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That's (Not) What She Said

Translating and Abridging Female Speech in Ívens saga

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Holly Frances McArthur

Kt.: 190392-4309

Leiðbeinandi: Sif Ríkharðsdóttir

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Abstract

Our current understanding of the Old Norse-Icelandic translations of Old French romances is functional, if somewhat limited: the corpus of translations is heavily abridged compared to their surviving Old French counterparts, with specific elements such as emotion and introspection frequently removed as the texts traveled north. While this conception of the translated texts has been helpful during initial surveys of the corpus, the nature of the abridging process—and its goals beyond the removal of undesirable emotional displays and extended self-analysis—has only rarely been questioned. This project will focus on the abridging process of the translated romances, specifically how that process treated women’s speech, as the words spoken by women in the translated romances frequently cover topics identified as prime targets for removal during the abridging process.

Female speech, however, was not all treated equally in translation; the varying level of silencing each female character in these texts received during the process of transmission has yet to be sufficiently addressed. Using close examination of how female speech was translated—or cut—during translation in *Ívens saga* I will discuss the interaction of gender and dialogue as the romances moved from the Old French cultural context into a Norwegian and, later, an Icelandic context. The disparate patterns of treatment will be examined in relation to the extant character archetypes found in contemporary examples from Old Norse-Icelandic literature, as elaborated by Jenny Jochens and Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, in order to illustrate how the more familiar image of a wise, advice-giving woman may have been less harshly reduced than a character who fell outside known archetypes. I argue that while adaptations were made to better fit Old Norse-Icelandic cultural norms and literary preferences, textual abridgement was based on a more complex system of gendered criteria than has heretofore been acknowledged.

Ágrip

Skilningur okkar á fornnorrænum þýðingum á frönsku riddarasögunni er takmarkaður: verkin hafa þó öll verið stytt þónokkuð ef þau eru borin saman við frönsku frumútgáfunar þar sem þær hafa varveist. Þá sérstaklega hafa ákveðnir þættir, eins og tilfinningar og íhugun, jafnan verið fjarlægðir þegar textarnir ferðuðust norður. Þrátt fyrir að þessi skilningur á þýddu textunum hafi verið gagnlegur í fyrri rannsóknum á ritunum þá hefur þetta ferli – og markmið þess fyrir utan að fjarlægja einfaldlega óæskilega tilfinningahegðun eða sjálfsskoðun – ekki verið kannað rækilega. Verkefni þetta mun einblína á þetta ferli og þá sérstaklega hvernig þýðendur meðhöndluðu orðræðu kvenna. Orð sem mælt eru af konum í þýddu rómönsunum ná oft yfir efni sem var líklegt til að vera fjarlægt í þýðingafærlinu.

Kvenleg orðræða var hins vegar ekki alltaf meðhöndluð á sama hátt í þýðingunum. Þöggun ákveðinna kvenna eða ákveðinnar kvenlegrar orðræðu í þýðingafærlinu hefur hingað til ekki verið skoðuð. Ég mun ræða sambandið milli kyngervis og orðræðu þegar rómansan færðist úr hinu fornranska yfir í hið norræna menningarsamhengi með því að rýna í hvernig kvenleg orðræða var þýdd (eða fjarlægð) í þýðingafærlinu í Ívens sögu. Þessi mismunandi mynstur verða skoðuð í tengslum við staðalímyndir kvenna sem hægt er að finna í fornnorrænum verkum (sbr. Jenny Jochens og Jóhönnu Katrínu Friðriksdóttur) til að sýna hvernig hin kunnuglega ímynd ráðgefandi konunnar hefur haldið sér á meðan orðræða annarra kvenpersóna hefur verið skorin meira niður. Ég held því fram að meðan aðlaganir voru gerðar til að laga efnið að norrænum menningarhefðum og bókmenntaáhuga þá hafi stytting texta oft verið byggð á flóknari kynbundnu kerfi en hafi hingað til verið talið.

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Introduction

The translated *riddarasögur*, frequently translated as the knight's sagas or sagas of chivalry, are a subsection of Old Norse-Icelandic literature which consists of translations from Old French to Old Icelandic. The translations of these texts were completed in the thirteenth century, presumably at the order of Hákon IV Hákonarson for the Norwegian court at Bergen. The earliest of the romances, translated in 1226, was *Tristrams saga ok Ísondar* based on Thomas of Britain's *Tristan*. Romances based on Chrétien de Troyes verse romances *Yvain*, *Le Conte de Graal*, and *Erec et Énide* are thought to have been translated at some point around the middle of the thirteenth century as *Ívens saga*, *Parcevals saga/Valvens þáttr*, and *Erex saga*. *Möttuls saga* and *Strengleikar* were also translated around this time from Old French *lais*, including two Arthurian *lais* based on works by Marie de France. Hákon Hákonarson is explicitly mentioned as the patron in five of these works: *Tristrams saga*, *Elís saga ok Rósamundu* (based on the *chanson de geste*, *Elie de Saint Gille*), *Möttuls saga*, *Strengleikar*, and *Ívens saga*.¹

The works considered as part of this subcategory of Old-Norse Icelandic literature vary greatly in style and assumed integrity of their extant manuscript contexts. *Strengleikar* and *Elís saga ok Rósamundu* are the only two texts considered to be part of the group of translated *riddarasögur* which still exist in Norwegian manuscripts.² All others exist only in late Icelandic copies and redactions. Scholarly debate in the 1970s and 1980s focused on the issue of how close the surviving texts were to the version created by Norwegian translation in the thirteenth century, and what their intended function was. Geraldine Barnes initially posited that “for purposes of literary and historical analysis, at least, it seems safe to assume that in their present state the *riddarasögur* MSS accurately represent the material translated, abbreviated or amplified by Brother Robert and his nameless colleagues.”³ She also argued for a didactic function

¹ Geraldine Barnes, “Scandinavian Versions of Arthurian Romance,” in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. Helen Fulton (Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 190.

² Marianne E. Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words: The Evolution of Medieval Romance in Iceland*, viii.

³ Barnes, “The *Riddarasögur*: A Medieval Exercise in Translation,” *Saga Book* 19 (1974–7): 438.

for the texts.⁴ Marianne Kalinke held that the later Icelandic manuscripts which survive today were heavily influenced by the Icelandic scribes and copyists who created them, a view which she continues to argue in her most recent work.⁵ The Icelandic influence on the extant texts of the translated *riddarasögur* has become the commonly accepted stance on these translations. A possible exception has been *Strengleikar*, which Ingvil Brügger Budal has been more recently able to connect to specific branches of the French manuscript tradition through textual analysis and comparison of variations within the wording of the *lais* themselves.⁶

Research on the translated *riddarasögur* has been more scattered, with a tendency towards analyses that are highly specific to individual texts, rather than corpus surveys.⁷ These analyses have most frequently been included as part of the broader discussions of emotions in medieval literature. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir has evaluated the presentation (and change) made to emotions in *Tristrams saga ok Ísondar* and in *Ívens saga*.⁸ Carlyne Larrington has discussed the emotional vocabulary of *Parcevals saga*. In addition to these studies on emotion, some studies on speech have been completed as well. F. Regina Psaki has compared female advice in the translated romances, specifically *Parcevals saga*, to the advice given by women in the *Íslendingasögur*.⁹ There has been more recent interest in the use of the translated romances by native literary genres, and the potential influence of the imported literature on native texts and forms. Stefka G. Eriksen's work with

⁴ Barnes, "Some Current Issues in *Riddarasögur* Research," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 104 (1989): 78–80.

⁵ Kalinke, "Scribe, Redactor, Author: The Emergence and Evolution of Icelandic Romance," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 8 (2012): 172–5. See also *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words*, particularly chapter two, "Tinkering with the Translations," 19–42.

⁶ Ingvil Brügger Budal, "Genesis of *Strengleikar*: Scribes, Translators, and Place of Origin," in *Eddic, Skaldic, and Beyond: Poetic Variety in Medieval Iceland and Norway*, ed. Martin Chase (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

⁷ Sif Ríkharðsdóttir and Stefka G. Eriksen, "État present: Arthurian Literature in the North," *Journal of the International Arthurian Society* 1, no. 1 (2013): 3–28. This is the most recent survey of current research on the topic of Arthurian romance in the north.

⁸ Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature: Translations, Voices, Contexts*, Studies in Old Norse Literature I (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2017). Chapter one focuses on emotion in the *riddarasögur*.

⁹ F. Regina Psaki, "Women's Counsel in the *Riddarasögur*: The Case of 'Parcevals saga,'" in *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology*, ed. Sarah M. Anderson and Karen Swenson (New York: Routledge, 2002).

polysystem theory has also brought in more recent methods of material philology, particularly with respect to *Élis saga ok Rósamundu*.¹⁰

This thesis will focus on the female characters found in *Ívens saga* in order to explore the ramifications of transmitting Old French cultural output into a new, northern context. *Ívens saga* has generally been regarded among scholars as a relatively faithful, if condensed, prose translation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au lion* or *Yvain*. The overall plot and structure follow the text's source material, but the narrative is heavily abridged. As in the French source text, Sir Íven kills a knight—known as Esclados the Red in the Old French—in combat at a magical, storm-summoning spring in order to avenge his cousin Kalebrant's disgrace.¹¹ He becomes trapped inside of Esclados's castle, and eventually marries the knight's widow with the help of her serving maiden Lúneta. He defends the lady's spring against King Artúrus and his knights, but afterwards he is convinced to leave by Sir Valven to fight in tournaments in order to further uphold his reputation. The lady allows this so long as he returns within a year, which Íven fails to do. Íven then completes many smaller quests as the "Knight with the Lion," eventually rescuing Lúneta from execution for her part in her lady's failed marriage.¹² After a further combat against Valven to help two sisters in an inheritance dispute, Íven returns to Landuc and Lúneta tricks her lady into helping the "Knight with the Lion" reconcile with his lady. Íven and the lady are reunited, and the trick is revealed, resulting in their reconciliation, since the lady does not wish to go back on her oath.

Ívens saga as it existed immediately following its translation in the thirteenth century no longer exists. The main manuscript is a parchment manuscript from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Stockholm, Holm perg. 6 4to, which preserves *Ívens saga* alongside other *riddarasögur*, both translated and indigenous.¹³ While the temporal

¹⁰ Eriksen, *Writing and Reading in Medieval Manuscript Culture*, Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 25 (Brepols, 2014). See also "Mode of Reception and Function of Medieval Texts: A Comparative Study of *Elye de Saint-Gilles* and *Elís saga ok Rósamundu*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 112 (2013): 1–25.

¹¹ Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)*, ed. and trans. David F. Hult, in *Romans*, ed. Michel Zink et. al. (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1994), v. 1972.

¹² This is rendered in *Ívens saga* as "leóns riddari," *Ívens saga*, ed. and trans. Marianne E. Kalinke, in *Norse Romance: The Knights of the Round Table*, Arthurian Archives 4 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), 79.

