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## **Böglunga saga (styttri gerð)**

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## Abstract

This is a translation of the shorter version of 'Boglunga saga', a history detailing the events of the Norwegian civil war and the struggles of succession after the death of King Sverrir. This is the younger version of Boglunga saga, covering the period 1202 to 1209.

The translation is accompanied by an introductory essay, a summary of the plot and central characters, and an appendix of placenames.

Ritgerðin er að meginhluta ensk þýðing á styttri gerð Böglunga sögu, sagnfræðilegt rit um borgarastríð í Noregi og átök um völd í kjölfar andláts Sverris konungs. Þetta er síðari gerð Böglunga sögu og nær yfir árin milli 1202 og 1209. Með þýðingunni fylgja inngangsrítgerð, efnislýsing ásamt kynningu á meginpersónum sögunnar. Loks er viðauki með örnefnum.

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## **Böglunga saga (styttri gerð) – translated to English from the Old Icelandic**

### **Introduction**

Böglunga saga is one of the *konungasögur* or king's sagas. It provides a brief history of a few years of the protracted Norwegian Civil War. The saga begins during the aftermath of the death of King Sverrir Sigurðarson and chronicles the struggles for power between the Baglar and Birkibeinar factions as they vie for control of a disunified Norway. The two versions of this saga are valuable sources for the events of the civil war. They serve as a direct sequel to *Sverris saga*, and are important in understanding the later events in *Hákonar saga*.<sup>1</sup>

*Böglunga saga* is preserved in two versions, and is extant in seven manuscripts (of which some are only fragments). The older and shorter version "S" (for styttri gerð), and the younger and longer version "L" (for lengri gerð). *Böglunga saga* (S) roughly covers the period from 1202 to 1209, and *Böglunga saga* (L) covers the period 1202 to 1217. Both versions begin in the summer when King Sverrir Sigurðarson died, but the longer version continues on past the wedding of Philippus of Veigin to the ultimate conclusion of the civil war.

*Böglunga saga* (S) has survived in three manuscripts: Sk: AM 81 a fol., Skálholtsbók (yngsta); E: AM 47 fol., Eirspennill; and AM 325 VIII 4a 4to. *Böglunga saga* (L) survives in four manuscripts, of which three are fragments: AM 325 VIII 4b 4to; AM 325 VIII 4c 4to; AM 325 VIII X 4to. The only manuscript containing a full version of *Böglunga saga* (L) is the 17<sup>th</sup> century translation into Danish by Peder Claussøn Friis in *Norske Kongers Chronica*. The number of preserved manuscripts containing the two versions, in whole or in part, of *Böglunga saga* is a testament to the historical importance of the text as the key textual source for the period.

Neither version has received a great deal of attention from scholars, therefore my discussion of the historiography will necessarily be brief. The shorter version was last translated in 1889 into Danish and Latin, and until now has never been translated into English. It was only with the recent publication of *Hákonar saga I* by Íslenzk fornrit that the saga has been readily available in the original language. A translation of both the longer and shorter versions of *Böglunga saga* would be valuable, but unfortunately the scope of this thesis does not allow for it.

The author of *Böglunga saga* (S) maintains a neutral stance throughout the saga. Any factional sympathies or prejudices he may have held are not evident in the text. The author of *Böglunga saga* (L) can arguably be seen as more sympathetic to the Birkibeinar faction<sup>2</sup>. Both versions were written anonymously, as was common practice at the time.

It is my hope that by translating *Böglunga saga* (S) into English a new, wider audience may be found for the text. I expect this translation to be particularly useful for students interested in Medieval Norwegian history who have not yet attained a working knowledge of Old Norse-Icelandic.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hákonar saga I*, Hið íslenska fornritafélag, p. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> *Hákonar saga I*, Hið íslenska fornritafélag, p. xv.

## On the difficulty of translation

In terms of style *Böglunga saga* (S) is very much a dry history rather than a truly literary work. For the most part the author presents the events of the saga almost as if he were simply chronicling the order in which they happened. Dialogue is minimal, with the author choosing to paraphrase most of what is said. A significant proportion of the text is given over to series of short sentences listing minor events in sequence. The manner in which these event sequences are presented is often formulaic, usually the sentence begins with the conjunction *en* (then, and, but, when, et cetera) followed by a simple action. This frequent, repetitive formula made the process of translation very tedious at times, and presented a significant challenge in creating a translation which is both faithful to the original style while being more easily readable.

The purpose of the text is clearly to record the events of the Norwegian civil war and continue the history where *Sverris saga* left off. The author treats the work as a serious history rather than a story to be read for entertainment. The author goes as far as to cite the sources of his information at several points. He also directly references *Sverris saga*, “*sem fyrr var ritat*”, though this may be the words of a copyist. Clearly the author intended the text to be viewed as a credible historical work. In light of this intended purpose I have given precedence to being faithful to the source material in my translation, rather than to strive for maximum readability.

The author makes frequent use of subject-verb inversion, which presented minor difficulties in translation. The inversion of subject and verb is a common occurrence in Old Icelandic, but in Modern English subject-verb inversion can make a sentence difficult to understand and defies convention. Attempting to retain subject-verb inversion would have also made the translation sound unnecessarily archaic, which I have tried to avoid throughout.

Clumsy redaction is somewhat prevalent in the original text. I have chosen to simply delete words which clutter the text, provided that nothing of the meaning is lost in the process. For example, in the case of multiple uses of the same personal pronoun (“he went to the town and he gathered a levy, then he went back to the ship”) I have minimized the usage in the translation (“he went to the town and gathered a levy, then went back to the ship”), again provided that the original meaning is adequately conveyed.

A number of sentences in the saga are difficult. Some are very challenging not only to translate but to ascertain the author’s intended meaning at all. For example, in Chapter XVI “*váru æ inir sömu frammi*” refers in some way to the defence put up by the Birkibeinar, but other than that just what the author is trying to say is unclear. Perhaps it is an idiomatic construction, the meaning of which has been lost. I have translated this sentence very literally and simply noted that the meaning is unclear.

At other times the author is simply imprecise in establishing just what he is referring to. An exemplar of this imprecise use of language can be found in chapter XIII. “*Tjaldit þurfti hálfþritög yfir*”. It is unclear just what this number twenty-five refers to. It is likely that the author is describing the size of the tent but this number could refer to the length of the tent in ells, the number of struts used to create the frame, or even refer to the lengths of cloth used in its construction. I have elected to translate the sentence as “the tent required space of over twenty-five ells in length”, as he had previously given the length of the ship in this

measurement, but the author could just as easily have been referring to something entirely different.

### On the main characters

Here I will very briefly present some of the main characters of the saga and the roles they play. There are multiple characters with the same names in the saga which can be confusing, this list is intended to help somewhat.

#### *Baglar:*

Ingi Magnússon – Son of King Magnús. He is proclaimed king as a child. Dies young.

Erlingr Magnússon steinveggr – Made king following the death of King Ingi. He is supposedly the son of King Magnús, which he aims to prove by submitting to trial by ordeal. Dies of gangrene.

Philippus Símonsson – Earl and later king, not to be confused with Philippus of Veigin.

Bishop Nikólás – Instrumental in brokering peace between the Baglar and Birkibeinar. He was an opponent of King Sverrir.

Philippus of Veigin – Military leader.

#### *Birkibeinar:*

Guthormr Sigurðarson – Proclaimed king while only a child. Hákon galinn effectively rules in his place. He dies at a very young age.

Hákon galinn – Earl, leader of the Birkibeinar, effectively acts as regent because Guthormr is just a child and inexperienced in rule.

Hákon Sverrisson – Succeeds to the throne of King Sverrir. He dies under suspicious circumstances, probably poisoned by an agent of Queen Margrét.

Ingi Bárðarson – He was the son of King Sverrir's sister, Cecília.

Margrét Eiríksdóttir – The widow of King Sverrir, suspected of having King Hákon poisoned.

Pétr steypir – Military leader.

### A brief summary of the plot

Here I will give a very brief summary of the chapters of Böglunga saga (S), mainly to identify major events in the plot and aid the reader in the understanding of these events. A summary is also of use in aiding the reader to quickly find a particular event of interest:

Chapter I - The saga begins immediately following the death of King Sverrir, with Hákon being made king by the Birkibeinar as the infant Guthormr is too young to rule. Ingi is made king by the Baglar. After a brief conflict Ingi is made to flee and is killed by farmers on an island in Mjörð. The Baglar army dispersed and fled the country. Hákon then reconciles with the bishops who had opposed King Sverrir and finds strong allies in them, thus demonstrating his ability to unify people and willingness to seek peace.

Chapter II – We are introduced to Erlingr steinveggr who claims to be the son of King Magnús. The origin of his nickname “steinveggr” is explained. Erlingr steinveggr finds a great deal of support for his kingship, but does not wish to make war in Norway while King Hákon is still alive. Queen Margrét, the widow of King Sverrir, is also introduced.

Chapter III – Queen Margrét comes to Björgyn where King Hákon is staying. The two do not have an agreeable relationship, and King Hákon dies under suspicious circumstances. Queen Margrét is suspected of having poisoned him. A man who was suspected of plotting the poisoning with Queen Margrét is tried by hot iron and, having failed the test, is drowned.

Erlingr steinveggr had pledged not to make war in Norway for as long as Hákon held rule, but with Hákon’s death Norway found itself without an undisputed ruler and a lasting truce between the two factions was now unlikely. Hákon had previously shown himself to be open to negotiations with the Baglar and favourable towards peace, had he lived reconciliation between the two factions would have been a very real possibility. Instead, the brutal civil war which had ravaged Norway during King Sverrir’s reign was allowed to resume.

Chapter IV – After the death of King Hákon the Birkibeinar made the child Guthormr their king. Erlingr steinveggr is tried by hot iron in Denmark to ascertain whether his claim to being the son of King Magnús is true. Erlingr passes the test as is witnessed by the Danish king. Erlingr is made king at the Haugr assembly, and Philippus Simonsson is made earl. He travels to Borg and his kingship is similarly accepted at the Borg assembly. The child-king Guthormr dies in Prándheimr, and Ingi succeeds him as King. King Ingi is also only a youth, and so Hákon galinn is made earl and effectively holds rulership. Low-level warfare commences between the Birkibeinar and Baglar factions. The castle at Björgyn is besieged by the Baglar, with the help of a German siege-specialist. The Birkibeinar come to Björgyn and lift the siege, and so the Baglar flee to Vík.

Chapter V – Fighting continues during the winter, and men are slain on both sides. Ships are built by the Birkibeinar, but the Baglar come out on top. A truce is accepted by Einarr, a leader of the Birkibeinar, but he is killed shortly after by men of the Baglar and they take the levy that he had collected. The mutual destruction on both sides and the brokering of truce followed by the useless and violent death of Einarr paints a picture of the futility of civil war.

Chapter VI – The Birkibeinar order levies from all over the north of the country. Pétr steypir takes over that which Einarr had held stewardship over. The Birkibeinar go to Túnsberg and hold the Haugr assembly, where Ingi is accepted as king. The Baglar are driven out of the country, and no parlay is held between the two factions as Bishop Nikólás advised against it. Fighting breaks out again and Erlingr is accepted as King at the Eyrar assembly. The Birkibeinar divide their forces and collect levies across the north. Philippus of Veigin and other leaders of the Baglar build a great naval force.

Chapter VII – Jón dróttning of the Baglar travels to a feast. At the feast he attempts to rape the farmer’s wife. He is dissuaded by the farmer and his men. Jón dróttning pays half a mark of gold in reparation, but he is nevertheless killed by the farmer and his men a week later. Jón’s brother Gunnbjörn and Sölvi Dísarson avenge Jón, killing and maiming several men.

Chapter VIII – The Baglar receive information that letter-bearers of the Birkibeinar were abroad, they intercept them and read the message. King Ingi’s sister, Sigríðr, is wed and the

leaders of the Birkibeinar congregate at the wedding. The Baglar plan to attack while the Birkibeinar are drunk at the feast.

Chapter IX – The Birkibeinar receive intelligence regarding the Baglar's plan to attack. King Ingi reads the letter to his men, they advise to gather the army at Gildisskála. Þorgrímr advises that King Ingi not end the feast, but keep a detachment of men awake and sober as guards. The guards set in place grow discontented that they are on watch while others are feasting. They abandon their post and so there is no guard or look-out protecting the revellers. The king and his men are very drunk.

Chapter X – The Baglar attack the town during the night, which is especially dark due to a snowstorm. King Ingi is awoken by his mistress and unprepared to face the attackers. King Ingi attempts to escape by boat, but is stopped. He falls on the bank of the river and is eventually rescued by Reiðúlfr Bárðarbróðir, they both flee to Strind. The town is ransacked and the Baglar take a great deal of plunder.

Chapter XI – King Ingi amasses an army of peasants and those men who had survived the Baglar's attack. They go about collecting a levy until they are spotted by the Baglar, who have a superior force, and are pursued. The Baglar give up the chase and go to Björgyn.

Chapter XII - The Baglar fortify Björgyn. Earl Philippus gathers a large army. The Birkibeinar break through the defenses and the Baglar retreat. Many in the town are killed. King Ingi is in Víkingavági.

Chapter XIII – Earl Hákon fears that they will be caught unprepared and so amasses an army. Earl Hákon travels to meet King Ingi. The Baglar stay in Björgyn for a while, they then divide their forces and start gathering levies. The Birkibeinar have three great ships constructed. King Erlingr dies. Erlingr's sons, Magnús and Sigurðr, are too young and so Earl Philippus takes over leadership of the Birkibeinar faction and is made king. Philippus of Vegin contracts gangrene in his arm and dies.

Chapter XIV – The Birkibeinar come from the north to Björgyn with many ships. There are several skirmishes at sea. The Birkibeinar go north and meet with the king.

