



The Happy Warriors

Halldór Kiljan Laxness , Katherine John (Translator)

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English translation.

The Happy Warriors Details

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From Reader Review The Happy Warriors for online ebook

Jeremy Hornik says

A parody of the classic sagas of violence and murder. I saw what he was getting at, at least in part, and didn't hate it. But a little of this went a long way.

Gill says

'Wayward Heroes' by Halldór Laxness

4.5 stars/ 9 out of 10

I was interested in reading "Wayward Heroes", because I have spent time in Iceland, and also have read and enjoyed Independent People by the same author.

This is a new translation, direct from Icelandic, by Phillip Roughton, (an earlier English translation by a different translator having been from a Swedish translation), to be published in October 2016.

I thought the translation was excellent. The descriptions were vivid, and used colloquial language where appropriate. The character and place names were given in the Icelandic alphabet; once I had checked out how to pronounce these, they felt completely natural to me.

This story of the exploits of Þorgeir and Þormóður, sworn brothers, inspired by old Icelandic Sagas, was adventurous, humorous and moving. I liked that Laxness had adopted a tragicomical approach to them. The two men seemed very true to life. The other characters in the novel were also well rounded. I liked how several of the women were such strong characters.

I found "Independent People" very good, but also almost unrelentingly gloomy, so it was a pleasant surprise to find humour in "Wayward Heroes ". At times it seemed like a cross between Don Quixote and Jason and the Argonauts.

I am really pleased that I read this translation of "Wayward Heroes", and will definitely read further works by Halldór Laxness.

Thank you to Archipelago and to NetGalley for an ARC.

Larissa says

This English edition was actually a translation from the Swedish translation of *Gerpla*. I'm reading it alongside the Icelandic original because the language in *Gerpla*—Halldór's self-created medieval Icelandic—is so complex and stylized that it would be pretty difficult for me to read it on its own within the given time frame. (Halldór said that he could have taught himself Chinese six times in the time it took him to develop the language spoken by the characters in this book.)

This version conveys the plot, obviously, as well as a lot of the latent humor and subtext of the story and situations. But the linguistic qualities of Halldór's writing definitely do not come across. So I am very much looking forward to Philip Roughton's new English translation of the book, which will be released by Archipelago Books in September 2016.

Caroline says

Once again unintentional serendipitous simultaneous reading leads to a dual review: of Halldór Laxness's *Wayward Heroes* (translated by Philip Roughton) and *Outlaws of the Marsh* by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong, translated by Sidney Shapiro <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7....> (I am given to understand that there is no adequate English translation of *The Outlaws of the Marsh*, but it's on Philip Ward's Lifetime Reading list, and this abridged version was the best I could do. And, in fact, I read in another GR review that the *Heroes* translation is actually from the Swedish translation because the 'medieval' Icelandic that Laxness invented for his original version is very difficult.)

While both are about mythic violence and outlawry, *Outlaws* is of its time, collected folk tales of bandit heroes in China during the reign of Hui Zong (reigned 1101 to 1125). *Heroes* is Laxness's 1950s anti-glorification of Viking thugs is set a little earlier; the action takes place before, during and somewhat after the reign of Olaf Haraldsson in Norway (lived 995-1030). It is loosely based on actual sagas, however.

I enjoyed both books, and would have individually, but the contrast of bouncing them off each other as I read added immensely to my perceptions of each one. Both are about the brotherhood that is sworn among men seeking fortune and glory. But in *Heroes* the tight brotherhood is among two men only, with the other Viking players fluid and much less (if at all) loyal to each other. In fact, both Nordic and Christian leaders and warriors change sides on an almost daily basis, depending on who looks to be ahead at the moment. The core outlaw band in *Outlaws* is much more cohesive, and grows day by day as those in the system (government or family dynasty) abandon the establishment and join the outlaws (granted, often because they've been kidnapped and see no other option now that their public image has been compromised). Another variation is in the attitude toward glory. In the Saga, it's about individual glory: being the best even if it's attained by subterfuge. The Chinese outlaws, however, keep a traditional attitude of group glory, meticulously deferring to each other when it comes to seating location and who is chosen as leader.

