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The Language of Halldór Laxness' *Gerpla*

1 Introduction

Halldór Laxness' *Gerpla* was published on December 5, 1952.[1] The novel

[1] The name *Gerpla* was coined at a quite late stage. The same is true for the use of *gar-pur* 'hero, champion'. The original provisional title was clearly related to *Fóstbræðra saga*, as it be seen from a typewritten version of chapter 1 in Lbs. 200 NF, case 200, which bears the title *Fóstbræðra saga ǫnnur* ("the second *Fóstbræðra saga*", cf. also Hallberg 1968: 36–37), and also in a letter from Jón Helgason to Halldór Laxness (November 7, 1950;

Abstract: This article offers a primarily linguistic analysis of the language used by Hall-dór Laxness in his novel *Gerpla* (1952), compairing that language with Old Icelandic. This linguistic description has multiple prongs, as it examines the novel's orthography and phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. It compares the novel's language to the linguistic model followed by Laxness, Old Icelandic, and for what concerns the lexicon, *Fóstbræðra saga*, the novel's primary literary model. No attempt was made to provide a detailed analysis of the literary models for this novel, since such a venture is clearly beyond the scope of this investigation. The results of the linguistic inquiry may be sum-marized by saying that the novel's language is a variant of Modern Icelandic from the phonological standpoint but it remarkably adheres to 14th-century Old Icelandic for what concerns morphology (with a few exceptions) and syntax. The lexicon is overall richer than that of the sagas of the Icelanders. Even the longest of them, *Njáls saga*, has a significantly smaller lexicon. Finally, based upon a close inspection of the corrections Jón Helgason (1899–1986) made on the proofs of the novel, a philological appraisal of his contribution to the shaping of the language in *Gerpla* is offered, concluding that Jón Helgason had a crucial influence on the final form of the novel's language.

Keywords: Halldór Laxness, Icelandic contemporary literature, Old Icelandic, saga rewriting, Jón Helgason.

is a rewriting of *Fóstbrœðra saga* and thus narrates the adventures and fate of the two 11th-century *garpar*, yielding the name *Gerpla* on the model of *Egla* ⇐ *Egill*, *Njála* ⇐ *Njáll* etc., Þorgeir Hávarsson and Þormóður Bessason Kolbrúnarskáld ('Kolbrún's skald'). The novel, a refined literary experiment, is rich in leitmotifs from medieval Icelandic literature, among others.[2] Laxness' literary experiment would never have seen the light of day if the language of its literary model had been substantially different from the author's own language, Modern Icelandic. It is thus indisputable that the unbroken linguistic tradition running from Old to Modern Icelandic was a cornerstone for the composition of the novel.[3] An enduring thread running through centuries of Icelandic uniquely characterizes the language and distinguishes it from other contemporary literary languages, for the difference between medieval and modern language is such that, at least morphologically, lexically, and syntactically, a modern reader can still read a medieval work, or, as Laxness himself put it (1962): "The language is essentially the same, notwithstanding swelling superficial corrugations" (Icel. *Málið er í eðli sínu hið sama, þrátt fyrir kvikandi gára á yfirborðinu*).[4]

Lbs. 200 NF, case 72), where he asks the author when *Fóstbrœðra saga hin nýja* ("the new *Fóstbrœðra saga*") would be published. The novel's *incipit* (*Tveir eru garpar er einna hafa orðið nafnkunnastir á Vestfjörðum* "Two are the heroes from the Vestfirðir that have gained the greatest renown") features the word *garpur* only at a late stage of composition. This can be seen, for example, in the hand-written copies of chapter 1 where the word *hetja* 'hero' is used instead. The same is true for the word *garpur* elsewhere in the novel (cf. Hallberg's comment on a paper slip in Lbs. NF 200, case 200 and on a yellow paper slip wrapped around a bulk of typewritten text in case 207).

  [2] E.g. *Egils saga* and *Ólafs saga helga*. In addition, in the notes to Jón Helgason's comments, Laxness names works such as *Knýtlinga saga* and *Oddrúnargrátur*, from which he says he found the words *must* 'temple, church' and *munum vinna* 'to delight in each other's love', respectively, on which Jón Helgason had previously commented.

  [3] In an interview with Matthías Johannessen (in Halldór Laxness and Matthías Johannessen 1972: 22–24), Laxness clearly states that his objective was "to write an archaizing work for modern people" (Icel. *að skrifa fornlegt listaverk handa nútímafólki*). Concerning language, he claims to have sought never to use a word which could "be proven to not have existed in the 11th century" (Icel. *að sanna að hafi ekki verið til í málinu á 11. öld*). A similar intention is seen in a letter from Jón Helgason to Laxness (October 21, 1952; Lbs. 200 NF, case 72), where the philologist explains the rationale for his linguistic corrections (all of this is also mentioned in Helga Kress 2018: 287–289).

  [4] With a *caveat* on orthography: Laxness battled fiercely to publish medieval works with modern spelling (cf. Laxness 1962: 122–123). Cf. also Laxness' above-mentioned aim (footnote 3) on one hand and his aim with the publication of classical saga literature with modern spelling, i.e. that "Icelandic [would be] as equally easily readable by every Icelander, young and old, as if the book were written today" (cited in Helga Kress 2018: 289, Icel. *íslenzka jafnauðlesin hverjum Íslendingi, ungum og gömlum, eins og bókin væri skrifuð í dag*).

The publication of *Gerpla*, whose deep meaning is allegorical, was praised by left-wing *intelligentsia*, but fiercely criticized by right-wing conservatives and rural readers. Both groups of critics, the former chiefly for political-ideological reasons and the latter owing to lack of literary sophistication and narrow-mindedness, failed to penetrate beyond the surface text meanings: both groups demonstrated the same ideological biases towards saga literature, which Halldór Laxness had earlier been obliged to face both as a saga editor and also as writer and translator (see for example Halldór Laxness 1941).[5, 6]

This article closely examines the language features of *Gerpla*, an area of study which thus far appears rarely to have been explored. I am aware of only two articles, i.e. Hallberg (1969) and Helga Kress (2018), which deal with the novel's language from a linguistic-philological point of view. Thus, this article does not purport to expand upon previous studies of a literary nature (e.g. by Ástráður Eysteinsson, Dagný Kristjánsdóttir, and Bergljót Soffía Kristjánsdóttir), *pace* those who would like this to be otherwise. Hopefully, presenting this article in English, instead of Icelandic, the active and passive knowledge of which is, however, indispensable for any serious investigation in the field of Icelandic language and literature, old and modern, will invite a wider academic readership, possibly extending beyond just the *coterie* of Icelandic studies.

The article is divided into two main parts, an analysis of the novel's language (§§ 2 and 3),[7] and a philological analysis of Jón Helgason's

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[5] On *Gerpla*'s early reviewers see in detail Hughes (2019) and also Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson (2005: 78–84). See also the thorough review by Kristinn E. Andrésson (1972), written shortly after the publication of the novel, but published two decades later. On Laxness as a saga editor see Crocker (2019). In general on the making of *Gerpla* see also Halldór Guðmundsson (2004, esp. pp. 566–569).

[6] Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson's three-volume biography of Laxness is a problematic work, because it was proven to extensively plagiarize its sources. As a result, the author was condemned by the Icelandic Supreme Court in March 2008 (see *Morgunblaðið* March 14, 2008, p. 4 "Skaðabætur í Laxnessmáli ein og hálf milljón"). In using the third volume of the biography, I made sure that the information quoted here was reported by H. H. Gissurarson in compliance with copyright legislation.

[7] This part of the study was on the one hand carried out using a text analysis tool (*Text-STAT*), and on the other with the aid of word lists provided by *Snara.is* (*Fóstbræðra saga*) and the *ONP*, besides, of course, direct study of the primary sources. The text of the 6th edition (2010) was used in the text analysis tool. The text of the 1st edition (2nd printing, 1952) was always cross-checked with the digital data. All direct citations from the novel, be they words or longer portions of text, are from the 1st edition, as are the page numbers in brackets which follow the citations, whose peculiar graphic form, exhibiting Laxness' own orthography, was left unchanged. Noun and adjective meanings are given in the nom. sg. form (or pl. in the case of *pluralia tantum*), not in the form actually cited. Similarly, verb meanings are provided in the infinitive, unless otherwise specified. English meanings are mostly from Cleasby/Vigfússon.

(1899–1986) contribution to the novel (§ 4). The linguistic description (§ 2) is divided into three sub-sections: phonology/orthography (§ 2.1), morphology (§ 2.2), and syntax (§ 2.3). Section 3 is devoted to *Gerpla*'s lexicon and its relationship with the lexicon of the sagas of Icelanders, esp. *Fóstbrœðra saga*. Section 4 addresses the role of Jón Helgason as Laxness' chief linguistic advisor (cf. Halldór Laxness 1941: 125). This chapter builds on a thorough data excerption from the final proofs of the novel, which Jón Helgason corrected. Halldór Laxness and Jón Helgason were also known to have discussed the novel's language etc. *viva voce* (as reported in Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson 2005: 45), but direct evidence of these conversations is unfortunately not recoverable. A concluding section (5) summarizes the chief findings of the study.

2 Linguistic description

2.1 Phonology/orthography

Since Laxness' aim was to write *Gerpla* in a variety of Icelandic inspired by the language of the sagas, it is appropriate to start its linguistic description by looking at a number of phonological changes which took place in the transition from Old to Modern Icelandic and at how these changes are represented in the novel, i.e. what their orthographical manifestation is. The selected phenomena are: the change *vá > vo*; the diphthongization of *a*, *e*, *ö* before *n+g/k*; the diphthongization before the cluster *g+i/j*; the vowel lengthening before *l+C*; *u*-anaptyxis (vowel epenthesis); the "disappearance" of *m* in the 1st pl. ending *-um* before the 1st pl. and du. personal pronouns *vér* and *vit*; and the diphthongization of *é*. Finally, the forms *kómu* and *vóru* are analyzed, and their place in the novel evaluated.

2.1.1 *The change* vá > vo

The change *vá > vo* had already begun by 1200, when *á > ǫ́*. Although the outcome of this phonological change was written ⟨a, aa, æ⟩ (± length mark), its quality was [ɔː]. As a result, the sequence *vá* came to be pronounced [vɔː], although it continued to be written using ⟨va, ua⟩ and other similar spellings. Later, *á* [ɔː] diphthongized. The outcome of this process was first [ɔṷ], and then, upon lowering of the former segment, [aṷ]. This diphthongization was blocked whenever *v* preceded *á*. In the first half of the 14th century, i.e. when the last stage of the diphthongization

was completed, the first examples of old *vá* written ⟨vo, uo⟩ appeared. These spellings are readily explained by noting that after *á* came to be pronounced [au̯] in all but one phonological context, i.e. after *v*, ⟨á⟩ (or similar spellings) was no longer suitable to represent positional [ɔː] after *v*. The spellings ⟨vo, uo⟩ came to be used increasingly to represent the sound cluster [vɔː]. As a result of the Quantity Shift (which was completed in the 16th century), long *o* was shortened in closed syllables. Thus, ⟨vo⟩ in Modern Icelandic stands for [vɔ(ː)] (Jón Axel Harðarson 2004: 203–204).[8]

In *Gerpla* old *vá* is always written ⟨vo⟩, e.g. *svo* 'so, then, thus' (7 *passim*), *tvo* 'two' (9 *passim*), and *þvo* 'to wash' (405).

2.1.2 Diphthongization of *a, e, ö* before *n+g/k*

The diphthongization of *a*, *e*, *ö* before *n+g/k* took place in the 14th century. Medieval spellings like ⟨lángr, laangr,[9] leingi, laung⟩ etc. show that this sound change had been completed (Stefán Karlsson 2000: 25–26, with references). In *Gerpla* it is always written ⟨á, ei, au⟩ in the environment in question. This orthographical feature, however, is to be ascribed to Laxness' orthography, which mirrors modern pronunciation, rather than to inspiration from medieval times. This is further confirmed by the fact that the author writes ⟨í, ú⟩ in the same environment, i.e. he reproduces the actual pronunciation of these clusters or, with other words, the allophones of [ɪ] and [ʏ] (Old Icelandic [ʊ]), [i] and [u], occur in this environment.

2.1.3 Diphthongization before the cluster *g+i/j*

The diphthongization of short vowels before the cluster *g+i/j* took place in the wake of the Quantity Shift, especially in the 16th century. The cause of this diphthongization is found in the change in syllable structure in Icelandic in the late (Icelandic) Middle Ages. The origin of a historically secondary monophthongal pronunciation (Icel. *einhljóðaframburður*), nowadays preserved in the Skaftafell region in southeast Iceland, whence the name *skaftafellskur framburður*, is the same. In short, both diphthongal and monophthongal pronunciations result from the way the originally short tonic syllable was lengthened, i.e. *hagi* 'pasture, meadow' [hajɪ] > [hai̯ɪ] > [hai̯ːɪ], i.e. [hai̯.ɪ] (diphthongal pronunciation) or [haː.ɪ̯ɪ] (monophthongal pronunciation).[10] This sound change is not visible

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8 See also Hreinn Benediktsson (2002a).
9 Spellings like these two show that diphthongization had happened, i.e. that the vowel had the same value of originally long /a/, i.e. /au̯/.
10 On the detailed history of this sound change see Jón Axel Harðarson (2007).

in *Gerpla*, as the author consistently writes monophthongs in this environment.

