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Translation as Cultural Appropriation in Medieval Scandinavia

Introduction

While courtly literature is usually considered to be the "giving" literature that changed the way of storytelling in Scandinavia, this chapter presents and discusses two different situations in terms of the role played by stylistic and narrative conventions in influencing the translation of courtly literature. Until now this aspect has been discussed mainly in connection with the question of why the courtly epic romances were translated into prose in Iceland and Norway (Kalinke 1981, 134).[1] In Sweden and Denmark, however, courtly romances have been rendered in verse – even if the translations were made from West Norse prose versions like *Flores och Blanzeflor*, or are likely to have used the West Norse translation of works in other languages, as in the case of *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren* (Lodén 2012; Lodén 2021).

Our starting point is the hypothesis that each translation is not only a transfer of language but also a transfer of culture (Burke 2022, 23). The meeting of these two cultures and the transfer of cultural artefacts, such as for example texts, results in an entangling of these two cultures. They exist next to each other and interact with each other (Burke 2022, 15). In Norway, courtly literature from the European continent was introduced by commission of King Hákon Hákonarson and translated for members of the court and later also for a wider audience as the representatives of a new culture (Kramarz-Bein 2012). In Sweden, courtly literature was introduced in the early fourteenth century at the behest of Queen Eufemia, German-born wife of the Norwegian king. While in Norway – and from there also in Iceland – courtly literature met an already existing vernacular literature with established narrative and stylistic conventions, in Sweden no evidence of a pre-existing literature in the vernacular has survived. This does not mean, though, that no literary tradition existed prior to the translation of the *Eufemiavisor*, the first known example of a vernacular literature in Old Swedish. We simply have no access to written evidence of literary texts in Old Swedish predating the *Eufemiavisor*.

To be able to transfer the characteristics of style and content of the courtly texts into the Scandinavian languages, the translators had to compromise. Since the literary

1 The idea that translation is best understood as a complex semiotic process involving an intercultural dialogue is one of the core assumptions at the heart of so-called Descriptive Translation Studies, advocated by a group of scholars in Belgium and Holland (Theo Hermans, André Lefevere) and Israel (Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury).

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systems of Norway / Iceland and Sweden were not identical these compromises were different in each case as we want to demonstrate with our examples.

We will look at the Scandinavian translations as suggested by Descriptive Translation Studies (Rosa 2016, 94–104; Even-Zohar 1997; Even-Zohar 2005), a target-oriented approach that focuses on the role of translation in cultural history and studies what translation involves, its circumstances and its reasons (Toury 1995, 15). Each translation is the result of restraints and influences on the target culture. Depending on the position of translations in the target culture translations have to adapt to the narrative rules already present or they can become an innovative factor. In Norway and Iceland, courtly romances meet a strong indigenous narrative literature which restricted the translations of foreign texts. In Sweden, however, the translations were the starting point for vernacular narration and could therefore be more innovative.

Translations are products enabled by the interaction of two different languages and their cultures. They are representations of the transformation that occurs within this interaction and thus hybrid products combining elements from both cultures. As Peter Burke points out, translations of the same text in different surroundings lead to different types of hybridity which can be called "ecotypes" (Burke 2022, 22). These variants are first positioned at the periphery of the literary system, but when they become relatively stable, start to interact with other texts in the literary system and influence the production of new texts they have found their place in the centre of the system. At first, each Scandinavian translation of a courtly text represented an individual variation of a new narrative form – or an "ecotype" – until after some time the characteristics of Norwegian or Swedish courtly style evolved, and a new genre was established. It was a long process for courtly literature to be considered a new literary genre integrated into the literary systems of the Scandinavian countries. Based on Burke's model this process of appropriation can be described in three phases:

1) the first encounter with the new culture. Members of the Scandinavian elites get to know the culture and literature of the Anglo-Norman and other European courts and recognise their importance for their relationship with other European countries. They feel the need to introduce this apparently central European culture or at least elements of it to their own countries that they must perceive as being not only on the geographical but also on the cultural periphery.
2) the first elements and representatives of the new culture introduced – probably by members of the elites or their representatives – into Scandinavian surroundings, such as for example new forms of behaviour and encyclopaedic knowledge, new aristocratic titles, artefacts and texts. As can be seen from the dissemination of the Norwegian *Konungs Skuggsjá* (King's mirror) not only members of the King's court but larger groups of the aristocracy and social elite were eager to participate in this central European culture (Johansson 2018). In this second phase the first texts also get translated. The translated texts join the literary polysystems, which means that they have to react to the already established literary conventions to meet the expectations of the audience. Narratorial commentaries in the transla-

tions reflect these interactions between the foreign texts and the indigenous conventions. Even though the translations may attempt an *imitatio* of European courtly literature the results are hybrid texts that mix new and indigenous elements.

3) elements of the new literature, as for example vocabulary, motives, or stylistic features, have been integrated and are no longer considered as belonging to a different culture. They are part of their own repertoire and can be used in writing new stories while the translated texts have become an integral part of the literary polysystem which contributes to the development of a new genre – in Iceland the so-called indigenous Riddarasögur and in Sweden the *rimkrönikor* (rhymed chronicles)

The texts we will discuss are examples of the second and third phases of this model, and we will look at the different kinds of hybridisation that can be seen in the translation resulting from the interaction between two literatures and cultures.

This interaction between languages and cultures and thus also the translation of texts requires mediators, like for example patrons or other people with an interest in the literary system who are interested in the literature of another culture and translators who are able to adapt a foreign text to their language. Quite often these mediators themselves have a hybrid background, as when travelling between different countries, speaking different languages, or having parents or spouses from a different background. Although we know very little about the people translating the courtly romances into Scandinavian languages, we still have evidence for this hybrid background of the mediators and agents. In Iceland and Norway members of the elite were often merchants who travelled to foreign countries, scholars had to go to foreign universities and the European network of the church and cloisters provided for the exchange of clerics. Since the Viking Age people from Scandinavia have travelled for various reasons to European countries and even beyond (Jesch 2005; van Nahl 2022, 58–61 and 66–72). The main patrons, King Hákon Hákonarson in Norway and Queen Eufemia in Sweden, also had multiple connections to foreign countries.

In this chapter we shall give some examples of the conditions for the translation of courtly romances and for the kind of strategies that were applied to position the translation in the receiving literary polysystem (Even-Zohar 1997; Even-Zohar 2005). We will look at the different institutions in Norway and Sweden that ordered the translations and their roles within the political, social and literary systems of their countries. If the translations were initiated by people with powerful positions, they must have wanted to make sure that the literature they imported and favoured got a place in the centre of the literary polysystem (Bampi 2013). Therefore, it was necessary that the new texts were innovative enough to arouse the interest of their audience, but that at the same time they contained enough elements that were familiar to the audience and well-known from indigenous literature (Bampi and Buzzoni 2013). Which stylistic and narrative elements were considered to fulfil these tasks were different in Norway / Iceland and Sweden, as our examples will demonstrate.

