

# REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN OLD NORSE LITERATURE: THE CASE OF ÁSLAUG SIGURÐARDÓTTIR<sup>1</sup>

Inés García López

Universitat Rovira i Virgili

e-mail: ines.garcia@urv.cat

Received: 30 Jan. 2021 | Revised: 10 May 2021 | Accepted: 5 June 2021 | Available online: 30 July 2021 | doi: 10.1344/Svmma2021.17.16

## Resum

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la representación de una mujer poeta, a través del personaje Áslaug Sigurðardóttir en la *Ragnars saga*, así como las representaciones de la mujer en sus mismos poemas. Tras realizar una sucinta pero necesaria revisión de las principales características formales y estilísticas de la poesía escáldica y la variante utilizada en la saga, comentaremos algunos de los poemas de Áslaug y situaremos sus divergencias como poeta respecto al canon tomando en perspectiva el contexto de recitación y el proceso de estetización que pretende acercar los versos a la audiencia.

**Paraules clau:** Áslaug, representaciones de mujeres, *skáldkonur*, poesía escáldica, contexto de recitaciones

## Abstract

This paper analyses the portrayal of the woman poet Áslaug Sigurðardóttir in *Ragnars saga*, as well as the representations of women contained in the verses attributed to her. After a brief—but necessary—review of the main formal and stylistic characteristics of skaldic poetry and the variants used in this saga, some of Áslaug's poems will be discussed to showcase her divergence from the canon of skaldic poetry, taking the context of recitation into consideration and the aestheticization process that aimed to bring these verses closer to the audience.

**Key Words:** Áslaug, women representations, *skáldkonur*, skaldic poetry, context of recitation

<sup>1</sup> The research leading to this article was carried out within the framework of the project entitled *Estudio de la canción de mujer en la lírica galorománica y germánica y de la figura femenina como constructora del espacio sociopoético trovadoresco* (PID2019-108910GB-C21), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.

## 1. Áslaug, *skáldkona* and Literary Character

### 1.1. Áslaug, the Mythical *skáldkona*

The verses of Áslaug Sigurðardóttir are included in *Ragnars Saga* or *Saga of Ragnar Hairy Breeches*<sup>2</sup> and comprise a total of ten stanzas, which, as usual in Icelandic sagas, are interspersed within the prose. Áslaug has mainly gone down in history as the wife of the famous hero Ragnarr<sup>3</sup> Loðbrók but, in contemporary sources, she was also described as a female skald.<sup>4</sup> The *Skáldatal Danakonunga ok Svía* [Catalogue of Skalds of the Danish and Swedish Kings] lists court poets from the legendary period<sup>5</sup> up to the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the catalogue, we find the following statement: “Ragnarr konungr Loðbrók var skáld ok Áslaug, kona hans, ok synir þeira”<sup>6</sup> [King Ragnarr Loðbrók was a skald and so were Áslaug, his wife, and his sons].<sup>7</sup> The order followed in the *Skáldatal*, which begins with the Danish-born king Ragnarr Loðbrók, and includes, among other renowned Norwegian kings, Haraldr hárfagri (ca 850 - ca 932),<sup>8</sup> Eiríkr konungr blóðöx (ca 885 - 954), Óláfr Tryggvason (ca 960 - 1000),<sup>9</sup> and Hákon konungr Hákonarson (1204 - 1263), reflects the hierarchy of Scandinavian kings as recounted in the *Heimskringla*,<sup>10</sup> a hierarchy based on legendary monarchs. In fact, the chief aim of the *Skáldatal* was not so much to provide a list of poets, but rather to lay the foundations for an account of the origins of the various Scandinavian kings and the poets who were in their employ. Therefore, skalds who did not compose the stories of kings were not listed (NORDAL 2001: 129).<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the comprehensiveness of the *Skáldatal* and its political purpose, it is remarkable that, on the

<sup>2</sup> *Ragnars Saga* was translated into Spanish by Santiago Ibáñez Lluch (IBÁÑEZ LLUCH 2016). For the Old Norse version we have used the edition by JÓNSSON, VILHIÁLMSSON 1954.

<sup>3</sup> All the proper names that appear in this article are in the nominative case. Therefore, we have kept the final ‘r’ in Ragnarr, as it is the mark of the masculine nominative.

<sup>4</sup> In Old Norse, the word for ‘poet’ is *skáld*, which belongs to the same word family as the Middle English word *scold*. *Skáld* is gender-neutral, but in Old Norse it was mainly used to refer to men. This is why the compound *skáldkona* (woman skald) is used to designate female poets, as in the case of the poet Þórhildr skáldkona who appears as a character in *Njáls saga* or Þordís skáldkona in the *Ljósvetninga saga*.

<sup>5</sup> The legendary period starts with the Viking raids between the eighth and the ninth centuries.

<sup>6</sup> We quote from the edition of the *Skáldatal Danakonunga ok Svía* by Guðni Jónsson. (<http://www.heimskringla.no/wiki/Sk%C3%A1ldatal>) [30/12/2020]

The earliest version of the text was part of the *Kringla* manuscript, written in the second half of the thirteenth century. This manuscript was destroyed in the great fire that ravaged Copenhagen in 1728. Only one page (Lbs. fragm. 82) survived, but fortunately there is an extant seventeenth-century copy. The second version of the *Skáldatal* is preserved in the *Codex Uppsaliensis* (DG 11), which dates from the early fourteenth century and includes more names of poets in the list.

<sup>7</sup> Translator’s note: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are based on the Spanish translations provided by the author.

<sup>8</sup> Harald hárfagri ‘Fair hair’, is considered as the first king of Norway.

<sup>9</sup> Óláfr Tryggvason was the first Norwegian king to be baptised into the Christian faith.

<sup>10</sup> The *Heimskringla* (“the circle of the world”), written by Snorri Sturluson in the thirteenth century, is the name given to a literary-historical work compiling the lives and reigns of the kings of Norway up to the author’s time.

<sup>11</sup> Nordal points out how skalds who are known to have worked for Icelandic noblemen were excluded from the list.

one hand, Ragnarr Loðbrók is listed as the earliest Scandinavian king and, on the other, Ragnarr and Áslaug are named as some of the earliest skalds.<sup>12</sup> However, it is worth asking whether the surviving stanzas of both Ragnarr and Áslaug were actually composed by them, or written by the thirteenth-century saga writer and then attributed to these two legendary figures. In the case of Áslaug, we are strongly in favour of the latter. Guðrun Nordal argues that, despite the prominence of the protagonists of the saga in the *Skáldatal*, and the fact that they might seem to be among the earliest *fornskáld* (ancient poets), their poems were not composed by a *fornskáld*, but rather by the author of the thirteenth-century saga (NORDAL 2001: 314). As we shall discuss, the author's use of an archaising metrical form was actually intended to lead readers to believe that these were very old compositions.

