Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Triennale Interclasse in
Lingue, Letterature e Mediazione Culturale (LTLLM)
Classe LT-11

Tesina di Laurea

Recounting a Myth: Relics of Norse Deities in Walter Scott's The Pirate

Relatore
Prof. Omar Khalaf

Laureanda
Martina Ongarato
n° matr.2008165 / LTLLM

Anno Accademico 2022 / 2023

To my mother, for her sacrifices.

To my brother, for his endless patience.

To all my friends, for their love and support.

And to professor Khalaf, for showing me that

my passions are worth it, after all.

Contents

Introduction 4

Chapter 1 – Sir Walter Scott and the Scandinavian world 7

1.1 The matter of "Northern antiquities" 7

1.2 Antiquary, scholar, collector: Scott's interest in Old Norse literature 10

Chapter 2 – A Romantic Medievalism 15

2.1 Scott's romanticisation of the Middle Ages 15

2.2 Experimenting with the myths: the case of Harold the Dauntless 20

Chapter 3 – *The Pirate*, a myth within the tale 29

3.1 Old Norse elements in the novel 29

3.2 The characters and the Norse deities, a comparison 34

Conclusions 49

Summary in Italian 52

Bibliography 56

Introduction

In 1814, Sir Walter Scott embarked on a trip that would become, a few years later, the prime inspiration for one of his novels. During the voyage that would have taken him around Shetland and Orkney, Scott had the opportunity to observe the culture of their residents, who maintained some of the traditions of the settlers that conquered Shetland nine centuries before – the Vikings (Lieder, 1920). Coincidentally, by that time Scott had already accumulated quite a vast knowledge on the history, culture and especially literature of the Norse. As a matter of fact, the father of the historical novel had a passion for Old Norse texts, even if, except for a few examples, he had not had the chance yet to properly use his expertise for a novel. The trip to the Shetland Isles, however, gave him the opportunity to do exactly this. In 1821, he published *The Pirate*, a novel set in those same regions, in which Scott draws from his knowledge of Old Norse texts to depict the culture of their inhabitants. In the novel, Scott recounts how the life of the inhabitants of Shetland is shaken by the arrival of a mysterious man, Captain Cleveland, who will later be revealed to be the pirate that the title references to. It is mainly a tale of societal transformation, in which the traditions of the protagonists collide with the revolutions of the world, creating a series of changes and turmoil in their peaceful existence.

This thesis aims to investigate the influence that the Old Norse sources had in the construction of *The Pirate*, especially those related to the characters of the novel. In addition to a more general analysis of the text, in fact, the focus of this study is to underline the possible correlations between the protagonists of Scott's work and the deities of the Norse myths. The reason behind this research stems from a series of considerations that I made while reading the novel. It was already known to me that *The Pirate* presented several elements extracted from Old Norse sources. However, while reading it, more and more details caught my attention, both as a reader and as a passionate student of Norse traditions. It appeared clear to me that a correlation between the characters and the Norse gods could be present in the novel, a suspicion that prompted this research into the direction that is hereby presented.

Although scholarly attention has been already shown on the subject, the studies that have been published are limited in scope and not up-to-date. The link between Scott's work and Norse texts have been discussed and verified by Edit Batho, who points out that the Scottish author have had a passion for this literary tradition since his childhood. In her work, Batho demonstrates that Scott spent much of his time studying thoroughly both skaldic poetry and the sagas, an effort that resulted in the

publication, in 1814, of the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, a work of comparative literature presenting many pieces of Old Norse literature that had never been translated into English before. Scott acted merely as an editor of the collection, even though he contributed to it with the *Abstract of Eyrbyggja Saga* (Batho, 1929). The connections between *The Pirate* and Old Norse sources have been analysed more thoroughly by Paul Lieder, who, in his work, calls attention to Scott's habit of directly quoting the writings of Danish antiquarian Bartholin and Swedish writer Olaus Magnus and analyses the passages in which these references are more evident. The mentions of Bartholin's work are not only present in *The Pirate*, but also in other novels and poems by the Scottish author (Lieder, 1920). However, Lieder restricts his studies only around the references that are more immediately recognizable and almost quoted word by word by Scott.

It seems that an investigation of the more implicit aspects of Norse influence in Scott's works have yet to spark the interest of the general academic discourse surrounding the creator of the historical romance. The lack of studies of this sort is what primarily inspired the writing of this thesis, considering that such an approach could be beneficial to the study of Scott's literature. On one hand, it could offer a new point of view for the analysis and interpretation of his writings. Scott's historical novels could be reinterpreted by looking at the elements that present a Norse spirit, possibly giving them a new meaning. This approach could also present an opportunity for the rediscovery of Scott's less influential writings, like *Harold the Dauntless* or *The Pirate* itself.

This study aims primarily at showing connections between the characters of *The Pirate* and the gods of the ancient Norse religion. The similarities are suggested mainly by the core attributes of the characters, by their personalities and by their role in the novel. However, to understand if these references are, in fact, in the text, it is vital to understand Scott's true preparation in the matter. If the Scottish author was just a casual reader of Norse literature, it is improbable that he possessed the essential knowledge to insert such references. On the contrary, if he was more than passionate about the subject, than the claim is more plausible. It can also be interesting to understand which elements of Old Norse literature were more attractive to an author – and, more importantly, to the audience – of the early nineteenth century.

This thesis will present three chapters that will clarify the relationship between Scott and the literary tradition of the Norse. The first chapter consists of an analysis of Scott as an "antiquarian", a collector of medieval texts. It will present an overview of the growing interest in the stories of medieval Scandinavia in the United Kingdom, from the Elizabethan period until the nineteenth century, and an analysis of Scott's own relationship with these texts. The second chapter aims at uncovering the elements of the medieval past that Scott might have considered as "Romantic". A brief analysis of his last long poem, *Harold the Dauntless*, will serve as an example of how Scott

works with Old Norse sources to create a story that can appeal to his readers. Finally, the third chapter will focus on *The Pirate*. A general investigation of the Norse elements presented in the novel will open this section, allowing the reader to grasp the overall setting created by Scott in the story. After this, the connection between the characters and the Norse deities will be explored in detail, with precise references to Old Norse texts.

The investigation will be conducted using a comparative method. Starting from Scott's personal interest in Norse studies, I will proceed with an analysis of the sources that were available to the author at the time the novel was written, which will be then used to study the characterization and key elements of the protagonists of the book. To further study *Harold the Dauntless* and *The Pirate*, I will continue by comparing excerpts from these two texts with passages from Old Norse literature that might have served as inspiration. The Norse sources that I will use as the backbone of my comparison will be the Poetic *Edda* and Snorri Sturluson's Prose *Edda.* In addition to these, further references will be made to other texts, such as Snorri's *Heimskringla* and the *Eiríks saga rauða.*

If the comparison between the characters of *The Pirate* and the deities of the Old Norse pantheon will be effective, it will open the doors to a new understanding of Scott's preparation on medieval subjects that is not only limited to the history of medieval England, which served as the background for his most famous novel, *Ivanhoe*. Moreover, it will prove Scott's sensibility and skill in working his source materials that goes beyond the much more researched habit of quoting directly. In my opinion, Scott proves himself to be an excellent author not only when he is able to take precise information from other sources and present it to his audience. Scott's pedagogical intent has in fact already been highlighted in previous studies (Mitchell, 1989). However, Scott seems skilled in taking elements from his sources and reworking them to look more modern, transforming them until they are no longer entirely recognizable except to the discerning eye. With this thesis, my main intention is to restore Scott's credit not just as an aspirant scholar who enjoys writing, but as a skilled author that is able to reframe his sources to create a unique story.

Chapter 1
Sir Walter Scott and the Scandinavian world

1.1 The matter of "Northern antiquities"

In 1814, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* was ultimately made available to the public after four years of work undertaken by its authors: German editor Henry Weber, Scottish antiquarian Robert Jamieson, and Sir Walter Scott. The piece was to become fundamental for the circulation of Old Norse and medieval German texts in England, with its rich array of abstracts and translations, some of which were previously unfamiliar to readers (Simpson, 1973, p. 308-309).

Scott officially contributed to the *Illustrations* with his *Abstract of the Eyrbyggja Saga*, which has been regarded as "the first English edition of an entire Old Norse saga" (D'Arcy and Wolf, 1987, p. 32). A further analysis of the *Abstract* will be provided later in the chapter, as it is critical to comprehend Scott's true understanding regarding Old Norse literature. However, even if the *Abstract* is the only instance of Scott's name being used to indicate authorship in the collection, scholars have confirmed his true involvement with the book. The creation of the *Illustrations* began in 1810, and was initiated by Scott himself, who sought a potential collaboration with Richard Polwhele, a clergyman with a passion for history (Simpson, 1973, p. 309). Moreover, Scott seems to have assisted Weber with the translation of some verses of the *Nibelungenlied*, according to Scott's biographer (Lockhart, 1838). These two instances alone should point out how involved Scott truly was in the writing of the *Illustrations*.

The concept of "Northern antiquities" was not entirely unfamiliar to the assortment of scholars, authors, and antiquarians of the early nineteenth century. However, although it was not entirely an unknown field, it could be considered a rather recent interest. It was only in 1770 when Thomas Percy published his *Northern Antiquities or, A description of the manners, customs, religion and laws of the ancient Danes and other northern nations, including those of our own Saxon ancestors* (henceforth *Northern Antiquities*), a translation of Swiss writer Paul Mallet's own *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*. The publication renewed an interest in Old Norse literature that – at least in England – was starting to resurface after centuries spent on the sideline (O'Donoghue, 2014).

As has been theorized in the past, it is possible that the interest in researching and collecting Medieval objects, in particular manuscripts, started in the mid-sixteenth century, right after the dissolution of monasteries carried out by Henry VIII. With the abolition of the monastical institutions, private collectors picked up the job of recovering, gathering, and redistributing knowledge that would have otherwise been lost (Fell, 1992, p. 86). This essential service of the first antiquarians, however, was not enough to keep the interest of the public focused on Old Norse literature. In the Elizabethan period there seemed to be little to no interest in the tales of heroes and gods of the North. Myths were probably known to a certain extent, but not in written form (O'Donoghue, 2014, p. 28). At the turn of the century, however, antiquarianism started to gain new value: intellectuals and writers began to display an interest in Old Norse literature which was not just literary, but political as well. Germanic tribes, primarily the Goths, promptly became a noble ancestor to reclaim – not only they had been able to outdo the greatness of the Roman Empire, but they also brought "democratic liberty" to the British Isles (Spray, 2015). This idea generated from an interpretation of Tacitus and his *Germania*, where the "barbarians" are depicted as bearers of those original Roman values that were lost in the centuries. Conversely, there are limits to the attention intellectuals took in Old Norse literature. There are no poetical attempts with Scandinavian subjects, and the interest shown seems relegated to politics, with no extensions to art and religion. Moreover, there was an issue with runes. At this point, runes were still called "Gothic characters" and were yet to receive an adequate interpretation by scholars and thinkers. Rhyme was also a source of arguments. Rhyme, being a poetic element of Germanic origin, was perceived both as a withdrawal from classical quantitative poetry, but also as a traditional element of English literature. This originated a debate between poets who were in favor of claiming rhyme as part of English poetical tradition and those who were against it (O'Donoghue, 2014, p. 32).

Between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century the same, nationalistic vision of Old Norse myth persevered, even if more interpretations began to emerge. As an example, scholars seemed to re-evaluate the figure of Óðinn – from sorcerer and shaman, he was now interpreted as a valiant armed leader of the Goths, a figure to be feared. This adjustment occurred above all thanks to the action of Robert Sheringan in his *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio*, which gave the public an interpretation of Óðinn as the god of poetry and runes as well as ruler of Valhalla. At this point, more information about the Norse myths started to circulate. In 1665, Peder Hansen Resen's *Edda Islandorum* was published and, in 1689, Thomas Bartholin's *Danish Antiquities*. With these publications, Snorri's *Edda*, as well as *Völuspá* and *Hávamál*, began to be recognized and appreciated by the public. During the eighteenth century, the focus remained on Óðinn and the tale of Ragnarr Loðbrók, with specific attention given to the theme of death and Valhalla. However, real academic

thoroughness still appeared as an afterthought. Names originally from sagas and poems were still inaccurately Latinized or spelled incorrectly. The poetry of Old Norse inspiration remained political rather than artistic. Nevertheless, things were about to change. The poetic qualities of Nordic literature slowly began to be played with by poets. For the first time, Old Norse verses were starting to appeal to readers and intellectuals for their own qualities instead of the patriotic projections of thinkers of the time. This is the case, for example, of Thomas Gray's "Norse odes" – *The Descent of Odin* and *The Fatal Sisters*, his own versions of *Baldrs draumar* and *Darraðarljóð.* Thanks to the work of Mallet and Percy, with the publication of *Northern Antiquities*, and the popularization of Norse inspired poetry, like Gray's, Scandinavian subjects were slowly becoming more and more relevant (O'Donoghue, 2014, pp. 28-64).

The interest that these scholars showed was then passed onto Romantic intellectuals. It is true that the most well-known artists of Romanticism did not show any curiosity in these subjects. The 'first generation' of Romantic poets – Coleridge, Wordsworth – encountered the new wave of Old Norse studies of the time but were not excessively inspired by them. Neither was the 'second generation', with Percy Shelley and Lord Byron as their representatives. However, the nineteenth century was not poor with innovations in the field of Norse studies. It opened with new translations of the *Edda*, such as Amos Cottle's *Icelandic poetry, or The Edda of Sæmund* in 1797, and William Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry* in 1804. In literature, the gods of the Norse pantheon and the protagonists of the sagas became a tool to explore themes such as love, sexuality, family, and stopped being just elements that linked the past and the present (O'Donoghue, 2014, pp. 104-147). This rediscovered mindfulness of the Scandinavian world created a new role in society for the figure of the antiquarian. Antiquarianism finally became relevant to scholarly debate because it was able to create a link between the imagination of the artist and the empiricism of the historian. This new movement was able to extend the interests of its members from literature and architecture to social history, customs, and traditions (Hill, 2011).

This was the context that led to the publication of the *Illustration of Northern Antiquities* – and, as we will see, to other works by Scott of Old Norse subject, such as *Harold the Dauntless* and *The Pirate*. A work like that of Scott, Weber and Jamieson can only appear now as the natural result of an attention towards Scandinavian and Germanic literature that was becoming more and more ordinary, not only for the themes that it provided – so exquisitely Romantic – but also for the need of writings of academic value on the topic. The most intriguing aspect of the *Illustrations* is what it shows of Scott as an intellectual, as he was not immune to the revived relevance of antiquarianism. As Hill describes him, he himself was "a self-described and enthusiastic antiquary" (Hill, 2011, p. 17). He even went as far as to publish a novel titled *The Antiquary*, in 1816. What Scott did with the

Illustration was promoting medieval literature in a way that was not correlated with his artistic endeavors – we could consider it an academic or scholarly attempt for a writer that has, for the most part, being considered as "not scholarly", as we will see later in the chapter (Lieder, 1920).

