

Sif Ríkharðsdóttir and Stefka G. Eriksen

État présent

Arthurian Literature in the North

Sif Ríkharðsdóttir: University of Iceland, E-Mail: sifr@hi.is

Stefka G. Eriksen: University of Oslo, E-Mail: s.g.eriksen@iln.uio.no

In 1217 Hákon Hákonarson (1204–63) was proclaimed King of Norway, commencing a reign that was going to have a great impact on the literary history of the Nordic countries. During his sovereignty several Arthurian texts, among many others, were translated from French (and/or Anglo-Norman) into Old Norse and then transmitted across the ocean to Iceland, Norway's sister country and later royal dependency. In Iceland, the texts sparked a local tradition of romance writing that is profoundly steeped in local lore as well as in the social and cultural concerns of the medieval and post-medieval readership. Nevertheless those texts can be said to owe their framework and thematic orientation to the generic features of the romance tradition. The translations and their indigenous offspring continued to be copied by hand as late as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which suggests a lasting interest in their content, narrative framework and subject matter that extends far beyond the medieval period.¹

Yet, while Hákon's rule was instrumental in the importation of Arthurian material in the North, the earliest Arthurian translations predate his reign by as much as two decades and belong not to a courtly context, but to that of the burgeoning literary community in Iceland. As early as the end of the twelfth century, or the early years of the thirteenth century, the *Prophetiae Merlini* were translated from Latin into Old Icelandic.² Shortly thereafter (or around the same

1 The terminology used here, i.e. 'translation', does not indicate a fidelity to a source inherent in the modern usage of the term. In fact, for many of the texts discussed in this article, 'adaptation' might be a more appropriate term. Yet, to avoid conflicting terminology between the various texts, given their relative fidelity to or divergence from their presumed source texts, we have opted for the general term 'translation' understood in its broadest sense as 'translatio', i.e. the transferral of material. We have tried to indicate, where appropriate, when there is uncertainty as to the role played by the original translator versus later scribes (or rewriters) in the transmission of the texts.

2 Stefanie Gropper, 'Breta sögur og Merlinússpá', in *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), pp. 48–60 (p. 48).

time) Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* was translated, which makes the *Merlínússpá* (*Prophetiae Merlini*) and *Breta sögur* (*Historia regum Britanniae*) the oldest known translations of Arthurian material in the North. The large Icelandic vellum codex *Hauksbók* (AM 544 4to) is the only preserved manuscript to contain a complete text of both *Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*, although incomplete versions of the texts can be found in other manuscripts.³ *Hauksbók* was written in the early fourteenth century for (and partially by) an Icelandic lawman, Haukr Erlendsson (d. 1334), and contains a collection of miscellaneous texts. The manuscript states that Gunnlaugr Leifsson (d. 1218/19), a monk in the Benedictine monastery of Þingeyri in Iceland, translated the poem: 'her eftir hefir Gvð[vn]lavgr mvníkr ort kvæði þat er heitir Merlinvs spá' (the monk Gunnlaugr has composed the poem called 'The Prophecies of Merlin' from this).⁴ If this indication is accurate, the Arthurian material was ostensibly being transmitted across the Northern Atlantic around 1200.⁵ These texts, along with later translations and adaptations of French courtly material, can thus serve as evidence of the continued engagement with the *matière de Bretagne* over several centuries, possibly dating back as far as the late twelfth century.

The Arthurian material known to have been translated into Old Norse consists of several romances, *lais* and Latin historiography, as we have mentioned above. Three of Chrétien de Troyes's romances have been preserved in Old Norse: *Yvain ou Le Chevalier au Lion* (*Ívens saga*), *Erec et Enide* (*Erex saga*) and *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal* (*Parcevals saga* and *Valvens þáttur*), which was divided into two separate parts, one containing the Perceval story proper and the other one dealing with Gawain. There is no evidence that Chrétien's romance *Lancelot ou*

³ Ibid, p. 49. *Hauksbók* is the only extant manuscript of the shorter redaction of *Breta sögur*. The longer redaction is preserved in two incomplete manuscripts, and a late fourteenth-century manuscript, AM 764 4to, additionally contains an excerpt of the text.

⁴ *Hauksbók udgiven efter de arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4to samt forskellige papirhåndskrifter*, ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab, 1892–96), p. 271, our translation. The reference to the poem's provenance can also be found in AM 573 4to, a fourteenth-century vellum manuscript, which contains the longer version of *Breta sögur* (Gropper, '*Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 48).

⁵ Simone Horst has suggested that the poem was composed in two stages ranging from 1210 to 1270 ('Die *Merlínússpá* – ein Gedicht von Gunnlaugr Leifsson?', *Skandinavistik*, 36 (2006), 22–31, pp. 30–31). Gropper, on the other hand, presumes that both the poem and the *Historia* were translated by Gunnlaugr Leifsson around 1200, which reaffirms the general consensus among scholars ('*Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*', p. 48); see for instance Marianne Kalinke, 'The Arthurian Legend in *Breta sögur*: Historiography on the Cusp of Romance', in *Greppaminni: Essays in Honour of Vésteinn Ólason*, ed. by Margrét Eggertsdóttir et al. (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 2009), pp. 217–30 (p. 217).

le Chevalier de la Charrette was ever translated, but the material may have been known nonetheless. It is intriguing, for instance, that the name ‘Lancelot’ does appear in *Ívens saga* in the list of knights attending the feast of Pentecost at King Arthur’s court, which might suggest that readers were familiar with the story or that his name belonged to the standard group of knights associated with King Arthur’s court.⁶ The three translations have generally been attributed to King Hákon’s reign, although they have only been preserved in later Icelandic manuscripts and show varying degrees of adaptation to their new readership.⁷ Chrétien’s *Yvain* was also translated into Swedish (*Hærra Ivan Leons riddare*) in the early fourteenth century. The Swedish text forms part of a trio of romances generally referred to as *Eufemiavisor* (the poems of Eufemia) as they were translated for Queen Eufemia, wife of King Hákon V Magnússon (r. 1299–1319), the grandson of King Hákon Hákonarson.

Thomas’s *Tristan* has also come down to us in an early Norse translation that currently presents the only complete version of Thomas’s text. According to the opening lines of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, the story was translated in 1226 by an unknown Brother Robert at the behest of King Hákon Hákonarson.⁸ If the incipit is authentic, the translation of *Tristan* marks one of the earliest transmissions of the romance material into Old Norse. The translated romance spawned a later

6 Sif Rikhardsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: The Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 90–91. For a discussion of the possibility of the story of Lancelot being known in Iceland see Rudolf Simek, ‘Lancelot in Iceland’, in *Les Sagas de Chevaliers (Riddarasögur): Actes de la V^e Conférence Internationale sur les Sagas (Toulon, Juillet 1982)*, ed. by Régis Boyer (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1985), pp. 205–16, and Marianne E. Kalinke, ‘Arthurian Echoes in Indigenous Icelandic Sagas’, in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 145–67 (pp. 156–57).

7 For a discussion of the transmission of Chrétien’s romances see Marianne E. Kalinke, *King Arthur, North-by-Northwest: The ‘matière de Bretagne’ in Old Norse-Icelandic Romances*, *Bibliotheca Arnarnagæana*, 37 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1981); Rikhardsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, especially pp. 76–112; Claudia Bornholdt, ‘The Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission of Chrétien de Troyes’s Romances: *Ívens saga*, *Erex saga*, *Parcevals saga* with *Valvens þátrr*’, in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 98–122.

8 *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. and trans. by Peter Jorgensen, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 23–226 (p. 28). The identity of Brother Robert and the veracity of the lines has been a matter of dispute; see for instance Geraldine Barnes, ‘The Tristan Legend’, in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 61–76 (p. 61), and Marianne E. Kalinke, ‘The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia’, in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 5–21 (pp. 10–11). See also Paul Schach, ‘Some Observations on the Translations of Friar Robert’, in *Les relations littéraires franco-scandinaves au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Société d’édition ‘Les belles lettres’, 1975), pp. 117–36, and Sverrir Tómasson, ‘Hvenær var *Tristrams sögu snúid?*’, *Gripla*, 2 (1977), 47–78.