Therefore, in our view, Áslaug was not a true historical female skald, but a mythical *skáldkona*, the portrayal of a female skald in a thirteenth-century text.

## 1.2. Áslaug, a Protagonist of *Ragnars Saga*

The depictions of women in medieval Icelandic texts are characterised by their variety and complexity: they range from the graceful and wise queen to the monstrous giantess (FRÍÐRIKSDÓTTIR 2013: 1).<sup>13</sup> In this article, we will look into the portrayal of women poets in the Icelandic sagas by analysing the case of Áslaug. Regardless of whether or not they actually existed, what remains of them is their representation within fictional accounts.

In 2011, Sandra Ballif Straubhaar published *Old Norse Women's Poetry. The Voices of Female Skalds* (STRAUBHAAR 2011), a book devoted to medieval Norse women's poetry where the author describes four types of *skáldkonur*. First, she characterises “historical or true skalds”,<sup>14</sup> whose compositions are extant in the historical sagas of the kings of Norway, in the sagas of Icelanders, and in thirteenth-century sagas describing contemporary events, such as the *Sturlunga saga*. Secondly, she identifies a group of “semi-historical skalds” featured in the sagas of Icelanders whose compositions cannot clearly be attributed to a historical figure. Thirdly, we find “visionary women”, who compose verses that they have heard in their dreams, a kind of dream poetry that gives form to disturbing omens and visions of the future. Finally, the last group of *skáldkonur* is that of the “legendary heroines”, who appear mainly in *fornaldarsögur* or sagas of ancient times. The character of Áslaug Sigurðardóttir belongs to the latter.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Subsequent studies have shown that the earliest skald whose work has survived is Bragi Boddason inn gamli (CLUNIES ROSS 2012: xiii).

<sup>13</sup> In her book *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words, and Power*, Friðriksdóttir comprehensively analysed this heterogeneity of female images with a special emphasis on the representation of female power in the Norse Middle Ages (FRÍÐRIKSDÓTTIR 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Jórunn skáldmær is the woman skald who seems to best embody the prototypical figure of a skald working at court as a councillor and poet. She lived in the early tenth century and probably served at the court of the Norwegian king Harald hárfagri (STRAUBHAAR 2011: 13).

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that Áslaug has been excluded from the list of women poets published by Straubhaar (STRAUBHAAR 2011: v-vi).

Many of the female characters depicted in medieval Norse texts, such as prophetesses or seers, reflect ancient traditions associated with women. The ancient poem *Völuspá*<sup>16</sup> puts in the mouth of a sibyl (*völva*) of great wisdom predictions about the future that are unknown even to the god Odin. This poem is written in alliterative verse, which is the type of verse characteristic of the metrical form known as *fornyrðislag* (the metre of ancient words), widely used in Eddic poetry. Judith Jesch argues that it is easier to hear the voice of women in Eddic poems, and that the audience for this type of poetry was probably largely female (JESCH 1991: 206). Another type of verse known as *dróttkvæðr hátttr*, which could be translated as the metre recited or sung at court —more specifically as the poetry of the *drótt*, the king’s personal guard— was also common in Norse medieval poetic compositions. Court poets were typically men, but there is written evidence of women also using this type of metre to praise the deeds of heroes and kings.<sup>17</sup> However, public performance was limited to prophetesses and male poets (JOCHENS 1995: 104). As in the specific examples we will see in this article, in sagas the occasions<sup>18</sup> of recitation of skaldic poems by women whose profession is not divination generally follow *Áslaug’s* pattern, that is, their verses are mainly addressed to their husbands or children and are recited within the family circle.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Skaldic Poetry and its Metric

Skaldic poetry was written in Norway and Iceland from about the ninth to the mid-fourteenth century (NORDAL 2001). In fact, it was at the courts of Norwegian rulers that we first hear of poets whose task was to praise the deeds of kings and *jarlar* (WHALEY 2012: xc-xciii).<sup>20</sup> Most of this poetry is preserved in sagas, although grammatical treatises and Snorri’s *Edda*<sup>21</sup> also feature skaldic poems. These verses written in the vernacular were used to explain Old Norse grammar in the same way that verses from the classics illustrated the teaching of Latin (WHALEY 2012: xci, GARCÍA LÓPEZ 2015: 40). The use of skaldic poetry as a pedagogical tool included in grammar books resulted in an increase in the number of poets during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, both in religious circles and within the milieu of powerful families in Iceland (NORDAL 2001:142-3).

<sup>16</sup> *Völuspá* is the opening poem of the collection of verse texts preserved in the mid-thirteenth-century *Codex Regius* (GKS 2365 4to). Known in Spanish as *Edda Mayor* or *Edda en verso* after Luis Lerate’s translation (LERATE 2000), *Völuspá* is a collection of anonymous poems on mythological and epic themes that deploys the components of the Norse mythical universe.

<sup>17</sup> In the tenth century, the aforementioned skald and royal councillor Jórunn skáldmær wrote the skaldic poem *Sendibíttr* (The Scathing Message) dedicated to the Norwegian king Haraldr hárfagri.

<sup>18</sup> The word ‘occasion’ refers here to the moment of recitation as represented within the fictional space of the narrative. On the term ‘occasion’, see NAGY 1994: 11-25.

<sup>19</sup> Among the few exceptions to this intimate occasion of recitation, we should again mention the case of Jórunn skáldmær, and that of Þórhildr skáldkona, who recites her compositions at a wedding celebration in *Njáls saga*. However, as regards the latter, it is worth noting that, despite the attendance of guests, this type of celebration took place in a private, family context.

<sup>20</sup> For more information on the context in which skaldic poetry originates, we recommend Whaley’s chapter: “Poetry and society: The circumstances of skaldic production” (WHALEY 2012: xc-xciii).

<sup>21</sup> See the Spanish translation of the *Snorra Edda* by Luis Lerate (LERATE 2000b).

