

NORÐMENN INIR VIÐFÖRLU: MOTIVATIONS FOR
DISTANCE TRAVEL BY SCANDINAVIANS
c. 1000 – 1200

A Master's Thesis

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DİLÂN DOĞAR NORÐMENN INIR VIÐFÖRLU: MOTIVATIONS FOR LONG DISTANCE
TRAVEL BY SCANDINAVIANS c. 1000 - 1200

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SCANDINAVIANS c. 1000 - 1200

By Dilan Doğar

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History.

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ABSTRACT

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Embedded within Scandinavian history, the theme of extensive long-distance journey stands as a defining motif. Predominantly embodied by the Viking Age, spanning approximately two and a half centuries, this proclivity saw Scandinavians emerge as conquerors, raiders and traders across Europe and the British Isles – effecting considerable spatial traversals. As the Viking Age started to wane, the motif of long-distance journey persisted, yet transformed in character. Evolving from roles as marauders and settlers, a shift occurred toward mercenary engagements under Russian princes, Varangian Guards service, and pilgrimages signifying a nuanced metamorphosis. This research focalises on three prominent eleventh-century figures: Yngvarr víðförli, Haraldr Sigurðarson, and Eiríkr inn góði. Each emblematic of distinct categories of extensive peripatetic undertakings, their selection ensures a comprehensive portrayal of medieval Scandinavia, culled from the Icelandic sagas

about Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Scrutinizing these sags, this thesis aims to excavate main motivations propelling these individuals on their remarkable journeys across substantial geographic expanses.



ÖZET

NORÐMENN INIR VIÐFÖRLU: MOTIVATIONS FOR LONG-DISTANCE TRAVEL BY SCANDINAVIANS c. 1000 – 1200

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Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Yardımcı Doçent Dr. David Thornton

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Uzun mesafeli yolculuk teması İskandinav tarihinde belirleyici bir motif olarak yer almaktadır. Ağırlıklı olarak Viking Çağı ile somutlaşan ve yaklaşık iki buçuk yüzyıla yayılan bu eğilim, İskandinavların Avrupa ve Britanya Adaları'nda fatihler, akıncılar ve tüccarlar olarak ortaya çıktığını ve önemli mekânsal geçişler gerçekleştirdiğini gördü. Viking Çağı sona ermeye başladığında, uzun mesafeli yolculuk motifi devam etti, ancak karakteri değişti. Yağmacı ve yerleşimci rollerinden, Rus prensleri altında paralı askerlik, Varangian Muhafızları hizmeti ve hac yolculuklarına doğru bir kayma meydana gelerek incelikli bir metamorfoza işaret etmiştir. Bu araştırma, yüzyılın önde gelen üç figürü etrafında şekillenmektedir: Yngvarr víðförlu, Haraldr Sigurðarson ve Eiríkr inn góði. Her biri farklı kategorilerde geniş kapsamlı peripatetik girişimlerin simgesi olan bu kişilerin seçimi, İsveç, Norveç ve Danimarka hakkındaki İzlanda

sagalarından derlenen Ortaçağ İskandinavya'sının kapsamlı bir tasvirini sağlamaktadır. Bu destanları inceleyen bu tez, bu kişileri önemli coğrafi genişliklerdeki olağanüstü yolculuklarına iten temel motivasyonları ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.



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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant themes in Scandinavian history is the long-distance journey; undertaking long distances was a so deeply established concept that in the Icelandic saga tradition one can find various chieftains who bear the epithet “Far-Traveller” (*inn viðförli*). The first and most prominent example of this far-travelling tradition is the Viking Age. For almost two hundred and fifty years, they left their marks as conquerors, raiders and traders throughout Europe and the British Isles by travelling long distances. Towards the conclusion of the tenth and the commencement of the eleventh century, a period concurrent with the termination of the Viking Age, the pervasive motif of the “long-distance journey” retained its prominence. On the other hand, it is possible to observe a change in the types of long-distance journeys in the same period. From raiders, conquerors and settlers, they became mercenaries, Varangian Guards, and pilgrims.

Despite the extensive corpus of secondary literature focused on the nature of emerging modes of movement, potential routes, and intermediate rest points along these pathways, there appears to be a noticeable gap in the scholarly discourse concerning the underlying incentives behind the aforementioned new types of long-distance journeys undertaken by medieval Scandinavians which is the primary concern of this thesis.

This study will centre its attention on three prominent figures who lived in the eleventh century and engaged in distinct categories of long-distance travel: Yngvarr viðförli, Haraldr Sigurðarson, and Eiríkr inn góði. For the comprehensive representation of the kingdoms within medieval Scandinavia, the selection of figures was drawn from the historical narratives of Sweden, Norway and Denmark,

respectively. By primarily scrutinizing their sagas, this study will delve into the underlying impetuses propelling these individuals to embark upon their respective long-distance journeys.

Finally, for all the primary and secondary sources written in other than English, Latin and Old Norse, a translation program named DeepL was used throughout this thesis and for the translation of *Historia de Profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam*, I use my own knowledge in Latin.

1.1. Literature Review

Omeljan Pritsak's book *The Origin of the Rus'* offers extensive research on the Old Scandinavian sources. Apart from an examination of the sources, the book includes a comprehensive exposition covering the entirety of the work and an introductory overview of both sections related to Scandinavia. The book is organised into six significant parts; among those "Exploration of Runic Inscriptions" was substantially used as a first step to explore Yngvarr and his expedition to east. Particularly, chapter seventeen of the aforementioned part, entitled "Yngvarr hinn víðforli and His Campaign in Særkland (1041)", commences with a thorough research on Yngvarr's pedigree and expedition to the east through analysing *Yngvars saga*, Yngvarr rune stones and Müneccimbaşı's (d. 1702) *Jāmi 'al-duwal* (Compendium of Nations). In the following section, entitled "The Expedition to Khwārisim" he analyses the rune stone Vs 1 and explores the possible meanings of the word *karusm* carved on the Vs 1 to find more clues on the expedition of Yngvarr. In the last part of chapter seventeen, he analyses the message of Yngvarr stones. However, since neither the Yngvarr stones nor the *Yngvars saga* comprise information about the motivation of Yngvarr's journey, the book does not discuss the possible motivations for such a long journey. One could argue that a discussion about Yngvarr's motivation might have been initiated after the

sections concerning *Jāmi‘ al-duwal* and the rune stone Vs 1 and the word *karusm* since it is possible to find a clue by examining the possible directions of the journey.

It would be unwise not to use Ferdinand Braun’s article “Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli? Ett Bidrag till Sveriges Historia under XI Århundradets Första Hälft” published in *Förvannen*, Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research. Due to his valuable research and analysis, the reader gains insight into the extent of information rune stones can offer regarding their proprietor. Swedish National Heritage Board’s (Riksantikvarieämbetet) Digital Services have also been crucial for this research. Their website’s very user-friendly interface for searching rune stones according to the text, signum or place of the rune stones saved much time.

Regarding the archaeological evidence of Scandinavian presence on Russian soil, Jonathan Shepard and Anne Stalsberg’s articles were particularly brief and to the point.¹ Both their narratives explain the archaeological findings and their significance laconically. Stalsberg’s list in the appendix regarding the archaeological findings in northwestern Russia is especially valuable. She puts everything in three groups, Scandinavian-type graves, towns and hoards, enumerates all the finds and gives the related corpus about the finds. Since Stalsberg’s article is entirely about the archaeological findings in the modern-northwestern Russia, one should not expect a discussion about Yngvarr and his expedition. In this regard, it can be said that her article acts as a supplementary source for the main aim of this thesis – to find the motivation behind undertaking such distances by Scandinavians. Shepard’s article, on the other hand, apart from his non-negligible contribution to the Yngvarr’s enigma, does not offer a possible motivation to the reader regarding Yngvarr’s expedition.

¹ Shepard, “Yngvarr’s Expedition to the East” 222–92; Anne Stalsberg, “Scandinavian Relations with Northwestern Russia during the Viking Age: The Archaeological Evidence,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 13, no. 3 (September 1982): 267–95.

Henrik Birnbaum's article briefly reexamines Yaroslav's interpersonal interactions and associations with Scandinavia.² He mainly, but by no means exclusively, focuses on Sweden, the ancestral homeland, through the insights provided by Norse, primarily Old Icelandic, references regarding the Russian ruler's Varangian connection. This study uses two of Samuel Hazzard Cross's works: his and Olgerd Sherbowitz-Wetzor's collaborated translation of *Russian Primary Chronicle* and his article "Scandinavian Infiltration into Early Russia". The latter commences with the period from 750 to 800, marked by pronounced organisation and conquest activity in Scandinavia, particularly Sweden. Throughout the article, he refers to the trade and conquest activities done mainly, though not exclusively, by the Swedish. The article, on the other hand, almost entirely focuses on the Yaroslav's perspective and thus offers the nature of the relationship between the Rus' and the Scandinavians only through Yaroslav's point of view. As a result, it lacks the perspective of Scandinavians and therefore their motivations for directing their routes to Russia.

The Varangians of Byzantium, written by Sigfus Blöndal and translated by Benedikt S. Benedikz, is a work that constitutes a translation, revision and partial modernisation. The aim of the book is to compile and analyse the historical records about the evidence of Norsemen or Varangians in the military service of the Byzantine Emperor spanning the tenth to fourteenth centuries. Although the numerous gaps in the sequence of evidence are perhaps compensated for quite frequently by applying the hypothetical future perfect, the factual details are well and lucidly documented in general. However, similar to Shepard's article, the Scandinavians' perspective appears to be absent in his book.

² Henrik Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection," *Scando-Slavica* 24, no. 1 (January 1978): 5–25.

In terms of medieval pilgrimage, Diana Webb's book *Medieval European Pilgrimage* offers a detailed account of pilgrimage types. It is quite an introductory book for newcomers to the medieval European pilgrimage. The book's clear organisation is mirrored by an evenly uncomplicated method of addressing complex matters. Overall, the book offers a comprehensive survey of the importance of pilgrimage in medieval Europe and the kinds of sources that are used by scholars to attain a better understanding of the pilgrimage phenomenon.

Finally, *Tracing the Jerusalem Code*, which has various chapters written by significant scholars in Scandinavian studies, has an immeasurable impact on this thesis. The primary object of the book is to show Christianity and hence Jerusalem from the lens of medieval Scandinavians. It suggests that Jerusalem is perceived as a code to Christian cultures in Scandinavia. It offers a great deal of knowledge concerning the notion of pilgrimage and the place of Jerusalem within the Northern world. On the other hand, since the book itself was dedicated to exploring the idea of Jerusalem in the Northern world, it does not provide an insight to the other forms of travel which were common among Scandinavians during the eleventh century.

1.2. Methodology

The Icelandic sagas and kings' sagas constitute a significant part of the primary sources concerning Scandinavian history. They are written in Old Norse, and it is possible to find any prominent name of the Viking Age in them. On the other hand, they were not written solely to record significant historical periods or figures; they inherently aim to entertain people through mythical figures and events. Chapter six in *Yngvars saga*, for example, forms an example of this feature: "After they had been travelling for a long time they saw a house, with a giant outside so fearsome and ugly

they thought it must be the Devil himself”.³ They are closer to praising and glorifying the main character rather than providing historical events. Furthermore, they are more inclined to explain the circumstances favouring the Scandinavian side of the story.

The kings’ sagas, on the other hand, are more historically accurate than the former. Apart from their early parts, which provide information about the origins of their societies — such as *Ynglinga saga* in *Heimskringla*—they do not include mythical figures or events. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the kings’ sagas are not devoid of historical inaccuracies. In the Icelandic literary tradition, if there is an established tradition about a certain king, traditionally and usually, the other authors continued this understanding. Furthermore, since they rely on the same sources, it is improbable to observe substantial disparities regarding a king across different kings’ sagas. For example, as it will be shown in chapter two, *Heimkringla*, *Morkinskinna*, and *Fagrskinna* provide almost the same narrative about Haraldr Sigurðarson, apart from one notable difference in *Morkinskinna* regarding Haraldr’s departure from Russia.

Furthermore, it is possible to detect differences between the Icelandic sagas and Latin sources. As demonstrated in chapter three, the reasons for Eiríkr’s decision to undertake a pilgrimage are pretty different. This is most likely resulting from the aforementioned Icelandic literary tradition. Eiríkr inn góði translates as Eiríkr the Good, and it appears that being a good king was the general understanding for Eiríkr. As a result, the author of the *Knyttlinga saga* does not attempt to give a reason for Eiríkr’s pilgrimage, relying on the implied significance of Eiríkr’s epithet. In comparison, *Gesta Danorum* offers a different story for Eiríkr’s decision to go on a pilgrimage, where Eiríkr enters a state of delirium and kills some of his men trying to

³ Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia: Yngvar’s Saga and Eymund’s Saga* (Polygon, 1989), 55.

hold him down. As a penance for his sins, he decides to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

In this regard, one can argue that the historical inaccuracies within the kings' sagas resulted from deliberate omissions or alterations of the facts to preserve the victorious and rightful image of the North. On the other hand, establishing this assertion as valid remains unattainable due to the absence of any reference to such tradition within the corpus of the Icelandic saga tradition. Furthermore, the lack of vernacular sources seems a more plausible reason for historical inaccuracies.

Nevertheless, dismissing the Icelandic sagas entirely on the basis of their historical inaccuracies would entail an undue disregard for valuable insights along with the perceived flaws. That is to say, apart from the historical inaccuracies, supernatural details and lack of various primary source material, there lie historical facts in their foundation.

The other type of source in Scandinavian history is rune stones. The tradition of erecting or commissioning rune stones started in the fourth century and lasted until the twelfth century. Although most of them are in Scandinavia, one can find them in the locations Norse men visited in the Viking Age. They were often erected for the memorial of deceased family members, friends or fellow soldiers. Even though they act as subsidiaries of the Icelandic sagas, other than names, the place and reason of death, they do not offer detailed information. Furthermore, the entirety of some of them is lost, and the runic inscriptions on considerable number of them are partially or entirely lost.

However, they serve as tangible manifestations of the occurrences delineated within the Icelandic sagas, encompassing elements of the supernatural and mythological nature. Yngvarr rune stones, for example, serve as material evidence of

the saga of Yngvarr, whose identity would have been forgotten or stayed as a semi-fictional figure. No other event or main character of a saga is attested by such a large number of extant stones.⁴ Additionally, with the help of both Yngvarr rune stones and the other ones relevant to this thesis, significant information about Yngvarr's identity is revealed in chapter one.

1.3. Thesis plan

This thesis consists of three main chapters, excluding the introduction and the conclusion chapters, which I intent to present the motivations behind the long-distance journeys undertaken by the eleventh-century Scandinavians. This study is motivated by a gap in research concerning their motivations for engaging in long-distance travel during a period when their modes of movement could be categorised into distinct groups, including embarking on pilgrimages, serving as Varangian Guards, and acting as mercenaries under Kievan princes. The abundance of Latin sources and lack of Scandinavian primary sources in general created a secondary literature in which the studies concerning the nature of these movements, common routes, significant historical figures known for their adventures while executing these journeys and etc. are in abundance. On the other hand, this diverted the focus from their main motivations for undertaking such long distances.

Three distinct historical figures have been positioned at the focal point of each of the three principal sections; Yngvarr inn viðförli, Haraldr Sigurðarson and Eiríkr inn góði respectively in this order. Given that the sagas serve as the primary sources for these historical figures, I adhere to the principal narrative depicted within the sagas of the each of these figures. However, as it was mentioned in the section 1.2., these

⁴ Jonathan Shepard, "Yngvarr's Expedition to the East and a Russian Inscribed Stone Cross," *Saga-Book* 21 (1982): 222–92.

sagas do not reflect an entirely factual story line therefore, I've used other written and material sources for strengthen the arguments I've discussed throughout the chapters.

Since neither any written record nor an archaeological evidence offer information about Yngvarr, the first chapter commences with an investigation of Yngvarr's pedigree through an analysis of Yngvars saga and various rune stones that allegedly have a connection with Yngvarr and his family. After eliminating certain possibilities concerning his background, the Russo-Scandinavian relations during the eleventh century are discussed. The aim is to establish a possible motivation for Yngvarr's journey through a combined analysis of both Yngvarr's pedigree and the Russo-Scandinavian relations.

The second chapter focuses of Haraldr Sigurðarson or his more common name Harald Hardrada. In order to offer a more vivid description of the rooted presence of Varangian Guards in the Roman Imperial Army, this chapter starts to present this gradual process by first describing the place of non-Romans in the Army in the early fourth century. Subsequently, the place of Norsemen in the Army is emphasised with examples from Russian Primary Chronicle and Annales Bertiniani starting from early ninth century. As the last step of this gradual process, the establishment of the Varangian Guard within the Army and the events led to this outcome are discussed.

The focal figure of the second chapter is Haraldr Hardrada who, perhaps, is the most known Varangian Guard both in Scandinavian and Byzantine history. For the sake of achieving a more elaborate storyline regarding why he left Norway and his subsequent activities in Russia and in Byzantine Empire, three kings' sagas examined in this chapter; Heimskringla, Fagrskinna and Morkinskinna.

The following chapter put Eiríkr inn góði in the centre of the chapter. Since the most prominent feature of Eiríkr's reign is his pilgrimage, the chapter starts with

elaborating on the idea and types of medieval pilgrimage. For the sake of establishing a general picture before going into the details about his reign as a devoted king. Once again, due to lack of primary sources, this chapter relies almost entirely upon *Knýtlinga saga*'s narrative. As a complementary source, *Gesta Danorum* is used and differences between two narratives are emphasised.

Fortunately, two other sources from late twelfth century, *Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam* and *Leiðarvísir og borgarskipan* offers further insight regarding the understanding of pilgrimage and Christian values among the common Scandinavian people. In this regard, the motivations for undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem can be understood from the perspectives of common Scandinavian people.

CHAPTER II: THE FAR-TRAVELLER

The first written record of Russo-Scandinavian relations can be found in *Russian Primary Chronicle*.⁵ It dates the establishment of these relations back to 860/2. Even though the date suggested by the archaeological evidence scattered in Northwestern Russia is far earlier than the date given by the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, the domination of Scandinavians over the inhabitants of the Russian lands is correct.⁶ Indeed, whenever the Slavic people established a petty state, known as *volosti*, centred around a fortified city, the Norsemen would often come and gain eventual control and take up residence.⁷ Over time, through various connections and intermingling, the nature of the relationship between the native inhabitants of Russia and Scandinavians started to alter. Even though some kind of change was inevitable as a result of the interactions between the two parties that will be discussed below, I argue that this change led to an alteration in the motivations of Norsemen regarding going eastwards.

In the Icelandic tradition, people who were interested in exploring the past were given the nickname “the Learned” (*hinn fróði*); those who took off from Iceland, however, were called “the Far-Travellers” (*inn viðförli*).⁸ One of the bearers of this epithet is *Yngvarr viðförli*, whose travels, it is believed, were written by the Icelandic Benedictine monk Oddr Snorrason.

In this chapter, by using Yngvar as a case study, I will explore the altered motivation of Yngvarr. In this regard, I will first investigate who Yngvarr is since there is no mention of him in sources other than the rune stones involving his name,

⁵ Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetor, eds. and trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Mediaeval Academy of America, 2020), 59.

⁶ In Russian Primary Chronicle, the native tribes of Russia, whom the Scandinavians receive tribute from, go overseas to call the Northmen back when they could not maintain order by themselves.

⁷ Sigfus Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, trans. Benedikt S. Benedikz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2.

⁸ Odd Snorrason the Learned, Ari Thorgilsson the Learned, Styrmir the Learned; Pálsson Hermann and Paul Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989), 24.

expedition in 1041, and his saga about his travels eastwards.⁹ I will start with analysing *Yngvars saga* and point out the errors that might lead to misguidance. I will then return to the saga once more to pinpoint the facts about Yngvar's story among the fictional details in the saga. Finally, I will examine the Russo-Scandinavian relations to reveal the nature of Yngvarr's expedition and his motivation concerning his journey eastwards.

2.1. Who is Yngvarr inn víðförli? — Yngvars saga and its errors

The first step of this roadmap is to clarify who Yngvarr is. Since there is no information about who Yngvarr is on the extant rune stones, the first source to be called upon is *Yngvarrs saga víðförla* since it is the main written source for Yngvarr. Even though we do not know who actually wrote *Yngvarrs saga*, we know from the last chapter of the saga itself that while writing it down, the anonymous compiler followed a book composed by Oddr Snorrason, who was a twelfth-century Benedictine monk at the Þingeyraklaustur monastery. For we cannot accept everything the writer of the *Yngvars saga* said in the saga as a fact, we do not know whether Oddr Snorrason wrote the book that guided the anonymous compiler. What we do have, however, is the strong claim by D. Hoffman about the original text. He has provided evidence that the current text is an Icelandic version of a Latin original, which is no longer available and that the Latin original was written by the monk Oddr himself.¹⁰ Although seemingly vague, these details will gain significance in the following paragraphs, where Yngvarr's pedigree will be analysed.

⁹ Since we do not have any information about Yngvarr and his expedition towards east, it is not possible to offer a historical background concerning his life or his expedition.

¹⁰ Dietrich Hofmann, "Die Yngvars Saga Víðförla Und Oddr Munkr Inn Fróði.," in *Speculum Norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. Ursula Donke and Gabriel Turville-Petre (Odense University Press, 1981): 182–222, 189–91, 194–5, 200–4, 221.

Yngvars saga commences with the story of Yngvarr's father, Aki, who wants to marry King Eiríkr inn sigrsæli's (r. c. 970-995) daughter. Since he is not a high-born, King Eiríkr finds Aki's proposal unacceptable and gives his daughter's hand to a provincial king from Russia in marriage. The saga continues by narrating how Aki killed the Russian prince with the help of eight other chieftains who bore the hostility of King Eiríkr for a long time and took the king's daughter back to Sweden, where Aki and the princess became espoused. In the saga, King Eiríkr's passive reaction is explained by the probable heavy loss that would occur on his side if he counteracted.¹¹

King Eiríkr eventually took revenge and killed Aki and the eight other chieftains in the celebrations of his marriage with the daughter of Earl Hákon of Norway and laid claim to all the possessions of Aki and others. On the other hand, Eymundr, son of Aki and the princess grew up with King Eiríkr in high honour. After King Eiríkr's death, his successor King Óláfr skautkonungr (r. c.995–1022), treated Eymundr with the same respect as King Eiríkr did. As Eymundr grew older, he began to contemplate his grievances as he witnessed possessions that were rightfully his but remained in the hands of others. He felt that he had been unjustly deprived of his birthright, just as King Eiríkr, King Óláfr, was receiving all the dues from his estates.¹²

Eymundr persevered in ruminating over his predicament. One day he stumbled upon the intelligence that the king had dispatched twelve of his loyalists to gather tribute from the lands previously under his father's ownership. Subsequently, Eymundr assembled a group of twelve confidants and lay in wait for the king's envoys in the forest, where he ambushed them. On the same day, King Óláfr's daughter, Ingigerd, found Eymundr in a forest, took him and healed him secretly. Nevertheless, when King

¹¹ Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, eds. and trans., *Vikings in Russia: Yngvar's Saga and Eymundr's Saga*, (Polygon, 1989), 44-45.

