

# 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

	<i>Hkr.</i> : <i>Heimskringla</i>	<i>Fsk.</i> : <i>Fagrskinna</i>	<i>Msk.</i> : <i>Morkinskinna</i>
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: Hálfðan svarti To: 1177 A. D.	From: 1030 To: 1157 A. D.
The Ringlets Dream	○	○	×
Tree Dream #01	○	×	×
Tree Dream #02	○	×	○

■ Two kinds of dreams in Kings' Sagas (*Hkr.*; *Fsk.* )

➤ Dream of Ringlets (King Hálfðan 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 twice in the narrative: both of the dreams anticipated two namesake Haraldrs, constituting a typological (?) pair

■ The aim of duplicating: to strengthen the 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**

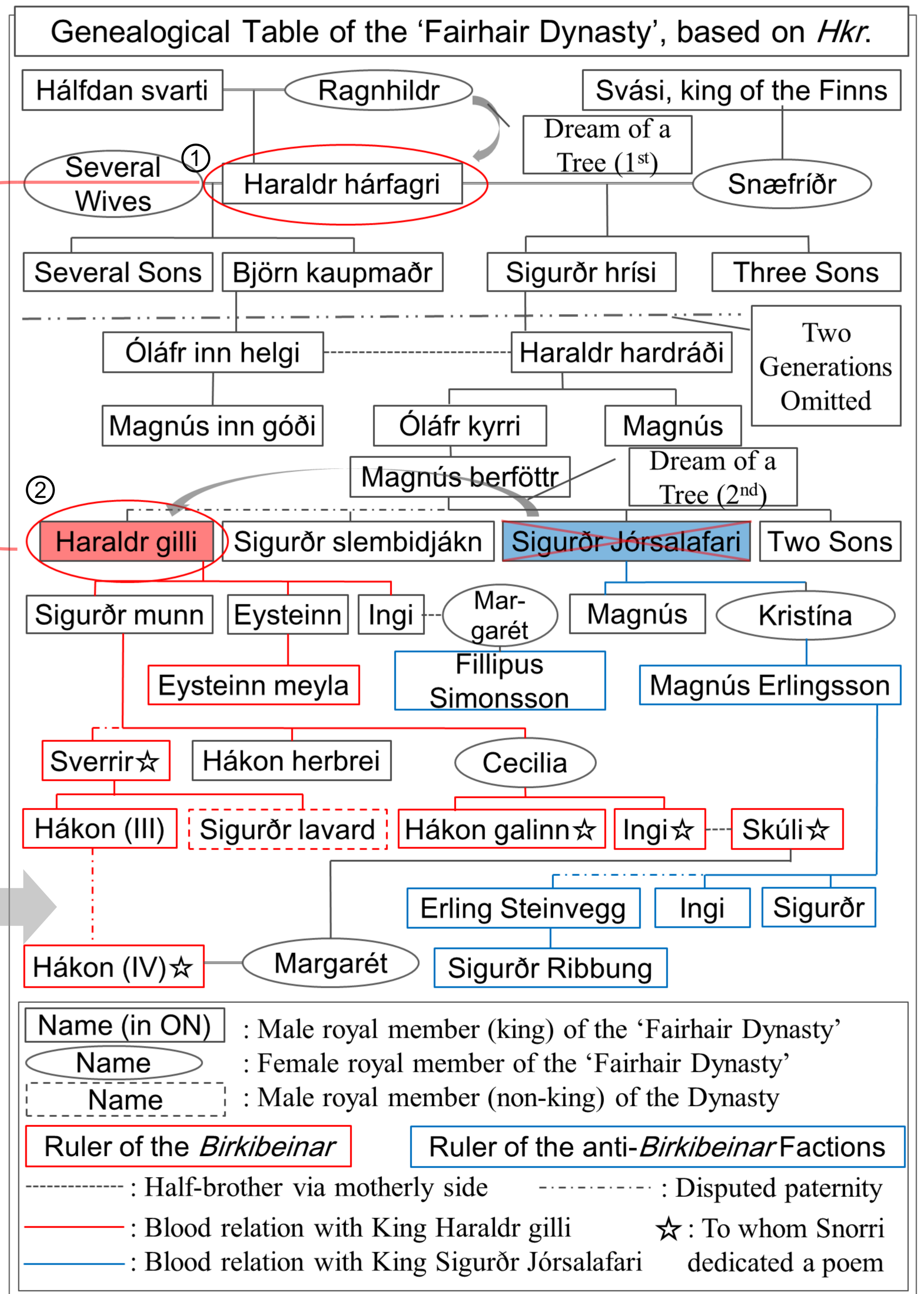
■ Most of the anti-*Birkibeinar* rulers (see the blue column): offspring of **Sigurðr Jórsalafari**

→ 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



### 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.