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Some Philological Observations on the Old Danish *Ivan løveridder* and its Old Swedish Source Text¹

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Abstract: The Old Danish *Ivan løveridder*, a translation of the Old Swedish *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren*, survives in two manuscript copies (Cod. Holm. K 4 and Cod. Holm. K 47) which differ considerably in length. The text in K 47 is much longer (6403 lines in Brandt's edition) than the defective text in K 4 (5273 lines in Brandt's edition) as well as the Old Swedish manuscript versions. Based on Noreen's study (1929) of the Scandinavian reception of Chrétien's text, the aim of the present essay is to illustrate and briefly discuss some of the main philological problems concerning the relationships between the manuscripts preserving the *Eufemiavisor* and their Danish translations as attested in K 47 and K 4.

Keywords: *Eufemiavisor*, Old Danish translation, MSS K 47 and K 4, philological problems, stemmatic relationships

The Old Danish version of Chrétien's work *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion* – customarily referred to as *Ivan løveridder* – is unanimously considered to be the translation of the Old Swedish *Herr Ivan lejonriddaren*. It survives in two manuscripts from the second half of the 15th century: Cod. Holm. K 4 and Cod. Holm. K 47, both preserved at the Royal Library in Stockholm.² While the collection in K 47 consists of several courtly works (i.e. the three *Eufemiaviser*, *Dværgekongen Lavrin*, *Personober og Konstantianobis* and *Den kyske dronning*), the codicological context in which *Ivan løveridder* appears in K 4 is more heterogeneous. The collection of texts making up this manuscript does indeed include several translated hagiographical materials (mostly about female saints), the annals known as *Rydårsbogen* and the so-called *Stenbogen*, a lapidary customarily attributed to Henrik Harpestreng. A third manuscript, now lost, is known to have been owned by the Danish book collector Frederik Rostgaard, who sold it together with the rest of his collection of books and manuscripts in 1726 (Noreen 1929: 7).

1 The present study is based on research conducted within the research programme “Modes of Modification. Variance and Change in Medieval Manuscript Culture”, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

2 On the dating of K 4 see Bullitta (2017). On K 47 see Glauser (1986) and Hartung et al. (2016: 177–178). An overview of the main dating issues concerning K 4 is given in Bampi (2019: 220–222).

The two extant Danish manuscript versions differ considerably in length. The text in K 47 is much longer (6403 lines in Brandt's edition) than both the defective text in K 4 (5273 lines in Brandt's edition) and in the Old Swedish manuscript versions.

In addition to their intrinsic value as translated works, the Old Danish *Eufemiaviser* have proved particularly relevant to the study of the East Norse reception of chivalric literature in that they appear to be based on longer versions of the Old Swedish texts than the ones attested in the extant manuscripts, as will be shown in some detail later on (Noreen 1929).

The aim of the present essay is to illustrate some of the main problems related to the reconstruction of the relationships between the manuscripts preserving the *Eufemiavisor* and their Danish translations. The following observations draw especially on Noreen's 1929 study of the internal relations among the manuscript witnesses of both the Old Swedish and the Old Danish texts.

Editions

The texts of K 47 and K 4 were edited by Carl J. Brandt in 1869 and 1870 as part of his *Romantisk digtning fra Middelalderen*. A new scholarly edition of the text of K 47 is available as part of the collection of texts published by scholars involved in the project *Studér middelalder på nettet*, which to date represents the most important endeavour for the renewal of interest in Old Danish literature.³ So far, no new edition of the *Ivan løveridder*-text in K 4 is available.

Relationship between manuscripts

Although it is an indisputable fact that the interest in the Old Swedish *Eufemiavisor* has been increasing considerably over the last 10 years, scholarly works on the philological aspects of the transmission of these texts in the East Norse area are still scant. Our knowledge of the relationships between the manuscripts preserving both the Old Swedish and the Old Danish translations is indeed based on a philological groundwork dating from the 1920s and 1930s. This is to be seen against the background of the relative disinterest Old Danish literature has received in international scholarship over the last few decades. Its regrettable marginalisation⁴ in Medieval Scandinavian studies is partly dependent on the fact that the majority of texts that have come down to us are translations, which tend either to be considered less valuable than original works or, when deemed noteworthy, are for the most part not approached as literary works in their own right.

