

Abstract:

The roles of women and men in selected Old Norse sagas diploma thesis focuses on literary analysis of two Old Norse sagas – the *Volsunga Saga* and the *Laxdæla saga* – from the perspective of gender theory. Each of the sagas belongs to a different genre, *The Volsunga* is a so-called fornaldarsögur, while *The Laxdæla saga* would be considered a Íslendingasögur. The theoretical part of the thesis draws from the methods of feminist literary critique of the 1970s and 1980s, namely theory of resistant reading which helps readers avoid adopting the author's own perception of their work, and feminist archetypal analysis. The second part of the thesis – the analysis itself – is divided into three topics: agency, vengeance, and genealogy; they are common for both sagas and allow for deeper exploration of the texts. It is on the basis on these topics that the thesis answers originally posited hypotheses regarding behaviours and behavioural patterns, activities, and meanings associated with female and male characters.

Key words:

Archetypal analysis, resistant reading, Old Norse, saga