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Mariú saga og Önnu

On 4 April 1500 a charter was drawn up in Hamburg establishing a merchants' confraternity dedicated to St. Anne. This "Broderschupp genannt sunte Annen der Iszlandesfarer" was inspired by a desire to honor and praise God and His mother Mary "unde sundergen der leuen hillighen patronen sunte Annen Tharlacj unde Olaiu to troste der leuendigen vnde doden" (*DI*, XVI:457). The confraternity was founded in the Dominican monastery of St. Johann by its religious superiors as well as the group of men constituting the Society of Iceland Farers ("gesellschop der Jslandesfarer"). The charter provided *inter alia* for an obligatory Mass in honor of St. Anne on Tuesdays, as well as vigils and fasts whenever the merchants were about to set sail for Iceland (p. 458).¹ That St. Anne should join the company of the Scandinavian saints Þorlákr and Óláfr as patrons for those engaged in commerce with Iceland comes as no surprise if one considers the ever-increasing popularity of her cult in the late Middle Ages (Ashley and Sheingorn 1990). The period saw the founding of many religious confraternities and societies in the German-language realm, and the St. Annabruderschaft soon developed into one of the most respected of the confraternities popular among merchants (Kleinschmidt 1930: 138–40).

Late medieval devotion to the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus apparently spread rapidly from the continent to Iceland. The inventories of Icelandic churches attest a devotion to St. Anne that paralleled the phenomenon on the continent, although churches dedicated to St. Anne are rare. Devotion to Mary's mother did not become popular on the continent until 1450 — according to Schaumkell, the height of devotion to her occurred in the last fifteen years of the fifteenth century (p. 11) — and thus did not reach Iceland until a

¹ The St. Anne Confraternities were quite popular in the German language realm. The Hansa city of Lübeck, for example, had five such confraternities. Tuesday was the day selected for special observances in her honor. Cf. Schaumkell (1893), pp. 18–21; Dörfler-Dierken (1992a), pp. 37–43; 100–101.

time when no new churches were being founded. Nonetheless, an “Aunnu kirkia j Sandfelle” is recorded in 1523 (*DI*, IX:188), and the inventory of this church from 1491–1518 attests that it “er helgud gude. jungfru mariu. Sancte Andrese og hinne helgu Aunnu” (*DI*, VII:37), while the cathedral church of Hólar boasted a St. Anne chapel (Guðbrandur Jónsson, 1919–29: 202–205; cf. *DI*, IX: 295) as did the monastery of Munkaþverá (cf. *DI*, IX: 305).

The inventories from the late Middle Ages record the existence of images of St. Anne. As might be expected, statues of St. Anne were found in monasteries: the inventories for the year 1525 attest that Munkaþverárklaustr possessed “brik god j annu stuku” as well as an “aunnu likneske forgyllt” (1525, *DI*, IX: 305), while Möðruvallaklaustr records an “onnu likneski” (*DI*, IX:317). Less significant churches also boasted images of St. Anne, such as the Skorrastaðakirkja í Norðfirði with its “sancte anne likneske med jslendzkt fargan” (1493, *DI*, VII: 199), or Andreaskirkja in the Vestmannaeyjar, which had an “onnv skript” (*DI*, VII:42), while an “aunnu l(ikneski)” was to be found in Gufudalskirkja í Gufudalssveit (1523, *DI*, IX: 197). According to an inventory dated 27 May 1514 the church at Harðarholt had been given “aunnu likneskie” by the priest Jón Jonsson (*DI*, VIII: 492), while an inventory dated 1551 lists an “Onnu lijneski” in the church at Grund (*DI*, XII: 195). The Þjóðminjasafn in Reykjavík exhibits two statues of St. Anne with the Virgin and Child — this type of representation is commonly known as “Anna Selbdritt” — both dating from the fifteenth century, the one of English provenance (Þjms. 2027), the other from Holt in Öndurarfjörður (Þjms. 2069), probably of German origin.

Several documents from the early sixteenth century commence with a reference to Christ, Mary, and Anne. A written protest against the overweening power of the bishops in Iceland, “Bændanna a moti Biskupanna ofrijki hier j landi”, composed in 1513, opens with a reference to Christ, Mary, and “signad(r)ar frv sancti aunnu sialf hinnar þridiu” (*DI*, VIII:432; cf. also VIII:437),² while a legal formula for compensation (“at bioda sættarbod”), in a document from 1550, closes with the statement: “Iesus Maria Anna kome” (*DI*, XII:162). Not unexpectedly, a letter by Björn Guðnason to Bishop Stefán,

² The phrase “sialf hinnar þridiu” to identify St. Anne is a translation of the German “Anna Selbdritt”, the title for images of St. Anne, the Virgin, and Child, “often arranged so that a small figure of the Virgin holding her infant son sits upon the lap of the enthroned Saint Anne” (Sheingorn, 1990: 175; cf. Beissel, 1972: 578–82).

dated 14 Jan. 1515, opens with the obligatory reference to God, “hans milldustu modur mey mariu”, and continues with “fru Sancta Aunnu” (*DI*, VIII:537). In a letter of 1550, Jón Arason mentions that “hafdi Teitur heitinn Þorleifsson gefit gudi og Sancte Aunu iordina Glaumbæ i Skagafirde” (*DI*, XI:776; cf. *DI*, X:99). Thus it is not surprising that in his last will and testament, this same Teitur Þorleifsson commends his soul to the keeping of “hans blezad(r)ar modur og meyar jungfru marie og sancti peturs postula. sancti johannes bapista og sancti onnu” (*DI*, IX:586; cf. IX:591) in addition to other named saints and all the saints in general. According to the “Testament Gottskalks” (1520), the daily Mass for the Dead that his predecessor Bishop Ólafur Rögnvaldsson had in 1479 ordered to be said and sung in the cathedral at Hólar (*DI*, VI:217–21),

skyldi j sancte Annae stuku. sie Eilijfliga vppi halldid suo sem fyrr nefndur Byskup Olafur. Gud hans sál nádi. hefur skipad. þuiad hann gaf þar peninga thil. suo og þær messur tuær humiliavit og af sancta Anna ä faustudaga og Laugardaga. (*DI*, VIII:732)

There had always been widespread devotion to Mary in Iceland and this was also expressed textually. In consequence, portions of the legend of St. Anne were early transmitted in the context of the Marian *vitae*. An inventory of 1525 attests that the monastery of Munkaþverá owned two different redactions of *Mariu saga*, the life of Mary, the one identified as “mariu saga. en stærre”, the other as “mariu saga hinn minne” (*DI*, IX:305; 307). Presumably the “mariu historiú” in the same inventory (IX:307) designates the so-called Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary.³ Additionally there is the “mariu saga med jarteignum” (IX:314). An inventory of 1674 tells us that Skálholt possessed a copy of “Mariu-saga og helgramanna” at one time (Hörður Ágústsson, 1992: 297, 324, 336). Although these works focused on Mary, an account of the life of Mary of necessity included information about her parents. Thus, the so-called “Mariu saga” commences with “Hér hefr upp sögu Mario drótningar. Joachim hét faðir Marie, en Anna móðir” (Unger, 1871: 2) and it continues with the forehistory.

³ Bekker-Nielsen (1958:11) writes: “I middelalderen var *historia* (underforstaaet *rhythmata*, *rhythmica* eller *rimata*) det staaende udtryk for et officium, hvis antifoner, sponsorer og lignende (men ikke lektioner, Davids-salmer og kollekter) havde metrisk form . . .” See esp. pp. 12–13.

Just before the Reformation, Icelandic interest in the life of St. Anne paralleled that on the continent and was expressed by the transmission of her legend from the German-language realm. Two distinct Icelandic translations were undertaken in the early sixteenth century of a Low German life of St. Anne, the one a faithful and quite literal translation (transmitted in the fragment AM 238 fol. III, second quarter of the 16th century, and AM 82 8vo, first half of the 17th century) of Hans Dorn's 1507 Braunschweig imprint of *De historie von der hilligen moder sunte Anna*, known as the *St. Annen-Büchlein* (SAB),⁴ the other a text transmitted in *Reykjahólabók* (Rhb), that is, Stockholm 3 fol., entitled "Emmerencia, Anna og Maria" by the editor Agnete Loth (II:305–468).⁵ I prefer to entitle this work *Mariu saga og Önnu*, since Björn Þorleifsson himself, the compiler of *Reykjahólabók*, refers in the legend of Lazarus to information "j Mariv savgv og þeirra Avnnv" (I, 171:34). The reason for naming both Mary and Anne in the title will become clear in the course of the article.

The two sixteenth-century Icelandic versions of the legend of St. Anne are quite different. Hans Bekker-Nielsen, who compared the version represented by the manuscripts AM 238 and AM 82 with the 1507 imprint of the Low German *St. Annen Büchlein*, came to the conclusion that "AM 82 slavisk følger fremstillingen i den nedertyske bog, har den samme inddeling i kapitler og medtager næsten rub og stub af de fromme bønner og andre indskud, som beretningen er pyntet op med" (1964: 208). The same cannot be said about the much longer *Reykjahólabók* version of the legend, which extends to 164 pages in print, but was originally even longer, since the manuscript now lacks several folios in the miracle-section of the legend. Bekker-Nielsen justifiably considered this version of the St. Anne legend a "hovedværk i senmiddelalderlig islandsk litteratur" (1964: 206).

In an article published in 1960, Ole Widding and Hans Bekker-Nielsen discussed the sources of the various legends in *Reykjahólabók*,

⁴ Kirsten Wolf is editing the two manuscripts of this *Önnu saga* (the edition will also contain the text of the *St. Annen Büchlein*). I am grateful to her for having given me access to her work prior to publication.

⁵ In his book, *Die heilige Anna*, Beda Kleinschmidt comments: "Selbst eine altisländische Prosafassung der Legende hat sich in einer Prachthandschrift vom Jahre 1387 erhalten, die im westlichen Island auf dem Gutshofe Narfeyri unweit des Augustinerklosters Helgafeld entstanden ist" (p. 258). The comment is in error. In a footnote (4) he refers to Kr. Kálund's *Alfræði islensk*, and it turns out that the text, entitled "Ættartala Önnu" constitutes a mere 15 ll. (p. 56). In the Foreword, Kálund remarks about the text: "Er et nytestamenteligt slægtregister over jomfru Mariæ moders pårørende" (p. XXVII).

including the St. Anne legend, and proposed: "Det nedertyske værk, som kompilator har benyttet, har vi bestemt til at være en *St. Annen Büchlein*, trykt af Hans Dorn i Braunschweig 1507" (1960:124). A comparison of the Icelandic and Low German legends prompted them to describe the relationship between the two texts as follows:

... kompilator har udnyttet sin kilde fuldstændigt og kun udeladt nogle for levnedstegningen ligegyldige bønner og overflødige genealogier (kapp. 54–52 [sic]); desuden er der en udeladelse (i begyndelsen af kap. 34) til fordel for en udvidelse andetsteds fra. Udvidelserne synes at være bestemt af et ønske hos kompilator om ikke blot at beskrive St. Annas liv, men også samtidige begivenheder i Marias og Jesu liv. Disse udvidelser har kompilator i så at sige alle tilfælde hentet fra sin sædvanlige hovedkilde, *Pass[ionael]*, som han har græsset i med sjælden grådighed. Han har således benyttet stof fra legenderne til følgende festdage: St. Annas dag, Marias undfangelse, Jul, Jesu omskærelse (Nytårsdag), Marias bebudelse, Marias besøg hos Elisabeth (*Visitatio Mariæ* — *Pass*: Marien bergganck), Kyndelmisse og Marias optagelse i Himlen (*Assumptio Mariæ* — *Pass*: Marien hemmeluart). Endvidere har han — som i Lazaruslegenden (nr. 7) — indflettet bibelsk stof, nemlig Lucas' beretning om Kristi fødsel (evangelierne til første og anden messe på juledag). Der er ganske få plussteder (i form af hele kapitler) både i forhold til Braunschweig-trykket og tilsyneladende også til *Pass*, hvad der tyder på, at endnu et skrift kan være benyttet som kilde. (p. 125)⁶

Two years later the scholars repeated their observations in English, but also augmented them, and this time they characterized the *St. Annen Büchlein* as "a Low German life of St. Anne, which is so closely related to the Icelandic version, that we do not hesitate to hail it as the main source of the story in *Holm 3*" (1962: 253). According to their thesis, the same work, that is, the *St. Annen Büchlein* (*SAB*), was rendered into Icelandic on two different occasions.⁷

As they did with the other legends in *Rhb*, Widding and Bekker-Nielsen interpreted the deviations in the Icelandic translation vis-à-vis the German imprint as the work of the translator/compiler who "follows the Low German source closely, but not literally, and he has

⁶ In the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog*, the sources for *Önnu saga* (= *Mariu saga og Önnu*, p. 30) are given as follows: *St. Annen Büchlein*, a1v–r3r; *Passionael*, 84b–85c, 115b–118c, 143b, 171c–171d, 299c, 385a–387c, 412b–414a.

⁷ This would not be at all unusual, as Hubert Seelow has abundantly shown in his study of the German chapbooks translated into Icelandic (*Die isländischen Übersetzungen der deutschen Volksbücher*, 1989).

frequently supplemented his account from other sources. Among these we find the *Passionael* once again" (1962: 253). Concerning the *Passionael* — their source is the Lübeck 1492 edition of Steffan Arndes⁸ — the scholars write:

We dare not hail this edition as the immediate source of the legends in *Holm 3* [i.e., *Reykjahólabók*], since there are a number of minor inexplicable discrepancies between the Low German and the Icelandic versions, but if Stephan Arndes's edition of 1492 may not be the source in the strictest sense of that word, it is at any rate closely related to the edition used by the compiler of *Holm 3*. (p. 246)

The above suggests that whereas Widding and Bekker-Nielsen were unwilling to claim the 1492 edition as the source, they nonetheless believed that the work itself, but in an unknown edition, was the source. Finally, in 1964, Bekker-Nielsen summed up his view concerning the manner in which the translator/compiler used the *St. Annen Büchlein* and the *Passionael*: "Kompositionen i Anna-sagaen, som vi finder den i *Holm 3*, er vellykket, og oversætteren (kompilatoren) har forstaaet at arbejde sine to kilder sammen paa en fiks maade" (1964: 206). The conclusion necessarily to be drawn from the above is that the same Low German legend of St. Anne, the *St. Annen Büchlein*, was rendered into Icelandic once by a slavish translator — in the AM 238/AM 82 version — and another time in *Rhb* by a translator/compiler⁹ who preferred to treat his primary Low German

⁸ The *Passionael* (1492) concludes as follows: "Hyr endighet sik dat passionael efte der hyllighen leuendt mit velen nyen merckliken schonen historien: Als Bonauenture . . . Rochi des marschalkes auer de pestilencie . . . Johannis crisostimi . . . myt velen anderen nyen historien (de heth heer to den mynschen vorborghen vnbekent vnde begrauen sint ghewest) vnde nu gode vnde synem hyllighen to laue in dat lycht vth deme latine in dat dusesck ghebracht vnde ghedrukket. dorch dat beueel vnde kunst Steffani arndes. inwaner vnde borgher der keyserliken stat Lubeck. Int yar vnser heren M. ccc. xcij. vp dem dach sunte Elizabeth". (CCCCxviii,b)

⁹ In their articles of 1960 and 1962, Ole Widding and Hans Bekker-Nielsen posited the theory that Oddur Gottskálksson (c. 1515–56) was the scribe of *Stockholm 3* fol., that is, *Reykjahólabók*. Mariane Overgaard was the first to reject their thesis, when she pointed out in the introduction to her edition *The History of the Cross-Tree* (1968) that the hand not only in *Sth. 3* fol. but also in several fragments bearing the signature AM 667 4to was the same as that of Björn Porleifsson, the writer of several documents from Reykhólar and environs in the period 1501–42. Her identification was confirmed by Agnete Loth in the introduction to the edition of *Reykjahólabók* (I, xxix), who further remarked that no other writer of his period has left behind such an extensive oeuvre. Agnete Loth posited that the copyist Björn Porleifsson was also the translator and compiler of the work (I: XXXIX). Her argument is convincing, but since the evidence is largely circumstantial and does not affect my arguments concerning *Mariu saga og Ónmu*, I shall not enter into a discussion of "authorship" here, but save it for a longer study of *Reykjahólabók*.

exemplar in a somewhat cavalier manner — Widding and Bekker-Nielsen write that he “follows the Low German source closely, but not literally” (1962: 253) — augmenting it with text gleaned from other available matter.