¹³ Eriksen, "The Materiality of Medieval Texts: A Comparison between *Elie de Saint-Gille* and Two Versions of *Elís saga*," *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 124 (2009): 82. The texts which are included in the

distance and Icelandic origin of the manuscript make it difficult to discuss the Norwegian translation *per se*, it is still possible to discuss the global changes to the text based on comparisons to the French model. Jonna Kjær applied a similar method to discuss broader thematic changes to the work, but I will be focusing on a particular subset of characters: the women.¹⁴

This project is based on a detailed comparison of female speech—that is, words said by characters presented as women by the narrative, both in terms of dialogue or direct speech and reported or summarized speech—in both the late twelfth-century Old French verse romance *Yvain* and its Old Norse-Icelandic counterpart, *Ívens saga*. In comparing the dialogue as it exists in extant versions of the work, I hoped to collect more information about the extent to which speech was abridged, and whether there were any particular types of speech which were more frequently censored than others with respect to female characters. Chapter one explores the methodologies of my initial close reading of *Ívens saga*, in light of the extensive research which has been done on the relationship of emotions and abridgement in the translated *riddarasögur*. It compares the treatment of the two main female characters, both to each other and against the secondary female characters of the saga. Chapter two discusses additional potential motivations behind the cutting of certain elements from Norse-Laudine’s lament, with respect to the text’s new cultural milieu and extant literary tropes in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus. Finally, chapter three tackles the question of Lúneta’s relative stability in her move from medieval France (and her origins as Lunete) to the Nordic world, especially given her relatively unique status as a female advisor in the Old French body of texts. It will also discuss how Lúneta’s stability affects Norse-Laudine’s function within *Ívens saga*, and what this might mean for the two characters in their new cultural context.

While I concede that the texts of the translated *riddarasögur* are not the texts as they existed immediately after translation into Old Norse-Icelandic in the thirteenth

manuscript as it survives today are: *Amicus saga ok Amilius*, *Severs saga*, *ívents saga*, *Parcevals saga*, *Valvens þdtr*, *Mirmants saga*, *Flóvents saga*, *Elís saga ok Rósamundu*, *Konrads saga*, *Þjalar Jóns saga*, *Möttuls saga*, and *Clárus saga*. The article also includes a philological analysis of Stockholm, Holm perg. 6 4to, although this is more focused on the manuscript’s transmission of *Elís saga*, 79–83.

¹⁴ Kjær, “Franco-Scandinavian Literary Transmission in the Middle Ages: Two Old Norse Translations of Chrétien de Troyes—*Ívens saga* and *Erex saga*,” in *Arthurian Yearbook II*, ed. Keith Busby (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992).

century, I argue that extensive work can still be done through more wholistic comparisons of the characters and themes back to the extant versions of the sagas' Old French models. As Sif Rikhardsdottir has reasoned: "Translations not only provide evidence of the cultural conditions of their creators, but are the prime site for cultural encounter. They therefore reveal active engagement with the conceptualization of linguistic and cultural identity, played out in the reconstruction of foreign or 'differing' literary material."¹⁵ By examining the interaction of the different known female character archetypes in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus with the female character types found in Old French verse romances, further study of the romances may allow us a more nuanced understanding of how Old Norse-Icelandic literature interacted with socially understood gender roles in the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries when these adaptations would have been made.¹⁶

¹⁵ Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France, and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 2.

¹⁶ The female character archetypes will be discussed more fully in chapter two. I base my discussion on the types identified by Jenny Jochens in *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). See especially 85–203, which discusses images of human women in Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Jochens' categories were further nuanced by Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, in *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words, and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 6–8. It is also important to note that the gender roles I discuss in this thesis are those which are constructed within the text. These may or may not have matched with actual lived gender experience of the people living in these cultures in this period. They are better taken as a reflection of how those involved with the production of these manuscripts—the translators, scribes, and patrons especially—thought about gender roles and how they should be portrayed.

Chapter One

Counting Dialogue in *Ívens saga*

Ívens saga is written in a heavily abridged style, with only approximately forty percent of the length of the extant Old French versions of *Yvain*.¹ Dialogue, however, is an element which the Old Norse-Icelandic translator and later copyists consistently chose to preserve, rarely omitting dialogue “in its entirety,” as Hanna Steinunn Þorleifsdóttir has observed.² Instances of dialogue, particularly between major characters, do not generally disappear altogether, but they are on occasion changed from direct dialogue to indirect dialogue. There are also instances where the reverse is true. Hanna Þorleifsdóttir further noted the text’s tendency to cut dialogue spoken by secondary characters more frequently, and to fuse dialogue together, resulting “in the participants’ speaking fewer times than in the original.”³ She did not, however, mark any distinctions between male and female speech in her observations.

There are approximately 160 instances of women’s direct speech in *Yvain*.⁴ This count includes instances of speech in which women are continuing conversations after an interruption or a period of silence. In *Ívens saga* there are about 110 instances of female speech, including instances where it is reported by the saga that a woman spoke, but her exact words are not included in the text.⁵ Such instances of summarized speech exist in

¹ Hanna Steinunn Þorleifsdóttir, “Dialogue in the Icelandic Copies of *Ívens saga*,” in *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, ed. Vera Johanterwage and Stefanie Würth, *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia* 14 (Vienna: Verlage Fassbaender, 2007), 167.

² Hanna Þorleifsdóttir, “Dialogue,” 170.

³ Hanna Þorleifsdóttir, “Dialogue,” 172.

⁴ This tally is based on David Hult’s edition of *Yvain*, which follows the manuscript BnF MS fr. 1433. The speech count is approximated, and the possibility (even likelihood) of variation between the different manuscripts of *Yvain* should be kept in mind.

⁵ This count is based on Marianne Kalinke’s edition of *Ívens saga*, which is primarily based on Stockholm, Holm perg. 6 4to, with interpolations from AM 489 4to, British Museum Add. 4857, and from Stockholm, Holm papp. 46 fol. in order to fill in lacunae and to supplement the text where the primary manuscripts are illegible. I have chosen to use the composite version of the saga in order to base my information on the most complete version of the saga possible from surviving sources and so determine what dialogue survived in the Old Norse-Icelandic context. Further work would be needed to determine whether there is any significant variation in the preservation of dialogue between these manuscripts and the later paper copies of the saga. *Ívens saga*, ed. and trans. Marianne Kalinke, in *Norse Romance: The Knights of the Round Table*, Vol. 2 of *Norse Romance*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke, *Arthurian Archives* 4 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999).

the Old French, but occur with more frequency in the Old Norse-Icelandic version. This is especially true for secondary characters. In *Yvain*, the French Lunete's speech is indirect only once, and French-Laudine's speech is indirect on four occasions. In *Ívens saga*, the Norse Lúneta's speech is reported indirectly twice, and Norse-Laudine's speech is indirectly reported four times. Although this seems as though Norse-Laudine's indirect speech is stable between the versions of the text, one of these instances of indirect speech is based on an instance of direct speech in *Yvain*, and some of her indirect speech from *Yvain* was not included at all.

When discussing the missing instances of speech between the Old French and Old Norse-Icelandic versions, it should be noted that sixteen of these instances derive from an episode which does not survive in any extant copies of *Ívens saga*, and which corresponds with one of the lacunae noted by Kalinke in Holm perg. 6 4to.⁶ This missing section would have contained the explanation of the daughters of "Li sires de la Noire Espine" (the lord of the Black Thorn) (v. 4699), and would have represented the translation of approximately five hundred lines from *Yvain*, starting from v. 4697.⁷ It would have included all the dialogue spoken by the younger sister on her quest to find the Knight with the Lion to help defend her inheritance against her older sister who had already enlisted Gawain's assistance.⁸ It also would have included the dialogue in *Yvain* from a second maiden who takes over for the younger sister when she falls ill, and some dialogue from Lunete, who encounters this second maiden and leads her to Yvain's last known location. More so than other episodes of the saga, the lacuna would have been the location of several instances of female speech, and its absence should be kept in mind when discussing the overall reduction of female speech in the saga.

Based on the above counts, *Ívens saga* has retained approximately seventy percent of the total instances of direct speech found in the version of *Yvain* preserved in BnF MS fr. 1433. Eliminating the sixteen instances of female speech found only in the missing

⁶ Kalinke, "Introduction," in *Ívens saga*, 36.

⁷ *Yvain*. References to the appropriate line number will immediately follow all direct quotes in Old French. English translations from Old French are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁸ Kalinke, "Introduction," in *Ívens saga*, 36. Kalinke also notes the reversal of roles between the older and younger sisters in the main text of Stockholm, Holm perg. 6 4to and Stockholm, Holm papp. 46, and blames the error on a copyist rather than the translator. See note 90 to *Ívens saga*, 90.

section from this calculation raises the total preservation rate to approximately seventy-six percent. Among these instances of female speech, Lunete accounts for about sixty of the Old French's 160 instances, and Lúneta accounts for forty-seven of the Old Norse-Icelandic instances. The survival of about eighty percent of her Old French instances of speech is higher than both the overall abridgement rate and the abridgement rate with adjustment for the missing section. Lúneta herself is affected by the missing section—she speaks twice during the relevant lines of *Yvain*—the percentage of survival for her speech accounting for these instances is approximately eighty-two percent, only slightly higher.

French-Laudine speaks, or is implied to speak, fifty-six times in the Old French *Yvain*. Norse-Laudine speaks forty-six times, approximately eighty-two percent of her Old French instances of speech, and was not affected by the instances lost in the lacuna. Looking only at instances of speech, the two main female characters appear to be similarly abridged during the process of translation and transmission. This does not, however, account for the actual content transmitted. Norse-Laudine still speaks in most of the moments where she spoke in *Yvain*, but she is heavily edited, and her speech is omitted or changed at crucial points throughout the text. While Lúneta loses a similar percentage of her speech instances, many of hers are condensed into shorter passages rather than being left out entirely. These passages retain their original narrative elements but are streamlined in order to increase the pace of the text and its focus on action.⁹ Norse-Laudine's speech in contrast is consistently missing key elements, as in the case of her lament, as I will show in chapter two, or is removed at moments which particularly displayed her agency, which will be further discussed in chapter three.

The Other Women

Lunete and French-Laudine's speech makes up approximately seventy percent of the total female speech in *Yvain*, with other female characters accounting for only about thirty percent of the total number of speech instances. Secondary female characters in *Ívens*

⁹ Claudia Bornholdt, "The Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission of Chrétien de Troyes's Romances: *Ívens saga*, *Erex saga*, *Parcevals saga* with *Valvens þátr*," in *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 110; Nicola Jordan, "Eine alte und doch immer neue Geschichte. Die *Ívents saga Artúskappa* und der *Iwein Hartmanns von Aue* als Bearbeitungen von Chrétien's *Yvain*," in *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, ed. Vera Johanterwage and Stefanie Würth, *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia* 14 (Vienna: Verlage Fassbaender, 2007), 148.

saga, that is, all female characters other than Lúneta and Norse-Laudine, account for only about fifteen percent of speech instances in the extant saga. This means that the total number of speech instances for secondary female characters is preserved at a rate of about thirty-seven percent. Once again, the loss of the section translating nearly five hundred lines affects this figure. If we discard the fourteen instances of secondary female speech from consideration, secondary female characters' speech is preserved at a rate of about fifty-five percent. Their characters, however, follow Lúneta in remaining relatively stable despite the transmission.

The Queen

Arthur's queen already played a relatively minor role in *Yvain*, and this is further reduced in *Ívens saga*. She is featured only at the beginning of the romance and is mentioned later as explanation for why Gawain is not available to defend Lunete in combat against her accusers. Her speech instances are relatively faithful to her speech in the Old French, although more summarized. She overhears the story of the misadventure at the fountain and Calogrenant/Kalebrant's disgrace, requests that it be retold in its entirety so that she can hear it, and then she insults Kai:

Þá mælti dróttningin: “Hvárt ert þú ærr, Kæi, er tunga þín talar æ þat er illt er, ok kant eigi þat er gott er, ok verði þín tunga bölvuð, er hún kann aldri yfir sinni illsku at þegja ok jafnan spottar þu þér betri menn. Ok allir hata þik fyrir þína tungu, þeir er til þín spyrja, ok æ mun þíns nafns getit at illu, meðan heimrinn stendr.”

