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## FVENS SAGA, MÍRMANNS SAGA AND ORMR SNORRASON'S BOOK

### I. Reconstruction of OS

Ormr Snorrason's Book (OS), a large collection of romances, was a manuscript much used by scholars in Sweden in the seventeenth century. The last record of it is in an inventory in 1693, and it is assumed that it was destroyed in the fire in which Stockholm castle burned down in 1697.

It is likely that the first scholar to use the name Ormr Snorrason's Book did so because there was a statement of ownership in the manuscript. The name suggests a connection with the Icelandic lawman Ormr Snorrason, whose adult life spanned the second half of the fourteenth century (the owner of a great manuscript of Lives of the Apostles, Codex Scardensis). What can be learned about the language of OS would square with his having been the first owner of it.

The history of OS in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is unknown. In 1602 a Swedish antiquarian recorded receiving it as a gift, and from then on it was in frequent use by a succession of scholars and their assistants through most of the century. Their activities have provided the materials used in modern times to try to establish what the manuscript was like.

There was an interest at times in having the manuscript copied. Four related transcripts exist of parts of the first item in OS, and in 1690-1 the Icelander Jón Vigfússon (JV) copied the greater part of it, if not the whole.

The manuscript was excerpted for lexicographical works several times. These works, published and unpublished, garble the Icelandic, use loose titles and (as it appears) make mistakes over page references. Nonetheless their extensive excerpts yield information about the manuscript's contents and their disposition, its size and appearance, and even its language. Moreover they can be used to test whether JV's copies are in fact from OS.

Descriptive remarks also provide some information about the manuscript. Chief among these is a list of contents,

although this is apparently misleading in some respects.

The construction of OS using such information was begun by Gödel in 1904. It was advanced by Broberg in 1908, and in more recent times there have been further advances, consolidations and refinements in a series of publications: Louis-Jensen 1963, Blaisdell 1965, Louis-Jensen 1975, Sanders 1979, Blaisdell 1979<sup>2</sup> and Andersen 1983. The results of these researches can be summarized as follows. The abbreviations S46 etc. refer to the Stockholm manuscripts Papp. fol. nr 46, 47, 58 & 66.

OS contents	OS ff.	JV copy
Trójumanna saga	1 - 15r	S58
Breta sögur	15 - 24	S58
Mágus saga	24v - 43	S58
Laes þátr	43 - 45r	S58
Vilhjálms þátr Laessonar	45r - 47r	S58
Geirardðs þátr	47r - 49v	S58
Flóvents saga	49v - 58r	S47
Bærings saga	58r - 64v	S47
Rémundar saga	64v - 72r	S47
Erex saga	72r - 75v	S46
Bevers saga	75v - 79r	S46
Ívens saga (Lacuna)	79r - ?	S46, part
Mírmanns saga	? - 83r/(v)	S47, part (?)
Partalopa saga	83(r)/v - 86v	S46
'Enoks saga'	86v - 90r/v	S66
Parcevals saga	?	-

Although the seventeenth-century list of contents of OS has 'Partiwal's' as its concluding item, no quotation from Parcevals saga has been found in the lexicographical works, and there is no known copy.

It is apparent from the summary that there is a major problem concerning Ívens saga and Mírmanns saga, and that is the subject of this paper.

Between the end of Bevers saga on F. 79 and the beginning of Partalopa saga on f. 83 there are only three complete leaves and parts of two others to accommodate whatever texts

stood between them. Quotations from both *Ivens saga* and *Mírmanns saga* in lexicographical works have page references to this part of OS. The space, however, is quite insufficient for them both in complete form.

There is evidence from the quotations for the presence in OS of almost half of the text of *Ivens saga*, and other evidence extends this to almost four-fifths, so that *Mírmanns saga* must certainly have been deficient, and seriously so. What is not clear is whether *Ivens saga* was still complete. Assuming there was only one lacuna, did it affect only *Mírmanns saga*, or did it affect both of them?

Before starting on this problem, I will mention one small matter, the reference given in the table for the beginning of *Partalopa saga*.

