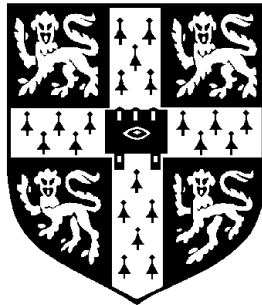


H. M. CHADWICK MEMORIAL LECTURES 18

SVERRE BAGGE

Order, Disorder and Disordered Order:  
Interpretations of the World and Society from the  
Pagan to the Christian Period  
in Scandinavia



DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE AND CELTIC

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Hector Munro Chadwick (1870–1947) was Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Cambridge from 1912 to 1941. Through the immense range of his scholarly publications, and through the vigorous enthusiasm which he brought to all aspects of Anglo-Saxon studies — philological and literary, historical and archaeological — he helped to define the field and to give it the interdisciplinary orientation which characterizes it still. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, which owes its existence and its own interdisciplinary outlook to H. M. Chadwick, has wished to commemorate his enduring contribution to Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic studies by establishing an annual series of lectures in his name.

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# Order, Disorder and Disordered Order: Interpretations of the World and Society from the Pagan to the Christian Period in Scandinavia

Sverre Bagge

During his visit to Norway in 1247 to celebrate the coronation of King Hákon Hákonarson, Cardinal William of Sabina agreed with the king, according to the saga, that Iceland should submit to him, as, he added, it was unheard of that a people did not recognise a king as their lord.<sup>1</sup> The authenticity of this quotation is open to doubt, as the Cardinal, of Genoese origin, can hardly have been unfamiliar with such people. Nevertheless, the reasoning is familiar to any scholar working on the Middle Ages: medieval churchmen held strong opinions on how the world was ordered and how it should be ordered, and Christian theology was used to support the legitimacy of a large number of secular institutions, including monarchy.

Order was a central concept in medieval Christendom, concerning religion, nature, ethics and society. In a general sense, all societies have some concept of order. However, in the following comparison between the pagan and Christian world picture in Scandinavia and in the account of the transition from the former to the latter, I want to argue that we are not only dealing with a change in the concept of order but with a new attitude to order as such, an idea expressed in my somewhat paradoxical term ‘disordered order’ for the pre-Christian period.

## *Creation in the Ancient Religion*

I shall start with the beginning, the creation of the world. As in most other mythologies, including the Christian one preserved in Genesis, the Old Norse account of the creation provides an important clue to the interpretation of the world and man’s place in it. The main source for this account is the most famous of the eddic poems, *Völuspá*, which tells the story of the creation of the world in the distant past, its decline and future destruction and finally the

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<sup>1</sup> Guðbrandur Vigfússon, ed., *Hákonar saga*, in *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores* 88.2 (London 1887, repr. 1964), ch. 257.

new, perfect world that will replace the present one.<sup>2</sup> The often brief and cryptic allusions here can to some extent be supplemented by two other eddic poems, *Vafþrúðnismál* and *Grímnismál*, plus, with more caution, Snorri Sturluson's account in *Snorra Edda*.<sup>3</sup> In the beginning, there was only empty space, (ON *ginnungagap*). The first living creature was the giant Ymir who begat children from under his arms, the giants (ON *jǫtnar*, sg. *jǫtunn*).<sup>4</sup> A primordial cow, Auðumla, had originated at the same time as Ymir and produced the first creature resembling a human being, Búri, by licking salt stones. Búri in turn had a son Borr who married the giantess Bestla. They became the parents of Óðinn (who in turn was the father of the other gods) as well as Vili ('will') and Vé ('sacred space'). The gods became creators in a more deliberate and systematic way. According to *Völuspá*, the sun, the moon and the stars appeared during this early phase of the creation, but it was the gods who gave them their proper places in the universe and gave names to night and day and organised time. Having killed Ymir and made the world from his body, the gods assembled at their meeting-place Iðavöllr ('work-plain') and decided to create the dwarfs; the poem devotes several stanzas to listing their names. The dwarfs may possibly have created the first human beings, the man Askr and the woman Embla.<sup>5</sup> This is not explicitly mentioned in *Völuspá*, however, which agrees with the other sources that the gods did not make them, but found them lying on the shore, without soul, life or thought which were the gods' gifts to them. After this, the poem provides a brief glimpse of peace and harmony reigning in the newly-created world, before strife is introduced through a cryptic allusion to the death of Gullveig, an episode which has caused later commentators much trouble.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Völuspá*, sts. 1-25, Neckel, Gustav, ed., rev. Hans Kuhn, *Edda: die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, vol. I, *Text*, 4th ed. (Heidelberg, 1962), pp. 1-6. Further references to eddic poems are by poem and stanza from this edition.

<sup>3</sup> The following is largely based on Margaret Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes: Old Norse Myths in Medieval Northern Society*, vol. I, *The Myths*, The Viking Collection 7 (Odense, 1994), pp. 144-228, which provides a detailed analysis of the different stages in the account, with extensive references to the sources. See also Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, vol. II (Berlin, 1956-57), pp. 359-72 and Gro Steinsland, *Norrøn religion, myter, riter, samfunn* (Oslo, 2005), pp. 110-21.

<sup>4</sup> This is not mentioned in *Völuspá*, but in *Vafþrúðnismál*, sts. 21 and 33. Cf. Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes*, pp. 152-55.

<sup>5</sup> The names are most probably derived from tree names: *askr* meaning ash, although the etymology of *embla* is disputed. One possibility is that it is a diminutive of *alm* ('elm'). There are parallels to the naming of the first human beings after trees in Iranian, Phrygian and possibly Greek religious traditions. See de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, vol. II, pp. 371 ff. and Anders Hultgård, 'The Askr and Embla Myth in a comparative perspective', in *Old Norse religion in long-term perspectives. Origins, changes, and interactions*, ed. Anders Andrén et al. (Lund, 2006), pp. 58-62.

<sup>6</sup> *Völuspá*, st. 21; cf. Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes*, pp. 198-211.

Details in this story may point to influence from Christianity, such as the ordering of time and the distinction between creating man and woman and giving them life and thought, although some of these features may simply be common to many such myths. In any case, the differences concerning the story as a whole are more significant. First, there is neither an almighty creator, nor creation *ex nihilo* in the Old Norse creation myth. Creation, or at least the most important aspect of it, is understood by analogy with building and forming, not giving birth. As emphasised particularly by Clunies Ross, this makes creation very much a masculine act – which corresponds to the Christian creation myth as well as to those of other religions – and gives the gods a crucial function, despite their late arrival. The gods confine themselves to the higher aspect of creation, establishing an order in the world, and giving man life and thought. In contrast to the Christian creation myth, the Old Norse one is thus evolutionary: the lower creatures come first, the higher – the gods and the humans – later. In particular, it is significant that the giants are older than the gods who are, in fact, descended from them.

Finally, although the death of Gullveig and the problems in its wake may suggest a vague resemblance to the Christian myth of the Fall, there is no explicit reference to moral wrong, nor should this event be regarded as the sudden arrival of evil in an otherwise perfect world. As is evident from the beginning of the story, conflict and death are present from the start, and the struggles in which the gods become involved after the creation of humans were most probably caused by the killings of the first inhabitants of the world whose descendants wanted revenge. Although the gods represent a higher stage of evolution, particularly regarding intellectual capacity, they are neither morally perfect nor omnipotent. In particular, their role in the work of creation seems to be based on a theory of the constancy of energy: they have to expend their resources by making something new. Thus Hœnir and Lóðurr, who give colour and intelligence to the first human couple, are later without these qualities themselves.<sup>7</sup> Óðinn, who also participates, is apparently more resourceful and manages to retain the qualities for himself (or at least parts of them), but he also has to make heavy sacrifices to achieve what he wants; thus, he gives away one eye in order to gain wisdom. There is therefore no perfect condition: creation, work and progress always involve cost. Did the world have a ‘meaning’ in a similar sense to that projected by Christian

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<sup>7</sup> See Else Mundal, ‘Skaping og undergang i *Völuspá*’, in *Sagnaheimur. Studies in Honour of Hermann Pálsson on his 80th Birthday, 26th May 2001*, ed. Ásdís Egilsdóttir and Rudolf Simek, *Studia Medievalia Septentrionalia* 6 (Vienna, 2001), pp. 195-207, at pp. 203-06; cf. pp. 196-98 on the creation and on the gods losing the power to make gold by creating the dwarfs.

theology? Immediately, it would seem that it did not, and thus that the pagan world picture is closer to that of modern secular society than is that of medieval Christianity. We do distinguish between a meaningless and amoral nature, however, and a meaningful and moral society. Did the ancient religion do the same? What were the social consequences of the ancient creation myth and the world picture it engendered?