1.2 Antiquary, scholar, collector: Scott's interest in Old Norse literature

Scott's interest in Old Norse literature is widely recognized. The number of publications written by him on the subject, as well as many other influences present in his works, are a testament to his passion for the Scandinavian tradition in Medieval times.

The most notorious example is the *Abstract of the Eyrbyggja Saga*, which Scott wrote in 1813 as a critical piece for the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*. As Edith Batho notes in her *Sir Walter Scott and the Sagas*, the *Abstract* is the first English rendition of an Icelandic saga, making Scott a pioneer in the distribution of Germanic texts in the early 1810s (Batho, 1929, p. 410).

The *Abstract* was probably regarded, at the time of its publication, as a valuable source not only for the comments that Scott made on different aspects of medieval Iceland, but also for the translation itself. The edition of the family saga that recounts the story of Snorri goði, however, is not perfect. It presents an array of errors that are both linguistic and stylistic. Nevertheless, these mistakes can be traced back to Scott's habit of quoting from memory without checking his sources, or because of haste, instead of a lack of knowledge and preparation (D'Arcy and Wolf, 1987, p. 34).

Apart from the publication of the *Abstract*, Scott's competence in Old Norse literature emerges again in other instances. As both Conrad Nordby and Paul Lieder underlined in their works, Scott seemed to rely on Latin translations of Old Norse texts for his studies, most notably Bartholin, Olaus Magnus and others. He used to refer to these sources in the footnotes of his writings, a practice that can also be observed in the *The Pirate* (Nordby, 1901; Lieder, 1920). These and more instances have been well documented in several academic publications, most notably in the forementioned analysis by Lieder. However, the aim of this chapter is to highlight a deeper understanding and a certain level of subtle competence owned by Scott that might have had repercussions on the building of the characters in *The Pirate*. The goal of this analysis is to determine whether Scott's knowledge of the matter could, in fact, have led him to insert elements of the Old Norse deities in the characters in his text.

The first aspect to consider is that Scott had been exposed to Scandinavian lore since his childhood. This passion was passed on onto him by the ballads that his mother sung to him and continued well after his childhood. He read Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* when

he was thirteen, and at seventeen his research on Norse, Old English and early Scottish literatures won him the title of "Duns Scotus" at a local debate group (Chandler, 1965, p. 318). This indicates a certain level of familiarity with the myths, folklore and recurring images and traditions presented by Old Norse literature – a familiarity that have guided him in his later studies, and that might have resurfaced, consciously or not, in his writings. Apart from his passion for the Sagas, Scott displayed a certain degree of interest in the most basic lore of Scandinavian tradition. In December 1792, when he was twenty-one, he read his paper, titled *On the Origin of the Scandinavian Mythology*, at the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. This alone suggests that Scott was interested in mythology, in addition to the deeds and exploits of the kings and warriors of the sagas.

Mythology must have been a great curiosity for Scott, so much so that, in 1792 – the same year as his speech at the Speculative Society – he felt the need to register his most recent readings in an entry of his journal. The text was *The Descent of Odin*, and he reported various versions of it, such as Bartholin's Latin translation, Thomas Gray's English poetic rendition of the piece and the original in Old Norse. The fact that Scott decided to add the original text should not be considered a matter of little to no importance. As Lieder's words put it, "Scott was not, nor should we expect him to be, scholarly in his methods" (Lieder, 1920, p. 13). This does not mean, however, that he did not try to add aspects of rigorousness to his studies. Even though Scott solely depended on Latin translations of the original Old Norse text – and it is not my intention to discredit this view – the Scottish author himself claimed to have at least a slight understanding of the language (Lieder, 1920, p.16). This limited knowledge shows itself in the attempt to correct some translation mistakes in Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, Translated from the Islandic Language*, published in 1763. Scott also appears very selective of the translation of the texts he chose to focus on, being critical towards some linguistic choices made by Mallet in his *Monuments de la mythologie et de la poesie des Celtes, et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves*. The book was then translated into English by Thomas Percy in *Northern Antiquities,* alongside Mallet's other work, *Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc*. All these examples point to Scott's attempt to be as thorough as possible for him, despite his linguistic limitations. An attempt that also underlines a level of curiosity and even understanding of the source material that might have reappeared in some of his writings.

It is also very important to understand the kind of environment Scott was immersed in. The Scottish author was constantly surrounded by scholars, writers and artists that shared the same academic interests in medieval foreign literature. The forementioned *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, redacted together with Weber and Jamieson, was a result of the circle of scholars Scott was acquainted with. Moreover, apart from Weber and Jamieson, Scott had contacts with scholars and academics from the Scandinavian area as well. Icelandic scholar Finnur Magnússon met Scott

and other Scottish authors during a short trip to Edinburgh, in the summer of 1812. Magnússon then kept in contact with them (Halink, 2015, p. 241). This can create an idea of the kind of atmosphere Scott was absorbed in – he was surrounded with people that were as familiar as him in such matters, and he was probably able to discuss, argue and speculate liberally on it.

This human aspect of his studies cannot be overlooked. It is central, for obvious reasons, to consider his writings, studies, and publications, but this brief analysis of the environment that surrounded him – or, rather, that he created around himself – also might suggest that his views on such matters probably were broader than what transpires from his publications alone.

As it had already been established, Scott was an avid reader, and he went as far as to register his literary discoveries in his personal journals, letters, and publications. An example of this rigorousness, apart from the one cited earlier in the chapter, can be observed in a series of letters he addressed to Thomas Frognall Dibdin during a visit to Dublin. One of the letters, dated August 9th, 1810, states:

> I have bought some of Johnstones books (the celebrated Northern antiquary) at a late sale at Dublin & rather think I have got the most curious particularly the Knytlinga Saga, the Wilkina Saga & a very curious volume containing a great number of Sagas very rarely to be met with. (Powell Jones and Scott, 1940, p. 481)

In the letters, the Scottish author expresses excitement for the finding of copies of the *Knytlinga Saga* and the *Wilkina Saga* at a local antiquary. Aside from this, William Powell Jones, the editor of the letters, believes the "very curious volume containing a great number of Sagas very rarely to be met with" to be a copy of either the *Nordiska Kampa Dater* by Erik Julius Björner (1737) or the *Heimskringla,* edited in 1697 by Johann Peringskiöld (Powell Jones and Scott, 1940). The first text details a history of Swedish kings, queens, and heroes, while the second is a saga of Norwegian and Swedish kings originally written by Snorri Sturluson around 1230.

Scott's enthusiasm can only be seen as natural, given the fact that the search for sources through antiquarians had a massive attraction for authors all around the Romantic period (O'Donoghue, 2014). Additionally, the discovery of previously unknown sagas in an era in which it was challenging to find any outside the Scandinavian countries was probably an event that, for the Scottish author, needed to be registered and celebrated. Scott also implies, in the following lines of the letter, how difficult the role of the "Northern antiquary" can be, and how much pride he took in considering himself one.

> These with some others & with what I had before make me strong in Northern antiquities which the Bombarment of Copenhagen in which Thorkelin's library perishd has renderd scarced. (Powell Jones and Scott, 1940, p. 481)

In this passage, Scott underlines how complicated it is to find Old Norse sources, reporting, as an example, the destruction of Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin's library in Copenhagen, in 1807, during the Napoleonic Wars. At the time, Thorkelin was working on a Latin and German translation of the Old English poem *Beowulf*. The transcripts and editorial notes, on which he worked for almost twenty years, were lost in the fire that destroyed his house (Fjalldal, 2008). Apart from recounting this fact, Scott seems to display excitement and pride at the idea of adding volumes to the collection he was building – a collection that is kept today in the library at his residence, Abbotsford, as another testament to Scott's devotion to his studies.

As the website of the residence details[1], the library houses a vast collection of printed works, some of which are unique copies that have not survived anywhere else. To understand the real extent of Scott's knowledge about Scandinavian tradition and literature, it feels logical to investigate the volumes he owned in his personal library. An attempt of this sort has already been comprised by Lieder, who reports a list of texts stored at Abbotsford that proves Scott's real interest in the matter. Lieder points out that Scott owned around fifty volumes on Scandinavian topics, which, in his opinion, demonstrates that his interest was far from shallow. In this list, several volumes are detailed, such as a copy of the *Eyrbyggja Saga* – which feels natural for Scott to own – but also a copy of Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum*, edited in 1514 under the title of *Saxonis Grammatici Historia Danica*. The most noteworthy out of the texts reported by Lieder is for sure a copy of the *Hervarar Saga* edited in 1785, as well as the *Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes and Vandals, and other Northern Nations* by Olaus Magnus (1658) (Lieder, 1920, pp. 10-11). Apart from these, the author details other books that are of little to no relevance for our case study.

What is truly intriguing though, are the texts that Lieder fails to document in his list. A thorough analysis of the *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford*, compiled in 1838 by Scott and Cochrane, highlights the presence of other documents that are far more compelling for the analysis of *The Pirate*. Some of these volumes include Resen' translation of Snorri's *Edda*, Finnur Magnússon's *Den Ældre Edda*, Thorsten's *Vilkings-sons Saga*, Thorlacius' *Egils Saga* and Peringskiöld's *Heimskringla*, the same he might have hinted at in his 1810's letter. The first two volumes mentioned are the most compelling for the purpose of our study, since they contain a vast

[1] https://www.scottsabbotsford.com/visit/the-house/the-library

number of references to the old Germanic deities. It is especially thanks to the *Eddas* if the attributes of the Æsir and Vanir have entered our collective consciousness – these texts are the footprint to the majority, if not the entirety, of modern iterations of the old gods. This might have been the case for Scott too, with *Eddas* playing a major role in the construction of many of his characters, their personalities, and actions.

It is safe to assume, at this point, that Scott was, in fact, very prepared on the matter of "Northern antiquities". His studies, publications, and the collection he stored at Abbotsford are all testament to the interest he took in Old Norse literature. An aspect of his life as an author that can be easily overlooked if we consider that he never wrote an explicit novel on the topic, maybe for lack of interest on the part of his readers, and that the only poem inspired by Old Norse literature, *Harold the Dauntless*, was not well received by the critics (Simpson, 1973). This, and the fact that he's primarily known as the author of *Ivanhoe,* could partly explain why his interest in Scandinavian culture and literature does not seem to be interesting to the general discourse on his work, even when it appeared fundamental to him.

Chapter 2
A Romantic Medievalism

2.1 Scott's romanticisation of the Middle Ages

It is evident now that Scott not only possessed a general curiosity of Old Norse literature but also a broad knowledge of it. However, it is up to interpretation what he might have found so compelling about the quests of kings and warriors of the North and, moreover, what he did not enjoy and what he wanted to change. Scott drew greatly from Medieval literature for his writings, as his historical novels and his poetic romances testify, but he displays the habit of adapting the Medieval subject so that it can be more relevant to the reader of his times. His historical prose, for example, is a result of the critics he received on his poetry, which was perceived as a desperate attempt to recreate typical Gothic models instead of creating original content (Moura, 2015, p. 97).

As the rise of enthusiasm for Northern antiquities demonstrates, Scott lived in an era in which the Middle Ages were receiving a new wave of idealization. This new sensibility on the matter can be traced back to a more general artistic current that could be more familiar to readers and intellectuals – Medievalism. It is this rediscovered appeal and Romantic glorification of the Middle Ages that inspired several artistic innovations of the time, such as eighteenth-century Graveyard Poetry, the Gothic revival in architecture, the hunt for Northern Antiquities and Scott's own historical novel (Chandler, 1970. Moura, 2015).

Medievalism was not a new movement for Romantic writers. The study and exploitation of Medieval tales, legends and archetypes had been occurring in England's literary circles since at least the sixteenth century. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that it became remarkably relevant. Medievalism took its first steps during the Elizabethan period, because of the hasty political and even more prominent religious shifts of the time. As the country started to settle on the idea of a protestant queen, poets and artists employed in Queen Elizabeth I's court – who oftentimes played a crucial political role as well – hurried to entitle and give authority to the new monarch's demands. The Middle Ages suddenly became a tool to legitimize Elizabeth's claim to the throne, justifying the rise of the Tudor family as well as the protestant reform of Henry VIII. This is one of the few instances in which the Middle Ages were employed to support a political and social transition instead of appraising it by idealizing the times that were. As soon as the seventeenth century, in fact, Medievalism was used to celebrate British identity and freedom, and during the eighteenth century it

was acting as an escapism method to cope with the uncertainty that the Industrial Revolution instigated (Chandler, 1970, p. 2).

It is during the eighteenth century that Medievalism took an innovative turn, taking on a new name and identity by engendering the creation of the Gothic movement, which will have a massive impact on Scott's outlook of the Middle Ages. The Gothic romance will find its beginning in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto, A Gothic Romance* (1764), where its medieval elements would take the name of "gothic" and would create a new taste for the things of the past. However, many of the following Gothic romances that Walpole inspired were not even set in the Medieval period. The settings that were generally associated with the Middle Ages were exploited by authors to give the novels a unique air that could catch the reader's attention. It is this mysterious and dangerous feeling that characterizes the early Gothic romance, and not the supernatural elements that we, as readers, might associate now to the genre. This particular taste went even beyond printed paper and landed on stone – the new Gothic movement generated the Gothic revival in architecture, which became massively popular and continued to flourish in the nineteenth century. Scott himself could not resist this new architectural style, and it seems he "spent far more money than he could afford rebuilding his home Abbotsford into a medieval baronial hall" (Simmons, 2016, p. 107).

Gothic literature had a vast influence on Scott's historical novel. Nonetheless, his novels were not Gothic romances. Early nineteenth-century Medievalism had its own sensibilities, especially political, and it could have not been more different than eighteenth-century Gothic fiction. Yet, for the creation of his novels, Scott seems to take what he considered to be the best of both worlds, and for two reasons. Firstly, Scott's love and passion for Gothic literature had been such an important part of his literary upbringing that it was difficult for him to completely let it go. Secondly, the connection between the Medievalism of his times and Gothic literature allowed him to transform the Middle Ages into an in-between world, a getaway in which the past could teach its lessons to the present (Chandler, 1970. Moura, 2015).