¹² Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 45-6.

Óláfr heard this, he declared Eymundr an outlaw. Ingigerd later provided Eymundr with a ship for a Viking expedition where he gained amass wealth with a skilled crew.

The saga continues with the marriage of Ingigerd with King Jarisleif of Russia and Eymundr's visit to Russia to visit and congratulate them. During his visit, Eymundr provided support to King Jarisleif, who was in a war with his brother, Burislaf. Eymundr won five battles against Burislaf and captured him. Subsequently, Ingigerd dispatched emissaries to her father, King Óláfr, requesting that he relinquish the estates that belonged to Eymundr. She proposed that it was better for Óláfr to reconcile with Eymundr rather than live in fear of an armed assault. King Óláfr seemingly acquiesced to her request.

Eymundr fought numerous battles in Novgorod and successfully regained many tributary territories for King Jarisleif. However, he grew homesick and desired to visit his estates in Sweden. With a well-equipped force and ample resources, he departed Russia with great respect and admiration from all. Returning to Sweden, he resumed control of his estates and other possessions. He eventually married the daughter of a landed man and had a son named Yngvarr.

Thus far, we understand from the *Yngvarrs saga*, Yngvarr's grandfather, Aki, indeed married the daughter of King Eiríkr, which makes Yngvarr related to royal blood. On the other hand, we do not have any primary source, other than the *Yngvars saga*, that informs us about the genealogical tree of Yngvarr. In the scholarly literature, however, there are three schools of thought concerning the origin of Yngvarr: (i) a conservative school of thought supported by Otto von Friesen and Mel'nikova, (ii) a school of thought which compares the Yngvarr stones with those mention the activities

of Knútr inn ríki (r. 1016-1035), (iii) an argument which based on specifically on the runic inscriptions found on the several Yngvarr stones.¹³

The traditional viewpoint supports the idea of *Yngvars saga* being written according to an oral tradition; thus, the genealogical information about Yngvarr reflects the truth. Namely, Aki did marry King Eiríkr's daughter hence the blue-blooded Yngvarr.¹⁴ The second school of thought was emerged under the influence of Elias Wessén's re-evaluation of the Yngvarr stones through a comparison of pictorial and structural elements of the Yngvarr stones with the ones mentioning the activities of Knútr inn ríki in England. The structural and pictorial similarities between the Yngvarr stones and the ones mentioning Knútr's activities in England led Wessén push the date of the stones twenty years earlier, the 1020s. As a result of this new theory, Lindqvist moved the date even earlier, to 1010s, and argued that since Yngvarr died at the age of twenty-five, then he might have been the son of another Eymundr, a son of King Eiríkr sigrsæli.¹⁵ Furthermore, this theory is strengthened by the research conducted by Lauritz Weibull and J. Svennung, in which it was proposed that a brother of Óláfr skautkonungr ruled before him in Uppsala.¹⁶ Last but not least, the third school of thought, which is based solely on the runic inscriptions found on several stones (U 513, U 540; Sö 179; Sö 279), contends that Yngvarr was the grandson of

¹³ Omeljan Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus': Old Scandinavian Sources Other than the Sagas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1981), 425.

¹⁴ See Otto von Friesen, "Runinskrifterna på En Koppardosa, Funnen i Sigtuna," *Fornvännen: Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research* 7 (1912): 199–209 and Elena Aleksandrovna Mel'nikova, "Èkspedicija Ingvara Putešestvennika Na Vostok I Poxod Russkix Na Vizantiju 1043g.," *Skandinavskij Sbornik* 21 (1976): 74–87, 78.

¹⁵ Sune Lindqvist, "Emund Slema Och Ingvar Vittfaren," *Saga Och Sed* 1968 (1968): 74–98.

¹⁶ Lauritz Weibull, *Kritiska undersökningar i Nordens Historia Omkring år 1000* (Generic, 2018); Josef Svennung, "Gränsdragningen Mellan Sverige Och Danmark På 1000-Talet," *Fornvännen* 61 (1966): 219–29.

Óláfr the Swede (d. ca. 1020/1022) and the son of Eymundr the Old (d. 1060), who was a Swedish king who ruled from 1047/1050 to 1060.¹⁷

Omeljan Pristak, however, tries a different approach regarding the debates on Yngvarr's genealogy. He firstly examines nearly the last information our learned compiler gives us: "We have heard this story told, but in writing it down, we have followed a book composed by the learned monk Oddr, which he based on the authority of well-informed people mentioned by him in his letter to Jon Loftsson and Gizurr Hallson".¹⁸ The first thing that Pristsak deduced from this sentence is that it is evident in the story that Yngvarr had already attained a degree of reputation in Iceland by the latter half of the twelfth century, or at the very least, within the intellectual centre of the Þingeyrar monastery.¹⁹ Secondly, Pristsak draws attention to two names mentioned in the sentence above: Jon Loftsson (b. 1124, d. 1197) and Gizur Hallson (b. 1126, d. 1206). They were the hereditary chieftains from the southern regions, renowned for their expertise in matters of tradition and were consulted and requested to furnish their revisions; furthermore, the former was the grandson of Iceland's first historian, Sæmundr inn fróði and foster father of Snorri Sturluson and the latter was the law speaker (*logsogumaðr*) between 1181 and 1200.²⁰ Mentioning these two influential chieftains further proves that Yngvarr was known in Iceland by the latter half of the twelfth century.

Last but not least, there is another statement by the compiler which is rather interesting for the discussion of Yngvarr's genealogy: "But we have heard that some saga-men claim that Yngvarr was the son of Eymundr Óláfrsson, thinking it to have

¹⁷ Friedrich (Fjodor) A. Braun, "Kto Byl Ingvar-Putešestvennik," *Zapiski Neofilologiceskogo Obscestva* 4 (1910): 131–53.

¹⁸ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 68.

¹⁹ Pristsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 427.

²⁰ Pristsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 427.

been a greater honour for him to have been a king's son. Onund would gladly have given his whole kingdom to buy back Yngvar's life, for all the chieftains in Sweden wanted Yngvar as their king. Now, some people may ask what it is that shows Yngvar was not the son of Eymundr Óláfrsson, and this is how we wish to reply: Eymundr, son of Óláfr, had a son called Onund, and this Onund was very like Yngvar in character as well as in his travels far and wide, as is stated in a book called *Gesta Saxonum*: 'It is said that Eymundr, King of Swedes, sent his son Onund across the Baltic Sea to most vicious Amazones and that he was killed by them.'"²¹ What is interesting here is the direct dismissal of the claim about Eymundr the Old being the father of Yngvar, which was also the claim of F. Braun, as mentioned in the earlier paragraphs.

Here, one should ask, "How?" How did the anonymous compiler come to that decision? On which grounds did he ground his argument? The first possibility might be that he uses Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* and finds that Eymundr has a son named Onund and not Yngvar and comes to the conclusion that Eymundr has one son — he actually had six.²² Secondly, *Flateyjarbók*, which comprises an account of St. Óláfr's saga, served as an additional reference source. It elucidated the existence of an individual named Eymundr Âkason, who remains obscure in all other records but is portrayed as the foster sibling of the venerated king. Based on this portrayal, the compiler postulated that this very Eymundr was indeed the progenitor of Yngvar.²³ Under the influence of these sources, our compiler, knowingly or unknowingly, dismissed the original Yngvar story and

²¹ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 67.

²² Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 428.

²³ Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 428.

created one more in fashion at that time, for sagas also had the purpose of entertaining the audience.

According to Pritsak, a family tree for Yngvarr was formulated due to these efforts, posing his grandfather's name as Aki.²⁴ However, this lineage lacks any substantiation in the primary sources and is merely the product of a conjecture by the compiler of Yngvarr's saga. The compiler penned this work in Iceland during the fourteenth century when the unfavourable political circumstances necessitated the inclusion of fanciful elements and extraordinary occurrences in literary compositions.²⁵ To achieve this objective, the writer introduced a daring chieftain named Aki, who defied the Swedish king's wishes by marrying his daughter after killing his princely rival. Such a heroic figure would undoubtedly befit the role of a grandfather for the intrepid protagonist, Yngvarr.

2.2. Genealogy of Yngvarr through Yngvarr Rune Stones

Concordantly, once again, we see why one should only rely partially upon the Icelandic sagas as primary sources. Although essential, as the only written sources in Scandinavian history, they include a conglomeration of fantastic historical figures and places. In short, as Pritsak concludes, the version of Yngvarr's pedigree that the *Yngvars saga* gives us must be ignored. What, then, should we rely on to answer the question of who Yngvarr was?

As previously stated, no other event or principal character of a saga is evidenced by such a substantial collection of extant stones. In this regard, the answer to the last question is quite obvious; a rather "concrete" path should be followed, namely the

²⁴ Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus* , 428.

²⁵ Iceland suffered the consequences of Norway's decline throughout the fourteenth century since it was submitted to Norway in the thirteenth century. See Eiríkra Ruth Sigurdson, *"The Church in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: Ecclesiastical Administration, Literacy, and the Formation of an Elite Clerical Identity"* (2011), 21-23.

Yngvarr stones. Exactly twenty-six stones testify to Yngvarr's expedition to the East (Ög 145, 155; Sö 9, 105, 107, 108, 131, 173, 179, 254, 277, 281, 287, 320, 335; U 439, 513, 644, 654, 661, 778, 837, 1143; U Fv1992; 157; Vs 19, M 4) however, apart from Sö 179, none of them gives information either about Yngvarr nor his pedigree.²⁶ Fortunately, our investigation does not end due to this obstacle. Besides the twenty-six Yngvarr stones, two different stones provide the information we need with the help of the necessary examination: U 513 and U 540.

U 513

Transcription: Anundr ok Æiríkr ok ok Ingvarr ræis[tu stæin] þenn[s]a æftir Ragnar, broður sinn. Guð hialpi and hans.

Translation: Qnundr and Eiríkr and Hákon and Ingvarr raised this stone in memory of Ragnarr, their brother. May God help his spirit.

U 540²⁷

Transcription: Æiríkr ok Hakon ok Ingvarr ok Ragnhildr þau Hann varð dauðr a Grikklandi. Guð hialpi hans salu ok Guðs móðir.

Translation: Eiríkr and Hakon and Ingvarr and Ragnhildr, they He died in Greece. May God and God's mother help his soul.

To reach the most accurate result, one should take baby steps, so to speak, and carefully examine every detail that the stones U 513 and 540 give us. The first step is, in this context, to analyse the names that are given both in the stones, as Braun did and ask the right questions. As one can see, six different people's name were carved on these stones. In this context, the first question to ask is, "How common were these names in eleventh-century Sweden?" The name Yngvarr/Ingvarr is recorded in twenty

²⁶ Samnordic Runetext Database 2020, Department of Nordic Languages, Uppsala University. <http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm>

²⁷ U 540 = inscription published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 2* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien), 1978.

Swedish inscriptions, apart from the twenty-six Yngvarr stones, suggesting that it was an infrequent name used mainly by a select few distinguished families during the eleventh century.²⁸ As is commonly known, ancient Germanic and Scandinavian lineages frequently followed a practice of passing down names across generations, with the names of grandfathers being bestowed upon their grandsons and so forth.²⁹

According to this criterion, it is possible to deduce certain groups that unequivocally pertain to a single family from the number of Swedish inscriptions. Frequently, the genealogical connections between such groups are so conspicuous that one can establish the genealogy of a family from the eleventh century with great precision, spanning over three generations.³⁰ If the same criterion is applied to the name Yngvarr/Ingvarr, the spread of the name is even more restricted. Of the twenty inscriptions that bear the name Yngvarr/Ingvarr (Ög 30, 38; Sö 295, 362; U 101, 111, 143, 147, 266, 287, 307, 309, 310, 363, 423, 478, 972, 1032, 1068; U Fv1998; 241) five belong to the Jarlabanke family (U 143, 147, 309, 310, 478).³¹ It appears that the family in question was affluent and influential, possessing vast properties in the regions of Danderyds skeppslag and Vallentuna härad. Our Yngvarr, however, should be sought in this family since he is heavily linked with his expedition to the east, and they would not be mentioned separately. For the same rationale, we must refute the hypothesis of his identity with the namesakes referenced in U 1032, 266, 307 and Ög 30, despite the latter inscription indicating the death of a Yngvarr in the eastern territories.³² Additionally, the discovery site of the stone Ög 30 (Täby parish in

²⁸ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli? Ett Bidrag till Sveriges Historia under XI Århundradets Första Hälft," *Fornvännen: Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research* 5 (1910): 99-118, 102.

²⁹ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 102.

³⁰ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 102.

³¹ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 102.

³² F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 102-03.

Östergötland) is excessively distant from the purported birthplace of Yngvarr in this particular case.

There is no reason to look for a hint for our Yngvarr in the stones Ög 38; Sö 295, Sö 362; U 111, 287, 363, 423, 478, 972, 1068 and U Fv1988; 241 since there is a lack of relevance regarding our Yngvarr within the information that the given rune stones give.

Braun argues that except Anund/Qnundr, the remaining male names referred to in the stones U 513 and U 540 are uncommon in Swedish runic inscriptions.³³ However, it should be noted that he gives this data in an article dated 1910, and therefore it would be naive to assume this number did not increase in the last hundred years. According to the Swedish National Heritage Board's (Riksantikvarieämbetet) search service Runor, twenty-nine rune stones comprise the name Eiríkr (Vg 4, 119; U 20, 29, 960, 1165; G 58, 100; DR 1, 17; N 79, 121, 416, 454, 497, 581, 583, 652, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684; N A206, N A280; N B303, N B572, N B586), excluding U 513 and U 540. Other than U 20, U 29, U 960, and U 1165, the remaining stones are far from the birthplace of Yngvarr, like the rune stone Ög 30.

U 20 contains the name Eiríkr, but the runic inscription clearly shows it was a commoner's husband.³⁴ In U 29, the Eiríkr that we come across probably refers to a

³³ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 103-04.

³⁴ Rune text: k · bunta sin ... auk -... ..(u)prik · faður sin · gu... ..-b... ..n- ·

Translation: ... Eiríkr(?) his/her husbandman ... and ... Guðríkr, his/her father. May God help (his) spirit. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

son or a husband of a woman whose name is unknown.³⁵ U 960's Eiríkr is the son of a Hakon and a Ástriðr.³⁶ Lastly, U 1165 refers to an Eiríkr who is a runecarver.³⁷

When we search for the name Hákon in the same manner, we find twenty-seven references excluding U 513 and 540: Ög 149, 162, ATA6225/65, Fv1970;310; Sö 18, 260; Sm 16, 76, 127; Vg 128; U 11, 16, 542, 617, 828, 879, 960, 1022; M 5, 6, 7; DR 281, N 110, 216, 291, B333 and OR Barnes28.³⁸ U 617 and Sm 76 should be the first in line to be examined since there are comparatively reliable clues to be traced.³⁹ Firstly, both refer to a Jarl whose name was Hákon, but the similarity in the names does not mean one should blindly assume they are the same person. Four Jarl Hákons have been considered in this context: Hákon Sigurdarson (d. 995), his grandson Hákon

³⁵ Rune text: raþ| þu kairmuntr -ik · kair[|]a[uk ·] (m)aytumi| i þa · finku · þau sun · aþ han · truknapi · in sun to : siþan : þa + fi(k) (h)(u)- --þrik · ha- ... (þ)(i)nsa · þa · finku þa(u) [bar](n) ... (i)(n) mar ain lifþi · [hu]n hit ' ...g[a] ' h(a)... fik raknfastr · i · snutastaþum · þa uarþ han tauþr · auk · sun · siþan · in · mopir kuam + at sunar ' arfi ' þa ' fik hun ' airik ' þar ' uarþ hun tauþ ' þar kuam ' gairlauk at arfi ' inku tutur sinar þurbiur(n) ' skalt ' risti runar

Translation: Interpret! Geirmundr got Geirlaug (to wife) in her maidenhood. Then they got a son, before he (= Geirmundr) drowned. And then the son died. Then she got Guðríkr. He ... this. Then they got children. And one maid lived; she was called Inga. Ragnfastr of Snotastaðir got her (to wife). Then he died, and thereafter the son. And the mother came to inherit from her son. Then she got Eiríkr. Then she died. Then Geirlaug came to inherit from Inga, her daughter. Þorbjörn Skald carved the runes. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

³⁶ Rune text: + hakuno * auk * ostriþr * kirþu ... * sun * snialan * sar × hit ×× iriks × kuþ × tr...
...Translation: Hákon and Ástriðr made ... able son. He was called Eiríkr. Lord God

The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 4* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

³⁷ Rune text: hialmtis × (a)uk × þurstain × raistu × sta(i)na × -...- -ftir × nuka + <airikr> + hiuk

Translation: Hjalmdís and Þorsteinn raised these stones in memory of Nokki. Eiríkr cut. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 4* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

³⁸ Samnordic Runetext Database 2020, Department of Nordic Languages, Uppsala University. <http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm>

³⁹ Rune text: kinluk × hulmkis × tutir × systir × sukrupar × auk × þaira × kaus × aun × lit × keara × bru × þesi × auk × raisa × stain × þina × eftir × asur × bunta · sin × sun × hakunar × iarls × sar × uar × uikika × uaurþr × miþ × kaeti × kuþ × ialbi × ans × nu × aut × uk × salu

Translation: Ginnlaug, Holmgeirr's daughter, Sigrðr and Gautr's/Gauss' sister, she had this bridge made and this stone raised in memory of Qzurr, her husbandman, Jarl Hákon's son. He was the viking watch with Geitir(?). May God now help his spirit and soul. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 3* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien); Rune text: [tufa : risti : stin : þina : eftir : ura : faþur : sin : stalar]a : hkunar : [iarls]

Translation: Tófa raised this stone in memory of Vrái, his father, Earl Hákon's marshal. The inscription was published Ragnar Kinander, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: IV. Smålands runinskrifter* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

Eiriksson (d. 1029), Hákon ívarsson (d. 1062), and Hákon Pálsson (d. 1122) and the prominent runology experts, including Brate, von Friesen, Wessén, Jansson, Kinander, and Ruprecht, generally concur that the two Hákon Jarls mentioned in the inscriptions are distinct persons, one from Sweden and the other from Norway.⁴⁰

For the rune stone Sm 76, Jansson asserts that it is highly probable that Earl Hákon, in this context, was a relative of Knútr inn ríki and his ally, as well as a member of the renowned Jarls of Lade (*ladejarler*) dynasty of Norway. He drowned in the Pentland Firth during his voyage from England to Norway in 1029. Tova, Hákon's marshal's daughter from Sweden, erected the rune stone as a tribute to her father's memory, and she was proud to acknowledge that her father held a significant position in the court of Earl Hákon.⁴¹ This popular identification was first suggested by Richard von Friesen in 1922.⁴²

U 617, on the other hand, refers to another Hákon, the Swedish Earl Hákon. He was a landowner with a son called Assurr/Qzurr, who defended the Uppland Södermanland coastline against Viking invasions.⁴³ In light of this information, we are left with twenty-five rune stones that include the name Hákon. Other than seven stones, namely, U 11, 16, 542, 828, 879, 960 and 1022, the remaining stones are considerably far from where Yngvarr was born; therefore, there is no point in analysing them. As for the seven aforementioned stones, there are ongoing scholarly discussions about the runic inscription on the U 11,⁴⁴ whether it was commissioned by Hákon the Red or

⁴⁰ Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus*, 407.

⁴¹ Sven B. Jansson, *Swedish Vikings in England* (H.K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1966), 17.

⁴² See, Otto von Friesen, "Run-Grafstenen Från Södra Unnaryds Kyrka, Västbo Härad," *Meddelanden Från Norra Smålands Fornminnesförening* 5 (1919): 84–89.

⁴³ Arndt Ruprecht, *Die Ausgehende Wikingerzeit Im Lichte Der Runeninschriften*. (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 163. Also, for more information on Swedish Earl Hákon, see the same source by Ruprecht.

⁴⁴ Rune text: raþ| þu : runar : ret : lit : rista : tolir : bry[t]i : i roþ : kunuki : tolir : a(u)k : gyla : litu : ris... - : þaun : hion : eftir ...k : merki srni... haku(n) · (b)ap : rista

for another king. Nevertheless, regardless of the result, even though it was commissioned by Hákon the Red, it does not provide critical information for our research.

Similarly, U 16⁴⁵ has continuous scholarly discussions about its runic inscriptions, but yet again, it does not provide any subsidiary information about our search about Yngvarr.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, extant inscriptions on U 542⁴⁷ gives us hardly anything. U 828,⁴⁸ U 879,⁴⁹ U 960,⁵⁰ and U 1022⁵¹ are family stones with which either parents or children commemorate their deceased family members.

Translation: Interpret the runes! Tólr the steward of Roðr had them rightly carved for the King. Tólr and Gylla had [the runes] carved ... this married couple as a landmark in memory of themselves(?) ... Hákon ordered (it) be carved. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁴⁵ Rune text (now lost): [kuni · auk : kari : raispu · stin · efir ...r : han : uas : buta : bastr : i ruþi : hakunar]

Translation: Gunni and Kári raised the stone in memory of ... He was the best husbandman in Hákon's dominion. The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁴⁶ Elias Wessén points out that "roði Hakonar" refers to a group called leidang that was led by a man Hákon, who could have been a jarl. However, Wessén believes it is more likely that the Hákon referred to here is the Swedish king Hákon the Red. On the other hand, some people think that Hákon refers to the Norwegian jarl Hákon Eiríksson, such as the rune stone Sm 76, while Omeljan Pritsak suggests that the person the stone was dedicated to, was a member of the army of jarl Hákon Eiríksson during the time in England. See, Pritsak Omeljan, *The Origin of the Rus'* and Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1*

⁴⁷ Rune text (now lost): [...- · at · akun · r...]