### *The World of the Gods and the World of Men*

The rest of the eddic mythological poems as well as the prose stories rendered in Snorri's *Edda* largely describe struggles and competition between the gods and the giants, in which the gods usually win, but often only after sacrifices and humiliation. The giants are regarded as inferior to the gods in some respects but not as radically different. Some giant women could be very attractive and desired by the gods. The fact that the giants live in a different place and apparently have their own social organisation suggests that they should be regarded as another tribe rather than as a lower class, although they need not necessarily fit into either category.<sup>8</sup> There are two categories of gods, the *æsir* (males) and *ásynjur* (females) on the one hand, and the *vanir* on the other. Earlier in mythological time, they had been enemies – there is an allusion to this in *Völuspá* – but they were later reconciled and belong to a common pantheon. The division between gods and giants can be seen to correspond to the geography of the natural and supernatural world expressed in the three terms *Ásgarðr*, *Miðgarðr* and *Útgarðr*, the sites respectively of gods, humans and giants. Some scholars have almost gone as far as drawing maps of these places and comparing the division between *Miðgarðr* and *Útgarðr* with that between the cultivated land of the farm and the wilderness, but it is doubtful how precise contemporary ideas were.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the term *Miðgarðr* for the world of the worshippers of the Norse gods gives the Scandinavian people a more central place than is the case in the Christian world picture.

The marriage pattern of the three groups of supernatural beings points to the hierarchical nature of their relations.<sup>10</sup> The *æsir*, who are on top of the hierarchy, are hypergamous and can take wives or mistresses from both other

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<sup>8</sup> This interpretation differs from that of Clunies Ross (*Prolonged Echoes*, pp. 48-50, and pp. 93-102), who regards the giants as being of lower social status.

<sup>9</sup> See Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes*, p. 51; Stefan Brink, 'Mytologiska rum och eskatologiska föreställningar i det vikingtida Norden', in *Ordning mot kaos. Studier i förkristen kosmologi*, ed. Anders Andrén *et al.* (Lund, 2004), pp. 291-316, at pp. 291-98.

<sup>10</sup> For the following, see Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes*, pp. 85-143.



categories, whereas the *ásynjur* are forbidden to the giants and possibly also to the *vanir*; there is at least no evidence of *vanir* marrying *ásynjur*. Several eddic poems deal with the problems resulting from the giants' failure to respect this order. When in *Brymskviða* the giants steal Þórr's hammer and demand the goddess Freyja as their king's bride in return for giving it back, the gods find themselves in a terrible dilemma. Without his hammer, Þórr is nothing, but the prospect of marrying a goddess to a lower-ranking giant is equally disastrous. To save the situation, Þórr has to dress up in female clothes – taboo in the divine as well as the human world – pretending to be Freyja. A series of burlesque scenes follow, where the enormous 'bride' eats an ox and eight salmon and drinks three barrels of mead, before 'she' receives the hammer in her lap, tears off the disguise and kills the bridegroom and the other giants gathered for the wedding. In a similar way, it is an intolerable and extreme humiliation to the gods when the *vanr* god Freyr proposes to the giantess Gerðr and is rejected. Gerðr resists for a long time but a series of terrible threats force her to submit.<sup>11</sup> In accordance with the logic that every advantage has to be paid for by sacrifice, however, the gods buy their victory at a considerable price. Freyr has to give away his sword, which is never returned to him and he therefore must fight without it in the final struggle at *ragnarøk*.

Within the community of the gods, Óðinn is the father and the leader. Óðinn's central position is attested in several textual sources but there is little mention of the power relationship between the other gods, apart from some references to deliberations among them on *Iðavöllr*. The main reason for Óðinn's importance and authority seems to be his personal qualities: his skill, intelligence and cleverness. The only other god who can compete with him in importance is Þórr (who is usually portrayed as his son), but he excels in brute force rather than intelligence. Óðinn's qualities are more highly regarded since they are the qualities developed at the final stage of creation, whereas the giants had already excelled in brute force at an earlier stage in the process. From this point of view, Óðinn represents what is good, although in a very different sense from the Christian notion of goodness.

Furthermore, the relationship between gods and giants does not correspond to the opposition between good and evil. Despite their inferior rank, the giants are a constituent element of the world picture. They existed

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<sup>11</sup> See *Skírnismál*. On the theory that *Skírnismál* is a poem about the origin of the Ynglingar dynasty, see Gro Steinsland, *Det hellige bryllup og norrøn kongeideologi: en analyse av hierogami-myten i Skírnismál, Ynglingatal, Háleygjatal og Hyndluljóð* (Oslo, 1991) and *Den hellige kongen. Om religion og herskermakt fra vikingtid til middelalderen* (Oslo, 2001), pp. 53-69.

before the gods; they have their own society, similar to that of the gods, to whom they represent a threat only when marriage or sexual relationships are attempted. By contrast, Loki is a more sinister figure. He is partly the gods' enemy and partly their ally. The main example of him in the former capacity is his staging of the death of Baldr, Óðinn's son, who is thoroughly good and noble and the perfect being, loved by everyone. Having heard a prophecy about Baldr's death, the gods demand all living things on earth swear that they will not harm him. However, they forget the mistletoe, which Loki manages to turn into a deadly weapon that kills Baldr. After Baldr's death, the gods get another chance to save Baldr, namely that he will be returned to them if all creatures ask for this to happen. All do, except one old woman who, of course, is Loki in disguise. Here we meet the opposition between good and evil more explicitly than anywhere else in the mythology, as well as the idea that the perfect being is bound to die, an idea that is possibly, but not necessarily, inspired by Christianity.

We are never told why Loki wants to kill Baldr. One possible motive is revenge. As Loki is partly of giant origin, he may have picked the most perfect of the gods to avenge the gods' killing of Ymir. As Loki is only half giant, he would not seem the obvious choice to carry out such an act of revenge. Moreover, he acts completely by himself; the other giants do not appear in the story at all. An alternative explanation may therefore be sought in the contrast between the two characters; Loki is not only morally but also genetically Baldr's very opposite. Baldr is born from the marriage between Óðinn and his wife Frigg. He may thus be regarded as Óðinn's legitimate heir. He belongs entirely to the gods' world and represents the final stage of perfection in the evolution that started with the death of Ymir. Loki's origin is never mentioned directly but he seems to be the result of a union between a goddess and a giant.<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, this links him to both groups but, on the other, represents such a breaking of a taboo as to render him unacceptable to the gods and quite possibly also to the giants. Moreover, not only does Loki's birth represent the breaking of a taboo but so do his own sexual relations. He begets Óðinn's horse, Sleipnir, by turning himself into a mare and mating with a stallion. Here he breaks a double taboo, acting sexually as a woman and overstepping the border between man and animal. He is also the father of some of the most awful creatures in the mythological world, the wolf Fenrir, the Miðgarðr serpent and Hel.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Loki belongs nowhere; he has

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<sup>12</sup> See Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *At fortælle historien. Telling History. Studier i den gamle nordiske litteratur. Studies in Old Norse Literature* (Trieste, 2001), pp. 30 ff.; Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes*, pp. 64 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Steinsland, *Norrøn religion*, p. 230.

to make himself useful from situation to situation through his falsity and cleverness. He plots to kill Baldr but also aids Þórr in getting back his hammer. When breaking the taboo by becoming Sleipnir's mother, he actually helps the gods out of a difficult situation; in other words, he does the dirty work for them. According to Snorri, the gods had promised the sun, moon and the goddess Freyja to a giant in return for building a wall around Ásgarðr for them, in the firm belief that the giant would never be able to complete the work in the allotted time. The giant set an enormously strong horse to work on the wall and was on course to finish the wall on time when Loki turned himself into a mare and distracted the horse.<sup>14</sup>

Baldr and Loki thus represent purity and pollution respectively in absolute form. In representing the taboo forces Loki, however, plays a more productive role in Old Norse religion than the devil in Christianity; he is clever and resourceful and helps the gods in difficult situations. Some contact with the taboo forces seems to be necessary for survival, as may perhaps be illustrated by Baldr's fate: he is too pure to survive. At least this conclusion seems to be supported by the example of Óðinn. From one point of view, as the highest of the gods, Óðinn is the very opposite of Loki. He represents a new and higher stage in creation, and he is the leader of the gods. On the other hand, Óðinn breaks taboos more often than any of the other gods. He learns sorcery (*seiðr*) which, at least according to Snorri, is dishonourable for a man; he even dresses as a woman to learn this art. He learns the art of poetry by stealing the poetic mead from the giant Suttungr who had appointed his beautiful daughter to protect the treasure deep inside a mountain. By turning himself into a snake, Óðinn enters the cave, seduces the daughter and betrays her, taking with him the mead. Considering Sleipnir's origin, it would seem at first surprising for Óðinn to use such a horse, but its origin is apparently the source of its magical qualities. Óðinn's origins may have something to do with these proclivities, as he too is related to the giants, although his birth is not the result of incest.