Icelandic rendering, *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*, dated to the fourteenth century, as well as a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century ballad, *Tristrams kvæði*.⁹ In addition to the romance material and the Latin historiography of Geoffrey of Monmouth mentioned above, there is a corpus of translated *lais* (*Strengleikar*), an independent prose adaptation of *Le lai du cort mantel* (*Möttuls saga*) and a fifteenth-century reworking of the material into the ballad *Skikkjurímur*. The *Strengleikar* collection is the only Arthurian translation to have been preserved in its entirety in a Norwegian manuscript, Uppsala De la Gardie 4–7, written around 1270.¹⁰ It contains the two Arthurian *lais*, *Geitarlauf* (*Chèvrefeuille*) and *Januals ljóð* (*Lanval*), commonly attributed to Marie de France. The texts mentioned above, including *Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*, adaptations of Thomas’s *Tristan* and Chrétien de Troyes’s texts as well as the Arthurian *lais*, form the basis of the Arthurian corpus in the North.

The intent of this essay is to survey the critical work on Arthurian literature in the North over the period of the last twenty years or so. Although the Norse heritage of the *matière de Bretagne* is gaining increasing interest and recognition among scholars, it remains a fairly obscure field for researchers working on the other linguistic branches of the Arthurian legend. Our hope is to provide an overview of the current scholarship on the Norse transmission, to reveal its relevance to the larger context of the European transmission of the Arthurian matter and to encourage cross-linguistic engagement with the legend as the most promising venue to gain an understanding of Arthur’s place in European literary history.

We conceive of Arthurian literature in its narrowest sense here, i.e. as material written about or relating directly to the legend of King Arthur and his court or his knights. This does not indicate the position of the authors on Arthurian material in general, which we would generally consider in its most inclusive sense, nor

⁹ The relationship between the two romances has been much debated, with positions ranging from the suggestion that the later romance presents a parody of the earlier translation (see for instance Paul Schach, ‘*Tristrams Saga ok Ýsoddar* as Burlesque’, *Scandinavian Studies*, 36 (1987), 86–100) to the notion that the younger romance is a token of late medieval indigenous romance production (see, for instance, Geraldine Barnes, ‘Tristan in Late Medieval Norse Literature: Saga and Ballad’ in *Tristan und Isolt im Spätmittelalter: Vorträge eines interdisziplinären Symposiums vom 3. bis 8. Juni 1996 an der Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*, ed. by Zenja von Ertzdorff (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 373–96, and Marusca Francini, ‘The “*Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*”: An Icelandic Reworking of “*Tristram saga*”’, in *The Garden of Crossing Paths: The Manipulation and Rewriting of Medieval Texts*, ed. by Marina Buzzoni and Massimiliano Bampi (Venice: Cafoscarrina, 2007), pp. 249–71).

¹⁰ Carolyne Larrington dates the manuscript between 1250 and 1270 in ‘The Translated *Lais*’, in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 77–97 (p. 77).

is it indicative of the critical approaches to Nordic Arthurian material in general, but it is rather the stance taken in this essay for the sake of conciseness. The breadth of secondary Arthurian scholarship is extensive, and we have sought to limit ourselves to material dealing directly with the Arthurian translations and, where appropriate, with their direct successors.

The overview is not intended as an exhaustive inventory of materials and, as David Lawton has stated, 'it is a variant of catastrophe theory that the very work we miss turns out to be the most important for us'.¹¹ The aim is rather to give a selective overview of the state of affairs within Norse Arthurian scholarship, noting major trends and developments and hinting at potential directions for future research.

1 Pioneers in the Field

The early years of Nordic Arthurian studies are strongly characterised by the works of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century German philologists, such as Eugen Kölbing and Rudolf Meissner, and the Nordic scholars Gustav Cederschiöld, Gísli Brynjúlfsson, Rudolf Keyser and Carl R. Unger, whose editions laid the foundation for the study of the Norse Arthurian texts. These early editions were not replaced for more than half a century, until Bjarni Vilhjálmsson published a collection of various romances, *Riddarasögur*, in the mid-twentieth century.¹² The Arnamagnæan editions of *Erex saga* (1965), *Ívens saga* (1979) and *Möttuls saga* (1987), containing diplomatic editions of all the manuscripts of the three texts, were also fundamental for the development of Norse Arthurian scholarship. It was not until the late 1990s, however, that the Arthurian romances were collected in Marianne E. Kalinke's edition *Norse Romance*, this time containing English translations of the Norse texts.¹³

In terms of critical approaches the early years of Nordic Arthurian studies are marked by scholarly disdain, as the romance material was considered to be

¹¹ 'Analytical Survey I: Literary History and Cultural Study', *New Medieval Literatures*, 1 (1997), 237–70 (p. 237).

¹² *Riddarasögur*, 6 vols (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1943–51). The series is a collection of assorted romances, both translated and indigenous, and contains the following Arthurian texts: *Saga af Tristram og Ísönd*, *Möttuls saga* (vol. 1), *Ívents saga* (vol. 2), *Parcevals saga*, *Valvers þáttr* (vol. 4) and the native *Tristrams saga og Ísoddar* (vol. 6).

¹³ *Norse Romance*, 3 vols (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999). The edition contains the Norse translations of Arthurian romances and *lais*, but not *Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*.

inferior to the sagas of the Icelanders (*Íslendingasögur*) and the sagas of kings (*konungasögur*). The sagas and romances were compared on the basis of national sentiments – stemming from the general national momentum of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the battle for independence in Iceland – and generic stipulations that favoured the saga form as the ‘authentic’ voice of the Icelandic people. While these early critical views have more or less died out, the scholarly attitude towards the Nordic Arthurian texts as intrinsically subsidiary by virtue of their nature as *transmitted* materials has persisted. Matthew Driscoll, Torfi Tulinius and Margaret Clunies-Ross have all argued in favour of a more expansive approach to the romance material in Iceland, reiterating that the reading communities that produced and relished the sagas were actively producing and copying romances, both translated and ‘native’.¹⁴ Moreover, the saga production in Iceland – while generating some spectacular and unique local texts – forms part of a larger pan-European interest in historiography and the past, as the early translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia* indeed affirms.

Henry Goddard Leach’s 1921 volume *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* marks perhaps the first steps in cross-cultural approaches in Arthurian research, almost a century ahead of his time.¹⁵ While, from a twenty-first-century perspective, the volume is certainly outdated in many ways, it still remains an insightful account of the relations between Angevin Britain and the Northern countries, particularly Norway.¹⁶ Almost forty years later, Roger Sherman Loomis was to publish his massive study *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, containing a chapter on Scandinavian literature, thus firmly establishing the Nordic texts as part of a larger European context of Arthurian transmission.¹⁷ Leach and Loomis were followed by another pioneer, Marianne E. Kalinke, whose research on Norse Arthu-

14 Matthew Driscoll, ‘Þögnin mikla: hugleiðingar um riddarasögur og stöðu þeirra í íslenskum bókmenntum’, *Skáldskaparmál*, 1 (1990), 157–68; Torfi H. Tulinius, ‘The Self as Other: Iceland and Christian Europe in the Middle Ages’, *Gripla*, 20 (2009), 199–215; Margaret Clunies Ross, ‘Medieval Iceland and the European Middle Ages’, in *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerhard Wolfgang Weber*, ed. by Michael Dallapiazza *et al.* (Trieste: Edizioni Parnaso, 2000), pp. 111–20.

15 *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

16 As Leach was mostly working in uncharted areas the volume does not aim to be exhaustive and has thus worked well as the ‘guide-book’ it was intended to be (p. vii). A product of the early twentieth century, it bears the hallmarks of its time and reveals at times the lack of access to many of the texts as well as a lack of knowledge of others.

17 Phillip M. Mitchell, ‘Scandinavian Literature’, in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History*, ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 462–71.

rian material has laid the foundation for large parts of the critical output of the last twenty years.