Chapter XV – The Baglar are in the east with many ships. They gather their army and decide to meet the Birkibeinar in battle. Dagfinnr remains in the castle at Björgyn with only a hundred men. The Baglar encounter an England-faring merchant ship in Jaðarr and plunder it, gaining great wealth. The Baglar lay siege to the castle in Björgyn. When the Birkibeinar run out of drink they cede the castle to the Baglar and give oaths not to come in arms against the king. The Baglar loot the castle and then demolish it. The Birkibeinar burn all of the Baglar's ships in Túnsberg.

Chapter XVI – The Birkibeinar and Baglar fight each other and King Philippus is thrown overboard. A rumour spreads among the Baglar camp and disheartens the men. The Baglar gather an army and attack Björgyn, wreaking great havoc. Philippus is accepted as king at the Eyrar assembly. The Baglar attack and Pétur steypir barely escapes.

Chapter XVII – After some skirmishing a truce is called in order for a peace to be brokered. Bishop Nikulás and Philippus meet to discuss terms at Hvítungseyjar. The Birkibeinar arrive at the meeting with a great crowd of men, exceeding what had been agreed upon, and so the result of the negotiations is heavily skewed in their favour. There is strong evidence that



following this result Phillipus sent a formal letter of complaint to the Pope,<sup>3</sup> suggesting that the outcome was indeed partly the result of strong-arm tactics by the Birkibeinar.

Phillipus weds Princess Kristín and formally gives up the title of king, though the Baglar still refer to him as such. The Baglar and Birkibeinar who gained little wealth from the peace treaty decide to go raiding in Suðreyjar.

Chapter XVIII – Styrkár is attacked and killed at his residence in Karmsund. The remaining men give pledges of truce, concluding the hostilities of *Böglunga saga* (S).

Chapter XIX – A supernatural episode is related to Earl Philippus. A smith is visited by Óðinn as he leaves Norway and travels to Sweden. I will elaborate further on this episode.

### The Óðinn Episode

The final episode of *Böglunga saga* (S) involves Óðinn visiting a farm to have his horse shod as he leaves Norway for Sweden – the warring in Norway being temporarily on hold. It is interesting for a number of reasons and warrants greater analysis than the scope of this introductory essay allows for.

Up until this episode the saga has been completely devoid of magic, miracles, or any hint of the supernatural at all. It is curious then that the only such occurrence involves the pre-Christian deity Óðinn. The saga is concerned with Christian rulers fighting for dominion over a long-since Christianized kingdom, and likely authored by a monk so why this episode was included at all is puzzling. It evidences the lingering scholastic interest, epitomized by the works of Snorri Sturluson, in Iceland and Norway of the pre-Christian past, but also that the figure of Óðinn was alive in the imagination of the everyday people.

In this episode Óðinn functions as a metaphorical device for conflict. He leaves Norway for Sweden as peace is brokered in the former and violence is about to erupt in the latter. As the Norse deity most commonly associated with war and as supreme psychopomp of the battle-slain he is a fitting metaphor for war itself.

The author points out that this episode is just that which was relayed to Earl Philippus and declines to comment on the veracity of the tale. Even in relating this supernatural episode he is ever the source-critical historian.

### Conclusion

*Böglunga saga* (S) adequately serves its intended function in relating the events of the Norwegian civil war from the death of King Sverrir Sigurðarson to the marriage of Philippus. It is not a great work of literature, but it was never intended to be such and should not be judged on its literary merit. It is an important work of history and deserves far more recognition and discussion than it has received. It is my hope that this translation may be of some use to students interested in the Norwegian Civil War and that I have contributed to some small degree in the transmission of this text.

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<sup>3</sup> *Hákonar saga II*, Hið íslenska fornritafélag, p. 289

Chapter I

That same summer, the previous spring in which King Sverrir had died,<sup>4</sup> Hákon, son of King Sverrir, was made king at the Eyra assembly. All the military leaders who had previously served King Sverrir supported him in this decision. They had great power. Somewhat prior to this Lord Sigurðr, son of King Sverrir, had died. He had a surviving son, who was named Guthormr. At the time King Sverrir was laying siege to the castle at Túnsberg,<sup>5</sup> as was previously written,<sup>6</sup> Ingi was made king<sup>7</sup> while in Upplönd. When he received news that King Sverrir had left Vík, Ingi then moved to Vík and stayed there until hearing news of King Sverrir's death. After that the Baglar manned ships in Vík and gathered a great army,<sup>8</sup> and intended to go north to Björgyn. They set off rather late as they waited for a favourable wind. Sigurðr, the king's cousin, was already there when the news came to Björgvin that the Baglar were on their way. He was the son of King Sverrir's sister; his mother was called Helga, daughter of King Sigurðr. When he received news of the Baglar, he went against them with a great army and many large ships. He found the Baglar south in Jaðarr and drove them off their ships, and took all the ships and wealth there was. Ingi fled first east to Vík, from there to Upplönd and stayed for the summer up in Mjörs. There he was betrayed by his own men. There was a man named Gunnar lest.<sup>9</sup> King Ingi had before given him a place close to himself and done many things for him. Ingi was killed by farmers there on the Holy Island, as it is called, in Mjörs. After that the whole army was disbanded. Those who were most guilty fled the country, some south to Denmark, and some to more distant places.

Queen Margrét, who was the widow of King Sverrir, travelled east to Gautland after his death and took Kristín, their daughter, with her and many treasures which King Sverrir had possessed. She stayed there for the spring. That same summer King Hákon travelled from the north all the way east to Vík and stayed there for a long time during the summer. He sent word to all of the bishops, those who had been in disagreement with King Sverrir, that they should come to visit him, and that he would reconcile with them as King Sverrir had given this counsel before he passed away. He sent word after Kristín, his sister, and took her against the queen's will and preserved her possessions. The bishops travelled home to their seats and became dear friends of the king.

King Hákon travelled in the autumn to Björgyn and stayed there for the winter. He soon became a popular leader. That autumn Guðmundr Arason came from Iceland and was elected as bishop over the region of Norðlendingafjórðungr. The king received him kindly. The bishop-elect was with him for a while and was the greatest friend of his from then on. Priest Einarr married the sister of King Hákon. He was the king's representative south in Rogaland and was the greatest leader. He received great honour from the king. Many other leaders were

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<sup>4</sup> Andaðisk – literally means to have taken one's last breath, but is most often used to simply mean "died"

<sup>5</sup> Bergit – "the rock" The name of the castle in Túnsberg, pp.3, Böglunga saga (s)

<sup>6</sup> Sem var fyrr ritat – this is a reference to *Sverris saga*

<sup>7</sup> Tekinn til konungs – made king, accepted as king

<sup>8</sup> Baglar – "croziers", political faction, name refers to the bishop's staff (Old Norse – bagall, from Latin baculum)

<sup>9</sup> Lest – nickname: burden, cargo

of the Birkibeinar:<sup>10</sup> Hákon galinn,<sup>11</sup> Pétr steypir,<sup>12</sup> Sigurðr and Hróarr the king's cousins, Eyvindr the priest's brother and many other excellent men, both because they were well-born and for the position they held.

## Chapter II

There was a man named Erlingr, who was nicknamed steinveggr.<sup>13</sup> He was said to be the son of King Magnús Erlingsson. He was held prisoner in a tower in Vinðland.<sup>14</sup> Margrét was a Wendish woman. She aided him by cutting their clothes into ribbons and making a rope. He went out of a window and down the stone wall with a rope. However, the rope did not reach the ground, and he then fell down on his hip and injured his hip. But because the night was dark he got away and went onward to Denmark. Since then he was called Erlingr steinveggr. That summer in which King Hákon was in Vík, Erlingr steinveggr came in the autumn to Skáneyri and made it known to Norwegians of his clan. Many men offered to follow him, but he said he did not wish to raise an army against King Hákon or make turmoil while he was king over Norway. Then he travelled to Kaupmannahafn and stayed there over the winter.

## Chapter III

King Hákon went to Björgyn in the autumn and stayed there for the winter. The summer after he went east to Vík, and went next to Björgyn in the autumn and made arrangements there to stay for the winter. That autumn Erlingr was in Skáneyri, as was previously said. Then Queen Margrét came from Gautland in the east to Björgyn and stayed there during the winter. Relations were strained between her and King Hákon. In the winter, during Yule, King Hákon took so ill that he could not control himself. Then he had himself moved to the castle and remained there a short while until he died. That was on the eighth day of Yule. He was buried in Christ's Church.<sup>15</sup> People stood greatly distressed over his burial, because he was very popular. He was affable and gentle, courtly and well-mannered, brave in peril, victorious, as was earlier said that King Sverrir was. The Birkibeinar always relied on him (Hákon) when King Sverrir was not there.

It was imputed of Queen Margrét that she had plotted with a man to betray the king in his drink.<sup>16</sup> The Birkibeinar took that man and accused him of this, but he pleaded innocence and offered to submit to trial by ordeal. It came so that he was tried by hot iron and bore it quite honorably. But when his hand was untied he was then seen to be badly burned. After that he was taken outside to the bay of Björgyn and drowned there.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Birkibeinar – “birch-legs”, political faction, name refers to the Birkibeinar supposedly being so poor that they could not afford anything but wooden armour on their legs. Originally used derisively but came to be adopted by the Birkibeinar.

<sup>11</sup> Galinn – nickname: crazy, mad

<sup>12</sup> Steypir – nickname: over-thrower

<sup>13</sup> Steinveggr – nickname: stonewall

<sup>14</sup> Vinðland – an informally defined region of the Wends, a Slavic people formerly living south of the Jutland peninsula

<sup>15</sup> Kristskirkja – Christ's Church

<sup>16</sup> Poisoning

<sup>17</sup> Drowning was a common punishment for those considered to be “ni ðingr”; guilty of a shameful, unmanly crime (of which poisoning certainly qualified).

## Chapter IV

That same spring the Birkibeinar proclaimed as their king in Björgyn the son of Lord Sigurðr who was called Guthormr. He was a child at that time. These were the leaders of the army: Hákon galinn, the son of King Sverrir's sister, Pétr steypir, another of his sister's sons, who was married to Ingibjörg, the daughter of King Magnús. These leaders were also in the army: Sigurðr the king's cousin, Eyvindr the priest's brother, Einarr the king's brother, Hróarr the king's cousin, and many other military leaders. When those who had previously been with the Baglar heard about the change of rulership, they felt it would not be left in peace by the Birkibeinar and so went south out of the land into Denmark. Then Þorleifr skálpr and his sons Önundur hlunn,<sup>1819</sup> Oddr tannr,<sup>20</sup> Arnbjörn troll,<sup>21</sup> came to Erlingr steinveggr in Kaupmannahöfn. That was the beginning of the uprising. When the news spread, many of those who had previously followed the Baglar joined them. They sent a message north to their friends in Vík and summoned them to Álaborg for the fast.<sup>22</sup> There came then from Norway Hreiðarr sendimaðr,<sup>23</sup> Jón dróttning,<sup>24</sup> Sölvi Dísarson, and Philippus of Veigin. Then they set off from there with the fleet of small manned ships. When they came to Vík, all the people submitted to them, and so they went east to Ósló. Bishop Nikolás was there. Then Erlingr requested of the bishop that he be allowed to submit to an ordeal to prove his paternity. But the bishop did not wish to hold the ordeal in Ósló. The leaders of the army then came and supported Erlingr's cause.<sup>25</sup> It then came about that the bishop asked him to go to Borg to submit to trial by ordeal, if he wished. Erlingr then went to Borg and fasted in preparation for the ordeal. Then Bishop Nikolás came to that place where he was to be tried by ordeal. Then the bishop said that he should not be tried by ordeal, "go now to Túnsberg and be tried by ordeal at that place, because the Danish King will come there. He shall see the trial of carrying a hot iron." Then Erlingr travelled to Túnsberg and asked for the Danish King there. The king and the bishop had themselves made counsel that the king would travel to Norway and take with him Philippus, son of Símon Kárasen, sister-son of Ingi King Haraldr's son, cousin of Bishop Nikolás, and would convey him to the king. It was during the spring before St. Bótólf's Day when the Danish King Valdamarr came to Túnsberg and had more than three-hundred ships and travelled in a very ordered and peaceful way. Then Erlingr fasted in preparation for the ordeal by iron for the second time, and carried the iron well and honorably. The king and the bishop witnessed his ordeal. When the time came that he take the dressing of his hand, then the king ordered his armed host to surround the church, and if Erlingr would not be found innocent then it was obvious what was in store for him. He was well cleared and was with the king that day. At this banquet the Danish king gave him thirty-five ships full rigged.<sup>26</sup> The morning after people gathered at the Haugr assembly. But prior to the assembly Bishop Nikolás, with the assistance of his friends, had brought about that Philippus, his cousin, was made earl. The bishop vowed that he would aid them with all his strength, and

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<sup>18</sup> Skálpr – nickname: scabbard

<sup>19</sup> Hlunn – nickname: tree-trunk

<sup>20</sup> Tannr – nickname: tooth, referring to the large size of

<sup>21</sup> Troll – nickname: troll, giant, probably in reference to his size, ugliness, or foul nature

<sup>22</sup> Friday? – föstu (dagr)

<sup>23</sup> Sendimaðr – nickname or perhaps title: messenger

<sup>24</sup> Dróttning – nickname: queen

<sup>25</sup> Sveitarhöfðingjar – leaders of bodies of men, military leaders, commanders

<sup>26</sup> hálfan fjórða tug – thirty-five

then Erlingr was made king. He gave Philippus the title of Earl at the same assembly. After that the Danish king travelled back to Denmark. Then a team gathered for King Erlingr, and were made his retainers. Then Arnbjörn, son of Jón Gautsson, and Helgi Birgisson, Ásbjörn koppr,<sup>27</sup> Gyrðr Benteinsson, Guthormr þvari,<sup>28</sup> Ormr langi,<sup>29</sup> Þórðr dokka,<sup>30</sup> Benedikt of Gumanes, Símon kýr,<sup>31</sup> Kolbjörn rauði,<sup>32</sup> and Gyrðr skjálgr came to him.<sup>33</sup> They had a large and fine team of men. After Jónsvika they travelled over to Borg and held the Borg assembly at that place,<sup>34</sup> and Erlingr was made king and Philippus made earl there. Next they travelled again to Túnsberg. The Birkibeinar asked if they should all take flight from Vík and go north to Þrándheimr, some people to Björgyn. When the Birkibeinar realized that the Danish army was set in Vík, they turned north to Þrándheimr before going to Björgyn and stayed there for the summer.