The slow development of a renewed interest in the Old Danish reception of the *Eufemiaviser*, if compared to the Old Swedish source texts, explains why all relevant scholarship on the *Eufemiavisor/Eufemiaviser* is by and large based on the critical editions that Erik Noreen and Emil Olson published around 90 years ago. In the case of the Old Danish texts, Carl Brandt's edition from 1869–1870 is still an important milestone, although

3 <https://tekstnet.dk/ivan-loeveridder/1>

4 Notable exceptions are represented by Glauser (1986), Dahlerup (1998), Fredriksen (1998a and 1998b) and Brandenburg (2019).

the edition of the K 47-text mentioned above will hopefully become the standard edition in the years to come.⁵

If one wishes to analyze the Old Danish translation by comparing it with its Old Swedish source, Noreen's text is thus still the only point of reference. The new edition of the Swedish texts by Henrik Williams, in which the *Eufemiavisor* are presented in a modernized form, came out in 2018 and is primarily intended for a larger audience, as the following passages make clear:

Syftet med föreliggande utgåva är att locka nya läsare till forntida texter. (2018a: 362)

The aim of this edition is to attract new readers to ancient texts.

(...) Den som vill få ett intryck av hur det äldsta textlagret ser ut hänvisas till Williams & Palmgren, där en fornsvensk 1300-talsversion av *Ivan lejonriddaren* har återskapats. Här vill jag istället söka mig till den andra ytterligheten, en så sent fornsvensk version som möjligt. Jag har tagit mig friheten att ikläda mig rollen som en skrivare vid medeltidens absoluta slut. Därvid har jag i stort sett följt texten hos Olson respektive Noreen men ersatt svårförståeliga ord med andra, hämtade från någon av handskrifterna, enligt principen att de valda orden ska ligga så nära dagens språkbruk som möjligt. (2018a: 364)

Whoever wishes to get an idea of how the oldest text layer looks is referred to Williams & Palmgren, where a 14th-century Old Swedish version of *Ivan lejonriddaren* has been reconstructed. Here, instead, I want to move to the other extreme, i.e. an Old Swedish version as late as possible. I have taken the liberty of assuming the role of a scribe at the very end of the Middle Ages. In doing so, I have largely followed Olson's and Noreen's text, respectively. However, I have replaced difficult words with others, taken from one of the other manuscripts, following the principle that the chosen words should be as close to today's language as possible.

The critical text established by Noreen poses some relevant philological issues. It is indeed a hybrid in that it contains passages that are taken from the Danish manuscripts, as explicitly declared in the critical apparatus, and re-translated into Old Swedish, whenever the Swedish manuscripts lack a corresponding passage. In some cases, the density of such interpolations is fairly high (see, for example, ll. 3500–3512; 3530–3533; 3541–42; 3543–44; 3561–62), which makes Noreen's critical text into an instrument that must necessarily be used with caution, especially if one aims to look at the transmission of Chrétien's text in the East Norse area as a whole. The *Herr Ivan*-edition is based on MS. A (Cod. Holm. D 4), which contains several lacunae. What meets the reader is therefore the result of a reconstructive effort that is obviously influenced by the state of manuscript transmission.⁶

In 1929 Erik Noreen published his thorough investigation of the relationships between the manuscripts preserving both the Old Swedish and the Old Danish translations as part of a broader tripartite philological study called *Studier rörande Eufemiavisorna*. To date,

5 It is thus noteworthy that the most recent contribution by the late Sigurd Kværndrup (2014) is an edition of the Old Swedish *Herr Ivan* intended for a Danish readership. In the book, only a few pages (295–297) are devoted to the Old Danish reception, although some of Kværndrup's observations are very interesting and would thus deserve further attention.