Analysis of some of the legends in *Reykjahólabók* has revealed that the creative role envisaged for the translator/compiler by Widding and Bekker-Nielsen cannot stand up to scrutiny. Agnete Loth had wondered whether the solution to the problem of the many discrepancies between the legends in *Reykjahólabók* and the putative Low German sources ought not to be sought in other Low German imprints or even manuscripts (1969, I:XXXVI). Her suggestion is well taken. It can be shown that additional or divergent matter in such legends as those of Gregorius peccator, Heinrich and Kune-gunde, and Oswald actually coincides with texts other than those in the *Passionael*; furthermore, one can assume that the sources of these legends were longer versions, deviating from the redactions in the *Passionael* (Kalinke, 1991a, 1991b, 1992). Hence, one should reject the notion that the translator/compiler engaged in creative writing, and instead posit his use of as yet unidentified sources, which he scrupulously followed. It can be shown that he was a meticulous copyist, for instance, of the greater portion of *Stefanus saga* that derives from an older Icelandic translation,¹⁰ and it is reasonable to assume that he devoted the same care to translating as he did to copying.

Because sufficient doubt exists concerning the validity of Widding and Bekker-Nielsen’s analysis of the translator’s methodology — which was based on the assumption that the *Passionael* was the chief source of *Reykjahólabók* — the following study is undertaken as an attempt to establish the relationship — if any — of *Mariu saga og Önnu* to the *SAB* and the *Passionael*.

There are three plausible explanations for the origin of the composition that we call *Mariu saga og Önnu*: 1) If we accept Widding and Bekker-Nielsen’s theory, then the translator had available both the 1507 Braunschweig imprint of the *St. Annen Büchlein* and an edition resembling the 1492 Lübeck imprint of the *Passionael*, and the matter in these sources he augmented further with passages from the New Testament and possibly one additional source (“endnu et skrift”). All passages additional to or deviating from these texts would conse-

¹⁰ An article on “Stefanus saga in Reykjahólabók”, is forthcoming in *Gripla*.

quently have to be considered the original work of the Icelandic compiler/translator. 2) The source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* was a combination of *St. Annen Büchlein* and an unidentified Life of Christ, Mary, and St. Anne. The latter furnished all the matter that according to the first explanation would have been gleaned from various legends throughout the *Passionael* and the New Testament. Here too, additional matter in the saga vis-à-vis corresponding text in the *SAB* would have to be ascribed to the translator. 3) The source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* is a single work, an as yet unidentified Low German life of Anne and Mary, either in print or manuscript.

I. Structure

Compared to the St. Anne legend in *SAB*, *Mariu saga og Önnu* is much longer. Contributing to the greater length of the Icelandic legend is the inclusion of Marian matter. Even where the matter in *Mariu saga og Önnu* and the *SAB* corresponds, the former frequently diverges not only by reason of additional matter, but also variant detail. Moreover, despite the overall greater verbosity of *Mariu saga og Önnu*, the Icelandic legend occasionally lacks text found in the *SAB*. The discrepancy in structure generated by the Marian matter in the Icelandic legend — vis-à-vis the Low German version — is reinforced by deviations in the physical disposition of the matter common to both the Low German and Icelandic legends. Both texts are divided into chapters, but these frequently do not coincide, even when the texts otherwise correspond in the sequence of matter.

The following table shows the disposition of chapters in the Low German and Icelandic legends. Corresponding matter in the *Passionael* (*Pass.*), where none exists in the *SAB*, is noted after the chapter numbers of the saga.

<i>St. Annen Büchlein</i>	<i>Mariu saga og Önnu</i>
1	1–4
2	5
3	6–7
4	8
5	9–11
6	12

7 (<i>SAB</i> mistakenly numbers the chapter 6)	13–14
8	15
9	16
10	17
11	18–20; 26–27 21–25 (5 exempla not found <i>SAB</i>) 22 (<i>Pass. CCxcix,c</i>) 23 (<i>Pass. CCxcix,c</i>) 25 (<i>Pass. CCxcix,c</i>)
12	28–29
13	30
14	31 (end of ch. contains matter found at beginning of ch. 15 <i>SAB</i>)
15	32 33 (no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>)
16	34
17	35 (contains additional matter)
18–19	36
20	37
21–22	38
23–24	39
25–26	40–41 (ch. divisions differ from those in <i>SAB</i>) 42 (no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>)
27	43
28	44
29	45
30	47
31	46
32	48–49 (<i>Rhb</i> , 375:25); 58 (389:17 ff.) 49 (375:25)–58 (389:17) (no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>); 49 (<i>Pass. CCCCxii,c</i>) 50 (<i>Pass. CCCCxii,c</i>) 56 (<i>Pass. CCCCxiii,a</i>) ch. 59 returns to ch. 32 of <i>SAB</i>
33	59–60 (391:19)
34	60 (391:19 to end of ch.)
35	61
36	62 (contains additional matter)
37	63 (contains additional matter)
38	64
39	65
40	66

41	67
42–43	68 (contains additional matter; different disposition of shared matter)
	69 (no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>)
44–46	70–71
47	72 (contains additional matter)
48–49	73
50	74
51	75
	76–82 (no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>)
	77–80 (<i>Pass.</i> Cxvi,a–Cxvi,c)
	82 (Cxvii,a)
52–54 (prayers to St. Anne; no corresponding matter in Rhb)	
	83–84 (Marian miracles; no corresponding matter <i>SAB</i>)
	83 (<i>Pass.</i> Cxviii,b–c)
	84 (<i>Pass.</i> Cxviii,b)
55–56	85 (lacuna of 1 fol.)
57	86
58	87
59–61	88 (lacuna of 1 fol.)
62	89
63	90
64	91
65	92
66	93
67	94
68	95 (lacuna; end of ch. 68 is missing)
69	95 (lacuna; beginning of ch. 69 is missing)
70	96

One distinguishing feature that gives *Mariu saga og Önnu* a character rather different from the *St. Annen Büchlein* is the inclusion of extended Marian matter (Widding and Bekker-Nielsen 1960: 124–25; 1962: 253–54). Chs. 21–25 contain five exempla that focus on the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. They follow the angel's announcement to St. Anne that she will give birth to a maiden who is to be the mother of the Redeemer. The concluding words of ch. 20 serve to introduce the exempla:

Og mvn eg nv fyrst latha hier so vid standa. en seigia nockvt vt af þeim dasemdar thaknm er gvd almatthogr hefer nv sidan vilia lætha birttazt sier til dyrdar og sinne blezanlegre modr og heilagre frw sancte Avnnv æn gomlv syndar. (329:19–24)

The five chapters depict miracles related to belief in the Immaculate Conception. In the last the promulgation of the dogma at the Council of Basel is mentioned; *Rhb* erroneously gives the date as 1339 (332:10–11), a century before the fact.¹¹

Unlike the *St. Annen Büchlein*, which concludes the narrative proper of the legend with a survey of St. Anne and Joachim's ancestry (ch. 52) and a number of prayers to St. Anne (chs. 53–54), *Mariu saga og Önnu* continues the narrative by turning after Anne's death to the life of Mary (chs. 76–81), which concludes with her assumption and its aftermath (414:23–424:15). Subsequently there is a lacuna, presumably of two folios, which most likely contained some Marian miracles. In any case, when the text resumes (424:17), three Marian miracles, which can also be found in the *Passionael*, are told (chs. 82–85), before a sequence of miracles relating to St. Anne commences (chs. 85 ff.). *Reykjahólabók* shares the St. Anne miracle stories with the *St. Annen Büchlein*.

That *Mariu saga og Önnu* in *Rhb* has a focus that extends beyond the life of St. Anne is manifest not only by the Marian matter narrated after the death of St. Anne, but also by the shift of focus to Christ and Mary in the middle of the work. The narrative of ch. 32 in the *SAB*, which deals with Anne's search for Mary, is interrupted in *Rhb* by the inclusion of narrative and theological matter in chs. 49–58 relating to the birth of Christ, for which the *SAB* has no corresponding matter. A similar "interpolation" occurs after ch. 15 *SAB*/ch. 32 *Rhb*, which deals with the names of Mary. This "interpolation", ch. 33 of *Rhb*, is devoted to the ten gifts or graces bestowed upon Mary by God. The additional matter in *Rhb*, which is devoted to Christ and Mary — and not counting additional matter in corresponding chapters in the Low German and Icelandic works and the concluding miracles — comes to about 32 pages of printed text. The legend proper of St. Anne — that is, without the appended miracles — may

¹¹ The exempla were well known in the Middle Ages. Shorter versions of the exempla in chs. 22, 23, and 25 enjoyed wide circulation through Johannes Pauli's *Schimpf und Ernst* (1972, I: 315–16; II: 379–80). These very same exempla are also found in the *Passionael* (CCxcix, c).

be considered to commence with ch. 10 (*Rhb* 316:6), where her father learns that his wife shall conceive, and ends with ch. 75 (414:22), when St. Anne dies. Of these approximately 100 printed pages of the legend, Anne does not appear at all in one-third of the text, which is devoted exclusively to Mary and Jesus. In consequence, the focus in the Icelandic legend is much broader than that in the Low German work and one is justified in considering the Icelandic text a legend devoted to both Mary and Anne. This presumably led Björn Þorleifsson to refer to the work as *Mariu saga og Önnu*.

The chart above is somewhat misleading. Although the juxtaposition of chapters in the two works suggests general correspondence, even when one chapter in *SAB* is represented by three in *Rhb*, for example, *SAB* ch. 5 = *Rhb* chs. 9–11, the larger number of chapters in *Rhb* also suggests a different approach to structure. In some cases, as in chs. 18–20; 26–27, which correspond to a single chapter (ch. 11) in the *SAB*, the arrangement of the material in the saga can diverge extraordinarily, thereby producing a rather different perspective. Furthermore, the sequence of narrative sections can also undergo change, as in *SAB* chs. 30–31, which are reversed in *Rhb* chs. 47–46.

The first fifteen chapters of *Mariu saga og Önnu* are devoted to the life of Emmerencia; they function as the forestory to the life of Anne and Mary. In the *SAB* this matter is divided into eight chapters. Analysis of the chapters in the saga suggests that the “author” or “compiler” — presumably of the Low German source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* — thought of chapter division as a playwright might conceive scenes, that is, he structured the material so that a new chapter commences with a new scene to signal the entrance of a new character, or a shift in speaker, or a shift from the general to the more specific. Thus, ch. 1 introduces the protagonist Emmerencia and relates that she often visited the prophets and holy men on Mt. Carmel to discourse with them and learn about the coming of the Savior. The matter introduced in ch. 1 becomes more specific in ch. 2, for here she now encounters a specific wise man named Archos, and inquires whether she might discuss with him some of her concerns. He encourages her to do so. In ch. 3, she voices her concerns at length, and in ch. 4 Archos answers these. All of this matter, extending to 157 lines in print in *Rhb*, is presented as one chapter in the *SAB*.

Ch. 5 of *Mariu saga og Önnu* corresponds to ch. 2 in the *SAB*, and this chapter focusses on the physical and spiritual qualities of

Emmerencia. Chs. 6 and 7, which correspond to ch. 3 in the *SAB*, are conceived in a structurally similar manner as the first four chapters of the saga. In ch. 6 Emmerencia's family and friends decide that the time has come for her to get married. Since they know of her desire to maintain perpetual virginity, they go on pilgrimage to Mt. Carmel to seek divine guidance, and this is forthcoming in ch. 7, where a voice from heaven makes the divine will manifest. In the following ch. 8, Stollanus, who is to become Emmerencia's husband, is introduced, and this corresponds to ch. 4 in the *SAB*. Subsequently, ch. 5 in the *SAB* becomes tripartite in the saga, as the focus shifts from Emmerencia (ch. 9), to Stollanus (ch. 10), and finally to Fronus, a holy man on Mt. Carmel, who prophesies that Emmerencia is to give birth to a daughter.

Ch. 12 corresponds to one chapter in the *SAB* (ch. 6), which records the birth of St. Anne and relates how a blind man regains his sight in the presence of the baby. The following two chapters in the saga, which correspond to only one in the *SAB*, are structured according to scenes in a similar manner as the earlier chapters. While ch. 13 is general in nature and tells about Anne's life in the temple, ch. 14 focusses on a specific prayer, revelatory of Anne's sanctity, which is overheard by a priest. Finally ch. 15, which corresponds to ch. 8 in the *SAB*, relates the deaths of both Anne's father and mother and transmits at length Emmerencia's death-bed advice to her daughter.

The principles of chapter division evident in the forestry are paradigmatic in the sense that in general the Low German and Icelandic legends are distinguished by divergent approaches to organization. On the whole, the legend represented by *Reykjahólabók* is structurally and narratively a work superior to the *SAB*, which on the one hand duplicates material in such a way as to suggest that it was compiled from more than one source, the work occasionally proceeding so hastily as to produce redundancies, but on the other hand condenses text in such a manner as to undermine the motivation necessary for both plot and narrative logic.

Duplication of matter occurs in *SAB* chs. 42–43 and is of such a nature as to suggest that the two chapters derive from two different sources, for the information conveyed is partly contradictory. Ch. 42 relates that St. Anne decides to go into the desert in order to do penance. She takes leave from the poor and the sick, distributes to them all her possessions, and departs. The wretches attempt to follow her, without success, however. After searching for her for 14

days they turn back. At the age of 44, after Anne has been in the desert for some time, she decides to increase her penitential life. She finds a stone pit and lives there in her old age. In ch. 43 we learn that Anne has decided to live a strict penitential life; she no longer sleeps in bed — the matter antedates her sojourn in the stone pit — but rather on the bare ground with a stone as pillow. She abstains from all delicacies, visits churches, and ministers to pilgrims and lepers. She now decides to observe even greater penance:

Alsze se do ver *vnde* veftich iar olt was do gink se in de woestenige in de alder hemelyckeste stede de sze vinden kunde in dem vant se eine kulen de sere scharp was vnde van der erden hoch vorhouen dar ginck sze in sitten. (iv,v–ivi,r)

The text above is nearly identical to that in the previous chapter, in which Anne seeks “de elendesten stede de se vinden kunde” and finds “eine scherpe steynkulen”, which is both “vorholen” and “vorhouen” (iv,r). Chapter 42 ends with the observation that “dar ginck se in in oren olden dagen” (iv,r), while ch. 43 concludes “*vnde* dusse strengicheyt helt se mennich iar lanck in groter otmoedicheit vnde lidesamicheit” (ivi,r). The nature of the two chapters suggests that an earlier version of the legend had contained the matter now distributed over two chapters in the *SAB* as a single sequence; it had told that St. Anne ministered to the poor and sick, that she decided to live out her life in the desert, that the poor and sick attempted to follow her but could not find her, that St. Anne decided to increase her penitential life, and that she finally came to live in the stone pit. It is possible that two redactions deriving from this version made use of different sections, that there had occurred a case of complementary attrition, the one redactor choosing to relate how St. Anne ministered to the poor and sick, the other focussing on how these attempted to find her in the desert. For some reason the redundant matter came to be included as two chapters in the *St. Annen Büchlein*.

