

Who edited Heimskringla?

The kings' sagas as we know them were hardly written by the hand of Snorri Sturluson himself, believes the Danish professor, Jonna Louis-Jensen.



Jonna Louis-Jensen.

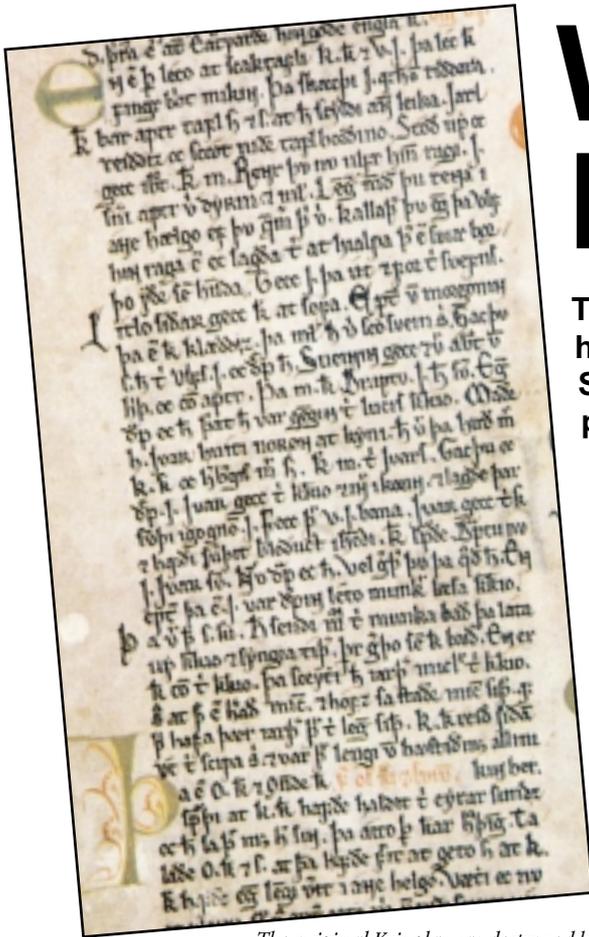
There is much to suggest that Heimskringla is an edited and adapted version of Snorri's texts, written after his death. None of the original texts Snorri probably wrote has been preserved. The kings' sagas and other medieval texts we know of today have been taken from copies.

Snorri's kings' sagas as they appear in Heimskringla are known from a medieval manuscript called Kringla. This was lost in a major fire in Copenhagen in 1728. Only one single leaf of the original Kringla escaped the flames. This has made it possible for researchers to establish that the document was written by an Iclander probably some 15 to 20 years after the

death of Snorri Sturluson himself. Literary history must be rewritten, says Jonna Louis-Jensen. She

goes on to point out that there are several medieval copies of parts of Heimskringla, but only one "complete" version of the whole work. The professor is of the opinion that this strengthens her theory that Kringla – and thus the kings' sagas – represent editorial work carried out by others, possibly Snorri's own nephew.

See more on pages 6-7



The original Kringla was destroyed by fire in 1728. Only one leaf escaped the flames. (Facsimile of the Kringla manuscript, from *Snorres kongesoger* [Snorri's Kings' Sagas], published by Det Norske Samlaget in 1979.)

CAS seeks proposals for group leaders

The Centre for Advanced Study organises basic research on an international level. In December the Board is to evaluate candidates to head research groups that are to spend one year at the Centre in the research year 2003/2004. The group leaders are chosen from among leading Norwegian researchers within the fields of the humanities, mathematics/natural science and social science/law. The groups are to have an international composition and will be fully funded by the CAS in cooperation with the Norwegian universities. It is not possible to conduct experimental research at the Centre. The CAS is now asking for proposals for suitable candidates to serve as leaders.

Proposals should include:

1. The name(s) of the candidate(s), place of work and CV.
2. Subject field or theme of the group's one-year period of activity at the CAS.
3. A brief description of the proposed theme and a survey of central problem areas in the field.

More information is to be found on: www.shs.uio.no Questions and proposals should be addressed to Professor Aanund Hylland, e-mail: aanund.hylland@econ.uio.no, tel: 22854271, or Professor Ole-Jørgen Skog, e-mail: o.j.skog@shs.uio.no, tel: 22122511.

