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**Medieval Icelandic Studies**

# **The Karlamagnús Compendium**

**Genre and Meaning in AM 180a-b fol.**

**Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs**

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## Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the fifteenth century manuscript AM 180a-b fol.; made up of a copy of the A version of *Karlamagnús saga* (180a) and seven further sagas - *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, *Dunstanus saga*, *Katrínar saga*, *Bærings saga*, *Knýtlinga saga*, *Vitus saga* and *Laurentius saga* (180b), it originally formed one codex. The thesis has two main aims: to consider the generic position of *Karlamagnús saga* as it existed for the compilers of the manuscript and to speculate on the producers, purpose and use of the manuscript by means of a holistic consideration of its parts. The first aim is prompted by viewing the sagas of 180b as a reflection of the generic ambiguity of *Karlamagnús saga*. While patently belonging to the *riddarasögur*, *Karlamagnús saga* has affinities with hagiography and the *konungasögur*; representatives of these three generic classes are to be found in 180b. Structured by the theme of saintliness, in which a chronological line of saintly figures is presented, as well as shared geographical referents, the codex is marked by a wide-ranging intellectual curiosity. This is attributed to the concerns of the North Icelandic Benedictine School, the presence of which is marked in the manuscript, and to the wider intellectual atmosphere of fourteenth century Iceland in which saints' lives and romances were possibly written by the same people.

## Ágrip

Þessi ritgerð skoðar fimmtánda aldar handritið AM 180a-b fol.; sem samanstendur af A gerð *Karlamagnúsar sögu* (180a) ásamt sjö öðrum sögum- *Konráðs sögu keisarasonar*, *Dunstanusar sögu*, *Katrínar sögu*, *Bærings sögu*, *Knýtlinga sögu*, *Vitus sögu* og *Laurentiusar sögu* (180b), sem upphaflega mynduðu saman eitt handrit. Ritgerðin hefur tvö megin markmið: annars vegar að skoða í hvaða bókmenntaflokki *Karlamagnúsar saga* var álitin af þeim sem að settu saman handritið og hins vegar vangaveltur um hverjir það voru sem settu það saman, tilgangi þeirra með samsetningu þessara rita og hver notkun og hlutverk þessa handrits gæti hafa verið með því að horfa á það heildrænt. Hvatinn að baki fyrsta markmiðinu kemur af því að skoða hvernig sögurnar í 180b gætu endurspeglad óljósa bókamenntaflokkun *Karlamagnúsar sögu*. *Karlamagnúsar saga* tilheyrir flokki riddarasagna, en á þó margt sameiginlegt með heilagramannasögum og konungasögum; sögur sem bera einkenni þessara þriggja sagnategunda eru að finna í 180b. Þema heilagleika mótar uppbyggingu handritsins, þar sem tímaröð heilagra einstaklinga er kynnt, ásamt því að veita landfræðilegar tilvísanir, en handritið ber einnig einkenni lærdómsvilja og forvitni. Þessi vilji og forvitni eru rekin til norðlenska Benediktínaskólans, handritið ber einkenni hans og einkenni þess lærdómsanda sem var ríkjandi á Íslandi á fjórtánda öld, þar sem dýrlingasögur og rómansar voru mögulega rituð af sömu einstaklingum.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Literary review.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>180a-b fol.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The Manuscript - Acquisition and Contents .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Manuscript - Dating and Script .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Genre.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Kms as saint's saga .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<b>Compilation .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>Konráðs saga keisarasonar 1r-1r .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Dunstanus saga 1r-5v .....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Katrínar saga 5v-8v.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Bærings saga fagra 8v-19v .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Knýtlinga saga 19v-32v Knýtlinga saga 33r-34r.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Vítus saga 34r-36r.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Laurentius saga 36r-52v .....</i>	<i>35</i>
<b>180b as a complement to 180a.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>The North Icelandic Benedictine School.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Konráðs saga keisarasonar and Bærings saga as clerical texts.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Vitus saga and Katrínar saga - supporting documents.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Knýtlinga saga as saint's saga.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<b>Producers, Purpose and Use .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Primary Sources.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Secondary Sources .....</b>	<b>53</b>

## Introduction

*Karlamagnús saga* (hereafter *Kms*) is a testament to the protean nature of vernacular narrative in medieval Europe. Changing literary form, language and cultural context, the stories of Charlemagne and his twelve peers travelled from the jongleurs' repertoire in 11th century France to the prose compilations of Icelandic scribes; later they became orally recited poetry once again in the form of *rímur*.<sup>1</sup> This thesis concerns itself with the fifteenth century codex 180 a-b fol., dubbed 'The Karlamagnús Compendium' in the title since this is the only surviving manuscript to contain *Kms* (180a) alongside other material (180b). Together with 180c fol., a vellum dated to c.1400, 180a constitutes the A version of *Kms*, as established by C. R. Unger in his edition of 1860.<sup>2</sup> This version is thought to have originated in the mid thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The B version records a revision carried out in Iceland in the fourteenth century, in which certain branches have been added or rewritten (further details below) and is represented by the seventeenth century paper manuscripts AM 180d fol. and AM 531 4to, copies of lost vellums. It was at the court of the Norwegian King Hákon Hákonarson (r. 1217-63) that a number of literary works in Old French and Anglo-Norman were translated into Old Norse. These included the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes, such as *Ivain* (*Ívens saga*), *Erec et Énide* (*Erex saga*) and *Perceval, ou le conte du Graal* (*Parcevals saga*), the *lais* of Marie de France (*Strengleikar*), Thomas of Britain's *Tristan* (*Tristrams saga*), the fabliau *Le Mantel mautaillié* (*Mottuls saga*) and a number of *chansons de gestes* including *Elie de Saint Gilles* (*Elis saga og Rósamundu*). The identification as Norwegian of a thirteenth century fragment of *Kms*, NRA 61, has prompted scholars to associate the compilation of *Kms* with this period of translation at the Norwegian court<sup>4</sup>; nevertheless, orthographic analysis of this fragment has identified Icelandic linguistic traits.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, we

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<sup>1</sup> E. F. Halvorsen notes four *rímur* cycles based on *Karlamagnús saga* - *Geiplur, Landrésrímur, Rollantsrímur af Ferakutsbardaga* and *Rollantsrímur af Runsivalþætti*. E. F. Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, Bibliotheca Arnarnagnæana 19 (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1959), 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Karlamagnus saga ok kappa hans. Fortællinger om keiser Karl Magnus og hans jævnninger i norsk bearbejdelse fra det trettende aarhundrede*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania: H. J. Jensen, 1860).

<sup>3</sup> Constance B. Hieatt, "General Introduction," in *Karlamagnús saga. The Saga of Charlemagne and His Heroes*, vol. 1, trans. Constance B. Hieatt (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1975), 23.

<sup>4</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 32. Halvorsen calls this fragment 'Fr1'.

<sup>5</sup> Stefán Karlsson, "Íslandsk bogeksport til Norge i middelalderen," *Maal og minne* (1979): 1-17. Cited in Marianne Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 2005), 333. First pub. by Cornell University Press, 1985.

know little about how the translations that made up *Kms* came about and were put together, and cannot say for sure if the translators and compilers were Norwegian or Icelandic.<sup>6</sup>

*Karlamagnús saga* is a collection of translated Old French *chansons de gestes* which relate to Charlemagne or members of his retinue; translations of two Latin texts have also been worked into the text. Since the translations of the individual *chanson de geste* are quite close to the originals and there is little attempt on the part of the compiler to create a coherent narrative, the saga has been described as "chronologically confused and full of inconsistencies"<sup>7</sup>. That is to say, *Karlamagnús saga* is more akin to an anthology of translated poems touching on a similar topic, rather than a history or life of Charlemagne, as the word *saga* might suggest. The ten branches of the collection recount different episodes in the martial career of Charlemagne. Following the branch numbers and titles used by Unger, the A version contains the following: Branch I, *Karlamagnús saga ok kappa hans*, a synthesis of a number of lost *chansons de geste*, including a *Chanson de Basin*, which introduces events and characters that appear in the succeeding branches; Branch III, *Af Oddgeiri danska*, a close translation of the *Enfances d'Ogier le Danois* which sees a hostage, Oddgeir, become Karlamagnús's champion when he excels in an Italian campaign against the Babylonians; Branch IV, *Af Agulando konungi* - the first 23 chapters are a translation of the Latin *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, followed by a translation of the *Chanson d'Aspremont* -, it recounts the battles in Spain with Agulandus, King of Africa; Branch V, *Af Gvitalín saxa*, based on a lost source perhaps the same as that used for Jean Bodel's *Chanson de Saisnes* - it tells of the Saxon campaign; Branch VI, *Af Otúel*, based on the *Chanson d'Otinél*, which concerns the heathen Otúel who converts to Christianity when duelling with Rollant; Branch VII, *Af Jórsalaferð*, a translation of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, describing a journey made by Karlamagnús to Jerusalem and Constantinople; and lastly Branch VIII, *Af Rúnzivals bardaga*, based on the *Chanson de Roland*, which tells the story of the French defeat at the hands of the heathens in Spain, entailing the deaths of Rollant, Oliver and Turpin. 180c fol. breaks off before the end of Branch VII whilst 180a fol. stops three lines before the end of Branch VIII; it is not known how far the A version continued after this point.<sup>8</sup> The B version carries on with Branch IX, *Af Vilhjálmi korneis*, which concerns the hero William of Orange; the

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<sup>6</sup> Povl Skårup, "Karlamagnús saga," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 349.

<sup>7</sup> Hieatt, "General Introduction," 14.

<sup>8</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 33.

translation is connected to the *Moniage Guillaume* from the *Cycle de Guillaume*. Branch X, *Um kraftaverk ok jarategnir* uses Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* to provide a revised account of Charlemagne's death, and Branch II, *Afrú Ólif ok Landrés*, a translation from a Middle English romance related to the *Doon de la Roche*, is also added to the B version.<sup>9</sup> Other notable changes found in the B version include a comprehensive reworking of Branch IV, a shortening of I and VI, and a lengthening of III.<sup>10</sup>

### Literary review

The scholarly work that *Karlamagnús saga* has attracted has often been conducted with a presumption of its inferior quality.<sup>11</sup> Even the translator of the only full version in English, Constance B. Hieatt, prefaces her translation with the caveat that, "It must, however, be admitted that the literary quality of *Karlamagnús saga* is, at best, secondary", lacking the "special magic" to be found in Gottfried's *Tristan*.<sup>12</sup> This negative judgement of the saga as a work of art is certainly due to the fact that it is a translation, placed, as Daniel Lacroix writes of the translated literature from French into Old Norse in general, "à la marge de deux grandes domaines d'étude", that of the "romanistes" and that of the "scandinavistes".<sup>13</sup> The former have tended to regard the saga as a mere source for clarification on French texts, and the latter have often deemed the translated sagas as less worthy of attention than the more 'authentic' Scandinavian literary texts, such as the Sagas of Icelanders. These views have been exacerbated by the lack of critical editions and translations. Writing in 1959, Halvorsen lamented that due to students of Old French literature having to rely on summaries of the branches, such as those translated by Gaston Paris from Unger's edition, "very few non-Scandinavian scholars have therefore been able to contribute anything of importance to the study of the saga"<sup>14</sup>. Constance Hieatt's English translation of the full version<sup>15</sup>, published in three volumes from 1975-1980 and Daniel Lacroix's translation of the full version into

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<sup>9</sup> It is only AM 531 4to in which Branch II appears between Branches I and III; in AM 180d fol. Branch II is found at the end of the manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> Hieatt, "General Introduction," 21.

<sup>11</sup> Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), 70.

<sup>12</sup> Hieatt, "General Introduction," 14.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Lacroix, "Introduction," *La Saga de Charlemagne: traduction française des dix branches de la Karlamagnús saga norroise* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000), 11.

<sup>14</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 57.

<sup>15</sup> *Karlamagnús saga: The Saga of Charlemagne and His Heroes*, 3 vols. trans. Constance B. Hieatt (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1975-80).

French<sup>16</sup>, published in 2000, has surely improved this situation. Nevertheless, the only complete edition of the original text remains Unger's edition of 1860.<sup>17</sup> Bjarni Vilhjálmsón's Modern Icelandic edition of 1950<sup>18</sup> largely follows Unger's editorial choices, and Agnete Loth's bilingual French-Old Norse edition of 1980 includes just four branches: I, II, VII and IX.<sup>19</sup>

In the history of scholarship of the Old-Norse Icelandic corpus, both the translations from French, often known as *riddarasögur* due to their shared knightly context, and the indigenous *riddarasögur* which they gave rise to, have been the subject of neglect and denigration. With regard to *Kms* in particular, the period following Unger's edition and introductory essay of 1860, and Gustav Storm's book on Charlemagne and Dietrich von Bern of 1874<sup>20</sup> up until the 1950s was particularly sparse. In his exhaustive survey of the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, published in three volumes, Finnur Jónsson devotes six pages to *Kms* and his analysis draws heavily on the work of Unger and Storm<sup>21</sup>. As Halvorsen points out, "Finnur Jónsson was not particularly interested in the European and romantic part of it [Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian literature]."<sup>22</sup> The German scholar Eugen Mogk agreed with Storm's conclusions as to the sources of Branch I in his survey of the corpus in 1904, and criticized Karl Steitz's article of 1908 which dealt with Branch VIII. There is a brief discussion of *Kms* in the Dutch scholar Jan de Vries's survey work of 1942, which has been criticized for the mistakes it contains.<sup>23</sup> It is perhaps no coincidence that this period - the late 19th century and first half of the twentieth century - coincides with the rise of the nationalist movement in Iceland which, to quote the historian Gunnar Karlsson, "owes both its origin and its success to the cultural

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<sup>16</sup> *La Saga de Charlemagne: traduction française des dix branches de la Karlamagnús saga norroise*, ed. Daniel Lacroix (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> *Karlamagnus saga ok kappá hans : Fortællinger om keiser Karl Magnus og hans jævnninger i norsk bearbejdelse fra det trettende aarhundrede*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania: H. J. Jensen, 1860).

<sup>18</sup> *Karlamagnús saga og kappá hans*, 3 vols. ed. Bjarni Vilhjálmsón (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, Haukadalsútgáfan, 1961). First published 1950.

<sup>19</sup> *Karlamagnús saga. Branches I, III, VII, et IX*, ed. and trans. Agnete Loth (Copenhagen: La Société pour l'étude de la langue et de la littérature danoises, 1980).

<sup>20</sup> Gustav Storm, *Sagnkretsene om Karl den Store og Didrik af Bern hos de nordiske folk* (Christiania: Norske historiske forening, 1874).

