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## **The Hero in *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* in Relation to Spatiality**

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## Abstract in English

This Master's thesis, by the title "The Hero in *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* in Relation to Spatiality" written by Carla Schäffler, analyses these three sagas in context of spatiality and its relation to the literary depiction of the male protagonists' masculinity. The sagas are part of the Old Norse literary genre of translated *riddarasögur*. Originally, the texts are based on Old French verse novels that were translated into Old Norse during the reign of King Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263) to serve his political agenda to establish a hierarchical society in Norway by implementing the norms and values portrayed in the sagas on his courtiers in order to create a standardised society across his kingdom and to thereby also make his kingdom competitive with the rest of continental Europe, as the standards of the Norwegian court were lacking compared to the rest of Europe.

The analysis of this thesis mainly focuses on the three saga's relation of spatiality and the hero's masculinity, but also shows how his masculinity is intertwined with the code of conduct displayed in the translated *riddarasögur*, the *Konungs skuggsjá* (composed around 1250) and *Hirðskrá* (compiled between 1273 and 1277). The two latter texts are Old Norse courtly texts, with the first-mentioned being a didactic work, whereas the other represents a code of law for the king's retainers. In order to conduct this analysis, the spaces within the sagas are categorised into the space of the court, the forest space, the space of the other court and the magical space, through which the hero's movement and his changing courtly masculinity is analysed. The results show how each space is semantically charged and that the spaces are necessary to portray the hero's unfulfilled masculinity through a lack of a courtly value, but also to help him repair and regain his masculinity in retrieving the lost value through his movement within the different spaces which create plot and thereby quests for the knight. The spaces and the subsequent quests that result from the hero's movement within them also reveal the core value that each saga aims to portray. In the case of *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga*, it is the refined value of honour. For *Parcevals saga*, which describes the full education of the hero it not only includes the refined facets of courtly masculinity, but also portrays the even more basic values and norms presented by *Konungs skuggsjá* in the form of the virtues *manvit* [wisdom], the basis of all good manners, *siðgóði* [good breeding] and *hóverska* [courtesy], which represent the refined form of courtliness.

## Abstract in Norwegian

Denne masteroppgaven, med tittelen "The Hero in Erex saga, Ívens saga and Parcevals saga in Relation to Spatiality" skrevet av Carla Schäffler, analyserer disse tre sagaene i sammenheng med romslighet og deres relasjon til den litterære fremstillingen av de mannlige hovedpersonenes maskulinitet. Sagaene er en del av den gammelnorske litterære sjangeren oversatte *riddarasögur*. Opprinnelig er teksten basert på gammelfranske versromaner som ble oversatt til gammelnorsk under kong Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263) for å tjene hans politiske agenda om å etablere et hierarkisk samfunn i Norge ved å implementere de normene og verdiene som skildres i sagaene på sine hoffmenn for å skape et standardisert samfunn i hele riket og dermed også gjøre riket konkurransedyktig i forhold til resten av det kontinentale Europa, ettersom standarden ved det norske hoffet var mangelfull sammenlignet med resten av Europa. Analysen i denne avhandlingen fokuserer i hovedsak på de tre sagaenes forhold til romlighet og heltens maskulinitet, men viser også hvordan hans maskulinitet er sammenvevd med de etiske retningslinjer som kommer til uttrykk i de oversatte *riddarasögur*, i *Konungs skuggsjá* (skrevet rundt 1250) og *Hirðskrá* (skrevet mellom 1273 og 1277). De to sistnevnte tekstene er gammelnorske hofftekster, der den førstnevnte er et didaktisk verk, mens den andre er en lovsamling for kongens undersåtter. For å oppnå dette kategoriseres rommene i sagaene i det hoffets rom, skogsrommet, det andre hoffets rom og det magiske rom, der heltens bevegelse og hans skiftende høviske maskulinitet analyseres. Resultatene viser hvordan hvert rom er semantisk ladet og at rommene er nødvendige for å skildre heltens uforløste maskulinitet gjennom en manglende høvisk verdi, men også for å hjelpe ham å reparere og gjenvinne sin maskulinitet for å gjenvinne den tapte verdien gjennom hans bevegelse i de ulike rommene som skaper handling og dermed oppdrag for ridderen. Rommene og de påfølgende oppdragene som er resultatet av heltens bevegelse i dem, avslører også kjerneverdien som hver saga tar sikte på å skildre. I tilfellet av *Erex saga* og *Ívens saga* er den raffinerte verdien ære. *Parcevals saga*, som beskriver heltens fullstendige utdanning, omfatter ikke bare den høviske maskulinitetens raffinerte fasetter, men skildrer også de enda mer grunnleggende verdiene og normene som *Konungs skuggsjá* presenterer i form av dydene *manvit* [visdom], grunnlaget for alle gode manerer, *siðgóði* [god oppdragelse] og *hóverska* [høflighet], som representerer den raffinerte formen for høflighet.

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# 1. Introduction

During the Middle Ages, the kingdom of Norway experienced an immense growth politically, economically and socially.<sup>1</sup> This is especially visible during the reign of King Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263) (also referred to as King Hákon in the following), in which he entertained relations and friendships to other kingdoms, especially in continental Europe.<sup>2</sup> Due to this connection and King Hákon's political ambitions, which will be explained in the course of this thesis, a cultural exchange between the different countries took place. Part of this exchange was the import and translation, as well as cultural adaptation of Old French courtly literature that was undertaken on behalf of King Hákon as a patron, in order to support his political agenda, which sought to consolidate the king's power as the sole ruler of Norway, as well as to reform his court to a continental European standard.<sup>3</sup> This imported literary genre is known under the name translated *riddarasögur*, the first part referring to their heritage as translated literature and the latter relating to their content as sagas of chivalry and knighthood, hence *riddari* [knight].<sup>4</sup> The term first appeared in the latter part of the *Magús saga jarls*, whose literary tradition dates back to around 1300.<sup>5</sup> The original Old French texts that these translations were based on are chivalric poems that were written in “Old French, or in fact in a majority of cases, in the Anglo-Norman dialect”<sup>6</sup>, which reached Norway from France, via England.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the imported Old French literature can be thematically divided into three different branches, the *matière de France*, the *matière de Rome* and the *matière de Bretagne*.<sup>8</sup> The content of the first branch is concerned with France and its kings, as for example the Old French *chansons de geste*, which are narrative poems about national heroes such as

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<sup>1</sup> See Bandlien, Bjørn: *Man or Monster? Negotiations of Masculinity in Old Norse Society*. Dissertation (2005), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed* (1996), p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> See Uecker, Heiko: *Geschichte der altnordischen Literatur* (2004), p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> See Marti, Suzanne: *Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Parceval Matter* (2010), p. 78. The standardised spelling of all Old Norse terms in this thesis is taken from the online database of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. The spelling of all Old Norse genre-titles follows the ones used throughout Rory McTurk's *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (2005). All following translations of this thesis are made by the author of this thesis, unless something else is stated.

<sup>5</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia”. In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Brügger Budal, Ingvil: “A wave of reading women: The purpose and function of the translated French courtly literature in thirteenth-century Norway”. In: *Riddarasögur* (2014), p. 131.

<sup>7</sup> See Sif Ríkharrðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> See Eriksen, Stefka G.: “Courtly Literature”. In: *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Saga* (2017), p. 60.

Charlemagne.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, as the name indicates, the content of the second branch is about Greece and Rome during ancient times, described through pseudo-historiographic works.<sup>10</sup> However, the last branch of the Old French material is about the matter of Britain, specifically around the court of King Arthur. Part of this third branch is *Tristram saga ok Ísöndar*, which is generally acknowledged to be the oldest of these translations as it was supposedly composed in the year 1226, as its prologue states: “Var þá liðit frá hingatburði Christi 1226 ár, er þessi saga var á norrænu skrifuð eptir befalningu ok skipan virðuligs herra Hákonar kóngs”<sup>11</sup> [This saga was translated into the Norse tongue at the behest and decree of King Hákon when 1226 years had passed since the birth of Christ]<sup>12</sup>. Other literary examples for this branch are for example the *Strengleikar*, which are Old Norse translations of Breton *lais* composed in Old French by Marie de France (ca. 1135–ca. 1200), a French noblewoman of whom not much is known, as well as translations of the verse novels of the French “court poet and trouvère Chrétien de Troyes”<sup>13</sup> (ca. 1140–ca. 1190).<sup>14</sup> Three of his works namely *Erec et Enide* from 1170, *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*, which was written around 1179 and *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, which was composed between 1180 and 1190 were translated into Old Norse and changed from verse to prose most probably under the reign of King Hákon and are known under the names *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*.<sup>15</sup> Additionally to the switch from verse to prose, the sagas have undergone even more changes, which include for example an extreme reduction of the length of the texts, as well as omissions of descriptions of the hero’s emotions.<sup>16</sup> In this context, the term translation is questionable since the sagas have been subjected to so much change from their original verse novels that they are often rather regarded as an adaption of the Old French works for an Old Norse audience, rather than a translation.<sup>17</sup> In turn, these changes in themselves are questionable as well, as it is impossible to know if the changes that can be found in extant manuscripts were made by the original scribe or by later copyists, given the

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<sup>9</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia”. In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus’ Realms* (2011), p. 13 and see Kibler, William W.: “Chanson de geste”. In: *Medieval France. An Encyclopaedia* (1995), p. 195.

<sup>10</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*. In: *Norse Romance: I. The Tristan Legend* (1999) (= Arthurian Archives III), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Brügger Budal, Ingvil: “A wave of reading women: The purpose and function of the translated French courtly literature in thirteenth-century Norway”. In: *Riddarasögur* (2014), p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 132–133.

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 132, 136.

<sup>16</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Höfische Unterhaltung und ideologisches Ziel. Das Beispiel der altnorwegischen *Parcevals saga*”. In: *Die Aktualität der Saga* (1999), p. 66 and see Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 164.

<sup>17</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 66 and see Brégaaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 245 and see Sif Ríkharrðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 5ff.

circumstance that the extant manuscripts are much younger than the supposed date of composition and originated in Iceland, therefore also stemming from a different cultural milieu.<sup>18</sup> This question, however, will not be pursued throughout this thesis, as its focus does not lie on a comparison of the Old Norse texts to their Old French originals, but rather on the Old Norse texts themselves. For the purpose of this thesis, the translated *riddarasögur* will be referred to as translations, if necessary, in unison and relation to the title of their genre.

In addition to the translated *riddarasögur*, King Hákon not only imported foreign literature into his kingdom, but also endorsed the composition of a multitude of native Old Norse texts that were composed under his reign and utilised for his political agenda of state formation and cultural and legal reforms. Part of this campaign is the didactic text *Konungs skuggsjá*, (composed around 1250) also called *Speculum regale* or *King's mirror*, which is a courtly prose text that falls under the genre of didactic literature, as well as “Sachprosa”<sup>19</sup> [non-fictional prose], due to its description of the wonders of the earth, biology and the profession of a tradesman in the first chapter. The text is constructed as a conversation between a father and his son, in which the son asks the father questions, for example about courtly conduct, and the father's response provides the son with a correct answer, thereby making the text also didactic for the reader. Also included in the genre of Old Norse courtly texts is the *Hirðskrá*, a code of law for the King's retainers compiled between 1273 and 1277, which in three chapters states the rights and duties of the king's *hirð* [retinue] and was supposed to regulate the relationships between the members of the *hirð*, as well as their conduct towards the king.<sup>20</sup> Together, these texts reflect a newly desired idea of masculinity that was established during the reign of King Hákon, as well as partly during the reign of his son King Magnús *lagabætir* (1238–1280) (also referred to as King Magnús in the following) as texts like the *Hirðskrá* could have been composed under his rule. This refined masculinity supersedes the more traditional Old Norse concept of masculinity and is based on a more continental courtly behaviour of the king's *hirð*, as will be shown later on in this thesis. The translated *riddarasögur* convey these courtly values that are considered masculine through the portrayal of their respective hero, thereby bestowing the sagas not only with an entertainment but also an educational character for the *hirð*.<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>18</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission”. In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 23, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> See Imsen, Steinar: “Innledning”. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn* (2000), p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 247.



order to create the plot that makes these courtly values visible, the sagas rely on the hero's movement between the different spaces within the sagas.<sup>22</sup>

Against this background, it is the aim of this thesis to analyse the male protagonists in *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, as this literary corpus forms the collective Old Norse translations of the works of Chrétien de Troyes and focuses on one hero and his courtly behaviour. This analysis will focus on the hero's movement between the different spaces of the story, as well as on the change of his masculinity, constituted by his courtly behaviour, in relation to these spaces. This thesis therefore asks the following research question: How are the different spaces in *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* defined and is there a correlation between them and the portrayal of the hero's masculinity in form of his courtly virtues? In order to answer this question, the thesis will firstly present the historical circumstances surrounding King Hákon's reign and the composition and introduction of the imported literature and values. This is followed by an outline of the history of scholarly literature focused on translated *riddarasögur*, as well as a presentation of the theoretical works concerning spatiality and masculinity that this thesis is based on. Afterwards, this thesis will provide an overview of the primary sources and their manuscript transmission. Leading into the main part, the thesis will present the concept of masculinity during the reign of King Hákon, as it is conveyed through the description of norms and values in Old Norse courtly literature such as *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*, as well as the portrayal of the ideal hero in the three aforementioned translated *riddarasögur* on the basis of the theories of Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock, which will be explained later in this thesis. Additionally, the characteristics of the different spaces of the sagas will be presented, which is followed by the analysis of the hero within these spaces, simultaneously focusing on the portrayal of the hero's courtly masculinity. This analysis is based on Werner Schäfke's theories on spatiality that he has applied on the closely thematically related genre of Icelandic indigenous *riddarasögur*, which will also be explained later on, but which up to this point has not been used in context of the genre of translated *riddarasögur*. This thesis therefore builds upon existing research that has been conducted on translated *riddarasögur* in a novel combination with Evans', Hancock's and Schäfke's theories of spatiality and masculinity, thereby analysing and presenting the three translated *riddarasögur* in a new context. Finally, to conclude this thesis, the results of the earlier chapters will be gathered and summarised in the closing chapter.

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<sup>22</sup> See Bowden, Sarah/Friede, Susanne: "Introduction". In: *Arthurian Literature XXXVI* (2021), p. 3.

## 2. Historical Background

After the general introduction to the topic of translated *riddarasögur*, it becomes evident that an in-depth review of the historical circumstances surrounding the origin of the translated *riddarasögur* is required prior to any further analysis of the texts themselves. This chapter will therefore provide an overview on the history of Norway in the twelfth and thirteenth century, how the sagas came into existence and their intended use at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson.

The High Middle Ages in Norway was a tumultuous period for the kingdom in a multitude of ways. One of the most shaping chapters can be dated from the 1130s to the year 1240 and was concerned with questions over the line of succession to the Norwegian throne, which resulted in several conflicts generally known as the civil wars.<sup>23</sup> These have their origins in the fact that the then current rule of succession possessed a rather egalitarian approach towards legacies, meaning that all male sons of a king, whether they were born into wedlock or not, had an equal claim of the throne and could be proclaimed king by an assembly.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence, if there are multiple candidates that each have been announced as king by an assembly, they either have to share the throne or fight against one another for the sole regency over Norway.<sup>25</sup> Even though a peaceful agreement was common in the history of kingship, the events resulting in the civil wars were caused by the latter solution of conflict.

Such was the case in the 1130s, when an unknown heir of King Magnús *berföttr* (1073–1103) by the name of Haraldr Gilli (1102–1136) arrived from Ireland in Norway and claimed the throne next to his half-brother's son King Magnús Sigurðarson (1115–1139), before mutilating him and sending him to a convent and Harald thereby becoming sole ruler of Norway.<sup>26</sup> The arrival of King Haraldr, his reign and the birth of his sons during his regency thus introduced a new bloodline that could lay claim to the throne of Norway. His reign also made visible that, in order to become king of Norway, it is imperative to gather a circle of men around you to support your claim and that of your sons. In light of the now two existing bloodlines with equal royal claim, these circles developed into factions “in the 1150s”<sup>27</sup>, each supporting a king of one of those bloodlines and fighting each other to see their king on the throne. The first faction,

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<sup>23</sup> See Orning, Hans Jacob: “Håkon, Skule og de norske borgerkrigene”. In: *Historisk Tidsskrift* 100/3 (2021), p. 224.

<sup>24</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom* (2010), p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

supporting the original bloodline of King Magnús Sigurðsson are the so-called *baglar* [Crozier] and second faction supporting the heirs of King Haraldr Gilli are the *birkibeinar* [Birchlegs].<sup>28</sup>

The war between these factions following the disputes over the Norwegian throne was part of the next few generations, each presenting their own pretenders. One of the most renowned kings in Norwegian history is King Sverrir Sigurðarson (1145/1151–1202), a grandson of King Haraldr Gilli through his son Sigurðr, was therefore supported by the Birchlegs and with their help fought his way to the throne.<sup>29</sup> His reign was characterised by “a change from aristocracy of local leaders to an aristocracy of the realm”<sup>30</sup> which is centralised around one leader on the top of the hierarchy: the basic ideas of the *rex iustus*, one king appointed by the grace of God, found its way to Norway over King Sverrir and his predecessor King Magnús Erlingsson (1156–1184) in 1163.<sup>31</sup> King Sverrir, however, did not recognise the importance of the Church as an institution or as a mediator and saw his divine office as king directly tied to God.<sup>32</sup> This disdain for and rejection of the Church also becomes visible in the *Róða Sverris* [*Speech against the bishops*], a political pamphlet from ca. 1200, emphasising the royal authority over the Church.<sup>33</sup> Eventually, the quarrels between the Birchlegs and Croziers stopped after the Crozier king, King Philip, died in 1217.<sup>34</sup> The same year, two crucial figures, both being pretenders of the faction of the Birchlegs, had to divide the throne and the realm of Norway between them.<sup>35</sup> The first one was King Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263), a grandson of King Sverrir through his son Hákon, who was pronounced king at the *Eyrabing*, an assembly in Trøndelag, in 1217.<sup>36</sup> But since he was “only thirteen years old, and hardly able to lead a country by himself”<sup>37</sup>, a second ruler was appointed, named Earl Skúli Báðarson (1189–1240), who was the brother of an earlier king called King Inge (1185–1217).<sup>38</sup> However, this shared rule over Norway and its tax revenue between two rulers was not a time of peace or even the end of the civil wars. On the contrary, both King Hákon and Earl Skúli found themselves in a “quest for power and

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<sup>28</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 45–46.

<sup>29</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 45–46.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> See Helle, Knut: “The Norwegian kingdom: succession disputes and consolidation”. In: *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia* (2003), p. 377–378.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 377–378.

<sup>33</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 378. For an edition of King Sverrir’s pamphlet see *En tale mot biskopene: En sproglig-historisk undersøkelse*. Edited by Anne Holtmark (1931).

<sup>34</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom* (2010), p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>37</sup> Marti, Suzanne: *Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Parceval Matter* (2010), p. 74.

<sup>38</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 177–178.

influence”<sup>39</sup> against each other, thereby causing tensions between the co-rulers. Earl Skúli openly questioned King Hákon’s rightly claim to the throne which led to him having to prove himself and the legitimisation of his rulership on multiple occasions, such as through trial by ordeal in 1218 and 1233.<sup>40</sup> It even went so far that King Hákon’s mother Inga had to swear an oath on his lineage and his ancestry to King Sverrir in 1218.<sup>41</sup> Other attempts of reconciliation, such as King Hákon’s marriage to the daughter of Earl Skúli proved unsuccessful in establishing peace between the two parties as well.<sup>42</sup> Finally, these tensions and conflicts resulted in an open rebellion of Earl Skúli against King Hákon, when the former tried to proclaim himself as king in 1239, after being only co-ruler without royal dignity during his governance.<sup>43</sup> The following year, in 1240, King Hákon led an attack against Earl Skúli, which resulted in the death of Earl Skúli and the subsequent defeat of the uprising.<sup>44</sup>

This incident shaped the kingdom in multiple ways. Firstly, it effectively made King Hákon the undisputed sole ruler of Norway and secondly, it also marked the end of the period of the civil wars, finally unifying Norway’s aristocracy under one king. With this in mind, King Hákon understood the necessity of strengthening his singular leadership and his position as the head of state, which was then supported by the recognition of the church and his official crowning and unction in 1247.<sup>45</sup> He now became the *rex iustus* who, as opposed to King Sverrir, acknowledged the Church and reigned as “God’s representative on earth who was responsible for governing the Church as well as people”<sup>46</sup>. This ideology also continued the idea of the hereditary kingship, which in light of the previous events and the rule that all male descendants of a king can claim the throne that caused the problematic to begin with, made an update on this matter a necessity. An earlier attempt to resolve the issue of the question of succession was rather unsuccessfully made in 1163/4.<sup>47</sup> It was only after the introduction of the new law of succession during the reign of King Hákon and his son King Magnús *lagabætir* in 1260 and 1273 that a clear line of succession with a single ruler can be made the head of state.<sup>48</sup> This rule is categorised in four consecutive levels of entitlement of the throne: the first candidate in the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>40</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>41</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia”. In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus’ Realms* (2011), p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 178.

<sup>43</sup> See Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat 1130–1319* (1974), p. 111.

<sup>44</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>46</sup> Bagge, Sverre: *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom* (2010), p. 63.

<sup>47</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>48</sup> See Helle, Knut: “The Norwegian kingdom: succession disputes and consolidation”. In: *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia* (2003), p. 380.

line of succession is always the first born son, born into wedlock, the second one is the next wedlock-born son, the third one is an illegitimate son and the last candidate is the grandson.<sup>49</sup> After having inherited about ninety years of internal conflict between his subjects and most importantly, just having crushed the open riot by Earl Skúli, it now was the responsibility of King Hákon to organise his retainers into a coherent system supporting his royal position. In the beginning of his sole reign in 1240, this proved to be rather difficult, because during his co-rulership with Earl Skúli, each ruler had their own circle that were loyal to their respective ruler.<sup>50</sup> This means that after the death of Earl Skúli, his retainers had to be integrated into King Hákon's own circle, eventually forming a "unique royal *hirð*"<sup>51</sup> consisting of Norway's social elite and aristocracy. To be respected and regarded as sole ruler required the complete and utter obedience of the *hirð*, which could have been difficult to obtain if some subjects still held on to old grudges and their loyalty to the deceased Earl Skúli and possible heirs.

In fact, the obedience of his retainers actually forms the main pillar of the king's power, socially and politically. Only with their support and their recognition of the distribution of power is it possible to lead a country successfully. This obedience is closely related and depending on the discipline within the *hirð* and whether they can respect the king and their responsibility that comes alongside their role in the *hirð*. As a matter of fact, King Hákon's own saga, the *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* (in the following referred to as *Hákonar saga*), is a good indicator of the lack of discipline that could be found in the royal *hirð*, since it provides a contemporary view of the situation of King Hákon's reign.

The saga was composed by the Icelandic writer, skald and lawspeaker Sturla Þórðarson (1214–1284), a nephew of the famous Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241) in 1265 on behalf of the son of the King Hákon, King Magnús *lagabætir*, whose own saga, *Magnús saga lagabætis*, was also composed by Sturla.<sup>52</sup> He must have based his work on documents from the royal archive in Bergen, which give a detailed description of the events during King Hákon's reign.<sup>53</sup> But, as is the case for the rest of the Old Norse genre of the *konunga sögur*, the sagas of the Norwegian kings, the *Hákonar saga* has to be regarded with caution and cannot be understood as an utterly reliable source of history. As opposed to the other *konunga sögur*, whose issue lies often with the vast difference of time between the historic events and the composition of the equivalent

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<sup>49</sup> See Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat 1130–1319* (1974), p. 116.

<sup>50</sup> See Brégaunt, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed* (1996), p. 91 and see Kalinke, Marianne E.: "The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 9.

<sup>53</sup> See Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat 1130–1319* (1974), p. 108.

sagas, the *Hákonar saga* was written only shortly after the death of King Hákon in 1263, thereby providing enough witnesses and other sources to form a dependable account. Its unreliability lies elsewhere and is twofold. Firstly, as already mentioned, Sturla was the nephew of Snorri Sturluson, whose murder was instigated by King Hákon.<sup>54</sup> Having been commissioned to write the saga of the king, the indirect murderer of his uncle, could have led to a personal conflict of interest for Sturla. Furthermore, the second problem lies with the fact that the son of the king and then current ruler King Magnús not only commissioned but most certainly must have also supervised the composition of the saga and acted as a witness for the author, which meant that it was inevitable for Sturla to portray the father of the king in a flattering light and that he had to rather glorify King Hákon's achievements.<sup>55</sup>

Whether or not the saga is truly authentic account for the actions of King Hákon, it certainly provides a convincing picture of the state of his *hirð* and its aforementioned lack of discipline and tendency towards violence. A reason for this issue lies in the drinking culture, which traditionally played an important role in Old Norse society and politics.<sup>56</sup> During the course of the saga, multiple instances paint a vivid picture of the lack of responsibility and misdemeanour under King Hákon's subjects. The first example is in direct relation to the king:

Arnbjörn Jónsson ok Loðinn Gunnason fóru norðr með konungi. Þeir lágu nökkurar nætr í Hornborusundi ok tóku þaðan út eitt kveld ok váru mjök drukknir. Um nóttina gerði veðr hvasst ok regn mikit í móti þeim. Sigldu þeir þá inn til hafna ok vissu þá eigi hvar þeir fóru.<sup>57</sup>

Arnbjorn John'sson and Lodin Gunni's son went north with the king. They lay some nights in Hornbora-sound, and took the sea thence one evening and they had all drunk hard. In the night very rough weather came on and rain in their teeth. They sailed in to shore to a harbour, and they knew not whither they were going.<sup>58</sup>

This excerpt shows the circumstances in 1221, when the nine-year-old King Hákon was traveling to Bergen.<sup>59</sup> Here, the king is onboard a ship whose crew was heavily drinking prior to departure. Of course, the weather conditions must not have helped the situation and navigating the ship must have been difficult. But nevertheless, their drunkenness in

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<sup>54</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *From Gang Leader to the Lord's Anointed* (1996), p. 92.

<sup>55</sup> See Brégaunt, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 223–224.

<sup>56</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>57</sup> Sturla Þórðarson: "Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar". In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar I* (2013), p. 241.

<sup>58</sup> "The Saga of Hacon, Hacon's son". Translated by G. W. Dasent (1894), p. 64.

<sup>59</sup> See Brégaunt, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 181.

combination with the weather was jeopardising King Hákon's life since they did not know where they were steering the ship.

