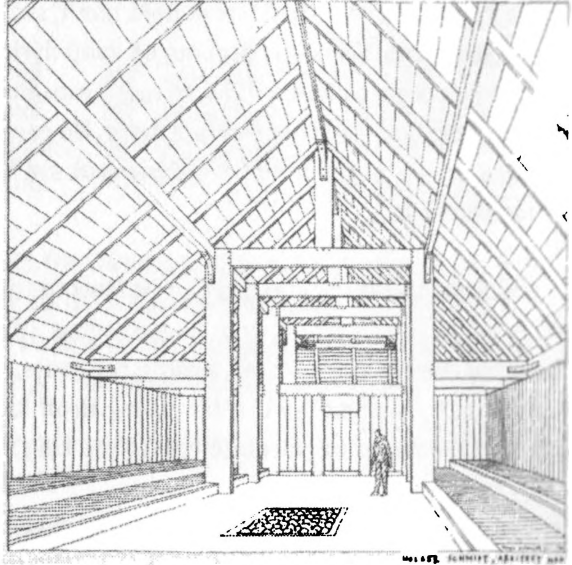
<sup>185</sup> ok eigi með öllu óhræddr: 'and not [being] totally unafraid.'

human beings and as many horses, along with dogs and cocks – the latter being used in place of hawks. (Trans. David A. Warner *The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*)

### 15.13 READING – HROLF GETS THE NICKNAME KRAKI (SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL, FROM THE PROSE EDDA)

*Skáldskaparmál* from *The Prose Edda* recounts how a servant named Vogg (*Vöggr*) gives Hrolf his nickname *kraki* 'pole ladder.' Vogg, who is only a boy, swears an oath to avenge the king if he should be killed. After Hrolf's death, the servant proves his faithfulness when he leads an army and defeats the king's enemies.

**Skáldskaparmál (ch 53)** Konungur einn í Danmörk er nefndr Hrólf kraki. Lítill sveinn ok fátœkr er nefndr Vöggr; hann kom í höll Hrólfs konungs. Þá var konunggrinn ungr at aldri ok grannligr á vöxt. Þá gekk Vöggr fyrir hann, ok sá upp á hann. Þá mælti konunggrinn: 'Hvat viltu mæla, sveinn, er þú sér á mik?' Vöggr segir: 'Þá er ek var heima, heyrðað'k<sup>186</sup> sagt, at Hrólf konungr at Hleiðru var mestr maðr á Norðrlöndum, en nú sitr hér í hásæti kraki einn lítill, ok kallið þér hann konung.' Þá svarar konungr: 'Þú, sveinn, hefir gefit mér nafn, at ek skal heita Hrólf kraki.'



**Figure 57. Interior of the Reconstructed Ninth-Century Great Hall at Lejre,** excavated by the Danish archaeologist Tom Christensen. On both sides of the great hall are tiered side benches against the walls where people sat and slept. In the center of the floor are stones for the long fire. The steeply pitched roof was supported by two interior rows of massive timbers or posts, whose size may be judged by comparison with the man at center right and the door at the far end.

### 15.14 CULTURE – BERSERKERS

Berserkers are especially prominent in *Hrolf's Saga*. In the medieval perceptions of pre-Christian Scandinavia, berserkers (*berserkir*, sg *berserkr*) may have been members of cults connected with Odin in his capacity as god of war. *Ynglinga Saga* describes Odin's warriors

<sup>186</sup> heyrðað'k = heyrðað ek 'I heard.'



His men went to battle without armor and acted like dogs or wolves. They bit into their shields and were as strong as bears or bulls. They killed men, but neither fire nor iron harmed them. This is called going berserk.

En hans men fóru brynjlausir ok váru galnir sem hundir eða vargar, bitu í skjöldu sína, váru sterkir sem birnir eða griðungar. Þeir drápu mannfólkið en hvárki eldr né járn orti á þá. Þat er kallað berserksgangr.

The berserkers of the sagas often appear as the king's elite warriors. At times, they are reminiscent of Odin's own warriors and may be connected to ancient bear cults. The term berserker could mean 'bare shirt,' that is, naked. Berserkers, as a mark of their ferocity and invincibility, are said to have fought without armor. Berserker may also mean 'bear-shirt,' suggesting they fought in bear skins. When the 'berserker-fury' (*berserksgangr*) was upon him, a berserker was thought of as a sort of 'were-bear' (or werewolf) – part man, part beast – who was neither fully human nor fully animal. Although never called a berserker, Bodvar Bjarki shares an affinity with this tradition. During Hrolf's final battle, Bodvar sits quietly in a room and projects his spirit in the form of a huge bear that fights for King Hrolf and is invulnerable to weapons. In his ability to project himself in spirit form, Bodvar displays a supernatural characteristic attributed to Odin.

Berserkers, who were once the coercive arm of kings and Viking chieftains, appear as stock characters in a number of family sagas. They are mostly presented as troublemakers and sources of menace, who are demystified and reduced to bullies and public nuisances.

## EXERCISES

**15.15 Grammar Review.** For the underlined words in this passage from *Hrolf's Saga*, give the relevant grammatical information, dictionary (or infinitive) form, and translation.

Síðan fór Böðvarr leið sína til Hleiðargarðs. Hann kømr til konungs atsetu. Böðvarr leiðir síðan hest sinn á stall hjá konungs hestum hinum beztu[m] ok spyrr engan at; gekk síðan inn í höllina, ok var þar fátt manna.

Hann sezk útarliga, ok sem hann hefir verit þar lítla hríð, heyrir hann þrausk nökkut útar í hornit í einhverjum stað. Böðvarr lítr þangat ok sér at mannshönd kømr upp ór mikilli beinahrúgu, er þar lá; höndin var svört mjök. Böðvarr gengr þangat til ok spyrr hvern þar væri í beinahrúgunni. Þá var honum svarat ok heldr óframliga: 'Höttr heiti ek, bokki sæll.'

'Hví ertu hér,' segir Böðvarr, 'eða hvat gørir þú?'

Höttr segir, 'Ek gøri mér skjaldborg, bokki sæll.'

Böðvarr sagði, 'Vesall ertu þinnar skjaldborgar!' Böðvarr þrífr til hans ok hnykkir honum upp ór beinahrúgunni.

Höttr kvað þá hátt við ok mælti, 'Nú viltu mér bana! Gør eigi þetta, svá sem ek hefi nú vel um búizk áðr, en þú hefir nú rótat í sundr skjaldborg minni, ok hafða ek nú svá

gört hana háva utan at mér, at hon hefir hlíft mér við öllum höggum ykkar, svá at engi högg hafa komit á mik lengi, en ekki var hon enn svá búin sem ek ætlaða hon skyldi verða.'

Böðvarr mælti: 'Ekki muntu fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr.'

- Ex: leið noun f acc sg 'leið' way
- 1. hestum \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. sezk \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. sér \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. mikilli \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. heldr \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6. ertu \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7. gør \_\_\_\_\_
  - 8. búizk \_\_\_\_\_
  - 9. skyldi \_\_\_\_\_
  - 10. skjaldborgina \_\_\_\_\_

15.16 Enclitic Pronouns. Rewrite the underlined verbs with full pronouns.

- Ex: 'Hví ertu hér,' segir Böðvarr, 'eða hvat gørir þú?' ert þú
- 1. Böðvarr sagði, 'Vesall ertu þinnar skjaldborgar!' \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Hötttr kvað þá hátt við ok mælti, 'Nú viltu mér bana!' \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Böðvarr mælti: 'Ekki muntu fá skjaldborgina gerða lengr.' \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Hötttr mælti ok grét: 'Skaltu nú bana mér, bokki sæll?' \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. 'Hvat viltu mæla, sveinn, er þú sér á mik?' \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6. Vöggv segir: 'Þá er ek var heima, heyrða'k sagt...' \_\_\_\_\_

15.17 Strong Verbs – Class VII. *Ráða* is an example of a Class VII strong verb with principal parts *ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn*. Conjugate *ráða* in present and past.

PRESENT		PAST	
Sg ek	_____	Sg ek	_____
þú	_____	þú	_____
hann	_____	hann	_____
PI vér	_____	PI vér	_____
þér	_____	þér	_____
þeir	_____	þeir	_____

Class VII verbs usually have the same vowel in the infinitive and past participle, for example, *halda*, ppart *haldinn*, and *láta*, ppart *látinn*. Give the past participles for the Class VII verbs below.

Ex: halda haldinn

lata látinn

1. auka \_\_\_\_\_

2. gráta \_\_\_\_\_

3. leika \_\_\_\_\_

4. blóta \_\_\_\_\_

5. falla \_\_\_\_\_

6. hlaupa \_\_\_\_\_

Most Class VII strong verbs have the same vowel in the past singular and plural. Give the past plural based on the past singular. Then find the infinitive for these Class VII verbs.

Ex: lét PST PL létnu INF láta

7. jók \_\_\_\_\_

8. grét \_\_\_\_\_

9. lék \_\_\_\_\_

10. blét \_\_\_\_\_

11. féll \_\_\_\_\_

12. hljóp \_\_\_\_\_

When *-ng* and *-ld* come at the end of a word, these sounds change to *-kk* and *-lt*. Give the 3sg past for the verbs below.

13. ganga \_\_\_\_\_

14. halda \_\_\_\_\_

This change also occurs in a few Class III strong verbs such as *springa* (past sg *sprakk*) and *gjalda* (past sg *galt*).

**15.18 Strong Verb Review – Classes I–VII.** Give the strong verb class for each of the following infinitives and provide the requested grammatical form. For help, review the Guideline Chart for Distinguishing Strong Verb Classes in Lesson 11.

Ex: halda	<u>Class VII</u>	1sg pres	<u>held</u>
1. gefa	_____	3pl pres	_____
2. heita	_____	3pl past	_____
3. verða	_____	1pl pres	_____
4. líta	_____	3pl pres	_____
5. draga	_____	1sg past	_____
6. bjóða	_____	2sg past	_____
7. halda	_____	2pl pres	_____
8. svíkja	_____	1sg past	_____

**15.19 Subjunctive Mood – Active and Middle Voice.** Conjugate the following verbs in the present subjunctive.

	GERA	
PRESENT	ACTIVE	MIDDLE
Sg ek	_____	_____

	BRJÓTA	
	ACTIVE	MIDDLE
Sg ek	_____	_____

PRESENT	ACTIVE	MIDDLE		ACTIVE	MIDDLE
<i>þú</i>	_____	_____		<i>þú</i>	_____
<i>hann</i>	_____	_____		<i>hann</i>	_____
PI <i>vér</i>	_____	_____		PI <i>vér</i>	_____
<i>þér</i>	_____	_____		<i>þér</i>	_____
<i>þeir</i>	_____	_____		<i>þeir</i>	_____

Conjugate the following verbs in the past subjunctive.

PAST	GERA		BRJÓTA	
	ACTIVE	MIDDLE	ACTIVE	MIDDLE
Sg <i>ek</i>	_____	_____	Sg <i>ek</i>	_____
<i>þú</i>	_____	_____	<i>þú</i>	_____
<i>hann</i>	_____	_____	<i>hann</i>	_____
PI <i>vér</i>	_____	_____	PI <i>vér</i>	_____
<i>þér</i>	_____	_____	<i>þér</i>	_____
<i>þeir</i>	_____	_____	<i>þeir</i>	_____

**15.20 Subjunctive of Weak Verbs.** Identify each of the following subjunctives.

Ex: leiddim 1pl past subj

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. talaðið _____ | 4. þegir _____   |
| 2. skipa _____   | 5. gerðizk _____ |
| 3. legði _____   | 6. hefða _____   |

**15.21 Subjunctive of Strong Verbs.** Identify each of the following subjunctives.

Ex: næma 1sg past subj

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. komim _____  | 4. fengi _____  |
| 2. stœðið _____ | 5. gefumk _____ |
| 3. yrða _____   | 6. væri _____   |

**15.22 Review: Prepositions, Pronouns, and Case Endings.** Fill in the blanks.

Konungr einn \_\_\_\_\_ Danmörk er nefndr Hrólf \_\_\_\_\_ krak \_\_\_\_\_. Lítil sveinn ok fátæk \_\_\_\_\_ er nefndr Vögg \_\_\_\_\_; hann kom \_\_\_\_\_ höll Hrólfs konung \_\_\_\_\_. Þá var konungrin \_\_\_\_\_ ung \_\_\_\_\_ at aldri ok grannlig \_\_\_\_\_ á vöxt. Þá gekk Vögg \_\_\_\_\_ fyrir \_\_\_\_\_, ok sá upp á \_\_\_\_\_. Þá mælti konungrin \_\_\_\_\_: 'Hvat viltu mæla, svein \_\_\_\_\_, er þú sér \_\_\_\_\_ mik?' Vöggr segir: 'Þá er ek var heima, heyðað'k sagt, at Hrólf konung \_\_\_\_\_ Hleiðru var mest \_\_\_\_\_ maðr \_\_\_\_\_ Norðrlöndum, en nú sitr hér \_\_\_\_\_ hásæti kraki einn lítil \_\_\_\_\_, ok kallið þér hann konung.' Þá svarar konung \_\_\_\_\_: 'Þú, sveinn, hefir gefit mér nafn, at ek skal heita Hrólf \_\_\_\_\_ krak \_\_\_\_\_.'

APPENDIX A

QUICK GUIDE TO

OLD NORSE GRAMMAR

A short overview of the most important tables of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs.  
For a full Old Norse Reference Grammar see *Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*.

STRONG MASCULINE NOUNS					STRONG NEUTER NOUNS	
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 1	
Sg nom	hestr (-inn)	staðr	fjörðr	maðr	land (-it)	
acc	hest (-inn)	stað	fjörð	mann	land (-it)	
dat	hesti (-num)	stað	firði	manni	landi (-nu)	
gen	hests (-ins)	staðar	fjarðar	manns	lands (-ins)	
Pl nom	hestar (-nir)	staðir	firðir	menn	lönd (-in)	
acc	hesta (-na)	staði	fjörðu	menn	lönd (-in)	
dat	hestum (hestunum)	stöðum	fjörðum	mönnum	löndum (löndunum)	
gen	hesta (-nna)	staða	fjarða	manna	landa (-nna)	

STRONG FEMININE NOUNS				WEAK NOUNS		
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 4	masc	fem	neut
Sg nom	för (-in)	höfn	mús	goði	saga	hjarta
acc	för (-ina)	höfn	mús	goða	sögu	hjarta
dat	för (-inni)	höfn	mús	goða	sögu	hjarta
gen	farar (-innar)	hafnar	músar	goða	sögu	hjarta
Pl nom	farar (-nar)	hafnir	mýs	goðar	sögur	hjörtu
acc	farar (-nar)	hafnir	mýs	goða	sögur	hjörtu
dat	förum (förunum)	höfnum	músum	goðum	sögum	hjörtum
gen	fara (-nna)	hafna	músa	goða	sagna	hjartna

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STRONG ADJECTIVE DECLENSION				WEAK ADJECTIVE DECLENSION		
	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	margr	mörg	mar(g)t	margi	marga	marga
<i>acc</i>	margan	marga	mar(g)t	marga	mörgu	marga
<i>dat</i>	mörgum	margri	mörgu	marga	mörgu	marga
<i>gen</i>	margs	margrar	margs	marga	mörgu	marga
<b>Pl nom</b>	margir	margar	mörg	mörgu	mörgu	mörgu
<i>acc</i>	marga	margar	mörg	mörgu	mörgu	mörgu
<i>dat</i>	mörgum	mörgum	mörgum	mörgum	mörgum	mörgum
<i>gen</i>	margra	margra	margra	mörgu	mörgu	mörgu

**Examples of Strong Adjective endings.** Strong adjectives take endings similar to strong nouns. Deviations are explained by a few rules. We suggest reviewing the Special Stem Rules in Lesson 5 which explain the patterns resulting when an *-r* ending is added to a noun or adjective whose stem ends in *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-* (stem-final *-l-*, *-n-*, *-r-*, or *-s-*) and the apparent lack of the nominative *-r* ending in masculine words such as *Þorsteinn* and *fugl*.

LAUSS ‘LOOSE, FREE’				VÆNN ‘BEAUTIFUL, FINE’		
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
	lauss	laus	laust	vænn	væn	vænt
<i>acc</i>	lausan	lausa	laust	vænan	væna	vænt
<i>dat</i>	lausum	laussi	lausu	vænum	vænni	vænu
<i>gen</i>	lauss	laussar	lauss	væns	vænnar	væns
<b>Pl</b> <i>nom</i>	lausir	lausar	laus	vænir	vænar	væn
<i>acc</i>	lausa	lausar	laus	væna	vænar	væn
<i>dat</i>	lausum	lausum	lausum	vænum	vænum	vænum
<i>gen</i>	laussa	laussa	laussa	vænna	vænna	vænna

FAGR 'BEAUTIFUL, FAIR'				GAMALL 'OLD'		
	M	F	N	M	F	N
Sg nom	fagr	fögr	fagrt	gamall	gömul	gamalt
acc	fagran	fagra	fagrt	gamlan	gamla	gamalt
dat	fögrum	fagri	fagru	gömlum	gamalli	gömlu
gen	fagrs	fagrar	fagrs	gamals	gamallar	gamals
Pl nom	fagrir	fagrar	fögr	gamlir	gamlar	gömul
acc	fagra	fagrar	fögr	gamla	gamlar	gömul
dat	fögrum	fögrum	fögrum	gömlum	gömlum	gömlum
gen	fagra	fagra	fagra	gamla	gamla	gamla

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MIKILL 'GREAT'				LÍTILL 'LITTLE'		
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>N</i>
<b>Sg nom</b>	mikill	mikl	mikit	líttill	lítil	lítit
<b>acc</b>	mikinn	mikla	mikit	líttinn	lítla	lítit
<b>dat</b>	miklum	mikilli	miklu	lítlum	lítilli	lítlu
<b>gen</b>	mikils	mikillar	mikils	lítils	lítillar	lítils
<b>Pl nom</b>	miklir	miklar	mikil	lítlir	lítlar	lítil
<b>acc</b>	mikla	miklar	mikil	lítla	lítlar	lítil
<b>dat</b>	miklum	miklum	miklum	lítlum	lítlum	lítlum
<b>gen</b>	mikilla	mikilla	mikilla	lítilla	lítilla	lítilla

PERSONAL PRONOUNS						
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>			<i>refl</i>
			<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>	
<b>Sg nom</b>	ek	þú	hann	hon	þat	—
<b>acc</b>	mik	þik	hann	hana	þat	sik
<b>dat</b>	mér	þér	honum	henni	því	sér
<b>gen</b>	mín	þín	hans	hennar	þess	sín
<b>Dual nom</b>	vit	(b)ít				
<b>acc</b>	okkr	ykk				
<b>dat</b>	okkr	ykk				
<b>gen</b>	okkar	ykkar				
<b>Pl nom</b>	vér	(b)ér	þeir	þær	þau	—
<b>acc</b>	oss	yðr	þá	þær	þau	sik
<b>dat</b>	oss	yðr	þeim	þeim	þeim	sér
<b>gen</b>	vár	yð(v)ar	þeir(r)a	þeir(r)a	þeir(r)a	sín

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DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS						
	sá			þessi		
	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>
<i>Sg nom</i>	sá	sú	þat	þessi ~ sjá	þessi ~ sjá	þetta
<i>acc</i>	þann	þá	þat	þenna	þessa	þetta
<i>dat</i>	þeim	þei(r)ri	því	þessum ~ þeima	þessi ~ þessa(r)ri	þessu ~ þvísa
<i>gen</i>	þess	þei(r)rar	þess	þessa	þessar ~ þessa(r)rar	þessa
<i>Pl nom</i>	þeir	þær	þau	þessir	þessar	þessi
<i>acc</i>	þá	þær	þau	þessa	þessar	þessi
<i>dat</i>	þeim	þeim	þeim	þessum	þessum	þessum
<i>gen</i>	þei(r)ra	þei(r)ra	þei(r)ra	þessa ~ þessar(r)a	þessa ~ þessar(r)a	þessa ~ þessar(r)a

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS				DEFINITE ARTICLE		
	nökkurr			inn		
	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>	<i>masc</i>	<i>fem</i>	<i>neut</i>
<i>Sg nom</i>	nökkurr	nökkur	nökku(r)t	inn	in	it
<i>acc</i>	nökkurn	nökkura	nökku(r)t	inn	ina	it
<i>dat</i>	nökkurum	nökkurri	nökkuru	inum	inni	inu
<i>gen</i>	nökkurs	nökkurrar	nökkurs	ins	innar	ins
<i>Pl nom</i>	nökkurir	nökkurar	nökkur	inir	inar	in
<i>acc</i>	nökkura	nökkurar	nökkur	ina	inar	in
<i>dat</i>	nökkurum	nökkurum	nökkurum	inum	inum	inum
<i>gen</i>	nökkurra	nökkurra	nökkurra	inna	inna	inna



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All **weak verbs** form their past tense by adding a suffix containing a dental consonant (-ð-, -d-, or -t-) and the past tense ending, for example *kall-að-a* 'I called,' *mæl-t-a* 'I spoke,' *tal-d-a* 'I counted,' and *vak-t-a* 'I woke.' All weak verbs share the same past tense endings but differ somewhat in the dental suffix.

**Past Tense Endings of Weak Verbs**

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 <sup>st</sup>	-a	-um
2 <sup>nd</sup>	-ir	-uð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	-i	-u

1<sup>st</sup> conjugation weak verbs insert the past tense dental suffix -að- before the endings (*kall-að-i*). The past endings -um, -uð, and -u trigger u-umlaut in the plural, changing -að- to -uð- (*köll-uð-u*). All other weak verbs add a dental suffix without a linking vowel (*mæl-t-i*, *tal-d-i*, *vak-t-i*).

	1 <sup>ST</sup> CONJUG	2 <sup>ND</sup> CONJUG	3 <sup>RD</sup> CONJUG	4 <sup>TH</sup> CONJUG
	KALLA	MÆLA	TELJA	VAKA
Sg 1 <sup>st</sup>	ek kallaða	mælta	talda	vakta
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þú kallaðir	mæltir	taldir	vaktir
3 <sup>rd</sup>	hann kallaði	mælti	taldi	vakti
Pl 1 <sup>st</sup>	vér kölluðum	mæltum	töldum	vöktum
2 <sup>nd</sup>	þér kölluðuð	mæltuð	tölduð	vöktuð
3 <sup>rd</sup>	þeir kölluðu	mæltu	töldu	vöktu

**PRINCIPAL PARTS OF STRONG VERBS**

	Infinitive	3sg Present	3sg Past	3pl Past	PPart
Class I	ríða	ríðr	reið	riðu	riðinn
Class II	bjóða	býðr	bauð	buðu	boðinn
Class III	bresta	brestr	brast	brustu	brostinn
Class IV	bera	berr	bar	báru	borinn
Class V	gefa	gefr	gaf	gáfu	gefinn
Class VI	fara	ferr	fór	fóru	farinn
Class VII i)	heita	heitr	hét	hétu	heitinn
ii)	búa	býr	bjó	bjoggu~bjuggu	búinn
iii)	ganga	gengr	gekk	gengu	genginn
iv)	ráða	ræðr	réð	réðu	ráðinn
v)	snúa	snýr	sneri~snøri	sneru~snøru	snúinn

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VERB CONJUGATION		Strong 'fara'	Weak I 'kalla'	Weak II 'mæla'	Weak III 'telja'	Weak IV 'vaka'	'vera'
Present Indicative	1sg	fer	kalla	mæli	tel	vaki	em
	2sg	ferr	kallar	mæliir	telr	vakir	ert
	3sg	ferr	kallar	mæliir	telr	vakir	er
	1pl	föllum	köllum	mælum	teljum	vökum	erum
	2pl	farið	kallið	mælið	telið	vakið	eruð
	3pl	fara	kalla	mæla	telja	vaka	eru
Past Indicative	1sg	fór	kallaða	mælti	talða	vakta	sjá, sé
	2sg	fórt	kallaðir	mæltir	talðir	vaktir	sér
	3sg	fór	kallaði	mælti	talði	vakti	sé
	1pl	fórum	kölluðum	mæltum	töluðum	vöktum	sém
	2pl	fóruð	kölluðuð	mæltuð	töluðuð	vöktuð	séð
	3pl	fóru	kölluðu	mæltu	töluðu	vöktu	sé
Present Subjunctive	1sg	fara	kalla	mæla	telja	vaka	var
	2sg	farir	kallir	mæliir	telir	vakir	vart
	3sg	fari	kalli	mæli	teli	vaki	var
	1pl	farim	kallim	mælim	telim	vakim	várum
	2pl	farið	kallið	mælið	telið	vakið	váruð
	3pl	fari	kalli	mæli	teli	vaki	váru
Past Subjunctive	1sg	fcera	kallaða	mælti	telða	vekta	væra
	2sg	foerir	kallaðir	mæltir	telðir	vektir	værir
	3sg	foeri	kallaði	mælti	telði	vekti	væri
	1pl	foerim	kallaðim	mæltim	telðim	vektim	værim
	2pl	foerið	kallaðið	mæltið	telðið	vektið	værið
	3pl	foeri	kallaði	mælti	telði	vekti	væri
Present Participle		farand	kallandi	mælandi	teljandi	vakandi	verandi
Past Participle		farinn	kallaðr	mæltr	taliðr	vakit	verit
Imperative		far	kalla	mæl	tel	vaki	ver

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**Guideline Chart for Distinguishing Strong Verb Classes.** A strong verb’s class can often be determined from the infinitive. For instance, Class I strong verbs have *í* in the infinitive while Class II have *jú, jó, ú*. The following chart is a guide to identify strong verb classes from the infinitive. ‘C’ refers to a consonant following the root vowel. ‘R’ refers to the four consonants *r, l, m, n*, known as resonants. On occasion there are exceptions to these rules. For example, Class V *fregna* and Class VI *standa* have two consonants after the vowel.

	INFINITIVE	EXAMPLES
Class I:	í	líta, rísa
Class II:	jú, jó, ú	krjúpa, bjóða, lúka
Class III:	eCC, jaCC, jáCC, iNC (also øCCv, yNCv)	verða, gjalda, hjálpa, binda sökkva, syngva
Class IV:	eR	skera, stela, nema
Class V:	eC, iCj	gefa, vega, biðja
Class VI:	aC, eCj	fara, aka, draga, hefja
Class VII:	aCC, au, á, ei (also ö, ó, á, ú)	halda, falla, hlaupa, gráta, heita

C = any consonant    R (resonant) = r, l, n, or m    N (nasal) = n or m

## APPENDIX B

### THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

GIVEN IN THE FOLLOWING LISTS:

A. THE 70 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

B. THE 246 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS (by part of speech)

C. THE 246 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS (in alphabetical order)

#### A. THE 70 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. <b>ok</b> – and                               | 26. <b>eigi</b> – not                       | 49. <b>vel</b> – well                       |
| 2. <b>sá</b> – that (one)                        | 27. <b>sinn</b> – his/her/their<br>(own)    | 50. <b>hverr</b> – each, every;<br>who?     |
| 3. <b>hann</b> – he, it                          | 28. <b>fyrir</b> – before; for              | 51. <b>upp</b> – up                         |
| 4. <b>at</b> – that                              | 29. <b>sjá</b> – this                       | 52. <b>síðan</b> – then                     |
| 5. <b>vera</b> – to be                           | 30. <b>sem</b> – who, which, that;<br>as    | 53. <b>eiga</b> – to own                    |
| 6. <b>ek</b> – I                                 | 31. <b>af</b> – of; from                    | 54. <b>láta</b> – to let                    |
| 7. <b>til</b> – to                               | 32. <b>mæla</b> – to speak                  | 55. <b>heita</b> – to call; be<br>named     |
| 8. <b>í</b> – in; into                           | 33. <b>vilja</b> – to want                  | 56. <b>búa</b> – to live, dwell;<br>prepare |
| 9. <b>en</b> – but                               | 34. <b>mikill</b> – great                   | 57. <b>sjá</b> – to see                     |
| 10. <b>er</b> – who, which, that;<br>when; where | 35. <b>hon</b> – she, it                    | 58. <b>einn</b> – one                       |
| 11. <b>á</b> – on; onto                          | 36. <b>allr</b> – all                       | 59. <b>ef</b> – if                          |
| 12. <b>þá</b> – then                             | 37. <b>taka</b> – to take                   | 60. <b>ríða</b> – to ride                   |
| 13. <b>þú</b> – you                              | 38. <b>skulu</b> – shall                    | 61. <b>konungr</b> – king                   |
| 14. <b>hafa</b> – to have                        | 39. <b>ganga</b> – to walk                  | 62. <b>svara</b> – to answer                |
| 15. <b>maðr</b> – man, person                    | 40. <b>gera</b> – to do; make               | 63. <b>þó</b> – nevertheless                |
| 16. <b>þar</b> – there                           | 41. <b>verða</b> – to become                | 64. <b>margr</b> – many                     |
| 17. <b>segja</b> – to say                        | 42. <b>kveða</b> – to speak                 | 65. <b>skip</b> – ship                      |
| 18. <b>um</b> – about                            | 43. <b>sik</b> – him/herself/<br>themselves | 66. <b>spyrja</b> – to ask; learn           |
| 19. <b>koma</b> – to come                        | 44. <b>þykkja</b> – to seem                 | 67. <b>minn</b> – my                        |
| 20. <b>fara</b> – to go, travel                  | 45. <b>ekki</b> – not                       | 68. <b>góðr</b> – good                      |
| 21. <b>nú</b> – now                              | 46. <b>eptir</b> – after                    | 69. <b>biðja</b> – to ask; tell             |
| 22. <b>við</b> – with; against                   | 47. <b>annarr</b> – other; second           | 70. <b>heim</b> – (to) home                 |
| 23. <b>munu</b> – will                           | 48. <b>hinn</b> – the other                 |   |
| 24. <b>með</b> – with                            |   |   |
| 25. <b>svá</b> – so; such                        |   |   |

#### B. THE 246 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS (by part of speech)

##### NOUNS

- |   |                                  |                               |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <b>maðr</b> – man, person            | 5. <b>sonr</b> – son             | 10. <b>land</b> – land        |
| 2. <b>konungr</b> – king                | 6. <b>hönd</b> – hand            | 11. <b>kona</b> – woman       |
| 3. <b>skip</b> – ship                   | 7. <b>fé</b> – wealth; livestock | 12. <b>ráð</b> – advice; plan |
| 4. <b>mál</b> – speech; case,<br>matter | 8. <b>bróðir</b> – brother       | 13. <b>dagr</b> – day         |
|   | 9. <b>vetr</b> – winter          | 14. <b>frændi</b> – kinsman   |

15. **jarl** – earl
16. **faðir** – father
17. **ferð** – journey
18. **sumar** – summer
19. **dóttir** – daughter
20. **þing** – assembly
21. **orð** – word
22. **hest** – horse
23. **nótt** – night
24. **tíðindi** – news, tidings
25. **fundr** – meeting
26. **lið** – following, troops
27. **bær** – farm

28. **bóndi** – farmer
29. **sverð** – sword
30. **hlutr** – thing; part
31. **sök** – cause, reason
32. **bú** – farm
33. **höfuð** – head
34. **móðir** – mother
35. **víg** – slaying
36. **vinr** – friend
37. **vísa** – verse
38. **leið** – path
39. **sinn** – time
40. **kveld** – evening

41. **vápn** – weapon
42. **morginn** – morning
43. **hús** – house
44. **fótr** – foot
45. **spjót** – spear
46. **sveinn** – boy, lad
47. **vár** – spring
48. **kostr** – choice
49. **skjöldr** – shield
50. **bak** – back

### ADJECTIVES

1. **mikill** – great
2. **margr** – many
3. **góðr** – good
4. **lítill** – little
5. **illr** – bad, ill
6. **sannr** – true
7. **fár** – few
8. **dauðr** – dead
9. **stórr** – big
10. **gamall** – old
11. **kyrr** – quiet
12. **fyrri** – former
13. **varr** – aware
14. **sterkr** – strong
15. **ungr** – young
16. **víss** – certain; wise
17. **vánder** – bad

18. **langr** – long
19. **sárr** – wounded
20. **hálf** – half
21. **vænn** – beautiful
22. **verðr** – worthy
23. **líkr** – alike
24. **vitr** – wise
25. **harðr** – hard
26. **vanr** – accustomed
27. **heill** – whole
28. **lauss** – loose, free
29. **sekr** – guilty
30. **vinsæll** – popular
31. **skyldr** – related; necessary, obliged
32. **miðr** – middle
33. **fullr** – full

34. **fagr** – beautiful
35. **auðigr** – wealthy
36. **fríðr** – beautiful
37. **réttr** – right, correct
38. **næstr** – next
39. **kunnigr** – known; cunning, skilled in magic
40. **líkligr** – likely
41. **reiðr** – angry
42. **ríkr** – powerful
43. **fjöldmennr** – well attended; numerous
44. **skammr** – short; brief
45. **göfugr** – noble

### PRONOUNS

1. **sá** – that (one)
2. **hann** – he, it
3. **ek** – I
4. **þú** – you
5. **sinn** – his/her/their (own)
6. **sjá** – this
7. **hon** – she, it
8. **allr** – all
9. **sik** – him/herself/ themselves