The corresponding ch. 68 in *Rhb* strongly supports such a reconstruction of an older, narratively superior account of St. Anne’s decision to undergo a life of penance in the desert. All the elements of chs. 42–43 — but without the duplication of matter — are present and in the correct chronological sequence. St. Anne decides to live a life of penance in the desert (402: 31–34); she seeks out the poor and

sick to take leave and distribute her goods to them (402:34–403:4); she leaves Bethlehem for the desert, and the poor follow her for 14 days, but cannot find her (403:4–21); their looking upon her as their mother is explained (403:25–33); when she is 54, St. Anne wishes to increase her penitential life, and when she finds a stone pit, she rests there on the ground with a stone as pillow (403:33–404:7).¹² In addition to all the elements of the two chapters in *SAB*, *Mariu saga og Önnu* contains a discourse on St. Anne as the mother of all in need. Far from being a recasting of two chapters in *SAB*, with additional matter created by the translator, ch. 68 suggests derivation from a longer, older, and narratively superior St. Anne legend than that found in *SAB*, but one nevertheless closely related to it.

In chs. 25 and 26 of the *SAB*, which are represented by chs. 40 and 41 of *Rhb*, the opposite problem occurs, that of exaggerated condensation. Furthermore, the disposition of matter in the two chapters makes it evident that the text of the *SAB* could not have been the source of that in *Rhb*. The text in question relates that when Mary was 14 years old, the time had come for all nubile maidens to return to their parents in order to get married. Mary refused, however, because of her vow of virginity, and when the high priest asked St. Anne for an explanation, she told him of the various graces Mary had received and the miracles that had occurred. Consequently, the high priest convokes his fellow priests, and the *SAB* continues,

vnde gink myt oene in den tempel dar vellen se alle to samende vp de erden vnde beiden godde mit groter deuocien dat he one tho kennende wolde geuen sinen godliken willen in dussen saken. (gi,v)

There is no reference, however, that would explain “dussen saken”, and the corresponding scene in *Rhb* suggests that the text of *SAB* is

¹² A similar but not as striking duplication of text occurs in chs. 21 and 22, which commence with nearly identical sentences. Ch. 21 starts out:

Also Joachim vnde anna marien ore dochter gode in dem tempel geoppert hadden vnde eine tidt lanck by or gebleuen weren benedigeden vnde loueden se vnsen heren god almechtich vor sine ghaue vnde barmherticheit de he oene bewiset hadde do reiseden se wedder vmme tho nazareth. (fiii,v–fiiii,r)

There follows nothing but the information that they took the same lodging as on their way to Jerusalem and that they experienced a number of miracles, which will be told at the end of the legend. The next chapter opens in the same manner as above, but now we are told that when they had returned to Nazareth, Joachim became sick and died. The corresponding text is found as a single unit in ch. 38 of *Rhb*.

an abbreviated version of an originally longer Low German text; someone, possibly the printer of the 1507 imprint, excised the high priest's speech containing an explanation for the convocation and of Mary's special circumstances. In *Rhb* we read that the high priest let "kalla til sin alla þæ presta sem j mvsterinv vorv og sagde sidan thil þeirra ...". An extended speech follows (361:11–20), which concludes with the suggestion that they should ask God to make his will manifest. For this reason the priests go into the tempel, as the *SAB* informs us, and *Rhb* follows suit (361:21). A voice from above says that a staff shall bloom from the root of Jesse, and the eligible young men are convened. The one whose staff blooms is to marry Mary. *SAB* tells us that everyone except Joseph came, but when no one's staff bloomed, he too was called to participate. The abrupt nature of the Low German narrative suggests that an originally longer text had been condensed in the *SAB*, and the *Rhb* text seems to confirm this. In *Mariu saga og Önnu* the failure of the convocation to produce a husband for Mary is followed by a voice from heaven bidding the priests to seek out Joseph of the family of David:

Par er enn einn fæddr af Davidz æth. og byr nær stadnum Bethlehem og heiter Josep hann er hier ecki þviat hann reiknade sig fyrer gyde vera overdogan til þessarar ferdar. enn hann er verdogr at fæ meyna Mariv. Af þvi at hann avdmivkv. rethlatvr og godgiarn er Hann þionar og vel gyde sinvm skapara. (362:13–17).

The voice from heaven was not created by the translator but rather derives from his source. It is found, for example, in the popular vernacular version of the New Testament known as *Die neue Ee*, which was composed around 1400 and was transmitted in both manuscript and imprints in the fifteenth century. There we find a corresponding text:

Do kom ein stim von got, die sprach: Er ist nicht hie, der heilig man, den got Marien hat ausserkoren; er heisst Joseph und ist von Davids geslacht, und Jacob ist sein vater genant. (Vollmer 1929: 20,18–20)

In *Rhb* the chapter concludes with Joseph's staff blossoming and his humble promise:

Og so sem eg hefer geymt gvde min. hreinleika. So vil eg og geymæ hanna ælla mina daga æ medan eg lijfe. (362 : 28–30)

This public promise too, which is not found in the *SAB*,¹³ reflects popular religious tradition. As with the voice from heaven, this speech is also transmitted in *Die neue Ee*. When the priests tell Joseph that he is to marry Mary, he protests:

wan ich han mich got versprochen, das ich ân alle weib wil beleiben; ob ich aber weib wolt nemen. so zem mir doch Maria nicht zu einem weib, wann Maria leib zimbt nicht mannes gemein. (21 : 7–10)

When the priests insist that it is God's will, Joseph replies in the form of a prayer:

Her, vater aller weisheit, du erkest alle herz; also erken an mir, das ich mich dir ergeben han, keusch zu beleiben; also hilf mir, her, das ich diser magd nicht geruech, noch ander weib. (21 : 13–15)

In the *SAB*, these passages are lacking and the chapter ends with Anne's being told of the miracle. We are told that Anne knew and esteemed Joseph and therefore she was pleased. Ch. 41 in *Rhb* places this final scene at the beginning of the next chapter. Moreover, the saga also relates that St. Anne was told that Joseph intended to preserve his virginity throughout life — this section is not found in *SAB* — and therefore she was glad and praised God and gave her consent to the marriage (363 : 7–17).

One might argue that the translator/compiler of *Mariu saga og Önnu* went about his work in an analytical manner, that he was aware of the imperfections of the *SAB*, that is, of the contradictions, inconsistencies, lacking transitions, and that he revised by excising, augmenting, and combining matter at the same time that he translated. While such a procedure would be cumbersome and time-consuming to the extreme, it is not entirely out of the question. Nonetheless, it is implausible. Throughout *Mariu saga og Önnu* there are passages that either deviate from the text of the *SAB* — where the two versions otherwise correspond in narrative matter — or are

¹³ In the the following chapter (26) of *SAB*, we read that when Joseph learns that Mary had vowed to maintain her virginity, he rejoices "wente he ock in synem herten vp ghesat hadde dat he al sine leuedage in kuschere reinicheit leuen wolde" (giii,r). Unlike his counterpart in *Rhb*, Joseph does not reveal his intention in public.

additional to it. On these occasions there is repeated evidence in the form of Low German loan words and translations that the source of the discrepancy is a different Low German redaction of the *SAB*, as the following shows.

One day, as the young St. Anne is praying in the temple, she is overheard by a priest. At one point she says:

Ick bidde di leiuē here hore dut bet miner kleinen innicheit vnde
vorsmade min bet nicht dar vmme dat ick nach kleine bin. (b viii,
r-v)

The corresponding passage in *Rhb* reads as follows:

Eg bidr þig allra kæraste herra hneig þv þinv blezanlegv eyrv hier
thil og heyr þessa mina litle jnnalega bæn er \eg/ bidr þig drotten af
ollvm minvm hvg og hiartta. og forsmáþv mina bæn ecki drottinn
minn þinnar fathækrar ambattar. (321:4-7)

The passage “forsmáþv mina bæn ecki” is a word-for-word translation of “vorsmade min bet nicht”; the translator has gone so far as to transmit the loan *forsmá*. The following clause, “dar vmme dat ick nach kleine bin”, is not transmitted in *Rhb*, however, which renders a quite different Low German text; it transmits a passage which presumably contained the phrase “arme deinst maget” or “arme maget”. The phrase “fátæk ambátt” occurs frequently in *Rhb* to render a Low German “arme maget” or “arme deinst maget”. When the Low German phrase occurs in the *SAB*, it is represented either by Icelandic “fátæk ambátt” or “fátæk þiönustu mey” (306:26 = aiii,r; 309:14 = av,r), but it also turns up at times when there is no corresponding Low German passage (314:1; 321:7; 328:3; 328:17) in the *SAB*. This suggests that the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* had in these instances contained the phrase “arme maget” or “arme deinst maget”. The Icelandic “fátæk ambátt” is an incorrect loan translation, because it fails to take into account that “arm” is meant in a metaphorical sense. It is unlikely that the translator would have generated the phrase himself; it represents the Latin *ancilla* as it is used, for example, in Mary’s response to the angel Gabriel in the gospel of St. Luke: “Ecce ancilla Domini” (Lk. 1, 38). In Icelandic this is simply rendered by *ambátt*.¹⁴ The Icelandic misconstrues the Low German

¹⁴ In late 15th- and early 16th-century editions of the Low German Bible the word *ancilla* in Lk. 1,38 is transmitted as either *derne* or *maget*. See Ising 1976, VI: 272.

word “arm”, which expresses unworthiness rather than poverty.¹⁵ The confusion may actually have arisen because of the very existence in Icelandic of the word *armur*, which could mean both *vesæll* and *fátækur* (Sigfús Blöndal 1980).

In their article on “Low German Influence on Late Medieval Icelandic Hagiography” (1962), Widding and Bekker-Nielsen had remarked on this feature of *Reykjahólabók*, that is, on the extensive literal translation, use of loan words, and even loan syntax (pp. 258–59). What they failed to pursue, however, is the occurrence of the same features in Icelandic passages for which there is no correspondence in either the *Passionael* or the *SAB*. Where there is no corresponding Low German reading, it is reasonable to posit a source that had generated the loans in Icelandic. For example, throughout *Mariu saga og Önnu* we read “gamla moder” to mean Icelandic *amma*,¹⁶ both where the Low German of the *SAB* reads “older moder” and where the phrase does not occur. It is unlikely that the translator would have used this meaningless phrase if he had himself created the augmented text. A similar phenomenon occurs in respect to the loan word *forborg* which is conjoined to *helviti* to mean “the gate of hell”. In the *SAB* we frequently encounter the phrase “vorborch der helle” and this is paralleled by “forborg helvitis” in *Rhb* (e.g.,

¹⁵ There is another striking instance of a mistranslation of the Low German *arm* in the legend of St. Rochus. In the *Passionael* occurs the phrase “mit den armen elenden seken minschen” (Cxlix,a), the corresponding passage of which reads in *Rhb*: “fathækra manna og vthlendra” (II, 152:14). The translation is wrong on two counts: *arm* means ‘wretched’ here and not ‘poor’, while *elend*, which ordinarily also means ‘wretched’ or ‘miserable’, when combined with *seken* in the collocation “elende seken” means ‘leper’. Cf. Schiller and Lübken, *Mittelniederdeutsches Wörterbuch*. In *Mariu saga og Önnu* occurs a reference to “fathækvm vtlendzkvm monnvm” (324:23) in a passage that is longer than the corresponding text in the *SAB* (ciiii,r). The context suggests that the source must have contained the phrase “armen elenden seken minschen”, which the translator misconstrued just as in the legend of St. Rochus. In only one instance does *Mariu saga og Önnu* not contain the word *fátæk* before *ambátt* and that is in the text of the *Magnificat*, which Mary recites on the occasion of her visit to Elizabeth. In this instance we encounter “lithelæthe ambattar”, which correctly renders the Latin “humilitatem ancillae” (Lk 1,48). The *Magnificat* is found neither in the *SAB* (gv,r) nor in the *Pass.* (Clxxi,c), but the reading in the Low German Bible provides the explanation for the correct transmission of the text. The Latin “humilitatem ancillae” is rendered in Low German with “de oetmodicheit siner dernen” or “de oetmodicheit siner maget” (*Die niederdeutschen Bibelfrühdrucke*, VI: 272).

¹⁶ The loan translation also occurs in “Saga heilagrar Önnu”, the other translation of a Low German life of St. Anne, in this case, demonstrably of the *SAB*, e.g., hiii,r “dat sze oldermoder was des nigengeboren koninges” is rendered “ad hun var en gamla moder þess nyborna kongs” (AM 82 8vo, 52v).

308:28 = aiiii,v; 310:21 = av,v; 356:14 = fv,r). The loan also occurs, however, when there is no corresponding passage in the *SAB*, e.g., 372:15, and this suggests that the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* had contained the corresponding phrase.

This is not the place to undertake a study of the loan vocabulary and loan translations in *Mariu saga og Önnu* or in *Rhb* as a whole; suffice it to say, that Widding and Bekker-Nielsen were right to point out this feature of the text. In those instances when the Icelandic text is fuller — anywhere from a single sentence to entire chapters — the occurrence of unusual loans, especially those that had not yet entered Icelandic,¹⁷ suggests that they were generated by a Low German source. Thus it would be remarkable — if one is to give credence to the thesis that the *SAB* is the source of the saga — for the translator to render the Low German “*Alse Anna dut horde*” (hiii,v) as “*Enn þa sem Anna hafde vndirstadit ord kongsens*” (392:21), or to have produced the unusual loan word *glaiete* (339:4) when the *SAB* writes *spere* (dii,r).¹⁸ *Mariu saga og Önnu* is replete with Low German loans — *lesmeistaren* (331:16), *byvisa* (330:25; 372:12; *byvisad* [401:22] = *bewiset* [i ii,v]), *allvelldogheit* (364:17), *wisheit* (365:17), *vijsheithen* (365:24), *navdþurftta* (373:2), *navdþurftar* (403:2), *hast* (336:5; 369:9), *nidr þryckia* (372:21; 421:4) — for which no counterpart exists in the *SAB* or the *Passionael*, and it is reasonable to assume that this fact, together with indubitable evidence of corruption in the Low German text (see below) permits us to conclude that the 1507 imprint of the *SAB* was not one of the sources of *Rhb*.

II. Corruption in the *St. Annen Büchlein*

If one assumes that the *SAB* and the *Passionael* were the sources of *Mariu saga og Önnu*, then the preceding analysis of the organization of the Icelandic text suggests that the translator/compiler went about

¹⁷ The word *forborg* is not listed in Chr. Westergård-Nielsen, *Låneordene* (1946), nor are *undirstada*, *glafiel*, *lesmeistari*, *allvelldogheit*, and *visheit*. The verb *undirstanda* occurs, however, in Oddur Gottskálksson's translation of the New Testament. Cf. Jón Helgason 1929:385. The words *forborg* and *visheit* also occur in the *Saga heilagrar Önnu* that is being edited by Kirsten Wolf (cf. ch. 2).