[Then the queen spoke: “Are you mad, Kæi, since your tongue always speaks what is evil, and is incapable of saying what is good, and may your tongue be cursed, since it can never silence its ill will and you always mock anyone who is better than you. And everyone hates you because of your tongue, everyone who knows of you, and your name will always be associated with evil as long as the world lasts.”] (44, [45])¹⁰

The queen in *Yvain* insults Kai in a very similar fashion, with a few additional metaphors and a reference to a church screen.¹¹ Although her scene is shortened and the audience

¹⁰ All citations from *Ívens saga* will be followed by the appropriate page reference in-text. The first page number refers to the reference for the Old Norse-Icelandic text, and the number in brackets references Kalinke's English translation in the same edition.

¹¹ *Yvain*, vv. 86–91, 131–41, and 610–27.

learns less about Kai up front, as noted by Hanna Þorleifsdóttir, the queen’s character in this case is nevertheless well-preserved in transmission.¹²

Laudine’s Messenger

Laudine’s messenger plays a very important role in sending the romance back into action after the resolution of the initial conflict centered around Esclados’s death. Íven’s realization of the missed deadline is spurred into immediate consequences by the messenger’s arrival.¹³ Her greetings, in both versions, are initially written as indirect speech, but switch into direct speech part way through. She accuses Yvain/Íven of being a traitor in both versions, and while the language of the Old French is far more elaborate, lasting for seventy-five lines while *Ívens saga* covers the same material in two short paragraphs, the essentials of her report remain the same. She departs again after taking back the magical ring Laudine had gifted to Yvain/Íven. As a primarily functional character—she arrives in order to drive the narrative’s momentum forward—her dialogue does not seem to have been targeted.

Both texts switch from indirect to direct speech at roughly the same moment. The Old French reports the messenger’s claims that Yvain “s’estoit faus, soidoians, et lerres” (is false, a seducer, and a thief) (v. 2724) as indirect speech. *Ívens saga* combines this same general vein of insult with the immediately following accusation in the French that Yvain had seduced Laudine and stolen her heart under false pretenses, to create a single, consolidated accusation: “en þú ert undirhyggjumaðr, svikall ok þjófr,” (“but you are a deceitful man, traitor and a thief”) (66, [67 and 69]), but in general, the messenger character’s speech, accounting for only one instance in both Old French and Old Norse-Icelandic, is largely unaffected by the translation.

The Lady Noroison and Her Maidens

These women fill a fairly major role in *Ívens saga*, serving as the purveyors of the magical healing cream which returns Íven to sanity. Of the three maidens who are said to

¹² Hanna Steinunn Þorleifsdóttir, “Dialogue,” 170–1.

¹³ “Such good timing is only possible in the world of romance.” Frederic L. Cheyette and Howell Chickering, “Love, Anger, and Peace: Social Practice and Poetic Play in the Ending of *Yvain*,” *Speculum* 80, no. 1 (2005): 83.

accompany the lady, only one has a speaking part. She is the one who finds Yvain/Íven and recognizes him by his scar.¹⁴ The lady, unnamed in *Ívens saga*, but identified in Hult's edition of *Yvain* as Lady Noroison, is in possession of a magical cream which was given to her by "Margue la sage," (Morgan the wise) (v. 2953)/"Morgna hin hyggna," ("Morgan the Wise") (68, [69]). In both texts, the lady gives instructions to her maiden in the use of the cream, and the maiden gets carried away. *Yvain* includes a follow-up scene during the ride back in which the maiden drops the box which had held the cream and concocts a fib to hide the maiden's overzealous use.¹⁵ In *Ívens saga*, the disappearance of the magical cream is never mentioned, and the maiden evidently experiences no consequences for her actions. The rest of their scenes, dealing with Yvain/Íven's combat with *comte Alier/Aleus jarl*, is, again, functionally unchanged.

Three Hundred Women Weeping

The woman who speaks on behalf of the three hundred maidens enslaved to two giants because of their lord's foolishness, explains the reasons behind their emotional display to Íven:

Allar váru þær grátandi ok sorgfullar. Íven reið þar at ok spurði hvat því gegndi.
 Ein af þeim svarar: "Guð gæti yðar, herra ok góði riddari, betr væri at þú hefðir aldri hér komit, þvíat margr riddari hefir fyrri freistat at ríða í þennan stað at frelsa oss af vári nauð, ok hafa þeir allir dauða fengit."

[All of them were crying and were sorrowful. Íven rode up to them and asked what was the matter.

One of them answers: "God keep you sir and noble knight; it would be better if you had never come here, because many a knight has attempted before to ride to this place to free us from our misery, but all have met death.]" (86, [87])

The scene removes some details from the passage explaining how the three hundred women came to be sent to the castle, such as the age of their lord when he had been forced to promise maidens to the two demons or be killed, once again, the core of the scene is unchanged.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Yvain*, vv. 2901–7; *Ívens saga*, 68 [69].

¹⁵ *Yvain*, vv. 3088–103.

¹⁶ *Yvain*, vv 5252–333.

Secondary female characters appear to be more affected by the translation process than Norse-Laudine and Lúneta. This fact is consistent with Hanna Þorleifsdóttir's observations about dialogue in the saga more generally.¹⁷ The presence of the lacuna does interfere with the results overall, particularly as it interrupts a section in which secondary female characters play major roles. However, their function within the narrative is generally stable; the women just say less while fulfilling these roles.

On the Basis of Emotion?

The abridged nature of *Ívens saga* has frequently been observed alongside and explained through the lack of emotion in the *riddarasögur*, especially in comparison to their Old French models.¹⁸ Sif Rikhardsdóttir has argued that the abridging of the translated *riddarasögur* frequently targeted areas of the text on the basis of emotion.¹⁹ She explains this by adapting Barbara Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities into a more literature-focused concept of emotive literary identities, which "are based on established perceptions of emotional behaviour or expression, except that these are specific to literary works or narrative material rather than actual historical communities of people."²⁰ She further argues that literary texts use "emotive scripts" which are based on "generic parameters, the emotional vocabulary of any given language and the meaning of emotive behaviour within the reading community within which the texts originated," and which are read against "the horizon" of an emotive literary identity.²¹ The emotive scripts—systems of behavior which signal to the audience "the emotive framework within which the emotional behaviour is to be decoded"—used in the Old French verse romance would not have had the same meaning for the text's audience in Norway and Iceland.²² The

¹⁷ "Dialogue," 170–172.

¹⁸ Bornholdt, "Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission," 100; Þórir Óskarsson, "Rhetoric and Style," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 367.

¹⁹ Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 25–7.

²⁰ Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 25.

²¹ Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 27.

²² Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 26.

introduction of a new emotive script—that found in the Old French verse romances—would have relied on the extant emotive literary identities of the text’s new Old Norse-Icelandic context as the “horizon” against which the new scripts would be compared so that they could be properly contextualized.²³ Laudine’s grief in particular, a public performance tied into her perceived role in society which is noticeably shorter in *Ívens saga* than in *Yvain*, showcases the effects of necessary reinterpretation in a new environment, and it will be discussed at length in chapter two.²⁴

Carolyne Larrington’s comparison of emotional markers in *Parcevals saga* and *Valvens þátr* supports this idea of a new emotive script being compared against the extant emotional identities, as seen in the case of the translated *riddarasögur*. Larrington argues that the emotional vocabulary of *Parcevals saga* relied on the native vocabulary found in the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus, but their use in the romances is triggered by different events than those found in examples from the *Íslendingasögur*.²⁵ Larrington, at least in *Parcevals saga* and *Valvens þátr*, did not find any loanwords being brought into the Nordic context from the Old French to describe emotions.²⁶ Instead, emotions from native literature, which would have been more familiar to the audience, were used in new situations. The reinterpretation of emotion is thus dependent on the extant vocabulary of Old Norse-Icelandic. Frank Brandsma argues that in Old Norse-Icelandic Arthurian material emotion is pushed to the background, whereas in the Old French and other continental versions like the Dutch Arthurian material, the emotional narrative would

²³ Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 27.

²⁴ Sif Rikhardsdóttir also discusses Laudine’s lament and the abridging of emotions in *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, 92–3; and in “Translating Emotion: Vocalisation and Embodiment in *Yvain* and *Ívens saga*,” in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*, ed. Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, and Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 171–7.

²⁵ Carolyne Larrington, “Learning to Feel in Old Norse Camelot?” *Scandinavian Studies* 87, no. 1 (2015): 86.

²⁶ Larrington, “Learning to Feel,” 86. Unfortunately, due to constraints of time and space, I will not be able to address female speech in *Parcevals saga* as a whole. The concept of women’s counsel, if not women’s dialogue more generally, has been addressed by Psaki in “Women’s Counsel in the *Riddarasögur*,” with particular discussion of Parceval’s mother’s advice at 205–9. Larrington’s discussion of emotions in the *riddarasögur* in “Learning to Feel in Old Norse Camelot,” also touches on the speech of both Parceval’s mother and Blankiflúr. See 77–9 and 81–4, respectively.

have been at the forefront.²⁷ He points to the requirement of rhetoric to stir emotion among a text's audience, a fact which is noted by several continental romance prologues, and which explains the emotional foregrounding of the continental corpus.²⁸ The use of a more subdued emotional script—at least in comparison to continental texts—is associated with the style of the *Íslendingasögur*, and the adaptation of the romance to more closely match this style of prose has been noted by Nicola Jordan.²⁹ Kalinke has also noted the “creative impulse” of Icelandic scribes to change the style of the prose as they copied.³⁰

Based on the above observations, it seemed likely that female speech, with its frequent emotional expression, was going to be a consistent target for abridging in the translated *riddarasögur*. I expected female dialogue in *Ívens saga* to follow this pattern, and anticipated that the abridging would be most apparent in sections of the text where emotional expression was a key objective of the Old French verse, as in the case of Norse-Laudine's lament for her husband or Lúneta's lament that she would be burned at the stake because no knight present was willing to fight on her behalf against three knights. Instead, a close reading of the female speech in *Ívens saga*, in comparison to the dialogue found in *Yvain*, reveals that while much of Norse-Laudine's speech is omitted or changed, Lúneta's dialogue—although long speeches are frequently condensed and multiple speech instances combined in the manner noted by Hanna Þorleifsdóttir above—is preserved in almost every instance.

Women, Experiencing Emotions

Female speech in *Yvain* is commonly paired with emotional scenes. New female characters are frequently introduced to the narrative in a context of intense emotions. The lady of the castle, known in a minority of the Old French manuscripts as Laudine and unnamed in the rest, is defined in the early part of the narrative by her role as grieving

²⁷ Frank Brandsma, “Where Are the Emotions in Scandinavian Arthuriana? Or: How Cool is King Arthur of the North?” in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*, ed. Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, and Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), 105.

²⁸ Brandsma, “Where are the Emotions,” 97.

²⁹ Nicola Jordan, “Eine alte und doch immer neue Geschichte,” 148 and 165.