That same summer King Guthormr died there in Þrándheimr, the Birkibeinar then convened the Eyrar assembly. Archbishop Þórir was there and a multitude of all the wisest farmers in Þrændalög. The king's levy was then discussed. Hákon galinn had then taken a wife called Kristín. The archbishop said that this marriage was not in accordance with canon law. Most followers and farmers would have chosen Hákon to be king, but the archbishop spoke against it. Then Sigurðr, the king's cousin and son of King Sigurðr Haraldsson's daughter, and Pétr steypir, sister-son of King Sverrir, were named (as possible kings).

Ingi was the son of Cecilia, the king's daughter, and brother of Hákon galinn, and the son of Bárðr Guthormsson. At that time he was in Kaupang. But because his family was from Þrændalög the farmers would rather have him as their king. That was also the archbishop's wish, because Ingi had previously been with him. It was then that Ingi was made king. But because he was a very much a youth and had not experienced being in command of troops, on the other hand he commits himself to lead the army, it was then advised by the soldiers that Hákon, King Ingi's own brother, should be given the title of earl. And so it was done. After Óláfr's Week, King Erlingr and Earl Philippus and Bishop Nikólás and all of their army travelled from Túnsberg with thirty-five ships, and travelled north along the coastline and took the levy and all the king's taxes. They travelled at a rather leisurely pace. When they travelled to Björgyn, in the castle were Birkibeinar, Dagfinnr, Þorgrímur of Ljásnes, and Þórir brasi and nearly two hundred men<sup>35</sup>. The Baglar went up to the town and advanced on the castle, and they shot at each other for a while. Then Erlingr steinveggr called to the Baglar: "Stop shooting at them, because they are our men." The Baglar always slept on the ships at night, some by anchors, some by the monks' piers<sup>36</sup> but were in the settlements during the days and travelled often up to the castle, and shot at each other. Some men were wounded, and some were slain. One day they rowed King Erlingr on some small ships to Hólm and

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<sup>27</sup> Koppr – nickname: cup

<sup>28</sup> Þvari – nickname: spear

<sup>29</sup> Langi – nickname: long

<sup>30</sup> Dokka – nickname: hay bundle

<sup>31</sup> Kýr – nickname: cow

<sup>32</sup> Rauði – nickname: red

<sup>33</sup> Skjálgr – nickname: cross-eyed

<sup>34</sup> Borgarþing – assembly of Borg

<sup>35</sup> Brasi – nickname: unruly man

<sup>36</sup> Munkabryggjur – pier of monks

landed by the king's piers<sup>37</sup> and went up to Christ's Church. The Birkibeinar saw it and went against them, and they shot at each other. When they saw that they had a small host the Birkibeinar then ran at them and gave a hard attack, so that the Baglar retreated back into the water. King Erlingr leapt into the water along with some of his men, but some were slain. Some reached the ships and were pulled up onboard the ships. They travelled with it to their host. Then they asked Erlingr whether it was the king's men who were in the castle. He said that was so.<sup>38</sup>

Sometime later the Baglar travelled out of the settlement and went north along the coast and appointed stewards in the districts. They went directly north to Rugsund and stayed there for nearly three weeks. Bishop Nikólás then collected his land-taxes. Then a great levied army came to join them. Then farmer Lóðinn of Leykin, farmer Nikólás Bótólfsson and Körlungr, his brother, Eindriði hegri,<sup>39</sup> and Kálfr of Hornyn came to them. They got the news that the Birkibeinar had both a king and an earl. It was decided by Nikólás and the king to travel next to Björgyn and conquer the castle. They sailed south to Björgyn and anchored in Laxavágr. The bishop had a German with him there who knew how to construct a catapult. He said that he had breached many castles: "and if I don't breach this one", he said, "lay me in the sling and throw me at the castle." Then a great willow tree was conveyed to the castle and made into a sling<sup>40</sup>. It was called The Autumn of the Catapult.<sup>41</sup> Then news came to the town that Birkibeinar had been seen sailing from the north about Stafafjörðr, and the bishop set up a meeting of all the skippers. He then asked the men what they thought was advisable. The king said that their counsel was that they wait there and hold battle there against the Birkibeinar. The others agreed with this counsel. The bishop said: "If you would fight against the warships of the Birkibeinar then you shall never again make decisions for these men who now follow you. Let us rather decide immediately on another course of action. Hoist our sails and sail east to Vík. Fight against the Birkibeinar there if they seek after us to that place." That was then decided upon before the meeting ended. Then the bishop left and set up his tent on his ship, and went out from Vágr, then each one was equipped. They travelled nights and days until they came to Túnsberg. The bishop went into Ósló.

The Birkibeinar came to Björgyn a little later when the Baglar were away. They had a great host and large ships. They thought that they would not be able to pursue them on a winter day. They dwelled there in Björgyn for a while and yet went north next and stayed in Þrándheimr that winter while the Baglar were in Vík, and both were also in Upplönd.

## Chapter V

These of the Birkibeinar were in Upplönd: Úlfr hani,<sup>42</sup> Haraldr kesja,<sup>43</sup> Guðleikr flotbytta and other military leaders.<sup>44</sup> And of the Baglar there were Þóraldr Auguson, Guðleikr

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<sup>37</sup> Konungsbryggjur – King's Pier

<sup>38</sup> Segir – present tense: normalized it to past tense to agree with the rest of the text

<sup>39</sup> Hegri – nickname: heron

<sup>40</sup> Clearly *slöngva* in this context is referring to a seige sling, such as a mangonel or trebuchet, not a handsling.

<sup>41</sup> Mönguhaust – the name given to the siege sling

<sup>42</sup> Hani – nickname: cock

<sup>43</sup> Kesja – nickname: refers to a weapon, probably a polearm (most likely a long-bladed spear), which has not been positively identified. Often anachronistically rendered as "halberd".

skreiðungr,<sup>45</sup> and in Hringaríki was Benedikt of Gumanes, and in Valdres was Jón griðmaðr.<sup>46</sup> That winter they killed Narfi spjót and many men with him, though some managed to escape and hurried to Sogn. There were often attacks and pursuits during the winter. Both factions took men from the other. King Erlingr stayed in Túnsberg during the winter, and in the winter after Easter he had skiffs and light-ships made. The men in charge there were Arnbjörn Jónsson, Nikólás Bótólfsson, Loðinn the king's marshall, Gyrðr Benteinsson, and Atli griðkona.<sup>47</sup> They had eighteen ships and intended to go to Björgyn and travelled quickly. When they came before Fjölbyrja they learned that Einarr, the king's relative by marriage, had a group of armed men in Stafangr and had not received news of their travels. The decision was then taken, and they sailed during the day past Jaðarr and at about noon-tide they arrived to the town. When Einarr received news of the Baglar he was in a certain peace-meeting and had not expected them to come so quickly. When they saw the ships they then ran to Saint Swithun's Church and further inside into the steeple,<sup>48</sup> but the Baglar broke in to the church and they offered Einarr a truce. Eventually they went out from the steeple and into the choir room. Einarr took an oath at Saint Swithun's shrine to never make an attack against King Erlingr. After that they went out of the church with him. The leaders wished to hold truce with him, but the the members of the troop decided otherwise, and he was slain. Four of his followers who had previously been taken from the church were slain, but nearly fifty men were spared. At that place they took a great levy which Einarr had taken from all over Rogaland and other great wealth which the Birkibeinar and the townsfolk had. The Baglar then set off for Túnsberg.

## Chapter VI

The Birkibeinar ordered levies from all the north land, and during the spring they travelled south to Björgyn and had great strength in both their army and their ships, and they dwelled there for a little while before they travelled east to Vík. Pétr steypir then took stewardship over that which Einarr had owned and put Lem, his sister's son, and Þorkel dreka in charge of it,<sup>49</sup> but Pétr went east with the King.

The Baglar were in Túnsberg and had prepared their ships and intended to go north. When they got news of the Birkibeinar they had a talk among them. Bishop Nikólás said there was no alternative other than to retreat and travel south to Denmark rather than fight an army which was by far stronger than theirs. The decision was taken to sail south to Halland, and they laid anchor in Visk for a while. The Birkibeinar came to Túnsberg and held an assembly at Haugr. There Ingi was made king and Hákon was made earl. They conquered all of Vík and set men as rulers there. They then travelled over to Borg and held the Borg assembly. There Ingi was made king and Hákon was made earl. Next they returned to Túnsberg.

When the Baglar heard of this, they made their decision. Earl Philippus then travelled north to Vík and with him went Arnbjörn Jónsson, Philippus of Veigin and Hreiðarr sendimaðr, Nikólás Bótólfsson, Atli griðkona, and Helgi Birgisson. They had twenty ships. The king

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<sup>44</sup> Flotbytta – nickname: grease pail

<sup>45</sup> Skreiðungr – nickname: cod

<sup>46</sup> Griðmaðr – nickname: labourer, workman

<sup>47</sup> Griðkona – nickname: work-woman, almost certainly insulting

<sup>48</sup> Svithúnskirkja – Svithún's church, Svithún = the Anglo-Saxon Saint Swithun.

<sup>49</sup> Dreka – nickname: dragon

remained with some of their men. Bishop Nikólás had gone south to Kaupmannahafn. The Baglar travelled north with haste and intended to take them by surprise. When they came to Hafsteinssund they got news that the Birkibeinar were not on the east side of the fjord. They waited there to sail at night over the fjord. The king sailed from the south to Þraum up to the strait. Then the Baglar awoke and ordered to attack. The king sailed out from the strait and across the fjord. The Baglar then realised that news of their coming had arrived in Túnsberg. The Baglar moved with haste and sailed after the king. The king was then heading for Brimsteinn. When the Baglar saw that they could not overtake him, they then turned back to Hafsteinssund and then south to Vík and to their king. A little later all of the host travelled over to Limafjörðr and stayed a long time during the summer in Álaborg. Bishop Nikólás joined them. Then the host tired of staying there. They travelled next back to Vík. Then they travelled north to Haugasund from Konungahella and went there by land, and sent the ships south to Halland where Loðinn, the king's marshal, and Arnbjörn troll were along with two-hundred men. They sailed south to Nizir and set up their ships there. Bishop Nikólás came to that place and left the Bókaskreppan there.<sup>50</sup> He travelled across land from the east to Vík, and the Baglar travelled north to Vík as during the summer was better with small ships and met at Borg during the autumn. They moved the ships up the river and so to Eyjavatn, from there up to Mjörð, then north to Heiðmörk. When they came north to little Hamarr, Oddr tannr was killed; that was done by Guðleikr flotbytta. Four men leapt out from the forest and went back again into the forest. Then the Baglar travelled north to the mountain and over to Uppdalr, then to Orkadallr, and from there into Kaupangr. In the summer detachments of Baglar travelled from Upplönd and into Harðangr. There were these commanders: Sörkvir snápr,<sup>51</sup> Símon uxi,<sup>52</sup> Erlingr short-neck, Halli froth, Ögmundr oak-tree. They had thirty men and slew Erlingr birkibeinn and his son.<sup>53</sup> Then they received news of Þorkell and his travelling companion and went to seek them out. Þorkell was with twenty-five men and had rowing ships and had landed by Ögvaldsnes and had a tent on the land. The Baglar landed by Boer and went towards the bay and took the first guard. After that they attacked the tent. At that place Þorkell and all of the detachment were slain. The Baglar then travelled to Upplönd. The Baglar travelled north and came to Kaupang and fought off resistance there and dwelled there for some time. They summoned an assembly at Eyrar, but few came. At that place Erlingr was made king and Philippus made Jarl. Men were then sent to the counties and obtained little wealth from the countryside.

When the Birkibeinar learned that the Baglar had travelled north about the mountain they then divided their host into two parts. The king went north, and Earl Hákon went south with some of the host to Halland and came upon the men who were guarding the ships in Nizir. At that place thirty men of the Baglar were slain, and the rest fled up to the land. Arnbjörn troll was killed there. There the Earl took all of the ships belonging to the farmers and the Baglar and also Bókaskreppan which was owned by Bishop Nikólás. They burned some, but some they had for themselves. Next they travelled to Vík and he collected land-levies. The following autumn he travelled north to Björgyn. King Ingi travelled north to Þrándheimr. The Baglar had been spying in Moerr, Ásbjörn koppr and Þóraldi skinnhringr with two skiffs.<sup>54</sup> They saw

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<sup>50</sup> Bókaskreppan – the name of Bishop Nikólás's ship

<sup>51</sup> Snápr – nickname: fool

<sup>52</sup> Uxi – nickname: ox

<sup>53</sup> Birkibeinn – nickname: birch-leg

<sup>54</sup> Skinnhringr – literally "skin-ring", referring to his belt



that the Birkibeinar had sailed for Stimr. The Baglar then rowed north. The Birkibeinar saw that they (the Baglar) were after them and had been following hard all day. Some rowed into Þingvöllum.<sup>55</sup> Guthormr þvari was there. He had had stewardship. The Birkibeinar pursued up to that place. Guthormr died there along with some of his group. Late in the evening, Ásbjörn koppr and his companions docked their ships at Sólskel. But during the night the Birkibeinar came at them and drove them up there, and kept guard around the island during the night. In the morning they searched the island and slew most of the men. Ásbjörn escaped with a few other men. Then the Birkibeinar travelled north and caught one of the Baglar' skiffs north towards Agðanes. The men went into the settlement. When the Baglar saw that they went from the settlement and up onto the bridge, and so up to Selabú and east about Skáneyjarsíða to Eystirdalr, and so onto the mountain and Heiðmörk and to Ósló and stayed in great Ey until Yule. During Yule they were in Ósló. That winter King Ingi was in Kaupangr and Earl Hákon was in Björgyn. Before the autumn, as the Baglar were up pursuing in Nizir, they all had difficult journeys. They arrived at Ljóðhús in the evening. Some Birkibeinar were there with two skiffs. Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi was their leader.<sup>56</sup> The Baglar came at them when they were not expecting it and at that place most of them were killed, except those that managed to dive into the water and those who were up in the town. The Baglar took the ships and rowed up the river and all the way to Naustdalsfors and at that place they landed the ships and burned them, then they went up to Markir and so north to Eiðaskógr on to Upplönd and met the king in Mjörð. Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi managed to escape, because he had been up in the town.

