

Preface

BY JÜRIG GLAUSER

This volume arises from the fifth lecture in Medieval Philology at the University of Zurich presented by Judy Quinn of the University of Cambridge. The author is currently one of the world's leading scholars of Old Norse literature, having published innovative research on a number of branches of Old Norse-Icelandic studies over many years. Judy Quinn taught in the Department of English at the University of Sydney before moving to the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at the University of Cambridge in 2000, where she is now Professor of Old Norse Literature. She is a Corresponding Member of Kungliga Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur in Uppsala and received the prestigious Dag Strömbäck Prize from the academy in 2005. She was President of the Viking Society for Northern Research, which is based in London, from 2014 to 2016 and has held Visiting Professorships in, among other places, Rome, Verona and Zurich.

The thematic and methodological spectrum of her interests is outlined by three recent volumes she has edited. In both *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature* (co-edited with Emily Lethbridge, Odense, 2010) and in *Studies in the Transmission and Reception of Old Norse Literature: The Hyperborean Muse* (co-edited with Adele Cipolla, Turnhout, 2016), fresh philological approaches to Old Norse literature are promoted with close textual analysis underpinning the foregrounded methodology. Theoretical considerations play an important part in Scandinavian medieval studies insofar as they are always implicated in the critical question of the relationship between an assumed medieval 'original' work and the inevitably younger manuscripts that preserve the text or texts of the work. New Philology and Material Philology have accordingly proved to be highly productive approaches to the study of Old Norse literature over the past two or so decades. In contrast to other traditions of philology, where such approaches have sometimes been regarded as unproductive, or un-

necessarily theory-laden, in the field of Old Norse they have proved to be fruitful and progressive, as is demonstrated by the work of the author and, often inspired by her, in the research projects of younger scholars. Philologically precise attention to the transmission and textuality of Old Norse texts is an important focus of Judy Quinn's research. Another central area is represented in *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia* (co-edited with Carolyne Larrington and Britany Schorn, Cambridge, 2016). This is dedicated to the mythological, epistemological and heroic texts of the Poetic Edda, which is perhaps the most traditional area of research in Nordic Studies. In her numerous contributions to eddic research, the author has challenged a number of established editorial reworkings of the texts of eddic poems and proposed new interpretations of several poems based on the actuality of the manuscript text. Her interest in figurative language, and in particular the figure of the kenning, has been sustained across her scholarship as has her engagement with the complexity of gender in Scandinavian mythology and literature. These approaches are consistently characterized by methodological openness and interdisciplinary thinking, which also encompasses disparate disciplines such as evolutionary biology. They are also reflected in, for example, engagement with media-focused approaches, which arose from her participation in the Zurich National Centre of Competence in Research 'NCCR Mediality. Historical Perspectives, 2009-2017', which led to the essay 'Looking ahead to what is long past: The mediality of Jóreiðr's dreaming in *Sturlunga saga*' (*RE:writing: Medial Perspectives on Textual Culture in the Icelandic Middle Ages*, edited by Kate Heslop and Jürg Glauser, Zurich 2018). As early as 2010 the impact of her research was clear with the essay 'Liquid Knowledge: Traditional Conceptualisations of Learning in Eddic Poetry' (*Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*, edited by Slavica Ranković, Leidulf Melve, and Else Mundal, Turnhout), in which to a certain extent she anticipated the connection between mediality and memory studies which has since become influential in Nordic Studies (cf. Kate Heslop, *Viking Mediology*, New York 2022). While the subject of poetics, both skaldic and eddic, has been the primary focus of Judy Quinn's work, her interest in the prosimetric context in

which much of the Old Norse poetic corpus is preserved has increased over recent years. Her current international collaborative research project, ‘The *Íslendingasögur* as Prosimetrum’ (2020-2023), has expanded her research interests to include the third main genre of Old Norse literature, the saga. In the project, the joint Cambridge and Tübingen team are examining the fascinating phenomenon of trans-genre prosimetrum, and it is this topic which is the subject of this publication. The analysis of the ways in which narratorial authority is constructed and the implications of anonymity for saga prosimetrum — issues that she had begun to explore in earlier articles — are taken up again here.

Judy Quinn’s research interests thus cover the major genres of Old Norse literature and through her work she has deepened our understanding of often canonized works and extended our knowledge of the field through her theory-led investigations. Because she characteristically analyzes Old Norse literary texts in innovative and original ways, she opens them up for consideration within the context of internationally oriented Scandinavian medieval studies.