Kalinke's 1990 article surveying Northern Arthurian literature was preceded by the publication of the volume *King Arthur North-by-Northwest*.¹⁸ The monograph, published in 1981, considered the translated texts to be valuable in their own right, not merely as derivative texts of the French originals. The study repositioned the critical perspective to favour a contextual approach, i.e. considering the function of the texts within the target culture and possible motivations behind the original translations. Kalinke considered Hákon's court to have been cosmopolitan by design and believed that the translations were aimed at entertaining the courtiers in the manner of the royal courts in England and France: 'The Arthurian literature was translated not to provide a source of proper etiquette, a handbook of chivalrous conduct, but rather to make available the literature considered *de rigueur* at other courts, and to expand the literary horizon of the Norwegians' (pp. 27–28). Yet, while the texts originated within the context of King Hákon's royal court, the majority of them have only been preserved in later Icelandic manuscripts. Therefore, as Kalinke duly notes, they should be regarded as evidence of the preferences and concerns not only of their patron, but also of their later Icelandic audiences.¹⁹ Kalinke thus focused on the paths of transmission and the contexts of translation activity and later scribal circumstances, rather than relying exclusively on textual comparison of source and target text.²⁰ This

18 'Arthurian Literature in Scandinavia', in *King Arthur Through the Ages*, ed. by Valerie M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day (New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 127–51. This survey was followed by a second survey in 2006 on 'Scandinavian Arthurian Literature', in *A History of Arthurian Scholarship*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 169–78.

19 The texts reveal, as a matter of fact, varying degrees of traces from their transmission and manuscript history. *Gvímars saga*, the Icelandic redaction of the thirteenth-century Norse translation of Marie de France's *Guigemar*, has only been preserved in an eighteenth-century manuscript and thus postdates the Codex De la Gardie 4–7 – written perhaps within a decade or two after the original translations – by almost five centuries. Nevertheless the redaction contains original material already lost or altered in the earlier manuscripts (*King Arthur North-by-Northwest*, pp. 49–52). See also Kalinke's 'Gvímars saga', *Opuscula*, 7, Bibliotheca Arnarnagana, 34 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels boghandel, 1979), pp. 106–39; 'Stalking the Elusive Translator: A Prototype of *Guimars ljóð*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 52 (1980), 142–62; and Ingvil Brügger Budal, 'Omsetjing frå gammalfransk til norrønt: Ein samanliknande studie av *Guigemar* og *Guimar*', *Nordica Bergensia*, 26 (2002), 9–37.

20 While Kalinke features prominently here, this does not diminish the contribution of other scholars to this area of research. The most prominent scholar within Nordic Arthurian studies leading up to Kalinke's work is probably Paul Schach, whose work centred predominantly on the Tristan legend (see for instance 'Some Observations on *Tristrams saga*', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 15 (1957–59), 102–29). Álfrún Gunnlaugsdóttir focused her attention on the transmission and

heralded a new direction in the study of Arthurian material taking into account the nuanced modifications of the thematic, structural and stylistic frameworks of the texts and sparking a flurry of research that took Kalinke's standpoint as a springboard for further studies on translation modulations.

2 Major Trends, Developments and New Directions

New trends in translation studies, and other disciplines, have indeed been greatly influential in the treatment of Old Norse Arthurian material. They have led to an essential change of focus from regarding translations as functions of their sources (and thus automatically as secondary literary productions) to studying them in their own right, as original products of the new target culture.²¹ Generally speaking, this is a shift from exclusively comparing the texts with their sources and discussing their degree of faithfulness to considering the process of adaptation to the literary context of other Old Norse contemporary texts, translated or indigenous, and their role in that process.

As early as 1986, Gerd Wolfgang Weber placed the Norse Arthurian sagas in the context of existing Old Norse literary genres, advocating that they be characterised as a new and distinct Old Norse genre.²² He argued that in the process of textual translation and transmission, 'the imported Old French courtly romances los[t] most of the feudal semiotics with which they were imbued' (p. 427), as well as traces of Christian symbolism, allegory and iconographical references to classical Rome and Greece (pp. 442–48). Despite these changes, Weber maintained that the translations were so markedly different from other existing genres that

analysis of the Norse text in her study *Tristan en el Norte* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, 1978). At the same time a group of Nordic scholars were discussing the transmission of *Strengleikar* (Paul Skårup, 'Les *Strengleikar* et les *lais* qu'ils traduisent', in *Les Relations littéraires Franco-Scandinaves au Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque de Liège, avril 1972* (Paris: Société d'édition 'Les belles lettres', 1972), pp. 97–115, and Mattias Tveitane, *Om språkform og forelegg i Strengleikar* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1973). A decade later critics were conducting comparative analyses of the translations and their presumed original as well as of the texts' reception (Geraldine Barnes, 'Some Current Issues in *riddarasögur* Research', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 104 (1989), 73–88; Maureen F. Thomas, 'The Briar and the Vine: Tristan Goes North', *Arthurian Literature*, 3 (1983), 53–90).

²¹ For information on developments in translation studies see for instance Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995) and Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, *Translation, History, and Culture* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990).

²² 'The Decadence of the Feudal Myth', in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, ed. by John Lindow, Lars Lönnroth and Gerd Wolfgang Weber (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), pp. 415–54.

they led to the emergence of a new Old Norse literary genre. Geraldine Barnes's study of the different representations and functions of the narrator in Old Norse Arthurian narratives, their source texts and indigenous Icelandic literature led her to similar conclusions.²³

The impact of Arthurian material on the Old Norse literary tradition is indeed being reconsidered by scholars. Jürg Glauser has recently suggested that the romances brought about a new 'awareness of writtenness' to the Old Norse literary culture.²⁴ From their very beginning, Glauser maintains, most of these texts redefined the relationship between text, narrator and narration. This relationship distinguished the text as a new type of narration and thus influenced the audience's concept of fiction. According to Glauser, other medieval Icelandic authors, such as Snorri Sturluson, also show some consciousness of writing, but not to the same degree as the translators, or rewriters, of the *riddarasögur* (romances) (pp. 383–84). The appropriate literary and cultural context for the study of Old Norse Arthurian material has been one of the main concerns of the research project 'Translation, Transmission and Transformation: Old Norse Romantic Fiction and Scandinavian Vernacular Literacy 1200–1500', initiated at the University of Oslo in 2007. The collaborators of the project have sought to show that the Old Norse translations and adaptations of Arthurian material were in fact significant for the establishment of a rich vernacular Old Norse literary culture.²⁵

It is of relevance here that the diverse materials translated in Norway and Iceland, such as historiographies, *chansons de geste*, romances, *fabliaux* and *lais*, were systematically translated into prose (*Merlínussþá* being the only and notable exception as it is written in the Eddic metre *fornyrðislag*).²⁶ This seems to

²³ 'Authors, Dead and Alive, in Old Norse Fiction', *Parergon*, 8 (1990), 5–22.

²⁴ 'Romance (Translated *Riddarasögur*)', in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. by Rory McTurk (Maldon: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 372–87 (p. 383).

²⁵ The most relevant publications – because of their explicit focus on or reference to Arthurian material – stemming from the project are Hans Jacob Orning, 'Tristram: From Civilizing Hero to Power Politician', *Arthuriana*, 22:1 (2012), 91–108; Suzanne Marti, 'Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Perceval Matter: An Analysis of the Old Norse and Middle English Translations of *Le Conte Du Graal*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oslo, 2010); Karoline Kjesrud, 'Lærdom og fornøyelse: Sagaer om helter på eventyr – et speilbilde av ideer og forestillinger fra senmiddelalderen på Island' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oslo, 2010).

²⁶ For the argument that the Old Norse Arthurian translations, along with many of the translated texts, can be categorised collectively under the generic rubric of *riddarasögur* see Jürg Glauser, 'Romances (Translated *Riddarasögur*)'. For a study of *Strengleikar* in connection with the debate of form and genre see Daniel Sävborg, 'Strengleikar, kärleken och genren', in *Francia et Germania: Studies in Strengleikar and Þiðreks saga af Bern*, ed. by Karl G. Johansson and Rune Flaten (Oslo: Novus, 2012), pp. 231–50.

have been a conscious choice of the translators, who aimed to convey the poetic origin and nature of their source texts through various means. H  l  ne T  trel argues, for example, that the *Strengleikar* collection differs from the rest of the romance material because the translator (or scribe) seems to acknowledge the poetic origin of the texts by referring to the collection as *lj   abok* (book of poems/songs).²⁷ This reference to songs or poems ‘creates a limit, a frame around the *lai* which cannot be trespassed’ (p. 102). In the other translations, references to songs, poetry, *jongleurs* and performance are ‘mostly erased’, and it is therefore easier to regard them as prose narratives and incorporate them into other prose cycles (ibid). T  trel’s argument focuses on generic differences, but it may also serve to explain the post-translation transmission of the *Strengleikar* collection (or the lack of it). If the *lais* were perceived (or conceived) differently from other prose narratives, this may be one of the reasons why they do not seem to have reached a similarly widespread distribution within the manuscript tradition as the other texts.²⁸ As Rikhardsd  ttir has noted, the ‘semiotic system out of which the *Lais* originated was profoundly different from the existing narrative and cultural discourse of Scandinavian literary tradition’, suggesting that ‘audience expectations and cultural predilection’ may have had a great influence on the reception of the texts.²⁹

The post-translation transmission of the Old Norse Arthurian material in Iceland is in fact vital to the discussion, given that the texts have been preserved almost exclusively in Iceland. Eriksen argues that the translations influenced the formation of the literary tradition in thirteenth-century Norway by virtue of their uniqueness, yet over time their form was normalised, and by the fifteenth century the texts were regarded as an inherent part of the Icelandic literary tradition.³⁰ In Iceland the translated texts would thus have been perceived as belonging to the

27 ‘*Lais* and *Strengleikar*: A “Breton” Short Narrative Type in Old Norse’, in *Francia et Germania*, pp. 87–104 (p. 90).