During Scott's time, Medievalism was still being experimented with. The historical romances of nineteenth century were a Romantic innovation, but they did not focus on those fantastic and supernatural elements that the word "romance" might evoke. Romantic authors used the Middle Ages as settings of love stories and adventures – *that* is what the word "romance" refers to. The idea of Romantic Medievalism is a product of the late nineteenth century. In the *early* nineteenth century, the idea of those same Middle Ages served another specific – and very much political - intention. As the conditions of the working class continued to deteriorate, the Medieval times became an ideological place were values like family and nature had never been lost, a place in time were humans and nature had an indissoluble relationship (Chandler, 1970, p. 7). Moreover, the Middle Ages were

perceived as a powerful tool to emancipate a national identity that had been undermined by centuries of subordination to Classicism (Simmons, 2016). Medievalism was the answer to the problems posed by the Industrial Revolution, as well as the uncertainty caused by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Medievalism was a tool that authors skilfully employed to craft the image of the contemporary human – a dynamic creature, generous like the people of the past, but also heroic, loyal to their country and with a deep connection to nature, the holiest of Romantic subjects. Themes of earlier iterations of Medievalism are reinvented by the Romantic movement, such as the theme of uncertainty (Chandler, 1970, p. 8) which the poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, titled *Mutability* – not a Medievalist poem, but still relevant to the connection between the two periods – serve as an example. The theme of mutability, after all, was connected to the idealization of ruins, that not only inspired the movement of Graveyard Poetry but also a whole line of Romantic poetry, from Shelley to Keats. The poet Thomas Gray himself is probably more recognized by the general public for his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* than he is for his 'Norse odes' – which is proof of how well received Gothic literature was at the time.

Scott's approach to the Middle Ages was slightly different. As it has already been established, his tales seems to belong both to the Gothic movement and early Romanticism – probably due to the fact that his literary education took place in the very middle of the Gothic revival. He did not *invent* Romantic Medievalism, but he contributed to it, most notably, with the creation of the historical novel. His extensive collection of tales, legends, and ballads, which he stored at Abbostford, were a precious resource to construct his Medieval subjects. The Medieval setting of his poems and novels, an element of Gothic influence, was a way to demarcate the transition between those Medieval and modern values that were so dear to Romantic literature (Simmons, 2016, p. 105). Scott's historical novels did not have an educational intention, but they were intended to be an imaginary world that people of the nineteenth century could fantasise about, understand, and appreciate. He wanted people to recognize the traditions and typical customs of individuals in the past, and for this reason he created characters that both the occasional and the most loyal reader could empathize with (Moura, 2015, p. 98). In other words, Scott thought that the Middle Ages were able to teach something about the present, and he tried to make them as interesting and relatable as possible.

Both the more explicitly Medievalist novels by Scott and those that deal with a distant Medieval subject – such as *The Pirate*, which keeps evoking the Norse past of the characters – present the elements that the Scottish author seemed to find more interesting in the Middle Ages. Apart from the theme of chivalry, which is prominent in his writings, Scott focuses on the theme of order. He rejects violence and lack of law and uses the subject of the feast and the banquet in great halls to highlight a world that lives in harmony with society's rules and expectations (Chandler, 1970, p. 32-

33). The setting of the hall and the element of the feast is so classically Medieval that can evoke, in the most receptive reader, countless examples from Medieval literature – Heorot, king Hrothgar's hall in the Old English poem *Beowulf*, is just one, predictable example. Scott connects the hall and the feast to the idea of loyalty and trust in the chief, king, or person in command.

However, the theme of order is more deeply explored by Scott in those characters that Chandler calls "hard primitives" (Chandler, 1970, p. 33). These characters are, as Scott describes them in the Preface of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, "partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredations with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry" (Scott, 1900, p. 11). This idea seems reminiscent of the myth of the 'noble savage' first illustrated in John Dryden's stage play *The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards* (1672) – Scott even quotes Dryden in *The Pirate* – in which civilization and barbarism melt together to create the perfect human creature. The dichotomy of Civilization and Barbarism, which has been thoroughly analysed by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in 1845 in relation to South American history, seems to surface in Scott's novels as well. This is especially evident in Scott's *Harold the Dauntless*. At the end of the poem – which will be analysed later in the chapter – Harold, an exiled *berserkr*, finally leaves behind his "barbaric" ways and yields to society's norms. This is a common trope in Scott's fiction – he rejects the idea of 'pure' primitives, people who seem unable to accept modern societal restrictions. This 'hard primitive', at the end of the story, must be domesticated. The *berserkr* needs to learn the mistakes of his ways, accept Christian values, repent, and re-enter society. The Medieval element in Scott's novel always fulfils an educational role. As it has been already said, he uses to past to teach something about the present. For this reason, Scott might have felt the need to domesticate and civilize the Medieval element – a process that the characters in *The Pirate* might have been subjected to.

Even if Scott's historical novels aimed at being ascribable to the Romantic movement rather than the Gothic, the elements of Gothic taste cannot be ignored. Scott will never be able to estrange the Gothic literature that he loved so much, and portions of it can be found all throughout his writings. Both the Gothic romance and Scott's narrative sees the Middle Ages as an idealized and perfect place, full of mystery and magic, simply because detached from modernity. However, Scott manages to modernize this nostalgic idea of the past by giving an air of historical accuracy to his writings. Where Gothic authors only searched for feelings of uneasiness and fear, Scott gives the reader a realistic description of the Middle Ages, thanks to his extensive studies. Moreover, Scott romanticises the Middle Ages with other Gothic elements. Nature is presented in all its beauty, creating the illusion of a world that has not been touched by humanity yet – maybe that will *never* be touched by humanity. Chivalry is idealized. Religious uncertainty becomes a critic against the Church, heritage of the Enlightenment. Scott also likes to include characters with mysterious identities, which generates an

air of mystery as well as dramatic misunderstandings between the characters (Moura, 2015). The character with a mysterious identity is, once again, a commonplace of Medieval literature – we see it, for example, in the Old High German poem *Hildebrandslied*, where Hadubrand fails to recognize his father, who, for his part, does not reveal his true identity to his son. The result can only be catastrophic, even if the true ending of the heroic lay remains a mystery to the readers.

With keeping all of this into consideration, knowing what Scott found so interesting in Old Norse literature can only be up to supposition. As it has already been explained in the previous chapter, he was fascinated by Scandinavian literature, and he had an extensive knowledge of it. In his *Essay on Romance*, he expresses his high regard for Norse poetry by writing:

> Scandinavia, as was to be expected, may be safely regarded as the richest country in Europe in ancient tales corresponding with the character of Romance; sometimes composed entirely in poetry or rhythm, sometimes in prose, and much more frequently in a mixture of prose, narrative and lyrical effusions. Their well-known Scalds, or bards, held a high rank in their courts and councils. (Scott, 1887, p. 95)

It does not seem unlikely that this ideal of Old Norse literature had been influenced by his passion for the Gothic tradition. It is possible that, once Scott's tastes had evolved and he had started creating a literary niche for himself – that being the historical novel – he might have found elements in the adventures of Scandinavian kings and warriors that were fit for his novels of Romantic and Gothic inspiration. What these elements might have been can only be conjectured.

The wild and untamed nature of the North could be considered the perfect setting for an historical novel of Old Norse inspiration. Forests, little villages, and halls were all elements that encountered the tastes of both the Medieval revival and the Gothic imagination. The hall itself, being a recurrent element in Scott's writing, is a central setting in the *Eddas* and in sagas. Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* recounts the importance of the mead hall in ancient Scandinavia in the legend featuring Harald Hárfagri and Eric Eymundsson. Apart from this, the hall figures in mythology as well, with Valhǫll as the primary example. The mythical hall in which Óðinn accommodates half of the souls of those who died in battle – the other half joining Freyja in her Fólkvangr – became so popular that it appears all throughout the poetry of Old Norse inspiration in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (O'Donoghue, 2014). Another prominent hall is that of the sea-god Ægir, which appears in *Grímnismál*, *Hymiskviða* and *Lokasenna*, where all the gods gather after a hunt to feast, drink, and battle each other in a contest of insults. The role of Ægir can be traced back to the Norse tradition with which a king would strengthen his influence with the use of feasts (Larrington, 2014), and it is an aspect that Scott himself adopted as well, probably because of the political intentions of Romantic

Medievalism which has already been discussed. In Canto I of *Harold the Dauntless*, Count Witikind organizes a feast in his hall to celebrate his conversion to Christianity, in a possible attempt to show his power to the members of the Church. Even *The Pirate*, despite its more contemporary setting, features a similar scene, when the Udaller Magnus Troil throws a feast consisting of dances, poetry declared by the *skáld*-like-figure Claud Halcro, and prophecies by Norna of Fithful Head, the *vǫlva* of the novel.

Scott also liked the idea of characters displaying mysterious identities, a commonplace that is typical of Old Norse deities. In the myths, Óðinn is oftentimes portrayed as he wanders around Miðgarðr and the other Worlds in disguise, bearing a false name. As an example, in *Skáldskaparmál* Snorri Sturluson recounts how Óðinn, under the disguise of Bǫlverkr, obtains the mead of poetry from the *jǫtunn* Suttungr. Scott employs this topic in *Ivanhoe*, where the protagonist chooses to conceal his identity and calls himself "Desdichado", and in *The Pirate* as well, where Norna of the Fitful Head is later revealed to be Ulla Troil, Magnus' wife.

There are also the supernatural elements. However, as it frequently happened with early Gothic fiction, the supernatural is just a tool to create a sense of wonder or agitation in the reader and is never truly explicit (Simmons, 2016, p. 108). This gives Scott the liberty to include mystical elements in his writings just to create an effect, without them to have a true impact on the story. Because of this, in his novels and poems we can have witches – who do not really perform any magic – and *draugar,* Norse undead entities, which appear in *The Wife of Usher's Well* (Lieder, 1920). The role of witches, with a particular focus on Norna, will be discussed into detail in a later chapter.

These are only a few examples of Scott's use of Medieval subjects. It appears clear that there were elements depicted in Old Norse literature that Scott either found Gothic or that he tried to connect with the Romantic vision of the Middle Ages. It could even be that, aside from his scholarly interest, Scott used Old Norse literature – and, more generally, Medieval literature – as a corpus from which he picked the elements that he felt resonated more with the tastes of his times and the aims of his writings. If this was the case, Old Norse literature offers a wide variety of materials that could have captivated and amused his readers, and he could have used those aspects to create the perfect setting for a story that crossed the line between Gothic fiction and Romantic Medievalism.

2.2 Experimenting with the myths: the case of Harold the Dauntless

> Upon another occasion, I sent up another of these trifles, which, like schoolboys' kites, served to show how the wind of popular taste was setting. The manner was supposed to be that of a rude minstrel, or Scald, in opposition to the 'Bridal of Triermain,' which was designed to belong rather to the Italian

> school. This new fugitive piece was called ‘Harold the Dauntless'; and I am still astonished at my having committed the gross error of selecting the very name which Lord Byron had made so famous. It encountered rather an odd fate. (Scott, 1843, pp. 11-12)

With these words, included in the introduction to *Lord of the Isles*, Scott explains to his readers what led him to write *Harold the Dauntless*, the poem that will be his last of long form before he completely devoted himself to the historical novel. From this short excerpt, it appears as if Scott was aware, to some extent, that literary trends were slowly shifting. He learned this when his *Harold the Dauntless* started receiving mixed critics, with some not even recognizing him at all as the author of the piece, which was published anonymously. It is interesting as well that he mentioned Lord Byron in the same passage, almost as if he was underlining his awareness of the shift in popular taste and admitting his inability to follow it – in verses, at least.

Even if it might not be considered Scott’s best work,[2] the poem allows to understand how Scott uses Old Norse subjects to create a piece of Romantic tradition. Since it was written before he started working on *The Pirate*, the text can be a useful resource to understand his approach to Old Norse literature, in the attempt to capture which elements of sagas and skaldic poetry he might have deemed interesting enough to create an overall Romantic setting and story. In *Harold the Dauntless*, Scott seems to work the source material in two different ways: through precise references, with quotes pulled directly from translations of the sagas, and through a reimagination of the elements that he found most relevant to the effect he was trying to create. The last point appears crucial in the attempt to actualize and make appealing a subject that was mostly unknown to the public.

Harold the Dauntless, published in 1817, was to become Scott’s last poem of considerable length. After the publication, in fact, Scott will occasionally write some verses, but they will never reach the intricacy and complexity of his first compositions. After *Harold,* Scott preferred to continue with the historical novel, which had reached success with the publication of *Waverly* in 1814. Even before the publication, Scott was aware that *Harold* was not his best work. It was published anonymously, and the critics either considered it an imitation of his writing style or struggled to recognize his pen. This unfortunate reception was probably a result of the difficulty he had in completing the poem – Scott, in fact, started the project enthusiastically but ended up losing all this initial outburst of creativity. He started the poem in 1815, abandoned it completely and finished it a year later “with hurry and impatience”, as he said in one of his letters. The manuscript of the poem itself is a testament to the problems the Scottish writer encountered during the writing process. The

[2] See, for example, Hillhouse, James T. “Sir Walter’s Last Long Poem”. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1952, pp. 53-73

title was changed from *Harold the Hardy* to *Harold the Dauntless*, a proposition Scott might have had since the beginning but that he might have put off until it was suggested by the editor. He also didn't include any punctuation, leaving the task to the printer (Hillhouse, 1952) – perhaps because of his impatience to finish the poem, or maybe as a remain of Medieval literature.

Throughout the poem, Scott makes good use of references to Scandinavian literature, which suggest what imagery he might have considered more pertinent for the literary taste of his times. As it was noted by Lieder, Scott prefers to mention passages from Thomas Bartholin the Younger's *Antiquitatum Danicarum de causis contemptae a Danis adhuc gentilibus mortis* (1689), a long reflection on the theme of death in Old Norse texts which included extracts in the original language alongside their Latin translations (Lieder, 1920). He does that in the first canto of the poem, when Scott presents the prototype of his "Scandinavian hero". The description of Harold's father, Count Witikind, as a fearsome Viking warrior who, in his youth, raided the English coast, leaving behind nothing but destruction and death is a popular idea that Scott probably took from Bartholin's work.

> Count Witikind came of a regal strain,
> And roved with his Norsemen the land and the main.
> Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
> Was shedding of blood, and rending of hair,
> Rape of maiden, and slaughter of priest,
> Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast:
> When he hoisted his standard black,
> Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
> And he burn'd the churches, that heathen Dane,
> To light his band to their barks again.
> (Scott, 1817, lines 3-12)

The description of Count Witikind's endeavours seems in line with Scott's idea of the "hard primitive" that was presented in the previous paragraph. Witikind appears in this description as a warlike figure, with "habits of constant depradation". However, Witikind does not appear to have the "rude spirit of chivalry" that Scott seems to associate with the hard primitive yet. This characteristic appears a bit later in the canto, when Witikind renounces his pagan beliefs to convert to Christianity – the barbaric element being finally domesticated.

To continue the list of passages of clear Norse influence, Scott dutiful registers the love that medieval Scandinavians shared for poetry and song, when he makes Harold address his loyal page, Gunnar, in the third canto:

Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde,
Offspring of prophetess and bard!
Take harp, and greet this lovely prime
With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell's sonorous sound.
Yet wild by fits, as when the lay
Of bird and bugle hail the day.
Such was my grandsire Erick's sport,
When dawn gleam'd on his martial court.
Heymar the Scald, with harp's high sound.
Summon'd the chiefs who slept around;
Couch'd on the spoils of wolf and bear,
They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rush'd in emulation forth
To enhance the glories of the north.
(Scott, 1817, lines 79-94)

This could be a reference to the *Saga of Saint Óláf*, where Snorri Sturluson recounts how the skald Þormóðr woke up the King and his men from their sleep and prompted them to battle.

