

The Legendary Sagas

Definition

Legendary Saga (*fornaldarsaga*)

A prose narrative recounting deeds of a legendary nature in a setting that is remote in time and space (Continental Scandinavia; occasionally further). The action tends to centre on adventure and heroic exploits.

Definition

Legendary Saga (*fornaldarsaga*)

A prose narrative recounting deeds of a legendary nature in a setting that is remote in time and space (Continental Scandinavia; occasionally further). The action tends to centre on adventure and heroic exploits.

Thematically close to romance (*riddarasogur*), but without the emphasis on courtly culture and exploits.

Definition

Legendary Saga (*fornaldarsaga*)

A prose narrative recounting deeds of a legendary nature in a setting that is remote in time and space (Continental Scandinavia; occasionally further). The action tends to centre on adventure and heroic exploits.

Thematically close to romance (*riddarasogur*), but without the emphasis on courtly culture and exploits.

May contain poetry, but less commonly the dense skaldic verse found in the sagas of Icelanders.

Definition

Legendary Saga (*fornaldarsaga*)

A prose narrative recounting deeds of a legendary nature in a setting that is remote in time and space (Continental Scandinavia; occasionally further). The action tends to centre on adventure and heroic exploits.

Thematically close to romance (*riddarasögur*), but without the emphasis on courtly culture and exploits.

May contain poetry, but less commonly the dense skaldic verse found in the sagas of Icelanders.

c. 30 legendary sagas survive. c. 7 shorter tales (legendary *þættir*) survive.

Themes

- ▶ Raiding and warfare
- ▶ Quests
- ▶ Exploration / distant lands
- ▶ Royalty
- ▶ *troll* and *finnar* (Sami)
- ▶ Óðinn and the valkyries
- ▶ Magic and the supernatural assume a more prominent place: these texts are closer to fairytales than to being at all realistic

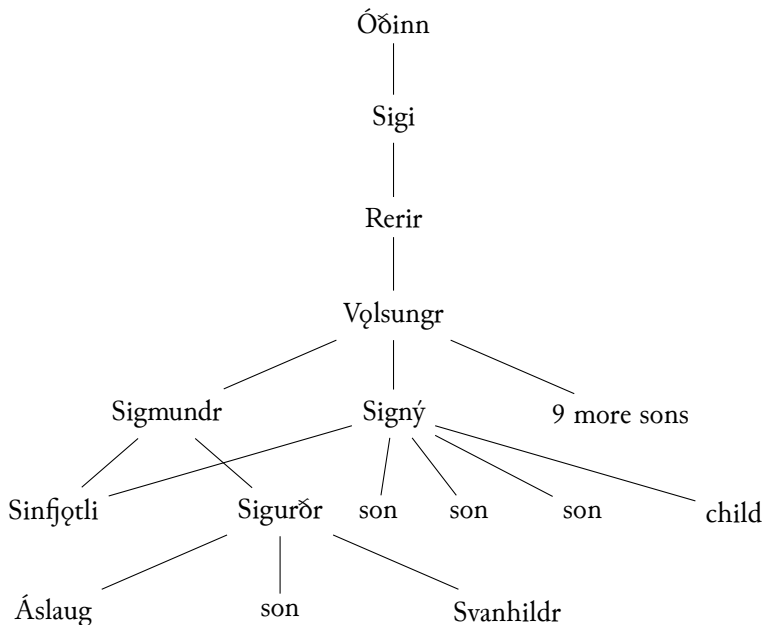
Compare

- ▶ Romance (*riddara sögur*)
- ▶ Sagas of Icelanders (*Íslendinga sögur*)
- ▶ Kings' sagas (*konunga sögur*)
- ▶ Bishops' sagas and saints' lives (*heilagra manna sögur*)
- ▶ Contemporary sagas (*samtíðarsögur*)

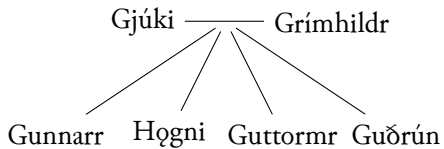
Some Notable Titles

- ▶ *Völsunga saga*: the Nibelungen one
- ▶ *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*: the English one/History Channel one
- ▶ *Hrólfs saga kraka*: the *Beowulf* one
- ▶ *Ketils saga hængs*: the Sami one
- ▶ *Göngu-Hrólfs saga*: the Russian one
- ▶ *Qrvar-Odds saga*: the one with the long-lived hero
- ▶ *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*: the warrior princess one
- ▶ *Bósa saga ok Herrauðs*: the dirty one

Völsungar (according to *Völsunga saga*)



Gjúkungar



Bibliography

- Arnold, Matthew, and Alison Finlay, eds. *Making History: Essays on the fornaldarsögur*. Exeter: Short Run, 2010.
- Driscoll, Matthew J., ed. "Stories for All Times: The Icelandic Fornaldarsögur." Accessed January 14, 2019.
<http://fasnl.ku.dk>.
- Lassen, Annette, Agneta Ney, and Ármann Jakobsson, eds. *The Legendary Sagas: Origins and Development*. Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2012.
- Torfi H. Tulinius. *The Matter of the North: The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*. Translated by Randi C. Eldevik. The Viking Collection 13. Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2002.