

Learning Old Norse in Fourteenth-Century Norway

Beck Lecture, September 16th, 2011, University of Victoria

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Laurentius Kálfsson (subject of *Laurentius saga*) Einarr Hafliðason (author of *Laurentius saga*)

born:	1267	born:	1307
consecrated:	1288	consecrated:	1334
in Norway:	1294–1307	composes <i>Laurentius saga</i> :	after 1346
bishop of Hólar:	1322	in France:	1347
dies:	1331	dies:	1393

ch. 11

Var þá kominn ... klerkr einn mikill, Jón flæmingi, hafði hann lengi til París staðit ok Orliens at <i>studium</i> . Var hann svá mikill juriste at enginn var þá í Nóregi hans líki; hafði ok erkibiskupinn þar við at styðjaz sem hann var, því at allir mestháttar kórsbræðr vóru honum mótstaðligir. Appelleruðu þeir iðugliga til páfans ok fengu bréf mörg af páfagarði erkibiskupi til þunga; vildi ok erkibiskupinn gjarnan fá klerka hvar sem hann kunni. Mátti því Jón flæmingi miðr gagna erkibiskupi í deilum þeira kórsbræðra at hann kunni ekki norrænu at tala, ok skildi alþýðan ekki máls hans því at hann talaði allt á latínu, fransisku eðr flæmsku...	A great scholar, Jón the Fleming, had recently arrived. He had spent a long time studying in Paris and Orleans. He was so great a <i>juristi</i> [lawyer] that there was at that time no-one of his calibre in Norway. Moreover, the archbishop had good reason to lean on him, because the all the leading brothers of the chapter were set against him. They went always petitioning the Pope and got many letters from the Curia with which to oppress the Archbishop—and the Archbishop was always eager to get hold of scholars wherever he could. But Jón the Fleming could help out the Archbishop less in his dealings with the chapter because he couldn't speak Norse, and the general populace didn't understand his speech because he said everything in Latin, French or Flemish.
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chs 14–15 (Low German loans are **emboldened**)

Nú er þar til at taka at Laurentius var með Jörundi erkibyskupi í Niðarósi ok <i>studeraði</i> jafnan í kirkjunnar lögum er <i>meistari</i> Jóhannes flæmingi las honum; vóru þeir ok miklir vinir sín í millum. Laurentio þótti mikil skemmtan at hann brauz við at tala norrænu en komz þó lítt at. Einn tíma mælti Jón flæmingi við Laurentium: 'Ek vildi at þu flyttir við minn herra at hann veitti mér Máriaúrkirkju hér í býnum, því at hún er nú <i>vacans</i> .'	The next thing to relate is that Laurentius was with Archbishop Jörundr in Niðarós, and always studied the laws of the Church which master Jóhannes the Fleming read him. They were also good friends with each other. It seemed very funny to Laurentius that he struggled away at speaking Norse but still made so little progress. On one occasion, Jón the Fleming spoke to Laurentius: 'I'd like it if you could have a word with my lord about him granting me St Mary's here in the town, because it's currently <i>vacans</i> .'
Laurentius svarar: 'Hversu má þat vera þar sem þér kunnið ekki norrænu at tala?'	Laurentius replied, 'How could that happen when you can't speak Norse?'
'Kann ek sem mér þarfar', sagði Jón, 'ok þat sem mér liggr á at tala.'	'I can say what I need to', said Jón, 'and what I'm required to.'
'Skipum nú þá', sagði Laurentius, 'sem kominn sé föstu innangangr, þá verðr at tala fyrir sóknarfólki yðru hversu þat skal halda langaföstuna.'	'So let's suppose', said Laurentius, 'that it's the first day of Lent, and you have to tell your parishioners how they should celebrate Lent.'
'Á þenna máta ', sagði Jón flæmingi, 'nú er	'Like this', said Jón the Fleming: 'Now <i>lentin</i> has

<p>komin lentin, hvern mann kristinn komi til kirkju, gjöri sína skripin, kasti burt konu sinni, maki engi sukkk, <i>nonne sufficit, domine?</i></p> <p>Þá hló Laurentius ok mælti: ‘Ekki skilr fólkit hvat lentin er.’</p> <p>Sagði hann erkibyskupi ok gjörðu þeir at mikít gaman, en fengu Jóni nokkorn afdeiling sinnar beizlu því at hann var mjök bráðlyndr ef ei var svá gjört sem hann vildi.</p> <p>XV. Kapítuli</p> <p>Einn tíma kómu mörg Íslandsföör til Niðaróss ok vóru á margir íslenzkír menn; vildi síra Laurentius þeim öllum nokkot til góða gjöra. Þar kom millum annarra sá maðr er Klængr steypir hét ok frændi Laurentii ok honum heimuligr. En sem Jón flæmingi sá þat, vildi hann gjöra honum nokkot athvarf ok talaði einn tíma við Laurentium á latínu ok mælti:</p> <p>‘Kennið mér at heilsa á þennan yðar kompán upp á norrænu.’</p> <p>Laurentio þótti mikít gaman at Jóni ok sagði: ‘Heilsaðu honum svá: Fagnaðarlauss kompán!’</p> <p>‘Ek undirstend’, sagði Jón, ‘at þetta mun vera fögr heilsan, því at gaudium er fögnuðr, en laus er lof,—gengr síðan at Klængi steypir, klappandi honum á hans herðar ok mælti: ‘Fagnaðarlauss kompán!’</p> <p>Hinn hvessti augun í móti ok þótti heilsunin ei vera svá fögr sem hinn ætlaði.</p> <p>Nú mælti Jón flæmingi við Laurentium: ‘Ek forstend nú at þú hefir dárat mik, því at þessi maðr varð reiðr við mik.’</p>	<p>arrived, each Christian person should come to Church, do his <i>skripin</i>, throw away his wife, make no disorder, <i>nonne sufficit, domine?</i></p> <p>Then Laurentius laughed and said: ‘The people won’t understand what <i>lentin</i> is.’</p> <p>He told the archbishop and they had a good laugh about it, but they gave Jón a share of his request because he was very hot-tempered when he didn’t get his way.</p> <p>Chapter 15</p> <p>Another time, a lot of sailings from Iceland arrived at Niðarós, and many Icelandic people where aboard; Síra Laurentius wanted to do something good for them. Amongst others came a person called Klængr steypir, who was a kinsman of Laurentius’s and close to him. And when Jón the Fleming saw that, he wanted to hang out with him, and at some point spoke to Laurentius in Latin and said ‘Tell me how to greet this friend of yours in Norse’.</p> <p>Laurentius thought of a great joke to play on Jón and said, ‘Greet him like this: <i>Fagnaðarlauss kompán!</i> [‘damned dude’; lit. ‘joyless dude’]’</p> <p>‘I understand’, said Jón, ‘that this must be a nice greeting, because <i>fögnuðr</i> [‘joy’] is <i>gaudium</i> and <i>laus</i> means <i>lof</i> [‘praise’].’ So he went up to Klængi steypir, clapping him on the back, and said ‘<i>Fagnaðarlauss kompán!</i>’</p> <p>The man narrowed his eyes at him and then the greeting didn’t seem as <i>fögr</i> [attractive] as Jón thought.</p> <p>So then Jón the Fleming spoke to Laurentius: ‘I now understand that you tricked me, because this man was angry at me.’</p>
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