Immediately after Yule the stewards went to the districts. Philippus of Veigin had stewardship over Borg. He had two skiffs made, Ásbjörn koppr one skiff, Þóraldi Auguson one skiff, Ormr langi in Óðinsey one skiff, Þorstein þjófr one skiff, Jón dróttning two skiffs with Elfi, Guðúlfr of Blakkastöðum and Gunnarr Ásuson two skiffs, Hreiðarr sendimaðr two skiffs, Earl Philippus two skiffs, Þórdr dokka one ship, Hundólfr heita and Gunni langi two skiffs in Skíðunni, Gyrðr Benteinsson one. All twenty-two were equipped, and the king took most of the team. Now they travelled south for Vík and all the way south to Konungahella near the middle of Lent. All of the skiffs came to that place. Next they travelled north with the ships and arrived at Túnsberg on the third day of the week preceding Easter. Then Birkibeinar received news regarding the shipbuilding. They thought that the Baglar had left the country since they travelled east. On Good Friday the Baglar travelled out of town over to Óðinsey and on the second day of Easter they went to Grindhólmarsund. From there they sailed on Friday west to Þórsey and on the Saturday to Portyrja, and on Sunday to Esjunessey. Then the whole of the army had come together. They had twenty-two ships. Then the king said that he wanted to go to the north into the country. They had made their own skiff, Símon kýr Ragnarsson and Arnþórr foka in Bergheimsheraði one skiff.<sup>57</sup> This plan was thought to be rather ill-advised. On Tuesday the king travelled to Randarsund,<sup>58</sup> and afterwards stayed in Esjunesseyjar and Ormr langi, Ragnarr Gamalsson, Gunnar Ásuson, Benedikt of Gumanes would not travel with four skiffs. Then they received word that Þorgils fuðhundr had drawn together a great levy in Hvinisdalr.<sup>59</sup> They had sailed for a day, and came early north to Hítr and were informed that Þorgils had gone north with the levy. They then rowed after them.

<sup>55</sup> Þingvöllum – meaning assembly field, common placename

<sup>56</sup> Hlíðarfaxi – nickname: beautiful-haired person from Hlíð

<sup>57</sup> Foka – nickname: storm

<sup>58</sup> Þriðja daginn – „the third day“, presumably meaning Tuesday (modern Icelandic: þriðjudaginn)

<sup>59</sup> Fuðhundr – nickname: bitch, certainly insulting

When they arrived at Foksteinum they saw then where merchant-ships were going. When the crew of the merchant-ships saw the skiffs they turned in to Rekuvág and ran up there. The Baglar took the levy and went to Eikundasund in the evening.

## Chapter VII

It so happened while the Baglar were constructing the skiffs, that Jón dróttning had been given stewardship over the east with Elfi. During the winter he travelled with a group of armed men from farm to farm to receive tribute.<sup>60</sup> He came to a farmer named Þrándr. He had a beautiful wife. Jón called them to speak with him in a loft. The lady of the house came in first. When she came in to the loft he then turned against the farmer and pushed him out, and locked the loft. But when the farmer protested Jón threatened him. Jón had him taken and bound to a horse tail and dragged thusly to the ship. He paid half a mark of gold to be freed and was relieved. Seven nights later, Jón was feasting at that place which is called Forsœla. He went up to the church early one morning and another man was with him. Þrándr and eight others were situated a short distance from there and saw Jón travelling. They ran to the church and went inside, but Jón fled into the choir. Þrándr threw his spear at him. He was wounded by it. He ran out of the choir door and Þrándr went after him, and he was struck down out on a field. Þrándr cut off his head. Jón was moved to Konungahella and was buried there at the monastery. Then Þrándr went to the Birkibeinar. Jón's brother Gunnbjörn and Sölvi Dísarson avenged him, slaying nine men, and maiming seven.

## Chapter VIII

At that time the Baglar had been in Eikundasund, they then sailed from that place five days north past Jaðarr to Hvítungseyjar, and in the evening north to Karmsund. At that time it was so dark that only a few skiffs sailed into the strait. A part of the fleet had sailed into Fylinsfjörðr, and didn't come into Karmsund until later in the evening. They rowed north to Siggjarvág and had a meeting of all the skippers there, and they discussed then whether they should head to Björgyn or go north from there. They had received information that Earl Hákon was in the town and had not been given news of them. Many more were willing to turn their ships in that direction. Hreiðarr sendimaðr argued against it, he called it more expedient to seek after where the king was. That counsel was taken, and they stayed there for a day and night. On the Lord's Evening they travelled north to Skálavík. They brought their skiffs into Grafdalr, and took two millers there and brought them out to the army. People from the town came and said that news had come to the earl and all the people were gathered there in the churchyard of Christ's Church. A great deal of discussion went on about what to do. The king wanted to attack the town, but Hreiðarr dissuaded him, and his advice was taken. The sail was then hoisted up and they passed around Völunes and on the outer side of Fenhring and so onto the sea-route. They encountered three merchant-ships of the Birkibeinar in Víkingavág, and they slew there a number of men, but some escaped to the island. The Baglar cast anchor on Monday evening in Skútusund and stayed there during the night. Some men went up to the town and claimed to be Birkibeinar and asked for tidings. A farmer told them that he had ferried letter-bearers of the earl to Vágsey and said where they would be during the night. The Baglar went then and slew them, and brought the letter to King Erlingr. In the letter, Earl Hákon sent his regards to King Ingi, his brother, and warned him that the Baglar were going

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<sup>60</sup> Could mean travelling the country to multiple feasts, as kings did, there is no way to tell from the case.

from the south, and knew not where they would go. “But they have a small army and small ships. You do not need to fear them.” On the third day they rowed north to Angr.<sup>61</sup> Then a headwind came, so that the merchant-ships sailed against them with two reefs.<sup>62</sup> The Baglar then received news from Borhund that there was a great gathering of men there and that a longship was being constructed. On Wednesday it was blowing very hard from the north. They set sail but all of the ships were driven back except Earl Philippus and four skiffs. They did not arrive in Borhund until night time and slew eighteen men there, and took the levy and burned the longship. On Thursday the king rowed north to Yxney and stayed there for the night. They received word from the north from Kaupang that King Ingi was going to wed Sigríðr, his sister, to Þorgrímr of Ljánes; drink and food for the wedding were to be gathered on the Friday; also that the Birkibeinar had constructed ships in Véey. They sent Philippus of Veigin and Þórðr dokka there with two skiffs.<sup>63</sup> That Friday evening a good sailing wind started blowing, and they rowed to Lyngver. Philippus and the others came in the evening to Véey and dropped anchor in the outer bay. The Birkibeinar had a skiff in the inner bay. The Baglar took few of the men. They took the levy and a lot of other valuables, and burned the ships. They were there during the night. On the Friday evening the wind ran in the sails. Then the Baglar hoisted up their sails and sailed north during the night. They could not ransack the town before it became light. Jón angraðr and his detachment had been there.<sup>64</sup> They arrived in Sveggjaðarsund. Then the weather struck, and they took in all reefs but one and stayed there in Veddey during the day and ate there and made their counsel. Arnbjörn Jónsson and Hreiðarr said that it would be expected that their host would wait there, because there had been two skiffs behind south in Fjörðum, and they would not come after Philippus. They had fourteen skiffs. “I think it better”, said the king, “to take fourteen skiffs to the town at night than half more in the morning.” When they were prepared they went to their ships, hoisted up their sails and sailed north and landed within Agðanes in the evening. They were then prepared to fight. Loðinn, the king’s marshall, spoke and said that they were well-advised to go in to the town and dock outside at Eyrar opposite Gildisskála and go up, despite what would come against them, “and it is better to die with courage here rather than to be driven back and forth along the coast any longer, and though it is more likely that if we flee we will be pursued by both the Birkibeinar and the farmers. But it is possible that they have had no news of us and lie about dead-drunk, which is likely since many have not withheld themselves from drunkenness by mead and wine - neither of which they lack. The king’s detachment and his banner shall go up the street to the west and the earl and Arnbjörn to the street in the north. Arnþórr foka and Símon uxi,“ -- they had one ship -- ”they shall row to the river and take care of those who may flee into the water. It was evening and the night was falling. They set sail into the fjord.

## Chapter IX

Earl Hákon had commissioned three letters written in Björgyn, each with the same contents. The Baglar took one letter, as was previously written, but another came to the king, and the third arrived late. That Saturday evening the letter came to King Ingi. He read it aloud and showed it to his leaders. People agreed on gathering all of the army out to Gildisskála in the

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<sup>61</sup> Angr – name of a port

<sup>62</sup> Reefs in the sail; sails shortened to improve stability in wind and lessen the potential of damage

<sup>63</sup> Dokka – nickname: windlass, crank on a crossbow

<sup>64</sup> Angraðr – nickname: gloomy

evening. When Þorgrímr learned of this he asked the king not to spoil the feast, he said that he would arrange it so that the guards would be reliable, and his detachment would remain awake and armed; he said that the Baglar will not dare to travel to Kaupang because of the number of men who were there. The king and all of the army were very drunk. It was decided to renounce bringing together the army. The feasting went on for a long time. But those who were supposed to mount the guard, the members of Sigvaldi karl's detachment, said that they weren't more obliged than others to stay awake and drank until they were incapacitated. There was then no guard nor did anybody mind to them. The king was asleep in the house belonging to Sigurðr svardagi.

## Chapter X

The Baglar sailed in over Flaðkar in the fjord and in by means of great Gaularás to Íla. They then lowered the sails and made preparations. Then came a great, dark snowstorm, and it was very dark during the upper part of the night. They then separated their ships. Arnþórr rowed to the river, and when they came to the mouth of the river Arnþórr did not want to drop anchor, but Símon and some of the detachment wanted to drop anchor, and it was at that place that they stayed until the attack. Arnþórr advised not to drop anchor. Another army landed before them at Eyrar, and then leapt over board when the ships touched the bottom, each out of their own room,<sup>65</sup> and then went up to the town as was planned. Then the trumpets were blown, but all was still and silent over in the town. They went there shouting and making a din up the street and breaking into the houses and went all the way up to the church-yard of Christ's Church. At that time no people had been killed. They went out next to the field beside the town, and they killed all of those who came running out of town. Then the Baglar went onto the street another time, and many people were killed in that moment. Þórðr Finngæirsbróðir was killed first out on his yard on the lower street. They found Þorgrímr of Ljánés on the upper street and then four together and then killed three. When the Baglar ran ahead, Þorgrímr was coming down the road and was greatly wounded.

King Ingi slept beside his mistress and a few people heard the first war-cry. He was awoken by the women. But the king awoke too late and spoke unwisely: "What, what?", "Sir" they said, "hostility has arrived in the town." He leapt up and went to the doors and heard the commotion, then leapt towards the joining of the buildings and up to the roof there and laid there while the army went out of the yard. When it went quiet in the street he leapt down onto the pier and out into the river. There some ships were laid at anchor, and he rambled there and took up the anchor cable and wanted to travel away in the ship. Then he loosened his linen breeches, and wrapped them around the anchor cable. There was one man on the ship and he said to him: "Do not damage the rope, man! Go on your way!" The king was silent, but the merchant took up a pole and shoved at him, so that he let go of the rope. Then the king took to the strait. At that point in time a great number of men leapt into the river, some sooner than the king and some later.

The king travelled over the river and went up the bank. There he fell and was unable to walk. Both coldness and weariness came over him. He looked up and saw Ívarr fljóðakollr coming.<sup>66</sup> The king called to him, "Ívarr, help me!" He replied, "I will help myself first if I can," and then went away. Sometime later men came from the river. There in front was

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<sup>65</sup> Rúmi – "room", personal rowing space on a ship

<sup>66</sup> Fljóðakollr – nickname: derived from a place-name

Reiðúlfr Bárðarbróðir and he went up to the king and said, “Are you there, lord?” “So you called me yesterday,” said the king. Reiðúlfr spoke, “and so you are, and so shall you be as long as we both live.” He took off his over-cloak and wrapped it around the king. He took the skirt of the cloak and lifted it onto his shoulders and carried the king on his back and went thusly up to Skýsás. The king was given a draft animal and a sled and clothes, which they needed. Reiðúlfr had previously no more than a hose and a shirt. Reiðúlfr went with the king into Strind.