It is because of the popularity and centrality of this type of poetry in Old Norse literature that the medievalist Ursula Dronke argues that without the poets we would not have Icelandic sagas (DRONKE 1978: 23).

The most commonly used metre in skaldic poetry is *dróttkvætt* (court metre),<sup>22</sup> which takes its name from the audience for which the verses were intended. This type of metre—which is very complex when compared to other contemporary medieval metrical compositions—is characterised by alliterative hexasyllabic verse, internal syllabic rhyme (*hending*) and rhetorical figures of speech in the realm of metaphors and metonymies such as *kenningar* and *heiti*.

Each poem composed in *dróttkvætt* has at least eight lines, which are grouped into two stanzas (*helmingar*) of four lines each. These stanzas are syntactically independent, that is, the sentence that begins in the first four lines can never continue in the second *helmingr*, it must necessarily end in the first one. Eight-line poems are called *lausavísa* (single stanza), as they constitute an independent poetic unit that does not belong to a long poem. *Lausavísur* are very common in sagas, and this is also the most common strophic form in *Ragnars saga*.

One of the rhythmic devices of the skaldic metre that is shared with all other medieval Germanic compositions is alliteration. The skalds who composed in *dróttkvætt* continued the alliterative tradition characteristic of verse written in *fornyrðislag*. We find this type of verse, for instance, in Áslaug's first poem, which we will later discuss in greater detail. Below, the letters or sounds that form the alliteration are highlighted in bold. In each pair of lines, the first line contains two of the three alliterated sounds, while in the even lines, the alliterative sound usually falls on the first syllable, which in turns guides us to find the other two letters with the same sound as that of the previous line.

Þori ek eigi **boð** **brjóta**,  
 er **báðuð** mik ganga,  
 né **ræsis** kvöð **rjúfa**,  
**Ragnarr**, við þik stefnu.  
**Manngi** er **mér** í sinni  
 — **mitt** er bert hörund eigi —  
 — **fylgi** hefi ek **fullgótt** —  
 — **fer** ek ein saman — mínu.

I dare not disobey the command, nor disregard the king's summons, when you, Ragnarr, have bidden me attend upon you. There is no person in my company; my flesh is not bare; I have a perfectly good escort; I come alone.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> As mentioned above, the other type of metre used by poets was *fornyrðislag* (the metre of ancient words), which was widely used in Eddic poetry. However, the distinction between Eddic and skaldic poetry dates from well after the Middle Ages. When these poets called themselves skalds —Bragi Boddason inn gamli states in one of his poems: “Skald kalla mik” (“they call me ‘skald’”)— or when they used the term *skáldskapr* (poetry or poetic art) they did not distinguish between skaldic poetry and Eddic poetry. This differentiation is a product of nineteenth-century research. Although the term ‘skaldic’ is currently only used to refer to the poetry described in this section, in the Middle Ages the word ‘skald’ was the generic term for ‘poet’ (WHALEY 2012: xiii).

<sup>23</sup> Edited by McTurk, ‘*Ragnars saga loðbrókar 2* (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 1)’ (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 629).

While alliteration is the common element between the metrical forms of *fornyrðislag* and *dróttkvætt*, internal rhyme is precisely what differentiates them. The use of syllabic internal rhyme was an innovation of skaldic poetry; there is no other evidence of it in Germanic poetry. At the end of the thirteenth century, however, end-rhyme eventually displaced this genuine type of rhyme to become widespread in all Norse poetry (WHALEY 2012: lviii-lix).

### 2.1. Internal Syllabic Rhyme or *hending*

There are two types of internal rhymes in skaldic poetry. On the one hand, in odd lines, the internal rhyme is called *skothending*<sup>24</sup> (incomplete or assonant rhyme). On the other, in even lines, the rhyme is called *aðalhending*,<sup>25</sup> that is, perfect or consonant rhyme, as the vocalic and consonant sounds are identical. Unlike alliteration, internal rhyme is syllabic in nature.

In the explanation of the formal characteristics of skaldic poetry included in his thirteenth-century metrical treatise *Háttatal*,<sup>26</sup> Snorri Sturluson gives the example of a stanza with two *aðalhendingar* in each line, and states that this is one of the most beautiful metrical forms:<sup>27</sup>

Bað ek sveit á glað Geitis,  
 gǫr er ið at fǫr tíðum,  
 drögum hest á lög lesta,  
 lið flýtr en skrið nýtum.<sup>28</sup>

I commanded the company onto the {Glaðr {horse} of Geitir} [SHIP];<sup>29</sup>  
 preparation is often made for a voyage; we pull the {cargo horse} [SHIP]  
 out to sea; the crew sails and picks up speed.’

<sup>24</sup> On the terminology concerning the skaldic technique of the internal syllabic rhyme, see GADE, 1995, SEE, 1981: 361-66.

<sup>25</sup> Whereas *aðalhending* literally means ‘noble rhyme’, *skothending* can be translated as ‘inserted rhyme’ (WHALEY 2012: cx, cxl).

<sup>26</sup> Snorri’s *Háttatal* has not yet been translated into Spanish. For more information on the process of academization of skaldic art from the twelfth century onwards and the composition of skaldic treatises, see WELLENDORF 2017.

<sup>27</sup> “Þessi þykkir vera fegrstr ok vandastr, ef vel er ortr, þeira háttar er kvæði eru ort eptir,” (“This is considered to be the most beautiful and choicest, if it is composed well, of the verse-forms that poems are composed in”) (FAULKES 2007b: 45).

<sup>28</sup> FAULKES 1991: 21. The author of this poem is Klœingr Þorsteinsson, the fifth bishop to live in the Icelandic town of Skálholt in the mid-twelfth century. He was considered one of the best skalds of his time, but unfortunately this stanza is the only surviving part of his poetic production (GADE, MAROLD 2017: 268).

<sup>29</sup> {Glaðr {horse} of Geitir} is an example of *kenning* for [SHIP] and is composed of two proper names: on the one hand, Glaðr (the bright one), which is a mythical horse that pulls the sun to bring forth the day; and, on the other hand, Geitir, which is the name of a sea god. The sequence that helps us to understand the metaphor is as follows: Geitir’s Glaðr > the sea god’s horse > the sailor’s horse > the ship. In this stanza, and throughout the article, we have inserted in capital letters the word to which the metaphors between the braces refer in order to make them easier to read. These words have been added in the translation and do not form part of the original poem.