Both Óðinn and Loki serve as perfect illustrations of Mary Douglas's analyses of purity and pollution.<sup>15</sup> By distinguishing between pure and impure and establishing borders between them, regulating communication and above all sexual relationships, people order their universe, more or less strictly. The Jewish dietary rules and the Indian caste system are extreme examples but Old Norse mythology can be seen to express the same basic idea. On the other

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<sup>14</sup> Steinsland, *Norrøn religion*, p. 83.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1978 [first published 1966]), pp. 94-113 and pp. 159-79.

hand, what is impure is also strong and serves as a basis for sorcery and magic. Material used for such purposes typically includes corpses, particularly of people who have suffered a shameful or unhappy death; blood (particularly menstrual blood); faeces and so forth.<sup>16</sup>

As might be expected, there are some correspondences between taboos and notions of pollution among the gods and among their human worshippers. There was a strict taboo against a man assuming the role of a female or an animal; according to the laws, a man accused of such an act was allowed to kill the accuser. Thus, men were regarded as superior to women. Certain women could nonetheless achieve nearly equal status by virtue of their personal characteristics, which were not necessarily the same as a man's, and they might use their wisdom, eloquence and ability to exploit their female beauty to acquire what they wanted.<sup>17</sup> Less is known about marriage patterns and what might be considered the human equivalents to the three classes of supernatural beings. As we have seen, the gods are hypergamous, which seems to correspond to the marriage pattern described in medieval Norwegian regional laws.<sup>18</sup> This must have changed later, at least for the elite of Norwegian society, in accordance with the normal pattern in Western Christendom.<sup>19</sup> At this time, it must at least have been possible to marry daughters to men of slightly lower rank, although the normal pattern in both periods would seem to have been for marriages to take place between approximately equal partners. If the woman's rank was significantly lower than the man's, concubinage would be the preferred alternative. While there is thus a general resemblance between the marriage pattern among the gods and the system found in the early laws, it is doubtful that the various categories of supernatural beings had human equivalents. The Sami may possibly have

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<sup>16</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 94 and *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*, 2nd ed. (London, 1973), p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> Carol Clover, 'Regardless of Sex. Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum* 68 (1993), 363-87, argues that in accordance with Laqueur's theory, Old Norse society did not recognise any qualitative difference between men and women, but distinguished between 'hard' and 'soft', the former category consisting of most men in their prime plus some strong and heroic women, whereas most women, plus children and old men, belonged to the latter. Although this competitive rather than hierarchical attitude accords well with what is otherwise known about Old Norse society, the theory probably has to be modified to the extent that women usually excel in different ways from men. They use their charm, beauty and intelligence to make men carry out their will, as illustrated by Guðrún Ósvifsdóttir in *Laxdæla saga* and Hildigunnr Stakaðardóttir in *Njáls saga*; see Sverre Bagge, *Mennesket i middelalderens Norge* (Oslo, 1998), pp. 34-36.

<sup>18</sup> See Torben Vestergaard, 'The System of Kinship in Early Norwegian Law', *Medieval Scandinavia* 12 (1988), 160-193, at 188 ff.

<sup>19</sup> See Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley, 1991), p. 120; and Auður Magnúsdóttir, *Frillor och fruar. Politik och samlevnad på Island 1120-1400* (Gothenburg, 2001), pp. 181-84.

been regarded as a parallel to the giants.<sup>20</sup> The Kings' Sagas give examples of Norwegian men marrying or having sexual relationships with Sami women but not normally of such relationships between Sami men and Norwegian women.<sup>21</sup> It may also be mentioned that the eddic poem *Rígsþula* describes a tripartite division of humanity into aristocrats (*jarl* = earl or nobleman), commoners (*karl* = man or commoner) and slaves, all of which are endogamous. In case of the top layer, we note that the young Jarl has to find his bride far away, from another aristocratic family, headed by Hersir.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, there is a chronological division between these social layers just as there is in the myth of creation. The slave couple is called Ái and Edda ('great-grandfather' and 'great-grandmother'), the commoners Afi and Amma ('grandfather' and 'grandmother') and the aristocrats Faðir and Móðir ('father' and 'mother').<sup>23</sup> There is evidence that contemporary Scandinavian aristocrats regarded themselves as descended from the gods, and they may thus have followed the gods' restrictive marriage patterns themselves, controlling their women and preventing them from marrying below their rank. The Sagas of Icelanders give a vivid impression of how a father's honour was threatened when a suitor approached his daughter without permission.<sup>24</sup> Although *Rígsþula*'s division of people into aristocracy, commoners and slaves hardly corresponds to the divisions among the supernatural beings, a kind of social hierarchy exists in both worlds. In contrast to the later Christian doctrine, this division does not express an ordained higher order, but simply states the close correlation between status and personal characteristics. The successful ones always win and live a life of beauty and luxury, while the unsuccessful are ugly and dirty and have to accept the dirt floor and cold, lumpy porridge.

An ethical doctrine, as expressed in the eddic poem *Hávamál*, gives a similar impression to that of the picture of the supernatural world. The poem opens by describing a wanderer arriving at an unknown house. After a long journey over mountains and wilderness, he needs fire, food, clothes and friendly words. But he has to be careful when opening the door; he does not know if enemies are sitting inside. To get the comfort he wants, he needs

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<sup>20</sup> Else Mundal, 'The Perception of the Saamis and their religion in Old Norse sources', in *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, ed. Juha Pentikäinen (Berlin, 1996), pp. 97-116, at pp. 111 ff.

<sup>21</sup> However, the prose introduction to *Völundarkviða* attributes such an origin to Völundr and his brothers who married King Hloðvér's daughters.

<sup>22</sup> *Rígsþula*, st. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ursula Dronke, *The Poetic Edda*, vol. II. *Mythological Poems*, ed. with translation, introduction and commentary (Oxford, 1967), pp. 179-85.

<sup>24</sup> See Bjørn Bandlien, *Strategies of Passion. Love and Marriage in Old Norse Society* (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 67-85.

wisdom, not in the sense of philosophical insight but what we would call social intelligence. He must strike the right balance between self-assertion and pride and between silence and modesty; he must neither be credulous nor suspicious nor reticent.<sup>25</sup> The poem proceeds to give practical advice about how to survive and succeed among other people. Ultimate success is measured after death, in the most famous stanzas of the poem: all living creatures die but a man's memory never dies.<sup>26</sup> Thus, there is a judgement after death, not in an afterlife but in how the dead man is regarded by other men. This ethical doctrine is at the same time social and egocentric. Its aim is to teach the individual person how to succeed in life, not how he or she should serve the community or mankind or carry out some high ideal. On the other hand, success depends solely on the individual's status in the eyes of others. In a similar way, skaldic praise poetry celebrates generosity, heroic deeds and victory, including the ability to feed ravens and wolves on the bodies of slain enemies, and the Sagas of Icelanders, mostly written in the thirteenth century, largely convey the same attitude. The relationship between the pagan gods and their worshippers seems to have been more of a mutual contract than anything found in Christianity: the gods gave luck and prosperity in return for sacrifices. It was possible to favour one of several gods and to seek an alternative protector if rejected by the first.

There is order and hierarchy in the divine as well as the human world, expressed in taboos, rules about marriage and in the idea in *Rígsþula* that social position is determined by birth. On the other hand, both worlds are highly competitive. The gods constantly struggle with the giants and often have to break taboos in order to achieve what they want. Social divisions are not based on any moral order but on the physical and material differences that are obvious to all. There is no relationship between the three categories, no moral doctrine obliging people to remain in their estate; rather, they cannot do anything else: how would the ugly, boorish slaves manage in higher society? Aristocrats are not responsible for the lower layers of society but compete among themselves for power, wealth and glory. This fits in well with what we know of Viking-Age society as well as with descriptions in the Sagas of Icelanders of the pagan as well as the Christian period. There was constant competition for wealth, power and honour. Loyalty was based on personal relationships, kinship and friendship, strengthened by gift exchange. Gaining wealth, through Viking expeditions and in other ways, was largely a means of

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<sup>25</sup> *Hávamál*, sts. 1-11; cf. Bagge, 'Du savoir-vivre pratique aux vices et vertus. La doctrine éthique en Norvège au Moyen Âge', *Mélanges Elisabeth Mornet* (Paris, 2008 forthcoming) pp. 5 ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Hávamál*, sts. 76-77.

gaining clients and adherents. Honour was defended by violence. Although killings and injuries could be compensated for by fines, at least according to the extant laws, the most prestigious way of reacting was clearly by taking revenge: a section of the *Gulapingslög* stipulates that no one was entitled to receive fines more than three times if he had not in the meantime avenged himself.<sup>27</sup> The precise extent of violence in this society is open to discussion. Pre-state society has often been regarded through the eyes of later reformers who defended the rise of royal power and public justice by labelling it as chaotic and riven by endemic warfare. There were mechanisms developed to limit conflict in the old society as well as the new, but armed conflict was nevertheless part of the social order to a greater extent in earlier times than it was in later times.<sup>28</sup>

As we have seen, some parallels between Viking-Age society and the divine world suggest influence from the former onto the latter. The question of the direct political function of the pagan religion in a political context leads to the much disputed theory of sacred kingship, which was rejected by some scholars as a part of the reaction against the Germanistic school of historical studies in the post-war period, but it is now gaining ground once more.<sup>29</sup> The notion of sacred kingship is clearly present in *Rígsþula*, where the first king, Konr ungr, is educated by his divine grandfather.<sup>30</sup> Further, two such myths have been preserved in skaldic poetry, one about the Ynglingar dynasty, the other about the Háleygjar dynasty.<sup>31</sup> The former was, at least in later tradition, regarded as the genealogy of the royal dynasty that came to power with Haraldr hárfagri, although the poem does not mention him. The extant poem begins with Fjólfnir but there are allusions to descent from the god Freyr later in the poem. In *Historia Norwegiae*, Freyr is said to be the progenitor,

<sup>27</sup> *Gulapingslög* ch. 186; see Bjørn Eithun, Magnus Rindal and Tor Ulset, ed., *Den eldre gulatingsslova* (Oslo, 1994), p. 120.

