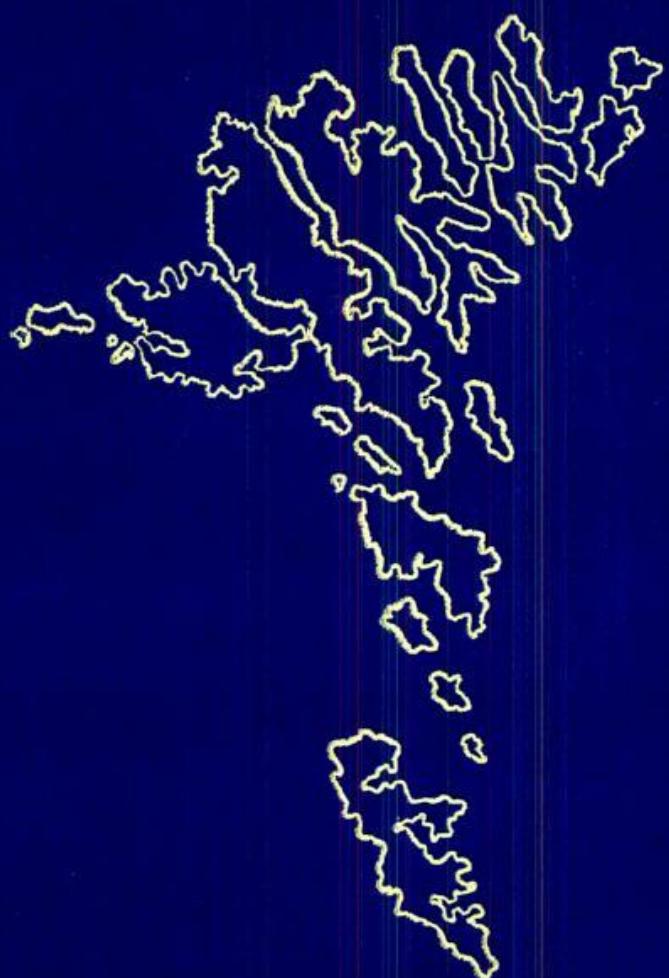


# the faroese saga



# **THE FAROESE SAGA**

Freely translated with maps and genealogical tables.

This one



KZLA-UC5-9NX6

Material chráněný autorskými právy

### Acknowledgments

We would like to record our deep appreciation to all who have assisted us with comments and given us encouragement in the course of this work.

In particular, we would like to express our thanks to John Davidson of Tórshavn, who checked the genealogical tables, and to Alex Bell for his excellent illustrations.

© G. V. C. Young, Q.B.E. and C. R. Clewer, B.A.(Hons.), 1973.

### ERRATA

- (1) The omitted name on Streymoy in Map A should read 'Tórshavn.'
- (2) The omitted line in Table E should read 'Steingrim = Thora.'

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# THE FAROESE SAGA

*Freely translated with maps  
and genealogical tables*

by

G. V. C. YOUNG, O.B.E.  
and  
CYNTHIA R. CLEWER, B.A. (Hons.)



BELFAST 1973

## TO THE READER

This translation of the *Faereyíngá Saga* is free rather than verbatim, and is designed to bring this delightful piece of Viking history to as large a number of readers as possible.

We have borne in mind the fact that the Saga was written for live audiences rather than readers and we have endeavoured, to the best of our ability, to retain this style.

We have tried, as far as possible, to give place names their modern local spellings or equivalent, but to anglicize the names of persons.

The maps and genealogical tables are intended to bring the Saga more clearly before the eyes of the reader, and to try to make it even more interesting than it would otherwise be. The dates given in the tables are compiled partly from those given by C. C. Rafn, in the Danish translation of the *Faereyfngá Saga*, published in 1832, partly from those contained in the notes to the *Føroyingasøga* of Hedin Brú and Rikard Long, which refer to views expressed by Professor Finnur Jónsson, and partly from our own deductions based on the facts contained in the Saga in relation to other dates. We recognise the fact that Finnur Jónsson's dates do not always coincide with those given by Rafn, and we have, on the whole, followed the former in cases where differences exist; but on occasions we have tried to arrive at a compromise. We do not suggest that the dates we have given are anything more than approximations, but we hope that we are not too far wide of the mark.

In conclusion, we hope that our readers may share some of the very great pleasure which we have had in translating this Saga and in preparing the various maps and tables.

GVCY  
CRC

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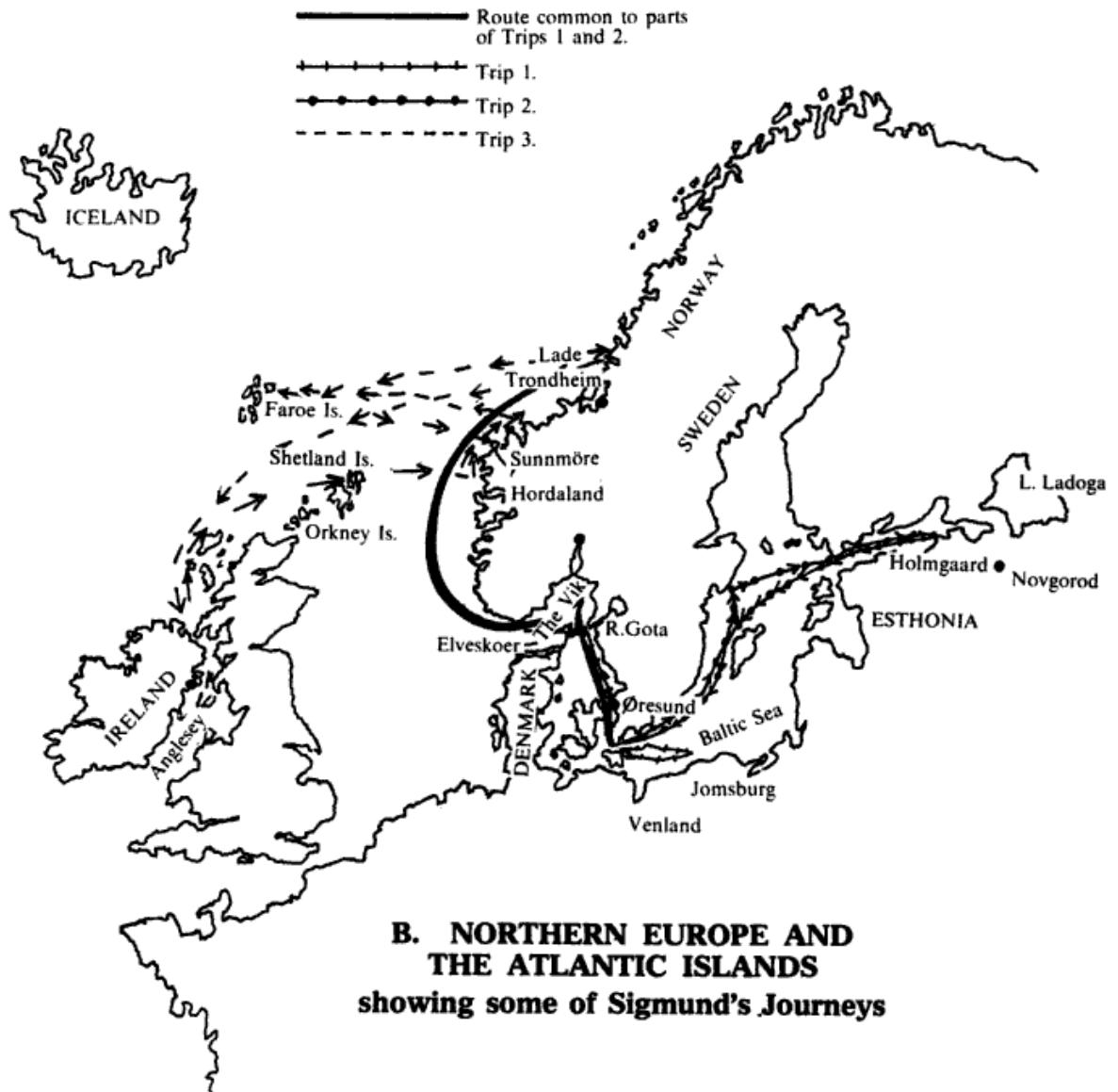
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**A. THE FAROE ISLANDS**  
**indicating certain places mentioned in**  
**the SAGA**



**B. NORTHERN EUROPE AND  
THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS  
showing some of Sigmund's Journeys**

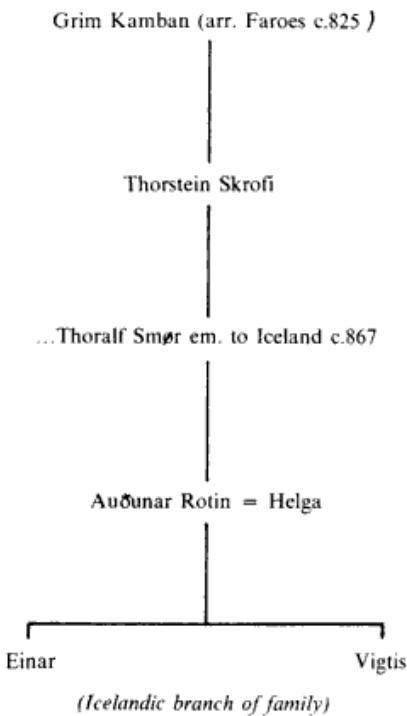


**C. NORWAY**  
**indicating certain places mentioned in  
the SAGA**

**Tunsberg to Lade. Journey of Sigmund and Thorer.**

\*Home of Thorkel Barfrost in exile.

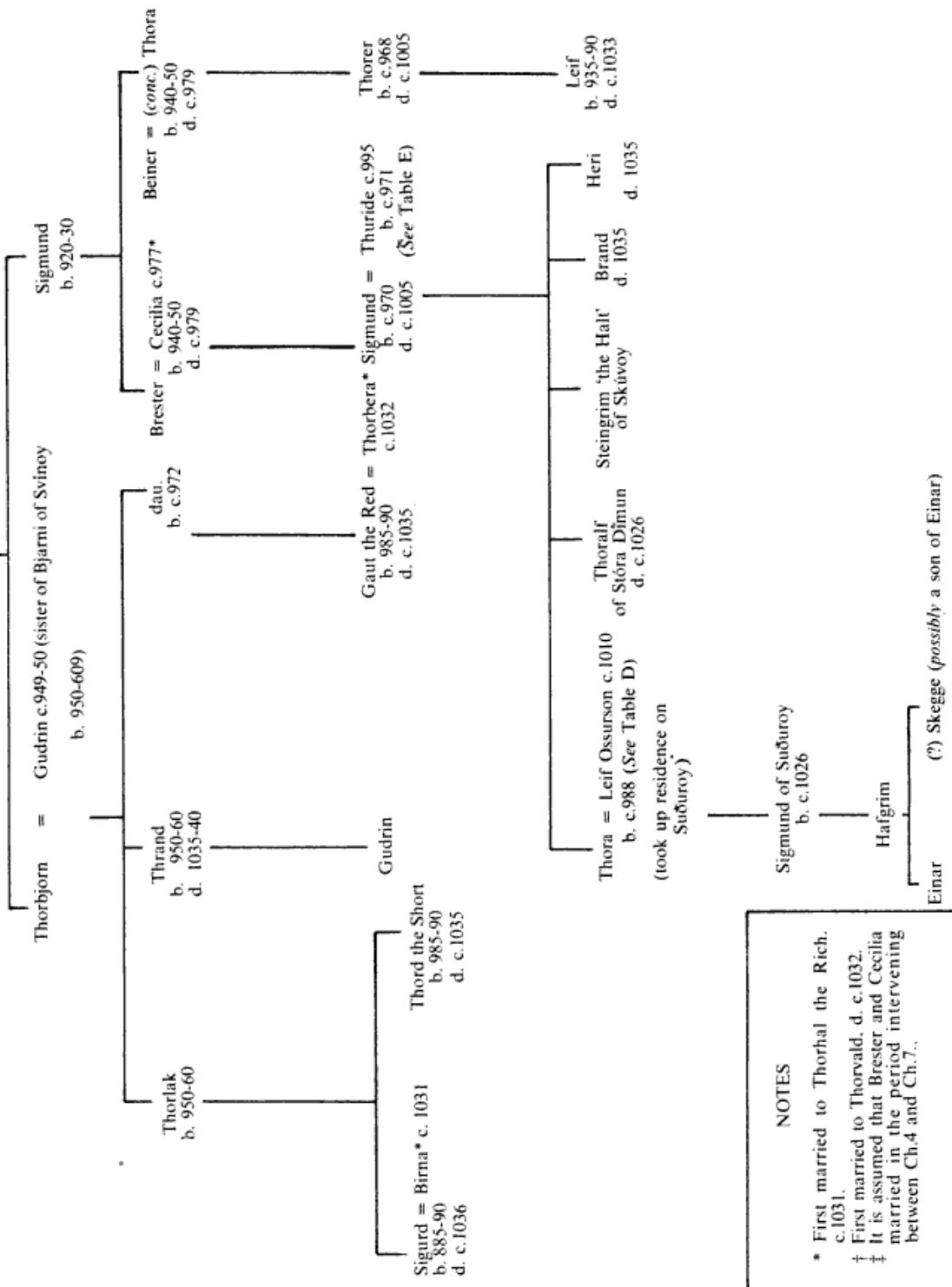
TABLE A



NOTE: Oluf, daughter of Thorstein the Red, and Ravna Flóka's daughter are both stated to be ancestresses of Thrond. Thoralf Smor accompanied Ravna Flóka to Iceland in 867. There is, however, no evidence to prove the connections between Oluf's side of the Thrond family and Ravna Flóka's daughter, nor of either of them with Grim Kamban.

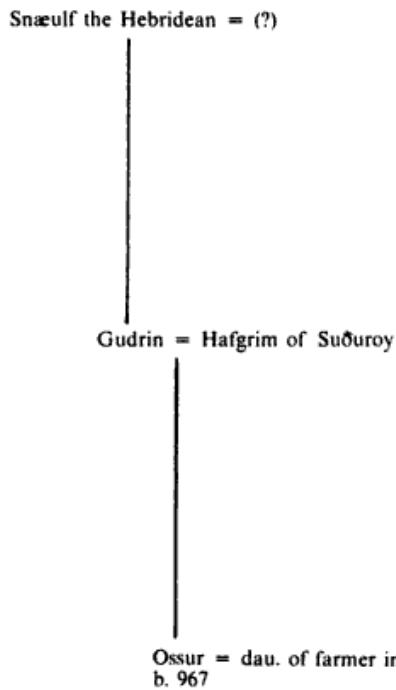
#### Genealogical Table of Grim Kamban.

TABLE B



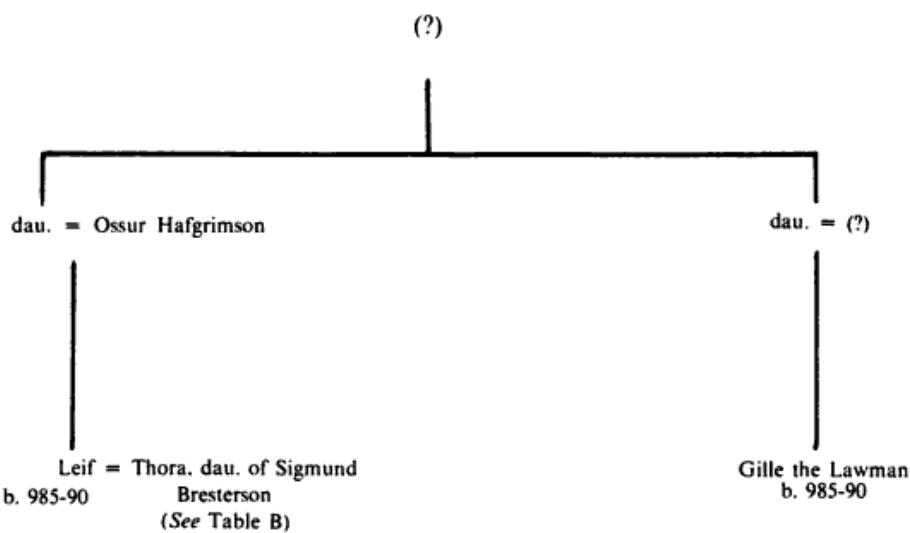
Genealogical Table of Thorbjorn and Silmund.

TABLE C



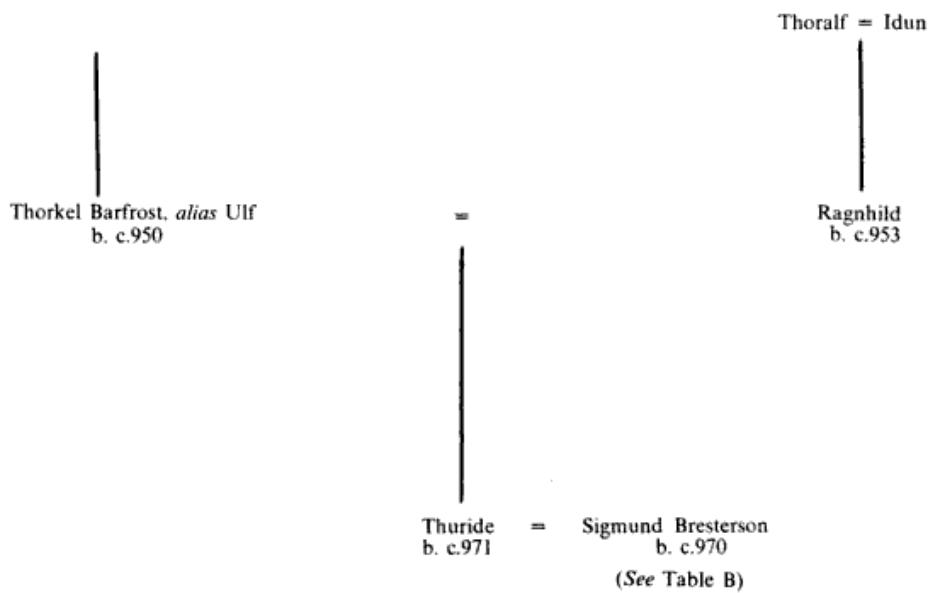
Genealogical Table of Snaeulf the Hebridean.

TABLE D



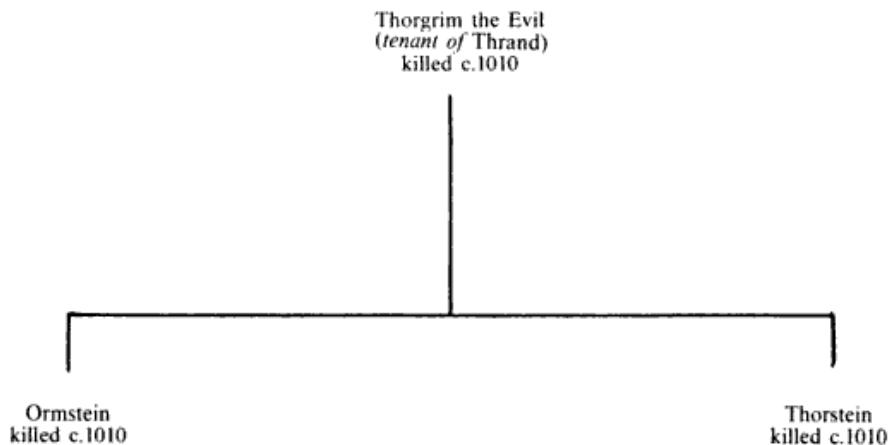
Genealogical Table (showing descent) of Leif Ossurson and Gille the Law Man.

TABLE E



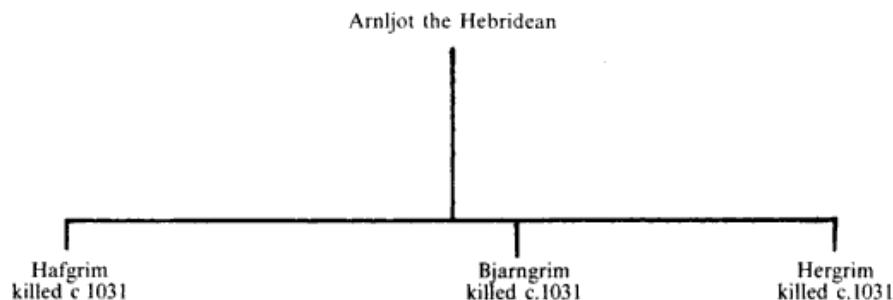
Genealogical Table of Steingrim and Thoralf.

TABLE F



Genealogical Table of Thorgrim the Evil.

TABLE G



Genealogical Table of Arnljot the Hebridean.

# THE FAROESE SAGA

## 1. INTRODUCTORY

There was a man called Grim Kamban. It was he who first colonized the Faroe Islands in the time of Harald Fairhair. There were many people at that time who fled from the tyranny of the King, of whom some settled down in the Faroes and made their abode there; but others sought out other deserted countries. Aud, the extremely rich

(or deep-minded), set out for Iceland, and on the way landed in the Faroes, where she gave away in marriage Thorstein the Red's daughter Oluf\*, and from her stemmed the leading Faroese family which is called the Götuskeggs. They lived on Eysturoy.

### Notes on Chapter 1

The first direct reference to the Faroes is contained in Dicuil's *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*, written in 825 A.D. According to Dicuil (an Irish monk), Irish monks first went to certain islands (generally accepted to be the Faroes) about one hundred years previously (c.727) but, by 825, the islands were, as a result of the activities of the Vikings, deserted except for sheep and sea-birds.

The general view prevalent nowadays is that Chapter 1 of the *Saga* is inaccurate when it says that Grim Kamban settled in the Faroes in the time of Harald Fairhair. Grim Kamban's settlement of the Faroes is in general placed at 825.

\*Anglicised form Olive



Grim Kamban comes to the Faroes.



Holmgeir the Rich offers a ring to the brothers Sigurd and Harek.

## 2. THRAND TRAVELS TO DENMARK

There was a man who was called Thorbjorn and he came to be called Götuskegg. He lived on Eysturoy in the Faroes. His wife was called Gudrun. They had two sons, the elder of whom was called Thorlak and the younger Thrand. They were promising young men. Thorlak was big and strong, and Thrand possessed the same qualities when he grew up; however, there were great differences between these brothers. Thrand was red-haired, had freckles on his face and was stern of countenance. Thorbjorn was a rich man and was already old in years when this happened. Thorlak married on the island and remained at home with his father at Götu, but shortly after Thorlak had married Thorbjorn Götuskegg died and was carried out and buried in a barrow according to ancient custom, for at that time the Faroese were all still pagan. His sons divided the inheritance between them. Both wanted to have the main farm at Götu because it was the finest

property. They then cast lots for it, and as a result the farm at Götu went to Thrand. After the division Thorlak asked Thrand if he, Thorlak, might have the principal farm in return for Thrand getting the greater part of the personal property, but Thrand would not allow this. Then Thorlak went away and took up another residence in the islands. Thrand let out the land at Götu to different men and took as large a rent for it as he could get. Then he set out to sea in the summer, but he had only a few articles of merchandise. He went to Norway where he stayed on a farm during the winter and brooded the whole time.