6 On D 4 as a whole and the question of its dating see Carlquist (2002: 97–103).

Noreen's work is the only philological investigation of the whole manuscript tradition of the *Eufemiavisor* in their Swedish and Danish incarnations.⁷ The present essay argues, by way of textual evidence, that a reconsideration of the relationships between the manuscripts is needed. However, since a thorough analysis of the relevant textual passages would exceed its scope, a limited number of examples will be illustrated.

However, for the purpose of studying the Danish transmission of the story of *Ivan løveridder* Noreen's study is still indisputably important for several reasons, not least because he considers the version of the text in K 47 (MS. F) to possess a considerable stemmatic value, as the following statements make clear:

Det synes mig ganska påtagligt att texten i F står avsides från den tradition som föreligger i de sv. hss. A B D och även från den danska hs. E, vilken ansluter sig till gruppen A B D. Är denna uppfattning riktig så blir F av Iv (Cod. K 47) av samma kapitala betydelse för textkritiken som G av Fr (= K 47). Under alla omständigheter måste texten i F genom sin utmärkta fullständighet tillmätas det allra största värde. (Noreen 1929: 19)

It seems rather evident to me that the text in F lies apart from the tradition that is represented by the Swedish manuscripts A B D and even from the Danish manuscript E, which joins the group A B D. If this view is correct, ms. F of *Ivan* (Cod. K 47) should be accorded the same primary significance for textual criticism as ms. G of *Hertig Fredrik* (= K 47). In any case, the text in F must be given the utmost value by its excellent completeness.

Av dessa har F:s källa varit en utmärkt hs. F är den fullständigaste av texterna och en plusvers i F bör principiellt anses ha tillhört det fsv. (...) E, som står närmast A och B, visar ofta prov på en alldeles mekanisk överflyttning av den svenska texten; den karakteriseras även av många och svåra luckor i texten. (Noreen 1929: 45).

Of these, the source of F was an excellent manuscript. F is the most complete of the texts, and an additional verse in F must in principle be held to have belonged to the Old Swedish (source). E, which is closest to A and B, often shows evidence of a very mechanical translation of the Swedish text. It is also characterized by many difficult lacunae in the text.

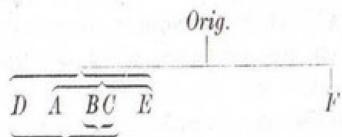
As far as the relationships among the manuscripts preserving the Old Swedish and Old Danish text are concerned, Noreen suggests the following reconstruction:

Jag anser mig icke bättre kunna uttrycka min uppfattning av handskrifternas förhållande till varandra än genom förut meddelade stamträd, försett med några klammer för att antyda sammanhang i den "svenska" gruppen". (1931: xiii)

I think I cannot express my understanding of the manuscripts' relationships with each other in any better manner than through the previously given stemma, provided with some brackets in order to hint at the connections in the "Swedish" group.

7 Alongside Noreen's study one should mention Valter Jansson (1945). In Jansson's seminal study, though, the focus is solely on the Old Swedish texts.

This is the stemma codicum of the East Norse *Ivan* according to Noreen (1931: 13):



The Swedish philologist provides textual evidence in support of his hypothesis that the additional verses in F – if compared to the other manuscripts, including E – are original (Noreen 1929: 19–24). Some of these examples point indeed to the fact that F retains several original readings or passages that are not attested in E (and, occasionally, in other Swedish manuscripts), as will be briefly shown in the following section:

I)

Luneta addresses a maiden who is looking for the lion's knight:

Herr Ivan

Then snimpsta tima iak han fan
tha skildis iak hær vidher han (ll. 4325–4326)⁸

The last time I saw him
I parted from him there⁹

Only F shows two additional verses if compared to both the rest of the Swedish manuscripts and E:

F
Sisten time jech hanum fandh
skildis jech heræ widh ham
hwad han hawer sidhen giord
ther hawer jech jnthat aff spord (78r)¹⁰

The last time I saw him
I parted from him there.
What he did afterwards
I have not heard anything about

The additional verses find correspondence in the wording of the Old French text:

⁸ In Noreen's critical edition, ll. 4329–4330 ("hwat han hafuer sidhan giort, / ther hafer iak ække aff sport") are taken from F and translated into Old Swedish, as discussed above. The Old Swedish text is quoted throughout from Noreen's edition.