2.1.4　Diphthongization of é

The originally long *e* started to diphthongize not later than in the 13th century (Aðalsteinn Hákonarson 2017: 37). The outcome of this process was twofold: either [eː] > [ei̯] > [ɛi̯] or [eː] > [ie̯ː] > [i̯ɛː]. The former variant, [ɛi̯], was short-lived so that it did not come to coincide with the diphthong *ei*. Furthermore, it is likely that this variant was somewhat similar to the outcome of the diphthongization of *æ* [æi̯], which may also have had a role in the process. In *Gerpla* the author only uses the grapheme ⟨é⟩. A handful of forms, which originally had a short *e*, are written with ⟨é⟩: *féll* 'to fall' (15 *passim*), *fékk* 'to get, receive' (19 *passim*), *héðra* 'hither' (376), *hérað* 'district' (8 *passim*). In addition, the author chose not to write ⟨é⟩ in the 1st sg. pronoun (*eg* 14 *passim*) and the verb *éta* 'to eat' (*eta* 29 *passim*). This fact suggests that the forms *eg* and *eta* are archaizations in line with the author's programmatic intention statement cited in footnote 3 above.[11] The earliest examples of diphthongization in the 1st sg. pronoun are from the second half of the 14th century, whereas for the verb *éta*, there are instances as early as ca. 1200 (*ONP* s.v. *ek*, ²*eta*).

2.1.5　Vowel lengthening before l+C

The vowel lengthening before *l*+*C* took place in the first half of the 12th century (Jón Axel Harðarson 2006). The distribution of long vowels in the aforementioned environment is the same in *Gerpla* as in Modern Icelandic (e.g. *háls* 'neck' 113 *passim*, *sjálfur* 'self' 132 *passim*, *úldinn* 'decomposed, putrid' 363). This feature does not differ from its 14th-century Icelandic counterpart.

2.1.6　U-anaptyxis

The anaptyxis of *u* in the contexts *Cr#* (e.g. *maðr* > *maður* 'man') and *CrC* (e.g. *digrð* > *digurð* 'bigness, stoutness') is attested in Icelandic from the last quarter of the 13th century. The process did not reach completion before the 16th century, however (cf. Ari Páll Kristinsson 1992: 15–16).

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[11] Although the same spellings were still common in the first half of the 20th century, what is proposed here is indirectly confirmed by the author's orthographic choices in his editions of Icelandic sagas (*Hrafnkels saga*, *Laxdæla saga*, *Njáls saga* etc.), i.e. *ég*, *éta*, and in Laxness' stated objective with them (quoted in footnote 3 above) beside his aim with the publication of *Gerpla*.

The distribution of anaptyctic *u* is the same in *Gerpla* as in Modern Icelandic (e.g. *maður* 9 *passim*).

2.1.7   The 1st pl. ending -um before vér and vit

From about 1200 on there are indications of sporadic assimilation of -*m* in the 1st pl. ending -*um* to the homorganic fricative of the (immediately) following pronoun *vér* (pl.) or *vit* (du.) (cf. *ONP* s.vv. *vér, mér* and ²*vit*). This positional sound change has never become a phonological rule. Instead, it is bound to the subject/verb inversion (Hallberg 1965: 157–161). The assimilation evolved as follows: *hǫfum vér* [hɔvʊmveːr] > [hɔvʊvːeːr] > *hǫfu vér* [hɔvʊveːr].[12] Beside regular forms, *m*-less forms are well attested in *Gerpla*, e.g. with the following verbs: *fara* 'to go, travel', *ganga* 'to go, walk', *gera* 'to do', *hafa* 'to have', *munu* 'to will, shall', *vita* 'to know', *vilja* 'to want, wish, will, desire', *ætla* 'to intend, plan' (*fóru við* 196, *höfu við* 104, *ætlu vér* 144 etc.). According to Hallberg (1968: 32), *Gerpla* is in this respect "sagamässiger als die alten Sagas," as *m*-less forms are more common in the novel than in its chief literary model, *Fóstbrœðra saga*, which Hallberg uses as a base for comparison.

2.1.8   The forms kómu and vóru

The by-forms of *koma* 'to come, arrive' and *vera* 'to be' *kómum, kómuð, kómu* and *vórum, vóruð, vóru* (along with the standard forms *komum, vorum* etc.) are preserved in Modern Icelandic, especially in the West Fjords (Jón Axel Harðarson, p.c.). These by-forms show the regular evolution of *vǫ́* (> *vó* > *ó*) before C+*u*, with analogically restored *v* in the conjugation of *vera*: *kvǫ́mu(-)* > *kvómu(-)* > *kómu(-)* og *vǫ́ru(-)* > *vóru(-)* > *óru(-)* → *vóru(-)*.[13] In *Gerpla* the following by-forms of *vera* and *koma* are attested: *kómu* (9 *passim*), *vórum* (104 *passim*), and *vóru* (9 *passim*). Although they are still preserved in the modern language, their use in *Gerpla* is employed as an archaism. On the other hand similar by-forms of the verbs *kveða* 'to say' and *sofa* 'to sleep', i.e. *kóðum, sófum* etc. (< *kvǫ́ðum, svǫ́fum*), are not found in *Gerpla*, where one only finds

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[12] By-forms of the 1st pl. pronouns *vér* and *vit* are *mér* and *mit*, whose origin is due to the assimilation of original *v* to the *m* of the ending. Although they occur in both Icelandic and Norwegian manuscripts (see *ONP* s.vv. *vér, mér* and *vit, mit*), they have disappeared from Icelandic, whereas they are retained in Norwegian (cf. Nyn. *me*). These by-forms confirm that the described sound change was an assimilatory process and not an apocope, because otherwise pronominal *m*-forms should have been found.

[13] The form *vóru(-)* (← *óru(-)*) is due to paradigmatic leveling (the sg. forms start with *v*-) and, moreover, to influence exerted by the forms *vǫ́rum, vǫ́ruð, vǫ́ru* which were analogically retained in Icelandic along with the forms with *ó* (Jón Axel Harðarson p.c.).

forms with *vá* (e.g. *kváðu* 54 *passim*, *sváfu* 62 *passim*), which have been influenced by the paradigm of strong verbs with the ablaut alternation *a – á* in the preterite singular and plural, respectively (e.g. *bar – bárum* og *gaf – gáfum*). This is to say that the forms *kváðu* and *sváfu* in comparison to *kómu* and *vóru* adhere to modern language norms.[14]

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From the previous analysis, it is clear that from an orthographical stand-point, the language of *Gerpla* is a variant of Modern Icelandic. The author choses to use his own orthography rather than to archaize it, with a few exceptions (e.g. *kómu*, *vórum*, *vóru*, *eg*, *eta*). This is in line, *mutatis mutandis*, with Laxness' stance on orthography when publishing medieval works, opposing the normalized "archaizing" orthography used in the series *Íslenzk fornrit* to this day ("a kind of Esperanto, which linguists have invented to kill time", Icel. *nokkurskonar esperantó, sem málfræðingar hafa fundið upp sér til dundurs*, Halldór Laxness 1962: 122). Laxness' view, first published in 1937 (but dated 1935, Halldór Laxness 1962), held that two different orthographic standards should be applied according to the audience for which the writing was intended: on the one hand he conceded that it was necessary to publish medieval texts as they were found in manuscripts, i.e. for a scholarly audience; on the other hand he urged that editions for the general public used the current orthography.

2.2 Morphology[15]

2.2.1 *Nouns and adjectives*

2.2.1.1 *a*-stems and related subgroups

The declension of pure *a*-stems is almost unchanged from Old to Modern Icelandic. The ending of dat. sg. of long *a*-stems was (almost) never -Ø in Old Icelandic.[16] Instances of zero ending in short *a*-stems are attested from the first quarter of the 13th century (*ONP* s.vv. *dalr* and *smiðr*).[17]

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[14] Forms like *kváðu* are attested from the 13th century, however. See *ONP* s.v. *kveða* ⟨kvaðoz⟩.

[15] This section is based on the Old Icelandic grammar by Adolf Noreen (1970), to which the reader is referred for accessing any linguistic information (such as e.g. paradigms) not provided here for the sake of brevity.

[16] Cf. the dat. sg. *a*-st. form **woduride** (Tune, ca. 400, Krause 1966: 162–167). On early attestations of dat. sg. -Ø in long *a*-stems in skaldic poetry cf. Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 2) and for examples see Finnur Jónsson (1901: 7–14).

[17] Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 2) mentions the 12th century instead.

The dat. sg. ending *-i* is regularly employed in long *a*-stems in *Gerpla*: *báti* 'boat' (141 *passim*), *eldi* 'fire' (25 *passim*), *hesti* 'horse' (74 *passim*), *knífi* 'knife' (78 *passim*), *þræli* 'slave' (35 *passim*). The same applies to nouns suffixed with *-ing-/-ung-*, also with the definite article: e.g. *víkíngi* (40 *passim*), *víkínginum* (34 *passim*) 'viking'. The disappearance of the dat. sg. ending in this group of nouns was common in the 14th and 15th centuries (cf. *ONP* s.v. *bátr* and Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 2).

In the *wa*-stem declension, the dat. sg. ending should appear in both masculine and neuter nouns. Masculine *wa*-stems show zero ending in dat. sg. in *Gerpla*, e.g. *saung* 'song' (47 *passim*). Neuter *wa*-stems, which of course never feature the zero ending, almost always display thematic *v* in dat. sg., e.g. *fjörvi* 'life, life force, vitality' (50 *passim*), *höggvi* 'blow, knock' (121), *smjörvi* 'butter' (293). The form *höggi* occurs once (144). As expected, in dat. pl. these stems do not show thematic *v*. Analogical forms with *v* /_u are found from at least the 14th century (cf. *ONP* s.v. *sǫngr*). The earliest attestations of both dat. sg. -Ø in masculine *wa*-stems and forms without thematic *v* in neuter *wa*-stems are from the same century (*ONP* s.vv. *mjǫl* and *sǫngr*, Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 12).

For the most part, masculine *ja*-stems had already coalesced into *i*-stems in Old Icelandic. The word *niður* 'son, descendant, kinsman', however, exemplifies the declension of these stems. The word only appears once in *Gerpla* in nom. pl. *niðjar* (287). The declension of neuter *ja*-stems is the same in Modern and Old Icelandic. Starting from the 16th century (cf. Bandle 1956: 204; no examples in the *ONP*), a small number of originally neuter *ja*-stems shifted to the pure *a*-stem declension, as is the case with *net* 'net', which is declined as an *a*-stem in the novel (*netunum* 249). The declension of *ija*-stems is the same in Old and Modern Icelandic, this owing to a strong linguistic puristic policy, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries (on the revival of extinct morphological patterns see Kjartan G. Ottósson 1987, on *ija*-stems esp. p. 314).

2.2.1.2   *ō*-stems and related subgroups

The declension of *ō*-stems in *Gerpla* accords with 14th-century Icelandic usage, in which several changes were underway. In the declension of pure *ō*-stems both nom. pl. endings *-ar* and *-ir* can occur in those words which have the morphophoneme /ǫ ~ a/ such as *gjǫf* 'present' and *sǫk* 'charge, offence'. This is mirrored in *Gerpla*: *gjafar* (199 *passim*), *gjafir* (228 *passim*), *sakar* (12 *passim*), *sakir* (27 *passim*). Some words which have both variants in Modern Icelandic (e.g. *kvísl* 'branch', *skálm* 'short sword') in *Gerpla* only show the ending of *i*-stems *-ir*: *kvíslir* (249), *skálmir* (146).

An acc. pl. f. *skeiðar* of *skeið* 'race' (a neuter *a*-stem!) is used once in the novel (*renna brattar skeiðar* 35). Variation in the endings of *ō*-stems is also present in dat. sg., where the ending -*u* occurs beside -Ø (e.g. *jörðu* 61 *passim*, *jörð* 329 'earth, ground, soil').[18] Feminine nouns suffixed with -*ing*-/-*ung*- regularly show the dat. sg. ending -*u* in Old Icelandic, whereas they have -Ø in acc. sg. According to Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 15), the ending -*u* also started to be used in the accusative in the 14th century, and more so thereafter. Accusative forms with spurious -*u*, beside -Ø, often appear in *Gerpla*: *drotníngu* (397 *passim*), *drotníng* (296 *passim*) 'queen'.

Wō-stems are rare and they do not appear often in *Gerpla*. The word *ör* 'arrow', which occurs once in acc. pl. *örvar* (477), is an exemplar from this group, which also includes the word *dögg* (attested 3x in nom. sg. in the novel).

The word *mær* 'virgin, maiden'[19] shows the following singular declension in *Gerpla*: nom. *mær*, acc./dat. *mey*, gen. *meyar*. Neither nom. sg. *meyja* (analogical) nor dat. sg. *meyju* (regular) are attested. The earliest example of dat. sg. *mey* is in an anonymous *lausavísa* quoted in the *Third Grammatical Treatise* (from ca. 1250). Several other *jō*-stems are attested in *Gerpla*: *dys* 'cairn, heap of stones/earth' (352), *egg* 'cutting edge' (51 *passim*), *ey* 'island' (237 *passim*), *fit* 'fin' (382), *fles* 'plain' (98, 149), *hel* 'hell' (265 *passim*), *hreðjar* 'testicles' (*hreðjamikli* 59), *klyf* 'pack/trunk on a pack-horse' (14 *passim*), *minjar* 'memorials' (312), *nyt* 'profit, produce, use' (264). The word *ey* has -Ø in dat. sg. (237), whereas if it had been regular, it would have featured -*u* just like *mær*. Dat. sg. *ey* is very common in Old Icelandic (*ONP* s.v. *¹ey*). The regular dat. sg. ending -*u* is attested in *Gerpla* only in the following words: *egg* (*eggju* 51, 122) and *hel* (*helju* 151, 193). Both words are attested with either ending in 14th-century Icelandic (*ONP* s.v. *¹egg* and *hel*).