Sigvaldr karl, together with nine men, defended in the loft of Sigvaldr eikirunn,<sup>67</sup> and they were all slain. Bergsveinn langi,<sup>68</sup> the standard-bearer of King Ingi, was killed too. When the Baglar went from him they then took a number of women marked by his belt and kept watch. Kolbeinn berrir,<sup>69</sup> together with six men, was laid ill on the street next to Saint Gregory’s Church and died there.<sup>70</sup> Kolbeinn died in the churchyard. Eyvindr feykir,<sup>71</sup> together with eight men, died in Akrinn. Kolbeinn strýnefr died on the northernmost street together with five others.<sup>72</sup> Hallvarðr hlíðarfaxi, together with three others, died on the street by the Church of the Cross.<sup>73</sup> Jón skekki died alone in the loft beneath the marketplace.<sup>74</sup>

The Birkibeinar had slept outside in Akrinum with nearly forty men. There was Sigurðr skjálgr,<sup>75</sup> Örnólfir hækill,<sup>76</sup> Þorgils skokkr,<sup>77</sup> and Þorfinnr lúðrsveinn.<sup>78</sup> They ran into the town and killed a man in the lane of the Baglar who was called Styrr and another in the street, an Icelander called Kolskeggr. The Birkibeinar ran to the gate where Sigvaldr karl was ill. The yard was full of Baglar. Guðúlfr of Blakkastöðum turned out from the gate and shot at their shields, but was killed with a sword. A stab hit Örnólfir on the forehead below his steel cap. The Birkibeinar ran away, and nearly all of them came to Christ’s Church, but Örnólfir had ran into the river and he was found dead. A number of women said to the Baglar that King Ingi was in Saint Mary’s Church. They ran to the choir sills and cut them down. They were quite prepared in the church. Inside there were two men of the county, Óleifr from Ljáröndum and Ívarr dýnulauss,<sup>79</sup> together with nine others. Óleifr was shot in the eye inside the church, and all were slain. In Saint Óláfr’s Church were Bjálfi skinnstakkr and thirteen men,<sup>80</sup> and all were slain. Bárðr stálpi,<sup>81</sup> along with four men, was in Saint Andrew’s church.<sup>82</sup> Barðr was struck down and he was the bravest. Three were slain but the fourth had his hand hacked off.

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<sup>67</sup> Eikrunn – nickname: oak-tree

<sup>68</sup> Langi – nickname: long

<sup>69</sup> Berrir – nickname: ram

<sup>70</sup> Gregoríuskirkja – Saint Gregory’s Church

<sup>71</sup> Feykir – nickname: impatient

<sup>72</sup> Strýnefr – nickname: tassel-nose

<sup>73</sup> Krosskirkja – Church of the Cross

<sup>74</sup> Skekki – nickname: crooked

<sup>75</sup> Skjálgr – nickname: squinting

<sup>76</sup> Hækill – nickname: shank

<sup>77</sup> Skokkr – nickname: trunk

<sup>78</sup> Lúðrsveinn – nickname: trumpet-boy

<sup>79</sup> Dýnulauss – nickname: bed-less

<sup>80</sup> Skinnstakkr – nickname: skin-cloak

<sup>81</sup> Stálpi – nickname: strength

<sup>82</sup> Andréskirkja – Saint Andrew’s Church

On Sunday the word was clear that the town was divided, with the Baglar in four places, and so the army ransacked the town. The king had one district and had allotted the uppermost part of the town, Earl Philippus the other, Arnbjörn and Guðúlfr the third, and Hreiðarr and Philippus of Veigin the fourth district. Philippus and Þórðr had come to the town from the south in the morning. They were destroying the houses. Many men were found; most had been taken and killed. There they took a great deal of wealth. On the second day of the week they went to their ships. They were setting forth in their ships as they wanted to travel away. The king had Gullbringan, and the earl had Gestaskálprinn, Arnbjörn had Darrhettan, and Hreiðarr Lyrtan. Many of them had large ships, Philippus of Veigin Ógnarbrandinn, and Guðúlfr of Blakkastöðum had one ship. They burned Kláðinn and Elfrin and the third skiff, and some other skiffs. The Baglar stayed by the castle each night, but during the days they dwelled on their ships. On Wednesday the booty was carried out to Gildisskála, on Thursday and Friday and Saturday it was divided. There were three-hundred mail byrnies and greaves in addition. There was a great deal of wealth, so that none had a lesser share of wealth than three or four marks.

### Chapter XI

King Ingi and his company travelled by Strind along the shore to Gaulardalr. An army then gathered to him, those which had escaped, an army of peasants, so that he had more than two-hundred men. He went in to the town. On the second day of the week the Baglar set out to Hólm. On the third day they set out to Agðanes. They had drawn an army from the town and travelled south along the country. A levy was ordered out, and they took each man that they could take. They then rowed north to Stim. Earl Hákon prepared himself with the news and travelled north towards Staðr. They rowed to a skerry, and departed the ship, and lost fifteen men. One of the two skips rowed towards men that had dove into the water and took them and then wealth. There the ship was set, and the earl went north. He came north before Stim, then he sailed north on the high road. The Baglar stayed by Markarhólmr. When they saw the earl sailing they rowed north and went in the direction of Langeyjarsund. The earl stayed in Sveggjaðarsund. They saw the ships of the Baglar and thought that they did not have a sufficient army to fight against them, so they rowed north through the fjord to Hamarsund. But the Baglar rowed after them. The Birkibeinar went in the direction of Æðey. Then the weather shifted to the west. They came sailing, and the Baglar turned around. The earl went north and the Baglar went south to Björgyn. At that time Svertingr, Þórir brasi, Ívarr gusi, and Eiríkr maxi were in the castle. The Baglar were in the town during the days, but slept on the ships during the night, and had a great army. Ormr langi came from the east to Björgyn with Princess Margrét,<sup>83</sup> the wife of Philippus of Veigin. A little while later he kept guard with his county-men and Benedikt of Gumanes. He had then arrived from the east. They came with detachments up to Bakki and held the guard there. When the men from the castle saw that they then ran away down into the river, but the Baglar drove them away. At that place Ormr langi was slain. The Baglar were often drunk during the late evenings when they ran up to the castle. Some were wounded and some were slain.

### Chapter XII

Earl Hákon had been living in the north during vigil-time. Ships were then raised in Kaupang. The earl travelled north from where he lived and had five longships and thirteen skiffs. When

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<sup>83</sup> Konungsdóttir – king's daughter, princess

he came south to Staðr in Hindey, he left all of the bigger ships, but had with him the army which was bravest. Then he sent after Andrés dritljóð,<sup>84</sup> Benedikt þjóf and asked them to go north to Þrándheimr as soon as possible.<sup>85</sup> The earl travelled south with the skiffs. The Baglar had two skiffs in Mjaðmarsund. Marteinn soddi<sup>86</sup> and Kolbeinn smjörreðr<sup>87</sup> departed by ship. The earl rowed from the north to Sognsjár. The Baglar rowed south, and the earl went after them to Keilustraum. Kolbeinn rowed up to a skerry. The earl took the skiff, and then killed almost everyone. Marteinn carried the news to the town in the evening. The earl rowed to Háey, then they rowed in to Arnarfjörðr. They cleared the ships, and hid the travelling gear and left men to guard it, then went south over the mountain and arrived in Björgyn the next night. The Baglar had prepared all of their men there. The king was up in the churchyard of Saint Mary's Church.<sup>88</sup> Up in Kopr wicker barricades were set up everywhere where there were no longer any houses. There was a great army within. The earl and Philippus of Veigin were above Saint Nicholas's Church and there they had a great army.<sup>89</sup> In the morning they counted those with them. The Baglar asked the Birkibeinar to go ahead. They said to meet at lunch time, but they must come down from the castle. The Baglar had more than two-thousand men and all was well prepared, but the Birkibeinar had six-hundred. They had two banners. Pétr steypir went along with others. He turned onto the inland road to go to the meeting with the earls. But Earl Hákon went over to Kopr. Philippus then fled when the army came together in the town and out of the street, and some into the street. Earl Hákon went to and broke the barricades. The Baglar retreated. In Kaupang the Baglar had taken captive Þorfinn lúðrsvein and the trumpet Andvaka,<sup>90</sup> King Sverrir had taken eight. King Erlingr then asked the earl to blow the trumpet while he walked above. But he did not bring a sound out of the trumpet, and no blast came out. The Birkibeinar attacked from above in the yards. But there was no resistance, and all of the crowd had fled. When the king went over to Saint Mary's Church then Þorfinnr lúðrsveinn spoke: "Lord," he said, "run inside the church!" The king kept silent and did not turn to go inside. Þorfinnr ran into the church and so did many Birkibeinar. When the earl came into the churchyard then the Birkibeinar ran out from the church to him. Then Þorfinnr blew Andvaka, as he wanted to.<sup>91</sup> The men who had fled went over to Saint Laurentius's Church and into Miklabœr.<sup>92</sup> At that place was a congregation of men on the slope. Many were slain there and each lay heaped on top of another. At that place a great heap of the slain was made. The earl came up to the houses and into the lofts of the buildings. He was severely wounded. Up in Saint Laurentius's Church Þorðr dokka and Benedikt of Guðmanes, Gunni langi and other men among them were slain. Then the Birkibeinar went to hack up the pile of slain men. Then one man spoke: "Do not hack them up!" he said, "they were our men!" Now as they were hacking, the Baglar leapt to their feet, each who could. Many came to escape, many were slain. The Baglar ran out to the ships and went out to the pier and took the ropes and pulled their ships, but the Baglar defended

<sup>84</sup> Dritljóð – nickname: bird-dropping poetry

<sup>85</sup> Þjóf – nickname: thief

<sup>86</sup> Soddi – nickname: dampness, steam

<sup>87</sup> Smjörreðr – nickname: penis as soft as butter. Probably refers to sexual disfunction.

<sup>88</sup> Mariukirkja – Saint Mary's Church

<sup>89</sup> Nikóláskirkja – Saint Nicholas's church

<sup>90</sup> Andvaka – "sleepless" a trumpet belonging to Þorfinn lúðrsvein (from which he takes his nickname), mentioned in *Sverris saga*

<sup>91</sup> To call on the army

<sup>92</sup> Lafranzkirkja – Saint Laurentius's Church

themselves. Then each of both sides who had weapons taunted each other. The Baglar cut the ropes and went out with their ships and took many of their men from the strait. The Baglar set down on Váginn but some went over to the monks' piers and took their men who had ran from the town. The Baglar then rowed out from Váginn north along the coast and in to Arnarfjörðr. And the Birkibeinar, they who the earl had set to keep watch, ran to and attacked the ships when they saw the Baglar travelling and then ran to the forest and hid themselves. When the Baglar arrived they dragged their ships up and repaired them, and some ran to the forest to search for the men in there, and found most of them. The Baglar rowed away with the skiffs. Philippus of Veigin was there. They rowed north, and the large ships were next laid at anchor in Víkingavági. The Birkibeinar, who had travelled north with the large ships, were not inclined to row north for Staðr and stayed at Síld and waited for a favourable wind. And they had a six-oared boat south in Úlfasund to scout. When the scouts saw that the army had travelled from the south, they rowed north and told their men that fourteen skiffs had rowed from the south and made it known that the earl had them in the south. Then they set up their tents and rowed in to the fjord. They saw a fleet of ships moving so speedily that the rest turned after them, and that there were no shields on the stern of the ship. They thought it was wise to treat it with hostility. They rowed in to Moldafjörðr, but the skiffs chased hard after them. When the Birkibeinar came to land they ran up and some dove into the water, then they bore quickly to the skiffs. They jumped up and pursued them. At that place Andrés dritljóð and nearly two-hundred Birkibeinar were slain. The Baglar took the ship there where it was on the river. A great amount of booty was taken there. The Baglar went south next and met the king in Víkingavági.

### Chapter XIII

Earl Hákon then went from Björgyn where he received news that the Baglar had travelled north. He was afraid that the king would come to them while unprepared. Then the earl went up to Borgarskarð and down to Óstrarfjörðr and up to Vörs, then to Rauðafjall and down to Lærdalr in Sogn, then up to Valdres and up to Guðbrandsdalr, then via Dofrafjall to Þrándheimr and there met with King Ingi.

The Baglar travelled to Björgyn and stayed there for a while. They then divided the army. Earl Philippus went east with large ships. And the king had a twenty-oared ship and many smaller ships. He travelled north to Stim and stayed in Frekeyjarsund and had skiffs sent north in Mœri and ordered out a levy of men and provisions. Next he went south and took over the army such as he saw fit and took all of the king's subjects along the land. Then he went to Sauðungssund in the north where no king had been known to travel. He came to Túnsberg just before Yule. A feast was held there during Yule. After Yule Earl Philippus went with the small ships north along the coast and came to Björgyn. King Erlingr had a longship constructed, Hreiðarr another, and Philippus a third. They were greater than any that had previously been constructed in Norway. They were made with two kinds of row-locks between the east-rooms. The inward upper oars were twenty ells long. The tent required space of over twenty-five ells.<sup>93</sup> So it was written that eight men needed to be able to fit in half a room. When a man stood up on the deck, none were as tall as the broad axes up on deck.