³⁰ Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words*, ix. See also discussion on the intervention of Icelandic scribes in “Scribe, Redactor, and Author,” especially 172–4.

widow to the late Esclados the Red.³¹ French-Laudine is introduced to the audience in terms of that grief, and first speaks in the context of her lament for her husband. The narrator introduces her, briefly mentioning her beauty before focusing on her grief:

De si tres bele crestienne
Ne fu onques plait ne parole ;
Mais de duel faire estoit si fole
C'a poi qu'ele ne s'ochioit.
A la feÿe s'escrivoit
Si haut qu'ele ne pooit plus,
Si recheoit pasmee jus. (vv. 1148–54)

[Of a more beautiful Christian woman
one had never spoken or made mention;
But she had become so crazed by grief
That she could well have killed herself.
At moments she would cry out
So high that she could not,
So that she would fall in a faint.]

The extremity of French-Laudine's emotion is the focus of the audience's (and Yvain's) first perception of her as a character. This moment is very similar in *Ívens saga*, when Norse-Laudine enters the hall as part of the funeral procession: “eptir líkinu gekk ein frú svá fögr, at í allri veröldu mátti eigi finnaz hennar nóti. Hún syrgði ok æpti sinn harm; stundum fell hún í óvit.” (“Behind the body walked a woman so beautiful that nowhere in the world might one find her equal. She was mourning and moaned loudly in her grief. Now and then she fell into a swoon.”) (50, [51]). Throughout the first part of the work, the Laudines are associated with strong emotion—first the grief of the lament, and then their anger against Lunete/Lúneta for the advice that she gives.

While Lunete is also introduced in a highly emotional circumstance, she is not described as experiencing most of those emotions herself. Lunete is brought into the narrative when she intervenes on Yvain's behalf to help hide him from the rest of the

³¹ Claudia Bornholdt and Jonna Kjær note Laudine's lack of name in *Ívens saga* as evidence of the cutting down of the text, but it seems likely that her name was not included in the exemplar, rather than its exclusion being a conscious choice of the translator at the Norwegian court or a later scribe. “Laudine” is only given as a name for the lady of Landuc in three out of ten manuscripts which contain the only line in which her name is ever found. The rest of the extant manuscripts contain a version of the lines: “La dame qui fu fille au duc / Landudet, don't l'an note un lai.” For the purposes of clarity, I will refer to the lady of Landuc as French-Laudine or Norse-Laudine, to distinguish between the two iterations. *Yvain*, vv. 2154–55; see also Hult's footnote to page 781, referring to vv. 2152–55; Bornholdt, “Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission 108–9; and Kjær, “Franco-Scandinavian Literary Transmission,” 126.

castle's inhabitants as repayment for the kindness he had previously shown to her. When she finds him, she "s'esmaia mout de premiers." (is very startled at first.) (v. 975). As the conversation continues, Lunete expresses the current emotions of the other characters for the benefit of both Yvain and the romance's audience, but her own emotions are more contained. She tells Yvain: "Je crien que mal soiés venus." (I fear that you are ill-arrived.) (v. 977), expressing a warning, but "crien" implies only a slight amount of emotion on Lunete's part, and one that does not magnify the emotion expressed by "s'esmaia" (startled). Lunete describes the emotions of others in the castle more vividly: "Ma dame en maine .i. duel si fort / Et ses gens en viron li crïent, / Que par poi de duel ne s'ochïent," (My lady has a grief so strong and her people around her cry, that they could almost kill themselves from grief,) (vv. 982–84) and mentions that "entr'eus est li duelz si grans..." (Among them the grief is so great...) (v. 986). Lunete is speaking about emotions, but she is separated from the emotions experienced by both her lady ("ma dame") and the rest of the castle's population ("entr'eus"), specifically using the third person plural pronoun and excluding herself from the group. Her speech is about emotion in this section, but it does not directly express any of her own. She is serving as an intermediary through which the narrative expresses the general emotional tone of the castle, but Lunete herself does not seem to be experiencing any of these emotions.

In *Ívens saga*, Lúneta evokes fear in Íven rather than being startled herself, with the narrative telling the audience that "þá ógnaði hún honum mjök í fyrstu." ("she at first frightened him a great deal.") (48, [49]). She still fears for Íven's safety within the castle, but, once again, the fear she expresses is of the more rhetorical kind, without indications of deeper emotion: "ek óttumz at þú sért hér eigi velkominn." ("I am afraid that you are not welcome here.") (48, [49]). Just as her Old French counterpart does, Lúneta recounts the emotions of the other castle dwellers for Íven's benefit: "mín frú hefir fengit mikinn harm ok allt lið hennar, þat hjá henni sitr, svá at nálíga springa allir af harmi," ("my lady has suffered great distress, as have all her people who are with her, so that her heart is nearly breaking of grief,") (48, [49]). She adds that the other occupants of the castle are incapable of acting "fyrir harmi" ("because of their grief") (48, [49]), but Lúneta, like Lunete, does not include herself in this, and can be seen to be acting quite competently.

In both versions, Lunete/Lúneta's personal emotions appear much later in the narrative, when Yvain/Íven encounters her on the eve of her execution. In *Yvain*, she

names herself “une dolente” (a wretch) (v. 3560), claiming that she is “la plus dolente riens qui vive” (the most miserable being alive) (v. 3570). In a departure from most moments of emotion in *Yvain*, *Ívens saga* is the more insistent of the two texts, employing four emotion words in order to emphasize Lúneta’s grief at this point in the text: “Ek em einn veslingr,” sagði hún, “svá vesöl, at ekki kvikindi er mér harmsfullara né hugsjúkara.” (“I am a poor wretch,” she said, “so wretched that no living being is more sorrowful or more griefstricken than I.”) (74, [75]). Why does the text feel it appropriate to use four words for Lúneta’s grief at this moment? The pairing of “veslingr” (“poor wretch”) and “svá vesöl” (“so wretched”) (74, [75]) are comparable to the descriptions found in *Yvain*. The addition of “harmsfullara” (“more sorrowful”) and “hugsjúkara” (“griefstricken”) could have been additional emotion words which appeared in the version of *Yvain* to which the translator had access in the thirteenth century and were copied into the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus as a result. However, the words repeat a roughly equivalent idea to the first two emotion words, so it seems a bit strange for all of them to be kept when emotions are otherwise more summarized. Kalinke’s theory of amplification as a result of the alliterative style of translation into Old Norse-Icelandic prose may explain some of it, but it is, among the examples of female speech in *Ívens saga*, a unique occurrence.³² In any case, it is another example of the text’s inclination to keep emotion and speech for Lúneta where it is less willing to do so for other characters. Both Lunete/Lúneta and the Laudines describe and present emotion, but Lunete/Lúneta, at the moment of her introduction, serves as a narratorial device to explain the general emotional context of the setting, while Laudine’s character is inherently an emotional one: the grieving widow. In both versions of the work, Laudine’s grief is made known before the narrative introduces her as her own character, and before she can speak for herself.

Intense emotions mark the speech of minor female characters as well. These women appear periodically in the narrative to request help from Yvain/Íven, thus prompting him to embark on a new adventure and a new feat of heroism, and they rely on emotional appeals to convince him to fight on their behalf. Examples found in both versions include the Lady of Noroison (unnamed in *Ívens saga*) along with her maidens, who ask for his help in order to defeat *comte* Alier/Aleus *jarl*, and the three hundred

³² Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth in Fair Words*, 7.

weeping maidens at *Pesme Aventure / Finnandi Atbuðr*.³³ Nicola Jordan argues direct speech by secondary characters was often omitted.³⁴ This seems to hold true for the secondary female characters, whose speech instance preservation is significantly less in *Ívens saga* than the eighty to eighty-two percent preservation rate for the saga's two main female characters, Lúneta and Laudine. The content of their speech instances is still abridged, but, once more conforming to Hanna Þorleifsdóttir's general observations, the dialogue between characters of *Ívens saga* is not the main source for shortening the text, despite the frequent emotional nature of female speech.

The raw numbers of instances of dialogue show that female speech follows the same general patterns observed by Hanna Þorleifsdóttir and Nicola Jordan. The dialogue of main characters, like Lúneta and Norse-Laudine, are retained at a higher rate (approximately eighty-two percent when adjusted to account for the missing section) than secondary characters' dialogue, which is preserved at a rate of fifty-five percent with consideration to the missing section, but thirty-seven percent of those instances are included. Overall, female speech would have been retained at a rate of about seventy to seventy-six percent, depending on how many instances of speech in the missing section would have been preserved. The numbers do not tell the whole story: female speech frequently dealt with emotional topics, and while the emotion was frequently condensed in the transmission of speech, it was not removed completely, although they were certainly made less prominent. The backgrounding of emotions, which Brandsma has discussed, and removal of certain elements of the verse romances as a result would seem to anticipate a greater reduction of female speech than that which has occurred in *Ívens saga*. Even more intriguing is that although Sif Ríkharðsdóttir's analysis of Laudine's lament clearly shows the influence of emotion in the abridgement of the contents of a speech, Norse-Laudine and Lúneta speak an approximately equal number of times. Norse-Laudine loses more substantial elements of her speech than Lúneta, who loses her speech instances primarily through the combination of multiple extended instances into a single, shorter, and more efficient speech act, which maintains most of the content of her words. However, major cuts to Lúneta's speech do exist. The text removes both a longer

³³ *Yvain*, vv. 2888–3324 and *Ívens saga*, 68–73; *Yvain*, vv. 5184–342 and *Ívens saga*, 84–7.

³⁴ Jordan, "Eine alte und doch immer neue Geschichte," 148.

farewell to Íven ahead of his combat against the three knights in her defense and a speech of just under forty lines, which reiterates advice to Yvain not to be foolish, whose message can be assumed as an implication from other surviving lines of dialogue.

The concept of emotive literary identities will be helpful moving forward with this information. The translated romances represent a series of new emotive scripts which are being introduced into the Old Norse-Icelandic literary context and its extant emotive scripts. This raises two major questions, one of which has been partially addressed but which needs to be further explored. The first, and the focus of chapter two, is to what extent French-Laudine's lament needs to be reinterpreted for a body of literature which includes a variety of famous (and infamous) grief-motivated speeches given by women in the form of the incitement speech. The second question, to be broached in chapter three, centers on Lúneta's stability as a character in her translation, in both a literary and physical sense. What is it about Lúneta's emotive script (or lack of emotion) which allows her speech to remain relatively consistent in terms of its substance while Norse-Laudine's is so drastically cut down?

Chapter Two Performative Grief and the Question of Laudine

Ívens saga's Laudine Problem

Norse-Laudine's character is heavily abridged throughout *Ívens saga*, but cuts made to specific aspects of her character and agency, along with certain moments of narrative commentary, result in a more negative portrayal overall for her character than the portrayal found in the Old French model. The narrative, which is already negatively disposed towards French-Laudine, becomes even more negative about Norse-Laudine. Some of the animosity appears to be incidental, occurring as a side effect of the types of abridging employed consistently throughout the corpus of translated *riddarasögur*. This is the case for the reduction of her soliloquies and other moments of intense introspection. The removal of these sections results in a much flatter character whose motivations and justifications are never made clear to the audience, but this type of passage—extensive rhetorical exercises made to express inner thoughts—is normally removed from the romances as they are translated.¹ Their absence from *Ívens saga* is not particularly remarkable when considered alone and does not necessarily indicate particular prejudice against Laudine as a character. Her role in the French verse romances simply calls for more of such speeches, and so these are taken out in order to create a character more suited to Norse-Icelandic literary preferences.

