

KIRIALAX SAGA : A BOOKISH ROMANCE

Robert COOK

*Kirialax saga*¹ stands alone among the medieval Icelandic romances for its striking use of learned sources, both by way of direct citation (Isidore of Seville, the *Gesta Romanorum*, "Dialogus Gregorii", and Dares Phrygius are among those named) and by way of narrative segments obviously taken from learned works (e.g. visits to Troy and Jerusalem, a description of marvelous birds in India, and the story of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand maidens slain in Cologne). In less obvious ways, too, the saga makes use of learned sources in building up its narrative, as I will demonstrate below. All this does not mean that the work is not a romance, however. There is an abundance of stock romance descriptions - of feasts, battles, jousts, fair princesses - as well as of stock romance motifs, like that of a father who resists marrying off his daughter (2.16-19), or a young man who studies the seven liberal arts (13.24-25 ; cp. 100.14-19), or a knight who spares the life of an enemy he has defeated in battle and thus gains him as an ally (6.9-17), or a horse that fails his rider and causes his defeat (5.28-9 ; 17:33-18.3). At heart *Kirialax saga* is a romance, but the heavy concentration of learned elements clearly makes it an unusual one and perhaps makes it an unsuccessful one. In this paper I will survey the bookish elements in the saga and then study in some detail three examples of how the author constructs episodes out of his learned material. First, however, I will describe the saga.

I

The personal name "Kirialax" is a Norse adaptation of the Greek *kairios* *Alexios* and refers first of all to the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus who ruled in Constantinople from 1081 to 1118. He is mentioned in *Íslendingabók*, the *Annales regii*, and the *Oddaveria Annal* as "Alexius/Alexis Grikkia conungr"², and as "Kirialags/Kirialax Grikia konongr" or "Kirialags keisara Grikia" in the *Annales Reseniani*, *Henrik Høyers Annaler*, *Lögmanns-annáll*, *Gottskalks Annaler*, and the annals in *Flateyjarbók*³. In historical narratives he always appears under the name "Kirialax", as in Snorri's *Magnússona saga*, chs. 12-13, where he receives a visit from King Sigurður (Jórsalafari) Magnússon in Constantinople⁴, and in *Hákonar saga herðibreiðs*, chs. 20-21, where he buys a miraculous sword (Hneitir) that had belonged to St. Olaf⁵. This Kirialax (i.e. Alexius I Comnenus) also appears in *Játvarðar saga heiga*, where he grants land to English nobles who

left England after the Norman conquest⁶.

The name Kirialax can also refer to two descendants of Alexius I Comnenus. In ch. 9 of Snorri's *Magnússonar saga* we are told that Kirialax, the son of Mánúli keisari (i.e. Emperor Emanuel Comnenus) is the grandson of Roger of Sicily⁷; this indicates Alexius II Comnenus, who ruled from 1180 to 1183. In *Sverris saga* there is mention of a letter and seal sent by "Kirialax Girkia-konungr" in an attempt to recruit soldiers⁸; this must refer to the Emperor Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203). On the model of these historical uses of the name, the hero of the saga with which we are here concerned is called Kirialax because he eventually becomes the emperor in Constantinople⁹.

The text of *Kirialax saga*, in the only four out of the seven extant manuscripts which are reasonably complete, ends with a beginning:

And now I will write no more of their doings (i.e. those of Kirialax and his sons) for the time being; let us direct the saga to another place, to the kings and heroes who lived in the northern part of the world and who have a part in this saga. (101.7-10)

One of these four manuscripts, AM 489 4to, has, on a thin strip that is all that remains of leaf 26, a few words that would seem to be from the continuation indicated by the words just cited. If so, this is the only trace of the second half of the saga. But rather than believe that so much has been lost, we might be sceptical as to whether the author actually went ahead and composed what would in effect be a wholly new saga or, if he did begin such an enterprise, whether he got much further than the few sentences represented by the fragmented leaf in AM 489 4to.

The story of the saga covers three generations, that of Kirialax' father Laicus, that of Kirialax himself, and that of his sons. Of the 101 pages in Kálund's edition, the first twelve and a half are devoted to Laicus while the last twelve tell a story about the two sons of Kirialax. There is thus a neat symmetry, with Kirialax getting the bulk of the attention in the center of the saga.

- A. In the first part, Laicus, King of Thessaly, hears of the beautiful daughter of King Dagnus in Syria and sends an embassy to ask for her hand. When he is turned down, Laicus comes with an army, conquers Tyre and Sidon and other towns and then defeats Dagnus' son Egias in single combat. Egias, in exchange for his life, then offers to help Laicus achieve his desire, and by means of Egias' persuasion the marriage between Laicus and Mathidia is arranged and celebrated. This is followed by a digression which tells how Egias gained a bride by slaying the monster Honocentaurus in a labyrinth.
- B. The second and longest part of the saga deals with Kirialax, born of the union between Laicus and Mathidia. After being educated in both

the liberal and the martial arts, he proves by his success in a tournament arranged by his father that he is cut out for a life of chivalric prowess rather than that of a monk. He then sets out to see the world, and his subsequent career may be summed up as two campaigns, some miscellaneous travel, and a bride-winning expedition :

1. First he visits King Soba of Phrygia and defends him against an invasion by the pagan King Solldan of Babylon who comes with a mighty and fierce army whose ranks include giants, monsters, berserks, negroes, and elephants.
 2. He defends King Lodovicus of Sicily and Emperor Zeno (who is at that time also in Sicily) against a marauder from the north named Eugenius.
 3. He travels to Troy (this actually took place during 1. above), to Jerusalem, to India (where he takes part in a splendid fight against griffons), to Asia, to Africa, to Hercules' Pillars (i.e. the Strait of Gibraltar), and then returns to Greece after a stop in Sicily.
 4. He wins as his bride the daughter of Lotharius, the "stolkongr" in Constantinople, and becomes the emperor¹⁰.
- C. The last part of the saga tells about the two sons born to this union, Villifer and Valterus. Both are promising, but Valterus is more assertive and ambitious. One day when Valterus is away hunting, an impressive Roman knight named Kvinatus arrives and is directed by Kirialax to sit in Valterus' seat. When Valterus suddenly returns and sees this, he is angry and challenges Kvinatus to a joust. Valterus is defeated, but his brother Villifer manages to fight Kvinatus to a draw, after which Kvinatus reveals that he is their cousin, the son of Kirialax' sister and Romanus, an excellent Roman knight who had accompanied Kirialax on his great adventures. There is general rejoicing in the court, and the saga text ends (as indicated above) just after the author declares that he will turn his attention to the northern part of the world.