Violence is at the heart of both books. For a few key characters, violence is what they are to the core. Li Kui and ?orgeir are exemplars of blood lust. But neither world hesitates to slash, burn and loot. The beheadings are beyond numbering. In their own self-story, the Chinese outlaws long to be forgiven and turn to defending the state and emperor again. But none of them are really political outlaws; they broke the law in anything from relatively minor ways to outright blind rage killing. The Vikings, on the other hand, are on the cusp of changing times in their own land. French and Swedish kings are happy to use them as (very dumb) mercenaries, but in Iceland prosperous, wiser chieftains tell them to stay at home and tend to their lands. Hard to know whether this is accurate, but Laxness is not really carrying on the saga tradition; he is gutting it to show violence for the violence it is, no romance about it. Other reviews cite *Heroes* as Laxness on the stupidity of the Cold War. It could certainly be about the stupidity and inhumanity of any violent culture or attitude today.

I should mention one other common feature of the books. They are both quite funny. *Outlaws* offers slapstick, trickery, and banter. Laxness laces almost every scene with a caustic but comic sarcasm about the contrast between the romantic aura of the sagas and the actual filth, thuggery, stupidity, lust, rapine,

discomfort, ineptness, prehensile technology, ugliness, disloyalty, and suffering of Viking life.

To me the main value of *Outlaws* is as a classic of Chinese literature and to catch the references to it in subsequent Asian literature and film. For example, it includes the genesis of the *Chin P'ing Mei* (*Plum in the Golden Vase*). Laxness, however, is a work of art. While the subject is violence, the book is as much about the relations between men and women and the role of the artist. For one of the sworn brothers is a skald, whose role is not so much to do battle as to glorify in epic poetry the brother who fights to best all others, no matter how vile his actions or his 'cause'. Yet another skald wanders through events baldly revising history to portray ignominy as victory in order to enhance a king; he is ever-prepared to abandon a fading king to join an up and coming man with plunder to share. Rather like the main character in Saramago's *History of the Siege of Lisbon*, we are left to wonder what really happened at events we know only from ancient tales, and to ask whether we judge an artist by his truth or by his 'art'.

In sum, both worth reading for understanding where these cultures have been, where they went, and how we haven't really escaped these times. Laxness in particular is a beautiful work of art.

Kristín says

Ég er mikill aðdáandi Halldórs Laxness og hef verið ákaflega hrifin af flestum bóka hans — fyrir utan Heimsljós sem ég náði einhvern veginn ekki að tengjast. Því miður fellur Gerpla í flokk með Heimsljósi. Ég veit að þetta er ádeila á Íslendingasögurnar og það kom fyrir að ég hló að einhverju — kannski sérstaklega í lokin — en mér fannst þessi bók samt eiginlega ekki segja mér neitt sem ég hafði ekki áður lesið í Fóstbræðrarsögu. Og mér fannst ég ekki þurfa að lesa Gerplu til að sjá fáránleikann í hetjudýrkun. En kannski var þetta öðruvísi þegar bókin kom út. Þá litu Íslendingar enn á Gunnar á Hlíðarenda sem mesta kappa sem uppi hefur verið og þá hötuðu menn Hallgerði. Þetta hefur einfaldlega breyst á Íslandi, alla vega á meðal þeirra sem virkilega velta sögunum fyrir sér, og því á Gerpla kannski einfaldlega minna erindi til okkar nú en hún gerði þegar hún kom út. Eða kannski á hún bara svona lítið erindi til mín. Ég veit það ekki, ég veit bara að mér fannst bókin eiginlega hundleiðinleg og ég kláraði hana bara af því að ég er þrjósk. En ég þurfti að leggja hana nokkrum sinnum frá mér og taka langar pásur.

Nelleke says

Verwacht geen verhaal over helden. De drie hoofdpersonen van dit boek zijn zware jongens die geweld niet schuwen. Geschreven in Edda-stijl is dit een bijzonder mooi verhaal, gebaseerd op een tweetal sagen, waaruit Laxness zijn eigen sagen gecreëerd heeft. Oorspronkelijk geschreven in Oud-ijslands, een uitzonderlijke prestatie van Laxness. Maar een nog grotere prestatie was het vertalen in het Nederlands door Marcel Otten uit het Oud-ijslands in een niet al te modern Nederlands. Een compleet ander boek dan werken als Salka Valka en Onafhankelijke mensen, gelukkig zijn de mooie beschrijvingen van de omgeving ook hier weer terug te vinden.

