

**“SHADOW OF THE RAVEN” IN ICELAND IN THE
13TH CENTURY (TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
ODINIC MYTH-RITUAL CONTEXT OF THE PLOT ACTION
IN “HARÐAR SAGA OK HÓLMVERJA”)**

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INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to study the life of medieval Scandinavian society without addressing to the narrative monuments of the proper era. In order to get closer to an adequate understanding of the socio-cultural processes that took place in northern Europe at that time, one must take into account the peculiarities of the mentality and religious beliefs of the northern peoples, which were etched in the lines of family and royal sagas, “Poetic Edda”, “Prose Edda”, skaldic poetry etc., to ask new questions to these works. It will help to look at the early medieval community as a complete system where religion and politics, private and public, secular and sacred are intertwined; to realize more clearly that the social ties of a man for example of the Viking Age were not limited to just one or other material aspects, but they were based on direct personal relationships that were defined by a complex of concepts that were rooted in the archaic layers of human consciousness – individual and group. This complex manifested itself practically in everything – in the blood revenge, in the relationship of konungs and jarls with the bonds, in the attitude of the Scandinavians to the gods, etc. Its study significantly expands the boundaries of modern historical, anthropological, cultural and anthropological knowledge of various symbolic and ritual nuances of the social behavior of the Scandinavian in the Middle Ages – an individual who is in a peculiar relationship with his surroundings.

Turning to the origins of Icelandic culture, we deal with the mythological stage of the pre-writing tradition, its transformation into epic and other forms of creativity. Here, in the mythological layers, it is natural to meet the names of gods and heroes of the ancient Scandinavians, their moral norms and values, everyday traditions and more.

During the time of Christianity extension in the Scandinavian countries and Iceland, settled primarily by natives of Norway, the northern peoples already had a developed mythological culture with its gods and heroes. But if in Europe – and in the North Europe including – the introduction of Christianity was accompanied by the eradication of paganism, in Iceland the adoption of the new faith in 1000 led to the preservation of the old heritage¹. “Christianity ...,” wrote H. Laxness, “for a long time could not cope with the firm position of the Icelanders, so never being able to finally subjugate them to themselves. Contrary to official Christianity, which was primarily a form and a foreign law, Icelanders were never Christians to the extent that other Western European peoples. And in the period (around 1200), when the country had the largest number of churches in its history, there was created the most pagan of all European literatures, and Iceland became the only European country where the pagan spirit produced works of high cultural value»². These works refer to family sagas, or Icelandic sagas. It is known that the tribal sagas refer to the events of the first century after the settlement of Iceland, that is, about 930 – 1030. The sagas were written in the 13th – 14th centuries. However, despite the fact that the “Icelandic sagas” were created almost two hundred years after the introduction of Christ’s faith, “the influence of Christian ideology is quite insignificant³.” As A. Gurevich wrote in his time, the spirit that pierces the sagas “is completely pagan”⁴. They always have “the shadow of the ravens”^{*}, the birds of the pagan god of the Scandinavians Odin (Óðinn), Hugin (Huginn; “thinking” or “Thought”) and Munin (Muninn; “the one who remembers” or “Memory”) which flew everywhere in the world and then whispered to God about everything they saw.

As H. Palsson showed in the survey “The Odin-like in the «Gisla saga Surrsonar»”, if we careful read the text of the family sagas we can

¹ Стеблин-Каменский М. И. Культура Исландии. Л.: Наука, 1967. С. 120.

² Лакнесс Х. Заметки об исландских сагах. *Писатели Скандинавии о литературе : Сб. статей.* М.: Радуга, 1982. С. 132.

³ Стеблин-Каменский М. И. Культура Исландии. С. 123.

⁴ Гуревич А. Я. История и сага. М.: Наука, 1972. С. 16.

^{*} Скористаюся назвою фільму одного з провідних режисерів ісландського кіно Храфна Гуннлаугссона (Hrafn Gunnlaugsson) «У тіні ворона» (ориг. *I skugga hrafnansins*; англ. *The Shadow of the Raven*) (1988), у якому йдеться про християнізовану Ісландію, де вирують міжусобні пристрасті язичницьких часів (українським глядачам фільм відомий під назвою «Тінь ворона»).

feel the invisible presence of a deity in certain plot events: “In the sagas where the main events unfold in Iceland or where the main characters come from, it is not enough to look for the Odin-like on the surface level; most often, these motives lie deeper”⁵. The researcher interprets “the Odin-like” as “moments ... that may be related to the cult of Odin”⁶. Based on the experience I will try to find manifestations of the Odin-like in “*Harðar saga ok Hólmverja*”, without claiming, of course, on dogmatism of my observations, and being aware of this survey only as an outline, as a distant approach to an interesting topic that needs more thorough coverage.