10. **annarr** – other; second
11. **hin** – the other
12. **hverr** – each, every; who?
13. **minn** – my
14. **engi** – no (one)
15. **nökkurr** – some, a certain
16. **þinn** – your
17. **síkr** – such
18. **báðir** – both

19. **várr** – our
20. **hvárr** – who, which (of two)?
21. **sjálf** – self
22. **samr** – same
23. **sumr** – some
24. **hvárrtveggj** – each of the two
25. **yðr** – you (*pl*)
26. **okkarr** – us (*dual*)
27. **einhverr** – someone

## NUMERALS

- |                         |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <b>einn</b> – one    | 5. <b>fjórir</b> – four | 9. <b>sju</b> – seven        |
| 2. <b>tveir</b> – two   | 6. <b>sex</b> – six     | 10. <b>fimmtán</b> – fifteen |
| 3. <b>þrír</b> – three  | 7. <b>fimm</b> – five   |                              |
| 4. <b>tólf</b> – twelve | 8. <b>tíu</b> – ten     |                              |

## VERBS

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1. <b>vera</b> – to be                  | 19. <b>búa</b> – to live, dwell;<br>prepare | 36. <b>bjóða</b> – to offer; invite                  |
| 2. <b>hafa</b> – to have                | 20. <b>sjá</b> – to see                     | 37. <b>hlaupa</b> – to leap; run                     |
| 3. <b>segja</b> – to say                | 21. <b>ríða</b> – to ride                   | 38. <b>kalla</b> – to call                           |
| 4. <b>koma</b> – to come                | 22. <b>svara</b> – to answer                | 39. <b>halda</b> – to hold                           |
| 5. <b>fara</b> – to go, travel          | 23. <b>spyrja</b> – to ask; learn           | 40. <b>falla</b> – to fall                           |
| 6. <b>munu</b> – will                   | 24. <b>biðja</b> – to ask; tell             | 41. <b>skilja</b> – to part,<br>separate; understand |
| 7. <b>mæla</b> – to speak               | 25. <b>mega</b> – may                       | 42. <b>drepa</b> – to kill                           |
| 8. <b>vilja</b> – to want               | 26. <b>fá</b> – to get, obtain              | 43. <b>setja</b> – to set                            |
| 9. <b>taka</b> – to take                | 27. <b>ætla</b> – to intend                 | 44. <b>liggja</b> – to lie                           |
| 10. <b>skulu</b> – shall                | 28. <b>vita</b> – to know                   | 45. <b>leita</b> – to search                         |
| 11. <b>ganga</b> – to walk              | 29. <b>leggja</b> – to lay, place           | 46. <b>veita</b> – to grant                          |
| 12. <b>gera</b> – to do; make           | 30. <b>bera</b> – to carry, bear            | 47. <b>sækja</b> – to seek                           |
| 13. <b>verða</b> – to become            | 31. <b>gefa</b> – to give                   | 48. <b>höggva</b> – to strike                        |
| 14. <b>kveða</b> – to speak             | 32. <b>finna</b> – to find                  | 49. <b>senda</b> – to send                           |
| 15. <b>þykkja</b> – to seem             | 33. <b>ráða</b> – to advise; rule           | 50. <b>geta</b> – to get, beget                      |
| 16. <b>eiga</b> – to own                | 34. <b>sitja</b> – to sit                   |  |
| 17. <b>láta</b> – to let                | 35. <b>standa</b> – to stand                |  |
| 18. <b>heita</b> – to call; be<br>named |   |  |

## PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS

- |                                |                              |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <b>til</b> – to             | 17. <b>upp</b> – up          | 33. <b>undir</b> – under           |
| 2. <b>í</b> – in; into         | 18. <b>síðan</b> – then      | 34. <b>heldr</b> – rather          |
| 3. <b>á</b> – on; onto         | 19. <b>þó</b> – nevertheless | 35. <b>brott</b> – away            |
| 4. <b>þá</b> – then            | 20. <b>heim</b> – (to) home  | 36. <b>enn</b> – yet, still        |
| 5. <b>þar</b> – there          | 21. <b>út</b> – out          | 37. <b>niður</b> – down            |
| 6. <b>um</b> – about           | 22. <b>frá</b> – from        | 38. <b>ofan</b> – from above       |
| 7. <b>nú</b> – now             | 23. <b>hér</b> – here        | 39. <b>aptr</b> – back             |
| 8. <b>við</b> – with; against  | 24. <b>mjök</b> – very       | 40. <b>móti</b> – against          |
| 9. <b>með</b> – with           | 25. <b>þegar</b> – at once   | 41. <b>hjá</b> – by, near          |
| 10. <b>svá</b> – so; such      | 26. <b>ór</b> – out of, from | 42. <b>illa</b> – badly            |
| 11. <b>eigi</b> – not          | 27. <b>fram</b> – forward    | 43. <b>lengi</b> – for a long time |
| 12. <b>fyrir</b> – before; for | 28. <b>yfir</b> – over       | 44. <b>hversu</b> – how            |
| 13. <b>af</b> – of; from       | 29. <b>fyrir</b> – before    | 45. <b>þangat</b> – to there       |
| 14. <b>ekki</b> – not          | 30. <b>áður</b> – before     | 46. <b>aldri</b> – never           |
| 15. <b>eptir</b> – after       | 31. <b>saman</b> – together  | 47. <b>nær</b> – nearly            |
| 16. <b>vel</b> – well          | 32. <b>inn</b> – inside      | 48. <b>mikit</b> – greatly         |

49. milli – between  
50. útan – from out

## CONJUNCTIONS

- |  |                     |                      |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ok – and                              | as                  | 11. nema – except    |
| 2. at – that                             | 6. ef – if          | 12. né – nor         |
| 3. en – but                              | 7. eða – or         | 13. enda – and yet   |
| 4. er – who, which, that;<br>when; where | 8. hvárt – whether  | 14. hvárgi – neither |
| 5. sem – who, which, that;               | 9. bæði – both      |                      |
|  | 10. þótt – although |                      |

## C. THE 246 MOST FREQUENT WORDS IN THE SAGAS (in alphabetical order)

- |                               |  |                                  |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| af – of; from                 | en – but                               | ganga – to walk                  |
| aldri – never                 | enda – and yet                         | gefa – to give                   |
| allr – all                    | engi – no (one)                        | gera – to do; make               |
| annarr – other; second        | enn – yet, still                       | geta – to get, beget             |
| aptr – back                   | eptir – after                          | góðr – good                      |
| at – that                     | er – who, which, that; when;<br>where  | göfugr – noble                   |
| aðigr – wealthy               | fá – to get, obtain                    | hafa – to have                   |
| á – on; onto                  | faðir – father                         | halda – to hold                  |
| áðr – before                  | fagr – beautiful                       | hann – he, it                    |
| bak – back                    | falla – to fall                        | harðr – hard                     |
| báðir – both                  | fara – to go, travel                   | hálf – half                      |
| bera – to carry, bear         | fá – to get, obtain                    | heill – whole                    |
| biðja – to ask; tell          | fár – few                              | heim – (to) home                 |
| bjóða – to offer; invite      | ferð – journey                         | heita – to call; be named        |
| bóndi – farmer                | fé – wealth; livestock                 | heldr – rather                   |
| brott – away                  | fimm – five                            | hest – horse                     |
| bróðir – brother              | fimmtán – fifteen                      | hér – here                       |
| bú – farm                     | finna – to find                        | hinn – the other                 |
| búa – to live, dwell; prepare | fjórir – four                          | hjá – by, near                   |
| bæði – both                   | fjölmennr – well attended;<br>numerous | hlaupa – to leap; run            |
| boer – farm                   | fótr – foot                            | hlutr – thing; part              |
| dagr – day                    | fram – forward                         | hon – she, it                    |
| dauðr – dead                  | frá – from                             | hús – house                      |
| dóttir – daughter             | fríðr – beautiful                      | hvárgi – neither                 |
| drepa – to kill               | frændi – kinsman                       | hvárr – who, which (of<br>two)?  |
| eða – or                      | fullr – full                           | hvárrtveggi – each of the<br>two |
| ef – if                       | fundr – meeting                        | hvárt – whether                  |
| eiga – to own                 | fyrir – before; for                    | hverr – each, every; who?        |
| eigi – not                    | fýrr – before                          | hversu – how                     |
| einhverr – someone            | fyrri – former                         | höfuð – head                     |
| einn – one                    | gamall – old                           | höggva – to strike               |
| ek – I                        |  |                                  |
| ekki – not                    |  |                                  |

**hönd** – hand  
**illa** – badly  
**illr** – bad, ill  
**inn** – inside  
**í** – in; into  
**jarl** – earl  
**kalla** – to call  
**koma** – to come  
**kona** – woman  
**konungr** – king  
**kostr** – choice  
**kunnigr** – known; cunning,  
     skilled in magic  
**kveða** – to speak  
**kveld** – evening  
**kyrr** – quiet  
**land** – land  
**langr** – long  
**lauss** – loose, free  
**láta** – to let  
**leggja** – to lay, place  
**leið** – path  
**leita** – to search  
**lengi** – for a long time  
**lið** – following, troops  
**liggja** – to lie  
**líkligr** – likely  
**líkr** – alike  
**lítill** – little  
**maðr** – man, person  
**margr** – many  
**mál** – speech; case, matter  
**með** – with  
**mega** – may  
**miðr** – middle  
**mikill** – great  
**mikít** – greatly  
**milli** – between  
**minn** – my  
**mjök** – very  
**morginn** – morning  
**móðir** – mother  
**móti** – against  
**munu** – will  
**mæla** – to speak

**nema** – except  
**né** – nor  
**niðr** – down  
**nótt** – night  
**nú** – now  
**nær** – nearly  
**næstr** – next  
**nökkurr** – some, a certain  
**ofan** – from above  
**ok** – and  
**okkarr** – us (*dual*)  
**orð** – word  
**ór** – out of, from  
**ráð** – advice; plan  
**ráða** – to advise; rule  
**reiðr** – angry  
**réttr** – right, correct  
**ríða** – to ride  
**ríkr** – powerful  
**saman** – together  
**samr** – same  
**sannr** – true  
**sá** – that (one)  
**sárr** – wounded  
**segja** – to say  
**sekr** – guilty  
**sem** – who, which, that; as  
**senda** – to send  
**setja** – to set  
**sex** – six  
**sik** – him/herself/  
     themselves  
**sinn** – his/her/their (own)  
**sinn** – time  
**sitja** – to sit  
**síðan** – then  
**sjau** – seven  
**sjá** – this  
**sjá** – to see  
**sjálfr** – self  
**skammr** – short; brief  
**skilja** – to part, separate;  
     understand  
**skip** – ship  
**skjöldr** – shield

**skulu** – shall  
**skyldr** – related; necessary,  
     obliged  
**slíkr** – such  
**sonr** – son  
**spjót** – spear  
**spyrja** – to ask; learn  
**standa** – to stand  
**sterkr** – strong  
**stórr** – big  
**sumar** – summer  
**sumr** – some  
**svara** – to answer  
**svá** – so; such  
**sveinn** – boy, lad  
**sverð** – sword  
**sækja** – to seek  
**sök** – cause, reason  
**taka** – to take  
**til** – to  
**tíðindi** – news, tidings  
**tíu** – ten  
**tólf** – twelve  
**tveir** – two  
**um** – about  
**undir** – under  
**ungr** – young  
**upp** – up  
**út** – out  
**útan** – from out  
**vanr** – accustomed  
**varr** – aware  
**váðr** – bad  
**vápn** – weapon  
**vár** – spring  
**várr** – our  
**velta** – to grant  
**vel** – well  
**vera** – to be  
**verða** – to become  
**verðr** – worthy  
**vetr** – winter  
**við** – with; against  
**vilja** – to want  
**vinr** – friend



**vinsæll** – popular  
**vita** – to know  
**vittr** – wise  
**víg** – slaying  
**vísa** – verse  
**víss** – certain; wise  
**vænn** – beautiful  
**yðr** – you (*pl*)

**yfir** – over  
**þangat** – to there  
**þar** – there  
**þá** – then  
**þegar** – at once  
**þing** – assembly  
**þinn** – your

**þó** – nevertheless  
**þótt** – although  
**þrír** – three  
**þú** – you  
**þykkja** – to seem  
**ætla** – to intend

APPENDIX C

PRONUNCIATION OF OLD ICELANDIC

Reconstruction of Old Icelandic sounds is by nature approximate. In most instances, we estimate the pronunciation from spellings in manuscripts and rhymes in poetry. There was no standard spelling. Writers and poets often employed their personal or regional pronunciation, and sounds sometimes changed over decades and centuries.

**STRESS** in Icelandic typically falls on the first syllable of the word, for example *kona*, *gerði*, and *konungr* are pronounced *ko-na*, *ger-ði*, and *kon-ungr*, with stress on the first syllable. Compounds also have a secondary stress on the second element, for example the syllable *-móð-* in *konungamóðir*, ‘mother of kings.’

**VOWELS** are sounds made by the free passage of air through the mouth, that is, without closing the mouth or narrowing it to the point where the sound is obstructed. Vowels in Old Icelandic had no immediately following glide as is often the case in Modern Icelandic and English.

Old Norse vowels are classified as long or short. For most vowels, length is indicated by an acute accent, *á, é, í, ó, ú, ý*; however, the vowels *æ* and *œ* are always long.

Long vowels in Old Icelandic were longer versions of the corresponding short vowels. For example, *a* and *á* were pronounced the same, but *á* seems to have been longer in pronunciation duration until about the year 1200. In Modern Icelandic, many of the long vowels differ from the corresponding short vowels in quality as well as length, for example, *a* (pronounced as in English *father*) and *á* (as in *house*).

The vowels *au*, *ei*, and *ey* are diphthongs, a sequence of two vowel sounds pronounced together, with the tongue gliding from the first vowel to the position of the second. For example, *ei* begins with *e* and glides towards *i*. As noted below, these diphthongs are pronounced somewhat differently in Old and Modern Icelandic. Below is a pronunciation chart for Old Icelandic vowels.

VOWEL	OLD ICELANDIC PRONUNCIATION	OLD ICELANDIC
<i>a</i>	as <b>a</b> in father, but shorter	<i>faðir</i>
<i>á</i>	as <b>au</b> in caught but with rounded lips and longer than <i>ø/ö</i>	<i>láta</i>
<i>e</i>	as <b>e</b> in bet	<i>bekkr</i>
<i>é</i>	as <b>e</b> in bet, but longer	<i>pér</i>
<i>i</i>	<b>i</b> in sin	<i>sinn</i>
<i>í</i>	as <b>ee</b> in seen	<i>líta</i>

<i>o</i>	as <b>o</b> in <i>sole</i> , but shorter	<i>kona</i>
<i>ó</i>	as <b>o</b> in <i>boat</i>	<i>bjóða</i>
<i>u</i>	as <b>oo</b> in <i>took</i>	<i>sumar</i>
<i>ú</i>	as <b>oo</b> in <i>moon</i>	<i>búa</i>
<i>y</i>	as <b>ee</b> in <i>seen</i> , but pronounced with rounded lips; as in German <i>für</i>	<i>systir</i>
<i>ý</i>	as <b>ee</b> in <i>seen</i> , but pronounced with rounded lips; as in German <i>für</i> , but longer	<i>býðr</i>
<i>æ</i>	as <b>a</b> in <i>nap</i> , but longer	<i>lætr</i>
<i>œ</i>	as <b>e</b> in <i>bet</i> , but longer and pronounced with rounded lips; as in German <i>können</i>	<i>fátækr</i>
<i>ø</i>	as <b>e</b> in <i>bet</i> , but pronounced with rounded lips; as in German <i>können</i> . By early thirteenth century <i>ø</i> merges with <i>ϕ</i> .	<i>søkkva</i>
<i>ϕ (ö)</i>	as <b>au</b> in <i>caught</i> , but pronounced with rounded lips and shorter than <i>á</i>	<i>fϕr</i>
<i>au</i>	as <b>ow</b> in <i>cow</i>	<i>nauð</i>
<i>ei</i>	as <b>ay</b> in <i>may</i>	<i>beita</i>
<i>ey</i>	Old Icelandic <b>e + y</b>	<i>heyra</i>

**CONSONANTS** are sounds made by a narrowing or closure of the vocal tract, which results in obstruction of the free flow of air. Most Icelandic consonants are similar to corresponding sounds in modern English.

Both Old and Modern Icelandic distinguish the pronunciation of single and double consonants. Double letters form long consonants, for instance, the *-mm-* in *stemma* is pronounced twice as long as the *-m-* in *heima*. In words that employ stop consonants (*p, t, k, b, d, g*) like *staddr* and *liggja*, there is a pause before the release of air forming the consonant.

The consonants *b, d, h, k, l, m, n, s*, and *t* were probably pronounced much as in Modern English. In Old Icelandic *f* and *v* were likely pronounced using both the lower and upper lips. Below is a pronunciation chart for the other Old Icelandic consonants.

<i>f</i>	1) at the beginning of a word: as <b>f</b> in father 2) in the middle or at the end of a word: as <b>v</b> in have	<i>faðir</i> <i>hafa</i>
<i>g</i>	at the beginning of word or after <i>n</i> : as <b>g</b> in good before an <i>s</i> or <i>t</i> : as <b>ch</b> in Scots English loch	<i>góðr, langr</i> <i>lagt</i>
<i>j</i>	as <b>y</b> in yes	<i>játa, Herjólfur</i>
<i>þ</i>	as <b>p</b> in pin when preceding <i>s</i> or <i>t</i> : as <b>f</b> in after	<i>þenningr</i> <i>skipta</i>
<i>r</i>	trilled as Scots English <b>r</b>	<i>rauðr</i>
<i>v</i>	as <b>w</b> in west or <b>v</b> in vest	<i>vestr</i>
<i>þ</i>	as <b>th</b> in thing	<i>þing, þórr</i>
<i>ð</i>	as <b>th</b> in this, rather	<i>bróðir, Óðinn</i>
<i>x</i>	as <b>chs</b> in Scots English lochs	<i>øx</i>
<i>z</i>	as <b>ts</b> in prints	<i>brazuk</i>

### OLD ICELANDIC READ WITH MODERN ICELANDIC PRONUNCIATION

A trend in the teaching of Old Norse – Icelandic is to read the texts with Modern Icelandic pronunciation. For those interested in reading the texts with Modern Icelandic pronunciation, the following two charts provide guidance. Much of the grammar and vocabulary of Old Icelandic come into Modern Icelandic with few changes, and employing modern pronunciation is a good start to learning Modern Icelandic.

<b>VOWEL</b>	<b>MODERN ICELANDIC PRONUNCIATION</b>	<b>OLD ICELANDIC</b>
<i>a</i>	as <b>a</b> in father before <i>ng</i> and <i>nk</i> as <b>ow</b> in cow	<i>faðir</i> <i>langr</i>
<i>á</i>	as <b>ow</b> in cow	<i>láta</i>
<i>e</i>	as <b>e</b> in bed	<i>bekkr</i>
<i>é</i>	as <b>ye</b> in yes	<i>þér</i>
<i>i</i>	as <b>i</b> in tin	<i>sinn</i>
<i>í</i>	as <b>ee</b> in seen	<i>líta</i>
<i>o</i>	as <b>o</b> in more	<i>kona</i>
<i>ó</i>	as <b>o</b> in go	<i>bjóða</i>
<i>ö</i>	as <b>u</b> in cut, but with rounded lips	<i>köttur</i>
<i>u</i>	as <b>ou</b> in should	<i>sumar</i>

<i>ú</i>	as oo in moon	<i>búa</i>
<i>y</i>	as i in tin	<i>systir</i>
<i>ý</i>	as ee in seen	<i>býðr</i>
<i>æ, œ</i>	as i in mile	<i>lætr, fátækr</i>
<i>au</i>	as ay in hay but with rounded lips; Modern Icelandic <i>ö</i> + <i>y</i>	<i>nauð</i>
<i>ei, ey</i>	as ay in say	<i>leiða, leysa</i>

### CONSONANTS IN MODERN ICELANDIC

- *h, k, l, m, n* are pronounced much as in Modern English.
- The consonants *p, t, k* are pronounced voiceless (with no vibration of the vocal cords), as in English.
- Unlike English, the consonants *b, d, g* are also pronounced voiceless.
- The two consonant series *p, t, k* and *b, d, g* are distinguished from each other by the presence of aspiration (a following puff of air); *p, t, k* are generally aspirated, while *b, d* and *g* are not.
- In Modern Icelandic (and English), the letters *f* and *v* are pronounced with the lower lip in contact with the upper teeth.

CONSONANT	MODERN PRONUNCIATION	OLD ICELANDIC
<i>ð</i>	as <i>th</i> in <i>that, brother</i>	<i>bróðir, Óðinn</i>
<i>f</i>	at the beginning of a word: as <i>f</i> in <i>father</i> before <i>n</i> or <i>l</i> : as Modern Icelandic <i>p</i> elsewhere: as <i>v</i> in <i>have</i>	<i>faðir</i> <i>nafn, kafli</i> <i>hafa</i>
<i>g</i>	at the beginning of a word and after <i>n</i> : as <i>g</i> in <i>good</i> , but voiceless before an <i>s</i> or <i>t</i> : as <i>ch</i> in Scots English <i>loch</i> after vowels and before <i>a, u, ð, r</i> : as <i>ch</i> in Scots English <i>loch</i> , but voiced between a vowel and a following <i>i</i> or <i>j</i> as <i>y</i> in <i>yet</i> between <i>ó, á, ú</i> , and a following <i>a, u</i> : silent in sequences <i>angt</i> and <i>angs</i> : silent	<i>góðr, langr</i> <i>lagt</i> <i>fluga</i> <i>eigi, segja</i> <i>fljúga</i> <i>langt, langs</i>
<i>j</i>	as <i>y</i> in <i>yes</i> when preceding <i>s</i> or <i>t</i> : as <i>f</i> in <i>after</i>	<i>játa, Herjólfur</i> <i>eptir</i>
<i>r</i>	trilled as Scotch English <i>r</i>	<i>rauðr</i>
<i>s</i>	as <i>s</i> in <i>sink</i> , not as English <i>z</i>	<i>sitja</i>
<i>þ</i>	as <i>th</i> in <i>thing</i>	<i>þing, Þórr</i>

A few double consonants in Modern Icelandic have special pronunciations.

- *pp*, *tt*, and *kk* are pronounced with a preceding *h*. For example, *upp*, *dóttir*, and *ekki* are pronounced *u<sup>h</sup>pp*, *dó<sup>h</sup>ttir*, and *e<sup>h</sup>kki*. *pp* is pronounced as *f* in *father* when it precedes *t*, for example, *keppti*.
- *nn* is pronounced much like *tn* when it follows a vowel with an accent mark or diphthong at the end of a word, for example, *einn* [eitn]
- *ll* is pronounced much like *tl* when preceding a vowel, *r*, or *n*, for example, *kalla* [katla], *allr* [atlr]. *ll* is also pronounced *tl* at the end of words, for example, *mikill* [mikitl]. Before *t*, *d*, and *s* double *ll* is pronounced like a single *l*, for example, *alls* [als], *allt* [alt]. In loan words and nicknames *ll* is pronounced as long *l*, for example, *mylla* ‘mill’ [milla] and *Kalli* [kalli].
- The sequences *rn* and *rl* usually are pronounced [rtn] and [rtl], for example *Bjarni* [bjartni], *karlar* [kartlar].

Sequences of three consonants are often simplified at the end of a syllable. For example, *b* in the word *kumbi* is dropped, and pronounced *kuml* similar to the English ‘subtle’ pronounced *sutl*. When the sequence occurs over a syllable break, all three consonants are pronounced, for example *landnám* (the syllable breaks between *land-* and *-nám*).

## VOCABULARY

### Order of the Alphabet

The alphabetical order is: a, á, b, d, ð, e, é, f, g, h, i, í, j, k, l, m, n, o, ó, p, r, s, t, u, ú, v, y, ý, x, z, þ, æ, œ, ö/ø. Long vowels with accent are listed after the corresponding short vowels without accent (a, á). At the end of the alphabet, æ and œ are listed separately while ö and ø are listed together.

### Word Frequency

The symbol ♦ marks the 246 most common words in the sagas.

### Notes on the Vocabulary

Verbs and prepositions take their objects in various cases, depending on sometimes unpredictable usage. This vocabulary adopts the Icelandic convention of using the pronoun *einnhverr* meaning 'somebody' [sb] and *eitthvat* meaning 'something' [sth] to indicate which case is used with particular verbs.

[e-n] (einhvern) = somebody [sb] *acc*

[e-t] (eitthvat) = something [sth] *acc*

[e-m] (einhverjum) = (for) [sb] *dat*

[e-u] (einhverju) = (for) [sth] *dat*

[e-s] (einhvers) = (of) [sb] or [sth] *gen*

Examples:

fala [e-t] af [e-m] offer to buy [sth] from [sb]

firra [e-n] [e-u] deprive [sb] of [sth]

mæla [e-t] við [e-n] say [sth] to [sb]

segja [e-m] frá [e-m] tell, inform [sb] about [sb]

segja [e-m] til [e-s] tell, inform [sb] where [sth/sb] is to be found

The following conventions are employed in this vocabulary.

- **STRONG MASCULINE NOUNS:** the genitive singular and nominative plural endings are given after the nominative singular. For example, *helmr* <-s, -ar> *m* world; *vinr* <-ar, -ir> *m* friend.
- **ADJECTIVES:** the strong masculine accusative singular is given to indicate a stem-final -j- or -v- or syncope (loss of vowel). For example, *ríkr* <*acc* *ríkjan*> *adj* powerful, *dökk* <*acc* *dökkvan*> *adj* dark, *göfugr* <*acc* *göfgan*> *adj* noble, distinguished.
- **STRONG VERBS:** the principal parts (3sg pres, 3sg past, 3pl past, and past participle) are given. For example, *fara* <*ferr*, *fór*, *fóru*, *farinn*> *vb* go, travel.
- **WEAK VERBS:** the dental suffix -að- indicates when a weak verb is 1<sup>st</sup> conjugation. For example, *kalla* <-að-> *vb* call. For all other verbs the dental (-t-, -d-, or -ð-) is given with the ending for 3sg past and past participle, for example *mæla* <-ti-, -tr> *vb* speak. When there

is a change in the stem from present to past, the Vocabulary provides the forms in full: **spyrja** <spurði, spurðr> *vb* ask. When a past tense dental is added to a verb whose stem already ends in a dental (*leiða*, *setja* and *senda*), the two dentals often undergo change. In such instances, the Vocabulary indicates the outcome, hence *leiða* <-ddi, -ddr>, *setja* <-tti, -ttr>, and *senda* <-di, -dr> (that is, past tense *leiddi* 'he led,' *setti* 'he set,' *sendi* 'he sent').

- **PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS:** are named so because their present tense looks like the past tense of strong verbs.

When looking up a compound word, go to the final element of the compound. Hence for **landnámsmaðr** look under **maðr**; and for **fyrirbjóða** look under **bjóða**.

Some entries are labeled *defective*, meaning these words lack a full set of forms in the extant sources. For example, the verb *kná*, has no infinitive form in any of the manuscripts. The dictionary form, *kná*, is the 1/3 sg (first and third person) present: *kná* <kná, 1pl knegum, knátti, past inf knáttu> *defective pret-pres vb* be able to, can; could.

### ABBREVIATIONS

<i>1dual, 2dual</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person dual, etc.
<i>1pl, 2pl, 3pl</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, etc.
<i>1sg, 2sg, 3sg</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, etc.
<i>acc</i>	accusative
<i>adj</i>	adjective
<i>adv</i>	adverb
<i>art</i>	article (definite)
<i>aux</i>	auxiliary (verb)
<i>comp</i>	comparative (adjective or adverb)
<i>conj</i>	conjunction
<i>conjug</i>	conjugation
<i>dat</i>	dative
<i>def</i>	definite (article)
<i>defect</i>	defective
<i>dem</i>	demonstrative (pronoun)
<i>esp</i>	especially
<i>etc</i>	etcetera
<i>ex</i>	example
<i>f</i>	feminine
<i>fig</i>	figurative
<i>gen</i>	genitive
<i>impers</i>	impersonal (verb)
<i>indecl</i>	indeclinable
<i>indef</i>	indefinite (pronoun)
<i>indic</i>	indicative
<i>inf</i>	infinitive



<i>interrog</i>	interrogative (adverb or pronoun)
<i>intrans</i>	intransitive (verb)
<i>leg</i>	legal usage
<i>lit</i>	literally
<i>m</i>	masculine
<i>mid</i>	middle voice
<i>neg</i>	negative
<i>n</i>	neuter
<i>nom</i>	nominative
<i>num</i>	number
<i>obj</i>	object
<i>OE</i>	Old English
<i>OI</i>	Old Icelandic
<i>ON</i>	Old Norse
<i>ord</i>	ordinal (number)
<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>poet</i>	poetical usage
<i>poss</i>	possessive (pronoun)
<i>ppart</i>	past participle
<i>pref</i>	prefix
<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>pres</i>	present
<i>pres part</i>	present participle
<i>pret-pres</i>	preterite-present (verb)
<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>refl</i>	reflexive (verb or pronoun)
<i>rel</i>	relative (pronoun or particle)
<i>sb</i>	somebody
<i>sg</i>	singular
<i>sth</i>	something
<i>str</i>	strong (adjective or verb)
<i>subj</i>	subject
<i>subjunct</i>	subjunctive
<i>superl</i>	superlative (adjective or adverb)
<i>trans</i>	transitive (verb)
<i>transl</i>	translation
<i>usu</i>	usually
<i>var</i>	variant
<i>vb</i>	verb
<i>w</i>	with
<i>wk</i>	weak (adjective or verb)
<i>=</i>	equals

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e-n (einhværn) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; e-t (eitthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*;  
 e-u (einverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; e-s (einvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

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## Alternative or alternating (spelling)

## A

**Aðalráðr konungr** *m* King Æthelred II (the unready) of England

**aðra** *f acc sg & m acc pl of annarr*

**aðrir** *m nom pl of annarr*

♦ **af** *prep [w dat]* of, by; off, out of, from

**afar** *adv* extremely

**afarmenni** *n* a big or strong man

**afbragð** *n* outstanding example; **afbragð þeira manna allra** the most outstanding of all those men

**afbrigði** *n* deviation, transgression, offense

**afi** *n* physical strength, might, power; **rammr at afli** extremely strong

**afreksmaðr** *m* outstanding or exceptional man

**aka** <ekr, ók, óku, ekin> *vb* drive

**akkerl** *n* anchor

**akr** <akrs, akrar> *m* field, crop

**ala** <elr, ól, ólu, alinn> *vb* give birth to; bring up, raise (children)

**alda** *gen pl of öld*

**aldinn** *adj* aged, old

**aldr** <-rs, -rar> *m* age; lifetime; old age; long period of time

**alregi** *adv* never

♦ **aldri** *adv* never

**Alföðr** <-s> *m* All-Father, i.e., Odin

**alheimskr** *adj* completely foolish

**alin** <alnar~álnar> *f* Old Icelandic *ell* (about half a yard); unit of value, typically of woolen cloth

**alla** *f acc sg & m acc pl of allr*

**allan** *m acc sg of allr*

**allfríðr** *adj* very beautiful

**allir** *m nom pl of allr*

**allmikill** *adj* very great

♦ **allr** <f öll, n allt> *adj pron* all, entire, whole

**allra** *gen pl of allr*

**allri** *f dat sg of allr*

**allt** *adv* completely, entirely; everywhere; **allt til Orkneyja** all the way to the Orkney Islands; **allt til þess** right up to that point; **allt upp undir** right up under

**Alrekr** <-s> *m* Alrek (*personal name*)

**alsnotr** *adj* sagacious, wise (of a woman)

**alsvartr** *adj* pure black

**alþýða** *f* all the people, the majority of the people the public, the common people

**ambátt** (also **ambótt**) <pl -ir> *f* handma maidservant

**ambótt** *var of ambátt*

**andi** *m* breath, spirit

**Andvari** *m* Andvari (*personal name*)

**angr** <gen angrs> *m* grief, sorrow

**annan** *m acc sg of annarr*

♦ **annarr** <f önnur, n annat> *adj pron* one of two other, another; *ord* second; **annarr ... annarr** one ... the other