Narrative disapproval of Laudine can be far more salient, however. For example, after summarizing Norse-Laudine's conversation with her vassals, the narrator comments:

En henni líkaði betr en hverjum þeira; mundi hún eigi at síðr frammi hafa haft sinn vilja, þótt allir hefði í móti mælt, fyrir því at þat er flestra kvenna siðr [ok nátt]úrlig [kyn]fylgja, at þat sem þeim vel líkar, hvárt sem þat dugir eða [meiðir], þá skal þat æ fram sem þeim er í hjárta. Fyrir því verðr mörgum vant við at sjá kvenna hver[flýn]di.

[But she was more pleased than any of them; she would nonetheless have had her way even though all had spoken against it, since it is the custom of most women and a natural feminine tendency that whatever pleases them, whether it is useful

¹ Bornholdt, "Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission," 100 and 109; Kjær, "Franco-Scandinavian Literary Transmission," 115.

or harmful, will ever be brought about if it is in their hearts. For this reason it is difficult for many to guard against the fickleness of women.] (62, [63])

While the narrator is present throughout *Yvain*, rendering interventions in the text commonplace and somewhat less noteworthy, the narrator in *Ívens saga* makes only the rare appearance, rendering the narrative commentary more jarring. Moreover, the passage above portrays Norse-Laudine's actions—that is, requesting advice from her vassals even though she has already decided what she wants to do—in a distinctly undesirable light. The narrator makes it clear that she would have done as she wished no matter what the cost was, even if the outcome would have been harmful to herself and her people. *Yvain* features an intervention by the narrator at the same point in the text, but it portrays its Laudine in a more positive way:

Tant li prïent qu'ellë otroie
Ce qu'elle feïst toute voie,
Que Amours a faire li commande
Ce dont los et conceil demande.
Mez a plus grant honneur le prent
Quant elle a le los de sa gent.
Et les proieres riens n'i grievent
Ainz li essaucent et soulievent
Le cuer a fere son tallent :
Le cheval qui ne va pas lent
S'esforce quant on l'esperonne. (vv. 2139–49)

[They ask her so much that she agrees
To that which she would have done in any case,
That Love had commanded her to do
That for which she had asked council
But she takes him with much more honor
When she has the approval of her people.
And their prayers, far from aggrieving her,
So they exalt and elevate
Her heart to follow its desire:
The horse which does not go slowly
Puts forth more effort when spurred.]

Although French-Laudine is here tangentially compared to a horse which needs to be spurred on in the proper direction, the narrative at least approves of her choices in this instance. She is choosing to marry Yvain because of Love, but she is getting advice from her vassals before she does so. The narrative seems to condone her following Love's

mandate, but emphasizes that, by asking her vassals, she has more honor in following that command.

In contrast, the Old Norse-Icelandic version sees her asking advice as somewhat absurd, perhaps as vanity, rather than being the proper course of action which ultimately adds honor to her behavior. Rather than having the vassals ask their lady to marry Íven of their own accord, as they do in the Old French, *Ívens saga* frames their appeal as something which Norse-Laudine forces to happen: “lét hún mjök lengi þurfa at biðja sik sem henni væri þat eigi at skapi,” (“she made them implore her for a very long time as though she was not inclined to do so”) (62, [63]). The tone of the passage, and the idea that Norse-Laudine makes her vassals ask her, rather than their asking arising spontaneously as in *Yvain*, reveals the negative perspective from which *Ívens saga* views its Laudine. *Ívens saga* has a lot of issues with Laudine as a character, a fact which is exacerbated by the text’s attitude towards her behavior as a whole. This is especially true in situations which reflect a particular feudal context. As illustrated above, Laudine asking her vassals for advice is viewed in a very different manner than it is in the French, in part because the Old Norse-Icelandic cultural context does not have a way to explain her behavior, or a way to easily integrate the “courtly lady” archetype into its own existing understanding of female character types.

Neither the French nor the Norse iteration of Laudine fits easily within the female archetypes of the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, originally documented by Jenny Jochens and more recently nuanced by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir.² These subdivisions of types of human women found in secular literature were defined by Jochens as the Prophetess/Sorceress, the Warrior Woman, the Avenger, and the Whetter.³ Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir argues that this subdivision excludes female characters “that gain

² Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women*; Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 6–8.

³ Briefly, the Prophetess/Sorceress is the wise woman, frequently a sibyl or a völva “who performs prophesy or...employs magic.” The Warrior Woman is, among human female characters, the heroic shield-maiden and related to the supernatural Valkyrie of the mythology. The Avenger is a woman who takes physical revenge, acting out the desired violence herself. The Whetter goads or incites her (male) kin to take vengeance according to her own understanding of what is just. Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women*, 6–7.

agency without stigma” from the analysis, and so does not fully acknowledge the variety of women found in the sagas.⁴

Norse-Laudine is not a prophetess or a sorceress, although she does have access to a magical ring, which she gifts to Íven on his departure and takes back through a proxy when his promise to her is broken. She is not a warrior, and while her Old French counterpart could arguably be considered an avenger or a whetter based on the formula of her lament, she does not follow through—this aspect of her character is mostly cut from the Old Norse version. The archetype of the maiden king, a subclass of the Warrior Woman type identified by Jochens and further discussed by Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, is perhaps the closest to be found in other native forms of literature, but it is ill-fitting.⁵ Laudine in both versions is a young, noble woman, but she is not unmarried in the strictest sense usually seen in the maiden king narratives. Rather, we meet Laudine as an extremely recent widow. Her reasons for not wishing to marry again are, initially, that she does not wish to marry a knight who is less worthy than her husband was and is reluctant to hear the arguments that Íven is in truth a better knight.

Norse-Laudine is depicted as haughty and cruel, but she is not armed. The fact that she cannot bear arms is explicitly stated by the text: “En kvennmaðr má eigi riddari vera né vápn bera” (“But a woman cannot be a knight nor bear weapons”) (62 [63]). This is given as the main reason that she should marry Íven as quickly as possible by both Lúneta and Laudine’s steward. She rules her own lands after her father’s death, and, although she was previously married, Esclados is only described in relation to the defenses of her duchy. She rejects Íven as a suitor, at least initially, and spurns him completely later on, but this is for the justifiable reason that he was so thoroughly distracted by earning knightly honors in tournaments alongside the rest of the court that he forgot to return to the duchy of Landuc within the one-year time limit set for him. She is verbally cruel, but most of that cruelty is shown through conversations with Lúneta instead of with her suitor. Finally, the story concludes with a close approximation of the

⁴ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 6.

⁵ Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women*, 102–3; Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 108–116.

traditional marriage ending, in this case a reconciliation (against Laudine's wishes and through the helpful tool of legal entrapment) of a marriage which already took place.

Although the maiden king is the most similar character type to the reality of Norse-Laudine, it is important to consider that the maiden-kings are a hallmark of a subcategory of the indigenous *riddarasögur*. Their survival in manuscripts and our knowledge of these stories today is undoubtedly influenced by the earlier arrival of the translated romances.⁶ However, these sagas highlight a certain level of discomfort within the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus with the concept of a female ruler. The maiden-kings sagas are frequently violent, both on the part of the maiden king against her suitor(s), and on the part of the suitor(s) against the maiden king.⁷ Jóhanna Katrín argues that these sagas are patriarchal, and uphold ideals of "appropriate behavior for men and women" while simultaneously revealing male anxieties about female rulers.⁸ The maiden king figure, "otherwise courtly and feminine, carries status as monarch, destabilizing a hierarchy where persons of only one gender are legitimately entitled to official power."⁹ This can also be seen in the character of Queen Gunnhildr in the *Íslendingasögur* and the *konungasögur*, who is often "demonized" by medieval sources and literature.¹⁰ A key example of the incompatibility of certain traits and responsibilities of the courtly lady comes with French-Laudine's major function at the time of her introduction. Her purpose in the early part of the text is to perform the role of the grieving widow to a beloved lord. While her grief and its accompanying lament makes sense for a courtly lady and represents a key part of her responsibilities, it clashes with extant ideas about lament and female grief in the native Old Norse-Icelandic narratives.

Who Dares Incite God

Sif Rikhardsdóttir has discussed at length the removal of emotion and the sharp paring down of French-Laudine's lament into the abbreviated form found in *Ívens saga*. She

⁶ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 107.

⁷ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 107.

⁸ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 108.

⁹ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 113.

¹⁰ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 11 and 82–4.

notes that “the emotions displayed by Laudine and her people can be understood in relation to this convention as a sign of feudal tribute rather than a demonstration of personal (or internal) sorrow.”¹¹ Her gestures in this part of the text represent her social obligations as the widow of Esclados the Red, rather than her personal feelings, although the two are not mutually exclusive. French-Laudine’s grief, Sif argues, is a deliberately performed emotional display in a public setting, as opposed to an automatic or involuntary emotional response.¹² Laudine is performing the role of a grieving widow in a public funeral procession, and that performance “confirms and asserts her feudal status and identity.”¹³ The emotion of the passage is cut down because the “signifying framework” of the feudal tribute is no longer relevant, an argument which relies on the fundamental concept that the emotional displays found in *Yvain* needed to be translated into the correct types of signals in order to create the desired emotional effect in the text’s intended Norse-Icelandic audience.¹⁴

The shortening of her lament, in *Ívens saga*, however, may have had a more complex goal than has been previously acknowledged. French-Laudine’s lament in its unaltered form strongly parallels many elements of the incitement speech found in the native Old Norse-Icelandic literary traditions, but there are key differences which could have caused problems for Norwegian and Icelandic audiences. Connections between female lament and male revenge in both Old Norse-Icelandic and wider Germanic cultural contexts have been studied in terms of performatives, especially in the *Nibelungenlied*. Performed female grief is frequently motivated in Germanic literature by desire to influence political situations. The agentic and performative nature of these speeches, particularly those found in the *Nibelungenlied* has been discussed by Kathryn Starkey, who marks the distinction between performance and performative in social displays of emotion in the context of a political power struggle.¹⁵

¹¹ Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 41.

¹² Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 40.

¹³ Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 40.

¹⁴ Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 56.

¹⁵ Kathryn Starkey, “Performative Emotion and the Politics of Gender in the *Nibelungenlied*,” in *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity*, ed. Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 256–8. Starkey’s article draws on some of the ideas

In the Old Norse-Icelandic literary tradition, this correlation appears in the much-discussed *hvöt*, or incitement speeches, found in the *Íslendingasögur*. The *hvöt* can involve several elements: the speech itself, the key component, sometimes combined with a token which can be the corpse of the person slain or something bloodstained from the fight in which they were killed.¹⁶ The token reminds the woman’s audience of the damage done to the family and their collective honor as a result of the kin-killing.¹⁷ Carol Clover’s discussion of the speech and bloody token motif in *Íslendingasögur*, as well as lament poetry more broadly, frames the incitement speech as women’s role in the broader cultural ethic of honor and feud: “duty obliged a man to take action over a kin-killing, and it was no less the duty of women to remember and remind.”¹⁸ As a literary motif, the whetting scene grants a sort of social sanction from the narrative’s perspective—a man is required to take action in response to an incitement speech despite potential risks, and so is left with no option but to act.¹⁹

Comparison of French-Laudine’s lament as it appears in BnF fr. 1433 and the standard narrative indicators of a *hvöt* speech, as outlined above, reveals a surprisingly close match. The speech takes place in public: French-Laudine makes a speech before her audience in the hall, although it is not addressed to them and does not call upon them to put forth more effort in finding the person who killed her husband. Secondly, there is a bloody token. This takes the form of her husband’s corpse, literally bleeding all over the bier on which it rests. In the Old French context, as the verse romance points out, the bleeding corpse is taken as a signal of the murderer’s presence and culpability:

Et che fu prouvanche bien vraie
 Qu’encor iert chil laiens sans faille
 Qui avoit faite le bataille

about gender and performatives formulated by Elaine Tennant in “Prescriptions and Performatives in Imagined Cultures: Gender Dynamics in Nibelungenlied Adventure 11,” in *Mittelalter: Neue Wege durch einen alten Kontinent*, ed. J.D. Müller and H. Wenzell (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel, 1999), 273–316.

