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Vár lög: **Outlaw Communities from *Jómsvíkinga saga* to *Harðar saga***

Introduction

Being an outlaw in medieval Iceland was — supposedly — a lonely matter. Since what we know as Iceland today was a stateless society from its settlement (c. 870 AD) until its submission to the Norwegian crown (1262—1264) during the so-called Icelandic Commonwealth, the main ways to deal with criminality and anti-social behaviour there were through social processes such as the feud¹ and legal institutions such as outlawry. Using evidence from both legal codes² and sagas (hereinafter referred to as “corpus”), we can draw a fair picture of the different types of outlawry applied in medieval Iceland.

There was first a temporary exile abroad, called *fjörbaugsgarðr* or lesser outlawry, which lasted for three years. The lesser outlaw had three years to leave Iceland, and was safe as long as he was outside Iceland. District outlawry existed too, which was a temporary or definite exile from a specific area. Fi-

¹ See H. Þorláksson: *Feud and Feuding in Early and High Middle Ages*. In: *Feud in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Eds. J. Netterstrom, B. Poulsen. Aarhus 2007, pp. 69—94. See also W. Miller: *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking. Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland*. Chicago 1990, and J.L. Byock: *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*. Berkeley 1982.

² Even though the law codes preserved are anachronistic. See P. Norseng: *Law codes as a source for Nordic history in the early Middle Ages*. “Scandinavian Journal of History” 1991, Vol. 16(3), pp. 137—166.

nally, for more serious crimes such as unjustified murder, the condemnation was stronger and definitive: a permanent exile from the one called *skóggangr* (literally “going-by-the-forest”). The *skógarmaðr* (man-of-the-forest) is made by law a total stranger to his own society. He becomes *óæll* (cannot be given food), *óferjandi* (cannot be transported) and *dræpr fyrir hverjum manni* (the one whom anyone can kill without legal consequences).³

In theory, full outlaws should not be helped in any way,⁴ though if they received help, it was often from a member of their family, or an isolated farmer, and always a timely one.⁵ Outlawry was thus “virtually the death penalty,”⁶ imprisoning the outlaw inside the island, though denying him any alternatives. Grettir the Strong wanders the wilderness for almost 20 years, while Gísli Súrsson hides in undergrounds or hide-outs for 13 years. Some are even found dead from cold and hunger as Óspakr (Grettir’s nephew) in *Bandamanna saga*.⁷ The very fact of surviving in the unlivable conditions was maybe what made their story *söguligr*, worth-telling, and raised them to the heroic stature.

If an outlaw could not be helped in any way, we may think that outlaws tried to help each other through their hardship. Yet, this possibility — and danger — was supposedly avoided too, as outlaws could be redeemed if they killed another outlaw.⁸ This is illustrated in *Grettis saga* where petty outlaws could be hired and promised to be pardoned if they helped to catch a “bigger fish,” like Grettir the Strong. This aspect obviously made solidarity between outlaws a risky option.

This is why *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* is such a surprising story. It relates the tale of a band of outlaws settling an alternative community on an island

³ G. Turville-Petre: *Outlawry*. In: *Sjötíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni* 20. júlí 1977. Eds. E. Pétursson, J. Kristjánsson. Reykjavík 1977, pp. 769–778.

⁴ Helpers were liable to outlawry. See *Grágás* Ia 122–123; Ia 88–92. *Grágas. Islandarnes lovbog i Fristatens Tid, I–III*. Ed. V. Finsen. Copenhagen 1852, 1879, 1883. See also *Laws of Early Iceland. Grágás I*. Eds. A. Dennis, P. Foote, R. Perkins. Winnipeg 1980, p. 236.

⁵ All references to the sagas refer to *Íslenzk Fornrit* editions: *Grettis saga*. Eds. G. Jónsson, B. Vilhjálmsson. Reykjavík 1964, ch. 54, p. 178. For example, Grettir is asking for help from Skapti lögmaðr, but he refuses by stating that it was against the law: “[...] þá stendr mér eigi at taka við útleigðarmönnum ok brjóta svá löginn”; as a general pattern though, outlaws seem to receive help mostly from women. See J. Ahola: *Outlaws, Women and Violence. In the Social Margins of Saga Literature*. In: *Á Austrvega. Saga and East Scandinavia*. Eds. A. Ney, H. Williams, F. Ljungqvist. Gävle 2009.

⁶ *Laws of Early Iceland. Grágás I*. Eds. A. Dennis, P. Foote, R. Perkins. Winnipeg 1980, p. 8.

⁷ *Bandamanna saga*, ch. 12, p. 363. *Grettis saga*. Eds. G. Jónsson, B. Vilhjálmsson. Reykjavík 1964.

⁸ *Grágás I*, section 133, p. 237. See also F. Amory: *The medieval Icelandic outlaw: life-style, saga, and legend*. In: *From Sagas to Society. Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*. Ed. G. Pálsson. London 1992, p. 94.

called Geirshólmr, in Hvalfjörður. For about 3 years (c. 985—989) between 70 and 180 men are said to have been Hólm-dwellers, creating troubles and unrest in the district.⁹ Outlaws gathering in such an important band of men is a unique fact for medieval Iceland, and the medieval Icelandic corpus. We do not question here the historical possibility of bands of lawless men scavenging the land.¹⁰ Beyond the self-evident fact that criminality is a universal phenomenon, it also makes sense with the Icelandic full outlawry configuration. With the full outlaws being *óferjandi* (forbidden to be transported), the whole island became a kind of natural prison, leading them to wander the land for shelter, food or company.

Nevertheless, what can be put into question here is the realism of the proportion. Bands of outlaws, robbers or men driven into thievery by the need are mentioned in different sources, though they appear as far smaller, and we could say, realistic proportion. *Landnámabók* (chapter 30) reports, beyond the Hólm-dwellers,¹¹ two other groups of outlaws, though they were no more than 18 in one case (the *Hellismen*), and 12 in the other case (the *Kroppsmen*), both hiding in caves. In *Vatnsdœla saga*¹² it is said: “At that time there were so many outlaws and robbers both north and south that it was with difficulty that men could hold their own [...]. Ólafr went to see Íngolfr [a *goði*] and told him of this. Íngolfr made himself ready to leave home with fifteen men.” Íngolfr will unfortunately die from his wounds after killing the ruffians, though it is not corroborated by other accounts. In *Flóammanna saga*, group of outlaws (*ránsmenninir* and *víkingar*) in Greenland, are said to be around 30 men with a leader named Þorsteinn, plundering and hiding in some islands in Eiríksfjörður.¹³

Therefore, by Icelandic standards, more than 100 men seems to be a bit exaggerated. Moreover, the actual size of the island being 100 meters long and 45 meters wide,¹⁴ the very physical possibility of such a large number of men living on the island is rather unlikely, even if the piece of land could have suffered from natural erosion.¹⁵

⁹ *Harðar saga*, ch. 24, p. 65.