The sole example of nom. sg. of *ijō*-stems, apart from personal names (e.g. *Þórelfur*), in *Gerpla* is the word *ylgur* 'she-wolf' (225), which is a declensional relic. Modern Icelandic has innovated in that the nom. sg. ending of these stems is -*i* by analogy with other feminine nominal paradigms (see in detail Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir 1997 and Solveig María

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[18] On the history of the *ō*-stem dat. sg. ending -*u* and its origin see the most recent proposals of Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir (2007) and Myrvoll (2015).

[19] This word originally pertained to *ijō*-stems but it was already inflected as a *jō*-stem in Old Icelandic. The same is valid for the word *þír*. Cf. the nom. sg. ending -*r* (*sic!* by analogy with *i*-stems, e.g. *brúðr*, Got. *bruþs*) and the Gothic cognates *mawi* 'maiden' and *þiwi* 'female servant'.

Sigurbjörnsdóttir 2020). This analogical change can be traced back to the 16th century.

2.2.1.3 *a*-/*ō*-stem adjectives and related subgroups

The declension of *a*-/*ō*-stem adjectives has not undergone major changes from Old to Modern Icelandic, although a number of changes have occurred in some groups of adjectives pertaining to this declension. *a*-/*ō*-stem adjectives which end in a long root vowel were declined in (Classical) Old Icelandic such that if the case ending started with *a* or *u*, this vowel was contracted. In older times, however, as evidenced in Eddic poetry, non-contracted forms were common (cf. Noreen 1970: § 130). In *Gerpla*, these adjectives show a mixture of contracted and non-contracted forms, which, incidentally, surfaced again in Icelandic starting from the 15th century (cf. *ONP* u. *blár* og ³*fár*): *blá* (dat. sg. n. 395, 422), *blám* (dat. sg. m. 225, 274) 'blue', *fám* 'few' (dat. pl. 185 *passim*) beside *bláan* (87), *bláum* (dat. pl.100), *fáar* (nom. pl. f. 24, 435), *fáa* (acc. pl. m. 290). The adjective *nöktur* 'naked' (OIcel. *nøktr*) is fairly well attested in *Gerpla*, where it displays the Old Icelandic declension. The current form *nakinn* first appears in the 15th century (*ONP* s.v. *nakinn*). Its creation may be traced back to changes in the declension of the past participle of *ja*-verbs (see Jón Hilmar Jónsson 1979: 114–116).

In the declension of adjectives suffixed with -*ag*- or -*ig*-/-*ug*-, the suffixal vowel was syncopated whenever the ending started with a vowel (e.g. *heilagr*, *heilags* : *helgan*, *helgum* etc.). If the adjectival root ended with an unvoiced consonant, the suffixal consonant underwent devoicing upon syncope of the vowel (e.g. *máttkir*). The Old Icelandic declension of this group of adjectives is in general maintained in *Gerpla*, especially in regard to the adj. *heilagur* 'holy' (*heilags* 292, *helga* 305 etc.). Exceptions to this generalization are found in the declension of the adj. *máttugur* 'powerful': *máttkir* (96), *ómáttugir* (49). Non-syncopated forms are attested from the 13th century (cf. *ONP* s.v. *máttugr*).

The declension of *wa*-/*wō*-stem adjectives is mixed in *Gerpla*. Adjectives belonging to this subgroup were declined in Old Icelandic in such a way that thematic *v* surfaced whenever an ending started with *a* or *i*. In *Gerpla* both variants are attested: e.g. *hávan* (289) and *háan* (481) 'high'. Variants without *v* first appeared historically (14th/15th c.) in those adjectives whose root ends in a consonant (e.g. *døkkr* 'dark', Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 34–35). They were retained somewhat longer in adjectives whose root ended in a vowel.

In the declension of *ja-/jō*-stem adjectives, thematic *j* surfaced whenever a case ending started with *a* or *u*. This declension coalesced into the more common *a-/ō*-stem declension in the 14th century or even earlier (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 35). According to Björn K. Þórólfsson (*ibid.*), only the adjectives *nýr* 'new' and *miður* 'middle' preserve this declension in Modern Icelandic. However, to these *hlýr* 'warm, mild' and other adjectives like those ending in *-ær* should be added. The adj. *hlýr* is only attested in poetry in Old Icelandic (10th/11th c.). In *Gerpla* it is found once, *hlýjan* (432). A mixture of forms is displayed in *Gerpla*, where, in addition to *nýr* and *miður*, forms such as *ríkja* (369) and *ríka* (214 *passim*) 'rich' are attested. Other adjectives belonging to this subgroup are inflected according to *a-/ō*-stem declension: *deigum* 'damp, wet, soft' (143, 144), *eygar* 'having eyes' (354), *fátækan* 'poor' (465), *klámfenga* 'obscene' (274), *fræga* 'famous'(259), *hægum* 'easy, convenient, gentle' (254), *víga* 'in fighting state, serviceable'(34).

2.2.1.4   *i*-stems

The declension of *i*-stems has undergone few changes from Old to Modern Icelandic. There are, however, some which are worth addressing.

The dat. sg. ending of masculine *i*-stems was originally -Ø. From about 1300, one sees forms with the ending *-i* in these stems (cf. *ONP* s.v. *gestr* og *¹staðr*). Forms with and without a dative ending, i.e. with -Ø, are found in *Gerpla*, but never for exactly the same word. Examples: *al* 'awl' (443), *gesti* 'guest' (126 *passim*), *hag* 'living condition' (84, 376), *hval* 'whale' (368), *líkam* 'body' (430), *stað* 'place, position' (26), *svani* 'swan' (476). Some masculine *i*-stems could be inflected in the plural as *a*-stems in Old Icelandic (e.g. *gramr* 'war hero', *guð* 'god', *hvalr* 'whale', *lýðr* 'people, population'); the oldest attestation of *i*-stems inflected as *a*-stems in the plural is from 1250 (cf. *ONP* s.v. *hvalr*). In *Gerpla* the acc. pl. forms *hvali* (105) and *hvala* (345) are found.

Some originally *ō*-stems (e.g. *jǫrð* 'earth, ground, soil', *rǫdd* 'voice', *þjóð* 'people, nation') were already inflected as *i*-stems in the oldest Icelandic sources. These forms are, as might be expected, mirrored in the language of the novel.

Starting from the 13th century feminine *i*-stems, which would otherwise have -Ø, could adopt the dat. sg. ending *-u*, e.g. *hurð* 'door' (cf. *ONP* s.v.). The language of *Gerpla* does not display any examples of this, nor are homophonous acc. sg. forms represented.

In the singular declension of nouns suffixed with *-un- ~ -an-* in Old Icelandic the non-umlauted variant of the suffix appeared in the geni-

tive, whereas the umlauted variant was employed in the other cases.[20] Modern Icelandic has generalized the umlauted variant in the singular. In *Gerpla* both gen. sg. *-anar* and *-unar* are attested: *huggunar* 'comfort, solace, consolation' (91), *skemtunar* (347), *skemtanar* (58) 'fun, enjoyment, amusement'. Moreover, the non-umlauted variant of the suffix also appears in other cases in the singular: e.g. *skemtan* (dat., 68), *skipan* 'order, arrangement, disposition' (acc., 220), *ætlan* 'thought, design, plan' (dat., 156). This state of things is well represented in 14th-century Icelandic (cf. *ONP* s.v. *huggun*).

2.2.1.5   *u*-stems
The declension of *u*-stems in *Gerpla* is in accordance with the witness borne by 14th-century Icelandic.

In the acc. pl., only regular forms appear: e.g. *fjörðu* 'fjord' (*Vestfjörðu* 9 *passim*), *skjöldu* 'shield' (163 *passim*), *sonu* 'son' (61 *passim*). Forms with acc. pl. *-i* (+ umlaut), which have come about by analogy with masculine *i*-stems,[21] are not attested. The acc. pl. form *syni* is first attested in Icelandic about 1300 (*ONP* s.v. *sonr*), whereas comparable forms appear later in the declension of *fjǫrðr* and *skjǫldr*. At any rate, the regular acc. pl. ending *-u* is retained in most *u*-stems beyond 1500 (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 22).

Some other *u*-stems such as *friðr* 'peace', *litr* 'color', and *réttr* 'right' underwent influence from *i*-stems early on, leading to the adoption of -Ø instead of *-i* in the dat. sg. (cf. *ONP* s.v. *friðr*, *¹litr*). In *Gerpla*, only regular forms are attested: *friði* (52 *passim*), *rétti* (208).

A number of *u*-stems, like e.g. *liðr* 'joint', could adopt the *a*-stem gen. sg. ending *-s* in Old Icelandic. These analogical forms are not present in *Gerpla*.

In Old Icelandic, in the declension of words suffixed with *-nuð-* ~ *-nað-*, the umlauted variant was used in nom. and acc. sg. and dat. pl., whereas the non-umlauted form was used in all other cases. In *Gerpla*, forms with analogical *-nað-* are more often employed: e.g. *búnaður* (395), *hagnað* (acc., 411), *trúnað* (acc., 336), thus better reflecting the actual distribution of the non-umlauted allomorph. The historically regular declension is, however, preserved to some extent in the word *fögnuður* 'jubilation, exultation, joy', which also shows analogical forms: nom.

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[20] On the history of this suffix in Icelandic, see Hugrún Ragnheiður Hólmgeirsdóttir (1995).
[21] Cf. nom. pl. *gestir* : acc. pl. *gesti* = nom. pl. *firðir, skildir, synir* etc. : *x* → acc. pl. *firði, skildi, syni* etc.

fögnuður (465)/*fagnaðar* (27), acc. not attested, dat. *fagnaði* (263)/*fögnuði* (193, 270), gen. *fagnaðar* (*gestafagnaðar* 74). The earliest example of *fagnaðr* instead of *fǫgnuðr* is from 1270 (*ONP* s.v. *fǫgnuðr*). There are no examples of dat. sg. *fǫgnuði* in the *ONP*.

2.2.1.6   *n*-stems and adjectival weak declension
The declension of *n*-stems is almost unchanged from Old to Modern Icelandic. It must be noted, however, that *jan*-stems, which ought not to show *j* before the nom. sg. ending -*i*, do so in *Gerpla*, e.g. *skipverji* 'crew member (on a boat)' (98). Such analogical forms are first attested in Icelandic ca. 1500 (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 24, cf. also below § 2.2.3.4 on the pronoun *hver*).

Feminine *n*-stems (*ōn*-, *jōn*- and *īn*-stems) are inflected in the same way in Old and Middle Icelandic. No *wōn*-stems (e.g. *vǫlva,* gen. sg. *vǫlu* 'seeress') appear in *Gerpla*.[22]

The adjectival weak declension in *Gerpla* accords with Old Icelandic, as the dat. pl. ending is -*um* (e.g. *í þrælum hinum húnvetskum* "in the slaves from Húnavatn" 145).

2.2.1.7   *r*-stems
In Old Icelandic the words *faðir* 'father' and *bróðir* 'brother' could appear in their regular dat. sg. forms *feðr* and *brǿðr*, respectively (cf. the datives Got. *broþr* and esp. OE *brēþer*). Similarly, the word *dóttir* 'daughter' could show the dat. sg. form *dǿtr* (cf. Got. *dauhtr*). This form disappeared early in Icelandic. In *Gerpla*, *r*-stems are inflected as in Modern Icelandic. Dative forms such as **feður (= OIcel. *feðr*) are not attested.

2.2.1.8   *nd*-stems
These stems are only masculine. Their inflection follows that of *an*-stems in the singular and that of consonantal stems in the plural. Here, the word *búandi*/*bóndi* 'farmer' is worth highlighting. From the beginning of the 14th century forms of this word are attested in which the *i*-umlaut is generalized throughout the plural: *búendum*/*bændum, búenda*/*bænda*.[23] The word *búandi* is only present in the nom. sg. and gen. sg. and pl. in *Gerpla*: *búandi, búanda* (471) and *búenda* (467). The word *bóndi* displays

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[22] On the prehistory of *vǫlva* see Schaffner (2004). On other *wōn*-stems in Icelandic and their history see Kjartan G. Ottósson (1983).
[23] *ONP* s.vv. *bóndi, búandi* and Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 31).

variants in dat. and gen. pl.: *bóndum* (98 *passim*)/*bændum* (74 *passim*), *bónda* (134 *passim*)/*bænda* (296 *passim*).[24]

2.2.1.9   Other consonantal stems

The following nouns are noteworthy: *nótt* 'night', *strönd* 'coast, shore', *sæ(i)ng* 'bed' and *hönd* 'hand'. The words *nótt*, *strönd* and *sæ(i)ng* could display the dat. sg. ending *-u* by analogy from *ō*-stems. Such forms date from at least the 14th century (*ONP* s.vv. *strǫnd, sæng, sæing*). Both forms with *-Ø* and *-u* are encountered in *Gerpla* for the words *nótt* (*nótt* 373, *nóttu* 382 *passim*) and *strönd* (*strönd* 172, 368, *ströndu* 398 *passim*), whereas *sæ(i)ng* only appears with *-u* (*sæíngu* 221).[25] From at least the 13th century (*ONP* s.v.), *strönd* could be inflected in the plural as an *i*-stem, thus nom./acc. *strandir*. In *Gerpla* the word is only inflected as a consonantal stem in the plural: *strendur* (196).

   The word *hönd* was originally an *u*-stem (cf. Got. *handus* 'hand'). Its declension in the standard modern language is still as it was in Old Icelandic. The dat. sg. *hönd* (instead of *hendi*) is first attested in the third quarter of the 14th century (*ONP* s.v. *hǫnd*). This by-form is not found in *Gerpla*.