<sup>21</sup> Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislanske litteraturs historie*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Gad, 1920-1924) First edition 1894-1902.

<sup>22</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

heritage of the nation."<sup>24</sup> This nationalism manifested itself in the concerns of the Icelandic School, dominated by the scholar Sigurður Nordal. Nordal sought to connect the Sagas of Icelanders with a particular kind of Icelandic genius which flourished in the Commonwealth period. After the political submission to Norway in 1262-1264, it was argued, Icelandic literature entered a period of decadence in which fantastical and escapist subject matter such as is found in the *riddarasögur* and the *fornaldarsögur* was favoured over the austere, 'Classical' style of the *Íslendingasögur*.<sup>25</sup> Underlying this assessment is the sense that foreign influences - that is to say, the translated material from French - had an egregious effect on the autochthonous sagas. As Marianne Kalinke has argued, this idea of decadence is not born out by the chronology, since, she writes, "the earliest *riddarasögur* presumably are contemporary with or at the very most slightly younger than some classical Icelandic sagas", as the presence of *Baerings saga* and *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* alongside *Egils saga* in the manuscript MS Stock. Perg. 4to no. 7 would suggest.<sup>26</sup> It is true, however, that the manuscript evidence shows a flourishing of interest in the *riddarasögur* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Iceland. *Kms* seems to have been a popular saga - before the fire of Copenhagen in 1728 Árni Magnússon possessed five vellum manuscripts<sup>27</sup>, of which two survive; translations were made into both Swedish and Danish, and the material was adapted into *rímur* in Iceland and ballads in the other Scandinavian countries.<sup>28</sup>

The focus of the scholars writing on *Kms* since the 1950s has been directed towards the same questions as those explored by Unger and Storm. The problems raised by *Kms* are succinctly laid out by Halvorsen as, "1. its sources, 2. the translator's way of dealing with his sources, and 3. the original form and later development of the saga".<sup>29</sup> Unger and Storm both concentrated on the first point, particularly on the sources of Branch I which Storm believed to be an introduction to the *Chanson de Roland* and written by a Frenchman. This idea was developed by Paul Aebischer in a book of 1954 in which he avers that the translator of

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<sup>24</sup> Gunnar Karlsson, "Icelandic Nationalism and the Inspiration of History," in *The Roots of Nationalism: Studies in Northern Europe*, ed. Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1980), 88.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, "Rip Tide," ch. 5 of Part V in Sigurdur Norðal, *Icelandic Culture*, trans. Vilhjálmur T. Bjarnar (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 290-302. *Íslenzk menning*, vol. 1 was first published in 1942.

<sup>26</sup> Marianne Kalinke, "Riddarasögur," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 530.

<sup>27</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 35.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

Branch I was different to the translator of the other branches.<sup>30</sup> Peter Foote made a useful contribution to the debate, building on Aebischer's work, in his 1959 booklet on the date and provenance of the translation of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, used in Branch IV *Af Agulando konungi*.<sup>31</sup> Aebischer has also concerned himself with the second point; his assertion that the translator of Branch VIII had a limited knowledge of French was confirmed in Halvorsen's book of 1959, which concludes after a detailed analysis of the translation of Branch VIII that the translator was probably a Norwegian cleric who had studied in England and had a flawed understanding of both the French language and matters of chivalry.<sup>32</sup> As for the third point, there are a number of differing theories, espoused in the main by Aebischer and Halvorsen. In an interesting article of 1996, Jonna Kjær challenged Aebischer's contention (supported by Halvorsen) that the translator was "un paresseux", and argues that he made a conscious decision to excise from the translation the two fundamental concerns of French feudal society expressed in the *Chanson de Roland*, "la croisade et le chauvinisme religieux"<sup>33</sup>, since these were of little interest to King Hákon. She made the first attempt to discuss the ideological dimension of the translation, rather than mere stylistics. In a chapter of her recent book on medieval translations<sup>34</sup>, Sif Rikhardsdóttir, picking up on ideas expressed by Gabriele Röder in article of 1998<sup>35</sup>, also challenges Halvorsen's identification of the translator's 'mistakes', stressing that Branch VIII must be seen as an adaptation rather than a translation. Nevertheless, critical attention has not strayed from the initial translation of *Kms* and no scholars have considered its later use and meaning in fourteenth and fifteenth century Iceland.

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<sup>30</sup>Paul Aebischer, *Textes norrois et littérature française du moyen âge I: Recherches sur les traditions épiques antérieures à la Chanson de Roland d'après les données de la première branche de la Karlamagnús saga* (Geneva: Droz, 1954).

<sup>31</sup>Peter Foote, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle in Iceland: A Contribution to the Study of the Karlamagnús saga*, London Mediæval Studies, Nr. 4. (London: University College, 1959).

<sup>32</sup>Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 278.

<sup>33</sup>Jonna Kjær, "La réception scandinave de la littérature courtoise et l'exemple de la *Chanson de Roland/Af Rúnzivals bardaga*: Une épopée féodale transformée en roman courtois?" *Romania* 114 (1996): 66.

<sup>34</sup>Sif Rikhardsdóttir, "Behavioural Transformations in the Old Norse Version of *La chanson de Roland*," in *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), 53-75.

<sup>35</sup>Gabriele Röder, "Die *Chansons de geste* in der altnordischen *Karlamagnús saga*: Übersetzungen oder Adaptationen?" in *The Medieval Translator / Traduire au moyen âge*, ed. Roger Ellis, René Tixier and Bernd Weitemeier, vol 6. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 134-58.

## 180a-b fol.

As the literary review has shown, scholars writing on *Kms* have tended to focus on the sources, the translation techniques and the changing structure and form of the saga in its different versions. The present study seeks to concentrate on one particular manuscript - 180a-b fol. - which is the only manuscript of *Kms* to contain other texts. The seven sagas which follow *Kms* in the manuscript represent a range of genres - saints' lives (*Dunstanus saga*, *Vitus saga*), indigenous *riddarasögur* (*Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga fagra*), king's sagas (*Knýtlinga saga*) and bishop's sagas (*Laurentius saga*); little attention has been paid to their inclusion in the manuscript and none as to what relationship they might have with *Kms*. In his book of 1959, Halvorsen discusses *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* as the first text of 180b but only as a means of elucidating where *Kms* finishes in 180a. In his introduction to the facsimile edition of 1989, he covers the paleographical details of the seven sagas of 180b and the philological issues that arise, but no speculation is made as to the rationale of the compilation. Indeed, the title of the edition, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, implies a rather dismissive estimation of the textual companions of *Kms*, which cannot be classed simply as 'religious' and may be ordered according to a compilatory logic rather than included haphazardly.

In recent years the impact of the so called New Philology has been felt in the sphere of Old Norse-Icelandic studies. The intellectual discoveries to be made by concentrating on one manuscript and considering the conditions under which it was produced and used have been demonstrated in Elizabeth Ashton Rowe's study of the development of *Flateyrbók*<sup>36</sup>, Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir's analysis of *Reynistaðarbók*<sup>37</sup>, and most recently, Stefka Eriksen's book about three different manuscripts, French, Norwegian and Icelandic, which all contain a version of the *chanson de geste Elie de Saint Gilles* (*Elis saga og Rósamundu* in the Norse

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<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, *The Development of Flateyrbók: Iceland and the Norwegian Dynastic Crisis of 1389* (Odense: The University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "Writing universal history in Ultima Thule: The case of AM 764 4<sup>o</sup>," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 14 (2014): 185-194; and "Arctic Garden of Delights: The Purpose of the Book of Reynistaður," in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honour of Marianne Kalinke*, ed. Kirsten Wolf and Johanna Denzin, *Islandica* 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2008).

translation)<sup>38</sup>. In an article published in 2012 on *Reynistaðarbók*, Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir sets out a call to arms for this new approach, and the questions that she poses can be usefully applied to the study of 180 a-b fol.

We have woken up to the fact that the world of medieval manuscripts is full of strange books, but in order to fully appreciate their message we must train ourselves to examine them in their entirety. This invites us to ask questions such as: how has the book acquired its present form? What forces led to an unorthodox coupling of texts or an unusual codicological makeup? What were the intentions of the people who produced the book? What were the needs of its users, and did these change over time? Were the producers, owners and users different persons, could the same individual assume all these roles?<sup>39</sup>

In the case of 180 a-b fol., the paucity of external sources as to the use and ownership of the manuscript means that the internal evidence - the interplay between the constituent texts - must be the main basis of any speculation as to its meaning and purpose for those who created and used it. The primary research question of this dissertation, then, is to look at what the texts of 180b can tell us about how the compilers of the manuscript viewed 180a, that is to say, *Kms*. Second, we can consider the manuscript in its entirety and think about the last three of Svanhildur's questions - why, for what purpose and by whom was the codex created. Undoubtedly, an investigation of this sort will involve an element of guesswork, but a guiding light may be taken from Andrew Taylor's 2002 book on three medieval manuscripts, in which he writes (with reference to medieval performance), that, "overt speculation is better than unexamined assumption".<sup>40</sup> The unexamined assumption concerning the codex 180a-b fol. seems to be that it is a miscellany; it is called "a curious potpourri of texts of various genres"<sup>41</sup> by Kirsten Wolf, and the editor of *Dunstanus saga*, Christine Fell, talks of this

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<sup>38</sup>Stefka Eriksen, *Writing and Reading in Medieval Manuscript Culture: The Translation and Transmission of the Story of Elye in Old French and Old Norse Literary Contexts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

<sup>39</sup>Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, "The Resourceful Scribe: Some Aspects of the Development of *Reynistaðarbók* (AM 764 4to)," in *Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages*, ed. Slavika Rankovic (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 326-327.

<sup>40</sup>Andrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 21.

<sup>41</sup>Kirsten Wolf, "The *Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensis* in Icelandic Translation (AM 180b fol)," *Gripla* 19 (2008): 169.

saga's position "incongruously sandwiched between a fragment of *Konráðs saga* and *Katrínar saga*."<sup>42</sup> Margaret Cormack alone has pointed to how the mixture of disparate sagas may not necessarily be miscellaneous; she writes: "The only medieval manuscript to contain *Lárentíus saga* (AM 180b fol.) shows that medieval manuscripts may not be dedicated to modern genres; it includes saints' lives, a king's saga, and romances."<sup>43</sup> It is the intention of this thesis to look for an organising principle behind the compilation, and to hazard some overt speculations.

The first part of the thesis will look at *Kms* through the lens of genre, using the texts of 180b as pointers as to how the saga was perceived by the compilers of the manuscript. *Kms* is generically ambiguous, not least because through the act of translation it moved from one literary system of genres - the *chanson de geste* in Francophone medieval literature - to another, the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, in which heterogeneous foreign literature was clumped together as *riddarasögur* by virtue of a common courtly narrative background. Nevertheless, elements of saints' sagas and kings' sagas can also be identified in *Kms*. It is not the intention of this thesis to reassign the generic specification of *Kms*, however. Rather, the question of genre will be used as a tool to examine how the saga was perceived at the time of the production of the manuscript. In this respect, Keith Busby's work on genre in Old French literature is particularly useful. He writes, "Ultimately, the purpose of thinking about genre and questioning narrative texts as to their generic affiliation must be to enable modern readers to situate them in their medieval textual context and to make them reveal by comparison significant details about their form and meaning."<sup>44</sup> Following Massimiliano Bampi's insistence that, "Any discussion of genre distinctions cannot lose sight of the materiality of textual transmission", it could be argued that, in the case of generically ambiguous texts such as *Kms*, the textual company that it keeps is itself a definer of genre.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Christine Fell, "Anglo-Saxon Saints in Old Norse sources and vice versa," in *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress*, ed. Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Peter Foote and Olaf Olsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), 102.

<sup>43</sup> Margaret Cormack, "Christian Biography," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 28.

<sup>44</sup> Keith Busby, "Narrative Genres," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 141.

<sup>45</sup> Massimiliano Bampi, "Genre," in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Sagas*, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (New York: Routledge, 2017), 11.

The second part of the thesis will focus on the texts of 180b and consider the manuscript as a whole, attempting to see why this series of texts was placed together and by whom. We shall begin, however, with an overview of the manuscript and its particularities, based on the information provided by Halvorsen in his introduction to the facsimile edition of 1989.

### The Manuscript - Acquisition and Contents

The codex 180a-b fol. is a vellum manuscript of 112 leaves, currently kept in the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen. It contains eight sagas, of which the first, *Karlamagnús saga*, is by far the longest, taking up just over half the number of leaves. The great Icelandic collector of manuscripts Árni Magnússon (1663-1730) noted in his catalogue of 1707 that the manuscript had been broken up in the North of Iceland, and it was from various owners there, including Magnús Jónsson of Leira and Skúli Ólafsson, that he acquired the constituent parts. A letter from Skúli Ólafsson to Árni in September 1697 states that he would send him leaves containing *Vitus saga* and *Laurentius saga*. Árni also notes that further fragments of the manuscript were acquired from different places in Iceland after 1702.<sup>46</sup> It is not known if *Karlamagnús saga* was acquired as a discrete fragment but it was catalogued separately as 180a fol., along with the other manuscripts containing versions of *Karlamagnús saga* in the Arnamagnæan collection - 180c fol. and 180d fol. 180b fol. was the number given to the remaining seven sagas which follow *Karlamagnús saga* in the codex in question.

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<sup>46</sup> *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts: AM 180 a and b fol.*, ed. E. F. Halvorsen, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile 18* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1989), 9.

The contents of the codex are as follows:

<u>180a fol.</u>	
lacuna	
1r-60v	<i>Karlamagnús saga</i>
lacuna	
<u>180b fol.</u>	
lacuna	
1r-1r	<i>Konráðs saga keisarasonar</i>
1r-5v	<i>Dunstanus saga</i>
5v-8v	<i>Katrínar saga</i>
8v-19v	<i>Bærings saga fagra</i>
19v-32v	<i>Knýtlinga saga</i>
lacuna	
33r-34r	<i>Knýtlinga saga</i>
34r-36r	<i>Vitus saga</i>
36r-52v	<i>Laurentius saga</i>
lacuna	

Further to a number of mutilated and illegible leaves, there are several important lacunae. By comparison with the other manuscripts containing *Karlamagnús saga*, E. F. Halvorsen calculates that between 6 and 7 1/2 leaves are missing at the beginning of 180a, and 4 or 5 leaves at the end.<sup>47</sup> The majority of *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, "about 10 folios"<sup>48</sup>, is missing from the beginning of 180b, leaving just one leaf containing the end of the saga. Halvorsen estimates that between 9 and 11 leaves are missing between the first and second fragments of *Knýtlinga saga* and that "at least two leaves containing the end of *Laurentius saga*"<sup>49</sup> are missing at the end of 180b. He concludes:

Thus 180a, which now contains 60 leaves, probably consisted of at least 92-93 leaves when the *Karlamagnús saga* was complete. 180b now contains 52 leaves, and when

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 14.