II

The main, almost the only, work on *Kirialax saga* thus far has been done by Kristian Kålund, in his edition of 1917 and in an article on the sources published the same year¹¹. Drawing on his wide knowledge of Old Norse literature, Kålund demonstrated that the saga is "the most curious mosaic of borrowings from Norse texts, concerning which the author had a remarkable knowledge" (p. 6 of article). To give some examples of these borrowings :

- The passage describing Egias' slaying of the monster Honocentaurus (pp. 10-12) is based on a text about the Labyrinth

- (called "Völundarhús") preserved in AM 736 III 4to.
- Kirialax' visit to the ruins of Troy (pp. 25-27) is adapted from Alexander's visit to the same place as described in *Alexanders saga*, an Icelandic translation of the *Alexandreis* of Walter of Chatillon.
 - The battle in which Kirialax uses mice to terrify the elephants of the Babylonian King Solldan (pp. 28-36) is built up on the basis of a passage in *Stjórn*.
(To these three passages we shall return later).
 - The description of the monstrous races in the army of King Solldan (p. 28) is based on a passage in *Hauksbók*.¹²
 - A reference to Fortune's Wheel (55.5-25) is based on a passage which immediately follows the description of the Labyrinth in AM 736 III 4to¹³. Kålund's note refers to *Alexanders saga*¹⁴ but AM 736 III 4to is the more likely source, both because of closer verbal resemblance and because the Wheel of Fortune passage in AM 736 III 4to follows immediately a text used by the author of *Kirialax saga*.
 - In a kind of historical excursus the author tells the story of Ursula and the eleven thousand maidens beheaded by Attila (pp. 63-4) - this is based on *Breta sögur* (*Hauksbók*, pp. 267-8).
 - Kirialax' visit to the holy sites in and around Jerusalem (pp. 64-7) is based on an Icelandic guide to Jerusalem similar to that in AM 194 8vo¹⁵.
 - An account of marvelous birds in India (pp. 68-70) - the phoenix, the *cinnami* (who build their nests with a sweet plant which takes its name, cinnamon, from the birds), the *sitacus* (who is capable of speaking words of greeting to men) - is taken from a description of India in *Stjórn*¹⁶.
 - The description of the splendid palace in Constantinople - with its twelve golden pillars, on each of which stood a figure of a maiden with a pipe, arranged so that when the wind blew the pipes sounded harmoniously together (p. 87) - is a re-working of a passage in *Karlamagnús saga*¹⁷. There is no need to claim, as does Margaret Schlauch¹⁸, that the passage in *Kirialax saga* is taken directly from the *Pélerinage de Charlemagne* rather than from the Norse translation.

The list of borrowings could continue, but this is enough to show how heavily *Kirialax saga* depends on the learned texts of the medieval north. This dependence on native texts is not less so when the author explicitly claims a foreign source :

- He twice refers to the *Imago mundi* (of Honorius Augustodunensis), in the first instance (p. 13) as a source for information not found in that work. The citations are probably borrowed from *Stjórn*, as Kålund has indicated¹⁹.

- The same is no doubt true for the three references to Isidore of Seville (pp. 30, 67, 68) : the first, for example, cites Isidore as the source for the information that elephants fear mice more than they fear any other creatures. In fact, the author of *Kirialax saga* took this information directly from *Stjórn* (p. 70), where Isidore is cited as a source²⁰.
- The *Gesta Romanorum* is cited twice (pp. 62, 63) in instances that show the author of *Kirialax saga* to be laboring under the false assumption that this work was a source of Roman history rather than a collection of moral anecdotes.
- A reference to the "Dialogus Gregorii" as one of the sources for Theodoric's killing of Pope John, Simmachus, and Boethius (p. 63) also betrays a Norse source : the information appears in *Veraldar saga*, just before a mention of Gregory's "Dialogus"²¹.
- Two lines of Martial's Latin are cited concerning the bird *sitacus* (p. 70), but Martial is not mentioned, just as he is not mentioned in the passage from *Stjórn* (p. 70) from which the *Kirialax saga* author borrowed the lines. He introduces the Latin couplet with the phrase "þadan af hefir svo sagt eirn meistari af fuglsins vegna", which Kálund has shown to be based on a line in *Stjórn* which a few pages later introduces another Latin citation : "Af huers uegna er einn meistari segir sua" (*Stjórn*, p. 81).

In short, for all his references to learned Latin literature, there is no evidence that the author of *Kirialax saga* went beyond Norse sources for his information. To point this out is not to criticize him, however. His procedure was laudable and scholarly : he wanted to cite what were, according to his lights, the best sources for his facts, whether or not he himself used these sources. Certainly this audience will agree that it is no sign of deficient learning to be as well read in Norse texts as he was.

The bookishness of this author is evident not only from his learned borrowings and references but also from his verbal imitations of passages in Norse literary texts :

- When he describes the physical agility of the young Kirialax in these words,

He was so quick with a sword that it seemed as though there were two in the air at once ; he jumped twelve ells forward and no fewer backward,

he clearly had in mind, if not before him, the description of Gunnar of Hlíðarendi in *Njála* :

He was so quick with a sword that it seemed as though there were three in the air at once ;... he could jump more than his height with all his armor on, and no less a distance backward than forward.²²

- Shortly after this description we read of how Kirialax was dubbed a knight by his father :

'Then the king girded him with the sword named Hylmingur. He delivered a swift blow to the neck and told him to remember that very blow if someone else should strike him, and then give that man a blow in return.

This is obviously borrowed from the dubbing in *Tristrams saga* :

King Mark himself girded him (i.e. Tristram) with the sword and struck him a great blow on the neck, saying, "My dear nephew, never take blows from other men unless you avenge this one at once".²³

- In the battle against King Solldan of Babylon this reference to the Fates occurs :

Many a man's fate is reversed here, and those three who control fate can scarcely tear the threads of fate quickly enough that they do not have to cut through them quickly instead.

This, as Kálund points out, is adapted from *Alexanders saga* :

And now there is so great loss of human life that Atrops, one of the three sisters who control fate, is not able to tear the threads of fate as quickly as it seems necessary to them. Her sisters put their work aside, and all three of them cut the threads of fate as fast as they could.²⁴

These and many similar passages testify to a very bookish author indeed, who took not only many of his ideas but also many of his expressions and turns of phrase directly out of written texts. Kalund's notes, as extensive as they are, by no means account for all the borrowings in this saga.

III

Now that we have surveyed, following Kalund, the pervasive bookish element in *Kirialax saga*, it will be of interest - perhaps especially in a conference with the double theme of *riddarasögur* and narratology - to see how the author used his learned material in building his narrative. I plan to do this, first and primarily, by examining in some detail three passages in the light of their known sources, and, second, by some brief general reflections on the quality of the narrative in *Kirialax saga*.

A. *The Labyrinth*.

The passage in *Kirialax saga* in which Egias slays the monster Honocentaurus reads as follows :

He (i.e. Egias) came to the place called Getulia. A king's daughter, who had learned heathen ways and magic, had lived there. It is told that she had tamed a bull with witchcraft and idolatry and had become pregnant from it and given birth to the beast called "Honocentaurus". It was so savage with its diabolical power that whether many men or few approached it, none came back. There was at this time another princess thought to be an excellent match. Egias heard this and asked for the maiden's hand, and when this was discussed it was agreed by her advisers that Egias - since he was

famous for many deeds of prowess - should rid them of the savage beast Honocentaurus. This agreement was confirmed between them.