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<sup>93</sup> What the number twenty-five refers to is not actually specified, see the earlier discussion of this in the introductory essay



A little while after Yule King Erlingr got ill and died, and lay nearly a week. His death was at first kept secret for some time. The corpse was kept in a room for seven nights. The corpse was then moved to Saint Óláfr's Church and kept there.<sup>94</sup> A skiff was then sent north to the earl. Óláfr Þóruson was already there. He met the earl in Björgyn and told him the news. It was said by the common folk that the Danish king wished to pay a visit to him. The earl went to Túnsberg on the fast. The death of the king was then proclaimed and the corpse was buried at Saint Óláfr's Church. The king was laid in a stone wall in the north, some distance out from the altar. Earl Philippus took over leadership of the troop and held the army together. They were in Túnsberg during the fast. Erlingr steinveggr had two sons to survive him, Magnús and Sigurðr. At that time Sigurðr was four years old. Erlingr had carried on as his father. Magnús was eight years old. Erlingr wished to prove himself as being like his father. Then he was called the son of the king. Now the earl said that they had good heirs to the throne, which were the sons of King Erlingr. That was well-liked by the men of the army. Then letters were sent between the earl and Bishop Nikólás. He had long secret meetings with the farmers who were the most powerful. Half a month after Easter all of the army of the Baglar went over to Borg and they had with them the son of King Erlingr. Then the Borg assembly was held. Bishop Nikólás arrived there. The assembly was held in the churchyard of Saint Mary's Church. The bishop was in the church along with all of the farmers, they were powerful and most worthy of giving counsel. The bishop spoke for them and they all came to agreement among themselves about the election of the king. Hreiðarr sendimaðr spoke at the assembly and spoke about his loss at the death of the king. "But nevertheless," he said, "it is necessary that we take a chief over the army. We have a good hold of it, since here are two sons of King Erlingr. The farmers and the army may then decide if this is agreeable enough." No answers were taken of the farmers, because they who were powerful and most worthy of giving counsel were in the church. They went to the church after them, and they arrived at the assembly, and then one farmer spoke and said thusly: "The necessity is sufficient," he said, "to take a chief for the army, because there is great strength here in both troops and ships. There will be great need, if you should listen, for the Birkibeinar. Now we, the farmers, have made our counsel. We think that it would not be child's work to deal with these difficulties. We think that this man will need to have both wisdom and know how to command and to uphold the rights of the farmers. Now we wish to have a king who will adequately defend us. Now this is well carried here, since we see fit to take as chief there where the earl is, the son of King Ingi Haraldsson's sister, and this was the best king that has been in Norway in people's memory. He proved to be wise and of good conduct. We will give him the title of king, if you will it." Loðinn, the king's marshall, answered: "You farmers had to give counsel on the election of the king. But though I would like to agree with the army that they would prefer to serve under one of the sons of King Erlingr." Then the entire crowd said that this was true, and the voice of the crowd was great. Each stood up and spoke to others. "Is it not your wish," they said, "that this king we will have will not bind us in subjection?" It was seen then that many of those in the group who straggled were not in agreement and had hope that the group of Birkibeinar would be divided. It was then advised that the farmers should decide. Erlendr of Húsabœr from Hegginn gave Philippus the title of king. A second farmer stood up and judged his levy, rowing and ready. They then went to the ships. The next morning they travelled to Túnsberg and were there for some time. In the north they constructed sixteen skiffs. Arnþjórn Jónsson, Eindriði hegri, Nikólás Bótólfsson, Arnþórr foka and Gyrðr

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<sup>94</sup> Óláfskirkja – Saint Óláfr's Church

Benteinsson then ruled over that place. Then Philippus of Veigin died. He contracted gangrene in his arm, and died a while later. He was buried in Saint Óláfr's church.

#### Chapter XIV

That same spring the Birkibeinar were staying in the north and had many large ships which they had had constructed in Kaupang. There were three which had more than thirty oars and some had fifteen, and many skiffs and twenty-oared ships. They had a very great army and went south to Björgyn. In the south they had fourteen skiffs scouting. That place was ruled over by Þorsteinn gemsir<sup>95</sup> and Sveinn næpa.<sup>96</sup> The king and the earl went south next with all of the large ships to Hvítungseyjar. The Baglar travelled from the east to Selý. They received information that Þorgils fuðhundr was in Sókn north of Veggir and had drawn together a levy. At that time there was little wind from the north. They rowed north before sunrise. So it was said that all of the ships met at Hítr. They arrived there at mid-morning time. Arnþórr rowed north. When Arnþórr came before the mouth of the river the Birkibeinar quickly sent two skiffs towards them. Arnþórr then turned away from there and hoisted sail. They both rowed and sailed. The Birkibeinar sent some men.<sup>97</sup> When they saw the skiffs, which were rowing from the south, they turned away from there and went north for Hádýr. The Baglar rowed in to Sókn and layed anchor in the river with all the army. They sent three ships north to scout. And when they came to Sélvaga then they sent news that the Birkibeinar had twelve skiffs in Eikundasund. Then Baglar rowed north to Hádýr. They saw fourteen skiffs of the Baglar rowing from the north. They turned away from there, but the Birkibeinar pursued them. They saw that the Birkibeinar held watch where they rowed. Arnþjórn then turned out from the river. He set up his banner. When the Birkibeinar saw it they thought that it was the main army of the Baglar, so they turned away and rowed north. The Baglar then pursued them. The Birkibeinar ran onto land in Sváfuvík, but the Baglar pursued them for a long time. With the Birkibeinar was a great army of levies. At that place many of their men were slain. Sveinn næpi and Erlendr þjófakappi were slain there. Some surrendered. The Baglar took all of the ships and next travelled east. It was said that the army of the Birkibeinar stayed outside in Hvítungseyjar. The Baglar travelled night and day to Túnsberg. And the Birkibeinar travelled north and met the king in Hvítungseyjar with the large ships.

#### Chapter XV

Sometime later the Baglar were staying in the east with a fleet of skiffs and had forty-five skiffs. At that place were Nikólás of Listi, Erlingr víkr,<sup>98</sup> Ormr skutilsveinn,<sup>99</sup> and Knörr hattspjör.<sup>100</sup> They travelled north, and came north to Helgasund. Then news arrived from the north. They were told that the Birkibeinar had sailed for Jaðarr and then for Listi. Nikólás wished to sail east, but Ormr spoke against this. They waited there all day until evening. At night they sailed east and in the morning stayed in Portyrja. It was very dark. They did not see that the Birkibeinar sailed across the harbour. The Birkibeinar moved with speed and threw off their tents and turned east from the harbour onto the route and after that they hoisted up

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<sup>95</sup> Gemsir – nickname: joker

<sup>96</sup> Næpa – nickname: turnip

<sup>97</sup> Dispatched with report of the Arnþórr's ship.

<sup>98</sup> Víkr – nickname: bay

<sup>99</sup> Skutilsveinn – nickname: harpoon-boy

<sup>100</sup> Hattspjör – nickname: wearing a torn hat

the sails and went in the direction of Aurr in the fjord. The Birkibeinar had already arrived east over the fjord. The Baglar then sailed after them and layed anchor in Staferni. The Birkibeinar sailed in to the strait. And three skiffs of the Baglar sailed before them – Björgolfir bátr,<sup>101</sup> Eiríkr bergr,<sup>102</sup> and Skæringr. They took news to the king. He then had the entire army gather in Haugr. Then he asked what course of action they wished to take, whether the men wished to go by ship and fight the Birkibeinar, or did they wish to wait there in the town. He said that they would have to fight against the odds. “It seems that one will”, the king said, “turn to land, and hold together the army. I intend for us to be the best.” Arnbjörn Jónsson said, “Let us go to the large ships and take with you those who are the bravest. Though we slowly become ill, we still have an army, just smaller.” That counsel was well-liked by them. They then went to the ships and on the grandest ship was Philippus of Veigin staying. Arnbjörn was on the foremost of the ships along with his troop, and the king’s troop behind them. The Birkibeinar landed by Hrossanes and prepared to attack and put on their armour. When they were ready to attack they rowed against the enemy. They came swiftly, the Baglar ran up to the stern-gangway and next to the men stationed at the bow of the ship. The Birkibeinar were not shot upon by those walking on the land, because the ships were too far away from the piers. The Baglar went up in arms from the towns and so went up to Fróðás and there were no men there except for one who was called Þórbjörn skeifr and he was a levied man.<sup>103</sup> The Birkibeinar took all of the ships, both of those which the king had set in Kaupang and also those which had been set there by the Baglar, and much wealth too, because the Baglar had swiftly set upon the road. The Birkibeinar stayed there for a while.

Before the Birkibeinar went from Björgyn it was decided that Dagfinnr, the king’s representative, would remain in the castle. He wanted to have two-hundred men. But people said that he did not need to stay there with so many soldiers. Svertingr suggested that the castle could be held with a hundred men. It was decided that Ívarr boddí and Erlendr slíðri would stay there all the time. The Baglar travelled with a fleet of skiffs north along the coast. They received report that the Birkibeinar, Óláfr Jörundarbróðir and Óláfr smjörmagi,<sup>104</sup> had travelled with two skiffs. They had business in Vestr-Agðir. The Baglar then met them and pursued one up to Þrymlingum and the other up by Flóstrgafl and most were slain. Nikólás of Listi gave a truce between him and Óláfr. When the men of the army came to know this they then gave an attack and killed them. Then the Baglar went north. When they came north to Jaðarr they then encountered an England-faring ship and plundered it and took much wealth. They took the ship to Körmt. That was the England-faring ship. They set their course north for Björgyn. It was said to them that there was only a small army in the castle. They rode to the castle from the south. Then they divided the army. They rowed to Töluvík, but some stayed out of the town. Then both went up to the castle. The Birkibeinar went out against the castle walls and the Baglar attacked, but it was thinly manned. The Birkibeinar fell back to the walls and to the main castle. The Baglar came in to the castle and won that quickly, then they conquered the castle. When the Baglar saw that they had not held the main castle they then burned the outer castle, and prepared their own men in the castle. When they knew for sure that the Birkibeinar had a small army and were very lacking of drink then they took care that nothing was brought to them. They stayed there for a while. King Philippus and the army that

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<sup>101</sup> Bátr – nickname: boat

<sup>102</sup> Bergr – nickname: rock

<sup>103</sup> Skeifr – nickname: crooked

<sup>104</sup> Smjörmagi – nickname: butter-belly

was pursuing in Túnsberg went over to Upplönd, and came down to Sogn. They received report of their men in Björgyn and where they were. They went to their ships and travelled south to Björgyn. When the Birkibeinar were out of drink then they asked them for a truce and offered to give up the castle. King Philippus gave them a truce and so that each should have what they had in the castle, but that which the king took should be divided with the army. Then the castle was given up. The men went out and swore oaths that they would not bear arms against the king's family. There in the castle was Kristín, daughter of King Sverrir, and Skúli, brother of King Ingi, Margrét wife of Dagfinnr, and Guðríðr, wife of Þorstein heimnes, Guðríðr Jónsdóttir. All together there were forty women.

The Baglar took the castle and took a great amount of provisions and a small amount of wealth. On Monday the king came to the town. On Tuesday the people left the castle. On Wednesday the castle was ransacked, and on Thursday it was burned. Friday evening and all day Saturday was spent demolishing the castle. News came that Earl Hákon was travelling from the east. On Sunday they stayed out in Flóruvága.

The Birkibeinar burned all of the ships in Túnsberg, first those that were the biggest the Baglar had made, Gestaskálprinn and Lyrtan, which had with them Gullbringan and the other large ships.<sup>105</sup> When they received intelligence that the Baglar had travelled north they then divided the army. The king was left with the larger ships, and the earl went north in a twenty-oared ship along with other smaller ships. There was a wind blowing from the north; the Baglar thought that the earl's life was in peril. On the second day of the week the Baglar went in to a castle and all of the people of the town were gathered to destroy the castle.<sup>106</sup> The next Tuesday they left the town and went south to Sundsvág. On Wednesday they were sailing against a wind blowing from the south. The earl and his men sailed from the south. When he came to Harðsæ he then saw the Baglar and rowed south to meet them.<sup>107</sup> The earl thought that they would wish to attack, and took in the sails. When the Baglar came within range they then went out across by the fjords. The Birkibeinar rowed after them and came within shooting range of the skiffs, but the longships were slow. Then the Baglar turned around and wished to take the skiffs, but the Birkibeinar came again in the longships to attack. The Baglar then rowed away south to Salbjarnarsund in the evening. When the Birkibeinar saw that they could not get a hold of them they hoisted their sails and sailed north to Björgyn. When they arrived there they gave great rebuke to those who had given up the castle and said that it was their fault. Dagfinnr argued strongly that the castle should be rebuilt. The people of the town were then gathered and told to patrol the walls of the castle day after day. Now the earls came to think that the king would deem them to have a shortage of men and so went east to Vík. He was staying in the north and set Pétr steypir and Dagfinnr, the king's representative, as guard over the castles.