*Konráðs saga*, *Knýtlinga saga* and *Laurentius saga* were complete it must have contained at least 77-79 leaves. A codex of about 172 leaves would make quite a large book, but there is reason to believe that other texts too have been lost, in addition to parts of texts which exist in the codex as fragments.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the damaged state of the manuscript and the number of missing leaves 180a-b fol. presents a significant compilation of textual witnesses, unique in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus.

### The Manuscript - Dating and Script

The division between 180a and 180b is not an arbitrary one for the two parts were written by different scribes at different times. 180a is written in one hand, which Agnete Loth has found evidence of also in GKS 1008 fol. (also known as Thomasskinna) and AM 238 XVI fol.<sup>51</sup> Paleographic analysis of 180b has concentrated on *Dunstanus saga* and *Laurentius saga* and scholars have inconclusively suggested the possibility of two hands.<sup>52</sup> Scholarly consensus places 180a in the fifteenth century, and Halvorsen concludes his review of the attempts at dating by Kristian Kålund (15th century), C. R. Unger (first half of the fifteenth century) and Agnete Loth (after c. 1400, based on the identification of the same hand in Thomasskinna) thus: "It is scarcely older than c.1400, but there seems no compelling reason why it cannot be somewhat younger."<sup>53</sup> The *Registre* of the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosaprog* follows Stefán Karlsson's dating of c. 1450-1500.<sup>54</sup> 180b has been dated a little later - to the middle or latter part of the fifteenth century (Guðbrandur Vigfússon, Unger), and the end of the fifteenth century (Cederschiöld, Hreinn Benediktsson) although Kålund and Carl af Petersens and Emil Olson specify simply the fifteenth century. Based on an analysis of the confusion

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>51</sup> *Tómas saga erkibiskups: Thomasskinna*, ed. Agnete Loth, *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile* 6 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1964), 17; Agnete Loth, *Egidius saga hins helga: fragment AM 238 XVI fol.* Opuscula 3 (Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana 29), 1967, 64.

<sup>52</sup> *Dunstanus saga*, ed. Christine Fell. *Editiones Arnamagnæanæ*, Ser. B, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963), lxviii.

<sup>53</sup> Halvorsen, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> *Ordbog over det norrøne prosaprog: Registre* (Odense: AiO, 1989), 435. The personal dating by Stefán Karlsson was made in 1983.

between the letters i and y in 180b Halvorsen concludes that, "as the evidence stands, 180b may date from about 1500, but it may also be considerably younger".<sup>55</sup>

The question remains as to whether the difference in dating and scribes between 180a and 180b allows for the codex to be considered as a single project planned with both sections in mind. Halvorsen's judgements highlight the time gap between the writing of the two parts: "Thus even if 180a was written around 1450 or in the latter part of the fifteenth century, it seems likely that 180b was added to the manuscript some years later".<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, all attempts at dating remain approximate and it is equally possible to suggest that the writing of 180b followed soon after the writing of 180a, both manuscripts being products of the fifteenth century. Secondly, it is reasonable to accept that a period of time passed between the transcription of *Kms* and the gathering together of the seven sagas which had been selected to follow it. This thesis seeks to show how 180b was written to complement and reflect 180a, and is written on the premise that the differences between the two fragments does not preclude them from forming a single codex, and having been produced as such.

### Genre

To what genre did the fifteenth century Icelandic compilers of 180a-b fol. ascribe *Kms*? In considering this question one must begin by examining the Icelandic medieval conception of generic boundaries. Margaret Clunies Ross's assertion that "what we and medieval people call *saga*" is "the one secure generic term for this kind of writing" is a profitable and cautious way to preface such an examination.<sup>57</sup> Clunies Ross argues that "discernable generic affiliations" can be found in medieval Latin literature as well as in Old Norse-Icelandic poetry.<sup>58</sup> The first writing in prose, begun in the twelfth century, initially took on the generic qualities of Latin literature - saints' lives, for example, or those of the earlier poetry by means of incorporation in the prosimetrum combination, such as the use of skaldic poetry in the kings' sagas. Yet this new prose form soon took on a life of its own, transcending previously existing generic divisions; "the saga form was labile and could assume one or more of a

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<sup>55</sup> Halvorsen, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Margaret Clunies Ross, "Interrogating Genre in the *Fornaldarsögur*: Round Table Discussion," ed. Judy Quinn, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia 2* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 277.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

number of guises, borrowing from this or that foreign or indigenous model".<sup>59</sup> In the case of *Kms*, we are dealing with a translation of a text composed in a different culture rather than an indigenous Icelandic creation, even though the compilation of the different branches and the prosification of the material took place in the Old-Norse Icelandic literary milieu of the thirteenth century. While we can only attribute in part, therefore, any generic multiplicity in *Kms* to the lability of the nascent saga form, it is possible to assume a lability of interpretation on behalf of the scribes and readers of 180a-b fol. In the same way that the sagas demonstrate a hybridity of literary form and genre, so we can assume that the contemporary readers of *Kms* understood it not in terms of a strictly defined genre, but as a text pointing to other texts, with a number of possible meanings and resonances.

In the currently accepted taxonomy of saga genres, *Kms* is placed amongst the *þýddar riddarasögur* (translated chivalric sagas), one of the seven groups listed by Massimiliano Bampi in his recent survey of genre in the corpus, the other six being *konungasögur* (kings' sagas), *íslendingasögur* (sagas of Icelanders), *samtíðarsögur* (contemporary sagas), *fornaldarsögur* (legendary sagas), *frumsamdar riddarasögur* (indigenous (or Icelandic) chivalric sagas) and *heilagra manna sögur* (hagiographic sagas).<sup>60</sup> *Riddarasögur* is an unusual generic designation - Kalinke calls it "descriptive" rather than a generic term - since it links together a heterogeneous literature made up of different genres, solely by nature of their shared references to a knightly culture.<sup>61</sup> For the *chansons de geste*, the Breton *lais* and the courtly romances, to list the three main types of Old French literature translated into Old Norse, differ widely. The most immediate distinction is one of subject matter, and one that corresponds to a medieval observation of generic division - the categorization of three *matières* - that of Britain, France and Rome, by the twelfth century French poet Jean Bodel, in his *Chanson de Saisnes*. Bodel also associates certain uses with the different *matières* - *la matière de Bretagne*, which encompasses the Arthurian romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the Breton *lais* of Marie de France, is for entertainment ("plaisant"), and *la matière de France*, such as the Charlemagne cycle of *chansons de geste*, is seen as true ("Cil de France de voir chascun jor aparant"), and by implication should be used to study history.<sup>62</sup> The

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>60</sup> Bampi, "Genre," 4-5.

<sup>61</sup> Marianne Kalinke, "Riddarasögur," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 528.

<sup>62</sup> Jean Bodel, *Chanson de Saisnes*, ed. Annette Brasseur (Geneva: Droz, 1989), 3, lines 9-11. In her modern French translation of the poem, Annette Brasseur translates "Cil de France de voir chascun jor

*matière de Rome* was for edification ("sage et de san aprenant"); no texts translated from Old French correspond to it, but it is represented in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus by *Rómverja saga*, *Trójumanna saga* and *Alexanders saga*, all translated from Latin.

If the generic holdall of *riddarasögur* were abolished and its inhabitants had to seek places elsewhere, where would they fit? Marianne Kalinke suggests a correspondence between the *chansons de geste* and the *fornaldarsögur*. She writes, "The *chansons de geste*, in fact, are to French literature ... what the *fornaldarsögur* are to Icelandic literature, that is, if one understands these as embracing narratives of an epic *forn öld*".<sup>63</sup> This thesis would contend that the *fornaldarsögur* are much more akin to the courtly romances and the *lais* (the matter of Britain) - their subject matter is the distant, mythical past of Arthur and his knights, the *lais* in particular contain the same magical and fantastical motifs as the *fornaldarsögur*, and they are associated with entertainment. Far from representing a "forn öld", the *chansons de geste* depict recent historical events - Charlemagne's court of the late 8th century. Written down in the eleventh century, the time difference between the events depicted and their recording on parchment corresponds to the temporal distance from their subjects confronted by the authors of the kings' sagas - that is to say, for example, the two hundred to three hundred years between the lives of the Norwegian Kings, beginning with Hálfðan svartí (c.810-c.860), and the composition of Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* (c.1230).

The representation of events that took place in Charlemagne's reign may be widely distorted in the *chansons de geste*, but they are based, ultimately, on some kind of historical fact. A case in point is the battle of Roncesvalles in the *Chanson de Roland*. In the poem it is the Saracens who ambush Charlemagne's rear guard led by Roland, while we know from the Royal Frankish Annals that it was in fact the Basques who carried out the attack, in the year 778. Even if the poem confuses the protagonists of the battle, influenced as it by the crusading spirit of the 11th century, it still records a military engagement that actually took place. Likewise, Branch V of *Kms, Af Gvitalín saxa*, deals with Charlemagne's campaigns against the Saxons, also recorded in the Annals. Branch V is translated from an unknown

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aparant" as "ceux de France sont toujours éclatants de vérité". *La chanson des Saxons traduit en français moderne par Annette Brasseur* (Paris: Champion, 1992), 117.

<sup>63</sup> Marianne Kalinke, "Interrogating Genre in the *Fornaldarsögur*: Round Table Discussion," ed. Judy Quinn, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia 2* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 275-276.

source which was probably the same source used for Jean Bodel's *Chanson de Saisnes*.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the very material which is worked into the *Kms* is connected to Bodel's idea that the *matière de France* should be seen as true. It would not be outlandish to assume, then, that if a French composer viewed the *chansons de geste* concerning Charlemagne as a source for historical knowledge, then the Norwegian translator did also. The question remains as to whether the fifteenth century Icelandic compilers of 180a-b continued this association, or if the exploits of Karlamagnús, Ótuel and Gvitalín were to them as fantastical as those of Arthur and Guinevere, or Equitan and Milun. It seems very likely that *Kms* was seen as a historical text by its fifteenth century Icelandic producers, particularly given the connection with Scandinavian history in Branch III, *Af Oddgeiri danska*, whose eponymous hero is the son of the King of Denmark. What is certain is that the generic designation *riddarasögur* does not distinguish between the historical basis of the *chansons de geste*, and the legendary and folkloristic subject matter of the *lais* and the courtly romances.

Unlike the generic designation *fornaldarsögur*, which was coined by the Danish scholar Carl Christian Rafn in the nineteenth century and has caused much debate as to its efficacy as a generic marker, the term *riddarasögur* has a number of medieval attestations. Marianne Kalinke has located three of these, all from the fourteenth century, in *Mágus saga jarls*, *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, and *Skikkju rímur*.<sup>65</sup> The diverse origins of these texts demonstrate the wide variety of the translated literature and the imitations that it inspired. *Mágus saga jarls* takes for its material the *matière de France*, but seems to have been written in Iceland<sup>66</sup>, *Viktors saga ok Blávus* is an indigenous *riddarasaga* that shows an awareness of its origin in the translated literature (it talks of how the Norwegian King Hákon Magnússon (r.1299-1319) had "mörgum riddara sögum" translated into Norse from French and Greek)<sup>67</sup>, and *Skikkju rímur* is a versified version of *Möttuls saga*, the Norwegian translation of *Le Mantel mautaillié*, a fabliau which takes place at the court of King Arthur. The broad employment of the term *riddarasögur* in these three sources would suggest that it was used in the fourteenth century in the same way as it is in the twenty-first - to denote those sagas which contain

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<sup>64</sup> Constance B. Hieatt, Introduction to "Part V Gvitalin the Saxon" in *The Saga of Charlemagne and His Heroes: Karlamagnús saga*, vol. 3. trans. Constance B. Hieatt (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 7. Hieatt refers to the *Chanson de Saisnes* as the *Chanson de Saxons*.

<sup>65</sup> Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," 321.

<sup>66</sup> Jürg Glauser, "Mágus saga jarls," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 402.

<sup>67</sup> *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson. *Riddarasögur*, 2. (Reykjavik: Handritastofnun Íslands, 1964), 3, cited in Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," 321.

knights which were translated from French, and those containing knights which later were composed in Iceland. The reference in *Mágus saga jarls* is the most pertinent with regards to *Kms* for it talks of "Þiðreks saga, Flóvenz saga eðr aðrar riddarasögur"<sup>68</sup>. *Þiðreks saga* is a collection of tales about a number of heroes, based around Þiðrekr, the "legendary development"<sup>69</sup> of Ostrogothic ruler Theoderic the Great (454-526), and *Flóvenz saga* is an adaptation of a lost *chanson de geste*<sup>70</sup>. Since *Kms* springs from the same tradition and genre - the *chanson de geste* - as *Flóvenz saga* and *Mágus saga jarls*, and depicts a similar protagonist - a strong king of the Early Middle Ages - to that of *Þiðreks saga*, we can assume that it may also have been termed a *riddarasaga* by a fourteenth century Icelander. Nevertheless, its designation as such would not exclude it from being considered under other lights - such as a source for information on a saintly and historical figure. One might conclude that *Kms* is a *riddarasaga*, but not just that.

It is worth bearing in mind that the figure of Charlemagne existed outside of literature, and the renown of his name predated the appearance of *Kms*. As Henry Leach wrote in 1921:

In Scandinavia the figure of "the first great Christian king," whether historical or legendary, became even more popular than in England. The glamor of his name impressed even the vikings. Northern kings emulated his conquests and government. They slavishly copied his coinage. They christened their sons after his attribute, "Magnus," a name borne by no less than seven kings of Norway.<sup>71</sup>

One wonders, on the other hand, to what extent Clovis and Floovant would appear as historical figures to a fourteenth century Icelandic audience. Equally, Þiðrekr, channelled through the figure of German legend Dietrich von Bern, retains little in common with the historical figure of Theoderic. Further, Þiðrekr's exploits involve fantastical adventures of

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<sup>68</sup> *Bragða-Mágus saga með tilheyrandi þáttum.*, ed. Gunnlaugr Þórðarson (Copenhagen: Páll Sveinsson, 1858), 177, cited in Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," 321.

<sup>69</sup> R. G. Finch, "Þiðreks saga af Bern," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 662.