Translation: ... in memory of Hákon(?) ... The inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 2* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁴⁸ Rune text: kakr × uk × a[k]un × litu × akua × sten × uk × br[u × kira × u]ftir × ernisl [× faþur + sin × kuþan × ku]þ × ialbi salo ans × t(i)[þk]umi [×] uk × sten × þino

Translation: Kagr(?)Gagr(?) and Hákon had the stone cut and the bridge made in memory of Erngísl, their good father. May God help his soul. Tíðkumi cut this stone. This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 3* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁴⁹ Rune text: inkualtr uk suin litu rista stin þina · eftir hakun faþur sin

Translation: Ingivaldr and Sveinn had this stone carved in memory of Hákon, their father. This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 3* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁵⁰ Rune text: + hakuno * auk * ostriþr * kirpu ... * sun * snialan * sar × hit ×× iriks × kuþ × tr... ...

Translation: Hákon and Ástriðr made ... able son. He was called Eiríkr. Lord God ...

This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 4* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁵¹ Rune text: [ui]kn[i · a]uk · althrn · uk ailifr · akhun · runfriþ · litu · rita · stain · if(t)ir ilhu[tfa k]aþur · sinub(i)(r) [· r...st...] (r)(u)(a)[a]

Last but not least, there are seven rune stones with the name Ragnarr carved on them apart from U 513: Vg 55, U 98, U 687, N 148, N 360, N 586, and N 722. The N group can be ignored since they are considerably far from where both Yngvarr was born and the Yngvarrr stones are currently at. However, to further prove the stones' irrelevance with our research about Yngvarr, we should look into what the runic inscriptions say. N 148 is a rune stone possibly ordered by a bishop name Ragnarr.⁵² N 360 gives only the name "Ragnarr the Stout"; thus, linking this Ragnarr to Yngvarr's Ragnarr or another family is problematic since we have no information other than the name and cognomen.⁵³ The runic inscription on N 586 suggests it was erected to put Godly protection on someone whose father was Ragnarr.⁵⁴ Lastly, N 722 refers to a Ragnarr who owns a particular yarn. However, yet again, it does not have sufficient information for our case, so it is almost impossible to deduct what it actually refers to.⁵⁵

Translation: Vígi(?) and Halfdan(?)/Eldjarn(?) and Eilífr (and) Hákon (and) Rúnfríðr had the stone erected in memory of Illugi(?), their father. Æpir carved the runes. This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 4* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁵² Rune text: ra^n^na^r : biskop : uigpi : kir:kiu : þessa : þa : fygpi : honom : fylgpi : þa : þorþr : ka^palæin ¶ ok : æina^r : na^fr : o^k þro^nt^r : mo^kr : ok : þorstæin : ra^upi : ok þo^nt^r : kin : o^k han : ræist : runa^r : þesar
Translation: Bishop Ragnarr dedicated this church. He was then assisted, then assisted by Þórðr the Chaplain and Einarr Nave-borer/Auger and Þróndr the monk and Þorsteinn Red and Þróndr Chin, and he carved these runes. This inscription was published in Kristel Zilmer, "Words in Wood and Stone: Uses of Runic Writing in Medieval Norwegian Churches," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 12 (January 2016): 199–227, 220.

⁵³ Rune text: r<a>n t^r<yll>

Translation: Ragnarr(?) the Stout. This inscription was published in Kristel Zilmer, "Words in Wood and Stone: Uses of Runic Writing in Medieval Norwegian Churches," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 12 (January 2016), 199–227, 220.

⁵⁴ Rune text: (o) gu(þ) e^r alt m(a)(t)i : a(r)la kæt(e) · (r)-a-- r-n-rso-ar han^an ræis- ru^na^r

Translation: O God, who since the beginning has presided over all, protect ... Ragnarr's son. He carved runes. This inscription was published in Kristel Zilmer, "Words in Wood and Stone: Uses of Runic Writing in Medieval Norwegian Churches," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 12 (January 2016): 199–227.

⁵⁵ Rune text: rannr a : ka^rn : þætta

Translation: Ragnarr owns this yarn. This inscription was published in James E. Knirk, "Documentation of Runic Inscriptions," *Runrön: Runologiska Bidrag* 24 (2021), 15–42, 21.

Regarding other stones about Ragnarr, Vg 55 commemorates a father, Fari, and was erected by two brothers named Ulfr and Ragnarr.⁵⁶ Similar to Vg 55, in U 98, we can understand that this Ragnarr is unrelated to ours because it also commemorates a father, Sigtryggr and the person who commissioned the stone; surprisingly, a woman, Ingibóra, commemorates her father, adds her brother's name to the rune stone.⁵⁷ Finally, according to the runic text in U 687,⁵⁸ a woman named Runa, along with the widow of her eldest son Sigrid, commissioned the rune stone to commemorate Runa's husband and her four sons passed away.

Thus far, all the information above about the rune stones containing the names Yngvarr, Hákon, Eiríkr, and Ragnar deserves to be noticed. Even though Braun's argument about the names being uncommon among the rune stones is considerably challenging to support due to the archaeological findings in the last seven decades, we can still partially hold on to his argument for the names in question, Yngvarr, Eiríkr, Ragnar, since they are found less in rune stones in number in comparison to the other names such as Svein (204), Halfdan (51), Stein (360), and so on. His other argument, on the other hand, is still valid. He argues that those names, combined as family

⁵⁶ Rune text: ulfr : auk : þir : ra(k)narr : risþu : stin : þansi : iftir : fara : faþur sin : ristin : man : sar : hafþi : kuþa : tru : til : kus :

Translation: Ulfr and Ragnarr, they raised this stone in memory of Fari, their father ... Christian man. He had good belief in God. This inscription was published in Hugo Jungner and Elisabeth Svärdström, *Sveriges runinskrifter: V. Västergötlands runinskrifter* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁵⁷ Rune text: [igibur- : lit : raisa : stain : þina : eftir : faþur : sin : syktrykr : auk : ragnfastr : sun : henar : ragnar : hit : brupir : henar :]

Translation: Ingibóra had this stone raised in memory of her father Sigtryggr, and (so did) Ragnfastr, her son. Her brother was called Ragnarr. This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 1* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

⁵⁸ Rune text: runa ' lit kiara ' mirki at ' sbialbuþa ' uk ' at ' suain ' uk ' at ' antuit ' uk at ' raknar ' suni ' sin ' uk ' ekla ' uk ' siri(þ) ' at ' sbialbuþa ' bonta sin an uar ' tauþr ' i hulmkarþi ' i olafs ' kriki ' ubir ' risti ' ru

Translation: Rúna had the landmark made in memory of Spjallboði and in memory of Sveinn and in memory of Andvétr and in memory of Ragnarr, sons of her and Helgi/Egli/Engli; and Sigríðr in memory of Spjallboði, her husbandman. He died in Holmgarðr in Ólaf's church. Æpir carved the runes. This inscription was published in Elias Wessén and Sven B.F. Jansson, *Sveriges Runinskrifter: VII. Upplands Runinskrifter del 3* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien).

members, are highly characteristic of Sweden's noblest family, who ruled Sweden at least since the ninth century.⁵⁹ The existence of several resemblances in the names associated with this particular dynasty strongly suggests a genealogical descent from the Ynglings.

In *Ynglingasaga*, we found the name Eiríkr three times — in chapters twenty, twenty-three and forty-six.⁶⁰ One of these Eiríkr is King Agni's son, who, in turn, is the son of the mythological king Dag the Wise (*Dagr spaki*).⁶¹ The other Eiríkr is the grandson of King Agni and the son of King Yngvi, who was also a mythological king.⁶² The last Eiríkr in the Yngling family is King Eiríkr Agnarsson, the king in Vestfold.⁶³ As for the name Qnundr, in the *Ynglingasaga*, we found one Qnundr who is King Qnundr/Anundr (*Brøt-Anundr*), who was the son of Yngvarr Harra (d. early 7th century).⁶⁴ Last but not least, we have one, Yngvarr/Ingvarr, the father of King Qnundr/Anundr (*Brøt-Anundr*)⁶⁵. In fact, about the same time period, there was a regional king in Uppland who shared the same name and was very likely a member of the same royal family.⁶⁶

In addition, although there is no record of a Swedish king named Ragnar, there is a mention of a king with this name in the writings of Saxo Grammaticus.⁶⁷ This may have led to confusion and caused Ragnar Loðbrók, a Dane, to be later depicted as the King of Sweden. This confusion was further exacerbated by his son being named Björn (*Bjørn*), a common name among Swedish royalty. The name Hákon/Håkan appears in

⁵⁹ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 103-4.

⁶⁰ Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla Volume I*, trans. Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (University College London, 2011).

⁶¹ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla I*, 22-23.

⁶² Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla I*, 25.

⁶³ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla I*, 43.

⁶⁴ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla I*, chapter 33-4-5.

⁶⁵ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla I*, 35-6-7.

⁶⁶ F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförli?", 103-4.

⁶⁷ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes. Volume II*, ed. Karsten Friis-Jensen, trans. Peter Fisher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 801-802.

both inscriptions but was not included in the official royal lists until the eleventh century. However, its appearance in the sixth decade of the same century is significant and provides important clues to the question of Yngvarr's pedigree.

On the other hand, we should refrain from diving into this bottomless well since this differs from the question we are trying to answer: What was Yngvarr's motivation? What we should remember instead is the fact that we have the figure of Yngvarr, which is highly problematic and enigmatic on the one hand and non-negligible reasons to suggest that Yngvarr and his brothers mentioned in the rune stone U 513 were a part of the Swedish royal family on the other. For there are strong inducements to assume the latter is correct, I will continue, from now on, to explore Yngvarr's journey and his motivation for this journey with acknowledging the assumption that Yngvarr and his brothers mentioned in the U 513 were a part of Swedish royal family.⁶⁸

2.3. Yngvarr's Journey Overseas

Given what has been said, as I have demonstrated so far, it is best to ignore the genealogical tree data *Yngvars saga* provides. On the other hand, this does not mean that all the information given in the saga should be ignored altogether. In this respect, we should once more go back to the saga itself and try to find the possible motivations for Yngvarr's journey towards the East within the side stories produced inside the range of the fertile imagination of the author of the *Yngvars saga*.

At the end of the fourth chapter in *Yngvar's saga*, we see Yngvarr winning a battle against Semgalls, who refuse to pay tribute to King Óláfr, with his cousin Onund/Anund(r)/Qnundr. The saga depicts him upset for Yngvarr wants King Óláfr to give him "the title of the king and the honours go with it."⁶⁹ The king rejects

⁶⁸ See F. Braun, "Hvem Var Yngvarr Enn Vidförlí?", 109-11.

⁶⁹ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 50.

Yngvarr's wish but offers to grant him anything else he wants.⁷⁰ As expected, both parties stood firm, creating tension between King Óláfr and Yngvarr.⁷¹

The saga commences in chapter five: "Then Yngvarr prepared for a journey overseas, for he wanted to find a kingdom in some foreign land."⁷² In other words, we are not given any explanation for his journey other than the tension between him and King Óláfr. Even though this alone seems plausible to a twelfth-century saga audience, it would be fallacious since the primary focus of the saga writers was on the portrayal of individual characters, including their personalities, destinies, and achievements in the narrative.⁷³ That is to say, the author of the *Yngvars saga* might have wanted to subtly emphasise the "destiny" element of Yngvarr's journey by presenting the tension between Yngvarr and King Óláfr as the only reason for his journey to the East. Alternatively, the other details about Yngvarr's motivation seemed unnecessary for a twelfth-century saga author, for the relations with the king were the foremost important thing in a twelfth-century chieftain's life. Another possibility is that he did not think those were necessary for the "entertaining" flow of the saga.

2.4. Russo-Scandinavian Relations in the Eleventh Century

Luckily, our area of research here, geographically, stretches out to the Caspian Sea and allows us to search for Yngvarr's motivation for the journey in the sources of the civilisations of Central Asia. At the end of the tenth century, what we see in the reign of Vladimir I (d. 1015) is the construction of steppe frontiers to make the journey to

⁷⁰ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 50.

⁷¹ The examples of Scandinavian pretenders or jarls who asserted their right to the throne or a specific jarldom, subsequently necessitating their self-imposed exile due to the prevailing superiority of opposing forces or their defeat within the context of conflicts can be found in the narrative of the sagas and other medieval texts. See Laura Napran and Elisabeth Van Houts, eds., *Exile in the Middle Ages* (Brepols, 2004); Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 50.

⁷² Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 50.

⁷³ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 23.

Byzantium safer and more convenient than before.⁷⁴ This naturally paved the way for an increase in the travellers between Scandinavia, Russia and Byzantium. Hence, we see a substantial rise in travelling between Scandinavia, Russia and Byzantium in the eleventh century.

Here, it is essential to emphasise that Russo-Scandinavian relations were established centuries before Vladimir I. Both archaeological and literary evidence can be found regarding the infiltration of Scandinavians, mostly Swedes, into Russian soil. Archaeological finds in the regions Leningrad, Pskov, Novgorod and western parts of the Vologda oblasts, for instance, can be categorised as Scandinavian-type graves, hoards and dwelling sites.⁷⁵ Archaeological discoveries from northwestern Russia, specifically in five towns —Pskov, Novgorod, the Riurik fortified site, Old Ladoga, and Beloozero — have revealed Scandinavian connections. Among these discoveries are various objects with both males and females, along with children's wooden toy swords found in Pskov and Old Ladoga. Certain findings strongly indicate the presence of Scandinavians, including runic inscriptions in Old Ladoga and Novgorod.

⁷⁴ Following Russia's conversion, Byzantine-Russo trade grew in both volume and value, which was much greater than the trade that occurred during the middle years of the tenth century. However, as beneficial as it was, the journey between Kiev and Constantinople remained arduous and highly unsafe. As one might expect, this was partly a result of the raging nature of Dnieper. Nomads along the Dnieper River constituted the other part of the threat and, without a doubt, more dangerous than the wild stream of Dnieper. The nomads in question were principally Pechenegs, semi-nomadic Oghuz Turkic people from Central Asia. As the trade activity between the Empire and the Rus' heightened, it provoked Pechenegs, who were only one day's journey from the Rus', according to Constantine VII's *De Administrando Imperio*, into launching more frequent and aggressive ambushes and raids. On top of that, Pechenegs were focused on not only raiding and pillaging but also competitors to the Empire in trade. They transported goods from the forested areas to the cities along the northern coast of the Black Sea, particularly Cherson. The trade conditions between the Empire and the Rus', then, were insecure and harsh. It was Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich (Vladimir I) who significantly altered the circumstances by making his territory the primary supporter of the Byzantine Empire north of the Black Sea, thus replacing the Pechenegs in that position. He was also the one who formulated a strategy to guard Kiev from the south by creating a steppe frontier. This plan involved constructing forts (also known as *gorody* in the Russian Primary Chronicle) along the Dnieper's tributaries from the Desna to the Sula, as well as on the right bank of the Dnieper River along the Stugna. Although the first function of this steppe frontier was to protect the apple of Vladimir's eye, Kiev; it also had a secondary but still significant function which was the protection of the traffic on the Dnieper. For more detail on the subject see, Jonathan Shepard, "The Russian Steppe-Frontier and the Black Sea Zone," *Archeion Pontou* 35 (1979), 218-37, 225.

⁷⁵ Stalsberg, "Scandinavian Relations with Northwestern Russia", 272.

Additionally, a miniature iron Thor's hammer was found in Old Ladoga, attached to a neck ring, and two incomplete discarded ornaments — a pendant from Pskov and a needle from the Rurik fortified site.

The discoveries found within the towns predominantly belong to the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁷⁶ However, in Pskov, there is a likelihood that these findings originate from the ninth century. In the case of Old Ladoga, the findings can be traced back even further to the time before the Viking age, specifically the eighth century. This implies that Scandinavian artefacts have been present in these towns since their earliest stages.

In northwestern Russia, only two collections of Scandinavian items in the form of hoards can be identified: a pendant found in Skadino and an annular brooch discovered in Demshina.⁷⁷ Both collections primarily consisted of coins from Western Europe, and they were concealed around 1075 and during the eleventh century, respectively. Fourteen mounds were found in Northwestern Russia and seventy more in the Southeastern Ladoga area with artefacts of Scandinavian type.

We found the literary evidence in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, where it is told that in 859, Varangians from the Baltic region came to Russia and forced northern Slavic tribes and Finnish neighbours to pay tribute.⁷⁸ These tributaries rebelled and

⁷⁶ Stalsberg, "Scandinavian Relations with Northwestern Russia", 272.

⁷⁷ Stalsberg, "Scandinavian Relations with Northwestern Russia", 273.

⁷⁸ According to the Russian Primary Chronicle "(859) The Varangians from beyond sea imposed tribute upon the Chuds, the Slavs, the Merians, the Ves' and the Krivichians. (...) 6368-6370 (860-862) The tributaries of Varangians drove them back beyond the sea and, refusing them further tribute, set out to govern themselves. There was no law among them, but tribe rose against tribe. Discord thus ensued among them, and they began to war one against another. They said to themselves, 'Let us seek a prince who may rule over us and judge us according to the Law.' They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes: these particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some called Swedes, and others Normans, English, and Gotlanders, for they were thus named. The Chuds, the Slavs, the Krivichians, and the Ves' then said to the people of Rus' 'Our land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us.' They thus selected three brothers, with their kinsfolk, who took with them all the Russes and migrated. The oldest, Rurik, located himself in Novgorod; the second, Sineus at Beloozero; and the third, Truvor, in Izborsk." See, Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 59.

expelled the Varangians, but they soon realised they could not maintain stability and invited them back to restrain the order. Three Varangian brothers, Rurik, Sineus and Truvor (the equivalent of Hroerkr, Signiutr, and Þorvaldr in Old Norse), and their kinsfolk migrated to Russia. However, according to Arabic sources, the Scandinavian immigration was not sudden but gradual. Scandinavian traders had established themselves in Northern Russia well before the proposed date of 859 and before the Dnieper trade route gained its significance which happened in the following two centuries.⁷⁹

The Arabic sources also provide significant evidence of the Scandinavian infiltrators' commercial activities. In his work, *Kitāb al-A'lāq al-Nafīsa*, geographer Ahmad ibn Rusta writes that they made frequent incursions into neighbouring Slavic territories and sold Slavic captives as slaves to the Bulgars and Khazars. The Rus⁸⁰ people were regular traders at the Bulgar metropolis at the junction of the Kama River and the Volga, near modern-day Kazan.⁸¹ In addition to the enslaved people, the Rus traded in furs such as sable, ermine, and squirrel, and this commerce was mainly

⁷⁹ S. H. Cross, "The Scandinavian Infiltration into Early Russia," *Speculum* 21, no. 4 (October 1946): 505–14, 507. For more details on the Scandinavians in the Arabic sources, see Ibn Khordadbeh, *Kitāb Al-Masālik Wa-Al-Mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Brill, 1189), 115; Ahmad Ibn Rustah, *The Book of Precious Records: An English Translation from Russian*, trans. Nathan Sokolovsky (Independently Published, 2022).

⁸⁰ The people of Scandinavia have been drawn to Russia for trade ventures from the earliest of time. This trade predominantly originated from Sweden, which possessed the most direct route to Russia, specifically from areas such as Uppland, East Gotland, and the island of Gotland. The maritime regions of Uppland and East Gotland were initially known as Roper or Ropin, later referred to as Roslagen in Old Norse. The inhabitants of these regions were initially called Róðskarlar, Róðsmen and lastly, Róðspiggar. These people constituted the majority of Russian traders and eventually began establishing settlements in the East. As a result, the Finnish coastline closest to Sweden was initially settled by them, and this area still comprises the Swedish-speaking segment of Finland, referred to as Ruotsalaiset in Finnish and Ruotsi in Swedish. Over time, their presence grew significantly in Russia proper to the extent that Norse writings denoted the northern and central regions of Russia as Svíþjóð en mikla (Great Sweden) or Svíþjóð en kalda (Cold Sweden), distinguishing them from the core of Sweden. Subsequently, the Slavic populations in Russia adopted this term for the Norse individuals through the Finns and labelled them Rus. This term then transformed into Rhos in Medieval Greek and found its equivalent as Rus in Arabic. See, Vilhelm Thomsen and Hans Hildebrand, *Ryska Rikets Grundläggning Genom Skandinaverna* (Samson & Wallin, 1882), 80-89.

⁸¹ Daniel Abramovich Chwolson, "*Izvestiya o Khazarakh*," St. Petersburg, 1869 (notes on the Chazars, Burtars, Madjars, Slavs, and Russians from the Arabic of Ibn Dasta), 23, 34-35, quoted in S. H. Cross, "The Scandinavian Infiltration into Early Russia," *Speculum* 21, no. 4 (October 1946), 507.

conducted through money transactions. Frequent discoveries of Arabic coins in Northern Russia, with dates ranging from 745 to 900, support this claim.⁸² The fact that the Rus' had gained mastery over certain Slavic territories and had learned the Slavic language through their close interactions with the Slavs is further evidence of their non-Slavic origin, as noted by the Jew Ibrahim ibn Ya'qub around 965.⁸³

Luckily, the Scandinavian interlopers left other traces behind during the first steps of the aforementioned gradual infiltration period. We see Ibn Rusta uses the *khakan* title while describing the Rus' chieftain. The same title can also be seen in the *Annales Bertiniani* report when a group of men, whom the Byzantines called *Rhos*,⁸⁴ came to the court of Loius the Pious along with a Greek embassy. The reason behind this crowded visit was a request from his Greek contemporary, Theophilus, regarding the journey of the *Rhos* to their prince (*chacanus*).⁸⁵ The original route of the *Rhos* is abundant in threatening barbarians, and Theophilus is requesting Louis to speed them on their way. The Carolingian emperor ordered an investigation into these men called

⁸² Chwolson, "Izvyestiya", 507.

⁸³ J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge: Ethnologische und Historisch-Topographische Studien zur Geschichte des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts (ca. 840-940)* (Leipzig, 1903), xxxi, 24-25, 160-206,

⁸⁴ The majority of the original inhabitants of Russia were of Slavonic origin, along with other tribes residing in the North-West regions. Swedes mostly arrived as merchants in these territories; however, due to the need for protection, these trading journeys often turned into piratical expeditions. Naturally, as time passed, the eastern lands' social and political organisation became more settled, and Norse trade voyages became more regular and economically significant. This led to the establishment of fortified trading posts to safeguard principal trading points, especially when Swedes started settling permanently in these areas. Eventually, the Swedes built their fortified trading posts called "garths" (known as *goroda* in Russian). Frequently, the Slavs had already formed small states centred around fortified cities before the Norsemen arrived and settled there, eventually gaining control. The Slavonic chieftains often sought the Norsemen's assistance as allies or mercenaries, especially for guarding merchants against robbers or supporting them in civil conflicts. Although the Norse states in Russia are typically associated with the arrival of Rurik and his brothers in Novgorod in 862, historical evidence indicates the existence of Norse-ruled petty states along the major rivers long before that time. In this regard, I argue that the Russians were an amalgamation of Scandinavian — mainly Swedish — settlers and Slavic and Finno-Ugrarian nomads therefore, from now on, I will use the term "Rus" as an umbrella term which describes the people of both Slavic and Scandinavian origin. On the other hand, since this thesis is fundamentally about Scandinavians, the emphasis will be on Scandinavian origin.