1. The Old Man in the Blue Cloak – “the Sower of Runes of Discord”

In the book “The Vikings: The Descendants of Odin and Thor (Russian translation was with such a title *A History of the Vikings*), G. Jones points out that the Freyr cult was paramount in Sweden, and provides such statistics for Norway onomastics: names including Freyr and Freyja occur 48 times, Ullr – 33, Thor – 27 times, Njörðr – 26, Odin – 12. As for Iceland at the time, Jones wrote that “no locality bears the name of Odin”⁷. The idea that the Odin cult in Iceland was less common than in Sweden or Denmark is confirmed, according to researchers, by Odin’s infrequent appearance on the pages of family sagas⁸. Often, the supreme Viking god appears in “royal” sagas, as, for example, in “*Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*” where it is said that konung Ólaf was attended by “a man, old and very eloquent. He had a wide-brimmed hat and only one eye. He was able to talk about all countries. He had a conversation with Konung. <...> Konung asked him many things, and the guest always knew how to answer his questions, so Konung sat with him until late in the evening. <...> Some time later, Konung woke up and asked where the guest was, and told him to call him. But the guest was nowhere to be found. The next morning, Konung summoned the chef and the one who prepared the drink and asked them if any stranger had come to them. They said that when they were about to cook, a man came up to

⁵ Палссон Х. Единическое в «Саге о Гисли». *Другие средние века*. М.-СПб.: Университетская книга, 1999. С. 254.

⁶ Палссон Х. Единическое в «Саге о Гисли». С. 253.

⁷ Джонс Г. Викинги: Потомки Одина и Тора. М.: Центрполиграф, 2003. С. 336.

⁸ Розедаль Э. Мир викингов: Викинги дома и за рубежом. СПб.: Всемирное слово, 2001. С. 135.

them and said that they were cooking bad meat for the Konung table. He then gave them two large and fat pieces of beef, and they cooked them with other meat. Then Konung ordered all this brew to be thrown away.

“It was probably not a man,” he said, “it was probably Odin the Gentiles had long believed in. But Odin will not be able to outwit me”⁹. These pieces of beef, as noted by M.I. Steblin-Kamensky, were, of course, pieces of horseflesh. Odin preferred that Konung Ólaf Tryggvasonar, who converted many people to Christianity, eat the horse and thus become a Gentile again. Obviously, there was an idea that the essence of paganism was the consumption of horseflesh for food; the origins of this representation date back to the ancient horse cult that existed in Scandinavia and its associated rites¹⁰.

Odin also appears in the family “Harðar saga ok Hólmverja”, which was thought to have been written in the early 14th century and is a reworking of the saga of Harðar, created at the beginning of the 13th century. It was formed directly on oral tradition¹¹. It is known that the tragic fate of the saga hero, Harðar, the son of Grimkel, is reminiscent of the story of Gísla Surssonar from “Gísla saga Surssonar” or Grettis, the son of Asmund, from “Grettis saga Asmundarsonar”, both announced like Harðar, outlawed. Harðar and his companions – the pariahs – were killed around 989¹².

Harðar met Odin on a trip to the Viking Soti Mound, which one of Harðar’s sworn brother, Hróar, was about to enter.

Harðar saw a man in a striped blue cloak with a hood^{13**}, called Björn (in ancient times dark blue meant something supernatural or magical in Iceland. Very often objects used by magicians or fortune-tellers while conjuring were colored in this color (blár). In addition to Odin, alvi-elves appeared to humans as strangers in cloaks of dark blue¹⁴). Bjorn, reminding Harðar that he was a friend of his relatives,

⁹ Снорри Стурлусон. Круг Земной. М.: Наука, 1980. С. 139.

¹⁰ Стеблин-Каменский И. М. Комментарии. *Снорри Стурлусон. Круг Земной*. М.: Наука, 1980. С. 646.

¹¹ Стеблин-Каменский М. И. Примечания. *Исландские саги. Ирландский эпос*. М.: Худож. лит., 1973. С. 815.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Исландские саги. Ирландский эпос. М.: Худож. лит., 1973. С. 465.

**Далі посилання на це видання подаємо в дужках із номером сторінки арабськими цифрами; переклад саги – О. О. Смирницької.

¹⁴ Из рассказов о древнеисландском колдовстве и Сокрытом Народе. М.: ИД «София», 2003. С. 76.

facilitated the hero to penetrate the mound with the help of a magic sword, and then disappeared, after that, as it is said in the saga, people became convinced that he was none other than Odin (468).

“Prose Edda” tells the story of how Odin went after honey poetry owned by the giant Suttungr and met nine slaves mowing the hay. Odin proposed them to sharpen their scythes, and the mowers agreed to. Deciding that it was much easier for them now, the slaves asked Odin to sell the whetstone. He also offered to buy a whetstone to someone who “will pay for it to the extent. Everyone liked this, and everyone began to ask for a whetstone for themselves. One threw a whetstone in the air, but as everyone wanted to grab it, it turned out that they slapped each other with scythes around their necks”. To the master of these slaves, the giant Baugi, Odin was later called Bolverkr, which means “villain”¹⁵.

The appearance of Odin could have preceded the fighting. For example, chapter IX of the Ynglinga saga by Snorri Sturluson states that Odin appeared to Swedes before the great battles¹⁶. “God of warriors, Odin is both a god of victory and a god of defeat at the same time. After all, even when both sides pray to the same deity before the battle ..., the one still wins and the other loses. ... Odin is the

luck of the battle or the lack of it. Therefore, he himself, deprived of his strength and his luck, dies in the Last Battle¹⁷.