In those days Harald Greycloak reigned over Norway. The following summer Thrand went down to Denmark with some traders and, before the summer was out, came to Elsinore. At that time there was a great crowd of people gathered there, and it is recorded that a market time there

came to this place the largest gathering of people that had ever assembled in the Nordic countries. King Harald Gormson, nicknamed Bluetooth, was, at that time, at Elsinore during the summer accompanied by a great following. Of the King's advisers two are mentioned, the brothers Sigurd and Harek. They went around the market continually with the intention of buying the largest and most superior gold ring they could get. They came eventually to a very well-appointed booth where there sat a man who gave them a very good reception and asked them what they wanted to buy. They replied that they wanted a large, good, gold ring for themselves, whereupon he said that there was a good selection to choose from. They then asked him for his name and he replied that he called himself Holmgeir the Rich.

He then took out his jewels and showed them a thick gold ring, which was of great value, but he put such a high price on it that they could not immediately see any way of raising the amount of silver which he demanded; accordingly, they asked him if he would reserve it for them until the next day. This he then promised to do. Having settled this affair, they went away and the night passed by. In the morning Sigurd went away from the tent, but Harek stayed behind. Shortly afterwards Sigurd came back to the entrance of the tent and said: 'Harek my kinsman, quickly hand me the bag with which we decided to buy the ring, because the bargain is now sealed; but bide you here in the meantime and look after the booth.' Harek then passed Sigurd the silver through the tent opening.

### 3. THRAND'S ADVICE

Shortly afterwards, Sigurd came back to the tent to his brother, and said: 'Come now, out with the silver, the deal is now completed.' 'I gave it to you just a moment ago,' his brother replied. 'No,' said Sigurd, 'I never received it.' Then they got tired of this argument and reported the affair to the King. He, like others, realised that the money had been stolen. The King then put a ban on all departures so that no ship was allowed to sail before the case had been cleared up. Many found it a great inconvenience, as indeed it was, to stay on there after the market was over.

The Norwegians then held a meeting so that they could deliberate. Thrand was present and spoke as follows: 'Here the people are very perplexed,' he said. 'Have you got any advice to give?' they asked. 'Certainly,' he answered. 'Come forward with your advice then,' they continued. 'I will give it to you to-day,' he replied. They asked him what he demanded. He replied: 'Each of you shall give me a silver øre.' They said that that was a lot. However, they agreed that each one of them should straight away put half an øre into Thrand's hand, and promised him another half if his proposal made good headway. The following day the King held a meeting of his Council (*Thing*), and pronounced his decision, namely that no one should depart from that place until the matter of the theft had been finally cleared

up. Then a young man with a great head of red hair, freckled face and very stern countenance got up. He took the oath and spoke as follows: 'The people here are very perplexed,' he said. The King's advisers asked what counsel he had worked out. 'It is my advice,' replied the young man, 'that everyone who has come here should hand out as much silver as the King demands, and when this amount has been collected in one place, a sum should be paid over to the injured party to compensate him for his injury; but the balance should be kept by the King as a token of respect, because I know he will use his share well. And the people will not have to remain here as if they were immured, to their great detriment, and a great multitude of people is assembled here.'

This proposal immediately received universal approval, and the shipmasters said that they would prefer to give the money and the token respect to the King rather than linger there to their great loss. They decided on this solution and collected the money, and it amounted to a considerable sum. Immediately after this a large number of the ships sailed away. The King again held a Council Meeting, and they inspected the vast sum of money which had been collected. From this the brothers first received compensation for their injury. Then the King spoke with his

men regarding what should be done with the great riches which remained.

Then a man took the oath and said: 'What do you think the man who gave the counsel deserves?' They saw then that it was the same young man who had given the advice.

Thereupon King Harald said: 'All this wealth shall be divided into two parts and my men shall have one half, and the other half shall again be divided into two parts; one half of this half shall go to this young man, but I will take the other half.' Thrand thanked the King with fair, sweet words, and it was such an extremely great amount of wealth which fell to Thrand that it would have been extremely difficult to count the number of marks. King Harald sailed away, and so did the vast crowd of people who had been there. Thrand

travelled to Norway with the Norwegian merchants, and they paid him the money which he had stipulated. There\* he bought a large, good cargo ship which he loaded with a considerable amount of goods, which he had acquired on this journey. Then he set sail with this ship for the Faroes, and arrived there with his goods safe and sound.

In the spring he put his place in Götu into order, and now he was not lacking in wealth. Thrand was a big man with red hair and a red beard, freckled and stern in appearance, sombrely disposed, cunning and obsequious in all his schemes, unsociable and bad to ordinary people, yet sweet-spoken to his superiors, but always deceitful in his heart.

\*i.e. in Norway

#### 4. SIGMUND BRESTERSON AND THORER ARE BORN

There was a man called Hafgrim who lived on Suðuroy in the Faroes. He was a powerful man, robust, and rich in property. His wife was called Gudrid and she was a daughter of Snæulf. Hafgrim was chief over half of the islands, and had this half on lease from King Harald Greycloak who, at that time, ruled over Norway. Hafgrim was of very impetuous disposition, but, according to his reputation, was not very wise. He had a man with him called Einar with the additional name 'the Hebridean.' With Hafgrim there was also another man, Eldjarn Kamhat\* by name; he was stupid, malicious, lazy and impetuous, a gossip and insolent in speech, mendacious and slanderous. In the saga are mentioned two brothers who lived on Skúvoy; the one was called Brester and the other Beiner. They were sons of Sigmund, who was a brother of Thrand's father, Thorbjorn Götuskegg. Brester and Beiner were famous men and were chiefs over half of the Faroes, which they had on lease from Earl Hakon Sigurdson who, at that time, had dominion over Trondheim. They were Earl Hakon's courtiers, and his dearest friends. Brester surpassed all in size and strength, and was more warlike than all

the others who had dominion over the Faroes at that time. He was impressive in appearance and dextrous at all games. Beiner resembled his brother in many respects, but could not be compared with him. There was not a very good understanding between these brothers and Thrand, although they were closely related to each other. The brothers were unmarried but had mistresses. Brester's mistress was called Cecilia and Beiner's Thora. Brester had a son, Sigmund by name, who was promising from an early age. Beiner also had a son, who was called Thorer, and he was two years older than Sigmund. These children were very young at the time when the events we are about to relate took place. Apart from the farm where they lived, the brothers had another, smaller, farm on Dímun (Stóra Dímun). Hafgrim's father-in-law Snæulf, who by descent was a man of Suðuroy and had left that island for the other Faroese islands on account of a murder he had committed now lived on Sandoy on that account and because of the subsequent trouble. He had been on Vikings raids in his younger days, and he was still unpleasant and hard to get on with.

\*Otherwise called Kambhött



Portrait of Thrand.

*five*

## 5. MISFORTUNES IN THE FAROES

On Svínoy there was a man who was called Bjarni\* and he came to be called Svínoy-Bjarni. He was a good farmer and had a lot of property. He was the maternal uncle of Thrand, who lived in Götu and was a very cunning man. The inhabitants of the Faroes held their Council Meeting on Streymoy, where a harbour called Tórshavn is situated. Hafgrim, who lived on Suðuroy on the farm called Hóv, was a great idolator because at that time paganism still prevailed in the Faroes. Now it happened that at one harvest time Einar from the Hebrides and Eldjarn Kamhat were sitting at the sacrificial pyre with Farmer Hafgrim. They began to make comparisons between certain people. Einar praised his kinsmen Brester and Beiner, but Eldjarn praised Hafgrim, and called him the most outstanding. Things went so far that Eldjarn jumped up and struck Einar with a piece of wood that he had in his hand. It caught Einar on the shoulder and he became very indignant about it. Einar then seized an axe and struck Kamhat on the head with it, so that he was wounded and fainted. When Hafgrim got to know about this, he drove Einar away and told him he should go to his friends on Skúvoy and live with them since he had been on their side. 'In the end,' added Hafgrim, 'whether it be sooner or later, the people of Skúvoy and I shall tackle each other.' Einar left and went to the brothers and told them what had happened. They received him kindly, and he spent the winter there and was well treated. Einar asked his friend Brester to take on his case for him, and this he promised to

do. Brester was a sensible man and learned in the law. In the winter Hafgrim took a ship to Skúvoy and came to the brothers and asked them how they wished to compensate the injury which Einar had inflicted on Eldjarn Kamhat. Brester replied that they should take the case to the best man for judgment, so that there should be a reasonable and amicable settlement. 'There will be no amicable settlement,' replied Hafgrim, 'unless I counsel one.'

Then Hafgrim summoned Einar before the Council Meeting at Streymoy, and at that they parted.

Immediately after the incident had occurred Brester had made known the fact that Kamhat had attacked Einar first. Then both parties went to the Council Meeting and brought many people with them. But when Hafgrim went to the court to prosecute the case against Einar, the brothers Brester and Beiner went to the other side with a large crowd and Brester caused Hafgrim to lose the case: he submitted that Kamhat had broken the domestic peace, contrary to the ancient law of the country, in that he had struck a blameless man. This gave the case a twist different from that which Hafgrim had desired. At this Hafgrim said indignantly that this would be avenged, but Brester declared that he was prepared for it and that he (Brester) did not care about Hafgrim's threats. They then parted, the case having been disposed of.

\*Anglicised form Barney

## 6. THRAND'S COUNSEL AGAINST BRESTER AND BEINER

Shortly after this, Hafgrim left home accompanied by six men and also by his wife, Gudrid. They went by ship to Sandoy where his father-in-law (the father of his wife Gudrid) lived. When they arrived at the island, they saw nobody outside the farm and nobody out on the island. They went up into the house, but again there was nobody there. They went into the main room and there found a table laid with food and drink, but there was nobody there. They considered this strange, and remained there for the night. But the

next morning they prepared to depart and sailed along the coast of the island. Then a ship rowed towards them from the other side of the island with many people on board, and they recognised Farmer Snæulf and his whole household. Hafgrim then rowed towards them, and greeted his father-in-law Snæulf. Hafgrim then asked Snæulf what advice he would give in relation to the case between himself and the brothers Brester and Beiner, so that he might come out of it with honour.

'You are a bad man,' replied Snæulf, 'in that you are prosecuting without cause a man who is better than you, but you, however, must yield.'

'I had expected from you something more useful than reproof,' said Hafgrim, 'and I will listen to none of that from you.' Snæulf seized a spear and hurled it at Hafgrim, but the latter held up his shield in front of him and the spear stuck fast in it and so he was not wounded.

With the affair so disposed of, they parted, and Hafgrim sailed home to Suðuroy and was ill pleased with his trip. Hafgrim had, by his wife Gudrid, a son, Ossur by name, who was nine years old when this incident took place, and he was a promising child. The time slipped by in this way.

Hafgrim sailed home to Eysturoy to see Thrand, who received him kindly. Then Hafgrim asked Thrand's opinion as to what he would advise him to do regarding the affair between him and the two brothers from Skúvoy, Brester and Beiner, and said that Thrand was the wisest man in the Faroes, adding that he (Hafgrim) would willingly give him (Thrand) something in return. Thrand said that it was strange to ask him to take part in an attack against his own kinsmen. 'And you cannot be in earnest,' he added, 'be-

cause I observe that you are so minded that you will have others conspire with you and yet you yourself will not sacrifice anything in order to get your cause advanced.'

'No,' said Hafgrim, 'it is not like that; I will sacrifice much for you to counsel me as to how to get the days of these brothers numbered. Then Thrand replied: 'I will provide you with the opportunity to attack these brothers,' he said, 'but you must repay me by giving me the value of two cows every spring and of two hundred every autumn; and this debt will be upon you throughout your lifetime and likewise upon your estate after your death; and I will not prepare for this unless you get more people to participate in it. I want you, therefore, to visit my maternal uncle in Svínoy and get him to take part in the plan.'

Hafgrim accepted this and left for Svínoy, where he met Bjarni and applied to him for his assistance, as Thrand had advised. Bjarni replied that he would not participate in the attack unless he got something for it. Hafgrim asked him what he desired. 'You must,' said Bjarni, 'give me every spring the value of three cows and every autumn the value of three hundred.' This Hafgrim accepted and then, having settled the affair, he went home.

## 7. THE FIGHT

Now is the time to tell of the brothers Brester and Beiner. They had two farms, the one on Skúvoy and the other on Dímun (Stóra Dímun). Brester had a wife, Cecilia by name, who was Norwegian by birth, and by her he had a son who was called Sigmund and was, at the time this happened, nine years old. He was both big and brave. Beiner had a mistress, Thora by name, and by her a son who was called Thorer who was then eleven years old. Now it happened at that time, when the brothers Brester and Beiner were on their farm on Dímun, that they sailed over to the island of Lítla Dímun (which is uninhabited), where they let their sheep run together and shared those which they decided to slaughter.

The boys, Sigmund and Thorer, asked if they might go with them, to which the brothers agreed, and they then sailed over to the island. The brothers had all their weapons with them. Brester

is described as a big, strong man, more expert with weapons than anyone else, wise and very popular with all his friends. Beiner also possessed excellent qualities, but could not be compared with his brother. They then sailed from Lítla Dímun, and while they were heading at great speed for the inhabited Dímun (i.e. Stóra Dímun), they saw three ships with armed men on board sailing towards them; and there were twelve men on each ship. They recognised them as Hafgrim from Suðuroy, Thrand from Götu (on the second ship) and Bjarni from Svínoy (on the third ship). They steered between the brothers and the island so that the former could not get in to land, but came with their ship to a place on the beach. There there was a steep rock up which the brothers ran with their weapons and where they let the boys sit down beside them. The rock was broad at the top and a good defensive



Brester and Beiner are killed.

position. Hafgrim and his companions then arrived from their three ships, and they immediately jumped from the ships on to the beach and made for the rock. Hafgrim and Svínoy-Bjarni\*, without stopping, launched an attack on the brothers, but the latter defended themselves well and in a manly fashion. Thrand and his crew walked to and fro on the beach and did not take part in the assault. Brester defended the side which was easiest to attack and most difficult to defend. The two parties then fought together for a while, and the struggle between them was not quickly determined.

Then Hafgrim said: 'Thrand! I stipulated that you should help me, and that was why I allowed you to have my cattle,' he added. 'You must be a cowardly chap,' replied Thrand, 'if you with two dozen men cannot attack two single men; it is your way always to risk others, but you do not dare approach when there is any danger at hand. It would be wisest, if you have any guts in you, for you to advance first on Brester while the

others follow on after you — otherwise I can well realise that you are no good at anything.' And he incited Hafgrim most vehemently in this way.

After that Hafgrim ran up the rock towards Brester and stabbed him with his spear in the middle of his waist, and pushed it through him. And when Brester realised that he was mortally wounded, he advanced and made contact with Hafgrim and hacked at him with his sword. The blow caught Hafgrim on his left shoulder and cleaved the shoulder and the side so that his arm fell away from the body, and Hafgrim fell from the rock, dead, and Brester fell on top of him; and there both lost their lives.

They next attacked Beiner, and he defended himself well, but the upshot of it was that Beiner also fell. People say that Brester was the slayer of three men before he killed Hafgrim, and Beiner killed two before he fell.

After this had happened, Thrand said that they should kill the children, Sigmund and Thorer. 'No,' replied Bjarni, 'they should not be killed.'

'If they escape,' said Thrand, 'they will become the killers of most of those present here. 'Nevertheless,' replied Bjarni, 'they should no more be killed than I myself.'

Then Thrand said: 'I was not serious about that; I wished only to set a test for you, to see how you would react to the proposal; but instead I will now repay the boys for my part in this encounter and offer to bring them up.' The boys sat on the rock and watched this incident. Thorer cried, but Sigmund said: 'Let us not weep, my kinsman, but remember this happening the longer!'

They then went away from the place, and Thrand let the boys accompany him to Götu. Hafgrim's corpse was taken to Suðuroy, and was there buried according to ancient custom; but the friends of Brester and Beiner took their bodies home to Skúvoy and buried them there, also according to ancient custom.

These tidings became known all over the Faroes, and everyone mourned these two brothers.

## 8. RAFN ACCEPTS SIGMUND AND THORER

That summer a ship came to the Faroes from Norway. The skipper was from Vik and he lived in Tunsberg. He had acquired the name of 'the Holmgaard Sailor' because he frequently sailed to Holmgaard\*. This ship came to Tórshaven. But it is said that when the traders were ready to leave again, Thrand from Götu came there in a small craft, took Skipper Rafn to one side to talk to him, and said that he had two boy slaves whom he wanted to sell to him. Rafn said that he would not buy them before he got a chance of seeing them. Thrand then brought the two boys, who had shorn heads and were dressed in white peasants' coats. They were of handsome appearance, but their faces were swollen with grief. When Rafn saw these boys, he said: 'Is it not a fact, Thrand, that these boys are sons of Brester

and Beiner whom you killed a short time ago?' 'Yes,' replied Thrand, 'I certainly believe that to be so.' 'Then they will not come into my power through my paying money for them.' 'We shall strike a bargain,' said Thrand. 'Here are two silver marks which I shall give you if you will take them away with you so that they never again come to the Faroes.' And he showed the skipper the silver, counted it and poured it into Rafn's lap. Rafn liked the silver and so it came about that he accepted the boys. He sailed out to sea as soon as he got a fair wind, and landed at the place he intended, namely, on the east coast at Tunsberg. There he spent the winter, and the boys stayed with him and were well treated.

\*now Novgorod, Russia

## 9. ABOUT SIGMUND, RAFN AND THRAND

In the spring Rafn prepared his ship for a journey to the East, and he asked the boys how they had liked their stay with him.

Sigmund replied: 'Well, compared with our position when we were in Thrand's power.' 'Do you know,' asked Rafn further, 'what arrangement Thrand and I have entered into?' 'We know it fully,' replied Sigmund. 'However, I consider it best,' Rafn went on, 'that you go where you will. As regards the silver which Thrand handed over to me, I think it will be best employed if you use it for your board and lodging, for it has been hard enough for you coming away to a foreign land.'

Sigmund thanked him, and said that, compared with their previous situation, Rafn had acted magnanimously.

It is now told of Thrand that he took over supreme control of the Faroes and seized all the goods and property which his kinsmen Brester and Beiner had possessed. He himself took the boy Ossur Hafgrimson, who was at that time ten years of age, and brought him up. Thrand was then absolute monarch over the whole of the Faroes, and no one dared to say a word against him.

## 10. ABOUT SIGMUND

That summer, when the brothers Brester and Beiner were killed, Norway had a change of King: Harald Greycloak was slain, and Earl Hakon reigned in his stead and had the kingdom as his successor. All the power of Gunhild's\* sons was then at an end: some of them were killed and the rest left the country.

Now is the time to relate the story of Sigmund and Thorer. They remained in Vik for another two years after Rafn had freed them; and then the money which Rafn had given them ran out. At that time Sigmund was twelve years old and Thorer fourteen. They then heard people talking about the power of Earl Hakon, and made up their minds to pay him a visit, if possible: they expected to get some assistance from him right away, as their father had served him.

They then went away to the uplands, and took the road eastwards through Hedemark, and then north to Dovrefjell where they encountered the beginning of winter; nevertheless, in spite of the frost and snowy weather, they went on, with little thought, up into the mountains, lost their way, and lay out under the open sky for many days without food. Finally, Thorer lay down exhausted and asked Sigmund to save himself and look for the way down from the mountain. But Sigmund said that either both of them would get down or neither of them would; and so great was the difference in their strength that Sigmund put Thorer on his back and carried him. Both of them were now extremely exhausted.

However, they began to descend and, one evening, they found a little valley in the mountains. They went on through the valley and eventually noticed the smell of smoke, and then they found a farm ahead of them. They went in

and came into a room where two women were sitting. One of them was oldish, but the other was quite a young girl; both were beautiful in appearance. They greeted the boys kindly, took their clothes off them and gave them dry clothes in their place; then, at once, they gave them something to eat and prepared a good bed for them and showed them where it was. They said that they did not want the man of the house to find them there when he came home as he was somewhat surly. Some time later Sigmund woke up and became aware that a man, big in stature, and dressed in reindeer skin, had come in carrying a reindeer on his back. This man put his nose in the air and, with an angry expression, asked who had come. His wife said that two boys had come who were so wretched, perished with cold and exhausted, that they were at death's door.

'I have often said,' went on the man, 'that you were not, on any account, to disclose our whereabouts, let alone receive anyone into our dwelling.' 'I had not the heart,' replied the wife, 'to let such promising lads die here just outside our house.'

The farmer let them lie in peace and went along with the women to eat, and then went off to bed. There were two beds in the bedroom — the farmer slept with his wife in one of them and the farmer's daughter occupied the other. But a couch was prepared for the boys in the same room. The farmer was up early in the morning, and said to the boys: 'It seems to me, as it would to the womenfolk, that you should rest here today if you find it fit for you.'

They said that they would like to do that.

\*Widow of Eirik Bloodaxe of Norway, 'Mother of Kings.'

## 11. SIGMUND STAYS WITH ULF

The farmer then went away for the day and came home in the evening and was very friendly towards Sigmund and Thorer. The following morning he came to the boys and said: 'Fate has willed it that you should come here to my abode. Now I think it best if you stay here for the winter — that is if it suits you. The womenfolk have taken a great liking to you, but you have travelled

far off your course, and it is far from here to any of the settlements.'

Sigmund and Thorer thanked the farmer for his offer and said that they would like to stay on. The farmer said that they could repay the good treatment which they had received from his wife and daughter by being of service to them when they required it. 'But I must be away every day.'

he added, 'in order to provide us with foodstuffs if things are to prosper.'