<sup>28</sup> See William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking. Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 259-99.

<sup>29</sup> The main attack on the theory was delivered by Walter Baetke, 'Yngvi und die Ynglingar. Eine Quellenkritische Untersuchung über das nordische "Sakralkönigtum"', *Sitzungsberichte der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig. Phil-hist. Kl.* 109.3 (Berlin, 1964).

For more positive, recent interpretations, see Steinsland, *Den hellige kongen*, pp. 53-59; Sverre Bagge, 'Christianization and State Formation in Early Medieval Norway', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 30 (2005), 107-34, at 119 ff. and Olof Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring. Rulers and religion in ancient Svea society* (Uppsala, 2002), pp. 18-38. For a survey of the whole discussion, with extensive bibliography, see Olof Sundqvist, 'Sakralkönigtum. Skandinavische Quellen', *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. Rosemarie Müller et al. (Berlin, 2004), pp. 279-93.

<sup>30</sup> See Sverre Bagge, 'Old Norse Theories of Society. From *Rígsþula* to *Konungs skuggsjá*', in *Speculum regale. Der altnorwegische Königsspiegel (Konungs skuggsjá) in der europäischen Tradition*, ed. Jens Eike Schnall and Rudolf Simek (Vienna, 2000), pp. 7-45.

<sup>31</sup> See Steinsland, *Norrøn religion*, pp. 50, 406, and 416.

whereas Snorri regards Freyr as a descendant of Óðinn. Admittedly, the authenticity of *Ynglingatal* has been disputed, most recently by Claus Krag who claims that it is a learned construction from the twelfth century, but almost all the reviews and other responses to Krag's book have rejected this hypothesis and confirmed the authenticity of the poem.<sup>32</sup> *Háleygjatal*, composed to honour the earls of Lade, provides further evidence of attempts to link a princely kindred to the ancient gods; the poem traces the earls' genealogy back to Óðinn.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to the Christian idea of sacredness introduced later, the notion of pagan sacredness was not derived from an idea of order and hierarchy in the world, nor was it linked to an ethical doctrine of how society should be governed. Heroic attributes were inherited, and kinship with the gods was a guarantee of such characteristics. It also seems that this idea was linked to that of 'good seasons and peace'; there is evidence in skaldic poetry of the king being regarded as responsible for good and bad harvests; and the different evaluations in the sagas of Hákon the Good, the Eiríkssons and Hákon jarl, respectively, seem to be based on such a tradition.<sup>34</sup> The king's responsibility for 'peace' may at first sight seem to contradict the mainly martial picture of the king in the Kings' Sagas and skaldic poetry, but it can be seen to confirm it, in fact. Peace is not the absence of war, but the result of successful war. The pagan concept of sacredness was compatible with *Vø luspá's* representation of the world as an arena with different forces in mutual competition, and it did not offer the ruler any protection against rival powers. The king held his power by virtue of being 'the best man'. There was no monopoly over divine descent or divine protection and the ruler might therefore be deposed by another with similar qualities. The notion of pagan sacredness was closely connected to the concept of luck, which might favour a ruler for a certain time and then desert him.<sup>35</sup> As in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, legitimacy was based on actual power.

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<sup>32</sup> See Claus Krag, *Ynglingatal og ynglingesaga. En studie i historiske kilder* (Oslo, 1991); cf. reviews by Bjarne Fidjestøl, *Maal og minne* (1994), 191-9 and Jørn Sandnes, *Historisk tidsskrift* 73 (1994), 229-31. See also Sundqvist, *Freyr's Offspring*, pp. 43-54 and 'Aspects of Rulership Ideology in Early Scandinavia – with Particular References to the Skaldic Poem Ynglingatal', in *Das Frühmittelalterliche Königtum*, ed. Franz-Reiner Erkens, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 49 (Berlin, 2003), pp. 87-124, at pp. 90-97 and Dagfinn Skre, 'The Dating of *Ynglingatal*', in *Kaupang in Skiringssal. Kaupang Excavation Project. Publication Series I*, ed. Dagfinn Skre (Århus, 2007), pp. 407-29.

<sup>33</sup> Finnur Jónsson, ed. *Den norsk-islandske Skjaldedigtning*, A1-B2 (Copenhagen 1908-14), A1, pp. 68-71; B1, pp. 60-62.

<sup>34</sup> See Bagge, 'Christianization', p. 120.

<sup>35</sup> Like sacred kingship, some scholars have also regarded this idea as derived from Christianity, pointing to the parallel to the Latin *fortuna*. However, it took a long time for the latter concept to be integrated into Christian thought, and the well-developed Old Norse terminology, which does not seem to show any foreign



*The Christian Idea of Order: the Creation and the Fall*

The Christian myth of creation differs radically from the Scandinavian pagan one, in form as well as content. With regard to form, the original creation myth in Genesis belongs to the same genre as the Old Norse one, although it differs fundamentally in content by attributing the whole of creation to one God. The role of this God was further developed in the Christian theological tradition, which regarded the myth as literal truth and spent much time and ingenuity in analysing it. One example of such a theological project is Honorius Augustodunensis' *Elucidarium* from the early twelfth century, which became very popular and was translated into many languages, including Old Norse, where it is called *Elucidarius*.<sup>36</sup> *Elucidarius* is structured using catechismal form, giving precise information by means of questions and answers and representing literate rather than oral discourse. Nothing is left unsaid; dogma replaces myth. Admittedly, the author of *Elucidarius* had to base his interpretation on the biblical account of the creation of the world in Genesis, which describes the creation as a series of stages, divided into six days. Does this mean that God had to work hard and could not make everything at once, as is indicated at the end, when God is said to have rested on the seventh day? Historically, this aspect of the story is of course the result of the fact that the creation myth served to explain the origin of the Sabbath and was used to urge the audience to respect it. To medieval theologians, however, the story was an accurate account of what had happened at the creation, written by Moses under divine instruction.

Thus, the author of *Elucidarius* is confronted with the question of whether the Almighty God needed time in order to fulfil his work. His answer to this question is emphatically no. God created everything in one moment but divided the whole into various categories during the six days.<sup>37</sup> There is therefore no real narrative, nor explanation, because no explanation is needed: God decided in His sovereign wisdom to create the world at a certain time and carried out His will. The world is perfect and has a meaning and God has given humans reason. As a consequence it is possible to deduce explanations and unknown facts through logic, once God has revealed Himself to humans through Christ. This enables the author of *Elucidarius* to discuss why God created the world, what would have happened if Adam and Eve had not sinned, and the correspondence between Adam's six sins and the six ages of

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influence, is also an argument in favour of the local origin of the idea. See most recently Bagge, 'Christianization', p. 120, with references there.

<sup>36</sup> *Elucidarius*, in *Þrjár þýðingar lærðar frá miðöldum*, ed. Gunnar Harðarson (Reykjavík, 1989), pp. 45-120.

<sup>37</sup> *Elucidarius*, pp. 48 ff.

the world during which he was in the realm of death before the coming of Christ. There are always perfect numbers and proportions; nothing is there by chance. For instance, Adam has his name from the four corners of the earth, in Greek Anathole (αναθολη), Disis (δυσις), Arctos (αρκτος) and Mesembria (μεσημβρια) – which in turn means that Adam's descendants should spread to the whole earth and that he should govern the earth as God governs heaven.

However, the consistent and harmonious account of the creation in Genesis and *Elucidarius* also entails problems that do not occur in the corresponding account in *Völuspá*: that almighty God created the world according to His will and concluded that everything was good. But everything is not good. There is death, disease, suffering, injustice, which become an intellectual problem in Christianity. As Mary Douglas points out, the problem of evil is not universal, but the consequence of the idea of an almighty God.<sup>38</sup> Like their counterparts in most other ethnic religions, the Old Norse gods were not considered to be the sole creators of the world and therefore cannot take the blame for its imperfections. Whereas natural or ethnic religions are interpretations of the immediate experience of the world as it is, Christianity draws a sharp distinction between the existing world and the ideal one. Historically, this distinction was expressed most clearly in the account of the Fall of man, an episode which forms an important part of the discussion in *Elucidarius*.

The original story of the Fall in Genesis has parallels in other myths of origins, including the Greek one about Pandora in which the jealous gods fear that humans will become too powerful and they therefore send the beautiful Pandora with her fatal box to prevent this.<sup>39</sup> Similarly in Genesis, God fears that Adam and Eve, having gained wisdom by eating of the forbidden tree, will also eat of the other tree, the tree of life, and become immortal. Consequently, he prevents this by expelling them from Paradise. Like the ancient Greek gods, the God of Genesis feels threatened by humans and takes precautions to protect his own position. In a way similar to that of Greek and other myths, the Genesis myth contrasts nature and culture. Originally, Adam and Eve are innocent and ignorant like children and animals; they are naked without being ashamed; they do not work to gain their living, they are ignorant of the world around them and without understanding and reflection. Having eaten the fruit, they enter the stage of adulthood and culture; they know their situation in the world; they dress and they work.