Similar incidents also involving the heavy drinking of King Hákon's subjects manifested themselves in the town of Bergen. On two different occasions, *Hákonar saga* reports about excessive drinking in Bergen: “Þá váru drykkjur miklar í bænum.”<sup>60</sup> [Then there were great drinking bouts in town.]<sup>61</sup> This excess was even causing further problems: “Markt hark varð þar annat um sumarit fyrir ofdrykkju sakir, en allir hlutir fóru þá blíðliga milli konungs ok jarls.”<sup>62</sup> [There was much other uproar that summer for drunkenness sake, but all things then went blithely between king and earl.]<sup>63</sup> This lack of discipline was not only reduced to the geographical confines of Norway. On the contrary, the Norsemen and their reputation were known in England and continental Europe. The speech of Cardinal William of Sabina (1184–1251), who was in Norway for King Hákon's coronation in 1247, shows what foreigners thought about Norwegians:

Mér var sagt at ek munda fá menn sjá. En þó at ek sæi nökkura þá mundi þeir vera líkari dýrum en mönnum í sinni atferð. En nú sé ek hér ótalligan her af þessu landsfólki, ok sýnisk mér með góðum atferðum. Svá sé ek ok hér mikinn her útlenzkra manna ok svá mikinn fjölda skipa at ek hefi eigi sét fleiri skip í einni höfn, ok trúi ek at flest öll hafi hingat komit með góðum hlutum hlaðin. Ek var mjök hræddr gerr at ek munda hér lítit brauð fá ok lítinn mat annan, en vandan þann sem væri. En nú sýnisk mér svá mikil gnótt af gæzku at bæði eru full af, hús ok skip. Sagt var mér ok at ek munda hér engan drykk fá nema blöndu eða vatn. En nú sé Guð lofaðr at ek sé hér alla hluti góða, þá sem til eru, ok betra er at hafa en missa.<sup>64</sup>

It was told me that I should here see few men; but even though I saw some, then they would be liker to beasts in their behaviour than to men; but now I see here a countless multitude of the folk of this land, and, as it seems to me, with good behaviour. So also I see here a great host of outlandish men; and such a crowd of ships that I have never seen more ships in one haven; and I trow also that almost all of them have come hither laden with good things. I was made much afraid that I should have here got little bread and little other food, and what there was of it bad; but nor there seems to me to be such a store of good things that ships and houses are full of them. It was also told me that I should get no drink here, save whey and water. But now praised be God, that I see all good things here which are to be had, and which are better to have than to miss.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Sturla Þórðarson: “Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar”. In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar II* (2013), p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> “The Saga of Hacon, Hacon's son”. Translated by G. W. Dasent (1894), p. 145.

<sup>62</sup> Sturla Þórðarson: “Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar”. In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar II* (2013), p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> “The Saga of Hacon, Hacon's son”. Translated by G. W. Dasent (1894), p. 146.

<sup>64</sup> Sturla Þórðarson: “Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar”. In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar II* (2013), p. 130.

<sup>65</sup> “The Saga of Hacon, Hacon's son”. Translated by G. W. Dasent (1894), p. 258–259.

This paragraph shows the clearly bad reputation that the Norwegian suffered abroad. The Cardinal speaks for example of the lack of civility in behaviour and food culture that he was warned about, most likely by Englishmen that he met during his travel over England as he was on his way to Norway.<sup>66</sup> After stating the prejudice that he held before his arrival, he swiftly corrects himself and emphasises his change of judgment and that the circumstances of his stay are indeed much different. The wealth and richness in goods and food and drink are not at all what he expected. Nevertheless, the sentiment shines through that England and continental Europe do not regard the Norsemen highly or as a civilised people, which might stem from their earlier experiences with the Vikings, known for their cruelty and crudeness.<sup>67</sup>

King Hákon must have been aware of his own people's reputation abroad. With this in mind and after having remained victorious against Earl Skúli in 1240 and having established stability within his realm, King Hákon can now put effort into improving his country's respectability as well as strengthening diplomatic relations with foreign countries and their leaders. In fact, his reign was characterised by extensive contact with foreign courts, princes and rulers. Under these important political contacts to continental Europe are among others the French king Louis IX (1214–1270) and the German emperor Frederick II (1194–1250).<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, an economic and political relation to England had already been established during the reign of King Sverrir, which was deepened during the reign of King Hákon.<sup>69</sup> He maintained a strong connection with King Henry III of England (1207–1272), who became King in 1216, only one year prior to King Hákon himself.<sup>70</sup>

One of the main characteristics of these foreign relations is based in the international trade, such as the import and export of goods. In the case of King Hákon, this trade is not solely restricted on the import of goods for consumption, like wheat or wine, but also includes the import of literature.<sup>71</sup> The king himself was described by the English monk Matthew of Paris (1200–1259), as a *bene litteratus*, a well learned person through extensive reading, who possessed a

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<sup>66</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> See Brégaïnt, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 190.

<sup>68</sup> See Marti, Suzanne: *Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Parceval Matter* (2010), p. 75.

<sup>69</sup> See Sif Ríkharrðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 10.

<sup>71</sup> For an overview on the trade between England and Norway see Ebel, Else: "Der Fernhandel von der Wikingerzeit bis in das 12. Jahrhundert in Nordeuropa nach altnordischen Quellen". In: *Untersuchungen zu Handel und Verkehr der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit in Mittel- und Nordeuropa* (1987), p. 266–312 and see Helle, Knut: *Kongesete og kjøpstad: fra opphavet til 1536*. Bergen (1982) and see Helle, Knut: "Anglo-Norwegian Relations in the Reign of Hákon Hákonsson". In: *Medieval Scandinavia* 1 (1968), p. 101–114.



great personal interest in literature.<sup>72</sup> This personal interest is for example displayed in the description of the final moments of King Hákon:

Í sóttinni lét hann fyrst lesa sér látínubækr. En þá þótti honum sér mikil mæða í at hugsa þar eftir hversu þat þýddi. Lét hann þá lesa fyrir sér norrænubækr nætr ok daga, fyrst heilagra manna sögur, ok er þær þraut lét hann lesa sér konungstal frá Hálfðani svarta ok síðan frá öllum Nóregskonungum, hverjum eftir anna. [...] Þá er lesit var konungatal framan til Sverris þá lét hann taka til at lesa Sverris sögu. Var hon þá lesin bæði nætr ok daga jafnan er hann vakði. [...] Nær miðri nótt var úti at lesa Sverris sögu [...].<sup>73</sup>

In the sickness he let Latin books be read to him at first. But then he thought it great trouble to think over what that (the Latin) meant. Then he let be read to him Norse books, night and day; first the Sagas of the saints; and when they were read out he let be read to him the tale of the kings from Halfdan the black, and so on of all the kings in Norway, one after the other. [...] When the tale of the kings was read down to Sverrir, then he let them take to reading Sverris's saga. Then it was read both night and day whenever he was awake. [...] Near midnight Sverrir's saga was read through.<sup>74</sup>

While resting on his death bed, the King's wish was to be read aloud to. First with Latin books, which were then followed by the traditional Old Norse literature: *heilagra manna sögur*, the sagas of the Saints, and the aforementioned *konunga sögur*, finishing with the saga of his own grandfather King Sverrir. This passage supports the idea of King Hákon as a friend of literature and maybe this personal interest in original Old Norse but also foreign literature was a contributing factor in the import of literature to Norway. As a matter of fact, King Hákon was not the only medieval Norwegian royal involved in importing literature. The wife of his grandson King Hákon Magnússon (1299–1319), Queen Eufemia (around 1280–1312), was responsible for the translation of *Eufemiavisor* (written in 1303–1312) and the verse novel *Hærra Ivan* (written probably in 1302) into Old Swedish.<sup>75</sup>

However, the reign of King Hákon was marked with the introduction and establishment of a new literary genre in Norway, the translated *riddarasögur*. These texts were imported to and translated at King Hákon's royal court in Bergen as part of his "kulturpolitischen Bestrebungen"<sup>76</sup> [cultural and political efforts], an endeavour that was rooted in two goals. The

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<sup>72</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: *King Arthur North-by-Northwest* (1981), p. 20. For an edition of Matthew of Paris' work see "Matthæus Parisiensis Monachi sancti Albani, Chronica Majora. Vol. IV, A.D. 1240 to A.D. 1247". Edited by Henri Richards Luard (1877), p. 652.

<sup>73</sup> Sturla Þórðarson: "Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar". In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar II* (2013), p. 261–262.

<sup>74</sup> "The Saga of Hacon, Hacon's son". Translated by G. W. Dasent (1894), p. 366–367.

<sup>75</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: "Höfische Unterhaltung und ideologisches Ziel. Das Beispiel der altnorwegischen *Parcevals saga*". In: *Die Aktualität der Saga* (1999), p. 63.

first intention has already been outlined previously and refers to King Hákon's outer political wish to strengthen his foreign relations. However, the second one refers to his inner political concerns for his kingdom, as will be shown in the following.

As was already mentioned before, the *hirð* of King Hákon was characterised by a lack of discipline and unwanted behaviour. Because of this, King Hákon aimed to educate his people “by promoting cultivated behaviour and introducing rules of etiquette at court”<sup>77</sup>. They were aimed at resolving the aforementioned issues of drinking and insubordination but were also “aimed at strengthening the loyalty of the aristocracy and channelling its excesses into service of the monarchy”<sup>78</sup>. In fact, this agenda also benefited his foreign enterprises, since an aristocracy with good behaviour is more competitive with other royal courts and his aim “to make the Norwegian a European people.”<sup>79</sup> Establishing new rules and a new set of norms and values as a form of social control also led to an enhancement of the power of the social elite as well as to a confirmation King Hákon's role as the *rex iustus*, the head of a state by the grace of God, and his inherent supremacy over the aristocracy.<sup>80</sup> This also becomes important with King Hákon's efforts to expand his realm in the region of the North Sea, the so-called “Norgesveldet”<sup>81</sup>. Under his reign, and shortly after his death, Iceland, Greenland and Scotland became part of the Norwegian crown, with the former struggling under this arrangement.<sup>82</sup> With Icelanders at his court as his subjects, it must have been important to King Hákon to establish a unified *hirð*.

These refined behaviours, rules of etiquette and norms and values were supposed to be implemented through the import of foreign literature and their translations into the translated *riddarasögur*, due to their content being exemplary of the desired behaviour.<sup>83</sup> During the reign of King Hákon as well as his successor King Magnús, other courtly literature was also composed in order to support this implementation and indoctrination of European standards. Included in this are for example the *Konungs skuggsjá*, a didactic text written around 1250 and

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<sup>77</sup> Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 1. This article is an online source without page numbers, this thesis therefore refers to paragraphs instead of pages in regard to this article in the following.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., paragraph 1.

<sup>79</sup> Fidjestøl, Bjarne: “Romantic reading at the court of Hákon Hákonarson”. In: *The Viking Collection 9: Selected Papers* (1997), p. 363.

<sup>80</sup> See Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 21.

<sup>81</sup> Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat 1130–1319* (1974), p. 118. For more about *Norgesveldet* see Imsen, Steinar: *The Norwegian domination and the Norse World c.1100–c.1400* (2010).

<sup>82</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>83</sup> See Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 21.

the *Hirðskrá*, a courtly code of law compiled between 1273 and 1277.<sup>84</sup> Especially the former text, but not exempting the latter, show a clear ideological agenda that is pointed towards the didactic goal of educating the courtiers.<sup>85</sup> Chapter six of this work will provide a more in-depth analysis of the contents of the aforementioned texts and their educational factor.

This points at the next section of this thesis. In the scholarly field of Old Norse studies, it is a still a topic of discussion, whether the originally intended purpose of translated *riddarasögur* was truly educational, as is the case in *Konungs skuggsjá*, or whether they were translated simply for their entertainment value. This thesis follows Bernd Kretschmer's opinion that the translated *riddarasögur* must have been entertaining to at least some degree in order to be able to have a didactic influence on the receiving group.<sup>86</sup> The following chapter will therefore provide an overview of the previous research on the field regarding translated *riddarasögur*, including the different schools of thought regarding their supposed intention for composition. It will also include an overview of the other subject areas that this work is based on and provide a review of the field of spatiality and studies of masculinity.

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<sup>84</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 184.

<sup>85</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: "Höfische Unterhaltung und ideologisches Ziel. Das Beispiel der altnorwegischen *Parcevals saga*". In: *Die Aktualität der Saga* (1999), p. 81.

<sup>86</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 37–39.

### 3. Previous Research

In the scholarly field of Old Norse studies, translated *riddarasögur* have not always occupied as much space as they do nowadays. However, the research on them reaches as far back as first editions of some of the translated *riddarasögur* being compiled by Eugen Kölbing in 1872, also containing a critical analytic commentary by Kölbing himself.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, Gustaf Cederschiöld also published editions of a variety of translated *riddarasögur*, such as for example his edition of *Erex saga* from 1880.<sup>88</sup> These works generally build the foundation of textual editions, thereby making the Old Norse texts accessible for researches in the twentieth century.

Even though the production of literary research on translated *riddarasögur* increased in the following century as opposed to the previous one, the beginning of the twentieth century still was rather influenced by the attitude of earlier researchers towards the sagas. The fact that translated *riddarasögur* were often overlooked in earlier research stems from their foreign origin and the general preference of scholar to work with native Old Norse literature, such as *Íslendingasögur*, the Sagas of Icelanders.<sup>89</sup> In addition to their foreignness, the lack of relevance was also attributed to their inferior style, which is neither at the level of their original Old French texts, nor comparable to the epic style of *Íslendingasögur* and were often regarded as dull and unoriginal.<sup>90</sup> A first thorough research which provided first insights on the literature in context of and their significance for their historical background was performed by Henry Goddard Leach in his monography *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* from 1921.<sup>91</sup> This was closely followed by works of Paul Schach, especially on the topic of the Old Norse *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* and its stylistic features, as well as their literary tradition in the 1960s.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, a decade later in 1977, Foster W. Blaisdell and Marianne Kalinke released translations of *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga*, from Old Norse into English.<sup>93</sup> Marianne Kalinke represents one of the most productive scholars in the field of translated *riddarasögur* and has published her own editions and translations of *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* in 1999, thereby updating

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<sup>87</sup> Kölbing, Eugen: *Riddarasögur: Parcevals saga, Valvers þátrr, Ívens saga, Mírmans saga* (1872).

<sup>88</sup> Cederschiöld, Gustaf: *Erex saga: etter handskrifterna* (1880).

<sup>89</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 31.

<sup>90</sup> See Eriksen, Stefka G.: “Courtly Literature”. In: *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Saga* (2017), p. 59.

<sup>91</sup> Leach, Henry Goddard: *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (1921).

<sup>92</sup> See for research by Schach: Schach, Paul: “Some Observations on the Influence of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* on Old Icelandic Literature”. In: *Old Norse Literature and Mythology* (1969), p. 81–129 and Schach, Paul: “Tristan and Isolde in Scandinavian ballad and Folktale”. In: *Scandinavian Studies* 36/4 (1964), p. 281–297.

<sup>93</sup> *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga. The Old Norse Versions of Chrétien de Troyes’s Erec and Yvain*. Translated and with an introduction by Foster W. Blaisdell and Marianne E. Kalinke (1977).

the until then predominant edition of Kölbing.<sup>94</sup> This work remains the current and most updated edition of these works and therefore also forms the basis of the Old Norse text as well as the English translation that is used in this thesis.

Kalinke also represents the most prominent figure in the school of thought that translated *riddarasögur* solely served the purpose of entertainment, rather than education, as some of the prologues of the translated *riddarasögur*, such as *Möttuls saga*, indicate: “til gamans ok skemtanar”<sup>95</sup> [as entertainment and diversion]<sup>96</sup>.<sup>97</sup> Another scholar that shares the same opinion is for example Gerd Wolfgang Weber. In his article “The decadence of feudal myth” (1986), he ascribes translated *riddarasögur* a more entertaining character.<sup>98</sup> This is opposed by the view that translated *riddarasögur* were not necessarily transmitted for their entertainment value but more in an educational effort, as was already mentioned in the previous chapter. Geraldine Barnes supports this opinion, stating that “the didactic value of the *riddarasögur* is an ‘ethical’ one rather than a ‘courtly’ one”<sup>99</sup> and is in accordance with the values of the previously mentioned *Konungs skuggsjá*. In relation to the latter text, Barnes also focused her work on the *Parcevals saga* and attributes it a particularly didactic role, comparing it to the values portrayed in the *Konungs skuggsjá*, even going so far as to calling it a *Riddara Skuggsjá*.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, Barnes names earlier scholars such as Rudolf Meissner and Henry Goddard Leach that share her opinion of the translated *riddarasögur* playing a didactic role, even if they recognise it more superficially on a courtly and not an ethical level.<sup>101</sup> In addition to this, Susanne Kramarz-Bein points in one of her articles at the duality of the *Parcevals saga* and attributes both an educational, as well as an entertainment factor.<sup>102</sup> This relates to Bernd Kretschmer’s reception model that he presents in his monography *Höfische und altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982). Here he describes how the Old Norse audience needs to be satisfied in their wish to be entertained, in order to be receptive to the educational element of the translated

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<sup>94</sup> *Erex saga, Ívens saga and Parcevals saga* in Kalinke, Marianne E. (ed.): *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999).

<sup>95</sup> *Möttuls saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: *King Arthur North-by-Northwest* (1981), p. 22–23.

<sup>98</sup> Weber, Gerd Wolfgang: “The decadence of feudal myth – towards a theory of *riddarasaga* and romance”. In: *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature* (1986).

<sup>99</sup> Barnes, Geraldine: “Some current issues in *riddarasögur* research”. In: *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* (1989), p. 78 and see Barnes, Geraldine: “The *riddarasögur* and Medieval European Literature”. In: *Medieval Scandinavia* 8 (1975).

<sup>100</sup> Barnes, Geraldine: “Parcevals Saga: Riddara Skuggsjá?”. In: *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* (1984).

<sup>101</sup> See Barnes, Geraldine: “Some current issues in *riddarasögur* research”. In: *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* (1989), p. 78. For Meissner see Meissner, Rudolf: *Die Strengleikar* (1902).

<sup>102</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Höfische Unterhaltung und ideologisches Ziel. Das Beispiel der altnorwegischen *Parcevals saga*”. In: *Die Aktualität der Saga* (1999), p. 63–84.

*riddarasögur*, meaning that both factors are extant and intentionally applied during the translation process.<sup>103</sup>

Overall, translated *riddarasögur* have been the subject of a number of reviews on Old Norse literature and literature history such as Jan de Vries' *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte* (1999), Heiko Uecker's *Geschichte der altnordischen Literatur* (2004), Phillip Pulsiano's and Kirsten Wolf's encyclopaedia *Medieval Scandinavia* (1993), Ármann Jakobsson's and Sverrir Jakobsson's *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (2017) and Jürg Glauser's contribution on translated *riddarasögur* in Rory McTurk's *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (2005).<sup>104</sup> Jónas Kristjánsson also reviews chivalric sagas in his literature overview *Eddas and Sagas* from 1997.<sup>105</sup>

A general shift in the history of research can be noted in the 1980s, as Katharina Seidel points out in her monography on the manuscript transmission of selected translated *riddarasögur*.<sup>106</sup> Around this time, the focus of scholars moved more towards the process of translation and how the works were received by the intended recipients or in other words, the court of King Hákon Hákonarson. Claudia Bornholdt has traced back the transmission of *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* from their Old French originals to their extant Old Norse versions in her contribution in Kalinke's anthology *The Arthur of the North* (2011).<sup>107</sup> But as pointed out before, Marianne Kalinke is again a key-figure in this regard. She describes the problem of manuscript transmission in regard to its authenticity and maintains the position that most of the changes that were made to the translated *riddarasögur*, which differentiate them to their original Old French templates, were carried out throughout the years of textual transmission.<sup>108</sup> She does not solely attribute the editorial work of the texts to the original translators of the translated *riddarasögur*, but rather to a joint effort with the Icelandic scribes that transmitted the sagas.<sup>109</sup> Again opposing this view, is Barnes. She bases her opinion on the theory that all changes of the

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<sup>103</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 37–39.

<sup>104</sup> Vries, Jan de: *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte* (2012) and Uecker, Heiko: *Geschichte der altnordischen Literatur* (2004) and *Medieval Scandinavia*. Phillip Pulsiano/Kristen Wolf (eds.) (1993) and Ármann Jakobsson/Sverrir Jakobsson (eds.): *The Routledge Research Companion to The Medieval Icelandic Sagas* (2017) and Glauser, Jürg: "Romance (Translated *riddarasögur*)". In: *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture* (2005), p. 372–387.

<sup>105</sup> Jónas Kristjánsson: *Eddas and Sagas. Iceland's Medieval Literature* (1997).

<sup>106</sup> See Seidel, Katharina: *Textvarianz und Textstabilität. Studien zur Transmission der Ívens saga, Erex saga und Parcevals saga* (2014), p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Bornholdt, Claudia: "The Old Norse-Icelandic Transmission of Chrétien de Troyes's Romances: *Ívens saga*, *Erex saga*, *Parcevals saga* with *Valvens Pátr*". In: *The Arthur of the North* (2011), p. 98–122.

<sup>108</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 22.

<sup>109</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 23, 31.

texts were conducted by the original Norwegian translator in the thirteenth century.<sup>110</sup> In her article “Translations at the court of King Hákon Hákonarson” (2011), Liliane Irlenbusch-Reynard takes the idea of the editing translator further and proposes that the translation of the Old French texts were a highly selective programme, only choosing texts that portray kingship and the king in a flattering light.<sup>111</sup> If any of the Old French texts did not follow the agenda of King Hákon to civilise his people, the texts were consciously not translated, as Irlenbusch-Reynard claims was the case for the Old French *Lancelot*.<sup>112</sup> Another explanation for the lack of textual evidence of *Lancelot* could be that it only existed in an oral tradition or that it simply did not survive the process of manuscript transmission through the centuries.<sup>113</sup> A more recent work on the topic of the question of transmission is Sif Ríkharðsdóttir’s monography *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), as well as Suzanne Marti’s Dissertation from 2010, called *Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Perceval Matter*.<sup>114</sup> Closely related to the subject of the transmission of the texts is the scholarly question of how the Old-Norse translated *riddarasögur* relate to their Old French originals, as in, how close is the textual evidence and where are differences or similarities. Bernd Kretschmer has addressed this topic in his previously mentioned monography and compared the Old French text to the Old Norse text in context of a variety of topics.<sup>115</sup>

But other focuses within the field of Old Norse studies have also produced noteworthy research. Specialising on the matter of historical context for example, rather than being literary scholars are the Norwegian historians Sverre Bagge and Knut Helle, who both composed works on the historical circumstances of the Middle Ages in Norway and the process of state formation.<sup>116</sup> On the same topic, with a more literary theoretical approach, David Brégaint analyses in his monography *Vox Regis* (2016) the royal communication in medieval Norway and also provides in-depth reviews of the historical situation surrounding translated *riddarasögur* and other Old Norse courtly literature, such as the *Konungs skuggsjá*.<sup>117</sup> The fact that the studies of translated

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<sup>110</sup> See Seidel, Katharina: *Textvarianz und Textstabilität. Studien zur Transmission der Ívens saga, Erex saga und Parcevals saga* (2014), p. 28.

<sup>111</sup> See Irlenbusch-Reynard, Liliane: “Translations at the Court of Hákon Hákonarson. A well planned and highly selective programme”. In: *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36/4 (2011), p. 387.

<sup>112</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 387–388, 392.

<sup>113</sup> See Simek, Rudolf: “Lancelot in Iceland”. In: *Les Sagas de chevaliers (Riddarasögur): Actes de la V<sup>e</sup> Conférence Internationale sur les Sagas* (1985), p. 212–213.

<sup>114</sup> Sif Ríkharðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012) and Marti, Suzanne: *Kingship, Chivalry and Religion in the Perceval Matter* (2010).

<sup>115</sup> Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982).

<sup>116</sup> Bagge, Sverre: *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom* (2010) and Bagge, Sverre: *From Gang Leader to the Lord’s Anointed* (1996) and Helle, Knut: *Norge blir en stat 1130–1319* (1974).

<sup>117</sup> Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016).

*riddarasögur* are closely related to the scholarly work on the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá* comes to no surprise. In fact, many scholars who have devoted their research to the study of translated *riddarasögur* also reviewed the latter texts to some extent. Hans Jacob Orning has for example done so in his article “The *Konungs skuggsjá* and the emergence of a new Elite in Thirteenth-Century Norway” (2018).<sup>118</sup> Additionally, on the topic of *Konungs skuggsjá*, Jens Eike Schnall has conducted an in-depth analysis on the didactic characteristics and purposes of the text.<sup>119</sup> Susanne Kramarz-Bein also contributed to the research on *Konungs skuggsjá* and focuses on the portrayal of courtliness within.<sup>120</sup> The topic of courtliness, especially in its historic context is also the main topic of focus for Joachim Bumke, as he demonstrates through his fundamental research in his monography *Höfische Kultur* (1997).<sup>121</sup> Similarly, Werner Paravicini has also conducted research on the historical background of medieval courtliness.<sup>122</sup> The topic of courtliness in the translated *riddarasögur* is often times in direct relation to the portrayal of the male hero of the saga. During the 1970s, the study of men and masculinities moved into the focus of research, which was inspired by the previously established and more researched women studies and which also found its way into Old Norse studies.<sup>123</sup> Especially the last few decades have shown a growing interest in the male hero.

The hero’s portrayal as a topic has been researched by Bjørn Bandlien in a multitude of his works, such as *Strategies of Passion* (2005).<sup>124</sup> He also composed his Dissertation in 2005 on the topic of masculinity in Old Norse society, also referring to courtly masculinities in Norway.<sup>125</sup> However, Bandlien does not remain the only Old Norse scholar concerned with the topic of Old Norse masculinity. Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock have compiled an anthology by the name of *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (2020) on this topic, spanning over multiple types of native Old Norse sagas and providing an overview on the theoretical background in their introduction to their work.<sup>126</sup> They have based their research on

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<sup>118</sup> Orning, Hans Jacob: “The *Konungs skuggsjá* and the Emergence of a new Elite in Thirteenth-Century Norway”. In: *Speculum septentrionale* (2018), p. 245–264.

<sup>119</sup> Schnall, Jens Eike: “Von der norwegischen *hirð* zu einem europäischen Hof: das Bildungsprogramm der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Arbeiten zur Skandinavistik* (2000) and Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000).

<sup>120</sup> Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 51–86.

<sup>121</sup> Bumke, Joachim: *Höfische Kultur* (1997).

<sup>122</sup> Paravicini, Werner: *Die Ritterlich-Höfische Kultur des Mittelalters* (2011).

<sup>123</sup> See Bandlien, Bjørn: *Man or Monster? Negotiations of Masculinity in Old Norse Society*. Dissertation (2005), p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> Bandlien, Bjørn: *Strategies of Passion* (2005) and Bandlien, Bjørn: “Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: ‘Erex Saga’ and ‘Ivens Saga’ in the World of Ormur Snorrason”. In: *Arthuriana* (2013), p. 6–37.

<sup>125</sup> Bandlien, Bjørn: *Man or Monster? Negotiations of Masculinity in Old Norse Society*. Dissertation (2005).

