

JARL SIGVALDI AND THE BATTLE OF SVOLDR IN SAGA TRADITION

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ABSTRACT. The battle of Svoldr is one of the most outstanding moments in saga tradition, which preserves memory about Viking Age Scandinavia. The fame of the battle was strictly connected with particular personas involved in the conflict, among them the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason played the most significant role. The battle itself and its circumstances proved that Óláfr was a great, warlike, valiant and at the same time deeply Christian to do monarch, whose death was compared to martyrdom. The saga authors, thoroughly describing all events connected with the battle of Svoldr, included also Sigvaldi, the jarl of Jomsborg, in their narratives. According to most accounts, the jarl was member of coalition, Óláfr Tryggvason's enemies, who planned to trap the Norwegian king, depriving him of life and power. Sigvaldi's role was to pretend Óláfr's friend and ally and lead him from Vinland, where he stayed, directly into trap. The saga authors created their narratives about Sigvaldi and his role in the events of the year 1000, quoting particular skaldic stanzas, which were used to corroborate their prose accounts. The analysis of these verses leads to conclusion that the saga authors felt completely free in using them, differently and very often mistakenly understanding their content. Particular stanzas, quoted in the saga narratives, analysed once more, seem in fact to refer to completely different persons and/or events, having nothing in common with either Sigvaldi or Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle.

The issue of the role and importance of prosimetrum – the relation between poetical and prosaic modes in the Old Norse narratives, concentrates much specialists' debate. Scholars agree nowadays, that the beginnings of the usage of prosimetrum in Scandinavia are rather obscure,¹ although there are assumptions that they should be traced back to the time of composi-

¹ See J. Harris 1997: 131; R. Poole 1997: 41; K. E. Gade 2000: 69.

tion of the oldest eddaic poems.² Nevertheless, coexistence of these two modes can be observed in the oldest preserved literary works. Moreover, scholars point to the elements (e.g. broadly commented in different studies the description of a wedding feast in Reykhóltar in 1119³), which confirm common knowledge of this literary device. This concerns not only *íslendigasögur* but also *konungasögur* and their predecessors, synoptics.⁴

The ways the authors of the latter used skaldic stanzas in their narratives have been recently analysed by Bjarne Fidjestol⁵ and Diana Whaley⁶ regarding *Heimskringla* and Heather O'Donoughe⁷ regarding *Ágrip*.

It seems doubtless, that the authors of these two works (as in the case of others *konungasögur* and synoptics) used skaldic stanzas, very often originating from longer *drápur* or *flokkar*, mostly as corroboration of the events described in prose, a reliable source of information about the past. In other words, poetry of skalds, quoted in texts, where the name of the eye-witness poet lent as the same weight as the content of the documentary entity, served them as the historical evidence still very important for composition of the story.⁸ In this context, one should remember about Snorri Sturluson's declarations on poetry as the source material included in the prologues to both *Heimskringla* and *the Separate Saga of St. Óláfr*, which also have been broadly commented and differently interpreted in scholarship.⁹ On the other hand, Fidjestol's and O'Donoughe's studies indicate that also in the Old Norse historical works, the quoted skaldic stanzas played different, similar to *íslendigasögur*, role.¹⁰ Namely, we find in *Ágrip* and, first of all, in *Heimskringla* examples that show how particular pieces of poetry served to show feelings and thoughts of the characters or to construct dialogue scenes where the characters communicate with each other through the composed verses.

It does not change the general situation, that in most cases, first of all in *konungasögur*, skaldic stanzas were quoted to corroborate what is written in saga prose. The issue of whether and how to quote verses providing the source material, must have been of great importance already at the beginning of historical writing in the North.¹¹ Skaldic stanzas were then recognised as inde-

² There are arguments, that the two main eddaic metres, *fornyrðislag* oraz *ljóðaháttur*, were more prosaic and thus it is possible, that already in oral stage, eddic poetry was composed in prosimetrical mode. See J. Harris 1997: 133.

³ P. Meulengacht Sorensen 2001: 183-184.

⁴ H. O'Donoughe 2005: 14-15.

⁵ B. Fidjestol 1993: 77-98.

⁶ D. Whaley 1993: 245-266.

⁷ H. O'Donoughe 2005: 23-45.

⁸ J. Quinn 1997: 62; K. E. Gade 2000: 67; H. O'Donoughe 2005: 11.

⁹ See M. Clunies Ross 2005: 72-77; P. Meulengacht Sorensen 2001: 174-176; H. O'Donoughe 2005: 45.

¹⁰ H. O'Donoughe 2005: 12.

¹¹ H. O'Donoughe 2005: 23.

pendent features, imported quotations, rather than authorial shifts from one literary mode to another.¹² It is significant, that also in this kind of writing, it is possible to observe how saga authors interpreted skaldic poetry and what features influenced the decision to use particular stanzas that way or another.

The purpose of this paper is to trace those mechanisms using as an example the motive of Sigvaldi, jarl of Jomsborg and his part in the battle in Øresund, the tradition well known to saga authors. In this naval military confrontation, mistakenly located by most of medieval writers in the vicinity of the island Svoldr,¹³ the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason fought against the coalition of his enemies: the Danish king Svein Forkbeard, the Swedish king Óláfr soenski and Eirik jarl of Hlaðir. This group was said to be supported by jarl Sigvaldi. The battle ended with the defeat and death of the king of Norway. I would like to analyse not only the way particular saga authors constructed their narratives, basing on skaldic stanzas treated as an evidence. My aim is also to question the veracity of this tradition, linking Sigvaldi with the battle. Finally, I would like to investigate potential genuine context of the quoted stanzas.

The tradition which was raised on Óláfr Tryggvason's life and deeds, seen and remembered first of all as the missionary king,¹⁴ treated events of the year 1000, that ended with the death of the monarch, as one of the most important motives, significantly showing the distinguishing status of the king. Thus, it is not surprising that these events were so broadly and thoroughly described by Scandinavian medieval authors in their historical narratives. We find descriptions of the battle in all the three synoptics: *Theodorici Monachi Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensum*,¹⁵ *Ágrip af Nóregis konunga sögum*¹⁶ and *Historia Norwegie*.¹⁷

Although only later works, referring to the battle and other related events, *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar* by Oddr Snorasson,¹⁸ *Fagrskinna*,¹⁹ *Heimskringla*²⁰ and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*,²¹ include jarl Sigvaldi in this context.

According to Oddr, all the events that led to the battle of Svoldr were preceded by an intrigue of queen Sigríð. She was Óláfr Tryggvason's arch enemy since the king humiliated her twice: rejecting the offer to marry her and

¹² H. O'Donoghue 2005: 22. See also B. Fidjestøl 1993: 83; D. Whaley 1993: 248; J. Quinn 1997: 63-70.

¹³ I have analysed the case of localisation of the battle elsewhere, see J. Morawiec 2004: 17-31, 2007.

