SCANDINAVIAN ELEMENTS
IN THE
WORKS OF WILLIAM MORRIS

by

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Preface

As Sir Oliver Elton points out in his excellent essay on William Morris in his Survey of English Literature: 1780-1880,

Altogether the spell of Iceland, along with that of Chaucer, was the most potent that Morris ever felt. It coloured his mental landscape and his ideals; gave him the matter for his greatest poem; shaped a good deal of his diction; and led him to translate some of the best of the prose epics: a gift to English readers which is by no means yet outworn, and which entitles him, as a helpmate of genius, to his place near the scholars and pioneers, like Guðbrandr Vigfússon and Sophus Bugge, who were basing the edifice of Northern studies.¹

That the Old Norse sagas had an extremely significant influence upon Morris both as a man and as a writer has long been realized. In addition to the innumerable general accounts of this matter that have appeared in biographies and critical discussions of Morris and in literary histories of the second half of the nineteenth century, at least twelve detailed investigations of particular aspects of this question have been published. A number of phases of Morris's Norse work, however, have not been carefully examined, and many of those that have been given minute consideration have not, as I shall show in the following pages,


² These twelve special investigations I have discussed in detail at the proper points in my chronological survey of Morris's Scandinavian work, indicating in my comments on each study its scope and results and calling attention whenever necessary to inaccurate or misleading statements. Thus, for an account of Heinrich Bartels, William Morris: The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs. Eine Studie über das Verhältnis des Epos zu den Quellen (Münster, 1906), see below, pp. 235-243; for Arthur Biber, Studien zu William Morris' Prose Romances (Greifswald, 1907), see below, pp. 305-335, passim.
manuscript material available in order to determine as definitely as possible what his principles of translation were. It is the hope of satisfying these needs - in part, at least - that I have undertaken the present investigation.

I have been able to complete my work only because of the generous assistance I have received from a variety of sources. First of all I must acknowledge my gratitude to Professor Paul R. Lieder of Smith College, who not only first suggested this topic to me and gave me valuable advice derived from his own researches in Anglo-Scandinavian literary relations, but also most generously put at my disposal his manuscript of the Morris-Magnússon rendering of the Sigurðar saga Jórsalafara, Eysteins ok Olafs, on which the main part of my study of Morris's style of translation in Chapter IV is based. Even greater, however, is my indebtedness to Professor F. Stanton Cawley, for it has been under his patient and competent guidance that the investigation has been carried on; it was he, moreover, who taught me what I know about Old Norse, and who first introduced me to the literature of medieval Scandinavia. From Professor Francis P. Magoun, Jr., also, I have received many fruitful suggestions and much encouragement, his interest in Old Norse being surpassed only by his enthusiasm for Old and Middle English. Finally I wish to express my thanks to Professor Halldor Hermannsson of Cornell University, especially for the help he gave me in solving various problems that arose during the final stages of my research, after I had begun teaching at Cornell.
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During the academic year 1933 to 1934 my work was materially aided by the grant of a Rogers Travelling Fellowship from Harvard University; the opportunities afforded me by this award to meet relatives and friends of Morris and to examine manuscript material which is now deposited in public and private libraries in England have enabled me to make my account of Morris's Scandinavian studies much more complete than it would otherwise have been. Of those who helped me in England I am especially indebted, first, for personal reminiscences, to Morris's daughter, the late Miss May Morris, and to such friends of Morris and his collaborator Eiríkr Magnússon as Professor John W. Mackail, Professor H. Munro Chadwick, Mr. A. J. Wyatt, and Miss Anna Faure, and secondly, for their very kind permission to examine Morris and Magnússon manuscripts in their possession, to Miss May Morris, Sir Sydney Cockerell, Miss Dorothy Walker, and the authorities of the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the Library of the University of Cambridge, the Brotherton Library in Leeds, and the City Museum and Art Gallery in Birmingham.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to the officials of the Boston Public Library and the Cornell University Library, but especially to the officers and attendants of the Harvard College Library, where the bulk of my research has been carried on.
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Chapter I

The Beginnings of Morris's Interest in the History and Literature of Early Scandinavia: 1834-1870

William Morris was born in Walthamstow, just outside of London, on March 24, 1834. During his childhood and early youth he enjoyed an unusual degree of freedom from restrictions at home, at the elementary schools he attended, and at Marlborough College; and this liberty to read just what he wished and to pursue his natural inclinations in other respects also enabled him at an early age to follow and develop the very strong interest in medieval history, literature, and art with which he seems to have been born, - an interest which was destined to remain with him until his death and was to become the ruling passion of his life. Many years later Morris described the activities of his early youth for one of his friends, Wilfred S. Blunt, who recorded these reminiscences in his diary in the following words:

He talked a great deal about his boyhood, said he had read the whole of Scott's novels before he was seven, and had gone through the phase of 'Marmion' and the 'Lady of the Lake.' At his school, Marlborough, he was neither high nor low in his form, but always last in arithmetic...; hated Cicero and Latin generally, but anything in the way of history had attracted him; he knew English history better than Greek history, though only the latter was taught; he had learned nearly everything he knew of architecture and mediæval things running about the country round Marlborough as a schoolboy.\(^2\)

It should be noted that it was very likely in the works of Scott that Morris first met with references to Scandinavian mythology and

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Early in 1853, when he was nineteen years old, Morris entered Oxford. Here he soon became a member of a small but enthusiastic group of students who, although most of them had come to the university for the purpose of preparing for the ministry, showed from the very beginning a much greater interest in art and literature and in the preaching of Ruskin and Carlyle. J. W. Mackail in his biography of Morris gives a very extensive account of Morris's reading during his days at Oxford; most of the books he enumerates are of the type that we should expect any young man to read who was planning to enter the ministry but who was also filled with a lively interest in literature in general and in the literature of the Middle Ages in particular. In only a few cases are books mentioned that might have served to familiarize Morris with the history and culture of early Scandinavia; one of these works, however, is very important. Among Morris's closest friends was a young man by the name of Edward Burne-Jones, and between him and Morris there immediately arose a most intimate friendship, which was destined to last throughout Morris's life. According to Mackail, Burne-Jones had arrived in Oxford "full of the fascination of the Celtic and Scandinavian mythologies," and he soon introduced Morris to Benjamin Thorpe's Northern Mythology; it was this book, as far as we know, that gave Morris his first formal acquaintance with the early literature of the Scandinavian countries.

1. For a discussion of the Scandinavian elements in the works of Scott, see Paul R. Lieder, "Scott and Scandinavian Literature," in Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, II, No. 1 (October, 1920), 5-57. For a shorter account, see below, pp. 596-598.

2. I, 37-41.


Morris could scarcely have found a better introduction to the subject, for Thorpe's work, which extends to three volumes, offers an excellent survey of the early mythology and later folklore of the North. Volume I presents first what is practically a translation of the Prose Edda, together with some material from the Poetic Edda. Then follow abstracts of the story of Völund, of the tale of Velint from the Víkinga saga, of the Völsunga saga, and of the story of Ragnar Lodbrok's dealings with Thora and with Aslaug, the daughter of Sigurd and Brynhild. In Section II of Volume I, Thorpe presents various interpretations of the Old Norse myths, and in Section III he tries to explain the meaning of practically all the names that occur in the Eddas. The Appendix contains an account of the "Gröttssungr," a description of various Scandinavian pagan customs, and a lengthy "Epitome of German Mythology." In Volume II Thorpe presents a great number of Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish popular traditions and superstitions, including in this material several stories about Olaf the Holy and abstracts of many important ballads such as "Axel Thordson and Fair Walborg" and "Hafbur and Signy." Volume III consists of North German and Netherlandish popular beliefs and tales. Undoubtedly Thorpe's Northern Mythology was one of the best general introductions to Scandinavian mythology and popular tradition that Morris could possibly have procured at this time.

No other purely Norse works are to be found among the books that we know Morris came across at Oxford, but Mackail states that the young man read and drew inspiration at this time from the
romances of De la Môtte Fouqué, and some of these include Scandinavian material; although they give a very weak and totally false representation of the vigor and nobility of the life of the Norsemen, they must have served at any rate to acquaint Morris with certain general features of the life and history of medieval Scandinavia, such as the procedure at the "albingi" in Iceland, the institution of the Varangian Guard at Constantinople, and the extent of the Norse influence in Southern Europe. Since, according to Morris's own statement, he could not read German fluently, it is perhaps safe to assume that he knew only those Scandinavian stories of Fouqué which had at this time been translated into English - namely, Sintram and his Companions, Thiodolf, the Iceland-er, and Aslauge's Knight. The action of Sintram, the only one which Mackail mentions specifically as having been known to Morris at Oxford, is laid in Norway, chiefly at Drøntheim. A fierce knight by the name of Biorn of the Fiery Eyes makes a vow on the sacred boar's head at a Christmas feast to slay all German traders that come into his power, and then, when the opportunity immediately presents itself, tries, but fails, to carry out this rash promise.

1. William Morris, I, 41.


3. Undine, and Sintram and his Companions (New York, 1845).

4. Thiodolf the Iceland, and Aslauge's Knight (New York, 1845).
As a result of his wickedness, Biorn's young son Sintram becomes mentally deranged, is visited with terrible hallucinations, and is subjected to dreadful temptations. Finally, through the aid of the Church, Sintram overcomes the curse laid upon him, regains his health, and saves his father from eternal destruction. Thiodolf the Icelander is a lengthy account of an impetuous young man in Iceland called Thiodolf; he entertains at his home a young Italian couple, Pietro and Malgherita, who have been shipwrecked, is summoned before the "alpingi" by Gunnar of Lithend as a consequence of one of his boisterous, thoughtless acts but is acquitted, takes his guests home to Italy, goes to Constantinople and joins the Varangian Guard, wins Isolde, the sister of Malgherita, as his bride, and with her returns to Iceland. Asluga's Knight is a very short tale of an accomplished young Dane named Froda, who, after reading the old stories of the wondrously fair daughter of Sigurd and Brynhild, resolves to become her knight; at the wedding dance of one of his friends Froda is greeted by a vision of Asluga, is permitted to dance with her, and is found dead the next morning. The Magic Ring, another tale by Fouqué, with which Morris may have become acquainted at Oxford, is not laid in Scandinavia, but one adventure takes the hero to Norway and Sweden and there are occasional references throughout the work to Odin, Freia, Gottheim, Asgard, runes, scalds, and "holm-bouts."