**aptann** <dat aptni, gen aptans, pl aptnar> *m* even

♦ **aptr** <superl aptastr~epztr> *adv* back, again

**arfi** *m* heir

**arfr** <-s> *m* inheritance

**argr** *adj* cowardly, effeminate, (passive) homosexual

**armr** *m* arm

**armr** *adj* poor, unfortunate, unhappy; vile, wretched wicked

**Arnfastr** <-s> *m* Arnfast (*personal name*)

**askr** <-s, -ar> *m* ash, ash tree; ash spear; small sh the great ash tree, **Yggdrasil**

**Assurr** (also **Özurr**) <-s> *m* Assur (*personal name*)

**at** *prep [w dat]* at, in; as to, as, with respect to; account of, by reason of; close up to, around, l

♦ **at** *conj* that

**at** *inf marker to*

**atal** <f ötul, n atalt> *adj* fierce, aggressive

**Atall** <-s> *m* Atal, name of a Viking (*personal name*)

**atburðr** <-ar, -ir> *m* occurrence, event; **af þess atburði** because of this incident

**atganga** *f* attack

**atgervimaðr** *var of atgervimaðr*

**atgervi** *f and n* ability, talent, accomplishment; **atgervi** in ability (*esp physical*)

**atgervimaðr** (also **atgervimaðr**) *m* a man accomplishments

**atkváma** *f* arrival

**atлага** *f* attack; laying ships alongside for attack

**atróðr** <gen atróðrs> *m* rowing towards, rowing against  
**atseta** *f* a royal residence  
**auðgi** *weak m nom sg* of **auðigr**  
 ♦ **auðigr** (also **auðugr**) <acc auðgan> *adj* rich, wealthy; **auðigr** at fé very wealthy  
**auðugr** *var* of **auðigr**  
**auga** *n* eye  
**auk** *prep* [*w gen*] aside from  
**auka** <eykr, jók, jóku, aukinn> *vb* increase, augment; [*w dat*] add; exceed, surpass  
**aurr** <-s> *m* mud  
**ausa** <eyss, jós, jósu, ausinn> *vb* pour, sprinkle; **ausa** [e-n]/[e-t] [e-m] sprinkle [sb/sth] with [sth]; **ausa**

**bát** *bail* a boat  
**austan** *adv* from the east  
**Austmaðr** *m* person from the east, Norwegian  
**austr** <-rs, superl austastr> *n* east; *adv* eastward  
**austför** <pl austfarar> *f* (*usu in pl*) travels to the east  
**Austrlond** *n pl* the eastern lands; eastern Europe; Russia and the Orient  
**austurvegr** <-s, -ir> *m* the east, i.e., the Baltic, *lit* the eastern way; **fara í austurveg** trading or raiding in the Baltic or journeying east and south down the rivers of Russia  
**austroenn** *adj* eastern  
**auvirðismaðr** *m* worthless wretch, wretched man

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## Á

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**á** <gen ár, pl ár, dat ám, gen á> *f* river  
**á** 1/3sg pres of **elga**  
 ♦ **á** *prep* [*w acc*] onto, on, towards (*motion*); with respect to; [*w dat*] on; upon; at; in (*position*)  
**á brott** *adv* away  
**á milli** *var* of **milli**  
 ♦ **áðr** *adv* before; already  
**áeggjun** <-ar> *f* egging on, urging  
 ♦ **ágætr** *adj* excellent  
**ál** <á, ár> *m* great-grandfather  
**ákafamaðr** *m* an aggressive man  
**ákafliða** *adv* exceedingly, very; vehemently, impetuously  
**ákaftr** <*f* ákóf> *adj* fierce  
**ál** <pl -ar> *f* leather strap  
**Álfheimr** *m* Alfheim, World of the Elves  
**álfr** <-s, -ar> *m* elf  
**Áll** *m* Ali (*personal name*, an old shortening for Áleifr-Óláfr)  
**álit** *n* appearance  
**Álof** *f* Alof (*personal name*)  
**álpt** <pl álptir~elptr> *f* swan  
**Álptanes** *n* Alptanes (*place name*), Swans' Headland  
**álög** *n pl* dues or taxes  
**án** *prep* [*w gen*] without  
**ár** *n* year  
**árferð** <pl -ir> *f* season, harvest  
**Arnes** *n* Arness (*place name*)  
**Arni** *m* Arni (*personal name*)

**ársæll** *adj* fortunate as to the seasonal harvest; **allra konunga ársælstr** of all kings the most harvest-fortunate  
**ársælstr** *superl* of **ársæll**  
**árvænn** *adj* promising a good seasonal harvest  
**ásamt** *adv* together  
**Ásbjörn** <gen Ásbjarnar> *m* Asbjorn (*personal name*)  
**Ásbrú** *f* Asbru, another name for **Bífröst**  
**Ásdís** *f* Asdis (*personal name*)  
**Ásgarðr** *m* Asgard, the residence or fortress of the gods  
**Ásgerðr** <acc/dat Ásgerði, gen Ásgerðar> *f* Asgerd (*personal name*)  
**Ásgrímr** <-s> *m* Asgrim (*personal name*)  
**ásjá** *f* help, aid, protection; inspection; appearance, shape  
**Ásmundr** <-s> *m* Asmund (*personal name*)  
**áss** <dat æsi~ás, gen áss~ásar, pl æsir, acc ásu~æsi> *m* god; **Æsir** *pl* one of the two major groups of gods  
**ást** *f* love, affection (frequently used in plural with same meaning)  
**Ásta** *f* Asta (*personal name*)  
**Ásvaldr** <-s> *m* Asvald (*personal name*)  
**ásynja** *f* goddess  
**át** 1/3sg past of **eta**  
 ♦ **átta** <ord áttandi~áttundi, átti, eighth> *num* eight  
**átti** 3sg past of **elga**  
**áttján** <ord áttjándi, eighteenth> *num* eighteen

áttu 3pl past of elga

ávanr <f ávön, n ávant> adj only in n and the phrase

[e-s] er ávant [sth] is wanted, needed

## B

bað 1/3sg past of biðja

baðmr <-s> m tree

♦ bak n back

Baldr <-rs> m Baldr (personal name)

Balli (also Baldi) m Balli (personal name)

bana <-að-> vb [w dat] kill

banahögg n death-blow

banamaðr m killer, executioner, slayer

banasár n fatal wound, death

band <pl bönd> band, cord; the act of binding; (pl) bands, fetters; [poet] the gods

bani m death, bane, slayer

bann n prohibition, ban

banna <-að-> vb ban, forbid, prohibit

bar 1/3sg past of bera

bardagi m fight, battle; beating, thrashing

barð n brim of a helmet or hat; verge or edge of a hill; prow of a ship

barn <pl börn> n child

barneska f childhood

barr n foliage, often needles (of pine, etc.)

Barreyjar f pl the Barra Isles

batna <-að-> vb improve; *impers* [e-m] batnar one recovers

batnaði 3sg past of batna

batt 1/3sg past of binda

bauð 1/3sg past of bjóða

baugr <-s, -ar> m ring, bracelet, armlet

bauzt 2sg past mid of bjóða

bazt superl adv var of beztr

baztr superl adj var of beztr

♦ báðir <f báðar, n bæði, gen beggja> adj pron dual both

Bálki Blæingsson m Balki Blæingsson (personal name)

Bárðr <-ar> m Bard (personal name); Bárðr svartir Bard the Black

bátr <-s, -ar> m boat

beðið ppart of biðja

beggja all gen pl of báðir

beiða <beiddi, beiddr> vb [w gen] ask, beg; beiða [e-n] [e-s] ask [sb] for [sth]; beiðask mid ask for, request on one's own behalf

beiddisk 3sg past mid of beiða

beiddusk 3pl past mid of beiða

bein n bone

beinahrúga f bone-pile

beiskr adj bitter, acrid; angry, exasperated; painful, sore

belting <pl -ar> f grazing, pasturage

bekkr <dat bekk, gen -s~-jar, pl -ir> m bench

belgr <dat belg, gen -s~-jar, pl -ir> m pelt, skin of an animal (taken off whole); skin-bag; bellows

bella <bellr, ball, -, -> defective vb [w dat] hit, hurt

bella <-di, -tr> vb [w dat] venture (into)

belti n belt

ben <gen -jar> f (mortal) wound

♦ bera <berr, bar, báru, borinn> vb bear, carry; bera saman collect; compare; bera um carry about; bera þrendi sín (upp) fyrir [e-n] plead one's case before [sb]; tell one's errand [sb]

berja <barði, barðr~bariðr> vb strike, beat; berjask mid fight

berr adj naked, bare; unsheathed (of a sword)

berserkr <-s, -ir> m berserker

berserksgangr <-s> m fury of a berserker, going berserk

betr comp adv of vel, better

betri comp adj of góðr, better

beysta <beysti, beystr> vb bruise, beat

beytill <-s> m horse-prick

best (also bazt) superl adv of vel, best

beztr (also baztr) superl adj of góðr, best

♦ biðja <biðr, bað, báðu, beðinn> vb ask, beg; command, tell; biðja [e-n] [e-s] ask [sb] for [sth];

biðja gera command to be made

bifask <-ði, -ðr also -að-> vb mid shake, tremble, quake; be moved

Bifröst f Bifrost, the rainbow bridge that connects Miðgarðr and Ásgarðr

bikkja f female dog, bitch

bila <-að-> vb fail

binda <bindr, batt, bundu, bundinn> vb bind, tie, fasten; bind up (a wound); pledge; binda í [e-u] bind to [sth], bind on [sth]

biða <biðr, beið, biðu, beðinn> vb [w gen] wait for, remain, abide; [w acc] suffer, undergo

bíta <bitr, beit, bitu, bitinn> vb bite, bite through; rip

- apart
- bjalla** <gen bjöllu, pl bjöllur> *f* bell
- bjarg** <pl björg> *n* rock, boulder; cliff
- bjarga** <bergr, barg, burgu, borginn> *vb* [w dat] save, help
- Bjarnardóttir** *f* Bjorn's daughter (personal name)
- Bjarnarfjörður** *m* Bjorn's Fjord (place name)
- Bjarni** *m* Bjarni (personal name)
- bjart** <f björt, n bjart> *adj* bright
- bjó** 1/3sg past of **búa**
- ♦ **bjóða** <býðr, bauð, buðu, boðinn> *vb* [w acc] offer; [w dat] invite; order, command; **bjóða** [e-m] sætt offer [sb] reconciliation; **bjóða** [e-n] [e-m] at sætt offer [sth] to [sb] for reconciliation
- björn** <dat birni, gen bjarnar, pl birnir, acc björnu> *m* bear
- Björn** <dat Birni, gen Bjarnar> *m* Bjorn (personal name); **Björn buna** Bjorn buna
- blautr** *adj* soft; soaked, wet
- blár** <f blá n blátt> *adj* blue; dark, black
- blása** <blæsir, blés, blésu, blásinn> *vb* blow
- Bleking** *f* Blekinge, Denmark (place name) now part of Sweden)
- blindr** *adj* blind
- blíðr** *adj* happy
- blóð** *n* blood
- blót** *n* sacrifice
- blóta** <blœtr, blét, blétu, blótinn> *vb* [w acc] worship; worship with sacrifice; [w dat] sacrifice, sacrifice in worship
- blóta** <-að> *vb* [w acc] worship; worship with sacrifice; [w dat] sacrifice, sacrifice in worship; curse
- blótuðu** 3pl past of **blóta** (wk vb)
- blunda** <-að> *vb* shut the eyes, doze
- Blaengr** <-s> *m* Blaeng (personal name)
- bogi** *m* bow
- bokki** (also **bökki**) *m* buck, fellow (used as a manner of address) **bokki sæll** my good fellow, good sir, boss
- Bolli** *m* Bolli (personal name)
- bolæx** *f* broad-axe
- borð** *f* board, plank; side of a ship; board, table; board, food, upkeep; á **borð** on one side (of a ship)
- borg** <pl -ir> *f* stronghold, fortification; town
- Borg** *f* Borg (place name)
- Borgarfjörður** *m* (place name)
- borgarmaður** *m* garrisoned soldier; townsman
- bóarni** <pl bóendr> *m* var of **bóndi**
- bógr** <dat bægi, gen bógar, pl bægir, acc bógu> *m* shoulder of an animal
- bók** <gen bókar~bækr, pl bækr> *f* book
- ból** *n* lair
- ♦ **l.ónði** (also **bóandi** & **búandi**) <gen bónda, pl bæendr> *m* husband; farmer; head of a household
- bót** <pl bætr> *f* bettering, cure, remedy; adornment; pl compensation, atonement; at **bótum** as atonement
- brann** 1/3sg past of **brenna**
- Brattahlíð** *f* Brattahlid (place name), Steep-Slope
- brauð** *n* bread
- braut** var of **brott**
- braut** 1/3sg past of **brjóta**
- brautflutning** <pl -ar> *f* carrying off
- brauzk** 1,2,3sg past of **brjótask**
- brauzt** 2sg past of **brjóta**
- brá** <gen brár, pl brár> *f* eyelash
- brá** 1/3sg past of **bregða**
- bráðgörr** *adj* matured early in life, precocious
- bráðr** <n brátt> *adj* sudden; hot-tempered, hasty
- bráðum** *adv* soon, shortly
- brásk** 1/3sg past mid of **bregða**
- brátt** *adv* soon, suddenly; **brátt er** as soon as
- bregða** <bregðr, brá, brugðu, brugðinn> *vb* [w dat] move quickly; draw, brandish (a weapon); break (faith or an oath); turn, alter, change; break off, leave off, give up; **bregða við** [e-u] ward off with, parry with [sth]; **bregðask mid** fail, come to nothing; **bregðask** [e-m] deceive, disappoint [sb]; **bregðask í** [e-t] shapechange, turn into [sth]
- breiða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* spread; stretch; display
- Breiðablik** *n* Breidablik, the hall of the god Baldr (place name)
- Breiðafjarðardalir** *m* pl the Dales of Breidafjord (place name)
- Breiðafjörður** *m* Breidafjord, Broad Fjord (place name)
- breiðara comp** *adv* of **breiðr**, more broadly
- breiðr** <f breið, n breitt> *adj* broad
- brekka** *f* slope
- brenna** <brennr, brann, brunnu, brunninn> *vb intrans* burn
- brenna** <-di, -dr> *vb trans* burn
- bresta** <brestr; brast, brustu, brostinn> *vb* burst, break, crash; **bresta niðr** crash down
- Brisingamen** *n* the necklace of Freyja

**brjóst** *n* chest, breast  
**brjóta** <brýtr, braut, brutu, brotinn> *vb* break, break up, break open; **brjótast til ríkis** fight for the kingdom  
**Brodd-Helgi** <-s> *m* Spike-Helgi (*personal name*)  
**broddr** <-s, -ar> *m* spike  
**brotna** <-að-> *vb* break  
 ♦ **brott** (*also burt & (f) braut*) *adv* away, off  
 ♦ **bróðir** <acc/dat/gen bróður, *pl* bræðr, *dat* bræðrum, *gen* bræðra> *m* brother  
**bróðurgjöld** *n pl* wergeld, ransom, or compensation for a dead brother  
**brunnr** <-s, -ar> *m* well; spring  
**brutu** *3pl past* of **brjóta**  
**brú** <gen brúar, *pl* brúar~brúr~brýr> *f* bridge; causeway built over swampy ground  
**brúðfé** *n* bride's fee or gift  
**brúðkaup** *n* wedding feast  
**brúðlaup** *n* wedding feast  
**brúðr** <acc/dat brúði, *gen* brúðar, *pl* brúðir> *f* bride; [poet] woman  
**brúnn** *adj* brown  
**bryggja** *f* gangway; pier; bridge  
**Brynhildr** *f* Brynhild (*personal name*)  
**brynja** *f* chain-mail shirt  
**bryti** *m* bailiff  
**brækr** *f pl* breeches  
**buna** *f* buna (nickname of uncertain meaning, perhaps 'one with ungartered stockings,' i.e. hanging down his leg)  
**burlufótr** *m* clumsy-foot (*meaning uncertain*)  
**burr** <-ar, -ir> *m* [poet] son  
**burt** *var* of **brott**  
 ♦ **bú** (*also bý*) <dat *pl* búm> *n* home, house, household; farm; estate  
 ♦ **búa** <býr, bjó, bjoggu~bjuggu, búinn> *vb* live (in a

place), dwell, inhabit, live; prepare, make ready;  
**búask** *mid* prepare, get oneself ready; **búask til [e-s]** prepare oneself for [sth]; **búask um** make oneself secure, prepare  
**búandi** <*pl* búend> *m var* of **bóndi**  
**búfé** *n* cattle  
**búi** *m* dweller, inhabitant  
**búinn** *ppart* of **búa** ready, prepared  
**búizk** *ppart* of **búask** (búit + sk)  
**Búseyra** *f* Buseyra, a giantess killed by Thor  
**búss** *m* a type of wood  
**byggð** *f* abode  
**byggja** *var* of **byggva**  
**byggva** (*also byggja*) <-ði, -ðr> *vb* settle; occupy, inhabit  
**byrðr** *f* burden  
**byrja** <-að-> *vb* begin  
**byrr** <-jar, -ir> *m* fair wind  
**bý** (*var* of **bú**) <dat *pl* býum> *n* home, house, household; farm; estate  
**býfluga** *f* bee  
 ♦ **bæði** *adv* both; **bæði ... ok conj** both ... and  
**bæði** *n* of **báðir**  
**bær** *var* of **boer**  
**boegi** *dat sg* of **bógr**  
**boen** *f* prayer, request  
 ♦ **boer** (*also bær*) <gen bæjar~býjar, *pl* bæir, *dat* bæjum, *gen* bæja> *m* farm, farmhouse, farmstead; landed estate; town  
**boeta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* better, make compensation  
**Böðvarr** <-s> *m* Bodvar (*personal name*)  
**bökkli** *var* of **bokki**  
**böl** <gen *pl* bölv> *n* misfortune  
**bölvasmíðr** *m* contriver of mischief, misfortune  
**börðusk** *3pl past mid* of **berja**

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## D/Ð

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**daga** <-að-> *vb* dawn  
**dagmál** *n* nine in the morning  
 ♦ **dagr** <dat degi, *gen* dags, *pl* dagar> *m* day; í **dag** today; **um daginn eptir** (on) the day after, the next day  
**dagsmark** *n* day-mark, time of day  
**Dala-Kollson** *m* son of Dala-Koll (*personal name*) Koll of the Dales  
**Dalir** *m pl* Dalir (*place name*) the Dales  
**dalr** <dat dal, *gen* dals, *pl* dalar~dalir> *m* valley, dale  
**Danir** *m pl* the Danes

**Danmarkar** *gen* of **Danmörk**  
**Danmörk** <gen *Danmarkar*> *f* Denmark  
**danskr** *adj* Danish  
**datt** *1/3sg past* of **detta**  
 ♦ **dauðr** <f dauð, *n* dautt> *adj* dead  
**daufr** *adj* deaf  
**dautt** *n nom/acc sg* of **dauðr**  
**dáð** *f* deed  
**Dáinsleif** *f* Dainsleif, the name of Hogni's sword  
 Dain's Inheritance  
**detta** <dettr, datt, dattu, dottinn> *vb* drop, fall

**deyja** <deyr, dó, dó, dáinn> *vb* die  
**djarfr** <f djöf, *n* djarft> *adj* bold, daring  
**djúpauðigr** *adj* deep-minded  
**djúpvitr** *adj* deep-witted, resourceful  
**dó** 1/3sg & 3pl *past* of **deyja**  
**Dómaldi** *m* Domaldi (*personal name*)  
**dómr** <-s, -ar> *m* court; judgement  
**dómstaðr** *m* place where court is held  
**♦ dóttir** <acc/dat/gen dóttur, *pl* døtr, *dat* døtrum, *gen* døtra> *f* daughter  
**draga** <dregr, dró, drógu, dreginn> *vb* pull, draw, drag  
**drakk** 1/3sg *past* of **drekka**  
**drap** 1/3sg *past* of **drepa**  
**drapt** 2sg *past* of **drepa**  
**drasill** *m* horse (*poet*)  
**draumblaeti** *n* pride, haughtiness  
**dráp** *n* killing, murder  
**dreginn** *ppart* of **draga**  
**dregit** *ppart* of **draga**  
**dreifa** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* spread, scatter; **dreifask** *mid* be spread out  
**dreki** *m* dragon-ship  
**drekka** <drekkr, drakk, drukku, drukinn> *vb* drink  
**drengilligr** *adj* brave, valiant  
**drengr** *m* a bold man  
**♦ drepa** <drepr, drap, drápu, drepinn> *vb* slay, kill, smite; strike, beat, knock; **drepa** [e-u] f [e-t] stick [sth] into [sth]  
**Drepstokkr** <-s> *m* Drepstokk (*place name*)  
**dreyma** <-ði~di, -t> *vb* [acc *subj* and *obj*] dream; [e-n] **dreymr** [e-t] *impers* [sb] dreams [sth]

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## E

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**♦ eða** (also **eðr**) *conj* or; (introducing a question) but  
**eðr** *var* of **eða**  
**♦ ef** *conj* if  
**efnilligr** *adj* promising  
**efri** (also **øfri**) *comp adj* upper, inner; latter  
**efstr** (also **øfstr**) *superl adj* uppermost, innermost; last  
**egg** <gen *pl* eggja> *n* egg  
**egg** <pl eggjar> *f* edge, blade's edge  
**eggja** <-að-> *vb* incite, goad, egg on, urge  
**eggskurn** *f* egg shell  
**Egil** <*dat* Agli, *gen* Egils> *m* Egil (*personal name*)

**dreyra** <-ði, -t> *vb* bleed, ooze (of blood from a slight wound)  
**drífa** <drífr, dreif, drifu, drifinn> *vb* [*trans*] to drive; [*intrans*] to crowd, throng, drift, hurry  
**drjúpa** <drýpr, draup, drupu, dropinn> *vb* drip  
**Droplaugarsynir** *m pl* the sons of Droplaug  
**dróttinn** <*dat* dróttni~drottni, *gen* dróttins, *pl* dróttnar~drottnar> *m* lord  
**dróttning** <*dat* dróttningu, *pl* dróttningar> *f* queen  
**drykk** <-jar, -ir> *m* drink  
**duga** <-ði, dugat> *vb* do, show prowess; **duga verr** come off badly, fare worse (in a contest), to be useful  
**dunði** 3sg *past* of **dynja**  
**dúfa** *f* dove, pigeon  
**dvelja** <dvaldi, dvaldr~dvalinn> *vb* slow, stop  
**dvergr** <-s, -ar> *m* dwarf  
**dynja** <dundi~dunði, dunit> *vb* din, thunder, resound, whirl, whizz; pour, shower  
**dys** <-jar> *f* cairn  
**dýja** <dúði, dúit> *vb* shake  
**dýr** *n* wild beast; animal; deer  
**ðæma** <-di~ði, -dr~ðr> *vb* judge  
**ðæmðir** *ppart* (*m nom pl*) of **ðæma**  
**dögg** <*dat* dögg~döggu, *gen* döggvar, *pl* döggvar> *f* dew  
**dögum** *dat pl* of **dagr**  
**Þökkálfar** *m pl* the Dark Elves  
**dökk** <*m acc sg* dökkvan, *m nom pl* dökkvir, *m acc pl* dökkva, *f acc sg* dökkva, *f pl* dökkvar> *adj* dark

**Egilsstaðir** *m pl* Egilsstadir (*place name*) Egil's Farmstead  
**♦ eiga** <á, átti, áttir> *pret-pres vb* own, have, possess; be married or related to; [*aux*] must, owe, be obligated, have to; **eiga ráðagörð** take council  
**♦ eigi** *adv* not  
**eigna** <-að-> *attribute, dedicate; mid eignask* get, claim, take, become the owner of  
**eignaðisk** 3sg *past mid* of **eigna**  
**eignazk** *ppart mid* of **eigna**  
**eik** <-ar, -r> *f* oak, tree  
**Einnarr** *m* Einar (*personal name*)

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e-n (einhvern) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; e-t (eitthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*;  
 e-u (einhverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; e-s (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

**einheri** <-ja, -jar> *m* great champion (addressing Thor); **einherjar** *pl* slain warriors who dwell in Valhöll

♦ **einn** <*f* ein, *n* eitt, *ord* fyrstr, first > *num* one; *indef* pro a, an, a certain one; *adj* alone (when placed after the noun it modifies, **einn** can take on the meaning 'only')

♦ **einnhverr** *adj* *pron* some, someone, a certain one; (*usu* as two words, **einn hverr**) each, each one; **einnhvern dag** one day

**einskipa** *adv* with one ship

**einu** *n* *dat sg* of **einn**

**einvaldi** *m* sole ruler, monarch, sovereign

**einvaldskonungr** *m* sole ruler

**Eiríkr** <-s> *m* Eirik (*personal name*)

**Eiríksfjörðr** *m* Eiríksfjord (*place name*), Eirik's Fjord

**eista** *n* testicle

**eitthvat** *adj* *pron* some, something, a certain one

♦ **ek** <*acc* mik, *dat* mér, *gen* mín> *pron* I

**ek** *1sg pres* of **aka**

**ekki** *n* *nom/acc sg* of **engi**

♦ **ekki** *adv* not

**eldaskáli** *m* fire hall, main hall of a long house, where benches used for sitting and sleeping were warmed by a long fire that ran the length of the hall and was used for cooking

**elding** *f* the last part of the night before dawn

**eldr** <-s~ellds~ellz, -ar> *m* fire

**elfr** <*acc/dat* elfi, *gen* elfar, *pl* elfar> *f* great river

**Elfráðr inn ríki** *m* Alfred the Great (*personal name*)

**elgr** <*gen* elgs~elgjar, *elgir*> *m* elk

**elli** *f* age

♦ **ellifu** <*ord* ellifti, eleventh > *num* eleven

**ellri** *comp* of **gamall** older, elder

**ellstr** *var* of **el(l)ztr**

**elska** <-að> *vb* love; **elskask** love one another,

**elskask at** [e-m] grow fond of [sb]

**el(l)ztr** (*also* **ellstr**) *superl* of **gamall** oldest, eldest

♦ **en** *conj* but; and (*in a contrastive sense*); *w* *comp* than

**en er** *conj* but when

**en þó** *adv* nevertheless

♦ **enda** *conj* and (*etc.*); and if; even; even if; and also, and so; and yet

**endi** (*also* **endir**) <-is, -ar> *m* end

**endir** *var* of **endi**

**endlangr** *adj* the whole length of

**endr** *adv* again, once more

♦ **engi** <*f* engi, *n* ekki> *indef pron* no one, none, no

**engill** <-s, -ar> *m* angel

**engis** *var* of **enskis**

**Englakonungr** *m* king of England

**England** *n* England

**Englar** *m* *pl* the English

**engrar** *f* *gen sg* of **engi**

**enkis** *var* of **enskis**

♦ **enn** *adv* yet, still

**enni** *n* forehead

**enskis** (*also* **engis~enkis**) *m/n* *gen sg* of **engi**

**enskr** *adj* English

**ept** *var* of **eptir**

♦ **eptir** (*also* **ept**) *prep* [*w* *acc*] after (*in time*); *ir* memory of; [*w* *dat*] after, along; **eptir landin** along the coast; after somebody

**eptri** *comp* of **aptr** farther back

**epztr** (*also* **aptastr**) *superl* of **aptr** farthest back

♦ **er** (*older* **es**) *rel* *particle* who, which, that; *con* when; where; as

**er** *3sg pres* of **vera**

**erendi** (*also* **ørendi** & **erindi**) *n* errand, mission, res of errand

**erfa** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* throw a funeral feast; inherit

**erfiði** *n* trouble, effort

**erindi** *var* of **erendi**

**erja** <*er*, *arði*, *arinn*> *vb* plough; scratch, scrape

**Erlingr** <-s> *m* Erling (*personal name*)

**eru** *3pl pres* of **vera**

**es** *older form* of **er**

**eta** <*etr*, *át*, *átu*, *etinn*> *vb* eat

**ey** <*dat* ey~eyju, *gen* eyjar, *pl* eyjar> *f* island

**eyða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* waste; spend; do away v destroy; make empty; **eyðask** *mid* be squandered come to naught

**eyna** *acc sg* of **ey+in**, the island

**eykt** *f* three in the afternoon

**eyra** *n* ear

**eyri** *var* of **eyrr**

**eyrir** <*acc/dat* eyri, *gen* eyris, *pl* aurar, *acc* aur; aurum, *gen* aura> *m* an ounce of silver or gc

**eyrr** (*also* **eyri**) <*acc/dat* eyri, *gen* eyrar, *pl* eyri> gravelly riverbank; small spit of land running the sea

**eystri** *comp* of **austr** more eastern

**Eyvindr** <-ar> *m* Eyvind (*personal name*)



## F

- ♦ **faðir** <acc föður, dat föður~feðr, gen föður, pl feðr, dat feðrum, gen feðra> *m* father
- ♦ **fagr** <f fögr, *n* fagrt, *comp* fegri, *superl* fegrstr> *adj* beautiful, fair, attractive
- ♦ **falla** <fellr, féll~fell, féllu~fellu, fallinn> *vb* fall; fallask *mid* fail
- fann** 1/3sg past of finna
- ♦ **fara** <ferr, fór, fóru, farinn> *vb* go, travel; move; fara *at* go, proceed; fara frá leave, back off, back away
- farmaðr** *m* seaman, seafarer, merchant
- farmr** *m* cargo
- farþegi** *m* passenger on a voyage
- fast** *adv* firmly,
- ♦ **fá** <fær, fekk, fengu, fenginn> *vb* get, take, procure; grasp; marry; give, deliver; fekk konu got married, *lit got a wife*; fá góðar viðtökur be welcomed well
- Fafnir** *m* Fafnir, a son of Hreidmar who turns himself into a dragon, brother of Regin
- fálátr** *adj* silent, reserved, taciturn
- ♦ **fár** <f fá, *n* fátt, *comp* fær(r)i, *superl* fæstr> *adj* pron few; cold, reserved; fátt manna few men, *lit* few of men
- fásénn** *adj* rare
- fátækur** *adj* poor, wretched
- fégar** *m* pl father and son(s)
- ♦ **feginn** *adj* glad, joyful
- fegrð** *f* beauty
- fegrstr** <f fegrst, *n* fegrst> *superl* of fagr
- fégr** *adj* fated to die
- feltr** *adj* fat
- fekk** 1/3sg past of fá
- féla** <feir, fal, fálu, fólgin> *vb* hide, conceal
- féll** *n* hill, mountain
- félla** <-di, -dr> *vb* fell
- féllu** 3pl past of falla
- fengit** ppart of fá
- fengu** 3pl past of fá
- ♦ **ferð** <pl -ir> *f* journey; conduct, behavior
- ferma** <-da, -dr> *vb* load ferma [e-t] með [e-u] load [sth] with [sth]
- ferr** 2/3sg pres of fara
- féti** *m* strider, stepper, pacer (name for a horse)
- ♦ **fé** <gen fjár, gen pl fjá> *n* cattle, sheep; wealth,

money

**félagi** *m* partner, comrade, companion, friend**féltíll** *adj* short of money, poor**féll** 1/3sg past of falla**fémætr** *adj* valuable**fénu** = fé + lnu♦ **fimm** <ord fimmti, fifth> *num* five**fim(m)tán** <ord fim(m)tándi, fifteenth> *num* fifteen**fingr** <gen fingrar~fingers, pl fingr> *m* finger♦ **finna** <finnr, fann, fundu, fundinn> *vb* find; finnask *mid* be found, be perceived, noticed; (impers) [w dat subj] be found, perceived, noticed by [sb]**Finnr** *m* Finn (personal name)**firði** *dat sg* of fjörðr**firr** *comp adv* of fjarri**first** *superl adv* of fjarri**fiskr** *m* fish**fjaðralauss** *adj* without feathers, featherless**fjaðrhamr** *m* feather skin, coat, shape**fjall** <pl fjöll> *n* mountain**fjara** *f* ebb-tide, ebb; shore, beach**fjarri** <comp firr, *superl* first> *adv* far off**fjándi** <gen fjánda; pl fjáendr> *m* enemy**Fjón** *f* Fyn, Denmark (place name)♦ **fjórir** <f fjórar, *n* fjögur, *m* acc fjóra, dat fjórum, gen fjögurra, ord fjórði, fourth> *num* four**fjórtán** <ord fjórtándi, fourteenth> *num* fourteen**fjórum** *dat pl* of fjórir**fjörðr** *f* feather**fjögur** *n nom/acc pl* fjórir**fjölið** *f* a multitude; [poet, w gen] plenty of**fjöliði** *m* abundance**fjölkunnigr** *adj* skilled in magic**fjölkyngr** *f* magic, the black art, witchcraft, sorcery♦ **fjölmennr** *adj* in a large group, numerous; with many people, well-attended**fjölmenn** *adv* in crowds, in large numbers**fjör** <dat fjörvi> *n* life**fjörðr** <dat firði, gen fjarðar, pl firðir, acc fjörðu> *m* fjord**fjörlausn** *f* ransom for one's life; release from life**fjörsegl** *m* life-morsel, heart**flagð** <pl flögð> *n* an ogress, giantess**flakl** *m* wicker-work shield or barrier**flakka** <-að-> *vb* roam, wander about (as a shepherd

†-n (einhvern) = 'somebody,' acc.; e-t (eittthvat) = 'something,' acc.; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' dat.;

†-u (einhverju) = '(for) something,' dat.; e-s (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' gen.

