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Gnýs ævintýr

Jeffrey S. Love, Beeke Stegmann & Tom Birkett

1. Introduction

Gnýs ævintýr is the Icelandic interpretation of an exemplum (a short tale with a moral) which was circulating in Europe during the Middle Ages as part of a large miscellaneous collection of such tales generally known as the *Gesta Romanorum*, or 'Deeds of the Romans'. The Latin *Gesta* – which collected together exempla from a variety of different sources, including classical, Asian and medieval European folk traditions – was one of the most popular collections of the late medieval period, as demonstrated by some 165 surviving manuscripts and the pervasive influence it exerted on later writers from Boccaccio to Shakespeare. The *Gesta* was also translated into several vernacular languages, including the Middle English collection from which the Icelandic 'Tale of Gnýr' is derived. Versions of this particular tale seem to have been circulating for a long time before it appears in the compilation of the *Gesta* in the fourteenth century, and a similar narrative of grateful animals is found in

This work is the result of an editing project initiated at the Eighth International Summer School in Manuscript Studies in 2011. The summer school was held in Reykjavík and organised by the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum in cooperation with Den Arnamagnæanske Samling at the University of Copenhagen, the National and University Library of Iceland and the Universities of Tübingen, Zürich and Cambridge. David Baker, Nicola Lugosch-Baker, Margareta Regebro and Simon Patterson contributed to earlier stages of the edition, and Bragi Halldórsson provided some helpful corrections. Moreover, we are indebted to M. J. Driscoll and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir for their support and advice.

an eleventh-century collection of Indian folk tales known as the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (cf. e.g. Tawney 1924–1928, v: 157–164). The genre of illustrative exempla, often translated as *ævintýri* in the Old Norse tradition using the Middle Low German loan word *eventūr* (Hughes, forthcoming), does not seem to have attained the same popularity in Iceland as it did in England and on the Continent during the Middle Ages. The majority of exempla which did make it to Iceland came via England, probably during the mid-fifteenth century when English bishops held the seat at Hólar.[1]

The narrative of *Gnýs ævintýr* is simple. We first hear of a poor man who is raised from destitution to become steward of the empire and subsequently grows proud and conceited. Another poor man, Gnýr, collects and sells wood to provide for himself and his wife. On one of his gathering trips, he hears a cry for help from a pit, into which the emperor's steward and three wild animals have fallen. Gnýr rescues the steward on the promise of a reward, which the steward subsequently neglects to provide, instead beating Gnýr and leaving him for dead. Gnýr recovers and soon receives unexpected treasures from the three grateful animals, which he had also saved from the pit. One of the treasures, a magic stone, eventually attracts the attention of the emperor. Gnýr relates to him the story of how he acquired the stone, including the acts of the ungrateful steward. The steward's wicked nature is revealed, and he is put to death, with Gnýr appointed to govern in his place. The moral of the story is, of course, one of thankfulness and generosity, principles known even to irrational beasts. The extended didactic afterword (or *moralite*), which accompanies it in the *Gesta* tradition in both Latin and Middle English, attaches additional symbolic meanings to various figures and actions in the tale.

[1] On the transmission of exempla into Iceland and the difficulties in finding a suitable translation for 'exemplum' in Old Norse cf. Jorgensen (1972), Einar G. Pétursson (1976) and Hughes (forthcoming).

2. The Middle English *Gesta Romanorum*

The immediate source for *Gnýs ævintýr* is an exemplum found in the Middle English translation of the *Gesta Romanorum*. The story is untitled in the first print edition of this collection of tales (cf. appendix, p. 80 ff), but referred to by Madden (1838) and Herrtage (1879) as "Ciclades the Emperour". Herrtage also adds the rather cumbersome subtitle "or the ingratitude of a steward towards a poor man who had saved his life". The story is referred to by the more workable title of "The Ungrateful Steward" in the running header of the Early English Text Society (EETS) edition, and most subsequent commentators have adopted this title.

The Latin *Gesta Romanorum* survives in two groups of related manuscripts, an Anglo-Latin branch and a Continental branch (including a German translation), with significant variations in content both within and between the English and Continental traditions. Madden (1838: iii) places the date of the Latin collection's composition in the first half of the fourteenth century, whilst Oesterley (1872: 257–260) identifies the original compilation of the *Gesta* as probably taking place in England in the late thirteenth century or, at the latest, the early years of the fourteenth century, after which it was exported to the Continent and expanded with the addition of numerous tales. More recent scholarship places the date of the compilation somewhat later, in the early fourteenth century, and has opened up the question of where the tradition originated; indeed, the earliest surviving manuscript is that of Innsbruck Universitätsbibliothek Cod. lat. 310, dated to ca. 1342 (Speed 1999: 45–56).

Herrtage lists 30 MSS in the Anglo-Latin group, which makes the *Gesta* one of the more popular texts circulating in fourteenth-century England. The compilation's influence on English poetry in the late medieval and early modern period is notable, and the collection includes likely sources for Boccaccio, Gower, Chaucer, Hoccleve and Shakespeare, the last of whom famously reproduced the exemplum of "The Three Caskets" in his comedy *The Merchant of Venice* (Herrtage 1879: xviii–xix). The Anglo-Latin *Gesta* was translated into Middle English in the early fifteenth cen-

tury, possibly during the reign of Henry VI, and four manuscripts survive: British Library, MS Add. 9066; British Library, MS Harley 7333; Cambridge University Library, MS Kk. 1.6. (a later, abridged version); and a fragmentary version of the Middle English *Gesta*. The fragment was discovered relatively recently in Gloucester, Cathedral Library 22, and appears to be "to a great extent an independent translation" (Sandred 1971: 7). It does not include "The Ungrateful Steward", but it does add to our impression of the variety within the Middle English *Gesta* tradition.

In addition to these manuscripts, Wynkyn de Worde produced an edition of the Middle English *Gesta* in the early days of printing. Finally, a tale related to the "The Ungrateful Steward" can be found outside the *Gesta* context, namely in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* from the end of the fourteenth century (for a recent edition of Gower's work see Peck (2005)). Gower's tale is called "The Story of Adrian and Bardus", and although the dramatis personae bear different names, the moral of the tale is much the same:

> Wherof that every wysman may
> Ensamplen him, and take in mynde
> What schame it is to ben unkinde
>
> (Peck 2005, III: Bk 5, ll. 5157–5162)

Gower's version is, however, less violent than *Gnýs ævintýr* and the Middle English *Gesta*. At the end, Adrian is only forced to make good on his agreement to pay Bardus rather than being executed for his misdeed. Likewise, Bardus is merely threatened, not thrashed, by Adrian after the latter has been freed from the pit.

Each branch of the *Gesta Romanorum* has a different assortment of exempla, as well as differences in the order and in treatment of shared exempla. The fact that each individual exemplum formed a discrete unit within the larger collection allowed for significant variation in its compilation, and as Diane Speed (1999: 46) points out, "each manuscript and incunabulum of the *Gesta* is effectively a distinct version of the work".

Since individual exempla were essentially stand-alone stories drawn from various popular traditions, they were amenable to excerption and reworking by later authors, whilst the appended moral application made the tales particularly suitable for reuse in preaching contexts. As Marchalonis (1974: 318) points out, these moral applications may have been added to popular tales not simply to edify the reader, but rather "to provide a set of terms from which the sermon might be developed". The text of "The Ungrateful Steward" in BL Add. 9066 ends with an explicitly theological *moralite* which explains in detail how the characters and metaphors relate to Christian doctrine. The emphasis on didactic application and the *Gesta*'s value as a sourcebook of edifying narratives suitable for preaching material goes some way towards explaining why this miscellaneous collection was copied so frequently during the Middle Ages.

The version of the Middle English *Gesta* preserved in Harley 7333 comprises 70 tales, including that of "The Ungrateful Steward" towards the end. The manuscript as a whole is a handsomely produced compilation of Middle English poetry and prose associated with the Chaucerian scribe John Shirley, and it represents a veritable "library of secular literature" including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and part of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (Manly and Rickert 1940: 207). The *Gesta* is included in Booklet VI of the manuscript, preceded by Lydgate's verses on English kings, and followed by the final booklet of the manuscript containing Hoccleve's *De Regimine Principum*. It is dated to around 1440 by Herrtage, and more cautiously to the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century in the records of the British Library (n. d.).

BL Add. 9066 is most accurately described as a compilation of exempla from various sources – of a total of 96 tales, 46 are taken from what Herrtage refers to as 'the class of *Gesta* proper', though diverging from Harley 7333 in certain details. Five of those 46 are unrecorded in Harley 7333 and derive from a different Anglo-Latin version surviving e.g. in British Library, Harley 219 (Herrtage 1879: xx). The remaining texts in BL Add. 9066 are unique within the *Gesta* tradition, deriving from various sources including Odo of Cheriton's fables, the *Vitas Patrum*, and Robert

of Brunne's prose exempla in *Handlyng Synne*, written in 1303 (Herrtage 1879: xix–xx; Jorgensen 1970: 306–307). The manuscript was copied by two fifteenth-century scribes, and it may be of a slightly later date than Harley 7333, perhaps written in the mid to late fifteenth century.

The Cambridge manuscript, UL Kk. 1.6., is an abridged version of the content in BL Add. 9066. Its selective nature is acknowledged in the colophon, which states that "Here endith a Fewe of the Tales of Gest*us* Romonor*um*" (Herrtage 1879: xx, note 2). It includes "The Ungrateful Steward", though without the moralizing epilogue, and is noteworthy due to the fact that it was probably copied from a common exemplar rather than directly from BL Add. 9066, as it does not duplicate several of the mistakes found in the latter (Jorgensen 1972: 310).

Yet another version of the *Gesta* is extant in Wynkyn de Worde's printed edition of the Middle English texts from the beginning of the sixteenth century. One of the copies in the English Short Title Catalogue (n.d.) is dated as early as ca. 1502.[2] According to the colophon, the edition was printed in "flete street" in London (cf. also Madden 1838: xvi). Its 43 exempla (with appended morals) derive from an expanded version of the Middle English *Gesta*. Of the extant manuscripts, it agrees best with BL Add. 9066, but also follows Harley 7333 in certain details, and it includes eight additional tales not extant in any of them (Madden 1838: xv–xvii). The story of "The Ungrateful Steward" in this version of the *Gesta* adds some minor details, which are not known from any of the previously discussed texts. In its main features, though, the plot is unchanged.

Narrative variants between the (unabridged) ME texts can be summarised briefly as follows:

- WdW adds the information that the animals which fall into the pit are supposed to be brought to the emperor.

[2] *Gesta Romanorum*. [London: ca. 1502–1525]. The conjectured date range is based on ESTC nos. S96169, S4864, S94949 and S954.

- WdW gives an exact time for Guy to come to the palace to meet the steward, i. e. three o'clock.
- WdW adds the detail that the porter foresees Guy's harm when he comes to the castle for the second time.
- Harley 7333 adds that Guy's wife greets the steward ("gafe her blessing") with her left hand.
- In WdW there is an unspecified number of donkeys while there are ten donkeys in both Harley 7333 and BL Add. 9066.
- In WdW the lapidary is named Peter.
- Harley 7333 and WdW add that the lapidary first tries to buy the stone from Guy, who refuses.
- In Harley 7333 Guy finds the stone in his wife's chest instead of his own treasury.

We can deduce from the extant manuscripts that the Latin *Gesta* was translated into Middle English at some point prior to the copying of Harley 7333 in the mid-fifteenth century, and after the compilation of the Latin collection in the early fourteenth century. From this ME tradition, the story of "The Ungrateful Steward" was transferred into Icelandic as *Gnýs ævintýr*.[3]

While the main protagonist is called Guy in the ME texts, his name is changed to Gnýr in Icelandic, an uncommon personal name, though it does occur in, for instance, *Stjörnu-Odda draumur* (Bragi Halldórsson et

[3] Jorgensen (1971: 1–7, 247–250) assumes that the genre of *íslenzk ævintýri* dates back to pre-Reformation times and puts forth the possibility that many of the *ævintýri* only known from paper manuscripts go back to lost medieval parchment manuscripts. He gives a tentative dating of 1390–1430 for the original ME compilation. Furthermore, he identifies a possible translator of the Middle English *Gesta* into Icelandic, namely Jón Egilsson, scribe to (the English) Bishop Jón Craxton at Hólar (1429–1434).

al. 1987: 2233–2235) where a pair of berserks bear the names of Garpur and Gnýr. Another saga character with the name Gnýr appears in *Huldar saga innar miklu* (*Sagan af Huld hinni miklu og fjölkunnugu trölldrottningu* 1911: 11). It is likely that the translator was unfamiliar with the name Guy and replaced it with an Icelandic approximation. The Icelandic text of the present edition bears great similarity to the plot in BL Add. 9066, even more so than that of Harley 7333. Of the Icelandic manuscripts, AM 578 e 4to is especially close to the ME texts (see below). Since AM 578 e 4to shares the most details with the ME version and contains all the important facts for the *moralite* found at the end of the ME texts (though lacking the appellation itself), it is possible that AM 578 e 4to was derived from BL Add. 9066 or a related manuscript. AM 578 e 4to might even be a free translation of BL Add. 9066, but this is difficult to determine for certain. In his general discussion of the Icelandic *Gesta* tradition Jorgensen (1971: 201–205; 1972: 310) points out that there are correspondences between the Icelandic texts and both the closest Latin *Gesta* MSS and Harley 7333; these correspondences are not extant in the other ME manuscripts. Based on this observation, he argues that there must be at least one other Middle English manuscript which contained the sources for the Icelandic *Gesta* "for neither [BL Add.] *9066* nor [Cam. UL Kk.] *1.6* can be the exact source of the Icelandic texts" (Jorgensen 1971: 201).

3. The Manuscripts of *Gnýs ævintýr*

The eight known manuscripts of *Gnýs ævintýr*, all on paper and written in Iceland, date to the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Brief descriptions are available in Kålund's (1889–1894) catalogue of the AM collection and the catalogues of the Lbs collection by Páll Eggert Ólason (1918–1937; 1947), Blöndal (1959), Grímur Helgason & Lárus H. Blöndal (1970) and Grímur Helgason & Ögmundur Helgason (1996). More recent descriptions for all eight manuscripts are available online at handrit.is, the majority accompanied by digital images. Additional descriptions for AM

119 b 8vo, Lbs 2421 8vo and Lbs 1172 4to are accessible through a website dedicated to *fornaldarsögur* based at the University of Copenhagen (Stories for all time: The Icelandic fornaldarsögur n.d.).