The closing date for the submission of proposals is 23 November 2000

Current CAS Groups

Editing Medieval Manuscripts,

The group is headed by Professor Odd Einar Haugen, University of Bergen. The group's project and participants are presented on pages 4–7.

Decision Making under Uncertainty,

the group is headed by Professor Stein W. Wallace of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim.

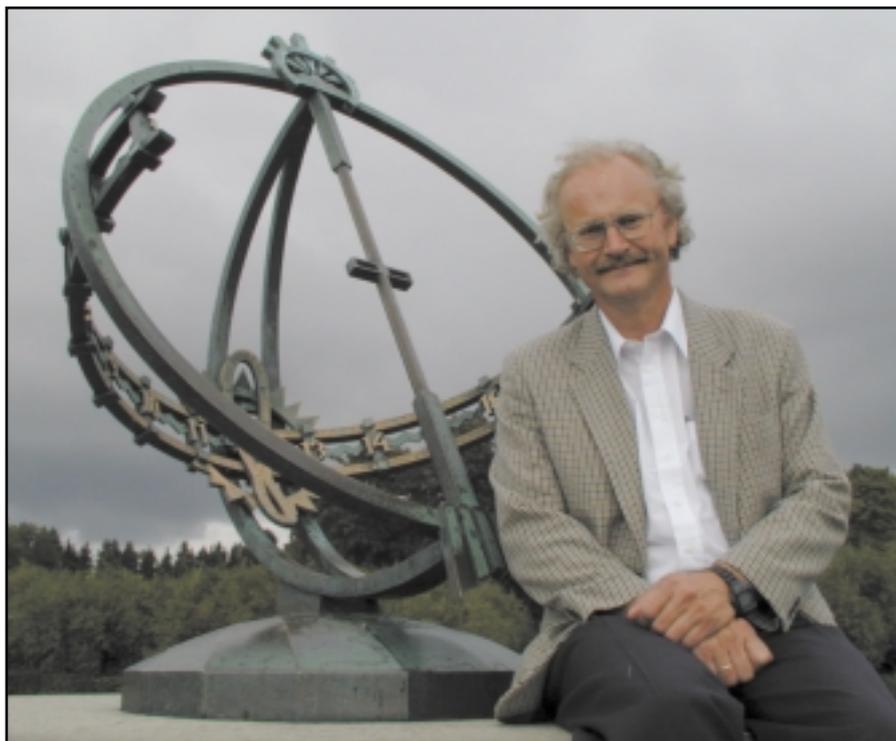
Dynamics of Fluid Rock Systems,

this group is headed by Professor Bjørn Jamtveit, University of Oslo.

The two latter groups will be presented in the next issue of the CAS Newsletter in the spring of 2001.

Scientific Director Ole-Jørgen Skog:

With a liking for deviance and action



The sociologist Ole-Jørgen Skog has taken up his appointment to the newly established post of scientific director at the Centre for Advanced Study. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

Without any liking for compartmentalised academic thinking, but as a specialist in deviance with a belief in a richer future, and spurred by intellectual curiosity, Professor of Sociology Ole-Jørgen Skog has taken up his appointment to the newly established post of scientific director at the CAS.

This autumn the Centre for Advanced Study at last got a scientific director in a full-time post, as the Bjørgo Committee had recommended in its evaluation of the Centre in 1997. Ole-Jørgen Skog (54) comes from a professorship at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography at the University of Oslo and is looking forward to continuing the Centre's commitment to the promotion of free and outstanding basic research in Norway.

The professor from Halden has an all-round background and he has been involved in a number of areas of academic research. Actually he was to have become a mathematician, and he received his basic education in the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. But in the late 1960s he followed the stream over to the Faculty of Social Science and took a higher degree with education as his main subject. However, his first academic post was in epidemiology and sociology, and he ended up with the sociology of deviance with the focus on alcohol, drugs, suicide and violence as his special field.

"I have little respect for traditional compartmentalised academic thinking", he says. "I have always cut across institutions and am genuinely curious about other subjects than my own. Fortunately more and more people are adopting an interdisciplinary approach to research, so the rigid boundaries between different subject communities are being breached a little bit."

Indeed it was not least the interdisciplinary, elitist environment at the Centre for Advanced Study that aroused Professor Skog's interest in the post of scientific director. He thinks the system of three one-year research projects within very different subject areas is particularly exciting, and he believes there will be new intellectual challenges both for himself and for the visiting researchers at the Centre. He is committed to giving the groups the best possible working conditions and will support them in such a way that a good dialogue is established between them.