<sup>126</sup> Evans, Gareth Lloyd/Hancock, Jessica Clase (eds.): *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (2020).



the theories in the works of Rachel Aslop, Anette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon in their monography *Theorizing Gender* (2002) and Raewyn W. Connell's *Masculinities* (2005).<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, Carol J. Clover has provided interesting insights in a possible *one-gender-model* in Old Norse society in her essay "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe" (1993).<sup>128</sup>

Lastly, Jürg Glauser analyses the indigenous *riddarasögur*, a literary genre of Icelandic romances that contains motifs of the translated *riddarasögur*, in a context of spatiality in his monography *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983).<sup>129</sup> However, his research was conducted solely on the field of the Icelandic indigenous *riddarasögur* and not actually on the translated *riddarasögur*. This former genre is closely related to the latter, thereby making Glauser's research also interesting for this thesis. Similarly, Werner Schäfke's work is also concerned with the indigenous *riddarasögur*. In his monography *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), he analyses the portrayal of norms and values in context of the spatial semantics within the indigenous *riddarasögur*, therefore forming the main theoretical text of this thesis.<sup>130</sup>

More in the field of translated *riddarasögur*, Sarah Bowden and Susanne Friede compiled an anthology by the name of *Arthurian Literature XXXVI. Sacred Space and Place in Arthurian Romance* (2021) on the topic of space within Arthurian literature, in which their introduction provides an overview on their definition of spaces.<sup>131</sup> But the most important scholar that must be named in the context of spatiality is undoubtedly Juri M. Lotman and his ground-breaking work *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1977, originally 1972), who defined space as a narrative element.<sup>132</sup>

This chapter has introduced some of the mainstreams in the research of Old Norse literature, as well as the other theoretical works that are used in this thesis. It was established that there were different focuses in research, such as the transmission of translated *riddarasögur* or the comparison to their Old French originals. For the purpose of this thesis, the latter is not necessarily of concern, it rather connects on the literary analysis in context of the studies of space and masculinity, as will be explained in the following chapter.

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<sup>127</sup> Aslop, Rachel/Fitzsimmons, Anette/Lennon, Kathleen: *Theorizing Gender* (2002) and Connell, Raewyn W.: *Masculinities* (2005).

<sup>128</sup> Clover, Carol J.: "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe". In: *Speculum* 68/2 (1993), p. 363–387.

<sup>129</sup> Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas. Studien zur Prosaliteratur im spätmittelalterlichen Island* (1983).

<sup>130</sup> Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013).

<sup>131</sup> Bowden, Sarah/Friede, Susanne: "Introduction". In: *Arthurian Literature XXXVI. Sacred Space and Place in Arthurian Romance* (2021), p. 1–11.

<sup>132</sup> Lotman, Juri M.: *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1977).

## 4. Theory and Methodology

As was already established in the former chapters, the main focus of this thesis will be on the different settings within some of the translated *riddarasögur* in relation to the portrayal of the hero's masculinity. In order to follow this goal and perform a detailed literary analysis of *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, it is necessary to first establish the theoretical groundwork that this thesis is based on. Therefore, this chapter introduces the different theoretical approaches, as well as the subsequent methodology that is applied on this thesis.

### 4.1. Spatiality and Spatial Semantics

In the case of this thesis, the term spatiality does not solely refer to physical space within the translated *riddarasögur*, such as specific landscapes or buildings, but rather refers to the complex semantic meaning that each of the different physical spaces carry for the story and that are necessary for the portrayal of development of the hero. When talking about the matter of spatiality and setting, it is inevitable to come across Russian literary scholar and semiotician Juri M. Lotman. He shaped the literary science of narratology with his work *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, originally from 1972 and translated into English in 1977. In this work, he established his model of spatiality and its relation to the text and defined space as a narratological element within the text. He describes that plot is developed through an event, which is created by the transgression of spaces by the hero and that this event can only occur when the hero is outside of his assigned space.<sup>133</sup> Other scholars have summarised and explained his theory through their own words in their works, such as Michael Titzmann with his article (2003) on literary semiotics [Literatursemiotik]. Similarly, Armin Schulz also refers to Lotman's work in his introductory work *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2015), in which he applies Lotman's theory in a medieval literary context. In the following, both Titzmann and Schulz will be referred to in order to present Lotman's model.

Firstly, Lotman defines a narratological event as “the shifting of a persona across the borders of a semantic field”<sup>134</sup>. This definition, however, demands further explanation, since it introduces the terms border and semantic field, which need to be defined individually. A literary world can be divided into textual segments that each get charged with semantic characteristics

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<sup>133</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 231–239.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

that differentiate these segments from each other.<sup>135</sup> A semantic characteristic would bestow the segment with meaning and could be, for example in the context of this thesis, “courtly” and “uncourtly”, thereby making a binary distinction between these segments and creating a semantic space each. Titzmann defines semantic space, on the basis of Lotman, as follows:

(3.) Ein semantischer Raum  $sR_1$  ist ein semantisch-ideologisches Teilsystem einer dargestellten Welt, wobei gilt:

(3.1.) Dieses System  $sR_1$ , besteht aus einer beliebig umfänglichen Menge von (untereinander korrelierten) Merkmalen (zum Beispiel ontologischen, biologischen, sozialen, psychischen usw. Gegebenheiten).

(3.2.) Diese Menge  $sR_1$  steht zu (mindestens) einem anderen semantischen Raum  $sR_2$  bezüglich (potentiell beliebig vieler, aber mindestens) eines Merkmals in Opposition.

(3.3.) Diese Opposition gilt entweder schon vortextuell-kulturell (im epochalen kW [kulturelles Wissen]) als relevant oder wird erst im Text(segment) selbst als relevant gesetzt. Das heißt, diese Opposition markiert eine Grenze, deren Überschreitung (kulturell oder textuell) als nicht trivial gesetzt ist, sei es, daß sie eine wesentliche Zustandsveränderung für die Figur mit sich bringt, sei es, daß sie sanktioniert wird, sei es, daß sie als selten / unwahrscheinlich / unmöglich gilt. Die Zugehörigkeit zu einem  $sR_1$  ist die Regel der dargestellten Welt, der Übergang von  $sR_1$  zu  $sR_{non-1}$  die Abweichung.<sup>136</sup>

(3.) A semantic space  $sS_1$  is a semantic-ideological subsystem of a represented world, where holds:

(3.1.) This system  $sS_1$ , consists of an arbitrarily circumferential set of (mutually correlated) features (for example, ontological, biological, social, psychological, etc. conditions).

(3.2.) This set  $sS_1$  is in opposition to (at least) one other semantic space  $sS_2$  with respect to (potentially any number of, but at least) one feature.

(3.3.) This opposition is either already considered relevant pre-textually-culturally (in epochal ck [cultural knowledge]) or is only set as relevant in the text(segment) itself. That is, this opposition marks a border, the transgression of which (culturally or textually) is set as non-trivial, be it that it entails a substantial change of state for the figure, be it that it is sanctioned, be it that it is considered rare / improbable / impossible. Belonging to an  $sS_1$  is the rule of the represented world, the transition from  $sS_1$  to  $sS_{non-1}$  the deviation.

According to Titzmann, a semantic space consists of certain characteristics that correlate to each other, which can be for example social or biological. This semantic space exists in the literary text together with other semantic spaces, which in turn also consist of characteristics that could potentially oppose the characteristics of the first semantic space. And this opposition marks a border between those spaces, which, as was shown through Lotman earlier, needs to be crossed

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<sup>135</sup> See Schulz, Armin: *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2015), p. 176.

<sup>136</sup> Titzmann, Michael: “Semiotische Aspekte der Literaturwissenschaft: Literatursemiotik” (2003), p. 3077.

by the protagonist in order to create a narratological event, a point in the plot.<sup>137</sup> The juxtaposition of these events then forms the plot of the literary text, which can “always be reduced to a basic episode – the crossing of the basic topological border in the plot’s spatial structure”<sup>138</sup>. A border can be marked through its physical aspects, like for example a wall, a spatial metaphor, as the “iron curtain”, or can constitute its own space, like a city representing a border space between the life and death.<sup>139</sup> Through this definition, it thereby becomes evident that literary spaces can be “understood as narrative constructs that present social norms and values and their cultural order”<sup>140</sup>, since the crossing of the semantical spaces and their inherent values creates the narrative event.

This crossing of semantic borders, however, can only be performed by the hero of the story because they exhibit a certain kind of relation to spatiality and stand out of their own semantic field, which is indicated by their characterisation.<sup>141</sup> The hero already possesses certain characteristics that semantically belong to the contrary semantic field, which allow him, according to Schulz, to use raw force in the uncourtly outside-space despite of his civility and refined manners.<sup>142</sup> The division between courtly and uncourtly and their allocation to inside-space and outside-space is made by Schulz, since he points to the fact that topographical and semantic spaces can sometimes coincide. This means that a setting within the text, such as a castle, could be connected to semantic space charged with a certain meaning that was established by the text, which he summarises by the example of “ein höfisches ‘Innen’ und ein nicht-, außer- und vorhöfisches ‘Außen’”<sup>143</sup> [a courtly “inside” and an uncourtly ‘outside’] in a medieval context. Lotman’s theory is especially suited to be applied on medieval texts, since it established the basic model of spatial semantics without being too formalised, thereby not forcing texts into a rigid grid of analysis and instead giving them enough freedom to still be able to take the nuances of individuality between the different texts into consideration.<sup>144</sup>

For this reason, other scholars apart from Schulz, have also applied Lotman’s concept of spatial semantics on their own works in the field of medieval courtly literature. Karin Boklund for example has based an intriguing study of continental courtly romance on Lotman’s theory of space, which she presents in her article “On the Characteristics of Courtly Romance” (1977).

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<sup>137</sup> See Schulz, Armin: *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2015), p. 176.

<sup>138</sup> Lotman, Juri M: *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1977), p. 238.

<sup>139</sup> See Krah, Hans: “Räume, Grenzen, Grenzüberschreitungen”. In: *Kodikas/Code 22/1* (1999), p. 6.

<sup>140</sup> Bowden, Sarah/Friede, Susanne: “Introduction”. In: *Arthurian Literature XXXVI* (2021), p. 7.

<sup>141</sup> See Schulz, Armin: *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2015), p. 181 and see Krah, Hans: “Räume, Grenzen, Grenzüberschreitungen”. In: *Kodikas/Code 22/1* (1999), p. 7.

<sup>142</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>144</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 183.

Even though it is not a recent study, it is still important in the context of spatial analysis, since it makes the application of Lotman's theory on medieval courtly texts visible and opens up a methodological approach that could also be applied to this thesis. In her text, she refers to another one of Lotman's texts and states that courtly romance belongs to spatial category that is "characterizing the place, disposition and activity of a man in the surrounding world"<sup>145</sup>.<sup>146</sup> This means, that the crossing of the border by the hero is the result of a breach in the boundary that has already occurred, such as a normal activity of the court that brought it close to the border and provoked a confrontation, or an external power confronting the courtly space.<sup>147</sup> In order to re-establish the boundary that was breached by the outside, the hero has to cross it and embark on his quest.<sup>148</sup> With this in mind, Boklund then analyses the crossing of the boundaries in different continental courtly romances, such as the works of Chrétien de Troyes. This approach is also utilised by Jürg Glauser in his work *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983) but applied on the native Old Norse literary genre of indigenous *riddarasögur*, that were partly inspired by translated *riddarasögur*.<sup>149</sup>

A similar approach can also be found in Werner Schäfke's *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* from 2013. In his work, Schäfke applies the concept of spatial semantics on indigenous *riddarasögur*, like Glauser, in order to visualise the inherent systems of norms and values within the texts and to interreference them, since moral values can be reconstructed through spatial semantics.<sup>150</sup>

Since the concept of spatial semantics has already been described earlier, Schäfke agrees with Boklund's application of Lotman's theory, in which the hero's crossing of a border is the direct result of an earlier breach between two semantic spaces, calling this process "Ereignistilgung"<sup>151</sup> [eradication of the event]. He divides this process in four different possibilities, the first one is the return [die Rückkehr], the second is the recovery model [das Beuteholerschema], the third is the absorption in the opposite space [das Aufgehen im Gegenraum] and lastly the meta-eradication [die Metatilgung]:

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<sup>145</sup> Lotman, Juri M.: "On the metalanguage of a typological description of culture". In: *Semiotica* (1975), p. 102.

<sup>146</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 9.

<sup>147</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>148</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>149</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 10f.

<sup>150</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27f.

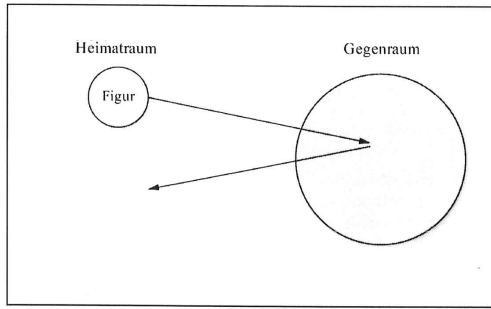


Abbildung 9: Typen der Ereignistilgung: erstens, die Rückkehr

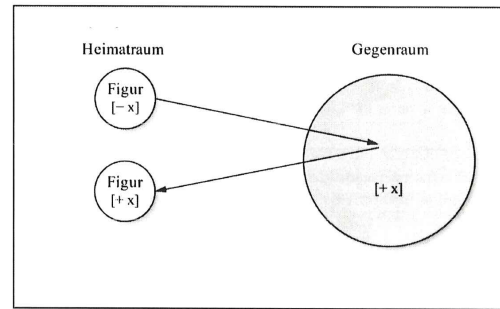


Abbildung 10: Typen der Ereignistilgung: zweitens, das Beuteholerschema

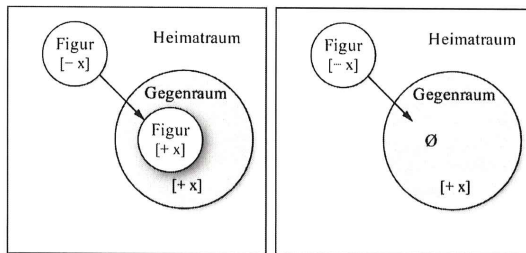


Abbildung 11: Typen der Ereignistilgung: drittens, das Aufgehen im Gegenraum. Links: Aufgehen im Gegenraum durch Anpassung der Merkmalsstruktur. Rechts: Aufgehen im Gegenraum durch Tilgung des grenzüberschreitenden Elements.

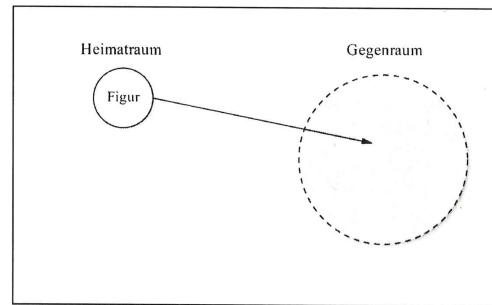


Abbildung 12: Typen der Ereignistilgung: viertens, die Metatilgung

Fig. 1: Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

The first model simply describes the return of the hero from the other semantic spaces, which in turn re-establishes the earlier breach. The second adds the factor of the hero having to retrieve something he misses from his original space, whereas the third refers to the hero adapting to the new space and accepting the new characteristics. This is followed by the meta-eradication [die Metatilgung], which describes a change in the structure of the space caused by the crossing of the border. Both Glauser and Schäfke assign the usual organisation of the stories of indigenous *riddarasögur* to the second concept of the eradication of the event [Ereignistilgung], the recovery model since the texts often consist of the hero's lack of semantic characteristics or literary entities like other figures or objects and his crossing of the border in order to retrieve it from another semantic space.<sup>152</sup>

However, when it comes to the definition of characteristics of a semantic space Schäfke's method differs from that of Boklund and Glauser. Schäfke generally differentiates between two semantic spaces, the first one being abstract, containing concepts such as lawfully vs. unlawfully, and the second one describing concrete semantic spaces such as the court vs. the countryside.<sup>153</sup> On the premise of this distinction, he then refers to Boklund and Glauser and

<sup>152</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 28–29 and see Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 156–158.

<sup>153</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 27.

points out that their methodology consists only of the concept of abstract semantic spaces.<sup>154</sup> In their research, the position of the literary figure in concrete space is not taken into consideration and spaces are only differentiated by adorning them with abstract attributes such as courtly characteristics.<sup>155</sup> This leads to a simple division between the binary opposition of courtly vs. uncourtly, to which all other positive or negative characteristics can be attached accordingly.<sup>156</sup> Schäfke then instead presents the solution of dividing spaces into three individual semantic spaces, which would include social space [sozialer Raum], moral space [moralischer Raum] and concrete space [konkreter Raum]:

	Before Quest	During Quest
Social Space	(+ noble)	(+ noble)
Moral Space	(+ courtly)	(– courtly)
Concrete Space	(+ at court)	(– at court)

Fig. 2: After Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 51.

This model is divided into a pre-stage and a current stage of the quest, that each then is marked with the negative or positive characteristics of the individual semantic space, such as noble for the social space, courtly for the moral space and the royal court for the concrete space. With this differentiation into three spaces, Schäfke’s model or “Merkmalsmatrix”<sup>157</sup> [matrix of characteristics] as he calls it, leaves space for potential moral ambiguity of the hero, instead of reducing morality to the already positively established social standing of being noble.<sup>158</sup> Boklund and Glauser’s model also attaches morality to concrete space, thereby creating a “Gesinnungsort”<sup>159</sup> [space of disposition], which together with the factor of social standing then only leaves two opposing variables, the courtly and uncourtly that only provides a limited understanding to the spatial concepts of the texts.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>154</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>155</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>156</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 52 and see Schäfke, Werner: “The ‘Wild East’ in Late Medieval Icelandic Romances: Just a Prop(p)?”. In: *Á austrvega: Saga and East Scandinavia* (2009), p. 849.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>158</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 51ff.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>160</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 51ff.

## 4.2. Gender and Masculinity

After the theoretical framework of this thesis on the topic of space and setting has been presented, the following part will focus on the theory behind the concept of masculinity.

The study of gender and their role in literature is very contemporary research that has especially been growing since the twentieth century and used to focus on the role of women in literature, which gradually changed towards the role of men. It has also found its way into the field medieval studies, in which Jo Ann McNamara has first coined the term “Herrenfrage”<sup>161</sup> [question of men], in opposition to the then already existing *Frauenfrage* [question of women], to describe the question concerning the development of masculinity in medieval Europe of the twelfth century. The question of the literary role of men and portrayal of masculinity has also been made subject in the context of Old Norse literature. Here, Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock made multiple contributions with the most recent one being a compilation under the name *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (2020) that focuses on native Old Norse literature. In the introduction to this compilation, they also refer to the aforementioned works *Theorizing Gender* (2002) and *Masculinities* (2005) and provide an overview to the definition and concept of masculinity. The former states that “gender refers to the cultural understandings and representations of what it is to be a man or a woman”<sup>162</sup>. Evans and Hancock interpret this statement and define gender simplistically to: “Femininity is the term used to classify those behaviours, acts and styles which are generally associated with being a woman; ‘masculinity’ is the term used to classify those behaviours, acts, and styles generally associated with being a man.”<sup>163</sup> Moreover, they differentiate between four foundational rules concerning gender. The first one is that “*Gender is socially constructed*”<sup>164</sup>, which means that “gendered significance accorded to certain acts and behaviours is created relationally, between gendered subjects, within the context of the social organization in which they are found”<sup>165</sup>. In other words, in order to create gender, there has to be a social structure that awards acts and behaviours with gendered significance. This is followed by the second rule, which states that “*Gender is performative*”<sup>166</sup>, meaning that gender is produced by the repetition of acts that were given

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<sup>161</sup> McNamara, Jo Ann: “The *Herrenfrage*. Structuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150”. In: *Medieval masculinities. Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (1994), p. 3.

<sup>162</sup> Aslop, Rachel/Fitzsimmons, Anette/Lennon, Kathleen: *Theorizing Gender* (2002), p. 3.

<sup>163</sup> Evans, Gareth Lloyd/Hancock, Jessica Clase: “Introduction”. In: *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (2020), p. 2.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. Italicized by the original authors.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. Italicized by the original authors.



gendered meaning by its social context and that these acts are performed on the basis of identity scripts.<sup>167</sup> This also implies that the performance of gender is not necessarily tied to a body form, meaning that a male-sexed character could also act feminine.<sup>168</sup> Additionally, Evans states the third rule saying that “*Identity is intersectional*”<sup>169</sup> which refers to the fact that masculinity or gender is only one aspect of a character’s identity. Lastly, the fourth rule concludes that “*Masculinities are multiple*”<sup>170</sup>. This means that different contexts produce different types of masculinities, but also that a specific type of masculinity can be dominant or more culturally accepted in a certain context or genre.<sup>171</sup>

As was already established, the research that has been conducted on the topic of spatiality in the field of Old Norse and courtly literature has proven itself to be applicable on medieval texts but has so far restricted itself to either continental courtly literature or indigenous *riddarasögur*. The same can be said in terms of research of masculinity concerning Old Norse literature, specifically translated *riddarasögur*. Thus, this thesis builds upon the aforementioned theories and will apply them on the three texts. Chapter eight of this thesis therefore defines the different spaces and how they are semantically charged, while chapter nine applies Schäfke’s model of the eradication of the event together with his matrix of characteristics on the depiction of the hero within the different spaces, as his model is the most compelling due to the closeness of the two literary genres of indigenous and translated *riddarasögur*. Though his matrix is separated into a pre- and current stage of the quest, this thesis is not solely focused on the depiction of the hero in context of this quest and will therefore refrain from a binary separation and will instead utilize Schäfke’s characteristics of the hero (+/- noble), (+/- courtly) and (+/- at court) in context of all the different spaces of the sagas, regardless of whether the hero is on a quest or not. The analysis of the hero’s depiction is based on chapter six and seven, in which the hero’s masculinity is being defined on the basis of Evans’ and Hancock’s aforementioned points. Even though their research is focused on the literary portrayal of masculinity in native Old Norse literature, their general statements that were explained earlier are compelling and also applicable on the field of translated *riddarasögur*. These two chapters therefore make evident, what an ideal hero consists of and how the norms and values come into place through translated *riddarasögur* and Old Norse courtly literature.

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<sup>167</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>168</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. Italicized by the original authors.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4. Italicized by the original authors.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, refers to R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 77 and Aslop, Fitzsimons, Lennon *Theorizing Gender*, p. 136–44.

## 5. The Primary Sources and their Manuscript Transmission

The following chapter aims to introduce and provide an overview of the main primary literature, and their editions that were utilised in this thesis, as well as an exposition of their extant manuscripts.

To begin with, the first primary work that has already been utilised in the thesis is the *Hákonar saga*. The edition that was used in this thesis, due to it being the most recent and normalised edition of the text, is part of the *Íslensk fornrit* from 2013. It was edited by Þorleifur Hauksson and Sverrir Jakobsson and is based on the *Flateyjarbók* manuscript GKS 1005 fol from the late fourteenth century, the *Skálholtsbók* manuscript AM 81 a fol from around 1450–1475, with lacunae substituted by Holm perg 8 fol, written around 1340–1370 and AM 325 X 4° from around 1370.<sup>172</sup> All in all, the text is extant in fifteen copies, with the oldest three manuscripts written between 1300 and 1325 and the youngest from the seventeenth century, none of them stemming from Norway.<sup>173</sup>

As for the translated *riddarasögur*, it was already briefly explained in the first chapter that the translated *riddarasögur*, specifically *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, are prose texts that are based on the Old French verse novels of Chrétien de Troyes, namely *Erec et Enide* (1170), *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion* (1179) and *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* (1180–1190). This saga genre is unique to the Old Norse literary corpus, since its content does not stem from an Old Norse tradition but was rather obtained from medieval continental Europe.<sup>174</sup> During their time of composition, however, Old Norse literature already had a long tradition of prose narratives.<sup>175</sup> This longstanding tradition led to the fact that by that time, the Old Norse audience was generally more used to prose narratives, which must have persuaded the original Old Norse translator of the translated *riddarasögur* to change the verse novels into prose texts and to thereby make the texts more palatable, as well as also more accessible to the Old Norse audience.<sup>176</sup> Accessibility, in this case, means the ability to comprehend a text and its underlying message, since the texts were most likely part of an educational programme by King

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<sup>172</sup> See Þorleifur Hauksson/Sverrir Jakobsson: “Formáli”. In: *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar I and II* (2013), p. lx. The spelling of the manuscripts in this thesis is taken from the online database of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. A reference to where the mentioned manuscripts can be found is in the bibliography of this thesis.

<sup>173</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 256.

<sup>174</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> See Barnes, Geraldine: “Arthurian Chivalry in Old Norse”. In: *Arthurian Literature* 7 (1987), p. 60.

<sup>176</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 7.

Hákon to establish a refined courtly ideal to which the courtiers should strive.<sup>177</sup> However, as was already brought up in the chapter three, the debate between scholars whether the purpose of the translated *riddarasögur* was purely educational, for entertainment or maybe a combination of both is still ongoing. The reasoning of Bernd Kretschmer that texts must have been entertaining at least to some degree, in order to be educational, such as other contemporary Old Norse courtly literature that will be presented later in this chapter, leads the assumption that the educational factor weighs heavier than the entertainment factor seems plausible.<sup>178</sup>

The actual composition and textual transmission of the translated *riddarasögur* in Norway and Iceland, however, proves itself to be rather problematic. All of the three sagas are generally believed to have been commissioned by King Hákon and composed at his court in Bergen during his reign, which means between 1217 and 1263.<sup>179</sup> In fact, *Ívens saga* actually provides textual proof of the assumption, since it finishes with the words: “Ok lýkr hér sögu herra Íven er Hákon kóngr gamli lét snúa ór franzeisu í norrænu.”<sup>180</sup> [And the saga of Sir Íven ends here, which King Hákon the Old had ordered translated from French into Norse.]<sup>181</sup> However, the epithet “the Old” indicates a distinction between King Hákon and his son Hákon Hákonarson *hinn ungi* (1232–1257) or his grandson King Hákon Magnússon (1270–1319) and was not used during the reign of King Hákon, thereby making the authenticity of this reference questionable.<sup>182</sup> Possible explanations for the addition of the reference to King Hákon could be either that only *gamli* was added at a later point, since the distinction became necessary during the reign of King Hákon Magnússon or that the whole reference to King Hákon was made by an Icelandic scribe in the transmission process, but still refer to the true patronage. Another possibility could be that the reference is simply a topos that was used to attribute the work to King Hákon in an attempt to make it a part of the corpus of royal literature. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir sees no reason to question the authenticity of the latter addition, since other works also refer to King Hákon.<sup>183</sup> It therefore seems plausible to not consider the reference as part of the original Old Norse adaptation, but to trust in the genuineness of its reference to King Hákon, since other manuscripts, such as De La Gardie 1–4 from around 1270, containing the courtly literature by

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<sup>177</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 38 and see Fidjestøl, Bjarne: “Romantic reading at the court of Hákon Hákonarson”. In: *The Viking Collection 9: Selected Papers* (1997), p. 362.

<sup>178</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 37–39.

<sup>179</sup> See Barnes, Geraldine: “Parcevals saga”. In: *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopaedia* (1993), p. 496.

<sup>180</sup> *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 98.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>182</sup> See Sif Ríkharðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 82 and see Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Introduction”. [*Ívens saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 35.