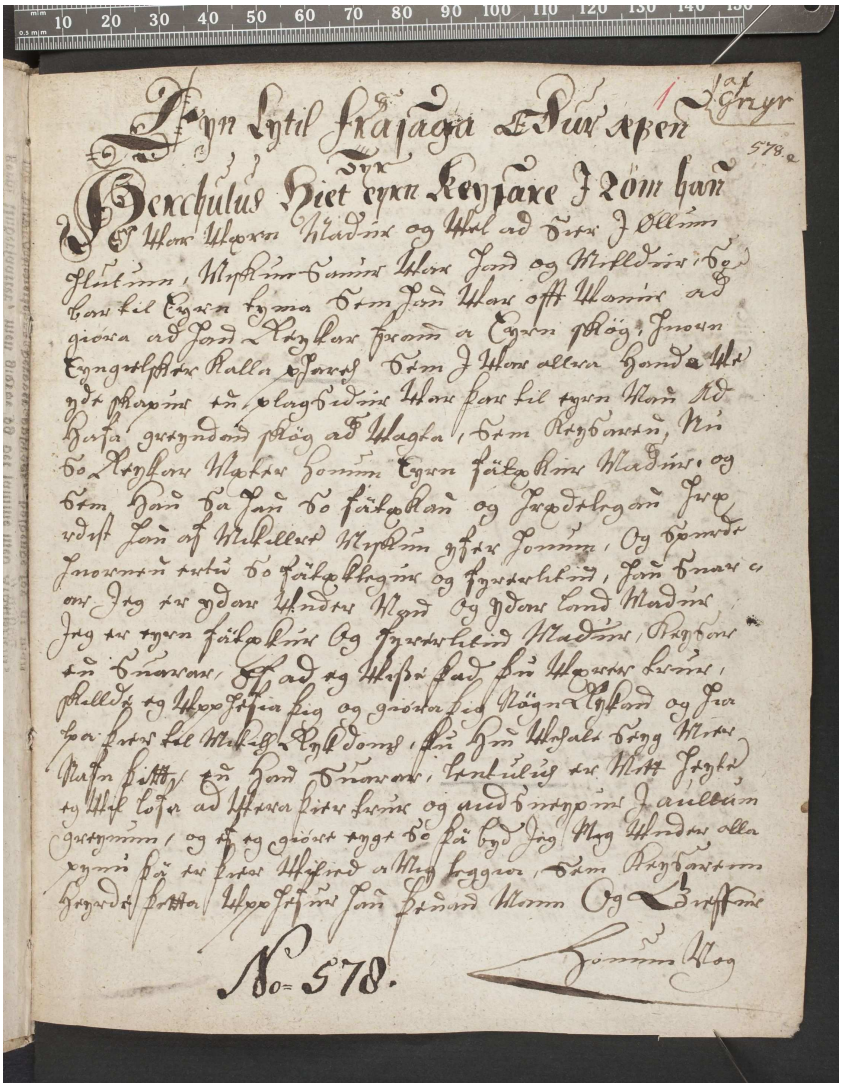
The manuscripts containing *Gnýs ævintýr* are, in general, small, unassuming volumes. Most of them are in relatively poor condition and have not received much scholarly attention. Unsurprisingly, *Gnýs ævintýr* is most often accompanied by other fabulous tales, including texts labeled *ævintýri* and *fornaldarsögur*. Seven of the manuscripts are housed in Reykjavík, and one (AM 119 b 8vo) is housed in Copenhagen.

3.1. AM 578 e 4to (s. XVII ex.)

This small, eight-leaf manuscript (Fig. 1 on p. 34) bound in plain pasteboard is one of the earliest known sources for the story of Gnýr in Iceland, and its text is the closest to the surviving Middle English exemplum. It was part of Árni Magnússon's collection and has been housed in Reykjavík at the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum since 1993. Kålund (1889–1894, I: 740) dates it to the end of the seventeenth century, presumably on the basis of script, and there is no compelling evidence to suggest otherwise. There are no marks of provenance or related marginalia except, perhaps, a partially legible autograph ("[...] Jngv*ar*") at the foot of fol. 8v.

AM 578 e 4to contains only *Gnýs ævintýr*, though it was previously listed as part of AM 578 a–k 4to in Jón Ólafsson's handwritten catalogue (AM 456 fol, 23r). Contents of the AM 578 a–k 4to manuscripts, which most likely formed a loose and unbound collection of texts, include other *ævintýri* (e.g. "af Valltara æfintyr" in AM 578 b 4to and "æfinntir" in AM 578 i 4to). These were collected and re-arranged by Árni Magnússon, as can be seen from the various provenance notes in his hand (Kålund 1889–1894, I: 739–740). Hugo Gering (1882–1884, I: xxxi) consulted AM 578 k 4to for his editions of *Islendzk Æventyri*, but he does not appear to have considered the tale of Gnýr in AM 578 e 4to for inclusion.

The entire text of AM 578 e 4to is written in a single, unidentified hand. On fol. 1r, the first page of *Gnýs ævintýr*, a later addition "af Gnyr" is found



No= 578.

Figure 1: Image of fol. 1r in Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 578 e 4to, s. xvii ex. © Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, Reykjavík.
Photo: Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir

in the upper right corner and should be read together with the otherwise nonspecific rubric referring to a 'little tale or story'. The shelfmark in the corner of fol. 1r appears to be in the same ink as the addition.

3.2. AM 119 b 8vo (s. XVII)

AM 119 b 8vo, housed in Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, Copenhagen, is a small book which sustained heavy damage prior to conservation and rebinding in 1963. In his catalogue, Kålund (1889–1894, II: 402) calls the manuscript "Safn af æfintýrum" ('a collection of exempla'). In fact, *Gnýs ævintýr* occupies the first ten leaves (1r–10r), followed by *Eiríks saga víðförla*, *Ormars þáttr Framarssonar*[4] and three unidentified texts, two of them untitled *ævintýri*.[5] The first 23 (of 24) leaves are in a single hand, though some leaves (e.g. 17v) appear to be partially written in other hands. Kålund dates AM 119 b 8vo broadly to the seventeenth century, but Jensen (1983: xcvii–xcviii) suggests that it may have been written as early as ca. 1650. According to Jón Ólafsson's handwritten catalogue, AM 119 b 8vo was formerly bound together with AM 119 a 8vo, the latter of which was part of a larger codex along with AM 588 p 4to, AM 109 a 8vo III and AM 118 a 8vo before they were separated by Árni Magnússon. Jensen (1983: xcvii–xcviii) puts forth the possibility that AM 119 b 8vo was at some point part of that same larger codex. A table of contents in a manuscript in Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket, Holm papp 11 8vo, mentions *Gnýs ævintýr* and may refer to the text in AM 119 b 8vo (Jensen 1983: xcviii; ccxlix).

3.3. Lbs 2421 8vo (ca. 1750)

Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, Lbs 2421 8vo is a collection of shorter sagas, *þættir* and *ævintýri*.[6] It contains an even 100 leaves, with *Gnýs ævintýr*

[4] *Ormars þáttr* has not been edited, but both this manuscript and Lbs 2421 8vo (see below) are singled out as important MSS by Simek and Pálsson (2007: 297).

[5] The final text, simply called "Eitt litid æfinntyr" in the manuscript has been edited and discussed briefly by Bjarni Einarsson (1955: clxiv; 106).

[6] A full list of contents (most of them listed as "Æfentyr" in the manuscript) is available in Hubert Seelow's edition of *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka* (1981: 33–35). A description of

appearing on fols. 41r–46v. Páll Eggert Ólason (1918–1937, III: 342) dates the codex to ca. 1750, since the majority of the manuscript is in the hand of Pétur Jónsson from Svefneyjar in Breiðafjörður (ca. 1700–after 1761);[7] fols. 1–8 and 92 are later replacements. Three former owners of the manuscript can be discerned from autographs. Two appear on the otherwise blank fol. 100v: Th. Grímsson and Þórunn Þorláksdóttir; an autograph from Guðrún Hafliðadóttir (1849–1924 according to handrit.is) is written on the recto side of a blue cover leaf at the front. The first two autographs have been identified on handrit.is as Þorlákur Grímsson, hreppstjóri, in Látur in Breiðafjörður (1772–1870) and Þórunn, a member of his household, possibly his daughter (Jensen 1983: xcix).[8] This manuscript is one of several donated to the library by Ólafur Marteinsson (1899–1934).

3.4. Lbs 2071 8vo (before 1760)

Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, Lbs 2071 8vo contains only a fragment of Árni Böðvarsson's (1713–1776) well-known poem *Skipafregn* (fols. 1r–3v; composed in 1734) and *Gnýs ævintýr* (fols. 4r–8v). The text of *Skipafregn* in this manuscript lacks the first seven stanzas and part of the eighth compared to the edition in Rask (1819: 281–286). The entire manuscript is in the hand of a certain Sigurður Jónsson, whose name appears at the bottom of fol. 3v. An inscription on fol. 8v dated 1760 puts the book in the

Lbs 2421 8vo can also be found in Gillian Fellows-Jensen's edition of *Hemings þáttr Áslákssonar* (1962: lxxxi).

[7] Pétur's hand was identified by comparison with Lbs 242 4to (Seelow 1981: 35–37). His script appears in at least sixteen manuscripts according to listings on handrit.is. On the dates for the scribe, see Jensen (1983: xcviii) and Annette Hasle (1967: xxxiii–xxxiv), who points out that the latest dated manuscript in Pétur's hand is from 1722, though he is mentioned in an account book as late as 1761.

[8] Þorlákur Grímsson is mentioned in *Sýslumannaæfir* (Bogi Benediktsson et al. 1881–1932, II: 711) as the husband of Katrín Einarsdóttir. One of their children is Þórunn. Þorlákur also appears in the 1816 census of Iceland (Ættfræðifélagið 1947–1974: 646), which mentions a widow, Þórunn Þorláksdóttir (aged 71 at the time) as part of his household. Handrit.is identifies Þórunn as the latter (1745–1826).

hands of an unidentified Björn Jónsson and serves as a rough date for the composition of the texts in this manuscript.

3.5. Lbs 1172 4to (s. xviii)

Gnýs ævintýr stands out as the only exemplum in the middle (fols. 136r–138v of 181 fols.) of Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, Lbs 1172 4to. Other texts in the manuscript consist mostly of what we currently consider *fornaldarsögur* and *riddarasögur*: *Ketils saga hængs* (fols. 1r–16r), *Gríms saga loðinkinna* (16r–23v), *Örvar-Odds saga* (24r–75r), *Vilhjálms saga sjóðs* (75r–101r), *Jóns saga leikara* (101r–106r), *Blómsturvalla saga* (106r–121v), *Bósa saga ok Herrauðs* (122r–131r), *Nitida saga* (138v–144v), *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* (144v–181r [2 copies]), as well as two shorter texts: "Brot úr ferðabók Jóns Ólafssonar" (132r–135r) and "Um Bjarna í Efranesi" (135r–135v). The manuscript was written sometime during the eighteenth century by three unknown scribes. The text concerning Gnýr is in the third hand, which is dated to the second half of the eighteenth century (Páll Eggert Ólason 1918–1937, I: 461).

Several marks of ownership are present in the volume, including multiple autographs. The title page (front flyleaf recto) is dated 1839 and gives "Asgerdur Olafs Dottir" as the owner.[9] At the foot of the same leaf is the date 25 September 1[..].[10] An unidentified Jón Jónsson wrote his name multiple times on fol. 181r, and on fol. 181v a certain Sigríður Jónsdóttir from Reykjavík attests that the manuscript belongs to "Björn Björnsson".[11] The name "Jakob Johann[esson?] á Harastod[um?]"[12] is present on a loose leaf accompanying the manuscript. According to Páll Eggert Ólason

[9] An Ásgerður Ólafsdóttir is mentioned as living at Guðrúnarstaðir in Grímstungusókn, Húnvatnssýsla in *Manntal á Íslandi* from both 1801 and 1816 (Ættfræðifélagið 1980: 36; 1947–1974: 797). Since she is registered as being 18 years old in 1801, she must have been born in 1782 or 1783.

[10] Probably '18[..]'; most of the date is lacking due to damage.

[11] Identified as the bookbinder colloquially known as Bóka-Björn (1822–1879).

[12] There are several Harastaðir in Dalasýsla and Húnavatnssýsla, but no record of a Jakob Jóhannesson could be located at any of them. In Harastaðir in Miðdalur a certain Jónas

(1918–1937, I: 461), the manuscript was also owned by Dr. Jón Þorkelsson (1859–1924), who acquired it from Guðmundur Hjartarson (1850–1882),[13] before it came into the library's collections.

The front pastedown is manuscript waste containing a fragment of an Icelandic account book. Names of places (e.g. Laxardal, Seli) and people (Jón, Sigurður) are written in an eighteenth-century hand. Many leaves near the front and the end of the codex have sustained some damage to the margins, though the loss of text is relatively minimal. Three loose leaves accompany the manuscript along with dozens of fragments containing printed and manuscript detritus. One leaf is a letter from a certain Jón Andrésson addressed to "Sveini Jónssyni af Eyumm". It is undated and bears the remnants of a wax seal. A second leaf is another letter, also with traces of a wax seal, though this leaf is heavily damaged and mostly illegible.

Lbs 1172 4to is mentioned in a list of sources of *Jóns saga leikara* in Martin Soderbach's dissertation (1949: lii), but the author was unable to access materials in Iceland at the time. Broberg's edition (1909–1912: v–vi) of *Rémundar saga keisarasonar* mentions other manuscripts in Icelandic holdings, but he does not seem to have been aware of the version in Lbs 1172 4to.

3.6. JS 545 4to (s. XVIII/XIX or 1700–1879)

Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, JS 545 4to is a rather thick volume (257 leaves) containing a miscellaneous assortment of texts. The volume is a composite

Jóhannesson is registered as a *vinnumaður* in 1845 (Ættfræðifélagið 1983: 152). A person with the name Jakob Jóhannesson is mentioned in *Vestur-íslenzkar ævískrár* (Benjamín Kristjánsson 1961: 180), where he is said to be born in 1870 in Sker and have died in 1914 in Akureyri. The name Jakob Jóhannesson also occurs three times in Vesturfaraskrár, of which two can be ruled out, because they give a different place of origin. The third entry does not mention any place of origin. This remaining Jakob Jóhannesson was 23 years old when he emigrated to Canada in 1887 (Júníus H. Kristinsson 1983: 357, 417).

[13] A loose leaf accompanying Lbs 1172 4to contains a later table of contents (in the hand of Jón Þorkelsson?). At the head is a note stating that the book came from the collection of 'Guðmundur í grjóta (d. 1882)'.

collection, and individual sections are divided by small, blue paper booklets. Jón Sigurðsson, the former owner, has included notes on the contents of some booklets, but the booklet containing *Gnýs ævintýr* is blank except for some modern annotations. Contents of the manuscript include documents relating to the adventurer Jørgen Jørgensen (1780–1841), genealogies, legal materials and other assorted texts.[14]

JS 545 4to has been dated broadly to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Páll Eggert Ólasson (1918–1937, II: 597), but the cataloguers at the National Library in Iceland have slightly narrowed the date range to 1700–1879 in the description on handrit.is. The manuscript, as it exists now, was probably assembled some time shortly before 1879, when Jón's collection was acquired by the library. Individual elements of the manuscript were written a while before this; numerous dates are given throughout the manuscript, some as early as 1656 (though Jón's notes suggest even earlier dates for some texts). *Gnýs ævintýr* is written in one of the several unidentified hands throughout the manuscript. The copy of the tale in JS 545 4to is damaged, resulting in gaps in the text on the first leaf (fol. 184). The text of *Gnýs ævintýr* ends on fol. 193v and is signed by a certain Eyjólfur J[óns]s[on?]. Another text is written in the same quire as the end of *Gnýs ævintýr* and is dated 1762 (fol. 195v). This text appears to be a later addition, so it is likely that the text of Gnýr was copied slightly earlier.