"The groups can have a lot to learn from one another," Professor Skog points out, as he seeks to pave the way for formal and informal meetings

between the groups. "Informal conversations between people of different nationalities with different specialised academic knowledge give the researchers opportunities to gain different and fruitful inspiration."

Basic research

Another important task for the scientific director is to be a prime mover in research policy both in public and vis-à-vis the authorities. Better financial conditions are a core question here. After the Bjørgo Committee stated in 1997 that the CAS would not survive unless the funding of the Centre was dramatically improved, the Bondevik Government increased the grants in the Budget by 26 per cent the following year. In this way further activity at the Centre was ensured. Nevertheless, the increased grants represented only a small fraction of what had been recommended in the evaluation report, and the CAS still has extremely tight financial conditions.

"Norway spends very little money on research," says Professor Skog, who has been a member of a working group at the University of Oslo which submitted a report on the conditions for university research in Norway in February 2000.

"In our report we pointed out that the investment in basic research in Norway lies far behind the rest of Europe and the USA. Basic research must be strengthened if we are to keep pace with developments. Our politicians have said that they take this seriously. We have been promised greater investment that is to bring Norway up to the average level of the OECD countries in the course of five years. We must hope that their promises will be honoured this time. If this does happen, a strengthening of the CAS ought to be a matter of course."

The Government's Research Report also signalled a wish to set up more centres for outstanding research in Norway, preferably at the universities but other types of institution may also be considered. Ole-Jørgen Skog welcomes such a development and says it will be natural to establish co-operation between the centres as soon as they come into operation.

In addition to working for increased grants for the CAS in the Budget, the scientific director of the CAS will be looking for other sources of funding. Among other things he points out that the Norwegian Research Council ought to give priority to the Centre in Drammensveien when the interest on the newly established basic research fund is to be distributed.

A boost for the CAS administration

Scientific director Ole-Jørgen Skog strengthens the administration at the CAS.

Until Professor Skog was appointed, the CAS had only two permanent members of staff. In particular the Centre's untiring office manager, Unn Haaheim Hagen, is delighted to have been given the support of somebody with academic weight who is present the whole time. "It is an enormous advantage for the visiting researchers that Professor Skog is available for discussion and questions related to their fields of study," she says. "He has a unifying influence on the academic environment here, and that is a strength. It is also important that the CAS has been given a face that is always available to the outside world. Unn H. Hagen is also being given badly needed respite after eight years of responsibility for the administration of the Centre and for seeing to everything for the visiting researchers. Every year between 30 and 40 researchers visit the CAS. Very few of them are from Oslo and they must therefore have help to find accommodation. Researchers from abroad may need visas, they must be welcomed on arrival, and if they bring their whole families with them, schooling must be found for the children.

For the first three years after the Centre for Advanced Study opened, Unn H. Hagen was the only permanent member of staff at



Marit F. Strøm (left), Ole-Jørgen Skog and Unn H. Hagen. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

the Centre. In 1995 Marit Finnemyhr Strøm was appointed to the post of secretary. In addition the former Chairman of the Board, Torstein Jøssang, functioned as director of studies, but he divided his time between the Centre and his duties in the Department of Physics at the University of Oslo. In other words the Centre had a minimal administration that was extremely vulnerable and depen-

dent on particular individuals. Despite its minimum of staff, the researchers who visited the Centre over the years praised the good service and the administration's unique ability to see to everything. One more man in the team means a noticeable strengthening of the administration at the CAS. This is something both the staff and the researchers in the "House of Spirits" appreciate. ES

"But this fund is basically too small to cover the need," says Professor Skog, who agrees with the Hervik Committee that the world of commerce and industry in Norway ought to make a greater investment in basic research.

"We must see how the land lies when it comes to finding private forms of funding, although this is something that probably lies way ahead in time. Abroad, and especially in the USA, there is considerable private funding of elitist research. In Norway there is no tradition for this; here the business world would invests in sport rather than research and culture."

Expert on abuse of intoxicants

Ole-Jørgen Skog is also to conduct his own research at the CAS. With previous affiliation to various research institutes and universities at home and abroad, he has concentrated on what is termed the sociology of deviance. He is among this country's leading experts on deviant behaviour related to alcohol, drugs, suicide and violence. He has been a member of several public committees working on the problem of

intoxicants, and among these he was in the period from 1989 to 1995 a member of the Board of the Directorate for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Problems.