So the boys stayed on and the women were good to them, and the boys really liked being there. The buildings were good and strong and well-equipped. The farmer was called Ulf, his wife Ragnhild and his daughter Thuride. She was a very pretty girl and of noble disposition. The relationship between her and Sigmund was good, and they often talked together, which neither the farmer nor his wife forbade them to do. However,

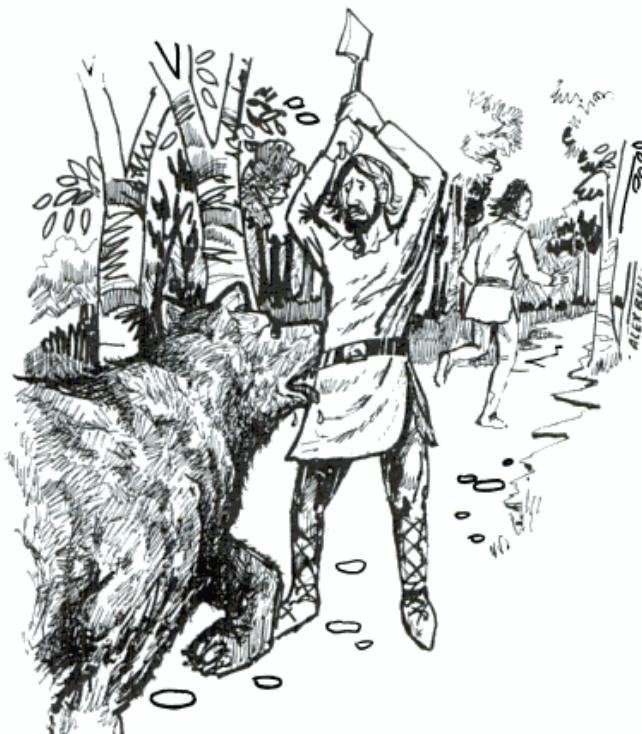
winter then passed away, and, on the first day of summer, Farmer Ulf came to Sigmund and said: 'Now you have spent the winter with me, and if you do not see anything better to do than be here, you shall have permission to stay, and you can grow up here; it may be that we will have even more to do with each other. However, there is one thing which I must warn you about, namely, that you should not go out into the forest which lies to the north of the farm.'

## 12. SIGMUND OVERCOMES THE BEAST

Not far from the farm was a lake to which the farmer often went and taught the boys to swim. They also went for shooting practice, and Sigmund quickly acquired an aptitude for all the physical accomplishments, and became excellent at sports — likewise Thorer, who, however, could not compare with Sigmund.

Ulf was a big, strong man, and the brothers soon noticed that he excelled in all sports.

They stayed there for three years, by which time Sigmund was fifteen years old and Thorer seventeen. Sigmund was a brave youth, and already well developed; so were they both. Nevertheless, Sigmund, although he was two years younger, was, in every respect, the more outstanding. And then, one summer's day, Sigmund said to Thorer: 'I wonder what would really happen if we were to go out into the forest



Sigmund kills the bear.

which lies to the north of the farm.'

'I am not curious to know,' replied Thorer. 'It is otherwise with me,' said Sigmund, 'and I must go there.' 'You will have your way,' said Thorer, 'but we will then disobey our foster-father's order.'

So they went, and Sigmund had a wood-axe in his hand. They went into the forest and on to a beautiful open space: but they had been there only a little while when they heard a powerful crashing in the forest, and immediately afterwards they saw a very large, ferocious bear — a colossal forest bear — wolf-grey in colour. They ran back along the same path by which they had come. Thorer ran in front, and Sigmund was in the rear. The animal now ran along the path after them and the path was too narrow for it, and trees were broken as it ran. Then Sigmund turned away quickly from the path and placed himself among the trees, standing there until the animal was right in front of him. He then gripped the axe with both hands and hacked the animal right between the eyes, so that the axe sank in. The animal toppled forward and died on the spot so that no sign of life could be observed in it. Then Thorer came up and said: 'It fell to your lot, kinsman, to perform this deed of manhood, and it did not come my way. That is most reasonable as, in many things, I am your inferior.'

Then Sigmund said: 'We must try and raise the animal up,' and they did what he said, and got the animal up, and then bent the trees so that it

could not fall and put a stick in its mouth. And the animal appeared to gape with its mouth.

After this they went home and, when they arrived there, they found that their foster-father was at home in the paddock outside the farm. He had just been about to go and look for them, and, with an angry expression, asked them where they had been.

Sigmund replied: 'Now things have gone badly for us, Foster-father,' he said. 'We have disregarded your advice, and the bear chased after us.' 'I expected,' replied Ulf, 'that that would happen, but I did not want it to chase after you more than once. However, this animal is such that I have not dared to trifle with it. Nevertheless, we will now try,' he said.

Ulf turned around and went in and fetched a spear and, holding it in his hand, he ran into the forest, followed by Sigmund and Thorer. Ulf got to the place where the bear was and ran straight at it and thrust the spear into it; and the bear fell with the jab. But then Ulf noticed that the animal had been dead beforehand, and said: 'You have now got the better of me, but which of you killed the animal?'

Thorer said: 'I cannot lay claim to this deed for myself, Foster-father! It was Sigmund who killed the animal.'

Then Ulf said: 'This is the greatest deed of manhood, and it heralds many more deeds of manhood from you.'

They went home from the forest, and from that time onwards Ulf had more respect for Sigmund than he had had before.

### 13. THE DEPARTURE OF THE BROTHERS FROM ULF

The brothers now stayed with Ulf until Sigmund was eighteen and Thorer twenty. At that time Sigmund was superior both in stature and strength, and also in all accomplishments. It is shortly to be related that he approached nearest to Olav Tryggvesson in all sports. And when things had got so far, Sigmund said to his foster-father that he wanted to move on, 'because it seems to me,' he said, 'that there will be small prospects for us in the future if we do not seek to become acquainted with other people.'

'Yes,' replied Ulf, 'I entirely approve of this wish of yours.'

While they had been staying there they had noticed that, every autumn and every spring, Ulf had been away for about seven days or so, and had then brought home with him many necessities, such as linen and cloth, or other things which they needed. Ulf now let them make clothes for themselves and fitted them out for their departure. It could clearly be seen that the women took the separation very much to heart, and the daughter most of all. Then they departed and went away, and Ulf accompanied them on their way, and went with them over Dovrefjell until they could see northwards over to Orkedal. Then

they all sat down, and thereupon Ulf spoke the following words:

'Now I would like to know whom I have brought up and what family you belong to, and where your fatherland is.'

Then they told him everything they had gone

through in their lifetime, and Ulf was very sorry for them. Then Sigmund said: 'Now, Foster-father, I want you to tell us about your life and what has happened to you.' 'Yes, I will tell you,' said Ulf.

## 14. THORKEL TELLS THE BROTHERS ABOUT HIS LIFE

'I will begin my story by saying that there was once a farmer, Thoralf by name, who lived on the Hedemark in the uplands. He was a mighty man and the district chief of the King of the Uplands. He was married, with a wife, Idun by name, and a daughter, Ragnhild, with whom no other woman could compare in beauty. Not far away there lived a farmer who was called Steingrim, an honest farmer and well-to-do. His wife was called Thora and they had a son called Thorkel, who was a promising person and both big and strong. It was Thorkel's task, when he was at home with his father, every winter when the frost began and there was ice on the water, to go out, in company with some of his companions, and hunt animals; and he was an extremely good Bowman. He began this pursuit of his at the time when the black frost began, and so got the additional name

'Barfrost.' Once upon a time, Thorkel went to his father in order to talk to him, and said that he wished his father to get him a wife and to court Farmer Thoralf's daughter, Ragnhild, on his behalf. His father replied that Thorkel was aiming pretty high, but nevertheless the result was that father and son set out together to Farmer Thoralf and put forward their request that Thorkel should woo Thoralf's daughter, Ragnhild. Thoralf was slow to answer and said that he had intended a more distinguished match for his daughter than a marriage with Thorkel: but he said that on account of the friendship which existed between him and Steingrim he wanted to reply kindly, although nothing could come of the match. Thereupon they parted and Steingrim and Thorkel returned home, having completed their mission.

## 15. ABOUT THORKEL AND THORALF

One night shortly afterwards, when he had learned that Thoralf was not at home but was away on his official duties, Thorkel went out. He went with his friend in the night and went to Ragnhild's bed and embraced her and carried her out and took her home with him. His father was displeased with this and said Thorkel had taken upon himself something which he could not see through, and ordered him to take Ragnhild back home immediately. 'I will not do that,' replied Thorkel.

Then Farmer Steingrim ordered him to go away. Thorkel did so, and went away with Ragnhild, and they lived in the forest. There were with him twelve young men who were his companions and playmates. Later, Farmer Thoralf came home and learned what had happened.

and immediately gathered people together and went to Farmer Steingrim's with hundreds of men and ordered him to surrender his son and hand over his (Thoralf's) daughter. Steingrim said that they were not there. Then Thoralf ransacked the farm, but did not find them. Thereupon they went out into the forest and searched for them, and they so divided themselves up for the search that there were thirty men with Thoralf. One day Thoralf saw twelve men in the forest, and there was a woman with them, which made a total of thirteen. He believed that they must be the people he was looking for, so he then made for that place. Then Thorkel's companions said that people were coming after them and asked Thorkel what action they should take.

He replied: 'A short distance from where we



Ulf carries off Ragnhild.

are there is a hill to which we will go, as it is a good defensive position. There we will take up stones and defend ourselves courageously!"

They then went to the hill and made ready. It was not long before Thoralf and his party arrived and immediately attacked them, weapons in hand. Thorkel and his people defended themselves well like men; and the result of the encounter was that twelve men on Thoralf's side fell and seven on Thorkel's, but the other five on Thorkel's were wounded. Farmer Thoralf received a fatal wound.

Then Thorkel and his companions fled away into the forest, and in that way they lost contact. Ragnhild was left behind and was taken to the settlement with her father, but then Thoralf came to the settlement, he died of his wounds, and popular belief has it that Thorkel was his killer.

Then this incident became known. Thorkel went home to his father. He had only a slight wound but the majority of his companions had more serious ones, but they were healed.

## 16. THORKEL'S STORY

After this the Uplanders held a Council Meeting, and at this Thorkel Barfrost was banished. When Steingrim and Thorkel became aware of this, the father said that Thorkel could not remain at home so long as they were in hot pursuit of him. 'You must go, kinsman,' he said, 'to the river which runs close to the farm. Alongside the river there is a big, rocky gorge, and in this gorge there

is a cave. No one except myself knows of this hiding place. You must go there and take food with you.'

Thorkel did this, and he was in the cave while the search was at its height, and they did not find him. It seemed to him that his stay there was tedious, and so, after a lapse of some time, he came out of the cave and went to the farm which

Farmer Thoralf had owned. He carried Ragnhild away from there for the second time, and took her up to the mountains and into the deserted forest: 'and here I stopped,' he said, 'where I have now built my dwelling, and here I have remained ever since, and Ragnhild with me, yes, for eighteen winters, which is the age of my daughter Thuride. Now I have told you the story of my life,' he said.

'I think, my Foster-father, that the story of your experiences is remarkable,' Sigmund said, 'but now I must tell you that I have repaid you ill for your kindness and for bringing me up, because your daughter told me when we parted that she was pregnant, and that no one except myself could be alleged to be the father; that was the particular reason for my going away, as I was afraid it would cause trouble between us.'

'I have known for a long time that there was a lovers' understanding between the two of you,' said Thorkel, 'and I did not want to forbid you.' 'I beg you, my Foster-father,' said Sigmund, 'not to give your daughter, Thuride, away in marriage to anyone else, because I will have her or no wife at all.'

'My daughter could not wish to marry any better man,' replied Thorkel; 'but I will ask you, Sigmund, if you get any promotion from the chiefs, to remember me and obtain for me peace and reconciliation, because I am weary of being in this desolate place.'

Sigmund promised to do this if he could manage it, and then they parted and the kinsmen continued on their way until they came to Lade where Earl Hakon had his seat. Then they went before the Earl and greeted him; and he received their greetings kindly, and asked who they were.

'I,' said Sigmund, 'am a son of Brester who was, at one time, your district chief out in the Faroes; he was killed there. I have now come to you, my Lord, because I expect you to see that I get good promotion and I wish to be your man — and that is the wish of both of us kinsmen.'

Earl Hakon said that he could not be certain who Sigmund was: 'however, you are not unlike Brester,' he added, 'but you yourself will have to furnish proof about your family. However, that will not stop me from giving you food.' And he then showed them to a seat among his guests. Sven Hakonson was at that time young, and was at his father's court.



Sigmund and Thorer come to Earl Hakon.

## 17. SIGMUND TALKS WITH EARL HAKON AND SVEN

Sigmund talked with the Earl's son, Sven, and played many games for him with great dexterity. And the Earl's son got great pleasure through him. Sigmund then put his case to Sven, and asked him for his help so that he could get some advancement from his father. Sven asked him what he wanted.

'I would prefer to take part in a campaign,' said Sigmund, 'if your father would equip me.' 'That is a good decision,' said Sven.

The winter was now getting towards Christmas time and, at Christmas, Earl Erik Hakonson came home from the East, from Vik, where he had his seat. Sigmund had a talk with Earl Erik and acquainted him with his unfortunate position. Then Earl Erik promised Sigmund that he would recommend him to his father, Earl Hakon, and said that he himself would grant him a status which would be no less important than that which Earl Hakon himself would allow him.

After Christmas, Sigmund petitioned Earl Hakon for some confirmation one way or the other, and asked if it might stand to his credit that his father, Brester, had been the Earl's official.

Earl Hakon replied: 'Truly, I lost a brave man when my courtier, the brave and frank Brester, was killed, and those who killed him deserve much harm from me; but what is your wish?'

Sigmund said that he would prefer to go on a Viking expedition, and then either win some promotion or meet his death.

'That is well said,' said the Earl, and you shall know in the spring, when people are preparing for the journeys, how I shall deal with this matter.'

The winter passed away, and when Sigmund reminded Earl Hakon of his promise, the Earl said: 'I will give you a long ship, and on board it there will be forty men with proper weapons; but this crew will not be a first-class one because most people will not be inclined to accompany you, who are a foreigner and unknown.'

Sigmund thanked the Earl and told Erik what his father had granted him. 'It was a small contribution,' replied the Earl, 'but it will be of use to you. However, I will give you another ship with a similar crew of forty men.' And the ship which Erik gave him was well equipped in all respects. Sigmund then told Sven what his father and brother had granted him.

'In my position,' replied Sven, 'I do not find it so easy to grant my friends anything, but, nevertheless, I will give you a third ship, also with a crew of forty men, and they shall be my own men. I expect that they will be the best of the men who have been given to you.'

## 18. SIGMUND FIGHTS WITH RANDVER

Sigmund, in company with his men, prepared to go to sea, and sailed as soon as he was ready. He went east to Vik, and from there to Denmark and through the Sound, right into the Baltic, and sailed around during the summer without getting any great amount of booty: for, with this force, he did not take comfort in the thought of going anywhere where there was any great strength to fight against. Traders he let go in peace.

When the summer was over, they sailed from the East and continued sailing until they came under Elveskær where there was always a large Viking lair. They went alongside under an island, and Sigmund went up on the rock to have a look

round. He then discovered that there were five ships on the other side of the island, of which one was a dragon ship. Thereupon he went to his men and told them that there were five Viking ships on the other side under the rock: 'and I will tell you now,' he said, 'that I am not anxious to sail away from them without a trial, and without venturing a fight, because if we don't risk an encounter we will never win any promotion.'

They asked him what his advice was. 'We should now carry stones out on to the ships,' said Sigmund, 'and prepare ourselves as we think best. We should place our ships outside this creek where we are now lying, because there the creek

is at its narrowest, and it seemed to me when we sailed in this evening that no ship could come alongside us if we put our own three ships abreast. It will be to our advantage if they are unable to lie on all sides of us.'

This they did, but in the morning, when they had put the ships out in the creek, the Vikings rowed against them with five ships. A big, strong man stood in the bow of the dragon ship, and he immediately asked who was the leader of the three ships. Sigmund gave his name, and asked the other man his name. The other said that he was called Randver, and that he had his home in the east, over in Holmgard, and he gave them two conditions: either that they surrender themselves and their ships or, as an alternative, that they defend themselves. Sigmund said that the two conditions were totally incompatible and that first they would test their weapons. Randver then ordered his people to put three ships alongside, as they could not put all of them alongside, and he first wished to test how things would go. Sigmund steered the ship which the Earl's son Sven had given him, and Thorer sailed the one which Earl Erik had given Sigmund. The ships then lay alongside and the battle commenced.

To start with, Sigmund and his people threw stones so violently that the others could do nothing but protect themselves, and, when the stones were used up, Sigmund and his men let the others feel a heavy shower of arrows. Many people on the Vikings' side fell and a great number were wounded. Sigmund and his men next took their cutting weapons, and the fight began to get hard for Randver's people. But when Randver saw how adversely things were going for his men he said that they were great dullards who were not fit for anything, in his opinion. They replied that it was his custom to incite them, but to look after himself, and they asked him to go forward. He said that he would do so, and he now put the dragon ship alongside, and also the other ship on which there were fresh people, and filled the third with people who were not wounded. They now lay together for the second time and the fight was harder than before. Sigmund was the foremost man in his ship, and he hacked hard

and often. His kinsman Thorer was also well to the fore. They then fought for a long time without being able to say to which side victory would fall.

Then Sigmund said to his men: 'We will not be able to defeat them outright unless we try harder. I will now attempt to board the dragon ship.' Sigmund and eleven of his men now went on board the dragon ship, and he soon killed one after the other of those on board, and his men followed him well. Thorer and four of his men also boarded the dragon ship, and everyone now gave way before them. When Randver saw this he ran at Sigmund, and they met and fought with each other for a very long time. But then Sigmund showed his dexterity by throwing his sword and swinging it up in the air. He caught it in his left hand and his shield in his right, and hacked with his sword at Randver and chopped away his right leg below the knee. Then Randver fell, whereupon Sigmund gave him a slash on the neck and removed his head. Sigmund's people then shouted their war-cry, and after that the Vikings fled in the three warships, but Sigmund and his people tidied up the dragon ship by killing every single person on board it.

They then looked at their crews, and found that on Sigmund's side thirty men had fallen. After this the ships took shelter and the men bound up their wounds and rested for some days. Then Sigmund took possession of the dragon ship, and also the other ship which remained behind. They collected a lot of booty in weapons and other valuables. They then sailed away to Denmark and north to Vik, where they met Earl Erik, who gave them a warm welcome and invited them to stay with him.

Sigmund thanked the Earl for the invitation, but said that first he wanted to travel north to Earl Hakon. However, he let two of his ships remain behind to defend the young Earl as he had only a small garrison. They then went on to Earl Hakon, who gave Sigmund and his companions a good reception, and Sigmund spent the winter with the Earl. By then he had become a very able man. And at Christmas in that winter Sigmund became Earl Hakon's courtier, and so did Thorer, and they enjoyed good times there.

## 19. SIGMUND KILLS BJORN

At this time there ruled over Sweden King Erik the Swede, a son of Bjorn, who was himself the son of Erik Eyvendson. He was a powerful king. One winter twelve Norwegian traders had travelled together to Sweden over the mountain range that separates that country from Norway, and when they arrived in Sweden they held a market with the people of that country. However, a dispute arose in the market and a Norwegian killed a Swede. When King Erik learned about this he sent his guests out and had the twelve Norwegians killed.

When spring arrived, Earl Hakon asked Sigmund where he intended to sail his ship to in the summer. Sigmund said that it depended on the Earl's decision. 'Then,' said Earl Hakon, 'I would like you to sail somewhat nearer to the kingdom of the Swedish King and remind the Swedes that a short time ago, in the winter, they killed twelve of my men and this has not yet been avenged.'

Sigmund said that he would carry out the Earl's wish if it were possible to do so. Then Earl Hakon gave Sigmund a picked crew, half from his own household troop and half from the war troop; and by that time, everyone earnestly desired to follow Sigmund. They steered eastwards to Vik where they met Earl Erik, who also gave Sigmund a fine crew and Sigmund had by then over three hundred men and five well-equipped ships. They sailed down from Vik to Denmark, and then east of Sweden, and went along the east coast of that country.

'We will make our landing here,' Sigmund told his men, 'and we will advance singing our battle-song!' They then disembarked with three hundred men and went up to the settlement where they slaughtered people, collected a great haul of booty and set fire to the farms. The inhabitants escaped to the thickets and forests as far as they could flee. King Erik's district chief, Bjorn by name, was not far from the place where they were pursuing the fugitives. As soon as Bjorn learned of the attack, he gathered people around him and got a considerable force together which he placed between Sigmund's people and the ships. Sigmund's men now caught sight of their army and asked him what decision they should take.

'All is not yet lost,' said Sigmund. 'It often happens that those who have the larger force have not, for that very reason, become the victors; it depends only on being brave enough to oppose them. We will now take a decision to rally our forces and form them up like a herd of pigs. I and my kinsman Thorer will be foremost, and after us three men and then five and so on, but the men with shields ought to be out on both wings. We will then force our way into their host and try to get through it; but the Swedes will not be steady in the field.'

So they did this and forced their way into the Swedish host, and broke through it. Then a tough fight began, and they felled many of the Swedes. Sigmund was well to the fore and hacked on both sides. He came up against Bjorn's standard-bearer and struck him a deadly blow. Thereupon he urged his men to break the defensive ring of shields which had been thrown around Bjorn, and they did so. Sigmund then came up against Bjorn, and they exchanged blows, but Sigmund soon got the better of the other man and became his slayer. Then the Vikings gave their victory cry, and the people of the country fled. Sigmund said that he would not pursue the fugitives as they did not have the force to do so in a foreign country, and they did not do so. They obtained a large quantity of booty and took it to their ships, and they then sailed away from Sweden, eastwards over to Holmgaard where they ravaged the islands and headland.

Two brothers are mentioned in the kingdom of Sweden, of whom one was called Vandil and the other Adil. They were defenders of the realm for the King of Sweden and never had less than two dragon ships and eight other ships. When the Swedish king learned that a hostile attack had taken place against his country, he immediately sent a message to the two brothers and ordered them to shorten the days of Sigmund and his companions. This they promised to do.

In the autumn, Sigmund and his people sailed from the East, and on the way came under an island which lies close to Sweden. Then Sigmund said to his men: 'We have not yet come among

friends because we have the Swedes ahead of us, so we must be careful; I will go ashore on to the island and look around.' He did so, and when he

was ashore he saw on the other side of the island ten ships, namely, two dragon ships and eight other ships.