1. (London, n.d.) [Translator's Preface is dated 1846]
Morris's sources of information about the Scandinavian countries up to the end of his stay at Oxford seem thus to have been the tales of Scott, Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, and a few of the romances of Fouqué, Thorpe's work being by all means the most important. Morris does not at this time seem to have formed any great attraction for the North, but, as we shall see, his own writing now and in the next few years shows that he was not totally unresponsive to this part of his reading.

It was not until the winter of 1855, when he had been at Oxford almost two years, that Morris wrote his first poem; when his friends heaped praise upon it, he is said to have remarked, "Well, if this is poetry, it is very easy to write." 1 A short time thereafter he learned that he could write prose also, and during the summer of 1855 he was busy composing prose romances. Morris and his friends, who had banded themselves together into an organization called "The Brotherhood," now decided that they must have some form of publication by which to present their ideas to the world at large, and they therefore began issuing the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, of which twelve monthly numbers appeared during 1856. Here Morris had an opportunity to print a number of his poems and several of his prose tales, together with a few general articles. 2

Practically all the poems and prose romances he contributed are vague, dreamy, and unreal, highly imaginative and often pervaded with mysticism; only one, "The Lindenborg Pool," owes its


2. Most of Morris's prose contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* were collected and reprinted by Miss Morris in the *Collected Works*, I, 147-369. The poetry Morris himself reprinted in *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (see below, page 10).
source to a Scandinavian story and is of interest to us here.¹ In his own prefatory remarks to this tale Morris wrote, "I read once in a lazy humour Thorpe's Northern Mythology, on a cold May night when the north wind was blowing; in a lazy humour, but when I came to the tale that is here amplified there was something in it that fixed my attention and made me think of it, and whether I would or no, my thoughts ran in this way, as here follows."² He then proceeds to tell a story nine pages long based on a tale of twenty-nine lines, the plot of which in the original is very simple. In the Norse narrative the servants at a large estate, in the absence of their master, put a swine in his bed, wrapping it up in the bedclothes, and then summon a priest to administer the last rites to their master, who, they say, is at the point of death. The priest, suspecting nothing, comes and performs his duty; but when he produces the wafer and a swine raises his head and snaps at it, he flees from the house in terror amidst the laughter of all present. No sooner has he come outside than the house begins to crumble and fall, and in its place rises a great lake which covers all the ruins. In Morris's story the framework is much more involved and complicated. He tells first how on a dark, wet night in early May he went to the lake described in Thorpe's tale for the purpose of measuring the depth of the pool, which Thorpe had said was unfathomable. He was very much moved by the desolation all around him, and the spot seemed especially horrible to him that night, for it was just ten years ago to a day


². Ibid., I, 245. The tale he refers to is "The Sunken Mansion," which is found in the Northern Mythology, II, 214-215.
that he slew a man. Then suddenly he found himself dressed in a
priest's robes, riding on a mule through a dark forest, accompa-
nied by a drunken guide who sang ribald songs, the whole scene
being laid in Morris's beloved "dim, far-off thirteenth century."¹
Then follows the tale told by Thorpe, the narrator sometimes be-
ing the priest and sometimes the nineteenth-century investigator.
The whole story is told with the same wealth of vivid and sensuous
detail, making the unreal seem very real, that is found in practi-
cally all of Morris's work, and it is marked with the passionat-
eness and nervous energy characteristic of all Morris's early writ-
ing; in contrast to the situation in his other romances in the mag-
azine, however, the narration here is fairly direct, and is free
from the usual dreamy atmosphere in which the characters seem to
be carried from one action to another without any will of their
own. The framework of the tale - the setting of one story within
another and the occasional interweaving of the two - foreshadows
in a way the treatment Morris was to give another Scandinavian
story in the poem "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon"
in The Earthly Paradise.² Moreover, the tale illustrates remark-
able well Morris's method of composition, for it shows how, when
he was fascinated by some story, his imagination immediately began
to work on the theme and carried him from one episode to another,
each one built up out of a mass of minute observations drawn from
his medieval reading and from the actual world around him, until
finally he had produced practically a new tale.

¹ Collected Works, I, 247.
² See below, pages 67-87.
It is perhaps idle to seek for traces of Scandinavian influences in Morris's other contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, but it is not at all unlikely that many of the Norse names that appear in the other tales were the result of Morris's reading of the *Northern Mythology* and other Scandinavian works; thus in "Gertha's Lovers" two of the characters are called "Olaf" and "Sigurd," in "Svend and his Brethren" we find the names "Valdemar," "Eric," "Gunnar," and "Sven," and in "The Hollow Land" the queen is named "Swanhilda."¹ It is also very striking that two rather unusual names found in "Svend and his Brethren" — namely, "Siur" and "Cissela" — occur in Thorpe's work.²

In 1855 Morris decided to give up his intention of taking Holy Orders. At the end of that year he passed in the Final Schools and brought to a close his days at Oxford, and at the beginning of the following year he began to study architecture in the office of G. E. Street in Oxford. In August, Street moved his business to London, and Morris of course accompanied him; here the young man came more and more under the influence of Rossetti, who wanted him to become a painter, and before the year was over Morris had left Street and joined Burne-Jones in an endeavor to learn to paint. It was at this time, according to Mackail, that Morris began making illuminated manuscripts, an occupation which, as we shall see, served as his chief amusement for many years later in his life.³

¹. For occurrences of these names in the *Northern Mythology*, see, for example, I, 95ff. ("Sigurd"), I, 99ff. ("Gunnar"), I, 106ff. ("Swanhilda"), I, 160 ("Olaf"), II, 58f. ("Eric"), II, 141ff. ("Svend"), and II, 233f. ("Valdemar").

². See *ibid.*, II, 14 for "Siur" and II, 89 for "Cissela."

³. See below, pages 109 and 179-180.
and Burne-Jones went back to Oxford with Rossetti, who had undertaken to paint the walls of the newly-built hall of the Oxford Union Debating Society. Morris soon finished his picture, but stayed in Oxford during the rest of this year and the next also. While he was there, reunited with many of his old friends, he wrote a great deal of poetry; and early in 1858 he published his first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*. Although later critics have praised this book as one of the most promising initial publications ever made by a poet, it met with practically no response at all, either good or bad, from the public at large at that time; as *Nock* points out, Morris was throughout his life almost completely unmoved by criticism of his work, but there can be little doubt that the indifference with which his first volume was received was to a great extent responsible for his failure to write much poetry during the next five or six years. Most of the poems appearing in this little book are similar in tone and spirit to the prose romances and verses he had contributed to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*; his chief inspiration seems to have been the Arthurian stories and the Middle Ages in general.

There are only two references to anything Scandinavian in this volume. In the poem "The Wind" an old man, sitting dreaming in his carven chair in the gray of morning, sees the ghosts of

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1. *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* was not actually the first volume Morris published, although it is generally considered such, for he had printed a few months earlier a very short poem called *Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery* (London, 1858), which he reprinted in the new volume. (See Harry Buxton Forman, *The Books of William Morris* (London, 1897), pp.33-34.)

dead warriors march by,

And faint upon their banner was Olaf, king and saint; and in "Rapunzel," the Prince, describing the tower in which the fair lady was imprisoned by the witch, says that

no soot that tells

Of the Norse torches burning up the roofs On the flower-carved marble could I see;

The acquaintance with Olaf the Holy which Morris reveals in the first of these passages he probably derived from Volume II of Thorpe's Northern Mythology, where the main historical facts and traditions regarding this figure are presented at great length. The reference in the second quotation to "the Norse torches burning up the roof" was perhaps the result of his having read somewhere of the practice common among the early Scandinavians, though by no means restricted to them, of burning their enemies, either public or private, in their halls. Thorpe, in the abstract he gives of the Völsunga saga, refers briefly to two such burnings, and Mallet's Northern Antiquities, with which Morris may have at this time become acquainted, presents a summary of the Njáls saga, describing in some detail the burning of Njál, it is possible that it was these accounts that suggested to Morris the remark quoted above, although it is just as likely that he simply had in mind

2. Ibid., I, 65.
3. Pages 34-43.
4. I, 93 and 106.
the many references to Viking raids and burnings in England that he must have come across in his reading of English history.

While Morris was living in Oxford in the late 1850's, he met Jane Burden, and in the spring of 1859 he married her. After a short honeymoon spent on the Continent, the young couple went to London, where they lived for a little over a year until the new home, Red House, which Morris was building at Upton, about ten miles from London, was ready for occupancy. It was Morris's difficulty in finding suitable furnishings for his new home that led to the formation at this time of the firm of "Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company, Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture, and the Metals," which, after a few uncertain years, became his chief means of support during the rest of his life. Morris spent five happy years from 1861 to 1865, carrying on the work of the firm in London and keeping open house for all his friends at Upton; but this arrangement gradually proved impracticable, and in the autumn of 1865 the family moved back to London.