For more on the debate concerning the origin of Rus, see Sigfús Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, trans. Benedikt S. Benediktz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁸⁵ Janet L. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin Ninth-Century Histories, Volume I* (Manchester University Press, 1991), 44.

Rhos and discovered that they belonged to the people of Swedes. It is possible that the adventurers referenced were part of the earliest scouting parties to descend the Dnieper River and reach the Black Sea.⁸⁶ In light of what has been said, it is very definite that the infiltration of Scandinavians down the Dnieper began toward the middle of the ninth century, even though Genozdovo is considered the first permanent Scandinavian settlement in the Dnieper Valley.

Just as importantly, we see Scandinavians as mercenaries for the princes of the Rus'.⁸⁷ Therefore, one can assume that the number of Scandinavian adventurers who had travelled southwards along the Dnieper on June 18, 860, for example, in the Rus expedition to Constantinople, was high.⁸⁸ Vikings were well-known for their threatening behaviour in the Euxine region by this date. Furthermore, this period overlaps with the *Russian Primary Chronicle's* date regarding the foundation of a Scandinavian community in Kiev.

So, by the tenth century, Russo-Scandinavian relations must have been well-established. In other words, by the time Russo-Scandinavian-Byzantine relations peaked in the eleventh century by order of Vladimir to construct forts along the Dnieper's tributaries from the Desna to the Sula together and on the right bank of the Dnieper along the Stugna river, both parties were familiar with each other's appearance and presence. As mentioned earlier, this made the journey on the Dnieper far safer and more convenient, and hence the number of people who travelled back and forth from Scandinavian kingdoms to the land of the Rus' increased vastly. This incessant and relatively safe toing and froing directly affected trade. In the second half of the tenth century, a town called Olesh'e arose in the Dnieper estuary, and according

⁸⁶ Cross, "The Scandinavian Infiltration", 508.

⁸⁷ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection".

⁸⁸ Cross, "The Scandinavian Infiltration", 508.

to the preliminary excavations, the commercial life climaxed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁸⁹ During the five trial excavations, a significant number of fragments of Byzantine or Crimean amphorae, glazed pottery and glass bracelets were discovered.⁹⁰

Additionally, archaeologists have found a miniature version of the viking boat burning excavated at the Christian cemetery at Belgorod, which was founded by Vladimir shortly after the conversion of Russia; the boat was simply a tree trunk that had been hallowed out, and it was set on fire in a hole. The “miniature” size of the boat and where it was excavated suggest that it might have been done in such a “secretive” manner, for the excavated area belongs to the aforementioned Christian cemetery.⁹¹ They also found ornaments, a cross bearing on it a representation of the Crucifixion, a bronze cross-pendant of Scandinavian type—a bronze figurine of a man and another bronze figurine of a rider clinging to a rearing horse—in cemeteries located in rural settlements near the Upper Dnieper in the Mogilev region; these ornaments were described by the same archaeologists as made in Scandinavia.⁹² Furthermore, a remote area surrounded by bogs near the Rive Derazhin was discovered and dated to the eleventh century at the cemeteries at Ludchitsy, situated half a kilometre from the right bank of the Dnieper, and at Kolodezskaya.⁹³ Last but not least, a bronze cast figurine of a man found at a female burial at Ludchitsy was confidently argued to be Scandinavian-made by Y. G. Rier.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Shepard, “Yngvarr’s Expedition to the East”, 225.

⁹⁰ A. L. Sokul’sky, “K Lokalizatsii Letopisnogo Olesh’e,” *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 1 (1980), 64-73, 66-9, 71, 73.

⁹¹ Shepard, “Yngvarr’s Expedition to the East”, 226. See also G. G. Mezentseva and Y. P. Prilipko, “Novye Otkrytiya Na Raskopkakh Belgoroda Kievskogo,” *Arkheologicheskie Otkrytiya 1976 goda*, 1977, 339-40.

⁹² Shepard, “Yngvarr’s Expedition to the East”, 226.

⁹³ Shepard, “Yngvarr’s Expedition to the East”, 226.

⁹⁴ Y. G. Rier, “Izuchenie Kurganov v Mogilevskom Podneprov’e,” *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya* 2 (1976): 179-91, 190.

The number of examples, or more precisely, material proofs of the marks of trade between the Rus' and Scandinavians, can be increased. In this regard, it is apparent that the available literary and archaeological proof suggests that Scandinavians traded in Russia during the eleventh century, adds to the more widely known evidence of them serving as mercenaries for Russian rulers.⁹⁵ We have shortly referred to the Scandinavian mercenaries in the service of the Rus princes above, and even if we date the beginning of this tradition to the mid-800s, it can still be argued that there would be enough time for this tradition to become a common practice in the eleventh century. Furthermore, the number of Scandinavian mercenaries under the service of the Russian princes increased significantly in the eleven years following Vladimir I's death in 1015.⁹⁶

Before proceeding any further, we should remember our primary question: What was the motivation behind Yngvarr's expedition, or more specifically, what was the motivation behind Yngvarr's movement towards the east? Could it be the growing trend of being a mercenary for a Russian prince? An answer can be given with the wide range of sources attesting to the activities of Scandinavians in the service of Russian princes.

First, we have Yaroslav the Wise (d. 1054), whose relationship with Scandinavians can be grouped into three kinds of occurrences and situations according to Birnbaum: (i) "matrimonial connections"; (ii) "hosting of prominent Scandinavian political figures, frequently while on the run from their own country"; (iii) "calling-in and maintaining of mercenaries."⁹⁷ While the first two are as important as the third

⁹⁵ Shepard, "Yngvarr's Expedition to the East", 227.

⁹⁶ Shepard, "Yngvarr's Expedition to the East", 228.

⁹⁷ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection", 7. This is mentioned in *Russian Primary Chronicle* as well "6523 (1015). While Vladimir was desirous of attacking Yaroslav, the latter sent overseas and imported Varangian reinforcements since he feared his father's advance." Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 124.

one for establishing relations, we should focus on the third to find an answer to our question.

At least four occasions are known when Yaroslav recruited Scandinavians to handle political-military emergencies. He first sought the help of Scandinavian mercenaries, especially Swedes and probably Norwegians, when organising to openly oppose his father, Great Prince Vladimir (d. 1015).⁹⁸ Although this scheme became unnecessary when Vladimir the Great died, he needed the help of Scandinavian mercenaries once again in 1018, when he claimed his right to the grand-princely throne of Kiev against his half-brother Sviatopolk I (d. 1019).⁹⁹ The third and fourth occurrences of Scandinavian recruitment happened in 1025 and 1036. In the former, Yaroslav marched against his brother Mstislav I of Kiev, who advanced from his principality of Tmutarakan' to Chernihiv with the support of Turkic nomads of the steppe.¹⁰⁰ The latter recruitment in 1036 was to retake Kiev from the hands of a nomadic Turkic tribe, the Pechenegs, due to their siege of the capital when Yaroslav was in Novgorod.¹⁰¹ Given what has been said, it appears that Yaroslav made use of Scandinavian mercenaries in various types of conflicts he faced throughout his reign.

⁹⁸ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection", 18.

⁹⁹ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection", 19. Also mentioned in *Russian Primary Chronicle* "While Yaroslav had not yet heard of his father's death, he had many Varangians under his command, and they offered violence to the inhabitants of Novgorod and to their wives. The men of Novgorod then rose and killed the Varangians in their market place. (...) On the morrow, he collected the remnant of the men of Novgorod and (...) Then the men of Novgorod said, 'We can still fight for you, oh Prince, even though our brethren are slain.' So Yaroslav collected one thousand Varangians and forty thousand other soldiers and marched against Svyatopolk. (...) When the latter went out upon the ice, it broke under them, and Yaroslav began to win the upper hand. Svyatopolk then fled among the Lyakhs, while Yaroslav established himself in Kiev..." Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 131-2.

¹⁰⁰ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection", 20. Also mentioned in *Russian Primary Chronicle* "Then Yaroslav returned and came again to Novgorod, whence he sent overseas after Varangians. Thus Hakon came over with his Varangian followers." Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 135.

¹⁰¹ Birnbaum, "Yaroslav's Varangian Connection", 21. Also mentioned in *Russian Primary Chronicle*, "While Yaroslav was still at Novgorod, news came to him that the Pechenegs were besieging Kiev. He then collected a large army of Varangians and Slavs, returned to Kiev, and entered his city." Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 136.

Unless we assume Yaroslav recruited randomly for such crucial military campaigns, it can be argued that recruiting mercenaries from Scandinavia was almost a habit for Yaroslav. So, it is highly possible that Yaroslav was quite content with the service of Scandinavians. In this regard, Yaroslav's contentedness, on the one hand, and the lack of negative records of any sort about Scandinavian mercenaries, on the other, it can be said that this was a common and preferred way of recruiting.

Second, we have Þorsteinn, a commander in a Rus' retinue, inscribed on a rune stone Sö 338.¹⁰² Considering the size of the stone, 2,09 metres tall and 1,19 meters wide, one can assume he acquired a sizeable fortune during his service to a Russian prince.¹⁰³ This can be further proved with another rune stone discovered in Veda. The rune stone U 209 reads, "Þorsteinn made (the stone) in memory of Erinmundr, his son, and bought this estate and earned (wealth) in the east in Garðar (Russia)".¹⁰⁴ Regarding these two rune stones, we can suggest that they are the same Þorsteinn, and he bought this land in Veda with the wealth he earned in Russia and later gave it to his son.¹⁰⁵ One can interpret that Sö 338 represents the two-sidedness of the Russo-Scandinavian relations. The Russian princes were resolving the conflicts they faced with the service of Scandinavian mercenaries, and the latter were paid enough — for commissioning an enormous rune stone — to stay loyal.

¹⁰² Rune text: §A · ketil : auk + biorn + þair + raistu + stain + þin[a] + at + þourstain : faþur + sin + anuntr + at + bruþur + sin + auk : hu[skar]lar + hifir + iafna + ketilau at + buanta sin · ¶ bruþr uaru þar bistra mana : a : lanti auk : i liþi : uti : h(i)(l)(t)u sini huska(r)la : ui- + §B han + fial + i + urustu + austr + i + garþum + lis + furugi + lanmana + bestr

Translation: §A Ketill and Björn, they raised this stone in memory of Þorsteinn, their father; Qnundr in memory of his brother and the housecarls in memory of the just(?) (and) Ketiley in memory of her husbandman. These brothers were the best of men in the land and abroad in the retinue, held their housecarls well. §B He fell in battle in the east in Garðar (Russia), commander of the retinue, the best of landholders.

¹⁰³ Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus* ', 396.

¹⁰⁴ Rune text: þurtsain × kiarþi | iif×tir irinmunt × sun sin auk | kkaubti þinsa bu × auk × aflapi × austr i karþum

¹⁰⁵ Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus* ', 396.

Another example that must be mentioned in this regard is Eymundr Hringsson, son of Hring, who descended from Haraldr Fine-Hair's blood.¹⁰⁶ In *Eymunds saga* (*Eymundar þátt hrings*), after an expedition to England, Eymundr and Ragnar — the son of Agnar, the son of Ragnar Rykkil, who was the son of Haraldr Fine-Hair, or his cousin — arrive in Norway with their large fleet.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, they were given the news of the conquest of Norway and the elimination of all the provincial kings in Norway.¹⁰⁸ Eymundr then calls his countrymen for a meeting and explains why he cannot bear arms against Saint Óláfr (King Óláfr II of Norway, d. 1030), for he thinks the country is in good hands and swore oaths of allegiance that he was duty-bound to keep them.¹⁰⁹ When asked about his next plan, Eymundr offered to go to Russia and visit the three Russian princes who were, at the time, in a power struggle following the death of Vladimir the Great.¹¹⁰ His plan was to "... visit these kings, and stay with one of them, preferably one who intends to hold on to his realm but is satisfied with the way their father divided the country", for he was sure to "win fame and fortune there."¹¹¹ Unsurprisingly, this plan seemed like the best option to most of them since they all wanted to make money and walk away from the ill-treatment they faced in Norway.¹¹² The saga continues with Eymundr's arrival in Russia and meeting with Jarisleif/Yaroslav. Indeed, it can be said that recruitment from Scandinavia was so frequent and usual that in *Eymunds saga*, Eymundr seems notably sure about his career

¹⁰⁶ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 69. Also see Robert Cook, "Russian History, Icelandic Story, and Byzantine Strategy in Eymundar Þátt Hringssonar," *Viator* 17 (January 1986): 65–90 for more on Eymundr's Saga.

¹⁰⁷ There are two versions of *Eymundar þátt hrings*; one of them appears as *Eymundar þátt hrings* in *Flateyjarbók* and the other one is an introductory chapter in *Yngvars saga víðförla*. Since I have access to none of the versions of *Flateyjarbók*, I used the one in the introductory chapter form.

¹⁰⁸ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 70.

¹⁰⁹ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 70. In addition to Eymundr's trust in King Óláfr, being blood brothers must have affected the former's decision regarding taking arms against the latter.

¹¹⁰ Jarisleif, who is the Yaroslav above the Wise; Vartilaf, also known as Izyaslav of Polotsk; and Burislaf, who is likely Syvatopolk, Vladimir's illegitimate son according to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, 93.

¹¹¹ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 71.

¹¹² Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 71.

path after fleeing Norway. Given what has been said until now, his words on visiting one of the Russian princes and winning fame and fortune most likely refer to his plans to be a mercenary.

Last but by no means not least, Jakun, the Varangian king, further proves the Scandinavian recruitment culture within the retinues of the Rus. We find the reference to him under the year 1024; the following account talks about Jakun's involvement in the conflict between half-brothers Yaroslav the Wise and Mstislav.¹¹³ In this regard, it could be said that the possibility that Hákon was the aforementioned brother of Yngvarr, who was mentioned in the rune stone U 617.¹¹⁴

2.5. Analysis

When the Russo-Scandinavian relations are examined, all the written and material evidence suggest a power balance in which the latter dominated the former to a certain extent. This is indeed observable in both Russian and Arabic sources. In *Russian Primary Chronicle*, it is stated that prior to the arrival of three Scandinavian men, Rurik, Sineus and Truvor (ON Hroerkr, Signiutr, and Þorvaldr), the “The Varangians from beyond the sea imposed tributes on Chuds, the Slavs, the Merians, the Ves’, and the Krivichians”.¹¹⁵ Since the party that imposes tributes is Scandinavians, it is evident on whose side the power lies. Likewise, the statement that the Scandinavian people made incursions and enslaved Slavic people in the *Kitāb al-A lāq al-Nafīsa* supports the aforementioned power balance.

This balance seems to change gradually when we compare Ahmad ibn Rustah's statements with the nature of the relationship between the Kievan princes and Scandinavians. As mentioned earlier, both literary and material evidence show that

¹¹³ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 135.

¹¹⁴ See page 22.

¹¹⁵ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 59.

recruiting mercenaries from Norse men can be considered a custom due to its frequency in terms of time and types of military expeditions. In this regard, we can conclude that there had been a shift in the balance of power. Even though we cannot be sure about the causes of this power shift, what we can be sure of is the fact that, as a consequence of this shift, there occurred a recruiter-recruit relationship between them. Moreover, it seems that Scandinavians found this new power balance logical and profitable enough, for even among our scarce sources, four examples of mercenaries under Russian princes can be found.

So, what did Yngvarr go east for? According to the saga, Yngvarr died in 1041 from a sickness that broke out during the expedition.¹¹⁶ The Grand Prince of Kiev in the year 1041 was Yaroslav the Wise. In this regard, Yngvarr must have gone eastwards during the reign of Yaroslav, and earlier, I mentioned that Yaroslav's relationship with Scandinavians can be grouped into three kinds of occurrences, according to Birnbaum.¹¹⁷ Since we do not have any evidence of a matrimonial connection concerning Yngvarr, it is best to eliminate the first occurrence. Although we have established that Yngvarr was a descendant of the Swedish royal family, we still do not have any clue concerning his part in the Swedish royal family due to the lack of sources. Additionally, if he had been an important political figure whom Yaroslav hosted, this would have been mentioned in *Yngvars saga*. This left us with the third option, which is calling in and maintaining of mercenaries and along with his military success frequently mentioned in the saga, I argue that he was a mercenary under the service of Yaroslav.

Finally, in order to find Yngvarr's motivation for going eastwards, we must return to the saga once again. In the saga, Yngvarr leaves Sweden because King Óláfr

¹¹⁶ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 60.

¹¹⁷ See page 36.

rejects to give “the title of the king and the honours go with it”.¹¹⁸ As mentioned before, even though sagas are inherently fictional for the most part, one should not neglect them altogether. Additionally, since there is no further information about Yngvar’s leave in literary and material sources, we only have the tension between Óláfr and Yngvarr as a clue. If we accept this as a fact, then I argue that Yngvarr’s desire to be the king can be boiled down to his desire to be wealthy and powerful. In other words, I argue that it is very likely that Yngvarr’s motivation for going eastwards was to be as wealthy and powerful as the king.

2.6. Conclusion

Both archaeological and literary evidence suggests that the contact between the Scandinavians and the inhabitants of Russian soil started long before 860, the date *Russian Primary Chronicle* gives. The power dynamics, on the other hand, appear to be overlapping in both Arabic and Russian sources. We find Scandinavians in a more dominant status than their neighbours during the first couple of centuries of their contact. It appears that by the start of the tenth century, the nature of Russo-Scandinavian relations started to change. That is to say, we started to encounter them as the mercenaries of the Kievan princes. Although no specific reason was given regarding this shift, its effects on both the reasons and the motivations of the Scandinavians can be seen.

Once the tributaries of Scandinavians, by the turn of the eleventh century, they were the mercenaries of the Grand Princes. However, it should be emphasised that this power shift does not necessarily signify a new relationship in which Scandinavians are forced to enter the service of the princes. This was simply a medieval recruiter-recruit relationship.

¹¹⁸ Palsson and Edwards, trans., *Vikings in Russia*, 50.

As a result of this change, Scandinavians, particularly but not exclusively Swedes, started to benefit from this new relationship. Inevitably, this also affected their motivations for going eastwards, in this case, Russia. That is to say, they were no longer motivated by the possible Slav slaves and the loot that they could forcibly extract from native inhabitants. They were motivated by fame and, most importantly, payment.



CHAPTER III: THE COMMANDER OF THE VARANGIANS

Medieval Scandinavians stood out as remarkable seafarers and intrepid travellers, leaving an indelible mark on medieval Europe and the Middle East to a certain extent through their voyages across vast distances. On the other hand, Christianity, expectedly, influenced Scandinavian society to a great extent, and thus Viking raids subsided at some point, albeit not immediately. While they were not the axe-bearing pagan warriors of the North anymore, they now had the opportunity to travel through those empires/kingdoms where their ancestors had raided a couple of decades earlier. As we will see in the following paragraphs, this led to a permanent presence which eventually gave rise to the establishment of Varangians in the Byzantine Army. I argue that, along with the alteration in their routes, their motivation for travel also changed. In this chapter, by comparing three different saga compilations — *Heimskringla*, *Fargskinna* and *Morkinskinna* — I will explore Haraldr Sigurðarson's (r. 1046-1066) motivation for going eastwards and entering the service of the Byzantine Emperor. In this regard, I will first mention the non-Roman presence in the Roman Imperial Army to visualise the beginning of the path that began to be paved in the fourth century by the Germans and ultimately came to a point which resulted in a hundred-year-long presence of Scandinavians in the Byzantine Army. I will then continue with the presence of Norse men in the Byzantine Army, the establishment of the Varangian Guard and Harald's journey from Norway to Constantinople, respectively.

3.1. Non-Romans in the Roman Army

One could be baffled by how, once warlike and militarised to an exceptional degree Roman Empire came to depend very largely on troops of non-Roman, particularly Germanic, origin. Indeed, the recruitment of non-Roman people can be traced to the

early fourth century.¹¹⁹ However, it could be said that the occurrence of Germans and other non-Roman officers as a striking force in the Roman imperial army started with Constantine I's (r. 306-337) initiatives to muster a mobile army to attack Maxentius (r. 305-312) to win the Empire for himself.¹²⁰ Constantine's army was mainly constituted of barbarians and "partly from among the prisoners of war settled by the tetrarchs in Gaul, partly from the captives taken by himself, partly from volunteers across from the volunteer".¹²¹ By doing this, it appears that he created a new *auxilia* to judge by their name, consisting largely of Germans.¹²² Furthermore, Constantine seems to establish a type of guard unit, *Scholae Palatinae*, in the place of the praetorian guard, which was recruited and mainly commanded, but not exclusively, by Germans. In light of what has been said, Germans of various tribal origins had a significant role in the Roman armies. During the middle years of the fourth century, the Alamanni held a significant presence, while the Franks occupied essential roles for the majority of the century.

The extant part of the Ammiannus Marcellinus' *Rerum Gestarum Libri* provides detailed information about the Late Roman officer class starting from 353/4.¹²³ It seems that by the second half of the fourth century, German officers were numerous and in influential positions. One can even find German officers who Latinized their

¹¹⁹ M. P. Speidel, "The Rise of Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army," in *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt II*, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini-Gräfin Vitzthum (De Gruyter, 1975), 202-31.

¹²⁰ D. Hoffmann, "Die Spätromischen Soldatengrabinschriften von Concordia," *Epigraphische Studien* 7, no. 1-2 (1969), 130-41, 169-73, 199-201.

¹²¹ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Clarendon Press, 1990), 7.

¹²² D. Hoffmann, "Die Spätromischen", 200-300.