## 20. THE BATTLE BETWEEN SIGMUND AND VANDIL

Early in the morning they rowed towards the ten ships. The leaders of these ships immediately shouted to them and asked who commanded them. Sigmund gave his name, and then there was no need for them to ask about the affair. They immediately seized their weapons, and a fight began which was so hard that Sigmund and his men had never in all their travels come up against such a test. Vandil put his dragon ship alongside Sigmund's, but met a tough reception. When they had fought for a time, Sigmund said: 'The position is the same as it was before; we will not be able to obtain victory unless we go into the

enemy. I will now board the dragon ship and you will follow me well!'

Sigmund then jumped on to the dragon ship and a large troop followed him, and he soon slaughtered one man after another, and the enemy drew back before the assault. Thereupon Vandil bounded forward towards Sigmund and they exchanged blows for a long time. Then Sigmund adopted his usual trick and changed his weapons from the right hand to the left. He then struck Vandil with his left hand, and Vandil's right hand, which was his sword hand, fell to the ground. Sigmund soon finished him off. Sig-



The fight with Vandil.

mund's men then shouted their victory cry and, when Adil heard it, he said: 'There has now been a change in the situation, and Vandil must have been killed. Let us therefore take to our heels, and let everyone look to his own safety!'

After that Adil fled with his people in five ships, and the other five were left behind; and Sigmund, when he had slaughtered every single person on board them, took them into his custody and seized them for himself. They then sailed on and reached the kingdom of the Danish King where they believed themselves to be safe and in

good hands; and they rested there and bandaged their wounds. And when they had recovered they sailed on to Vik. There they met Earl Erik and were well received by him. They stayed there a short time, and then sailed north to Trondheim and went to Earl Hakon. He received them well and thanked them for the exploits which they had performed that summer.

The kinsmen Sigmund and Thorer spent the winter with Earl Hakon, and a troop of people with them, but their crews got quarters elsewhere. By this time they had no lack of possessions.

## 21. THE MEETING BETWEEN SIGMUND AND HARALD

When spring came, Earl Hakon asked Sigmund where he intended to raid that summer. Sigmund said that it would depend on the Earl's decision.

'I would not urge you to go out and provoke the Swedes, but I would like you to go westwards to the seas around the Orkneys. There I expect you will meet a man called Harald Ironhead (or Ironbrow). He has been banished by me and is my greatest enemy, and he had caused a lot of dissension here in Norway. He is a formidable man. I want you to kill him, if you can do so.'

Sigmund said he would be sure to meet him if he could track him down. Then Sigmund sailed away from Norway with eight ships, and Thorer steered the dragon ship which they had seized from Vandil; but Sigmund himself steered the one they had taken from Randver. They sailed westwards across the ocean, but could get only a little booty during the summer, and at the end of the summer they came to Anglesey, which lies in the Irish Sea. There they saw ten ships lying in front of them, and among them a large dragon ship. Sigmund soon found out that Harald Ironhead was the leader of this fleet, and battle between them was arranged for the following morning.

The night passed away, and in the morning, at daybreak, they seized their weapons and fought all day long until nightfall. They separated when darkness fell and arranged to continue the battle the next morning. And, next morning, Harald shouted across to Sigmund's ship and asked him if he wished to continue the battle.

'I would now like to say,' said Harald, 'what I have said to no one before, that we would like to become your companions and not fight each other any longer.' Both men were in favour of this and said that it was wonderful for them to want to be reconciled and to join forces, because there would then be no one who could stand up to them. Sigmund said that there was one circumstance which was a stumbling block to their reconciliation. 'What is that?' asked Harald. 'It is,' replied Sigmund, 'that Earl Hakon has asked me for your head.' 'I could expect only evil from him,' said Harald. 'You two are so unlike because you are a very brave man and Hakon is one of the worst people I know.' 'We do not think alike on that,' said Sigmund.

However, the people on both sides sought to bring about a reconciliation between them; and in the end it came about that they did enter into a reconciliation. They put their booty together and they plundered far and wide during the summer. And at that time few could give them any opposition. But when autumn came, Sigmund said that he wanted to steer for Norway.

'Then we must part,' said Harald. 'No,' said Sigmund, 'that shall not be. I want us both to go together to Norway and, by doing that I will fulfil the promise which I made to Earl Hakon when I said I would take you to him.' 'Why should I go to my greatest enemy?' asked Harald. 'If you would only accept my advice on that point,' said Sigmund. 'You must advise me in this matter.' Harald said, 'both because I trust you well and

because you are in duty bound to remedy my predicament.'

They then sailed northwards and came to Hadeland\*. When they got to know that Earl Hakon was at Nordmöre, and was in Borgund, they set course for that place and put their ship alongside at Steinavaag. Sigmund set out in a rowing boat, with twelve men, for Borgund, in order to meet Earl Hakon first. Harald, however, remained at Steinavaag. When Sigmund went to Hakon, Hakon was sitting at the drinking table. Sigmund immediately went in to the Earl and greeted him humbly. The Earl received him gently and asked him for his news, and invited him to sit down in a chair in front of him. This Sigmund did, and they talked together for a time, and Sigmund told the Earl about his journeys; but he did not mention the fact that he had met Ironhead. But when Hakon thought enough time had elapsed without the subject of the killing being brought up, he asked Sigmund if he had met Harald.

'Yes, indeed,' said Sigmund, and then told him how it had come about that he had made a reconciliation. Then the Earl was silent, and his face became as red as blood, and after a time, he said: 'You have often carried out my missions better than on this occasion, Sigmund.'

'My Lord,' replied Sigmund, 'the man has now come here into your power, and I expect that, for my sake, you will pour out forgiveness on him so that there will be peace for his life and limbs, and that peace will remain in the land.'

'That I will not do,' said the Earl. 'I will have him killed as soon as I get him into my clutches.' 'My Lord, I am prepared to go to Borgund and there to give you however many goods you may desire.' 'What you offer will not help,' said the Earl. 'It is for small benefit that I have served you,' replied Sigmund, 'when it will not, on one occasion, help me so much as to provide a man with peace and reconciliation. I will therefore go

away from this country and not serve you any more; but I would like it to cost you something before he is killed.'

Sigmund stood up and went out of the room; but the Earl remained seated and silent, and no one ventured to plead for Sigmund. Then the Earl spoke as follows:

'Sigmund was very angry just now,' he said, 'and the harm is to my kingdom if he goes away, but he cannot think seriously of such a thing.' 'He is certainly serious about it,' said the Earl's men. 'Then hurry after him; we should accept the condition which he offered.'

The Earl's men then went to Sigmund and told him this, and Sigmund went back to the Earl. On this occasion, the Earl was the first to give salutations and said that they should accept the conditions which Sigmund had put forward. 'I do not want you to go away from me,' he said. Then Sigmund accepted peace and reconciliation from Earl Hakon on behalf of Harald, and afterwards set out for Harald and told him everything that had taken place, and that a reconciliation had been obtained for him. Harald said that it was dangerous to believe the Earl, but that nevertheless he would go to him and accept the condition which had been named.

Then Harald went north to Helgaland†, but Sigmund stayed on for the winter with the Earl and enjoyed much proof of his favour. Sigmund's kinsman Thorer was also there with him, and a large troop of people besides. Sigmund looked after his men well, both as regards clothes and weapons.

\*now the westmost part of Aalesund between the islands of Hesöy and Apsöy.

†now Norland (north of Trondheim on the border of Finnmark).

## 22. ABOUT THE ISLANDERS AND SIGMUND

Concerning the Faroese, the time has come to record that Ossur Hafgrimson had been brought up with Thrand in Götu until he was fully grown, and that he was a bluff man and a manly one. Thrand obtained for him the best farmer's daughter in the Faroes for his wife. Thrand then said that they would divide the islands into two halves and that Ossur should have authority and control over the half which his father had owned, but that he himself should have authority and control over the half which the brothers Brester and Beiner had had. Thrand also said that he considered it proper for him to take possession of all the property, both lands and personal possessions, which the brothers had owned, as a penalty for the fate of Ossur's father. Everything happened as Thrand advised, and Ossur then had two or three farms, one (his father's paternal inheritance) at Hov on Suðuroy, a second one at Skúvoy, and a third on Dímun (i.e. Stóra Dímun) on the paternal inheritance of Sigmund and Thorer.

The Faroese had learned that Sigmund had become a famous person and had made great preparations for him. Ossur then had a great entrenchment made around the farm at Skúvoy, where he spent most of his time. The formation of Skúvoy is such that its height makes it an excellent place to defend and it has only one place of access; and it is said that it cannot be captured if there are twenty or thirty people\* to defend it, however many people may come to attack it. Ossur had twenty men between his farms, but at his home he always had thirty men around him, including his workmen. After Thrand there was no one in the Faroes who had as much power as he had.

The considerable amount of money which Thrand had got at Elsinore never ran out, and he was the richest man of all in the Faroes, and at this time he controlled everything because he was wilier than Ossur.

\*cf Ch. 37, where 10 men is stated to be the number required

## 23. ABOUT EARL HAKON AND SIGMUND

It is told of Sigmund at this time that he informed Earl Hakon that he wished to desist from war expeditions and set out for the Faroes. He said that he did not want any longer to hear the reproach that he had not avenged his father, and he then asked the Earl to confirm his proposal and give him advice as to how he should get his wish carried into effect. To this the Earl replied that it was difficult to survive in the sea around the Faroes, on account of the very heavy surf. 'One cannot handle a long ship there, and so I will let you make two knórrur\* and give you men for them, so that we can say that you are well equipped.'

Sigmund thanked the earl for his generosity, and the expedition was made ready in the winter. In the spring the ships were completely ready, and men had been provided for their crews. Harald came and met Sigmund in the spring and prepared to travel with him. When they were just about ready Earl Hakon said to him: 'He who is along with you† genuinely wants to see you return again,' and the Earl went out with Sigmund.

Hakon then said: 'What have you to say about what you believe in?' Sigmund replied: 'I believe in my power and my strength.' 'That must not be,' said the Earl, 'you must put your trust in the same being as in whom I have placed my whole confidence, that is Thorgarde the Holy Bride. We will now go and visit her, and there seek good luck for you.'

Sigmund asked the Earl to advise him. Then they went into the forest, first following the road and then going off on to a small side track. They came to an open place ahead of them in which there stood a house with a picket fence around it. The house was very beautiful and gold and silver were worked into the carvings on it. Hakon and Sigmund went into the house, and the house was fitted with many glass windows so that no part of it was in shadow. Inside there were many pictures of idols. There was a woman just inside facing the entrance, and she was richly adorned. The Earl threw himself down at her feet and lay there for a long time, and then he stood up and said to Sigmund that they should bring an offering of



King Olaf takes Sigmund to the Priestess.

silver. 'But,' continued the Earl, 'she should, as a sign to us that she accepts the offering, and that she will fulfil my wish, remove the ring which she has on her hand, and that ring, Sigmund, will bring you good luck.'

The Earl took hold of the ring, but could not get it off, and it seemed to Sigmund that just then she was clenching her fist. The Earl threw himself on the ground in front of her for the second time, and Sigmund did the same, and tears came into the Earl's eyes. Then the Earl stood up and took hold of the ring, and this time it was loose and he gave it to Sigmund, saying that Sigmund should

never be separated from the ring. This Sigmund promised. Then, when this had taken place, they parted and Sigmund went to his ship, and it is said that every ship had a crew of sixty men.

They then steered out to sea, with a favourable wind, until they saw birds from the Faroes, and they kept the ships together. Harald Ironhead was on board Sigmund's ship, but Thorer steered the second ship. Then a storm blew up and the ships were separated, and they drove before the storm for several days.

\*a special type of ship

†i.e. himself

## 24. SIGMUND COMES TO THRAND

Of Sigmund and his crew it can now be told that they got a fair wind and sailed to the island, and they saw that they had come to the eastern side of the Faroes. Some men on board Sigmund's ship who knew the coastline noticed that they were very close to Eysturoy. Sigmund said that he would prefer to get Thrond into his power, but when they approached the island they

were met by both wind and storm so that they were far from able to get near to the island. However, as they had experienced and skilful helpers on board, they reached Svínoy at day-break, and forty-five men went up to the farm while ten looked after the ship. They surrounded the farm and broke into it, and seized Farmer Bjarni in his bed and took him out. Bjarni



Portrait of Sigmund.

asked who was the leader of the expedition, and Sigmund gave his name. 'Then,' said Bjarni, 'you will be furious with the one who did you nothing but evil in the encounter when your father was killed. I will not conceal the fact that I was present, but you will recall what I counselled when it was proposed that both you and your kinsman Thorer should be killed, namely that I said that they should as little kill you as they should kill me myself.'

'I remember that well,' said Sigmund. 'When shall I get my repayment for that?' asked Bjarni. 'Now,' replied Sigmund, 'because you shall now have peace; but I want one judgment for the rest.' 'Let it be so,' replied Bjarni. 'Now,' said Sigmund, 'you shall go with us to Eysturoy.' 'You will not get there,' replied Bjarni, 'any more easily than you will get up into the sky so long as the weather remains as it is.' 'Then,' said Sigmund, 'you will trave to Skúvoy if Ossur is at home.' 'Let that be your advice,' replied Bjarni. 'I think we will meet Ossur there.'

That night they went to Skúvoy and reached that island at daybreak on the following morning. It was lucky for Sigmund that there were at that time no men on watch on the narrow path at Skúvoy. Then they went straight up accompanied by fifty men whom Bjarni had given them. When they arrived at the entrenchment, Ossur and his people had come up to it, and then Ossur asked who it was who had come there. Sigmund gave his name.

'You appear to believe you have a mission with us,' said Ossur, 'and I will offer you reconciliation so that the best men in the Faroes can judge your case.' 'No,' replied Sigmund, 'there will be no peace between us unless I counsel it.' 'In that case I shall not enter into any compromise,' said Ossur, 'in order to let you be judge in your own cause. I do not see that there is such a difference either between us or between our cases that I should need that.'

Then Sigmund turned to his men and said they should attack the mocker on the entrenchment. 'However, I will consider what I shall do.'

Harald Ironhead was a stern adviser, and he advised against any reconciliation. Ossur had thirty men on the entrenchment and it was difficult to attack it. Ossur had a son called Leif, who was, at that time, a young child. Sigmund's men then attacked the entrenchment and the others

defended it. Sigmund went off round the entrenchment and looked at it. He was so dressed that he had a helmet on his head and he wore a sword, and carried in his hand a silver-studded axe the handle of which was bound; it was a first-class weapon. He wore a red coat, and under it a light breastplate. It was said by his enemies as well as by his friends that never had there come to the Faroes such a man as Sigmund.

Sigmund discovered that at one place the wall of the entrenchment had fallen down a bit, so that it was somewhat easier to scale than elsewhere. He then went away from the entrenchment and took a run and jumped so high up on to the wall that he got his axe up on its top edge. Then he climbed swiftly up the wall with the help of the axe-handle, and so he came up on to the entrenchment. Immediately a man came at Sigmund and cut at him with his sword. Sigmund parried the blow with his axe and immediately stuck the point of the axe into the man's chest, so that the axe sank right in and he died on the spot.

Ossur saw this and immediately leaped at Sigmund and hewed at him; but Sigmund again parried the blow and hacked Ossur with his axe and cut off Ossur's right hand so that his sword fell to the ground. Thereupon Sigmund struck Ossur for a second time, this time on the chest so that the axe went in deep; and then Ossur fell. Then several men went for Sigmund, but he jumped backwards from the entrenchment and landed on his feet. Thereupon they crowded round Ossur until he was dead. Then Sigmund said to those who were left on the entrenchment that they had two choices — either that he would starve or burn them out, or that they should enter into an amicable settlement and let him be the one to advise them. They assigned to him the right to judge the case, and surrendered.

It should be mentioned that Thorer had arrived at Suðuroy and he then joined up with Sigmund after the events on Skúvoy had taken place. Messages then passed between Sigmund and Thrand on the subject of a reconciliation, and a truce was declared. A meeting between them was fixed for Tórshavn on Streymoy, where the Faroese held their Council Meeting. Sigmund and Thrand and a great gathering of people came there. Thrand was very elated; and, when he was told of the reconciliation, Thrand said: 'It was

improper. Sigmund, my Kinsman, that I was present at the encounter when your father was killed. I will therefore grant you a reconciliation out of which you will get the most glory, and, if you can be best satisfied that way, I want you to decide the whole case between us.'

'I do not want that,' said Sigmund, 'I want Earl Hakon to decide the whole case, otherwise we will not be reconciled; and that, I hold, will be the better course. But, if there must be some reconciliation, then we should both go to Earl Hakon.'

'I would prefer, my Kinsman,' said Thrand, 'that you yourself should judge it, and I will stipulate only that I should have permission to stay in the Faroes and to retain the same dominion which I now have.' 'There will be no reconciliation without the conditions which I have offered,' said Sigmund. And when Thrand saw that the other way was the harder they became reconciled on these terms, that they should both go to Norway the following summer.

One of the ships went to Norway in the autumn with many of the men who had accompanied Sigmund to the Faroes. Sigmund spent the winter

in Skúvoy, and his kinsman Thorer stayed with him, as did Harald Ironhead and many other men. Sigmund introduced a great deal of splendour and provided with great care everything that was needed in the house.

Then the winter was over, and Sigmund made his ship ready for sea. Thrand also prepared a cargo ship which he owned. And they each knew of the other's preparations. Sigmund sailed just as soon as he was ready, and with him on board were Thorer, Harald Ironhead and nearly twenty men. They landed at Sunnmøre in Norway and, on learning that Earl Hakon was not far from there, they went straight to him. Earl Hakon gave Sigmund and his companions a good reception. Sigmund told the Earl about the reconciliation between him and Thrand. The Earl replied: 'You and Thrand have not been equally wily, because it is very doubtful whether he will come to me.'

The summer passed away, but Thrand did not come. Then a ship arrived from the Faroes and the people on board it said that Thrand had been driven back, and that his ship had been damaged so that it could not put out to sea.

## 25. EARL HAKON'S SETTLEMENT BETWEEN SIGMUND AND THRAND

Then Sigmund said to the Earl that he wanted him to decide the case in spite of the fact that Thrand had not come. The Earl said that it should be done. Then he said, 'I will order Thrand to pay you two penalties by way of blood-money, one for each of the brothers, a third such penalty because Thrand advised that you and Thorer should be killed after he had permitted the slaying of your fathers, and fourth such penalty because Thrand sold the two of you as slaves. And, instead of your having a fourth part of the Faroes under your control, there shall now be taken from Thrand's share and from Ossur's inheritance sufficient to enable you to have control over half the Faroes; but the other half will be confiscated because Hafgrim and Thrand killed my courtiers Brester and Beiner. Hafgrim shall not be punished for Brester's death and for the attack on innocent people. Ossur shall not be penalized on account of the injustice of

taking possession of your property on which he was killed. But you shall share the blood-money with your kinsman Thorer as you think best. Thrand shall have permission to remain in the Faroes if he complies with this decision. You shall have all the islands on lease and pay me tribute on my share.'

Sigmund thanked the Earl for his decision, and stayed with him for the winter. In the spring he went to the Faroes and his kinsman Thorer went with him, but Harald Ironhead remained behind. Sigmund had a good crossing and, when he arrived in the Faroes, he summoned Thrand to a Council Meeting in Tórshavn on Streymoy. Thrand appeared at the Meeting, and a large gathering assembled there. Sigmund said that, as yet, Thrand had kept the reconciliation only indifferently, and recited the terms of the Earl's decision. He then asked Thrand to do one of two things — either to keep to the terms of the re-

conciliation or to break them. Thrand still asked Sigmund himself to determine the case, and said that he would that there should be as much glory for Sigmund as possible. Sigmund said that he, Thrand, must not hesitate any longer on the point and asked him to decide one course quickly, either to abide by the decision or to decline to do so, and added that he himself would be glad if there were no reconciliation. Thrand preferred to keep to the reconciliation, but asked for a longer time in which to pay the money, because the Earl had decided that the money should be paid over within half a year. However, at the request of the people, Sigmund allowed the time for the payment of the money to be three years.

Thrand said that he thought it very suitable for Sigmund to have dominion over the people as, by this time, he, Thrand, had held it for so long, and

that it was reasonable for things to go the way they had. Sigmund said that there was no need for Thrand to come out with such hypocrisy because he himself would never worry about such a thing. Thereupon they parted as they were all reconciled.

Thrand then invited Leif Ossurson to come home with him to Götu for his upbringing, and Leif grew up there. Sigmund got his ship ready in the summer to go to Norway, and Thrand paid over one third of the blood-money, but was very slow to do so. Sigmund demanded Earl Hakon's tribute before he sailed from the Faroes.

He had a good crossing, and went immediately to Earl Hakon, bringing the Earl's tribute with him. The Earl gave a good reception to Sigmund, to his kinsman Thorer and to all their men. They spent the winter with the Earl.

## 26. ABOUT SIGMUND, SON OF BRESTER

In the summer after the winter preceding the Christmas when Sigmund had become Earl Hakon's courtier, he went with the Earl to the Council Meeting at Frosta, and there Sigmund presented the application of his father-in-law Thorkel to be freed from outlawry and to be given permission and liberty to reside in the country; and this Earl Hakon was willing to grant to Sigmund.

The Earl then allowed a message to be sent to Thorkel and his family, and Thorkel and his wife and daughter Thuride spent the winter with Earl Hakon. Thuride had given birth to a daughter in the same summer that Sigmund and Thorer had gone away: she was called Thora.

The following spring Earl Hakon gave Thorkel Barfrost a district out in Orkedal to control. Thorkel took up residence there and remained there up to the time that the story has now reached.

At this time Sigmund rode out and visited Thorkel and was well received by him, and then Sigmund wooed Thuride. Thorkel received the proposal well, and said that the offer brought honour and glory both to himself and to his daughter, and also to them all. Sigmund held his wedding at Lade at Earl Hakon's residence, and the Earl let the party go on for seven days. Then

Thorkel Barfrost became Earl Hakon's courtier and dearest friend. After this they went, but Sigmund and his wife remained with the Earl until the autumn, when he went off to the Faroes, whither his wife Thuride and daughter Thora followed him.

It was quiet in the Faroes during the winter. In the spring the people went to the Council Meeting on Streymoy. A large gathering assembled there, and Sigmund had a troop of people with him. Thrand also appeared, and Sigmund demanded the second third of the blood-money, but said, however, that he ought to have had the whole of the balance due, although, as a result of the people's petition, he had allowed himself to be satisfied with the present arrangement. Thrand replied: 'It is a fact, my Kinsman, that there is with me one who is called Leif, and he is a son of Ossur. I invited him to my house when we became reconciled. I will now ask you to grant Leif some blood-money for his father, Ossur, whom you killed, and it will be very proper if I pay him the money which you have in credit with me.'