Snorri includes in his treatise another example of composition with assonant internal rhyme or *skothending*. As we can see in this stanza, the two types of internal rhyme alternate (WHALEY 2012: cx):

Line 1 *skothending* **Samþykkjar fremr sökku**m  
 Line 2 *aðalhending* snarr **Baldr** hjarar **aldir**,  
 Line 3 *skothending* **gunnhættir kann Grotta**  
 Line 4 *aðalhending* **gláðdript** hraða **skipta**;  
  
 Line 5 *skothending* féstríðir kná **Fróða**  
 Line 6 *aðalhending* friðbygg liði tryggva,  
 Line 7 *skothending* fjölvinjat hylr **Fenju**  
 Line 8 *aðalhending* **falr melder alinveldi**.<sup>30</sup>

The bold {Baldr<sup>31</sup> of the sword} [WARRIOR] promotes people with treasures of accord; the {battle-darer} [WARRIOR] distributes the {cheerful snowdrift of Grotti [GOLD] quickly. The {money-fighter} [GENEROUS MAN] secures the {peace-barley of Fróði} [GOLD] for the troop; the {corrupt flour of Fenja} [GOLD] covers the {many-meadowed elbow-realm} [HAND].<sup>32</sup>

The rhetorical figures in this poem draw on the legend contained in *Gróttasöngur* (The Mill's Song): two female *\*etunaz*,<sup>33</sup> Fenja and Menja, are bought as slaves by the Danish king Fróði to work in a magic mill that grinds gold. In the poem, the *\*etunaz* lament their hard work and sing of their desire to be freed (GADE, MAROLD 2017: 1152).

Metrical demands often call for the use of enjambement, which makes it difficult for modern readers to understand these poems. However, the density of rhetorical figures and their mythical-legendary background, together with the recitation of the rhythmic sounds of these compositions, must have had a remarkable effect on the audience.

## 2.2. The *háttlaus* variant

Although the main part of the corpus of skaldic poetry essentially conforms to the rules outlined above, in the *Háttatal*, Snorri Sturluson describes variants and innovations that he had noted in

<sup>30</sup> STURLUSON 1991: 21. The translation follows the prose order proposed by Gade and Marold: {Snar-Baldr hjarar} fremr aldir sökku samþykkjar; {gunnhættir} kann skipta {gláðdript Grotta} hraða. {Féstríðir} kná tryggva liði {friðbygg Fróða}; {falr melder Fenju} hylr {fjölvinjat alinveldi}; see the enjambements within each *helmingr* (GADE, MAROLD 2017: 268).

<sup>31</sup> Bálder is a god, son of Odin, who is associated with light, beauty and peace. The poet chooses this god to compose his *kenning* because it is the most appropriate for the message he wants to convey: if a king or ruler is generous and distributes wealth, peace is assured, as his troops will not mutiny and will defend the territory.

<sup>32</sup> In this *kenning*, the “many meadows” would be the fingers on which the golden rings would be placed (GADE, MAROLD 2017: 1152).

<sup>33</sup> We translate the term ‘jötunn’ as ‘\*étunaz’, and not as ‘giant’, because, as Riutort points out, ‘jötunn’ is only one of the five types of giants in Norse mythology (<https://usuaris.tinet.cat/mrr/islandes/islandes15.html>) [30/12/2020].

some skaldic poems. One such variant can be found in almost all the poems featured in *Ragnars saga*. This is why the verses of Áslaug, Ragnarr, and his sons have sometimes been dated to a very early period of skaldic poetry in which metrical forms were not yet established (NORDAL 2001: 314). The verses of *Ragnars saga* are composed in the *háttlausu*<sup>34</sup> (formless) variant, a metrical form characterised by the absence of internal syllabic rhyme in some of the lines:

Höfðum lét of hrundit  
 hundmörgum gramr undir ,  
 at feigum bör fólka  
 fingi eldr yfir syngja.

The warrior allowed a great many heads to be piled up under him, so that fire would have a chance to pray over the {doomed tree of battles}  
 [WARRIOR].

In these four verses, attributed to Áslaug, the alliteration and the number of syllables per line coincide with the canonical *dróttkvætt* form, but as regards internal rhyme, the poet only uses *aðalhending* in the even lines, while there is no internal rhyme in the odd lines. Snorri points to this variant as a metrical inconsistency that was used by early skalds (*fornskáld*).<sup>35</sup> Snorri also includes another of the poems featured in *Ragnars saga* as an example of the *háttlausu* variant, thus showing, in line with the *Skáldatal*, that this was a saga that contained poetic fragments composed by ancient skalds. Snorri's assumption regarding the *háttlausu* variant has been questioned by later studies which, as noted above, have shown that the poems in *Ragnars saga* were composed by the thirteenth-century author of the text (NORDAL 2001: 314).

### 3. Áslaug's Poems in *Ragnars saga*

As was usual in *fornaldarsögur* sagas, the plot of *Ragnars saga* blends history and legend.<sup>36</sup> The story describes the Viking raids that took place in Northumbria, on the west coast of present-day Britain, during the eighth and ninth centuries. There is agreement that these raids started with particular viciousness with the attack on the monastery of Lindisfarne in 793. As for its legendary content, suffice it to note that *Ragnars saga* is the sequel to the *Völsunga saga*, a work devoted to the Nibelungian matter starting with the ancestors of Sigurðr, the hero who seized the gold of

<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that the term 'hátr', which is usually translated as 'metre', seems to refer in this case to internal rhyme, because the verses of *Ragnars saga* do have metrical form, but lack internal rhyme.

<sup>35</sup> "Nú skal rita þá háttu er fornskáld hafa kveðit," ("Now shall be exemplified those variations of form which early poets have used in composition") (STURLUSON 2007b: 45).

<sup>36</sup> Regarding the historical background of the protagonist of the saga, McTurk claims that the hero Ragnarr loðbrók is a combination of two historical figures: on the one hand, the Viking leader known as "Reginheri", whose exploits include the sack of Paris in 845, and, on the other, a certain "Lodbroci" who is mentioned in two eleventh-century chronicles (McTURK 1991: 1-6). Despite his semi-legendary nature, the reasons mentioned above make it highly unlikely that the poems in the saga are the work of this historical figure.



the Rhine after slaying the dragon Fáfnir. In fact, Áslaug is presented as a descendant of Sigurðr himself and the valkyrie Brynhildr.