3.7. Lbs 799 8vo (1854)

Gnýs ævintýr is the first of three texts in Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, Lbs 799 8vo. It accompanies *Þorgríms saga konungs og kappa hans*, a younger *fornaldarsaga*, and *Tyrkjaránið*, an account of the 1627 pirate raid in Iceland. The latter text is attributed to the prolific Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá. *Tyrkjaránið* is dated to 1854 and signed by the scribe, Þorsteinn Jónsson á Hellum,

[14] An extensive list of contents can be found on handrit.is, though some leaves (e.g. 194r–195v) remain undescribed.

on fol. 17v (Páll Eggert Ólasson 1918–1937, II: 154). Three other scribes and dates (1824, 1829, 1850) are mentioned on the same page, and the hand of *Gnýs ævintýr* and *Þorgríms saga* appears to be the same as the first hand of *Tyrkjaránið*. Another date, 21 January 1876, appears on fol. 64v. Printed waste on the front pastedown is a copy of p. 110 of the Icelandic journal *Sæmundar Fróði* (July 1874) concerning an upcoming visit by King Christian IX of Denmark to Iceland.

3.8. Lbs 4847 8vo (1868–1874)

Reykjavík, Landsbókasafn, Lbs 4847 8vo is a thick paper manuscript written by Sighvatur Grímsson Borgfirðingur (1849–1930), who lived on a farm called Höfði in Dýrafjörður (Páll Eggert Ólason 1948–1976, IV: 200). His initials, along with the date (2 April 1873), appear in the colophon on fol. 132r. The manuscript contains a total of 21 texts, most of them sagas, the contents ranging from *Trójumanna saga* and *Hálfdanar saga Brönufóstra* to Icelandic riddles.[15] *Gnýs ævintýr* is the fifteenth text (fols. 129r–132r) and is followed by several other *ævintýri*. Based on the colophons present in the manuscript, the individual items were written during the years 1868–1874. The manuscript was recently acquired by the Landsbókasafn as part of a group of manuscripts thought to have been owned by the family of blacksmith Bjarnhéðinn Jónsson (1876–1920) (handrit.is).[16]

4. Textual relationship

The eight known texts of *Gnýs ævintýr* in Icelandic are all relatively similar in terms of plot narrative. Applying Hufnagel's (2012: 34–35) definition of a textual version as "a partial recomposition or restructuring of a work

[15] A more complete list of contents is available in the entry for Lbs 4847 8vo on handrit.is.

[16] Lbs 4847 8vo was acquired by the National Library of Iceland in October 2000 and was catalogued just prior to the submission of this edition. We are grateful to Sigríður Hjördís Jörundsdóttir for providing some preliminary photographs of relevant parts of the manuscript in order that details from Lbs 4847 8vo might be included here.

with considerable alterations leading to a change in the overall aesthetic effect of the whole work", they should be considered the same version of the work but with textual variants. The texts preserved in Lbs 2071 8vo or Lbs 1172 4to, however, could potentially qualify as a different version (see below). The differences tend to fall into distinct groupings, and it is clear that some of the manuscripts are more closely related than others.

The texts in AM 578 e 4to and AM 119 b 8vo, the two oldest manuscripts, have the same overall narrative structure, but vary with regards to the details. For instance, in AM 578 e 4to (2r:11–12), Gnýr is said to live in the same town as Lentulus whereas in AM 119 b 8vo (3r:1–2) he lives in another nearby village. Other differences in the main narrative include:

- In AM 578 e 4to the emperor asks for Lentulus' name later than in AM 119 b 8vo, in which this is his first question.
- In AM 578 e 4to the number of pits is specified as a hundred, but not in AM 119 b 8vo.
- In AM 578 e 4to Lentulus mentions God in his request for help (unlike AM 119 b 8vo).
- In AM 578 e 4to Gnýr receives ten donkeys, but only one in AM 119 b 8vo.
- In AM 578 e 4to the magic stone has three colours, whereas it is described as 'pretty' in AM 119 b 8vo.
- In AM 119 b 8vo Gnýr has the pits refilled. This detail is not present in AM 578 e 4to.

In addition, the rhetorical style differs considerably between the two manuscripts. While AM 119 b 8vo is characterized by a succinct and plain style, AM 578 e 4to tends to be richer in its descriptions, so that the text in AM 578 e 4to is longer than the text in AM 119 b 8vo by almost 800 words. AM 578 e 4to tends to have longer passages with more extensive descriptions, often

including adjective pairs, e.g. "fätækur og fyrerlitin*n*" (1r:16) and "dugande man*n* og gode win" (2r:20–21), as well as more detailed interpretations.

The texts in Lbs 2421 8vo, Lbs 2071 8vo and Lbs 4847 8vo have more in common with AM 119 b 8vo than with AM 578 e 4to. Lbs 2421 8vo is very closely related to AM 119 b 8vo and shows no independent variants. Only on a few occasions, e.g. in the rubric, is the phrasing slightly different, so Lbs 2421 8vo could be a direct copy of AM 119 b 8vo. The text in Lbs 4847 8vo follows AM 119 b 8vo and Lbs 2421 8vo. In terms of word choice and phrasing, however, it shows a degree of independence. Also noteworthy is the fact that the number of pits is specified as 100 in Lbs 4847 8vo. Since there are no other close similarities with AM 578 e 4to and its related manuscripts, and considering the fact that the number 100 is a common number for signifying 'many', this is probably an independent innovation.

The text in Lbs 2071 8vo, on the other hand, has rather more distinctive features. In particular, the story contains some humorous elements not present in any of the other manuscripts. When freeing the steward from the pit, Gnýr comments on his weight: "Þü ert furdu þüngur en*n*da müntu feit*ur* vera". (You are pretty heavy, but then you are fat.) (5v:14–15). In general, however, Lbs 2071 8vo presents an abbreviated version of the tale. Some extended passages have also been left out, such as the recap of the story that Gnýr relates to the emperor. Instead, we are informed that Gnýr simply "told the emperor what had occurred" (8r:11–12), and the moralizing summary is also missing. Detailed descriptions tend to be left out of the text in Lbs 2071 8vo, and there are also fewer references to the emotions or motivations of the characters (e.g. Gnýr is not described as sad after being turned away by the steward), or to some of the more outlandish elements of the story such as the stone's ability to generate money. As a result of these changes, the text is ca. 750 words shorter than those in both AM 119 b 8vo and Lbs 2421 8vo.

JS 545 4to and Lbs 799 8vo are more closely related to AM 578 e 4to. They all have around 3000 words and have almost identical phrases throughout large parts of the text. The text in JS 545 4to follows AM 578 e 4to more closely than does the text of Lbs 799 8vo. For example, Lbs 799 8vo

(2v:22–23) adds the detail that Lentulus falls into the pit together with his horse, which is told in neither JS 545 4to nor AM 578 e 4to (nor any of the other manuscripts). Both JS 545 4to and Lbs 799 8vo share one significant variant not present in AM 578 e 4to, namely the golden ring, which Gnýr is given by the ape (JS 545 4to, 189r:5–6; Lbs 799 8vo, 4v:7).[17] The close relationship between Lbs 799 8vo and JS 545 4to can furthermore be seen in common copying mistakes, e.g. the missing word *höndum* in Gnýr's statement "Vel verde minum höndum". (JS 545 4to, 189v:1; Lbs 799 8vo, 4v:22). Additionally, both manuscripts read "glede fyrir utan folk" (JS 545 4to, 189r: 16; Lbs 799 8vo, 4v:16) in the first account of the properties of the magic stone, whereas all other manuscripts have some variant of "gledi utan þunga". In the second account, when Gnýr tells the emperor about the properties of the stone, JS 545 4to uses the less poetic word *þunga* again, which indicates that the earlier usage of *fólk* is an innovation. Lbs 799 8vo, on the other hand, is consistent and uses the same word in both occurrences. This evidence suggests that the latter is a copy of JS 545 4to.

Finally, Lbs 1172 4to has similarities and common variants with both of the above outlined groups, but also contains its own narrative variants. The general tone of Lbs 1172 4to is more moralising and emphasises the didactic aspect of the tale more than the other manuscripts. An additional episode is appended to the end of the story, in which Gnýr's humble character is put to trial once more (138v:9–23). Elsewhere details less relevant to the moral message are omitted in order to emphasise the good character of Gnýr. Gnýr gives only a short summary instead of a full recapitulation of his story before the emperor (as in Lbs 2421 8vo), and the emperor's demand that

[17] This motif is not found in either of the Middle English manuscripts or in the Latin tradition and must be an Icelandic innovation. The motif is known from other Icelandic literature, e.g. a poet being rewarded for a poem in *Þorleifs þáttr jarlsskálds* and *Sighvats þáttr skálds* (Boberg 1966: 216–219). The bestowing of a ring is, of course, a common folkloric motif, and several stories involving the giving of a gift of a ring or recognition of position through the identification of a ring are also found in the Middle English *Gesta* tradition (including the tale given the title "Of the Three Images in the Temple in Rome" by Herrtage (1879: 308–311)).

Gnýr choose between selling the stone and leaving the emperor's realm has been omitted.

With respect to the source of the story, the Icelandic texts are generally similar to the Middle English tale. The most notable difference is that the ME texts have a moralising explication following the narrative, whereas the Icelandic tale does not. The so-called *moralite* (or *declaratio* as in BL Add. 9066) explains how the characters and metaphors in the tale relate to Christian doctrine, and it has been noted that in many of these didactic interpretations of popular narratives, "there is an air of contrivance" (Marchalonis 1974: 312). Nothing like this contrivance can be found in the Icelandic manuscripts. At most they only have a few sentences at the end in praise of Gnýr for his exemplary character. In the manuscripts where chapters are marked, such as AM 119 b 8vo, the closing comments are folded in with the final chapter rather than being given their own space as in the ME texts. Even the Icelandic manuscript with the strongest focus on the moral, Lbs 1172 4to, does not match the explicitly theological character of the *moralite* from the *Gesta* tradition proper, and its additional episode in which Gnýr is tested following his promotion to Steward is not extant in any of the ME texts.

Aside from the missing *moralite*, there are few differences between the narrative found in the Icelandic texts and in the supposed ME source. The plot of AM 578 e 4to and its closely related manuscripts bear a strong correlation to the ME versions, including the following distinctive details:

- The emperor asks for Lentulus' name later than in AM 119 b 8vo, Lbs 2421 8vo, and Lbs 2071 8vo.
- There are 100 pits instead of an undefined quantity.
- Gnýr comes from the city and not a nearby village.
- Lentulus refers to God in his request for help.
- There are ten donkeys.

- The stone has three colours.

It is also striking that some of the details that are changed in the group around AM 119 b 8vo, e.g. the number of donkeys and the three colours of the stone, are relevant to the Christian allegories in the ME texts. In other words, within the appended *moralite*, these allegories are taken up again and explained to the audience. It therefore seems unlikely that these details were changed in a version that contained the *moralite*. Rather, the moralising explanation at the end of the tale must have been omitted first, as in AM 578 e 4to, leaving the details open to change in later copies.

5. Rímur based on *Gnýs ævintýr*

The distinctively Icelandic genre of *rímur* – or long stanzaic narrative poems – draws almost exclusively on pre-existing prose material, particularly the fantastic and folk-tale narratives represented especially in *ævintýri* and *fornaldarsögur* traditions. The development of *rímur* in late medieval Icelandic literary tradition has often been linked with the European ballad or Romance tradition and influences from outside Iceland, though there is little doubt that it is "an indigenous development" (Hughes 2005: 206) which responded to rather than mimicked developments in Europe. The tradition also had great longevity, and was flourishing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when most of the surviving manuscripts of *Gnýs ævintýr* were being copied. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that *Gnýs ævintýr* served as a source for several *rímur*.[18] There are no fewer than ten surviving manuscripts of *Ríma af Entulus og Gný* (215 stanzas) by Þorkell Pálsson (dated to 1770–1780). A similarly named *Rímur af Entúlus og Gný* written by a certain Þorsteinn survives in a single known manuscript from the first half of the nineteenth century (Lbs 3379 8vo), and there are at least three other *rímur* cycles based on the tale of Gnýr called *Rímur af Stývarði*:

[18] Cf. Finnur Sigmundsson's *Rímnatal* (1966, I: 121–122, 454) for brief details concerning *rímur* related to the tale of Gnýr.

one by Páll Sveinsson (ca. 1738–after 1786) preserved in a single known manuscript (Lbs 459 8vo), a short *rímur* (2 fyttes) by Þórður Einarsson (1786–1842) surviving in two manuscripts (Lbs 1405 8vo and Lbs 1978 8vo) and *Rímur af Stývarð ráðgjafa og Gnír bónda* (3 fyttes) by Jón Grímsson (1804–1870), printed in Reykjavík in 1909.[19]

The *rímur* differ from the *ævintýri* in several plot details and in the order of events – for example, Jón Grímsson's lengthy tripartite *Rímur af Stývarð ráðgjafa og Gnír bónda* has the Steward and animals fall into separate pits, the animals subsequently rewarding Gnír before he visits the king and is told to seek his repayment from the steward. Under accusation of stealing the precious stone, Gnír must defend himself, and the story becomes a dramatic test of which man is telling the truth. A more significant addition to the story is the final *ríma* in this three part sequence which details a further trial of Gnír, in which jealous courtiers accuse him of benefitting himself at the king's expense. Gnír is quickly exonerated and marries the king's daughter. This addition is noteworthy, as one of the manuscripts of *Gnýs ævintýr* (Lbs 1172 4to) includes an additional episode (as mentioned above) detailing a similar accusation of embezzlement by the emperor's followers – described as jealous men – after Gnýr is promoted to the position of steward and has a well-appointed house built for himself.[20] This episode is not found in the Middle English or Latin *Gesta* traditions, or in any other surviving Icelandic manuscript witness, and it is probable that Jón Grímsson was working either from Lbs 1172 4to itself or a closely related manuscript when composing his *Rímur*. An edition of the *rímur* and more comprehensive study of the tale of Gnýr in this parallel tradition would no doubt shed light on their relationship and the role of the *rímur* in the transmission of the narrative.

[19] A manuscript copy of Jón's *rímur* survives as part of Lbs 4251 8vo, dated 1838 (Grímur Helgason and Ögmundur Helgason 1996: 282).

[20] See note 1 on page 75 in the translation below.

