



**Review of: The Uppsala Edda . DG 11 4to . By Snorri Sturluson. Edited with introduction and notes by Heimir Pálsson. Translated by Anthony Faulkes. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2012. Pp. £12.**

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*Published in:*  
J E G P

*Publication date:*  
2015

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Lassen, A. (2015). Review of: The Uppsala Edda . DG 11 4to . By Snorri Sturluson. Edited with introduction and notes by Heimir Pálsson. Translated by Anthony Faulkes. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2012. Pp. £12. *J E G P*, 114(1), 121-122.



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## The Uppsala Edda. DG 11 4to by Snorri Sturluson (review)

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JEGP, Journal of English and Germanic Philology, Volume 114, Number 1, January 2015, pp. 121-123 (Review)

Published by University of Illinois Press



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Shippey is particularly good on style (pp. 250–54), but his literary common touch is felt throughout. Minor slip-ups include placement of “the Carpathian Mountains beyond the Black Sea” (p. 245)—unless viewed from China—and the confusion of the first Guðrún poem with *Guðrúnarkviða in forna* (p. 246). Tolkien’s idiosyncratic use of the term *kviðuháttir* for *fornyrðislag* deserves a word of explanation (p. 250).

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THE UPPSALA EDDA. DG 11 4TO. By Snorri Sturluson. Edited with introduction and notes by Heimir Pálsson. Translated by Anthony Faulkes. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2012. Pp. 327. £12.

Heimir Pálsson’s edition of the manuscript *Codex Upsaliensis* of Snorri Sturluson’s *Edda* is a welcome, normalized reading edition, which will make the study of the transmission, textual variety, and context of Snorri’s *Edda* in the Middle Ages more accessible for students of Old Norse. Snorri’s *Edda* is one of the most important Old Norse texts. As is well known, the *Edda* is a handbook for comprehending and composing skaldic poetry. Guðrún Nordal (2001) has even argued that it was a sort of textbook used in schools. Snorri’s *Edda* belongs to the category of learned medieval writings, as has been argued by a number of scholars, not least Anthony Faulkes (1983) and Peter and Ursula Dronke (1977), even though scholars do not agree upon the extent of Snorri’s learning.

Snorri’s *Edda* has been transmitted in four almost complete manuscripts and in a number of fragments. Generally, the *Codex Regius* of Snorri’s *Edda* (GKS 2367 4to) is believed to come closest to Snorri’s original. This manuscript is thought to have been written in the first quarter of the fourteenth century. The *Codex Trajectinus* (Utrecht 1374), which is a copy from ca. 1595 of a now lost medieval manuscript, is closely related to the *Codex Regius*. From ca. 1350, we have the *Codex Wormianus* (AM 242 fol.), which preserves a text of Snorri’s *Edda* with a number of learned interpolations. Finally, there is the *Codex Upsaliensis* (DG 11 4to), believed to be slightly older than the *Codex Regius* and written ca. 1300, which preserves a third redaction of the text that is generally considered to be abridged in comparison to the other redactions.

There are facsimile editions of all four manuscripts, but until now only two of the manuscripts have been available in a normalized reading edition. The text of the *Codex Regius* has been published in a complete and normalized edition by Anthony Faulkes (1982–1998; with introduction and commentary), including an English translation by Faulkes (1997), and the text of *Codex Wormianus* has been published by Karl G. Johansson online at the Medieval Nordic Text Archive (menota.org). In addition to the facsimile edition from 1962, *Codex Upsaliensis* is available in a diplomatic edition with a palaeographic commentary and an introduction by Anders Grape, Gottfrid Kallstenius, and Olof Thorell (1977). With the present edition, including Anthony Faulkes’s translation, *Codex Upsaliensis* is now also easily accessible for students.

Each redaction of Snorri’s *Edda* on its own is naturally of interest to students and scholars of Old Norse. Accordingly, Heimir Pálsson has emended the text of *Codex Upsaliensis* as little as possible: “The intention is not to reconstruct the original text of Snorri Sturluson, much less that of the poets that he quoted, but rather to examine exhaustively the text that the anonymous scribe set down on parchment around the year 1300” (p. cxxv). With the exception of the *Codex Trajectinus*, all four

manuscripts contain texts in addition to Snorri's *Edda*, and none of the four manuscripts is entirely complete. In *Codex Upsaliensis*, the text has also been structured in a manner different from the other manuscripts. Apart from Snorri's *Edda*, *Codex Upsaliensis* contains a genealogy of the Sturlungs, *Skáldatal* (a list of skalds), and a list of lawspeakers. One of the reasons why *Codex Upsaliensis* has attracted particular interest is that it is the only manuscript of Snorri's *Edda* that provides information about Snorri Sturluson's compilation of the work: *Bók þessi heitir Edda. Hana hefir samansetta Snorri Sturlusonr eptir þeim hætti sem hér er skipat* (This book is called Edda. It has been put together by Snorri the son of Sturla, following the manner in which it is arranged here). Thus it seems reasonable that *Codex Upsaliensis* was somehow written in connection with the *Sturlungar*, the family clan to which Snorri belonged.