¹²³ Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 8.

names.¹²⁴ In this regard, it is possible that the number of officers of Germanic origin was significantly higher in practice.¹²⁵

The influential role that German officers held in the middle of the fourth century can also be traced by the large number of them who rose to the highest rank of *magister militum*.¹²⁶ Agilo under Constantinus, Victor under Julian, Jovian and Valens and Arinthaëus under Valens were the prominent members of *magister militum*.¹²⁷ Indeed, these men were influential in the succession to the Empire. In fact, Nevitta was evidently one of the prominent officers in Julian's reign. He succeeded Gemoarius, perhaps an Alaman, in 361, as *magister equitum per Gallias*.¹²⁸ The following year, he displaced Agilo, another Alaman, as *magister equitum praesentalis*.¹²⁹ Moreover, following Julian's death on the Persian campaign, the expeditionary force, which included both Eastern and Western field armies, Nevitta and Dagalaifus were the spokesmen on behalf of the Western army and Arintheus, and Victor represented the Eastern army in the meeting where they had to choose a new emperor.¹³⁰

During the last years of Emperor Valentinian I (r. 364-375), the rank of *magister militum*¹³¹ was also on the list of possible ranks Germans could hold.¹³² For example, Merobaudes, as *magister peditum praesentalis*, played a significant role in the declaration of Valentinian II as joint emperor at the death of Valentinian I.¹³³ Later,

¹²⁴ References in the A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I*, A.D.260- 395 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 163, 957, 532 — Bonitus 2 of Frank descent, Victor 4 who is Sarmatian, Magnus Magnentius of German origin.

¹²⁵ Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 8.

¹²⁶ Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 8.

¹²⁷ Jones, Martindale and Morris, *The Prosopography I*, 28, 957, 462-3, 930-1, 104 (in the order of the names).

¹²⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus*, trans. Charles Duke Yonge, 1862, xxi. 8.1.

¹²⁹ Marcellinus, *The Roman History*, xiv. 10. 8.

¹³⁰ Marcellinus, *The Roman History*, xxv. 5. 2.

¹³¹ *Magister militum* consisted of two posts: *magister peditum* as the head of the infantry and *master equitum* as the head of the more prestigious cavalry.

¹³² Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 9.

¹³³ Jones, Martindale and Morris, *The Prosopography I*, 598-89 (Merobaudes 2).

with his influence, a substantial portion of the army, initially intended for reinforcement against the Goths in the Eastern Empire, was redirected to Gaul to defend the Empire against the possible attacks of Germans.¹³⁴

3.2. Norsemen in the Roman Army

Given what has been said in the previous section, the Romans were used to the presence of foreigners in the Army starting from the fourth century and vice versa. In this regard, it ought not to be a matter of astonishment that individuals identifying themselves as *Rhos* were part of the Greek embassy sent by Theophilus (r. 829-842) to the court of Louis the Pious in 839.¹³⁵ The writer of *Annales Bertini* mentions that they had visited Theophilus on behalf and on request of their king, *Chacanos*, to establish friendly relations with the Greeks and on their way back home, they desired to use the territories of Louis for the road they had come was impassable due to depredations of hostile tribes. Having had a bad experience with the Norsemen, Louis investigated their origin and found out that the men were of Swede origin,¹³⁶ therefore, emissaries were detained until he was satisfied.

In *Russian Primary Chronicle*, we encounter two chieftains, Askold and Dir (corruptions of the Norse names *Höskuldr* and *Dýri*),¹³⁷ who attacked the districts around the Bosphorus by a fleet of *Rhosi* in the absence of Micheal III (r. 842-867) who was on an expedition against the Arabs during the attack.¹³⁸ Most of the Russian fleet was destroyed by the great storm that appeared during their attack, and the Imperial troops defeated the remnants. Subsequently, Russians sent messengers to establish a

¹³⁴ Marcellinus, *The Roman History*, xxxi. 7. 4.

¹³⁵ Georg Waitz, ed., *Annales Bertiniani* (Hannoverae, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1883), 20.

¹³⁶ "... eos gentis esse Sueonum" verbatim "their nation is Sveoni".

¹³⁷ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 33.

¹³⁸ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 60.

truce. A new treaty with a clause that the Russians should send troops into the Emperor's service was prepared.¹³⁹ One can argue that these were the baby steps of a long process that ended with the significant presence of the Scandinavians in the Roman Army.

Constantine's *De Ceremoniis*, while mentioning the preparations for the naval expedition to Crete in 902, refers to 700 *Rhosi* who were paid between them 7200 nomismata in *roga* due to their participation in the operation.¹⁴⁰ Five years later, in 907, Prince Oleg¹⁴¹ (*Helgi*) attacked Constantinople by sea.¹⁴² Although the *Russian Primary Chronicle* refers to it as a success, there is no mention whatsoever in the Byzantine accounts.¹⁴³ Eventually, a new treaty for peace and a new trade pack was concluded in 911.¹⁴⁴ In the new treaty, the Russians declared,

Whenever you (the Byzantine Emperor) find it necessary to declare war, or when you are conducting a campaign, providing any Russes desirous of honouring your Emperor come at any time and wish to remain in his service, they shall be permitted in this respect to act according to their desire.¹⁴⁵

It appears that they had a desire to make the conditions for entering into the Emperor's service more flexible. They might have wanted to pave the way for their fellow Northmen since it was an undeniably suitable career for them. The names at the end of the contract are all of Norse origin: Karl, Ingjald, Farulf, Vermund, Hrollaf, Gunnar, Harald, Karni, Frithleif, Hroarr, Angantyr, Throand, Leithulf, Fast and Steinvith.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 225.

¹⁴⁰ Constantine VII, *De Ceremoniis*, 654.

¹⁴¹ There are ongoing discussions about the exact dates of Prince Oleg's reign. See Donald Ostrowski, "Was There a Riurikid Dynasty in Early Rus'?", *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 52, no. 1 (2018), 30-49.

¹⁴² Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64.

¹⁴³ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 36.

¹⁴⁴ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 64-5.

¹⁴⁵ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 68.

¹⁴⁶ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 65.

Another attack was made in 941 by Igor (*Ingvar*) on Constantinople. This attack was likely due to the failure to pay the agreed-upon retainers in the treaty with Oleg.¹⁴⁷ In 945, the initial agreement with Oleg was reestablished, undergoing slight adjustments. Consequently, the Empire and the principedom of Kiev entered into an eternal alliance, vowing to protect each other from the encroachments of external forces.¹⁴⁸

In 949, we find Russians as the coastguards upon the ships at Dyrrhachium and along the Dalmatian coast, while 629 *Russi* were sent to Crede to participate in the expedition.¹⁴⁹ Through the court poet of Sayf al-Dawla, poet Mutanabbi, we learn that there was a Russian troop in the force led by Bardas Phokas in his Syrian campaign of 954-55.¹⁵⁰ If we consider this a fact, then it is most likely that Russian troops were with him as well on the previous campaigns, such as the Syriac one of 947.¹⁵¹

After the death of Romanos II (r. 959-963), Joseph Bringas, an important eunuch in the Byzantine court, tried to manoeuvre power into his own hands and attempted a rebellion. It was put down by Basil the Chamberlain (illegitimate son of the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos), who commanded the Grand Hetairia¹⁵² during the reign of Constantine. It appears, in this context, it is also most likely that the troops that put down Eunuch Bringas' rebellion included Russian mercenaries as well.¹⁵³

During the reign of Nicephorus II Phokas (r.963-969), the Rus were noted as being the troops dispatched to Sicily led by Manuel and Nicetas Phokas, who were the sons of the Emperor's brother. Furthermore, it is highly possible that in the expedition

¹⁴⁷ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 37.

¹⁴⁸ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 73-77.

¹⁴⁹ Constantine VII, *De Ceremoniis*, 664.

¹⁵⁰ The translation of Mutanabbi's poem is in J. Derek Latham, "Towards a Better Understanding of Al-Mutanabbi's Poem on the Battle of Al-Hadath," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 10 (1959).

¹⁵¹ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 37.

¹⁵² *Hetairia* is the overall name for the foreign mercenaries in the service of the Emperor.

¹⁵³ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 38.

to Cyprus during his reign, the troops included many Russians since the naval troops who participated were selected from those who had accompanied the future Emperor during his successful military expedition to Crete in 960.¹⁵⁴ In 967, Nicephorus campaigned against the Bulgars but had to return home for urgent matters. He left Prince Svyatoslav of Kiev (r. 945-972) to continue the fight, and Svyatoslav made considerable progress. However, a subsequent attack on Svyatoslav's lands caused him to return to his kingdom. As a result of this alliance, a division emerged during the subsequent reign, leading to a situation where Russians were pitted against each other in conflict.

After Nicephorus' request, Svyatoslav intervened in a conflict regarding a peace subsidy owed to Tsar Simeon I by Romanos I.¹⁵⁵ While Svyatoslav was away dealing with the Emperor's request, the news of a Pecheneg attack reached him and caused him to return to Kiev to defend his kingdom. He later resumed his campaign in Bulgaria and conquered a large part of the country from Tsar Peter's successor. However, he felt betrayed by his Byzantine allies, leading him to invade the Byzantine Empire. In 970, Svyatoslav's forces attacked and looted Philippopolis. In response, John I Tzimiskes, who was crowned in December 969, personally took charge and in the following two years, he not only reclaimed the territories lost to the Russian invaders¹⁵⁶. The siege of Silistria forced the Russians to seek peace. As a result, a new treaty was established between the two parties. Considering the Byzantine Empire's conservative nature and reliance on past precedents, it is reasonable to assume that this treaty might have included provisions for incorporating Norse Russians into the

¹⁵⁴ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 39.

¹⁵⁵ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 40-41.

¹⁵⁶ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 40-41.

Byzantine armed forces. However, it's crucial to note that there is no surviving documentary evidence to support this assumption.

3.3. Establishment of the Varangians

The organisational change regarding the Northmen in the Imperial Army came under Basil II (r. 976-1025). Before elaborating on the establishment of the Varangian Guard itself, we should ask under what circumstances Basil decided to establish an army composed of non-Roman mercenaries, which would be responsible for protecting the Roman Emperor and his interest. It is highly possible that he heard of the rumours of John Tzimiskes killing Nicephoras by the time he reached twenty and became old enough to rule the Empire.¹⁵⁷ The killing of a father figure by the other one would have triggered his safety concerns deeply. Moreover, the suspicious death of John Tzimiskes in a distant corner of the Empire from a disease with symptoms too similar to poisoning and his mother's involvement in Nicephorus' murder should have been a cherry on top for Basil.

The distrustful young man must have realised that to survive, he needed loyal servants who were not driven by personal agendas that could harm his interests and would remain devoted as long as they received generous and regular payment.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, these servants needed to possess military skills that surpassed the average capabilities of even the formidable Roman Army. Observing Nicephorus, who had effectively utilised powerful warriors from the Russian steppes in various successful missions and whose excellent military skills and less endeavouring character had rubbed off on to his stepson, Basil would have been prone to think favourably of the Norsemen for the potential candidates for this role. Indeed, at the

¹⁵⁷ Diaconos Leo, *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, trans. Denis F. Sullivan and Alice-Mary Maffry Talbot (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2005), 139.

¹⁵⁸ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 41.

end of his reign, we find them definitely established in the Byzantine records, leaving no room for uncertainty regarding their roles or positions.¹⁵⁹

In 986, Tsar Samuel II (r. 997-1014) invaded Greece, and in return, Basil invaded Bulgaria and besieged Serdica.¹⁶⁰ Due to “the incompetence of the commanders”, the army failed to accomplish and was forced to raise the siege. What is more, when he returned home, he faced two revolts consecutively, the former by Bardas Skleros (d. 991) and the latter by Bardas Phokas the Younger (d. 989).¹⁶¹ At this point, Basil sought aid from Prince Vladimir of Kiev (r. 978-1015), and his eternal ally sent him the contingent of Varangians on condition that Basil gave him his sister Anna in marriage.¹⁶² On his part, Basil conditioned Vladimir to be baptised into the Christian faith. When both parties fulfilled their part of the agreement, in the winter of 988, 6000 men arrived to enter the service of the Emperor.¹⁶³ This arrangement between Basil and Vladimir is well documented in Byzantine sources and is referred to Greek, Armenian and Arabic sources as well.¹⁶⁴

On the other hand, Vladimir was not casting his bread upon the waters just for his ally. The Norsemen, whose assistance Vladimir used to overcome his brother, Jaropolk I's (r. 972-978) rebellion in the year 980, were now declaring Kiev as their own: “This city belongs to us, and we took it; hence we desire tribute from it...”.¹⁶⁵ Vladimir told them to wait a month and then dismissed them to Greece.¹⁶⁶ In this

¹⁵⁹ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 42.

¹⁶⁰ Diaconos Leo, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, 213-14.

¹⁶¹ Diaconos Leo, *The History of Leo the Deacon*, 215-16.

¹⁶² Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (London, England: Penguin Books, 2011), 35.

¹⁶³ Elmacen, *Historia Saracenorum*, ed. T. Erpenius (Leiden, 1625), 313 quoted in Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 42.

¹⁶⁴ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 43.

¹⁶⁵ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 93.

¹⁶⁶ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 93.

regard, it appears that it was such a fortunate coincidence for Basil, who greatly needed mighty soldiers.

The dispatch of Norse soldiers is referred into *Chronographia* as follows:

The Emperor Basil was well aware of disloyalty among the Romans, but not long before this a picked band of Scythians had come to help him from the Taurus. These men, fine fighters, he had trained in a separate corps, combined with them another mercenary force, divided by companies, and sent them out to fight the rebels.¹⁶⁷

Basil quickly realised the invaluable asset he had acquired in these formidable warriors from the North. They proved their worth by leading him to triumph against Delphinus, Bardas Phokas' lieutenant at Scutari, in 989. Moreover, their assistance led him to triumph over Phocas at the Battle of Abydos in 989.¹⁶⁸

From this time onward, neither an internal nor an external hostile power dared to raise his hand against Basil. Unquestionably, he took great pleasure in this sense of security he could now find at home and ensured it by establishing a highly-capable, disciplined and utterly reliable lifeguard. This new regiment assumed the role of personal safety of the Emperor, relieving the *Excubitores*¹⁶⁹ of this duty.¹⁷⁰ Throughout Basil's numerous campaigns, they consistently accompanied him and played a crucial role in many of his successful ventures. Over time, this Varangian regiment became the core of the guards, and they likely required a substantial entry fee, given their significantly higher regular pay and additional bonuses compared to the rest of the army, which is an essential detail for us that I will discuss later. These select Varangians were known as the "Varangians of the City" in contrast to other Varangian units called "Varangians outside the City", which served in various military

¹⁶⁷ Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, 35.

¹⁶⁸ Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, 45-6.

¹⁶⁹ An imperial guard unit that was founded in c. 460.

¹⁷⁰ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium*, 45.

roles as needed across the Empire.¹⁷¹ The guardsmen never left the capital unless the Emperor himself was present, which was infrequent since Basil was not feeling in his safest place within the capital's environment and often avoided it as much as possible until his death.

3.4. Haraldr Sigurðarson and the reason why he left Norway — Comparison of Heimskringla, Morkinskinna and Fagrskinna

Three saga collections will be used in this section to optimise the information that can be learned about Haraldr Hardrada's departure from Norway since they are the most common primary sources about Harald: *Heimskringla*, *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*. The first of these, *Heimskringla*, perhaps the best-known of the Old Norse kings' sagas, was ascribed to Snorri Sturluson (b. 1179, d. 1241), the Icelandic historian. On the other hand, there is little clear evidence that Snorri wrote *Heimskringla*. In fact, no documents explicitly state that Snorri wrote the work, and the details about how this attribution came to be are especially unclear.¹⁷² Regarding its context, it is a compilation of sagas about Swedish and Norwegian kings beginning with the legendary saga of the Swedish dynasty of *Ynglings* and ending with the death of pretender Eystein Meyla in 1177.

Morkinskinna is also in the category of kings' sagas but covers only Norwegian kings from approximately 1030 to 1157. There is no mention of a writer or a compiler within the work; however, in the introduction of the translated version, Andersson and Gade argue that the author was a northern Icelander.¹⁷³ They also argue that it must

¹⁷¹ Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium* 45.

¹⁷² Patricia Pires Boulhosa, *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway* (Brill, 2005), 8-9.

¹⁷³ Theodore M. Anderson and Kari Ellen Gade, trans., *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings (1030-1157)* (Cornell University Press, 2012), 82.

have been written earlier than *Heimskringla*, which was written between 1225-1235,¹⁷⁴ since the former was a primary source for the latter.

Finally, *Fagrskinna* is considered to be the saga that was read to Hakon IV on his deathbed.¹⁷⁵ Although we do not have information about his author, it is usually regarded as having associations with the court of King Hakon. It ends with the beginning of Hakon's grandfather King Sverrir in 1177.¹⁷⁶

In all three saga compilations, we can see that Haraldr leaves Norway after getting wounded and the death of Óláfr in the Battle of Stiklarstaðir¹⁷⁷ in 1030. Both in *Heimskringla* and *Morkinskinna* Rognvaldr Brúsason removes him from the battlefield and takes him to a farmhouse to heal.¹⁷⁸ In *Fagrskinna*, the farmhouse detail is not given: "When Óláfr the blessed king had fallen at Stiklarstaðir, his brother Haraldr and Rognvaldr Brusason and many men with them left the country".¹⁷⁹

Minor details differ on his experience during his time at the farmhouse and how he found his company of men, but eventually, he and his men reach Russia and are welcomed by the Grand Prince of Kiev, Yaroslav the Wise (r. 1019-1054). Although the author did not explicitly state it, Harald's leaving Norway, one might even say fleeing to a certain extent, represents that he is going into a political exile because, with the death of Óláfr, there was no one to claim the Norwegian throne. Also, there was already a lost battle on Harald's scoreboard; therefore, he must have thought that a second attack under that circumstances would be doomed to failure.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 66.

¹⁷⁵ Alison Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna, a Catalogue of the Kings of Norway* (Brill, 2004), 1.

¹⁷⁶ Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Belligerents were Óláfr II Haraldsson (r. 1015-1028) and his companions and allies versus King Knútr (r. 1016-1035) and the peasant army under his influence.

¹⁷⁸ Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla Volume III* (University College London, 2011), 41; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 130.

¹⁷⁹ Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 182.

Without giving further details, all three saga compilers provide us, after mentioning Harald's arrival, with the information that Haraldr becomes the commander of the King's national defence: "King Jarizleifr welcomed Haraldr and his companions. Haraldr then became leader over the king's national defence force, together with Jarl Rognvaldr's son Eilifr"¹⁸⁰, "Haraldr soon became the commander of King Yaroslav's defence forces"¹⁸¹, "King Jarizleifr appointed Haraldr as second in command over his army and paid a wage to all his men"¹⁸².

The amount of time that Haraldr spent under Yaroslav is unclear. *Heimskringla* suggests that he "stayed Garðariki for some winters...";¹⁸³ *Fagrskinna* describes it as "a long time".¹⁸⁴ In *Morkinskinna*, however, it is said that Haraldr asks Yaroslav's daughter, Elisabeth's (ON Ellisif) hand in marriage, but Yaroslav conditionally rejects his proposal:

This is a good proposal, and in many ways it seems to me an even match. It is quite likely that your deeds will continue to grow in the way they have begun, but just now you have not the means for such a distinguished marriage, and for the moment you are a landless man. But because your success may turn out as I expect, I will not reject you indefinitely.¹⁸⁵

Subsequently, Haraldr prepares to go abroad. Even though this gives us nothing regarding the amount of time he stayed in Russia, the author appears to present his desire to be worthy of marriage with Kievan Princess Elisabeth as a reason for his departure from Russia. However, we need to bear in mind that these sagas were written down two hundred years later or more after the events; also the fact that they are inherently partly factual and exaggerated for the audience's entertainment.

¹⁸⁰ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 41-2.

¹⁸¹ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 131.

¹⁸² Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 182.

¹⁸³ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 42.

¹⁸⁴ Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 183.

¹⁸⁵ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 131.

Additionally, in *Russian Primary Chronicle*, under the year 1031, it is said that Yaroslav went on a campaign against Poland and recaptured the cities of Cherven.¹⁸⁶ Haraldr saga in *Flateyjarbók* mentions that Haraldr thereupon asked for the princess's hand in marriage.¹⁸⁷ However, Elisabeth could hardly have been six years old at that point.¹⁸⁸ In this regard, if we stick to the scarce information in our hands, this exchange must have happened later in his life, most likely after his return from Byzantium, since there are no records of them communicating in between.

3.5. Haraldr Hardrada as the commander of Varangian Guard

When he arrives in Constantinople, according to *Heimskringla*, he goes to see Empress Zoë in ríka (the Great) (b. 978, d. 1050) and Michael IV (r. 1034-1041) to become a mercenary.¹⁸⁹ More or less, the same storyline is given in *Fagrskinna*, “Then Haraldr made a request of the emperor and the queen, saying he wanted to take paid service there with all his men, and this was granted to him...”.¹⁹⁰ The compiler of *Morkinskinna*, along with giving the pitstops he makes, gives more details than the other sagas:

Here it is said that he sailed with warship and great company to Constantinople in order to meet with the Byzantine Emperor, whose name was Michael Catalactus. At that time the queen in Constantinople was Zoe en ríka (the Powerful). The Norwegians were welcomed there. Haraldr immediately entered the emperor's service and called himself Norðbrikt. On the contrary, he urged everyone to conceal the fact because foreigners are shunned when they are the progeny of kings.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans., *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, 136.

¹⁸⁷ C. R. Unger and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *Flateyjarbók* (Christiania, P.T. Mallings, 1860), 290.

¹⁸⁸ Per Sveaas Andersen, “Ellisiv – Norsk Dronning,” Store norske leksikon, March 8, 2023, https://snl.no/Ellisiv_-_norsk_dronning; For detailed discussion see, Peter A. Munch, *Samlede Afhandlinger I* (Gustav Storm, 1876), 534.

¹⁸⁹ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 42.

¹⁹⁰ Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 183.

¹⁹¹ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 132.

Unlike the other two saga compilations, *Morkinskinna* does not mention an immediate departure.

In all three saga compilations, Haraldr becomes the commander of the *Væringjar* in the same narrative. When Haraldr and his men entered the Army, the Greek king's fleet was commanded by a general named Gyrgir (Georgios Maniaces, d. 1043), also a kinsman of the Empress.¹⁹² During an expedition, possibly in the Aegean Sea, they quarrel over whose troop should pitch their tent where. Georgios claims the Greek troops should pitch their tents to the better ground since this was the law. Even though this conflict did not become a serious fight, according to *Heimskringla*, "there were other things that led to disagreements between them, and it always turned out that Haraldr got his way".¹⁹³ It is possible that this continuing tension between them started to make people in the Army choose sides. This peaked when soldiers noticed that the army was almost always victorious with Harald's command. They tell Georgios that Haraldr should be the sole leader of the army for the sake of fulfilling the army's purpose. The former defends himself by asserting that the *Væringjar* never give him any help and does not listen to his commands. Ultimately, the army divides into two parties; *Væringjar* and the Normans depart with Harald, and the Greek army returns to Constantinople with Georgios, except for the young men who want to earn money and fame.