Nick Jones says

De Gelukkige Krijgers is a very fine and unusual book. I enjoyed the tour of the eleventh century Nordic

world, from the West fjords of Iceland to Ireland, England, Normandy, Norway, Kiev and Greenland. Even more I enjoyed the way Laxness debunks the warrior myths of Iceland, as well as the sanctity of the early church, showing cruelty, pettiness, greed and banal self interest where his warrior and his skaldic poet see honour and fame.

Heather says

I had a much more enjoyable time reading this than I had anticipated, and found myself laughing out loud on more than one occasion. My initial feelings were that this would be a good book to read, but not necessarily fun. In the end I was correct on the former and completely wrong on the latter.

Þorgeir and Þormóður (the "Þ" in their names is, I believe, pronounced like the "Th" of Thor) are the titular wayward heroes. They are born at a time when Icelandic men are moving away from the tradition of pillaging marauding and pillaging for riches, and are instead amassing riches through more peaceable means. Having been raised on stories of blood and glory, and being convinced that the attaining of glory through blood is the manly thing to do, the idea of peace is not exactly to the taste of Þorgeir:

A little farther down the road they found a farmstead, where no one was stirring yet. [...]
Þorgeir went to one of the windows and shouted that there were visitors outside, and that those inside were to open the door. A woman asked who went there.
"Champions and warriors," said Þorgeir.
"So you are not men of peace?" asked the woman.
"I hope that we will never commit such a howling offense as to sue for peace with others," said Þorgeir.

Þorgeir's tendency to become affronted at the slightest things, or to take offense for no reason was particularly funny to me. He seemed to be at the extreme end of the stereotypical Viking scale: quick to anger, not wanting to admit weakness, and would literally prefer to plunge off a cliff than ask for help.

... if Þorgeir had called out even a little loudly, Þormóður could easily have heard him. Yet on this, the old books all tell the same story: nothing could have been further from Þorgeir's mind at that moment, hanging as he was from the cliff, than to call his sworn brother's name only to beg him for help.

Þormóður brought a more fantastical element to the novel, as he comes into contact with Fates (or the Nordic iteration of them anyway) and trolls, has encounters with Valkyries and witches, and just generally lives a much dreamier sort of life. Of the two I probably preferred Þorgeir, but that's mostly because he made me laugh with his ridiculousness.

It was this ridiculousness and the deadpan humour throughout that was probably my favourite thing about Wayward Heroes. I wasn't necessarily expecting it and it gave levity to a book that I think would have been lacking without it.

Although some books state that the Norsemen had axes so sharp that they could cleave men from head to toe, the way wooden rafters are split, or cut men's heads off and slice their limbs off their bodies without needing a chopping-block, or halve a fleeing enemy with one blow, making him fall to the ground in two parts, we believe all this to have been dreamed up by people who actually wielded blunt weapons.

I found the historical aspect of the novel very interesting. Not being overly knowledgeable on the history of Iceland and Scandinavia, I can't really comment on it in terms of how accurately it was portrayed, or how it fits in with Laxness's commentary on the world at the time in which he was writing, but it's whet my appetite for more historical fiction set in Iceland and Scandinavia, and probably some non-fiction too.

Although the allegorical aspect of the novel might be beyond my novel, I can safely say that in the centuries between now and when *Wayward Heroes* is set, politics hasn't become any more sensible, particularly if the current political climate is anything to go by. Laxness's work is definitely that of the enduring sort that is relevant no matter which decade you happen to be reading in. But does this speak highly of the reach of his work, or show the lack of change in humanity? I'd like to think it's the former, but perhaps it's a little of both.

My only issue with the book is that coming in at 500 pages, it started to feel a little long towards the end and my interest began to wane in the parts that were more about politics and less about the two sworn brothers. I can understand why these things were included, but with so many kings/wannabe kings to keep track of, it got to be a bit of a struggle. It's definitely one of those books that would benefit from a slow reading - maybe a couple of chapters a week rather than trying to get it all out of the way in as short a period of time as possible, which is perhaps where I went wrong with it. I'd definitely reread it, but I'd take my time with it.

I should warn you that there are lots of place names in the book that are in Icelandic; I felt like I stumbled over these a bit in the early stages of the novel and I found them distracting and a bit jarring to read, but I became used to it in the end and I actually came to enjoy reading these wonderful place names, such as "Hrafnfjörður" and "Sviðinsstaðir".