'That I will not do,' said Sigmund. 'You shall pay me my money.' 'You must consider what I say to be reasonable,' said Thrand. Sigmund answered: 'Pay the money or something worse will happen to you.'

Thereupon Thrand paid half of the third which was due, and said that he was not in a position to pay more at that time. Then Sigmund went towards Thrand, and he had in his hand the silver-studded axe with which he had killed Ossur, and he put the point of the axe on Thrand's chest and said he would press the axe in so that Thrand would feel its power unless Thrand immediately paid him the money.

Then Thrand said: 'You are a dangerous man,' and he asked one of his men to go into the tent for the purse which lay there, and see if there was sufficient silver left in it. The man went and handed the purse to Sigmund, and the silver was weighed; and there was exactly the amount which Sigmund should have. At that they parted.

That summer Sigmund went to Norway with Earl Hakon's tribute, and was well received by the Earl. He spent a short time with the Earl and then went back to the Faroes and spent the winter there. His kinsman Thorer was with him the whole time.

Sigmund was popular in the Faroes. He and Svínoy-Bjarni kept well to the terms of their reconciliation, and Bjarni was constantly having to keep the peace between Thrand and Sigmund otherwise things would have gone badly.

In the spring the people gathered at the Council Meeting on Streymoy, and there was a large assembly there. Sigmund demanded from Thrand what was due to him, but Thrand, on behalf of Leif Ossurson, asked for the blood-money due in respect of Leif's father. Many of the people present tried to mediate between the two of them so that there might be a reconciliation. Sigmund replied: 'Thrand will not pay the money to Leif any more than he will pay it to me, and on the word of good men this money should by now have been my permanent property; but I will not remit the money, nor, as matters stand, will I assign it as blood-money to Leif.'

At that they parted and went home from the Council Meeting.

Sigmund again prepared to go to Norway in the summer with Earl Hakon's tribute, but was late in getting ready. As soon as he was ready he put to sea. His wife, Thuride, stayed behind but his kinsman Thorer went with him. They had a good journey and arrived at Trondheim late in the autumn. Then Sigmund went to Earl Hakon and was well received. At this time Sigmund was twenty-seven years old. After that he stayed with Earl Hakon.

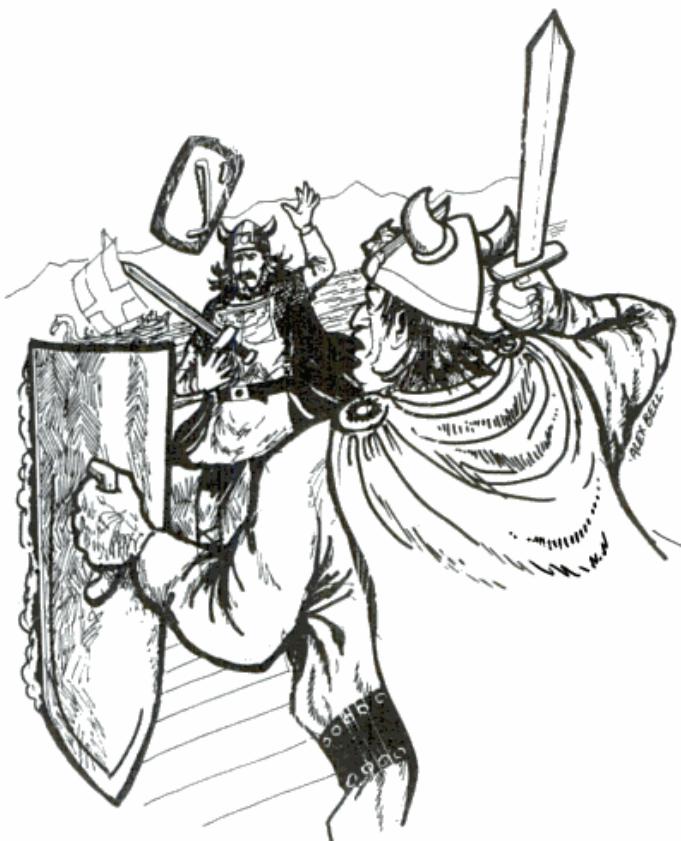
## 27. DEATH OF BUE THE STOUT

In the winter the Jomsvikings\* came to Norway and fought with Earl Hakon and his sons. The kinsmen Sigmund and Thorer were in the fight, together with Earl Hakon and Earl Erik, and it is related that Sigmund was the first of all of them to board Bue the Stout's ship as Bue was the most violent fighter. Thorer was the next on board, and thirty men went with him. When Sigmund and Bue joined in combat with each other and Sigmund saw that he could not match Bue in strength and power of his blows, he made use of his dexterity and threw his shield and sword up in the air and switched hands with them, as he often

used to do. Bue was not prepared for this, and with his left hand Sigmund then struck Bue's hands off his wrists.

After that Sigmund jumped back on board his own ship with seven men because all the others who had gone on board with Thorer had been killed. Bue jumped overboard and his ship was put out of action. In the following spring Earl Hakon gave away large gifts before they parted. The kinsmen then sailed to the Faroes and had a peaceful journey; and Sigmund ruled there alone.

\*see Map B. see also footnote to Chronological Table of Events



Sigmund fights with Bue the Stout.

## 28. KING OLAF SENDS FOR SIGMUND

The story is now taken up again at the time when King Olaf had been on the throne of Norway for two years, and had, during the winter, made the whole of Trondheim Christian. The King then sent a messenger to the Faroes to Sigmund Bresterson, and invited him to come

and see him, and at the same time told the messenger to inform Sigmund that it would be a journey of honour, and that Sigmund should become the most powerful person in the Faroes if he would be the King's man.

## 29. SIGMUND BRESTERSON ACCEPTS THE FAITH

At the end of the summer, King Olaf left Trondheim and went to Sunnmøre; and when the King arrived at Sunnmøre; he stayed there as the guest of a reputable farmer. Sigmund Bresterson went there from the Faroes, in accordance with

the King's command, and was accompanied by his kinsman Thorer.

When Sigmund went to the King, the latter received him very graciously, and they soon entered into conversation. The King spoke as

follows: 'You did well, Sigmund, not to decline this journey. The main reason I asked you to come to me is that many people have told me about your bravery and your accomplishments, and I will gladly be your friend in all things if you will obey me in this matter on which I place most importance. Some people say that it would not be improper for us to seal a friendship because neither of us is considered to be cowardly, but both of us have endured adversity and misery before coming to our rightful station in life. A number of not dissimilar things have happened to both in our exile and bondage. You were but a child and saw your father killed for no reason, but I was in my mother's womb when my father was treacherously killed without any cause whatsoever, other than his kinsman's malice and avarice. It has also been told to me that, instead of paying you blood-money for your father's death, your kinsmen were eager to slay you as well as your father, and that you were later on sold as a slave. Yes, money was even paid in order that you might be forced into bondage, and you were thus driven off and taken away from your property and your fatherland and had, for a long time, nothing to support you in a foreign land except for what people, who had no need to do so, gave you out of compassion by an act of Almighty God. In a not dissimilar way my fellow-countrymen pursued and persecuted me as soon as I was born, so that my mother had to flee with me, in wretched circumstances, away from her father and her kinsfolk, and from all her property. In this way I passed the first three years of my life. We were then taken by the Vikings and I was parted from my mother, so that I never saw her again. I was sold into slavery three times. I remained in Estonia among complete foreigners until I reached the age of ten. Then one of my kinsmen came there and recognised me as one of his own folk and released me from bondage, and took me with him over to Russia. I remained there for another nine years, still in exile, although I was considered to be free.'

'Then I came into something in the way of power and received greater honour and esteem from King Valdemar than would appear reasonable for one who was in exile. So it was like the honour conferred on you by King Hakon. Now at last things have progressed so far that we have both come into possession of our patrimony and

the land of our birth after being obliged to do without success and esteem for a long time. Now, most of all on the ground that I have learned that you have never sacrificed to idols after the custom of the heathen, I have good hope that the King of Heaven above will, through what I say, lead you to the knowledge of His Holy Name and of the Holy Faith, and will make you my comrade in the true religion, as you are like me in strength and accomplishments and the other gifts of His grace which He has given to you just as He did to me long before I had any knowledge of His glory. Now, may the same Almighty God grant that I may succeed in converting you to the true faith and in bringing you to serve Him, so that hereafter, with my example and my encouragement, you may lead all your subordinates to His glory, which I expect will happen. You shall also, if you obey my word, receive friendship and honour from me, although it will have no importance in comparison with the glory and bliss which Almighty God will pour on you, as He does on everyone else who performs His command for the love of the Holy Ghost: to reign with His sweet Son, King of Kings, eternally in the highest glory in Heaven.'

When the King had finished speaking, Sigmund replied: 'It is well known, my Lord, what you also recently referred to in your discourse, namely, that I was Earl Hakon's subordinate. He treated me well, and I was well satisfied with my position, because he was gracious, painstaking and affectionate to his friends, although he was cruel and deceitful to his enemies: but there is a great difference between your religions. However, as I understand from our words of invitation, that the Faith which you have is, in all respects, nobler and fairer than that which the heathens have. I am willing to follow your advice and win your friendship. I will not sacrifice to idols because I have, for a long time, considered that that religion was not good, but I did not know any which was better.'

King Olaf was pleased with Sigmund's reply, in that he in so judicious a way accepted the King's plea. Sigmund was then baptised together with all his followers, and the King had Sigmund instructed in Holy Writ. Sigmund then stayed with the King for the winter and was held in great esteem.

## 30. SIGMUND GOES ACROSS AND PROCLAIMS CHRISTIANITY IN THE FAROES

At the beginning of spring, the King came one day and had a conversation with Sigmund and said that he wanted to send him out to the Faroes to christianize the people who lived there. Sigmund excused himself from this task, but finally agreed to do what the King wished. The King made Sigmund officer in charge of the whole of the Faroes, and give him priests to baptize the people and to instruct them in the doctrine.

Sigmund sailed away as soon as he was ready, and his trip went off successfully. When he came to the Faroes, he summoned the farmers to a Council Meeting on Streymoy. Many people assembled there. When the members of the Council were seated, Sigmund stood up and gave a long talk in which he told them that he had been over in Norway with King Olaf Tryggvesson. He also said that the King had made him officer in charge of the whole of the Faroes. The majority of the farmers received this well. Then Sigmund said: 'I will also proclaim to you that I have taken on another religion and have become a Christian, and I have an errand and command from King Olaf to convert everybody in these Islands to that same Faith.'

Thrand replied to Sigmund's speech and said that it was reasonable that the farmers should talk over this difficult matter among themselves. The farmers said that this was well said. They then went to the other side of the field and Thrand told the farmers that it would be best for them to

refuse this command right away, and by his persuasion he caused them all to agree with him. But when Sigmund saw that all the people had moved over to Thrand and that there was nobody behind him except his own men, who were Christians, he said: 'I have given too much power to Thrand.' Then the people thronged to where Sigmund and his men were seated, and they immediately unsheathed their weapons and did not appear peaceful. Sigmund and his men jumped up to meet them. Then Thrand said: 'Let the people sit down, and do not behave so violently, but I will tell you, my Kinsman Sigmund, that we farmers are all agreed to reply thus to the petition which you have put forward, namely that we will in no way accept a change of Faith; and we will attack you here at this Council Meeting and kill you unless you abandon this idea and give us your firm promise that you will never again put this matter forward in these Islands.'

When Sigmund realized that he could in no way advance the Faith and that he did not have the force to fight against all the people who had assembled there, he saw that it was necessary to promise what they demanded, and did so in front of witnesses and with a handshake, and, at that, the Council Meeting ended.

Sigmund spent the winter at his home on Skúvoy, and was very displeased with the farmers for having coerced him, but did not let it be observed.

## 31. THRAND IS COERCED

On one occasion in the spring when the currents were very strong and people considered it impossible to sail between the islands, Sigmund set out from his home on Skúvoy with thirty men in two ships. He said that he now wanted one of two things — to try to carry out the King's errand or, as the alternative, to fall dead.

They set course for Eysturoy and reached that island when night was far advanced without having been observed by anyone. The encircled the farm at Götu and pushed a pole against the

door of the room in which Thrand slept and thus forced it, after which they seized Thrand and led him out. Then Sigmund said: 'It now seems, Thrand, that luck can still change! You coerced me in the autumn and laid down hard conditions for me. So, I will now lay down for you two dissimilar conditions: the good one is that you will accept the true Faith; but the alternative is that you will be killed right away on the spot, and that condition will be bad for you, because you will lose your great riches and success in this



Thrand is coerced into accepting the Christian Faith.

world and will therewith suffer the tortures of the damned and everlasting torment in the next world.'

Thrand said: 'I will not desert my old friends.'

Sigmund then detailed a man to kill Thrand and put a big axe in his hand; but when he went towards Thrand with the axe raised. Thrand looked at him and said: 'Do not hack me so quickly: I will first say something. Where is my kinsman Sigmund?'

'Here I am,' said Sigmund. 'You shall be the one to counsel between us,' Thrand said, 'and I will accept the Faith which you want me to.' Then Thorer said: 'Hack him, man!' 'He shall not be cut down now,' replied Sigmund. 'It will be the death of you and your friends,' said Thorer, 'if he escapes now.'

Sigmund said that that should be risked. Thrand was then baptised by a priest, together with his whole household. Sigmund got Thrand to go with him after Thrand had been baptised.

Sigmund then took Thrand over the whole of the Faroes and did not stop until everyone had become Christian.

In the summer Sigmund put his ship in order and prepared to go to Norway to bring to King Olaf his tribute, and in addition Thrand of Götu. But when Thrand realised that Sigmund intended to take him to the King, he asked if he could get out of this journey. But Sigmund would not agree to this and, as soon as there was a fair wind, he weighed anchor. But they had not got far out to sea before they met strong currents and a severe storm, so that they were driven back to the Faroes where the ship was battered to pieces. All the goods were lost, but the majority of the people on board were saved. Sigmund rescued Thrand and many others. Thrand said that the journey would not go well for them if they made him go against his will, but Sigmund said that he must nevertheless accompany them, despite the fact that he did not wish to do so. Sigmund then took another

ship and his own goods to take to the King instead of the tribute, because he did not lack personal property.

They put out to sea a second time, and this time they got somewhat further than before, but again they met a strong headwind which drove them back to the Faroes and battered the ship to bits. Sigmund said that it seemed to him that there was a big stumbling-block to their journey. Thrand said that this would happen as often as they attempted the journey when he was going with them against his will.

Sigmund then released Thrand on condition that Thrand swore a sacred oath that he should uphold the Christian Faith, that he would be honest and faithful to King Olaf and Sigmund,

and that he would not hinder or prevent anyone from displaying loyalty and obedience towards them, but that on the other hand he would promote and carry out this command of King Olaf and also everything else which he was ordered to carry out in the Faroes. And Thrand swore, without the slightest reservation, on everything which Sigmund could think of to convince him. Thrand then went home to Götu and Sigmund remained for the winter on Skúvoy because, on the last occasion when they were driven back to the Faroes, it was far into the autumn.

Sigmund had the ship which had suffered the least damage put into order, and the winter was peaceful in the Faroes, and nothing untoward occurred there.

## 32. THRAND WILL NOT GO TO KING OLAF

When Sigmund Bresterson had made the whole of the Faroes Christian, he intended to take Thrand of Götu with him to Norway, but was twice driven back, as has been recently related. Sigmund made ready and set out on his journey and had a good crossing. He arrived in Norway and met King Olaf up in Trondheim and brought him the money which he paid for the tribute from the Faroes, which had been lost the previous year, and, in addition, the tribute which was at this time due to be paid. The King received him well and Sigmund stayed with him far into the spring.

Then Sigmund told the King exactly how things had gone with Thrand and the other islanders. 'It is bad,' said the King, 'that Thrand

did not come with you, and it is a great injury to your islands that he cannot be got away from the Faroes, because I consider that he is unquestionably one of the worst people in all the Nordic countries.'

One day in the spring King Olaf said to Sigmund: 'We will now enjoy ourselves and test our skills.' 'I am not fit for that, my Lord,' said Sigmund, 'but this, as everything which is within my power, shall depend on you.'

Then they tried swimming, shooting and other skills, and people are agreed that Sigmund came very close to King Olaf in many sports, but in all of them he was behind the King, but less so than anybody else in Norway at that time.

## 33. KING OLAF DEMANDS THE RING FROM SIGMUND

It is related that once, when King Olaf was sitting at the drinking table entertaining his household troop and had many guests with him, Sigmund, who was at that time held in great affection by the King, and only two people sat between him and the King, put his hands on the table. The King looked at him and saw that Sigmund had a thick gold ring on his hand. The King then said: 'Let me see the ring.' Sigmund removed the ring from his hand and handed it to the King. The King said: 'Will you give me this

ring?' 'It has been my intention, my Lord,' said Sigmund, 'not to be separated from this ring.' 'I shall give you another ring in its place,' said the King, 'and it shall be neither smaller nor less beautiful.' 'I will not part with it,' said Sigmund. 'I promised Earl Hakon, in all sincerity, when he gave me the ring that I would never be separated from it. I should keep to that because the donor, Earl Hakon, seemed to me to be a good man, and he did a lot of good for me in many respects.'

Then the King said: 'Let both the ring and him who gave it to you appear as good to you as you wish, but good fortune will now forsake you because this ring will be your slayer. I know very well how you obtained the ring and from where it came. The reason for my demand was more that I wanted to ward off an unhappy fate from my friends than that I coveted this ring.'

The King's face then became as red as blood, but this conversation ended, and after that the King was never as gentle towards Sigmund as he had been before.

Sigmund remained for a time with the King, and then, early in the summer, he went out to the Faroes. The King and Sigmund parted in friendship, but Sigmund never saw him again.

Sigmund arrived in the Faroes and stayed at his farm in Skúvoy; but it happened as King Olaf had foreseen, that a man, Thorgrim the Evil by name, along with his two sons, murdered Sigmund at the place in Suðuroy which is called Sandvik, when he was exhausted from swimming, in order to appropriate the ring which Sigmund had got from Earl Hakon.

## 34. EARL SVEN AND EARL ERIK SEND FOR SIGMUND

Earl Sven and Earl Erik sent a message to the Faroes asking Sigmund Bresterson to come to them. Sigmund did not put this journey off, but went to the Earls up in Lade in Trondheim. They gave him a good reception with great kindness.

Sigmund became their courtier, and they assigned the Faroes to him on lease. They then parted with great warmth and friendship, and Sigmund went back to the Faroes in the autumn.

## 35. ABOUT SIGURD THORLAKSON

Three men are mentioned in the Saga who grew up with Thrand in Götu; one was called Sigurd and was a son of Thrand's brother Thorlak. He was a big, strong, impressive man, and had blond hair which fell in curls. He possessed great agility in sports, and it is said that he must have come nearest to Sigmund Bresterson in all of these. His brother was called Thord and had the nickname 'the Short.' He was very thickset and extremely strong. The third was called Gaut the Red. He was Thrand's sister's son. Leif was being brought up at the same place, and they were all the same age.

Sigmund and Thuride had the following children: their eldest daughter was Thóra, who was born in the mountains. She was tall in stature and masterful, and not very pretty, but early on she became an intelligent woman. Their eldest son was called Thoralf, the second Steingrim, the third Brand and the fourth Heri\*. They were all promising men.

But Christianity in the Faroes by this time went, as it did on other places throughout the Kingdom of the Earls, in such a way that

everyone lived as he wished; but the Earls themselves adhered steadfastly to their Faith. Sigmund also, and all his people, kept well to their Faith, and allowed a church to be built on their farm. It is said of Thrand that he almost completely forsook the Faith, and all his companions did the same.

The Faroese then summoned a Council Meeting‡, to which Sigmund and Thrand of Götu and a great assembly came. Then Thrand said to Sigmund: 'The time has now come, my Kinsman Sigmund, for me to ask for blood-money, on behalf of Leif Ossurson, which you will pay to him for his father whom you killed.'

Sigmund said that, as regards that, they must obey the judgment which Earl Hakon had pronounced between them on this case as a whole. Thrand said that it would be more appropriate to grant Leif such blood-money for his father as the best man in the Faroes should decide. Sigmund said that Thrand should not quarrel about that because it would not happen. Then Thrand said: 'It is true that you have become hard, but it could also happen that my Kinsmen who grew up with

me will not take it to be very reasonable if you do not grant them some control when more than half of it is due to us from you, and it would be as well not to expect them to put up with that for long. You have given me a lot of humiliation,' continued Thrand, 'and it was the greatest humiliation of all when you forced me to change my Faith, because what I will be most sorry for so long as I live is to have submitted to that. You

must also prepare yourself for the fact that people will not endure for long your thus violating their rights.'

Sigmund said that he was not alarmed by Thrand's threats. At that they parted.

\**Anglicised form Harry*

†*Thing*

## 36. ABOUT SIGMUND

It is related that Sigmund sailed one day to the island of Lítla Dímun in the company of Thorer and Einar the Hebridean. Sigmund went to bring over for slaughtering some sheep which grazed on that island. When Sigmund and Thorer were up on the island they saw people coming ashore and their shining shields threw out reflections. This told them that twelve men had come on to the island. Sigmund asked who they could be. Thorer said that he could recognize that they were people from Götu, namely, Thrand and his kinsmen: 'but what course shall we adopt?' asked Thorer. 'It is not difficult,' replied Sigmund. 'We should all go for them with our weapons and, if they attack us, we should all then run away, but in such a way that we all assemble in one place where there are steps down to the sea.'

Thrand and his companions meanwhile arranged among themselves that half should go for Sigmund and that Thorlak's sons and a fourth man should go with them. This was heard by Sigmund and his companions. They then went at each other. Thrand and his people immediately went in at them, but Sigmund and his people ran away, each man on his own. But they assembled at one place and ran to the steps where they met a man ahead of them. Sigmund was the first to reach him, and made short work of him.