¹⁸ The same discrepancy occurs in the legend of St. Sebastian: *Rhb* I,159:21 “*med glafielvm*”; *Pass.* “*mit speren*”. The Low German *gleve* (variants: *glave*, *gelave*, *gleive*, *glevie*, *glevi(n)ge*) means ‘lance’ or ‘lance head’.

the task in a rather complicated manner, reversing chapters of the *SAB* or placing later ones at an earlier point in the narrative; breaking off a chapter in the *SAB* in mid-narrative to interject into the translation matter from another work; in turn, breaking off the interpolated matter in mid-chapter to resume translating from the primary source. Moreover, much indirect discourse in the *SAB* emerges in the form of extended direct discourse in the saga, thereby augmenting the text vis-à-vis the alleged sources to such an extent as to double, triple, and in some instances expand it to ten times the original length. Such a method of translating/compiling appears to be extraordinarily cumbersome and counterproductive.

A close comparison of what may perhaps have been the most difficult chapter in the *SAB* with its “translation” provides evidence that the 1507 imprint of the *St. Annen Büchlein* cannot have been a source of *Mariu saga og Önnu*. The chapter in question — ch. 15 of the *SAB* and ch. 32 of *Rhb* — treats of the prototypes of Mary in the Old Testament. The presentation of each prototype is followed by an explanation of the Marian analogy, of the relationship between the Old and New Testament figures. Chapter 15 of the Hans Dorn imprint of 1507 contains a rather corrupt redaction of this matter, which becomes apparent if one compares it with the corresponding ch. 32 of the saga. The nature of the Low German text permits one to conclude that additional matter in *Mariu saga og Önnu* is not to be ascribed to the translator but rather to his source. Ch. 15 of the *SAB* bears considerable evidence of either quite crude condensation or rather sloppy typesetting. Thus, the passage in which Mary is said to be prefigured by Sarah in the Old Testament, reads as follows:

Se ys ock de benedigede zara de patriarche nicht allene den minschen besunderen ock den engelen van welker minschliker frolicheit lachede iesus also Jsaac geboren wart. (dvii,r)

The text is garbled and makes little sense, but reference to *Mariu saga og Önnu* manifests the nature of the corruption in the 1507 imprint. The corresponding, but longer and superior Icelandic text, which we assume to transmit the reading of its exemplar, is as follows:

Hvn er og kend vid hina blezada Zæra. sem aller glöddvnt vid til komv Ysaac og moder hans hlo af fagnade er hvn leit hann fæddan. So fognudu og eigi at eins patriarchar eda adrar menn helldr og hellger

einglar er þeir sæv Jhesvm fæddann med mannlegre nattvrv. (344:9–12)

Throughout this section, an Old Testament type is presented as foreshadowing a New Testament figure or event, together with an explanation of the nature of the prefiguration. The Low German and Icelandic passages above — the italicized Icelandic represents text omitted, presumably through carelessness — attest both the corrupt character of the 1507 imprint and the textual preeminence of the saga. Sarah's rejoicing over the birth of Isaac prefigures the joy experienced by the patriarchs and saints at the birth of Jesus.

A similar type of corruption occurs a few lines later, where the *SAB* has presumably again skipped a line or two from its exemplar. The reference is to Rachel as a prototype of Mary:

Se ys ock tho dem negeden male de suluighe salighe rachel welke de den waren Josep ghetet hefft de dar nicht allene gheworden is ein here syner broder vnde des heilen landes van Egipten besunderen ock eyn forste der engehe vnde ein here aller creaturen Jesus Christus gebenediget in ewicheit. (dvii,v–dviii,r)

The corresponding passage in *Rhb* clarifies the nature of the corruption in the 1507 imprint of the *SAB*:

hvn er reiknvt vid blezada Rachel. af hverre at gvdh gaf henne einn son er Josep /hiet\ j hverr ecki at eins var herra yfer sinvm brædrvm helldr var hann og einn herra yfer heilv Egipta lannde. *So var og blezade Jhesus sonvr Mario. eige at eins einn herra heilagra eingla þa helldr allra creatvra.* (344:15–19)

The Low German text reads that Joseph was both lord of Egypt and of the angels, presumably because the printer or redactor had left out the crucial words necessary to establish the relationship between Old and New Testament events.

A final example from ch. 15 of the *SAB* and ch. 32 of *Rhb*, similar to the above, should suffice to demonstrate that the Low German text is characterized both by excessive condensation and corruption. In the passage in question we read that Mary is prefigured by Solomon's throne. In the *SAB* the passage is manifestly corrupt, but the cause of the corruption is not easily inferred:

Maria is ock . . . des waraftigen Salemones tron vnde grote stoel van elpenbenen ghemaket, wente he heft vormiddelst oer syck besmedet iunckfrwschop vnde renicheit iesu christo dem waren Salomone einen stol beret vp welkem he in orem lichamme negen mante rastet hefft. (dviii,v-ei,r)

As it stands, the passage is problematic. The pronoun *he* seems to refer to Solomon, but this makes no sense, and syntactically “syck besmedet” is out of place. A phrase mentioning God appears to have been omitted after *ghemaket*, while the *besmedet* needs a referent, possibly Solomon’s throne. The corresponding passage in *Rhb* is somewhat longer, primarily because the analogy between Solomon’s throne and Mary as Christ’s throne is better established.

Hvnn vidr likizth og hinvm mikla stol Salamonis hvern at sig sanlega optlegana þar j hvilde. Þessi hinn mikle stoll var giordvr af hinu Skiraztha fils beine. So hefer Jhesvs lifanda gvdz sonvr sier virdzt at senda einn megthogan stol hier æjardrike af hinvm skiraztha og hreinlegaztha mey dome jvngfrv Mariv hvar hann villde sier soma latha ath hvila sig j þessvm stollnm. en þat er at skilia hennar blezada likama j nijv manvde. (345: 14–20)

The Icelandic version elucidates the nature of the prefiguration: just as Solomon had a throne built for himself, on which he liked to rest, so also Jesus Christ — the true Solomon, thus *SAB* — sent His throne to earth, that is, the womb of Mary, in which he rested for nine months. The phrase “sier soma latha ath hvila sig” is strange, but comparison with a corresponding passage in the Low German *Grosser Seelentrost* not only provides an explanation for this but also further clarifies the nature of the corruption in the *SAB*. In ch. 33, which is devoted to the “Joys of Mary”, we read:

konningk Salomon leit maken eynen schone thorn van elpenbene, den cledede he myt golde. Dar stunden an beyden siden twelff lauwen. De thorn was so schone, dat sin gelijk nu geseen wart. Dar vppe sath konningk Salomon, vnde de konninge quemen van allen landen vnde vellen vppe ere kne vnde geuen eme grote gauē. Konningk Salemon dat ys vnse leue here Jhesus Christus. De elpenbenene thorn dat ys Marien scot, dar he vppe sath, do de konninge quemen vnde bededen en an vnde brochten eme offer. (Schmitt 1959: 109–110)

The passage in the *Grosser Seelentrost* presents a different exegesis of Mary as Solomon's throne. Unlike the *SAB* and *Rhb*, which liken the throne to Mary's womb, in the passage above, Mary's lap becomes the throne on which Christ revealed Himself to the Magi. Despite the difference in the prefiguration, the passage attests that the corresponding section in the *SAB* is the result of corruption.

In a later chapter a similar essential passage is lacking in the *SAB* but found in *Rhb*. In ch. 36 of *Rhb*, Mary's presentation in the temple is depicted with reference to prototypes in the Old Testament. Extreme reduction of text has taken place in the *SAB*, so that the nature of the prefiguration is lost on the reader. Jephthe's daughter is named as prefiguring Mary's presentation in the temple:

To dem anderen male ys marien presentacie in dem tempel prefigureret west in Jepte dochter dar van ghescreuen steit in dem boke geheten *Judicum* auer de de ane vorbedacht vnde discrecien godde gheoppert dat sze dar na do godde nicht denen kunde. auer marien wart wirlick vnde mit discrecien gode gheoppert denen de ome alle oer leuent lanck. (eviii,v–fi,r)

The above is clearly defective; lacking are the circumstances in both the Old and New Testament accounts that would offer an explanation as to why the one sacrifice is acceptable, but the other not. The corresponding passage in *Rhb* furnishes the missing analogy and explication:

J avdrvm matha er Maria var offrvd j mvsterit er theiknvd vid Jepte. hvat er skrifat stenndr j einne bok er *Judicum* heiter j þridia capithvla. og seiger so. At Jepte so heitande madr offrade dottvr sina drottne med hæfilegvm sigre. Jepte fyrertheiknast vid Joachim hver med sinne qvinnv Avnnv. offrade Maria j mvsteret sem þav lofvdv gvdi. So seigizt at dottvr j hafde þat grathid at hvn ætte ad deya mey. Hier j mothe fann Maria fyrst at heita at hallda hreinlife. Dottvr Jepte var fornfærd hæfilegvm sigre fyrer þacklæthis giorder. En Maria var fornfærd fyrer saker samtheing¹⁹ sigvrsins. Dottvr Jefte var offrvd oforsialega og þar fyrer matthe hvn ecki þiona gvde j mvsterinv. Enn jvngfrv Maria efter fornfæringh sinna fedgina var hvn æthid jafnnan þionande gvde. (353: 16–28)

¹⁹ In a note Agnete Loth suggests that the word should perhaps read "samtheinging", but even so the text appears to be corrupt here. The only meaning that suggests itself to me is that Mary's presentation in the temple can be related to the Old Testament victory — and this relationship is explained in the next two sentences.

The Icelandic text reveals that Jephthe's daughter as a prototype of Mary was actually part of an extended explication, in which not only the maiden but also her father figured. According to the Bk. of Judges, Jephthe had promised — rather rashly, it turns out — that if God gave him victory over the Ammonites, he would offer to Him in sacrifice the first being to leave his house when he returned home (Judges, 11: 30–31). This happened to be his daughter (Judges, 11: 38). According to the above, Jephthe offered his daughter to God in thanksgiving for a great victory, but he did this imprudently, and therefore she was unable to serve God in the temple. Wanting in the *SAB* is the context that would make the reference to Jephthe's daughter and the analogy with Mary comprehensible.

Comparison of the above passages in the *SAB* and the corresponding readings in *Rhb* suggests that the *SAB* bears the marks of both corruption — resulting from carelessly omitted text, presumably in typesetting — and occasionally extreme editing; whether the latter occurred at the hands of the printer Hans Dorn or had already occurred in his source cannot be established. The extensive editing and reduction of text in the *SAB*, much of it not entirely felicitous, at times resulted in non sequiturs, as the following makes evident.

Ch. 88 of *Mariu saga og Önnu* is a miracle tale about a widow persecuted by a tyrant. When he cannot break her will, he resorts to imprisonment and torture. St. Anne comes to her rescue. The narrative in the saga is much longer than the corresponding ch. 59 in the *SAB* and also deviates in a number of respects. Not only are there discrepancies in the sequence of detail, but the manner of presenting the material also differs substantially. Thus, the *SAB* has the narrator transmit conversation in the third person, while the saga relates it in direct speech. When the widow, who has been falsely accused of being responsible for the death of the lord's livestock, is visited by him in jail, the *SAB* reports:

Se sede dat se van dem dode des queckes nicht enwuste noch
schuldich were vnde dat se sunte anna vt der vencknisse loset hedde.
(nvi,r)

In *Mariu saga og Önnu* her speech commences in the third person but then switches to direct discourse:

hvn svarade og sagdezt skvlda lavs af hans peninga davda vera og ecki helldr sagdezt hvn vitha at hann hefde nockvnr skada feingit. en vmm þat hvernen at eg var leyst vr þinv fangelse giore eg þier þæ grein þar vppa. At sancte Anna kom til min seiger hvn og leidde mig j bvrtrv med sier allt þangat til at vid qvomvm fram j kirkiv sannara kann eg þier ecki at seija. (440: 4–10)

In the Icelandic text not only the nature of the discourse is different but also the amount of information transmitted. It is unlikely that the fuller Icelandic redaction is the result of embellishment and creative writing on the part of the translator. The corresponding matter in his source must have been more extended and contained an intact text — which is not the case in the *SAB* — as the following will show. In response to the above, the angry lord has the widow put in chains, or as the Low German has it:

Also dusse wreuel tiranne sach dat he or nicht mer aff hebben enkunde so wart he entzundet myt rasender bosheit vnde leet alle de iseren keden vp *deme* slote weren vmm eoren hals hengen. (nvi,r)

He says to her that he now dares St. Anne to release her; she shall burn at the stake the following morning.

At this juncture there occurs in the saga what might be interpreted as a major interpolation. When the widow explains — as in the Low German text above — that she has not been responsible for the death of the lord's livestock and that St. Anne has released her from the dungeon, the lord responds by saying “þetta er þinn lyge” and then the following ensues:

og skipar monvm sinvm at thaka hana hondvm og beria hana. so giora þeir lemia hana med lvrckvm og pina hana þar med ymsvm pislvm so at þeir briotha j svnndr æ henne alla hennar lime og lidv og bidia hana ganga vid er herran ber at henne vmm fiar skadan. en hvat sem þeir giora henne med pinvm hoggvm og slogvm þæ þeiger hvn og svarar ongv orde. nema hvn kallar sier til hialppar sancte Avnv sialf þridiv. Og þæ sem þesse hinn omillde thiranne sæ þat og heyrde at hvn hvorcke villde sier neitt svar giefa og eigi helldr ganga vid neinv vm hans peninga þæ vard hann j sinne jllzkv nalega ær og galenn og skipar at þangat skvlv bera til sin allar þær jarnfester sem æ slothenv være. þetta var giortt. sidan bydr þesse grimme vlfr at allar jarnfestarnar skylldv læssazt og bindaz kring vm halsenn æ eckivnne. Þetta var allt giortt efter því sem hann bavd. (440: 10–24)

As in the *SAB*, the lord dares St. Anne to come to her aid. One response to the above is, of course, to attribute the greater verbosity to amplification by the translator. A subsequent passage in the *SAB* contains evidence, however, that the torture described in the Icelandic text was part of the “original” version of the tale and that the redaction in the 1507 imprint of the *SAB* is a rather awkwardly reduced text, a text suggesting the work of a quite thoughtless redactor.

Shortly after the lord has left her, the *SAB* reports that St. Anne visited the widow: “Geringe dar na quam sunte anna to oer vnde vorlosede se van allen iseren banden vnde makede se gesunt in alle oeren leden de myt der groten pynen tho broken weren” (nvi,r). The remark about the tortures suffered by the widow only makes sense with reference to the Icelandic text above, which describes these tortures. The corresponding text in the saga is quite closely related to the Low German passage, but also contains additional information:

Pegar efter lithen thima kemvr þar en heilog moder Anna til hennar. og hvggar hana med livflegvm ordvm og thekr sidan avll bönden af henne. og giorde hana heila aptvr j allan matha sem hennar bein hefde alldre brothen verit og so hennar likamr alldreigi meiddr e(da) pinndr verit. (440:31–441:1)

The passage in the *SAB* referring to the tortures inflicted on the widow — which had, however, not been depicted or even mentioned previously — attests on the one hand that the 1507 imprint transmits a text that has been considerably reduced and on the other hand that the Low German source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* contained a text superior to the 1507 imprint.