Odin is the deity of the battle fury, he is the spontaneous beginning, the madness and chance of battle, the god changeable and cunning¹⁸. Odin gives victory on a whim, not on merit, leaving those he previously favored in the time of the greatest distress. In “Lokasenna”, Loki tells about Odin in such a way:

Ты, Один, молчи!
Ты удачи в боях
не делил справедливо:
не воинам храбрым,
но трусам победу
нередко дарил ты¹⁹.

¹⁵ Младшая Эдда / Пер. О. А. Смирницкой. М.: Наука, 1970. С. 59.

¹⁶ Snorri Sturluson. Круг Земной. М.: Наука, 1980. С. 15.

¹⁷ Бедненко Г. Школа рун. М.: ЗАО Центрполиграф, 2006. С. 22.

¹⁸ Бедненко Г. Школа рун. С. 21.

¹⁹ Старшая Эдда. Древнеисландские песни о богах и героях / Пер. А. И. Корсуна. М.-Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1963. С. 56.

Odin's favorite pastime is to make trouble, sow squabbles, strife, break the strongest family, friendship and other ties between people, as he explicitly states in the verse 24 of "The Song of Harbard" (Hárbarðsljóð) from "Poetic Edda":

Я в Валланде был,
в битвах участвовал,
князей подстрекал,
не склонял их к миру²⁰.

Among the names of Odin we find, in particular, the names Hnikarr and Hnikuðr, the "sower of discord". The Scandinavian of the Viking age had no doubt about the culprit. For example, in "Helgakviða Hundingsbana II" from "Poetic Edda", Högni's son Dagur tells his sister Sigrún about the murder of Helgi, her husband, as a revenge for the old death of their father. He explains his act to an angry Sigrun in such a way:

Сестра, ты безумна,
затмился твой разум,
коль беды зовешь
на голову брата!
Один повинен
в этом несчастье,
меж нами руны
раздора посеяв²¹.

In this connection, it is possible to point out at one moment of "Harðar saga ok Hólmverja" which, in my opinion, correlates with this feature of God. Chapter XIII deals with the story that happened to Harðar's sworn brother, Geir, in Norway, that at that time was ruled by konung Harald the Gray Cloak: "Once, Brunolv left the country, and Geir left home. He was wearing a fur coat. Geir saw there: some people were heading toward him, and one of them was wearing a blue cloak with a hood. Soon, they came up and asked Geir his name. Geir without a secret called his name and asked who they were. Their leader was named Arntor, treasurer of Gunnhild, mother of a konung. They appreciated Geir's cloak, but he did not want to sell it. Then one of them tore off his

²⁰ Старшая Эдда. С. 47.

²¹ Ibidem. С. 90.

cloak. Geir did not budge and grabbed his sword. They laughed loudly, and made fun of him, and teased that, the Icelfander did not keep his cloak. Geir did not bear their ridicule and loss of his cloak and became furious. He grabbed his cloak, and everyone pulled to his side. Arntor clutched at the cloak and forced to snatch it. Geir swung his sword and cut Arntor's arm higher than his elbow. Then he grabbed his cloak and ran home because they were all lost. And his sheaths remained there. People were busy with Arntor because he was bleeding.

<...> Arntor was completely exhausted from the loss of blood and fell into the hands of those who stood nearby, and soon died of blood loss" (462–463). Harðar and Brunolv, whose ship was used by the Icelanders in order to sail to Norway, managed to persuade konung Harald not to punish Geir's throat and accept a ransom for his dead friend. The presence of the mysterious "one in a blue cloak with a hood" among Norwegian teasers suggests that this episode did not go without Odin's intervention, but the role of the fatal whetstone of myth was played here by Geir.

2. Prophecy for "Hero with a Secret Vice"

"Это великое несчастье, и, верно, не к добру оно. Лучше повернуть назад, не хочу я дальше ехать" (449), – so Signý, daughter of Valbrandur from the Broad Court (Breiðabólstað) reacted in the "Harðar Saga..." to the news of the death of her horse Blackbird (Svartfaxi) even planning to cancel her wedding trip to her future husband, Grimkell*, whom she had promised to by her father against her own and her brother Torfi's will.

It is known that in Indo-European cultural traditions the horse is associated with a semantic complex of death, burial, sacrifice. The frank hubris of the horse and its connection with burial rituals have been commented on numerous times and in great detail. Within our subject we

* The name of this saga hero is related to Odin: Grímkell comes from Grím+kell (Grím – "The one hiding under the mask" is one of Odin's names; kell – is a form of Ketill, "kettle", than Grímkell – "Odin's kettle" (recall that in the burial chambers of Odin, Valhöll, the cook Endhrímnir cooks for the fallen Einherjar warriors the meat of the marvellous boar Sæhrímnir in the kettle Eldhrímnir). Indeed, as the "Harðar saga..." shows, in the family and surroundings of Grímkell, this powerful and wealthy man who did not shy away from violence (446), the fatal passions that led to the death of Harðar and many other people stirred up like in a kettle.

can recall at least the wild hunting of Votan-Odin at the head of the souls of dead warriors or Odin's warrior riders-Valkyries, who are involved in the division of victories and defeats in battles. In "Poetic Edda" (*Edda*), "Grímnismál" speaks that the best horse is Sleipnir – the Odin's horse with eight legs²², according to modern interpretations, a shamanic horse that transports a rider to different worlds. On this horse, Odin travels to the realm of the dead Hel and there his son Hermóðr rescues the god Baldr, using essentially Odin's method to enter another world and return²³. The horse became an instrument of revenge for the gods of the protagonist of the "Örvar-Odds Saga": Odd, who was accustomed to relying more on his own power and the power of his sword than on sacrifice, was killed by the snake bite that came out of the horse Faksi's skull.