⁹ All translations of the Old Swedish text are taken from Williams/Palmgren 1999 (here p. 205).

¹⁰ The *Ivan*-text in K 47 (F) is quoted throughout from the scholarly edition available online (<https://tekstnet.dk/ivan-loeveridder/1>). This passage corresponds to ll. 4304–4307 in Brandt's edition (1869: 137).

French

Bien m'an sovient que jel lessai
 Bien pres de ci, ou ci meïsmes;
 Ne puis ne nos antreveïsmes,
 Ne je ne sai qu'il a puis fet (ll. 4996–4999)¹¹

I definitely remember leaving him quite near here, or at this very place; we have not seen one another since, nor do I know what he has done since then." (Kibler 2004: 357)¹²

II)

The members of the court invite Ivan to return and celebrate his victory upon completing his task of killing the giant:

Herr Ivan

Tha mælte then herra och the frvgħa:
 "Wi bidhiæ thet gernæ om thet ma dugħa,
 mæden j mogen ey nw medh os in,
 j komin her ater eth annat sin
 oc huilen ider oc haffuen make,
 i gøren thet for ware sake
tha i thet ærinde hafuin giört
ther wi hafuum aff idher hørt."¹³

Herra Iwan swarar husbondan tha:

"*For sannind iak thet ey iatta ma,*
thy thet alt a lykko star,
huru thet mik i hænde gar."¹⁴

Æ badh herra Iwan husbondan tha:

J laten idhræ sønir göræ swa,
 takā thenne dwaergh och bort han føræ
 thit som j herra Gawian spøriæ (ll. 3521–3536)¹⁵

Then the lord and the lady said.
 "we ask you, if it suits you,
 Since you cannot come in with us now,
 That you come back another time
 To rest up and be at leisure;
 do so for our sake.
 When you have carried out the task

11 The Old French text is quoted throughout from Poirion (1994).

12 The English translation of the Old French text is quoted throughout from Kibler (2004).

13 The italicized verses were taken by Noreen from MS. D (Stockholm, Riksarkivet, E 8822).

14 The italicized verses are not attested in any of the Old Swedish manuscripts and were therefore added by Noreen, who translated them from F into Old Swedish.

15 Text according to B (Noreen 1929: 21).

That we have heard about from you".

Sir Ivan then answered his host:

"I cannot truthfully promise you this,
Because everything depends on fate
How things will turn out for me."

But Sir Ivan then asked his host:

"Let your sons do this:
Take this dwarf and let them take him away
To where you hear of Sir Gawain;
They should not reveal who has rescued them from their distress."

F

tha meltæ bodæ then herræ och frwe
wi bedhæ edher giernæ om thet maa dwe
men i mowe ey nw medh os bidhæ
i komær heræ affter jet anneth sindh
ath hwillæ edher och hawæ magæ
i giøræ thet och for woræ sagæ
tha i thet erindæ hawe giord
ther wi hawæ aff edher hørd
herræ iwan swaredæ **hosbwndæn tha**
for sanindæ jech thet ey jettæ maa
thy thet alt a lyckæ stor
hwræ thet mæg i hændæ gaar
æn bad her ywan **hosbwndhen tha**
j ladher edher sönær giøræ saa
och tage thenne dwerigh och bort hanum føræ
thidh som i herræ gawian ma spøræ (63r)¹⁶

Then the lord and the lady said.

"we ask you, if it suits you,
Since you cannot come in with us now,
that you come back another time
to rest up and be at leisure;
do so for our sake.

When you have carried out the task
that we have heard about from you".

Sir Ivan then answered his host:

"I cannot truthfully promise you this,
because everything depends on fate
how things will turn out for me."

But Sir Ivan then asked his host:

"Let your sons do this:

16 Lines 3506–3521 in Brandt's edition.

take this dwarf and let them take him away
to where you hear of Sir Gawain;
they should not reveal who has rescued them from their distress.”