¹⁴ On this topic see recent study of J. Zernack 1998: 77-95.

¹⁵ Theodoricus: 14: 23-35.

¹⁶ Ágrip: 20: 32-34.

¹⁷ HN: 17: 96-100.

¹⁸ Oddr: 62-73: 179-232.

¹⁹ Fsk: 22: 114-134.

²⁰ Hsk: 98-112: 171-181.

²¹ ÓsTm: 230-255: 198-286.

slapping her in the face for not accepting Christianity. Thanks to her machinations there were among conspirators, apart from her husband, Eirik and Svein, jarls of Hlaðir and jarl Sigvaldi, who had previously had hostile relations with the rest of the group. Finally, the vision of joint fight against the common enemy, united them in conspiracy. According to Oddr, the scheme of the action, prepared by Sigrid was quite simple. Sigvaldi was ordered to go to Norway and, on behalf of the young Swedish king, to persuade Óláfr Tryggvason to meet Óláfr soenski in order to help him with promoting Christianity in Sweden. Sigrid was certain that the Norwegian king, considering the circumstances, would willingly leave his country, cross Øresund and be easily trapped. According to Oddr, Sigvaldi's mission succeeded as Óláfr Tryggvason had agreed to meet his namesake.²² Finally, when they did not manage to meet, the Norwegian king sailed to Vindland, where he met king Burisleifr and his daughter Astrið, who was Sigvaldi's wife.²³ In chapter 65, Oddr informs us, that Óláfr Tryggvason's united enemies had learnt about his journey to Vinland and this news terrified them very much since Óláfr had a great army at his disposal and would be a difficult enemy to overcome.²⁴ Then it was Sigvaldi again who took the action. He was ordered to go to Vindland, to meet the Norwegian king and to recognise if it would be possible to trap him as there were gathered great forces against him. The ambush was laid in the vicinity of the island Svoldr.²⁵ In the same chapter Oddr writes, that Sigvaldi managed to meet Óláfr Tryggvason. Jarl, being asked by the king about the trap rumours convinced him that they were fictitious and even swore that he was telling the truth.²⁶ Then Sigvaldi sailed to Scania where, as Oddr seems to report, Svein Forkbeard, Óláfr soenski and Eirik jarl of Hlaðir were waiting for Óláfr Tryggvason's fleet to attack it in proper time.²⁷ There Sigvaldi warned Þorkell nefja who sailed at the head of the Norwegian fleet about the trap.²⁸

²² Oddr : 62: 179-184.

²³ Oddr: 64: 190-191.

²⁴ Oddr: 65: 191-192: *Oc er þeir spyria nu allir at Olafur konungr tryggua son er cominn til vinþlandz með mikin her þa ottuðuz þeir miok oc þotti hann vera torsotligr.*

²⁵ Oddr: 65: 192: *Sigpalldi jarl fóri enn til Olafs konungs oc vita ef hann fengi leitt hann iþetta ofrefli oc fyrir satir er þeir hófðu fyrir honum buit. En þat var við eyna suolþr. En Sigpalldi seylldi teyia Olaf konung til þeira með fam skipum.*

²⁶ Oddr: 65: 193: *Nu ferr Sigpalldi til vindlandz oc hittir Olaf konung oc taca þeir tal sin imilli. Olafur konungr spyrr huat satt se iþui huart nocquo rar um satir veri sættar fyrir oc ufridr. Sigpalldi jarl segir at þat var hinn mesti hegomi oc lygþ, er þeim var sagt oc suerr um at hann segir satt Olafur konungr truir orðum Sigpallda.*

²⁷ Oddr: 66: 198: *Sigpalldi var þa farin norþr a scaney.*

²⁸ Oddr: 67: 202: *Þa tok Sigpalldi jarl skeið eina oc for ut til skipanna oc skiota up huitum skillði, þui at þat var friðmark, hinir laða seglunum oc biða oc þetta hit micla skip het tranin þui styrði þorkell nefia frendi konungs. Spyria þeir þa Sigpallda huer tíðendi hann kunní segia, hann lezk kunna at segia þau tíðendi at uelræði var sett fyrir Olaf konung. Nu lata þeir þorkell fliota skipit oc biða oc vilia nu eigi undan fara.*

Fagrskinna also mentions Sigvaldi describing the events that led to the Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle. The author of the saga placed the jarl among coalitions awaiting the the Norwegian king who was sailing back from Vindland near the island of Svoldr: *Sigvaldi was there with the king of the Danes, as he was his jarl.*²⁹ According to the saga, the jarl, just before Óláfr Tryggvason appeared to his enemies, had managed to stop the Þorkell nefja's ship,³⁰ and next placed his troops against the approaching Norwegian fleet.³¹

The jarl of Jomsborg is also present in the context of these events in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*. In his description, Sigvaldi is also connected with the conspiracy against the Norwegian king made by Svein Forkbeard, Óláfr soenski and Eirik jarl of Hlaðir. The jarl was sent by the Danish king to the land of the Slavs to recognise Óláfr's plans. The jarl *fór til Jómsborgar ok síðan á fund Ólafs konungs Tryggvasonar (first he came to Jomsborg where he found the king Óláfr Tryggvason).*³² According to Snorri, Sigvaldi talked to the king in a very friendly manner. We learn, that Astrið, Burisleifr's daughter, was close Óláfr's friend, and that she respected him very much, especially for his marriage with Geira, her sister. Sigvaldi, following the orders, tried to delay Óláfr's journey back to Norway, waiting for the news from the rest of conspirators. After some time *Sigvaldi jarl fékk njósn leynilega af Danmörk at þá var austan kominn herr Svíakonungs ok Eiríkr jarl hafði þá ok búinn sinn her ok þeir höfðingjarnir mundu þá koma austr undir Vindland ok þeir höfðu ákveðit at þeir mundu bíða Ólafs konungs við ey þá er Svöld heitir, svá þat at jarl skyldi svá til stilla at þeir matti þar finna Ólaf konung (jarl Sigvaldi received a secret message, that there came the army of the Swedish king from the east and that jarl Eirik also was ready and that leaders decided to sail towards Vindland and await Óláfr off Svoldr).*³³

The Norwegian king felt alarmed by the news he heard about Svein and his allies. Sigvaldi tried to assure Óláfr that Svein's intentions were good, that was why he proposed Óláfr his participation in the journey back to Norway as a safeguard.³⁴ According to *Heimskringla* it was jarl of Jomsborg who delivered the Norwegian king eleven ships³⁵. Sigvaldi, who commanded them, sailed

²⁹ Fsk: 22: 116: *Sigvalde iarl var þar með Danakonge fyrir þa sok at hann var Dana konungs iarl.*

³⁰ Fsk: 22: 120.

³¹ Fsk: 22: 122: *Sigvalde styrði skæið sinni inn með holmanom i mote liði kononganna er inna foro.*

³² Hsk: 99: 172.