Day has come,
the cock shakes his wings.
'tis time for thralls
to take to their tasks.
Awake, ye friends,
be wakeful ever,
all ye best men in Athils' court.
Hár the hard-gripping,
Hrólf the bowman,
men of noble line who never flee:
I wake you not to wine
nor to women's converse,
but rather to Hild's
hard game of war.
(Snorri, 2011)

The passage probably serves the purpose of giving Harold a more human side. The reader of the poem might think that, even if Harold is a fearless and ruthless warrior, he still enjoys poetry and song, a characteristic that opens the possibility for a future redemption of the character. Scott also uses this passage as a tool to praise skaldic poetry, by describing it as "strong, deep, and powerful", something that was not entirely common for a time in which poets and authors were still struggling to find a poetical heritage that was unbound from Classical literature.

There are other passages in the poem that point to Scott's attempt to romanticize Old Norse literature. The past, for example, undergoes the same process of idealization that was typical of the time. Scott writes, at the beginning of the third canto, that "the northern harp still invites [his] hand" to sing about "the wonder of thine earlier time". "Wonder" is of course an important word to associate with Medieval times, which were viewed for so long as an inferior period if compared to the grace of Classicism and the Renaissance. A few verses later, he evokes a Gothic building, and at the beginning of the fourth canto there's a description of a Gothic church, as an homage to the genre he appreciated so much. The landscape of the North of Europe too gets an idealized description when in the third canto Gunnar tells Harold:

> I love my father's northern land,
> Where the dark pine-trees grow,
> And the bold Baltic's echoing strand
> Looks o'er each grassy oe.
> (Scott, 1817, lines 254-257)

In the poem there are other elements of Norse inspiration that Scott seems to reconnect to Gothic taste. In the second canto, when Harold evokes the imagery of Valhalla, he seems to allude of a ghost-like figure, when he asks if the spirit of King Erick feasts in the hall of the dead or wanders around his burial site while looking over the ocean – a possible reference to the Norse *draugr*.

> In wild Valhalla hast thou quaff'd
> From foeman's skull metheglin draught,
> Or wander'st where thy cairn was piled
> To frown o'er oceans wide and wild?
> (Scott, 1817, lines 97-100)

On the same line, in the fifth canto, Harold and Gunnar encounter a phantom in the woods that urges Harold to repent and convert to Christianity. The Deep Voice, as Scott calls it, seems to have elements in common with the typical description of Óðinn as a mysterious and cloaked wanderer, as described in Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál*, where he even has the name of Loðungr, or 'cloak wearer' (Isnardi, 2018, p. 205).

> Break off, we are not here alone;
> A palmer form comes slowly on!
> By cowl, and staff, and mantle known,
> My monitor is near.
> (Scott, 1817, lines 81-84)

Even if it appears unlikely for Óðinn himself to urge a person to convert – especially since he appears at the end of the poem to punish Harold for this same decision – the image of the cryptic traveler seems one that the Romantic reader might have appreciated.

Later in the fourth canto, Scott might have inserted an indirect reference to mythology. When Harold is discussing with the priests of St. Curthbert, he throws on the altar a severed head and hand, which belonged to the two men the ecclesiastics entitled with Harold's inheritance. The severed head might be a reference to Mímir, who is beheaded in both the Prose and the Poetic *Edda* and whose head is carried around by Óðinn so that he can learn from his wisdom and knowledge. And the hand could refer to the god Týr, whose hand was cut away by the wolf Fenrir in the Prose *Edda*. Of course, the connection between the two instances might be a coincidence, but the possibility cannot be ignored given Scott's knowledge of the matter. The passage, even if it has a slight Gothic feeling, is not the most relevant proof of Scott's ability to manipulate the Norse subject to meet the standards of Romantic literature, but it is still relevant in showing his habit of taking elements of Old Norse literature and reimagining them in a new context. He does the same with the character of Metelill's mother Jutta, a witch that shares resemblance with both Norna of Fitful Head and the Scandinavian witch, or *vǫlva*.

The most obvious instance of the manipulation of the Norse subject though occurs with the character of Harold. To begin with, he shares the characteristics of Scott's primitive Scandinavian hero with his father, Witikind. In the first canto, in fact, Scott lets the protagonist of the poem introduce himself to the reader.

> For me, I am what thy lessons have made,
> I was rocked in a buckler and fed from a blade,

An infant, was taught to clasp hands and to shout,
From the roofs of the tower when the flame had broke out;
In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip,
And tinge with its purple my cheek and my lip.
(Scott, 1817, lines 156-161)

Harold resembles his father in his taste for battle and bloodshed, which marks him as the new primitive element that needs to learn how to live in a society. Harold is also presented as a *berserkr*, a figure that interested Scott enough to include him not only in this poem, but also in *The Bridal of Triermain* and *The Pirate*. Scott describes Harold's tendencies better in the third canto.

Profane not, youth—it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line—
The bold Berserkar's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring, deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall—
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall—
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like wither'd reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds, and yet survive.
Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory,—
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,
Deep drinks his sword,—deep drinks his soul;
And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire,
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den,
And couches till he's man agen. —
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb,
When 'gins that rage to overbrim—
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;

> And when thou seest me roll mine eye,
> Set my teeth thus, and stamp my foot,
> Regard thy safety and be mute;
> (Scott, 1817, lines 173-201)

Lieder traces back this description to a passage of the *Ynglinga Saga* by Snorri, which was quoted by Bartholin in his *Antiquitatum Danicarum.*

> Óðinn was able to cause his enemies to be blind or deaf or fearful in battle, and he could cause their swords to cut no better than wands. His own men went to battle without coats of mail and acted like mad dogs or wolves. They bit their shields and were as strong as bears or bulls. They killed people, and neither fire nor iron affected them. This is called berserker rage. (Snorri, 2011)

Scott seemed fascinated by the strength, energy, and madness of these "champions", as he describes them in a note in *The Pirate* (Scott, 2017, p. 24). Scott might have found the figure of the *berserkr,* an animalistic warrior possessed by an unnatural rage, not only fascinating *per se* but also particularly Romantic as well. Madness and alterations of the mental state of a person were, after all, popular topics for poetry and novels of the first half of the nineteenth century (Shimer, 1893). However, what appears most interesting about Harold is that he truly is a Romantic hero. Even if he is presented as rude and violent – traits that Scott did not enjoy in a character, as it has been previously said – he has many aspects in common with this literary archetype that was so popular at the time. Scott takes this rough, barbarous, and brutal *berserkr* and places him on the margins of society. His sole identity as a *berserkr* conveys physical strength, power and ruthlessness often rejected by society. He is estranged by his family – even if this estrangement is self-induced. His love life is tragic as well since his first love interest ends up marrying another man. The other love interest in the story, Gunnar – who in the end is revealed to be Eivir, a woman in disguise – suffers throughout the poem because of Harold's infatuation for Metelill and because of his 'berserker rage', an aspect he has in common with the love interests of other Romantic heroes. All of these are aspects typical of the Romantic hero (Fyre, 1968) that Harold shares with him. Harold also displays a great level of humanity, which is in contrast with the typical ideal of the *berserkr* one could imagine. He is moved to tears in front of young Gunnar's loyalty in the second canto, and in canto third he is touched by the sights of nature.

> The scenes which morning beams reveal,
> Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
> In all their fragrance round him steal,

It melted Harold's heart of steel.
(Scott, 1817, lines 46-49)

In addition to this, Gunnar's secret identity can be reconnected to Scott's passion for mysterious characters. Coincidentally, the theme of women dressing like men is present in Norse literature as well. A noteworthy example is the character of Hervǫr, the protagonist of the *Hervararkviða*, the last poem in the Poetic *Edda*. In this section, young Hervǫr conceals her identity by impersonating a man, changing her name in Hjörvard, to retrieve the magical sword Tyrfing from her father's tomb.

If Harold is interpreted as a Romantic hero, the case of *Harold the Dauntless* proves Scott's ability of taking elements from the Old Norse and translating them so that they could fit into Romantic form. In writing the poem, Scott proves himself as a skillful writer that can manipulate the object of his study, to create a story that could speak to modern audiences through the models and archetypes of Medieval literature. The case of *Harold* shows Scott's tendencies not only of referencing with precision the sagas but also to internalize elements of Norse literature that only the most passionate readers can spot. This inclination aims at the creation of an overall effect, an *ambiance* in which Scott could use his knowledge with subtlety, without veering excessively from the tastes of his readers.

Chapter 3
The Pirate, a myth within the tale

3.1 Old Norse elements in the novel

The analysis of Scott's indebtedness to Old Norse literature that has been conducted until now is a crucial starting point for the study of his fourteenth novel, *The Pirate.* Alongside *Harold the Dauntless*, this novel is the only other work by Scott that presents extensive explicit references to Scandinavian literature and culture (Nordby, 1901), even if the setting is not Medieval at all. Scott displays the habit of directly mentioning the sagas, or works that deal with the same matters, such as Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum* or Gray's *Reliques*, in the attempt to contextualize the traditions of the inhabitants of Zetland, the ancient name for Shetland (Lieder, 1920). The examination of these citations is useful in order to comprehend the impact that Norse literature has had in the design of the novel and opens the doors to an analysis of the more implicit elements, the aspects of the plot and, above all, the characters that could be of Norse descent without, however, being direct quotes from pre-existing texts.

The plot of the novel sees a shipwrecked pirate, Clement Cleveland, sowing discord between the main characters, especially between young Mordaunt and the Troil sisters, Minna and Brenda. With the story, Scott seems interested in presenting the reader a tale of transformation, as we see the peaceful existence of the Zetland inhabitants being overturned by a series of newcomers, such as Basil and Mordaunt Mertoun, Triptolemus and Barbara Yellowley and Cleveland himself (Weinstein, 1997, p. 203). The novel is the result of Scott's years-long attempt of setting a story in Zetland that could give the reader an idea of its culture and natural beauty. His original plan of using the region as the background of his *Lord of the Isles* was not as successful as he had hoped, since the poem was not well received by the public. As he himself recounts in the Introduction to *The Pirate*, in the same period his first novel *Waverley* was meeting and incredible success, and Scott started wondering if he could reuse the setting of the Scottish region for a novel instead of a poem. He had become familiar with the nature and traditions of both Zetland and Orkney in 1814, during a voyage in which Scott had the opportunity of acquainting himself with the residents of Zetland (Scott, 1831), learning about a history and tradition that was tightly linked to those of the sagas and skaldic poems he was passionate about. In an entry of his journal, dated 1814, he writes that he has "gleaned something of

the peculiar superstitions of the Zetlanders, which are numerous and potent" (Lieder, 1920, p. 36). Zetland was colonised by Norwegians between the eight and the ninth century (Schei, 2006) and, as Scott's notes in the novel put it, had maintained its Viking heritage throughout the centuries, which allowed him to create a scenery where the present of the story and its historical past could blend into something unique. The manuscript of the novel reveals that Scott started working on the story as soon as 1817, and the final version was published anonymously in 1821 (Weinstein, 1997). Even if the novel is not set in the Middle Ages, the Medieval past of the region is still present, impending on the native characters with its legacy and creating a sense of belonging and love for a shared past. It can be observed, for example, in a passage in the twentieth chapter in which Minna Troil recalls and takes pride in the Viking past of her people.

> I am a daughter of the old dames of Norway, who could send their lovers to battle with a smile, and slay them, with their own hands, if they returned with dishonour. My lover must scorn the mockeries by which our degraded race strives for distinction, or must practise them only in sport, and in earnest of nobler dangers. No whale-striking, bird-nesting favourite for me; my lover must be a Sea-king, or what else modern times may give that draws near to that lofty character. (Scott, 2017, p. 254)

In the passage, Scott displays his passion for the idea of the Norse sea-warrior, the *vikingr* which he also referenced in *The Fair Maid of Perth*. His idea of the Viking warrior was probably taken by Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum*, as most of the suggestions to Norse culture can be traced back to the work of the Danish antiquarian (Lieder, 1920).

Throughout the novel, the reader can observe Scott's attempt in making the novel appear more scholarly and erudite, an effort that is not perfectly successful, as some mistakes committed by him denote (Lieder, 1920), but that conveys his desire to prove the reader how intensely he had studied the subject he decided to present them. The attempt shows itself in the author's notes at the end of each volume, which shed a light on the sources he employed in the creation of the lore of this idealized version of Zetland. As mentioned before, he seems to draw inspiration primarily from Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum,* but he also references Thomas Gray's poems and Olaus Magnus's *Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes and Vandals, and other Northern Nations* (Lieder, 1920; Smith, 2002). He employs these sources to populate his Zetland with magical creatures that never truly appear in the story, natural phenomena that cannot be explained, witches and prophecies. In other words, he creates a version of the Scottish region that could comply with the Romantic and Gothic taste of his times, as he already had done in the past with his other works – both poetical and in prose. An example can be the mentions, scattered all throughout the novel, to dwarves, or Drows, as he calls them. The description of these creatures is in line with the one given by Bartholin (Lieder,

1920, p. 37), even if the passionate reader of Old Norse literature might be more familiar with the descriptions given in the *Gylfaginning*, the *Völuspá* and *Alvíssmál*. For Scott, the Drows are an essential part of Zetlandic superstition, which are probably taken from the *dvergar* of Norwegian folklore, as he writes in an entry of his journal dated 1814 (Lieder, 1920, p. 37). Scott's dwarves in the novel possess all the peculiarities of their mythological counterparts: they are gifted with an extraordinary talent for the art of metallurgy, they live in underground caverns and can be both benevolent and malevolent. Moreover, Scott mentions other figures from mythology. He evokes again, as he did in *Harold the Dauntless*, the figure of the *berserkr*. In the second chapter, Mordaunt alludes to them by saying that his father seems to possess their same fury. In the author's note, Scott adds:

> The sagas of the Scalds are full of descriptions of these champions, and do not permit us to doubt that the Berserkars, so called from fighting without armour, used some physical means of working themselves into a frenzy, during which they possessed the strength and energy of madness. The Indian warriors are well known to do the same by dint of opium and bang. (Scott, 2017, p. 24)

Apart from the *berserkr*, Scott also includes in the story the typical "Scandinavian fortune-teller", as Lieder puts it in his analysis (Lieder, 1920, p. 38). Norna of Fitful Head is what Scott calls a "voluspae", a more modern version of the Norse *vǫlva* and a clear allusion to the homonymous piece, the *Völuspá.* The attributes that Scott might have found most compelling about this folkloric character are probably best summarized in a speech that Norna gives in the nineteenth chapter, when she says:

> I longed to possess the power of the Voluspae and divining women of our ancient race; to wield, like them, command over the elements; and to summon the ghosts of deceased heroes from their caverns, that they might recite their daring deeds, and impart to me their hidden treasures. (Scott, 2017, p. 157)

In this description, it is easy to see a Gothic theme being associated with the description of the *vǫlva* as someone capable of controlling the natural elements and of summoning ghosts, probably an allusion to the Norse *draugr*. The ability to raise the spirits of the dead is also associated with Óðinn, as attested in the *Ynglinga Saga*. A more in-depth analysis of the character of Norna in association with the figure of the *vǫlva* will be conducted in the following paragraph. However, Norna is not the only *vǫlva* present in the volume. Scott references, in the author's notes for the second volume, a passage from the *Eiríks saga rauða* which served as an inspiration for Norna's alleged prophetic abilities. Scott quotes directly from Bartholin's version of the story, in which the prophetess Þorbjörg

Lítilvölva, latinized by Bartholin and Scott as Thorbiorga, fortells the future of the inhabitants of a farm in circumstances that are almost identical to those described by Scott in the first chapter of the second volume. Soon after the description of Þorbjörg's deeds, Bartholin mentions a passage about another *vǫlva* called Heida, which can be easily recognized as Heiðr, with the Latin description matching almost perfectly a short stanza in *Völuspá* – if one overlooks the possible mistakes in interpretation and translation made by Bartholin.