Laxness was awarded the Nobel Prize "for his vivid epic power which has renewed the great narrative art of Iceland" (nobelprize.org). After reading *Wayward Heroes* I have to say that I 100% agree with the phrase "vivid epic power" and I'll definitely be looking for more of his work.

Mandy says

This is really not my sort of book and therefore it's difficult for me to write a review. I decided to read it as I know very little about Halldor Laxness's work and am always eager to expand my knowledge of authors from other countries, but this one defeated me. Very much in the tradition of the Sagas and therefore packed with all the tropes of such literature, I found it unengaging and difficult to read – not least because the translator chose to use the Icelandic alphabet. The historical background, which the author explores in some depth, made for some heavy-going reading and slowed the action considerably, and the rather picaresque romp of the two main characters left me cold. So I'm hedging my bets with the rating and assuming it was my tastes rather than the book itself that has left me feeling so half-hearted.

Jos says

Alle eer aan de schrijver alsook aan de vertaler, Marcel Otten, die onversaagd verder gaat met de vertaling, uit het IJslands, van de meesterwerken van Halldor Laxness. Deze "anti-vikingsaga" gaat speelt zich af in het Noorwegen van de 14de eeuw en handelt voornamelijk over 3 personages; de bloedbroeders Thormod de dichter en Thorgeir de krijger en later Olaf de Dikke. Thormod en Thorgeir, 2 wat onbeholpen personages die het geluk en een zekere toekomst achter zich laten op zoek naar avontuur en roem. Hun wegen scheiden zich al gauw na een korte periode van voorspoed, waarin ze samen optrekken, als Thormod de dichter na een rampzalige boottocht al meteen verliefd wordt op de eerste trollenfee die ze tegen komen. In tegenstelling tot de saga's die een heldenepos en een eerbetoon aan de Scandinavische volksaard zijn gaat het de twee avonturiers van kwaad naar erger en wordt hun onbehouden houding en domheid volledig uitgespeld. Olaf de dikke, later de Heilige, was een ordinaire boerenpummel en brandschatter die als huurling Europa afschuimde met zijn Vikingtroep en het even bracht tot Koning van Noorwegen. Hij was verantwoordelijk voor de gewelddadige kerstening van Noorwegen. Zijn veld- en boottochten voeren je door een groot deel van Europa langs de hoven van Koningen en ander oplichters. Interessant is het nawoord van de vertaler waarin hij de schrijver en latere Nobelprijswinnaar kadert in het na-oorlogse Europa van eind jaren 40. Halldor Laxness schreef dit boek in het IJslands van rond 1200 wat op zich een prestatie is, denk even na over het werk van Marcel Otten om dit te vertalen naar het Nederlands van de 21ste eeuw zonder in deze de geest van de schrijver te verloochenen. Dankjewel Halldor, Merci Marcel

Elaine Aldred says

Wayward Heroes was one book in the body of work for which Halldor Laxness was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1955. Its inspiration came from the wonderful classic Icelandic Sagas. Wayward Heroes is a title which says it all, because it is the story of Thorgeir and Thormod, two blood brothers. Thorgeir, is obsessed with becoming a warrior, while the less bellicose Thormod aspires to be a great bard. The text begins in a very grand manner in the style of a storyteller enthralling his audience huddled around a roaring fire on a cold winter's night.

The story is set in eleventh-century Iceland. Europe is not completely Christian. Yet the behaviour of the story's characters shows that people are essentially the same, regardless of time or location.

Thorgeir witnesses his father's death; a man who was far from popular in the local community. Fuelled by his father's stories of Viking warmongering and traumatised by his father's murder, Thorgeir sets about his own form of training to fulfil his obsession with becoming a Viking warrior and avenge his father's death. He eventually meets frustrated bard Thormod, and the two set off on their adventures, Don Quixote style. But there is no Sancho Panza to save them from themselves as the characters lurch from one misadventure to the next. They certainly do not seem to be the glorious heroes of the Sagas. Their brand of Viking prowess is little more than sordid and unnecessary violence, ensuring they soon wear out their welcome. Although eventually history shows they do manage to redeem themselves.

This is a book to savour and one that does feel epic, while at the same time feeling remarkably intimate. You are also left wondering whether you have just read a work of fiction, or something that really happened a long, long time ago in an unforgiving land far, far away.