¹⁶ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 17–18.

¹⁷ Carol Clover, “Hildigunnr’s Lament,” in *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology, A Collection of Essays*, ed. Sarah M. Anderson and Karen Swenson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18.

¹⁸ Clover, “Hildigunnr’s Lament,” 17.

¹⁹ Jóhanna Katrín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 18–20. See also Zoe Borovsky, “Never in Public,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 112, no. 443 (1999): 16–18.

Et qui l'avoit mort et conquis. (vv. 1182–85)

[And this was truly proof
That still there inside, undoubtedly,
Was he who had fought the combat
And who had killed and conquered.]

The same irrefutable evidence, or “prouvanche bien vraie,” is included in *Ívens saga*, but the connection between the bleeding of the corpse and the known presence of the murderer is only made through the commentary of the people in the hall that “vissuliga er sá maðr hér inni, er várn herra hefir drepit” (“surely the man is in here who has killed our lord”) (50, [51]), an observation which lacks the pronominal reference back to the corpse, “et che,” which exists in *Yvain*. Unfortunately, the research needed to establish whether or not the concept of cruentation (*ius cruentationis*) was known in thirteenth-century Norway or fifteenth-century Iceland is beyond the scope of this thesis. The corpse however, does provide the opportunity for an Old Norse-Icelandic audience to recall the bloody token motif, as the bodies of the slain were sometimes used in place of a bloody token belonging to them, so the corpse of Laudine’s husband would likely have been understood as an appropriate reminder even without belief in cruentation.²⁰

The speeches in both versions rely on similar language and insults, although the Old Norse, as expected, is far more succinct. Both texts use cowardice as the central accusation made against Yvain/Íven. Norse-Laudine addresses the unknown killer as “váandi svikari” (“wretched traitor”); the Old French calls him “l’omechide, le traïtour” (the murderer, the traitor) (50, [51]; vv. 1207). Íven is accused of being “huglauss” (“a coward”) for not daring to face Norse-Laudine; Yvain faces a similar accusation: “mout est couars quant il me crient / Et devant mi moustrer ne s’ose” (He is very cowardly when he fears me / and does not dare to present himself before me) (50, [51]; vv. 1224–25). The French further adds accusations of enchantment which have not transferred to *Ívens saga*, including speculation that Yvain is “fantosmes” (an apparition) or “anemis” (a devil) (vv. 1220). The main point of these accusations in both is the fact that Yvain/Íven must have killed Laudine's husband through treachery of some sort.

²⁰ Clover, “Hildigunnr’s Lament,” 17–18.

Both speeches include a challenge made by their respective Laudines that she will fight the killer herself, but neither text takes these accusations seriously. The speech in *Yvain* contains a passive threat, which leaves the challenge at a level of imagined possibility only: “Que ne t’ ai jē en ma baillie ! / Que ne te puis ore tenir !” (If I had you in my possession! / If only I could seize you now!) (vv. 1230–31). *Ívens saga* allows its Laudine to make the threat in a more active voice in combination with an insult: “gakk fram til mín, ef þú ert eigi huglauss, svá at ek mega taka á þér svá framt sem ek veit” (“come forward, unless you are a coward, so that I can take ahold of you as best I can”) (50, [51]). However, there is still no true result from these threats, and she does not take any steps towards implementing violent action against Íven to avenge her husband. In neither case does the speech affect the progression of the narrative. The French lament is intended as a display of French-Laudine’s appropriate behavior as a grieving widow, a feature which likely makes her more desirable as the object of Yvain’s love. In the Old Norse-Icelandic context, such declarations would typically be made in order to goad a male relative into properly dealing with an instance of dishonor, as is the case with Hildigunnr.²¹ In *Ívens saga*, the text moves on, ignoring the issue and Norse-Laudine’s threat against Íven entirely. The speech is necessary to show Laudine grieving properly as a noble widow and thus fulfilling her wifely responsibilities within the feudal context, as Sif Ríkhardsdóttir argues. It serves a less vital function in the Old Norse-Icelandic context. No one is immediately available who could be properly considered responsible for taking revenge, and the situation itself would not necessarily call for a full lament speech as is required by the French context.²²

The main divergence between the two speeches comes as a result of the removal of French-Laudine’s accusation against God made in vv. 1210–12, an accusation which does not appear in any of the extant versions of *Ívens saga*. These lines are the only element of French-Laudine’s lament to be excluded in their entirety from Norse-Laudine’s lament. While it is possible for the relatively small aspect of the speech to have been skipped over by accident, I think it is worth considering the potential reasons behind

²¹ Hildigunnr’s incitement of Flosi Þórðarson in *Njáls saga* serves as the main case study for Clover’s discussion of *hvöt* in “Hildigunnr’s Lament.”

²² Sif Ríkhardsdóttir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, 41–2.

an intentional exclusion. Blame is a central aspect of the *hvöt*, but in the Old Norse-Icelandic, there is nowhere appropriate for the blame to be placed. Laudine is a widow and has already inherited her father's lands, which implies that she has no surviving male relatives of her own within any degree of closeness. Nothing is mentioned about her husband's family, and her vassals are consistently characterized as being useless in a fight, despite all of the noise they make trying to find Yvain/Íven. Lunete remarks that "chertes nis une chambriere / ne valent tuit, bien le savés, / Li chevalier que vous avés." (Certainly you know well that all the knights you have are not equal to even one chambermaid,) (vv. 1628–30). Lúneta simply states that there are no knights in Norse-Laudine's lands who would be willing to fight "hinum minstum riddurum Artús kóngs," ("the least knight of King Arthur,") (52, [53]).

No one, besides Íven, is blamed for Esclados's death in *Ívens saga*. The French-Laudine, however, does find somewhere else to place the blame, despite the lack of proper audience for her incitement (that is, someone who is able but not willing to avenge her husband's death). Instead, the lament turns the blame for her husband's death and the possible lack of vengeance on his killer directly on God:

Voir Dix, le tors en sera tiens
 Se tu le laisses escaper
 Autrui que toi n'en sai blasmer. (vv. 1210–12)

[God, you will be at fault
 If you let him escape
 I know not to blame any other than you.]

French-Laudine's invective against God is made in the context of her madness and could have been viewed by the French as something which highlighted her madness and courtly devotion to Esclados. If we follow an interpretation of her address based on other similar episodes in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus, the speech could be interpreted as an incitement speech made to God. There is a bloody token—the bleeding corpse of her husband in the center of the room—and blame set on the Christian God for allowing her husband's death. It also matters that God does not intervene in the way that an incitement speech calls for and which the audience might expect in the wake of such a speech. God is not an appropriate audience for the speech, at least in the quasi-legal terms in which *hvöt* could be understood in the Old Norse-Icelandic context. Although Laudine was out of her mind at the time, it was perhaps considered to be dangerous territory. The Old

Norse version of the text thus omits what might have been considered a failed incitement since it does not achieve any concrete result in terms of vengeance. Instead of seeking vengeance for her husband's death, Laudine is convinced to marry her husband's killer. This result is already somewhat questionable in the Old French, but studies tend to point to the text's justification of the marriage because of its social necessity as a way to justify French-Laudine's change of heart.²³

The invective against God, taken from its native French context of feudal tribute, poses two potential problems. One, actions encouraged by the *hvöt* speech in the Norse-Icelandic literary context are most often those which are understood to have narrative approval, which Íven's death clearly would not.²⁴ Two, it fails to satisfy the demands of the *hvöt*. Failing to properly avenge a kinsman's death "occasions some of the choicer insults of cowardice in Icelandic literature."²⁵ If God is the audience of an incitement speech and fails to act in the way the female speaker desires, is that to be read as a failure or as divine will? It may have been a safer option to simply remove this element entirely from Laudine's lament, leaving behind the emotion, but none of the other ritual elements which may have created unfortunate expectations for the audience. I point to the similarity to the *hvöt* in order to underline the potential for shame placed on God in "failing" to act on French-Laudine's incitement. Although there are generic and situational differences which would have influenced the way a Norse-Icelandic audience would have interpreted French-Laudine's lament, it is possible that one of the copyists removed the complaint against God because of the expectation of action in the wake of a woman's lament.

The codes surrounding feud in the medieval Icelandic context are particular, based on familial obligations. While the context of French-Laudine's lament is a different one, I do not think the possibility of intervention by the translator or a copyist should be entirely dismissed. The Old Norse-Icelandic context has its own share of laments directed at gods—Egill Skallagrímsson's lament of his sons in *Sonnatorrek* addresses Óðinn—but

²³ Amy Brown, "Female Homosexuality and the Marriage Plot: Women and Marriage Negotiation in *Cligès* and *Le Chevalier au Lion*," *Parergon* 33, no. 1 (2016): 60-61; Cheyette and Chickering, "Love, Anger, and Peace," 89.

²⁴ Clover, "Hildigunnr's Lament," 17.

²⁵ Clover, "Hildigunnr's Lament," 17.

this is aimed at the pre-Christian deities, rather than at the Christian one.²⁶ Jonna Kjær has argued that *Ívens saga* exhibits an explicit ideological transformation from its French model, so that the saga exhibits a stronger Christian mentality in its Norse-Icelandic iteration than it did in the French context.²⁷ If it does show a stronger Christian mentality, it may simply be the case that the translator, or one of the later copyists, felt that the possible implications of God's failure communicated by French-Laudine's blame was not appropriate to keep.

French-Laudine's lament strongly parallels the concept of *hvöt*, except that the revenge called for by her speech—against *Yvain*—is not the result desired, implicitly or explicitly, by the text itself. The spoken grief and implied blame against her husband's killer are in fact explicitly against the goals of the narrative, which, even in its shortened Norse-Icelandic form, takes the space to explain why marrying *Yvain/Íven* is really in both Laudines' best interests. Removing the portion of the Old French verse which directly incites God accounts for the removal of nearly a third of the speech's total lines and is a significant part of the reason the translation is so much shorter than the speech which appears in its French model.

Other elements of the speech are also removed, but these cuts are aimed more so at material which could be considered repetitive, leaving behind only the central accusation of the Laudines' lament: that *Yvain/Íven* is a coward and that he defeated her husband only through trickery. These elements, including her own challenge, retain aspects of the widow's lament, but do not call upon her listeners for any direct response, and so alleviate the generic expectations created by a *hvöt*. The text, in the process of translation, has purposefully broken the connection between Norse-Laudine's iteration of her lament and the typical incitement it would signify.²⁸ As a result, Norse-Laudine's speech is shortened, and her role in the first third of the romance shifts, changing the focus of her role within the narrative to her conversations with *Lúneta* rather than the lament. The emotions inherent in this inform the general shortening of the section, but the

²⁶ Sigurður Nordal, ed. *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar, Íslenzk fornrit 2* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1933), 241–245.

²⁷ Kjær, "Franco-Scandinavian Literary Transmission," 129.

²⁸ Sif Ríkhardsdóttir, "Translating Emotion," 178.

emotional elements—changed as they are—remain, at least in a de-emphasized form, while the invective against God certainly does not.