Further supporting evidence for such a thesis is furnished by a subsequent miracle tale, but this time the *SAB* forgets a vital detail after it had already announced the necessity of its subsequent presence. The tale is fragmentary in *Rhb*; because of a lacuna of one folio in the manuscript the beginning of the narrative is lacking, but can be supplied from the *SAB*. The narrative tells of a man who had agreed to serve the devil, but who wished to change his mind when he learned that he therefore had to abjure Jesus, Mary, and Anne. Like the miracle tale above, the Icelandic redaction of this narrative is much longer than the version in the *SAB*. The devil does not intend

to let his victim go, but gives him leave to bid his friends farewell before returning to his service. The man does so, but also visits the church of St. Anne. She appears to him and encourages him to confess his sins, and then she tells him that if he should ever need her help, he should hold on to her image for dear life. In the *SAB*, she says:

holt dut belde myt dinen henden sterckliken stridende vnde du
enschalt nicht aff laten vnde du schalt dy nicht vor veren laten
wente du my denne myt dynen vleslicken ogen nicht sein enkanst so
schalt du doch myne kraft vnde macht van my vor varen vnde
mynen by stant bevinden in dynen noeden. (oiiii,r)

The Icelandic version closely resembles the Low German text:

Ef so ber til at þv þvrfer nockvrs vid sem mig varer at þv mvner
þvrfa. þa takttv styrklega thil likneskivnar med þinvm hondvm og
lath ecki lavst hvat sem æ hnnyr. e(da) fyrer þin avgvn kann bera.
þviat at sinne mattv ecki leingr med þinvm likamlegvm avgvm mig
sia Enn þo skalttv vijst vitha at min krapt og megth mvnttv få at
reyna hveria hialp og hiastavdv er eg vil þier veitha j þinne navd.
(445:6-12)

As soon as St. Anne has disappeared, the devil arrives to fetch his victim with much noise, and in the *SAB* he

grop one by synen klederen vnde wolde one vt der kercken tein De
iungelinck wort iamerliken ropen de klokken worden luden van sick
suluen. (oiiii,v)

Despite St. Anne's instructions that he is to hold on to her statue for dear life, should he need her help, the young man, according to the above, does nothing but cry out. Whereupon the bells proceed to ring of their own accord and, the text continues, the ringing causes the town folk to rush to the church.

The Icelandic version attests, however, that the 1507 imprint transmits a reduced text, the redactor of which at times went about his task in a rather careless manner. The *Rhb* redaction contains what must be considered to approximate better the original version of the miracle tale. The devil arrives with much noise,

og hleypr jnnar til mannzins þar sem hann stendr og þrifr j klæden æ
honvm og vill med sinne diofvlslegre megt og sterckleika draga hann

bvrttv vr kirkivne. Enn þesse fathæke madrinn greip til likneskins med badvm hondvm og hiellt þar sem hann matte af ollv afle og hropade þar med sem hann gath mest sier thil hialppar. en klvckvnr allar er j kirkivne vorv hringdvzt og sialfar. (445:9–20)

The Icelandic text clearly shows that a sentence has been omitted from the Low German redaction. The young man is saved, not because he cries out loud, but because he does as St. Anne had told him to do. By holding on to her image, the young man prevents the devil from having power over him. The adjective *fathæke* above is a further argument for the existence of the sentence in question in the Low German source, for it presumably is a translation of the Low German *arm*, which, as we have seen above, is generally taken literally by the translator when the German word actually means 'miserable' or 'wretched'. A similar inappropriate use of *fátækr* occurs in a subsequent sentence: "Og fra þeim thima og þeirre stvnnndv styrktezt þessi fathæke madr aptvr j sinne rettre trv og þionade sancte Avnnv med mikille godfyse" (434:15–17), which corresponds to the following in the *SAB*: "van der tit deinede de misstrostige minsche sunte annen myt szo groter innicheyt truwen vnde werdycheit" (ni,v). Although the Low German source of the Icelandic text presumably was longer than that in the *SAB*, it presumably also contained the word "deinede" as well as a synonym for "misstrostige", probably "arm", as is posited for the passage above.

III. *SAB* and *Mariu saga og Önnu*: Variant Versions

The legend of St. Anne in the *SAB* is not only a rather defective text vis-à-vis *Mariu saga og Önnu*; it is also a different version. The nature of the discrepancies between the Low German and the Icelandic texts are such as to make evident that a rather different point of view molded the two legends. This can be seen not only in the deviating chapter divisions, but also in the roles the various protagonists play in shaping or being shaped by salvation history. Chs. 18–27 of *Mariu saga og Önnu* are paradigmatic for the nature of the differences between the Icelandic and Low German redactions. The narrative in these chapters concerns the events just prior to and at the birth of Mary.

Mary's birth is anticipated by an episode in the temple, where Joachim, Anne's husband, had gone to offer sacrifice. Ch. 17 of *Mariu saga og Önnu* opens with the observation that after Anne and Joachim had lived together as husband and wife for twenty years, there was only one thing wanting in their marriage, namely a child. Because of their childlessness the couple is reproached by many, and when Joachim approaches the altar one time to present his offering, the priest rejects it, throws it to the ground, and informs him that all those who do not have children are cursed both by the law and by God. Joachim is so ashamed because of what has happened that he dares not go home to Nazareth, but instead escapes into the fields to his flocks.

Ch. 18 opens with the observation that no one has received news of Joachim and that this state continued for five months (326:1). When Anne learns of what has happened in the temple, she withdraws, puts on clothes of mourning, and spends the next half month in prayer and fasting. Two of her prayers are transmitted in direct discourse (326:12–14; 19–25). The second and longer prayer is a moving plea for a child; she has gone into the orchard, reminds God that he has given all creatures except her — animals and birds, fish and women — offspring, and she concludes by pleading: “þvi bidr eg þig min elskvlegr skapare og allra hvgare at þv syn mier þina dyrd og gief mier einn erfingia. þann skal eg þier offra j mvsterit” (326:23–25). At the conclusion of this prayer the angel Gabriel appears to her to reveal — in a rather long speech spilling over into the following ch. 19 (326:27–327:20) — that she will give birth to a child. He refers to the several women of the Old Testament who had been sterile for a long time, to Sarah and Rachel, and to the mothers of Samson and Samuel. Despite the visitation, Anne does not go to the temple at the next great feast, but instead spends her time in prayer. Once more the angel appears, and this time his prophecy becomes more specific. He not only informs her that her child is to become the mother of the Redeemer, but references to both the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth are also included in his prophecy. Mary's son is to be born without the intervention of man: “Alldre skal hvn og helldr þydazt nockvrn mann. en verdr þo fædandi æn nockvrs konar manlegs til verckan edr hialpar einn son sem lavsnare æ vera allrar veraldar” (329:10–12). The subsequent information on Mary's birth is theologically unsound, however, for the author applies to Mary a combination of the Virgin Birth and the Immacu-

late Conception. The latter doctrine does not mean that Mary conceived Jesus without human intervention, or that she herself was conceived by a virgin, but rather that Mary “im ersten Augenblick ihrer [eigenen, sie selbst ins Dasein einführenden] Empfängnis durch eine besondere Gnade (singulari gratia) u. Auszeichnung (privilegio), mit Blick auf die Verdienste Christi Jesu, des Erlösers des Menschengeschlechtes, vor jedem Makel (Schaden) der Erbsünde bewahrt blieb” (LTK, 10: 467). In *Mariu saga og Önnu*, however, the belief in Mary being born without the taint of original sin is coupled with the belief that she herself was born of a virgin:

af hinne gomlv synd skal hvn vera frelst. þviat hvn skal vera giethen af skire og ofleckadre ast en eigi af holdlegre sambvd. (329: 15–17)

This belief is not expressed in the *SAB*, where the angel, who appears to Joachim (see below) refers neither to the Immaculate Conception of Mary nor to her birth of a virgin. Nonetheless, the same theologically unsound information that is transmitted in *Rhb* was propagated on the continent (Brandenburg 1990: 86–93; Dörfler-Dierken 1992b: 49–52) and was also found in earlier German sources. In an illustrated life of Mary, dated 1465, written in Switzerland, the conception of Mary is depicted as occurring at the Golden Gate:

do sy also einander begegotten anna und joachim nach des engels sag, und von dem gruoss den sy einander buttent, das da wer das mit würgen des heiligen geistes, und das sant anna mariam die muotter gotz also in dem gruss emphing in mitwürgen got des vatters und des heiligen geistes, das sy also on erbsünd emphanen sy als den miltenlich wol zuo gelobent ist das die arch vol sy gewessen aller heilikeit und fry von aller sunden in die der ewig got wolt schliessen sin ewig vetterlich wort christum jesum unseren herren. (Benziger 1913: 22–23)

The nature of the discussion current in theological circles in the late Middle Ages is succinctly expressed in the *Marienleben* of Heinrich von St. Gallen, who flourished at the University of Prague in the years 1371–97:

Aber anders ward entpfangen Maria vnd anders ir lieber sun Ihesus; wan Maria ward entpfangen von menschlichem samen alß ain ander kind, Ihesuß aber an allen menschlichen samen. (Hilg 1981: 131)

Ch. 20 of *Rhb* concludes with an authorial comment that matters will now rest for the time being in order to turn to the marvels God has revealed by permitting Mary to be born of her mother “*æn gomlv syndar*” (329:19–24). There follow the five aforementioned exempla, all involving miracles relating to belief in the Immaculate Conception (chs. 21–25; 329:25–333:4). The fifth exemplum relates how the city of Basel was spared from the Black Death when the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated there from the pulpits, but once again, as in the previous angel’s prophecy, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is confused with the Virgin Birth: “*at jvngfrv Mariæ være gethen af eiginlegre nad gvddomsins og af skire ast enn eigi af likamlegre sambvd so sem adrer*” (332:16–18).

The exempla-series concludes in a similar manner as it had been introduced, with a transitional comment: “*og mvn eg hier so latha bijda vid en thaka þar aptvr til sem fyre var fra horfet*” (333:4–6). In chs. 26 and 27 the focus shifts to Joachim, who had been with his flocks for five months. He too is visited by the angel, who identifies himself as the same angel who had appeared to Anne. Oddly enough, however, what the angel tells Joachim in a very long speech (333:11–334:7) is not consonant with what he had told Anne, for he is now theologically quite orthodox. Joachim is informed that “*hvn skal med þier gietha þat sæd sem yckvr er badvm giefit*” (333:13); that is to say, there is no mention of a virgin birth. After Joachim has sacrificed a lamb in thanksgiving, he still hesitates to return to his wife. As was the case with Anne, Joachim has a second visitation by an angel who informs him that “*er eg giefin þier til einn geymara*” (335:18). Joachim is told to seek out his wife Anne, and as a sign of the truth of what he has told him, the angel prophesies that “*nær sem þv kemvr nær gvlllega ported hvat j lathinv kallazt og ported avrea Þa kemvr þar til motz vid þig Anna*” (335:21–23).

The ensuing meeting between Anne and Joachim is preceded by two angelic visitations, where she is similarly told to go to the golden gate to meet her husband. Their reunion is depicted as follows:

þa gieck hvn j mothe honvm. Og lagde sinar hendr vmm halsen æ honvm og þackade gvde sina nad og myskvnn og kyste hann Og af þeim fagnadar kosse og so af þeirre skjire æst er þav havfdv samans þæ strackx vard sæ blezannlege gethnadr þeirra æ mille sem eingillen hafde þeim bodat at gvdz fyrer skipan efter þvi sem fyr seiger. (336:11–16)

The explanation of how Mary was conceived concurs with the words spoken by the angel to Anne. In these chapters the author clearly takes the position that Mary is conceived without original sin and that Anne remains a virgin — despite the apparent contradiction in the angel's prophecy to Joachim.

The account is quite symmetrical: Anne's duplicate angelic visitation is paralleled by Joachim's two visions, as is her hesitation, similar to Joachim's, to take immediate action. The doctrinal content of the narrative is stressed through the five-fold emphasis of the same through the miracles depicted in the exempla. These serve to underscore both the message of the angel and the belief that Mary is conceived free of original sin. We are told that

hvn var og jafnskiott helgvt j modr qvide yfer fram alla heilaga eingla og yfer allar skepnvr og avnnr creatvr þviat hennar like verdr hier efter alldreigi. Af þvi at henne er giefet sierdeilis nad af gvdi miklv frammar enn nockvr manneskia og frammar en hinvm hæztha eingle. eda Adam sialfvm er gvd skapade sialfvr med sinvm blezannlegvm hondvm. þviat Adam hneigizt fra gvdz bode og til syndarinar. Enn Maria hneigdizt alldreige til nockvrs þess hlvtar sem henne matte til syndar verda hvorcke nadalegrar nie so davglegrar. (336: 27–337: 3)

Mariu saga og Önnu has a distinct theological bent in the account of how Anne came to give birth to Mary.

The corresponding version in the *St. Annen Büchlein* is characterized by brevity in the narrative proper; furthermore, it does not contain the exempla. The Low German legend concentrates, as it were, into a single chapter, consisting of 103 lines, the events related above. The Low German redaction contains only one long discourse by the angel — not to Anne, but to Joachim — and this speech is devoid of the extensive theologizing that is the mark of *Mariu saga og Önnu*. The angel prophesies the birth of a daughter to be named Maria, who

schal gode consecreret werden effte gehilliget werden vnde in dem liue oerer moder vor vullet myt dem hilgen geiste dar vmme se nicht myt dem gemeinem volcke wonen schal besunderen in dem tempel vp dat nemant quat vormodet van or edder hebben schal Vnde likerwis also se van eyner vnfruchtbarigen moder schal geboren werden so schal ock wunderliken van or de sone godes geboren werden welckes name schal Jesus sin vnde he schal aller minschen heil wesen vnde salicheit. (cvii,r)

The implication above is that the miracle of Jesus's virgin birth is prefigured in the miracle of the unfruitful Anne giving birth to Mary. The narrative of ch. 11 in the *SAB* corresponds to that found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* in ch. CXXXI, which is entitled "De nativitate beatae Mariae virginis" (Graesse, 1890: 587–88).

The *SAB* version of the events preceding the birth of Mary is remarkable not only for its pithiness but also the fact that the emphasis is on Joachim rather than on Anne. The sequence of angelic visitations is the obverse of that in *Mariu saga og Önnu*, for the angel appears first to Joachim, to whom he conveys the entire message, and only then to Anne, whom he consoles,

vnde gaff or tho bekennende alle dath he Joachim orem manne
vorkundinget hadde vnde dat se tho Jerusalem in de gulden porten
scholden ghaen dar scholde he or tho mote komen. (cvii,v)

Not only does the *SAB* present the angelic visitations in the reverse sequence of that found in *Mariu saga og Önnu*, but the prophecy is given in full and in the first person only in the vision experienced by Joachim, whereas it is summarized by the narrator when the angel appears to the prospective mother. This almost suggests that the "author" of the *SAB* had at least in this section a distinctively male orientation, or to put it another way, the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* was composed with a view to establishing the mother as the focal point. Indeed, comparison of the text in the *SAB* with that of the much older *Legenda aurea* reveals that the *SAB* transmits the structure of Jacob of Voragine's legend of the Nativity of Mary (Graesse 1890: 587–88). The structure of this part of the legend in *Rhb* has a distinctly feminist orientation, however, and this is shared by the vernacular legend of St. Anne that is transmitted in the *Passionael* (see section V below). *Mariu saga og Önnu* follows a version of the legend that ultimately derives from the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, a version that is also represented by the Dutch *Die historie, die ghetiden ende die exempelen vander heyligher vrouwen sint Annen*, composed in 1486 but not printed until 1490/91 (Brandenburg 1990: 59; cf. Tischendorf 1876: 55–61).

