

The Old Norse *Exempla* as Arbiters of Gender Roles in Medieval Iceland

Shaun F. D. Hughes
PURDUE UNIVERSITY

1. Gender Roles and Ecclesiastical Reform 1262–1350

In 1262 what became known as the *Gamli sáttmáli* (Old Covenant) was verified at the Alþingi and Iceland became part of the Kingdom of Norway.¹ By the time the last of the Icelandic chieftains had confirmed it in 1264, Hákon Hákonarson, king of Norway 1217–63, had died, to be succeeded by his son, Magnús Hákonarson, later known as *lagabætir* (law-reformer) who ruled until 1280. He turned away from the expansionist policies of his father and set about consolidating royal power throughout his extensive and far-scattered realm. Before his death King Hákon had initiated moves to reform and to unify the Norwegian legal system, which at that time had a separate law code for each of the four *þing*-districts of the kingdom. His son, Magnús, earned the credit due for making this plan a reality. In 1267 Jón rauði (the Red) was consecrated archbishop of Niðaróss (Trondheim). He set about to bring the legal standing of the Northern church in line

1. Dates and historical references here and elsewhere are drawn from Gunnar Karlsson, *The History of Iceland* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Patricia Pires Boulhosa claims in her *Icelanders and the Kings of Norway: Medieval Sagas and Legal Texts*, *The Northern World* 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), esp. ch. 3, that the surviving documents relating to the *Gamli sáttmáli* are fifteenth-century forgeries. Chapter 3 has separately appeared as *Gamli sáttmáli: tilurð og tilgangur*, trans. Már Jónsson, Smárit Sögufélags (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 2006). Helgi Skúli Kjartansson challenges her interpretation of the evidence in “Gamli sáttmáli—hvað næst?” *Saga* 49 (2011): 133–53, and Boulhosa defends her position in “A Response to ‘Gamli sáttmáli—hvað næst?’” *Saga* 49 (2011): 137–51.

with the practices of the rest of Europe. In particular he argued that the Church was responsible for determining and administering its own legal responsibilities. Although the narrative of his ultimately fruitless struggle with royal authority lies outside this study, it did have consequences for Iceland. In 1268 Jón rauði consecrated Árni Þorláksson bishop of Skálholt, a position he held until his death in 1298.² As might be expected, Árni was as zealous as Jón rauði in pursuing policies that would bring the practices of the Icelandic Church more in line with then-current European norms as expressed in canon law.

In 1271 King Magnús, as part of his policy of legal reform, sent to Iceland a new legal code, which gained the nickname *Járnsíða* (Ironsides).³ It was not particularly popular but was in force until 1280 when it was replaced by a revised version, which came to be known as *Jónsbók* after the lawman Jón Einarsson (d. 1306), who was instrumental in preparing it and presenting it to the Alþingi. The major innovation of *Járnsíða* compared to the previous code, *Grágás*, is that there is no section of laws concerning the church (*Kristinna laga þáttur*), only a *Kristindómsbálkr* containing seven paragraphs affirming the Christian faith and the rights of the king and bishops.⁴ This omission is thought to have been the result of the influence of archbishop Jón, and it was rectified when in 1275 bishop Árni presented a new legal code to the Alþingi based on Canon Law for governing the Church in Iceland.⁵ This *Nýi kristinréttur* or, as it became known, *Kristinréttur Árna*, concerned itself with the administration of the Church, and took a much more prominent role in the regulation of marriage than had previously been the case, making the consent of the bride obligatory along with the publication of the banns for three weeks before the marriage and outlining in detail the degrees of consanguinity

2. See Gunnar Kristjánsson, ed., *Saga biskupsstólanna: Skálholt 950 ára—2006—Hólar 900 ára* (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Hólar, 2006), 35–36.

3. See *Járnsíða og Kristinréttur Árna Þorlákssonar*, ed. Haraldur Bernharðsson et al., Smárit Sögufélags (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 2005), especially the introduction, 13–25. The surviving text of the law code is published on 61–141.

4. *Ibid.*, 68–73.

5. *Ibid.*, 143–90. Soon after his consecration bishop Árni had published in 1269 a detailed series of ordinances (*skipan*) dealing with the administration of ecclesiastical affairs in his diocese, significant portions of which dealt with regulating gender relations. See in particular Jón Sigurðsson et al., eds., *Diplomatarium Islandicum: Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn*, 16 vols. (Copenhagen and Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1857–1972), henceforth DI, 2:23–37.

within which marriage was forbidden.⁶ It was one thing to pass this law and another thing to enforce it. There seems to have been resistance to its provisions, particularly in the diocese of Hólar, but the reality was that the old practices eventually had to be put aside.⁷ Bishop Árni's other major reform, which he achieved just before his death, was to wrest control away from the secular authorities who claimed ownership of those churches still in private hands and the revenues associated with them. Eiríkur Magnússon *prestahatari* (the hater of clerics), king of Norway 1280–99, Jørund, archbishop of Niðaróss from 1287 to 1309), and bishop Árni concluded this agreement at Ogvaldsnes in Norway in 1297, bringing to a close the long and bitter struggle known as the *Staðamál* (affair over church property).⁸

In addition to bishop Árni Þorláksson, among the bishops who were particularly committed to ecclesiastical reform and with aligning the practices of the Icelandic church with those current in the rest of Europe, were Þorlákr Þórhallsson, bishop of Skálholt 1178–93 and Jón Halldórsson, bishop of Skálholt 1322–39,⁹ all of whom also

6. Canon Law did confirm that men and women were equal in the sexual act in marriage, although in general it stressed gender inequality. See James A. Brundage, "Sexual Equality in Medieval Canon Law," in *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 66–79.

7. See Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, *Property and Virginity: The Christianization of Marriage in Medieval Iceland, 1200–1600* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 87–94. Henric Bagerius has shown how the changes in Icelandic social and sexual identity after the unification with Norway are reflected in the Icelandic *riddarasögur*; see *Mandom och mödom: Sexualitet, homosocialitet och aristokratisk identitet på det senmedeltida Island* (Gothenburg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2009). Sigríður Beck, in *I kungens frånvaro: Formeringen av en isländsk aristokrati 1271–1387* (Gothenburg: Göteborgs Universitet, 2011), charts the development of an Icelandic aristocracy along European lines in Iceland in response to the loss of independence.

8. For a brief overview of this contentious episode in early Icelandic ecclesiastical history see Gunnar Karlsson, *History of Iceland*, 96–99; see also the sections "Hverjir áttu kirkjurnar" and "Staðamál og kirkjueignir" in Gunnar F. Guðmundsson, *Íslenskt samfélag og Rómakirkja*, Kristni á Íslandi 2 (Reykjavík: Alþingi, 2000), 79–102. For a more detailed investigation, see Magnús Stefánsson, *Staðir og Staðamál: Studier i islandske egenkirkelige og beneficalrettlige forhold i middelalderen* (Bergen: Historisk Institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 2000). Orri Vésteinsson outlines how secular chieftains came to control so much Church property in *The Christianization of Iceland: Priests, Power, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 93–132.

9. Jón Halldórsson had entered the Dominican monastery in Bergen as a child and studied at Dominican-run universities in Paris and Bologna. See vol. 3 of *Biskupa sögur*, ed. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, *Íslensk fornrit* 17 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1998), henceforth ÍF 17, cii–iv, and Gunnar Kristjánsson, *Saga biskupsstólanna*, 36–37.

concerned themselves with attempting to correct what they saw as inappropriate aspects of the relationships between the sexes and what they must have perceived as the inappropriate freedom women had to act on their own behalf. In the period before the submission to Norway in 1262, Icelandic society was hardly a feminist paradise, but scholars such as Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir and Jenny Jochens have shown how women had considerable freedom in initiating divorce;¹⁰ that they enjoyed certain privileges in inheriting property because of a kinship system that was “bilaterally organized with a patrilineal tendency”;¹¹ and that they exercised considerable freedom as widows.¹² Iceland did not have any urban centers and its position on the inhabitable fringe of Europe made gender cooperation more important than gender hierarchies. Nevertheless reform-minded bishops did what they could to bring the situation in Iceland in line with Canon Law, under which any rights and privileges for women were severely restricted.

He was also renowned for his fluency in Latin. See Shaun F. D. Hughes, “*Klári saga* as an Indigenous Romance,” in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honor of Marianne Kalinke*, ed. Johanna Denzin and Kirsten Wolf, *Islandica* 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2009), 142 (the references there to both citations in footnote 30 should be to ÍF 17:405–06 and 383). It has seemed natural to conclude that he was Norwegian in origin but there is good evidence to suggest that this may not be the case. The entry in *Flateyjarannáll* for 1323 begins: “Kom út Jón byskup Freygerðarson” (Bishop Jón, the son of Freygerðr, arrived in Iceland). See Gustav Storm, ed., *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578* (Christiania [Oslo]: Grøndahl, 1888), 395. “Freygerðr” is a rare but distinctly Icelandic name, and decidedly not Norwegian as is shown by the entry in E. H. Lind, *Norsk-Islandska Dopnamn och fingerade Namn från Medeltiden*, 3 vols. (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1905–31), 1:283, although his father’s name, Halldór, is common to both areas. See further the discussion in Hughes, “*Klári saga*,” 137–38.

10. Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 55–61.

11. Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, *Property and Virginity*, 32. A bilateral system allows the transfer of property in the same generation whereas a patrilineal system transfers property from one generation to the next. See further Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, *Konur og vígamenn: Staða kynjanna á Íslandi á 12. og 13. öld*, *Sagnfræðirannsóknir* 12 (Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun—Háskólaútgáfan, 1995), 78–104. On the position of women in general during the settlement period, see Jenny Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women*, *Middle Ages Series* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

12. Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society*, 61–64. In *High-Ranking Widows in Medieval Iceland and Yorkshire: Property, Power, Marriage and Identity in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, *The Northern World* 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), Philadelphia Ricketts has shown that “many Icelandic widows did not remarry; most Yorkshire ones did. A significant portion of Icelandic women had extra-marital relationships . . . most as widows; only one Yorkshire woman conducted a liaison and that was before widowhood” (299–300).

The Church was not just interested in regulating the private lives of women; men too were to have their behavior strictly controlled.

In 1178 bishop Þorlákur issued a *skriftaboð* (penitential) primarily concerned with regulating sexual behavior.¹³ Long before his *Kristinréttr* of 1275, bishop Árni had issued a *skriftaboð* in 1269 almost immediately after having become bishop.¹⁴ Bishop Jón Halldórsson issued his *Bannsakabréf* (Letter outlining the grounds for excommunication) in 1326. Most of the twenty-four grounds listed are concerned with preserving the status of the Christian religion and protecting the privileges of the church and its functionaries.¹⁵ However, the twenty-first ground excommunicates those who perform marriages between couples who are fourth cousins (*fermenningar*) or more closely related, and in a clarificatory paragraph to the document bishop Jón reiterates the prohibition on secret engagements or marriages.¹⁶ Furthermore he ordered his clergy not to dignify second marriages with a nuptial mass.¹⁷ Jón Þorkelsson posits that in the same year, 1326, bishop Jón reissued an expanded version of bishop Þorlákur's *skriftaboð*.¹⁸ But the Church did not rely solely on legislation in its attempt to regulate attitudes toward gender roles and sexual behavior. It also adopted a thirteenth-century innovation that had done much to

13. For Þorlák's penitential see DI 1:237–44. This penitential is remarkably frank about a wide range of sexual issues opening with the penance required for acts of bestiality and singling out lesbian activity.

14. DI 2:37–42 (5 versions). Paragraphs 13–15 deal with adultery (41).

15. *Ibid.*, 2:582–94. While some have taken the *Bannsakabréf* to indicate that Jón was particularly distressed about the low level of sexual morality discernable in his diocese, Lára Magnúsardóttir has argued that Jón was just following the directions of Eilífr korti Árnason, archbishop of Niðaróss, 1309–33. See her *Bannfæring og kirkjuvald á Íslandi, 1275–1550* (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 2007), 393–99. Strictly speaking this indeed may have been the case, but like Árni Þorláksson before him, Jón was ever zealous in carrying out the archbishop's wishes, as witness his exertions on Eilífr's behalf (1326–28) during the so-called “Möðruvallahátt,” in which he struggled to enforce the archbishop's edict that the monastery at Möðruvellir be re-established against the wishes of bishop Lárentíus Kálfsson of Hólar (1267–1330), who had confiscated its lands and income after the drunken monks had burned the cloister to the ground in 1316. See Torfi K. Stefánsson Hjaltalín, *Eldur á Möðruvöllum: Saga Möðruvalla í Hörgárdal frá öndverðu til okkar tíma*, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Flateyjarútgáfan, 2001), 1:31–35, 47–48. Indeed Jón may in fact have prodded the archbishop to do something in the belief that the decree would have more weight if it originated with the archbishop himself.

16. DI 2:590–91, 593.

17. Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, *Property and Virginity*, 119.

18. The two surviving versions of Jón's re-issue of this decree are found in DI 2:596–606.

revitalize popular preaching on the continent of Europe, particularly in the hands of the Dominican Order, or the Order of Friars Preachers, which had been officially recognized in 1216.