As discussed above, changes made to Laudine's speech throughout the text may reflect a shift in the character in order to be closer to the trope of the maiden king while maintaining the vague idea of the courtly lady archetype on which her Old French character is based. The role and function of Laudine's courtly persona—particularly the grief rituals expected of a courtly widow and the *hvöt*-like blaming of God for allowing her husband's killer to escape—did not necessarily make sense within the Old Norse-Icelandic cultural context, resulting in some fundamental changes to her behavior, and a distinct lack of sympathy from the narrative. The general patterns of translation, as noted by previous scholars, do hold up for the most part when compared to the specific tendencies with respect to female speech in the translated romances. Certain omissions, however, do result in more significant changes to the overall character of Laudine, and indicate a more complex approach to the abridging process than has thus far been recognized.

Chapter Three

Lúneta's Counsel and its Nordic Context

Lúneta, in contrast to Norse-Laudine, does not undergo any major change as part of her transition from Old French to Old Norse-Icelandic. Lúneta's speech is heavily summarized, matching the general style of the saga's prose, but her speech is otherwise remarkably unchanged by her transmission north. Only two instances of her speech, apart from those lines of dialogue included in the missing adventure in the set-up to the *Finnandi Atbuðr*, are excluded in their entirety from *Ívens saga*. The first instance is a few lines in which Lunete wishes Yvain good lodging for the evening before he fights on her behalf the next day; the second is a speech of thirty-seven lines which urges Yvain to caution.¹ Otherwise, Lúneta's speech is included in the translation in at least a summarized form. Lúneta is even given additional dialogue, speaking the messages originally contained in Laudine's rhetorical debate in conversation with the lady.

A Nordic Girl Living in an Old French World

Lunete, as she exists in *Yvain*, would have been a familiar figure to her new Old Norse-Icelandic audience. She plays the part of a counselor to French-Laudine, a role which rendered her a relatively unique figure in the Old French literary corpus.² The advisory role she takes on in the narrative was usually filled by masculine characters in the Old French literary tradition. Ellen Germain points this out as one of the reasons to consider Lunete as filling a masculine role in the composition as a whole, along with her participation in the economy of honor, and riding out to greet Yvain at the fount in vv. 6649–60.³ Roberta L. Krueger, however, sees Lunete instead as a prototype of “the resourceful female go-between (and ingenious narratorial agent) in later romances,” an active, but not necessarily masculine figure.⁴

¹ *Yvain*, vv. 3762–5 and vv. 1305–42.

² Ellen Germain, “Lunete, Women, and Power in Chrétien's *Yvain*,” *Romance Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1991): 15–16.

³ Germain, “Lunete, Women, and Power,” 16–19.

⁴ Roberta L. Krueger, “Questions of Gender in Old French Courtly Romance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 138.

In the north, however, Lúneta finds herself in the company of many women across the genres of the Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus. Wisdom of the type exhibited by Lunete was a trait associated with women, particularly with the women of the *fornaldarsögur*, a genre whose boundaries frequently blur with those of the *riddarasögur*. Human women in these texts “are often both beautiful and wise, but usually at least wise; the common phrase used to describe them in *fornaldarsögur* is *væn ok vitr* ‘beautiful/promising and wise’ or variants of *vittr*,” a formula which also appears occasionally in the *Íslendingasögur*.⁵ These counselors in the *fornaldarsögur* tradition had to be listened to in order to avoid catastrophe and maintain peaceful social and political relationships.⁶ Lúneta exhibits both of these qualities; she is physically described as “ein fögr mærl fríð æskiliga vaxin,” (a beautiful maiden, pretty and well shaped,) (48, [49]). Her advice in *Ívens saga* is characterized as “heilt,” (“wholesome,”) (52, [53]) and aligns with the narrative’s concept of what is good for society as a whole. Fredric L. Cheyette and Howell Chickering have also argued for a similar role for the Old French Lunete, describing her as an embodiment within the narrative of the social pressure medieval French society used to end feuds.⁷

Lúneta’s counsel preserves Íven’s life in the face of the manhunt undertaken by Norse-Laudine’s vassals. She gives Íven the advice which keeps him hidden while the mob-like group of Laudine’s people hunt for him in the hall, and, like her *fornaldarsögur* counterparts, she provides magical aid to Íven in the form of a ring which renders him invisible. Her next series of advice is made to convince Norse-Laudine to marry Íven, who has fallen in love with her while he was trapped in the hall. This advice serves two purposes: the marriage would help preserve the peace in Laudine’s lands by furnishing her duchy with a competent knight to defend the magical spring from any abuse of its quirk. It also helps Íven to marry the woman with whom he has fallen in love which is also presented as further repayment of Íven’s earlier kindness.

Lúneta’s final set of advice comes when Íven attacks the spring at the end of the romance in order to force Laudine to face him. She advises Laudine to call upon the knight

⁵ Jóhanna Katín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 26.

⁶ Jóhanna Katín Fríðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 26–7, 40.

⁷ “Love, Anger, and Peace,” 96.

“er jötuninn drap ok sigraðiz einn á þrim riddurum ok leónit fylgir,” (“who killed the giant and alone vanquished three knights and whom the lion accompanies,”) (96, [97]). This advice is made to combat the horrible storms being faced by Laudine’s people (caused by Íven in the first place, but Lúneta is not cognizant of this fact). Lúneta, aware of the knight’s identity makes it clear to Laudine that the knight will help protect her kingdom, but only if she wants “hann sætta við frú sína er hann er ósátr við ok hann elskar framar en líf sitt,” (“to reconcile him with his lady, from whom he is estranged but whom he loves above his,”) (96, [97]). The storm threatens the duchy, and Lúneta’s advice is sensible. Norse-Laudine must promise to do everything in her power to reconcile the knight with his estranged lady in order to secure safety for her people. Lúneta does her best to make the promise as binding as possible, including having Norse-Laudine swear the oath upon a reliquary. As a result, Norse-Laudine is forced to accept the reconciliation with her husband to secure a guardian for the realm and its magical spring, restoring political stability to the duchy.

The treatment of the female characters in *Ívens saga* can be partially explained by the efforts of those involved in its initial transmission, and later copies, to integrate the two female characters into the Norwegian and Icelandic cultural and literary tradition. Claudia Bornholdt discusses the integration of Old Norse-Icelandic cultural concepts into *Ívens saga*, using the example of Íven’s lion:

The grateful lion is coupled with a figure drawn from the culture of its Norse audience, an approach found throughout the sagas of Parceval, Íven and Erex.... The linking of the courtly lion with the barbaric *berserkr* illustrates that the Norse Arthurian sagas are not so much translations of French romances as adaptations that seek to integrate a new literature into the Norwegian and Icelandic culture and literary tradition and its code of ethics.⁸

This process is far simpler for one of these women: Lúneta is already disposed towards becoming the wise, advice-giving, magic-dispensing woman who features so prominently in the *fornaldarsögur*. She needs little alteration because her dialogue is already aligned with the narrative goals of *Ívens saga*. Her speech is thus far more frequently safe from the translator’s tendency to shorten the text—it already makes narrative sense within the new cultural context. As the wise character, the translator and later copyists were perhaps

⁸ Bornholdt, “Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission,” 98.

predisposed to allow her to maintain the speech whenever there was repetition with another character. This further reduced the chances of her verbal content disappearing, even if rhetorical devices were still cut out. Norse-Laudine is a more difficult character to integrate into a society which is still being introduced to the rules and expectations of the continental, courtly culture. Her ritual functions—as a widow and as the ruler of her duchy—are the source for the actions for which French-Laudine could conceivably be praised in *Yvain*. These are no longer applicable for her Old Icelandic counterpart. Norse-Laudine loses speech to Lúneta, who is appropriately dispensing her counsel, and to Íven, for the simple reason that her own statement would be repetitive, and the text consistently sees her as the less appropriate vehicle through which to disseminate new information to the audience.

Throughout the narrative, Lúneta's primary motivations are either to repay her own debt of honor or to promote the general peace in her lady's kingdom. Although she is an unusual figure within the Old French context, the very characteristics which render her unique there make her character and her speech far more acceptable to the translator of the saga than French-Laudine. This can be seen in the consistent preservation of Lúneta's speech within the text, voicing the advice that has the approval of the narrator, even when that means taking speech away from Laudine herself.

Laudine's Diverted Agency

Norse-Laudine's agency in the decision-making process is further compromised by other omissions. During her initial attempts to convince Laudine to marry Íven, Lúneta asks her, “Nú ef tveir riddarar herklæðaz til bardaga ok mætað, <hvárr> þeira hyggur þú at vildari sé, ef einn vápnækir annan ok sigrar?” (“Now if two knights get armed for combat and meet, which of them do you think is better if one overcomes the other and is victorious?”) (54, [55]). In the Old Norse-Icelandic version, Laudine answers this question in a straightforward manner: that she thinks the victorious knight is the better one.⁹ In the Old French verse, however, she draws attention to Lunete's attempted manipulation: “Il m'est avis que tu m'agaites, / Si me veuz a parole prendre.” [“It is my opinion that you are lying in wait for me, / if you want to take me at my word.”] (vv.

⁹ *Ívens saga*, 54 [55].

1700–1). The change to this line casts Norse-Laudine as a more passive character. She does not catch on to Lúneta's manipulations, and she simply answers the question as it has been posed to her.

Norse-Laudine's passivity is more pronounced and more significant to the narrative later in the text, when *Ívens saga* changes the order of events surrounding Laudine's final oath in order to put the responsibility for the oath's wording solely into Lúneta's hands. In the Old French, Laudine herself proposes the oath and adds in the declaration which means she must reconcile with Yvain, without Lunete's prompting:

Le main destre leva adonques
La dame, et dist : « Trestout ainsi
Com tu l'as dit, je le t'otri,
Et si m'aït Diex et les sains,
Que ja mes cuers ne sera fains,
Que je tout mon pooir n'en faiche.
L'amor li rendrai et la grâce
Quë il seut a sa dame avoir
Se j'en ai forche ne pooir » vv. 6640–48.

[The lady raises her right hand
And says: "Exactly as
You have said, I agree to it
And, so help me God and the saints,
That so long as my heart beats
That I will do everything in my power,
To return him to the love and good graces
Which he previously knew from his lady
If I have the strength and power."]

In this version of events, French-Laudine contributes to her own oath. Lunete asks only that French-Laudine will swear that she intends to do her best to ensure that he "l'amor de sa dame ara / Tout en tout, si com il ot onques," (will have the love his lady / just as he had it before,) (vv. 6634–9). While this would be sufficient when sworn on a reliquary to lock French-Laudine into her promise, thus securing the narrative's desired ending of reconciliation, *Yvain* adds the additional assurance of Laudine's contribution to the sworn oath. French-Laudine is an active participant in the formulation of the oath, adding the specific reference to "Diex et les sains" to the power of the reliquary. In this way, she is at least partially responsible for her entrapment in the oath and the reconciliation with her husband required for its fulfillment.

Ívens saga removes Laudine’s verbal response to the oath. Instead, the formulation is implied to come in its entirety from Lúneta:

Lúneta tekur þá helga dóma ok fær frú sinni ok mælti: “Eigi vil ek at þér kennið mér í morgin at þér sverið þenna eið sakir mín heldr sakir sjálfrar yðrar nauðsynjar.”

Síðan stafaði hún frú sinni eið á þann hátt, at sá riddari er león fylgir skal sættaz við frú sína ok hvárt þeira við annat, sem þá er blíðaz var með þeim.