2.2.1.10 Comparatives of adjectives and adverbs

Gerpla follows Old Icelandic with respect to comparative adjectives and adverbs. Some adjectives, such as *djúpr* 'deep', *dýrr* 'precious', *framr* 'forward, prominent', and *frægr* 'famous', could be compared by using either the suffixes *-ar-/-ast-* or *-r-/-st-* (+ *i*-umlaut). In *Gerpla*, these adjectives make use of either set of suffixes, i.e. *dýrri* (410), *frægri* (420), *frægra* (442), and, used adverbially, *djúpara* (325, 330).

   As regards declension, it is worth mentioning that the comparative grade is inflected in the masculine singular mostly as in Modern Icelandic, thus *-i* in all four cases, being the older declensional pattern, that of *an*-stems, only found in a handful of cases: *jafnan hærra hlut* (68), *í betra stað* (168), *að eg hafa eigi áður stakk meira né betra en þessi er* (199), *hinn fyrra dag* (348), *annan hærra* (427).

2.2.2   Numerals

In *Gerpla* the dative of *tveir* 'two' and *þrír* 'three' is always *tveim* and *þrem*, respectively, whereas in Old Icelandic the forms *tveimr* and *þremr*

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[24] Cf. the comment by Jón Helgason in *Table 1* on the inflection of this noun.
[25] This word also appears as ⟨sæng⟩ (283).

are also attested (i.e. *tveimur* and *þremur* today). The datival form *þremr* is a relic,[26] whereas *tveimr* resulted from analogy. Conversely, the form *þrem* was created by analogy with the form *tveim* (Katrín Axelsdóttir 2021).

The tens 30–90 appear in *Gerpla* in non-compounded form, which accords with Old Icelandic, i.e. by inflecting both the basic number and the word *tigur*.

In the inflection of ordinal numbers the only example of a decade, *sjötugasta* 'seventieth' (225),[27] follows Modern Icelandic, whereas in Old Icelandic these ordinals where inflected as present participles, i.e. *-tugundi* or *-tugandi*. The only example of *-tugasti* in the *ONP* (s.v. *fertugasti*) is preserved in a 16th-century mansucript and it is likely to be spurious.

2.2.3 Pronouns
2.2.3.1   Personal and possessive pronouns
The paradigm of personal and possessive pronouns used in *Gerpla* is in line with that of Old Icelandic. The tripartite system (singular, plural, and dual) is used. Plural and dual forms (1st *vér*, *við*; 2nd *þér*, *þið*) are never confused with each other, as they began to be starting from the 15th century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 41, for a detailed analysis of this phenomenon see Helgi Guðmundsson 1972). In a similar fashion, the respective possessives (1st *vor*, *okkar*; 2nd *yðvar*, *ykkar*) are also used and consistently inflected according to Old Icelandic usage. There are instances in *Gerpla* in which the 1st pl. is used as *pluralis auctoris* or *maiestatis*.[28] Both usages are known from Old Icelandic sources. According to Helgi Guðmundsson's (1972: 34) analysis, the system used in *Gerpla* is that of stage 2, i.e. each number is used in its primary role but the plural is also used as *pluralis auctoris* or *maiestatis*. This system is the oldest to have been used in Icelandic.

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[26] Cf. the ending *-umʀ* in the runic inscription from Stentoften from about the middle of the 7th century (Krause 1966: 209–214).
[27] But cf. also the ordinals used to number the chapters.
[28] Examples: *Höfu vér því í einn stað saman færðar frásagnir …* "[and] thus we have spent long hours compiling into one narrative their achievements …" (*pluralis auctoris* 7), *Heyrt höfu vér getið Þorgeirs Hávarssonar …* "We have heard tell of the warrior Þorgeir Hávarsson …" (*pluralis maiestatis* 405).

2.2.3.2   The demonstrative pronouns *sjá*/*þessi*

In *Gerpla* older forms of the demonstrative pronoun 'this' appear beside the new ones:[29] i.e. *sjá* : *þessi* (nom. sg. m. 166 and 13 *passim*, resp.), *þenna* : *þennan* (acc. sg. m. 14 *passim* and 58, resp.), *þeima* : *þessum* (dat. sg. m. 195 *passim* and 12 *passim*, resp.), *þvísa* : *þessu* (dat. sg. n. 271 *passim* and 23 *passim*, resp.). The dat. sg. f. *þessi* is not attested in *Gerpla*, whereas it had already appeared in 13th-century Icelandic (*ONP* s.v. *¹sjá*). The nom. sg. m./f. *þessi* is attested from the 13th century. The older form *sjá* is only used once anaphorically in *Gerpla* (*… hrísburðarmaður heldur áfram gaungu sinni … Eigi er sjá maður meðalfóli …* "… the man bearing the brushwood continued on his way … that man is more than a middling fool …" 166). The change *þenna* → *þennan* started in the middle of the 13th century, although the new form did not spread to any significant extent before about 1500 (Katrín Axelsdóttir 2014: 195–198). The forms *þessi* and *þennan* reached full circulation in the 16th century. The forms *þeima*, *þessu* and *þvísa* are all attested very early in Icelandic (Katrín Axelsdóttir 2014: 181).

2.2.3.3   The definite article

In Old Icelandic the definite article was *inn*. The demonstrative pronoun *hinn*, however, could be used as an article from at least ca. 1250. In *Gerpla*, *hinn* is used both as a pronoun (177 *passim*) and as the definite article (58 *passim*). In addition to this, the article *inn* occurs twice in gen. sg. m. in the novel (35, 369).

2.2.3.4   The interrogative pronoun *hver*

The interrogative pronoun *hver* 'who, which, what' shows a mixed inflection in *Gerpla*, in which both the older form *hverir* (102 *passim*) and the later analogical form *hverjir* (135 *passim*) are used.

2.2.3.5   Indefinite pronouns

The pronoun *einhver* 'somebody, someone, some' had forms in Old Icelandic where the first part of the compound was inflected together with the second part, i.e. *einumhverjum* and *einshvers*. The fact that both parts must originally have been inflected is also seen in the modern language where *einhver* in nom./acc. sg. n. is *eitthvað*/*eitthvert* and not **einhvað*/*einhvert*, although these latter analogical forms are often heard in every-

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[29] On the history of this demonstrative pronoun see Katrín Axelsdóttir (2014: 165–239).

day speech beside being found in written texts since at least the second half of the 19th century (cf. Katrín Axelsdóttir 2014: 265–268). In *Gerpla*, the form *einumhverjum* occurs once (304). In all other instances of dat. sg. m. the form used is *einhverjum* (83 *passim*).

The pronoun *enginn* 'no one, nobody, nothing' shows several inflectional variants in *Gerpla*. In nom. sg. m./f. and nom./acc. pl. n. the form *engi* (*eingi* 25 *passim*) prevails. The forms *enginn* (*einginn* nom. sg. m. 63 *passim*) and *engin* (*eingin* nom./acc. pl. n. 272) are employed a few times. Umlauted forms are also used (e.g. *aungva*, *aungvan*, *aungvir* 249, 283 *passim*). These forms have been used from ancient times.

The pronoun *nokkur* 'someone, anyone, something, anything, some, any' is attested in *Gerpla* only with *o* in the first syllable (7, 281 *passim*), whereas in Old Icelandic there also appear forms with *e* or *ö* (< ø, ǫ), i.e. *nekkverr*, *nøkkurr*, *nǫkkverr* etc. (cf. *ONP* s.v. *nøkkurr, nakkurr, nekkverr* …). The inflection of this pronoun in *Gerpla* is somewhat modern, as non-contracted forms such as *nokkuru(m)* do not appear. This contraction likely took place in the latter part of the 14th century. Contracted forms were common by the 15th century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 49).

Of the indefinite pronouns *hvor tveggja* and *hvortveggi* 'both', only the latter is used in *Gerpla*, judging from the form *hvorirtveggju* (142). In the declension of this compound pronoun both parts are inflected: the former part like the indefinite pronoun *hvor* and the latter part like the *ja-/jō*-stem adjective *nýr* in the weak declension. Other forms of this pronoun occurring in the novel, *hvorttveggja* (15 *passim*) and *hvorstveggja* (392) could also follow the inflection of *hvor tveggja*, in which only the former part was inflected. This remains the most widely used form of this pronoun today. In contrast, *hvortveggi* prevailed in Old Icelandic until 1500 (Katrín Axelsdóttir 2014: 303–393, esp. p. 337).

2.2.4 Verbs

For the most part, verbal conjugation in *Gerpla* is in accordance with Old Icelandic. There are, however, exceptions. Notably, variants of 3rd sg. present indicative of *þykja*: *þykir* (11 *passim*) and *þyki* (31 *passim*) 'to be thought to be, seem to be, to be esteemed, valued' are used in *Gerpla*.[30] Both variants are attested in the oldest sources. The *r*-less variant

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[30] Early in Old Icelandic this verb appears either with double or single *k*. The form *þykkja* seems, however, to have prevailed before the 15th century (Haraldur Bernharðsson 2004: 129). Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 63) notes that the form *þykja* is used in *Möðruvallabók* (AM 132 fol., from ca. 1350) almost exclusively. Haraldur Bernharðsson (*ibid.*) believes that the witness borne by north Icelandic manuscripts supports the hypothesis

originates from the assimilation of the *r* (← 2nd sg.)[31] to the following personal pronoun, e.g. *mér* or *þér*, a process similar to that sporadically undergone by the 1st pl. -*m* (cf. above § 2.1.7).

In the conjugation of the preterite indicative the 1st sg. ending of weak verbs -*a* prevails, although the analogical ending -*i* (← 3rd sg.) occurs once: *þjónaði* 'to serve' (458). This ending first appeared ca. 1300 and became more widespread during the 15th century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 61).

The 2nd sg. ending of strong verbs is always -*st* in *Gerpla*. Older forms with -*t*, i.e. in those verbs whose stem did not end in *s* or *t*, are not attested.[32] The ending -*st* was generalized in the 16th century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 111).

In *Gerpla*, there is a mixture of old and new endings in the subjunctive. The more recent ones are seen in manuscripts from the 14th century onward. Examples: *eg skylda* 'shall' (28 *passim*) and *eg megi* 'may' (45 *passim*), *vér dræpim* (149, 243) and *vér dræpum* (154) 'to kill', *við farim* (122) and *við förum* (96) 'to go, travel'. The 1st sg. ending -*i* arose by analogy with the 3rd sg., whereas the plural endings -*um*, -*uð*, -*u* were taken from the preterite indicative.

In *Gerpla*, the present participle shows the old declension, where uninflected forms did not appear. These are, however, already attested in 14th-century Icelandic (cf. Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 36). With regard to the declension of the past participle, it is important to note that *ja*-verbs such as *berja* 'to beat', *hefja* 'to heave, lift, raise', *rekja* 'to spread out, unfold, trace', *semja* 'to compose, arrange, settle, restore', *skilja* 'to divide, understand, discern', *telja* 'to tell, say, count, claim', *temja* 'to tame, break', *vefja* 'to wrap, fold, entangle', and *uppvekja* 'to awake', follow the old declensional pattern (e.g. *barður* nom. sg. m. 39 *passim*, *rakið* nom. sg. f. 292). The mixed declension in the past participle of *ja*-verbs was, however, common by the 14th century (Jón Hilmar Jónsson 1979: 74).

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that the form *þykja* is north Icelandic in origin. At any rate, the form *þykja* in *Gerpla* is to be regarded as belonging to Modern, rather than Old, Icelandic.

[31] Cf. the 3rd sg. ending in two runic inscriptions from the same area (Blekinge, south Sweden) and period (second half of the 7th c.): ʙᴀriutiþ (Stentoften, ca. 650, Krause 1966: 209–214) og ʙᴀrutʀ (Björketorp, ca. 675, Krause 1966: 214–218). On the history of these two endings see Jörundur Hilmarsson (1980). On the preservation of the original *þ*-ending in the 3rd sg. pres. ind. (Noreen's theory) see Kjartan Ottósson (1981) and also Haraldur Bernharðsson (2004: 131–132).

[32] The 2nd sg. pret. ind. ending of strong verbs -*t* may still be seen today in the conjugation of preterite-present verbs, e.g. *þú annt*, *kannt*, *þarft* etc. (but not in *muna* 'to remember', now *þú manst* instead of older *þú mant*).

In the conjugation of the middle, the ending of the 1st sg. is *-umst* (e.g. *beiðumst* 129). The older endings *-umk* or *-umsk* are never used in the novel. The ending *-umst* is attested from the latter part of the 13th century (Kjartan G. Ottósson 1992: 152–154). Modern Icelandic, on the other hand, has the ending *-st* (cf., e.g., *klæðist*).

2.2.4.1   1st cl. st. v.
1st-class strong verbs *hníga* 'to bow down, sink, fall gently' and *stíga* 'to step (upwards)' only display in *Gerpla* the forms *hné* (165) and *sté* (21 *passim*) in the preterite singular instead of *hneig* and *steig*. Other verbs which had comparable variant forms in Old Icelandic (e.g. *míga* 'to micturate' and *síga* 'to sink down, slide slowly') are not found in the novel.

The verb *ríta/rita* 'to inscribe, write' is inflected as a strong verb only in the preterite indicative. On the other hand, both strong and weak participial forms, the latter only in the neuter, are used in *Gerpla*: *ritinn* (60) and *ritað* (263 *passim*). Both weak and strong forms are already found in the oldest sources (Tarsi 2019: 51–52). In the novel, both strong and weak forms of the verb *rísta/rista* 'to inscribe' are also attested. The strong forms only occur in connection with the carving of runes (168, 306), whereas *rista* occurs once in connection with the cutting of turf (75). Weak forms of this verb are likely to be post-medieval.[33]

The verb *líða* 'to go, pass, move' shows variants in the preterite singular of the indicative: *leið* (81 *passim*) beside *líddi* (344, 425). Both forms are attested in 13th-century sources (*ONP* s.v. *³líða*).