28 As Kalinke has noted, the existence of the Icelandic redaction of *Gu  mars lj   *, *Gv  mars saga*, indicates that at least certain sections of *Strengleikar* did find their way to Iceland (‘*Gv  mars saga*’, p. 49). See also her ‘A Werewolf in Bear’s Clothing’, in *Maal og Minne*, 3–4 (1981), 137–44, and Rikhardsd  ttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, p. 52, n. 79 and the works cited there. Yet, despite evidence of familiarity with the *Strengleikar* collection in Iceland, the Norse translations of the *lais* seem not to have been as influential or popular as some of the other translated texts if manuscript evidence can be trusted as an indicator of relative popularity.

29 *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, p. 74.

30 ‘The Position of Translated *riddaras  gur* within Old Norse Literary Polysystems: A Case Study of *Eliss saga ok R  samundar*’, in the Proceedings of the International Workshop ‘Polysystem Theory and Beyond’, 4–6 October 2010, University of Venice, ed. by Massimiliano Bampi (Venice: Venice University Press, forthcoming).

same group as other indigenous texts, i.e. romances, *formaldarsögur* (legendary sagas), *ævintýri* (fairy tales) and even possibly late sagas of Icelanders, and their origin as translations may no longer have been relevant. It is, of course, quite possible that such distinctions were never made to begin with.

The rewriting of Arthurian material was the most popular mode of transmission as the translations did not lead to the production of indigenous Arthurian romances, as they did in the German-speaking context. The only exception is the Icelandic romance *Saga of Tristram ok Ísodd*. The texts did, however, inspire the composition of other genres, such as ballads (especially in the Tristan and Yvain tradition), *rímur* (rhymed verse forms) and folktales.³¹ They may furthermore have contributed to the establishment of the Old Swedish literary tradition as the Old Norse *Ívens saga* seems to have been known to the writer of the Swedish *Hærra Ivan*, although admittedly their specific role is contended.³² Needless to say, the Old Norse Arthurian romances are both directly and indirectly related to other Arthurian literary traditions. Some work has already been done that highlights the relevance of the various Arthurian traditions for each other, but the potential of comparative studies emphasising the link between Old Norse, Old Swedish and other traditions has not been fully exploited.

³¹ Matthew Driscoll, 'Arthurian Ballads, *rímur*, Chapbooks and Folktales', in *Arthur of the North*, pp. 168–95, and Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, 'Old French *lais* and Icelandic *sagnakvæði*', in *Francia et Germania*, pp. 265–88. See also Paul Schach, 'Some Observations on the Influence of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* on Old Icelandic Literature', in *Old Norse Literature and Mythology: A Symposium*, ed. by Edgar C. Polomé (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1968), pp. 81–129. On the influence of the Tristan material on later Icelandic sagas, such as *Kormáks saga*, *Grettis saga* and *Rémundar saga keisarasonar*, see Geraldine Barnes, 'The Tristan Legend', pp. 73–74.

³² The relation between the Swedish *Hærra Ivan* and the earlier Norse translation has been debated. Scholars have generally assumed that the translator (or author) had access to both copies and used those while translating; see for instance E. Kölbing's Introduction to his edition *Riddarasögur* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1872), pp. i–lv (pp. xii–xxxviii), and Sofia Lodén's recent doctoral thesis, 'Le Chevalier courtois à la rencontre de la Suède médiévale: Du *Chevalier au lion* à *Herr Ivan* (unpublished, University of Stockholm, 2012). William Layher claims, on the other hand, that the translator had 'access to additional channels of Arthurian reception unknown to us', and suggests a Riparian or Low German (or Dutch) influence in the Swedish translation ('The Old Swedish *Hærra Ivan Leons riddare*', in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 127–28). The link between the Old Norse and Old Swedish translations may be supported by the translation of the Swedish *Flores och Blanzefflor* from an Old Norse source text (see Massimiliano Bampi, 'Flores och Blanzefflor', in *Eufemia. Oslos Middeltaldersdronning*, ed. by Bjørn Bandlien (Oslo: Dreyer, 2012), pp. 216–22).

3 Literary Aesthetics and Cultural Context

The earlier source-oriented perspective, at its extreme, resulted in a negative attitude towards the literary value of the Norse Arthurian texts, both because of their apparent ‘unfaithfulness’ to the source texts, and because of their ostensible literary and stylistic ‘inferiority’ when compared to the Icelandic sagas. Gradually this perception has given way to an approach that acknowledges the inherent difference between the Old Norse texts and their Old French originals, recognising their authors’ competence in the arts of composition and rhetoric.³³

Despite the shift from verse to prose, the style of the Old Norse Arthurian texts is nevertheless poetic in nature; it has been categorised as ‘courtly’ style (to distinguish it from the so-called ‘saga style’). Its characteristics are, amongst other, the use of alliteration and/or synonymous or antithetical pairs for rhetorical affect.³⁴ It should be noted, however, that these stylistic features also appear in translations of *chansons de geste*, as well as in texts belonging to the learned tradition, such as the *Old Norse Homily Book* and *Barlaams Saga*.³⁵ Despite the change in metrical structure, the style of the translations included rhetorical figures stemming from classical and medieval Latin. The ‘courtly’ style became an influential rhetorical model for later translations, though many of the later

³³ In 2012 a special issue of *Arthuriana* (22:1) dedicated to ‘Arthur in the North’ was published. The editors, Keith Busby and Kirsten Wolf, note in their introduction the apparent ‘resurgence of interest over the last few years in the *riddarasögur*’, which the volume is intended to address. The articles in the volume range from the study of the ethics of knowledge in the Norse Arthurian corpus to conceptions of masculinity and physical attributes in the translated texts, but the underlying central concern is the process of acculturation (see Geraldine Barnes, ‘Cognitive Dysfunction in *Dínus saga dramláta* and *Le Roman de Perceval*’, 53–63, and Claudia Bornholdt, ‘“Everyone thought it very strange how the man had been shaped”: The Hero and His Physical Traits in the *Riddarasögur*’, 18–38, respectively; see also Marianne E. Kalinke, ‘*Ectors saga*: An Arthurian Pastiche in Classical Guise’, 64–90, and Norris J. Lacy, ‘Writing in the Margins: Norse Arthurian Sagas as Palimpsests’, 5–17, for examples of studies on acculturation in the volume).

³⁴ For information on the courtly style see, for instance, Reidar Astås, ‘Lærd stil, høvisk stil, florissant stil i norrøn prosa’, *Maal og Minne* 1 (1987), 24–38. For a discussion of the rhetorical devices in the Old Norse Arthurian texts see Paul Schach, ‘The Style and Structure of *Tristrams saga*’, *Scandinavian Studies*, 37 (1965), 63–86, and ‘Some Observations on the Influence of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*’, p. 127; Marianne E. Kalinke, ‘Alliteration in *Ívens saga*’, *Modern Language Review*, 74 (1979), 871–83; and Ingvil Brügger Budal, ‘*Strengleikar* og *lais*: Høviske noveller i omsetjing frå gammalfransk til gammalnorsk’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Universitetet i Bergen, 2009), particularly ch. 7.

³⁵ Stefka G. Eriksen, ‘Mode of Reception and Function of Medieval Texts: A Comparative Study of *Elye de Saint-Gilles* and *Elis saga ok Rósamundu*’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 112 (2013), 1–25 (p. 11).

versions and local renditions of the romance material reveal a relatively wide range of stylistic influences and arrangements.

