Dreams in Old Norse-Icelandic Royal Biographies as Representations of the Dynastic Identity

The Case of the Fairhair Dynasty

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1. Ringlets and Tree: Representations of the Dynastic Identity in Kings' Saga

	Hkr.: Heimskringla	Fsk.: Fagrskinna	Msk: Morkinskinna
Assumed Date of Composition	ca. 1220 (s)	ca. 1220	ca. 1220; revised by ca. 1270
Period Covered	From: Mythical Past To: 1177 A. D.	From: Hálfdan svarti To: 1177 A. D.	From: 1030 To: 1157 A. D.
The Ringlets Dream	0	0	×
Tree Dream #01	0	×	×
Tree Dream #02	0	×	0

- Two kinds of dreams in Kings' Sagas (*Hkr.*; *Fsk.*)
 - Dream of Ringlets (King Hálfdan svarti) Cf. Fsk.
 - Dream of a Tree (Queen Ragnhildr): Only in *Hkr*.
- : anticipating their son, Haraldr hárfagri and 'his' dynasty
- Question: Do these two kinds of dream in *Hkr*. represent the same ideological concept of the 'Fairhair Dynasty'?
- Few previous researches have analyzed ideological implications of the two dreams separately.
- Of these two kinds of dreams, the tree dream is arguably closer to *Hkr*'s ideological concept.

2. Two Tree Dreams, Anticipating the Arrival of two Haraldrs in Hkr.

- Snorri, *Hkr*.'s 'compiler', employed the dream of a tree not once, but <u>twice</u> in the narrative: both of the dreams anticipated two namesake Haraldrs, constituting a typological (?) <u>pair</u>—
- The aim of duplicating: <u>to strengthen the</u> legitimacy of the newer Haraldr (Haraldr gilli)

3. Haraldr hárfagri & Haraldr gilli

- 'Civil War' Period in Norway (1130-1240) and Haraldr gilli, with less self-evident paternity
- Literature as a tool for political propaganda
- Twofold 're-'definition of the dynastic identity by two Haraldrs: Only the descendants of both Haraldrs (Haraldr hárfagri; Haraldr gilli) is to be eligible as a ruler of Norway!

4. Snorri & the *Birkibeinar* Rulers

- Rulers of the *Birkibeinar* (See the red column in the right): almost all related to Haraldr Gilli
- Most of the anti-*Birkibeinar* rulers (see the blue column): offspring of Sigurðr Jórsalafari
- →Ideological function of the two tree dreams: favored the *Birkibeinar*'s claim against others
- Snorri's 'Norwegian' connection (see ☆: right)
 - ①: served 5 Birkibeinar rulers as a skald
 - 2: needed political support abroad

Genealogical Table of the 'Fairhair Dynasty', based on Hkr. Hálfdan svarti Ragnhildr Svási, king of the Finns Dream of a Tree (1st) Several Haraldr hárfagri Snæfríðr Wives Several Sons Björn kaupmaðr Sigurðr hrísi Three Sons Two Óláfr inn helgi Haraldr hardráði Generations Omitted Magnús inn góði Óláfr kyrri Magnús Dream of a Magnús berföttr Tree (2nd) Siguror Jórsalafari Two Sons Haraldr gilli Sigurðr slembidjákn Mar-Eysteinn Ingi Sigurðr munn Magnús Kristína garét Fillipus Eysteinn meyla Magnús Erlingsson Simonsson Hákon herbrei Sverrir☆ Cecilia Sigurðr lavard Hákon galinn☆ Hákon (III) Skúli☆ Sigurðr Erling Steinvegg Ingi Margarét Hákon (IV)☆ Sigurðr Ribbung Name (in ON) : Male royal member (king) of the 'Fairhair Dynasty' : Female royal member of the 'Fairhair Dynasty' Name : Male royal member (non-king) of the Dynasty Name Ruler of the *Birkibeinar* Ruler of the anti-*Birkibeinar* Factions ----:: Half-brother via motherly side ----:: Disputed paternity : Blood relation with King Haraldr gilli ☆: To whom Snorri : Blood relation with King Sigurðr Jórsalafari dedicated a poem

Concluding Remarks: Snorri's Flattery?

- Diverse concept(s) of the 'Fairhair Dynasty' as a political-ideological agenda in ON historiography
- Snorri/ *Hkr*.'s definition by two dreams of a tree: unique, in regard with the favor to the *Birkibeinar*
- The historical tradition of Haraldr hárfagri and his dynasty: developed rather as political agendas, entwined with the political and ideological power struggles in contemporary Norway.