*Ragnars saga* begins with the story of Áslaug's childhood and her pursuit by the Hun king Atli (Attila). Three-year-old Áslaug finds shelter in the house of her adoptive father Heimir in Hlymdalir,<sup>37</sup> who knowing that her pursuers are closing in on them, decides to flee with little Áslaug hidden in a harp. During their flight, they arrive in Norway and stay at Spangarheiðr farm,<sup>38</sup> where the sinister owners, Gríma and Áki, kill Heimir and adopt Áslaug. In order to make sure that the girl remains unnoticed, old Gríma cuts off her hair and smears it with pitch or tar, and they start calling her Kráka.<sup>39</sup> The centrality and detail with which Áslaug's early years are described are remarkable, as is the importance the character acquires throughout the saga.<sup>40</sup> One might even think that this is partly the 'Saga of Áslaug', as it is she, and not Ragnarr, who is descended from the noble Völsung lineage.

Ten of the forty stanzas included in the saga and allegedly composed by its protagonists are attributed to Ragnarr and another ten to Áslaug. She recites her first skaldic stanza in response to a demand from Ragnarr. The hero, after one of his raids, arrives at Spangarheiðr, and the ship's cooks approach the farm to bake bread. Kráka helps them with the task, but engrossed by her beauty, they do not pay attention to the oven and the loaves burn. Upon returning to the ship, the cooks explain to Ragnarr the reason for their failure, and the hero summons the young woman adding a few unusual demands: "Hvárki vil ek, at hún sé klædd né óklædd, hvárki mett né ómett, ok fari hún þó eigi ein saman, ok skal henni þó engi maðr fylgja"<sup>41</sup> [I want her to be neither dressed nor undressed, neither fed nor unfed, and moreover she must not be all alone, but nevertheless no one may accompany her].<sup>42</sup> While old Gríma finds the request impossible to fulfil, Kráka-Áslaug seems to understand the message and appears before Ragnarr dressed in a trout net, after having eaten a chive, and in the company of a dog. Upon seeing her, Ragnarr asks her who she is, and she replies with the following stanza:

Þori ek eigi boð brjóta,  
er báðuð mik ganga,  
né ræsis kvöð rjúfa,  
Ragnarr, við þik stefnu.  
Mangi er mér í sinni  
— mitt er bert hörund eigi —  
— fylgi hefi ek fullgótt —  
— fer ek ein saman — mínu.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> As Chapter 25 of the *Völsunga saga* recounts, the second meeting between Sigurðr and Brynhildr takes place in Heimir's house..

<sup>38</sup> This place name may correspond to the present-day Norwegian municipality of Spangereid..

<sup>39</sup> The Old Norse word *kráka* means 'crow'. As will be shown below, Áslaug still changes her name once more, adopting the name "Randalín" (shield goddess).

<sup>40</sup> Tulinus and Nordal emphasise the relevance and prominence of Áslaug in the development of the saga. (TULINIUS 2002: 130-135; NORDAL 2001: 314).

<sup>41</sup> JÓNSSON, VILHJÁLMSOHN 1954 ([https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars\\_saga\\_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar\\_ok\\_sona\\_hans](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars_saga_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar_ok_sona_hans)) [30/12/2020]

<sup>42</sup> Translator's note: Based on the Spanish translation by Santiago Ibáñez Lluich (IBÁÑEZ LLUCH 2016: 178).

<sup>43</sup> Edited by Rory McTurk, '*Ragnars saga loðbrókar 2 (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 1)*' (CLUNIES ROSS

I dare not disobey the command, nor disregard the king's summons,  
when you, Ragnarr, have bidden me attend upon you.  
There is no person in my company; my flesh is not bare; I have a perfectly  
good escort; I come alone.<sup>44</sup>

In this *lausavísa*, composed in *háttlausu*, the absence of *kenningar* and *heiti* is striking. This sparing use of rhetorical figures is in fact characteristic of Áslaug's poems, and often of non-skaldic poetry as well.

As she herself states in her poem, Kráka-Áslaug successfully fulfils Ragnarr's demands, and so he asks her to spend the night on his ship and to accompany him on his voyage. She refuses and insists that they meet again after his voyage to see whether his desire for her has changed in any way. Ragnarr consents to Kráka-Áslaug's request and offers her a beautiful shift that had belonged to Þóra, his first wife, as a present. He then recites a poem to which she responds in kind:

Þori ek eigi<sup>45</sup> þann þiggja,  
er Þóra hjörtr átti,  
serk við silfr um merktan;  
sama ælig mér klæði.  
Því em ek Kráka kölluð,  
í kolsvörtum váðum  
at ek hefi grjót um gengit  
ok geitr með sjá reknar.<sup>46</sup>

I dare not accept that shift,  
decked out with silver,  
which Þóra 'Hart' possessed;  
wretched garments are suitable for me.

I am called Kráka because I have walked on stones in coal-black clothes  
and driven goats by the sea.

Once again we are dealing with a poem of a certain syntactic complexity, but of low rhetorical density, something that in principle should facilitate a better understanding of the poem by the speaker's interlocutor, in this case Ragnarr. That is why Kráka-Áslaug's clarification in prose at the end of the recitation comes as a surprise: "'Ok vil ek víst eigi taka við serknum,' segir hún" ["'and I will certainly not take this shift', she said"). In the prose fragment, Áslaug again explains

2017: 629).

<sup>44</sup>The prose translation follows the syntactic order proposed by McTurk.: "Ek þori eigi brjóta boð, né rjúfa kvöð ræsis, er báðuð mik ganga stefnu við þik, Ragnarr. Manni er mér í sinni mínu; hörund mitt er eigi bert; ek hefi fullgótt fylgi; ek fer ein saman".

<sup>45</sup>Note how these three opening words coincide with those of the previous poem.

<sup>46</sup>Edited by Rory Mc Turk, '*Ragnars saga loðbrókar* 5 (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 3)' (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 629).

the content of the poem to Ragnarr, persistently refusing his gift because as long as she continues to live in the farm as Kráka, she is not worthy of such a garment. While we could say that the first encounter and exchange of verses was a success on a communicative level, it seems that this second conversation is more problematic, not only because of the rejection of the gift, but also because it requires unnecessary clarifications. The following encounter between Ragnarr and Kráka-Áslaug does indeed take place after the hero's journey. He heads to Spangarheiðr farm to fetch Kráka and bring her to his kingdom to marry her. On the wedding night however, when he expresses his desire to go to bed with her, she warns him that, were that to happen, it would have grave consequences. To which she adds that it is safer to proceed in the way she suggests in the following *lausavísa*:

Þrjár nætr skulum þessar,  
ok þó saman, byggja  
†hressvar†<sup>47</sup> nætr í höllu,  
áðr vit heilug goð blótím.  
Þó munu mein á mínum  
megi til löng of verða;  
heldr ertu bráðr at byrja  
þann, er bein hefir engi.<sup>48</sup>

Let us share these three grey nights  
in the great hall, together, before the two of us  
sacrifice to the holy gods.