2. The *Exempla* as a Preaching Tool

The Dominican order was committed to combating heresy and strengthening the faith of lay communities through vigorous preaching in the vernacular. One of the rhetorical strategies used by preachers to achieve this was to sprinkle their sermons with appropriate anecdotes.¹⁹ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the number of such collections of short narratives known as *exempla* multiplied.²⁰ These stories were gathered together to serve as aids in preaching and assisting in the composition of homilies and sermons. They were often arranged thematically. For example, the *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus* of the Dominican Étienne de Bourbon (d. 1262) was planned as seven massive volumes, each one dedicated to one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As it was, Étienne lived long enough to complete only the first four volumes and the opening portion of the fifth, in the

19. Compilations of edifying narratives already existed even before the founding of the Dominican Order, and one of the most important and influential collections was that known as the *Disciplina Clericalis* ("Clerical Instruction"), by Petrus Alfonsi, which became one of the most important of the preachers' handbooks. See John V. Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 139–54. The Icelandic versions of this text will be discussed in section four below.

20. Among the major collections from which stories seem to have made their way to Iceland in the fourteenth century are: Caesarius of Heisterbach (ca. 1180–ca. 1246), *Dialogus miraculorum: Dialog über die Wunder*, ed. and trans. Nikolaus Nösges and Horst Schneider, 5 vols., *Fontes Christiani* 86 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), and *Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, intro. G. G. Coulton, 2 vols. (London: G. Routledge, 1929); Étienne de Bourbon (d. 1262), *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus: Prologus, Prima Pars: De Dono timoris*, ed. Jacques Berlioz and Jean-Luc Eichenlaub, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* 124 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), and *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus: Liber tertius de eis que pertinent ad donum scientie et penitentiam*, ed. Jacques Berlioz, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 124 B (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); *Anecdotes historiques: Légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon dominicain du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Albert Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Renouard, 1877); Jacques de Vitry (ca. 1160/70–1240), *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares*, ed. Thomas Frederick Crane (London: D. Nutt, 1890; repr. New York: Burt Franklin, 1971); Jean Gobi (fl. 1330), *La "Scala Cœli" de Jean Gobi*, ed. Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Paris: Éditions de CNRS, 1991); Thomas de Cantimpré (1201–1272), *Les exemples du "Livre des Abeilles": Une vision médiévale*, trans. Henri Platelle, *Miroir du Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997).

process managing to amass a collection of more than three thousand *exempla*.²¹ Markus Schürer has shown how *exempla* collections such as that by the Dominican Thomas de Cantimpré (1201–1272), *Bonum universale de apibus*, helped define the religious community and to give it a particular group identity by emphasizing the ideals of the Dominican order and by reinforcing the ideals of the *vita religiosa* such as chastity, obedience, asceticism, humility.²²

While there have been numerous formal studies of the *exempla*,²³ there has not been much interest in examining them in the light of how they arbitrate gender roles. One study that does take such an

21. A complete edition is underway, but to date only volumes 1 and 3 have appeared. So far only one *exemplum* (from the not-yet-edited second volume) has been identified among the Icelandic *exempla* as coming from the *Tractatus*, namely XLIV: “Af tveimr munkum” (Of two monks) in Hugo Gering, ed., *Íslendzk æventýri: Isländische Legenden, Novellen und Märchen*, 2 vols. (Halle: Buchhandlungen des Waisenhauses, 1882–83), henceforth *ÍÆ*, 1:147–49 (here and following, Roman numerals refer to the number of the *exemplum* of Gering’s edition, Arabic numerals to the volume number and page number followed by line number when needed). This also happens to be one of the *exempla* associated with Jón Halldórsson (for a Latin text see: *Anecdotes historiques, exemplum* 79, pp. 75–76).

22. Markus Schürer, *Das Exemplum oder die erzählte Institution: Studien zum Beispielgebrauch bei den Dominikanern und Franziskanern des 13. Jahrhunderts*, *Vita Regularis* 23 (Berlin: LIT, 2005), 129–47, 154–60, 300. There is no modern edition of Thomas’ work, but a translation is available: *Les exemples du “Livre des Abeilles,”* trans. Henri Platteau. Gering notes that *exemplum* LXXXVI (which is another of those he attributes to bishop Jón Halldórsson): “Af konu einni kviksettri” (Of a woman buried alive) [*ÍÆ* 1:254–56; Gering’s title] is based on no. 219 in Platteau’s translation (252–53), and Gering notes similarities between what are Platteau’s nos. 188 and 185 (222–23, 219–220) and his *exempla* XXXVI: “Frá prestakonunni er tekin varð af djöflunum” (Of the priest’s wife who became taken by devils) [1:124–26; Gering’s title] and XXXIX: “Af konu er drýgð hórdóm við föður sinn” (Of the woman who committed adultery with her father) [1:129–33; Gering’s title]—but see note 103 below.

23. See for example: Jean-Thiébaud Welter, *L’Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du moyen âge*, Bibliothèque d’histoire ecclésiastique de France (Paris: Occitania, 1927; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1973); Suzanne Baumgarte, ed., *Summa bonorum: Eine deutsche Exempelsammlung aus dem 15. Jahrhundert nach Stephan von Bourbon*, Texte des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit 40 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1999); Jonathan Burgoyne, *Reading the Exemplum Right: Fixing the Meaning of “El Conde Lucanor,”* North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literature 289 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Fritz Kemmler, “*Exempla*” in *Context: A Historical and Critical Study of Robert Mannyng of Brunne’s “Handlyng Synne,”* Studies and Texts in English 6 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1984); Tolan, *Petrus Alphonsi*; and the relevant essays in Bernd Engler and Kurt Müller, eds., *Exempla: Studien zur Bedeutung und Funktion exemplarischen Erzählens*, Schriften zur Literaturwissenschaft 10 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1995); Walter Haug and Burghart Wachinger, eds., *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*, Fortuna vitrea: Arbeiten zur literarischen Tradition zwischen dem 13. und 16. Jahrhundert 2 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999).

approach is by Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu.²⁴ In his part of the essay Berlioz observes: "Needless to say, the image of women conveyed in the collections of *exempla* as well as in the moral treatises is largely negative,"²⁵ and although he does concede there are some *exempla* that do portray virtuous women, he suggests that these stories are most useful for their details of everyday life and the glimpses they give of medieval gender relations. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu examines the use of the words *mulier* and *femina*, as well as other words for women, in the 972 *exempla* in the *Scala Cæli* by the Dominican Jean Gobi the Younger, compiled 1320–30. Again while there are some examples in the collection that portray virtuous women, Polo de Beaulieu is forced to conclude: "Gobi cannot find enough harsh words to denounce women's vices that stem not from passing temptation but from her sinful nature."²⁶

Of the many thousands of *exempla* preserved in medieval collections, only a little over one hundred survive in Icelandic versions. These seem to have entered the country in two waves. The first was in the early fourteenth century, and many of these narratives are associated with Bishop Jón Halldórsson and are preserved in AM 657 a-b 4^o (mid-fourteenth century). The second wave was in the fifteenth century, and the majority of these stories are translated from Middle English, particularly from the *Handlyng Synne* (finished 1303) of Robert Manning of Brunne,²⁷ itself translated from the anonymous thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman poem *Le Manuel des Péchés*.²⁸

24. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, "Exempla: A Discussion and a Case Study, 1: *Exempla* as a Source for the History of Women, 2: *Mulier* and *Femina*: The Representation of Women in the *Scala celi* of Jean Gobi," in Rosenthal, *Medieval Women*, 37–65. I have not seen the unpublished "Mémoire de maîtrise" (University of Paris IV) by Elizabeth Flüry-Hérard, "L'image de la femme dans les exempla, XIII^e siècle" (1975).

25. Berlioz and Polo de Beaulieu, "Exempla: A Discussion," 44.

26. *Ibid.*, 60.

27. Robert Manning of Brunne, "*Handlyng Synne*" and its French Original, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, o.s. 119, 123 (Millwood, NY: Kraus, 1988; first published 1901–03); *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 14 (Binghamton, NY: CMRS, SUNY, 1983).

28. There is no scholarly edition of this poem sometimes ascribed to a certain William of Waddington. Furnivall provides the relevant sections in his EETS edition (see previous note) and a somewhat fuller selection in Robert Manning of Brunne, "*Handlyng Synne*" (*Written A.D. 1303*) with the French Treatise on which it is Founded, "*Le Manuel des Pechiez*" by William of Waddington, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: Roxburghe Club, 1862). See also E. J. Arnould, "*Le Manuel des Péchés*": Étude de littérature religieuse

This period of activity in translating texts from English into Icelandic is probably to be associated with the time 1425–40 when English clerics were appointed as Bishops of Hólar.²⁹

Because they are for the most part translated from continental models, these short narratives have not excited much interest outside of the preparation of editions and associated source studies. Nor do the *exempla* leave many traces in subsequent Icelandic literary history, except for *Jónatas ævintýri* and *Af þrimr þjófum í Danmörk* (*Sagan af ill, verra og verst*), both of which proved popular enough to be made into *rímur* and survive in subsequent prose retellings.³⁰

Anglo-Normande (XIII^e siècle) (Paris: Droz, 1940). Arnould dates the poem to the second half of the fourteenth century (253) and concludes that the question of authorship remains open (245–49), it not even being clear which Waddington this William is associated with.

29. These were John Craxton (1425–35) and John Bloxwich (1435–40). Robert Wodborn was appointed bishop in 1441, but never came to the country. See Gunnar Kristjánsson, *Saga biskupsstólanna*, 415–16. Einar G. Pétursson has edited the English-based *exempla* in *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku*, Rit 11 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1976). See also Peter A. Jorgensen, “Ten Icelandic Exempla and their Middle English Source,” *Opuscula* 4, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 30 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1970), 177–207; “Four Æventýri,” *Opuscula* 5, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 31 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1975), 295–328; “The Icelandic Translations from Middle English,” in *Studies for Einar Haugen*, ed. Evelyn Scherabon Firchow et al., *Janua linguarum, Series maior* 59 (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 305–20; Jonna Louis-Jensen, “Nogle Æventýri,” *Opuscula* 5, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 31 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1975), 263–77. Ólafur Halldórsson, in “AM 240 fol XV: tvinn úr handriti með ævintýrum,” *Gripla* 18 (2007): 23–46, identifies a four-page fragment (AM 240 fol., XV) as coming from a manuscript containing *exempla* translated from English. Of the six whole or fragmentary stories, for the first see *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku, exemplum* 27, p. 72, line 81, to p. 80, line 136; for the third, the last two lines of *exemplum* 4, p. 6, lines 13–14; and for the sixth, *exemplum* 4, p. 7, line 1, to p. 8, line 20. The second, an *exemplum* about the power of the Eucharist to punish wickedness, is found in several English manuscripts including British Library MS Royal 18 B xxiii (ca. 1450). See Woodburn O. Ross, ed., *Middle English Sermons: Edited from British Museum MS. Royal 18 B xxiii*, Early English Text Society 209 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 62. However, the version in Shrewsbury school MS 3, as retold by Beth Allison Barr, appears closer to the Icelandic fragment; see *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England*, Gender in the Middle Ages 3 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 119.

30. “Jónatas ævintýr,” which is based on an English version of the *Gesta Romanorum*, was not edited by Gering. The *ævintýr*, the sixteenth-century *rímur* based on it, and the prose retelling of the *rímur* have all been critically edited by Peter A. Jorgensen, *The Story of Jonatas in Iceland*, Rit 45 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1997). *Þjófarímur* (sixteenth century), based on Gering’s *exemplum* XC: “Af þrimr þjófum í Danmörk” (ÍLÆ 1:276–86; Gering’s title), for which no direct source is attested although the story itself is widespread, remains unpublished. See Björn K. Þórólfsson, *Rímur fyrir 1600*, Safn Fræðafelagsins um Ísland og Íslendinga 9 (Copenhagen: Möller, 1934), 453–54.

But there are signs that the Icelandic *exempla* did play a role in the Church's attempts to control gender relations on the island. However, before taking up this issue something needs to be said about the way in which medieval Icelandic authors and scribes refer to them.

3. Problems in defining the *Exempla* in Icelandic

As Thomas Frederick Crane states in the introduction to his edition of the *exempla* taken from the *Sermones vulgares* of Jacques de Vitry (ca. 1165–1240), the use of the word *exemplum* in the meaning “an illustrative story,” first began to appear around 1200, and found its justification in section fifteen of the thirty-eighth homily of St. Gregory's *Forty Gospel Homilies*,³¹ where Gregory states: “Sed quia nonnunquam mentes audientium plus exempla fidelium quam docentium verba convertunt” (The example of the faithful often transforms the hearts of listeners more than a teacher's words).³² The term *exemplum* has proved difficult to define,³³ that is, to determine a definition for it that distinguishes it from similar short narratives such as *parabola* (parable), *fabula* (fable) and *similitudo* (analogy, parable),³⁴ and it has proven even more difficult to translate. From the point of view of modern scholarship, Claude Brémond et al. define the medieval exemplum as: “Un récit bref donné comme

31. Jacques de Vitry, *Exempla*, xviii. Crane's definition and discussion are referred to with approval by Welter, *L'Exemplum*, 1–3.

32. *Quadraginta homiliarium in Evangelia libri duo*, ed. J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 76 (Paris: Migne, 1849), col. 1290; *Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. Dom David Hurst, *Cistercian Studies Series* 123 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 351. Bruno Judic quotes this passage in his survey of the use of the word *exemplum* in Gregory's work as a whole. See “Grégoire le Grand et la notion d'*exemplum*,” in *Le Tonnerre des exemples: Exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu et al., Collection “Histoire” (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 135.

33. For a survey of the issues involved, see ch. 1, “Définitions et problèmes,” in Claude Brémond et al., *L'Exemplum*, 2nd ed., *Typologie des Sources du moyen âge occidental*, fascicle 40 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1996), 27–38.