2.2.4.2   2nd cl. st. v.
Among the 2nd class of strong verbs, the following verbs and verb groups are noteworthy: *kjósa* 'to choose'; *fljúga* 'to fly', *ljúga* 'to lie', *smjúga* 'to slip', *sjúga* 'to suck'; *lúka* 'to close, finish, end' and *súga* (=*sjúga*).

The verb *kjósa* is conjugated in *Gerpla* both strong and weak: *kaus* (92, 162), *kjöri* (282) and *kjöru* (223). The weak forms are modeled on the past participle *kjörinn* and are likely to have arisen towards the end of the 13th or early in the 14th century (Hreinn Benediktsson 2002b: 413–448, esp. p. 424).

The verbs *fljúga, ljúga, smjúga,* and *sjúga* displayed in Old Icelandic variants in the preterite indicative: the phonetically regular *fló, ló, smó,* and *só* and the analogical *flaug, laug, smaug,* and *saug*. These latter forms

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[33] The examples in the *ONP* are, though few, all found in paper manuscripts.

are attested at least since the 13th century (*ONP* s.v. *fljúga*). In *Gerpla* only the phonetically regular forms *fló* (77 *passim*) and *ló* (104) are used.[34]

In the late Middle Ages (starting from about the 15th c.) the verbs *lúka* and *súga*, an older variant of *sjúga*, acquired an analogical *j* in the present stem, thus becoming *ljúka* and *sjúga* (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 57, 113). *Gerpla* is inconsistent here in its adherence to Old Icelandic, since it features both the verb *lúka* (54 *passim*) and *sjúga* (21).

2.2.4.3   3rd cl. st. v.

Among 3rd class strong verbs, *bjarga* 'to save', *blanda* 'to blend', and *hjálpa* 'to help' need to be addressed first, since they later became 2nd class weak verbs. Weak forms of *blanda* and *hjálpa* date from the 13th century (*ONP* u. ³*blanda* og ²*hjalpa*) at latest, whereas the weak preterite of the verb *bjarga* does not appear in written sources until the 15th century (*ONP* u. ²*bjarga*). The verb *bjarga* is always conjugated strongly in *Gerpla* (e.g. *barg* 169). The verb *blanda* is generally conjugated strongly (e.g. *blett* 40), although a weak form occurs once (*blandaði* 314–315). The verb *hjálpa* does not occur at all.

Another noteworthy verb of this group is *syngva/syngja* 'to sing', which is attested in *Gerpla* in both variants: *sýngva* (60 *passim*), *sýngja* (62 *passim*). The form *syngva* is original (cf. Got. *siggwan* 'id.'), whereas *v*-less forms, which arose by analogy with weak verbs such as *þröngva/þröngja* 'to narrow, close, tight', are known from at least the 13th century (Jón Axel Harðarson 2017: 228). These forms came to supplant the earlier ones.

Finally, the verb *tyggva/tyggja* 'to chew' is conjugated strongly in *Gerpla*, where it is attested twice in the 3rd sg. pret. ind. (*tögg* 87 and 89, cf. Mod.Icel. *tugði*).

2.2.4.4   4th cl. st. v.

Two verbs of the 4th class of strong verbs are important to note: *fela* 'to hide, conceal, entrust' and *koma* 'to come'. In *Gerpla*, the verb *fela* displays the older form of the past participle, i.e. *fólginn* (with lengthening of the vowel before *l*+C, see above § 2.1.5). This verb originally belonged to the 3rd class (cf. Got. *filhan* 'to hide, conceal', *affalht* 'you hid'). Weak

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[34] It should be noted that the form *fló* of *flýja* is not found in *Gerpla*. This form is chiefly attested in poetry (see in detail Jón Axel Harðarson 2001: 22–23).

forms of this verb are post-medieval (on analogical changes in the history of *fela* see Guðrún Þórhallsdóttir 2012).[35]

Through regular phonological evolution, the verb *koma* should have developed a long root vowel in the preterite indicative plural, i.e. *kómum*, *kómuð*, *kómu*. In *Gerpla*, only 3rd pl. *kómu* is attested (see above § 2.1.8), *kom-* in other cases. Thus, the language of the novel demonstrates a somewhat inconsistent mixture of Old and Modern Icelandic forms.

2.2.4.5   5th cl. st. v.
Among 5th-class strong verbs *sjá* 'to see' and *vera* 'to be' are worthy of consideration.

The verb *sjá* displays in *Gerpla* the form *sénn* in the past participle and never the late-attested form *séður*.[36]

In the conjugation of the verb *vera* the 1st sg. of the present indicative in *Gerpla* is *em*. The current form *er* (← 3rd sg.) first appeared in the first part of the 14th century (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 58). In *Gerpla* no forms such as *est* (2nd sg. pres. ind.),[37] *es* (3rd sg. pres. ind.), or *vas* (1st and 3rd sg. pret. ind.) appear. These forms disappeared from Icelandic in the first part of the 13th century (cf. *ONP* s.v. ²*vera*). In the plural of the preterite indicative, only the forms *vórum* and *vóru* are used (on which see above § 2.1.8) in the novel.

2.2.4.6   6th cl. st. v.
Two verbs of this class are interesting: *vaxa* 'to grow' and *þvo* 'to wash'.

In *Gerpla*, the verb *vaxa* manifests regular *v*-less forms in the preterite, as the second and third principal parts start with a round back vowel. In addition, the older preterital form *óxu* (instead of younger *uxu*) is used (27). Analogical forms such as *vóx* are found in 14th-century manuscripts (*ONP* s.v. *vaxa*).

The verb *þvo* shows strong conjugation in the preterite: *þær þógu* (111) instead of later *þvoðu*.[38]

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[35] In the *ONP* (s.v. ²*fela*) one example of weak conjugation for this verb is found, i.e. *faldist*. This form is preserved in a paper manuscript (JS 28 fol.) dating from 1660. See also Jón Hilmar Jónsson (1979: 109–111).

[36] The *ONP* (s.v. ²*sjá*) lists only one instance of weak conjugation of the past participle of this verb: *siedur*. The example is from AM 285 4to, a paper manuscript from the second half of the 17th century. Cf. also Jón Hilmar Jónsson (1979: 118–120).

[37] On this form see Crawford (2012: 13–17) and also Stiles (2021: 260).

[38] Examples of weak conjugation for this verb are found from the 16th century (*ONP* s.v. ²*þvá*), See also Bandle (1956: 406).

2.2.4.7   7th cl. st. v.

The following verbs and verb groups of the 7th class merit attention: *blóta* 'to worship, sacrifice', *falla* 'to fall', and *fá* 'to receive'; *höggva* 'to strike, smite, behead, hew or cut off'; *gnúa* 'to rub', *gróa* 'to grow, be healed (of wounds)', *róa* 'to row', and *snúa* 'to turn'; and *ráða(st)* 'to advise, counsel'.

The verb *blóta* shifted to the 2nd class of weak verbs, whereas it was originally a strong reduplicative verb (*blóta – blét – blétum – blótinn*). Both paradigms are attested in Old Icelandic (*ONP* s.v. *¹blóta* and *²blóta*). There is just one occurrence of this verb in *Gerpla*, i.e. the weak form *blótar* (293).

In Old Icelandic, the verbs *falla* and *fá* had a short root vowel *e* in the preterite, which became *é* by analogy with other preterital forms such as *hét* (from *heita* 'to be named'), *gékk* (from *ganga* 'to go, walk'), *grét* (from *gráta* 'to cry') etc. Without exception, the preterital forms of these two verbs display *é* in *Gerpla* (see above § 2.1.4).

The verb *höggva* shows *v* in the past participle in *Gerpla* (e.g. *höggvinn* 322). Forms without *v* date from at least the latter half of the 14th century (*ONP* s.v. *hǫggva*).

In the preterite of verbs such as *gnúa*, *gróa*, *róa*, and *snúa* the root vowel was *e* in the singular and *ø* (> *ö*, *u*-umlaut of *e*) in the plural. The mixture of *e* and *ø* is already found in the oldest sources (*ONP* s.v. *snúa*). The language of *Gerpla* reflects this mixture: *sneri* (70 *passim*), *snöri* (110 *passim*), *snöru* (376), *gnerust* (86).

The verb *ráða(st)* originally belonged to the 7th class. Weak forms of this verb are attested from the 14th century (*ONP* s.v. *ráða*).[39] This verb appears in both strong and weak conjugation in *Gerpla*: *réð* (98 *passim*), *réði* (207 *passim*).

2.2.4.8   1st cl. wk v.

Among 1st-class weak verbs worth highlighting are those which have by-forms with *v* or *j* in the infinitive and the verbs *embætta* 'to attend, wait upon', *flýja* 'to flee', and *gera/gjöra* 'to do, make'. Weak verbs with -*v*-/-*j*- infinitval by-forms (e.g. *byggva/byggja* 'to settle, inhabit, build', *þröngva/þröngja* 'to narrow, close, tight') are represented in *Gerpla* by the verbs *byggva* (271, 312) and *byggja* (42 *passim*), *þreingjast* (439), and *þraungva* (106 *passim*). Similar by-forms are also found in strong verbs such as *syngva/syngja* 'to sing' (cf. above § 2.2.4.3).

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[39]   Björn K. Þórólfsson (1925: 115) thought that the weak forms were not older than the 17th century.

The verb *embætta* originally belonged to the 1st class of weak verbs (cf. Got. *andbahtjan* 'to serve, minister, perform, administer'). Starting from the 16th century, this verb shifted to the 2nd class of weak verbs (Bandle 1956: 416). The verb only occurs once in *Gerpla*, where it is inflected as a 2nd-class weak verb: *embættuðu* (366).

The verb *flýja*, together with other verbs ending in *-ýja* in the infinitive, is peculiar among 1st-class weak verbs in that it forms the preterite in different ways (Jón Axel Harðarson 2001: 13). The preterite originally had *ý* as the root vowel. Forms with *ú* are common in the 14th century (*ONP* s.v. *flýja*). In *Gerpla* only the old inflection is attested: *flýði* (296, 469), *flýðu* (288, 403).

In Old Icelandic, the verb *gera* had the stem variants *ger(v)-* and *gør(v)-* (cf. in detail Jón Axel Harðarson 2017: 3). *Gerpla* displays e.g. the following variants: *gera* (80 *passim*), *gerir* (145 *passim*), *göra* (1st sg. pret. sbj. 78), *görvir* (83 *passim*) etc. In addition, the form *gerður* (490), which is attested in Icelandic from the early 14th century (*ONP* s.v. *¹gera*), is found in the novel. This form, however, was not common in Icelandic before the latter half of the 15th century but became more common in the 16th (Björn K. Þórólfsson 1925: 118).

2.2.4.9   2nd cl. wk v.

Two verbs of this class are noteworthy: *glóa* 'to glow' and *flóa* 'to boil, flood', for in Old Icelandic they could be inflected according to the 2nd or the 3rd class of weak verbs; *glóa* both in present and preterite, *flóa* only in the preterite. *Gerpla* attests to the following state of affairs: *glóa* follows the 2nd cl. wk in the present indicative (*glóar* 80), whereas in the preterite, it inflects according to the 3rd cl. wk (*glóðu* 79). The verb *flóa*, which only occurs in the 3rd sg. present indicative, shows the variants *flóar* (95) and *flóir* (329). This last-mentioned variant is not attested in Icelandic before the 16th century (Bandle 1956: 419).

2.2.4.10 3rd cl. wk v.

Among the verbs belonging to this class, the verb *hafa* 'to have' deserves special mention, for it shows variants in the conjugation of the singular in the present indicative in Old Icelandic: *hef(i)*, *hef(i)r* (*ONP* s.v. *hafa*). In *Gerpla*, the variant *hefi* only occurs once (459); in all other cases the forms *hef*, *hefur* are used.

2.2.4.11 Preterite-present verbs

Preterite-present verbs are conjugated in *Gerpla* as they were in Old Icelandic, in which the 3rd pl. ending in the present indicative is *-u* and not *-a* as in Modern Icelandic (e.g. *eigu* 'they own, possess' 75 *passim*, *þurfu* 'they need, require, have to' 228 *passim*). The ending *-a*, which is analogical to the common inflection of the present indicative, is already attested in the conjugation of preterite-presents in the 13th century (*ONP* s.v *eiga*).

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All in all, the morphology of the language of *Gerpla* is quite consistent with that of 14th-century Icelandic. There are, however, two main exceptions to this generalization. On the one hand *Gerpla* employs far more regular inflectional patterns than 14th-century Icelandic, in that a number of variants and analogical forms are not attested in the novel. On the other hand, *Gerpla* also displays forms which are not attested in 14th-century Icelandic. In addition it should be noted that the use of the preterite indicative form *kómu* beside *komum* and *komuð* and the employment of the forms *hné* and *sté* instead of *hneig* and *steig* arise from the deliberate archaizing style of the novel.

2.3 Syntax

The syntax of *Gerpla* displays a number of Old Icelandic features,[40] on several of which the following survey focuses. These may be grouped as follows: 1) subject/verb order; 2) subordinate clauses; 3) verbs with auxiliaries; 4) the indefinite article; and 5) prepositions.

Item (1) comprises the SV-order in the use of imperative, e.g. *þú seg* 'say!' (113). This word order, which in Old Icelandic appears mainly after the conjunction *en*, is not possible in Modern Icelandic.

In regard to subordinate clauses (item (2)), it should first be mentioned that in Old Icelandic, the indicative could be used in subordinate clauses governed by verbs such as *segja* 'to say' or *spyrja* 'to ask' in the main clause, whereas in Modern Icelandic the subjunctive is usually used in those cases. *Gerpla* features examples of the old usage, e.g. *Húskarl geingur inn og segir að úti stendur ókunnur maður* "the servant goes in and reports that a stranger is at the door" (49).