<sup>70</sup> Otto J. Zitzelsberger, "Flóvents saga Frakkakonungs," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 202.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Goddard Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 237; "the first great Christian King" is a quotation Leach takes from Schofield, W. H. *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (New York, 1906).

dragon-slaying more akin to the adventures of a knight from Chrétien de Troyes than the pitched battles of Charlemagne.

In the fourteenth century *riddarasaga Flóres saga konungs ok sona hans*, thought to be an indigenous composition despite its foreign motifs<sup>72</sup>, we find an attempt by the author to categorize the sagas that concern the ancient past; evidence that the taxonomical desire is not solely post-medieval. Marianne Kaline has succinctly summarized the three groupings:

(1) saints' lives, which most people do not consider very entertaining ("eru þeir þó fleiri menn, er lítil skemtun þykkir at heilagra manna sögum"); (2) sagas about powerful kings, from which we may learn courtly behaviour ("høverska hirðsiðu") or how to conduct oneself in the service of powerful chieftains; and (3) sagas about kings who test their mettle in feats of prowess and thereby achieve renown... [relating] deeds beyond the normal mortal's ability or realm of experience.<sup>73</sup>

Kalinke assigns the majority of the translated *riddarasögur* to the second group, and the Icelandic *riddarasögur* and the *fornaldarsögur* to the third, with a certain amount of overlap. How useful is this categorization with regards to *Kms*? As we shall see in the next section, *Kms* has strong links with hagiographical material, yet it is able to provide "skemtun". It is certainly a saga about a powerful king but also involves exploits in exotic locations such as Jerusalem, Constantinople and Spain, and encounters with fantastic beings, such as Roland's duel with the giant Ferakut in Part IV, *Af Agulando Konungi*, as is found in the *fornaldarsögur*. Thus *Kms* could plausibly fit into all three categories, and, as argued above, may not even have been considered as a depiction of the ancient past. This categorization by the author of *Flóres saga konungs ok sona hans* can by no means taken as representative of a uniform view of genre in the fourteenth century, but its inability to incorporate *Kms* in any one category demonstrates the particularity of the latter, and its generic elasticity. If the prosification of the different French genres and their respective metres which took place in the process of translation led to their grouping under one generic heading - *riddarasögur* -

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<sup>72</sup> Régis Boyer, "Flóres saga konungs ok sona hans," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 200.

<sup>73</sup> Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," 325. Her quotations of *Flóres saga konungs* are drawn from *Drei Lygisögur: Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana, Ála flekks saga, Flóres saga konungs ok sona hans*, ed. Åke Lagerholm, ASB, 17 (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1927).

then it also allowed for links and comparisons to be made with all other texts existing in the "labile" prose saga form.

### *Kms* as saint's saga

There are a number of reasons to suggest that *Kms* was copied and read as a saint's saga, not least the inclusion of a number of sagas of saints and saintly figures in the manuscript 180b. The ways in which 180b can be seen as a complement or reflection of 180a will be explored at length in the second section of this thesis. In this final part of the section on genre, the study of links with hagiography will concentrate on *Kms* in isolation, although the redaction of the saga found in 180a - the A version - will take precedence over the B version. We shall begin with a look at the subject matter of the saga and how a fifteenth century audience may have recognised hagiographic traits in *Kms*. On numerous occasions throughout the branches of *Kms*, God is shown to be on the side of Karlamagnús and intervenes to help him by means of miracles and the appearance of angels. Karlamagnús is seen as the defender of Christianity and its holy places against the depredations of the Saracens. In Branch III, *Af Oddgeiri danska*, Karlamagnús gathers his forces and makes haste for Rome when he hears that King Ammiral of Babylon has occupied the city and broken up its churches and chapels. In chapter 5, his route takes him over the Alps, which seem impassable. Karlamagnús prays to God for assistance, which is delivered in the form of a white hart who acts as guide through the mountain passes. "En guð heyrði bæn hans og vissi, hvat hann þurfti, ok sendi honum skjótt mikla hjálp ok góðan leiðtoga."<sup>74</sup> Karlamagnús's prayers are answered, therefore, but he is also reported to be the object of the intercessory prayers of others. In chapter 8 of the same branch, Christian captives held by Ammiral's son Danamund "kallar á guð sér til hjálpar. ok biðr þess at Karlamagnús konungur skuli koma að leysa þat af þíslum heiðinna manna."<sup>75</sup>

Other miracles include the sprouting into leaves of the spears of four thousand of Karlamagnús's soldiers. In chapter 8 (of the A version) of Branch IV, *Af Agulando konungi*<sup>76</sup>, the Christians drive their spears into the plain by their camp on the eve of their battle with the pagan King Agulandus; the next morning the spears belonging to those who were to die in battle that day have borne leaves. This is echoed in Branch VIII, *Af Rúnzivals bardaga*, when,

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<sup>74</sup> *Karlamagnús saga ok kappá hans*, ed. Unger, 78.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>76</sup> All chapter references in *Af Agulando Konungi* will follow the A version, that of 180a.

in chapter 40, Karlamagnús arrives at the corpse-strewn battlefield of Rúnzival and finds he is unable to distinguish the Christian dead from the the bodies of the pagans. After a night spent in prayer, the bodies of his men are revealed by the fact that bushes had grown over the pagan corpses, but not the Christian. Saints appear to Karlamagnús and aid him in his endeavours. In chapter 2 of *Af Agulando konungi*, St. James reveals himself to Karlamagnús in a dream, telling him that God has chosen him from amongst all other kings to go to Galicia in Spain and recover his grave and chapel from the pagans. Later, during the episode of fighting against Agulandus described in chapter 94, saints George, Demetrius and Mercurius appear on white horses and aid the Christians in the fray. It is no coincidence that these three are all military saints, soldiers who fought for Christianity, as did Karlamagnús.

In his dream appearance, St. James informs Karlamagnús that when he has taken back the saint's resting place from the heathens, many pilgrimages will be made to the place. Karlamagnús as protector and preserver of holy relics is seen also in Branch VII, *Af Jórsalaferð*. On his way to visit Emperor Hugon of Constantinople, Karlamagnús passes through Jerusalem and is given a number of relics by the Patriarch "at prýða land sitt með."<sup>77</sup> These include, amongst others, "armlegg ins helga Simeonis. ok höfuð Lazari, ok af blóði ins helga Stephani, af klæði því er dróttinn hafði um höfuð sér. þá er hann var í gröf lagðr, ok einn af nöglum þeim er Krístr var krossfestr með, ok hlut af kórónu hans."<sup>78</sup> Karlamagnús is seen to be the inheritor of the most holy relics connected with Christ's passion and the apostles and the first saints, and to be transporting these from the East to the West. Earlier in the same chapter, Karlamagnús and his twelve peers enter "til kirkju þeirrar er Paternoster heitir" in Jerusalem and take the seats sat in by Jesus and his twelve apostles.<sup>79</sup> A Jew enters and is terrified by the sight of the thirteen men; he immediately seeks out the Patriarch and asks to be baptized saying, "ok veit ek víst, segir hann, at þar er guð sjálf ok hans tólf postular".<sup>80</sup> Many scholars have argued for the parodic intent of the *Le Pélérinage de Charlemagne*, the *chanson de geste* of which *Af Jórsalaferð* is a fairly close translation, and certainly this last episode has its comic dimension. Álfrún Gunnlaugsdóttir has stated that this comic element is carried across in the translation, and that the opportunity to laugh at normally revered topics allowed for a 'cleansing', or a form of psychological relief.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> *Karlamagnús saga ok kappa hans*, ed. Unger, 469.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 469.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 468.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 468.

<sup>81</sup> Álfrún Gunnlaugsdóttir, "Jórsalaferð, *Le Voyage de Charlemagne en Orient*," *Gripla* 7 (1990): 250.

Presumably a fourteenth or fifteenth century Icelandic audience would also appreciate this puncturing of noble ideals. The ability to laugh, however, would not necessarily undermine completely an acknowledgement of the connection made between Jesus and his apostles and Karlamagnús and his peers, in which Karlamagnús had inherited the title of holy king.

Branch I of *Kms*, *Karlamagnús og kappá hans*, is a synthesis of a number of different sources and its origin has caused much debate amongst scholars. Since it contains episodes and characters dealt with at greater length in the succeeding branches, Unger postulated that it was written as an introductory summary.<sup>82</sup> This idea has largely been supplanted by Aebischer's theory that Branch I is a translation of a lost *Vie romancée*, a compilation of material about Charlemagne's life, written in French. These debates were not the concern of fifteenth century Icelanders, however, and are of little use in an attempt to guess at how Branch I was read and understood by such an audience. One narrative model they would have known well was the *vita* or saint's life, and one may speculate as to whether it was read as such. If so, it would certainly have seemed an anomalous one. Rather than beginning with his childhood, we first encounter Karlamagnús at the age of 32, after the death of his father, King Peppin. In the first chapter an angel appears to Karlamagnús, as it might do in the infancy of a future saint to herald future glory, yet this angel's instruction is a strange one, "bað hann upp standa ok fara at stela"<sup>83</sup>. Thus begins an episode, presumably belonging to a lost *chanson de geste*, in which Karlamagnús and the thief Basin steal Earl Renfrei's horse and in doing so discover the Earl's treacherous plans; in chapter 23, following Karlamagnús's consecration, the Earl and his conspirators are captured and subsequently executed. The narrative proceeds with Karlamagnús's establishment of a church at Eiss (Aix-la-Chapelle) (ch. 11), his consecration by Pope Milon (ch. 22) who declares him "rétrr keisari um allan heim"<sup>84</sup>, and his coronation in Rome (ch. 35). There follows a strange chapter in which Karlamagnús impregnates his sister Gilem. Far from being punished by holy powers, the Archangel Gabriel descends to declare that the fruit of this union will be Rollant, who will be both son and nephew to Karlamagnús. Rollant becomes one of Karlamagnús's most trusted knights, they attack the city of Viana together (ch. 40), and Karlamagnús entrusts the sword Dyrumdali to him (ch. 45) after the angel Gabriel has told him it contains three holy relics.

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<sup>82</sup> Heatt, "General Introduction," 49.

<sup>83</sup> *Karlamagnús saga ok kappá hans*, ed. Unger, 2. Since the first 37 chapters of the A version of Branch I are missing, we have only the B version to go on for the first part.

<sup>84</sup> *Karlamagnús saga ok kappá hans*, ed. Unger, 20.

Karlamagnús defeats the Saxons (ch. 47) when the walls of Trivers miraculously fall down, marries Aude and begets a son, Lödver (ch.49), visits Constantinople and returns with relics (ch. 50), conducts a campaign in Spain against the pagans (ch. 51-53) and the final chapter, 59, sees him appointing his twelve peers: "Þessa höfðingja set ek til stjórnar móti heiðnum lýð í þá minning sem guð skipaði 12 postulum sínum at predika guðs eyrendi um allan heim."<sup>85</sup>

As such a summary demonstrates, a large number of episodes in the life of Karlamagnús are dealt with in Branch I, and there is some form of narrative progression with regards to the timespan of his career; we begin with him as a relatively young man facing off treacherous noblemen seeking to take advantage of his father's death, and end with him established as the Holy Roman Emperor, victor of the pagan Saxons and the Muslims (described as pagans) of the Iberian peninsula, a husband, father and feudal lord to his twelve most honoured knights. This is in contrast to the succeeding branches which focus on discrete episodes, many of which are touched on in Branch I. A medieval Icelandic audience of *Kms* would recognise the form of the latter in the episodic *þættir* found amongst the kings' sagas. Yet what would they make of this condensed collection of episodes, if not a *vita* then a biographical overview of Karlamagnús's early adulthood and maturity? As in a saint's saga, Karlamagnús experiences angelic visitations but ones that exhort him to steal and to cover up for an act of incest. The sense of religion is the crude, crusader ideology of the *chansons de geste*, which pits Christian good against pagan evil, and where Christianity is essentially a martial force, relics in the helm of a sword, rather than the meek message of the New Testament. This hodge-podge of different *chansons de geste*, fossilized by the weight of translation and prosification, and shot through with a crusader ideology foreign to the Icelandic experience, is akin to a saint's life or *vita* but not close enough to be classified as such. Like *Kms* as a whole, Branch I would have had for the contemporary Icelandic readership, one could argue, an effect of generic and religious ambiguity.

The most striking piece of evidence that *Kms* was seen as a saint's saga, or to be more precise, as a credible source for information about saints, is the fact that saints' lives were composed in Iceland in the 14th century using material from the saga. Halvorsen has

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 49.

identified two examples - *Tveggja postola saga Jóns ok Jacobs* and *Mikaels saga*<sup>86</sup>. Both of these saint's lives are written in "Late Prose", corresponding to the writing of saint's lives in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in an ornate language, often expanding on earlier, shorter versions written in a simpler style. *Tveggja postola saga Jóns ok Jacobs* joined together the separate sagas of the apostle brothers John and James and survives in manuscripts dating from the fourteenth century. As stated above in the summary of the contents of *Kms*, Branch IV, *Af Agulando konungi*, is based on two sources, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* and the *Chanson d'Aspremont*. Towards the end of *Tveggja postola saga Jóns ok Jacobs*, when the author deals with Charlemagne's involvement with the resting place of St. James, he talks of "Agulando kongi og hans syni"<sup>87</sup>. Since the sons of Agulandus are only mentioned in *Kms*, and not in the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, Halvorsen concludes that the author of *Tveggja postola saga Jóns ok Jacobs* must have derived this episode from *Kms* rather than from the Latin chronicle alone. He goes on to show that the author of *Tveggja postola saga Jóns ok Jacobs* followed the A group redaction rather than the B. *Mikaels saga*, an unusual *vita* in that it recounts the story not of a saint, but of the Archangel Michael, is the work of Bergr Sökkason, a prolific monk of the fourteenth century, attached to the monastery of Þingeyri and later becoming the abbot at the monastery of Munkaþverá. Two manuscripts of the saga survive from the late fourteenth century, and contain an episode in which the Archangel Michael carries the body of Rollant to heaven after the battle of Rúnzival. Halvorsen argues that Bergr Sökkason used the *Kms* as a source for this episode, rather than Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale* or the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, since Bergr also mentions one of the sons of Agulandus, in this case by name - Jatmundr - a piece of information only found in the *Chanson d'Aspremont* and consequently in the *Kms*.

The version of *Kms* found in 180a finishes a few lines before the end of Branch VIII. Halvorsen estimates that 4 or 5 leaves are missing from the end of 180a<sup>88</sup> and we can only speculate as to what these contained. Presumably, there was Branch IX, *Af Vilhjálmi korneis*, and then Branch X in some form, recounting the death of Karlamagnús. Branch X as it stands in Unger's edition is an editorial construct which does not exist as such in any of the manuscripts: MS *b* has five chapters which follow Branch IX, *B* has only two (chapters 7 and

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<sup>86</sup> Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 38-48.