Norway / Iceland

The continental courtly literature met in the western parts of Scandinavia, i.e. in Norway and Iceland in the thirteenth century an already well established literary polysystem, which contained a number of genres with different functions. Norway and Iceland are here studied together, since apart from the fact that Iceland did not develop kingship, its political development paralleled that of Norway, and they both had a similar political development in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Orning 2017, 312). In general, one cannot say for certain whether a translation was made in Norway or Iceland and we thus have to reckon with both Norwegian and Icelandic translations and also with Icelandic redactions of Norwegian translations (Glauser 2005, 374–375). In Norway the literary polysystem mainly consisted of translation of texts belonging to different genres (Eriksen 2013, 48). In Iceland in addition to translations the system also contained texts composed in the vernacular (Glauser 2006, 6–11). In addition, the lyrical genres of skaldic and eddic poetry – which were also known in Norway as can be deduced from runic inscriptions or pictorial sources – the literary system contained several narrative and prosimetric genres which became more and more productive in the thirteenth century. These texts were most likely transmitted orally as well as in written form and during this transmission they were again and again reworked and adapted to new contexts for their audiences' changing expectations. Quite a large number of texts have been dated to the thirteenth century, including many Sagas of Icelanders, historiographic texts like *Heimskringla*, *Landnámabók* or *Konungasögur* (Sagas about the Norwegian kings), and poetologic writings like the *Poetic Edda* or the *Grammatical Treatises*, although the dating of individual texts is sometimes disputed. The oldest manuscripts contain saints' lives and homilies, based on Latin and perhaps also Old English sources. In addition to that in the thirteenth century the oldest *Fornaldarsögur* (Legendary Sagas) were written as well, and both the vernacular and Latin had a strong position in this polysystem when it came to the production of texts. In the second half of the twelfth century Theodoricus Monachus composed his *Historia de antiquitate regum norwagiensium*, probably at the same time as an anonymus author wrote *Historia Norwegiæ*. Both works bear witness that at that time in Norway authors had solid knowledge of Latin historiographic tradition and literary conventions (Würth 2005). Historiographic texts in the widest sense were also translated into the vernacular, such as *Trójumanna saga*, *Bretasögur* or *Rómverjasaga*. Although these texts are only extant in Icelandic manuscripts, they probably were translated in Norway or their exemplars came via Norway to Iceland.

King Hákon Hákonarson (1204–1263) who according to the prologue of *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*, was one initiator of translations of courtly literature into Norwegian, had grown up in quite a diversified literary environment with texts in the vernacular as well as in Latin. Since this prologue is only preserved in a manuscript from the seventeenth century there are doubts about its reliability. Nevertheless, during his reign a literary milieu developed, in which a number of courtly texts were produced

(Kramarz-Bein 2014, 15). When Hákon gave the order to translate courtly romances – Arthurian romances, *Lais*, epic poetry about Charlemagne or stories relating to Dietrich of Bern – and thus the most innovative and modern literature of the European Middle Ages, there existed a broad spectrum of stylistic, formal and generic literary models in Latin as well as in the vernacular. The translators had to position their new works in this literary polysystem by trying to balance out the new and the conventional ways of expression. Eddic poetry offered a metrical form that could be used for epic narration but in the vernacular tradition it related to very different types of stories than the non-heroic courtly romances. The different saga genres provided a form of narrative where the prose concentrating on the plot was quite often interspersed with stanzas that slowed down the speed of the narration and offered a platform for a more internal view of the characters. But these narrations and their stanzas represented a different time and above all a very different ethos than courtly literature. Although the translators could thus choose between a number of narrative and epic conventions, they had to try to create something new that related to the innovative elements of their originals and at the same time did not challenge their audience too much and was not too far from well-known literary practice. The Norwegian translation of courtly literature renders the epic verse of their originals into rhythmic prose which is embellished with either new stylistic features or with already established elements used in a new way or in higher frequency and density (Kalinke 1981, 134). Along with the style of the courtly romances their narrative structures and complexity also required some creative alterations. How the translators managed to balance the necessities of innovation and tradition will be demonstrated in the following examples.

Ívens saga

According to its concluding sentence the Old Norse *Ívens saga* was translated on behalf of the Norwegian King Hákon Hákonarson from French: *Ok lykr hér sögu herra Íven er Hákon kóngr gamli lét snúa ór franzeisu í norrœnu*. (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 98; 'And the saga of Sir Íven ends here, which King Hákon the Old had ordered translated from French into Norse.') The king is here called "the old" in contrast to his namesake son who was co-regent with his father from 1240–1257. The appellation "old" might thus be an indication that *Ívens saga* was translated during this time (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 35). If the reference to the possible time is correct, then *Ívens saga* was translated at least 20 years later than *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*. Since this prologue is only preserved in a manuscript from the seventeenth century, scholars have repeatedly doubted its reliability and thus its accuracy on the dating (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke, 99). However, despite some doubts about the exact date of the translation scholars generally agree that *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* belongs to the earliest courtly texts translated in Scandinavia and that it contributed to wider knowledge about courtly culture and literature (Glauser 2020).

As most other Riddarasögur *Ívens saga* is poorly preserved. It is transmitted in relatively late manuscripts that represent an altered text of the original translation (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 35–36). The three primary manuscripts are: Holm. Perg. 6 from the early fifteenth century, AM 489 4to from ca. 1450, and Holm. Papp. 46 fol. written in 1690. The first two manuscripts are defective, but they supplement each other for a large part of the text. The third manuscript represents a complete, albeit extremely abridged version of the translation. Since a late transmission, most often only in Icelandic manuscripts, is typical for the translated Riddarasögur, it has been debated whether the preserved texts can be used for a comparison with the French texts and how much they can tell us about translation strategies. Although a strictly philological point of view of these late manuscripts can tell us very little about the original text of the translations and of the exact sources used, they nevertheless reveal quite a lot about the strategies that were applied to adapt the texts into new contexts and to secure them a place in the literary system (Busby 2014, 21).

In *Ívens saga* we can see quite a few features that witness the interaction of foreign and indigenous literary elements and that demonstrate the process of adaptation to the Norse literary system. As all the other translated Riddarasögur *Ívens saga* is composed in a rhythmical prose, with syntactic parallelism that often is underlined by alliteration. A good example for this court style is Íven's lament over the loss of his wife.[2] In a differentiated literary system, texts have to give their audience clear markers about what is to be expected of the text and which kind of knowledge has to be activated. This is done through stylistic elements, elements of content and of course by paratextual information. *Ívens saga* immediately reveals itself as a courtly romance by its title: *He[r byrj]ar upp sögu hins agœta Íve[ns], er var einn af Artús köppum.* (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 39; 'Here begins the tale of the excellent Iven who was one of Arthur's champions.') Right at the beginning of the text the audience receives an intertextual hint – the reference to King Artus and his knight localises *Ívens saga* among other similar sagas and reveals that a *Riddarasaga* is to be expected. Such intertextual hints prove that by the time this title was written the Riddarasögur were well integrated into the literary system (Glauser 2020, 310). The title invokes the special storyworld of the Riddarasögur and invites the audience to activate its knowledge about the rules of this world. The translator of *Ívens saga* could rely on knowledge about courtly culture without having to explain as much as the first translators – and in fact, *Ívens sag*a does not contain as many ex-