Yet the harmful consequences for my son will be too long-lasting; you are rather hasty  
in begetting the one who has no bones.

On this occasion, Ragnarr not only leaves the poem unanswered, but disregards Kráka-Áslaug's request to wait three nights and imposes his will. The saga relates how, despite this, their life together went well and there was much love. Yet, after nine months, the baby, whom they called Ívarr, was born boneless. Once again, we are faced with a misunderstanding, with the ineffectiveness of verses which "Ragnarr did not heed" ("gaf Ragnarr at því engan gaum").<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The translation of this term has been a matter of debate (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 636-637). The problem is the relevance of the term *hress* ("healthy, good-humoured") in relation to the noun *nátt* ("night") (*ONP*: *hress*). Some authors have proposed the term *höss-hösvar* ("dark") to accompany the noun "night". In fact, the adjective *höss* would actually mean "grey" (BAETKE 1965: 300). WSantiago Ibáñez' translation seems to us to be the most appropriate one, as follows a traducción de este término ha sido motivo de debate. El problema es la pertinencia del término *hress* ("sano, de buen humor") en relación al sustantivo *nátt* ("noche") (*ONP*: *hress*). Algunos autores han propuesto el término *höss-hösvar* ("oscuro") para acompañar al sustantivo "noche". De hecho, el adjetivo *höss* vendría a significar más bien "gris" (BAETKE 1965: 300). This is the way in which Santiago Ibáñez translates it, and we agree with him (IBAÑEZ LLUCH 2016: 184).

<sup>48</sup> Edited by McTurk, 'Ragnars saga loðbrókar 6 (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 4)' (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 635).

<sup>49</sup> JÓNSSON, VILHJÁLMSÓN 1954 ([https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars\\_saga\\_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar\\_ok\\_sona\\_hans](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars_saga_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar_ok_sona_hans)) [30/12/2020]

According to later events in the saga, the narrator seems to suggest that the reason for these discrepancies and failed encounters was the fact that Áslaug's true ancestry remained hidden beneath the character of Kráka. However, in the ninth chapter of the saga, an event precipitates the need to reveal her lineage.

As he does every summer, Ragnarr goes to visit his friend, the Swedish king Eystein. During the banquet, Ragnarr's men encourage him to marry Ingibjörg, the king's daughter, arguing that a hero deserves to marry someone of higher rank than a peasant's daughter. Moved by his men's reasoning, Ragnarr is then betrothed to Ingibjörg. However, the hero warns his warriors not to reveal the betrothal until he sees fit to explain it under penalty of death. Once they return to their kingdom, Kráka-Áslaug asks Ragnarr whether there is any news, but he answers in the negative both times she asks, until she finally reveals that she already knows he is betrothed to Ingibjörg. Áslaug clarifies that it was not any of his men who told her, but three birds that landed near them while they talked.<sup>50</sup> She then asks him not to marry Ingibjörg, because Áslaug too is the daughter of a king, not of a peasant. It is at this moment when, after her words "Saga er til þess,"<sup>51</sup> ["this is the story"], the narrator recounts how she explains to Ragnarr that she is the daughter of Sigurðr Fáfnisbani (the slayer of Fáfnir) and Brynhildr Buðladóttir (daughter of Buðli). She also tells him that she is pregnant and that the child in her womb will bear a snake-like mark in his eye. After the birth of this new son, Ragnarr decides not to go to Sweden to marry the king's daughter. The emotion and pride he feels at the sight of his son is expressed in three very beautiful skaldic stanzas. In the first one, he announces that his son's name will be Sigurðr, after his maternal grandfather, and acknowledges him as a descendant of Odin's line. In the second stanza, he praises the lineage of Áslaug, daughter of Brynhildr and descendant of the legendary king Buðli.

From this point onwards, both characters, especially Ragnarr, are displaced in the narrative by the exploits of their sons. Áslaug is again involved in the story in the tenth chapter when she is told of the death of Ragnarr and Þóra's sons while they were fighting King Eystein. Áslaug then urges her own sons to avenge the death of their half-brothers. Despite Ívarr's reluctance, the brothers finally set sail with twenty ships. Áslaug accompanies them, but changes her name to Randalín (the shield goddess).<sup>52</sup> References to Randalín-Áslaug are scarce until Ragnarr reappears in the saga. The exploits of his sons have gained so much fame and renown that Ragnarr plans to carry out a great deed and invade England. Randalín warns him that his planned voyage is foolhardy as he does not have enough ships. Ragnarr again disregards his wife's warnings and sets out to conquer England. Randalín-Áslaug gives him a shirt along with what will be the last poem she will ever recite to her husband:

<sup>50</sup> Áslaug inherits the ability to understand the language of birds from his father Sigurðr. In the *Völsunga saga*, Sigurðr acquires this skill after drinking the blood of the dragon Fáfnir.

<sup>51</sup> JÓNSSON, VILHJÁLMSOHN 1954 ([https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars\\_saga\\_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar\\_ok\\_sona\\_hans](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars_saga_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar_ok_sona_hans)) [30/12/2020]

<sup>52</sup> 'Shield goddess' is a *kenning* for female warrior. Therefore, Áslaug hides her real name by calling herself a "warrior".

Þér ann ek serk inn síða  
 ok saumaðan hvergi  
 við hug ofinn heilan  
 ór hársíma gránu.  
 Mun eigi ben blæða  
 né bíta þik eggjar  
 í heilagri hjúpu;  
 var hon goðum signuð.<sup>53</sup>

I am giving you the long shirt,<sup>54</sup> devotedly woven  
 out of grey hair-thread, and nowhere sewn.  
 A wound will not bleed, nor sword-edges cut you in that holy shirt:  
 it was consecrated to the gods.