As early as 1978 he received his first award, when the Fund for Research and Popular Enlightenment presented him with the Scharffenberg Prize, as it is called, for popular scientific work on intoxicants. In 1987 he received the prestigious Jellinek Memorial Award from the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, Canada for his contribution to the understanding of drinking cultures and the connection between the population's drinking habits and alcohol problems. With long experience gained in the field he can assert – going completely against what most people want to believe – that the Norwegian policy on alcohol works in the way it is intended. High prices and limited availability make us drink less alcohol.

The eternally curious Ole-Jørgen Skog continues, however, to extend his research horizon, and he has recently been developing a wider interest in general action theory with the

focus on the pair of concepts "rationality/irrationality" and "weakness of will".

"What does it take to stop one from giving way to temptations? What is it that causes me to take only two beers when I am sitting in the pub with the lads on an ordinary Wednesday evening?"

"It's a question of how concerned one is with future consequences of what one is doing now, for example tomorrow's lecture. Many forms of deviance are due to too little interest in what consequences these actions will have in the future," he explains, adding that people's weakness of will is connected with how patient they are.

"When one is in an impatient phase, one is more inclined to do things one will regret in the future," says Professor Skog, who is at present working on a theoretical research project that is seeking to develop a general understanding of human actions. And indeed there the interdisciplinary professor is using sociology, psychology, economics and political science.

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Back to the Middle Ages, via modern

With today's modern information technology researchers at the CAS are mediating between us and our remote past, at the same time as they are giving us direct access to the medieval sources.

Imagine that you pick up a beautifully decorated doorstop of a book, settle down comfortably in your armchair and turn to the first page of Snorri's kings' sagas and start reading his account of early Norwegian history. It will probably hardly occur to you that the book you are holding in your hands is the result of many years' study of medieval manuscripts, interpretations of signs and linguistic variations, and repeated translations of an unstandardised Old Norse language.

The original medieval hand-written texts are inaccessible material for the great majority of us. In the first place both the writing and the language are to a great extent incomprehensible for a Norwegian reader. There is a further difficulty because very many words have been abbreviated more than once, and in addition there is great variation in spelling forms and grammar. In the Middle Ages there was no common orthographic or grammatical norm for the Old Norse language, and this gave the manus-

cripts a strongly individual character. Nor does the fact that the manuscripts are also few in number, that they have in some cases been damaged by the ravages of time, that they are extremely expensive to reproduce and are stored in central archives, contribute to letting the public have a closer look at them.

Mediating the texts of the past

It has therefore become the task of researchers in language and literature to mediate between the texts of earlier times and the readers of today. This year's research group in the humanities at the Centre for Advanced Study is seeking precisely to contribute to this mediation between a remote past and the present. Odd Einar Haugen, who is Professor of Old Norse Philology at the University of Bergen, is in charge of the research project "Editing Medieval Manuscripts", which has gathered researchers from all the Nordic countries and Germany. In the main the researchers are wor-

king on individual, electronic publication projects, but are co-operating on finding their way to a common standard for encoding medieval documents.

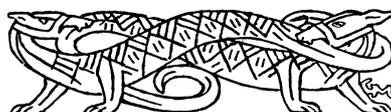
"Today's electronic aids are not designed for a medieval written language, and many symbols for letters and abbreviations are lacking in the existing fonts," explains Odd Einar Haugen. "To cover the range of sounds in Old Norse the Latin alphabet had in its time to be extended by the addition of several symbols. Some of these were taken from the runic alphabet, while others were made by adding strokes, arches and so forth – or by writing individual symbols together. Furthermore the ordinary abbreviation symbols were extended by the addition of new variants and ways of using them. This is something we cannot simply go ahead and reproduce with today's electronic word-processing equipment, at any rate not in a manner for which a common standard has been worked out."

Nevertheless researchers have found their own ways of solving these problems and have come up with different forms of codes. But since this encoding has not been co-ordinated through a central standardising body, many different encoding practices have arisen. This has made it difficult to collate the texts and search them. This difficult situation is something the research group at the CAS wants to contribute to changing by promoting a common standard.