With Egias was a marvelously skilled smith named Dydalos. He put his skill to practice and constructed a building with marvelous turnings and passages which ran in different directions through the building. When it was finished they took pork (*flesk*) and rubbed it with blood and honey and pulled it through the forest where Honocentaurus lived. When the beast became aware of the men and recognized the smell of the bait, it ran furiously after it. Egias pulled the bait into the building and ran through the passages that had been constructed. When the beast came into the passages it ran about wildly, bellowing fiercely, while Egias climbed up on the wall and from there made many assaults on the beast (*veitandi þadan maurg til-ræði dyrinu*). Because of its strength and savagery the wall gave way at places. Egias delivered frequent blows, and with one of them he took off the beast's head. He then fled to another passage which led out of the building and came back unharmed to his men. People have since then had a drawing of this building, for the memory and fame of the one who built it. It is called "Domus Dydali" -we call it "Wayland's House" (*Vaulundar hus*).

(11.12-12.16)

As indicated above, this is based on a text represented in AM 736 III 4to, which I here translate :

Wayland's House (*Volundarhus*)

This is the explanation for the figure²⁵ which is called "Wayland's House" : there was a king in Syria named Dagnus who had a son named Egeas. This Egeas was a man of great physical skill. He went to the land of King Solldan to ask for his daughter's hand. But the king answered that in order to get his daughter, Egeas would have to overcome by himself the animal called "Honocentaurus", whom no one had been able to defeat with human means. And since this princess was exceptionally wise, more so than all the wise men in that kingdom, the prince (i.e. Egeas) sought her out in secret and told her what task her father had imposed on him as a condition for winning her hand. Because her eyes were filled with love for him she said, "Since deeds of human force cannot overcome this beast, I shall teach you how to construct a trap in the woods where the beast is accustomed to walk. First destroy every animal which it is accustomed to use for its food. Then take the meat of a wild boar and rub it with honey and set it as bait so the beast will get its scent and run after it. You run ahead of it and into the trap and along all the passages which will be in it. Then leap up on the wall which is closest to the centermost part of the building, and from there do what harm you can to the beast, though this will not cause his death.

Leave through a passageway in the trap. It will be such a long route for the beast that it will not be able to do you harm".

Then she took a cloth and sketched on it this trap which we call "Wayland's House". And he had it constructed accordingly with tile and stone, making all the details just as she had prescribed. He had all the animals in the forest destroyed and fixed the pork (*flesk*) as bait. The beast became hungry and ran after the bait into the building. Egeas threw down the bait and climbed up on the wall and made assaults on the beast (*veitti dyrinu tilraedi*) with all his might, and then ran from the wall into the passageway. The beast became terribly thin and was found dead in this very trap seven days later.²⁶

The author of *Kirialax saga* makes use of this passage in two ways, one for the composition of the passage just cited from the saga, the other for details in the saga at large. The first will take most of our attention.

Since our interest is in what the author of *Kirialax saga* did with the passage in AM 736 III 4to, we need not concern ourselves with the peculiar variations on the classical Labyrinth story which both Icelandic versions share, though it is useful to notice them in passing. Chiefly, they are :

1. the substitution of Egias for Theseus as the monster-slayer ;
2. the substitution of the Honocentaurus - a half-man, half-donkey creature found also in the Icelandic Physiologus and the Latin from which it was taken²⁷ - for the Minotaur ;
3. the construction of the Labyrinth not as a home in which to shut up the beast, but as a place in which to kill him ;
4. the consequent device of a bait with which to lure the beast into the Labyrinth, and the absence of the thread with which, in the classical story, the hero found his way in and out ;
5. the absence of the desertion motif - in both Icelandic versions the hero marries the princess.

The principal changes made by the author of *Kirialax saga* over the version in AM 736 III 4to are these :

1. He gives a name to the land in which the adventure takes place - Getulia - at the same time that he fails to call it "riki solldans konungs" (the realm of King Solldan). The reason for withholding the king's name will be apparent below. The name "Getulia" was probably taken from *Hauksbók* (p. 165) where "Getuland" appears among the lands ruled by Noah's grandson Chanaan. This section appears in *Hauksbók* just before the section "fra marghattaðum þjóðum" which the author of *Kirialax saga* used for his monster descriptions (ed., p. 28).
2. He supplies an account of the birth of the monster by having two king's daughters instead of one, the first of whom (the one added in *Kirialax saga*), through her devilish arts, conceived with a bull and gave birth to the Honocentaurus. In creating this additional

female figure the author of *Kirialax saga* was following the classical story, according to which Poseidon inspired Pasiphaë, the wife of Minos, with an unnatural passion for the snow-white bull which Poseidon had sent Minos, but which Minos refused to sacrifice. From this union the Minotaur was born. The substitution of a king's daughter for a king's wife, and of magical art for raw passion, may well have been made by the author of *Kirialax saga*, the latter on the model of the (single) king's daughter in the AM 736 III 4to version who was said to be "yfer vættis vitur vm fram alla spekinga i því ríki".

3. The author also showed his knowledge of classical literature, or at least of the classical story of the Labyrinth, in supplying the name of Dedalus as the architect of the Labyrinth. This meant, of course, that the "Ariadne-figure" (the clever king's daughter in AM 736 III 4to, the second king's daughter in *Kirialax saga*) is deprived of her role as the clever adviser who sketched the plan for the Labyrinth on a piece of cloth. As we saw above, her cleverness was displaced to the other king's daughter who seduced a bull by the use of magical arts. In *Kirialax saga* the builder of the Labyrinth is Dedalus, but it is unclear whether Dedalus told Kirialax how to use the Labyrinth to kill the beast or whether the entire scheme (build Labyrinth, entice beast there to kill him) came from the mind of Kirialax. In any case it is clear that the king's daughter had nothing to do with it. By inserting Dedalus, the author of *Kirialax saga* overcomes what is perhaps a slight weakness in the AM 736 version, which does not explain why a construction designed by a princess should be called "Völundarhús". The author of *Kirialax saga* knew that in the classical story Dedalus built the Labyrinth, and he knew that "Völundarhús" was the Norse equivalent of "Domus Dedali".
4. Again in line with the classical story, the author of *Kirialax saga* had Egias kill the beast, whereas in AM 736 he merely enticed him into the Labyrinth and then (after some inconsequential bombarding or assaulting from the wall) left him there to starve to death. This change, though learned and in one sense logical (Egias' attacks from the wall culminate in his slaying the beast), brings with it a disadvantage: the Labyrinth is now a nearly useless thing, neither a building in which to lock up the beast (the classical version), nor a trap into which to lure the beast so that it starves to death there because it is unable to find its way out (the AM 736 version). It is merely the place where Egias lured the beast in order to kill him, but an intricate labyrinth was not needed for this purpose; a simple enclosure would have done as well.
5. As a fifth point we might say that the *Kirialax saga* author

"streamlined" the story by eliminating the double effect of first having someone explain how something is to be done (the princess tells Egeas how to build the Labyrinth and kill the beast) and then having the person so advised carry out the plan (Egeas builds the Labyrinth and kills the beast). But perhaps the streamlining went too far, for in *Kirialax saga* we are not clear whether it was Dedalus or Egeas who thought of the scheme of killing the beast by means of the Labyrinth.