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<sup>38</sup> Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, pp. 136 ff.

<sup>39</sup> For this and the following, see François Flahaut, *Adam et Eve. La condition humaine* (Paris 2007), pp. 55-139.

This story was changed radically through different Christian theologians' interpretations which are summarised in *Elucidarius*. The dichotomy of nature and culture is replaced by that of innocence and sin. By disobeying God, Adam and Eve lose their original innocence and transmit their guilt to all future generations. The emphasis shifts from the effects of the fruit to the act of disobedience in eating it. When the Disciple finds it difficult to understand why eating a fruit can be such a terrible sin, he is overwhelmed by the Master's merciless logic: what can be worse than disobeying God's explicit command?<sup>40</sup> Only one specific effect of eating the fruit remains: sexual desire. While the act of sexual union itself would have taken place if the first humans had not sinned, it would have been without lust. After Adam and Eve's disobedience, however, every act of human conception is accompanied by sin, which then transfers original sin to each new human being. The history of the Fall serves to acquit the almighty and benevolent God of responsibility for the miseries of this world, and at the same time to set a moral standard for men that differs from normal or average behaviour. The result is a sharp contrast between order and disorder, and a conceptualisation of the former that does not correspond to the world as it happens to be.

### *The Ethical Doctrine*

In accordance with the doctrine of the Fall, Christian ethics did not take its point of departure from the world as it is. Unlike *Hávamál*, the aim was not to succeed in this life but to win eternal life by not being absorbed by the sins and miseries of human society after the Fall. The point of departure was therefore an abstract system of virtues, as in Alcuin's widely read *De virtutibus et vitiis*, preserved in an Old Norse translation, probably from the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>41</sup> Alcuin's work opens with a chapter on wisdom, followed by the three theological virtues – faith, hope and charity – whereas the four cardinal virtues – prudence, justice, strength and temperance (derived from Classical Antiquity) – are presented towards the end of the work. The main vices are presented in a similar way, partly, but not wholly, opposed to the virtues. A number of other virtues and vices are derived from these ones, although Alcuin is not quite consistent on this point. Readers reasonably familiar with Christian ethics are unlikely to be surprised by Alcuin's work. Against a traditional Old Norse background, however, the

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<sup>40</sup> *Elucidarius*, pp. 94-99.

<sup>41</sup> The translation serves as the introduction to the Old Norse book of homilies; see Gustav Indrebø, ed. *Gamalnorsk homiliebok* (Oslo, 1931), pp. 1-31.

whole approach to the idea of virtue as well as the definition of individual virtues, is in many ways revolutionary. Whereas *Hávamál*, taking its point of departure from concrete situations, teaches its audience how to deal with the problems they will meet in life in such a way that they will succeed and get respect from others, Alcuin starts from a set of abstract virtues that have their origin in God's eternal goodness and wisdom. Acquiring them does not necessarily lead to success in this world but to a life according to God's will, which will be rewarded in heaven.

Wisdom or intelligence is important in *Hávamál* as well as in Alcuin, but it has a different character. Whereas *Hávamál*'s wisdom is the ability to thrive in human society, Alcuin's is a strictly religious quality: the knowledge of God's will and the decision to follow it; hence it is the key to all other virtues. Humility is a central Christian virtue but it has no equivalent in ancient ethics, although excessive pride might be considered a fault. The Christian virtue of humility is derived from the doctrine of the Fall: humans have to acknowledge that they are sinners, submit to God and ask forgiveness. The idea as well as the term 'sin' is also of Christian origin,<sup>42</sup> breaking the norms laid down by the Almighty God, whereas ancient ethics only knew harm done to individuals who were then entitled to vengeance or compensation. Christian asceticism was also alien to pagan ethics, notably the negative attitude to sexuality, the unavoidable sin that transmitted the consequences of the Fall to new generations. Sexuality as such was no problem in pagan ethics but control of women was. Sexual relationships might easily lead to conflicts with the woman's guardians, fathers or brothers and, as we have seen, finding the right marriage partner might be a great problem in the divine, as well as the human, world.

### *The Political Consequences: the Right Order of the World*

The practical and political consequences of the doctrine of the Fall might differ greatly. Christianity might serve as an argument for revolutionary changes in political organisation or for letting the sinful world remain as it is while the faithful try as best as they can to live a Christian life, and it might be used to support radical egalitarianism as well as strict hierarchy. The form it takes usually depends more on social factors than on strict theology. The medieval Latin Church was heir to a long tradition of organised religion: first the Church had experienced nearly three hundred years as a persecuted

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<sup>42</sup> Old Norse as well as modern Norwegian *synd*. The etymology of the word is uncertain, but a Christian origin is likely; see Einar Molland, 'Synd', *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder XVII* (Oslo 1972), coll. 616 ff.

minority, during which time it developed a strong organisation that eventually demonstrated its usefulness to the declining Roman Empire, and then followed nearly 1000 years of further organisational growth, partly in alliance, partly in competition with the secular state. Hierarchy therefore became an essential feature of organisation as well as doctrine. The Church's relationship with the world remained ambiguous, but at least from the period of the Gregorian reform onwards, the main tendency was for churchmen to try to change society to make it conform to Christian ideals. However, Christian doctrine was not only used by ecclesiastics and theologians to defend and strengthen the organised Church, but also by secular authorities in the service of the state.

The account of the Fall in Genesis came to be used as a strong argument for order and authority in the family as well as in society. What happened with original sin was that the woman allowed herself to be led by the animal and the man let himself be led by the woman, instead of following the correct order, which placed the man highest, followed by the woman, and then the animals.<sup>43</sup> As the lord of creation, man was supposed to be superior to woman and he had exclusive access to clerical positions. The doctrine of the Fall had similar consequences for society. An early example of its use in a political context is King Sverrir's great speech after Magnus Erlingsson's death in 1184, as rendered in *Sverris saga*, where Sverrir presents himself as God's instrument to crush the haughty, Magnus and his father Erling, who have usurped a rank that was not theirs. Magnus and Erling are represented as the last in a series of rebels against God, starting with Lucifer and continuing with Adam and Pharaoh.<sup>44</sup> Sverrir's speech shows the propagandistic possibilities inherent in the story as well as, indirectly, a concept of society different from the traditional one. The implications of this concept are further developed in two later versions, both originating in the royal court, *Konungs skuggsjá* (c. 1255) and *Stjórn* (early fourteenth century), a translation of Genesis and the first half of Exodus with excerpts from theological commentaries.<sup>45</sup> In *Konungs skuggsjá*, which has the most explicitly political

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<sup>43</sup> Ludvig Holm-Olsen, ed. *Konungs skuggsjá* (Oslo, 1945), p. 82. Cf. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, ed. J. Zylcha, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Prague, 1894, repr. 1970) XI.35.47; and Sverre Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror, Medieval Scandinavia. Supplements III* (Odense 1987), pp. 230 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Gustav Indrebø, ed. *Sverris saga* (Kristiania, 1920), ch. 99, p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 75-84; cf. Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 54-59 and 225-33; Richard Unger, ed. *Stjórn. Gammelnorsk bibelhistorie* (Christiania, 1862), pp. 35-41; cf. Reidar Astås, *An Old Norse Biblical Compilation. Studies in Stjórn, American University Studies*, Ser. VII vol. 109 (New York, 1991) and Sverre Bagge, *Da boken kom til Norge 1000-1537, Norsk idéhistorie I*, ed. Trond Berg Eriksen and Øystein Sørensen (Oslo, 2001), pp. 109-20.

interpretation, the story serves as an example of a just judgement, balancing the various considerations the judge has to take into account which are symbolised by the allegorical figures of the four sisters, Mercy (*Miskunn*), Truth (*Sannendi*), Justice (*Rettvísi*) and Peace (*Friðsemi*).<sup>46</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá*'s doctrine of the Fall can be summarised in three words: justice, balance and obedience. God's judgement of Adam and Eve represents perfect justice, based on a careful consideration of the two sinners' guilt and balancing the aggravating and attenuating circumstances. There is one, and only one, adequate solution to every case brought before the judge, and it is his responsibility to find it, as indicated in the story of the king's son who, placed in his father's seat of judgement for one day, sees an angel with a sword and a scale, ready to strike him with the sword if the scale is not in perfect balance.<sup>47</sup> Thus, whereas the competitive society of Old Norse religion may be compared to the eighteenth-century moral philosopher Adam Smith's invisible hand which creates some kind of balance through leaving the various forces to themselves, *Konungs skuggsjá* represents a highly interventionist picture of society which needs to be governed by a strong, visible hand. The idea of perfect justice leads logically to the idea of a clearly defined, interventionist social order: every human being has his or her fixed place in society, which the king, out of duty, must uphold. According to the same logic, obedience becomes the main virtue and disobedience the main sin, as stated in the version of the Fall in both *Elucidarius* and *Konungs skuggsjá*.