34. See, for example, the first three essays in Haug, *Exempel und Exempelsammlungen*: Fritz Peter Knapp, “Mittelalterliche Erzählgattungen im Lichte scholastischer Poetik,” 1–22; Peter von Moos, “Die Kunst der Antwort: *Exempla* und *dicta* im lateinischen Mittelalter,” 23–57; Klaus Grubmüller, “Fabel, Exemple, Allegorese: Über Sinnbildungsverfahren und Verwendungszusammenhänge,” 58–76. Especially useful is the diagram at the conclusion of Knapp's essay (22). Kemmler also refers to the *exempla* as “the evasive genre” (“*Exempla*” in *Context*, 154–68).

véridique et destiné á être inséré dans un discours (en général un sermon) pour convaincre un auditoire par une leçon salutaire” (A short account presented as factual and intended to be inserted into a narrative [usually a sermon] in order to persuade an audience through a salutary lesson).³⁵ However, when it came to providing a suitable translation for the word *exemplum* into Old Norse a number of problems presented themselves.

The roots of this difficulty lie in the fact that in his translation of the Greek New Testament into Latin, Jerome chose to render the Greek word παραβολή (comparison) as both *similitudo* (as for example in Luke 13:6) and *parabola* (as for example in Luke 15:3). Both of these verses were commented upon by St. Gregory in his *Forty Gospel Homilies*, and this work was among the very earliest patristic material translated into Icelandic, a task undertaken in the twelfth century. The Homilies on Luke 13:6 (Homily 31) and Luke 15:3 (Homily 34) are preserved and are found in AM 677 4°, a manuscript from the first half of the thirteenth century, although there are significant losses to the text of Homily 31.³⁶ What is interesting is that the translator chooses one word, *dæmisaga*, to render both *similitudo* and *parabola*.³⁷ We do not know how the

35. Claude Brémond et al., *L’Exemplum*, 37–38, translation mine. Kemmler (“*Exempla*” in *Context*, 155–66) gives a number of reasons why this definition “is not adequate enough” (166), but it is sufficient for the discussion here.

36. The surviving homilies in order of appearance are nos. 26 (incomplete), 29, 30, 40, 36, 34, 39, 38 (incomplete), 33 (incomplete), 31 (incomplete). They have all appeared in: Þorvaldur Bjarnason, ed., *Leifar fornra kristinna frœða íslenzkra* (Copenhagen: Hagerup, 1878), 19–86. For a discussion of AM 677 4°, see Konráð Gíslason, *Um frum-parta íslenzkrar túngu í fornöld* (Copenhagen: S. Trier, 1846), xciii–xcix. There (xciii–xciv) he says that the manuscript is “sjálfsagt snemma á fyrra hlut 15. aldar” (clearly early in the first part of the fifteenth century). “15. aldar” must be a misprint for “13. aldar,” as that is how Þorvaldur Bjarnason quotes the passage (xiii), and when Konráð Gíslason edits the twenty-ninth homily in his *Fire og fyrretýve . . . próver af oldnordisk sprog og literatur* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1860), 459–67, it is introduced (viii) as being “efter den fortræffelige Membran, fra den første Halvdeel af det 13. Aarh., AM. 677 Qv” (taken from the splendid vellum manuscript from the first half of the thirteenth century, AM. 677 4°).

37. Þorvaldur Bjarnason, *Leifar*, 57 and 85, respectively. The word *dæmisaga* is used twice in an earlier text, the Old Icelandic Homily Book. See Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, ed., *Lemmatized Index to The Icelandic Homily Book: Perg. 15 4° in the Royal Library Stockholm*, Rit 61 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 2004), 29. The Homily Book is preserved in a manuscript dated to around 1200. See Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, ed., *The Icelandic Homily Book: Perg. 15 4° in the Royal Library Stockholm*, Íslensk handrit: Studies in Quarto 3 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1993), 10. However, it is not possible to determine on the basis of these two usages, folio

translator rendered Gregory's *exemplum* in section 15 of Homily 38 mentioned above, because unfortunately there is a lacuna in AM 677 4^o affecting much of this homily and the beginning of Homily 33. However, the word *exemplum* appears twice in the surviving text of Homily 33 and on both occasions it is translated by a form of *dæmi*.³⁸ Even though *dæmisaga* may have first been used with

63^v, line 5, and folio 70^v, line 33, what if any Latin word the author of the individual homilies was adapting. See Theodor Wisén, ed., *Homilíu-Bók: Ísländska homilíur eftir en handskrift frá tólfte árhundradet* (Lund: Gleerups, 1872), p. 139, line 14; p. 154, line 14, and Sigurbjörn Einarsson et al., eds., *Íslensk hómíliubók: fornar stólræður* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1993), 198 and 221. Matthew 25:14–30 is also referred to as a *dæmisaga* in *Stjórn: Gammelnorsk Bibelhistoria*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania [Oslo]: Feilberg and Landmark, 1862), 150; *Stjórn*, ed. Reidar Astås, 2 vols., Norrøne Tekster 8 (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2009), 1:226.

38. Homily 33: "Cujus enim vel saxeum pectus illae hujus peccatricis lacrymae ad exemplum poenitendi non emolliant?" (*Quadragesima homiliarium*, col. 1239), "Whose heart is so stony that this sinful woman's tears wouldn't soften it with her example of repentance" (*Forty Homilies*, 269), "[því að tár þessar syndugrar konu hræra steinleg hjörtu úr til iðrunnar dæmis]" (Þorvaldur Bjarnason, *Leifar*, 79—normalized); "et poenitentem peccatricem mulierem in exemplum vobis imitationis anteferte" (*Quadragesima homiliarium*, col. 1245), "and bring before you the repentant sinful woman as an example for you to imitate" (*Forty Homilies*, 278), "og gáð eftir iðrunnar dæmum þessar syndugrar konu" (Þorvaldur Bjarnason, *Leifar*, 85). Note that Snorri Sturluson uses *dæmi* at least ten times in his *Edda* in places where it could without straining be translated as "story, example": *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. Anthony Faulkes, 2nd ed. (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1988), ch. 34 (28.8) ("proofs," 28); ch. 41 (34.14) ("evidence," 34); *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, ed. Anthony Faulkes, 2 vols. (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998), ch. 1 (6.3) ("story," 65); ch. 2 (6.30) ("examples," 66); ch. 2 (8.22) ("example," 67); ch. 3 (14.19) (not translated as such, 72); ch. 7 (18.1) ("account," 75); ch. 17 (20.30) ("stories," 77); ch. 33 (41.13) ("in imitation," 95). Translations from Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, trans. Anthony Faulkes, Everyman's Library (London: Dent, 1987). Hermann Pálsson finds in *Hrafnkels saga* "ýmis einkenni dæmisögu" (various characteristics of the *dæmisaga*) in *Úr hugmyndaheimi Hrafnkels sögu og Gretlu*, *Studia Islandica* 39 (Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1981), 14. In chapter 4, "Forn dæmi," he translates "Fabula ostendit" as "Dæmisaga sýnir" (58), and it is clear that by *dæmisaga* he means the *Æsopian fabula* (a moral tale in which the chief protagonists are animals) with its *epimythium* or moral that comes after the narrative and comments on it; see also his *Sagnagerð: Hugvekjur um fornar bókmenntir* (Reykjavík: Almenna bókafélagið, 1982), 36–44, 91–92. Sverrir Tómasson, in "Helgisögur, mælskufræði og forn frásagnarlist," *Skírnir* 157 (1983): 154, rightly takes him to task for using *dæmisaga* in the sense of *fabula* since *exemplum* is a more appropriate translation—and in *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara á miðöldum*, Rit 33 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1988), 280–85, Sverrir discusses the particular use of *dæmi* in the historiography of Ari fróði Þorgilsson and Snorri. Possibly in response to Sverrir's criticism, Hermann later equates the *fabula* and the *exemplum* in the phrase "dæmisögur bæði klassískar og kristnar" (*dæmisögur* both classical and Christian), a conflation for which there is no evidence in Medieval Icelandic. See *Mannfræði Hrafnkels sögu og frumþættir*, Íslensk ritskýring 3 (Reykjavík: Menningarsjóður, 1988), 63. For example, Petrus Alfonsi in the *Disciplina clericalis* refers to his stories as *fabulae* three times: *Petri Alfonsi Disciplina clericalis*, ed. Alfons Hilka and Werner Söderhjelm, 3 vols., *Acta societatis scientiarum Fennicae* 38.4–5, 49.4

religious connotations, it was soon appropriated by secular writers for a short narrative without “a salutary lesson,” at least in the moral sense (here translated as “anecdote”). For example, in the *Eirspennill* version of *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* (AM 47, fol., early fourteenth century), it states that “Eptir þat sagði hann [Hákon Hákonarson] dæmisögu þá er Sverrir konungr var vanr at segja” (After that Hákon Hákonarson told that anecdote that King Sverrir was accustomed to tell).³⁹ Therefore, when the *exempla* begin to appear in Icelandic in the early fourteenth century, their translators faced something of a dilemma in determining how to refer to them. Even though they were intended to have some kind of moral lesson, these short narratives must have been felt to have been qualitatively different from the similar stories found in the Gospels, in the same way that Oddur Gottskálksson (ca. 1514–1556) chose to abandon *dæmisaga* with its religious and secular connotations in his translation of the New Testament published in Roskilde in 1540.⁴⁰ Therefore, while the

(Helsinki: Druckerei der Finnischen Literaturgesellschaft, 1911–22), 1: *Lateinischer Text* 2.5; 9.17; 16.10. Only the last of these is translated into Icelandic in Sth. Pap. fol. nr. 66 (1690, but based on the lost vellum codex Ormsbók, ca. 1400), where *fabulas* is rendered as *sögur* (ÍÆ 1:180.2). And where Petrus on one occasion uses *exemplum* (*Disciplina clericalis*, Hilka, 1:15.14), the Icelandic translator uses *æventýr* (ÍÆ 1:178.21). Tolan discusses the particular sense of *fabula* in the *Disciplina clericalis* (*Petrus Alfonsi*, 82) and is of the opinion that the use of *exemplum* in the rubrics of stories present in many manuscripts did not originate with Petrus (*Petrus Alfonsi*, 235n36).

39. *Eirspennill: Noregs konunga sögur*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Christiania [Oslo]: Julius Thømtø, 1916), 601 (normalized). The reference is to Sverrir’s speech to his men before the battle at Ílúvellir in chapter 47 of *Sverris saga*, ed. Þorleifur Hauksson, Íslensk fornrit 30 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2007), 72–73. Finnur Jónsson (vii) dates AM 47 fol. “uden tvivl til det 14 årh.s første fjerdedel, sikkert ikke senere” (without question to the first quarter of the fourteenth century, certainly not later). Similarly in reference to a secular event, the narrator of the AM 310 4^o (late thirteenth-century) version of the Icelandic translation of the lost Latin life of Óláfr Tryggvason by the monk Oddr Snorrason (second half of the twelfth century) comments on the truth quotient of the account just given (ch. 45) of the battle between the hart that fled the dying body of Þórir hjörtr and the king’s dog, Vígi, stating, “er ver segiom fra slicum lutum oc dómisogum. þa dómum ver þat eigi sannleik at sua hafi verit. helldr hyggiom ver at sua hafi synnz þui at fiandinn er fullr up flærðar oc illzku” (when we narrate such matters and anecdotes then we do not judge that to be the truth that so it has been, rather we think that so it may have seemed to have happened because the devil is filled up with falsehood and ill-will). *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar af Oddr Snorrason munk*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gad, 1932), 142–43.

40. Oddur renders *similitudo* (Luke 13:6) and *parabola* (Luke 15:3) consistently as *eftirlíking*. Oddur Gottskálksson, *Nýja testamenti Odds Gottskálkssonar*, ed. Sigurbjörn Einarsson et al. (Reykjavík: Lögberg, 1988), 154, 158. Oddur made his translation principally from the Vulgate but with an eye to Martin Luther’s translation among others. Luther follows the Greek and uses a single word, *Gleichnis* for παραβολή. See *Biblia, das*

term *dæmisaga* is occasionally applied to the *exempla*, a new term, *ævintýr* (“chance,” “fortune,” as well as “adventure,” “happening”), came into use as a loanword from Middle Low German *eventür*.⁴¹ While *ævintýr* continued to be used in the general sense of “adventure” even as late as the eighteenth century,⁴² it soon came to refer specifically to the *exemplum* and then later in the form *ævintýri* to the folk-tale while *dæmisaga* was used to refer to the fable.⁴³

ist, die gantze Heilige Schrift Deutsch, trans. Martin Luther (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1534; repr. in 2 vols. Cologne: Taschen, 2004), vol. 2, folios 49^r, 50^v. Jón Helgason in his analysis of Oddur’s translation used a modern edition of Luther based on an edition of 1545. See *Málið á Nýja Testamenti Odds Gottskálkssonar*, Safn Fræðafjelagsins um Ísland og Íslendinga 7 (Copenhagen: Möller, 1929; repr. Rit um íslenska málfræði 4, Reykjavík: Málvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands, 1999), 177. In his glossary to Oddur’s work (240), he notes the use of *eftirlíking* with the comment: “Orðið ‘dæmisaga’ er ekki til” (The word *dæmisaga* does not exist). *Eftirlíking* is a word Oddur would have found in *Stjórn*, a text for which there is ample evidence he was familiar with, as for example in the paraphrase of “The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs” inserted at the end of Genesis (“Testament of Zebulun”); see Unger, 243, and Astås, 1:366. Note that in both versions of the fifteenth-century translation of the Bible associated with John Wycliffe, *similitudo* is translated as *lyknesse* (Luke 13:6) and *parabola* as *parable* (Luke 15:3), a practice that had been abandoned by the time of the 1611 Authorized Version. John Wycliffe and his Followers, *The Holy Bible*, ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 4:193 and 198.