¹⁰ See G. Ólafsson, K. Smith, T. McGovern: *Surtshellir: A fortified outlaw cave in West Iceland*. In: *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West*. Eds. J. Sheehan, D. Ó Corráin. Dublin 2010.

¹¹ *Landnámabók* (chapters 19—21) mentions Hörður and the Hólm-dwellers, though does not mention their numbers. See *Landnámabók*. Ed. J. Benediktsson. Reykjavík 1986, p. 111.

¹² *Vatnsdæla saga*. Ed. E. Sveinsson. Reykjavík 1939, ch. 41.

¹³ *Flóammanna saga*, ch. 25, pp. 303—304. *Harðar saga*. Ed. B. Vilhjálmsson. Reykjavík 1991.

¹⁴ *Harðar saga*, note 4, p. 64.

¹⁵ See Emily Lethbridge's journey to the saga places: <http://sagasteads.blogspot.is/search/label/Hvalfj%C3%B6r%C3%B0ur>.

And it is from this unique example of such a large band of outlaws living in a community in Iceland that I would like to draw a parallel with the Jómsvíking community, and assess to what extent of intertextual influences may have been at work between the two stories in order to question the possible legacy of the Jómsvíking story in the Icelandic landscape and outlaw narratives.

Outlaws and genre problems

The three outlaw sagas (*Gísla saga*, *Grettis saga* and *Harðar saga*) had suffered a lot from genre problems, in a way similar to those of *Jómsvíkinga saga*. On top of being social outcasts, the outlaws had been regularly excluded from the classical genre of saga, mostly because of uncommon features they displayed, more precisely a higher degree of supernatural features, legendary and/or chivalric markers.

Gísla saga is probably the one that suffered the least, by being considered the closest to the *Íslendingasögur* genre. Being thought a rather early writing (mid-13th century), it is nonetheless often connected to hagiographic works and Christian visionary literature for its uncommon dreams staging two dream-women fighting for his soul.¹⁶

Grettis saga received more genre-related criticism, first for its supernatural and folktale aspects (mound-breaking, fight with the draugr Glámr, encounters with trolls) and specially its epilogue, the so-called *Spesar þáttr*, an episode with undisputable borrowing from the Tristan legend.¹⁷ Therefore the saga had been thought to be “doubly contaminated” by both legendary sagas and continental chivalric influences. Partly for this reason, it has been considered a rather late writing, though Grettir is mentioned in earlier texts such as *Gísla saga*,¹⁸ *Fóstbræðra saga*¹⁹ and *Ljósvetninga*

¹⁶ T. Andersson: *The Growth of Medieval Icelandic Sagas (1180—1280)*. Ithaca—London 2006, pp. 77—78. See also P. Langeslag: *The Dream Women in Gísla saga*. “Scandinavian Studies” 2009, Vol. 81(1), pp. 47—72.

¹⁷ S. Kramarz-Bein: *Der Spesar-Þáttr der Grettis saga. Tristan-Spuren in der Isländersaga*. In: *Studien zur Isländersaga — Festschrift für Rolf Heller*. Ed. H. von Beck, E. Ebel. Berlin 2000.

¹⁸ *Gísla saga Súrssonar. Vestfirðinga sögur*. Eds. B. Þórólfsson, G. Jónsson. Reykjavík 1943. ch. 22, p. 70. “It is agreed among all wise men that Gísli went longer as an outlaw than any other man, except Grettir son of Asmund,” p. 39.

¹⁹ *Fóstbræðra saga*. Eds. B. Þórólfsson, G. Jónsson. Reykjavík 1943, ch. 1, p. 331.

saga²⁰ showing that he was rather early on an important figure of Iceland's cultural landscape.

Finally, the one that probably suffered the most is *Harðar saga ok Hólmverjar*. Often categorised as a post-classical saga, it is ignored by Theodore Andersson in his overview of the *Íslendingasögur*, and is compiled with the ÍF vol. 14 of so-called post-classical sagas dating from the 14th century onwards.²¹ However, the mention of the “saga Harðar Grímkelssonar ok Geirs” and “Hörðr er var fyrir Hólmsmönnum”²² has been pointed out to suggest that *Harðar saga* belonged to the established saga literature by the middle of the 13th century.²³ Summing up the dating debate of the saga, it is supposed that a rather early version of *Harðar saga* was composed between 1220—1245,²⁴ though the extant version, for its style and even verses,²⁵ was composed in the 14th century.²⁶

Harðar saga bears markers of legendary sagas, mostly in its first half taking place abroad: Hörðr marries the daughter of the Earl of Gotland, goes extensively on Viking expeditions as their fearless leader, enters a grave-mound and fights the draugr Sóti, gets a cursed treasure from him, meets with Óðinn in the woods, and finally turns hideous while dying.

I would explain these uncommon features as being more inherent to the sub-genre of outlaw stories. They are not connected to a time of writing or the “contamination” of the genre, but were connected to the topic itself: outlawry. When dealing with the biography of chieftains, it is easy to depict their life within the public space, during debates, or inside a hall. These are moments that can be easily witnessed or depicted, so that they appear very realistic,

²⁰ B. Sigfússon: *Ljósvetninga saga*. Reykjavík 1940, ch. 1, p. 194: “It is told that Þorfinnr and Grettir had an encounter, but neither attacked the other. It can be seen from this what sort of warrior Þorfinnr was.”

²¹ Vésteinn Ólason classifies it as a “post-classical” saga as well. See V. Ólason: *Family Sagas*. In: *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*. Ed. R. McTurk. Oxford 2005, p. 335. Accidentally or not, *Harðar saga* received a similar treatment as *Gull-Þóris saga*. See D. Sävborg: *Búi the Dragon. Some Intertexts of Jónvíkinga saga*. “Scripta Islandica” 2014, Vol. 65, pp. 101—124.

²² The “saga of Hörðr Grímkelsson and Geirr” and “who led the isle-men.” *Landnámabók*, ch. 19—21, p. 72, both in *Hauksbók* and *Sturlubók* versions.

²³ E.Ö. Sveinsson: *Dating the Icelandic Sagas. An Essay in Method*. London 1958, p. 90.