Afterwards, Haraldr and the rest who sided with him sail to Africa and win eighty towns.¹⁹⁴ *Heimskringla*, *Fargskinna* and *Morkinskinna* do not forget to emphasise that all the gold, valuable possessions and precious stones that he had acquired during his

¹⁹² Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 43; Finlay, trans., *Fargskinna*, 183; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 134.

¹⁹³ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 44.

¹⁹⁴ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 44; Finlay, trans., *Fargskinna*, 184; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 135.

time in Africa, he would send them north into *Hólmgarðr* into the care and keeping of King Yaroslav, apart from the expenses of the army. Even though this is only mentioned during his time in Africa, it is most likely that he did this often, namely in every valuable thing he possessed.

From Africa, he sails to Sicily. Haraldr takes at least four cities in Sicily and a considerable wealth from them.¹⁹⁵ From Sicily, he returns to Constantinople. All three saga compilations provide different accounts for this part of the storyline. In *Heimskringla*, it is said that he “left behind the gold for the salaries of the king of the Greeks’ army and all the Væringjar that had joined up with him for this expedition” and stays there “a little while” before he sails to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁶ There is no mention of a specific event during his time at Constantinople, and “soon afterwards”, he “made his way with an army from Mikligarðr to Jerusalem” in *Fagrskinna*.¹⁹⁷ Finally, once again, *Morkinskinna* gives a whole different account than *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna*; Haraldr wants the most precious items from the wealth they amassed from the captured cities in Sicily. Georgios objects to his claim and says he wants to present them to the Emperor. Haraldr subsequently points out to Georgios that his military skills are the reason behind that accumulated wealth. When Georgios returns to the court of the Emperor, he slanders Haraldr and tells him that “he wanted to appropriate all the money and leave very little for the emperor”.¹⁹⁸

Regarding Harald’s journey to Jerusalem, the author of *Morkinskinna* states that Haraldr then “made his way with his whole army from Sicily to Jerusalem, desiring to

¹⁹⁵ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 45-9; Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 186-7; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 136-44. However, in *Morkinskinna*, Haraldr and the Varangians go to Sicily with commander Georgios.

¹⁹⁶ Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla Volume III*, trans. Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (University College London, 2011), 49.

¹⁹⁷ Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 187.

¹⁹⁸ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 143.

atone for his transgressions against God”.¹⁹⁹ In *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna*, however, there is no mention of such a desire. Yet, reference to performing the rituals that a pilgrim would perform proves that one of the purposes of this expedition was spiritual satisfaction: “Then he went out to the Jórðan and washed himself there, as the custom is among other pilgrims to the Holy Land”.²⁰⁰ All three accounts agree on the other details about his time in Jerusalem. The land comes into his possession without being wasted or harried; he contributed a vast amount of gold to the Holy Sepulchre, the Holy Cross and the other holy relics in Jerusalem. He then secures the road all the way out to Jordan from robbers and other plunderers.

When he returns to Constantinople, Empress Zoë begins to be displeased due to his intimacy with Maria — Empress Zoë’s son’s daughter in *Fagrskinna*; her brother’s daughter in *Heimskringla*; maiden Maria in *Morkinskinna* — and the allegations about him keeping the gold that belonged to Byzantine Emperor.²⁰¹ As a result of these accusations, Haraldr (and two other men, Halldórr Snorrason and Úlfr in *Fagrskinna*) is taken as a prisoner and put in a dungeon. In all accounts, his deceased brother Óláfr appears to him and helps him to get out of the dungeon. He then blinds the Emperor, escapes from Constantinople with his men and sails to Russia, King Yaroslav.

All three sagas, apart from the minor differences in the narratives, present the same storyline concerning Haraldr’s succession to the Norwegian throne. He sails first to Sigtuna where he meets Sveinn Úlfsson, who had fled from King Magnus in Denmark, and became friends due most likely to their kinship.²⁰² They got themselves

¹⁹⁹ Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 144.

²⁰⁰ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 50.

²⁰¹ Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 50; Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 188; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 145.

²⁰² King Óláfr skautkonung (Olaf the Swede, r. 995-1022) was the father of Haraldr’s wife Ellisif’s mother and Sveinn’s mother was King Óláfr’s sister according to *Heimskringla*. Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla III*, 54; Finlay, trans., *Fagrskinna*, 192; Anderson and Gade, *Morkinskinna*, 150.

ships in Sigtuna and sail for Norway, to take the throne back from King Magnus Magnús Ólafsson (Magnus the Good, r. 1035-1047). In all three sagas, King Haraldr recovers the Norwegian throne after a meeting with King Magnus but yet again, all three subtly emphasises the power of both Haraldr and his army against King Magnus.

3.6. Analysis

Harald's decision to go to Kiev and then to Constantinople after the defeat in the Battle of Stiklarstaðir may seem insignificant at first glance since the ties with Kievan Rus and Constantinople have long been established during Harald's time, but what makes his decision interesting is the fact that almost a hundred years ago in Norway, political exiles directed their routes towards the west rather than the east. In *Íslendingabók*, for example, it is stated that people who were upset with Haraldr Fairhair's (r., putatively, 872-930) assertion of taxing rights on the lands that had seemingly been owned outright by their previous possessors went to Iceland.²⁰³ Moreover, it is also noted that Harald's adversaries sought refuge in Iceland, most probably, positioning themselves as political exiles. In this regard, the smart question here is "why". Why did Haraldr Hardrada choose the opposite way of his ancestors? What was his motivation while going towards the East? To answer, one must go step by step.

As mentioned before, we see Haraldr escape from Norway after the defeat and, most importantly, the death of Óláfr in the Battle of Stiklarstaðir. Given what has been said, the reasons for Harald's departure from Norway can be summarised as follows: it is highly possible that he was aware of the fact that Óláfr's death had left both Haraldr and the army Óláfr had mustered without a purpose. To put it simply, there was no other claimant to the Norwegian throne other than King Knútr the Great (r. 1016-1035). Additionally, all three saga compilations above, *Heimskringla*,

²⁰³ Hugh Chisholm, ed., "Harald vs. Harald I," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Cambridge University Press, 1911).

Fagrskinna and *Morkinskinna*, state that Haraldr was taken out of the battlefield and taken to a farmhouse to heal. This suggests that Haraldr was far too wounded to leave the battlefield on his own and unable to defend himself. In this regard, it is likely that he soon realised that neither he nor his men had the strength for a subsequent second attack.

On the other hand, his escape from Norway also indicates that he was not ready to surrender and accept Knútr's victory. Therefore, rather than die for what he advocates, he chooses to escape and seek the right time which, as we have seen above, appears to be the right choice to make. For there to be any point in seeking the right time, he first had to have money to raise enough troops. Since he was of noble blood, one should not expect him to find a commoner's job and to be able to save a sufficient amount from this job for mustering an army. In these circumstances, raiding was his best and only available option. In this regard, Iceland, which was the choice of his forefathers, would not serve his purposes due to its remoteness to the places where he could plunder. Given what has been said, the first part of our answer is Iceland's or other possible lands situated westwards remoteness compared to the lands abundant in various sources situated eastwards.

Unsurprisingly, money constitutes the second part of our question. Although it is pretty difficult to estimate the necessary wealth for mustering an army which should be qualified enough to defeat King Knútr in the eleventh century, and his army, there is no need to take a wild guess. In other words, one can easily interpret that a large amount of money was required if we consider the provisions of that army. What were, then, Harald's options? As mentioned above, Iceland or any place situated in the far west would be impractical for him. Additionally, since he was a Christian, it would not be moral for a man of royal blood to go raiding and plunder every piece of land his

ship and army could anchor.²⁰⁴ It can also be said that this would not be suitable for his status as a young future Christian king whose older brother had a name for advocating Christianity in Norway.²⁰⁵

What he did have, however, was a membership that his ancestors had acquired a couple of decades earlier: He belonged to Christendom. This meant he had the opportunity to go eastwards, or more specifically, towards the part of the world where wealthy Christian kingdoms were located, without facing any hardships or conflicts. Since he was now part of the “club”, he was not considered the pagan beast his ancestors once were and thus was not marginalised because of his non-Christian beliefs. This, then, constitutes the third part of our question: he chose to move eastwards to benefit from his involvement in Christendom since plundering wherever his ship could reach was not an option for him. In this manner, he hit two birds with one stone: he both earned the money he needed to make a comeback and contributed to his military *curriculum vitae*, so to speak, by including numerous towns into the Byzantine domination.

So, if Harald’s motivation for going eastwards was to acquire wealth to muster an army and make a claim to the throne, what was the motivation of a Scandinavian commoner? Even though the presence of the Norsemen in the Byzantine Army can be traced back to the mid-tenth century, establishing the Varangian Guard within the military structure resulted in a peak in Norse membership in the Byzantine Army during the eleventh century.²⁰⁶ It is highly possible that their motivation was similar to

²⁰⁴ Palsson and Edwards, *Knytlinga saga*, 64-5; Finlay and Faulkes, trans., *Heimskringla*, 201-3.

²⁰⁵ From the middle of the tenth century, Christianity had already made significant progress in Norway, particularly in the western regions. Óláfr focused his activities in the Opplands and other areas where the traditional beliefs still held sway, and there were instances of violence to some extent. Niels Lund, “Scandinavia, c. 700–1066,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 224.

²⁰⁶ Rue Taylor, “The Long Road Home: Veteran Identity and the Varangian Guard,” (paper presented at *International Saga Conference: Sagas and the Circum-Baltic Arena*, Helsinki and Tallinn, 2022), 1.

Harald's: monetary and military gain. As mentioned above, Varangian Guard's salary and bonuses were higher than the rest of the Army. Most often, this generous amount of salary brought military success with it. Undoubtedly, these two elements, monetary and military gain, can be considered two of the ultimate goals of a medieval Scandinavian man whose people were known for their raids throughout Europe. In this regard, it is highly possible that monetary and military gains motivated them in their journeys towards the East.

3.7. Conclusion

The infiltration of the different ethnicities into the Roman Imperial Army started early in the fourth century as *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* and *Rerum Gestarum* state.²⁰⁷ Both medieval texts attest to the German people's presence, some even holding considerably prestigious ranks within the Army. So, when Northmen started to be included in the Byzantine expeditions in the early tenth century, the Romans were already accustomed to the presence of non-Romans within the army for almost six hundred years. Eventually, an organisational change came during Basil II's reign when this custom of recruiting non-Romans overlapped with Basil's distrust towards Romans and the increasing incompetence of Romans in the Roman Army compared to the Rus colleagues. At the end of his reign, Varangian Guard was the core regiment of the Byzantine Army.

This organisational change influenced the Scandinavian society as much as it did the Romans. In other words, establishing such a regiment and recruiting specifically from Northmen directly opened a new route for the Scandinavians. Going eastwards and entering the Emperor's service as a Varangian was now an option, in fact, a beneficial option for them. In this regard, I argue that Haraldr Hardrada was most likely

²⁰⁷ See sections 3.1. and 3.2.

aware of the convenience and the benefits of being a Varangian and thus, his motivation for going eastwards rather than west was his gain monetary and military gain. I also argue that Christianisation opened the Varangian way for Haraldr as well as for the other Scandinavians and thus played an essential role in the alteration of motivations regarding long-distance journeys.



CHAPTER IV: THE PILGRIM

Starting from the eighth century, Scandinavians had come into contact with Christian customs, and at times, they were inclined to adopt them. Initial efforts to introduce Christianity to the northern regions occurred during the early eighth century; however, these endeavours were predominantly met with hostility.²⁰⁸ Therefore, in comparison to the kingdoms of Western Europe, Scandinavians were relatively late in embracing Christendom. Likewise, the integration of Christianity and Christian values into the state systems of Scandinavian kingdoms occurred later than in other Western European empires. In this regard, one could say that a latecomer to Christianity situated on the periphery of Christendom, Scandinavian kingdoms might have felt the urge to include themselves further in the league of flourishing Christian kingdoms.

Among all the other kings in *Knýtlinga saga*, only Eiríkr inn góði earns the epithet of “pilgrim” from the translators of it;²⁰⁹ this word choice, however, could suggest much more than a simple cognomination to a pious king but rather a channelisation from the saga writer,²¹⁰ who most likely, wished to attract attention to Eiríkr and, therefore, to his pious character as a devout king who abdicated and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.²¹¹ In other words, there is a strong possibility that the element of religion and piety, which was made dominant by the saga writer in the chapters about Eiríkr. This is further attested by the detailed description of Eiríkr in the saga. Despite his short reign (1095-1103), more chapters focus on Eiríkr than the other Danish kings who ruled longer than him, such as Nikulás Sveinsson.

²⁰⁸ Kristin B. Aavitsland and Line M. Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code: Volume 1: The Holy City Christian Cultures in Medieval Scandinavia (ca. 1100-1536)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 15-16.

²⁰⁹ Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga* (Odense University Press (Denmark), 1986, 121.

²¹⁰ Although traditionally, Óláfr has been considered the author of *Knýtlinga saga*, there are studies arguing otherwise. However, recent studies show that Óláfr might have been the compiler of the saga, rather than the sole author. For more information, see Gulen, Deniz Cem. *Understanding Knytling saga*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 30-64.

²¹¹ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 119.

Additionally, on average, each chapter about Eiríkr is considerably longer than the rest of the chapters in *Knyttlinga saga*. On this basis, I believe King Eiríkr is the most suitable example for exploring the motivation behind a northerner's movement from the edges of northern Europe to the Levant's coasts. In this chapter, I will discuss the motives behind the pilgrimage that the Scandinavians made by first exploring the themes in the chapters focusing on Eiríkr in *Knyttlinga saga*; then compare those themes with the ones in *Gesta Danorum*. Subsequently, I will further analyse and discuss the motivational themes for pilgrimage in *De Profectione* and a better apprehension of the motive behind the movement toward Jerusalem.

4.1. Medieval Pilgrimage in Europe — Reasons

Going on a pilgrimage was not a concept that medieval people were unfamiliar with. It was a kind of travel where they could have the opportunity to break free from the daily and domestic setting in which they were considerably limited due to various factors such as wealth, class, gender and religious status.²¹² At the same time, despite the hundreds of centuries in between, a medieval individual should not be too different from a modern person; therefore, a wish for a change of scenery once in a while might have stayed the same.

On the other hand, undertaking such a dangerous and long journey requires more than just a wish for a change in scenery. Diana Webb lists the most common motivations for going on a pilgrimage as follows: (i) penance (*peregrinatio*), (ii) cure and devotion, (iii) vows and miracles, and (iv) indulgences.²¹³ *Peregrinatio* emerges as the pursuit of a monastic perfection in the early middle ages. A common reason among Irish and English monks, *peregrinatio* represented a path in which the

²¹² Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, C.700–C.1500* (London Macmillan Education, 2002), 45.

²¹³ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 46-102.

individual detaches himself from the familiar and the comfortable to attain an otherwise unattainable perfection. The detaching of the self meant renouncing worldly pursuits to devote oneself entirely to spiritual work; in other words, it is the rejection of the riches consequent to his birth and even the home and kin themselves.²¹⁴ The practice bore formal similarity to exile since both require an abandonment of the homeland and the benefits that come with it. By the year 1000, with the change in both comprehension and implementation of *peregrinatio*, pilgrimages were already imposed as penance for certain offences.²¹⁵ In the later middle ages, ecclesiastical and secular courts used a bureaucratic penitential procedure in which penitents had to bring back a certificate from their assigned shrine.²¹⁶ Pilgrimages were imposed as punishment for various offences, including non-religious ones, from slander to homicide.

The popes promoted their unique authority to forgive grave sins to strengthen their hold over the people of Christendom, especially newly converted communities, and align them with Rome.²¹⁷ In 1171, Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) recommended that the archbishop of Uppsala and his suffragans send individuals who committed serious crimes like parricide, infanticide, incest, and bestiality to visit the shrines of apostles Peter and Paul.²¹⁸ Through hard work and the journey itself, this pilgrimage was seen as a way for these individuals to avoid divine judgment and seek forgiveness. However, later popes realised that the “stubborn” Scandinavians were not inclined to undertake penitential pilgrimages. As a result, they proposed alternative measures,

²¹⁴ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 46.

²¹⁵ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 49.

²¹⁶ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 50.

²¹⁷ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 56.

²¹⁸ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 56.

such as organising crusades against Lithuanians, to address their spiritual needs and seek absolution.

Local and regional shrines provided people with their needs for both devotion and healing since the route to the Holy Land was neither safe nor comfortable. Clearly, it was safer for a pregnant woman from Western Europe to go to a local shrine than the Holy Land. In this regard, other shrines catered more conveniently to the needs of the sick and disabled.²¹⁹ Holy Land, on the other hand, remained the central destination for devotional pilgrimage, for there could be no better place for prayer and receiving spiritual enlightenment.

Regarding vows, in cases where a vow was made in silence and kept secret, it was left to the individual's discretion whether it held moral significance, and they could choose whether or not to reveal it publicly.²²⁰ So, one can say that a vow itself was not always a heavy obligation. As Hugh Latimer, the reforming bishop of Worcester, likely suspected, some individuals seeking a day off or a break from their usual routine could claim to have made a pilgrimage vow that now required fulfilment. If someone failed to fulfil their pilgrimage to Rome, Jerusalem, or Santiago de Compostela, they had to seek permission or an alternative arrangement directly from the Pope. However, for vows to latter destinations, the Pope was not involved.

Lastly, by the tenth century, the strictness of early medieval penitential systems, where penance had to be completed before receiving absolution and readmission to communion, had largely been replaced by a more lenient approach that considered human frailty and the brevity of life.²²¹ This paved the way for indulgences in which the amount of punishment that one has to undergo for his/her sins was reduced by an

²¹⁹ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 55.

²²⁰ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 57.

²²¹ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 21.

ecclesiastical authority.²²² On the other hand, since indulgences were available in various places other than the Holy Land herself, people most likely preferred to undertake pilgrimages to closer shrines or pilgrimage sites. In this regard, one cannot say that indulgences represented the sole aim of a pilgrimage towards the Holy Land.²²³

4.2. Scandinavian Pilgrims

Historical records mention several pilgrimages to Jerusalem from Scandinavian territories during the century preceding the First Crusade.²²⁴ Some of these accounts, like the one attributed to Óláfr I Tryggvason (r. 995-1000) after his disappearance during the sea battle of Svoldr (999/1000), are considered purely legendary. However, there are other pilgrimages that are better supported by reliable documentation.

In 1098, Eiríkr I of Denmark (b. 1060 d. 1103) travelled to Rome and Bari, and while on his way to Jerusalem, he passed away in Cyprus.²²⁵ About two and a half centuries later, in 1347, Valdemar IV Atterdag (b. 1320 d. 1375) also went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.²²⁶ Magnus Eiríkrsson of Sweden had plans to do the same around the same time, but it appears he did not carry them out.²²⁷

In 1423-25, Eiríkr of Pomerania (b. 1381/2 d. 1459), who ruled over all three Scandinavian kingdoms in name, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, entrusting the capable management of his territories to his wife during his absence.²²⁸ Following him, his nephew and successor, Christopher of Bavaria (b. 1416 d. 1448), was among several Scandinavian monarchs who made pilgrimages to Wisnack during the fifteenth

²²² Edward N. Peters, *A Modern Guide to Indulgences: Rediscovering This Often Misinterpreted Teaching* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2008), 13.

²²³ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 67-68.

²²⁴ Aavitsland and Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code*, 199-200.

²²⁵ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 102; Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 122.

²²⁶ Rikke Agnete Olsen, *Sjællandske Krønike* (Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2021), 34-35.

²²⁷ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 102.

²²⁸ Felix Fabri, *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti Peregrinationem* (Nabu Press, 2013).

century.²²⁹ Later, in 1448, the Danish Queen Dorothea embarked on a journey to both Rome and the Holy Land.²³⁰

As mentioned before, going on a pilgrimage was not a far-fetched idea for medieval people despite the long and arduous journey. Therefore, besides the documented visits by kings and queens of Scandinavia, though scarce, there are also records of common Scandinavians embarking on pilgrimages. One of them is the *Historia de Profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam* which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The anonymous work is about a group of Danish-Norwegian people who planned to join the Third Crusade, but the war was already over when they arrived at Acre, and they visited the holy sites instead.

The other pilgrimage account is named *Leiðarvísir og Borgarskipan*. It was written in c. 1157 by Abbot Nikulas, the abbot of the monastery of Munkaþverá.²³¹ It is an itinerary with a detailed guideline for future pilgrims and visitors to Jerusalem.

4.3. Eiríkr inn góði in *Knýtlinga saga*

Eiríkr is first introduced to the narrative in chapter twenty-three when the saga writer mentions the children of Sveinn Ástríðarson, and nothing particular was stated about him.²³² In chapter thirty, Eiríkr is appointed as the Jarl of Sjáland.²³³ In the following pages, in chapter forty-three, Eiríkr is presented in an intermediary role in the conflict between King Knútr - inn ríki (r. 1080–1086) and his troops, and thus, his balancing nature, as a characteristic of a king, is uncoiled:²³⁴ “The earl (Eiríkr) spoke long and

²²⁹ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 102.

²³⁰ Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 102.

²³¹ Luana Giampiccolo, “Leiðarvísir, an Old Norse Itinerarium: A Proposal for a New Partial Translation and Some Notes about the Place-Names,” *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* 8, no. 1 (2013).

²³² Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 47.

²³³ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga* 57.

