A saga in a network and a network of a saga

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Computer-assisted methods of analysis open wide possibilities for asking new research questions and exploring new areas of textual and manuscript studies, which lie outside the reach of traditional methods. These can be questions of historical reception of texts, ethnic genre in literature, or authorship form attribution. At the same time, computer-assisted analysis of texts preserved in manuscript form poses numerous challenges, from the instability of manuscripts as artefacts, through orthographic and textual variations, to multiple reworkings of texts. The proposed paper illustrates some of these possibilities and challenges on an example of the transmission history of a single Old Norse saga: Hrómundar saga Greipssonar. The presentation will be based on my doctoral thesis defended at the University of Copenhagen in December 2018.

In my unpublished thesis I examined the textual transmission of Hrómundar saga in multiple manuscripts from perspective of material philology (Nichols 1990; 1997) and transmission history (Ruh 1985; Löser 2004). Inspired by Alaric Hall’s (2013) work on Konráðs saga keisarasonar, the main focus of my study was on the stemmatic relationships among various material texts of the saga (witnesses) and on the manuscript context in which the saga appears (co-occurrence with other texts). These networks of texts and manuscripts played a significant role in understanding the transmission and reception of the saga throughout centuries. This research resulted in a discovery of a new saga of Hrómundur, which appears in a quite different manuscript context than the older saga.

Bibliography