<sup>183</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 82. Other translated *riddarasögur* that contain a reference to King Hákon as a patron are *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, *Möttuls saga* and *Elíss saga ok Rósamundar*.

the name of *Strengleikar*, also refer to King Hákon, thereby proving a long-lasting tradition of referencing King Hákon as a patron of literature.<sup>184</sup>

The saga follows the knight Íven who in the first story cycle sets out to restore the honour of one of his relatives, after he tells a story at the court of King Arthur in which he lost a fight with a knight at a magical spring. He defeats the knight and follows him to his castle where he also marries his widow through the help of her servant Lúneta. Afterwards, he leaves her castle to go on knightly adventures, however, he misses the date which his lady has set for his return. After this realisation and a message of his lady telling him about her loss of love for him, he sets out again, thereby commencing the second cycle, to redeem his honour and her love through a number of adventures which result in his friendship with a lion and his transformation into the Knight of the Lion. In this form, he can show his lady that he is worthy of her love and that he has regained his honour so that he can finally return to her castle.

Concerning the manuscript transmission of *Ívens saga*, the text is not extant in any contemporary manuscripts of its supposed time of composition but is found in fifteen copies of manuscripts, of which three are important.<sup>185</sup> The first primary manuscript is Holm perg 6 4°, which stems from the early fifteenth century, the second is AM 489 4°, stemming from around 1450 and lastly, the third is Holm papp 46 fol from 1690.<sup>186</sup> The youngest edition of the text was made by Marianne Kalinke in 1999 and is mainly based on the former manuscript. Since both of the first two manuscripts are defective, the edition switches between them to fill in the lacunae and also occasionally refers to a paper manuscript with the signature of Add MS 4857 from between 1669 and 1670.<sup>187</sup> All texts in Kalinke's edition follow the form of manuscript criticism after the Lachmann-model, which is split into a *recensio*, the best possible option of a manuscript, as in that comes closest to the original manuscript, in Kalinke's case Holm perg 6 4°, and an *emendatio*, other texts that, for example in case of lacunae, are referenced to improve the established best possible text, which in this case are AM 489 4° and Add MS 4857.<sup>188</sup> The relationship between the individual extant manuscripts can then be depicted in the form of a *stemma codicum*, similar to a genealogical family tree that leads back to a collective archetype manuscript of the text, which, however, is not necessarily of concern for this thesis since it does

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<sup>184</sup> See *Strengleikar: an Old Norse translation of twenty-one Old French lais*. Translation by Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane (1979), p. 4. The manuscript De La Gardie 4–7 is generally known under this name but is referenced as DG 4–7 in the bibliography after the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*.

<sup>185</sup> See Sif Ríkhardsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 82.

<sup>186</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Introduction". [*Ívens saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 35.

<sup>187</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>188</sup> See Haugen, Odd Einar: "Textkritik und Textphilologie". In: *Handbuch der norrönen Philologie* (2020), p. 99–100.

not focus on the manuscript transmission of the sagas.<sup>189</sup> Kalinke's edition and translation is also based on a previous edition written by Foster Blaisdell in 1979 with whom she also translated *Ívens saga* and *Erex saga* in 1977.<sup>190</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, Kalinke's edition from 1999 was used since it revised the previous work made by Blaisdell in his edition and his and Kalinke's joint translation and thereby forms the most recent and updated edition that also contains an English translation.

Incidentally, the fifteenth-century main manuscript of *Ívens saga*, Holm perg 6 4°, an older codex of romances, also contains the entire translation of *Parcevals saga* and the additional text of *Valvens þátr*, which tells the tale of Gawain, a knight at King Arthur's court.<sup>191</sup> This saga also follows the young Parceval, who is characterised through his extreme lack of courtly behaviour since he grew up in a forest with his mother. He only learns how to be a courtly knight through Gormananz, who teaches him the virtues and abilities of a true knight. After his training, he sets out on his first adventure cycle and tries to test and apply his newly learned skills in numerous adventures, on one of which he meets his lady Blankiflúr, only to show eventually that he has not yet learned the right measure of the knightly norms and values. This becomes visible at the castle of the Fisher King, where he fails to ask a crucial question as he was taught to not speak too much in the company of strangers. Only after realising his mistake and asking for redemption during the second story cycle is he allowed to return to the castle of his lady.

Concerning the question of other extant manuscripts of this saga, *Parcevals saga* also exists in an additional fragment of a manuscript by the signature NKS 1794 b 4° from around 1350, as well as a number of paper manuscripts from the seventeenth century that all derived from Holm perg 6 4°.<sup>192</sup> The edition and translation of *Parcevals saga*, which is used in this thesis is again to be found in Kalinke's normalised edition from 1999, which also contains *Ívens saga* and *Erex saga*. However, this edition includes the text of *Valvens þátr*, also known as *The Tale of Sir Gawain*. Since this thesis is only concerned with the main text of *Parcevals saga* and its eponymous hero Parceval, the text of *Valvens þátr* with the hero Sir Gawain will not be analysed. Furthermore, it most probably is a newly composed ending that was added at a later

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<sup>189</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>190</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Introduction". [*Ívens saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 36. For Blaisdell's edition of *Ívens saga* see *Ívens saga*. In: Foster W. Blaisdell (ed.): *The saga of Ivens* (1979).

<sup>191</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Introduction". [*Parcevals saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 105.

<sup>192</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 105 and see Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: "Höfische Unterhaltung und ideologisches Ziel. Das Beispiel der altnorwegischen *Parcevals saga*". In: *Die Aktualität der Saga* (1999), p. 65.

point, thereby not making it part of the supposed original saga.<sup>193</sup> In any case, the use of Kalinke's edition is based on the fact that it represents the most recent edition of the text, including an English translation, as opposed to Eugen Kölbing's older edition from 1872. In the case of *Parcevals saga*, the text was edited by Kirsten Wolf and translated by Helen Maclean, whereas the other two sagas were both edited and translated by Marianne Kalinke. This edition of *Parcevals saga* by Kalinke is based on the vellum Holm perg 6 4°, with lacunae being supplemented by the fragment NKS 1794 b 4°.<sup>194</sup>

The last of the three translated *riddarasögur* that are analysed in this thesis is the *Erex saga*. This saga follows the story of Erex and is separated into two adventure cycles. In the first cycle, Erex joins a royal hunt during which his and the queen's honour is damaged. To repair it, he sets out and successfully fights the knight who committed the offense, while also meeting his later wife Evida. Upon their return to the court of King Artur, they get married. However, their married life of bliss is interrupted because of Erex suffering reproach by the other knights for his life of ease. In order to overcome this reproach, he sets out on his second adventure cycle together with his wife with various adventures which lead to him regaining his knightly abilities and to successfully return home to his father's court and becoming a king himself.

Concerning the history of textual transmission of *Erex saga*, it proves to be more complicated than the other two translated *riddarasögur*. In fact, *Erex saga* is only extant in Icelandic manuscripts from the post-medieval period.<sup>195</sup> The only complete version of the text can be found in two paper manuscripts from the seventeenth century, AM 181 b fol, which was written around 1650, and Holm papp 46 fol from 1690, also containing *Ívens saga*.<sup>196</sup> The former manuscript derives from Holm perg 6 4° and the latter stems from the so-called *Ormsbók*, both older manuscripts stemming from the fourteenth century.<sup>197</sup> Fragments of *Erex saga* also exist in the form of two vellum strips, Lbs 1230 III 8°, from around 1500.<sup>198</sup> Again, for the purpose of this thesis, both the Old Norse version and English translation in Marianne Kalinke's 1999 edition were used because it represents the most updated and recent edition. She based her

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<sup>193</sup> See Brügger Budal, Ingvil: "A wave of reading women: The purpose and function of the translated French courtly literature in thirteenth-century Norway". In: *Riddarasögur* (2014), p. 132.

<sup>194</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Introduction". [*Parcevals saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 105.

<sup>195</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Introduction". [*Erex saga*] In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 219.

<sup>196</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>197</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 220. The original manuscript of *Ormsbók* burned in the fire of 1697 in Stockholm.

<sup>198</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 219. For an in-depth overview of extant manuscripts of all three sagas see Seidel, Katharina: *Textvarianz und Textstabilität. Studien zur Transmission der Ívens saga, Erex saga und Parcevals saga* (2014), p. 65–117.

edition on the manuscript AM 181 b fol, as well as Foster W. Blaisdell's critical edition from 1965, which also used AM 181 b fol, and their joint translation from 1977.<sup>199</sup>

After presenting the manuscript tradition of the translated *riddarasögur*, it becomes evident that at least some of the manuscripts of *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, such as Holm perg 6 4° from the fifteenth-century, are relatively close to their supposed timeframe of composition during the reign of King Hákon. When comparing this to the circumstances surrounding the transmission of *Erex saga*, a gap becomes visible that stretches around four hundred years between the middle of the thirteenth century and the only intact manuscripts from the seventeenth century. Additionally, the manuscripts are of Icelandic provenance exclusively, which leads to the question whether the text can be considered as a true Norwegian translation or simply an Icelandic redaction of the original text.<sup>200</sup> The time difference between composition and the extant manuscripts also relates back to Kalinke's work on the question of manuscript transmission that was previously mentioned in the chapter three. In such a vast timeframe, the text must have been edited by Norwegian and Icelandic copyists at least to some extent, such as in the form of additions or omissions.<sup>201</sup> This therefore opens the additional question, whether all of the extant manuscripts of the three translated *riddarasögur*, especially *Erex saga*, depict a true picture of the thirteenth-century Norwegian court, or whether the manuscripts rather represent the circumstances of their respective composition, as in for example the fifteenth- or seventeenth-century Iceland, which would be a very different milieu due to the geography, population, time period and political circumstances.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, when working with the texts *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, it must be considered that the cultural context that they present has been subjected to multiple generations of cultural influence during their textual tradition, consequently not necessarily depicting the true picture of their original compositions in thirteenth century Norway.<sup>203</sup>

However, the situation of the textual transmission of the other Old Norse texts, which are included in the main corpus of this thesis, is very different compared to that of the translated *riddarasögur* as will be shown in the following. The didactic text of the *Konungs skuggsjá* is divided into a prologue and three parts, with the first part, as already mentioned, being

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<sup>199</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 220. For Blaisdell's edition of *Erex saga* see *Erex saga*. In: Foster W. Blaisdell (ed.): *Erex saga Artuskappa* (1965).

<sup>200</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>201</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Sources, Translations, Redactions, Manuscript Transmission". In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus' Realms* (2011), p. 22.

<sup>202</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>203</sup> See Sif Ríkharðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012), p. 7 and see Brügger Budal, Ingvil: "'Blood Flying and Brains Falling Like Rain': Chivalric Conflict Gone Norse. In: *Moving Words in the Nordic Middle Ages: Tracing Literacies, Texts, and Verbal Communications* (2019), p. 316.

concerned with the life of a merchant, whereas the latter two refer to life at court and go into detail about the life of the *hirðmenn* [retainers] and what manners make them courtly, as well what constitutes a good king. There have been debates, whether the prologue is actually part of the original work, or if it was added by a later scribe, since it mentions additional topics, which, however, were not passed down in the extant manuscript.<sup>204</sup> But Jens Eike Schnall recognises enough similarities within the prologue and the text itself to assume the same author.<sup>205</sup>

Due to its didactic character, the text was most likely used as an ethical framework for the desired behaviour of the *hirð*, which was problematic as was shown in the second chapter.<sup>206</sup> But the text was not only intended for the courtiers but was most likely also composed for the instruction of the sons of King Hákon, Hákon *hinn ungi* and King Magnús.<sup>207</sup> Just like the translated *riddarasögur*, the *Konungs skuggsjá* must have been composed by an unknown author under the reign of King Hákon, with scholars dating its origin in the 1250s.<sup>208</sup> The oldest extant manuscript that contains the texts is a Norwegian manuscript from the second part of the thirteenth century and the youngest is Icelandic from around 1800.<sup>209</sup> The former possesses the signature AM 243 b α fol and is believed to be composed around 1275.<sup>210</sup> It also forms the basis of the edition created by Ludvig Holm-Olsen in 1983, which is used in this thesis, since it forms the most recent edition of the text.

A similar closeness between the supposed composition of a work and its oldest textual evidence can also be found in the tradition of the *Hirðskrá*, the code of law for the King's retainers. The text was supposed to be read to the courtiers each Christmas, who were lawfully required to addend these reading to remind them of their rights and duties, subsequently pointing to the fact that the laws were enforced and very much part of the courtiers' life.<sup>211</sup>

Even though the *Hirðskrá* is not as concerned with the actual courtly conduct, such as table manners, as was the *Konungs skuggsjá*, there is still a correlation between the two texts that becomes visible in the *Hirðskrá*'s interest in the correct behaviour of the courtiers, especially towards the king.<sup>212</sup> This might be due to the possibility that the author of the *Hirðskrá* was

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<sup>204</sup> Schnall, Jens Eike: "Von der norwegischen *hirð* zu einem europäischen Hof: das Bildungsprogramm der *Konungs skuggsjá*". In: *Arbeiten zur Skandinavistik* (2000), p. 216f.

<sup>205</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>206</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 58.

<sup>207</sup> See Holm-Olsen, Ludvig: "Innledning". In: *Konungs skuggsjá* (1983), p. XI.

<sup>208</sup> See *ibid.*, p. XI.

<sup>209</sup> See *ibid.*, p. XI.

<sup>210</sup> See Holm-Olsen, Ludvig: *Håndskriftene av Konungs skuggsjá* (1952), p. 20.

<sup>211</sup> See *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirðloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 178.

<sup>212</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 257.



using the *Konungs skuggsjá* as a reference for his own work.<sup>213</sup> This assumption is supported by the supposed date of composition of the work, which is thought by Steinar Imsen to have been between 1273 and 1277, which is after the creation of the *Konungs skuggsjá* in the 1250s and puts it during the reign of King Magnús.<sup>214</sup> Imsen proposes 1273 as the oldest possible date due to the fact that the youngest content of the code of law is based on a meeting in Tønsberg and the new laws it produced.<sup>215</sup> As an explanation as to why 1277 is the youngest date, he states that noble members of the *hirð* were allowed to use titles such as baron and knights from that year on, but that these titles are not mentioned in the *Hirðskrá*.<sup>216</sup> The text also mentions an older *Hirðskrá*, which must have included laws from the early 1000s.<sup>217</sup> As for the question of extant manuscripts, the Norwegian manuscript AM 322 fol from around 1300 is regarded as the oldest complete version of the text and is also, as the title indicates, the basis for Steinar Imsen's edition and Norwegian translation from 2000, which is used in this thesis since it is the most recent Old Norse edition.<sup>218</sup>

Since it was already established earlier that the translated *riddarasögur* are at least to some extent educational, which in light of the *Konungs skuggsjá* being a didactic work and the *Hirðskrá* being a code of law with set rules that stem from the same time period, it opens the question whether there is a correlation between the texts. Or in other words, whether the sagas can be read as an educational pamphlet for the behaviour of courtiers that draws its content from the codes of conduct found in the *Konungs skuggsjá* and subsequently from the *Hirðskrá*. Schnall points out that some of the translated *riddarasögur* could have had a direct influence on the *Konungs skuggsjá*, based on their time of composition, as for example *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, which was, according to its prologue, supposedly written in 1226, therefore before the composition of the *Konungs skuggsjá*.<sup>219</sup> Other sagas, however, could have been understood as a frame of reference of courtliness and courtly education and could have been applied as comparative works to the *Konungs skuggsjá*, highlighting the educational aspects of courtliness.<sup>220</sup> The translated *riddarasögur* form a vessel, in which the ideas of courtliness can be transported to the courtiers and through which the idea of the courtly conduct of the *Konungs*

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<sup>213</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 256–257.

<sup>214</sup> See Imsen, Steinar: “Innledning”. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn* (2000), p. 24.

<sup>215</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>216</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>217</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>218</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>219</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 242.

<sup>220</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 242–243.

*skuggsjá* and the *Hirðskrá* can be made visible and graspable.<sup>221</sup> This becomes especially evident in the process of the education of the hero, as for example in the *Parcevals saga*.<sup>222</sup> It is through the sagas that the *hirð* can see the norms and values of the courtly texts applied on the behaviour of the heroes of the sagas.

In this chapter, it has been shown that the textual transmission of the individual texts is quite different. Where, as is the case of *Erex saga*, there can be around 400 years between an extant manuscript and its original composition, there can also just lie around 25 years as is the case in *Hirðskrá* and *Konungs skuggsjá*. Additionally, it has also been shown, that there is a connection between these texts, such as *Hirðskrá* being inspired by *Konungs skuggsjá*, or that the translated *riddarasögur* were used to underline the codes of conduct and desired behaviour of the previous texts and vice versa, depending on their time of composition.

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<sup>221</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>222</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 247 and see Barnes, Geraldine: "Parcevals Saga: Riddara Skuggsjá?". In: *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* (1984), p. 62.

## 6. Masculinity in Old Norse Courtly Literature

Beginning the main part of this thesis, it is essential to the work to first establish the Old Norse concept of masculinity during the thirteenth century in Norway. According to the theory of Evans and Hancock, which has been introduced in chapter four, “‘masculinity’ is the term used to classify those behaviours, acts and styles generally associated with being a man.”<sup>223</sup> This statement can be combined with their two principles that gender is socially constructed, thereby meaning that masculinity is created within a social context, and that gender is performative, meaning that masculinity is marked by the repetition of acts that society associates with men.<sup>224</sup> This makes evident that the prevalent concept of masculinity at the court of King Hákon can be made visible through the performance of behaviours, acts and styles of the male courtiers, as the last part of the term *hirðmenn* [retainers] suggests. These behaviours are marked as masculine through the social milieu and the new social standard King Hákon tried to implement on his retainers. What exactly constitutes these behaviours, acts and styles has mainly been transmitted to the modern age through the then contemporary extant literature, such as *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá* and will be defined later in this chapter.

As was already investigated before in the previous chapter, the problematic history of the transmission of the texts, such as that some of the extant manuscripts stem from much later historical periods, it has to be questioned to what extent these manuscripts accurately portray the conditions and mindsets of the royal Norwegian court during the reign of King Hákon and his son King Magnús or if they are rather a testimony to the influence of the Icelandic scribes.<sup>225</sup> Since it has been shown that the manuscripts used for the editions of the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá* are quite close to their estimated date of composition, it is possible to assume that they portray at least a somewhat believable picture of the expectations around the Norwegian court during the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.

In the second chapter of this work, it has already been explained that the Old Norse drinking culture represented a major concern to the discipline of King Hákon’s retinue. At the same time, this issue is also exemplary to the change of Old Norse masculinity that occurred during the progression of the Scandinavian Early and High Middle Ages (ca. 1050–1250) to the Late

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<sup>223</sup> Evans, Gareth Lloyd/Hancock, Jessica Clase: “Introduction”. In: *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature* (2020), p. 2.

<sup>224</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> See Sif Ríkharrðsdóttir: *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse* (2012) p. 7 and see Kalinke, Marianne E.: “The Introduction of the Arthurian Legend in Scandinavia”. In: *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and the Rus’ Realms* (2011), p. 15.

Middle Ages (ca. 1250–1500), in which period also King Hákon’s reign and that of his son King Magnús fall. First, however, it has to be established how masculinity was characterised prior to this period. The time before and early into King Hákon’s rule was shaped by the picture of the dominant male. Bandlien points out that the ideal man was often the “aggressive masculine”<sup>226</sup>, who dominated over women and who had to avoid being passive or feminine by always complying to the ideal masculinity.<sup>227</sup> Women on the other hand were able to adopt masculine traits and move in typically masculine coined areas outside of their domestic sphere.<sup>228</sup> It is also interesting to note that in the context of Old Norse masculinity Carol Clover described a so-called *one-gender model* that refers to a societal scale on which both men and women can be placed, where terms such as strong and mighty are opposed to weak and dependent and each person can slide to the top or bottom of said scale.<sup>229</sup> A drop in scale is affected by the Old Norse term *níð* [libel, defamation] and refers to the loss of honour and cowardice.<sup>230</sup> Especially honour, but also other norms and values such as “action, political pragmatism, excess in drinking and eating, and personal revenge”<sup>231</sup> were part of the traditional image of masculinity.

Jo Ann McNamara detects a change in the gender system from 1050 to 1150, since several factors such as urbanisation and state formation made it difficult to live up the warrior or aggressive male standard.<sup>232</sup> This means that social change led to a shift in the perception of what is considered the dominant masculinity. With the import of continental courtly literature, King Hákon introduced a refined concept of masculinity, which was in accordance with the “courtly ideals promoting temperance and self-control”<sup>233</sup>. Now, with the example of excessive drinking in mind that was mentioned earlier, it becomes evident that there occurs a clash in the concepts of masculinities: what was earlier considered as masculine, such as the indulgence in drink and food, which were also closely related to politics, has been refined by a new etiquette surrounding the king, in which self-control, temperance and regulation define men.

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<sup>226</sup> Bandlien, Bjørn: *Man or Monster? Negotiations of Masculinity in Old Norse Society*. Dissertation (2005), p. 9.

<sup>227</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 8–9.

<sup>228</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 9 and see Mundal, Else: “Den doble verknaden av kristinga for kvinnene i den norrøne kulturen”. In: *Kvinneforskning* (1999), p. 75.

<sup>229</sup> See Clover, Carol J.: “Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe”. In: *Speculum* (1993), p. 377–379.

<sup>230</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>231</sup> Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 1.

<sup>232</sup> See McNamara, Jo Ann: “The *Herrenfrage*. Structuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150”. In: *Medieval masculinities. Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (1994), p. 3–4.

<sup>233</sup> Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 1.

This refined etiquette describes the expected behaviour, norms and values that constitute the concept of masculinity at the court of King Hákon and is a main component of the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*. Especially the former provides in-depth information about how the retainers in the *hirð* of King Hákon were supposed to behave. In order to make the *hirð* understand the complexity of these refined norms and values, the author of the *Konungs skuggsjá* names the three core values: “Þat er þriýallt at kyæðe er naliga er þo sœm allt se æitt raunar er maðr þarf ýandligha at geta. Þat er monýit oc siðgœðe oc hoyæska.”<sup>234</sup> [But there are three things (which are, however, almost the same in reality) which one must observe with care: they are wisdom, good breeding, and curtesy.]<sup>235</sup> Jens Eike Schnall points out that the text regards *manvit* [wisdom] as the most fundamental virtue of the three.<sup>236</sup> The lyrical voice of the father tells his son: “Ðæssur aller luter er nu hofum ýer talða hvartyæggja um hoyæsko oc siðgœðe þa ma ænge æignaz nema hann hafi monýit mæðr oc æigu þæsser luter monýiti at fylgia.”<sup>237</sup> [No one can attain to all these virtues which we have now enumerated as belonging to courtesy and good breeding, unless he is also endowed with wisdom.]<sup>238</sup> In order to achieve the finer virtues of good breeding and courtesy, one has to first gather enough wisdom. The Son is aware of this already to some extent, as he states: “Mæð þýi at ec em nu alettazta aldre þa fysumz ec at fara lannda mæðal þýiat ec treystumz eigi til hirðar leita fyr enec hæfða seð annarra manna siðu aðr.”<sup>239</sup> [I am now in my most vigorous years and have a desire to travel abroad; for I would not venture to seek employment at court before I had observed the customs of other men.]<sup>240</sup> He is aware that the end goal is to become part of the king’s retinue, but that he needs to gain wisdom abroad before he can learn the courtly etiquette. To underline this statement, the Father uses the example of a tree and describes how *manvit* forms the roots of the tree out of which a strong trunk grows that splits up in individual twigs and branches, some bigger some smaller.<sup>241</sup> The branches are distributed among people with some having thicker branches than others and the son wishes to learn how to find a good branch that is useful to him.<sup>242</sup> After stating that wisdom is the fundamental virtue, the author continues to list the elements that define wisdom:

<sup>234</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 8–9.

<sup>235</sup> *The King’s Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 227, XL.

<sup>236</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 60–63 and see Bagge, Sverre: *The Political Thought in the King’s Mirror* (1987), p. 89.

<sup>237</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 65, lines 4–5.

<sup>238</sup> *The King’s Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 229, XL.

<sup>239</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 4, lines 5–7.

<sup>240</sup> *The King’s Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 79, III.

<sup>241</sup> See *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 65, lines 29f.

<sup>242</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 66, lines 2f.

**orðhægi oc snilld oc skilning** allra síða **kunna** þæl at **marka hvat goðer síðer ero**. eða hvat síðer ero kallaðer æptir at kþæðe heimskra manna oc ero þo **osiðer**. Þat er oc manþit æf maðr er staddr aþiolða funnd manna aþingum eða astæfnum oc høyrir hann þar orð manna oc ærcænnde at kunna aþgi **goða skilning hvær orð eða ærcænnde ero þau þar mælt er tækin** ero af man þitz grundþælli eða hvat mælt er af skioto tungu þarpi eða skamsyniligo þarra skrapí. Ðat er oc monþit at **kunna skilia þandligha æf domar falla amal manna** hþærsu þat þar mælt at eigi þærði mæð orðum aukit eða þanat æf maðr þarf annat sinni mæðr sialfum ser at sanna Þat er oc manþit at **hallda alla luti mæðr athuga samligo minni þa sæm mæltar / þærða**. eða gorþir manna millim. Ðat er oc manþit at **kunna þæl logh** oc kunna a þgi goðar skilningar hvat logh ero rett eða hvat log ero kallað oc er þo æ-i-ki næma logkrokar oc sleitur. Þat er oc manþit æf maðr þill bæiðazk æinna hværa luta at **kunna skilning aþgi hværra luta hann beiðizk þeira er þiðr kæmilegir se oc hinum er þæl þæitannde** Sþa oc æf hann sialfr noccorra luta bæðenn at kunna þat þel at sia hværir luter er hanum ero þæl þæitannde eða hværir þiðr siannde at hann iatte æigi þeim lutum *firi* sic eða fyrri hina er æptir hann koma er hanum se siðan hællðr til sþiþirðingar snuit hællðr en til upphafs. Sþa er oc þat manþit at **gerazt æigi fast hænndr aþeim lutum** er honum ero þæl þæitannde at eigi snuiz honum sin fæsti eða sinka til sþiþirðingar. **Hof allt** oc **sannsyni** er oc manþit. **frøðleicr allr** oc **skilning oll** oc **goð forsio** suer hafa þarf til hoþæsko eða síða lanðz byggingar eða lagha gezlo eða lannz gezlo.<sup>243</sup>

**Elegance in speech, eloquence, insight into proper conduct, and ability to discriminate between good manners and what passes for such in the sayings of foolish men, though they are in fact bad manners.** It is also wisdom, when one is present at the law court, or some other place where men congregate, and hears the speeches and the suits of men, to be able **to discern** clearly what suits or what speeches delivered there are **based on reason** and which ones are merely glib palaver and senseless verbosity. It is also wisdom to have a **clear appreciation, when decrees are rendered in the disputes** of men, how these are stated, so that not a word will be added or taken away, if one should need to know them at some time later. It is also a wisdom to **keep faithfully in mind what facts were discussed and what agreements were reached.** It is wisdom to **know the law thoroughly**, to have clear perceptions of what is actual law and what is merely called law, being nothing but quibble and subterfuge. It is also wisdom, if one has a request to make, to **be able to determine what he may ask for that will prove serviceable and is proper for the other to grant**; also, if one meets a request, to know precisely what may grant with propriety and in what matters he must be careful not to bind himself to those who come after him, such thing, namely as may prove a disgrace to him rather than a distinction. Finally, it is wisdom **not to be strait-handed** about things which one may just as well dispose of, lest such stint or stinginess bring shame upon him. There is also great wisdom in **moderation** and **righteousness. All forms of learning, insight and good foresight** which is necessary to courtesy and good breeding, to stewardship, government and the enforcement of the law [...].<sup>244</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 65, lines 6–25. Highlights made by the author of this thesis. For a compilation of the virtues of *manvit* see Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 66–67.

