

Sturla Þórðarson: his work in context of his time and an analysis of the authorial intent

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the literary-historiographical works of Sturla Þórðarson with regard to the specific historical situation at the time of their origin and the methods and authorial intent of this 13th century Icelandic historian. The introductory chapters give a brief overview of Sturla Þórðarson's life in a broader historical context, based on the extant primary sources, and of his literary and literary-historiographical works. The major topic of the thesis is an analysis and comparison of two of the author's works, *Íslendinga saga* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, in context of various scholars' views of medieval historiography. The former saga belongs to the genre of *samtíðarsögur* (contemporary sagas), the latter to the genre of *konungasögur* (kings' sagas). Both works present the same historical period. The major object of analysis is the differences in the author's approach to the historical material in his literary-historiographical works of different genres; this analysis is followed by an attempt to explain the differences. The first part of the thesis presents a separate analysis of each saga in context of the given genre. Both sagas are among the latest extant works in their respective genres and represent the final stages of the genres' development. Therefore the thesis shall concentrate on these sagas' specific features as well as traits that are common with the older sagas and it shall discuss the development of the genres. I will first discuss the author's work with sources and then the ideology and approach to history that the author's work was based on, with regard to the historical circumstances of the sagas' origin. The discussion of the older sagas is mostly based on other scholars' research, while the analysis of Sturla Þórðarson's works is to a greater extent based on my own work with the primary sources. The final chapters of the thesis present a comparison of the two sagas and an analysis of the differences. The main objects of analysis are the form and purpose of the underlying authorial comments and the relationship between the indirect psychological characteristics of the protagonists, the depiction of politics and power and the general idea of the saga, i.e. the author's concept of history. The major purpose of the thesis is to decide whether the differences are based solely on the genre conventions that the author followed, or whether they are based on a different concept of

history and a different authorial intent.

Keywords: Icelandic sagas, medieval historiography, authorial intent, Icelandic history, 13th century