³³ Hsk: 99: 172.

³⁴ Hsk: 100: 172: *Þá kom pati nökkur til Vindlands at Sveinn Danakonungr hafði her úti ok gerðist brátt sá kurr at Sveinn Danakonungr mundi vilja finna Ólaf konung. En Sigvaldi jarl segir konungi, ekki er þat ráð Sveins konungs at leggja til bardaga við þik með Danaher einnsaman svá mikinn her sem þér hafit. En ef yðr er nökkur grunnr á því at ófriðr muni fyrir þá skal eg fylgja yðr með mínu liði.*

³⁵ Hsk: 100: 172: *[...] mun ek fá þér 11 skip vel skipuð.*

at the head of the fleet, guiding Óláfr towards Svoldr. Snorri adds, that the forces of the Norwegian king included 71 ships.³⁶

Snorri witnesses that jarl did not take part in the battle in its initial stages. He joined the fight only when Óláfr Tryggvason was defeated.³⁷

Finally, Sigvaldi plays a role in Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*. In this narrative, the jarl is again connected with the Sigrid's intrigue, who wanted her husband, Svein Forkbeard, to fight with Óláfr Tryggvason. As Svein is said not to be so eager to do so, Sigrid made up and prepared the treacherous plan herself. This plan included also Óláfr sosenki, Eirik jarl of Hlaðir and Sigvaldi.³⁸ Then Svein sent the jarl to Vindland, where he was to recognise Óláfr Tryggvason's plans and persuade him to meet the king of the Danes. Sigvaldi went to Jomsborg where he spoke very friendly with Óláfr.³⁹ Staying in Jomsborg, the jarl was secretly informed that the joint forces of the coalitions had moved towards Vindland and would station off the island Svoldr whereas his role was to make the Norwegian king sail in the same direction.⁴⁰ The news about it reached Jomsborg and alarmed Óláfr Tryggvason. Sigvaldi tried to appease the king, proposing his participation in his planned journey back to Norway.⁴¹ *En mesta*, similarly to the previous narratives, informs us that Óláfr Tryggvason's fleet counted 60 ships supported by Sigvaldi's eleven units.⁴² We are informed further, that the jarl first had led the Norwegian fleet from Vindland and when they got to Svoldr and he learnt that Svein and his allies were ready, he *ordered to lower sails and row slowly towards the island and their ships to find some shelter there*.⁴³

³⁶ Hsk: 100: 173: *Hér segir at Ólafr konungr ok Sigvaldi jarl höfðu 70 skipa ok einu meir þá er þeir sigldu sunnan.*

³⁷ Hsk: 112: 180: *Svá var fyrr ritat at Sigvaldi jarl kom til föruneftis við Ólaf konung í Vindlandi ok hafði jarl 10 skip en þat hit ellifta er á váru menn Ástríðar konungsdóttur konu jarls. En þá er Ólafr konungr hafði fyrir borð hlaupit þá oepti herinn allr sigróp ok þá lustu þeir árum í sjá, jarl ok hans menn, ok reru til bardaga.*

³⁸ ÓsTm: 244: 245-247.

³⁹ ÓsTm: 245: 248: *Sendi Sveinn konungr Sigvallda til Vindlandz vm sumarit at niosna vm ferdir Olafs konungs Trygva sonar ok gilldra sva til, at fundr þeira Olafs konungs matti verða ok Sueins konungs. For þa Sigvalldi leið sína ok kom fram j Vindlandi, for hann til Iómsborgar ok siþan aa fund Olafs Trygva sonar. Voro þar fogr orð ok vínattu mal af jarli við Olaf konung, kom Sigvalldi ser i hinn mesta karleik við konung.*

⁴⁰ ÓsTm: 245: 248-249: *En lið Olafs konungs let geysi illa ok voro menn hans miok heim fusir, er þeir lágu þar lengi albnir, en veðr byr vant. sigvalldi jarl feck niosn leynliga af Danmorku at þa var austan kominn herr Olafs Svía konungs ok Eiriks jarls. Sva þat at Dana konungr hafði þa ok buit sinn her ok þeir hofðingiarnir mundi þá sigla avstan vndir Vindland með allan herin, þar er þeir hofðu aakuepit at þeir mundi biða Olafs konungs Trygva sonar við ey þa er Svoldr het. Sendu þeir ok. þau orð Sigvallda jarli at hann skyllði sva til stilla at þeir matti þar finna Olaf Noregs konung.*

⁴¹ ÓsTm: 245: 249.

⁴² ÓsTm: 245: 251.

⁴³ ÓsTm: 247: 252.

Generally, all the narratives, from Oddr to *en mesta*, present the jarl in a similar way. Sigvaldi joined Óláfr Tryggvason's enemies and took part in the conspiracy against the Norwegian king. First, he was to recognise Óláfr's plans, then not only to convince him that news about the treachery were fictitious, but to lead him to the trap, prepared by the coalitions. All the saga narratives agree, that the jarl did not take direct part in the battle, only Snorri informs us, that when the fight was almost finished and Óláfr Tryggvason already fell, Sigvaldi and his army joined the coalitions.

Although the saga authors admit, that little is known about Sigvaldi's participation in the battle, they boldly create an image of another enemy of the king of Norway, who deceitfully and treacherously contributed to his fall. Creating this motive, the saga authors used particular pieces of skaldic poetry: stanza 2 of Halldór ókristni's *Eiriksflokkur*, stanza 2 of Skúli Þórsteinsson's *Poem of Svoldr* and one of Stefnir Þórgilsson's *lausavísur*.

In the first of the verses listed above we read:

Eyna fór ok einu, unnviggs, konungr sunnan, sverð rauð, matr, at morði meidr, sjau togum skeiða,	þás húnlagar hreina hafði jarl of krafða, satt gekk seggja atar sundr, Skönunga fundar. ⁴⁴
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The great king of isles came from the south with 71 ships, the host of stalions of waves [ships] reddened their swords in fight; then jarl of Scanians called sea-reindeers [ships] for gathering, peace among warriors is broken.

In Oddr Snorrason's saga, the stanza in question is preceded by a prose narrative about Sigvaldi, his journey from Jomsborg to Scania and about Óláfr Tryggvason who left Vindland with 71 ships. The way Oddr used this fragment of *Eiriksflokkur* show, that, in his opinion, skald refers exactly to the jarl Sigvaldi. However, one can assume, that it is possible to trace some gradation of information. Oddr first writes about Sigvaldi and his journey to Scania (*Sigpaldi var þa farin norþr a scaney*) and only in the second, separate sentence, he refers to the size of Óláfr's fleet (*Olafr konungr hafði eitt skip oc lxx skipa*) which is closed with the formula *sua segir haldorr hinn ucristni*. One may have an impression, that Oddr quoted his stanza first of all to corroborate what he wrote about the size of Óláfr's fleet rather than about the Sigvaldi's deeds.