The scanty page and line references in the quotations do not settle the question of where *Partalopa saga* began, and calculations based on estimates of numbers of lines in lost manuscripts are inevitably imprecise. In this case the calculation must be made all the way from the end of the saga, more than six large pages, with practically no useful intermediate points. The calculation in the recent edition (Andersen 1983 LVI) results in an indication that *Partalopa saga* began at or near the top of f. 83v. It may accordingly have begun the new page. Or it may have begun a little lower down, in which case the top of the page must be presumed to have contained the final words or sentences of the preceding *Mírmanns saga*. But the result of the calculation, as is said in the edition, does not rule out the possibility that *Partalopa saga* began at the foot of f. 83r. If it did begin on f. 83r, it will hardly have begun very close to the bottom; for if the space available had been small, it would probably have been left unused, particularly as there is no connection between the two sagas. On balance f. 83v seems more likely than f. 83r.

It remains unclear from this whether *Mírmanns saga* ended on the top of f. 83v or on f. 83r; and if the latter, unclear how near to the bottom of the page. However, another consideration given below will help by making it clear that

Mirrmanns saga must have extended to very near the bottom of f. 83r at least.

## II. Ivens saga

JV's copy of Ivens saga in S46 can be seen, from the agreement between its text and some words quoted from OS by the lexicographers, to be derived from OS for much of its length; and it is likely that it was a direct copy of it. But from the beginning of chapter 14 onwards, as has been shown by Blaisdell 1979<sup>2</sup> XC-XCI, the text of S46 is derived from a different manuscript, the still existing S6 (Stockholm Perg. 4to nr 6); and again it is likely that it was a direct copy of it. JV's change of exemplar does not necessarily imply that OS was defective. But that is obviously a possible explanation of his change of exemplar, and there may be reasons for adopting it. Firstly, although not all JV's copies of sagas in OS have been investigated yet, it is a working hypothesis at present that he was set to copying the whole of OS, and did so; if Ivens saga had continued any further in OS, he would have persisted with it. Secondly, we have to reckon with a lacuna somewhere hereabouts in OS; we should place it here, on the basis of this indication, unless arguments can be found against doing so or in favour of placing it at some other point. Thirdly, the calculation in Sanders 1979. 152 makes it likely that chapter 13 ended at the very bottom of f. 81v, i.e. at the end of a leaf; this strongly supports the notion that the reason why JV turned to another manuscript at this point in the text was that the leaf containing chapter 14 (and the rest of the saga) was missing from OS.

What is there to gainsay the assumption that OS lacked the end of Ivens saga from chapter 14 onwards because of a lacuna? Blaisdell 1979<sup>2</sup> XCII, perceiving that JV turned to S6 for his text here, thinks that he may still have used OS in this part in two ways: for occasional readings, and for the text of the very end of the saga (which I take to begin with blifdlega, EdAM B18 145:21, differing slightly from Blaisdell 1979<sup>1</sup> 233).

## (a) Occasional readings:

Most of the deviations of S46 from S6 are very slight and in accordance with the scribal freedom of the time and JV's known propensities. Only the longer additions and substitutions could reveal use of another manuscript, and even with these there must be doubt when the other manuscript is not to hand (though reference to the distant French source might help).

JV copied 4 pages of S6 (ff. 36v18-38v15), in 17 pages of S46 (pp. 58:20-75:28). In all of this there are only six additions of 4 words or more (Blaisdell 1979<sup>1</sup> 235). They are the following, and all of them can in my opinion be attributed to JV quite easily.

1. mal S6] liff + ok leysa þeirra mál S47, EdAM B18 131:23.

A common type of partial correction after an error.

2. riddarin] + sä er hana skylldé forsvara 132:26-7.

3. riddara] + sem at svara skylldi 133:29.

4. riddara] + sem at fyrir huorju þeirra fyrir sik skylldi  
ut rida, ok gotzit for svara 134:21-3.