As early as 1971 Kalinke argued that while *Erex saga* was structurally different from its Old French original *Erec et Enide*, both works were concerned with the same two main themes: honour and fidelity.³⁶ The different approaches to those themes reveal a conscious choice of the mode best suited to convey them to the respective cultural context. In 1975, Eyvind Fjeld Halvorsen similarly pointed out that some adaptation of foreign elements would have been necessary during the translation process, and that any such adjustments would have been made in order to strengthen the didactic character of the texts in their target culture.³⁷ He assumed, nevertheless, that many of the changes were simply due to the translators' insufficient competence in French. Jonna Kjær has, however, shown that the differences between the original texts and their translations (or adaptations) are systematic and that the objective seems to have been to provide the Old Norse text with a sense of courtly style.³⁸ In her study of *La Chanson de Roland* and *Karlamagnús saga* she claims that the style of the Old Norse translations of the *chansons de geste* and the romances is fundamentally compatible and that both resemble the narrative mode of French romances. She further argues for a thematic compatibility between the romances and other indigenous texts, such as *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, particularly when it comes to the representation of the figure of the king. Kjær thus emphasises the significance of the cultural horizon of the Norwegian audience for the style and thematic structuring of the translations (pp. 68–69).³⁹

The socio-cultural function of the Nordic Arthurian texts has, as a matter of fact, been extensively discussed in the last few decades. A major focus of the debate has been on the function of the texts within their target culture, i.e. the implicit intent behind the translation activity. The debate has been characterised

³⁶ 'A Structural Comparison of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* and the Norse *Erex saga*', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (1971), 54–65.

³⁷ 'Problèmes de la traduction scandinave des textes français du Moyen Âge', in *Les relations littéraires franco-scandinaves au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Société d'édition 'Les belles lettres', 1975), pp. 247–74 (pp. 251, 270).

³⁸ 'La réception scandinave de la littérature courtoise et l'exemple de la *Chanson de Roland*/Af *Rúnzivals bardaga*: Une épopée féodale transformée en roman courtois?', *Romania*, 114 (1996), 50–69.

³⁹ Hanna Steinunn Þorleifsdóttir has similarly considered the particular way in which direct speech, dialogues and conjunctions are translated in both *Ívens saga* and *Hærra Ivan*, suggesting that the stylistic differences reflect scribal choices in terms of formal presentation of his narrative material ('Dialogue in the Icelandic copies of *Ívens saga*', in *Übersetzen im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, ed. by Vera Johanterwage and Stefanie Würth (Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 2007), pp. 167–76, p. 176).

by polarisations, as scholars have assumed either that the texts were imported with the aim of educating the Norwegian court in the manners of Francophone courtly culture, or that they were translated with the specific intent of entertaining Hákon's courtiers.⁴⁰ Jürg Glauser has recently suggested that the numerous references to *gaman ok skemtan* (pleasure and amusement) and *fróðleikr* (instruction or information) may have been standard rhetorical topoi of a certain aesthetic and literary value within the narrative, without necessarily being indicative of the function of the texts.⁴¹

Sidestepping the dichotomy of education versus entertainment, some scholars have argued that the texts could have been translated for multiple reasons, suggesting that they could have fulfilled numerous simultaneous functions depending on the audience. Bjarne Fidjestøl wonders, for instance, whether Hákon Hákonarson may have commissioned the translations out of pure fascination, or in order to give his queen, Margrét Skúladóttir, proper intellectual satisfaction, as the romantic sagas may have had a particular appeal to highborn ladies.⁴² The translation of the sagas can also be considered from the viewpoint of literary sociology and, more specifically, in view of the appearance of a reading public in Norway. In this perspective, Fidjestøl argues, the translations can be considered to form part of the cultural and educational programme of King Hákon (p. 360). This programme comprised both architectural and literary undertakings, for example the building of Hákon's hall in Bergen and the composition of *The King's Mirror* (*Konungs Skuggsjá*). King Hákon may have used the sagas of chivalry as a tool to legitimise the positioning of his own court in relation to European courts. The translated stories were thus conceivably intended as a 'mirror to be held against the nobility, presenting them with an ideal' (pp. 364–65). Rikhardsdóttir, adopting postcolonial theory to examine the adaptation of the *lais*, similarly suggests that these functions need not be mutually exclusive:

40 For an explicit argumentation of the didactic function of the translations see for instance Barnes, 'The "Discourse of Counsel" and "Translated" *Riddarasögur*', in *Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World: Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross*, ed. by Judy Quinn, Kate Heslop and Tarrin Wills (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), pp. 375–97. For an example of a study that advocates the texts' entertainment value see Kalinke's *King Arthur North-by-Northwest*. The debate is summarised in Carolyne Larrington's 'The Translated *Lais*' (pp. 93–94).

41 'Romance (Translated *Riddarasögur*)', p. 379.

42 'Romantic Reading at the Court of Hákon Hákonsson', in *Selected Papers*, ed. by Odd Einar Haugen and Else Mundal, trans. by Peter Foote (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), pp. 351–65. For a comparative study of the function of the translations at the Norwegian and Castilian courts, see Vincent Almazan, 'Translations at the Castilian and Norwegian Courts in the Thirteenth Century: Parallels and Patterns', *Medieval Scandinavia*, 12 (1988), 213–32.

The fact that the texts were adjusted to Nordic audiences by excluding or reducing elements that had no meaning within the receptive culture does not preclude their function as guidance in courtly mannerisms. Similarly the very notion that they were intended as 'entertainment' rather than for educational, doctrinal or documentary purposes, indicates the extent to which the ideology represented within the text, that is the nobility's leisure to pursue such frivolous matters, has been assumed.⁴³

In her doctoral thesis on the transmission of the Perceval story in Old French, Old Norse and Middle English, Suzanne Marti argues that references to kingship, chivalric culture and religion were translated specifically to present models for chivalric and moral mannerisms at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson.⁴⁴ In his analysis of *Strengleikar* Robert Cook likewise concludes that although the rhetoric of love is modified, the translator was well aware of the emotional turmoil love could cause.⁴⁵ Cook assumes that the cultural competence of the audience, i.e. the lack of familiarity with rhetorical figures such as Venus and Amor, dictated the reformulation of some passages.

The contextual approach is also adopted by several historians in their studies of Norwegian and Icelandic cultural, intellectual and political history. Hans Jacob Orning interprets *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* and the Icelandic *Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd* as representative of political and cultural structures in thirteenth-century Norway and fourteenth-century Iceland, respectively.⁴⁶ Bjørn Bandlien also considers two Old Norse Arthurian texts, *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga*, to be potential witnesses to the worldview of one of the richest and most powerful men in fourteenth-century Iceland, namely Ormur Snorrason.⁴⁷ He argues that the inclusion of the Arthurian texts in Ormur's own manuscript (the now lost *Ormsbók*) marks and negotiates his own double identity and position as a respectful subject of the King on the one hand and a person of superior local authority on the other. Arthurian literature was thus used as a means of gaining an esteemed position in an unstable political world. The approach has been applied to Old Swedish Arthurian material as well. A recent publication on Queen Eufemia situates the *Eufemiavisor* not only in the context of French, German and Old Norse literary traditions, but also considers its origin and transmission to be the direct result

⁴³ *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*, pp. 28–29.

⁴⁴ 'Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Perceval Matter'.

⁴⁵ 'Concepts of Love in the *Lais* and in their Norse Counterparts', in *Francia et Germania*, pp. 53–86.

⁴⁶ 'Tristram: From Civilizing Hero to Power Politician'.