> Bright One they called her, wherever she came to houses,
> the seer with pleasing prophecies, she practised spirit-magic;
> she knew *seid, seid* she performed as she liked,
> she was always a wicked woman's favourite.
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 6)

It is possible that Scott used this short passage as well in the construction of his *vǫlva* since it matches both Þorbjörg's and Norna's behaviors.

Scott also makes direct references to the Norse deities. He invokes Óðinn all throughout the novel, and in particular in relation to oaths and promises in chapter twenty-two, when Minna confronts Captain Cleveland.

> I will bind myself to you, if you dare accept such an engagement, by the promise of Odin, the most sacred of our northern rites which are yet practised among us, that I will never favour another, until you resign the pretensions which I have given to you. (Scott, 2017, p. 206)

In a note, Scott explains that such promises were still in use in the region even if its residents have long forgotten their loyalty to gods such as Óðinn. Vows were a serious matter in Medieval Scandinavia, usually carried out with an invocation to the deities and with a series of very ritualized ceremonies (Isnardi, 2018, p. 638). The most notorious example from literature is the pact of foster brotherhood, which Scott included in his *Sir Tristam* and even explained by referencing to a passage in the *Lokasenna* in which Loki recalls the brotherhood that joined him to Óðinn (Lieder, 1920, p. 39). Apart from providing him with inspiration for his stories, the fact that Scott chooses to focus on the theme might highlight that he truly understood the significance that such a matter had for the society of Medieval Scandinavia. Furthermore, Óðinn is not the only god that Scott names in *The Pirate*. He references Þórr shortly after in the same chapter when Minna declares:

> I knew where the sacrifices were made of yore to Thor and to Odin, on what stones the blood of the victims flowed— where stood the dark-browed priest— where the crested chiefs, who consulted the will of the idol—where the more distant crowd of inferior worshippers, who looked on in awe or in terror. (Scott, 2017, p. 157)

Lieder suggests that Scott might have read of these idols of Þórr and of sacrifices attended by worshipping crowds in Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum*, even if the theme of sacrifice is a prevalent one in Norse literature (Isnardi, 2018, p. 631). One of the most notorious examples is probably Óðinn's sacrifice to obtain the secrets of the runes, as described in *Hávamál*.

These are just a few examples of how Scott directly references Old Norse sources in the novel. However, what is most interesting for this study is probably what Scott does *not* reference directly, but what he is able to mention implicitly. As an example, the essential theme of the novel itself –a rural society transformed by the incursion of modernity – can be traced back to Norse sources. The passage from more archaic and traditional ways to more current values, based on the ideals of the Industrial revolution, was of great interest for Scott and it is an essential theme of his Romantic Medievalism, as it has already been explained in the previous chapter. This idea presents itself in the habit of the members of the Troil family to evoke their Norse past, seven centuries after the Norwegian colonization of Zetland, as opposed to the persistent attempts of Triptolemus Yellowley to reform the agricultural system of the region. The theme of change and its hardships is also vividly present in the Norse tradition. The first war between the Æsir and the Vanir, recounted in the *Völuspá*, is an example of the conflicts that can emerge when two distinct groups with different values meet. The general interpretation of the myth itself seems in line with Scott's philosophy – with the war between the two orders of deities representing the passage from a simple, agricultural lifestyle to a war-based society (Lindow, 2001). This is not to say that the myth has had any influence on Scott's writing principles – the similarities between the two are, most certainly, a fortunate coincidence. However, Scott might have found in Norse literature a good companion in the exploration of the theme of mutability since it is a central subject in several Norse myths, with Ragnarǫk as the most recognizable one. As it can be noted, even if there are no direct references to a precise work, not even Scott's favourite, Bartholin, the connection between the novel and the myth reveals itself to the most attentive reader. As Lieder himself notes in his work, there might be "passages [in *The Pirate*] where the spirit or temper might well be Norse, although the idea expressed was not clearly so", but he chooses not to attempt in finding nor interpreting these elements (Lieder, 1920, p. 55). This is what this chapter resolves to do, by focusing primarily on the characters that occupy the scenery of *The Pirate,* even if the same concept could be applied to other elements of the novel.

3.2 *The characters and the Norse deities, a comparison*

> The purpose of the following Narrative is to give a detailed and accurate account of certain remarkable incidents which took place in the Orkney Islands, concerning which the more imperfect traditions and mutilated records of the country only tell us the following erroneous particulars:— (Scott, 2017, p. 10)

It is with these words that Scott guides the reader into the events that will take place in the following forty-two chapters of *The Pirate*. In the Advertisement that opens the novel, in fact, the "Author of *Waverley*", as he signs himself to maintain his anonymity, takes the time to explain that the subject of the novel is not entirely a product of his own imagination, but a loose recollection of a real historical event surrounding the life of John Gow, a pirate who served as inspiration for the character of Captain Cleveland. Even if the incident has nothing that connects it with the field of Norse literature, the passage is still emblematic: it makes clear, from the very beginning, that this work of fiction will be taking inspiration from various elements and will shape them to create a new story. The concept of retelling is of course not new in literature, but the fact that Scott decides to disclaim this approach to the novel in the very beginning of the book is meaningful, especially if we consider all the other elements of Norse inspiration that he includes – and correctly references – in the story. However, as it has been argued before, there might be mentions in the novel that Scott chooses not to disclose, possibly because he aspired to maintain some credit for the idea, or because done subconsciously. This is the case for the characters of *The Pirate*. Even if the protagonists of the story might seem like the personifications of stereotypical personalities that were representative of the literature of the time – as much as the aforementioned example of the Romantic hero – there are elements that might suggest that the construction of these characters and of their personalities might have been influenced by Old Norse literature. A reader with some knowledge for this branch of literature might have recognized in some of the behaviours and descriptions of these characters attributes that are typically evoked in relation to Norse deities. If we read of these characters with this idea in mind, it is possible to spot similarities between them and some of the gods worshipped by ancient Scandinavians, and this approach might even lead to a new interpretation of the novel itself.

The first example that appears in the novel, and probably the most evident one, is that of Basil Mertoun. Father of young Mordaunt, he is a solitary and melancholic man who rents the castle of Jarlshof from Magnus Troil, the Udaller of the region, when he comes back to Zetland to raise his son. In the typical fashion of Scott's novel, Basil reveals himself as having a partial secret identity, when it is revealed that his true surname is Vaughan and that he is the father of Captain Cleveland as

well as Mordaunt's. Basil is the first character to be introduced to the reader in the first chapter of the first volume, when he is described as a quiet yet educated and knowledgeable man.
We learn that he is a strict father, who takes a strong interest in the education of his son, but also that he often suffers from what Scott describes as a "dark hour" – moments of extreme emotions and melancholy, which Basil decides to spend alone, meandering around his residence in solitude, with his hat and staff (Scott, 2017, p. 21). It could be just a case that wisdom, false names, strong emotions and wandering habits, represented with hood and staff, are also attributes traditionally related to the most representative deity of the Norse pantheon, the All-father, Óðinn, but the similarities are still there, making us wonder if Scott inserted those traits deliberately to make us think of the god or to further connect the characters with their Norse past.

In relation to the theme of knowledge and wisdom, one of Scott's first descriptions of Basil in the very first chapter of the novel reports:

> But he was sometimes led into discussions, which showed, as it were in spite of himself, the scholar and the man of the world; and, at other times, as if in requital of the hospitality which he experienced, he seemed to compel himself, against his fixed nature, to enter into the society of those around him, especially when it assumed the grave, melancholy, or satirical cast, which best suited the temper of his own mind. Upon such occasions, the Zetlanders were universally of opinion that he must have had an excellent education. (Scott, 2017, p. 14)

Even if Basil's knowledge does not remotely resemble the one possessed by Óðinn – at least as it is depicted in the novel – it is still emblematic that Scott decided to put this aspect as the first thing the reader must know about the character. Óðinn is, after all, considered the wisest of gods, an ability that he paid dearly. The *Völuspá* recalls, in fact, the great sacrifice carried out by Óðinn to obtain part of his knowledge, when he had to give his eye to drink from the spring of the giant Mímir.

> Alone she sat outside, when the old man came,
> the Terrible One of the Æsir and he looked in her eyes:
> 'Why do you question me? Why do you test me?
> I know all about it, Odin, where you hid your eye
> in Mimir's famous well.'
> Mimir drinks mead every morning
> from Father of the Slain's pledge—do you want to know more: and what?
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 7)

This is not the only example of Óðinn having to sacrifice to obtain wisdom. The All-father goes as far as to sacrifice his own life to obtain the secrets of the runes, as described in the poem *Hávamál*:

> I know that I hung on a windswept tree nine long nights,
> wounded with a spear, dedicated to Odin,
> myself to myself,
> on that tree of which no man knows
> from where its roots run.
> With no bread did they refresh me nor a drink from a horn,
> downwards I peered;
> I took up the runes, screaming I took them,
> then I fell back from there.
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 32)

Shortly after in the poem, Óðinn recalls:

> Then I began to quicken and be wise,
> and to grow and to prosper;
> one word from another word found a word for me,
> one deed from another deed found a deed for me.
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 32)

These are just the most representative examples of Óðinn's continuous quest for knowledge and wisdom, that show the lengths he would go to obtain them. Another testament to Óðinn's skills is his connection to poetry. In *Skáldskaparmál* Snorri details the story of the creation of the Mead of Poetry and the incidents that led Óðinn to steal it to share it with the other gods. In the *Ynglinga saga,* Óðinn is described as always talking in verse, another example that links him with the importance that poetry had for medieval Scandinavians (Isnardi, 2018, p. 202). In relation to these attributes of the All-father, in *The Pirate*, Basil is described as possessing

> some powers of conversation, when, as we have already hinted, he chose to exert them, and his misanthropy or aversion to the business or intercourse of ordinary life, was often expressed in an antithetical manner, which passed for wit, when better was not to be had. (Scott, 2017, p. 14)

However, it is important to consider that Basil never displays any talent in the art of poetry throughout the novel, and this is the only instance in which his speech is described as eloquent. In the same

paragraph, Scott anticipates to the reader an aspect of Basil's personality that will be better illustrated in the following chapter of the novel, when he describes how his "habits […] were retired and gloomy" (Scott, 2017, p. 14). These habits would be revealed during those "dark hours" that Scott describes in the second chapter as moments of "gloomy despondency", to which he copes by isolating himself either in his apartments or wandering around the house.

> At other times, and especially during the winter solstice, when almost every person spends the gloomy time within doors in feasting and merriment, this unhappy man would wrap himself in a dark-coloured sea-cloak, and wander out alone the stormy beach, or upon the desolate heath, indulging his own gloomy and wayward reveries under the inclement sky, the rather that he was then most sure to wander unencountered and unobserved. (Scott, 2017, p. 21)

These wandering habits are also frequently displayed by Óðinn. In both the Poetic and Prose *Edda*, he is often described as a one-eyed wanderer, wearing a hooded cloak. For this reason, he receives the name of Loðungr, "cloak wearer", and Síðhǫttr, "broad hood" (Isnardi, 2018, p. 205). Of Óðinn, the *Lokasenna* also mentions that he is far too often absent from Ásgarðr, a vacancy that his brothers Vili and Vé decide to resolve by taking the throne for themselves and having an affair with Óðinn's wife, Frigg. Furthermore, in *Grímnismál*, the god disguises himself as the wayfarer Grímnir to test king Geirröth's hospitality. All of these are examples not only of Óðinn's tendency to wander around the Nine Worlds, but also of his habit of disguising his true identity. As mentioned before, Basil seems to share this characteristic with the Norse deity, when in chapter twenty-one it is revealed that his real family name is Vaughan, and not Mertoun. As it has been pointed out in the previous chapter, Scott displays a passion for characters with hidden identities, so much so that, in *The Pirate,* he includes three characters that conceal their true nature – Basil, who uses his new name in the attempt to escape his past; Cleveland, who poses as an everyday gentlemen instead of revealing himself as the pirate he is; and Norna, who is later revealed to be Basil's wife. Even if the motivations behind Basil and Óðinn's decision of changing their names are fundamentally different, one could argue that Scott must have found inspiration in the numerous instances in which the All-father disguises himself to obtain anything.

Following the same line of thought, it is possible to draw similarities between Basil's son, Mordaunt, and Óðinn's own son, the "white god" Baldr. In the second chapter of the novel, Scott describes Mordaunt as a beloved youth that often visited the neighbouring houses, bringing happiness and amusement to the inhabitants of Zetland:

> Amid the revels of this merry, though rigorous season, no youth added more spirit to the dance, or glee to the revel, than the young stranger, Mordaunt Mertoun. When his father's state of mind permitted, or indeed required, his absence, he wandered from house to house a welcome guest wherever he came, and lent his willing voice to the song, and his foot to the dance. […] Upon these occasions, full of fun and frolic, he led his retinue from house to house, bringing mirth where he went, and leaving regret when he departed. Mordaunt became thus generally known, and beloved as generally, through most of the houses composing the patriarchal community of the Main Isle; but his visits were most frequently and most willingly paid at the mansion of his father's landlord and protector, Magnus Troil. (Scott, 2017, p. 23)

The fact that Mordaunt is so welcomed and loved by the people of Zetland makes it possible to compare him with Baldr, the most beloved god among the Æsir, who is most known for the myth surrounding his death, recounted in the Eddic poem *Baldrs draumar* and in the *Gylfaginning*. Both figures also display some level of talent in the use of words, further validating the theory of a possible connection.

> Odin's second son is Baldr, and there is much good to tell about him. He is the best, and all praise him. He is so beautiful and so bright that light shines from him. […] He is also the most beautifully spoken and the most merciful, but one of his characteristics is that none of his decisions is effective. (Snorri, 2005, p. 33)

Furthermore, both Mordaunt and Baldr's moments of favour come to an end because of an element of disturb. In *The Pirate*, Captain Cleveland manages to put the Troil family against young Mordaunt by convincing them that he has no good intentions towards the two sisters, Minna and Brenda. In the same way, in the Norse texts Baldr's death is caused by Loki, who was able to convince the god Hǫðr to kill Baldr with an arrow made with mistletoe, the only plant capable of harming the god. The theme of Loki as the slayer of the white god is possibly repeated in *The Pirate* as well, when Cleveland assaults Mordaunt in the third chapter of the second volume, injuring him and forcing him to flee from Burgh Westra, the residence of the Troil family in which both were attending a feast.