2 *Til hvers skal ek lifa? Vesall maðr var ek, svá ógeyminn. Hvat skal ek útan drepa mik sjálfr? Ek hefi týnt huggan minni ok fagnaði, ok um snúit af sjálfs mín glœp virðing minni, ok vent tign minni í týning, yndi mitt angrsemi, líf mitt í leiðindi, hjarta mitt í hugsótt, unnustu mína í <ó>vin, frelsi mitt í friðleysi; eða hví dvel ek at drepa mik?* (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 74; 'For what reason should I live? I was a wretch of a man, so heedless. What am I to do but kill myself? I have lost my consolation and joy, and through my own fault brought down my honor and turned my reputation into loss, my delight into suffering, my life into loathing, my heart into anxiety, my beloved into my enemy, my freedom into outlawry; why do I delay in killing myself?').

planations of foreign features as for example *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* does. Within this frame set by the title, the first chapter lays the ground for the reception of the saga and guides the audience's expectations:

> Hinn agæti kóngr Artúrus réð fyrir Englandi, sem mörgum mönnum er kunnigt. Hann var um síðir kóngr yfir Rómaborg. Hann <er> þeira kónga frægastr er verit hafa þann veg frá hafinu ok vinsælastr annarr en Karlamagnus. Hann hafði þá röskustu riddara er í varu kristninni. Þat var einn tíma sem jafnan, at hann hafði stefnt til sín öllum sínum vinum ok helt mikla hátíð á pikkisdögum, er ver köllum hvítasunnu. (ed. Kalinke 1999, 39)

> The excellent King Arthur ruled England, as is known to many. After a time he became king of Rome. He was the most illustrious of the kings who had lived on this side of the ocean and the most popular other than Charlemagne. He had the bravest knights who lived in Christendom. It happened one time, as was customary, that he had convoked all his friends and held great festivities at Pentecost, which we call Whitsun.

The very first sentence emphasises King Artus' fame, and the audience is reminded of his well-known reputation. The references to Artus' kingdom and the comparison with Charlemagne inform the audience about time and space of the story, a method that is also common in other narrative genres within the Norse literary system. The difference, however, is, that this realm of the Riddarasögur is a fictional one. Although Artus as well as Charlemagne appear in Norse historical sources the audience of the Riddarasögur is aware that these courtly romances are fictional stories about fictional characters. For the audience this fictionality is marked by a lack of historical references – as for example to Scandinavian kings reigning at the same time – and by the lack of genealogies. The characters of the Riddarasögur are only named by their first names, and only very rarely is there a reference to their larger family. In *Ívens saga* most of the characters are anonymous. Only the main characters and the ones appearing in other Riddarasögur are named, as Artúr, Íven, or Kalebrant. For a Norse audience used to extensive genealogies that provide for each character an exact position within a tightly knit social network anonymity of the characters must be a strong signal for a story's proximity to historicity or fictionality (Fulton 2017).

The actual plot of *Ívens saga* starts á *pikkisdögum, er vér köllum hvítasunnu* ('at Pentecoast which we call Whitsun'). With this short explanation the translator proves to the audience his qualification and at the same time puts himself on the side of the audience. During these big Whitsun-festivities stories were told – a scenario that was known to the Scandinavian audience from their own tradition as it is witnessed in Kings' sagas and in other texts, as for example in *Þorsteins þáttr sögufróða*, which is part of the saga about the Norwegian King Haraldr Sigurðarson (*Þorsteins þáttr sögufróða,* ed. Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson, 235–237) The anecdote about the story-telling at the wedding of Reykjahólar is probably one of the most discussed passages when it comes to the study of oral story-telling in Western Scandinavia (Mitchell 2022). The festivities at Artus' court thus recall a situation known to the audience from public events organized by the indigenous elite. As is typical for a Ridd-

arasaga, *Ívens saga* contains several meta-fictional remarks (Glauser 2020, 299). When starting his tale at the King's court, Kalebrant admonishes his audience to listen well and to pay attention, *þvíat heyrð orð eru þegar týnd, nema hugr hirði þat er eyra við tekr*. (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 39; 'for words heard are lost at once unless the mind preserves what the ears receive.') This explanation indicates on the one hand the consciousness about the differences between written and oral transmission and on the other it indicates that written texts were the norm within the literary system. As in the famous passage at the wedding of Reykjahólar, Kalebrant discusses the truth of his story: *þvíat ek vil eigi týna þeim draum né hégóma, né þat sem efan er í at trúa, heldr þat sem ek reynda ok sá*. (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 39; 'because I do not want to tell them a dream or a fiction nor anything that is subject to doubt, but rather what I experienced and saw.') A story has to be "true", to be reliable – even if it is a story within a fictional frame. Kalebrant describes "truth" as that which is seen and experienced by a person. He thus refers to the concept of the trustworthy eyewitness as it was known to a Norse audience from historical writing or from Sagas of Icelanders. On the other hand, Kalebrant is a purely fictional character, who claims truth for his story. His fictional status is underlined by the fact that he has not been introduced into the story with any genealogy or even just a father's name. The Riddarasaga obviously trusts its audience to have the necessary literary consciousness to understand this meta-fictional discussion and to distinguish between fictional and historical eye-witnesses.

After this narrative frame has been set, the Norse audience can be confronted with topics or motifs that for them are not only different from the well-known ones of indigenous literature, but that would even seem alien within an indigenous genre. While the Arthurian knights' concept of honour could be related to the concept of honour in heroic poetry or the Sagas of Icelanders, the idea that Íven feels sorry for the widow of that man he just killed must have been new in a non-religious context (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 50). The same holds true for Íven falling in love with his enemy's widow, regardless of her beauty (*Ívens saga*, ed. Kalinke 1999, 52). Within the fictional storyworld of the Riddarasögur, however, such seemingly outlandish elements could be accepted. The Riddarasögur thus provided a playground for trying new possibilities of living and relating to each other in Norse society during a period of change, when – in Iceland as well as in Norway – fewer people belonged to the elite and when this elite had closer bonds with Europe and its culture (Orning, 2017, 311).

Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr

The second example is a translation of the French verse romance *Floire et Blanchefleur* which has been dated to the middle of the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century the French verse romance was translated into Old Norse prose, but it is only preserved in later manuscripts. In the early fourteenth century the Norse text was

translated into Swedish (see below), which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Norse translation, usually dated to around 1280. The text itself does not contain any hints to the circumstances of the translation, its patron, time, place or translator. The saga is almost exclusively transmitted in Icelandic manuscripts with 25 manuscripts preserved from the time between 1385 and 1900 indicating the long-lived popularity of the story.