The inauspicious omens surrounding Ragnarr's journey to England prove true. He loses the battle against King Ella,<sup>55</sup> all his men are killed, and he ends up captured, but when asked about his name, he does not answer. The English king wants to ensure that Ragnarr is not killed for fear of his sons' revenge, and therefore throws him into a snake pit ordering his release if he claims that he is indeed Ragnarr. The king's men witness how the snakes do Ragnarr no harm, and remember how the swords did not hurt him during the fight either. King Ella then orders his shirt to be removed and, from that moment onwards, the snakes bite him to death.

Before dying though, Ragnarr recites two stanzas that hint at his identity. King Ella then prepares to protect himself from the vengeance of Ragnarr's sons, but he is defeated and captured. Ívarr decides that his death, and with it his revenge, will be carried out as follows: "Nú skal sá maðr, er oddhagastr er, marka örn á baki honum sem inniligast, ok þann örn skal rjóða með blóði hans"<sup>56</sup> ["The man who is most skilled in carving [with the tip of a knife or a sword] shall carve an eagle on his back so precisely that the eagle shall redden with his blood"]. After the death of King Ella, Ívarr rules England.

The saga continues with an account of the exploits of Ragnarr's sons. Randalín-Áslaug intervenes for the last time in the saga to dedicate a few verses to his son Hvítserkr after receiving the news of his death in battle:

<sup>53</sup> Edited by McTurk, 'Ragnars saga loðbrókar 25 (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 8)' (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 644).

<sup>54</sup> Unlike in the poem "Þori ek eigi þann þiggja", discussed above, where we chose the word 'shift' to translate the term *serkr*, here we have translated it as 'shirt'. We consider this to be more accurate, as *serkr* is accompanied by the adjective *síðr* "long, hanging, drooping", and because of the type of garment to which Randalín-Áslaug refers.

<sup>55</sup> According to Anglo-Saxon chronicles, Ella - *Ella* was king of Northumbria, one of the seven kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England, during the second half of the ninth century.

<sup>56</sup> JÓNSSON, VILHJÁLMSOHN 1954 ([https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars\\_saga\\_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar\\_ok\\_sona\\_hans](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars_saga_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar_ok_sona_hans)) [30/12/2020]

Höfðum lét of hrundit  
 hundmörgum gramr undir,  
 at feigum bör fólka  
 fingi eldr yfir syngja.  
 Hvat skyli beð enn betra  
 böðheggr und sik leggja?  
 Olli dýrr við orðstír  
 allvaldr jöfurs falli.<sup>57</sup>

The warrior<sup>58</sup> allowed a great many heads to be piled up under him, so that fire would have a chance to pray over the {doomed tree<sup>59</sup> of battles} [WARRIOR].<sup>60</sup>  
 How could {a battle-cherry tree} [WARRIOR] place beneath himself an even better bed?<sup>61</sup> The mighty ruler caused a prince's<sup>62</sup> death with glory.

In this laudatory poem Áslaug includes two *kenningar* for 'warrior' that were commonly used in skaldic poetry.

#### 4. Conclusions

The portrayal of Áslaug in the saga is marked by the different names assigned to her: Kráka, the slave, Áslaug, the queen, and Randalín, the warrior. On the one hand, the poems are attributed to the three characters that Áslaug personifies in the saga without any apparent change of style connected to them. On the other, there are interesting differences in both the content of the poems and their rhetorical density in relation to the representations of women in the Norse Middle Ages. In our view, the key to interpreting these differences lies in the analysis of the parameters of the occasion of recitation in which the poems are presented in the saga, and in the demands that this occasion places on the Norse tradition of poetic composition.

According to this analysis, we conclude that the five poems discussed in this article are representative of three types of compositions attributed to Áslaug in *Ragnars saga*:

<sup>57</sup> Edited by McTurk, 'Ragnars saga loðbrókar 31 (Kráka/Áslaug Sigurðardóttir, Lausavísur 10)' (CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 685).

<sup>58</sup> The term *gramr*, which we have translated here as 'warrior', could also be translated as ruler. Although it is not clear whether it was the ruler who killed him who had the heads piled up or Hvítserkr himself who ordered it, the question posed in the second *helmingr* suggests the latter. This is why we translate the term *gramr* as 'warrior', as it is also the term used in the *kenningar* that Randalín-Áslaug addresses to his son in the poem.

<sup>59</sup> We have translated *börr* as 'tree' because we do not know to which of the possible variants the term refers here: *börr*: "coniferous tree: pine, fir or cypress" (ONP: börr; CLUNIES ROSS 2017: 686).

<sup>60</sup> In these first four verses, we understand that they place Hvítserkr, still alive, at the foot of the pile of heads, and that is why the fire prays over the dying man. It is in the second part of the stanza that the pile becomes his bed; in other words, once dead, his corpse is placed on the pile of burning heads for cremation.

<sup>61</sup> The saga describes how Eíríkr, Hvítserkr's half-brother, also procures a death-bed for himself, not of human heads but of spears..

<sup>62</sup> Hvítserkr's death.

The first group of poems consists of those that are recited in dialogue with Ragnarr, such as “Þori ek eigi boð brjóta,” (“I dare not disobey the command”) or “Þori ek eigi þann þiggja,” (“I dare not accept that shift”). This verse conversation is characterised by a minimal presence of *kenningar* in both Áslaug’s and Ragnarr’s verses. Together, these poems convey, on the fictional level and within their prose context, a possible version of the dramatic scene in which the characters’ voices conform to certain male and female roles, and where their verses would correspond to the dialogue of the play.

The second group includes Áslaug’s prophetic poems, such as “Þrjár nætr skulum þessar,” (“Let us share these three grey nights”) or “Þér ann ek serk inn síða” (“I am giving you the long shirt”). The absence of rhetorical figures and the nature of the content suggest that the author of the saga chose a poetic form that leads to the identification of Áslaug with a mythical sibyl, whose verses are characterised by the alliterative metre of *fornyrðislag*. As mentioned above, one of the fundamental differences between *fornyrðislag* and *dróttkvætt* or *háttlausá* is the more or less consistent presence of internal rhyme and *kenningar*. The absence of these features in Áslaug’s prophetic poems may have been intended to generate an archaising effect that would align these poems with the tradition of ancient prophetic poetry. The author of the saga chose a female character to represent this ancient social function of women in relation to divination, thereby displacing the literary context (JOCHENS 2002: 14). This process of aestheticisation involves retaining the prophetic tone in the skaldic verses as much as possible in order to evoke a certain collective imaginary shared by the audience.