A comparison of the chapters leading up to the birth of Mary manifests that the *SAB* and *Mariu saga og Önnu* represent two distinct versions of the legend. Similar discrepancies occur through-

out the text. On the whole, one can characterize the *SAB* as a mostly condensed version of the legend, the reduced character of which is highlighted all the more by the leisurely narrative mode and breadth of material in *Mariu saga og Önnu*. Despite the greater length of the Icelandic version overall, it nonetheless lacks now and then matter found in the *SAB*. This argues against assuming that the greater verbosity of *Mariu saga og Önnu* is the result of a conscious striving — on the part of the Icelandic translator — to embellish his source in order to produce as much text as possible. An analysis of the Low German and Icelandic redactions leads one to conclude that both the loquacity and the additional material in the saga derive from its Low German source. Indeed, the style of the “additional” matter, frequently entire chapters, reveals its Low German origin in the choice of vocabulary.

Chs. 28–31, which recount the events immediately following the Annunciation, manifest the disparity in narrative mode, structure, and matter in the *SAB* and *Mariu saga og Önnu*. The most obvious discrepancy obtains in length. Ch. 28 in the *SAB*, for example, contains nothing but a summary relating that Mary

ginck hastliken in de geberchte tho Zachariam vnde grotede Elizabet syne huszfruwen vorder else dat ewangelium vtwiset. me lyst dat do dat nigeboren kint Johannes baptiste al der erst wort vp vorhouen van marien van der erden vnde vort dar na reysede se wedder vmme to nazaret to orer moder annen. (gv,r-v)

This is the extent of the information conveyed about the Visitation. By comparison, the corresponding chapter 44 in *Mariu saga og Önnu* is a self-contained vignette that includes data on the distance between Nazareth and Jerusalem (25 miles), and between Jerusalem and the village in which Elizabeth lived (4 miles). We learn that Mary did not travel alone, but was accompanied by the younger of one of two maidens who attended her. When Mary entered the house she greeted Elizabeth, “þviat Maria var yngre og thil komenda” (369: 18–19). The saga includes the familiar biblical salutation by Elizabeth (369: 26–31) and, in turn, Mary’s *Magnificat* (369: 32–370: 12). These are followed by apocryphal matter (also mentioned in the *SAB*): “So finntz skrifat at Maria thæke fyrst sancte Johannes baptista vpp fra jordv er hann kom til fræ sinne modr” (370: 13–15). The chapter concludes by remarking that Mary returned to her mother,

og hafde þæ med theket og læst j sinvm ofleckvdm likama þann oendalegan og eylifann gvd sæ sem hvorcke himen nie jord matte yfer thaka hans verdogleika og alla hlvt hefer skapat og vpp helldr med almætthe sinns krapttar. þennan enn same hafde nv og vppe helltt hennar jvngfrvlege likamvr. þo fyrer vtan allan þvnga. sott og sorgar og bar þa þann sem bæde var sannvr gvd og sannvr madr fyrer sinv brioste uært. j .xl. vikvr. (370: 16– 23)

The following three chapters of the saga are marked by equally great verbosity vis-à-vis the *SAB* and additional information. In the *SAB*, ch. 29 recounts Joseph's discovery that Mary is with child and the angel's appearance to him in his sleep; ch. 30 enumerates the reasons why God wanted Mary to be married; and ch. 31 reports Anne's praise of the Lord for permitting her daughter to have conceived the son of God. Especially the section on St. Joseph's doubts prior to the angel's appearance is greatly amplified (370: 24–371: 33) because of the expansive transmission of his reasoning process in the saga. The simple declaration "so he do sach dat se swanger was" corresponds to "þæ vard hann þegar vel merckiande at hvn være ecki ein með sialfreser. og vard miog hvgsande vm þetta efne" (370: 29–31). In the *SAB* his reaction is simply put: "do wolde he sze nicht entfaugen noch beruchtigen dat de ioden se nicht ensteinden so wolde he se by orer moder frunde hemeliken laten blyuen" (gv, v). These two simple sentences become in *Mariu saga og Önnu* a long dissertation on the consequences of sexual transgression by women according to the Jewish law (370: 32–371: 13) and concludes with his resolve:

og fyrer þvi villde Josep med sinne god giræ hialppa sinne festar mey jvngfrv Mariv so at jvdarner mætte þessa savk ecki henne giefa til grythningar. og so thok þat j hv g sier at mata hana vera heimoglega hia modr sinne Avnnv. Enn med sinne retthvise giorde hann þat ef hvn hefde savrgazt j frá honvm med nockvrvm manne. þæ villde hann firazt hana so at hann yrde ecki hennar synd samþyckiande. (371: 13–19)

The distinct character of the Low German source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* is also indicated by the two chapters that follow Joseph's angelic visitation. In the *SAB*, ch. 30 carries the heading: "wur vmme dath vnse here wolde dat sin moder scholde Josepe vortruwet werden" (gvi,r), while ch. 31 contains Anne's prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the graces bestowed on Mary. In *Mariu saga og Önnu* the two chapters are reversed. The account of Joseph's angelic

visitation had concluded with the words: “Og þá sem Josep vaknade þá lofada hann gvd. og thok Mariæ festarmey sina til sin efter því er eingillen sagde honvm fyrer” (371:31–33). The new chapter follows seamlessly with the transitional sentence: “<P>æ sem eingill gvdz var horfen frá Josep. þá jafnsnartt kom hann thil sancte Avnnv og sagde henne at dotter hennar Maria hafde theket vid gvdz synne og bære hann j sinvm likama” (372:1–3). It is this angelic appearance that generates Anne’s prayer of praise in the saga. The chapter concludes with her prayer, and the following ch. 47 then presents the reasons why God chose his mother to have a mortal husband (372:18–373:6). This last chapter prior to the birth of Jesus thus constitutes a summation in the saga. In the *SAB* St. Anne’s prayer is introduced with the words: “Alse anna horde van dem engele vnde van orer dochter dat se den some godes entfangen hadde in orem lichamme do wart sze vtermaten vorfrowet” (gvi,v). This is a *non sequitur*, for there had been no previous mention of Anne also having been visited by an angel. Therefore, a reference to such a visit suggests that the ultimate source of the 1507 imprint of the *SAB* had contained such a visitation, which then had been excised in the process of condensation; the only indication of its earlier presence in the legend is the above reference “Alse anna horde”.

Mariu saga og Önnu is on the whole narratively and structurally superior to the *SAB*. Furthermore, the variants in structure and content discussed above present a strong argument for deriving *Mariu saga og Önnu* from a redaction of the legend that is distinct from the *SAB* not only by virtue of length and structure but also theological orientation.

IV. Discourse in the *SAB* and *Rhb*

One of the remarkable features distinguishing *Mariu saga og Önnu* from the *SAB* is the frequent occurrence of direct discourse in the former but indirect discourse in the Low German text. The latter bears all the signs of having been condensed from a longer version. This is evident not only in instances of garbled text — which presumably was produced through careless condensation — but also in a tendency to third-person narrative. Ch. 31 of *Rhb* and the corresponding section in *SAB* contain an example of these distinguishing features. In the saga we read that after Anne and Joachim’s child had

been given her name, angels appeared and sang a song of praise. Anne and Joachim are astounded by the apparition, but then a voice from heaven informs them that what they have seen and heard was granted them by the Blessed Trinity. Whereupon they fall on their knees and, according to the *SAB*,

benedigeden loueden vnde erden godde almechtich dat he vmme siner vnspreckliken leue tho den minschen sine barmherticheit wunderliken in oene bewyset hefft. (dv,v-dvi,r)

In *Mariu saga og Önnu* the above is expressed directly, however, in the form of a prayer. We are told that Anne and Joachim

lofvdv og dyrkvdv gvd almatthogan med þessvm ordvm og avdrvm þvilikvm sem hier greiner. O þv allvelldogr fader skapare allra hlvtu. hvat ovmmrædelega ast og elskv hefvr þv æ mankynev med þinne ohvgsannlegre milldre myskvn fyrer þæ vndarlegv velgiorninga er þv æ hveriv avgna blike veither vervildine allre og so avllvm þeim er j henne erv. þo eigi at eins monnvm helldr og jafnvel avllvm qvikinndvm synelegvm og osynelegvm. hvat blezadr drottenn minn at ingen thvnga mæ þitt nafn og vel giorder fvllþacka þo allt þat j heimenvm være yrde at tvnngvm einvm. Þæ være þat samtt. þig lofvvm vid og vevsavmvm af avllvm hvg og hiartta drottenn nv og at eylifv amen. (342:225-343:4)

It is unlikely that the translator/compiler would have generated this long prayer on his own.

A more extreme example of the essential difference in the presentation of speech, that is, in the *SAB* by means of a laconic summary in the third person, but in *Rhb* through extended direct discourse, occurs in the account of one of the miracles associated with Mary's birth. At that time those possessed by the devil made such terrible noises that everyone feared that God might be visiting His anger upon the land. A holy man directs those possessed to tell him why they were behaving in such a manner, and the evil spirit answered out of the possessed

vnd sede dat vp den dach tho Nazaret gheboren were ein medeken vmme des willen de engele vtermaten ser vorfrowet weren in dem himmel vnde vp erden vnde dat se des nicht liden mochten wente se worden voriaget vt den mynschen vorschouen vnde vordreuen vnde gheworpen in de aff grunt der helle. (d ii,v)

This passage has a very different character in *Rhb* — and it should be noted that it is exemplary for an essential discrepancy between the Icelandic and Low German texts throughout, a difference which accounts for the much greater length of the Icelandic legend of St. Anne. While the *SAB* presents a third-person summary, *Rhb* chooses to transmit the very words spoken. Throughout, the saga thus evinces a rather dramatic character. Corresponding to the above is the following:

Þæ svarade andskothen er j mannenvm var. Nv j dag seiger hann er fættth eitth mey barn j stadnm Nazareth. af hveriv barne at einglarnr bæde æ himne og æ jordv frygda sigh og glediast hennar til komv wr ollvm matha. enn þetta er oss obæthelegr brvne og pina er vær þolvm fyrer hennar skvlld. þviat nv verdvm vær at fara og j bvrtrt fra vorvm hybylvm er vær hofvm leingi haft og ervm þar med so miog fordrifner og j bvrtrtv skvfader fra ollvm og nidr steypter j af grvnn helvitis. hvat er vær eigvm hvergi annars stadar vera nema þar j eynd og vesold. (339: 23–32)

It is quite unlikely that the translator/compiler created the above. The Low German loan *fordrifa* — see Westergård-Nielsen (1946: 83) — presumably transmits the wording of the source text. Like the many instances of Icelandic passages that are superior to the frequently corrupt text in the *SAB*, the extended passages in direct discourse in *Rhb* suggest that the Low German St. Anne legend on which the *SAB* is based, resembled the text of *Rhb*, while the *SAB* is a radically reduced version of the same.

A final comparison between corresponding passages in the *SAB* and *Rhb* should illustrate the disparity not only in length between the two legends but also in narrative perspective. In ch. 24 of the *SAB* is recounted how St. Anne searches for Mary and meets the three kings. One of them tells her that they had been sent to search for the new-born king and that they had seen Mary and the child. He continues:

Do gaff he oer vort to bekennde wu dat se alle dre hedden gesein einen sterne dar inne ein nyge geboren kynt. hebbende ein cruce vp sinen schulderen vnde one gesecht wort do se des vorwunderden wu dat se in dat ioedesche lant reisen scholden vnde dar dat kint vinden So deden se also vnde also wy dar quemen toge wy dem sterne na vnde reden in de stat tho Jherusalem vnde vrageden dar na dem

nigen geboren koninge der ioeden etc. gelick sunte matheus de ewangelista beschriuet. (h iii,v–h iiiir)

The passage is a mixture of indirect and direct discourse. The king begins by recounting recent events in the third person and then, suddenly, he switches to direct discourse with the first person plural pronoun *wy*. Finally the text refers to the Gospel of St. Matthew, where anyone interested can read the rest of the account. The corresponding passage in the saga is quite a bit longer and contains extended direct discourse:

Og sem kongren sæ og fornám at heilogh Anna gladdizt við sín ord. þá lieth /hann\ eigi af að gledia fyrer henne og sagde henne þá j frá hverrsv ollvm þeim þrim kongvnm hafde birzt ein stiarna og jnnan j stiorvne savm vær eitt barn og hafde eitt krossmarck æ herdvnm. og sem vær vndrvdvnzt þetta þa var thalad til vor at vær skylldivm fara j jodverska landet og finna þar eit sven barn ny fætt hiæ modr sine. En vær giordvm so og forvm efter stiorvne sem hvn for vndan oss allt þangat til at vær komvm thil Jhervsalem og spvrdvnzt þá fyrer hvar sem hinn vnga kongvren være sem ny fæddr var. enn oss var þá so til visad at hann mvnde vera fæddr j Bethel-lem. og sem Herodes kongr fieck vita at vær villdivm fyrer eins finna þenna vnga sveinen þá liet Herodes kalla oss fyrer sig og bad os að finna sig aftvr þegar at vær mattvm og vær hofdivm fvndit sveinen og því lofodvm vær. en eingill gvdz kom til vor og bavd at vær skylldivm fara annann veg heim til vorra landa og finna echi Herodes þviat hann mvnda vilia giora honvm mein. og erm vær nv því komner vppa veginn heim aptvr enn þo vil eg vijsa þier hvset þat er vær skildvm við dottvr þina og son hennar. (392: 21–393: 8)

Only the first sentence of the king's speech is given in indirect discourse; thereafter the entire account is presented in the first person. Instead of cutting off the narrative with a reference to St. Matthew — the account is found in ch. 2 of the gospel — the saga continues to have the king relate the events from his perspective. It is unlikely that the source of the Icelandic account is the shorter version found in the *SAB*. Had that been the case, the translator/compiler would have had to analyze the passage, decide that a first-person account would be more effective as a narrative, convert the given text into direct discourse, retrieve the rest of the account from St. Matthew and adjust it to the earlier part of the king's report. Such a procedure, while not impossible, is nevertheless im-

plausible. It is more likely that here, as in other instances, the redactor of the *SAB* version was condensing a longer text, partly by rendering direct in indirect discourse, partly by excising further matter and supplying it with a reference to St. Matthew. The conclusion to be drawn here, as in other instances, is that the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* in *Rhb* was a legend that was similar to the one condensed by the redactor of the *SAB*.

V. *Mariu saga og Önnu* and the *Passionael*

Ole Widding and Hans Bekker-Nielsen were aware of some of the divergences both in length and content between *Mariu saga og Önnu* and the *SAB*, which they posited as the chief source, and solved the problem of discrepancies by assuming that the translator/compiler augmented the text of the *SAB* by intercalating matter from appropriate legends in the *Passionael*. Therefore one would have to postulate that the translator was quite familiar with the various legends in the *Passionael* that included pertinent matter and borrowed from them whenever appropriate. Accordingly, he had recourse to seven different legends in compiling his own version of the life of St. Anne.