During the seven years that had passed since the publication of The Defence of Guenevere, Morris does not seem to have done much writing. Mackail says that while Morris was at Red House he worked on the "Scenes from the Fall of Troy," which he had begun

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1. Karl Litzenberg, in his article "William Morris and the Burning of Njal" in Scandinavian Studies and Notes, XIV(1930-1937), 40-41, compares this brief reference to a Norse burning with the more detailed description at the close of "The Proud King" (see below, p. 37), to show that Morris's acquaintance with early Scandinavia increased between 1858 and 1868.
in Oxford but never finished.\(^1\) Moreover, a number of the short prose romances and poems, often uncompleted, which have come down to us in manuscript form and which are clearly early work, may very likely have been composed during this period. Morris left all these works unpublished, but some of them Miss Morris printed in the last volume of the Collected Works\(^2\) and others she described in the Introduction to Volume XXIII;\(^3\) all of these compositions are similar in spirit to the works that we have already considered, and show no traces of Scandinavian influence.\(^4\)

While Morris was still living at Red House, according to Mackail, he had begun to consider writing a series of narrative poems connected by some framework similar to that of The Canterbury Tales. When the family moved back to London and Morris thus secured a greater amount of leisure time, he began working on several tales, and the plan of the whole rapidly developed. Mackail summarizes very satisfactorily the evolution of the underlying

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1. William Morris, I, 166.
2. Pages 3-53.
3. Pages xvii-xxxv.
4. I should also like to point out that one of these tales, "The Wasted Land," which Miss Morris merely mentions in the Collected Works, XXI, xx, I have examined in its manuscript form in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England; there are no Scandinavian elements in this work either.

The manuscript in which this poem is written out is a small book measuring 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) by 8 inches. On the inside of the front cover is pasted a slip of paper bearing the name of Ch. Fairfax Murray. The manuscript contains the poem described by Miss Morris in Collected Works, XXI, xx-xxi, the tale printed in ibid., XXIV, 52-57, the poem called "St. George," which is found in ibid., XXIV, 75, the story entitled "The Wasted Land," and two ballads of which I shall speak in detail later (see below, pages 147-158).
structure of what was to be *The Earthly Paradise*. Morris first intended, he says, to draw indiscriminately upon the whole stock of the world's tales and legends for the plots of his poems, but later decided to base one half of his narratives on Greek stories and the other half on non-Greek material. In order to bring together two groups of people who would be familiar with these two different bodies of lore, he determined to place the scene of the telling of the stories on a remote island where in early times there might have been an outlying colony of Greeks who, cut off from the rest of the world, had preserved through the centuries down to the end of the Middle Ages the old Greek tales. As a motive for bringing men of Western Europe to the island, he chose the search for an earthly paradise stimulated by the stories of the Norse discovery of America and by a desire to escape the ravages of the Black Death.\(^1\)

Among the first poems written for this collection, according to Mackail, were three based on Greek legends, the subjects of these being the love of Orpheus and Eurydice, the life of Aristomenes of Messene, and the search for the Golden Fleece.\(^2\) None of these tales, however, were eventually included in *The Earthly Paradise*. The first two Morris never published, and the third one grew to such a length that it could not be given a place in this collection, but had to be published separately as *The Life and Death of Jason*. This work appeared in January, 1867. As might be expected from its subject, it shows no traces of Scandinavian influence.

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2. Ibid., I, 188.
The first part of *The Earthly Paradise*, however, which was published in the spring of 1868, contains many indications of Morris's interest in the North. None of the twelve tales in this part are of Norse origin, but the Prologue to the whole poem and a number of the links between the various narratives include numerous references to medieval Scandinavia. Moreover, it is important to note that although none of the stories printed in 1868 were Norse, one of the tales he had decided to include in the collection and which he very likely had already written - namely, "The Palace East of the Sun" - was based on a Scandinavian story. This poem is included in the list of tales that Morris printed in 1867 in his announcement of *The Earthly Paradise* in the *Jason* volume.\(^1\) Although the mention of the work here does not of course prove that it had already been composed, it is very likely that when Morris prepared this list, he had written, or had at least outlined, many, if not most, of the stories there included. As a matter of fact, all but eight of the twenty-six works mentioned in the list in the first edition of *Jason* were finally published in *The Earthly Paradise*, and of these eight unpublished ones, five exist in manuscript form.\(^2\)

Moreover, in the Preface to one of the volumes of the *Collected Works* Miss May Morris describes a series of six quarto manuscripts

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notebooks containing *Earthly Paradise* tales, stating that she is of the opinion that the order in which the poems are given in these manuscripts indicates the order in which they were written; in this list of twelve works "The Palace East of the Sun" comes fourth.¹ In a later Preface Miss Morris seems somewhat less confident about using this list as evidence of the order of composition,² but although these manuscripts may not indicate the exact sequence in which the tales were composed, she feels that there is little doubt that the works included here were among the first written and were thus composed fairly early. In fact, of the twelve poems in these notebooks eight were published by 1868, one, "The Deeds of Jason," as a separate volume and seven in the first part of *The Earthly Paradise*.³ That one version of the tale in question had at any rate been prepared before the summer of 1869 is made clear by the fact that in a letter which Morris wrote in August, 1869, when he was preparing the next volume of *The Earthly Paradise* for publication, he speaks of completely rewriting this particular poem.⁴ I have not seen the version of this story in the quarto notebooks described by Miss Morris, but I have examined a manuscript version now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge,

¹. III, xv.

². VI, xvii. It does seem rather unsafe to assume that the tales were written in the order in which they are found in these manuscripts, for in these books "The Deeds of Jason" comes last, and according to Mackail, as I pointed out above, this was one of the first works Morris produced when he began planning *The Earthly Paradise*.


⁴. See below, page 62-63.
England which differs considerably from the published tale and which is very likely in the main a copy of the one referred to by Miss Morris. This is evidently the version Morris rejected in 1869; as compared with the published form, it reveals, as I shall show later, a distinct immaturity of workmanship, and must have been composed at an early date. ¹ Thus there is every reason to believe that the tale in its original form was one of the earliest poems Morris wrote for The Earthly Paradise although it was not published until September, 1869.

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the Norse elements in Part I of The Earthly Paradise, I should like to point out that although Morris did introduce a considerable number of Scandinavian allusions in this section of his work, and had determined to include and seems to have already written at this time one poem based entirely on a Norse story, it is rather surprising that out of the twenty-four tales which, according to the list in the Jason volume in 1867, he originally intended to publish in the new collection and to put in the mouths of a number of Norwegian mariners and their Greek-speaking hosts, only one is Scandinavian in origin; it is evident that at this time Morris's Norse reading had not made a deep impression upon him.

The majority of the Scandinavian allusions in the first part of The Earthly Paradise are contained in the Prologue, which is called "The Wanderers." The Prologue that Morris published in 1868, it should be noted, was not his first attempt at writing the poem which furnishes the background and general setting for the whole

1. See below, pages 74-87.
work; according to Miss May Morris there are manuscript remains of three other beginnings, all of them in a four-line stanza rhyming abab.¹ One of these manuscript Prologues runs to the length of 634 stanzas; it is carried to a conclusion, but it is clearly not in its final form.² Morris seems to have written this Prologue late in 1865 or early in 1866; he composed the final published version in the summer of 1867.³

Both these forms of the Prologue show unmistakably that by the middle of the 1860's Morris had become rather well acquainted with early Scandinavian history. It should be noted that the very fact that he decided to make the mariners who went on a fruitless search for an earthly paradise Norwegians reveals an intimate familiarity with many phases of the life of medieval Norway. The appropriateness of representing the wanderers as Scandinavians has not been sufficiently appreciated, it seems to me. In the first place it should be remembered that the Norsemen were known to be the most intrepid sailors of the time, and it was accordingly very fitting that the mariners who sailed forth without hesitation over unknown seas should be pictured as Scandinavians. Again, the tradition of a strange, unexplored land lying westward over the sea would most likely be most alive among the Norsemen, who were obviously well acquainted with the saga stories of the voyages of their kinsmen to North America. Moreover, it was absolutely essential to the plot of the whole poem that the men of western Europe who met with

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1. Collected Works, II, xiii-xv;

2. Miss Morris published this version many years after her father's death in Volume XXIV of the Collected Works, pp. 87-170.

3. Mackail, William Morris, I, 188.
the Greeks and exchanged tales with them should be able to understand and speak Greek readily, and this circumstance was provided for by the fact that many Norsemen in the Middle Ages served in the Varangian Guard at Constantinople and there learned Greek. Finally, the wanderers were to be represented as telling stories drawn from a great variety of sources, and the Norsemen, who had visited almost all parts of Europe, would be more likely than any other people to be acquainted with such a wide range of tales.¹

The Scandinavian background is found in both Prologues, but it is presented in much greater detail in the published version than in the other. From the information available it is impossible to ascertain whether in the earlier Prologue Morris was simply not interested in giving his story an air of realism or whether his knowledge of early Scandinavia increased during the year or two that elapsed between the two forms so that he was better able in 1867 to develop in detail the Northern background. It should be noted that the second Prologue is in all respects a much more mature piece of work than the first. It is more carefully planned and developed, and shows a richer imagination and a far

¹ In the final published version of the Prologue Morris provides a Breton squire and a Swabian priest to tell some of the tales, but in the earlier Prologue he does not mention any foreigners as being present in the group of Norsemen.
greater mastery of the verse; the other Prologue, written in a jaunty, four-line stanza, is in general much less detailed, the scenes passing by as in a fleeting dream. In view of this change in the character of the work as a whole, it seems very likely that the fuller treatment of the Scandinavian setting in the published version - and I shall make clear the exact difference between the two Prologues in this respect in a moment - was to a great extent, if not wholly, simply the result of maturing literary powers.