The verses in F (italicized in the quotation above), that are not found in the other manuscripts, find correspondence in the Old French text, as attested in the italicized passage below:

De monseignor Yvain sont cert
Qu’ il nel porroient retenir
Por rien qui poïst avenir,
Si li prient de retourner
Por deduire et por sejorner
Tot maintenant que fet avra
Son afeire la ou il va.
Et il responcqu’il ne les ose
Asseürer de ceste chose;
Il ne set mie deviner
S’il porra bien ou mal liner;
Mes au seignor itant dist il
Que il vialt que si quatre fil
Et sa fille praignent le nain,
S’aillett a monseignor Gauvain (ll. 4262–4276)¹⁷

They knew that nothing in this world could detain my lord Yvain a moment longer, so they begged him to return and celebrate as soon as he had completed the task to which he was going. He answered that he did not dare promise them this; he could not guess whether it would end well or not. But he did say to the lord that he wanted his four sons and his daughter to take the dwarf and go to my lord Gawain.¹⁸

This appears to be a case of omission by homeoteleuton, as observed by Noreen.¹⁹ The scribe did probably skip the text between the two lines that contain the phrase, “husbondan tha”. The fact that the same omission is attested in manuscripts B, C, D and E appears to indicate that they are likely to derive from a manuscript that contained this error. At the same time, the fact that F preserves the whole passage leads Noreen to conclude that it must be based on a different antigraph from the model used for B C D E.²⁰ The general assumption on which this statement rests is that none of the extant manuscripts is a direct copy of any of the manuscripts that have come down to us: “Ingen av de bevarade handskrifterna

17 Poirion (1994: 442).

18 Kibler (2004: 348).

19 As mentioned in note 12 above, the Old Swedish edited text contains the whole passage because the missing lines in the Old Swedish manuscripts (“Herra Iwan swarar husbandan tha: / “For sannind iak thet ey iatta ma, / thy thet alt a lykko star, / huru thet mik i hænde gar”) were translated by Noreen from the Old Danish manuscript witnesses.

20 In addition, it is noteworthy that the wording in F mirrors the one attested in the Old French text.

är avskrift av någon annan av de bevarade handskrifterna, utan samtliga äga större eller mindre värde för textkritiken" (Noreen 1931: xi).²¹

However, Noreen's investigation leaves space for doubts:

Vad särskilt E beträffar är saken visserligen ej fullt klar (...) men i fråga om en så omfangsrik text måste lämnas ett visst utrymme åt tillfälliga överensstämmelser. (Noreen 1929: 30)

As far as E especially is concerned, the matter is not entirely clear (...). However, in the case of such a comprehensive text, one must leave some room for accidental agreements.

Furthermore, the analysis of common errors in two or three manuscripts in group A B (C) D E "bekräftar den ovan uppställda arbetshypotesen men ger f.ö. icke så många säkra resultat om de närmare frändskapsförhållandena inom nämnda grupp" (Noreen 1929: 31)²².

Both quotations from Noreen's study are indicative of the degree of relative uncertainty that characterizes the relationship within what he considers one of the two branches of the dissemination of the *Eufemiavisor* in Sweden and Denmark.

If we narrow our scope within the Danish texts, some textual passages deserve special attention. One of the two examples that will be discussed presently is merely mentioned by Noreen, whereas the other is granted more attention.

Such examples regard textual passages in which E and F converge against A B C D (Noreen 1929: 27).

Herr Ivan

Herra Iwan sprang op fra thet bordh,
 han mælte til ængin man eet ordh
 ok lop thøm allo swa langt ij fra
 thet ængin thera matte honum na.
 Owit swa hans **hiærna** fordreff
 thet all siin klædhe han aff sik reeff
 ok bardhe sik medh thorn ok qwista
 thy at han ænkte vætta vistæ (ll. 2181–2188)

Sir Ivan sprang up from the table;
 he did not say one word to anybody
 and ran so far away from them all
 that no one could reach him.
 Madness attacked his **mind** in such wise
 that he tore off all his clothes
 and lashed himself with thorns and twigs
 because he was out of his mind (Williams/Palmgren 1999: 109)

The text in both E and F reads as follows:

21 "None of the extant manuscripts is a copy of any of them, yet all of them possess a greater or lesser value for establishing the critical text".