"We are taking as a basis the standard that has been worked out by what is called the Text Encoding Initiative," Professor Haugen explains, "in particular the standard that has been developed in Extensible Markup Language. These standards are extremely general and cover all kinds of languages. It is therefore a concrete challenge to see how they ought to be used on a particular body of source material in a particular linguistic form – in our case medieval manuscripts in Old Norse. The most important thing for us is that the information in the texts should be encoded in the best possible way, but we also place weight on its being possible to read the texts in a comprehensible version, on the model of existing editions of the texts. This can be done by means of special programmes such as DynaText, or through an ordinary Web browser – for the moment only Internet Explorer. In time we hope that most researchers in our field will support a common encoding standard."



The medieval manuscript Flateyjarbók contains a long series of kings' sagas; electronic publication gives us access both to translations and the beautiful original document.



Odd Einar Haugen

Odd Einar Haugen (46) has been Professor of Old Norse Philology at the University of Bergen since 1993. He is heading the research group “Editing Medieval Manuscripts” at the CAS in the present research year. Professor Haugen has done research and published within the fields of philology and textual criticism, mainly with the emphasis on Old Norse language and literature. He received his doctoral degree in 1992 with the study *Stamtre og tekstlandskap* [on methods for analysing manuscript filiation]. He has also published several textbooks on Old Norse philology, including *Grunnbok i norrønt språk* [a grammar of the Old Norse language] (3rd ed. 1998).

In the period from 1993 to 1998 Odd Einar Haugen was academic co-ordinator for *Fjernord*, a distance teaching programme for students taking a university foundation course in Scandinavian literature and languages. For the past five years he has been editor of *Maal og Minne*, a specialist journal for Old Norse philology and Nordic linguistics.

Since 1992 Professor Haugen has been a member of the editorial board of the book series *Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile*, published in Copenhagen.

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Fidelity versus comprehensibility

It is however not only the reproduction of signs that is a great challenge for the publishers of medieval texts. Another fundamental question is how faithful one is to be to the original language and the text of the manuscript. Linguistic fidelity to the source means as a rule an incomprehensible text for those without special competence.

“In order for most people to be able to read and understand the old texts, they must be translated into present-day language,” says Professor Haugen. “This entails both interpretations and paraphrases, and one moves away from the original text. Precisely for this reason it has also been the usual thing to publish versions that are very faithful to the original text, in

spite of the fact that these are unsuitable for the public at large. In this respect the possibility we now have for electronic publication represents an enormous step forward, a paradigm shift in fact in our field.” Professor Haugen points out among other things that the possibility of links between different types of texts makes it much simpler to consult original manuscripts and other relevant sources. Reproductions that are close to the source text, old and new translations and interpretations, as well as digitalised facsimiles of the original manuscript can be collated. One is no longer so much at the mercy of the quality of the mediators’ work, since one can now go straight to very good reproductions of the original sources.

Earlier the work of consulting sources and comparing texts was extremely time-consuming. In the worst event the researcher had to visit manuscript collections in a number of countries to gain access to the original sources. The majority of the Old Norse manuscripts are now to be found in Reykjavik and Copenhagen, but there are also a certain number in Sweden, Norway and other European countries. Naturally enough the keepers of the archives are very restrictive when it comes to lending this material.

“Gradually texts and facsimiles will be available on the Internet, and they can be included, or easily referred to, in the electronic editions. The researcher’s job will then be far simpler,” says Professor Odd Einar Haugen.

Text encoding and translation

Different ways of mediating medieval text; here follows the first stanza of *Hávamál* from Codex Wormianus in different variants.

Text Encoding Initiative markup

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Gaatt<expan abbr=&z;>er</expan>
allar a&dh;&rrot;</l>
<l>gang&iac; &finscl;ram<expan
abbr=&bar;>m</expan> um
&slong;kygnaz &slong;kyl&iac;
&th;<expan abbr=&bar;>via</expan>t
uvi&slong;t e<expan
abbr=&z;>r</expan> hvar uvin<expan
abbr=&z;>er</expan> &slong;it&iac;a
&finscl;leti &finscl;y&rmaaj;<expan
abbr=&z;>er</expan>
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Old Norse

Gáttir allar,
áðr gangi fram,
um skygnaz skyli;
þvíat óvíst er,
hvar óvinir sitia
á fleti fyrir.