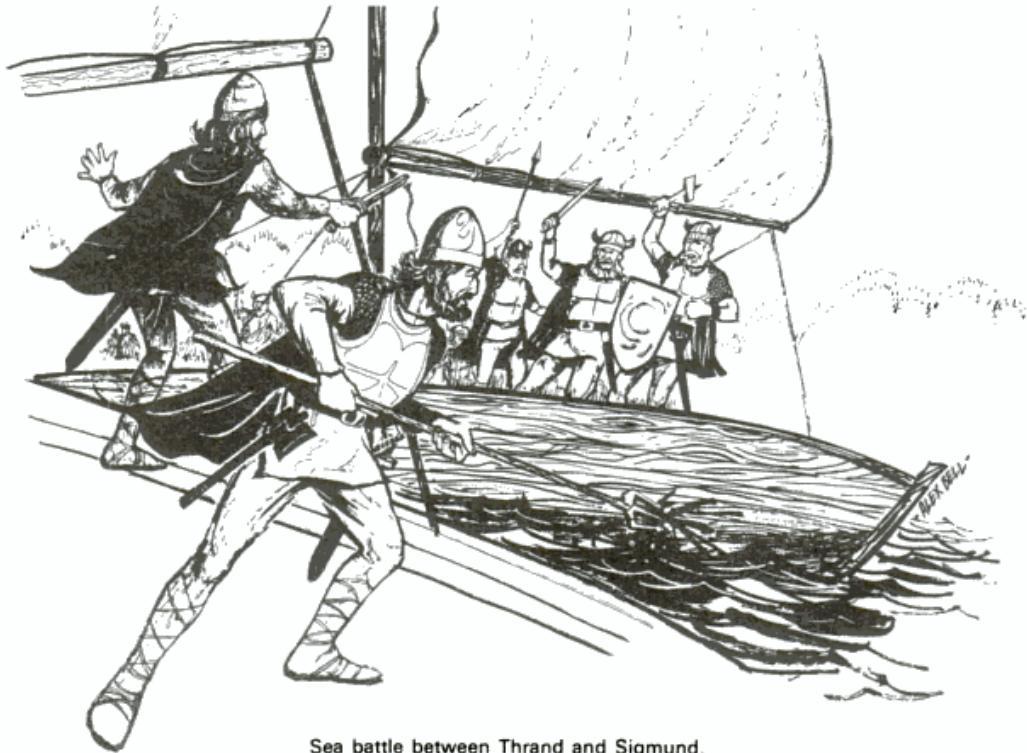
After this, Sigmund defended the steps, but Thorer and Einar ran to Thrand's ship where one man held the shoreline and another was on board. Thorer ran to the man who held the line and killed him. Meanwhile, Einar ran to Sigmund's ship and floated it. Sigmund defended the steps and jumped from there down to the beach to get to their ship. On the beach he killed one of the other party's followers, and he and Thorer

then ran out to the ship. Sigmund soon threw overboard the man who was on that ship. They then rowed away with both ships, but the man whom Sigmund had cast overboard swam ashore.

Thrand then lit beacons, and people rowed out to them and they went home to Götu. Sigmund collected people around him and intended to take Thrand and his companions prisoner before he learned that they had gone away.

Some time later, in the summer, Sigmund, accompanied by two others, went for his land dues. They rowed into a narrow sound between two islands and, when they came out of the sound, a ship was sailing towards them and had already come very close. They recognized the people on board as being from Götu, namely, Thrand and eleven of his followers. Then Thorer said: 'They are too near to us now: what shall we do, my Kinsman, Sigmund?' 'There is only a little to do here,' said Sigmund, 'but we will take the decision to row towards them. They will then strike their sail, and, as our ship goes past theirs, you should draw your swords and cut into the shrouds on the part of the ship where the sail is not being struck. In the meantime I shall do what I can think of.'

They rowed towards the other ship and, as their ship came alongside the other one, Thorer and Einar cut all the shrouds on that part of the ship where the sail was not being struck. Sigmund seized a pitchfork which lay on his ship and pushed it so hard into the side of the other ship that it capsized immediately, that is to say he pushed the pitchfork against the side of the ship where the sail had been struck and to which the ship had previously been inclined. The ship then heeled over quickly, since Sigmund pushed with all his strength. Five of Thrand's men drowned at



Sea battle between Thrand and Sigmund.

that place. Thorer said that they should kill every single one of them they could reach, but Sigmund, on the other hand, said that he would not do that but would rather provoke them as much as possible. They then parted.

Then Sigurd Thorlakson said: 'See how much shame and injury we have got from this new attempt on Sigmund.' He then righted the ship and saved many of the people. When Thrand came up into the ship, he said: 'Now must the luck between me and Sigmund have changed.'

because this time he has acted without much thought, in that he has not killed us when he had us in his power. From this time onwards we will take care and will not stop until we have Sigmund in the next world.'

The others said that they too would wish it that way. With the affair completed, they then went back home to Götö. The summer then passed, and for that period they let things be as they were.

### 37. THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN SIGMUND AND THRAND

Now it happened one day when winter was approaching that Thrand called people to him and they left there, sixty men strong, and Thrand said that they should now go and seek out Sigmund, and he humoured them by saying that he would now get near to him. They had two ships and a hand-picked crew. In Thrand's company were Thord the Short, Gaut the Red, Steingrim, a farmer from Eysturoy, and Eldjarn

Kamhat, who had already been with Thrand for a long time. Svínøy-Bjarni kept quiet in these conflicts because he had become reconciled with Sigmund. Then Thrand went with his people straight to Skúvoy. They pulled their ships ashore and went right on up until they reached the steps. Skúvoy is such a good defensive position that it is said that the island cannot be taken when there are ten† men to defend the steps, however many



Sigmund leaps over the gorge.

there may be who engage in the assault. Eldjarn Kamhat went up in front of the others and met Sigmund's guard at the steps. They immediately went for each other, and their exchange ended in both of them falling off the rock; and in this way the two of them met their death.

Thrand then went up to the farm with all the rest of them and surrounded it, and they came upon those who were there so unawares that not the least bit of news had reached them beforehand. They then broke the doors open. Sigmund and all his people who were present immediately seized their weapons. His wife Thuride did the same, and she assisted as well as a man could. Thrand set fire to the house and they meant to attack the farm with both fire and weapons. They then launched a heavy assault, and when they had attacked for a period Thuride went out to the door and said: 'For how long, Thrand, do you intend to fight leaderless men?' Thrand replied: 'Those words may be true, and Sigmund may have gone away.'

Thereupon he went behind the house and whistled, and then came to the opening to a secret

passage a short distance from the farm. Next he contrived to stick his hand into the ground and then took it up to his nose and said: 'All three, Sigmund, Thorer and Einar, have passed here.'

Thrand then went round for a bit and sniffed as he followed the trail like a hound, and asked the others not to approach him. He then went to a mountain forge which goes across the island of Skúvoy. At that Thrand said: 'They have been this way, and Sigmund must have jumped over here when they heard us coming. Now we will divide our people up.' continued Thrand. 'and Leif Ossurson and Sigurd Thorlakson are to go to one end of the gorge with some people, but I will go to the other end and we will meet on the other side of the gorge.'

This they did. Then Thrand said: 'Sigmund, are you fit to show whether you still possess your courage and can be held to be a brave man, as you have been called for a long time?'

It was pitch dark, and immediately after this a man jumped across the gorge and cut at Thrand's neighbour, Steingrim, with his sword and split him down the shoulders. It was Sigmund, and he

immediately jumped backwards across the gorge. 'There goes Sigmund,' said Thrand, 'we should go after them to the end of the gorge.' This they did and then Leif and Thrand and all their people met. Sigmund and his companions were at this time up on a rock close to the sea, and they could hear men's voices on all sides of them. At that, Thorer said: 'We should here and now make such a defence as destiny shall make possible for us.' 'I am not in a position to make any defence,' said Sigmund, 'because I lost my sword when I

jumped back across the gorge. We will therefore jump down from the rock and try to swim away.' 'Let us do as you suggest,' said Thorer.

They took this decision, jumped out from the rock into the sea and began to swim. When Thrand heard the splash he said: 'We shall now take a ship where we can get one and search for them, some on the sea and some ashore.' They did so, but they did not find them.

†cf Ch. 22 (20 or 30 men)

### 38. SIGMUND BRESTERSON IS MURDERED AND HIDDEN

Of Sigmund and his companions it is related that they swam for a time and headed for Suðuroy where the distance was shortest, but it was still a long sea mile. When they had covered half the distance, Einar said: 'Here we must part.' Sigmund said that that should not happen. 'Put yourself on my shoulders, Einar,' he said; and the other did so. Sigmund then swam for a time.

Then Thorer, who was swimming behind him said: 'How long, my Kinsman, Sigmund, will you drag a dead man behind you?' 'I do not believe it is necessary,' Sigmund said.

They swam on so far that only a quarter of the journey remained. Then Thorer said: 'My Kinsman, Sigmund, we have been together for the whole of our lives and have borne great



Sigmund's swim from Skúvoy to Suðuroy.

affection for each other, but now it seems that our time together is up. I have done everything I can do. I now want you to save yourself and your life and not worry about me any more, because if you get involved with me you will lose your own life.' 'It shall never happen, my Kinsman, Thorer,' said Sigmund, 'that we part in this manner. Either both of us or neither of us will reach the shore.'

Sigmund then carried Thorer between his shoulders, but Thorer was so exhausted that he could hardly help himself in the slightest degree. However, Sigmund swam on until they reached Suðuroy. There was strong surf at the island, and Sigmund was so exhausted that he was at one moment carried away from the shore and at the next carried back again. Then the waves swept Thorer off Sigmund's shoulders and Thorer drowned; but Sigmund finally managed to creep up, and he was so exhausted that he could not walk but could only crawl on to the beach and there he lay down on a pile of seaweed. That was at dawn. He lay there until it was broad daylight.

There was a little farm called Sandvik on the island not far away where there lived a man, Thorgrim the Evil by name. He was a big, strong man and held his farm in copyhold from Thrand of Götu. He had two sons, by name Ormstein and

Thorstein, who were promising men. Thorgrim the Evil went to the beach in the morning, and he had a wood-axe in his hand. He then came to a place where he saw a piece of red cloth sticking out from a pile of seaweed. Thereupon he scraped the seaweed to one side, and saw a man lying there. He asked the man who he was and Sigmund gave his name. 'Our chief now lies low,' said Thorgrim. 'What has caused it?' Sigmund then told him everything that had taken place. At the same time Thorgrim's sons arrived. Sigmund asked them to help him, but Thorgrim was not quick in replying to that request, but spoke quietly to his sons: 'Sigmund has, so it seems to me, more riches on him than we have ever owned, and his gold ring is very thick, so it seems to me best if we kill him and then hide his body; no one would ever find out about it.'

For a time his sons were against this, but they finally consented. They then walked over to where Sigmund lay and took him by the hair, and Thorgrim the Evil cut off Sigmund's head with his wood-axe, and so life passed from Sigmund, he who in all respects was an exceptional man.

They took his clothes and valuables off him and then dragged him up under an earth bank and buried him there. Thorer's body was washed ashore, and they buried him beside Sigmund, and hid them both.

### 39. THE CONDUCT OF THE ISLANDERS AFTER THE DEATH OF SIGMUND

Of Thrand and his companions it is related that they went home after this incident. The farm at Skúvoy was saved; only a little of it had been burned and only a few had lost their lives. Sigmund's wife, Thuride, who then got the additional name of the Principal Widow, ran her farm at Skúvoy after the death of her husband. Sigmund, Sigmund's and her children grew up with her, and they were all promising. Thrand and Leif Ossurson now had the whole of the Faroes under them, and they ruled over them.

Thrand offered Thuride, the Principal Widow, and her sons a reconciliation, but they did not wish to enter into such a thing. When Sigmund's sons were young, they did not seek any help from the chiefs in Norway, and so some years passed by during which all was peaceful in the Faroes.

On one occasion Thrand said to Leif Ossurson that he would seek to provide him with a good match. 'Where shall it be sought?' asked Leif. 'I am thinking of Sigmund's daughter Thora,' he replied. 'There seems to me no likelihood of that,' said Leif. 'The wench will not be given to you if you do not woo her,' said Thrand.

They then went to Skúvoy accompanied by some men, but there they met a chilly reception. Thrand and Leif offered Thuride and her sons such reconciliation as the best men in the islands should judge between them. Thuride and her sons were not quick to enter into such an arrangement. Then Thrand began the courtship on behalf of Leif and wooed Sigmund's daughter, Thora, for him. That seemed to them to be the best way of

getting a complete reconciliation going between the two parties.

Thrand offered to give Leif a considerable fortune. They all accepted this well, but Thora herself replied as follows: 'I wonder if you think that I am lusting after marriage. I, for my part, will lay down this condition: when Leif gives me his oath that he did not slay my father and that he did not set any of his people on to kill him, I will then make it a condition that he shall provide

me with information as to who my father's killer was, or who it was who caused his death. And, when all that is done, we will then conclude a reconciliation according to the counsel of my brothers and my mother, and of our other kinsmen.'

Everyone considered this to be well said and wisely thought out. They were united in this, so Thrand and Leif promised to do what was asked, and they then parted with the matter disposed of.

#### 40. ABOUT THRAND

Shortly after this, Thrand left Götu, accompanied by Leif, and they went by ship, twelve of them in all, to Skúvoy, and arrived at Sandvik at Thorgrim the Evil's place. This was some years after the death of Sigmund and Thorer. It was late when they came to the island and they went up to the farm. Thorgrim gave Thrand a good reception and they went inside. Thrand and Thorgrim went into the main room, but Leif and the others remained seated in the ante-room, where a fire had been lit for them. Then Thrand

and Thorgrim talked a great deal with each other. Thrand said: 'Whom do people think was the killer of Sigmund Bresteron?' 'People do not seem to know for certain,' said Thorgrim. 'Some believe that you found them on the beach or in the water and killed them.' 'Such a supposition is evil and improbable,' replied Thrand, 'because everyone knew we wished to kill Sigmund: but why should we conceal their killing? Talk like that comes from a hostile mind.' 'Others, however, say that they may have burst



Thrand conjures up the dead Kinsmen.

themselves swimming or that Sigmund may have come ashore somewhere, as he was an excellent man in many respects. He may have met his doom, if he came ashore in a weakened condition, and been secretly murdered.' 'That sounds very good to hear,' said Thrand, 'and it is my belief that that is what happened; but is it not so, my dear friend who suspects me, that *you* are Sigmund's killer?' Thorgrim denied this most vehemently. 'You dare not deny this,' said Thrand, 'because I believe I know that you are the real culprit.' Thorgrim continued his denials.

Thrand then had Leif Sigurdson called, and ordered that Thorgrim and his sons should be put in chains; this was done and they were chained and bound fast. Thrand then had a large fire made in the smoke-room and he had four frames put together in a square and cut nine circular pieces out of each of the sides of the four frames. He then sat down on a chair between the fire and the frames. He told them not to speak to him, which they observed.

Thrand sat like this for a time, and some time later a man came into the smoke-room — he was completely wet. They recognised the man as Einar the Hebridean. He went up to the fire and stretched out his hands for a moment, and then turned round and went out again. Some time later a man came again into the smoke-room. He went to the fire and stretched out his hands, and then he went out. They recognised him as Thorer. Immediately, a third man came into the smoke-room. This was a big man and very bloody: he had his head in his hand. They all recognised that it was Sigmund Bresterson. He stood at a spot on the floor and then went out.

After this Thrand got up from the chair, uttered a frightful groan, and said: 'Now you know what caused the death of these men:

#### 41. LIEF GETS SIGMUND'S DAUGHTER THORA

After this Thrand had a main Council Meeting summoned at Tórshavn on Streymoy where the Faroese held their Council Meetings. There Thorgrim the Evil and his sons, in the presence of all the men of the Council, confessed to the killing and death of Sigmund, namely, that they had killed him and then hidden away his corpse. After they had confessed, they were hanged there at the Council Meeting, and so they ended their lives.

Leif and his foster-father then pressed the

Einar was the first to perish and he died of cold or was drowned, as he was the least strong of them. Thorer must have perished next and Sigmund carried him on well, and as a result must have become very exhausted. Sigmund came ashore, completely weakened, and these men must have killed him, as he appeared before us bloody and headless.'

All Thrand's companions accepted as the truth that this must have been what happened. Then Thrand said that they must search everywhere, and this they did, but they found no clues. Thorgrim and his sons continued to deny it and said that they had not committed this deed. Thrand said that they did not dare to deny it, and ordered his men to search more closely, and they did so.

A large, old chest stood in the smoke-room. Thrand asked if they had searched the chest. They said that they had not done so, and they then forced it open. There did not seem to be anything in it apart from rubbish, and they searched for a while among that.

Thrand said: 'Turn the chest around,' and they did this. There they found a bundle of rags which had been in the chest, and they brought it to Thrand. He loosened it, and there were many rags twisted together; and at last Thrand found a big gold ring there, and recognised that the ring had belonged to Sigmund Bresterson, the one which Earl Hakon had given to Sigmund.

When Thorgrim noticed this, he confessed to Sigmund's murder and then told everything and how it had happened. He showed them the place where Sigmund and Thorer were buried, and they carried their corpses away. Thrand made Thorgrim and his sons go with him.

Then Sigmund and Thorer were buried in the church on Skúvoy which Sigmund had built.

courtship of Thora and offered her and her mother such reconciliation as they would be content with, and the upshot of the affair was that Leif got Thora, Sigmund's daughter, and they concluded a complete reconciliation. Leif put in order his residence on the ancestral farm at Hov on Suðuroy.

And now for a time all was peaceful in the Faroes. Thoralf Sigmundson married and took up his abode on Dímun (Stóra Dímun).

## 42. ABOUT THE FAROESE AND KING OLAF THE HOLY

Learned men have rightly written, and it is truly recorded, that King Olaf made all countries which, at that time, came under Norway (except Iceland) liable to taxes. The Orkneys were the first, then the Shetlands, the Faroes and Greenland. And so it is said that, in the ninth year of his reign, there came to Norway from the Faroes, in answer to the summons of King Olaf, Gille the Law Man, Leif Ossurson, Thoralf from Dínum\* and many other sons of farmers. Thrand of Götu prepared to travel with them, but, when he was ready, he had an attack of epilepsy, so that he was quite unable to go, and he remained behind.

When the above-mentioned Faroese came to King Olaf, he called them in to him and held a meeting with them. He put forward to them the proposal which was the real reason for the summons, that he wanted to have taxes from the Faroes and that, in addition, the Faroes should accept the laws which he, King Olaf, gave them.

It was noticeable, from the King's words at that meeting, that he wanted assurance on this matter from the Faroese who had then come to Norway, by their confirming this on oath. He offered to the men who had come to him that, if they would enter into this condition, then the most distinguished of them would become his men and receive his friendship and honours.

The Faroese thought about the matter and observed that it might well be doubtful what the result of the matter would be if they were unwilling to consent to the King's demands; and, although many meetings were held about this matter, the King got his demands put through and Leif, Gille and Thoralf submitted themselves to the King and became his courtiers. All the Faroese present swore oaths to King Olaf to keep the laws and submit to the justice which he gave them in the Faroes, and to pay the taxes which he had imposed.

Then the Faroese men prepared themselves for the journey home, and, when they departed, the King gave gifts of friendship to those who had become his men. They went on their way when they were ready, but the King had a ship made ready and sent men out to the Faroes to receive the taxes which the Faroese should pay him.

They were soon ready, and all there is to tell of their journey is that they did not come back, and no taxes arrived during the following summer. People said that they did not arrive in the Faroes, and that no one there had collected taxes.

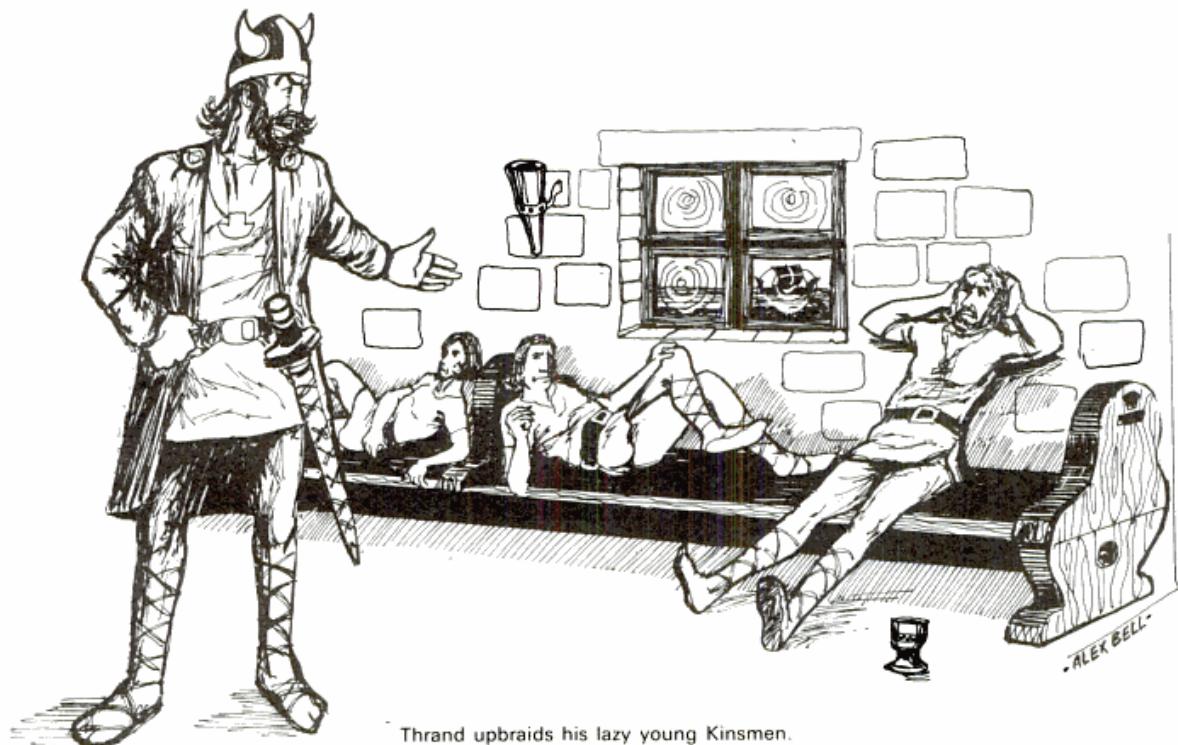
\*i.e. Thoralf Sigmundson from Stóra Dímun

## 43. ABOUT SIGURD AND THRAND OF GÖTU

In that Spring a ship came to the Faroes from Norway with a message from King Olaf that one or other of his courtiers in the Faroes, namely, Leif Ossurson, Gille the Law Man or Thoralf from Dímun, should come to him. When this message came to the Faroes and it was announced to them, they joined in guessing what the purpose must be, and they all believed that the King would certainly wish to question them about the incidents, which some held to have in truth happened in the Faroes. These concerned the misfortune which had overtaken the King's emissaries on the two ships, none of whose crews had returned. They then decided that Thoralf should travel.