- with his sheep)  
**flaska** *f* a flask; **flösku-skegg** bottle-beard (*nickname*);  
**flösku-bakr** bottle-back (*nickname*)  
**flatnefr** *adj* flat-nosed (*in nicknames*)  
**flaut** 1/3*sg past* of **fljóta**  
**flá** <flær; fló, flógu; fleginn> *vb* flay; strip (of clothes and of money)  
**fleginn** *ppart* of **flá**  
**fleinn** *m* pike, spear; dart, shaft; fluke of an anchor  
**fleiri** *comp* of **margr** more  
**flestr** *superl* of **margr** most  
**fljóta** <flýtr, flaut, flutu, flotinn> *vb* float; **skipit flaut** the ship floated (at anchor)  
**fljúga** <flýgr, fló~flaug, flugu, floginn> *vb* fly  
**Flosi** *m* Flosi (*personal name*)  
**fló** 1/3 *sg past* of **fljúga**  
**flutt** *ppart* of **flytja**  
**flytja** <flutti, fluttr> *vb* convey, move, carry; bring, deliver; tell, recite  
**flýgr** 2/3*sg pres* of **fljúga**  
**flyja** <-ði, flyðr~flyiðr> *vb* flee  
**fnasa** <-að-> *vb* snort  
**forðum** *adv* formerly, of old  
**formaðr** *m* captain, leader, chieftain, *lit* fore-man  
**formáli** *m* stipulation, condition; preamble, foreword, preface  
**forráð** *n* administration, management; **til forráða** for rulership  
**fors** <*pl* -ar> *m* waterfall  
**forstjóri** *m* overseer, leader  
**forstreymis** *adv* downstream  
**foringi** *m* captain, commander, leader  
**fólginn** *ppart* of **fela**  
**fólgit** *ppart* of **fela**  
**fólk** *n* folk, people; [*poet*] battle  
**Fólkaðr** (also **Fólkvarðr**) <-ar> *m* Folkad (*personal name*)  
**fór** 1/3*sg past* of **fara**  
**fóru** 3*pl past* of **fara**  
**fóstr** <*gen* fósturs> *n* fostering of a child; **taka til fósturs** take as a foster child; **vera at fóstri** be a foster-child, be in a fostering relationship  
**fóstri** *m* foster-son  
♦ **fótr** <*dat* fœti, *gen* fótár, *pl* fætr, *acc* fætr> *m* foot, foot and leg  
♦ **fram** <*comp* fremr~framar, *superl* fremst~framast> *adv* forward  
**framan** *adv* from the front; **framan í hann** in his face  
**framar** (also **fremr**) *comp adv* of **fram** farthest forward  
**framast** (also **fremst**) *superl adv* of **fram** farthest forward  
**framí** *m* fame  
**frauð** *n* froth; juice  
♦ **frá** *prep* [*w dat*] from; about; *adv* away  
**frák, frá ek** from **fregna**  
**fránn** *adj* gleaming  
**fregna** <fregn, frá, frágu, freginn> *vb* hear of, informed; ask; **fr'ak** (fr'a ek) I heard  
**fregnvíss** *adj* curious  
**freista** <-að-> *vb* [*w gen*] try, make trial of  
**fremr** *var* of **framar**  
**fremst** *var* of **framast**  
**frest** *n* delay, respite; **lj'a** [*e-m*] **fresta** give [respite]  
**Freydis** <*acc/dat* Freyðisi *gen* Freyðisar> *f* Fre (*personal name*)  
**Freyja** *f* a fertility goddess  
**frétt** <*pl* -ir> *f* news  
**fríðr** <*dat* friði, *gen* friðar> *m* peace  
**Frigg** *f* Frigg, a goddess, wife of Odin  
**frilla** *f* mistress, concubine  
**fríðastr** *superl* of **fríðr**  
♦ **fríðr** <*f* frið, *n* frítt> *adj* beautiful, handsome, I  
**frost** *n* frost  
**Fróði** *m* Frodi (*personal name*)  
**fróðr** <*n* frótt> *adj* wise  
**frú** <frú~frúar, frúr> *f* mistress, lady  
**frægr** *adj* well-known  
♦ **frændi** <*pl* frændr> *m* kinsman, friend  
**fræði** *f* knowledge  
**Fröysteininn** (also **Freysteininn**) <-s> *m* Froys (*personal name*)  
**fugl** <-s, -ar> *m* bird  
**fuglakyn** *f* family or species of bird  
**fuglsrödd** *f* the speech of a bird, a bird's voice  
♦ **fullr** *adj* full  
**fullsteikinn** *ppart* fully roasted  
**fundinn** *ppart* of **finna**  
♦ **fundr** <-ar, -ir> *m* meeting; finding, disco  
**koma á fund** [*e-s*] come to a meeting with [s]  
**funl** *m* flame  
**fúna** <-að-> *vb* rot, decay  
**fúss** *adj* eager **fúss** [*e-s*] eager for [sth]  
**fylgð** *f* help, support; guidance; party, follower  
**fylgja** <fylgði, fylgt> *vb* [*w dat*] accompany; *fc* help, side with  
**fylki** *n* province  
**fylkja** <-ti, -t> *vb* [*w dat*] draw up (in battle arr  
**fylla** <-di, -dr> *vb* fill; complete; fulfill  
**fyr** *var* of **fyrir**  
♦ **fyrir** (also **fyr**) *prep* [*w acc/dat*] before, in fr

along, against; before, preceding, ago; above, superior to; for, on behalf of; for, because of; by, by means of; [*w acc only*] in spite of, against; [*w dat only*] at the head of (leading); *fyrir austan / norðan / sunnan / vestan* in the east / north / south / west ; *fyrir innan* [*w acc*] inside; *fyrir neðan* [*w acc*] below; *fyrir ofan* [*w acc*] above; *fyrir útan* [*w acc*] outside; out beyond; *fyrir adv* ahead, in front, before; first, before; at hand, present; *fyrir því at conj* because  
*fyrirbjóða* <-býðr, -bauð, -buðu, -boðinn> *vb* forbid  
*fyr(ir)nema vb* deprive one of speech, make silent  
 ♦ *fýrr comp adv* before, previously, sooner; *fýrr en conj* before, sooner than, until  
 ♦ *fýrri comp adj* former, previous; *comp adv (=fýrr)* before, previously, sooner  
*fýrnum adv* formerly, before  
*fýrst superl adv* of *fýrr* first

♦ *fyrstr superl adj* of *fýrr* first  
*fyrstr ord* first  
*fýsa* <-ti, -tr> *vb* urge  
*fær 3sg pres* of *fá*  
*fær(r)i comp adj* of *fár*  
*fæða* <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* feed; rear, bring up; *fæða upp* bring up; *fæðask mid* grow up, be brought up; be born; feed oneself, be fed; *fæðask upp* grow up, be brought up  
*færa* <-ði, -ðr> *vb* bring, present, convey, send, give  
*föður acc/dat/gen sg* of *faðir*  
*föðurkyn n* father's kin  
*föðursystir f* aunt, father's sister  
*fögr f nom sg* of *fagr*  
*för f* fare, journey; expedition  
*förum 1pl pres* of *fara*

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## G

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*gá 1/3sg past* of *gefa*  
*galeið* <*pl* *galeiðr~galeiðir*> *f* galley  
 ♦ *gamali* <*acc* *gamlan, f gömul, n gamalt, comp* *ellir~eldri, superl* *ellztr~elztr~ellstr~eldstr*> *adj* old  
*gaman* <*dat* *gamni*> *n* game, sport; pleasure, enjoyment, delight, joy  
*Gamli m* Gamli, the Old One (*personal name*)  
 ♦ *ganga* <*gengr, gekk, gengu, genginn*> *vb* walk; go; *ganga af* leave, go from; *ganga á* [*e-t*] encroach upon [sth]; *ganga til* go up to, go toward  
*ganga* <*gen göngu*> *f* a walking, course, procession  
*Gangleri m* Gangleri (*personal name, mythological*)  
 Wanderer, the false name adopted by the Swedish king Gylfi  
*garðr* <-s, -ar> *m* enclosed space, yard; fence; court; stronghold, castle  
*garpr* <-s, -ar> *m* a bold, daring, courageous, or warlike man or woman  
*gata* <*gen götu, pl götur*> *f* way, path, road  
*gaumr m* attention, heed; *gefa at* [*e-u*] *gaum* pay attention to [sth]  
*Gautar m pl* the Goths  
*Gautr* <-s> *m* Gaut (*personal name*)  
*gáfu 3pl past* of *gefa*  
*gás* <*gásar, gæss*> *f* goose  
 ♦ *gefa* <*gefr, gaf, gáfu, gefinn*> *vb* give, grant

*gefandi* <*gefanda, gefendr*> *m* giver  
*gegn* (also *í gegn*) *prep* [*w dat*] against  
*gegnum* (also *í gegnum*, older *gögnum*) *prep* [*w acc*] through  
*geirr m* spear  
*Geitir* <-is> *m* Geitir (*personal name*)  
*gekk 1/3sg past* of *ganga*  
*geldingr* <-s, -ar> *m* wether, gelded sheep  
*gengu 3pl past* of *ganga*  
 ♦ *gera* (also *göra*) <-ði, -ðr~gerr> *vb* make; do, act; *gera sér mikit um* [*e-n*] make much of or admire [sb]; *gerask mid* become, come to pass, occur, happen  
*gerði 3sg past* of *gera*  
*gerðisk 3sg past mid* of *gera*  
*gerðu 3pl past* of *gera*  
*gestr* <-s, -ir> *m* guest  
 ♦ *geta* <*getr, gat, gátu, getinn*> *vb* get; beget [*w gen*] speak of, mention; [*hon*] *man láta getit* [she] will have it told; *þess er getit* *impers* it is told; [*w ppart* of another verb] be able to; *geta veiddan fisk* be able to catch fish; *impers* [*w dat subj*] *getask at* [*e-m/e-u*] like, love [sb/sth]  
*geyja* <*3pl past gó*> *defect vb* bark; *geyja á* [*e-n*] abuse [sb]  
*gildir adj* worthy, great; of full value; [*w dat*] valued at

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↗ (einhvern) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; e-t (eittthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*;  
 ↗ (einhverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; e-s (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

**Gimlé** *m* Gimle, hall inhabited by Light Elves

**ginning** *f* deception, tricking

**Ginnlaug** <-ar> *f* Ginnlaug (*personal name*)

**Ginnungagap** *n* Ginnungagap, the yawning or gaping void, the primeval void from which the world is created

**gipta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* give away in marriage

**gína** <gínr, gein, ginu, ginit> *vb* gape, yawn

**gisl** *m* bailiff; warder; hostage

**gjald** *n* tribute; payment; reward; compensation; wergeld

**gjalda** <geldr, galt, guldu, goldinn> *vb* pay, repay; give; [w *gen*] pay for, suffer on account of

**gjalla** <gellr, gall, gullu, gollinn> *vb* yell, scream

**Gjallarhorn** *n* Gjallarhorn, Yelling Horn, the horn blown by the god Heimdall to announce the beginning of Ragnarok

**gjarm** *adj* eager, willing

**gjarna** *gjarnan* *adv* eagerly, willingly, very much

**gjósa** <gýsr, gaus, gusu, gosinn> *vb* gush, burst out; erupt

**glæðmæltr** *adj* cheerful in speech

**glæðr** *adj* glad, cheerful

**gleypa** <-ti, -tr> *vb* to swallow

**Glitnir** *m* Glitnir, silver hall belonging to the god Forseti

**glóa** <-að-> *vb* glow, shine, glitter

**glymja** <glymr, glumdi, glumiðr> *vb* dash noisily, clatter, rattle, clash

**gnaga** <-að-> *vb* gnaw

**gnesta** <gnestr, gnast, gnustu, gnostinn> *vb* crack, clash

**Gnítahelðr** *f* Gnitaheath, the health where Fafnir, as a dragon, lies upon great wealth

**gnúa** <gnýr, gneri, gneru, gnúinn> *vb* rub

**goð** *n* god

**goði** *m* chieftain; priest

**goðorð** *n* chieftaincy

**Gormr** <-s> *m* Gorm, first king of the Jelling dynasty in Denmark (*personal name*)

**góðan** *m* *acc sg* of **góðr**

♦ **góðr** <*f* **góð**, *n* **gott**; *comp* **betri**, *superl* **bezt**> *adj* good

**gólf** *n* floor

**graðungr** <-s, -ar> *m* bull

**grafa** <grefr, gróf, grófu, grafinn> *vb* dig

**Gramr** *m* the name of a sword

**granahár** *n* whisker

**Grani** *m* Grani, the name of Sigurd's horse

**grannligr** *adj* slender, slim

**gras** *n* grass; herb

**grár** *adj* gray; spiteful, malicious

**gráta** <grætr, grét, grétu, grátinn> *vb* weep, cry

**grátr** <-s> *m* weeping

**greiða** <-ddi, ddr> *vb* comb, unravel; prepare; speed, hasten; pay

**Grettir** *m* Grettir (*personal name*)

**grey** *n* dog, greyhound

**grét** 1/3*sg* past of **gráta**

**gríð** *n* *pl* terms of peace

**Grikland** *n* Greece, the Byzantine Empire

**Griklandseyjar** *f* *pl* the Greek Islands

**Griklandshaf** *n* the Aegean Sea

**grimmr** *adj* cruel, savage; severe, stern

**gripr** <-ar, -ir> *m* (costly) thing, treasure

**Grímr** <-s> *m* Grim (*personal name*)

**grípa** <gripr, greip, gripu, gripinn> *vb* grasp, seize

**grjót** *n* stone; hail of stones

**gróa** <grœr, greiðr~grœri, greiðr~grœru, gróinn> *vb* grow; heal

**grund** *f* a green field; ground; [*poet*] the earth, the green earth; **Atals grund** land of Atal (kenning for 'sea')

**grunnr** <-s, -ar> *m* bottom (of the sea or other body of water)

**græða**~**grœða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* make grow; heal; increase

**Grænland** *n* Greenland

**Grœnlendingr** <-s, -ar> *m* Greenlander

**grœnn** *adj* green

**grœr** 2/3*sg* pres of **gróa**

**gröf** <*gen* **grafar**; *pl* **grafir**~**grafar**> *f* pit; grave

**gröftr** *var* of **gröptr**

**gröptr** (*also* **gröftr**) <*dat* **grepti**, *gen* **graptar**> *m* digging, burial

**guð** *m*, God *cf* **goð**

**Guðbjörg** <*acc/dat* -björgu, *gen* -bjargar> *f* Guðbjörg (*personal name*)

**Guðbrandr** <-s> *m* Gudbrand (*personal name*)

**Guðmarr** <-s> *m* Gudmar (*personal name*)

**Guðormr** <-s> *m* Gudorm (*personal name*)

**Guðrøðr** <-s> *m* Gudrod (*personal name*)

**gull** *n* gold

**gullband** *n* golden collar

**gullbaugr** *m* gold ring

**gullhring** *n* a gold ring

**gullhyrndr** *adj* golden-horned, with horns of gold

**gullrekin** *ppart* inlaid with gold

**Gunnarr** <-s> *m* Gunnar (*personal name*)

**Gunnfúss** <-ar> *m* Gunnfus (*personal name*)

**Gunnhildr** <*acc/dat* **Gunnhildi**, *gen* **Gunnhildar**> *f* Gunnhild (*personal name*)

**Gunnlaugr** <-s> *m* Gunnlaug (personal name)  
**Guthormr** <-s> *m* Guthorm (personal name)  
**Gyða** *f* Gyða (personal name)  
**gyðja** *f* priestess  
**gyðir** *ppart* of *gylla*  
**Gylfi** *m* Gylfi, king in Sweden, name of a Viking (personal name)  
**gylla** <-di, -dr> *vb* gild  
**gyrða** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* gird, put on  
**Gyrgir** *m* Gyrgir, the Greek general Georgios Maniakes  
**gýgr** *f* giantess  
**Gýriðr** <acc/dat Gýriði, gen Gýriðar> *f* Gyrid (personal

name)  
**gæfumunr** *m* difference in fortune, turn or shift of luck  
**gæta** <gætti, gætt> *vb* [w gen] watch, tend, take care of  
**gætir** <-is, -ar> *m* keeper, guard  
**Gætir** <-ir> *m* Gaetir (personal name)  
**göfugr** <acc göfgan> *adj* noble  
**gögnun** *var* of *gegnum*  
**Göngu-Hrólfr** *m* Hrolf the Walker (personal name)  
**göra** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* (var of *gera*)

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H

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**haf** *n* sea, the high sea; **vestr um haf** westwards over the sea

♦ **hafa** <hef(i)r, hafði, haft> *vb* have; hold, keep; take; **hafa** [e-t] *i* hendi hold [sth] in one's hand; **hafa** [e-t] með sér take, bring [sth] with one

**hafir** <gen hafrs, pl hafrar> *m* goat

**Hafsfjörðr** *m* Hafrsfjord (place name)

**hafskip** *n* ocean-going ship

**hagi** *m* field, meadow

**hagliga** *adv* neatly, adeptly, skillfully

**hagr** *adj* skilled, handy

**hagr** *m* state, condition, affairs; means

**Haki** *m* Haki (personal name)

**haklangr** *adj* long-chinned

♦ **halda** <heldr, hélt, héldu, haldinn> *vb* [w dat] hold; keep, retain; **halda undan** fly, flee; **halda sveit** hold command over a troop; **halda upp** hold up; **halda við** [e-m] stand or hold against [sth]; **haldask** *mid* hold, last

**Halla** *f* Halla (personal name)

**Halland** *n* Halland, Denmark (place name) now part of Sweden

**Hallbjörn** *m* Hallbjorn (personal name)

**Hallfríðr** *f* Hallfrid (personal name)

**Hallgerðr** <acc/dat Hallgerði, gen Hallgerðar> *f* Hallgerd (personal name)

**Hallkatla** *f* Hallkatla (personal name)

**hallr** <f höll, n hallt> *adj* leaning, sloping; **hallr í**

**göngu** stooped, walking with a stoop

**Hallvarðr** <-s> *m* Hallvard (personal name)

**hæðri** *n* famine

**hamarr** <dat hamri, gen hamars, pl hamrar, acc hamra, dat hömrum, gen hamra> *m* hammer  
**hamr** <dat hami~ham, gen hams, pl hamir> *m* a skin, shape

**hana** *acc sg* of *hon*

**handa** *gen pl* of *hönd*, see also *tíl handa*

**handan** *prep* on the other side of

♦ **hann** <acc hann, dat honum, gen hans> *pron* he

**hans** *poss pron* his

**hans** *gen* of *hann*

**hanzki** *m* glove

**Haraldr** <-s> *m* Harald (personal name); **Haraldr blátönn** Harald Bluetooth, king of Denmark (958–987); **Haraldr harðráði** Harald the Ruthless, Norwegian King (1045–1066); **Haraldr hárfagri** Harald Fairhair also **Halraldr lúfa** Harald Shaggyhair, Norwegian king who reigned from ca. 860–930; **Klakk-Haraldr** Klakk-Harald

**harðhugaðr** *adj* ruthless, resolute

♦ **harðr** <f hörð, n hart> *adj* hard, difficult, severe

**harðráðr** *adj* hard in council, tyrannical, ruthless

**Hasvimýrar** *m pl* Hasvimyrar (place name)

**Hati** *m* Hati, the wolf that pursues the moon

**haugr** <-s, -ar> *m* burial mound

**haukr** <-s, -ar> *m* hawk

**haust** *n* autumn, harvest season

**hausta** <-að> *vb* draw near to autumn

**Hábrók** *f* Habrok (personal name)

**hádegi** *n* midday, noon

**Háey** *f* the Island of Hoy (place name)

**Hákon** <-ar> *m* Hakon (personal name); **Hákon jarl**

e-n (einhværn) = 'somebody,' acc.; e-t (eitthvat) = 'something,' acc.; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' dat.; e-u (einverju) = '(for) something,' dat.; e-s (einvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' gen.

**Grjótgarðsson** *m* Earl Hakon, son of Grjotgard, Stone-Fence  
**Hálfðanarhaugar** *m pl* Halfdan's mounds  
**Hálfðanr** <-ar> *m* Halfdan (*personal name*);  
**Hálfðanr svartl** Halfdan the Black, 9<sup>th</sup> century  
 Norwegian king and father of Harald  
 Shaggyhair/Fairhair  
 ♦ **hálf** *adj* half  
**háls** <*gen* háls, *pl* hálsar> *m* neck  
**hálsagör** *adj* half-told  
**hánun** *var* of honun  
**hár** <*f* há, *n* hátt, *dat pl* há(vu~fu)m, *comp* hæri, *superl* hæstr> *adj* high, tall, long; loud  
**Hár** *m* High, one of the three interrogators of King Gylfi  
**hár** *n* hair  
**hárfagr** *adj* fair-haired (*nickname*)  
**hásæti** *n* high-seat, throne, seat of honor  
**hátt** *adv* loudly; **hafa hátt** make an outcry  
**háttatal** *n* list of meters or verse forms  
**háva** *f acc sg strong* of hár  
**hávun** *n dat sg* of hár  
**heðan** (*also* **héðan**) *adv* from here, hence; **heðan af** from now on, henceforth  
**Heðinn** (*also* **Héðinn**) <*acc* Heðin, *dat* Heðni, *gen* Heðins> *m* Hedin (*personal name*); **Héðinn**  
**Hjarrandason** *m* Hedin Hjarrandi's son  
**hefði** *3sg & pl past subjunct* of hafa  
**hefja** <hefr, hóf, hófu, hafinn> *vb* lift, raise, heave; begin; hold; **hefja blót** hold sacrifices  
**hefna** <-di, -dr> *vb* [*w gen*] avenge, take revenge  
**hegat** *var* of hingat  
**Heiðmörk** *f* Heidmork (*place name*)  
**heiðr** <*acc/dat* heiði, *gen* heiðar, *pl* heiðar> *f* heath, moor  
**Heiðrún** *m* Heidrun, a goat that gives mead in Valhöll  
**heilagr** <*f* heilög, *n* heilagt; *contracted stem w vowel in ending*: *acc m* helgan> *adj* holy; protected  
 ♦ **heill** *adj* hale, sound, healthy, unscathed; healed; blessed, happy; whole, complete  
**heilsa** <-að-> *vb* [*w dat*] greet  
 ♦ **helm** *adv* home, homeward (*motion toward*)  
**helma** *adv* home, at home (*position*)  
**helman** *adv* from home  
**Heimdallr** <-s> *m* the watchman god, who guards the rainbow-bridge; one of the Æsir  
**helmr** <-s, -ar> *m* world; earth  
**helmta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* recover; claim  
**heft** *n* promise  
 ♦ **helta** <heitr, hét, hétu, heitinn> *vb* call, give a

name to; call, call on; (*intrans w pres heitir*) be called, be named; [*w dat*] promise  
**heiti** *n* name; synonym  
**heitr** *adj* hot  
**Hekja** *f* Hekja (*personal name*)  
**hel** <*dat* helju, *gen* heljar> *f* Hel, abode of the dead, separate from Valhalla, and ruled over by a goddess of the same name; death  
 ♦ **heldr** *comp adv* rather; [after *neg*] on the contrary  
**Helga** *f* Helga (*personal name*)  
**Helgi** *m* Helgi (*personal name*)  
**helgistaðr** *m* holy place  
**hella** <*gen pl* hellna> *f* flat stone, slate  
**hellustein** *m* flat slab of rock, flagstone  
**helmingr** *m* half; í **helminga** in halves; equally  
**helzk** *1/3sg past* of haldask  
**helzt** *superl adv* most willingly  
**hendl** *dat* of hönd  
**Hengjankjapta** *f* Hengjankjapta, a giantess killed by Thor  
**hennar** *gen sg* of hon her, hers  
**henni** *dat sg* of hon  
**heppinn** *adj* lucky  
**hepta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* bind, fetter; hold back, restrain  
**herað** (*also* **hérað**) <*pl* heruð~heröð> *n* district, country  
**herðar** *f pl* shoulders, upper part of back  
**herfang** *n* booty; at **herfangi** as booty  
**herja** <-að-> *vb* raid, harry; make war  
**Herjólf** <-s> *m* Herjolf (*personal name*)  
**Herjólfssfjörðr** *m* Herjolfssfjörðr (*place name*), Herjólf's Fjord  
**Herjólfssnes** *n* Herjolfssnes (*place name*), Herjólf's Headland  
**herkonungr** *m* warrior-king  
**Herlu-Bjarni Arnfinnsson** *m* Herlu-Bjarni, son of Arnfinn (*personal name*)  
**hermaðr** *m* warrior  
**hernaðr** <-ar> *m* plundering, raid  
**herr** <-jar, -jar> *m* army, troops  
**hersir** <-is, -ar> *m* regional military leader in Norway; chieftain  
**herskapr** *m* harrying, warfare  
**hertogi** *m* commander; duke  
**hervápn** *n pl* weapons  
 ♦ **hestr** <-s, -ar> *m* horse, stallion  
**heygja** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* bury in a mound  
**heyra** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* hear  
**héðan** *var* of heðan  
**Héðinn** *var* of Héðinn  
 ♦ **hér** *adv* here (*position*)

**hérað** *var of* **hérað**

**hét** 1/3sg past of **helta**

**Hildir** *f* **Hild** (*personal name*) battle

**Himnibjörg** *n pl* **Himnibjorg**, place where **Blifröst** enters **Ásgarðr**

**himinn** <dat himni, gen himins, pl himnar> *m* sky; heaven

**hingat** (*also* **hegat**) *adv* to here, hither; **hingat til** hitherto, up to this time, until now

♦ **hin** <*f* hin, *n* hitt> *dem pron* the other one; á **hin** **fótinn** on the other foot

**hinn**, **hin**, **hit** *art* = **inn**, **in**, **it**

**hinna** *f* membrane

**hirð** *f* a king's or earl's bodyguard; the king's men, retainers

**híra** <-rði, -rðr> *vb* mind, care for, hide, conceal; keep in a box or chest

**hírlir** <-is, -ar> *m* herdsman

**hírmadr** *m* king's man, retainer

**hirtir** *n pl* of **hjótr**

**hitta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* meet with, hit upon; hit; **hittask** *mid* meet one another

**Hjaðningavíg** *n* the Fight of the Hjadnings

**Hjaðningr** <*pl* Hjaðningar> *m* a Hjadning

**hjált** *n* hilt; sword guard; pommel

**Hjalti** *m* **Hjalti** (*personal name*)

**Hjarðarholt** *n* **Hjarðarholt**, Herd's Hill (*place name*)

**hjarta** <*pl* hjörtu> *n* heart

**hjartrablóð** *n* heart's blood

♦ **hjá** *prep* [*w dat*] by, near; with, at one's place

**hjálmr** <-s, -ar> *m* helm, helmet

**hjálp** *f* help

**hjálp** <helpr, halp~hjalp, hulpu, hólpin> *vb* [*w dat*] help, save

**Hjálprekr** *m* a legendary king

**hjó** 1/3sg past of **höggva**

**hjótr** <*dat* hirti, *gen* hjartar; *pl* hirtir, *acc* hjörtu> *m* hart, stag

♦ **hlaupa** <hleypr, hljóp, hljópu, hlaupinn> *vb* leap, spring; run; **hlaupa at** [*e-m*] leap at, assault [*sb*]

**hlaut** 1/3sg past of **hljóta**

**Hleiðargarðr** *m* **Hleiðargarðr**, the court of **Hrolf kraki**

**Hleiðra** (**Hleiðr**) *m* modern Lejre in Denmark; royal seat of king **Hrolf Kraki**

**Hlíðskjálf** *f* **Hlíðskjálf**, the seat on which **Odin** sits in his hall **Valaskjálf**

**Hlío** <*pl* -ir> *f* mountain-side, slope

**Hlíðarendi** *m* **Hlíðarendi**, Slope's End (*place name*)

**hlíf** <*pl* hlífar> *f* shield, cover, protection

**hlífa** <-ði, -t> *vb* [*w dat*] protect, shelter; show mercy

**hlífðit** = **hlífði** + *t* (*negative suffix*)

**Hlífsteynn** <-s> *m* **Hlífsteyn** (*personal name*)

**hljóta** <hlýtr, hlaut, hlutu, hlotinn> *vb* be allocated, receive

**hljóp** 1/3sg past of **hlaupa**

**hló** 1/3sg past of **hlæja**

**Hlórriði** *m* [*poet*] **Thor**

**hluti** *m* part

♦ **hlutr** <-ar, -ir> *m* lot; thing

**hlæja** <hlær, hló, hlógu, hleginn> *vb* laugh

**hníga** <hnígr, hné~hneig, hnigu, hniginn> *vb* sink, fall gently

**hnúka** <-ði~ti, -ðr~tr> *vb* sit cowering

**hnykkja** <-ti, -tr> *vb* [*w dat*] pull violently, yank

**hof** *n* temple (frequently a name for a farm)

**Hof** *n* **Hof** (*place name*)

**Hofsland** *n* the Hof estate

**Hofsverjar** *m pl* the people of Hof

**holr** *adj* hollow

**holt** *n* wood, forest; rough stony hill or ridge

♦ **hon** <*acc* hana, *dat* henni, *gen* hennar> *pron* she

**honum** (*also* **hánum**) *dat sg* of **hann**

**horfa** <-ði, horft> *vb* turn, look (in a particular direction); **horfa á** [*e-t*] look at [sth]

**horfinn** *ppart* of **hverfa**

**horn** *n* horn, drinking horn; corner

**hófsmaðr** *m* man of moderation

**hófu** 3pl past of **hefja**

**hógværr** *adj* gentle

**hóll** (*var of* **hváll**) <-s, -ar> *m* hill, hillock, knoll

**Hóll** <-s> *m* **Hol**, hill (*place name*)

**Hólmfastr** <-s> *m* **Holmfast** (*personal name*)

**Hólmgarðr** <-s> *m* **Holmgard** (*place name, modern Novgorod*)

**Hólmgarðsfari** *m* voyager to **Hólmgarðr**

**Hólmgautr** <-s> *m* **Holmgaut** (*personal name*)

**Hólmgeirr** <-s> *m* **Holmgeir** (*personal name*)

**hrafn** <-s, -ar> *m* raven

**hregg** *n* storm, storm and rain

**Hreiðarr** <-s> *m* **Hreidar** (*personal name*)

**Hreiðmarr** <-s> *m* **Hreidmar** (*personal name*); the father of **Otr**, **Fafnir** and **Regin**

**hreinn** <-s, -ar> *m* reindeer

**hreystimaðr** *m* a valiant man, champion

**Hringaríki** *n* **Hringaríki** (*place name*)

**hrista** <-ti, -tr> *vb* shake

**e-n** (einhvern) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; **e-t** (eitthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; **e-m** (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*; **e-u** (einhverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; **e-s** (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

**hríð** <pl -ir> *f* time, while; storm; attack, battle  
**hrím** *n* rime  
**Hrímpursar** *m pl* the Frost Giants  
**Hrotti** *m* the name of a sword  
**Hróðgelirr** <-s> *m* Hrodgeir (personal name)  
**Hrólfr** <-s> *m* Hrolf (personal name); **Hrólfr kraki**  
     Hrolf Kraki, legendary Danish king  
**hrósa** <-að-> *vb* [w dat] praise; boast (of)  
**hrukku** *3pl past* of **hrökkva**  
**Hrungnir** <-s> *m* Hrungnir, a giant killed by Thor  
     with his hammer  
**hrútr** *m* ram  
**HRÚTR** <-s> *m* Hrut (personal name) Ram  
**Hrútsstaðir** *m* Hrutstadir (place name) Hrut's  
     Farmstead  
**hrynja** <hrundi, hruninn> *vb* fall, collapse; flow,  
     stream; fall loosely (of clothing); **látum und**  
     **honum hrynja lukla** let keys jingle about him;  
     **hrynja á hæla** [e-m] shut upon one's heels  
**hræ** <pl gen hræva> *n* dead body, corpse, carrion  
**hræddr** *adj* afraid, frightened  
**hræða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* [w acc] frighten; **hræðask**  
     *mid* be frightened; **hræðask** [e-t] be afraid of  
     [sth]  
**Hrærekr** <-s> *m* Hroerekr (personal name)  
**hrökkva** <hrökk~hrekkr, hrökk, hrukku, hrokkin>  
     *vb* fall back, recoil  
**hugkvæmr** *adj* clever, crafty  
**hugr** <dat hug ~ hugi, gen hugar, pl hugir> *m* mind;  
     mood, heart, temper  
**hugsjúkr** *adj* distressed, anxious, worried  
**hulðu** *3pl past* of **hylja**  
**hunangsfall** *f* honey-dew  
**hundr** <-s, -ar> *m* hound, dog  
**hundrað** <pl hundruð> *n* hundred (*usu* followed by  
     noun in *gen*) (tólfrætt **hundrað** = 120, tírætt  
     **hundrað** = 100)  
**hungr** <-rs> *m* (*n* in younger texts) hunger; **svelta**  
     *hungri* starve, die of hunger  
 ♦ **hús** *n* house  
**húsaboer** *m* farmstead  
**húsfreyja** (also **hýsfreyja**) *f* housewife, *lit* house-  
     lady  
 ♦ **húskarl** *m* farmhand; king's man, retainer  
**hvaðan** *adv* from where, whence  
**hvalkváma** *f* stranding of a whale  
**hvalnum** *dat sg* of **hvalr**+inn, the whale  
**hvalr** <gen hvals, pl hvalir~hvalir> *m* whale  
**hvalríf** *n* whale-rib  
 ♦ **hvar** *interrog adv* where; **hvar sem** wherever  
**hvargi** *adv* everywhere; **hvargi sem** wherever,

wheresoever  
**hvas** <f hvöss, *n* hvasst> *adj* sharp, keen  
**hvat** *interrog pro* what  
**hváll** (also **hóll**) <-s, -ar> *m* hill, hillock, knoll  
 ♦ **hvárgi** <*n* hvárki~hvártki> *adj pron* neither (of  
     two); *conj* hvárki...né neither...nor  
**hvárki** *n* of **hvárgi**  
 ♦ **hvárr** *interrog pron* who, which (of two)?; *indef*  
     *pron* each (of two)  
 ♦ **hvártveggi** *indef pron* each of the two  
 ♦ **hvárt** *interrog adv* whether; **hvárt sem~hvárt er**  
     *conj* whether  
**hváruntveggjum** *dat pl* of **hvártveggi**  
**hveim** *dat* of a defective *pron* to whom, for whom  
**hverfa** <hverfr, hvarf, hurfu, horfinn> *vb* be lost, be  
     missing; disappear  
**Hvergelmir** *m* Hvergelmir Seething Well, the home of  
     Niðhögg and source of the rivers in Níflheimr  
**hvergi** (also **hverrgi**) *pron* each, every one  
**hvergi** *adv* nowhere; [w *gen*] nowhere on  
**hverir** *m nom pl* of **hverr**  
**hvern** *m acc sg* of **hverr**  
**hvernug** *adv* how  
 ♦ **hverr** <f hver, *n* hvert> *interrog pron* who, which?;  
     *indef pron* each, every, all  
**hverrgi** *var* of **hvergi**  
 ♦ **hversu** *interrog adv* how, just how  
**hvert** *adv* to where, whither; **hvert er** whithersoever  
**hvetja** <hvet, hvatta, hvöttu, hvattr> *vb* whet,  
     sharpen; encourage  
**hvé** *adv* how  
**Hvinir** *m* Hvinir (place name)  
**hví** *interrog adv* why?  
**hvítast** *superl* of **hvítr**  
**hvítr** <f hvít, *n* hvítt> *adj* white  
**hyggja** <hugði, hugðr~hugaðr> *vb* think, believe;  
     **hyggja at** [e-u] look at, consider [sth]  
**hykk** = **hygg ek**  
**hylja** <hulði~huldi, huliðr~huldr> *vb* bury, cover over,  
     conceal, hide  
**hylli** *f* loyalty, allegiance, favor  
**Hyrrokkin** *f* Hyrrokkin, a giantess killed by Thor  
**hýsfreyja** (*var* of **húsfreyja**) *f* housewife  
**hætta** <-tti, -tt> *vb* [w dat] risk, stake  
**hægr** *adj* easy, convenient; **hægri** *comp* right; the  
     right hand  
**hægri** *comp* of **hægr**  
**hæla** <-di, hœlt> *vb* [w dat] praise, flatter, boast of  
**Hœnir** *m* Hoenir, a god  
**hæta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* threaten  
**höfðingi** <gen -ja, pl -jar> *m* leader; chieftain; captain