English translation

by Lee M. Hollander (1962)

Have thy eyes about thee
when thou enterest
be watchful always
for one never knoweth
when need will be
to meet hidden foe in the hall

Read more about the Text Encoding Initiative and Extensible Markup Language at respectively: www.tei-c.org and www.oasis-open.org/cover/xml.html



The research group “Editing Medieval Manuscripts” consists of (from left) Associate Professor Jon Gunnar Jørgensen, University of Oslo; Research Fellow Rune Kyrkjebø, University of Bergen; Professor Hubert Seelow, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; Associate Professor Kolbrún Haraldsdóttir, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; Professor Jonna Louis-Jensen, University of Copenhagen; and Professor Odd Einar Haugen, University of Bergen (leader). Dr Karl Gunnar Jobansson, University of Växjö and Senior Executive Officer Espen Ore, University of Bergen, were not present when the photograph was taken. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

Danish professor places a question mark against our history:

Did Snorri write the whole of Heimskringla?



The Danish professor Jonna Louis-Jensen does not take it for granted that it was Snorri Sturluson who put together the Norwegian kings' sagas for the complete historical work Heimskringla. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

It cannot be documented that Snorri Sturluson was the author of the whole of Heimskringla as we know it, claims Jonna Louis-Jensen from Denmark.

Probably it was others who put Snorri's texts together for this fundamental work in Norwegian history, several years after Snorri himself was dead.

She is challenging our understanding of history, Jonna Louis-Jensen (64) from Denmark, Professor of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Copenhagen, who is at present participating in the CAS group with the focus on the editing of medieval texts.

For while most of us take it for granted that it was wholly and solely Snorri Sturluson who wrote the kings' sagas, Professor Louis-Jensen is sowing the seeds of doubt about Snorri's writings. She is of the opinion that there is not sufficient evidence to claim that it was Snorri who was the author of the kings' sagas, as we have come to know them in Heimskringla.

In reference works and history books it usually says that Heimskringla is a historical account of the Norwegian kings from legendary times down to 1177. It is further stated that the work was written by Snorri Sturluson, who used skaldic verse and other material that had been handed down, in both oral and written forms, as historical source material. And hardly any of us have probably ever doubted that it was the powerful Icelander Snorri who wrote Norway's kings' sagas. But the Danish Professor Jonna Louis-Jensen and several of her colleagues are now stirring up a fight over the traditional view of our history.

"There is in fact more to support the view that it was not Snorri who wrote Heimskringla in its complete form," says Jonna Louis-Jensen, pointing to the fact that all Snorri's original texts have been lost.

"Texts from the Middle Ages have been handed down through hand-written reproductions. Some of these reproductions are pure copies, others are edited and adapted versions of older texts."

Several reproductions

In the Middle Ages there was not the same concept of author as today. Prose texts were not viewed as the originator's intellectual property, but were handed down anonymously, and freely included in, and edited into, new textual contexts.

There was no clear boundary between author, editor and scribe, and it was only on rare occasions that texts were signed, or specified an author. Therefore we do not as a rule know who wrote or copied the texts. Nevertheless, there are some people who stand out as important writers and who are referred to in other texts, among them Snorri Sturluson.

There are several copies of Snorri's works, but only one text from the Middle Ages contains the "whole" Heimskringla. This is precisely why there is

reason to believe that it was put together by others, Professor Louis-Jensen argues.

Kringla written in 1260

Unfortunately the original text – the one known as Kringla – was lost in a major fire in Copenhagen in 1728, but fortunately at that time a number of copies had been produced. Only one single original leaf of the text escaped the flames, having been sent to Sweden, probably as documentary evidence of the authenticity of a copy, Louis-Jensen believes.

"Thanks to the handwriting on this leaf of the text, we have been able to establish that Kringla was written by an Icelander probably around 1260. Snorri Sturluson died in 1241, which precludes his having written this manuscript. But it can of course have been a reproduction of something he wrote," says Professor Louis-Jensen, who also points out that Snorri was a very powerful man and an active politician, who was involved in a number of conflicts, which among other things led to the Norwegian king's ordering his death. Snorri was hacked to death with an axe in 1241.

"In view of his active life, there is reason to doubt that Snorri would have had the peace and quiet to sit down to write and edit the whole of

Heimskringla,” Professor Louis-Jensen believes.