²⁴ J. Jóhannesson even stated that the *Sturlubók* version of *Landnámabók* has acquired some information from *Harðar saga*. See J. Jóhannesson: *Gerðir Landnámabókar*. Reykjavík 1941, pp. 88—89.

²⁵ Based on linguistic evidence, some verses would date from the late 14th century. See J. Jónsson: *Um vísurnar í Harðar sögu Grímkelssonar*. “Tímarit hins íslenska bókmenntafélags” 1892, Vol. 13; and S. Hast: *Harðar saga I. Inledning, text*. København 1960, p. 81.

²⁶ For a recent stemma, see J. Ahola: *Outlawry in the Icelandic Family Sagas*. Helsinki 2014, pp. 116—117.

almost historical. On the other hand, once a man is outlawed, he does not belong to this daily sphere anymore, he enters a world unknown to any writer, so I believe this is why outlaw sagas especially have a higher proportion for supernatural or unrealistic features: the outlaw disappeared from the public space, so the author had to imagine what happened to them.²⁷ Even though the legendary features appear before the actual sentence to outlawry, the prefiguration technique of the *Íslendingasögur*²⁸ may have made it a constant theme of the outlaw story.

Nonetheless, the core specificity of *Harðar saga* does not lie in its supernatural elements, but in the community settled on Geirshólmr, which does not have any other parallel within the Icelandic sagas occurring in Iceland, and which, I believe, connects it to *Jómsvíkinga saga*.

While other young promising Icelandic men accomplished their masculine rite of passage abroad, bringing back wealth, objects, and fame, Hörðr brings back something more: a full following of men after 15 years of being a Viking leader in the Baltic.²⁹ Once back in Iceland, Hörðr goes to claim his rightful property from Torfi, who is his maternal uncle, with a following of 25 men (e.g. chapter 22). Later on, his gang even follows him into outlawry, and becomes the first armed men of his outlaw community. Here, we do not get the typical exclusion and loneliness of the Icelandic outlaw as mentioned earlier. Before or after his outlawry, without having his rightful property yet, Hörðr has his own following, his band of men, thus has the stature of a war-lord or gang leader, who is a figure usually belonging to the king sagas, legendary sagas, and more specifically to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, but not appearing within the Icelandic territory during the saga-age.

In the same fashion, *Jómsvíkinga saga* has been suffering from genre-issues, having legendary markers of noble Vikings, along with a king's saga style, though often labelled anti-royal.³⁰ The latest analysis of its genre issue concludes fairly that *Jómsvíkinga saga* defies genre classification.³¹ Both

²⁷ M. Poilvez: *Access to the Margins: Outlawry and Narrative spaces in Medieval Icelandic Outlaw Sagas*. "Brathair" 2012, Vol. 12(1), p. 115. See also M. Sandbach: *Grettir in Thorisdal*. "Saga-Book" 1937, Vol. 12, p. 98: "The less that is known of a person's life the easier it is to make up stories about him. Nothing is simpler than the transformation of such a person into a being with supernatural powers, or one associated with supernatural beings."

²⁸ See T.H. Tulinius: *Saga as a myth: The family sagas and social reality in 13th-century Iceland*. In: *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society. Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference 2–7 July 2000, University of Sydney*. Eds. G. Barnes, M. Clunis-Ross. Sydney 2000, pp. 35–43.

²⁹ *Harðar saga*, ch. 20, p. 52.

³⁰ M. Berman: *The Political Sagas*. "Scandinavian Studies" 1985, Vol. 57, pp. 113–129.

³¹ A. Finlay: *Jómsvíkinga saga and Genre*. "Scripta Islandica" 2014, Vol. 65, p. 77.

Jómsvíkinga saga and *Harðar saga* represent a mixed modality³² which strengthen in a way their connection. Moreover, both the Hólm-dwellers and the Jómsvíkings/Jómsborg are cultural figures appearing in other sources earlier than the preserved written version of their story.³³ Therefore, I would argue that the Jómsvíking story does not have its closest parallel in *Yngvars saga víðförla* as previously stated, but also with the Iceland-based outlaw story of Hörðr and the Hólm-dwellers.³⁴

Jómsborg and Geirshómlr: Islands as strongholds

The most striking point of resemblance between the two stories is obviously the creation of the two independent communities. Both are founded by an outlaw leader. Hörðr is declared an outlaw by the general assembly³⁵ and Pálma-Tóki is meant to be seized by King Sveinn.³⁶ Both only escape death because they have enough manpower and friends with them. In *Jómsvíkinga saga*, it is said: “Ok síðan leitar hann út ok allir hans menn, því at svá átti hann þar vel vingat at engi vildi honum grand göra.”³⁷ Moreover, after the outlawry penalty, it is said in *Harðar saga* that “litlu síðar fór Hörðr í Botn með allt sitt til Geirs, fóstbróður síns [...]. Öll hjón hans fóru með honum ok fylgdarmenn til Geirs ok höfðu þar setu.”³⁸

Both communities are created on someone else's land with whom they have to make an agreement. Jómsborg is built in agreement with Búrisleifr, king of

³² S. Aalto: *Jómsvíkinga saga as a part of Old Norse Historiography*. “Scripta Islandica” 2014, Vol. 65, p. 39.

³³ For instance, Snorri Sturluson does not even introduce the Jómsvíkings in *Heimskringla*. “The Tale of Ogmundr Bash” mentions the battle between Earl Hákon and the Jómsvíkings (*Ögmundar þáttur dytts*. See *Eyfirðinga sögur*. Ed. J. Kristjánsson. Reykjavík 1956, p. 109). See J. Morawiec: *Danish Kings and the Foundation of Jómsborg*. “Scripta Islandica” 2014, Vol. 65, pp. 125—127.

³⁴ S. Aalto: *Jómsvíkinga saga as a part of Old Norse Historiography*. “Scripta Islandica” 2014, Vol. 65, p. 46.

³⁵ *Harðar saga*, ch. 21, p. 58.

³⁶ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 14, p. 16.

³⁷ Ibidem. “Afterwards he and his men made their way out of the hall for he had so many friends there that no one would do him harm.”

³⁸ *Harðar saga*, ch. 22, pp. 58—59. “A little later Hörðr went to Botn with all his people to his foster brother Geirr's [...]. All his household and followers went with him to Geirr's and they set up a garrison there.”