22 "confirms the aforementioned working hypothesis, yet does not provide so many certain results concerning the closer kinship relationship within the group".

F:

Herre ywan sprank op fra thet bord
 han taled til jngen man iet ordh
 och løb them alle sa longt fra
 thet jngen aff them kwnne hanom naa
 widh hans **hierte** sa for dreff
 thet alle sine kleder han aff segh reff
 och borde segh met torne och qwiste
 thy ath han ey bedre wiste (38r–38v)²³

Sir Ivan sprang up from the table;
 he did not say one word to anybody
 and ran so far away from them all
 that no one could reach him.

Madness attacked his **heart** in such manner
 that he tore off all his clothes
 and lashed himself with thorns and twigs.
 because he was out of his mind

E:

Her ywan sprangh vp foræ thet bortd
 Han meltæ til engen man eth ordh
 Han løb thom allæ soa langt j fra
 Ath engenteræ mattæ hannum naa
 Llwuicht **hiartæ** soa fordreff
 Ath alle syne clædær han af sich reff
 Och bardæ sigh mæt torne qwistæ
 Thi at han enktæt vistæ (Brandt 1870: 191; ll. 1984–1991)

Sir Ivan sprang up from the table;
 he did not say one word to anybody
 and ran so far away from them all
 that no one could reach him.

Madness attacked his **heart** in such manner
 that he tore off all his clothes
 and lashed himself with thorns and twigs.
 because he was out of his mind

23 Brandt (1869: 69; ll. 2173–2180).

Noreen observes that E and F have *hierte* instead of *hiærne*, which is attested in all Swedish manuscripts. A comparison with the Old French text leads him to rule out the possibility that *hierte* is original as the text reads as follows:²⁴

Lors se li monte uns torbeillons
El chief, si grant que il forsane (ll. 2806–2807)

Then such a tempest rose in his head that he went mad. (Kibler 2004: 330)

Furthermore, the fact that this passage is about Yvain losing his temper after suddenly realising the consequences of his foolish behaviour leads us to believe that the *hiærne*-reading is more plausible. Irrespective of whether the *hierte* variant should go back to a now lost French manuscript or not, though, what is particularly noteworthy here is that both Danish manuscripts contain one and the same variant that is not attested elsewhere.

There is another example of convergence of E and F against all other Swedish manuscripts that is even more interesting than the previous one. It is a short passage following a monologue in which Yvain/Ivan blames himself for causing such unbearable sorrow to Laudine, whom he sees crying in great despair from his window.

<i>Herr Ivan</i>	Cod. Holm. K 4 (E)	Cod. Holm. K 47 (F)
<p>Iak veet thet væl for vtan swik/ hon saghe mik hælder dødh æn qwik/ Tho hafuer iak hørt sighia een visan man/ thet han ij bokom skrifuith fan/: hwa ther stadhlika hafuer akt op a/man qvvinno hwgh skøt vænda ma/ thy at man finer thet opta swa/ the sighiæ thet ney, the wilia ia/ Iak thorff ey tala swa vnderlik/hwa weet hwath gudh vil gøre medh mik? /Han ma væl hænna hiærta vænda/ ok hona mik til glædi at sænda. (v. 1093–1104)</p> <p><i>I know it well, /she would rather see me dead than alive. /Yet I have heard a wise man tell/what he had found written in a book:/everyone who is very observant knows/that one can quickly change a wom- an's mind/since this has often been demonstrated; /they may say "no"</i></p>	<p>Iech wedh thet wel for wten suegh/hwn saa megh heller døth æn kuegh/jech tørff ey tale saa vderligh/hwem vedh huad gudh vil giøre met megh/ath han maa vel henne hierte om wende/ henne megh til gleden at sende (Brandt 1870: 162; ll. 1028–1032)</p> <p><i>I know it well/ she would rather see me dead than alive/ I need not talk so strangely;/ who knows what God intends for me? / He may well change her heart/ so that it inclines towards me, to my joy.</i></p>	<p>iech wedh thet wel for wthen suegh/hwn saa megh heller døth en kuegh/jech tørff ey tale saa vnderligh/hwem vedh huad gudh vil giøre met megh/ath han maa vel henne hierte om wende/henne megh til gleden ath sende (19r–19v; Brandt 1869: 34; ll. 1092–1097)</p> <p><i>I know it well/ she would rather see me dead than alive/ I need not talk so strangely;/ who knows what God intends for me? / He may well change her heart/ so that it inclines towards me, to my joy.</i></p>