In summary, the author of *Kirialax saga* kept the basic features of his received version of the Labyrinth story - Egeas as hero, the Honocentaurus, the use of pork as a bait to lure the beast into a labyrinth constructed especially for the purpose of killing him - and at the same time made certain alterations in line with the classical version. The result is a more complete story, beginning with the origin of the monster and ending with the marriage of Egeas to the princess. A purist might regret the absence of the Ariadne-thread motif, but the thread-device was no longer necessary in a story where the intricacy of the Labyrinth was of little importance and where in any case the hero was present at the building of the Labyrinth; as for the clever princess, she was made redundant both by the lack of the thread motif and by the fact that the task of building the Labyrinth was returned to Dedalus. Under these conditions it would have been straining matters to give her the role of a clever adviser. Rather than imitate the classical story of a woman who is abandoned by the hero she has aided, the author of *Kirialax saga* was content to present a more conventional princess who was passively won and married. This was not only the natural result of the changes he made but was also more in harmony with the tendency of the *riðdarasögur* to prefer happy endings. On the whole, we may admire the way in which he kept the unclassical emphasis of his received story - a hero woos, wins, and weds a princess by slaying a monster - and at the same time supplemented it with details from the classical story. His alteration was for the most part skillful, but might be criticized on two scores, the vagueness concerning who devised the scheme of killing the beast with the Labyrinth and the turning of the Labyrinth itself into a kind of blind motif.

A second way in which the author of *Kirialax saga* used the account of the *Völundarhús* was to draw on it for names which he used outside of the Labyrinth episode. King Dagnus of Syria, the father of Egeas in the AM 736 III 4to story of the Labyrinth, remains Egeas' father in *Kirialax saga* but is also given a role of his own in the first episode of the saga: it is his daughter Mathidia whom Laicus (Kirialax' father) wins by defeating Egeas in single combat and then gaining his help. Around these names - Dagnus and Egeas from the Labyrinth story, plus Laicus and Mathidia - the author wove the story of a king with a daughter whom he did not want to marry off and a son who, when defeated by another king bent on marrying the daughter, made friends with the enemy king and acted on his behalf in

winning the bride. These story elements - the reluctant father of the bride and the peace-making son - were available in a number of places, and I will make no further attempt to describe the genesis of this story than to point out that here the author of *Kirialax saga* is using conventional motifs in the fashion probably most used in composing the *riddarasögur*.

The *Kirialax saga* author also took from the Labyrinth story in AM 736 III 4 to the name of King Solldan, who in that account was the father of the daughter whom Egeas won by killing the Honocentaurus. In this case the author of *Kirialax saga* did not use him in the episode of the Labyrinth, but gave him a completely different role, that of the heathen king of Babylon whose attack on King Soba, with an army of berserks, giants and monsters, occupies a good third of the saga (pp. 21-57)²⁸. We will come later to a portion of that struggle.

B. The Visit to Troy

A second episode that is worth examining in relation to its bookish source (in this case, sources) is that of Kirialax' visit to the ruins of Troy. The visit occurs during an interval between Kirialax' offer to aid King Soba and the arrival of King Solldan and his army :

One day Kirialax asked the king (i.e. Soba) to lend him men whom he trusted and to whom the way was known, to ride for curiosity and amusement to the place where Troy had once stood, "and I want to see the site of that city". And thus it happened. Kirialax rode with many knights up to the place where Troy had stood. Many of the walls of the city could still be seen, where the fire had not reached, and they were so strong that they could in no way be breached. There were still many houses and dwellings standing. Kirialax wandered about the site and came to the tomb of the famous Hector, which was built like a chapel out of marble and decorated with gold.

The tombstone that was over his bones had been carved by masters of amazing skill, and on it were marked the great deeds by which he alone slew twenty dukes and champions of the Greeks. He saw on the tombstone, which was made of gold, an inscription in Latin letters reading "Here lies Sir Hector, the greatest champion in all the world". He also saw the tomb of the famous Achilles, which had the same kind of form, painted all in gold and carved with the famous deed of the slaying of Hector. Scholars differ widely about this story and how it happened : some assert that Achilles made vows to Pallas, the goddess of battle, and that she appeared to Hector during the fight in such a bright light that he could scarcely look at her ; he took off his helmet and bent humbly toward her. But Master Dares says that Achilles waited until Hector had nearly collapsed of fatigue from having previously fought and defeated very strong warriors, and then Achilles attacked him and overcame him by this means. The making of these monuments had been ordered by early kings related

to these men - Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and other heathen emperors. In the center of the city's site was the tomb of King Priam, and nearby were those of his sons Alexander, Paris, the illustrious Troilus, Deiphebus and many others. When Kirialax had seen what he wished to of this place, he went back to his fortress.

(25.22-27.16)

We can compare this with the following passage from *Ale saga* :

After this Alexander the king went to that part of the kingdom called Phrygia, where once stood the town of Troy. Men consider that this town was once the largest and strongest ever to be attacked, for Agammemnon, king of the Greeks, besieged it for ten years with many heroes and an innumerable army before he was able to penetrate it and reach king Priam and his sons. To this place Alexander came out of curiosity to see if there were any traces of the great events that had taken place there. He came to where Troy had stood ; there was nothing to see of it but the foundation. From it, however, he could tell how large the city must have been. Then he directed his attention to the burial places of the heroes who had fallen, because there was an inscribed tombstone over each of them. He came to the place where Achilles was buried, and this is what was written on his tombstone :

"Here lies Achilles the strong, who killed Hector, the son of King Priam. He was betrayed and killed by Paris, Hector's brother, in the temple of the sun god".

The king studied this inscription, which seemed of much worth to him, and then he placed incense on the tomb as if it had been that of a holy man.

(ed. Finnur Jónsson, 15.14-16.8)

The re-working of this passage in *Kirialax saga* has several striking features :

1. the walls of Troy are still standing ;
2. Kirialax (taking the place of Alexander) studies two tombs, those of Hector and Achilles, rather than just that of Achilles ;
3. Hector's tomb is described in greater detail, whereas that of Achilles is just mentioned in passing ;
4. two different versions are given concerning the manner in which Achilles slew Hector ;
5. the tombs were placed there by Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar.