6. Editorial principles

The present edition follows the text in AM 578 e 4to. AM 578 e 4to was chosen as the main text due to its age, length and relative similarity to the ME versions of the exemplum. It also shows a relative richness in detail compared to other manuscript witnesses.[21] As this edition is intended to present a single text of *Gnýs ævintýr* the size of the accompanying variant apparatus has been kept to a minimum. Only extensive narrative variants are presented, and variants are given in paraphrase, as the focus is on content rather than wording. In this case 'extensive' refers to added, omitted or significantly modified clauses or longer as well as details which potentially change the interpretation of a passage.[22] In some cases shorter substantive variants, such as differences in the name of a character, have been indicated in the notes to the translation as items of possible interest to the reader. Occasionally, prose accounts in AM 578 e 4to are presented as dialogue in other manuscripts, and there is variation in the order of some details (e.g. the sequence in which the animals fall into the pit). These types of structural variants have not been noted. When multiple manuscripts display the same variant, the shelfmarks are listed in chronological order with quoted text always being taken from the first mentioned manuscript. Readers interested in lexical and orthographic variants are encouraged to consult the digital facsimiles of the manuscripts available on handrit.is.

This edition closely follows the handwritten text and reproduces the original orthography. In order to retain a high degree of readability most diacritical marks and other purely paleographic features are not displayed. Diacritical marks have only been retained when they indicate a change in the quality or quantity of a vowel. Here, the common practice of post-medieval scribes to use dieresis for vowel length and an acute on the letter "o" to indicate modern *ö* is retained where it occurs. While paratextual features such as catchwords and line breaks are not shown, page breaks

[21] See the section on *Textual Relationship* above.

[22] On the levels of narrative variants see e.g. Cerquiglini (1999: 78) and Johansson (2010).

are indicated in the edition, so that any line of text can still be found in the manuscript reasonably quickly. Abbreviations are expanded and indicated by italics. Punctuation, word spacing and capitalisation have also been normalised for readability. Commas are inserted where the syntax is complex, and direct speech is indicated with quotation marks.

Scribal corrections, e.g. crossed-out words or changes to the text by the scribe himself, are silently incorporated into the text. Editorial emendations are kept to a minimum. They are indicated in the text using the symbols described by Stefán Karlsson (1963: lxvii–lxviii):

* corrected by the editors
[ ] supplied due to damage
⟨ ⟩ supplied due to omission in the manuscript

Raised forward and back slash (`´ or ´`) are used to indicate additions by a later hand.

7. Paleographical characteristics of AM 578 e 4to

AM 578 e 4to is written by a single unidentified scribe. The dominant script type is early *kurrent script* (*árfljótaskrift*). The text body shows consistent usage of the characteristic kurrent forms of *e*, *h* and *r*. Hooks and loops are frequently employed on all lower case letters with an ascender except for consonants combined with *t*. The upper case letters *S*, *H*, *R*, and *I* occur both with hooks and without. Other upper case letters are written without hooks. Starting on fol. 6r:12, letters which extend below the baseline sometimes display two concentric loops in the descender. This decoration only occurs a few times within the preceding pages. The script is angled slightly to the right, giving it a rather upright appearance compared to later forms of kurrent script. As is typical for this script type, the scribe has written dots above *i* and hooks above *u*. However, this practice is not consistent and only applies to ca. 80 % of cases, making it difficult at times

to distinguish between *i* and *e*, and *u* and *n* based on paleographical evidence alone.

For rubrics, as well as the first and the last line of the text, the scribe uses *chancery fractura* (*kansellíbrotaskrift*). These lines show a strong alternation between broad strokes and hairlines. Moreover, the first letter of each line is decorated with additional strokes, hooks or ornaments. The final "Amen" (8v:13) shows additional aspects of the script type *humanist cursiva* (*snarhönd*) with all letters connected and a cursive form of *e*.

In both script types, the letter *s* appears in two variants, the so-called 'round *s*' and 'long *s*'. While "ſ" appears in all possible positions, its round counterpart is limited to word-initial and word-final positions. The insular variant of *ſ* only occurs a few times in the lines written in chancery fractura. Where it occurs, it is written with both arms curved back to the descender, the predominant form up to the seventeenth century (Stefán Karlsson 2002: 836). It is absent in the main part of the text, as is common for kurrent script. The so-called '*r*-rotunda' is not found in this manuscript.

The letter *y* is written with the descender as part of the right hand stroke and with a narrow upper part. In most cases, the part above the baseline appears similar to the minims *n* or *u*, which leads to *y* appearing quite similar to the combination "ij". In other cases, the upper part is more similar to the scribe's *r*. Uppercase *I* always extends below the baseline, thus resembling *J*. Despite the graphematic similarities of capital *I* to modern *J*, there is no evidence of the semi-vowel *j* having an independent representation in the manuscript. In lower case, it is usually written as "i", whereas in upper case the before mentioned "J" is used for both *i* and *j*. Due to this consistency, the transcription only uses "i" and its upper case variant "I".

The letter *v* is not attested in the part of the manuscript written in kurrent script; instead, *u* is used. The upper case variant resembles a *W*. Since this variant is occasionally used in the middle of a word, it is retained and printed as "w" (e.g. "erwide" 7v:8). In the lines written in chancery fractura, one occurrence of *v* is attested, namely in the noun "vegsemd" (8r:12). Another peculiarity of the present hand is that in kurrent script the

consonant combination "ck" is written as a ligature, with the second part more similar to the customary form of *h* than *k* (e.g. "nockur" 1v:26).

The scribe has a tendency to capitalise words. Proper names are always written in upper case whereas nouns, pronouns, verbs and adjectives occur both capitalised and non-capitalised, seemingly at random. Prepositions and conjunctions, on the other hand, usually only show upper case when they occur in the beginning of a sentence or a relative clause preceded by a comma.

Diacritical marks are found above vowels throughout the manuscript, but the marks are not applied consistently. The diacritical marks can be grouped into the following three types:

- Dots and hooks (consisting of one or two bows) appear most frequently over *i* and *u*, respectively. They serve the purpose of distinction from other minims.[23]
- Dieresis occurs mainly on *a* and *o* when used to denote a long vowel.
- Single straight acute is found on the letter *o*; mostly in positions where modern Icelandic has *ö*. In one instance, namely in "wǫ́rd" (1v:13), it occurs on a hooked *o*. On occasion the straight acute is used to denote long *o* or *a*.

Abbreviations only occur in the part written in kurrent script. The most commonly used abbreviation by far is the superscript nasal stroke. It is used to indicate *n* or *m* and is usually employed for the second nasal in a consonant cluster, e.g. "haⁿ̄" standing for "han*n*" (3r:19) and "fraⁿ̄" for "fram*m*" (1r:7). Every now and then, the scribe employs suspension, e.g. "s." for "s*varar*" or possibly even "s*egir*" (2v:18) and "G." for "G*nyr*" (4v:19). Special signs and supralinear letters are rare but do appear. On

[23] It is not possible to determine whether the two dots above the letter *y* – which could also be read as "ij" with a dot each – denote a change of the quality or quantity of the vowel in question. They are thus treated like dots over *i*.

fol. 5r, line 21, the form "marg̊" expands to "marg*ar*". Here, the superscript letter is written as a *v*-shaped *r*, despite occurring in the kurrent part of the text.

In general, the script is fairly consistent in terms of letter forms and abbreviations. Diacritical marks and separations between characters, on the other hand, are not as consistent, making it difficult at times to distinguish between individual characters.

8. Phonology and Morphology of AM 578 e 4to

In accordance with the paleographic characteristics of the scribe, the way the phonology is indicated shows a considerable amount of variation. The morphology, on the other hand, is stable with hardly any deviation.

Most simple vowel symbols can represent both historically long and short vowels, e.g. "rad" (1v:21) vs. "han*n*" (2r:3), "trenu" (4v:14) vs. "Nema" (2v:11) and "skog" (2r:18) vs. "morgun" (2v:18). However, long *a* and long *o* are in the majority of cases indicated by a dieresis, e.g. "fätækur" (1r:11), "skögar" (3r:1). Long *e* is mostly represented by the combination "ie", e.g. "sier" (1r:4), "ieg" (5r:19), indicating the diphthong that developed after 1300 (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 14). The vowel *u* is almost always written with a hook above it to distinguish it from *n* or other minims. This practice does not correlate with the vowel length, leaving no distinction between long and short *u*. For the front vowels *i* and *y*, the situation is similar, and the graphemes "i" and "y" are used interchangeably. This leads to forms such as "seigier" (3r:12) appearing right beside "seygist" (3r:7) and "idur" (7r:17) as well as "ydar" (1r:15). The scribe shows a slight tendency to prefer "y" for single long vowels in lower case and "i" in upper case and in unstressed syllables. However, when *i* and *y* occur as part of a diphthong or in stressed syllables, there is no system to be seen. Therefore, no overall systematic distribution of *i* and *y* can be proven. Neither is it possible to speak of a separate representation of their long and short variants.

The most common representative of Old Icelandic *ǫ* and *ø* is "o". The grapheme "ø" is found five times, but none of the instances are in its original position. Instead, it denotes original *ǫ*. Occasionally the spelling "au" (e.g. "aullu" 3v:8) occurs. Even less frequently, it is written as "ǫ" (e.g. "ǫllum" 7v:19). The verb *gera/gjöra* is consistently spelled with "io", sometimes with acute, sometimes without. The unrounding of *jö* > *je*, which becomes apparent after 1600 (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 15), is not present in AM 578 e 4to, since all the examples in question are spelled with "io" and thus represent the older form, e.g. "miog" (3r:22).

Unstressed vowels are mostly written as *u* and *e*. The grapheme "i" occurs in less than 30 % of the forms throughout the manuscript, but towards the middle of the text it appears slightly more often than elsewhere (e.g. "ordin*n*" 4r:9; "dreigid" 4r:20). There is no example of *o* in an unstressed position within the text of *Gnýs ævintýr*. The svarabhakti vowel *u* before *r* is written out in both verbal and nominal forms throughout the text (e.g. "wpphefur" 8r:10; "madur" 2r:12). There is clear indication of the vowel *e* being pronounced as a diphthong before *ng* as all the forms are spelled with "ei", e.g. "leinge" (5v:12), "welgeingne" (5v:14).

Fricativisation of both *k* > *g* and *t* > *ð* in unstressed final position is visible in the orthography as the scribe writes "g" and "d" in these positions, e.g. "komed" (4v:2), "þig" (3v:4). The palatal offglide of *g* and *k* is attested before *e*, *æ* and *ö* (from *ø*) as can be seen in "kiemur" (4r:3), "skogie" (1v:9), "kiærlega" (5v:10–11) and "giora" (5v:25). Equally, the onglide is found – most prominently in present tense forms of the verb *segja*, e.g. "seigier" (3r:12).

The relational sound change *vá* > *vo* is consistently indicated in the text. The adverb *svá* is written as "so" (e.g. 6v:2), dropping the *v* in front of a round vowel (Hreinn Benediktsson 2002: 237). The pronunciation of *hv* as *kv*, with the oldest known evidence of this pronunciation being from the eighteenth century (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 21), is not found in the manuscript.

The geminate *n* frequently appears as "rn", as in "eyrn" (1r:6) and "steirnenn" (5r:5), indicating dental insertion in the pronunciation of both *rn* and

nn when following long, stressed vowels and resulting in both clusters being pronounced as [d̥n]. On the other hand, dental insertion in the clusters "rl" and "ll", which took place around the same time (Stefán Karlsson 1978: 98; 2004: 21), is not reflected in the scribe's orthography.

Middle voice is indicated by means of the suffixed "-st" (e.g. "komast" 3r:9; "fanst" 4v:5). The same letters are used for the superlative forms (e.g. "skiotast" 4r:1; "besta" 4r:25; "stærstu" 7v:1–2). The definite article occurs always with initial *h*, for example in "hin*n*s" (3v:23) and "hinum" (7v:14).

Finally, it should be noted that the text contains loanwords. The most frequent borrowings are *stívarður* (e.g. "styward" 1v:2), a loanword from Middle English *steward* (OE *stīweard*) (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989: 963), and *riddari* (e.g. "riddare" 1v:13) from Middle High German (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989: 758).

9. Notes on the Translation

The translation accompanying this edition of *Gnýs ævintýr* closely follows the Icelandic text, though some allowances have been made for the sake of style and readability. The Icelandic demonstrative *þesse* ('this') has often been rendered as 'the', and the tense of several verbs has been shifted to the simple past for consistency.

[1r] # Eyn lytil frasaga edur æfentyr[1] ´af Gnyr`

Herchulus[2] hiet eyrn keysare i Röm. Han*n* war wærn madur og wel ad sier i øllum hlutum. Miskunsamur war han*n* og milldur. So bar til eyrn tyma sem han*n* war offt wanur ad gióra ad han*n* reykar fram*m* a eyrn skög, huorn Eyngelsker kalla Phares,[3] sem i war allra handa weydeskapur. En*n* plagsidur war þar til eyrn man*n* ad hafa greyndan*n* skög ad wagta. Sem keysaren*n* nu so reykar mæter honum eyrn fätækur madur, og sem han*n* sa han*n* so fätækan*n* og hrædelegan*n* hrærdist han*n* af mikillre miskun yfer honum og spurde: "Huornen*n* ertu so fätæklegur og fyrerlitin*n*?" Han*n* suarar: "Ieg er ydar wndermann og ydar landmadur. Ieg er eyrn fätækur og fyrerlitin*n* madur". Keysaren*n* suarar: "Ef ad eg wisse þad þu wærer trur, skillde eg wpphefia þig og gióra þig nögu rykan*n* og hialpa þier til mikils rykdoms. Þu hin*n* wesale, seyg mier nafn þitt". En*n* han*n* suarar: "Lentulus[4] er mitt heyte. Eg wil lofa ad wera þier trur og audsueypur i aullum greynum, og ef eg gióre eyge so þä byd ieg mig wnder alla pynu þä er þier wilied a mig leggia". Sem keysarenn heyrde þetta, wpphefur han*n*
1v þen*n*an*n* mann og gieffur || honum nögan*n* rykdóm, og giórer han*n* sin*n* radsmann og quad han*n* wera sinn styward af keysaradæme.

Og sem han*n* hafde sig framad nockra tyma i keysaradæmenu,[i] liffter

[1] Differing titles: [E]itt æfen*n*tyr til gamanz af einu*m* kieisara er Joku*m* hiet og af Entuluz og Gnyr, 119; Æfen*n*tjr af einum keisara er Jochum hiet, og af Entulus oc Gnir, 2421; Æfen*n*tir af Ceisaranum*m* Jöhan*n* *og* bönda er Gnyr hiet, 2071; Ein litil frasaga ´[Gnirs æfintýr]`, 1172; Hier biriast sagan*n* af Gnyr, 545; Saga af Gnir og stivardi stadarins, 799; Þáttur af einum keisara, er Jokkum hét, og af Entúlus og Gnýr, 4847.

[2] The emperor's name varies between texts: Jochum in 119, 2421 and 4847; Johan*n*, 2071; Dieclus, 1172; Huglus and Hugulus in 545 and 799 respectively.

[3] The forest is called Fares in 1172 and Paris in 545 and 799. The 'English' name is omitted in 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847.

[4] He is called Entulus in 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847; Centulus in 799.

[i] keysaradæmenu] 578 reads "keysara dæmudæmenu". It appears to be an incomplete correction to the text.