<sup>87</sup> *Postola sögur*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania, 1860), 674, cited in Halvorsen, *The Norse Version of the Chanson de Roland*, 39.

<sup>88</sup> Halvorsen, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, 14.

8 in Unger's edition) and the first five are taken from earlier in the manuscript (they appear appended to Branch II).<sup>89</sup> The chapters that Unger has rearranged to form Branch X show the redactor of the B group expanding on source material from Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*, describing miracles and signs, as Hieatt writes, "signs that Charlemagne was elect, a true saint."<sup>90</sup> For example, in chapter 1 Constantine, King of Constantinople has a vision of Karlamagnús - he appears glowing and shining, dressed in full armour, with a flame flying from the point of his spear; Constantine is told in his dream that this man will deliver Jerusalem from the pagans. After he has defeated the pagans, Karlamagnús is welcomed to Constantinople and presented with a holy relic - a thorn from the crown of thorns. The presentation of this relic in chapter 3 sees a number of miracles; a heavenly dew descends on the thorns causing them to bloom, a sweet smell appears and sick men in the crowd are healed, Karlamagnús's glove with which he receives the thorn remains suspended in mid air for an hour, the flowers turn into manna. This scene is in many ways a repetition of the gifting of relics found in Branch VII, *Af Jórsalaferð*, yet here the source text is expanded and embellished. While this embellishment is the work of the redactor of the B group and so probably not found in 180a, the redactor was an Iclander, and is indicative of the attention paid to the saintly signs surrounding Karlamagnús.

It is worth noting, also, that the two texts in which Agnete Loth has located the hand that wrote 180a both contain saints' sagas - GKS 1008 fol. and AM 238 XVI fol. The fragment AM 238 XVI fol. contains parts of *Játvarðar saga*, the life of the West Saxon King St. Edward the Confessor (r.1042-1066) and *Egidius saga*, the life of St. Giles (c.650-c.710), founder of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Gilles in Provence which lay on the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostela. A medieval legend linked St. Giles with Charlemagne and indeed he appears in Branch I of *Kms* in chapters 24, 26, 36 and 49 as either Gilia or Egidius. The same scribe wrote folios 79-165 of GKS 1008 fol., a manuscript which was given the name Thomasskinna by the Icelandic scholar and historian Þormóður Torfason (Torfæus)<sup>91</sup> (1636-1719), since it contained the saga of the English saint and martyr, Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 to 1170. The codex also contains the interpolated

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<sup>89</sup> Constance B. Hieatt, Introduction to "Karlamagnús saga. Part X. Miracles and Signs," in *Karlamagnús saga. The saga of Charlemagne and his Heroes*, vol. 3. trans. Constance Hieatt (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 320.

<sup>90</sup> Constance B. Hieatt, "Charlemagne in Vincent's Mirror: The *Speculum Historiale* as a source of the Old Norse *Karlamagnús saga*," *Florilegium* vol. 1. (1979): 186.

<sup>91</sup> Loth, *Tómas saga erkibiskups*, 24.

version of the Separate Saga of St. Óláfr,<sup>92</sup> attributed to Snorri Sturluson. Since *Tómas saga* ends and *Óláfs saga* begins on folio 90v, then the scribe that wrote 180a (Hand III in Thomasskinna) wrote both of these sagas.<sup>93</sup> Sverrir Tómasson has traced hagiographic motifs in the Separate Saga of St. Óláfr<sup>94</sup>, and argues that it was received as "a royal martyr passion".<sup>95</sup> The fact that the same scribe who devoted himself to the writing of saints' sagas should also write *Kms* further pushes *Kms* into the hagiographical ambit.

In 1165 Charlemagne was actually canonised by the Antipope Paschal III, at the behest of the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, although this was never recognised by the Apostolic See.<sup>96</sup> In the *Vita Karoli* composed to accompany the canonisation, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* played a large part.<sup>97</sup> Whether the Icelandic scribes of 180a knew about this aborted attempt at canonisation is unknown and one cannot say for sure to what extent they viewed Karlamagnús as a saint. Nevertheless, *Kms* was a source for hagiographers and in its synthesis of different texts - the various *chansons de gestes*, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, and, added later by the B group redactor, the *Speculum Historiale*, it is more akin to a kings' saga or a saints' saga of the fourteenth century than a chivalric romance.

### Compilation

The aim of the following section is to try and suggest some reasons for the selection and ordering of the texts that make up the codex 180a-b fol., working on the assumption that there is an intelligible rationale behind these processes, rather than "some disembodied encyclopedic impulse".<sup>98</sup> This thesis would like to propose two possible ways of understanding the collection of texts, before going on to consider the codex in relation to the North Icelandic Benedictine School. First of all, a summary of the contents of 180b will serve

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<sup>92</sup> Known in Icelandic as *Óláfs saga helga in sérstaka*. Agnete Loth refers to it as "The Great Saga of St. Olaf."

<sup>93</sup> Loth, *Tómas saga erkibiskups*, 7.

<sup>94</sup> Sverrir also refers to it as "The Great Saga of St. Olaf" in "The Hagiography of Snorri Sturluson, especially in the Great Saga of St Olaf," in *Saints and Sagas: A Symposium*, ed. Hans Bekker-Nielsen and Birte Carlé (Odense: Odense University Press, 1994), 49-71.

<sup>95</sup> Sverrir, "The Hagiography of Snorri Sturluson," 71.

<sup>96</sup> Jace Stuckey, "The Twelfth-Century *Vita Karoli* and the Making of a Royal Saint," in *The Charlemagne Legend in Medieval Latin Texts* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 35.

<sup>97</sup> Foote, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle in Iceland*, 2.

<sup>98</sup> Rowe, *The Development of Flateyrbók*, 28.

as an introduction to their examination as part of an interrelated compilation. They appear in the order in which they are found in the manuscript.

### Konráðs saga keisarasonar 1r-1r

*Konráðs saga keisarasonar* is an early indigenous *riddarasaga*; according to Otto J. Zitzelsberger it was "presumably composed by an Icelandic cleric in the early 14th century".<sup>99</sup> It must have been a popular story for no less than forty-eight MSS containing the saga survive. In 180b all is lost save the 42 lines found on 1r, from the end of the saga.<sup>100</sup> The story deals with the relationship between Konráðr, son of the Emperor of Saxland, and his foster-brother Róðbert. Konráðr excels in physical activity whilst Róðbert applies himself to the study of foreign languages. When they travel to Constantinople, Róðbert persuades Konráðr to swap identities in order to deal with the Emperor, since the former can speak Greek. Róðbert seeks to destroy his foster-brother, however, telling the Emperor that Konráðr is intent on wooing his daughter Matthildr. For this, Konráðr must undergo a series of trials. Eventually, he finds a common language with Matthildr from a magical book, proves his identity and Róðbert's deception and marries Matthildr. Marianne Kalinke has argued for the centrality of the monolingualism/multilingualism divide to the plot, whilst Zitzelsberger sees the underlying theme as "the conflict of good and evil".<sup>101</sup>

### Dunstanus saga 1r-5v

*Dunstanus saga* is the life of the Anglo-Saxon St. Dunstan (c.909-988), a Benedictine monk at the monastery of Glastonbury and later Archbishop of Canterbury. He was instrumental in the English Benedictine Reform, introducing Continental elements he had learnt whilst at the monastery of St. Peter, Ghent in Flanders.<sup>102</sup> The saga is the work of Árni Laurentiusson (b.1304) who entered the monastery of Þingeyrar in 1317 along with his father Laurentius Kálfsson, later Bishop of Hólar (1323-1330) and the subject of *Laurentius saga*, also to be

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<sup>99</sup> Otto J. Zitzelsberger, "Konráðs saga keisarasonar," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 361.

<sup>100</sup> Halvorsen, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, 12.

<sup>101</sup> Marianne Kalinke, "The Foreign Language Requirement in Medieval Icelandic Romance," *Modern Language Review* 78 (1983): 850-61. *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, ed. Otto J. Zitzelsberger, American University Studies. Series I, Germanic Languages and Literature. vol. 63 (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), xiii.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Lapidge, "Dunstan," in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 146.

found in 180b. Árni compiled the saga from a number of Latin works, his main sources being Adelard's *Vita Dunstani* and a life of Dunstan by Eadmer of Canterbury; he probably knew the latter from a copy of Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*.<sup>103</sup> Divided into seventeen chapters, the saga recounts a number of signs, miracles and holy visions related to the life of St. Dunstan, before his birth (in his mother's womb), during his life and two which occur after his death. Other episodes touch on the life of the West Saxon Kings with whom St. Dunstan was involved. Apart from some loss of text due to the cutting away of folios 2 and 3, the text is complete and is preserved solely in 180b.

### Katrínar saga 5v-8v

The title of this text is misleading for rather than a life of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the saga tells of the *translatio* of her relics from Mount Sinai to Rouen in Normandy and the miracles caused by these relics in the 11th century. Peter Foote was the first to identify the saga as a translation of the *Sanctae Catharinae Virginis et Martyris Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensia*,<sup>104</sup> a text dated to the latter half of the eleventh century,<sup>105</sup> and most probably written as an attempt by the recently established monastery of Holy Trinity, Rouen to encourage the cult of St. Catherine.<sup>106</sup> The first part of the saga relates how Simeon, a monk at the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, takes away three small bones along with the holy oil that it was the custom to gather, "flutu þar fram ur leidinu. med \*driupandi oleo. þriu sma beín sæ<l>ar kateríne", from the tomb of St. Catherine which he was guarding.<sup>107</sup> He then brings them to Duke Richard of Normandy, great-grandson of Rollo (Hrólfur). The local nobleman Goscelyn (Gostelinus) and his wife Emmeline (Emília) establish a large church and monastery to house the relics. Thereafter follow eight short miracle stories, in which a number of ailments including toothache, childlessness, a viper eating the insides of a man, and paralysis are cured by making a pilgrimage to the church at Rouen and being anointed with or drinking the holy oil of St. Catherine, or seeing her in a vision. The first two miracles involve Isembert, the first abbot of Holy Trinity. In the Norse-Icelandic corpus this

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<sup>103</sup> This is the third hypothesis (and "the simplest and most probable") set forward by Christine Fell with regards to Árni's use of the *Speculum Historiale*. *Dunstanus saga*, ed. Fell, xlii.

<sup>104</sup> *Lives of Saints. Perg. fol. nr. 2 in the Royal Library, Stockholm*, ed. Peter Foote, Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile 4 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1962), 26.

<sup>105</sup> Christine Walsh dates the *Translatio et Miracula* to some time between 1051 and c.1090 in *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 81.

<sup>106</sup> Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 82.

<sup>107</sup> 6r l.24 from Kirsten Wolf's edition. "The *Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensia* in Icelandic Translation (AM 180b fol)," *Gripla* 19 (2008): 172.

saga is found only in 180b and was edited for the first time by Kirsten Wolf in her diplomatic edition of 2008.

### Bærings saga fagra 8v-19v

Like *Konráðs saga*, *Bærings saga* is an early, popular indigenous *riddarasaga*, extant in fifty-five MSS, the earliest of which is from the beginning of the 14th century.<sup>108</sup> The antagonist of the plot is Heinrekr, who kills Bæringr's uncle, attempts to marry his mother and seizes the throne of Saxland. Bæringr and his mother flee to England where the former becomes a knight. He befriends the king of Constantinople, and after a series of martial adventures and having rejected the advances of a number of princesses who fall for his good looks, he defeats Heinrekr, marries Vindemia, the sister of the Greek king, and becomes the emperor of the Roman Empire. Jürg Glauser has stressed that the "Christian moral attitude" of the saga is particularly noteworthy.<sup>109</sup> The text is complete in 180b.

### Knýtlinga saga 19v-32v

### Knýtlinga saga 33r-34r

*Knýtlinga saga* is a chronicle of the Danish Kings, running from Haraldr Gormsson (r. c. 958-c. 986) to Knútr Valdimarsson (r. 1182-1202). The name was probably not medieval since it first appears in Árni Magnússon's c.1700 copy of a c.1300 manuscript.<sup>110</sup> While the saga is anonymous there is evidence to suggest that it was written in the west of Iceland towards the middle of the thirteenth century by a nephew of Snorri Sturluson, Óláfr Þórdarson (d.1259).<sup>111</sup> There are two main recensions, an A group and a B group, and the version found in 180b is the main source of the B group, which begins in chapter 22 and ends in chapter 88.<sup>112</sup> The saga is divided up into two parts in 180b, however; the first part, found on pages 19v-32v contains chapters 28 to 88, whilst the second part, found on pages 33r-34r, contains an earlier section, beginning near the end of chapter 22 and ending with the last words of chapter 27. Halvorsen notes that this "puzzling" order, "is not due to any confusion

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<sup>108</sup> Jürg Glauser, "Bærings saga," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 60.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>110</sup> Rikke Malmros, "Knýtlinga saga," in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 359.

<sup>111</sup> *Knýtlinga saga, The History of the Kings of Denmark*, trans. Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), 18.

<sup>112</sup> Bjarni Guðnason, "Formáli III. Knýtlinga saga," in *Danakonunga sögur*, ed. Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenszk fornrit vol. 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenszka fornritafélag, 1982), clxxxv.

of leaves in the manuscript" and that, "A possible explanation might be that the scribe did not have a complete text of *Knýtlinga saga* when he began copying it, and when he later got hold of a more complete text he copied it as a supplement".<sup>113</sup> What is clear is that the scribe intended to begin with the part of the saga concerning Knútr Sveinsson (r. 1080-1086), later known as St. Knútr. This part stretches into the description of the reigns of St. Knútr's brothers who succeed him, Óláfr Sveinsson (r. 1086-1095) and Eirik Sveinsson (1095-1103), and it is the latter who arranges for the canonization of St. Knútr. It is during the reign of the fifth brother (the first being St Knútr's predecessor, Haraldr Sveinsson) Nikulás Sveinsson (r.1104-34) that the focus turns to St. Knútr's nephew and namesake Knútr lávarðr (1096-1131) who was also to become a saint. The lacuna begins after chapter 88 and we know from copies made in the seventeenth century, when the manuscript was more complete, that 180b originally contained the remainder of the saga up until the end.<sup>114</sup>

#### *Vítus saga* 34r-36r

Like the *Katrínar saga* found earlier in the manuscript *Vítus saga* is unique in the corpus in that it only exists in 180b, although there is a 17th century paper copy of a story involving St. Vitus extant in Stock. Papp. 8vo no. 8.<sup>115</sup> It recounts the *passio* of the Italian boy martyr Vitus, and according to Kirsten Wolf is based "on a version of *BHL* 8711 and possibly *BHL* 8714".<sup>116</sup> From a wealthy family of Lucania, seven year old Vitus embraces Christianity and resists the attempts of his pagan father Hylas to force him to sacrifice to the pagan gods, here drawn from the Norse pantheon, "Odenn, Þor ok Frey, Frigg ok Freyiu" rather than the Roman.<sup>117</sup> Hylas enlists the help of local ruler Valerian who has him tied to a stake. When Valerian tries to strike the boy his hand is injured which Vitus proceeds to heal; similarly Hylas is blinded and subsequently healed by Vitus' prayers. Guided by an angel, Vitus and his tutor Modestus escape on a ship and end up in a place called Siler. From there they travel to Rome where Vitus cures the Emperor Diocletian's son who has been possessed by a devil. Diocletian puts Vitus in a furnace and then throws him to wild beasts; having survived both

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<sup>113</sup> Halvorsen, *Karlamagnús saga and some religious texts*, 12.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>115</sup> This is listed as "Æfintýr. a) Om Vitus och Modestus" in *Katalog öfver Kongl. Bibliotekets fornländska ock fornorska handskrifter*, ed. Vilhelm Gödel (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt & söner, 1900), 367.