In Kringla the kings’ sagas are arranged in chronological order, and in the sagas of the kings who succeeded Ólafr the Saint, the miracles that Ólafr performed are merged into the chronology of history. No other medieval copies of the kings’ sagas ascribed to Snorri have this construction. Literary researchers believe they recognise a single author’s personality in the texts of Heimskringla, and this is ascribed to Snorri. Professor Louis-Jensen does not therefore deny that Snorri may have written the texts in Heimskringla, but the evidence is less conclusive than has normally been believed, yet there is no better candidate than Snorri. What Jonna Louis-Jensen questions is whether it was Snorri who arranged Heimskringla into a complete historical work.

Edited by Snorri’s nephew?

“Researchers usually divide Heimskringla into three, so that legendary times form Part I, the saga of Ólafr the Saint is Part II, and the kings who came after Ólafr the Saint are described in Part III,” explains the Danish professor.

“We have a number of separate copies of these parts with a relatively high degree of correspondence between them, which should indicate that they are faithful to the originals which were probably written by Snorri. But the usual thing is a composite of Part I and Part III, sometimes interspersed with other texts by different authors. The saga of Ólafr the Saint, as Snorri probably wrote it, has on the whole been reproduced by itself.”

“We don’t know who wrote Kringla, but we do know that he was an Icelander and that he wrote a number of texts. In this respect he is well known.” Professor Louis-Jensen does however advance a possible candidate for the editorship of Snorri’s kings’ sagas, namely Snorri’s nephew Ólafr hvítaskáld. He has been recognised as the author of the Knytinga saga, a medieval text that very strongly resembles Heimskringla both in language and construction. That Ólafr hvítaskáld is also said to have known Snorri’s works by heart, contributes to strengthening this theory.

Changing literary history

But even though Jonna Louis-Jensen doubts Snorri Sturluson’s authorship with respect to Heimskringla, she does not deny his importance for the kings’ sagas. The fact that the medieval copies of the works ascribed to Snorri appear to be close to the original works should indicate that the scribes had very great respect for him. Furthermore, he is referred to in other medieval texts, which is in fact the reason we know his identity.

Traditionally the history of literature has

described different authors down through the ages. But it was not until the Romantic Period that we formed a concept of the brilliant and outstanding author. Literary history before the 19th century must focus less on works and writer and instead concern itself with the texts.

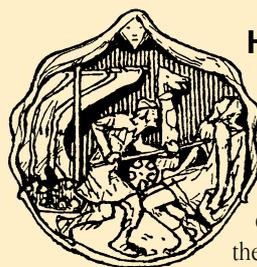
“Philologists compare different manuscripts of the same text,” explains the Danish professor. “We go through them word for word in order to discover the relationship between them and which manuscript is the most original one. We do not work according to a notion that the text has one author. A wealth of texts with more or less unknown authors constitute the basis for medieval literary history,” says the Danish professor, explaining that in the study of manuscripts from the Middle Ages it is the texts as such that are in focus.

“Snorri Sturluson’s historical importance and his place in the history of literature are not diminished for this reason, but it is perhaps time for a more nuanced view of his literary production. The anonymous editor of Heimskringla should also get his fair share of the credit.”

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Was it Snorri Sturluson who wrote the complete historical work Heimskringla? (Ill: Snorri Sturluson drawn by the Norwegian artist Christian Krohg.)



Heimskringla – from OTinn to King Sverrir

Heimskringla tells the story of the Norwegian kings from legendary times down to the Battle of Re in 1177. After this come Sverrir’s saga, the sagas of the Baglers and Hákon Hákonarson’s saga, so that in different kings’ sagas we are given an unbroken chronological account of Norwegian history down to Hákon Hákonarson’s death in 1263.

Heimskringla falls into three parts: (1) from legendary times down to and including Ólafr Tryggvason, (2) Ólafr the Saint, (3) Magnús the Good down to and including Magnús Erlingsson. The history of Norway is traced back to OTinn and the Aesir in Asia, via the kings of the Yngling line down to the historical Hálfðan the Black and the kings of the Fairhair line down to King Sverrir.

The work builds on early written sources, and was given its form in the 1220s or in the

early 1230s. In some later sources it was ascribed to Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241), and in Norway it usually goes under the name of “Snorri’s Kings’ Sagas”. The title Heimskringla, “the earth’s circle”, goes back to the opening lines of the Yngling saga, and gives no indication that these are kings’ sagas. As a historical work Heimskringla is outstanding for its time, and still makes exciting and absorbing reading.