A little tale or story [about Gnýr]

There was an emperor in Rome named Herchulus. He was a fine man and gifted in all ways, and he was merciful and kind. It happened one time that he was taking a walk, as he was often inclined to do, in a forest which the English call Phares, in which there was all manner of game. It was the custom for one man to watch over the forest just mentioned. As the emperor was walking, he encountered a poor man, and when he saw him so poor and wretched, he was overcome by a great feeling of mercy and asked: "How are you so poor and forsaken"? He responded: "I am your subject and countryman. I am a poor and forsaken man". The emperor answered: "If I knew that you would be faithful, I would elevate you and make you very powerful and help you to gain great wealth. Tell me your name, O wretched one". He answered: "Lentulus is my name. I shall swear to be faithful to you and complaisant in all matters. If I am not, then I will offer myself to all punishments you wish to lay upon me". When the emperor heard that, he elevated the man and gave him great wealth. He made him his advisor and declared that he would be steward over his empire.

And when he had distinguished himself for a while in the imperial

han*n* wpp synu hiarta og war allur snuen*n* til drambs og ofmetnadar, so alla þä sem woru meyre hattar enn hann þä øfundade han*n*, en*n* fätæka pynde han*n* og rænte þä øllu þuy han*n* gat.[1] So bar til eyrn tyma ad þesse greyndur Lentulus reyd fram*m* med sogdum skogie, ad han*n* bydur þeym sem skogien*n* geymde – med þuy þad er sidur wtlendskra man*n*a ad byfala sierlegum manne ad wakta soddan*n* sköga[2] – ad koma a tal wid sig. Og sem fyr sagdur riddare finnur þen*n*an*n* skogarwórd bydur han*n* honum ad grafa hundrad[3] diupar grifiur i þeym skögie og hylia ofan*n* yfer med grænum grosum, ef so kin*n*e til ad bera ad *fienadur,[i] olm dyr edur huorskonar kuikinde, er nærre skögienum geinge, þau skillde falla i þessar grafer. Han*n* sagdist han*n*s wilia gióra skillde. Effter þetta bar so til ad ymisleg kuikinde runnu hia skögienum og fiellu sum þar in*n* effter þuy sem rad war fyrer giort. Og sem þesse radsmadur sem fyrr war frä sagt war ridin*n* ad sia þess⟨a⟩ pitte, og sem han*n* reyd eyrn saman*n* seyger han*n* med sialfum sier: "Eg mä wel wera kalladur herra þuy allt er giort effter min*n*e beydne og
2r skipan*n*. Eda mun nockur gud wera wtan*n* eg?" Enn i þuy‖lykre hugsan slö han*n* hestin*n* sporunum og reyd i fram äkaflega.[4] En*n* þad skiede so ad han*n* fiell i eyrn af þeym fyrr sogdu pittum, huoria han*n* hafde adur skipad grafa lata. Þadan*n* matte han*n* alldrey med neynu mote burtu komast. Og skóm*m*u effter þetta fiell eytt leon in*n* i þan*n* sama pitt. Effter leoned fiell þar in*n* apynia, en*n* effter apyn⟨i⟩una fiell þar in*n* hoggormur. Nu sem þesse radsmadur war so wmkryngdur af þessum kuikindum, ward han*n* so hræddur og harms fullur, ad han*n* wisse ecke huad han*n* skillde til räda

[1] 2071 adds that the steward slandered others before the emperor.

[2] 119, 2421 and 4847 specify that the forest is guarded against thieves and harmful animals. 2071, 1172, 545 and 799 do not explain the role of the forest warden.

[3] 119, 2421, 2071, 545 and 799 do not specify the number of pits.

[4] 2071 omits the Steward's prideful reflections on his position and his own suggestion that he is a god.

[i] The fourth letter in 578 is obscured. The emended reading is inferred from other texts (1172 and 799).

realm, his heart swelled up and completely turned toward arrogance and pride. He envied all who were above him, and he tormented the poor and stole everything he could from them. So it happened one time that this Lentulus rode into the aforementioned forest and bid the forest warden to come speak with him, because it was the custom of foreign men to order particular men to watch over such a forest.[1] And when this knight found the forest warden, he ordered him to dig a hundred deep pits in the forest and to cover them with greenery, so that if any livestock, savage animals or any kind of beast might approach the forest, they would fall into these pits. He said he would do as he wished.[2] After that it happened that various creatures ran through the forest, and some fell in as had been planned. And when this advisor, who was previously mentioned, was riding alone to view the pits, he said to himself: "I might well be called Lord, since everything is done according to my beck and call. Or might there be a god other than me"? And at that very thought, he struck his horse with his spurs and rode briskly, and it came about that he fell into one of those pits which he had had dug earlier. There was no way at all for him to get out. A short while afterwards, a lion fell into the same pit. After the lion, an ape fell in, and a serpent after the ape. Now, when the advisor was surrounded by these beasts, he became so frightened and distressed that he didn't know what he should do.[3] But in the same town from which the advisor had ridden was a poor man named Gnýr. The man had nothing to sustain himself except for a donkey, and he went to the outskirts at set times in order to trade for

[1] This reference to the custom of foreign men is not in the Middle English version of the story and must be an addition made by the Icelandic translator to explain an unfamiliar practice. It suggests that the translator was not a passive reader of the text, but was prepared to adapt his source text for a local audience.

[2] I.e. the warden acquiesced to his superior's wishes.

[3] Lit. 'that he did not know which counsel he should take'. There is a pun in the Icelandic that the *ráðsmaður* is here without *ráð* ('counsel, plan').

taka. Enn i somu borg[1] og þesse firr nefn⟨d⟩ur radsmadur war ut af ridinn war eyrn fatækur madur huor ad Gnyr war ad nafne. Sä madur hafde ongua hlute sier til widurlyfes wtann hann atte eyrn asna, og for so ä markid a til settum tyma i þessum stad, ad wersla sier þessu til biargar, þuy hann hafde þetta eyna sier og sinne konu hellst og mest til atwinnu.

Og eyrn dag ⟨er⟩ Gnyr for ä skog effter wanda med asna sinn i þä ätt wid skogienn nærre þeym pittum, þa heyrer hann mansrodd so talande: "Þu dugande mann og gode win", seigir hann, "huor þu ert, hialpadu mier wt af þessum pitt, og skal eg alla myna æfe giora þier gott og gióra þig nögu rykann".[2] Nu sem Gnyr heyrer mannsroddena stalldrar hann wid i skogienum hia grofinne. Þa kallar radsmadurenn seigiande: "Hier er ieg
2v stywardur stadarenns og rads||madur stadarenns. I þessum sama pitt er hia mier leon, aphinia og hoggormur, og dullt er mier med óllu huort af þessum kuikindum hellst mune tortyna mier. Enn þu giór fyrer guds saker og drag mig hier wpp ur. Eg wil þier þad wellauna, þuy ef þu hialpar mier eyge þa er eg þegar daudur af þessum kuikindum".[3] Gnyr suarar: "Þetta er torwellt fyrer mig ad gióra og bag⟨i⟩ stor mier, skule eg werda frä mynu daglegu erwide þar fyrer tyma þuy ieg hefe nu ongwann hlut mier til widurlyfis og hialpar nema þad sem er ad eg safna mier smælke i þessum skögie og sydann sel ieg þad mier til widurlyfis og hier med hialpast ieg. Og þo eg gióre þinn wilia i þessu og slokue nidur mynu erwide og bæge sialfann mig, þa weit ieg ecke huor laun mier mune wys hia þier wera". Stywardurenn suarar: "Wit fyrer wyst ad eg skal giora þig nogu rykann og strax a morgun". Gnyr s*uarar*: "Ieg skal giora sem þu bidur". Og hann reyd heym sem skiotast og sokte streyng eyrn, og liet syga ofann *snæred[i]

[1] In 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 Gnýr is said to live in a village nearby.

[2] All other manuscripts add that he wants to make Gnýr rich with the help of the emperor.

[3] In 2421 and 2071 the steward does not exaggerate his plea by saying that his life is in acute danger from the animals.

[i] 578 reads "snæred".

sustenance, because it was all he had to provide everything for himself and his wife.

One day, when Gnýr was making his customary trip to the forest with his donkey, he reached the part of the forest near the pits. There he heard a man's voice calling: "You excellent man and good friend", he said, "whoever you are, help me out of this pit, and all my life I will treat you well and make you very rich". Now when Gnýr heard the man's voice he halted in the forest beside the hole. Then the advisor called out saying: "Here am I, steward and advisor of the city. A lion, an ape and a serpent are with me here in this pit, and I cannot tell which of these creatures is most likely to kill me, unless, for God's sake, you pull me up out of here. I will richly reward you; for if you don't help me, I will soon be killed by these beasts". Gnýr answered: "That is difficult for me to do, and it would be a great inconvenience not to pursue my daily business for some time, because now I can do nothing to sustain nor help myself except gather kindling in this forest, which I then sell to sustain myself and thereby help myself. Nevertheless I will do as you wish and cease my labour and inconvenience myself, though I do not know what reward there is to be expected from you". The steward answered: "Be assured that I will make you very rich, and soon on the morrow". Gnýr answered: "I shall do as you request". He rode home as quickly as possible and looked for a rope. He let down the coils calling out: "Lord Steward", he said, "climb up the rope". And as soon

so kallande: “Herra stywardur”, seigir han*n*, “gä wpp med snærenu”. Og þegar leoned sa snæred halade þad sig wpp sterklega. Gnyr ætlade ad han*n* munde draga wpp riddaran*n* en*n* han*n* drö wpp leoned.[1] En*n* sem þad war
3r upp || komed laut þad Gny og ran*n* sydan til skögar. Riddaren*n* suarar og seygist nu wera i mikillre hrædslu, af þessum kuikindum.[2] Liet Gnyr nu syga streyngin*n* i an*n*ad sin*n*, þä drö han*n* wpp aphiniuna en*n* seynast hóggorminn. Og þau lutu bæde Gny og runnu til skögar. Riddaren*n* kallar og seygist nu wera leystur fra þessum kuikindum, og bidur ad läta syga nidur kadalen*n* til syn so han*n* mætte wpp komast.[3] Og so giórde Gnyr. Riddaren*n* bindur um sig fast. Gnyr dregur han*n* wpp, enn sem riddaren*n* war wpp komen*n* seigier han*n*: “Gnyr, kom þu til keysaran*n*s gards a morgun og skal ieg giora þig nógu rykan*n* wm allan*n* þin*n* alldur”. Gnyr ward gladur wid og for heymleydis.

Enn sem Gnyr kom heym spyr kona han*n*s han*n* þuy han*n* hefde onguo smælke safnad, huad þeyrra widurlyfe wære þan*n* dag. Han*n* seiger hen*n*e ad han*n* hafe hialpad riddaranum wr pittinum og huorsu han*n* heffde lofad honum ad gióra han*n* strax ad morgne fullrykan*n*. Enn hun ward miog glod wid þetta, so seygiande: “Eg bid þig, giórum wid ockur glatt og kätt”.[4]

3v || Nu er þar frä ad seigia ad eyrn dag atlade Gnyr ad witia riddaran*n*s, og kiemur til keysarans gards, allt ad portinu, og talar wid portsman*n*en*n* so seigiande: “Eg bid þig ad ganga til stywards stadaren*n*s og seigia honum madur sie komen*n* wid huorn han*n* talade i giærdag”. Portmaduren*n* for og talade wid riddaran*n*, og han*n* sagde frä erendunum og aullu þui sem Gnyr hafde bodid honum. Riddaren*n* suarar: “Wid ongwan*n* mann rædde ieg i giærdag, og einginn rædde wid mig. Lät han*n* ganga sin*n* weg ad ei sæge han*n* meyr”. Portmaduren*n* geck afftur til dyran*n*a og sagde honum

[1] In 2071 Gnýr remarks on the weight of the rope and quips that the steward must be fat.
[2] 119, 2421, 2071, 1172 and 4847 omit this repeated cry for help.
[3] The steward’s second plea for help is omitted in 2071.
[4] 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 add that they endured until the morning despite the lack of food.

as the lion saw the rope, it pulled itself up forcefully. Gnýr thought he was pulling up the knight, but he pulled up the lion. And when it had come up, it bowed to Gnýr and then ran into the forest. The knight responded and said that he was now in great danger from these beasts. Gnýr let down the rope a second time. He drew up the ape and finally the serpent. They both bowed to Gnýr and ran into the forest. The knight called out and said he was now free of the beasts and bid him to let the cable down to him so that he might get out. And Gnýr did so. The knight bound himself fast. Gnýr drew him up, and when the knight had come up he said: "Gnýr, come to the emperor's castle tomorrow, and I shall make you very rich for the rest of your life". Gnýr was pleased with this and made his way home.

When Gnýr came home his wife asked him why he had not collected any kindling and what would sustain them for the day. He told her that he had helped a knight out of a pit and how he had promised to make him very rich immediately on the morrow. She became very glad at this, thus saying: "I pray you, make both of us happy and glad"!

Now it is to be told that one day Gnýr intended to visit the knight and came to the emperor's castle. He approached the gate and spoke to the gate watchman saying: "I bid you go to the city steward and tell him that the man with whom he spoke yesterday has come". The gate watchman went and spoke with the knight, and he told him the message and everything which Gnýr had asked him to say. The knight responded: "I did not speak with any man yesterday, and none spoke with me. Let him go on his way before he says anything else". The gate watchman returned to the doors,

andsuor riddaran*n*s og bad han*n* sydan*n* ganga sin*n* weg i burt þadan*n*. Sem Gnyr heyrde þetta, ward han*n* sorgfullur, for heym afftur og sagde konu sin*n*e allt þad, sem komed war. Enn hun gladde han*n* og hafde aff fyrer honum sem hun kun*n*e og bad han*n* ganga heym til borgar i an*n*ad sin*n* til riddaran*n*s og wita huorsu geinge. Ecke leid leinge adur Gnyr for an*n*ad sin*n* til borgaren*n*ar og bad portman*n*en*n* flitia syn erende til riddararan*n*s. Portmaduren*n* for ad beydne han*n*s og sagde þessum styward komu hin*n*s fatæka man*n*s. Sem stywardduren*n* heyrde þad ward han*n* reidur miog og i þeyrre sinne reide for han*n* og barde þan*n* fatæka man*n* og skillde wid han*n* halfdaudan*n*.