The Old Norse saga is based on version I – the so-called "aristocratic" version – of the French text (Degnbol 2014, 75). The last part of the saga, however, deviates from the French version. Although there are some similarities, version II – the so-called "*jongleur*-version" – of the French text is not the direct model for the saga but must be an independent creation. Nevertheless, the process of adaption and rewriting the first version was similar to the one that lead in France to the *jongleur* version (Degnbol 2014, 73): it was for a newer generation than the first translations. They were still aristocratic or members of an elite, but they knew courtly culture and did not need any description of courtly behaviour or the expensive things at a court. At the end of the thirteenth century most of the old chieftain families in Iceland had been diminished and lost their importance after the fights during the Sturlung age, and the new and upcoming elite had to compete for royal offices after Norwegian laws were implemented (Orning 2017, 312). In Norway as well there were changes after King Hákon Hákonarson's reign. His sons competed for the kingship and their reigns were shorter than their father's so there was more political change. During Hákon's reign Norway reached its greatest expansion in all its history, and it was the aim of Hákon's sons to consolidate this state. As the so-called post-classical Íslendingasögur from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries indicate these people were less interested in complicated feuds with lawsuits dependant on who is able to find more supporters at the court meetings during the þing-assemblies. *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* is well-suited to this new audience, telling a love-story that takes the protagonists to many countries with different cultures and different customs. The audience may have been reminded of places known from pilgrimages or crusades.

What has not yet been studied, however, is the role of women in the production and reception of literature. We do not know whether the growing number of love stories in literature from the end of the thirteenth century was tailored specially for a female audience or whether and how much women participated in the production of texts. However, since *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* was translated into Swedish on behalf of a woman, Queen Eufemia – as will be explained below – we might infer that women were agents acting within the literary system in a different role.

Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr does not have a prologue or any introduction. As in *Ívens saga* the very first sentences inform the audience about the genre and about the storyworld where the plot is going to unfold:

> Felix hét konungr í borg þeiri, er Aples heitir, ágætr at fé ok liði; en hann var heiðinn. Hann bauð út leiðangri ok fór með mikinn her ok skipum til Jacobs land, at brenna ok bæla ok herja á

> kristna menn. En hann var þar með lið sitt VI vikur, ok var engi sá dagr, er hann reið eigi upp á land ok brendi borgir ok rændi fé ok flutti til skipa; ok XXX rasta frá strǫndinni stóð hvárki bœr né borg, ok eigi gó hundr ok eigi gól hani, svá hafi hann eytt allt. En er Felix konungr vildi fara heim aptr, þá kallaði konungr til sín einn riddara, ok bað þá herklæðaz ok mælti svá: 'Farið upp til vegarins ok mœtiz pílagrímum þar, en vér munum hlaða skipin meðan. (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 1–2).

> Felix was the name of a king in that city that is called Aples, excellently endowed with money and men; but he was heathen. He practiced warfare and travelled with men and ships to Jacobsland, to burn and scorch and raid on Christian people. When he had been there with his army for VI weeks, there was no single day, that he did not ride up onto the land, burn cities, steal cattle and bring it back to the ships; within XXX miles from the beach there was no longer any city or village standing, and no dog was barking or rooster crying, in such a way he had destroyed everything. And when King Felix wanted to return home, he called one of his knights, ordered them to put on armour and spoke: 'Go up to the road and meet the pilgrims there, and we will load the ships in the meantime.' (own translation)

This setting is completely different from *Ívens saga* which started at the court of King Artus with story-telling and a competition among educated knights. *Flóres saga and Blankiflúr* is set in a country that is obviously outside the Christian realm. The King of this country prepares to wage war against the Christian people and Christian pilgrims. As in Ívens saga we do not get any genealogy which marks the story as fictional. The martial setting at a royal court is more reminiscent of a Fornaldarsaga than a Riddarasaga. It is only in the second chapter that courtly elements are added. Among the Christian pilgrims the King had taken hostage is a woman whom the King presents to his wife as a present:

> Dróttning varð því fegnari en engi gjǫf fyrri, ok bað hana vera sína fylgiskona ok gæta kristni sinnar; bað hon vel veita henni, ok bað aðra henni þjóna, lék opt við hana ok mælti gaman við hana, ok lét kenna henni valska tungu ok kendi henni aðrar. Konan var kurteis ok prúð, ok gerði sér hvern mann at vin. Svá þjónaði hon dróttningunni, sem sinni móður skyldi þjóna. (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 5).

> The queen was more pleased about that than about any other present before, and asked her to be her servant and take good care of her Christianity; she asked that she was served well and she asked others to serve her, she played often with her and talked to her about entertaining things, and she let her teach her the French language and taught her others. The woman was courteous and fine, and she made everyone her friend. She served the queen as you should serve your mother. (own translation)

Whereas the first chapter started with the "male" side of the story, now the "female" side is introduced. These first two chapters thus suggest an outer sphere for the men and an inner sphere for the women. The outer sphere is associated with martial aspects while the inner sphere is associated with courteous behaviour, entertainment, and education. Since according to Kölbing the remark about learning different languages seems to be an addition in the Norse version (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 5, footnote for line 6.), so it might mirror a particular awareness of the importance of for-

eign languages among the Norse audience – an audience belonging to a country with many political, religious, and economic connections to foreign countries. Between these two spheres, the rest of the story unfolds and takes place in a number of different and rather exotic countries.

As with other *Riddarasögur* and as a marker of fictionality the saga does not contain any genealogies and personal names are rare. On several occasions the translation contains additional explanations especially for a Scandinavian audience:

> En pálmsunnudagr heitir blómapáskir á útlǫndum, þviat þá bera men blóm sér í hǫndum. En blómi er flúr á vǫlsku, ok váru þau af því kallat blómi. Hann var kallaðr Flóres, en hon Blankiflúr; þat þýðir svá sem hann héti blómi, en hon hvíta blóma; (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 6–7).

> But Palm Sunday is called flower-easter[3] in foreign countries, because then people carry flowers in their hands. And flower is flúr in French, and therefore they were called flower. He was called Flóres, and she Blankiflúr; that means the same as if he were called flower and she white flower;

Like in *Ívens saga* the translator boasts of their knowledge and at the same time demonstrates that they belong to the target audience. However, the saga not only contains longer and detailed explanations like this one, but a large number of shorter explanatory subclauses. A similar "slightly pedantic tendency to explicate the development of the narrative" (Degnbol 2014, 79) can also be found in some *Fornaldarsögur*. It seems to be a common narrative within the Norse literary system to convince the audience of a story's plausibility, since it is more common in narratives with fewer historical references.

Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr is closer to the indigenous *Riddarasögur*, written in Iceland from the fourteenth century, than to the earlier translated *Riddarasögur*. It combines elements from the courtly romances – especially the descriptions of educated and refined behaviour as well as the love story – with elements from the *Fornaldarsögur*, including the fights, the travels with their challenges and the missionary story. But in contrast to other translated *Riddarasögur Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* hardly shows any signs of the courtly style except for some alliterating word-pairs which are also common in other Norse genres. The saga is a hybrid product as a result of interaction between different genres within the literary system. *Flores saga ok Blankifl*úr is already rooted deeply in the Norse literary system, as proven by its complex intertextuality. The nested narrative about Trojan matters links up with *Trójumanna saga,* and the ending suggests that of *Laxdæla saga*. It shares a motive with *Grettis saga*, when King Marsilius declares that several sides of a story have to be heard before one can judge a person.[4] The closest connection, however, is between *Flóres saga ok*

3 According to *Blómapáskir* (flower-easter) is the literal translation of the French *Pasque-florie* (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 6, footnote for line 9).