But back to the "Harðar Saga...". The premonitions did not deceive Signý, the death of her horse became a sign for a woman: relations with her husband were not settled, they were cool; the son of Signý from Grimkell, the saga hero Harðar, was unloved for his mother; she herself will die during heavy labor, giving birth to Harðar's sister Thorbjörg (Þorbjörg) and prophesying great misfortunes to her relatives before her death; the Signý's brother Torfi, who believed that his sister would not have happiness in the home of her much older husband, would become one of his nephew's fiercest enemies and make every effort to Harðar's death...

Norwegian writer Sigrid Unset called Harðar a wonderful and courageous man "and yet with a certain secret vice in his soul that determines his fate – he becomes a hevding (leader – A.V.) of the scum of Icelandic society, and he does not control them, but they control him"²⁴. Harðar – a tragic character with the traits of an Odin-like hero. He was born of Grimkell Godi and Signý, who did not feel any warm feelings for each other. The saga says of little Harðar: «Скоро он стал большим и красивым, но в одном отставал поначалу: ему было три года, а он всё не ходил» (451)*. Harðar's first step was unsuccessful: «Вот однажды, во время жертвоприношения в капище на Эльвус-Озере, – а Гримкель усердно приносил жертвы богам, – сидела Сигню посреди горницы и наряжалась. А доброе ее ожерелье лежало

²² Poetic Edda. P. 39.

²³ Bednenko G. Runes School. P. 19.

²⁴ Unset S. The book that played a crucial role in my fate. *Budur N. V. The Vikings. Pirates of the North*. M.: OLMA PRESS, 2005. P. 302.

* The one-eyed Odin was physically deficient himself (if we can say so about God).

у ней на коленях. Маленький Хёрд стоял у столба, и тут он впервые отступил от столба, и бросился прямо к матери, и ткнулся в ее колени. Ожерелье упало и расколосось на три части.

Сигню очень рассердилась и сказала:

– Плох был твой первый шаг, и еще много плохих впереди. Но последний будет всех хуже.

Она сказала вису:

– На пол упало сокровище,

На три куска расколосось.

Кто соберет осколки,

Кто мне вернет ожерелье?

Плох был твой первый шаг,

Хуже будут другие.

Но последний твой шаг

Будет худшим из всех» (451).

The words of his own mother, as seen in the subsequent events of the saga, will prove prophetic.

Next time Harðar appears on the saga pages at the age of twelve – in the circumstances connected with the seeking in marriage of Illugi from the Island manor with Turíðar (Þuríðar), Grimkell Godi's daughter from Rannveigar (Rannveigar Þorbjarnardóttur), his first – dead because of illness – wife. Illugi had come to invite Harðar to his wedding and to offer his friendship, and that man told a lot of arrogant words and refused to go. But in the end, Harðar agreed to persuade of Geir, the son of his named father Grimm The Little, to the family of which Harðar was submitted to parenting by Grimkell Godi, who did not want to leave him at home after he had heard the sinister Signý's verse about the Harðar's future. When they caught up with Illugi, he was very happy and behaved as if Harðar had not spoken any proud words to him. When parting after the wedding, Illugi wanted to give a shield to Harðar – a sign of good friendship between them. But in response, he heard from Harðar: “- У Грима, моего приемного отца, хватает щепок.

И он (Harðar. – *A. V.*) сказал вису:

– Щит никудышный дал мне

Гривен дробитель в подарок.

Эта луна ладьи

Ему самому пригодится.

Пускай делитель колец,
Любящий Хлин полотен,
Хранит у себя сокровище
До бури костров крови” (459).

Harðar did not keep his tongue here as well, as if confirming Odin’s words from “Hávamál” in “Poetic Edda”:

Кто нравом тяжёл,
тот всех осуждает,
смеётся над всем;
ему невдомёк,
а должен бы знать,
что сам он с изъязном²⁵.

«Никто не мог отвести ему глаза, – saga tells about Harðar, – потому что он видел всё как есть» (460), and that was confirmed when Harðar and his islanders were confronted by Thorbjörg Katla, a well-known witch and fortune teller: her spells (the impenetrable darkness she sent upon the Harðar’s and Geir’s people) could not darken Harðar’s eyes, and the islanders went wherever they wanted, killed some cattle, embarked their ship to the top and left for the Island (XXV) (481).