⁴⁷ 'Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga* in the World of Ormur Snorrason', *Arthuriana* (forthcoming).

of the political situation in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Norway and Sweden.⁴⁸

4 Material Philology and Translations

As has been stated, post-translation transmission and textual adaptation are particularly relevant topics within Nordic Arthurian research. The questions regarding the role of translators and copyists in the textual modifications of the extant texts have also been discussed from another perspective, however, namely in a codicological context and in view of the manuscript variants of particular texts. In a 2004 article, Hanna Steinunn Thorleifsdóttir studies the divergences between the various manuscripts of *Ívens saga*. By comparing the two main manuscript versions from Iceland (A=Holm 6 4to and B=AM 489 4to; from the early and mid-fifteenth centuries respectively) with an extract of Chrétien's *Le Chevalier au Lion* (the thirteenth-century Paris, BnF MS fr. 794 and variants), she is able to trace the changes made in the Norse text. In her view, it is difficult to distinguish between changes made in the translation process and those made in the course of later scribal copying. She nevertheless assumes that the original translation of Chrétien's text, the one made at the behest of King Hákon, was both longer and more coherent than the extant fifteenth-century rewritings.⁴⁹

Stefanie Gropper draws attention to the different functions and styles of the two preserved redactions of *Breta sögur* that reveal the writers' active engagement with the material within a particular codicological context: 'Whereas the *Hauksbók* redaction of *Breta sögur* obviously functions as part of a historic encyclopaedia, in *Ormsbók* and AM 573 4to *Breta sögur* was read as an Arthurian narrative.'⁵⁰ Kalinke similarly notes that while the AM 573 redaction 'more or less faithfully transmits a Latin version that had undergone substantial narrational augmentation, Haukr Erlendsson's editing of the translation returns the Arthurian narrative to an earlier chronicle form', signalling the intentional 'scribal' rewriting of the text.⁵¹ Nevertheless, as Kalinke has pointed out, the material gen-

⁴⁸ *Eufemia: Oslos Middelalderdronning*, ed. by Bjørn Bandlien (Oslo: Dreyer, 2012).

⁴⁹ 'Le Chevalier au lion: un texte dénudé en traduction? Le cas d'Ívens saga', in *Medieval Translation Practices: Papers from the Symposium at the University of Copenhagen, 25th and 26th October 2002*, ed. by Peter Andersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2004), pp. 22–28 (p. 27).

⁵⁰ *Breta sögur* and *Merlínússpá*, p. 51.

⁵¹ 'Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission', in *The Arthur of the North*, pp. 22–47 (p. 37).

erally gives little indication as to whether the changes, omissions and additions must be ascribed to the scribes or the translators (p. 26). Roger Andersson has also recently sought to approach the *Eufemiavisor* from a new philological perspective, proposing that by tracing the manuscript transmission of the three texts he can gain a better understanding of the cultural interests of the political elite in fifteenth-century Sweden.⁵²

In reality, what has come down to us of Old Norse Arthurian texts is more or less exclusively preserved in Icelandic manuscripts; and not a single manuscript exists containing the original translations. The *Strengleikar* collection is the only complete text to be preserved in a Norwegian manuscript, the aforementioned DG 4–7 dated to c. 1270, which belongs more or less to the same literary and cultural context as the original translation. The codex is the only extant manuscript of the *Strengleikar* collection as a whole.⁵³ In general, very few Old Norse translations are preserved in Norwegian manuscripts. A small fragment of *Karlamagnús saga* from c. 1250–1275 is still extant (Oslo, National Archives, MS NRA 61, fols 1r–2v) in addition to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts. *Barlaams saga* appears in a Norwegian manuscript from c. 1275 and in two fourteenth-century manuscripts, among others. *Þiðreks saga af Bern* is also preserved in a manuscript from c. 1275–1300, Holm Perg 4 fol, and in a number of seventeenth-century paper manuscripts. And finally, *Elis saga ok Rosamundu* appears in the De la Gardie manuscript together with *Strengleikar* as well as in several later Icelandic manuscripts. A comparative study of the thirteenth-century versions of these translations and the fifteenth-century manuscript versions may shed new light on the debate about the transmission of the Arthurian texts.⁵⁴

Other relevant questions that have been discussed in connection with Old Norse Arthurian texts, and the genre of *riddarasögur* in general, are the mode of translation and the nature of translation as a text-generating activity. With regard to *Strengleikar*, Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane suggest that before being assembled as a collection in DG 4–7 fol., the different *lais* may have circulated

52 ‘Eufemiavisenes Publikum’, in *Eufemia*, pp. 233–46.

53 Two Icelandic rewritings of individual poems in the collection, *Tiodielis saga* and *Gvímars saga*, have, however, been preserved in later Icelandic manuscripts (see Kalinke, ‘*Gvímars saga*’ and *Tiodielis saga*, ed. by Tove Hovn Ohlsson, Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, 2009).

54 See for example Stefka G. Eriksen, ‘Writing and Reading in Medieval Manuscript Culture: The Transmission of the Story of Elye in Old French and Old Norse Literary Contexts’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oslo, 2010). For a discussion of materiality and rhetorical devices in connection with the *Strengleikar* texts see also her ‘Prose Rhythm and Rhetorics in *Strengleikar* – A Case Study of the Prologue and the *Lai of Laustic*’, in *Francia et Germania*, pp. 179–201.

separately, or in smaller booklets.⁵⁵ Ingvil Brügger Budal, on the other hand, has proposed that King Hákon Hákonarson may have sent a translator to England, who would have found appropriate *lais* in one or more manuscripts and translated them there.⁵⁶ Given that there are no extant French manuscripts in Norway, it is difficult to hypothesise on the transmission paths of many of the texts. There is evidence, however, that at least one manuscript in Old French existed in Norway. It belonged to Queen Isabella Bruce and contained a French translation of the Latin chronicle *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* (*History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea*) by William of Tyre.⁵⁷ Manuscripts in Middle High German must also have been available in Norway, as is indicated by the preserved fragment of the German romance *Wigalois* from a Norwegian manuscript.⁵⁸ The scarcity of preserved French and German texts and manuscripts from Norway and Iceland should therefore not necessarily be considered as evidence that hardly any can have existed in the Middle Ages.⁵⁹

Ultimately, this discussion is closely related to the debate on orality and literacy and theories pertaining to the nature of writing, and texts in the Middle Ages in general. The oral and written production, transmission and reception of texts are, of course, increasingly considered to be interrelated aspects of medieval culture.⁶⁰ Furthermore, many scholars have pointed out that composing, commenting and glossing are text-generating activities that were similar in nature and that the Latin literary tradition had a great impact on the works of vernacular authors like Chrétien de Troyes, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer and Gower.⁶¹ Moreover, Rita Copeland has noted that translation and textual com-

55 'Introduction', in *Strengleikar: An Old Norse Translation of Twenty-one Old French Lais*, ed. and trans. by Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1979), pp. i–xxxvii (pp. xxv–xxviii).

56 'Strengleikar og *lais*', pp. 27–28 and pp. 417–18.

57 Bjørn Bandlien, 'Dronning Isabellas bok', in *Eufemia*, pp. 109–11.

58 Bjørn Bandlien, 'På sporet av ridderen av det runde hjul', in *Eufemia*, pp. 223–32.

59 For a useful overview of the extant manuscripts of the Norse Arthurian texts, as well as the Norse romances in general, see *Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Romances*, comp. by Marianne E. Kalinke and P. M. Mitchell, *Islandica*, 44 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

60 See Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and D. H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

61 Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984); *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary Tradition*, ed. by Alastair J. Minnis, A. B. Scott and David Wallace (Oxford:

mentary were similar activities. Both have the potential to reproduce a text while simultaneously providing an interpretation of it within a new cultural and historical context, although the specific relationship between the source and the target text may vary greatly.⁶² This dynamic process could thus produce a faithful reproduction and an innovative adaptation of the material at the same time.

The hermeneutic nature of the production and transmission of *Strengleikar* and *Þiðreks saga* is discussed in a recent article, where the texts are understood to be original Old Norse productions, albeit with a close intertextual relationship to their source texts as well as to contemporary indigenous material.⁶³ Geraldine Barnes holds a similar position with regard to *Tristrams saga*, arguing that the text that has come down to us must be the result of a process of the medieval act of *translatio*, rather than a translation in the modern sense of the word. It should therefore be regarded as an independent literary creation based on Thomas's poem rather than a secondary product.⁶⁴ The diverging dynamics of translating practices and translation intent across the Nordic and English linguistic and geographical borders are also the main topic of Rikhardottir's recent study *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse*.

5 Where Should We Be Heading?

As suggested in this survey, recent critical approaches to Nordic Arthurian literature are indebted to other fields of study, such as modern and medieval translation theory and material philology. Nonetheless, the potential of such cross-fertilisation has not been fully exploited. Innovative applications of theoretical perspectives to Old Norse Arthurian material will continue to be fruitful. Questions of geography, borders and identity raised in recent studies offer much to consider for the study of the Nordic transmission.