About the addition at 133:29 Blaisdell says that it 'might perhaps be original (from OS)' and refers to Chrétien. But he points out the clear similarity of these last three instances, which 'may suggest that the second is not original after all, and the correspondence with the French merely coincidental'. All three instances may be viewed as phrases added by JV on his own initiative, making things clearer, and padding the text.

5. folkit] + út a turna borgarinnar 134:23. A phrase with more meaning than many of JV's additions, but still attributable to his initiative. It occurs on a page (p. 63) where there is a notable amount of padding (the previous example being part of it); this was perhaps intended to ensure that the new chapter that was coming would begin on the new page.

6. heimsk] + þar med ok eirninn 136:19. Padding.

One addition of three words has been mentioned by Blaisdell as possibly original, i.e. therefore from OS. 'After heyrðu JV adds pä þessir tveir (136:20). Chrétien has: Totes cez

paroles oïrent / Li dui qui des cos s'antranpirent (lines 6193-4)' (1979<sup>1</sup> 235). The addition of pâ is of course merely one of the many times JV has added that adverb. The point is in the addition of þessir tveir. The S6 text has riddarar with no article or other defining words; an addition of some sort was in order, and þessir tveir is easily supplied from the context. There is no need to think that JV looked at another manuscript at this point.

There seem to be no other additions worth mentioning in this connection.

In the section of his article which deals with words changed, Blaisdell mentions (p.237) another passage 'which may preserve' traces of something from Chrétien through OS. The italics emphasising 'may' are his. The same caution is constantly apparent, in both edition and article. It is never claimed for any addition or alteration that derivation from OS is the necessary explanation, nor even that it is the preferable one. It is only a possibility — 'theoretically, at least' (1979<sup>1</sup> 234). Looking at the examples, I am inclined to think that JV made the changes without influence from another manuscript.

(b) The text of the very end of Ívens saga:

JV seems to have continued copying S6 as far as the words ste hon þegar af hesti sínum ok fagnadi honum (EdAM B18 145:5), which complete the line in S6 at f. 38v15. Just before this there is a haplography of four words, and there are several instances of omission of single words (upp, herra, þegar); although elsewhere JV adds words more than he omits them, these omissions do not seem significant. But at the point mentioned the words med mikillf gledf in S6 are not reproduced in S46, which has instead blídflega (EdAM B18 145:21). An immediately following short phrase (ok huort odru) is also wanting in S46, and other variants quickly follow. The texts are remarkably different from here onwards. S46 is much shorter, less than one-fifth of the length of S6.

Nothing in the physical state of S6 suggests why JV stopped copying it. The rest of f. 38v is perfectly legible,

and so, though slightly darker in places, is f. 39r, the facing page, on which *fvens saga* ends. Nor is there any indication in S46.

The end of the saga in S46 consists of only 108 words. That would be about seven lines in a manuscript the size of S6, but probably only six in a folio manuscript. Why would anyone change to a different exemplar for so little? Because S6 ceased to be available? Because another manuscript was preferred where there was a choice?

There is an alternative to a change of exemplar. JV may have condensed what lay before him in S6. Nothing in the wording of the texts prevents such an assumption (there are two expressions in S46 which are not in S6, but they are expressions which anyone making such a radical condensation might have introduced). But there is an obvious and strong objection to this suggestion. It is that where JV's practice as a copyist has been investigated, a consistent picture has emerged of a copyist who kept to his exemplar fairly well, with some accidental omissions and a good many deliberate small expansions. It may seem unlikely that such a copyist would have acted so differently as is now suggested.

But perhaps this is the very evidence that JV was capable of such an action occasionally. And without reason, or without discoverable reason. And perhaps investigation of further JV copies will produce some more examples.

For those who still prefer to think that the end of the saga was copied fairly closely from an exemplar, it will be natural to think that JV may have returned to OS. It cannot be proved, and the theoretical possibility of it does not outweigh the considerations previously given supporting the notion that the leaf containing chapter 14 and the rest of the saga was missing from OS. However, the evidence from *fvens saga* is perhaps not firm enough to settle whether this saga was complete in OS.