41. This was a borrowing from Old French *aventure* (something that must or might come to pass, an occurrence, adventure). See Pekka Katara, *Das französische Lehnwort in mittelniederdeutschen Denkmälern von 1300 bis 1600*, Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsinki 30 (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 1966), 24–25, s.v. “aventür(e).” In Middle Low German are found both *aventür* and *eventür* (see Katara, *Das französische Lehnwort*, 25) but it is the latter form that prevailed in the Scandinavian languages. Note the use of *ævintýr* in *Stjórn* (Unger, 7; cf. Astås, 1:13): “þeir uissu eigi sitt eftirkomanda ævintýr” (they did not know their future fortune); also (Unger, 64; cf. Astås, 1:95): “Jonithus saa fyrir nokkur þau tíðindi ok ævintýr er löngu síðarr komu fram” (Jonithus saw in the future those happenings and events that much later came to pass). Note as well how the doublet *tíðindi* og *ævintýr* here translates the Latin *eventus* (occurrence, event, good fortune, success): “Jonithus iste futuros quosdam eventus praevidit”; Petrus Comestor, *Historia scholastica*, ed. J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 198 (Paris: Migne, 1855), ch. 37, “De dispersione filiorum Noe, et Nemrod” (col. 1088C). Finally, note the translation of Genesis 41:13 (Unger, 202; cf. Astås, 1:304): “eptir þi sem huars ockars audna ok ævintýr gekk síðan” (according to how the fortune and good luck of each of us turned out later), where the doublet *audna* ok *ævintýr* translates the Vulgate’s *eventus*: “audivimus quidquid postea rei probavit eventus.” Standard definitions of *dæmisaga* and *ævintýri* can be found in Lauritz Bødker, *Folk Literature (Germanic)*, International Dictionary of Regional European Ethnology and Folklore 2 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1965), 21–22, 65.

42. Steinunn Finnsdóttir (ca. 1641–1710) says in the eleventh stanza to the first fitt of *Hyndlu rímur*: “Ævintýr mun ei so leit / ef menn sér það kynna” (The “adventure” will not be so boring, if people familiarize themselves with it). Steinunn Finnsdóttir, *Hyndlu rímur og Snækóns rímur*, ed. Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, Rit Rímnafélagsins 3 (Reykjavík: Rímnafélagið, 1950), 4.

43. The earliest surviving translations of the *fabulae* of Æsop into Icelandic are found

in the prologue to *Adonias* (also *Adonius*) *saga* (ca. 1400) found only in AM 593a 4^o (fifteenth century). See Agnete Loth, ed., *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances*, 5 vols., Editiones Arnarnagæðanæ B20–24 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962–1965), 3:69–74, and Ole Widding, “Om Rævestreger: Et kapitel i Adonius saga,” *Opuscula* 1, Bibliotheca Arnarnagæðana 20 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), 331–34. Here is found a version of “The Raven and the Fox,” tale no. 124 as catalogued by Ben Edwin Perry, ed., *Aesopica: A Series of Texts Relating to Aesop or Ascribed to Him or Closely Connected with the Literary Tradition that Bears his Name*, new ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 381, although with details from an unidentified source, and a brief version of Perry 155 “The Wolf and the Lamb,” in the version made popular by Phaedrus as the opening narrative to book 1 of his collection. See Sverrir Tómasson, “The ‘Fræðisaga’ of Adonias,” in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, ed. John Lindow et al., The Viking Collection: Studies in Northern Civilization 3 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), 381–84, and Tómasson, *Formálar*, 292–95. The author of the prologue chooses not to employ Icelandic terminology to introduce these stories, but uses the Latin *fabula* instead (Loth, *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances*, 71 and 72): “Slikum grenum hæfa þær fabulas sem froder menn hafa vessað” (the fables that wise people have versified illustrate such particulars) and “segizt su fabula” (the fable declares). But by the time Guðmundur Erlendsson að Felli í Sléttahlíð (ca. 1595–1670) produced a translation of some 119 of Aesop’s fables, they are referred to in JS 232 4^o (1688–1689) as *dæmisögur*: Guðmundur Erlendsson, *Dæmisögur Esóps í ljóðum*, part 1, ed. Grímur M. Helgason (Reykjavík: Æskan, 1967), xiii. Guðmundur, who also composed the as yet unpublished *Rímur af Esóp hinum gríska* in 14 fitts, had access to one of the many Latin editions of Aesop containing prose translations of the fables by William Hermansz of Gouda (ca. 1466–1510), Adriaan van Baarland (1486–1538), and others, volumes that had been appearing since at least 1509. The later editions often had the title *Fabularum quae hoc libro continentur interpretes*.

For more on the use of *dæmisaga* and *ævintýri*, see Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, *Um íslenzkar þjóðsögur* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1940), 6–10; translated as *Folk-Stories of Iceland*, rev. Einar G. Pétursson, trans. Benedikt Benedikt, ed. Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2003), 13–16. *Ævintýri* also became a synonym for a wide range of narratives known variously as *álagasögur*, *lygisögur*, *skröksögur*, *stjúpmæðrasögur*, and *yrkjuögur* (see Bødker, *Folk Literature*, 23, 184, 278, 288, 328). These and the related *kerlingasögur* and *kotasögur* are discussed by Jürg Glauser, *Isländische Märchensagas: Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island*, Beiträge zur nordischen Philologie 12 (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1983), 17–22. Terje Spurkland discusses three of these terms in an attempt to determine the parameters of truth and fiction in the *fornaldarsögur*; see his “*Lygisögur*, *skröksögur* and *stjúpmæðrasögur*,” in *The Legendary Sagas: Origins and Development*, ed. Annette Lassen et al. (Reykjavík: University of Iceland Press, 2012), 173–84. Spurkland points out that “*skröksaga*” is also used in *Stjórn*, *Postola sögur*, and *Heilagramanna sögur* as a translation of “fabula” (see 176–77 and the references there), but this may be a particular religious use of the word in reference to stories that are at odds with the truth of scripture. He would take *stjúpmæðrasögur* as a translation of *fabulae aniles* (“old wives’ tales”), a term more accurately translated as *kerlingasögur*. However, this appears to be a modern term although the expression *kerlingavilla* (“old wives error”) in the prose epilogue to “Helgakviða Hundingsbana II” could also be translated as *fabula anilis*. Árni Magnússon in his Latin life of Sæmundr fróði refers to *aniles nugae*, which Gottskálk Jenson, “‘Ævi Sæmundar fróða’ á latínu eftir Árna Magnússon,” in *Í garði Sæmundar fróða: Fyrirlestrar frá ráðstefnu í Þjóðminjasafni 20. maí 2006*, ed. Gunnar Harðarson and Sverrir Tómasson (Reykjavík: Hugvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2008), translates as *kerlingasögur* (168); see also Gottskálk’s discussion of the word “fabula” in classical and early modern Icelandic contexts (140–42).

Unfortunately the usefulness of this term became further compromised in Modern Icelandic when it was also applied to folk literature in general⁴⁴ and to the International Folk Tale, the fairy tale, or *Märchen* in particular.⁴⁵ The question of how to refer to the *exempla* was never fully resolved by Icelandic authors and scribes. *Ævintýr* as a loanword has some claim as the most appropriate term for this imported genre. Perhaps the only observation to be made is that there

44. Magnús Grímsson and Jón Árnason used *ævintýri* this way in the first printed collection of Icelandic folklore, *Íslensk ævintýri* (Reykjavík: E. Þórðarson, 1852; repr. Akureyri: Bókaútgáfan Edda, 1942), for the collection includes not only prose narratives but also verse including ballads and hymns. Note that Gering appears to translate “ævintýri” in a similarly broad fashion, as may be seen by the sub-title on the title-page to his collection of *exempla*: “*Íslendzk æventýri: Isländische Legenden, Novellen und Märchen*” (1:iii).

45. “A *Märchen* is not so vague a thing as a ‘folktale’ . . . Lüthi usually uses the term to refer to tales numbered 300–749 in the Aarne-Thompson *Type Index*, the so-called ‘tales of magic.’ The term ‘wondertale’ is not a bad equivalent.” John D. Niles, “Translators’s Preface,” in Max Lüthi, *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*, trans. John D. Niles, Translations in Folklore Studies (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982), xxiv. Konrad Maurer used the term *Volkssagen* for his collection, *Isländische Volkssagen der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1860; repr. Rye Brook, NY: Elibron Classics, 2001), and Guðbrandur Vigfússon calqued this term as *þjóðsögur* (folk-stories) for the title of Jón Árnason’s collection *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1862–64), using the term throughout his “Formáli,” 1:v-xxxviii. Jón Árnason on the other hand translated *Volkssagen* as *alþýðusögur* (popular tales, or literally “tales of the common people”) in the “Formáli” to his collection, which arrived in Germany too late to be included in the published volumes and which was not printed until much later in the second edition, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, 2 vols. (Reykjavík: Sögufélag, 1925–39), 2:715. *Alþýðusögur* had some currency in the middle of the nineteenth century but since then has dropped out of use. See Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, 213–14; *Folk Stories*, 226–27, who also attempts to distinguish between *munnmælasögur* (oral narratives about odd behavior, witty retorts, etc., often centered on *lausavísur*), *sagnabættir* (narratives associated with particular events, individual and families), and *þjóðsögur*. This latter category he divides into *þjóðsagnir* (folk-legends), which he defines as aetiological narratives associated with known people and places (what the Grimms classified as *Sagen*), and *ævintýri*, i.e., what the Grimms called *Märchen* (*Um íslenskar þjóðsögur*, 10–19; *Folk Stories*, 16–23). See also Bødker, *Folk Literature*, 204, 261, 294–95, 295. However, these distinctions are far from universally followed. Sigfús Sigfússon used *Ævintýri og dæmisögur* as the title for the collection of *Märchen* in his folktale collection, *Íslenskar þjóð-sögur og -sagnir*, 16 vols. (Seyðisfjörður, Hafnarfjörður, and Reykjavík: Nokkrir Austfirðingar, Prentsmiðja Hafnarfjarðar and Víkingsútgáfan, 1922–1958), vol. 13 (1957); new ed., Óskar Halldórsson et al., 11 vols. (Hafnarfjörður: Þjóðsaga, 1982–1993), 10:1–177, although here just called “Ævintýri.” The most recent major collection of folk stories uses a completely different system of organization in which the editors set out “að flokka þetta fjölbreytilega efni á nýjan hátt með það fyrir augum að það verði sem auðnýtanlegast fyrir nútímalesendur” (to classify this greatly diverse material in a new way with an eye toward making it so that it might be the most easily accessible to contemporary readers). Ólafur Ragnarsson et al., eds., *Íslenskt þjóðsagnasafn*, 5 vols. (Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell, 2000), 1:5–6.

was almost universal agreement that the *exempla* were different from the indigenous short narratives or *þættir*, and that term was almost never applied to them.⁴⁶

4. Medieval Icelandic *Exempla*

There can be little doubt that the Dominican brother Jón Halldórsson played an important role in popularizing the use and distribution of *exempla*, and he may even have been responsible for their introduction into Iceland. Although there is no clear evidence to indicate what term bishop Jón used to refer to these narratives, by the time the earliest collections of them in Icelandic were put together, *ævintýr* seems well established as an appropriate term for them. Thus, in the preface to the collection of translated *exempla* in AM 657 a-b 4^o (mid-fourteenth century),⁴⁷ the author states: “Til nytsemðar þeim sem eptir kunnu at koma sneru heimsins vitringar á latínu margskonar fræðum er mikil hulla lá á ok myrkvaþoka, fyrir alþýðu. En af því at eigi hafa allir þá gjöf hlotit af guði, at latínu skili, þá viljum vèr til norrænu færa þau æventýr er hæverskum mönnum hæfir til skemtanar at hafa” (The world’s wise men turned into Latin for the use of those they knew to come after that wisdom of various kinds in which much was hidden and concealed for ordinary people. And because not all have received that gift to understand Latin, then we wish to present in Norse those *exempla* [*æventýr*] that are suitable for gallant people to have as entertainment).⁴⁸ There is a similar statement in the preface to the second collection of *exempla* in AM 624 4^o (mid-fifteenth century): “Nú er

46. One exception is Gering’s *exemplum* LXXXIX: “Trönuþátttr” (1:272–75). MS AM 624 4^o (middle of the fifteenth century) reads only “Trönu . . .” for the heading and a later hand has added: “Trönu þátttr; Frá einum ríku bøndasyni ok einni ekkju ok um þau brögð er þau beittuz við” (The Story of the Crane; concerning a rich farmer’s son and a widow and about the tricks they played on each other). However, this story is more in the form of a *fabula* complete with the *epimythium* (1:275) “fylliz þat hær, at hverr tekr þat at sêr sem hann veitir öðrum” (that is confirmed here, that everyone be prepared to experience that which they impose upon others”). There is no similar story listed under crane or stork in the 725 narratives catalogued in Perry’s *Aesopica* or in Gerd Dicke and Klaus Grubmüller, *Die Fabeln des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit: Ein Katalog der deutschen Versionen und ihrer lateinischen Entsprechungen*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 60 (Munich: Fink, 1987), and the source has not been identified.