24 As much as it is understandable that Noreen makes use of the critical edition of the Old French text for his study of its East Norse translations, it goes without saying that one should check all manuscripts of the Old French *Yvain* to establish whether such a reading is attested in any of them. The fact that there are important differences between some of the manuscript witnesses of Chrétien's *Yvain* makes a thorough inspection of all of them even more important in order to gain a clear picture of the relationship between the Old Swedish translation and the French source text. On the manuscripts of *Yvain* see Busby et al. (1993) and Busby (2005).

<i>yet mean “yes.” I need not talk so strangely;/ who knows what God intends for me? / He may well change her heart/ so that it inclines towards me, to my joy. (Williams/ Palmgren 1999: 59)</i>		
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The difference in tone between the Swedish text and the Old Danish branch of the *Yvain*-tradition lies, quite obviously, in how Laudine’s reaction to her beloved husband’s death is commented upon.

A comparison with the Old French text reveals that the reference to women’s unsteady mood is couched in other words there:

D’oreンドroit ai ge dit que sages,
que fame a plus de cent corages.
Celui corage qu’ele a ore,
espoir, changera ele ancora;
ainz le changera sanz espoir. (ll. 1437–1441)

I was right to speak of ‘right now’, for a woman has more than a hundred moods. This mood she is now in, she will yet change, perhaps; in fact there’s no ‘perhaps’: she will change! (Kibler (2004: 312)

The last two verses in the Old Swedish passage (“thy at man finer thet opta swa/ the sighiæ thet ney, the wilia ia”) are not present in A either, and in light of Noreen’s stemmatic hypothesis they should therefore be understood as an innovation of B.

Moving from Noreen’s hypothesis that E and F go back to two different manuscript copies, the fact that both versions show the same omission (or lacuna) demands further attention, and the same applies to the example discussed above. Since all other manuscripts share at least two of the verses that express a slightly misogynistic attitude, one is led to wonder how likely it is that two scribes would have omitted the same passage independently. To weigh the sustainability of this view, one must consider what is known of the social environment in which the two manuscripts preserving the text were probably used.

Two passages in K 47 (one in *Hertug Frederik af Normandi* and one in *Flores og Blaneflor*) suggest that the copyist (or even the translator) is likely to have been a woman (see Glauser 1986: 193–194). In addition, some textual clues seem to indicate that the texts making up the collection were intended for a female public:

Als inhaltliche Hinweise auf ein klösterliches und eventuell weibliches Schreibermilieu hat man die Milderung von Kampfbeschreibungen, die drastische Kürzung einer erotischen Szene im dänischen *Hertug Frederik* und eine Ermahnung an Mönche, keine Waffen zu tragen (*Den kyske dronning*), gedeutet. (Glauser 1986: 194)

The mitigation of combat descriptions, the drastic shortening of an erotic scene in the Danish *Hertug Frederik* and an admonition to monks not to carry weapons (*Den kyske dronning*) have been interpreted as evidence of a monastic and possibly female writing milieu.