<sup>116</sup> Kirsten Wolf, *The Legends of the Saints in Old Norse-Icelandic Prose* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2013), 396.

<sup>117</sup> *Heilagra Manna Sögur II*, ed. C. R. Unger (Christiania: 1877), 328.

ordeals unscathed he is put on the rack. From there Vitus and Modestus are transported by an angel back to Siler where their souls ascend to heaven and their bodies are watched over by angels for three days.

### Laurentius saga 36r-52v

*Laurentius saga* is the story of the Icelandic clergyman Laurentius Kálfsson, born in Vellir in Svarfaðardalur in the north of Iceland in 1267. After completing his studies at the school at Hólar he stayed on there as a priest and schoolmaster. Later he fell out with both the Bishop of Hólar and the Archbishop of Niðaros and spent some time imprisoned in Niðaros. On his return to Iceland he works his way up the church hierarchy, becomes a monk at the Benedictine monastery of Þingeyrar in 1317 along with his son Árni, and in 1324 is elected Bishop of Hólar, a position he holds until his death in 1331. The saga was written by Einarr Hafliðason (1307-1339), a friend and fellow clergyman of Laurentius who is mentioned in the text; by looking at other dated documents scholars believe the saga to have been written around 1346. There are two extant vellum MSS of the saga, AM 406a I 4to (A), dated to 1530, and 180b fol. (B). The texts are similar for the first quarter of the saga, and then the B version becomes more concise. *Laurentius saga* is the sole text in AM 406a I 4to, which makes 180b fol. the only manuscript where we have evidence of *Laurentius saga* being joined with other texts in a medieval compilation. Most often classified as a *biskuposaga*, which is sometimes seen as a subgenre of the *samtíðarsögur* (contemporary sagas), *Laurentius saga* shares some characteristics with a saint's life.<sup>118</sup> Ásdís Egilsdóttir writes that, "Íslensku biskupasögurnar eru ekki allar dýrlingasögur, en allar eru þær helgar eða kristilegar ævisögur".<sup>119</sup> While *Laurentius saga* is most useful in shedding light on the intellectual environment existing in the churches and monasteries of the North of Iceland in the 14th century, which Sverrir Tómasson has called the North Icelandic Benedictine School<sup>120</sup>, we

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<sup>118</sup> Bampi does not even mention the *biskupasögur* in his recent listing of generic groups within the corpus, but notes that Kurt Schier in 1970 and Margaret Clunies Ross in 2010 see the *biskupasögur* as a subgroup within in the *samtíðarsögur*. Bampi, "Genre," 11.

<sup>119</sup> Ásdís Egilsdóttir, "Formáli. Biskupasögur og helgi ævisögur," in *Biskupa sögur 1*, ed. Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, Ólafur Halldórsson and Peter Foote, Íslensk fornrit, vol. 15.1 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2003), xxvii.

<sup>120</sup> Sverrir Tómasson, "Norðlenski Benediktínaskólinn," in *Tækileg vitni: Greinar um bókmenntir gefnar út í tilefni sjötugsafmælis hans 5. apríl 2011* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar and Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2011), 345-358. Originally published in *The Sixth International Saga Conference* (1985) vol. 2, 1009-1020.

must not forget that the primary motivation behind its writing was a religious one, and that it is more than a mere historical source.

### 180b as a complement to 180a

If we take the codex 180a-b as a whole, and work on the assumption that it was planned and written with a certain rationale as to the selection and ordering of the texts, then 180b could be seen as a textual expression of the generic ambiguities contained in 180a, as explored above in the discussion of *Kms*. In this way, we could divide up the seven texts of 180b into four groups, each a manifestation of a generic strand to be found in *Kms*. Firstly, *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga fagra* can be paired together; they are both indigenous *riddarasögur* which draw their narrative furniture and geographical setting (Saxland and Constantinople) from the translations of French chivalric literature, to which *Kms* belongs. *Dunstanus saga* and *Laurentius saga* might form a second couple. They both concern Benedictine monks who reach the highest ecclesiastical office following an initial struggle with the authorities, be they West Saxon Kings or the Archbishopric of Niðarós. The miracles found in *Kms* are echoed in the signs and miracles of *Dunstanus saga* and, to a lesser extent, in *Laurentius saga*. *Katrínar saga* and *Vitus saga* form a third group, in that they are both translated from Latin sources and deal with martyred saints from the first centuries of Christianity. In sharing the first criterion *Dunstanus saga* could also be placed in this group. *Katrínar saga* and *Vitus saga* also contain a geographical connection to *Kms* and the figure of Charlemagne. The former concerns itself with the workings of the saint's relics in Rouen, which formed part of Charlemagne's empire and as a French speaking city makes a link with the original language of the *chansons de gestes* from which *Kms* was translated and assembled. St. Vitus became the patron saint of the Saxons, conquered and Christianized by Charlemagne, and his relics were brought to the monastery of Saint Denis, north of Paris, during Charlemagne's lifetime, and transferred to the Imperial Abbey of Corvey in Saxony a few years after his death. Lastly, *Knýtlinga saga* stands as a reflection of the theme of kingship found in *Kms*. The way in which the version of *Knýtlinga saga* found in 180b concentrates on the two Danish royal saints, Knútr Sveinsson and Knútr lávarðr, would suggest that the compiler was interested in the combination of kingship and saintliness, also to found in the figure of Karlamagnús.

Viewed in such a way, the contents of 180b become less a rag-bag collection of sagas from different genres, and more an editorial reflection of the range of generic resonances created by *Kms*, in which *riddarasaga*, *heilagra manna saga*, and *konungsaga* co-exist. This complex textual response to *Kms* on the part of medieval Icelanders suggests that *Kms* was an important text for them. Another way to look at the logic of compilation behind 180a-b is to see it as a discourse on saintliness. The codex presents, in chronological order, a succession of saintly figures - Karlamagnús - a historical figure of the 8th and 9th centuries (but also belonging to a legendary past), Dunstanus - a representative of 10th century monastic reform, St. Knútr Sveinsson and Knútr lávarðr - royal saints of the late 11th and, in the latter case, early 12th centuries, and lastly, Laurentius Kálfsson, whose career spans the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Interspersed in this line are two chivalric romances and two saint's stories - one *translatio* and collection of miracle tales (*Katrínar saga*) and one *vita* (*Vitus saga*) - which could be likened to decorative studs or interludes in the chronological progression of saintly figures. *Katrínar saga* deals with miracles that occurred in the 11th century, mentioning the first abbot of Holy Trinity, Rouen, Isembert, whose abbacy occurred in the mid 11th century,<sup>121</sup> and so would also fit in to the chronological scheme, falling as it does between *Dunstanus saga* and *Knýtlinga saga*. These two ways of looking at the codex are not necessarily mutually exclusive and both schemes will be considered in a closer analysis of the points sketched out above. Before this, however, it seems pertinent to consider the manuscript in the light of the North Icelandic Benedictine School.

### The North Icelandic Benedictine School

Sverrir Tómasson coined the term *norðlenski Benediktínaskólinn* in a workshop paper for the Sixth International Saga Conference of 1985 and later wrote a chapter on the topic for the second volume of *Íslensk Bókmenntasaga*, published in 1993. He uses the term to describe the work of three writers of saints' lives active in the North of Iceland in the 14th century, who all happened to be brothers of the Benedictine Order. The foremost and most prolific of these is Bergr Sökkason (d.1350), abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Munka-Þverá, and author of *Mikaels saga höfuðengils* and *Nicolás saga erkibiskups*. These are the only sagas that we know for certain were written by Bergr Sökkason and, as Sverrir Tómasson notes, the Swedish scholar Peter Hallberg has attributed a number of further sagas to Bergr Sökkason,

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<sup>121</sup> Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine*, 76. Christine Walsh writes, "While the exact dates of Isembert's abbacy are disputed, they seem to fall within the range 1031-54".

including *Tveggja postula saga Jóns og Jakobs*, *Jóns saga postula IV*, *Tómas saga erkibiskups II*, *Jóns saga helga* as well as two branches of *Kms* from the B group, Branch IV *Af Agulando konungi* and Branch X *Um kraftaverk ok jarategnir*.<sup>122</sup> The other two members of the school are Arngrímr Brandsson (d.1361), abbot of the monastery of Þingeyrar and author of *Guðmundar saga biskups D*, and Árni Laurentíusson (b.1304), author of *Dunstanus saga*. The main source of information about these figures and their milieu is to be found in *Laurentius saga*, in which Laurentius Kálffsson is shown to be a teacher and guide to both Bergþór Sokkason and his son Árni. In chapter 38 of the B version we are told that Laurentius, Bergþór and Árni all become monks at Þingeyrar in the same year - 1317, Laurentius having known Bergþór from his time at Munkaþverá where he had taught him. Bergþór is described as, "hinn framasti klerkr ok mælskumaðr allmikill svá hann setti saman margar sögur heilagra manna í norrænu með mikilli snilld" and we learn that "unnuz þeir mikit bróðir Bergþór ok bróðir Laurentius."<sup>123</sup> When Laurentius appoints Bergþór abbot of Munkaþverá in 1325 (chapter 42 in the A version), the author of *Laurentius saga* expands on this encomium, describing Bergþór as, "formenntr maðr umfram flesta menn þá á Íslandi <með> klerkdóm, letr, söng ok málsnilld; saman setti hann margar heilagra manna sögur í norrænu sem birtaz mun ok auðsýnaz meðan þetta land er byggt."<sup>124</sup> From these statements we can conclude that Bergþór was the foremost writer, or translator, of saints' lives in Iceland of his time, and that he is certain to have produced more than two. Secondly, that the relationship between Laurentius and Bergþór was very close, and that both were held in high esteem by Einarr Halfiðason, the author of *Laurentius saga*. Árni Laurentíusson is also seen to be an able scholar and very close to his father; chapter 52 of the A version tells us, "Var bróðir Árni hinn bezti klerkr ok versificator ok kenndi mörgum klerkum; fór hann hvern tíma í visitatione með herra Laurentio, föður sínum, ok svaf í einu herbergi ok hann."<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Peter Hallberg, *Stilsignalement och författarskap i norrön sagalitteratur*. Nordistica Gothoburgensia 3 (Gothenburg: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968); "Jóns saga helga," *Afmælisrit Jóns Helgasonar*. ed. Jakob Benediktsson et al (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1969), 59-79; "Om Magnús saga helga," *Einarsbók* ed. Bjarni Guðnason et al. (Reykjavík: Nokkrir vinir, 1969), 59-70. Cited in Sverrir Tómasson, "Trúarbókmenntir í lausu máli á síðmiðöld," in *Íslensk Bókmenntasaga 2* (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1993), 250-51.

<sup>123</sup> *Biskupa sögur 3*, ed. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, Íslensk fornrit 17 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1998), 333.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

Arngrímur Brandsson is also mentioned in *Laurentius saga*; stated to be the holder of the benefice of Oddastaðr and "fremstan í sínu byskupsdæmi"<sup>126</sup>, he is sent to Norway by the bishop of Skálholt, Jón Halldórsson (c.1275-1339) to plead in the Möðruvellir case, which pitted the see of Skálholt against that of Hólar, the latter controlled by Laurentius. We learn in chapter 51 of the A version that he neglected his ambassadorial duty in favour of taking lessons on the organ. This Arngrímur Brandsson is presumed to be the same man who went on to become the abbot of Þingeyrar and author of *Guðmundar saga biskups D*.

Sverrir Tómasson makes two main points about the style and technique of writing saints' lives employed by the North Icelandic Benedictine School, focusing on the work of Bergur Sökkason. The style is a florid, Latinate one, in which the authors favour rhetorical flourishes such as the use of *homoeoteleuton*.<sup>127</sup> Secondly, they display a concern for historical detail and accuracy, as is demonstrated by the addition of dates and names to earlier versions of certain saints' lives. Sverrir writes: "their hagiographical narratives took on the character of universal history, with exact chronology and geography alongside traditional interpretations of theological questions".<sup>128</sup> Christine Fell confirms this tendency in *Dunstanus saga* and even goes so far as to suggest that an interest in history was the prime motivating force. In considering *Dunstanus saga* and the anonymous 14th century *Játvarðar saga* she writes: "The significance of these sagas is the way in which their authors exploited the library resources available."<sup>129</sup>

Another important figure to consider from this milieu is Jón Halldórsson, Bishop of Skálholt, mentioned above as the commissioner of Arngrímur Brandsson's journey to Norway. Before Jón Halldórsson and Laurentius fell out over the Möðruvellir case *Laurentius saga* tells us that they they were the best Latinists of their generation and held each other in esteem, "var þat mál manna at á Íslandi mundi varla verit hafa meiri latínklerkar en þeir voru. Var ok harðla kært þann tíma í meðal þeirra".<sup>130</sup> Since no saints' lives have been attributed to him, Sverrir Tómasson does not include Jón Halldórsson in the North Icelandic Benedictine

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>127</sup> Sverrir, "Trúarbókmenntir í lausu máli á síðmiðöld," 265.

<sup>128</sup> Sverrir Tómasson, "Mírmanns saga: The First Old Norse-Icelandic Hagiographical Romance," in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honour of Marianne Kalinke*, ed. Kirsten Wolf and Johanna Denzin. *Islandica* 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2008), 332.

<sup>129</sup> Fell, "Anglo-Saxon Saints in Old Norse sources and vice versa," 105.