4 *ok er ósagt frá, ef einn segir*. (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, 71; ‚it has not been told, if only one is telling.') In *Grettis saga* Skapti lögsögumaðr uses a similar phrase: *en jafnan er hálfsǫgð saga, ef einn segir*; (*Grettis saga*, 146; 'but a story has been told just half, if only one is telling.').

Blankiflúr and *Víglundar saga*, an *Íslendingasaga* (Saga of Icelanders) dated to the fourteenth century. Both sagas tell the story of the love between a boy and girl who have grown up together and have to fight for a happy ending for their love. These few examples demonstrate not only the integration of *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* into the Norse literary system, but they also show that the saga is more closely related to indigenous sagas than to other Riddarasögur.

As was mentioned before, the last part of the saga deviates from the French version. With its new ending where Flóres is saving his own life and winning Blankiflúr with a fight and the magic ring the story jumps back into the martial world of the beginning. This final part tells of legal proceedings and judicial combat and transposes the action partly to Babylon, partly to Flóres' own country. When Flores and Blankiflúr are 70 years old, they retire to monasteries and spend the rest of their lives as a monk and a nun, but not before they have organised the succession to the throne with their sons. A life within a monastery is presented as an alternative for members of the secular elite, which was a real possibility in the late thirteenth century or in the fourteenth century when members of the social elite increasingly used donations to monasteries for maintaining the fundamental structures of society and for preventing their property from being split between too many heirs (Andersson 2006).

Although in literary histories *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* is usually included among the *Riddarasögur* that King Hákon Hákonarson had commissioned, it was actually translated after his reign had ended and when his sons had taken over. They represented a different generation that no longer needed information or education about courtly culture but was interested in new topics, such as travels to exotic countries and battles against heathens of different religions and cultures. Like their father, Hákon's offspring were associated with many cultural and literary activities (Degnbol 2014, 85). His son Magnús Hákonarsson lagabøtir (reg. 1263–1280) is associated with the revision and codification of the national laws, with the *Hirðskrá* (Rules of allegiance), and with translations from Latin, for example *Alexanders saga*. Hákon's grandson Eríkr Magnússon (reg. 1280–1299) is not known for his own literary activities, but during his reign a representative of the Norwegian aristocracy (Bjarni Erlingsson) travelled to Scotland, where he translated a story belonging to the *Riddarasögur* from French. Eríkur's brother Hákon Magnússon (reg. 1299–1319) is said to have sponsored large translations of religious works. In the beginning of *Viktors saga ok Blávus*, an original *Riddarasaga*, it is stated that the king had great pleasure in fair stories and had many Riddarasögur translated into Norse from "Greek" and French. Although the historicity of this statement about the Greek language may not be very trustworthy it nevertheless indicates the interest in exotic and adventurous stories at the king's court. During Hákon Hakónarson's reign as well as during this later period there was lively contact with different European countries, and there were especially close relationships with Anglo-Norman England and Scotland.

Ívens saga as well as *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* are part of the changes that took place in the Norse literary system during the thirteenth century. Although the genres

present in the literary system in the first half of the thirteenth century were still productive, they included new elements that indicate the competition with the translated *Riddarasögur* and with *Fornaldarsögur*. But the *Riddarasögur* changed as well during the thirteenth century by integrating stylistic and thematic elements from indigenous texts and indigenous contexts. At the end of the century the genres have re-defined their generic boundaries which in literary history usually leads to criticism of the individual representatives of these genres.

Sweden

In Sweden, translation played a major role in the rise and development of a literary tradition in the vernacular throughout the late Middle Ages. Intense translation activity contributed to bringing late-medieval Swedish culture into the broader European context, thus importing customs, notions and idea(l)s into the target system. The translation of literary works, mainly from the continent, is a major part of such activity.

As far as we can tell based on extant evidence, a vernacular literary tradition does not seem to have taken shape before the translation of the so-called *Eufemiavisor*, three courtly romances (*Herr Ivan lejonriddaren*, *Hertig Fredrik av Normandie*, and *Flores och Blanzeflo*r) that were turned into Old Swedish at the beginning of the fourteenth century. No strictly literary work is indeed known to us from the time prior to the appearance of these three translations. However, the *Eufemiavisor* can hardly have sprouted out of nowhere. Their formal and stylistic features make the existence of some sort of pre-existing literary tradition likely, although any attempt to reconstruct such a stage remains highly speculative.

The relative dating of the three texts has proved fairly controversial. While it is possible to assert that the *Eufemiavisor* were translated between 1301 (or 1303) and 1312, it is more problematic to establish whether *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren* (henceforth *Herr Ivan*) came first, and *Hertig Fredrik av Normandie* (henceforth *Hertig Fredrik*) after it, or the other way round. However, for the purpose of the present discussion it is not necessary to go into further details about this matter.

The name *Eufemiavisor* is a modern label. As briefly mentioned above, this group of translations is named after Eufemia of Rügen, German Queen of Norway and spouse of Hákon V, who reigned over Norway from 1299 to1319. Eufemia died in 1312, the same year in which *Flores och Blanzeflo*r is known to have been translated, as stated in the epilogue to the romance. The reason for the texts being named after the queen is that they were translated at her behest, as explicitly stated in the epilogues, most probably for the betrothal of the Norwegian princess Ingebjørg to the Swedish duke Erik Magnusson, which took place in 1302 (Johansson 2015, 151). The three translations are thus generally viewed as a gift to the couple (Würth 2000). The purpose they were meant to serve, though, did in fact stretch beyond their function as enter-

taining stories. As will be shown in more detail later on, the three texts indeed had ideological messages to convey to the Swedish aristocracy (Layher 2010), which the young princess would soon join as a result of her marriage.

The fact that the *Eufemiavisor* are known to us as the very first example of a literature in the vernacular in medieval Sweden also contributes to explaining why they played a major role in appropriating foreign models and schemes, thus shaping aristocratic ideology as reflected in literary works long after their coming into being (Johansson 2015). Most of such works are, quite interestingly, also translations based on various sources. However, the influence exerted by the *Eufemiavisor* made itself felt not only on other translations but also on original works. Here it may suffice to reinforce how they appear to have been used as ideological and formal models for the composition of *Erikskrönikan*, the first major example of the new genre of *rimkrönika* (rhymed chronicles), partly modelled after Middle Low German verse chronicles.[5] In terms of formal features, the *knittelvers* used to translate the *Eufemiavisor* was also used for *Erikskrönikan*.