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[40] In choosing the features analyzed here I relied upon the diachronic survey by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson in Höskuldur Þráinsson (2005: 601–615).

Interrogative clauses in *Gerpla* show a number of archaic features, among which the interrogative pronouns *hvað* 'what' and *hvort* 'which (of two)' and the connectives *er*, *að*, and *eð* merit special attention. Instead of the pronoun *hvaða*, which is attested from the 16th century,[41] Old Icelandic made use of *hvað* + dative or genitive. In *Gerpla*, where *hvaða* 'what, which' is not found, both combinations are attested, e.g. *hvað manni* "what sort of man" (405), *hvað vopna* "what weapons" (179 *passim*).

In Old Icelandic, the interrogative pronoun *hvort* was used in yes/no questions, and this usage is mirrored in *Gerpla*, e.g. *hvort antu mér á þeim degi, Þormóður?* "on that day, will you love me, Þormóður?" (93).

The connectives *er* and *að*, and also *eð*, could follow an interrogative pronoun in Old Icelandic. In *Gerpla* the connectives *er* and *að* are sometimes placed after interrogative pronouns, e.g. *hvort er hann vildi leingur eða skemur* "for as long or short a time as he wished" (103), *hvort að kona sú … hefur hunángsblett* "whether the woman … has a strawberry mark" (353).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Old Icelandic featured a number of causal conjunctions no longer in use in normal speech. In harmony with Old Icelandic, *Gerpla* uses the following: *með/fyrir því að* "for, because of, given that" (37 *passim*/28 *passim*) and *alls* "as, while, since" (450).[42] E.g. *Kolbakur … snýr við að lokum með því að eigi var reitt þar sem graðhesturinn setti í fjallið* "Kolbakur … before turning back – the path the young stallion had taken being impossible for a rider" (37), *Og als Íngigerður frændkona mín synjaði þér ráðahags …* "Since my kinswoman Ingegerd refused to marry you …" (450).

In item (3), the use of *hafa* 'to have' + past participle should be noted. In Old Icelandic it was customary for the past participle of transitive verbs governing the accusative and used in connection with the auxiliary *hafa* to agree with the direct object. However, Old Icelandic also featured the construction still used today, i.e. *hafa* + past participle acc. sg. n. (supine; for an overview Barnes 1969). In *Gerpla* the past participle agrees in most cases with the direct object, e.g. *þú hefur til mín orta drápu …* "you have made me a lay …" (106). A few examples exist in which the supine is used: *hann hefur gert alla menn sonu sína* "he has made all men his sons" (63).

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[41] The pronoun *hvaða* originated from the univerbation of the pronoun *hvað* and the connective *að* (*ÍOb* s.v. *hvaða*).

[42] Cf. also the famous words by the First Grammarian: *alls vér erum einnar tungu* "since we are of one tongue" (transl. Hreinn Benediktsson 1972).

The word *einn* 'one' (item (4)) was sometimes used as indefinite article in Old Icelandic. This use is attested in *Gerpla*: *mun og slíkt einsdæmi í veröldinni, að einn sveinstauli geri sér konu að orðfífli* "and it is unexampled in all the world for a little boy to make a woman his laughingstock" (23).

Regarding item (5), *Gerpla* uses the preposition *án* 'without' as it was used in Old Icelandic: with the accusative, the dative, or the genitive, whereas in Modern Icelandic only *án* + gen. is possible: e.g. + acc. *án guðlega læríng* 'without divine teachings' (219), + dat. *án farángri* 'with no belongings' (341), + gen. *án frægðar* 'with no renown' (402).

In addition to the syntactic features addressed above, it should be mentioned that in *Gerpla* the verb phrase can follow the OV order, instead of employing the more common VO order: *[eg] mynda þig aldrei lausan látið hafa* "I would never have allowed you to leave" (354) : Mod.Icel. *ég myndi aldrei hafa látið þig lausan*. Verbal particles often occur in *Gerpla* before non-finite verbal forms, e.g. *en hann vill ekki upp gefa son þeirra* "yet he will not give up their son" (398),[43] and adjectives can often occur after the noun they modify, e.g. *hann var atgervismaður mikill og hofmaður ágætur* "he was an accomplished, courtly man" (136).

Finally, it may be noted that verbal agreement with a conjoined abstract or uncountable subject can be of the "separative" kind (terminology of Jón G. Friðjónsson 1990–1991), i.e. with the verb in the 3rd sg. as in *En bæði var að vindur og vatnsniður bannaði manninum að nema mál ferðalángs* "The wind and the noise of the water, however, prevented the man from hearing the travelers' words" (166).

3 Lexicon

The lexicon of *Gerpla* has been investigated both in absolute and relative terms. In absolute terms *Gerpla* attests to a great degree of variation, as a number of lexical variants of the same word are used in it, e.g. *bjarg/berg* 'mountain', *erindi/örindi* 'errand, message, business, mission', *sær/sjár/ sjór* 'sea'. As a rule, Laxness appears to use as many lexical variants from Old Icelandic as possible. Latin is used sparingly, but not infrequently, e.g. personal names such as *Alflegus*, *Carolus*, *Christus*, *Odus*, common nouns (e.g. *archiepiscopus*, *caro*, *protomartyr*, *synodus*, *vernaculus*), and

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43 Cf. also Jón Helgason's comment to *upphéldu* in *Table 1*.

adjectives (e.g. *venerabilis*). Latin words are declined according to Latin, a feature often found in Icelandic medieval works. In some cases, *Gerpla* displays code-switching, i.e. when entire Latin sentences are uttered by characters, e.g. *o Roma nobilis orbis et domina albis et virginum liliis candida* (452–453) or *in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti* (235).

To compare the lexicon of *Gerpla* with the Old Icelandic lexicon, the novel was analyzed in two ways, first with reference to loanwords, and second with regard to the size of its lexicon compared with that of the sagas of Icelanders in general, and *Fóstbrœðra saga* in particular.

3.1 Loanwords

Excluding Latin words, some 150 loanwords are attested in *Gerpla*, some of which are not listed in the *ONP*: *akólúti* 'acolyte', *antípáfi* 'antipope', *arkímandríti* 'archimandrite', *basilíka* 'cathedral, basilica', *bogatír* 'bogatyr', *bojari* 'boyar', *franseis* 'French', *gíbellíni* 'Ghibelline', *gúelfi* 'Guelph', *kamera* 'Apostolic Camera', *Kólonna* 'Colonna', *kurél* 'hymn', *kúría* 'curia', *landskapur* 'landscape',[44] *lektúli* 'lectulus', *metrópolíti* 'metropolite', *Orsíni* 'Orsini', *súpplikátsía* 'supplication'. Among these loans, which are not attested in Old Icelandic, it is interesting to note that there is only one which is neither a technical word nor does it belong to any specialized lexicon, i.e. *landskapur*. Of the remaining words three deserve special mention: *basilíka*, *kamera*, and *súpplikátsía*, in that words related to these occur in the *ONP*: *basilískr* 'like in a basilica, which is typical of a basilica', *kameri* 'cell', and *súpplíkera* 'supplicate'. For *basilíka*, the existence of the adjective *basilískr* in Old Icelandic justifies the use of *basilíka* in the novel. *Kamera* is glossed with *fésjóðsherbergi* 'treasury', and in all probability comes from Late Latin *camera (denariorum)* 'treasury', whereas OIcel. *kameri* had a wider semantic scope and comes from MLG *kamer* 'room' (*ÍOb* s.v. *kamar*). No traces of *súpplikátsía* appear in Old Icelandic. The presence of the related word *súpplíkera*, a *hapax legomenon* from the 15th century in the *ONP*, does not indicate a high probability of *súpplikátsía* having existed in Old Icelandic, although it is still possible for this word to have been in use then. If the word was indeed used, it would have derived from Late Latin *supplicatio* 'plea, supplication'.

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[44] In an early typewritten version of chapter 1 (Lbs. 200 NF, case 207), Jón Helgason comments on the use of the word *landspláss* by Halldór Laxness and suggests substituting *landskapur* for it.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the stem *krank-* 'ill' is used, although rarely, in *Gerpla* (e.g. *kránkdæmi* 'sickness' 343).[45] This stem, which dates from no earlier than the 14th century, became increasingly common in Icelandic in the wake of the widespread use of the adjective *krankr* 'ill' (< MLG *krank* 'id.'). The distribution of the stem is the same as for the synonymic *sjúk-*. The use of *krank-* is clearly inconsistent with the author's stated objective, i.e. to avoid using words which could be proven to not have existed in the 11th century (cf. footnote 3 above).

3.2 The lexicon of *Gerpla* and that of the sagas of Icelanders, esp. *Fóstbræðra saga*

The lexicon of *Gerpla* comprises 8,202 Icelandic words, including anthroponyms, toponyms, and proper nouns (7,845 excluding these particular word categories). On the other hand, *Fóstbræðra saga* comprises only 1,942 words, according to the survey by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (cited in Örnólfur Thorsson 1994: 930). The overall lexical size of the sagas of Icelanders (omitting proper nouns) is 12,401 words (Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990: 54–61).

The type-token ratio for *Gerpla* is (8,202 ÷ 100,523) × 100 = 8.16% whereas for *Fóstbræðra saga* the ratio is (1,942 ÷ 29,124) × 100 = 6.67%. *Gerpla* has about three times more running words than *Fóstbræðra saga*. However, this ratio presents a somewhat distorted view of the actual situation, since in *Gerpla* most lexemes are used fewer than five times, and most often appear only once.[46]

In comparison to the lexicon of the sagas of Icelanders, the lexicon of *Gerpla* is very large, both in terms of lexemes and of running words. All together, the sagas of Icelanders contain 740,746 running words and 12,401 lexemes, whereas in *Gerpla* alone the running words total 100,523 and the lexemes 7,845. The longest saga of the Icelanders, *Njáls saga*, contains 98,938 running words but only 3,135 lexemes. This means that *Gerpla* is two and a half times lexically richer than *Njáls saga*, which is of comparable length. Finally, it should also be mentioned that a great many words found in *Gerpla* are not attested anywhere in Old Icelandic (source: ONP); they are often authorial creations (e.g. *músarskjálfti* 'quiver mouslike', *skyndikonungur* 'fugitive king', *öxarkjagg* 'old cleaver').

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[45] Jón Helgason does not comment in his corrections on the use of this stem in the novel.

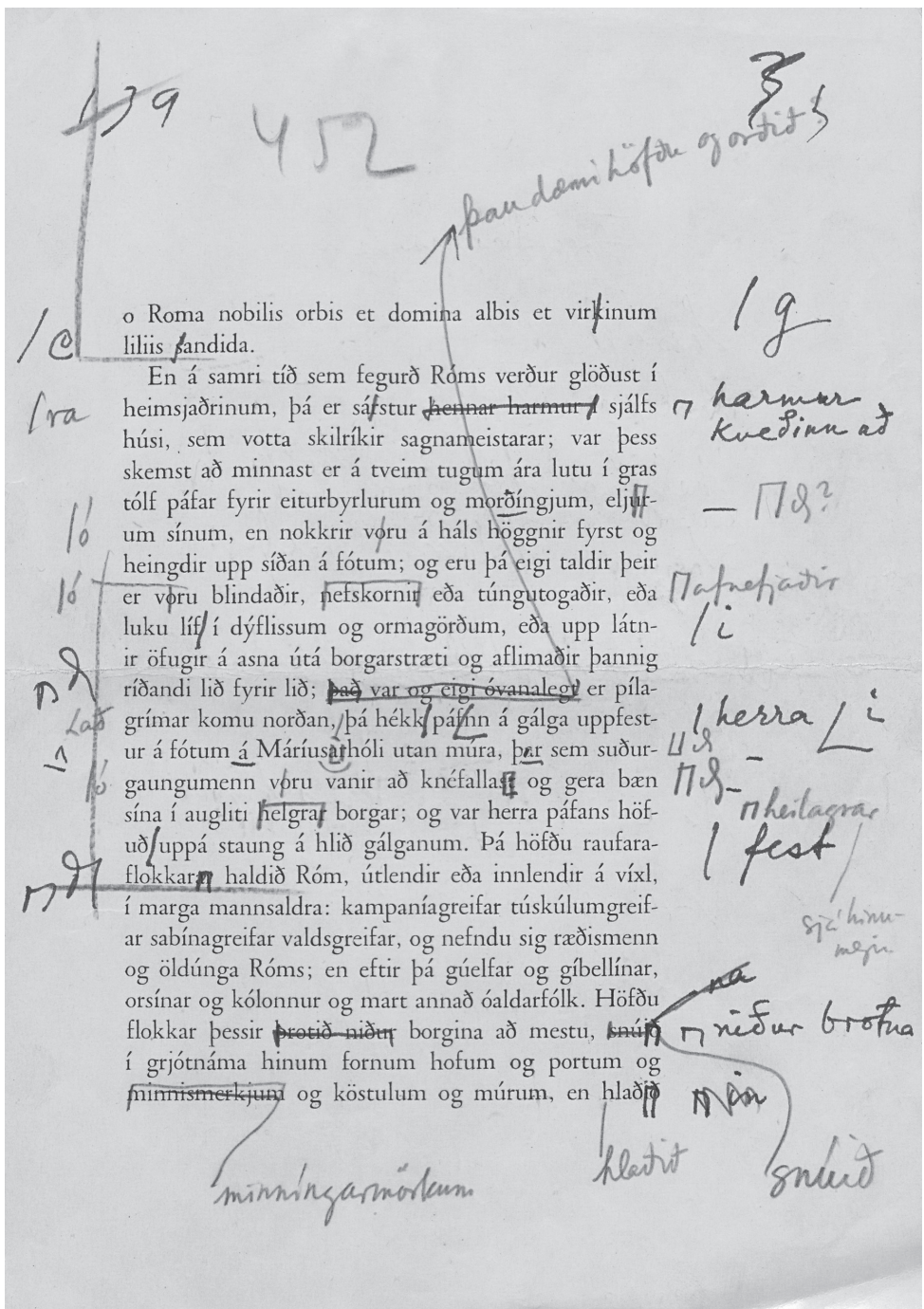[46] On *Gerpla*'s lexically rich style and relevant literary analysis see Helga Kress (2018: 289–293).