The work has been translated into Norwegian on several occasions. Most well-known today are Gustav Storm’s Bokmål translation from 1900 and Steinar Schjøtt’s Nynorsk translation from 1901; both were later revised and published as parallel jubilee editions in 1979. The illustrations by among others Erik Werenskiöld, Gerhard Munthe, Christian Krohg and Halfdan Egedius have become an integral part of the work and have without any doubt contributed to giving Heimskringla a unique place in modern Norwegian literary history as well. OEH

Centre for Advanced Study

The Centre for Advanced Study is an independent foundation with a board appointed by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and the Council for Universities and Colleges. Prominent Norwegian and foreign scholars are invited for one-year stays to engage in research in the Centre's premises at the Academy's villa.

Each year, activities are organised in three research groups, each with from six to ten members. The work of each group is planned and organised around a common theme and headed by one or more outstanding researchers. The groups are chosen from each of the following three areas:

- Humanities
- Social science/law
- Natural sciences/medicine

The CAS is exclusively a basic research institution, where the participants have no other obligations than their own research.

The Board of the CAS:

Professor Aanund Hylland (chairman)
Professor Jan Frithjof Bernt (vice-chairman)
County Governor Ann-Kristin Olsen
Deputy Rector Kathrine Skretting
Professor Bjørn Tysdahl
Professor Tore O. Vorren
Secretary General Hans M. Barstad
(observer, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters)



Former CAS researcher Nils Christian Stenseth. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

Prize to former CAS researcher

Professor Nils Christian Stenseth has been awarded the Research Council's prize for his outstanding research within population ecology.

In the research year 1996-1997 Professor Stenseth was the leader of the research group studying the mystery of the lemming cycle at the CAS. Lemming years, as they are called, with a large population of lemmings, occur every three years. A good understanding of this cycle can contribute to better management of our natural environment. Professor Stenseth's research has among other things made valuable contributions to a major international project in Tanzania, where every year small rodents destroy a large part of the maize crop that could

have provided food for millions of people.

An international panel of experts recently described the research community around Professor Stenseth and his colleagues in the Department of Biology at the University of Oslo as one of the world's foremost in its field. Professor Stenseth is being given the Research Council's prize of NOK 500,000 both for his long and outstanding research, but also as an inspiration to develop further a community that is recruiting students and new researchers to a research environment of world format.

CAS enters its ninth year

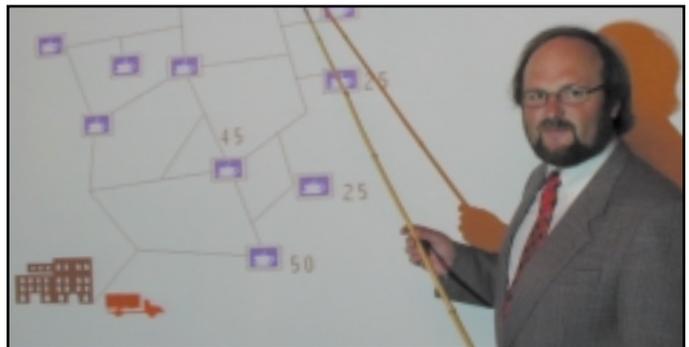
When the CAS opened its ninth year, Professor Stein W. Wallace gave a humorous introduction about the decision-making under uncertainty performed by drivers of lorries carrying empty bottles.

On 5 September the ninth academic year at the CAS was officially opened by the new chairman of the Centre's Board, Professor Aanund Hylland. The floor was then given to the afternoon's main speaker, Professor Stein W. Wallace, who is heading the research group "Decision Making Under Uncertainty".

Wallace's lecture was a brief and not least humorous introduction to the group's research field. Among other things he gave an account of what mathematical models, theoretical consider-

ations and uncertainty factors a lorry driver would be confronted with, if he were to decide which itinerary would be the most

effective if he were to collect empty bottles from the city's restaurants. His lecture aroused great enthusiasm among the audience, which consisted of the Centre's own research groups, guests



"Which itinerary is the most effective?" asks Professor Stein W. Wallace, University of Trondheim. (Photo: Ellen Stokland)

from the group members' respective embassies, former and future CAS researchers as well as the customary friends of the Academy.

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