In using God's judgement after the Fall as a model for kingship, the author of *Konungs skuggsjá* not only illustrates the complexities involved in judging justly, but draws a direct parallel between the king and God. This parallel is developed further in other passages of the work.<sup>48</sup> Quoting Christ's words about giving both God and the king what belongs to them, the *Konungs skuggsjá* author identifies obedience to the king with obedience to God. The king bears God's own name, he shows God's majesty to his subjects, and he can only be removed from his office by God, to whom he shall also render account for how he has exercised his power. The author not only uses the Fall

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<sup>46</sup> The allegory has its origin in Psalms 84,1: 'Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi; justitia et pax osculate sunt'. The personification of these four virtues stems from Jewish exegesis and was taken over by Christian theologians from the twelfth century onwards. The legal use of the allegory seems to be specific to *Konungs skuggsjá*. See Einar Molland, 'Les quatre filles de Dieu', in *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), pp. 155-68; Mattias Tveitane, 'The four Daughters of God in the Old Norse King's Mirror', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972), 795-804 and Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 54 ff.

<sup>47</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 101 ff.; Bagge, *Political Thought*, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> See Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 22-26 with references there.

as an example for the king, but presents a whole series of God's judgements in the Old Testament, thus explicitly urging the king to imitate God's judgments. This identification of the king with God is balanced by the Christian idea of kingship as an office, modelled on the clerical office. Like earlier sources, such as Magnus Erlingsson's privilege (c. 1170) and *A Speech against the Bishops* (c. 1200), *Konungs skuggsjá* distinguishes clearly between the person and the office (regarding the latter as bestowed upon the king by God in order to promote justice on earth) and develops in great detail the contrast between the person as weak and sinful, and the office, representing God's power and glory.<sup>49</sup> Thus, in contrast to pagan ideology, the Christian idea of the king's sacredness did not include divine descent. The king as a person was an ordinary human being, though the office of king was instituted by God to represent Him on earth. Despite this less direct concept of sacredness, its consequences were more far-reaching than those of the pagan one.

Finally, the extended discussion in *Konungs skuggsjá* not only about society but also about nature is clearly intended as another way of bringing out this parallel. The moral meaning of nature becomes particularly evident in Wisdom's speech in the third part of the work, in which Wisdom, personified, addresses the king, describing her participation in the work of creation in a series of quotations from and allusions to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the king should rule his realm as God rules the universe. This follows from God's words in Genesis 1,26 that He created man in His image to rule over all other creatures. When man's similarity to God derives from the act of ruling, it follows that the king will resemble God to a greater degree than ordinary human beings do.<sup>51</sup> The author also explicitly states that kingship as such is the result of creation and not of the Fall. Admittedly, perfect order cannot exist among humans after the Fall, but God's work of creation before the Fall can, nevertheless, present an ideal to be imitated as far as possible. Whereas the Fall brings sin into human society, nature is still obedient to God as it was immediately after creation. The first part of *Konungs skuggsjá*, concerning the merchant, deals briefly with the practical and ethical aspects of the merchant's work and focuses on nature and geography. The material presented here is said to be intended partly as entertainment but can be shown to have a moral purpose as well. The author

<sup>49</sup> Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 22-26, 61-64 and 161.

<sup>50</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 98-100; cf. Bagge, 'Nature and Society', pp. 24 ff.

<sup>51</sup> Compare God's words to the king in *Konungs skuggsjá*: 'Ðu ert skryddr mæð minu nafni því at þú ert bæðe konongr oc domare sæm ec' (*Konungs skuggsjá* p. 124); cf. Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 22-26, 141-43.

has a clear idea of natural forces, expressed in the terms ‘nature’ (*natúra*) and ‘force’ (*afl*). From a modern point of view, these terms may seem tautological, or synonymous, for the various ways natural objects influence one another, but in fact the terms imply a distinction between natural causation and direct intervention by God through miracles, a distinction the author makes explicit when discussing the latter.<sup>52</sup> The author’s doctrine of the relationship between the two corresponds to contemporary medieval philosophical and theological thought. God has created the universe and laid down the laws that govern it, so that He can normally abstain from interfering directly in its workings; this in turn means that the universe has an order that can serve as a model for society. There is harmony and balance in nature, as expressed for instance in the comment that there can be only two specimens of an enormous whale, because it needs such quantities of food that nothing would otherwise be left for the other fish.<sup>53</sup> God has thus wisely arranged nature so that there are fewer big animals than small ones, which means that all living creatures get an appropriate amount of food.

Nevertheless, as was evident to the author as well as to his readers, nature is not always balanced and harmonious, but can also be dangerous and threatening. Has nature also been affected by the Fall? Such an idea seems to be suggested in *Elucidarius*, when the Disciple asks why God created animals that are useless or harmful to men and the Magister replies that God knew in advance that man would fall and would therefore need such animals. Consequently, lice, mosquitoes, ants and horseflies are created for the glory of God and in order to counteract men’s pride, through the fact that the smallest creatures are able to harm men.<sup>54</sup> The author of *Konungs skuggsjá* does not discuss insects but has a clear awareness of the contrast between harmony and disharmony in nature, which he uses to bring home his political message. The first part of the work, concerning the Merchant, deals with sailing in addition to nature and geography as already mentioned; it describes the beginning and the end of the sailing season in two passages (one at the beginning and one at the end), which in a poetic and allegorical way explain what happens when the sea is calm and easy to cross in summer, and how in contrast, it turns tumultuous and dangerous in winter.<sup>55</sup> When the sun is strong, it keeps the winds – the chieftains – in check, creating peace between them, which in turn leads to harmony throughout the whole world, makes the sea calm and the

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<sup>52</sup> See Bagge, ‘Nature and Society’, pp. 8-11.

<sup>53</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* p. 17; cf. Bagge, ‘Nature and Society’, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Elucidarius* 65-69, pp. 56 ff.

<sup>55</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 7-9, 35-37; cf. Bagge, ‘Nature and Society’, pp. 14-18.



land bring forth crops, so that life becomes easy for men. When the sun loses its force in late autumn, peace breaks down, the winds get out of control, and the earth becomes barren and the sea tumultuous and dangerous to cross.

The immediate lesson drawn from these passages is that the merchant has to adapt to the changing phases of nature and use the summer for sailing while staying on shore in winter. However, the relationship between the sun and the winds suggests another and deeper message that is brought out in later parts of the work, namely the importance of strong government. The passage about the sun and the winds has a close parallel in the allegory of dearth in the second part of the work, where civil war in a kingdom is compared to crop failure in a farm.<sup>56</sup> The passage is directly intended as an argument against the division of the kingdom, which according to the author will inevitably lead to conflict between the kings and their men. However, it also serves to develop the author's contrast between the well-ordered hierarchy that God has ordained and the competitive society of the ancient religion, many features of which still existed in the thirteenth century. Great men compete for power and influence; judicial cases are decided according to friendship and influence rather than objective justice; people take revenge for relatives who have been killed as punishment for serious crimes; and they avenge themselves not only on the guilty party but also on the dead man's innocent relatives. Thus, the old order is not represented as an alternative way of organising a society, as we would understand it, but as a lapse from a universal norm of the social order because of the division of the king's power. Breakdown of strong government has the same effect in nature and in society: The decline of the sun leads to conflict between the winds in the same way that the decline of monarchy through divided inheritance leads to chaos and civil war in society. In this way, the chaotic conditions at sea in winter described in *Konungs skuggsjá* serve to bring home the same lesson to men as the mention of lice and the horseflies in *Elucidarius* does.

### *Social Order and Social Stratification*

Corresponding to this insistence on a social order sanctioned by God, *Konungs skuggsjá* also gives a relatively precise description of what this order should be like, partly in the form of explicit statements about social stratification, and partly suggested in the structure of the work. The prologue to *Konungs skuggsjá* lists four social classes: the merchants, the king and the secular aristocracy, the clergy and the peasants.<sup>57</sup> The main body of the work,

<sup>56</sup> *Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 51-55; cf. Bagge, 'Nature and Society', pp. 18-25.

<sup>57</sup> The older of the two manuscripts containing the prologue, dating from the fifteenth century and used in Holm-

however, has three classes: the merchants, the *hirðmenn*, and the king. Most probably the reason for this discrepancy is that the work is unfinished.<sup>58</sup> Compared to *Rígsþula*, the slaves have disappeared and the peasants have become the lowest class, which corresponds to what seems to have been the actual social change between the Viking Age and the thirteenth century. Furthermore, the clergy has been added, and this corresponds to the transition from the pagan to the Christian period, particularly during the period after around 1150, when the clergy became an estate, with great wealth and political influence. Finally, the tripartite division is replaced by a quadripartite one, of which *Konungs skuggsjá* seems to be an early example.<sup>59</sup>

The reason for this quadripartite division in which the merchants form a separate category is hardly that trade and merchants were particularly important in Norway. The explanation should rather be sought in the way in which the author distinguishes the merchant from the aristocrat. The merchant of *Konungs skuggsjá* is an aristocratic *farmaðr*, a young man of good family who wants to see the world by travelling around as a merchant, probably partly in order to sell surplus from his farms. Socially and economically, he does not differ greatly from the aristocrat. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference between the two classes which becomes clearer in the next part of the work, dealing with the aristocracy. What really defines an aristocrat in *Konungs skuggsjá* is formally serving the king, through membership of the king's body of retainers, the *hirð*. This doctrine is emphasised in several passages in the second part of the work, where the author points out that the *hirðmaðr* owes his position entirely to the king and should therefore always be loyal and obedient to him. One passage in particular is very explicit regarding the definition of aristocratic status. When rejecting the Son's suggestion that men of wealth and distinction in their local communities would hardly find it worthwhile to enter the lower levels of the king's service, the Father points out that all men are bound to serve the king. Entering the king's direct service is always an advantage and an honour, in

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Olsen's edition, has 'lendra manna', while the younger, from the sixteenth century, has 'lærðra'. The latter is clearly correct, as the *lendir menn* must be included in the secular aristocracy mentioned earlier.