47. A version of this preface is also found in Sth. Pap. fol nr. 66, as the preface to translation of the *Disciplina clericalis*.

48. ÍÆ 1:3. The preface is headed “Hær byjar æventýrum nökktrum” (Here begin some *exempla*).

bert af þersum orðum ok greinum, at sá er samsetti bækling þenna með ymsum æventýrum villdi dvelja oss frá illum umlestri, frá eiðum röngum ok únýtri margmælgí” (Now it is revealed through these words and reasons that he who assembled this booklet containing various *exempla* [“æventýrum”] wished to hinder us from doing wicked slander, swearing wrong oaths, and needless loquacity).⁴⁹ But there must have continued some debate about whether or not *ævintýr* was an appropriate term for these narratives, as the introduction in AM 624 4^o to Gering’s *exemplum* LXXXV: “Af riddara ok álfkonu” (Of a knight and an elf-woman), demonstrates: “Bæklingr sjá hinn litli er samsettr af skemmtunarsögum þeim sem virðuligr herra Jón biskup Halldórsson sagði til gamans mönnum. Má þat kalla hvárt er vill, sögur eðr ævintýr” (This little booklet is composed of those amusing stories that the worthy bishop Jón Halldórsson told to people for entertainment. One can call that material whatever of the two one wishes, stories or *exempla*).⁵⁰ And even though the preface to the *exempla* in AM 657 a-b 4^o quoted above unequivocally refers to them as *ævintýr*, this is not at all the case in the opening section of the *sögubáttur af Jóni Halldórssyni biskupi*, which appears in the same manuscript. In his edition of *Íslendzk æventýri*, Hugo Gering, using stylistic criteria, identified thirty-six narratives (including the *sögubáttur*) included in AM 657 a-b 4^o, which he associated with Jón Halldórsson and his circle.⁵¹ Stefán Karlsson has convincingly argued that these thirty-six narratives are in fact the work of Arngrímr Brandsson (d.1361), better known as the compiler of *Guðmundar saga biskups* (Version D).⁵² In *Lárentíus saga biskups*, chapter 51 (A Version), it is said that Jón Halldórsson considered Arngrímr “prest þann sem hann helt fremstan í sínu byskupsdæmi” (That priest whom he considered the foremost in his bishopric).⁵³ Arngrímr had received

49. Ibid., 1:4.

50. Ibid., 1:246.

51. ÍÆ 2:xxv-lxiv. The *exempla* attributed to an author designated α are: I–IV, VI, IX, XV, XIX, XXII–XXV, XXVIII, XLVIII, LXXVIII, LXXXII, LXXXIII, LXXXVB, LXXXVII–LXXXIX, XCVIII, CI in AM 624 4^o; XLIIB from Stock. pap. fol nr. 66; and X, XI XVI, XVII, XXVI, XXVII, XC–XCIII, XCV, XCVI from AM 647 a–b 4^o.

52. Stefán Karlsson, “Icelandic Lives of Thomas à Becket: Questions of Authorship,” in *Proceedings of the First International Saga Conference*, ed. Peter Foote et al. (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1973), 236.

53. ÍF 17:412. In the B Version of *Lárentíus saga* (ibid.), Arngrímr is “einn sinn fremsta prest” (one of his foremost priests).

the benefice at Oddi on Rangárvellir in 1334. He did not remain there long after bishop Jón's death, and in 1341 he became a monk, presumably at the monastery at Þingeyrar, because by 1350 he had become abbot there, a post he held, although not without controversy, until his death.⁵⁴ It is assumed it was during his time at Þingeyrar that Arngrímr undertook his literary activities, including writing the *sögubáttur* about his close associate bishop Jón and making a collection of *exempla* that he had heard or obtained from the bishop. It is interesting to note that Arngrímr is far from consistent in the *sögubáttur* in his use of terminology when referring to the *exempla*. It is as if for him this terminology is still in a state of flux compared to the introductory remarks from elsewhere in the same manuscript quoted above, which may or may not have originated with him. He opens by referring to these stories as *dæmisögur*⁵⁵ before switching to *frásögn* ("narratives"), itself a neutral term very frequently employed elsewhere in the collection,⁵⁶ and then turning to *ævintýr*.⁵⁷

En hverr man greina mega, hverr hans góðvili var at gleðja nærverandis menn með fáheyrðum dæmisögum er hann hafði tekit í útlöndum, bæði með lettrum ok eigin raun, ok til vitnis þar um harðla smátt ok lítit man setjaz í þenna bækling af því stóra efni, því at sumir menn á

54. In 1357, on learning of the death overseas of the bishop of Hólar, Ormr Ásláksson, a synod of northern priests tried to remove Arngrímr from his posts as abbot and *officialis* (representative of the bishop during an overseas absence). At this point Arngrímr is said to have expressed the desire to become a Dominican and retire to their monastery in Bergen (reversing the journey of Jón Halldórsson). See Janus Jónsson, *Um klaustrin á Íslandi* (Reykjavík: Endurprent, 1980), 191, first published in *Tímarit hins íslenska bókmenntafélags* 8 (1887): 174–265.

55. *Dæmisaga* appears again in the *sögubáttur* with the meaning *exemplum*. See ÍF 17:453; ÍÆ 1:92.247 (XXIII). *Dæmi* is also occasionally used where it might be translated as *exemplum*, for example: X, 1:31.32; XXII, 1:80.68; XXVIII, 1:109.46; XXXVI, 1:125.58.

56. *Frásögn* appears almost as often as *ævintýr* within the narratives to refer to themselves, for example: IV, 1:20.24; XXII, 1:77.1; XXII, 1:81.119; XXIII, 1:84.14; XXIII, 1:87.92; XXIII, 1:89.181; XXIV, 1:104.12; XLII, 1:146.211; LXXVIII, 1:207.90; LXXXIX, 1:211.201; LXXX, 1:216.11; LXXXII, 1:234.43; LXXXIII, 1:244.129; LXXXVII, 1:256.8; LXXXIX, 1:275.92; XCI, 1:287.42; XCII, 1:291.130.

57. Among the places *ævintýr* appears in ÍÆ are Preface A: 1:3.5; Preface B: 1:4.27; X, 1:33.84; XXIII, 1:84.15; XXVII, 1:47.1; XXXII, 1:119.11; XXXVI, 1:125.54; XXXIX, 1:129.1; XLI, 1:134.1; XLII, 1:144.170; XLIV, 1:149.63; XLVI, 1:154.34; LXII, 1:185.11; LXV, 1:179.29; LXX, 1:190.69; LXXXIX, 1:217.127; LXXXII, 1:236.100; LXXXV, 1:254.161; LXXXVII, 1:288.340. In LXXXIII, 1:243.102, *ævintýr* is used not in the sense of *exemplum* but rather as "adventure."

Íslandi samsettu hans frásagnir sér til gleði ok öðrum. Munum vér í fyrsta setja sín ævintýr af hvárum skóla, París ok Bolon, er gjörðuz í hans náveru.⁵⁸ (ÍF 17:445)

And everyone is capable of telling what kind was his benevolence to entertain people in the vicinity with rarely heard parables (*dæmisögur*) that he had picked up overseas, both in letters and as a result of his own experience, and as witness to this is assembled in this little book a very small amount and a little of that vast material, because some people in Iceland put together his narratives (*frásagnir*) for the pleasure of themselves and others. To begin with we shall assemble his *exempla* (*ævintýr*),⁵⁹ which happened in his presence, from each of the two schools, Paris and Bologna.

Likewise, the opening sentence to *Klári saga*, presumably written by Arngrímur, refers to the story that will follow as a *frásögn*,⁶⁰ one of the more frequent words used to introduce the *ævintýr*,⁶¹ while in the colophon to the saga the narrator, presumably bishop Jón, states that the saga has served as a “ljós dæmi” (clear *exemplum*).⁶²

This opening paragraph of the *söguþáttur* says that bishop Jón brought some of his narratives with him “með lettrum” (in letters), that is, in written form, presumably in Latin. It is possible that he had made an anthology of *exempla* from various collections, possibly in Latin, but more plausibly in Icelandic. This would account for the appearance among the Icelandic *exempla* of narratives derived from the major anthologies, as there is no evidence that these collections circulated separately in Iceland.

One of the most important collections of *exempla* was the *Disciplina Clericalis* (Clerical Instruction) by Petrus Alfonsi.⁶³ It quickly

58. This text is based on AM 657 a-b 4^o, and Gering prints the *söguþáttur* as *exemplum* XXIII but from AM 624 4^o; see ÍÆ 1:84–94.

59. Here it would also be possible to translate *ævintýr* as “adventures” or “occurrences.”

60. *Klári saga*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld, Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek 12 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1907), 1. Cederschiöld had edited the saga some thirty years earlier with a Latin translation by Samuel J. Cavallin as *Clarus saga, Clari fabella* (Lund: Gleerup, 1879).

61. See note 56 above.

62. *Klári saga*, Cederschiöld, 74.

63. Petrus Alfonsi (1062–ca. 1140) was born Moses Sephardi and had served as a rabbi in Huesca, in the Kingdom of Aragon, before converting to Christianity in 1106. He came

became popular and was translated into most of the European vernaculars, including Anglo-Norman.⁶⁴ As Sveinbjörn Rafnsson has argued, this text in whole or in part may have been known in Iceland before the arrival of Jón Halldórsson in Skálholt, because a translation of the conclusion to chapter 28, “Exemplum de Socrate et rege,” to the end of the treatise is found at the beginning of folio 15^r and ending at the top of 16^r in AM 544 4^o (early fourteenth century), i.e., in that part of Hauksbók written by a scribe described variously as Norwegian or Faroese in the employ of Haukr Erlendsson (d. 1334).⁶⁵ However, the evidence is equivocal as to whether this narrative was collected in Iceland or Norway and whether it was written down before or after Jón Halldórsson came to Iceland. What is unequivocal is that three tales derived from the *Disciplina clericalis* are found in AM 657 a-b 4^o: “Af hálfum vin capitulum,” “Hèr segir af öllum vin,” and “Frá danska manni ok kerlingu.”⁶⁶ They are among

to England a few years later and may have been personal physician to Henry I. It has been assumed that it was during this period (ca. 1110-ca. 1120) that he composed the *Disciplina Clericalis*. Fluent in Hebrew and Arabic as well as Latin, his collection of narratives served as a conduit for oriental stories into the Western tradition. For a general introduction, see “The Author and his Times,” in Petrus Alfonsi, *The ‘Disciplina Clericalis’ of Petrus Alfonsi*, trans. and ed. Eberhard Hermes, English trans. P. R. Quarrie (London: Routledge, 1977), 1–99; Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 9–11; and Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, “Sagnastef í íslenskri menningarsögu,” *Saga* 30 (1992): 81–121. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson surveys the translations into Icelandic of the *Disciplina Clericalis* and their influence on medieval and early modern literature.

64. There are two Anglo-Norman verse translations from the early thirteenth century both appearing with the title “Le Chastoiement d’un pere a son fils.” Both have been edited in *Französische Versbearbeitungen* (1922) of the *Disciplina clericalis*, Hilka, part 3.

65. See Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, “Sagnastef,” 81–85. The text is published in *Hauksbók udgíven efter de arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 40*, ed. Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1892–96), 178, and in Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, 99–101. The text contains the concluding section of chapter 28: “Exemplum de Socrate et rege,” to the end of the treatise (*Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:41.1–1:46.11), omitting chapter 29: “Exemplum de prudenti consilarii regis filio” (Ibid., 1:42.1–42.8). The translation is abbreviated but not drastically so, the occasional sentence being left un-translated, and the Latin is followed more closely than in the three *exempla* in AM 657 a-b 4^o. Sveinbjörn argues that the quire now missing before 15^r contained the rest of the *Disciplina Clericalis*. The situation is further complicated by the fact that it is not possible to determine whether AM 544 4^o was written in Iceland or Norway (the latter seems more likely), nor is it possible to fix the dating of the manuscript, which may have been written any time up to 1334, the year of Haukr’s death—fourteen years after Jón Halldórsson became bishop. The relationship of this text to the translation of the *Disciplina Clericalis* in AM 657 a-b 4^o and Sth. Pap. fol nr. 66 (see below) is not clear, but for reasons I cannot go into here I believe they are unrelated.

66. XCI-XCIII in Í/Æ 1:286–92.

those texts that are presumed to have been collected by Arngrímr Brandsson from Bishop Jón Halldórsson. The first two narratives are based on the opening pair of *exempla* in the *Disciplina clericalis*: I: “Exemplum de dimidio amico” (The Half Friend) and II: Exemplum de integro amico” (The Perfect Friend), along with a version of no. XV: “Exemplum de decem coiris” (The Ten Chests).⁶⁷ The Icelandic versions have been “Europeanized,” that is the references to Arabs, Mecca, and other features of the pluralistic society with which Petrus Alfonsi was familiar have been thoroughly “Christianized.”⁶⁸ For example, in “The Half Friend” (*exemplum* XCI) the story of the dying Arab (“Arabs moriturus”) has become a tale “af höfutspekingi gömlum” (of a certain aged chief-sage) who “lagðiz í banasótt” (lay on his death-bed), and the Spanish Muslim on a pilgrimage to Mecca by way of Egypt in the “Exemplum de decem coiris” (quidam Hyspanus perrexit Mech, et dum ibat pervenit in Aegyptam) becomes in *exemplum* XCIII “einn danskr maðr . . . at vitja heilagra staða” (a Danish man . . . visiting holy sites).⁶⁹ Because of changes like these in the Icelandic text, Gering speculates that these versions are based on oral retellings of these narratives by bishop Jón.⁷⁰ This may indeed be the case, but neither this translation nor the later versions of the *Disciplina Clericalis* have been extensively studied, so it is not possible to say from what language these texts have been translated.⁷¹ These three

67. *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:2–4, 4–5, 20–22; *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hermes, 106–09, 128–30.