In both Prologues the story of the strange voyage in search of the earthly paradise is put into the mouth of one of the surviving mariners, who now for the last time retells the tale to the people at whose shores he and his fellows have finally arrived and with whom they are to pass their few remaining days. In the first version the narrator does not begin with an account of their race and their native land, as we should expect him to do and as he actually does in the second Prologue, but plunges directly into the story of the beginning of their journey. Moreover, the willingness of the sailors to set forth on a perilous journey over unknown seas is not so carefully motivated here as in the later work, for in this first version they decide quite suddenly on their search merely because of a dream and a vision that comes to their captain on one of their trading voyages. During a short stop for water, according to the narrator, their leader dreamed that he was standing in a temple full of images of Greek deities, and that two men appeared and described the land in which they lived as the home of eternal happiness, which anyone could reach by sailing westward and by praying for the aid of Venus; at this point he awoke, and saw two strange figures close by him;
"Waking, I saw two ancient men
  There in the corners; of gold fine
One wore a crown; about his head
  Shone rings of light, all armed was he
And all his raiment was of red;
  He held a great axe handily.

The other man was clad in blue
  One-eyed he was and held a spear:
Olaf and Odin straight I knew
  And cried the cry that you did hear.

Straightway they vanished, but each one
  Beckoned me westward as he went...."  

This account of Olaf and Odin is the first reference to anything Scandinavine in the early Prologue, and is the first indication that the Wanderers may be Northmen. The old sailor then tells how their priest tried to dissuade their captain from setting out in search of this land by pointing out that since King Olaf and Odin had appeared together, it was probably the devil who had assumed these shapes to lead him astray; the priest also related that many years before, several men had gone on a similar search and after many dire experiences

"...came broken-hearted to Norway."  

The captain, however, was firm in his resolution, and he and a group of his followers set sail. We are now introduced to some of the leading characters, two of whom have Scandinavian names, Sir Rolf the Old and Sir John of Hederby. As the story progresses, we learn more about the ancestry of the sailors, for in a dream the captain sees his father and

My mother whom I left alive
  In Norway, and my daughter fair.

2. Ibid., XXIV, 92.
3. Ibid., XXIV, 93 and 106.
4. Ibid., XXIV, 108.
and a few stanzas later the sailors comfort themselves in their despair by the thought that the worst that can happen to them is to die like their fathers,

"Who fell upon the English shore,  
Or sunk below the sandy Seine,  
Or back from Russia came no more,  
Or got no mercy from the Dane."  

Two later passages give us more definite information about the Wanderers. On hearing the language of some ladies they have rescued from death, one of the sailors remarks,

"This is the Greek tongue  
That erst at Micklegarth I heard  
By the Greek king when I was young."  

and when they are brought before the queen of these ladies, the captain proudly proclaims,

"From Harald Fair-Hair am I sprung  
And thence from Odin in right line,  
Who was a God, as skalds have sung."  

The passages that I have quoted here contain all the references to Scandinavia that are to be found in the first completed Prologue, except for a few colorless repetitions that add nothing new; but although the references are far fewer in number and much less detailed than in the final published version, they indicate that already by 1865 Morris had a more extensive knowledge of the Scandinavian past than he could have gained from the books that we know he read at Oxford. His description of Olaf and Odin as they appear in the vision may have been based on passages in Thorpe's Northern Mythology, and his information regarding the

2. Ibid., XXIV, 120.  
3. Ibid., XXIV, 127.  
4. Such as ibid., XXIV, 92, 11, 17-19 and 127, 1, 25.  
Varangian Guard at Constantinople may have been drawn from Fouqué's *Thiodolf the Icelander*; but for the familiarity he shows with the expeditions of the Norwegians to England, France, Russia, and Denmark and for his reference to the captain's descent from Harald Fairhair and thus from Odin, he seems to have drawn upon some Scandinavian history. As I shall show later, we know that by 1863 he was familiar with Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*; this book may very well have been known to him in 1865, and may have been the source of the material referred to above. It is not at all unlikely that he also knew Laing's translation of the *Heimskringla* at this time. The Scandinavian allusions in the final form of the Prologue make it almost certain that he was familiar with the *Heimskringla* in 1867, and he may very likely have been acquainted with the book two years earlier and have been indebted to the very full account of the early history of Norway presented there for the passages cited above. Neither of these works, it

1. See pages 163-304.

2. See below, pages 43-45.

3. See pages 168-192 for an account of the foreign expeditions of the Norsemen, pages 75, 121, 182, 183, 187, 235, and 280 for references to Harald Harfager, and pages 193-194 for an account of the service of Scandinavians in the bodyguard of Byzantine emperors. For possible sources of Morris's statement that Harald was descended from Odin, see below, page 24 and note 1.


5. See, for example, I, 288-289, 293-294, 316-317, 319-323, 396-397 and 459 for references to Norse voyages to other lands of Europe; I, 271-313 for the story of Harald Haarfager; and III, 3-17 for an account of Harald Hardrada in Constantinople.
should be noted, states explicitly that Harald Fairhair was
descended in a direct line from Odin; but there is an account,
in Mallet of the custom of tracing the ancestry of early kings
or other heroes back to Odin or to one of the other gods and in
Laing's *Heimskringla* there are occasional references to such
traditions, and it was probably this material which led Morris to
represent the sailor as claiming descent from Odin through Harald.
It should also be noted that in Laing's translation of the *Heims-
kringla* there are a number of accounts of the reappearance of Odin
and King Olaf after death; as I have already stated, Morris very
likely drew upon Thorpe for his description of these figures in
the captain's dream, but there is only one account in Thorpe of a
vision of Odin and none of Olaf, and so it was very likely these
stories in Laing that suggested to Morris the idea of picturing

1. Page 80.

2. See, for example, I, 212, 223-224, 242 ("visa"), and 261
("visa"). Moreover, in one of the "visur" in the *Haralds saga
hárfræga* (I, 277), Harald is described as
"The fair-haired son of Odin's line."

197-201, 264-265, and 297.

Odin and Olaf as appearing to a fourteenth-century Scandinavian. Finally, I should like to point out that in none of the works mentioned above is the form "Micklegarth," which Morris used in the next to the last quotation, employed in place of "Constantinople"; of all the Scandinavian books with which we definitely know Morris was familiar by 1868, I find that only Dasent's rendering of the Njáls saga uses "Micklegarth.

In the final version of the Prologue, as I have already pointed out, the Scandinavian background is developed in more detail; here the Wanderer who relates the story of the voyage begins

1. I have assumed that the "Olaf" Morris meant to represent as appearing in the captain's vision was King Olaf the Holy. However, Karl Litzenberg, in his article "William Morris and the Heimskringla" in Scandinavian Studies and Notes, XIV (1936-1937), 36-37, identifies this Olaf as King Olaf Tryggvason. That this was the Olaf Morris had in mind seems to me less likely. In the first place, the legends telling of the reappearance of Olaf the Holy were much more numerous than the stories of visions of Olaf Tryggvason. There is only one mention in the Heimskringla, as far as I know, of the reappearance of the latter (see II, 295-296), in contrast to the nine accounts of the visits of Olaf the Holy just listed in note 3 on the preceding page. Moreover, since Morris makes the priest say that the appearance of Olaf and Odin together must have been the work of the devil, it is more likely that he had Olaf the Holy in mind, for this Olaf was of course much more famous than Olaf Tryggvason as the champion of Christianity. Furthermore, the "rings of light" which Morris says shone around his head were very likely meant to refer to the halo which would naturally surround a saint. Finally, the fact that the figure carried an axe points toward Olaf the Holy, for Olaf's axe was supposed to have replaced Thor's hammer as the symbol of divine might and in all representations of Olaf the Holy he was pictured with an axe.

2. See below, pages 43-47.

3. See The Story of Burnt Njáls, tr. George Webbe Dasent (Edinburgh, 1861), I, x. Moreover, in his long introduction Dasent describes, though much more briefly than Mallet and Laing, the foreign expeditions of the Norsemen (see I, ix-x), and refers occasionally to Harald Fairhair (see I, ix and xi). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in Mallet and Laing, Harald's nickname is not translated, but in Dasent, as in Morris, he is called "Harald Fairhair."
at once with a full account of his Norse origin: 1

No wonder if the Grecian tongue I know,
Since at Byzantium many a year ago
My father bore the twinbail valiantly;
There did he marry, and get me, and die,
And I went back to Norway to my kin,
Long ere this beard ye see did first begin
To shade my mouth, but nathless not before
Among the Greeks I gathered some small lore,
And standing midst the Vägringers, still heard 2
From this or that man many a wondrous word;
For ye shall know that though we worshipped God,
And heard mass duly, still of Swithiod
The Greater, Odin and his house of gold,
The noble stories ceased not to be told;
These moved me more than words of mine can say
E’en while at Hicklegarth my folks did stay;
But when I reached one dying autumn-tide
My uncle’s dwelling near the forest side,
And saw the land so scanty and so bare,
And all the hard things men contend with there,
A little and unworthy land it seemed,
And yet the more of Asgard 3 I dreamed,
And worthier seemed the ancient faith of praise. 4

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1. In quoting passages from this form of the Prologue, I have followed the edition of The Earthly Paradise that was published in London between 1863 and 1871 in four volumes. The version that was printed in the Collected Works, III-VI, embodies changes that Morris made in his revision of this work in 1890 (see Collected Works, III, xxx); and in this revised form many of the proper nouns in the Prologue are altered. I have preferred to reproduce the original version here, for the names used in this text often throw light, as I shall show, on the source of Morris’s information. When the names occurring in my quotations were later changed, I have given the revised form in the footnotes.

2. Revised form: "midst the Vägring warriors heard."

3. Revised form: "of Asgard’s days."

A few pages later he goes into more detail about his ancestry:

Now if ye ask me from what land I come
With all my folly, - Viken is my home...
Where Trygge Olaf's son and Olaf's sire...
Lit to the ancient Gods the sacred fire,
Unto whose line am I myself akin,
Through him who Astrid in old time did win,
King Olaf's widow: let all that go by,
Since I was born at least to misery.