## Chapter XVI

King Ingi went from Túnsberg and in to Ósló and had four ships, Ógnarbrandinn, two other large ships and Gullbringan.<sup>108</sup> He stayed there for a while. The Baglar had good luck in the north. When they arrived in Þrymlingar they received report that King Ingi was in Ósló. Then

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<sup>105</sup> Gestaskálprinn, Lyrtan, and Gullbringan – the names of three ships

<sup>106</sup> Annan dagr - could also mean the next day or another day

<sup>107</sup> Against the wind

<sup>108</sup> Ógnarbrandinn – the name of a ship

they sailed on but they did not get to Túnsberg, and landed beside Ormey in from Jarlsey. It was then decided to attack the king. Later they sailed in to the fjord and came in to Höfuðey, and at that time men were coming in for drinking parties. The gathering was in the town. The Birkibeinar ran to the ships and dragged them out to anchor. Then the Baglar attacked them, and they were so near to them that they had the ropes cut. The weather was sharp, and the large ships were driven on to the river Frysja, and they went on until they all landed at Leira. The king's ship was there alone. When the Baglar saw it then they boldly rowed after it. All those of both parties who had weapons went. King Philippus set off on his skiff first. The Birkibeinar came and fastened a grappling hook to it and pulled it towards them, and the king fell overboard along with all the men. Seven or eight men died there. The king was taken while swimming along with others that were in the river. After that the Baglar rowed again to the town and took five merchant ships and loaded them with bundles of birch bark and straw and lit them on fire there, and pushed that in to the ships and rowed on. The Birkibeinar thrust at the fire with poles when it came towards them and put the fire out. It was driven in to Leira. When the Baglar saw that it had not worked then they rowed in to the town and in the evening went out to Höfuðeyjar. The weather was diminished. When the tide rose and set afloat the Birkibeinar's ships they then rowed to town and laid anchor until the next day. In the morning the Baglar decided to go out to Túnsberg to take a trade ship there and then go in the direction of the Birkibeinar and not stand any lower than them. There they took two cogs and seven east-faring ships, took the gunwhales and oar-holes and planking to pieces, next loaded it with rocks and then moved themselves out to the fjord. The Birkibeinar sailed towards the fjord, and the Baglar went out in opposition to them in the fjord. When the Baglar saw this they took the most direct course at them. When they came within shooting distance they then turned away out to the fjord. They fought to the last man on the strait. The Baglar leapt off of the large ships and on to the skiffs and went after them. The Birkibeinar went out towards Tvimuskagi, then sailed over the Nesjar high-road, and landed in the Marfjörðr. At that place the Birkibeinar laid anchor and the Baglar were in the landing-stage. The Birkibeinar were short of water. In the morning they sank the ships. They called and commanded Smjör-Kári frændi to clear the harbour for the king.<sup>109</sup> They landed out of the harbour and thrust the prows to the ness. The Birkibeinar next rowed east and landed in Staferni and stayed there another night and remained with the anchors. The Baglar followed them, and went all the way on the same route with them and quicker, the Birkibeinar laid anchor, and the Baglar rowed out and stayed by the ness. In the morning both of the parties were on land. They saw that ships sailed from the west toward Grenmarr and counted thirty (ships). There was an evil rumour among the Baglar, because of the prospect that it was the earl coming from the north. The Birkibeinar called out to them, "What is it now, Baglar? Do you see some sails? Be calm. We set up together. This is cowardly!" The Baglar paid no attention to this and hoisted their sails and sailed east over Foldin, and stayed for some nights in Ástishólm. The others had been sailing from the north from Björgyn, and intended to go to Túnsberg. A few days later the earl arrived from the north. He then met with the king. Now he travelled with all of the army to Túnsberg and dwelled there during the autumn. The Baglar made counsel to go north to Agðir and sailed early in the morning and in the evening arrived in Þrymlinga and there met many merchant ships which were coming from the north. They reported that the earl had sailed east, so Pétr steypir and Dagfinnr were in Björgyn and were preparing the castle, and Dagfinnr put his whole mind to it, because he had rulership in

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<sup>109</sup> Frændi –nickname or title: kinsman

Hörðaland. He believed that his rulership supported the town. Pétr steypir paid no heed. He was constantly over in Saint John's Church because Princess Ingibjörg,<sup>110</sup> his wife, was there. Earl Hákon did not have the military strength to make an attack against the building of the castle. The Baglar went north rather quickly and stayed in Eldeyjarsund and rowed in the evening and in the night and came before dawn to the town and leapt off of the ship into the street, some above the town. Dagfinnr was with his men in the castle, and when they became aware of this they ran into the town. Then they blasted the trumpets. The Birkibeinar who were in the town wished to go to the castle, but they were too late,<sup>111</sup> and eleven men were slain there. Pétr and his men, and those who had heard the blast, ran up out of town. The Baglar settled down in the castle and waited for dawn. When daylight came they went to the castle and asked Dagfinnr for a truce, but he pretended not to need it. The Baglar awaited the attack of the castle. The Birkibeinar defended themselves bravely, and some were in and some ahead.<sup>112</sup> The Baglar then changed out their weary men, and then went ahead with the others. The Baglar took fire with them and attacked the castle. The Birkibeinar men with them were weary and hot. They were also much wounded. There were fifteen men. Dagfinnr asked them for a truce. The Baglar said that they did not need a truce any more than he did in the morning. They took the church-path above to the town and set against the castle and went thus up. Dagfinnr allowed a bond to form with the boy Hákon, the son of King Hákon Sverrison, and asked to give him a truce. With that he let his sword go and sent it to Gyrðr skjálgr, his relative by marriage. Gyrðr took both together, the boy and the sword. "Go to the king," said Dagfinnr, "and try if you can to make a truce for us." Gyrðr did so and asked the king to give Dagfinnr a truce, he offered all of his property as a pledge that he should not be in opposition to him in the future. Arnbjörn Jónsson came and swore many oaths. The king then called a house-assembly and said that the men should give counsel regarding truces. Everyone spoke in opposition. Gyrðr asked not to delay the truce. "You go," said the king, "and ask Dagfinnr to come here alone and make a truce." Then Gyrðr went and told Dagfinnr. "I do not wish to have a truce," he said, "unless we are all together." Gyrðr went next and told the king. Then the king commanded the army to give them a truce, he said that it was of no benefit to kill a few men there at least until there was no foul play. They were then given a truce, on the condition that they go about weapon-less and without overcoats. Dagfinnr had a steel cap. They went from above to byskupsgarðr and trusted the king's oath of faithfulness. The day after the Baglar called to gather all of the men in order to attack the castle, and each stone was moved from its place.<sup>113</sup> The Baglar were in the town for half a month. From there they went north to Þrándheimr. Philippus was then declared king at the Eyrar assembly. At the time the famine was so great in Þrándheimr that they were unable to feed such a great army, and they went after the winter nights south to Björgyn and had skiffs go south to scout. At that place were Björgólfr báttr and Birgir of Stöng, Brynjólfir nefr and Skæringr.<sup>114</sup> They received report that Pétr steypir was in Stafangr along with his men. The Baglar stayed in Mostr and received report that Pétr steypir was not in the town during the nights, but stayed there during the days and had not been informed that they had come from the north. They rowed out to Herfili and

<sup>110</sup> Jónskirkja – Church of Saint John

<sup>111</sup> The Baglar came against them before they could attack

<sup>112</sup> "váru æ inir sömu frammi" – the meaning of this is unclear, perhaps an unknown idiom. See the discussion of this in the introductory essay.

<sup>113</sup> Meaning that they wreaked havoc and turned the place upside-down

<sup>114</sup> Nefr – nickname: nose

took the headwind and stayed there for four nights. They then rowed over the fjord, in to Vaðeyjar before going in to Bókn and from there out of Útsteinn, then south to Fjarðbyrjusundr and inward to Váginn. Pétr steypir had gone to matins and listened to matins-mass along with his men. The snow drift was so dark that they did not notice when the Baglar came off of the ships. The Birkibeinar saw and Pétr was told. He ran and raced out of town along with all of the men. Pétr was the fastest on his feet of all men. The Baglar ran after them and slew eleven men. Pétr was so close to escaping that he cast away his tunic and belt. The Baglar found the tunic but not the belt and took it to town. The king's daughter thought that Pétr must have been slain, before she was told that he got away. The Baglar stayed at that place for the night and then went north to Björgyn.

## Chapter XVII

King Ingi and Earl Hákon and all of their army went from the east from Vík and came north a little before Yule, and stayed all autumn long in Seleyjum. When the Baglar received report that the Birkibeinar were coming to Karmsund, they then rowed south from the town and landed at Bárðarsund and stayed there for the night, and rowed to Hvistvík during the day, and there was a southerly wind. The Birkibeinar then sailed to Eldeyarsund. Then the Birkibeinar received report that the Baglar were in the south in Storð. Earl Hákon went south with all of the light ships, but the king stayed behind. In the evening the earl landed by Títólfsnes. He was told that the Baglar were not away travelling. The Baglar rowed during the night and thought that the Birkibeinar would all be together in Eldeyarsund. When they came before Láfungsnes they turned towards the fjord to Títólfsnes, and the land-wind was blowing. Arnbjörn went first with four skiffs, and was aware of the guard of the Birkibeinar and called loudly to him, "Out of the tents," he said, "here comes hostility!" The Baglar thought it was extraordinary, because they did not think that the Birkibeinar were near. The ships went quickly forwards from the harbour. They saw fires up on the land and the ships which were bearing fire-light and now hit them with oars. Björgólfr bátr called to them, "Who are these people?" he said. The Birkibeinar had much trouble and took down their tents and laid down the mast, but they gave no answer. Björgólfr called out a second and third time. Then a man spoke. "Don't be like that, man," he said, "you have observed us." The Baglar thought they knew that the Birkibeinar would be there, took to the oars and now rowed out. The men of the Baglar had all arrived before the harbour and the Birkibeinar rowed after them and blew the trumpets. The Baglar rowed harder. It was so dark that they could not know what was going on. The ships all went closely together and passed the river. The Baglar went out directly along the coast, and the Birkibeinar went quickly out to the fjord. Then they went to the strait with them. The Birkibeinar did not know in which direction the Baglar had turned. The Birkibeinar then turned back. Pétr steypir then came to the Birkibeinar from Eikundasund and took control of a skiff. He steered up to Hreiðarr's ship. A man called to Pétr's ship. "Why did you devils row for us in the night?" He threw a stone, and it hit a man who was sat in the fore-room of Hreiðarr's ship.<sup>115</sup> The man on Hreiðarr's ship spoke. "We rowed as well as we were able."

Pétr steypir did not recognize them. Hreiðarr rowed in to Mostr along with Helgi Birgisson. Arnþórr foka turned back to the north and went to Teknaþjörðr, and there he leapt on to land.

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<sup>115</sup> Fyrirrími – "the 'room' in a ship of war before the 'lypting', the middle 'room' of a boat.", Zöega, pp.

The Birkibeinar landed in the harbour and waited there for a day. In the morning the Birkibeinar pursued Arnbjörn and his brother Sörkvir snápr up to Vaðilsey. There Arnbjörn was slain along with five men. The Birkibeinar went on their way north to Björgyn. In the morning the Baglar arrived in Haugasund with their army. Bishop Nikólás's messenger arrived there to see the king. The king read the letter. It was there on the river that they should reconcile, the Birkibeinar and the Baglar, and neither should do any harm to the other. At that time it was shortly before Yule. The Baglar moved their army to Agðir on Yule. After that they went east to Túnsberg and stayed there during the winter. Bishop Nikólás had travelled north to Þrándheimr during the previous summer in order to meet with Archbishop Þórir. An agreement with them was established that they should all be reconciled, the Birkibeinar and the Baglar. Bishop Nikólás went back east, and messengers were sent between the men. In the spring Bishop Nikólás went out to Túnsberg to meet with Philippus. Then they held their meeting together. The king spoke. "Lord bishop," he said, "who at this place of peace-seeking have you travelled with?" The bishop answered. "Lord," he said, "it is an honour, that you have three leaders. Should your lands be increased by a third who should have what. You should, lord, have Vík and Upplönd. And it is not fair, that in Þrándheimr there is now hunger and famine, but there is a good season here. The archbishop has decided that you should wed Kristín, king Sverrir's daughter, as she comes from the best family in Norway. It should so follow that you would have a son together. People would then think little of the families of Bárðr Guthormsson or Fólkvíðr lögmaðr.<sup>116</sup> We have long had difficulties with the Birkibeinar. And if you want this then first reconcile, it may be that we gain more from a compromise than another time. The king thought this becoming. The bishop now went north to Björgyn with good company. He came to talk with King Ingi and Earl Hákon, brought this up for them and then said, "Philippus, our kinsman,<sup>117</sup> would you now give up with lesser persuasion now that all resistance is against you? He accepted that it was advisable to make a connection with you if you would marry him to Kristín, King Sverrir's daughter. Now he can be with you, lord, a man of great strength, which you know that's what you want." The king and the earl had few words regarding this, they said that it would not be acceptable to not have Ingi as the sole king over the country. The bishop talked mildly here, grasped them slowly at first and little by little won them over. It was especially agreed by them that Philippus should have the girl if that was her wish and have a similar proportion of the land that Earl Eiríkr, king Sverrir's brother, had owned and such a degree of rank as King Ingi wished to give him. The Birkibeinar thought that the bishop was going to take rather everything but they assented. It came about that this was discussed at the assembly. Bishop Nikólás performed the speech. The Birkibeinar opposed the words that they thought unfriendly and demanded the villain be silent, he now said what had previously been mistrusted. The bishop gave no heed to what they said. The archbishop had then arrived from the north. He landed and had a great wish for peace to be made. It came about that a peace meeting was to be held in Hvítungseyjar. Members of both parties were to go there, and also the archbishop and Bishop Nikólás. They met there in the autumn. The Birkibeinar stayed by Hvítungseyjar and the Baglar by Nautey. The men went to meet at a halfway point, and next had a meeting themselves. The Birkibeinar took a great crowd of people. The bishops then talked and told each what the conditions of peace were. Then it was, which often may occur, that members of both parties misinterpreted some of what was said. The Birkibeinar then

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<sup>116</sup> Lögmaðr – nickname: lawyer

<sup>117</sup> Nikólás was the uncle of Philippus. *Böglunga saga I*, pp.45



made the decision that Philippus should not have land further north than to Rýgiarbit, and no further south than to Svínasund. He should give up the title of king and accept the title which King Ingi would give him. This peace agreement was bound by an oath, and also regarding the slayings of men between each should not be avenged but payments of gold should be demanded in reparation; regarding property seized, each should have what they took. Now they took oaths of faithfulness, first the leaders, King Ingi and Earl Hákon and Philippus, soon after the men of the land and the stewards, twenty-four of each. And so the meeting for peace was concluded and allegiance was given. Gunnarr grjónbak made a speech there.<sup>118</sup> The second day after Philippus wed Princess Kristín. Then there were grumbings among the men of both armies who had no wealth and no titles. It was then decided that after the spring they should go raiding to Suðreyjar and take wealth for themselves. This was the intention of the men of both armies. Then they, Pétr steypir and Hreiðarr sendimaðr, made counsel. He married Margrét, the daughter of King Magnús. They intended to travel out to Jórsalaheimr<sup>119</sup>. It is said that they then parted. The Baglar went east and the Birkibeinar went to Björgyn. The Baglar referred to Philippus as king as they had done before.