68. I employ the term “Europeanization” in the sense used by Lisa Lampert-Weissig: “This self-definition of ‘modern Europe’ has been shaped in part by a particular view of medieval Europe, a medieval Europe that is commensurate with Christendom and from which certain demons, such as the history of the Muslim presence on the Iberian peninsula from 711–1492, have been exorcised.” *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, Postcolonial Literary Studies (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 2. A similar process of “Europeanization” is also a feature of “Le Chastoiement d’un pere a son fils,” where the Arab of the first narrative has been changed to “a wise man” (Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, 125). The A version at line 229 has “uns saives hom . . . quant il sout que finer deveit” (*Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 3:7). However, the A version of the opening of exemplum XV (lines 2209–13) follows the Latin text: “Li prodrom ert d’Espaigne nez, / Or et argent aveit asez: / Parmi Egite tresspassout / Et tot dreit a Mech en alout / La ou Mahom ert henorez” (ibid., 3:40).

69. *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:3 and 20; ÍÆ 1:286, 292.

70. ÍÆ 2:229.

71. See James F. Caldwell, “On the Icelandic *Disciplina clericalis*,” *Scandinavian Studies* 10 (1929): 125–35. Caldwell sets out to determine the particular Latin version used by the translator of the *Disciplina clericalis* found in Sth. Pap. fol nr. 66, and agrees with Gering that the three stories found in AM 657 a-b 4^o represent a separate tradition

exempla must have been very popular and appear to have achieved a wide distribution, as elements from “Af hálfum vin capitulum”⁷² turn up in chapters 13–15 of *Víga-Glúms saga*,⁷³ a narrative supposedly composed around 1230 but whose textual history is very complex.⁷⁴ Scholars assume the saga was written in Eyjafjörður and that the author was in some way connected with the monastery at Munkaþverá. However, a mid-thirteenth-century dating does not preclude the saga’s being rewritten and “improved” along the way. While it is possible that a text of the *Disciplina Clericalis* was circulating in an Icelandic monastery before the bishopric of Jón Halldórsson, it is more likely that the episode involving Ingólfr and the calf was added to the text some time during the bishopric of Jón Halldórsson or soon afterward and so made its way into the Möðruvallabók version, as scholars agree that this episode and several others in the saga are extraneous to the main narrative involving Víga-Glúmr. This is the only example of an episode set in Iceland in the *Íslendingasögur* that can be directly traced to a non-native source.⁷⁵

(127). However, his attempts to associate the later Icelandic translation with a particular Latin recension or manuscript prove inconclusive, although he does notice some evidence suggesting that the translator used a manuscript similar to Harley 3938 (130–35). However, Caldwell based his analysis strictly on the variants noted by Hilka and Söderhjelm in their critical edition of Petrus’ work rather than checking the text in this or any other manuscript. H. L. D. Ward notes that Harley 3938, in which the *Disciplina clericalis* occupies folios 80–107b, is a sixteenth-century paper manuscript written in Italy. See H. L. D. Ward and J. A. Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols. (1883–1910; London: repr. British Museum, 1961–1962), 2:245. Because of the late date of the manuscript and its Italian provenance, even Caldwell’s tentative conclusion and provisional stemma (135) will have to remain highly speculative until much more work is done in evaluating the texts of the surviving manuscripts; Tolan (*Petrus Alfonsi*, 201–04) identifies thirteen additional manuscripts not known to Hilka and Söderhjelm containing the *Disciplina clericalis* in whole or in part.

72. In the third translation of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, this story (Gering’s *exemplum* L) is called “Frá lærisveini einum er freistaði vina sinna í nauðum staddr” (ÍÆ 1:164–65).

73. *Víga-Glúms saga*, ed. Gabriel Turville-Petre, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), xxxiii–xxxviii.

74. John McKinnell, “Víga-Glúms saga,” in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 691–92. One version of the saga that contains the episode based on the *Disciplina Clericalis* is found in the mid-fourteenth-century Möðruvallabók (AM 132 fol).

75. Although *Tristrams saga og Ísþondar* (1226), the Icelandic translation of Thomas of Brittany’s *Roman de Tristan*, left its mark on Icelandic vernacular literature, especially the *Riddarasögur*, even when motifs from it are incorporated into an *Íslendingasaga* such as in the “Spesar þátrr” of *Grettis saga* (chs. 63–93), they maintain an exotic distance in that the narrative there is set in Constantinople. In addition to a discussion of *Víga-Glúms saga*, Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (“Sagnastef,” 92–95) argues for the influence of the

What appears to be a third translation of the *Disciplina Clericalis* (Gering's nos. XLIX–LXXVI) is found in Sth. Pap. fol. nr. 66.⁷⁶ This manuscript in the hand of Jón Vigfússon (d. 1692)⁷⁷ was completed

Disciplina Clericalis, chapter 3: “Exemplum de tribus versificatoribus” on *Sneglu-Halla þátrr* and of chapter 2: “Exemplum de integro amico” on chapters 56 and 62 of *Egils saga*, but interestingly enough only in the version found in *Möðruvallabók*. See *Egils saga*, ed. Bjarni Einarsson (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2003), 84, 106. However, apart from the appropriation in *Víga-Glúms saga*, none of these correspondences is particularly close. Episodes in *Grettis saga* that can be ultimately linked with the Old English poem *Beowulf* cannot be argued as demonstrating direct influence. See further, Susanne Kramarz-Bein, “Der *Spesar þátrr* der *Grettis saga*: Tristan-Spuren in der *Isländersaga*,” in *Studien zur Isländersaga: Festschrift für Rolf Heller*, ed. Heinrich Beck and Else Ebel, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 24 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 152–81, and Marianne Kalinke, “Arthurian Echoes in Indigenous Icelandic Sagas,” *The Arthur of the North*, ed. Marianne Kalinke, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* 5 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 145–67.

76. ÍÆ 1:163–200. On this manuscript see ÍÆ 1:xxix–xxxi. In addition to the translation of Petrus Alfonsi, the collection contains the preface from AM 657 a-b 4^o, as well as six versions of *exempla* also from AM 657 a-b 4^o inserted between LXXI and LXXII but from the section written around 1400. Some of these narratives are found in other manuscripts as well: see XXV: “Af biskupi ok flugu” (ÍÆ 1:100–04; source unknown); LXXVIII: “Af dauða ok konungssyni” (1:204–11; source unknown although many post-medieval versions); LXXXII: “Af þrim kumpánum” (1:232–39; source unknown); LXXXIII: “Af rómverska dáránunum” (1:239–44; Gering's title; source unknown); XLIIIB: “Af einum greifa” (1:139–46; ultimately from India), and LXXXIX: “Trönupátttr” (1:272–75; see footnote 46 above). Where Gering did take his text from Sth. Pap. fol. nr. 66, he notes, “Die moderne Orthographie der Hs. habe ich natürlich nach Massgabe der Texte des 14. Jhs. geändert” (1:xxxi). The translation covers chapters 1–23 (of thirty-four) of the *Disciplina clericalis*, ending with the chapter 23: “Exemplum de arature et lupio iudicioque vulpis” (*Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:32–33). Gering also prints as LXXVB (ÍÆ 1:197–98) a version of chapter 22: “Exemplum de rustico et avicula” (*Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:30–31) found in Stock. papp. fol. nr. 67, from what is a fourth separate translation of the *Disciplina clericalis*. This manuscript contains in addition a version of chapter 2: “Exemplum de integro amico” and chapter 19: “Exemplum de duobus burgensibus et rustico” (*Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:27–28; see LXXII: “Af tveimr burgeisum ok kotkarli,” ÍÆ 1:192–94; Gering's title). Sveinbjörn Rafnsson edits all three narratives, “Sagnastef,” 115–18. Stock. papp. fol. nr. 67 was written in Copenhagen in 1687 by Jón Eggertsson *klausturhaldari* (1643–1689). On Jón and his manuscript collecting see Vilhelm Gödel, *Fornnorsk-isländsk litteratur i Sverige*, *Antiqvarisk Tidskrift för Sverige* 16.4 (Stockholm: Kongl. Vitterhets Historie och Antiquitets Akademien, 1898), 189–208, and Regina Jucknies, *Der Horizont eines Schreibers: Jón Eggertsson (1643–89) und seine Handschriften*, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Germanistik und Skandinavistik* 59 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009)—on Stock. papp. fol. nr. 67 see 79–81. Since many stories from the *Disciplina clericalis* circulated independently, the translation of individual narratives in AM 657 a-b 4^o and Stock. papp. fol. nr. 67 does not imply separate translations of the entire text (see Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi* 132–58).

77. Jón Vigfússon became a scribe in the Swedish *Antiquitetskollegiet* (College of Antiquities) in 1684 but otherwise little is known about him. See Gödel, *Fornnorsk-isländsk litteratur*, 194, 201.

in 1690 and contains mostly *riddarasögur*.⁷⁸ The translation of the *Disciplina Clericalis* is the last entry, taking up pages 323–417, and is headed by the following rubric: “Hèr hefjaz nökkur æventýr eðr vísa manna framsagnir ok holl ráð” (Here begin some *exempla* or the narratives and wholesome counsel of wise men).⁷⁹ There has been considerable speculation concerning the manuscript from which Jón Vigfússon made his copy of the *Disciplina Clericalis*. Knut Frederik Söderwall argued that the source was a medieval manuscript referred to in the edition of the Old Swedish *Um styrilsi kununga ok höfþinga* published by Johannes Thomae Bureus (1568–1652) in 1634.⁸⁰ However, Jonna Louis-Jensen has demonstrated that the Bureus reference and the source manuscript used by Jón Vigfússon were the lost vellum codex Ormsbók.⁸¹ The translation covers

78. In addition to the translation of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, the manuscript contains versions of *Sigrarðs saga frækna*, *Vilhjálmss saga sjóðs*, *Dámusta saga*, *Sigurðar saga fóts*, *Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana*, *Þorsteins þáttur sögufróða*, and *Stjörnu-Odda draumr*.

79. ÍÆ 1:163.

80. Knut Frederik Söderwall, *Studier öfver Konunga-styrelsen*, Lunds Universitets Årsskrift 15 (1878–1879), Afdelningen för filosofi, språkvetenskap och historia 4 (Lund: Fr. Berling, 1880), 55–56. See also ÍÆ 2:139. Bureus, in his list of sources to *En nyttigh Bok, om Konunga Styrilse och Höfðinga* (Uppsala: Eskil Mattsson, 1634), Q1^v, says that the phrase on page 15.4–7 introduced by: “Thi at svá är skriuath” (Because so it is written): “det fins i en äldre Swensk bok (som så börjas: Enok heet madher) så lydandes. Annar spåkinger sagdi: Sa är Gud ottaz ten rædhaz aller lutir: En sa är ey rædhiz Gud, sa rædhiz alla luti” (one finds that in an old Swedish book [that begins: a man is called Enoch] as follows. Another philosopher said: He who fears God, all things are afraid of him: But he who is not afraid of God is afraid of all things). This is close to but not exactly the same as the third sentence in XLIX: “Af ýmissa spekinga ráðum” (ÍÆ 1:163.5–8; Gering’s title) and translates *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:2.18–19.

81. Ormsbók, the famous vellum codex in Bureus’ possession as early as 1602, was either owned by or written for Ormr Snorrason from Skarð á Skarðströnd, *lqgmaðr sunnan og austan* 1359–1368, 1374–1375 (d. after 1401). After Bureus’ death it passed to the *Antiquitetskollegiet* and was presumably destroyed in the fire that consumed Stockholm castle in 1697. See further, *Trójumanna saga*, ed. Jonna Louis-Jensen, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ A8 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963), xi–xv. The manuscript contained *riddarasögur*, among them *Bevis saga*, *Flóvents saga Frakkakonungs*, *Partalopa saga*, and the β version of *Trójumanna saga*, in “Enoks saga,” *Opuscula* 5, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 31 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1975), 225–37. Jonna Louis-Jensen argues that “Enok heet madher,” or rather “Enoch hét maðr,” the opening phrase of the *Disciplina Clericalis* translation found in Sth. Pap. fol nr. 66, along with other evidence from unpublished dictionaries and glossaries, confirm that this version of the *Disciplina clericalis* was one of the items included in Ormsbók. Lise Præstgaard Andersen assigns “Enoks saga,” i.e. the *Disciplina clericalis*, to foliation 86^v–90^{r-v} in her hypothetical list of the materials in the second part of Ormsbók. See *Partalopa saga*, ed. Lise Præstgaard Andersen, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ B28 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1983), lxxv, and Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, “Sagnastef,” 86. If Ormr had been aware that there was a version of the

about two-thirds of the text and follows its Latin exemplar closely, although that does not preclude its having been translated from a vernacular version. The text has been “Europeanized,” but not to the extent of Jón Halldórsson’s versions.⁸² Gering, in fact, does not bother to give a German translation for this part of his collection regarding such a task as “unnötig,” and he provides a relevant Latin text in an appendix to volume 2.⁸³ The narratives in Sth. Pap. fol nr. 66 are handled very differently than those from the same text associated with Jón Halldórsson, and it is most unlikely that they were circulating in Iceland early enough to have been in a position to influence *Víga-Glúms saga*.