He relates how he and his companions, when young men in Norway,
used to pore over old tales of voyages to strange lands, and how,
impelled by the desire to escape the ravages of a pestilence, they
themselves finally decided to set out in search of the land of
eternal youth.

Now Nicholas came to Laurence and to me
To talk of what he deemed our course should be,
To whom escape I listened, since I knew
Nought but old tales, nor aught of false and true
Amid these, for but one kind seemed to be
The Vineland voyage o'er the unknown sea
And Swegdir's"search for Godheim," when he found
The entrance to a new world underground;
But Nicholas o'er many books had pored
And this and that thing in his mind had stored,
And idle tales from true report he knew.
- Would he were living now, to tell to you
This story that my feeble lips must tell!
Now he indeed of Vineland knew full well,
Both from my tales where truth perchance touched lies,
And from the ancient written histories;
But now he said, "The land was good enow
That Leif the son of Eric came unto,
But this was not our world, nay scarce could be.
The door into a place so heavenly
As that we seek...."

1. Revised form: "Vick was once my home."
2. Revised form: "Tryggvi."
4. Revised form: "Swegdir."
5. Revised form: "Godhome."
These statements by the spokesman of the Wanderers concerning his ancestry and his early life as well as his references to stories of voyages by other Northmen to unknown lands show clearly that Morris had at this time a rather extensive knowledge of early Scandinavian history,\(^1\) a far more extensive knowledge than he could have gained from the works of Scott, Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, and the Norse romances of De la Motte Fouqué. The most likely sources of his information about the matters referred to in these passages are Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* and Laing's translation of the *Heimskringla*. Thus, the service of the Northmen in the Varangian Guard at Micklegarth, to which he refers in the first quotation given above, is mentioned on numerous occasions in both these works and also, as I have already pointed out, in Fouqué's *Thiodolf the Icelander*.\(^2\) It is noteworthy that the rather peculiar form "Væringers," which is used by Morris, is found in the 1844 edition of Laing's *Heimskringla* and in Fouqué's *Thiodolf*. Again, the reference to "Swithiod the Greater" was probably based on the description of the world in the opening chapter of the "Ynglinga saga" in the *Heimskringla*, where we are told that this name was in medieval times applied to the territory now called "Russia."\(^3\) By "Odin and his house of gold" Morris probably meant either Odin and his

1. The more important Scandinavian allusions in this version of the Prologue are discussed by O. F. Adams and W. J. Rolfe in their notes to their edition of *Atalanta's Race and other Tales from The Earthly Paradise* (Boston, 1888). Adams and Rolfe, however, are interested only in explaining these references to the general reader, and make no attempt, as I have done in my comments, to ascertain the source of Morris's information regarding these matters; moreover, they are not at all interested in using these allusions to determine the extent of Morris's acquaintance with early Scandinavia at this time.

2. See above, page 23, notes 1, 3, and 5.

3. I, 216.
mansion Gladsheimr or Odin and the hall Gimli, both houses being made of gold and being famed as the abodes of happiness; with both Gladsheimr and Gimli Morris may have become familiar through either Thorpe's Northern Mythology or Mallet's Northern Antiquities.\textsuperscript{1} Laing explains in a footnote to the first mention of "Swithiod the Great" that this territory was often called "Godheim" and was considered the home of the gods;\textsuperscript{2} it was perhaps for this reason that Morris placed Odin's "house of gold" in "Swithiod the Greater," although the two are never linked in Old Norse mythological works. For his information regarding "Asagard" Morris may have been indebted to Thorpe, Mallet, or Laing.\textsuperscript{3} Rather surprising, however, is his use of the form "Asagard," which is found in none of these works; very likely Morris's spelling was simply the result of his having forgotten the correct form.

In the second passage quoted above Morris makes even more extensive use of Laing's translation of the Heimskringla. It may well be that a footnote by Laing at the beginning of "King Olaf Tryggvason's Saga" to the effect that "King Olaf, it will be remembered, was one of Harald Haarfager's sons; King Tryggve Olafsson was the son of this Olaf, and this Olaf Tryggvesson the son of Tryggve"\textsuperscript{4} suggested Morris's reference to "Tryggve Olaf's son and Olaf's sire"; the spelling "Tryggve," which Morris used instead of the more correct "Tryggvi," is found in Laing's translation.

\textsuperscript{1} See Thorpe, op. cit., I, 11 and 19 and Mallet, op. cit., pp. 104, 409, 414, 500, and 504.

\textsuperscript{2} I, 216. See also page 224.

\textsuperscript{3} See Thorpe, Northern Mythology, I, 11; Mallet, Northern Antiquities, pages 80, 84-85, and 406; and Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 217.

\textsuperscript{4} I, 367.
it should be noted. Moreover, like Morris, Laing - and Mallet also - give the name "Viken," with the suffixed definite article retained, to the district around the Oslo Fjord.\footnote{See, for example, Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 290, 316, 319, 321, and 323 and Mallet, op. cit., p. 183.}
In another of his allusions, Morris seems likewise to be drawing on information he had derived from Laing, but here he seems to be making a slight slip: he represents the mariner as saying that he is related to Tryggvi's line

Through him who Astrid in old time did win,
King Olaf's widow,
but the only Astrid whom the description "King Olaf's widow" fits is the Astrid, daughter of King Olaf of Sweden, to whom King Olaf Haraldsson of Norway was married, and the Heimskringla does not record that she ever remarried after her husband's death at Sticklestad.\footnote{See Heimskringla, tr. Laing, III, 365 and 368-369.} Morris probably had in mind either Astrid, the daughter of King Tryggvi Olafsson and sister of Olaf Tryggvason, by whose marriage to Erling Skialgsson King Olaf Tryggvason brought about the baptism of Hordaland,\footnote{See ibid., I, 429-431.} or else Astrid, King Tryggvi's widow, the mother of King Olaf Tryggvason, who fled from home after King Tryggvi's murder, gave birth to a son, was captured by vikings from Esthonia, and was sold into slavery, from which she was rescued by Lodin, a rich Norwegian merchant, who ransomed her and brought her home on the condition that she would marry him.\footnote{See ibid., I, 367-371 and 426-426.} It is of course impossible to determine to which Astrid Morris intended to refer;
undoubtedly both these stories appealed to him.¹

In the third passage quoted above, Morris's allusion to "Swægder's search for Godheim" is in all probability based on the story in Chapter XV of the Ynglings saga, where it is related that Swægder went seeking for Godheim, was beckoned into a huge rock by a dwarf, and was never again seen on earth.² The Wineland voyages, also mentioned in this quotation, are described at great length both in the Appendix to Laing's translation and in Mallet's Northern Antiquities.³ Laing called the newly-discovered country "Vinland," and Mallet uses the terms "Vinland" and "Wineland"; in neither discussion does Morris's name "Vineland" occur.

Not only is the Scandinavian setting presented in more detail at the beginning of the final version of the Prologue, but throughout the poem Morris carries out much more completely than in the first Prologue the illusion that the sailors are Norwegians. The characters are given such typically Scandinavian names as "Marcus"

¹ Karl Litzenberg, in the article already referred to in Scandinavian Studies and Notes, XIV (1936-1937), 35, identifies Astrid as the widow of King Olaf Haraldsson; he thinks that Morris remembered that the Heimskringla does not mention the remarriage of this Astrid after the death of Olaf, and believes that Morris deliberately chose to refer to a second husband of this Astrid as the ancestor of the sailor Rolf in order to supply a "mysterious and intangible link between Rolf and the imaginary royal genealogy which the English poet has constructed for him." It seems to me somewhat more likely that Morris made a slight slip in his account, and meant to refer to either Astrid, King Tryggvi's daughter, or Astrid, King Tryggvi's widow.

² See Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 227-228. The forms "Swægder" and "Godheim" are there used, it should be noted.

Erling," "Kirstin," and "Rolf." When the adventurers are making their plans for setting sail secretly, they arrange to leave the town by the gate facing Saint Bride and to meet "at King Tryggve's hill Outside the city gates."

In referring to "King Tryggve's hill," Morris very likely had in mind the account in Laing's translation of the Heimskringla of the murder of King Tryggvi and the statement "He lies buried at a place called Tryggve's Cairn." According to the Heimskringla, Tryggvi was slain at Vegger, near Sotaness; if, then, by "Tryggve's hill" Morris means "Tryggve's Cairn," as he almost certainly did, the allusion would place the starting-point of the Wanderers roughly in the Oslo Fjord. That this deduction is correct is proved by a statement made by Rolf, the narrator, towards the end of the poem:

But twenty summers had I seen go by
When I left Viken on that desperate cruise.

Rolf further relates in his speech before the Greeks how he stole away that memorable night when he left Norway, bearing

My father's axe that from Byzantium,
With some few gems my pouch yet held, had come.

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1. See, for example, Earthly Paradise, I, 11 and 12. With the names "Marcus," "Erling," and "Rolf" Morris could have met in the Heimskringla (see, for example, I, 244, 245, 292, and 293, and III, 254, 255, 259, 310, 315, and 317); the name "Kirstin" occurs in Thorpe's Northern Mythology (see II, 232).

2. Revised form: "Tryggvi's."

3. Earthly Paradise, I, 12.


5. Revised form: "Wickland."


7. Ibid., I, 13.
When he grew downhearted as they journeyed over the vast ocean, he recalled the story told of one of his countrymen who sailed through unknown seas in a heavy fog and came to a rocky island,

And while a little off the land he lay
As in a dream he heard the folk call out
In his own tongue, but mazed and all in doubt
He turned therefrom, and afterwards in strife,
With winds and waters, much of precious life
He wasted utterly, for when again
He reached his port after long months of pain,
Unto Biarmeland he chanced to go,
And there the isle he left so long ago
He knew at once, where many Northmen were.