²³⁴ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 74. In chapter forty-one, King Knútr (r. 1080-1086) and Óláfr III of Norway (Haraldsson) (r. 1067-1093) arrange a meeting at the Göta River to hold talks and assemblies. King Knútr then proposes a joint expedition to Óláfr to England. This proposal seems promising to Óláfr and gets his consent. King Knútr dispatches orders for military service across his

boldly on behalf of the farmers”.²³⁵ Later on, in chapter fifty-four, Eiríkr advises his brother, King Knútr, to run away from the uprising of the farmers whom Knútr found guilty of treason “‘My advice, sir’ said his brother Earl Eirik, ‘is that you get astride a horse and ride away. Things may still turn out for the best if God wills, and all’s well if you are’”.²³⁶ Here, Eiríkr’s advice can easily be interpreted as an unkingly feature by the audience of the Kings’ saga, for he is simply advising him to escape, which would be ignoble. If we juxtapose this with his decision to run away while others, particularly his little brother, Benedikt, chose to stay and continue to fight against the farmers’ army, Eiríkr himself could be interpreted as behaving cowardly and thus not worthy of the throne, as kings should not possess timidity.²³⁷

These drawbacks above must have caught the eye of the saga writer since he did not forget to add at the end of the chapter:

Earl Eirik escaped along with several other men. For one thing, little attention was paid to this small group, but also, though there were some who recognised him, Earl Eirik was so well-liked by most people that no-one wished to harm him.²³⁸

entire realm, specifying the prescribed number of troops to be contributed by each district and proclaims a comprehensive conscription of men and ships in the forthcoming spring. Throughout the winter season, substantial preparations are undertaken throughout the land. Accordingly, troops are assembled at Limfjord in the early spring. However, Knútr is absent on the day of departure because he has received the information about the Wends’ planned attack on Denmark during the upcoming winter. Without knowing what Knútr is dealing with, the Danes start to become bad-tempered due to waiting aimlessly and their leader’s absence. Ultimately, they choose to dispatch messengers to the king, requesting the assistance of his brother, Óláfr (r. 1086-1095), to undertake this mission. Although reluctant, Óláfr agrees to go and talk with his brother about this issue. Knútr reads this as treachery, seizes Óláfr, and sends him to Flanders to be kept safe in prison under the responsibility of his father-in-law, Duke Baldwin; he gives the farmers a severe reprimand for how they dishonoured him. Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 70-1-2-3.

²³⁵ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 74.

²³⁶ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 88.

²³⁷ In chapter fifty-eight, Knútr is killed by Eyvind Bifra at the church, and there starts a muttering among the king’s men. They soon decided it was for the best if they escaped since they were outnumbered and exhausted by the first two attacks. Eiríkr, who was thinking the same thing, called out to his brother: “It would be no compensation for anyone’s suffering if all the good men here were to be killed” but Benedikt refused him and replied: “Everyone has to do as he thinks best. Those who wish to escape must to do so, but let them fight on who think it more fitting. Hail and farewell, brother, until we meet in Heaven”. Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 94.

²³⁸ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 94.

By indicating that the farmers' army spared Eiríkr's life because he was well-liked by most of them, Óláfr reminds his audience that Eiríkr's decision was neither unkingly nor cowardly but rather a wise and cautious one since surviving and being well enough physically when it is his time to rule the kingdom of Danes was also a feature of a great king.

After the death of Knútr, his brother, whom Knútr sent to be kept in prison in Flanders, Óláfr becomes the king of the Danes.²³⁹ After four considerably short chapters about his ruthless and unpopular reign, he dies in his bed, leaving only a bad memory among his people.²⁴⁰ In chapter seventy-one, Eiríkr

was made king over the whole Danish empire in accordance with the law, since he was the eldest living son of King Svein (Sveinn Ástríðarson), and with the complete approval of the nobility and the common people of Denmark.²⁴¹

The complete approval of Eiríkr should not come as a surprise since, until now, we have not seen a description of Eiríkr where he did not act as if he was not from kingly stock in the chapters focused on him. Additionally, one chapter before Eiríkr was made king, the saga writer reminds us that Eiríkr "was a strong and popular chieftain, always having with him a large company of retainers".²⁴² The saga writer continues to praise Eiríkr by referring to his viking expeditions to the Baltic regions and how he fought against the heathens but let all the Christians and merchants go in peace on those expeditions.²⁴³ For that matter, he also says that this treatment made him renowned and famous throughout the Baltic.

²³⁹ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 100.

²⁴⁰ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 105.

²⁴¹ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 106.

²⁴² Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 105.

²⁴³ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 105.

4.4. Eiríkr inn góði as a Christian king in *Knyttlinga saga*

Chapter seventy-three is reserved for King Eiríkr's rule and for summing up how he turned out to be an excellent king:

King Eiríkr turned out to be a strong and impressive ruler, and the most popular of kings. He imposed harsh punishments on bad conduct, exterminated vikings and villains, had thieves and robbers put to death or else mutilated their hands or feet or inflicted other severe punishments, so that no evil-doer in the land could prosper. He was a fair judge and observed the laws of God strictly.²⁴⁴

Here, this can be read as Óláfr's successful attempt to describe Eiríkr as a pious king. References to Christianity and the Christian values that are observable in the examples of Óláfr, such as annihilating heathens (vikings) and securing justice for God since an armed attack upon God's enemy (and hence the enemy of Christianity) can only be God's will, also attest to this.²⁴⁵

Eiríkr's religious commitments and actions in this respect are repeated throughout the saga narrative. In chapter seventy-four, Eiríkr goes on a pilgrimage to Rome; although neither the pilgrimage route nor the holy sites he visited are mentioned, his personal efforts for trying to include Danes and Norse-speaking-pilgrims into Christendom further accentuate the elements of Christianity within his reign. He was granted an archbishopric by the approval of Pope Paschal II (1099-1118) owing to their good company, which developed during his pilgrimage.²⁴⁶ Since there

²⁴⁴ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knyttlinga Saga*, 108.

²⁴⁵ We can see the same motives in Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont in 1095. As he was addressing the call for aid coming from Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), for the latter had lost nearly all the Asia Minor to Seljuk Turks by then, he used the same reasoning while urging the crowd to aid their religious fellows and recover Palestine from heathens' hands: "Most beloved brethren, today is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.' Unless the Lord God had been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let his then be your war-cry in combats, because this world is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" See, Edward Peters, *The First Crusade "the Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres" and Other Source Materials* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 28-29.

²⁴⁶ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knyttlinga Saga*, 110.

were no archbishopric seats in the north other than of Bremen in Saxony, one can say that it was an excellent score for the Danes. On his way back home, Eiríkr also spends a generous amount for the comfort of Norse-speaking pilgrims, so to speak:

Then the Pope and King Eirik parted company in friendship and affection, and Eirik turned his path towards home. When he came to a town called Piacenza he founded hospice nearby and when he reached the town of Lucca further north he donated money to provide all Norse-speaking pilgrims with a generous helping of free wine: also they were entitled to a free night's lodging at the hospice founded by him, of which we spoke.²⁴⁷

The saga writer also adds to the end of the chapter: “After that Eirik completed his journey home to his kingdom in Denmark, a journey which made him a famous man.”²⁴⁸

While Eiríkr is in Rome, Heinrek,²⁴⁹ the emperor of Saxony at that time, leads an army to Wendland taking advantage of Eiríkr's absence, conquers the whole territory and appoints his brother-in-law, Björn, to rule the region.²⁵⁰ While giving details about the conquering process, the saga writer consequently gives two essential details about the Wends: “He (Heinrek) conquered the entire province and all the inhabitants granted him their allegiance. At that time the whole population of Wendland was heathen.”²⁵¹ Giving these sentences consecutively can be interpreted as the saga writer's attempt to provide an excuse, or maybe a reason, for Wends' decision to give their allegiance to a non-Christian ruler, for in the saga, Heinrek appears to have appointed chieftains among the Wend chieftains who were, as mentioned, heathen at that time.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 110-11.

²⁴⁸ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 110-11.

²⁴⁹ Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1084-1105)

²⁵⁰ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 111.

²⁵¹ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 111.

²⁵² Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 111.

It can also be read as a justification for the upcoming slaughter in the following chapters, in which Eiríkr finds out about the invasion of heathen Wends and muster a great army to reconquer the territory long ruled by the Danish kings.²⁵³ Once, again, we can see similar references to Christianity and Christian values through the epithet “heathen” since the opposite party, in this case, is our Eiríkr, who is deeply devoted to Christianity.²⁵⁴

After the victorious reconquest of Wendland, Eiríkr returns home. In the following chapter, Eiríkr gathers all the wisest men, laymen and clergy in his kingdom to win their consent for digging out Knútr’s grave and examining his body.²⁵⁵ Nobody opposes the king, and they cross over to Fyn to dig out the coffin. When the coffin is opened, they see Knútr’s uncorrupted body, and people at the church where it was taken claim it should be tested. Eiríkr approves this request and puts his linen roll upon Knútr’s body. Then he sets the linen fire with a consecrated flame, which entirely consumes in flames, but Knútr’s body remains unburnt and complete. In fact, according to the saga writer,

... the body was shone more radiantly than ever.”²⁵⁶ At the end of the chapter, it is said that the miracles did not cease to happen in the church where Knútr’s body was kept as a relic: “There the blind regain their sight, the lame their power to walk, lepers are cleansed and devils flee from the demented.”²⁵⁷

This is yet, another reference to Christian values in which praising a God’s martyr, the holy King Knútr, was God’s will.

²⁵³ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 112-13-14-15.

²⁵⁴ The negative connotations of heathens are also observable in the *Eiríksdrápa*, written by Markus Skeggjason, who was the son of Skeggi Bjarnason and the lawspeaker in Iceland from 1084 to his death in 1107: “The Wends had not dared to retain control of the realm which the ruler possessed; error turned to misery for them; then came (news of) the truce-breaking of the treacherous men from the south.” See Kari Ellen Gade, *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 2: Poetry by Named Skalds C.1035-1105* (Brepols Publishers, 2009), 444.

²⁵⁵ While at a feast, a priest tells Eiríkr that he has seen signs indicating Knútr is a saint and asks him if they make this news public. Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 116.

²⁵⁶ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 116.

²⁵⁷ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 117.

Finally, in chapter seventy-nine, Eiríkr holds a large assembly and announces his plans to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When he reaches modern-day Cyprus, “which the Norsemen call Kipr”, he contracts a disease that soon causes his death.²⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, “it caused great grief to all his men, and to people wide, wherever the news spread.”²⁵⁹

4.5. Eiríkr inn góði as a Christian king in *Gesta Danorum*

A more detailed description of Eiríkr and his reign can be found in Saxo’s *Gesta*; Eiríkr is the central figure of Book XII. In every detailed account about Eiríkr, one can see the divine hand upon his shoulders; for he is a just king and a servant to God, God loves him. In the passage where Saxo begins to narrate Eiríkr’s reign, he writes,

His reign brought new relief to the endangered people’s dwindling harvests, and the crops, visited by timely and welcome showers, gained strength once more. While Eiríkr occupied the throne, the condition of the fields advanced to such a high state of fertility that pecks of any kind of grain would be sold for a penny each. And as every successive year of his sovereignty went by, so this fruitfulness of the lands progressed.²⁶⁰

One can read this as the embodiment of God’s love towards Eiríkr for being a just and devoted king. Because God loves him, his people and lands are relieved from famine and prosper.²⁶¹

Saxo’s account displays the references to Christianity and Christian values differently in comparison to the saga narrative. Saxo creates nearly his whole narrative through Eiríkr’s characteristics and attitudes; therefore, we see those references through his features as a king. Saxo describes Eiríkr as a “gentle soul”, meaning that

²⁵⁸ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 122.

²⁵⁹ Pálsson and Edwards, trans., *Knýtlinga Saga*, 122.

²⁶⁰ “Huius etas periclitanti populo labentis annone subsidia reparauit, segesque tempestiui imbris beneficio uisitata conualuit. Nam regnante eo agrorum habitus ad tantam ubertatem excessit, ut singuli cuiuslibet annone modii totidem denariis permu tarentur. Sed et continuis regni ipsius annis eadem agris ubertas incessit”, Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 870; Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 871.

²⁶¹ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 863.

“he was as much a stranger to cruelty as he was free from idleness”.²⁶² Although at first glance, it looks like an ordinary praise of a beloved king, his wordage says otherwise. With his words, he creates an image of Eiríkr as a king who has a personality free from two of the capital sins in Christianity: sloth and anger. In this regard, this can be seen as Saxo’s endeavour to further connect Eiríkr and his popular image to Christianity.

On the following page, Saxo says Eiríkr’s “gentle soul” is actually picky, and this gentleness is only to the humble folk. He emphasises that Eiríkr treated the lower class with fatherly tenderness and the upper class with royal severity.²⁶³ The critical question here is why he treated the upper class differently. According to Saxo,

To prevent the lords ’greed weakening the ties of justice and their insolence taking the edge off the law, he blocked their arrogance with his firmness and, the farther away he was from those evildoers, the more he exerted his authority to inflict injury on them.²⁶⁴

Yet again, it is the word choice we must look at: “greedy”. For Eiríkr, the upper classes were greedy and were not worthy of gentleness. Apart from the word’s own negative meaning, greed is also one of the seven capital sins in the Book of Proverbs. So, it is not surprising that Eiríkr treated the upper class differently than the lower.

Additionally, the greedy upper class was also a threat to him and, therefore, to a just and faithful king. His kingdom would not prosper if not for God’s will, so he does not have a problem with murdering them,

When his absence diminished the fear that he used to strike into the oppressors of the populace, he had them seized abruptly by a band of his retainers, and made

²⁶² Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 872-73.

²⁶³ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 875.

²⁶⁴ “Ne enim potentum auaritia equitatis uinculum labefactaret petulantiaque iuris hebetudinem pareret, insolentie rigorem opposuit et, quo plus a peruersis loco distitit, hoc magis per imperium nocuit.”, Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 874; Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 875.

sure they were hanged. How else could he have outweighed their offence but by using the gallows to tip the scales in his own favour?²⁶⁵

Like Óláfr, Saxo mentions how Eiríkr was ruthless against heathens. Though, it was, again, not groundless. While Danes and Wends are at war, two Scanian men attack and plunder a town²⁶⁶ on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, which the Danes then inhabited.²⁶⁷ The Danish soldiers soon come to establish control and exhaust the citizens with a siege. They offer a truce in return for handing the pirates they hold inside the walls and money. Once the Scanians are handed, they are atrociously killed by the Danes.²⁶⁸ They were killed in such a way that it became a warning for future assaulters, Wends, who were consistently raiding the Danish coasts.²⁶⁹ Multiple factors must have affected Eiríkr's attitude towards Wends, but clearly, religion was one of them. As mentioned before, in *Knýtlinga saga*, Wends were still pagans during the reign of Eiríkr, and he annihilated the heathens as it befits a just king following God's orders.

²⁶⁵ “Quippe cum a popularium oppressoribus parum per absentiam timeretur, eosdem subita satellitum manu interceptos suspendio consumendos curavit. Quo facto quid aliud quam iniurie pondus arborea lance pensavit?”, Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 874; Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*: 875.

²⁶⁶ Saxo calls the town Julin, a medieval settlement often considered legendary. It is believed to correspond to Jomsborg, Vineta and the modern town of Wolin in northwest Poland. For detailed information about Julin and its references in primary sources, see Roderich Schmidt, *Das Historische Pommern : Personen - Orte - Ereignisse, Veröffentlichungen Der Historischen Kommission Für Pommern* (Böhlau Köln, 2007), 70-72.

²⁶⁷ Whether it was Danish territory or a settlement with a considerable Danish population is unclear. Translators preferred to say it was “an assured heaven for Danes”; however, Saxo prefers to say “certissimum Danorum profugium”. See Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 876-877.

²⁶⁸ “Nam quo uiolentiore eos morte consumerent, reuinctis post terga manibus palis primum affigendos curabant, deinde uentrium caua cultro rimati nudatis extis primaque uiscerum parte protracta cetera stipitibus explicabant, nec ante supplicium remiserunt, quam tortos extis funditus aluo egestis horride rapacitatis spiritum profundere coegis sent” “In order to bring them to a more savage end, the Danes bound their hands behind their backs and had them first tied to posts; they then probed the hollow of their bellies with a knife and, when their bowels were laid bare and the front end drawn out, they wound the remaining intestines on stakes; the torture did not cease till the entire cavity had been emptied of its entrails, and the tormented creatures had been forced to shed the breath of their wicked and greedy lives”. See Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 878-9.

²⁶⁹ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 879.

In the following paragraph, Saxo tells us that Eiríkr demands an archbishopric after being wrongly excommunicated by the archbishop of Hamburg.²⁷⁰ Although the events that escalated to being granted an archbishopric differ between *Gesta* and *Knyttlinga saga*, Eiríkr's efforts to include northern lands into Christendom cannot be neglected. In Saxo's account, Eiríkr goes to Rome twice; first, to defend himself against the wrong accusations, and second, to demand an archbishopric for the northern lands.²⁷¹ Whilst Saxo's account that Eiríkr travelled to Rome for the second time is unlikely to be correct, one can say that Saxo might have found this plausible since this was the image that Eiríkr had tried to create: a devoted king who does not shy away from the challenges for his faith.

Upon his return, Eiríkr attends a royal banquet where a teacher of the arts²⁷² of music claims that certain musical modes could drive people to madness. The teacher, skilled in this technique, was compelled by the king to demonstrate its effect. When the musician begins to play his harp, the king loses his reason and starts to lash out. While in this overwhelming seizure of madness, he slaughters four soldiers who tried to subdue him.²⁷³ After recovering his right mind, he provides appropriate restitution, but to "proclaim his repentance in a more active form of atonement",²⁷⁴ he decides to go on a pilgrimage. Although different from what Óláfr says regarding the decision

²⁷⁰Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 879.

²⁷¹ "Nec contentus efficacissimum cause dictionis sue propugna torem egisse, aduersarie partis odio penetralium sacrorum decus externo sacerdotio subiectum* habere passus non est. Quamobrem Romam regressus tum se, tum etiam patriam ac domestica sacra Saxonica prelatione liberari petiuit, ne religionis ratione exteris admodum obsequi cogeretur aut eius disciplinam ab alienigenis petere necesse haberet" "Not content with having been a most able champion in delivering his own claims, through his dislike of the opposing faction he could not bear the idea that the dignity of this holy sanctuary should remain subordinate to an outside priesthood. Accordingly he made the journey back to Rome to entreat that he, his homeland, and its national worship should be freed from that Saxon prelacy, so that in the sphere of religion they should not submit to the necessity of being entirely subservient to foreigners or be bound to seek their doctrinal teaching from strangers." See Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 880-81.

²⁷² *musice rationis professorem*, see *Gesta Danorum*, 880.

²⁷³ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 882-883.

²⁷⁴Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 883.

process of Eiríkr's pilgrimage, an emphasis on a similar theme is apparent in both accounts: Eiríkr's eagerness to be a good servant to God.

4.6. *Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam*

Kings were not the only ones undertaking a pilgrimage among Scandinavians. Since the action in itself makes the individual closer to Christ and hence to God, Scandinavian nobles were also profoundly enthusiastic about going on a pilgrimage to Rome or Holy Land. To understand that pilgrimage was not only performed solely by kings, it is essential that we take a look at other primary sources that offer further information about pilgrimage and, thus, the motivation behind it.

Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam recounts the expedition undertaken by a cohort of Danish and Norwegian individuals who sought to partake in the Third Crusade by travelling to the Holy Land. However, their arrival occurred belatedly, precluding their involvement in the decisive battles of the campaign. The work's author is unknown, but he calls himself "frater X canonicus" in the *epistola auctoris*.²⁷⁵ In chapter nine, he reveals that he has lived in Tønsberg, south-eastern Norway, for some time.²⁷⁶ The work itself was most likely written in the late 1190s, about a decade after the loss of Jerusalem by Christians in 1187.²⁷⁷ The work consists of twenty-seven chapters, preceded by a dedicatory letter and a prologue. The majority of the narrative focuses on the early stages of the journey, encompassing preparations and diversions, while a mere two chapters, twenty-four and twenty-five, are allocated to the group's time in the Holy Land.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Scriptores Minores Historiæ Danicæ Medii Ævi Ex Codicibus Denuo* (København, I. Kommission hos G. E. C. Gad, 1917), 457.

²⁷⁶ Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 473.

²⁷⁷ Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, *A Journey to the Promised Land: Crusading Theology in the "Historia de Profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam"* (C. 1200) (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, Univ, 2001), 9.

²⁷⁸ Aavitsland and Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code*, 134.

Chapters one and two establish the theological and historical background of the Third Crusade. The narrative highlights the sinful state of the world, resulting in the pagan occupation of Jerusalem.²⁷⁹ Jerusalem's significance as the birthplace of Christianity and the Holy Land where the Son of God resided is emphasised, contrasting with its current defilement by pagan inhabitation and persecution of Christians. In the narrative, Pope Gregory VIII (c. 1100/1105-1187) responds to this catastrophe by composing a *lamentabile carmento*, calling for a new crusade and urging faithful believers worldwide to take action.²⁸⁰

The parts concerning this present chapter begin after Pope Gregory's bull, namely in chapter four. The chapter commences with the arrival of messengers to the court of Danish king, Knútr VI, from the apostolic see. As mentioned above, the message was from Pope Gregory VIII and urging Christians worldwide to defend and fight for the Holy Land where Christ had worked the salvation for men:

Let all the earth, its inhabitants and all the earth-born and the children of men together, the rich and the poor; let them hear and mourn the death of Christ and let them remember that they owe him for their redemption and let not the insult of Christ remain unavenged. And he who, in order to redeem us, gave himself unhesitatingly to death, and the death of the cross, let us in turn set the same example, let us not hesitate to give our lives for Christ; because he who makes his soul more precious to Christ does not deserve Christ.²⁸¹

Hearing Pope's words, people in the court burst into tears. For a better apprehension of the kings and the audience's emotions, the author gives great detail about the energy of the room:

²⁷⁹ Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 460-62.

²⁸⁰ Aavitsland and Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code I*, 134; a paraphrased version of the letter is in Chapter three in Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*.

²⁸¹ "Audiat siquidem orbit terrarum et universi, qui habitant in eo, quique terrigene et filii hominum simul in unum, diues et pauper, audiant et vicem Christi doleant et meminerint se debitores redemptionis sue, nec patiantur iniuriam Christi fore diutius inultam. Et qui se pro nobis redimendis incunctanter dedit in mortem, mortem autem crucis, nos versa vice ipsum ponamus exemplum, pro Christo animam dare non dubitemus; quia qui preciosiorem facit animam suam Christo, Christum non meretur", Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 464.

...they were all completely speechless, and no one dared to give an answer to those who were telling them, the great sadness absorbing their hearts. At length, they came to themselves and, resuming their breath, broke the silence; because it often happens in this way when the unusual news of great things is heard. But which of them should have replied to these so great and so sad tidings, it was scarcely discovered until they encouraged each other.²⁸²

It can be seen that the emotions that were given are incredibly intense; the crowd in the court feel such a connection to Holy Land that they feel attacked and, perhaps, even robbed. In other words, the emphasis is on the “sense of belonging” to Christianity.