5. Icelandic *Exempla* as Arbiters of Gender Roles

It is hard to tell how the *exempla* were actually put to use in Iceland, since there are so few examples preserved and no complete collection surviving except the partial translations of the *Disciplina clericalis*. Nor do any collections of sermons survive outside the twelfth-century *Hómilíubók*. Neither the Dominicans nor the Franciscans had a strong presence in Iceland, where the monasteries were either Benedictine or Augustinian. On the other hand, the brief flurry of activity in the second quarter of the fifteenth century when a number of *exempla* were translated from English collections suggests that the utility of the form was still recognized. However, Bishop Jón Halldórsson had been raised in the Dominican monastery in Bergen and studied at Dominican-run universities in Europe, and his presentation of *Klári saga*, where various *exempla* are used to flesh-out a bare-bones narrative with a very specific moral purpose in mind, gives us, I think, the opportunity to see a master Dominican preacher in action.

Disciplina clericalis in Hauksbók, that might have inspired him to find or commission a version for his own collection (the concluding section of the translation may have already been lost by the time the manuscript came into Bureus’ possession).

82. Thus in exemplum I, “arabs moriturus” (ÍÆ 1:164) is translated as “einn spekingr í helsótt sinni” (a sage during his fatal illness), and the Spaniard on a pilgrimage to Mecca (1:185) becomes: “kaupmaðr einn [af Spania] fór til Egiptalandz . . . ok . . . villdi fara um eyðimörk” (a merchant from Spain went to Egypt . . . and . . . wished to travel across the desert).

83. ÍÆ 2:139. The Latin may be found in the same volume (366–91).

I have argued elsewhere why I believe *Klári saga* is by Jón Halldórsson and why I think the claim that the narrative was translated from a Latin poem found in France is just a rhetorical ploy.⁸⁴ The saga is found in AM 657 a-b 4^o (1350) and the copy is also assumed to be the work of Arngrímur Brandsson, but the style differs considerably from that of the *söguþáttur* and the *exempla* associated with Jón Halldórsson.⁸⁵ I would argue that this is because the saga, except for the opening sentence, is based on a manuscript version by Jón Halldórsson himself, while the *ævintýr* have been purged of the peculiarities of bishop Jón's style in the retelling, especially the Latin mannerisms and the plentiful and exotic vocabulary adopted from Low German, which was likely to have been a distinctive feature of Jón's Icelandic given his upbringing in the Hansa port of Bergen.⁸⁶ Although there is no evidence to point to any particular date for the composition of *Klári saga*, a case can be made that it was composed some time around 1326, the year bishop Jón issued his "Bannsak-abréf" and also perhaps reconfirmed bishop Þorlákur's penitential in

84. Hughes, "Klári saga," 147–48. To the references there should be added Roger Dragonetti, *Le mirage des sources: l'art du faux dans le roman médiéval* (Paris: Seuil, 1987). Because I argue the saga is an original work, not a translation, and closely bound with Skálholt (and Bergen), I would reject the argument by Peter Hallberg, *Stilsignalement och författarskap i norrön sagalitteratur: Synpunkter och exempel*, Nordistica Gothoburgensia 3 (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1968), 183–87, that the saga may be attributed to Bergr Sökkason (d. ca. 1345). I would also reject the argument of Karl G. Johansson that the origin of *Klári saga* should be assigned to the northern monastery of Þingeyrar, and the translation practices associated with it. See his "Bergr Sökkason och Arngrímur Brandsson—översättare och författare i samma miljö," in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society: Proceedings from the 11th International Saga Conference*, ed. Geraldine Barnes and Margaret Clunies Ross (Sydney: Centre for Medieval Studies, 2000), 181–97, as well as "A Scriptorium in Northern Iceland: Clárus saga (AM 657 a-b 4to) Revisited," in *Sagas and the Norwegian Experience—Sagaene og Noreg: Preprints of the 10th International Saga Conference, Trondheim 3.–9. August 1997*, ed. Jan Ragnar Hagland et al. (Trondheim: Norges Teknisk-naturvitenskapelige Universitet, Senter for Middelalderstudier, 1997), 323–31. Whatever role Arngrímur Brandsson may have had in having *Klári saga* and the *exempla* associated with bishop Jón committed to parchment during his tenure as abbot of Þingeyrar, he seems to have been careful about preserving Jón's vocabulary and style.

85. Gering (ÍÆ 2:xxviii–xxxi) examines the difference between the style of the saga and the *ævintýri* and comes to the conclusion that the saga is a work of the bishop's youth (2:xxx; i.e., presumably composed before 1300 when he was in France). This I believe is incorrect.

86. On the Low German influence in *Klári saga*, see Hughes, "Klári saga," 144–45, and Marianne Kalinke, "Clári saga: A Case of Low German Infiltration," *Scripta Islandica* 59 (2008): 5–25.

an expanded version and when he seems to have had issues of gender relations very much in mind.

Klári saga is considered to be the earliest of the surviving bridal-quest romances, initiating what became a distinctive Icelandic genre. It has been demonstrated that the medieval bridal quest narrative is a specifically German phenomenon with its roots in Merovingian historical accounts,⁸⁷ and bishop Jón was probably exposed to such stories during his time in Bergen. While the story has many features in common with the *riddarasögur*, it differs from them in that there is a strong didactic element in the story.⁸⁸ While the first half of the narrative chastises inappropriate female behavior, the second half extols wifely virtue in the face of overwhelming odds.⁸⁹ This is made abundantly clear in the epilogue to the saga:

87. Claudia Bornholdt, *Engaging Moments: The Origins of the Medieval Bridal-Quest Narrative*, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 46 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005). On the motif in Icelandic literature see Marianne Kalinke, *Bridal-Quest Romance in Medieval Iceland*, *Islandica* 46 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

88. Not that the first half is free of such elements. During Klárus' first banquet with the princess Serena (*Clári saga*, Cederschiöld, 22), she offers to share a soft-boiled egg with him: "Ok nú býz hann at taka við egginu sem einn hofmaðr. En svá sem hann tekr við, þá fitlar hon til fingrunum. Ok allt saman af hálleika skurnsins ok hennar tilstilli verðr honum laust eggit ok steypiz upp í fang honum, svá at stropinn strýkr um bringuna ok kyrtillinn allt niðr at belti" (And now he prepares to take the egg as a courtier. But as he takes it then she fumbles it with her fingers. And all together as a result of the slipperiness of its shell and her connivance, the egg gets away from him and tumbles onto his breast so that congealed contents of the egg spill down his chest and his tunic all the way down to his belt). On this episode see Marianne Kalinke, "Table Decorum and the Quest for a Bride in *Clári saga*," in *At the Table: Metaphorical and Material Cultures of Food in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Timothy J. Tomasik and Juliann M. Vitello, *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* 18 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 51–72. Petrus Alfonsi has a whole section on the importance of good table manners embedded in chapter 26: "De modo comendendi," *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, 1:37–38, a section that unfortunately is not preserved in any of the Icelandic translations. Tolan (*Petrus Alphonsi*, 155, 259) mentions that the fifteenth-century scribe of Vienna, Hofbibliothek 3530 at fol. 110^v inserted a whole *exemplum* right before the epilogue on how to eat an egg properly (printed in *Disciplina Clericalis*, Hilka, Anhang II, 1:77).

89. The outline story for the saga can be found in *Beowulf* lines 1931b–62: a young woman living under the protection of her father behaves imperiously to any man who looks at her. She is given in marriage at her father's counsel and becomes a model wife. There has long been consensus that this woman is called Mōðþrýð or Þrýð, but the most recent editors opt for an earlier suggestion, that she is called Frema. See R. D. Fulk et al., *Klaeber's "Beowulf" and "The Fight at Finnsburg"*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 222–26, and R. D. Fulk, "The Name of Offa's Queen: *Beowulf* 1931–2," *Anglia* 122 (2004): 614–39. On the relationship of *Klári saga* to this material, see Hughes, "*Klári saga*," 150–52.

En hon [Serena] þolði allan þenna tíma angist ok armœðu fyrir ekki vætta útan fyrir sína eiginliga dygð ok einfaldleik . . . ok þetta allt lagði hon at baki sér ok þar með fǫður, frændr ok vini ok allan heim-sins metnað, upp takand, viljanligt fátœki með þessum hinum herfliga stafkarli, gefandi svá á sér ljós dæmi, hversu ǫðrum góðum konum byrjar at halda dygð við sína eiginbœndr eða unnasta. Fór þat ok eptir verðugu í síðustu, at hon fekk þat, er hon var maklig fyrir sína fáheyrða staðfestu . . . varð hon yfirdrottning allz Saxlands.⁹⁰ (*Clári saga*, Cederschiöld, 73–74)

But she [Serena] endured all the time the misery and distress for no other reason than her singular probity and simplicity. . . . And she put absolutely everything behind her, including father, kin and friends, and all the world's honor, taking up poverty willingly with this miserable beggar, giving so by her behavior a clear *exemplum*, how it befits other good women to maintain their probity with their husbands or betrothed ones. That also turned out in due course as it was deserved, that she received that which was fitting for her because of her unheard-of steadfastness, that . . . she became sovereign queen of all Saxland.

It is the period of the transition from haughty princess to model wife that especially interests bishop Jón. To illustrate this process he draws upon two *exempla* found only in later collections. The second half of *Klári saga* takes elements from a narrative found in *El Conde Lucanor* by Don Juan Manuel, the Infante of Castile (1282–1348), a contemporary of the bishop's and someone with Dominican connections.⁹¹ This narrative becomes later popularly known as “the taming

90. Given the tenor of this passage it seems more appropriate to translate *unnasti* in its modern meaning “betrothed” rather than the more common medieval meaning, “lover.”

91. Juan Manuel founded a Dominican Convent in Peñafiel in 1318 where he was later buried, and all through his life kept close connections with the Dominicans. For a succinct introduction to Juan Manuel and his times, see David A. Flory, “*El Conde Lucanor*”: *Don Juan Manuel en su contexto histórico* (Madrid: Editorial Pliegos, 1995). Since the final section of *El Conde Lucanor* was not completed until 1335, it is not a matter of bishop Jón being aware of Jan Manuel's text, but of his being very much in tune with the same traditions out of which the Spaniard composed his narratives. See also Jonathan Burgoyne, *Reading the Exemplum Right: Fixing the Meaning of “El Conde Lucanor,”*

of the shrew."⁹² It is combined with the narrative of the supremely patient wife later identified with the story of Griselda.⁹³

Klári saga demonstrates that in the hands of a skillful storyteller, *exempla* could be successfully used to create a narrative that could play a role in the Church's attempt to bring Icelandic social behavior and gender relationships more in line with what it had been able to achieve on the continent of Europe. *Klári saga* promotes an extremely patriarchal version of social organization and permits only a very a limited role for women in its fictional society. Serena's "patience" in the face of the brutality and humiliation inflicted on her by a man she believes to be her husband is offered without qualification as a model of wifely behavior.

There are also among the surviving Icelandic *exempla* those that look as if they might have been selected because of their usefulness

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92. Tale type 901, "The Shrewish wife is Reformed," in Aarne-Thompson, *Types of the Folktale*, 310–12. Now called "The Obstinate Wife Learns to Obey" in the revised edition, Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson*, 3 vols., FF Communications 133–35 [284–86] (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 2004), 1:523–27. The Spanish version of the story is found in tale 35: "De lo que contesçió a un mançebo que casó con una muger muy fuerte et muy brava" (What happened to a young man who married a fierce and truculent woman), in Juan Manuel, *"El Conde Lucanor": A Collection of Medieval Spanish Stories*, ed. and trans. John England (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1987), 216–23. See also *El Libro de los Enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor et de Patronio*, ed. Hermann Knust and Adolf Birch-Hirschfeld (Leipzig: Seele, 1900), 154–61 and notes 368–79, as well as Renaldo Ayerbe-Chaux, *El Conde Lucanor: materia tradicional y originalidad creadora* (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1975), 154–60, 309–19, as well as Hughes, "Klári saga," 155–56.

93. Tale Type 887, "Griselda" (Aarne-Thompson, 302–03; Uther, 1:521–22). The earliest recognized appearance of this tale is Book 10, tale 10 of the *Decameron* (1350–1353) of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). Bishop Jón also appears responsible for introducing another story otherwise first recorded in *El Conde Lucanor*, tale 11: "De lo que contesçió a un Deán de Sanctiago con Don Illán, el grand maestro de Toledo" (What happened to a Dean of Santiago with Don Illán, the great sage of Toledo) [England, *El Conde Lucanor*, 84–91; *El Libro de los Enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor*, Birch-Hirschfeld, 45–51 and notes 324–34; and Ayerbe-Chaux, *El Conde Lucanor*, 98–104, 239–46]. In this story the Mage, Don Illan of Toledo, tests the ability of the Dean of Santiago to keep his word, although instead of partridges cooking in the kitchen, the Icelandic version substitutes a capon. This narrative, the third of the three stories associated with the Arabian magician Pérús published as LXXXI in *ÍE* (1:217–31) under the title: "Af meistara Pero ok hans leikum" (About Master Pérús and his games), is found in AM 657 a-b 4°, specifically from the second part of the codex designated by Gering as C1, dating from around 1400, as well as in AM 586 4° (ca. 1400) and in AM 343 4° from the same period.

in attempting to provide a model for what the Church considered appropriate male and female behavior. Markus Schürer's research has demonstrated the way in which the *exempla* collections helped to define the religious community, and all available evidence points to the Icelandic *exempla* being made for a monastic audience. Many of the stories tell of individuals with ecclesiastical connections, bishops, popes, and pious monarchs, or they deal with monastic life. A typical example would be Gering's XLIV: "Af tveimr munkum" (Of Two Monks),⁹⁴ in which two monks lost in a forest pray to Mary for assistance. They come to a well-appointed monastery, but at Matins all that the brothers sing is the opening verse from the Psalm 59 (Vulgate): "Deus, reppulisti nos et destruxisti nos; iratus es et misertus es nobis" (O God, you have cast us off, and have destroyed us; you have been angry, and have had mercy on us),⁹⁵ changing the last phrase each time to "et non misertus es nobis" (and have not had mercy on us). In the morning the elder monk is asked to preach to the brothers and he embarks on a sermon on the fallen angels during which the brothers in the congregation begin disappearing one by one until only the abbot and the two visitors are left. The monastery turns out to have been populated by devils who were forced against their will by Mary to give the two monks shelter and succor—but they could not bear to hear a sermon that focused on the shame and misery of their fall from grace. The story ends with the infernal monastery disappearing in a clap of thunder and the two monks finding themselves alone on a level field.⁹⁶

94. ÍÆ I:147–49. This is a story assigned by Gering to bishop Jón and adapted from Étienne de Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus*, book 2.