Another aspect that links the two figures is the love of their mothers and their attempt to save the life of their sons. In the novel, Norna of the Fitful Head reveals herself as Mordaunt's mother in the thirteenth chapter of the second volume, even if it is later revealed that she is not, in fact, his real mother, but that Cleveland is her real son. However, until Basil reveals this information to her, Norna is convinced that Mordaunt is her son, and tries her best to protect him and help him fulfil his fate – a fate, however, that belongs to Cleveland. An example of this attitude can be seen in the sixth chapter, when Norna urges Mordaunt to leave the Yellowley's house:

> "Hear me, young Mordaunt," said Noma, "and depart from this house. Fate has high views on you —you shall not remain in this hovel to be crushed amid its worthless ruins, with the relics of its more worthless inhabitants, whose life is as little to the world as the vegetation of the houseleek, which now grows on their thatch, and which shall soon be crushed amongst their mangled limbs." (Scott, 2017, p. 51)

In the tenth chapter, Norna also reminds Mordaunt that he does not need to fear her, because she was always good to him. She recalls when she gifted him with a golden chain to wear around his neck when he was fifteen, to protect him and make the people of the region accept him as one of their own. In the second volume, the chain is said to be made "of elfin gold" (Scott, 2017, p. 165), confirming its magical origin.

> When I hung around thy neck that gifted chain, which all in our isles know was wrought by no earthly artist, but by the Drows, in the secret recesses of their caverns, thou wert then but fifteen years old ; yet thy foot had been on the Maiden-skerrie of Northmaven, known before but to the webbed sole of the swartback, and thy skiff had been ill the deepest cavern of Brinnastir, where the *haaf-fish* had before slumbered in dark obscurity. Therefore I gave thee that noble gift; and well thou knowest, that since that day, every eye in these isles has looked on thee as a son, or as a brother, endowed beyond other youths, and the favoured of those whose hour of power is when the night meets with the day. (Scott, 2017, pp. 84-85)

In a similar way, the myths also portray a mother that is actively involved in the protection her son. In the Prose *Edda*, the goddess Frigg forces all elements and creatures of the world to promise to never harm her son Baldr, after he had started having prophetic dreams surrounding the moment of his death.

> When he told the Æsir about his dreams, they took council and decided to seek a truce for Baldr, protecting him from all dangers. Frigg took oaths that Baldr would not be harmed by fire and water, iron and all kinds of metal, stones, the earth, trees diseases, animals, birds, poisons and snakes. (Snorri, 2005, p. 65)

In such a manner, Baldr and Mordaunt display some similarities – from being loved by the people they live alongside with, to see their peaceful existence being put to risk by an external entity. Of course, in the case of Baldr the interference of this external entity has more serious consequences that result in his tragic death. On the other hand, even if there are instances throughout the novel in which Mordaunt risks his life – he almost drowns in the seventeenth chapter, and is saved by Cleveland,

who later fights and injure him – his journey receives a satisfactory and happy conclusion by the end of the novel.

Captain Cleveland is of course the disturbing element of the plot of *The Pirate*. He is introduced in the seventh chapter of the first volume, when he is rescued by Mordaunt after he shipwrecked, and even if he looks amiable and kind to Mertoun at first, he soon displays his true nature when he turns the Troil family against his saviour. It is interesting to notice how Scott can create, with this character, a double meaning with the title of the novel. The pirate mentioned in the title is, for sure, Cleveland himself. However, the word "pirate" is also often used in relation to the Vikings, and it could be that the Scott was also referring to them, given how in the novel he plays with the Norse heritage of the inhabitants of Zetland. What is so compelling about this possible double meaning is that Cleveland is introduced as an external entity, someone that is not native to Zetland and have nothing in common with its inhabitants, not even their Norse ancestry. By the end of the novel though, it is revealed that Cleveland is the son of Basil and Norna, meaning that he has the blood of those "Sea-kings" that are so often evoked in the text. Therefore, the title does, as a matter of fact, refer to Cleveland, only that he is a pirate in the modern sense of the word, while also descending from a lineage of pirates of the North, the Vikings.

This double nature of Cleveland, together with the fact that he is an element of disturb, his connection with ships, and lies and mischief makes it easy to create a connection with the Norse trickster, Loki. The first resemblance between the two lies in the fact that both Cleveland and Loki display a double personality. Loki is an ambivalent deity – he both aids and impede other gods, he is the personification of "necessary evil" that maintains the balance of the universe (Isnardi, 2017, p. 246). The Old Norse sources give several examples of this. The *Gylfaginning* recalls how Loki helped the gods when a giant claimed for himself the goddess Freyja, as well as the sun and the moon, as payment for the construction of the walls of Ásgarðr. In this instance, Loki prevented the giant to complete his work, so that the gods were not obligated to pay the price. Conversely, in the book *Skáldskaparmál*, Loki helps the giant Þjazi in the abduction of the goddess Iðunn, an action that will be reprimanded by the other gods by forcing Loki into salvaging the goddess. Something similar happens in *The Pirate* as well. Captain Cleveland starts his journey in the novel appearing as a grateful man towards young Mordaunt. However, he soon enough reveals his personality, as he antagonizes the Troil family and Mordaunt. The young man recognizes almost immediately the Captain's deception and plans on exposing his lies at the feast organized by Magnus Troil. Here, the double nature of Cleveland reveals itself once more, when he saves Mordaunt from drowning, after all the Zetlanders have hurried at sea to hunt a whale. However, this gesture is immediately explained by Cleveland to be not as an act of kindness but a settling of scores between the two of them. The double

nature of Cleveland's character is even explicitly expressed in the text, in the second chapter of the second volume, after the other characters learn of his hidden identity as a pirate.

> "You have worn what you are wont to call your iron mask so long, that your features," replied Minna, "retain the impression of its rigidity even when it is removed." (Scott, 2017, p. 203)

In another passage in the eighteenth chapter of the second volume, Norna openly refers to Cleveland's deceiving nature.

> […] this ground is sacred to the Gods of old Valhalla. — And now say, man of mischief and of blood, are you friend or foe to Noma, the sole priestess of these disowned deities? (Scott, 2017, p. 327)

The idea of mischief expressed by Norna calls to mind the very nature of the character of Loki as the trickster of Norse mythology, an entity that can shapeshift in order to deceive his enemies. In the same paragraph, Norna goes on and points out the chaotic and even evil nature of Captain Cleveland.

> You are of that temperament which the dark Influences desire as the tools, of their agency; bold, haughty, and undaunted, unrestrained by principle, and having only in its room a wild sense of indomitable pride, which such men call honour. Such you are, and as such your course through life has been—onward, and unrestrained, bloody, and tempestuous. (Scott, 2017, p. 328)

The concept of chaos and evil is often associated with Loki. He is, after all, a satire of the traditional god, a profane, outrageous, and menacing version of a deity. It appears as if Loki understands the natural order of the cosmos, but he decides to pervert it on purpose (Isnardi, 2018, p. 246). This description is in line with the characterization of Cleveland in the novel as well.

Another minor element that connects the two figures is their relationship with ships. Cleveland's connection with the sea appears obvious in the novel given his past as a pirate, but Loki also presents similar traits. The *Völuspá* attests that Loki will join Ragnarǫk on board of the ship Naglfar, which the *Gylfaginning* describes as composed of the untrimmed nails of the dead.

> The serpent churns the waves, the eagle shrieks in anticipation,
> pale-beaked he rips the corpse, Naglfar breaks free.
> A ship journeys from the east, Muspell's troops are coming
> over the ocean, and Loki steers.
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 10)

Once these connections are established, it is possible to see a relation between these two characters, more in their nature and behaviour than in precise textual instances. There are no details that explicitly create this link between the two figures as it was the case, for example, with Basil. The relationship between Cleveland and Loki is purely based on their villainous role within the story, but other elements further validate the theory, such as the double nature of both the characters.

Before we move on with the analysis of the character of Norna, it is worth briefly mentioning the other figures in the novel that might display some resemblance with the deities of the Norse tradition. Magnus Troil displays a strong connection with the element of the sea. He proudly declares his Viking descend all throughout the novel, he seems particularly skilled in the art of whale hunting and his house is filled with maritime decorative pieces, as a passage in the eleventh chapter explains:

> […] yet so frequent were wrecks upon that tremendous coast, and so many unappropriated articles were constantly flung ashore, that the interior of the house bore sufficient witness to the ravages of the ocean, and to the exercise of those rights which the lawyers term Flotsome and Jetsome. The chairs, which were arranged around the wails, were such as are used in cabins, and many of them were of foreign construction ; the mirrors and cabinets, which were placed against the walls for ornament or convenience, had, it was plain from their form, been constructed for ship-board, and one or two of the latter were of Strange and unknown wood. Even the partition which separated the two apartments, seemed constructed out of the bulkhead of some large vessel, clumsily adapted to the service which it at present performed, by the labour of some native joiner. (Scott, 2017, p. 100)

All these elements could be related to the sea-god Njörðr, although Magnus's inclination of hosting feasts with mead and dances might also remind of Ægir, a giant that is also associated with the element of the sea together with his wife Rán. In *Grímnismál*, Óðinn alludes to Ægir's reputation among the Æsir as host of great banquets.

> Fleeting visions I have now revealed before the victory-gods' sons,
> now the wished-for protection will awaken;
> to all the Æsir it will become known
> on Ægir's benches,
> at Ægir's feast.
> (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 55)

The analogies between these personalities are more evident in the central chapters of the novel, when Mordaunt decides to attend, uninvited, one of Magnus's feasts. The celebration of Saint John's Eve organized by the Udaller includes a gathering, a banquet, poetry and songs, the enactment of the traditional Sword Dance of Zetland and Orkeney – a tradition that Scott describes in detail in the notes – and a demonstration of poetical and prophetic talent by Norna. A similar event also takes place in the myths. One of Ægir's feasts is the central setting of the *Lokasenna*, where the gods have gathered to drink ale and celebrate. The banquet is interrupted by Loki, who demands to be readmitted to the celebration after he was excluded for killing one of Ægir's servants. The prose introduction to the poem describes the feast as a rich and peaceful celebration, with "shining gold […] used instead of firelight" and with ale that "went round by itself" (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 80). Liquor and alcohol are also present in Magnus's celebration, as a short passage in the thirteenth chapter illustrates.

> The good liquor was not slow in performing its office of exhilaration, and, as the revel advanced, some ancient Norse drinking-songs were sung with great effect by the guests, tending to show, that if, from want of exercise, the martial virtues of their ancestors had decayed among the Zetlanders, they could still actively and intensely enjoy so much of the pleasures of Valhalla as consisted in quaffing the oceans of mead and brown ale, which were promised by Odin to those who should share his Scandinavian paradise. (Scott, 2017, p. 114)

Even if the passage references Valhalla, the comparison between Ægir's feast and Magnus's is still present. Both banquets have, for instance, uninvited and unwanted attenders – Mordaunt in *The Pirate*, and Loki in the Poetic *Edda*.

In both gatherings there is also a prominent use of poetry. In *The Pirate*, the character of Claud Halcro shows his poetical skills in various occasions, most notably with his *Song of Harold Harfager*, which he recites in the fifteenth chapter at Magnus's feast. In the same chapter, Scott explains that most of Halcro's poetry is of Norse inspiration, marking him as a sort of skald of modern times.

> Halcro's poetry might indeed have interested the antiquary as well as the admirer of the Muses, for several of his pieces were translations or imitations from the Scaldic sagas, which continued to be sung by the fishermen of those islands even until a very late period; insomuch, that when Gray's poems first found their way to Orkney, the old people recognised at once, in the ode of the "Fatal Sisters," the Runic rhymes which had amused or terrified their infancy under the title of the "Magicians," and which the fishers of North Ronaldshaw, and other remote isles, used still to sing when asked for a Norse ditty. (Scott, 2017, p. 122)

The figure of Halcro is reminiscent of another deity often associated with poetry, the Æsir Bragi. In the *Gylfaginning*, Bragi is described as wise and eloquent with words, and "most knowledgeable about poetry" (Snorri, 2005, p. 36). Bragi is also often in company with Ægir, as Halcro is often together with Magnus Troil. In *Skáldskaparmál*, Bragi sits next to Ægir and tells him stories about the Æsir. More interesting for the comparison between Halcro and Bragi is that the god of poetry is one of the attendees at Ægir's feast in the *Lokasenna*. Here, Bragi offers gifts to Loki in the hope of calming him and avoid his ire. Likewise, in *The Pirate*, Halcro offers Mordaunt words of advice in his feud with Captain Cleveland. In the novel, poetry is also evoked by a tradition that the Zetlanders claim to come from their Norse ancestor. Two days after the celebration of Saint John's Eve, Magnus's guests gather for a round of fortune-telling, a tradition that sees a woman acting as a sibyl, or "voluspa", as it is called in the novel, who must fulfil the task of foreseeing the future of the bystanders.

> The sibyl was usually chosen from her possessing the talent of improvisation in the Norse poetry; no unusual accomplishment, where the minds of many were stored with old verses, and where the rules of metrical composition are uncommonly simple. The questions were also put in verse; but as this power of extemporaneous composition, though common, could not be supposed universal, the medium of an interpreter might be used by any querist, which interpreter, holding the consulter of the oracle by the hand, and standing by the place from which the oracles were issued, had the task of rendering into verse the subject of enquiry. (Scott, 2017, p. 192)

This tradition is most probably taken from the *Völuspá*, in which a *vǫlva* predicts the fate of the gods to Óðinn. Scott even references the importance that fate had in the Norse tradition at the beginning of the first chapter of the second volume:

> [The tradition] seems to have been borrowed from those poems of the Scalds, in which champions and heroines are so often represented as seeking to know their destiny from some sorceress or prophetess, who, as in the legend called by Gray the Descent of Odin, awakens by the force of Runic rhyme the unwilling revealer of the doom of fate, and compels from her answers, often of dubious import, but which were then believed to express some shadow of the events of futurity. (Scott, 2017, p. 192)

In this instance, the role of the "voluspa" is taken on by Norna, whose entrance interrupts the gathering and provokes bewilderment among the attenders. In a similar way, Loki interrupts the feast in Ægir's hall, stirring anger among the gods, and displays his poetical skill with a long series of

insults addressed to them. This last example, together with the other that have been presented, suggest not only the connection between the two figures of Magnus and Ægir, but also a possible influence that the *Lokasenna* might have had in the creation of the feast in *The Pirate*.