Let us now take a closer look at each of the three works. Consensus among scholars holds that *Herr Ivan* is a translation based on Chrétien's *Yvain ou le chevalier au lion*. The translator made use of a copy of the Old French text, using the Old Norse translation – customarily known as *Ívens saga* – as an "additional resource for the translation process" (Lodén 2021, 50). *Herr Ivan* is the only example of Arthurian romance in Old Swedish.

Nothing certain is known about the source of *Hertig Fredrik*. Although in the epilogue one reads that it was translated from a German translation of a French original, no such source is extant.[6]

There is hardly any doubt about *Flores och Blanzeflor* being based on the Old Norse *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, itself a translation made from the so-called aristocratic version of the Old French *Floire et Blanchefleur*, a romance that enjoyed great popularity all over Europe in the High and Late Middle Ages. The hypothesis of the Old Norse saga providing the direct source text is based on fairly solid ground. The main support for this view is that the ending of the story is unique to the two Nordic versions (i.e. the Old Norse and the Old Swedish ones). However, it is possible that the translator may have used a copy of the Old French original alongside the saga (Lodén 2021, 5).

As for the identification of whomever was responsible for the translation of the three romances, although more than one hypothesis has been put forth over the last few decades, consensus now holds that the *Eufemiavisor* are likely to be the work of one person, most probably a cleric (Andersson 2014, 52; Lodén 2021, 5–6). The translator is usually identified with Peter Algotsson, who was well versed in learned conti-

5 *Erikskrönikan* is generally dated to the 1320s, i.e. only a few years after the appearance of the *Eufemiavisor*.

6 On *Hertig Fredrik* see Layher (2000; 2003); Bambeck (2009); and Matthews (2020).

nental literature, had regular contacts with the Norwegian court and with prominent aristocratic families in Northern Germany.[7]

The *Eufemiavisor* are preserved in a few multi-text manuscripts from the fifteenth century. The main ones are Cod. Holm. D 4, Cod. Holm. D 3, Cod. Holm. D 4a, AM 191 fol.[8] D 3 and D 4a were certainly owned by two noblewomen (fru Elin and fru Märta, daughter and mother), and it is likely that D 4 was owned by Gustav Algotsson, a prominent nobleman, husband of fru Märta and father to fru Elin (Jonsson 2010, 118–120; Andersson 2012, 239). AM 191 fol is known to have been owned by the chaplain of Askeby nunnery, and it is likely that *Flores och Blanzeflor* (the only *Eufemiavisa* in the manuscript) was used for the moral edification of the nuns, some of which were probably of noble descent. All this indicates that an interest in the *Eufemiavisor* in aristocratic environments continued well into the fifteenth century.

The translation activity that started in the early fourteenth century with the *Eufemiavisor* continued to import new literary texts into the Old Swedish literary system in the fifteenth century alongside the production of new rhymed chronicles and occasional texts that were meant to comment on the state of political turmoil of the Swedish kingdom, which came to be ruled mainly by foreign kings.

After the *Eufemiavisor*, literature intended for the higher echelons of society continued for the most part to be translated from foreign sources. This is particularly clear in the case of courtly romances and, more generally, of epic works. During the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a few literary works from the continent were turned into Old Swedish. Some of them were translated from Middle Low German source texts. This is the case with *Namnlös och Valentin* and *Riddar Paris och Jungfru Vienna* (also known as *Paris och Vienna*). Other works translated from Middle Low German originals which were intended for an aristocratic public are *Schacktavelslek*, an allegory on the game of chess partly based on the Middle Low German *Meister Stephans Schachbuch*, and the C-version of *Sju vise mästare*, most probably based on an incunabulum printed in Lübeck in 1478.

It is noteworthy that Middle Low German culture was considered prestigious in medieval Sweden, as was the Middle Low German language, especially in aristocratic environments (Lodén 2021, 14).

Other important translated works include *Konung Alexander*, *Didrikskrönikan* and *Historia Sancti Olai*. The first is an Old Swedish verse translation of the I2-redaction of the Latin *Historia de preliis* (a work chronicling the deeds of Alexander the Great). It was translated at the behest of Bo Jonsson Grip, a member of the Swedish *riksråd*, in the second half of the fourteenth century (Jansson 2015). The translated text was rewritten considerably to enhance its ideological contents (Bampi 2015). Some parts were ap-

7 For a different hypothesis see Wollin (2015).

8 For a detailed list see Layher (2015). For a description of the main manuscript witnesses see Bampi (2022).

parently added to function as a commentary on treachery and treason as two of the main causes of the moral decay pervading the Swedish court.

Didrikskrönikan is a strongly abridged translation of *Þiðreks saga af Bern*, a major epic compilation having the Gothic king as main protagonist (Henning 1970), and *Historia Sancti Olai* is itself an abridgement of the West Norse *Ólafs saga helga*, a saga narrative about the Norwegian royal saint Ólafr Haraldsson. Similarly, the work known as *Karl Magnus* is a verse translation of two episodes from *Karlamagnús saga*, a West Norse compilation of narratives about the deeds of Charlemagne and his champions (Kornhall 1959).

In all of the abovementioned examples, the target text is marked by a clear tendency to rewrite the source text to adjust it to a different context of use or a different purpose. The constraints obtaining in the target culture did indeed necessarily have a bearing on the way the text was manipulated when it was imported into a new culture. The greater the distance between the two cultures, the greater the degree of manipulation of the text tended to be.

In the following, the role of ideology in the translation of two of the *Eufemiavisor* shall be illustrated by way of a few examples that help elucidate the overall translation strategy.

Before delving into the translated texts, two caveats must be given. First, the textual analysis has been conducted using the critical editions of the Old Swedish and the Old Norse texts. As is widely known, the edited text is the result of a reconstruction based on a thorough examination of all the manuscript witnesses of the work. As such, it cannot be granted the status of original version of the work. Second, since it is not known which manuscript version of the Old Norse translation the translator used, the divergences that can be detected in the target text may have been there in the manuscript version of the text used by the translator. As will be shown later on, though, some divergences are more likely to be the result of conscious choices made by the translator.

Herr Ivan

Herr Ivan is generally held to be the oldest of the three *Eufemiavisor*. If compared to its alleged source text – the Old French *Yvain*, as mentioned above – the translated text contains a number of passages that point to the role played by ideology in rewriting the text for a different public, and indeed for a different purpose. In her doctoral dissertation, as well as in a number of subsequent articles (Lódén 2018; 2021), Sofia Lodén focuses on the value of the target text as "a coherent and engaged interpretation that does not misinterpret its sources but interprets them for the sake of intrinsic coherence" (Lodén 2021, 285). The kind of interpretation of the story and its underlying values that *Herr Ivan* provides is best approached against the background of the

ideological function that this text, along with the other *Eufemiavisor*, was meant to serve (amongst others, Würth 2000).

The following observations are meant to show how the appropriation of the source text appears to have been driven mainly by ideological concerns, all of which linked with the reception of the text in aristocratic environments.[9]

Such concerns regarded mainly two major aspects, securely linked together: a political one (the idealized representation of the ruler) and a pedagogical one (the instruction of the Swedish nobility in terms of ideal conduct).