[Lúneta then takes some relics and hands them to her lady and spoke: “I do not want you to charge me tomorrow with having sworn this oath for my sake but rather on account of your own need.”

She then spelled out the oath for her lady to the effect that the knight who is accompanied by a lion is to be reconciled with his lady, each with the other, just as when they were most dear to each other.] (96 [97]).

By removing Laudine’s verbal response to Lúneta’s proposed formulation, the Old Norse version places all responsibility for the terms of the oath with Lúneta. She is allowed to dictate the terms of the oath in its entirety without input from Norse-Laudine, and so the resulting reconciliation becomes more purely Lúneta’s achievement. Lúneta’s actions in this moment are praised in the saga’s conclusion, if only because the reconciliation results, purportedly, in “óspilliligan frið ok undarlígan fagnað” (“inviolable peace and wondrous happiness”) (98, [99]).

Another example of Norse-Laudine’s reduction as a character is the omission of a debate that French-Laudine has with herself following her first conversation with Lúneta about what to do in the wake of her husband’s death. She argues with herself about Yvain’s motives, and convinces herself that Yvain’s defeat of her husband was in fact just, since her husband would have killed Yvain if he had been able to.

– Dont n’as tu riens vers moi mespris,
Ne vers lui n’eüs tu nul tort,
Que c’il peüst, il t’e üst mort ;
Por ce, mien escient, cuit gié
Que j’ai a droit et bien jugié. » (vv. 1768–72)

[So you have not committed any crime against me,
Nor against him have you done anything wrong.
Because if he could have, he would have killed you;
For that reason, by my faith, I believe
that I am correct and have judged well.”]

This reiterates the arguments that Lunete makes in their initial conversation and is restated later in the text by Yvain when he is presented to Laudine. In *Ívens saga*, the argument is made by Íven at his introduction to Norse-Laudine:

Ef herra þinn réð á mik, í hverju misgerða ek þá er ek varði mik? Sá er tapa vill öðrum eða drepa, ok ef sá drepr hann er verr sik fyrir honum, seg mér, ef hann misgerir nokkut í því?

[If your husband attacked me, how did I transgress greatly when I defended myself? Suppose some wants to destroy or kill another, if the other kills him and defends himself against him, tell me, whether he has transgressed in any way by doing so?] (58, [59])

This section takes on a different tone when the narrative has not already presented this argument being formulated by Laudine herself. Although the internal debate is crucial to at least a token attempt at explaining French-Laudine's internal shift of perspective, the Old Norse-Icelandic translator removes it. The section's rhetorical formulation offers a potential explanation for the passage's exclusion, if the new audience was not expected to be familiar with it, or it may have been cut because the same idea is repeated later, but the choice is still made to leave the words of wisdom in French-Laudine's staged debate about Yvain's guilt for her husband's death in the mouth of another character.

Lúneta, unchanged in any way that matters, does not lose the essence of her dialogue in the transmission of *Ívens saga*, even over the hundreds of years which separate the initial translation and the extant versions of the manuscript, and despite the somewhat philologically alarming frequency of Icelandic scribes to approach manuscript copying in a rather loose sense. Her character, unlike that of Norse-Laudine, is unaffected by the few cuts which are made, and which largely focus on streamlining dialogue so that conversations have fewer mono-syllabic interruptions than appear in the Old French verse. She is still the counselor figure to both Laudine and Íven in the text, and her function remains essentially the same. Her character was likely familiar to the Old Norse-Icelandic audience, who were accustomed to wise, advising women through the presence of such women in the *fornaldarsögur* and in older mythological figures like the *völva*.¹⁰ The changes that are made to her dialogue follow the general shortening of the text, but the content—her counsel—is unchanged. She still argues with Norse-Laudine to establish

¹⁰ Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, 26 and 49–50.

that Iven is a better knight than Esclados the Red, but in *Ívens saga* the elements which showed that Norse-Laudine had already reached this conclusion have been removed. This in turn lends more weight to Lúneta's arguments and her presence in the text as the voice of reason. Similarly, the reorganization of events around Norse-Laudine's oath on the reliquary places the responsibility for the binding word choice on Lúneta rather than allowing Norse-Laudine some degree of agency in her own decision.

As I mentioned in chapter one, Lúneta is still presented as an emotional figure—especially while imprisoned at the church ahead of her execution—but her emotion is something that the text seeks to amplify through the use of alliteration, in the process described by Kalinke.¹¹ She also frequently serves to present the emotions of other characters in the text. Importantly, Lúneta's emotions in this instance align with the narrative goals. Her grief is that she will be killed for betraying her lady because of her counsel. The narrative wishes to assert that her advice is for the best, and that she does not deserve her fate. Lúneta's lament in chapter ten of *Ívens saga* is a sharp contrast to the abridged form of Norse-Laudine's lament in chapter four.¹² The narrative takes Lúneta's side, as it had not taken Laudine's, and so her emotions are both retained and amplified.

¹¹ Kalinke, "Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission," in *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. Marianne Kalinke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 37–44. See also Kalinke, *Stories Set Forth with Fair Words*, 7.

¹² *Ívens saga*, 74 [75] and 50 [51].

Conclusions

Dialogue plays a major role in the plot-progression of *Ívens saga*, as Hanna Þorleifsdóttir has pointed out. For female characters, studying the treatment of their dialogue by the translators and subsequent scribes provides a unique opportunity to see how the Old Norse-Icelandic literary culture dealt with unfamiliar character types. This thesis has explored the treatment of these characters through the narrative and highlighted the unequal treatment they received during the transmission process. Chapter one discussed the general treatment of female dialogue in the process of transmission. While female speech in general was translated from *Yvain* to *Ívens saga* at a rate of about seventy percent, Norse-Laudine and Lúneta retained about eighty-two percent of their speech instances, compared to the thirty-seven to fifty-five percent rate of preservation of secondary female characters. The exact rate would be dependent on the translation of text contained in the lacuna found in the main manuscript witnesses to *Ívens saga*, which inadvertently targets major parts of *Yvain* which are focused on secondary female characters rather than Laudine and Lúneta. I also discussed how these secondary characters were affected by the reduction in speech, noting that their function in *Ívens saga* is essentially unchanged. Lúneta and Laudine speak roughly equivalent numbers of times in *Ívens saga*, so I posed the question as to why their overall portrayal would feel so different from their French models, questions which I tried to answer in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter two addressed Norse-Laudine's inability to be made to fully conform with any of the female character archetypes which would have been familiar to an Old Norse-Icelandic audience. French-Laudine was a courtly lady and there was no easy transition into the literature of the north for the actions and motivations requisite to her character in the Old French verse. I also discussed her lament, a long speech which is inseparable from Laudine's introduction in both the French and Old Norse-Icelandic iterations. In comparing her speech to the requirements of the Icelandic *hvöt* tradition, I found that the only major element of French-Laudine's speech to be entirely excluded in her northern manifestation was her invective against God. I propose that this section was removed on purpose because the direct address to God had the potential to be interpreted as shameful to the Christian God since the demands of Norse-Laudine's incitement are not met. Finally, chapter three turned to Lúneta, a character who is remarkably unchanged

by the narrative's transmission. Although she is affected by the overall shortening of the narrative into the saga's much more straightforward form, the core of Lúneta's character remains essentially the same. Just as her French model does, Lúneta functions primarily as an advisor to Norse-Laudine, voicing the socially approved course of actions—that is, marrying Íven and thus providing security for her lands and people. Lunete's advice and function in *Yvain*, although unusual in the French context, reflects the common function of women in the *fornaldarsögur*. Lúneta thus requires very little adaptation to fit within Old Norse-Icelandic literary expectations, in contrast to French-Laudine, whose actions and performances in the narrative make far less sense outside of her original feudal context.

The familiarity of Lunete's character, in contrast to the foreign courtly lady archetype embodied by French-Laudine, results in very different treatment overall by the text. The drastic difference in how the narrative approaches these two female figures implies some sort of awareness of audience preferences. It is clear that the wise, advising woman is granted far more space to act and function within the Old Norse-Icelandic saga, perhaps even more so than in the French, as some of the agency French-Laudine possessed is lost in the process of translation. The stability of Lúneta's transmission confirms that the transmission of a female character between the Old French to the Old Norse-Icelandic contexts without significant changes is possible. This further confirms that, although the changes could have happened at any point between the initial thirteenth-century translation and the creation of extant manuscripts in the fifteenth century, the changes made to Norse-Laudine's speech and the negative presentation of her character were intentional on the part of at least some of the transmitters. Norse-Laudine's instability in comparison to her French model is made more remarkable by the overall stability of the secondary female characters. These women retain their essential function within the narrative, despite losing a higher percentage of their speech instances than either Norse-Laudine or Lúneta.

The treatment of Norse-Laudine in *Ívens saga* compared against the women around her indicates that it was French-Laudine, rather than the female characters of the romance as a whole, who was specifically targeted for changes. This evidence complicates the transmission of the narrative north. The translated *riddarasögur* offer a unique opportunity for viewing cultural interaction. Although the timespan between

initial transmission and the extant manuscript witness does pose problems for discussing the specific linguistic aspects of the translations, I do not believe it serves as a barrier to discussing broader changes made to characters and themes. The changes I have discussed to these characters could have been made in the original translation or at any point along the transmission timeline prior to the creation of Holm perg. 6 4to. The uncertainty of when the changes were introduced does make analyses more difficult, but my discussion has been based on the integration of these female characters into the female archetypes which have been previously observed in the native Old Norse-Icelandic literary corpus.

In *Ívens saga* female characters who appeared mostly in relation to their explicit function in the plot, frequently moving it forward or introducing the next strand of adventure, are left relatively unchanged, even with a greater rate of abbreviation. Lúneta, whose French model is surprisingly close to the trope of the wise, counseling woman in the *fornaldarsögur* (and occasionally in the *Íslendingasögur*), is left mostly unchanged, or even amplified in some places of the narrative. The courtly lady archetype exemplified by French-Laudine's character and function within the plot is more difficult for *Ívens saga* to integrate into the expectations of the text's new literary community. The maladaptation of Norse-Laudine—her loss of agency, discussed in chapter three, and the text's amplified negative perspective on her character introduced in chapter two—is the result of these preferences. She does not integrate easily into any of the character types found in other native literary genres, and her actions thus fit poorly into the expectations of the new audience.

Further research into the adaptation of female characters of the romance genre is needed to determine whether the treatment of the women in *Ívens saga* is typical of the genre, or if Lunete's unique status in the French literary corpus, as argued by Germain, results in unique treatment by northern translators. Lúneta retains a high percentage of her original speech instances as well as a high degree of fidelity to her original characterization in the French. Conversely, the treatment of the other courtly lady figures who have been translated into Old Norse-Icelandic should be examined further to determine if there is any regular pattern to how they are treated. French-Laudine's emotional lament has been a frequent target of discussion, and its centrality to her character as the courtly lady has been discussed. The changes made to her agency in the

text are also significant, and whether similar categories of change have been made to other courtly lady types should be explored.

In sum, our inability to discuss the process of translation from Old French to Old Norse-Icelandic directly should not stop the attempts of scholarship to discuss more global changes to the translated *riddarasögur*. The meeting of different conceptualizations of female roles and gender-appropriate functions in the romances offers a unique opportunity to compare these texts across a significant time-gap. I have narrowed my focus here to the dialogue of women in *Ívens saga* precisely because the dialogue is preserved at a higher rate than other aspects of *Yvain*, but there is far more to be explored in the world of northern romance.

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