The last detail is an obvious attempt to accommodate to the fact that the visitor to Troy is not Alexander, but Kirialax. The other changes all tend to glorify the Trojans - and especially Hector - over the Greeks,

and this bias is in line with a second source used for the passage in *Kirialax saga* : *Trójumanna saga*. In the Hauksbók version of that saga the account of Hector's death reads as follows :

Now when Achilles had bound his wounds he went back into the battle, where he saw that Hector had killed many men. Achilles made an assault on Hector, who was extremely tired. It appeared to Hector then that his brother Deiphebus was standing next to him, and Hector expected to receive support from him. But this vision was a kind of sign of death. They went at each other then (i.e. Achilles and Hector) and fought vigorously. Hector perceived that his fatigue was taking away his strength. He looked around for the help he expected from his brother Deiphebus, and he saw that there was none. At this moment Achilles pierced his gullet with his sword, and that was Hector's death wound.²⁹

This passage from *Trójumanna saga* - minus the apparition of Deiphebus - was the source for the second of the two versions of Hector's death reported in *Kirialax saga*, that of "meistari Dares", according to which Achilles killed Hector when the latter was overcome with fatigue. But where did the author of *Kirialax saga* find his other version, that which reported that Achilles prayed to the war-goddess Pallas, who then appeared to Hector in such a blinding light that he took off his helmet and bowed to her, giving Achilles a chance to slay him ? Kålund was unable to trace this and considered it as one of three details in *Kirialax saga* which "must have another source" (ed., p. xx), but one which he was unable to find (see p. 12 of his article). It is possible, however, to see where this passage came from. Thanks to the good work of Professor Jonna Louis-Jensen, we now have in print accurate texts of the various versions of *Trójumanna saga*.³⁰ Two versions of this saga as printed in her 1963 edition - AM 573 4to (S) and Ormsbók (O) - have a fuller version of the final encounter between Achilles and Hector than does Hauksbók. After telling of Hector's fatigue and his fantasy that Deiphebus was there to help him, these texts have this clause :

og so seigir Homerus at Pallas bardist þa i moti (S : þratt mot) Ectore. ("and Homer has it that Pallas fought then against Hector", 182.7-8, 20)

I suggest that the author of *Kirialax saga* knew a manuscript of *Trójumanna saga* which contained this clause, which he then fleshed out - by having Achilles pray to Pallas and then having Pallas distract Hector - to form the first of his two versions of the slaying of Hector. (The other version comes, as we have noticed, directly from the passage in *Trójumanna saga*, along with the ascription to Dares : "meistari Dares segir", 27.4)³¹ This first version, ascribed to the indefinite "some" ("sumir sanna", 26.22), is not in Dares or Dictys or Homer or any source I have been

able to find. And indeed, if I am correct, the real source is to be found in the constructive skill of the author of *Kirialax saga*, building on the phrase "and Homer says that Pallas fought then against Hector". The idea of having Pallas "fight" by appearing in a vision may have been suggested by the vision of Deiphebus in the *Trójumanna saga* passage, which of course the author of *Kirialax saga* then suppressed - it would not do to give Hector both a fancied vision of his brother and a real vision of Pallas Athena, especially when the effect of both is the same : to distract him so that Achilles can slay him. The two accounts of Hector's death would then have resembled each other too much. The author of *Kirialax saga* preferred to have two quite different accounts : in one Hector is distracted by a vision and in the other he is simply worn out with fatigue. This is less confusing than the *Trójumanna saga* passage, where in one account both the vision of Deiphebus and fatigue play a role in Hector's death.

But this only accounts for part of the story. Granted that he got the idea of Pallas' vision from the vision of Deiphebus, where did the author of *Kirialax saga* get this particular vision, whereby she appeared in a dazzling light, causing Hector to bow in humility ? I suggest that these details were readily available to the author in a text he had before him. At the end of the first book of *Alexanders saga*, just after the passage about the visit to Troy which was quoted above, Alexander tells his men of a vision that came to him when once, after his father's death, he reflected on how far he should wage war :

"One night when everyone else was asleep and I was awake in my bedchamber with these thoughts, a great and bright light came over me. In this light was a noble man - if it is permitted to call him a man. He was splendidly arrayed, most like bishops when they are dressed in episcopal vestments..."

Alexander goes on to describe the man's appearance and then tells how this man advised him to conquer outside of Greece, but also to be merciful if he should ever meet a man with his appearance. The vision is soon fulfilled : after defeating Tyre, Alexander moves with his army toward Jerusalem, intending to destroy it, but the people of Jerusalem send their "bishop" (i.e. high priest) out to meet him :

And when the king saw the bishop, he realized that this man was arrayed exactly like the one who had appeared in his vision. He got off his horse and fell on his knees before the bishop. The king's men were amazed that their king would humble himself so much as to bow to this man, since they knew that he wanted to make all men bow to him and they had never before seen him bow his head.³²

Here we find the details used in the *Kirialax saga* account of the appearance of Pallas : a numinous figure appears in a bright light, causing the hero to bow in humility³³. (The humble gesture in *Alexanders saga* occurs at a later moment in time than the vision itself, but this is of little importance since it occurs only a few lines later in the text). Since this

remarkable story of Alexander's vision of the high priest comes immediately after Alexander's visit to Troy (the primary source for Kirialax' visit to Troy), it can be regarded as certain that the parallels in Pallas' appearance to Hector came from this source. (We might even go a step further and observe that if the author of *Kirialax saga* had not been under the influence of the story of the high priest of Jerusalem, it would have been more natural for him to tell his story differently. For example, would not a blinding light have been more effective in rendering a hero impotent than a bright radiance that might or might not inspire awe?) The only detail unaccounted for by this combination of sources is Achilles' petition to the goddess, but for this we need not expect a source; if Pallas fought against Hector, it is no large invention to say she did so because Achilles prayed to her to do so.

For his account of Kirialax' visit to Troy, then, the author provided a definite Trojan bias, combined two different texts (*Alexanders saga* and *Trójumanna saga*), added a clear distinction between two versions of the slaying of Hector, and built up one of those versions on the basis of a brief hint in *Trójumanna saga* and some details in *Alexanders saga*. This required close contact with the texts and some ingenuity.

C. Of Mice and Elephants.

The largest single episode in the saga is the battle that ensues when the pagan King Solldan attacks King Soba of Phrygia, at whose court Kirialax is an honored guest. The battle proceeds carefully through a number of stages - strategic planning on both sides, initial encounter, mass slaughter, single combats - and with a richness of verbal detail, much of it borrowed from other texts. But the backbone of the episode and its most interesting part has to do with the elephants in King Solldan's army and how Kirialax devised a way to defeat them.

In discussing this passage I will reverse my procedure and present first the passage which was the source of the episode and then the passage in *Kirialax saga*. The source is in *Stjórn*, in the same description of India that supplied the author of *Kirialax saga* with information that he used later (68ff.) about exotic birds and griffins. These words come directly after the description of the bird "Psitacus":

Especially elephants are raised there. They get their name "elephants" from the size of their body, because "elephio" in Greek is like "mountain" (*fjall*) in Norse. These large creatures, the elephants, are very well suited and adapted for taking part in great battles. The Saracens and Indians put high towers on them when they are getting ready for a battle and preparing to fight, and then they throw down from these towers or "castles" (or *heim turnum edr kastalum*)³⁴ destructive missiles at their enemies as if from a wall... They (i.e. elephants) flee from mice if some appear before them, and they scatter from each other's company. If they are giving birth in

lakes or in the forest and become aware of the presence of dragons, they abandon their newborn, because there is great hostility between these creatures. It happens sometimes that an elephant is taken and killed by a dragon.