Wendland³⁹ and Hólm in agreement (or complicity) with the locals responsible for the transport by boat. Both also have an extensive company of men said to live constantly in the place, even a garrison (*seta*) in Hörðr's case, resembling in that a military camp.⁴⁰

As soon as they seize the land, they implement there their own laws (*lög þeira*). Both sagas use on several occasions the possessive pronoun as if to emphasise their unity by opposition to the main authority: “Eptir þetta setr Pálna-Tóki lög í Jómsborg [...] Þat var upphaf laga þeira [...] þangat ráðask er eigi væri í þeim lögum [...] ok halda vel lög sín”⁴¹ and “Þau váru lög þeira [...]”⁴² In Geirshólmr, if a man could not get up for more than three nights, he was thrown over the cliff, which resembles that in Jómsborg, a man could not be away from the fort for more than three nights.⁴³ It is stipulated that the men had to obey Hörðr and Geir his foster brother by swearing an oath (*eiðr*).⁴⁴ Similarly, Pálna-Tóki is an undisputed leader of the group, having the final word in matters of dissension: “[...] þá skyldi Pálna-Tóki þat allt doema ok hvatki missætti annat er þeira yrði á milli.”⁴⁵

Geographically speaking, both places are described as strongholds where the band cannot be defeated. The water setting is a clear advantage, as nobody can enter Jómsborg unless the doors are opened,⁴⁶ nor reached Geirshólmr easily.⁴⁷ Also, both communities depend on raids to get supplies.

Both groups suffered from a certain decadence as well, having breached their own laws after some time, perhaps as a prefiguration of their destruction. In Jómsborg, after Pálna-Tóki's death, things start to collapse: “Sigvaldi hefir skamma stund stýrt lögum þeira áðr nökkut breytisk ór því sem áðr var. Þá váru konur þar tveim nóttum saman eða þrim ok svá eru menn nú ór borginni lengrum en þá er Pálna-Tóki lifði. Verða ok stundum áverkar eða einstaka víg.”⁴⁸

³⁹ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 15, p. 17. Sometimes appearing as Búrisláfr in other Old Norse sources. See *ibidem*, note 1, p. 17.

⁴⁰ J. Morawiec: *Danish Kings and the Foundation of Jómsborg...*, p. 130.

⁴¹ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 16, pp. 17–18. “Afterwards Pálna-Tóki gave laws to Jómsborg [...]. The first section of their laws was [...] when those who were not members wished to be enrolled [lit. In their laws] [...] and kept their laws well,” pp. 17–18.

⁴² *Harðar saga*, ch. 24, p. 64: “It was their laws [...]”

⁴³ *Ibidem*; *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 16, p. 18.

⁴⁴ *Harðar saga*, ch. 24, p. 65.

⁴⁵ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 16, p. 18: “[...] then Pálna-Tóki was to have the final word in the matter and in any other dissension which arose among them.”

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, ch. 18, p. 19.

⁴⁷ *Harðar saga*, ch. 24, p. 64.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, ch. 24, p. 25: “Sigvaldi had not been head of the company very long [lit. ‘guiding their laws’] before the discipline began to deteriorate. Women remained in the city for two or three nights at a time and the men also stayed away from the city longer than when Pálna-Tóki had been alive. And from time to time injuries were inflicted and a few isolated killings took place.”

Similarly on Geirshólmr, their laws become weaker. The original group of warriors starts to be joined by more and more wicked criminals,⁴⁹ and Hörðr has less and less authority over them.

Apart from the community itself, we can underline other common motifs which are not uncommon in the saga genre, but strengthen the connection between the two sagas: a clear interest in maritime battle and description of Viking raids,⁵⁰ the motif of the child put to exposure,⁵¹ then found but having an unrecognised legitimacy at first,⁵² or the collective vows made during a feast.⁵³ We can also point out two characters overly attached to their chests: Bolli the slave who would risk his life to recover it (the episode is a byplay)⁵⁴ and Búi digri who would not give up his chests of gold when the battle of Hjörungavágr is lost, leaping overboard with them, and turning into a serpent for the sake of his obsession.⁵⁵ Finally, we should stress the common presence of the tutelar god-like figure Þorgerðr Hölgabrúðr⁵⁶ in connection to Grimkell Bjarnason who is a *goði* related to king Hákon,⁵⁷ and also called on by Earl Eiríkr on Þrímsignð.⁵⁸

Obviously, the argument of similarities by accumulation of motifs that are alike cannot be valid on its own as it only picks up what is needed, and we should not forget the differences between the two stories.

The main difference lies in the geographical setting of both communities. Geirshólmr is an island and Jónsborg is not described as such, even though its supposed location in Wolin (Poland) is on an island.⁵⁹ As we study here textual connection, we should stick to what the texts have to offer. Therefore, if — as we argue — Jónsborg influenced the story of Geirshólmr, what is the reason behind setting the community on an unrealistic small island in the Hvalfjörður?

⁴⁹ Ibidem, ch. 24, p. 65: “[...] hann var einn tillagaverstr af öllum Hólmverjum ok fýsti allra illvirkja. Þangat drifu nær allir óskilamenn [...]”; “he was one of the most hostile of the Hólm-dwellers and suggested all kind of wicked deeds.”

⁵⁰ Ibidem, ch. 17, pp. 45–48; *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 31–33, pp. 35–38.

⁵¹ *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 1, pp. 1–2; *Harðar saga*, ch. 8, p. 19.

⁵² *Harðar saga*, ch. 7–8, pp. 16–22; *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 10–11, pp. 11–13.

⁵³ *Harðar saga*, ch. 14, pp. 38–39; *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 26, pp. 28–29.

⁵⁴ *Harðar saga*, ch. 27, p. 69.

⁵⁵ *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 33, p. 37 and ch. 38, p. 43.

⁵⁶ On this figure, see G. Røthe: The Fictitious Figure of Þorgerðr Hölgabrúðr in the Saga Tradition. In: *Proceedings of the 13th International Saga Conference*. Eds. J. McKinnell et al. Durham—York 2006.

⁵⁷ *Harðar saga*, ch. 19, pp. 50–52.

⁵⁸ *Jónsvíkinga saga*, ch. 32, p. 36.

⁵⁹ J. Morawiec: *Vikings among the Slavs. Jomsborg and Jomsvikings in Old Norse Tradition*. Wien 2009. See also L. Słupecki: *Jónsvíkingalog, Jónsvíkings, Jónsborg/Wolin and Danish Circular Strongholds*. In: *The Neighbours of Poland in the 10th century*. Ed. P. Urbańczyk. Warszawa 2000.