<sup>244</sup> *The King's Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 229–230, XL. Highlights made by the author of this thesis.

Wisdom is presented as a sharpened mind. The courtier is supposed to be aware of what good and bad habits are and to build a foundation upon which the other two virtues can be erected. If there is no or insufficient wisdom, the core of *siðgóði* and *hóverska* will not be fully comprehensible. Therefore, the courtier is required to first learn and be able to discern between the desired and despised norms and values.

As the author of the *Konungs skuggsjá* states himself, the terms are close in meaning and it can prove difficult to differentiate between the nuances of their individual meaning. On account of this circumstance, Susanne Kramarz-Bein points out that the author throughout the text often prefers to name the virtues *siðgóði* [good breeding] and *hóverska* [courtesy] closely after one another, thereby forming a “Wortpaar-Bildung”<sup>245</sup> [a creation of a connection of words]. She therefore claims that both of these virtues are supposed to be synonymous and understood as one and the same.<sup>246</sup> This claim, however, seems to be a misunderstanding of the term-definition provided by the author himself. The author identifies the similarity of the terms but by naming them individually proves their individual distinction in meaning. If the terms *siðgóði* and *hóverska* were indeed synonymous, the author would not have made the effort to establish the three individual termini. On the basis of this, Jens Eike Schnall counters Kramarz-Bein’s claim with his own analysis of the individual meanings, stating that *siðgóði* represents the broader, more fundamental term of both.<sup>247</sup> It describes how to behave as a good member of society, whereas *hóverska* defines and sharpens these virtues in a courtly context.<sup>248</sup>

After having established the first term *manvit*, the virtues of *siðgóði* and *hóverska* need to be defined as well. As was already mentioned, the former refers to a more general set of values and is described by the author as such:

En þat er sið gæðe at gæraz samþycr aðrum monnum oc æigi æinlyndr hæfilar íallu gefna geði sino. Gang pruðr æf hann gengr geta þæl lima sinna hvært sæm hann gengr at hvær þeira fari rettr þæl oc þo æpter sinni natturu. þat er oc siðgæði æf maðr gengr i kaup staðum milli unkunnra manna at þæra falatr oc æigi marghyrðr flyia gio oc alla hegomlega dryckiu. Ræfsa oc stulðe oc allar aðrar heimsligar uspæcter þat er oc siðgæði at sea þæl þið munnæiðum aðe bolbænum eða gauðriþi oc allu aðru tungu skæðe. Sþa sia oc þið þgi at þæra orðþarps maðr firi heimska mænn oc oraðþannda. en ænn siðr þæita þeim fylgð til sinnar folsko. oc þæra hælldr hataþdi alla oraðþænde þat er oc siðgæði at / flyia tafl oc tæþinga kast port kvænna hus eða æiða usæra. Lyghi þitni eða aðra gio eða saurlifi. þat er oc siðgæðe at hafa

<sup>245</sup> Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 58.

<sup>246</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>247</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 59.

<sup>248</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 84.

sec reinliga hvartýæggia at mat ocklæðum yæra rackr at husum æf hann á eða skipum eða hæstum eða yarpnum Væra oc for siall en æigi alœypinn. oc þo hugraccr inauðsynium yæra æigi aburðar samr eða iyir giarn eða oyyñdsiucr flyia dramb oc allan of mætnað. En þat er hofuð allrar siðgœðe at ælska guð oc heilagha kirkio lyða tiðum yandligha yæra iðinn ahælgum bænum oc biðia ser miskunnarr oc allu kristnu folki.<sup>249</sup>

It is good breeding **to be agreeable and never obstinate when one is with other men, and to be modest in demeanour; to walk a proper gait** when on foot and to watch one's limbs carefully wherever one goes to make sure that each will move correctly and yet **in a natural way**. It is good breeding, too, **when one strolls about in a city among strangers, to keep silence and use few words, to shun turmoil and disgraceful tipping, to punish theft and robbery and all other foolish rioting**. It is also good **breeding to avoid profanity, cursing, scolding, and all other pernicious talk**. Be careful also **never to appear as the advocate of stupid and dishonest men** and especially not to support them in their impudence, but rather to show hatred for wickedness in every form. It is good breeding **to shun chess and dice, brothels and perjury, false testimony, and other lasciviousness or filthy behavior**. It shows good breeding **to be cleanly in food and clothes; to take good care of the ships, horses, weapons, and buildings that one may possess; to be cautious and never rash and to be undismayed in times of stress; never to be ostentatious, domineering, or envious; and to shun arrogance and affectation** in every form. But the chief point in all conduct is **to love God and holy church, to hear mass regularly, to be diligent in divine service, and to implore mercy for oneself and all other Christian people**.<sup>250</sup>

The advice to avoid partaking in rioting and drinking recalls pictures of the situation that were mentioned in the second chapter, about King Hákon struggling with his men's lack of moral standards, excessive drinking and their subsequent brawls. All in all, this virtue is less about acquiring wisdom and rather focusing on how to actually behave, speak and dress, even if just on a basic level, such as keeping your clothes clean. The main idea is to act honourably, so as to not bring shame on oneself, fellow courtiers or the king.

The last virtue, *hóverska*, represents the most important virtue for the life at court since it shows a refinement of the more basic norms and values. The author of the *Konungs skuggsjá* describes them as such:

En þat er hoyseska at yæra bliðr oc letlatr oc þionosto fullr oc fagr yrðr kunna at yæra goðr felaghe isamsæti (oc) iyidrrœðu yiðr aðra mænn. kunna a þyi goða skilning æf maðr talar yið konor hvart sæm ero ungar eða meirr all dri orpnar rikar eða noccot

<sup>249</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64 line 30–p. 65, line 4. Highlights made by the author of this thesis. For a compilation of the virtues of *siðgóði* see Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 80–81.

<sup>250</sup> *The King's Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 228, XL. Highlights made by the author of this thesis.



urikari at þau orð kunni hann til þeira at mæla er þeira tignund hæfi oc þeim sami γæl at hœyra oc manni sami γæl at mæla. Sγa oc æf maðr talar γiðr karlmann hγart sœm ero unger eða gamlir rikir eða urikir þa hœyir oc γæl at kunna hœfiliga orðum at skipa hvær orð er hværium þeira samir at þiggia. En æf þat skal gaman yrðe heita þa gegnir þat at þau se hvartγæggia fogr oc sœmiligh. þat er oc hoγæska at hann kunni grein orða sinna hvar hann skal marghfallda eða hvar hann skal æinfallda til þeira manna er hann mælir eða hværsu hann skal haga klæðum sinum bæðe at lit oc aðrum lutum sγa oc ner maðr þarf at stanða eða sitia eða ner retr stannda eða ner akne. Þat er oc hoγæska at kunna γita ner hann þarf hændr sinar niðr firir / sec at racna lata oc kyrrar hafa eða ner hann ma sinar hænndr rœra til æinjar hværrar þionosto annat hvart sialfum ser eða aðrum at γæita eða hvært hann skal aγdliti sinu snua oc briosti eða hværsu hann skal snua baki eða hærðum. Sγa oc at kunna goða skilning a þyi ner hann ma skikkiu sina ifrælsi bæra eða hott eða kγæif æf hann hæfir eða ner hann skal þarnazk. Sγa oc er hann sitr yfir borðe ner hann þarf augum atleiða firi hoγæsku sacar rikra manna matar noeyzlu eða ner hann ma sins matar eða dryckiar γæl noeyta sγa at þat þyckki γæl bæra oc γiðr kœmiliga. Ðat er oc hoγæska at hallda sec fra spotti allu oc haðungar gabbi oc kunna γæl at skilia hvat er þorpara skapr er oc flyia hann allan γanndligha.<sup>251</sup>

It is courtesy to be friendly, humble, ready to serve, and elegant in speech; to know how to behave properly while conversing or making merry with other men; to know precisely, when a man is conversing with women, whether they be young or older in years, of gentle or humble estate, how to select such expressions as are suited to their rank and are as proper for them to hear as for him to use. In like manner when one speaks with them, whether they be young or old, gentle or humble, it is well to know how to employ fitting words and how to determine what expressions are proper for each one to take note of. Even when mere pleasantry is intended, it is well to choose fair and decent words. It is also courtesy to know how to discriminate in language, when to use plural and when to use singular forms in addressing the men with whom one is conversing; to know how to select one's clothes both as to color and other considerations; and to know when to stand or sit, when to rise or kneel. It is also courtesy to know when a man ought to let his hands drop gently and to keep them quiet, or when he ought to move them about in service for himself or for others; to know in what direction to turn his face and breast, and how to turn his back and shoulders. It is courtesy to know precisely when he is free to wear his cloak, hat, or coif, if he has one, and when these are not to be worn; also to know, when at the table, whether good breeding demands that one must watch the great men partake of food, or whether one may eat and drink freely in any way that seems convenient and proper. It is also courtesy to refrain from sneer and contemptuous jest, to know clearly what churlishness is and to avoid it carefully.<sup>252</sup>

Especially the last sentence points at a core idea of this refined masculinity. The author advises to discern what churlishness, meaning bad and rude behaviour, is and to stay away from this

<sup>251</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 9–30. Highlights made by the author of this thesis. For a compilation of the virtues of *höverska* see Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 78–79.

<sup>252</sup> *The King's Mirror*. Translation by Marcellus Laurence Larson (1917), p. 227–228, XL. Highlights made by the author of this thesis.

feature. The Old Norse term for this is *þorparaskapr* that derives from the word *þorpari*, referring in its true sense to a villager but figurately meaning a fool with crude behaviour.<sup>253</sup> The *þorpari* is used as the antithesis to the courtly man since the former, in his boorish ways, is the object of disdain and contempt.<sup>254</sup> In order to establish a new Norwegian aristocracy with its own identity, it was necessary to create distance between them and the simple folk which was marked by this refined set of manners, norms and values that mark the different social status.<sup>255</sup>

This distinction between the social elite at the court and the uncultured peasantry has also been made in continental Europe. Susanne Kramarz-Bein points out that the Old Norse term *höverska* is semantically related to the Middle High German *zuht* [courtly education] and especially to *hövescheit* [courtliness].<sup>256</sup> Joachim Bumke provides a definition of the latter term:

Der Ritter soll nicht nur Weisheit, Gerechtigkeit, Mäßigung und Tapferkeit besitzen, er sollte nicht nur vornehm, schön und geschickt in den Waffen sein, sondern er sollte auch die feinen Sitten des Hofes beherrschen, die Regeln des Anstands und der Etikette, die richtigen Umgangsformen, den guten Ton, vor allem gegenüber den Damen.<sup>257</sup>

The knight should not only possess wisdom, justice, moderation and bravery, he should not only be distinguished, beautiful and skilful in arms, but he should also master the fine manners of the court, the rules of decency and etiquette, the right manners, the good tone, especially towards the ladies.

This concept of *hövescheit* is then often contrasted by the term *dörperheit*, which is the equivalent to the Old Norse *þorpari*, and can also be found in the Old French court terminology *cortois/corteisie* [courtliness] and *vilain/vilenie* [uncourtliness/peasantry].<sup>258</sup> Since the description of the term *hövescheit* correlates closely the Old Norse understanding of *höverska*, it becomes evident how the native Old Norse norms and values have been influenced by a more continental European comprehension.

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<sup>253</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 60.

<sup>254</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 104 and see Bandlien, Bjørn: *Man or Monster? Negotiations of Masculinity in Old Norse Society*. Dissertation (2005), p. 287 and see Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 60.

<sup>255</sup> See Brégaint, David: *Vox Regis. Royal Communication in High Medieval Norway* (2016), p. 189.

<sup>256</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 59.

<sup>257</sup> Bumke, Joachim: *Höfische Kultur* (1997), p. 425.

<sup>258</sup> See Kramarz-Bein, Susanne: “Zur Darstellung und Bedeutung des Höfischen in der *Konungs skuggsjá*”. In: *Collegium medievale* (1994), p. 60.

Comparing this description of norms and values to the prior one of *siðgóði*, it becomes apparent that *hóverska* is a much more detailed description of the former. Schnall provides a compelling comparison of where exactly their differences lie. The good breeding only demands to not speak unfavourably or ill-willed, whereas courtliness asks to always speak the correct thing according to the situation using beautiful words.<sup>259</sup> Additionally, the good breeding requests a good, straight posture and natural movement, while courtliness to always sit in the right position, again according to the situation, and the use of the correct gestures.<sup>260</sup> Furthermore, good breeding simply asks to keep your clothes clean, while courtliness requires for the right clothing to be picked, knowing which clothes are allowed at court.<sup>261</sup> And lastly, similar to the clothes, good education only asks for the table to be clean during dinners, whereas courtliness point out the different codes of conduct do flatter the powerful men at the table, such as keeping your eyes at them while they eat.<sup>262</sup>

Schnall already points at the important main areas of the refined masculinity at court by comparing good breeding and courtliness: speaking, posture, clothing and eating. David Brégaint also recognises these areas as the core elements regarding the refined etiquette.<sup>263</sup> These elements are also a recurring theme in the *Hirðskrá* and provide the *hirð* with additional information regarding courtly conduct. Since the content of the *Hirðskrá* is most probably inspired by the *Konungs skuggsjá*, it leads to a general overlap in the portrayal of the new continental norms and values, with the *Hirðskrá* providing generally less detailed information and only providing specific laws on courtly conduct.<sup>264</sup> This may also be due to the nature of the texts, since the *Konungs skuggsjá* is a didactic text, intended for teaching and explaining, therefore providing a richer background on each norm, as opposed to a code of law, which is simply stating the rules.

Within the *Hirðskrá*, there are two chapters especially concerned with courtly conduct. In chapter 28, the author of the text shows what is considered unwanted behaviour and first warns to avoid provoking God by circumventing the following seven cardinal vices:

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<sup>259</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 84.

<sup>260</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>261</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>262</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>263</sup> See Brégaint, David: “Civilizing the ‘Viking’. A Pedagogy for Etiquette and Courtly Behavior in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Norway” (2016), paragraph 6–16.

<sup>264</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen ‚Königsspiegel‘ (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 257.

[...] þat er fyrst ofnæylzla matar oc dryckiar vhořsamlegha mikil oc vviðrkømølegom stoðum næytt. Þat er annat er þesso lyti fylgir oftazt. þat er fuvll oc vræinn likams sins lifnaðr þegar hann er ofkatr alenn. Þriða er sparleg sincka Fiorða er slenskapleg læti. nokot gott at at havazt. Fimta er ivirgiarlegt storlæte með ðrambsamlegom ofmetnaðe. Setta er hæiftug ræiði með grimmv langræke. Siaunða er sorgbitinn ofunð með hiartlegom hatre.<sup>265</sup>

[...] the first is immoderate indulgence in food and drink, indulgence to great excess and in inappropriate places. This vice is frequently accompanied by a second: the foul and filthy life of the body when it is lavishly maintained. The third is miserly greed. The fourth is slothful apathy as regards doing anything worthwhile. The fifth is exaggerated pride with pompous self-esteem. The sixth is malicious anger with grim implacability. The seventh is dismal envy with intense hatred.<sup>266</sup>

The author continues by providing more information about each of these vices, which are extremely similar to the ones presented in the *Konungs skuggsjá*, such as: “Raan oc stulð. horðom. oc frillulivi. portkonor eða dubl oc lausyrði eða ðramb oc ofmeðnað [...]”<sup>267</sup> [Shun further robbery and theft, adultery and fornication, prostitutes and gambling, loose talk and boasting, arrogance [...].]<sup>268</sup> If the courtiers should have fallen for one of these vices nonetheless, the author advises to not continue on this path and rather rise up from it and: “hælðr þiona þu þui **karlmanlegre** guði framlæiðis at aðr hævir nokot a skort með vruggre von at have þer firir latet [...]”<sup>269</sup> [be all the more **manly** in serving God in the future, confident that he has forgiven you [...].]<sup>270</sup> To refrain from the vices and to rather serve God and to follow the rules of good behaviour is therefore considered manly, supporting the idea that the new codes of conduct and norms and values implemented by the *Konungs skuggsjá* and the *Hirðskrá* constitute the concept of courtly masculinity.

The following chapter of the *Hirðskrá*, however, switches from presenting bad core vices to a more general desired behaviour of the courtiers:

Ger þer engan lut jamkiæran sem skapara þins vilia at gera [...]. Ef þu komær til konongs þionustu þa ælska hann nest guði [...]. ver littlatr við alla menn huart sem þæir ero firir seer mæiri eða minni. [...] Fagryrðr æigi ofmalogr nauðsynialaust siðrlatr oc þo kviklatr .i. ollum atfærðum þinum arvakr en æigi ofsuæfnugr vapnræckr ræinlatr. oc æftir fongum orlatær. Klæð þik væl oc þo sua at æigi virðizt oðrum mannum til ðrambs. [...]

<sup>265</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 110.

<sup>266</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirðskrá 1–37, A Translation with Notes* (1968), p. 50–51.

<sup>267</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 110.

<sup>268</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirðskrá 1–37, A Translation with Notes* (1968), p. 51–52.

<sup>269</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 112. Highlights made by the author of this thesis.

<sup>270</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirðskrá 1–37, A Translation with Notes* (1968), p. 53–54. Highlights made by the author of this thesis.

Margfroðr. Spurrall. minnigr. [...] Gott er at vera vapnfimr oc logkønn til huærs sem taka þærf. [...] þa .i. huga offt at þu farer sua með at fyrst liki guði en þa kononge þinum.[...] Haf iamnan .i. hug þer hofsæmi oc sansyni. litilæte. oc rettlæte oc tryglæk.<sup>271</sup>

Value nothing more highly than to conform to the will of your creator [...]. If you come into the kings's service, then show him a love second only to your love of God [...]. Be humble in the presence of all men, regardless of whether they be superior to you or inferior. [...] Be discreet in your use of fine words, be not excessively loquacious. Always conduct yourself in a refined but cheerful manner. Be early to rise and not overly drowsy. Be skillful in the use of weapons. Be just. Be generous according to your means. Be well-dressed but not to such an extent that others deem it pretentious. [...] Be learned in many things. Be inquisitive. Have a good memory. [...] It is good to be skilled in the use of weapons, proficient in battle, and well versed in the laws whenever the need arises. [...] be frequently mindful that the manner in which you conduct yourself is first of all pleasing to God, and secondly to your king. [...] Have moderation, equity, modesty, righteousness and fidelity on your mind at all times.<sup>272</sup>

This list of desired behaviours shows again the emphasis on the king as second only to God, as the *rex iustus*.<sup>273</sup> It also presents itself as a blend of the three carefully distinguished core terms of the *Konungs skuggsjá*, as Schnall sees not only the basic *siðgóði* and the more refined *hóverska* represented, but also elements of *manvit*.<sup>274</sup>

After considering the different new virtues and inherent norms and values that were presented to the courtiers of King Hákon and his son King Magnús, it becomes visible that honour still remained a core element of the now refined concept of masculinity. This understanding of honour, however, is more to be understood in regard to the king and his court. It is not just a personal honour but rather a collective term: a man's honour stands in direct relation to his place in court and to his king.<sup>275</sup> Unhonourable behaviour would be considered insulting to himself, but also to fellow retainers and the king. Generally, the king, as the centre of society and the court, plays an important role in all of the values listed, since all can be traced back to him and his desire to be respected and regarded as the *rex iustus*.<sup>276</sup> The refined concept of masculinity is therefore visible in the performance of the expectations set by the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*. And as was already mentioned, the translated *riddarasögur* were used as pamphlets for this refined desired behaviour, with the refined masculinity being portrayed

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<sup>271</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 114, 116, 118.

<sup>272</sup> *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirðskrá 1–37, A Translation with Notes* (1968), p. 55–58.

<sup>273</sup> See Bagge, Sverre: *The Political Thought in the King's Mirror* (1987), p. 22–26.

<sup>274</sup> See Schnall, Jens Eike: *Didaktische Absichten und Vermittlungsstrategien im altnorwegischen Königsspiegel' (Konungs skuggsjá)* (2000), p. 257.

<sup>275</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 175.

<sup>276</sup> See Eriksen, Stefka G.: "Popular Culture and Royal Propaganda in Norway and Iceland in the 13<sup>th</sup> century". In: *Collegium Medievale* (2007), p. 100.

by the hero in each saga. The following chapter will therefore further investigate how the ideal hero of the translated *riddarasögur* is constructed.

## 7. The Ideal Hero in Translated *Riddarasögur*

The refined concept of masculinity has also found its way into the translated *riddarasögur*, especially through the portrayal of the ideal hero as a role model for the *hirðmenn*. As was already established in the previous chapter, the basic virtue that any courtly man needs, is *manvit*. In the *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, the eponymous hero is described in his younger years as a truly accomplished young man:

Síðan lét hann kenna honum bókfræði. Ok var hann hinn næmasti, ok fræðiz hann í þessu næmi sjau höfuðlistum, ok snilldaz hans allr konar tungum. Því næst nam hann sjau strengleika, svá at engi fannz honum frægri né betr kunnandi. En at góðlyndi ok mildleik ok hirðligri hæversku, at viti, ráðum ok hreysti fannz engi honum gnógari. At siðum ok sæmdum var eingi hans maki. Svá styrktiz hann batnandi. [...] lofuðu kunnáttu hans ok list, fegrð ok atgerð, vizku ok meðferð [...].<sup>277</sup>

In time he had taught the knowledge of books, and he was quick to learn. He acquired the seven liberal arts and learned well a great many languages. Next he mastered seven different stringed instruments so well that no one was better known or able to play better. Nor was there anyone his equal in terms of good nature, generosity, or courtly conduct, intelligence, common sense and valor. No one could match him in good and honourable behaviour. And as he grew older, he grew better and better. [...] praising Tristram's knowledge and refinement, his good looks and accomplishment, and his wisdom and behavior [...].<sup>278</sup>

The listed qualities align with the idea of *manvit*, which form the basis of the virtues good breeding and courtesy, as presented in the previous chapter. This shows that the *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, as it is considered the oldest translated *riddarasaga*, might have thus influenced the other sagas following it, by already establishing the virtue of *manvit*, since the heroes of the sagas are usually already in possession of this virtue and are not in need of showcasing it.

With the virtue *manvit* as their basis, the other terms, *siðgóði* and *hóverska* of the *Konungs skuggsjá* are also extant in the saga-texts and consequently form, partly through the description of the characters themselves, or in other words their physical attributes, another important area of creating the ideal hero.<sup>279</sup> This becomes evident in the introduction of Erex, since he is described as an accomplished knight: “Einn af þeim var sonr Ilax kóngrs, mikill kappi í riddaraskap, fríðr sýnum ok íþróttamaðr mikill, eigi ellri en hálfþrítugr [...]. Hann var vel virðr

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<sup>277</sup> *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*. In: *Norse Romance: I. The Tristan Legend* (1999) (= Arthurian Archives III), p. 50–52.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51–53.

<sup>279</sup> See Bumke, Joachim: *Höfische Kultur* (1997), p. 96.

af kóngi ok dróttningu ok allri hirðinni.”<sup>280</sup> [One of them [the wise men of the Round table] was the son of King Ilax, a great champion in knighthood, handsome in appearance and a man of great accomplishments, no more than twenty-five years old [...]. He was greatly esteemed by the king and queen and the entire court.]<sup>281</sup> Here he is described to be *fríðr sýnum* [handsome in appearance]. This physical beauty is also underlined by his attire since he is in possession of: “góðu essi er komit var af Spánialandi. Yfirklaði hans var af rauðu silki, kyrtil af hvítum purpura, hosur af silki, bitill af silfri, söðull af fílsbeini, sporar af brendu gulli.”<sup>282</sup> [a fine horse which had come from Spain. His outer garment was of red silk, the tunic of a precious white cloth, his hose of silk; the horse’s bridle bit was of silver, the saddle of ivory, the spurs of pure gold.]<sup>283</sup> Jürg Glauser sees in this specification of beauty an expression of knightly virtue, which thereby also categorises the hero inside of the courtly space.<sup>284</sup> Other factors that coalign to the virtues *siðgóði* and *hóverska* of the *Konungs skuggsjá*, but which also indicate an affiliation with this space are strength, nobility, contact with civility such as castles, mastering of the courtly ethos, expressiveness and *aventure* [quest, adventure] as the main meaning of life.<sup>285</sup> The factor of nobility is for example evident in *Erex saga*, since its introduction indicates that Erex is the son of King Ilax. In the case of Íven, his father is named as King Urien.<sup>286</sup> Similarly, Parceval is also of noble decent: “Þessi karl var bóndi at nafnbót, en riddari at tign. [...] Hann hafði tekit kóngsdóttur at herfangi ok settiz í óbygð, þvíat hann þorði eigi millum annarra manna at vera.”<sup>287</sup> [This man [Parceval’s father] was known as a farmer, but in rank he was a knight. [...] He had taken captive in war a king’s daughter, and had later settled down in the wilderness because he could not risk being among other people.]<sup>288</sup> Their noble heritage also marks them as exceptional from other knights and lets them stand out among their group.<sup>289</sup>

On the topic of a courtly ethos, Bernd Kretschmer means to have detected an influence of the traditional Old Norse literature on the translated *riddarasögur* and claims that even though the heroes such as Erex, Íven and Parceval cannot be juxtaposed to traditional Old Norse literary heroes that portray a classic Old Norse ethos, which was described in chapter six, they can also

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<sup>280</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 222.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>284</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 164–165.

<sup>285</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>286</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 48.

<sup>287</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 108.

<sup>288</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>289</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: “On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance”. In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 7.



not be compared with the heroes of Chrétien de Troyes' romances.<sup>290</sup> The heroes of the latter portray an ethos of correct courtly conduct towards opponents, as well as women, physical and spiritual, intellectual beauty, material wealth and an elitist awareness of social classes.<sup>291</sup> Instead, the heroes of the translated *riddarasögur* are similar to those of the Old French romances as they display the norms and values and general sense of knighthood that is usually portrayed in the Old French texts, but show signs of an unmistakable Old Norse mindset that is based on bravery, physical strength, community, independence and less focused on the portrayal of emotions.<sup>292</sup> This assumption stems true to at least some degree, however, compared to the results of the previous chapter, it is difficult to detect a true Old Norse influence on the portrayal of the heroes, when the social ethos has been so heavily influenced and even inspired by continental standards, as can be seen in the portrayal of the virtues of the *Konungs skuggsjá* and the *Hirðskrá* in the previous chapter, leading more to the idea of a refined ethos that is both Old French and Old Norse. This means that ideas from both the Old French and Old Norse standards of masculinity and an ideal hero were combined into a blend of the two, with the foreign character of the Old French weighing heavier in for example the aspects of conduct, whereas the Old Norse influence is more visible in the concept of the hero's honour, as will be shown later in this chapter. Or as Bandlien describes: "Displays of strength and courage on the battlefield are not enough if a knight does not also use wisdom and courage in his encounters with ladies as well"<sup>293</sup>, showing that Old Norse ideas of the warrior-male have to be enriched by the courteous continental virtues to form the refined ideal masculinity.