**höfn** <gen hafnar, pl hafnir> *f* holding, possession; harbor  
 ♦ **höfuð** <dat höfði, pl dat höfðum, gen höfða> *n* head  
**höfuðsbani** *m* death  
**höfuðstaðir** *m* chief place; capital  
**högg** <dat höggvi> *n* blow, stroke, chop; beheading, execution  
**högg** 2sg imper of **höggva**  
**höggspjót** *n* broad-bladed spear  
 ♦ **höggva** <hæggr, hjó, hjoɡgu, högg(v)inn> *vb* strike (a blow), chop, hack, hew  
**Högni** *m* Hogni (*personal name*)  
**höll** <dat höllu, gen hallar, pl hallir> *f* hall

♦ **hönd** <acc hönd, dat hendi, gen handar, pl hendr, dat höndum, gen handa> *f* hand; af hendi [e-s] on behalf of [sb]  
**hörð** *f* nom & *n* nom/acc pl of **harðr**  
**Hörða-Knútr** <-s> *m* Horda-Knut (*personal name*)  
**Hörðaland** *n* Hordaland (*place name*)  
**hörr** <dat hörvi~hörr> *m* flax, linen  
**Höskuldr** <-s> *m* Hoskuld (*personal name*)  
**Höskuldsstaðir** *m* pl Höskuldsstaðir Höskuld's Farmstead (*place name*)  
**Hötrr** <dat Hetti, gen Hattar> *m* Hott (*personal name*) Hood (the Masked One)



**ljumaðr** *m* hard-working man  
**lgða** *f* a nuthatch  
 ♦ **illa** <comp verr, superl verst> *adv* badly, ill  
 ♦ **illr** <comp verri, superl verstr> *adj* bad, evil  
**illka** *f* badness  
**illt** *f* evil (treatment)  
**Ingibjörg** <gen Ingibjargar> *f* Ingibjorg (*personal name*); Ingibjörg Hróðgeirsdóttir ins hvíta Ingibjorg, daughter of Hrodgeir the White  
**Ingjaldr** <-s> *m* Ingjald (*personal name*); Ingjaldr tryggvi Ingjald the True  
**Ingólfr** <-s> *m* Ingolf (*personal name*)  
 ♦ **Inn** <comp innarr, superl innst> *adv* in, into

(*motion toward*)  
**Inn**, **In**, **It** *art* the  
**Inna** <-ti, -tr> relate, tell; inna til [e-s] make mention of [sb]  
**Innan** *prep* [w gen] within; **innan** *adv* from within, outward  
**Innanlands** *adv* within the land, at home (as opposed to abroad)  
**Inni** *adv* within, inside; in-doors  
**It** *n* of Inn



♦ **Í** *prep* [w acc] into (motion); during (time); [w dat] in, within, at (position)  
**íbraut** (also **í brott**) *adv* away  
**íggnum** *var* of **gegnum**  
**ímóti** *var* of **móti**  
**ínánd** *adv* nearby  
**ísamt** *adv* in a row  
**ísundr** *adv* asunder  
**í því** *adv* at that time  
**Íkorni** *m* squirrel

**Írakonungr** *m* King of the Irish  
**Írland** *n* Ireland  
**Írskr** *adj* Irish  
**Ísland** *n* Iceland  
**Íslendingabók** *f* Book of the Icelanders  
**Íslenzkr** *adj* Icelandic  
**íss** <gen íss, pl ísar> *m* ice  
**Ívarr** <-s> *m* Ivar (*personal name*)

## J

**jafn** <f jöfn, n jafnt> *adj* even, equal  
**jafna** <-að-> *vb* smooth, even out, tidy, trim;  
 make equal (*in comparisons*), equate; **jafna**  
 [e-u] til [e-s] liken [sth] to [sth]  
**jafnan** *adv* always; constantly, equally  
**jafnberr** *adj* equally exposed, naked, or unprotected  
**jafndjúpvitr** *adj* as deep-witted, as deep-scheming,  
 as resourceful  
**jafngamall** *adj* as old, of the same age  
**Jafnhár** *m* Just-as-High, one of three interrogators of  
 King Gylfi  
**jafnmikill** *adj* equally great  
**jafnungr** *adj* as young  
 ♦ **jarl** <-s, -ar> *m* earl  
**jarlsríki** *n* an earldom  
**jartegn** *n* token, evidence, proof (of a thing)

**Jófríðr** <acc/dat Jófríði, gen Jófríðar> *f* Jofrid  
 (personal name)  
**jól** *n pl* Yule, Yuletide, a great midwinter feast in  
 heathen times, later applied to Christmas  
**Jótland** *n* Jutland (place name)  
**jökull** <dat jökli, gen jökuls, pl jöklar> *m* glacier; ice;  
 icicle  
**jörð** <dat jörðu, gen jarðar; pl jarðir> *f* earth; land,  
 ground  
**Jörð** *f* Earth, as goddess and mother of Thor  
**Jörmungandr** *m* Jormungand, name of the Midgard  
 Serpent, the world serpent  
**jötunheimar** *m pl* the land of giants  
**jötunn** <dat jötni, gen jötuns, pl jötnar> *m* giant

## K

**kaðall** <dat kaðli, gen kaðals, pl kaðlar> *m* cable,  
 twisted rope  
**Kaldbak** *n* Cold-Back Mountain  
**Kaldbeklingar** *m pl* the men of Kaldbak  
**kaldr** <f köld, n kalt> *adj* cold  
 ♦ **kalla** <-að-> *vb* call  
**kallaðir** *ppart* of **kalla** (*m nom pl*)  
**kallaðr** *ppart* of **kalla** (*m nom sg*)  
**kambr** <-s, -ar> *m* comb  
**kanna** <-að-> *vb* search, explore, find out about;  
**kannask við** [e-t] recognize [sth]  
**kappi** *m* champion  
**karfi** *m* a fast coastal rowing ship  
**karl** <-s, -ar> *m* man; old man; Þorsteinn karl old  
 Thorstein, old man Thorstein  
**Karlstefni** *m* Karlstefni (personal name)  
**kasta** <-að-> *vb* throw, cast  
**kaupa** <keypti, keyptr> *vb* buy  
**kaupmaðr** *m* merchant  
**Kári Sölmundarson** *m* Kari Solmundarson (personal  
 name)  
**kátalaktús** *see* Michael kátalaktús  
**kátr** *adj* cheerful  
**Keila** *f* Keila, a giantess killed by Thor

**kemr** *3sg pres* of **koma**  
**kenna** <-di, -dr> *vb* know, recognize; feel; attribute;  
 teach  
**kenning** *f* poetical periphrasis or metaphor  
**kenningarnafn** *n* nickname  
**kent** *ppart* of **kenna**  
**kerling** *f* old woman  
**Ketill** <-s> *m* Ketil (personal name)  
**keypti** *3sg past* of **kaupa**  
**kirkja** *f* church  
**Kjallandi** *f* Kjallandi, a giant killed by Thor  
**Kjartan** <-s> *m* Kjartan (personal name)  
**Kjarvalr** <-s> *m* Kjarval (personal name)  
**kjöll** *m* ship (poet)  
**kjósa** <kýss, kaus~köri, kusu~kuru, körinn~kosinn> *vb*  
 choose  
**Kjötvi** *m* Kjetvi (personal name); Kjötvi inn auði  
 Kjetvi the wealthy  
**Klakk-Haraldr** <-s> *m* Klakk-Harald (personal name)  
**klettr** <-s, -ar> *m* rock, crag  
**Klifshagi** *m* Klifshagi (place name), Cliff Meadow  
**klífa** <klífr, kleif, klifu, klifinn> *vb* climb  
**kljúfa** <klyfr, klauf, klufu, klofinn> *vb* cleave, split  
**kyf** <pl -jar> *f* pack (for a horse)

**klæða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* clothe

**klæði** *n* cloth, (*pl*) clothes

**kná** <kná, *1pl pres* knegum, knátti, *past inf* knáttu>  
*defective pret-pres vb* be able to, can; could

**knálíga** *adv* hardily, vigorously

**knáligr** *adj* hardy, vigorous

**knerrir** *nom pl* of **knörr**

**kneyfa** <-ði, -ðr> *drink in large gulps*

**kné** <*dat pl* knjám, *gen* knjá> *n* knee

**knúta** *f* knuckle-bone

**knútr** <-s, -ar> *m* knot

**Knútr** <-s> *m* Knut (*personal name*); Knútr inn ríki,  
King Canute the Great

**knýja** <knýr, knýðir~knúði, knúinn> *vb* knock (at the  
door); press, urge on, compel, force; knýjask *mid*  
struggle on

**knörr** <*dat* knerri, *gen* knarrar, *pl* knerrir, *acc* knörru>  
*m* ship; merchant vessel

**Kolbeinn** <-s> *m* Kolbein (*personal name*)

**kollr** <-s, -ar> *m* top, summit; head

**kóm** *1/3sg past* of **koma**

♦ **koma** <kemr~kømr, kom, kómu~kvámu, kominn>  
*vb* come; koma at come to, arrive; koma at [e-u]  
come across, arrive at [sth]; koma ásamt með  
þeim they agreed; koma endr at regain; komask  
*mid* make one's way

**kominn** *ppart* of **koma**

**komnir** *m nom pl* of **kominn**

♦ **kona** <*gen pl* kvenna> *f* wife; woman

**konu** *acc/dat/gen* of **kona**

**konungastefna** *f* a meeting of kings

**konungdómr** *m* kingdom

♦ **konungr** <-s, -ar> *m* king

**konungsson** *m* prince

**korn** *n* grain, seed

**kostnaðr** <-ar> *m* cost, expense

♦ **kostr** <*gen* kostar, *pl* kostir, *acc* kosti~kostu> *m*  
choice; opportunity; match; state, condition; cost,  
expense; at öðrum kosti else, otherwise

**kómu** *3pl past* of **koma**

**krakl** *m* pole ladder; stake

**kraptr** *m* strength

**kráka** *f* crow

**krás** <*pl -ir*> *f* delicacy, dainty (of food)

**krefja** <krafði, krafðir~krefinn> *vb* crave, claim,

demand

**kringla** *f* circle, disk, orb

**kristinn** *adj* Christian

**Kristr** <-s> *m* Christ

**krjúpa** <krýpr, kraup, krupu, kropinn> *vb* creep;  
crouch

**Krossavík** *f* Krossavík, Cross Bay or Inlet, presumably  
an inlet where a cross was erected, a farmstead  
**kumbl** <*pl* kumbl> *n* burial monument, mound or  
cairn (frequently used on Danish and Swedish rune  
stones in the plural)

**kunna** <kann, kunni, kunnat> *pret-pres vb* can, know  
how to; feel (an emotion)

♦ **kunnigr** *adj* known; wise; versed in magic

**kunningi** *m* acquaintance

**kurteiss** *adj* courteous, well-bred

**kuru** *3pl past* of **kjósa**

**kussari** *m* corsair (corsairs were pirates who  
operated along the Barbary Coast of North Africa)

**kúla** *f* hump, hunchback

**kvað** *1/3sg past* of **kveða**

**kván** (also **kvæn**) <*pl -ir*> *f* wife

♦ **kveða** <kveðr, kvað, kváðu, kveðinn> *vb* speak,  
say; recite verse; kveða á fix, determine; kveða við  
reply; kveðask *mid* say of oneself; declare

♦ **kveld** *n* evening; at kveldi at nightfall

**kvelda** <-að-> *vb* [impers] become evening

**Kveld-Úlfr** <-s> *m* Kveld-Ulf, Night Wolf (*personal  
name*)

**kvennváðir** *f pl* women's clothing

**kverk** <*pl* kverkr> *f* the angle below the chin

**kvíkr** *adj* alive

**kvíkvendi** *n* a living creature

**kvæði** <*gen pl* kvæða> *n* poem

**kvæn** *var* of **kván**

**kyn** <*dat pl* kynjum, *gen* kynja> *n* kin; kindred

♦ **kyrr** *adj* still, quiet

**kyssa** <-ti, -tr> *vb* kiss

**kýr** <*acc/dat* kú, *gen* kýr, *pl* kýr, *dat* kúm, *gen* kúa> *f*  
cow

**kærleikr** *m* affection, friendship

**kømr** (*var* of **kemr**) *2/3sg pres* of **koma**

**körtr** <*gen* körts~kartar> *m* short, stocky man  
(*nickname*)

**kötttr** <kattar, kettir> *m* cat

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L

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**lag** <pl lög> *n* thrust, stab  
**lagit** *ppart* of **leggja** placed  
**lagt** *ppart* of **leggja** placed  
**lamði** 3*sg past* of **lemja**  
 ♦ **land** <pl lönd> *n* land; country; estate  
**landnám** *n* settlement, *lit* land-taking  
**Landnámabók** *f* Book of Settlements  
**landnámsmaður** *m* settler, *lit* land-take-man (the term refers to both women and men)  
**landráð** *n* the government of the land  
**landskyld** *f* land tax, property tax  
**landsmaður** *m* countryman, inhabitant or native of a country  
**landsréttir** *m* the law of the land, customary rights  
**langeldar** *m pl* long fires (down the middle of a hall)  
**langfeðgar** *m pl* forefathers, ancestors (through the father's line)  
**langhals** *m* long-necked (*nickname*)  
 ♦ **langr** <*f* löng, *n* langt, *comp* lengri, *superl* lengstr> *adj* long (of distance and time)  
**langt** *adv* for a long time  
**Laufey** *f* goddess, known only as mother of Loki  
**laug** <*dat* laugu, *pl* laugar> *f* bath; hot spring  
**lauk** 1/3*sg past* of **lúka**  
**lausafé** *n* movable property, as opposed to lands or even to land and cattle  
 ♦ **lauss** *adj* loose; free, unimpeded  
**laust** 1/3*sg past* of **ljósta**  
**lausung** <*dat* lausungu, *pl* lausungar> *f* lying, falsehood  
**laut** 1/3*sg past* of **lúta**  
**lax** <*gen* lax, *pl* laxar> *m* salmon  
**Laxárdalur** *m* Laxardal, Salmon River Valley  
**lá** 1/3*sg pret* of **liggja**  
**lágu** 3*pl past* of **liggja**  
 ♦ **láta** <lætr, lét, létu, látinn> *vb* let, allow, permit; put, place, set; behave; **láta fram** let go, yield, hand over; **láta sem** pretend, make or behave as if, *lit* let on as if; [*w infin*] have something done; *ppart* dead, deceased  
**látinn** *ppart* of **láta** dead, deceased  
 ♦ **leggja** <lagði, lagiðr~lagðr~laginn> *vb* lay, place, put; stab, thrust; **leggja á** impose; **leggja frá** withdraw; **leggja í spánu** smash into pieces; **leggja til** attack (by stabbing); **leggja til barðaga** attack; **leggja til [e-s] með [e-u]** attack [sb] with [sth];

**leggja undir sik** conquer; **lífit á leggja** lay down one's life; **leggjask mid** lay, set oneself; **leggjask á [e-t]** prey upon (of robbers, beasts of prey, etc), fall upon, attack [sth]; **leggjask niður** lay oneself down; **leggjask út** set out (into the wilderness to live as an outlaw)  
**leggr** <-jar, -ir> *m* leg; **leggr ok liður** every limb  
 ♦ **leið** <pl -ir> *f* road, path; way  
**leið** 1/3*sg past* of **líða**  
**leiða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* lead  
**Leiði** *m* Leid, a giant killed by Thor  
**leifa** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* leave, leave as heritage; to leave behind, abandon, relinquish  
**Leifr** <-s> *m* Leif (*personal name*)  
**leika** <leikr, lék, léku, leikit> *vb* play; **leika sér** play  
**leikr** <-s, -ar> *m* game, play, sport  
 ♦ **leita** <-að-> *vb* [*w gen*] seek, search for; proceed on a journey  
**leka** <lekr, lak, lákum, lekit> *vb* drip, dribble, leak  
**lemja** <lamði, lamiðr~lamdr~laminn> *vb* maim  
**lendr** *adj* describes one who has received a grant of land from a king, landed; **lendr maður** landholder  
 ♦ **lengi** <*comp* lengr (*time*), lengra (*distance*) *superl* lengst> *adv* long, for a long time  
**lengr** *comp adv* longer (*time*), for a longer time  
**lengra** *comp adv* longer (*distance*), farther  
**lengst** *superl adv* longest, for the longest time  
**lesa** <less, las, lásu, lesinn> *vb* gather; read  
**leyfa** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* [*w dat*] permit, allow  
**leyfi** *n* permission, leave  
**leyna** <-di, -dr> *vb* hide, conceal; **leynask mid** hide oneself, be concealed; **leynask í burt** steal away, leave  
**lék** 1/3*sg past* of **leika**  
**lét** 1/3*sg past* of **láta**  
**lézt** 2*sg past* of **láta**  
 ♦ **lið** *n* band of men, following, troops  
**liður** <*gen* liðar, *pl* liðir, *acc* liðu> *m* joint  
**lifa** <-ði, lifaðr> *vb* live  
 ♦ **liggja** <liggr, lá, lágu, leginn> *vb* lie  
**limar** *f pl* limbs, branches  
**litla** *f acc sg* of **lítill**  
**litlu** *n dat sg* of **lítill**  
**littr** <-ar, -ir> *m* color  
**Livsteinn** <-s> *m* Livstein (*personal name*)  
**líða** <líðr, leið, liðu, liðinn> *vb* pass (*usu of time*); **líða**

- at draw toward (of time); *sem leið at jólum* as time passed toward Yule
- líf* (also *lífi*) *n* life; *líft á leggja* lay down one's life
- lífi* *var* of *líf*
- lífiát* *n* loss of life, death
- lík* *n* body; corpse
- líka* <-að-> *vb* *impers* [*w dat subj*] like, be pleasing (to one)
- líki* *n* body; form, shape
- ◆ *líkligr* *adj* likely, probable
- líksamastr* *superl* of *líksamr*
- líksamr* *adj* merciful
- ◆ *líkr* *adj* like, resembling; probable; promising
- lín* *n* flax; linen, linen garment
- lína* *f* bowline, rope; line; bridal veil, (see also *lín*)
- Linakradalr* <-s> *m* Linakradale (place name), Valley of Linen Fields
- líta* <lítr, leit, litu, litinn> *vb* look; *líta á* [e-t] look at [sth]; *mið lítask* [e-m] appear (seem) to [sb]
- ◆ *lítill* <f lítil, n lítit> *adj* little; *lítila hrið* for a little while; *lítlu síðar(r)* a little later
- litt* *adv* little
- lízk* 2/3sg *pres* mid of *líta*
- ljá* <lér, léði, léðr> *vb* [*w gen*] lend; *ljá* [e-m] [e-s] lend [sb] [sth]
- Ljósálfar* *m pl* the Light Elves
- ljóss* *adj* light, bright
- ljósta* <lýstr, laust, lustu, lostinn> *vb* strike; *ljósta í hel* strike dead
- ljúga* <lýgr, laug~ló, lugu, loginn> *vb* lie, tell a lie; fail
- loðbrók* *f* shaggy-breech(es) (nickname)
- lofa* <-að-> *vb* praise
- logi* *m* flame, fire
- lokhvlla* *f* locking bed-closet
- Loki* *m* Loki, the trickster god
- lokrekka* *f* locking bed-closet
- lokrekjugólf* *n* locking bed-closet
- lopt* *n* sky, heavens, air
- lostinn* *ppart* of *ljósta*
- lófi* *m* palm of the hand; *holr lófi* open palm
- lund* <-pl -ir> *f* manner; mind, temper; *á þessa lund* in this manner
- lundr* <-ar, -ir> *m* grove
- lunga* *n* lung
- lúfa* *f* shaggy-hair (nickname)
- lúka* <lýkr, lauk, luku, lokinn> *vb* [*w dat*] close; end, conclude; shut
- lúta* <lýtr, laut, lutu, lotinn> *vb* bend down, bow
- Lútr* *m* Lut, a giant killed by Thor
- lygi* *f* lie, falsehood
- lykill* <dat lykli, pl luklar, acc lukla> *m* key
- lysta* <-ti, -tr> *vb* intend, wish to
- lýsa* <-ti, -tr> *vb* light up, illuminate; proclaim, announce; *impers* shine, beam; *lýsa* [e-u] proclaim [sth]; *lýslr af honum* light shines from him
- Lýtingr* <-s> *m* Lyting (personal name)
- læknir* <-is, -ar> *m* physician
- lætr* 2/3sg *pres* of *lata*
- lög* *n pl* law, laws
- lögberg* *n* law-rock (where the law was recited)
- lögðu* 3pl *past* of *leggja*
- lögligr* *adj* legal, lawful
- lögmaðr* *m* lawman
- lögretta* *f* legislature at the Althing
- lögsögumaðr* *m* law-speaker
- löngu* *adv* long, far off; long since
- löngum* *adv* a long time, constantly

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## M

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- ◆ *maðr* <acc mann, dat manni, gen manns, nom/acc pl menn, dat mönnum, gen manna> *m* man; person, human being
- maðligr* *adj* fitting, proper, becoming; deserving
- mala* <mélr, mól, mólu, malinn> *vb* grind
- mangi* *var* of *manngr*
- mannblót* *n* human sacrifice
- mannbroddr* *m* spike
- manndráp* *n* murder
- mannfólk* *n* mankind
- manngr* (also *mangr*) <gen mannskis> *pron* no man, nobody
- mannshönd* *f* a man's hand
- mannvit* *n* intelligence
- mannvænn* *adj* promising
- margbreytinn* *adj* fickle, capricious, unpredictable
- margkunnigr* *adj* learned (in magic)
- margmenn* *n* multitude, many

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e-n (einhvær) = 'somebody,' acc.; e-t (eitthvat) = 'something,' acc.; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' dat.; e-u (einhverju) = '(for) something,' dat.; e-s (einvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' gen.

♦ **margr** <f mörg, *n* margt~mart, *comp* fleiri, *superl* flestr> *adj* (*w sg*) many a; (*w pl*) many

**marka** <-að-> *vb* mark, draw; fix; mark as one's property; mark with an emblem; heed, mind; signify, mean; infer, observe; þar eptir mátt þú marka fegrð hans accordingly, you can judge his beauty

**marr** <-s, -ar> *m* horse, steed

**mart** *var* of *margt*, *n nom/acc sg* of *margr*

**matr** <-ar, -ir> *m* food

**mágr** <-s, -ar> *m* brother-, father-, or son-in-law; kinsman

♦ **mál** *n* speech, narrative, talk; language; saying; deliberation, discussion; case, matter, affair; [*leg*] suit, action, case

**málafylgjumaðr** *m* lawyer

**máli** *m* contract, agreement; ganga á mála take service

**málfeti** *var* of *málmfeti*

**máligr** *var* of *málugr*

**málmfeti** (*also* *málfeti*) *m* name for a horse; málmfeti varrar horse pulled by an oar (kenning for 'ship')

**málmr** *m* metal, ore

**málstefna** *f* meeting, conference

**málugr** (*also* *máligr*) <*m pl* máligr> *adj* talkative

**mánaðr** *var* of *mánuðr*

**máni** *m* moon

**mánuðr** (*also* *mánaðr*) <*gen* mánuðar, *pl* mánuðr> *m* month

**már** <*dat* mávi~máfi, *gen* más, *pl* mávar> *m* gull, sea-gull

**mástallr** *m* stall of the sea-gull (kenning for 'sea')

**mátt** *2sg past* of *mega*

**mátti** *3sg past* of *mega*

♦ **með** *prep* [*w acc*] with (in the sense of bringing, carrying, or forcing); [*w dat*] with (in the sense of accompanying or togetherness); sigla með landi sail along the coast; með *adv* as well, with it

**meðal** *prep* [*w gen*] among, between

**meðan** *conj* while, meanwhile, as long

♦ **mega** <má, mátti, mátt> *pret-pres vb* can, may; be able

**megin** *n* strength

**meiða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* injure, hurt, damage; meiðask *mid* become injured, hurt, damaged

**meiðmar** *f pl* treasures

**meiri** *comp adj* of *mikill*

**meir(r)** *comp adv* more greatly, more

**mella** *f* noose; [poet] giantess

**men** <*dat pl* menjum, *gen* menja> *n* necklace; [*pl*]

treasures, jewels

**menn** *nom/acc pl* of *maðr*

**merki** <*dat pl* merkjum, *gen* merkja> *n* boundary; banner, standard; token, mark, sign

**mest** *superl adv* mostly

**mestr** *superl adj* of *mikill*

**meta** <*metr*, *mat*, *mátu*, *metinn*> *vb* evaluate, value; set a price

**mey** *acc sg* of *mær*

**meydómr** *m* maidenhood, virginity

**mevjar** *gen sg & nom/acc pl* of *mær*

**mevju** *dat sg* of *mær*

**mér** *dat sg* of *ek*

**Michael kátalaktús** *m* Michael katalaktus (*personal name*)

**miðdegi** *see* *hádegi*

**Miðfjarðar-Skeggi** *m* Skeggi of Midfjord (*personal name*)

**Miðfjörðr** *m* Midfjord (*place name*)

**Miðgarðr** *m* Midgard, the Middle Enclosure, Middle Earth

**Miðgarðsormr** *m* Midgard Serpent, the serpent Jörmungandr that encircles the earth

**miðla** <-að-> *vb* share, hand out; miðla [e-t] við [e-n] share [sth] with [sb]

**miðnótt** *f* midnight

♦ **miðr** <*m acc* miðjan, *n nom* mitt> *adj* middle

**miðr** *comp adv var* of *minnr*

**miðr-aptan** *m* middle evening, six in the evening

**miðrdegi** *see* *hádegi*

**mik** *acc* of *ek*

♦ **mikill** <f mikil, *n* mikit, *comp* meiri, *superl* mestr> *adj* big, tall, great; much, very; mikill fyrir sér powerful, strong

**mikillátr** *adj* proud

**mikinn** *adv* hard, fast (*m acc sg* of *adj* mikill)

♦ **mikit** *adv* greatly

**Mikilgarðr** (**Miklagarðr**) *m* Constantinople

**miklu** *adv* much (*w comp*)

♦ **milli** *prep* [*w gen*] between (*also* á milli and í milli)

♦ **minn** <mín, mitt> *poss pron* my

**minna** <-ti, -tr> *vb* remind; minna [e-n] [e-s] remind [sb] of [sth]; *impers* minnir mik I remember; *mid* [*w gen*] minnask remember, call to mind

**minni** *comp adj* of *lítill*

**minnr** (*also* *miðr*) *comp adv* of *lítit*

**minnst** *superl adv* of *lítit*

**minnstr** *superl adj* of *lítill*

**mín** *gen* of *ek*

**Mímírl** *m* Mimir, one of the Æsir

**Mímisbrunnr** *m* Mimisbrunn, the Well of Mimir

**mjǫðr** <dat miði, gen mjaðar> *m* mead

♦ **mjök** *adv* much, very

**mjöl** <gen *pl* mjölva> *n* meal, flour

**mjölleyfi** *n* a license to export meal

**Mjöllnir** *m* the hammer of Thor

♦ **morginn** (also *morgunn*) <gen *morgins*, *pl* *mornar~morgnar*> *m* morning; á *morginn* tomorrow

**mosi** *m* moss; moorland

♦ **móðir** <acc/dat/gen *móður*, *pl* *mæðr*, *dat* *mæðrum*, *gen* *mæðra*> *f* mother

**móður** *acc/dat/gen sg* of *móðir*

**móðurbróðir** *m* mother's brother, uncle

**móðurætt** *f* kinsfolk on the mother's side of the family

**mór** <dat *mó*, *gen* *mós*, *pl* *móar*> *m* moor, heath

♦ **móti** (also á *móti* and í *móti*) *prep* [*w dat*] towards; against, contrary to

**móttaka** *f* resistance, defense, counter-attack; til *móttöku* to a defense, to counter-attack

**muna** <*man*, *mundi*, *munaðr*> *pret-pres vb* remember, call to mind

**munat** = *muna* + *t* (*negative suffix*)

**mundr** <-ar> *m* bride price

**munnr** *m* mouth

**munr** <-ar, -ir> *m* difference

♦ **munu** <*mun~man*, *mundi*, *past inf* *mundu*> *pret-pres vb* will, shall; to be sure to, must (*probability*);

would, must (*in past tense*)

**múgr** <-s, -ar> *m* crowd

**mús** <*pl* *mýss*> *f* mouse

**Múspellsheimr** *m* Muspellsheim, the Land of Fire

**mylla** <*pl* -ur> *f* mill

**mynda** *1sg past subjunct* of *munu* or *muna*

**myrkr** *adj* dark

**Mýrkjartan** <-s> *m* Myrkjartan (*personal name*)

**mýrr** <acc/dat *mýri*, *gen* *mýrar*, *pl* *mýrar*> *f* moor, bog, swamp

♦ **mæla** <-ti, -tr> *vb* say, speak; *leg mæla eptir* [*e-t*]/[*e-n*] take up the prosecution for [sth]/[sb] (who was murdered or wronged); *mæla við* [*e-n*] speak to or with [sb], say to [sb]

**mær** <acc *mey*, *dat* *meyju*, *gen* *meyjar*, *pl* *meyjar*, *dat* *meyjum*, *gen* *meyja*> *f* maid, girl, virgin

**mætta** *1sg past subjunct* of *mega*

**Maerr** <acc *Maeri*, *dat* *Maeri*, *gen* *Maerar*> *f* a region in West Norway

**mæta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* meet

**mögfellandi** *m* kin-slaying (one)

**mögr** <*dat* *megi*, *gen* *magar*, *pl* *magir*, *acc* *mögu*> *m* son, boy

**möl** <*gen* *malar*> *f* pebbles, gravel

**mön** <*gen* *manar*, *pl* *manar*> *f* mane

**Mörör** <*gen* *Marðar*> *m* Mord (*personal name*)

**mörg** *f nom sg & n nom/acc pl* of *margr*

## N

**nafn** *n* name

**nafnfrægr** *adj* famous

**nagl** <*pl* *negl*> *m* nail

**nam** *1/3sg past* of *nema*

**nauðgjald** *n* forced payment

**nauð(r)** *f* need, difficulty, distress; *ætla* [*e-t*] til *nauða* [*e-m*] intend [sth] as harm to [sb]

**nauðsyn** <*pl* *nauðsynjar*> *f* necessity

**nauðugr** *adj* unwilling, reluctant

**naut** *n* cattle, oxen

**ná** <*náir*, -ði, *nát*> *vb* [*w dat*] reach, catch, overtake; get, obtain; [*w inf*] be able to

**nágrindr** *f pl* gates of the dead

**nál** <*pl* -ar> *f* needle

**nálga** *adv* nearby; nearly, almost

**nánd** <-ar, -ir> *f* proximity

**nár** <*nás*, *náir*> *m* corpse, dead man

**nátta** <-að> *vb* become night, grow dark

**náttmál** *n* nine in the evening

**náttstaðr** *m* night-quarters

**náttúra** *f* natural ability

**neðan** *adv* from below, from beneath; *without motion* beneath, underneath

**nef** <*gen pl* *nefja*> *n* nose

**nefna** <-di, -dr> *vb* name, call

**nei** *adv* no

**nema** <*nemr*, *nam*, *námu*, *numinn*> *vb* take; claim land; hear; learn

♦ **nema** *conj* except, save, but; [*w subjunct*] unless  
**nes** *n* headland