Joseph Sullivan sums up the thematic core of the text and its political implications as follows:

> among the central thematic features of the Old Swedish text is its program presenting model political behaviors suitable for emulation by noble audience members. In fact, the Old Swedish text delivers a much more coherent and positive picture of right rule and the ideal relationships that should exist between individuals sharing political bonds than had Chrétien's often morally and politically ambiguous *Yvain* (Sullivan 2015, 34).

In particular, the Swedish translator adjusted the portrayal of King Arthur to turn him into a model king.

Quite interestingly, the prologue to the Old Swedish translation follows the pattern used in *Ívens saga* to introduce the recipients to the story. In *Herr Ivan*, too, the prologue provides information about the legendary king, also by comparing him to Charlemagne:

> aff the werdhogasta konunga twa
> ther man æ hørdhe sakt j fra:
> Karlamagnus oc konung Artws;
> til dyghdh oc æro waro the fws
> Artws war konung aff Ængland.
> Han van Rom medh swerdh oc brand
> ok war ther keyser medh mykle æra.
> Han frælste Ængland aff hardhe kæra
> ok skat ther romara førra giordho,
> swa at ængin han sidhen kreffwia thordhe.
> Annar war Karlamagnus aff Franz.
> Thet wil iak idher sighia til sanz,
> mot hedhna mæn for cristna at stridæ
> waro enge fræmbre j thera tidæ.
> Badhe the herra iak sigher j fra
> the haffwa thera framfærdh skipath swa,

9 As shown above, all three *Eufemiavisor* are preserved in manuscripts that were either owned by members of the Swedish aristocracy (Cod. Holm. D 4a and Cod. Holm. D3, and most probably Cod. Holm. D 4) or used for an aristocratic public (AM 191 fol).

ower alla werldina gaar there loff
hwar herra och førstæ søkiæ hoff.
(*Herr Ivan,* ed. Noreen 1931, vv. 9–22)

about the two most worthy kings
about whom stories have ever been told:
Charlemagne and King Arthur;
they were eager for virtue and honor.
Arthur was the king of England.
He conquered Rome with sword and fire
and was emperor there with great glory.
He freed England from hardship
and from tribute which the Romans formerly imposed,
so that nobody has dared demand it since.
Charlemagne was the other one.
In truth I want to tell you:
where Christians battled against the heathens
none was more outstanding in those days.
The two rulers I am telling about
have governed their actions in such a manner
that their praise has spread over the entire earth,
wherever lords and princes hold court.
(*Hærra Ivan,* trans. Williams and Palmgren 1999, 11)

As observed by Sullivan (2015, 35–36), the prologue in Chrétien's *Yvain* is much shorter, and does not contain any reference to Charlemagne.

If compared to *Ívens saga*, though, the Old Swedish prologue shows a more structured comparison of King Arthur and Charlemagne, which can be said to highlight the exemplary nature of King Arthur. In particular, the translator emphasizes their exemplarity both as valorous defenders of the Christian faith and as great rulers, as *reges iusti* whose actions have gained them praise.

King Arthur is thus represented throughout as a ruler in command of his decisions and actions. Accordingly, the Swedish translator rewrites the episode in which the king takes to his chambers with his wife, at the outset of the story. Whereas in the Old French text it is the queen who detains him ([*e [m]es cel jor ensi li avint/ que la reïne le detint,/si demora tant delez li/ qu'il s'oblia et endormi* [*Yvain*, ed. Poirion et al. 1994, vv. 49–52]), in *Herr Ivan* the king is the one who decides to go to sleep, followed by his wife (*Herr Ivan,* ed. Noreen 1931, vv. 59–68). The rewording of the episode emphasizes the king being subject to no decisions but his own, and the fact that the queen is here presented as acting upon King Arthur's decision can be indicative of the translator's ideological agenda.

The other major way in which the Old Swedish text appears to be the result of a conscious rewriting of the source text is its response to the pedagogical preoccupation. This becomes particularly obvious in the attitude towards the portrayal of noble characters' conduct. A good example of this is the scene in which the narrator describes Laudine's reaction to the tragic news of her husband's death. In the Old

French text her despair is described in a rather dramatic way: *she cried out loudly and fell down in a faint. When she was lifted back to her feet, she began clawing at herself and tearing out her hair like a madwoman; her hands grabbed and ripped her clothing and she fainted with every step* (trans. Kibler 1991, 309; corresponds to lines 1150–1160 in the Old French text).

In the Swedish text, Laudine's reaction is described in a very different way. Indeed, her grief "remains rather more controlled: instead of screaming, she weeps and is unable to speak or hear" (Lodén 2021, 54):

> For sorgh gath hon ey talat eller hørt
> ønkelik tha varo hænna laat
> for sorgh ok iæmber ok mykin graat.
> Først hon a likit sa
> ij ofwith fiol hon nider ok la
> (*Herr Ivan*, ed. Noreen 1931, vv. 944–948)

> For grief she was not able to speak or hear
> the sounds she made were pitiable,
> caused by grief and lamentation and much weeping.
> As soon as she saw the corpse
> she fell down in a swoon
> (*Hærra Ivan*, trans. Williams and Palmgren 1999, 53)

It is more than likely that the translator decided to rewrite the description of the grief-stricken woman's conduct in the Old French text because it was considered unworthy of a noble woman. Interestingly, the same kind of censorious attitude is found in other Old Swedish translated works, namely in *Namnlös och Valentin* and in the C-redaction of *Sju vise mästare* (Bampi 2014, 253–254). The fact that there exist other instances of the translator's intervention to rework a passage describing the conduct of noble characters may be taken as a clue to an overall ideological agenda, whereby texts intended for an aristocratic public, in addition to being sources of entertainment, were meant to serve a "pedagogical" purpose, i.e., provide models of conduct for the Swedish nobility to follow.

Flores och Blanzeflor

As seen above, the Old Swedish translation was made from a copy of the Old Norse *Flóres saga*.

Some passages in the Old Swedish translation of *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr* appear particularly relevant to the purpose of identifying the main traits of the translated text as opposed to the source text. Such passages regard three main aspects of the ren-

dition of the story: the role of divine intervention, the use of direct speech, and the description of noble characters and their demeanour within a courtly context.[10]

As for the first aspect, the Old Swedish text contains a relevant number of passages where references to God are expanded as compared to *Flóres saga*. On a more general note, a tendency to highlight the religious aspects of the story can be discerned, with God's role as the main mover of the action acknowledged and highlighted by the narrator's voice.[11]

The use of direct speech for passages given in reported speech in the source text features across the Old Swedish *Flores*. The main consequence of this is that there are more dialogues in the target text than in the source text. This feature of the translated text is particularly relevant in that it contributes to enhancing the dramatic tension of the story, thus making some scenes more prominent than others. Also, it functions to highlight the didactic quality of the text, i.e. its role as an instrument for the illustration of good vs. bad behaviour. The latter is without a doubt a major feature of the *Eufemiavisor* as a whole, and indeed of most of the translated literature of secular works in Old Swedish. It is safe to assert, as has been shown in international scholarship, that courtly literature – and literature in general – is best understood if viewed as providing both entertainment and instruction. Broadly speaking, there tends to be an element of ideology to the texts making up the courtly repertoire, with the representation of the courtly world and its values playing a major role in the semantic architecture of these works (see, amongst others, Småberg 2011 and Bergqvist 2015 for Old Swedish chivalric literature).