Opposing the social ethos of virtues that is portrayed by the knights within the courtly space is the uncourtly outside space, which is categorised by ugliness, a connection to nature, such as them living in the wilderness and interacting with animals within, the inability to speak, captivity and the ignorance of civilised and courtly ethics.<sup>294</sup> Especially the opponents that the male heroes have to fight during their quests are marked by being malformed and ugly, thereby showcasing and emphasising the hero belonging in the pure courtly space by contrasting their hideousness to the hero's beauty.<sup>295</sup> So is for example Erex attacked by a "ljótr dvergr"<sup>296</sup> [an

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<sup>290</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 176–177.

<sup>291</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>292</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 160, 164.

<sup>293</sup> Bandlien, Bjørn: *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway* (2005), p. 195.

<sup>294</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 164.

<sup>295</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 3.

<sup>296</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 224.

ugly dwarf]<sup>297</sup> in the first cycle of the story, and Íven is led to an opponent by a figure indicating the uncourtly: “Þá reið hann í skóginn til þess blámanns er villidýranna geymdi ok graðunganna.”<sup>298</sup> [Then he rode into the woods to the dark fellow who watched over the wild animals and the bulls.]<sup>299</sup> The term *blámaðr* for villain is commonly used in Old Norse to translate the Old French *vilain*, which was already mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>300</sup> Lastly, Parceval also has to fight “inn drambláti riddari”<sup>301</sup> [the Haughty Knight]<sup>302</sup> in order to rectify previous misdeeds.

Additionally, to the implementation of the virtues of the *Konungs skuggsjá* through the characterisation of the heroes, the concept of honour is another important element to the ideal hero of the translated *riddarasögur*. This becomes visible in the introductory description of the eponymous hero of *Erex saga*, as has been presented earlier. Here, especially the term *virðr*, as in *Erex* being esteemed by the king and queen, is of importance since it derives from the word *virðing* and signifies honour. Marianne Kalinke identifies in one of her articles that two of the three translated *riddarasögur*, which are part of this thesis, are constructed on the same motivation: the search and preservation of the chivalric virtue of honour.<sup>303</sup> In this context, Kalinke refers to Gerlind Sommer’s monograph *Abstrakta in der altisländischen Familiensaga* (1964), who defines two classical Old Norse understandings of honour on the basis of the Old Norse ethos that can be found in *Íslendingasögur*, the *virðing* and the *sómð*.<sup>304</sup> The former refers to honour that naturally comes along with a certain social standing, such as knighthood, whereas the latter is based on the deeds and adventures one has accomplished.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, Jürg Glauser names in the context of honour the terms *frægð* [fame, prestige] and *frami* [honour, prestige] as important elements to the self-perception of the characters, since they refer to a self-aware, personal concept of honour, rather than the former two which refer to social standing and accomplished deed.<sup>306</sup> All of these definitions are important to knights at court, however,

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>298</sup> *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 46.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>300</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 164. For more about the term *blámaðr* see Arngrímur Vídalín: “Demons, Muslims, Wrestling Champions: The Semantic History of Blámenn from the Twelfth to the Thirteenth Century”. In: *Paranormal encounters in Iceland 1150–1400* (2020), p. 203–226.

<sup>301</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 156.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>303</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*”. In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 143.

<sup>304</sup> See Sommer, Gerlind: *Abstrakta in der altisländischen Familiensaga* (1964), p. 123–127, 155 and see Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*”. In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 139–140.

<sup>305</sup> See ibid., p. 123–127 and see Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*”. In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 139.

<sup>306</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 197.

*virðing* is not lasting and needs to be accompanied by *sómð* to make a knight truly honourable. For this reason, all three heroes of the sagas go through different adventures to (re-)gain their honour.

In the case of *Erex saga*, the story is composed in two adventure cycles. In the first cycle, Erex gets whipped by a dwarf and not only loses his own honour but also that of the queen and embarks on a quest to redeem said honour.<sup>307</sup> During this quest he meets his later-wife Evida, with their marriage introducing the conclusion of the first cycle and the beginning of the second. After his marriage to Evida, he neglects his knightly duties and leads a life of ease with his wife in bed. She overhears the other knights reproaching him for his behaviour, which leads to his realisation of his loss of honour and the embarkment on a quest to regain it.<sup>308</sup>

The hero Parceval in *Parcevals saga*, however, shows a very different type of knight. In the beginning of the story, Parceval is not really in possession of the virtue *virðing*. Though he should be in noble standing by blood through his mother and father, he shows no signs of it whatsoever. With virtually no manners and only a few pieces of advice by his mother, he sets out to King Arthur's court to become a knight. On his way there, he shows time and time again that he is far from being an honourable knight, as he for example forces a maiden to kiss him and talks to her in crude language and he threatens a prolific knight. Even at court, he does not seem to know how to conduct himself, but he finally learns the basic rules, norms and values, the actual *virðing*, of being a knight from his mentor, Gormanz of Groholl, such as the three core values *manvit*, *siðgóði* and *hóverska* of the *Konungs skuggsjá*, which have been presented in the previous chapter. With this foundation, he can set out again to gain *sómð* and make an honourable knight out of himself.

Björn Bandlien characterises Parceval as that he “unifies chivalric virtues (including love) with Christian ideals such as humility and sincerity”<sup>309</sup>, which lets the saga combine the secular with the religious, eventually resulting in Parceval as the most accomplished knight, which is why he can be introduced in the beginning as a such: “Hér byrjar upp sögu ins prúða Parcevals riddara, er enn var einn af Artús köppum.”<sup>310</sup> [Here begins the story of the proud knight Parceval, who was another of Arthur's champions.]<sup>311</sup> In addition to this, Bandlien's emphasis

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<sup>307</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*”. In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 138.

<sup>308</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Characterization in ‘Erex Saga’ and ‘Ivens Saga’”. In: *Modern Language Studies* (1975), p. 15.

<sup>309</sup> Bandlien, Björn: *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway* (2005), p. 192.

<sup>310</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 108.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

on love as a chivalric virtue provides an interesting perspective on the medieval masculinity within the saga texts. He concludes:

To acknowledge and confess love does not mean that the hero loses his masculine identity – on the contrary. [...] Thus, love and honor are not mutually exclusive. The *riddarasögur* aim to show how bravery, honour and love can function together. Love does not expose the knight to ridicule; to love is a natural part of his chivalric character. Not least, love is an art a man can learn just like any other courtly skill.<sup>312</sup>

As has been already established by Kalinke, honour is an integral part of the ideal hero and the heroes', and thereby the sagas', driving force.<sup>313</sup> Together with Bandlien's analysis, it becomes visible that love also plays an important part in the concept of the hero. However, Erex' episode, in which he forgets his knightly duties while focusing on his new marriage, makes evident that it is about balancing all the virtues, such as love and honour.<sup>314</sup> If the focus is only on one virtue, in this instance love, the other lacks, such as his honour. Moreover, the love of a woman can add to a man's honour, since it shows his possession of good manners and his efforts to conquer her, since in medieval Norway, it was in the woman's power to agree to a marriage.<sup>315</sup> A loss of love, can therefore also mean a loss of honour.

This becomes especially visible in *Ívens saga*, where the hero also experiences such a loss. He doesn't get beaten by a dwarf like Erex, he also already possesses *virðing* and knows how to behave like a courtly knight, other than Parceval: "hins ágæta Ívens, er var einn af Artús köppum. [...] Hann hafði þá röskustu riddara er í váru kristninni."<sup>316</sup> [the excellent Íven who was one of Arthur's champions. [...] He [Arthur] had the bravest knights who lived in Christendom.]<sup>317</sup> Instead, he forgets a promise to his lady and does not keep his word and forgets his duties as a husband in order to chase adventure. Firstly, he loses honour in not meeting her at the time and place that was clarified beforehand, thereby making him unreliable. As a result of this, his lady leaves him, leading to an even further loss of honour. Both can only be restored by redeeming his worth and bravery, which also includes proving his love to his

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<sup>312</sup> Bandlien, Bjørn: *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway* (2005), p. 195–196.

<sup>313</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*". In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 143.

<sup>314</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982), p. 176.

<sup>315</sup> See Bandlien, Bjørn: *Strategies of Passion: Love and Marriage in Medieval Iceland and Norway* (2005), p. 207, 196.

<sup>316</sup> *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 38.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

lady, all of which are knightly virtues and parts of his masculinity. The pre-existing *virðing* is not sufficient and needs to be enriched by *sómð*.

As can be seen, this chapter has described how the ideal hero is portrayed in the translated *riddarasögur* and what virtues constitute the courtly ethos. Moreover, it was also shown how the hero is opposed by the uncourtly space, which is inhabited by the villains or opponents of the heroes. It has also indicated that this opposition can be found outside of the court and has a clear connection to the wilderness and forest. The following chapter will therefore aim to establish the literary depiction and connotation of the different spaces of the three translated *riddarasögur*.

## 8. The Characteristics of the Different Spaces

The following chapter draws an outline of the characteristics and subsequent literary meaning of the different spaces within the *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* before analysing the hero's movement and change within and their relation towards them. Spaces in the texts are on a superficial level stages on which the plot can take place but receive symbolic meaning through the values attached to them by literature.<sup>318</sup> In this way, spaces can be regarded as narrative constructs that represent cultural order and their inherent social norms and values.<sup>319</sup> These symbolic meaning are explored in the following, starting with the most essential space, the royal court.

### 8.1. The Court

One of the main spaces, in which this chapter is categorised in, is the royal court. In chapter four, it was shown by Schulz' theory that the narrative world of courtly romance can be divided into a courtly inside space and its opposing uncourtly outside space.<sup>320</sup> The former is a clear definition of the royal court, since it constitutes the place where the king and his court reside, the social group representative of the courtly norms and values. The royal court is the centre of the world within the plot of the texts and only accepts their set of values, as in the ones presented in the courtly literature in chapter six.<sup>321</sup> Then again, at the centre of this world sits King Arthur, who cannot be removed from this position, meaning that if he moves within the literary world, his whole cultural space, the courtiers around him, move together with him.<sup>322</sup> This courtly inside space is marked by characteristics such as beauty, youth, elegance, luxury, generosity, courage, and the refinement of behaviour and manners.<sup>323</sup> Compared to the virtues of the ideal hero presented in the previous chapter, it is evident that they coalign with the features of the courtly space, thereby indicating that the figure of the courtly hero and the courtly space semantically belong together.

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<sup>318</sup> See Lutwack, Leonard: *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 34–35.

<sup>319</sup> See Bowden, Sarah/Friede, Susanne: "Introduction". In: *Arthurian Literature XXXVI* (2021), p. 7.

<sup>320</sup> See Schulz, Armin: *Erzähltheorie in mediävistischer Perspektive* (2015), p. 177.

<sup>321</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 2.

<sup>322</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>323</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 2.

The ideal state of existence at the court is in utter harmony, when the courtly space is in order, and is called *joie de la court* [joy of the court].<sup>324</sup> This state also forms the narrative frame of the texts, since the stories often start out in this state of bliss during the *joie de la court*, which then is lost by a breach into the courtly space, and then has to be reinstated by the hero, so that the stories finish again with the state of pure harmony, often symbolised by festivities such as a feast.<sup>325</sup> This breach and disruption of the harmony can happen in two different ways. Firstly, normal activities of the court can bring it into the outside world, thereby crossing the border between the semantic spaces and provoking contact with characters associated to the uncourtly outside space, such as during the royal hunt in the forest.<sup>326</sup> Secondly, another form of breach occurs when the uncourtly outside space finds its way into the courtly inside space and thereby causes an imbalance in the harmony, which then in turn can only be repaired by the restitution of the boundary separating these spaces.<sup>327</sup> The uncourtly figure committing this breach does not have access to the courtly inside space, since it does not belong to the court, by for example noble birth, and instead should exist outside of this sphere due its uncourtliness and its lack of affiliation.<sup>328</sup> By transgressing the border of the semantic spaces in either direction, an event occurs subsequently creating the plot, as has been shown in chapter four.

## 8.2. The Forest

The most apparent space opposing the courtly inside space is that of the forest, which belongs to the uncourtly outside space, inhabited by “the Bad”.<sup>329</sup> Being detached to the norms and values that determine the royal court, the forest presents a multitude of symbolic meanings and interacts with the male hero in various forms, subsequently forming one of the most multifaceted spaces according to each translated *riddarasaga*. The forest can be for example a place of danger, exile, delight and the opportunity for glorious challenges.<sup>330</sup> It can also be a sheltering grove or a place of refuge, a place of freedom or of horror.<sup>331</sup> In general, however,

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<sup>324</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 3 and see Fichte, Joerg O.: “Das Fest als Testsituation in der mittelenglischen Artusromanze”. In: *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter* (1991), p. 449.

<sup>325</sup> See Fichte, Joerg O.: “Das Fest als Testsituation in der mittelenglischen Artusromanze”. In: *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter* (1991), p. 449.

<sup>326</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: “On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance”. In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 9.

<sup>327</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>328</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>329</sup> See Glauser, Jürg: *Isländische Märchensagas* (1983), p. 197.

<sup>330</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 66–67, 70.

<sup>331</sup> See Lutwack, Leonard: *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984), p. 35, 44–45.

the forest is a space of wilderness.<sup>332</sup> Inside the forest dwell the ugly anti-heroes, wild beasts, robbers, giants and sometimes supernatural creatures, which are affiliated to the uncourtly and thereby restrained to the outside space, usually the forest, as was described in the previous chapter.<sup>333</sup> Corinne Saunders summarises the literary forest quite fittingly as the following:

The world of these forests is characterized by universal romance themes of love, adventure, quest, enchantment and vision, and by their counterparts, rape, death, madness, imprisonment, penance, rendering the forest a specialized landscape just on the margins of human credibility, lingering somewhere between nightmare and wish-fulfilment.<sup>334</sup>

Independent of the question, whether the forest is a place of danger or refuge to the hero, the space is usually related to the hero's destiny, since it is the space in which the hero can fulfil the purpose of his existence, namely the *aventure*.<sup>335</sup> This is because honour is to be gained outside of the centre and in its periphery, the outside space.<sup>336</sup> Here, through the different quests he has to master, the hero can commence his character development and self-realisation as a prolific knight.<sup>337</sup> It is therefore on the background of the dark forest that the figure of the knight can stand out.<sup>338</sup>

### 8.3. The Other Court

Inside of the uncourtly outside space, there can exist an enclave of the courtly space in the form of isolated castles that do belong to the courtly space by extension, if they own similar characteristics of the courtly space, as described earlier.<sup>339</sup> However, the space of the other court can also often exist a counterpart to the royal court of King Arthur, in the form of a separate court, a rival space that is reigned by its own rules and laws, usually to be found in the forest.<sup>340</sup> This form of the other court is unrelated to King Arthur's court, yet forms its own space of

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<sup>332</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 22.

<sup>333</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>334</sup> Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 205.

<sup>335</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 204.

<sup>336</sup> See Bandlien, Bjørn: "Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: 'Erex Saga' and 'Ívens Saga' in the World of Ormur Snorrason". In: *Arthuriana* (2013), p. 11–12.

<sup>337</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 204.

<sup>338</sup> See Gsteiger, Manfred: *Die Landschaftsschilderungen in den Romanen Chrestiens de Troyes* (1958), p. 100.

<sup>339</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 5.

<sup>340</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 68.



courtliness in its own world.<sup>341</sup> This circumstance proves to be problematic, since the other court acts as an alternative centre to the court of King Arthur, which causes a conflict, since the spatial centre of the sagas' world is based in the court of the latter.<sup>342</sup> To solve this issue, the other court can be assimilated by the original royal court, or the other court becomes to new centre of the narrative.<sup>343</sup>

## 8.4. Magical Spaces

The last category of spaces within the translated *riddarasögur* to be added here are the magical spaces, as Karin Boklund titles them in the context of continental courtly romance.<sup>344</sup> They must be differentiated from courtly and uncourtly spaces altogether.<sup>345</sup> However, these spaces are often found within the uncourtly outside space of the forest, since the forest can also contain a mysterious and mystical element.<sup>346</sup> It should, however, not be confused with the uncourtly forest, which can prove to be difficult due to their similar dangerous quest-character.<sup>347</sup> In order to be able to distinguish between the spaces, they are disconnected from each other, with the magical spaces forming their own world with clear boundaries that is separated by a physical barrier like a wall or a river.<sup>348</sup> It can also be separated through a bridge.<sup>349</sup> By the crossing of the forest space into the magical space through the literal crossing of a river or a bridge, an event is created, which usually indicates a further progress in the course of the story, such as an advancement in a quest.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 5.

<sup>342</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>343</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>344</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>345</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>346</sup> See Classen, Albrecht: "Introduction". In: *Rural Space in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (2012), p. 58.

<sup>347</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: "On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance". In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 5.

<sup>348</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>349</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 78.

<sup>350</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 78.

## 9. The Depiction of the Hero within the Different Spaces

The following chapter will analyse in context of Schäfer's theory that was described in chapter four, how the hero moves within the different spaces, which were described above. It will also analyse the depiction of the hero's masculinity and how these spaces have an influence on this depiction. Firstly, the sagas will be analysed within the space of the royal court, followed by the forest, then of the other court and lastly within magical spaces.

### 9.1. The Court

#### 9.1.1. *Erex saga*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the storyline of *Erex saga* is divided into two story cycles. This leads to the classical Arthurian form of the *Doppelwegstruktur* [Arthurian Cycle], which describes the two narrative cycles within a text that the hero needs to follow in order to successfully retain his knightly achievements.<sup>351</sup> The reason for his first cycle is to make a name for himself or redeem a virtue after which he returns to King Arthur.<sup>352</sup> The second cycle is then initiated by the hero's realisation of guilt or reproach of others for a lacking virtue, which then again needs to be regained on a second round of quests and which in turn leads to a changed self-perception of the hero that includes the restored virtue.<sup>353</sup> The first cycle begins with the *joie de la court*, when the royal court is in perfect balance and follows one of its activities, the hunt for the white stag.<sup>354</sup> Because of the hunt, in which King Arthur also takes part, the royal court is required to move with him, as the king forms the centre. Through this movement, the court, of which the saga hero Erex is a part of, steps into the uncourtly outside space. But, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, the court can exist in its entirety, as long as it moves together with its centre, the king. Therefore, the first movement does not yet symbolise a breach between the two semantic spaces of the courtly and the uncourtly. The crossing of a border only occurred after the court in the form of Erex and the queen come into direct contact with the uncourtly. During the interaction with a strange knight, Erex experiences a loss of honour, which will be further analysed in the chapter concerning the forest, since this scene takes place in this space. However, before this point in the saga, the focus shifts only slowly on Erex,

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<sup>351</sup> See Fromm, Hans: *Arbeiten zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* (1989), p. 122.

<sup>352</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>353</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>354</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 222f.

meaning that there is not much information on him yet. As seen in chapter seven, he is presented as the son of a king, an esteemed knight at King Arthur's court and a member of his Round Table.<sup>355</sup> At court, before the incident with the strange knight and the dwarf and in the words of Werner Schäfke in his matrix of characteristics, Erex is (+ noble) through his birth, thereby possessing *virðing*, he is (+ courtly) and he is (+ at court). Erex' courtliness becomes visible in his aforementioned description of being well dressed, such as his tunic out of "rauðu silki"<sup>356</sup> [red silk]<sup>357</sup>.<sup>358</sup>

The next time Erex is at the court of King Arthur, he returns having successfully regained his honour, as well as having found his wife Evida. This retrieval will be explained in the following chapter since it does not take part at the court. However, upon Erex' return, the balance of the court, as well as the hero's honour have been restored and the *joie de la court* finds its way back to the court, which is concluded by the wedding ceremony and its festivities.<sup>359</sup>

The time between this *joie de la court* and Erex' and Evida's final contact with the court is interluded by other *aventure* episodes, which will be described in the chapter concerning the forest. But this interruption also initiates the second cycle of the *Erex saga*, in which Erex and Evida experience the different *aventures* as a married couple. The reason for this second break of the *joie de la court* and Erex' need to go on quests is not embedded in the context of the forest and the uncourtly breaching into the courtly space. It is rather anchored in Erex' lack of focus on his knightly duties. After his wedding and his return to his father's kingdom, Erex spends his days in bed with his wife Evida and completely forgets about his knightly duties, which is noted negatively by his peers and thus results in a loss of his honour: "[...] eigi lengr vil ek þola ámæli fyrir mitt hóglífí af þeim landsmönnum."<sup>360</sup> [I don't intend any longer to tolerate reproach for my life of ease from my countrymen.]<sup>361</sup> This life of ease coincides with one of the seven vices presented in the *Hirðskrá*, namely sloth, showing that the supposedly ideal hero has in fact a flaw in his courtly masculinity that ought to be rectified.<sup>362</sup> This lack in masculinity, however, as Bandlien has pointed out, is not his overwhelming love for Evida or its demonstration, but rather that Erex cannot find the right balance between his love and knightly virtues and rather favours the former. If he does not perform his duties, his perceived

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<sup>355</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 222f.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>358</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>359</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 234f.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>362</sup> See *Hirðskrá*. In: *Hirdloven til Norges Konge og hans Håndgangne Menn. Etter AM 322 fol.* (2000), p. 110.

masculinity is at peril, since his inherited *virðing* by noble birth is not built upon by *sómð*, which is honour accumulated by knightly deeds, as explained in chapter seven. His wife Evida is the one unconsciously pointing out this reproach to him and fears for his reputation, which in turn makes Erex question her love for him.<sup>363</sup>

After having travelled far and experienced different quests, Erex can re-establish his honour once more and Evida can prove her love for Erex and vice versa, which leads to the reestablishment of courtly harmony, symbolised by the married couple meeting King Arthur and his court, not at his castle “Kardigan”<sup>364</sup>, but at the castle “Rais”<sup>365</sup>, meaning that the court moved once again with the king, similar to the beginning of the saga. Their return also marks the end of the second cycle and is celebrated by a feast, which, as has been shown in the previous chapter, marks once again the *joie de la court*. After having proven his valour and knightly abilities and thereby also his masculinity, Erex can return to his father’s kingdom and take his rightful place of becoming king.<sup>366</sup>

Both cycles follow the recovery model that was described by Werner Schäfke, in which the hero has to leave his home space, in this case the court, and go into the opposite space, in this case the uncourtly forest, in order to rectify a deficiency that he has experienced in his home space.<sup>367</sup> In the case of Erex, the deficiency is his loss in honour and potentially love that are a result of his life of ease.

### 9.1.2. *Ívens saga*

Similarly to *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* can also be divided into two different adventure cycles. The first one, as is usually common for the translated *riðdarasögur*, starts with the setting of King Arthur’s court. The court is in the state of *joie de la court*, the perfect harmony, as the king “held mikla hátíð á pikkisdögum”<sup>368</sup> [held great festivities at Pentecost]<sup>369</sup>. However, this harmony is interrupted by the king falling ill, which causes an imbalance as he is the centre of the royal court. The knights taking watch before the king’s chamber start telling stories, one of which being Kalebrant, the close relative of the hero Íven, who retells the tale of how disgrace has

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<sup>363</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 236.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>366</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>367</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 29.

<sup>368</sup> *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 38.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

befallen him on account of his loss against a strange knight.<sup>370</sup> But it is not only a family member that has suffered disgrace, as Íven is being taunted at the same time by another knight Kæi, who suspects him of cowardice and incapable of defending his relative and thereby questions his masculinity.<sup>371</sup> However, the character Kæi is reproached multiple times by the court, specifically the queen since he “talar æ þat er illt er”<sup>372</sup> [always speaks what is evil]<sup>373</sup> and his unnecessary teasing of Íven, indication that Kæi’s expressed doubt is only a personal attack and not the opinion of the whole court, which has to be blighted nonetheless, as it questions Íven’s masculinity and reputation. The disgrace of a family member and the mocking of Kæi urges Íven to take it upon himself to avenge his kinsman’s disgrace and honour: “ek skal hefna þinnar svívirðingar.”<sup>374</sup> [I shall avenge your disgrace.]<sup>375</sup>

In this first cycle, Íven has not experienced a direct lack in his courtly masculinity and behaviour since the family’s disgrace has not directly befallen himself or was caused by his own doing. Because of this, his characteristics at the beginning of the story are (+ noble) as he is the son of a king, he is (+ courtly) since he has not shown a lack of courtly behaviour, but rather his good education as he is willing to avenge his relative, and at this point, he is (+ at court). The last point does in fact change, as he leaves the royal court and sets out to fight the knight to regain his relatives honour, which will be analysed in a later chapter.

The next time Íven enters the courtly space of King Arthur, is after he has defeated the strange knight and taken his place in his castle, as well as having married his widowed wife. In this context, King Arthur now moves his whole court with him to investigate the place in which Kalebrant was disgraced and where Íven promised to go and avenge him. They all then go together to Íven’s castle, where a feast and celebrations are held, which, in light of King Arthur and his court being present, indicate the restored harmony and subsequent *joie de la court*.<sup>376</sup>

Again similar to the episode of Erex’ life of ease in *Erex saga*, Íven is at risk of falling into a life of ease and leisure after his wedding to his lady, which is why his fellow knight Valven advises him that “hann skyldi fylgja brott kónginum ok þar eigi lengi vera í þeim kastala ok fordjarfa svá sinn riddaraskap ok atgervi”<sup>377</sup> [he should accompany the king and not stay in the castle longer and thus ruin his knightly reputation and accomplishments]<sup>378</sup>. Íven follows this

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<sup>370</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 38–42.

<sup>371</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 44, 46.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>376</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64, 66.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

advice under the promise that he will return to his wife after no longer than twelve months and embarks on knightly adventures. However, after some quests, which are not explained in the story, Íven and Valven reunite with King Arthur, when Íven eventually realises that he missed the set deadline of return and is therefore called “sannan svikara ok lygimann ok falsara”<sup>379</sup> [a real traitor and liar and deceiver]<sup>380</sup> by the lady’s servant Lúneta. This shows the lack of honour that Íven has showcased through his behaviour. He was focused on gaining honour through his knightly duties, the *sómð*, to not be reproached for potentially living a life of ease with his wife.<sup>381</sup> This in turn lead to him not keeping his word and betraying his wife, which resulted in a loss of her love and thereby, as was shown in the previous chapter by Bandlien, also a loss of honour, resulting in the characteristics (+ noble), (– courtly) and (+ at court). The circumstance of the lack of courtliness leads to the hero’s need to enter the uncourtly outside space in order to repair this lack, in line with Schäfke’s recovery model, as will be shown in the next chapters.<sup>382</sup> This incident also marks the beginning of the second adventure-cycle of the story, in which Íven flees into the forest and regains his honour through multiple quests, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

The final time the hero is at the courtly space of King Arthur’s court, he defends a maiden by unknowingly fighting his peer, the knight Valven, but eventually stops the fight after recognising his opponent as a friend.<sup>383</sup> At this point, Íven has already proven his knightly abilities and regained his honour, which is why he is known as “leóns riddari [...] ok mesta frægð hafði unnit”<sup>384</sup> [the Knight of the Lion, who had won such great fame]<sup>385</sup>, as the lion is one of the noblest members of the animal kingdom and therefore underlines Íven’s virtue, as will be explained in the following chapter concerned with the portrayal of Íven within the forest space.<sup>386</sup> This excerpt of Íven adapting his new identity as Knight of the Lion also shows that he himself is aware that he has regained his honour, as he is now again in possession of *frægð*, which describes the hero’s personal concept of honour as was shown in chapter seven. Thus, Íven is now characterised through the characteristics (+ noble), (+ courtly) and (+ at court),

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>381</sup> See Bandlien, Bjørn: “Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: ‘Erex Saga’ and ‘Ívens Saga’ in the World of Ormur Snorrason”. In: *Arthuriana* (2013), p. 12.