**nest** *n* traveling provisions

♦ **né** *conj* nor; **hvárki...né** neither...nor; **né...né** not...nor

**niðr** <*dat* nið, *gen* niðjar~niðs, *pl* niðjar> *m* son, kinsman, relative through marriage

♦ **niðr** *adv* down

**Niflheimr** *m* Niflheim, the Underworld

**Niflhel** *f* Niflhel, Dark Hel, place for some dead

**níð** *n* insult

**Níðhöggr** *m* Nidhogg, the serpent which dwells in the spring Hvergelmir

**nítján** <*ord* nítjándi nineteenth> *num* nineteen

♦ **níu** <*ord* níundi, ninth> *num* nine

**njósn** <*pl* -ir> *f* news; spying, scouting, looking out

**njóta** <*nýtr*, *naut*, *nutu*, *notinn*> *vb* enjoy

**Njörðr** *m* Njord, god of the sea, one of the Vanir

**norðan** *adv* from the north

**Norðmaðr** <*pl* Norðmenn> *m* Northman, Norseman, Norwegian

**Norðmannalið** *n* a band of Norsemen

**Norðmannlí** *n* Normandy

**norðr** <-rs> *n* the north

**norðr** *adv* north, northwards

**Norðrlönd** <*dat* Norðrlöndum> *n pl* the Northern countries or region, Scandinavia

**Noregr** (also **Norvegr** or **Nóregr**) <-s> *m* Norway, *lit*

northern way

**nom** <*pl* -ir> *f* norn, one of the three fates; one of various supernatural females who shape people's fates

**norraena** *f* Norse, *lit* northern

**norraenn** *adj* Norwegian, *lit* northern

**Nóatún** *n* Njord's home, *lit* precinct of ships (*nóa*), i.e. sea, *see* **Njörðr**

♦ **nótt** (also **nátt**) <*gen* nætr, *pl* nætr> *f* night; of **nóttina** during the night

**numinn** *ppart* of nema

♦ **nú** *adv* now

**nýr** <*acc* nýjan, *f* ný, *n* nýtt> *adj* new

**nýra** *n* kidney

**næði** *3sg/pl past subjunct* of ná

♦ **nær** *prep* [*w dat*] near; **nær** *adv* almost, nearly

**nærri** *comp adv* nearer, very near

**næst** *superl adv* nearest, next; því **næst** thereupon

♦ **næstr** *superl adj* next; nearest

♦ **nökkurr** <*f* nökkur, *n* nökkut> *adj pron* any, anybody; some, a certain

**nökkut** *adv* somewhat

**nökkvi** <-a, -ar> *m* boat, ship

**Nörðrlönd** *var* of **Norðrlönd**

**Nörr** *m* Norr, (*personal name*)

## O

**of** *prep* [*w dat/acc*] over, for; *adv* too

♦ **ofan** *adv* from above, down; downwards; on the uppermost part, at the top of; [*w gen*] above the surface of

**ofan á** *prep* [*w acc*] down (from above) to

**ofan til** *prep* [*w gen*] down (from above) to

**ofn** <-s, -ar> *m* oven

♦ **ok** *conj* and; *adv* also

**okkar** *gen* of vit

**okkr** *acc/dat* of vit

♦ **okkarr** *poss dual pron* our

**opt** <*comp* optar *superl* optast> *adv* often

♦ **orð** *n* word; repute, fame, report; í öðru orði at the same time, likewise, *lit* in a second word

**orðit** *ppart* of verða

**orðstírr** *m* fame, renown

**Orkneyjar** *f pl* the Orkney Islands (*place name*)

**ormr** <-s, -ar> *m* snake, serpent, worm

**Ormr** <-s> *m* Orm (*personal name*); **Ormr inn auðgi**

Orm the Wealthy

**ormr-lauga** *n* Snake-in-the-Eye (*nickname*)

**ormslíki** *n* shape, form of a dragon

**orrosta** *f* battle; til orrostu to or for battle

**orrostumaðr** *m* warrior, man of battle

**oss** *acc/dat* of vér

**otr** <*gen* otrs, *pl* otrar> *m* otter

**otrbelgr** *m* otter pelt or skin

**otrgjöld** *n pl* wergeld, ransom, or compensation for a dead otter, Otter's ransom

**oxi** *var* of uxi



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ó- *neg pref* un-

óðæll *adj* difficult, quarrelsome, stubborn

óðal <pl óðöl> *n* ancestral property, patrimony,  
allodium, property held in allodial tenure

óðfúss *adj* madly keen, eager

Óðindisa *f* Odindisa (*personal name*)

Óðinn *m* Odin, chief god of the Æsir

óðr <f óð, n ótt> *adj* frantic; furious, vehement

óelrðarmaðr *m* unruly man

Ófeigr <-s> *m* Ofeig (*personal name*)

óframliga *adv* timidly

ófríðr <-ar> *m* war, strife

ógurligr *adj* awful, terrible

óhræddr *adj* unafraid

ójafn *adj* uneven, unequal

ójafnaðarmaðr *m* an overbearing, unjust man

ók 1/3sg *past* of aka

ókátr *adj* gloomy

ókembdr <n ókembt> *ppart* unkempt

Óláfr <-s> *m* Olaf (*personal name*); Óláfr pái Olaf the

Peacock

Ólöf <gen Ólafar> *f* Olof (*personal name*)

ólög *n* lawlessness

♦ ór (also úr) *prep* [w *dat*] out of, from, from inside  
of; made of

óráð *n* evil plan

óríkr *adj* weak

óskorinn <n óskorit> *ppart* uncut, unshorn

ósætt *f* disagreement

ótta *f* the last part of the night before dawn

óttask <-að-> *vb* be afraid

ótti *m* fear

óvandr *adj* unwary

óvinr *m* enemy

óvitrliga *adv* foolishly

óvægr *adj* harsh, unmerciful

óx 1/3sg *past* of vaxa

ópýðr *adj* unfriendly; intimidating

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P

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pallr *m* step; raised platform along the side(s) of a  
hall

papri *m* pope; priest. Name for the Irish anchorites  
said to be in Iceland when the first Norse settlers  
arrived.

pái (also pá) *m* peacock (*nickname*)

penningr *m* coin, penny; piece of property, article

prestr *m* priest

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R

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Ragnarr <-s> *m* Ragnar (*personal name*); Ragnarr  
loðbrók Ragnar Shaggy-breeches, a legendary  
Viking chieftain of the 9<sup>th</sup> century

ragnarök(k)r <-rs> *n* Ragnarok, the twilight of the  
gods, the world's end (also referred to as ragna  
rök *n pl* doom of the gods; see rök)

Ragnfróðr <-s> *m* Ragnfród (*personal name*)

Ragnhildr <acc/dat Ragnhildi, gen Ragnhildar> *f*  
Ragnhild (*personal name*)

Ragnvaldr <-s> *m* Ragnvald (*personal name*)

ragr <f rög, n ragt> *adj* effeminate, cowardly,  
(passively) homosexual

rammr <f römm, n rammt> *adj* strong; mighty,  
powerful; rammr at afli extremely strong

**Rangárvellir** *m pl* Rangarvellir (*place name*) Rang River Plains  
**rangr** <*f* röng, *n* rangt> *adj* crooked, unjust; wrong, false  
**Rannveig** <-ar> *f* Rannveig (*personal name*)  
**Ratatoskr** (*also* Ratatöskr) <-s> *m* Ratatosk, the squirrel that carries insults between Níðhöggr and the eagle  
**Rauð-Balli** *m* Red-Balli (*personal name*)  
**rauðr** <*f* rauð, *n* rautt> *adj* red (frequently as a descriptor for gold)  
**Raumaríki** *n* Raumaríki (*place name*)  
 ♦ **ráð** *n* advice, counsel; plan  
 ♦ **ráða** <ræðr, réð, réðu, ráðinn> *vb* [*w dat*] advise, counsel; rule, govern, manage; **réð löndum** ruled over (his) lands; **ráða at** attack; **ráða fyrir** [*e-u*] rule over [sth]; **ráða um við** [*e-t*] deliberate or think about [sth]  
**ráðagærd** <*pl -ir*> *f* council; **elga ráðagærd** take council  
**ráðsnjallr** *adj* wise in counsel  
**ráku** *3pl past* of reka  
**Refill** *m* the name of a sword  
**Refr** <-s> *m* Ref (*personal name*) Fox; **Refr inn rauði** Ref the Red  
**Refsstaðir** *m pl* Refsstaðir (*place name*) Ref's Farmstead  
**regin** <*dat pl* rögnum, *gen* ragna> *n pl* (divine) powers, gods  
**Reginn** <-s> *m* Regin; son of Hreidmar, brother of Fáfnir the dragon  
**regna** <-di, -t> *vb* rain  
**reiddisk** *2/3sg past* of reiðask  
**reið** *1/3sg past* of ríða  
**reiðask** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* become angry  
**reiði** *f* wrath, anger; **af reiði** in anger, out of anger  
**reiðl** *m* ship's equipment  
 ♦ **reiðr** *adj* angry, offended  
**reis** *1/3sg past* of rísa  
**reisa** <-ti, -tr> *vb* raise; **láta reisa stein** have a stone raised  
**reka** <rekr, rak, ráku, rekinn> *vb* drive, herd; drive onto shore, wreck; [*w gen*] take vengeance for; **reka spor** follow tracks or footprints  
**rekaviðr** *m* driftwood  
**rekl** *m* driftage, a thing drifted ashore, wreck  
**rekja** <rakði~rakti, rakið~rakðr~raktr> *vb* track, trace  
**rekkja** *f* bed; **fara í rekkju** go to bed  
**reknir** *ppart* of reka  
**renna** <rennr, rann, runnu, runninn> *vb intrans* run  
**renna** <-di, -dr> *vb trans* run; put to flight

**rerir** *3sg past* of róa  
**Rerir** <-s> *m* Reri (*personal name*)  
**reru** *3pl past* of róa  
**reyðr** <*acc/dat* reyði, *gen* reyðar, *pl* reyðar> *f* rorqual, large baleen whale  
**Reykjanes** *n* Reykjanes, Headland of Smoke (*place name*)  
**Reykjavík** *f* Reykjavík, Bay of Smoke (modern Reykjavík)  
**reyna** <-di, -dr> *vb* try, prove; experience  
**réð** *1/3sg past* of ráða  
**rétt** *adv* directly  
 ♦ **réttr** <*f* rétt, *n* rétt> *adj* straight; correct, right, just  
**réttr** <-ar> *m* law  
**ríf** <*dat pl* rifjum> *n* rib; reef (in the sea)  
**Rífsker** <*dat pl* Rífskerjum> *n* Rífsker (*place name*), Rocky or Rib Reef  
**rísta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* cut, carve, engrave  
**ríta** <-að-> *vb* write *var of* ríta  
 ♦ **ríða** <ríðr, reið, riðu, riðinn> *vb* ride  
**Ríkarðr** <-ar> *m* Richard  
**ríki** <*dat pl* ríkjum, *gen pl* ríkja> *n* power; realm; kingdom  
**ríkismaðr** *m* great man, prominent man, wealthy man, man of power  
 ♦ **ríkr** <*acc* ríkjan> *adj* powerful, mighty  
**rísa** <ríss, reis, risu, risinn> *vb* arise, rise, stand up; **rísa upp** rise up, get up  
**rísmál** *n* six in the morning  
**rísta** <rístr, reist, ristu, ristinn> *vb* cut; carve, engrave; carve, form by carving; **láta rísta rúnar** have runes carved  
**ríta** <rítr, reit, ritu, ritinn> *vb* write; scratch, cut  
**rjóða** <rýðr, rauð, ruðu, roðinn> *vb* reddening  
**rjúfa** <rýfr, rauf, rufu, rofinn> *vb* break; break a hole in; **rjúfa sáttmál** break an agreement or truce; (*impers*) **rýfr veðrit** the weather clears  
**Roðbertr löngumspaði** <-s> *m* Robert Longsword  
**Rogaland** *n* Rogaland (*place name*)  
**róa** <rœr, rœri~reri, rœru~reru, róinn> *vb* row  
**róðr** <*gen* róðrar, *pl* róðrar> *m* rowing, pulling  
**rógmálmr** *m* gold, metal of strife  
**rót** <*gen* rótar, *pl* rœtr> *f* root  
**róta** <-að-> *vb* [*w dat*] throw into disorder; **róta** [*e-u*] í sundr knock [sth] apart  
**rúm** *n* bed; space, seat  
**rún** <*pl -ar*> *f* secret, mystery; rune, a letter in the runic futhark  
**rygr** <-jar> *f* housewife  
**ræna** <-di, -dr ~ -ti, -tr> *vb* rob, steal, plunder; **ræna** [*e-n*] [*e-t*] rob [sb] of [sth]

**ræða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* speak; converse, discuss  
**rætr** *nom/acc pl* of **rót**  
**rög** *f nom sg & n nom/acc pl* of **ragr**  
**Rögnvaldr** <-s~ar> *m* Rognvald (*personal name*)  
**rök** *n pl* judgment, doom  
**rökðu** *3pl past* of **rekja**  
**rök(k)r** <-rs> *n* twilight

**røru** *3pl past* of **róa**  
**röskr** <*acc röskvan*> *adj* sturdy, vigorous, brave  
**röst** <*gen rastar, pl rastir*> *f* unit of distance between two resting places (perhaps equivalent to the Old Scandinavian mile)

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## S

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**saga** <*pl sögur*> *f* what is said, story, saga, tale, legend, history; **saga til** [e-s] a story about [sth]  
**sakar** *gen* of **sök**  
**sakeyrir** *m* fine  
**sakna** <-að> *vb* [w *gen*] miss, feel the loss of  
**salr** <*dat sal, gen salar, pl salir*> *m* hall  
 ◆ **saman** *adv* together  
**samför** <*pl samfarar*> *f* (*usu in pl*) relationship, marriage  
**sammæðr** *adj* of the same mother  
 ◆ **samr** <*f söm, n samt*> *adj pron* same; **lna sömu nótt** on the same night; **it sama** the same, likewise  
**sannnefni** *n* appropriate, truthful name  
 ◆ **sannr** <*f sönn, n satt*> *adj* true  
**sauðahús** *n* sheep pen, sheep-fold  
**sauðamaðr** *m* shepherd  
**sauðr** <-ar, -ir> *m* sheep  
**sautján** (*also sjautján*) <*ord sautjándi, seventeenth*> *num* seventeen  
 ◆ **sá** <*f sú, n þat*> *dem pron* that (one)  
**sá** <*sær, søri~seri, søru~seru, sáinn*> *vb* sow  
**sá** *1/3sg past* of **sjá**  
**sál** *f* var of **sála**  
**sála** *f* soul  
**sáld** *n* cask, vat  
**sámr** *adj* swarthy, blackish  
**sár** *n* wound  
 ◆ **sárr** *adj* wounded; painful, sore  
 ◆ **sáttr** *adj* reconciled, at peace  
**sátu** *3pl past* of **sitja**  
**sáu** *3pl past* of **sjá**  
**seggr** <*pl seggir, gen seggja*> *m* man  
 ◆ **segja** <*sagði, sagt*> *vb* say; **segja frá** [e-u] reveal, tell about [sth]; **segja** [e-m] **til** [e-s] tell, inform [sb] of [sth]; **segja til sín** give one's name

◆ **sekr** <*acc sekan~sekjan*> *adj* guilty; convicted, condemned to outlawry; **gera** [e-n] **sekan** condemn [sb] to outlawry  
**selja** <-di, -dr> *vb* hand over to another; sell; **seljast** *mid* give oneself up  
 ◆ **sem** *rel particle* who, which, that; *conj* as; (*w superl*) as ... as possible; where  
 ◆ **senda** <-di, -dr> *vb* send  
**sendimaðr** *m* messenger  
**senn** *adv* at once, straight away  
 ◆ **setja** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* set, seat, place; **setja til ríkis** put in power; **setja á** hurl at; **setja upp** set, stand up; **setja við** prepare; **setjask** *mid* seat oneself, sit  
 ◆ **sex** <*ord sétti, sixth*> *num* six  
**sex tígir** *num* sixty  
**sextán** <*ord sextándi, sixteenth*> *num* sixteen  
**seyra** *f* starvation  
**sezk** *2/3sg pres* of **setjask** (*setr + sk*)  
**sém** *1pl pres subjunct* of **vera**  
**sér** *dat* of **sik**  
**sér** *2/3sg* of **sjá**  
**sétti** *ord* sixth  
**Sif** *f* Sif, a goddess, the wife of Thor  
**Sigfaðir** *m* Victory-father, a name for **Óðinn**  
**Sighvatr** <-s> *m* Sighvat (*personal name*)  
**sigla** <-di, -dr> *vb* sail  
**sigla** *f* mast  
**Sighvatr** <-s> *m* Sighvat (*personal name*);  
**Sighvatr inn rauði** Sighvat the Red  
**Sigi** *m* Sigi (*personal name*)  
**Sigmundur** <-ar> *m* Sigmund (*personal name*)  
**Signý** <-jar> *f* Signy (*personal name*)  
**sigr** <-rs> *m* victory  
**sigra** <-að> *vb* to defeat  
**Sigríðr** <*acc/dat Sigríði, gen Sigríðar*> *f* Sigrid

(personal name)

**sigrsæll** *adj* victorious

**Sigröðr** <-ar> *m* Sigrod (personal name)

**Sigtrygg** <-s> *m* Sigtrygg (personal name)

**Sigurðr** <-ar> *m* Sigurd (personal name); **Sigurðr slefa** Sigurd the Slobberer

♦ **sik** <dat sér, gen sín> *refl acc pron* him-/her-/it-/oneself, themselves

**silfr** *n* silver

**silki** *n* silk

**silkitreyja** *f* the silken jacket

♦ **sinn** *n* time (of repetition); **eytt sinn** one time; **einu sinni** once; **hvert sinn** every

♦ **sinn** <f sín, n sitt> *refl poss pron* his, her, its, their own

♦ **sitja** <sitr, sat, sátu, setinn> *vb* sit; reside

**síð** <comp síðr superl sízt> *adv* late

**síðar** *var* of **síðarr**

**síðarr** (also **síðar**) *comp adv* of **síð**, later

♦ **síðan** *adv* then, later, afterwards

**síðr** *superl* of **síð**

**síga** <sígr, sé~seig, sigu, siginn> *vb* sink gently down; glide, move slowly

**Simon knútr** *m* Simon Knot (personal name)

**sín** *gen* of **sik**

**sína** *f acc sg* of **sinn**

**Síreksstaðir** *m pl* Sireksstadir (place name) Sirek's Farmstead

**sízt** *conj* since, for

**sízt** *superl adv* of **síð**

**sjaldan** *adv* seldom

**sjautján** *var* of **sautján**

♦ **sjau** <ord sjaundi, seventh> *num* seven

♦ **sjá** *var* of **þessi**

♦ **sjá** <sér, sá, sá(u), sénn> *vb* see, look; understand; **sjá á** [e-m] look upon [sb]

**sjái** *3sg & pl pres subjunct* of **sjá**

**Sjáland** *n* Zealand, Sjælland in modern Danish (place name)

♦ **sjálfr** *adj pron* self, oneself, himself, herself, itself, themselves

**sjávarafill** *m* catch of fish, bounty of the sea

**sjónhverfing** *f* optical illusion (caused by a spell)

**sjónlauss** *adj* blind, sightless

**sjór** <gen sjóvar~sjófar> *m* the sea; **fyrir ofan sjó** above the waterline

**skaði** *m* harm, damage; death

**skafa** <skefr, skóf, skófu, skafinn> *vb* scrape, shave

**skaka** <skekr, skók, skóku, skekinn> *vb* shake

**skal** *1/3sg pres* of **skulu**

**Skallagrímur** <-s> *m* Skalla-Grim, Bald-Grim

(personal name)

**skalt** *2sg pres* of **skulu**

♦ **skammr** *adj* short; brief

**skammt** *adv* a short distance, not far (place)

**skap** *n* state, condition; temper, mood

**skapa** <-að- or skepr, skóp, skópu, skapinn> *vb* shape, form, make, create

**skapt** <pl sköpt> *n* handle, shaft; **á hávu skapti** on a long shaft

**skarpr** <f skörp, n skarpt> *adj* scorched, pinched, chafing

**skattr** <-s, -ar> *m* tribute, tax

**skáld** *n* poet, skald

**skáldskaparmál** *n pl* poetic diction

**skáli** *m* main hall, sleeping hall

**skálm** <pl -ir> *f* short sword, cleaver

**Skáney** *f* Skåne, Denmark (place name), now part of Sweden

**skáru** *3pl past* of **skera**

**skegg** *n* beard

**skeinuhaettr** *adj* likely to wound

**skel** *f* shell

**skelfr** *2/3sg pres* of **skjálfa**

**skellr** <pl -ir> *m* blow, stroke

**sker** <dat pl skerjum, gen pl skerja> *n* skerry, isolated rock sticking out of the sea

**skera** <skerr, skar, skáru, skorinn> *vb* cut

**skikkja** *f* cloak

♦ **skilja** <-di~ði, skiliðr~skildir~skilinn> *vb* part, separate, divide; understand; **þá skilr á um** [e-t] *impers* they fall out over, differ, disagree about [sth]

**skillingr** <-s, -ar> *m* shilling, i.e. piece of money; *pl* money

**skilnaðr** <-s> *m* parting

**skinn** *n* skin, fur

**Skinna-Björn** *m* Bjorn Fur-Skins (personal name)

**sklinni** *m* skinner (nickname)

♦ **skip** *n* ship

**skipa** <-að-> *vb* arrange, array; man, occupy

**skipför** <gen skipfarar, pl skipfarar> *f* a voyage, sailing, passage of a ship

**skipt** *ppart* of **skipta** (*n nom/acc*)

**skipta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* [w dat] divide; share; change

**skipti** *n* division

**skið** *n* ski, piece of wood; **skið Atals grundar** ski of the land of Atal (kenning for 'ship')

**skið** *n* stick

**Skíði** *m* Skidi (personal name)

**skína** <skínr, skein, skinu, skinninn> *vb* shine

**Skínir** *m* Skinir (personal name)

**skjaldborg** *f* shield-wall, protection

**skjall** *n* the white membrane of an egg

**skjálfa** <skelfr, skalf, skulfu, skolfinn> *vb* tremble, shake

**skjóta** <skýtr, skaut, skutu, skotinn> *vb* shoot

**skjótliga** *adv* swiftly

**skóttligr** *adj* swift

**skjótr** *adj* quick

**skjött** *adv* suddenly

♦ **skjöldr** <dat skildi, gen skjaldar, pl skildir, acc skjöldu> *m* shield

**Skoll** *m* Skoll, the wolf that pursues the sun

**skorinn** *ppart* of skera

**skorta** <-ti, -t> *vb* be lacking to one; [**e-n**] **skortir** [**e-t**] [*sb*] is short of [*sth*]

**skot** *n* shooting, shot, missiles

**Skotland** *n* Scotland

**skógr** <-ar, -ar> *m* wood, forest

**skór** <dat skó, gen skós, pl skúar, acc skúa, dat skóm, gen skúa> *m* shoe

**skriða** <skriðr, skreið, skriðu, skriðinn> *vb* crawl

**Skrymir** <-s> *m* Skrymir, name of a giant

**Skuld** *f* Skuld (*personal name, mythological*) Debt, that which should become, one of the three Norns

♦ **skulu** <skal, skyldi, past inf skyldu> *pret-pres vb* shall (*obligation, purpose, necessity, fate*); should

**skurðr** <-ar, -ir> *m* a cutting, slice; a trench; the flensing of a whale

**skúr** *f* shower

**Skútaðar-Skeggi** *m* Skeggi of Skutad (*personal name*)

**skyld** <pl -ir> *f* tax, due; incumbrance (on an estate); reason, sake

♦ **skyldr** *adj* bound, obliged; due; urgent; related by kinship

**skyldu** *3pl past* of skulu

**skyli** *3sg & pl pres subjunct* of skulu

**skynda** <-di, -dr> *vb* [*w dat*] hurry

**skyr** *n* curdled milk

**ský** <gen pl skýja> *n* cloud

**Sköfnungr** (*also Sköflungr*) *m* Skofnung, possibly Shin Bone, the name of King Hrolf's sword

**skökull** <dat skökli, gen skökuls> *m* harness

**skör** <gen skarar> *f* locks, hair

**skörungur** <-s, -ar> *m* a notable man or woman, leader

**slá** <slær, sló, slógu, sleginn> *vb* strike

**slefa** *f* saliva, slobber, slobberer (as nickname)

**Sleipnir** *m* Sleipnir, Odin's horse

**sleppa** <sleppr, slapp, sluppu, sloppinn> *vb* slip; escape, slip away; fail, slip up

**slíðrar** (*also slíðrir*) *f pl* sheath, scabbard

**slíðrir** *var* of slíðrar

♦ **slíkr** *adj* such

**slíkt** *adv* in such a way

**sló** *1/3sg past* of slá

**smalamaör** *m* shepherd

**smár** <*f* smá, *n* smátt> *adj* small

**smíðja** <-u, -ur> *f* smithy

**smíðr** *m* smith

**smj** <smýgr, smaug~smó, smugu, smoginn> *vb* creep through an opening; pierce

**smjör** <dat smjörvi> *n* butter

**Smjörvatnsheiðr** *f* Smjörvatnsheid (*place name*), Butter-Lake Heath

**sneiða** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* slice; glance off

**snemma** (*also snimma*) <comp snemr, superl snemst> *adv* early

**snemr** *comp* of snemma

**snerta** <snetr, snart, snurtu, snortinn> *vb* touch; concern

**snimma** *var* of snemma

**snjófa** <-að> *vb* snow

**snjór** <gen snjóvar~snjófar> *m* snow

**snúa** <snýr, sneri~snøri, sneru~snøru, snúinn> *vb* turn; twist, plait, braid; **snúask til** turn oneself to

**Snaekólf** *m* Snaekolf (*personal name*)

**sofa** <sofr~sefr, svaf, sváfu, sofinn> *vb* sleep

**sofna** <-að> *vb* fall asleep; **vera sofnaðr** have fallen asleep

**sokkr** <-s, -ar> *m* sock, stocking; **einir sokkar** a pair of socks

**sonargjöld** *n pl* wergeld, ransom, or compensation for a dead son

**sonarsonr** *m* grandson

♦ **sonr** <dat syni, gen sonar, pl synir, acc sonu> *m* son

**Sónadalr** *m* Sognadale (*place name*)

**sól** <dat sól~sólu> *f* sun; day

**sólskli** *n* sunshine

**sómi** *m* an honor

**Sótanes** *n* Sotaness (*place name*)

**sótti** *3sg past* of sækja

**sóttu** *3pl past* of sækja

**e-n** (einhvern) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; **e-t** (eitthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; **e-m** (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*; **e-u** (einhverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; **e-s** (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

**spaði** *m* spade, shovel  
**spakara** *comp adv* of *adj* **spakr** more wisely  
**spakr** <*f* spök, *n* spakt> *adj* wise  
**spáþáði**, *vb* prophesy, foretell  
**spánn** (also **spónn**) <*dat* spæni, *gen* spánar, *pl* spænir, *acc* spæni> *m* chip, shaving; spoon  
**spekð** (also **spekt**) *f* peace; wisdom  
**speki** *f* wisdom  
**spekingr** <-s, -ar> *m* wise person, sage  
**spekt** (also **spekð**) *f* peace; wisdom  
**spilla** <-ti, -tr> *vb* [*w dat*] spoil, destroy  
**spillir** *m* spoiler; **spillir bauga** spoiler of rings, generous prince  
**spinna** <*spinnr*, *spann*, *spunnu*, *spunninn*> *vb* spin  
 ♦ **spjót** *n* spear, lance  
**Spjútr** <-s> *m* Spjut (*personal name*)  
**spor** *n* track, trail, footprint; step, foothold  
**spónn** *var* of **spánn**  
**spretta** <*sprettr*, *spratt*, *spruttu*, *sprottinn*> *vb* spring up, burst forth; start, spring; sprout  
**springa** <*springr*, *sprakk*, *sprungu*, *sprunginn*> *vb* jump, spring; issue forth; burst; die from overexertion or grief  
**spurði** *3sg past* of **spyrja**  
**spurðusk** *3pl past mid* of **spyrja**  
 ♦ **spyrja** <*spurði*, *spurðr*> *vb* ask; hear, hear of, learn, be informed of, find out; **spyrja til** [*e-s*] have news of [*sb*], learn of [*sb*]; **spyrja** [*e-n*] at [*e-u*] ask [*sb*] about [*sth*]; **spyrjask mid**  
**spörr** <*pl* sparvar> *m* sparrow  
**staddr** (*ppart* of **steðja**) placed, present; situated  
 ♦ **staðr** <*dat* stað~staði, *gen* staðar, *pl* staðir> *m* stead, parcel of land; place, spot; abode, dwelling  
**stafr** <*gen* -s, *pl* stafar~stafir> *m* wooden staff, stick; pole, timber  
**stalli** <-a, -ar> *m* altar (heathen)  
**stallr** <-s, -ar> *m* stall; pedestal  
 ♦ **standa** <*stendr*, *stóð*, *stóðu*, *staðinn*> *vb* stand; stay, remain; stand, stick; rest, stop; befit, become; catch, overtake; **standa af** [*e-u*] be caused by [*sth*]; **standa undir** [*e-u*] be subject to [*sth*]; **standa undir** [*e-t*] support, approve of [*sth*]; **standa við** [*e-u*] withstand [*sth*]; **standa yfir** last  
**stanga** <-að> *vb* ram, (head)butt, gore (of cattle); **stangask mid** butt each other  
**starf** *n* work  
**steði** <*gen* steðja> *m* anvil  
**steðja** <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* stop; fix, settle

**stefna** <-di, -dr> *vb* aim at, go in a certain direction; call, call together, summon  
**stefna** *f* direction, course; meeting; appointment; summons  
**steikja** <-ðirti, -ðitr> *vb* roast  
**steina** <-di, -dr> *vb* paint  
**Steinbjörn** *m* Steinbjorn, Stone-Bear (*personal name*)  
**steinn** <-s, -ar> *m* stone; cave or stone dwelling; [*poet*] precious stone, jewel  
**Steinn** <-s> *m* Stein (*place name*) Stone  
**steint** *ppart* of **steina**  
**stela** <*steir*, *stal*, *stálu*, *stolinn*> *vb* steal  
**sterkastr** *superl* of **sterkr**  
 ♦ **sterkr** *adj* strong  
**stikubliðr** *m* stick-gazer, miser (*nickname*)  
**stinnr** *adj* stiff, unbending, strong  
**stirðr** <*n* stirt> *adj* stiff, rigid; harsh, severe  
**stirt** *adv* harshly  
**stíga** <*stígr*, *sté~steig*, *stígu*, *stígninn*> *vb* step, tread; **stíga á hest** mount a horse  
**stjarna** <*gen* stjörnu, *pl* stjörnur> *f* star  
**stjórna** <-að> [*w dat*] rule over, govern, command  
**stjórnsamr** *adj* ambitious, overbearing  
**stofa** *f* stove room, a room in a long house, secondary to the **eldaskáli** and warmed by a stove of flat stones; served as a living room, where women worked the looms, families sat in the evenings, and feasts were held  
**stokkr** <-s, -ar> *m* trunk or log of wood; wooden beam; base under an anvil  
**stolinn** *ppart* of **stela**  
**stormr** *m* storm  
**stóð** *1/3sg past* of **standa**  
**stóll** <-s, -ar> *m* stool, chair; bishop's see; king's throne or residence  
**stórlátr** *adj* proud, haughty, arrogant  
**stórmannliðr** *adj* magnificent, grand  
**stórmennska** *f* magnanimity  
**stórmerki** *n* *pl* great wonders  
 ♦ **stórr** <*comp* stærri, *superl* stærstr> *adj* big  
**strandhögg** *n* a shore raid, piracy; **höggva strandhögg** engage in piracy  
**Strandir** *f* *pl* Strandir (*place name*), the Strands  
**straumr** <*gen* straums, *pl* straumar> *m* stream  
**strá** <-ði, -ðr> *vb* strew, spread  
**strengja** <-da, -dr> *swear* solemnly; string tight  
**strjúka** <*strýkr*, *strauk*, *struku*, *strokin*> *vb* stroke, rub, wipe; caress; smooth, brush  
**strönd** <*dat* ströndu~strönd, *gen* strandar, *pl* strendr~strandir> *f* strand, coast, shore; border,