As a matter of fact, narratives of outlaws and fugitives in the sagas are intertwined with narratives of islands. Grettir the Strong is forever bound to Drangey, Gísli found his best shelter on Hergilsey where the *seiðr* performed against him could not reach him easily,⁶⁰ and Bishop Guðmundr with the outlaw Aron stands a siege on Málmey⁶¹ and later will hide on several islands during his outlawry. Extending the scope, we can point out many more examples appearing in fugitive-episodes. From Norway to Norwegian islands (*Egils saga*, *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Þorsteins saga hvíta*, *Sneglu-Halla þáttur*), from Norway to Shetland, Orkney, Hebrides, Iceland (Ketill Flat-nose in *Eyrbyggja saga*, and most of the “genealogical” early chapters from the *Íslendingasögur*) and finally from Iceland to Icelandic islands (*Landnámabók*, *Íslendinga saga*, *Eiríks saga rauða*). As a sum-up example of this pattern, we can quote the first chapter of *Eyrbyggja saga*: “Þetta var í þann tíma, er Haraldr konungur inn hárfagri gekk til ríkis í Nóregi. Fyrir þeim ófriði flýðu margir göfgir menn óðul sín af Nóregi, sumir austr um Kjölu, sumir um haf vestr. Þeir váru sumir er héldu sik á vetrum í Suðureyjum eða Orkneyjum en um sumrum herjuðu þeir í Nóreg og gerðu mikinn skaða í ríki Haralds konungs. Bændr kærðu þetta fyrir konungi ok báðu hann frelsa sik af þessum ófriði. Þá gerði Haraldr konungur þat ráð, at hann lét búa her vestr um haf [...]”⁶²

They all depicted the island as a shelter or a transition, and a base for attacks, plunders, towards surrounding lands, all in time of political tension with a jarl or a king, or a local chieftain in Iceland, creating a continuous frame of association between fugitive stories, political challengers and islands in the sagas-corpus. We could as well mention that the two other so-called political sagas,⁶³ namely *Orkneyinga saga* and *Færeyinga saga*, are dealing with distant islands communities with unstable relationships to the mainland, Norway, and so with Norwegian authority.

I believe this same association is even echoed and in a way confirmed on a legendary level in the *Flateyjarbók* (thus compiled with a version of *Jómsvíkinga saga*) with the introductory story to *Orkneyinga saga*, on the foundation

⁶⁰ *Gísla saga*, ch. 26, p. 84.

⁶¹ *Arons saga*, ch. 3, p. 314; G. Vigfússon: *Sutrlunga saga including the Íslendinga saga of lawman Sturla Thordsson and other works*. Oxford 1878.

⁶² *Eyrbyggja saga*. Ed. G. Jónsson. Reykjavík 1936, p. 1: “This was at the time when King Harald Fairhair came to power in Norway. Many distinguished men fled their lands in Norway because of the hostilities, some east across the Kjolen mountains, and some west across the sea. Some of them stayed during the winters in the Hebrides or the Orkney Islands and in summers returned to plunder Norway, causing great damage in king Harald’s realm. The farmers there complained to the king about this and asked him to protect them from these hostilities. Then King Harald answered by preparing an army to set out for the west across the sea [...]”

⁶³ M. Berman: *The Political Sagas*. “Scandinavian Studies” 1985, Vol. 57, pp. 113—129.

of Norway. There we read: “Þrimr vetrum síðarr strengðu þeir broeðr heit, at þeir skyldi hennar leita, ok skipta svá leitinni, at Nórr skyldi leita um löndin, en Górr skyldi leita um útsker ok eyjar, ok fór hann á skipum [...] Þaðan sneri Nórr aptr norðr til ríkis þess, er hann hafði undir sik lagt; þat kallaði hann Nórveg [...] Górr hafði eyjarnar, ok var hann því kallaðr sækonungr; hans synir váru þeir Heiti ok Beiti; þeir váru sækunungar ok ofstopamenn miklir. Þeir gengu mjök á ríki sona Nórs, ok átti þeir orrostur margar [...] Heiti, sonr Górs, var faðir Sveiðar sækonungs, föður Hálfðanar ins gamla [...] föður Rögnvalds jarls ins ríka ok ins ráðsvinna.”⁶⁴

Here we are given a genealogy of an overseas ruler connected to sea-kings plundering the mainland. This probably reveals a concern from the time of composition, where islands, maybe more specifically — distant islands, were perceived as unstable places where keeping power was difficult and from where attacks on the mainland were carried out.⁶⁵

Without being actually sent to islands by force — that is to say, there was no designated space where to send either criminals or fugitives in medieval Iceland — outlaws are often depicted as choosing islands as shelters in the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus. In a study dealing with the relationship between English and Icelandic outlaw tales, Joost de Lange stated: “The strategical value of an island is prominent in several of the outlaw stories: Ely in the Hereward-traditions, Drangey in *Grettis saga*, Hólmr in *Horðr-Saga*. This feature clearly rests upon historical foundations.”⁶⁶ I would add that in the Icelandic mentality in fact islands were perceived as natural stronghold. It would have been rather unrealistic to set up a stronghold as *Jómsborg* within the Icelandic landscape. On the one hand, Icelanders never had such elaborated structures and urban centres, so it did not make much sense to describe a stronghold in the middle of the *Hvalfjörður*. On the other hand, an island like Drangey in *Grettis saga* is described as the best defence, a natural stronghold (*vígi*) only acces-

⁶⁴ *Orkneyinga saga*. Ed. G. Guðmundsson. Reykjavík 1965, ch. 1—3, pp. 3—7; “Three years later, Nor and Gor made a solemn vow to set out in search of Goi. Their arrangement was for Nor to scour the mainland and Gor all the islands and outlying skerries, making his way by ship [...]. From there, Nor made his way back north to the country he had laid claim to and called it Norway [...] Gor ruled the islands, and that’s why he came to be called a sea-king. So too were his sons Heiti and Beiti, a very aggressive pair. They made constant attacks on the territories of the sons of Nor and fought many battles [...]. Heiti, the son of Gor, was the father of the sea-king Sveidi, [...] father of the wise counsellor Earl Rognvald the Powerful.” *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney*. Eds. H. Pálsson, P. Edwards. London 1978, pp. 27—29.

⁶⁵ See also Earl Hákon who sends Thorgils to the Hebrides to collect the tribute which he did not receive for three years (*Flóamanna saga*, ch. 15, p. 258).

⁶⁶ J. DeLange: *The Relation and Developement of English and Icelandic Outlaw Tradition*. Haarlem 1935.

sible with ladders.⁶⁷ Geirshólmr is described in a similar way with stiff cliffs, with only one entrance possible.⁶⁸ This would explain the replacement of the man-built stronghold of Jómsborg, by what was available in Iceland: an island which would convey the same idea of stronghold according to Icelandic standards.