<sup>382</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>383</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 94.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>386</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 159.

meaning that he has regained his honour as a knight and has restored his masculinity, thereby being finally able to return to his lady and become a good husband.

### 9.1.3. *Parcevals saga*

Compared to the other two saga, the portrayal of the courtly space of King Arthur's court in *Parcevals saga* is not as prevalent and is used mostly to show Parceval's uncourtliness. Furthermore, the story of the saga also does not commence in the setting of the royal court and the description of the *joie de la court*, as has been the case in *Erex saga* or *Ívens saga*. Instead, *Parcevals saga* begins in the space of the forest, which will be analysed in the following chapter.

The royal court is only introduced, after Parceval is on his way to King Arthur, as he has been informed by a knight that armour can be retrieved at his court. The court of King Arthur is being attacked by a Red Knight, which is a breach of the uncourtly outside space into the courtly inside space, since the Red Knight “býr í mörk þeiri er heitir Qvinqvarie”<sup>387</sup> [lives in the forest named Qvinquarie]<sup>388</sup> and thereby both figuratively and semantically belongs to the uncourtly forest. This attack on the courtly space causes an imbalance of the court's harmony and a lack of the *joie de la court*, made visible through the description of the king as “angraðr ok áhyggjufullr”<sup>389</sup> [anxious and ill at ease]<sup>390</sup>. In this context, Parceval enters the king's hall on his horse and is unsure who to greet, which is why he demands in crude language to know who the king is, showing his lack of manners.<sup>391</sup> He also knocks off the hat of the king as he rides too close to him and asks in an uncourtly way to become a knight: “Heyr, kóngr [...] ger mik riddara, þvíat ek vil þegar í brott fara”<sup>392</sup> [Listen, king, make me a knight, because I want to be off at once]<sup>393</sup>. This behaviour, or more lack of good behaviour, does not go unnoticed by the rest of the king's court as “Allir er orð hans heyrðu, heldu hann fyrir heimskan mann, en sá hann þó vera bæði fríðan ok vaskligan”<sup>394</sup> [Everyone who heard his request thought him a fool; yet they saw nonetheless that he was both handsome and bold]<sup>395</sup>. The first part of this sentence

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<sup>387</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 114.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>391</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

shows how little he is esteemed at the court of King Arthur, as at this point, he possesses the characteristics (+ noble), as he is of noble birth, but (– courtly) due to his uncourtly behaviour and (+ at court) since he is at the court of King Arthur. The last part of the sentence, however, also indicates that the court may not esteem him highly in this exact moment, but that he does in fact already possess *virðing* through his ancestry and therefore can be expected and does indeed show potential to do great deeds. So remarks King Arthur the following: “eitt at atferðum hans, at hann er eigi vanr hirðsiðum”<sup>396</sup> [The only fault in his behaviour is that he is not familiar with the customs of the court]<sup>397</sup>, which in turn can be learned as Parceval states himself in the beginning of the saga: “engi er með slíku borinn, ok nám kennir fleira en náttúra. Mikit kennir ok venja, ok dirfiz maðr af manni.”<sup>398</sup> [no one is born with such abilities, and nurture teaches more than nature. Practice too teaches much, and one man grows bold from another’s example.]<sup>399</sup>

The fact that Parceval is destined to achieve astounding deeds despite his evident uncourtliness then becomes visible in his victory over the Red Knight that terrorises King Arthur’s court. However, the battle was not fought in order for Parceval to show that he in fact possesses knightly abilities, but rather because of his simple want for the knight’s armour, his whole reason for his travel to King Arthur’s court: “Legg niðr vápn þín ok ber þau eigi lengr, þvíat Artús kóngur gaf mér þessi vápn”<sup>400</sup> [Lay down your arms, and bear them no longer, for King Arthur has given me those arms]<sup>401</sup>. Parceval’s seizing of the knight’s weapons is followed by a lengthy description of his lack of understanding on how to handle, armour, weapons and knightly gear, for which he needs assistance that he orders to receive quickly.<sup>402</sup> Even some well-meant advice of the knight Ionet about also wearing the Red Knight’s costly tunic out of silk is rejected by Parceval saying:

Spottar þú mik snápr? Hyggr þú at ek vil skipta mínum klæðum er móðir mín gerði mér fyrir tveimr dögum, skyrta nýja ok stóra af striga ok þessa hans ina smáskyrta er ekki er haldit í, kyrtil minn nýjan ok þykkann fyrir þann inn forna ok inn þunna, er engu er nýtr?<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>402</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., p. 118.



You blockhead, are you making fun of me? Do you think that I would exchange my clothes, which my mother made for me two days ago, a big, new canvas shirt for this one of his, this skimpy shirt, which is not worth anything, my new, thick tunic for that old, thin one which is for nothing?<sup>404</sup>

This shows again, how unaware Parceval truly was of the courtly etiquette or the importance of wearing courtly clothes that underline the rank of a nobleman, as well as speaking correctly and choosing the right words.<sup>405</sup> The author adds: “Seint er at kenna fóli vísdóm”<sup>406</sup> [It is a slow business, teaching wisdom to a fool]<sup>407</sup>, with the Old Norse word *vísdóm* [knowledge, wisdom] being a possible alternative to the term *manvit*, which was presented in chapter six as part of the virtues of the *Konungs skuggsjá*.<sup>408</sup> This means that Parceval is not even in possession of the basic virtue of wisdom yet and can therefore also not know the more refined manners.

King Arthur is also well aware of Parceval’s lack of courtliness, as he concludes upon his departure, that he left before he could learn the art of chivalry, including how to fight with arms and to ride correctly, which renders him helpless against opponents inside of the uncourtly outside space.<sup>409</sup> He concludes: “Sá er illa fallinn at berjaz, er eigi kann vápnum verjaz. Sá er vita vill sinn drengskaparleik, þarf drengskap ok vaskleik”<sup>410</sup> [A man who cannot weapons wield is ill-equipped to take the field. A man who wants to test his manhood needs manliness and hardihood]<sup>411</sup>. This comment points to the fact that Parceval has a lack of courtliness and a lack of knowledge about being a trained knight, which in turn also constitutes a lack in his masculinity. This lack of masculinity and courtly behaviour has to be rectified by retrieving these courtly values in different spaces such as the forest or the other court, according to Schäfke’s recovery model, and will be analysed in the following chapters.<sup>412</sup>

The next time Parceval reaches the courtly space, he has already gained the virtues whose lack thereof he had formerly displayed at King Arthur’s court. He now enters clad in “beztu guðvefjarskikkju ok alla ina beztu gangveru. Nú er Parceval vel búinn ok sýniz nú inn fríðasti riddari”<sup>413</sup> [the finest velvet mantle and a suit of clothing all of the best. Now Parceval is well

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>405</sup> See *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 9–30.

<sup>406</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 118.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>408</sup> The translation of the term *vísdóm* is taken from *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*. Edited by Geir T. Zoëga (2004), p. 500.

<sup>409</sup> See *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 122.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>412</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>413</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 164.

dressed and appears the most handsome of knights]<sup>414</sup>. Through the description of his clothes, it becomes clear that Parceval has gotten rid of his foolish ways he has displayed earlier and has almost become an accomplished knight. He has also learned to approach the queen in a proper and courteous way.<sup>415</sup>

His education, however, is not completely finished, as the court is interrupted by “ein mærljót ok leiðilig svá at aldri fæddiz fjándligra kvikendi”<sup>416</sup> [a damsel so ugly and loathsome that a more fiend-like creature never was born]<sup>417</sup>, indicating her affiliation to the uncourtly outside space and forming a breach on the courtly space. She enters the court to inform Parceval of the consequences of his misdeed at the castle of the Fisher King after not speaking and asking a wished-for question, as he adhered to Gormananz’ advice not to talk too much, which is in tune with the *Konungs skuggsjá* advising not to speak much in the presence of strangers.<sup>418</sup> She calls his failure of not finding the right way to apply his courtly abilities an act of villainy, thereby showing that Parceval’s education is not yet complete, which is why he has to leave King Arthur’s court again and embark on the second adventure cycle of the story. His characteristics are still the same as the first time he entered the courtly space, as in that he is still (+ noble) and (– courtly), since Parceval has not yet proven true courtliness by failing to have asked the right question at the right time, and (+ at court). However, this level of uncourtliness is not comparable to his lack of any courtly behaviour the first time he has entered the courtly space at King Arthur’s court. But even though Parceval has learnt what constitutes courtly behaviour at this point in the story, he has not fully comprehended yet, how and when to correctly apply it, as will be shown in the following chapter.

## 9.2. The Forest

### 9.2.1. *Erex saga*

As mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, *Erex saga* is divided in two cycles. During the first cycle, the *joie de la court* is interrupted by the crossing of the semantic spaces of the courtly space and the uncourtly space, in other words the forest, which is eradicated by an event in the plot. This is indicated by the text describing the entering of the forest: “Árla um morgininn

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<sup>414</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>415</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., p. 167.

<sup>418</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 128 and see *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, line 30–p. 65, line 4.

ríðr kóngur á skóginn með hirð sinni.”<sup>419</sup> [Early in the morning the king rides into the forest with his retainers.]<sup>420</sup> In the forest, Erex, a maiden and the queen come upon a strange knight and his ugly dwarf, who by his ugliness indicates their affiliation to the forest, as was shown in chapter seven. Their encounter results in the maiden, as well as Erex being attacked by the dwarf with a whip, which means that Erex has failed in his knightly duties to defend himself, the maiden or the reputation of the queen.<sup>421</sup> Erex is aware of this and states: “[...] ek skal eigi fyrr apr koma til hirðar Artús kóngrs en ek hefí hefnt þessarar þinnar ok minnar skammar, eða fá aðra hálfu meiri.”<sup>422</sup> [...] I shall not return to King Arthur’s court until I have avenged both your dishonor and mine, or else get another even greater.]<sup>423</sup> His first inhibition to defend himself or his queen led to a loss in honour, but a failure to avenge himself and the queen would lead to an even further loss and would showcase his lacking masculinity. In the case of this scene, the forest symbolises a place of peril and danger that led to the revelation of the hero’s flaw in courtly expectations and masculinity. According to Schäfke’s matrix of characteristics, Erex is at this point (+ noble), by birth, (– courtly), meaning that he is lacking in his courtly behaviour and (– at court).<sup>424</sup> This loss of the courtly, as well as Old Norse virtue of honour, a loss of *fréggð* and *frami*, rather than *virðing* or *sómð* which refer to honour as a social standing or accomplished deed, have to be reversed, which happens in Erex’ case in the space of the other court and will therefore be analysed in the following chapter concerned with this space.

The second cycle of *Erex saga* provides more insights into the correlation of the forest and the hero’s masculinity. Erex and Evida leave his father’s castle after he was reproached for his life of ease and they ride into the forest called Hervida.<sup>425</sup> Here, the hero’s crossing of the courtly space into the uncourtly space has not simply one but multiple eradication of events in the form of multiple quests. Erex has to fight against the inhabitants of the uncourtly forests such as robbers, evil knights, an earl, giants and a dragon which all serve the purpose of Schäfke’s recovery model, to help Erex regain his honour.<sup>426</sup> He enters the forest with a lack of honour and eventually leaves it to finally return to the royal court with regained honour, meaning that the virtue is to be gained by successfully finishing quests within the forest, thereby transforming

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<sup>419</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 224.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>421</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>424</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>425</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 238.

<sup>426</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

this space from not only a place of danger to a place that also provides glorious challenges and opportunities. Simultaneously, it is also a place of refuge, away from the reproach of the other knights and even from enemies during his quests.<sup>427</sup> After a particularly difficult fight, “Erex forðar sér á skóginn”<sup>428</sup> [Erex escapes into the forest]<sup>429</sup>, seeking safety.

Here it is important to note that even though the circumstances of Erex entry into the forest are not portraying him in the best light, as opposed to him succeeding in all of his quests, Erex is nonetheless superior to almost all of his opponents as shown in the following: “Tekz þar hin snarpasta orrusta ok lauk svá at Erex feldi þá alla, en varð lítt sárr.”<sup>430</sup> [A most fierce battle ensues and ended when Erex felled them all, but he was little wounded.]<sup>431</sup> This stems true until Erex eventually becomes supposedly fatally wounded and is brought with Evida to the castle of Earl Placidus, which will be analysed in the following chapter.

### 9.2.2. *Ívens saga*

The setting of the forest constitutes an essential element for *Ívens saga*. However, in the first cycle of the story, the forest is only mentioned in the following account. Íven leaves the royal court in order to avenge his relative’s disgrace. To achieve this, he has to arrive at the spring, at which the knight that disgraced his relative was conjured. This spring is to be found in the woods, with the path to the spring being guarded by a dark fellow who watches over the wild animals within the forest, his name, as was shown in chapter seven, being an indication to the uncourtly and subsequent danger that awaits Íven.<sup>432</sup>

The second cycle is of much more relevance for the uncourtly outside space of the forest. After being reproached by his lady’s servant for missing his date of return, as has been shown in the chapter concerning the court, Íven is ashamed and seeks to go to a place “sem engi maðr þekti hann”<sup>433</sup> [where no one knew him]<sup>434</sup>. Therefore, he “hljóp ór landtjaldinu til skógar. Týndi hann þá mjök svá öllu vitinu ok reif af sér klæðin”<sup>435</sup> [ran out of the tent and into the woods. There he lost nearly all his reason and he tore his clothes off]<sup>436</sup>. It is also described that he

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<sup>427</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 65.

<sup>428</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 242.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238, 240.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>432</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 46.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

“skaut sér dýr, ok át hrátt kjöt þeira”<sup>437</sup> [shot animals and ate their meat raw]<sup>438</sup>, emphasising his despair and abandonment of courtly behaviour.<sup>439</sup> Through this it becomes evident, that the forest is a place of refuge from the reproach of his lady, but also a place of exile, in which Íven fled because of his shame. Under these circumstances Íven is only (+ noble) but lost his courtliness (– courtly) and is also no longer at court (– at court). His transgression from the semantic space of King Arthur’s court into the uncourtly forest, however, was not solely an act of fleeing and exiling himself, but also for the purpose of regaining his honour through *sómð*, knightly deeds in the uncourtly space, through Schäfke’s recovery model.<sup>440</sup>

In the forest, Íven had to fulfil a multitude of quests, such as helping a lady defend her castle and realm from an evil earl, fighting giants, saving a woman who turns out to be the lady’s servant Lúneta, fighting other knights and saving a lion from a dragon, with the former becoming his trusted companion. The lion, as part of a wild, exotic animal inhabiting the forest, represents a key point in Íven’s development, as their meeting displays Íven’s ability to perform knightly deeds and signifies a new dimension of his identity, the tamed forest, or in other words, the courtly in an uncourtly space. His situation in the forest was that of an uncourtly outcast, that slowly has to rediscover his knightly abilities and prove himself worthy once more of his lady’s love.<sup>441</sup> But after fulfilling multiple quests, Íven forms his new sense of masculinity, through relearning and reapplying knightly virtues and deeds, on the basis of his forest episodes, which is symbolised by his friendship with the lion, the tamed nature and the courtly within the uncourtly.<sup>442</sup> He therefore forms his new identity, the Knight of the Lion, with the characteristics, (+ noble), (+ courtly), (– at court), and can finally regain his honour and lead a life of fidelity with his lady, which is why he is able to return to her, after she realises that it is Íven who is behind the Knight of the Lion and his famous deeds.<sup>443</sup>

### 9.2.3. *Parcevals saga*

In *Parcevals saga*, the setting of the uncourtly forest represents the most unusual element compared to the other translated *riddarasögur*. Here, the hero is in fact a child of the forest.

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>439</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 71.

<sup>440</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>441</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 71.

<sup>442</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>443</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 71.

Before Parceval was born, his father and mother were well off but had to flee into the forest after becoming impoverished.<sup>444</sup> This means that for his family, the forest was a place of refuge in which they could hide after having lost their lands. Parceval, however, was not completely untrained in the arts of combat when he grew up in the forest, On the contrary, before his father dies, he “hafði áðr kent honum skot ok skylmingar, ok svá kunni hann gaflökum at skjóta svá at þrjú váru á lopti senn”<sup>445</sup> [had already taught him archery and swordplay, and he could throw javelins so that three were in the air at once]<sup>446</sup>. This, together with his noble heritage as was shown in chapter seven, shows that Parceval was in possession of *virðing*, even though he grew up in a forest. Other than his father and his mother, he had no exposure to other people, let alone the royal court. The latter recognises Parceval’s lack in courtliness and states in regard to his wish to go to the court of King Arthur: “Þeir einir fá þar sæmd er íþróttamenn eru ok örugt hafa hjarta ok sé þó sjálfir vitrir, en þik skortir allt þetta, ok ef þú kemr þar, verðr þú hleginn en eigi gjöfum feginn”<sup>447</sup> [The only men who win honour there are those who are skilled in arms and who have fearless hearts, though they themselves should also be wise, but you are quite lacking in these things, and if you go there you will be jeered, not cheered with gifts]<sup>448</sup>. Her use of the term *sómð*, which has been explained in an earlier chapter, indicates Parceval’s uncourtliness and emphasises his inexperience as a knight. With this description it is possible to characterise Parceval as (+ noble), (– courtly), (– at court), due to his lack of courtliness. However, Parceval is also very much aware of the fact that he needs to learn the knightly virtues through practice.<sup>449</sup> The well-intended advice of his mother on how to act courtly as in not to make a fool of himself upon his arrival at King Arthur’s court, is rather defective. For example, she advises to only kiss a woman and nothing more.<sup>450</sup> Parceval readily follows this advice when he leaves for King Arthur’s castle, as he meets a maiden and forces her to kiss him against her will.<sup>451</sup> This act stands against of hat the *Konungs skuggsjá* would consider right courtly conduct towards women.<sup>452</sup> His courtly behaviour only changes, after he meets Gormanz, whose castle does in fact exist within the forest, but will be analysed in the chapter concerned with the space of the other courts.

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<sup>444</sup> See *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 108–110.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>449</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>450</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>451</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>452</sup> See *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 9–30.

Within the forest Parceval encounters multiple quests in which he can test the newly learned skills. One of which is connected to the maiden, which he forced to kiss earlier in the storyline. After their earlier encounter, she was reproached by her lover for what had happened and forced to ride with little food or water behind him.<sup>453</sup> In this context, Parceval meets them again and wants to defend her honour, as he has now learned the courtly behaviour and how to treat a lady.<sup>454</sup>

### 9.3. The Other Court

#### 9.3.1. *Erex saga*

The space of the other court is mentioned numerous times in *Erex saga*. During Erex' first adventure cycle, he follows a strange knight and his dwarf, which were the cause of his distress and loss of honour, back to the knight's castle.<sup>455</sup> After Erex' crossing of the border between the forest and the other court into the castle of the knight Malpirant and his subsequent triumph over the knight, the court of the knight is absorbed by King Arthur's court as "gerði Artús kóngr hann hirðmann sinn"<sup>456</sup> [King Arthur made him his retainer]<sup>457</sup>. This absorption is following Schäfke's model of meta-erasure, in which the borders between the courtly space and the other court vanish and morph into one space, dominated by the royal court of King Arthur.<sup>458</sup> However, this absorption of the other court is only possible if the hero's opponents are of noble birth. In order to have access to the courtly space, they need to possess courtliness and be of nobility, as has been shown in chapter eight. This becomes visible, as only two of Erex' opponents, two knights, are later included into King Arthur's court and others, such as robbers and giants from the forest or earls showing their uncourtliness by trying to force Evida to marry her, do not get included.

It is also at Malpirant's court that Erex should meet his later wife Evida, who is in fact of noble decent as her mother was the daughter of an earl.<sup>459</sup> She is described as the most beautiful maiden that has "líkamans burðir ok kurteisi, svá at sjálf náttúran undraðiz at hún var svá fríð

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<sup>453</sup> See *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 112.

<sup>454</sup> See *Konungs skuggsiá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 9–30.

<sup>455</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 226.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>458</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>459</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 226.

sköpuð.”<sup>460</sup> [such bearing and such fine manners that Nature herself was astounded that she was created so beautiful.]<sup>461</sup> However, she is described to be dressed “í einum línkyrtli fornum ok slitnum”<sup>462</sup> [in an old and tattered linen dress]<sup>463</sup>. The fact that she is of noble decent, beautiful and bestowed with courtly behaviour, yet clothed in tattered rags causes a problem in the idea of courtliness, meaning that this other court is not as refined and civilised as King Arthur’s court, since it is unable to recognise and appreciate Evida’s courtly virtues.<sup>464</sup> King Arthur’s court on the other hand recognises her affiliation to the courtly sphere and clothes her in expensive garments, makes her part of the queen’s retinue and chooses her as the most beautiful maiden.<sup>465</sup> Erex himself is characterised at the court of Malpirant as (+ noble), (– courtly), meaning that he lost his courtly virtue honour through the knight’s and dwarf’s disgrace and (– at court), showing that in this case, the other court serves as a place for Erex to avenge his and the queens honour by fighting the knight.

The second cycle of *Erex saga*, however, provides a much more varied approach to the role of the space of other court. During his quests, Erex and Evida ride within the forest until they come upon different castles multiple times: “Þau ríða nú lengi um skóginn þar til at þau sjá einn kastala [...]”<sup>466</sup> [They now ride for a long time in the forest until they see a castle [...]]<sup>467</sup>. Usually, these castles and their courts, as they are places in the uncourtly forest, tend to portray a place of danger that harbours robbers or evil knights. However, sometimes the opponents or their lovers from another court turn out to be related to Erex or Evida, transforming them instantly into more courtly beings that by extension also belong to the court of King Arthur. Erex’ cousin Guiamar, for example, “rennr á háls Erex og fagnar honum blíðliga ok biðr af sér reiði ok býðr honum alla kosti”<sup>468</sup> [throws his arms around Erex’s neck and greets him warmly and asks him not to be angry and offers to place everything at his disposal]<sup>469</sup>, showing that he is in fact aware of courtly behaviour.

On one occasion another court seems like a shelter for the married couple, until it turns out that the earl of the castle plans to kill Erex in order to be able to marry Evida, thereby becoming a

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>464</sup> See Boklund, Karin M.: “On the Spatial and Cultural Characteristics of Courtly Romance”. In: *Semiotica* (1977), p. 3.

<sup>465</sup> See *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 232–234.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid., p. 245.



place of danger as well.<sup>470</sup> This theme is picked up again at a later point in the saga, when Earl Placidus takes Erex, who is wounded and mistakenly considered dead, and his mourning wife Evida to his court and states that he will marry Evida, even if it is against her wish. To this, the court voices their disapproval: “Jarlinn reiddiz nú ok slær hana pústr ok biðr hana eta með sínum bónda. Hún grætr sárliga, en hirðinni líkar illa tiltæki jarlsins.”<sup>471</sup> [The earl now got angry and boxes her ears and bids her eat with her husband. She cries sorely, and the court is ill-pleased with the earl’s behaviour.]<sup>472</sup> The emphasis of the author to show that the court disapproves of him is a clear demonstration that the earl is uncourtly, since he does not know how to treat a woman correctly.<sup>473</sup> Furthermore, the author’s choice to mention this instance was made to keep with their Old Norse code of ethics that saw the women’s right to make their own choices in the question of marriage, as the court reminds him that forcing here would be “guðs lög eigi, nema hún gefi leyfi til”<sup>474</sup> [contrary to God’s law, unless she consents]<sup>475</sup>.<sup>476</sup> In this context, Erex can prove his knightly abilities as he fights the earl in order to save his wife, again showing that the prevalent model of eradication of an event, as the crossing into the space of another court, is Schäfke’s recovery model.<sup>477</sup> The lack of honour that was caused by his life of ease can be restored through his knightly achievements in the episodes of the forest and at the other court, because the crossing of the borders between those spaces provoke an interaction of the hero with the different spaces that allow him to prove his abilities and regain the lost virtue, eventually stabilising and restoring his courtly masculinity. With this in mind, the characteristics of Erex have changed, making it possible to eventually arrive at King Arthur’s court with the newly regained characteristic of (+ courtly).

This forms the last quest within a different castle, apart from the final episode in the castle Bardiga of King Effuen, which however will be analysed in the following chapter, as it falls under the category of a magical space.

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<sup>470</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>473</sup> See *Konungs skuggsiá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, lines 9–30.

<sup>474</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 250.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>476</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: “Characterization in ‘Erex Saga’ and ‘Ivens Saga’”. In: *Modern Language Studies* (1975), p. 18.

<sup>477</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 252 and see Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

### 9.3.2. *Ívens saga*

The space of the other court appears in a few instances in *Ívens saga*. During the first cycle of the story, Íven's quest to avenge his relative eventually leads him to the castle of the knight that he fought at the spring.<sup>478</sup> Here he is met with the most important space of the other court extant in the saga, the home and courtly milieu of his later wife, the widowed lady of the knight he had to fight earlier.

During his fight with the knight, Íven injures him gravely, which is why he subsequently has to flee to his castle and is followed by Íven. In the castle, the hero is hidden away by the lady's servant Lúneta, because all of the inhabitants of the castle are looking for the man that killed their lord.<sup>479</sup> The transgression of the border between the forest and the other court is in this case identical to the transgression of the royal court and the forest that was described in the previous chapter about the forest space, since this transgression is still part of his quest to fight the knight of the castle, following Schäfke's recovery model of retrieving the honour in an outside space.<sup>480</sup> The death of the knight means the rehabilitation of the honour of Íven's relative, since he is the one that was disgraced in battle, but has simultaneously also proves Kæi's mockery wrong by showing his valour, which was in fact never truly lost but only doubted by the evil-tongued Kæi.<sup>481</sup> Because of this, Íven is in fact (+ noble), (+ courtly) after having regained his own as well as his relative's honour and (– at court). Additionally, the possibility whether this first castle may also be a magical space, based on its description and inherent qualities, will be explored in the next chapter.

During the second cycle of the story, Íven often encounters lords or ladies of other castles, who ask for his help and therefore form the starting point of each individual quest, in line with Schäfke's recovery model.<sup>482</sup> After he was able to help them and prove his male prowess, he is asked multiple times if he does not want to stay at the castle and even marry daughters, as he has become such a virtuous knight.<sup>483</sup> However, he always refuses the offers, since he cannot stay as he is on a quest for his honour and cannot make any other commitments.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 46–48.

<sup>479</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 48–50.

<sup>480</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>481</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 44.

<sup>482</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>483</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 78, 82.

<sup>484</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 72, 78, 83, 90.