As Heimir Pálsson points out in his preface, the present edition is in part the labor of a group of scholars in Uppsala. In addition to Heimir Pálsson, these scholars are Henrik Williams, Lasse Mårtensson, Daniel Sävborg, Jonatan Pettersson, and Maja Bäckvall. Aided by a grant from The Swedish Research Council, they dedicated themselves to an in-depth study of the *Codex Upsaliensis*. The Introduction is not a general or traditional introduction to Snorri's *Edda*. Most of the 115-page-long Introduction (nine out of eleven sections) is organized around Heimir Pálsson's theories about the origins and compilation of DG 11 4to. The first section is a lengthy discussion of Snorri Sturluson, his biography, and his authorship of the *Edda*. The second is a discussion of *Codex Upsaliensis* and its relationship to the other manuscripts of Snorri's *Edda*. The third treats the sources used in the compilation called Snorri's *Edda*. In the fourth section, Heimir Pálsson argues that the two major sections of Snorri's *Edda* should be regarded as separate works, a "Liber primus" and a "Liber secundus." The fifth section attempts to delineate the redactor's attitude when it comes to expression in the manuscript. The sixth section deals with headings and marginal notes in DG 11 4to. In the seventh, he discusses empty spaces and marginal notes. The eighth section is a discussion of the *Edda*'s terminology for grammar and prosody; Heimir Pálsson concludes that it is "impressive in its range and independence of Latin sources" (p. cxv). The ninth section draws together the arguments of the previous sections.

In general, Heimir Pálsson's Introduction downplays the importance of Latin literacy in Oddi and elsewhere in Iceland and builds up a probability of oral, pagan, or folkloric sources. This bias against written culture and Latin learning in a study of the written work of a medieval scholar leads to what may seem like questionable readings of texts. An example is his reading of *Þorláks saga*, where it says that Þorlákr "spent his time, when he was young, for long periods in study, and frequently in writing, in prayer in between, but learned, when not occupied in anything else, what his mother was able to teach him, genealogy and history of individuals." The passage is relevant because like Snorri, Þorlákr was educated at Oddi. Heimir Pálsson deduces from this description that "Þorlákr's mother passed onto him native lore of certain kinds" (p. xiii). He speculates that "[i]t may be that Snorri sought just as much to hear old women chanting old poems" (p. xiii). By old poems, he means old pagan poetry. But the celibate and saintly Þorlákr's deeply Christian mother would be a very unlikely candidate for chanting such poetry. Furthermore, there is no discussion of the debate about Snorri's authorship of *Heimskringla* (Louis-Jensen 1997) or the *Edda* (Lönnroth 1964). Heimir Pálsson claims that the sources of *Gylfaginning* must have been oral tales (p. xlv), even though for the structure and contents of the work, with all probability Snorri had access to *Völuspá*, *Vaffbrúðnismál*, and *Grímnismál* in writing, as has been shown by

Jón Helgason (1953) and Gustaf Lindblad (1978). Lindblad's important studies (1954, 1977, 1978, 1980) of the written transmission of Eddic poetry are not listed in the bibliography. Medieval genealogies, such as the one in *Codex Upsaliensis*, which includes pagan gods and Old Testament figures, is claimed to be "clearly a learned fiction which would hardly have been taken seriously in the thirteenth century" (p. lxxviii). One may not take this seriously in the twenty-first century, but in the thirteenth century, this was perfectly valid as scholarship.

As a solution to the stemmatological challenges of the manuscripts of Snorri's *Edda*, Heimir Pálsson suggests that it may be possible to construct two stemmas of the manuscripts instead of one. He hypothesizes that before 1218, Snorri had compiled some drafts of the *Edda*, which included *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál*, in a form similar to that in *Codex Upsaliensis*. Afterwards these drafts were revised by Snorri or someone else, and this revised version became the archetype of the *Codex Regius* version. Thus, the importance of *Codex Upsaliensis* is stressed, since according to this theory, it derives from Snorri's working copy. It's a stimulating thought that we might be able to witness Snorri's work in progress (as, for example, Saxo's working copy, the so-called Angers fragment, NKS 869 g 4to, of *Gesta Danorum*, allows us to do), but unfortunately this wishful hypothesis is not convincing. Even within the Uppsala Edda project, another hypothesis has also been advanced about the nature of the abridged text of *Codex Upsaliensis* in comparison with the *Codex Regius*. Daniel Sävborg (2012) has argued that by analyzing the shifting percentage of abridgement in the *Codex Upsaliensis*, one can detect traces of two scribes copying a manuscript of Snorri's *Edda* prior to the *Codex Upsaliensis*. The latter hypothesis is better argued and more persuasive, but the relationship between the manuscripts of Snorri's *Edda* will most likely continue to be a matter of debate.

Heimir Pálsson makes the point in his Introduction that new scholarly work or hypotheses usually take around fifty years to enter the classroom. With his normalized edition, including the thorough Introduction and Faulkes's translation, he has made sure that the *Codex Upsaliensis* will be read and studied by numerous future students of Old Norse without the usual delay. The edition makes the redaction of *Codex Upsaliensis* easily accessible. Future studies of Snorri's *Edda* will without doubt benefit from that. Moreover, the edition will enable teachers to introduce their students (even before they have learned to read Old Norse) to the variety and the unsteadiness of medieval textuality, even of classic texts like the *Snorra Edda*. This is a considerable achievement.

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CELTIC INFLUENCES IN GERMANIC RELIGION: A SURVEY. By Matthias Egeler. Münchner Nordistische Studien, 15. München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2013. Pp. 156. EUR 34.

In his concise and readable survey, Matthias Egeler parses judiciously through the often contentious claims for Celtic influences in Germanic pre-Christian religious traditions. Egeler sketches the main lines of Celtic-Germanic comparative research over the last century and selects some valuable cases to illustrate the positive and negative tendencies of the field. He pays initial attention to borrowing between continental Celtic and Germanic populations, as reflected in the writings of Classical authors like Tacitus and Caesar (pp. 16–32), and as suggested by various