Wayward Heroes was courtesy of Archipelago Books via NetGalley

Ebony says

Wayward Heroes follows the story of Þormóður Bessason and Þorgeir Hávarsson. The book, written by Icelandic Nobel Prize winner Halldór Laxness, is a retelling of various Icelandic sagas.

Ultimately this is a story about brotherhood, loyalty, friendship, power, and revenge. I loved the story and it was told really well. It takes place around the 10th and 11th century, the time period of one of my other favorite books, The Long Ships, and takes you on the adventures of Vikings. Halfway through, the book becomes a story about revenge and power. The first half of the book tells the story of Þormóður Bessason and Þorgeir Hávarsson as they make their way as Vikings. The last half of the book focuses on the political powers that are controlling the areas of England and Scandinavia. The pace of the book is done really well and the political atmosphere was told in a way that didn't feel bogged down or long-winded. A great story and I'm looking forward to reading more of Laxness' other books.

Sylvia says

A fine book in the epic story tradition of the Icelandic Sagas. The author used existing sagas, but changed the character so the book became an hilarious tale of the wanderings of two young men who become blood brothers and want to live according to the old warrior traditions and tales of the Vikings. They want to gather fame in the service of a Norwegian king Olaf, a warrior who succeeds to become king and murders his country men.

The book is a parody of the old sagas of Iceland, which can be read in the The Prose Edda and other books. Halldór Laxness wrote this book in the old-Icelandic language.

I loved the way the story developed and the way it was told with long poetic sentences. Especially the last part where Thormod the poet seeks revenge for the death of Thorgeir and travels to Greenland, becomes a member of an Inuit community for a short time. Travels to Norway to seek the glorious king in whose service his blood brother has died, only to discover that the glorious Olaf of his poem, has almost been defeated. The translation in Dutch is brilliant.

I'm going to search for the real version (the old Icelandic sage) which has been translated in English.

Maria Beltrami says

Questo è probabilmente il più islandese dei romanzi di Laxness, non solo nella storia quanto soprattutto nella struttura, e questo mi ha creato qualche difficoltà di lettura. L'avventura tragicomica dei due fratelli d'armi Thorgeir e Thormod, ispirata a un'autentica saga, è scritta con uno stile e un ritmo che ricorda molto l'Edda di Snorri, che però non è un romanzo ma una serie di "quadri" narrativi intesi a dare ai poeti dei riferimenti letterari. Anche qui le avventure si svolgono in quadri, che spesso si interrompono per poi riprendere da un'altra parte senza che al lettore non islandese sia dato capire la ragione del fermarsi proprio in quel punto della storia e del perché riprendere proprio in quell'altro punto della storia. Senza questo inconveniente, la descrizione di un mondo in completo divenire come quello dei Paesi Scandinavi al momento della cristianizzazione e la descrizione impietosa dei personaggi avrebbe fatto sì che il libro non avrebbe potuto essere definito altro che un capolavoro.

Ringrazio Archipelago Books e Netgalley per avermi fornito una copia gratuita in cambio di una recensione

onesta.

This is probably the most Icelandic of Laxness' novels, not only in its history as especially in the structure, and this caused me some difficulty reading. The tragicomic adventure of the oath-brothers Thorgeir and Thormod, inspired by a true saga, is written with a style and a pace that reminded me of the Snorri's Edda, but it is not a novel but a series of narrative's 'paintings', intended to give literary references to poets. Again, these adventures take place in 'paintings', which often break and then resume elsewhere without the not Icelandic reader is given to understand the reason why stopping at that point in the story and why they pick up right at any other point of the plot. Without this inconvenience, with the description of a world complete development like Scandinavia at the time of Christianization and the merciless description of the characters, it would have meant that the book could not be called anything but a masterpiece. Thank Archipelago Books and Netgalley for giving me a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

Eric Hinkle says

I was very excited for this one, because it's been years since another Laxness book has been translated into English - despite him remaining a legend in Iceland nearly 20 years after his death. It's a very entertaining novel, both in its blatant humor and its not-so-subtle mockery of epic sagas and the ridiculous notion held by many proud Scandinavians that vikings were noble warriors with dignity, valor, and any semblance of morals. Laxness takes this epic tale of sworn brothers Þorgeir and Þormóður, the former a psycho killer and the latter a wannabe poet/skald whose main wish is to glorify the evil, base, "valiant" deeds of his sworn brother and their ilk. Throughout their absurd paths, together or separated, Laxness constantly illustrates how unblinkingly violent and undignified these 11th Century warriors were, with heads being chopped off at every turn, entire townships being burned without regard, and games where babies are thrown up into the air only to be skewered on spear-tips. As much as Laxness has previously demonstrated his love for the language and poetry of the old Sagas, he makes it perfectly clear how much he despises these morally-corrupt scoundrels. He isn't merely "poking fun" at the sagas, he's ripping them apart in hilarious fashion.