I shall now bring forward a suggestion about Mirmanns saga which, if it is right, will mean that *fvens saga* was defective in OS, and then JV's source for the very end of the saga, if it was not S6, must have been some other manuscript, now unknown.

## III. Mírmanns saga

The only edition of Mírmanns saga made directly from manuscripts is by Kölbing in 1872, and references to textual locations will be to that edition. Two texts are printed there, but no fewer than six texts have to be reckoned with:

1. Stockholm Perg. 4to nr 6 (=S6). Medieval. Defective. Printed by Kölbing, 139:1 - 165:15. Can be continued as far as 205:13 using 17th century mss (here referred to as \*S6). The ending of the saga in this text may be traceable in 18th century mss (not used by Kölbing, and not referred to here).
2. AM 593a, 4to (= 593). Medieval. Defective. Printed by Kölbing, pp. 154-213, lower text.
3. BL Add. 4859. 17th century. Primary source for a text of the ending of the saga, corresponding to Kölbing 205:13 - 213:24, but having no old connection with S6 and \*S6.
4. Stockholm Papp. fol. nr 17 (=S17). 17th century. Defective; also a lacuna in the exemplar is indicated.
5. Stockholm Papp. fol. nr 47 (= S47). Written by Jón Vigfússon in Stockholm in 1690-1.
6. íB 152, 8vo (= íB). Written in Iceland in 1817.

JV's copy of Mírmanns saga in S47 is a complete text of the saga. It begins as a copy of S6, but as that manuscript was defective, the most it could have supplied is less than half of the saga. In fact JV seems to have stopped copying S6 in the bottom line of f.69r, presumably because of the poor condition of the following verso (the last page of Mírmanns saga in S6). The remainder of the text in S47 can be divided into two on textual and linguistic grounds (the point of division is imprecise, but is within narrow limits), and the whole text can therefore be divided into three sections:

1. S47 pp. 1 - 69 (= Kölbing 163:6)
2. pp. 69 - 161/165 (= Kölbing 194/195)
3. pp. 161/165 - 203

In section 2 S47 can be compared with four other apparently primary texts of the saga.

The relation of the primary texts to each other and to a putative original is obscure, but a general impression may be

given in the following terms. Each of the five texts has its peculiarities; S6/\*S6 and 593 (the two printed by Kölbing) agree fairly well; S17 tends to be like them, and to agree now with one, now with the other, and to be shorter; fB usually has different wording, and is usually shorter; and S47 is often longer. (At the end of the saga there is also 4859.)

Although fB and S47 are often very different from each other and from the other three, they agree with each other against the rest in about twenty instances. The following are two examples.

1. 165:4 - 166:11. In the combat between Mírmann and Bæringr, fB and S47 agree in differing from S6/\*S6 and 593 (lacuna in S17) in a series of details:

165:4-8. No description of the horses. Only: keirir hann  
nú hest sinn sporum fB; Nú keyrir Bæring sinn góða hest  
Marmorjum med sporum S47.

165:10-13. No prayer (but praying is mentioned: Mýrm: bjdur  
sier gud til hiálpar fB; Mirmant bidur Gud i sinu hiarta S47).

165:16 Mírmann is wounded (after different wording: skarst  
figðrinn ut med síjdunni og var þad sar mikid fB; og út med  
síldunne og feck Mirmant mikid sár S47).

165:16-17. Mírmann's use of his spear comes after the speeches (i.e. after 166:5). There is no mention of his spear breaking; Bæringr is unmoved (ecki bifadist Bær: j  
söðlinum fB; hann bifadist huorgi i söðlinum S47).

166:8. After he has been wounded by the sword, Bæringr falls rather than dismounts.

2. 181:19 ff. In \*S6, 593 and S17 Mírmann defeats three named knights: Flórentius, Almákus (-g- 593, S17) and Valternir (Valintínus 593, Valtare S17). The name of the second is wanting in fB and S47. Flórecius ... pá reid annar framm,  
og főr hann a sómu (sic) leid ... Valtari fB; Forentjus ...  
og hid sama giórde hann óðrum ... Walltarj S47.