Discourse on kinship and leadership

Having established the correspondence of motifs between the two communities, we still have to establish the relevance of this association for *Harðar saga*'s audience. The Jómsvíkingar are an ideal community made of qualified warriors, an elite, male only, resembling a strict chivalric code possibly influenced by the Norwegian *Hirðskrá*.⁶⁹ Their settlement resembles first of all a military camp in the Baltic.⁷⁰ Moreover, the Hólmverjar seems to be a parody, a mini-version of noble fighters, for, apart from Hörðr himself and some of his men, the whole of his community is made of other outlaws and vagabonds, which he is barely able to keep under his control. This may be a reference — if not a criticism — to the 13th-century leaders harbouring outlaws in their territory in order to protect it, as in *Sturlunga saga*.⁷¹ The Hólm-dwellers are not as selective as the Jómsvíkingar were (as showed by the discussions about whether or not to integrate Vagn in to the gang⁷²), for they are desperate about manpower, being under siege. They are not in a position of power as much as the Jómsvíkingar are.

Nevertheless, what in my opinion reinforces the connection and a possible network of influence between the two stories, are the “social discourses con-

⁶⁷ *Grettis saga*, ch. 67, p. 218.

⁶⁸ See the description of Geirshólmr: *Harðar saga*, ch. 24, pp. 64–65.

⁶⁹ B. Bandlien: *A New Norse Knighthood? The Import of the Templars in Late Twelfth-century Norway*. In: *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*. Eds. J. Malkki, K. Ritari. Helsinki 2005, pp. 175–184.

⁷⁰ J. Morawiec: *Danish Kings and the Foundation of Jómsborg*..., p. 130.

⁷¹ Einarr keeps in his territory the “Skógungar,” and is criticised for that — *Sturlu saga*, ch. 16, p. 58. G. Vigfússon: *Sturlunga saga including the Íslendinga saga of lawman Sturla Thordsson and other works*. Vol. 1. Oxford 1878. See H. Þorláksson: *Sturlusaga of Einar Þorgilsson*. In: *Heimtur, ritgerðir til Heiðurs Gunnari Karlssyni sjötugum*. Ed. G. Jónsson, H.S. Kjartansson, V. Ólason. Reykjavík 2009.

⁷² *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 22, pp. 22–23.

cerning power”⁷³ in the shape of a similar anti-royal sentiment coupled with a debate on kinship and leadership. First, and even if the story of the Icelanders being noble men expelled from Norway by an unjust king is a *topos* of the *Íslendingasögur*, *Harðar saga* gives one of the strongest statements seen in the corpus: “Á dögum Haralds ins hárfagra byggðist mest Ísland, því at menn þoldu eigi ánauð hans ok ofríki, einkanliga þeir, sem váru stórrar ættar ok mikillar lundar, en áttu góða kosti, ok vildu þeir heldr flýja eignir sínar en þola ágang ok ójafnað, eigi heldr konungi en öðrum manni.”⁷⁴ Also, Queen Gunnhildr appears twice as a negative figure connected with magic,⁷⁵ a motif contributes to the anti-royal tone.

Secondly, the law of the *Jómsvíkingar* could be said to contain a discourse on leadership, for it changes the usual rules of kinship: “Hvárki skyldi því ráða frændsemi, þó at þeir menn vildi þangat ráðask ei eigi væri í þeim lögum.”⁷⁶ The saga debates how personal worth, especially within the scope of fighting and courage, mattered here more than pure kinship and discusses who has the right to rule: the son of a king, or a noble leader. We see this with the men of no noble birth but nonetheless worthy such as Áki Tókason. The father Tóki does not have any genealogy (only land, Fyn in Denmark) and his son Áki is presented as follows: “Engi maðr í þau mund ótiginn var meiri fyrir sér í Danmörk en Áki Tókason.”⁷⁷ We can find several similar statements in *Harðar saga*. For example, Högni is said to be from an insignificant family, though he was an accomplished man with great property who could marry a woman of greater family.⁷⁸ Later on, Grímr the Small, Signý’s foster son, is said to have a lower status than his prospective bride, though he becomes successful being reckoned among the best farmers,⁷⁹ and described as having

⁷³ S. Jakobsson: *The Territorialization of Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth*. In: *Statsutvikling i Skandinavia i middelalderen*. Eds. S. Bagge, M.H. Gelting, F. Hervik, T. Lindkvist, B. Poulsen. Oslo 2012, p. 101.

⁷⁴ *Harðar saga*, ch. 1, p. 3: “In the days of Harald Fairhair Iceland was mostly settled, because people could not put up with his oppression and tyranny, particularly those who were of great lineage and proud mind and had good means, and they preferred to abandon their possessions than suffer aggression and injustice, whether from a king or from anyone else.”

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, ch. 13, p. 36 and ch. 18, p. 49.

⁷⁶ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 16, p. 17: “Kinship was not to be taken into consideration when those who were not members wished to be enrolled [in their law].”

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, ch. 7, p. 9: “At that time no one who was not of noble birth enjoyed so much respect in Denmark as Áki Tókason.”

⁷⁸ *Harðar saga*, ch. 2, p. 268: “Högni var ættsmár ok var þó vel at sér, en Þorbjörg, kona hans, var synu ættsærri, ok kom þó vel ásamt með þeim. Högni var vel fjäreigandi”; “Högni was of small family and was nevertheless accomplished, but his wife Þorbjörg was of much greater family, and yet they got along well. Högni had good property.”

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, ch. 5, pp. 271–272.

a “good nature” (*góðmannlega*)⁸⁰. Also, both Hörðr and Pálnir heppened to marry with the daughter of the earl of Gautland,⁸¹ which looks like a direct borrowing.