After the meeting, fifteen men in the audience who were quite touched by the Pope’s letter decided to take the matter into their own hands. Upon disseminating the Pope’s words to the broadest extent possible and securing the requisite sources, for they could not have an impact by themselves, these fifteen men opt to construct Viking vessels, which they call “snecks”, capable of enduring the arduous voyage. They have one thing both in their minds and hearts: to render aid in the emancipation of the Holy Land from the grip of heretical Muslims.²⁸³ Only five out of fifteen remain true to their word. As the honourable men they are, the author does not hesitate to glorify the remaining five men:

These are the strong and glorious men, whom the Lord chose in unfaithful charity; whose names, perpetual praise, deserved eternal rewards, because, not only hearers of the divine teachers but doers, they did not hesitate to go out with Abraham from the land of the Chaldeans, that they might deserve to see the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey.²⁸⁴

²⁸²“ Quod rex audiens et universi considentes in profusionem lachrymarum et suspiria resoluuntur, ut penitus omnes obmutescerent, nec waleret quispiam responsum dare narrantibus, tristitie magnitudine cunclos absorbente. Tandem in se reversi, resumpto spiritu, ruperunt silentium; quia sic fieri frequenter assolet, audita insolita rerum magnarum novitate. Quis autem illorum his tam magnificis tamque tristibus nunciis respondere debuisset, uix inventum est, donec se invicem confortantes animarent”, Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 464-65.

²⁸³Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 468.

²⁸⁴“ Isti sunt viri fortes et gloriosi, quos elegit dominus in charitate non ficta; quorum nomina, perpetua laude ictura, meruerunt premia eterna, quia, divinorum preceptorum non auditores tantum sed factores, non hesitabant cum Abraham exire de Vr Chaldeorum, ut videre mererentur terram promissionis, fluentem lacte et melle” , Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 469.

As mentioned, they do not get the chance to fight for their Lord in the Holy Land, but the writer makes it very clear that the hardships and deaths they face during their journey are just as worthy of spiritual merit. Although cautiously, he even calls them martyrs for the hardships they had to endure: “Who will ever be able to recommend the death of martyrs, so to speak, worthy of preaching?”.²⁸⁵ Again, the emphasis on the sense of belonging can be seen here. Attributing the “martyr” epithet can be regarded as a way to include these pious men in Christianity further. They were not the Christian northerners living on the periphery of Christendom in the eyes of the author; they were the men willing to sacrifice their lives for their Lord.

Upon reaching the Holy Land, the travellers’ initial response is overwhelming joy as they shed tears of elation, fulfilling their long-held desire to explore its sacred sites.²⁸⁶ However, their joy turns to sorrow upon seeing the holy city under pagan occupation. Nevertheless, they are granted access to the Holy Sepulchre and the River Jordan due to the truce.²⁸⁷ The sense of being “robbed” of where their beloved Lord embellished with his passion and resurrection is, again, as clear as day. It is the land of their Lord, and thus the sense of “being at home” must have been quite strong in

²⁸⁵ “Quis unquam hominum horum, ut ita dixerim, martyrum mortem digno poterit commendare preconio?”, Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 485.

²⁸⁶ Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 488.

²⁸⁷ Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 489; Richard the Lionheart (r. 1189-1199) and his army retreated to the coast before their final march to Jerusalem in 1192. During the winter, they repaired conquered fortress. In spring, Richard managed to restore the unity among Christian forces in Palestine and under his command, they proceeded towards Jerusalem. However, at some point in the march, Richard decided to direct the army to Jaffa with the consent and encouragement of his council, which consisted of selected barons of Palestine and chiefs of the military Orders (Knights Templar). He then sailed off to Jaffa with a small squadron. While approaching the shore, he plunged into the sea. With this small squadron, he gains a victory against the Turkish cavalry situated on the shores of Jaffa. Saladin (sultan of Egypt and Syria, r. 1174-1193) was so convinced of his inability to overcome Richard and his army that he abandoned the siege of Jaffa without any further attempts. This victory marked the pinnacle of King Richard’s accomplishments in Palestine and effectively concluded the Third Crusade. The two monarchs, Richard and Saladin, negotiated a truce between their respective faiths based on specific terms. See George Proctor, *History of the Crusades* (The Keystone Publishing, 1889), 112-3-4.

our travellers' hearts. Since nobody wants strangers in their home, one can say that their tears of sorrow are for losing their homes to "pagans and idolaters".²⁸⁸

In chapter twenty-five, the same chapter where our travellers' joyful tears become tears of despair, a poem expressing grief for the state of Jerusalem was initially included. However, this poem has not been passed down in the preserved copies of the text.²⁸⁹ Nonetheless, even in the absence of the poem, this section of the narrative effectively addresses and expands upon the theme of sorrow surrounding the city's loss:

From the inmost affection of the heart they undergo tears and sighs, especially from those who had before seen her sublimated in glory and honor: nevertheless, because of peace, they enter the excellent dignity. They are led to the sacred places of the Sepulchre; but the trenches, which once excited the feeling of devotion, were turned to an increase of merit.²⁹⁰

4.7. *Leiðarvísir og Borgarskipan*

Based on what has been said above, *de Profectione* demonstrates the Danish attitude towards pilgrimage and, consequently, Christianity itself by grounding the narrative on emotions. On the other hand, although scarce, it is also possible to see the importance of pilgrimage among medieval Scandinavian societies through other medieval narratives. One such example is *Leiðarvísir og Borgarskipan* (itinerary and the list of cities)²⁹¹. Although it does not narrate any emotions like *de Profectione*, with the detailed description of the road from Iceland to Rome and Jerusalem, one can interpret that the pilgrimages were not isolated instances and rarely took place.

²⁸⁸ *paganis et idolatria*, Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 489.

²⁸⁹ See the note in Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 489.

²⁹⁰ "Ex intimo cordis affectu fletus subeunt et suspiria, precipue a his, qui eam prius viderant gloria et honore sublimatam: attamen propter pacis excellentem dignitatem intrant. Ducuntur ad sacrosancta loca Sepulchri; sed cunela, que quondam devotionis excitabant affectum, ad meroris uerluntur augmentum", Martin Clarentius Gertz, *Historiæ Danicæ*, 489.

²⁹¹ Tommaso Marani, "Leiðarvísir. Its Genre and Sources, with Particular Reference to the Description of Rome" (2012), 9.

Leiðarvísir is an Icelandic itinerary of the mid-twelfth century. Its authorship is usually attributed to Nikulás Bergsson, the first abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Munkaþverá in northern Iceland, for the *explicit* of Manuscript 194 8vo of the Arnamagnæan Collection²⁹² mentions that the itinerary was written by an Abbot Nikulas.²⁹³ Regarding its date and place, we have the information that the work was completed in 1387 on the farm of Geirrðareyri (now Narfeyri) on the peninsula of Snæfellsnes in western Iceland.²⁹⁴

Scholars generally agree that Nikulas was abroad in the early 1150s, as supported by limited but convincing textual evidence. The itinerary's concluding sentence identifies Nikulas as an abbot. During the mid-twelfth century, Iceland had two Benedictine monasteries in the northern diocese of Holar. Þingeyrar, founded in 1121, had an abbot named Nikulas Saemundarson, who passed away in 1158. The other monastery Munkathvera was established in 1155, and records mention Hoskuldr as the first abbot. However, Hoskuldr's time as abbot was short-lived, as Nikulas Bergsson succeeded him, assisting the two Icelandic bishops at the consecration of the new cathedral at Skalholt. This latter abbot, Nikulas Bergsson, passed away in 1159 or 1060. In this regard, although early scholars²⁹⁵ attributed the authorship of the itinerary to Nikulas Seamundarson, the dating and the evidence now point more convincingly to Nikulas Bergsson as the likely writer, which is currently widely accepted among scholars.²⁹⁶

²⁹² The full text of *Leiðarvísir* is preserved within the folios 11r-16r of the parchment Manuscript 194 8vo, which is preserved in the Arnamagnæan Collection in Copenhagen. Tommaso Marani, "Leiðarvísir. Its Genre and Sources, with Particular Reference to the Description of Rome" (2012), 4-5.

²⁹³ Marani, "Leiðarvísir. Its Genre and Sources", 42.

²⁹⁴ "Enn þa er þetta var skrifat, var lidith fra hingat-burðinum M. CCC. LXXXVII vetr," "But when this work was written, 1387 years had passed since the birth of Christ". Quoted in Marani, "Leiðarvísir. Its Genre and Sources", 5.

²⁹⁵ Paul Riant, *Expéditions et Pèlerinages des Scandinaves en Terre Sainte au Temps des Croisades, 1865, 80-81.*

²⁹⁶ Gabriel Turville-Petre, *Origins of Icelandic Literature* (Clarendon Press, 1953), 160.

The period when Nikulas undertook his pilgrimage was when the conditions were as favourable as they can be in the twelfth century.²⁹⁷ It was after the Second Crusade that Greek and Italian merchants enjoyed relatively unrestricted voyages between Italy, the Byzantine Empire and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. This peaceful atmosphere also benefitted pilgrims from all over the world, like Nikulas. In fact, unlike Seawulf,²⁹⁸ who faced perilous situations from pirates in the eastern Mediterranean and was ambushed by Saracens in the Holy Land, Nikulas' travel account mentions no such dangers.

In the narrative, including Norway, we see ten different pitstops which correspond to six different modern-day countries: From Iceland to Norway, Norway to Ålborg, Denmark, from Ålborg to Stade, from Stade to Mainz, from Mainz to Lake Geneva, from Lake Geneva to Rome, from Rome to Bari then Brindisi, and finally from there to Acre and then to Jerusalem.²⁹⁹ The indications of the distance between these pitstops and the detailed description of the facets of these cities are what Nikulas tells in between these cities. Apart from providing detailed religious, geographical and anthropological information, Abbot Nikulas also includes references to mythological and pagan elements from Nordic cultures.³⁰⁰

These references, which often relate to Germanic/Nordic culture, contrast sharply with the prevailing Christian belief of the era.³⁰¹ Nikulas strategically places these references whenever he encounters specific locations, serving as reminders of

²⁹⁷ Joyce Hill, "From Rome to Jerusalem: An Icelandic Itinerary of the Mid-Twelfth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 76, no. 2 (April 1983): 175–203, 201.

²⁹⁸ Hill, "From Rome to Jerusalem, 201.

²⁹⁹ Luana Giampiccolo, "Leiðarvísir, an Old Norse Itinerarium: A Proposal for a New Partial Translation and Some Notes about the Place-Names," *Nordicum-Mediterraneum* 8, no. 1 (2013): 1–26.

³⁰⁰ R. Raschellà, "'Devozione Cristiana E Leggenda Germanica Nell'Itinerarium' Dell'abate Nicola Di Munkapverá," in *L'immaginario Nelle Letterature Germaniche del Medioevo*, ed. Adelle Cipolla (FrancoAngeli, 1995), 257–73, 258–59; Lars Lönnroth, "A Road Paved with Legends. The Pilgrim Itinerary of Nikolas Bergsson", in *Atti del convegno: I rapporti tra Italia e Europa del nord nella letteratura e nell'arte, Giornate Scandinave* (1989), 35–47, 37.

³⁰¹ Giampiccolo, "Leiðarvísir, an Old Norse Itinerarium".

the mythological figures known from ancient times: “Then you travel for four days to reach Mainz, in between there is a village called Horhausen, another one called Kiliandr, and there is Gnita-heiðr, where Sigurðr killed Fáfnir”.³⁰² As a result, Nikulas’ guide, imbued with deep devotion, not only imparts geographical and religious insights into Medieval Scandinavia but also offers a glimpse into the literary traditions of these ancient peoples.

The urge to be included and a part of Christendom can be seen through Nikulas’ narrative. By giving such a detailed account and reminding his audience of the ancient Germanic/Nordic events, Nikulas tries to connect his ancient ties with his “new home”. One can say that during his journey, he occasionally reminds himself and his audience of his and their Nordic roots to tie them with the new ones they have. Moreover, the extent of details he gives while in Jerusalem shows how he wants his fellow Northmen to know everything about their “new home”: “On the banks of the Jordan, if a man lies on his back on the ground and raises his knee and his fist then pulls his thumb up, over these he can see the North Star, so high that nothing is higher”.³⁰³ In other words, it can be said that he wants to make sure that when other Scandinavians plan to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they will know where to go and what to do like a local Christian.

4.8. Analysis

Up until this point, we’ve seen how Christianity and Christian values are treated through different narratives. Although this strong emphasis on Christianity can be

³⁰² According to the Nordic version of *Nibelungenlied*, Gnita-heiðr is the place where the Dragon Fáfnir builds his palace to hide dwarf Andvari’s gold. We also encounter this legend in heroic poems of the Edda, *Reginismál* and *Fáfnismál*, in which Sigurd and Regin kill the dragon in Gnita-heiðr and steal his treasure. Giampiccolo, “Leiðarvísir, an Old Norse Itinerarium”.

³⁰³ Giampiccolo, “Leiðarvísir, an Old Norse Itinerarium”.

found in most medieval texts, encountering it in works about medieval Scandinavians can be interpreted as deliberate attempts to strengthen the Scandinavians' ties with Christendom. Compared to the rest of continental Europe, the Scandinavian kingdoms converted to Christianity at a late stage.³⁰⁴ As a result, the eleventh and twelfth-century Scandinavians struggled to familiarise themselves with Christendom, which was already a thousand years old at the time of their conversion.³⁰⁵ Additionally, converting to a religion centred on another continent made the northern territories the periphery of Christendom. That is to say, before conversion, they were in the heart of their own religion and therefore were the subject of their faith. After the conversion, since Jerusalem was the centre of Christianity, they became the people in the periphery who lived thousands of kilometres away from the lands where Christ, who was now their Lord, lived. In this regard, it seems like people of the North, consciously or unconsciously, were trying to find a place for themselves in Christendom.

Given what has been said, this may well be applied to our pursuit of finding their motivation for undertaking such a long journey towards the Mediterranean. Besides the spiritual satisfaction and the fame it brings, it can be interpreted as a quest to find a conceptual place in the world they have entered. To proceed with examples, Eiríkr in *Knýtlinga saga* was represented as a pious and just king at the very beginning. Among the first information we get about his reign is his actions against heathens; he exterminates them and lets no evildoer prosper in his kingdom. This shows itself in his attitude towards the heathen Wends as well. He shows no mercy to them in every

³⁰⁴ The definitive change came when the ruling dynasties underwent a conversion. King Haraldr Blátǫnn Gormsson (Bluetooth) of Denmark (r. 958-986) was baptised in the 960s. In Norway, King Óláfr Tryggvason (r. 995-1000) announced the adoption of Christianity in the 990s, and he was followed by King Óláfr Haraldsson (r. 1015-1028), who introduced Christian laws in the early eleventh century. In Iceland, chieftains gathered at the Alþingi in 999/1000 and decided to embrace Christianity. See Aavitsland and Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code I*, 15-16.

³⁰⁵ Aavitsland and Bonde, eds., *Tracing the Jerusalem Code I*, 15.

conflict they have in the saga. Even though this was most probably due to his deep devotion to Christianity as a king who grew up with Christian beliefs, one cannot deny the possibility of his awareness of the situation that both his kingdom and his fellow northerners were in. Their kingdoms were situated on the periphery of the Christian realm, and the only way to better include Scandinavians was to distinguish himself as a Christian king.

This argument further strengthens by his efforts to secure an independent archbishopric for the people of the North. He wants his lands and the Norse-speaking world to be acknowledged by the authorities of the Christian world. Additionally, his efforts to canonise his brother Knútr set another example for his longing to be included. After all, if miracles could take place in other Christian territories, they could as well take place in his kingdom. In this regard, his desire to be acknowledged and included might have also affected his decision to go on a pilgrimage, or, in other words, his movement towards the Mediterranean.

In *Gesta Danorum*, other than the aforementioned differences in the narrative and the storyline, we see a somewhat similar Eiríkr. However, this time, the emphasis is displayed through Eiríkr's characteristics and attitudes towards critical subjects. He orders a brutal end for the two Scanians who disturbed and plundered the Danish frontiers, and yet again, the brutality of how they were killed might also indicate his desire to be included in Christendom. He was proactive against future assaults from pirates and Wends, in other words, heathens. He is as brutal as a Christian king should be against heathens.

As described previously, the story of Eiríkr's securing an archbishopric differs from the one in *Knýtlinga saga*. In *Gesta*, we see a much more zealous Eiríkr. He goes

all the way to Rome, for the second time, to demand an independent archbishopric since he thinks,

his homeland, and its national worship should be freed from that Saxon prelacy, so that in the sphere of religion they should not submit to the necessity of being entirely subservient to foreigners or be bound to seek their doctrinal teaching from strangers.³⁰⁶

He wants to be a part of Christendom, not subjugated to it.

De Profectione helps us analyse the zeal for inclusion among Scandinavian noble people. We encounter a group of men deeply touched by Pope Gregory's letter and organise an expedition to Jerusalem from scratch. When the preparations for the pilgrimage of kings are considered, for they spare no expense, these men's ardour and desire seem self-explanatory for the reader. Infidels capture their so-called "home" they never saw, and they wish to have their finger in the pie, so to speak. In other words, they want a sense of belonging and think it can be found by actually being in there. They planned to find that sense of belonging through a change of space by moving towards the heart of their religion, Jerusalem. Lastly, with *Leiðarvísir*, we see the desire of Scandinavians to be included in Christendom. The writer, Nikulas Bergsson, provides every detail about both the road and the significant pitstops along the road to prevent any unfamiliarity that could occur in the hearts of his fellow Northmen. In this regard, Nikulas' efforts — undertaking a pilgrimage and writing an incredibly detailed itinerary — symbolise the desire for inclusion that overgrew in the hearts of medieval Icelanders/Scandinavians.

4.9. Conclusion

Christianisation brought about a profound change in Scandinavia. Indeed, this change has manifested itself in different areas over the centuries. Among them are the religious

³⁰⁶ Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum II*, 879-80.

customs, particularly the custom of going on pilgrimage, which I discuss throughout this chapter. Since the heart of Christianity lies in the Middle East, conversion mentally and physically tied them to a continent utterly distant from them. Whilst they were known for travelling long distances, surpassing such distances could not have been just to visit the holy lands of the religion they had converted belatedly.

In the first two sources analysed in this chapter, I emphasised how important Christianity was to a Scandinavian king, beloved by his people, King Eiríkr, who trusted his kingdom to his son and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In *Knyttlinga saga* and *Gesta Danorum*, the reasons for his pilgrimage differ from each other, however, the emphasis on Eiríkr being a devoted king and the decisions that he deliberately made are significantly noticeable in both sources. Furthermore, in the other two narratives, *Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam* and *Leiðarvísir og Borgarskipan*, the vigour and the desire to go and visit the Holy Land are emphasised to a great extent. In the former, the narrative revolves around five men who decide to sail to the Holy Land to assist in liberating Jerusalem after its fall in 1187. The fighting was over by their arrival, so they decided to visit the Holy Sepulchre and River Jordan. So, *de Profectione* symbolises the fire burning inside noble Scandinavians for seeing the lands where their Lord was born. In that case, the former, *Leiðarvísir*, symbolises the same fire within the common Scandinavian people. As an itinerary covering how to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in this respect, it shows that the custom of going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was not uncommon.

I argue that one of the significant motives for undertaking such a long journey is their desire to be included in the realm of the religion that they converted later in comparison to the other Western kingdoms. Throughout the chapter, I strengthen this claim by mentioning the overly-emphasised Christian elements presented through

Eiríkr's life and character in both *Knyttlinga saga* and *Gesta Danorum*. Lastly, in order to expand the scope of my argument to the common people of medieval Scandinavia, I analysed *de Profectione* and *Leiðarvísir* and presented the theme of “desire for inclusion to Christendom” by describing both the journey and the emotions of the characters during the journey.



CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

A significant and enduring element into the fabric of Scandinavian history centres on the idea of long-distance journeys. The Viking Age activities vividly depicted in the medieval chronicles — such as the raid of 793 to Lindisfarne described in *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* — offer an example of this phenomenon. Indeed, during the Viking Age, the Vikings left an indelible mark as conquerors, marauders, and traders, traversing vast expanses to establish their presence across Europe and the British Isles. In this regard, one can say that the Viking Age stands as evidence of their remarkable mobility.

By the turn of the millennium, the panorama of long-distance travel in this transformative period reveals a remarkable evolution. While the Vikings once emerged as formidable raiders and conquerors, this era has witnessed a noticeable transformation in their quest. They have shed their former roles, taking on an eclectic array of roles as mercenaries for Kievan princes, sworn members of the Varangian Guard, and even pilgrims. Reflecting the changing socio-political landscape and the coming together of different motivations, this metamorphosis gives rise to an alteration in the motivations for undertaking such long distances.

There is a vast corpus of the Viking Age and its possible reasons. On the other hand, once they involve in the outer world with accepted titles, such as Varangian, pilgrim and mercenary, the literature tends to ignore the motivation behind their movements and take the title as the sole reason for their long-distance journeys. One could argue that it is a plausible inclination since Icelandic sagas are challenging to work with due to their historical inaccuracies. However, as it was mentioned in the introduction, in terms of the broad narrative of events, sagas are accurate. In this

regard, the clues of the motivation of the kings can be traced through sagas with, of course, the help of other literary and material evidence.

While the reasons for their long-distance travels seem explanatory enough — entering the service of a Kievan prince as a mercenary, becoming a Varangian, going on a pilgrimage — they do not reflect the main motivations behind them. That is to say, when Yngvar was leaving Sweden because King Óláfr did not let him have the throne, his driving force was fame and wealth. Since he and his people were not the raider Vikings anymore, he could not obtain this goal by going on raids and plundering wherever his ship dropped anchor.

The motivation of Haraldr is more or less the same as Yngvarr. When his brother, Óláfr, was defeated and he got deeply wounded at the Battle of Stiklarstaðir, he flees from Norway to Russia. Other than *Morkinskinna*, the other two sagas, *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna*, do not offer a reason for his departure from Russia. On the other hand, all three narrate that he sent the wealth he acquired in the expedition in Africa as a Varangian to Yaroslav to keep them safe. After a long career as a Varangian, he returns to Norway and reclaims the throne. It seems highly possible that Haraldr used that money to muster an army to take the throne. In this regard, it can be said that even though he left his kingdom because he was a political exile, his primary motivation for going to Constantinople was not to become a Varangian. It was indeed to gather enough wealth to muster an army to support him.

Finally, even though *Knýtlinga saga* represents Erik as a devoted king who chose to go on a pilgrimage during a very successful reign, I argue that his desire to be included in Christendom was his driving motivation. The same eagerness for inclusion can be seen through an analysis of *Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam* and *Leiðarvísir og Borgarskipan*

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