In fact, after saving the servant Lúneta later in the story, he returns to the castle of his lady without them recognising who he truly is, since he enters this space with his new identity, the Knight of the Lion.<sup>485</sup> The lady also asks him multiple times, whether he would like to stay with them to protect the castle, which he refuses by explaining that he cannot stay “sú frú fyrirgefr mér illvilja sinn, er reiði hefir á mér”<sup>486</sup> [until that lady forgives me her ill will, the one who is angry with me]<sup>487</sup>, thereby referring to his lady, who is also the person in front of him. His refusal to unveil his identity at this point stems to the fact that he has to wait until his lady is willing to reconcile with him. This is achieved by Íven’s return to the spring, which is at this point without the protection of a knight, as well as the castle of his lady, which in turn frightens them and makes the lady wish for the Knight of the Lion to protect them.<sup>488</sup> Her servant Lúneta, who at this point already knows about Íven’s identity, then states that if the lady helps the Knight of the Lion reconcile with his lady that she will be protected, which the lady willingly agrees to, only afterwards realising that it is in fact her husband under the name of the Knight of the Lion, who she then accepts back and is reconciled with.<sup>489</sup> As the Knight of the Lion, Íven now has finally returned to the lady’s court with the following characteristics (+ noble), with his deeds and her love making him (+ courtly) and (– at court), since he is not at the royal court.

### 9.3.3. *Parcevals saga*

For the space of the other court, *Parcevals saga* offers two main accounts. The first space in which Parceval moves is the court of the Gormananz of Groholl. Here, he rides through woods and comes upon a castle.<sup>490</sup> At the castle, Gormananz sees Parceval’s uncourtliness and questions him on the skills he already possesses, as they had been taught by his father and mother. It turns out that he is in fact very unskilled and mentions his mother rather often: “Þat kendi móðir mín mér, at ek skylda blíðliga heilsa yðr”<sup>491</sup> [My mother taught me that I should greet you

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<sup>485</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>488</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 94–96.

<sup>489</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 96–98.

<sup>490</sup> See *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 122.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

politely]<sup>492</sup>. This is underlined by the author mentioning Parceval's garments that revoke the image of a peasant.<sup>493</sup>

Because of this, Gormanz feels compelled to teach Parceval the necessary skills to become an accomplished knight and informs him that an unwillingness to learn would lead to further “skömm ok skaða”<sup>494</sup> [disgrace and injury]<sup>495</sup> of his honour, than he already suffered through his ignorance. The skills Gormanz teaches Parceval include how to “vápnum stýra ok spjóti halda ok vápnhesti hleypra [...]. Síðan kendi hann honum skildi at halda”<sup>496</sup> [handle your weapons and hold your lance, and how you put your warhorse to the gallop [...]] After that he taught him how to hold a shield]<sup>497</sup>. He also taught him “riddaraviðskipti [...] ok vápnaburð”<sup>498</sup> [chivalric manoeuvres and the bearing of weapons]<sup>499</sup>. Additionally, the final advice he gives Parceval is similar to the one he received earlier by his mother: to not kill an opponent when he is defeated, to not be too talkative or inquisitive, to give wise advice, to not constantly refer to his mother as it is foolish and to be a good Christian.<sup>500</sup> Lastly, to finally make him a knight, Gormanz also exchanges his peasant clothes and instead clads him in a “skyrtu ok brók af hvítu silki, hosur af rauðu eximi, kyrtil af inum bezta guðvef”<sup>501</sup> [shirt and breeches of white silk, hose of red samite, and tunic of the best velvet]<sup>502</sup>. It becomes evident that Gormanz' teachings align with the descriptions of the three courtly virtues *manvit*, *siðgóði* and *hóverska*, which have been presented in chapter six of this thesis. Furthermore, in the space of the other court of Gormanz, Parceval's characteristics are (+ noble), but still (- courtly) as he has learned the skills and virtues necessary to be courtly but has not yet proven himself capable of demonstrating his abilities, and (- at court).

The circumstance of not having yet proven himself is changed during the first cycle of the story in the episode following the time at the court of Gormanz, which in fact is also another space of the other court. Here, once again following Schäfke's recovery model, the hero Parceval moves to a different space in order to prove himself and gain knightly virtues through practice,

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<sup>492</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>493</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>500</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

as he said himself earlier to his mother, is necessary to learn.<sup>503</sup> This other court, however, is the castle “Fagraborg”<sup>504</sup>, which is home to Parceval’s lady Blankiflúr and besieged by King Klamadius and his steward Gingvarus.<sup>505</sup> Both of them are defeated by Parceval without being killed, as Gormananz had advised him, and are subsequently asked to return to King Arthur, who takes them into his court and thereby absorbs King Klamadius’ kingdom, which in itself forms another court.<sup>506</sup>

At the court of Blankiflúr, Parceval can show his knightly skills in battle and through this gain *sómd*, which is further enriched through receiving the love of his lady. His interaction with her is in stark contrast to his first meeting of a maiden after he left home and forced a kiss from her. With Blankiflúr, he has proven himself worthy of her love and has shown his knowledge of correct conduct.<sup>507</sup> However, Parceval’s mother was unhappy with his departure in the beginning of the story and their unhappy parting is standing in the way of Parceval’s own happiness, which is why he leaves the court of his lady. On his way back to his mother he comes upon multiple different quests, to once again test his knightly virtues and masculinity, one of which is the castle of the Fisher King, which will be analysed in the following chapter. His failing of finding the right balance of knightly virtues and the way he departed from his mother earlier are the causes why, after his return to the court of King Arthur, Parceval once again sets out to redeem his shame.<sup>508</sup> He has also failed to be a good Christian man, as opposed to what Gormananz had advised him earlier and to what the *Konungs skuggsjá* coins a courtly.<sup>509</sup> These circumstances, however, can be redeemed by Parceval’s confession and the studying of a prayer and by becoming a good Christian, after which he can finally return to Blankiflúr’s court as an accomplished knight.<sup>510</sup> With this in mind, Parceval’s characteristics are finally (+ noble), (+ courtly) and (– at court).

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<sup>503</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>504</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 138.

<sup>505</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>506</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>507</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 134f.

<sup>508</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 166, 178f.

<sup>509</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 178–180 and see *Konungs skuggsjá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 64, line 30–p. 65, line 4.

<sup>510</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 180, 182 and see Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 80.

## 9.4. Magical Spaces

### 9.4.1. *Erex saga*

In the whole of *Erex saga*, there is only truly one place that could be regarded as a magical space. This space can be found in Erex' last *aventure* episode at the court of King Effuen. Here, Erex is warned by his cousin King Guimar that the castle Bardiga contains a place called "Hirðar Fagnaðr"<sup>511</sup> [Joy of the Court]<sup>512</sup>, which has been the reason for the perishing of many knights. The castle of Bardiga could fall into the category of the space of the other court, as it is in fact a castle with its own king. However, it also shows explicit signs of belonging to magical spaces. This is due to the fact that the space is explicitly described to be "sterkliga múrat"<sup>513</sup> [surrounded by a strong wall]<sup>514</sup>. There is also "einn múr ok eitt port með sterkri járnhurð, ok var hún eigi læst, þvíat hanna geymði einn dvergr"<sup>515</sup> [a wall and a gate with a strong iron door, and it was not locked, since a dwarf guarded it]<sup>516</sup>. As described earlier, magical spaces are usually marked by being demarcated from other spaces through a clear border, such as a wall or a strong door, as is the case here. Furthermore, the description of a dwarf guarding the door, resembles the description of the uncourtly forest and forebodes a sense of danger surrounding this place.

Within the castle, the protagonist and his wife are met with a beautiful garden that symbolises a tamed forest, a transition between his forest episodes and his return to King Arthur's court, the two most opposing spaces in the text.<sup>517</sup> There he meets a knight by the name of Malbanaring, who tries to attack Erex both physically and verbally by using uncourtly speech, which Erex criticises and replies: "Hvat skulu slík stóryrði, þvíat karlmenn skulu með vápnum vegaz en ekki með illyrðum."<sup>518</sup> [What is the meaning of such big words, for real men ought to fight with weapons and not with abusive language.]<sup>519</sup> With this encounter it becomes visible, that after all his quests, Erex has become truly courtly again, as he can discern the knight's lack of courtly behaviour, as in the wrong use of speech.<sup>520</sup> The remark about the fact that real men fight with words, which Erex intended to do instead of using crude language as the knight, also

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<sup>511</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 254.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>517</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 64.

<sup>518</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 256.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>520</sup> See *Konungs skuggsiá*. Edited by Ludvig Holm-Olsen (1983), p. 65, lines 6–25 and p. 64, line 30–p. 65, line 4.

emphasises the stability of Erex' masculinity, that was re-established through his knightly deeds in the forest and castles, leading to Erex characteristics being determined as (+ noble) as always, (+ courtly) due to his regained courtliness but still (– at court), as he is not back at King Arthur's court yet. However, this changes after Erex conquers the knight, and the fact that Evida and the knight's beloved Elena realise they are kinswomen so that they all ride back to King Arthur's court, where the knight Malbanaring becomes “kóngr maðr”<sup>521</sup> [the king's retainer]<sup>522</sup>, meaning that his court, as this magical space is set in a castle, can be absorbed by the latter's royal court. This shows that the eradication of the event of Erex crossing the border between the forest and the magical castle becomes resolved through Schäfke's meta-eradication, which means that the border between the semantic spaces of the courtly and magical space vanish as the latter was absorbed by the courtly space of King Arthur's court.<sup>523</sup>

#### 9.4.2. *Ívens saga*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the other court, which is home to Íven's lady and will later become his home as well, can not only be read as the space of the other court, but also as a magical space. However, Íven's characteristics, as they have been described in the chapter concerned with the space of the other court, do not change if read in the context of a magical space. The possibility to interpret it as a magical space is due to the description of the castle, especially on the question of how to reach it.

Before Íven arrives at the castle, he has to summon the knight of the castle, who will lead him there after their fight. This summoning happens at a spring, from which water, which is both cold and yet boiling, has to be retrieved and then poured into a pillar beside it.<sup>524</sup> When done so, "gerðiz þegar mikill vindr ok vatnsfall ok slíkr stormr sem vant var. [...] þá kom þar einn riddari með vellandi reiði [...]"<sup>525</sup> [a great wind and downpour were produced and such a storm as was customary. [...] a knight came riding boiling with rage]<sup>526</sup>. After Íven severely injures the knight, the latter flees back to his castle, which is only accessible through a narrow gate, a physical border, thereby further hinting at the magical qualities of the knight's castle.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>521</sup> *Erex saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 256.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>523</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

<sup>524</sup> See *Ívens saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 42, 46.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>527</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 46, 48.

Furthermore, behind the gate is a “eitt mikit garðhlið ok ramligt en hin þykkvasta hurð fyrir”<sup>528</sup> [a large, sturdy portal with a very thick door]<sup>529</sup>, through which the knight flees and into which Íven follows him.

Because of the author’s insistence on emphasising the magical component of finding the way to the castle and meeting its lord, as well as the physical boundaries of the castle, the description does at least to some degree provide the option of being interpreted as a magical space. This is further supported by the lack of merging of the other court of Íven’s lady, and finally his own, and King Arthur’s court. As has been shown earlier, it is a characteristic of the space of the other court to be eventually absorbed by the courtly space of King Arthur, whereas by the end of the story of *Ívens saga*, Íven and his lady seemingly stay as rulers at their own castle and do not return to King Arthur.<sup>530</sup> Additionally, reading the castle of Íven’s lady as a magical space would make it stand out among the other spaces of the other court presented in the saga, thereby symbolising the importance it has in Íven’s life and subsequently the story itself.

### 9.4.3. *Parcevals saga*

The role of the magical space in *Parcevals saga* is much more prominent than in the other two sagas. Here, it is the setting for one of Parceval’s biggest tests of his courtly abilities and knightly virtues during the first cycle of the story. As mentioned beforehand, the magical space can be found in the castle of the Fisher King. The castle is described to be surrounded by “mikit vatn”<sup>531</sup> [a great lake]<sup>532</sup> and can only be accessed through the crossing of a bridge and a gate, thereby creating a physical boundary and separating the magical space from other spaces, such as the forest space.<sup>533</sup> When entering the castle, Parceval shows his knightly virtue of using fine language “þakkaði húsbónda með fögrum orðum”<sup>534</sup> [thanked the master of the house in gracious words]<sup>535</sup>, which stands in contrast with his earlier use of language, as he for example greeted King Arthur in his hall.<sup>536</sup> Inside the castle, Parceval is met with wonderous things,

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>530</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>531</sup> *Parcevals saga*. In: *Norse Romance: II. The Knights of the Round Table* (1999), p. 146.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>533</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>536</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 114.



however, he does not “spyrja með hverjum hætti þat gerðiz”<sup>537</sup> [ask how that came to be]<sup>538</sup>, as he was taught by his teacher Gormanaz, “at hann skyldi eigi vera ofmálugr ef hann kæmi í ókunnan stað”<sup>539</sup> [that he should not be too talkative if he were to come into an unfamiliar place]<sup>540</sup>. The next day, Parceval suddenly finds the castle abandoned with nobody to be found, further underlying the magical element of the space.<sup>541</sup>

Parceval’s silence on the night before, however, proves to be a mistake, as he learns later, since he could have freed the enchanted Fisher King, if he had asked him.<sup>542</sup> The author concludes Parceval’s failure by stating: “En svá sem maðr má vera ofmálugr sér ti meina, svá má hann ok vera ofþögull sér til skaða, þvíat hvárttveggja má mein gera, ofmælgí ok ofþögli.”<sup>543</sup> [But just as a man may be too talkative to his own jury, so may he also be too silent to his own undoing. For both may do harm, excessive talking and stubborn silence.]<sup>544</sup> With this episode in the magical space, it has been shown that because of Parceval’s naivety, he still has not achieved the state of complete courtliness, as he has not yet found the right balance of the virtues and how or when to correctly apply them, which makes Parceval therefore still (+ noble) as always, (– courtly) and (– at court).<sup>545</sup>

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>541</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>542</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>545</sup> See Saunders, Corinne J.: *The Forest of Medieval Romance* (1993), p. 78.

## 10. Conclusion

This thesis has shown the differentiation of courtly and uncourtly characteristics with which the different spaces in *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* are semantically charged and, by using Schäfke's theory of the eradication of the event, as well as his adapted matrix of characteristics, that it becomes visible through the depiction of the hero's movement within them that the spaces are fundamental to making the development of hero's masculinity visible. The space of the court was established as the centre of the world in which beauty, courtliness and harmony, or the *joie de la court*, are the essential characteristic but also the final goal of the sagas. Additionally, the uncourtly forest space forms the counter space to the court, in which the hero can prove his courtly valour through quests. It is often marked through attributes such as ugliness and villainy. Within this space, the space of the other court can often be found, which can represent an enclave of courtliness and become an extension of the courtly space of King Arthur, or it can represent another uncourtly space in which the hero can prove his skills. Lastly, the magical space contributes an otherworldly dimension to the sagas, as this space, though often found within the forest space, is neither courtly nor uncourtly and is marked by a clear border, such as a wall or a river. The space of the other court can sometimes manifest itself as a magical space to bestow it with an additional focus and to let it stand out among the other spaces of the other court. In the magical space, the hero often faces his ultimate test in which he has to show his ability to apply his courtly skills. With all of this in mind, it becomes evident that the various spaces within the sagas can sometimes coincide and that they cater to different needs of the hero's journey and offer different opportunities for the hero's display of his courtly masculinity.

The aspect of the hero's masculinity has also been analysed in this thesis. It has been shown through Evan's and Hancock's theories how the portrayal of the hero's masculinity is based on an Old Norse ethos but becomes refined by the courtly virtues introduced in the translated *riddarasögur*, and collectively presented in the younger works of the *Konungs skuggsjá* and the *Hirðskrá*. These virtues are based on the core values *manvit*, *siðgóði* and *hóverska* that are also essential to the literary depiction of the hero's masculinity in the three aforementioned sagas. The analysis of the defined spaces within the sagas in context of this depiction renders the following general results: in the space of the court, the hero often experiences a loss in his masculinity through the loss of a courtly virtue, which can only be redeemed by his crossing into a different space. Since the forest is the counter space of the space of the court, he has to

enter this space to follow his quests, which then in turn lead him into the spaces of the other court and the magical. There, he either has to prove his courtly abilities, or he can find a place of rest in the form of the courtly enclave in the space of the other court. After he has regained his lost virtue, that was lost in the space of the court, the hero is finally able to return to the courtly space of King Arthur and restore the *joie de la court*, the perfect harmony. Each of the three sagas follows this general result, however, they also use the characteristics of each space in an individual way as a literary topos. Therefore, each saga has a unique approach to each space, as for *Erex saga*, the space of the court is the main focus and for *Ívens saga*, the space of the other court and possibly also the magical space play an important role and that for *Parcevals saga*, the space of the forest differs in its importance to the other two sagas.

Furthermore, the final chapter of this thesis will also summarise the results that were obtained in the previous chapters. As was made visible in the historical context, the reign of King Hákon Hákonarson was characterised by a change on a political level, as well as on a social level. The image of the king as the *rex iustus* on top of the social pyramid secured the kingdom politically, but also established a new social order, that was based on Old Norse ethos but build upon by new continental European ideals, norms and values. It was then the core idea of the king's court, the *hirð*, to serve the king after the ideas of a continental monarchy, as King Hákon strived to make his court competitive with the rest of Europe, as its development was lacking, which was made visible by the behaviour displayed by his *hirð* and their reputation abroad.

In this context, chapter six has shown in what way these continental ideas were introduced and implemented in the king's court. The Old Norse courtly texts, as in the didactic work *Konungs skuggsjá* and the retainer's code of law *Hirðskrá*, have described what is considered courtly and good behaviour and base these ideas on the three main virtues *manvit*, *siðgóði* and *hóverska*. It has also been shown that the translated *riddarasögur*, such as *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga*, which were imported and translated from Old French into Old Norse on behest of King Hákon, were utilised to entertain the court but at the same time were also introduced to educate the court on the desired courtly behaviour, as the translated *riddarasögur* reflect the virtues that are presented in the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*.

Chapter six and seven have also demonstrated, how a change in the idea of masculinity occurred, in tune with the shift in society from a traditional Old Norse standard to a more continental European one. This means that during the reign of King Hákon, the traditional idea of the Old Norse warrior hero was developed further by a more continental idea of masculinity, as it is represented in the translated *riddarasögur*. The refined masculinity is connected and characterised by the courtly ideal and values that are presented in the *Konungs skuggsjá* and

*Hirðskrá*, and then in turn underlined through the sagas. A man is therefore masculine, if he behaves according to the norms and values and thereby serves the king in a manly way. However, the refined courtly masculinity has not fully eradicated the Old Norse understanding of masculinity yet, as the translated *riddarasögur* show changes to their Old French originals that were inspired by an Old Norse ethos, as for example through the concept of the virtue of honour. This virtue is much more prominent in the Old Norse versions and shows the blend of the masculinities, by the Old Norse understanding of honour being enriched by the continental values.

As was already mentioned, to make this refined masculinity accessible, as well as desirable to the *hirð*, the translated *riddarasögur* were used to make the courtly virtues visible by letting the heroes of *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* demonstrate them to the court. In order to effectively display the virtues, the hero has to experience a lack in his courtly values and therefore also in his masculinity, who then has to go on different quests to regain them, which then leads to a re-established harmony at the court, the *joie de la court*. To be able to experience a lack in virtues and to then redeem this lack, it is necessary to divide the translated *riddarasögur* into different spaces, based on their semantic meaning. Through them and through the hero's movement, the hero can ultimately convey the core idea and inherent courtly value of each saga, as it is his own masculinity that consists of courtly behaviour that needs to be mended.

In the case of *Erex saga*, the hero first experienced a loss of his and his queen's honour in the forest, which later could be redeemed in the space of the other court. Afterwards, he experiences another loss in his honour at the court of his father, a space of the other court. Here, *Erex* forgets his knightly duties after spending too much time with *Evida* in bed and he also fears to have lost her love, with the lady's love also being a sign of his masculinity and honour, due to his life of ease and reproach of his peers. He must then go through the uncourtly forest to show that he truly is a courtly knight and restore his masculinity, as *Schäfke's* recovery model shows how the hero must enter a different space to retrieve something he misses.<sup>546</sup> After *Erex* successfully regains his honour and can assure himself of *Evida's* love for him, he can return to the court of King Arthur, re-establish the *joie de la court* and take over his father's place as a king himself. Similarly, in *Ívens saga* the hero *Íven* must avenge his relative's loss of honour that he experienced in the forest. For this, he has to leave the court and seek the space of the other court, which could also be understood as a magical space, and defeat the knight that caused his

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<sup>546</sup> See Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013), p. 28f.

relative's shame. After achieving this and marrying his widow, Íven wants to avoid falling into a life of ease, as Erex did before, and departs his lady's castle for knightly adventures. However, Íven misses his date of return and falls into despair, as he has lost his honour by betraying his wife. He flees into the forest and lives there for some time, experiencing quests to regain his honour and masculinity, as in Schäfke's recovery model and finally transforms into his new identity of the Knight of the Lion.<sup>547</sup> In this form, having finally become courtly again, he can return to his lady.

The *Parcevals saga*, however, is not so closely related to the other two sagas. Instead, the hero is here an uncourtly child of the forest space that first arrives at the courtly space of King Arthur showing his lack of education and of the three main virtues presented in the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*. As in Schäfke's recovery model, he sets out and tries to redeem this flaw of his lack of knowledge and learns courtly behaviour at the court of Gormanz, the space of the other court.<sup>548</sup> There he learned how to eat, speak, fight, dress and behave correctly, according to the standards set in *Konungs skuggsjá*, *Hirðskrá* and the translated *riddarasögur*. He then sets out to prove that he is indeed a courtly knight. For this, he enters the space of the other court in form of the castle of his lady Blankiflúr and he can prove himself worthy. However, he does also show that he still has not found the perfect balance of the knightly virtues yet, as he fails in the magical space at the castle of the Fisher King. Only after realising his error and repenting his sins can he return to his lady.

Considering these results, it becomes evident that the main spaces of *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* are the courtly space of King Arthur's court and the uncourtly space of the forest. However, within the sagas it sometimes becomes difficult to draw a clear line between the different spaces as they often seem to overlap. So can the space of other court sometimes be read as a magical space, as a courtly space, or as an uncourtly space, depending on whether it depicts a courtly enclave, as in the case of *Ívens saga* the court of Blankiflúr, or if it depicts the home of the hero's opponent within a quest. This could also be based on the aforementioned use of space as a literary topos, in which the semantic meaning of a space can be applied differently in each saga, which leads to the spaces' ability to offer different interpretations and shifts of focus in the sagas. All in all, it can be summarised that the hero needs the different spaces of the sagas, in order to move through them and demonstrate the knightly virtues that constitute his masculinity, as the sagas tried to educate the courtiers on exactly these values. Each space provides a different opportunity for the hero to show his development. The space

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<sup>547</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 28f.

<sup>548</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 28f.

of the court demonstrates the perfect harmony, when everybody is courtly, and the hero's masculinity is set to respected standards. If there is a breach by the uncourtly, the hero loses a knightly virtue and aims to retrieve it in the forest, where he can embark on quests and show his valour. The forest provides the contrast of the courtly knight and the uncourtly, which gives the knight the opportunity to show off their knightly value, thereby being an integral element to the storyline. Furthermore, the space of the other court, can sometimes be a place for the hero's quest or an extension of the royal court, but also provides the hero with the possibility to establish his own courtly space. And lastly, the magical space supplies the sagas with a supernatural element, as well as elevating other spaces from similar ones, such as the space of the other court. It also portrays the ultimate space in which the hero can be tested for his abilities.

To conclude, the translated *riddarasögur* show on the basis of the courtly norms and values of the *Konungs skuggsjá* and *Hirðskrá*, how the court of King Arthur ought to act. To achieve this, the different spaces within the texts and the hero's movement in them are necessary in order to depict the state of the hero's masculinity by showing his courtly abilities, as his masculinity and his courtly behaviour are intertwined. This in turn then provides insight into the core values that each saga is supposed to teach. As Marianne Kalinke already detected in some of her works, the main focus and main virtue that is portrayed and conveyed in *Erex saga* and *Ívens saga* is the courtly virtue of honour.<sup>549</sup> For *Parcevals saga*, the description used by Geraldine Barnes as "*Riddara Skuggsjá*"<sup>550</sup> is very fitting as the saga describes the whole education of a courtly knight with all of the important virtues, including how to properly dress, speak, behave around women and be a good Christian, as was shown in chapter six. Due to the majority of norms and values displayed in the *Konungs skuggsjá* also being found especially in *Parcevals saga*, Barnes' combination of the two names underlines the connection between the two literary genres of the didactic work *Konungs skuggsjá* and the translated *riddarasögur*, and their role in conveying the norms and values through the sagas' protagonists. Together with the historical background of the introduction of the texts into an Old Norse milieu as was shown in chapter two of this thesis, it becomes evident that the historical context is of much importance to the understanding of these texts. King Hákon's earlier internal struggles of an insubordinate, divided *hirð* can be overcome by uniting and optimising them to the same, more continental European standard and thereby making them competitive on an external level with the rest of

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<sup>549</sup> See Kalinke, Marianne E.: "Honor: the Motivating Principle of the *Erex saga*". In: *Scandinavian Studies* (1973), p. 143.

<sup>550</sup> Barnes, Geraldine: "Parcevals Saga: Riddara Skuggsjá?". In: *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* (1984), p. 62.

Europe through the use of the sagas as entertainment but also as didactic works as a pamphlet of behaviour. In front of the background of the hero's depiction within the different spaces in the saga, the court of King Hákon can see which courtly values are of importance and which should be adapted in order to fit into the new societal standards that his reign created.

Lastly, this thesis claims its relevance in the fact that a thorough analysis on the topic of spatiality and its relation to the hero's masculinity has not been conducted purely on the field of the Old Norse translated *riddarasögur*, specifically *Erex saga*, *Ívens saga* and *Parcevals saga* before. Previous research on similar topics have been made for example by Bernd Kretschmer, who, however, focused on a comparison between the Old Norse texts and their Old French originals, and by Werner Schäfke, whose research forms the foundation of this thesis, but whose work focuses on the genre of indigenous *riddarasögur* instead of the translated *riddarasögur*.<sup>551</sup> This thesis, with its research focus combining the theoretical fields of spatiality and masculinity, therefore offers a new perspective on the genre of translated *riddarasögur* that focuses purely on the Old Norse texts, as it provides an in-depth literary analysis of the works in context of their historical background.

With this in mind, this thesis has also shown how possible future research on the field of translated *riddarasögur* still has a diversified potential. There are a multitude of other sagas of this genre that could be analysed under a similar research question or that could follow the example of Kretschmer and Schäfke and analyse them in relation to their Old French originals or even to the genre of indigenous *riddarasögur*. It would also prove interesting to shift the focus from the portrayal of the hero's masculinity to the literary depiction of the female lead's femininity. For these reasons, this thesis portrays a further step in the future direction of research on the field of literary studies of the translated *riddarasögur*.

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<sup>551</sup> See Kretschmer, Bernd: *Höfische und Altwestnordische Erzähltradition in den Riddarasögur* (1982) and see Schäfke, Werner: *Wertesysteme und Raumsemantik in den isländischen Märchen- und Abenteuersagas* (2013).

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