The saga hero is endowed with the gift of foreseeing the future – a property of Odin himself, who participated in the creation of the world, learned from the seeress the events of recent times and knew beforehand all the events of divine and human history. Harðar has a hunch that despite all of Illugi's wishes, he won't become Harðar's good son-in-law (460). Harðar gives to beloved sister Thorbjörg for a good memory a precious wrist, a gift from Illugi that Harðar took instead of a shield: he knows that Torbjörg will outlive her brother (460). Harðar, in spite of his desire, concedes to his sworn brother Geir at his request not to refuse the assistance of his father, Grimkell, in arranging a trip to Norway. Again, not wishing that Harðar agrees to persuade Geir and Helgi to take him with them, saying that in due time they will regret*.

²⁵ Poetic Edda. P. 17.

* Helgi witnessed the family shame of the Harðar family: his father, Sigmundur, who was engaged in begging, was for some time a sworn father of Harðar's sister, Torbjörg, who Torfi had been brought to their care, being angry because of Signý's death after the girl's birth, to be one in the eye for Grimkell Godi (462).

Not only one Harðar's grim prophecy was addressed to Helgi. When Helgi swore to be with Harðar and Geir as long as they were alive, Harðar wished Helgi to make sure that he would not cause their and many other people's deaths, noting that they would not survive each other for long (465). The highlight was Harðar's prophecy, which he made after Helgi killed young Sigurd, who accidentally wounded a horse: «- Злой ты человек, раз убил юношу, и притом безвинного. Тебя бы следовало убить. Все же я не пойду на это, хоть и лучше бы тебе не жить после этого злодеяния. Отсюда начнется твоя неудачливость. Вот и совершилось то, что я предчувствовал, и это, вернее всего, приведет нас так или иначе к гибели, да и не нас одних, когда сбудется все, что суждено судьбой» (475). Realizing that the presence of unlucky Helgi will not bring him luck as well, Harðar, however, as the leader being sworn in fraternal loyalty by others, adheres to the Odin's testament:

Надобно в дружбе
верным быть другу...²⁶.

Helgi's haplessness began to “work” when Harðar sent him to his son-in-law, Indriði, for him to come to alto and represent his interests in the litigation with Torfi. When Indridi explained to Helgi that he had already promised to go with Illugi the Red to one of the local tings, but he was going to invite Harðar to himself, Helgi replied rudely: «- Подумаешь, важное дело – ехать на тинг Килевого Мыса, когда надо защитить такого зятя. И ты самая последняя дрянь после этого». In these abusive words, Thorbjörg, Indridi's wife and Harðar's sister, remarked: «- Ещё можно было бы уладить дело, если бы послали путного человека. А теперь, верно, ничего не выйдет. Вот оно, несчастье, которое ты принёс!» (476). And so it happened: Harðar and Helgi were declared outlawed because of murder. Harðar's Odin-like premonitions were also confirmed during one of the big island clashes with the bonds, when Harðar had to fight with the people of his son-in-law, Illugi the Red, and with him as well, as they sought to wean their cattle from island robbers (484 – 485).

Harðar, “programmed” for the rest of his life to fail with maternal prophecy, sees danger everywhere, but boldly moves toward his own destiny without seeking to change something in the coming events. The

²⁶ Poetic Edda. P. 19.

gods themselves turned away from Harðar, telling Grimkell that they were not going to turn their luck back on his son (472). That is why Harðar does not argue with his sworn brother Geir in making a decision, he does not insist on his point of view, because he knows that everything will happen as it was destined and the way he anticipates (for example, in the case of the Bolli's, the slave of Ormur, arrival on the Island, when Harðar, sensing danger, urged the islanders not to listen to his advice and not to go ashore to return the chest with tools, captured by the islanders in irruption to Ormur, but Geir insisted, hit trapped, lost four of his men and barely escaped himself).

As events unfold, Harðar feels stronger antipathy to things that his people and he did, and tried to “rebuild” his fate. The first attempt to counter the customs of the islanders was Harðar's decision not to catch up with the cattle of his sister Thorbjörg and her husband, Indridi, captured earlier, which, after taking advantage of the sleep of the Harðar's people, an assistant of shepherd murdered by the islanders drove home. «Будет лучше, если это останется у моей сестры, чем попадёт в руки островитянам», – Harðar told to the boy and let him go (486). For the second time, Harðar was about to break out of a vicious circle of violence and robbery when he offered his people to seize a merchant ship and sail from Iceland. But the proposal did not find support for the islanders: the majority refused Harðar to capture the ship and were in favor of continuing the raids. Harðar stepped in, noting that he does this despite his own will to stop all these robberies and bloodshed. When Geir offered to burn Torfi, Valbrandur's son, Koll from the Forest, Kilgrim the Old Man, Indridi and Illugi in their own houses, Harðar initially protested, reasoning that they would not be allowed to do this and would just be killed, but then he accepted the offer of his sworn brother.

During the attack of the Harðar's people at Indridi's Court, Thorbjörg refused to drop her husband and go to her brother's side. Harðar had to back down, he was unable to burn Indridi as Thorbjörg ordered the water to be brought and skillfully organized the protection of her property.