He made himself ready and prepared a cargo ship which he owned and got people as crew. In

all, there were ten or twelve men. When they were ready and waiting for a fair wind, it happened one day, when there was good weather on Eysturoy, that Thrand went into the main room, and Sigurd, Thord and Gaut were lying there on the bench. Then Thrand said: 'Much changes in a man's lifetime. It seldom happened in our youth that those who were well able to do what should be done sat inside or lay about during the daytime when the weather was good, and our forefathers would never have believed that Thoralf from Dínum could be a braver man than you; but my vessel which lies here in the boathouse has become so old that it is rotting under the tar. Every house is full of wool that has not been converted into money. That would not have been the case if I had been some years younger.'



Thrond upbraids his lazy young Kinsmen.

Sigurd then jumped up and went out, and called Thord and Gaut and said that he would not tolerate this reproach. They then walked out to the men and went and launched the vessel and got the men to carry the cargo on board and loaded the ship, and in a few days made it ready for departure. There were also ten or twelve men on this ship.

They and Thoralf set out on their journeys at the same time and were continually within sight of each other while at sea.

They made a landfall at Herna. It was dark. Sigurd let his ship lie further out from the beach, but there was only a short distance between them. It happened in the evening, when it had become dark and Thoralf and his people intended to go to bed, that he and one of his men first went ashore on a necessary errand. But the man who accompanied him said that when they were ready to go down again, a cloth was thrown over his head and he was lifted up from the ground, and at the same time he heard a blow. He was then carried and swung before being thrown, but the sea was below him and he was thrown into the water.

When he came ashore again, he went to the place where he and Thoralf had been separated from each other. He found Thoralf, who was split down the shoulders and was dead.

When Thoralf's crew got to know this, they carried his corpse out to the ship and set out into the night.

At this time King Olaf was a guest at Lygra. A message was immediately sent to him, and the people were then summoned to a Council Meeting by means of an arrow\*, and the King himself came to the Council Meeting. He had had the Faroese from both ships summoned and they had appeared.

When the Members of the Council were seated, the King stood up and spoke: 'An event has occurred here, the like of which, with all good luck, is rarely heard of,' he said. 'A brave young man has had his days cut short here, and we believe that he was innocent. Is there anyone here at this Meeting who can inform us who has committed this deed?' But no one replied to that question.

'I will not conceal my opinion about this affair, namely, that I am suspicious of the Faroese, and it seems to me to be quite reasonable that Sigurd Thorlakson has killed the man, and that Thord threw the other one into the sea. I think that the motive for this deed must have been that they did not want Thoralf to tell about the crimes which he must have known they were guilty of, and of which we had our suspicions, namely, the homicide and crimes of murdering my emissaries over there.'

When the King had finished his speech, Sigurd Thorlakson stood up and said: 'I have not previously spoken at the Council Meeting and, therefore, do not really know how to 'dress up' my words; but I do see that urgent necessity demands that I make some reply. I well assume that this accusation which the King has now put forward must have come from such men as are very imprudent and worse than he is, but one does not need to conceal the fact that they are our true enemies. It is also said that I should want to inflict harm on Thoralf, without any justification, because he was my foster-brother and good friend; and if there had been any other ground for it, and if there had been any matter between myself and Thoralf, then I am sensible enough to prefer to have carried out such a job at home in the Faroes rather than here just under your eyes. oh King! I will therefore deny this accusation myself, and on behalf of the whole of my ship's company and I will then offer my oath as your law provides; but if you consider it to be better proof, I will carry the iron; and I want you yourself to be present at the ordeal.

When Sigurd had ended his speech, there were many who pleaded with the King that Sigurd should be allowed to go free. They thought that he had spoken well, and said that he was certainly innocent of what he had been accused of.

The King replied: 'As regards this man, one or other thing must apply: either he is a very brave man, if he is innocent in this matter, or, on the other hand, he is somewhat more impudent than anyone whose example we have. About that I have the same strong suspicion. But he himself will, I suspect, soon show how the matter will unfold.'

And, on account of the people's petition, the King accepted Sigurd's promise to carry the iron. Sigurd was to come, in the morning, to Lygra, where the Bishop would be in charge of the ordeal. At that the Council Meeting closed.

The King went back to Lygra, but Sigurd and his companions returned to their ship. Soon afterwards the darkness of night began to fall. Then Sigurd said to his travelling companions: 'It is certain that we have got into a very difficult position and you have been shamefully accused. This King is cunning, and the result of this case is easy to predict, if he prevails. He first had Thoralf killed and now he wishes to make us outlaws. It is an easy matter for them to get the carrying of the iron to go the wrong way for us. I therefore hold that it is the worst possible thing to risk being with such a man. Now a gentle breeze is blowing in from the sound: I accordingly advise that we hoist our sail to the top of the mast and set course out to sea. Let Thrand travel another year and sell his wool if he wants to. But if I escape now, I never expect to come back to Norway.'

The Faroese thought it was an ingenious piece of advice, and immediately hoisted their sail; and during the night they kept out to sea as much as they could and sailed, without interruption, to the Faroes. Thrand showed his dissatisfaction at their behaviour: they gave no proper reply.

\*notification was made by sending round an arrow which indicated the martial nature of the proceedings

#### 44. CARL OF MÖRE COMES TO KING OLAF

King Olaf soon learned that Sigurd and his people were away. Hard words were spoken about their conduct and there were some who considered it a reasonable assumption that Sigurd and his companions were guilty of what they had previously denied. King Olaf did not speak much about this affair, but by this time, however, he believed what he had previously suspected to be

true. He then went around to the various feasts which had been prepared for him.

In the spring, King Olaf made ready to depart from Trondheim and a great army was mustered round him, both from Trondheim and from places widely scattered around the northern part of the country. When he was ready for the journey, he sailed with the fleet first down to Möre

and went from there, and also from Romsdal, together with his warriors. He then went to Sunnmøre and lay at Herøy and waited for his army. He often held House Council Meetings, because he had come to hear a great many matters about which he believed it necessary to consult the people.

At one of the Council Meetings he put the matter concerning the loss of the men which he had suffered in the Faroes; 'but the taxes,' he said, 'which they promised me never came. I now intend to send men over there for them.'

He approached several people with the plea that they should undertake this expedition, but he got from all of them the answer that they excused themselves from the journey.

Then a big, brave man stood up at the Council Meeting. He wore a red coat, and had a helmet on his head, carried a sword and had a halberd in his hand. He spoke as follows: 'It is certain,' he said, 'that there is here a big difference in people and that you and I have a good King; but he has bad servants. You say "no" to the mission on which he wants to send you, but, nevertheless, you have previously received from him gifts of

friendship and many marks of honour. Up to now, I have not been the King's friend; he has even been my enemy and will say that he had cause for that. Now I will offer, oh King, to go for you, if no better man is to be found for it.'

The King said: 'Who is this brave man who replied to my speech? You are far ahead of the others who are present here, since you yourself offer to go on the journey, while they, whom I expected to undertake it willingly, excused themselves from it. But I do not quite recognise you and do not even know your name.'

The man replied: 'My name does not need to be concealed, oh King! I think you must have heard my name: I am called Carl of Møre.' 'So let it be, Carl!' replied the King. 'I have heard mention of you, and it is true that there have been times when, if we had met one another, you would not have been able to tell of the meeting. But now I shall not behave any worse than you, and, as you offer me your assistance, I will accept it with good will. Now, Carl, you shall come to me today and be my guest, and we shall then talk this matter over.'

Carl replied that that should be so, and, at that, the Council Meeting ended.

## 45. CARL OF MÖRE IS RECONCILED WITH THE KING

Carl of Møre had been a great Viking and the worst of plunderers, and the King had very often sent men out after him to have him killed; but Carl of Møre came from a distinguished family and was outstanding in many accomplishments. But when Carl had been appointed for this journey, the King took him into his favour and showed him great affection. He allowed him to make the best preparations for the expedition: there were in all twenty men in the ship. The King sent a message to his friends in the Faroes and recommended that they assist Carl. It was to Leif Ossurson and Gille the Law Man that he sent his tokens.

Carl went away as soon as he was ready, and they had a fair wind and came to the Faroes and berthed in Tórshavn on Streymoy. A Council Meeting was then summoned and a large number of people attended. Thrand of Götu came with a large crowd of people. Leif and Gille also came there, and they too had a lot of men with them.

And when they had pitched their tents and got

their Council Meeting going, Leif and Gille went to meet Carl of Møre, and they greeted each other in a friendly manner. Then Carl produced King Olaf's message and token and greetings of friendship to Leif and Gille. They received these well and invited Carl to come to them, and promised that they would promote his errand and afford him all the assistance they could. This Carl received with thanks.

Shortly afterwards Thrand arrived and gave Carl a friendly greeting. 'I am glad,' he said, 'that such a man as you has come here to this country on our King's errand which we are all obliged to comply with. I will not have you do otherwise than come to me for your winter lodgings and to bring as many of your men with you as are in keeping with your standing.'

Carl said that he had decided to go to Leif; 'otherwise,' he added, 'I would have accepted this invitation with pleasure.' Thrand replied: 'Then by this a great honour has been conferred on

Leif; but is there no other way in which I can be of service to you?"

Carl said that he would consider it to be real service if Thrand would collect the taxes from Streymoy and all the northern islands. Thrand said that it was his duty and obligation to afford this assistance in accordance with the King's command.

Thrand then went back to his tent and nothing more noteworthy occurred at this Council Meeting.

Carl went for lodgings to Leif Ossurson, and spent the winter there. Leif demanded taxes from

Streymoy and from all the islands south of it.

In the following spring Thrand became very sick. He had bad eye trouble and suffered as well from asthma and other illnesses. Then he prepared to go to the Council Meeting as he was accustomed to do.

When he came to the Council Meeting and had his tent pitched, he had a curtain put inside it with a black curtain under the first one so that the daylight would not shine so brightly into his tent. When the Council Meeting had lasted for some days, Leif and Carl went to Thrand's tent with a large following.

## 46. CARL RECEIVES MONEY FROM THE KINSMEN

Then they came to Thrand's tent, and some men were standing outside it. Leif asked if Thrand was in the tent, and they said that he was there. Leif said that the men should ask him to come out. 'I and Carl have an errand with him,' he added.

But the men came back and said that Thrand had such a bad pain in his eyes that he could not go out, and asked Leif and Carl to come inside. Leif said to his companions that they should go forward cautiously when they got inside. 'Do not crowd in,' he said, 'but let him come out first who goes in last!'

Leif went in first and then Carl and his companions, and they were fully armed as if they were going into battle. Leif went through the black curtain and asked where Thrand was. Thrand answered and greeted him. Leif returned his greeting and then asked if he had demanded any tax from the northern islands, and what accurate accounting he would give for this money. Thrand replied that he had not forgotten what he and Carl had agreed on, and said that the tax should be duly paid. 'Here is a purse, Leif,' he then said, 'which you will accept; there is silver in it.'

Leif looked around the tent, and there were only a few men there, some of whom were lying on the bench and some of whom were sitting up. Leif then went to Thrand, took the purse, carried it out to the front of the tent where there was light, held the silver on his shield and turned it over with his hand and said to Carl that he should look at the money. When they had looked

at it for a time, Carl asked Leif what he thought of the silver. 'I believe,' said Leif, 'that every shilling which is included in this is of the worst quality that can be had in the northern islands.'

When Thrand heard this, he said: 'Isn't the money good?' 'No, it is not,' replied Leif. Then Thrand said: 'they are mean knaves then, my kinsmen; one cannot trust them in anything. I sent them out in the spring to demand taxes from the northern islands because I have not been fit for anything this spring; but they have allowed themselves to be bribed by the farmers to receive for taxes false money which is not good enough to accept. So you come here, Leif, and look at the money which has been paid to me for land dues.'

Leif took the silver back and took another purse and carried it to Carl and they looked at the money. Carl then asked Leif what he thought of that money. 'Bad,' he said. 'However, I will not deny that one could accept it for a debt\* for which no special provision had been made, but I will not accept this money for King Olaf.'

A man who was lying on the bench then threw away the cap which he had on his head and said: 'The old saying is true — that the older one gets the less brave one becomes, and it applies to you, Thrand, the way you let Carl reject your money all day long.'

It was Gaut the Red who spoke. Thrand jumped up at these words, spoke with vehemence and rebuked his kinsmen, and finally said that Leif should give him back the money. 'But, here, take a bag which the people of my own island have paid me this spring! Although I do not see



The man with a halberd warns Carl of Møre.

clearly, one's own hand is the most trustworthy.'

Then another man got up from the bench. It was Thord the Short, and he said: 'It is no small reprimand we have to endure for the sake of this Carl from Møre, and he has well earned payment for it.'

Leif then took the silver and carried it immediately to Carl and they considered it. Then Leif said: 'I do not need to look at this money for long. Here one piece of money is better than all the other money: we will accept this. Get a man to see how much it weighs, Thrand.' Thrand

replied that he had no one better than Leif to be present at the weighing. Carl took the helmet off his head and poured the silver into it; and it was weighed. They saw a man approach them with a halberd in his hand, a flat hat on his head and a short green cloak. He was bare-legged with linen shorts and had thongs on his legs. This man put the halberd into the ground, went away from it and said: 'See to it, Carl of Møre, that you get no injury from my halberd.'

\*i.e. the land dues

## 47. CARL IS KILLED

Shortly after this some men came, fully armed, and shouted loudly to Leif Ossurson that he should go to Gille the Law Man's tent, 'because,' they said, 'Sigurd Thorlakson has run through the tent opening and mortally wounded one of Gille's men.'

Leif jumped up and immediately went off to Gille the Law Man and all the people from his

tent followed him, but Carl remained seated where he was. The Norwegians stood around him. Gaut the Red then ran and hacked at Carl with a hand-axe over the shoulders of the others, and cut Carl on the head. The wound was not serious however. But Thord the Short seized the halberd which stood in the ground and struck with it the hammer edge of the axe so that the axe went

down into Carl's brain. At the same time, a throng of people swarmed out of Thrand's tent. Carl was carried away from there, dead.

Thrand condemned this deed very much, but offered blood-money on behalf of his kinsmen. Leif and Gille, who were parties to the suit, would not accept the blood money, and Sigurd was then banished from the country for the act of violence which he had inflicted on Gille's man; but Thord and Gaut were banished for the killing of Carl.

The Norwegians made ready the ship which

Carl had brought over and went back to King Olaf. But fate prevented this act\* being avenged due to the unrest which at that time prevailed in Norway.

And there is now no more to be told about the incidents which were brought about by King Olaf demanding taxes from the Faroes. However, after the death of Carl of Møre, great quarrels arose in the Faroes between Thrand of Götu, Leif Ossurson and Gille the Law Man, and there are long tales about these which are yet to be narrated.

\*i.e. Carl's death

## 48. THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE FAROESE AND THRAND

After the death of Carl of Møre and the attack on Law Man Gille's man, Thrand's kinsmen Sigurd Thorlakson, Thord the Short and Gaut the Red were banished and driven away from the Faroes. Thrand gave them a ship which was suitable for long journeys and some goods. They believed that they had been badly equipped and made a great many reproaches to Thrand. They said that he had taken possession of their patrimony, and did not at this time wish to give them any of it. Thrand said that he had got more than was due to them and that he had taken care of them for a long time, and had often given them a great deal but had received poor thanks for it.

Sigurd and the others put out to sea, and there were twelve of them in the ship. Word went about that they intended to go to Iceland, but they had been only a short time at sea before a big storm blew up, and this storm lasted for nearly a week. Everyone ashore knew that Sigurd and his followers were in the centre of the storm and people had different conjectures about their expedition; and at the end of the autumn pieces of their ship were found which had been driven on to Eysturoy.

And in the winter many ghosts came to Götu and all around Eysturoy, and Thrand's kinsmen often showed themselves. Because of this, people suffered great injuries: some got broken legs and other mutilations. They assaulted Thrand so much that he did not dare go anywhere.

Many rumours went around during the winter about these happenings, and when the winter was over Thrand sent a message to Leif Ossurson saying that they should meet. This they did, and, when they came together, Thrand said: 'We

came, Foster-son, into a state of great distress last summer, and it was on account of this that the members of the Council were almost going to fight. Now, my Foster-son, I would like it to be adopted by law, in accordance with our advice, that people should never bring weapons with them to the Council Meeting, which is where they should be talking about their cases and discussing reconciliation.'

Leif said that this was well spoken. 'And on that subject,' he said, 'I will listen to my kinsman, Gille the Law Man's, advice.'

Gille and Leif were nephews of Thrand. Then they all met together and discussed the matter between them. Gille answered Leif thus: 'It seems to me inadvisable to trust Thrand, and accordingly we will provide that all of us officials and some of those who accompany us shall have our weapons, but that the common people shall be unarmed.'

Then all of them straight away agreed between themselves that it should be so.

By this time the matter was over and the people came in the summer to Streymoy to the Council Meeting. It happened one day, at this time, that Gille and Leif came out from their tent, which was on a hill on the island, and were speaking together when they saw in the east under the rising sun some people who had gone on to the headland there. They could count up to thirty men. There gleamed in the sunshine fair shields and shining helmets, axes and spears, and they appeared to be very formidable people.

They saw that a large, dashing man in a red coat went in front and he had a shield, which was painted half blue and half gold, a helmet on his



Confrontation between Thrand and his young Kinsmen and Leif and Gille.

thought that they recognised Sigurd Thorlakson there. Next to him walked a stout man in a red coat: he had a red shield. They thought they surely recognised him as Thord the Short. The third man had a red shield on which was painted a human head, and he had a big axe in his hand. It was Gaut the Red.

Leif and Gille went quickly home to their tent. Sigurd and the others soon came there and they were all well armed. Thrand went out of his tent towards Sigurd, and his followers and many men followed him; and all his men had weapons. Leif and Gille had only a few men to oppose Thrand, and, to make the difference greater, only a few of them had weapons. Thrand and his kinsmen went to Leif's and Gille's troop.

Then Thrand said: 'So the position now, Foster-son Leif, is that my kinsmen who, on the last occasion, left the Faroes in a hurry have arrived here. Now I will not allow myself and my kinsmen to be subdued by you and Gille. There

are now two alternatives at hand — the one is that I alone shall judge between you, and the other is that, if you don't want that, I will not stop my kinsmen from doing the job they would like to undertake.'

Leif and Gille saw that, on this occasion, they did not have the strength to stand up to Thrand, and they therefore chose to hand over the whole case to Thrand to judge. He immediately pronounced his judgment and said that he would not give a wiser one if he deferred it until later. 'It is my determination,' said Thrand, 'that I wish these, my kinsmen, to be allowed to stay where they think fit here in the Faroes, although they have been banished, but no blood-money shall be paid by any of the parties. In addition, I will so change the rule in the Faroes that I will have one third, Leif shall have the second third and Sigmund's sons the third. This realm has for long been a source of envy and a bone of contention. To you, my Foster-son Leif,' continued Thrand, 'I will offer to bring up your son Sigmund. That kindness I will still give you.'

Leif replied: 'I want the bringing-up of the child to be left to the decision of my wife Thora — whether she wants her son to go to you or to remain with us.'

At that they parted. And when Thora got to know that Thrand had offered to bring up her son, she replied: 'It may be that once again I take a view different from yours, but if I must give

advice, I cannot deprive my son Sigmund of his upbringing; and it appears to me that Thrand is far superior to most other people.'

Thora's and Leif's son Sigmund then went to Götu for his upbringing. At that time he was three years old and gave the best of hopes for himself, and he grew up there.

## 49. ABOUT THRAND AND HIS KINSMEN

At the time when Sven was King of Norway and his mother ruled with him, Thrand stayed at home in Götu and his kinsmen Sigurd, Thord and Gaut the Red stayed with him. It is said that Thrand was unmarried, but, nevertheless, he had a daughter who was called Gudrun.

When Thrand's kinsmen had been there for some time, he went to them and said that he did not want to have them there any longer on account of their laziness and sluggishness. Sigurd answered him unpleasantly and said that Thrand did not wish his kinsmen anything but evil, and that he held on to their patrimony; and they exchanged hard words. The three kinsmen then left and went to Streymoy, which is the most heavily-populated island in the Faroes.

There lived on Streymoy a man, Thorhal the Rich by name, and he had a wife who was named Birna and came to be called Streymoy-Birna. She was a very masterful and impressive woman. Thorhal was at that time rather elderly, but Birna had married him for the sake of his wealth. Thorhal had money outstanding with almost everyone, but from many he got only a little back.

Sigurd, Thord and Gaut came to Streymoy and went to Farmer Thorhal. Sigurd offered to collect

the outstanding debts from Thorhal's debtors for half of their value; but if he needed to sue them then he wanted to have, for his trouble, what he needed from the suit, but Thorhal should have his share of the half. Thorhal thought that this was a stiff condition, but nevertheless they agreed about the matter on those terms.

Sigurd then went around the Faroes and demanded payment of Thorhal's outstanding debts, and started suits as soon as he found it necessary. In a short time Sigurd collected a considerable sum and he soon acquired great wealth. By this time Sigurd and his kinsmen had been with Thorhal for a long time. Sigurd and Birna often spoke together and people will say that he seduced the wife. The kinsmen stayed there for the winter.

In the spring, Sigurd said to Thorhal that he would like to enter into partnership with him in the management of the house, but Thorhal would not agree to this until his wife intervened. Then he allowed his wife to prevail. Thorhal was no longer the man of the house: Sigurd and Thorhal's wife decided everything, just as they thought fit.

## 50. THE KILLING OF THORHAL

In the summer it happened that a ship came to the Faroes and was stranded on Suðuroy and a very great amount of the cargo was lost. There were twelve men on board the ship, of whom five were drowned; but seven came ashore alive: one of them was called Hafgrim, another Bjarngrim and a third Hergrim. They were all brothers and the masters of the ship. They had a bad time

getting provisions and the others things they needed. Sigurd, Thord and Gaut went to them, and Sigurd said that they had got into a bad state, and invited them to come to him.

Thorhal then went to Birna and said to her that he had found out that they had done this without previous consultation. Sigurd said that the expenses could come out of his pocket.

The three men stayed on there and were very well looked after — better than Thorhal.