There are numerous references to Norse voyages to Biarmeland in

Leising's translation of the Heimskringla, where the name of the country is spelled in just this way, but no story like that referred to by Rolf is told in the Heimskringla or in any of the other Scandinavian books that Norris is said to have known. Probably Norris had simply become acquainted with some such tale in the course of his extensive reading, and he now localized the story and identified the land as Biarmeland, in the north of Russia, in order to develop further the Scandinavian background of his poem. A little later in his narrative Rolf says that when the mariners began to notice signs of land, one of the sailors brought him some seaweed, and immediately he thought of home:

then knew I certainly
The wrack, that oft before I had seen lie
In sandy bights of Norway.


2. See I, 301 and 362; II, 196-200, 205, 221, and 224; and III, 117.

One night they slept, full of hope, on the shore of what they thought was their promised land, and Rolf dreamt; he was straight-way carried back to his early days:

But in my sleep of lovely things I dreamed, For I was back at Micklegarth once more, But not a court-man's son there as of yore, But the Greek king, or so I seemed to be, Set on the throne, whose awe and majesty Gold lions guard.¹

At one time he and his companions dwelt among some savages who knew little of the arts of civilization; Rolf says the Northmen built them huts, as well we could, for we who dwell in Norway have great mastery in woodwright's craft....²

On another occasion the Northmen were attacked by a host of vicious savages, against whom they fought so valiantly

That Odin's gods had hardly scared men more. As fearless through the naked press we bore.³

Towards the end of their journey the Wanderers reached a land of fairly civilized people; Rolf noted at once the character of their writing, and remembered he had seen something similar in his earlier days:

Such lore as we from our own land had brought Unto this folk, who when they wrote must draw Such draughts as erst at Micklegarth I saw Writ for the evil Pharaoh-kings of old.⁴

¹ Earthly Paradise, I, 50-51.
² Ibid., I, 56.
³ Ibid., I, 61.
⁴ Ibid., I, 72-73.
There are a few other, less important references to Scandinavia in the poem, but I have quoted enough to show clearly that by the time Morris wrote the final version of the Prologue - that is, by the summer of 1867 - he had become very well acquainted with the life, culture, and history of the early Scandinavians, and had begun to digest this material and to learn to think and see from the point of view of a Northman, so that his Norse allusions in the poems produced at this time seem to be more natural and not so much mere external decoration as in his early work. However, all the compositions written before 1868 show that he had as yet not been moved by the spirit of the saga literature; this development was not to take place until he began reading the sages in the original and came into contact with a personal representative of the Old Norse culture.

All but one of the remaining Scandinavian allusions in the first part of The Earthly Paradise are contained in the links Morris inserted between the various tales. Most of these allusions are general and unimportant, but a few give us more information about the Norwegian sailors and incidentally throw further light on the extent of Morris's acquaintance with early Scandinavia; for the sake of completeness, I shall list all the passages containing Norse references.

1. See Earthly Paradise, I, 8, 11, 17 and 20; 9, 1, 13; 13, 1, 28; 22, 11, 11-12; 23, 11, 26-28; and 72, 11, 21-25. Only one of these allusions is at all important or interesting. As the Wanderers are sailing through the English Channel, they are stopped by the fleet of King Edward III of England; after learning the purpose of their journey, Edward lets them sail on, and gives Rolf and his fellow-commander parting gifts, bidding them (I, 25)

"Remember me, who am of Odin's blood,
As heralds say...

Morris's authority, if any, for putting this remark in the mouth of Edward III is not known to me. Perhaps he simply had in mind the common medieval custom of tracing the ancestry of kings back to the gods or to mythological heroes; see above, page 24.
In introducing "The Man Born to be King," one of the tales told by a Wanderer, Morris represents the sailor as saying,

'O kind hosts and dear,
Hearken a little unto such a tale
As folk with us will tell in every vale
About the yule-tide fire, when the snow
Deep in the passes, lefthem to go
From place to place: now there few great folk be,
Although we upland men have memory
Of ills kings did us; yet as now indeed
Few have much wealth, few are in utter need.
Like the wise ants a kingless, happy folk
We long have been, not galled by any yoke,
But the white leaguer of the winter tide
Whereby all men at home are bound to bide."1

It is impossible to determine the exact source of Morris's information about the state of Norway in the fourteenth century; the subject is not treated in any of the Scandinavian works with which we definitely know that he was familiar at this time. As I have already pointed out, we learn in the Prologue to the whole poem that Holf, the captain, was a native of the district around the Oslo Fjord and that the expedition set sail from this region. Some of the sailors, however, seem to have been from the north of Norway, for in the introductory remarks to "The Proud King" one of the Wanderers says,

"Sirs, it happed to me,
Long years agone, to cross the narrow sea
That twixt us Brontheimer and England lies;

... it came to pass
That to this town or that we took our way,
Or in some abey's guesten-chamber lay,
And many tales we heard, some false, some true,
Of the ill deeds our fathers used to do
Within that land; and still the tale would end,
'Yet did the Saint his Holy House defend;'
Or, 'Sirs, their fury all was mought and vain,
And by our Earl the pirate-king was slain.'
God wot, I laughed full often in my sleeve.

And could have told them stories, by their leave,
with other endings: but I held my tongue." 1

This charming picture of a fourteenth-century Norseman visiting
England adds a great deal of realism to the setting of the poem.

With the important town of Drøtheim Morris may have become fa-
miliar through Thorpe, Mallet, or Laing. When the wanderer had
finished his story of "The Proud King," some of the men began to
talk of past events; one of the scenes thus recalled was that of

The fir-built Norway hall
Filled with the boneders waiting for the fall
Of the great roof whereto the torch is set. 3

With Norse burnings Morris had already showed himself familiar in
1858 in the poem "Rapunzel"; since then, he had very likely be-
come further acquainted with this very common custom through Laing's
Heimskringla. Finally, after Laurence, one of the wanderers, has
recited the tale "The Writing on the Image," which tells of a
scholar who gained access to a treasure-chamber but as a result
of his avarice was imprisoned therein forever, the men talk of
other seekers after treasures, and mention

the Niflungs' fatal hoard. 7

The serpent-guarded treasures of the dead. 7

Here Morris is evidently referring to the tale of the Volsungs.
With the story of Sigurd's slaying of Fafnir and the curse laid
on the dragon's gold Morris had in all probability been long

2. See, for example, Thorpe, Northern Mythology, II, 10-11
   and 35; Mallet, Northern Antiquities, page 109; and Heimskringla,
   tr. Laing, I, 275, 276, and 277.
4. See above, pages 10-11.
5. See, for example, I, 229, 246, 251, 254, 256, 281, 298,
   and 304.
6. Revised form: "Niflungs' ."
acquainted, for there is a very full synopsis of the 
Völsunga saga in Thorpe's Northern Mythology, which, as we have seen, Morris read while a student at Oxford. In making the allusion just quoted, however, he seems rather to have had in mind the poetical version of the tale in Thorpe's translation of the Poetic Edda, which we definitely know he had read by 1868, for in the Northern Mythology Thorpe calls the family of Gudrun the "Nibelungs," but in his rendering of the Poetic Edda he, like Morris, terms them the "Niflungs."

The one remaining Scandinavian allusion in the first part of The Earthly Paradise is found in "Ogier the Dane." In this poem Morris followed primarily a late French prose romance, but he treated his source with a great deal of freedom. In one passage not in the original he makes a remark in which he is evidently referring to the Old Norse Thor and his fellow-gods: when Ogier returns to earth from Avalon and arrives at Paris, Morris represents him as exclaiming to the guard,

"St. Mary! do such men as ye
Fight with the wasters from across the sea?
Then, certes, are ye lost, however good
Your hearts may be; not such were those who stood
Beside the Hammer-bearer years agoe."

By the "Hammer-bearer" Morris almost certainly meant Thor. With Thor and his hammer he had very likely become familiar through

1. I, 91-113.
3. See below, pages 43-44.
4. See II, v, vii, 97, and 116-117 for occurrences of the name "Niflungs."
the *Edda* stories in Thorpe and Mallet.

At the end of this first part of *The Earthly Paradise* Morris announced the second and, as he then intended it to be, the concluding volume; "The Palace East of the Sun" appeared again in this list of forthcoming tales, but this was the only Scandinavian story that he planned even at that late time to include in this lengthy work. Before the end of the year, however, he was destined to meet with a great experience which was to have a decided effect upon the rest of *The Earthly Paradise* and, indeed, upon the rest of his life.

While Morris was still living at Red House, he had made the acquaintance of Harrington Taylor, an accomplished young man of an artistic temperament who had already squandered two fortunes and was now earning his living as a check-taker at the Opera House in the Haymarket; Taylor and Morris became excellent friends, and, strange to say, Morris appointed Taylor business manager of the firm, a post which he filled exceptionally well until he died of consumption in 1870 at the age of thirty. To this young man goes the credit for having brought together William Morris and Árni Magnússon in the summer of 1868, — an event which was destined to be of the utmost importance both to Morris and to Magnússon and which was to result in the most important contribution of the nineteenth century to the furthering of an interest in Icelandic literature among English-speaking people.