<sup>130</sup> *Biskupa sögur* 3, ed. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, 383.

School (additionally, he was trained as a Dominican, not a Benedictine), but he must have had an influence on the main figures. Indeed, Laurentius sends his son Árne south to Skálholt to be ordained by Jón.<sup>131</sup> Jón Halldórsson was a remarkably learned man for his time and there is a tale devoted to his life, the *Sögubáttur af Jóni Halldórssyni biskupi*, the earliest manuscript witness of which dates from 1350. Here we learn that he studied in Paris and Bologna, and that he enjoyed collecting stories from his foreign travels - "hans góðvili var at gleðja nærverandis menn með fáheyrðum dæmisögum er hann hafði tekit í útlöndum, bæði með letrum ok eigin raun."<sup>132</sup> Although not a *dæmisögur* or *exempla*, one text which Jón seems to have brought from abroad is the chivalric romance *Klári saga* which, according to its prologue, was found in France by Jón Halldórsson and translated by him from Latin into Old Norse.<sup>133</sup> Shaun Hughes has claimed that this is a "modesty topos" and has argued convincingly that it was Jón himself who wrote *Klári saga*.<sup>134</sup> Peter Hallberg has made linguistic and stylistic links between *Klári saga* and three other romances, *Kirjalax saga*, *Rémundar saga keisarasonar*, and *Dínus saga draumbláta*, suggesting that Bergr Sökkason or others close to him may be the authors.<sup>135</sup> This leads us to the conclusion made by Erika Sigurdson in her recent book, *The Church in Fourteenth Century Iceland: the Formation of an elite Clerical Identity*:

The same small group of elite clerical writers responsible for *Lárentíus saga*, *Jóns þáttur Halldórssonar*, the saint's lives and other religious literature are therefore also closely connected to the translated and native romances which came to Iceland in the fourteenth century, either as authors or audience.<sup>136</sup>

It is clear that the North Icelandic Benedictine School leaves a strong print on the codex 180 a-b fol. It contains not only the most important source of information on all the characters involved - *Laurentius saga* - but also includes the only manuscript witness to *Dunstanus*

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 382.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 445.

<sup>133</sup> Shaun F. D. Hughes, "Klári saga as an Indigenous Romance," in *Romance and Love in Late Medieval and Early Modern Iceland: Essays in Honour of Marianne Kalinke*, *Islandica* 54 (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2008), 137.

<sup>134</sup> Hughes, "Klári saga as an Indigenous Romance," 158.

<sup>135</sup> Peter Hallberg, "A Group of Icelandic "Riddarasögur" from the Middle of the Fourteenth Century," in *Les sagas de chevaliers (riddarasögur): Actes de la Ve Conférence internationale sur les sagas*, ed. Régis Boyer (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1985).

<sup>136</sup> Erika Ruth Sigurdson, *The Church in Fourteenth Century Iceland: the Formation of an elite Clerical Identity* (Boston: Brill, 2015), 45.

saga. We know that Bergr Sökkason used *Kms* as a source for *Mikaels saga*, and Peter Hallberg has made a good case in identifying his involvement in the rewriting of Branches IV and X. Whilst these branches are to be found in the B group of *Kms*, rather than the A group to which 180a belongs, it shows that *Kms* was seen as a source text for writing hagiographies. Further, it shows the connection between chivalric romance and religious literature demonstrated by the work of Jón Halldórsson and probably that of his clerical contemporaries. In this light, the inclusion of *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga* in 180b appears less of an anomaly. The concern with history displayed in the saints' lives of Bergr Sökkason and Árni Laurentiusson, and highlighted by Sverrir Tómasson and Christine Fell, is pertinent when considering the codex as a whole. The selection of *Katrínar saga* and *Vitus saga* could be a precise exploitation of library resources (to use Fell's term), in an attempt to fill out a historical picture. The constituent texts will now be considered in greater detail, bearing in mind the three interpretative lights as introduced above: 180b as a reflection of the generic ambiguity of 180a, the codex as a chronological presentation of saintly figures, and the connections with the North Icelandic Benedictine School.

#### *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga* as clerical texts

Both *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga* belong to the earliest phase of indigenous romance writing, placed by Jürg Glauser in, "the group of younger *riddarasögur*, for which no foreign-language sources are known, but which display thematic and stylistic connections to the translated *riddarasögur*".<sup>137</sup> The two others that he includes in this group are *Mírmanns saga* and *Rémundar saga keisarasonar*, both of which have been connected to clerical authors. *Mírmanns saga* has strong religious overtones, not only in the inclusion of material on God's mercy but also in the moral lesson imparted by the tale; Sverrir Tómasson describes this "concluding sentiment" as an injunction that, "the *vita carnalis* should be avoided, and the members of the audience should submit to the spiritual power represented by the Church"; he even goes so far as to describe *Mírmanns saga* as an "hagiographical romance".<sup>138</sup> *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* is included in what Peter Hallberg calls the "Clarus Group", a group of four *riddarasögur* with common features, the others being *Klári*

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<sup>137</sup> Jürg Glauser, "Romance (Translated *riddarasögur*)," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 373.

<sup>138</sup> Sverrir, "*Mírmanns saga*," 334.

*saga* (called *Clarus saga* by Hallberg), *Kirjalax saga* and *Dínus saga drambláta*.<sup>139</sup> By means of an analysis of vocabulary and the use of tenses, Hallberg has identified a strong correlation between these sagas and Bergr Sökkason's *Nikolaus saga*. He concludes: "these *riddarasögur* reveal such a dense and specific web of connections between themselves, and not least with Bergr's *Nikolaus saga*, that they must be attributed to a very narrow circle or school of writers - if not to Bergr Sökkason himself".<sup>140</sup> One wonders if he would have achieved the same results with *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga*. Although Hallberg's methodology is open to criticism, the connection remains between the writers of romance in the early fourteenth century and the hagiographers. Outside of linguistic affinities, the interest in "geography, history or pseudo-history and other learning, as well as in Christian and clerical matters"<sup>141</sup> that Hallberg identifies in his "Clarus Group", is, as discussed earlier in this thesis, shared by the North Icelandic Benedictine School.

While Christian themes are not immediately apparent in *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, Zitzelsberger is certain that its author was clerically trained, based on the latter's knowledge of the Bible and close quotations from Ezekiel and Samuel.<sup>142</sup> The narrative sees the eponymous protagonist overcoming a purposeless life of self-gratification, and the evil Roðbert, to marry Matthildr and achieve a life of "purposeful activity".<sup>143</sup> *Bærings saga*, however, is marked by Christian morality, and the figure of Bæringr even takes on some of the crusading spirit found in *Kms* - we find him holding aloft the sign of the Cross when attacking the Saracens who threaten Byzantium.<sup>144</sup> Striking also, is the similar geographical area covered by these two romances and by *Kms*, and by other texts in the codex. Both the former see a move from Saxland to Constantinople, mirroring Karlamagnús's journey to the East referred to in Branch I and detailed in Branch VII. In chapter 81 of *Knýtlinga saga*, King Eirik also journeys to Byzantium and is welcomed by the Greek King in Constantinople; his *jórsalaferð* is never accomplished since he dies of an illness en route, in Cyprus. It is in the country of Dunstanus - England, that Bæringr becomes a knight. Names of characters in the romances echo those of historical figures connected to this geographical area: we have the Holy Roman Emperors Konráðr and Heinrekr (the uncle of Bæringr), and the Norman kings

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<sup>139</sup> Hallberg, "A Group of Icelandic "Riddarasögur", " 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>142</sup> Zitzelsberger, *Konráðs saga keisarasonar*, xi.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

<sup>144</sup> *Fornsögur Suðrlanda*, ed. Gustaf Cederschiöld (Lund: Berling, 1884), 100.

Ríkarðr (Konráðr's father) and Roðbert, both the latter mentioned in *Katrínar saga*. Rather than "*Kitsch and Trivalliteratur*"<sup>145</sup>, then, *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and *Bærings saga* can be seen as clerical productions intended to impart a Christian moral message, as well as to demonstrate a wide knowledge of history and geography, culled from learned reading.

#### *Vitus saga* and *Katrínar saga* - supporting documents

Why is *Vitus saga*, the story of a boy martyr in 4th century Italy, included in this codex and found in only one other place in Icelandic manuscripts? A possible reason could be the connection between St. Vitus and the Benedictine monastery of Corvey, in Saxony. The *Translatio sancti Viti martyris*, written in the ninth century, recounts the transferral of Vitus's relics from Rome to the monastery of St. Denis near Paris in the eighth century, and from there to Corvey in the year 836.<sup>146</sup> Charlemagne appears in the account as a ruthless crusher of Saxon paganism and the *translatio* confirms the establishment of Christianity in the recently conquered lands. The abbey's links with Scandinavia were strong: the monk Ansgar, tasked with evangelizing Denmark, Norway and Sweden in the 9th century, set up the abbey school and Widukind of Corvey provided the first account of the baptism of the Danish King Haraldr Gormsson.<sup>147</sup> The first Icelandic Bishop, Ísleifr Gissurarson, was sent by his father to be educated at a convent in Herford<sup>148</sup>, which existed as "a sort of female twin of Corvey"<sup>149</sup>, and he would no doubt have been aware of the veneration of St. Vitus. *Vitus saga* provides a direct link to Charlemagne, therefore, and acts as a complement to *Kms* earlier in the manuscript.

It would have been more apposite to include the *translatio* of St. Vitus's relics, with the direction mention of Charlemagne and the Saxon wars, rather than his *passio*. Perhaps the compilers were unable to locate a copy of the former and settled for the latter. They were,

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<sup>145</sup> Kalinke, "Norse Romance (*Riddarasögur*)," 316. This is how Kalinke sums up how the *riddarasögur* were viewed by critics of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>146</sup> David F. Appleby, "Spiritual Progress in Carolingian Saxony: A Case from Ninth-century Corvey," *The Catholic Historical Review* 82, no. 4, (1996): 605.

<sup>147</sup> Michael H. Gelting, "The kingdom of Denmark," in *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900-1200*, ed. Nora Berend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80.

<sup>148</sup> Orri Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland. Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

<sup>149</sup> Peter Foote, "Aachen, Lund, Hólar," in *Les relations littéraires franco-scandinaves au moyen âge. Actes du colloque de Liège (avril 1972)*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, Fasc. 208 (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1975), 58.

however, able to find a version of the *translatio* of St. Catherine's relics, a document which also appears only in 180b. As stated earlier, a connection can be made with Charlemagne in that Rouen fell in his part of the empire and *Kms* was translated from the French. Also, the movement of St. Catherine's relics from Mount Sinai to France, from East to West, parallels Karlamagnús's transfer of a number of relics from Jerusalem to France in Branch VII of *Kms*. The mention of Duke Richard of Normandy's Viking ancestor Rollo (Hrólfr) would have piqued the interest of an Icelandic compiler<sup>150</sup> as well as the fact that St. Óláfr Haraldsson is reported, in the Norwegian Homily Book, to have been baptised in Rouen during the reign of this same Duke Richard II.<sup>151</sup> Kirsten Wolf speculates that an Icelandic student returned home with a copy of the *translatio*, and she notes that Jón Halldórsson, Bishop of Skálholt, is amongst those known to have studied in France.<sup>152</sup> Did Jón bring back the document and introduce it into the group of learned clerics based around Laurentius Kálfsson? Slight as it is, we have another link with the North Icelandic Benedictine School in that chapter 5 of *Dunstanus saga* has Dunstanus going to visit "til erchibyskups Rodobernensem er heit Adelinus".<sup>153</sup> Leonore Harty believes Rodobernensem (which might be a version of *Rotomagus*, the Latin name for Rouen) to be a slip for Doroberensis, "a name for Canterbury used by author B, Adelard and Osbern in their Lives of St Dunstan"<sup>154</sup>. This sounds completely plausible, but there may have been a connection with Rouen, which is now lost to us, in Árne Laentiusson's mind or in that of the compiler of the manuscript.

#### *Knýtlinga saga* as saint's saga

As stated above, the version of *Knýtlinga saga* presented in 180b (the B version) begins with the life of St. Knútr Sveinsson and ends with the marriage of St. Knútr lávarðr, suggesting that the compiler of the manuscript has a particular interest in saintliness. Like the saintly motifs in *Kms*, the moments of divine intervention and favour are crude, and the narrative of political manoeuvring and the struggle for power remains the primary one. As Bjarni Guðnason writes: "Knúts s. er ekki helgisaga, en í henni er nokkurt helgisagnaefni".<sup>155</sup> The

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<sup>150</sup> Wolf, "The *Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensia* in Icelandic Translation," 189.

<sup>151</sup> *Gamal Norsk homiliebok. Cod. 619 4to*, ed. Gustav Indrebø (Oslo, 1931), 108. Cited in Sverrir Tómasson, "The Hagiography of Snorri Sturluson, especially in the Great Saga of St Olaf," in *Saints and Sagas: A Symposium* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1994), 57.

<sup>152</sup> Wolf, "The *Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensia* in Icelandic Translation," 189-190.

<sup>153</sup> Fell, *Dunstanus saga*, 8.

<sup>154</sup> Leonore Harty, "The Icelandic Life of St Dunstan," *Saga-Book* 15 (1957-59): 265.

<sup>155</sup> Bjarni Guðnason, "Formáli, *Knýtlinga saga*," in *Danakonunga sögur, Íslenzk fornrit* 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag 1982), CXXX.

signs of holiness attributed to St. Knútr Sveinsson during his lifetime are indicative of a society recently converted to Christianity (which had taken place approximately 100 years earlier, under the reign of Haraldr Gormson, the first king to be dealt with in *Knýtlinga saga*). As well as making mention of "allsvaldandi guð" in his speeches, St. Knútr's holiness is demonstrated by his forbearance from giving in to the temptation of sleeping with the wife of a priest (ch. 31) and reprimanding Egill Ragnarsson for drinking human blood (ch. 36). His martyrdom in a church is followed by the wrath of God's vengeance - the instigator of his murder, Earl Ásbjörn, is eaten alive by rats, a punishment divinely sanctioned (ch. 61). Upon his death, St. Knútr's path to canonisation is more conventional. A light is seen shining from his grave (ch. 66), he miraculously appears to the Þorgunnusons in prison, breaking their fetters and leaving behind a sweet fragrance (ch. 68), and in chapter 77 miracles occur when his relics are moved and his body remains unburnt when set alight.