(*Stjórn*, p. 70)

From the various hints in this description - and substituting mice for the dragons and adding a detail from the same source about how lions fear the turning and creaking of wheels³⁵ - the author of *Kirialax saga* constructed the lively narrative which follows. (Because this story of elephants and mice is spread out over a number of pages, I will give only excerpts from the saga ; but the reader will quickly see for himself what the author has done with his material).

(King Soba reports to Kirialax about the approaching enemy force). "In the ships they have many elephants and "castles" (*kastali*, a kind of mini-fort perched on the elephants) along with the army, and frightful giants and terrible monsters and negroes are assigned to accompany the elephants into battle and terrify ordinary men with their frightening voices and with their ugly appearances. In this way he (i.e. King Solldan) is victorious over all peoples" (28.11-18)

(On King Soba's request, Kirialax gives advice on how to meet the enemy). "Have a shield wall drawn up and place under it your bravest knights. Have your archers and those who are best at throwing spears on top of the shield wall³⁶. They are to have with them wooden boxes, well closed, inside of which you are to place a great number of mice, both large and small. When you get close to the elephants, let those on the shield wall throw the boxes at them, so that they break open and the mice run toward the elephants. There is no creature in the world whom elephants fear more than mice, according to what Bishop Isidore says in his eleventh book of *Etymologies* : that the elephant will even abandon its newborn offspring if he becomes aware of the presence of such creatures. They are also very frightened by the creaking of wheels". (29.15-30.4)

(The battle :) Now not all of what happened can be described at once, so for the amusement of people we shall first tell what those did who were to direct the elephants. The giants egged each other forward with the elephants, and those in the "castles" prepared to shoot. Now the devilish monsters advanced, showing their shapes, and the knights on the shield wall let their missiles fly swiftly. The keepers of the elephants drove the animals forward with strong blows, and it was terrible to face them because they all together gave off horrible sounds... Now when the elephants and giants reached the shield wall they intended to break it down and terrify their opponents with their frightful looks and strange noises. The men on the shield wall then sent forth the boxes, which broke at once and the mice ran up to the

elephants. At this sudden turn of events the elephants went mad and turned away as fast as they could. They reared straight up, and many tumbled over and fell to the earth, never to get up again. The men on the shield wall then let loose all kinds of missiles and wounded many. After this they turned the war machines on those who had been accompanying the elephants. The giants and negroes and horrible creatures fell like the billows of waves, and the elephants, charging about, fell and broke the "castles" which were on their backs. All the men in them were killed. Some of the elephants went mad and rushed from the battle into a dense forest, breaking off and knocking down the "castles" and thus losing the archers who had been placed in them. Some of them stumbled into bogs and perished there. (34.12-36.7)

That is the end of the elephants, but the battle goes on for another sixteen pages before King Solldan flees in defeat. What is particularly effective about the use of the information about elephants and mice is not only that the author of *Kirialax saga* constructs a lively and extended action out of a brief static description, but also that he gives Kirialax the role of advising King Soba to adopt the strategy of using mice in boxes. By this means the author dramatically displays his hero's wisdom, much as the *Beowulf*-poet does when he has Beowulf predict the consequences of the Ingeld-Freawaru marriage. The author even has Kirialax cite Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, which may seem inappropriate to a council of war but which is thoroughly appropriate for a hero who in his childhood spent seven years studying the "liberalis artes" (*sic*, 13.25). The advice turns out to be well taken, and it brings about the turning point in the greatest battle in the saga.

These three passages illustrate various ways in which the author of *Kirialax saga* built up his story from learned sources. To the Labyrinth episode he made changes on the basis of the classical legend: by explaining the origin of the monster he amplified the story; by introducing Dedalus as the builder he brought about a change in the plot whereby the princess was no longer instrumental in his success; by having Egias kill the beast he deprived the Labyrinth of its essential function. He thus combined details from two sources - the story of the Labyrinth as he found it in a Norse text and the classical story of the Minotaur³⁷ - and came up with a new version of his own.

In the story of the visit to Troy he also used two sources, adding to the description of Troy in *Alexanders saga* a bias in favor of the Trojans from *Trójumanna saga*. He also used the latter text to present the story of the slaying of Hector by Achilles, and what is of particular interest here is the way he expanded one line in his source ("and Homer says that Pallas fought against Hector") into a small narrative by supplying the "who"

(Pallas was the goddess of war), the "why" (she did it because Achilles prayed to her) and the "how" (she stunned Hector into humility by appearing in a bright light, in the manner of the high priest of Jerusalem in *Alexanders saga*).

In the story of the elephants and the mice he went even further in creating a long narrative, with several parts (plan, execution), out of a brief passage. Here, as in the story of Pallas "fighting" Hector, he shows a keen ability to create an episode out of "narrative germs".³⁸

It is all the more pity, then, that although the saga is rich where it adapts incidents from learned works and where it borrows the language of other sagas, it is weak when it comes to putting these together into a well-shaped story. A number of the episodes in the saga are explicit digressions, and even the episodes which could be connected have no plotting devices to link them together, with one exception: when Romanus marries the sister of Kirialax and then is called back to Rome on the sudden death of his father (89.19-91.12), the groundwork is laid for the last scene of the saga when, some years later, Kvinatus arrives in Constantinople and after jousting with the sons of Kirialax reveals that he is their cousin, the son of Romanus. Apart from this the only links are that the stories all relate to the same family, and most of them to the same man, but this does not constitute serious plotting.

The saga not only lacks a strong narrative thread, it also lacks good dialogue and interesting glimpses into the psychological state of the characters. All these things (good plotting, dialogue, and psychology) are present, for example, in sagas considered to be related to this saga, *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* and *Clárus saga*.³⁹ The author also seemed to run out of ideas for episodes; the securing of a bride for Kirialax (74.5-89.11) has many of the same plot elements as the securing of a bride for Laicus (2.3-10.26): 1. the sending of an embassy; 2. the refusal of the suit by a king who is advised to accept it; 3. single combat; 4. in which a defeated relative of the king agrees to take the side of the suitor; 5. the king is persuaded; 6. the wedding is celebrated. The repetition is not, it seems to me, interesting parallelism, but reflects a poverty of imagination.⁴⁰

The excellence of *Kirialax saga* does not lie in its story, but precisely in the intense and clever use of sources that this paper has tried to demonstrate. By concentrating on building his episodes, and by neglecting at the same time to consider the whole shape of his work, the author reveals what I hope none of us ever reveals: the danger of too much bookishness.

