

The Saga of the Confederates is a critique of legal suits brought on account of greed, and admits few other readings. Odd, the son of Ofeig, went on a trading voyage and left Ospak in charge of his Goddord and his estate. When he returned, Ospak did not want to relinquish what he had been leant. So, Odd drew his sword and compelled Ospak to return what was his (4). Later, Odd has reason to believe that Ospak stole his sheep. Odd and his kinsman Vali search for Ospak, but Ospak hides and gives Vali a mortal wound(4). Odd brings a case against Ospak at the Althing, but errs by summoning witnesses from his district, and not from the althing. Two cheiftains, Styrmir and Thorarin, catch the error and use this technicality to destroy Odd's suit(5). The cheiftains then leave the court. Ofeig, Odd's father, then intervenes, and asks the court whether justice or procedure is more important. Additionally, "from time to time Ofeig let the purse slip down below his cape and then pulled it up again" (6). Ofeig gives the purse to the judges, and they outlaw Ospak. In response, Styrmir and Thorarin gather their friends and pledge to bring suit against Odd for bribery. Styrmir and Thorarin "explained the situation and how the case then stood, and also how much of Odd's wealth was up for grabs and that they would all get very rich out of it" (7). Styrmir, Thorarin, and their confederates are depicted as greedy, while no such negative characterizations are attached to Ofeig. Ofeig has actually bribed judges, even though he was initially described as "a very wise man, and a shrewd advisor ... a man of distinction" (1). But apparently, retaliating for bribery is greedy, while bribing itself is virtuous. The story rewards Ofeig with some riches and peace, while the confederates get nothing, although a suit against Ofeig for bribery is entirely within their rights. If this story was merely a criticism of legal technicalities interfering with justice, then the judges would have listened to Ofeig without a bribe. If the story was a criticism of bribery, then Ofeig would have been humiliated, instead of the confederates. This story must then be a criticism of greed. Ofeig, since he is willing to give up wealth by giving many bribes, is not greedy, while greed motivates the confederates, and causes strife. The Saga of the Confederates critiques greed, like the Saga of the Volsungs and Egil's saga.