3. Hel's Shoes, Mound Dweller, Berserker Frenzy – Odin-like “Markers” in the Saga

In the “Gisli Saga”, in the scene of the burial of Westin (XIV), there is a detail that, according to experts, is nowhere else to be found:

«Когда... завершили обряд над телом Вестейна по тогдашнему обычаю, Торgrim подошёл к Гисли и сказал:

– Есть обычай обувать покойного в башмаки Хель, чтобы в них он вошёл в Вальгаллу. Я сделаю это для Вестейна. – И покончив с этим, он сказал:

– Я не умею завязывать башмаков Хель, если эти развяжутся» (40). So, in the tome of the sagas, they believed that the dead should come on foot to the Odin's palace, Valhalla²⁷.

“Harðar Saga...” contains an episode that can be correlated with the above storyline of the “Gisli Saga». After a brutal ball-and-horn beat game, in which there were the victims and the Harðar's people emerged victorious, a strange case happened with one of the participants in these competitions, Öundur, the son of Tormóð (Öundur Þormóðsson), who had to play against the famous Harðar's fighter: returning home, Öundur stopped to tie his shoe, and died instantly. Öundur, as it said in the saga, the strong man respected by everybody (so, by his qualities – he is a suitable candidate for the Odin's hero), carelessly performed a burial act and left the living. Obviously, it was not accidentally, that the saga emphasizes: «Ни Хёрду, ни его людям не предъявляли обвинения по этому делу» (479): no one thought to appeal to the will of Odin, who was eager to supplement his army with another worthy warrior, needed for the last battle with the monsters during Ragnarök...

From the mythological songs of the “Poetic Edda”, from the “Baldrs dreams” (*Baldrs draumar*), for example, we can learn that in the representations of the Scandinavians, the Hell and the grave could be combined: Odin at Sleipnir goes to Niflhel, o cast spells to rise a seeress²⁸, who died for a long time ago, from the grave. Originally, the word “hel” meant “grave”. Actually, the grave was the embodiment of hell. Battles could be fought in burial mounds. One of them, between armies in red and black clothes, was observed in the mound by Torstein, Icelandic from the “Book of the Flat Island”²⁹.

The echoes of these singular motifs can be found in the episode with a visit to the Sóti Mound. During the visit of sworn brothers Harðar, Geir and Helgi in Gautlands, visiting Haraldur jarl, his son Hróar at the holy

²⁷ Palson H. The Odin-like in the “Gisley Saga”. P. 261.

²⁸ Poetic Edda. P. 158.

²⁹ Petrukhin V. Myths of ancient Scandinavia. M.: Astrel, AST, 2005. P. 166.

winter swore to enter the Sóti viking mound during a year. When it came time to keep his word, Hróar was frightened, and Harðar, his friend, had to go after the buried viking's treasures himself, especially since he also made a public oath to follow Hróar into the mound. In the mound crypt Harðar enters the battle with the suddenly revived Sóti, who defends his treasures, and emerges from this duel as the winner. Thus, Harðar enters the viking's mound as an Odin-like traveler. However, a meeting with the haug-búi ("the inhabitant of the sacrificial mound") did not go to Harðar. After the clash in the mound, Sóti, whose valuable wrist Harðar had taken away (that is, encroached on a thing that had to serve a viking hero in Odin's Valhalla and belonged to Odin himself as to the god of fallen warriors), told:

«Хёрд у меня
Отнял обручье.
Это сокровище
Мне было дороже
Всего другого
Бремени Грани.
Но берегись,
Несет оно гибель
Всем, кто посмеет
Им завладеть» (467).

The words of the Hundred of Vikings came true: Harðar was outlawed, and along with other similar outcasts he settled on the island. They all died in clashes with the Bonds. Soti's wrist went to Harðar's murderer, Thorstein Gullknapp, (steinorsteinn gullknappur). He, in turn, was killed by Indriði, the husband of Herd Thorbjörg's sister, who, at the request of his wife, cut Thorstein's head off. Then The Viking's wrist went to a witch and a fortune-teller named Torbjörg Katla, mother of Old Refur who was involved in the murder of Harðar. Another sorceress, Torgrima Master (grorgríma smíðkona) wanted to take this wrist to her son Indridi; the rivals slapped each other in the fight, and the treasure was gone...

However, let's return to the story of "a hero with a secret ganja". When Harðar offered to pay the Vira (a fine for murder) to Aud, whose son, Sigurd, killed Helgi, Aud (Auður) replied that he had passed the case to Torva, Harðar's uncle, and hoped that Harðar and his men would now be indulgent. Harðar, in full accordance with his earlier prophecies

concerning his fate of prophecy, without remembering his anger, kills Aud, and behaves in the same situation as an angry warrior of Odin, a berserkr, endowed with inhuman power. For example, in “The Saga of Inglings” (VI), Snorri Sturluson writes: “Odin could make his enemies in battle blind, or deaf, or terror-struck, and their weapons so blunt that they could no more but than a willow wand; on the other hand, his men rushed forwards without armour, were as mad as dogs or wolves, bit their shields, and were strong as bears or wild bulls, and killed people at a blow, but neither fire nor iron told upon themselves. These were called Berserker” (translation by M. I. Steblin-Kamensky)³⁰. The idea of berserk (the word actually means «bear-skinned») was associated with beliefs about werewolves, which, in the Scandinavian and more broadly, in the German cultural-mythological tradition, were bears or wolves (werewolves)³¹. Obviously, people believed that such properties were inherent in members of the Harðar clan. Let us recall the words of Grimkel, Harðar's father, in Torvey's quarrel with his uncle, which would be bad if the proverb that people are born to a maternal uncle is justified, because Torvey is a werewolf (458).