By opposition, the two *goðar* of the saga, Grimkell and Torfi (who have a conflict), are both depicted as bad characters. Grimkell is an unfair man,⁸² a pagan who drops dead for offending the gods⁸³ and expelled both of his children — Hörðr and Þorbjörg — from his home.⁸⁴ Torfi is the evil uncle exposing a child of his own kinship⁸⁵ and refusing Hörðr his rightful inheritance.⁸⁶ None of them seem to deserve their status whereas Hörðr had to beg on several occasions for means and inheritance,⁸⁷ proved himself superior, both by marrying the earl’s daughter, and by leading over 15 years his band of Vikings (which partly follows him to Iceland). He is well born, though he earned his status as well. Therefore, inheritance (or, better said, the dangers of refusing inheritance) may as well be a common theme between the two stories, as for example Fjölfnir, the eldest son but, at the same time, an illegitimate child of Tóki from Fyn, would create tensions between his legitimate brothers and the king because he did not receive his part of the inheritance.⁸⁸

Being strip of his inheritance, he settles by his own micro-society by himself. His community is obviously doomed to fail, because it was not made of worthy persons,⁸⁹ but its creation was an ultimate challenge to the chieftains’ unfair authority. Before his outlawry, Hörðr tries to settle compensation and stop conflicts,⁹⁰ and therefore acts as a worthy leader.

Torfi Tulinius’s analysis of *Jómsvíkinga saga* being connected to rebellious tales of noble’s revolt against royal authority showed that saga authors adapted their material to the concerns of the 13th-century audience.⁹¹ Here the discourse on kingship would be moved within the Icelandic context of the *goðar*, and the band of warriors, or outlaws, would be their kind of nemesis, a vessel for criticism. Outlaws and criminals are a threat calling into question the dignity and power of local chieftains in Iceland: on many occasions throughout the corpus, farmers go to complain to chieftains and urge them to

⁸⁰ Ibidem, ch. 10, p. 26.

⁸¹ Ibidem, ch. 16, p. 45; *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 8, p. 10.

⁸² *Harðar saga*, ch. 2, p. 5.

⁸³ Ibidem, ch. 19, p. 50.

⁸⁴ Ibidem, ch. 7, p. 18 and ch. 9, p. 23.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, ch. 8, p. 20.

⁸⁶ Ibidem, ch. 20, p. 53.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, ch. 12 p. 33 and ch. 20, p. 53.

⁸⁸ *Jómsvíkinga saga*, ch. 7, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Ibidem, ch. 36, p. 88.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, ch. 21, pp. 54–56.

⁹¹ T.H. Tulinius: *The Matter of the North. The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*. Odense 2002.

get rid of outlaw problems in the district. They are a challenge, a test, to see how in times of extreme conflicts a chieftain reacts, and if he is worthy of his status.

As Torfi H. Tulinius has expressed, *Jómsvíkinga saga* is not fully anti-royalist, as King Sveinn's role as a mediator of conflicts appears in a positive light. Similarly in *Harðar saga*, which is not a critique of *goðar* as legitimate figures of authority, but more of a critique of kinship and leadership. The saga also expresses a view on how power should ideally be: while of course having the right lineage and family is prestigious, an heir also has to prove himself worthy of it in his life. These two aspects appear complementary: lineage without worth is not working, to the point that worth without lineage is even described in a positive way.⁹²

Conclusions

I believe this text would deserve a deeper and wider scope of research, especially to connect *Harðar saga* with other sagas that have fugitive motifs such as *Sverris saga*, in which the Sverrir's outlaw-like early life of hardship appeared as a literary process in his legitimation as a ruler. He seems described as a gang leader having good intention in warfare. He is morally and militarily superior,⁹³ and in that not so different from Hörðr who tries to prevent worst crime even being already an outlaw.⁹⁴

The comparison between *Jómsvíkinga saga* and *Harðar saga* argues in favour of a textual connection between the two sagas. Added to that, one important figure of medieval Icelandic historiography connects also the two stories, namely Styrmir "inn fróði" Kárason (c. 1170—1245). In the same fashion as in *Grettis saga* where Sturla Þorðarson is mentioned as a source for the final triple elegy,⁹⁵ Hörðr gets its posterity stamped by Styrmir: "Segir ok svá Styrmir prestr inn fróði, at honum þykkir hann hafa verit í meira lagi af sekum

⁹² A similar discourse is found in *Vatnsdæla saga*. Ed. E. Sveinsson. Reykjavík 1939, ch. 41, pp. 107—108.

⁹³ See B. Bandlien: *A New Norse Knighthood? The Import of the Templars in Late Twelfth-Century Norway*. In: *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*. Eds. J. Malkki, K. Ritari. Helsinki 2005, pp. 178—179.

⁹⁴ *Harðar saga*, ch. 22, p. 60.

⁹⁵ This similarity has already been stressed. See S. Hast: *Harðar saga I. Inledning, text*. København 1960, p. 103.

mönnum sakir vizku ok vápnfimi ok allrar atgervi; hins ok annars, at hann var svá mikils virðr útlendis, at jarlinn í Gautlandi gipti honum dóttur sína; þess ins þriðja, at eptir engan einn mann á Íslandi hafa jafnmargir menn verit í hefnd drepnir, ok urðu þeir allir ógildir.”⁹⁶ Styrmir happens to be quoted as an important source for the *Landnámabók*⁹⁷ (where Hörd and the Hólm-dwellers are mentioned on several occasions) but also for the *Flateyjarbók*⁹⁸ containing a redaction of *Jómsvíkinga saga* contained within *Ólafs saga helga* thought to be authored by Styrmir.⁹⁹ Redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* are thought to have been compiled around 1220,¹⁰⁰ thus during Styrmir life-time. Similarly, it has been argued that an early version of *Harðar saga* written by Styrmir¹⁰¹ existed at an early stage of the development of Icelandic literature,¹⁰² also during Styrmir’s lifetime. Therefore, there may be not only a textual relationship between the two sagas, but a personal one through the direct influence of Styrmir Kárason.

Even if the *Jómsvíkinga saga* did not achieve success as a copied saga in Iceland (for the reasons that Sirpa Aalto stressed: lack of relevance for an Icelandic audience, as no Icelanders are involved), it does not mean that the strong motif it conveyed (a band of warriors in a stronghold defying authority) did not influence or had a long-lasting existence within Icelandic saga-writing. Torfi H. Tulinius argued that the early dating of *Jómsvíkinga saga* places it as a very important milestone within the evolution of Icelandic literature,¹⁰³ and could reach Icelandic concerns. I would even propose a more specific pattern. The Jómsvíking-motif (a band of warriors with their own laws challenging the stability of an area) was transported to the Icelandic context, landscape, and audience, which could relate to it by understanding it as a debate on regional lordship and territorial inheritance. The *Jómsvíking* story may have been a kind of tutelary motif which influenced the outlaw narratives in Iceland, starting with *Harðar saga* and its outlaw community on an island.

⁹⁶ *Harðar saga*, ch. 41, p. 97; “The Priest Styrmir the Wise also says that he thinks he has been amongst the best of outlawed men because of his cleverness and skill with weapons and all types of abilities; and secondly also, that he was so highly esteemed abroad that the earl of Gautland gave him his daughter in marriage; and thirdly that no single man in Iceland have so many men been killed in revenge, and were all uncompensated for.”