- edge  
**stund** *f* a while, a time; hour  
**stundum** ... **stundum** *conj* sometimes ... some-times, at times ... at times  
**stýra** <-ði, -t> *vb* [*w dat*] steer, command; rule, govern; manage  
**stýrmaðr** *m* captain, steersman  
**stöðlinum** = **stöðli** + **inum**, *dat sg of stöðull*  
**stöðull** <*dat stöðli*> *m* milking pen (for cows)  
**stöðva** <-að-> *vb* stop, halt  
**stökk** 1/3*sg past of stökkva*  
**stökkva** <stökk, stökk, stukku, stokkinn> *vb* spring, burst, leap; be sprinkled  
**stöng** <stangar, stangir~steng> *f* staff, pole  
**suðr** <-rs> *n* south  
**suðr** *adv* south, southwards  
**Suðreyjar** *f pl* the Hebrides (from a Norwegian perspective, *lit* the South Isles)  
**Suðrlönd** *n pl* the Southlands, Germany  
**Suðrmaðr** *m* South-man, southerner; a German, a Saxon  
**Suðr-Rygirnir** *m pl* South Rogalanders  
**suðrœnn** *adj* southern  
**sultr** <-ar> *m* hunger  
 ♦ **sumar** <*pl sumur*> *n* summer; **um sumarit** in the summer; **hvert sumar** every summer  
**sumir** *m nom pl of sumr*  
 ♦ **sumr** *adj pron* some  
**sumra** <-að> *vb* draw near summer  
**sumur** *n nom/acc pl of sumar*  
**sundfærr** *adj* able to swim; **sundfærr of sæ** sea-worthy, *lit* able to swim over the sea  
**sundr** *adv* asunder  
**sunna** *f* sun  
**sunnan** *adv* from the south  
**Sunnudalr** *m* Sunnudal (*place name*)  
**Surtr** *m* Surt, the lord of **Múspellsheimr**  
**sú** <*acc pá, dat þeir(r)i, gen þeir(r)ar*> *f sg dem of sá* that (one)  
**Súðvirkir** *n* Southwark (*place name*)  
**Súlki** *m* Sulki (*personal name*)  
**súpa** <*sýpr, saup, supu, sopinn*> *vb* sip, drink; take a sip  
**svaf** 1/3*sg past of sofa*  
**svafr** *adj* cool  
**svaltz** *variant of svalzt*  
**svalzt** 2*sg past of svelta*  
**svanr** <-s, -ir> *m* swan  
**Svanr** *m* Svan, Swan (*personal name*)  
**svar** <*pl svör*> *n* answer, reply  
 ♦ **svara** <-að-> *vb* [*w dat*] answer  
**svardagi** *m* oath  
**Svartálfheimr** *m* Svartálfheim (*place name, mythological*) world of the dark elves  
**svartr** <*f svört, n svart*> *adj* black  
**Svartr** *m* Svart (*personal name*), Black  
 ♦ **svá** *adv* so, thus; such; then; so (*denoting degree*); **svá at** such that, with the result that; **svá sem** so as, as; **svá mikill at** so great  
 ♦ **sveinn** <-s, -ar> *m* boy, lad; servant; page  
**Sveinn tjuguskegg** <*gen Sveins*> *m* Svein Forkbeard, king of Denmark (987–1014)  
**sveit** <*pl sveitir*> *f* group or body of men; troop, band, company; region, district  
**sveiti** *m* sweat, blood  
**svelgja** <*svelgr, svalg, sulgu, sólgin*> *vb* swallow  
**svelta** <*sveltr, svalt, sultu, soltinn*> *vb* die (of starvation); starve, suffer hunger; **svelta hungri** starve, die of hunger  
 ♦ **sverð** *n* sword  
**sverðsegg** *f* sword's edge  
**sverja** <*svarði, svarðr or sverr, sór, sóru, svarinn*> *vb* swear (an oath)  
**svimma** <*svimmr, svamm, summu, summin*> *vb* swim  
**svipan** *f* swing, blow  
**Svipdagr** <-s> *m* Svipdag (*personal name*)  
**svipstund** *f* moment  
**svipta** <-ti, -tr> *vb* sweep; throw, fling  
**Svíar** *m pl* the Swedes  
**svíða** <*svíðr, sveið, sviðu, sviðinn*> *vb* singe, burn  
**svikja** <*svíkr, sveik, sviku, svikinn*> betray, deceive, cheat, defraud  
**Svívör** *f* Svivor, a giantess killed by Thor  
**Svíþjóð** *f* Sweden  
**svör** *nom/acc pl of svar*  
**syngva** <*syngir, söng, sungu, sunginn*> *vb* sing  
**syni** *dat of sonr*  
**systir** <*acc/dat/gen systur, pl systir*> *f* sister  
**sýna** <-di, -dr> *vb* show; **sýnask** *mid* seem, appear  
**sýnum** *adv* by sight, apparently  
**sæhafa** *indecl adj* sea-tossed, driven off one's course; **verða sæhafa** be driven off-course  
**Sæhrímnir** *m* Sæhrímnir, the boar who feeds the warriors in **Valhöll**  
**sæll** *adj* fortunate, happy

**sær** <acc *sæ*, *dat* *sævi~sæ*, *gen* *sævar*> *m* the sea  
**sæta** <-tta, -tt> *vb* [*w dat*] wait in ambush, waylay;  
 undergo, suffer; bring about, cause  
**sætt** <*pl* *sættir*, *dat* *sáttum*, *gen* *sátta*> *f*  
 settlement, reconciliation, atonement,  
 agreement; *at sætt* as atonement  
**sætta** <-tti, -ttr> *vb* reconcile; make peace among;  
*sættask mid* come to terms, settle, agree, be  
 reconciled  
**sættusk** *3pl past mid* of *sætta*  
 ♦ **sækja** <*sótti*, *sótttr*> *vb* seek; pursue; *sækja til*  
*[e-s]* seek out [sb]  
**sæmð** *f* honor

**saenskr** *adj* Swedish

♦ **sök** <*gen* *sakar*; *pl* *sakar~sakir*> *f* cause, reason,  
 sake; *fyrir [e-s]* *sakar* on account of, because of  
*[sth]*

**sök** *f* thing, case

**sökkva** <*sökk*, *sökk*, *sukku*, *sokinn*> *vb* sink

**söm** *f nom sg* & *n nom/acc pl* of *samr*

**sömu** *str n dat sg*, *wk f acc/dat/gen sg* & *all wk*  
*nom/acc/gen pl* of *samr*

**söng** <-s, -var> *m* song

## T

♦ **taka** <*tekr*, *tók*, *tóku*, *tekinn*> *vb* take, catch, seize;  
 take hold of, grasp; reach, touch; [*w inf*] begin;  
*impers [e-t]* *taka af* [sth] comes loose, comes off;  
 [sth] ceases; *taka arf* inherit; *taka [e-t] á [e-u]*  
 touch [sth] with [sth]; *taka [e-m]* *fegins hendi*  
 receive [sb] gladly, joyfully; *taka í sundr* cut  
 asunder; *taka [e-n]* *höndum* seize or capture [sb];  
*taka upp [e-t]* pick up [sth]; *taka við [e-m]* take in,  
 receive, or welcome [sb] into one's house; *taka við*  
*[e-u]* receive, take possession of, acquire, inherit  
 [sth]; *taka til* begin

**tal** *n* talk, parley, conversation

♦ **tala** <-að-> *vb* talk, speak; *tala við [e-n]* speak to  
 [sb]

**telja** <*talði~taldi*, *talið~taldri~talinn*> *vb* count;  
 reckon, consider

**temja** <*temr*, *tamði~tamdi*, *tamði~tamdr*, *taminn*> *vb*  
 tame; train, exercise

**Temps** *f* the river Thames

**tigr** <*gen* *tigar*; *pl* *tigir*, *acc* *tigu*> *m* ten; a decade

♦ **til** *prep* [*w gen*] to; of; on; too

**til handa** *prep* [*w dat*] for

**tilkall** <*pl* *tilköll*> *n* claim

**tillagagóðr** *adj* well-disposed, reliable

**tillit** *n* look, glance (*cf* *líta*)

**tíðara** *comp adv* of *adj tíðr*

**tíðendi** *var* of *tíðindi*

♦ **tíðindi** (*also* *tíðendi*) *n pl* news, events, tidings

**tíðr** *adj* frequent

**tíðum** *adv* often

**tími** *m* time

**tíróðr** *adj* counted by tens, ten tens

♦ **tíu** <*ord* *tíundi*, *tenth*> *num* ten

**tívar** *m pl* gods (*plural only*, in poetic usage)

**tjalda** <-að-> *vb* pitch a tent

**tjaldat** *ppart* of *tjalda*, tented; with its awning up

**toddi** *m* bit, piece, morsel (*nickname*)

**topt** <-ir> *f* homestead; the walls or foundations of a  
 (former) building

**Toptavöllr** *m* Toptavoll (*place name*)

**tók** *1/3sg past* of *taka*

**tóku** *3pl past* of *taka*

♦ **tólf** <*ord* *tólfth*, *twelfth*> *num* twelve

**tólfraðr** *adj* counted by twelves, twelve tens

**tómliga** *adv* slowly

**tómr** *adj* slow

**tré** <*dat* *tré*, *gen* *trés*, *pl* *tré*, *dat* *trám*, *gen* *trjá*> *n*  
 tree; wood

**tréna** <-að-> *vb* dry up

**troða** <*treðr~trøðr*, *trað*, *tráðu*, *treðinn*> *vb* tread;  
 cram, pack; *troðask (mid)* crowd upon each other

**troll** (*also* *tröll*) *n* monstrous inhuman creature;  
 human with troll characteristics

**trollkona** *f* troll-wife, a giantess

**trúa** (*also* *trú*) <*trú*> *f* faith, word of honor, religious  
 faith, belief

**trúa** <-ði, trúat> *vb* believe

**trúr** *adj* true

**tryggvi** *m* the True (*nickname*)

**tröll** *var* of *troll*

**tunga** *f* tongue; language, tongue; tongue of land a  
 the meeting of two rivers

**tuttugu** <*ord* *tuttugandi~tuttugundi*, *twentieth*> *num*  
 twenty



tún *n* enclosure, farmstead; hayfield, homefield;  
 [poet] dwellings, precincts  
 ♦ tveir <f tvær, *n* tvau, *acc m* tvá, *dat* tveim(r), *gen*  
 tveggja, *ord* annarr, second > *num* two  
 typpa <-ti~typði, -tr~typðr> *vb* top, crown  
 týja <3sg *pres* týr, 3sg *past* týði> *vb* do, work; [w *dat*]  
 help, assist; *impers* avail, týði ekki it was of no

avail  
 tæla <-di, -dr> *vb* trick, betray  
 tækl 3sg & pl *past subjunct* of taka  
 tönn <*gen* tannar, pl tenn~tennr~teðr> *f* tooth

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## U

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Uðr *var* of Unnr  
 ulfr *var* of úlfr  
 ull <*dat* ullu> *f* wool  
 ullarlagðr *m* tuft of wool  
 ♦ um *prep* [w *acc*] about; around; across; for,  
 because of; beyond; during, for, in, by (*time*); [w  
*dat*—in poetic and older texts] over; by, in (*time*);  
 [w *vb* of motion] over, past, beyond, across  
 um *adv*, *pre-verbal particle* (untranslatable, but  
 carrying connotation of completion)  
 um þvert *adv* (diagonally) across  
 umhverfis *prep* and *adv* around  
 una <-ði, *unat*> *vb* dwell, stay, abide, live at; [w *dat*]  
 enjoy, be happy in, be content with a thing unðu  
 þeir þar lítila hríð they did not like staying there  
 but for a little while  
 und *prep* w *acc/dat* under  
 ♦ undan *prep* [w *dat*] from under, from beneath;  
 away from; just off, near to  
 undarilgr *adj* strange  
 ♦ undir *prep* [w *acc/dat*] under, underneath  
 undirhyggjumaðr *m* a guileful or deceitful person  
 unðu 3pl *past* of una  
 ♦ ungr <*comp* yngri, *superl* yngstr> *adj* young

unna <*ann*, *unni*, *unnt*~*unnat*> *pret-pres vb* grant,  
 allow, bestow; [w *dat*] love; unna [e-m] [e-s] let  
 [sb] have [sth]  
 unnit *ppart* of vinna  
 Unnr (also Uðr) <*acc* Unni, *dat* Unni, *gen* Unnar> *f*  
 Unn (*personal name*)  
 unnu 3pl *past* of vinna  
 uns *var* of unz  
 unz (also uns) *conj* until, till  
 ♦ upp *adv* up, upward (*motion toward*)  
 upphiminn *m* heaven (above)  
 uppl *adv* up (*position*); vera uppl to live, last  
 upplenzkr *adj* of or pertaining to the Uplands  
 (Norwegian highlands)  
 Upplönd *n pl* Uplands (*place name*) Norwegian  
 highlands  
 Uppsallr *m pl* Uppsala (*place name*)  
 Urðarbrunnr *m* Urðarbrunn, the Well of Fate  
 Urðr *f* Urd, Fate, that which should become, one of  
 the three Norns  
 urðu 3pl *past* of una  
 uxi (also oxli) <*acc/dat/gen* uxa, pl yxn~øxn, *dat*  
 yxnum~øxnum, *gen* yxna~øxna> *m* ox

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## Ú

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Úlfar *m* Ulfar (*personal name*)  
 úlfr <-s, -ar> *m* wolf  
 úr *var* of ór  
 ♦ út *adv* out, outward (*motion toward*), out to  
 Iceland  
 ♦ útan *adv* from outside; from abroad, from Iceland,

from without; (*without motion*) outside  
 útanverðr *adj* the outward, outside, outer part of  
 útar *comp adv* farther out  
 útarliga *adv* far out  
 Útgarðr *m* Utgard, the Outer Enclosures, the home  
 of the giants (*place name*)

úti *adv* out (*place*), outside, out-of-doors

útlagi *m* an outlaw

útlendr *adj* foreign

## V

vaða <veðr, óð, óðu, vaðinn> *vb* wade (through water); rush (at an opponent)

vagn <-s, -ar> *m* wagon, vehicle

vaka <-ti, vakat> *vb* be awake

vakna <-að-> *intrans vb* awake, get up

Valaskjálf *f* Valaskjalf, Odin's silver-roofed hall

vald *n* power

Valdres *n* Valdres, a highland region in Norway

Valhöll *f* Valhalla, the Hall of the Slain

Valir *m pl* the inhabitants (*esp* Celtic) of France

valkyrja *f* a chooser of the slain, valkyrie

Valland *n* France

valr *m* corpses on the battlefield, the slain

valr <-s, -ir> *m* hawk

vandahús *n* wicker house

vandamál *n* complicated case, difficult matter

vandi *m* habit; custom

vandliga *adv* carefully

vandr *adj* difficult

Vanir *m pl* one of the two major groups of gods

vann 1/3sg past of vinna

♦ vanr *adj* accustomed, wont; vanr [e-u] accustomed to [sth]; usual

var 1/3sg past of vera

varð 1/3sg past of verða

varðveita <-tta, -ttr> *vb* keep, preserve, watch, defend

vargr <-s, -ar> *m* wolf

varla *adv* hardly, scarcely

varmr *adj* warm

♦ varr <f vör, n vart> *adj* aware; cautious, wary

vas (older form of var) 1/3sg past of vera

vatn <gen vatns~vatz~vaz, pl vötn> *n* water, fresh water; lake

vaxa <vex, óx, óxu, vaxinn> *vb* grow

vá 1/3sg past of vega

vágr <-s, -ar> *m* bay, inlet; wave, sea

Vágr *m* Vag, Bay (*place name*)

vágskorinn *pp* vágr + skorinn, bay-cut, cut with bays or inlets

vágu 3pl past of vega

ván <pl vánir> *f* hope, expectation, prospect

♦ vándr *adj* (qualitatively) bad, wretched; (morally) bad, wicked

♦ vápn *n* weapon

vápnadr *ppart* armed

Vápnafjörðr *m* Vapnafjord, Weapon's Fjord

vápnjarfr *adj* fearless, daring in battle; Inn

vápnjarfasti the most fearless in battle

vápnfærr *adj* skilled in arms

♦ vár *n* spring

vár *gen* of vér our (*pl*)

Vár *f* perhaps a goddess associated with pledges;

Várar hendi by the hand of Var

vára <-að> *vb* draw near spring

várar *f pl* oath, solemn vow

♦ várr *pass pl pron* our

várþing *n* spring assembly

veð <dat pl veðjum, gen veðja> *n* pledge

veðr *n* weather; wind; storm

Veðrfölnir *m* Vedrfolnir, the hawk which sits between the eyes of the eagle atop Yggdrasill

vefa <vefr, óf~vaf, ófu~váfu, ofinn> *vb* weave

vega <vegr, vá, vágu, veginn> *vb* kill, slay; fight

veggj <dat vegg, gen -jar~-s, -ir> *m* wall

♦ vegr <gen vegar~vegs, pl vegir~vegar, acc vegu~vega> *m* way, road; mode, manner; direction; side

veiða <-ddi, -ddr> *vb* catch; hunt

veiðr <acc/dat veiði, gen veiðar, pl veiðar> *f* hunting, fishing, catch

veit 1/3 pres sg of vita

veizla *f* feast

veiztu = veizt þú 2sg pres of vita, you know

♦ veita <-tti, -ttr> *vb* grant, give, offer; assist; veita [e-m] atgöngu attack [sb]; veita [e-m] atlögu attack [sb]; veita atróðr set out rowing (toward); [e-m] veita betr [sb] has the better of it; veita tilkall make a claim

veizla *f* feast, banquet

vekja <vakði~vakti, vakiðr~vaktr~vakinn> *trans vb* wake, awake; vekja [e-n] upp wake [sb] up

♦ vel <comp betr, superl bezt~bæzt> *adv* well; very; vel at sér gifted, capable

velli *dat sg of völlr*

♦ vera <er, var, váru, verit> *vb* be; last; vera fyrir lead; vera þar fyrir be there present; vera vel at kominn be welcome; vera við be present, take part in

♦ verða <verðr, varð, urðu, orðinn> *vb* become, happen; have to; verða at [e-u] become [sth]; verða at grjóti turn to stone; verða at sætt reconcile; verða sæhafa be driven off-course (when sailing)

Verðandi *f* Verdandi (personal name, mythological) Becoming or Happening, one of the three norns

♦ verðr *adj* [w *gen*] worthy; verðr [e-s] worthy of [sth]

ver-gjarn *adj* eager for men, lustful

verit *ppart of vera (n)*

verja <varði, variðr~varðr> defend, verja [e-u] keep [sth] away; verjask (*mid*) defend oneself

verk *n* work

verpa <verpr, varp, urpu, orpinn> *vb* throw

verr <-s, -ar> *m* [poet] husband; [pl] men

verr *comp adv* worse

verri *comp adj* of illr and vándr, worse

verst *superl adv* of illa, worst; sem verst as bad as it can be, as bad as possible

verstr *superl adj* of illr and vándr

veröld *f* world

vesall *adj* pathetic, miserable, wretched

vestan *adv* from the west

Vestfold *f* Vestfold (place name)

vestr <*gen* vestr> *n* west; *adv* westward, vestr um haf, west over the ocean (to Britain)

vestri *comp of vestr*

Veströnd *n pl* the Weslands, the British Isles and France

vestrvegir *m, pl* the west, i.e., toward the British Isles and beyond, lit the western ways

vestroenn *adj* western

♦ vetr <*gen* vetrar, *pl* vetr> *m* winter; um vetrinn for the winter

vetra <-að> *vb* draw near winter

vexti *dat of vöxtr*

Véfastr <-s> *m* Vefast (personal name)

vél *f* deceit, trick

vér <*acc/dat* oss, *gen* vár> *pron we (pl)*

♦ við *prep* [w *acc*] at, by, close to; with; according to, after; [w *dat*] against; toward; with

viðartaug <*pl -ar*> *f* a flexible and tough twig

viðr <*gen* viðar, *pl* viðir, *acc* viðu> *m* tree; forest, wood; timber

viðtaka <*gen* viðtöku, *pl* viðtökur> *f* reception

vika *f* week

Vilhjálmr *m* William (personal name); Vilhjálmr bastarðr *m* William the Conqueror, illegitimate son of Robert Longsword

vill *m* desire

♦ vilja <2/3sg pres vill, vildi, viljat> *vb* wish, want

vill 2/3sg pres of vilja

vinaboð *n* feast for one's friends

vinátta *f* friendship (esp a sincere, personal friendship)

vinda <vindr, vatt, undu, undinn> *vb* twist, wring, squeeze; wind, hoist; turn, swing; vindask (*mid*) make a sudden movement, turn oneself away

vindr <*gen -s~-ar*> *m* wind, air

vinfengi *n* friendship (esp a contractual alliance)

vingóðr <*f* vingoð, *n* vingott> *adj* good towards one's friends, friendly

Ving-bórr *m* [poet] brandishing-Thor

vinna <vinnr, vann, unnu, unninn> *vb* gain, win; work; perform, accomplish; vinna herskap á [e-m] win battles against [sb]

♦ vinr <-ar, -ir> *m* friend

♦ vinsæll *adj* beloved, popular

virða <-ði, -ðr> *vb* evaluate, value, appraise

virðing *f* respect, value

vist *f* food, provisions; stay; abode

vit *n* sense, wit, intelligence, understanding

vít <*acc/dat* okkr, *gen* okkar> *pron we (dual)*

♦ vita <veit, vissi, vitaðr> *pret-pres vb* know; vita fram or vita fyrir know the future, foresee

vitandi *pres part of vita*, knowing

vitja <-að-> *vb* [w *gen*] go to a place; visit

♦ vitr <*acc* vitran> *adj* wise, intelligent

vitrast *superl of vitr*

viða *adv* widely, far and wide

viðfrægr *adj* widely-renowned, famous

viðr *adj* wide

♦ víg *n* battle; homicide, manslaughter, killing

vígja <-ði, -ðr> *vb* consecrate, hallow

vígr *adj* able to fight; vígr vel well-skilled in arms

vígvöllr *m* battlefield

vík <*gen* víkr, *pl* víkr> *f* bay

Vík *f* Vik, Bay (place name)

Víkin *f* the Vik region, Oslo fjord

víking <*pl -ar*> *f* raid; í víking on a raid

e-n (einhvern) = 'somebody,' *acc.*; e-t (eitthvat) = 'something,' *acc.*; e-m (einhverjum) = '(for) somebody,' *dat.*; e-u (einhverju) = '(for) something,' *dat.*; e-s (einhvers) = '(of) somebody or something,' *gen.*

**víkingavörðr** <-varðar, -verðir> *m* Viking-Guard (coast guard against Vikings)  
**víkingr** <-s, -ar> *m* Viking  
**víkja** <víkr, veik, viku, vikinn> *vb* [*w dat*] move, turn; *impers nú víkr sögunni* now the saga shifts  
**Víkmaðr** *m* man from Vik  
♦ **vísa** *f* verse  
**Vísburrr** <-s> *m* Visbur (*personal name*)  
**vísindi** *n pl* knowledge, intelligence  
♦ **víss** *adj* certain; wise; known  
**víst** *adv* certainly  
**vísundr** <-s, -ar> *m* bison  
**vítt** *adv* far  
**vægð** *f* mercy, forbearance  
**vængr** <-jar, -ir> *m* wing  
♦ **vænn** *adj* beautiful, fine, handsome; likely, to be expected; hopeful, promising  
**vænta** <-ti, vænt> *vb* [*w gen*] expect, hope for  
**væri** *3sg & pl past subjunct* of *vera*  
**Væringi** <*pl*/Væringjar> *m* Varangian, the name of the Norse warriors who served as bodyguards to the

emperors of Constantinople in the Varangian Guard  
**vætr** *n indecl* nothing  
**vættir** <*dat* vætti, *gen* vættar, *pl* vættir> *f* creature, being; supernatural being, spirit  
**vöðvi** *m* muscle  
**Vöggr** *m* Vogg (*personal name*)  
**völlr** <*dat* velli, *gen* vallar, *pl* vellir, *acc* völlu, *gen* valla> *m* field, plain  
**Völlr** *m* Voll, field (*place name*)  
**völuspá** *f* the sybil's prophecy  
**völva** <*gen* völu, *pl* völu> *f* seeress, sybil  
**vörðr** <*dat* verði, *gen* varðar, *pl* verðir, *acc* vörðu, *gen* varða> *m* warden; coastguard, watchman  
**vörr** <*dat* verri, *gen* varrar, *pl* verrir, *acc* vörru> *m* a pull of an oar  
**vöxtr** <*dat* vexti, *gen* vaxtar, *pl* vextir, *acc* vöxtu> *m* size, stature, growth; shape

Y

**yðarr** (*also* **yðvarr**) *poss pl pron* your  
♦ **yðr** *acc/dat* of *pl pron þér*, you  
**yðru** *n dat* of **yðarr**  
**yð(v)ar** *gen* of *pl pron þér*  
**yðvarr** *var* of **yðarr**  
♦ **yfir** *prep* [*w acc/dat*] over, above, across  
**Yggdrasill** *m* Yggdrasil, name of the World Tree  
**ykkar** *gen* of *dual pron þit*  
**ykkarr** *poss dual pron* your

**ykkir** *acc/dat* of *dual pron þit*, you  
**yigr** <-jar> *f* she-wolf  
**Ymir** *m* Ymir (*personal name*)  
**yngrir** *comp* of *ungr*  
**yrkja** <*corti*, *ortr*> *vb* work, *esp* cultivate; compose (verses); **yrkja á** [*e-t*] set about; *mid* attack one another, **yrkisk á um** [*e-t*] it begins  
**yxnum** *dat pl* of *uxi*

Ý

**ýrit** (*also* **ærít**) *adv* sufficiently  
**ýtri** *comp adj* outer, outermost

**ýztr** *superl adj* outermost

## Z

**Zóe dróttning in ríka f** Empress Zoe the Great

## Þ

**þaðan** *adv* from there, thence; **þaðan frá** from that point onward

**þagði** *3sg past* of **þegja**

**þakka** <-að> *vb* [w *dat*] thank

◆ **þangat** *adv* to there, thither (*motion toward*)

**Þangbrandr** <-s> Thangbrand (*personal name*)

**þann** *acc sg of dem sá*

◆ **þar** *adv* there; **þar sem** *conj* where

**þat** <*acc þat, dat því, gen þess*> *pron* it; *n nom/acc of dem sá* that (one)

**þau** <*acc þau, dat þeim, gen þeira~þeirra*> *n pl pron* they; those (ones)

◆ **þá** *adv* then, at that time

**þá f** *acc sg of sú; m acc pl of þeir*

**þá er** *conj* when

**þás** = **þá es** (**þá er**)

**þátr** <*dat þætti, gen þáttar, pl þættir, acc þáttu*> *m* tale, short

◆ **þegar** *adv* at once, immediately; already; **þegar á morgin** first thing in the morning; **þegar á unga aldri** already by a young age; **þegar um haustit** that very autumn

**þegja** <*þegir, þagði, þagat*> *vb* be silent

**þegn** *m* subject; freeman, a good man

**þegnskapr** <*gen -ar*> *m* generosity, open-handedness

**þeim** *m dat sg of dem sá* that (one) & *all dat pl of þeir/þær/þau* they; those (ones)

**þeima** (*also þessum*) *m dat sg & all dat pl of þessi*

**þeir** <*acc þá, dat þeim, gen þeira~þeirra*> *pron* they; those (ones) (*m pl*)

**þeira** (*also þeirra*) *pron gen pl of þeir/þær/þau* they; their

**þeirra var** *of þeira*

**þekkja** <-ti~þekti~þekði~þátti, -tr~þektr~þekðr> *vb* perceive, notice; know, recognize; **þekkjast** *mid* know one another

**þenna** *m acc sg of þessi*

**þess** *m/n gen sg of sá/þat*

◆ **þessi** (*also sjá*) <*f þessi, n þetta, m acc sg þenna, m dat sg & all dat pl þessum~þeima, m/n gen sg þessa, m nom pl þessir, all gen pl þessa~þessar(r)a, f acc sg þessa, f dat sg þessi~þessar(r)i, f gen sg þessar~þessar(r)ar, n dat sg þessu~þvísa, n nom/acc pl þessi*> *dem pron* this, these

**þetta** *n nom/acc sg of þessi*

**þér** *dat of þú*

**þér** <*acc/dat yðr, gen yðarr~yðvarr*> *pl pron* you

**Þiðrandi** *m* Thidrandi (*personal name*)

**þiggja** <*þiggr, þá, þágu, þeginn*> *vb* accept; receive; accept lodgings

**þik** *acc of þú*

◆ **þing** *n* assembly, *lit* thing

**þingmaðr** *m* thingman, the follower of an Icelandic chieftain

**Þingvöllr** *m* the Thing-Plain (*place name*)

◆ **þinn** <*þín, þitt*> *poss pron* your (*sg*)

**þit** <*acc/dat ykk, gen ykkar*> *dual pron* you

**þín** *gen of þú*

**þjóð** <*dat þjóðu, gen þjóðar, pl þjóðir*> *f* people, nation

**þjófr** *m* thief

**þjófsaugu** *n pl* thief's eyes

**þjóna** <-að> *vb* [w *dat*] serve

**þollr** *m* a tree; fir tree

**þora** <-ði, þorat> *vb* dare

**Þorfastr** <-s> *m* Thorfast (*personal name*)

**Þorfinnr** <-s> *m* Thorfinn (*personal name*)

**Þorgeirr** <-s> *m* Thorgeir (*personal name*); **Þorgeirr flöskubakr** Thorgeir Flask-Back

**Þorgerðr** <*acc/dat Þorgerði, gen Þorgerðar*> *f* Thorgerd (*personal name*)

**Þorgils** <*gen Þorgils*> *m* Thorgils (*personal name*);

**Þorgils Þorsteinssonar** Thorgils, son of Thorstein (*personal name*)

**Þorgrímr** *m* Thorgrim (*personal name*)  
**Þorkell** <-s> *m* Thorkel (*personal name*); **Þorkell**  
**Geitisson** *m* Thorkel, son of Geitir  
**Þorleikr** <-s> *m* Thorleik (*personal name*)  
**Þormóðr** <-ar> *m* Thormod (*personal name*)  
**Þorsteinn** <-s> *m* Thorstein (*personal name*);  
**Þorsteinn hvíti** *m* Thorstein the White  
 ◆ **þó** *adv* yet, though, nevertheless  
**þó** 1/3*sg past* of **þvá**  
**Þóra** *f* Thora (*personal name*)  
**Þórarinn** <-s> *m* Thorarin (*personal name*)  
**Þórdís** <-ar> *m* Thordis (*personal name*)  
**Þórðr** <-ar> *m* Thord (*personal name*)  
**Þórir** <*gen Þóris*> *m* Thorir (*personal name*)  
**Þórólfr** <-s> *m* Thorolf (*personal name*)  
**Þórr** <*dat Þór~Þóri, gen Þórs*> *m* Thor, god of thunder, husband of Sif, son of Odin and Earth  
 ◆ **þótt** *conj* although  
**þótti** 3*sg past* of **þykkja**  
**þóttu** [*poet*] = **þó at þú**  
**þrasa** <3*sg pres þrasir*> *vb* be belligerent  
**þrausk** *n* rummaging  
**þreifa** <-að-> *vb* touch or feel with one's hand;  
**þreifask** *mid* fumble, grope  
**þrekvirkil** *n* courageous deed, feat of strength  
**þrettán** <*ord þrettándi, thirteenth*> *num* thirteen  
**þriðjungur** <-s> *m* a third  
**þriði** <*f þriðja, n þriðja*> *ord num* third  
**þriði** *m* Third, one of the three interrogators of King Gylfi  
**þrifa** <*þrífr, þreif, þrífu, þrífinn*> *vb* grasp; **þrifa til**  
 [*e-s*] *grab hold of* [*sb/sth*]  
 ◆ **þrír** <*f þrjár, n þrjú, acc m þrjá, dat þrim(r), gen þriggja, ord þriði, third*> *num* three  
**þrír tígir** *num* thirty  
**þrjá** *m acc pl* of **þrír**  
**þrjár** *f nom/acc pl* of **þrír**  
**þrjú** *n nom/acc pl* of **þrír**  
**þrúðugr** *adj* strong, powerful  
**Þrymr** <-s> *m* a lord among the giants

**þræll** <-s, -ar> *m* thrall, slave  
**Þröstr** <-s> *m* Throst (*personal name*)  
**þumall** <*dat þumli, gen þumals, pl þumlar*> *m* thumb  
**þumlungr** <-s, -ar> *m* thumb (of a glove)  
 ◆ **þungr** <*comp þyngri, superl þyngstr*> *adj* heavy  
**þunnr** *adj* thin  
**þurfa** <*þarf, þurfti, þurft*> *pret-pres vb* [*aux*] need; [*w gen*] need, have need of  
**þurs** <*dat þursi, gen þurs, pl þursar*> *m* giant, ogre  
**Þurvi** *f* Thurvi (*personal name corresponding to Old Icelandic Þyri*)  
 ◆ **þú** <*acc þik, dat þér, gen þín*> *pron* you (*sg*)  
**þúsund** <-ar, -ir> *f* thousand, usually long thousand, twelve hundred  
**þvá** <*þvær, þó, þógu, þvegin*> *vb* wash  
**þverr** *adj* across; *see also* **um þvert**  
**þverra** <*þverr, þvarr, þurru, þorrinn*> *vb* wane, grow less, decrease  
**Þvinnill** <-s> *m* Thvinnil, name of a Viking (*personal name*)  
**því** *n dat of þat*  
**því** *conj* thus, therefore  
**þvísa** (*also þessu*) *n dat sg of þetta*  
**því at** *conj* for, because  
**því næst** thereupon, then  
 ◆ **þvilíkr** *adj* such  
**þvít** = **því at**  
 ◆ **þykkja** <*þykkir, þótti, þótt*> *vb impers* seem to be, [*w dat subj*] think, seem (to one); **þykkjask** *mid* seem to one, think oneself  
**þykkir** *adj* thick  
**þykkt** *adv* thickly  
**Þyri** *f* Thyri (*personal name*)  
**þýða** (-ddi, -ddr) *vb* explain, interpret; signify; win over; **þýðask** [*e-n*] (*mid*) associate with [*sb*]  
**þær** <*acc þær, dat þeim, gen þeira~þeirra*> *pron* they; those (ones) (*f pl*)  
**þökk** <*gen þakkar, pl þakkir*> *f* thanks

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## Æ

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**æ** *adv* ever, always, forever  
**æja** <*ær, áði, áð*> *vb* graze; rest  
**Æsir** *m pl* of **áss**, one of the two major groups of gods  
**æti** 3*sg & pl past subjunct* of **elga**

◆ **ætla** <-að-> *vb* intend, purpose, mean; think, consider

**ætlan** *f* intent  
**ætlat** *ppart* of **ætla**

**ætt** <pl ættir> *f* family, kindred; generation  
**ættangr** *m* family calamity or misfortune

**ætti** *3sg & pl past subjunct of elga*  
**ævi** *f indecl* age, time; **alla ævi** for all time, forever

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## Æ

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**æðri** *comp adj* higher  
**ægishjálmr** *m* helm of terror  
**æpa** <-ti, -t> *vb* cry, scream, shout  
**◆ ærinn** (*also ýrinn*) *adj* sufficient  
**ærít** *adv* sufficiently, overly, very

**æxla** <-ti, -tr> *vb* cause increase, multiply  
**æztr** *superl adj* highest

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## Ö/Ø

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**öðlask** <-að-> *vb* win, earn  
**öðru** *n dat sg of annarr*  
**øfri** *var of efri*  
**øfstr** *var of efstr*  
**öfundarorð** *n pl* slander, words of envy  
**öl** <dat övi, gen pl ölva> *n* ale, beer  
**öld** <dat öldu, gen aldar, pl aldir> *f* age, time; [*poet*]  
     *man pl* mankind, men  
**öldnu** *wk f acc sg of aldinn*  
**öll** *f nom sg & n nom/acc pl of allr*  
**öllum** *dat pl of allr*  
**Ölvir** <gen Ölvís> *m* Olvir (*personal name*)  
**önd** <dat önd~öndu, gen andar, pl andir> *f* breath;  
     *life; spirit, soul*  
**öndóttir** *adj* fearsome, terrifying  
**Öndóttir kráka** *m* Ondott Crow (*personal name*)

**önnur** *f nom sg & n nom/acc pl of annarr*  
**Önundur** <-s> *m* Onund (*personal name*)  
**ör** <gen örvar> *f* arrow  
**ørendi** *var of erendi*  
**ørendislauss** *adj* without effect, purposeless, *lit*  
     *errand-less*  
**ørendislaust** *adv* without purpose, in vain, for  
     nothing; **fara ørendislaust** go in vain, without a  
     purpose or reason  
**örloög** *n pl* fate  
**örn** <dat erni, gen arnar; pl ernir, acc örnu> *m* eagle  
**øx** <acc/dat øxi, gen øxar, pl øxar> *f* axe  
**Øxarfjörður** *m* Oxarfjord, Axe Fjord (*place name*)  
**öxl** <gen axlar, pl axlir> *f* shoulder  
**Øxna-Þórir** *m* Oxen-Thorir (*personal name*)

## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

### Viking Age Iceland

by Jesse Byock

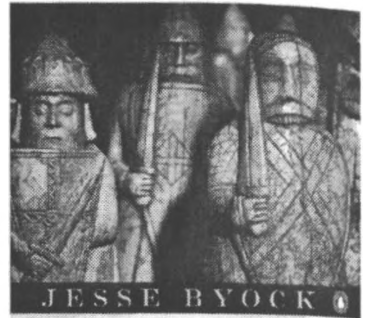
Penguin History, Penguin Books

The popular image of the Viking Age is a time of warlords and marauding bands pillaging the shores of Northern Europe.