Recent critical approaches to Nordic Arthurian literature owe much to Rita Copeland's reformulation of the concept of 'translatio' within vernacular medieval literature and her discussion of its function, suggesting that the act of trans-

Clarendon Press, 1988); Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶² Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁶³ See Karl G. Johansson and Stefka Eriksen, 'Francia et Germania – Translations and the Europeanisation of Old Norse Narratives', in *Francia et Germania*, pp. 9–51.

⁶⁴ 'The Tristan Legend', p. 61.

lating in and of itself can be interpreted as an act of subversion of authority.⁶⁵ This notion raises multiple questions in terms of perceived cultural authority and its reclaiming through the act of substituting a reformulated representation of that cultural authority in its place.⁶⁶ Michelle R. Warren's *History on the Edge* and Patricia Clare Ingham's *Sovereign Fantasies* each question the function of the Arthurian legend in the construction of borders and imagined empires across the British Isles.⁶⁷ Postcolonial approaches to the political contestations of affiliation and alienation across the boundaries of medieval Britain suggest underlying cultural anxieties about identity and loss that are dealt with in the fictional empire of the Arthurian world. Warren's deliberations of borders in and through time as paradoxical 'modes of possession' (p. 16) raises some fundamental and, as yet, unanswered questions when considering the Nordic transmission of the Arthurian legend, i.e. the implications of border-crossing and language-crossing for the implicit imperial content of the Arthurian legend. The analysis of textual function, when considering the relationship between the Nordic countries and England (and later between Norway and Iceland) in the Middle Ages, is therefore particularly relevant. The confluences of imperial aggression and resistance in the British Isles are, as a matter of fact, played out on a grander scale across the Northern seas throughout the Middle Ages.

Diachronic studies, such as Helen Cooper's *English Romance in Time* and Carlyne Larrington's *King Arthur's Enchantresses*, are a reminder that much needs to be done in the study of Nordic Arthurian material through history.⁶⁸ Carolyn Dinshaw's observation that the very concept of the 'medieval' is a production of the present – i.e. of modernity as it distinguishes itself through the demarcation of the past as what has already 'been' – is valid in this context. Drawing on Thomas Prendergast's and Stephanie Trigg's statement that 'the "medieval" is continually in the process of becoming', Dinshaw points out that 'the medieval is always being produced in relation to the present, "any given present", and that the problems of relevance and use of the past are thus foregrounded in the process

⁶⁵ *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages*.

⁶⁶ Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'The Imperial Implications of Medieval Translations. A Comparative Analysis of the Old Norse and Middle English Versions of Marie de France's *Lais*', *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 144–64 (pp. 152–53).

⁶⁷ *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100–1300* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) and *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and *King Arthur's Enchantresses: Morgan and her Sisters in Arthurian Tradition* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2006).

they call “medievalization”⁶⁹. The great number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Icelandic paper manuscripts of the Arthurian texts suggests their continued relevance to their reading communities long after the heyday of continental courtly culture. The refashioning of the narrative material in and through time is a sadly unexplored field; the transformations bearing subtle witness to the process of cultural change and the role of each ‘modernity’ in reshaping its ideological content and relevance. Related to the text’s historicity is the question of the codicological context, which has recently begun to attract more scholarly attention.⁷⁰ Kalinke’s previously cited reading of *Hauksbók* as an example of the ‘editorial’ practices of the Icelandic scribes hints at the potential socio-cultural and codicological discoveries awaiting scholars in this field. The suggestion that an implicit philosophical signification of a text can be deduced from its style, narrative focus or contextual representation seems alluring.

Ultimately the engagement with and the representation of gender in the Nordic Arthurian transmission is of particular relevance and has not received due attention, despite the general endorsement of and enthusiasm for gender and queer studies within scholarly research in general. When considering the socio-political context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century France versus the cultural context of Iceland in the fourteenth and later centuries – where the status of women seems to have been a topic of debate within literary production – the acculturation of gender codes is of vital importance. The existence of several Icelandic ‘maiden-king romances’ – whose focal point is the maiden-king’s rejections of male suitors to preserve their royal authority – suggests that female authority was at the very least a contended topic in fourteenth-century Iceland.⁷¹ The reception and adaptation of womanhood, not only as a gendered behavioural code, but also as an interior space (one that suggests the possibility of female subjectivity) may thus offer insights into both the gender constructions of the target culture and their potential within the textual realm. Sharon Kinoshita’s recent study of ‘Feudal Agency and Female Subjectivity’ in Chrétien de Troyes’s works reveals the tantalising implications a perceptive and nuanced analysis of the text

⁶⁹ ‘Are We Having Fun Yet? A Response to Prendergast and Trigg’, *New Medieval Literatures*, 9 (2007), 231–41 (p. 232). See also Thomas A. Prendergast and Stephanie Trigg, ‘What Is Happening to the Middle Ages?’ *New Medieval Literatures*, 9 (2007), 215–30.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

⁷¹ Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, ‘Meykóngahefðin í riddarasögum. Hugmyndafræðileg átök um kynhlutverk og þjóðfélagsstöðu’, *Skírnir*, 184 (2010), 410–33.

and its represented subjectivity can reveal.⁷² Within the textual framework lies the potential for female subjectivity, and it is precisely in the process of translation that this subjectivity is actualised and represented. The female subject as representative space in Nordic Arthurian literature remains to be discovered.

In conclusion, Norse Arthurian research might benefit from being placed in juxtaposition to the development within other Arthurian traditions. Comparing general theoretical and methodological concerns in the various traditions, or encouraging collaborative studies of a text, or a literary motif, across the linguistic and cultural borders of medieval Europe would certainly be relevant for, and offer new insights to, Arthurian scholarship in general.

Bibliography

The bibliography of this first *État présent* survey differs from conventional bibliographies in the sense that it is intended to give an overview of the relevant primary manuscripts of the Old Norse Arthurian texts, their editions and modern translations into English, German and French only. Scholarly works cited in the article are listed comprehensively in footnotes in order to prevent an overly extensive bibliography.

Manuscripts

Breta sögur

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 544 4to

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 573 4to

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 764 4to

Dublin, Trinity College, Trinity L 3 23 1r–1v (5 frg.)

Erex saga

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 181 b fol.

Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn, Lbs 1230 III 8vo, 1v (2 frg.)

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm papp 46 fol.

Hærra Ivan

Stockholm, Riksarkivet, E8822 (Skokloster 156 fol.)

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm cod D3 (Fru Elins bok)

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm cod D4

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm cod D4a (Codex Verelianus/Fru Märetas bok)

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm cod K4 (Old Danish version)

Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm cod K47 (Old Danish version)

⁷² Zrinka Stahuljak *et al.*, *Thinking Through Chrétien de Troyes* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp. 111–38.

Ívens saga

Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, AM 489 4to
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm papp 46 fol.
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm perg 6 4to

Merlínussþá

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 544 4to

Möttuls saga

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 179 fol.
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 181 b fol.
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 588 i 4to
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 598 I α 4to
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 598 I β 4to
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm perg 6 4to

Parcevals saga

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 179 fol.
 Copenhagen, The Royal Library, NKS 1794 b 4to
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm perg 6 4to

Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd

Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, AM 489 4to

Skikkjurímur

Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, AM Acc. 22
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm papp 15 4to
 Wolfenbüttel, Codex Guelferbytanus 42.7 Augusteus 4to

Strengleikar

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 666 b 4to, 1r–4v
 Uppsala, Uppsala University Library, De la Gardie 4–7, 17v–43v

Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 543 4to
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 567 XXII 4to
 Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn Íslands, ÍB 51 fol.
 Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn Íslands, JS 8 fol.
 Washington, Library of Congress, Libr. Congr. Reeves ('R')

Valvens þáttur

Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 179 fol.
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 181 a fol.
 Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 573 4to
 Stockholm, Royal Library of Sweden, Holm perg 6 4to

Editions and Translations

Elis saga, Strengleikar and Other Texts. Uppsala University Library Delagardieska Samlingen Nos. 4–7 Folio and AM 666 b Quarto, ed. by Mattias Tveitane, Corpus codicum norvegicorum medii aevi, quarto serie, vol. 4 (Oslo: The Society for Publications of Old Norwegian Manuscripts, 1972).

Erex saga, ed. by Gustaf Cederschiöld, Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk literature, 3 (Copenhagen: S. T. U. A. G. N. L., 1880).

Erex saga, ed. and trans. by Marianne E. Kalinke, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 2, *The Knights of the Round Table* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 217–65.