Fagrskinna seems to confirm, that stanza 2 of *Eiriksflokkur* was treated by the saga authors that way. The author of the saga, similarly to Oddr, quoted Halldór's verse in a prose context of military help for Óláfr Tryggvason, but he is silent about Sigvaldi. He neither writes about his conspiracy against the Norwegian king, nor his journey with Óláfr towards Svoldr. One may have an impression, that contrary to the monk from Þingeyrar, *Fagrskinna's* author did not identify the jarl, whom mentions Halldór ókristni, with Sigvaldi but rather Eirik jarl of Hlaðir, who appears in the same chapter.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ F. Jónsson 1912: 193.

⁴⁵ See Fsk 2004: 118 note 310 for Alison Finlay's similar assumption..

The stanza in question is quoted also in *Heimskringla* by Snorri Sturluson. He puts the verse directly after he describes how Óláfr Tryggvason and Sigvaldi left together Jomsborg and the jarl, planning to trap him, led the Norwegian king towards Svoldr. There is rather no doubt, that for Snorri, it is Sigvaldi, who is mentioned by Halldór in his stanza.

In similar context stanza 2 of *Eiríksflokkur* is quoted by the author of *en mesta*, who, following Snorri, also used the verse while describing Óláfr Tryggvason's and Sigvaldi's journey from Vindland to Svoldr.

The way saga authors used this Halldór's piece of poetry, seems to indicate, that we deal with their lack of homogenous understanding of the content of the stanza. Consequently, they seem to be completely free in quoting it, following their subjective opinions instead of the content of the given verse. This lack of uniform interpretation of the stanza probably means, that for the saga authors it was not so obvious, that skald in fact referred to Sigvaldi in his stanza. As we can only speculate about it following Oddr's narrative, *Fagrskinna* rather clearly demonstrates, that Halldór might have referred to someone else. Only Snorri Sturluson and *en mesta* have no doubts in that matter. This situation meant a possibility of free usage of the stanza, and the saga authors did not hesitate to do so. Although the content of the first *helming* seemed quite restrictive for them, as they, quoting it, consequently inform us about the size of the fleet of *Eyna konungr* in their prose,⁴⁶ we observe a completely different attitude in the case of the second part of the stanza. Oddr uses it to corroborate his account about Sigvaldi's dirty tricks against Óláfr Tryggvason in Jomsborg and the jarl's journey to Scania. For Snorri and the author of *en mesta*, it was the evidence of Sigvaldi leading the Norwegian king directly into the trap.

We can observe a similar attitude in modern scholarship. The second *helming* of Halldór's stanza has been broadly commented on so far. The identification of the jarl was the subject of debate. Alexander Bugge found it possible, that skald referred to Sigvaldi.⁴⁷ Finnur Jónsson had a similar opinion. He kept in mind, that according to Snorri, Sigvaldi, after the battle in Hjörungavåg, became the jarl of Scania, that's why, in his opinion, the second *helming* refers to *the jarl of Scania (jarl Skónunga), who gathered fleet to fight*. We can find such an interpretation in Finnur's classic edition of skaldic poetry.⁴⁸

Finnur's opinion was rejected by other scholars who, first of all, could not agree with linking the mysterious jarl with Scania. According to Ove Moberg⁴⁹ and Svend Ellehøj,⁵⁰ Halldór refers to *jarl who moved his ship to meet Scanians*, but it was Eirik jarl of Hlaðir. Walter Baetke⁵¹ argued that skald's intention

⁴⁶ For the analysis of this epithet and identification of *Eyna konungr* see J. Morawiec 2007.

⁴⁷ A. Bugge 1910: 32.

⁴⁸ F. Jónsson 1912: 193.

⁴⁹ O. Moberg 1940: 12-14.

⁵⁰ S. Ellehøj 1953: 6.

⁵¹ W. Baetke 1951: 86-87.

was to inform, that *jarl collected Scanian ships to fight*. Also in his opinion, Halldór referred to jarl Eirik. Baetke's arguments were questioned by Gerard Labuda, who, although admitted, that the skald mentions Eirik,⁵² but drew attention to the fact, that Hakon's son could not have gathered the army in Scania if, according to Halldór, he did it in Sweden and Scania belonged to Denmark.⁵³ Thus, in Labuda's opinion, stanza 2 of *Eiriksflokk* refers to jarl Eirik, who joined his army with Scanian (i.e. Danish) forces, just before the battle began.⁵⁴

It is easy to see that lack of uniform interpretation of the stanza was characteristic for the saga authors and modern scholars as well. Part of the former found Sigvaldi in Halldór's verse, most of the latter jarl Eirik. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Halldór ókristni could, in fact, refer to someone else. One has to agree with the opinion, that Oddr and Snorri wrongly interpreted Halldór's stanza. Although Snorri links Sigvaldi with Scania, but he is the only one to do it. Besides, his account is inconsistent with probably older tradition, presented by e.g. the survived *Jómsvíkinga saga* redactions, which points to the fact that Sigvaldi descended from jarls of Zeland, and after the battle in Hjørungavåg, he came back to his family estates.⁵⁵ Other accounts followed this tradition. Consequently, it is difficult to agree with Bugge and Jónsson that Sigvaldi is *jarl Skönunga*. In my opinion, those scholars who interpret Halldór's stanza differently, pointing to Eirik, are wrong too. In attempt to propose an alternative interpretation, I would come back to the way stanza 2 of *Eiriksflokk* Finnur Jónsson understood. I agree with him, that it is possible to link the words *jarl* and *Skönunga*, but in my opinion, we should identify *jarl of Scanians* with someone completely different. It should be emphasized, that we deal on this occasion with the reference to the region, which at that time, was an integral and crucial part of Denmark. The status and development of Lund, first as the royal minting place, later as the bishopric seat, is the best evidence for it.⁵⁶ Harald Gormsson's decision to built another Trelleborg camp there supports it as well. Ruling over fertile Scania, Danish kings were able to control effectively Øresund. Thus it is not surprising, that they constantly underlined their political dominance in Scania. Skaldic corpus provides us with interesting examples. In the poem composed for Harald Gormsson, Einarr Helgason calls the Danish king *frökn jöfurr Lundar lands* (*valiant prince of the land of Lund* i.e. Scania).⁵⁷ Ottar svartir referring to Knutr inn ríki's conquer of England in *Knútsdrápa*, emphasizes, that the king *bjótt Skönunga lið* (*called the host of Scania*).⁵⁸ Þjóðolfr Arnórsson, in his *Magnúsflokk*, calls the Norwegian and Danish king Magnus

⁵² G. Labuda 1964: 250.

⁵³ G. Labuda 1964: 251.

⁵⁴ G. Labuda 1964: 252.

⁵⁵ Jms: 39: 204-205.

⁵⁶ See B. Malmer 1991: 187-196.

⁵⁷ F. Jónsson 1912: 116.