The saga states: “Harðar said:

«You got the wrong thing – quarrel with Torvey.» But you will pay for it!

He grabbed Soti's sword and cut Aud in half and the employee who was with him, too. Harðar was so furious that he burned the manor and all the stacks and two women who did not want to go out” (475).

Once again, Harðar demonstrated his superhuman qualities of the Berserker Odin in the last battle. Harðar managed to break free from the shackles, which the Indridi's son-in-law had tied his hands, snatch his ax, and break through the triple ring of people. Together with him, the faithful and unlucky Helgi, escaped from the encirclement. Several times Herd was shackled (herfjötur) – the Icelandic magical way to deprive an enemy of the ability to move³²) and several times he was able to drop his spell, breaking through the surroundings of the bonds and carrying Helgi's back. But when the shackles once again enveloped Harðar and he

³⁰ Snorri Стурлусон. Круг Земной. С. 13.

³¹ Хлезов А. А. Предвестники викингов. Северная Европа в I–VIII вв. СПб.: Евразия, 2003. С. 125.

³² Кораблёв Л. Рунические заговоры и Апокрифические молитвы Исландцев. М.: Велигор, 2003. С. 209–210.

was overtaken by the whole crowd, he threw his brothers from his back and, like the ancient conung Gunnar from *Atlakviða* in grónlenska, who demanded the death of Hughni's own brother to take secret of the Niflung treasures to the grave – he cut Helgi in half and said that now they would not be able to kill his sworn brother in his presence; “Harðar was so frightened in anger that no one dared approach him in front” (494). He was killed by the traitor Thorstein (gold-button), – an ax strike from behind, at the back of his neck, since no one dared to attack Harðar from the front, though he was unarmed (495). In all, in that battle, Harðar killed thirteen enemies. “Everybody praised his bravery, his friends and enemies, and they believe that at that time there was no man more valiant and smarter than Harðar, but he had no luck. In the same, that he participated in such atrocities, firstly, his companions are guilty and, secondly, you will not escape from fate” (495). It should be noted that Herd's sister, Torbjörg, in her axis, on the death of her brother, was convinced that he had been overcome by evil sorcery (496).

He is endowed with singular features in “Harðar saga...” and the Torvo's alumnus Sigurd, the leader of the Vikings, led by five warships. He had, as you can guess from the text of the saga, the talent of a scald that was also inherent in Odin, as Snorri Sturluson writes in *The Saga of Inglinga*: “He (Odin – AV) also possessed the art of speaking so beautifully and smoothly that to all who listened to him, his words seemed true. In his speech, everything was as complicated as in what is now called poetry³³.” Scald – a divine elect who received from Odin as a gift a sip of wonderful honey poetry, a drink endowed with the power of direct magical influence, as did Odin himself, the purveyor of honey poetry and, accordingly, the supreme god of all scalds – marked with the seal of the otherworld.

It can be assumed that the Viking hedging Sigurd Pet Torvy was a *krapta-skáld*, a poet who, through the power of his magical works, could have power over people and spirits, and was able to forebode or anticipate the danger that lurked on him. These qualities of Sigurd showed themselves when he was captured by the Vikings, who were going to kill him in the morning. Sigurd offered his guard to listen to his poems, from which everyone fell asleep, after which he freed himself from the ropes and shackles, cut the sleeping guard and fled to Harðar (470).

³³ Snorri Sturluson. *Круг Земной*. С. 13.

4. Betrayal and Loyalty to the Oath

Valkyrie Sigrdrif (Sigrdrífumál's speeches in Senior Eddie) advises Sigurd's Dragon Slayers:

Совет мой второй –
клятв не давай
заведомо ложных;
злые побеги
у лживых обетов,
и проклят предатель³⁴.

In “Sörla líátrr eða Heðins saga ok Högna”, through the perfidies of Odin, the heroes are sworn enemies because of Hedgney's breach of the Hogeneity oath³⁵.

The greatest swearing-in of the Scandinavian Gentiles was the supreme god himself.

Клятву Один
дал на кольце;
не коварна ли клятва!³⁶ –

it is mentioned in the «Speeches of Hávamál « (Hávamál).