One interesting trait of the Old Swedish *Flores* is that the translator rewrote some passages illustrating the demeanour of members of the aristocracy to adapt it for an audience of people belonging to the nobility. One such passage is when the king of Babylon finds Blankiflúr / Blanzeflor, kept captive in a tower, in the arms of Flóris / Flores. The source and the target texts differ considerably in the way in which the king addresses the woman:

> ***Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*:**
> Konungr spurði, hvat manna hann væri, "er þú þorðir at ganga hingat í turninn og leggjaz með Blankiflúr? Ok þar fyrir skaltu deyja ok hon, sú hin vánda púta, er hjá þér liggr." Nú kom Flóres í hug, hvílíka sælu þau hǫfðu heima, eðr hvat nú var fyrir augum, ok mælti Flóres til konungs: "Herra", sagði hann, "kallið eigi Blankiflúr pútu, þvíat enga fái þér slíka í yðvarri borg." (*Flores saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 68–69)
>
> The King asked what kind of a man he was, "you who dare to come here to the tower and sleep with Blankiflúr? And for this reason you will die, you and the wicked whore who is lying beside you." Now Flóres remembered how happy they used to be at home and thought of what was

10 The following remarks on *Flores och Blanzeflor* are based on Bampi (2012).

11 See, for example, ll. 665–680, in the Old Swedish text as compared to what is told in the Old Norse saga (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 34–35).

appearing before him right now, and said to the King: "Sir", he said, "do not call Blankiflúr a whore, because there is no woman like her in your castle." (own translation)

***Flores och Blanzeflor*:**
tha mælte om thæn konung rik:
"Hwa æst thu, læt mik thet forstanda,
ther thik thordhe thetta tagha til handa,
gøra vith mik tholik oæra,
sofua medh miin hiærta kæra?
Iak swær om alla gudha iak a,
ij skulin ondan dødh hær fa;
then skamlikasta iak kan radha,
tha skulin ij hær tagha badhe;
the onda quinna hær ligger hos thik
swa hadhelika hafuer swikith mik."
Flores sagdhe til konungin tha:
"Talin the quinno ey illa op a
for idher eghin konungxlik æra!
Hon ær ey værdugh skyld at bæra."
(*Flores och Blanzeflor*, ed. Olsson 1921, 105–06)

Then the mighty King said: "What are you, tell me,
who dared to come here and
to commit such a shameful act,
you who dared to sleep with my beloved?
I swear upon all the gods I have,
you will suffer a terrible death;
the most shameful death I can give you both;
the wicked woman who is lying beside you
has hatefully fooled me."
Flores said to the King:
"Do not speak so badly of this woman
on your royal honour.
She does not deserve to be blamed."
(own translation)

Judging the words uttered by the King as completely inappropriate, the translator deletes his description of the woman's behaviour. Remarkably, Flores appeals to the king's royal honour (*for idher eghin konungxlik æra*).

In a similar vein, later on in the text the translator adds a few words to clarify why he silently disapproves of the King's behaviour:

Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr
þá mælti húsbóndi: "Herra", segir hann, "mér sýniz, sem þú sér óglaðr; væntir mik, at þat sé vegna tollsins, er þú galt svá mikinn, þvíat þat er enn tíundi hverr peningr." Þá svarar Flóres: "Ek hugsa um þann konung, er slíkt býðr." (*Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*, ed. Kölbing 1896, 36)

Then the householder spoke: "Sir", he said, "it seems to me that you are unhappy. I feel it is because of the high toll you had to pay, because it is a tenth of each penny." Then Flóres answered: "I am thinking about the king who orders such things." (own translation)

Flores och Blanzeflor:
S: Husbondin taladhe til hans thæræ:
"Min gæst, mik thykker thik syrghiande væra,
ffor tol idhra pæninga tok min swen —
thy at edher tio gaar hær for en."
Tha huxadhe Flores mædher sik:
"Then konunger ær ey dygdhelik,
ther tholik toll biudher wt at fa,
ther ængin iæmpnath følghia ma."
(*Flores och Blanzeflor*, ed. Olson 1921, vv. 46–47; see also *Le conte de Floire et Blanchefleur*, ed. Leclanche 2003, 72; vv. 715–722)

The householder said to him:
"My beloved guest, it seems to me that you are in sorrow
because of the toll that my boy levied from your money —
in fact, it is a tenth on each penny."
Then Flores thought to himself:
"It is not a virtuous king
the one who orders to levy this toll,
if the money is not equally distributed afterwards."
(own translation)

Concluding remarks

The observations presented above allow us to point to some major differences regarding the way in which the translation of courtly literature – understood as a major instrument of cultural transfer and innovation – had an impact on the Old Norse and the Old Swedish literary systems. In the Old Norse literary system, there already existed a strong narrative tradition in prose (i.e., that of saga writing), which helps explain why Old French romances in verse were translated in prose. Also, other saga genres were already present and productive. The introduction of courtly romances gave rise to the *Riddarasögur* genre, the stylistic and thematic repertoire of which came to interact with the already existing genres. Such an interplay resulted in a cross-fertilization between genres producing hybrid forms, with the *Riddarasögur* being both on the giving and the receiving end of the process of mutual influence. Additionally, the two chivalric sagas discussed here (*Ívens saga* and *Flóres saga ok Blankiflúr*) represent two stages in the reception of chivalric and courtly matters in medieval Norway and Iceland. Interestingly, *Flóres saga*, as a later product of an interest in the chivalric world than *Ivens saga*, shows a remarkable degree of influence

from indigenous saga genres, rather than from other translated *Riddarasögur*, thus attesting to the fact that the new generic repertoire introduced a generation earlier had already been absorbed, and took active part in the development of the literary system.

The case of medieval Sweden is rather different. Here, the fact that the three *Eufemiavisor* mark the beginning of literary production in the vernacular mean that translation actually paved the way for textual production in Old Swedish. The three texts thus imported narrative and ideological models that were then adopted to give rise either to a new indigenous genre (i.e., the *rimkrönikor*) or to new translations of texts meant to address an aristocratic public. In other words, the ideological agenda of the *Eufemiavisor* kept its validity long after the appearance of the three translations.

Unlike the Old Norse situation, no cross-fertilization between genres is evidenced. It is certainly indicative of the state of the Old Swedish literary system that translations do not seem to have triggered the composition of original works of the same kind (i.e., romances directly written in Old Swedish).

In both cases discussed above, translation came to play an active part in the shaping and development of the literary polysystem of which it became a part. We believe that the different dynamics at play are indicative of the importance of studying translation activity and its various textual manifestations as an integral and active part of cultural production in the medieval period.

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