Precise definition of the point of division between sections 2 and 3 is not possible. fB and S47 agree in having no reference to Guðifreyr's beard at 194:6. They have similar extra phrases at 194:10 (med ydar ráði og vitund fB; enn þó med  
ydar vitund alleinasta, og af ydar ráðum S47). Finally they have some agreement, less clear-cut, in 194:14-16. This brings

us to p. 161 in S47. Within a few pages S47 begins to present a text markedly different from all the others quite frequently.

For reasons of space I give only the first example and two others out of the dozen distinctive passages that now occur in S47.

1. 196:2-19. Katrín's treatment of the messengers:

196:2-3. In S47 (p. 165) the messengers come to her, at her request; she does not go to them as in all the others.

This or (at the latest) the occurrence of the name Vagerna (below) can be taken as the point at or before which section 3 begins.

196:4-10. Not represented in S47 (nor in S17, or fB).

196:12. Instead of Stephanus (Stefan 593; not named or referred to in S17 or fB) S47 has the name Vilcinus, several times (p. 165).

196:15. She threatens and bribes the messengers.

196:18-19. She substitutes two letters, not one. One is from an otherwise never mentioned Vagerna (p. 166; corresponding to Rogérus), and one from Cecilia; the first is described, the second given directly, at length (126 words).

2. 206:8-10. One text has this single sentence describing frungr's appearance, the others nothing, except S47 which has a very long description (pp. 180-183).

3. 209:7 - 210:8. In S47 the king and others go out to meet Hyringur; the king offers his daughter and half his kingdom to Hyringur, and offers to sacrifice Mirmant to the gods; Hyrfngur stays six nights and visits the king's daughter frequently, but refuses her love. It is very different, and very long (pp. 189-194).

JV's source for section 2 is unknown. Some of the points of agreement with fB might be due to coincidence, but some seem to indicate a common origin, a very remote one.

If JV used the same source for section 3 as for section 2, then that exemplar must have itself contained the textual characteristics that distinguish the two sections from each other. But it is just as likely that JV had separate exemplars for these two sections, and I shall propose that his source for section 3 was OS. The argument will be based on evidence

from lexicographical works (concerning which see particularly Louis-Jensen 1963 XXII-XXVII), and on considerations of length of text and available space.

One lexicographical work attributes a quotation to OS which contains the name Mírmann and is therefore certainly from Mírmanns saga. Olaus Verelius, Index Lingvæ Veteris Scytho-Scandicæ, 1691, has on p. 207, s.v. Rioda:

Cod. Orm. pag. 165. Skal eg fornfæra Myrman gudunum, oc  
rioda med has(!) blodi þeirra stalla.

If the wording of the quotation is accurate, OS presumably had the spelling ek rather than eg, and has is presumably a misprint for hans.

The text in S47 reads (p. 191):

og skal i yckar Brúdkaupe Mirmant offra Gudunum, og riðdra(!)  
medur hanns Blöði þeirra stalla.

The subject eg is understood from the context.

No other text of the saga has anything like the sentence in Index and S47. Nor does even the sense of it occur anywhere else.

The passage in S47 comes near the end of the saga, so the attribution of the quotation to p. 165 in OS fits the reconstruction of OS, which would have Mírmanns saga end on f. 83r (or else at the very top of f. 83v).

The differences between the two renderings of the first clause can be explained.

The interest of the sentence for Index lies in riðda in the second clause, and it is possible that the first clause has been shortened in quotation, and made clearer by the addition of the pronoun subject (which could account for the spelling eg). Even so, fornfæra is presumably accurate, and then JV, if he was copying OS, must have substituted offra and changed the word-order. Such are changes he is known to have made quite often.

On the other hand, if the quotation in Index is accurate, then there are two considerable alterations in the same clause to be attributed to JV. This also is not inconceivable.

It is perhaps possible that Index accurately represents OS and S47 accurately represents its exemplar, a text like OS

but not OS itself. But the differences can be explained, and I take this passage as an indication that JV was copying OS at this point.