Image 1. A sample page (452r) from Lbs. 200 NF, case 209: Jón Helgason's corrections in pencil, those by Laxness in pen.

4 Jón Helgason's role in shaping the language of *Gerpla*

Not only were Halldór Laxness and Jón Helgason very good friends but Jón Helgason was also one of the key readers to whom Halldór Laxness submitted his works for proofreading (cf. Halldór Laxness 1941: 125). Understanding Jón Helgason's revision activity, noting the nature and extent of the modifications he made to Halldór Laxness' text, and subsequently assessing the role he had in shaping it, is crucial when investigating the language of *Gerpla*. To determine the extent of Jón Helgason's influence, a thorough investigation was made of the proofs of the novel (Lbs. 200 NF, case 209; cf. *Images 1* and *2*) and the letters between the two Icelanders during the period in which *Gerpla* was conceived, written, and published (Lbs. 200 NF, cases 72 and 164, Jón Helgason sent the last corrected pages to Laxness on October 31, 1952, see the accompanying letter in *Image 3*). The overall conclusion of this investigation is that the language of *Gerpla* would have been very different without Jón Helgason's counseling and corrections.[47]

The proofs of the novel contain the most direct evidence of Jón Helgason's active role in shaping the language of *Gerpla* in the form of pencil-written corrections and comments,[48] most often in the margins and, if longer, on the back, e.g. on the elision of *v* before *u* (55v) or on the old declension of the adjective *heilagur* (452v, cf. *Image 2*). Jón Helgason's comments and proposals for modifications can be grouped in six categories: style (euphony and repetitions), word forms, morphology, word choice, syntax, and Latin. *Table 1* lists examples for each category. Page numbers are according to the proofs:

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[47] Jón Karl Helgason pointed out to me the words of Ragnar í Smára, Halldór Laxness' publisher in Reykjavik, and of Jón Helgason, both of whom he quotes in his work *Mynd af Ragnari í Smára* (Jón Karl Helgason 2009: 241 and 246): on the one hand Ragnar notes "the gruesome stench" (*sá óhugnalegi ópefur*) which emanated from some of Laxness' writings, as if Laxness plagiarized others (*sem kemur fram í því að eigna sér það sem aðrir hafa gert* "which emanates from claiming for oneself something that others have done"), but on the other, Jón Helgason shows humility regarding his role as proofreader of Halldór Laxness' works.

[48] A few comments by Jón Helgason are also present in a typewritten version of chapter 1, which is mentioned above (footnotes 1 and 44). They are similar to those on the proofs of the novel in Lbs. 200 NF, case 209.
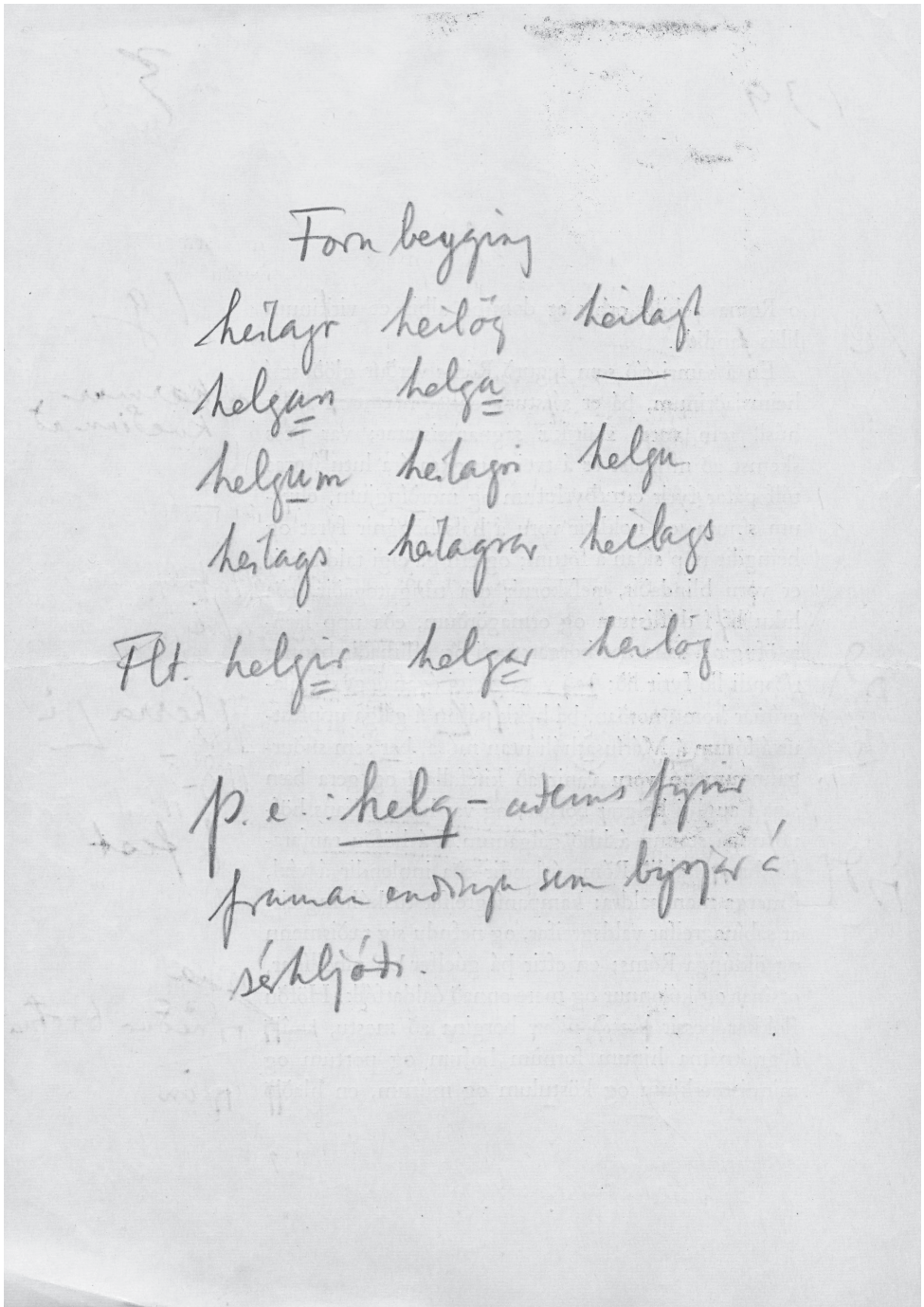
Image 2. The old Icelandic declension of the adjective *heilagr* 'holy', Lbs. 200 NF, case 209 p. 452 v.

Table 1. Sample of Jón Helgason's corrections and comments.

Category	P.	Laxness' text	Jón Helgason's correction	Jón Helgason's comments
Style (euphony)	33	*gerðist skjótt*	*gerðist brátt*	*gerðist skjótt* er vond samkoma hljóða.[49]
Style (repetitions)	21	*lítill þarfi*	*þarfleysa*	Til að forðast *lítt – lítill*.[50]
Word forms	20	*kvöld*	*kveld*	Ég hef strikað í *kvöld* hér og víðar af því að *kveld* er forna myndin. Er samt hikandi við þetta, menn fara að lesa *kveld*, og það setur leiðinlegan pappírssvip á lesturinn.[51]
	121	*sveipði*	*sveipti*	*sveipði* er auðvitað forn mynd (12. og 13. öld), en þá ætti líka að skrifa *kipði, sökði, rakði* etc.[52]
	236	*skúum*	*skóm*	*skúar* nefnifall, *skúa* þolfall. En þágufall *skóm*![53]
Morphology	14	*bænda*	*bónda*	*bóndi* beygist í fleirtölu (eins og *bók*) *bændur, bændur, bóndum, bónda*. Ég hef leiðrétt *bændum, bænda*, en er ekki harður á því, einkum getur *bónda* valdið misskilningi (skilst sem eintala).[54]
	46	*Það þykir mér*	*Það þyki mér*	
	60	*skamma læríngu*	*skamma læríng*	Kvenkynsorð á *-ing* eru eins í þolfalli, en hafa *-ingu* í þágufalli.[55]
	121	*í einu höggi*	*í einu höggvi*	
	176	*falin vopn*	*fólgin vopn*	
	198	*Þykist eg*	*Þykjumst eg*	

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[49] Transl. "*gerðist skjótt* is a bad combination of sounds".

[50] Transl. "To avoid *lítt – lítill*".

[51] Transl. "I have corrected *kvöld* here and elsewhere because the old form is *kveld*. I am hesitant about this, however, because when one reads *kveld*, this lends the reading a tedious, bookish air".

[52] Transl. "*sveipði* is of course the old form (12th/13th c.), but then *kipði, sökði, rakði* etc. should also be written".

[53] Transl. "*skúar* nominative, *skúa* accusative. But dative *skóm*!"

[54] Transl. "*bóndi* inflects in the plural (like *bók*) *bændur, bændur, bóndum, bónda*. I have corrected *bændum, bænda*, but I am not too rigid [in my correcions], especially [because] *bónda* could be misinterpreted (understood as a singular form)".

[55] Transl. "Feminine words [ending] in *-ing* are the same [as the nominative] in the accusative, but have *-ingu* in the dative".

Osló ³¹/₁₀ 52

Kæri vinur.

Þá rek ég þetta af höndum mér eins og það leggur sig og þó hálfnauðugur, því að ég finn með sjálfum mér að ef ég ætti kost á að fara yfir það aftur, mundi ég reka augun á eitthvað fleira, t.d. sé ég einlægt annað kastið, ef ég lít á það sem ég hef skrifað, að mér hættir stundum til að leiðrétta það sem vel mætti standa, eða réttara sagt að tillögur mínar eru ekki góðar. En nú dugir mér þetta ekki lengur, ég má til að fara að eiga tal við hérlenda menn, og þó er annað verra, það er búið að auglýsa að ég tali hér á háskólanum á mánudaginn, en ég er ekki farinn að hugsa hót um það, veit ekki einu sinni hvað ég ætla að tala um. Ég trúi því að Gerpla verði talin þeim mun meiri bót sem menn lesa hana oftar; ég formálti við

Image 3. Jón Helgason to Halldir Laxness, Octorber 31, 1952, page 1.

Category	P.	Laxness' text	Jón Helgason's correction	Jón Helgason's comments
Word choice	22	*hafði seinar hættur*	*búist seint til rekkna*	*hættur* víst ekki fornt.[56]
	24	*ættuð*	*ættskuð*	
	24	*upphéldu*	*héldu upp*	Orð eins og *upphefja*, *upphalda* ekki forn, þeir sögðu *hefja upp*, en í hluttaksorði *upphafinn*.[57]
	34	*prinsessur*	*prinsipissur*	Mér er hálfilla við orðið *prinsessa* hér, það verður víst ekki rakið lengra aftur en til 14. aldar, kemur þá upp úti í Frans. Hvernig væri að nota eldri orðmyndina: *prinsipissur*?[58]
	42	*mannbær*	*manntæk*	*mannbær* er ekki fornt, heldur ung þýzka. Gamla orðið er *gjafvaxta*, en það fer víst ekki vel hér. Norðmenn hafa ágætt orð, *manntæk*, væri það ekki gull í íslenzku?[59]
	155	*á syllu*	*á bergskor*	*sylla* er víst ekki gamalt, en *skor* heitir stallur í kletti bæði í Noregi og Færeyjum, *bergskorir brattar klífa* stendur í *Helgakviðu*.[60]
	277	*fimmtíu*	*fimm tigu*	
	361	*Júítar*	*Núítar*	Hér er ég bókalaus og urræðalaus á hótelherbergi. En mig minnir að eskímóar kalli sig sjálfir *innuit* (með áherzlu á -*nu*-). Ef það er rétt, hvers vegna heita þeir þá ekki fremur *núítar* en *júítar*. Ef *innuit* yrði *núítar*, væri þá svipað og *episcopus* verður *biskup*.[61]

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[56] Transl. "*hættur* surely not old".

[57] Transl. "Words [i.e. word forms] such as *upphefja*, *upphalda* [are] not old, they said *hefja upp*, but *upphafinn* in the participle".

[58] Transl. "I don't like the word *prinsessa* much here, it cannot likely be traced back earlier than the 14th century, when it arises in France. How would it be to use the older word form: *prinsipissur*?"

[59] Transl. "*mannbær* is not old, but rather recent German. The old word is *gjafvaxta*, but probably it does not fit well here. The Norwegians have a quite good word, *manntæk*. Wouldn't it be perfect in Icelandic?"

[60] Transl. "*sylla* is surely not old, *skor* is called a ledge both in Norway and the Faroe Islands. In the *Helgakvíða bergskorir brattar klífa* is found".

[61] Transl. "Here I am without books nor solutions in a hotel room. I recall that eskimos call themselves *innuit* (with accent on -*nu*-). If this is correct, why aren't they then called *núítar* rather than *júítar*. If *innuit* becomes *núítar*, it would be similar to *episcopus* becoming *biskup*".

fyrstu sýn þessum bölvuðum Hjartósaroddi
og öllu þessu umbroti víkinga úti á löndum,
vildi heyra meira um Þorgeir Hávarsson; en
nú þykist ég sjá að allt er gert af ásettu
ráði og þjappað saman af fastri hendi.
Kaflinn um vist Þormóðar á Grænalandi
þykir mér samt grafa yfir allt saman, og
veit ég ekki hvort þú hefur nokkurn tíma
betur gert.