The character of Norna of Fitful Head is probably the most emblematic of *The Pirate*, so much at least that Scott felt the urge to defend her in the Introduction by the criticism she was receiving at the time. With her depiction in the novel, Scott was trying to convey the image of the Norse *vǫlva,* a woman skilled in the art of divination and that practices a specific kind of magic called *seiðr*, as depicted in the *Ynglinga saga*. In the novel, Norna appears as an independent and mysterious woman, who wanders around the island practicing her rituals and foretelling the future of the inhabitants of Zetland. Her skills make her both feared and respected by the people of the region. Her expertise seems to lie in the control of the elements and the weather, as attested in the seventh chapter.

> "What! the mistress of the potent spell," answered Mertoun, with a sneer — "she who can change the wind by pulling her curch on one side, as King Erick used to do by turning his cap? The dame journeys far from home— how fares she? Does she get rich by selling favourable winds to those who are port-bound?" (Scott, 2017, p. 62)

Norna's first description appears in the fifth chapter of the novel, when she arrives at the Yellowley's house to warn Mordaunt of his upcoming fate.

> She wore in her belt an ambiguous-looking weapon, which might pass for a sacrificing knife, or dagger, as the imagination of the spectator chose to assign to the wearer the character of a priestess or of a sorceress. In her hand she held a staff, squared on all sides, and engraved with Runic characters and figures, forming one of those portable and perpetual calendars which were used among the ancient natives of Scandinavia, and which, to a superstitious eye, might have passed for a divining rod. (Scott, 2017, p. 48)

The description seems to heavily draw inspiration from the depiction of Þorbjörg Lítilvölva in the *Eiríks saga rauða,* which has already been mentioned in the previous paragraph. In the saga, Þorbjörg is introduced as follows.

> When she arrived one evening, along with the man who had been sent to fetch her, she was wearing a black mantle with a strap, which was adorned with precious stones right down to the hem. About her neck she wore a string of glass beads and on her head a hood of black lambskin lined with white catskin. She bore a staff with a knob at the top, adorned with brass set with stones on top. About her waist she had a linked charm belt with a large purse. In it she kept the charms which she needed for

> her predictions. She wore calfskin boots lined with fur, with long, sturdy laces and large pewter knobs on the ends. On her hands she wore gloves of catskin, white and lined with fur. (*Eiríks saga rauða*, transl. by Kunz, 2000, p. 657)

In both passages we find elements that are typically associated with these Germanic seeresses, like the allusion to the adorned divining staff. Norna's sacrificing dagger, however, is absent from the description of Þorbjörg's attire, implying that Scott could have taken this element from another source. Nevertheless, the sacrifice of animals was a typical ritual of the Old Norse world that is attested in both *Eddas* and in the sagas, and Scott might have used the image of the sacrificing knife to imply its magical importance. Norna also displays marked prophetic abilities, as testified not only by specific passages in the novel – which have already been discussed in previous paragraphs – but also by her own name. In giving her the name "Norna", Scott created an immediate link between her character and the theme of Fate. In Norse mythology, in fact, the Norns are the embodiment of Fate, (Isnardi, 2018, pp. 303-304). These deities are also attested in both *Eddas* and in the sagas. However, even if the ability to control and shape Fate is most notably connected with the Norns, prophetic skills are also a usual characteristic of the *vǫlur*, with the *Völuspá* being the foremost example as a long, prophetic poem. In it, the *vǫlva* that is predicting the destiny of the gods also mentions another important seeress in the myths, Heiðr, who is referred to as "the seer with pleasing prophecies" (*Edda*, ed. and transl. by Larrington, 2014, p. 6), further validating the connection between the *vǫlur* and prophetic abilities.

With all of this taken into consideration, the character of Norna seems to be inspired by a general role in Scandinavian society rather than a specific deity, in contrast with the other characters in the novel. In an attempt to connect each character of *The Pirate* with one deity of Norse tradition, it can be argued that Norna does share some resemblance with the goddess Frigg. However, I do not consider this correlation to be as clear as with the other characters. The possibility of a connection between Norna and Frigg can be supported only through a small quantity of examples. Firstly, in the *Gylfaginning*, it is said that Frigg possesses some level of ability in the art of prophecy, but in the myths, she does not make a true use of it (Isnardi, 2018, p. 214). Secondly, as already mentioned, Norna takes at heart the safety of that she believes to be her son, Mordaunt, exactly as Frigg tries her best to protect Baldr from his fate. Lastly, as Frigg is married to Óðinn, Norna is also united in marriage with Basil Mertoun, or Vaughan, the character in the novel that shares many characteristics with the All-father. In the thirteen chapter of the second volume, Norna describes her union with Vaughan as a ritual of heathen nature.

> Know, that we were wedded after the ancient manner of the Norse—our hands were clasped within the circle of Odin with such deep vows of eternal fidelity, as even the laws of these usurping Scots would have sanctioned as equivalent to a blessing before the altar. (Scott, 2017, p. 288)

It appears that a connection can be established between the two figures, but this connection is less stable than the other presented in this chapter. I believe that with the character of Norna, Scott could have taken as inspiration just the general figure of the *vǫlva*, without connecting her to one of the major goddesses in the Norse tradition. This would constitute an exception in the construction of the novel, but it does not have to come as a surprise, since Scott had already displayed in his works an interest in witchcraft and the figure of the witch.

This is attested not only by the publication of his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* in 1830, but also in the other characters that could be considered witches in his novels, such as Elspeth in *The Antiquary* and Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering* – which Scott even mentions in the Introduction of *The Pirate* in relation to Norna. Scott's witch, however, differs from its traditional depiction. Instead of working with the Devil, the magical women in his novels are more connected with natural elements. Scott's idea of witchcraft is in line with the Romantic ideals of his time – for him, it is nothing more than a stylistic effect that serves the purpose of creating a specific image of the past. For this reason, Scott oftentimes uses the setting of his stories to give truthfulness to the powers displayed by his characters. His witches, in fact, never own true magical abilities, but are only conditioned into thinking that their efforts produce true results. This shows that Scott is interested in the psychological aspect of this figure, as is the case with Norna — she is more of a person who believes she practices witchcraft because of her Norse descent, rather than an actual witch with real supernatural powers. Consequently, his witches are not evil *per se* – they are troubled women, whose moral compass has been redirected by their past experiences (Boatright, 1933).

The fact that Norna's character cannot be directly connected to a deity of the Norse pantheon does not eliminate the core argument of this chapter – that there are implicit elements of Norse descent in *The Pirate*, especially in the characters that animate its pages. It appears undeniable, in my opinion, that the connection between these characters and their alleged Norse counterparts are present in the novel. The implications of such a reading will be further discussed in the conclusions. However, what this chapter aimed at was highlighting those passages in the novel that did present a Norse spirit even if it not explicitly articulated, hoping to disclose Scott's ability in working with his sources even when he was not directly quoting from them. By doing this, I aimed at demonstrating a series of skills owned by Scott, especially in the comprehension of the source material, that I think are oftentimes disregarded when analysing his works of Norse inspiration, hoping that those passages "where the

spirit or temper might well be Norse, although the idea expressed was not clearly so", as Lieder argues in his work (Lieder, 1920, p.55), are no longer overlooked, but embraced, discussed and considered.

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the influence that Old Norse literature had in the works of Sir Walter Scott, with particular emphasis on his novel *The Pirate* and its characters. This analysis highlighted how Scott owned a broad knowledge of the Norse sources, and even considered himself an "antiquary", a collector of texts of the past. He owned a vast collection of sagas and texts of Norse influence and was always seeking to own more, a testament to a passion that Scott had cultivated since his youth. His interest for Scandinavian literature is testified by his involvement in the publication of *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, to which he contributed himself with his *Abstract of the Eyrbyggja Saga*. As an author, Scott used the Middle Ages as an inspiration for his historical romances. This was a byproduct of the literary movements of the time – Gothic literature created a new wave of interest for the past, which opened the doors for Scott to start using the Medieval elements he deemed as more "Romantic" in his works. For the specific case of Old Norse literature, the most notable example of this is the poem *Harold the Dauntless*, which presents several callbacks to the Norse sources, especially the Prose *Edda* by Snorri Sturluson. The case of *Harold the Dauntless* proves Scott's method in handling and shaping the Norse element in the creation of a coherent story. The same can be said about *The Pirate*. In the novel, Scott mixes precise and direct references to the *Eddas* and the sagas with more indirect elements that might remind the reader of the tradition of the North without resulting heavy and scholarly.

The initial analysis of *The Pirate* has been conducted basing on the ideas of Paul Lieder, whose work on the relationship between Scott and Scandinavian literature is the most exhaustive on the subject. Thanks to Lieder, it is possible to affirm that Scott used Norse literature in his works, with particular regard to the Danish scholar Bartholin. However, Lieder's work did not include an overview of the elements of "Norse spirit", all those instances in which the reference to Scandinavian tradition *is* in the text, simply not in plain sight. In my opinion, this is a disservice to Scott's work as an author. Lieder transitions from considering him "not scholarly" enough in his methods, to focus solely on the instances in which he is. This approach is not at all incorrect, but it feels incomplete. In *Harold the Dauntless*, it appears clear that Scott uses the Norse element to create an overall effect in the plot that resembles that of a Gothic story. Specific references to the sources can be uncovered, but they remain vague enough to not pull the reader out of the narration.

This is also the case for *The Pirate*, but the two texts present an essential difference. As Lieder notes, Scott stops to explain to the reader the meaning of some of the important points that appear in the plot, such as the figure of the *berserkr* and of the *vǫlva,* or the Sword Dance typical of Shetland and Orkney. Most of these references are taken from Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum.* However, as it has been demonstrated in the final chapter of this analysis, most of the characters in the novel present elements in common with the deities of the Norse religion. Basil resembles Óðinn in his attitudes, Mordaunt is as beloved as Baldr, Cleveland is chaotic and destructive like Loki, Magnus is hospitable and connected with the element of the sea, like Ægir. A thorough analysis of the descriptions of the characters further highlights these connections. Pointing out these ties is merely an attempt, on my end, of proving Scott's true expertise when working with Norse sources. As the father of the historical novel, he pulls from the tradition of the past to create a story that can speak to his present. What Scott has done, consciously or not – after all, he had been exposed to Norse myths since his childhood – was modernizing the typical attributes of the gods, transporting them from the Middle Ages to both the seventeenth century, when the story is set, and the nineteenth century, when he writes it.

Nevertheless, it is important to underline that this approach is not entirely typical of Scott. Even if considering only the references he deliberately decides to cite is an incomplete way of considering the true impact that Norse literature had on *The Pirate*, it is fair to point out that Scott usually mentions his references. In fact, he seems to enjoy explaining the cultural and historical background of his choices, especially since he has studied it with such a rigour. As it has been said before, Scott includes explanations in the Author's Notes on various aspects of the plot that he considered either important or interesting. It is not usual for him to include references without directly pointing them out in some way. So, if he genuinely established these connections between his characters and the Norse deities, it seems fair to ponder why not being more explicit about it. It is my opinion that these ties were probably formed subconsciously, or that, if this was not the case, he wanted to take credit for the portrayal of his characters. It is also possible that he deliberately chose to establish these references to create a modern version of the myth, as I previously suggested.

It is not possible, as for now, to say with certainty if Scott really took inspiration from the typical features of the Norse gods to create the characters that live through the pages of *The Pirate*. There is no physical evidence, under the form of journal entries, letters, or notes, that validates this theory. However, the connections are there and can be identified, recognized, and reconnected with the original source material. What Scott did with his novel was recounting a myth, using a literary tradition that was mostly ignored by other authors of his time to create the backbone of a story that takes pride in its Norse background – as the characters themselves do. With *The Pirate*, Scott offers

to the public a novel that shows his passion and knowledge of Old Norse literature, in a way that goes beyond precise references and scholarly attempts. In other words, Scott presents a story that seems to pull from Norse tradition more than what admits, with a setting that may be far from Scandinavia in time and space, but that keeps its essence at its core.

Summary in Italian

Nel 1814, Sir Walter Scott si imbarcò in un viaggio alla scoperta delle Shetland e delle Orcadi, non sapendo che sarebbe diventato una fonte di ispirazione per un romanzo da lì a pochi anni. Durante l'itinerario, Scott ebbe modo di osservare da vicino la cultura degli abitanti che popolavano la regione, e soprattutto le loro tradizioni, mantenute nel corso del tempo da quei loro antenati che secoli prima avevano conquistato e colonizzato le Shetland – i norreni (Lieder, 1920). Una fortunata coincidenza per Scott, che aveva già accumulato una conoscenza piuttosto vasta sulla storia, la cultura e soprattutto la letteratura del nord Europa. Il padre del romanzo storico presentava, infatti, una grande passione per i testi in antico norreno, anche se, salvo pochi esempi sparsi, non aveva ancora avuto modo di utilizzare adeguatamente questa sua esperienza per un romanzo. Tuttavia, il viaggio nelle Shetland gli diede l'opportunità per farlo. Nel 1821 pubblicò *The Pirate*, un romanzo – mai tradotto in Italia – ambientato in quelle stesse regioni che aveva visitato sette anni prima. Nel romanzo, Scott descrive la cultura degli abitanti delle Shetland attingendo a piene mani da quella conoscenza dei testi norreni che aveva accumulato sin dalla sua gioventù. Scott racconta così la storia di alcuni abitanti delle Shetland, la cui vita viene stravolta dall'arrivo di un misterioso uomo venuto dal mare, Cleveland, il pirata cui fa riferimento il titolo. Scott fa del suo romanzo un racconto di trasformazione sociale, presentando lo scontro tra le tradizioni più antiche dei protagonisti e le rivoluzioni che stanno stravolgendo il resto del mondo, uno scontro che cambia e porta disordine nella pacifica e semplice esistenza delle Isole.

Con questa tesi si mira ad analizzare l'influenza che le fonti norrene hanno avuto nella costruzione del *The Pirate*, in particolare quella esercitata sui personaggi del romanzo. Insieme ad un'analisi più generale del testo, infatti, si vogliono sottolineare le possibili correlazioni tra i protagonisti dell'opera di Scott e le divinità dei miti norreni. La necessità di questa ricerca nasce da una serie di considerazioni scaturite durante la lettura del romanzo. Ero già a conoscenza, prima di intraprendere la lettura, che *The Pirate* presentasse diversi elementi tratti da fonti norrene. Tuttavia, procedendo nella lettura, sempre più dettagli attiravano la mia attenzione sia di lettore che di appassionata delle tradizioni norrene. È apparso chiaro che nel romanzo potesse essere presente una correlazione tra i personaggi e gli dèi nordici, un sospetto che ha spinto questa ricerca nella direzione presentata in queste pagine.