<sup>58</sup> See Ludvig Holm-Olsen, 'The Prologue to The King's Mirror: Did the author of the work write it?', in *Specvlvm Norroenvm. Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. Ursula Dronke, Guðrún P. Helgadóttir, Gerd Wolfgang Weber and Hans Bekker-Nielsen (Odense, 1981), pp. 223-41 for a different opinion; Holm-Olsen maintains that the work as we have it is complete, but that the prologue is a later addition. For arguments in favour of the authenticity of the prologue, see Bagge, 'Nature and Society', pp. 25-29 and 'Old Norse Theories of Society', pp. 10-13.

<sup>59</sup> See Jacques Le Goff, 'Les trois fonctions indo-européennes, l'histoire et l'Europe féodale', *Annales ESC* 34 (1979), 1187-1215 at 1201-05, 1210; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Die funktionale Dreiteilung der "Gesellschaft" bei Adalbero von Laon. Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit im früheren Mittelalter', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 12 (1978), 1-54 at 107.

contrast to remaining at home as a *kotkarl* (a cotter, or cottager). Thus, a man who does not belong to the king's *hirð* is not only a 'commoner'; he is no different from the lowest and poorest peasant.<sup>60</sup>

This throws further light on the distinction between the *hirðmaðr* and the merchant and serves to bring home the author's main lesson even more explicitly. Despite the small difference in wealth or standard of living between the merchant and the *hirðmaðr*, the latter belongs to the aristocracy while the former does not, because of their different relationship to the king. Consequently, the king is the centre and the key to the whole system. Here *Konungs skuggsjá* differs radically from *Rígsþula* where the king is a kind of secondary extension of the class of earls. In other words, while in *Konungs skuggsjá* the king defines the aristocracy, in *Rígsþula* the aristocracy defines the king. In the feudal model, at least as developed in the late twelfth-century Angevin Empire, the king also had a crucial function.<sup>61</sup> He was usually portrayed as being outside the tripartite division, as the one who was responsible for upholding the whole system, by seeing that everyone keeps to his allotted place. In this area of Europe at least, the emergence of the tripartite model was not only the result of a clearer division of society into estates or a clearer notion of such a division, but also a result of the rise of the monarchy to a more prominent position. Thus in contrast to *Rígsþula*, *Konungs skuggsjá* conforms to the feudal model. It not only conforms to it, however; it carries the feudal model one step further, in making the king virtually the origin and creator of the aristocracy: the *hirðmaðr* is defined, neither by birth nor by wealth nor lifestyle, but solely by serving the king and being appointed by him.

The picture of society that emerges from this discussion is amply confirmed by the content of *Konungs skuggsjá* as a whole. The king's position is at the centre of the whole system, as God's representative on earth; he derives his power from God. This is repeatedly pointed out throughout the work, as is the people's – as well as the aristocracy's – duty of loyalty and obedience to the king. The relatively brief discussion of the relationship between the king and the bishop shows that this doctrine also applies to the clergy, while a number of Old Testament episodes, mainly intended as examples of just judgements for the king, serve as additional confirmation of how the clergy should behave towards the king.<sup>62</sup> Although the peasants are

<sup>60</sup> 'Nu mæð þvi at aller menn ero skyllder mæð konong til þionosto þeir sæm íero ríki hans. hvi man þa æigi hværium vitrum manne þyckia mykell mun unnder þvi væra athann se ífullu konongs trausti oc hans vinatto. ... Hælldr en heita cotkarl oc være æ unnder annars stiorn. (*Konungs skuggsjá* pp. 42.41-43.5).

<sup>61</sup> Georges Duby, *Les trois ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme* (Paris, 1978), pp. 343 ff.

<sup>62</sup> Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 113-130.

not often mentioned, the author's attitude to them is clear: they should obey their superiors and be governed by them. If they are given independent power, the consequences will be disastrous, as is demonstrated in the allegory of dearth.<sup>63</sup>

The distance between the top and the bottom of the social hierarchy in *Konungs skuggsjá* is thus at least as great as it is in *Rígsþula*, if not greater. There is an important difference, however. The hierarchy of *Konungs skuggsjá* is a functional hierarchy, based on a kind of organic idea of society, according to which all its members should work together for the common good. Despite being the lowest member of society, the peasant is not despised or ridiculed as the slave is in *Rígsþula*; he has duties to perform in the service of the whole and deserves some respect, as long as he knows his place. On this point *Konungs skuggsjá*'s doctrine corresponds to the feudal one; the three social orders are supposed to co-operate for the common good. The same idea is especially emphasised in the use of the human body as a model for society, an idea which became particularly popular from around 1150; a Norwegian example is to be found in *The Speech against the Bishops* which is dated to c. 1200.

This source mentions a number of different offices and ranks, both secular and clerical, and they can be divided into a few main categories. The king is compared to the heart and the breast, which should look to the welfare of the whole body; which should think and decide on its behalf; and which should protect it courageously.<sup>64</sup> The author depends here on an anatomical theory similar to that of Aristotle who believed that the capacity to think was located in the heart. The author thus attributes the same key position to the king as is found in *Konungs skuggsjá*, and it is a more central one than in most other examples of the allegory.<sup>65</sup> Further, in *The Speech* the king is mentioned between the clerical aristocracy, which comes first, and the secular aristocracy which follows. The skeleton and muscles are the secular aristocracy; the sense organs the secular clergy; the organs of digestion monks

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<sup>63</sup> Bagge, *Political Thought*, p. 180.

<sup>64</sup> 'Hiarta ok briost þessa likams skilldu vera konungar þeir er bera skilldu ahyggiu ok ætlan ok radagærd dírfd ok vorn firir allum adrum limum', *En tale mot biskopene*, ed. Anne Holtsmark (Oslo, 1931), p. 1.19-22.

<sup>65</sup> One parallel – a sermon, probably German, from the late twelfth century – is particularly close, so close that there must be some direct or indirect connection. Characteristically, the main difference between this sermon and *The Speech* lies precisely in the king's role. The sermon does not mention him and identifies the breast with the knights; see further Erik Gunnes, *Kongens ære. Kongemakt og kirke i 'En tale mot biskopene'* (Oslo, 1971), pp. 367-71. For a comparison of *The Speech* with various European examples of the allegory, see Gunnes, *Kongens ære*, pp. 73-83; and for the allegory in general, see Tilman Struve, *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1978). Struve finds a more explicitly organological thinking from the mid-twelfth century, starting with John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (pp. 123-148).

and nuns; and the feet the common people: ‘merchants and peasants’ – the latter conforming to what seems to be the normal position attributed to the people in other examples of the allegory. This amounts to five categories if we include the king. The anonymous author may have combined two versions of the tripartite division here: the older, ecclesiastical one, on the one hand, which divided the Christian people into, firstly, monks and nuns; secondly, the secular clergy, and thirdly, the laity; and, on the other hand, the feudal one of warriors, clergy, and people. The text of *The Speech* differs from *Konungs skuggsjá* in dividing the clergy into two categories, while having only one for the common people, but the general structure, the idea of a common function for society as a whole, and particularly the king's strong position, is the same.

The organological understanding of society, the parallel between nature and society by understanding both as systems, and the tripartite or quadripartite division all indicate a similar social and intellectual development in feudal Europe from the eleventh century onwards. Socially, the distinction between function and lifestyle, knight and cleric on the one hand, peasant or possibly merchant on the other, replaced an older distinction between free man and slave.<sup>66</sup> The clergy had been an estate since late antiquity, while the secular aristocracy became so from the eleventh century onwards. Warfare and carrying arms became a profession and a lifestyle; the real warrior, the *miles* (a word eventually used to denote the mounted knight) replaced the ‘free man’ who combined agriculture with occasional warfare. On the other hand, the great expansion of agriculture and the wealth the two higher orders derived from this, may have made the peasants a somewhat more respected category than the earlier, unfree labourers – after all, there was competition among lords to attract peasants to take part in clearing land. And there was certainly a need for lords to legitimate their position by an ideology such as that of the three orders. Further, these doctrines are doctrines for the whole of society, intended to strengthen the central power: in the secular version the king, in the clerical one the pope. Finally, the doctrines must be understood against the background of the intellectual revival in connection with the Investiture Contest, the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, and the rise of the universities.