There is another quotation from OS, in an unpublished work, which gives a similar indication. The quotation lacks a precise reference, but can now be identified as from Mírmanns saga. Laurentius Bureus, *Lexici Antiquæ Lingvæ Scantianæ Littera B*, in the Stockholm MS F. e. 1, has on f. 47r, s.v. Breiskleik:

Orms book. Eþy hefr min kuenligar(!) breiskleikr sigrat yðor,  
heller(!) styrk ok almattigh Guddomsis(!) hand.

The sentiment is distinctive and puts one in mind of the scene where Cecilia reveals herself to Mirmann, having overcome him in single combat some time before. The sentence is found there, but in only one manuscript, S47. The text in S47 reads (p. 200):

ad eigi kefur(!) minn kuennligur kraptur og Breiskleiki  
kunnad ad sigra og yfirvinna ydur, sem ad þier meigid ad  
sønnu siálfur siá og eirninn merkia, helldur styrk og almáttug  
Guds Drottins hýnd.

The essential wording is almost identical in LBB and S47, so there can be no doubt that the sentence in LBB comes from Mírmanns saga in OS. Its position near the end of the saga would place it in the lower part of f. 83r.

The sentence in S47 could be derived from a manuscript with the wording seen in LBB. kraptur og Breiskleiki looks like an error at once partially corrected (or it might be padding); kunnad—ydur contains obvious padding; all of sem—merkia is more padding; and there is then a small improvement at the end (unless the exemplar in fact had guds drottins and this was incorrectly quoted in LBB). It is conceivable that JV made all these changes himself, and I take this passage to be another indication that JV was copying OS at this point.

The first of the quotations from Mírmanns saga in OS is said in Index to be from p. 165, i.e. f. 83r. In view of the amount of story still to come before the end of the saga in all versions, it is likely that this sentence was at or very near the top of the page and the end of the saga at or very

near the bottom (if it was not on the top of f. 83v, above the beginning of Partalopa saga). Roughly speaking, this part of the saga occupied one page in OS.

The corresponding text in S47 occupies  $12\frac{1}{3}$  pages (pp. 191-203). An average ratio of 1 OS page to  $10\frac{2}{5}$  JV pages has been found for two sagas in another manuscript (Sanders 1979 152), so a ratio of 1 to  $12\frac{1}{3}$  is right for S47, which has only 29 lines to the page, against 34 in the other.

If Ívens saga was complete in OS, then only f. 83v is available for the latter part of Mírmanns saga. Then the most of S47 that could have been copied from OS would be pp. 191-203.

But if the end of Ívens saga was lost in a lacuna after f. 81, then ff. 82-83r are available for the latter part of Mírmanns saga. Three OS pages would mean roughly 37 pages in S47, i.e. pp. 166-203.

The page number 166 thus arrived at is remarkably close to the page number where there is a change in the nature of the text in S47. The change has taken place before the point on p. 166 where Vagerna is named, and later than p. 161. This may be a coincidence, but I suggest that the whole of section 3 is derived from OS.

#### IV. Conclusions

##### Conclusions concerning OS:

1. The end of Ívens saga from chapter 14 onwards was lost in a lacuna after f. 81v.
2. The beginning of Mírmanns saga was lost in the same lacuna.
3. Partalopa saga began on f. 83v rather than 83r.

##### Conclusions concerning JV's sources:

1. The end of Ívens saga in S46 (EdAM 145:21 - end) is not from OS. It is from an unknown source, if not condensed from S6.
2. Mírmanns saga in S47 is from three sources. The first section (pp. 1 - 69), about one-third of the saga) is from S6; the second (pp. 69 - 161/165, a little less than half) is from an unknown source; and the third (pp. 161/165 - 203, between one-sixth and one-fifth) is from OS ff. 82-83r.

### Abbreviations and references

Abbreviations (OS etc) are explained at the first occurrence. EdAM (= *Editiones Arnamagnæanaæ, Hafniæ*) is used when reference is made to a text; the editor's introduction is referred to by author's name and date.

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