⁵⁸ F. Jónsson 1912: 273.

góði Skǫnunga harri (ruler of Scania) and *allvaldr Lundar haldi* (sovereign of Lund estates).⁵⁹ Doubtlessly, these expressions are not accidental, and we can assume, that such epithets were suggested to the skalds, most probably by someone from king's retinue. Although there is a scanty number of surviving skaldic stanzas contributed to Danish kings, it is possible to trace some tendency, which stanza 2 of *Eiríksflokkur* follows. Consequently, it lets me assume, that *jarl Skǫnunga* is in fact Svein Forkbeard who could have been very interested in underlying his rights to Scania, especially in the time of restoring his power in Denmark after coming back from exile.

The identification of *jarl of Scanians* with Svein Forkbeard is not only in accordance with other tools of propaganda used by Danish kings. It matches very well the context of stanza 2 and the whole *Eiríksflokkur*. Among the eight surviving stanzas of the poem, the first three can be treated as a kind of introduction of the main participants of the battle. Stanza 1 informs us about jarl Eirik, collecting fleet in Sweden and progressing towards south. The second stanza, according to my interpretation, introduces Svein Forkbeard, Eirik's ally, who having gathered his fleet, arrived at the place of the battle. Finally, stanza 3 refers to Óláfr Tryggvason, who came on his main ship. Further stanzas focus on the direct fight between the Norwegian king's army and forces of jarl Eirik, the main hero of the *flokkur*.

This analysis seems to indicate, that stanza 2 of *Eiríksflokkur*, mistakenly used by the saga authors to corroborate their prose accounts about Sigvaldi's participation in the battle of Svoldr, hardly can be treated as the evidence for jarl's presence among those who fought in Øresund. The fact, that the saga authors felt free to use the stanza in a completely unrestricted way, indicates, that, similarly to modern scholars, they interpreted it's meaning very differently. It is especially easy to see in the case of the second *helming* of the stanza, where the skald introduced the mysterious jarl, whose identification caused so many problems. It makes a modern reader to look very sceptically at saga narratives, constructed basing on the stanza, on the other hand, to look for alternative proposals. The attempt to compare Halldór ókristni's devise he used in stanza 2 of his *flokkur*, with other similar expressions found in contemporary skaldic poems, can help with omitting such embarrassing situation. We can observe, that the references to rule over Scania, are introduced in skaldic poetry in connection with Danish kings. It lets me assume, that in the case of *Eiríksflokkur*, we deal with a similar situation. Moreover, the proposed identification of *jarl Skǫnunga* with Svein Forkbeard does not corrupt the general sense and content of the poem.

Also stanza 2 of Skúli Þórsteinsson's *Poem about Svoldr* served saga authors as the evidence of Sigvaldi's participation in the events of the year 1000:

⁵⁹ F. Jónsson 1912: 336.

Fylgðak Frisa dolgi, fekk ungr, þars spjor sungu, nú fiðr old at eldumk, aldrbót, ok Sigvalda	þás til móts við moeti malþings í dyn hjalma sunnr fyr Svoldrar mynni sárlauk roðinn borum. ⁶⁰
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I followed the enemy of Frisians and Sigvaldi then, when spears roared, as young I won fame, now people see I am mature; we carried swords to meet the one who takes part in meeting of weapons [battle<warrior], in noise of helmets [battle], south from the mouth of Svoldr.

This fragment of the poem is of crucial importance also regarding the name Svoldr that appears there. An interesting fact is, that his stanza, referring in it's second *helming* to a fight at the mouth of some river, paradoxically, was not quoted to corroborate the prose narratives locating the battle at the island Svoldr.⁶¹

Oddr Snorrason and the author of *Fagrskinna* almost in the same way explain why they quote this stanza. According to them *er Sigvalda lítt við orrostuna getit (little is known about Sigvaldi in connection with the battle)*, although – according to both accounts – there were four chieftains, two kings and two jarls, who took part in the battle. That's why, both authors quote Skúli's stanza, as it is he, who *segir í sinum flokki, at Sigvaldi var Þar (says in his poem, that Sigvaldi was there)*.

In the context of both narratives, Oddr's saga and *Fagrskinna*, the case of using stanza 2 of Skúli's *flokkr* is quite obvious. Both authors were convinced that Sigvaldi took part in the battle and although at the same time they were aware that little is known about that, skald's verse was sufficient enough to corroborate their prose accounts.⁶²

Snorri Sturluson and author of *en mesta* also shared this opinion. The jarl of Jomsborg plays an important role in their narratives as well. Both authors quote Skúli's stanza. But, surprisingly, they do so to corroborate their prose accounts telling that Sigvaldi avoided direct fight against Óláfr Tryggvason and looked for an shelter near the island. It is puzzling, as content of stanza 2 of *Poem about Svoldr* is rather unequivocal. It refers to two chieftains, one of them is called Sigvaldi, whom the skald mentions when *spjör sungu*, and who, like Skúli, *börum roðinn sárlauk in dyn hjalma*. It is difficult to understand, how the given verse could have been the evidence for the jarl's military reluctance, since the stanza itself presents something completely opposite. Perhaps, such an interpretation of this stanza, made by Snorri (*en mesta* relies strictly on *Heimskringla* in that matter), was influenced by stanza 3 of Hallfreð Óttarsson's *Óláfsdrápa erfídrápa* (also quoted by Snorri), where the skald states that in his last battle, Óláfr Tryggvason fought against two kings and one jarl.

Once again, the saga authors in a completely unrestricted and free way quoted the skaldic stanza, evidently ignoring it's potentially original meaning.

⁶⁰ F. Jónsson 1912: 283.

⁶¹ For more thorough commentary see J. Morawiec 2007.

⁶² See S. Rafnsson 2005: 41.

Comparably, neither Snorri Sturluson nor the author of *en mesta* mention that there is little known about Sigvaldi's participation in the battle and they do not seem to treat Skúli Þórsteinsson's as the last sheet-anchor to prove their accounts. *Heimskringla* clearly demonstrates the way the saga authors reconstructed the past, relying on the skald's authority. Snorri, noting that Sigvaldi, contrary to the rest of the coalitions, did not attend the battle but was awaiting its final score near the island, ends his account with the words: *svá segir Skúli Þórsteinsson, hann var þá með Eiriki jarli*. There is no doubt, that the author of *Heimskringla*, similarly to other writers quoting this stanza, identified the jarl of Hlaðir with Sigvaldi's companion, called *Frísa dólgr* (*enemy of Frisians*) by the skald.