NOTES

- 1 Edited by Kristian Kålund, *Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur XLIII* (Copenhagen 1917). All page and line references are to this edition. In an introductory essay in Jónas Kristjánsson's edition of *Viktors saga ok Blávus* (Reykjavík 1964), Einar Ólafur Sveinsson notes that the learning in *Kirialax saga* "was to be imitated by quite a few sagas, such as *Sigurðar saga þögla*, *Dínus saga drambláta*, *Ektors saga*, and *Vilhjálm's saga sjóðs*" (p. ccv), but none of these sagas makes obvious allusions to learned sources to the extent that *Kirialax saga* does.
- 2 *Ares Isländerbuch*, ed. Wolfgang Golther, ANSB 1 (Halle 1923), p. 24 ; *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578*, ed. by Gustav Storm (Christiania 1888), pp. 110, 112, 472, 473.
- 3 *Islandske Annaler*, pp. 18, 19, 58, 59, 252, 319, 320 ; *Flateyjarbók*, ed. C.R. Unger (Christiania 1860-68), III, pp. 510, 511.
- 4 *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, III (Reykjavík 1951), pp. 252-4 ; see also the account of this visit in *Morkinskinna* (ed. Finnur Jónsson, SUGNL LIII, Copenhagen 1932), pp. 348-9.
- 5 *Heimskringla*, III, pp. 369-72 ; the story is also told in *Flateyjarbók*, II, pp. 377-81.
- 6 "Saga Játvarðar konungs hins helga", ed. by Jón Sigurðsson, *Annaler for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* (Copenhagen 1852), pp. 36-42 ; *Flateyjarbók*, III, pp. 470-2.
- 7 *Heimskringla*, III, p. 248.
- 8 *Sverris saga*, ed. Gustav Indrebø (Kristiania 1920), p. 133 ; see also *Flateyjarbók*, II, p. 646.
- 9 Other *riddarasögur* use the name in the same way : the Saxon hero of *Konrads saga keisarasonar* marries the daughter of the emperor in Constantinople and becomes the emperor himself ; his son Heinrikr, who rules after him, has a son whom he names Kirialax (*Fornsögur Subrlanda*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld, Lund 1884, 84.53). The younger *Mágus saga* has another Greek emperor named Kirialax, cf. *Bragða-Mágus saga*, ed. Gunnlaugur Þórðarson (Copenhagen 1858), p. 172. Still another appears in *Vilhjálm's saga sjóðs* (*Late Medieval Icelandic Romances*, IV, ed. Agnete Loth, Copenhagen 1964), pp. 28, 76ff.

- 10 The saga creates confusion by having two rulers in "Grikkland", Lotharius the *stól-konungr* (this term usually refers to the Byzantine emperor) and Leo the *keisari*, successor to Zeno. The author seems to have thought of them as separate positions, and reduces the confusion only slightly on pp. 88-9 when he first has Lotharius give all of Greece to Kirialax and then has Leo do in effect the same thing. But the fact that Leo gives him all of Greece plus "the seven kingdoms that accompany it" (according to manuscript D), and then places his crown on Kirialax' head, may indicate that the author thought of the *keisari* as a kind of overlord over the *stólkonungr*.
- 11 "Kirjalax sagas kilder", *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie*, III. række, 7. bind (1917), pp. 1-15.
- 12 *Hauksbók*, published by Det kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab (Copenhagen 1892-6), p. 166.
- 13 Both of these texts are printed in *Småstykker 1-16*, SUGNL XIII (Copenhagen 1884-91), that on the Labyrinth on pp. 196-7 and that on Fortune's Wheel on pp. 198-9. Kålund dates AM 736 III 4to to the fifteenth century (*Katalog over den arnamagnæanske håndskriftsamling*, Copenhagen 1889-94), so that the fourteenth century author of *Kirialax saga* must have used an ancestor.
- 14 See also Kålund's article, pp. 8-9. The passage in question is on p. 23 of Unger's 1848 edition of *Alexanders saga* and on pp. 24-5 of Finnur Jónsson's 1925 edition.
- 15 This text appears in *Alfraedi íslenzk*, I, ed. Kr. Kålund, SUGNL XXXVII (Copenhagen 1908), pp. 26-31.
- 16 *Stjórn*, ed. C.R. Unger (Christiania 1862), pp. 70, 74.
- 17 *Karlamagnús saga, Branches I, III, VII, et IX*, ed. Agnete Loth, Annette Patron-Godefroit, and Povl Skårup (Copenhagen 1980), pp. 254-8.
- 18 *Romance in Iceland* (London 1934), p. 163.
- 19 "Kirjalax sagas kilder", p. 10.
- 20 See the note on p. 30 of Kålund's edition.
- 21 *Veraldar saga*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, SUGNL LXI (Copenhagen 1944) p. 64. The Norse translation of Gregory's Dialogues tells a story

- of the death of Theodoric and mentions his maltreatment of Pope John and Symmachus, but does not mention Boethius ; cf. *Heilagra manna sögur*, ed. C.R. Unger (Christiania 1877), I, p. 245.
- 22 *Kirialax saga*, 14.7-9 : "hann vo svo titt med sverdi, at tvau synnduzt senn á lopte ; hann hliop tolf alna aa fram ok eigi skemra á bak aftr". *Njála*, ch. 19 (ÍF 12, p. 53) : "ok hann vá svá skjótt með sverði, at þrjú þóttu á lopti at sjá... hann hljóp meir en hæð sína með öllum herklæðum, ok eigi skemmra aptr en fram fyrir sik".
- 23 *Kirialax saga*, 16.6-10 : "Sidan gyrdi kongren hann med sverdi því, er Hylmingur het. Sidan slo kongren eitt stort haugg á hans hals, bidiandi at hann minntezt á þat sama haugg, ef nockur slægi hann annar, at gefa þeim haugg í moti". *Tristrams saga*, ed. G. Brynjúlfsson (Copenhagen 1878), p. 43 : "Markis konungr gyrdi hann sverði sjálfr ok laust á hals hánun mikit högg ok mælti til hans "minn kæri frændi ! tak aldri högg af öðrum mönnum, nema þú hefnir þess þegar".
- 24 *Kirialax saga*, 34.7-11 : "Her umturna margz mannz zurlug, ok þær þrjar, sem aurlaugunum styra, geta nu varla slitit svo skiótt aurlaugz þraduna, at eigi verdi þær sem skiotazt at skera hann helldr". *Alexanders saga*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen 1925), 77.14-19 : "Ok nu goriz sua mikit mannfall at Atrops ein af þeim .iij systrum er orlogunum styra fær æigi sua skiótt slitit orlags þraduna sem þeim þickir þurfa. leggja systr hennar nu nidr verk sitt. ok slita nu allar orlags þraduna. sem þær megu tidaz." For an example of multiple borrowing, compare this single passage from *Kirialax saga* with a passage from *Tristrams saga* and two passages which occur in close proximity in *Alexanders saga* : *Kir* 48.2-12 : "Tekr nu vau llren allr at hyliazt af manna buku ok klædazt med stali ok iarni, torgum ok treyium, buklaurum ok breidauzum, skiöldum ok brynium. Eru nu mikler brestir i hernum af storum hauggum ; þa er annar særdr, er anar er i svima ; þa fellr annar, er anar er hauggvin, þa er anar lagdr, er annar er liflaten, þa sprauklar anar, er anar sperrezt, þa sæfizt anar, er anar er fullsæfdr. Nu er svo micit blodfall um volluna, at i dau l unum fliota med aullu bukarnir, en sumstadar falla sem ár med straumi". *Tr*, p. 56 : "völlrin klæddist af járn i ok stáli ok gyll d um búnaði skjalda ok hjálma". *Al*, 42.10-12 : "Annarr deyr nu, en annarr er dauðr með ollo. Annarr sprauclar nu. en annarr er full sefðr". *Al*, 41.22-3 : "Nu taka dauðir bukar at þekia iorðena hvervetna. vellir fliota af blöðe. en dalverpe fyllaz oll".
- 25 The text is accompanied, on folio 3r, by a drawing of a labyrinth which consists of eight concentric circles with a monster labeled "Honocentaurus" in the center.