Erex saga and Ívens saga: The Old Norse versions of Chrétien de Troyes's Erec et Yvain, trans. by F. W. Blaisdell and M. E. Kalinke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977).

Erex saga Artuskappa, ed. by Foster W. Blaisdell, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, series B, vol. 19 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1965).

Erikskrönikan enligt Cod. Holm. D2 jämte avvikande läsarter ur andra handskrifter, ed. by Rolf Pipping, Samlingar utgivna af svenska fornskrift-sällskapet, 158 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1921).

Geitarlauf, ed. and trans. by Robert Cook, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 4–8.

Geitarlauf, in *Strengleikar. An Old Norse Translation of Twenty-one Old French Lais*, ed. by Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane, ed. from the Manuscript Uppsala De la Gardie 4–7 – AM 666 b, 4to (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1979), pp. 195–99.

Hauksbók: The Arnamagnæan Manuscripts 371, 4to, 544, 4to, and 675, 4to, ed. by Jón Helgason, Manuscripta Islandica, 5 (Copenhagen: Ejnar Muunksgaard, 1960).

Hauksbók udgiven efter de arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4to samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter, ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson, vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab, 1892–96).

Herr Ivan, ed. by Erik Noreen, Samlingar, utg. av svensk fornskrift-sällskap, 50 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1931).

Hærra Ivan, ed. and trans. by Henrik Williams and Karin Palmgren, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 3, *Hærra Ivan* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999).

'Hærra Ivan', in *Mediaeval Stories*, trans. by Henrik Schück (London: Sands & Co., 1902), pp. 58–119.

'The Icelandic Ballad of Tristan (*Tristrams kvæði*)', trans. by Joyce Hill, in *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translation*, ed. by Joyce Hill (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 1977), pp. 29–38.

'The Icelandic Saga of Tristan and Isolt (*Saga af Tristram ok Ísodd*)', trans. by Joyce Hill, in *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translation*, ed. by Joyce Hill (Leeds: Leeds University Press, 1977), pp. 6–28.

Ívens saga, ed. by Eugen Kölbing, Altnordische Saga-bibliothek, 7 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1898).

Ívens saga, ed. by Foster W. Blaisdell, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ Series B, vol. 18 (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1979).

Ívens saga, ed. and trans. by Marianne E. Kalinke, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 2, *The Knights of the Round Table* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 33–102.

Ívens saga in Riddarasögur, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 2 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1943), pp. 1–78.

- Ívents Saga Artúskappa* in *Riddarasögur*, ed. Eugen Kölbing (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1872), pp. 73–136.
- Janual*, ed. and trans. by Robert Cook, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 10–22.
- Janual*, in *Strengleikar: An Old Norse Translation of Twenty-one Old French Lais*, ed. by Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane, ed. from the Manuscript Uppsala De la Gardie 4–7 – AM 666 b, 4to (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1979), pp. 212–27.
- ‘Merlins Prophezeiung’, in *Isländische Antikensagas*, ed. and trans. by Stefanie Würth, vol. 1 (Munich: Diederichs 1996), pp. 98–120.
- Möttuls saga: with an Edition of Le Lai du cort mantel by Philip E. Bennett*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, Editiones Arnarnagæanæ, series B, vol. 30 (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1987).
- Möttuls saga* in *Riddarasögur*, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 1 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1943), pp. 249–81.
- Möttuls saga*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 2, *The Knights of the Round Table* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 1–31.
- ‘The Norwegian Prose Lay of the Honeysuckle (Geitarlauf)’, trans. by S. A. J. Bradley, in *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translations*, ed. Joyce Hill, Leeds Medieval Studies, 2 (Leeds: The University of Leeds, 1977).
- Parcevals saga with Valvens þátr*, ed. by Kirsten Wolf, trans. by Helen Maclean, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 2, *The Knights of the Round Table* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 103–216.
- Parcevals saga* in *Riddarasögur*, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 4 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1951), pp. 195–285.
- Parcevals saga, Valvers þátr* in *Riddarasögur*, ed. by Eugen Kölbing (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1872), pp. 1–71.
- ‘The Reeves Fragment of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*’, ed. by Paul Schach, in *Einarsbók: Afmæliskeðja til Einars Ól. Sveinssonar. 12. desember 1969*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason et al. (Reykjavík, 1969), pp. 296–308.
- Romances. Perg. 4: o nr 6 in The Royal Library, Stockholm*, introduction by Desmond Slay, Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile, 10 (Copenhagen: Roskilde & Bagger, 1972).
- Saga af Tristram og Ísönd* in *Riddarasögur*, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 1 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1943), pp. 1–247.
- Saga af Tristram ok Ísönd*, ed. by Peter Jorgensen, trans. by Joyce Hill, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 241–92.
- Saga af Tristram ok Ísönd samt Möttuls saga*, ed. by Gísli Brynjúlfsson (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab, 1878).
- The Saga of Tristram and Ísönd*, trans. by Paul Schach (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973).
- Die Saga vom Mantel und die Saga vom schönen Samson. Möttuls saga und Samsons saga fagra*, ed. and trans. by Rudolf Simek, *Fabulae Mediaevales*, 2 (Vienna: Braumüller, 1982).
- Die Saga von den britischen Königen*, in *Isländische Antikensagas*, ed. and trans. by Stefanie Würth, vol. 1 (Munich: Diederichs, 1996), pp. 98–120.
- Die Saga von Iven: Aus dem Altisländischen übersetzt mit einem Nachwort von Rudolf Simek*, trans. by Rudolf Simek, *Altnordische Bibliothek*, 1 (Hattingen: Verlag Dr. Bernd Kretschmer, 1982).

- Die Saga von Parceval und die Geschichte von Valver: Parcevals saga ok Valvers þáttur*, trans. by Rudolf Simek, Wiener Arbeiten zur germanischen Altertumskunde und Philologie, 19 (Vienna: Halosar, 1982).
- Skikkjurímur*, ed. and trans. by Matthew J. Driscoll, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 2, *The Knights of the Round Table* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 267–325.
- Skikkjurímur in Rímnasafn: Samling af de ældste islandske Rimer*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, vol. 2, Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 35 (Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers og J. Jørgensen & Co.s bogtrykkerier, 1913–22), pp. 326–56.
- Strengleikar*, ed. by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir (Reykjavík: Bókmenntafræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, 2006).
- Strengleikar: An Old Norse Translation of Twenty-one Old French Lais*, ed. by Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane, ed. from the Manuscript Uppsala De la Gardie 4–7 – AM 666 b, 4to (Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1979).
- Strengleikar eða Lioðabok: En Samling af Romantiske Fortællinger efter Bretoniske Folkesange (Lais)*, ed. by R. Keyser and C. R. Unger (Christiania: Carl C. Werner & Comp.s Bogtrykkeri, 1850).
- ‘Texte norrois et traduction française du *lanuals lioð*’, ed. by Paul Aebischer, in *Marie de France. Le lai de ‘Lanval’. Texte critique et édition diplomatique des quatre manuscrits français par Jean Rychner. Accompagné du texte du ‘lanuals ljoð’ et de sa traduction française avec une introduction et des notes par Paul Aebischer* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1958), pp. 105–25.
- Tristrams kvæði*, ed. and trans. by Robert Cook, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 227–39.
- Tristrams kvæði in Íslenzk fornkvæði: Islandske folkeviser*, ed. by Jón Helgason, vols 1–8, Editiones Arnarnagænaæ, Series B, vols 10–17 (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1962–81), vol. 1: pp. 137–43; vol. 3: pp. 198–201; vol. 4: pp. 221–26; vol. 5: pp. 22–25.
- Tristrams saga og Ísoddar in Riddarasögur*, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 6 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1951), pp. 85–145.
- Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar: Mit einer literarhistorischen Einleitung, deutscher Uebersetzung und Anmerkungen*, ed. by Eugen Kölbing (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1878).
- Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, ed. and trans. by Peter Jørgensen, in *Norse Romance*, ed. by Marianne E. Kalinke, vol. 1, *The Tristan Legend* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999), pp. 23–226.
- Valvers þáttur in Riddarasögur*, ed. by Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 4 (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1951), pp. 287–314.
- Versions nordiques du fabliau français ‘Le Mantel Mautaillié’: Textes et notes*, ed. by Gustav Cederschiöld and Fredrik A. Wulff, Acta Universitatis Lundensis. Lunds Universitets Års-skrift, 13 (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1877).