The position taken by the two scholars is understandable, given that much of the matter covered in the *SAB* is also found in the *Passionael*, and that there are striking correspondences between *Rhb* and the *Passionael* in some chapters for which no counterpart exists in the *SAB*. A case in point is the story detailing Anne and Joachim's childlessness — discussed with reference to the *SAB* in the previous section — Joachim's flight from the temple and to his flocks in the mountains; Anne's despair over her inability to bear a child; the appearance of an angel to each of them; and the reunion of the couple at the Golden Gate. The matter is found in the legend "Van Sunte Annen" in the *Passionael*.

After Anne and Joachim had been married for 20 years without having conceived a child, Joachim went to the temple on a certain feast in order to make sacrifice to God. When he had laid his offering on the altar, the priest looked angrily at him, threw the offering to the ground, and said:

Hvat dirfer þig þess Joachim at þv þorer at ganga til altaris sem adrer er avoxt hafa færtt gydi. *eda veizt þv ecki at þeir erv aller for-*

bannader bæde af gudi og so lavgmalenv. er ecki eru barns eigande. Og er þat því ecki til heyrelegt at þiggja þar þina forn sem gvdi er ecki þægileg því at hann hefer þig ecki blezad. Og af þessvm ordvm prestsins v<ar>d Joachim miog skammadr og lyttvr af ollvm þeim er hann bæde sæv og heyrdv. enn sialfr vard hann miog hryggr og hvar sem for sidan þa leit hann ævalth nidr æ jordina. þvíat hann þorde ongvan mann at lijtha j avgvn. og gieck efter þetta vt af mvsterinv og vt j morckina til fiarhirda sina. enn fyrer skamma skvllð þorde hann ecki hellðr fara heim aftvr j Nazareth til qvinnv sinnar. (325: 22–33)

The priest's entire speech is transmitted in direct discourse, and the chapter ends with Joachim's decision above to go to his herds rather than return to Nazareth. The reason given by the priest for the rejection of Joachim's offering is the condemnation both by God and the law of those who do not beget offspring. In the *SAB* the incident is related in the third person. The priest

vorweit oeme sine vnfruchtbaricheit vnde sede dat idt nicht temelik were dat me syn opper entfangen scholde myt den iennen dede fruchtbar weren wente he in synem echte dat volck vnde dat geslechte van Jsrahel nicht en vormerde in dussen worden wart Joachim sere vorschemet alle vor den iennen de dat seghen vnde horden vnde wart sere drouich vnde sloch syne oghen neder vnde en dorste nemande an seyn van schemede wegghen vnde ginck vt dem tempel. (c v,r-v)

Ch. 10 ends here. Although the priest refers to Joachim's lack of fertility, he does not remark on condemnation by God and the law. Rather, he gives as cause of the rejection the inappropriateness ("nicht temelik") of including among those making sacrifice to God someone who is infertile and has not helped increase the population of Israel. When the *SAB* refers to the incident at the beginning of ch. 11 — Do Joachim so grofliken vnde so sere geschendet vnde gelastert wart in der ieghenwerdicheit syner frunde vnde des gemeynen voelckes (c v,v) — his decision to go to his herds is told in a manner that deviates somewhat from the account in the saga. Joachim goes into the fields because he does not want his neighbors to know about what has befallen him:

do en dorste he nicht van schemede wegen wedder vmme tho Nazaret reysen van sorghen dat ome sine nabers vorwiten wolden dat he also vorschemet was Dar vmme ginck he tho synen herden in dath velt buten nazareth syn queck tho bewarende. (cv,v–cvi,r)

The account in the *Passionael* deviates from the preceding in that the scene contains much of the direct discourse that we find in *Reykjahólabók*. Moreover, the version in the *Passionael* also mentions condemnation by God and the law and the priest comments that God has not blessed Joachim:

Wo darstu to deme altare gaen. *du bist van gode vnde van der ee vorvloket.* wente dyn offer is gode nicht annahme. darumme dat du vnvruchtbar bist. *vnde* byst ock nicht werdich. dat du gode dyne ghaue offerst. **wente got enheft dy nicht ghebenediget.** Des schemede sik Joachim so ghans sere. dat he trurich vth deme tempel ghink. *vnde dorste nicht in syn husz to syneme ghesinde gaen. vnde voer tho synen knechten.* de em dat vee hodden vp deme velde. (lxxxiii, a–b)

The conclusion of the above deviates both from the reading in *Rhb* and the *SAB*. Whereas in the Icelandic text Joachim does not dare return to his wife, and in the *SAB* he dares not go to Nazareth on account of the neighbors, he goes to his men in the *Passionael*, because he does not dare go back to his household. Both in *Rhb* and *SAB*, he goes to his flocks, but in the *Passionael* he goes to the men who are keeping his herds. The reading in the *Passionael* is odd, since it seems to make little sense that Joachim is afraid to show himself to those constituting his household, but does not mind returning to his shepherds. The substance of the reading in both *Rhb* and *SAB* seems to be that Joachim goes to his flocks in order to be alone. Indeed, the variant in *Rhb* concerning Joachim's unwillingness to go home to his wife has a precedent in German Marian legends. One of the oldest versions is that of Priester Wernher who composed a life of Mary in the year 1172, which ultimately derives from the apocryphal *Liber de ortu beatae Mariae et infantia salvatoris*, that is, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (Fromm, 1969: XIV). This Middle High German version provides the motivation for Joachim's decision not to go home:

erne wolte ouch niht mêre
wider in sîn hûs chêren
unt wolte sich vor leide
von sinem wîbe scheiden,
von siner wunneclicher chonen.
in einer wuoste wolt er wonen
von den liuten verre:

dar hiez ouch im der herre
 al sin chorter triben,
 unt wolte dâ beliben. (449–58)

The variant in *Rhb*, which deviates from both the *SAB* and the *Passionael*, thus has a precedent in older German literature.

Comparison of the three passages shows that *Rhb* agrees partly with one, partly with the other, but also deviates from both in relating that Joachim dared not go home to his wife. Given the divergent texts, the fact that *Rhb* agrees now with one, now with the other Low German version, one can take one of three positions relative to the saga's source(s): 1. that the chief source of the scene in the saga is the *Passionael*, but that the translator augmented the text and revised it in light of the variants in *SAB*; 2. that the source is the *SAB*, but that the translator created direct discourse out of the third person narrative, and this direct discourse happened to coincide with that in the *Passionael*; 3. that the translator followed the wording of his source closely, but this was not the *SAB* or the *Passionael*. Neither the first nor second alternative seems plausible, given the fact that subsequent text in the saga, which has no model in the *SAB*, but for which corresponding passages can be found in the *Passionael*, nonetheless deviates substantially from the same both in matter and length.

As was noted previously, the account of the angelic visions experienced by St. Anne and Joachim in *Rhb* differs rather extraordinarily from that in the *SAB*. The discrepancy obtains both in regard to length and structure. The legend of St. Anne in the *Passionael*, however, has the same structure as in *Rhb*, but does not include the Marian exempla. Upon comparing the matter in *Rhb* and the *Passionael*, it is nonetheless evident that despite the shared structure, the two works transmit distinct redactions. After the above-mentioned incident in the temple and Joachim's disappearance, Anne is distraught, since she does not know what has happened to her husband. One day she goes into her orchard, where she prays as follows:

O hera gvd þv hefer ollvm skepnm ævoxt giefet. dyrvm og fvglym.
 fiskvm og qvinnvm. nema mier eirnne. mig hefer þinn milldelegæ
 myskvn vte byrgtt fra þessare gïof hvar fyrer at minn madr og eg erv
 nw miog forsmad af ollvm fyrer þetta. þvi bidr eg þig min elskvlegr

skapare og allra hvggare at þv syn mier þina dyrd og gief mier einn erfingia. þann skal eg þier offra j mvsterit. (326:19–25)

The corresponding passage in the *Passionael*, while quite close to the above, nonetheless bears signs of shortening and suggests that the above represents a longer and better redaction:

O here god. du hefst allen creaturen kyndere ghegheuen. den deerten vnde den voghelen. vnde den viscken. de vrouwen syk alle der kyndere. vnde hefst my allene vthgheslaten van der ghaue dyner gudicheyt. vnde sprak ouer O myn god vnde myn schepper. yck bydde dy dat du my enen eruen gheuest. den wyl yk dy in dynen tempel offeren. (lxxxiii, b)

Comparison of the two texts reveals their indisputable relationship, but it is not that of source and translation, but rather that of sister texts.

Another example from the series of angelic visitations experienced by Anne and Joachim offers further evidence for the assertion that despite the great similarities between the *Rhb* and *Passionael* versions of this portion of the St. Anne legend, the latter was not the source for text not found in the *SAB*. After the angel had appeared to Joachim bidding him meet his wife at the Golden Gate, he also appears to Anne with a similar message. When the couple finally meets, we learn that:

þa sem hvn sæ at hann kom. þa gieck hvn j mothe honvm. Og lagde sinar hendr vmm halsen æ honvm og þackade gvde sina nad og myskvnn og kyste hann Og af þeim fagnadar kosse og so af þeirre skjire æst er þav havfdv til samans þa strackx vard sæ blezannlegre gethnadr þeirra æ mille sem eingillen hafde þeim bodat at gvdz fyrer skipan efter þvi sem fyr seiger. (336:12–16)

The corresponding passage in the *Passionael* reads as follows:

vnde sach dat he quam. do vil se em vmme synen hals vnde dankede gode syner gnaden. Do weren se des kyndes seker dat van en gheboren scolde werden. (lxxxv,c)

Once more comparison with Priester Wernher's Marian legend reveals that St. Anne's more enthusiastic greeting of her husband in *Rhb* has antecedents. When Anne spies her husband,

diu frouwe gâhete dar,
 umb den hals si in gevie,
 an sîner hende si gie,
 si halste in unde chuste,
 si druchte in an die bruste
 unt enphienc in inneclîchen wol. (1004–09)

The model for the above — as well as the account in *Rhb* — is provided by one of the redactions of the apocryphal Pseudo-Matthew account, where we read: “et occurrens illi ad collum eius se suspendit ipsum amplexando cum osculo et gratias agendo domino dixit” (Tischendorf 1876: 60, fn. 5).

There is a significant doctrinal discrepancy between the *Rhb* and *Passionael* accounts, one that derives from the previously enunciated belief (discussed above) that Mary “skal vera giethen af skire og ofleckadre ast en eigi af holdlegre sambvd” (329: 16–17). According to the saga, Mary is conceived as a result of Anne’s kiss and the pure love she and Joachim have for each other. The Low German text, however, simply comments that at this point the parents were certain that they would have a child. Belief in the notion that Mary was conceived as a result of the kiss was widespread enough in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries for Geiler von Kaysersberg, the popular preacher in Straßburg, to condemn it in 1512 in one of his sermons on Our Lady (Dörfler-Dierken 1992b: 51–52). This discrepancy between the *Rhb* and *Passionael* texts — as well as an earlier statement concerning Mary’s birth — reveals a basic theological difference between the two accounts that makes it most unlikely that the *Passionael* was the source of the additional matter in *Mariu saga og Önnu*. The reading in the *SAB* diverges even more from that in *Rhb*:

Also se szyck malck eyn ander moetten in der gulden porten do synt
 se beide froelick gheworden van den lofften des engels van der
 dochter de se krigen scholden. (cvii,v–cviii,r)

Instructive is a passage in Priestler Wernher’s legend, in which there is an explicit reference to sexual intercourse. When the angel appears to Joachim, he says to him:

got hat gegæben dir ze lone
 ein tohter bey deinem weibe;
 div chom von dinem leibe
 do dv ze iungist schiede von ir. (684–87)

Here one of the miracles associated with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is worth noting. As was stated above, in ch. 25 of *Mariu saga og Önnu*, Mary is presented as having been born both without stain of original sin and from a virgin. According to the saga, this double doctrine was espoused by the Council of Basel. The notion that Mary was born of a virginal Anne was a popular misconception, which is also reflected in the scene between Anne and Joachim above. That the *Passionael* was not the source of this misinformation is supported by the account of the miracle at the Council of Basel. According to the *Passionael*, the Council proclaimed “dat Maria godes moder entfangen werde sunder erfsunde vnde sunder alle beulekkinge (CCxcix,c). Both phrases — “without original sin and without stain” — refer to Mary.

One section of *Mariu saga og Önnu* coincides with text in the *Passionael*'s account “Van vnser leuen vrouwen hemmeluaert” (C xv, a–C xviii, d). Here too we find an irritating admixture of what amounts to word-for-word translation and substantial variance between the Icelandic and Low German texts. A case in point is the scene in which the angel Gabriel appears to Mary to announce to her that she is to leave this world. The scene is as follows in *Rhb*:

þæ einv sinne er hvn læ æ bæn sem hvn var vðn og var brennannde j gvdz elskv og vard bidiande til gvdz af ollv hiartta at hvn mætte eiga skiliazt vid heim þenna og gvd heyrdi kall hennar og birttezt henne Gabriel eingill vegsamlega henne heilsannde med þessare qvediv sem hier fylger Heil sierttv og blezvd sagde hann. Sie hiernæ drotning min palm qvist einn hvern at eg fære þier af paradiso. hann skalttv bida at latha bera. fyrer þinvm bavrv. þessi palm qvistv var miog fagr og græn at lith. en blavden æ honvm vorv so skiar sem morgvn stiarna. Hier med sagde eingillen thil hennar. fagna þv Maria þviat æ þridia deigi fra þessv mvnttv skiliazt vid þin likama og sonvr þin er bidande sinnar vegsamlegrar modr og vill leida þig med sier til eylifs fagnadar. sem hann hefvr þier adr longv fyrer bvit. og sialfr vill hann koma thil motz vid þig med ollvm himneskvm herskap. (420:9–22)

Mary now thanks the angel for the message, inquires what his name is — “þæ bidr eg þig at þv virdizt at birtha mier nafn þitt” (420:25–26) — and then continues:

So og bidr /eg\ at syner miner og brædvv en þat vorv apostolarner. at þeir safnizt til samans hingat til min so at eg siae þæ likamlegvm avgvv adr en eg deyie og giallde eg so gvde anda minn þeim nær-

verandvm so og bid eg at þæ sem min sal geingr vt af likamanvm at hvn siae onvan skelfelegan edr hræd<e>legan anda. og eingen megt o vinarens renne mier æ mothe. (420:26–31)

The angel reassures her that the apostles shall assemble as she has asked, but then poses the rhetorical question: “enn hvar fyrer ottazt þv at sia jllgiarna anda þar sem þv nidr þrycker þeirra hövud og magth en þo lika vel verde þin vile so at þv skaltt /þæ\ ecki sia” (421:3–6). The above, as all the matter concerning Mary’s life after the death of St. Anne, is wanting in the *SAB*, but a counterpart exists in the *Passionael*. Nonetheless, while containing much of the substance found in the saga, the scene in the Low German legend also deviates in content, structure, and the use of direct discourse:

Do nu de alderhilligheste iuncfrouwe to eren .lx.ij. iaren ghekomen was. do was se allene in erem husze vnde hadde groet begherte na erem leuen sone. so dat se myt milden tranen ere leue kynd bad. dat se mochte bi em wezen. do sande he eer den engel Gabriel. de sprak Ghegotet sistu maria. vnde brochte eer enen palmstruek vth dem paradise. de was ghans licht. vnde was eyn groen twych. de blade weren alze de lychte morghe sterne. vnde sede. Vrouwe dy Maria. wente dyn sone heft dyn begherte angheseen. vnde wil dy to den ewighen vrouden nemen. dar he dy to heft gheladen. vnde werd suluen to dy komen mit allen hemmelschen heere. vnde den palm schal men vor dyner baren dreghen. do sede se. Der bodeschop bin yk van ghantzeme herten vro. vnde beghere dre dinghe van myneme leuen sone Dat erste dat myn kynt to myner vorscheydinghe kome Dat ander dat ok alle de .xij. apostele to mi komen. Dat drudde. dat ik nenen bozenghest ensee. Do sprack de engel. Wat du biddest dat kryghestu van dynem leuen sone. vnde schedede do van eer. (Cxvi,b)