*Konungs skuggsjá* can largely be understood against a similar background: the division between the two higher estates and the ‘commoners’ replaced that between freeborn and slave, and society was regarded as an integrated whole. Above all, *Konungs skuggsjá* argues in favour of the king’s

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<sup>66</sup> See Duby, *Les trois ordres*, pp. 72, 216, 327-343; and Oexle, ‘Deutungsschemata’, pp. 98 ff.

central position as the leader of society, a doctrine that fits very well with what we know about Norwegian political thought and royal policy by the mid-thirteenth century, when the work must have been written.<sup>67</sup> The monarchy worked systematically to strengthen the central government, particularly in the field of justice, where it banned feuds and revenge and insisted that conflicts should be brought before royal courts of law. Although *Konungs skuggsjá*'s picture of the king's exalted position is ideological rather than real, its insistence on the aristocracy as an aristocracy of royal servants makes sense in its contemporary context. The definition of aristocratic rank was membership of the king's *hirð* and having titles conferred by the king; in practice, however, the king would have mainly chosen men of some wealth and standing.

There is therefore a fairly close similarity between the quadripartite model outlined in *Konungs skuggsjá* and the tripartite model in feudal Europe, while both differ from the tripartite model found in *Rígsþula*. The former two give the king a crucial function in the model and propound the idea of society as an organic unity. Moreover, despite the difference between three and four categories, they have basically the same structure, a combination of hierarchy and functional difference: all categories have different functions, and there is in addition a difference of rank between the clerical and secular aristocracy on the one hand, and the commoners on the other. The quadripartite division is more logical in the sense that it contains two equal classes on both levels of the hierarchy. It might be argued, however, that the functional difference between peasants and merchants was not sufficient to make them into separate categories; in contrast to 'higher' activities, such as war and religion, there was no particular reason to distinguish between the 'lower' categories of people who brought provisions to the whole body politic. This may explain why the tripartite division continued to be the stronger and more widespread of the two. As we have seen, the quadripartite division in *Konungs skuggsjá* may possibly have had something to do with a greater respect for the lower orders, but the author's main reason for choosing it was to point out, as clearly as possible, the contrast between the apparent similarity and the real difference between a wealthy commoner and an aristocrat, so as to bring home even more explicitly the message that aristocratic rank was something conferred by the king.

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<sup>67</sup> See Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 71-85, 174-186, 210-218.

*Christianity, Social Order and Social Change*

‘My kingdom is not of this world’, Jesus says to Pontius Pilate.<sup>68</sup> The distinction between politics and religion that is normally taken for granted in modern, western societies is an exception in a global context. Normally, there is a strong connection between the two, not only in Old Norse paganism but also in most other religions, even the nearest parallel religion to Christianity, Islam. It then seems a paradox that this unworldly religion has been the most efficient state-builder of all. Part of the paradox is of course solved by the fact that there was difference between theory and practice. The quotation above stems from a period when Christianity was the religion of a small, partly persecuted minority, whereas the medieval Church was a wealthy and powerful institution. But the attitude expressed in the quotation does in fact serve to explain the political role of the Church in medieval and later society. Being set apart from the world meant that the Church had to form its own society, whereas its ethics and doctrine meant that it did not take for granted society as it actually existed – at least it took it for granted to a lesser extent than the traditional ethnic religion had. The Christian religion therefore had the potential to become a revolutionary force, as the Investiture Contest demonstrates,<sup>69</sup> while its ideas as well as its organisation could be exploited by secular powers to build strong states. Despite the fact that Christian ethics were of limited importance in how people actually conducted their lives, they were an important element in the political ideology that was being developed in the service of the state.

The Church arrived in Norway with a well-developed, international ideology, that was closely linked to its own administration and functions, and which it developed further during the following centuries. By contrast, the monarchy, which established its lordship over the whole country about the same time, was not as well-defined an institution, and was subject to various ideological impulses, one of which, from the late tenth century, was Christianity. In the following period, Christianity became increasingly important as the ideological foundation of the monarchy, although for a long time it competed with other impulses. There is a clear parallel in the change from pluralism and competition to power monopoly and hierarchy in the divine as well as the human world. The period from around 1150 to 1300, when these doctrines were developed and set down in writing, was also a

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<sup>68</sup> John 18,36.

<sup>69</sup> See Gerd Tellenbach, *Libertas: Kirche und Weltordnung im Zeitalter des Investiturstreites*, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte VII (Stuttgart, 1936).

period of expansion for the Church and for the monarchy and of the development of royal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction and legislation.

In considering the practical importance of this change with regard to the concept of order, we not only have to acknowledge the inevitable difference between theory and practice, but we also need to account for considerable evidence of the old norms in the Kings' Sagas as well as in the Sagas of Icelanders. Despite his adherence to the *rex iustus* ideal evident in some explicit statements in his saga of St Óláfr, Snorri's narrative of his reign is essentially the story of a traditional political game, in which Óláfr was at first extremely successful but in the end failed because he made too many enemies through his intransigence.<sup>70</sup> Changing attitudes can be traced in slightly later sources, in addition to *Konungs skuggsjá*, *Hákonar saga* and the laws and charters from the reign of Magnus lagabætir and his successors, but older attitudes may have survived for far longer than can be traced in our limited evidence.<sup>71</sup>

Still, the changes did not only just affect a limited number of clerics and intellectuals who contemplated the notion of an ideal society. The Christian concept of order was also expressed in ideology and in institutions and legislation, the revision of the laws from the mid-twelfth century to the National Law of the 1270s (including the laws of succession of 1163/64, 1260, and 1273), and the introduction of royal unction and coronation (first in 1163/64 and 1194 and then permanently from 1247). The new doctrines were also accompanied by significant changes in the social and material world. A comparison of Christianity and the ancient Nordic religion indicates that the former had a greater potential in this respect than did the latter. From a materialistic point of view, the conversion meant that a cheap and unbureaucratic religion was replaced by an expensive and bureaucratic one.<sup>72</sup> Admittedly, the pagan religion was not cheap in the sense that it did not demand considerable resources, but it had less distributive effects than the Christian religion. The priests were local magnates and the religious ceremonies the expression of their wealth and power. Moreover, the food and drink collected for the sacrifices were mostly consumed by the participants themselves, only a minor part being left to the gods, in the same way as in the ancient Greek and Roman religions.

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<sup>70</sup> See Bagge, *Society and Politics*, pp. 66-70, 158-60.

<sup>71</sup> See Bagge, *From Gang Leader*, pp. 94-106, 147-60. I shall discuss the following in greater detail in my forthcoming book, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom. State Formation in Norway c. 900-1350*.

<sup>72</sup> On the following, see Bagge, 'Christianization', pp. 127-29.



By contrast, Christianity meant that the faithful had to support a numerous and wealthy class of religious specialists. The clergy in medieval Norway around 1300 – admittedly long after the missionary period – is estimated at around 2000 people, that is, one per 175-225 inhabitants (depending on the size of the population which is very uncertain), compared to one per 3800 in 1970. Further, this class received a tax of one tenth of the agricultural production and may have owned around 40 % of the land rent in the country. No doubt the wealth of the Church was not only the result of the conversion, but also of demographic and economic change, which favoured secular landowners as well. Nor did this wealth exclusively benefit the clergy; parts of it were returned to broader strata of the population in the form of hospitals, alms, and numerous opportunities for laymen to make a career in the service of the ecclesiastical aristocracy. Nevertheless, the main benefit the laity received from the Church was of a spiritual nature: by sacrificing material wealth, they gained the spiritual treasures the Church could offer which gave them protection against the dangers facing them in this life as well as in the life to come.

From a materialistic point of view, the clergy might well be regarded as a parasitic class, and even believers might think that the clergy gave little in return for the wealth they received. Nevertheless, they were not only parasitic, they also constituted an organised bureaucracy with a well-defined purpose – admittedly only partly conforming to the Weberian ideal – in which office-holders were appointed and certain skills were necessary for appointment. A number of important social functions were now brought under the control of a centralised organisation. The establishment and expansion of the ecclesiastical bureaucracy thus formed a major step in the direction of organised government. There was, however, a well-developed and apparently effective ecclesiastical jurisdiction which interfered in a number of matters in local society that had earlier been of no concern to the central power: fasts and rest from labour on holidays, marriage and sexual life, testaments, the protection of clerics against laymen, to give a few examples. This ecclesiastical jurisdiction and its procedures also formed an important model for the development of the royal courts. It is doubtful whether it would have been possible to bureaucratise anything other than religion to the same extent under contemporary conditions. Thus, despite occasional rivalry and conflict between the monarchy and the Church during the Middle Ages, there can hardly be any doubt about the common interests uniting the two institutions and the importance of the Church in developing an ideology for the exercise of secular power, in serving as a model and a recruiting ground for the royal

bureaucracy and last, but not least, in contributing to the general bureaucratisation of society. Although the doctrine of *Konungs skuggsjá* at times seems wildly exaggerated, it is no coincidence that it is expressed at this time and in this milieu.

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