4r Sem kona hans frietter þetta tekur hun sier asna þey||rra og fer hun sydan*n* sem skiotast til borgaren*n*ar ad witia hans. Hun finnur han*n* halfdaudann og kiemur honum med *illum[i] leyk og störum atburdum wpp a asnan*n*. Fer sydan*n* heym med han*n* og hyukrar ad honum þad framast hun kan*n*. Og þad litla eyna sem hun hafde, þad gaff hun til ad græda han*n* hier med. Ward han*n* effter nockra tyma lidna heyll og algröenn.[1]

Þad war eyrn dag þa Gnyr *war[ii] heyll ordin*n* aff þeim lemstrrum og storum sarum er han*n* hafde feingid af riddaranum. For han*n* sem han*n* war wanur til skögar ad fä sier smælke. Þä bar so wid eyrn dag sem Gnyr er faren*n* til skögar effter wanda synum med asna sin*n*, ad han*n* sier eytt leon `reka´ 10 asna[2] klifiada med ymislegan*n* warning. Leoned rak þad allt til Gnyrs. Enn er han*n* sa þetta ward han*n* mióg hræddur. Nu sem han*n* ihugade gior leoned þä kiende han*n* ad þad war þad sama leon er han*n* hafde wr pittinum dreigid.[3] Og sem asnarn*ir* woru aller komner firer hans husdyr og nämu þar stadar, laut leoned *Gny[iii] og ran*n* sydan*n* til skögar.

[1] 2071 adds that Gnýr's wife went out to collect kindling.
[2] Gnýr receives only one donkey in 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847.
[3] In 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 he is not said to be afraid of the lion.

[i] 578 reads "illann".
[ii] 578 reads "walr".
[iii] 578 reads "Gnys".

told him the knight's response and then bid him to be off on his way. When Gnýr heard that he became very sad. He went back home and told his wife everything that had happened. She cheered him up and comforted him as much as she could. She bid him go back to the city to see the knight a second time and see what might happen. It was not long before Gnýr went to the city a second time and asked the gate watchman to convey his message to the knight. The gate watchman did as he wished and told the steward about the arrival of the poor man. When the steward heard that he became very angry, and in his rage he went and beat the poor man and left him half dead.

When his wife heard about this, she took their donkey and travelled as quickly as she could to the city to find him. She found him half dead,[1] and only with great difficulty and travail did she get him up on the donkey. Then she traveled home with him and tended to him as well as she could, and what little she had she used to heal him. After some time he mended and healed.

One day, when Gnýr was completely healed from the beatings and serious injuries he had received from the knight, he went as he usually did to the forest to collect kindling. It happened one day, when Gnýr was travelling to the forest with his donkey as usual, that he saw a lion driving ten donkeys laden with various goods. The lion drove them all to Gnýr, but when he saw that, he became greatly afraid. Then he inspected the lion more closely and recognised that it was the same lion which he had drawn from the pits. And when the donkeys had all halted before the door of his house, the lion bowed to Gnýr and then ran into the forest. Gnýr

[1] The ME version in Harley 7333 adds that Gnýr's wife greets the steward ('gafe her blessing') with her left hand.

Enn *Gnyr[i] opnade baggana og fan*n* þar mikin*n* kaupeyrer alls konar besta
4v warnings.[1] Liet Gnyr þa lysa i øllu*m* || kirkium opin*n*berlega, sem þar war
sidur til,[2] huad til han*n*s heymilis komed wære, og spurdist fyrer huor þad 3
eiga munde, þar sem flester woru tilsaman*n*s komner, hefde nockur tapad
so miklum kaupeyre. Enn eyngin*n* fanst eigande ad þessu aullu rykedæme.
Þuy hafde þetta og hiellt Gnyr fyrer syna eygnn. 6

Huad miked þetta rykedæme war, þä fer Gnyr eige ad sydur a skog med
asna sinn og ætlar ad fa sier smælke og þetta giorer han*n* daglega.[3] Enn eyrn
dag þa Gnyr kiemur til skogarens, þä ber so til ad han*n* sier aphiniu þä er 9
han*n* hafde firr af pittinum wpp dreygid, ad hun er komen*n* wpp i toppinn
a eynu skogartrenu[4] og er med akafa ad ryfa og briota med tónnunum og
klönum sundur widinn og limed, og kastar ofann til Gnyrs so miklu sem 12
hann kun*n*e sem mestu i klifiarnar ad koma og heym ad draga a synum
asna.[5]

Wm morgunen effter fer G*nyr* a þennann skog ad wanda synum og þa 15
sa hann eirn mikinn dälegann orm hafandi i synum munne eyrn steyn med
5r þremur litum.[6] Han*n* for til Gnyrs og leggur steynenn || i hond honum og
hneygde sig fyrer honum, snere sydann skindelega i burt afftur a skogien*n*. 18
*Gnyr[ii] wndradist mióg steynenn og ⟨fer⟩ til eyns meystara og syner honum steynenn, og spurde han*n* ad huoria natturu steirnenn hefde. En*n* hann

[1] 2071 adds that Gnýr was so joyous that he wandered around the forest and did not travel home until long after nightfall.

[2] 119, 2421 and 4847 make no mention of churches or 'the earlier custom'. 2071 omits this preamble altogether; Gnýr simply finds and then sells the goods.

[3] 2071 omits the comment on the value of the wealth, but adds that he sells the goods for food and clothes for himself and his wife.

[4] 119, 2421, 2071, 1172 and 4847 specify that this is an oak tree.

[5] 545 and 799 add that the ape gives Gnýr a golden ring. On this motif see note 17 on p. 43 (Textual relationship).

[6] The stone is said to be pretty instead of having three colours in 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847.

[i] 578 reads "Gnys".

[ii] 578 reads "Grys".

opened the bags and found all kinds of goods of the highest quality. Gnýr then publicly announced everything which had come to his home at the church, as was the custom then.[1] When the greatest number of people had convened, he asked to whom it might belong and whether anyone had lost such excellent trade wares. No owner of all these riches was found, so he kept them for himself.

Despite the great amount of wealth, Gnýr made for the forest as usual with his donkey with the intention of collecting kindling, and he did so every day. But when Gnýr came to the forest one day, it happened that he saw the ape which he had previously drawn up from the pits. It had gone up to the top of a tree and eagerly tore and broke branches and limbs with its teeth and claws. It tossed down to Gnýr as many as he could manage to carry and load up on his donkey to take home.

The following morning Gnýr went to the forest as usual, and there he saw a great, terrible serpent holding a three-coloured stone in its mouth. It went up to Gnýr and placed the stone into his hand, bent himself before him and then quickly rushed back into the forest. Gnýr marveled greatly at the stone and went to a master jeweler. He showed the stone to him and asked which properties the stone possessed.[2] He answered and said that it

[1] This refers to the legal process of publicly announcing found goods to make sure they were not lost or stolen.

[2] The ME version in Harley 7333 adds that the lapidary first tries to buy the stone from Gnýr, who refuses.

suarar og sagde hann hefde þriär natturur: "1. hans nattura er su, ad huor hann ä skal hafa gladwærd firer wtan*n* þunga.[1] 2. han*n*s nattura er su ad huor han*n* á hann skal hafa nægd wtan*n* wantruar. 3. hans nattur⟨a⟩ er su ad han*n* hefur lios wtan*n* mirkur, og so huor han*n* hefur til eygnar og wilie han*n* selia hann og ef han*n* fær ei nög fyrer hann, þä skal hann koma heim afftur til hans sem han*n* atte". Og sem *Gnyr[i] heyrde þetta ward hann miog feigin*n* so seigiande: "I hagkuæman*n* tyma drö eg þä wpp ur pittinum og wel werde mynum hondum a þeim deige", seigir han*n*, "a huorium ieg þad giorde".[2] Fyrer natturu þessa stens feck *Gnyr[ii] so mikin*n* pening ad hann war kiorenn til riddara[3] og fieck marg*ar* godar gafur. Og sem so war komed
5v for þetta so titt ad þad kom iaffnwel || fyrer sialfan*n* keysaran*n*[iii] og war honum sagt ad herra Gnyr hefde eyrn steyn med frabære natturu.

Nu er þar fra ad seygia ad eyrn dag þa giórde keysarenn wt eyrn sendebod⟨a⟩ til herra *Gnys[iv] og baud honum ad koma a möts wid sig i leynelegan*n* stad.[4] Enn sem han*n* war komen*n* seigir keysaren*n* til han*n*s: "Þu göde win", seigir han*n*, "ieg hefe heirt ad firer nockrum arum wærer þu i mikillre fätæke og mestu fatækt. Enn nu aff natturu eyns steins siert ordin*n* ryku[r].[5] Þuy bid ieg þig kiærlega ad þu wilier selia mier þen*n*an*n* steyn". "Þad mä eg ey", sagde Gnyr, "þuy so leinge sem ieg ä steinin*n* þa er ieg fullrykur og wiss i allre weralldlegre welgeingne af natturu so

[1] One line of text was not copied in 2071, which causes the first property to be incomplete.
[2] 2071 omits Gnýr's reflections.
[3] In 2071 he is not made a knight, and the wealth is not explicitly attributed to the stone.
[4] In 119, 2421, 2071, 1172 and 4847 the meeting occurs at the emperor's court rather than a 'secret locale'.
[5] 2071 again does not mention the fact that the stone generates riches; the Emperor simply wants to buy it.

[i] 578 reads "Gnys".
[ii] 578 reads "Gnys".
[iii] The catchword on fol. 5r reads "konginn".
[iv] 578 reads "Gny".

had three properties: "Its first property is that he who owns it shall have happiness without oppression. Its second property is that he who owns it shall have abundance without mistrust. Its third property is that he[1] has light without darkness, and whoever owns it and wishes to sell it will have it return to him if he does not receive enough for it". When Gnýr heard that he was awestruck and said: "It was a fitting occasion when I pulled them up out of the pits, and praise be to my hands for the day in which I did that", he said.[2] On account of the stone's properties Gnýr obtained so much money that he was raised to knighthood and received many good graces. After a time it happened that it even came to the attention of the emperor himself, and he was told that Lord Gnýr had a stone with surpassing properties.

Now it should be told that one day the emperor had a message sent to Lord Gnýr and bade him come and meet with him at a secret location. When he had arrived, the emperor said to him: "Good friend", he said, "I have heard that some years ago you were in great poverty and the greatest penury. But now you have become wealthy because of the properties of a stone. Therefore I kindly bid you to sell me that stone". "I cannot do that", Gnýr said, "because as long as I own the stone I will be very rich and certain in all worldly prosperity due to the properties of such a precious stone.

[1] I.e. the owner.

[2] The motif of grateful animals and an ungrateful man is well known from folk-literature. Thompson (1957: 495) lists it in his index as number W154.8. Cf. also Chesnutt (1980).

dyrlegs steyns; þad fyrsta ad ieg skal hafa glede fyrer wtan*n* allan*n* þunga; þad annad ad ieg skal hafa nægd fyrer wtan*n* wantru edur hindran; þad þridia ad eg skal hafa lios fyrer wtan*n* mirkur". En*n* sem keysaren*n* heyrde þetta ward hans gyrnd þess meyre til steynsins.[1] Og af þiöste sagde han*n* til Gnys: "Tuo koste gióre eg þier og mattu kiosa þier huorn þu willt, ad annadhuort skalltu med allan*n* þin*n* aud og rykdom wera wr rykinu og mynu keysaradæme an allrar dualar, edur sel mier steynen*n*".[2] "Herra
6r keysare", seygier han*n*, "giora skal eg ydar || wilia og selia idur steynen*n*, en*n* þo skal eg seigia ydur werd ä honum. En*n* eff þu gieffur mier ey so miked fyrer han*n* sem han*n* er werdur fyrer wtan*n* effa kiemur han*n* þä heym afftur til myn". Keysaren*n* seygier: "Þu skallt fa nogu mikid þuy þier skal ieg fa þusund merkur gulls". Keysaren*n* tök nu wpp peningin*n* og tallde honum i hendur, en*n* Gnyr afhende steynen*n*.

En*n* morgunen*n* effter nær Gnyr lauk wpp fiehirdslu sinne þa fan*n* han*n* þar steynen*n* og synde han*n* konu sin*n*e og sagde henne fra þeyrra kaupskap og widrædum øllum. "Herra", sagde hun, "Gack afftur til keysarans".[3] Han*n* giorer so þanen*n* talande: "Heyll herra keysare", seyger han*n*. "Eg sellde ydur forkostulegan*n* steyn", seyger han*n*, "og er ieg nu komen*n* ydur han*n* afftur ad syna".[4] Sem keysaren*n* heyrde þetta geck han*n* sem snarast til sinar fiarhyrslu huar in*n*e han*n* hafde natturusteynen*n* geymt og finnur han*n* nu huorge. Wykur han*n* nu skindelega afftur til syns winar. Keysaren*n* seyger honum med þungre andwarpan og reydur i skape ad sagdan*n* steyn hefde han*n* mist. Gnyr suarar: "Ieg sagde idur, herra, ad ieg mætte ecke selia han*n* nema ieg feynge wyst fullt werd fyrer han*n* sem han*n* er

[1] In 2071 and 4847 the properties are not repeated and thus, the emperor's desire for it is not said to increase. In 2421 the properties are repeated, but no mention is made of the emperor coveting it more eagerly because of this.

[2] In 1172 the emperor does not give Gnýr any other option than selling the stone.

[3] In 1172 Gnýr's wife is not involved and Gnýr goes to the emperor immediately.

[4] All other manuscripts have Gnýr request to see the stone rather than show it to the emperor, e.g.: Nu þægi eg ad þier uilldud syna mi*er* h*an*n, 119.

First, I will have happiness without any oppression. Second, I will have abundance without deceit or hindrances. Third, I will have light without darkness". When the emperor heard that, his desire for the stone became even stronger. With great vehemence he said to Gnýr: "I give you two choices, and you may choose whichever you wish. You shall either depart from the realm and my empire with all of your belongings and wealth without any delay, or you shall sell me the stone". "Lord Emperor", he said, "I shall do as you wish and sell you the stone. However, even if I should tell you its value, if you do not pay me what it is worth, it will doubtlessly come back home to me". The emperor said: "You shall receive a sufficient amount, for I will give you a thousand marks of gold". Now the emperor took up the money and counted it out into Gnýr's hands, and Gnýr handed over the stone.

When Gnýr unlocked his chest the next morning,[1] he found the stone there. He showed it to his wife and told her about the exchange and their conversation. "Lord", she said, "go back to the emperor". He did so, saying: "Hail Lord Emperor. I sold you a precious stone", he said, "and now I have returned to show it to you again".[2] When the emperor heard that, he went as quickly as possible to his chest in which he had stored the stone, but he did not find it anywhere. Now he returned hastily back to his friend. The emperor, sighing heavily and in a foul mood, told him that he had lost the stone. Gnýr answered: "My lord, I told you that I could not sell it unless I received its full value of its worth in return. Here are the thousand marks of gold which you gave to me. I found it[3] returned to my cabinet the same day.

[1] In the ME version in Harley 7333 the stone is in his wife's treasure chest.

[2] This reading in 578 is unusual, as Gnýr seems to be flippant (not something he is known for in the text). Other texts have some variant of 'I've come for you to *show me* the stone'.

[3] I.e. the stone.