⁹⁷ See *Harðar saga*, *Formáli*, pp. xlv–lxvii.

⁹⁸ S. Nordal: *Formáli. Flateyjarbók IV*. Akranes 1945.

⁹⁹ E. Ashman Rowe: *The Development of Flateyjarbók: Iceland and the Norwegian Dynastic Crisis of 1389*. Odense 2005, p. 12.

¹⁰⁰ Þ.E. Jóhannesdóttir, V. Óskarsson: *The Manuscripts of Jómsvíkinga Saga: A Survey*. “Scripta Islandica” 2014, Vol. 65, pp. 9–29.

¹⁰¹ See *Harðar saga*, *Formáli*, pp. xlv–lxvii.

¹⁰² E.Ó. Sveinsson: *Dating the Icelandic Sagas. An Essay in Method*. London 1958, p. 107; S. Hast: *Harðar saga I. Inledning, text*. København 1960, pp. 13–116.

¹⁰³ T.H. Tulinius: *The Matter of the North...*, pp. 191–192.

Impossible micro-societies, such as Lilliput in *Gulliver's travels* or Thomas More's *Utopia*, are used in literature to criticise one's own society on a smaller scale, using often the self-defined space of an island. In the same vein, Geirshólmr's impossible island community makes a point on the dangers of landless elite and young nobles without function.¹⁰⁴ Apart from the debate about whether territorial power existed from the settlement onwards, or developed later in the 13th century, the social discourse in the saga is undoubtedly connected to the rise of territorial power in the second half of the 13th century. The description of the island as a stronghold and the gang-leadership with a set of laws, point towards a feudal aristocratic model, may be close to Hörðr re-enactments in a way that may have been "proto-states at the level of the commune,"¹⁰⁵ a literary "mini-*ríki*" with its self-defined space and its own laws, or also associate with the insular earldom of the Orkneys, with its "strong military and aristocratic character."¹⁰⁶

On a wider scale, the taking of a land (more precisely an island) by fugitives and the setting there of their law (*lög þeirra*) on their own terms with new rules of kinship may be reminiscent of the settlement myth of Iceland. From the settlement all through the Commonwealth period at least, the fact of it being a "new society" without a king stressed the importance of the law over kinship to keep social order.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the *Hólmverjar* stories may be a reinforcement of the intrinsic connection of land and law for the Icelandic worldview, as expressed in the famous *vár lög*,¹⁰⁸ and more widely for the Scandinavian world still preserving the long-lasting motto "með lögum skal land byggja."

¹⁰⁴ Both Hörðr and Sveinn (before being a king) create violent disturbance around them which could be explain by a lack of legitimacy.

¹⁰⁵ S. Jakobsson: *The Territorialization of Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth...*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁶ J.V. Sigurðsson: *Kings, Earls and Chieftains. Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland c. 900—1300*. In: *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages. Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*. Eds. G. Steinsland, J.V. Sigurðsson, J.E. Rekdal, I. Beuermann. Leiden 2011, p. 71.

¹⁰⁷ R.F. Tomasson: *Iceland: The First New Society*. Minneapolis 1980, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ K. Hastrup: *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland*. Oxford 1985, pp. 136—137.

Marion Poilvez

Vár lög
Społeczności banitów w *Jómsvíkinga saga* oraz *Harðar saga*

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu zbadanie podobieństw, zarówno w warstwie tekstowej, jak i koncepcyjnej, pomiędzy *Jómsvíkinga saga* oraz *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*. Mimo że utwory te dzieli wiele różnic (należą do odrębnych gatunków, zostały napisane w różnych miejscach i czasach), to jednak nie sposób nie zauważyć, że łączy je niecodzienny dla sag motyw literacki: ustanowienie alternatywnych społeczności rządzących się własnymi prawami, *lög þeirra*. Po krótkim przybliżeniu recepcji krytycznej obydwu utworów, zarówno w świecie historii, jak i literaturoznawstwa, autorka artykułu skupia się na analizie porównawczej dwóch społeczności przedstawionych w tekstach — Jómsborgu, leżącego u ujścia Odry w basenie Morza Bałtyckiego, oraz islandzkiego Geirshólmu — by pokazać, w jaki sposób elitarne wojsko wikingów przedostało się do islandzkiego Hvalfjörður, porzucając tym samym zbrojny gród na rzecz naturalnej warowni. Artykuł ukazuje przyczyny owej wyprawy, interpretując ją przez pryzmat pojawiających się w obydwu utworach postaci królów, a także pojęć takich jak pokrewieństwo i przywództwo. Wnioski końcowe artykułu potwierdzają, że motywy zawarte w *Jómsvíkinga saga* są konstytutywne dla światopoglądu Islandczyków.

Marion Poilvez

Vár lög
Die Gemeinschaften in *Jómsvíkinga saga* und *Harðar saga*

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag hat zum Ziel, die Ähnlichkeiten zwischen *Jómsvíkinga saga* und *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* sowohl in Textebene als auch in konzeptioneller Ebene zu erforschen. Obwohl diese Werke zahlreiche Unterschiede trennen (sie gehören zu anderen Gattungen, entstanden an anderen Orten und in anderer Zeit), ist es nicht zu übersehen, dass sie miteinander durch ein für Sagen untypisches literarisches Motiv verbunden sind, nämlich die Gründung von alternativen Gemeinschaften, *lög þeirra*, die sich von eigenen Gesetzen leiten ließen. Nachdem sie den Leser mit kritischer Rezeption der beiden Werke bekannt gemacht hat, konzentriert sich die Verfasserin auf die Vergleichsanalyse von den in den beiden Texten geschilderten Gemeinschaften: der an der Odermündung im Ostseebecken liegenden Siedlung — Jómsborg, und der isländischen Siedlung — Geirshólmu, um zu zeigen, wie die elitären Wikingentruppen in das isländische Hvalfjörður hingelangen, die Schutzburg zugunsten einer natürlichen Festung verlassen haben. Der vorliegende Beitrag lässt die Ursachen der Reise erscheinen, indem er die in den beiden Werken auftretenden Figuren der Könige darstellt und solche Begriffe wie: Verwandtschaft und Führung zu klären versucht. Die Schlussfolgerungen bestätigen, dass die in der *Saga Jómsvíkinga saga* enthaltenen Motive für Weltanschauung der Isländer konstitutiv sind.