The discrepancies between the Icelandic and Low German accounts are substantial. While the *Passionael* sets the scene in the 62nd year of Mary’s life, *Rhb* is silent on that account, but instead informs us that Mary is to die three days after the visitation by the angel. Furthermore, Mary’s request that Jesus be present at her death is not found in the saga, while the reference to Mary crushing the head of Satan is lacking in the *Passionael*. Mary’s asking in the *Passionael* that her son come to her at the moment of death is somewhat odd, since the angel has just finished telling her that Christ “werd suluen to dy komen mit allen hemmelschen heere”. The version in *Rhb* suggests

that the passage in the *Passionael* is a condensed version of what had originally been a longer text. Supporting evidence for this assertion comes from the corresponding text in the *Legenda aurea* account of Mary's Assumption, which contains matter also found in *Rhb* but not the *Passionael* (passages in italics are found in the Icelandic text but not the *Passionael*):

Die igitur quadam dum in filii desiderium *cor virginis vehementer accenditur*, aestuans animus commovetur et in exteriorem lacrimarum abundantiam excitatur, cumque ad tempus subtracti filii aequanimiter non ferret subtracta solatia, ecce angelus cum multo lumine eidem adstitit et reverenter utpote sui matrem domini salutavit. Ave, inquit, benedicta Maria suscipiens benedictionem illius, qui mandavit salutem Jacob. Ecce autem ramum palmae de paradiso ad te dominam attuli, quem ante feretrum portare jubeas, *cum die tertia de corpore assumeris, nam tuus filius te matrem reverendam exspectat*. Cui Maria respondit: si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, *obsecro, ut nomen tuum mihi revelare digneris*, sed hoc peto instantius, *ut filii et fratres mei apostoli ad me pariter congregentur*, ut eos, antequam moriar, corporalibus oculis videam et ab iis sepeliri valeam et ipsis presentibus spiritum Deo reddam. Hoc iterum peto et obsecro, ut anima mea de corpore exiens nullum spiritum teterrimum videat nullaque mihi Sathanae potestas occurrat. (*LA*, p. 505)

As he does in *Rhb*, the angel tells her that the apostles shall assemble, and then he similarly asks her:

Malignum autem spiritum videre cur metuis, cum caput ejus omnino contriveris et spoliaveris ipsum suae imperio potestatis? Fiat tamen voluntas tua, ut ipsos non videas. (*LA*, p. 505)

The striking congruence between the Latin and Icelandic texts attests that the longer Icelandic version — longer, that is, vis-à-vis the *Passionael* — is not the result of amplification by the translator. Rather, the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu* was a Low German text (cf. *nidrþrykkja*) that intermittently contained readings very close to those in the *Legenda aurea*. Indeed, the above corresponding passages (between *Rhb* and the *Legenda aurea*) are also found in a German text that was one of the sources of the prose *Passionael*, namely the metrical *Passional*, a monumental Middle High German verse legendary (nearly 110,000 verses) from around 1300, which derives much of its material from the *Legenda aurea* (Hahn, ed., 1982; cf.

Rosenfeld 1982: 63–65; Höbing 1935: 17; Masser 1976: 188–89). Here too we learn that Mary is to be taken to her son on the third day (122:80), and similarly the angel wonders why Mary is afraid of the devil:

durch waz vurchtes du in
 sit daz din heiliger sin
 din kuscheit diner tugende rat
 im sin heubt zvtreden hat
 dv hast in gar betoubet
 vnde sine gewalt beroubet
 so daz er dir nicht mach geschaden. (123:29–35)

The relationship between corresponding passages in *Mariu saga og Önnu* and the *Passionael* resembles that between the saga and the *SAB*. At times the similarity is striking, and occasionally there occurs what appears to be word-for-word translation. More often, however, the evidence mounts in support of the thesis that the source of the translation was not only a different but also a longer text. Like the *SAB*, which bears sufficient evidence of having been condensed from a longer text, the *Passionael* can be shown to contain reduced versions of originally more extended matter.

Another passage that attests the imperfect transmission of older matter in the *Passionael* but the retention of a superior text in *Rhb* is the depiction of the assumption of Mary's soul to heaven. In the *Passionael* the scene is rendered as follows:

Do schedede vnse leue here mit syner moder zele van dar. vnde mit allen hemmelschen heer. vnde sunghen gode lauesange vnde voren in den hemmel mit vnvthsprekliker clarheyt. Do leden de .xij. apostele vnser leuen vrouwen lycham vp de bare. vnde sunte Johannes ghinck dar voer. vnde droech den palmstruck. vnde de anderen droghen de baren vnde bernende kersen. vnde de engele sunghen in der lucht enen nygen sanck. (C.xvi.c–d)

The version transmitted in *Mariu saga og Önnu* is considerably longer by reason of added detail:

þæ hvarf drottinn fra avglite heilgra apostola med sæl modr sinnar og allvr himneskr herskapr er med þeim var svngv himneskan lofsöng gvdi til lofs og hans signadre modr allt til himna oendalegvm favgnvd er hvn atte þar at thaka. en postolar gvdz kavllvdv æ hana

efter æ og savgdv þv hin prydelegazta jvngfrv. verttv vor minnelegh hvertt sem þv geingr. Og þa sem einglarnr þeir sem efter blifv j himnenvm sæv hina stiga vpp aptvr er vorv med vorvm herra þa forv þeir amothe þeim. so sem med mikille vndrvn og giordv eina fagra og mikla processionem er þeir lithv kong sinn vera beranda sal sinnar blezanlegrar modr æ sinvm armleggivm. og vrdv af þessv sem nockvt ottande. kallande og so seijande. Hverr er þessi drottningh sem so er megthoglega vppstigande. af fliothande avdæfv. eda af lystingvm eydimarckar. en þat er at skilia af verolldv og er sithiande æ handleggivm sins elskvlegaztha sonar. Þa var þeim svaradh af hennar fylgiorvm sem vorv helger einglar. Þessi er sv en fegrdzta en prydelegaztha æ mille dætra af Jhervsalem hverr at sithiande skal vera thil hægra handar gvde j velldis sæte hans dyrdar. (423: 10–27)

Comparison of the two redactions reveals that the greater length is primarily the result of greater specificity, the inclusion of sufficient detail in *Rhb* to present a visual and auditory image of the scene being depicted. This presentation of the details of Mary's assumption has a long tradition. It is transmitted in the *Legenda aurea*, where we read:

Post eam apostoli clamitant dicentes: virgo prudentissima, quo progredieris? Esto nostri memor, o domina. Tunc ad concentum adscendentium coetus, qui remanserant, admirati concite obviam processerunt videntesque regem suum feminae animam in ulnis propriis bajulantem illamque super illum innixam obstupefacti clamare coeperunt dicentes: quae est ista, quae adscendit de deserto deliciis affluens innixa super dilectum suum? Quibus concomitantes dixerunt: ista est speciosa inter filias Jerusalem, sicut vidistis eam plenam caritate et dilectione. Sicque in coelum gaudens suscipitur et a dextris filii in throno gloriae collocatur. (p. 507)

Throughout the *Passionael* there is repeated evidence that the legends contained therein had been reduced from longer versions, the above scenes not excluded. To be sure, one can adduce passages in *Mariu saga og Önnu* for which corresponding passages can be found in the *Passionael*, but on the whole the similarity is too general to permit one to posit the Low German text as the source.

The nature of the at times extreme disparity in corresponding sections of the *Passionael* and *Rhb* resides in the difference between an allusion on the one hand and a full explication on the other. Such is the case in a passage in the account "Van der boert vnser heren Jhesu cristi" and the corresponding text in ch. 50 of *Mariu saga og*

Önnu. In the Low German legend are listed the wondrous events associated with the birth of Christ. We are told that Mary's virginity during and after the birth of Christ was prefigured by the rod of Aaron, which bloomed by itself, "vnde mit der porten Ezechielis. de alletijd besloten bleff" (CCCCxii,c). The counterpart to this laconic allusion reads in the Icelandic saga as follows:

Hv er þat læstæ portthed er prophethen Ezechiel sagde thil. þviat j giegnvm hennar obrvgdenn og ospilltthan likama gieck henar eingethen sonvr æn nockvrs konar særleika. So thil at jafna sem þæ solenn skinn j giegnvm skirtt gler og geingr geisle solarenar j giegnvm gleret ospilltt og obrothed og samaleidis er og geislenn ospiltvr þo at hann gangi og giegnvm gleret heillt og obrothed. So hefer og jvngfrv Maria fætt sinn blezada son æn nockvrs særleika eda savrganar. So og thil dæmis at thaka. at stiornnvnr hafa sitt lios og sina pryde e(da) fegvrð af solenne. So thok og Mariæ himneska stiarnan sem skinande er nv avallt fyrer æsionv sins sonar j ollvm dygdvm. þat oendalega lios og pryde af hans gvddomlegvm kraptthe. þo hans allvelldogvm gvddome ospillttvm og ominckvðvm j ælla stade. þæ sem hann gieck vt af hennar jvngfrvlegvm likama. sem einn brvgvme vt af sinv svefn hvse. (376 : 26–377 : 6)

VI. Conclusion

The preceding analysis and comparison of *Mariu saga og Önnu* and the corresponding legends in both the *St. Annen Büchlein* and the *Passionael* have provided more than sufficient evidence to support the thesis that neither was the source of the Icelandic legend. *Mariu saga og Önnu* derives not only from a longer and narratively superior Low German text but also from a redaction that was structurally distinct from the version transmitted in the *St. Annen Büchlein*. That Ole Widding and Hans Bekker-Nielsen identified the 1507 Braunschweig imprint of the *SAB* and the 1492 Lübeck imprint of *Dat Passionael* as the main sources of *Mariu saga og Önnu* can be explained by the at times uncanny congruence between passages in the saga and these two Low German texts. A word-for-word comparison shows, however, that the affinity is superficial. Divergence in length, structure, and matter prohibits identification of these two imprints as the sources of the Icelandic legend, either singly or together. Given the magnitude of the formal, structural, and material

dissimilarities between the saga and the Low German texts identified by Widding and Bekker-Nielsen, the theory that the compiler of *Rhb* conjoined various sections focussing on Mary and Christ in the *Passionael* with the *SAB* is to be rejected. One can conclude that *Mariu saga og Önnu* is a rather faithful translation of an unknown or no longer extant Low German compilation, which was translated in its entirety.

The existence of another version of the legend of St. Anne, one also containing much Marian matter, is plausible if one recalls the profusion of German legends in both manuscript and print that were devoted to the mother of Mary and grandmother of Christ in the Middle Ages. Werner Williams-Krapp notes the transmission of the legend in not only three different legendarys — *Der Heiligen Leben*; *Der Heiligen Leben, Redaktion*; and *Mittelfränkische Heiligenpredigten* — but also twelve redactions that are independent of these. None of these has been edited (Williams-Krapp 1986: 390–91).

Literary interest in the life of St. Anne in the German and Dutch language realm is widely attested before the Hans Dorn imprint. Prior to World War II, the text of the Braunschweig 1507 imprint had existed in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Ms. theol. germ. 19) belonging to the Stadtbibliothek Lübeck. This manuscript was dated after 1475 (Ampe 1979: 267). The work known as the *Sankt Annen Büchlein* is an anthology of texts relating mostly to devotion to St. Anne, including her legend. The *SAB* commences with “de dornen kron unses leven heren Jhesu cristi” and contains inter alia “Sunte Annen rosenkrantz”, “gebede vor de pestilencie”, and “Ein testament eyns waren cristen minschen” (Ampe 1979: 268). The second item in the collection is “Sunte Annen legend und all oeres geschlechtes”, that is, the text that previous scholarship has identified as the source of *Mariu saga og Önnu*. We have shown above that this cannot be the case. The Low German St. Anne legend represented today only by the *SAB* is itself an anonymous translation of the Dutch *Die historie van die heilige moeder santa anna ende van haer olders daer si van geboren is ende van horen leven ende hoer penitenci ende mirakelen mitten exempelen*, first published in 1499 by Petrus van Os in Zwolle (Brandenburg 1990: 287, 302; GKW II: 1994). The work saw two additional printings before 1507 (Zwolle, 1500; Deventer, 1504). This Dutch redaction in turn was a free translation by the Carthusian Wouter Bor of the *Legenda sanctae Emerencianae et sanctae Annae*, which has been ascribed to Jan van Denemarken, a secular priest who

died around 1545 (Brandenburg 1987: 105). The work is extant in a manuscript dated c. 1496 (Brandenburg 1990: 287–91). The legend in the SAB was not the only German legend of St. Anne in print. In 1501 *Dysz ist eyn seltzemme und gute legende von Sant Annan und von irem gantzen geslecht* was published in Straßburg. A second Straßburg imprint of the same work from 1509 bears a variant title: *Dis ist ein hüpsche legende von der heiligen frawen sant Anna* (GKW II: 2005). This German legend was also translated from a Latin text, namely the *Legenda sanctae Annae*, of which nine imprints are extant in the period 1496 (Leuven) to 1517. Seven of these are Leipzig imprints (Brandenburg 1990: 279–81; 286). Another life of St. Anne was published in 1490 in Ulm by Johann Reger with the title *Von dem ganzen Geschlecht S. Anna, von der S. Anna-Bruderschaft und von etlichen Wunderzeichen* (Falk 1879: 87). The work commences: “Emerencia vnd ir man Stallanus habent swo ll töchtern mit namen Anna und esmeria ge ll hept” (GKW II: 2012). Around the same year (1490/91) appeared a Dutch life, *Historie, ghetiden ende die exempelen van der heyligher vrouwen sint Annen*, composed in 1486, and printed by Gerard Leeu in Antwerp (GKW II: 1996). There were subsequent editions of this work in 1493, 1496, and two in 1497. From the year 1519 there is extant yet another imprint of a translation of Wouter Bor’s Dutch legend, namely the High German *Die history und das leben der heylicher frawen sant Annen eyn Mutter der junckfrawen Marie, wie sy ist geboren von jren heyligen eltern Stolanus und Emerentia. Auch von yren heyligen leben und bittere penitenz, myt vyl schonen miracelen und exemplen* (Brandenburg 1990: 299–301). This translation is ascribed to Nicolaus Symonis, a Carmelite in Erfurt.

Our survey of the incunabula and early sixteenth-century imprints of German and Dutch legends of St. Anne presumably contains only a fraction of the texts, be that in manuscript or print, that were available. In any case, all the evidence confirms that the Hans Dorn imprint could not have been the source of the Icelandic legend in *Reykjahólabók*, that the discrepancies between the Low German imprint of 1507 and *Mariu saga og Önnu* are not the result of improvisations and revisions by the translator. There had existed at one time either a manuscript or an imprint of a legend of St. Anne that also incorporated the complete life of Mary. This legend of St. Anne and Mary was the source of the rather faithful rendering transmitted in *Mariu saga og Önnu*.

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