6v werdur. Hier eru þusund merkur gulls er þier gäfud mi||er.[1] Þan*n* sama dag
fan*n* ieg han*n* i hyrslu min*n*e folgin*n.* Enn þad hefde mätt so audwelldlega
falla, hefde ieg ecke strax fært idur han*n* afftr, ad þier mundud wondan*n*
grun a mier hafa haft saklausum".[2] Nu sem keysaren*n* sä steynen*n* ward
han*n* af hiarta gladur wid, wndrande þetta so seygiande: "Seyg mier allan*n*
san*n*leyk, kiære win, huornen*n* þu komst ifer þen*n*an*n* natturusteyn". Gnyr
suarar: "Wppa myn saninde skal ieg seygia idur herra allt hid san*n*a wm
þen*n*an*n* natturusteyn þad framast ieg weyt. Þad er wpphaf sógu min*n*ar
ad idar stywardur og borgaren*n*ar radsmadur sä megtuge riddare huor adur
war full og fatækur, enn þier wpphöfud han*n* og giórdud wolldugan*n* og
gäfud honum nogan*n* rykdöm og settud han*n* til borgarennar rädsman*n*s
og rykisradgiafa, ædsta riddara og idar stywards. Þesse same liet grafa
marga pitte i idar skogie. Þar affter eyrn dag reyd han*n* öwarlega og med
storum oforsialeyka og bar þa so til ad han*n* fiell sialfur skindilega i eyrn af
fyr nefndum pittum og matte han*n* ecke sialfkrafa wtkomast med nockru
mote, þuy pitturen*n* war miog dyupur. So naumlega bar til ad effter han*n*
fiell þar in*n* leon, aphinia og hoggormur i þa somu gróf. Han*n* war þar
a medal þessara kuykinda i stærsta färe staddur. Ieg war þa i þan*n* tyma
7r i myk⟨l⟩um armod og fätæ||ke. For ieg ä skog med asna min*n* ad fä mier
smælke og smäwide ad flitia heym ad selia þad mier til widurlyfis. En*n*
sem ieg kom a skogien*n* farande fram hia þessum pitt kallade han*n* til
myn og bad mig ad hialpa sier ur þessum pitt og sogdum lyfs haska.
Hiet han*n* mier leynelega wpp a sitt lyf, san*n*ende og æru ad giaura mig
fullsælan*n* og rykan*n*. Þä hugsade ieg i min*n*e fatæke ad ieg skillde hans
wilia giora. Feck ieg mier med hin*n*e mestu flyte eyrn langan*n* streyng og
liet ieg þen*n*an*n* kadal ofan*n* syga i pittin*n*, og ætlade ieg ad draga han*n*

[1] In 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 Gnýr gives the emperor two options: Gnýr can either return the payment, or the emperor can pay him its full worth.

[2] In 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 these concerns about being found guilty are uttered earlier by Gnýr's wife. Omitted in 1172.

And if I had not brought it back to you straightaway, you might easily have had difficulty considering me innocent of any wrongdoing". Now when the emperor saw the stone he became very cheerful. He marveled at it, saying: "Dear friend, tell me the whole truth of how you came upon this virtuous stone". Gnýr answered: "My lord, by my troth I shall tell you the truth about that gifted stone as best I may. The first part of my story begins with your steward and city advisor, that mighty knight who was previously mean and poor. But you elevated him, made him powerful, gave him great riches and made him advisor of the city and the noblest knightly councillor of the realm. This very steward of yours had many pits dug in your forest. One day afterwards he rode unwarily and with great carelessness, and it happened that he himself fell headlong into one of the aforementioned pits. He could not manage to get out of his own accord through any means, because the pit was very deep. A lion, an ape and a serpent fell into the same hole shortly after he did. He was placed in the gravest danger amid those creatures. At the time I was in abject poverty and penury. I rode into the forest with my donkey to collect kindling and small sticks and take them home to sell for my livelihood. But when I came traveling into the forest near this pit, he called out to me and bade me help him out of the pit and the reported peril. He secretly promised me, upon his life and honour, to make me very rich and powerful. In my poverty, I decided that I should do as he wished. I sought out a long rope with the utmost haste, and I dropped that rope down into the pit to the councillor, intending to pull him out as quickly as possible. But it turned out that I unintentionally pulled up the lion, the ape and the serpent. Finally I pulled out the steward. The lion gave me ten horses with all sorts of new wares some time later. The ape gave me

iafnsnart üt. Enn so fiell til, ad owitande drö ieg wpp leoned, aphiniuna og hoggormen*n*. Sydast dro ieg wpp stywardin*n*. Leoned gaf mier 10 hesta[1] med alskonar nyan*n* warning nockrum tymum seyrna. Aphinian*n* gaf mier 3
smælke og smäwide, til þungra klifia a eyrn asna,[2] enn hoggormurenn gaf mier þennan*n* dyrmæta natturusteyn, sem ieg sellda idur. Enn idar stywardur launade mier þuy eynu[3] ad han*n* lamde mig särlega og særde 6
mig morgum storum särum grim*m*lega so eg ward halfdaudur og nær lyfs andwana heym fluttur a mynum asna til min*n*a heymkinna".[4]

Enn sem keysaren*n* heyrde þetta, angradist han*n* miog i synu hiarta ä 9
möte stywardinum og sende effter honum og baud honum samstundis
7v ad koma a sinn fund. Han*n* górer so. Keysarenn || leytar effter wandlega
og spyrst effter af honum med stærstu alworu huornen*n* fared hefde med 12
þeym herra Gny. Enn han*n* bar þad þuerlega afftur sem Gnyr haffde honnum fra *hermt[i] þeyrra widskifftum.[5] Þä sagde keysaren*n*: "O þu wonde
suykare og oþacklate skalkur, þar sem onatturleg kuikinde sem war leoned, 15
aphiniann og hoggormuren*n* gafu honum stör laun med rewerentiu fyrer sitt erwide og omak og þessa þeyrra lyfgiof ad han*n* drö þau wt af pittinum.[6]
Enn þu ert natturlegur madur,[7] en*n* fyrer han*n*s gödwilia ad han*n* frelsade 18
þig wt af daudan*n*s färe lamder þu han*n* miog nær allt til dauda og skilldist so wid han*n* daudwona.[8] Hier i möt dæme eg þig til heyngingar, a hinum

[1] Earlier the text states that he receives ten donkeys. This reference to horses appears to be unique to 578.

[2] 545 and 799 again mention the golden ring.

[3] In 119, 2421 and 4847 the steward calls Gnýr a liar.

[4] The story is not recounted but summarised in 2071 and 1172: e.g. Gnyr höf þä upp syna søgu og sagde allt sem fared hafde, 2071. In 119 and 2421 Gnýr also recounts how he was called a liar and that the steward had no love for him.

[5] 2071 omits the emperor's inquiry and the Steward's defiant response.

[6] 2071 does not mention the irrational creatures or compare their behaviour to that of the Steward.

[7] 2421, 2071, 119 and 4847 here add 'created by God'.

[8] 1172 and 2071 shorten the scolding, but in 1172 the emperor asks the steward how he became a servant of the devil and a traitor to his lord.

[i] 578 reads "hrermt".

kindling and small sticks, enough for a full load on a donkey. The serpent gave me that precious stone of virtue which I sold to you, but your steward rewarded me by grievously bludgeoning me and wounding me with many great injuries so that I was hauled home to my household on my donkey, half dead and almost deprived of life".

When the emperor heard that he grew very angry in his heart toward the steward. He had him sent for and bid him come to his court immediately. He[1] did so. The emperor interrogated him thoroughly, and asked with the greatest seriousness how he had acted toward Lord Gnýr. He bore what Gnýr said concerning their dealings with defiance. Then the emperor said: "O you wretched traitor and thankless rogue! Irrational creatures such as the lion, the ape and the serpent rightfully gave him great rewards for his efforts and trouble, and for saving their lives when he drew them out of the pit. But you are a rational man, and for his goodness in freeing you from the peril of death, you bludgeoned him severely, almost unto death, and left with the expectation that he would die. For this I condemn you to hang from the highest gallows. Your possessions and lands I give to Lord

[1] I.e. the steward.

hædsta galga. Enn þynar eygner, laund og iarder gief ieg herra Gny, og i þinn stad set eg herra Gny fyrer styward stadarens, foweta og keysarans radgiafa og eynkawin". Sem stywardurenn war heyngdur, tok herra Gnyr wid hans huse og herberge.[1] Ward hann lofadur af ǫllum monnum.[2]

Og ma hier heyra af tueymur olykum monnum; annar hafde hatursamlegt dramblæte, suiksamlega flærd og andstiggelega wnderhiggiu. Þar fyrer ward honum allt ad westu slisum forsmanarlegum dauda og med þad sydasta ad eylyfre fyrerdæmingu. So mun og ollum þeym fara sem
8r hafa þessa heyms hlute og wefia sig i þeim || og welkia, än alls gudotta og idranar og daudans punct sydast i þeyrra andlate. Enn annar hafde liuflegt trulinde, högwært lytelæte og astryka godgyrne med daglegre hofsemd i ollum hlutum. Honum ward þuy allt ad gödu, hann fann nad hia gude og monum og feck god endalok, og þa bestu dagana sem sydaster ifer hann komu.[3] Þeym sem hofmoduga drambsama og stærelata setur af stöle, enn þa lytelätu hogwæru og gudhræddu wpphefur og giefur näd; gude, eynum og þremum, odaudlegum konge sie lof, dyrd, heydur og vegsemd um allder og ad eilyfu.[4] Amen.

[1] 1172 adds another short episode: Og sem Gnir var nu kominn i soddann velgeingne, litelækade hann sig meir og meir. Efftir þad liet hann smida eitt hus vel tilbued, enn sem þad var algiórt og hans magt stod sem hædst fieck hann nockra ófundarmenn sem sógdu keisaranum ad Gnir hefde lated gióra eitt hus, hvar inne hann hefde folged þad fie sem hann stæle af keisarans inntektum. Enn sem keisarinn heyrde þad vard hann æfa reidur, reiste þangad sem fliotast og skipar ad Gnir skule opna þad nya hus. Gnir var tregur fire, enn þo vard keisarans vilie framm ad ganga. Enn sem keisarinn var kominn i hused fann hann þar ei neitt utann einn bagga af tótrum sem hieck a einum þræde. Keisarenn spir hvad sa bagge hafe ad þyda. Gnir seiger hann skal vera mier til minnis og minna mig a myna firre daga þa dramb og ofmetnadar þanckar koma mier i hug ad eg drambe ecke nie dreisse. Keisarinn vard gladur.

[2] 119, 2421, 2071 and 4847 add that Gnýr has the pits refilled.

[3] This moralising coda is shortened in 119, 2421, 1172, 545, 799 and 4847. In 799 the tale ends here.

[4] 119, 2421, 545, 799 and 4847 tell the moral without direct reference to God. In 2071 the whole moralising passage is missing, and Gnýr's achievements are briefly summarised: Og vard Gnyr lytelätur sannsyn godgiarn og medaumkvnarsamur vid fät[æ]ka.

Gnýr, and in your place as steward of the city and as official I set Lord Gnýr, as well as councillor to the emperor and particular friend". When the steward was hanged, Gnýr took over his house and lodging.[1] He was praised by everyone.

So one may hear of two dissimilar men. One was given to hateful haughtiness, treacherous betrayal, and odious deceit. For that he came to the worst misfortune, disgraceful death, and was condemned eternally in the end. So it might be for all those who partake in worldly possessions and embroil and wrap themselves about in them, without any fear of God or repentance or point of death at their final demise. But the other one had gracious faith, meek humility and zeal for God with daily temperance in all things. Therefore everything good came to him. He found grace among God and men and received a good end, and the best days which came to him at the end. He[2] deposes those who are prideful, haughty and boastful, but he elevates the meek, humble and god-fearing and gives them grace. Let there be praise, glory of worship and honor to the one God and the king of the immortal trinity always and forever. Amen.

[1] There is an addition in Lbs 1172 4to, which relates the following information: 'And when Gnýr had come into such prosperity, he humbled himself more and more. After that he commissioned the building of a well-appointed house. But when that was finished and his power stood at its peak, certain men became envious and said to the Emperor that Gnýr had ordered the building of a house, wherein he had concealed that money which he had stolen from the Emperor's revenue. And when the Emperor heard that he became exceedingly angry, travelled there as quickly as possible and arranged that Gnýr should open that new house. Gnýr was reluctant, but the Emperor's wish was carried out nonetheless. And when the Emperor came into the house, he found nothing there apart from a bundle of rags which hung on a thread. The Emperor asked what the bundle meant. Gnýr said "It is to be a reminder to me, and I will recollect my former days when proud and arrogant thoughts come into my mind so I don't become proud or vaunting". The Emperor was pleased.'

[2] I.e. God.

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Appendix
(From the Middle English *Gesta Romanorum*)

This appendix reprints one of the Middle English exempla related to *Gnýs ævintýr*. The chosen text is preserved in BL Add. 9066 in the British Library, and the printed form is adapted from Sidney Herrtage's 1879 edition of "The Gesta Romanorum" published in Early English Text Society (EETS), Extra Series, No. XXXIII. In Herrtage's edition, the text is entitled "Ciclades the Emp*er*our. (Of the ingratitude of a steward towards a poor man who had saved his life.)" Herrtage's main text follows another manuscript, Harley 7333, but the text of BL Add. 9066 is printed as a second version below the main text. In BL Add. 9066, the main protagonists are called Guy and Lenticulus.

The manuscript BL Add. 9066 was presented to the British Museum (now British Library) in 1832 by Rev. William Conybeare. It consists of 87 parchment leaves in a small folio size. It was written by two scribes in the fifteenth century, possibly slightly later than Harley 7333, which Herrtage (1879: xix–xx) dates to ca. 1440. From an autograph and a stanza on the last leaf of the manuscript it can be determined that the codex at some point belonged to a certain Gervase Lee who lived during the sixteenth century (Herrtage 1879: xix). Moreover, Rev. J. J. Conybeare, a former owner of the manuscript, added summaries of the groups into which he divided the tales of the manuscript to the end of the codex.[24] The manuscript contains a total of 96 exempla from different sources.

[24] Herrtage (1879: xx, note 1) disagrees with Conybeare's classification and corrects him.

CICLADES THE EMPEROUR.

(OF THE INGRATITUDE OF A STEWARD TOWARDS A POOR MAN WHO HAD SAVED HIS LIFE.)

[Reprint of "The Ungrateful Steward" in British Library, MS Add. 9066.[25]
Source: Herrtage, Sidney J.H. 1879. *The Early English Versions of the Gesta Romanorum*. EETS E.S. 33. London: Trübner, 279–294.]