                              Beztu kveðjur
                                   þinn einlægur
                                        J. H.

Í fyrradag rakst ég á konu þá sem heitir Kari
Shetelig, og eitt sinn var gift Hákoni nokkurum
Hamre, en er skilin við hann, lifir nú á að skrifa
í blöð um leikhús og bókmenntir. Hún er lærð á ís-
lenzku eða heldur sig vera það. Ég lofaði að skila
því til þín, að hana langar óhemju mikið til að fá
nýju bókina jafnskjótt sem út kom, og kveðst hún
þá munu skrifa um hana samstundis í Noregi, en
ekki veit ég hve blöð hún hefur samband við, né hvers
virði þú telur þetta. Bókina mátti þá, ef þú hirðir um
þetta, senda: Frú Kari Shetelig, adr. Bjarne Andersen,
Det norske teater, Oslo.

Image 3. Jón Helgason to Halldór Laxness, Octorber 31, 1952, page 2.

Category	P.	Laxness' text	Jón Helgason's correction	Jón Helgason's comments
Syntax	17	*er glímdu við tröllkonur*	*er við tröllkonur glímdu*	
	24	*sem aldrei höfðu komið í víkíngu*	*sem aldrei höfðu í víkíngu komið*	
	34	*að mestur garpur væri*	*að mestur væri garpur*	
	60	*en enskur förubiskup*	*en förubiskup enskur*	
	87	*hugdjarfur maður*	*maður hugdjarfur*	
	92	*og hún mun bjóða*	*og mun hún bjóða*	
	214	*Þar upphófust nokkrir*	*Þar hófust upp nokkrir*	
	266	*er mætti styðja*	*er styðja mætti*	
	273	*Þeir vóru ólíkir menn*	*Þeir vóru menn ólíkir*	
	334	*er líður nær vori*	*er nær líður vori*	
	345	*Frá því hefur verið sagt*	*Frá því hefur sagt verið*	
Latin	58	*paternoster*	*páternoster*	
	184	*Lásarúsi*	*Lásaró*	
	235	*In nomine patri et filii et spiritu sancti*	*In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*	
	312	*beatae Mariae*	*beate Marie*	Þannig mundi stafrétt í miðaldalatínu.[62]

Jón Helgason's corrections often appear unaltered in Halldór Laxness' text, on which they left a strong imprint. Peter Hallberg (1968: 37) and Helga Kress (2018: 289) briefly noted that Laxness followed Jón Helgason's corrections in the majority of cases, and this investigation arrived at the same conclusion. From a review of all of Jón Helgason's corrections and comments on the proofs, two things stand out: first, Jón Helgason did not correct the text in all cases, especially if a correction could have occasioned a misinterpretation (cf. the comment on the word *bóndi* in *Table 1*); second, he had a substantial influence on the archaizing language

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[62] Transl. "It would be spelled in this way in Medieval Latin".

choices which characterize the novel.[63] Jón Helgason's important role in shaping the language of *Gerpla* is confirmed when one collates the *lectiones* of the printed text with those of the proofs, commented upon by the Old Norse philologist. In addition, indirect confirmation of Jón Helgason's impact arises from those cases in which he chose not to correct the text. These editorial choices quite consistently influenced the mixture of archaic and more recent features found in the language of the novel. Relevant examples are listed in *Table 2*, with pages numbered according to the proofs. The examples are arranged according to the order followed in the linguistic description above.

Table 2. Examples from the proofs of corrected and non-corrected text.

With Jón Helgason's correction	Without correction
Nouns, adjectives and numerals	
við víkíng sínum > við víkíngi sínum (40)	
í einu höggi > í einu höggvi (121)	*höggi* (144, 322)
gjafir > gjafar (24)	*gjafir* (24)
jörð > jörðu (dat. 41)	*jörð* (dat. 328)
læríngu > læríng (acc. 60)	*drottníngu* (acc. 396)
strönd > ströndu (45)	*strönd* (dat. 172, 367)
nakinn > nöktur (38)	
máttugir > máttkir (96)	*ómáttugir* (49)
háan > hávan (289)	*mannhæðarháan* (155), *háan* (480)
voldugs > ins ríkja (368)[64]	*Knút inn ríka* (415)
firði > fjörðu (acc. 96)	
bændum > bóndum (247)	*bændum* (248)
dýpra > djúpara (325)	
	sjötugasta (225)

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[63] Of course Halldór Laxness himself was responsible for most of the novel's content, especially in terms of word choice (e.g. the words *fjöld* 'multitude' (9) and *und* 'under' (14 *passim*), cf. Hallberg 1968: 37), whereas Jón Helgason's changes for the most part concerned morphology and syntax. Jón Helgason suggested changing only those words which were too modern for the archaic nature of the content, or whenever they formed a cacophonous or repetitive combination with adjacent or nearby words.

[64] On page 214, however, Jón Helgason corrects *voldugs* with *ríka*. Cf. above § 2.2.1 on *ja-/jō*-stem adjectives.

With Jón Helgason's correction	Without correction
Pronouns	
vér > við (32 *passim*)	
þér > þið (56 *passim*)	
vor > okkar (declinated, 32)	
ykkar (gen.) *> ykkar* (declinated, 43)	
þessi maður > sjá maður (166)	
ins (35, 368), esp. p. 35 *írans > sveins ins írska*[65]	
hverir > hverjir (399, 467)	*hverir* (102)[66]
einhverjum > einumhverjum (304)	*einhverjum* (in all other occurences, cf. § 2.2.3)
Verbs	
þykir > þyki (46, 72)	*þykir* (11, 152)
sendi > senda (128), *unni > unna* (136)	*þjónaði* (457)
að eg skyldi > skylda (28),[67] *að eg flytji > flytja* (78)	*að eg megi* (45)
að seint munu vér > munim (102), *að vér rötum > ratim* (219)	*að vér höfum* (31), *að vér skyldum* (112)
barinn > barður (265, 300, 310), *uppvakinn > uppvaktur* (240), *rakin > rakið* (292)[68]	
þykist eg > þykjumst eg (198), *settist eg > settumst eg* (352)	
tugði > tögg (87, 89)[69]	

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[65] On page 35 Jón Helgason comments: "In the old language one speaks of *Íra*, *Dani* etc. in the plural, but a person can only be called *írskur maður, danskur maður*". Original comment: "Í fornu máli er talað um *Íra*, *Dani* etc. í fleirtölu, en einstaklingurinn getur aðeins heitið *írskur maður, danskur maður*".

[66] On page 399 Jón Helgason comments: "*hverjir* has not been corrected elsewhere, since it is an unnecessary change; thus [if it were corrected] also [the text] should [use] *vili* instead of *vilji* etc." Cf. above § 2.2.1 on *n*-stems and § 2.2.3.4 on the pronoun *hver*. Original comment: "*hverjir* hefur staðið víða óleiðrétt, enda þarflaust að breyta; því ætti líka að standa *vili* fyrir *vilji* etc."

[67] On the verso of page 28 Jón Helgason commented: "The old form of 1st sg. subjunctive ends in *a*: *að eg ætla*. I am, however, a little hesitant in continuing to use this form, [because] it looks strange in some places in the text". Cf. above § 2.2.4. Original comment: "Forn mynd er að viðtengingarháttur 1. p. et. endi á *a*: *að eg ætla*. Er samt hálfhikandi við að halda þessari mynd fram, hún verður nokkuð annarleg sumsstaðar".

[68] In the margin of page 292 Jón Helgason commented: "*rakiður*, feminine: *rakið*". Cf. above § 2.2.4. Original comment: " *rakiður*, kvenkyn: *rakið*".

[69] Jón Helgason adds in the margin of page 87: *tugði* new conjugation. Cf. above § 2.2.4.3 on 3rd class strong verbs. Original comment: "*tugði* nýrri beyging".

With Jón Helgason's correction	Without correction
faldar > fólgnar (117)	
komu > kómu (118, 167)	
voru > vóru (103, 171, 302 *passim*)	
vóx > óx (88)[70]	
þóu > þógu (111)	
ger > gör (21), *ger > gjör* (92), *gör > gjör* (134), *gerðan > görvan* (290)[71]	
flóir > flóar (95)	*flóir* (328)
eg höfum > eg hefi (458)	
megu > mega (inf., 23)[72]	
þurfa > þurfu (3rd pl. pres. ind., 28, 102)[73]	

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[70] Jón Helgason comments on the verso of page 88: "Forms such as *vóx, vorðinn* are somewhat common in manuscripts from the latter half of the 14th century, e.g. Flateyjarbók, but are hardly used in old[er] manuscripts, nor in more recent Icelandic; I think that they are nothing else other than imitations of the language of Norwegians, made for the sake of vanity. I don't like them. But if you like them, maintain them; in fact they were not uncommon for a period". Cf. above § 2.2.4.6 on 6th class strong verbs. Original comment: "Myndir eins og *vóx, vorðinn* tíðkast nokkuð í handritum frá síðara helmingi 14. aldar, t.d. Flateyjarbók, en eru varla til í fornum handritum, né heldur síðara máli íslenzku; ég held þær séu ekki annað en nælingar á máli Norðmanna, gerðar fyrir fordildar sakir. Mér er ekki um þær. En þyki þér svipur á þeim, þá haltu þeim; þær eru, sem sagt, ekki ótíðar á tímabili".

[71] On the verso of page 31 Jón Helgason comments: "In Old Icelandic there were two different sounds which correspond to our *ö* nowadays, on the one hand *ø*, on the other *ǫ*. Before *ø* [the sounds] *g* and *k* were soft (as in *ker*), before *ǫ* [the sounds *g* and *k* were] hard (as in *kǫttur*). When *ö* substitutes *ø*, it becomes necessary to mark the soft sound *kj*, otherwise the difference between the *k*'s in *kjörinn* (formerly *kørinn*) and *köttur* disappears. *NB gjöra*, but *gör* (for what today is *gerður*); [these spellings] have started to be confused early on and, as a result, *gj* is used in *gjör*". Cf. above §§ 2.2.4.2 and 2.2.4.8 on *kjósa* (2nd cl. st) and *gera* (1st cl. wk), respectively. Original comment: "Í fornu máli voru tvö mismunandi hljóð þar sem nú við höfum *ö*, annað *ø*, hitt *ǫ*. Fyrir framan *ø* var *g* og *k* mjúkt (eins og í *ker*), fyrir framan *ǫ* hart (eins og í *kǫttur*). Þegar *ö* kemur fyrir *ø*, verður að tákna mjúka hljóðið *kj*, annars þurkast út munurinn sem alla tíð hefur verið á *k*-i í *kjörinn* (að fornu *kørinn*) og í *köttur*. *NB gjöra*, en *gör* (þar sem nú er sagt *gerður*); þó hefur ruglazt snemma og *gj* komizt inn í *gjör*".

[72] Jón Helgason adds in the margin: "No, it has to be *mega*, *megu* is present plural (*þeir megu*), it can never be the infinitive". Cf. above § 2.2.4.10 on preterite-present verbs. Original comment: "nei, verður að vera *mega*, *megu* er nútíð fleirtölu (*þeir megu*), en getur aldrei verið nafnháttur".

[73] Jón Helgason comments in the margin: "No, *þurfa* is the infinitive! (again: *þeir þurfu*)". Original comment: "nei, *þurfa* er nafnháttur! (aftur: *þeir þurfu*)".

5 Conclusions

The analysis of the language of *Gerpla* has highlighted the fact that Halldór Laxness mostly used a variety of Icelandic reflecting that of the 14th century, but, to some extent, the language of the novel also displays a mixture of older and more recent forms. In terms of orthography, Halldór Laxness used his own spelling conventions.[74] Although inflected forms are widely archaized, some older and more recent forms appear side by side, e.g. *höggvi* and *höggi*, *hverir* and *hverjir* etc. *Gerpla*'s syntax also follows the language of the sagas. The lexicon is quite archaic and the use of rare words leaves a distinctive mark on the novel. These authorial choices directly reflect Laxness' stated objective to avoid words which could be proven to not have existed in the 11th century.[75] Only one exception to this programmatic principle was found, i.e. the stem *krank-* 'ill'.

This paper's examination of Jón Helgason's role in shaping the language of *Gerpla* has systematically documented the critical part he played concerning the archaizing aspects of the final published form of the the novel, above all in its morphology. This conclusion runs contrary to Jón Helgason's own self-effacing statement, i.e. that he made "only minor suggestions for changes concerning language" (Icel. *smávegis tillögur um breytingar á málfari*, cited in Jón Karl Helgason 2009: 256).

The collaboration between Halldór Laxness and Jón Helgson, those "intellectual blood brothers", so influenced the final version of the novel that Ragnar í Smára, Laxness' publisher in Reykjavik, wrote in a letter to Sigurður Nordal (cited in Jón Karl Helgason 2009: 241) that *Gerpla* "was almost the work of them both" (Icel. *hún* [i.e. *Gerpla*] *nálgast að vera verk þeirra beggja*).

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[74] Cf. Laxness' views on orthography and the publishing of saga literature in his 1935 essay (publ. 1937) *Um stafsetningu á fornsögum* (Halldór Laxness 1962 in the references). See also Crocker (2019). On Laxness' relationship with the so-called "Icelandic school", orthographic disputes etc. see Jón Karl Helgason (1996). On the influence of saga literature in Laxness' works see Hallberg (1982).

[75] See footnote 3 for bibliographical references.

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