On par with his mockery of these warriors is his disgust with the Church of old and their corruption, thievery, and murder. Also getting doused in Laxness' flammable words are Kings and politicians of all sorts. Indeed, it could be read as a condemnation of 20th century world leaders (the book originally came out in Iceland in the early 1950s). "Such was King Olaf's learning that he knew only two solutions to any predicament: one being baptism and the other murder. Due to his childish ignorance, he constantly had to have others at hand to tell him when to baptize and when to strike."

Perhaps my favorite part of the book is when Þormóður goes on his quest for vengeance and ends up in the northern parts of Greenland, "farther north than any other humans." In these parts, he's nearly left for dead and subsequently nursed back to health by the Inuits, who the Scandinavians in Greenland consider subhuman "trolls." It's fascinating to see the details Laxness gives us about the lifestyle, culture, and entertainments of the Inuits. He's extremely compassionate about their people and dignity, and holds no bars when it comes to contrasting them with the Norsemen and their evil, base ways.*

The middle section gets bogged down a bit when it moves from Iceland to Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Rome, and Kiev, introducing a bunch of history and new characters and virtually ignoring our sworn brothers for about a quarter of the book. However, some of the most scathing indictments of the Church of that time are in this section, so it holds interest.

All in all another pretty essential Laxness book, and one with a very unique tone (which says a lot about a writer whose books often have rather diverse tones).

Some favorite passages:

"Good men, let us now go and set Norway awash with flames. And when we have burned, scorched, and decimated the land, I will name my right-hand men and grant estates and titles to those who make the greatest achievements in the work that we shall commence in the red light of dawn. [...] The time has come for us to burn the Norwegian peasants' dwellings to charcoal. It is my command that you spare no creature that draws breath in Norway, and show no man mercy until I have once again gained control of the land. Wherever you see a churl with his brood in field or meadow, on the highroad, or in his punt, cut off his head. If you see a cow slaughter it. Set each and every house ablaze, and send barns up in flames. Millhouses--topple them; bridges--break them. Wells--piss in them."

"Good sirs, it is my understanding that this man you are teasing is a countryman of mine, and I ask you to regard his sore and battered feet and consider what a difficult road he has traveled. Look, too, at how weathered and furrowed his face is. This man has certainly traveled far longer and harder roads than you. I would hazard that he has experienced a thing or two more than some of you who lie about here among the skerries of Norway, men of little spirit and narrow outlooks."

*"[In the north] were to be found the abodes of the troll-races and sorcerers that the Greenland colonists called skraelings, after the way they wrapped themselves in scrappy, tattered skins and furs the likes of which Norsemen were ashamed to wear. The Norsemen refused to consider skraelings as human and declared them unfit to live [...]. Whenever the skraelings were sighted on land, the Norse chieftains sent out a call to arms and sallied out to kill them. The Norsemen soon learned that the skraelings' sorcery was so potent that they were never in mortal peril on sea or land. To them, every sort of weather was fair, and they were never more entertained than during the tempests that froze the life out of Norsemen or drowned them. These folks always had an abundance of food, in both good and bad years, and their bodies wobbled with fat. They feasted joyously while everything undertaken by the Norsemen - reputed to be wise, industrious husbandmen - went amiss, their colonies under constant threat of hunger and want, their crops failing and their livestock perishing, their children dying in the womb. When the sky darkened with piercing winds, heavy snowstorms, and harsh frosts, the troll-folk were settled snugly in their castles of ice, entertaining themselves by singing the 'Hymn of the Moon Man' backwards and forwards, night and day, and not giving a hoot whether the storms went on for days or blew over. The Norsemen, on the other hand, found it particularly bizarre that his race had no weapons and no knowledge of the arts of manslaughter and murder, and let themselves be chopped up like brushwood and their dwellings be set on fire when their sorcery was powerless to save their lives."