Weder neu noch original, sondern äußerst konservativ in seinem literarischen Geschmack, sammelte der jütische Kompilator bekannte hochmittelalterliche Erzählungen und versah sie mit einer differenzierten Funktion. Neue Rezipientenschichten fanden in ihnen unterhaltenden Vorlesestoff und in irgendeiner vagen Form vielleicht auch standesideologische Selbstbestätigung. In einem übergreifenden europäischen Kontext betrachtet, erstaunt nicht, dass um die Wende vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert in den höchsten aristokratischen Kreisen Dänemarks und dem sich allmählich formierenden Patriziat die alte, eigentlich bereits unzeitgemäß gewordene, höfisch-ritterliche Epik so hoch im Kurs stand wie nie zuvor. (Glauser 1986: 204)

Neither new nor original, but extremely conservative in his literary taste, the Jutish compiler collected well-known stories from the high Middle Ages and provided them with a differentiated function. New groups of recipients found entertaining reading material in them and, in some vague form, perhaps also ideological self-affirmation. Considered in an overarching European context, it is not surprising that around the turn of the 15th to the 16th century, in the highest aristocratic circles in Denmark and the urban patriciate that was gradually forming, the old courtly and chivalric epic, which had actually become out of date, was so popular like never before.

Furthermore, Britta Olrik Fredriksen has more recently described K 47 as a “repertoirehåndskrift” that “minder i så henseende om adelsdamers visebøger fra 1500- og 1600-tallet” (1998b: 48)²⁵, thus providing further evidence in support of the hypothesis that this collection of texts was meant to address a female audience. In her view, it is likely that the intended readers of the texts in K 47 were aristocratic women.

As far as K 4 is concerned, a recent analysis of the hagiographical section of the manuscript has convincingly shown that the texts were most probably used within a female monastic community:

With regard to the selection of Marian and hagiographical texts it contains, and in light of the uncommon reference to the “sisters” as part of the audience, it seems plausible that the Legendary was composed for a female monastic house in Roskilde, possibly Our Lady’s Dominican nunnery. (Bullitta 2017: 22)

Elsewhere I have suggested that the later inclusion of *Ivan løveridder* in K 4 may have been prompted by the fact that the story of the knight and his lion lends itself well to being interpreted in a spiritual way, as other manuscript evidence also suggests (Bampi 2019: 228; Bandlien 2013).

Therefore, all of the above clearly indicates that K 47 and K 4 are likely to have been used to address a female public. Accordingly, it cannot be ruled out that the two scribes rewrote the same passage independently, as a result of a conscious manipulation of the text to adjust it to the worldview of the addressees. The omitted lines would indeed have been received fairly badly by a female public.

As much as this hypothesis is plausible, though, it is also possible that both E and F ultimately go back, either directly or indirectly, to a common ancestor that contained the omission. Other evidence in Noreen’s study strengthens such hypothesis. According to him,

25 “and in this respect resembles the *visebøger* from the 16th and 17th centuries owned by noblewomen.”

the aforementioned example is not the only case in which E and F converge in omitting a part of the text that is preserved in the Old Swedish manuscripts (Noreen 1929: 29–30). In Noreen’s study, however, such omissions are only listed. A thorough investigation of all of them would enable us to ascertain on more solid grounds the nature of the relationship of E and F, also with regard to the Old Swedish *Herr Ivan*.

Furthermore, whether or not both instances of convergence of E and F against all other manuscripts discussed above should be interpreted as conjunctive errors can thus be established only after a careful re-examination of the manuscript transmission of the Old Swedish text and its translations into Old Danish. Such re-examination would no doubt benefit a great deal from a broader investigation of the textual evidence regarding the other two *Eufemiaviser*, especially with regard to K 47.

All this leads us to conclude that, ninety years after Noreen’s study, a new investigation of the manuscript transmission of *Herr Ivan* in medieval Denmark would represent a most welcome contribution to our understanding of how the Old Swedish text reached a Danish audience. To this end, the observations contained in Valter Jansson’s seminal study about the original *Eufemiavisor* being written in an area located between the Southwestern and the Western regions of the Swedish kingdom (1945: 14; 312–313) still provide a most valuable starting point.²⁶ A new philological endeavour will thus need to go hand in hand with a new investigation of the social, dynastic and political relationships between Denmark and Sweden in the second half of the 15th century.

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26 More recently, Dario Bullitta (2017: 23) has come up with the hypothesis that the copy of the *Herr Ivan*-text on which the Old Danish translation in K 4 may be based may have been found in Scania.

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