This identification have caused many problems to modern scholars. Lauritz Weibull⁶³ and Ove Moberg⁶⁴ argued that the skald does not refer in this stanza to Eirik as there is nothing known about his military affairs in Frisia. They both suggested that Skúli could have mentioned a completely different Viking raid, having nothing in common with the battle in Øresund. Leon Koczy⁶⁵ had similar view. This scholar, although found identification of *enemy of Frisians* with jarl Hakon's son possible, did not exclude that Skúli referred to totally different events. Koczy, however, incorrectly reads the stanza as, according to him, Eirik fought not with but against Sigvaldi.⁶⁶ Walter Baetke, who rejected Weibull's and Moberg's opinions,⁶⁷ insists that Eirik is *Frísa dólgr*.⁶⁸ Moreover, this scholar, strictly relying on Odrr Snorrason, links events, described in the stanza, with the year 1000. His arguments are based on the conviction that if it is known, that Skúli fought in the battle, he surely wanted to emphasize it.⁶⁹ Baetke's opinions were rejected by Gerard Labuda, who, similarly to the previous scholars, argued, that although the skald possibly refers to jarl Eirik, but in connection with a totally different campaign, having nothing in common with the last Óláfr Tryggvason's battle.⁷⁰

Whether *Frísa dólgr* is Eirik or not, is of minor importance in the context of the battle and Sigvaldi's attendance. I cannot agree with Labuda, who writes, that the stanza in question was part of the praise poem for Eirik.⁷¹ It is likely that it was the jarl of Hlaðir who was called *enemy of Frisians*, since Skúli Þórsteinsson was remembered as Eirik's skald by the tradition⁷². Whereas, as

⁶³ L. Weibull 1911: 127.

⁶⁴ O. Moberg 1940: 4-5.

⁶⁵ L. Koczy 1934: 101.

⁶⁶ L. Koczy 1934: 101.

⁶⁷ W. Baetke 1951: 92-93.

⁶⁸ W. Baetke 1951: 95.

⁶⁹ W. Baetke 1951: 95.

⁷⁰ G. Labuda 1964: 244-245.

⁷¹ G. Labuda 1964: 245 note 34.

⁷² Egil: 87: 294: *hann var stafnbúi Eiríks jarls á Járnbarðanum, þá er Óláfr konungr Tryggvason fell; Skúli hafði átt í víking sjau orrostur*.

Bjarne Fidjestol⁷³ and Alison Finlay⁷⁴ rightly point out, Skúli's poem is *flokkr* containing loosely connected stanzas, referring to various deeds of the poet. Among them is the fight *sunnr fyr Svólrar mynni*. Except verse 2, stanzas 3, 4 and 5 of the poem also refer to his event. In verse 3 the skald generally mentions how he fed ravens i.e. killed people (*gafk árflogni sárar*).⁷⁵ In the following stanza Skúli precises, that he reddened his sword near Svoldr for gold (*rauðk Reifnis réfrvita fyr Svóldr til auðar*),⁷⁶ and in stanza 5 he informs us that he, probably thanks to the fight, by killing many (*feldum val*), gained a lot of gold (*fleiri Freyju tór*).⁷⁷

We deal here with the description of a typical Viking expedition, that let it's participants gain booty and fame and show their military skills. One needs a lot of determination, specific for the saga authors, to see in Skúli Þórsteinsson's description the evidence of the last Óláfr Tryggvason's battle. If, as Baetke argues, the skald tried by these verses to prove his part in the battle in Øresund, he would doubtlessly mention fallen Óláfr Tryggvason, his lord's arch enemy, similarly to Halldór ókristni, another member of Eirik's *hirð*. But such thing does not happen. Thus, one may agree with Weibull, Koczy, Moberg and Labuda, that Skúli's poem, contrary to the saga accounts, does not refer to the events from the year 1000. Once again, the stanza, mistakenly quoted by the saga authors to corroborate their prose narratives about Sigvaldi, can be hardly treated as an evidence of the jarl's presence among those who fought against the Norwegian king in the year 1000.⁷⁸

Part of the narratives also connect Sigvaldi with the battle quoting one of Stefnir Þorgilsson's *lausavísur* :

Munkat nefna,	þanns Svein konung
nér munk stefna:	sveik ór landi
niðrbjúgt es nef	ok Tryggva son
á níðingi,	á talar dró. ⁷⁹

I won't call a name though I aim well; downwards hooked nose of the coward, one who deprived Svein of the land and led Tryggve's son into trap.

Although the skald does not name directly Sigvaldi in this stanza, an evident example of *niðvísur*, saga authors, who quoted it in their narratives, had no doubts, that Stefnir refers to the jarl of Jomsborg.

⁷³ B. Fidjestol 1980: 265.

⁷⁴ Fsk 2004: 123 note 323.

⁷⁵ F. Jónsson 1912: 283.

⁷⁶ F. Jónsson 1912: 284.

⁷⁷ F. Jónsson 1912: 284.

⁷⁸ We can only speculate, that Skúli's stanzas refer to Eirik's and Sigvaldi's joint war expedition and the latter can be identified with the earl who fought at Hjørungavágr. This attack, organized purely for plunder, might have been directed on Slavic, e.g. Lutician territories.

⁷⁹ F. Jónsson 1912: 146.

Oddr Snorrason quoted his stanza at the end of chapter 65. What constitutes his final part is the description of Sigvaldi's meeting with Óláfr Tryggvason in Vindland, during which the jarl assured the king about lack of any danger, swearing that everything he says is true. Then Oddr interpolates his commentary, that Óláfr was betrayed according to God's will and then he quotes Stefñir's verse.

The author of *Fagrskinna* knew Stefñir's stanza. He quoted it in his narrative directly after describing how the Norwegian king, sailing towards Svoldr, began to have some presentiment of danger and thus decided to stop his journey near the island. Then Sigvaldi moved his ships along the island towards the Norwegian fleet. The whole description ends with the statement *fyrir því kvað Stefñir svá um Sigvalda* (for that reason, Stefñir composed it about Sigvaldi) and a quotation of the skald's verse.

In a completely different context Stefñir's stanza was used by the author of *en mesta*, although even he did not have any doubts, that it's unnamed and negative hero is Sigvaldi. According to the saga, after Óláfr Tryggvason's death, Stefñir, like other king's friends, was very grieved and, because of that, he did not want to stay in Norway any longer. Instead, he decided to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. Coming back from there, he got to Danemark. There, in an unspecified place, Stefñir met Sigvaldi and then he recited his stanza. The jarl had quickly recognised the verse addressed to him and thus he ordered to kill the skald.

Similarly to the above instances, the saga authors very unrestrictedly used Stefñir's stanza, quoting it while describing totally different motives (although connected with the battle) so presumably differently interpreting the verse. It is striking, that they are constantly convinced that Stefñir refers to Sigvaldi, even if the skald does not mention him by name. One can assume, that once again, the saga authors, mistakenly or freely understanding the content of the stanza, quoted it to corroborate the motive of treacherous Sigvaldi and his part in the battle, invented only by themselves.⁸⁰

The same attitude seems to characterize scholarly debate. Leon Koczy already pointed out, that even if Stefñir's stanza may give us some insight into Sigvaldi's treachery, it's circumstances are obscure for us.⁸¹ A new and inspiring look at the stanza in question was made by Walter Baetke,⁸² who argued, that Oddr Snorrason, being acquainted with *Jómsvíkinga saga*, used the motive of Sigvaldi's treachery present there for his own purpose, namely to create a new motive of betrayal of the Norwegian king, inspired strongly by evangelical motive of Judas's treachery of Christ. In Baetke's opinion, the stanza contributed to Stefñir Þorgilsson could have been composed in fact by Oddr himself.