This deeply fascinating and important history reveals the society founded by Norsemen in Iceland was far from this picture. It was an independent, almost republican Free State, without warlords or kings. Honour was crucial in a world which sounds almost Utopian today. In Jesse Byock's words, it was 'a great village': a self-governing community of settlers, who adapted to Iceland's harsh climate and landscape, creating their own society.

Combining history and anthropology, this remarkable study explores in rich detail all aspects of Viking Age life: feasting, farming, battling the elements, the power of chieftains, the church, marriage, women's roles, and kinship. It shows us how law courts, which favoured compromise over violence, often prevented disputes and insults from becoming 'blood feud'. Iceland thrived for 300 years until it came under the control of the King of Norway in the 1260s.

This was a unique time in history, which has long perplexed historians and archaeologists, and which provides us today with fundamental insights into sometimes forgotten aspects of western society. By interweaving his own original and innovative research with masterly interpretations of the Old Icelandic Sagas, Jesse Byock brilliantly brings it to life.— *from the back cover*



### The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki

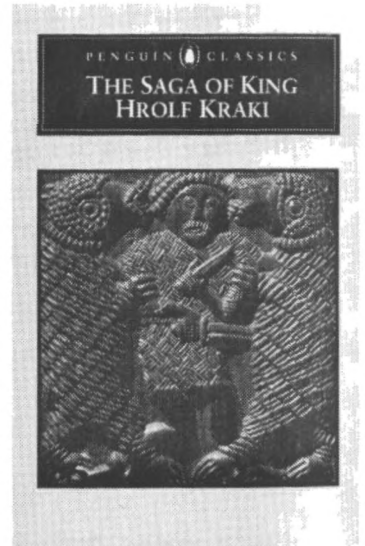
Translated with an introduction by Jesse Byock

Penguin Classics, Penguin Books

Composed in medieval Iceland, Hrolf's Saga recalls ancient Scandinavia of the Migration Period, when the warrior chieftain King Hrolf ruled in Denmark.

In the Old Norse / Viking world, King Hrolf was a symbol of courage. Sharing rich oral traditions with the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*, *Hrolf's Saga* recounts the tragedy of strife within Denmark's royal hall. It tells of powerful women and the exploits of Hrolf's famous champions – including Bodvar Bjarki, the 'bear-warrior', who strikingly resembles Beowulf. Combining heroic legend, myth and magic, *Hrolf's Saga* has wizards, sorceresses and 'berserker' fighters, originally members of a cult of Odin. Most startling is the central love triangle: Hrolf's father, a man of insatiable appetites, unknowingly abducts his daughter, who later marries the despised sorcerer King Adils of Sweden.

A powerful human drama with deep historical roots, extraordinary events and fierce battle scenes, *Hrolf's Saga* ranks among the masterworks of the Middle Ages, influencing writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien.— *from the back cover*





## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

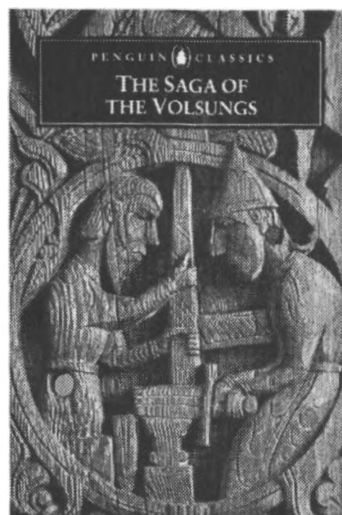
### The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer

Translated with an introduction and notes by Jesse Byock  
Penguin Classics, Penguin Books



An unforgettable tale, the Saga of the Volsungs is one of the great books of world literature. Based on Viking Age poems, the *Völsunga (Völsunga) Saga* combines mythology, legend and sheer human drama. At its heart are the heroic deeds of Sigurd the dragon slayer who acquires runic knowledge from one of Odin's Valkyries. Yet it is set in a human world, incorporating oral memories of the fourth and fifth centuries, when Attila the Hun and other warriors fought on the northern frontiers of the Roman empire. An illuminating Introduction links the historical Huns, Burgundians and Goths with the events of this Icelandic saga, whose author claimed that Sigurd's name was 'known in all tongues north of the Greek Ocean, and so it must remain while the world endures'.

With its ill-fated Rhinegold, the sword reforged, and the magic ring of power, the saga is the Norse version of the *Nibelungenlied* and a primary source for J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and for Richard Wagner's *Ring cycle*. *from the back cover*



### The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology

Saorri Sturluson

Translated with Introduction and Notes by Jesse L. Byock  
Penguin Classics, Penguin Books



*The Prose Edda* is the most renowned of all works of Scandinavian literature and our most extensive source for Norse mythology. Written in Iceland, it tells ancient stories of the Norse creation epic and recounts gods, giants, dwarves and elves struggling for survival. It preserves the oral memory of heroes, warrior kings and queens. In clear prose interspersed with powerful verse, the *Edda* provides unparalleled insight into the gods' tragic realization that the future holds one final cataclysmic battle, Ragnarok, when the world will be destroyed. These tales from the pagan era have proved to be among the most influential of all myths and legends, inspiring Wagner's *Ring Cycle* and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*.

This new translation by Jesse Byock captures the strength and subtlety of the original, while his introduction sets the tales fully in the context of Norse mythology. This edition includes detailed notes and appendices.  
— *from the back cover*



## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

### Medieval Iceland: Society, Sagas, and Power

Jesse L. Byock

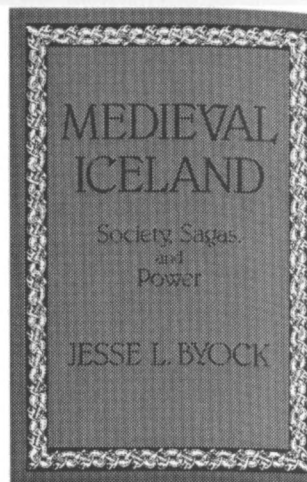
University of California Press

"Byock's book is a tour-de-force of historical argument. He brilliantly reconstructs the inner workings of an intriguing society, not elsewhere to be found in the Western world." — David Herlihy, *History Book Club*

"The first to demonstrate the importance of brokerage, advocacy, and arbitration as a social method of maintaining the governmental system, the balance of power, and the peace." — Helgi Thorláksson, *Skirnir*

"Medieval Iceland was a kind of pure-environment anthropological laboratory... It ought to have been a Utopia. It had: no foreign policy, no defence forces, no king, no lords, no peasants, no dispossessed aborigines, no battles (till late on), no dangerous animals, and no very clear taxes. What could possibly go wrong? Why is their literature all about killing each other. Answers lie, says Byock, in 'the underlying structures and cultural codes' of the island's social order... The most fascinating parts discuss the ways in which saga characters operate within system of checks and balances to gain their ends." — Tom Shippey, *London Review of Books*

"In this stimulating and important work, Byock has succeeded in rehabilitating the Icelandic saga as important sources for the social and economic history of the Free State (c. 930s to 1262-64)... Highly recommended." — C.W. Clark, *Choice*



### Feud in the Icelandic Saga

Jesse Byock

University of California Press (UCPress)

"Byock's thorough inquiry into the Icelandic feud system and its impact on the saga literature is valuable and fruitful in itself. But his specific research work also results in important general conclusions concerning the Icelandic saga as a medieval epic genre... A sound and convincingly motivated statement on the unique character of the Icelandic saga." — Peter Hallberg, *International Journal of Scandinavian Studies*

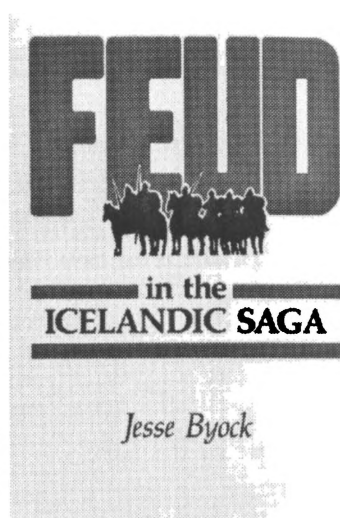
"Byock has not only succeeded in grounding, in a convincing manner, the social roles of individuals in the sagas but has also laid bare the role of narrative in Old Icelandic society." — Vilhjálmur Árnason, *Skirnir*

"Jesse Byock has here established an admirable basis for further research by clearing away much of the debris of the past. We are now ready for a full-scale reevaluation of saga materials in light of socio-historical and evolutionary views." — Einar Haugen

"An admirable study... A wealth of information about the political, social, and economic development of Icelandic society and the social thought underlying institutions and practices." — *The Scandinavian-American Bulletin*

"Jesse Byock's work has illuminated fundamental social concepts better and more clearly than has previously been done because he uses Icelandic sources in a new way." — Helgi Thorláksson, *Ný Sag*

"Boldly imaginative and on the cutting edge of the human sciences." — Dwight Conquergood, *Journal of American Folklore*



## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

### Sagas and Myths of the Northmen

Translated by Jesse Byock

Penguin Classics / Penguin Epics xvi

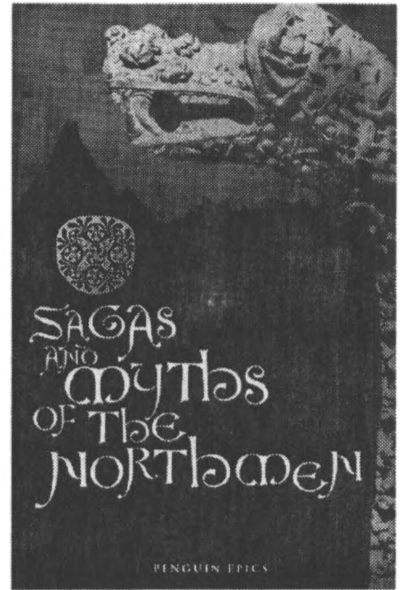
(Penguin Series: The Greatest Stories Ever Told)



A short introductory sampling of selected Norse myths and legends for beginners to Old Icelandic mythology and sagas with excerpts from *The Saga of the Volsungs*, *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, and *The Prose Edda*.

In a land of ice, great warriors search for glory... when a dragon threatens the people of the north, only one man can destroy the fearsome beast. Elsewhere, a mighty leader gathers a court of champions, including a noble warrior under a terrible curse. The Earth's creation is described; tales of the gods and evil Frost Giants are related; and the dark days of Ragnarok foretold.

Journey into a realm of Old Norse and Viking legend, where heroes from an ancient age do battle with savage monsters, and every man must live or die by the sword. — *from the back cover*



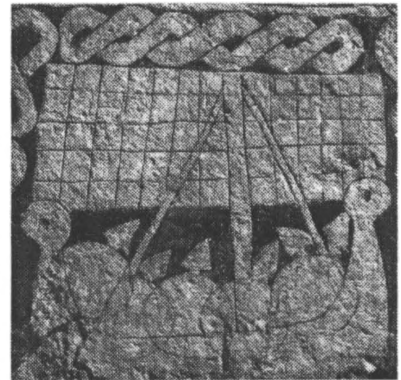
### Grettir's Saga

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Jesse Byock

Oxford University Press, Oxford World's Classics

*'You will be made an outlaw, forced always to live in the wilds and to live alone.'*

A sweeping epic of the Viking Age, *Grettir's Saga* follows the life of the outlaw Grettir the Strong as he battles against sorcery, bad luck, and the vengefulness of his enemies. Feared by many, Grettir is a warrior, a poet, and a lover who is afraid of the dark. Unable to resolve the dispute that has outlawed him, Grettir lives outside the bounds of family life. He roams the countryside, ridding Iceland and Norway of berserkers, trolls, and walking dead. The saga presents medieval Icelandic life, including love life, food, blood feud, folklore, and legend. *Grettir's Saga*, with its scathing humour, explicit verses, and fantastic monsters, is among the most famous, and widely read of Iceland's sagas.



Grettir's Saga

A new translation by Jesse Byock

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

This new translation features extensive maps and illustrative material. — *from the back cover*

# A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

## Viking Language 1:

### Learn Old Norse, Runes, and Icelandic Sagas

Jesse L. Byock

*Viking Language 1: Learn Old Norse, Runes, and Icelandic Sagas* is an introduction to the language of the Vikings offering in one book graded lessons, vocabulary, grammar exercises, pronunciation, student guides, and maps. It explains Old Icelandic literature, Viking history, and mythology. Readings include runestones, legends, and sagas.

*Viking Language 1* focuses on the most frequently occurring words in the sagas, an innovative method which speeds learning. Because the grammar has changed little from Old Norse, the learner is well on the way to mastering Modern Icelandic. *Viking Language 1* provides a wealth of information about Iceland, where the sagas were written and Old Scandinavian history and mythology were preserved. *Viking Language 1* is accompanied by *Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*.

## Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader

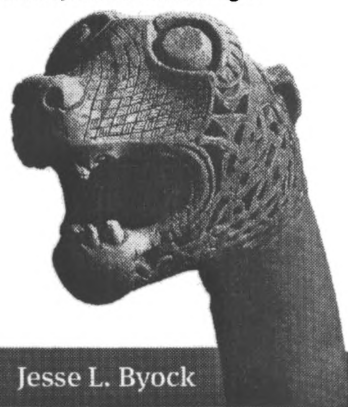
Jesse L. Byock

*Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader* is a collection of original texts to accompany *Viking Language 1*. A stand-alone book for classes and the self-learner, *The Old Norse Reader* immerses the learner in Icelandic and Viking Age sources. It provides the tools necessary to read complete sagas and Norse mythic and heroic poetry. *The Reader* includes:

- Sagas of blood feud in Viking Age Iceland accompanied by introductions, notes, maps, and cultural discussions.
- Extensive vocabulary, a comprehensive Old Norse reference grammar and answer key to the exercises in *Viking Language 1*.
- Mythic and heroic poetry teaching eddic, skaldic, and runic verse.
- Selections from Old Norse texts ranging from the doom of the gods at the final battle Ragnarok to descriptions of the ring and the dwarves' gold that inspired Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

## VIKING LANGUAGE 1

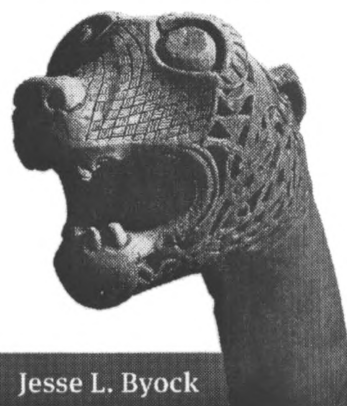
Learn Old Norse,  
Runes, and Icelandic Sagas



Jesse L. Byock

## VIKING LANGUAGE 2

The Old Norse Reader



Jesse L. Byock



## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

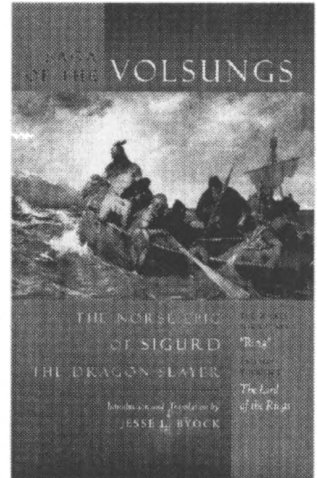
### **Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer**

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Jesse L. Byock

University of California Press

The source for Wagner's *Ring* and for Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

A trove of traditional lore, this Icelandic prose epic tells of love, vengeance, war, and the mythic deeds of the dragonslayer, Sigurd the Volsung. Richard Wagner drew heavily upon this Norse source in writing his Ring Cycle. With its magical ring, and the sword to be reforged, the saga was a primary source for J.R.R. Tolkien and romantics such as William Morris. Byock's comprehensive introduction explores the history, legends, and myths contained in the *Volsung (Völsunga) Saga*. It traces the development of a narrative that reaches back to the great folk migrations in Europe when the Roman Empire collapsed.



"Byock extends the background to the saga beyond the interest of 'Wagnerites' to the complex relationship between history and legend in the Middle Ages and the social context of the myths and heroes of the saga... [Byock is] very successful in his adept renderings of Eddic rhythm... The translation of prose is equally fine." — Judy Quinn, *Parergon*

"This is a book of the highest importance. No one should attempt to teach about Viking society or claim to understand it without being familiar with this chilling and enduring myth." — Eleanor Searle, *Medieval Academy of America*

### **L'Islande des Vikings**

Jesse Byock

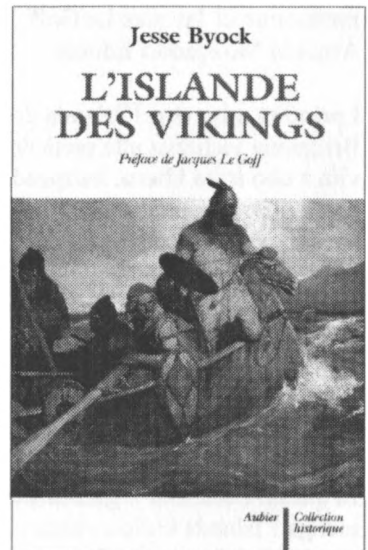
Traduit de l'anglais (E.-U.) par Béatrice Bonne

Préface de Jacques Le Goff

Aubier Collection historique

Flammarion / Aubier

Seigneurs sanguinaires, maraudeurs sillonnant les rivages de l'Europe du Nord et pillant tout sur leur passage, les Vikings n'ont pas bonne réputation. Et pourtant ils ont fondé, en Islande, sur cette île demeurée quasi vierge de toute présence humaine jusqu'au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle, une société unique: basée sur un État libre et indépendant, elle est en grande partie exempte des hiérarchies sociales habituelles – y compris dans les rapports entre hommes et femmes – et fait reposer le règlement des conflits davantage sur le consensus que sur la violence et la guerre. Entre festins de raie pourrie et manuel de survie en milieu hostile, conflits juridiques et méthode de construction des maisons en mottes de terre herbeuse... c'est la vie quotidienne des Vikings à l'époque médiévale qui nous est ici dévoilée. En entrelaçant ses propres recherches historiques et archéologiques avec ses interprétations magistrales des sagas, ces récits littéraires typiquement islandais, Jesse Byock fait revivre cette civilisation avec brio. — quatrième de couverture



## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

### Исландия эпохи викингов

Джесси Байок

Москва, Corpus, 2012

Translated by Ilya Sverdlov (Jesse Byock, *Viking Age Iceland*)

Джесси Л. Байок - специалист по древнеисландскому языку и средневековой Скандинавии, профессор Калифорнийского университета, автор множества книг, переводов и научных статей. Его главный труд, "Исландия эпохи викингов", - это и увлекательное путешествие по исландской действительности в период X-XIII вв., и полезное пособие по чтению саг, и экскурсия в удивительное общество, которое настолько занято делом, что вынуждено вместо междоусобных войн развивать правовую систему.



### La Stirpe di Odino: La Civiltà Vichinga in Islanda

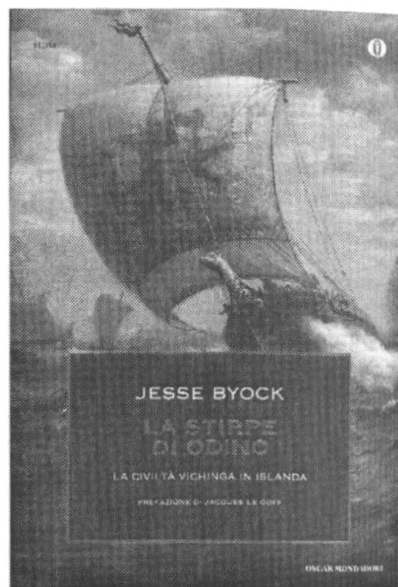
Jesse Byock

Traduzione di Marco Federici

Prefazione di Jacques Le Goff

Arnoldo Mondadori Editore

I primi raggiunsero l'Islanda dalla Scandinavia e dalla Britannia vichinga alla metà del IX secolo e qui diedero vita a uno stato libero, indipendente e non gerarchico, che costituisce un unicum nella storia europea. Le strutture sociali, economiche, politiche e giuridiche, infatti, per quanto ispirate a quelle delle zone d'origine, dovettero essere modellate su una realtà geografica del tutto nuovo, difficile e affascinante, e durarono con minime evoluzioni fino alla conquista norvegese del 1260, dando vita a una civiltà rurale, con una stupefacente cultura del diritto e un forte senso dell'onore.



In questo libro, che il grande medievista Le Goff ha definito "splendido e affascinante", l'autore indaga l'Islanda indipendente in modo globale, facendo ricorso a molteplici tipologie di fonti, da quelle giuridiche a quelle archeologiche, e in particolare analizza le splendide saghe, capolavori letterari dai quali è possibile ricavare la più esatta descrizione di quello che voleva dire vivere nella "terra dei ghiacci" tra IX e XIII secolo.

# A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

## アイスランド・サガ

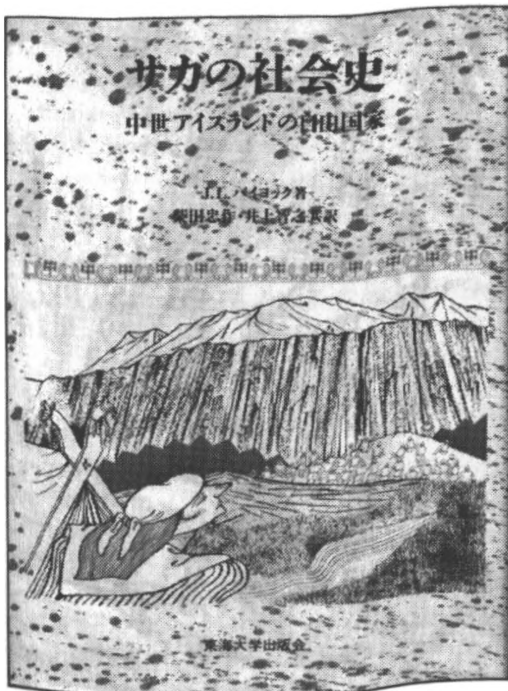
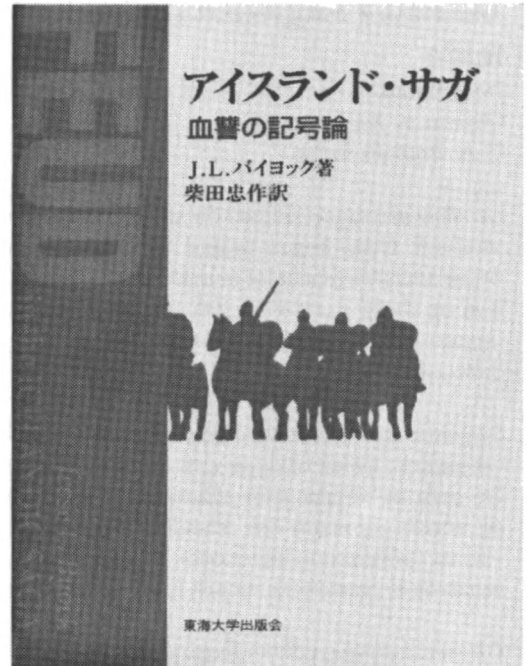
### 血讐の記号論

**Feud in the Icelandic Saga** (Japanese edition)

Jesse L. Byock

Translated by Chusaku Shibata and Tomoyuki Inoue

Tokai University Press, Tokyo



## サガの社会史

### 中世アイスランドの自由国家

**Medieval Iceland** (Japanese edition)

Jesse L. Byock

Translated by Chusaku Shibata and Tomoyuki Inoue

Tokai University Press, Tokyo

## A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY JESSE BYOCK ABOUT ICELAND AND THE VIKING AGE

### Island i sagatiden: Samfund, magt og fejde

Jesse Byock

Oversat av Jon Høyer

C. A. Reitzels forlag

De islandske sagaer udgør i denne bog et vindue ind til et usædvanligt samfund: Uden nogen central og udøvende myndighed formåede denne sociale nyskabelse at inddæmme fejder og konflikter og holde fred og forlig i omkring 300 år. I hele denne tradition, med dens tingsamlinger og kompromisløsninger, har de nordiske samfund dybe rødder.

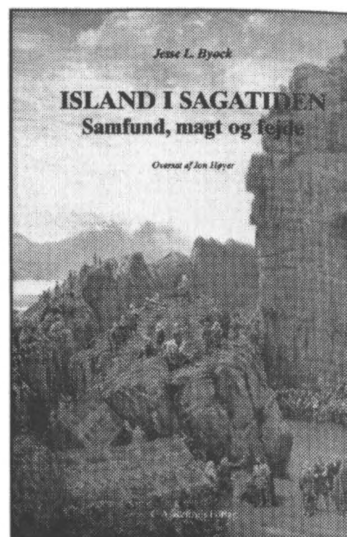
Sagaerne opfattes i denne bog som et middelalderfolks beretninger om sig selv, fortalt til sig selv, til underholdning og social orientering. De opfattes således som pålidelige gengivelser af sociale mønstre og normer igennem den islandske fristatstid, der var kendetegnet ved en forbavsende kontinuitet. Læst i sammenhæng med anden islandsk middelalderlitteratur kaster sagaerne et gennemtrængende lys over hele dette historiske forløb. — *bagsidetekst*

*Island i sagatiden* udkom første gang i 1988 i USA og England med titlen *Medieval Iceland* og er en meget benyttet fagbog i mange lande. Denne danske udgave er gennemgribende udvidet siden da og omkring halvanden gang så omfattende. Denne bog kan anbefales til både erfarne forskere og nybegyndere inden for sagastudierne. Byock fremlægger sine undersøgelsesresultater og sine præmisser forbilledligt og klart, og netop derfor vil denne bog stimulere debatten på bedste vis. — Nanna Damsholt, *Scandinavian Journal of History*

Byock er sandsynligvis den første forsker, der viser, hvordan mægling, tredjepartsindgreb og forhandling udgør en vigtig social metode til at sikre statssystemet, magtbalancen og freden. — Helgi Þorláksson, *Skirnir*

Byock's bog er en *tour-de-force* inden for historisk argumentation. På fremragende måde rekonstruerer han de underliggende styringsmekanismer i et fejdesamfund, der ikke findes noget andet sted i den vestlige verden. — David Herlihy, *History Book Club*

De mest fascinerende dele af Byock's bog blottlægger de måder, som sagapersoner handler på for at nå deres mål inden for samfundets kontrol- og balancesystem. — Tom Shippey, *London Review of Books*







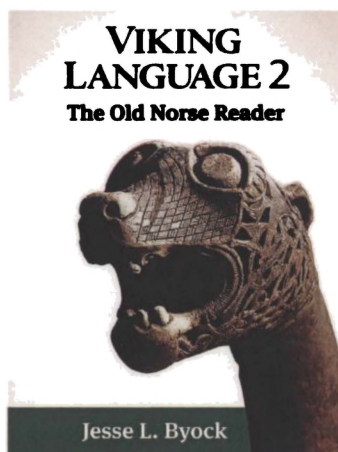
**VIKINGS** sailed over one-third the globe and were the first northern Europeans to harness the technology of long-distance seafaring. Their Old Norse language is the source of many English words and the parent of the modern Scandinavian languages: Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. Wherever they went, Vikings told their myths and legends, tales that are the basis of Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* and Wagner's *Ring Cycle*.

### ABOUT THIS BOOK

***Viking Language 1: Learn Old Norse, Runes, and Icelandic Sagas*** (the first book in the Viking Language Series) is an introduction to Old Norse and Icelandic. The beginner has everything in one book: graded lessons, vocabulary, grammar, exercises, pronunciation, culture sections, and maps. The book follows an innovative method that speeds learning. Because the grammar of Modern Icelandic has changed little from Old Norse, the learner is well on the way to mastering Modern Icelandic.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jesse Byock teaches Old Norse, Icelandic sagas, and Viking archaeology. He received his PhD from Harvard University and is Distinguished Professor of Old Norse Studies in the UCLA Scandinavian Section and Professor at the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology. Professor Byock directs the Mosfell Archaeological Project (MAP) in Iceland. His books include *Viking Age Iceland*, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*, *The Prose Edda: Norse Mythology*, *Grettir's Saga*, and *The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Volsung*.



***Viking Language 2: The Old Norse Reader*** (the second book in the Viking Language Series) immerses the learner in Old Norse and Icelandic. It teaches how to read complete sagas, poems of the Norse gods and heroes, and runic inscriptions. The Old Norse Reader includes a large vocabulary, a reference grammar, and an answer key to the exercises in *Viking Language 1*.

[www.vikingnorse.com](http://www.vikingnorse.com)