95. Ps. 59:3 (Douay-Rheims translation, modernized) from *The Vulgate Bible*, 6 vols., Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010–13).

96. ÍÆ I:148: "Stóðu þeir úti á slættum velli" (they stood outside on a level plain). This echoes the state of Þórr and his companions at the end of their visit to Útgardaloki: "Þá sá hann þar völlu víða ok fagra en önga borg" (Then he saw a wide and fair plain and no stronghold) [Snorri Sturluson, *Prologue and Gylfaginning*, 43 (slightly normalized)]. There is no corresponding phrase in the Latin text, which ends after the monastery has disappeared (Étienne de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques*, 76): "Dicti autem monarchi, se inveniētes inter dumos et paludes vix ad viam redire potuerunt" (then the said monks, finding themselves among brambles and bogs, with difficulty were able to return to the road).

Among the stories translated from *Handlyng Synne*⁹⁷ is one of a woman who was a priest's concubine and who bore him four sons, all of whom became priests.⁹⁸ Despite her sons' urgings, she refuses to repent, and after her death, they cannot prevent the devils dragging her off to hell. Sacerdotal celibacy was never a strong point of the Icelandic clergy and even the most reform-minded bishop during Catholic times was forced to turn a blind eye to priestly concubinage. Nevertheless this *exemplum* was aimed at women listeners so that "allar konur skyldu varaz at falla í þersa synd þær sem heyra þvílík dæmi" (all women should be warned against falling into this sin, those who listen to such an *exemplum*).⁹⁹ So far as such priests who take concubines are concerned: "þeir vitu vel hvat þeir gjöra, en þat hefi ek heyrt sagt fyrir satt, at engi meistari væri svá góðr, þóat [hann] væri svá víss sem Salomon ok svá veltalaðr sem Aron, ok lifði til þers at hann væri þúsund ára gamall, þá kynni hann eigi at tala af þeirri sorg ok pínu er prestar skulu hafa er liggja í þersu saurlífi" (they know very well what they are doing, and I have heard it told for a fact, that no university scholar may be so learned, even though he be as wise as Solomon and as eloquent as Aaron, and even though he should live until he was a thousand years old, that he should be able to tell of the miseries and tortures that priests will have who indulge in this kind of immoral life).¹⁰⁰

Another story from an unknown source found in AM 624 4°

97. Robert Manning of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, Furnivall, 253–58, lines 7987–8158; ÍÆ 1:124–26; Einar G. Pétursson, *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku*, 51–56.

98. XXXVI in ÍÆ 1:124–26: "Frá prestakonu er tekin varð af djöflunum" (About the priest's wife who became carried away by devils; Gering's title). André Vauchez has shown how the problem of priests with concubines was a Europe-wide phenomenon in "La question du célibat ecclésiastique dans l'Occident médiéval: Un état de la recherche," in Lars Bisgaard et al., eds., *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Tore Nyberg*, Odense University Studies in History and Social Sciences 234 (Odense: Odense University Press, 2001), 21–32. Certainly, this clerical celibacy was never effectively enforced in Iceland as the case of Jón Arason, last Catholic bishop of Hólar (1484–1550), testifies. He had six children with Helga Sigurðardóttir and his sons came to occupy important positions in the Icelandic administration. Two of them were beheaded with him at Skálholt on November 7, 1550. On concubinage in medieval Icelandic society, see Else Ebel, *Der Konkubinat nach altwestnordischen Quellen: Philologische Studien zur sogenannten "Friedelehe,"* Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 8 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), and Auður Magnúsdóttir, *Frillor och fruor: Politik och samlevnad på Island, 1200–1400*, Avhandlingar från Historiska Institutionen i Göteborg 29 (Gothenburg: Historiska Institutionen, 2001).

99. ÍÆ 1:125.

100. Ibid., 1:126.

(mid-fifteenth century) tells of an unmarried woman who lived an immoral life.¹⁰¹ The devil, becoming envious of her, plots to betray her and arranged it so that a young man falls in love with her and gets her pregnant. She gives birth to her baby in secret and then kills it. Even though she regrets this action, she does not go to confession. One night she prays to God for help and receives three drops of blood on the back of her hand. She does not know what this means and continues to pray until God appears to her and shows her his heart and the wound in his side. She then goes to confession and tell her sins with floods of tears. These tears fall on the marks left by the drops of blood and they disappear even though before this no amount of washing or rubbing had any effect on them. “Hèr af megum vèr hugsa, hversu guði er þat þægiligt, at vèr skriptumz rækiliga af öllum várum syndum ok leynum eigi með illvilja því er vèr munum at segja” (here we may contemplate how agreeable it is for God that we thoroughly confess all our sins and conceal not with ill-will that which we ought to say).¹⁰²

In these narratives women are deprived of any agency. And if women do have agency, they use it to make decisions that are immoral and antisocial. Nowhere is this more reinforced outside of *Klári saga* than in a tale based on an English original also found in AM 624 4°, here set in France.¹⁰³ A rich man has a wife who is “góða ok fulla af miskunnsemi” (good and full of mercy) and a daughter who is “þá hina vænstu er verða mátti sköput af holldi ok blóði” (the most beautiful creature who might be fashioned of flesh and blood).¹⁰⁴ The father begins an affair with his daughter and she bears him three sons in secret, each one of whom she kills. One day the mother catches them out and says she is leaving. Facing the threat of the discovery of

101. Ibid., XXXVII, 1:126–27: “Af konu úgiptri er drap barn sitt” (Of the unmarried woman who killed her child; Gering’s title).

102. Ibid., 1:127.

103. Ibid., XXXIX, 1:129–33: “Af konu er drýgði hórdóm við föður sinn” (Of the woman who committed adultery with her father; Gering’s title). There are three surviving verse versions of this narrative in Middle English. *Altenglische Legende: Neue Folge*, ed. C. Horstmann (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1969), 334–38, prints one version with variants from a second. In *Miðaldaævintýri þýdd úr ensku*, 60–80, Einar G. Pétursson prints a third version not known to Horstmann in 1881 and discusses the relationship among the English versions and the Icelandic translation (xc-xci). For a history of incest in Iceland, see Már Jónsson, *Blóðskömm á Íslandi, 1270–1870* (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 1993).

104. ÍÆ 1:129.

their behavior, at the instigation of her father the daughter kills her mother. Sometime later the father one day at church is overcome with remorse and goes to the priest and openly confesses all his sins and promises to undertake the penance assigned. The father comes home and tells his daughter that he will have nothing more to do with her. He goes to bed early as he must begin a pilgrimage the next day. The daughter comes in on him, cuts his throat, and then goes with her three serving women taking with them all the valuables they can carry to another city where she uses her wealth to live a life of luxury and license as a courtesan. One day a famous bishop comes to town to preach and so many people go to hear him that there are no customers for the lady and her companions. She decides to go to the church to drum up some business. As she enters the bishop looks at her and it is as if she has an iron band around her neck and from it chains by which demons are leading her. The bishop is full of compassion for her plight and continues to preach of God's mercy. At that, "með almáttigs guðs miskunn fló ein ör í hennar hjarta . . . svá at tárin fellu niðr um hennar kinnr; ok brast þá festrin um hennar háls, en fjándinn varð hræddr ok flýði í brott" (through the mercy of almighty God an arrow flew in to her heart . . . so that the tears fell down on her cheeks; and then the band around her neck shattered, and the devil became afraid and fled away).¹⁰⁵ She now falls down and asks for God's help and mercy. She then confesses all her sins and asks the bishop for absolution. He says she must wait until the end of the sermon, but when it is finished and he goes to seek her out, he finds she is dead. The bishop now falls down and in tears begs God for a sign whether she has been saved or damned. A voice comes from heaven announcing that this formerly sinful soul now shines brightly in heaven, and the woman's body should be buried in sanctified ground, "því[at] þótt maðrinn hafi gjört allar þær syndir sem gjöræz mega í veröldinni ok vill hann skriptaz ok iðraz ok yfir bæta ok af láta ok lifa vel síðan, þá mun guð fyrirgefa honum" (because even though someone has done all those sins in the world that one might do, and such a person wishes to confess and repent and make redress and give up those sins and live well afterwards, then God will forgive that person).¹⁰⁶ This *exemplum*

105. Ibid., I:132.

106. Ibid., I:133.

is one of a number found in Gering's collection that emphasize the power of repentance and the infinite nature of God's mercy, but that also emphasize woman's sinful nature, which we have already seen was a feature of Jean Gobi's *exempla*. In such a world view, women only act on their own to do wrong. The sinful woman cannot make a move to address her sins but must first be struck by the arrow of God's mercy launched by the bishop. This leads her to confess her sins, but not to repent them or receive absolution. Nevertheless the intercession of the bishop on her behalf proves efficacious and according to the story she is enabled to be numbered among the blessed in heaven.

The preservation of the *exempla* in numerous manuscripts and fragments demonstrates that they did circulate, even if they may have left virtually no traces in Icelandic vernacular literature. This suggests that they were largely ineffective in influencing their target audience, except perhaps the one within monastery walls. Ironically, the kind of "reform" of gender relations that was at the heart of the social reforms attempted by the Church in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—and that lies behind the ideology of the *exempla*—would have to wait until the Reformation.

When the Reformation came to Iceland the Church lost its ability to legislate its own affairs, relinquishing control to the secular authorities. On 2 September 1537, Christian III, king of Denmark (1534–59) published an ordinance that abolished Roman Catholicism in his kingdom and its dependencies, including Iceland. This ordinance was translated into Icelandic by Gissur Einarsson, bishop of Skálholt (1540–48), and in 1541 the Alþingi confirmed it for the Diocese of Skálholt, although it would have to wait until 1551 to be confirmed in the Diocese of Hólar.¹⁰⁷ So far as the regulation of gender relationships is concerned, and in particular with respect to marriage, the ordinance represented a radical change from what was then the practice: "Med eckta personur hiuskaparins vegna hafa Gudz ordz þienarar ecki at giora, nema þad sem vidvijkur þeirra samteinging. og ad hugsuala þeirra sorgmæddar samuitzkur. enn allt annad heyrer til veralldligrar valldzstiornar" (The servants of God's word have nothing

107. DI, "Kirkjuordinanzía," 10:117–67 (Appendices 167–255; Latin text after the printed version of 1537, 256–338). See further Gissur Einarsson and Gunnar Kristjánsson, *Saga biskupsstólanna*, 50–52; on the reformation in Iceland in general, see Gunnar Karlsson, *History of Iceland*, 128–37.

to do with married people in terms of marriage, except that which concerns their joining together and to comfort their sorrow-stricken consciousnesses. But everything else is the province of the secular authorities).¹⁰⁸ Marriage is no longer a sacrament and the regulation of individual behavior has now become the concern of the State, not the Church. What this meant became clear a few years later when in 1564 the Alþingi passed the *Stóridómur*. This ordinance regulated individual sexual behavior in great detail and punished transgression by fines and other penalties, even stipulating the death penalty for the most severe offences and for repeat offenders.¹⁰⁹ A secular court of law now became the venue for regulating human behavior with its foibles and missteps, not the pulpit or the privacy of the confessional. Like many other things associated with Catholic practice in Iceland, there was no longer any place for the *exempla*. The State had taken over the regulation of personal relationships through the apparatus of the law and the courts, and was not inclined to trust in stories as a way of encouraging individuals to monitor or reform their behavior.

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108. DI 10:143. The remainder of this section of the ordinance is three brief paragraphs indicating that marriage must not take place within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, that the banns must be read three times, and the wedding ceremony will follow the form prescribed by Martin Luther. For a thorough survey of how the Church responded to its new and limited responsibilities, see Arngrímur Jónsson, *Fyrstu handbækur presta á Íslandi eftir siðbót: Handbók Marteins Einarssonar 1555, Handritið Ny kgl. Sam. 138 4to, Graduale 1594—Litúrgísk þróunarsaga íslenzkrar helgisiðahefðar á 16. öld* (Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan, 1992), 333–89.

109. “Stóri dómr um frændsemi- og sifjaspiell, hórdómr og frillulífi” (The great verdict concerning violation of the rules of consanguinity, incest, adultery and concubinage, June 30th, 1564; DI 14:271–76). Before it was repealed in 1870 twenty-five men and twenty-five women, mostly from the less privileged sections of society, had been executed in the enforcement of the law’s harshest prescriptions.

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