According to «Völuspá» from the Elder Edda, oathbreakers suffer among other sinners on the Bank of the Dead³⁷. Among those characters in “Harðar saga...” who went the Odin’s crime route was Thorstein Gullknapp (gold-button), with which “the Holm-Dwellers “secretly agreed to send all the Islanders to the Isle and tell everyone that the Bonds were plotting against them. “He swore to them to do all this and not to deceive them in anything; they promised not to plunder him” (482). But Thorstein did not keep his word, moreover, he allowed the Bonds to use their boat so that the Island could reach Kjartan, who undertook to convince Harðarand his men of the illusory intent of Illuga and his comrades. To entice the island, Kjartan even swore an oath. Geir, as always, believed what he Harðar, and Harðar didn't. And this time, the premonition did not deceive Herd: those people who believed Kjartan,

³⁴ Старшая Эдда. С. 111.

³⁵ Прядь о Сёрли, или Сага о Хедине и Хёгни. URL: <http://norroen.info/src/forn/sorla/on.html> (дата звернення: 17.07.2019).

³⁶ Старшая Эдда. С. 24.

³⁷ Ibidem. С. 34.

grabbed Bond and cut their heads off. Also killed was Geir, who, despite all Harðar's warnings, went with another party of islands and before his death understood the justice of the advice of his cautious sworn brother. When Kjartan arrived on the Isle for the third time, he accused Harðar of wanting to go in a cowardice, and Harðar was forced to board the boat. But Kjartan did not have to be comforted by the glory of the man who lured the island: seeing Heir's body floating on the shore, Harðar understood everything and cut the traitor with Soti's sword in half, along with a double chain mail. By the way, the ancient Icelandic name Geirr means "spear". This name of the Harðar's brother can be seen as a kind of myth: it is known that Odin had a magic spear Gungnir, which always involved in the target; the spear killed the sacrifice for this treacherous god; Geir was killed in the back by Spear (dart), when he escaped from the bonds, tried to swim to get to the rocks. According to O. Khlevov, "in any of the other types of weapons the "norn sentence" is not as clearly manifested as when using a dart. The good fortune and will of the gods so clearly influenced on the final result of the cast that it was most often the highlight of a duel of heroes. Other variants of the epic clash were definitely secondary³⁸."

... At one time, when Harðar presented his wrist to his sister for remembering him, which Illuga had once given him, Torbjorg said a vow:

– Если прослышу,
Что ты и правда
В поле сражен,
Оружьем повержен, –
Замыслом умным,
Тайным советом
Сумею сгубить
Твоего убийцу (460).

In the wake of Harðar's death, Torbjörg, like many other women in the sagas, appears in a single hypostasis – the instigator of murder. After unsuccessfully attempting to slay Indridi, a member of Harðar's persecution, she demands that Indridi bring the head of Thorstein (gold-button), the murder of a brother – for reconciliation with her husband. Harðar's son-in-law fulfilled the wishes of his wife and his sister who

³⁸ Хлевов А. А. Предвестники викингов. С. 111.

preferred revenge: Indridi shook Torsteynov's head with Viking's sword Soti, announcing that the Gold Button had been a traitor for a long time (497)*. But Torbjorg did not stop there: she attempted to assassinate Reva from Mailed Vale, another active participant in the murder of Harðar, by promising the executor of revenge, Toroleva Shpak, to pay for him the widow of her brother, Helga Jarlsdóttir, who had been imprisoned. A wrist, which Harðar took away from Soti, housing and much good. But it was not possible to kill Reva. Revenge was averted by his mother, the witch Thorbjorg Katla, who warned her son of danger, and Torolov Shpakov only managed to chop Reva's legs off, after which he died from Katla, who had a snack on his throat. In total, to retaliate for Harðar's death, twenty-four people were killed by his relatives, none of which was paid for the funeral. Several were killed by Harðar's sons, at the behest of Helga, his widow, his relatives and son-in-law, as well as his brother, Hroar. Most were killed on the instigation of Thorbjörg, Harðar's sister. It was probably one of the largest feuds in Iceland, a worthy sacrifice for «God of Warriors», «Father of Wives», «Father of Rates» – Odin.

SUMMARY

The article attempts to identify the signs of myths related to the Odin cult and the pagan Scandinavian traditions in one of the Icelandic saga, “Harðar saga ok Hólmverja”. The features of a single hero in the protagonists of the work, Harðar and Sigurd, are emphasized, for example, single hypostases of the heroines of the saga are demonstrated. This is an effort to project the attributes of the characters on such characteristic attributes of Odin, as the ability to predict the future, aptitude for oaths and incitement enmity, scaldic talent, the ability to give soldiers combat rage and invulnerability in battle. The results of the research, which are based on an understanding of the content of the “Harðar saga ok Hólmverja” in its mythological “arrangement”, historical-mythological, “eddic” contextualization, moreover, may serve as another confirmation of the scale of the spread of the Odin cult in Iceland. The experience of this work makes it possible to conclude that the archetypal basis of what is happening in ancient monuments. A single

* Цікава деталь: за вбивство Херда бонди віддали Торстейнові золоте зап'ястя Соті, що було на руці у Херда, але воно виявилось для Торстейна фатальним, «притягнувши» до свого нового хазяїна смерть від іншої речі вікінга – його меча.

one, which runs through the event plan of the individual fates of the characters, converts the depicted into a heroic plane. The analyzed textual material also demonstrated that the identification of pagan, single receptions in sagas, orients the researcher to the use of a comprehensive approach to solving consonant problems.

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