The third group of poems comprises Áslaug’s laudatory verses, which would be related to the traditional or canonical skaldic poems. The poem “Höfðum lét of hrundit” (“The warrior allowed a great many heads”) belongs to this group.<sup>63</sup> Not surprisingly, these verses do feature *kenningar*, as their content is suited to an audience educated to listen to certain rhetorical turns of phrase characteristic of praises for fallen warriors or those going into battle. It should also be noted that Áslaug recites these poems as Randalín (the shield goddess), a name that attests to her legendary and warrior lineage inherited from both her mother, the valkyrie Brynhildr, and her father Sigurðr.

As shown above, the different occasions on which the mythical *skáldkona* Áslaug intervenes set the tone for the poetic and rhythmic content of her poems, and generate various poetic expressions based on the different representations of women. Among these, it is worth mentioning the one that most significantly portrays Áslaug: the ancient social function of women in relation to divination.

<sup>63</sup> In another poem dedicated to her son Rögnvaldr on the occasion of his death, she uses a beautiful *kenning* for ‘sea’: {field of seagulls}.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

CLUNIES ROSS, Margaret (ed.), 2017. *Poetry in fornaldarsögur. Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, Vol. 8*, Turnhout, Brepols

IBÁÑEZ LLUCH, Santiago (ed.), 2016. *Saga de Sturlaug el Laborioso, Saga de Ragnar Calzas Peludas, Relato de los hijos de Ragnar*, Madrid, Miraguano

JÓNSSON, Guðni (ed.), *Skáldatal Danakonunga ok Svía*, <http://www.heimskringla.no/wiki/Sk%C3%A1ldatal>, [30/12/2020]

JÓNSSON, Guðni, VILHJÁLMSOHN, Bjarni, 1954. “Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sona hans”, *Fornaldarsögur norðurlanda, I-IV*, Reykjavík, Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, [https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars\\_saga\\_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar\\_ok\\_sona\\_hans](https://heimskringla.no/wiki/Ragnars_saga_lo%C3%B0br%C3%B3kar_ok_sona_hans), [30/12/2020]

LERATE, Luis (ed.), 2000. *Edda Mayor*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial  
—2000b. *Edda Menor*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial

FAULKES, Anthony (ed.), 2007a. *Edda. Skáldskaparmál. Vol. 1, Vol. 2*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research  
—2007b. *Háttatal*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research

THORSSON, Örnólfur (ed.), 1985. *Völsunga saga og Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, Reykjavík, Mál og Menning

### Secondary Sources

ANDERSON, Sarah, M., SWENSON, Karen (eds.), 2001. *The Cold Counsel: The Women in Old Norse Literature and Myth*, Londres, Routledge

BAETKE, Walter, 1976. *Wörterbuch zur Altnordischen Prosaliteratur*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag

BOROVSKY, Zoe, 1999. “Never in Public: Women and Performance in Old Norse Literature”, *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 112, No. 443. (Winter, 1999): 6-39.

CLUNIES ROSS, Margaret, 2012. “What is skaldic poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages?”, *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035. Skaldic Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages, Vol. 1*, D. Whaley (ed.), Turnhout, Brepols: XIII-XVIII



- DRONKE, Ursula, 1978. "The Poet's persona in the Skalds' Sagas", *Parergon* 22: 23-28
- FRÍÐRIKSDÓTTIR, Jóhanna Katrín, 2013. *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words, and Power*, London, Palgrave Macmillan
- GARCÍA LÓPEZ, Inés, 2015. "Ars Poetica Borealis", *Quimera. Revista de Literatura*, nº 380-381: 40-42
- GADE, Karin Elle, 1995. *The Structure of the Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press
- GADE, Karin Elle, MAROLD, Edith (eds.), *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics. Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, Vol. 3*. Turnhout, Brepols
- GONZÁLEZ CAMPO, Mariano (ed.), 2003. *Saga de Bósi*, Valencia, Tilde
- HELGADÓTTIR, Guðrún P., 1961. *Skáldkonur fyrri alda*. Akureyri, Kvöldvökuútgáfan
- JESCH, Judith, 1991. "Women and Skaldic poetry", *Women in the Viking Age*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press: 148-168
- JOCHENS, Jenny, 2002. "At the Dawn of Nordic Literature: A Chorus of Female Voice", *Female Voices of the North I. An Anthology*, I. M. Olsen, S.H. Rossel, R. Nedoma (eds.), Viena, Praesens Verlag. —1995. *Women in Old Norse Society*, Ithaca & London, Cornell University Press
- MCTURK, Rory, 1991. *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar and its Major Scandinavian Analogues*, Oxford, The Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature
- NAGY, Gregory, 1994. "Genre and Occasion", *Mètis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*, vol. 9-10: 11-25
- NORDAL, Guðrun, 2001. *Tools of Literacy: The Role of Skaldic Verse in Icelandic Textual Culture of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press
- O'DONOGHUE, Heather, 2005. *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, Oxford, Oxford University Press
- ONP: *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*. University of Copenhagen, <https://onp.ku.dk/>, [30/12/2020]

PORTER, Edel, 2017. “La poesía escáldica”, *Una introducción al medioevo escandinavo*, S. Barreiro, R. Birro (eds.), Buenos Aires, Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Medievales

SEE, Klaus von, 1981. “Skothending. Bemerkungen zur Frühgeschichte des Skaldischen Binnenreims”, *Edda, Saga, Skaldendichtung: Aufsätze zur skandinavischen Literatur des Mittelalters*. Heidelberg, Winter Verlag: 361-66

STRAUBHAAR, Sandra Ballif, 2011. *Old Norse Women’s Poetry: The Voices of Female Skalds*. Cambridge, D. S. Brewer.

RIUTORT I RIUTORT, Macià, *Íslensk-katalónsk orðabók. Diccionari islandès-català* (<https://usuaris.tinet.cat/mrr/islandes/islandes1.html>) [30/12/2020].

TULINIUS, Torfi, 2002. *The Matter of the North. The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*, Odense, Odense University Press

WELLENDORF, Jonas, 2017. “The Formation of an Old Norse Skaldic School Canon in the Early Thirteenth Century”, *Interfaces* 4: 125-143

WHALEY, Diana (ed.) 2012. *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035. Skaldic Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages, Vol. 1*, Turnhout, Brepols