- 26 See note 13 for the printed edition of this text.
- 27 See Verner Dahlerup, "Physiologus i to islandske bearbejdelser", *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie*, II. række, 4. bind (1889), pp. 261-2, 277-8 ; also *The Icelandic Physiologus*, ed. Halldór Hermannsson, *Islandica XXVII* (Ithaca 1938), pp. 17, 20. The name of the hybrid creature goes back to the Septuagint, from which it came into the Vulgate, "Et occurrent dæmonia onocentauris" (Isaiah 34 : 14). The creature is also mentioned in *Stjórn*, immediately after a mention of the Minotaur and the Labyrinth (p. 85) : "Minocentaurum segia þeir nafn hafa tekit af manni ok gridungi. fyrir þa sauk at hann se sua uorðinn sem allt saman graðungr ok madr. huilikt dyr er hinir fyrri menn sogdu i sinum skroksogum inni byrgt i laborintho. huert er sumir menn kalla Volundar hús. Onocentaurus segiz at af þi se sua kallaðr. at hann se halfr uorðinn sem madr enn halfr sem asni".
- 28 In *Bevers saga*, the title of sultan has become a name : "Soldann kongr var hofdingi yfir ollum heidingium" (*Fornsógur Suðrianda*, 261.25-6). Christopher Sanders, who is preparing an edition of *Bevers saga*, kindly informs me that there is no "Soldann", either by name or title, in the surviving Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Hamtoun*e and suggests the possibility of influence from either *Kirialax saga* or the ancestor of AM 736 III 4to.
- 29 *Hauksbók* (ed. cited in note 12), 214.17-26. Also in *Trójumanna saga*, ed. by Jonna Louis-Jensen, *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ*, Series A, volume 8 (Copenhagen 1963), 181.27 - 183.23.
- 30 See the edition cited in note 29 and *Trójumanna saga : the Dares Phrygius Version*, *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ*, Series A, volume 9 (Copenhagen 1981).
- 31 See *Trójumanna saga* 1963, 174.20, where *Hauksbók* introduces the dream of Andromachæ with "sva segir meistari Dares" ; the *Ormsbók* reading here is "Sva segir Dares" (174.3) ; S is lacking this passage. It is curious that Hb is the only one of the printed texts to use the term "meistari" in connection with Dares (see also 213.11, 21, 31-2), while on the other hand it lacks the phrase "and Homer says that Pallas fought against Hector" that inspired the author of *Kirialax saga*. It is interesting, too, that *Ormsbók* (alone) makes a comment about conflicting versions which is similar to that in *Kirialax saga* : "Fra þeim tidindum er nu barvz at seigia nockut sinn veg huarer fra Omerus ok Dares. ok ma þo vel vera at hueru tveggju hafi satt sagtt ok hafi odrum verit kunnara fra Girkium enn odrum fra Trojumonnum" (173.21 - 174.3).

- 32 *Alexanders saga* (ed. F. Jónsson), 17.3-8 : "Oc eins hveria nött at aullom auðrom sofandom iminu svefninne þa er ec vacða vm slict hugse. kom mikit oc biart lios yfir mec. því liose fylgðe einn gaufuglegr maðr ef lofat scal mann at kalla. hann var harðla vel klæddr oc því licast sem byscopar þa er þeir ero scrydder byscops scrude..." 18.8-15 : "oc þegar er konungr ser byscop. þa kemr honom ihug at sa maðr variafnt þannug buinn er honom vitraðiz fyrr meir. oc hann stigr þegar af hesti sinom oc fellr akne fyr byscope. þetta undruðuz konungs menn mioc er konungr litelætti sec sva mioc at hann laut þessum manne. þar sem þeir vissv aðr at hann villde alla lata til sin luta. oc þeir haufðo hann aungom fyr set sitt haufð hnegia".
- 33 Some verbal parallels are : Al 17.4-5 "mikit ok biart lios"/*Kir* 27.2 "med miclu liose" ; Al 18.12 "konungr litelætti sec", 18.15 "þeir haufðo hann aungom fyr set sitt haufð hnegia"/*Kir* 27.3-4 "hneiandi i gegn med litilæte".
- 34 The ultimate source in Norse literature of this combination of elephants and "castles" is probably *Alexanders saga*, 52.3-5 : "Filar ero oc bunir til bardaga hvar sem þeir faz. oc hava byrðar ecke smaleitar. þvíat hver þeira hefir ábake ser kastala". This translates the Latin of Walter's *Alexandreis*, "elephantés bellica pressit/Machina, turrito gradientes agmine" (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. CCIX, col. 494).
- 35 *Stjórn*, p. 71 : "Hiola gang og gnisting ottaz þeir (lions) nockut" ; *Kirialax saga*, 30.4 : "ok hiola nisting ottazt þeir (elephants) ok miog".
- 36 The author of *Kirialax saga* uses *skjaldborg* to mean an actual wall.
- 37 I am not able to say precisely in what way this story reached the author of *Kirialax saga*, but the passage from *Stjórn* cited in note 27 testifies to the existence of *skröksögur* about the killing of the Minotaur. On the knowledge of the Latin classics in medieval Iceland, see the famous reference to Ovid in *Biskupa Sögur* (Copenhagen 1858-78), I, 165-6 ; Margaret Schlauch (see note 18), Chapter III, especially p. 46 ; Henry Goddard Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1921), p. 135 ; Mattias Tveitane, "Europeisk påvirkning på den norrøne sagalitteraturen. Noen synspunkter", *Edda* (1969), pp. 73-95.
- 38 The term comes from Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy : on the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), p.

88. The development of the Passion narratives, as Kermode describes it, bears some resemblance to the development of episodes in *Kirialax saga*.
- 39 See the paper in this volume by Peter Hallberg, which attempts to prove that these three sagas were written by the same author.
- 40 After my lecture at Toulon, Frederic Amory took issue with this remark, pointing out that the second bride-winning, which is much more elaborate than the first, might be a deliberate device on the part of the author to dramatize the great success Kirialax achieved. The bride in this case is, after all, the daughter of the *stólkonungr* of Constantinople, and as a consequence of winning her Kirialax becomes the emperor. I am grateful to Professor Amory for his thoughtful insight, with which I am inclined to agree. Certainly the remark in this lecture is a simplification, for there are considerable differences between the two episodes. In the second, for example, the princess is described with great care and affection (75.20 - 76.22) the embassy sent to ask for her hand brings generous gifts (77.10 - 11), the daughter herself advises her father to accept the suit (79.19-80.4), and a tournament between twelve men from each side is arranged (80.30 - 81.19), which avoids much bloodshed.