After the spring Philippus took two skiffs north to Björgyn to meet Princess Kristín. At that place were Eysteinn Hróason, Ámundi burst,<sup>120</sup> Grundi féhirðir.<sup>121</sup> The princess went east to Vík. Philippus got married in Ósló. Queen Margrét arrived there from the east of Gautland and had been married to King Sverrir. She was the daughter of King Eiríkr inn helgi.<sup>122</sup> She was also the mother of Kristín. That summer Þormóðr þasrámr, Þormóðr fylbeinn,<sup>123</sup> and Óspakr suðreyski went on a raiding expedition to Suðreyjar.<sup>124</sup> These were of the Birkibeinar. And of the Baglar there were Eiríkr Tófason and Eiríkr and Erlendr píkr,<sup>125</sup> Bergr maul, Nikulás gilli.<sup>126</sup> They had twelve ships. One winter since they had travelled over the land road, Pétr steypir and Hreiðarr, and had two ships, and neither returned.

## Chapter XVIII

That winter, in which Erlingr steinveggr had died, the Baglar went east to Vík shortly before Yule. The men stayed there afterwards and thought to take a breath. Sörkvir snápr had gone in to Harðangr. He went south on a little skiff together with fourteen others. At that time Styrkár stágnal had a fief in Rogaland.<sup>127</sup> He received report that Sörkvir was travelling and went to seek him out. They saw each other at Barðhólm. Styrkár rowed after them and followed them south to Karmsund. Then night came. Styrkár stayed in the town, set the ships up and went to a house. They stayed in the sitting-room. The week after they were still looking for Sörkvir, he was staying in the town and recognized Styrkár's ship. He later went

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<sup>118</sup> Grjónbak – nickname: grain-back

<sup>119</sup> To go on a Pilgrimage.

<sup>120</sup> Burst – nickname: bristle, bristles

<sup>121</sup> Féhirðir – nickname: shepherd

<sup>122</sup> Inn helgi – nickname: the holy, given post-humously

<sup>123</sup> Fylbeinn – nickname: foal-leg?

<sup>124</sup> Suðreyski – nickname: of the Hebrides

<sup>125</sup> Píkr – nickname: pike

<sup>126</sup> Gilli – nickname: servant. The word is of Celtic origin.

<sup>127</sup> Stágnal – nickname: mast-rope needle?

home to the town. Sørkvir went first in to the sitting-room. He took from above his two halberds and leapt out with them and went to attack, and it is said that he had a sufficient number of men. Then he took a sled and animals to drive it. Styrkár ran up and took his weapon. They had guessed that a crowd of men were outside. There were not many going outside. They set a table against the sitting-room window. Some men went out there. The Baglar broke through to the living room and carried stones in there. Then they took bundles of birch bark and lit a firebrand there and threw it through the window, so that the sitting-room was set alight. Some were wounded, and many were slain. Styrkár was slain there along with seventeen others. Sørkvir was wounded. Nine men gave their pledge of truce.

## Chapter XIX

That same winter, after Yule before the peaceful summer, a smith lived alone in Nesjar. It was one evening that a man came riding and he asked to lodge there for the night and he asked him to make a set of horse shoes. The farmer answered that it was well-able to be done. They stood up as it was a long time until day and went to the smith. The farmer asked, "Where were you the previous night?" "In Meðaldalr", said the guest. That was to the north in Þelamörk. The smith spoke, "You must be the most untruthful man, it is not possible because there is no road." He went and smithed but he did not smith as he had wanted." He spoke. "Never have I smithed so before," he said. The guest spoke.<sup>128</sup> "You smithed as you yourself would travel." More horse-shoes were made than he had seen before. They then took them to fit on the horses. Then he put the shoes on it. Then the guest spoke. "You are an unlearned man", he said, "and unwise. Why do you ask nothing?" The smith spoke. "What man are you, or where have you come from, or where are you going?" He answered, "I have come from my country in the north, and I have stayed here long in Norway. Now I intend to go east to Sweden. Long have I been on ships, but now I must become accustomed to horse for a while." The smith spoke. "Where do you intend to go in the evening?" "East to Sparmörk," he said. "You must have misspoken," said the farmer, "because the journey is a ride of almost seven days." He then mounted the horse. The farmer spoke. "Who are you?" He answered. "Have you heard mention of Óðinn?" "I have heard him named," said the farmer. "Here now you can see him," said the guest, "but if you do not believe that which I have said to you then watch now as I gallop my horse over the farm. The horse reared up. Then he drove his spurs into the horse and he moved quickly away. The horse leapt over the farm and disappeared. The fence stakes were seven ells high. He never saw it since. Four nights later King Sørkvir and King Eiríkr fought in Leinar. This interesting tale was told by the smith himself to Earl Philippus that same winter in Túnsberg, and so we have told it as we heard it. The farm was called Píslum, and the farmer, who made the horse-shoes, was called Þórðr vettir.<sup>129</sup>

## Appendix of Placenames

Compiled here are placenames of towns, farms and islands mentioned in the saga. Not included are names of churches, piers, castles and placenames forming part of a nickname. The placenames are ordered as per Icelandic convention.

Agðanes – Agdenes, Norway

Agðir – Agder, Norway

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<sup>128</sup> Gestr is one of the names of Óðinn, but also simply means "guest".

<sup>129</sup> Vettir – nickname: gloves

Akrinn – Kalvskinnet, Norway  
Arnarfjörður – Arnavågen near Bergen, Norway  
Aurr – Island in Telemark  
Álaborg – Aalborg, Denmark  
Ástishólm – Østvigs Holme, in Oslofjorden  
Bakki – Bakke, Norway  
Barðhólm – in Rogaland, Norway  
Bárðarsund – Bårdssundet in Hordaland, Norway  
Bergheimsheraði – Bærum, west of Oslo, Norway  
Björgyn – Bergen, Norway  
Borg – Sarpsborg, Austfold, Norway  
Borgarskarð – near Bergen, Norway  
Borhund – Borgund, Norway  
Bókn – Vestre Bokn, an island in Rogaland, Norway  
Blakkastaðir – Blakstad, by Oslo, Norway  
Brimsteinn – Brimsted in Oslofjorden, Norway  
Bær – on Karmøy, Norway  
Eikundasund – Eigersund in RBand, Norway  
Eiðaskógr – Eidskog, on the border of Norway and Sweden  
Eldeyarsund – Eldøysund in Hordaland, Norway  
Esjunessey – Hesnesøyene, in Aust-Agder  
Eyjavatn – Øyeren in Romerike, Norway  
Eyrar – Øra, Norway  
Eystirdalr – Østerdalen in Oppland, Norway  
Fenhring – Askøy, island near Bergen, norway  
Flaðkar – Flakk, Norway  
Flóruvág – Florvåg, Norway  
Flóstrgafl – Skinnfelltangen in Aust-Agder, Norway  
Fold/in – Somewhere in Oslofjorden  
Foksteinar – Foksteinen, Rogaland, Norway

Forscela – Forshälla in Bohuslän, Sweden  
 Fjarðbyrjusund – near Stavanger, Norway  
 Fjölbyrja – in Rogaland, Norway  
 Frekeyjarsund – Frekøysund, Norway  
 Frysja – Akerselva, a river by Oslo, Norway  
 Fylinsfjörðr – Førdesfjorden, Norway  
 Gautland – The homeland of the Gautish people, in Southern Sweden  
 Gildisskáli – in Trøndelag, Norway  
 Grafdalr – Gravdal near Bergen, Norway  
 Grenmarr – in Telemark, Norway  
 Grindhólmasund – Grengen, South of Tønsberg  
 Gumanes – Gomnes in Ringerike, Norway  
 Hafsteinssund – Havstenssund in Bohuslän, Sweden  
 Halland – Halland province, Sweden  
 Hamarrinn litli – Lillehammer, Norway  
 Hamarsund – Hamarsundet, Norway  
 Harðangr – Hardanger, Norway  
 Harðsær – Korsfjorden, Norway  
 Haugr – probably in Hedmark  
 Haugasund – Hofuesund, Rogaland, Norway  
 Hádýr – in Rogaland, Norway  
 Háey – Håøy, Norway  
 Hegginn – in Austfold, Norway  
 Heiðmörk - Hedmark, Norway  
 Helgasund – Hellesund in Agder, Norway  
 Herfili – a harbour in Rogaland  
 Hítr – Hidra, an island in Vest-Agder, Norway  
 Hornyn – in Fjordane district, Norway  
 Hólm – common placename referring to an islet.  
 Hringaríki – Ringerike, Norway

Hrossanes – Rambergodden, Norway  
Húsabær – Huseby in Hedmark, Norway  
Hvinisdalur – Kvinesdal, Vest-Agder, Norway  
Hvistvík – Hussvig in Stord, Hordaland, Norway  
Hvítingseyjar - Kvitsøy, Norway  
Höfuðeyjar – Hovedøya island by Oslo, Norway  
Hörðaland – Hordaland region, Norway  
Jarley – Jersøy near Tunsberg, Norway  
Jaðarr – Jaeren, Rogaland, Norway  
Jórsalaheimr – Jerusalem, Israel to go on pilgrimage  
Karmsund – Karmsund, Rogaland, Norway  
Kaupang – Kaupang, Norway  
Kaupmannahafn – Copenhagen, Denmark.  
Keilustraum – Kilstraumen, Norway  
Konungahella – Near the Gaut river, Norway  
Kopr – Kopen in Bergen, Norway  
Körmt – Karmøy, island in Rogaland, Norway  
Laxavágr – Laksevåg, near Bergen, Norway  
Láfungsnes – in the south of Hordaland, Norway  
Leinar – Kungslena in Götaland, Sweden  
Leira – Grønlandsleiret, one of the main streets in Oslo, Norway  
Leykin – Løken in Fjordane, Norway  
Limafjörðr – Limfjorden in Jutland, Denmark  
Listi – in Vest-Agder  
Ljánés – Ljones in Hardanger, Norway  
Ljárindir – Lerånda in Gaulardal  
Ljásnes – Ljones, Norway  
Ljóðhús – Gamla Lödöse, Sweden  
Lyngver – Lyngvær, north of Kristiansund, Norway  
Lærdalur – Lærdal in Sogn, Norway

Marfjörður – probably refers to Langesundsfjorden, Norway

Markarhólmur – probably Marholmen, Norway

Markir – Marker, border between Norway and Sweden

Meðaldalur – Meldal in Telemark, Norway

Mjaðmarsund – Mjømnesundet, Norway

Mjørs – Mjøsa in Oppland, Norway

Moldafjörður – Moldefjorden, Norway

Mostr – Moster, Hordaland, Norway

Mørr – Møre, Norway

Nautey – Nautøy, Rogaland, Norway

Nesey – Brunlanes in Vestfold, Norway

Nesjar – Brunlanes in Vestfold, Norway

Nizir - Lake Nissan, Sweden

Ormey – near Tunsberg, Norway

Orkadalur – Orkdalen, Norway

Ósló – Oslo, Norway

Óstrarfjörður – Osterfjorden, north-east of Bergen, Norway

Píslum – Pinsle, Sweden

Portyrja – Portør, a harbour in Telemark, Norway

Randarsund – Randesund, Norway

Rauðafjall – Trollefjeldet, in Hordaland, Norway

Rekuvág – Rekefjorden, Rogaland, Norway

Rogaland – Rogaland, Norway

Rugsund – Rugsundet, Norway

Rýggjarbit – probably refers to Gjærnestangen on the border of Agder and Telemark, Norway

Salbjarnarstund – Bekkjarviksundet, Hordaland, Norway

Sauðungssund – in Fjordane, Norway

Sélvága – Selvåg in Jæren, Norway

Siggjarvág – Siggjarvåg, Hordaland, Norway

Síld – Silda in Fjordane, Norway

Sogn – Sogn, Norway  
Sognsjár – Sognesjøen, Norway  
Sókn – in Rogaland, Norway  
Skálavík – Skålevik near Bergen, Norway  
Skýsás – in Strind, Norway  
Sparmörk – It is unknown where this is  
Stafafjörðr – Stavfjorden, Norway  
Stafangr – Stavanger, Norway  
Staðr – Stadshaff, forested region in western Norway  
Stimr – Stemshesten, mountain on the border of Møre og Romsdal district, Norway  
Storð – Stord, island in Hordaland  
Strind – Strinda, Norway  
Sundsvág – South of Bergen, Norway  
Suðreyjar – The Hebrides, Scotland  
Sváfuvík – Nålaugvika, Rogaland, Norway  
Sveggjaðarsund – Sveggesundet, Norway  
Svínasund – in Viken, Norway  
Teknafjörðr – in Hordaland, Norway  
Títólfsnes – Tittelsnes, Norway  
Túnsberg – Tønsberg, Norway  
Tvimuskagi – in Vestfold, Norway  
Töluvík – near Bergen, perhaps Sandviken  
Uppdalr – Oppdal, Norway  
Upplönd - Oppland, Norway  
Úlfasund – Ulvesundet, Norway  
Útsteinn – Utsteinen, Norway  
Valdres – in Oppland, Norway  
Vaðeyjar – in Rogaland, Norway  
Vaðilsey – in Hordland, Norway  
Vágsey – Vågsøy, Norway

Vágrinn – Vågen, Norway

Veigin – Veien, in Ringerike, Norway

Veddey - Vedøya in Sør-Trøndelag, Norway

Vestr-Agðir – Vest-Agder, Norway

Véey – Veøy in Romsdalfjord, Norway

Vinðland – Wendland, historical region of the Wends

Visk – Viskan river in Halland

Vík - Viken, Norway

Víkingavág – Vikingevåg in Sogn, Norway

Völunes – outside Bergen, Norway

Vörs – in Hordaland, Norway

Yxney – Uksnøya, Norway

Þraum – probably to the south of Havstenssund, Sweden

Þrándheimr – Trondheim, Norway

Þelamörk – Telemark, region in Norway

Þingvöllr – Tingvoll, Norway

Þórsey – Torsøy, Norway

Þrændalög – Trøndelag region, Norway

Þrymlingar - Tromlingene, a small island in Aust-Agder, Norway

Æðey – Edøya, in More og Romsdal region, Norway

Ögvaldsnes – Avaldsnes on Karmøy, Norway

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