The first part of *Knýtlinga saga* to be found in 180b begins with chapter 28, with the election of St Knútr as king. After the Danes have held an assembly, "Þá var þar Knútr Sveinsson til konungs tekinn at ráði allra landsmanna yfir allt Danaveldi".<sup>156</sup> This shows quite clearly a desire to begin with the story of St. Knútr. Why then does a second section, containing the end of chapter 22 up until the end of chapter 27 appear after this first part in the manuscript? Rather than a logistical error as suggested by Halvorsen (see above), it could be that the compiler wished to provide the reader with all the information available on St. Knútr from *Knýtlinga saga*. Chapter 23 introduces St. Knútr for the first time, in the list of King Sveinn's children; the end of chapter 22 with which the second section begins establishes Sveinn as King. This appendage of a 'pre-quel' or backstory could be seen as a conscientious attempt to provide all mentions of St. Knútr, the protagonist of interest, displaying a historian's diligence which would tally with the concern for detail found in the North Icelandic Benedictine School. The chapters on the second Danish royal king, Knútr lávarðr, end with his marriage at the end of chapter 88, however the manuscript would have originally contained the rest of the saga, including the notice in chapter 92 that, "Knútr lávarðr var færðr til Hringstaða ok þar jarðaðr ok er sannheilagr maðr ok gerir margar fagrar jartegnir ok dýrligar".<sup>157</sup> The fact that Ringsted Abbey was the main Benedictine abbey of Denmark may have been of interest to a Benedictine readership.

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<sup>156</sup> *Danakonunga sögur*, ed. Bjarni Guðnason, 145.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

## Producers, Purpose and Use

At this point we can return to some of Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir's questions introduced towards the beginning of the thesis. "What forces led to an unorthodox coupling of texts or an unusual codicological makeup? What were the intentions of the people who produced the book?" In considering the codex 180a-b fol. the links with the North Icelandic Benedictine School are striking. We have Einarr Hafliðason's *Laurentius saga*, Árni Laurentiusson's *Dunstanus saga*, the supposition that either Jón Halldórson or Bergr Sökkason had a hand in composing *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* and/or *Bærings saga*, the speculation that Jón Halldórson brought *Katrínar saga* from France and, whether he did or not, Bergr Sökkason would be a good a choice as any for the translator of *Katrínar saga* and *Vitus saga* from Latin into Old Norse. Further, we know Bergr Sökkason knew and used *Kms* for his work on *Mikaels saga* and the theme of saintliness which runs through the codex, in which different sagas add to a larger historical picture, fits in with the attention to chronology, geography and historical detail displayed by the fourteenth century writers of saints' lives.

In its combination of romance and stories concerned with miracles and relics, AM 180a-b fol. is similar to the manuscript AM 657 a-b 4to, mentioned by Erika Sigurdson as a good example of the work produced by the North Icelandic Benedictine School.<sup>158</sup> The latter contains Bergr Sökkason's *Mikaels saga*, the chivalric romance *Drauma-Jóns saga* and *Jóns þátr Halldórssonar* (both attributed to Bergr Sökkason), Jón Halldórsson's *Clári saga*, *Hákonar þátr Hárekssonar*, miracle stories and *exempla*. This manuscript is dated to 1350, not long after the constituent sagas are thought to have been written and before or just after the deaths of the authors. 180a-b is dated to around one hundred years later, however, with 180b in some estimates as late as c.1500. What could be the reason for this difference in dates of manuscripts made up of similar contents? The first is that 180a-b is a copy of an earlier manuscript in which the selection of the particular sagas was first made. In this scenario, the writers or copyists of the manuscript would not be the same people who arranged the ordering of its contents. The second explanation is that editor or compiler and scribe were the same person, and that this person was collecting together the works of an earlier generation. *Laurentius saga* certainly leaves us with the impression that a group of exceptional men were

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<sup>158</sup> Sigurdson, *The Church in Fourteenth Century Iceland*, 46.

gathered together; when Laurentius, Bergr and Áрни find themselves together after their entry into the Benedictine order, we are told that, "Sannliga mátti þat segja at fagrlegt var þat klaustr sem svá var skipat af slíkum munkum sem þá var at Þingeyrum".<sup>159</sup> Could 180a-b be an attempt to collect together and preserve the work and memory of this gilded trio and their intellectual milieu, whose fame had passed down two or three generations of scholars?

There is also the possibility that the North Icelandic Benedictine School connection is a coincidence, and that a fifteenth century cleric with access to the cathedral library at Hólar sought to put together a manuscript containing *Kms* and related sagas and, since the writers were all based in the North and their works were to hand, they happened to be chosen. There is strong evidence for the Northern origin of the manuscript. It is from owners in the North that Áрни Magnússon recovered most of the fragments, and the sign 'G' crossed with a 'Ð' found on folio 11v of 180b, which Christine Fell assigns to Guðbrandur Þorláksson, Bishop of Hólar in the early seventeenth century, would suggest that the manuscript (or *Dunstanus saga* at least) was at Hólar at this time.<sup>160</sup> What is more, a snapshot of the sagas held in the library of Hólar cathedral in 1396 reveals a very similar selection to that presented in 180a-b:

Þessar soǧhubókr Mariu sǧha guds modur. olafuanna soǧhur. karla maghnus saga. thomass soǧhur .ij. jacobi sǧha. anndress sǧha. gudmundar soǧur .ij. thorlaks saga. liber Regum. barláms sǧha. Riddara soǧur a tveim bokum. postola soǧur. jons sǧha hola biskups.<sup>161</sup>

It would be possible to compile a manuscript very like 180a-b from this inventory. *Kms* would be there, a number of saints' sagas, two *riddarasǧur*, instead of the saintly Danish kings there would be the saintly Norwegian kings' sagas (*olafuanna soǧhur*) and a bishop's saga (either *thorlaks saga* or *jons sǧha hola biskups*). The fact that a fifteenth century scribe could have made 180a-b as a library compendium does not rule out the possibility of the manuscript being put together a century earlier and copied again in the fifteenth century.

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<sup>159</sup> *Biskupa sögur* 3, ed. Guðrún Ása, 334.

<sup>160</sup> Fell, *Dunstanus saga*, lxviii.

<sup>161</sup> *Diplomatarium Islandicum - Íslenzkt Fornbrëfasafn*. Copenhagen, vol. III, no. 511, cited in Margaret Cormack, "Saints' Lives and Icelandic Literature in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Saints and Sagas: A Symposium* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1994), 37.

So far, two main reasons for the production of the book have been identified: firstly, as a meditation on *Kms* and the theme of saintliness and secondly, as a show-piece for the work of the North Icelandic Benedictine School. These two intentions could work simultaneously, and the compilation could have been made around 1350 and copied in the fifteenth century, or compiled and written at the same time. A third reason could be the desired canonisation of Laurentius. Concerning *Laurentius saga*, Margaret Cormack notes, "There was no canonization process for Laurentius, although I have no doubt that his biographer, Einarr Hafliðason, would have welcomed one. He has at any rate provided the necessary materials".<sup>162</sup> If *Laurentius saga* was composed in order to provide evidence for and spur on the canonization of Laurentius, then its placement at the end of a line of saintly figures from the past - Karlamagnús, Dunstan, the two saintly Knútrs - might provide further argument for such a process, by casting him as the latest manifestation of saintliness.

"What were the needs of its users, and did these change over time?" How were the texts of 180a-b consumed? In the prologue to his *Mikaels* saga, Bergr Sökkason informs the reader that it was written, "at hann iafnlega lesiz aa messuðagh Michaelis kirkjusoknar monnum til skamtanar".<sup>163</sup> Since there is very little evidence of the *cultus* of Dunstanus and Vitus in Iceland it is hard to say whether their saint's days would have been marked by a reading of the sagas, but this could have been the case. There existed a number of lives of St. Catherine in Old Norse which would have been read on her saint's day rather than the *translatio* of 180b. Discussing *Vitus saga*, Sverrir Tómasson argues that since it is wedged between *Knýtlinga saga* and *Laurentius saga* and that the manuscript contains "bæði veraldlegar sögur og helgisögur", it might have been used by laymen.<sup>164</sup> Given the marked theme of saintliness throughout the codex, for instance the selection from *Knýtlinga saga* of the saga of St. Knútr, this seems unlikely. The learned, religious nature of the codex would suggest that it was read in such an environment. *Laurentius saga* gives us a tantalising glimpse of the use of a saint's life, with his biographer reading to Laurentius of an evening, "Jafnan sem rökkva tók á vetrinn sagði Einarr djákni byskupinum heilagra manna sögur á norrænu eðr stundum las latínu sögur þar til sem hringt var til aftansöngs".<sup>165</sup> No doubt, more public readings would

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<sup>162</sup> Cormack, "Saints' Lives and Icelandic Literature," 44.

<sup>163</sup> *Heilagra Manna Sögur I*, ed. Unger. 676, cited in Cormack, Margaret, 1994, 32.

<sup>164</sup> Sverrir Tómasson, "Helgisögur og helgisagnaritun," in *Heilagra karla sögur*, ed. Sverrir Tómasson, Bragi Halldórsson and Einar Sigurbjörnsson (Reykjavík: Bókmenntafræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2007), lx.

<sup>165</sup> *Biskupa sögur 3*, Guðrún Ása, 379.

have taken place, for example in the refectory of a Benedictine house, as the monks ate in silence and listened to the adventures of Karlamagnús, Bæringr or St. Knútr, safe in the knowledge that such stories were condoned as edifying literature.

180a-b also belonged in the library, most probably of a religious institution. Above all, it is a scholarly compendium, and it is easy to imagine silent scholars cross-referencing the mentions of St. James in *Kms* with his saint's life, or seeking out the rare translation of the *Translatio et Miracula Rotomagensia*. It is clerical scholars, also, who would be able to appreciate the codex holistically as a book with a theme and interconnected texts, rather than as a mere gathering of sagas. Later on, the book was broken up and parts found their way into hands of laymen, Magnús Jónsson of Leira and Skúli Ólafsson being the last owners before the fragments entered the chests of Árni Magnússon. *Kms* and the romances might have been enjoyed during the *kvöldvaka* in a farmhouse; likewise the stories of saints, rare birds in a post-Reformation landscape.

## Conclusion

In chapter 2 of his book *Textual Situations*, Andrew Taylor examines the manuscript Digby 23, kept at the Bodleian library in Oxford. Otherwise known as the 'Oxford *Roland*', Digby 23 contains the earliest and most famous extant copy of the *Chanson de Roland*, but this is also bound with a copy of Plato's *Timaeus*. Taylor notes how the presence of the latter text has largely been forgotten in the clamour to exalt its companion in the codex, particularly after the *Chanson de Roland* was adopted, in the nineteenth century, as the foundational text of French literature.<sup>166</sup> We might compare this situation to the case of AM 180a-b fol. where the post-medieval career of the Norse *Chanson de Roland* is nothing like that of its previous, Anglo-Norman manifestation. To some extent, *Karlamagnús saga* is the *Timaeus* of 180a-b, languishing in semi-obscurity next to the brighter lights of *Laurentius saga* and *Knýtlinga saga*. Taylor reminds us, however, that, "The *Timaeus* and the *Roland* might seem to belong to different worlds, but the Norman and Anglo-Norman scribes who copied them lived in the same one".<sup>167</sup> It is manuscript compilations like 180a-b fol. that allow the modern scholar a rare glance into the appreciation of texts and the relationship between them, as perceived by medieval minds. The 'Karlamagnús Compendium' presents an eclectic selection of texts

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<sup>166</sup> Taylor, *Textual Situations*, 26-70.

<sup>167</sup> Taylor, *Textual Situations*, 58.

which, while challenging modern conceptions of genre, creates a textual world which is remarkably coherent, bound as it is by the theme of saintliness, a chronological structure and a shared geography.

This thesis has attempted to show how *Kms* might have been perceived by its copiers, by means of a consideration of the choice of texts in 180b. The range of genres represented in 180b, it has been argued, could be a reflection of the generic ambiguity or multiplicity in which *Kms* existed. *Kms* belonged to the mediievally attested generic class of *riddarasögur*, since its protagonists are mounted knights; yet unlike the other translated literature from Old French and Anglo-Norman, the *lais* and the courtly romances, *Kms* has a strong connection to history and therefore an affinity with the *konungasögur*. It stands out from other *chansons de geste*, also, in that its central character was not just a recognizable historical figure, but the personification of the royal ideal. Hagiographic motifs of miracles and visions run throughout the various branches, Branch I has some structural similarities to a saint's *vita*, writers of saints' lives borrowed from and contributed to *Kms*, and a scribe who transcribed saints' lives copied it - all of which connects *Kms* to the saints' lives.<sup>168</sup> We do not know if the version of *Kms* copied in 180a continued after Branch VIII, or if 180a and 180b contained further sagas which are now lost, but one might note the symmetry of seven branches of *Kms* in 180a - I, and III-VIII, followed by seven sagas in 180b.

The influence of the North Icelandic Benedictine School on 180a-b has been explored, and the contention that this circle of Benedictine brothers could be extended to include Jón Halldórsson, Bishop of Skálholt, and the possible literary innovations that he may have introduced given his contact with mainland European culture. Peter Hallberg's research has pointed to the activity of Bergr Sökkason across the literary board, in the production of saints' lives, romances and revisions to *Kms*. In such a small literate community as existed in medieval Iceland it is by no means incredible to imagine a single figure having such a prolific and eclectic role. Indeed, the make-up of 180a-b gives off an impression of intense intellectual curiosity which stretches across history, hagiography, and literature. In her analysis of *Dunstanus saga* and *Játvarðar saga*, Christine Fell concludes that the interest

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<sup>168</sup> This ambiguity of the position of *Kms* as a hagiographic text is reflected in its inclusion in Kirsten Wolf's *The Legends of the Saints in Old Norse-Icelandic Prose*; it is there (on page 74) but the entry begins with the statement: "The chapters on Charlemagne in *Karlamagnús saga*, a secular work, cannot be regarded as a proper saint's legend".

shown in Dunstanus and the two royal Edwards is "a literary and historical interest rather than a religious one".<sup>169</sup> This may be apparent in the choice of material employed but it is important to remember the over-arching religious and ethical framework that informed this curiosity. Even the writing and reading of romances should not be seen in contradistinction to more overtly religious literary pursuits; it was in clerical minds steeped in Christianity that this desire for knowledge expressed itself. It was also in Icelandic minds and the "impression of contrast and catholicity in the Icelanders' literary taste"<sup>170</sup> noted by Peter Foote in his discussion of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* goes for 180a-b as a whole. Rather than identifying *Kms* as a foreign body, which seems to have been its fate in much of saga scholarship, they engaged with it so as to make it their own.

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<sup>169</sup> Fell, "Anglo-Saxon saints," 105.

<sup>170</sup> Foote, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle in Iceland*, v.

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