Up to this time Morris does not seem to have ever expressed

2. See *Collected Works*, III, xii.
any desire to learn Icelandic; at any rate, he had never taken any steps in that direction. As we have seen, he was already familiar with the mythology, folk lore, and early history of the Scandinavians, and, as I shall show in a moment, he had read some of the English saga-translations then in existence; but as yet the Old Norse literature had made but little impression upon him. He seems to have been interested in it only because of his insatiable passion for everything medieval, and the spirit of this Northern literature of the Middle Ages, so totally different from the spirit of the medieval literature of other countries, had apparently had no effect upon him. The only results of his Scandinavian reading had been a short prose tale during his undergraduate days, a few vague references to the North in poems of the same time, a Norse background developed in some detail for the Prologue to his Earthly Paradise, a handful of Scandinavian allusions in the rest of this poem, and a Norse fairy tale in verse destined for the same work. If he had not at this time begun reading the Icelandic sagas in the original and if he had not come into personal contact with a man filled with such a contagious enthusiasm for his native literature as Magnússon, it is doubtful whether the literature of the North would ever have meant more to Morris than it had hitherto done. As a result of his meeting with Magnússon, however, the study of Icelandic literature became the absorbing interest of his life for a number of years. It led him to new forms of literary production, away from the romance to the epic; it furnished the inspiration for two of his greatest works, "The Lovers of Gudrun" and "The Story of Sigurd the Volsung; and it

1. See below, pages 43-47.
colored either the substance or the style of practically all the
creative writing he produced during the rest of his life. The
union of Morris and Magnússon was, to say the least, a great
stroke of luck - and, apparently, simply luck - for all lovers
of literature.

By the time Magnússon met Morris, he had already had consid-
erable experience as a translator. Magnússon was born and educated
in Iceland. In 1862, at the age of twenty-nine, he went to Eng-
land in order to take charge of the publication of an Icelandic
rendering of the New Testament by the British and Foreign Bible
Society. On the way he became acquainted with George E. J. Powell,
who was returning from a tour of Iceland, and the two men seem to
have become excellent friends immediately; a short time after their
arrival in England, they began collaborating on a number of trans-
lations from the Scandinavian. They first turned into English
some of the tales collected by Jón Árnason in his Íslenskar bídö-
sögur og Ísafinsýri, and published these renderings in two volumes
called Icelandic Legenda, the first one appearing in 1864 and the
second in 1866. During the years 1863 to 1865 they worked on an
Icelandic-English dictionary, but they gave up this undertaking
before any part of it was printed. In 1863 Magnússon translated
the Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings and Powell began revising the render-
ing, but they never published it. Similarly, Magnússon began
writing out an English version of the Egils saga in 1866, which
he completed and passed on to Powell, but they failed to publish

1. The account that follows, in the text, of Magnússon's early
life and work is based on Stefn Einarsson's Saga Ísfrík Magnú-
ssonar (Reykjavik: Ísafoldarprentsmíðja, 1933) and on Einarsson's
article "Ísfríkr Magnússon and his Saga-Translations" in Scandina-
vian Studies and Notes, XTII(1934-1935), 17-32.
this work also. Finally, in the summer of 1866 Magnússon and Powell translated from the Swedish some of Runeberg's shorter poems, but again they left their renderings unpublished. The failure of the two collaborators to carry their undertakings to a completion was, according to Stefán Einarsson in his article "Eiríkr Magnússon and his Saga-Translations," largely the fault of Powell, for he "seems to have been far too vacillating and inconstant to be able to buckle down to hard and concentrated work," whereas Magnússon "was a sure though rather slow worker." However, although very few of the translations Magnússon had produced before 1868 had actually been published, he had been given an excellent preparation for the work he was now to be called upon to carry on with William Morris.

The meeting of Morris and Magnússon undoubtedly took place in 1868. As Dr. Einarsson points out in the article to which I just referred, Magnússon's statement in the Preface to the last volume of The Saga Library to the effect that his acquaintance with Morris "began first in August, 1869" is obviously the result of a lapse of memory, for the two men began publishing their saga-renderings in January, 1869. Both Professor Mackail and Miss May Morris say that Morris met Magnússon in the fall of 1868, but this date is not absolutely correct either, for according to Dr. Einar-

1. Magnússon in collaboration with S.H. Palmer published a volume of translations from Runeberg twelve years later; see Johan Ludvig Runeberg's Lyrical Songs, Idylls and Epigrams (London, 1878).
2. Page 22.
4. See below, p. 52.
son Magnússon wrote a letter to a friend on July 26, 1868 referring to his visit to Morris.

Very interesting and valuable is the account of his meeting with Morris that Magnússon prepared for Miss May Morris many years later when she was issuing her edition of the Collected Works of her father:

I spent an evening at Mr. Taylor's, who had much to tell about your father. He was very enthusiastic about his personality and character, and besought me to allow him to mention my name to Morris, for he felt sure he would like to make the acquaintance of a real Icelander. He felt certain that the Saga-literature of Iceland would greatly interest him. A day or two afterwards I had a note from Taylor to say that Morris would be glad to see me on (I forget what) day in the afternoon. I think at four o'clock. I made my appearance at the appointed hour at 26 Queen Square. I met your father in the hall. With a manly shake of the hand he said: 'I'm glad to see you; come upstairs.' And with a bound he was upstairs and I after him until his study on the second floor was reached. A very animated conversation ensued on Icelandic matters, especially literature. With the Sagas of Burnt Nial and of Gisl the Outlaw he was familiar from Sir George Basset's translations; the former of these he admired immensely and regarded it as one of the greatest productions of medieval literature. His talk about the artistic handling of the characters of Nial's Saga was as striking as it seemed, and still seems to me, true. He thought the characters were moulded so powerfully, both in respect of daemonic depth and lofty magnanimity, as in the cases of Hallgerd and Hrapp on one side, and Gunnar and Nial on the other respectively, because the mind of the author was already preoccupied with the grand types of the heroee (Sigurd and Volsung) and heroines (Brynhild, Gudrun) of the Elder Edda. This work he was already familiar with from Benjamin Thorpe's translation, on the poetical diction of which he made many good-humoured criticisms, e.g., on Hunding's for Hunding's slayer, etc. He knew Cottage's translation (1796) of the mythic songs of the Edda. He was quite familiar with Mallet's 'Northern Antiquities' and Walter Scott's 'Abstract' on Eyrrýgga-saga. From modern books of travel on Iceland he was surprisingly well up in the geography of the island, and from Bishop Finn Jonsson's 'Historia ecclesiastica Islandiae' he had mastered the main features of the general history of the country.

In the Preface to the last volume of The Saga Library, in another

2. Collected Works, VII, xv-xvi.
account of his first visit to Morris, Magnússon says that Morris’s “volubility of speech struck me no less than the extensive information he displayed about Iceland and Icelandic literature generally, acquired, of course, at second hand.”

These statements show clearly, as our examination of the Scandinavian allusions in the first part of The Earthly Paradise also indicated, that Morris had by 1868 considerably extended his acquaintanceship with Norse literature since his days at Oxford. Let us briefly examine these new books mentioned by Magnússon. Desant’s translation of the Njáls saga had been published in 1861, and his rendering of the Gísla saga Súrasonar had appeared in 1866. The former is provided with a very lengthy introduction of more than two hundred pages describing Iceland, its settlement by the Norwegians, their religion, their legal institutions, and their way of life in general. With much of the material in Cottle’s translation of part of the Poetic Edda and in Thorpe’s complete rendering of the same work Morris was already familiar from the first volume of Thorpe’s Northern Mythology, but both books were nevertheless very important, for they introduced Morris directly to one of the great monuments of Old Norse literature. Mallet’s Northern Antiquities was a vast storehouse of information, on which, as I have already shown, Morris seems to have drawn in writing both versions of the Prologue to The Earthly Paradise. This book, which first appeared in French, was translated into English by Bishop Percy in 1770. The first volume contains an account of the


2. Gísl the Outlaw (Edinburgh, 1866).

3. Icelandic Poetry, or The Edda of Saemund, tr. A. S. Cottle (Bristol, 1797).
early history of the Scandinavians, their mythology and religion, their government, their methods of fighting, their voyages abroad both for trading and plundering, their visits to America, and finally their customs and manner of life in general; the second volume presents English and Latin translations of parts of the Prose Edda, an English rendering of sections of some of the songs in the Poetic Edda, and an English version of certain Old Norse odes. The book was issued again in 1899 in much the same form, and was republished for the third time in 1847, completely revised and enlarged by I. A. Blackwell. Besides the material already found in the book, the new edition contains additional chapters on Icelandic legal institutions and customs, including synopses, by way of illustration, of three sagas, the Kormáks saga, the Njáls saga, and the Laxdæla saga; inserted at the end is Sir Walter Scott's "Abstract of the Eyrbyggja-Saga." This edition of 1847 was very likely the one that Morris used. The last book mentioned by Magnússon, Bishop Finn Jónsson's Historia Ecclesiastica Islandiae, is a very lengthy Latin work running to four volumes, which tells first of the early pre-Christian religion of the Northmen, the visits of Irish monks to Iceland, the settlement of the island by the Norwegians, and the slow Christianization of these heathens, and then gives an account of the history of the Church in Iceland down to 1740.

For the sake of completeness I should like to call attention here to several other Scandinavian works, not mentioned by Magnússon, with which Morris seems to have been familiar at this time. In the Preface to one of the volumes of the Collected Works Miss May Morris mentions the books which she and her sister in their childhood were

1. In the new edition were added "The Incantation of Hervor" and "The Ransom of Egill the Scald."
2. (Copenhagen, 1772).
given by their parents to read; this list includes Thorpe's Northern Mythology, Thorpe's Yule-Tide Stories, Hans Andersen's Tales, Magnusson and Powell's Icelandic Legends, and The Heroes of Asgard. We know that Morris had become acquainted with Thorpe's Northern Mythology while he was at Oxford; he had very likely known Thorpe's Yule-Tide Stories for a long time also, for the only Scandinavian poem that he had originally intended to include in The Earthly Paradise - "The Palace East of the Sun" - is based on a tale found in the Yule-Tide Stories, and, as we have seen above, this work seems to have been written at an early date. The Yule-Tide Stories, which was published in 1853, contains a fairly large number of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and North-German popular tales. Magnusson and Powell's Icelandic Legends was printed in two series, the first series, which appeared in 1864, containing sixty-six Icelandic stories, and the second collection, which came out in 1866, consisting of eighty tales and a long list of superstitions. The Heroes of Asgard is a collection of Old Norse mythological stories retold for children; it first appeared in 1857. Finally - although this work is mentioned neither by Magnusson nor by Miss Morris - I should like to point out again that it is almost certain that Morris had read Laing's translation of the Heimskringla at this time, for, as I have already shown, there is good reason to believe that he derived from this book much of the information regarding early Scandinavia that he introduced into the final form of the Prologue to


2. From this reference it is of course impossible to determine which translation and collection of tales Morris knew and used.