Farmer Thorhal was very stingy, and he and Bjarngrim often quarrelled. It happened one evening when the people were in the main room that Thorhal and Bjarngrim began to quarrel. Thorhal was sitting on the bench and had a stick in his hand. He swung the stick when he spoke vehemently, and, as he did not see well, the stick caught Bjarngrim on the nose. Bjarngrim became indignant about this and wanted to seize his axe and strike Thorhal on the head with it. Sigurd jumped up and caught hold of Bjarngrim and said that he would reconcile them, and the result was that they were reconciled.

They spent the rest of the winter there, but from that time onwards they did not mix much with each other. The winter passed by in this way. Sigurd said that he would give them some help, and he gave them a cargo vessel of which he and Thorhal were joint owners. Thorhal was also very ill-pleased about this until his wife persuaded him to put up with it. Sigurd gave them food and they went on board and stayed on the ship at night, but went back to the farm in the daytime. But, when they were ready to sail, it happened that one morning they went back to the farm. Sigurd was not at home on the farm, but had gone out to deal with some work which he believed to be necessary. The men spent the day there. When Sigurd came home and went to dine, the traders had gone down to the ship. When Sigurd sat down to dinner, he asked where Thorhal was and was told that he was asleep. 'It is an unnatural sleep,' said Sigurd. 'Is he dressed, or not? We would expect him to come for food.'

Somebody then went out into the small room, and said that Thorhal lay on his bed sleeping. When Sigurd was told about this, he immediately jumped up and went out to Thorhal's bed, and it

was soon obvious that Thorhal was dead. Sigurd undressed him and saw that his bed was all covered in blood, and found a wound on his left arm and saw that he had been stabbed to the heart with a thin piece of iron. Sigurd said that it was a great crime. 'And it must be that wretch Bjarngrim who has perpetrated it!' he added: 'and he must now think that he has avenged the blow with the stick. We should now go down to the ship and get vengeance for this deed if we can succeed in doing so.'

The kinsmen seized their weapons and Sigurd had a large axe in his hand. They ran down to the ship and Sigurd was blaspheming vehemently. He immediately ran on board the ship. The brothers jumped up immediately they heard the swearing and cursing. Sigurd ran at Bjarngrim and hacked him in the chest with the axe, which he held with both hands, so that the axe went right in, and made a wound which caused his immediate death. Thord the Short hacked Hafgrim on the shoulder with his sword and wounded him down the side, so that his arm fell off, and he died on the spot. Gaut the Red hacked Hergrím on the head with an axe and split him down the shoulders. When the three of them were dead. Sigurd said that he did not want to pursue the matter further with those who were left, but he said that he should have the property which the brothers had left behind. However, this did not amount to much.

Sigurd, Thord and Gaut then went home with these goods, and Sigurd felt that he had avenged Farmer Thorhal well; but, all the same, an evil rumour went around about Sigurd and all his kinsmen concerning the killing of Thorhal. Sigurd then got Birna and, with her, took over the management of the farm. Thorvald and Birna had had many children.

## 51. THE KILLING OF THORVALD AND GAUT THE RED'S GUILE

A man, Thorvald by name, lived on Sandoy, and his wife was called Thorbera. He was a wealthy man and was advanced in years at the time of this event. Gaut the Red went to Thorvald and offered to collect the outstanding debts which were due from his less reliable debtors, and their arrangement was very like that between

Thorhal and Sigurd. Gaut spent no less time with Thorvald than he spent with Sigurd, and it soon came to be said that he had seduced Thorvald's wife. He collected a lot of money.

On one occasion, there came a man, a fisherman, who had an outstanding debt. It was dark in the evening in the main room where the people

sat. Then Thorvald demanded his money from the fisherman, but he delayed replying and grumbled. Gaut and some men walked round the floor in the dark, and, when they were least thinking about it, Thoryald said: 'Bad luck will strike you because you are sticking your scissors into the chest of an old and innocent man,' and

he dropped down against the skirting-board and died immediately.

When Gaut heard this, he jumped straight at the fisherman, and hacked him to death and said that he should not cause any more misfortune. Gaut then took over the management of the farm jointly with the widow, and he married her.

## 52. LEIF COMES TO THE FAROES

There was a man, Leif by name, who was a son of Thorer Beinerson: he made trading trips between Norway and the Faroes and was well off. When he was in the Faroes he stayed in turn with Leif Ossurson and Thuride the Principal Widow and her sons. It happened that, on one occasion, when Leif Thorerson came with his ship to the Faroes, Sigurd Thorlakson asked him to come to his home on Streymoy, and this was agreed on.

Leif Ossurson went to the ship and he was not very pleased that his namesake had decided to go to Sigurd. He said that that was not in accordance with his advice, and that Leif was free to stay with him on Suðuroy. Leif said that matters should remain as they had been arranged, and he went and lodged with Sigurd. Sigurd gave him the place next to himself and treated him well. Leif then stayed there for the winter and enjoyed good hospitality.

## 53. SIGMUND'S REVELATION TO THURIDE THE PRINCIPAL WIDOW

It is then related that, one day in the following spring, Sigurd said that he wanted to go to his neighbour, who was called Bjorn, to demand payment of his outstanding debts; 'and I want

you, Leif, to go with me in order to mediate between us, because for a long time I have been unable to get my money which he holds.'

Leif said that he would go with him as he



Sigmund appears to Thuride in a dream.

wished. They then both went together to Bjorn, and Sigurd demanded his money, but Bjorn gave him an offensive answer. Then there was a great uproar, and Bjorn wanted to hack Sigurd, but Leif ran between them and Bjorn's axe caught him on the head so that he died immediately. Sigurd then jumped at Bjorn and gave him a deadly hack.

This news was soon noised abroad. Sigurd was the only one who could tell about it, and then an evil rumour went about concerning him. Thuride, the Principal Widow, and her daughter Thora reproached Leif Ossurson vehemently for never seeking to avenge the great disgrace under which they still suffered. Yes, they showed him aversion and hostility, but he endured it with a great deal of patience. They said that his patience came

from cowardice and indolence. Both mother and daughter took Leif Thorerson's death very much to heart, and believed for certain that Sigurd had killed him.

It is related that, on one occasion, Thuride dreamed that her husband Sigmund Bresterson came to her and said: 'As you think, it is I who have come here, and I have had permission from God himself to do so. You must not harbour anger or hate against your son-in-law, Leif Ossurson, because destiny will permit him to avenge your shame.'

After that Thuride woke up and told her daughter Thora, and from that time onwards they behaved better than they had done previously towards Leif.

#### 54. EVENTS IN THE FAROES

It is related that a ship came to Streymoy in the Faroes not far from Sigurd's farm: it was Norwegian. The ship's master was called Arnljot, and there were eighteen men on board the ship. Where the ship berthed, there lived a man who was called Skofte. He worked for the traders and served them well. They too thought highly of him. The ship's master went on one occasion, to talk with Skofte and said: 'I want to tell you a secret which I have,' he said, 'namely, that Bjarngrim and his brohrs, whom Sigurd Thorlakson and his kinsmen killed, were my sons. I now want you to advise me how I can meet Sigurd and avenge my sons.' Skofte said that he did not have a good word to say for Sigurd, and he promised Arnljot that he would inform him when it would be opportune to meet Sigurd. It then happened that, on one occasion during the summer, the three kinsmen, Sigurd, Thorer and Gaut, went by ship to an island to fetch sheep for slaughtering, for it was the custom of the Faroese to have fresh meat at all seasons. When they sailed off, Skofte informed Arnljot of it. The traders then hurriedly got ready, and fifteen of them got into a boat belonging to the trading ship, and they went to the island where Sigurd and his kinsmen were. Twelve of them went ashore on to the island, but three of them looked after the boat. Sigurd and his kinsmen saw the men who had come on to the

island and had a discussion among themselves as to who they could be. They saw that the men were dressed in coloured garments and were armed. 'It could be,' Sigurd then said, 'that they are traders who have lain here this summer and it may be that they have another mission and have not come for the sole purpose of trading, and that they have an errand with us. We should therefore prepare ourselves, and now go for them and make use of Sigmund Bresterson's plan, that is that each of us should run his own way, but that we should all meet at our ship.'

They then went for each other. Arnljot immediately egged on his companions and asked them to avenge his sons. Sigurd and the others escaped, each to his own side, and they all met on the beach at their ship. Then Arnljot came and attacked them. Sigurd cut at the man who attacked him, and hacked both legs from under him above the knees. As a result he met his death. Thord killed another man and Gaut a third. Thereupon they jumped aboard their ship, and then encountered the traders' boat and the three men on board it. Sigurd jumped into the boat and killed one of them and pushed the other two overboard. They then took the boat and rowed away with both vessels.

Sigurd collected people around him and they went out to the island and went ashore. The

Norwegians closed up, intending to defend themselves. Thord the Short said: 'It is best, my kinsman Sigurd, to give these men peace as we have them completely in our power, and we have in the past inflicted great harm on Arnljot.' 'That is well said,' replied Sigurd, 'but nevertheless I want them to surrender everything into my power if they are to have peace.'

And so it happened that they handed themselves over to Sigurd's judgment, and he deter-

mined that Arnljot should pay treble blood-money for each of them. Arnljot, who came from the Hebrides, paid all this money, and this was the compensation he had for his sons! He then left the Faroes.

Sigurd came to learn that Skofte had betrayed him, and said that he should keep his life but leave the Faroes. Skofte went to Norway, and was exiled from the Faroes.

## 55. THORD TRIES TO GET THURIDE THE PRINCIPAL WIDOW TO MARRY HIM

It is then said that Sigurd Thorlakson hastened to get his brother Thord married. Thord asked what wife he intended him to have 'I will not conceal the fact,' said Sigurd, 'that the party here on the Faroes whom I think best of is, to be exact, Thuride, the Principal Widow.' 'I do not rate myself so high,' said Thord. 'You will not get her if you do not woo her,' Sigurd replied. 'I do not dare try that,' said Thord, 'and it is certainly far from likely that she will marry me, but, nevertheless, you can try it if you want to.'

Sigurd then went the next day to Skúvoy and put forward this proposal to Thuride. She was in no hurry to reply to it, but he presented his case and things went so far that she said she would consider the matter in consultation with her friends and sons, and concluded by saying that she would send him a message about what was negotiated in this respect.

Sigurd then went home and said that her reply gave good hope. 'It is quite strange,' said Thord, 'and I suspect that she is not completely serious about this matter.'

Thuride went to her son-in-law Leif and to her daughter Thora, and told them about the proposal of marriage. Thora asked what answer she had

given. She said that she had rejected it strongly but, all the same, less strongly than her mind prompted her to do. 'But what would you consider to be the best thing to do, my daughter?' Thora replied: 'If I advise you, you should not reject it if you think anything of accomplishing the revenge for the affair which has brought shame for us; for I see no bait other than this which is more likely to attract them. I do not need to put words into my mother's mouth because there are many ways in which she will be able to ensnare them, so that their purpose may be thwarted.'

Leif agreed with Thora and said that he would seriously think that those people would at last get what they had earned. They then decided on a day when Sigurd and Thord should come and decide this matter. Then Leif said: 'Thrand saw far ahead when he offered to bring up our child, and it is your fault Thora! It will be the death of our son Sigmund if he is with Thrand when anything takes place between us and Sigurd.' 'I do not intend,' said Thora, 'that he shall be there long from now. It is best if we travel to Eysturoy and you visit your foster-father Thrand.' They were all agreed on that.

## 56. ABOUT THE JOURNEY OF LEIF AND HIS WIFE

Leif and the others then went off together, and there were seven people on board the ship. They arrived at Eysturoy, and there the sea washed over the ship during the day. Leif and the others got very wet, but Thora remained dry. They went up to the farm at Götu, and Thrand gave them a

good reception, and had a fire lit for Leif and the others; but Thora was escorted into a room and she was there with her son, the boy Sigmund. He was at that time nine years old and appeared to be a very lively lad. His mother asked what Thrand had taught him. He said that he had



Leif recites Thrand's Creed to his mother.

learned to carry out every method of instituting suits and legal proceedings on behalf of himself and others: he understood it all thoroughly.

Then she asked what his foster-father had taught him of the Holy Faith. Sigmund said that he had learned the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. His mother said that she would hear them, and he did what she asked. She thought that he sang the Lord's Prayer fairly satisfactorily, but Thrand's Creed went as follows:

I do not go out alone  
Four follow me;  
Five of God's angels.  
For myself I offer a prayer,  
A prayer for Christ;  
Seven psalms I sing;  
Oh God, bless me and grant me good  
fortune!

And, at this, Thrand came into the room and asked what they had been talking about. Thora replied that her son Sigmund had informed her of the knowledge which Thrand had imparted to him. 'And I think,' she added, 'that the Creed does not resemble anything.'

'As you know,' replied Thrand, 'it is a fact that there were twelve or more disciples, and each of them used his own Creed. Now I too have my own Creed, but you have the one you learned. There are many Creeds and they do not need to be identical in order to be right.' They did not discuss the matter further.

In the evening they were well entertained and they drank heavily and Thrand was very jovial. Thrand said that couches would be prepared for them in the main room, and a broad bed was made up on the floor. Leif said that it would do very well.

Thora said that she wanted Sigmund to tell her of his travels and that she wanted him to sleep with her for the night. 'That cannot be,' said Thrand, 'because I will not be able to sleep tonight.' 'You will grant me this, my dear Thrand,' she said, and it so happened that the boy slept with his parents.

Thrand had a little room in which he always slept and he had the boy with him and only a few others. Thrand went to his room and it was already very late at night. Leif intended to sleep

and lay down and turned away from his wife. She pushed him in the back with her hand and asked him not to sleep. 'Get up,' she said, 'and go round Eysturoy to-night and damage every ship so that none of them will be able to put out to sea.' This they did. Leif was familiar with every bay there, and they damaged every ship so that none could go to sea. They did not sleep during the night, but got up early in the morning, and Thora and Sigmund immediately went down to the ship, but Leif went into the small room, bade Thrand goodbye and thanked him for the good reception he had given them, and said that Thora wanted Sigmund to go with her. Thrand had slept only a

little during the night, and he said that Sigmund could not go away. Leif now hurried down to the ship, but Thrand then believed that he understood their whole plan, and ordered his hands to take his ship and some of them to go on board it. They did so but the sea water streamed into it so that they were glad to slip back ashore again. No boat on the island was in a condition to put to sea, so Thrand had to stay behind whether he liked it or not.

Leif sailed home unmolested, and then gathered men around him: it was the very day when Sigurd and Thord were expected.

## 57. LEIF KILLS SIGURD AND HIS KINSMEN

The time has come to talk about Sigurd Thorlakson and Thord and to say that they prepared themselves on the date they had arranged to leave home, and Sigurd got them to hurry up. Thord said that he did not like the idea of the journey much, 'and I think,' he said, 'that you are decided on death when you hasten this matter so keenly.'

'Don't behave so stupidly,' said Sigurd, 'and do not be so afraid when there is no danger. We shall definitely not miss this meeting which we have arranged.' 'You may prevail,' said Thord, 'but it will not come as a surprise to me if we do not all come back unharmed this evening.' They went, twelve of them, in a ship. That day they



Sigurd woos Thuride.

had a storm and dangerous currents, but they got out of them well and reached Skúvoy. Then Thord said that he did not want to go any further. Sigurd said that he wanted to go up to the farm, even if he had to go alone. Thord said that he must be determined to die. Sigurd then went ashore on to the island, and he had a red coat and a blue cloak with a band over the shoulders. He wore a sword and had a helmet on his head. He went up on to the island, and when he got near to the house he saw that the doors were closed. In the paddock opposite the door stood the church which Sigmund had had built. When Sigurd went between the living quarters and the church, he saw that the church was open, and from the church came a woman who was dressed in a red coat and had a blue cape over her shoulders. Sigurd recognised that it was Thuride herself and turned towards her. She greeted him gently and went to a tree-trunk which lay in the paddock, and they sat there on the tree-trunk. She wanted to turn towards the church, but he wanted to face the door of the house and away from the church; but she had her way and turned towards the church.

Sigurd asked what people had come, and she said that there were not very many of them. He asked if Leif was there, and she said that he was not. 'Are your sons at home?' he asked further. 'Yes, they are,' she replied. 'What have they said about our affair then?' asked Sigurd. 'We have spoken about it,' she replied, 'and have said that all of us women think the best of you, and there would be no delay from my side if you were free.' 'That has been my misfortune,' said Sigurd, 'and things can soon be altered so that I will be free.' 'That is as it may be,' she said. And when he wanted to bend her towards him and put his arms around her, she pulled the cloak towards her. At that moment the door opened and a man rushed out of it with a naked sword. It was Heri Sigmundson, and when Sigurd saw this, he ducked down under the cloak and so slipped free, but Thuride kept the cloak. Then several men came out, and Sigurd ran down to the field. Heri seized a spear and ran down the field after him, and he was the swifter. He then hurled the spear at Sigurd, and when Sigurd saw that the spear was heading for his shoulder, he threw himself down so that the spear flew over him and buried itself into the ground.

Sigurd got quickly up again and seized the spear and sent it back, and it caught Heri in the waist; and he died on the spot. Sigurd then ran down the path, but Leif came to the place where Heri lay, and shortly afterwards turned away and ran out to the edge of the island and jumped down from that place. People say that from there down to the beach is fifteen fathoms. Leif came down on his feet: he ran to the brothers' ship, and by then Sigurd had arrived at the ship, and intended to jump out on to it. However, at that moment Leif thrust his sword into Sigurd's side, but he turned to face Sigurd and it appeared to Leif that the sword went into Sigurd's waist. Sigurd then jumped on board the ship and they left the shore, and at that they separated for the time being.

Leif went up on to the island to his men and asked them to go quickly on board, 'because we want things to go badly for them,' he said. They asked whether he had learned that Heri was dead or had met Sigurd. He said that he did not have time to say much. They then jumped on board two ships, and Leif had eighty men but came away later than the other party. Sigurd came ashore on Streymoy with his people. He had steered the ship and had not said much to them. But when they got out of the ship, Thord asked Sigurd if he was badly wounded. Sigurd said that he did not know exactly. Sigurd went to the wall by the boathouse, which is close to the sea, and rested his arms on it, but the others took the equipment from the ship and then went up to the boathouse. Then they saw that Sigurd stood there, and that he was stiff and dead. They carried his body home, but did not speak about this event.

They then went to supper, and when they had sat down and eaten, Leif came to the farm and attacked it, and set fire to it. They defended themselves well. There were twelve defenders, but there were thirty men in the attacking party. When the fire got a grip on the house, Gaut the Red ran out, for he could not stay any longer inside. Steingrim Sigmundson and two others attacked him, but he defended himself well. Gaut hacked Steingrim on the knee and cut the kneecap off, and there was a great wound so that he always limped after that; apart from that, Gaut killed one of Steingrim's companions. Then Leif came and they fought with each other, and

it ended with Leif killing Gaut. Then Thord the Short ran out, and Brand Sigmundson and two others went and attacked him, but it finished with Thord killing Brand and both his companions.

Then Leif Ossurson came and thrust through Thord the same sword with which he had run through his brother Sigurd, and Thord lost his life immediately.

## 58. LEIF THEN RULES ALONE. THRAND'S DEATH

Leif went home after this event and became famous as a result of these exploits. But when Thrand learned the news, it affected him so much that he died from his intense grief. Then Leif ruled over the whole of the Faroes, and this happened in the reign of King Magnus the Good, son of Olaf.

Leif went to Norway to King Magnus, and took the Faroes on lease from him. Leif then returned to the Faroes and lived there until his old age. His son Sigmund lived on Suðuroy in succession to his father Leif, and was a distinguished man.

Thuride and Leif died during the reign of King Magnus, but Thora lived with her son Sigmund and was always considered to be a very efficient woman. Sigmund's son was called Hafgrím and Hafgrím's sons were Einar and Skegge\* who were, a short time ago, district chiefs in the Faroes. Sigmund's son, Steingrim the Halt, lived on Skúvoy and was considered a good farmer.

Nothing further is told of great things happening to Sigmund Bresterson and his descendants.

\*See Table B

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS

A.D.	
c.725	Anchorites first go from Ireland to the Faroes.
c.795	Vikings come to the Faroes and the anchorites move west to Iceland.
825	Dicuil writes <i>Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae</i> , in which he describes certain islands which are generally accepted to be the Faroes, and says that there were no anchorites left, and that the islands were inhabited only by sheep and sea birds.
c.825	Grim Kamban colonizes the Faroes.
c.850-60	Aud goes to the Faroes to give away in marriage Oluf daughter of Thorstein the Red.
c.971	Thorkel Barfrost is banished.
979	The killing of Brester and Beiner. Rafn from Tunsberg comes to the Faroes and takes Sigmund away from there to Norway.
980	Rafn frees Sigmund and travels to the East.
982	Sigmund and Thorer go from Vik to Dovrefjell.
987	Sigmund and Thorer come to Earl Hakon. Thora, Sigmund's daughter, is born.
988	Sigmund's fight with Randver. Sigmund and Thorer become, at Christmas, Earl Hakon's housecarls.
989	Sigmund plunders in Sweden and Russia and has fight with Vandil.
990	Sigmund's fight with Harald Ironhead near Anglesey. Thorkel becomes district chief in Orkedal.
991	Sigmund comes to the Faroes and gets possession of his patrimony.
992	Sigmund goes to Norway and Earl Hakon settles the dispute between him and Thrand.

- 993 Sigmund travels to the Faroes in the spring and consents to Thrand paying over a period of three years the penalties which have been judged against him. He goes again to Norway.
- 995 Sigmund marries Thuride and, in the autumn, travels to the Faroes with his family.
- 996 Sigmund makes a short trip to Norway in the summer.
- 997 Sigmund travels to Norway in the autumn.
- 998 Sigmund takes part in the fight against the Jomsvikings.†
- 999 King Olaf Tryggvesson sends a message to Sigmund.
- 1000 Sigmund goes to the Faroes and proclaims Christianity there.
- 1001 The Faroes are Christianized.
- 1002 Sigmund brings King Olaf Tryggvesson tribute from the Faroes in the spring.
- 1003 Sigmund visits Earl Erik and Earl Sven.
- 1005 Sigmund is attacked by Thrand and murdered by Thorgrim the Evil.
- 1024 Gille the Law Man, Leif Ossurson and Thoralf from Dímun come to King Olaf the Holy.
- 1026 Thoralf from Dímun is murdered in Norway.
- 1027 Carl of Møre goes to the Faroes.
- 1028 The Killing of Carl of Møre.
- 1029 Thrand's settlement at the Council Meeting on Streymoy whereby his kinsmen are released from exile.
- 1035 Leif takes his revenge on Sigurd and his companions.

† The accuracy of this is disputed by some authorities.