Baetke's arguments have been recently analysed by Theodore Andersson. In his opinion, an uncompromising view that Stefñir's stanza is fictitious, has to

⁸⁰ See G. Lange 1989: 67.

⁸¹ L. Koczy 1934: 101.

⁸² W. Baetke 1970: 1-18.

be considered with the help of *Kristni saga*, which also quotes the verse, in almost the same context as *en mesta*, but with the commentary, that the whole story is confirmed by Ari Þorgilsson.⁸³ Andersson rejects Baetke's opinion, that Ari's account could not have included „Danish motives” (e.g. Svein Forkbeard's capture), as, according to him, treachery against Óláfr is the main motive of the stanza, and, itself too important for the history of Norway, could not have been omitted by him.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Andersson finds arguments confirming Baetke's thesis about the parallels between it and the story of Judas. He underlined the motive of the downwards hooked nose, the detail connected in iconography exactly with the Christ's betrayer.⁸⁵ Andersson is, however, not sure if this motive was known in 10th–13th century Scandinavia. Nevertheless, although still unwilling to accept Baetke's opinion about Oddr's initiative, Andersson admits that this motive (Christ's betrayer) was crucial for Stefnir's stanza.⁸⁶ He admits, that the skald, typically for *niðvísur* convention, wanted to slander the receiver of the verse, who might have been Sigvaldi. The comparison to Judas, the worst betrayer (by supplementing the motive of downwards hooked nose) fully justified the jarl's reaction, described by sagas.⁸⁷

Andersson's opinions will be used here as the starting point for my further arguments. In my view, we can find some elements in his analysis, that on the one hand should be questioned, on the other, can be important for drawing conclusions about Sigvaldi and his part in the battle in Øresund. As first should be listed the view that in the light of Stefnir's stanza Óláfr Tryggvason appears as quasi saint, strictly following the Christ's life.⁸⁸ Such an opinion would have ideally suited Oddr Snorrason's conception and probably this is what Andersson tried to achieve, since in his study he underlines how this perspective influenced the classification of the saga. He rightly indicates, that the stanza in question was a libel and such a type of skaldic activity meant focusing exclusively on slandered person. Second element of Andersson's study, which, in my opinion, should be argued, is the view that the reference to Denmark we find in Stefnir's stanza is accidental.⁸⁹ Firstly, the content of the verse itself does not allow to make such a gradation, secondly, that Óláfr Tryggvason's treason is so strongly emphasized is not the effect of the skald's efforts but the saga authors' who, as Baetke rightly indicates, did not hesitate to use this motive in their narratives.

In my opinion, there are reasons to look at those “Danish motives” more carefully and to propose an alternative interpretation of Stefnir's stanza. Then, contrary to Andersson, I would like to place this verse in the context of the

⁸³ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 21.

⁸⁴ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 21.

⁸⁵ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 22-23.

⁸⁶ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 23.

⁸⁷ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 23.

⁸⁸ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 25.

⁸⁹ Th. M. Andersson 2003: 21.

historical events, it presumably refers to. Stefnir mentions in his stanza a person, who *Svein konung sveik ór landi ok Tryggva son á talar dró*. Although, there is no direct reference to Sigvaldi in it, those, e.g. Oddr Snorrason, who were responsible for the tradition, had no doubts, that it was the jarl of Jomsborg who was the receiver of the verse. Andersson rightly states, that the fact that Stefnir's stanza is quoted in *Kristni saga* with the reference to Ari Þorgilsson can let us assume, that it is not only Oddr Snorrason who stands behind the connection of the verse with Sigvaldi. Consequently, it may indeed be treated as an effect of some real events from the past.

The content of the stanza, allows much broader interpretation than it would have been expected at the first sight. Saga accounts suggest, that their authors linked reference to the king of Danemark directly with the events described in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, namely the capture of Svein Forkbeard by Sigvaldi and taking him away to Jomsborg. It made the saga authors conclude, that if the jarl was the one who captured the Danish king, then the same person led Óláfr Tryggvason into the trap. In other words, Stefnir referred in his stanza to two separate events, Svein's capture and the conspiracy against the Norwegian king. Alison Finlay and Theodore Andersson, who have commented Stefnir's verse recently, seem to accept such an interpretation. But as such, in my opinion, it raises some doubts. They result, first of all, from the context we find the stanza in *en mesta*. As the narrative of *Kristni saga* seems to indicate, this context can have some other source in tradition, older than those which link it with the battle of Svoldr. It is striking, why Sigvaldi, who after the year 1000, according to the saga, still resided in Danemark, was offended that the skald reminded him that *then jarl led the Norwegian king into trap*, since, doing this, he was realizing Svein's plan? Jarl's postulated impetuous reaction suggests that the skald's allusions were rather uncomfortable for him and should be forgotten. But in the context of saga account such reaction looks odd and even illogical. The deed, causing slander in the quoted stanza, could be treated by Sigvaldi as the evidence for his loyal service and even political talents. Thus it is doubtful, whether the motive of treachery against Óláfr Tryggvason, in the context of the place where, according to the saga, Sigvaldi resided, would have been an opportunity for the skald to slander the jarl with *niðvísur* so strongly that causing Stefnir's death? The jarl could have felt embarrassed listening to the skald referring to the capture of the Danish king, but firstly, still basing on the saga account, Svein benefited with gaining Burisleifr as an ally, secondly, the Danish king had to forgive jarl, since Sigvaldi supported Svein in his conspiracy against Óláfr Tryggvason.

In my opinion, these doubts, shake this presumably solid interpretation of the Stefnir's stanza. Although comparison to Judas, the worst of the betrayers, was so effective, that the skald could expect jarl's utmost reaction. Nevertheless this slander is seriously weakened by its interpretation proposed by the saga author, the interpretation that raises serious doubts.

In my opinion, they can be drastically reduced, if the phrase *Svein konung sveik ór landi ok Tryggva son á talar dró*, which we find in Stefnir's stanza will be treated as the evidence of one event, common for Svein Forkbeard and Óláfr Tryggvason. Consequently, it means that the saga authors' interpretation must be rejected, since neither the Norwegian king was captured together with Svein nor the Danish king lost his kingdom while trapping Óláfr Tryggvason. This leads to the proposal of an alternative translation and interpretation of the fragment *Svein konung sveik ór landi*. It is particularly connected with the verb *svíkja*, translated so far as *to lure*, what consequently meant, that the skald wanted to emphasize that Svein was lured from his kingdom. Such an interpretation of the stanza was evidently influenced by saga account, that links Stefnir's reference to Svein with the episode described in *Jómsvíkinga saga*.