Inclides in the Citee of Rome Reigned, a full wise man, and aboue all thyng he was m*er*cyfull. It happed ones as he walked by a forest, he mette with a poore man. The Emp*er*our, whan he sawe hym, he was stered with mercy, and seid, "of whens art thou?" he said, "sir, I am your man, and of your lond born, and am poore and nedy." The Emp*er*our said, "yf I wist that thou were trew, I shuld promote the to richesse; telle me, what is thi name?" he said, "lenticulus is my name, and I wille be trew vnto you; and yf I do otherwise, I bynde me to all payn." whan the Emp*er*our had herd this, he promoted hym; and sone after he made hym knyght, and ordeyned hym steward of his Empire. Whan he was thus I-lifte vp, his hert was enhaunsed in pride, passyng all that were worthier than he; he dispised the symple, and the poore he dispoyled and robbed. On a tyme whan he rode by a forest, he comaunded the forster to make an hundred pittes right depe in the forest, and hille hem with swete herbes; and yf it happed þ*a*t the bestes ronne by the forest, thei shuld falle into the pittes. he said, "sir, thi wille shall be do." After this it happed, that the bestes ronne, and the Steward rode to the forest, for to see the pittes; and as he rode, he thought, "I am right grete, for all thyng are at my biddyng. Is there any god but I?" And he smote the horse with the sporres, and fille into one of the pittes, that before he had ordeyned; and myght not out. And sone aftir hym fille a lyon into the same pitte; And aftir the lyon fille an Ape; and aftir the Ape a Serpent. whan the Steward was thus vnbesette with thise iij. bestes, he was right sory. There was that tyme in the Citee a poore man, whos name was Guy, that had no thynge but an Asse, that every day was wonte to go to the forest, for to gadre stikkes, and charge his asse, and lede to the market for to selle; and so susteyned hym self and his wyf. And as Guy went in to the forest, he herd the Steward out of the pitte seiyng, "O! dere frend, what so ever thou art, here me, and it shall be to the ever wele." Guy, when he herd a voice of a man, he stode beside the pitte, and seid, "lo! I am here, for thou called me." Than

[25] Reproduced by permission of The Council of the Early English Text Society.

said the knyght, "I am the Steward of the Emperour, and in this pitte are with me a lyon, an Ape, and a serpent; and I wote not whiche of thise shall first devowre me. therefore, for goddes love, draw me out, and I shall wele promote the, For but I sone have help, of thise iij. bestes I shall be devowred." Guy seid, "this is herd to me to do, for I have right nought, but that I gadre stikkes, and selle hem, and thereof am I susteyned. But I shall fulfille your wille, and yf I have nought of you, it shall be harme to me." The Steward seid, "by the help of the Emperour, thou and all thyne to-morow I shall promote to grete richesse." Guy seid, "I shall do that thou biddest." he went to the Citee, and bought a longe corde, and stode on the pitte side, and lette downe the corde, and seid, "Steward, come vp by the corde." Whan the lyon sawe the corde, he sterte therto, and held it strongly. Guy wend he had drawen vp the knyght, and drewe vp the lyon; and whan the lyon was drawen vp, he lowted to hym, and ranne to the wode. [Then the second tyme he lete downe the corde. The ape saw that, and lepe therto, and so he was drawne vp; and thankyd hym on his maner, and went to the wode. The iij. tyme he let don the corde. The serpent saw that, and stert therto, and was drawyn vp; and lowtyd to hym, and went to the wode.] Than the steward seid, "now am I delyuered of iij. bestes, lette downe now the corde to me, that I may assend." and so it was done. he knytte it fast about his arse, and Guy drew hym out. And than said the knyght, "come to-morow at none to the paleys, and I shall make the riche for ever." Guy was Ioyfull and went home voide. his wyf asked whi he had gadred no stikkes, of the whiche thei myght lyve that day. he told her how he had delyuered the Steward out of the pitte; and the next day folowyng he shuld yeve hym worthi mede. his wyf was glad, and said, "lette vs be of good comfort; therfore rise the day and the houre, and go to the man for the reward." On the other day he went to the paleys, and spake to the porter, and said, "I pray the, go to the Steward, and telle hym, that the man is here with the whiche he spake yistirday." The porter went to the knyght, and said the herand and the message. The knyght said, "none spake with me; lette hym go his way, that I se hym not." the porter bad him go his way. whan Guy herd this, he was sory, and went home, and told his wyf all the matir. his wyf comforted hym in all that she myght, and said, "go to hym another tyme, and assaye." he went another day to the paleys, and praied the porter to spede his nedes. the porter went at his praiyng to the steward, and shewed to hym the comyng of the pore man. the Steward, whan he herd this, he went and bete him, and lefte hym halfe on lyve. his wyf herd that, and come to hym, and put hym on his asse, and ledde hym home; and that she had, she spended vpon medecynes, and so he was made hole. Than he went agayn to the wood with his

asse, for to gadre stikkes. It fille on a day, whan Guy went to the wood, he sawe a lyon, and before hym .x. asses chargede with dyu*er*se chaffare. The lyon brought hem all before hym. Guy was aferde, but whan he hade wisely behold the lyon, he knew wele the lyon, the whiche he drew out of the pitte, And whan all the Asses were entred into his house, the lyon enclyned his hede, and went ayene to the woode. Guy opened the pakkes, and founde moche merchaundise. he went, and did enquere in chirches and markettes, yf any man hadde lost chaffare with asses, that he shuld come to hym; but there was none found. Notwithstondyng thise richesse, he went agayn to the woode, for to gadre stikkes, with his asse. It happed on a day as he went to the woode, he sawe the Ape, that he drew oute of the pitte, in the croppe of a tree, brekyng stikkes with his handes, and with his tethe; and cast downe as many stikkes as he neded, to lade with his Asse, and wente home. Another day he went to the wood, and he sawe a-ferre a serpent, beryng in his mouthe a stone of .iij. colours, the whiche he gaf hym, and wente agayne to the woode. Guy had wondir of the stone, and wente to a lapydarye, to aske of what vertu it was. he aunswered, and said, it hadde .iij. vertues. The first vertu is this; he that have this, shall have ioye with out hevynesse. The second is, he shall have habundaunce with out defaute. The thirde is, he shall have light without derknesse. also he that hath it, and shall selle it, but yf he have as moche as it is worthe, it shall come home agayn to hym." Guy, whan he herd this, he said, "in a good tyme I drewe the bestes out of the pitte!" by the vertu of this stone he gate moche good, and so moche, that he was made a knyght, and gate many possessions. Anon after this, it was no counsaile, but it was shewed to the Emp*er*our, that Guy had a stone of grete vertu. The Emp*er*our sent to hym a messanger, that he shuld sone come to hym, at a certayn day. Guy, whan he was come, the Emp*er*our said to hym, "Frend, I have herd said, that some tyme thou were in grete pouerte, and now by the vertu of a stone thou arte made riche. I pray the, selle me that stone." he said, "sir, y may not, for I am certayn, that as longe as I have the stone, I shall be siker of iij. thynges. The firste is, I shall have Ioye without hevynesse. The second is, habundaunce with oute defaute. The thirde is, light without derknesse." The Emp*er*our, whan he had herd this, he was more covetouse of the stone, and said to hym, "chese of ij. thynges, other thou shalt out of my Empire, with all thi p*r*ogenye, or thou shalt selle me the stone." "Sir," he seid, "I were lothe to offende you; and therfore, yf ye wille bye the stone, I shall fulfille your wille. but first I shall shewe you the p*er*ile of the stone. Sir, but yf ye yeve me as moche therfore as it is worthe, with outen doute the stone shall come ayene to me." The Emp*er*our said, "I shall yeve the sufficiantly, for thou shalt have

of me a thousand pounde." Guy toke the money of hym, and delyu*er*ed hym the stone. atte morow Guy opened his chest, and founde the stone, and told his wyf of the chaunce. She seid, "oo! sir, go fast to the Emp*er*our, and take hym agayn the stone, lest he put to vs gyle or fraude." Guy wente to the Emp*er*our, and said, "Sir, yisterday I sold to you a stone; I wold gladly se it." the Emp*er*our went to his tresorye, and found not the stone. he come forthe hevy vnto Guy, and said, he had lost the stone. Than said Guy, "sir, be not hevy, for I said to you before, that I myght not selle the stone vnto I had resceived the valew. lo! here your thousand mark, that ye gaf me for the stone, For I this day found it in my chest; and happely but yf I had brought it to you ayene, ye wold have shewed me myne offence." The Emp*er*our, whan he sawe the stone, he mervailed, and said, "By the faithe thou owest to me, say how thou camest by the stone?" Guy said, "by the faith that I owe to you, I shall telle you the trouthe. youre steward, that ye promoted of nought, did make many depe pittes in your forest. and he, as he rode vnavised, fille into one, and myght not come out, for the pitte was depe. It happed wele, that after hym fille a lyon, an Ape, and a Serpente, into the same pitte. and I was that tyme poore, and wente vnto the Forest with my Asse, for to gadre stikkes; and as I wente, he cried to me, that I shuld help hym out of the pitte, and fro perile of dethe, by cause he was amonge suche perillous bestes. and trewly he hight to me with an othe, that he shuld promote me and all my progeny to richesse. And whan I herd this, I gate me a longe rope, and lette it into the pitte, and trowed I shuld draw hym to me; and I drewe vp the lyon, and aftir hym the Ape, and than the Serpent; and atte last I drew vp the Steward. The lyon yaf me .x. asses charged with dyuerse marchaundise; The Ape yaf me stikkes, as many as myn Asse myght bere; The serpent yaf me this percious Stone, the whiche I have sold to you; but the Steward bete me, and wounded me greuously, þat I was born home on myn asse." The Emp*er*our, whan he herd this, he was gretly stered in hym self agayn the Steward, and sent for hym; And whan he was come, the Emp*er*our vndirtoke hym of the cryme that he did to Guy; and he stode stille, and aunswered not, for he myght not denye it. Than said the Emp*er*our, "O! thou wrecche, vnresonable bes*tes*, as the lyon, the Ape, and the Serpent, yelded hym mede, because he drew hem out of the pitte vnpraied; and thou, that art a resonable man, and for his good purpose that delyu*er*ed the fro thi deth, for his mede thou bete hym nere to the dethe. For the whiche dede I deme the this day to be hanged on the Gibbette, and all thi londes I yeve to Sir Guy; and in thi stede I make hym Steward." Whan the Steward was hanged on the Gibbette, Sir Guy ocupied his place, the whiche was loved of all, and so in pease ended his lyf.

Declaracio. Worshipfull frendes, this Emp*er*our is the Fadir of heven. the poore man, that was p*r*omoted, is man, born of his modir naked and feble, that ofte tyme is promoted to richesse and dignytees; wherfore many so promoted know neither god nor hem self, but maken dyu*er*se pittes, that is malice and wikkednesse, that thei ordeyn agayn symple men, into the whiche pittes often tymes the devell maketh hem falle. Guy, the whiche went with his asse to the Forest, is eche rightfull man, that in the Forest of this world gadreth meritorie werkes, and maketh his Asse to bere hem, that is, his body, by the whiche the soule may be glorified in the ever lastyng tabernacle of god. And so his wyf, that is, his conscience, or his children, that are good vertues, he norissheth and fedeth. In the dyke of the Steward fille the lyon, the Ape, and the Serpent. So ofte sithes with the synner, the verrey lyon of the kynrede of Iuda, that is, god, he discendith, as ofte as he is redy to yeve grace to a synner. Guy, that drew out the lyon, is a rightfull man, that draweth god to hym by the corde of good vertues. he drew oute the Ape, that is, the contrarie wille to reason, for amonge all bestes he is most like to man. Right so wille amonge all the powers of the soule, namly it oweth to be like reason, and restyng therwith. Also he drew out the Serpent, that is, penaunce, and that for ij. thynges. the Serpent in his tongue bereth medecyne, and in his taile venyme; So penaunce to the doer is bitter, never the lesse it is better medecyne; therfore every rightfull man oweth to drawe to hym the serpent of penaunce. And atte last he drew out the Steward. Right so the rightfull man by werkes of mercy draweth out the synfull man of the pitte of synne, and that by the ensample of crist, that came not to calle rightfull men, but synners. And Senek taught many profitable thynges to Nero, the Emp*er*our, but in the ende he did slee Senek his maister, as the Steward did the poore man, for his good dede. Also crist yaf power to Iudas, for to do myracles, neverthelesse in the ende he lost hym self. Right so there are many children of the devell Beliall; all though some drede god, and shew to the body and to the soule holy doctryne and profitable, they yeld to hym no thyng agayn, but evell for good. Behold the lyon with the x. asses charged, that is, crist shall yeve x. preceptis to the rightfull man, charged, with dyu*er*se vertues, by the whiche he may come to the richesse of the kyngdome of heven. Also the Ape gadred stikkes, that is, alse ofte as man wilfully getteth hym werkes of charite; and that is for to gadre stikkes, in as moche as stikkes are good and profitable to ij. thynges, that is, to make hote, and to edefie houses. Right so parfite charite heteth the soule; also charitee araieth the house of the kyngdom of heven, to the comyng of the soule. Also the serpent yaf hym a stone of iij. colours. This stone is crist, in þat by penaunce we may gete this stone, that is, crist. this stone, that is, crist, is of

iij. colours, that is, power of the Fadir, wysedome of the sone, and the goodnesse of the holy gost. he that hathe this stone, shall have in heven habundaunce with out defaute, Ioye with out hevynesse or sorow, light with out derknesse; and this stone is so precious, that it may not be sold for silver ne for gold, but that it shall alway dwelle with the rightfull man. how then mow ye have that stone? forsothe by penaunce; and yf we do so, the Steward, that is, the vnrightfull man, shall be hanged in helle, and the rightful man in the heritage of the kyngdome of heven shall ever ioye. to the which Crist brynge vs! Amen.

Resumé

Gnýs ævintýr er den islandske interpretation af et exemplum, der sammen med andre moralske tekster i den store samling *Gesta Romanorum* cirkulerede i Europa i middelalderen. Den islandske tekst, der er overleveret i otte håndskrifter, går tilbage til en middelengelsk oversættelse af den latinske *Gesta Romanorum*. De ældste håndskrifter er fra det 17. århundrede, mens det yngste er dateret til den sidste halvdel af 1800-tallet. Det vil sige, at alle håndskrifter er papirhåndskrifter og dermed ret unge i forhold til teksten. Tekstens middelengelske kilde antages nemlig at stamme fra det tidlige 15. århundrede.

Gnýs ævintýr handler om en fattig mand, som bliver ophøjet af kejseren til forvalter af hans ejendomme og efterfølgende bliver hovmodig. En dag falder forvalteren i et stort hul i skoven sammen med en løve, en abe og en slange. Gnýr, en anden fattig mand, der samler træ i skoven, hører forvalterens råb om hjælp og befrier både ham og dyrene. I stedet for at belønne Gnýr, som forvalteren havde lovet, slår han den fattige mand næsten til døde, da han spørger efter sin belønning. Gnýr bliver dog rask, og så snart han kan tage til skoven for at samle træ igen, får han gaver fra de taknemmelige dyr, som han befriede. En af gaverne er en magisk sten, der blandt andet sikrer ejeren rigdom og derfor tiltrækker kejserens opmærksomhed. Da kejseren hører Gnýrs historie og erfarer om forvalterens opførsel, bliver denne straffet med døden, og Gnýr får lov til at overtage hans stilling.

Teksten er gengivet i en semidiplomatarisk udgave, der følger håndskriftet Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum, AM 578 e 4to fra det 17. århundrede. Signifikant afvigende læsemåder fra de øvrige håndskrifter er parafraserede i variantapparatet. Desuden er teksten oversat til engelsk. Som supplement er den middelengelske tekst *The Ungrateful Steward* genoptrykt efter EETS' udgave fra 1879.

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