3. See above, pages 15-17.

4. The Heroes of Asgard and the Giants of Jötunheim; or, The Week and Its Story, by the Author of "Mia and Charlie," and her Sister (London, 1857). When this work was reissued later, the authors were identified as A. and E. Keary.
The Earthly Paradise.

At his first meeting with Magnússon, Morris decided to read Icelandic with his new friend three times a week. These lessons probably began shortly thereafter, for a letter written by Morris in October of that year shows that the instruction was then well under way. Magnússon and Mackail do not agree in their statements as to which saga was read first. In the obituary notice on Morris which Magnússon wrote almost thirty years later for the Cambridge Review of November 26, 1896 and which is now reprinted in Volume VI of The Saga Library, Magnússon says in regard to his early Scandinavian work with Morris, "His first taste of Icelandic literature was the story of 'Gunlnung the Snaketongue'; and in a letter to Miss May Morris, written most likely some ten years later when she was preparing the Prefaces to the various volumes of the Collected Works, he again states, 'The first saga I read with Morris was the short tale of 'Gunnlaug the Wormtongue.' It was finished in a fortnight, and then we set to work on 'The Story of Grettir the Strong.'" Mackail, however, says that it was the yrrbyggja saga that the two translators read together first. He does not present the basis for his statement, but very likely he had seen and had in mind a note inserted by Morris at the end of the illuminated manuscript that he prepared of the yrrbyggja ren-

1. Collected works, VII, xvi.
2. Loc. cit.
3. "Gunlnung" is obviously a mistake for "Gunnlaug."
4. Saga Library, VI, xiii.
5. Collected works, VII, xvi-xvii.
dering in 1871, for in this note Morris says, "I translated this
book out of the Icelandic with the help of my master in that tongue,
Eiríkr Magnússon, sometime of Heydalr in the East Firths of Iceland:
it was the first Icelandic book I read with him." Needless to say,
this statement by Morris, made three years after he had begun study-
ing Old Norse, ought to be considered more reliable than Magnússon's
recollections thirty or forty years later. Before trying to decide
definitely which of these accounts to accept, we should note that
whatever the first saga may have been that they read together, it
is certain that by the beginning of November of that year the two
collaborators had translated the greater part of the Grettis saga, for
in a letter quoted by Dr. Einarsson in his Saga Eiríks Magnús-
sonar in another connection, Magnússon wrote under the date November
2, [1862] "at Gretla sé næstari alðum undir prentun"; this contem-
porary statement by Magnússon we can of course accept without ques-
tion, although, as we already have seen and shall see again, we
cannot always rely on accounts Magnússon prepared late in life con-
cerning his early work with Morris.

The confused situation created by these conflicting statements
is considerably, though not completely, clarified by the nature of
the holograph manuscripts of two of the renderings in question. I
have not seen the manuscript of the Morris-Magnússon translation
of the Gunnlaugr saga ormstungu, but I have examined the hol-
graph manuscripts of their rendering of the Eyþyrjóggja saga and the
Grettis saga, both of which are now in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

1. For a description of this manuscript, see Aymer Vallance,
William Morris: His Art His Writings and His Public Life (London,
1897), pp. 381-382. See also below, pages 942-943.
2. Page 98.
3. For an account of these manuscripts, see below, pages 514
and 530.
Cambridge, England. Unfortunately, neither one is dated. However, on the top of page 131 of the Eyrbyggja manuscript, just above and to the right of the beginning of Chapter LV, are written the words "from 15 Feb to 15 March." The meaning of this remark is not clear. If it refers to the time during which a part of the manuscript was prepared, one would expect to find it at the end of a section rather than at the top of a page over the beginning of a new chapter. Moreover, the phrase cannot indicate the time of the action of that particular part of the saga, for Chapter LV describes the driving away of the ghosts from Frodis-water, an event which the story states explicitly occurred "on the eve of Candlemas." The note might possibly have been inserted by the printer at the time the translation was published, but there is nothing else in the manuscript that might indicate that it was the basis of the printed edition; as a matter of fact, as I shall point out in a later chapter, there are so many discrepancies between the version in the manuscript and that in the published text that it is almost certain that the rendering was completely rewritten when it was printed more than twenty years later. There seems, after all, to be no other purpose for the remark than to indicate the time at which part of the translation was composed.

This evidence would thus seem to prove that the Eyrbyggja rendering was prepared fairly late, - after the Grettis saga translation. However, an examination of the rendering in the two manuscripts seems to indicate that the Eyrbyggja manuscript - or at

2. See below, pages 516-517.
least part of it - is earlier than the other. In the first place it should be noted that throughout the Eyrbyggja manuscript Morris very frequently left blanks in his original translation, some of them extending to two or three lines; these blanks he seems to have filled in later, in pencil, or ink, or both, apparently after consultation with Magnússon. We meet with this situation extremely seldom in the Grettis manuscript; evidently he was more familiar with the Icelandic when he wrote out his version of this saga. He seems to have been particularly undecided, in preparing the Eyrbyggja manuscript, about the rendering of proper nouns, for he repeatedly omitted these at first and inserted them later, but in the Grettis manuscript he does not appear to have hesitated about translating names directly. Again, in the Eyrbyggja rendering he often omitted the "visur," perhaps because he found it difficult to turn the Icelandic verses into English, filled as they are with kennings; all the "visur" in the Grettis manuscript, however, are written out. Furthermore, in the Eyrbyggja translation he occasionally shows that his knowledge of Old Norse inflections was at this time not very sure; in rendering the Old Norse "Helgason," for example, he first wrote "the son of Helga," and then changed "Helga" to "Helgi," and in translating "i Hvammi" he originally used "in Hvammi," and

1. I shall describe these two manuscripts in detail later (see below, pp. 512-539), but I should like to point out here that in both books the translation has been written out by Morris, apparently on the basis of a rendering by Magnússon; in the Grettis manuscript there are revisions by Magnússon, but in the Eyrbyggja translation there does not seem to be a single correction by Magnússon.

2. See below, page 886, 1.35.
then struck off the final "1." Finally, it is important to note that the frequency of all these changes and corrections decreases in the course of the rendering, and that in the last thirty-five pages of the manuscript there are practically no revisions, corrections, or insertions of any kind.

There seems to be only one possible account of Morris's and Magnússon's early work together which will fit all the known facts. Morris apparently began his Icelandic studies with Magnússon by reading the Eyrbyggja saga, as he stated three years later in his illuminated manuscript of his translation of this tale. In view of the nature of the rendering in the holograph manuscript of the saga, it seems likely that he began writing out his own version early in the autumn of 1868 but dropped it before it was completed. He then probably read and translated the Gunnlaugs saga, and next read and wrote out a rendering of the Grettis saga, so much of which was completed by the first part of November that Magnússon could at that time write to a friend that it was almost ready for publication; if the two collaborators first met in July and the lessons began early in the fall, they may easily have had time to read three sagas by November. Morris may then have completed his translation of the Eyrbyggja saga early in the next spring, as the remark at the head of Chapter LV seems to indicate. If this account represents the actual course of events, Magnússon may easily in the course of time have forgotten the early work on the Eyrbyggja saga in the fall of 1868, and hence have been led to say in 1896 and 1911 that he and Morris first read the Gunnlaugs saga and then the

1. See Saga Library, II, 11, 1.10.
Grettis saga.

Whatever the first saga may have been that Morris and Magnússon studied together, the first translation they published was "The Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-tongue and Ræfin the Skald"; this rendering appeared in the Fortnightly Review for January, 1869. It is signed by both Magnússon and Morris, Magnússon's name appearing first. The two collaborators seem to have based their translation on the text in Volume II of Íslandingsá Sögur, a copy of which Morris is known to have had in his library at his death. The Gunnlaug's saga is one of the most beautiful and best developed of the short Icelandic tales, and it was one of Morris's favorites throughout the rest of his life.

1. In Scandinavian Studies and Notes, XIII (1934-1935), 23, Dr. Einarsson calls attention to the disagreement in the statements made by Magnússon and Mackail in regard to the early translation work of Morris; but he dismisses the question by pointing out that the rendering of the Eyrbyggja saga is not mentioned in a letter that Magnússon wrote to Powell in January, 1869, in which Magnússon tells Powell that he and Morris had published their translation of the Gunnlaugs saga and were just about to issue their rendering of the Grettis saga. However, Magnússon may simply have thought it unimportant to mention that they had read the Eyrbyggja saga, inasmuch as they had not published a translation of this saga and did not intend to do so in the near future.

2. XI (1869), 27-56.

3. See below, page 1000. According to Islandica, I (1908), 37-38, there were four editions of the saga available in 1868: Sagan of Gunnlaugr ormsstungu ok skalld-Ræfini (Copenhagen, 1775); the text in Íslandingsá Sögur (Copenhagen, 1847), II, 187-276; the text in Alecta Norrnæna, ed. Theodor Möbius (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 135-166; and Guunnlaugs saga Ormsstungu, ed. Quuf Rygh (Christiania, 1862). A comparison of the following passages, for example, in Íslandingsá Sögur with the corresponding passages in the other editions makes it almost certain that Morris and Magnússon based their translation on the text in Íslandingsá Sögur: II, 190, 11.1-2; 190, 11.5-6; 190, 1.8-191, 1.8; 191, 11.9-11; 192, 1.8; and 195, 1.13-196, 1.1.