Studi di questo genere sono già stati portati avanti in passato. Tuttavia, la letteratura sull'argomento è spesso di portata limitata e non aggiornata, forse perché l'argomento non riesce a essere d'interessante nel panorama accademico odierno. Il legame tra le opere di Scott e i testi norreni viene discusso e appurato, ad esempio, da Edit Batho, che sottolinea come la passione per questa tradizione letteraria dell'autore scozzese fosse presente sin dall'infanzia. Scott trascorse gran parte del suo tempo studiando approfonditamente la poesia scaldica, le saghe e le Edde, uno sforzo che risultò poi nella pubblicazione delle *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, un'opera di letteratura comparata che presenta molti testi di letteratura norrena mai tradotti prima in inglese. Scott agì principalmente come curatore della raccolta, anche se vi contribuì con il suo *Abstract of Eyrbyggja Saga* (Batho, 1929). Per quanto riguarda *The Pirate,* i riferimento tra il romanzo e le fonti norrene sono stati analizzati più a fondo da Paul Lieder, il quale richiama l'attenzione sull'abitudine di Scott di citare direttamente gli scritti di autori a lui più cari, come il danese Bartholin e lo svedese Olaus Magnus. Lieder si limita ad analizzare solo i passaggi in cui questi i riferimenti sono più evidenti non solo in *The Pirate*, ma anche in altri romanzi e poesie dell'autore scozzese (Lieder, 1920). Così facendo, Lieder restringe la sua ricerca solo attorno ai riferimenti più immediatamente riconoscibili e citati quasi parola per parola da Scott. Questa sua mancanza di approfondimento sugli aspetti più impliciti dell'influenza norrena nella letteratura di Scott è ciò che ha ispirato la stesura di questa tesi. Questo approccio potrebbe, da un lato, offrire un nuovo punto di vista per l'analisi e l'interpretazione dei suoi scritti. I romanzi storici di Scott potrebbero essere reinterpretati guardando agli elementi che presentano uno spirito nordico, possibilmente dando loro un nuovo significato. Questa proposta potrebbe anche rappresentare un'opportunità per la riscoperta degli scritti meno influenti di Scott, come *Harold the Dauntless* o lo stesso *The Pirate*.

L'ipotesi principale di questo studio è, come affermato prima, che esistano collegamenti tra i personaggi del *The Pirate* e gli dèi dell'antica mitologia norrena. Gli attributi fondamentali dei personaggi, così come le loro personalità e i ruoli che presentano nel romanzo sono ciò che suggeriscono maggiormente queste somiglianze. Tuttavia, è fondamentale comprendere la reale preparazione di Scott in merito, per capire se questi riferimenti siano effettivamente presenti. È infatti improbabile che l'autore scozzese possedesse le conoscenze per inserire tali riferimenti, nel caso fosse stato solo un lettore occasionale di letteratura nordica. Al contrario, nel caso la passione per l'argomento fosse stata più forte, l'affermazione sarebbe più plausibile. Può anche essere interessante capire quali elementi della letteratura norrena potessero risultare più attraenti per un autore e per un pubblico degli inizi del XIX secolo, epoca in cui i racconti gotici e il movimento romantico dominavano su tutto.

Per strutturare meglio questo ragionamento, la tesi sarà organizzata in tre capitoli che chiariranno il rapporto tra Scott e la tradizione letteraria norrena. Il primo capitolo consiste in un'analisi di Scott come "antiquario", ovvero un collezionista di testi medievali. Presenta principalmente una panoramica del crescente interesse per le storie della Scandinavia medievale nel Regno Unito, dal periodo elisabettiano, quando la letteratura nordica serve uno scopo politico ben preciso, fino al XIX secolo, quando diventa ispirazione per poeti e autori. Nel momento in cui Scott scrive il suo *The Pirate*, l'attenzione verso questo ambito è più alta che mai, anche se la reperibilità dei testi e delle loro traduzioni – principalmente in latino – è ancora scarsa. Scott stesso è costantemente alla ricerca di testi non solo norreni, ma antichi in generale. La sua biblioteca personale, conservata nella sua residenza di Abbotsford, custodisce l'ampia collezione di testi norreni, principalmente in traduzione latina, posseduta e raccolta personalmente da Scott.

Il secondo capitolo mira a svelare quali elementi del passato medievale e della tradizione norrena Scott avrebbe potuto considerare come "Romantici". Nell'epoca in cui Scott scrive i suoi primi romanzi storici, il Medievalismo conosce una nuova importanza, grazie soprattutto alla letteratura gotica, che vede nel medioevo il periodo ideale per ambientare le proprie storie. Scott, grande appassionato della nuova tradizione gotica, sembra trovare interessanti alcuni elementi della letteratura norrena nella costruzione delle sue opere di stampo Romantico. Un esempio lampante è il poema *Harold the Dauntless,* di cui questo capitolo presenta una breve analisi. Questo poema, l'ultimo pubblicato dall'autore scozzese, è la prova di come Scott lavora con le fonti norrene nel creare una storia che possa attrarre i suoi lettori.

Infine, il terzo capitolo si concentra sull'analisi del *The Pirate*. L'ambientazione complessiva creata da Scott nella storia vede una società che mantiene tradizioni di stampo squisitamente norreno, con i personaggi nativi delle Shetland che rivendicano il loro passato e la loro discendenza dai vichinghi. Un'analisi generale del romanzo sottolinea come Scott prenda passaggi diretti da opere come quella di Bartholin, fornendo al lettore delle citazioni precise e verificabili. A parte questa analisi più generale, il capitolo amplia anche la tesi su cui si basa questo lavoro. L'indagine è stata condotta utilizzando principalmente un metodo comparativo. Per studiare ulteriormente *The Pirate*, ma anche nell'analisi di *Harold the Dauntless,* ho confrontato estratti del testo con passaggi della letteratura norrena che potrebbero essere serviti da ispirazione. Le fonti norrene utilizzate nel mio confronto sono soprattutto l'*Edda* Poetica e l'*Edda* in prosa di Snorri Sturluson. Oltre a questi, sono stati fatti ulteriori riferimenti ad altri testi, come la *Heimskringla* di Snorri e la *Eiríks saga rauða*.

Procedendo con la comparazione si scopre che questi riferimenti potrebbero effettivamente essere presenti. Il personaggio di Basil somiglia a Óðinn nei suoi atteggiamenti, suo figlio Mordaunt è amato dalla popolazione delle Shetland quanto il dio Baldr, Cleveland è caotico e distruttivo come

Loki, Magnus è ospitale e connesso con l'elemento del mare, come Ægir. I riferimenti sono spesso sparsi nel testo, vanno ricercati e messi in un contesto più ampio, ma una volta svolta questa operazione appaiono, a mio avviso, chiari e precisi. Sottolineare questi legami è semplicemente un tentativo, da parte mia, di dimostrare la vera esperienza di Scott nel modellare le fonti norrene. Come padre del romanzo storico, egli attinge alla tradizione del passato per creare una storia che possa parlare al presente in cui lui vive. Ciò che Scott ha fatto, consapevolmente o meno, è stato modernizzare gli attributi tipici degli dèi, trasportandoli dal Medioevo all'Ottocento. Non è possibile, tuttavia, stabilire con certezza se Scott si sia davvero ispirato ai tratti tipici degli dèi nordici per creare i personaggi del *The Pirate*. Non esiste alcuna prova fisica, sotto forma di voci di diario, lettere o appunti, che possa provare questa teoria. Nondimeno, le connessioni nel testo possono essere identificate e ricollegate al materiale originale. Ciò che Scott ha fatto con il suo romanzo è stato ri-raccontare un mito, utilizzando una tradizione letteraria per lo più ignorata da altri autori del suo tempo per creare la spina dorsale di una storia che è orgogliosa della sua discendenza nordica, come testimoniano i personaggi stessi. Con *The Pirate*, Scott mostra al suo pubblico la sua passione e conoscenza della letteratura norrena, in un modo che va oltre i riferimenti precisi e i tentativi eruditi. In altre parole, Scott presenta una storia che sembra attingere alla tradizione norrena più di quanto ammette, con un'ambientazione forse lontana dalla Scandinavia nel tempo e nello spazio, ma che ne mantiene l'essenza.

L'analisi condotta sui personaggi del *The Pirate* può avere un'utilità in un discorso più ampio sulla letteratura di Scott. Questo approccio può infatti portare a una nuova comprensione della preparazione di Scott sui temi medievali che non si limita solo alla storia dell'Inghilterra come lo fu per *Ivanhoe*. Dimostra, inoltre, la sensibilità e l'abilità di Scott nell'elaborare le sue fonti, abilità che supera di gran lunga l'abitudine molto più studiata di citare direttamente. A mio avviso Scott si dimostra un ottimo autore non solo quando riesce a prendere informazioni precise da altre fonti e presentarle al suo pubblico, con intendo quasi pedagogico. Egli è abile soprattutto nel rielaborare elementi dalle sue fonti per renderli più moderni, trasformandoli fino a quando non sono quasi più riconoscibili se non ad un occhio attento e a una mente preparata. Con questa tesi, la mia intenzione principale è di dare credito a Scott non solo come aspirante studioso che si diletta nella scrittura, ma come autore esperto, in grado di riformulare le sue fonti per creare una storia unica e accattivante.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Batho, Edith. C. “Sir Walter Scott and the Sagas: Some Notes”. *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1929, pp. 409-415.

Chiesa Isnardi, Gianna. *I Miti Nordici*. Padova, Longanesi & C, 2018.

Cochrane, John G., Scott W. *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford*, Edinburgh, T. Constable, 1838.

Larrington, Carolyne. *The Poetic Edda*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Lieder, Paul R. “Scott and Scandinavian Literature”. Northampton, Smith College Studies in Modern Languages, 1920.

Lockhart, John, Gibson. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott: In Four Volumes.* Paris, Galignani & Company, 1838.

Nordby, Conrad H. “The Influence of Old Norse Literature on English Literature”. New York, Columbia University Germanic Studies, 1901.

O’Donoghue, Heather. “*English Poetry and Old Norse Myth: A History”*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Powell Jones, William; Scott, Walter, “Three Unpublished Letters of Scott to Dibdin”. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1940, pp. 477-484.

Scott, Walter. *The Pirate*. Loschberg, Jazzybee Verlag, 2017 [1821].

Simpson, John M. "Scott and Old Norse literature". *Scott Bicentenary Essays: Selected Papers Read at the Sir Walter Scott Bicentenary Conference*. 1973, pp. 300–313.

Sturluson, Snorri. *Heimskringla*. Translated by Lee M. Hollander, University of Texas Press, 2011.

Sturluson, Snorri. *The Prose Edda*. Translated by Jesse Byock, Penguin Books, 2005.

Secondary sources

Boatright, Mody C. “Witchcraft in the novels of Sir Walter Scott”. *Studies in English*, No. 13, 1933, pp. 95-112

Chandler, Alice. “Sir Walter Scott and the Medieval Revival”. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1965, pp. 315-332.

Chandler, Alice. *A Dream of Order: the medieval ideal in nineteenth-century English literature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970.

D'Arcy, Julian; Wolf, Kirsten. "Sir Walter Scott and Eyrbyggja Saga," *Studies in Scottish Literature,* Vol. 22, 1987.

Fell, Christine. “Norse Studies: Then, Now and Hereafter”. *Viking Revaluations: Viking Society Centenary Symposium 14-15 May 1992*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 1992.

Fjalldal, M. “To Fall by Ambition – Grímur Thorkelín and his *Beowulf* Edition.” *Neophilologus,* Vol. 92, 2008, pp. 321–332.

Fyre, Northrop. *A Study of English Romanticism.* New York, Random House, 1968.

Halink, Simon. “A Tainted Legacy”. *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 40 No.2, pp. 239-270.

Hill, Rosemary. *Antiquaries in the Age of Romanticism: 1789-1851*. Queen Mary, University of London, 2011.

Hillhouse, James T. “Sir Walter’s Last Long Poem”. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1952, pp. 53-73

Jerome Mitchell, *A Study of Sir Walter Scott's Indebtedness to the Literature of the Middle Ages*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1989.

Kunz, Keneva. “Eirik the Red's Saga”. *The Sagas of the Icelanders*. Penguin Books, 2000, pp. 653–674.

Lindow, John. *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

Moura, Fernanda K. “Medievalism and the Gothic discourse in Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*”. *O Gótico em literatura, artes, mídia. Ensaios em ingles e portugues,* 2019, pp. 95-106.

Powell Jones, William; Scott, Walter, “Three Unpublished Letters of Scott to Dibdin”. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1940, pp. 477-484

Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Facundo: Civilización y Barbarie*. Chile, El Progreso, 1845.

Schei, Liv Kjørsvik. *The Shetland Isles*. Grantown-on-Spey, Colin Baxter Photography, 2006.

Shimer, Michael A. *Madness And The Muse In Nineteenth-Century English Romantic Poetry*. Indiana University ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1983.

Simmons, Clare A. “Romantic Medievalism”. *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Smith, Paul. “Sir Walter Scott and the Sword Dance from Papa Stour, Shetland: Some Observations”. *Folk Drama Studies Today - International Traditional Drama Conference*, Folk Play Research, 2002.

Speculative Society of Edinburgh. *The history of the Speculative society, 1764-1904*. Edinburgh, 1905.

Spray, Thomas. “Northern Antiquities and Nationalism”. *eSharp, Issue 23: Myth and Nation*, Durham University, 2015.

Weinstein, Mark. A. “The Manuscript of The Pirate”. *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, Vol. 58, No. 2, 1997, pp. 199-230.

Web sources

https://www.scottsabbotsford.com/visit/the-house/the-library

Other sources

Jamieson, Robert; Scott, Walter; Weber, Henry W. *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the Earlier Tentonie and Scandinavian Romances: Being an Abstract of the Book of Heroes, and*

Nibelungen Lay; with Translation of Metrical Tales, from the Old German, Danish, Swedish, and Icelandie Languages; with Notes and Dissertations. J. Edinburgh, Ballantyne and Company, 1814.

Kerr, James. "*Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller"*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Ljøgodt, Knut. "'Northern Gods in Marble': the Romantic Rediscovery of Norse Mythology". *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 141–166.

Miller, Peter N. "*History and Its Objects: antiquarianism and material culture since 1500*". Ithaca, NY. Cornell University Press, 2017.

Murray, Tim. "Rethinking Antiquarianism". *Bulletin of the History of Archeology*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2007, pp. 14-22

Scott, Walter. *Essays on Chivalry, Romance and the Drama*. Frederick Warne and Co., 1887.

Scott, Walter. *The Bridal of Triermain, Harold the Dauntless, Field of Waterloo, and other poems*. Edinburgh, T. Constable, 1836

Scott, Walter. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott from the Original Manuscript at Abbotsford*. New York, Burt Franklin, 1890.

Scott, Walter. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott from the Original Manuscript at Abbotsford*. New York, Burt Franklin, 1890.

Scott, Walter. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Boston, Ginn and Company, 1900.

Scott, Walter. *The Lord of the Isles; the Field of Waterloo and Other Poems*. New York, C.S. Francis & Co., 1843.

Sroka, Kenneth M. "The Function of Form: Ivanhoe as Romance." *Studies in English Literature*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1979, pp. 645-660

Truten, Jack. "Sir Walter Scott: Folklore and Fiction.", *Studies in Scottish Literature,* Vol. 26, 1991.