Meanwhile the verb *svíkja* can be translated as *to deprive (somebody of something)*. This lets me assume, that Stefnir referred in his stanza, evidently being lampoon, to Svein being deprived of his kingdom. Consequently, the skald's words can be connected with the events from the early 990s when Svein was attacked by the Swedish king Eirik the Victorious and forced to leave the country. One must question how these events can be connected with the phrase *ok Tryggva son á talar dró*? It seems to me, that such a connection is possible to determine, when the analysis is supplemented with the account of stanza 5 of Hallfreð Ottarsson's *Olafsdrápa*:

Böðserkjar hjó birki	hleyptimeðidr fyr Heiða
barklaust i Danmörku	hlunnviggja bý sunnan. ⁹⁰

The one who moves planked stalions [shipse<warriors] broke birches of battle shirts [byrinies<warriors] in Danemark, south from Hedeby.

Part of later narratives (*Heimskringla, en mesta*) quoted this stanza to corroborate accounts about Óláfr Tryggvason taking part in the battle between Otto II and Harald Gormson At Danevirke, where Tryggve's son together with Burisleifr supported the emperor. This motive has been found fictitious in scholarly debate.⁹¹ Nevertheless, there is no reason not to believe the skald, who, among various Óláfr's military achievements, lists the fights near Hedeby. Considering the whole *Olafsdrápa*, one can assume, that the events described in stanza 5 had taken place before Óláfr came to England, that is around the year 991.⁹² It is possible, that they are strictly connected with the Swedish attack on Danemark. Placing Hallfreð's and Stefnir's stanzas in one context results with the assumption that Tryggve's son could have taken part in his conflict, supporting Svein Forkbeard. Although the content of stanza 5 of *Olafsdrápa* suggests, that fight-

⁹⁰ F. Jónsson 1912: 149.

⁹¹ See K. Wachowski 1931: 181; L. Koczy 1934: 77; T. N. Jackson 2006: 426-434.

⁹² See J. Morawiec 2006: 591-592.

ing at Hedeby, Óláfr did not lack military luck, i.e. he was victorious, but one needs to remember about two things, skaldic rhetoric and lack of certainty, that, if true, hero's attitude meant the final victory.

There are other features, that seem to create a possibility of linking this fragment of Hallfreð's poem with the events that led to Svein's loss of power and the kingdom. Firstly, Hedeby as port-of-trade played an important role in Denmark and we can assume, that the Swedish king, willing to take control over the whole country, certainly made military attempts to capture it. Secondly, Óláfr's and Svein's short-lived but close cooperation in England, which included three years of constant attacks on Æthelred's kingdom, could have started already in Denmark, when the future Norwegian king, then still gaining fame, position and property, could have looked for another chance to take.

I am aware of the fact, that my proposal to date Óláfr's and Svein's cooperation back to "Danish period", i.e. before it is noted by the Anglo-Saxon sources, is rather hypothetical. It is based only on linking two separate skaldic stanzas, which presumably, did not have anything in common. The thesis, that, nonetheless, they refer to the same events, is supported by the new interpretation of Stefnir Þorgilsson's *lausavísa*, which, in my opinion, eliminates many doubts raised by the way the verse was used and interpreted by the saga authors.

But far more important than the authenticity of this so early dated both chieftains' cooperation, is conclusion, that Stefnir's stanza as such was mistakenly quoted by the saga authors and does not corroborate their prose narratives. Consequently, it can hardly be treated as an evidence for Sigvaldi's part in Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle.

There is one more aspect to consider. Only this new interpretation of Stefnir's stanza lets suit it with the context of both *Kristni saga* and *en mesta*, that quote the verse. If we assume, that the skald composing a lampoon against Sigvaldi, not only slandered him calling him betrayer, but also referred to prove the betrayal, the jarl's utmost reaction can not surprise. Fighting against Svein Forkbeard, attacked by the Swedes, could be treated as Sigvaldi's treachery against his sovereign. Those facts could have been unpleasant and politically uncomfortable for Sigvaldi, especially when he still resided in Denmark, ruled by far more powerful Svein, and made him react very rapidly hearing such accusations.

What is the relation of this alternatively interpreted Stefnir's stanza to the historical reality? Tradition is unanimous and solid – the skald referred to the jarl of Jomsborg. Nowadays, there is lack of strong arguments to reject that view. Historical Sigvaldi, who commanded the Danish fleet at Hjørungavåg, could, as the consequence of his attitude, have lost his position and power and save only the family estates. Potential king's disgrace could have raised the jarl's will to take revenge. Swedish attack in the early 990s could be a great opportunity. On the other hand, saving the family estates and resumption of the king's grace, postulated by saga tradition, can be treated as the evidence of such a strong po-

sition of the historical Sigvaldi's family, that the Danish kings had to show their consideration for. The example of Þorkell háfi, Sigvaldi's brother, much better enlightened in the contemporary sources and his relations with Svein Forkbeard, seem to support the view.⁹³

The saga authors, willing to corroborate their accounts about Sigvaldi and his part in the events of the year 1000, quoted skaldic stanzas. But the verses they use: stanza 2 of Halldór ókristni's *Eiríksflokkur*, stanza 2 of Skúli Þórsteinsson's *Poem of Svoldr* and one of Stefnir Þórgilsson's lausavísur, can hardly be treated as the evidence of that.

These stanzas were very unrestrictedly interpreted, used and connected with various motives of the battle of Svoldr by the saga authors themselves, who perhaps followed the earlier tradition. Admitting that there is little known about Sigvaldi in connection with the battle, they tried to "adapt" the skaldic accounts to the already constructed narratives.

These pieces of skaldic poetry, analysed once more, seem in fact to refer to completely different persons and/or events, having nothing in common with either Sigvaldi or the battle in Øresund.

Thus, it should be categorically stated, that the skaldic stanzas quoted in saga prose narratives do not corroborate accounts about Sigvaldi's part in the Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle.⁹⁴

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⁹³ See A. Kruhoffer 2006: 514-523.

⁹⁴ Another worth noting account is *Hallfreðar saga*, where we find information, that Hallfreð Ottarsson, still before the year 1000, during one of his travels, came to Sigvaldi's court and recited *flokkur* praising the jarl there (Hallfreðr: 168). It is doubtless, that note about the poem, was for the author of the saga the main reason to describe this motive. Considering tradition about Hallfreð's poem praising Sigvaldi and the jarl's part in the events of the year 1000 and his treachery against Óláfr Tryggvason as reliable, it is striking that Hallfreð didn't mention these facts in his poem about the battle (*Olafsdrápa erfídrápa*) although he didn't hesitate to accuse people of Trøndelag of such an attitude. In my opinion, it is another feature, proving that the whole account about Sigvaldi and his part in the battle in Øresund is based on free and unrestrictive interpretation of older sources.

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